An Unexpected Hero: Reduction-based Explicitation in Avengers: Endgame



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Abstract

As previous research on reduction in subtitling has mainly focussed on implicitation, this thesis explores the potential of reduction-based explicitation by categorising and quantifying the ways in which it occurs in the Dutch subtitles of the film *Avengers: Endgame* (A. Russo & J. Russo, 2019). After determining the frequencies of explicitation and implicitation, and reduction, expansion, and the same number of characters in a total of 2,364 instances, a crosstabulation of these strategies and length outcomes finds that although implicitation-based reduction accounts for 46.2% (i.e. 1,093) of all instances, nearly 10% of all instances (i.e. 234) can be attributed to explicitation-based reduction. Close analysis of these 234 instances identifies eight patterns, which are listed from most frequent to least frequent: (1) result-oriented translations, (2) overstatements, (3) reader-oriented translations, (4) increased probability, (5) eliminated idioms and expressions, (6) overt imperatives, (7) combined subtitles, and (8) desententialisation. Further research is needed to provide both qualitative and quantitative data on the occurrence of these patterns across different films, film genres, and language pairs.

Keywords: explicitation, reduction, audiovisual translation, subtitling

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Intellectual property statement

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1. Introduction

As interest in foreign-language films and programmes continues to increase (Hedges, 2022), the demand for subtitles, and preferably qualitatively sound subtitles, grows even more so. This increase in viewership is also accompanied by criticism on poor subtitles. Especially viewers with considerable knowledge of the foreign language (for example, most Dutch viewers when watching English content) often berate subtitles for deviating too much from the foreign dialogue. However, the reason why translators can hardly ever include everything from the dialogue has to do with the fact that subtitling is a form of constrained translation: both qualitative and quantitative constraints inherent to the medium itself require translators to shorten their translations when subtitling.

Previous studies have primarily focussed on how this reduction can be achieved through implicitation. Its opposite, explicitation (when a translation is more explicit than its source text), has not received comparable consideration in the field of audiovisual translation (AVT). This may be related to the inaccurate assumption that explicitation, per definition, leads to expansion. It was the Italian scholar Elisa Perego (2003) who pointed out that this need not necessarily be the case, and who introduced the notion of reduction-based explicitation. It should be emphasised here that this term refers to any instance in which explicitation occurs and in which the number of characters is reduced in the translation. Thus, no distinction is made between cases in which explicitation causes reduction and cases in which reduction causes explicitation.

This case study focuses on the practical side of reduction-based explicitation as it aims to categorise and quantify the different ways in which it occurs in the Dutch subtitles Frank Bovelander created for the English dialogue of the film *Avengers: Endgame* (A. Russo & J. Russo, 2019). The study starts with a systematic and comparative analysis of the corpus in order to quantify the instances containing implicitation, explicitation, or neither of the two strategies. Next, a similar analysis is performed to quantify in how many instances the translation became longer (i.e. expansion), shorter (i.e. reduction), or had the same number of characters as the source text. Correlating the three strategies with the three length outcomes yields nine outcomes, and although there should be a markedly higher frequency for the correlation between implicitation and reduction (as indicated by findings from previous research), there may also be several instances in which both explicitation and reduction occurs. Close analysis of these instances is then aimed at identifying patterns and their frequencies within these occurrences. With these findings the thesis

¹Perego (2003) raises this issue by posing the following question: "Is something said deliberately more explicitly because it has to be conveyed with fewer words or, vice versa, is the need for brevity the cause of unconsciously performed explicitation?" (p. 85). Methodologically speaking, this question remains difficult, if not impossible, to answer.

hopes to answer the following research question: "What are the most common reduction-based explicitation strategies in subtitling?". The analysis of qualitative and quantitative data seeks to complement Perego's (2003) research on reduction-based explicitation, and in doing so, aims to steer the attention away from implicitation, and instead, give explicitation a seat at the table of reduction strategies.

Section 2 provides a brief overview of the literature on subtitling, implicitation, explicitation, and reduction, but also identifies a gap in the research field by illustrating how the correlation between the latter two has been left mostly unexplored. In an attempt to close this gap, all instances of explicitation and reduction in the corpus need to be extracted before they can be analysed. The systematic and comparative method used to achieve this is outlined in Section 3. Upon close analysis of these instances of reduction-based explicitation, eight trends can be identified, which are presented in Section 4. The section starts with the trend occurring most frequently, discusses what is explicitated in each trend, and illustrates with the use of corpus examples how this involves a reduction in the number of characters. Section 5 concludes this thesis by summarising its main findings, discussing limitations of the research's set-up, and by encouraging fellow researchers to explore other unconventional strategies for common translation problems.

2. Theoretical framework

2.1 Introduction

In order to answer the research question, it is important to understand what subtitling is and how it fits into the field of audiovisual translation (AVT) and the bigger field of translation studies. After briefly discussing the differences in the types of subtitling and their purposes, the focus will shift to interlingual subtitling only for the remainder of this study, as this is the type of subtitling where translation comes into play.

Research on AVT is a relatively young field and research on subtitling even more so. Titford's (1982) observation that subtitling is a mode of constrained translation prompted researchers' interest in finding out what these constraints that affect the subtitling process are, exactly. This resulted in a shift in focus from product (what do audiences think of the subtitles?) to process (how do translators solve the problems caused by these constraints?).

This chapter will first discuss the different types of constraints that are inherent to the medium of subtitling with the use of Gottlieb's (1992) dichotomy of qualitative and quantitative constraints. This is followed by a discussion of how these constraints often require translators to shorten their translations in order for them to fit in the available space and time of the subtitles. Translators use several reduction strategies to achieve this, and according to Antonini (2005) there are three main ones that can be employed in subtitling, namely elimination, rendering, and simplification. A reduction strategy that has been left rather unexplored is explicitation. This phenomenon will be explained by relying on Séguinot's (1988) categorisation of different types of explicitation and Klaudy's (1996) categorisation of the reasons why translators decide to explicitate.

One reason explicitation has not been studied as a reduction strategy to a great extent is related to the fact that it is often equated or confused with addition, which is a translation strategy that results in the opposite of reduction: expansion. Making the differences between these concepts clear should illustrate how explicitation does not always involve expansion, but that it can also co-occur with reduction, which would imply that it could be considered a reduction strategy in the subtitling process. Italian scholar Elisa Perego (2003) is one of few scholars who have realised the potential of this use of explicitation and introduced the notion of reduction-based explicitation. This will be discussed and explained with examples from Perego's study as a full understanding of this concept is essential for this present study, aimed at determining if reduction-based explicitation occurs in the Dutch subtitles of Avengers: Endgame (A. Russo & J. Russo, 2019), and if this is the case, to analyse in what ways it is used and how common each of these are.

2.2 Subtitling

Subtitling can be defined as "the production of snippets of written text [...] to be superimposed on visual footage – normally near the bottom of the frame – while an audiovisual text is projected, played or broadcast" (Pérez González, 2009, p. 14). It is a form of audiovisual translation (AVT), which is a separate branch in the field of translation studies. AVT is any kind of translation "in which the verbal dimension is only one of the many [dimensions] shaping the communication process" (Díaz-Cintas, 2010, p. 344). Other dimensions shaping the communication process are, for example, songs, signs visible on the screen, and gestures. These definitions already signify that subtitling is a multifaceted process. Furthermore, there are several types of subtitling which can all be used for different purposes, as will be discussed in the two sections that follow.

2.2.1 Intralingual subtitling

The different types of subtitling are often differentiated by the number of languages involved. For example, *intralingual* subtitles are "composed in the same language as the source text speech" (Pérez González, 2009, p. 15). As there is only one language involved, intralingual subtitling can also be called *same-language subtitling* (SLS).

This type of subtitling is primarily used for making media (more) accessible for deaf and hard-of-hearing audiences (i.e. Subtitling for the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing, or SDH). This can be done, for example, by providing sound descriptions in addition to transcription of the dialogue in the subtitles. There are several handbooks on subtitling for media accessibility, such as *Subtitling for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Audiences: Moving Forward* (Neves, 2018), as well as studies on the topic, for example, "Subtitling for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing in Multilingual Films" (Szarkowska et al., 2013). Most studies focus on how technological developments can improve media accessibility. For example, Remael et al. (2016) discuss the ways in which more accurate speech recognition programmes would require less human intervention. As a result, SDH would become cheaper, and broadcasters would be more inclined to also offer the option of SDH for their audiences.

Intralingual subtitling is also used in educational institutions for foreign language acquisition. For example, English students can watch Spanish films with Spanish subtitles so they can see how the foreign words are written while simultaneously hearing how they are pronounced. Already in 1994, Borrás and Lafayette found that students who had seen a video with subtitles could "associate the aural and written forms of words more easily and quickly than [those with a] video without subtitles" (p. 70). This was also found in a more recent study by Daniela Frumuselu who investigated the ways intralingual subtitling is especially useful "for developing and enhancing colloquial speech in EFL settings" (2019, p. 103).

2.2.2 Interlingual subtitling

Unlike intralingual subtitling, *interlingual* subtitling includes the use of two languages. Thus, this is the type of subtitling where translation between two languages is involved. Interlingual subtitles² are, for example, the Dutch subtitles for one of the many English series and films on streaming services such as Netflix, Disney+ and Amazon Prime Video.

Research on subtitling is a relatively young academic field as with a long tradition of silent films, there had been no need for subtitles. Alan Crosland's *The Jazz Singer* (1927) was "the first feature length film with synchronised dialogue" and was shown with French subtitles in 1929 (North Lanarkshire Council, n.d.). The first subtitled films, however, did not immediately prompt research on subtitling. The first work devoted solely to subtitling is presumed to be *Le sous-titrage de films: Sa technique, son esthétique*, published by Simon Laks in 1957 (Díaz-Cintas, 2004).

In the following years, little to no substantive work was published on the subject. It was not until 1982, when Titford called subtitling "constrained translation" (p. 113), that interest in subtitling grew exponentially amongst researchers. According to Titford, translators are limited by certain constraints inherent to the medium of subtitling itself when subtitling. As a result, most of the research that followed focussed on what these constraints are and how they influence the subtitling process exactly (see Section 2.3).

After Titford introduced the notion of constrained translation in 1982, research on subtitling took off with great speed. The 1990s saw the publication of some influential works as, for example, Henrik Gottlieb wrote extensively on both the theory and practice of subtitling. His most influential work is probably "Subtitling: A New University Discipline" (1992) in which he suggests that there are ten subtitling strategies which "embody the different techniques used in the profession [i.e. subtitling]" (p. 166). In the same article, Gottlieb also classifies the different media-defined constraints of the subtitling process, which are discussed in more detail in Section 2.3.

Another influential researcher in the field of AVT is Jorge Díaz-Cintas. He wrote his first article, "El subtitulado como técnica docente" in 1995 and now has over one hundred publications to his name. He has collaborated on general handbooks, such as *Audiovisual Translation: Subtitling* (Díaz-Cintas & Remael, 2007), as well as more specific topics in AVT, such as the way it should be discussed in academic settings (for example, in his *The Didactics of Audiovisual Translation* (2008)). In his more recent works he mainly focuses on the effect of technological developments on the subtitling process, such as "Subtitlers on the Cloud: The Use of Professional Web-based Systems in Subtitling Practice and Training" (García-Escribano et al., 2021).

² Whenever the term *subtitles* or *subtitling* is used in the remainder of this thesis, this is the type of subtitles or subtitling that is referred to, unless stated otherwise.

2.2.3 The subtitling process

One of the key issues that complicates subtitling is its particular polysemiotic nature, which Chaume (2004) defines as having "several signifying codes that operate simultaneously in the production of meaning" (p. 16). These different semiotic channels can be both visual (e.g. characters on the screen) and auditory (e.g. the dialogue they are having). According to Perego (2003), subtitling is a form of language transfer which "involves a simultaneous three-stage process" (p. 65). She explains that this entails a double transfer:

- 1. from source language (SL) to target language (TL)
- 2. from the oral to the written code
- 3. together with a reduction of text (ibid).

The first two points are discussed briefly in the remainder of this section while the third point (i.e. reduction) is discussed in more detail in Section 2.3.3, as the need for reduction in the subtitling process is a pivotal point in this study.

2.2.3.1 From source language to translation

While people have always translated, the study of translations "had been relegated to an element of language learning" (Munday, 2016, pp. 13-14) until it became an academic discipline towards the end of the twentieth century. In this relatively short span of time, the field has garnered a great deal of interest amongst researchers, and the wide range of topics and diverse theoretical paradigms the field now covers have been detailed in several textbooks. For example, Jeremy Munday's Introducing Translation Studies: Theories and Practices (2016) provides an extensive overview of the major theories and concepts of translation studies. Another example is the Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies (Baker & Saldanha) of which the third edition was only just published in 2020. This reference book contains 132 entries and offers critical overviews of the most popular and recent topics in translation studies.

The fact that the discipline developed exponentially over the last thirty years illustrates how complex and multi-faceted translation is. It is as much a linguistic matter as a cultural transfer process. No matter what definition is used, translation entails a shift from one culture to another. Discussions on how to best navigate this shift from the source context to the target context often involve the question of what makes a translation a good translation. However, the notion of translation quality itself is also complex and contested as translation is not an exact science. As a result, the different parties involved all have personal and wide-ranging beliefs of what they consider to be good or desirable for a translation.

Nonetheless, these discussions on translation quality usually include a reference to the notion of invisibility. When talking about subtitles in particular, many would argue that good subtitles should be "as concise as possible, and must be part of the movie and their integration with the original must be such that they become invisible" (Tabrizi et al., 2015, p. 1352). Lawrence Venuti (2019), however, is against the instrumental mode of translation which dictates that translators should aim to reproduce the effect created by the source text. He claims that translators' pursuit of this equivalence effect is in vain, and that they should adopt a hermeneutic model of translation in which translation is seen as "an interpretive act that inevitably transforms the source material" (p. 141). Venuti admits that it will not be easy to change this way of thinking and that it might initially provoke unpleasant reactions from the audience as they notice the subtitles more now that these display the translator's interpretation and give less of an exact representation of what can be heard in the audio. Once this new type of subtitles is accepted, this now still unconventional practice might actually "enhance the viewer's appreciation of the film" (p. 145).

2.2.3.2 From the oral to the written code

Prototypically, translation happens within the same medium. For example, the translator stays within the written code when translating an English book into a Dutch book and an interpreter stays within the oral code when interpreting from Spanish to French. In subtitling, however, there is a shift from the oral to the written code, which Perego (2003) calls "the diamesic shift" (p. 65). As there are too many differences between spoken and written language to discuss here, only the loss of prosodic features when changing from the oral to the written code is discussed in this section as this illustrates one of the ways in which this diamesic shift hampers the subtitling process.

Prosodic features include, for example, a speaker's tone of voice or accent. These are features which the audience can hear, and which help them understand the narrative, but which the translator cannot (or only with significant effort) convey in the written subtitles. Netflix's hitseries *Squid Game* (2021) was directed by Hwang Dong-hyuk and is a good example of why a correct transfer of these features is important. The series received a great deal of criticism as viewers felt that certain elements from the Korean dialogue that were crucial to the plot (such as the distinction between dialects from North and South Korea) had not been transferred in the subtitles. As a result, many viewers (who could also understand the Korean dialogue) felt that the subtitles showed "a watered-down version" (Namkung, 2021) of the series.

In a small-scale study, audiovisual translators were asked if they felt that swear words were stronger when read in subtitles than when heard in the audio, and 93% of them agreed (Hjort,

2009). This shared assumption could be explained due to the missing prosodic features and is one of the reasons why swear words are often omitted in subtitles. Translators can leave the swear words out without too much trouble as the audience will still be able to infer their meaning from the other semiotic channels. Thus, by leaving the swear words out, translators can avoid unwanted reactions from the audience, shorten the translation, and also avoid having to translate cultural elements, as "swearing, as part of the language, is a manifestation of culture" (Fernández-Fernández, 2004, p. 211). Cultural references, humour, register and swear words are often described as "the AVT translation problems" (Gambier & Ramos Pinto, 2018, p. 2) and are some of the most popular research topics in AVT. This has resulted in numerous case studies in which researchers set out to identify and categorise the different strategies employed for tackling the specific translation problem; for example, "Subtitling Strategies of Swear Words and Taboo Expressions in the Movie "Training Day" (Abdelaal & Sarhani, 2021) and "Strategies of Subtitling the Word Fuck in *The Wolf of Wall Street* Movie" (Sutrisno & Ibnus, 2021).

2.3 Subtitling as constrained translation

All translators, regardless of the domain or language pair they are translating in, have to work within certain constraints, ranging from tight deadlines to the requirement to work with a specific translation tool. However, subtitling in particular appears to be more constrained than any other form of translation due to the aforementioned media-defined constraints. The most defining features of subtitling are related to the fact that translators are limited in the number of characters they can use on screen, and the time that a subtitle can remain visible, and as a result will almost always have to shorten their translations. Before turning to this need for reduction (see Section 2.3.3), it is important to understand the constraints and their implications that are responsible for this need for reduction as they "affect the perceived and desired quality of translation and dictate the choices and decisions the translator makes" (Darwish, 2010, p. 70).

2.3.1 Qualitative constraints

To this day many subtitling researchers still use Henrik Gottlieb's (1992) dichotomy of qualitative and quantitative subtitling constraints. The former group consists of *qualitative* or *textual* constraints as they relate to the way the subtitles are written; their presentation. Gottlieb emphasises that subtitling is "an additive type of screen translation" (p. 165) as the subtitles are layered on top of the video that the audience sees and the dialogue, music, and sound effects that they hear. Subtitles are thus added to the visual channel but should not disrupt the video, meaning that their presentation, such as the position on the screen, the font size and colour, and alignment must all

be considered. It is quite common for different broadcasting companies to have their own preferred presentation style for subtitles. Furthermore, with the increasing popularity of streaming services, many services now also offer the option for the viewer to customise the appearance of subtitles to their own preferences.

Although translators produce the subtitles, they often do not have a say in the way these are presented. While some aspects of the presentation of subtitles, like their colour, is not likely to constrain the subtitling process, the additive nature of subtitles, in general, does affect the subtitling process. Translators needs to keep in mind that audiences can still hear the dialogue as they are reading the subtitles. For example, a comedy programme such as *America's Funniest Home Videos* can be particularly difficult to subtitle due to comedic timing. If a punchline comes after a short pause, the subtitles cannot already show the entire joke, thereby giving away the punchline. As a result, translators need to split their translation in half and make sure that the subtitles with the punchline appear on the screen simultaneously with the spoken punchline. For example, there would be a separate box of subtitles for "He does not like..." and then another one for "toothpaste on his face." This can be particularly difficult when the two languages involved have a different sentence structure, making it difficult to split up the subtitles; for example, when translating the English "I told her to buy the red one" (SVO) to the Dutch "Ik zei dat ze de rode moest kopen" (SOV). As translating humour in subtitling can be quite challenging, it is not surprising that a lot of research has already been done on this particular topic (see De Rosa et al., 2014).

The interplay of the subtitles and the dialogue also constrains the translator as "the wording of the subtitles must reflect the style, speech tempo and – to a certain degree – the syntax and order of key elements in the dialog" (Gottlieb, 1992, p. 165). For example, a translator will have to translate "I need my socks, tie, and coat" into Dutch as "Ik heb mijn sokken, stropdas en jas nodig". If they were to change the order (e.g. "Ik heb mijn jas, sokken en stropdas nodig" 'I need my coat, socks, and tie'), it is likely the audience would notice the difference, thereby disrupting their viewer experience. This, of course, only occurs when the audience has some knowledge of the dialogue language. If the audience is not familiar with the dialogue language, the translator will have more freedom to, for example, leave out an element in order to shorten the translation. Nevertheless, a translator usually does not know the audience beforehand and can therefore not assume the audience's linguistic knowledge when translating.

2.3.2 Quantitative constraints

The extent to which the qualitative constraints limit the translator when making subtitles depends on the audiovisual text in question. The quantitative constraints, on the other hand, are more limiting and less dependent on the particular material that needs to be subtitled. Gottlieb (1992) also calls these constraints *formal* constraints as they relate to the number of characters, lines, etc. translators are expected or required to use when subtitling. He explains that these constraints either relate to the *space* factor or the *time* factor, as will be explained in the following sections.

2.3.2.1 Space factor

When calculating the maximum number of characters subtitles can have, a few things must be considered. For example, the letters must be large enough for the audience to be able to read them effortlessly. On the other hand, they cannot be too big, as they will take up too much space on the screen, thereby obstructing too much of the video and possibly distracting the audience. Although it is not entirely clear who implemented it, the general agreement in the industry is that subtitles should not have more than 35 characters on a single line and that there should be no more than two lines of subtitles showing at the same time (Díaz-Cintas, 2010).

It should be mentioned that not everyone adheres to this maximum of 35 characters. This has also been noted in the field of translation studies, as Pedersen (2011) indicates that "in academic texts on subtitling, there is quite a range as to how many characters you can fit into a line" (p. 19). In his book *Subtitling Norms for Television: An Exploration Focussing on Extralinguistic Cultural References,* Pedersen explains that the maximum number of characters ranges from as few as 28 to as many as 42 characters (ibid.). The character limit of 42 characters can also be found on various websites of translators and localisation companies (e.g. Transladiem (2021) and AmperSound Translate Media (n.d.)).

2.3.2.2 Time factor

Without the time factor, the subtitling process would be much less constrained. Each block of subtitles could consist of two lines of 35 characters, thereby giving translators the freedom of 70 characters for their translations. However, this is not always the case, as the combination of the audience's reading speed and the duration of each individual subtitle block (also called its *display time*), which is, in turn, timed to the characters' speech as well as shot changes, determine how many characters can be used for it.

Most subtitles are made with the *six-seconds rule* in mind. According to this rule, the audience needs approximately six seconds to read two lines of 35 characters. Thus, the ideal reading speed would be around 12 CPS (characters per second), which is why this rule has also been dubbed the *12-cps rule* (Pedersen, 2011). For example, if a subtitle block has a display time of two seconds, the subtitle block cannot contain more than 24 characters. With more characters, the subtitles would

disappear before the audience was finished reading. Although the rule's origin is unknown, it is recommended in various subtitling guidelines and handbooks, such as the *ITC Guidance on Standards* for Subtitling from the Independent Television Commission (1999).

Over the last two decades there has been growing interest in the way subtitles are processed by the audience. One of the key interests has been the reading speed of 12 CPS and whether audiences today are able to read subtitles faster (or slower) than when the rule was established. For instance, Szarkowska and Gerber-Morón (2018) used eye-tracking technology to investigate subtitle processing at various reading speeds. They found that the test subjects were not only able to read the faster subtitles (16 CPS or 20 CPS) without too much trouble, but that they actually preferred them over the slower ones (12 CPS). When looking at the eye-tracking data, they found that the slower subtitles were re-read more than the quicker ones, thereby "possibly resulting in confusion, frustration and less enjoyment" (p. 5). Although the six-seconds rule is still widely used, it is likely that this will start to change if more evidence in favour of faster reading speeds is found.

2.3.3 Reduction

Due to the constraints discussed above, translators usually have to shorten subtitles in comparison to the spoken dialogue. This is referred to as *reduction* and is one of the, if not the, most important subtitling strategy. How much the translation needs to be reduced depends on the content that needs to be subtitled as factors like the speech tempo of the characters and the speed of shot changes play a role. For example, if a narrator in a wildlife documentary talks very slowly, the display time will be longer, which means the translator will have more characters for their translation. According to Antonini (2005), translators will reduce the original dialogue by anywhere from 40% up to 75% when subtitling. She also states that translators can use three strategies to reduce their translations, namely elimination, rendering and simplification (ibid.).

Elimination occurs when a specific element from the source text is not present in the translation. Thus, the translator has left it out completely, which is also why this is often referred to as *omission* or *deletion*. Although this is a straightforward way to reduce the translation, the translator has to be careful in considering which elements of the source text are redundant and which ones are essential for the plot. Personal names can often be left out as the audience will still be able to see and hear those to whom a character is speaking. Thus, elimination is quite common in subtitling as other semiotic channels can compensate for the loss of information caused by the elimination of a certain element. Suratno and Wijaya (2018) also identified elimination as the predominant reduction strategy (in comparison to rendering and simplification) when looking at the Indonesian subtitles of two English films.

Rendering "implies reproducing or, in most cases depriving the target text, of features such as dialects, slang, humor, acronyms, taboo language, etc." (Antonini, 2005, p. 214). Rendering differs from elimination in the sense that a certain element is not left out completely, but certain features of the element are omitted. This partial reduction is therefore also called *condensation*. An example of this strategy would be the omission of the swear word when translating "Get in **the fucking car**" to "Stap in **de auto**" 'Get in **the** car'. Most studies on rendering have looked specifically at the translation of swear words, as already mentioned in Section 2.2.3.

The final reduction strategy is simplification. Although Baker (1996) claims that simplification is a subconscious process in which translators simplify their translations for the audience, it could also very well be a conscious process and something translators use to shorten their translations when subtitling. For example, the dialogue can be simplified and reduced with the use of generalisations, as would be the case when "My mother and father are here" is translated as "Mijn ouders zijn er" 'My parents are here'. A translation strategy that has been left by and large unexplored as a reduction strategy is explicitation, which is discussed in the next section.

2.4 Explicitation

2.4.1 Definitions and categorisations

Vinay and Darbelnet introduced the concept of explicitation into the field of translation studies in 1958. They described it as "[a] stylistic translation technique which consists of making explicit in the target language what remains implicit in the source language because it is apparent from either the context or situation" (p. 342). Especially in the 1990s, the phenomenon garnered a great deal of interest as researchers tried to delimit it and categorise translators' reasons for using it.

2.4.1.1 Types of explicitation

Séguinot's (1988) work mainly focuses on what should and what should not be considered explicitation. She states that explicitation only occurs if there is also "the possibility of a correct but less explicit or less precise version" (p. 108). In one of the first categorisations of explicitation, she lists three types of explicitation, which can be summarised as:

- 1. element absent in source text → element present in translation
- 2. element implicit in source text → element explicit in translation
- 3. element present in source text \rightarrow element more explicit in translation.

The first type is also known as *addition* and occurs when, for example, "The train leaves in a few minutes" is translated as "De trein vertrekt over een paar minuten **vanaf Leiden**" 'The train

leaves in a few minutes **from Leiden**.' The introduction of new information raises the much-debated notion of equivalence, which will not be discussed here due to the vastness of the topic. It will have to suffice to say that this type of explicitation usually results in a longer translation, which is why it does not occur often in subtitling.

With the second type of explicitation the explicitated element is already implicitly present in the source text. For example, translators can choose to translate "Where is **that** coming from?" to "Waar komt **dat geluid** vandaan?" 'Where is **that noise** coming from?'. They might decide to do so in order to clarify to the audience that "that" refers to the sound the characters on the screen are hearing.

In the case of the third type of explicitation, an element that is already present in the source text is made more important by a shift in "focus, emphasis, or lexical choice" (Séguinot, 1988, p. 108). An example of how this might be accomplished by a shift of lexical choice is the translation of "Daniel is crazy" to "Daniel is krankzinnig" 'Daniel is insane'. Without any context "gek" would probably have been the most obvious choice for "crazy", but perhaps the translator tried to capture the speaker's emotions towards Daniel by choosing "krankzinnig" 'insane' instead. This way, the translator also tries to convey some of the emotions in the speaker's voice, which otherwise would be less noticeable in the subtitles due to the shift from the oral to the written code (see Section 2.2.3).

2.4.1.2 A causal categorisation

Kinga Klaudy proposed a different categorisation of explicitation in her article "Back-translation as a Tool for Detecting Explicitation Strategies in Translation" (1996). She based her categories on the reasons why translators decide to explicitate and states that four types of explicitation can be identified with this approach, namely obligatory, optional, pragmatic/cultural, and translation-inherent explicitation (pp. 102-103).

In the case of obligatory explicitation, there are differences in the morphological, semantic or syntactic structures of two languages, which require translators to explicitate an element in order for the translation to be grammatically correct. For example, when translating "I don't like **the teacher**" in Spanish, a translator will have to explicitate the gender of "teacher" due the lexical gender of Spanish nouns. Thus, the translation would be either "No me gusta **la profesora**" (female) or "No me gusta **el profesor**" (male).

Optional explicitation occurs when something is explicitated that does not necessarily have to be explicitated. This usually stems from "differences in text-building strategies [...] and stylistic preferences between languages" (Klaudy, 2009, p. 106). An example of this type of explicitation is

the optional addition of the "that"-connective in English, which will be discussed in more detail in Section 2.4.3.

Pragmatic or cultural explicitation occurs due to cultural differences between the users of the two languages involved (Klaudy, 1996). If a certain cultural element is unknown to the readers of the translation, translators need to explicitate this in order for readers to understand the message that the translation is meant to convey. As these culture-specific elements are present in almost all texts, it is not surprising to see that this is a popular topic amongst translation studies researchers. For example, Diederik Grit lists seven strategies for translating these elements in his article "De Vertaling van Realia" (2010). One of those strategies is "omschrijving" 'description,' in which the denotation of a source text element is explained by describing the element in the translation; for example, in the translation of "Elfstedentocht" to "long distance skating race in Friesland" (p. 192).

Translation-inherent explicitation can be attributed to "the nature of the translation process itself" (Klaudy, 2009, p. 107). Klaudy explains that this type of explicitation has nothing to do with the languages involved but solely with the translation activity, its goal being the accurate transfer of the message. It should be noted that Klaudy does not give any examples of this type of explicitation. As a result, there has been quite some criticism on this specific part of Klaudy's categorisation. For example, Vermes (2018) believes translation-inherent explicitation to be the same as pragmatic/cultural explicitation, as they are both "motivated by the circumstances of the secondary communication situation" (p. 77).

2.4.2 An elusive concept

In her report Explicitation in Translation Studies: The Journey of an Elusive Concept, Gumul (2017) aptly points out that there is considerable conceptual inconsistency when it comes to explicitation. This is mainly due to the widespread interest in the various aspects of the phenomenon, as well as varying definitions of expansion, addition, and explicitation. As these three concepts are crucial to this present study (and to any study dealing with explicitation), they will be discussed in more detail below.

Expansion is what happens when a translation becomes longer than the source text and is therefore the opposite of reduction (see Section 2.3.3). The degree of expansion is usually discussed in terms of how many words more the translation has than the source text, though in subtitling, it is much more common to discuss this in the number of characters due to the required six-seconds rule (see Section 2.3.2). In the translation of "Where is that coming from?" to "Waar komt dat

geluid vandaan?" Where is that noise coming from?' there is expansion from 26 to 29 characters.³ Thus, in this specific example, explicitation also leads to expansion, but this is not always the case. It is therefore important to keep in mind that expansion is not the same as explicitation, but a possible result of it.

A translation strategy that normally leads to expansion is *addition*. As discussed in relation to Séguinot's (1988) classification in Section 2.4.1, this is a type of explicitation and can be defined as "the introducing [of] new meaningful elements that change the information content" (Gumul, 2017, p. 28). Thus, the main difference between explicitation and addition is the fact that addition is only one type of explicitation, one which involves the introduction of information. In the case of other types of explicitation the explicitated information is already present in the source text, albeit implicitly, or could be derived from the source text or its context.

Thus, conceptual inconsistency has caused many researchers to assume that addition and explicitation refer to the same concept. Explicitation, however, is the umbrella term for different translation strategies that result in a more explicit translation. Addition is only one of such strategies. Although addition often leads to expansion, other types of explicitation do not necessarily have to do so, as will be discussed in relation to the work by Elisa Perego (2003) in the following section.

2.4.3 Explicitation in translation research: Empirical studies

2.4.3.1 The explicitation hypothesis

Of the many works that have been written on explicitation since Vinay and Darbelnet introduced the concept into translation studies in 1958, the honour of the most influential work should probably be attributed to Blum-Kulka's (1986) explicitation hypothesis. According to this hypothesis, explicitation is a translation universal, which means that it occurs in "all translation activity irrespective of the mode, genre and language pair" (Gumul, 2017, p. 11). If this hypothesis is true, explicitation should occur in all domains of translation (e.g. medical, technical, literary) and in all language pairs and translation directions. Many researchers have set out to investigate whether this is really the case.

One example of such a study is the one by Olohan and Baker (2000) in which they investigated the use of the optional "that"-connective in translated English and original (i.e. non-translated) English texts. They define explicitation as "the spelling out in a target text of information which is only implicit in a source text" (p. 142) and "the introduction of new

³ There are no strict guidelines on whether spaces and punctuation should count as characters or not, but for the sake of clarity, each space and punctuation mark is counted as one character in this study.

information" (ibid.). They proposed that if explicitation indeed occurs in all types of translation, the translated texts will show a higher frequency of the "that"-connective than original texts in the same language, as translators will be more inclined to spell things out more (albeit subconsciously) than the writers of original English texts. For example, in the sentence "I noticed (that) they did not jump", the "that"-connective would be included in the translation but omitted in the non-translated texts. In their corpus-based study Olohan and Baker indeed find that the optional connective is far more common in the translated texts than in the non-translated texts, and they claim that this not only shows that explicitation is a common translation strategy, but they go as far as to say that this is evidence for translation-inherent explicitation and that explicitation is a translation universal.

Although Olohan and Baker's (2000) attempt to prove Blum-Kulka's (1958) hypothesis with the use of comparable corpora resulted in a great deal of interesting results, the way they interpret these results is debatable. Many scholars have pointed out that Olohan and Baker's study is product-oriented, and that there is thus little to no attention for the translation process in which translators decide whether to use the optional connective or not. One of the scholars who does not agree with Olohan and Baker's "evidence" for explicitation being a translation universal, is Anthony Pym. In his article "Explaining Explicitation" (2005) he argues that the notion of risk management should also be considered, as he claims that explicitation is the result of "risk aversion as a rational consequence of the kinds of situations in which translations work" (p. 41). Translators want to avoid misinterpretations of their translations and are therefore more inclined to be as explicit as possible, which leads them to add optional elements, such as the "that"-connective.

Another scholar who critiques the notion of translation-inherent explicitation is Becher (2010). He argues that any instance of explicitation can also be explained by several different factors, such as pragmatic and stylistic differences between the source and target language that may be transferred (see, for example, Becher et al., 2009), and that explicitation is therefore not necessarily a translation universal. Becher also points out that neither Blum-Kulka (1958) nor Olohan and Baker (2000) are able to provide an example of translation-inherent explicitation, and he urges scholars to abandon this category of explicitation and the explicitation hypothesis altogether. Instead, he proposes a modified version of Klaudy's asymmetry hypothesis, which proposes that "obligatory, optional and pragmatic explicitations tend to be more frequent than the corresponding implicitations regardless of the SL/TL constellation at hand" (Becher, 2010, p. 17). He thus argues that explicitation can only be a translation universal if translators choose to explicitate more than they choose to implicitate, thereby creating a non-symmetrical balance between the two strategies. However, in order to prove or disprove this hypothesis, there should

be an account of both translation directions (from the source language to the target language and vice versa), which is lacking in monolingual corpus studies such as the one by Olohan and Baker.

Despite (and perhaps because of) the many critiques on the study by Olohan and Baker (2000), many scholars became interested in the way increased explicitness in translated texts could be studied and set out to create similar studies. At the same time, this topic has also been studied in other areas of linguistics. For example, Tagliamonte and Smith (2005) study complementiser omission in dialects of English, Van Rooy and Kruger (2016) studied complementiser omission in Afrikaans written language, and Wulff et al. (2018) looked at the phenomenon in texts written by German and Spanish learners of English. They compared the results of the second language learners with those of native speakers of English to see if the level of language proficiency had any effect on whether the "that"-connective would be included or omitted. Furthermore, some scholars have also studied other grammatical alternations, such as Van Beveren et al. (2020), who looked into the use of the Dutch "om"-alternation in sentences such as "Het lukt haar niet (om) te komen" 'She was not able to come'.

One of the few studies on translation that does not focus as much on the frequency of different options in grammatical alternations, but more on the reasons behind it, is Kruger (2019). In general, there are three explanations for the inclusion and omission of optional complementisers, which can be summarised in three hypotheses: the cognitive complexity hypothesis, the pragmatic risk-aversion hypothesis, and the source-language transfer hypothesis. Kruger tested the three hypotheses with the use of a multivariate analysis of four corpora of written texts and found evidence against the transfer hypothesis, and support for the pragmatic risk-aversion hypothesis. Other scholars who are also in favour of this hypothesis are Becher (2010) and Pym (2005). Kruger also states that the cognitive complexity hypothesis cannot be ruled out and that "an interplay between corpus and psycholinguistic experimental work is necessary for the testing of causal hypotheses" (2019, p. 24). Indeed, a growing number of researchers (see also De Sutter & Lefer (2020) and Kruger (2016)) recognise that the field of translation studies would certainly benefit from interdisciplinary research as it will give them more insight into the cognitive effort involved by both translators and their intended audience.

2.4.3.2 Explicitation and implicitation in subtitling

As seen above, numerous studies have been done on the explicitation hypothesis and its implications. However, there has been limited research on explicitation in AVT and even less in relation to subtitling. This can partly be explained by the fact that other semiotic channels are

involved in AVT which can provide the audience with information, making it less likely that an element in the dialogue needs to be explicitated.

A small number of researchers have, however, investigated explicitation in subtitling. For example, Moghaddam et al. (2017) set out to discover if explicitation could be found in the Persian subtitles of two English films, and if so, what type of explicitation was used most frequently. Using Klaudy's (1996) causal categorisation (see Section 2.4.1), they found that translation-inherent explicitation was the main type of explicitation. Yet, like Klaudy, they fail to give an example to show what this translation-inherent explicitation looks like.

Like Moghaddam et al. (2017), Tabrizi et al. (2015) also considered explicitation in Persian subtitles of English films. They claim to find that explicitation was the main reason for expansion of the subtitles, the other reasons being mistranslations and paraphrasing. It should be noted that the aforementioned conceptual inconsistency is also present in their article, as the title reads "A Study on **Explicitation Strategies** Employed in Persian Subtitling of English Crime Movies" (p. 1352), but the first sentence states that their goal is "to investigate the application of **expansion strategy** in Persian subtitles" (ibid.).

Thus, the little research that has been done on explicitation in subtitling has mainly focused on its relation to expansion. As discussed in Section 2.3.3, this is the opposite of what is required in subtitling. As some researchers assume that explicitation by definition leads to expansion, it is not surprising that the opposite of explicitation (i.e. *implicitation*) is considered to lead to reduction. When implicitating, translators make an element of the source text more implicit in the translation, thereby "relying on the context or the situation for conveying the message" (Vinay & Darbelnet, 1958, p. 344). For example, "John and Mary loved the cat" could be translated as "Ze hielden van de kat" "They loved the cat' if it is clear from the context that "they" refers to John and Mary.

As implicitation is an effective reduction strategy, it is not surprising that it is a popular research topic in AVT. For example, Huber and Lideikyté (2021) study how implicitation "may cause the loss of semiotic cohesion between audio and visual channels of the multimodal product" (p. 145) and how other semiotic channels can compensate for this loss. Another example is Aryana, Nababan, and Djatmika (2018) who investigate reduction strategies in the subtitles of *Band of Brothers*. They find that implicitation is favoured over deletion, as it "will always have the highest rate for accuracy, acceptability and readability" (p. 74). Thus, implicitation is usually studied as a reduction strategy and explicitation as an expansion strategy.

2.4.3.3 Reduction-based explicitation in subtitling

Italian scholar Elisa Perego (2003) is one of the few scholars who have studied explicitation in subtitling. In "Evidence of Explicitation in Subtitling: Towards a Categorisation", she describes how she compared the Italian subtitles with the audio transcripts of two Hungarian films with the intention to categorise the different types of explicitation that occur in subtitling. In her categorisation, Perego introduces the notion of *reduction-based explicitation*, which she defines as "explicitation prompted by the need to reduce the ST in order to make it fit into each subtitle-block, thus making it readable in a short span of time" (p. 75). Thus, this type of explicitation is motivated by the need to conform to the media-defined spatial and temporal constraints (see Sections 2.3.1 and 2.3.2). It can compensate for the loss of information that usually results from reduction, while simultaneously reducing the number of characters in the translation. She states that this can be done either through addition, which involves the "insertion in the TT of linguistic elements different from those employed in the ST" (p. 73), or through specification, in which a more general word in the source text is replaced for a more specific one in the translation.

Table 2.1 shows the example Perego gives for reduction-based explicitation through addition. The Hungarian segment in bold shows the reason as to why Agi slept with a man (because she was so in love and had such a crush on him). This segment of 71 characters is eliminated in the translation and the adverb "persino" (seven characters) is added, as it has the same "semantic impact [that] is implied in the source message" (p. 82).

Original dialogue in Hungarian (Szabó)	Subtitles in Italian
Kata: GyereAgi mindenkinek a nyakába kapaszkodik. Egyszer szerelmes volt egy srácba, és annyira beleesett, hogy elhatározta, hogy lefekszik vele. []	370: Agnese è terribile. 371: Si attacca a chiunque. Una volta ha persino deciso 372: di andare a letto con un ragazzo.
English back translation	English back translation
Kata: Come here Agi's always leeching onto people. At one time she was in love with a	370: Agi is terrible. 371: She is always leeching onto people.

Table 2.1. Reduction-based explicitation through addition (Perego, 2003, p. 82)

With reduction-based explicitation through specification, a more general element is replaced by a more specific one. Perego explains that this is different from addition as specification

is more "a case of addition of meaning(s), though not necessarily of words" (p. 73). In the example she gives (see Table 2.2), "I couldn't fetch it up alone" in the Hungarian dialogue is replaced by "very heavy." In doing so, the implicit reason Luca was not able to fetch the basket (because it was very heavy) is explicitated in the translation, thereby reducing the translation by 14 characters.

Original dialogue in Hungarian (Makk)	Subtitles in Italian
Luca: [] Na, Irénke jöjjön segítsen nekem. Lenn hagytam egy kosarat, nem tudtam egyedül felhozni.	439. L: Mi aiuti, per favore 440. L: Ho lasciato giù un cesto molto pesante.
English back translation	English back translation
Luca: [] Well, Irénke, come help me. I've left a basket downstairs; I couldn't fetch it up alone.	439: Help me, please 440: I left a very heavy basket downstairs.

Table 2.2. Reduction-based explicitation through specification (Perego, 2003, p. 83)

Other than reduction-based explicitation, Perego's categorisation of explicitation types also includes cultural explicitation and channel-based explicitation. Translators can use one of the three types either through addition and/or specification. Thus, her categorisation consists of six forms of explicitation that can occur in subtitles. Although Perego already said that this is merely "an initial, rudimentary categorisation" (p. 68), the article seems to fall short by giving merely one example per explicitation type and by omitting the frequency of each type, making it impossible to make any statements about which of the types is the most or least common.

This thesis is aimed at providing more quantitative data to the notion of reduction-based explicitation Perego (2003) introduced. Due to the scope of this study, cultural and channel-based explicitation are not discussed further. As discussed in Section 2.3, the requirement to shorten translations is a result of the spatial and temporal constraints imposed by the medium of subtitling itself. According to Antonini (2005) there are three main reduction strategies, namely elimination, rendering and simplification. With her categorisation, Perego (2003) introduces explicitation as another possible reduction strategy. This, however, has not been widely investigated as such, which could be explained by the fact that explicitation is often incorrectly equated with addition; a translation strategy that leads to expansion. By categorising and quantifying the different ways reduction-based explicitation occurs in the Dutch subtitles of *Avengers: Endgame* (A. Russo & J. Russo, 2019), this study hopes to answer the question: What are the most common reduction-based explicitation strategies in subtitling?

3. Methodology

3.1 Introduction

By comparing the English dialogue to the Dutch subtitles of *Avengers: Endgame* (A. Russo & J. Russo, 2019) I aim to identify and describe recurring patterns of reduction-based explicitation in subtitling in the film. In this chapter I will explain why I selected this film and outline how I prepared the two subcorpora (i.e. the English dialogue and the Dutch subtitles) to be able to compare them (Section 3.1). Then, I will describe the two-step coding process that allowed me to extract the data needed (Section 3.2) for the statistical analysis (described in Section 3.3), in which I also focus on how often the patterns I identified occur and how these frequencies relate to each other.

3.2 Corpora

The data used in this case study was collected from the film *Avengers: Endgame* (2019), which is directed by Anthony Russo and Joseph Russo ("The Russo Brothers") and which can be accessed via the streaming service Disney+. The main motivation for choosing this film is its reputation. This superhero film is part of the immensely popular Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU), which is the media franchise created by Marvel Studios. The film is currently the second highest-grossing film in history, and has made over \$2.79 billion (Box Office Mojo, 2022). This number already illustrates how highly anticipated the film was, and thus it can be assumed that a company such as Marvel Studios (or its parent company The Walt Disney Company) would employ a professional subtitler for providing high-quality subtitles. It is then not surprising that the Dutch subtitles for this film were created by Frank Bovelander, a translator who, at the time, had over 23 years of subtitling experience and also subtitled for the streaming service Netflix (Verstegen, 2019). A second reason for choosing this film is related to its length. With three hours and two minutes of material I anticipated to find enough instances of explicitation to be able to test my hypotheses on how explicitations are used to shorten the translation.

For the English subcorpus I needed a transcript of the English dialogue. I first watched the film with the English closed captions (CC) turned on to see whether the entire dialogue had been included or if some words had been omitted. In the CC, the word "stop" had been omitted once, but aside from that it contained all words from the dialogue. I, therefore, used the CC as a reference to manually create a transcript in a Microsoft Excel file. It would have been more time-efficient to find a transcript online, but I wanted to ensure that the transcript was an exact

representation of the English dialogue Bovelander had used to create the Dutch subtitles. Manually creating the transcript also made it easier to assign each subtitle a number by giving it its own separate line, and to leave out the sound descriptions (e.g. "THUNDER RUMBLING") and speaker indicators ("LOKI:"). The completed English transcript of the dialogue (i.e. the source text (ST)) consists of 2,368 subtitles, 11,919 words, and 60,108 characters (see Table 3.1).

The second subcorpus consists of the Dutch subtitles created by Frank Bovelander, which were placed in the same Microsoft Excel file, aligned with the corresponding dialogue text of the English subcorpus to facilitate the comparison between the two. The choice for a manual transcription of the Dutch subtitles was motivated by two reasons:

- If an English subtitle had been omitted entirely or if several English subtitles had been merged into one Dutch subtitle, I could easily align the next Dutch subtitle to the corresponding English subtitle without having to shift the other cells in the document.
- Copying and pasting the Dutch subtitles from a file I had found online would have been a much less conscious process than typing and manually aligning them. This method also allowed me to get an initial sense of how the English dialogue had been translated and to see whether reduction-based explicitation occurred at all.

The Dutch subtitles (i.e. the target text (TT)) consists of 1,793 subtitles⁴, 10,323 words, and 54,339 characters (see Table 3.1).

	English subcorpus (ST)	Dutch subcorpus (TT)	ST + TT
Subtitles	2,368	1,793	4,161
Words	11,919	10,323	22,242
Characters	60,108	54,339	114,447

Table 3.1. Composition of the corpus

3.3 Data extraction

In order to uncover patterns of reduction-based explicitation, I first had to filter out the instances which contained explicitation (Step 1), and subsequently the instances that involved a translation with fewer characters than the source text (Step 2).

⁴ 96 English subtitles had not been translated into Dutch. Thus, these 96 empty subtitles were included of the total of 1,793 subtitles in order to be able to investigate implicitation in these subtitles.

3.3.1 Step 1: Explicitation, implicitation, combination, neither

The aim of the first step was to extract all the Dutch subtitles in which explicitation occurred, which is why I labelled each subtitle as 'explicitation,' 'implicitation,' 'combination,' or 'neither.'

3.3.1.1 Explicitation

The label 'explicitation' was attributed to any subtitle that contained explicitation. This could be one instance of explicitation or several, but the subtitle did not receive this label if it also contained one or more instances of implicitation (see the discussion of 'combination' in Section 3.2.1.3). If there were two instances of explicitation in the same subtitle, the subtitle was labelled "2E". When labelling the subtitles I adhered to Séguinot's (1988) definition of explicitation as presented in her typological categorisation (see Section 2.4.1). Thus, in this study, any instance of addition (i.e. Séguinot's first category) was also considered an instance of explicitation. An example of addition (subtitle [1527]) along with two other examples of explicitation can be found in Table 3.2.

Subtitle number	Source text	Translation
[330]	Yeah. And now we smell like garbage.	Ja, en nu stinken we .
[1462]	Amplify this , Maw.	Vergroot het beeld , Maw.
[1527]	I love you, mom. -I love you.	Ik hou van je, mam. -Ik hou ook van jou.

Table 3.2. Examples of 'explicitation'

In subtitle [330] "we smell like garbage" has been replaced by "stinken we" 'we stink'. This is an example of Séguinot's (1988) third category in which an element that is already explicit in the ST becomes more explicit in the TT. It can be assumed that the audience understands that something which smells like garbage does not have a very pleasant smell, but this has been made even clearer by translating this as "stinken we". Subtitle [1462] is an example of Séguinot's second category which is similar to the one discussed in Section 2.4.1. The audience will be able to infer from the visual channel that "this" refers to "het beeld" 'the image,' but Bovelander decided to explicitate this in his translation.

3.3.1.2 Implicitation

A subtitle was labelled 'implicitation' if something was made more implicit in the translation than it had originally been in the source text (see Section 2.4.3). Thus, for example, the omission of

English words that sound similar to their Dutch counterparts (e.g. "okay," "what" or "sorry") was also seen as implicitation in this study as the audience would still be able to infer this information from the context, in this case, the audio track. Similarly, the deletion of repetition was also seen as implicitation. This can be observed in subtitles [2302-2303] in which "Of course. Of course. Of course." was translated as a single "Uiteraard." 'Of course.' Any stylistic changes, such as the italicisation of text or the use of exclamation marks, was not considered to be implicitation as broadcasting companies often require translators to adhere to certain style guides that prevent them from using italicisation or exclamation marks (see Section 2.3.1). In order to be labelled 'implicitation' a subtitle could contain one or several instances of implicitation, but it could not contain any instances of explicitation in the same subtitle (see the discussion of 'combination' in Section 3.2.1.3). If the subtitle contained two instances of implicitation, the subtitle was labelled "21".

3.3.1.3 Combination

On numerous occasions a single subtitle contained (one or more instances of) both explicitation as well as implicitation. I created separate labels for these combinations, based on the number of instances of explicitation and implicitation they contained. This allowed me to evaluate these instances individually in Step 2. An example of a combination can be found in Table 3.3, which shows subtitle [1551]. This subtitle was labelled "1E - 2I" to indicate that it contained one instance of explicitation and two instances of implicitation. In this example "work" has been explicitated as it was translated with "moeten" 'must' and thus received more emphasis. Furthermore, the two implicitated elements are the omissions of both "but" and "right".

Subtitle number	Source text	Translation
[1 [[1]	But we work	We moeten het doen
[1551]	with what we got, right?	met wat we hebben.

Table 3.3. Example of 'combination'

3.3.1.4 Neither

I used the label 'neither' for subtitles that did not contain any instances of explicitation nor of implicitation. An example of this can be found in Table 3.4. As translation usually involves some change in explicitness, this label was used mostly for subtitles that had been translated literally.

Subtitle number	Source text	Translation
[1420]	It's the duty of the Sorcerer Supreme	Het is de taak van de Sorcerer Supreme
[1421]	to protect the Time Stone.	om de Time Stone te beschermen.

Table 3.4. Example of 'neither'

3.3.2 Step 2: Reduction, expansion, same number

Step 1 allowed me to determine how many subtitles (1) only contain instances of explicitation, (2) only contain instances of implicitation, (3) contain a combination of instances of explicitation and implicitation, and (4) do not have any instances of explicitation or implicitation. However, before I could indicate whether explicitation or implicitation had resulted in expansion, reduction, or the same number of characters in the translation, I first had to disentangle the various strategies if several occurred in the same subtitle. I deemed this intermediate step necessary as without it I would not have been able to indicate whether the reduction in characters for a subtitle with both strategies should be attributed to either the explicitation of one element or the implicitation of another. An example of this can be found in Table 3.5.

Subtitle number	Source text	Translation
[1684]	The door is this way, pal.	Daar is de uitgang, vriend.
[1007]	(26 characters)	(27 characters)

Table 3.5. Example of combination 1E - 1I

In this example, the ST has 26 characters and the translation has 27 characters. Thus, defining expansion as a TT with more characters than the ST and reduction as the opposite, I would have had to label this example as expansion. However, when considering the individual strategies, it is evident that the explicitation of "the door" (eight characters) to "de uitgang" 'the exit' (10 characters) has led to expansion, whereas the implicitation of "this way" (eight characters) to "daar" 'there' (four characters) has led to reduction. Thus, as every individual strategy can lead to a different result, I decided to duplicate the subtitles which contained two or more instances of explicitation or implicitation, or a combination of the two. This way, each instance of explicitation and each instance of implicitation was represented on its own line, which allowed me to indicate for each instance whether it resulted in reduction, expansion, or the same number of characters in the translation.

After this intermediate step was completed, I indicated for every subtitle whether the strategy in question had led to expansion, reduction, or whether the element in the source text and the element in the translation had the same number of characters (in which case I would label it as 'same number'). Table 3.6 shows an example of both duplicated and unduplicated lines after both Step 1 and 2.

Subtitle number	Source text	Translation	Step 1	Step 2
[1682]	Arnim?	Arnim?	neither	same number
	(six characters)	(six characters)		
[1683]	Hey!	Ø	implicitation	reduction
	(four characters)	(no characters)		
[1684]	The door is this way,	Daar is de uitgang ,		
	pal.	vriend.	explicitation	expansion
	(eight characters)	(10 characters)		
	The door is this way,	Daar is de uitgang,		
	pal.	vriend.	implicitation	reduction
	(eight characters)	(four characters)		
[1685]	Oh, yeah.	Ø	implicitation	reduction
	(nine characters)	(no characters)		

Table 3.6. Examples of duplicated and unduplicated subtitles

3.4 Statistical analysis

With the data from Step 1 I was able to calculate how many subtitles contained explicitation, implicitation, or neither strategy. I then set out in Step 2 to indicate whether each of these strategies had led to reduction, expansion, or if the number of characters had been retained. This resulted into nine possible outcomes:

- 1. explicitation-reduction
- 2. explicitation-expansion
- 3. explicitation-same number
- 4. implicitation-reduction
- 5. implicitation-expansion
- 6. implicitation-same number
- 7. neither-reduction
- 8. neither-expansion
- 9. neither-same number.

I first compared the frequencies of the nine outcomes to see whether this allowed me to make any tentative claims about, for example, the generally accepted idea that implicitation is more frequent than explicitation in subtitling, or that explicitation usually leads to expansion. Subsequently, I focussed solely on the first subset of outcomes, namely the one which includes all the instances of explicitation that had led to reduction. My aim was to find patterns in the ways explicitation had been used to reduce the translation and to describe precisely what had been done in order to achieve this. The last step entailed a comparison of the frequencies of the patterns to indicate what the most commonly used pattern was and to see if some patterns were used more frequently than others.

Thus, in order to aggregate the ways in which explicitation had been used to reduce the translation in the Dutch subtitles of *Avengers: Endgame* (2019), I first had to identify all the instances of explicitation that led to reduction. I used the coding scheme presented in Figure 3.1 to first indicate whether the Dutch subtitles contained explicitation, implicitation, a combination of the two, or neither strategy. I then specified if these strategies had resulted in reduction, expansion or whether the translation had the same number of characters as the source text. The outcome of these two steps was nine combinations of strategies and their effects, of which I could then isolate the instances of explicitation that led to reduction. This allowed me to identify recurring patterns of reduction-based explicitation and to study how these are quantitatively related to each other.

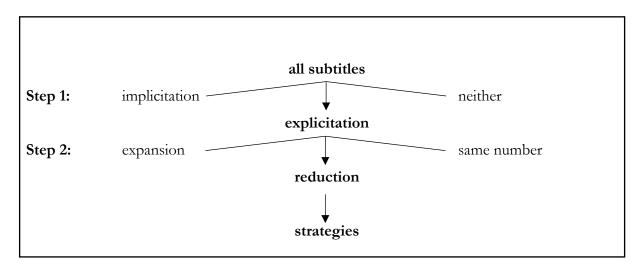


Figure 3.1. Applied coding scheme

4. Findings and discussion

4.1 Introduction

The goal of this study is to categorise and quantify the ways in which reduction-based explicitation occurs in the Dutch subtitles of *Avengers: Endgame* (A. Russo & J. Russo, 2019). In order to answer the research question 'What are the most common reduction-based explicitation strategies in subtitling?' this chapter first discusses the corpus analysis before turning to the interpretation of its results.

The frequencies of the three strategies (explicitation, implicitation, and no explicitation nor implicitation (i.e. the 'neither'-category)) are discussed in Section 4.2, while the frequencies of the length outcomes (expansion, reduction, and the same number of characters) are presented in Section 4.3. By crosstabulating these results, preliminary conclusions are drawn on implicitation in Section 4.3.2, on the neither-category in Section 4.3.3, and on explicitation in Section 4.3.4.

Having identified all instances of the three strategies and of the three length outcomes, the second part of this chapter is concerned with the interpretation of the instances that involve both explicitation and reduction. These instances of reduction-based explicitation can be grouped together in eight patterns, which are discussed with the use of examples from the corpus in Section 4.4, starting with the pattern occurring most frequently. Section 4.5 concludes this chapter with a summary of the presented findings.

4.2 Frequency of explicitation and implicitation

The English subcorpus consists of 60,108 characters, while the Dutch subcorpus contains only 54,339 characters. To discover in how many cases and in what ways this reduction of roughly 9.6% was accompanied by explicitation, I first isolated all the subtitles in which explicitation occurred (Step 1), and subsequently determined in which of these cases there was also a reduction of the number of characters in the translation (Step 2).

The analysis in Step 1 shows that of the 1,793 subtitles, 298 subtitles contain (one or more instance of) explicitation, 594 subtitles contain (one or more instance of) implicitation, 238 subtitles contain a combination of both explicitation and implicitation (one instance or more), and 663 subtitles contain neither explicitation nor implicitation (in which case I labelled the instance as 'neither'). The findings are visualised in Figure 4.1.

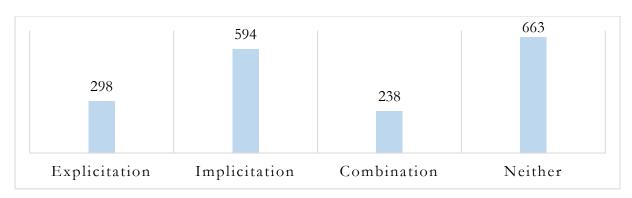


Figure 4.1. Results of Step 1: The frequency of explicitation and implicitation in the corpus, by subtitle (1,793 subtitles)

These findings already illustrate that subtitles where neither explicitation nor implicitation occur are the most frequent, accounting for 663 of the 1,793 subtitles (i.e. 37.0%). Implicitation is more frequent than explicitation, with implicitation occurring in 594 subtitles (i.e. 33.1% of the subtitles), compared to 298 subtitles (i.e. 16.6% of subtitles) containing explicitation. Subtitles combining explicitation and implicitation account for proportionally almost as many cases as the subtitles in which only explicitation occurs (238 subtitles, or 13.3%).

As one *subtitle* can contain several *instances* of explicitation and/or implicitation, I needed to execute the intermediate step described in Section 3.2.2 to be able to analyse all individual instances. To illustrate, among the total of 298 subtitles containing explicitation, there are 276 subtitles in which only one instance of explicitation occurs, 19 with two instances of explicitation, and three subtitles with three instances of explicitation. The distribution of the instances across the subtitles is as follows (where "E" and "I" refer to explicitation and implicitation, respectively):

- 298 subtitles with explicitation
 - o 1E (276), 2E (19), 3E (3)
 - \circ 276 + 38 + 9 = 323 instances of explicitation
- 594 subtitles with implicitation
 - o 1I (456), 2I (99), 3I (30), 4I (7), 5I (1), 6I (1)
 - \circ 456 + 198 + 90 + 28 + 5+ 6 = 783 instances of implicitation
- 238 subtitles with a combination of explicitation and implicitation
 - 1E 1I (144), 1E 2I (51), 2E 1I (20), 1E 3I (12), 2E 2I (8), 1E 4I (1), 3E 1I (1), 2E 3I (1)
 - 144 & 144 + 51 & 102 + 40 & 20 + 12 & 36 + 16 & 16 + 1 & 4 + 3 & 1 + 2 & 3
 = 269 instances of explicitation & 326 instances of implicitation
- 663 subtitles with neither explicitation nor implicitation = 663 instances with neither strategy.

Thus, in the total of 1,793 subtitles I identified 592 (323 + 269) instances of explicitation, and 1,109 (783 + 326) instances of implicitation. A total of 663 subtitles contain neither explicitation nor implicitation (see Figure 4.2). This yields a total of 2,364 instances to be analysed.

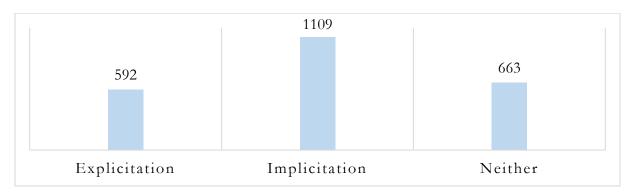


Figure 4.2. Results of intermediate analysis step: The frequency of explicitation and implicitation in the corpus, by instance (2,364 instances)

These findings are discussed in more detail in Section 4.3, but Figure 4.2 already shows that implicitation is much more frequent than explicitation (and the neither-category). This seems to confirm the assumption that implicitation is one of the (if not the most) commonly used subtitling strategies. The prevalence of this strategy justifies its popularity as a research topic in studies of AVT (see Section 2.4.3). Nevertheless, even though implicitation accounts for about half of the total of instances (1,109 of the 2,364 instances, or 46.9%) analysed, explicitation still accounts for 25.0% (592) of all instances, which is remarkably high, considering that it is a strategy that is commonly associated with expansion. In this next section, I report on the findings of Step 2 of the analysis, focusing on how the occurrence of explicitation and implicitation (also in comparison with the cases where neither occur) affects the number of characters in the subtitle.

4.3 The relationship between explicitation, implicitation, reduction and expansion

After identifying all instances of explicitation, implicitation and 'neither' in Step 1, I then set out to indicate how they affect the number of characters in the translation (Step 2). As explained in Section 3.2.2 I used a quantitative method based on number of characters to determine whether an instance should be labelled as 'reduction' (when the translation had fewer characters than the source text), 'expansion' (when the translation had more characters than the source text), or 'same number' (for the instances in which the source text and the translation had the exact same number of characters). The findings of this analysis, classifying all instances, are presented in Figure 4.3.

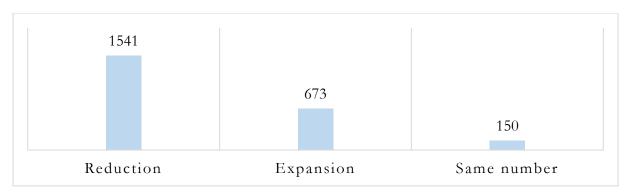


Figure 4.3. Results of Step 2: The frequency of reduction and expansion in all instances (2,364 instances)

Figure 4.3 clearly shows that reduction is unquestionably the most frequent result, occurring in 65.2% of all instances (i.e. 1,541 instances). This is in line with expectations: reducing the text is seen as one of the translator's most important tasks when subtitling (see Section 2.3.3). However, expansion occurs too, in 673 of the 2,364 instances (i.e. 28.5%). While this is less than half of the cases of reduction, it is still remarkably high, considering the space and time constraints that operate in subtitling. The limited scope of this study means that all the different strategies that result in these expansions cannot be investigated in further detail. In the remainder of the analysis, I focus only on whether they are associated with explicitation, implicitation or 'neither' (see Section 4.3.1).

Lastly, the low frequency of instances with the same number of characters (6.3%) is to be expected as the likelihood of a translation having the exact same number of characters as its source text is markedly lower than it having more ('expansion') or fewer ('reduction') characters. As predicted in Section 3.2.1.4 this label was used almost exclusively for cases of direct transfer and very literal translations; for example, as in subtitle [416] where "Scott." (six characters) in the source text remains "Scott." (six characters) in the translation, but also as in subtitle [548] in which "But this is a second chance." (28 characters) is translated as "Maar dit is een tweede kans." (28 characters).

4.3.1 Crosstabulation of strategies and length outcomes

Crosstabulating the three possible strategies identified (explicitation, implicitation, 'neither') with the length outcomes (reduction, expansion, 'same number') yields nine possible outcomes. These nine outcomes are visualised in Figure 4.4, together with the frequency with which each outcome occurs. These results are discussed in more detail in the following sections.

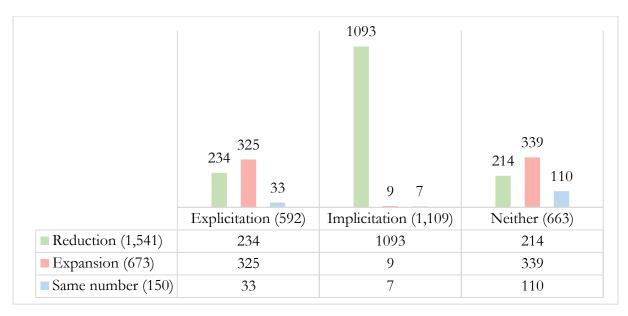


Figure 4.4. Crosstabulation of translation strategies and length outcomes (2,364 instances)

4.3.2 Implicitation

Figure 4.4 shows that the most frequent correlation is between implicitation and reduction. Being the combination of the most frequent strategy (implicitation) and the most frequent length outcome (reduction) it is not surprising that this is also the most frequent (1,093 of the 2,364 instances, or 46.2% of all instances) of the nine possible correlations. There are only nine instances of implicitation with a longer translation and only seven instances in which the number of characters is retained, which means that in 98.6% of all cases of implicitation, it is associated with a reduction in the length of the translation. Considered from a different perspective: of the 1,541 instances of reduction, 70.9% (1,093) result from implicitation, and only 15.2% (234) from explicitation. The remaining 13.9% (214) of instances reflect cases where neither implicitation nor explicitation is evident. Although there would be plenty of instances to analyse, due to the scope of this case study, I will not discuss the ways in which implicitation reduces the number of characters. Suffice it to say that these findings seem to support the claim that implicitation is most often employed in subtitling as a reduction technique (see Section 2.4.3).

4.3.3 Neither

As shown in Figure 4.4, of the 663 instances in which neither explicitation nor implicitation occurred, more than half of the instances (339 cases, or 51.1%) are associated with an expansion in the number of characters. This suggests that if nothing happens to a subtitle (i.e. no explicitation and no implicitation), the Dutch translation would still be longer than the English original in most cases. Further evidence in support of this claim is the fact that expansion is almost exclusively

(save the nine cases of implicitation) associated with explicitation (325 of 673 cases, or 48.3%) or the absence of either implicitation or explicitation (339 of 673 cases, or 50.4%).

An example of expansion that occurs in the absence of explicitation can be found in subtitle [1225] in which "He's found an Infinity Stone." is translated as "Hij heeft een Infinity Stone gevonden.". Although nothing was explicitated or implicitated in this literal translation, the translation consists of nine characters more (38) than the source text (29). This is the result of morphological differences between Dutch and English, and translators and translation agencies also notify potential customers about this difference between the two languages on their websites. For example, translators Seger & Yvet (2022) and Argondizzo (2022) state that a Dutch translation is usually at least 35% longer than its English source text. Although this is certainly a limitation of the counting method, I would argue that it is still a suitable method for this case study as all translators (translating from English to any target language) are bound to the same media-defined constraints (see Section 2.3) when subtitling the same film. This means that they will all have the same duration for their subtitles, and thus the same number of characters in which they are to fit their translations. In fact, because Dutch translations tend to be longer, Dutch translators will have to find more effective ways to reduce the text and make more of an effort to fit their translations in the permitted number of characters, which is exactly what I am interested in in this case study.

4.3.4 Explicitation

In line with the expectations outlined in Section 2.4.3, expansion is most frequently associated with explicitation, namely in 325 of the 592 instances of explicitation (see Figure 4.4). It should, however, be noted that this seemingly logical relation between explicitation and expansion is not as distinct as the relation between implicitation and reduction; 98.6% of the instances of implicitation (1,093 out of 1,109 cases; see Figure 4.4) are accompanied by reduction, whereas "only" 54.9% of the instances of explicitation are associated with expansion (325 out of 592 cases; see Figure 4.4). While this is strikingly lower than the 98.6% of implicitation cases linked to reduction, it is nevertheless a remarkably high percentage, illustrating that explicitation is not necessarily associated with expansion, as is often assumed. In 5.6% of the instances of explicitation (33 of 592 cases; see Figure 4.4) the translation and source text have the same number of characters. Most importantly for the purposes of this study, in 39.5% of the instances of explicitation (234 of 592 cases; see Figure 4.4) the number of characters is reduced in the translation. These instances of reduction-based explicitation are the focus of the remainder of this chapter.

4.4 The nature of reduction-based explicitation in subtitling

Close analysis of the 234 instances in which explicitation is associated with a reduction in subtitle length allowed me to identify eight patterns or trends, which I term:

- 1. Result-oriented translations
- 2. Overstatements
- 3. Reader-oriented translations
- 4. Increased probability
- 5. Eliminated idioms and expressions
- 6. Overt imperatives
- 7. Combined subtitles
- 8. Desententialisation.

These eight patterns are discussed in more detail in the following sections, thereby focussing on how often they occur, what is explicitated and how the number of characters in the translation is reduced.

4.4.1 Result-oriented translations

The most common trend resulting in reduction-based explicitation observed is what I term a resultoriented approach, used for the translation of 51 out of the 234 instances. In these cases, where the English source text describes a certain action or occurrence, the Dutch translation elaborates on the result of the action or occurrence. For example, subtitle [1576] "Tipped the cosmic scales to balance." (36 characters) is translated as "De kosmische schaal is in balans." 'The cosmic scale is in balance.' (33 characters), and subtitle [1303] "Change of plans." (16 characters) is translated as "Nu niet meer." 'Not anymore.' (13 characters). In the first case, the translation stays relatively close to the source text; but whereas the source text implies an agent doing the action of tipping the scales, the agent and action are omitted in the translation, and the attention is shifted to the result of the agent's action. In the second example, however, there is no longer any literal reference to the source text. In both examples the focus has shifted from what happened to the result of what happened; because the cosmic scales were tipped to balance, they are now "in balans" in balance,' and because the plans were changed, a certain situation has now been altered. The reduction of three characters in both examples may seem minimal, but this is actually quite substantial considering the fact that most guidelines dictate that there can only be 35 characters per line when subtitling (see Section 2.3.2). This result-oriented approach can be seen to lead to explicitation in

the sense that they uncover or explicitate the speakers' intended meaning; they are not simply remarking the occurrence of an event but are concerned about the resulting implications of that event.

A more specific subcategory in this pattern is related to the way locations and directions are described. Two examples of this are shown in Table 4.1.

Subtitle	Source text	Bovelander's translation	
number	Source text	(+ back translation)	
[1148]	And ask our librarians	En vraag aan de bibliothecarissen	
[1140]		of ze bundels over astronomie	
[1140]	to pull some volumes	(And ask the librarians if they [can get]	
[1149]	from the astronomy shelf.	volumes on astrology)	
[1061]	Friday,	Waar schieten ze op?	
[1961]	what are they firing at?	- Iets in de bovenste atmosfeer.	
[1962]	Something just	(What are they firing at?	
	entered the upper atmosphere.	-Something in the upper atmosphere.)	

Table 4.1. Two examples of result-oriented translations leading to reduction-based explicitation

In the first example, source text readers will undoubtedly be able to infer that volumes on an astronomy shelf will be about astronomy, but this has been explicitated in the translation by calling them "bundels over astronomie" 'volumes about astronomy.' The location of the volumes has thus been changed into an intrinsic quality of the volumes. This reduces the text from 37 to 23 characters (only focussing on the words in bold), which is a substantial reduction, also compared to the two previous examples. A similar reduction occurs in the translation of subtitles [1961-1962], which also provides an example of a result-oriented translation relating to directions. In this example, the text is reduced from 22 characters to only seven characters by highlighting the fact that if something (or in this case someone, namely Captain Marvel) "just entered upper atmosphere" it will be *in* the upper atmosphere when the speaker utters the sentence. Thus, the translation creates a more direct response to the question asked in subtitle [1961], making this a case of Séguinot's (1988) third explicitation type, in which an element from the source text receives more emphasis in the translation than it did in the source text (see Section 2.4.1).

Singling out a quality and presenting it as something intrinsic also occurs in the translation of subtitle [808]. In this subtitle "Whew! Something died in here!" is translated as "Er ligt hier iets te rotten." There is something rotten here.'. The result of something dying is that it will eventually start to rot, which is what is causing the foul smell that the speaker is commenting on. Though this result-oriented translation highlights the intended meaning of the speaker, the reduction in this case truly is minimal; the source text consists of 29 characters and the translation of 28.

4.4.2 Overstatements

The second most frequent trend consists of 46 (of the 234) instances in which the information from the source text is presented more strongly or gravely in the translation. Like the result-oriented translations discussed above, this pattern can also be classified as a case of Séguinot's (1988) third explicitation type, for if something is overstated in the translation, it will have had to be present in the source text to begin with.

An interesting characteristic of this pattern is that it often involves a (partial) deletion (i.e. implicitation) that results in a more explicit translation. For example, in subtitle [1747] "I need every available MP to sublevel six." is translated as "Alle MP's naar -6." 'All MPs to -6.'. Explicitation occurs due to two interlocked translation strategies in this sentence. Firstly, by using "I need" the speaker (a guard) conveys a certain sense of urgency, so by deleting these two words Bovelander would have lost the sense of urgency they convey. However, Bovelander manages to not only reconstruct the urgency but also intensify it, by also deleting "available." In the source text the guard *needs* every *available* MP to go to sublevel six, which implies that the situation is critical but not as dire that *every* MP *needs* to come. In the translation, however, the situation seems a lot worse as *all* MP's are required to come, whether they are available or not. As this explicitation is caused by deletion, this leads to a substantial reduction from 25 characters in the source text to as little as nine in the translation.

In some instances a source text's implied meaning is explicitated and exaggerated, intensifying the translation. This is, for example, the case in subtitle [1505] in which "That's a little bit harsh." (12 characters) is translated as "Dat is wel erg bot." "That is very blunt.' (seven characters). This sentence is the speaker's response to his mother calling him a failure; clearly a very harsh statement. The speaker saying it was "a little bit harsh" therefore simultaneously underplays the harshness and introduces an element of irony. The intensification in the translation alters the irony, which may be the consequence of Bovelander's interpretation of the intended meaning, which might not be the right one (i.e. the one that corresponds with the interpretation of the screenwriters). Justified or not, this translation has five fewer characters than the source text.

Another subtrend associated with this pattern includes the use of an indefinite pronoun. An example of this can be found in subtitles [1767-1768], in which "My old man, he never met a problem he couldn't solve with a belt." is translated as "Mijn ouwe heer loste alles op met de riem." 'My old man solved everything with the belt.' It could be argued that the text already becomes more explicit as the double negative in the use of "never" and "couldn't" is removed, making the translation easier to read by simply shifting the polarity of a sentence to the positive, while also reducing the number of characters from 40 to only 14. I would argue, however, that the

explicitation here mainly results from the way in which "a problem" disappears in the translation as a consequence of removing the two negatives. Instead, the indefinite pronoun "alles" 'everything' is used to replace it in the translation, which is considerably more comprehensive than just "a problem."

Lastly, in some cases intensification with accompanying explicitation also occurs in shifting the use of polarity in a sentence. For example, in subtitle [1774] "No amount of money ever bought a second of time." is translated as "Geld heeft nog nooit een seconde opgeleverd." 'Money has never bought a second.' In this case the negation is not removed from the translation entirely, as is the case in the previous example. Instead, the negation no longer modifies the money (i.e. "no amount of"), which would have been a rather lengthy translation, but is transferred to the element of time by simply adding the letter "n" to "ever/ooit." Thus, the explicitation occurs by shifting the emphasis from the money to the time, which is exactly what the speaker is saying is more valuable.

4.4.3 Reader-oriented translations

The third pattern of reduction-based explicitation identified consists of 37 instances in which the information from the source text was altered in order to facilitate ease of understanding for the target audience. There are three main ways in which this is accomplished, which can be classified as: (1) cultural explicitations, (2) clearer formulations, and (3) exposing intended meanings. The examples in this section illustrate, however, that some instances may also be classified under some of the other patterns, highlighting the complexity of identifying types of explicitation. For example, the explicitation of the intended meaning also occurs in subtitle [1505], which has been discussed as a case of overstatements in Section 4.4.2. Nonetheless, I would argue that these instances require a distinct classification, as they are all characterised by the fact that the translation is clearly aimed at helping the audience understand the information from the source better or more quickly.

The first subset in this pattern involves the translation of cultural elements that the target audience (i.e. the readers of the Dutch subtitles) may not be acquainted with. This type of cultural explicitation (or pragmatic explicitation) has already been discussed in Section 2.4.1 in relation to Klaudy's (1996) causal categorisation of explicitation types. An example of this can be found in subtitle [1633] in which "Garden State" is translated as "New Jersey". As this explicitation only reduces the text by two characters and because both "Garden State" and "New Jersey" refer to the same location, it is highly likely that this translation is aimed at clarifying what "Garden State" refers to, rather than in the first instance being motivated by the need to reduce the number of characters.

The second subset is comprised of instances in which the translation presents a simplified version of characters' lengthy and/or complicated ways of saying something. These kinds of instances usually occur when the characters are discussing a difficult subject or because it is part of their style of speech. A combination of these two situations can be found in subtitles [2224-2226], presented in Table 4.2.

Subtitle number	Source text	Bovelander's translation (+ back translation)	
[2224]	It's got me scratching my head	Ik vraag me ernstig af	
[2225]	about the survivability of it all.	of dat te overleven valt. Vandaar dus. (I seriously wonder whether that can	
[2226]	That's the thing.	be survived . Hence.)	

Table 4.2. Example of a clearer formulation in translation

These sentences are part of a video message Tony Stark records for his family, in which he expresses his doubts about an upcoming battle. Subtitle [2224] is an example of how idioms are also clarified in the translation, which will be discussed in Section 4.4.5, but the subtitle of interest for this pattern is subtitle [2225]. The translation of this lengthy clause of 33 characters has been simplified substantially in the translation, in which it only consists of 24 characters. I would argue that the simplification in this sentence results in Séguinot's (1988) third type of explicitation; the translation still conveys the message present in the source text, but by simplifying it, it highlights the message itself, rather than the way it was said.

The last subset in this pattern is related to instances in which the speaker's intended meaning is spelled out in the translation. For example, in subtitles [607-608], after several fans thank the Hulk for taking a photo with them, he says "No, it was great, kids. Thank you very much." Bovelander translates this with "Graag gedaan, jongens." You're welcome, guys.' even though the Hulk never actually says, "You're welcome." The audience of the English source text will most likely be able to infer this intended meaning for themselves, but Bovelander does this for the Dutch audience, thereby explicitating the meaning and reducing the text from 44 to 22 characters.

4.4.4 Increased probability

The fourth pattern identified is reflected in 35 instances, making it one of the larger patterns in this case study. These instances are characterised by the removal of probability or uncertainty markers, thereby presenting a possible outcome from the source text as a certainty in the

translation. Like the pattern of overstatements (see Section 4.4.2), this pattern highlights that the distinction between explicitation and implicitation is not always clear and is open to interpretation. For example, in subtitle [1158] "I think I'm having a panic attack." (18 characters) is translated as "Ik heb een paniekaanval." 'I'm having a panic attack.' (six characters). One could argue that the deletion of "I think" should earn this instance to be labelled as implicitation. However, the comment clause "I think" adds a certain degree of epistemic uncertainty to the speaker's statement; he is not entirely sure whether he is having a panic attack or not. The omission of the probability or uncertainty marker thus makes the translation more explicit as the panic attack is no longer presented as a probability but as a certainty. Similar cases involve phrases like "I guess," "I believe," and "I feel like."

Explicitation also occurs when adverbials of probability are deleted in the translation. For example, subtitle [179] "**He's gonna probably be** out for the rest of the day." (22 characters) is translated as "**Hij is** de rest van de dag onder zeil." 'He's out for the rest of today.' (six characters). This deletion also alters the speaker's attitude; in the source text he does not seem to know for sure whether "he will be out for the rest of the day", but in the translation he seems convinced that this will be the case. Thus, the deletion explicitates the translation at the lexical level by fixing the intended meaning, while also altering the way the audience perceives the characters.

Thirdly and finally, this pattern also includes instances in which modals of possibility are changed, typically by deleting them. Two examples of this can be found in Table 4.3.

Subtitle number	Source text	Bovelander's translation (+ back translation)	
[751]	Instead of pushing Lang through time,	In plaats van Lang door de tijd te duwen,	
[752]	you might have wound up	hebben jullie de tijd door Lang geduwd. (Instead of pushing Lang through time,	
[753]	pushing time through Lang.	you have pushed time through Lang).	
[1399]	Now, this may benefit your reality	Dit is bevorderlijk voor jouw realiteit, maar niet voor de mijne.	
[1400]	but my new one, not so much.	(This is beneficial to your reality, but not for mine.)	

Table 4.3. Two examples of increased probability through the deletion of modal verbs

In both examples the speakers are aware of the fact that what they are saying is a possibility, and although they are hinting that they assume this to be the actual result, they do not state it directly, instead using modal verbs expressing likelihood or possibility: "might" and "may." In the

example of subtitles [751-753] the speaker is talking about an event that he was not present at, and in the second example the speaker is talking about an event in the future. Thus, the caution with which they make their statements is entirely justified. The removal of the modal verbs results in translations in which all signs of doubt and uncertainty seem to be taken away. In doing so, the text is reduced from 24 characters to 13 in the first example, and from three to two characters in the second example.

Thus, the instances in this pattern are classified as explicitation because the translation becomes more explicit when a possible outcome is presented as being a certainty, either by the omission of a probability marker or by changing or deleting modal verbs expressing probability. The outcome is already presented in the source text, albeit presented as a possibility, which means that this type of explicitation should also be classified as Séguinot's (1988) third explicitation type.

4.4.5 Eliminated idioms and expressions

The last reasonably frequent pattern of reduction-based explicitation involves 31 instances in which English idioms and expressions are explained, clarified or omitted in the Dutch translation. In a way, these instances could also be seen as related to the pattern of reader-oriented translations (see Section 4.4.3). For example, by translating "I'm gonna grab a quick slice." as "Ik ga even iets eten." 'I'm gonna eat something.', one could argue that Bovelander creates a clearer formulation aimed at helping the Dutch audience understand that "slice" refers to a slice of pizza and that the speaker is thus saying he is going to get something to eat. Nevertheless, the instances in this pattern are treated as a separate pattern, as it was striking (1) how many idioms and expressions were used in the source text, (2) how few of them were translated with a similar Dutch idiom or expression, and (3) how this affects the portrayal of certain characters. Similar to all the previous patterns, this pattern can also be classified as Séguinot's (1988) third explicitation type as the idiom or expression is already present in the source text, but its intended meaning becomes explicitated in the translation.

To start, of the 31 instances reflecting this pattern, almost half (15) are found in sentences uttered by Tony Stark (Iron Man) or his father Howard Stark, who have a similar phraseology, characterised by idioms, expressions, sarcasm, and slang words. An example of this is presented in Table 4.4, which shows one of Tony's lines during a mission.

Subtitle	Source tout	Bovelander's translation	
number	Source text	(+ back translation)	
		Duimelijntje, hoor je me?	
[1316]	Thumbelina, do you copy?	Doelwit in zicht.	
	I've got eyes on the prize.	(Thumbelina, do you hear me?	
	_	Target in sight.)	

Table 4.4. Example of eliminated idiom

Bovelander eliminates the idiom in his translation, and in doing so he conveys the message from the source text in a much more direct way, making it easier for the audience to understand. "Doelwit in zicht." 'Target in sight.' seems like a reasonable choice as it is most definitely more appropriate for a mission situation, and it also reduces the text from 27 characters to 17. In removing too many idioms and expressions, however, translators may risk the characters becoming too one-dimensional as their speech is presented in the same standardised way. This is a risk particularly in the case of characters where their speech traits are clearly indexical of their character, as is the case for Tony who describes himself as a "genius, billionaire, playboy, philanthropist" (Whedon, 2019) – a characterisation that is reflected in his typical phraseology. In the subtitle in question, "Thumbelina" is retained, perhaps for this very reason. Thus, explicitation may have effects on the level of the message that needs to be conveyed, but it can also alter the way characters are portrayed.

As only the finished product (i.e. the translation) is available, it is not possible to make any statements on Bovelander's reasoning for eliminating these idioms and expressions. Perhaps he wanted his translation to be as clear as possible and was thus simply averting the risk of his audience not understanding a similar Dutch idiom or expression, a tendency that Pym (2005) suggests is typical of translators (see Section 2.4.3). Nevertheless, as one of the intrinsic qualities of idioms and expressions is that they have a figurative meaning, their translation necessarily adds an extra interpretive step to the translation process; Bovelander's translation is based on his interpretation of the figurative meaning of the idiom or expression. Some idioms and expressions are relatively straightforward to interpret, as is the case when, for example, Bovelander translates "How about ketchup?" in subtitle [25] as "Ik wil ketchup." 'I want ketchup.' However, the interpretation of idioms and expressions is not always as straightforward as in this example and becomes increasingly difficult when they are part of longer and more complex sentences. For example, in a scene where the superheroes have just won a battle that destroyed half of the city and are waiting for the villain to be taken into custody, Tony says, "We can all stand around posing up a storm later." (subtitle [1258]). A likely interpretation of "posing up a storm" would be based on analogical expressions, like cooking up a storm or dancing up a storm, meaning that someone is cooking or dancing enthusiastically. Thus, Tony is commenting on the team just standing around and waiting enthusiastically in their superhero poses, and he thinks that they should save that for a later time. He therefore wants the team to move along and do something. However, Bovelander translates this as "We kunnen later nog **in actie komen**." "We can take action later.' which reflects the exact opposite of the above interpretation and demonstrates the importance of a translator's interpretation when translating idioms and expressions. Whether it is the right interpretation or not, Bovelander nevertheless reduces the text by 16 characters with his translation.

4.4.6 Overt imperatives

Compared to the patterns discussed in the preceding sections, this pattern is substantially smaller, containing 12 instances in which the implicit imperative nature of the source text is made explicit in the translation. This often happens by omitting the subject pronoun in the translation, as in subtitle [1721] in which "You better get down here." (25 characters) is translated as "Kom hierheen." 'Get over here.' (13 characters). Whereas there is a sense of politeness in the source text by posing the imperative as a suggestion, this becomes an obvious command in the translation. Similarly, and with a similar reduction of characters, the question "Why don't you come sit down?" (28 characters) in subtitle [1043] is translated as "Ga even zitten." 'Sit down for a minute.' (15 characters). Evidently, the speaker also wants the listener to sit down in the source text but uses an interrogative mood to express this. This is the first pattern identified in which all instances can be categorised as Séguinot's (1988) second explicitation type, as the imperative nature is only implicitly present in the source text and is made explicit in the translation.

As with the elimination of idioms and expressions (see Section 4.4.5), making imperatives more overt in translation also results in differences in characterisation. This can be seen in the translation of subtitle [1146] in which "**If you could send** Loki some soup." is translated as "**Stuur** Loki wat soep." 'Send Loki some soup.' In this example, the speaker is queen Frigga who is addressing her servants. Although both the indicative and imperative might have been appropriate in this situation, it does seem like the translation's imperative mood portrays the queen as sterner, or even less polite, than is the case in the source text. Thus, in this specific case one could also argue that there is explicitation in the portrayal of the character. Nevertheless, Bovelander manages to reduce the text from 17 characters to five with this explicitation.

4.4.7 Combined subtitles

This pattern occurs only to a limited extent, reflected in 12 instances. Reduction-based explicitation is, in this case, accomplished by combining two or three English subtitles into one Dutch subtitle, thereby creating a shorter and more explicit rendering of the information. Consider, for example, the translation of subtitles [1499-1500] presented in Table 4.5.

Subtitle	Source tout	Bovelander's translation	
number	Source text	(+ back translation)	
[1499]	You're here, aren't you?	Je bent hier gekomen om raad te vragen	
[1777]		aan de wijste persoon op Asgard.	
[1500]	Seeking counsel from	(You came here to seek counsel	
	the wisest person in Asgard.	from the wisest person on Asgard.)	

Table 4.5. Example of combined subtitles

Explicitation occurs in this example as the sentence in subtitle [1500] is transformed into an adverbial clause expressing causality in the translation. It could be argued that this causal relationship is already implied in the source text, but because the two subtitles are separate, the audience may interpret them separately: the speaker is commenting on the listener's presence in subtitle [1499], and then subsequently states that they are also seeking counsel in subtitle [1500]. If a causal connection is to be made, this will require additional effort by the viewer. By combining the two subtitles, the translation gives the impression that the listener came to a certain place specifically to seek counsel (which is not the case). Even though this only reduces the text by two characters, this example illustrates how the combination of subtitles can lead to explicitation by establishing a relationship between clauses not present in the source text.

An example in which the reduction is more effective is presented in Table 4.6; the translation is reduced by 33 characters as three English subtitles are combined into one Dutch subtitle.

Subtitle	Source text	Bovelander's translation	
number	Source text	(+ back translation)	
[576]	For years,		
[576]	I've been treating the Hulk	Jarenlang zag ik de Hulk als een ziekte	
[577]	like he's	waar ik vanaf wilde.	
[577]	some kind of disease	(For years, I saw the Hulk as a disease	
[578]	something to get rid of.	that I wanted to get rid of.)	

Table 4.6. Second example of combined subtitles

In this scene Bruce Banner is describing how he has found a way to co-exist with the Hulk. Audiences will be able to understand that a disease is also something that Bruce would want to get rid of. However, subtitle [578] starts with "something," thereby seemingly introducing a new subject that is different from the "disease" in subtitle [577]. Thus, in the source text "some kind of disease" and "something to get rid of" are presented as two separate things. In the translation, however, these two are presented as being the same thing; Bruce sees the Hulk as a disease *that* he wants to get rid of. The conjunction "waar" 'of which' is introduced in the translation, which enables the omission of "something", but also emphasises how the Hulk is seen as a disease. This could, therefore, be qualified as the first instance in which Séguinot's (1988) first explicitation type occurs; the conjunction is absent in the source text and has been added in the translation, thereby establishing a relationship between subtitles not present in the source text.

4.4.8 Desententialisation

The mere 10 instances of this trend are discussed more as a kind of honourable mention to illustrate how explicitation can also function on a grammatical level (rather than on a semantic level). In these 10 instances explicitation is caused by desententialisation, which Lehmann (2021) defines as "the reduction of a sentence to a noun/adjective/adverb". Thus, the three forms of desententialisation are nominalisation, adverbialisation, and adjectivisation. An example of the adjectivisation is presented in Table 4.7.

Subtitle number	Source text	Bovelander's translation (+ back translation)	
[930]	And ever since Hank Pym got snapped	Sinds Hank Pym er niet meer is,	
[931]	out of existence, this is it.	is dit het enige wat we nog hebben. (Since Hank Pym is no longer here,	
[932]	This is what we have. We're not making any more.	this is the only thing we have left.)	

Table 4.7. Example of desententialisation

On a semantic level, "het enige" 'the only thing' could be seen as the result of "We're not making any more." in which case this example could also be categorised as a result-oriented translation (see Section 4.4.1). Alternatively, this could also be seen as a case in which "This is what we have." and "We're not making any more." have been combined (see Section 4.4.7). From a purely grammatical perspective, however, the desententialisation of "We're not making any more." into the nominalised adjective "het enige" reduces the text from 26 to nine characters, which is a

considerable reduction in length. In this concise translation the speaker does not dwell on the reasons why they cannot get more particles. Instead, the focus shifts to the fact that these are the last ones, thereby highlighting their importance and that the group cannot let them go to waste.

Similarly, subtitle [1430] "So, he must've done it **for a reason**." has been translated as "Hij moet het **bewust** gedaan hebben." 'He must have done it consciously.' By translating the prepositional phrase from the source text with an adverb, Bovelander manages to reduce the text from 12 to six characters. This is similar to the previous example in the sense that one could argue that when someone does something for a reason, they have thought about it and therefore their resulting action will be a conscious one. The fact that this thought process has already been done for the reader of the translation, makes this a case of explicitation; the information has been spelled out for the audience. In both cases the information is already present in the source text, making this another, albeit extremely limited, pattern that is consistent with Séguinot's (1988) third explicitation type.

4.5 Summary

In order to categorise and quantify the ways in which explicitation is accompanied with a reduction of characters in the Dutch subtitles of *Avengers: Endgame* (A. Russo & J. Russo, 2019), these instances of reduction-based explicitation first had to be isolated. The first step of this analysis is focussed on the three strategies and shows that out of a total of 1,793 subtitles, 298 contain (one or more instance of) explicitation, 594 contain (one or more instance of) implicitation, 238 contain a combination of both explicitation and implicitation (one instance or more), and 663 subtitles contain neither explicitation nor implicitation (i.e. the 'neither'-category). In an intermediate step the individual instances of the three strategies were analysed, showing that in 1,109 out of the 2,364 instances (i.e. 46.9%) implicitation is the most common strategy, followed by the neither-category (663 out of 2,364 instances, or 28.0%). Even though explicitation only accounts for 25.0% of the instances, there are still 592 instances to be analysed. The second step of the analysis shows that reduction is unquestionably the most frequent length outcome in this case study, occurring in 1,541 out of 2,364 of all instances (i.e. 65.2%). This is followed by the 673 instances (i.e. 28.5%) of expansion, and 150 instances (i.e. 6.3%) in which the number of characters is retained in the translation.

Crosstabulating the three strategies (explicitation, implicitation, 'neither') with the three length outcomes (reduction, expansion, 'same number') yields nine outcomes, which are summarised with their frequencies in Table 4.8.

Strategy-length outcome	Frequency	Percentage
implicitation-reduction	1,093	46.2%
neither-expansion	339	14.3%
explicitation-expansion	325	13.7%
explicitation-reduction	234	9.9%
neither-reduction	214	9.1%
neither-same number	110	4.7%
explicitation-same number	33	1.4%
implicitation-expansion	9	0.4%
implicitation-same number	7	0.3%

Table 4.8. The frequency of the nine outcomes, by instances (2,364 instances)

The most frequent correlation is between the most frequent strategy and the most frequent length outcome, namely implicitation-based reduction, accounting for almost half of all instances (1,093 out of 2,364 instances, or 46.2%). In most cases where an element from the source text is explicitated, the corresponding element in the translation consists of more characters (i.e. expansion). This correlation of explicitation-based expansion can be found 325 times (i.e. 13.7%) in the case study. Nevertheless, of the total of 2,364 instances, there are also 234 instances (i.e. 9.9%) that contain explicitation accompanied with a reduction in the number of characters.

Eight patterns or trends can be identified upon close analysis of these 234 instances of reduction-based explicitation. The first and most frequent pattern can be termed *result-oriented translations*, which contains 51 instances in which the English source text describes an action or occurrence, while the focus shifts to the result of said action or occurrence in the Dutch translation. The second pattern consists of 46 *overstatements*; information from the source text is presented more strongly or gravely in the translation. If information from the source text is altered to facilitate ease of understanding for the Dutch audience, the instance is labelled a *reader-oriented translation*. This third group consists of 37 instances. Containing 35 instances, the fourth group of *increased probability* is characterised by instances where a certain event is presented as a possibility in the source text but as a certainty in the translation. The fifth and last substantial pattern contains 31 instances in which English idioms and expressions are eliminated in the Dutch translation, either by explaining, clarifying or omitting them completely. A small group of 12 instances makes up the sixth trend of *overt imperatives*; the implicit imperative nature of source text elements is made explicit in the translation. The seventh pattern consists of 12 instances in which multiple English

subtitles are combined into one Dutch subtitle, thereby establishing a relationship between clauses not present in the source text. The last group is termed *desententialisation* and consists of 10 instances that show how reduction-based explicitation also works on a grammatical level through nominalisations, adverbialisations, and adjectivisations.

Except for the sixth and seventh pattern, all patterns contain explicitation that can be characterised as Séguinot's (1988) third explicitation type, in which an element that was already present in the source text receives more emphasis in the translation. The sixth pattern of overt imperatives can be classified as the second explicitation type as the imperative nature was already implicitly present in the source text but made explicit in the translation. The first explicitation type only occurs in the seventh pattern, as the relationship between clauses is introduced in the translation.

5. Conclusion

This study aimed to categorise and quantify the frequency and nature of reduction-based explicitation in the Dutch subtitles of *Avengers: Endgame* (A. Russo & J. Russo, 2019). Having isolated and analysed 234 instances of reduction-based explicitation, eight patterns or trends of reduction-based explicitation can be identified in the corpus. The most common trend consists of 51 instances in which the translation is more result-oriented than the source text, followed by a second trend in which the content is overstated in the translation (46 instances). This is followed by instances in which the translation facilitates ease of understanding for the Dutch audience (37 instances), in which an element from the source text is presented as more probable (35 instances), and in which idioms and expressions are removed (31 instances). A last group of three trends with limited numbers of instances can be identified, formed by 12 instances in which the imperative nature of the source text is explicitated in the translation, 12 instances in which multiple English subtitles are combined into one Dutch subtitle, and finally, 10 instances in which explicitation occurs through desententialisation.

Research on audiovisual translation (AVT), and on subtitling even more so, is a relatively young field, though academic interest in these topics has increased substantially over the last thirty years (see Section 2.2). Most of these studies start with Titford's (1982) premise that subtitling is a form of constrained translation, thereby focusing on the various media-defined constraints that affect the subtitling process. One of the main findings is that these constraints require translators to present the source text in fewer characters, and as such there has been substantial research on the most effective ways translators can use to accomplish this reduction. Antonini (2005), for example, argues that the three main reduction strategies in subtitling can be classified as elimination, rendering, and simplification (see Section 2.3.3). Another effective reduction strategy and widely researched topic in AVT is implicitation. In line with expectations, this was the most frequent of the three quantified strategies (explicitation, implicitation, and the absence of the two) in this study. Similarly, reduction was the most common length outcome, and the correlation of implicitation and reduction accounts for almost half of all instances in the corpus.

However, by crosstabulating the three strategies and the three length outcomes (reduction, expansion, and the same number of characters), it turns out that in nearly 10% of all instances, reduction correlates with explicitation. However, there is little existing research on this correlation, and most research on explicitation instead focuses on whether explicitation occurs in various modes of translation or not (e.g., Olohan & Baker, 2000), on its different types (e.g., Séguinot, 1988), and on the reasons why translators choose to explicitate (e.g., Klaudy, 1996). The fact that

the combination of explicitation and reduction has been left rather unexplored could be related to the misconception that explicitation is the same as addition, and that it therefore leads to expansion, by definition.

It was Italian scholar Elisa Perego (2003) who introduced the notion of reduction-based explicitation and who argued that it can occur either through addition or specification (see Section 2.4.3). Although both types occur within each of the patterns identified in this study, there seems to be a preference for specifying information from the source text, rather than introducing something new in the translation. A similar trend can be observed when considering Séguinot's (1988) explicitation types: all but two trends identified in this study reflect her third explicitation type in which an explicitated element from the translation was already present in the source text. Thus, explicitation in the corpus of subtitles analysed generally occurs through a shift in focus or because a specific aspect from the source text receives more emphasis in the translation. This often involves a reduction of characters, as the concentration on a single aspect of the source text leaves other aspects unaddressed, illustrating that explicitation and implicitation co-occur when reduction is involved. As this concentration on a single aspect leaves other aspects from the source text unaddressed, which can be considered implicitation, this kind of explicitation commonly involves reduction.

Though these findings provide an initial categorisation and quantification of the ways in which reduction-based explicitation occurs, further research is required to determine whether similar trends occur, and to what extent, in subtitles of other films, made by other translators, working in different language pairs. Due to morphological differences, an English text typically expands about 35% when translating to Dutch (see Section 4.3.3), which means that Dutch translators are affected more by the media-defined constraints that dictate reduction in this case. Similar research with a different target language, ideally one characterised by reduction when translating from English (e.g. Finnish), would be particularly interesting as this would provide valuable insight on the effect of morphological differences between languages on the subtitling process.

Furthermore, as with any product-based approach, it is not possible to make comprehensive statements on why translators chose a certain translation: Were they given certain guidelines that required them to stay as close to the source text as possible? How many characters were they allowed to use per line? What reading speed did they have to adhere to? In an ideal setting researchers would be able to interview translators as they are subtitling in order to outline their decision-making process. Researchers could, for example, ask how translators would have translated a certain sentence if they were not bound by the media-defined constraints dictating

reduction. In such a study researchers can also shed some light on the issue of causality raised by Perego (2003; see Section 1); they can ask translators whether their translations became more explicit because they had to reduce the number of characters or if the translations contained fewer characters as a result of a more explicit translation.

This study identified and quantified eight trends of reduction-based explicitation in the Dutch subtitles of *Avengers: Endgame* (2019). In doing so, it attempted to fill a gap in the field of subtitling research, a field that mainly looks to implicitation when discussing reduction. Similar studies with different films, translators, and language pairs are encouraged in the hope of providing more qualitative and quantitative data on the identified patterns, and in the hope of inspiring others to explore unconventional solutions for common translation problems.

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