

# From “Five and Ten in Woolworth” to “Negen Jaar in Tienhoven”: An Analysis of the Dutch Translation of the Puns and Wordplay in the Marx Brothers Movies



MA Thesis

David Voncken

s1059947

[d.j.a.voncken@umail.leidenuniv.nl](mailto:d.j.a.voncken@umail.leidenuniv.nl)

[djvoncken@hotmail.com](mailto:djvoncken@hotmail.com)

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Leiden University Centre for Linguistics

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Supervisor: Drs. K.L. Zeven

Second Reader: A.M. Bovelander, MA

## **Abstract**

In my thesis I analyzed the Dutch subtitles of the puns and wordplay in *Duck Soup* and several examples from other Marx Brothers movies. I used two different criteria to examine the Dutch subtitles. The first was: does the subtitler manage to come up with a translation that remains true to the absurdism of the Marx Brothers' humor, to the characters, and to the time in which the movies were made? The second was based on Dimitris Asimakoulas's 'ideal translation': a translation that remains faithful to all aspects of the General Theory of Verbal Humor. What my analysis has shown, on the basis of the two above-mentioned criteria, is that the subtitler frequently managed to come up with a translation that retained the absurdism of the humor and remained faithful to the time in which the movies were made, but that the subtitles do not remain faithful to the individual characterizations. Furthermore, in this thesis I also argued that a successful translation does not have to remain faithful to all elements of the General Theory of Verbal Humor. My thesis question "What makes for the 'best' translation of the puns and wordplay in the Marx Brothers movies, considering they rely heavily on puns and wordplay" can thus be answered as follows: a successful translation does not have to be a literal translation of the puns and wordplay or remain faithful to the aspects of the General Theory of Verbal Humor, but it should remain faithful to the characteristic absurdism of the Marx Brothers' humor, to the time in which the movies were made, and to the personality of the characters.

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## Introduction

When it comes to subtitling movies, puns and wordplay are some of the hardest elements to translate. Puns and wordplay rely on nuances and ambiguities in language, which means that a subtitler often has to be creative in his translation and occasionally radically re-write jokes, because puns and wordplay often cannot be translated literally (Williamson & Pedro Ricoy 170). Furthermore, since subtitling is a form of ‘constrained translation’, subtitles are limited by space and time (165). This also has an impact on the way the subtitler translates puns and wordplay. The words ‘puns’ and ‘wordplay’ are frequently used interchangeably by translation theorists, but some regard puns as a subcategory of wordplay and classify them separately (168). This thesis will use the latter approach so that certain instances that do not qualify as puns, but still exploit the double meanings of words or phrases, can also be analyzed. There are many different definitions of the words ‘puns’ and ‘wordplay’ and I will give several definitions of these terms in Chapter 1.

One comedy group whose humor often made use of puns and wordplay, including culture-specific puns and wordplay, was the Marx Brothers. Between 1929 and 1949 they acted in thirteen movies that relied heavily on puns and wordplay. Their humor has also often been described as absurd and surreal (Fuentes Luque 303). There are several types of ‘puns’ in the Marx Brothers movies: puns and wordplay based on ambiguities in language; puns and wordplay relating to English expressions and phrases; culture-specific puns and wordplay; sexually suggestive puns and wordplay and visual puns.

The reason why I will examine some of these movies in this thesis is not only because they are some of the most acclaimed comedies of all time, but also because these movies rely more strongly on puns and wordplay than most other comedies. Another reason why I will analyze these movies in this thesis is because the Dutch subtitles of these movies have never been a subject of academic analysis. This thesis aims to fill that gap. I will primarily analyze the Dutch subtitles of *Duck Soup* (1933), but I will also analyze certain moments from other Marx Brothers movies in order to provide a more complete idea of the Marx Brothers’ humor. The main question of this thesis will be: “What makes for the ‘best’ translation of the Marx Brothers movies, considering they rely heavily on puns and wordplay that is occasionally hard to translate?” In my view, the ‘best’ translation is a translation that remains faithful – within the constraints of the subtitles – not only to the absurdism of the Marx Brothers’ humor, but

also to the characters. For instance, Chico speaks in broken English and with a stereotypical Italian accent. Adrián Fuentes Luque identifies these two above-mentioned elements as the two aspects of the Marx Brothers' humor that foreign viewers often associate with the Marx Brothers (Fuentes Luque 300-303). In this thesis I will therefore argue whether the translation upholds the characteristics of the absurdism of the Marx Brothers' humor, remains true to the characters, and also to the cultural and temporal characteristics of the time when the movies were made, while still being accessible to contemporary Dutch viewers.<sup>1</sup>

One important aspect of the translation of puns and wordplay that will be analyzed in this thesis is the translation of culture-specific humor. Since the wordplay in the Marx Brothers movies is often very culture-specific, it makes them very hard to translate. One of the important debates translation scholars and translators are involved in is whether a translation should remain faithful to the cultural context of the source text in general and the cultural references in particular, or whether the translator should make a kind of 'cultural translation' to make the text more accessible for the target audience and turn the cultural references into references of the target culture, in this case Dutch references. The two strategies for translating culture-specific references are sometimes referred to as 'foreignization' and 'domestication' (Munday 218). This thesis will discuss whether a translation of culture-specific humor should 'foreignize' or 'domesticate' the culture-specific references. I will provide a more thorough analysis of this debate in chapter 1.

Before analyzing the translation of the subtitles, I will describe several existing theories and models of translation in the first two chapters in order to create a theoretical framework in the in which the main criteria for the 'best' way to translate the Marx Brothers movies are established. The first chapter will describe the 'constraints' in translation; the 'incongruity theory'; Dimitris Asimakoulas's theory of 'norm acceptance/norm opposition'; Patrick Zabalbeascoa's 'priorities' and 'restrictions' in translation and the 'intended comic effect'; the theories of Zabalbeascoa and Delia Chiaro about cultural factors in translation and Ritva Leppihalme's 'culture bumps'; discuss the idea of 'equivalence' in translations; explain Victor Raskin and Salvatore Attardo's General Theory of Verbal Humor; provide definitions for the words 'pun' and 'wordplay' and describe Lawrence Venuti's strategies of 'foreignization' and 'domestication'.

In the second chapter I will describe the background of the Marx Brothers and their

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<sup>1</sup> It would be interesting to include 'audience response' in my analysis of the translation of the movies, but due to the prescribed limitations of this thesis, I will refrain from incorporating this.

movies, discuss the types of puns and wordplay and the typologies of Gottlieb, Delabastita and Elena Manca and Daesy Aprile for translating puns and wordplay in general, as well as the typologies of Jan Pedersen for translating culture-specific puns and wordplay.

Furthermore, I will also explain my overall method for analyzing the movies. In these two chapters I will explain why I will use all these theories, models and typologies for my analysis of the subtitles, yet I will also point out flaws in their models and theories.

The third chapter will be an analysis of specific translation examples of the movies themselves, especially *Duck Soup* (1933). I will analyze certain examples from the movies and provide charts that show which strategies and procedures the subtitler used when subtitling the movies and how often the translation remained faithful to my own criteria for a good translation and to the GTVH. In the examples I have chosen I will discuss whether the translation manages to preserve the verbal humor (the puns and the wordplay) of the original, find a good ‘equivalent’, or whether the subtitles lose something in translation. As I will describe in chapter 1, many translation theorists use the term ‘equivalence’, but none of them give a clear definition of the term. I will discuss this in chapter 1 and give my own interpretation of what ‘equivalence’ is. In my analysis chapter I will also discuss instances when there are significant differences between the original dialogue and the Dutch subtitles, such as different cultural references, different puns, or omissions of puns or cultural references occur. Furthermore, I will also attempt to determine when the subtitler manages to find a suitable ‘equivalent’ translation, and when the translation loses the characteristic aspects listed above, which are so characteristic of the Marx Brothers’ humor. I will utilize all the relevant theories I have discussed in earlier chapters and provide my ideas for best practice based on the results from this analysis. I will only provide several examples that illustrate the points I want to make in this thesis. A complete transcript of the puns and wordplay in *Duck Soup* and several examples from the other movies will be included in the appendix.

My final chapter will be a conclusion. I will summarize my thesis and discuss my findings. Furthermore, I will also acknowledge several shortcomings in my thesis and provide recommendations for further research.

## Chapter 1 Theoretical Background

The first part of this chapter will explain and describe the criteria for a ‘good’ translation of humor in general and describe and analyze the most important theories, models and typologies that will be applied in later chapters. The second part will provide the criteria for making a translation of the puns and wordplay in the Marx Brothers movies that preserves the absurdism of the humor and remains true to the characters and the time when the movies were made, while still being accessible to Dutch viewers. It will also describe all the strategies and procedures that will be utilized in the next chapters. The last part of this chapter will describe the translation procedures for the puns and wordplay in general and focus on the criteria for a good translation of the culture-specific wordplay and puns in particular.

### 1.1 Main criteria for the ‘best’ translation of humor in general

Subtitling is not a straightforward, mechanical process of simply literally translating the English dialogue into Dutch. A subtitler has to deal with space and time constraints, idiomatic differences between languages, as well as other contextual factors. In this section I will describe all the language-specific and media-specific constraints in subtitling that subtitlers have to deal with, as well as the ‘externalities’: additional contextual factors that have an impact on the way audiences perceive humor. Subtitlers have to keep them in mind as well, for they strongly influence the way viewers perceive the verbal humor and they can also provide subtitlers with good assistance for translating certain jokes. I will describe Victor Raskin and Salvatore Attardo’s General Theory of Verbal Humor, which is crucial to my analysis chapter, because it is applicable to all types of humor and because it can be used to analyze the subtitles and argue whether the subtitler has made a translation that remains faithful to the absurdism that is characteristic of the Marx Brothers’ humor. The concept of the ‘incongruity theory’ as well as Dimitris Asimakoulas’s ‘norm acceptance’/‘norm opposition’ will also be described, because these explain several important aspects of humor in general. Furthermore, Patrick Zabalbeascoa’s model of ‘priorities’ and ‘restrictions’ will be discussed, as well as the idea of ‘equivalence in humor’ as described by Zabalbeascoa and Adrián Fuentes Luque.



### 1.1.1 Constraints in subtitling and contextual factors that subtitlers have to keep in mind

Before writing about the main criteria for the ‘best’ translation of humor in general, it is crucial to describe the constraints in the subtitles and other challenges a subtitler faces. Lee Williamson and Raquel Pedro de Ricoy describe subtitling as a “constrained translation”. This means that subtitles are limited by space and time (Williamson and Pedro Ricoy 165). According to Jorge Díaz Cintas and Aline Remael the reading speed for subtitles on DVDs is often 180 words per minute. This means that 1 second is equivalent to a maximum of 17 spaces, 2 seconds to a maximum of 35 spaces, 3 seconds to a maximum of 53 spaces, 4 seconds to a maximum of 70 spaces, and 5 and 6 seconds to a maximum of 78 spaces (Díaz Cintas and Remael 98-99). These constraints are very important to keep in mind, because the translator’s choices in translating certain puns or wordplay occasionally depend on the limited time and space for the subtitles. This can occasionally lead to a loss of wordplay in the subtitles.

Henrik Gottlieb refers to the above-mentioned constraints as ‘media-specific constraints’. He also mentions several other constraints that lead to a loss of wordplay in the subtitles: ‘language-specific constraints’ and ‘human constraints’. ‘Language-specific constraints’ refer to elements of the source language that have no linguistic equivalent in the target language. ‘Human constraints’ refer to the problems with the translators themselves, including a lack of interest, a lack of talent, a lack of experience, or time pressure (Gottlieb 216). ‘Language-specific constraints’ and ‘media-specific constraints’ are very important for this thesis since they deal with the main problems and challenges a translator faces when subtitling verbal humor. ‘Human constraints’, on the other hand, is purely subjective and highly speculative: a lack of talent is merely an opinion, and it is hard to prove if a translator has little time, experience or interest. Therefore, the last ‘constraint’ will be disregarded in this thesis.

In addition to ‘language-specific’ and ‘media-specific’ constraints, there are additional contextual factors that a translator needs to keep in mind. These factors have an impact on the way viewers perceive humor. Dimitris Asimakoulas refers to these additional contextual factors as ‘externalities’. The ‘externalities’ he mentions are: ‘image’, ‘constraints’, ‘presupposed knowledge’, ‘intertextuality’ and the ‘interpersonal’ (Asimakoulas 826). ‘Image’ refers to the visuals on screen (826). Several puns in the Marx Brothers movies are visual puns. One example is in *Horse Feathers*. Baravelli (Chico) and Pinky (Harpo) enroll as college students so that they can join the college football team. When they are about to sign

the paper Professor Wagstaff (Groucho) shouts: “Where’s the seal?”. Pinky then runs out to get the animal, rather than the instrument. When translating visual puns like these, the subtitler has to keep in mind the images on screen, in this case the seal. The subtitler has to come up with a joke that references the visual image of the seal. ‘Constraints’ refer to the limits of verbal humor in a certain language, e.g. some words lend themselves better to punning than similar words in other languages (826). ‘Presupposed knowledge’ refers to the knowledge the subtitler assumes the viewers already have about a subject (826). ‘Intertextuality’ refers to a text referencing another text, which can be a parody or an allusion (826). One example of a parody of another text is in *Animal Crackers* when Captain Spaulding (Groucho) says: “Pardon me while I have a *Strange Interlude*. He then proceeds to address the viewers directly with a nonsensical stream- of-consciousness monologue. This is an allusion to the play *Strange Interlude* by Eugene O’Neill. In this play the characters frequently address the audience directly to tell them their true feelings about other characters. The joke in *Animal Crackers* is that Captain Spaulding’s monologue initially starts with him telling the audience about how he really feels about getting married to the two women he has just proposed too, but his monologue quickly becomes nonsensical. In the same movie there is also a pun and an allusion to another famous play and movie from the 1920s. Captain Spaulding says to Ravelli (Chico): “Haven’t you ever heard of ‘habeas corpus’?” Ravelli then replies: “No, but I’ve seen *Habeas Irish Rose*”. This is a reference to and a pun on the title of the play *Abie’s Irish Rose*, a popular play from the 1920s that was also turned into a movie. The ‘interpersonal’ refers to the expression of a certain feeling and attitude between people, such as humor relating to superiority or disparagement, or satire (826). For a subtitler it is essential to take all these ‘externalities’ into account.

To sum up, the externalities referred to by Asimakoulas are crucial factors to bear in mind. When subtitling verbal humor subtitlers need to be aware of the ‘images’, for they often provide crucial contextual information when subtitling verbal humor. Subtitlers must also keep in mind the audience’s knowledge of the cultural references of the source text: they have to judge whether most of the audience can understand certain cultural references in the puns and wordplay and whether the references should be retained or whether they need to create new references. Subtitlers also have to judge whether the audience can understand the occasional allusions and parodic references in the verbal humor. All these constraints and challenges are very important to keep in mind, as we shall see in the next chapters.

### 1.1.2 Victor Raskin and Salvatore Attardo's General Theory of Verbal Humor

It is crucial to establish a theoretical framework for the translation of humor in general before looking into the translation issues of puns and wordplay, including culture-specific ones.

Dimitris Asimakoulas discusses, among other things, the General Theory of Verbal Humor (GTVH) developed by Victor Raskin and Salvatore Attardo. Initially the GTVH was designed to establish how similar or how different jokes were intralingually, but later it was also designed to analyze interlingual translations of jokes (Asimakoulas 823-824). Lee Williamson and Raquel Pedro de Ricoy note that Raskin and Attardo's GTVH is applicable to all forms of verbal humor. This makes the GTVH the most crucial theory for this thesis. It has been criticized, however, for being too vague, because it tries to cover all varieties of humor and because it lacks strict definitions for its main concepts (Williamson & Pedro de Ricoy 167). It is important to note that according to the GTVH wordplay should be handled differently, because it is based on a *signifiant*, "an exact wording that causes ambiguity". However, it is not stated how wordplay should be handled differently, only that it can still be applied in the GTVH (171). This is a rather vague and contradictory aspect of the theory.

Despite the criticisms of certain scholars, the theory does provide a very useful way to analyze the puns and wordplay in the Marx Brothers movies. In order to apply this theory I will first provide an outline of the theoretical framework. According to Raskin and Attardo's General Theory of Verbal Humor a joke can consist of six parameters. These parameters are called 'knowledge resources' (KRs) (Asimakoulas 823):

Language (LA)	"Choices on the phonetic, phonological, morphophonemic, morphological, lexical, syntactic, semantic and pragmatic levels which determine the entire makeup of the joke" (Asimakoulas 823).
Situation (SI)	The situation in which the joke takes place in regard to the objects and participants which comprise the props of the joke (Asimakoulas 823).
Narrative strategy (NS)	The way the joke is told: whether the joke is a riddle, an expository or a

	question-and-answer (Attardo & Raskin 300).
Target (TA)	Refers to the individuals or groups who are being targeted in the joke (Asimakoulas 823).
Logical mechanism (LM)	“The (situationally-)false, pseudological reasoning that playfully masks the oppositeness and seems to resolve the incongruity presented by it.” (Raskin, Hempelmann & Taylor 292). Among other things this can be ‘faulty logic’ ‘false analogy’, or ‘cratylism’ (“The assumption that two words or utterances that have the same or similar sounds must have the same meaning”) (Williamson & Pedro Ricoy 168).
Script opposition (SO)	The different ways in which a joke can be interpreted (e.g. sexual vs. non-sexual) (Asimakoulas 824).

According to Attardo, Ruch and Raskin the ranking of the individual KRs is hierarchical and the ranking always varies and depends on the joke itself (Attardo, Ruch & Raskin 127).

Attardo says: “If possible, respect all Knowledge Resources in your translation, but if necessary, let your translation differ at the lowest level necessary for your pragmatic purposes” (Williamson and Pedro Ricoy 171).

One of the important terms that Asimakoulas mentions that appears in the GTVH is the term ‘script’. He defines ‘script’ as: “an organized chunk of information about something, a cognitive structure internalized by the speaker which provides him/her with information on how the world is organized, including how one acts in it.” (Asimakoulas 822). Raskin and Attardo define ‘script’ as: “a structured chunk of information about lexemes and/or parts of the world” (Attardo, Ruch & Raskin 124). A similar definition is given by Lee Williamson and Raquel Pedro de Ricoy: “cognitive structures that humans have for organizing information required for an utterance to be understood” (Williamson & Pedro de Ricoy 167).

Script opposition occurs when a joke can be interpreted in two different ways (e.g. sexual vs. non-sexual).

According to Asimakoulas the ideal translation of a joke is when the translation “shares the same script opposition, the same logical mechanism, the same situation, the same target and the same narrative strategy as the original” (Asimakoulas 824). It seems unlikely, however, that all puns and wordplay can fulfill that strict criterion due to differences between the language systems of Dutch and English in grammar and idiom, as well as certain socio-cultural aspects relating to ‘target’ and ‘situation’. Nevertheless, Asimakoulas’s idea is crucial to this thesis and it shall be tested on all the examples that will be discussed later.

### 1.1.3 Incongruity theory and norm acceptance/norm opposition

In addition to applying the GTVH to the subtitles of the Marx Brothers movies, it is also important to keep several other theories in mind, namely the ‘incongruity theory’ and Dimitris Asimakoulas’s ‘norm acceptance/norm opposition’ theory. According to Simon Critchley humor is based on a disconnect between what is normal and abnormal and between what one would expect to happen and what actually does happen. This is known as the ‘incongruity theory’: “Humor is produced by a feeling of incongruity between what we expect and what actually takes place in a joke, gag or jest” (Manca and Aprile 155). This is a highly relevant point, for puns and wordplay rely strongly on upsetting our expectations through use of language.

Dimitris Asimakoulas also discusses the ‘incongruity theory’. His theory incorporates both Raskin and Attardo’s GTVH and some of the observations of fellow theorist Jeroen Vandaele. Vandaele describes the relation between the two main principles ‘superiority’ and ‘incongruity’ in humor. He cites psychologist Thomas P. Schulz, who gives the following definition of ‘incongruity’: “a conflict between what is expected and what actually occurs in the joke” (Vandaele 223). Later on Vandaele gives a definition of ‘superiority’: a “reinforcement” of oneself or a “heightened self-esteem” a person feels towards the other (Vandaele 224). Vandaele mentions two types of superiority that are relevant to this thesis: ‘aggressive superiority’ and ‘affirmative superiority’ (Vandaele 239- 245).

Aggressive superiority	There is a clear target in the joke.
Affirmative superiority	There is no clear target to attack in the joke.

	A person shows his superiority by his reaction to certain circumstances, such as the absence of inferiority and anxiety.
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Asimakoulas says that superiority relates to incongruity in the following ways: “most acts of incongruity can be assigned to a social product and/or agent which are thus seen as inferior” ; “ironic incongruity is controlled abnormality as a sign of superiority” ; “incongruity can in most cases be resolved and overcome, thus creating superiority” and “some incongruities are conventionalized as humorous” (Asimakoulas 824). The Marx Brothers frequently use puns and wordplay to show their superiority over their antagonists, and that also makes this theory highly relevant.

According to Asimakoulas verbal humor also relies on social/cognitive expectations and a norm acceptance/norm opposition. ‘Norm acceptance’ and ‘norm opposition’ can be distributed on the same levels as ‘incongruity’ and ‘superiority’. ‘Norm acceptance’ refers to a cliché or stereotype that is regarded as inherently funny in a society and does not exclusively involve a clash or incongruity. ‘Norm opposition’ can refer not only to the two separate ways certain puns and wordplay can be interpreted by different characters, but also to social incongruities. It can involve deviations from a ‘normal’ use of language as well (Asimakoulas 824). Norm acceptance/opposition is a means to establish a humorous connection between the filmmaker and the viewer (825). The Marx Brothers’ frequently anti-social behavior is often socially incongruous: Groucho loves insulting people, flirting with women and sometimes insulting them at the same time; Harpo often chases women and exhibits other types of bizarre behavior due to his muteness. However, it is their use of language in which they deviate most from ‘normal’ behavior: Chico speaks in broken English and Groucho uses puns and wordplay to fool people. They both use language to ridicule and undermine the established order.

#### 1.1.4 Priorities and restrictions

In addition to applying the GTVH, the ‘incongruity theory’ and the theory of ‘norm acceptance/ norm opposition’, a subtitler of the Marx Brothers movies also needs to establish ‘priorities’ and ‘restrictions’ in subtitling. In his article “Translating Jokes for Dubbed Television Situation Comedies” Patrick Zabalbeascoa argues in favor of establishing a model

based on ‘priorities’ and ‘restrictions’ in translating. Priorities are used “as a means of expressing the intended goals for a given translation task”, and restrictions are “the obstacles and problems that help justify one’s choices of priorities and, ultimately, the solutions adopted in the translation” (Zabalbeascoa 243). His article focuses strictly on dubbing and culture-specific humor, but his theories have broader implications for translating humor in general. His model deals with many elements of translation, of which humor is only one. He says that a translator should examine the functions of humor as well as the attitudes and mental states conveyed by it (Zabalbeascoa 244). When judging the translation of a comedy one would have to judge how funny the translation is, instead of how faithful the translation is to the source text (245). ‘Funniness’ is more important than teaching audiences about other cultures (246). However, as Zabalbeascoa admits, ‘funniness’ is a very vague and subjective criterion: not everybody will laugh at the same jokes or find the same type of humor funny. He fails to provide a good solution to this problem in his article. Nevertheless, he has still pointed out many important elements of what makes for the ‘best’ translation of puns and wordplay (this thesis’s central question), and he deals with the important question of how faithful a translation should be.

Zabalbeascoa then mentions the third means of describing priorities, ‘equivalence’. His definition of ‘equivalence’ is rather vague. He simply defines it as: “a priority for the translation to be equivalent to the original in a certain respect and to a certain extent” (247). What is notable about Zabalbeascoa and the other theorists, is that they frequently use the word ‘equivalence’, yet none of them ever give a clear definition of what it is. Zabalbeascoa says that a translator will have to decide whether a translation will have to be ‘equivalent’ to the original to a certain degree, ‘non-equivalent’, or whether equivalence will not be regarded. ‘Equivalence not regarded’ refers to the question how socially acceptable the humor of the source text is in the target culture and whether it should be translated (247). Some of the Marx Brothers’ verbal humor is rather dated due to the references to contemporary culture and movies, plays and literary works that were popular in the 1920, 1930s and 1940s (as mentioned in paragraph 2.1), but, with a few exceptions, little of it is completely socially unacceptable nowadays. For this research my definition of ‘equivalence’ is: a translation that remains faithful to the absurdism of the Marx Brothers’ humor, to the characters, and to the cultural context in its time.

In addition to ‘equivalence’ the ‘intended comic effect’ of the translation is a very high priority according to Zabalbeascoa (247). This is a good point, for a translation of a comedy

should always aim to be funny, in addition to remaining faithful to all the important aspects of the humor. Zabalbeascoa quotes Delia Chiaro who says that: “translators are often afraid of moving away from the text and replacing an untranslatable joke with another one which would work in the target language, even if it is completely different from the original” (249). This could be a potential problem with some of the Dutch subtitles of the Marx Brothers movies, for, as Adrián Fuentes Luque will explain in the next section, an overly literal translation of the puns and wordplay can be confusing and nonsensical. The next chapters will examine if Chiaro’s statement is true and whether or not moving away from the original text is a good strategy when translating the Marx Brothers movies. I will also keep Zabalbeascoa’s ‘priorities’ and ‘restrictions’ in mind and test them. His point that a translation should not always be faithful to the original if a literal translation is not funny, will be a guiding principle.

A similar point is made by Adrián Fuentes Luque in his research on the reception of the Spanish dubbed and subtitled version of *Duck Soup*. Fuentes Luque conducted an investigation into how non-native speakers reacted to the Spanish subtitled version and the Spanish dubbed version of *Duck Soup*. The Spanish subtitled version was a very literal translation of the puns, wordplay and the cultural references. The dubbed version was a more creative translation without the cultural references. This version was better received (Fuentes Luque 298-300). He mentions that this is consistent with Ritva Leppihalme’s remark that “cultural mediation through more interventional strategies has a better chance of enabling TT readers to grasp the point of an allusive passage” (300). Fuentes Luque makes the very important observation that his survey has shown that with the Spanish subtitled version native speakers laughed because they understood a pun or a cultural reference. Non-native speakers, on the other hand, laughed because they found the Marx Brothers’ humor absurd and surreal. He says this was possibly due to the overly literal – and therefore nonsensical – subtitles (303). Here, however, Fuentes Luque fails to make a difference between the intentional absurdism of the Marx Brothers’ humor and the audience’s perception of their absurdism due to an overly literal translation. I believe the subtitles should convey the intentional absurdism of their humor and not become unintentionally nonsensical due to an overly literal translation, for even the absurdity of their humor has a certain logic behind it. It will be interesting to analyze to what degree the Dutch subtitles manage to convey the original intent. Even though native speakers and non-native speakers laugh about different aspects of the Marx Brothers there is still one common aspect they laugh about: the absurdism and surrealism of the Marx



Brothers' humor. Fuentes Luque's conclusions underline my approach to the translation of the verbal humor: a good translation of the Marx Brothers' humor should retain the intentional absurdism of the humor yet still be accessible to Dutch audiences.

Fuentes Luque also points out that the dubbed and subtitled versions lack certain humorous aspects of the Marx Brothers, such as Chico's broken English and his strong pseudo-Italian accent. He says this could possibly have been recreated in the subtitles by using different spelling. This point underlines the necessity of remaining faithful to the characters, because Chico's accent and poor English are key to his characterization and *modus operandi*, and are – as Fuentes Luque remarks – an unnecessary loss (300-301). This is another crucial element that subtitlers should retain in the subtitles and the examples in my third chapter will examine whether that is the case.

## 1.2 Translating wordplay and puns

As a significant amount of the humor in the Marx Brothers movies is based on wordplay and puns, it is vital to select useful definitions of the words 'pun' and 'wordplay' and to consider whether puns and wordplay are translatable or not. I will first provide several definitions given by Dirk Delabastita, the Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English and the Concise Oxford Dictionary. Subsequently, I will provide insights from several theorists on the question whether puns and wordplay are translatable or not.

### 1.2.1 Definitions of puns and wordplay

Dirk Delabastita gives the following definition of wordplay: "Wordplay is the general name for the various textual phenomena in which structural features of the language(s) are exploited in order to bring about a communicatively significant confrontation of two (or more) linguistic structures with more or less similar forms and more or less different meanings" (Williamson & Pedro Ricoy 169).

The Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English defines a 'pun' as "an amusing use of a word or phrase that has two meanings, or of words that have the same sound but different meanings". One example is this dialogue in *Animal Crackers* between Captain Spaulding and Inspector Hennesy (Edward Metcalf). Spaulding says: "You know Conductor Hennessey, don't you?" Inspector Hennesy corrects him: "Inspector". Spaulding then replies: "Inspect her,

yourself.” The Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English refers to ‘wordplay’ as “making jokes by using words in a clever way” (Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English Edition). One example of wordplay in *Horse Feathers* involves Professor Wagstaff (Groucho) telling Baravelli (Chico) that he wants to recruit him for the college football team, but that he doesn’t have to decide immediately. He tells him: “I don’t want a hasty answer. Just sleep on it.” Baravelli replies: “I no think I can sleep on a football.”

The Concise Oxford English Dictionary defines ‘wordplay’ as “the witty exploitation of the meanings and ambiguities of words” and ‘pun’ as “a joke exploiting the different meanings of a word or the fact that there are words of the same sound and different meanings” (Concise Oxford English Dictionary). What both The Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English and the Concise Oxford English Dictionary have in common is that while there is considerable overlap between ‘wordplay’ and ‘pun’, ‘wordplay’ is much broader. The Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English makes this clearer. Therefore, the definitions of the Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English are the best and this thesis will use those definitions.

### 1.2.2 The (un)translatability of puns and wordplay

There has always been considerable debate about whether puns and wordplay are translatable or not (Williamson & Pedro Ricoy 170). Juliane House believes that puns in general are untranslatable due to differences in phonology and semantics between the languages. This is important to keep in mind in the next chapters. Dirk Delabastita asserts that people who claim that a particular type of wordplay is untranslatable usually mean that the translator’s version does not fit their idea of ‘translation equivalence’. As Lee Williamson and Raquel de Pedro Ricoy point out, claims that wordplay is untranslatable are based on a very narrow form of ‘equivalence’, namely ‘equivalence of form’ and not ‘functional’, ‘semiotic’ or ‘pragmatic’ (170). I agree that when judging a translation of wordplay, one must look at all possible forms of equivalence. However, their idea of ‘functional’ and ‘pragmatic’ equivalence is vague. Perhaps with ‘functional’ and ‘pragmatic’ they mean that a less literal translation is better than a literal translation, since a literal translation would be meaningless and less funny. Yet they do not give a clear definition of these two types of equivalence and the two types seem rather similar.

Unlike House, Henrik Gottlieb believes that most examples of wordplay are in fact

translatable. He points out that audiovisual texts are polysemiotic and that the non-verbal elements, such as the images we seen on screen, can provide translators with solutions (Williamson and Pedro Ricoy 170). I agree with him that one should also take other factors such as these into account, not only verbal ones.

Like Gottlieb, Adrián Fuentes Luque also believes that verbal humor is not untranslatable. He quotes Delabastita who says: “the only way to be faithful to the original text (i.e. to its verbal playfulness) is paradoxically to be unfaithful to it” (Fuentes Luque 304-305). This statement does contradict one of his earlier statements, for he has also stated that non-native speakers find the humor funny due to the overly literal subtitles. Here, however, he argues in favor of a non-literal translation.

Gottlieb and Ritva Leppihalme believe that wordplay should achieve the same effect in the translation as in the source text (Williamson and Pedro Ricoy 171). However – as Williamson and Pedro Ricoy correctly remark – this is quite a vague remark and relies very much on audience perception and reception studies (171). As stated in the introduction, this thesis will not focus on audience perception and reception studies and will only focus on the linguistic aspects of translation.

### 1.3 Translating culture-specific humor

#### 1.3.1 Culture and the problems with culture-bound humor

Patrick Zabalbeascoa says that one of the translator’s main challenges is dealing with culture-specific humor (Zabalbeascoa 237-238) and that the success of a series or a movie in other countries often depends on how culture-specific the source text’s humor is and whether other cultures understand the references (239-240). When dealing with the problem of how to translate culture-specific puns and wordplay, one must first provide a definition of ‘culture’. Elena Manca and Daesy Aprile cite E.B. Tylor who gives the following definition of ‘culture’: “that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by a man as a member of a society”. Manca and Aprile state that language is the expression of culture, “that is to say all the elements which constitute a cultural identity of people” (Manca & Aprile 155). Closely related to this, Williamson and Pedro Ricoy state that “humor’s stimuli are contingent on linguistic, geographical, diachronic, sociocultural, and personal boundaries” (Williamson & Pedro Ricoy 166).

Additionally, Delia Chiaro states that humor is very culture-bound and that due to globalization English-language humor travels better than humor in other languages. American humor, like slapstick, is universal, but European humor is often very culture-specific (Chiaro 136-139). Yet American humor can also be very culture-specific. The verbal humor of the Marx Brothers relates to American society in the 1930s and 1940s and contains many references to American culture and American history, American popular culture and American movies, plays and literature. Since the Marx Brothers movies are also highly regarded outside America it seems doubtful that culture-specific humor doesn't travel well.

In his article "An Empirical Approach to the Reception of Audiovisual Translated Humor" Adrián Fuentes Luque, also quoting Ritva Leppihalme, lists a number of examples of culture-bound humor that provide several difficulties for the subtitle: "humorous effects are lost in the translation process"; "laughter is triggered differently in different cultures"; "given its unique characteristics, the humor of the Marx Brothers is not universally understood and encodes different values from those available in Spanish culture"; "a given instance of humor may produce the same humorous effect in different versions (original, dubbed, subtitled) for radically different reasons"; "there can be humorous and cultural bumps (Leppihalme 1997), that is, target text receivers (viewers) may respond differently from receivers of the (audiovisual) source text" and "literal translation of certain puns, plays on ideas, cultural references and allusions results in comprehension errors or misconceptions, that is, in humorous or cultural bumps for receivers (viewers) of the target text (Leppihalme 1997:170)" (Fuentes Luque 295). These challenges are important to keep in mind when closely examining the subtitles.

Ritva Leppihalme herself quotes Walter Redfern who remarks that "the pun counts on allusions being spotted", which means that the target culture must understand the allusions in the pun (Leppihalme 203). She explains the term "culture bump", mentioned above: "a translation situation to denote a phrase or brief passage that for culture-specific reasons is inexplicable or puzzling in the target-language version" (209). This is a crucial element that a good translator should try to avoid as much as possible. Leppihalme later remarks that allusive wordplay can usually only be enjoyed by bilingual or bicultural readers (213). This, again, is an important point, because, as stated earlier, the Marx Brothers movies contain many instances of puns and wordplay that require a strong knowledge of the English language and of American socio-cultural history.

### 1.3.2 Domestication and foreignization

When it comes to translating culture-specific words, Lawrence Venuti's ideas of 'foreignization' and 'domestication' are very important. According to Venuti 'foreignization' means: "choosing a foreign text and developing a translation method along lines which are excluded by dominant cultural values in the target language". 'Domestication' means removing many culture-specific aspects of the source text and making a translation that reads less like a translation and more like an original. (Munday 218-219). Venuti's ideas of 'foreignization' and 'domestication' refer primarily to English language translations of world literature and he views 'foreignization' and 'domestication' from an American point of view, which means that 'domestication' refers to making a text more accessible for American readers. In the case of the Dutch subtitles of the Marx Brothers movies, 'foreignization' and 'domestication' would be from a Dutch perspective. 'Domesticating' a cultural reference can make the verbal humor more accessible to foreign viewers, especially when it refers to cultural references that foreign viewers don't understand. This would mean translating American culture-specific words into Dutch culture-specific words. By 'foreignizing' a cultural reference the translator relies on the viewer's knowledge of the other culture. A 'foreignizing' translation would retain the American culture-specific words. The disadvantage of 'foreignization' is that it could make the movie less accessible to a larger audience.

Venuti prefers 'foreignization' (219), and this thesis will examine whether 'foreignizing' a uniquely American sense of humor for a Dutch audience is preferable to 'domesticating' American humor for a Dutch audience or not. Furthermore, since subtitles often have special constraints, it is doubtful whether his theories of 'foreignization' and 'domestication' are as important to subtitling as they are to translating literature. The strategies of 'foreignization' and 'domestication' in subtitles will be examined in the third chapter.

### 1.4. Conclusion

The General Theory of Verbal Humor and the Incongruity Theory are the most significant theories discussed in this chapter, the former because it is very broad and can allegedly be applied to all types of humor; and the latter because it deals precisely with what makes a joke humorous and because it is closely related to two other important aspects in humor: 'superiority' and 'norm acceptance/norm opposition'. Achieving humor equivalence is one of

the most important problems a translator faces and will also be examined in the next chapters. In the third chapter it will also be crucial to remember the translation constraints. The priorities and restrictions a translator has to make, the question of the translatability of puns and wordplay, as well as the culture-specificity of the verbal humor will also return in the third chapter. Finally, the issue of ‘foreignization’ and ‘domestication’ in translation will also be examined in my analysis chapter.

## Chapter 2 Method

It is first crucial to repeat my definition of ‘pun’ and ‘wordplay’ and establish methods for analyzing the movies before analyzing *Duck Soup* and a few examples from several other Marx Brothers movies in chapter 3, as well as dealing with the thesis question “What makes for the ‘best’ translation of the Marx Brothers movies, considering they rely heavily on puns and wordplay?” in the same chapter. The Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English defines a ‘pun’ as “an amusing use of a word or phrase that has two meanings, or of words that have the same sound but different meanings” and ‘wordplay’ as “making jokes by using words in a clever way” (Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English Edition).

This chapter will first provide a background for the Marx Brothers and describe their impact and influence. It will then describe the plot of *Duck Soup* and justify my choice for analyzing this movie. Furthermore, this chapter will describe the translation procedures for translating puns and wordplay in general by Henrik Gottlieb, Dirk Delabastita and Elena Manca and Daesy Aprile. I will compare their typologies, indicate the similarities and the differences between them and argue which typology I find most useful and which ones I will use in chapter 3. Likewise, I will describe and compare Jan Pedersen’s and Valentina Shiryaeva’s and Georgiana Lungu Badea’s procedures for translating culture-specific puns and wordplay and argue which ones I find the most useful for the analysis of the movies. The selected procedures will provide the theoretical framework which will be used in chapter 3. Finally, I will explain the selected presentation method of the data.

### 2.1 Background of the Marx Brothers and their movies

The Marx Brothers were four Jewish-American comedians called Julius, Leonard, Arthur and Herbert Marx. They were also brothers in real life. Their stage names were Groucho, Chico, Harpo and Zeppo Marx. They were initially successful in vaudeville on Broadway with the musicals *I’ll Say She Is* (1924), *The Cocoanuts* (1925) and *Animal Crackers* (1928). The latter two were also adapted into movies. In 1929 they achieved their Hollywood breakthrough. Between 1929 and 1949 the Marx Brothers acted in thirteen movies, beginning with the film version of *The Cocoanuts* (1929) and ending with *Love Happy* (1949). Zeppo only acted in the first five movies, the last of which was *Duck Soup* (1933).

Unlike their contemporaries, such as Charlie Chaplin and Buster Keaton, the Marx Brothers' humor was mostly verbal as opposed to the slapstick humor of the other two. Although the brothers also made use of slapstick humor – especially Harpo – it is their idiosyncratic use of verbal humor and their absurdism that sets them apart from their contemporaries. Groucho usually played a man of humble origin ambitious to gain access to the higher social circles by conning and fooling people with his use of puns and wordplay; Chico always played a pseudo-Italian con-man, who spoke in broken English and with a stereotypical Italian accent; Harpo always portrayed a mute who frequently worked together with Chico, communicating through a wild variety of gestures, facial expressions and 'speaking' through musical instruments; and in the first five movies Zeppo played the serious role of straight man and occasionally the 'romantic lead'. In several of their most successful movies the actress Margaret Dumont played the rich widow targeted by the brothers, especially Groucho, who always tried to either woo her or insult her, sometimes both at the same time. The brothers often teamed up to work profitable schemes against upper-class villains. Occasionally the brothers would also help a romantic couple.

The humor of the movies – which is often absurd and relies mostly on puns, wordplay and slapstick – also contains many references to contemporary American culture and politics and American history. The movies often satirize the upper-class and highbrow institutions, such as the worlds of art in *Animal Crackers* (1930), universities in *Horse Feathers* (1932), politics in *Duck Soup*, opera in *A Night at the Opera* (1935), and hotel management in *The Cocoanuts* and *A Night in Casablanca* (1946). The brothers manage to gain access to these institutions and proceed to run riot and make a mockery of them and of the upper-class people that inhabit and run them.

The Marx Brothers have always been a very influential comedy team and many of their movies have been highly acclaimed: *Duck Soup* and *A Night at the Opera* appeared on the American Film Institute's list of the 100 greatest movies of all time and were inducted in the Library of Congress's National Film Registry. Those two movies also appeared on the American Film Institute's list of the 100 funniest movies of all time, as did *Monkey Business* (1931), *Horse Feathers* (1932) and *A Day at the Races* (1937). The Marx Brothers were also on the American Film Institute's list of the 100 greatest Hollywood stars, being the only group thus honored. Furthermore, the Marx Brothers were a major influence on later comedians and comedy groups, such as Woody Allen, Jerry Seinfeld, Steve Martin, Robin Williams, Monty Python and Saturday Night Live. Writers such as Thomas Pynchon, Jack Kerouac, E.L. Doctorow and Allen Ginsberg all made references to them in their books (Mills



2) and they were an acknowledged influence on Eugene Ionesco, and a possible influence on Bertolt Brecht (Gardner 8). Due to the movies' reliance on puns and wordplay, in particular culture-specific puns and wordplay, and their critical acclaim as some of the best pun- and wordplay-inspired comedies of all time, it makes them an excellent case study for analyzing the Dutch subtitles of movies with puns and wordplay, including culture-specific ones.

## 2.2 Plot and relevance of *Duck Soup*

Before analyzing the puns and wordplay in the third chapter, I will first describe the plot of *Duck Soup* and explain why I have chosen to analyze this movie in detail in chapter 3. My analysis in the third chapter will only focus in detail on *Duck Soup*, but I will also give examples from *Animal Crackers*, *Horse Feathers*, *A Night at the Opera*, *At the Circus* and *A Night in Casablanca* for certain types of puns and wordplay of which *Duck Soup* does not provide enough examples. I will only give a short description of those movies in the third chapter if it is necessary in order to understand the jokes.

In *Duck Soup* a man called Rufus T. Firefly (Groucho) is appointed dictator of the fictitious country Freedonia by the rich widow Gloria Teasdale (Margaret Dumont). Ambassador Trentino (Louis Calhern) of neighboring country Sylvania sends two spies, Chicolini (Chico) and Pinky (Harpo) to infiltrate his administration and undermine him. Fireflies proves to be a very ineffective leader and declares war on Sylvania for the most frivolous reasons. Freedonia eventually wins the war.

*Duck Soup* is a satire of the real-life dictatorships of Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini in the 1930s and the 1940s. The latter even banned the movie in his country. The movie underperformed at the box office and initially received lukewarm reviews, but it was later rediscovered in the 1960s. The movie is now regarded as a masterpiece (Grochowski 59) and has been inducted in the Library of Congress's National Film Registry and has been included in the American Film Institute's list of the 100 greatest movies of all time. I have chosen to analyze *Duck Soup* in detail in this thesis because it is a perfect example of the type of humor that the Marx Brothers are famous for and because it provides so many examples of puns and wordplay, including culture-specific puns and wordplay.

## 2.3 Methods for analyzing the movies

In this section I will first describe the procedures for translating puns and wordplay in general. I will compare and contrast the procedures of Dirk Delabastita, Henrik Gottlieb and Elena Manca and Daesy Aprile and argue who has provided the best procedures for analyzing the puns and wordplay in Marx Brothers movies. The criteria I use to select the best procedures are: the procedures have to be designed specifically for audiovisual texts and the method has to cover essential characteristics of the puns and wordplay. Later on I will also describe the procedures for translating puns and wordplay containing culture-specific items. I will compare and contrast the definitions of Jan Pedersen with those of Georgiana Lungu Badea and Valentina Shiryaeva and argue which ones are the most suitable for my case study. Besides describing the procedures for translating puns and wordplay, including culture-specific ones, I will also sum up the types of jokes that exist in comedies and that a translator needs to keep in mind according to Patrick Zabalbeascoa.

### 2.3.1 Types of wordplay and procedures for translating puns and wordplay

When analyzing the subtitles of the Marx Brothers movies it is essential to identify the types of wordplay that exist as well as all the procedures a subtitler can use for translating puns and wordplay. Dirk Delabastita names four types of wordplay: (Williamson & Pedro Ricoy 169):

Homonymy	“Same sound and spelling”
Homophony	“Same sound but different spelling”
Homography	“Different sounds but same spelling”
Paronymy	“Slight differences in both sound and spelling”

Henrik Gottlieb mentions the same four types of wordplay (homonymy, homophony, homography and paronymy) and subdivides homonymy into three aspects (170):

Lexical
Collocational
Phrasal

Gottlieb, Delabastita (172) and Elena Manca and Daesy Aprile (Manca & Aprile 158-159) provide the following procedures for translating puns and non-puns. Delabastita's procedures were primarily designed for the analysis of monosemiotic texts (e.g. literary texts), although they have also been applied for the analysis of puns and wordplay in audiovisual texts (e.g. movies) (Williamson & Pedro Ricoy 172). Gottlieb's and Manca and Aprile's strategies, on the other hand, were designed specifically for the analysis of puns and wordplay in audiovisual texts. I will provide a chart below to sum up their translation procedures and show the similarities and differences between them. As can also be seen in the chart below, sometimes they list procedures that do not have an equivalent in the other models.

Dirk Delabastita	Henrik Gottlieb	Elena Manca and Daesy Aprile
ST pun to TT pun	Adapt to the local setting, to maintain humorous effect	The substitution of verbally expressed humor (VEH) in the Source Language (SL) with an example of VEH in the Target Language (TL)
ST pun to TT non-pun	Replace with non-wordplay	The replacement of the SL VEH with an idiomatic expression in the TL
ST pun to TT literally translated pun	Render verbatim, with or without humorous effect	-
ST pun to related rhetorical device	-	-
ST pun to omission	Replace with non-wordplay  Do not render, using the space for neighboring dialogue	The replacement of the SL VEH with an idiomatic expression in the TL
ST non-pun to TT pun not present in ST	Insert in a different textual position, where the target language allows	The replacement of the SL VEH with an example of compensatory VEH elsewhere in the text
ST non-pun to TT	Insert in a different textual	The replacement of the SL

compensatory pun	position, where the target language allows	VEH with an example of compensatory VEH elsewhere in the text
Addition of editorial techniques, such as footnotes, endnotes or translator's forewords	Not applicable to translations of audiovisual texts	Not applicable to translations of audiovisual texts

What is notable from the chart above is that there are many similarities between the different models, but also slight differences. Delabastita is more specific in his focus solely on puns, whereas Gottlieb and Manca and Aprile choose to focus on the broader category of wordplay. Furthermore, Delabastita's translation procedures are also more specific than Gottlieb's and Manca and Aprile's: for example, Delabastita provides the separate procedures of 'ST pun to TT non-pun' and 'ST pun to omission', whereas Manca and Aprile only provide the procedure 'the replacement of the SL VEH with an idiomatic expression in the TL', which encompasses both of Delabastita's procedures. Gottlieb's 'replace with non-wordplay' can also belong in both categories, although Gottlieb also provides the separate procedure of 'do not render, using the space for neighboring dialogue'. Unlike Manca and Aprile, Delabastita makes it clear that there is a difference between a pun that is turned into a non-pun and a pun that is completely omitted and replaced with different text. Furthermore, Delabastita provides the separate procedures of 'ST non-pun to TT pun not present in ST' and 'ST non-pun to TT compensatory pun'. Delabastita makes a clear difference between the two procedures: with the first procedure he means that the translator comes up with a pun in a place where a pun is not present in the source text, and with the second he indicates that the subtitler tries to compensate for turning a previous pun into a non-pun by coming up with a new pun that is not present at that point in the ST (Delabastita 134).<sup>2</sup> Gottlieb and Manca and Aprile, on the other hand, only provide a single translation procedure: 'insert in a different textual position where the target language allows' and 'the replacement of the SL VEH with an example of compensatory VEH elsewhere in the text'. As Gottlieb, unlike Delabastita, never explains his procedures in any of his articles, this perhaps indicates that he believes that a translator can only compensate for the loss of wordplay by putting it in a different place in the text, and that

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<sup>2</sup> In this article Delabastita defines his own translation procedures, although he gives his procedures different names than the ones given above. I have decided to use the names for his procedures defined in Williamson and Pedro Ricoy's article, because I find them clearer than his previous names presented in this article.

a translator cannot come up with a new pun or wordplay that is not meant to compensate for the loss. Manca and Aprile also seem to believe that a subtitler can only come up with compensatory wordplay. Even though Delabastita's model was designed primarily for the analysis of literary texts, it is also very useful for analyzing subtitles, due to its precise analysis of the translation procedures of puns, as I have described above.

Gottlieb's and Manca and Aprile's procedures, on the other hand, were designed specifically for analyzing subtitles. Their models are very similar, however Gottlieb's procedures are more detailed than Manca and Aprile's: for example, he provides the separate translation procedures 'replace with non-wordplay' and 'do not render, using the space for neighboring dialogue', whereas Manca and Aprile only provide the procedure 'the replacement of the SL VEH with an idiomatic expression in the TL'. Gottlieb shows that there is also a difference between wordplay that is replaced with non-wordplay in the same sentence and wordplay that is not rendered at all and replaced with different dialogue, whereas Manca and Aprile do not make this distinction. Unlike Gottlieb, Manca and Aprile also have no equivalent for 'render verbatim, with or without humorous effect'. Since Gottlieb's model was designed specifically for the analysis of subtitles and because he focuses on the broader category of wordplay, unlike Delabastita's narrower category of puns, Gottlieb's model will also be applied in the next chapter. The difference between Gottlieb's 'insert in a different textual position, where the target language allows' and Delabastita's similar 'ST non-pun to TT pun not present in the ST', is that Gottlieb's procedure focuses on wordplay instead of puns. Furthermore, it could also mean that Gottlieb believes that the translator merely inserts wordplay in a different textual position instead of coming up with a pun in the position where there is no pun at all in the ST. Gottlieb's 'render verbatim, with or without humorous effect' is especially important, because it means that a subtitler has come up with an almost word-for-word translation that may or may not retain the humorous effect of the original. I will use 'render verbatim, with or without humorous effect' instead of Delabastita's similar 'ST pun to TT literally translated pun', because Gottlieb makes it clearer than Delabastita that not all the nearly word-for-word translations have to be humorous.

In contrast to Gottlieb's and Delabastita's models, Manca and Aprile's model overall provides more general categories than their models. As the chart above shows, Manca and Aprile only provide three different translation procedures. However, their procedure 'the substitution of VEH humor in the SL with an example of VEH in the TL' proves very useful for this thesis: unlike Delabastita's 'ST pun to TT pun' it focuses on the broader category of verbal humor that is not always a pun, but still a certain form of wordplay. It is also different

from Gottlieb’s ‘adapt to the local setting, to maintain humorous effect’, because it focuses on general wordplay that is replaced with general wordplay, whereas Gottlieb’s procedure focuses only on wordplay that has been adapted to the local setting.

As I have argued above, Delabastita’s, Gottlieb’s and Manca and Aprile’s models are all very useful for analyzing examples of the translation of puns and wordplay. Therefore, I will integrate the three models, making use of procedures from all three models for my analysis, and I will select the most precise translation procedure for each individual example. Lee Williamson and Raquel de Pedro Ricoy also combined the models of Gottlieb and Delabastita in their own analysis, which shows that the different models can all be used together, and thus I have made the same choice (Williamson & Pedro Ricoy 172).

### 2.3.2 Strategies and procedures for dealing with culture-specific words

In addition to establishing a theoretical framework for translating puns and wordplay in particular, it is also necessary to establish a typology for translating culture-specific words and also to identify the types of jokes that appear in comedies. Patrick Zabalbeascoa mentions that the following types of jokes often occur (Zabalbeascoa 251-254) :

International or binational jokes	A joke that works for both nations.
National-culture-and-institutions jokes	National, cultural or institutional references that have to be adapted to retain the humorous effect.
National-sense-of-humor jokes	Jokes that rely on a type of humor that is more popular in one country than in others.
Language-dependent jokes	“Jokes that depend on the features of natural language for their effect.”
Visual jokes	Jokes derived from what we see on screen or jokes that are the visually coded version of a linguistic joke.
Complex jokes	Combines several of the above-mentioned types.

In addition to establishing the types of jokes that occur in comedies it is also crucial to determine the procedures for translating culture-specific words. Jan Pedersen has given several translation procedures for dealing with culture-specific words, which he refers to as ‘Extra-linguistic Cultural References’ (ECRs). His procedures were designed primarily for subtitling, which makes his model perfect for this thesis. Although he does not deal directly with translating puns, his translation procedures are still very useful, for they describe the procedures that translators apply when translating puns and reveal whether the translation is mostly a ‘foreignizing’ or a ‘domesticating’ translation. He mentions the following procedures (Pedersen 74-76):

Retention	The translator has retained the culture-specific word in his translation.
Direct translation	The ECR is directly translated.
Specification	The translator has added more information about the word in his translation.
Substitution	A culture-specific words is substituted for a different culture-specific word.
Generalization	The TT word is made less specific than the ST ECR.
Omission	The culture-specific word is completely omitted in the translation.

‘Retention’, ‘direct translation’ and ‘specification’ are source-oriented strategies; ‘substitution’, ‘generalization’ and ‘omission’ are target-oriented strategies (Pedersen 74-75).

All the translation procedures described by Jan Pedersen are very important for this thesis, since they were directly designed to help subtitlers who have to translate culture-specific words. Other theorists, like Valentina Shiryayeva and Georgiana Lungu Badea, have also provided procedures for dealing with culture-specific words (Shiryayeva and Lungu Badea 886). In the chart below I will compare their translation procedures to Pedersen’s and show the similarities between their procedures:

Jan Pedersen	Valentina Shiryayeva and Georgiana Lungu Badea
Retention	Borrowing the culturally marked word

Direct translation	-
Specification	-
Substitution	Using a neutral hypernym or a functional equivalent in the target language
Generalization	Using a neutral hypernym or a functional equivalent in the target language
Omission	Omitting the word in question, leaving the meaning understood from the context

What can be seen from the chart is that Shiryayeva's and Lungu Badea's translation procedures are less specific and more general than Pedersen's. Therefore, Pedersen's translation procedures will be used in the next chapter. The next chapter will also make use of Patrick Zabalbeascoa's typology of jokes that exist in comedies as discussed above.

#### 2.4 Methodology for analyzing the subtitles in chapter 3

In Chapter 3 I will provide a transcript of several of the puns and wordplay in *Duck Soup*. I will also give a few examples from other Marx Brothers movies for certain categories of puns and wordplay of which *Duck Soup* does not provide enough examples. The complete transcript of all the puns and wordplay in *Duck Soup*, as well as the few examples from the other movies will be included in the appendix. The puns and wordplay will be divided into several different categories: puns and wordplay based on ambiguities in language; puns and wordplay relating to English expressions and phrases; culture-specific puns and wordplay; sexually suggestive puns and wordplay; and visual puns. Since some examples can belong to more than one category I will make a choice in which category I will include them, based on which elements are the most dominant. I will first count those examples as part of the category I have put them in and later count them as part of the overall translation. Before I analyze the examples of the separate categories I will first provide a chart of the overall translation and the translation procedures and how often the subtitles remain faithful to my criteria of a successful translation and to the GTVH. I will also provide charts for the separate categories.

For my analysis I will use the parameters of the GTVH and use the same structure as Lee Williamson and Raquel de Pedro Ricoy used in their analysis of the French comedy



*Bienvenue Chez Les Ch'tis*. I will make a chart in which I outline the parameters of the GTVH (language (LA), script opposition (SO), logical mechanism (LM) and narrative strategy (NS)) and compare the original dialogue to the translation. The dialogue will be listed under the parameter 'language'. One of the types of 'logical mechanism' Williamson and Pedro Ricoy focus on is 'cratylism'. 'Cratylism' means: "the assumption that two words or utterances that have the same or similar sounds must have the same meaning" (Williamson & Pedro Ricoy 168). This type frequently shows up in their analysis, and I will focus on it too. In their analysis of *Bienvenue Chez Les Ch'tis* Williamson and Pedro Ricoy removed the parameters target (TA) and situation (SI), because they found them redundant in audiovisual translations (186). I agree that 'situation' is redundant in audiovisual translations, but I will occasionally include the parameter 'target' to make my analysis more thorough. In the chart I will also occasionally apply Delabastita's four types of wordplay.

In my analysis below the charts I will identify the procedures that the subtitlers applied when subtitling the movies. I will integrate the models of Delabastita, Gottlieb and Manca and Aprile and select the most precise procedure for each individual example of puns and wordplay in the movies, because all three models cover different aspects of puns and wordplay, and therefore all of them contain translation procedures that are useful for my analysis. It is not exceptional for translation theorists to combine the models of separate theorists, since Williamson and Pedro Ricoy have also combined the models of Gottlieb and Delabastita in their own analysis (172). Therefore, in my analysis I apply Gottlieb's and Delabastita's models in equal measure and use one of Manca and Aprile's procedures as well.

Furthermore, when analyzing the movies I will focus not only on language, but I will also take the externalities 'image', 'constraints' and 'presupposed knowledge' into account, as discussed in chapter 1. The 'incongruity theory' and Dimitris Asimakoulas's 'norm acceptance'/'norm opposition' dichotomy will also be included in the analysis. Finally, I will also take Patrick Zabalbeascoa's types of jokes, 'priorities' and 'restrictions' and his 'intended comic effect' into account.

Moreover, I will examine whether there are significant differences between the original dialogue and the Dutch subtitles, such as different cultural references, different puns, or omissions of puns or cultural references. When discussing the translation of culture-specific references I will also discuss whether 'foreignization' or 'domestication' is the best strategy for translating the Marx Brothers' culture-specific puns and wordplay and whether certain translations of culture-specific puns and wordplay produce 'culture bumps'.

I will also analyze the question of the translatability of verbal humor and whether several losses of wordplay are due to certain constraints. Moreover, I will also examine whether the Dutch subtitles have accurately reflected Chico's broken English. This is an important part of his character, as Adrián Fuentes Luque has pointed out earlier (Fuentes Luque 300-303).

My analysis will use two different criteria for judging the translation. The first is: does the subtitler manage to find a translation that remains true to the absurdism of the Marx Brothers' humor, to the characters, and to the time in which the movies were made? The second is Asimakoulas's idea of the 'ideal translation': a translation that "shares the same script opposition, the same logical mechanism, the same situation, the same target and the same narrative strategy as the original" (Asimakoulas 824). This will also be an important criterion for analyzing the translation of the wordplay, yet I will also discuss whether this criterion is realistic or not.

### Chapter 3 Analysis

In this chapter I will provide an analysis of the Dutch subtitling of the puns and wordplay in *Duck Soup* and several of the other Marx Brothers movies. A number of examples will be analyzed in-depth to illustrate the way in which the subtitler dealt with the translation of puns and wordplay. I will put the dialogue into charts and use the parameters of the GTVH (language (LA), script opposition (SO), logical mechanism (LM) and narrative strategy (NS)) to compare the original dialogue to the translation. The entire transcript of all the puns and wordplay in *Duck Soup*, as well as the selected examples from other Marx Brothers movies, will be included in the appendix. The puns and wordplay will be divided into several categories: puns and wordplay based on ambiguities in language; puns and wordplay relating to English expressions and phrases; culture-specific puns and wordplay; sexually suggestive puns and wordplay; and visual puns. Most of the puns and wordplay in *Duck Soup* belong to the first two categories. For the examples that could belong to more than one category, I will make a choice in which category to include them, based on the dominant characteristics of the jokes. I will first count them as part of the category I have included them in and later as part of the overall translation. When translating these five types of puns and wordplay a subtitler has to make different translation choices and has to focus on different aspects in the various categories. I will analyze the subtitler's translation patterns not only in the separate categories, but also in the overall translation.

The examples I give will be used to illustrate the point I want to make in this thesis, namely that the puns and wordplay are well translated overall according to the criteria defined in the previous chapters: the subtitler has to come up with a translation that remains true to the absurdism of the Marx Brothers' humor, to the characters, and to the cultural and social context of the time in which the movies were made. Furthermore, I will argue that a good translation does not always have to remain faithful to all the aspects of the GTVH. I will apply all the theories and translation procedures that I have discussed in the previous chapters for my analysis of the subtitles, in particular Dimitris Asimakoulas's 'externalities' and his 'norm acceptance/norm opposition', Patrick Zabalbeascoa's 'equivalence', 'intended comic effect' and his 'priorities', Henrik Gottlieb's type of 'constraints' in translation and Lawrence Venuti's theories of 'foreignization' and 'domestication'. Furthermore, I will also add to the debate about whether wordplay in general is translatable or not in several of the examples that I will discuss below.

### 3.1 Puns and wordplay in *Duck Soup*

The Marx Brothers' jokes belong primarily to Patrick Zabalbeascoa's category of 'language-dependent jokes', although several of them also belong to the categories 'national-culture-and-institutions jokes' and 'visual jokes'. Since *Duck Soup* is a comedy that relies heavily on puns and wordplay, coming up with a translation that conveys the absurdism of the humor is a high priority for the subtitle. I have found forty-seven examples of puns and wordplay in *Duck Soup*. Before analyzing the individual categories of puns and wordplay I will first provide an overview of the translation procedures the subtitle applied and the number of instances of wordplay and how they were translated. I will only include Jan Pedersen's translation procedures for translating culture-specific references in the separate section of culture-specific puns and wordplay, as it merely concerns the translation of culture-specific references and has no bearing on the overall translation of the puns and wordplay.

#### Overall translations of the puns and wordplay in *Duck Soup*

	Faithful to both my criteria and the GTVH	Faithful to my criteria, not the GTVH	Faithful to the GTVH, not to my criteria	Faithful to neither	Total number of examples
Render verbatim, with or without humorous effect	9	0	1	0	10
Insert in a textual different position, where the target language allows	0	1	0	0	1

Replace with non-wordplay	0	0	0	4	4
ST Pun to TT pun	4	6	1	0	11
ST non-pun to TT pun not present in ST	1	0	0	0	1
ST pun to TT non-pun	0	1	0	0	1
The substitution of VEH in the SL with an example of VEH in the TL	3	10	5	1	19
Total number of examples	17	18	7	5	47

What this chart shows is that thirty-five out of forty-seven examples of puns and wordplay in *Duck Soup* remained faithful to the criteria set in this thesis, namely a translation that remains faithful to the characteristic absurdism of the humor and to the social and cultural context of the time when the movies were made. In only twelve out of forty-seven examples the subtitler came up with a translation that was too literal or where the pun or wordplay was lost. This indicates that the subtitling was generally successful and proves that most of the humor of the Marx Brothers is not untranslatable. When looking at the translation procedures in the chart one can see that among the jokes that were ‘rendered verbatim’ nine out of ten examples remained faithful to my criteria of a successful translation and among the jokes that turned an ‘ST pun into a TT pun’ ten out of eleven examples remained faithful to my criteria. Among the examples of ‘VEH humor substituted with VEH humor’ thirteen out of nineteen examples

remained faithful to my criteria. The single examples of ‘wordplay inserted in a different textual position’ and ‘ST pun into TT pun not present in ST’ were both well translated. Whenever the subtitler turned the puns and wordplay into non-wordplay, the translations failed.

In my analysis of the subtitles I tried to use Gottlieb’s translation procedures as often as possible, because his model was designed specifically for the analysis of subtitles, unlike Delabastita’s, and because his model is more detailed than Manca and Aprile’s. However, I use Delabastita’s and Manca and Aprile’s procedures as well, because sometimes their definitions were more accurate, as explained above. I noticed the following pattern: among Gottlieb’s strategies the subtitler almost always used ‘render verbatim’ and ‘replace with non-wordplay’ and only once used ‘insert in a different textual position, where the target language allows’, and among Delabastita’s strategies the subtitler mostly used ‘ST pun to TT pun’ and ‘ST pun to TT non-pun’ and only once used ‘ST non-pun to TT pun not present in ST’. Among Manca and Aprile’s strategies only ‘the substitution of VEH in the SL with an example of VEH in the TL’ was used. This shows that the subtitler usually tried to remain as close to the original dialogue as possible and only tried to come up with different wordplay several times. Furthermore, very few puns and wordplay were omitted.

After having analyzed all the puns and wordplay in *Duck Soup* in all the separate categories I have found the following pattern: the translations in the first two categories that are successful are usually good because they remain faithful to the absurdism of the original, because they occasionally change the types of wordplay due to difference in sounds in Dutch and English, and because they have come up with equivalent Dutch expressions for the English expressions. The translations that are unsuccessful usually failed because they were too literal and because the homophones, homonyms and paronyms in the original sounded less similar in Dutch. The best translations of the culture-specific references in *Duck Soup* were the ones that were ‘domesticated’ instead of foreignized. The ones that were unsuccessful failed because the ‘foreignization’ made them too literal and removed the puns and wordplay entirely in the translation. The best translations of the sexual jokes were the ones in which the sexual connotation of the original was retained or the ones in which the translator came up with a similar sexual connotation. The ones that were unsuccessful were usually unsuccessful because the sexual connotation was lost. Finally, the best translations of the visual jokes were the ones in which the translator took the externality of the ‘image’ into account in his translation and came up with a new pun based on the ‘image’ on screen.

### 3.1.1 Puns and wordplay based on ambiguities in language

I will start with giving several examples of the largest category of puns and wordplay: ‘puns and wordplay based on ambiguities in language’. I will analyze several examples and argue whether I believe the translator has come up with a translation that lives up to my criteria and to the theories of certain translation scholars. First, I will provide a chart with the number of instances of puns and wordplay and how they were translated as well as an overview of the translation procedures the subtitler applied.

Overall translation of the puns and wordplay based on ambiguities in language

	Faithful to my both criteria and the GTVH	Faithful to my criteria, not the GTVH	Faithful to the GTVH, not to my criteria	Faithful to neither	Total number of examples
Render verbatim, with or without humorous effect	6	0	0	0	6
Insert in a different textual position, where the target language allows	0	1	0	0	1
Replace with non-wordplay	0	0	0	2	2
ST pun to TT pun	1	5	1	0	7

The substitution of VEH in the SL with an example of VEH in the TL	0	1	3	1	5
	7	7	4	3	21

What this chart shows is that fourteen out of twenty-one examples remain true to my criteria of a translation that conveys the absurdism of the Marx Brothers' humor, four examples were translated too literally and only three were completely lost in the translation. This indicates that the subtitler either tried to remain as faithful as possible to the original dialogue or tried to come up with new puns and wordplay that accurately conveyed the absurdism of the humor. As can be seen from the chart above, the puns and wordplay that were 'rendered verbatim' or 'inserted in a different textual position' all remained faithful to my criteria of a successful translation as did six out of seven examples that were an 'ST pun turned into a TT pun'. Among the examples of 'VEH humor substituted with VEH humor' only one out of five was well translated and the examples that were replaced with non-wordplay were all unsuccessful.

For this category I will give several examples of translations that I believe are either successful or unsuccessful and argue why, using the GTVH parameters. The examples that I will give are mostly ones that were not literally translated, unless I believe that the literalness of the translation was detrimental to the end result. I will also provide several examples where I believe the puns or wordplay are arguably untranslatable.

One example of an unsuccessful translation is in the scene in which ambassador Trentino of neighboring country Sylvania meets with his two spies Chicolini and Pinky. They were supposed to shadow Firefly, but their account makes it look like they have not shadowed him at all.



	ST	TT
LA	Chicolini: “Sure we shadowed Fire. We shadowed him all day.”  Trentino: “What day was that?”  Chicolini: “Shaddaday.”	Chicolini: “Toch wel, de hele dag.”  Trentino: “Wanneer?”  Chicolini: “Op schaduwdag.”
SO	Day of the week vs. pun based on a day of the week	Day of the week vs. pun based on a day of the week
LM	Cratylism (homophony)	Cratylism (homophony)
NS	Dialogue	Dialogue

In both the original dialogue and the translation Chicolini makes a pun on the word ‘Saturday’, a day of the week, and the verb ‘to shadow’. As can be seen from the chart above, the Dutch translation remains faithful to the aspects of the GTVH. The problem with the Dutch translation, however, is that, while it does remain faithful to the elements of the GTVH, it is overly literal: in the original dialogue ‘saturday’ and ‘shaddaday’ are homophones, but ‘zaterdag’ and ‘schaduwdag’ do not sound nearly as similar in the Dutch translation. Therefore, in this case, I believe the translator should have come up with a less literal translation. This translation is an example of VEH humor in the original substituted with VEH humor in the translation.

On the other hand, in the scene immediately afterwards, there is a good example of a translation that is completely different from the original and not entirely faithful to the GTVH, yet is still a successful translation, because it accurately conveys the absurdism of the Marx Brothers’ humor. In this scene Firefly is holding a cabinet meeting with his ministers. He gets into an argument with the secretary of war.

	ST	TT
LA	<p>Secretary of War: “Gentlemen! Gentlemen! Enough of this. How about taking up the tax?”</p> <p>Firefly: “How about taking up the carpet?”</p> <p>Secretary of War: “I still insist we must take up the tax.”</p> <p>Firefly: “He’s right. You’ve got to take up the <i>tacks</i> before you can take up the carpet.”</p>	<p>Secretary of War: “Zo is het genoeg. We moeten over de belasting praten.”</p> <p>Firefly: “Hebben we het niet allemaal druk?”</p> <p>Secretary of War: “We moeten over de belasting praten.”</p> <p>Firefly: “Juist. Als je het druk hebt, is de belasting al gauw te groot.”</p>
SO	Tax vs. tacks	Tax vs. work pressure
LM	Cratylism (Homophony) and false reasoning	Cratylism (Homonymy) and false reasoning
NS	Dialogue	Dialogue

The ‘norm opposition’ in the original relies on the Secretary of War trying to come up with a policy of raising taxes, whereas Firefly is only interested in putting in a new carpet. What is notable about the Dutch translation is that it is completely different from the original English dialogue: in the translation Firefly’s response to the Secretary’s remark that they should talk about taxes is that he feels he has to work too hard. The wordplay in the translation relies on the ambiguous meaning of the Dutch word ‘belasting’, whereas the English dialogue relies on the similarity of the words ‘tax’ and ‘tacks’. The reason why the translator came up with a completely different translation is probably because there are no similar-sounding Dutch words for the English words ‘tax’ and ‘tacks’. Nevertheless, the subtitler was still able to come up with a translation that retains the characteristic absurdism of the Marx Brothers, even though the script opposition is completely different. The translator has therefore successfully applied Zabalbeascoa’s ‘intended comic effect’. This translation does not use any of Gottlieb’s translation procedures, but it does use Delabastita’s strategy of turning an ST pun into a TT pun.

One example of a pun that is arguably untranslatable is in the scene where Firefly finds out that Trentino is trying to undermine him. Firefly then comes up with a plan to insult him, in the hopes that Trentino will strike him, which would force him to leave the country. Trentino was invited to Mrs. Teasdale’s tea party, but Firefly was not. Firefly goes there anyway, and he finds Trentino making advances towards Mrs. Teasdale. He interrupts them and he himself starts making advances towards her.

	ST	TT
LA	Firefly (to Mrs. Teasdale): “All I can offer you is a Rufus over your head.”	Firefly (to Mrs. Teasdale): “Ik kan u alleen mijn roem bieden.”
SO	Rufus (the name) vs. a roof	None
LM	Cratylysm (paronymy)	None
NS	Dialogue	Dialogue

What can be seen in the chart above is that the pun concerning the similarity of the word ‘roof’ to the name ‘Rufus’ is completely lost. This dialogue is one example of virtually untranslatable verbal humor in the Marx Brothers movies, since it is very difficult to think of a Dutch pun relating to the name ‘Rufus’. This reveals the ‘language-specific constraints’ that subtitlers occasionally face. Furthermore, this example also demonstrates that the GTVH can be very vague and confusing at times: it is unclear from the chart whether there is an SO and an LM in the Dutch translation. This proves that not all jokes can be accurately analyzed by using the GTVH. The translation is an example of wordplay being replaced with non-wordplay.

Another good example of a translation that does not remain faithful to the GTVH, yet still manages to convey the characteristic absurdism of the Marx Brothers is in the scene where Chicolini is on trial after having been captured for sneaking into Firefly’s house to steal Freedonia’s plans of war. In this scene a prosecutor questions Chicolini.

	ST	TT
LA	Prosecutor: “Isn’t it true you tried to sell Freedonia’s secret war code and plans?”	Prosecutor: “Wou u niet Freedonia’s geheime oorlogscode en plannen verkopen?”

	Chicolini: “Sure, I sold the code and two pair of plans.”	Chicolini: “Zeker, en met de code verkocht ik mijn kop.”
SO	Plans of war vs. coat and pants	Selling (literal) vs. selling (metaphorical)
LM	Cratylism (paronymy)	Cratylism and false logic
NS	Dialogue	Dialogue

The ‘norm opposition’ in the original dialogue relies on the prosecutor seriously questioning Chicolini about selling state secrets and Chicolini then coming up with a pun that strongly resembles the words ‘a coat and two pair of pants’. Chicolini’s response in both the original dialogue and the translation is an example of Jeroen Vandaele’s ‘affirmative superiority’, since he shows that he is not intimidated by the prosecutor. For the Dutch translation the translator came up with a Dutch pun based on the verb ‘verkopen’. Even though the translation does not remain faithful to all aspects of the GTVH, I believe it is still a good translation, because the translator has come up a new pun in the translation that remains faithful to the point of the original version and to the absurdism of the Marx Brothers. According to Manca and Aprile’s strategies, the translator has substituted VEH in the ST with VEH in the TT.

In the same scene, however, there are also several examples of puns and wordplay that remain faithful to the GTVH, yet are translated too literally. One of them happens when Chicolini asks Firefly a riddle.

	ST	TT
LA	<p>Chicolini: “Now I ask you one. What is it has a trunk but no key, weighs two thousand pounds and lives in the circus?”</p> <p>Prosecutor: “That’s irrelevant.”</p> <p>Chicolini: “Irrelevant? That’s-a the answer. There’s a whole lotta irrelevants in the circus.”</p>	<p>Chicolini: “Wat heeft een slurf maar geen tanden, weegt 2000 pond en...”</p> <p>Prosecutor: “Irrelevant.”</p> <p>Chicolini: “Olifant! Dat antwoord is goed. In het circus zijn veel olifanten.”</p>

SO	Irrelevant vs. elephant	Irrelevant vs. elephant
LM	Cratylism (paronymy)	Cratylism (paronymy)
NS	Riddle & Dialogue	Riddle & Dialogue

The problem with this translation is that in English ‘irrelevant’ and ‘elephant’ are paronyms, but the Dutch ‘irrelevant’ and ‘olifant’ do not sound as much alike. This makes the translation unintentionally nonsensical. Therefore, I believe this is an example where the translator should have made a less literal translation in order to retain the absurdism. Furthermore, it is rather strange that the subtitler translated ‘irrelevant’ with ‘olifant’. Had the subtitler translated it as ‘irrelevant’, then the pun would have been retained. Another notable aspect of the subtitles is that Chicolini’s ungrammatical ‘what is it has a trunk’ and ‘that’s-a the answer’ in the original is changed into the more grammatical ‘wat heeft’ en ‘dat antwoord is goed’ in the Dutch translation. The subtitler has failed to retain this crucial aspect of the Marx Brothers’ humor. The same translation problems in this example can be found in the next example immediately afterwards, which has been included in the appendix. This translation is an example of VEH humor substituted with VEH humor.

What all the examples that I have given above show, is that coming up with a translation that conveys the absurdism of the Marx Brothers’ humor is more important than making a literal translation or remaining faithful to the GTVH. In this category I have found the following pattern: the examples that are well translated succeed because they can be translated almost literally and also remain true to the aspects of the GTVH. One example is the translation of ‘A standing army’ in the appendix. The examples that live up to my criteria also succeed because the subtitler has taken the ‘intended comic effect’ into account and retained the forms of ‘comic superiority’ of the original. Another reason why the translations succeed is because the subtitler has come up with a new pun in the translation that retains the absurdism of the original, such as in the example above of ‘Sold the code and two pair of plans’ and the example of ‘An abject figure’ in the appendix. Once the subtitler had to change the homophone into a homonym in the example above of ‘Taking up the tax’ in order to make a good translation. Finally, there is also one example that shows that an expression can be translated literally in order to retain the absurdism of the original, such as the example of ‘Crept into our machine gun nest and laid an egg’ in the appendix.

The translations that are less successful usually fail because they are translated literally and lose their comic effect or because the homonyms, paronyms and homophones in the

original sound less similar in the Dutch version. Examples are the translation of ‘That’s irrelevant’ above and the translation of ‘That testimony we can eliminate’ and ‘Tanks. You’re welcome’ in the appendix. Sometimes the translator removed the homophone, such as in the example of ‘If gas runs out, get ethyl’ in the appendix. Another reason why the translations sometimes fail is because the puns and wordplay are turned into non-puns and non-wordplay, such as in the example above of ‘A Rufus over your head’ and ‘Have you got a license’ in the appendix. Overall, however, most examples in this category were well translated.

### 3.1.2 Puns and wordplay relating to English expressions and phrases

The second largest category of puns and wordplay is ‘puns and wordplay relating to English expressions and phrases’. I will again discuss several examples that I believe are well translated. However, this time I will also give a few examples that remain faithful to both my criteria and the GTVH, because they illustrate certain important aspects of humor in general and certain aspects that I believe the subtitles have to convey. First I will provide a chart showing how the puns and wordplay in this category were translated, as well as the translation procedures that the subtitler applied.

Overall translation of the puns and wordplay relating to English expressions and phrases

	Faithful to both my criteria and to the GTVH	Faithful to my criteria, not the GTVH	Faithful to the GTVH, not to my criteria	Total number of examples
Render verbatim, with or without humorous effect	2	0	0	2
The substitution of VEH in the original with VEH in the subtitles	3	3	1	7
ST pun to TT	3	1	0	4

pun				
ST non-pun to TT pun not present in ST	1	0	0	1
	9	4	1	14

What the chart above shows is that thirteen out of fourteen examples lived up to my criteria of a successful translation of the Marx Brothers movies. It also demonstrates that the subtitler often tried to translate the jokes as literally as possible or tried to come up with an equivalent that was still very close to the original. There are no examples of puns and wordplay that were untranslated. What can be seen is that only one example of ‘VEH humor to VEH humor’ failed to live up to my criteria of a successful translation. All the other examples were well translated.

The first example of a successful translation that I will discuss in this section is at the beginning of the movie when Firefly has just been appointed leader of Freedonia. He is approached by Mrs. Teasdale, the woman responsible for his appointment. What follows are a succession of puns, two of which will be presented separately below.

	ST	TT
LA	<p>Mrs. Teasdale: “I’ve sponsored your appointment, because I feel you are the most able statesman in all Freedonia.”</p> <p>Firefly: “Well that covers a lot of ground. Say, you cover a lot of ground yourself. You better beat it or they’re gonna tear you down and put up an office building where you’re standing.”</p>	<p>Mrs. Teasdale: “Ik ondersteun uw benoeming omdat u hier de kundigste staatsman bent.”</p> <p>Firefly: “Dat is een breed terrein. Maar u bent ook nogal breed. Ga maar liever weg, voordat ze u slopen en er kantoren neerzetten.”</p>
SO	Cover vs. cover	Broad vs. fat
LM	Cratylism (collocational	Cratylism (collocational

	homonymy) and false reasoning	homonymy) and false reasoning
TA	Mrs. Teasdale	Mrs. Teasdale
NS	Dialogue	Dialogue

	ST	TT
LA	Firefly: “You can leave in a taxi. If you can’t leave in a taxi, you can leave in a huff. If that’s too soon you can leave in a minute and a huff.”	Firefly: “Neem een taxi. Komt er geen, vertrek dan op lange tenen.”
SO	In a huff vs. a minute and a half	Literal vs. figurative Dutch expression
LM	Cratylism (paronymy)	Cratylism and false logic
NS	Dialogue	Dialogue

The dialogue in the first chart relies on the ‘norm acceptance’ of Mrs. Teasdale telling Firefly why she supports him as leader of the country and Firefly’s ‘norm opposition’ of first accepting her compliment and then insulting her. These aspects are all retained in the subtitles. The translator managed to find a good equivalent for the double meaning of ‘cover a lot of ground’ by translating it into the Dutch expression ‘breed terrein’. Since the ‘norm acceptance’ and ‘norm opposition’ of the original dialogue are retained in the subtitles and because the subtitler managed to come up with a good equivalent joke, I believe this is a satisfactory translation. This translation turns an ST pun into a TT pun.

The pun of ‘huff’ and ‘minute and a huff’ in the second chart is translated differently. In this context ‘Op lange tenen’ can either mean to literally leave ‘on long toes’ or ‘be irritated’. The VEH humor in the original is replaced with VEH humor in the translation. I believe this is a good translation, because a literal translation would have been unintentionally nonsensical and unfunny.

Adrián Fuentes Luque identifies these examples as a challenge for subtitlers due to the speed of Groucho’s dialogue: his dialogue is fourteen seconds long and the Spanish subtitles consist of nine lines which can only appear on screen for one-and-a-half seconds. He claims that this



is one example where the space and time constraints in subtitling are evident (Fuentes Luque 184-185). However, as I have shown above, the Dutch subtitler was able to come up with good translations for the above-mentioned puns and wordplay, which shows that a good subtitler can make a successful translation of the Marx Brothers' characteristic puns and wordplay within the space and time constraints of subtitles. Therefore, the 'media-specific constraints' of the subtitles were not a problem for the subtitler.

In the same scene Firefly meets Vera Marcal, who is secretly working for Trentino and he says the following to her when she flirts with him. This dialogue is good example of how the subtitler succeeded in coming up with an equivalent Dutch expression for an English expression as well as the wordplay based around the expressions.

	ST	TT
LA	Firefly: "I could dance with you till the cows came home. On second thought, I'd rather dance with the cows till you came home."	Firefly: Ik zou met u kunnen dansen totdat de haan kraait. Of beter dans ik met de haan en u gaat kraaien.
SO	Expression vs. expression turned around	Expression vs. expression turned around
LM	False Logic	False Logic
TA	Vera Marcal	Vera Marcal
NS	Dialogue	Dialogue

The dialogue relies on the 'norm opposition' of Firefly first complimenting Vera Marcal by using a phrase saying that he would like to dance with her for a long time and then turning the phrase around by insulting her and saying that he does not want to dance with her. The subtitles have accurately rendered the 'norm opposition' of the original dialogue. The translator managed to find a suitable Dutch equivalent for the English expression 'till the cows come home', by using the expression 'totdat de haan kraait'. Likewise, in both the original and the translation, Firefly turns the expression around. I believe that choosing an equivalent Dutch expression is better than making a literal translation, because a literal translation would have been unfunny and unintentionally nonsensical. For all the above-

mentioned reasons, I believe this is a good translation. The VEH humor in the original is replaced with VEH humor in the subtitles.

In a scene which I have also discussed earlier, ambassador Trentino meets Chicolini and Pinky, the two people he sends to spy on Firefly, and asks them whether they have been trailing him. The translation of the following dialogue is a good example of the ‘incongruity theory’ and of how the subtitler manages to retain the characteristic absurdism of the Marx Brothers’ humor and remain faithful to the GTVH.

	ST	TT
LA	Chicolini: “Have we been trailing Firefly? Why, my partner’s got a nose just like a blood hound.”  Trentino: “Oh, really?”  Chicolini: “Yeah, and the rest of his face don’t look so good either.”	Chicolini: “En hoe! Mijn partner heeft een neus van een bloedhond.”  Trentino: “Echt?”  Chicolini: “En verder ziet z’n gezicht er ook niet mooi uit.”
SO	Expression vs. literal	Expression vs. literal
LM	Cratylism (phrasal homonymy)	Cratylism (phrasal homonymy)
TA	Pinky	Pinky
NS	Dialogue	Dialogue

Chicolini’s remark has a double meaning: it can mean that Pinky is very good at spying on Firefly, or that Pinky’s nose literally looks like the nose of a blood hound. This is an example of the ‘incongruity theory’: when Chicolini says that Pinky has a nose like a blood hound, we think that he means that Pinky is very good at his job, but instead he means to say that Pinky has an ugly nose. The joke is rendered verbatim with humorous effect. Since the translation remains faithful not only to the GTVH, but also to the point and the absurdism of the original, I believe it is a good translation.

In the scene immediately afterwards Firefly is holding a cabinet meeting with his ministers. As I will argue below, the subtitler has come up with a very interesting translation.

	ST	TT
LA	Secretary of War: “That’s the last straw. I resign! I wash my hands of the whole business.”  Firefly: “Good idea. You can wash your neck too.”	Secretary of War: “Dit is de druppel! Ik treed af! Ik was mijn handen in onschuld.”  Firefly: “Goed idee. Was ook uw hals.”
SO	Wash vs. wash	Wash vs. wash
LM	Cratylism (phrasal homonymy)	Cratylism (phrasal homonymy)
TA	Secretary of War	Secretary of War
NS	Dialogue	Dialogue

The joke in the original dialogue and in the translation is that the Secretary of War uses a saying, whereas Firefly uses the verb ‘to wash’ literally. What is notable about the original dialogue and the translation is that the phrase ‘wash your hands’ exists in both Dutch and English and that ‘wash your hands’ and ‘wash your neck’ can therefore be translated literally. Furthermore, what is also noteworthy is that the subtitler has applied the strategy of using an ST pun in the place of a non-pun in the original with the Secretary’s remark ‘Dit is de druppel’. Considering that the pun afterwards relies on the verb ‘to wash’, I believe this is a very clever addition. Since the translation not only remains faithful to both the GTVH and the characteristic absurdism of the Marx Brothers, and because the subtitler came up with a pun that was not present in the original dialogue, I believe this is a very good translation. The translation of ‘the last straw’ is an example of an ST non-pun into TT pun not present in the original.

In the translation of the puns and wordplay in the second category I have found the following pattern: the successful translations were effective because the subtitler managed to retain the meaning of the original, because the translator came up with puns and wordplay that are slightly different but still very similar to the original, and because the translations remain faithful to the absurdism of the original. Sometimes the translator had to use a modulation to translate certain expressions, for example in the translation of ‘I can’t make head or tail out of

this' as 'Ik kan er geen touw aan vastknopen' in the translation. In the examples I discussed above the translator also managed to retain the 'norm acceptance' and 'norm opposition', the comic incongruity, and also once came up with a pun not present in the original dialogue. What can be seen from the example above of 'A minute and a huff' is that the subtitler had to change the paronym of the original into a Dutch expression. Furthermore, in the successful translations the subtitler also managed to come up with good equivalent Dutch expressions, such as in the example above of 'till the cows come home' and in the examples in the appendix, such as 'I'll teach you' and 'A change of heart'. Furthermore, the examples above and in the appendix demonstrate that the homonyms in the original dialogue can often be translated literally or be replaced with a different homonym in the translation. Moreover, the best translations are the ones in which the translator manages to come up with a different pun in the translation, such as the example of 'Join a club' in the appendix. What can be seen in the analysis is that the SO sometimes had to be changed, but, with the exception of 'a minute and a huff', the LM was mostly the same in the translation. The less successful translations usually failed because the idiomatic expressions in the original were not translated into Dutch idiomatic expressions, as can be seen in the example of 'What's the idea' in the appendix.

### 3.1.3 Culture-specific puns and wordplay

The third category of puns and wordplay that I will discuss is 'culture-specific puns and wordplay'. *Duck Soup* contains several jokes that include culture-specific references. Patrick Zabalbeascoa refers to these jokes as 'national-culture-and-institutions jokes'. I found six culture-specific references, one of which is a reference which I will discuss below in the fourth category, 'sexually suggestive puns and wordplay', since there are otherwise very few examples in that category. I have included this joke in the second chart below, but not in the first chart.

Other Marx Brothers movies also contain instances of culture-specific puns and wordplay. Since *Duck Soup* only contains a few instances, I believe it is necessary to give examples from other Marx Brothers movies as well. I will give examples from *Animal Crackers*, *A Night at the Opera* and *At the Circus*, some of which I will discuss below and other which I will include in the appendix. First I will provide charts showing how the puns and wordplay were translated in *Duck Soup* and the other movies. For this category I will also apply Jan Pedersen's translation procedures for translating culture-specific words.

Overall translation of the culture-specific puns and wordplay in *Duck Soup*

	Faithful to my criteria, not to the GTVH	Faithful to GTVH, not to my criteria	Faithful to neither	Total number of examples
Render verbatim, with or without humorous effect	0	1	0	1
Replace with non-wordplay	0	0	1	1
The substitution of VEH humor in the original with VEH humor in the subtitles	2	0	0	2
ST pun to TT non-pun	0	0	1	1
	2	1	2	5

	Faithful to my criteria, not to the GTVH	Faithful to GTVH, not to my criteria	Faithful to neither	Total number of examples
Omission	0	0	2	2
Substitution	2	0	0	2
Retention	0	2	0	2
Total number of examples	2	2	2	6

	Render verbatim, with or without humorous effect	Replace with non-wordplay	The substitution of VEH humor in the original with VEH humor in the subtitles	ST pun into TT non-pun	Total number of examples
Omission	0	1	0	1	2
Substitution	0	0	2	0	2
Retention	1	0	1	0	2
Total number of examples	1	1	3	1	6

Overall translation of the selected examples of cultures-specific puns and wordplay from the other movies

	Faithful to both my criteria and the GTVH	Faithful to my criteria, not to the GTVH	Faithful to the GTVH, but not to my criteria	Faithful to neither	Total number of examples
Render verbatim, with or without humorous effect	1	0	1	0	2
ST pun to TT pun	1	1	0	0	2
ST pun to TT non-pun	0	0	0	1	1
Total number of examples	2	1	1	1	5

	Faithful to both my criteria and the GTVH	Faithful to my criteria, not to the GTVH	Faithful to the GTVH, but not to my criteria	Faithful to neither	Total number of examples
Retention	2	0	1	0	3
Substitution	0	1	0	0	1
Omission	0	0	0	1	1
Total number of examples	2	1	1	1	5

What the first chart shows is that the subtitler twice remained faithful to both my criteria and the GTVH and once made a translation that was too literal. Only two references were completely lost. The two translations of culture-specific references that were successfully translated were both an example of ‘VEH humor substituted with VEH humor’. The single examples that were ‘rendered verbatim’, ‘replaced with non-wordplay’ or which turned an ‘ST pun into a TT non-pun’ were all unsuccessful. What can be seen from the second chart is that two culture-specific references were omitted, two were substituted with Dutch culture-specific references and two were retained. Only the examples that were ‘substituted’ were successfully translated. Furthermore, what is notable is that the subtitler did not use a ‘direct translation’, ‘specification’ or ‘generalization’ in *Duck Soup*. I believe the reason why the subtitler never used a ‘specification’ is due to the media-specific constraints of the subtitles: a ‘specification’ means adding extra information about the culture-specific word, whereas subtitles have space and time constraints, which makes it difficult to add extra information.

What can be seen from the charts above for the examples from the other movies is that the subtitler remained faithful to both my criteria and the GTVH in three out of five examples, once came up with an overly literal translation and only once omitted the pun. Furthermore, the subtitler tried to retain the references as often as possible and only once came up with a ‘substitution’. Again, the subtitler never used the translation procedures ‘direct translation’, ‘specification’ or ‘generalization’ in the subtitles. Among the three examples that were successfully translated one of them was ‘rendered verbatim’ and two were an ‘ST pun turned into a TT pun’. Moreover, two out three examples that were ‘retained’ were well translated, as was the example that was substituted with different cultural references. In the unsuccessful

translations the references were either retained and the translation was too literal or the reference was omitted.

When analyzing the culture-specific references, I noticed that the subtitler of *Duck Soup* applied no overall strategy of ‘foreignization’ or ‘domestication’ to the movie, but used both strategies depending on which works better for certain jokes. This means that the subtitler tried to apply Zabalbeascoa’s ‘intended comic effect’ as often as possible. In my analysis of *Duck Soup* I will argue that to remain faithful to the absurdism of the humor it is better to domesticate the culture-specific references in *Duck Soup* than to foreignize them.

The first culture-specific reference in *Duck Soup* that I will discuss is in the scene when Trentino tries to apologize to Firefly for insulting him. Firefly seems to have forgiven Trentino and he says the following.

	ST	TT
LA	Firefly: “Well, maybe I am a little headstrong. But I come by it honestly. My father was a little headstrong. My mother was a little Armstrong. The headstrongs married the armstrongs and that’s why darkies were born.”	Firefly: “Misschien heb ik een wat harde kop, dat zit in de familie. Mijn vader had een harde kop. Mijn moeder was een harde noot. De harde kop en de harde noot trouwden met elkaar.”
SO	Headstrong (being stubborn) vs. armstrong (strength)	Stubborn person vs. a tough person
LM	False reasoning	False reasoning
NS	Dialogue	Dialogue

The above-mentioned dialogue contains a rather controversial intertextual reference to and a parody of a satirical anti-racist song called “That’s Why Darkies Were Born” written by Ray Henderson and Lew Brown for a Broadway musical called *George White’s Scandals* (1931). The point of Firefly’s reference to the song is to ridicule the false logic of the song. The reference is omitted in the Dutch subtitles, presumably because the joke is controversial nowadays. This translation is an example of Patrick Zabalbeascoa’s ‘equivalence not regarded’: humor that is nowadays socially unacceptable will not be translated. Considering



the controversial content of the joke, I find the omission of the cultural reference understandable, although this also means that the translation does not remain true to the cultural context in which the movies were made. The translation therefore fails to live up to one of my criteria, namely that a good translation should also remain faithful to the time when the movies were made. Perhaps the subtitler should have come up with an equivalent Dutch song. According to Gottlieb’s translation procedures, the joke is not rendered and replaced with non-wordplay.

The second culture-specific reference is in the courtroom scene when Firefly says the following to the jury and Chicolini then responds.

	ST	TT
LA	Firefly: “Gentlemen, Chicolini here may talk like an idiot and look like an idiot, but don’t let that fool you. He really is an idiot. I implore you: send him back to his father and brothers who are waiting for him with open arms in the penitentiary. I suggest we give him ten years in Leavenworth or eleven years in Twelveworth.”	Firefly: “Ook als hij als een idioot praat en er als een idioot uitziet: hij is een idioot! Stuur hem terug naar zijn vader en broers, die met open armen in de gevangenis op hem wachten. Of 6 jaar in Zevenbergen of 7 jaar in Achthuizen.”
SO	Name of a prison vs. fictitious names that sound like numbers	Numbers vs. names of Dutch cities that sound like numbers
LM	False reasoning	False reasoning
TA	Chicolini	Chicolini
NS	Dialogue	Dialogue

	ST	TT
LA	Chicolini: “I’ll tell you what I’ll do: I’ll take five and ten in Woolworth.”	Chicolini: “Ik kies voor 9 jaar in Tienhoven.”
SO	Numbers vs. discount in a shop	Numbers vs. fictitious cities

LM	False reasoning	False reasoning
NS	Dialogue	Dialogue

The original dialogue relies on the ‘norm opposition’ of Firefly suggesting a punishment for Chicolini and Chicolini instead saying that he wants a discount in Woolworth, an American department store. The joke relies on the similarities of the word ‘eleven’ to the culture-specific reference ‘United States Penitentiary Leavenworth’, an American prison in the city of Leavenworth in Kansas. The Dutch subtitler used a ‘domesticating’ strategy by turning the American ‘Leavenworth’ into the Dutch culture-specific references ‘Zevenbergen’ and ‘Achthuizen’, two cities in the Netherlands. Chicolini’s mention of ‘Woolworth’ is turned into the non-existent Dutch ‘Tienhoven’. The translator managed to convey the absurdism of the original joke by coming up with Dutch culture-specific references instead of retaining the American culture-specific references. I believe this is a better choice than retaining the original references, because most Dutch viewers are probably unfamiliar with ‘United States Penitentiary Leavenworth’ and, furthermore, a literal translation would probably have made the translation unintentionally nonsensical. Moreover, as Patrick Zabalbeascoa points out, it is better for a translation to be funny than to educate foreign viewers on culture-specific aspects of the original (Zabalbeascoa 246). In Pedersen’s terms, the subtitler used a ‘substitution’ twice and, according to Manca and Aprile, the VEH in the original is replaced with VEH in the translation.

Another culture-specific reference follows shortly afterwards when a soldier comes in to tell them that Sylvania troops are about to enter Freedonia. This leads to the following exchange between Chicolini and the Minister of Finance.

	ST	TT
LA	Minister of Finance: “Something must be done. War would mean a prohibitive increase in our taxes.”  Chicolini: “Hey, I’ve got an uncle who lives in Taxes.”  Minister of Finance: “No, I’m	Minister of Finance: “Oorlog betekent hogere census.”  Chicolini: “Hé, mijn oom woont in Texas.”  Minister of Finance: “Nee, ik

	talking about <i>taxes</i> . Money. Dollars.”  Chicolini: “Dollars! There’s-a where my uncle lives! Dollars, Taxes.”	bedoel belasting, dollars.”  Chicolini: “Daar woont hij! Dallas, Texas.”
SO	Taxes and dollars (money) vs. Dallas, Texas (city and state)	Taxes and dollars (money) vs. Dallas, Texas (city and state)
LM	Cratylism (Homophony)	Cratylism (Homophony)
NS	Dialogue	Dialogue

The joke in the ST relies on the similarity of the word ‘taxes’ to the American state of Texas and the similarity of the word ‘dollars’ to the city of ‘Dallas’, a city in Texas. I believe the Dutch translation is a perfect example of a bad translation, because the literal translation of the puns renders the subtitles unintentionally nonsensical, whereas the translation ought to be intentionally nonsensical. The translator probably tried to create a new pun based on the Dutch word ‘census’, but this still doesn’t explain Chicolini’s remark that his uncle lives in Texas. Furthermore, if the translator wanted to retain the pun of ‘Dallas’ and ‘dollars’, he should have translated it as ‘Dollars, Texas’ instead of ‘Dallas, Texas’ in the translation. Once more, I believe the translator should have chosen a ‘domesticating’ strategy instead of ‘foreignizing’ the translation by retaining ‘Dallas’ and ‘dollars’ and ‘Texas’ and ‘taxes’. This joke is another example of a Marx Brothers joke that is virtually untranslatable, since it is difficult to come up with comparable Dutch wordplay. Furthermore, the translation arguably produces a ‘culture bump’: Dutch viewers will likely find the original references inexplicable since the pun is lost in the translation and they will therefore likely not understand the subtitles. Perhaps the joke could have been funny had the movie been dubbed into Dutch, because then we could have heard him say it in Dutch in his characteristic accent. In the subtitles, however, the joke is completely lost. The joke is rendered verbatim, albeit to less humorous effect.

As for culture-specific references from other Marx Brothers movies, the first one I will discuss is in one scene in *Animal Crackers*. In this movie Chico plays a pianist called Emanuel Ravelli (Chico) and Groucho plays alleged explorer Captain Jeffrey T. Spaulding. Both of them are guests at the house of Mrs. Rittenhouse (Margaret Dumont) and Ravelli is

playing the piano in front of the guests. Captain Spaulding (Groucho) then makes the following remark.

	ST	TT
LA	<p>Captain Spaulding: “Play the song about Montreal.”</p> <p>Ravelli: “Montreal?”</p> <p>Captain Spaulding: “<i>I’m a Dreamer, Montreal.</i>”</p>	<p>Captain Spaulding: “Speelt u toch het lied over Montreal.”</p> <p>Ravelli: Montreal?</p> <p>Captain Spaulding: “<i>I’m a Dreamer, Montreal.</i>”</p>
SO	Homophony	Homophony
LM	Cratylism	Cratylism
NS	Dialogue	Dialogue

The above-mentioned dialogue contains a pun based on and an intertextual reference to the song *I’m a Dreamer, Aren’t We All?* from a Hollywood musical called *Sunny Side Up* (1929). The translator retained the culture-specific reference to the song in the subtitles. This translation again arguably produces a ‘culture bump’: Dutch viewers will likely find the original reference inexplicable in the Dutch subtitles and will not understand it. Furthermore, since the cultural reference is literally translated, it fails Zabalbeascoa’s principle of ‘intended comic effect’, because the pun is lost in the translation. Since Dutch viewers are unlikely to be familiar with the original song Spaulding refers to, I believe a ‘domesticating’ translation and a ‘substitution’ would have been better. The joke is rendered verbatim, only to less humorous effect.

There are also several examples of culture-specific puns and wordplay in *A Night at the Opera*. In this movie Groucho plays Otis B. Driftwood, the business manager of the rich widow Mrs. Claypool (Margaret Dumont). He finds out that Hermann Gottlieb (Sig Rumann), the director of the New York Opera company has signed up opera singer Rodolfo Lassparri (Walter Woolf King) for a very high price. Although this example could also have been included in the category of ‘sexually suggestive puns and wordplay’ I decided to include it in the category of ‘culture-specific puns and wordplay’, because I believe the example is more notable for its cultural reference than for the sexually suggestive humor.

	ST	TT
LA	Driftwood: “You're willing to pay him a thousand dollars a night just for singing? Why, you can get a phonograph record of <i>Minnie the Moocher</i> for 75 cents. And for a buck and a quarter, you can get Minnie.”	Driftwood: “Duizend dollar voor een beetje zingen? <i>Minnie the Moocher</i> heb je voor drie kwartjes. Twee erbij en je hebt Minnie.”
SO	A song title vs. a name of a woman	A song title vs. a name of a woman.
LM	False reasoning	False reasoning
NS	Dialogue	Dialogue

The original dialogue contains a reference to *Minnie the Moocher*, a 1931 jazz song by Cab Calloway. The joke is that Driftwood mentions the title of the song and then makes a sexual joke saying that he can get a woman of the same name for half a dollar extra. By retaining the reference to *Minnie the Moocher* the Dutch translator has made a ‘foreignizing’ translation. The translator likely either assumed that Dutch viewers have ‘presupposed knowledge’ or he decided to keep it in order to retain the SO of song title vs. name of a woman. The latter could also mean that he felt that Dutch viewers do not have to understand the reference, because the joke retains the sexual connotation in Dutch and is therefore still understandable. As shown above, the translation is faithful to the GTVH. Although I think the subtitler could have come up with an equivalent Dutch song title, I believe this is still an acceptable translation, because it remains faithful to all elements of the GTVH, and to the absurdism of the Marx Brothers’ humor. This translation turns an ST pun into a TT pun.

Another culture-specific reference is in another scene later in the movie when Driftwood is discussing a contract with Fiorello (Chico).

	ST	TT
LA	Driftwood: “No need of you reading that, because these are duplicates.”	Driftwood: “Lees het maar niet. Het zijn duplicaten.”

	<p>Fiorello: “Yeah. Is a duplicate. Duplicates.”</p> <p>Driftwood: “I say, they’re duplicates.”</p> <p>Fiorello: “Oh yes, they’re duplicates.”</p> <p>Driftwood: “Don’t you know what duplicates are?”</p> <p>Fiorello: “Sure, those five kids up in Canada.”</p>	<p>Fiorello: “Duplicaten, hè?”</p> <p>Driftwood: “Ik zei: het zijn duplicaten.”</p> <p>Fiorello: “Ja ja, duplicaten.”</p> <p>Driftwood: “Weet je wat dat zijn?”</p> <p>Fiorello: “Die vijfing uit Canada.”</p>
SO	A duplicate of a paper vs. a famous real-life family of quintuplets	A duplicate of a paper vs. a famous real-life family of quintuplets
LM	Cratylism	Cratylism
NS	Dialogue	Dialogue

This joke is an example of the very culture-specific humor of the Marx Brothers: Driftwood is referring to the Canadian ‘Dionne quintuplets’ in 1934, the first family of quintuplets in the world. The translator decided to foreignize the cultural reference, since the reference to the Canadian Dionne family is retained in the translation. Although the reference to the quintuplets will arguably be unfamiliar to a contemporary Dutch audience, I believe the translation still works, because the joke in the original relies primarily on the word ‘duplicates’, which in English refers to exact copies of something, either pieces of paper, or, in this case, babies. The Dutch word ‘duplicaten’ can also refer to both. Therefore, it does not matter whether the audience understands the cultural reference. The joke is rendered verbatim with humorous effect.

After having analyzed several examples of culture-specific wordplay in *Duck Soup* and several of the other Marx Brothers movies, I have found the following. The best translations of the culture-specific references in *Duck Soup* were the ones that were ‘domesticated’ and

substituted with Dutch references, such as the translation of ‘Ten years in Leavenworth’ and ‘Five and ten in Woolworth’. The culture-specific references in *A Night at the Opera* that were retained and substituted with other non-Dutch references were also successful because they managed to retain the pun of the original and the SO and because it is not necessary for Dutch viewers to understand the references. In the example of ‘Do you rhumba’ in *A Night at the Opera* that I have included in the appendix, the foreign reference is replaced with a different foreign reference in order to come up with a new homophone in Dutch. What I also noticed was that in the translations the SO was often changed. The LM was usually the same in all the translations, with the exception of the above-mentioned ‘A writ of habeas corpus’ and the omission of the LM in the example of *At the Circus* in the appendix.

The culture-specific references that were literally translated in *Duck Soup* as well as *Animal Crackers* were less successful, because the cultural references were completely removed and not substituted with Dutch cultural references such as in the example of ‘That’s why darkies were born’. Furthermore, in the above-mentioned example ‘A writ of habeas corpus’ in the appendix, the omission of the cultural reference also led to the omission of the homophone in the original and turned the pun into a non-pun. Sometimes the translation was too literal, which led to the loss of puns, such as in the above-mentioned example of ‘Dollars, Taxes’. The example from *Animal Crackers* fails because the cultural reference of ‘I’m a Dreamer Montreal’ is retained, which means that the pun is lost and which also makes the reference inexplicable for Dutch viewers. Finally, the example from *At the Circus* in the appendix fails, because by removing the reference completely, the pun is lost.

Overall, I disagree with Lawrence Venuti that ‘foreignization’ is a better strategy than ‘domestication’: in *Duck Soup* the best translations of the culture-specific wordplay were the ones that were ‘domesticated’ and the example in *Animal Crackers* should also have been domesticated. On the other hand, the references in *A Night at the Opera* that were ‘foreignized’ or were substituted with other non-Dutch culture-specific references were often well translated. This means that the choice to ‘domesticate’ or ‘foreignize’ certain cultural references should always be handled on a case-by-case basis and that the translator should choose a different approach according to context.

### 3.1.4 Sexually suggestive puns and wordplay

The fourth type of puns and wordplay that I will discuss is ‘sexually suggestive puns and wordplay’. Adrián Fuentes Luque identifies this type of humor as one of the many crucial types of humor in the Marx Brothers movies (Fuentes Luque 177) and *Duck Soup* also contains several examples. I will also give an example from *Horse Feathers* and give another example from *A Night at the Opera* in the appendix, as *Duck Soup* contains only a few examples. First I will provide charts with the overall translation of the puns and wordplay and the translation procedures that the subtitler applied for *Duck Soup* and the other movies.

Overall translation of the sexually suggestive puns and wordplay in *Duck Soup*.

	Faithful to both my criteria and to the GTVH	Faithful to my criteria, but not to the GTVH	Faithful to the GTVH, not to my criteria	Total number of examples
Render verbatim, with or without humorous effect	1	0	0	1
The substitution of VEH in the original with VEH in the translation	0	2	1	3
Total number of examples	1	2	1	4



Overall translation of the selected examples from the other movies

	Faithful to my criteria and to the GTVH	Total number of examples
Render verbatim, with or without humorous effect	2	2
Total number of examples	2	2

The first chart shows that the translator of *Duck Soup* once came up with a translation that was ‘rendered verbatim’ and remained true to my criteria and to the GTVH and twice came up with an example of ‘VEH humor substituted with VEH humor’ that was slightly different from the original version, yet which still conveyed the absurdism of the original. Only once did the translator come up with an example of ‘VEH humor substituted with VEH humor’ in which the sexual connotation was arguably lost. The chart therefore indicates that the translator always tried to remain as close to the original as possible. The second chart shows that the other two chosen examples from *Horse Feathers* and *A Night at the Opera* were both rendered verbatim and remained faithful to both my criteria for a successful translation and to the GTVH.

Overall, the translation of the sexually suggestive puns and wordplay in *Duck Soup*, *Horse Feathers* and *A Night at the Opera* is mostly successful, because the subtitler usually succeeded in coming up with a translation that remained true to the absurdism of the humor. I will discuss one example from *Duck Soup* and *Horse Feathers* that lived up to my criteria and one from *Duck Soup* that did not.

One example of a sexually-suggestive joke in *Duck Soup* is in one of the first scenes in the movie when Mrs. Teasdale meets Firefly, who has just been appointed leader of the country.

	ST	TT
LA	Mrs. Teasdale: “Your excellency, the eyes of the	Mrs. Teasdale: “Uwe excellentie, de hele wereld

	<p>world are upon you.</p> <p>Notables from every country have gathered here in your honor. This is a gala day for you.”</p> <p>Firefly: “Well, a gal a day is enough for me. I don’t think I could handle any more.”</p>	<p>kijkt naar u. Vooraanstaande personen uit alle landen zijn ter ere van u hier. Een bijzondere dag voor u.”</p> <p>Firefly: “Ik had liever een bijzondere nacht.”</p>
SO	A day of celebration vs. one woman per day	A day of celebration vs. spending the night with a woman
LM	Cratylism (homophony)	False reasoning
NS	Dialogue	Dialogue

The ‘norm opposition’ relies on Mrs. Teasdale telling Firefly that his inauguration is a very special day and Firefly then making a sexual joke. The pun of ‘gala day’ (a day of festivity) and ‘gal a day’ (one woman per day) has a sexual connotation. The Dutch translation is somewhat different: here Mrs. Teasdale tells him that his inauguration day is a day of celebration and Firefly responds that he would have liked to spend the night with a woman. This translation changes the SO from ‘a day of celebration vs. one woman per day’ to ‘a day of celebration vs. spending the night with a woman’ and the LM from ‘cratylism (homophony)’ to ‘false reasoning’. However, the Dutch translation ‘een bijzondere nacht’ can still have a sexual connotation. Even though it lacks the homophony and the punning aspect of the original, I believe it is still a good translation, because the original is impossible to translate literally and because the subtitler has come up with a joke that has a similar sexual connotation. The VEH in the original is substituted with VEH in the translation.

Another sexually-suggestive joke occurs later on in the movie, when, after having insulted Trentino and being insulted back, Firefly slaps him and says the following.

	ST	TT
LA	Firefly: “A man doesn’t live who can call a Firefly an	Firefly: “Niemand noemt een Firefly een parvenu. De

	upstart. Why, the Mayflower was full of Fireflies and a few horseflies too. The fireflies were on the upper deck, and the horseflies were on the fireflies.”	“Mayflower” zat vol met Firefly’s en ongedierte. De Firefly’s waren bovendecks en ’t ongedierte zat op de Firefly’s.”
SO	Names of people vs. animals	Names of people vs. animals
LM	False reasoning	False reasoning
NS	Dialogue	Dialogue

One of the notable aspects about this translation is that the culture-specific reference ‘the Mayflower’ is retained in the subtitles. The Mayflower was an English ship upon which the English puritans, known as the Pilgrim Fathers, sailed from England to America. The subtitler has taken the externality of ‘presupposed knowledge’ into account: he seems to assume that Dutch viewers are familiar with this reference. I, on the other hand, believe that the subtitler should have chosen the name of a Dutch ship, because the average Dutch viewer has probably never heard of the Mayflower. Furthermore, the translation loses the sexual connotation of ‘on the fireflies’. In the Dutch translation it seems like Firefly and his family had problems with all the insects on the boat. Therefore, the translation loses not only the sexual connotation, but also becomes less absurd. What is also rather strange is that the translator has translated ‘horseflies’ as ‘ongedierte’ instead of ‘horzels’ in the translation: this means that the double meaning of the name Firefly and the insects are removed in the translation. The VEH humor of the original is substituted with VEH humor in the translation.

One sexually-suggestive joke from the other movies that I will discuss is in *Horse Feathers*. In this movie Groucho plays the head of the university, Professor Wagstaff (Groucho) and in one scene he is on a romantic boat trip with Connie Bailey (Thelma Todd), a student at the college.

	ST	TT
LA	Connie: “Oh, you're perfectly safe, Professor, in this boat.”  Wagstaff: “I don't know. I was	Connie: “Geen angst, deze boot is veilig.”  Wagstaff: “Ik weet het

	going to get a flat bottom but the girl at the boat house didn't have one.”	niet, ik wilde een platte bodem, maar het meisje had er geen.”
SO	Sexual vs. non-sexual	Sexual vs. non-sexual
LM	Cratylism	Cratylism
NS	Dialogue	Dialogue

Both the original dialogue and the Dutch translation rely on the double entendre of ‘flat bottom’, which can either refer to the boat or to the woman in the boat house. The joke is rendered verbatim with humorous effect. I believe this is a good translation, because the translation remains true to the point of Professor Wagstaff’s remark and to all aspects of the GTVH.

Overall, nearly all the sexually-suggestive puns and wordplay were well translated, because they remained faithful to my criteria stipulated in thesis and sometimes also to the GTVH. This shows that the sexual jokes were usually not a problem for the translator. The best translations of the sexually suggestive puns in *Duck Soup* succeeded because they retained the sexual connotations of the original. Sometimes the jokes could be translated almost literally, such as in the example of ‘Open arms’ in the appendix. Another time the translator managed to find a good equivalent joke, such as in the example above of ‘A gala day’, even though this did result in the translation losing the homophone of the original. The example of ‘The horseflies were on the Fireflies’ that I discussed above, failed because the sexual connotation was lost. The SO was sometimes changed, but with the exception of the example of ‘A gala day’, the LM was always the same. The example from *Horse Feathers* was well translated because the double entendre is retained and because it remains faithful to the GTVH. Finally, the example from *A Night at the Opera* was also well translated because it remains faithful to all aspects of the GTVH.

### 3.1.5 Visual puns

The final category of puns and wordplay that I will discuss is ‘visual puns’. *Duck Soup* contains only three visual jokes unlike some of the other Marx Brothers movies. For this reason, I will also discuss several visual puns from the other movies in order to provide a more complete idea of the Marx Brothers’ humor. I will give one example of a successful

translation and one example of an unsuccessful translation from *Duck Soup*, one example of an unsuccessful translation from *Animal Crackers* and one example of a successful translation from *A Night in Casablanca*. I have also included a few others in the appendix. First I will provide a chart showing how the puns and wordplay in this category were translated, as well as the translation procedures the translator applied for *Duck Soup* and the other movies.

#### Overall translation of the visual puns in *Duck Soup*

	Faithful to my criteria, not to the GTVH	Faithful to neither	Total number of examples
VEH humor in the original substituted with VEH humor in the translation	2	0	2
Replace with non-wordplay	0	1	1
Total number of examples	2	1	3

#### Overall translation of the examples from the other movies

	Faithful to both my criteria and the GTVH	Faithful to neither	Total number of examples
Render verbatim, with or without humorous effect	1	0	1
ST pun into TT non-pun	0	1	1
Total number of	1	1	2

examples			
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The first chart above demonstrates that the subtitler of *Duck Soup* twice ‘substituted VEH humor with VEH humor’ in order to come up with a different pun that still retained the absurdism of the humor. Only one visual pun was completely omitted and replaced with non-wordplay. As I will discuss below, this means that the translator has successfully taken the externality of the ‘image’ into account. The second chart shows that among the two chosen examples from the other movies one of them was ‘rendered verbatim’ and remained true to both my criteria and to the GTVH. The example that turned an ‘ST pun into a TT non-pun’ was unsuccessful.

The first visual pun in *Duck Soup* occurs in the scene where Trentino meets with his two spies Chicolini and Pinky. Pinky shows him a gramophone record after Trentino says the following to him.

	ST	TT
LA	Trentino: “But I asked you to dig up something I can use against Firefly. Did you bring me his record?”	Trentino: “Ik wou dat u iets vond tegen Firefly. Moest hij wel eens de plaat poetsen?”
SO	Personal record vs. gramophone record	Dutch expression relating to the word ‘record’ vs. gramophone record.
LM	Cratylism (lexical homonymy)	Cratylism
NS	Dialogue	Dialogue

What can be seen in the chart above is that the subtitler has paid attention to the externality of the ‘image’. The translator managed to retain the word ‘record’ in the Dutch translation by translating it with the Dutch expression ‘de plaat poetsen’ so that the next part in which Harpo shows him a gramophone record still makes sense. The expression ‘de plaat poetsen’ means ‘deserting from duty’ (Van Dale Idioom Woordenboek). This translation makes sense, since Trentino wants to find out something about Firefly that could discredit him. In this case, the Dutch translation makes that even more clear, because the English phrase ‘bring me his

record’ does not make it as clear that he wants to prove that Firefly has committed criminal acts. I believe it is a very good translation, since the subtitler managed to come up with a translation that not only retains the absurdism of the original, yet also makes the meaning of the original even more clear in Dutch. This is one example of a translation of a visual pun that is successful because the translator paid attention to the ‘image’ and came up with a new pun based on that. The VEH in the original is substituted with VEH in the subtitles.

A less successful translation of a visual joke occurs in one of the war scenes near the end of the movie. In this scene Firefly’s headquarters is hit by a bomb. Firefly picks up a straw hat and then says the following.

	ST	TT
LA	Firefly: “Gentlemen, this is the last straw.”	Firefly: “De maat is vol.”
SO	Expression vs. straw hat	None
LM	Cratyism (homonymy)	None
NS	Dialogue	Dialogue

The original dialogue contains a pun relating to the phrase ‘the last straw’ which can mean “the last problem in a series of problems that finally makes you give up, get angry etc.” (Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English) or refer to the straw hat that Firefly is holding. The wordplay in the original is replaced with an idiomatic expression and non-wordplay in the translation, presumably because the translator was unable to come up with a new pun. The problem with the translation is that the subtitler has not taken the ‘image’ of the straw hat into account. This renders the straw hat inexplicable for Dutch viewers. Perhaps he could have translated this as “Dit is de laatste strohalm”. Although this has a slightly different meaning than the original, it does take visual image into account. What is also notable about the translation is that it again reveals the vagueness of the GTVH: in the chart above it seems that there is no SO and LM in the Dutch translation. It is unclear whether this means that I have made a mistake in the chart above or whether the chart demonstrates the limitations of the GTVH.

The first visual pun from the other movies that I will discuss is in *Animal Crackers*. In the movie the painter Roscoe W. Chandler (Louis Sorin) applauds a nonsensical speech by

Captain Spaulding (Groucho) about his travels in Africa and shouts the following, which leads the Professor (Harpo) to bring in two chairs.

	ST	TT
LA	Chandler: “Three cheers for Captain Spaulding!”	Chandler: “Driewerf hoera!”
SO	Cheers vs. chairs	None
LM	Cratylism (paronymy)	None
NS	Dialogue	Dialogue

The original joke is based on the paronym of ‘cheers’ and ‘chairs’. The subtitler translated this dialogue by using the Dutch expression ‘driewerf hoera’, meaning ‘three times’ in Dutch (Van Dale Groot Woordenboek Der Nederlandse Taal). The problem with this dialogue is that the pun of ‘chairs’ and ‘cheers’ is turned into a non-pun in the translation, which renders the translation unintentionally nonsensical. This makes it an unsuccessful translation. Again, it is also unclear whether this chart reveals the limitations of the GTVH.

In *A Night in Casablanca* there is another visual pun. In this movie Groucho plays Ronald Kornblow, the new manager of a hotel in Casablanca shortly after World War II. Several escaped Nazis have murdered the former managers of the hotel, and they are trying to kill Kornblow as well. Rusty (Harpo) and Corbuccio (Chico) come to warn Kornblow when he wants to start eating his lunch. In the end Rusty starts to eat everything. The phone rings and Rusty pours salt over the phone, which leads to the following exchange.

	ST	TT
LA	Kornblow: “Who’s he talking to?”  Corbuccio: “Salt Lake City.”	Kornblow: “Met wie praat hij?”  Corbuccio: “Salt Lake City.”
SO	Salt vs. name of a city	Salt vs. name of a city
LM	Cratylism	Cratylism
NS	Dialogue	Dialogue



This dialogue is a pun based on the words ‘salt’ and Salt Lake City, a city in the United States. What is notable is that the translator has decided to make a ‘foreignizing’ translation by retaining the name ‘Salt Lake City’ instead of using the domesticating strategy of using a Dutch equivalent, such as changing it to ‘Zoutbommel’. The translator seems to assume that Dutch viewers know the English word ‘salt’. In this case I find this translation acceptable, because we can hear him say ‘Salt Lake City’, and translating it with a Dutch city would be unnecessary. The joke is rendered verbatim with humorous effect.

On the whole, the examples in *Duck Soup* that were well translated were usually successful because the translator took the externality of the ‘image’ into account when coming up with a new pun, such as in the example above of ‘Bring me his record’ and ‘Fiddle around with’ in the appendix. In the first example the homonym of ‘record’ was removed and was replaced with a Dutch expression. In the second example the SO was changed and there was no LM in the translation. The translation of ‘The last straw’ failed because the subtitler did not take the ‘image’ into account and because the pun was turned into a non-pun. There was also no SO and LM in the translation. The subtitler also came up with a good translation in *A Night in Casablanca*, because the ‘image’ was taken into account and because it remained faithful to the GTVH. In *Animal Crackers*, on the other hand, the ‘image’ was not taken into account and the pun was lost in the translation. This made the translation unintentionally nonsensical.

### 3.2 Conclusion

What the analysis in this chapter has shown is that in the first category, ‘puns and wordplay based on ambiguities in language’, the subtitler often managed to come up with a successful translation. When I started this thesis I assumed that some of the puns and wordplay would be translatable, but that many instances would be unsuccessful due to the differences between the language systems of Dutch and English and because I had a very narrow idea of what a ‘good’ translation was before reading the translation theories. In this category the puns and wordplay that were ‘rendered verbatim’ and ‘inserted in a different textual position’ remained true to my criteria of a successful translation, as did six out of seven examples that were an ‘ST pun turned into a TT pun’. Among the examples of ‘VEH humor substituted with VEH humor’ only one out of five examples lived up to my criteria of a successful translation and the examples that were ‘replaced with non-wordplay’ were all unsuccessful. Overall, the examples that lived up to my criteria succeeded because the subtitler took the ‘intended comic

effect' into account and retained the forms of 'comic superiority' of the original. The translations that were not well translated usually failed because they were translated too literally or because the homonyms, paronyms and homophones in the original sound less similar in the translated Dutch words. Since only seven out of twenty-one examples completely retained all aspects of the GTVH and remained faithful to my criteria, the GTVH is not the best model for translating examples from this category.

In the second category, 'puns and wordplay relating to English expressions and phrases', thirteen out of fourteen examples lived up to my criteria of a successful translation. There were no examples of puns and wordplay that were untranslated. Only one example of 'VEH humor to VEH humor' failed to live up to my criteria of a successful translation. All the other examples were well translated. The translations succeeded because the translator managed to literally retain the meaning; because the translator came up with puns and wordplay that were slightly different, but still very similar to the original; and because the translations remained faithful to the absurdism of the original. Furthermore, the subtitler also managed to come up with good equivalent Dutch expressions. What can also be seen from the examples above and in the appendix is that the homonyms in the original dialogue could frequently be translated literally or be replaced with a different homonym in the translation. The reason why the translations succeeded in this category, despite the different homonyms, was because in this category it was more important to come up with an equivalent Dutch phrase or expression than to come up with a pun based on a single word. Therefore, it was important that the subtitler came up with a translation that was not literal. In the best translations the SO sometimes had to be changed, but, with the exception of 'a minute and a huff', the LM was mostly the same in the translation. The less successful translations usually failed because the idiomatic expressions in the original were not translated into Dutch idiomatic expressions. When I started this thesis, I thought that this category would be the most difficult to translate for a subtitler, because the puns and wordplay are so dependent on particular English expressions and phrases and that it would be difficult to come up with similar Dutch expressions and phrases. As I have shown in my analysis, the subtitler has proven that most examples are translatable. Furthermore, I have also shown that the GTVH can provide a subtitler with solutions for many of the examples in this category.

However, as can be seen from the examples given in this chapter and in the appendix, the translations of the culture-specific references in *Duck Soup* did not always meet my criteria: the translator sometimes used the 'foreignizing' strategy in order to retain some of the cultural

references. This made the translation too literal and less funny. Sometimes the translator even completely omitted the references, which lead to a loss of puns and wordplay. In this category the subtitler of *Duck Soup* twice remained true to my criteria, but not to the GTVH, and once made a translation that was too literal. Only two references were lost. This shows that the GTVH cannot be successfully applied for translating the culture-specific references in *Duck Soup*. The two successful translations of culture-specific references were both an example of ‘VEH humor substituted with VEH humor’. The examples that were ‘rendered verbatim’, ‘replaced with non-wordplay’ or which turned an ‘ST pun into a TT non-pun’ were unsuccessful. This shows that Manca and Aprile’s model has provided the subtitler with the best solutions for subtitling the culture-specific references. Furthermore, among Jan Pedersen’s translation procedures, two culture-specific references were ‘omitted’, two were ‘substituted’ with Dutch culture-specific references and two were ‘retained’. Only the examples that were ‘substituted’ were successfully translated. The best translations of the culture-specific references in *Duck Soup* were the ones where the subtitler used a ‘domesticating’ strategy by substituting them with Dutch culture-specific references. This shows that, in the case of *Duck Soup*, a ‘domesticating’ strategy is better than a ‘foreignizing’ strategy. Therefore, in the case of *Duck Soup*, I disagree with Lawrence Venuti that ‘foreignization’ is a better strategy than ‘domestication’. When I analyzed this category of *Duck Soup* I expected that the most successful translations would be the ones where the subtitler would substitute the American references with Dutch references, because I thought that the ones that would be retained would be too literal and lead to a loss of puns. This indeed turned out to be the case.

In the other movies the subtitler remained faithful to both my criteria and the GTVH in three out of five examples, once came up with an overly literal translation and only once ‘omitted’ the pun. Furthermore, the subtitler tried to ‘retain’ the references as often as possible and only once came up with a ‘substitution’. Among the three examples that were successfully translated one of them was ‘rendered verbatim’ and two were an ‘ST pun turned into a TT pun’. Moreover, two out three examples that were retained were well translated, as was the example that was substituted with different cultural references. In the unsuccessful translations the references were either retained and the translation was too literal or the reference was omitted. The translations of the selected culture-specific references in *Animal Crackers* and *At the Circus* were unsuccessful, because the example from the former movie was translated too literally and in the example from the latter movie the reference was completely removed, which lead to a loss of the pun. As I have shown above, the selected

culture-specific references were translated better in *A Night at the Opera* and *A Night in Casablanca*. The culture-specific references in *A Night at the Opera* that were retained and substituted with other non-Dutch references were successful because they managed to retain the pun of the original and the SO and because it is not necessary for Dutch viewers to understand the cultural references in these cases. In another example of a good translation from *A Night at the Opera* that I have included in the appendix, the foreign reference is replaced with another foreign reference in order to come up with a new homophone in Dutch. The results of the translations of the selected culture-specific references in the other movies turned out differently than I had expected: I had expected that all the examples that were ‘retained’ or ‘substituted’ with other foreign references would be unsuccessful, for the reasons that I have mentioned above, but the examples in *A Night at the Opera* and *A Night in Casablanca* have shown otherwise.

Overall, the examples discussed in this chapter show that, contrary to what Lawrence Venuti claims, ‘foreignization’ is not always a better strategy than ‘domestication’: while the ‘foreignized’ examples in *A Night at the Opera* and *A Night in Casablanca* were successfully translated, the examples in *Duck Soup* and *Animal Crackers* that were ‘foreignized’ were less successful. Therefore, the question whether to ‘domesticate’ or to ‘foreignize’ certain cultural references should always be handled on a case-by-case basis and the translator should not apply an overall strategy of ‘foreignization’ or ‘domestication’ to the translation.

The sexually-suggestive humor was mostly well translated because the translations were true to the absurdism of the humor and because they remained faithful to my criteria and also often to the GTVH. This shows that the sexual jokes were usually not a problem for the translator. When I analyzed this category I expected that most of the sexually suggestive puns and wordplay could be well translated, because for this category the primary importance is that the translator comes up with a translation that contains a sexual connotation that does not necessarily have to remain faithful to the literal meaning of the original. As my analysis has shown, most translations in *Duck Soup* and the other movies were successful. The best translations of *Duck Soup* succeeded because they retained the sexual connotations of the original. The translator once made a translation that was ‘rendered verbatim’ and remained true to my criteria and to the GTVH and twice came up with an example of ‘VEH humor substituted with VEH humor’ that was slightly different from the original version, yet which still conveyed the absurdism of the original. In only one example of ‘VEH humor substituted with VEH humor’ was the sexual connotation lost. The example from *Horse Feathers* was

well translated because the double entendre was retained and because it remains faithful to the GTVH. Finally, the example from *A Night at the Opera* was also well translated because it remains faithful to all aspects of the GTVH. The other two chosen examples from *Horse Feathers* and *A Night at the Opera* were both rendered verbatim and remained faithful to both my criteria for a successful translation and to the GTVH. As my analysis has also shown, only one out of four examples remained faithful to my criteria and to the GTVH. Therefore, I believe that in this category the GTVH is not a good model for translating the sexually-suggestive puns and wordplay in *Duck Soup*. Since I only gave a single example from *Horse Feathers* and *A Night at the Opera*, I cannot comment on whether the GTVH is a good model to translate the sexually suggestive puns and wordplay in those movies.

In the case of the visual puns, the translation of two out of three examples was successful. When I analyzed this category I was uncertain whether the translations would live up to my criteria, because the examples rely on both a verbal pun and the images we see on screen, and I assumed that a subtitler would have to take both into account. The examples in *Duck Soup* that were well translated were usually successful because the translator took the externality of the ‘image’ into account and came up with new dialogue. The examples that failed were unsuccessful because the puns were turned into non-wordplay and because the translator did not use the ‘image’ to come up with a new translation. None of the examples in *Duck Soup* remained faithful to the GTVH, which means that the GTVH is not a good model to use for translating the visual puns in *Duck Soup*. In this movie the subtitler twice used the strategy of the ‘substitution of VEH humor in the original with VEH humor in the translation’ to come up with a new pun that retained the absurdism of the humor. Only one visual pun from *Duck Soup* was completely omitted and replaced with non-wordplay. The example from *A Night in Casablanca* was ‘rendered verbatim’ and remained true to my criteria and to the GTVH. The translation of the example from *Animal Crackers* turned an ‘ST pun into a TT non-pun’ and was unsuccessful.

As for the constraints a subtitler has to deal with, ‘media-specific constraints’ were never a problem for the translator as seen from the given examples. The space and time constraints of the subtitles only meant that the translation had to be slightly condensed. However, this did not affect the jokes. The subtitler also had very few problems with ‘language-specific constraints’: the subtitler managed to come up with a good translation for most of the jokes and only a few jokes were arguably untranslatable. As for untranslatable jokes, only in the courtroom scene and the scene where Firefly is trying to woo Mrs. Teasdale did I find certain

jokes that were arguably untranslatable. My analysis has therefore demonstrated that most puns and wordplay are translatable, contrary to what some theorists, such as Juliane House, claim.

My analysis has shown that the GTVH was often useful for analyzing the subtitles. It provided a valuable way to test the translation. However, I also found several occasions in which the GTVH was rather vague: in some examples it is unclear whether there is an SO and an LM in the Dutch translation. This means that the GTVH is not always applicable in the analysis of the puns and wordplay in the Marx Brothers movies. My analysis, therefore, has demonstrated that a good translation does not entail remaining faithful to all elements of the GTVH, contrary to what Dimitris Asimakoulas claims: in a number of cases the subtitler came up with a good translation without remaining faithful to the elements of the GTVH and sometimes the translator did remain faithful to the elements, but the translation was ineffective.

My thesis question “what makes for the best translation of the puns and wordplay in the Marx Brothers movies, considering they rely heavily on puns and wordplay?” can thus be answered as follows: a good translation does not necessarily have to remain faithful to all the elements of the GTVH, but it should remain faithful to the characteristic absurdism of the Marx Brothers’ humor, to the time when the movies were made, and to the personality and diction of the characters. As I have shown in my analysis and in the charts above, the translations often retained the characteristic absurdism of the humor. The translations also usually remained faithful to the time and place when the movies were made, with the one exception I discussed above in the section analyzing the culture-specific puns and wordplay. However, on one account the subtitles are unsuccessful: they fail to retain the characterization of Chico’s character. In the original English version his character often speaks in broken English with a heavy Italian accent, but this is not accurately conveyed in the Dutch subtitles, as can be seen in the examples provided in this analysis. This is one aspect of the subtitles that could be improved upon in the future.

## Conclusion

The Dutch subtitles of the Marx Brothers movies have never been a subject of academic analysis. This thesis aimed to fill that gap. Furthermore, my thesis intended to provide a valuable contribution not only to the academic analysis of the Marx Brothers movies, but also to the academic analysis of comedies relying on puns and wordplay in general, since this is an important area of research in translation studies.

I used two different criteria to judge the Dutch subtitles. The first was: does the subtitler manage to find a translation that remains true to the absurdism of the Marx Brothers' humor, to the characters, and to social and cultural context of the time in which the movies were made? The second was Dimitris Asimakoulas's 'ideal translation': a translation that "shares the same script opposition, the same logical mechanism, the same situation, the same target and the same narrative strategy as the original" (Asimakoulas 824).

When judging the subtitles with these two criteria in mind one major assumption that I had when I began this thesis was challenged: I had always assumed that the Marx Brothers' humor was mostly untranslatable due to the differences in grammar and idiom between Dutch and English, as well as the culture-specificity of some of the references. Several theorists, such as Juliane House, have also claimed that puns and wordplay are untranslatable due to differences between language systems. Others, such as Henrik Gottlieb and Adrián Fuentes Luque have claimed that puns and wordplay are not untranslatable due to the polysemiotic nature of audiovisual texts as well as the non-verbal elements, such as the images on screen, that can provide translators with solutions (Williamson & Pedro Ricoy 170). I took these views into account in my analysis – the latter especially in my analysis of the visual puns – and what my analysis has shown is that the subtitler occasionally managed to make a successful translation based on the non-verbal elements on screen. Furthermore, I found only a handful of jokes in *Duck Soup* that were arguably untranslatable. This shows that 'language-specific constraints' and 'media-specific constraints' were usually not a problem for the subtitler. My analysis has therefore demonstrated that most puns and wordplay are not untranslatable, contrary to what some theorists claim.

What my overall analysis has shown on the basis of the two above-mentioned criteria is that the subtitler frequently managed to come up with a successful translation of the puns and wordplay. According to my analysis of *Duck Soup*, thirty-five out of forty-seven instances of

puns and wordplay remained faithful to my criterion of a translation that retains the characteristic absurdism of the Marx Brothers. Among the puns and wordplay based on ambiguities in language fourteen out of twenty-one examples received a successful translation and among the puns and wordplay based on English expressions and phrases in *Duck Soup* thirteen out of fourteen examples lived up to my criteria. The sexually-suggestive humor in *Duck Soup* and the other movies was also mostly well translated: among the sexually suggestive jokes in *Duck Soup* three out of four examples lived up to my criteria and the two examples from *Horse Feathers* and *A Night at the Opera* also lived up to my criteria. The visual puns in *Duck Soup* also received a mostly successful translation: two out three examples lived up to my criteria. The visual pun in *A Night in Casablanca* was also well translated, but the example from *Animal Crackers* was less successful. The culture-specific references in *Duck Soup*, on the other hand, were often not well translated: only two out of six examples remained faithful to my translation criteria. The reason why the translation was often unsuccessful was due to several reasons: sometimes the subtitler ‘foreignized’ some of the references, which made the translation too literal and less funny. Occasionally the translator completely omitted the references, which lead to a loss of puns and wordplay in the translation. The culture-specific references were often translated better in some of the other movies: from the examples I gave, three out of five lived up to my criteria. When it came to translating culture-specific references I argued that the question whether ‘foreignization’ or ‘domestication’ is a better strategy can be answered as follows: all instances of culture-specific references should be judged separately on a case-by-case basis.

My analysis has also demonstrated that a successful translation does not always have to remain faithful to all elements of the GTVH, contrary to what Asimakoulas claims. I have shown that it is possible to make a successful translation that remains faithful to the characteristic absurdism of the Marx Brothers’ humor without remaining faithful to all aspects of the GTVH. Furthermore, as my analysis has shown, not all puns and wordplay were able to fulfill Asimakoulas’s strict criterion due to differences between the language systems of Dutch and English in grammar and idiom, as well as due to certain socio-cultural aspects. Moreover, my analysis has also revealed that the GTVH can be very vague at times: sometimes it was unclear whether there was a script opposition and a logical mechanism in the translation or not. This shows that not all jokes can be analyzed through the GTVH.



My thesis question “What makes for the ‘best’ translation of the puns and wordplay in the Marx Brothers movies, considering they rely heavily on puns and wordplay” can thus be answered as follows: a successful translation does not have to be a literal translation of the puns and wordplay or remain faithful to the aspects of the GTVH, but it should remain faithful to the characteristic absurdism of the Marx Brothers’ humor, to the time when the movies were made, and to the characterization of the individual Marx Brothers, especially Chico’s broken English. My analysis has shown that the subtitles often managed to retain the absurdism of the humor and remain faithful to the time when the movies were made.

However, as for the characterization of the Marx Brothers, the subtitles have failed: Chico’s broken English was normalized in the subtitles and was never accurately conveyed in Dutch. This is one aspect that should be improved upon in future translations of the movies. Perhaps the subtitler could use different spelling, as Adrián Fuentes Luque suggested (Fuentes Luque 300-301), thereby turning the broken English into broken Dutch. Overall, however, I believe that the subtitles have demonstrated that comedies that rely heavily on puns and wordplay, such as the Marx Brothers movies, are not untranslatable.

Before concluding, I will also recognize several shortcomings in this thesis. First of all, when I wrote this thesis I had decided to focus purely on the linguistic aspect of the subtitles and not on audience perception and reception studies. I admit that this occasionally made it harder to analyze the effect the subtitles might have on Dutch viewers, and perhaps translation theorists who focus on audience perception and reception studies might have a different opinion about the subtitles of the Marx Brothers movies. Therefore, I recommend that future studies focus more on audience perception and reception studies. Second of all, due to time and space constraints, I could only thoroughly analyze one movie and give only a few examples from some of the other movies. Since I only comprehensively analyzed one of the Marx Brothers movies, I admit that it is impossible to draw definitive conclusions on several of the key issues I discussed in my thesis: whether Dutch subtitled versions can remain faithful to the characteristic absurdism of the Marx Brothers’ humor, to the time when the movies were made, and to the personality of the characters; and whether it is better to ‘foreignize’ or ‘domesticate’ the cultural references in the movies. Therefore, I recommend that future studies also focus on the other Marx Brothers movies in order to come to a firm conclusion about the above-mentioned issues. Despite these shortcomings, I hope my thesis has provided a valuable contribution to the analysis of the subtitles Marx Brothers movies and to the analysis of the Dutch subtitling of puns and wordplay in comedies in general.

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## Appendix

### Puns and wordplay based on ambiguities in language

	ST	TT
LA	<p>Firefly: “Never mind that stuff. Take a card.”</p> <p>Mrs. Teasdale: “A card? What’ll I do with a card?”</p> <p>Firefly: “You can keep it. I’ve got fifty-one left.”</p>	<p>Firefly: “Laat maar. Neem een kaartje.”</p> <p>Mrs. Teasdale: “’n Kaartje? Wat moet ik daar mee?”</p> <p>Firefly: “U mag het houden. Ik heb er nog 51.”</p>
SO	Take vs. take	Take vs. take
LM	Cratylism (collocational homonymy)	Cratylism (collocational homonymy)
NS	Dialogue	Dialogue

	ST	TT
LA	<p>Firefly: “I danced before Napoleon. No Napoleon danced before me. In fact, he danced two hundred years before me.”</p>	<p>Firefly: “Voor Napoleon danste ik al. Nee hij danste eerder dan ik. In feite danste hij al 200 jaar eerder.”</p>
SO	Before (in front of) vs. before (earlier than)	Before (in front of) vs. before (earlier than)
LM	Cratylism (collocational homonymy)	Cratylism (collocational homonymy)
NS	Dialogue	Dialogue

	ST	TT
LA	Firefly: "I'm in a hurry! To the house of Representatives. Ride like fury! If gas runs out, get ethyl. If Ethel runs out, get Mabel. Now step on it!"	Firefly: "Ik heb haast. Rijd razendsnel. Is er geen benzine, haal dan Jacqueline... of Christine. Gas!"
SO	Gasoline vs. names of women	Gasoline vs. names of women
LM	Cratylism (homophony)	False reasoning
NS	Dialogue	Dialogue

	ST	TT
LA	Chicolini: "Sure we shadowed Fire. We shadowed him all day."  Trentino: "What day was that?"  Chicolini: "Shaddaday."	Chicolini: "Toch wel, de hele dag."  Trentino: "Wanneer?"  Chicolini: "Op schaduwdag."
SO	Day of the week vs. pun based on a day of the week	Day of the week vs. pun based on a day of the week
LM	Cratylism (homophony)	Cratylism (homophony)
NS	Dialogue	Dialogue

	ST	TT
LA	<p>Secretary of War: “Gentlemen! Gentlemen! Enough of this. How about taking up the tax?”</p> <p>Firefly: “How about taking up the carpet?”</p> <p>Secretary of War: “I still insist we must take up the tax.”</p> <p>Firefly: “He’s right. You’ve got to take up the <i>tacks</i> before you can take up the carpet.”</p>	<p>Secretary of War: “Zo is het genoeg. We moeten over de belasting praten.”</p> <p>Firefly: “Hebben we het niet allemaal druk?”</p> <p>Secretary of War: “We moeten over de belasting praten.”</p> <p>Firefly: “Juist. Als je het druk hebt, is de belasting al gauw te groot.”</p>
SO	Tax vs. tacks	Tax vs. work pressure
LM	Cratylism (homophony) and false reasoning	Cratylism (homonymy) and false reasoning
NS	Dialogue	Dialogue

	ST	TT
LA	<p>Secretary of War: “I give all my time and energy to my duties and what do I get?”</p> <p>Firefly: “You get awfully tiresome after a while.”</p>	<p>Secretary of War: “Ik sloof me uit voor mijn land, en wat levert het op?”</p> <p>Firefly: “Een uitslover.”</p>
SO	Get (receive) vs. get (become)	Get (amount to something) vs. get (become)
LM	Cratylism (lexical homonymy)	Cratylism (lexical homonymy)
TA	Secretary of War	Secretary of War
NS	Dialogue	Dialogue

	ST	TT
LA	<p>Firefly: “Have you got a license?”</p> <p>Chicolini: “License? No I haven’t, but my dog he’s got millions of ‘em.”</p>	<p>Firefly: “Heeft u papieren?”</p> <p>Chicolini: “Ja, mijn hond heeft ongedierte.”</p>
SO	License vs. lice	Papers vs. vermin
LM	Cratylism (Paronymy)	None
NS	Dialogue	Dialogue

	ST	TT
LA	<p>Firefly: “How would you like a job in the Mint?”</p> <p>Chicolini: “Mint? No, no. I no like-a mint. What other flavor you got?”</p>	<p>Firefly: “Wat denkt u van iets bij de munt?”</p> <p>Chicolini: “Nee, ik hou niet van pepermint. Welke smaken zijn er verder nog?”</p>
SO	Mint (a facility for producing money) vs. mint (a flavor)	Mint (a facility for producing money) vs. peppermint
LM	Cratylism (lexical homonymy)	Cratylism (lexical homonymy)
NS	Dialogue	Dialogue

	ST	TT
LA	<p>Firefly: “Now that you’re Secretary of War, what kind of an army do you think we ought to have?”</p> <p>Chicolini: “Well, I’ll tell you what I think. I think we</p>	<p>Firefly: “Oh ja, wat voor leger moeten we hebben?”</p> <p>Chicolini: “Een staand leger.”</p>



	<p>ought to have a standing army.”</p> <p>Firefly: “Why should we have a standing army?”</p> <p>Chicolini: “Because then we save money on chairs.”</p>	<p>Firefly: “Waarom?”</p> <p>Chicolini: “Zo sparen we het geld voor de stoelen uit.”</p>
SO	Permanent army vs. an army of people who are literally standing	Permanent army vs. an army of people who are literally standing
LM	Cratyism and false reasoning	Cratyism and false reasoning
NS	Dialogue	Dialogue

	ST	TT
LA	Firefly (to Mrs. Teasdale): “All I can offer you is a Rufus over your head.”	Firefly (to Mrs. Teasdale): “Ik kan u alleen mijn roem bieden.”
SO	Rufus (the name) vs. a roof	None
LM	Cratyism (paronymy)	None
NS	Dialogue	Dialogue

	ST	TT
LA	<p>Mrs. Teasdale: “What’s that?”</p> <p>Firefly: “It sounds to me like mice.”</p> <p>Mrs. Teasdale: “Mice? Mice don’t play music.”</p> <p>Firefly: “No? How about the</p>	<p>Mrs. Teasdale: “Wat is dat?”</p> <p>Firefly: “ ‘t Lijken me muizen.”</p> <p>Mrs. Teasdale: “Muizen spelen geen muziek.”</p> <p>Firefly: “En die ouwe</p>

	old maestro?"	"muistro" dan?"
SO	Mice vs. maestro	Mice vs. maestro
LM	Cratyism (paronymy)	Cratyism (paronymy)
NS	Dialogue	Dialogue

	ST	TT
LA	Firefly: "Chicolini, I bet you eight to one we find you guilty."  Chicolini: "Ats-a no good. I can get ten to one at the barber shop."	Firefly: "Chicolini, ik wed 8:1 dat u schuldig bent."  Chicolini: "Da's niks. Bij de kapper stond ik 10:1."
SO	Betting odds vs. discount	Chicolini's odds at different places
LM	False logic	False logic
NS	Dialogue	Dialogue

	ST	TT
LA	Prosecutor: "Isn't it true you tried to sell Freedonia's secret war code and plans?"  Chicolini: "Sure, I sold the code and two pair of plans."	Prosecutor: "Wou u niet Freedonia's geheime oorlogscode en plannen verkopen?"  Chicolini: "Zeker, en met de code verkocht ik mijn kop."
SO	Plans of war vs. coat and pants	Selling (literal) vs. selling (metaphorical)
LM	Cratyism (paronymy)	Cratyism and false logic
NS	Dialogue	Dialogue

	ST	TT
LA	Firefly: "Look at Chicolini,	Firefly: "Kijk naar Chicolini. Hij

	he sits there alone. An abject figure.”  Chicolini: “I abject.”	zit daar alleen, ’n getekend man.”  Chicolini: “Ik teken verzet aan.”
SO	To object vs. abject	Doomed vs. to protest
LM	Cratylism (paronymy)	Cratylism (lexical homonymy)
NS	Dialogue	Dialogue

	ST	TT
LA	Chicolini: “Now I ask you one. What is it has a trunk but no key, weighs two thousand pounds and lives in the circus?”  Prosecutor: “That’s irrelevant.”  Chicolini: “Irrelevant? That’s the answer. There’s a whole lotta irrelevants in the circus.”	Chicolini: “Wat heeft een slurf maar geen tanden, weegt 2000 pond en...”  Prosecutor: “Irrelevant.”  Chicolini: “Olifant! Dat antwoord is goed. In het circus zijn veel olifanten.”
SO	Irrelevant vs. elephant	Irrelevant vs. elephant
LM	Cratylism (paronymy)	Cratylism (paronymy)
NS	Riddle & Dialogue	Riddle & Dialogue

	ST	TT
LA	Judge: “That sort of testimony we can eliminate.”  Chicolini: “That’s-a fine. I take some.”  Judge: “You take what?”  Chicolini: “Eliminate. A nice	Judge: “Eliminatie van deze uitspraak.”  Chicolini: “Ja graag. Dat wil ik wel.”  Judge: “Wat wilt u wel?”  Chicolini: “Limonade. ’n

	cold glass eliminate.”	Lekker koud glas.”
SO	Lemonade vs. eliminate	Lemonade vs. eliminate
LM	Cratylism (paronymy)	Cratylism (paronymy)
NS	Dialogue	Dialogue

	ST	TT
LA	Firefly: “The enemy has captured Hill 2728 throwing thirteen hillbillies out of work.”	Firefly: “De vijand heeft heuvel 2728 ingenomen. Dertien mollen zijn werkloos.”
SO	Military position vs. hilbillies	Moles (people) vs. moles (animals)
LM	Cratylism	False reasoning
NS	Dialogue	Dialogue

	ST	TT
LA	Firefly: “Last night two snipers crept into our machine gun nest and laid an egg.”	Firefly: “Sluipschutters ontdekten ons mitrailleurstent en legden een ei.”
SO	Nest (a place where soldiers hide) vs. nest (a place for birds to lay their eggs)	Nest(a place where soldiers hide) vs. nest (a place for birds to lay their eggs)
LM	Cratylism and false logic	Cratylism and false logic
NS	Dialogue	Dialogue

	ST	TT
LA	Bob Roland: “Message from the front, sir.”  Firefly: “Oh I’m sick of	Bob Roland: “Een bericht van het front.”  Firefly: “Nooit ’ns ’n bericht

	messages from the front. Why don't we ever get messages from the side."	van de flank?"
SO	Front vs. the front side	Front vs. flank
LM	Cratylism (homophony)	Cratylism (homophony)
NS	Dialogue	Dialogue

	ST	TT
LA	Firefly: "What is it?"  Bob Roland: "General Smith reports a gas attack. He doesn't know what to do."  Firefly: "Tell him to take a tea spoon full of bicarbonate soda and half a glass of water."	Firefly: "Wat dan?"  Bob Roland: "Gasaanval. Wat moeten ze doen?"  Firefly: "Laat hen een theelepel natron nemen met 'n half glaasje water."
SO	Chemical warfare vs. flatulence	Chemical warfare vs. flatulence
LM	Cratylism and false reasoning	Cratylism and false reasoning
NS	Dialogue	Dialogue

	ST	TT
LA	Chicolini: "I wouldn't go out there unless I was in one of those big iron things going up and down like this. What do you call those things?"  Firefly: "Tanks."	Chicolini: "Ik ga alleen als ik met zo'n ijzeren geval mag rijden. Hoe noem je dat?"  Firefly: "Tank."

	Chicolini: “You’re welcome.”	Chicolini: “Graag gedaan.”
SO	Thanks vs. tanks	Thanks vs. tanks
LM	Cratylysm (homophony)	Cratylysm (homophony)
NS	Dialogue	Dialogue

Puns and wordplay relating to English expressions and phrases

	ST	TT
LA	<p>Mrs. Teasdale: “I’ve sponsored your appointment, because I feel you are the most able statesman in all Freedonia.”</p> <p>Firefly: “Well that covers a lot of ground. Say, you cover a lot of ground yourself. You better beat it or they’re gonna tear you down and put up an office building where you’re standing.”</p>	<p>Mrs. Teasdale: “Ik ondersteun uw benoeming omdat u hier de kundigste staatsman bent.”</p> <p>Firefly: “Dat is een breed terrein. Maar u bent ook nogal breed. Ga maar liever weg, voordat ze u slopen en er kantoren neerzetten.”</p>
SO	Cover vs. cover	Broad vs. fat
LM	Cratylysm (collocational homonymy) and false reasoning	Cratylysm (collocational homonymy) and false reasoning
TA	Mrs. Teasdale	Mrs. Teasdale
NS	Dialogue	Dialogue

	ST	TT
LA	<p>Firefly: “You can leave in a taxi. If you can’t leave in a taxi, you can leave in a huff. If that’s too</p>	<p>Firefly: “Neem een taxi. Komt er geen, vertrek dan op lange tenen.”</p>

	soon you can leave in a minute and a huff.”	
SO	In a huff vs. a minute and a half	Literal vs. figurative Dutch expression
LM	Cratylism (paronymy)	Cratylism and false logic
NS	Dialogue	Dialogue

	ST	TT
LA	Firefly: You know you haven't stopped talking since I came here. You must have been vaccinated with a phonograph needle.	Firefly: U praat maar door. Bent u ingeënt met een grammofoonplaat?
SO	Needle (phonograph) vs. needle (medical)	Gramophone record vs. needle (medical)
LM	False reasoning	False reasoning
TA	Mrs. Teasdale	Mrs. Teasdale
NS	Dialogue	Dialogue

	ST	TT
LA	Firefly: I could dance with you till the cows came home. On second thought, I'd rather dance with the cows till you came home.	Firefly: Ik zou met u kunnen dansen totdat de haan kraait. Of beter dans ik met de haan en u gaat kraaien.
SO	Expression vs. expression turned around	Expression vs. expression turned around
LM	False Logic	False Logic
TA	Vera Marcal	Vera Marcal
NS	Dialogue	Dialogue

	ST	TT
LA	<p>Chicolini: “Have we been trailing Firefly? Why, my partner’s got a nose just like a blood hound.”</p> <p>Trentino: “Oh, really?”</p> <p>Chicolini: “Yeah, and the rest of his face don’t look so good either.”</p>	<p>Chicolini: “En hoe! Mijn partner heeft een neus van een bloedhond.”</p> <p>Trentino: “Echt?”</p> <p>Chicolini: “En verder ziet z’n gezicht er ook niet mooi uit.”</p>
SO	Expression vs. literal	Expression vs. literal
LM	Cratylism (phrasal homonymy)	Cratylism (phrasal homonymy)
TA	Pinky	Pinky
NS	Dialogue	Dialogue

	ST	TT
LA	<p>Minister: “Your Excellency, here’s the Treasury Department’s report. I hope you find it clear.”</p> <p>Firefly: “Clear? Why a four-year-old child could understand this report. Run out and find me a four-year-old child. I can’t make head or tail out of this.”</p>	<p>Minister: “ ‘t Rapport van ‘t ministerie van financiën. Hopelijk is ’t duidelijk.”</p> <p>Firefly: “Duidelijk? Zelfs een kind van 4 kan dat begrijpen. Ga op zoek naar een kind van 4 jaar, ik kan er geen touw aan vastknopen.”</p>
SO	Expression vs. literal	Expression vs. literal
LM	False logic	False logic



NS	Dialogue	Dialogue
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	ST	TT
LA	Firefly: “The secretary of War is out of order. Which reminds me, so is the plumbing.”	Firefly: “Niet aan de orde. ‘t Loodgieterswerk evenmin.”
SO	Out of order vs. out of order	Out of order vs. out of order
LM	Cratylism (phrasal homonymy) and false logic	Cratylism (phrasal homonymy) and false logic
NS	Dialogue	Dialogue

	ST	TT
LA	Secretary of War: Sir, you try my patience.  Firefly: I don’t mind if I do. You must come over and try mine sometime.	Secretary of War: Ik verlies mijn geduld.  Firefly: U mag ‘t mijne dan wel hebben.
SO	Expression vs. literalness	Expression vs. literalness
LM	Cratylism (phrasal homonymy) and false reasoning	Cratylism (phrasal homonymy) and false reasoning
NS	Dialogue	Dialogue

	ST	TT
LA	Secretary of War: “That’s the last straw. I resign! I wash my hands of the whole business.”  Firefly: “Good idea. You can wash your neck too.”	Secretary of War: “Dit is de druppel! Ik treed af! Ik was mijn handen in onschuld.”  Firefly: “Goed idee. Was ook uw hals.”
SO	Wash vs. wash	Wash vs. wash

LM	Cratylism (phrasal homonymy)	Cratylism (phrasal homonymy)
TA	Secretary of War	Secretary of War
NS	Dialogue	Dialogue

	ST	TT
LA	Lemonade vendor: "Hey what's the idea?"  Chicolini: "Ats-a not-a my idea. Ats-a his idea."	Lemonade vendor: "Wat een idee!"  Chicolini: "Dat was zijn idee."
SO	Expression vs. literalness	Expression vs. literalness
LM	Phrasal homonymy and false reasoning	Phrasal homonymy and false reasoning
NS	Dialogue	Dialogue

	ST	TT
LA	Lemonade vendor: I'll teach you to kick me!  Chicolini: You don't have to teach me. I know how.	Lemonade vendor: Ik zal jouw 'ns laten zien wat een pak rammel is.  Chicolini: Weet ik al.
SO	Teach vs. teach	Show vs. know
LM	Cratylism (phrasal homonymy) and false reasoning	Cratylism (phrasal homonymy) and false reasoning
NS	Dialogue	Dialogue

	ST	TT
LA	Firefly: "You wanna be a public nuisance?"  Chicolini: "Sure. How	Firefly: "Wilt u de plaag van iedereen zijn?"  Chicolini: "Verdient dat

	much does the job pay?”  Firefly: “I’ve got a good mind to join the club and beat you over the head with it.”	goed?”  Firefly: “Met een knuppel zou ik een doorslaand succes zijn.”
SO	Club vs. club	Beating someone with a club vs. being successful
LM	False logic	False logic
TA	Chicolini	Chicolini
NS	Dialogue	Dialogue

	ST	TT
LA	Trentino: “Gloria, I’ve waited for years. I can’t wait any longer. I love you. I want you. Can’t you see I’m at your feet?”  Firefly: “When you get through with her feet, you can start on mine.”	Trentino: “Ik wacht al jaren. Ik hou van u. Ik lig aan uw voeten.”  Firefly: “Straks ligt u voor mijn voeten.”
SO	Expression vs. literal	Expression vs. literal
LM	Cratylism (phrasal homonymy) and false reasoning	Cratylism (phrasal homonymy) and false reasoning
TA	Trentino	Trentino
NS	Dialogue	Dialogue

	ST	TT
LA	Mrs. Claypool: “The ambassador is here on a friendly visit. He’s had a change of heart.”	Mrs. Claypool: “Hij is hier met goede bedoelingen. Hij heeft ’t hart op de goede plaats.”

	Firefly: “What good’ll that do him? He’s still got the same face.”	Firefly: “Zijn gezicht anders niet.”
SO	Change (expression) vs. Change (literal)	Right place (expression) vs. right place (literal)
LM	False reasoning	False reasoning
TA	Trentino	Trentino
NS	Dialogue	Dialogue

#### Culture-specific puns and wordplay

	ST	TT
LA	Firefly: “Well, maybe I am a little headstrong. But I come by it honestly. My father was a little headstrong. My mother was a little Armstrong. The headstrongs married the armstrongs and that’s why darkies were born.”	Firefly: “Misschien heb ik een wat harde kop, dat zit in de familie. Mijn vader had een harde kop. Mijn moeder was een harde noot. De harde kop en de harde noot trouwden met elkaar.”
SO	Headstrong (being stubborn) vs. Armstrong (strength)	Stubborn person vs. a tough person
LM	False reasoning	False reasoning
NS	Dialogue	Dialogue

	ST	TT
LA	Firefly: “Gentlemen, Chicolini here may talk like an idiot and look like an idiot, but don’t let that fool you. He really is an	Firefly: “Ook als hij als een idioot praat en er als een idioot uitziet: hij is een idioot! Stuur hem

	idiot. I implore you: send him back to his father and brothers who are waiting for him with open arms in the penitentiary. I suggest we give him ten years in Leavenworth or eleven years in Twelveworth.”	terug naar zijn vader en broers, die met open armen in de gevangenis op hem wachten. Of 6 jaar in Zevenbergen of 7 jaar in Achthuizen.”
SO	Name of a prison vs. fictitious names that sound like numbers	Numbers vs. names of Dutch cities that sound like numbers
LM	False reasoning	False reasoning
TA	Chicolini	Chicolini
NS	Dialogue	Dialogue

	ST	TT
LA	Chicolini: “I’ll tell you what I’ll do: I’ll take five and ten in Woolworth.”	Chicolini: “Ik kies voor 9 jaar in Tienhoven.”
SO	Numbers vs. discount in a shop	Numbers vs. fictitious cities
LM	False reasoning	False reasoning
NS	Dialogue	Dialogue

	ST	TT
LA	Firefly: “I wanted to get a writ of habeas corpus, but I should have gotten a-rid of you instead.”	Firefly: “Was u nu maar het land uitgezet in plaats van voor het gerecht gedaagd.”
SO	Writ vs. rid	Deportation vs. court-martialing
LM	Cratylism (homophony) and false reasoning	False reasoning
TA	Chicolini	Chicolini
NS	Dialogue	Dialogue

	ST	TT
LA	<p>Minister of Finance: “Something must be done. War would mean a prohibitive increase in our taxes.”</p> <p>Chicolini: “Hey, I’ve got an uncle who lives in Taxes.”</p> <p>Minister of Finance: “No, I’m talking about <i>taxes</i>. Money. Dollars.”</p> <p>Chicolini: “Dollars! There’s-a where my uncle lives! Dollars, Taxes.”</p>	<p>Minister of Finance: “Oorlog betekent hogere census.”</p> <p>Chicolini: “Hé, mijn oom woont in Texas.”</p> <p>Minister of Finance: “Nee, ik bedoel belasting, dollars.”</p> <p>Chicolini: “Daar woont hij! Dallas, Texas.”</p>
SO	Taxes and dollars (money) vs. Dallas, Texas	Taxes and dollars (money) vs. Dallas, Texas
LM	Cratylism (Homophony)	Cratylism (Homophony)
NS	Dialogue	Dialogue

### Sexually suggestive puns and wordplay

	ST	TT
LA	<p>Mrs. Teasdale: “As chairwoman of the reception committee, I welcome you with open arms.”</p> <p>Firefly: “Is that so? How late do you stay open?”</p>	<p>Mrs. Teasdale: “Als voorzitter van ‘t ontvangstcomité ontvang ik u met open armen.”</p> <p>Firefly: “Echt? En tot hoe laat blijft u open?”</p>
SO	Open vs. open	Open vs. open
LM	Cratylism (lexical homonymy)	Cratylism (lexical homonymy)

	and false reasoning	and false reasoning
NS	Dialogue	Dialogue

	ST	TT
LA	<p>Firefly (doing a dance): “Here’s one I picked up in a dance hall.”</p> <p>Firefly (pointing to Mrs. Teasdale): “Here’s another one I picked up in a dance hall.”</p>	<p>Firefly: “Dit ken ik uit een dancing.”</p> <p>Firefly: “Dit ken ik ook uit een dancing.”</p>
SO	Picked up vs. picked up	Know from vs. know from
LM	Cratylism (phrasal homonymy)	Cratylism (phrasal homonymy)
NS	Dialogue	Dialogue

	ST	TT
LA	<p>Mrs. Teasdale: “Your excellency, the eyes of the world are upon you. Notables from every country have gathered here in your honor. This is a gala day for you.”</p> <p>Firefly: “Well, a gal a day is enough for me. I don’t think I could handle any more.”</p>	<p>Mrs. Teasdale: “Uwe excellentie, de hele wereld kijkt naar u. Vooraanstaande personen uit alle landen zijn ter ere van u hier. Een bijzondere dag voor u.”</p> <p>Firefly: “Ik had liever een bijzondere nacht.”</p>
SO	A day of celebration vs. one woman per day	A day of celebration vs. spending the night with a woman
LM	Cratylism (homophony)	False reasoning
NS	Dialogue	Dialogue

	ST	TT
LA	Firefly: “A man doesn’t live who can call a Firefly an upstart. Why, the Mayflower was full of Fireflies and a few horseflies too. The fireflies were on the upper deck, and the horseflies were on the fireflies.”	Firefly: “Niemand noemt een Firefly een parvenu. De “Mayflower” zat vol met Firefly’s en ongedierte. De Firefly’s waren bovendecks en ’t ongedierte zat op de Firefly’s.”
SO	Names of people vs. animals	Names of people vs. animals
LM	False reasoning	False reasoning
NS	Dialogue	Dialogue

#### Visual Puns

	ST	TT
LA	Trentino: “But I asked you to dig up something I can use against Firefly. Did you bring me his record?”	Trentino: “Ik wou dat u iets vond tegen Firefly. Moest hij wel eens de plaat poetsen?”
SO	Personal record vs. gramophone record	Dutch expression relating to the word ‘record’ vs. gramophone record.
LM	Cratylism (lexical homonymy)	Cratylism
NS	Dialogue	Dialogue

	ST	TT
LA	Firefly: “Gentlemen, this is the last straw.”	Firefly: “De maat is vol.”
SO	Expression vs. straw hat	None



LM	Homonymy	None
NS	Dialogue	Dialogue

	ST	TT
LA	<p>Firefly: “Where’s my Stradivarius?”</p> <p>Soldier: “Here sir.”</p> <p>Firefly: “I’ll show them they can’t fiddle around with ol’ Firefly.”</p>	<p>Firefly: “Waar is mijn Stradivarius?”</p> <p>Soldier: “Hier.”</p> <p>Firefly: “Ik zal die klooiviolen eens wat laten zien.”</p>
SO	Fiddle vs. fiddle around	Fiddle vs. swearword
LM	Cratylism	None
NS	Dialogue	Dialogue

#### Culture-specific puns and wordplay in other Marx Brothers movies

	ST	TT
LA	<p>Captain Spaulding: “Play the song about Montreal.”</p> <p>Ravelli: “Montreal?”</p> <p>Captain Spaulding: “<i>I’m a Dreamer, Montreal.</i>”</p>	<p>Captain Spaulding: “Speelt u toch het lied over Montreal.”</p> <p>Ravelli: Montreal?</p> <p>Captain Spaulding: “<i>I’m a Dreamer, Montreal.</i>”</p>
SO	City vs. name of a song	City vs. name of a song
LM	Cratylism (homophony)	Cratylism (homophony)
NS	Dialogue	Dialogue

	ST	TT
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LA	Driftwood: “You're willing to pay him a thousand dollars a night just for singing? Why, you can get a phonograph record of <i>Minnie the Moocher</i> for 75 cents. And for a buck and a quarter, you can get Minnie.”	Driftwood: “Duizend dollar voor een beetje zingen? <i>Minnie the Moocher</i> heb je voor drie kwartjes. Twee erbij en je hebt Minnie.”
SO	A song title vs. a name of a woman	A song title vs. a name of a woman.
LM	False reasoning	False reasoning
NS	Dialogue	Dialogue

	ST	TT
LA	<p>Driftwood: “No need of you reading that, because these are duplicates.”</p> <p>Fiorello: “Yeah. Is a duplicate. Duplicates.”</p> <p>Driftwood: “I say, they’re duplicates.”</p> <p>Fiorello: “Oh yes, they’re duplicates.”</p> <p>Driftwood: “Don’t you know what duplicates are?”</p> <p>Fiorello: “Sure, those five kids up in Canada.”</p>	<p>Driftwood: “Lees het maar niet. Het zijn duplicaten.”</p> <p>Fiorello: “Duplicaten, hè?”</p> <p>Driftwood: “Ik zei: het zijn duplicaten.”</p> <p>Fiorello: “Ja ja, duplicaten.”</p> <p>Driftwood: “Weet je wat dat zijn?”</p> <p>Fiorello: “Die vijfing uit Canada.”</p>
SO	A duplicate of a paper vs. twins	A duplicate of a paper vs. twins

LM	Cratylism	Cratylism
NS	Dialogue	Dialogue

	ST	TT
LA	Driftwood: “Do you rhumba?”  Woman: “Why, yes.”  Driftwood: “Well, take a rhumba from one to ten!”	Driftwood: “Danst u ook mambo’s?”  Woman: “Natuurlijk.”  Driftwood: “Pas maar op, anders wordt mam boos.”
SO	Rhumba vs. number	Mambo vs. an angry mother
LM	Cratylism (homophony)	Cratylism (homophony)
NS	Dialogue	Dialogue

	ST	TT
LA	Loophole: “Goodbye Mr. Chimps.”	Loophole: “Dag, Mr Aap.”
SO	Chimpansee vs. famous novel/movie	None
LM	Homophony	None
NS	Dialogue	Dialogue

### Sexually suggestive puns and wordplay in other movies

	ST	TT
LA	Connie: “Oh, you're perfectly safe, Professor, in this boat.”  Wagstaff: “I don't know. I was going to get a flat bottom but the girl at the boat house didn't have one.”	Connie: “Geen angst, deze boot is veilig.”  Wagstaff: “Ik weet het niet, ik wilde een platte bodem, maar het meisje had er geen.”

SO	Sexual vs. non-sexual	Sexual vs. non-sexual
LM	Cratylism	Cratylism
NS	Dialogue	Dialogue

	ST	TT
LA	Henderson: "Say! How did those two beds get together?"  Driftwood: "Well, you know how those things are, they breed like rabbits."	Henderson: "Hoe komen die twee bedden bij elkaar?"  Driftwood: "Je kent ze toch, het zijn net konijnen."
SO	Get together (non-sexual) vs. get together (sexual)	Get together (non-sexual) vs. get together (sexual)
LM	Cratylism (phrasal homonymy)	Cratylism (phrasal homonymy)
NS	Dialogue	Dialogue

#### Visual puns in other Marx Brothers movies

	ST	TT
LA	Chandler: "Three cheers for Captain Spaulding!"	Chandler: "Driewerf hoera!"
SO	Cheers vs. chairs	None
LM	Cratylism (paronymy)	None
NS	Dialogue	Dialogue

	ST	TT
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LA	Kornblow: "Who's he talking to?"  Corbuccio: "Salt Lake City."	Kornblow: "Met wie praat hij?"  Corbuccio: "Salt Lake City."
SO	Salt vs. name of a city	Salt vs. name of a city
LM	Cratylism	Cratylism
NS	Dialogue	Dialogue