Research Article

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Anglophonic Influence in the Use of Sound Symbolism in Italian Disney Comics: A Corpus-based Analysis

Abstract: This article will explore the linguistic implications of employing and creating sound symbolism (ideophones, onomatopoeia and interjections) in Italian Disney comics. It will endeavour to investigate the way sound symbolic forms in both imported Disney US comics and original Italian stories have profoundly influenced the development of Italian sound symbolism in the last century. The diachronic analysis is carried out thanks to the creation of a corpus of ideophones and interjections from 210 Disney stories published between 1932 and 2013. The corpus will allow the author to investigate how these forms have changed diachronically throughout the eighty years under investigation with the final aim of highlighting changes and patterns in both original and translated Italian stories. The unique status of ideophones, confirmed by language, sociological and neurological studies, has led to interesting experimentations but also to complicated dynamics. Certain linguistic settings seem to foster a better affinity towards the device— particularly if compared to Romance languages, such as Italian and Spanish, that often have to rely on Anglophone renditions. Anglicisation has indeed overshadowed previous original attempts. Nevertheless, recent creations, particularly from cartoonists, bear witness to a willingness to stretch language again in order to enhance language iconicity.

Keywords: sound symbolism; ideophones; onomatopoeia; Disney; comics studies; Italian language; semantics; historical linguistics; interjections; neology

1 Introduction

The linguistics branch defined as 'sound symbolism' studies the relationship between the sound of an utterance and its meaning (Hinton 1994, 1-2) and it is concerned with those 'marked words depictive of sensory images [...] noted for their special sound patterns, distinct grammatical properties and sensory meanings' (Dingemanse 2012, 654). In simpler words, these are words that try to depict, capture and imitate sensory perceptions, in an iconic (i.e. ideophones) but also non-iconic (i.e. interjections) fashion. They not only include depictions of sound (animal calls such as *bow-wow*, *oink*, *cock-a-doodle-doo* etc. or environmental noise such as *bang, boom* or *rumble*) but also smell, movement, touch, 'kinaesthetic sensations, balance, and other inner feelings and sensations' (Dingemanse 2012 656). They are often called onomatopoeia, an acceptable but sometimes limiting term, since it only refers to depictions of sound, which might be a satisfactory definition for some languages but not others.

Since the 1930s, imported (American) English Disney comics have been institutionalising the use of sound symbolic forms, especially ideophones, in Italian mass media, offering an original use of a device that had previously been employed mainly, and relatively infrequently, in Italian poetic and narrative

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compositions (see its use within the Futurist and Decadent literary movements) rather than paired with images. The 'plastic presence' (Gasca & Gubern 2004, 388) of English ideophones in foreign comics has been recorded since the 1930s. Although 'establishing their functional paternity is still quite a difficult task' (Gasca & Gubern 2004, 388), the undisputed hegemony of North American comics on the international market is undeniable since the early days of comics' industry. Ideophones were able to provide the Italian comic book with a newly-discovered sensoriality but they concurrently produced a dual effect: if, on one side, the device introduced new ways for visual and verbal elements to interact, representing by all means 'one of the best-known features of comic books' (Duncan & Smith 2009, 154)—on the other side, it drew attention to a seemingly unpredictable feature of the Italian language. Ideophones' closeness with orality and primordial language, combined with the Italian language's lack of familiarity with the use of these forms in comics, as suggested by Mioni (1990, 262), implied an 'absence of univocity in their use or function' (Chmielewska 2011, 3), making it difficult to frame them into specific paradigms. In addition, practical difficulties arose for editors, creators and translators who had to deal with the device's 'aberrance' (Newman 2001, 251), that is, its tendency to 'stretch' the system of languages by forcing them to depart from their normal structure. This resulted in a slow and still on-going process of linguistic adaptation of these English sounds. There are therefore almost eighty years of 'ideophonic' English influence to take into account, and this affects any studies attempting to analyse the Italian sound- symbolic system, which inevitably result in cross-linguistic investigations. Welcoming English phonetic and morphological patterns into the Italian language in order to accommodate ideophones has had a considerable impact on the language structure itself. This has been noticed also for other languages (especially Spanish) that—much like Italian—are subjected to an ongoing sound-symbolic language stretching and this is exactly the process that this article aims to describe.

The main questions that this inquiry wants to address focus on clarifying the behaviour of these forms from a diachronic perspective. As such, this paper will try to elucidate on (1) the main linguistic processes detected, (2) the position of the sound symbolic forms and (3) their phonomorphological changes – all of this always keeping in mind the diachronic focus of the inquiry, hence stressing how these have changed throughout the different decades under analysis and according to the manually-compiled corpus.

The corpus created as part of this research project will facilitate a comparative reading of ideophones and interjections in translated Disney comics mainly from the 1930s-90s (particularly the famous comic book *Topolino*, 'Mickey Mouse') and in original Disney stories by Italian cartoonists, commencing with the first full length one (approved by Disney) published in 1937 (Stajano 1999, 2). These types of corpus are defined as unidirectional, bilingual parallel corpora (McEnery et al. 2006, 48), which are often recommended for translation studies projects as they 'provide greater certainty as to the equivalence of particular expressions' (McEnery et al. 2006, 94). The majority of stories analysed as part of this project were included in the *Topolino* ('Mickey Mouse') magazine, which has almost-unremittingly published Disney stories in Italy since 1932.

The choice of this particular magazine was motivated by several factors. *Topolino*'s 'linguistic physiognomy' (Verda 1990, 58; translation mine) is altogether autonomous, personal and trendsetting. Its language is 'clearly distinguishable from that of other [Italian] comics' (Verda 1990, 58; translation mine), and that is what makes it so interesting from a scholarly point of view. Neologisms and coinages have flourished in its pages and they have done so in crucial decades (1930s-60s) for the development of Italian as a standardised language. Famous, for instance, is the way the names for mouse and duck (*topo* and *papero*) have triggered a prolific creation of several alternative names for toponyms, characters and objects. These include, among the rest, the names of the two cities *Topolinia* and *Paperopoli* ('Mouseton' and 'Duckburg', respectively) but also alternative names for famous non-Disney characters that were adapted for the comic book series, such as *Paper Jones* (see 'Indian Jones') or *Schwarzenpaper* (see 'Schwarznegger') - both word-plays based on the term *papero*, meaning 'male goose' (examples mentioned by Pietrini 2013).

Despite the focus of this project being mainly on ideophones, due to their similar linguistic function and evocative nature, data regarding interjections has also been collected and will, in certain contexts, also be featured during the analysis.

2 Defining the Ideophone

The term 'ideophone' initially came into use among early researchers in African onomatopoeia with the aim of investigating the different stages of linguistic evolution in African idioms (Tedlock 1999, 118). The term was first applied by Doke in 1935 to refer to Bantu languages and, since then, 'word classes identifiable as ideophones have been found in many of world's languages' (Dingemanse 2012, 655). The term is now employed not only with reference to the study of African sound symbolism, but it is also 'widespread and used to refer to any kind of language iconicity' (Liberman 2005, 33). The most recent widely-accepted definition of 'ideophone' is formulated by Dingemanse (2012, 655), who describes it as a 'marked word that depicts sensory imagery'. This definition was purposefully designed to be general, 'capturing the fundamental cross-linguistic characteristics of ideophones while leaving room for details and differences to be spelled out for individual languages' (Ibid.). Dingemanse's open definition is valuable as terminological usage among scholars in the field has been uncertain for decades. While the term *ideophone* indicates the word or expression itself, the phenomenon in which native speakers think that there is 'some kind of meaningful connection between a sound, or cluster of sounds, and properties of the outside world' (Crystal 2007, 250) is referred to as 'sound symbolism', 'phonosemantics' or 'phonaestesia'.

Cross-linguistic analysis of ideophones is slowly taking place, with certain areas that still deserve further attention (Dingemanse 2012, 663). The results available so far show that certain languages have a greater propensity towards sound symbolic patterns than others. Languages such as Japanese and Korean, and certain African idioms, which are 'characterised by lexicons rich in words which come under the heading of ideophones or sound symbolism' (Casas-Tost 2014, 39), seem to have attracted more scholarship (Casas-Tost 2014, 39), while research is still in the early stages for Romance languages (Smoll 2012, 1).

Despite the fact that ideophones are sometimes classified as interjections in dictionaries, ultimately they should not be considered as such, as there is linguistic evidence that shows that the two categories should be kept separate. Interjections are a 'typical case of emotional language' (Poggi 2009, 1)—words that have an inherently emotive function and are usually uttered by the speaker in order to openly express feelings and attract other people's attention. They can either have 'expositive value' (D'Achille 2010, 174; translation mine), when they are expressing the speaker's feelings—see *toh*, *bah* in Italian or *ew*, *yuck* in English—or an exhortatory one if they are employed to provoke a reaction—see *ehi!* or *hey!*. In the genre of the comic, these are usually but not always included within the speech balloon due to their enunciated nature. Despite sharing their holophrastic function—that is their tendency to be used as single words—with interjections, ideophones diverge from interjections as they use iconic and symbolic patterns to convey meaning, a characteristic not (completely) shared by interjections, which are generally crystallised forms whose meaning relies on arbitrary conventions. Furthermore, interjections do not feature unusual morphophonological patterns (see phono-morphological repetition, for example) as frequently as ideophones do. While interjections are usually present in dictionaries and categorised as such, ideophones represent a grammatical class open to different interpretations and categorisations (D'Achille 2010, 174).

Note that when the analysis focuses either on ideophones or interjections, this will be specifically and openly stated. At times, both forms are referred to and this will be stated by using the 'sound symbolic forms' umbrella term. Despite ideophones being considered more iconic than interjections, the term 'sound symbolism' can indeed be used to refer to interjections as well, depending on the context.

The peripheral status of the study of ideophones has long been preserved as a result of the dominant belief that languages are 'conventional codes' (Tedlock 1999, 118) created arbitrarily by their speakers. Since Ferdinand de Saussure's lectures were made available to the general public in 1916, it has been common to introduce 'the issue of ideophones (under various names) only to quickly dismiss it' (Tedlock 1999, 118). Despite the fact that scholarship has been concentrating more and more on problems related to the function and cross-linguistic aspects of ideophones, there are still some areas that remain under-researched. In particular, research on the practical use of ideophones has been sporadic, with an evident 'preoccupation with form and not function' (Dingemanse 2012, 654). As highly flexible and adaptable devices, ideophones fall within various disciplines: 'semiotics, psycholinguistics, semantic typology, corpus linguistics, conversation analysis, and the ethnography of speaking' (Dingemanse 2012, 654) to name but a few. It

follows that the impact of scholarship in sound symbolism often extends far beyond its main (linguistic) field and can lead to multifaceted results and an interdisciplinary methodology.

Ideophones are marked in the sense that 'they stand out from other words' (Dingemanse 2012, 655) as they show distinctive features that are not always applicable to the rest of the language system they are used in. From a purely theoretical linguistic perspective, ideophones are usually characterised by 'uncommon phonological elements' (Casas-Tost 2014, 40), simple morphology (the use of affixes, suffixes or inflected forms is rare) and a predisposition to drift away from the canonical orthographic and phonotactic system of languages (Gadducci & Tavosanis 2012, 114). In a clear attempt to express originality and 'sophisticated playfulness' (Anderson 1998, 108), ideophones are constantly challenging accepted norms of language (Dingemanse 2012, 655). This is often achieved through the use of 'affective markers', linguistic phenomena such as morphological reduplication (i.e. *toc toc*, *drin drin*), vowel alternation (i.e. *tic toc, ding dong, bim bum*) or consonantal and vocalic lengthening (i.e. *brrrrr*, *screeeek*, *brrruuum*) that express iconicity through unconventional linguistic stratagems (Mioni 1992, 87; Beccaria 1994, 524; Tedlock 1999, 119; Casas-Tost 2014, 40). These phenomena bear witness to ideophones' predilection for 'language diseconomy' (Anderson 1998, 107)—that is the use of linguistic ploys that are often linked to 'primitive and defective speech' (Anderson 1998, 108) and do not seem to be recurring in canonical language usage. As a consequence, most forms do not have a stable spelling (Bueno Pérez 1994, 20), thus tending to accept (and possibly foster) both linguistic creativity and syntactical flexibility.

The approach used for the current study is to use the term 'onomatopoeia' to refer to that sub-group of ideophones that depict sonic events. The term 'Ideophone' thus becomes an epithet for those words that evoke all sorts of events through linguistic and non-linguistic (i.e. visual) iconicity, from sound and motion to emotional states and manners (Dingemanse 2008). As confirmed by Dingemanse (2008), 'the sound-only connotation of *onomatopoeia* is the main reason for advocating the more general term *ideophone'*. Further support for this terminological approach lies in the fact that most of the scholars who have focussed their studies on sound symbolic forms in original and translated Italian comics (Mioni 1990; Beccaria 1994; Pietrini, 2009; D'Achille 2010) have named them *ideofoni* ('ideophones').

3 English v. Italian Sound Symbolism

The affinity of the English language for onomatopoeias is frequently mentioned by scholars in the field (Gubern 1974; Bueno Perez 1994, 25; Gasca & Gubern 2004; Delacruz & Tejedor 2009). This affinity is almost certainly due to linguistic factors, namely the simple morphology of the language, see the abundance of monosyllabic words as mentioned by Mioni (1992, 95) and its tendency to easily convert word classes (Newmark 1996, 54)—characteristics that bestow the language with several mechanisms 'to adapt writing to the original sound' (Bueno Perez 1994, 25; translation mine) in a more fruitful way. These characteristics make English thrive when it comes to creating onomatopoeic neologisms or adapting existing words for the pages of the comic. The poor affinity of Romance languages with sound symbolic forms seems to be caused by their inflecting nature, which might not offer the morphological flexibility needed in order to successfully create and use sound symbolic forms (Bueno Perez 1994, 25; Valero Garcés 2008, 239; Pischedda 2012; Dovetto 2012, 208).

One can say that English sound symbolism is more 'real and extensive' (Feist 2013, 105) than Italian sound symbolism, and it generally fits more naturally into the general framework of the language (Feist 2013, 105)[1]. Ideophones, particularly onomatopoeic words, have a much more prominent role in the language in use and particularly in the panels of comic books. As mentioned earlier, the distinctive isolating morphology of the language, together with the decisive role of English in the early days of production and circulation of comics have fostered considerable linguistic and cultural awareness of the English ideophone

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[1] On this, note that there is indeed one study by Franco (2017) that states that 'phonosymbolic expressions entering the light verb pattern are very common in Romance languages'. This is an interesting observation and it might indeed bear some truth. Nevertheless, the opinion among scholars in the field is indeed that, particularly when it comes to onomatopoeic creations, English seems to show more affinity than Romance languages, and this cannot be overlooked nor negated.

in the twentieth century, both abroad and at home. The structure of English words seems to fit the need for the comic panel to feature vivid, immediate and short iconic forms.

The Italian audience who read *Topolino* during the 1930s were part of a nation that was still very much linguistically-fragmented (Sabatini 2011). In 1931, 21.1% of the population was still illiterate and, by 1951, 66% of Italians would still prefer to speak a dialect rather than the country's official language (Sabatini 2011). The ground-shaking social and political unsettling events that occurred between 1915 and 1945, particularly the two wars and the fascist regime, played a remarkable role in dictating the directions taken by the Italian language. While there are languages in which ideophones are 'fully absorbed into the morphological system and are allowed to act as various parts of speech' (Chapman 1984, 40), there are also languages in which ideophones are restricted to particular genres or do not seem to fit the linguistic structure at all (Smoll 2012, 21)—the latter seems to be the case with Italian. The Italian sound-symbolic system is mainly constituted by ideophones imitating sound (Mioni 1990, 262) and, sometimes, motion (Mioni 1992, 88). Ideophones that convey feelings, frequently present in comics, are indeed usually borrowed from English, while Italian forms used to express emotions are generally interjectional and commonly found in dictionaries–see *uffa* (boredom, similar to the English *oof*) or *ahi* (used to express pain, as much as *ouch*). Those English forms that were adopted and have now spread in the Italian comic's pages—see *gasp*, *gulp*, *sniff*, etc.— are perceived as ideophones rather than as interjections since they are not officially part of the lexicon of Italian. These terms are lexicalised in English but are usually 're-categorisable' as ideophones when exported abroad, due to the simple English morphology that makes them look and sound so iconic and their common monosyllabic form (Mioni, 1990, 265). Mioni (1990, 265) agrees that in Italian these English forms are perceived as ideophones and should be considered as such, particularly considering that they are pronounced the Italian way, so /ro(a)r/ for 'roar' and /gulp/ for 'gulp' rather then /rɔːr/ and /gʌlp/.

According to some linguists and phonologists, ideophones in comic books are 'supplanting the native onomatopoeia and altering these languages at root' (Thomas 2004). Recently, this phenomenon has been noticed in the Italian language as well. As mentioned by Lorenzetti (2003, 54), scholars have suggested that English words in general are distorting Italian grammar. First of all, they are forcing consonant-ending words into the Italian lexicon: a fact that is endangering one of the fundamental features of inflecting languages, that is the use of word endings to deliver grammatical information. Newman (2001, 251) calls this peculiar phenomenon the 'linguistic *aberrance* of ideophones' (emphasis added) and has described ideophones with the epithet of actual 'language stretchers' (Newman 2001, 252). In the case of Italian, this theory seems to be confirmed by D'Achille (2010, 174), who mentions how both original Italian and imported sound symbolic creations are phonetically composed of only one syllable whose nucleus only sometimes includes a vowel (see 'pss', 'brrr', 'zzz'), a rare structure for Italian, and often allow otherwise inexistent structures, such as the final /w/ of 'bau' (sound for dog barking; 'bow-wow' in English), which is normally never present in syllabic coda.

English ideophones have also had an influence on spoken Italian, which often features an interjectional use of English ideophones and interjections. See, for example, the diffusion of English interjections such as '(o)ops!' or 'wow!' (sometimes spelled *uau*) that entered the language through comics (D'Achille 2010a). An even more recent phenomenon is the use of lexicalised English forms widely understood and used orally as holophrastic statements, as in 'gasp', 'gulp', 'bang', 'boom', 'slurp' (Dovetto 2012, 207; Pietrini 2009, 168). These forms were not used before the advent of comics and they illustrate one of the many ways in which comics have influenced and are still influencing both written and spoken Italian.

As noticed by Dovetto (2012), lexical experimentations by Italian cartoonists, in a plausible effort to create unique Italian sounds, were characterised by original spurs of creativity through the use of typical English morpho- phonological ploys transposed to the Italian language. Dovetto (2012, 205) illustrates her point by explaining that the ideophone *slam* (used for various violent sounds such as a door closing) has recently been substituted by Italian cartoonists with the Italianised form *sbatt*, an apocopation of the Italian verb *sbattere* ('to slam'), in a clear imitation of the English consonant-ending pattern. In the same way, jump became *zomp* (*zompare*, 'to jump') or the sound of a window opening was rendered as *spalanc* (spalancare, 'to open wide'). Cases like these prove that ideophones are indeed shaping the language (of comics) at its roots, and that they are doing this by sharply altering morphological rules that have been

established for hundreds of years. It is too soon to predict if these isolated experimentations will have any wider impact on the actual language in use, but thus far the influence of comics in the Italian language has been indisputable (Pietrini 2009, 17); hence, every attempt at altering the language on the part of comics should be considered in all respects as a significant event deserving more careful consideration.

4 Methodology

The main aim of this piece is to offer an account of the historical relevance and linguistic consequences of the Italian importation of English ideophones and interjections through US Disney comics and consequent Italian original creations. This will be investigated through close analysis of a corpus of sound symbolic forms, collected from both Italian originals and translated Disney stories published in Italy between 1932 and 2013.

The following list includes the question I aim to answer in each of the sections within the Results section:

Initial section: Stylistics and Etymology. This constitutes the introductory part of the Results section and will endeavour to answer specific questions in regards to the etymological nature of the forms and their position within the comic book's frame. Questions answered include: (1) Can the corpus be divided into specific time windows that keep into account the changes of these forms from a diachronic perspective? If so, what are these? - (2) What is the number of forms per story and how does this change diachronically? (see the 'Number of Sound Symbolic Forms per Story and Diachronic Change' sub-section) - (3) What are the main etymological groupings that can be detected in the corpus and what is the rationale behind these? (see the 'Creating Sound Symbolic Forms and Etymological Matters' sub-section) - (4) Where are the forms most likely to be positioned? Inside or outside the balloon? Does this change depending on the type of form? (See the 'Location of Sound Symbolic Forms' sub-section).

Second section: Phonomorphological Phenomena. This corresponds to the 'Observed Phonomorphological Phenomena' section, which aims to provide information on the phonological (related to sounds and their pronunciation) and morphological (related to word-formation) modifications detected and how these affect Italian- and English-borrowed forms respectively.

Final section: Diachronic Remarks. This corresponds to the last section within the Results part of this paper, where the focus will lie on how the forms have changed diachronically, also partially referring to the information offered until that point. In this case, questions include: (1) How have the forms changed diachronically? (2) Were there any clear turning points throughout the eight decades under analysis?

The empirical analysis has been performed through two fundamental phases: phase zero, which involved the collection of the materials, and phase one, which has been backed up by a set of data from extensive corpora. The two phases are hereby described more precisely.

4.1 Phase 0: Collection of Materials

The Italian corpus collection has been carried out in two Italian libraries, based in Cremona and Florence, between 26th May and 29th June 2014.

Most of the corpus was acquired at the *Centro Fumetto* ('Comics Centre') *Andrea Pazienza* in Cremona (Lombardy) and at the *WOW Comics Centre* in Milan (Italy). The collection of the early material (1932-1942) was carried out in the National Italian Library and the *Biblioteca Marucelliana*, both in Florence. The *Biblioteca Marucelliana*, a section of the library, owns most of the first Disney comics imported into Italy by the publishers *Nerbini* (based in Florence) and *Mondadori* between 1932 and the late 1940s.

4.2 Phase 1: Diachronic Exploration of Ideophonic and Interjectional Creations in Italian Disney Comics

The preparation for the analysis involved collecting sound symbolic data from selected Italian Disney comics (both translations and Italian original creations) from different decades, from 1932 up to 2014. Following approval from each archive, through the use of a digital camera, pictures of the different stories were taken and then stored digitally for future analysis. The work at the archive did not include any in-situ analysis of the actual stories. The stories were analysed by the author soon after the collection phase had ended and the data was manually included in the corpus throughout a 12-month period. Every sound symbolic form found was inserted in the corpus (repeated forms within the same story included).

The corpus created includes roughly 20+ stories per decade, for a total of 210 stories. For certain decades (1930s, 1940s and 1950s) the number of stories is uneven or slightly inferior, due to historical and logistic reasons: in the early 1930s stories ideophones and balloons were avoided, with the traditional Italian rhyming couplets being used instead (Boschi et al. 1990, 20). It was not until the end of the decade that sound symbolism started appearing. Publication was suspended from 21st December 1943 to 15th December 1945 due to War World II. Magazines published during the 1950s are extremely rare and sometimes impossible to obtain (even from national archives). To deal with this problem, reprints of 1950s stories, which have appeared throughout the decades, have been sought out. This stratagem ensured that an adequate number of 1950s stories would enter the corpus.

Out of the 210 stories selected, 126 were original Italian creations, while the remaining 84 were Italian translations of US comics. Even from a preliminary pilot study it became apparent that there was a high variability in the number of forms in each story. The final analysis confirmed this as the length of stories indeed varies across magazines and decades (Rota 2003). These factors affect the numbers of ideophones per text. The final compiled corpus includes 4681 forms. The decision to pick an even number of stories from each decade, possibly distributed through different years, is motivated by the will to ensure a consistent representativeness across time, in order to comply with the project's main aim of detecting change through time.

The following table (1) offers numerical data on the total number of stories and forms found in the compiled corpus:

Table 1. Table offering data on the total number of stories and forms included in the corpus

Total number of stories	210	
Number of stories (original v. translated stories)	126 (original)	84 (translated)
Number of forms found (original v. translated stories)	3224 (original)	1447 (translated)
Total number of forms	**4681**	
Time frame	**Number of forms**	**Number of stories**
1932-42	717	37
1945-59	844	36
1960-87	1525	74
1988-2004	786	31
2005-2013	809	32

5 Results

The present section is divided into two main parts. The first focuses on the stylistic and etymological features of the forms in question. The second part, rather, will comprise an analysis of prominent linguistic phenomena linked to sound symbolic forms as captured by the corpus.

The main analysis of the corpus will be organised according to different 'time windows', each chosen by virtue of the specific linguistic, historical and cultural vicissitudes that define their boundaries. This approach is considered particularly fruitful since the *Topolino* ('Mickey Mouse') magazine, which features the majority of these stories, is a rare example of a publication that has been published almost without interruption throughout its eighty-four years of existence.

The time frames chosen to organise the current analysis and the rationale for their selection are defined below, and will be used as points of reference throughout the chapter. The information that led to the creation of these time frames has been gathered throughout the corpus analysis and thanks to the use of framework offered by several scholars in the field (Boschi et al. 1990; Verda 1990; Stajano 1999; Gallo & Bonomi 2006; Becattini et al. 2012):

Pre- and during war (1932 to 1941): Pre-war years were characterised by a general insecurity and variability in the use of ideophones, in particular. Forms are often, and understandably, unstable, as cartoonists and translators were still coming to terms with the blending of images and text in a newly-discovered medium. The modalities of assimilation of English forms into Italian and creating original Italian sound symbolic expressions were still being investigated and experimented with. This resulted in a multi-faceted production of ideophonic forms that mirrored both the enthusiasm resulting from the freedom of creating new Italian forms and the struggle to adapt the English ones for the Italian audience.

Fascist censorship (1942): The ban of the use of original Disney stories resulted in the creation of an anthropomorphic 'Italianised' character, called *Tuffolino*, chosen to replace Mickey Mouse. The new stories, the ideophonic production of which will be further analysed later in this chapter, were written in the style of Italian comics from the early 1930s. There were no speech balloons and rhyming couplets appeared immediately below each cartoon.

This approach meant that there was only sporadic use of ideophones and interjections. Nonetheless there are a few instances in which sound symbolic forms have been used and these offer interesting cases for study. They can be seen as attempts to preserve 'energetic' forms in an expressive medium that was momentarily constrained both by censorship and by a generally hostile environment in the publishing industry—environment that 'forced the Italian publishers to suddenly stop printing any stories written in America' (Stajano 1999, 2-3; translation mine) and come up with original Italian ones.

Post-war and the 1950s (1945 to 1959): The post-war years were characterised by a clear willingness to revamp the genre in order to tailor it for a European (and Italian) context (Becattini et al. 2012, 49). The establishment of an Italian school of Disney scriptwriters and cartoonists, whose first story was published in 1948 with the title *Topolino e il cobra bianco* ('Donald Duck and the White Cobra'), provided Italian creators with more freedom to experiment with the genre. This resulted in the use of an eclectic and neologism-filled style through the employment of 'effective, exclusive and peculiar language' (Verda 1990, 58; translation mine). As a consequence, ideophonic creations from the 1940s and 1950s were possibly the most inventive and innovative of the whole corpus. Nonetheless, the English influence was still evident in certain forms and gradually increases throughout these years.

Pop Art Influence (1960 to 1987): The influence of the Pop Art movement was clearly visible in the graphical features of ideophones post 1960s (Gasca & Gubern 2004, 388; Verda 1990, 58). The ideophones of these years demonstrated increasing creativity in the use of graphic features to imitate the characteristic of the sense they are depicting. This is a time when, for instance, louder sounds started being represented by bigger fonts and brighter colours. Being subjected to a strenuous revamping and re-modernisation, ideophones were finally provided with more physical power within the comic panel, a fact that forced the reader to acknowledge their presence and relevance.

<u>Anglophonic Supremacy</u> (1988 to 2003): Confirming the increasing influence of English, stories published during the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 2000s show an unprecedented use of English forms. This is corroborated primarily by the ever-increasing use of English lexicalised forms to represent feelings (*sigh*, *sniff*, *gasp*, etc.), forms that have crystallised in and outside balloons since the end of the 1980s. The advances achieved through the use of digital tools to create comics have had a clear impact on the creation of ideophonic forms, which are now filling the panel and, at the same time, these technical advances have turned the creation of ideophones into an almost-automatic standardised process. This was the era of 'techno-neologisms' (Stajano 1999, 15; translation mine), new series and new layouts often 'inspired by superhero comics, perhaps with echoes to the Japanese manga' (Stajano 1999, 15; translation mine).

<u>Recent Tendencies</u> (2005 to 2013): The stylistic and linguistic nuances of the last decade are very similar to the ones seen in the previous time frame. Nevertheless, it was worth offering a more recent time window in order to describe the tendencies of the last few years and to highlight any minor changes that may have occurred and that are occurring at the moment of writing this inquiry.

5.1 Number of Sound Symbolic Forms per Story and Diachronic Change

Even a cursory examination of the stories gathered together for this research revealed the striking way in which the cartoons became more and more densely filled with text and images through the decades. Indeed, when looking at the number of forms per story ratio as detected in the corpus, there has been an increase in the average number of ideophones (cf. chart 1 below)—from 10 ideophones per story in the 1932-42 timeframe to an average of 23.25 forms in the last ten years (2005-13).
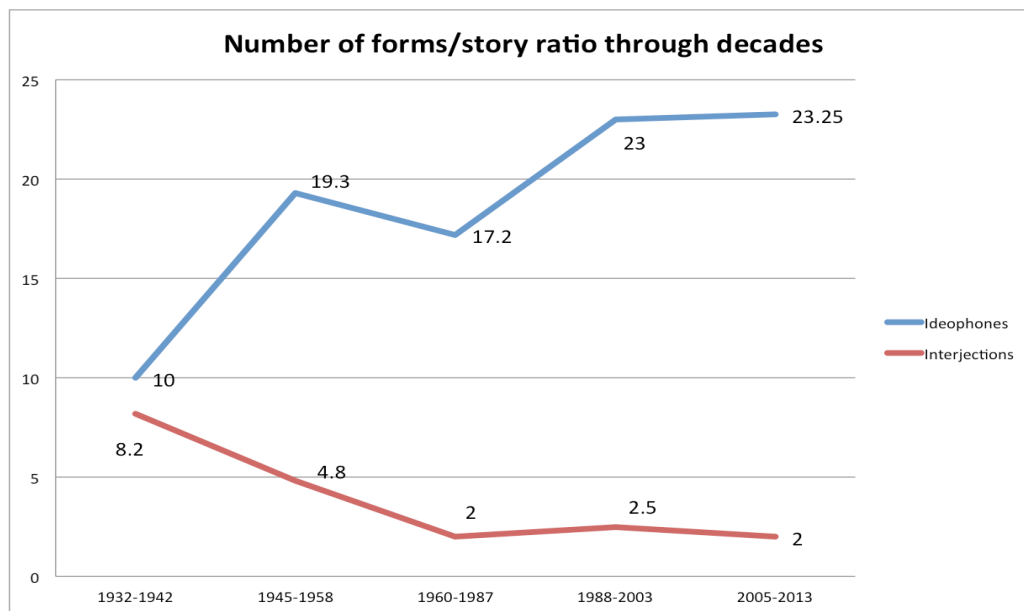

Chart 1. Chart with the average number of forms per story.

While the first decades feature stories where ideophones are timidly trying to find their place in the cartoon, later ones manifest a slow and steady attempt of these forms to find their place in the comic's landscape to the detriment of interjections, the use of which steadily declines through the decades. They do this successfully, becoming one of the most recognisable and characteristic features of comics.

5.2 Creating Sound Symbolic Forms and Etymological Matters

From a lexical point of view, the sound symbolic forms collected together in the corpus of this research project belong to one of two categories: (1) non-lexicalised ideophones (and its sub-category, 'familiar ideophones') and (2) lexicalised ideophones and interjections.

(1) Non-lexicalised ideophones are forms that are not etymologically explainable or present in dictionaries. This category seems the most linguistically-fascinating one, as these ideophones attempt to delve into the symbolic features of language and its phonemes/graphemes to evoke the most diverse senses, but to do so without using familiar words. Such forms include, for example, 'vowelless paraverbals' (Anderson 1998, 110) that are not found in dictionaries and are used for a great variety of sensorial experiences. These are commonly found throughout the decades. Cf. the following table (2) with some examples taken from each timeframe:

Table 2. Use of vowelless paraverbals through the decades.

Time frame	Vowelless paraverbals
1932-1942	*rrr* (1933): train running; *grr-r ff-ff* (1934): animal roaring; *zrpp* (1935): character sleeping; *s sss s* (1939): noise made by seat lowering; *crrr* (1941): character sleeping;
1945-1959	*fzzz* (1948): flying object; *zzsscc* (1948): snake hissing; *sptt* (1950): electrical wires; *crpff* (1950): character in pain; *swsssccc* (1956): object flying; *grgh* (1956): angry character
1960-1987	*swww* (1962): wheel spinning; *sccc* (1965): human sipping liquid; *crrr* (1972): object breaking; *ghf ghf* (1980): character in fear; *sffrrzzz* (1980): laser device; *fsss* (1981): spraying liquid; *zw-wb* (1984): character slipping; *kshhh* (1985): shower water flowing; *bll blll* (1985): toy floating on water;
1988-2003	*vvv* (1991): smoke; *crrrrkpk* (1992): door opening; *sww* (1994): moving arm;
2005-2013	*sssh* (2006): snake hissing; *wrrr* (2009): plane; wrrr (2010): digger; *bzzw* (2012): car moving

This category also includes what I shall call 'familiar ideophones', holophrastic forms often used orally and/or in informal speech that are widely known and understood but cannot be found in dictionaries ('De Mauro Dictionary of Language in Use', 2000, in this case) – as opposed to other types of non-lexicalised forms that are invented on the spot and are, thus, not crystallised within the lexical baggage of a community of speakers. Their position within oral culture and their uncertain grammatical status due to the lack of any dictionary definition makes it difficult to categorise these forms. Some of these ideophones might possess etymological links to existing words. Examples seen in the corpus include: *(s)gnaf*, often used to describe people stealing things, found once in a story from 1949; *gn(a/e)k*, used to describe the turning of a handle or an obstruction (1998); *sdeng* for the sound of a hit (1956, 1998); and forms which include the pata- affix such as *patapunf(ete)*, *patapum*, *patapun* or *patapam*. 'Familiar ideophones' are often used in child-like speech to depict a character falling or hitting an object, and are found in the corpus in stories from 1933, 1939, 1940 and 2012; *(s-)ciaff* (slap or punch; 1940); *pereppepé* (sound of a trumpet; 1982); *ploff/pluff* (entity falling into liquid-y substance; 1948) and *poti poti* (squeezing somebody's backside; 1984). The uncertain grammatical status of these familiar holophrastic forms, together with the fact that they are used in isolation as single-word sentences, might have prevented them from being officially adopted as part of the Italian language and from being included in dictionaries.

Secondly, (2) lexicalised ideophones and interjections can be found, which are forms that were already crystallised in the language before the arrival of comics and that are present in dictionaries. This category includes, for example, words that were originally borrowed from other languages and which were eventually listed in dictionaries, where they were categorised as *interiezioni* ('interjections') or *voce onomatopeica* ('onomatopoeic expressions'). Examples would include *sigh, gulp, gasp, voilà, pfft* etc., or other Italian

words considered onomatopoeic, such as the sounds used to depict animal cries (*bau bau*, *miao*, *muu* etc.) and other expressions, such as *ciaf,* used to describe the sound of a slap and found 11 times throughout the corpus, and widespread Italian interjections. The following table (3) presents some of the most frequently used ideophones of Italian origin that belong to this category:

Table 3. List of Italian lexicalised ideophones.

Form	Event described	First use recorded in dictionary (De Mauro 2000)	First use in corpus
cra	frog	1325	1949 (ID: 896)
bee	sheep bleating	14th century	1997 (ID: 3571)
cri	cricket	1400	1950 (ID: 1005)
bau	dog barking	1552	1934 (ID: 59)
miao	cat meowing	1565	1934 (ID: 64)
ciac	sound of waves	1665	1938 (ID: 360)
din	buzzer, bells	1778	1945 (ID: 739)
glu glu	drinking	1806	1935 (ID: 103)
pum	shooting	1876	1938 (ID: 361)
zac	cutting	1910	1936 (ID: 225)
drin drin	buzzer	1918	1939 (ID: 584)
ciaf	slap	1939	1936 (ID: 278)
ciuf	train	1970	1949 (ID: 877)
toc	door knocking	20th century	1935 (ID: 87)
gnam	eating	20th century	1940 (ID: 637)

In terms of word-creation, three main linguistic stratagems can be detected in the new words found within the corpus: (1) borrowings from other languages, (2) blendings, and (3) clippings. Borrowings are words taken from the lexicon of a particular language, especially English, though German- and French-derived forms can also be found (see 'voilà' or 'pfui'); these forms can either fully resemble lexicalised words or can appear with slight morphophonological modifications. Some English examples include forms that have eventually been added to Italian dictionaries, often as interjections or onomatopoeic expressions. Examples are *gulp* (added to dictionaries in 1930, according to De Mauro 2000), *boom* (added in 1931), *bang* (1941), *splash* (1950), *crash* (1956), *sniff* (1979) and *slam* (1999), which are generally classified as onomatopoeic words or, occasionally, as interjections.

Ideophones in English stories translated into Italian as covered by the corpus (1932-1992) are, for obvious reasons, more likely to be English-derived, with a considerable variability in their use through time. Evidence from the corpus shows that translators working between 1930 and 1970 tried to localise these forms for an Italian audience. Later comics, on the other hand, are much more likely to retain the original English forms. There is an exponential use of Anglophonic forms after the 1950s, leading to a total lack of localisation in most panels published after the mid-1970s. The only exception is ideophones inside balloons, which are sometimes still localised, possibly due to the ease with which the contents of the balloons can be changed.

Blendings, instead, are two existing words (either lexicalised or non-lexicalised and sometimes coming from two different languages) joined together, usually as a portmanteau. Examples include *dring*, often used to refer to a phone ringing, which is a portmanteau of the Italian onomatopoeic word *drin* and the English lexicalised term *ring*. Despite being the least used linguistic ploy (1% of the total number of ideophonic forms, with only 39 forms present out of 3887), portmanteau terms allow resourceful cartoonists to create

expressions that creatively exploit linguistic features, and are usually employed to describe events that include two different sensory stages.

Finally, clippings (McGregor 2011, 90) can be found, which are shortened or modified versions of existing words, what Mioni (1990, 266) calls 'new formations with zero suffix' (translation mine). Examples include *zomp zomp*, used to refer to a character jumping around and derived from the Italian verb 'zompare' (to jump), *spac spac* (from 'spaccare', to break) and *ronf ronf* (from 'ronfare', to snore). Marchand (1969, 448) tries to explain the pleasure of creating clippings, stating that this an experience similar to the 'technical enjoyment felt with new instruments and machines.' Marchand continues that it is not the same 'aesthetic pleasure which lies at the root of rhyme or ablaut reduplications' (eg. *tic toc*, *click clock*, etc.), as those are more based on alternation and sound polarity. In the case of clippings, the pleasure lies in the excitement of creating a new shortened word from an existing one in specific linguistic and cultural settings.

5.3 Location of Sound Symbolic Forms

Throughout four out of five time windows ideophones were usually placed outside speech balloons while interjections were placed within them. However, in the last time window (2005-2013) stories, due to visual and linguistic experimentation (but possibly also to changings in accepted conventions), forms are sometimes placed elsewhere in the panel. When it comes to positioning sound-symbolic forms within the cartoon, the majority (66%; 2545 forms out of 3887) of ideophones and ideophonic series are indeed placed outside the balloon, joining the so-called 'paraballoonic features' (Forceville et al. 2010, 65). As expected, the majority of interjections (94%—742 forms out of 794) are placed inside balloons. This is easily explainable as interjections are perceived as uttered expressions, and therefore are instinctively placed within the balloon's borders. Ideophones, since they represent senses and abstract images that are often linked to the main image, are more often and preferably placed around it rather than isolated within the balloon. One of the few exceptions to this, and that is why the percentage of ideophones inside balloons is slightly higher, is for those English ideophones used in Italian to express feelings (i.e. 'sigh', 'gasp', 'sob', etc.), which are often placed inside the balloon. This is due to the fact that those English-derived ideophones are used to express emotions, thus are conventionally placed directly inside the balloon nearer the speakers' mouths. In the corpus analysed during this research, 900 out of 947 ideophones expressing emotions are indeed to be found inside balloons. It follows that, since these English ideophones depicting emotions started being used in the later decades, there has been an increasing tendency to position ideophones inside balloons through these decades. Evidence of this, as shown in table 5 and chart 2 below, is that the number of ideophones inside balloons has, in the last ten years, overtaken the number of ideophones outside them.

'Emotion' and 'taste' are the only two senses whose forms are more likely to be placed inside balloons rather than outside them. This is understandable as they both express internal feelings rather than events (see 'motion', 'smell' and 'heat') or noises. The following table (4) summarises the position of ideophones according to the sense that they are trying to represent:

Table 4. Data regarding position of forms according to the sense they are depicting.

Sense	Total	Outside balloon	Inside balloon
Sound	2352	**2020**	332
Emotion	947	47	**900**
Motion	510	**501**	9
Smell	42	**28**	14
Taste	54	23	**31**
Heat	13	**13**	0
Other	85	**52**	33

Table 5. Position of ideophones and interjections through the decades. Cf. chart 2 for visual representation.

Time frame	Form	Outside balloon	Inside balloon
1932-1942	**Ideophones / Ideophonic Series**	**265**	109
	Interjections	10	**301**
1945-1959	**Ideophones / Ideophonic Series**	**525**	138
	Interjections	24	**144**
1960-1987	**Ideophones / Ideophonic Series**	**969**	409
	Interjections	8	**156**
1988-2003	**Ideophones / Ideophonic Series**	**467**	232
	Interjections	8	**67**
2005-2013	**Ideophones / Ideophonic Series**	309	**435**
	Interjections	0	**65**
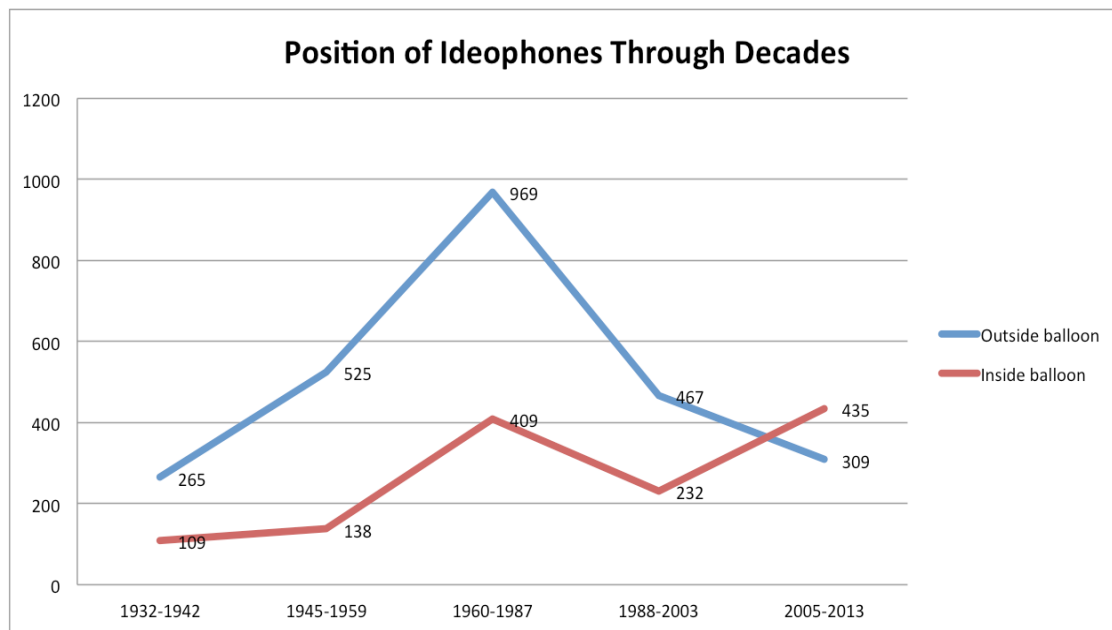
Chart 2. Position of ideophones through decades.

5.4 Observed Phonomorphological Phenomena

The following section aims to summarise the changes influencing the phonetic and morphological manifestation of ideophones. The most prominent occurrence is the acquisition and consequent gradual phonomorphological and graphical alteration of both Italian-derived and English-borrowed forms. These modifications can sometimes be arbitrary and isolated, thus only happening once. Nevertheless, a few patterns in these alterations have been identified and these have been indicated in the following sections.

5.4.1 Acquisition and Modification of English Forms

The use of words borrowed from English has created an 'international phonosymbolism', as defined by Beccaria (2010, 94-5; translation mine), an Anglo-Saxon version of sound symbolic forms that has invaded Neo-Latin languages and their comics. These lexemes have become conventional signs that readers have

learnt to interpret, mainly through visual and graphic agreements—genuine, tacit pacts between cartoonists and their audience. In Disney comics published in Italy, in particular, unmodified English words are often successfully used. Examples include the short monomorphemic forms referring to emotions that have been invading the speech balloons in Italian comics from the outset, such as 'gasp', 'pant', 'sniff', 'sigh', 'grunt' and 'snort'. There are 1696 English-derived ideophones in the corpus (45% of the total words present in the corpus) and 1533 of these (90%) are lexicalised English words, which are constantly reappearing throughout the decades. These lexicalised forms are not only included, as expected, in translated stories. 1107 of them (72%) are in fact featured in original Italian stories created from scratch by Italian cartoonists without the influence of an English source text. This data is clearly telling of the indisputable importance of English forms in the (sound symbolic) Italian language of comics. Throughout their decades of use these forms have often been subjected to irreversible morphophonological modifications that can be witnessed in both translated and original Italian stories.

Vocalic and consonantal substitution is particularly frequent when it comes to modifying English forms for the Italian context. The potential to make such modifications can be viewed as offering an opportunity for cartoonists to provide the audience with new and possibly more expressive creations. The process is clearly facilitated by a type of mass media that is, by nature, prone to accept novelties (Chapman 1984, 139). In practical terms, when it comes to consonantal substitution, both consonants that are not officially part of the Italian alphabet (i.e. <k>, <w>) and typical English clusters (i.e. <th>, <ph>, <sh>) are usually the ones to be lost. The modification usually has the effect of adapting the appearance of the ideophone in order to make it look (and sound) more Italian and, consequently, facilitate its reading. See some of the examples in the following table (6):

Table 6. Cases of consonantal substitution.

English cluster	English ideophone	Italian modification (number of occurrences in brackets)
/ch/	chomp	ci(i)omp (9)
	crunch	crunc (13)
	ouch	ouc (1)
/sh/	crash	crasc(h) (22)
	splash	splasc(h) (16)
	shuffle	suufle (1)
/k/	clunk	clunc (2)
	screek	(s)cre(e)c (5)
	bonk	bonc (8)
	click	clic (27)
	quack	(s)quac(c) (3)
	crack	crac(h) (19)
/th/	thud	(s)tud (8)
	thump	tump (39)
/ph/	umph	umf (8)
/w/	gnaw	gnau (1)
	whiiir	viiiir (2)

A similar principle applies to the substitution of vowels, which are adapted according to the Italian phonetic orthography, as shown in table 7 below. This is not systematic although early stories feature these variants more often. For instance, the last occurrence of *buum* was recorded in the corpus in 1955 although *boom* is found in stories published in 1948, 1949 and 1950 (and later, of course).

Table 7. Cases of vocalic substitution.

English form	Italian adaptation (number of occurrences in brackets)
boom	buum (14)
zoom	zu(u)m (6)
poof	puf (48)
woosh	wuush (1)
roar	roor (1)
sweep	swip (1)

Another, though less frequent, phenomenon is the removal of some graphemes from English forms, such as *snif* instead of 'sniff', *puf puf* instead of 'puff puff', *tomp tomp* instead of 'stomp stomp', *ulp* instead of 'gulp', *uack* instead of 'quack' or *urgle* in lieu of 'gurgle'. Some of these deletions have no linguistic or sociolinguistic purpose, although the removal of the double consonant at the end of the word might be due to the fact that Italian words never allow two consecutive consonants in syllabic coda (with the exception of some foreign borrowings, i.e. 'sport' and 'business') (Gili Fivela 2010).

Another common linguistic ploy involves affixation, that is the process of adding a bound morpheme, ie a morpheme that needs to be attached to a word and cannot stand on its own (McCabe 2011, 173), either to the beginning ('prefixation'), the end ('suffixation') or in the middle ('infixation') of an ideophone. All three types occur when importing both English and Italian lexemes into the pages of Disney comics, although when it comes to English forms the addition of a prefixed s- seems to be the most recurrent and fruitful stratagem. Examples include the following forms found in both translated and original Italian stories: *sgrunt, scrack, squack, squak, squeck, scrasc(h), sbam, screek, spop, scraac/skrak/skrac, sclang, sgueck* (s+queck), *sgrieek* (s+creak) (note the passage from voiceless /k/ to voiced /g/ through sandhi in the last two examples), *splank, sbang* (and its variations *sbeng, sbrang* and *sbreng*), *stud* (from 'thud'), *sgurgle, sbonk* and *sburp*. This 'impure s', as defined by linguists, is one of the most successful suffixes in Italian, with 1706 forms counted by De Mauro (2005, 148), which are included in the De Mauro Dictionary of Language in Use (2000). De Mauro describes it as an 'ambiguous device with Latin origin' (2005, 149; translation mine), as it can add either negative or positive connotations to the word it attaches to. When prefixed to Italian verbal forms it has an intensive and expressive value (Dardano & Trifone 1995, 544)—as in forms such as *(s)balzare, (s)battere, (s)beffare, (s)correre, (s)lanciare, (s)premere*—but it becomes a pejorative suffix if added to adjectives or nouns, as in formations such as *(s)cortese, (s)leale, (s)contento* ('un-kind', 'dis-loyal', 'dis-pleased'). Ideophones seem to have adopted the verbal intensive function rather than the nominal one. The affixation of the impure s- is an interesting phenomenon considering that it is applied to a device (the ideophone) that most frequently tends to eschew linguistic categories rather than favouring them (Kunene 2001, 183). It thus represents a highly expressive instance in which a grammatical category is prolifically applied to sound symbolic forms, as such momentarily attenuating the ideophone's intrinsic rebellious tendencies. The use of this particular phoneme is also due to its high flexibility in terms of the consonantal clusters to which it may be added. The prosthetic /s/ is indeed one of the few consonants that can 'most readily be prefixed to another consonant or combination of consonants' (Reid 1967, 17), : thus intensifying the expressive role of the consonants that it is joined to. In Italian <s> is indeed the only grapheme, which is rendered phonetically with one of two sibilants (/s/ or /z/), that can be added in front of other two consonants in order to create a CCC cluster (Castagna 2005, 72).

Less frequent types of affixation of English lexemes usually involve suffixation, visible in forms such as *cloppi* or *cloppete* (from the English 'clop'), *banghete* ('bang'), clakkiti ('clack') and *clicchete* ('click'), in a clear attempt to Italianise these words by adding bound morphemes ending in vowels. Prefixation is also present, and can be seen in the following: *ktonk* (Jul. 65), *sbada-krankl* (Feb. 76), *scrata-crash* (Feb. 76), *badabang* (Mar. 76), *sbadabam* (May 82), *stra-gulp* (May 82), *sbada-batank* (Sep. 84), *b-tump b-tump* (Feb. 89), *garagulp* (Jan. 94), *skrataplash* (Nov. 98), *tap taratap* (Feb. 99), *badacrash* (Jul. 05), *squaraquack* (Apr. 07), *sbaraquack* (Apr. 11), *katakrash* (Apr. 11).

One last and interesting modification identified is the hyper-Anglicisation of English forms, which could possibly be seen as a form of hypercorrection. Creations such as *krash, crakk, klak, klang, (s)krash, koff, skreak, skreek, wroom* and *klunk* (instead of *crash, crack, clack, clang, crash, cough, screech, vroom, clunk*) started appearing in original Italian stories after the 1970s and reflect a period in which English very strongly influenced ideophones within Italian Disney comics. This tendency resulted in a situation where even English forms started being altered, but this time not to be Italianised but rather to be even more Anglicised through the addition of the grapheme <k> in lieu of <c>. It is therefore probably no coincidence that translated stories after the mid-1970s started retaining most English ideophones, exemplifying a degree of an all-round English influence and iconic supremacy that has continued until the present day.

5.4.2 Acquisition and Modification of Italian Forms

One of the most successful and unprecedented processes when it comes to the incorporation of Italian into ideophones involves the truncation of Italian words and the consequent creation of clippings. Examples of these include forms such as *acc* (from *accidenti*, meaning 'damn'; this is the first recorded example, appearing in a translated story published in 1935); *spac* (from *spaccare*, 'to break'); *pac* (from *pacca*, a 'pat'); *ronf* (from *ronfare*, 'to snore'); *skrok* (from *scrocchiare*, 'to crack one's fingers'); *sput* (from *sputare*, 'to spit'); *zomp* (from *zompare*, 'to jump'); *(s)grat* (*grattare*, 'to scratch'); *fiiii* (from *fischio*, a 'whistle'); *pomp* (from *pompare*, 'to pump'); and *(s)frusc(h)* (from *frusciare*, 'to rustle'). Pietrini (2009, 166) states that the first example of clipping in a Disney story is to be found in a magazine published in 1957 although my corpus features this type of constructions in mid- and late 1930s already (cf. table 8 below).

These examples attest to a clear attempt to imitate consonant-ending and/or monomorphemic (hence more expressive?) English forms, while retaining clearly understandable Italian roots and their meaning. It is quite interesting to note that English borrowings tend to do the opposite (English roots plus Italian ending).

Other common modifications of Italian lexemes include different types of affixation, predominantly in the form of reduplicated lexemes in which the second word acquires a suffix, a prefix or an inflix, intensifying the expressivity of the whole depiction. See formations such as *uak quakarak, blip blip biriblip, cip ciricip, spat spatac, bip bibip bibip, dling daling, scata-trak, zum tarazum, potity pot*.

Another phenomenon that attests to the great Anglophonic influence post-1960 is the Anglicisation of Italian forms, in contrast to practices during the 1930s-50s, decades in which English forms tended to be Italianised. Applying typical English clusters such as /k/, /w/ and /sh/ to Italian lexemes creates an unusual cross-linguistic blending of graphemes that catches the eye and the imagination of the reader: *frush frush* (from *frusciare*, 'to rustle'); *tok tok* (instead of *toc toc*; this is the first recorded form in 1962); *pak pak* (intead of *pac pac*); *glugh glugh* (instead of *glu glu*); *kaiii* (instead of *caiii*, used to describe a dog in pain); *trak* instead of *trac; tonk* (instead of *tonc*); *sprush* (from *spruzzare*, 'to spray'); *morsh* (from *morso*, 'bite'); *wamp* (used to describe a fire flame, thus clearly deriving from the Italian *vampata*, 'burst of heat'); *gne(e)k* (intead of *gnic*, an ideophone also used in spoken Italian to refer to the action of turning a handle); *kokkodè* instead of *coccodè* ('cock a doodle doo'); and *(s)frush* instead of *frusc* (from *frusciare*, 'to rustle').

6 Diachronic Summative Remarks

The following final section will focus on the examination of the linguistic and stylistic changes detected during the corpus analysis.

Early ideophonic forms from the pre-war period were a triumph of inventiveness and orthographic experimentation. Despite not being as graphically complicated and elaborate as later forms the first two decades of Disney comics demonstrate a strenuous attempt by cartoonists to fit these forms into the Italian language. If, on the one hand, there is a clear attempt to deal with English forms, on the other hand, writers

Table 8. Examples of clippings in chronological order.

Clipping	Italian original word	English	Date of first use
acc	accidenti	damn	Apr-35
pac(c)	pacca	pat	Jun-36
spac	spaccare	to break	Oct-49
schiak	schiacciare (?)	to squeeze	Nov-50
sput	sputare	to spit	Dec-51
ro(o)n(f)	ronfare	to snore	Jun-55
graaaaich	gracchiare (?)	to caw/squawk	Jun-55
skrok	scrocchiare	to crack one's fingers	Sep-65
rooonzz	ronzare	to buzz	Jun-72
sbuff	sbuffare	to huff and puff	Jan-75
zomp	zompare	to jump	Jan-75
(s)grat	grattare	to scratch	Jul-75
fiiiii	fischio	whistle	Jul-75
pomp	pompare	to pump	Feb-76
gomk	gomma	pneumatic	Feb-76
sprusssh	spruzzare	to splash/spray	Feb-81
(s)frusc(h)	frusciare	to rustle	Feb-81
stuf	stufa	stove/heater	Sep-84
sbatt	sbattere	to smash	Mar-87
(s)tonf	tonfo	thud/plop	Mar-87
wamp	vampata	burst of heat	Feb-89
sgnac	sgnaccare (from Piedmontese dialect)	to push/press	Nov-89
strap	strappare	to pull out	Feb-90
spruzz	spruzzare	to splash/spray	Feb-90
spazz	spazzare	to sweep	Feb-95
squit	squittire	to squeak	Apr-97
pot	potare	to prune	Oct-07
stiiiiiir	stirare	to iron	Mar-12
tok	toccare	to touch	Jan-13

were clearly giving their best to somehow import and adapt English forms for Italian readers. An interesting mark of Italianisms, for example, is the early presence of accented vowels in both lexicalised and non-lexicalised forms. Accented vowels are present in 6.3% of the total number of ideophones found in stories from the 1930s, with 18 out of 284 forms. Examples found in stories published throughout the 1930s are: *caì* (1933) and *guaì guaì* (1936) for a dog in pain; *huì huì* (1935) and *hong-i-hù* (1935) for a kangaroo in pain; *pùm* (1936) for a punch; *tuuu-tu-tù* (1936) for the sound of a trumpet; *rahùgrrr* (1937) for a gorilla growling and *plà plà plà* (1936) for clapping. Even English borrowings are sometimes modified by adding accents typical of Italian spelling, as the use of *buùm or bùm* for 'boom' (Dec. 1935). During the 1940s and the 1950s some of these forms are still found but they are definitely less common, giving way to more Anglophonic graphics. In these two decades the corpus includes only 13 ideophones with an accented vowel out of 697 forms (1.86%): *glù* (1940) for the act of drinking; *caì* and *guaì* (1948) to describe a dog in pain; *sgnìau* for a big feline (1949); *chichirichì* (1949) for the cry of a hen; *caìn caìn* (1950) for a lion in pain; *boamtciuù* (1953) for a sneezing character; *caì* (1955) for a dog in pain; *pciù* (1956) for a kiss, *puàh* (1956) for a character expressing disgust; *miéee* (1956) for a meowing cat; *kr-r-riùp* (1957) for the cry of a bird and, finally, *peré pepée* (1957) to represent

the sound of a trumpet. The early use of accented vowels shows how writers were at the time trying to use Italian language orthographic patterns in the pages of the comics, but the practice quickly became obsolete, possibly due to the prominent influence of the English language. Despite the frequent use of English-derived forms, ideophones in original Italian stories written and created by Italian cartoonists seem to demonstrate much inventiveness. New non-lexicalised forms created from scratch and alterations of existing Italian and lexemes are abundant. However, they are found scattered around the page of each comic together with a large number of English-derived forms. The result is a potpourri of multilingual iconic forms that literally fill the panels, particularly in the stories created during the last 25 years (1990-2015). There seem to be two main reasons for this Italian inventiveness: firstly, the lack of an English source text offers much more freedom for cartoonists to create and update these forms, without the constraints imposed by a source text. Secondly, while comics written in English often simply use unmodified English lexemes, since the language possesses a higher percentage of these forms due to Germanic influence (i.e. *gulp*, *gasp*, *sigh, sob, etc.*), it may be that the Italian language was felt to offer insufficient ideophonic material of its own (see polymorphic words ending in vowels, which are possibly considered too long to be immediately expressive). It follows that cartoonists had to exhibit some level of originality in order to make those Italian forms more expressive. This led to some interesting experimentations that bear witness to a flexible use of Italian linguistic and stylistic resources. The influence of English is indeed apparent in the first Italian original stories published during the 1930s. Italian phonetic renditions of English ideophones are commonly used together with non-lexicalised invented forms. Examples of English ideophones modified to please the Italian audience include (English original form in brackets) *bu(u)m* ('boom' - 1932) and *squac* ('quack' - 1937). The first two ideophones recorded in the corpus are both 'bum' (/bum/), the Italian phonetic rendition of the English 'boom', often used for loud sounds and explosions. The first use of lexicalised English forms is to be found in the original Italian stories published in June 1942 during the ban on translated American comics prior the start of WW2. These new stories featuring the new character *Tuffolino* include two occurrences of 'bang', used to describe the sound of explosions. It is interesting that despite these new stories being created in an effort to censor any American symbols after Italy's declaration of war on the United States in December 1941, the only two featured ideophones are both borrowed directly from English. This fact suggests that the use of foreign ideophones was not considered as a real threat, or at least not as dangerous as the use of foreign loanwords in Italian, a practice officially banned by Fascism since 1940 (Raffaelli 2010). Concurrently, it also suggests that 'bang' was already fully assimilated and thus not perceived as a foreign borrowing.

If early ideophones were often characterised by linguistic uncertainties, later ones (mainly post-1980s) seem to feature much more regularity in their use. Whilst more and more crystallised forms are employed, the earlier flexible use of ideophones, whose forms were originally taking different forms and shapes, nowadays tends to be somehow toned down. In eighty years there have indeed been many changes, both linguistic and graphical ones. Both writers and readers needed to be formally trained to respectively create and process ideophones. Now it seems that authors have played with the language enough to learn which forms are more successful and effective than others. As a result, there has been an evident crystallisation of certain expressions that goes hand in hand with an exponential use of English forms post-1950s, forms that have slowly replaced Italian equivalents. Italian interjections such as *accidenti* ('damn!') and *perbacco* ('my goodness!') were in fact more and more replaced with *gasps*, *gulps* and *sighs*. While in the early decades comics featured typical Italian interjections such as 'oh', 'ah', 'perbacco', and 'accidenti', nowadays these tend to be replaced with English lexicalised ideophones—and this demonstrates the big shift in ideophonic use that happened between the 1950s and 1960s. Evidence of this is the higher percentage of interjections during the first decade of Disney comics production, which has slowly been decreasing throughout the decades (cf. table 9 below).

This shift has also happened in spoken Italian. One can nowadays hear Italian children successfully uttering these 'gasps' and 'sighs', what Cartago defines as *anglicismi popolari*, 'popular Anglicisms' (1994, 747; translation mine) (as opposed to *anglicismi colti*, 'educated Anglicisms'), generally pronounced the Italian way but definitely understood and successfully employed, thus possibly slowly switching grammatical function from ideophones to English-borrowed interjections (Bocchiola & Gerolin 1999, 61). Evidence of this is the fact that some of these forms have actually made it to dictionaries. Also note that a famous Italian channel dedicated to children's programmes is indeed called *Rai Gulp.*

Table 9. Percentage of ideophones and interjections through the decades.

Time frame	Ideophones / Ideophonic Series	Interjections	Total
1932-1942	389 (55%)	320 (45%)	709
1945-1959	676 (71%)	168 (19%)	844
1960-1987	1256 (90%)	147 (10%)	1403
1988-2003	711 (91.5%)	75 (9.5%)	786
2005-2013	744 (92%)	65 (8%)	809

7 Conclusions

The analysis offered has provided new original data on the use of ideophones and interjections in Disney comics since their first publication in the 1930s. The research has involved a close examination of the way this complex and overlooked set of forms has been created and employed. The data has revealed the degree of creativity with which sound symbolic forms, and particularly ideophones, have been generated. It seems that the process of creating ideophones has stretched the Italian language in ways that are specific to the nature of the form. From the breaking of established phonemic rules typical of Italian to the way creators push the linguistic and semantic boundaries of the language, there is a real sense that Italian Disney comics are sometimes establishing a sound symbolic language of their own. I believe that the originality also comes from the intrinsic brevity of these iconic renditions. The fact that they can only be based on approximate values forces cartoonists to choose phonetic and graphemic patterns that are perceived as more 'picturesque' (Dovetto 2012, 201; translation mine) and unusual. I suggest that this sort of flexibility cannot be said to apply to English ideophones, which take fewer non-lexicalised forms more often than the Italian versions do, and evidence to support this view has been provided throughout the analysis. Catracalà ([no date]) even suggested that there is enough evidence to support the existence of a completely separate variety of Italian which is used when sound symbolic forms are involved within specific media (comics, in this case). Catracalà calls it italiano figurato ('metaphorical/figurative Italian'; translation mine), which 'finds its completeness and semantic value within the context of the comic book, specifically thanks to a strong visual-verbal synergy' (Ibid.; translation mine).

Despite the creativity involved, it appears clear that convention plays a pivotal role in the creation and interpretation of these forms. There seems to be an implicit expectation on the part of creators that readers will interpret, or at least learn to interpret, English or non-lexicalised forms—relying heavily on the graphical features in the process. The category of ideophones in particular can be seen as a sectorial vernacular to which readers need to become accustomed and decode on a case-by-case basis, a vernacular whose interpretation changes according to the reader's familiarity with the genre (Morgana 2003, 167). Although, it is also true that, over time, the repetition of the same items produces a shared, accepted vocabulary.

The linguistic analysis has highlighted several linguistic processes that bear witness to a deep-rooted English-language impact on the Italian language of comics, the three main processes being (1) the presence of clippings, truncated Italian forms ending in consonants in an attempt to imitate English morphological patterns of consonantal syllabic codas, (2) the tendency to include English graphemes such as <k>, <sh> and <y> in Italian ideophones, a process defined as hyper-Anglicisation by the author of this article and, finally, (3) the abundant use of English-derived ideophones in original stories and not just in the translated ones. From a diachronic point of view, the history of the Anglophonic influence on the sound symbolic language of comics roughly seems to coincide with the information given by scholars on the general influence of English influence on Italian: the 'artificial censorship' imposed by Fascism is believed to be one of the few partially successful hindrances faced by Anglicisms post-unification (Cartago 1994, 721). Even then, the pages of Tuffolino did see the appearance of a couple of English ideophones although the number of sound symbolic forms was indeed extremely low compared to the usual comic strips.

Comic strips that include English- and Italian-derived forms in a potpourri of linguistic diversity are very common and confer the comic book page with a real polyglot feel. The effect of this Anglophonic presence is not, however, always that of making the readers aware of the real meaning behind the English term; the English term is perceived more as an iconic word linked to the specific action it represents rather than as a word of Anglophonic origin. This is why cases such as gasp, gulp, sigh and the like were inserted in the 'ideophone' category despite being English lexicalised words. As studies have shown (Pischedda 2010; Valero Garces 2008), the majority of Italophones and Hispanophones who do not possess a high level of English do not really perceive these terms to be English at all. The audience have learned to accept the ideophone as such, as a sound symbolic device aimed at making an event more expressive through a string of graphemes/phonemes that somehow resemble the situation pictured.

The status of sound symbolic forms, and of ideophones in particular, has confirmed their tendency to involve unusual linguistic patterns: see, among the rest, the tendency to add an impure s- to strengthen the expressivity of both Italian- and English-derived forms and the presence of irregular phonotactic patterns—characteristics that have allowed this investigation to align itself with scholarly work that stresses the status of sound symbolic expressive forms as 'linguistic rebels' (Kunene 2001, 183). This project has also confirmed the highly non-lexicalised nature of Italian ideophones particularly when compared to English creations. Nevertheless, the seemingly linguistic uncertainty of these forms is not matched with semantic uncertainty. Their meaning is indeed usually relatively clear, also thanks to the help of the accompanying image, and their expressive power has been a constant since their appearance in the pages of the comic, to the point of their becoming one of the medium's most recognisable features. When looking at the number of forms found in the cartoons, it was discovered that the presence of ideophones grows through the decades, from 10 ideophones per story in the 1932-42 timeframe to an average of 23.25 forms in the last ten years (2005-13)—which acts as an additional evidence of their growing importance within the medium.

The results offered have provided the reader with an insight into the ways in which the Italian language has been dealing with expressive sound symbolic forms in Disney comics and the resulting Anglophonic influence in both original and translated stories published throughout eight decades. Studies such as the current one can provide a historical overview of how the treatment of these peculiar words has been changing through years and decades, particularly since their employment in comics, and can clarify the expressive role of sound symbolism in multimodal work. On top of focussing on how sound symbolic forms have practically affected the Italian language in use, future research could also look at the same issues but in other Romance languages, such as Portuguese, French, Romanian and Catalan and also in sub-languages and dialects related to these. Such task did not receive much attention in this article but that would nonetheless be interesting, particularly to assess whether situations of diglossia might affect the perception and creation of sound symbolism. If more data were available on how other languages have treated these forms in translated and original comics a more general theory on the treatment of sound symbolic forms within the same language group (i.e. Romance languages) could be formulated. Such a theory would benefit such a thriving and young field of study and would help to clarify further the expressive and creative role played by iconic words within the comic book.

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