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*The Big Bang Thesis*

*Translating Cultural Intertextual References in Subtitles*

**Abstract**

Due to English becoming an obligatory subject in primary and secondary school the Dutch have a reasonable comprehension of the English language. This leads to the Dutch spotting “errors” in their subtitled television shows and films every now and then. Providing proper subtitles can be challenging when there are references involved that may be particularly related to a specific culture. In this thesis, the focus is the rendering of cultural intertextual references. Jan Pedersen offers an extensive overview of parameters that are crucial to subtitling and provides a foundation for decision-making. Even though the parameters interact and influence one another, the genre forms the core in the decision-making process, as humour and drama have different aims. The centrality and transculturality of a reference shows the importance of a reference in the source text. Then, the polysemiotic nature of subtitling and the co-text can guide in rendering the reference. Extratextuality determines to what extent a reference exists outside of the source text. Finally, media-specific constraints are a constant factor, which is a parameter that affects every aspect of subtitling and is not unique to the rendering of cultural intertextual references.

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**1 Introduction**

It is not uncommon to find “errors” in subtitles. The most uttered phrase while people are watching an English TV-show is “but that is not what is being said,” and I, too, find myself occasionally talking to my TV spotting errors. It is for that reason subtitles fascinate me, and it is for that same reason it is interesting to have a closer look at this phenomenon. There are many difficulties to subtitling – which can cause these “errors” – such as the translation of humour, vulgar language, and style, which are too great to discuss within this thesis, and therefore the focus of this thesis will be limited to cultural intertextual references, which will be explained in detail later on.

There have been many papers written about this and similar topics, and there are many terms used to describe problems in relation to cultural references. It is therefore important to make a distinction between the terms and phenomena described and what particular phenomenon is to be discussed in this thesis. It is also important to establish why this particular phenomenon forms a problem in subtitling, and whether this problem can be solved, for example by use of a model.

The main question this thesis therefore seeks to answer is: To what extent do cultural intertextual references have to be adapted to the Dutch target culture in subtitles? To answer this, it is important to ask what exactly cultural intertextual references entail, why they propose problems in translation, what the possible translation strategies are and which of these strategies are most desirable. This will be explored in relation to a comedy show, and the findings will therefore be related to the rendering of cultural intertextual references for comedies.

* 1. **Methodology**

The method used to answer these questions is primarily by literature. First, it is important to establish the translation problem. It is further explained how this problem is of particular difficulty in the Netherlands. Then, it is also important to establish problems of audiovisual translation, as these pose unique problems as opposed to other forms of translation. I will then elaborate more on the different types and degrees of references, as not every reference can be treated equally. Furthermore, it is also important to highlight the dangers of simplifying references, as it can obstruct the audience. Finally, possible translation strategies are set out in order to find a top-down model for rendering cultural intertextual references. Such a model will be explored by means of an annotated translation.

This annotated translation is based on an episode from *The Big Bang Theory*. The reason for translating this particular show is because the episodes are rich with various references. The episode in question, “The Comic-Con Conundrum,” offers a wide variety of references that can be identified as being cultural intertextual references. Therefore, this can be useful to design a translation model.

As mentioned in the introduction, audience members may find “errors” in subtitles, and might therefore prefer subtitles that are based on the source culture, as opposed to the target culture. This means that the preferred strategy will be retention. Nevertheless, many factors influence the translation and decision-making process, and therefore some strategies may be preferred over others.

**2 Theoretical Framework**

This chapter seeks to set out translation constraints with regard to audiovisual translation and translation strategies. The findings will be combined with the case study to see which translation strategies are most desirable for cultural intertextual references. Though there are institutional factors (such as guidelines, set translations, and deadlines) also influencing screen translation, they do not inherently contribute to decision-making and are therefore excluded. This thesis seeks to create a model to facilitate decision-making for translators, eventually aiding in e.g. time-constraints by institutions.

**2.1 Extralinguistic Cultural References**

The most general term used to describe cultural translation problems is ‘culture-specific words,’ which is often also seen in other variations such as ‘culture-specific elements’ and ‘culture-bound words.’ Shiryaeva and Badea state that these terms are interchangeable and convey the same definition, referring to “words and combinations of words denoting objects and concepts characteristic of the way of life, the culture, the social and historical development of one nation and alien to another” (Florin, quoted in Shiryaeva and Badea 884). These culture-specific words therefore cover a wide spectrum of words and items that relate to a specific culture. Because this spectrum is too wide to encompass, researchers have attempted to create multiple models by grouping culture-specific words into categories to find appropriate translation strategies. An example of this is the term realia, which is in turn subdivided into various other categories, of which the English language distinguishes proper names, place-names, materials (objects, food and drinks) and intertextual references (Tănase). Categories in realia can differ per country, though some categories can be applied to almost every country. Diederik Grit states that even within one language area realia can be varied (189).

Jan Pedersen also discussed this topic, and created a scientific term with its own definition in order to prevent misunderstanding and because “it is less ambiguous to use metalinguistic terms that are not part of the vocabulary of the language studied” (44). In other words, what Pedersen suggests is that the term “realia” can have different meanings depending on the reader, and it is difficult to deconstruct such an individual interpretation of the term. As Pedersen continues, “realia” has multiple definitions in the *Oxford English Dictionary*, and is therefore insufficient to use as a term for the particular translation problem of interest. Pedersen defines his term, Extralinguistic Cultural Reference (abbreviated to ECR), as “a reference that is attempted by means of any cultural linguistic expression, which refers to an extralinguistic entity or process. The referent of the said expression may prototypically be assumed to be identifiable to a relevant audience as this referent is within the encyclopaedic knowledge of this audience” (43). A more accessible definition Pedersen gives for ECRs is that they “are references to places, people, institutions, food etc. that you may not know even if you know the language in question” (44), therefore acknowledging that his definition does resonate with the term ‘realia,’ but as mentioned earlier his term, ECR, is used to prevent ambiguity about its exact meaning. Moreover, ECRs are not only of linguistic reference, but can also be of allusive nature, therefore making ECRs not limited to nouns and extending them to verbs and adjectives (51). Finally, ECRs can be divided into domains, as Pedersen puts it, such as proper names (subdivided into personal names, geographical names, institutional names and brand names), professional titles, literature, entertainment, sports and education (59-60).

The literature and entertainment categories are of intertextual nature and also have an overlapping category as, especially in current society, many literary works have become film adaptations. It is particularly the entertainment – but also the overlapping – category that is of interest in this thesis, therefore excluding other categories Pedersen has proposed. For this reason, I will refer to literary references as Literary Intertextual References (LIRs) and entertainment references as Cultural Intertextual References (CIRs). As explained by Pedersen, *cultural* can be defined as “relating to a certain culture” (46), but since LIR and CIR are tied to two distinctive categories (within ECRs), the term *cultural* here refers to that what relates to a certain culture within the entertainment category, namely, songs, film, television, dance and art. The notion of *intertextuality* is that a given text may have various relationships with other texts. This can be done by use of “anagram, allusion, adaptation, translation, parody, pastiche, imitation, and other kinds of transformation” (Baldick), i.e. citation.

Due to the fact that different terms are used in Translation Studies for describing the same phenomenon, the terms in this paper are interchangeably and will have the definition of ECRs, i.e. when allusion is used it is synonymous to ECR etc. Moreover, ECR will be used whenever possible.

For a better understanding of a CIR, it is useful to portray the particular problem they pose by means of an example. This particular CIR comes from the Netflix television show *WHAT/IF*. The main character of this dramatic thriller is characterized by a man, Liam Storm: “Lisa Ruiz-Donovan, part-time CEO, part-time Nancy Drew” (5:03-15). However, in the Dutch subtitles Nancy Drew is translated by the British equivalent, namely Sherlock Holmes. Sherlock Holmes is a more notorious character than America’s Nancy Drew. This can cause audiences to be confused because they do not hear the name Sherlock Holmes they read in the subtitles. The choice of translating Nancy Drew to Sherlock Holmes can be justified, namely, it refers to a fictional character that is known to be one of the best private investigators. If Nancy Drew was retained here, the audience could either wonder who Nancy Drew is and where she comes from, as there is no earlier reference or character in the series with that name, or not understand the essence of the reference which is that the main character acts as a private investigator. A possible translation for this line could be to explicate it by inserting private detective or P.I. before “Nancy Drew,” but this is highly dependent on the time constraints – a constraint that influences subtitles more than any other factor.

**2.2 Translating English into Dutch**

In the field of audiovisual translation English is a difficult language to translate into Dutch. This is for various reasons, as English is a subject taught to children in primary and secondary school. Moreover, the media landscape is mainly dominated by the Dutch and English language, as opposed to any other language. Consequently Dutch audiences are more likely to understand cultural concepts due to the long exposure to English and American television shows. Dutch subtitles for Spanish television shows are less likely to be critiqued, as Spanish is not taught at every secondary school in the Netherlands, nor is it an obligatory subject as opposed to English.

**2.2.1 Comprehension of the English language in the Netherlands**

The most prominent reason why ECRs are a translation problem for English-Dutch translation in general is because the Dutch have a better comprehension of the English language as opposed to other foreign languages. Alison Edwards notes that “the Netherlands has a long history of multilingualism” (16). Though this was primarily French and German, after the two world wars and rise of globalization in the 20th century, “English has become increasingly entrenched in Dutch society” (16). Moreover, it is questioned whether English should be called a second language rather than a foreign language, as English has become widely used in public spheres (17).

Furthermore, English is taught in the Netherlands in primary school, but especially in secondary school, which contributes to language learning. As Edwards states, English became a compulsory subject in secondary education in 1968, and became compulsory in 1986 for the last two years of primary school (27). She also notes that “[a]ll levels of education in the Netherlands have been characterized by an increase in English, in the form of both EFL [English Foreign Language] and bilingual education” (26-27). Ammon McConnell also states that “the Netherlands is certainly one of the most advanced countries in Europe concerning the integration of instruction of English in the national education system. The whole process was seriously begun in the 1950’s and its expansion has continued unabated since then” (qtd. in Edwards 27). Therefore, the majority of Dutch people have at least a basic understanding of the English language, which means that audiences may unconsciously process the English spoken language while reading the Dutch subtitles.

Moreover, watching subtitled content also attributes to the language-learning process. As Annamaria Caimi states, “the use of subtitles facilitates linguistic and cultural comprehension, in both formal and informal settings” (167). Thus, watching subtitled shows and programs aid in the language-learning process, but also enhances understanding of cultural concepts of another country. Even so, countries that use subtitling as opposed dubbing “exhibit a better command of the foreign language they are accustomed to listening to” (168). This language-learning process happens incidental according to Caimi, “that is, it is subconscious and unintentional” (168). Subtitles are beneficial to “all levels of language acquisition, from elementary to advanced, and can serve many language/culture goals” (169). Consequently, audiences process the English spoken language while reading the Dutch subtitles, unconsciously picking up on the English language and cultural concepts.

**2.2.2 Dutch Media Landscape**

The media landscape of a country is also an important aspect which influences language comprehension. Not surprisingly, the majority of television channels and television shows are Dutch. However, media products are also imported from other countries, of which America and England are the major suppliers, which results into English being the main source language of imported media (Kuipers 1007) as opposed to other languages. This adds to the English language input for Dutch audiences. In regard to subtitles, the “increasing globalization produces a wider social and cultural shift that affects screen translation” (1007), resulting in a demand for more authentic (i.e. close to the source) subtitles (1007) to preserve cultural identity.

**2.3 Translation Constraints**

When it comes to audiovisual translation, there are many factors that need to be taken into account in order to create proper subtitles. First and foremost, as the term audiovisual suggests, it deals with *audio* and *visual*, i.e. sound and image. As Kuipers explains, “laughter on a comedy laughtrack must be preceded by a joke. When the original joke is untranslatable, subtitlers must invent a new one. This new joke cannot be so different that audiences, who can hear the original, note the change” (992). Both Kuipers and Pedersen recognize other constraints such as space in subtitles (992; 18), as well as the conversion of speech into written language (992; 11). However, Pedersen provides a more extensive overview of subtitling constraints.

Primarily, subtitles have to appear on screen at the correct time. This task is called spotting or cueing. Luckily, nowadays this can be easily done by software. However, in order for the spotting to work, the lines cannot be too long (Pedersen 14). Moreover, a subtitler has to edit the text of subtitles in such a way “that it meets the spatial and temporal contstraints of the medium” (15). People talk and listen faster than they read, especially if there is also sound and image at play. Therefore, conversation from the original text has to be adapted and reduced (15).

Continuing with spatial constraints, a line can only fit a certain amount of characters, especially since it is preferred to use a maximum of two lines in a frame. Lines are therefore measured in characters, as opposed to words, as logically some words take up more space than others. Therefore, special characters such as spaces and commas also add up to the number of characters (19). Other factors, such as italics, bold and capital letters take up more space, as well as broader letters such as the letters ‘m’ and ‘w’ (19). According to Pedersen, “a full line is considered to have 36 characters, and a full two-liner 72 characters” of which normally one line is on average between 28-32 characters (19).

Temporal constraints are tied to spatial constraints. As mentioned before, the audience needs to be able to read the lines to comprehend the message. Therefore, the subtitles must be displayed long enough for the audience, also known as exposure time. Subtitlers on average allow “three seconds for a full one-liner and six seconds for a two-liner for TV subtitles” (19) as an average. Moreover, reading speed, exposure time and space are also influences by lexis and syntax. More complex language and larger words take up more time to read (20). As earlier mentioned, there is sound and image input which affects reading speed and exposure time. When there are more action scenes, the audience’s attention is more focused on what’s happening on screen as opposed to what is being said in the meantime. This may require the text to be displayed longer than in a different situation (20).

Although according to Pedersen it is not widely discussed, there is a phenomenon that needs to be taken into account. It was briefly mentioned earlier that a translator has to edit the subtitles, which entails the adapting or reducing of the source text. This is known as condensation. As Pedersen states, “condensation is not a necessary property of subtitles; it is just extremely common. So common, in fact, that it is virtually impossible to discuss the process of subtitling without discussing condensation” (20). Due to the spatial and temporal constraints, not all verbal content of the source text can be preserved in the subtitles. Or, as Pedersen puts it: “Something usually has to be left out, or rather: the remaining TT [Target Text] message has to be edited so as to (ideally) say the same thing, in fewer words (or at least in fewer characters), as the ST [Source Text]” (20). Condensation is influenced by “the pace and complexity of the dialogue” (20) but condensation does not always need to be the case, for example in slow conversation or captions. According to Gottlieb, “[e]specially with up-tempo speech, the subtitler may choose to sacrifice close to 50% of the dialogue [measured in word count]” (qtd. in Pedersen 20).

For this case study condensation has been taken into account, however, it is not the primary concern of this translation. Attention has been paid to condensation for rendering CIRs, but elsewhere in the text more liberty has been taken in this regard.

**2.4 Reference Categories**

Not every intertextual reference is the same, nor are they of the same nature. Irene Ranzato defines two types of allusion, which can form some guidelines that will further help translators finding the right strategy. Ranzato states that “[a]llusions can be overt and covert. The category of overt allusions includes intertextual references explicitly quoted in the text. Formal implicitness or covertness is traditionally considered a defining characteristic of allusion” (93). Here, the term allusion is made more flexible in such a way that it reflects the definition of CIRs, as accordingly to Ranzato allusions can be “exact quotations or proper names or otherwise “performed linguistic material” and even state openly their source reference” (94). In short, overt CIRs can be divided into proper nouns and key phrases whereas covert CIRs are adapted references, which are often key phrases and on a rare occasion, as in the example given in the introduction, a proper noun.

Moreover, any type of reference is also bound to time, as Elena Tănase explains:

The degree of transculinity of these references varies first of all according to the distance in time between the airing of the sitcom and the period the element referred to (movie, book, show or song) was successful in the source culture. As in the case of other culture-bound references . . . they are mostly likely to become microcultural in time. (103)

In other words, these references will become obsolete with time, even for source language audiences (104).

The degree of distribution also has an influence on references. Some references are comprehensible on an international level, others are more national, and some may be local. Transcultural references are concerned with popular culture, such as *Star Wars* and superhero franchises with characters such as Iron Man and Superman. Also characters like Sherlock Holmes – from either the BBC TV show or films – and Harry Potter are an example of this. Transcultural references exist in both the source culture and target culture. Monocultural references are slightly less well-known as they are bound to the source culture, but can nonetheless still be known by a majority of audiences, especially American or British references, as these countries account for a majority of the media landscape. References may also appear to be infracultural references in which a majority of the source cultural audience does not recognize the reference. This concept is known as transculturality, i.e. how well known a reference is (Pedersen 106-9). Transculturality is also defined as one of the seven parameters for decision-making by Pedersen.

**2.4.1 Parameters for Rendering References**

Even though ECRs are a much wider spectrum, these parameters will aid decision-making for rendering CIRs as well. As mentioned transculturality is one of the seven parameters Pedersen has set for rendering of ECRs. However, there is something to remark on transcultural references, which is that the spectrum of these references differ per culture, as the references are not necessarily bound to the source culture, as well as that it depends on the cultural distance between the source culture and target culture (Pedersen 107). According to Pedersen the monocultural references form the translation problem, as these are known to source culture audiences and not necessary to the target audience (107). Infracultural references are not a translation problem, as these references are only designed for a specific audience who will understand the references and are “accessible intra-diegetically” (108) in the source text. They are regarded as marginal ECRs (109).

For a clear overview of the parameters I have assembled them in a chart:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Parameter** | **Explanation** | **Elaboration** |
| Transculturality | The distribution of a reference, i.e. how well known a reference is. | As previously explained, there is a distinction in transcultural, monocultural, and Infracultural references. (106-9) |
| Media-specific constraints | Spatial and temporal constraints. | See chapter 2.3. |
| Extratextuality | To what extent the reference exists outside of the source text. | Text External references exist in cultures.  Text Internal references only exist in the source text, i.e. film or show. (110) |
| Centrality | The importance of a reference to the source text. A reference can be central on a micro- and macro-level. Centrality is the most influential parameter and “works on a gradual scale” (111). | If the ECR at hand is central on a global level it may be of importance to the subject matter and therefore difficult to use a different strategy than Retention or Official Equivalent. If an ECR is only briefly mentioned in passing the ECR is peripheral on the macro-level. To render such an ECR would then depend on the centrality of the ECR on a micro-level. If the ECR is also peripheral to the micro-level it is more likely that the ECR will be omitted. When an ECR is central on a micro-level, e.g. built upon a joke, more inventive translation strategies are considered (112). |
| Polysemiotics | The nature of subtitling. The four channels of semiotic texts may carry semiotic information that overlap, causing some redundancy. This is not always the case, and can help in rendering subtitles. It depends on the input of these four channels how much guidance the target audience may need from subtitles. | There are four channels:   1. The non-verbal visual channel (i.e. the picture) 2. The non-verbal audio channels (e.g. music and sound effects) 3. The verbal audio channel (i.e. the dialogue) 4. The verbal visual channels (displays and captions). (113) |
| Co-text | The overlapping of information in the dialogue. | If an ECR returns or has been explained earlier in the dialogue, the subtitler does not need to explain it or explicate it for every (re)iteration. (114) |
| Subtitling Situation | Not found *in* the text but rather *about* the text. | The aim or function of the text. This will be explored in the textual analysis of the corpus text. (115-16) |

The most important parameters are Centrality and Transculturality, as these are the core to decision making. It will then depend on Polysemiotics and the Co-text to what extent a reference has to be translated.

**2.5 Consequences of Simplification**

Audience reception has become increasingly important in Translation Studies. Especially in regard to allusions, “readers who recognise a creative allusion . . . attain a deeper understanding of a text, which means that they are in some way participating in its creation and can consequently feel a sense of fulfilment because they feel part of a restricted circle of readers who are on the same wavelength as the author” (Ranzato 88). According to Ranzato, “allusions create a special relationship between the audience and the text itself and, to a certain extent, they presuppose a disposition on the part of the target culture audience to retrieve information and make associations which are usually more than just encyclopedic as they require a certain degree of specialistic knowledge” (91). In other words, in order to understand the text to its fullest they may need extratextual knowledge. As Ranzato puts it, “[t]he referents of allusions belong to a body of ‘assumed shared knowledge,’ which may be general or specialised, be part of the source culture, of the target culture or of any third culture, but whose nature is different from realistic culture specific references” (93).

Allusions can therefore be said to have a “sophisticated quality to them” (96). They form a sensitive category in Translation Studies because of “‘the presumed ignorance’ of the target culture audience by the translators . . . presuming that the target culture audience might be ignorant of that particular content, translators may feel the need to simplify or alter the content itself in order for the audience to understand” (96). That is, the translators might feel the need to simplify references because the audience might not have the specific knowledge needed to understand a reference. The difficult task as a translator then, is to judge whether a certain reference belongs to this “body of assumed shared knowledge.”

In audiovisual translation, the line between domestication and foreignization is blurry (Tanase 104), because the translator has to carefully decide whether or not a particular reference is known to the target audience. Domestication is a way of translating that seeks to adapt cultural items, whereas foreignization seeks to preserve the cultural identity, and thus tries to preserve cultural items (Paloposki 40). In regard to this strategy, scholars invoke upon the concept of the contract of illusion (Pedersen; Tanase). The contract of illusions holds that “the viewer has to suspend his or her disbelief in order to enjoy the film” (Pedersen 22), which Pedersen also finds to be true for subtitles. Viewers are to believe that the subtitles are the dialogue, “that what you read is actually what people say” (22). This is of course not the case, as not only is speech a different mode of communicating; “[t]he language is cleaned up” which leads to the exclusion of hesitations or false starts (22), and the dialogue is often reduced to a third. Important to note is that in subtitling countries “people grow up with subtitling, and the contract of illusion is something they have internalized” (22).

Due to this suspension of disbelief, “subtitlers have traditionally tried to make their work as unobstrusive as possible” (22). To achieve this, subtitlers try to create transparent translations; or to put it differently, “good subtitles are those you *never* notice” (Lindeberg qtd. in Pedersen 22). As Pedersen explains, viewers do not have the option to go back to something they did not understand. For subtitles to be fluent do not necessarily means that domestication has to be used to achieve this (23). In fact, as Kuipers explains, Dutch screen translators think that “good subtitles are ‘natural,’ ‘neutral,’ ‘inconspicuous,’ and ‘faithful to the original,’” (993) which leads to the preference of foreignization strategies.

Even though it is preferred to use foreignization in subtitles, it does not entail that this should always be the case. In terms of translating references, a balance must be found between domestication and foreignization, since not every reference is easily picked up by the audience. The preference for foreignization, however, does provide a good starting point for translation strategies.

**2.6 Translation Strategies**

As Pedersen explains, “the treatment of [Extralinguistic Cultural References] was so varied, and symptomatic for the translational style of the subtitler, that their significance became apparent from the start” (43). Cultural references are important because translators do not only require to have “bilingual ability” but also require “bi-cultural vision:” translators act as a mediator between cultures with differences in ideologies and customs and need to find a way to translate these differences (43). As Ritva Leppihalme states, the difficulty in translating allusions is not the allusion itself, but the connotation that the allusion has in the source culture, which may be weaker in the target culture. It is important in decision-making which connotations are strong and which connotations are weak in the target culture (79-80)

Multiple translation strategies have been set out to translate cultural references. Although some models are not specifically designed for audiovisual translation, such as Leppihalme’s model for allusions, they can provide useful insight in how to approach references in subtitles. Important to note is that, as Tatsuya Fukushima and David Major state, translating cultural references has to be done on a case-by-case basis rather than using a fixed strategy (60). The aim of this case study is to find out whether some strategies are more frequently used, and therefore create a model that shows which strategies are preferred. What follows is an overview of strategies taken from Leppihalme and Pedersen.

In Leppihalme’s approach, the first step for figuring out which strategy to use is to analyse the reference in “micro- and macrocontext” (78). It depends what function the reference has in its context: is it important to understand it or not? E.g. a joke that includes or builds upon a reference may only be funny if the audience understands what exactly is referred to. Next, Leppihalme makes a clear distinction between a variety of allusions that can be used, namely, “proper-name (PN) allusions and key-phrase (KP) allusions” (78). Proper-names usually consist of a few words (e.g. names as Harry Potter or film titles such as *For Your Eyes Only*), whereas key-phrases refer to (adapted) sentences or segments from famous lines (e.g. the phrase “the name is Bond, James Bond” has been reiterated in various forms). In general, PNs rarely requires any change, whereas KPs will often require some rearrangement in phrasing (78).

For translating PNs Leppihalme suggests three options: “To keep the name unaltered, to change it, [or] to omit it” (78-79). These three options are then further divided into subcategories:

1. Retention of name . . . with three subcategories:
   1. Use the name as such;
   2. Use the name, adding some guidance;
   3. Use the name, adding a detailed explanation, for example a footnote.
2. Replacement of name by another . . . with two subcategories;
   1. Replace the name by another SL name;
   2. Replace the name by a TL name.
3. Omission of name; with two subcategories:
   1. Omit the name but transfer the sense by other means, for example by a common noun;
   2. Omit the name and the allusion altogether. (79)

What Leppihalme also points out is that there are some exceptions to some proper names:

Changes are required, for instance, for the names of rulers, many biblical, classical and literary persons, etc. . . . The same goes for certain place names . . . and many names of books, films etc. which have their ‘official,’ sometimes very different translated forms (79).

For key-phrases Leppihalme suggests the following strategies:

1. Use of a standard translation;
2. Minimum change, that is, a literal translation, without regard to connotative or contextual meaning . . .;
3. Extra-allusive guidance added in the text, where the translator follows his/her assessment of the needs of TT readers by adding information (on sources etc.) . . .;
4. The use of footnotes, endnotes, translator’s prefaces and other explicit explanations not slipped into the text but overtly given as additional information;
5. Simulated familiarity or internal marking, that is, the addition of intra-allusive allusion-signalling features (marked wording or syntax) that depart from the style of the context, thus signaling the presence of borrowed words;
6. Replacement by a preformed TL item;
7. Reduction of the allusion to sense by rephrasal, in other words, making its meaning overt and dispensing with the allusive KP itself;
8. Re-creation, using a fusion of techniques: creative construction of a passage which hints at the connotations of the allusion or other special effects created by it;
9. Omission of the allusion. (84)

There is something to remark on these strategies, as they are not specifically designed for subtitles nor audiovisual translation. Namely, footnotes cannot be used in an audiovisual medium. Furthermore, even though it is not entirely impossible to add information (e.g. by means of an adjective), it can be difficult since the majority of dialogue already has to be condensed. Nonetheless, Leppihalme offers useful approaches to different types of references.

Moreover, the strategies are highly influenced by the parameters set out by Pedersen. A highly transcultural and central reference will be rendered by either retention or an official equivalent. Monocultural references are more susceptible to other strategies. The co-text and polysemiotics can determine whether the audience will have enough information to retain the reference as is, or whether it needs to be specified, generalized, replaced, and so forth. Infracultural references are first dependent on their centrality. If it is vital to the source text the reference has to be rendered and is also susceptible to inventive strategies. However, if the reference is insignificant it could be omitted.

Pedersen, on the other hand, uses a less extensive model and is specifically designed for the translation of ECRs:

*Retention*. Here the ST ECR is retained in the subtitle unchanged, or slightly adapted to meet TL requirements. It could be marked off from the rest of the text, e.g. by the use of italics.

*Specification*. More information is added, making the subtitled ECR more specific than the ST ECR. This is done by completing or fleshing out a name or an acronym (Completion) or by adding more semantic content, such as an adding someone’s occupation or an evaluative adjective (Addition).

*Direct Translation*. The only thing that gets changed using this strategy is the language; no semantic alteration is made. Proper nouns are rarely translated, but it may be used for e.g. government agencies.

*Generalization*. This strategy makes the TT rendering less specific than the ST ECR. It can be done either by using a Superordinate Term or a Paraphrase.

*Substitution*. The ST ECR is replaced by another ECR, either from the SC or the TC. Alternatively, the ECR could be replaced by another ECR, either from the SC or the TC.

*Omission*. The ST ECR is not reproduced in any way in the TT. Toury has successfully shown that Omission is a legitimate translation strategy, and it is perhaps more used in subtitling than in any other form of translation, due to the constraints of the medium.

*Official Equivalent*. Either through common usage or by some administrative decision, a SC ECR may have a ready-made Official TL Equivalent. (76)

Moreover, Pedersen does not make a clear distinction between NPs and KPs as Leppihalme does.

Another important factor that will determine the preferred strategies is the attitude of translators towards subtitling culture specific elements. Kuipers has touched upon the preferences of Dutch translators and the Dutch subtitling ‘culture.’ Subtitles are generally more neutral as opposed to the original, which may lead to untranslatable terms to be omitted. Another aspect of Dutch subtitles is that they adhere to grammatical rules. Dialogue that may include mistakes, colloquialisms, accents or a dialect are not transferred to subtitles as they are believed to be too conspicuous. Moreover, vulgar language is often mitigated, “because its effect is said to be stronger in writing” (994). Kuipers also concluded that “Dutch translators prefer ‘foreignizing’ translation strategies that aim to preserve original meanings whenever possible” (994). This suggests that the first strategy towards translating CIRs is retention.

Fukushima and Major state that subtitles should be “*faithful* but *accessible*” (60), conveying that there should be a balance between preserving the cultural identity of the ST and target audience comprehension (60).

**3 Textual Analysis**

Before analysing the translation problems it is important to first analyse the source text. Especially in relation to CIRs, it is important that references are rendered properly for the target language translation. Another aspect of this is to make sure the subtitles contain the correct spelling of names or other words that may be relevant to the source text (Pedersen 15). Christiane Nord has provided some useful tools to analyse texts. Most information can be gathered by asking one question according to the Laswell formula, which can be applied to both the source and target text: “Who says what in which channel to whom with what effect?” (Nord 145). There are also two extratextual questions which relate to when and where. To answer these questions, it is useful to break the questions down and start analysing the source text first: *who* produces the product? *The Big Bang Theory* is a television show that airs on the CBS Network. CBS Network is a major network in America, providing television in various areas, claiming to be “[t]he best in Late Night, Daytime, Primetime, News, Sports and Entertainment” (CBS). They are known for shows and movies such as *Star Trek*, *Big Brother* and *NCIS*, ranging from drama, comedy and reality (CBS Interactive).

The second question is *which channel* is used. Television shows are part of audiovisual media. This will be the same for the target text. However, the difference between the source text and target text is that the source text is verbal, whereas the target text has to be in a written form, which is subject to the audiovisual medium.

The most important question is to *whom*, i.e. the intended audience. The show is not stated to be designed for a specific audience, nor identified as a family show. However, since the show primarily revolves around scientist who also identify as science fiction and fantasy geeks, it might be attracting recipients who have an affinity with one of these topics, although this may not always be the case. Moreover, the characters of the show are aged around 40. Though there is not a particular age-group expected to watch the show, it is useful to know that the majority may be ranging from 30-50 years-old. Even if this may not be the case, it is useful information in regard to the content and context of the references present.

Next it is important to know what the intended effect is of the source text. *The Big Bang Theory* is labelled as a sitcom, an abbreviation for situational comedy. According to the *OED*, a sitcom is “a regular programme on television that shows the same characters in different amusing situations” (Hornby 1438). The nature of the show is therefore to amuse the audience.

Turning to the two extratextual factors, the answers are straightforward. The show is produced in the U.S.A. and therefore made for an American audience. The show in its entirety aired from 2007 till 2019 (“List”).

The same process is then applied to the target text in order to produce a translation. This analysis serves more as a “translation brief,” i.e. it seeks to find an approach to translating the source text into the target text. The series has already ended and has also aired on Dutch television, which is the starting point of this analysis. The show was aired by Veronica Network, which is a part of Talpa TV. According to Talpa TV, Veronica is a network that broadcasts blockbuster movies, foreign shows in comedy, action and drama, reality shows and football (Talpa TV). Moreover, their target audience is a young audience or those who are “young at heart” (Talpa TV).

As previously mentioned, the medium is the same, with the main difference being that the verbal source text has to be transformed into a written target text. Since the show is a sitcom, and Veronica offers comedy shows, the intended effect does not change. The aim is to offer amusement to the audience.

The extratextual factor of *where* – which ties in with *whom* – is that the source text must be adapted to a Dutch audience. The question of *when* is somewhat complicated. Overall, the seasons were synonymous to the official airing times in the U.S., but every now and then there is a rerun.

A more extensive overview of the show in general will be useful to the rendering of CIRs because the show is known for its references to not only scientific endeavours but also – as they are geeks – to science fiction and fantasy. This overview is important because there are several CIRs that are frequently reiterated throughout the show, which can make it complicated to alter such references as these have to be continuously altered in order to maintain consistency. The most frequent references pertain to franchises, namely *Star Trek*, *Star Wars*, *Harry Potter*, and *The Lord of the Rings*. Next to these franchises, the characters often talk about comic book characters, especially since a recurring character, Stuart, owns a comic book store. Though these references often refer to the comic books and its characters, most characters are widely known by people due to the film adaptations that are known as the Marvel Cinematic Universe and the DC Extended Universe.

These CIRs belong to Christiane Nord’s pragmatic translation problem category. Pragmatic translation problems are concerned with the audience’s prior knowledge (147). This is in alignment with what Ranzato called “shared knowledge.” Whether a reference can be maintained as is, or has to be familiarised depends on the knowledge of the audience about those particular references. Christiane Nord also identified three other categories of translation problems, but these are not important for the rendering of references.

The particular episode chosen for this study is “The Comic-Con Conundrum,” season 10, episode 17. In this episode there is a tension in regards to attending Comic Con in San Diego. Throughout the episode, references are made to *Star Wars*, comics (popularized by its movie adaptations), Harry Potter and therefore poses some cases that require attention for translation. The lines are arranged in such a matter to replicate subtitles, of which some lines may extend into a third line, suggesting a new frame.

**4 Annotated Translation: *The Big Bang Theory: The Comic-Con Conundrum* (S10E17)**

\* Marked sentences are condensed sentences.

The Big Bang Theory: Het Comic-Con Raadsel

*“Eerder in” The Big Bang Theory:*

*Scene: Het appartement.*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Sheldon | Interessant. Oke. |
| Raj | Wat is de schade? |
| Sheldon | Laat ik het zo stellen.  Heb je een ton en bretels? |
| Raj | Serieus? |
| Sheldon | Ik draag deze klep niet voor damesgolf. |
| Penny | Hoi. |
| Leonard | Hey. |
| Penny | Laat me raden. Jullie zetten  een fictief accountantsbureau op. |
| Leonard | We helpen Raj met zijn financiën. |
| Penny | Hij heeft een baan.  Hoe erg kan het zijn? |
| Sheldon | Zijn huur en autolease zijn enorm.  En hij winkelt en dineert ook graag.\* |
| Penny | Wacht, niet voor kleding toch?  Ik bedoel, kijk naar hem. |
| Sheldon | Hij heeft ook hoge creditcardschulden. |
| Howard | Je vader betaalde die toch? |
| Raj | Ik heb een kaart voor noodgevallen  die ik zelf betaal. |
| Sheldon | Welk noodgeval was er in de dierentuin? |
| Raj | Ik sponsor een pinguïn.  Ze verliezen hun huis door global warming,  en mijn auto rijdt 1 op 11, dus ik vond het zielig. |
| Leonard | Wat is Pink Cheeks? |
| Raj. | Intiem harsen. Niet naar kijken. |
| Leonard | Misschien heb je iemand nodig  voor je financiën. |
| Raj | Zoals een boekhouder? |
| Sheldon | Absoluut niet.  Iemand betalen die je verbied geld te spenderen  is een domme uitgave.\* |
| Howard | Wat als iemand graag mensen commandeert  en hun plezier ontneemt?\* |
| Sheldon | Hij klinkt als een sociopaat. |
| Leonard | Dat weten we niet,  zijn moeder heeft hem nooit getest. |
| Sheldon | Je hebt het over mij. Grappig.  Alhoewel het mij leuk lijkt om Raj zonder enig medelijden  aan een toe budget te verplichten. |
| Penny | Wacht, wie vertelt het aan de pinguïn? |
| Raj | Oke, Sheldon. Ik geef jou de leiding over mijn financiën.  Ik zal niks uitgeven wat jij niet goedkeurt. |
| Sheldon | Goed. Comic-Con tickets zijn vrijdag beschikbaar.  Je kunt niet mee. |
| Howard | Volgende keer beter, Pink Cheeks. |

*Opening*

*Scene: Sheldon en Amy’s appartement.*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Amy | Ga je echt naar Comic-Con? |
| Penny | Leonard wil graag dat ik meer dingen met hem doe,  dus dit jaar wil ik mee.\* |
| Amy | Dat is lief.  Je gaat het vast leuk hebben. |
| Penny | Wil je mee? |
| Amy | Nee, dankjewel.  Ik woon al ergens waar nerds naartoe gaan. |
| Penny | Alsjeblieft? Ik ging vorige maand ook met jou mee  naar iets stoms. |
| Amy | De begrafenis van mijn tante? |
| Penny | Alsjeblieft, je checkte je e-mail tijdens de lofrede. |
| Amy | Ik ga niet, maar ik vind het lief dat jij mee wilt. |
| Penny | Ik wil niet mee, maar het maakt Leonard blij.  Als ik hem in een Ewok[[1]](#footnote-1) kostuum  moet zien wurmen, het zij zo. |
| Amy | Kijk naar jezelf, je gaat naar Comic-Con  en praat over Ewoks.  Ik ben nu de coole persoon geworden. |

*Scene: De stripboekenwinkel.*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Howard | Denk je echt dat Penny  Comic-Con leuk gaat vinden? |
| Leonard | Nee. Dat maakt me ongelukkig,  iets dat Sheldon hoort te doen. |
| Sheldon | Ze gaat een hekel hebben  om in de rij te staan voor de panels. |
| Howard | En alle menigten bij de panels. |
| Sheldon | Ze gaat de panels haten. |
| Leonard | Ze gaat het niet leuk vinden  hoe vaak we panels zeggen. |
| Howard | Waarom vertel je haar niet  dat ze niet hoeft te komen? |
| Leonard | Maar ze is zo enthousiast,  dat kan ik haar niet aandoen. |
| Howard | En als je het nou zo slecht laat klinken  dat ze niet mee wilt? |
| Leonard | Dat kan ik haar wel aandoen. |
| Raj | Ongelooflijk dat Penny mee mag  en ik niet. |
| Sheldon | Je kan de panels altijd online zien.  Oh, jeetje, we zeggen het echt vaak. |
| Stuart | Panels.  Ik wilde er alleen bij horen. |
| Raj | Kom op, Sheldon, het is Comic-Con.  Geef me alleen hier geld voor, ik hoef niks anders.\* |
| Sheldon | Je gaf mij verantwoordelijkheid over je financiën.  Als je een zwakkeling waar je overheen loopt wilde,  had je Leonard moeten vragen. |
| Leonard | Zie je? Ongelukkig. |
| Raj | Oké, je hebt gelijk, ik heb het er zelf naar gemaakt.  Maar ik heb nooit een Comic-Con met jullie gemist. |
| Sheldon | Je vader heeft je misschien verwend,  maar ik doe dat niet.  Als je een ticket wilt stel ik voor  dat je een manier vind om dat geld te verdienen. |
| Howard | Ja, je bent een hoogopgeleide volwassene.  Je kan mensen geld vragen om je te slaan. |
| Raj | Maak maar grapjes.  Ik weet niet hoe jij denkt te gaan,  je hebt net een kind gekregen.\* |
| Howard | Dus? |
| Raj | Dus? Denk je echt dat Bernadette je vijf dagen naar San Diego laat gaan?\* |
| Leonard | Wacht even.  Dus ik neem Penny mee,  jij kan het niet betalen,  Howard komt in de problemen,  en deze gast krijgt een geweldige tijd? |
| Sheldon | Ik ga als Perkamentus[[2]](#footnote-2). |

*Scene: Keuken van Howard en Bernadette*.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Howard | Hoe gaat het met mijn favoriete meid? |
| Bernadette | Het gaat prima. |
| Howard | Wat ben je aan het doen? |
| Bernadette | Ik maak lasagne. |
| Howard | Ze is sexy, ze kan koken.  Ik ben zo’n geluksvogel. |
| Bernadette | Je wilt iets stoms,  of heb je iets stoms gedaan? |
| Howard | Nee. Ik liep gewoon binnen,  zag hoe mooi je bent en moest dat je vertellen. |
| Bernadette | Oh hemeltje, je gaat vreemd met Raj. |
| Howard | Dat wordt nooit oud. Oké, ik wil iets,  maar het is geen probleem. |
| Bernadette | Wat is het? |
| Howard | Comic-Con tickets zijn deze vrijdag beschikbaar,  en ik wilde er met de jongens heen.  Voordat je iets zegt, ik maak het goed  door alles te doen hier. Echt alles.  Ik zal zelfs voor je antwoorden:  Ja, Howard, je mag gaan.\* |
| Bernadette | Ik kan moeilijk nee zeggen. |
| Howard | Dankjewel. |
| Bernadette | Dus ik zeg misschien. |
| Howard | Wat? Waarom? |
| Bernadette | Je zei dat de tickets vrijdag  pas beschikbaar zijn, toch? |
| Howard | Ja. |
| Bernadette | Je zei dat je alles zou doen, toch? |
| Howard | Ja. |
| Bernadette | Zie je waar dit naartoe gaat? |
| Howard | Ja. |
| Bernadette | Als je niet weet hoe je lasagne maakt.  Google weet het. |

*Scene: Het appartement.*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Leonard | Dit is de begane grond van Comic-Con.  Hier zijn alle verkopers en exposities. |
| Penny | Dat zijn veel mensen bij elkaar. |
| Leonard | Ik weet het.  Soms draagt Howard een gestreept shirt  om *Waar is Wolowitz?* te spelen.  En hier kamperen we  voor het Avengers[[3]](#footnote-3) panel. |
| Penny | Dus je slaapt echt op de stoep? |
| Leonard | Ja. Het kan fris worden,  maar Raj heeft ontdekt dat als je in een fles plast  en die in je slaapzak legt het je warm houdt.  Hier is de hotelkamer die we allemaal delen. |
| Penny | Maar jij en ik hebben  een eigen kamer, toch? |
| Leonard | Elk hotel is volgeboekt. Maar, zie je die ruimte  tussen Sheldons voeten en mijn hoofd?  Daar kom jij. |
| Penny | Dat is niet veel anders dan dat Sheldon  bij ons in bed kwam als het stormde. |
| Leonard | Maak je geen zorgen,  we slapen toch niet veel.  Het is als een nacht stappen.  Er is triviant en Dungeons & Dragons.  En wij vinden het te gek.\* |

*Scene: De stripboekenwinkel.*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Leonard | Ik had zelfs gezegd dat we het te gek vinden,  en ze wilt nog steeds mee. |
| Sheldon | Dat komt door mij. Ze heeft vast  over mijn Perkamentus kostuum gehoord.\* |
| Stuart | Ik geef je 20 dollar voor de hele doos. |
| Raj | Maar je hebt me honderden  laten betalen voor dit. |
| Stuart | Ik weet het. En ik deed het  met een strak gezicht. |
| Raj | Maar ik moet genoeg geld verdienen  zodat ik naar Comic-Con kan. |
| Stuart | Vooruit. Ik geef je 25 dollar.  Dat is mijn beste bod. |
| Raj | Ik heb geen keus. |
| Stuart | Weet je, als je extra geld wilt verdienen  kan ik je wel wat werk geven. |
| Raj | Echt? Ik zal alles doen. |
| Stuart | Mooi, je bent aangenomen.  Je mag eerst deze een prijskaartje geven.  Begin met vijftig voor de kleine. |

*Scene: Penny’s auto.*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Penny | Het is geen probleem. Ik kan alles uithouden voor drie dagen. |
| Amy | Comic-Con is vijf dagen. |
| Penny | Je maakt een grapje. |
| Amy | Waarom zeg je niet dat  je niet mee wilt? |
| Penny | Ik wil hem niet teleurstellen.  Hij doet altijd moeite om dingen met mij te doen  die hij niet leuk vindt, zoals naar buiten gaan. |
| Amy | Hij is een huiskat. |
| Penny | Misschien is het niet zo slecht.  Leonard zegt dat het normaal tegenwoordig.  Stripboeken zijn niet alleen voor zielige nerds.  Alhoewel het een belangrijk onderdeel van ze is. |

*Scene: Huis van Howard en Bernadette. Raj belt aan.*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Bernadette (weg) | Howie, kun jij gaan? |
| Howard (weg) | Ik ben nogal druk. |
| Bernadette (weg) | Druk zoals ik zal zijn met de baby  als jij naar San Diego gaat? |
| Howard. | Hey. |
| Raj | Waarom draag je handschoenen? |
| Howard | Het maakt mijn ensemble compleet.  Wat kan ik voor je doen? |
| Raj | Ik wil wat geld verdienen en ik vroeg me af  of je klusjes voor me hebt. |
| Howard. | Wacht even. Bernie, kan ik mijn klusjes uitbesteden  aan een Indiër? |
| Bernadette | Nee. |
| Howard | Ik heb het geprobeerd. |

*Scene: Het appartement.*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Leonard | Voor een koppelkostuum kunnen we  onszelf groen verven als Hulk en She-Hulk[[4]](#footnote-4).  Of we verven ons blauw  en gaan als Nightcrawler en Mystique[[5]](#footnote-5).\* |
| Penny | Is er een scenario waar we niet  in volledig body paint zijn? |
| Leonard | Wel als we er als losers  uit willen zien. |
| Penny | Weet je zeker dat de jongens  het oké vinden als ik mee ga? |
| Leonard | Natuurlijk, waarom? |
| Penny | Het is iets wat jullie samen doen,  en ik wil er niet tussenin komen. |
| Leonard | Hoezo? Wil je niet mee? |
| Penny | Hoezo? Wil je niet dat ik mee ga? |
| Leonard | Nee, ik wil dat je mee gaat. |
| Penny | Oké, mooi, want dat wil ik ook. |

*Scene: Sheldon en Amy’s appartement.*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Leonard | Nu gaan we als Hulk en She-Hulk.  Ik wil mijn shirt niet uitdoen op Comic-Con. |
| Sheldon | Als ik voor Comic-Con mag spreken,  wij willen dat ook niet. |
| Leonard | Is dat aardig? |
| Sheldon | Nee, maar wel eerlijk, en dat kun  je goed gebruiken in je relatie.\* |
| Leonard | Het is iets lastiger dan dat. |
| Sheldon | Ik ben altijd eerlijk tegen Amy.  Laatst vertelde ze me dat ze onzeker was over  het vlekje op haar schouder.  Ik vertelde haar dat als er haar uitgroeit  het een moedervlek is.\* |
| Leonard | Denk je dat ze net zo eerlijk is tegen jou? |
| Sheldon | Ik hoop het. Toen ze me een zak noemde,  denk ik dat ze het meende.\* |

*Scene: Keuken van Howard en Bernadette.*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Howard | Er moeten meer manieren zijn  om geld te verdienen. |
| Raj | Dat zou je denken. Misschien kan ik  mijn bloed en sperma verkopen. |
| Bernadette | Ik moet echt een bel om mijn nek dragen  zodat jullie me aan horen komen. |
| Raj | Hier, laat me je helpen. |
| Bernadette | Dankjewel. |
| Raj | Dubbel gevulde Oreos,ik herinner me nog  dat ik jullie kon betalen. |
| Bernadette | Daar gaat ze weer. |
| Raj | Blijf maar, ik ga wel. |
| Bernadette | Dat kan ik waarderen. |
| Raj | Het is prima.  Zij en ik kunnen samen huilen. |
| Bernadette | Hij is zo lief. |
| Howard | Ik weet het, ik wou dat we hem  konden helpen. |
| Bernadette | Als hij een vrouw met een baan vindt  zouden al zijn problemen weggaan. |
| Howard | Ja dat lijkt me prima. |

*Scene: Sheldon en Amy’s appartement.*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Amy | Penny zegt dat ze klaar zijn  om te gaan. |
| Sheldon | Goed. Bereid je voor op een lange nacht bedrog. |
| Amy | Sheldon, dat vrouwen make-up dragen  is geen bedrog. |
| Sheldon | Ik had het over Leonard.  En als make-up niet bedrog is,  waarom heet het dan concealer? |
| Amy | Wacht, waar is Leonard  over aan het liegen? |
| Sheldon | Hij wil niet dat Penny mee gaat.  Hij doet het alleen om haar blij te maken.\* |
| Amy | Echt? Want ze wil niet echt gaan.  Ze doet het om hem blij te maken.\* |
| Sheldon | Dus ze willen elkaar blij maken,  en het eindresultaat is dat ze elkaar verdrietig maken?  Dat is hilarisch.  Ik kan niet wachten om het ze te vertellen. |
| Amy | Nee, je gaat ze niks vertellen.  Je blijft erbuiten. |
| Sheldon | Hoezo? |
| Amy | Omdat het tussen hun gaat. |
| Sheldon | Mocht je het nog niet zijn opgevallen,  ik zit al tien jaar tussen hun in. |
| Penny | Hey. |
| Amy | Hoi. |
| Sheldon | Hallo. |
| Penny | Schat, wil jij rijden? |
| Leonard | Tuurlijk, of jij kan. |
| Penny | Nee het is goed, ik weet  dat je er niet van houdt als ik rijd. |
| Leonard | Ik heb geen probleem als jij rijdt. |
| Sheldon | Hoor jij dit ook?  Ze misleiden elkaar over alles.\* |
| Penny | Even dat je het weet,  die gast op de parkeerplaats raakte mij. |
| Leonard | Hij was niet in de auto, maar oké. |
| Penny | Zeg gewoon dat je wilt rijden. |
| Leonard | Om eerlijk te zijn, niet echt. |
| Penny | Amy, doe ons een plezier, rijd jij. |
| Amy | Tuurlijk, graag zelfs. |
| Leonard | Als je wilt rijden, rijd gewoon.  Ik zie niet waarom dit zo lastig moet zijn. |
| Penny | Het is niet lastig, Amy rijdt, klaar. |
| Leonard | Dat is het niet,  je ben duidelijk overstuur. |
| Penny | Jij lijkt meer overstuur. |
| Leonard | Waarom zou ik overstuur zijn? |
| Amy | Omdat je niet wil  dat ze naar Comic-Con gaat. |
| Sheldon | Dat is een interessante manier  om erbuiten te blijven. |
| Penny | Wacht, je wilt niet dat ik mee ga? |
| Leonard | Ik denk gewoon dat je  het niet zo leuk gaat vinden. |
| Sheldon | Dat denkt Penny ook, ze wilt ook niet mee.  Jij zette ‘m op, ik schiet hem erin.\* |
| Leonard | Waarom zei je dat je mee ging  terwijl je dat niet wilde? |
| Penny | Ik dacht dat het je blij zou maken. |
| Leonard | Wacht even, dus als jij niet mee wil  en ik neem je niet mee, is het dan goed?\* |
| Penny | Wacht, ik denk even of ik boos ben.  Nee, ik ben blij dat ik niet mee hoef. |
| Leonard | Oké, probleem opgelost. |
| Penny | Oké. |
| Sheldon | Niet helemaal, de strijd  over wie gaat rijden is nog ste… |
| Amy | O mijn God, stop met praten. |

*Scene: Howard en Bernadette’s huis.*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Amy | Dit ziet er goed uit.  Hebben jullie een hulpje? |
| Bernadette | Soort van. |
| Howard | Avondeten is bijna klaar.  Als je gehaktbrood lekker vindt,  zal je zijn neefje kom gehakt ook lusten. |
| Penny | Als je nog geld nodig hebt wil ik best betalen  om die jas te verbranden. |
| Raj | Dankjewel, maar het lijkt er niet naar  dat ik dit jaar naar Comic-Con ga. |
| Sheldon | Met de schulden die je hebt  volgend jaar waarschijnlijk ook niet. |
| Bernadette | Howie? |
| Howard | Natuurlijk. Dit is voor jou. |
| Raj | Wat is dit? |
| Bernadette | Dit is geld voor alles dat je voor Halley  hebt gedaan de afgelopen tijd. |
| Howard | Het is meer dan genoeg  om naar Comic-Con te gaan. |
| Stuart | Ik help ook met Halley. |
| Bernadette | En jij woont hier gratis. |
| Stuart | Dat klopt, mevrouw,  dank u wel, mevrouw. |
| Raj | Dat is zo lief van jullie,  ik heb er geen woorden voor. |
| Leonard | Nu kan je met ons mee. |
| Penny | Ja, er is nog ruimte in bed  bij Sheldons voeten. |
| Raj | Ik waardeer het heel erg  maar ik kan dit niet aannemen.  Halley is mijn petekind,  ik verzorg haar niet voor geld. |
| Stuart | Ik wil wel. |
| Bernadette | Houd het, zie het als een gift. |
| Sheldon | Wacht even. Is het geld of een gift? |
| Bernadette | Wat is het verschil? |
| Sheldon | Als de belastingdienst ons ondervraagt in aparte kamers  moeten we ons verhaal kloppen. |
| Raj | Het maakt niet uit. Ik weiger het.  Ik probeer verantwoordelijk te zijn.  Geld van anderen helpt daar niet bij.\* |
| Amy | Dus je gaat niet naar Comic-Con? |
| Raj | Ik ben vaak genoeg gegaan.  Het is prima als ik er een mis,  ik ben een grote jongen. |
| Sheldon | Ik ben een grote jongen. Als ik er een mis,  heb ik een grote jongens driftbui. |
| Leonard | Weet je wat? Ik ben al twaalf keer geweest.  Dit jaar blijf ik ook wel thuis. |
| Penny | Echt? |
| Leonard | Ja. Misschien kunnen we  iets leuks doen dat weekend. |
| Penny | Zullen we gaan raften? |
| Leonard | Waarom sluiten we geen compromis en gaan naar  de Small Worldattractie in Disneyland? |
| Howard | Weet je wat, ik ga ook niet. Ik ben nu vader.  Ik ben liever bij mijn familie.\* |
| Bernadette | Je wilt gewoon niet  alleen met Sheldon gaan. |
| Howard | Ik kijk even naar het avondeten. |
| Amy | Ziet er naar uit dat iedereen  thuis blijft. Wat zeg jij? |
| Sheldon | Niks, ik ga naar Comic-Con. |
| Amy | Alleen? |
| Sheldon | Niet per se. Ik heb vier maanden  om nieuwe vrienden te vinden. |
| Stuart | Ik wil wel mee. |
| Sheldon | Dat is aardig van je, Stuart.  Vraag nog maar eens in Juli. |

*Scene: Sheldon en Amy’s appartement.*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Sheldon | Daar is mijn mooie vriendin. |
| Amy | Ik ga niet mee naar Comic-Con. |
| Sheldon | Wat? Kan een man niet blij zijn  om zijn vrouw te zien en haar te aaien  op haar tweede meest erogene kogelgewricht? |
| Amy | Dat kan hij, maar ik verander niet van gedachten. |
| Sheldon | Misschien wil wat er in mijn broek zit  je gedachtes veranderen.  Het is de panellijst van dit jaar.  Het is lang, nietwaar? |

**5 Conclusion**

The translation of cultural intertextual references for a Dutch audience is a complicated matter. Due to English becoming a dominant language in the Dutch culture, combined with the fact that is an obligatory subject in secondary school, the Dutch have a basic comprehension of the English language. The imported media landscape is primarily dominated by American and British products, and due to the subtitling nature of the Netherlands, audiences are – as previously stated – “unconsciously picking up on the English language and cultural concepts.”

This has led to the demand of authentic subtitles which preserve the cultural identity of a product. Indeed, as Giselinde Kuipers states, Dutch screen translators consider neutral and faithful translation to be “good” subtitles. However, foreignization strategies can cause problems in terms of translating CIRs, as people require external knowledge to identify them properly and make connections.

Jan Pedersen’s parameters allowed for a proper judgment for each CIR in this case study. They can be constructed in a hierarchical manner, though they work in a organic manner and interact with each other. The Subtitling Situation is an important parameter to start with, as eventually the approach to translating CIRs is highly dependent on what type of text it is. If the text aims to be amusing and include humour, translating references are particularly difficult because they can be the core element of a joke. Moving on to parameters for the text itself, the most determining parameters are Centrality and Transculturality. The Centrality of a reference will determine how important the reference is to the source text, whereas Transculturality determines whether the reference is known to other cultures. Then, Polysemiotics and Co-text can help guide the translation: is there external help from the context or visual product? The Co-text can offer enough information to understand what is being intended. The Extratextuality parameter and Media-specific constraints are a given to translation. References that are Text Internal are unproblematic for translation as opposed to Text External references, as these are dependent on Transculturality. Media-specific constraints are a constant factor for subtitling.

As is seen in the annotated translation, more often than not the Co-text allowed for the retention of most instances. Although people who recognise the designated CIRs will have a better understanding – or rather, a better visualisation –, audience members who are unfamiliar with the details will be able to gain enough information through the context.

On a final note it is important to state that this conclusion is the result of one episode. To see whether it is viable it is vital to analyse more episodes and possibly different genres.

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**Appendix: Source Text**

*Following a “previously on” sequence:*

*Scene: The apartment.*

Sheldon: Uh-huh. Interesting. Okay.

Raj: How bad is it?

Sheldon: Let me put it this way, do you own a barrel and suspenders?

Raj: Are you serious?

Sheldon: I’m not wearing this visor to play women’s golf.

Penny: Hi.

Leonard: Hey.

Penny: Oh, let me guess. You guys are drafting your fantasy accounting firms.

Leonard: We’re helping Raj figure out his finances.

Penny: Well, he has a job. How bad can it be?

Sheldon: Well, his rent and car lease are exceedingly high. You couple that with his penchant for dining out and shopping.

Penny: Wait, wait, not shopping for clothes, right? Because look.

Sheldon: He also has a remarkable amount of credit card debt.

Howard: I thought your dad paid your cards.

Raj: I have a card for emergencies that I pay for myself.

Sheldon: What emergency happened at the L.A. Zoo?

Raj: That’s a penguin I sponsor. They’re losing their homes to global warming, and my car gets, like, seven miles a gallon, so I felt bad.

Leonard: What is Pink Cheeks?

Raj: It’s intimate waxing. Quit looking at that.

Leonard: Maybe you should find someone to help you get your finances under control.

Raj: Like a business manager?

Sheldon: No, absolutely not. You can’t afford to hire someone who’ll forbid you from spending your money on foolish expenses. That is a foolish expense, and I forbid it.

Howard: What if there’s someone who just likes controlling other people and stealing joy from their lives?

Sheldon: He sounds like a sociopath.

Leonard: We don’t know, his mother never had him tested.

Sheldon: You’re talking about me. Very funny. Although I would enjoy drawing up a budget and forcing Raj to adhere to it without an ounce of compassion.

Penny: Wait, wait, who’s gonna break it to the penguin?

Raj: Okay, Sheldon. Yeah, I’m putting you in charge of my finances. I will not spend another penny that you don’t authorize.

Sheldon: Very well. Hey, Comic-Con tickets go on sale this Friday. You can’t buy one.

Howard: Oh, better luck next time, Pink Cheeks.

*Credits sequence.*

*Scene: Sheldon and Amy’s apartment.*

Amy: You’re actually going to Comic-Con?

Penny: Well, Leonard wants me to do more stuff like that with him, so I thought maybe this year I’d tag along.

Amy: Well, that’s sweet. I bet you’ll have fun.

Penny: So, do you want to come?

Amy: No, thanks. I already live in a place all the nerds come to.

Penny: Please? I went to your boring thing last month.

Amy: My aunt’s funeral?

Penny: Come on, even you checked your e-mail during the eulogy.

Amy: Well, I’m not going, but I do think it’s nice you want to.

Penny: It’s not that I want to go, I just think it’ll make Leonard happy. And if I have to watch him squeeze into an Ewok costume, so be it.

Amy: Look at you, going to Comic-Con, talking about Ewoks. I really have become the cool one around here.

*Scene: The comic book store.*

Howard: You actually think Penny will have fun at Comic-Con?

Leonard: No. Which will make me miserable, which is usually Sheldon’s job.

Sheldon: She’s gonna hate waiting in line for the panels.

Howard: And hate all the crowds at the panels.

Sheldon: She’s gonna hate the panels.

Leonard: She’s gonna hate how often we say the word panels.

Howard: Why don’t you just tell her not to come?

Leonard: Well, she’s so excited, I can’t do that to her.

Howard: What if you make it sound so bad she won’t want to go?

Leonard: That I would do to her.

Raj: I can’t believe Penny’s gonna get to go, and I’m not.

Sheldon: You can always watch the panels online. Oh, boy, we do say that a lot.

Stuart: Panels. Just wanted to be included.

Raj: Come on, Sheldon, it’s Comic-Con. Just let me have the money for this, and I won’t ask for anything else.

Sheldon: You put me in charge of your finances. If you wanted someone weak and spineless you could walk all over, you should have asked Leonard.

Leonard: See? Miserable.

Raj: Okay, you’re right, I got myself into this, but I’ve never missed a Comic-Con with you guys.

Sheldon: Your father may have spoiled you, but I won’t. If you want a ticket to Comic-Con, I suggest you figure out a way to earn the money yourself.

Howard: Yeah, you’re a grown man who’s highly educated. You could charge people money to punch you.

Raj: Go ahead, make jokes. I don’t know why you think you’re going to Comic-Con, you just had a baby.

Howard: So?

Raj: Well, so? So you think Bernadette’s just gonna let you jet down to San Diego for five days and leave her alone?

Leonard: Hang, hang on. So I have to bring Penny, you can’t afford it, Howard’s gonna get in trouble, and this guy gets to have a great time.

Sheldon: I’m gonna go as Dumbledore.

*Scene: Howard and Bernadette’s kitchen.*

Howard: Mm-mm, how’s my favourite girl?

Bernadette: Okay.

Howard: What you doing?

Bernadette: Making lasagna.

Howard: Oh, she’s sexy, she can cook. I’m such a lucky guy.

Bernadette: You want something stupid, or you did something stupid?

Howard: No. I just walked in here, saw how beautiful you are and had to tell you.

Bernadette: Oh, dear God, you’re cheating on me with Raj.

Howard: Ha ha ha, never gets old. Okay, there is something I want, but it’s not a big deal.

Bernadette: What is it?

Howard: Well, Comic-Con tickets go on sale this Friday, and I was hoping I could go with the guys. But before you say anything, I’ll make up for being gone by doing everything around here, I mean everything. I’m even gonna answer for you. Yes, Howard, you can go.

Bernadette: It’s so hard to say no to you.

Howard: Thank you.

Bernadette: So I’ll say maybe.

Howard: What? Why?

Bernadette: You said tickets don’t go on sale till Friday, right?

Howard: Yeah.

Bernadette: You said you were gonna do all this stuff for me, right?

Howard: Yeah.

Bernadette: See where I’m going with this?

Howard: Yeah.

Bernadette: If you don’t know how to make lasagna, Google does.

*Scene: The apartment.*

Leonard: Okay, so this is the main Comic-Con floor. It’s where all the vendors and exhibits are.

Penny: Wow, that is a lot of people jammed in there.

Leonard: I know. Sometimes Howard wears a striped shirt so we can play Where’s Wolowitz? Okay, now, This is us camping out in line for the Avengers panel.

Penny: Oh, you really sleep on the sidewalk, huh?

Leonard: Yeah. It can get chilly, but Raj figured out that if you pee in a bottle and put it in your sleeping bag, it helps keep you warm. Here’s the hotel room we all share.

Penny: Well, you and I would get our own room, right?

Leonard: Every hotel is booked. But, yeah, see this space here between Sheldon’s feet and my head? That’s where you go.

Penny: Well, it’s no different than when Sheldon used to climb in bed with us during a thunderstorm.

Leonard: Don’t worry, we won’t be doing much sleeping anyway. It’s like an all-night party. There’s trivia contests and Dungeons & Dragons. As we like to say, it’s off the chain mail.

*Scene: The comic book store.*

Leonard: I even said off the chain mail, and she still wants to go.

Sheldon: That’s probably my fault. She may have heard about my cool Dumbledore costume.

Stuart: Okay, I can give you 20 bucks for the whole box.

Raj: But you charged me hundreds for this stuff.

Stuart: I know. And I did it with a straight face.

Raj: But I need to earn enough money so I can go to Comic-Con.

Stuart: Well, all right. I’ll give you 25 bucks. That’s my best offer.

Raj: I have no choice.

Stuart: You know, if you want to make extra money, I could throw some work your way.

Raj: Really? I’ll do anything.

Stuart: Great, you’re hired. First thing you can do is put price tags on these. Start the little ones at fifty.

*Scene: Penny’s car.*

Penny: You know, it’s no big deal. I can put up with anything for three days.

Amy: Comic-Con’s five days.

Penny: Are you kidding me?

Amy: Why don’t you just tell him you don’t want to go?

Penny: I can’t, it’ll break his heart. You know, he’s always making an effort to do things with me he doesn’t enjoy, like going outside.

Amy: He is an indoor cat.

Penny: You know, maybe it won’t be that bad. Leonard says it’s really mainstream now. Comic books aren’t just for sad nerds any more. I mean, it is still a key part of their demographic.

*Scene: Howard and Bernadette’s house. Raj rings the doorbell.*

Bernadette (off): Howie, can you get that?

Howard (off): Kind of busy.

Bernadette (off): Busy like I’ll be with the baby if you go to San Diego?

Howard: Hey.

Raj: What’s with the gloves?

Howard: They complete my ensemble. What do you want?

Raj: I’m looking to make extra money and was wondering if you had any chores I could do.

Howard: Hang on. Bernie, can I outsource my chores to an Indian guy?

Bernadette: No.

Howard: I tried.

*Scene: The apartment.*

Leonard: Hey, I was thinking, if you want to do a couples costume, we could paint ourselves green and be Hulk and She-Hulk. Or we could paint ourselves blue and go as Nightcrawler and Mystique.

Penny: Is there any scenario where we’re not in full body paint?

Leonard: Yeah, if you want us to look like losers.

Penny: Hey, um, are you sure the guys are okay with me coming?

Leonard: Yeah, of course, why?

Penny: This is just something you usually do together, and if I’m screwing it up, I don’t have to go.

Leonard: Oh, why? Do you not want to go?

Penny: Why? Do you not want me to go?

Leonard: No, I want you to go.

Penny: Okay, good, ’cause that’s what I want, too.

*Scene: Sheldon and Amy’s apartment.*

Leonard: Now we’re going as Hulk and She-Hulk. I don’t want to take my shirt off at Comic-Con.

Sheldon: If I may speak for Comic-Con, we don’t want that either.

Leonard: Is that nice?

Sheldon: No, but it’s honest, and it sounds like you could use a little more honesty in your relationship.

Leonard: Uh, it’s more complicated than that.

Sheldon: I’m always honest with Amy. The other day she said she was self-conscious about the beauty mark on her shoulder, and I said, you know, you can call that a beauty mark all you want. When there’s hair growing out of it, that’s a mole.

Leonard: Do you think she’s as honest with you?

Sheldon: I should hope so. When she called me an insensitive jerk, I’d like to think she meant it.

*Scene: Howard and Bernadette’s kitchen.*

Howard: There’s got to be other ways you can make a quick buck.

Raj: Yeah, you’d think. Ooh, maybe I could sell my blood and sperm.

Bernadette: I really should wear a bell around my neck so you guys can hear me coming.

Raj: Here, let me help you.

Bernadette: Thank you.

Raj: Oh, Double Stuffed Oreos, I remember when I could afford you.

Bernadette: There she goes.

Raj: Stay, I’ll get her.

Bernadette: I appreciate it.

Raj: That’s fine. She and I can cry together.

Bernadette: He’s such a sweetie.

Howard: I know, I wish there was some way we could help him.

Bernadette: If he could find a girl with a job, all his problems would be over.

Howard: Yeah, that’s working out great for me.

*Scene: Sheldon and Amy’s apartment.*

Amy: Penny says they’re ready to go.

Sheldon: Very well. Prepare for a long night of deceit.

Amy: Sheldon, women can wear make up, it’s not lying.

Sheldon: I was talking about Leonard. And if make up is so truthful, why is it called concealer?

Amy: Wait, wait, wait, what’s Leonard lying about?

Sheldon: He doesn’t really want Penny to go to Comic-Con. He’s just doing it to make her happy.

Amy: Really? Because she doesn’t actually want to go. She’s just doing it to make him happy.

Sheldon: So they’re both trying to make each other happy, and the end result is they make each other sad? That’s hilarious. I can’t wait to tell them.

Amy: No, you’re not gonna tell them anything. You’re gonna stay out of it.

Sheldon: Why?

Amy: Because it’s between them.

Sheldon: Well, if you haven’t noticed, I’ve been between them for the last ten years.

Penny: Hey.

Amy: Hi.

Sheldon: Hello.

Penny: Hey, babe, you want to drive?

Leonard: Sure, or you can.

Penny: No, it’s fine, I know you don’t like the way I drive.

Leonard: I don’t have a problem with your driving.

Sheldon: Are you listening to this? They deceive each other about everything.

Amy: Shh.

Penny: Just so you know, that guy in the parking lot hit me.

Leonard: He wasn’t in a car, but okay.

Penny: Just say you want to drive.

Leonard: I honestly don’t.

Penny: Amy, do us a favour, please drive.

Amy: Sure, happy to.

Leonard: If you want to drive, just drive. I don’t see why this has to be so complicated.

Penny: It’s not complicated. Amy’s driving, that’s it.

Leonard: That’s not it because you’re clearly upset.

Penny: You’re the one who seems upset.

Leonard: Why would I be upset?

Amy: Because you don’t want her to go to Comic-Con.

Sheldon: This is an interesting way to stay out of it.

Penny: Wait, you don’t want me to go?

Leonard: Well, I just don’t think you’re gonna have a good time.

Sheldon: Yeah, well, get this, neither does Penny, that’s why she doesn’t want to go. You set ’em up, I knock ’em down, good job.

Leonard: Why would you say you wanted to go if you didn’t?

Penny: I just thought it would make you happy.

Leonard: O-o-o-okay, hold on, so if you don’t want to go and I don’t need to bring you, is everything good?

Penny: Hold on, I’m trying to decide if I’m mad at you. No, I’m happy I don’t have to go.

Leonard: All right, problem solved.

Penny: Okay.

Sheldon: Not entirely, the fight over who’s going to drive is still…

Amy: Oh, my God, stop talking.

*Scene: Howard and Bernadette’s house.*

Amy: The place looks great. Did you guys get a maid?

Bernadette: Kinda.

Howard: Dinner’s almost ready. If you like meatloaf, I’m sure you’ll like its cousin, bowl of meat.

Penny: Hey, if you’re still looking to make money, I will pay you to burn that jacket.

Raj: Thank you, but it doesn’t look like I’m going to Comic-Con this year.

Sheldon: Well, with as much debt as you have, probably not next year either.

Bernadette: Howie?

Howard: Sure. This is for you.

Raj: What’s this?

Bernadette: It’s back pay for all the babysitting and taking care of Halley you’ve done.

Howard: There’s more than enough in there to cover Comic-Con.

Stuart: Um, I also take care of Halley.

Bernadette: And you live here for free.

Stuart: I do, ma’am, thank you, ma’am.

Raj: This is so generous of you, I, um, I don’t know what to say.

Leonard: Now you can come with us.

Penny: Yeah, there’s room in the bed by Sheldon’s feet.

Raj: As much as I appreciate this, I can’t accept it, okay? Halley’s my goddaughter, I don’t take care of her for money.

Stuart: I would.

Bernadette: Keep it. Consider it a gift.

Sheldon: Hold on. Is it back pay or is it a gift?

Bernadette: What’s the difference?

Sheldon: When the IRS questions us in separate rooms, we need to have our stories straight.

Raj: It doesn’t matter. I’m not keeping this. I’m trying to pay my own way and be responsible. Taking handouts won’t help that.

Amy: So you’re not going to Comic-Con?

Raj: I’ve been plenty of times. If I miss one, it’s fine. I’m a big boy.

Sheldon: I’m a big boy, and if I missed one, I’d throw a big-boy tantrum.

Leonard: You know what? I’ve gone 12 times. Maybe I’ll sit out this year, too.

Penny: Really?

Leonard: Yeah. Maybe you and I can do something fun that weekend.

Penny: Ooh, how about white-water rafting?

Leonard: Oh, how about we compromise and go on the Small World ride at Disneyland?

Howard: You know what, I’m not gonna go either. I’m a father now. I’d rather spend time with my family.

Bernadette: You just don’t want to go alone with Sheldon.

Howard: I’m gonna go check on dinner.

Amy: Sounds like everyone’s staying home. What do you say?

Sheldon: Nuts to that, I’m going to Comic-Con.

Amy: By yourself?

Sheldon: Not necessarily. I have four months to find some new friends.

Stuart: I’ll go with you.

Sheldon: That’s very kind of you, Stuart. Check back in with me in July.

*Scene: Sheldon and Amy’s apartment.*

Sheldon: There’s my pretty girlfriend.

Amy: I’m not going with you to Comic-Con.

Sheldon: What? Can’t a man just be happy to see his woman and pat her on her second most erogenous ball-and-socket joint?

Amy: He can, but it’s still not changing my mind.

Sheldon: Well, maybe what’s in my pants will change your mind. It’s a list of this year’s panelists. It’s long, isn’t it?

1. Retention – The problem of translating “Ewok” is that it refers to a fictional species in *Star Wars*. Though *Star Wars* is a transcultural reference, “Ewok” is not a common reference. Audiences unfamiliar with the franchise may know of characters such as Chewbacca and R2D2, but Ewoks are more obscure a reference in that regard. Since the reference is central to the message being conveyed it cannot be omitted. Moreover, the dialogue is extensive here, so it is not desirable to use specification. This leaves retention and replacement to be an option. A possible alternative is “beer,” considering their hairy nature, or “yeti” to keep imaginary sense (substitution). “Ewok” is retained, as it gives enough information to the audience unfamiliar with *Star Wars* that it is something imaginary. The point here is that Penny thinks such a costume is ridiculous, and it is therefore not about the reference. The tone of voice (polysemiotics) will allow for this interpretation. The word is highlighted by capitalization in order to mark the reference. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Official Equivalent – The Harry Potter series have their own official equivalent in the Dutch language. Due to the popularization of the books and adaptations the books and consequently the adaptations have been adapted to fit the Dutch language. The entire world of Harry Potter therefore exists, in Dutch, in the Netherlands. Though the franchise has grown and the English names may have gotten acknowledgement in the Netherlands, the Dutch names have become common usage and are therefore used here. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Retention – The superhero franchise is a transcultural franchise. Even though the distinction between comic and adaptation are sometimes blurry, the characters are well-known due to the adaptations and bear resemblance to the comics in which they appear. Audience members who are not familiar with the stories are able to recognize title characters, such as the Avengers, and know the general concept of superheroes. However, more specifically in this case this information is insignificant, since the point here is that the main characters are going to wait in line for a panel at Comic-Con, which could be any type of panel. Therefore, specification is not needed, especially since there is extensive dialogue. However, using omission will cause generalization. Stating that they will camp in line for a panel takes away the importance of the panel. The word is therefore capitalised to mark the reference. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Retention – Hulk is a popularized character, which can therefore be attributed to be a transcultural reference. Even though Dutch has an equivalent, “Rauwe Bonk,” it is not regarded as an official equivalent. Due to the popularized films of the Avengers, the character has gained popularity (transculturality). The Hulk was already a prominent character infamous for his green and muscular appearance. Though She-Hulk is not as popularized, in this context people are able to get an idea of She-Hulk – as her name is clearly related to the Hulk. Moreover, the intend here is to suggest a couple’s costume, which in general is drawn from a fictional couple (co-text). For this particular reference it is difficult to find a Dutch replacement, as it is about characters that are entirely in green – a specific characteristic. Direct translation is possible, since there is a Dutch equivalent – however, due to the extensive dialogue it is challenging to replace it with “Rauwe Bonk” as this takes much more space than “Hulk” does. As the reference is central to the message it cannot be omitted. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Retention – Nightcrawler and Mystique are familiar to people who have seen the X-Men films. Nightcrawler has a Dutch equivalent, “Harlekein,” but this might be confusing to the audience, as it is not associated with a blue colour. As in the previous case, it is not too significant which characters are being referred to here. From the Hulk and She-Hulk these characters can be perceived to belong to the superhero realm as well. Moreover, it is clear from the context that these two characters are entirely blue, much like the Hulk and She-Hulk are entirely green (co-text). For this reference it is possible to find an alternative, namely the Smurfs, as these characters are also entirely in blue. This would also safe some space. However, due to the polysemiotic nature of subtitling, translating it to “smurfen” can be confusing as not only does the character name two specific characters, the character does not mention the Smurfs, possibly confusing the audience if it were rendered to “smurfen.” Since this reference is a comparison with something else the reference cannot be omitted. To specify Nightcrawler and Mystique will take too much space, moreover, as with the previous reference and earlier mentioned, it is not specifically about the characters, but about the appearance. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)