

A Bilingual Lexicon for a Functional Analysis of Basic Elements of Comic's Language

Un lexique bilingue pour une analyse fonctionnelle des éléments fondamentaux du langage de la bande dessinée

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Abstract

In this paper, the authors intend proposing a bilingual lexicon (English-French) of the basic elements of comics' language. They thus propose the systematic naming and definition of 26 entries corresponding to the visual and functional units and sub-units of the system. Framing the lexical entries, they also present the theoretical contextualization of the selected elements. In the same way, a clarification of the choice of terminology is also presented when necessary.

Résumé

Dans cet article, les auteurs entendent proposer un lexique bilingue (anglais-français) des éléments de base du langage de la bande dessinée. Ils proposent ainsi la dénomination et la définition systématique de 26 entrées correspondant aux unités et sous-unités visuelles et fonctionnelles du système. Encadrant les entrées lexicales, ils présentent en outre la contextualisation théorique des éléments sélectionnés. De même, un éclaircissement du choix terminologique est également exposé quand cela s'avère nécessaire.

Keywords: Lexicon, Comics, Comic's language, Functional units, Bilingual

The production of this English-French lexicon takes place in the context of an interdisciplinary research, associating computer scientists from the Federal Polytechnic School of Lausanne (EPFL) and humanities researchers specialized in comics theory from the University of Lausanne (UNIL). This project¹ intends to facilitate transfers of comics from analogical to digital publication channels by including the development of algorithms in order to assist authors in reconfiguring their boards for various kind of analogical and digital channels.

The development of such algorithms implies to provide computer scientists with discreet units identified as functional elements of a comic board. This perspective led us to focus on units that (1) convey *a specific function* in the system of comics narrative and (2) are discernable through *visual criteria*. In other words, each of the notions presented in this lexicon has to work as a key for an artificial intelligence to discriminate and classify elements in order to ease reconfiguration processes. At the same time, we believe that the relevance of this lexicon might be much broader, since it could also help human intelligence, when someone has to describe comics images as precisely as possible, a task whose importance has increased due to the raise of graphic narrative analysis within the humanities.

Furthermore, as the project gathers both French-speaking and English-speaking researchers, we had to elaborate a standard language, merging both comic studies traditions. Yet, both English and French comics academic fields accept several terminologies in their midst. In this perspective, the *Cité internationale de la bande dessinée et de l'image* already offers an online international lexicon (citebd.org/spip.php?article223). However, in numerous cases, several synonyms for each language are suggested, and the selection of entries isn't led by a determined point of view. As we needed to provide a standard vocabulary for visual and functional units, this lexicon represented a starting point and we had to refine it according to our needs. Furthermore, stabilizing a bilingual lexicon exceeds our personal needs. The transcultural aspect of comics as well as the metadiscourse in use justifies the introduction of a common terminology for both English and French speaking fields. A settled lexicon also has the potential to be of uses as a basic frame for more accurate translations of research works from one linguistic field to another.

Glossaries and lexicons are common appendixes to comics theory publications, especially within introductions (Kukkonen 2013; Morgan 2003) or popularization books (Fresnault-Deruelle 1973). We therefore chose to start our research at this kind of documentation as well as glossaries published for their own sake (Biasi and Vigier 2016) in order to establish and sort the main basic units we identified. We also looked into the most cited introduction works in both French (Groensteen 1999; Peeters 1991) and English fields (Kukkonen 2013; McCloud 1993) of comics theory in order to broaden and refine our lexicon. Several specific publications were also considered when a more accurate terminology was needed.

Translations choices had to be made while creating this bilingual lexicon. When facing several synonyms, we based our decisions on three criteria determined by our interdisciplinary framework: (1) the *popularity* of the term in the common scientific field, (2) the *adequacy* between the semantics and our own definition, and (3) the *linguistic economy* that led us to chose the less sophisticated words when it was possible. In summary, we tried to create a lexicon whose units' terms are *relevant, precise and intuitive*.

Instead of selecting the alphabetical order to classify the units, we suggest using a hierarchical structure to present the concepts. Hence, we follow the path of most of the French comics studies which “successively

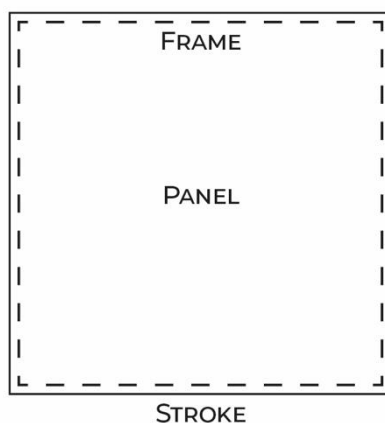
¹ The project, directed by Pr. Sabine Süssstrunk, Mathieu Salzman and Pr. Raphaël Baroni, is funded by a Sinergia grant of the Swiss National Science Foundation (CRSII5_180359).

examine the entanglement of the internal relations of the panel [...] then the relations that are woven between the panels, the articulation mode(s) of these complex units” (Groensteen 1999:34). Therefore our classification is divided into two movements: first a close look on the panel and its components and features, then a broader eye on larger units.

The panel as a basic unit

We follow (Groensteen 1999) when he states that the panel is the starting point, the basic unit when one wishes to start comics study. He confers the panel a “theoretical privilege on all the smaller units” (1999:31). The reader thus perceives the panel as a whole and, at the same time, as a “Lego brick”, which, through accumulation, brings life to the story.

About the panel



PANEL

The PANEL is an area in which a moment of the story is depicted. The PANEL's area is delimited by its FRAME, sometimes explicitly rendered through a STROKE. The size, the shape and the localization of a PANEL, as well as the placement of its inner elements (CHARACTERS, OBJECTS, TEXTS...) affect the timing or pacing of a story (Eisner 1985:30).

The PANEL can be of any shape and any size, expending from a minor area on the BOARD up to occupying the whole space. These parameters – size and shape – are some of the significant features of the PANEL, as they affect and convey the narrative.

According to Groensteen (1999:36–37), a PANEL possesses a precise localization (“site”) on the BOARD that cannot change without impacting the sequential signification (Groensteen 1999:44). Furthermore, some specific localizations within the BOARD have a more or less definite status during the reading process. For example, it is common to

CASE

La CASE est un espace au sein duquel est représenté un moment de l'histoire. L'aire de la CASE est délimitée par son CADRE, rendu explicite ou non par un FILET. La taille, la forme et la localisation d'une CASE, de même que l'emplacement de ses éléments internes (PERSONNAGES, OBJETS, TEXTES...) affectent la cadence ou le rythme d'un récit (Eisner 1985:30).

La CASE peut prendre toutes les formes et toutes les tailles, allant d'un espace mineure de la PLANCHE jusqu'à en occuper l'ensemble. Ces paramètres – taille et forme – constituent des caractéristiques signifiantes de la CASE, en tant qu'ils affectent et soutiennent le récit. Selon Groensteen (1999:36–37), toute CASE a un site précis au sein de la PLANCHE, qui ne peut varier sans affecter la signification séquentielle (Groensteen 1999:44). En outre, certains sites ont un statut défini dans le processus de lecture. Il est par exemple courant d'associer à la première ou la dernière

associate to the first or the last PANEL of the BOARD a specific role for the narrative tension. As PANELS work as a sequence, permutations can thus convey a completely different meaning to a story.

CASE de la PLANCHE un rôle particulier en termes de tension narrative. Par ailleurs, les CASES fonctionnant en séquence, leur permutation peut faire varier radicalement le sens du récit.

French scientific literature uses the word “*vignette*” as a complete synonym for “*case*”. As we had to select between both, that is a typical case in which we opted for the most accessible term both for an English speaker and the common French language.

FRAME

The FRAME is defined as the PANEL’s borders and can be explicitly rendered by a more or less thick and stylized STROKE. According to Groensteen, it is a central significative unit with six functions: closing, splitting, rythming, structuring, expressing and reading functions (Groensteen 1999:44).

CADRE

Le CADRE se définit comme les frontières de la case et peut être représenté explicitement par un FILET plus ou moins épais et stylisé. Pour Groensteen, il s'agit d'une unité significative centrale présentant six fonctions : fermeture, division, rythme, structuration, expression et lecture (Groensteen 1999:44).

Since the FRAME plays a significant role – Groensteen says that it’s the unit “which *does* the panel” (1999:44) – it is important to distinguish it and to not use the word “frame” as a synonym for “panel”, as it can sometimes be found in English literature (Eisner 1985:45).

Another linguistic precision relates to the word “border” which can be found from time to time as well. As we follow Groensteen’s theory on the *cadre*, we sought for a better a literal translation and “frame” is therefore the most appropriate.

STROKE

The STROKE is the explicit materialization of the PANEL’s FRAME. It consists in an outline whose aspect can vary. Similarly to the PANELS, BUBBLES and CAPTIONS often have STROKES in order to be made visible and to be identified as such. The STROKE can also help highlighting cases where some elements overflow the boundaries settled by the FRAME.

FILET

Le FILET est la matérialisation explicite du CADRE de la CASE. Il s'agit d'un contour dont l'aspect peut varier. Comme les CASES, les BULLES et les CARTOUCHES peuvent comporter un FILET afin d'être rendu visibles et identifiés comme tels. Le FILET peut aussi servir à mettre en évidence les effets de débordement des limites définies par le CADRE.

We chose not to use the word “outline”, which is sometimes used in literature (Eisner 1985:28), because our aim is to focus on the physical embodiment of a FRAME, while “outline” implies a relation between several elements and/or a hierarchical classification.

Storyworld representation

Elements represented in a PANEL related to the storyworld can be either a CHARACTER, an OBJECT or a part of the SETTING. This division is not exclusively established according to each element’s visual characteristics, but also to each element’s function within the narrative. Thus, we follow a structural semantic perspective, which explains why a figure can change its status depending on its evolving role. Indeed, a PANEL belongs to a sequence and therefore, its meaningful elements can only be determined on the basis of what comes before and what follows.

CHARACTER

A CHARACTER is an actant (Greimas 1966) of the scene depicted by the PANEL. The CHARACTER is not necessarily anthropomorphic. It behaves in a SETTING and can interact with OBJECTS and/or other CHARACTERS. To be perceived as a CHARACTER, a figure has to be singularized through (1) repeated apparitions or previous reader's knowledge (Yus 2006:224), (2) specific visual characteristic and/or (3) attribution of a discourse (speeches, thoughts). The accumulation and the repetition of these traits confers a figure a more or less important role in the narrative. The centrality of the actant notion implies that a figure can become a CHARACTER by suddenly playing a role that no longer confines it to figuration. After having played a role or taken part in the interaction, a CHARACTER can never lose its singularity and become part of the SETTING again. Its presence in a PANEL will always have a meaning that exceeds the representation of a place.

OBJECT

In contrast to CHARACTERS, OBJECTS are unanimated things, possessing neither thoughts nor will. They nevertheless perform a function which exceeds the depiction of the place, contrarily to the SETTING. Any unanimated element thus becomes an OBJECT as soon as it becomes part of an interaction with a CHARACTER, including situations when it is simply gazed at.

There are many possible hints that show this peculiar relation which makes an element becoming an OBJECT in the narrative construction, such as ONOMATOPOEIAS, MOVEMENT LINES or CHARACTERS' positions and glances.

SETTING

All the elements showing the frame of the action are considered as part of the SETTING. Their only functions is to create an atmosphere or help the reader imagine the world in which the CHARACTERS are acting. An animated figure or any unanimated element can thus be part of the setting until it acquires a narrative function and become a CHARACTER or an OBJECT.

The SETTING of a PANEL can have varying

PERSONNAGE

Le PERSONNAGE est un actant (Greimas 1966) de la scène représentée par la CASE. Il n'est pas nécessairement anthropomorphe. Il agit dans un DECOR et peut interagir avec des OBJETS et/ou d'autres PERSONNAGES. Pour être perçue en tant que PERSONNAGE, une figure doit se singulariser par (1) des apparitions répétées ou une connaissance préalable par le lecteur (Yus 2006:224), (2) des caractéristiques visuelles spécifiques et/ou (3) l'attribution de discours (paroles, pensées). Le cumul et la répétition de ces traits confèrent à la figure une importance narrative plus ou moins grande.

La centralité de la notion d'actant implique qu'une figure peut devenir un PERSONNAGE dès qu'elle joue un rôle qui ne se limite plus à la figuration. Dès qu'elle a joué un rôle ou participé à une interaction, un PERSONNAGE ne peut perdre sa singularité et faire partie du DECOR. Sa présence dans une CASE aura toujours un sens dépassant la représentation du lieu.

OBJET

Au contraire des PERSONNAGES, les OBJETS sont des choses inanimées, sans pensées ni volonté. Ils remplissent néanmoins une fonction dépassant la représentation du lieu, par opposition au DÉCOR. Tout élément inanimé devient donc OBJET dès qu'il entre en interaction avec un PERSONNAGE, y compris si celui-ci lui adresse un regard.

De nombreux indices permettent de manifester cette relation particulière qui fait d'un élément un OBJET dans la construction narrative, comme les ONOMATOPOÉES, les LIGNES DE MOUVEMENT ou les positions et regards des PERSONNAGES.

DÉCOR

Tous les éléments indiquant le cadre de l'action sont considérés comme faisant partie du DÉCOR. Ils ont pour seules fonctions de créer une atmosphère ou d'aider le lecteur à imaginer le monde dans lequel agissent les PERSONNAGES. Une figure animée ou un élément inanimé peut ainsi faire partie du décor jusqu'à ce qu'il acquière une fonction narrative et devienne un PERSONNAGE ou un OBJET.

levels of abstraction, from a very detailed representation of the storyworld to an abstract figuration, even just a single color. There are hints in order to indicate that the place in which the scene takes place has not changed, even if its depiction is not the same in different PANELS.

Le DÉCOR d'une CASE peut avoir différents niveaux d'abstraction, d'une représentation très détaillée jusqu'à une figuration abstraite qui peut se résumer à une simple couleur. Des indices sont donnés pour signifier que le lieu où se déroule la scène ne change pas, même si, au sein de différentes CASES, sa représentation n'est pas la même.

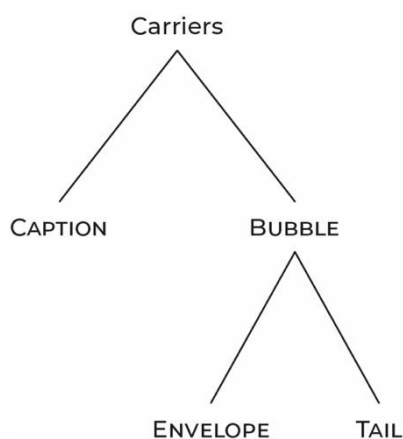
Writings inside the panel

What we call “writings inside the panel” relates to all occurrences of typographical strings contained in PANELS (types of writings), but also to elements which serve as containers (carriers) to host these writings, as they can assume different functions depending on their shape or location.

Carriers

Carriers are areas designed to host writings of various kinds (types of writings). They can be sorted in two sub-categories of units: CAPTIONS and BUBBLES.

We use the term “carrier” following Cohn (2013a, 2013b), as their function is to “encapsulate text” (2013b:35). However, we do not adopt his proposition on identifying “carriers” as what we call the ENVELOPE of the BUBBLE (2013b:35). His classification blurs the functional division between BUBBLES and CAPTIONS. Indeed, we have to make this distinction between two separated sub-units of carriers because they convey distinct visual and functional characteristics within the comics’ narrative system.



CAPTION

The CAPTION is a box designed to contain a TEXT. The TEXT carried by the CAPTION is conventionally meant to provide information that is not represented in the drawn part (Kukkonen 2013:168). It may consist of spatial and temporal indications, narrative contents or CHARACTERS’ inner speech. The box can be explicitly represented through a plain colored background and a STROKE or remain implicit. Although it is classified as a unit within the PANEL, which represents its conventional apparition mode, the caption is nevertheless a type of carrier that can appear anywhere on a BOARD.

CARTOUCHE

Le CARTOUCHE est une boîte conçue pour contenir un texte. Le texte véhiculé par le CARTOUCHE est conventionnellement destiné à fournir des informations qui ne sont pas représentées dans la partie dessinée (Kukkonen 2013:168). Il peut s’agir d’indications spatio-temporelles, de contenus narratifs ou de discours intérieurs des PERSONNAGES. La boîte peut être explicitement représentée par un fond de couleur uni et un FILET ou rester implicite. Bien que classé comme une unité à l’intérieur de la CASE, ce qui représente son mode d’apparition conventionnel, le CARTOUCHE est cependant un type de

support qui peut apparaître n'importe où sur une PLANCHE.

In our translation, we chose not to use the commonly used term *recitative* (or “*récitatif*” in French), whose meaning refers too specifically to type of TEXT rather than to the container of this TEXT. Furthermore, TEXTS carried by CAPTIONS are not necessarily narrative as *recitative* implies. Therefore, we suggest to use “*cartouche*” in French, a term referring explicitly to the visual unit². It would be fair to retort that the choice to use CAPTION in English is paradoxical as its meaning also refers to the TEXT rather than to the carrier. However, when compared to “*recitative*”, which refers to a specific type of discourse, “caption” is only defined by its accompanying function.

BUBBLE

A BUBBLE is defined as an area in the PANEL kept for the CHARACTERS' expressions (speeches or thoughts). The speaker's expression is hosted in an ENVELOPE and is connected to the CHARACTER by a TAIL. BUBBLES, as other functional units are consistently related to others that provide the readers with a cluster of signs leading their interpretation process.

BULLE

La BULLE se définit comme un espace de la CASE réservé aux expressions des PERSONNAGES (paroles ou pensées). L'expression du locuteur est hébergée dans une ENVELOPPE et reliée à lui par un APPENDICE. Les BULLES, comme d'autres unités fonctionnelles, sont constamment reliées à d'autres unités qui fournissent au lecteur un ensemble de signes guidant son interprétation.

Concerning the choice of terms, in English, “bubble” and “balloon” seem equivalently attested and used as synonyms. Corresponding words are also in use in French, but we can also find the more sophisticated term “*phylactère*”. We chose to dismiss this word as it tends to include bubbles in a controversial history of representation of text and images (Smolderen 2009:120). Also, as “*ballon*” is not widely used by contemporary French theorists anymore, we favor the stabilized literal translation of “*bulle*” and “bubble.”

Bubbles are often sorted in two different types: speech-bubbles and thought-bubbles. If they are sometimes radically distinguished (Cohn 2013b:36; Kukkonen 2013:176–77), we rather consider these two notions as one same unit, whose function is to attribute verbal discourse.

ENVELOPE

The ENVELOPE is a sub-element of the BUBBLE consisting in an area dedicated to contain writings such as VERBAL TEXT or IDEOGRAMS. The ENVELOPE can also contain pictures referring to parts of the storyworld or embed visual units meant to frame the speeches' tonality (Fresnault-Deruelle 1973:32–33). The ENVELOPE can come in several shapes, sizes and colors and can be outlined with or without a STROKE. The ENVELOPE can be completely implicit when neither a STROKE nor a background color outlines the text from the scene represented in the PANEL. In this case, the BUBBLE is only identifiable through its TAIL.

ENVELOPPE

L'ENVELOPPE est un sous-élément de la BULLE consistant en un espace dédié à contenir des écritures tels que du TEXTE VERBAL ou des IDEOGRAMMES. L'ENVELOPPE peut aussi contenir des images liées à des parties de la diégèse ou accueillir des unités visuelles destinées à illustrer le ton du discours (Fresnault-Deruelle 1973:32–33). L'ENVELOPPE peut se présenter sous plusieurs formes, tailles et couleurs et être entourée d'un FILET ou non. L'ENVELOPPE peut être complètement implicite, lorsque ni un FILET ni une couleur de fond ne détachent le texte de la scène représentée dans la CASE. Dans ce cas, la BULLE n'est identifiable que par son APPENDICE

² In Biasi and Vigier (2016), we find three distinct entries for “*cartouche*”, “*récitatif*” and “*commentaire*” sharing comparable definitions. The only differences relate to the enunciative status of the text.

The term “envelope” is a neologism. Although a similar decomposition of BUBBLES’ elements has been proposed in Cohn (2013a, 2013b), as we argued, the term “carrier” he proposes does not match with our own classification. Furthermore, since we are not aware of any other typology of this kind, we suggest the term “envelope” which is easily translatable into French and possesses an intuitive meaning of an object containing writings.

TAIL

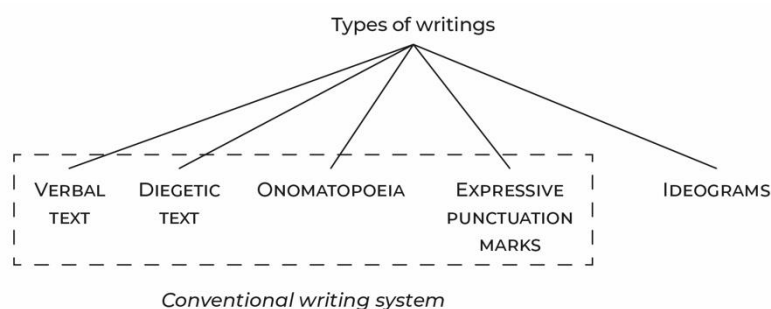
The TAIL is responsible for the attribution of the discourses (speeches or thoughts) ostentatiously connecting them to their root. Similarly to the ENVELOPE, TAILS can be implicit. In such cases, the attribution of discourse has to be interpreted through other hints such as an important proximity to a CHARACTER potentially depicted speaking or the fact that only one CHARACTER is represented within the PANEL.

APPENDICE

L'APPENDICE est responsable de l'attribution des discours (paroles ou pensées) en les reliant ostensiblement à leur source. Tout comme l'ENVELOPPE, les APPENDICES peuvent être implicites. Dans de tels cas, l'attribution du discours doit être interprétée à l'aide d'autres indices comme une proximité importante avec un PERSONNAGE, potentiellement représenté en train de parler, ou par le fait qu'un seul PERSONNAGE est représenté dans la CASE.

Types of writings

Types of writings include various kinds of elements designed to convey information through signs. Writings either correspond to a conventional writing system (VERBAL TEXT, DIEGETIC TEXT, ONOMATOPOEIA, EXPRESSIVE PUNCTUATION MARKS) or use signs that do not belong to the writing system in use (IDEOGRAMS).



VERBAL TEXT

VERBAL TEXT gathers all verbal language manifestations represented scripturally through a conventional writing system and cannot be *seen* by characters in the storyworld. This definition excludes IDEOGRAMS (which are represented through unconventional writings), EXPRESSIVE PUNCTUATION MARKS (which are not meant to be considered as discourse representation), ONOMATOPOEIA (which are not manifestations of verbal language) and DIEGETIC TEXTS (which are meant to be seen in the storyworld).

TEXTE VERBAL

Le TEXTE VERBAL regroupe l'ensemble des manifestations du langage verbal représentées de manière scripturale par un système d'écriture conventionnel et qui ne peuvent pas être vues par les personnages au sein de la diégèse. Cette définition exclut les IDEOGRAMMES (qui sont représentés par des écrits non conventionnels), les SIGNES DE PONCTUATION EXPRESSIFS (qui ne sont pas destinés à être considérés comme une représentation du discours), les ONOMATOPEES (qui ne sont pas des manifestations du langage verbal) et les TEXTES DIEGETIQUES (qui sont destinés à être vus dans la diégèse).

DIEGETIC TEXT

DIEGETIC TEXT relates to all occurrences of written texts belonging to the storyworld, i.e. existing as such in the depicted universe. Conventionally, DIEGETIC TEXTS are to be distinguished from CHARACTERS' discourses (speeches or thoughts) and from narrative voices. However, they can appear in the world's representation as well as they can be embedded in carriers. In the second case, the quotation is made explicit through typographic variation (Fresnault-Deruelle 1972:175).

ONOMATOPOEIA

ONOMATOPOEIA consists in written representation of a non-verbal sound through text and symbols, using a distinctive font from the VERBAL TEXT. Their typographic stylization is a part of the sound effect representation. The variations in size, orientation, deformation, color and localization of ONOMATOPOEIA emphasize the sound's characteristics as they are supposed to appear in the storyworld. Various kinds of expressive ornaments can also appear to underline the effect. Contrary to some scholars who divide ONOMATOPOEIA into types according to their source (Guynes 2014), we do not identify any functional nor visual criteria allowing such discrimination.

EXPRESSIVE PUNCTUATION MARKS

In some cases, EXPRESSIVE PUNCTUATION MARKS, such as exclamation and interrogation marks and suspension points, can appear isolated from VERBAL TEXTS, within or outside of BUBBLES. EXPRESSIVE PUNCTUATION MARKS can articulate several marks of various types. They are not used to represent verbal discourse but the CHARACTERS' state of mind or psychological state.

IDEOGRAMS

IDEOGRAMS consist in signs or chains of signs that do not belong to the writing system in use. They are meant to be interpreted as a (part of) discourse. A wide

TEXTE DIEGETIQUE

Le TEXTE DIEGETIQUE concerne toutes les occurrences de textes écrits au sein la diégèse, existant en tant que tels dans l'univers représenté. Conventionnellement, les TEXTES DIEGETIQUES doivent être distingués des discours (paroles et pensées) des PERSONNAGES et des voix narratives. Cependant, ils peuvent apparaître dans la diégèse aussi bien qu'ils peuvent être intégrés dans des supports de textes. Dans le second cas, la citation est rendue explicite par une variation typographique (Fresnault-Deruelle 1972:175).

ONOMATOPEE

Les ONOMATOPEES consistent en la représentation écrite d'un son non-verbal par du texte et des symboles, en utilisant une fonte distincte du TEXTE VERBAL. Leur stylisation typographique fait partie de la représentation de l'effet sonore. Les variations de taille, d'orientation, de déformation, de couleur et de localisation de l'ONOMATOPEE soulignent les caractéristiques du son, telles qu'elles sont censées apparaître dans la diégèse. Différents types d'ornements expressifs peuvent également apparaître pour souligner l'effet. Contrairement à certains chercheurs qui divisent les ONOMATOPEES en classes selon leur source (Guynes 2014), nous n'identifions aucun critère fonctionnel ou visuel permettant une telle discrimination.

SIGNES DE PONCTUATION EXPRESSIFS

Dans certains cas, les SIGNES DE PONCTUATION EXPRESSIFS, tels que les points d'exclamation et d'interrogation ainsi que les points de suspension, peuvent apparaître isolés des TEXTES VERBAUX, à l'intérieur ou à l'extérieur des BULLES. Les SIGNES DE PONCTUATION EXPRESSIFS peuvent articuler plusieurs signes différents. Ils ne sont pas utilisés pour représenter le discours verbal, mais désignent l'état d'esprit ou l'état psychologique des PERSONNAGES.

IDEOGRAMMES

Les IDEOGRAMMES consistent en des chaînes de signes n'appartenant pas au système d'écriture en usage. Ils doivent être interprétés comme (une partie) du discours.

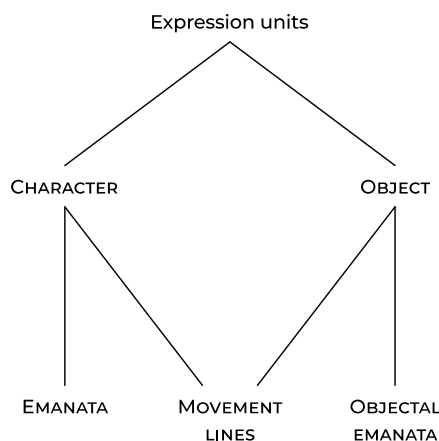
variety of signs can play this role: the most common are icons, signs imported from (or simulating) foreign writing systems, punctuation marks and special typographic characters.

Une grande variété de signes peut jouer ce rôle : les plus courants étant les icônes, les signes extraits de (ou simulant des) systèmes d'écriture étrangers, les signes de ponctuation et les caractères typographiques spéciaux.

Expression units

Expression units constitute a set of figurative symbols used to express diegetic elements or phenomena that cannot be represented by still pictures. They gather EMANATA, MOVEMENT LINES and OBJECTAL EMANATA. They are sorted according to their dependence on a CHARACTER or an OBJECT, because the same forms can be interpreted differently according to their origin.

Some scholars in the cognitive field of comics theory suggest the notion of “pictorial rune” to describe almost identical phenomena (Forceville 2005, 2011). However, since we do not intend to understand how these units are interpreted as signs, but to identify their role and their apparition mode within the system of comics language, the term EXPRESSION UNITS is a more appropriate choice.



EMANATA

Associated to a CHARACTER, EMANATA are conventional graphic symbols, which are not visible as such by the CHARACTERS. They are used to indicate a psychological state or a physical affection of a CHARACTER such as stress, fear, panic or dizziness.

ÉMANATAS

Associés à un PERSONNAGE, les EMANATAS sont des symboles graphiques conventionnels, qui ne sont pas visibles comme tels par les PERSONNAGES. Ils sont utilisés pour indiquer l'état psychologique ou l'affliction physique d'un PERSONNAGE comme le stress, la peur, la panique ou le vertige.

The term of EMANATA is due to Walker (1980a) and, despite the satirical tone of his book, it has been discussed as a vague synonym for “pictorial runes” (Forceville 2011). Taking advantage of the flexible significations associated to this notion as well as of its expressiveness, we choose to associate it to the specific cases of expression units that virtually *emanate* from CHARACTERS or OBJECTS (OBJECTAL EMANATA).

OBJECTAL EMANATA

OBJECTAL EMANATA share the same basic traits as EMANATA, but associated with an

ÉMANATAS D'OBJET

Les EMANATAS D'OBJET partagent les mêmes traits de base que les EMANATAS

OBJECT, they are used to indicate its invisible sensorial qualities, such as smell, heat or sounds.

mais, associés à un OBJET, ils sont utilisés pour indiquer ses qualités sensorielles invisibles, comme l'odeur, la chaleur ou les sons.

MOVEMENT LINES

MOVEMENT LINES can be either associated with CHARACTERS or OBJECTS. They consist in one or several lines accompanying the representation of a moving physical entity as well as the intensity of its motion.

The MOVEMENT LINE can be decomposed in geometrical and expressive parameters. The movement direction is hence represented through the geometric properties of the line (direction and bending), when the intensity of motion is supported by the thickness or the beveling of the line. The amount of lines accompanying the movement can serve to express its intensity as well.

LIGNES DE MOUVEMENT

Les LIGNES DE MOUVEMENT peuvent être associées à des PERSONNAGES ou des OBJETS. Elles consistent en une ou plusieurs lignes accompagnant la représentation d'une entité physique en mouvement ainsi que l'intensité de ce mouvement.

La LIGNE DE MOUVEMENT peut être décomposée en paramètres géométriques et expressifs. Le sens du mouvement est représenté par les propriétés géométriques de la ligne (direction et inflexion), tandis que l'intensité du mouvement est exprimée par l'épaisseur ou le biseau de la ligne. Le nombre de lignes accompagnant le mouvement peut également servir à exprimer son intensité.

MOVEMENT LINES are also named “motion lines” (Cohn 2013b) or even decomposed in “movement-lines” and “speed-lines”(Forceville 2011). Our visual-functional definition gathers both units.

Around the panel: a broader scope

Even if the PANEL and its sub-units occupy a privileged position, they are not the only elements that are significant. Other elements found on a page convey a function, such as the informational units outside the panels (PERITEXTUAL ELEMENTS and METATEXTUAL INFORMATION) or the delimitation areas (GUTTERS and MARGINS). Furthermore, as a part of a narrative chain, the PANEL is never to be taken on its own, but enters in broader significant relations (STRIPS and BOARD). Additionally, TECHNICAL INDICATIONS are also identifiable on pages, but they are a type of visual unit without narrative function.

Informational units “outside” the panels

A few elements appear on a comic BOARD without belonging to the narration itself. They can be classified in three categories: PERITEXTUAL ELEMENTS, METATEXTUAL INFORMATION and TECHNICAL INDICATIONS.

PERITEXTUAL ELEMENTS

The PERITEXT (Genette 1987:10) embraces all the elements delimitating the narrative when published in a volume (book, magazine...).

In comics, the PERITEXTUAL ELEMENTS appear mostly under the forms of entitlement elements, closing indications (such as *the end*, or *to be continued*), and author's signatures. This notion includes all the concrete indications that help understanding when and where the narrative begins and ends.

ÉLÉMENTS PERITEXTUELS

Le PERITEXTE (Genette 1987:10) comprend l'ensemble des éléments permettant de borner le récit lors de son inscription dans un volume (livre, magazine...).

En bande dessinée, les ÉLÉMENTS PERITEXTUELS apparaissent sous la forme d'éléments de titraison, d'indications de fermeture et de signatures d'auteur, par exemple. Cette notion inclut toutes les indications concrètes permettant de comprendre où et quand commence et se termine le récit.

METATEXTUAL INFORMATION

METATEXTUAL INFORMATION refers to messages addressed to the reader in order to fill a potential lack of information required for a proper understanding of the story. This information mostly lies in GUTTERS or MARGINS, less frequently in CAPTIONS.

TECHNICAL INDICATIONS

TECHNICAL INDICATIONS are editorial elements related to the material organization of the comics. They mostly relate to the composition of the volume. The most visible are the pagination numbers – a visual marker of the book composition. The STRIPS and half BOARDS numbering left by the author inside the PANELS or the GUTTERS are often artefacts of its technical production. They are therefore not significant within the narrative.

INFORMATIONS METATEXTUELLES

Les INFORMATIONS METATEXTUELLES sont des messages pour le lecteur visant à combler une lacune potentielle quant aux informations nécessaires à la compréhension du récit. Ces informations se trouvent le plus souvent dans les GOUTTIERES, les MARGES ou plus rarement dans les CARTOUCHES.

INDICATIONS TECHNIQUES

Les INDICATIONS TECHNIQUES sont des éléments éditoriaux liés à l'organisation matérielle de la bande dessinée. Ils concernent principalement la composition du volume. Les plus visibles sont les numéros de pages, marqueurs visuels de la composition livresque. Les numérotations de STRIPS ou de demi-PLANCHES laissées par l'auteur à l'intérieur des CASES ou des GOUTTIERES, sont souvent des artefacts de sa production technique. Ils ne sont donc pas signifiants pour le récit.

Delimitation and composition units

As comics consist in the articulation of PANELS and not of isolated PANELS, the following notions relate to structuration and articulation units organizing the panels on a broader scope.

GUTTERS

GUTTERS are delimitating spaces allowing to visually distinguish PANELS from each other. These elliptic areas (McCloud 1993:86) participate in the narrative sequencing. They can be crossed by elements extracted from one or more adjacent PANELS, and they sometimes include METATEXTUAL INFORMATION. GUTTERS have been widely commented as being a crucial articulation unit (Baetens 1991; Brunon 1989; McCloud 1993).

MARGINS

MARGINS are defined as the part of the BOARD, traditionally not crafted, outside the worked area (Groensteen 1999). But even if “the term *margin* becomes synonym of ‘uncovered part of the support’” (1999:39), this area can be meaningfully invested in an explicit overrun and breaking of the common comics rules. Similarly to

GOUTTIERES

Les GOUTTIERES sont des espaces de délimitation permettant de distinguer visuellement les CASES. Ces zones elliptiques (McCloud 1993:86) participent à l'enchaînement narratif. Elles peuvent être traversées par des éléments extraits d'une ou plusieurs CASES adjacentes et elles accueillent parfois des INFORMATIONS METATEXTUELLES. Les GOUTTIERES ont été largement discutées en tant qu'unité d'articulation cruciale (Baetens 1991; Brunon 1989; McCloud 1993).

MARGES

Les MARGES sont définies comme la partie de la PLANCHE, généralement non exploitée, qui se situe à l'extérieur de la surface ouvragée (Groensteen 1999). Bien que « le terme *marge* devient synonyme de “partie non recouverte du support” » (1999:39), cet espace peut être investi de manière significative, par un dépassement explicite

GUTTERS, MARGINS belong to elliptic areas: they are a delimitation unit and fulfill a function even when left blank.

et une violation des règles de base de la bande dessinée. Comme les GOUTTIÈRES, les MARGES font partie des zones elliptiques : elles sont une unité de délimitation et ont une fonction même lorsqu'elles sont laissées vides.

STRIP

Immediately wider than the PANEL, the STRIP is a compositional unit of the comics language. It consists in a horizontal and linear succession of several PANELS occupying the whole area between MARGINS. As the PANEL, the STRIP can be conceived as a part of a BOARD or as an autonomous sequential unit.

STRIP

À l'échelle supérieure de la CASE, le STRIP est une unité compositionnelle du langage de la bande dessinée. Il s'agit d'une succession horizontale et linéaire de plusieurs CASES occupant toute la surface entre les MARGES. Tout comme la CASE, le STRIP peut être conçu comme une partie d'une PLANCHE ou comme une unité séquentielle autonome.

English comics theory sometimes uses “tier” to refer to lines of PANELS on a BOARD, in order to make a distinction with comic-strip as a publishing format. Our choice of “strip” to unify these two notions is led by the convention of French comics theory (Fresnault-Deruelle 1976; Groensteen 1999), which employs this English word to name both.

BOARD

The BOARD is the sum of MARGINS, GUTTERS and PANELS. With the DOUBLE BOARD, it constitutes the biggest narrative organizational unit of comics that can be apprehended as a whole in a single gaze. As the STRIP, the BOARD is an articulation unit conveying its own autonomy while integrating itself in the continuity of the other BOARDS.

PLANCHE

La PLANCHE est la somme des MARGES, des GOUTTIÈRES et des CASES. Elle constitue, avec la DOUBLE PLANCHE, la plus grande unité d'organisation narrative de la bande dessinée qui puisse être appréhendée dans son ensemble en un seul regard. Tout comme le STRIP, la PLANCHE est une unité d'articulation qui a sa propre autonomie tout en s'intégrant dans la continuité des autres PLANCHES.

This notion has to be explicitly understood as a signification unit *per se* and not to be confused with the page. Indeed, the notion of page must be limited to the material medium: printed paper in the context of comics published in book form. This clear distinction is to be made for several reasons. Firstly, BOARDS can be displayed on different types of material supports. The book page is one of them, but the same BOARD can also appear on screens, posters, mural paintings, etc. Secondly, a book page can host one or several BOARDS or even different kinds of content such as texts or pictures. There is no necessary homogeneity between the BOARD size and the page size. Thirdly, a BOARD can sometimes occupy the width of two adjacent book pages. In such cases, it's not relevant to separate the BOARD into two distinct functional units and the material separation in pages is to be considered as empiric contingency. Finally, TECHNICAL INDICATIONS such as page

Cette notion doit être comprise comme une unité de signification et ne doit pas être confondue avec la page. En effet, la notion de page doit être limitée au support matériel : papier imprimé dans le contexte de la bande dessinée publiée sous forme de livre. Cette distinction claire doit être faite pour plusieurs raisons. Tout d'abord, la PLANCHE peut apparaître sur différents types de supports matériels. La page du livre constitue l'un d'entre eux, mais une même PLANCHE peut aussi apparaître sur un écran, une affiche, une peinture murale, etc. Deuxièmement, une page de livre peut accueillir une ou plusieurs PLANCHES ou même différents types de contenus, tels que des textes ou des images. Il n'y a pas d'homogénéité nécessaire entre la taille d'une PLANCHE et celle d'une page. Troisièmement, une PLANCHE peut parfois occuper la largeur de deux pages adjacentes. Dans de tels cas, il n'est pas pertinent de

numbering aren't necessarily attributed to BOARDS but to pages. Indeed, two different editions of one same comic can show different page numbers attributed to the same BOARD.

séparer la PLANCHE en deux unités fonctionnelles distinctes et la séparation matérielle en pages doit être considérée comme une contingence empirique. Enfin, les INDICATIONS TECHNIQUES telles que la numérotation des pages ne sont pas nécessairement attribuées aux PLANCHES, mais aux pages. En effet, deux éditions différentes d'une même bande dessinée peuvent attribuer à une même PLANCHE des numéros de page différents.

On this specific unit, we encounter an important terminological issue as we propose to re-discuss both French and English conventional vocabulary. Indeed, in the English-speaking field, the term “board” isn't as common as “page” to describe both the material and functional units that we distinguish here³. On the other hand, to French-speaking theorists, the distinction is not obvious either⁴, or it is more complex⁵. Furthermore, in French, the notion of “*planche*” can sometimes be defined as a unit of material production (Biasi and Vigier 2016; Fresnault-Deruelle 1972), thus creating a synonymy with “page”.

Drawing a clear boundary between these two terms is fundamental while identifying functional units. Even if it means re-discussing established terminology, in this case, the unclear distinction between a signification unit and its material support could lead to methodological issues when analyzing comics published on multiple supports for instance.

DOUBLE BOARD

As comics are traditionally published in book form, the unit of the DOUBLE BOARD is to be considered as an articulation unit, since the reader generally gazes at both at once. According to Groensteen (1999) “[w]hen two BOARDS face each other, they have a natural solidarity and are predisposed to dialogue. The cartoonist can ignore this predisposition, but there are many ways to use it successfully” (1999:44).

DOUBLE PLANCHE

La bande dessinée étant traditionnellement publiée sous forme de livre, l'unité de la DOUBLE PLANCHE doit être considérée comme une unité d'articulation, puisque le lecteur perçoit généralement les deux à la fois. Selon Groensteen (1999), « les pages situées en vis-à-vis sont liées par une solidarité naturelle, et prédisposées à dialoguer. S'il est permis au dessinateur d'ignorer cette prédisposition, il y a pourtant de multiples façons d'en tirer parti » (1999:44).

Conclusion

The production of such a lexicon does not emerge without lingering issues on several entries. Among them, we would like to highlight that the various types of writing are the most resistant. Bubbles can contain extremely heterogeneous contents that resist systematic analysis. None of the existing textual classifications are able to cover all the writing systems occurrences, or to discriminate them according to functional criteria. Therefore, we had to provide a whole new division system and several unprecedented categories. Although our classification seems to work in all cases we have been made aware of, a more thorough investigation may be required to be more accurate.

³ For example, in Kukkonen (2013) we can sometimes find the use of the term “page” describing the material support of both literature and comics published in books (2013:80) as well as referring to a “narrative unit” (2013:90).

⁴ In Peeters (1991), board and page are exact synonyms.

⁵ In Groensteen (1999), if the “board” refers to the sum of “panels” grouped on a “page” (1999:38), the notion of “page” is not explicitly defined.

Our intention was to create entries as synthetic, systematic and helpful as possible. This triple goal guided our methodological approach and our choices when providing descriptions of units identified on the basis of their functionality and determined by visual criteria. By avoiding divisions not relevant from a functional point of view, we were able to avert the potential atomization of units. Determination through visual criteria also prevented us from electing some ideal form and establishing formal hierarchization. Therefore, the units' norm is their expected functionality regardless of their visual form. It allowed us to integrate potential formal experiments to our model by playing with the established delimitations while making these divergences to a salient and significant norm.

The goal of intelligibility and synthesis has led us to opt for economical linguistic choices, both in terms of unit names and of brevity of descriptions. Therefore, we wanted to provide a useful, easily understandable glossary. Nevertheless, we have based our lexicon on established and acknowledged theoretical perspectives and established terminologies. Aside our effort in organizing and stabilizing comics significant units among the density of notions discussed in literature, we would like to conclude by highlighting some of the inputs we consider innovative. The differentiation between board and page has been brought to our attention considering the issues related to reconfiguration processes. We have emphasized the fact that a clear distinction between these two terms has not been acutely discussed. However, it seems to us that considering the board as a functional unit distinguishingly from its material support is a serious issue for analysis. In addition, our classification of types of writings appears as a first step in a more accurate understanding of text representations in comics based on a functional point of view. Indeed, the difficulties we encountered while trying to classify a wide diversity of textual elements based on visual criteria highlights a whole field of investigations on texts in comics, which can be considered as a significant and functional phenomenon.

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