TRANSLATIONS OF VERBAL HUMOUR IN DON ROSA'S *DONALD DUCK* STORIES

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Tiivistelmä – Abstract

Kääntämisen tärkeyttä ei voi vähätellä: nykymaailman kasvavassa ja globaalissa ympäristössä on elintärkeää, että maapallon lukuisten kielten muodostamien muurien yli ja ympäri päästään. *Aku Ankka* on löytänyt melkoista suosiota Suomessa, ja monia tutkimuksia Ankka-tarinoista sekä Disneyn muista sarjakuvista on jo tehty. Tästä huolimatta Suomessa suosittu Don Rosa on jäänyt suuresti ilman huomiota käännöstieteiden alalla. Tässä tutkimuksessa minä pyrin täyttämään tämän tieteellisen aukon. Pääpaino on verbaalisessa huumorissa ja sen käännöksissä: mitä kääntämistekniikoita on hyödynnetty ja mitkä kohdat Rosan sarjakuvatarinoissa jäävät ilman suoraa käännöstä?

Tutkimuksen kohteena ovat seitsemän Rosan *Aku-Ankka* tarinaa niiden englannin- ja suomenkielisinä versioina. Kyseiset tarinat valittiin Rosan suosion ja aikaisemmin mainitun tutkimusvajeen vuoksi. Kävin tarinat läpi huumoria sisältävää dialogia etsien ja sitten luokittelin ne kääntämistekniikoiden mukaan.

Analyysin tulokset osoittavat, että *Aku Ankan* käännökset suosivat käännösstrategioiden joukosta kotouttamista ja sen alahaaroja: sarjakuvien kieli siis mukautetaan suomeen niin läpikotaisesti kun on mahdollista, jopa englanninkielisten tarinoiden alkuperäisen materiaalin kustannuksella. Vanhan huumorin korvaaminen uusilla suomen kulttuurikohtaisilla vastineilla on helposti suosituin kääntämistekniikka, ja se muodostaakin puolet aineistosta aivan yksinään. Tämän lisäksi myös suorat käännökset ovat yllättävän yleisiä, vaikkakin joissakin tapauksissa vaikutti siltä, että niitä voitaisiin teettää vielä enemmänkin, ja että suomenkieliset kääntäjät päättivät luoda epäsuoria käännöksiä tuntemattomista syistä.

Asiasanat – Keywords	domestication, foreignisation, translation, verbal humour, Donald Duck
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1 INTRODUCTION

Humour is a difficult genre, and translating it is even more so. Not only is it a highly subjective matter, but it changes across cultures, making the task of bridging it over to a language that has its own rules, customs and traits a daunting one. Even experienced and seasoned translators can find interpreting humour a mighty uptaking (Kovács, 2020, p. 1). But such translations are necessary, and always will be; language barriers are an ever-present part of the world, and humanity requires ways to bridge the gaps they form to ensure that everyone possesses the same level of access to things. Humour is irreplaceably present in all of our lives as well: it occurs in the everyday conversations that people have, helping colour the language we use in interacting with one another, and it is also very present in modern media. Movies, video games, music, print media—everything has humour in it one way or another.

Comic books are no exception, and there have been various studies exploring the translations in the medium before. In the world of Walt Disney, Vuorenoja (2016) examined how verbal humour in *Mickey Mouse* comic books was translated from English to Finnish. Another study by Koponen (2004) analysed the translation of wordplay in *Donald Duck* comic books, her focus being the English-to-Finnish (ETF) translation process as well. Outside of these two works, the translations in Walt Disney comics are a subject that has been left mostly unexplored. Vuorenoja studied *Mickey Mouse* stories from the 1930s, while Koponen directed her focus towards *Donald Duck* stories released between the 1950s and the 1990s. Their studies are most thorough, covering 20th century publications extensively, and this study will study translations from then onwards, with a focus on stories written by Don Rosa.

The aim of this study is to examine the translation of verbal humour in various *Donald Duck* comic books released since the 1990s, which is where Koponen's coverage of them ended. The study will compare the dialogue between the original English versions and the translated Finnish versions, searching for any direct translations between the two. The translation techniques used by the translators responsible for the Finnish comic books will also be analysed. The analysis can provide greater insight into the art of translation, whether that is on a micro-level (ETF) or the macro-level (in general); the knowledge about patterns in translations between languages could be used to improve and further the work of translators. The resulting implications will concern fields in humanities, such as languages and literature, but also any field that faces intercultural and interlingual communication—which can be argued to be any field.

2 BACKGROUND

1.1 Translation definition

The term translation has received many definitions throughout the ages. Toury (1980, p. 17) defined translation as communication through translated messages within a culture-linguistic system—one which involved breaking down the original message, establishing 'the invariant', transferring the message across languages and then reforming it into a new rendition. Another definition offered by Bassnett (2002, p. 7) defines translation as the rewriting of an original text. This definition is short, succinct and accurate: though the translator's intent is to often retain the source text to their best ability, they are inherently rewriting it in a different language on principle. Toury's definition was criticised by Venuti (2013, p. 12), who pointed out that translation does much more than simply communicate, and also questioned Toury's use of the term "invariant", as a translation of something always undergoes change in the target language. This is a valid form of criticism because the very nature of translation as a process is about change; though it may seem desirable to keep the material being translated as similar and unchanged as possible, with the many linguistic and cultural differences that exist between different languages, such a thing may be impossible to achieve.

1.2 Translation theory

Translating is a large field governed by various strategies and disciplines. Two important ones are primary translation strategies coined by Venuti, domestication and foreignisation. Domestication means appealing to the new target language and demographic as much as possible, while foreignisation refers to the complete opposite and strives to be as authentic and faithful to the original work as possible, even at the cost of readability (Venuti, 2008). These two macro-level translation strategies are ones that every translator must choose between as they begin translating something, and

should be considered relevant in every discussion involving translation theory. Domestication and foreignisation are not the only translation strategies, however. Pedersen (2011) found the following on other strategies:

> Domestication and foreignisation, being two large-scale translation strategies, act on a macro level. Both house various subcategories—other translation strategies that operate on the micro level. Offshoots from domestication include strategies such as generalisation, substitution and omission, while foreignisation has retention, specification and direct translation. The strategies are all based around the larger orientation that they branch off of, and either conform or clash with the target language—even at the cost of losing information from the source text (domestication) or breaking the new language's conventions (foreignisation). (Pedersen, 2011, p. 75)

The dichotomy formed by domestication, foreignisation and the various strategies branching off of them is particularly important in the context of this study, where English and Finnish renditions of *Donald Duck* comic books are being compared. They allow us to examine the comic books and their translation choices through an existing framework which has roots dating all the way back to 1964 (Pedersen, 2011, p. 71).

2.3 Humour

Seeing as it forms one half of the analysis, we should briefly define what humour is. The most basic definition states that humour is the ability to find things funny, the quality of being funny, or the way in which people see things that are funny (Cambridge Dictionary, 2024). It is used, in one way or another, to express something about the concept of funniness.

If we delve deeper into the matter, we find that there are a plethora of different theories which all seek to discover what humour exactly is. Among these theories are the superiority theory, where humour and laughter are associated with finding yourself superior to someone else, the release theory, which asserts that laughter is a release of nervous energy, and, most relevant for this study, the incongruity theory—which states that one's laughter is derived from the view of two or more inconsistent, unsuitable things or circumstances that are considered united or one (Carroll, 2014, pp. 8-38). Put simply, the incongruity theory requires for the different parts of the joke

to be incompatible with each other in some way, to the extent where their lack of cohesion becomes amusing. As stated by Carroll (2014, p. 17) this theory is very widely supported by many philosophers and psychologists, and I also find merit in it, hence my focus on it in particular. Others, such as Attardo (2001, p. 39, as cited in Goatly, 2012, p. 22) also support the presence of incongruences in humour, believing that a joke, at its simplest, features a set-up, an incongruity and a resolution.

2.4 *Donald Duck* comics

Because of their popularity as a medium, comic books have seen an abundance of translations over the years. *Donald Duck* is far from the first brand to have gained great popularity outside of its original country, though the acclaim the comic book has received in Finland should not be seen as any less impressive either way; it was estimated to have over one million Finnish readers in 2001 (Toivonen, 2001, p. 73, as cited in Koponen, 2004, p. 29). Nevertheless, comic book translations have received a fair amount of attention in academic literature: there have been studies researching the representation of various native peoples (Sihvonen, 2021 and Viljakainen, 2013), the relationship between the comics and the people of Finland (Kontturi, 2022) and more. As expected of a popular brand, it has been researched and studied very thoroughly, with most aspects and areas accounted for to varying degrees. Studies of translations, let alone the translations of verbal humour, in *Donald Duck* comic books are less common, however, and that is what will be discussed next.

2.5 Related studies

The studies relevant to this one are Vuorenoja (2016) and Koponen (2004). Koponen (2004) studied the wordplay in *Donald Duck* comics and their translations. The material for her study included 12 English *Donald Duck* comic book stories and their Finnish translations, which made it easy to acquire translations of the comic books

from various decades (Koponen, 2004, p. 59). Koponen (2004) is an extensive study which covers the timespan of 50 years. Koponen (2004, p. 60) first collected different instances of wordplay from the English stories through a close reading, and then did the same with the Finnish stories; the author of the original stories was kept the same to avoid any additional variables. As for her results, Koponen (2004, p. 83) found that wordplay was a very frequent form of humour in the *Donald Duck* comics, and also discussed the possibility of comic book translators being limited by panel images and their relations to different jokes—a possibility that Vuorenoja (2016, p. 21) mentioned in his study as well. This may be because the comic book medium is more of a visual medium than it is a textual one. Although the text in comic books changes during translation, the images and art are kept mostly the same, making them a permanent factor that the translator cannot overly influence. Though Vuorenoja (2016) focused on translations of verbal humour in *Mickey Mouse* comic books, his subject is still very closely intertwined with mine, and so I will be using his results as a matter of comparison later.

3 DATA AND METHODS

3.1 Research aim and questions

This thesis focuses on the translation strategies used when converting humourful English dialogue in *Donald Duck* comic books into Finnish. It aims to study translations of verbal humour for any potential patterns, noteworthy details or other interesting information. The main question is *how* verbal humour is translated. The *why* is also considered in relation to some examples, but is not the focus of the thesis, as without legitimate information it would only lead to undue speculation. The research questions were designed with the intent of examining the data with the *why* in mind, and to seek out possible limitations that Finnish translators, and perhaps ETF translations in general, may find themselves hindered by. Such data will not be relevant only to the *Donald Duck* comic books, but to the translations of other material as well—be it movies, video games, songs, or more pressing matters such as organisational meetings, intercultural communication and the like.

For this thesis, my research questions are as follows:

1. What translation techniques and methods were used when translating the humour in the analysed *Donald Duck* comic books?
2. What types of verbal humour in the analysed *Donald Duck* comics were not directly translated from English to Finnish in the dialogue?

The research questions bear some similarity to the ones Vuorenoja (2016, p. 7) used in his thesis, though the comics we study are from different eras of the industry. Studying the translation techniques and methods at use is an approach which will net useful information for various parties in the field without delving into the source material too intricately. Then, of course, finding any patterns in what linguistic material does not translate between the English and the Finnish versions of the comics could pave the way for research into why these elements are not flexible for translating—at least when the ETF avenue is considered.

3.2 Describing the data

The data acquired for this thesis consists of *Donald Duck* stories released from the late 1990s onwards: this choice was made to see if translations from a different era to Koponen (2004)'s, who also studied *Donald Duck* comics up to the 1990s, differed in their techniques and strategies. Beyond that, I closed off the data even further by only studying *Donald Duck* comics made by one specific author, that being Don Rosa. As for why I chose Rosa's comics, there are two reasons: firstly, Don Rosa is one of the most successful Donald Duck authors and also particularly popular in Finland. The other reason is that Rosa's works have not been overly studied in the context of translation. Translations of Disney comics have been done for other *Donald Duck* comic books and also *Mickey Mouse* comics, as mentioned previously, but translation studies on works by Rosa himself are more scarce. This thesis seeks to add a new perspective to this area.

The stories I picked my data from all come out of Don Rosa's most acclaimed and well-known comic books: I used the sixth volume of the *Don Rosa Library*—which is a new series that publishes Don Rosa's most popular stories for today's readers. The stories I have extracted data from in the volume include "The Duck Who Never Was", "The Treasury of Croesus", "The Universal Solvent", "An Eye for Detail", "The Lost Charts of Columbus", "The Incredible Sinking Tightwad" and "Hearts of the Yukon". They are all issues originally published between 1994 and 1997. The stories were limited to fit the scope of the study, and these stories in particular were easy to acquire among Don Rosa's collection.

3.3 Data collection

In collecting the data, I used the following method: reading both the Finnish and the English versions of the story, I perused through a row of panels—one row typically containing two panels, but sometimes three—first in Finnish and then in English. While reading, I searched for dialogue containing humour of any kind. If I did not

find any dialogue that met the criteria for being qualified as humourful, I continued my reading within the same procedure. When I did find dialogue that qualified, I first wrote down both versions of the dialogue and then compared them to find any linguistic differences. Translations were placed into two different categories: translations with virtually no changes in meaning and translations with noteworthy differences in meaning. I also gave the comparisons brief labels based on what the differences were, and what translation techniques had possibly been used, though without deeper analysis this glance was superficial at best. I continued operating under the same method of data collection until the end of the story, and then proceeded to the next. This continued until I finished the volume.

3.4 Data analysis

I based data analysis on the translation strategies and techniques I laid out in the literature review, specifically using the framework by Pedersen (2011). With every instance of dialogue, I studied it for the traits and qualities that one of Pedersen (2011)'s outlined strategies might possess. The first distinction to make was whether the Finnish translation was changed from the original English version—specifically if it had any semantic changes. If so, I labelled it as a case of direct translation. If not, the next step was to see if the translation inclined towards domestication or foreignisation. This was to further narrow down the results in a deductive order. Then, once the translation's primary approach was clear, I looked for traits belonging to one of the strategies branching from it. If determining domestication or foreignisation as a primary strategy did not succeed, I attempted comparing the dialogue to each strategy one at a time, until a matching strategy was either found or nothing seemed to match; if a match was not found, the dialogue received the label 'uncategorisable'. I wished to create a clear and logically-ordered table of results that is easy to read and interpret, based upon the literary foundation established earlier in the thesis.

4 ANALYSIS

From the *Don Rosa library*-volume, I documented 45 instances of dialogue that contained verbal humour within it. Of these 45 instances, a vast majority are indirect translations that use various translation techniques, typically with a leaning towards domestication and the target language, Finnish. There are ten translations which meet the definition of a direct translation given by Pedersen (2011, p. 76), three specifications, three generalisations, two omissions, and four translations that I cannot categorise as any one translation technique or strategy. Substitution is the most widespread technique at 23 translations. One reason for the number of domestication techniques may be that focusing on the Finnish readers of *Donald Duck* while translating it to their language is a logical way to please the new reader base. Different categories of translation strategies are presented one at a time down below as a deeper dive into the matter. I present substitutions in subsection 4.1, specifications in 4.2, and direct translations in 4.3.

4.1 Substitutions

One of three target-oriented translation strategies, substitution is when the source-text reference is replaced either by a different cultural reference, or something else that fits the context of the text (Pedersen, 2011, p. 76). In effect, the translator takes something from the source text and substitutes it with a different term, typically from the language that the original text is being translated into. Substitution is by far one of the most common translation strategies employed in the data, having 23 instances all to itself.

Example 1

> **Beagle Boy 1:** Wow, he's running amok!
> **Beagle Boy 2:** No, I think it's a belchfire runabout!

(The Duck That Never Was, Don Rosa 2016: 20)

Karhukoplan Jäsen 1: Huh? Hän ajaa pakoon vimmalla!
Karhukoplan Jäsen 2: Jaa, minusta tuo on kyllä dudge!
(Olla kuin ei olisikaan, Don Rosa 2024: 20)

In this example, we can witness one substitution in each line. The first is the use of the phrase 'running amok'. In the Finnish translation, the Beagle Boy's first line can roughly be translated to mean *Huh? He's driving away in a frenzy!* Finnish does have a rough equivalent to the phrase, which effectively means what it does in English, but the original joke seems to somewhat play off of the verb 'run'—as in that Donald is 'running' a car, which causes the other Beagle Boy to think that 'amok' is a car brand. Since the Finnish equivalent has no such verb attached, that aspect of the joke would have been lost in a literal translation. This may be why the Finnish translation goes out of its way to emphasise that Donald is driving away. It has substituted the original term for another one, perhaps to try and retain the joke's original intent. A more accurate translation would simply say that Donald is rampaging or out of control, but this general statement is less linked to his escape by car. The addition of *ajaa pakoon*, which means *drive away* in English, is perhaps the translator's attempt to keep this link intact.

The other substitution is the translation of 'belchfire runabout'. Finnish has no real equivalent to this term, none that would sound reasonable at the least, and as such the English line is translated into *Well, I think that's a dudge!* This is a situational reference to the structure of Donald Duck's car, which is said to possess the body of a 1922 Dudge in Rosa's story, "Recalled Wreck" (Rosa, 1987, p. 1). As 'belchfire runabout' would be very difficult to translate into Finnish, the translator has opted for a substitution that the Finnish reader would understand. This way the play on car brands and car names is still retained, and the solution also plays into older comics by Rosa in a way that knowledgeable fans may enjoy.

Substitution is a very flexible translation technique in all: if a direct translation is not seen as possible for one reason or another, then replacing a challenging term or a

difficult phrase with whatever fits is a quick and easy solution. The translator may even attach something relevant to the target language's culture to make the text more pleasant to the audience; this is known as cultural substitution (Pedersen, 2011, p. 89). The following is one example of that:

Example 2

Dewey: The magma will come roaring down here and make short work of us and that jar, releasing the omnisolve to continue destroying the earth!
Louie: A grim future, eh?
(The Universal Solvent, Don Rosa, 2016: 62)

Tupu: Magma haihduttaa niin meidät kuin purnukkammekin. Kertalaaki pääsee taas jatkamaan maapallon tuhoamista.
Lupu: Siis ojasta allikkoon.
(Matka Maan Keskipisteeseen, Don Rosa, 2024: 62)

This translation is taken from the Universal Solvent, where Gyro Gearloose invents the titular solvent, something capable of melting through everything except pure diamonds. When met with such a promising substance, Scrooge predictably goes out of his way to try and make profits out of it. But when things go wrong and the solvent starts digging its way towards the earth's core, he, Donald Duck and Huey, Dewey and Louie have to stop it before everything is destroyed.

In essence, the first lines of the dialogue are all but identical in meaning, conveying the same messages, albeit with some changes to the sentence structure. For substitution and cultural substitution, however, we will only focus on the final thing said by Louie. The English version is as seems: he makes a dark remark about what a future where the omnisolve gets free from its jar would entail; the use of *grim* can be analysed to have numerous meanings: the literal meaning is how, after the omnisolve dissolves the earth's core and causes the planet to be destroyed, there will be nothing but the darkness of space. The one that adheres to wordplay refers to the omnisolve's appearance as an entirely black substance, meaning that any future involving it would be grim on principle. A direct translation could have been attempted here, perhaps

something like *Synkkä tulevaisuus, vai?* This would retain the original remark's meaning almost entirely. Instead, the Finnish translation substituted Louie's comment with a culturally-specific phrase, 'ojasta allikkoon'. This is a common idiom in Finnish, a straightforward translation being *Out of the ditch and into the puddle.* It functions much like 'out of the frying pan and into the fire', describing a situation where things go from being bad to even worse. This fits the situation presented in the story, where the ducks are already deep underground trying to avert the earth's destruction and would see that very destruction happen in the situation Dewey describes. The substitution does, however, remove the pun relating to the omnisolve. At the cost of the original wordplay, it replaces the joke with a culturally-relevant one that Finnish readers are more likely to recognise and get enjoyment out of.

4.2 Specifications

One of the aforementioned translation techniques that branch off from foreignisation, specification involves adding more information to the target text; it makes the term or reference more specific than the source text's equivalent, often by completing a name or an acronym or by adding more semantic content (Pedersen, 2011, p. 76). This way the item in the target text becomes less ambiguous and easier to understand. The need for a specification depends on how the translators view their target audience's background knowledge; if the reader is not familiar with the background that the story ties into, then specifying a loosely-defined term could only serve to confuse them more and require them to do their own research. However, it could also raise awareness and understanding about specific cultures and backgrounds. Specification also ties into the source text's original context, leaving less details to be lost and only adding more to be found; it familiarises the reader with the work even more.

There are three instances where specifications are used in the data.

Example 3

Superintendent Steele: Mister London, there seems to be some sort of conflagration in process.
London: Yes, that happens very often here!
Superintendent Steele: Very well. As long as all is in order. Carry on burning, you buildings there! Good show!
(Hearts of the Yukon, Don Rosa 2016: 149)

Ylitarkastaja Steele: Herra London, vireillä näyttää olevan jonkin sortin suurpalo.
London: Niitä tapahtuu Dawsonissa säännöllisesti.
Ylitarkastaja Steele: Olkoon sitten niin. Tärkeintä, että järjestys säilyy. Jatkakaa, rakennukset! Hyvää työtä!
(Yukonin Sydän, Don Rosa 2024: 149)

In the original version, as superintendent Steele and the writer London chase Scrooge McDuck through a town caught in chaos, Steele notes how a fire has broken out. In response, London, who is more familiar with the area than Steele, dismisses the matter by saying that fires are common in Dawson, given that it is portrayed as a corrupt place overrun by villainy and scams. This then sets up the punchline of the joke, where Steele takes London's reassurances too literally and tells the buildings to keep on burning, further normalising the situation. In Finnish, the exchange is about the same, the core meaning being retained rather accurately, with one minor change: when London assures Steele that nothing is wrong, what he says in Finnish effectively means *They (conflagrations) happen regularly in Dawson.* For whatever reason, the translators have decided to add in the town's name for emphasis. This is a prime example of specification: the setting of the story is made abundantly clear through an additional mention of its name, even if the source material never mentioned it. This use of specification enables the reader to know where the story is taking place. Dawson is mentioned by name on other occasions in the story as well, so the need for this change is not absolutely necessary, but it is a relatively small detail that does little except specify the setting. There is no harm done in leaving it in, and all it does is further reinforce that Scrooge McDuck's adventure is taking place in Dawson specifically. To some readers it may simply be a name that they briefly note before they carry on with their reading.

4.3 Direct translations

Due to the definition of direct translations that Pedersen provides in his book, finding translations that qualify from Rosa's stories proves very difficult: direct translations are where the only changing factor is the language itself; there are no semantic alterations made to the text, and its meaning remains the same (Pedersen, 2011, p. 76). Using this definition, most translations of verbal humour in the chosen stories simply do not meet this set of criteria. Though many translations are very similar and authentic to their Finnish counterparts, with their greater meanings being about the same, they still hold semantic changes of some kind; it may be a slight change to the sentence structure, or one word being switched for another, but this means that the language is still altered semantically, which means that the translation is not direct. Despite this, the quantity of direct translations found in the data was still surprisingly numerous, forming the second-largest category after substitutions. Below is an example of why a seemingly similar translation of dialogue can not be considered direct:

Example 4

Scrooge McDuck: Ulp! Talk about a close shave!
(The Universal Solvent, Don Rosa 2016: 61)

Roope Ankka: Ulp! Aine sai uusia sulkia hattuunsa!
(Matka Maan Keskipisteeseen, Don Rosa 2024: 61)

This example is taken from when Scrooge gets close to the universal solvent (see Example 2) and nearly becomes devoured by it, only barely avoiding such a fate. The exclamations in both versions are quite different in meaning, but neither really takes away from their respective contexts. The Finnish version spells out to mean *Ulp! The substance got new feathers on its hat!* This is a Finnish saying, which effectively means that since the solvent put new, fancier feathers on its metaphorical hat, it grew greater

and more dangerous. Both phrases are ultimately Scrooge saying something witty, but the semantic changes in the Finnish version still alter the meaning behind the dialogue: the original speaks of Scrooge's close brush with death, while the Finnish version focuses on the universal solvent and its supposed improvement, or increased ferocity. The focus of the sentences is shifted entirely, and so they do mean different things. This is semantic altering, and thus Pedersen's definition would rule the translation out from being a direct type. I think that a more faithful translation can be attempted, maybe with a solution such as *Ulp! Tuo liippasi läheltä!* This would effectively mean, *Ulp! That was close*, and thus contain about the same meaning as the original sentence semantically.

Example 5

Professor Pigayam: 'Common crook'? 'Private army'? Mr. McDuck, you have it all wrong!
Scrooge McDuck: How so, pork puss?
Professor Pigayam: To the quick I'm cut!
(The Treasury of Croesus, Don Rosa 2016: 41)

Professori Aborsaz: Vai "voro" ja "yksityisarmeija"? Olette pahasti hakoteillä, Herra Ankka.
Roope Ankka: Kuinka niin, sikaniska?
Professori Aborsaz: Tuo viilsi syvältä!
(Kroisoksen Aarre, Don Rosa 2024: 41)

This exchange is one I would argue to be a direct translation. Scrooge's insult to Pigayam can be translated to mean 'pig neck' or 'pork nape', which is not exactly the same as the original. I believe that you could make for a more accurate translation by having Scrooge use the term 'sikasuu', which would tie to how the word *puss* has ties to the face or the mouth by literally meaning 'pigmouth'. What I want to focus on, however, is the final phrase uttered by Pigayam. The Finnish version is rather accurate, meaning *That cut deep!* This semantically means the same as the original, which refers to being cut very deep by something that has been said (Merriam-Webster, 2024). The Finnish language does not really have an equivalent to the word *quick*, not in the way that refers to something very deep or internal at the least, and so

the solution offered by the translators is the closest you can get while remaining authentic. However, it still retains the same meaning semantically, and so I would argue that it can be defined as a direct translation.

5 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The primary goal of this thesis is to examine how ETF translations of verbal humour are handled in *Donald Duck* comic books, with a focus on two aspects in particular. The first research question focuses on what translation techniques and strategies were used while translating verbal humour in the comic books, and the second on what types of verbal humour could not be, or were not, translated directly into Finnish. For the first question, the data indicate that the most common translation technique used by far is substitution. Of the 45 instances of verbal humour, 23 involve substitution to some degree. This means that substitution makes up over half of the data in total at 51.11%—a clear and definite majority. The other major category are direct translations, which comprise 22.22% of the data. Therefore, the main takeaway is that substitutions and direct translations form an undisputed majority of the documented dialogue, with 73.33% of all translations being one or the other. They are the main two translation strategies found in Finnish translations of Don Rosa's stories in *Don Rosa's Library* volume 6. Outside of that, the remaining strategies are not nearly as plentiful, composing the remaining 26.64% of the data; their share is considerably smaller and less well-defined.

As for the second research question, the majority of verbal humour identified for the data was not directly translated, and as such the answer here is actually rather broad. However, this lack of direct translations did not necessarily stem from a direct necessity to make them indirect, but seemed to sometimes be due to personal decisions made by the translators. There were times when I compared English and Finnish versions of the same dialogue and noticed cases where the Finnish version could have gone for a more direct and authentic translation but did not for unknown reasons. One or two examples of this can be found in the analysis section (see 4.3, Examples 4 and 5). Vuorenoja (2016, p. 20-21) notes a similar finding in his thesis when it concerned the Finnish translations of *Mickey Mouse* comic books. Why the translators made these decisions is unknown, and trying to ascertain the reasons would be nothing but baseless speculation. Now, to pivot back to the original question, the data

showcased certain patterns for when translations were not done directly, most commonly when the English dialogue used items that had no clear Finnish equivalents (see 4.1, Example 1, and 4.3, Example 4). Items such as these include specific words, terminology, phrases and idioms. As already mentioned, sometimes these items did have direct translations, or they could have been translated more authentically, but at the potential loss of style.

In conclusion, the Finnish translations of *Donald Duck* comic books greatly favour domestication over foreignisation; the source text is changed and altered for the sake of the Finnish reader more than it is kept faithful and authentic. Substituting phrases, words and sayings with Finnish equivalents is by far the most common technique in use, and translations are sometimes made indirect due to the translators' choices instead of any limitations tied to the languages themselves. These findings partially coincide with previous studies on translation techniques and verbal humour in comics: Vuorenoja (2016, p. 21) comes to the same conclusion in regards to indirect translations and the translators' choices. In terms of techniques, substituting original humour with new types was rather common in Vuorenoja's results as well (Vuorenoja, 2016, p. 19), but the main thing our results differ in is the quantity of omissions: Vuorenoja (2016, p. 21) finds that omission, as a technique, is by far the most dominant technique among his results, whereas in mine it is the least common with only two instances to its name. However, it should be noted that though our studies share much overlap in their topics, Vuorenoja (2016) studies *Mickey Mouse* comics and not *Donald Duck* comics, and that our comics come from entirely different eras.

The limitations of this thesis are in its validity: the scope of the research is rather small, and only focuses on seven stories from the same author. The results are thus not widely applicable. Translating humour into Finnish in English comic books certainly has a lot of research, with numerous theses and studies documenting different aspects of it, but a larger-scale research may be required if that foundation is to be expanded upon. Hypothetical research of this nature could compare ETF translations in comic books in an attempt to find any consistent patterns or traits: what

words, phrases or linguistic items are the most difficult to translate? What items are the easiest to translate? Are there situations where direct translations are statistically more common than they are in others? Don Rosa's comics are still a potential subject for research, as his works are much easier to access in Finland and I only tapped into a fraction of his stories, but other authors are also good topics to focus on. Carl Barks has been researched as well, but a wider study could attempt to analyse stories from numerous authors for the sake of generalisability. Such research could also transcend past humour as a lens and attempt to examine other aspects of language. Any insight into translation between languages could prove valuable in a growing age of globalisation, where different cultures and peoples are in contact more commonly. Studies regarding humour as an angle can also grant us perspective on areas like communication, culture and other humanitarian fields.

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