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A Corpus-Based Study on the Translation of English Ideophones in Italian Picture Books: The Case of the *Diary of a Wimpy Kid*

Pier Simone Pischedda (ID)

Linguistics and Phonetics, University of Leeds, Leeds LS2 9JT, UK; p.s.pischedda@leeds.ac.uk

Abstract: This paper aims to provide the readers with an overview of the nature of sound symbolism in Italian and offers new food for thought to scholars in the under-researched field of sound symbolism in translated literature for young readers. Whilst English uses ideophones in literature for young readers, Italian sound symbolism often seems to rely on Anglophonic creations, arguably due to both linguistic and cultural reasons. The third and fourth books of the series for children and young adults, '*Diary of a Wimpy Kid*', have been taken as a source for examples. The books contain both text and pictures, which include ideophones in them. Each of the two English books has been analysed together with their Italian versions, and the strategies employed to translate sound symbolism have been catalogued into a small corpus. The results, on top of elucidating the nature of Italian sound symbolism, show a considerable degree of adaption and a frequent reliance on Anglophonic forms, with scattered attempts made at adapting English ideophones for the Italian readership. This is achieved through the modification of source forms to resemble Italian syntactical structures more closely and through the removal of certain consonant clusters that are considered typically Anglophonic (i.e., <th>, <sh>).

Keywords: picture books; sound symbolism; ideophones; translation; phonaesthesia

1. Introduction

This research will seek to map the use and importation of sound symbolic forms such as ideophones into Italian through picture books coming from the '*Diary of a Wimpy Kid*' series written by Kinney (2009a, 2009b, 2010, 2011). Systematic studies of the creative potentials of Italian sound symbolism or on the influence of English ideophones based on corpora are scarce. This is a chance to look at how a single linguistic phenomenon (i.e., sound symbolism) has been moulded into a language through decades of assimilation and, more specifically, to study how the Italian language and translations from English of a famous picture book series published in Italy have adapted in order to accommodate and successfully employ sound symbolic forms for a younger audience.

Sound symbolism is the phenomenon by which people associate the sound of an utterance with its meaning (Hinton et al. 1994, pp. 1–2). Sound symbolic words are often referred to as 'ideophones', which are commonly defined as 'marked words that depict sensory images' (Dingemanse 2012, p. 654). Examples of these include *boom* to describe an explosion or *sniff sniff* to describe the action of sniffing. These are words that often accompany the image in multimodal works such as comics, picture books and (at times) cartoons and try to bring the action described by the picture to life but, at the same time, they also become problematic when it comes to transposing them into other languages. The translation of comics and, by extension, the translation of sound symbolism, remain significantly under-investigated topics within translation studies (Borodo 2015, p. 22). The need for more research into this area means that recent papers on the matter have often been focused on the multimodality of the translation process for this particular medium. This is

particularly relevant in the case of expressive and sound symbolic language in translation. The key concept in this case is that 'meaning is not only communicated by language but also many other modes [. . .] that in concrete circumstances possess equal meaning-making potential' (Borodo 2015, p. 23). The present study thus takes up the suggestion of both Lathey (2006, p. 11) and Oittinen (2008a, p. 3) that areas of research in translation studies should include analysis of the relationship between the verbal and the visual in illustration and picture books. As pointed out by Oittinen (2005), 'almost nothing visual can be altered [and] translators need to pay attention to the visual aspect and design their texts so that they conform to the visual information' (p. 47). For this paper, the examples will be taken from Jeff Kinney's young adult series *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* (2007–), named *Diario di una schiappa* in Italian, which portrays the life of an eleven-year-old, undersized middle school boy named Greg. The illustrations portraying Greg would not have the same humorous effect without the words that accompany them. Ideophones, typical of comics' balloons (Kaindl 1999, p. 274), are especially dependent on both the visual and the textual. They not only refer to the actual action as portrayed in the picture but also aim to explain and enhance the text's expressivity through their shape, size, and colour, requiring a high level of creativity (Oittinen 2008b) and linguistic knowledge on the translator's part in order to create an even stronger bond between text and pictures.

Before moving to the description of the use of sound symbolism in the *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* series, in the next section I outline what 'sound symbolism' refers to, together with definitions of key terms such as 'ideophone', 'onomatopoeia' and 'phonaesthesia', and how these affect the translating approach when tasked with English to Italian translations.

1.1. Sound Symbolism, Ideophones, Onomatopoeias, Interjections

An excerpt from Casas-Tost (2014, p. 40) defines ideophones as 'phonetically driven words [. . .] with enormous expressive capacity'. In layman's terms, ideophones are expressive words that try to represent a certain sense, be it a sound or a feeling, often via phonetic means. As such, they do not only depict sonic experiences but often also cover other sensorial realms (motion, smell, touch and temperature, for instance) and emotions. 'Onomatopoeia' is the historical term that has been used at times to refer to this type of words, although the term is partially limiting as it only refers to strings that imitate sonic events (*ribbet* for a frog or *bow-wow* for a dog's bark for instance). 'Interjections', instead, are defined as a 'typical case of emotional language' (Poggi 2009, p. 1). These are words that are uttered by speakers via single-word phrases and are used to express certain feelings openly. *Ouch* is for instance an interjection used in English to express pain, whilst *hoorah* is uttered to express happiness. The main difference between ideophones and interjections lies in the fact that interjections are meant to be uttered by the speaker out loud and host a completely arbitrary relationship between sign and meaning. The phonetic substance of ideophones is instead often directly linked to their meaning (Lyons 1977, p. 75), a phenomenon that is formally defined as 'phonaesthesia', whereby certain vocalic or consonantal strings seem to consistently be used to refer to specific senses, with Reid (1967) being one of the pioneers in this type of scholarly inquiries. 'Phonaestheme' is also an important term that was coined by Firth (1930) and refers to these specific clusters of sounds that are recurrently used to refer to specific meanings across words—see, for instance, the use of the cluster <gl-> in words that refer to shininess such as 'glow', 'glitter' or 'gloss' (topic also later analysed by Bolinger 1965). Still, interjections can and do sometimes include certain sound symbolic features so the boundary between the two concepts can at times be blurred and can also depend on personal perspective. Indeed, the marked nature of sound symbolic words goes hand in hand with the classificatory difficulties within this area of scholarship. 'Not only is the use of the term 'ideophone' not always completely agreed upon, but there is also no completely agreed-upon set of features characterising ideophones' (Smoll 2012, p. 2), as the term is often used to describe forms that vary across languages in terms of linguistic features. It follows that, as ideophone inventories are elaborated in different ways across languages, any categorisations will never (and should not) claim to be strict or

all-inclusive. For instance, in certain African languages ideophones are usually adverbial and not onomatopoeic, as they are not trying to evoke sounds but, more frequently, whole situations and modes that other languages can only paraphrase by using several words. On the other hand, in studies that focus on Asian languages, they are usually called 'mimetics', 'expressives' or 'descriptives' (Smoll 2012, p. 2). For the purpose of this paper, the term 'ideophone' will be used as an epithet to refer to any iconic words that are embedded in the pictures included in the literary works under scrutiny. These are sometimes actual English words that one might not actually instinctively see as being ideophonic, see the use of *crawl crawl* to signal a person crawling on the floor. Nevertheless, considering the context in which these words are used makes them highly symbolic and expressive, referring to them as 'ideophones' seemed like the most appropriate terminology to use in this case. 'Phonaesthesia' will be used to refer to the specific phenomenon of certain phonemes and graphemes carrying recurrent meanings.

Another important distinction that is made throughout the analysis is the one between lexicalised and non-lexicalised ideophones. While lexicalised ideophones can be found in dictionaries, being official words in the language, non-lexicalised ideophones are instead originally nonsensical and they do not have official status as words in the language. In the latter case, their meaning comes from both phonaesthesic properties (where the use of certain phonemes in the word elicits certain senses) and the picture they are embedded in. When judging whether a form belonged to either of the two categories, specific online dictionaries have been used: 'Il Nuovo De Mauro Dictionary of Language in Use', 2022 (De Mauro 2022), for Italian and 'Merriam Webster Online', 2022 (Merriam-Webster 2022), for English. If a form was found in the relevant dictionary, it was considered as being 'lexicalised'.

As highly flexible and adaptable devices, ideophones are studied within various disciplines: 'semiotics, psycholinguistics, semantic typology, corpus linguistics, conversation analysis, and the ethnography of speaking' (Dingemanse 2012, p. 654) to name but a few. Considering that every language has its own phonological system, ideophonic coining 'is largely dependent on the phonemes and phonemic combinations of the language' (Marchand 1969, p. 402). Kilian-Hatz's definition of ideophones seems to reiterate this same concept, emphasizing their highly 'dramaturgic function' (cited in Voeltz and Kilian-Hatz 2001, p. 2):

Ideophones do not simply describe a state or event, but rather they *simulate* it, allowing the speaker to perform the event and raising the *illusion* that it is occurring at the moment of the utterance (Kilian-Hatz 2001, p. 155; emphasis added).

The ideophone *bang* does not describe or allude to the explosion (as the word 'explosion' does) so much as it attempts to *perform* the explosion itself. Regarding the imitativeness of ideophones, Assaneo et al. (2011) point out that the actual imitative value of ideophones is the subject of a challenging debate. The real acoustic properties of 'collisions, bursts and strikes are in fact very different from the string of consonants and vowels forming their onomatopoeic written forms' (Assaneo et al. 2011, p. 1), which are limited to a variable number of phonetic categories (Tsur 1992, p. 18). For this reason, Assaneo et al. (2011) suggest that a better way to define the ideophone is to describe it as 'a transformation of a sound into *the best possible* speech element'. By defining it thus, they are not intending to wholly reject the phonaesthesic nature of languages (a property that is sometimes referred to as 'iconicity') but rather remind us of its limits, as 'every language has its own phonological system [. . .] and is thus dependent on a particular set of phonemes and phonemic combinations' (Marchand 1969, p. 402). When environmental sounds are transformed into speech elements, not everything can be acoustically preserved. 'The choice of speech sounds is to certain extent accidental' (Marchand 1969, p. 401). Iconicity comes also from tacit conventions among the speakers of a language and is closely dependent on the way natural sounds have been converted in order to fit the language's alphabet and phonological classes (Bueno Pérez 1994, p. 18; Catricala n.d.). Therefore, despite the fact that English cats might not exactly pronounce the word 'meow' when they are meowing,

it is an accepted convention that an ideophone is the closest written representation of the sound emitted by cats. The same logic applies to the Italian *miao* or the French *miaou*. It follows that different degrees of iconicity exist, such that certain representations are undoubtedly closer to their real acoustic output than others (Beccaria 1994, p. 380).

Indeed, the ease with which ideophonic neologisms are created and accepted into a language (Chapman 1984, p. 156) has not only bestowed the device with a rare linguistic flexibility, but has also created interest among writers, who have learnt to exploit it in order to 'give free reign to their imagination' (Chapman 1984, p. 133). Poems, stories, lullabies and traditional songs were in fact the first testing grounds for sound symbolic experimentations (Mphande 1992, p. 118). Used to convey 'dramatic enhancement in narrative texts' (Mphande 1992, p. 118), this linguistic device has led writers to a 'highly evocative onomatopoeic coinage and several ambitious attempts' (Chapman 1984, p. 137). In the first case, ideophones are mainly used as mnemonic devices to make a product more memorable for customers: 'Plop, plop, fizz, fizz, oh what a relief it is' (slogan of Alka Seltzer); 'Snap, crackle, pop' (slogan of Rice Krispies cereals); 'Bubble Yum. It's so much yum, yum, yum' (slogan of Yum Bubble Gum) and so on (examples mentioned in Crystal 2007, p. 252). In the case of comics and picture books, the genres' propensity to mix different modes of expressions, particularly verbal and visual signs, has given editors and cartoonists the chance to flaunt 'a vigorous and bold invention of onomatopoeia beyond that of most literary writers' (Chapman 1984, p. 139), with the final result of successfully renewing some of the traditional forms.

1.2. Italian v. English Sound Symbolism

Italian and English are linguistically very distinct languages, and this is reflected in the way they treat and deal with ideophones. The Italian language, due to Latin influences and its inflectional nature (Crystal 2005, p. 368) (that is, often a word needs to be modified according to gender and number), possesses predominantly multi-syllabic words. The English language, in contrast, due to its Germanic roots, possesses a greater number of monosyllabic words, which makes the English language naturally inclined to create sound symbolism and use it with ease in everyday speech (Garcia De Diego 1968, p. 18; Allott 1995). In order to create ideophones that sound and look 'naturally' Italian, one would need to use words ending in vowels, as is demonstrated in the long, vowel-ending expressions that have been devised by the few Italian poets, writers and cartoonists who have attempted to invent ideophones (Arcangeli 2009).

The ease with which English speakers can create ideophones and the way these naturally fit in the language implies that they can be easily used when speaking. This issue takes us to another linguistic characteristic of the English language, the possibility of converting word classes (Newmark 1996). The noun 'slap', for example, readily functions as a verb with minimal grammatical modification that does not reduce its iconic effect (*to slap*, *slaps*, *slapped*). The Italian language, again due to its inflectional characteristics, needs to inflect the term when changing class, so the noun *schiaffo* ('slap') becomes *schiaffeggiare* ('to slap'). This characteristic of the English language implies that English speakers can easily import sound symbolic words into the language and use them in everyday speech, by converting them without adding any suffix or endings. This implies that, when reading a comic or a picture book, an English reader is visualising sound symbolism commonly used in speech, consequently making the whole reading experience more familiar.

Scholars (Dingemanse 2012, p. 664; Smoll 2012, p. 24; De La Cruz Cabanillas and Martínez 2009, p. 50; Beccaria 1994, p. 317) have come to the conclusion that generating a typological classification of languages according to their use of ideophones is a difficult (and perhaps not even useful) task, due not only to cross-linguistic discrepancies in terms of phonology, morphology, syntax and semantics, but also, and more importantly, because of the high degree of variability of forms and functions within each individual language (Smoll 2012, p. 22). A more fruitful approach to the study of sound symbolism would involve an investigation of the common (or divergent) cross-linguistic properties, especially

by focusing on the way ideophones are actually used or translated and how they affect and shape languages. 'Naturalistic corpus data is therefore likely to play an essential role in this enterprise' (Dingemanse 2012, p. 657).

Linguistic properties are not the sole source of this cross- and intra-linguistic flexibility. A few scholars (Beccaria 1994, p. 380; Oszmiańska 2001; Crystal 2007, p. 250; Casas-Tost 2014, p. 41) draw attention to the cultural reasons behind the use of ideophones, stressing the importance of social norms and historical facts in determining the success or partial failure of the way sound symbolism is used for communication purposes. This is also generally true in relation to verbal and visual elements in interaction, as 'meanings belong to culture, rather than specific semiotic modes', hence 'the way some things can be said either visually or verbally is also culturally and historically specific' (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006, p. 2). The Japanese language, for example, has an extended array of sound symbolic forms that are employed not only in colloquial contexts, as happens in many languages, but also in formal situations. Scholars agree that this is partly due to the 'kinaesthetic' nature of Japanese culture, which tends to favour 'silence and visual forms of communication' (Maynard 1997, p. 180)—a characteristic that might also explain the notable success of comic art forms such as manga and anime in Japan. Oszmiańska adds that, since the structure of ideophones is determined by linguistic rules, language structure will always 'overshadow the iconic principle' (Oszmiańska 2001, p. 154).

Various foreign languages have incorporated Anglophonic sound symbolism into their array of iconic expressions, Italian being one of them. Japanese is possibly one of the few languages 'so far largely uncolonised by Anglo-American sound-words' (Thomas 2004), probably due to the already intricate system of sound symbolic form present in the language.

Iconic forms indirectly affect the literary, cultural and historical contexts of a language and its speakers. As highlighted by Assaneo et al. (2011, p. 8), ideophones, 'as any other word with a long tradition [. . .], contain elements accumulated across history, elements beyond pure acoustic imitation'. Cross-modal relationships are therefore highly useful when attempting to explain the nature of verbal (but also vocal) sound symbolism (Assaneo et al. 2011, p. 8). In general, and particularly for this paper, research on ideophone systems will also impact on more widely relevant fields such as language imitation and evolution, verbal art and cultural studies. But, more importantly, it will assist the everlasting inquiry into how sensory images are interpreted/translated in vernaculars (Dingemanse 2012, p. 664) and how environment may shape languages in particular ways (Smoll 2012, p. 24).

1.3. The Challenge of Translating Sound Symbolism

Historically, most of the existing Italian literature regarding the translation of children's books has focused on the characteristics of children's literature rather than the strategies involved during the translating process. One of the first Italian scholars to draw attention to the issues surrounding the translation of Italian comics was Eco (2003, 2008), who has always shown an interest in the translation of children's literature and has dedicated some reflections to the translation of Italian Disney comics. Key to the advancement of the field as a fully fledged academic subject was, instead, the early work of Zanettin (2008, 2013, 2014)—which then inspired later work from the author of this article (Pischedda 2017, 2020). Historically, the approach to children's literature in translation has gone from a prescriptive one (how should you translate?) to a more descriptive one (how do texts present themselves as translations?) (Van Coillie 2006, p. vi). The strategy of 'cultural context adaptation', first suggested by Klingberg (1986, p. 86), is still believed to be useful (Frimmelova 2010, p. 30) and it is taken as an umbrella term for a series of strategies aimed at 'moving the source text towards the child reader' (Lathey 2006, p. 7). Since young readers are not expected to have the same world knowledge as an adult, the translator can be more flexible (Bell 1985, p. 7) and help the child reader by adapting and localising references coming directly from the source culture. The translation of ideophones adds another level of difficulty to the translator's task, involving the age-old linguistic and

philosophical debate surrounding the relationship between sound and meaning. It also offers food for thought in relation to research on translation for young readers, which has included empirical analysis of the reactions of the 'interpreting' young reader to the translated text (Oittinen 1993, p. 37) and the creativity and inventiveness involved in the translating process (Lathey 2010, pp. 199–200).

The linguistic barriers to creating sound symbolism in Italian have led translators to often leave the English ideophone in place without localising it (Semprini 2006, p. 42; Eco 1994, p. 147). As a consequence, Italian readers of comics are presented with ideophones that are not included in their linguistic repertoire and, very often, are not even understandable. Adult readers of comics had to learn English ideophones in order to easily recognise their meaning. Children who had just entered the world of comic and picture books were faced with foreign sound symbolic words which they could not understand and which did not sound and look familiar or as belonging to their mother tongue, and hence their comprehension of the target text and their reading experience were irreparably jeopardised (Abòs in Castillo Cañellas 1997). For all these reasons, we can see how problematic the matter is from a translating, but also educational, point of view.

However, there are also non-linguistic reasons for the frequent usage of English ideophones—the American monopoly of the market of young readers' literature (Thomas 2004). American comic books together with their ideophones became famous all over the world, allowing foreign readers to get used to English sound symbolism (Valero Garcés 2008, p. 247) and accept it as a standard way of expressing the sounds contained in balloons. Note that in Italy, before the arrival of American comic books in the 1930s, comics did not contain any sound effects to accompany the image (Eco 2008).

The struggle experienced by the Italian language to successfully employ sound symbolism in everyday speech has led many translators to leave English sound symbolism intact in Italian translations. Child readers, due to their limited knowledge of the world, should be guided through the translated text and often the translator is expected to localise the source text material more than when translating for adults (Tortoriello 2006; Frimmelova 2010). This prevailing strategy thus seems frequently neglected when translating ideophones in comic and picture books. The following research issues and questions have been the focus of my examination of the strategies used to translate ideophones in the third and fourth books of the *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* series into Italian: which type of sound symbolic word tends to be adapted more frequently, non-lexicalised ideophones which invoke the illocutionary force of the utterance more than its minimal semantic content, or lexicalised ideophones such as *groan*? Why? In which cases has the ideophone been left intact? In which cases has it been localised? The results will be used to formulate a series of hypotheses that will prove fruitful for future research on similar topics.

2. Materials and Methods for the Corpus Creation

As shown by research into the translation of ideophones in Spanish (Valero Garcés 2008), Japanese (Ozumi 2011; Inose 2011) and Swedish (Flyxe 2002), the best way to assess how sound symbolic words are translated is to catalogue them. In order to analyse how the sound symbolism has been translated in the *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* series, a list of all the sounds together with their translation has been created and, consequently, the different strategies used have been detected. The data was collated manually by the author of this article and saved in a digital spreadsheet—this seemed to be the most effective method due to the limited sample size. The forms come from a total of four books from the *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* series: two English books published by Amulet (Kinney 2009a, 2009b), which provided the source-text forms, and the two corresponding books translated into Italian published by Il Castoro (Kinney 2010, 2011). Ideophones have been catalogued according to their type (non-lexicalised or lexicalised) in order to determine which of the two was more frequently translated and in which cases.

To classify the types of ideophones more precisely, I have adapted a typology of translation procedures developed by Kaindl (1999, p. 275) from the work of Delabastita (1989) on film translation. There are five strategies for dealing with ideophones:

- Reproduction: language and/or typography are reproduced in their original form;
- Deletion: ideophone has been removed from the picture;
- Addition: ideophone has been preserved but spelling/phonetic changes have been applied. For example, the English 'beep' becomes 'bip' in Italian, with the aim of achieving the same pronunciation;
- Partial Substitution: ideophone has been localised and the same class of ideophone has been used. For example, in the English source text the lexicalised ideophone 'crawl crawl' has been translated with the Italian lexicalised ideophone 'striscia striscia' (direct translation of 'crawl crawl');
- Total substitution: ideophone has been localised but a different type of ideophone has been used. For example, the English lexicalised ideophone 'poke poke' has been translated into Italian with the non-lexicalised ideophone 'tunk tunk'.

3. Corpus Results

Each of the following tables show the results of the preliminary analysis of the translation of ideophones divided according to the strategy used.

3.1. Reproduction

Table 1 is the list of some of the terms that have been kept intact in the Italian translation. The second column indicates if the English term is non-lexicalised or lexicalised.

Table 1. List of 'reproduction' instances.

English and Italian	Type
Bink Bonk Doink Bap Cloink Squork Vrmmmm Zzzzzzzz	Non-lexicalised
Hop Hop Whirrrrrr Pant Pant Pat Pat Gasp Sniff Snap Snap Honk Splat Snap Flash Click Pluck Chomp Gobble Slurp Dump Zap Zap Hop Squish Slap Zing Sniff Sniff	Lexicalised

3.2. Deletion

In the two books, only in two cases was the ideophone removed from the Italian version of the picture: a 'honk' to indicate the sound of a horn and a 'tug tug' to indicate the insistent tapping on someone's shoulder, respectively.

3.3. Addition

Table 2 shows the ideophones that have undergone a spelling/phonetic change, involving the substitution of either a vowel or a consonant, in order to be adapted for the Italian readership.

Table 2. List of 'addition' instances.

EN	IT	Type
Thunk Bump Thwunk	Tunk Bump Tunk	Consonant change
Splash Sploosh Clunk Beep Boop Beep Beep Beep	Splish Splash Clank Bip Bip Bip Bip Bip	Vocalic change

3.4. Partial Substitution

Table 3 shows some of those cases in which the English ideophone was translated into Italian with the same lexical type, indicated in the third column.

Table 3. List of 'partial substitution' instances.

EN	IT	Type (in Italian)
Fwoosh	Wuuush	
Slork Slork	Slurp Slurp	
Whap	Sbang	
Zow	Zot Zot	
Clonk	Sbam	
Doink	Ding	Non-lexicalised
Thwap	Slash	
Slork Slork	Slap Slap	
Wham Wham	Bam Bam	
Ding Dong	Dling Dlong	
Clang	Sbang	
Kick	Calcio	
Tweet	Fischio	
Push	Spinta	
Trip	Cadi	
Yank	Strapp	
Dump	Giù	
Twirl	Giro	
Clink	Cin Cin	
Drop	Lascia	Lexicalised
Toss	Butta	
Suck Suck	Ciuccia Ciuccia	
Blush	Arrossisce	
Yank	Tira	
Scoot Scoot	Striscia Striscia	
Punch	Pacca	

3.5. Total Substitution

Table 4 shows some of the ideophones that were translated using a different type of in the Italian version. All the examples found saw a lexicalised English ideophone translated into an Italian non-lexicalised one, with no cases detected that were the other way around.

Table 4. List of 'total substitution' instances.

EN	IT
Chew Chew	Cric Croc
Punch Punch	Bonk Bonk
Chatter Chatter	Brrrrr
Wheeze	Pant Pant
Snore	Zzzz
Smack	Clap
Punch	Bonk
Snip	Zac Zac
Ring	Drin
Blink Blink	Gasp
Bark	Bau Bau
Whimper Whimper	Mhhhhh
Squirt	Sguish
Wriggle Squirm	Strush Strush
Scream	Aaaaaargh
Zap	Stac
Lick	Lap
Shudder	Brrrrr
Wheeze	Uff Uff

Table 5 shows how often each of the strategies was used. For *reproduction* and *partial substitution*, the table specifies if the English ideophone was a non-lexicalised ideophone or a lexicalised form. For *total substitution*, the table indicates how many ideophones were translated for each combination, from non-lexicalised to lexicalised form ('non-lex to lex') or vice versa ('lex to non-lex'). For *addition*, the table specifies if the spelling/phonetic change involved a consonant or a vowel.

Table 5. Overall distribution of the five translation strategies.

Strategy Name				Strategy Total Distribution
	total	non-lexicalised	lexicalised	31.48% Reproduction
Reproduction	34	6	28	
%	31.48%	17.65%	82.35%	
		non-lexicalised	lexicalised	
Partial Substitution	39	10	29	
%	36.11%	25.64%	74.36%	
		non-lex to lex	lex to non-lex	66.67% Adaptation
Total Substitution	27	0	27	
%	25.00%	0.00%	100.00%	
		consonantal	vocalic	
Addition	6	2	4	
%	5.56%	33.33%	66.67%	
Deletion	2			1.85% Deletion
%	1.85%			
Total	108			

Since *partial substitution*, *total substitution* and *addition* are all a kind of adaptation of the source text, they have been grouped together in the last column, which shows that in

67% of cases the source term has undergone an adaptation. The strategy of *repetition* comes second with 31%, followed by *deletion*, which was used only twice in the two books overall.

4. Discussion of Translation Strategies

The analysis showed, overall, a high level of adaptation. As seen in Table 5, out of 108 ideophones present in both books, 66.67% underwent some degree of adaptation, either a *substitution* or an *addition*, showing that the translator was aware of the issue and tried to adapt sound symbolism where possible. Again, this is probably also because of the graphic simplicity of the pictures, which allow more freedom on the translator's part. The example of the *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* thus seems different from the translation of comics, in which the English ideophone is usually retained. The most common strategy appears to be *partial substitution*, 39 times out of 108, with a total of 36%, closely followed by *reproduction* (31%) and *total substitution* (25%). These figures show the effort made by the translators to adapt ideophones for the younger audience. In all cases, when total substitution is used, the English lexicalised form is translated with a non-lexicalised ideophone in Italian, a practice which confirms that lexicalised ideophone poses a persistent problem when translating into the Italian language.

The first thing that attracts one's attention is the non-lexicalised nature of the Italian ideophone (see *brrrr, zzzz, aaargh, mmmmmhh*).

Another phenomenon, also cited by Valero Garcés (2008), is that, faced with the need to translate a less well-known ideophones, translators tend to choose common expressions taken directly from English rather than the target language. See for example the use of 'gasp' for 'blink', 'slap' for 'slork', 'pant pant' for 'wheeze', 'clap' for 'smack' and 'thumb' for 'slap'.

These phenomena confirm the major influence of English sound symbolism on the development of non-English sound symbolism—to the point that translators are apparently unaware that the ideophones they employ are actually of English origin and, instead, assume they belong to the target language (Valero Garcés 2008, p. 247). Further confirmation of this unwitting assumption is evident in Ozumi's finding (2011) that, in 48% of cases, when translating from Japanese into Italian, translators prefer ideophones derived from English to those derived from Italian.

Although a heavy reliance on the English source text has been noticed, in *Diario di una Schiappa*, we can still find a few traces of great attempts at 'Italianising' English lexicalised ideophones, particularly when *partial substitution* is employed, as in the examples in Table 6:

Table 6. Examples of Italianisations of English lexicalised ideophones.

EN	IT	Gloss
Shake Shake	Scuoti Scuoti	'shake shake' (imperative form)
Suck Suck	Ciuccia Ciuccia	'suck suck' (imperative form)
Blush	Arrossisce	'(he/she) blushes' (3rd pers. sing.)
Scoot Scoot	Striscia Striscia	'(it) scoots' (3rd pers. sing.)
Toss	Lancia	'toss' (imperative form)
Wag Wag	Scodinzola Scodinzola	'(it) wags wags' (3rd pers. sing.)
Yank	Strap Strap	Part of the verb 'to yank' (strappare)
Dig Dig Dig	Gratta Gratta Gratta	'scratch scratch scratch' (imp. form)

In the above cases, every Italian translation reflects the English source term, for which either its direct translation or a synonym has been chosen. Verbs are usually in the imperative or the third person singular form. The use of this kind of 'Italianised' ideophones, although representing quite a clever and original attempt, might make some Italian readers turn up their noses, and the same issue has been noticed by Castillo Cañellas (1997) for the Spanish language. In a couple of cases, we can see the effort made by the translator to make some Italian verbs onomatopoeic by cutting off their suffix. See 'strap' for 'yank', which comes from the verb '*strap*pare' ('to yank') or 'strush strush' for 'wriggle',

which comes from the verb '*strus*ciare' ('to rub oneself against someone or something'). This kind of ideophone seems difficult to be classified because they come from an actual verb, but they are not fully lexicalised as the original term has lost its suffix. From now on, I will be referring to these examples as 'semi-lexicalised ideophones'.

Reproduction is used for simpler ideophones which are easily understandable and for those expressions which have entered the Italian language thanks to American comics, such as *slap*, *gasp*, *pant*, *bonk*, *snap*, *click*, *zip*. Bear in mind that these sounds, although easily understandable by young readers, possess highly iconic connotations and are frequently used in comics. Nevertheless, they still remain English words and require an effort from the Italian reader's part in order to be fully understood.

Apart from the usual well-known ideophones (see *pant*, *sniff*, *clap*, *click*), all the other *reproductions* involve a sound referring to a sudden movement or a hit on the ground, such as *hop*, *screech*, *bump*, *dump* and the words ending with a nasal + velar stop cluster, which usually indicate the sound of a bouncing object (Oswalt 1994, p. 304). This is probably due to the fact that ideophones referring to loud sounds are also the most known and most used in comics and picture books, and also because their onomatopoeic nature is easily graspable, thanks to the presence of stop sounds, which have proven to be the most common phonemes used in ideophones (Attridge 2007).

Another frequent phenomenon, particularly linked to the strategy of *addition* (i.e., phonetic/spelling changes), is the tendency to adapt those ideophones which contain clusters not perceived as Italian, such as <th>, <sh>, <wh> or <ck>. Therefore, 'thunk' becomes 'tunk', 'whump' turns into 'bump', 'whap' becomes 'sbang', 'thwunk' turns into 'tunk', 'click' appears as 'clic' and 'wham' becomes 'bam'. This strategy shows again the effort made by the translator to make the sounds as 'visually' familiar as possible to the young readers.

After consideration of the results of the analysis, some hypotheses surrounding the translation of English ideophones to Italian have been created. The hypotheses are as follows:

1. The Italian readership is not expected to tolerate many English ideophones.
2. Italian sound symbolism is frequently of non-lexicalised nature.
3. Semi-lexicalised ideophones are used to try and make Italian sound symbolism more expressive.
4. There is a tendency to adapt English sounds that contain clusters not perceived as Italian, probably because these are considered to be (possibly) confusing for the non-English reader.
5. When having to translate a less well-known ideophone, translators tend to choose common expressions taken directly from English rather than the target language and unconsciously do not seem to realise that that expression is actually of English origin, as do the readers (Valero Garcés 2008).
6. Since *repetition* is often used (31.48%), it seems that translators are expecting certain phonemes and consonant or vowel clusters to be cross-linguistically expressive.

5. Conclusions

The analysis and the results confirmed that the translator of the 'Diary of a Wimpy Kid' series was aware of the need to localise the ideophones for the younger readership, following the suggestion of a few scholars (Lathey 2010; Oittinen 2008a; Frimmelova 2010), who stressed the importance of adaptation strategies when dealing with texts addressed to young readers.

The difficulty of the Italian language when creating ideophones and its reliance on English forms was confirmed: lexicalised Italian ideophones are rarely used, while the non-lexicalised type is preferred. English ideophones are still widely used and typically English spelling does not seem to be considered confusing by Italian natives. It is either retained from the English version or used to translate less common English ideophones.

For future research, the use of semi-lexicalised and lexicalised ideophones should be further analysed and the efficacy of the non-lexicalised ideophones should be checked, possibly through the use of different experimental methodologies (surveys or interviews, for instance) and through the analysis of other types of books for children, such as comics for young readers, picture books or other multimodal texts. This would allow further insight into the veracity and applicability of the aforementioned hypotheses, which were formulated as a result of this research project.

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