

WYŻSZA SZKOŁA LINGWISTYCZNA

**WYDZIAŁ FILOLOGICZNY
FILOLOGIA ANGIELSKA**

Tomasz De Wille

Teoria i praktyka przekładu komiksu

**Praca magisterska
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dr Przemysława Janikowskiego**

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Theory and practice in comics translation

**M.A. Thesis
Supervised by
dr Przemysław Janikowski**

Częstochowa 2008

OŚWIADCZENIE

Oświadczam, że praca pt “Theory and practice of comics translation” jest moją pracą autorską.

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PREFACE



Peanuts 1956

Reading comics is for many part and parcel of growing up as much as watching TV or playing Nintendo Wii and surfing the Internet. Who does not remember Superman, who will deny at least fragmentary knowledge of Peter Parker? And even though many grey-templed pundits have foretold the end of comics, they remain alive and well. Admittedly, the industry has had its ups and downs but every single time it was able to recover and these days comics are again experiencing a momentous boom with many of them being made into movies. However, comics genre is not only used in entertainment but also it is a very popular form in advertising: Uncle Sam wants you in the army, a very amiable young man tells you about bets galore at a most popular betting shop chain, increasingly often DIY furniture is provided with comics showing a step-by-step procedure of assembling furniture featuring happy engineers. NHS prints comic strips showing how you can overcome even the most serious illnesses. Even in TEFL we are witnessing an increasing use of comics and one of the most accessible coursebooks in linguistics for beginners (Fromkin's *An Introduction to Language*) features some cartoons.

It is very easy then to point to comics we have read or to refer to their everyday use but it is immensely difficult to find sources which offer an in-depth analysis of comics. The very fact that reading comics is usually associated with one's childhood denied them a long due proper definition. In fact, comics can and have played a role which has been reserved for novels at the same time being subversive enough as to bring a refreshing look on many subject matters ranging from the moral revolution in Iran to Aids and Holocaust and even Superman fighting Nazis. No task is too small nor

too big for comics and the envelope is being pushed farther and farther. Comics alternately fascinate and shock, educate and disgust and will continue to do so for years to come.

Unfortunately, despite many years of their existence on the Polish market precious little theory on translating comics has been produced. Even expert translators have been heard to say that the only way to learn translating comics is “by doing it”. It is this yawning gap that I shall try to fill at least in some part. In my thesis I will try to define the comics themselves, their function and to elucidate the emerging theory of comics translations along with a few examples of seminal comics in translation. In the first chapter of this thesis I shall attempt to provide a solid definition of comics, present a short history of comics and its paths of development in Europe, US and Asia.

Chapter 2 gives a brief overview of those tenets of translation theory which are applicable to comics translation as well as other issues pertaining to translating comics. I hope that this thesis will improve and facilitate the process of comics translation by making it less random and less experience-dependent as well as provide a useful benchmark tool for checking and reviewing existing translations.

Chapter 1 - Comics

1.1 What is comics?

As is the case with many other everyday objects, the task of defining comics proves tricky. The problem is that while we can usually remember the titles of comics we used to read or the main characters and the biggest villains, the details will be blurred. Even the word comics on its own, without such add-ons as “comic strip” or “comic book” feels strange to many people. In this thesis I shall consistently follow the example of Scott McCloud in using the word “a comics” in its countable form to refer to particular comics and ‘comics’ to refer to the genre, be it a subtype of comic strips, comic books, graphic novels as well as comic albums.

A normal response to the question “What is comics?” will invariably be “well, it’s like Superman... or Batman!” and while it is true that superhero comics is a form which has dominated the genre over the years and is virtually equated with comics by the vast majority of people, it still does not give us the analytic answer that we require in order to have greater insight into the subject. What is comics, then?

Let’s try and extract the meaning from the word ‘comics’ by consulting Encyclopaedia Britannica first. Characteristically, the word comics does not have a separate entry, but exists only in conjunction as a comic strip.

Comic strip – “series of adjacent drawn images, usually arranged horizontally, that are designed to be read as a narrative or a chronological sequence. The story is usually original in this form. Words may be introduced within or near each image; they may also be dispensed with altogether. If words functionally dominate the image, it then becomes merely illustration to a text. (Britannica)”

While this definition holds water, one might posit that the last three sentences are surplus to requirements as a general definition need not have an “either or” clause. If we dispose of it, it will look like this:

Comic strip - “series of adjacent drawn images, usually arranged horizontally, that are designed to be read as a narrative or a chronological sequence”.

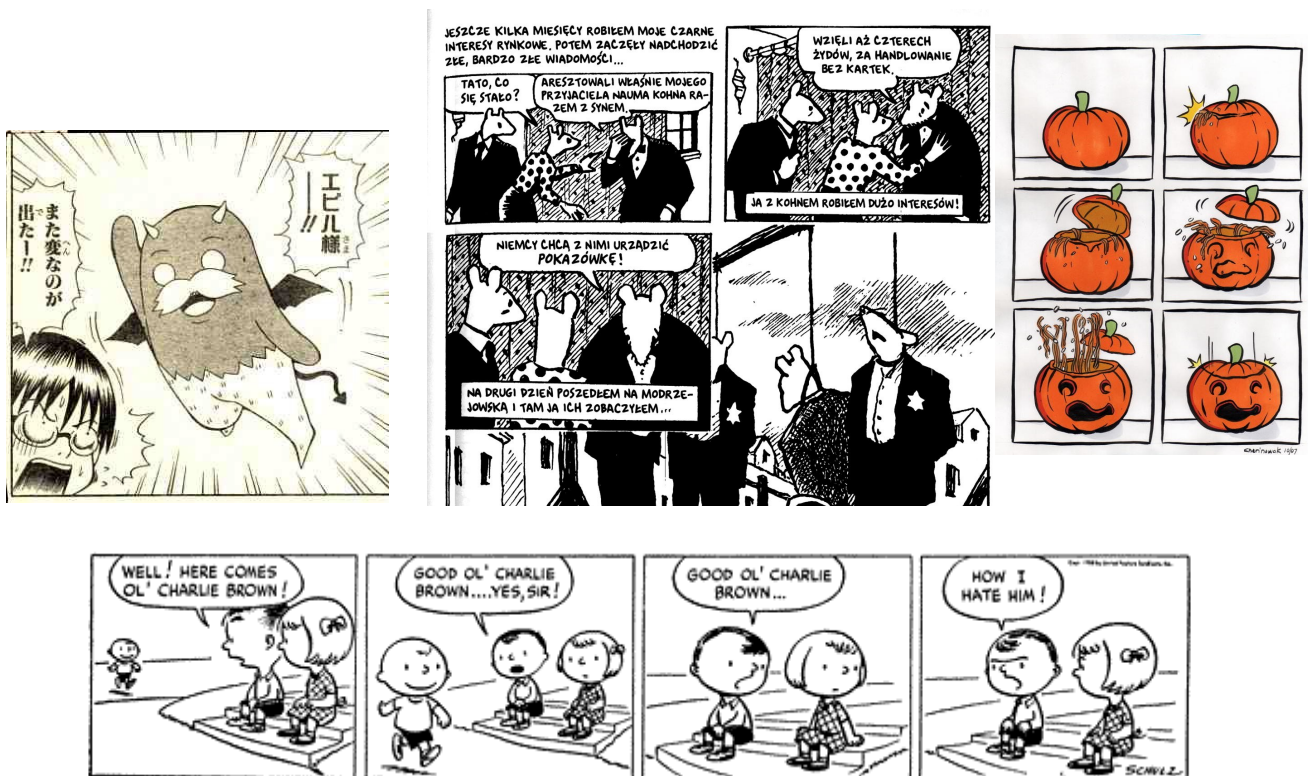
And fonder though we might be of Will Eisner’s term “sequential art” with its literary-like definition of comics as:

“a means of creative expression, a distinct discipline, an art and literary form that deals with the arrangement of pictures or images and words to narrate a story or dramatize an idea” (Eisner 5)

or Scott McCloud’s meticulous

“juxtaposed pictorial and other images in deliberate sequence, intended to convey information and/or produce an aesthetic response in the viewer” (McCloud 9)

...the meaning behind them is really the same. Therefore all of these fulfill the comics criteria.



1.2 Parts of comics

Now that I have defined what comics is, let us look at what comics is made of. Comics creators have developed an impressive array of analytic tools over the years. A detailed description of them all would certainly go beyond the scope of this thesis, therefore I shall only discuss those terms which I will be using in later chapters of my thesis on translating comics.

At a very basic level, a comics is made of panels. Panels can be further subdivided into frames and speech balloons. The frame is the rectangular shape, inside which the plot takes place. The function of panels is telling the story. But how exactly do they do it? In order to describe this process one can draw a comparison with the process of making movies. Each second which we see on TV consists of up to 50 frames, each lasting 1/50 of a second. All frames are very similar, which gives an impression of a natural flow. In fact, the flow is far from natural but the human eye can only see up to 20 frames per second. If the frequency is higher, we have the impression of fully animated action.

In comics we can see two or more points in time sharing a fair degree of similarity. The similarity must be high enough in order to enable the reader to imagine what must have happened in between them (which constitutes another comics vocabulary item – the closure). If two frames are not similar enough, the reader must “work” harder to grasp the plot development. The trick is for the author to get the difficulty level right so that the reader feels pleased with their ability to follow the plot without getting perplexed ¹.

The sequence on the right is characterized by a very high degree of similarity. A small, slim gutter represents minimal time lapse. We know that the sequence happens within a split second.



¹ If the closure does not require the reader to do any mental work (as would be the case if frames were extremely similar), the reader may feel bored

Will Eisner neatly concludes that the frame in comics is the equivalent of time lapse in reality (28)

Generally, the narrower the frame is the more plot-packed it seems.



Note how the author skillfully manipulates the time flow in V for Vendetta. The actions of the guards are in narrow frames which suggests fast paced moves yet V is shown in larger frames to make the reader think that the guards were transfixed at V who seems to be moving in slow motion and yet we know he is faster than the guards.

V for Vendetta, Vol.1 p. 8



The following picture shows a comics without the use of frames. The impression is that of multifarious simultaneous activities even though it certainly takes a few seconds for the eye to go from left to right. What we see looks much more like a painting and not a comics. The reason is the lack of the gutter - the name for the space dividing the frames

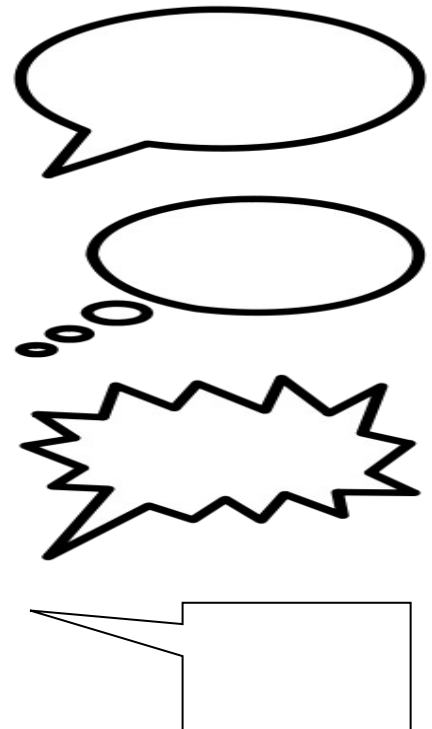
1.3 SOUND IN COMICS



Peanuts 1955

Another device which I mentioned earlier is the speech balloon. Generally, we distinguish several types of balloons:

- Normal speech
- A thought balloon
- Loud speech or a scream
- Other balloons (read signs etc.)



Interestingly enough, balloons are not always necessary even if sounds are made.

Using a balloon in this panel would
 Conversely, leaving it out gives the
 uncontrollability and wildness.



Balloons are obviously a highly artificial way of presenting sounds. Will Eisner calls them a “desperation device” as it is the only way to present sound. The purely imaginary quality of comics sound can often be a stumbling block for anyone who is new to reading comics. The lack of real sounds prevents us not only from hearing the volume of speech and the manner in which it is uttered, but also from hearing accented speech or knowing if the character is speaking their native language or struggling with a foreign language. To solve these problems comics authors had to find ways around them by using fonts of varying sizes, shapes and even colours.

And here’s an illustration of Asterix speaking very bad Egyptian:

This is how Uderzo shows his characters speaking German in a French context.



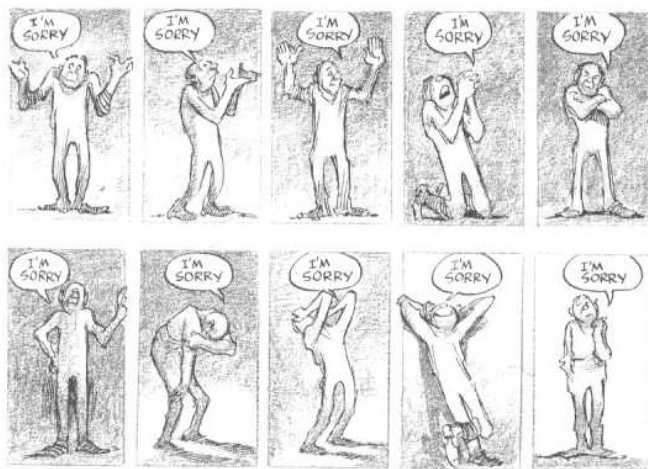
Figure 4. Asterix and Cleopatra, p. 19. © 2001 Les Editions Albert René/Goscinnny-Uderzo.



Asteriks i Goci, p. 9

1.4 Multimodality in comics

Panels and speech balloons are vital to the understanding of how comics get us involved in the plot. Panels constitute the first perception channel in comics, namely the visual modality. The reader looks at pictures which give him some idea about the plot. I have also mentioned that speech balloons are an artificial way of presenting sounds – they are a substitute for another perception channel – the auditive modality. Thus, we can talk about multimodality in comics – a synergy of perception channels, which, on their own, would make little impact. Multimodality is even suggested in the very definition of comics: “comics consist of pictorial narratives or expositions in which words (often lettered into the picture area within speech balloons) usually contribute to the meaning of the pictures and vice versa” (Harvey 76). Will Eisner in *Comics and Sequential Art* shows how multimodality works in comics. Below you can see how different postures can change our way or perceiving simple apologies: (Eisner 103).



Eisner 113

Postures, facial expressions, gestures or even the angle at which we see the character all influence the words and their impact on the reader. These graphical tools make up for the losses in the auditive modality.

Eisner's *Hamlet On a Rooftop* is a staple example of comics multimodality. The intent here is to permit a meaningful fusing of word, imagery and timing (Eisner 113) Perret suggests that even the position of the balloon and division of Hamlet's words into separate balloons can affect our perception and understanding of words (141)



Eisner 113

However, some critics reject Hamlet on a Rooftop as an example of a book with illustrations rather than a comics in that the pictures do not complement or bestow extra meaning to the text but rather strengthen up their impact – thus rejecting the claim to multimodality, which requires complementation to function.

McCloud rightly notices that both perception channels – the visual and especially the auditory do not exist in reality but are our simple representations of reality (25). We, as readers, perform a “willing suspension of disbelief” and engage all our perception channels when in fact only one is presented on paper. Since it is the visual modality which helps the reader create both other modalities as well as the elements of the plot that are not explicit (closure), it is undoubtedly the key element of comics while words are just an optional element. Therefore, forgetting the visual modality while translating a comics can be compared to not seeing the forest for the trees and yet it is a mistake which, as I will try to show in the next chapters, translators routinely make and one which is often their undoing.

1.5 Classification of comics



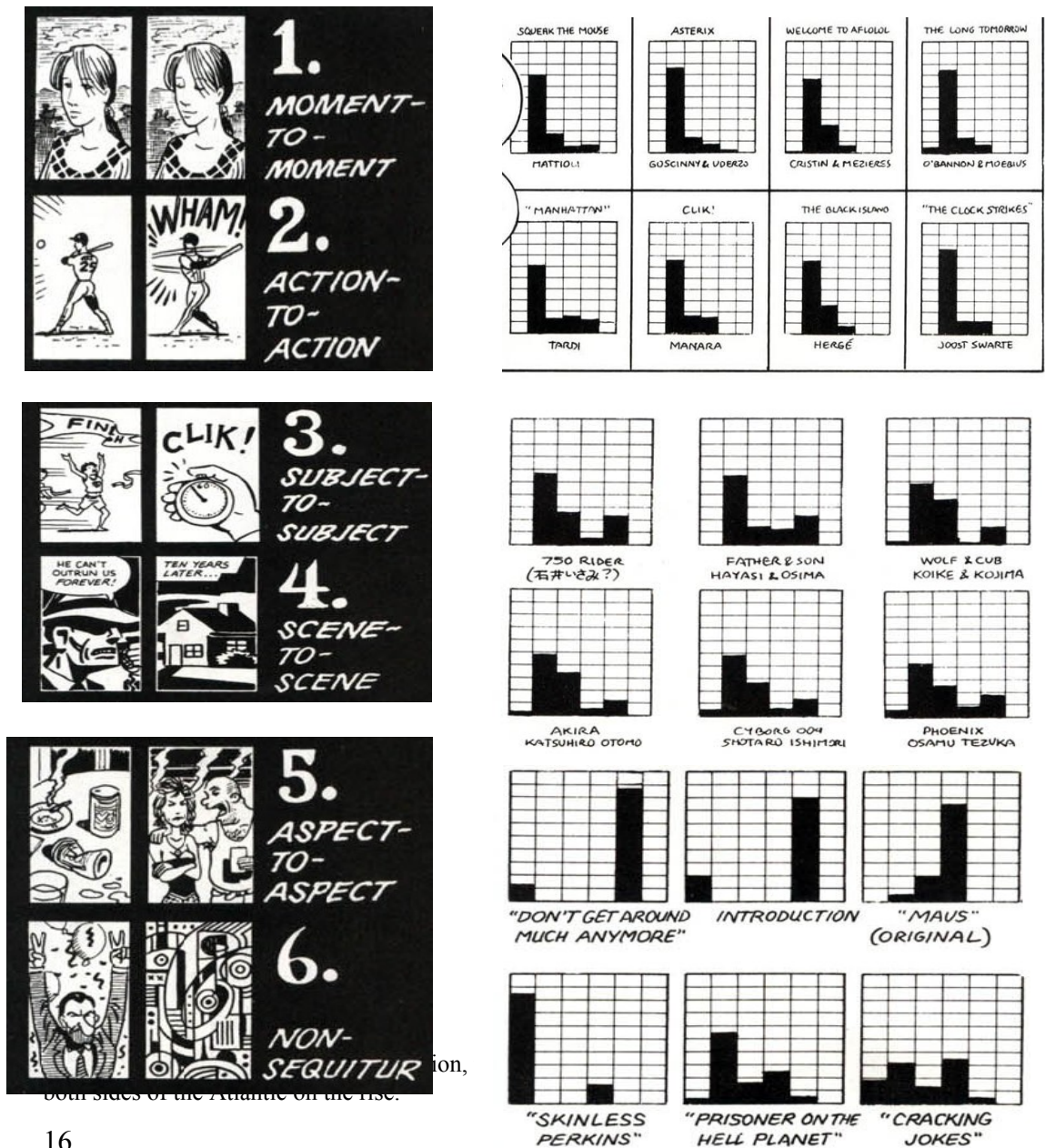
Peanuts 1953

Earlier on I mentioned that a general impression is that superhero comics have dominated the comics world. While it is true in terms of sheer revenue – Superman, Batman and Spiderman being undoubtedly publishers’ bestsellers, there is a plethora of other uses of comics. Eisner distinguishes the following general categories: entertainment comics, graphic novels, technical instruction comics, attitudinal instruction comics and story boards. Since the focal point of this thesis is entertainment comics, therefore I shall further subdivide this category into:

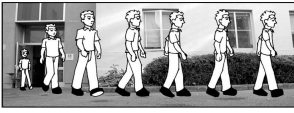


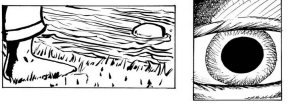
1. Caricature comics
2. Crime comics
3. Editorial comics
4. Political cartoons
5. Graphic novels
6. Horrors
7. Ligne clair
8. Manga
9. Online comics
10. Science fiction
11. Superheroes/villains
12. Tijuana Bibles
13. Underground/ alternative comics
14. War comics
15. Westerns comics

1.4.1 Comics by regions

Another type of classification and the one that is relevant to translators, is the classification by regions according to distinctive styles in which comics are made². There are three major types: European, American and Japanese. Each different style employs distinctive techniques of drawing, presenting the plot and sometimes also different choices of subjects. McCloud tries to quantify these differences by dividing frame transition types into six categories (on the left) and calculates charts for Europe, Japan and experimental comics (76)



It is clear that while not entirely dissimilar, all these types feature a markedly different range of comics-making techniques. McCloud accounts for these differences as stemming from differences in Western and Eastern mentality, between “being there and getting there” (81) .

	Base Tier
Polymorphic	
Macro	
Mono	
Micro	

Neil Cohn addresses these differences differently; he analyses the Lexical Representational Matrix in single frames and by dividing the base tier into four categories: Polymorphic, Macro, Mono and Micro he draws the conclusion that Japanese comics present the reality in a slightly different way than European comics. He also volunteers an opinion that Japanese comics creators are less willing to experiment judging by much greater variety in comics craft in European and American comics. (Internet 23)

Whichever method of analysis is employed, the differences are tangible and become obvious immediately on so much as browsing. Such differences beg a question if the process of translating comics should involve redrawing them, ‘readapting’ them for another type of readers or at least adopting different translation methods to reflect visual differences.



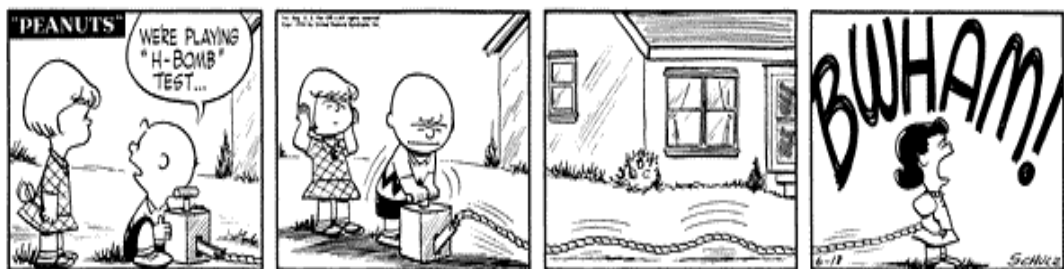
In the above sequence from Kingdom Come, Superman's pensive expression is an impressive but distracting study that interrupts the flow of the narrative. *art by Alex Ross*

The comment below the picture on the left suggests that the use of a typically Asian “Aspect to Aspect” technique may encounter confusion and disapproval. Typically, the ‘getting there’ appears to western audiences to be more relevant than the ‘being there’.

How are these differences relevant? Neale defines genre as a “set of expectations” and suggests that genre makes readers expect certain conventions as well as it gears them

towards certain feelings, attitudes and presumptions making it easier to understand a given text. (Neale 1980:51). Bearing in mind that the differences have been repeated and consolidated over time we can see how it led to readers having different expectations towards comics in different countries.

Different expectations have in turn led to considerable differences in status of the genre in each of these regions with a good example of manga comics in Japan. “Manga has historically held a more important place in Japanese culture than comics have in American culture. Manga is widely respected as both an art form and as a form of popular literature with many manga comics becoming tv shows or short movies” (Internet 9). The status of a comics has a direct bearing on the whether the society gives its acceptance to the choice of the medium to broach certain taboo topics. In the next chapter we shall see how long it took for comics to break out of its ‘superhero slavery’, a preconception commonly shared in many countries that comics is fit only for adventures of Batman, Superman and suchlike, and how reluctantly the general public in some countries is embracing the use of comics to depict and discuss the raw black and white existence of ordinary people.



Peanuts 1953

In Poland the use of comics as a communication medium is not as widespread as, say, in the US, their chief role being entertainment pure and simple. This state of affairs is changing only very slowly as publishing comics about social issues would not be economically viable. Spiegelman's Maus is one example of a comics which told a harrowing story of WW II death camps in all its gritty detail but the form itself in which it was presented led to controversies and an amazing 10-year delay in publishing it in Poland. Comics in the Anglo-Saxon culture have a long tradition of holding a mirror to reality and have never shirked from discussing any subject, be it somber, sordid or silly.



Action Comics, vol. 35



*9-11 comics, p.34

1.6 History of comics

Comics' rise to success in the 20th century was indeed meteoric and one would be hard pressed to find anybody without at least fragmentary knowledge of the imaginary worlds of superheroes. When this craze began and what its origins were are questions to which there are no unambiguous answers. According to some, the history of comics began with *The Adventures of Obadiah Oldbuck* published in 1837 whose author was Rudolph Topffer (Internet 11). Scott McCloud argues on the other hand that Egyptian hieroglyphics, stained glass windows, Japanese emaki and finally the famous Bayeux Tapestry were actually first comics (12)



The term itself is derived from the content of the first comic strips which were indeed “comic” (another popular name still used to this day is the funnies). Although the exact date is unknown, it was in the early 30’s that the word comics started to describe the form and not the content. There is general consent that it was the overwhelming success of *The Yellow Kid* which marked the beginning of the comics boom that lasted for more than a century.

The history of the 20th century comics can be divided into several periods (Internet 11):

- The Platinum Age/Pre-Golden Age (1890-1938)

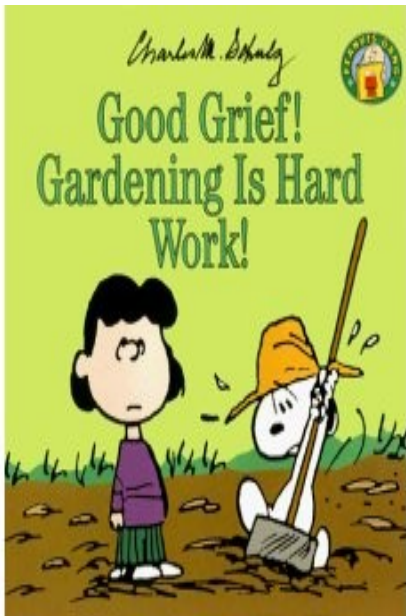
It was in that period of time that newspapers started to include the funnies – comic strips which were ‘funny’ in nature and relatively short in form. Notable examples from that period are the Yellow Kid, Mickey Mouse, Popeye as well as Flash Gordon and Mandrake the Magician. A crucial development was the formation of DC comics which is still one of the biggest publisher in the genre. The end of the Platinum Age saw the emergence of superhero comics with The Phantom and Flash Gordon.

- The Golden Age (1938-1956)

In 1938 and 1939 Superman and Batman made their first appearances soon to be followed by other superheroes – Captain America and Captain Marvel. However, not everyone saw comics as sheer entertainment and in mid 40’s comics were heavily criticized for their supposedly negative influence on children’s minds. Such was the ferocity of comics’ adversaries that mass burnings of comics were reported in some American cities. In Canada strict comics legislation followed and virtually nothing which had anything to do with crime could be included in comics. Naturally, that decision dealt a fatal blow to the superhero genre – how could heroes fight crime and criminals if the latter couldn’t be shown or talked about? In America, the legislation was more lenient as Senate only forced publishing houses to establish a self-policing body, Comics Code Authority, to censor all comics. Nevertheless, such was the power of CCA at its beginning, that for a period of time no superhero comics were issued (Internet 12)



Superman – definitely the most ‘powerful’ goody character of the genre. The adventures of the man of steel fighting crime and supervillains whose only bane is radioactive kryptonite are a vintage classic of superhero genre. It has been pointed out that a likely reason for Superman’s popularity was the dual identity of the main protagonist, a hero hidden under the unlikely personae of Clark Kent.



Peanuts (1950) is an immensely popular comic strip by Charles Schulz, Peanuts is known for its often harsh criticism of social issues. Michaelis speculates that the key to its success was that “Schulz fuses adult ideas with a world of small children”, “[Schulz] brought... humor to taboo themes such as faith, intolerance, depression, loneliness, cruelty and despair. His characters were contemplative. They spoke with simplicity and force. They made smart observations about literature, art, classical music, theology, medicine, psychiatry, sports and the law.” (Internet 13)

Even at such an early stage of comics development that Peanuts should be mentioned right next to Superman is proof of how the history of comics was branching out organically to respond to all sorts of social needs.

- The Silver Age (1953-1961)

In 1953 the superhero genre came back with a vengeance by publishing The Flash. Its success prompted other publishers to restart the now moribund genre.

- The Marvel Age/Post silver Age (1961 – 1970)

This period is a success streak for Marvel Comics which during that period unveiled Fantastic Four, X-men, Spiderman and revived old heroes – Captain America and Dr. Namor. The age is also known for focusing strongly on villains and supervillains with special Villain Team-ups coming out for the first time. We see Joker and Dr. Doom for the first time.



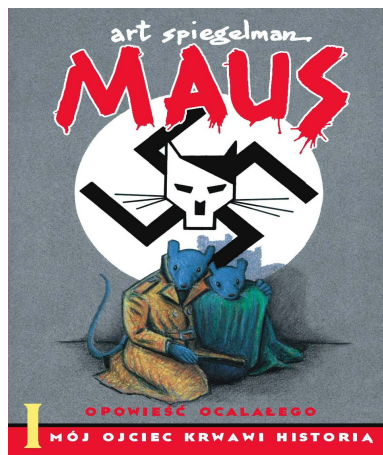
ze Age



The Bronze Age sees the further weakening of CCA's power which enables comics creators to discuss issues and show actions which were banned in the past. A good example is a murder of one of the key characters in Spiderman, which earlier on would have been too controversial (Internet 14). The Bronze Age brings also Wolverine and Punisher, two highly controversial characters who never shy away from using violence. Existing characters also reveal their darker dimensions with a notable example of Frank Miller's Batman which is far "grittier" than its earlier versions and now shows a strong predilection towards bloodshed. Furthermore, as audiences grow tired with old heroes, publishing houses start experiments, crossovers and new lines with varying degree of success. Lastly, we are getting many independent or underground comics which focus on psychological issues and social reality.



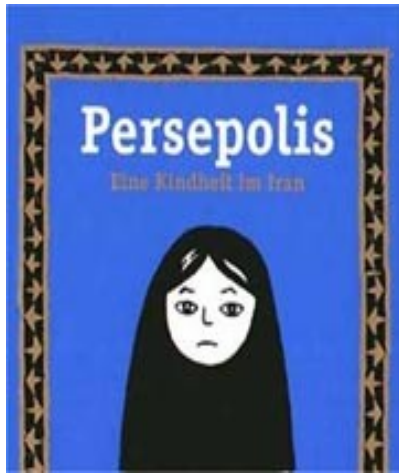
The first such comics is Cerebus the Aardvark. (1977) What began as an animal parody of Conan the Barbarian developed into a saga of impressive proportions about an ambitious earth-pig which trots up the social ladder to become a Pope and later a ruler in its fortress, yet dies alone, unmourned and unloved.



Another key comics is Maus, A Survivor's Tale by Art Spiegelman (1991), a tale of a Polish Jew in a concentration camp during Second World War. Here Jews are shown as mice, Nazis as cats and Poles as pigs. This unusual choice of subject led to controversy in many countries and even delayed its publishing in Poland by nine years. A unique drawing method together with a shocking subject make for an unputdownable reading.



No history of the comics genre could ever be complete without Watchmen. This brilliant 'deconstructive' graphic novel shows the seamy and gritty sides of superheroes' often deranged psyches, makes heavy use of symbolism, features great artwork. An attentive reader will notice many references to psychological theories, literary works and historical allusions.



Persepolis: a story of childhood in Iran - this French graphic novel about living in Iran as seen from a girl's perspective provides an interesting insight into the everyday life in times of Revolution. A definitely bizarre subject matter with an unlikely protagonist makes for a splendid read and pushes the already broad envelope of the genre.

This extremely brief history of comics is clearly dominated by main publishers with their superhero comics. However, we can see how the function of comics has been changing. First, their aim was to entertain and their link with reality was tenuous at best (apart from parodies and caricatures), then came a partial inclusion of reality (otherworlds, imaginary worlds or superheroes on Earth) their potential to affect readers emotionally was perceived. Finally, comics veered to reflect reality with all its shortcomings and malaises; writers began to explore topics previously broached by novels and poetry. What does the future hold in store for comics? The answer to this question is definitely connected with the development of so-called web comics, increased interactivity and with the solution to the ubiquitous issue of piracy as the comics industry is suffering due to the popularity of P2P networks where it is extremely easy to get hold of virtually any comics in a computerized format which makes it very easy to browse. On the other hand, it is exactly this phenomenon which let the comics genre survive. Most fans now have a larger collection of cbr comics files than their paper versions. Amazon.com lets fans download comics to a wireless Kindle device. The big business has realized that there is still money to be earned in this industry. Therefore I find it absolutely impossible to imagine the future without the medium which has lived through two hundred years and is still flexing its now virtual muscles.

Chapter 2 - The art of translation

“Translation is an art of failure”

The great debate on how to translate anything has raged on for centuries now with many clichés trotted out about the juxtaposition of faithful and beautiful translations, good and bad translations etc. Many such opinions stem from an incomplete understanding of what translating is and what it should be. The perennial question is whether translation is an art, elusive and indefinable, or a science which lends itself to describing and prescribing. Depending on the school of thought translation:

- is the expression in another language of what has been expressed in another, source language preserving semantic and stylistic equivalence” (Bell 5)
- involves two equivalent messages in two different codes (Jakobson 1959:2000: 114)
- “Translation is a kind of activity which inevitably involves at least two languages and two cultural traditions.” (Toury 1978:200)
- involves far more than replacement of lexical and grammatical items between languages (Bassnett 1980/1981:25)
- is causing “what was stated in one language to be stated in another, with the purpose of achieving the semantic and expressive equivalence of both statements” (Traduire c'est faire que ce qui était énoncé dans une langue le soit dans une autre, en tendant à l'équivalence sémantique et expressive des deux énoncés) (an entry from Petit Robert quoted in Newmark: Taking a stand on Mary Snell Hornby)

The subject of translation was discussed as early as in ancient times. Munday quotes Cicero talking about his translations of Attic speeches :

“And I did not translate them as an interpreter, but as an orator, keeping the same ideas and forms, or as one might say, the 'figures' of thought, but in language which conforms to our usage. And in so doing, I did not hold it necessary to render word for word, but I preserved the general style and force of the language “ (Munday 15)

2.1 EQUIVALENCE

Cicero, as well as many other theorists refer to the concept of equivalence or “the same effect” or “keeping the same ideas and forms”. Wilss (1982a: 134) states that "the concept of TE (translation equivalence) has been an essential issue not only in translation theory over the last 2000 years, but also in modern translation studies". But what exactly is equivalence and at what level should we explore it? Jakobson asserts that “there is ordinarily no full equivalence between code-units” (Jakobsson 1959:2000:114) suggesting that one should discuss translation of texts rather than words.

Bell presents a useful division where :

“texts in different languages can be equivalent in different degrees (fully or partially equivalent), in respect of different levels of presentation (equivalence in respect of context, semantics, grammar, lexis) and at different ranks (word-for-word, phrase-for-phrase, sentence-for-sentence)” (6).

Nida divides equivalence into formal and dynamic equivalence where the latter is “ to be defined in terms of the degree to which the receptors of the message in the receptor language respond to it in substantially the same manner as the receptors in the source language. This response can never be identical, for the cultural and historical settings are too different, but there should be a high degree of equivalence of response, or the translation will have failed to accomplish its purpose." (Nida & Taber 1969: 24) and gives the example from Bible translation, where the phrase 'Lamb of God' would be rendered into 'Seal of God' for the Eskimos because the lamb doesn't symbolize innocence in their culture. In this case, a literal translation (formal equivalence) doesn't mean anything in a different culture so the dynamic equivalence is necessary,

Newmark uses different systematics in his Textbook of Translation and defines a communicative translation as one which “attempts to produce on its readers an effect as close as possible to that obtained on the readers of the original" and a semantic translation as one that “attempts to render, as closely as the semantic and syntactic structure of the second language allow, the exact contextual meaning of the original" (1981:39) . Anelo cites Bernandez’s theory of self-regulation of communication, according to which the sender of the message, the translator in this case, will adjust the

information according to the necessities of the receiver and other contextual factors in a process of self-regulation that have a tendency towards a state of entropy or a state of equilibrium. Equilibrium here would be understood as the ideal result where the message has maximum comprehension with minimum alteration of the linguistic elements and structures (Internet 3)

Closely connected with this discussion are the terms 'foreignizing' and 'domesticating'. Foreignizing puts an emphasis on the fact that the text is a product of a culture which is different from the target culture, it respects and cherishes that difference; foreignizing teaches the value of otherness and equality. A domesticating strategy takes into account the often steep learning curve of a new text and tries to make the reading experience easier by 'bringing the text closer to the reader'³. Broadly speaking, communicative translation will employ domesticating strategies while a semantic translation foreignizes a text under translation.

However, it has been noted that if following a communicative translation strategy involves changing a number of foreign elements into elements which are familiar, the essence of the text might get changed in a way that the target text cannot be called a valid translation. Venuti is a famous proponent of foreignizing translations since he believes that domesticating a text is a sign of culture hegemony and ethnocentrism. Venuti claims that transparency attained through a domesticating strategy is an illusion as it reflects values and views of the target culture (1995: 61) and because of the application of domesticating strategy, the readers image of a foreign culture might be distorted. An ethical translation project should "deviate "from domestic norms to signal the foreignness of the foreign text". (1998:87) as an attempt to express "resistance against ethnocentrism and racism, cultural narcissism and imperialism, in the interests of democratic geopolitical relations" (1995:20).



³ It must be noted that no text uses only one strategy but the pendulum can at times reach far extremities



Garfield. June 6, 1981

Naturally, one could not conceivably claim that translating anchovies as *pieczareczki* is an example of ethnocentrism but it might limit our opportunities to learn about cultures which dare to put anchovies on their pizzas.

The translation of the Garfield comic strip shows that the translator was aware of the fact that the target readers might have difficulty understanding what anchovies are. After all, it is very rare for pizzerias in Poland to have anchovies as one of pizza toppings. Therefore, anchovies can be translated into mushrooms with the strip being no less funny for it. The translator recognized the true purpose, or the communicative value, of the strip, which is chiefly to entertain, and employed a domesticating strategy which suits the genre and preserves the ‘Garfieldesque’ sense of humour.

We can treat the Garfield strip translation as an example of a functional equivalent preserving a semantic-free communicative value in target text culture, a concept which Newmark calls a ‘cultural equivalent’. The translator assumed that the communicative value of anchovies as a pizza topping is different for ST target reader and TT target reader. Karamanian points out that “As translators we are faced with an alien culture that requires that its message be conveyed in anything but an alien way” (Internet 4). One must bear in mind, though, that the choice of the strategy is not without consequences for the reader. ⁴

First of all, we have already noted that if we assume that anchovies on a pizza are a fairly common topping in the target culture, translating it to a functional equivalent “*pieczareczki*” denies the reader the opportunity to learn about a foreign culture. Second, changing Garfield’s topping of choice means that the translator has changed

⁴ Luckily, this particular strip is devoid of the ‘multimodal’ factor in that we actually cannot see the anchovies. In chapters on translating comics I will discuss examples where multimodality proves a stumbling block for the translator with all the items to be translated clearly drawn in the panel.

Garfield eating habits. It might for instance be slightly perplexing for the reader to learn from future strips that both Garfield and his owner find “pieczareczki” repulsive. Readers can be counted on to remember even the pettiest details about their heroes and do not shrink from complaining.⁵

The question worth asking is whether intercultural translations are in fact translations or mere adaptations and, more importantly, whether it is feasible to render such a intercultural transfer in all cases.

Historically, some radical thinkers actually believed that no intercultural translation can ever be successful. Saussure claims that “no neutral translation is possible since languages involve different value systems (Saussure quoted in Chandler: *Semiotics: the basics*) Others assert that words, phrases, and even whole sentences put a native speaker in the mind of situations long forgotten, ring distant bells, are embedded strongly in culture to the point of making the text difficult to understand even for the most versatile translator. Consequently, to translate any text one would need to translate the source culture which Coşeriu defines as “the historical objectivity of the spirit in shapes that last, in shapes that turn into traditions, that become historic shapes describing man’s own world, man’s own universe. (...) And man creates culture, he is a creator, he is endowed with *energéia* to the extent to which it goes beyond what man has learnt, beyond what he has gained through experience (...) language, art, religion, myth, science, and philosophy. This sum of forms is what we call culture in so far as they are achieved at in history as products of man’s creative activity”. (1993:173) Similarly, steadfast supporters of Sapir and Whorf hypothesis claim that nothing can be translated accurately since the differences between languages inevitably lead to differences in perceiving the world and if so, how could we possibly translate differences in perception? They most certainly defy description and cannot be quantified. This ‘embedding’ of any text within a nexus of other texts is known as intertextuality. This concept started with a Russian theorist Kristeva who famously said that ‘every text is from the outset under the jurisdiction of other discourses which impose a universe on it’. Kristeva referred to texts in terms of two axes: a horizontal axis connecting the author and reader of a text, and a vertical axis, which connects the text to other texts (1980, 69)

⁵ Da Cruz, editor of the *Superman* recalls a situation when she published a *Superman* adventure that she thought was new. It turned out it had been published five years before. The publishing house realized that on receiving angry letters from no less than five countries.

One of the key related subjects concerns the text's authorship. Barthes asserted that the writer is an orchestrator of the 'already written' text which is 'a tissue of quotations' (Internet 16) . “ These three quotes raise a plethora of very theoretical assumptions but at the level of practical translation, at its 'most superficial' layer of quotations or rephrasings intertextuality is a very real problem and one to which there are no perfect solutions.

The other view, 'universal rationalism', based on biological and psychological determinism states that given the relatively minor differences between languages it is feasible to translate any text. Chomsky asserts that no more than 4000 existing languages present a surprisingly similar syntax in spite of their phonologic and graphic differences and declares that it is this fact allows languages to be translated from one into another. (Internet 5)

2.2 Relevance theory in comics translation

It seems that the abundance of translation theories enables the translator to be blissfully eclectic. However, a nagging question is whether one can apply a simple test to check whether the translation task has been carried out satisfactorily. To answer this question we need to cast our mind back to the Gricean assumption about the purpose of communication which he understood as “expression and recognition of intentions” (Grice 1989: chapters 1-7) This model of communication has become known as “inferential” where “a communicator provides evidence of her intention to convey a certain meaning, which is inferred by the audience on the basis of the evidence provided. An utterance is, of course, a linguistically coded piece of evidence, so that verbal comprehension involves an element of decoding. However, the linguistic meaning recovered by decoding is just one of the inputs to a non-demonstrative inference process which yields an interpretation of the speaker's meaning” (Internet 6). Ergo - any utterance contains one of many keys necessary to unlock its meaning. Other keys lie in the shared context between all participants of the conversation. The more common ground the less processing effort is required to decode the meaning. Thus, if no context is provided, decoding the relevance of the message might be impossible, especially if the writer and the reader share no or little common ground. Based on the Gricean maxims and the Cooperative principle, the central claim of relevance theory is that ‘expectations of relevance raised by an utterance are precise enough, and predictable enough, to guide the hearer towards the speaker’s meaning’ (Sperber 608) The often unconscious processing on the part of the receiver consists of two steps:

- a. Follow a path of least effort in computing cognitive effects: Test interpretive hypotheses (disambiguations, reference resolutions, implicatures, etc.) in order of accessibility.
- b. Stop when your expectations of relevance are satisfied. (Relevance Theory: A Tutorial: 54)



One should not stop too soon, though.

Peanuts 1954

(In Y. Otsu (ed.) *Proceedings of the Third Tokyo Conference on Psycholinguistics*. Hituzi Shobo, Tokyo: 45-70)

Two of the key concepts employed in Relevance Theory are implicatures – components of speaker meaning that constitute an aspect of what is meant in a speaker's utterance without being part of what is said (Horn 1) and explicatures – 'explicit' assumptions communicated by an utterance, which is a development of a logical form encoded by the utterance (Sperber 1995: 182)

Gutt posits that a test of whether a translation is successful is to check if the source text and the target text share the same implicatures and explicatures: a translation "...should convey to the receptors all and only those explicatures and implicatures that the original was intended to convey." (1991: 94).

Bearing in mind that in comics text is just one element to be translated and that it enters a synergic relationship with other elements to create a multimodal whole, a mistranslation of one element may invalidate an implicature that the text should otherwise convey. Text often serve to explicate pictures which convey implicatures and the opposite holds true as well.

Moreover, there can be little common ground between the reader and the characters in the comics and, consequently, we can no longer assume that 'expectations of relevance raised by an utterance are precise enough, and predictable enough, to guide the hearer towards the speaker's meaning'. It is worth asking the question if it is the relevance of the utterance that should be increased or the common ground between the characters and the reader.

In the next chapters I shall try to apply this theory to various comics under translation to examine both its strengths and weaknesses.

Chapter 3 - Translating comics

3.1 An Introduction to translating comics

If reading comics is not considered to be a very prestigious activity, analyzing translations of comics is indeed a fringe area studied by very few. Sjogren quotes Delabastita's words that "the social sciences tend to select their objects of study on the basis of cultural prestige rather than intrinsic interest. It is often more prestigious to study Shakespeare than to study popular literature or, for that matter, a derivative phenomenon such as translations (qtd in Sjogren 29) Sjogren makes a very good point when she bemoans the current theoretical deficiencies in comics translation ("the only way to learn how to translate comics is by doing") as there are extremely few published sources on the subject. This deplorable scarcity of published materials is only redeemed by a slightly higher amount of internet sources, the quotes from which will therefore constitute the vast majority of all quotes in this paper. Fortunately, so vast is the available corpora of comics translations that the least we can do is analyze the mistakes of existing translations, 'borrow' recent hypotheses in other translation fields, such as movie translation and apply them to comics.

In this chapter I shall try to define the conditions for a successful comics translation which I understand as such a translation which is not only acceptable from the point of view of translation theory but also one that will be kindly looked upon by readers.



This illustration neatly illustrates the process of comics translation. One could point out that translating comics more often than not resembles a boxing match between the translator's wishful thinking ("I could render a brilliant translation of this short sentence...") and the reality ("...but it wouldn't fit into the speech bubble"). The only difference is that there is a lot of flip-flopping involved.

At a very basic level a successful translation of a comics will take into account all those visual aspects which form a comics while retaining the standards of good translation practice.

Cay Dollerup in his “Loss and Gain in Comic” argues that a successful translation of a comics is one where the ‘gain’ in meanings is bigger than the ‘loss’. ‘Gain’ understood as the translation having more meanings than in the original version while ‘elements said to be lost are those which the observer finds are not realized in the target text’.

(197) A successful translation can be understood as yielding:

a) gain without loss

b) gain with loss

To Dollerup, gain without loss occurs when the target – language text is more specific than the source-language text and gives the example of the word “cousin” which, if translated into Danish” will inevitably gain information as Danish distinguishes between male and female cousins.

Gain with loss takes place if there are no 1:1 lexical equivalents and translators produce texts that are equivalent or , as Dollerup puts it, “consistent within the totality of the translations at the macrolevel!”. The natural obstacles in comics translation i.e. the speech balloon limitation and no compensation opportunities make this genre perfect to discuss ‘loss and gain’. It goes without saying that most idioms, puns and references will be realized as ‘gain with loss’ because of little culture overlap and the resulting lack of common ground.

If any text for translation is potentially beset with difficulties, translating comics adds yet another level of complexity. Rota points out that “Translating a comic is then a much more complex operation than merely transposing the text contained in balloons (...) : because of their complex structure resulting from the interweaving of texts and pictures, comics have to be presented to the target culture after a process of adaptation which has to take into consideration the expectations and tastes of the new cultural context, and at the same time has also to avoid the corruption of the work to be translated.”(Internet 1)

Kaindl holds a view that there is indeed more to translating comics than just translating the text even if additional constraints have been taken into account: “In the process of translation comics undergo a number of changes, with respect both the language and the level of the picture. Neither a linguistic nor a purely textual approach is sufficient to deal with these changes. If translation is understood not only as a linguistic or textual operation, but as a social practice, the social context of action in which the translation process is embedded has to be taken as the starting point for analysis” (1999:265).

I have already mentioned the differences between comics’ status in particular countries. From a more practical point of view, status has a direct bearing on the readers’ readiness to pay more or less for a comics. Rota notes that each culture “produces different kinds of comics” (Internet 93) with different sizes, prices, periodicity or even colours. This makes the matter of translation slightly more complex as the publisher needs to adapt the comics to the needs of particular readers: to change the size, add colour to black-and-white comics or even divide the story into individual chapters if it is thought that readers would be reluctant to pay a larger sum for one big graphic novel. Zanettin gives the example of translation of Dylan Dog, an Italian comic series which was later translated and marketed in the US but only after a series of changes had been introduced. First, all the covers were redrawn to make them look more recognizable and “palatable” to the American reader. Second, the internal structure of the comic was changed, from one divided into typically Italian subchapters to an American structure where a story reads like a continuum, without its characteristic climax-anticlimax rhythm. (Zanettin 10) To leave the structure and the look of a comics unchanged is to risk limiting the potential reader group to people interested in foreign novelties, making the comics a commercially unviable niche experiment.

In many countries where comics market is insufficiently big as to warrant considerable investments in the publishing house, the financial problem is further compounded. Due to financial limitations of publishing houses translations are made by either hardcore fans of comics who may mean well but often lack professional workmanship, or translators who have little experience translating comics. Either way, internet forums frequently seethe with anger at translations made inexpertly, which spoils the long awaited fun and prevents the correct understanding of the plot, let alone the more subtle allusions and intertextual references.

Moreover, many non-superhero, alternative and underground comics, so the ones which target a well-educated adult reader, do not actually get translated as translating and publishing them is not economically viable.

In order to successfully carry out a translation with so many potential difficulties it is normally a good idea to prepare a professional workbench with such tools as help us avoid major mistakes. To that end I have devised a procedure which might make it easier for a translator with little or no experience in comics translation to get a foothold in the big gate of the world of comics.

3.2. THE ANALYSIS OF A COMICS UNDER TRANSLATION

3.2.1 Reading as a phase in the process of comics translation

Although this step does seem most obvious, we should stop and consider what reading a comics means for the translator. Needless to say, the comics in question should be read in its totality. Even if only one chapter is to be translated, the translator should go to every length in order to obtain the following chapters. Why should we do it? Certain decisions made by the translator may prove pernicious in translating next chapters. One example is the Finnish translation of an X-men comics where the acronym S.H.I.E.L.D was translated directly into Finnish - Y.P.K.V.V. This direct translation effectively prevented the translator from retaining any wordplays on the word 'shield'. (Internet 17) Only after reading the entire series can we be sure that by translating words in a certain way we have not limited our options. Of course, this rule does not apply to new bestsellers which need translating without any delay.

Secondly, it is a good idea to read things repeatedly to be absolutely positive that we understand the often meandering plot. Witkowski gives a good example from the translation of 'Return of the Dark Knight'. On page 18 a news anchor says :

'Police commissioner Gordon issued an all points bulletin for Dent' which is translated as

"Komisarz Gordon wydał nakaz aresztowania Denta"

According to Wikipedia 'while it is true that an APB may in some cases be issued to arrest a suspect, it is normally used to find a 'person of interest' - someone involved in a criminal investigation who has not yet been arrested or formally accused of a crime (Internet 19).

The misunderstanding would not have occurred had the translator actually read the comics thoroughly. Witkowski states that twenty pages later it is speculated whether Gordon is actually going to arrest Dent which in Polish version leads to confusion as the reader remembers that on page 18 he was given to understand that the order had already been given

(Internet 2)

Let us now carry out a simple test. The second part of the sentence has been blanked out. Can we work out what is happening in the picture?



To use 'relevance' terms, the implicature of the picture is that Garfield is going to kill Pooky.

A hostage situation is probably the first answer. In the following translation the translator did not look closely enough at the picture, which resulted in a funny misunderstanding.



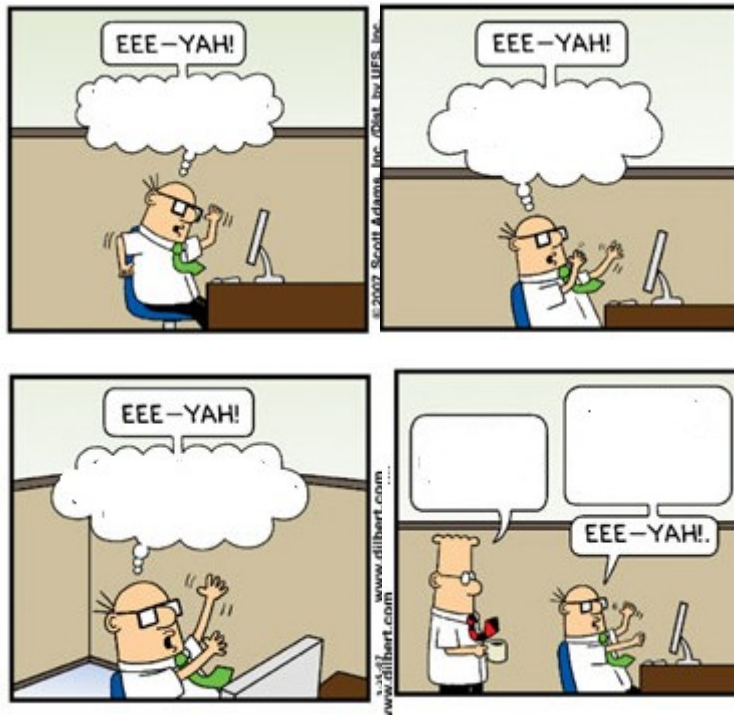
Garfield. 14 July, 1982

The text explicature reinforced by the picture's implicature is that Dan should stay where he is or Garfield kills Mr. Pooky.



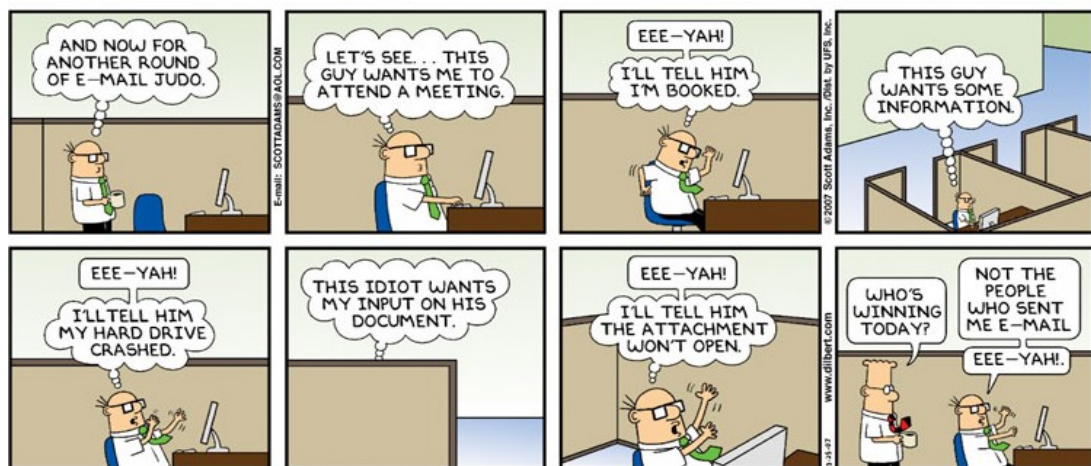
The misunderstanding is probably the result of the apparently deictic use of 'it' by Garfield, whereas Garfield is in fact making a far more sinister threat than feeding Pooky with the last banana. The plicatures of the text in English (understood as the words and the picture) are markedly different than the plicatures of the text in Polish.⁶

Let's consider another example:

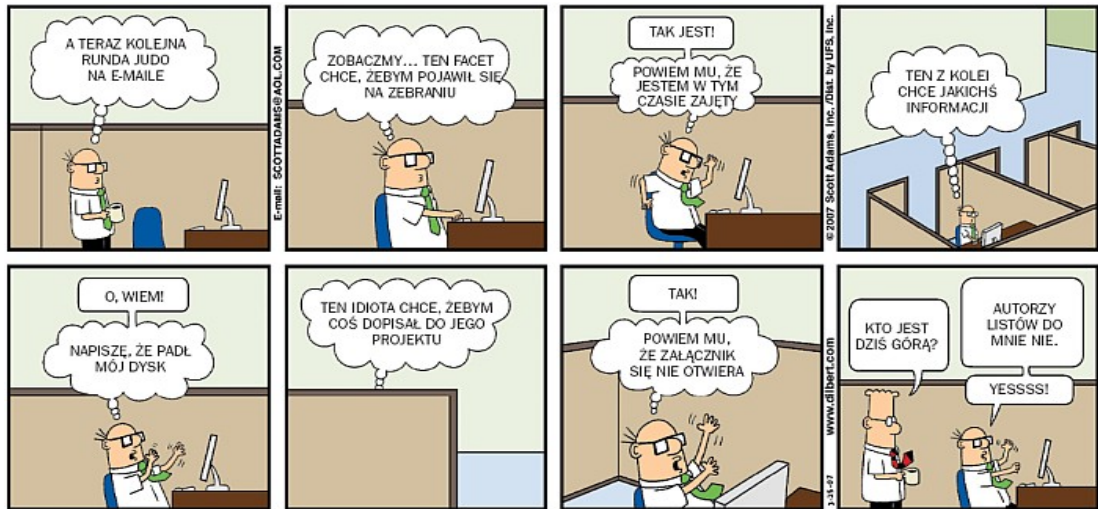


In the same way that the previous example from Garfield, here the implicature of the picture reinforced by the text is that of Wally doing karate.

Dilbert, 26 March, 2008

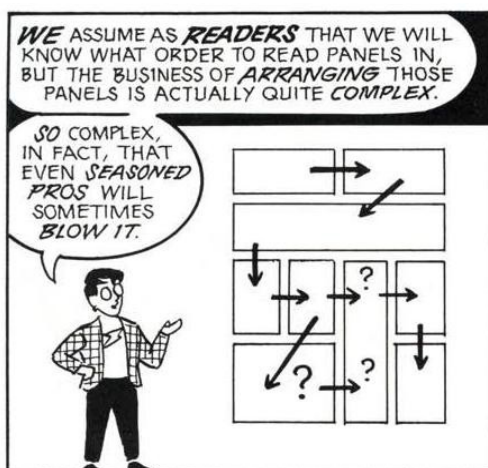


⁶ The big question is if we should care at all since the text remains funny.



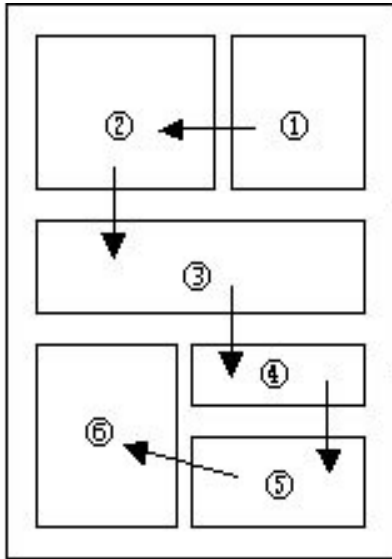
‘Eee-yah’ can only mean “o wiem” to a very, very short-sighted translator. Again, there seems to be a big divide between the plicatures in both texts.

From the graphical point of view, the genre presents us with yet another difficulty when it comes to reading them as the sequence of reading can prove a stumbling block for a beginner. A simple example are Japanese comics read from right to left and not from left to right. More complex is a purposefully tricky design of panels, where the reader can make their own decision as to the proper direction of reading.



(Internet 10)

Bearing in mind the Scott McCloud’s “closure” effect we could say that the content created in the reader’s imagination depends on the often subconscious decision to follow the panels in a specific direction. The translator must be careful so as to choose the path which is bound to be followed by most readers.



This is an example of the reading order in *manga* and *litrwàahntòuh*

It shows the traditional way of presenting as you can see the gutter between panel 1 and 2 is smaller than the gutter between 2 and 3.

The illustration on the left handside shows the traditional Japanese panel layout with the correct reading order. It is approximately a mirror image of the European panel order. Many publishing houses are now retaining the traditional reading order instead of reverting it to respect the sanctity of the original work.

3.2.2 ANALYZING

As far as translating is concerned, there is a fine line between reading a text and analyzing it because an experienced translator will inevitably notice some of the more challenging features of the text to be translated even during the first reading.

When discussing the process of reading, the three very important focal points are the author, the reader and the translator, or in other words, who speaks to whom through whom.

The author persona is expressed in what the text conveys and implies (or what it chooses not to say). As it is not always possible for the translator to ask the author about the relevance of the text, careful research into the life of the author can often be of utmost importance.

As to the readers, Kate James differentiates two groups: a Source Text ideal reader and a Target Text ideal reader and quotes Coulthard according to whom all readers are generally expected:

- to be familiar with certain facts, historical events and/or customs of the country in question
- to have memory of certain experiences understood as contact with different social groups
- to have opinions, preferences and prejudices resulting from their idiosyncratic experiences
- to possess a certain level of linguistic competence

(Coulthard qtd in Internet 20)

Naturally, there will be a big divide between these two reader groups. TT readers do not normally have enough contextual information to understand more obscure references unless they exhibit a strong interest in the target culture. Moreover, their opinions on facts will differ. A reader from Poland has never met the oft ridiculed girl from Essex, does not know whether to mentally congratulate the protagonist on getting a '55 plymouth fury or whether to deplore his utter impecuniousness. At times even speakers of the same language do not share enough common ground as to 'get the drift'. When Scott Adams' Dilbert was asked to get a client 'a little bit pregnant', even other American English speakers could not understand what that meant. Here the information

gap between Scott Adams who had worked in the corporate environment and people who hadn't effectively prevented the readers from getting the joke was too large to bridge in three frames. (Internet 24)

When translating comics it is of paramount importance to remember who the reader of the translated piece will be and to think if the target group corresponds with the source reader group.

This example illustrates how employing a particular translation strategy can change the target group.



Dilbert, December 04, 2007

In western comics we do not normally get swearwords but they are traditionally expressed by signs e.g. &^*#! Here the translator decided to use “do cholery” probably because dilbert’s translated comics are first of all published on the back cover of Gazeta Wyborcza – an unlikely read for small children who might get offended by explicit language, secondly, there might be ethnoprismatic differences in ‘politeness strategies’ employed in Poland and in the US. In the US Dilbert appears in thousands of syndicated newspapers which cannot afford to lose readers by using even a slightest swearword.⁷ Unfortunately, the strip loses a bit in humour as the translator forgot to use the same “shouting” font in the panel, this being a typical omission committed even by experienced translators.

However, Janikowski argues that ‘cholera’ seems relatively innocuous in comparison to the camouflaged original swearword ‘which sends us to a different reality’ (Janikowski. Re:By the ways. April 23, 2008) and which many readers will ‘deep read’ between the lines (or rather between the symbols). He finds the utterance to be even less denotative than the original.

⁷ One of the characters in Dilbert, Phil – prince of insufficient light will occasionally cast a hex on misbehaving employees by “darning them to heck” thus ridiculing the ‘no swearword’ limitation.

If we make the assumption that the reader is unlikely to get offended by the word 'cholera', here's a more radical example

Curiously, I came across an unusual translation of the following comic strip.



Garfield, May 13, 1980

In as much as this strip translates easily, the translator might occasionally feel extraordinarily creative and add something idiosyncratic. If one takes translation standards seriously then one should read as many Garfield comic strips to find out what the nature of Garfield the cat is before embarking on the translation task. I do not think I am far off the mark when I say that Garfield is lazy, overweight and malicious yet kind-hearted and (vaguely) loyal to his master Jon but would not use such language for all the tea in China.



This translation appears to be more than slightly misguided and difficult to account for even if the translation has only been made available on the Internet ⁸.

That brings us to the role of the translator whose task is to understand the relevance and the true communicative goal of the text and convey it faithfully in TL, through decisions which bear the brunt of any limitations, both those of the author (i.e. the inability to communicate the relevance to the translator), of the message (outdated, without a target reader), of the reader (insufficient knowledge), and of his own limitations i.e. lack of full language proficiency. However, the requirements for the translator are much higher than merely language proficiency. The translator must be a *culturally* competent speaker. Hymes explains that to be a culturally competent speaker is to understand all the speech events recognized by that culture (Hymes 53-62). Speech events, he explains, have the following components:

S setting and scene (where and when does it happen?)

P participants (who is taking part?)

E ends (what do the participants want to achieve?)

A act sequence (what is said and done?)

K key (what is the emotional tone, e.g. serious, sorrowful, lighthearted?)

I instrumentalities (what are the ‘channels’ e.g. verbal, written, and ‘codes’ e.g. languages, speech styles?)

N norms of interaction and interpretation (why ‘should’ people act like this?)

G genre (what kind of speech event is it?)

Other focal points for the translator include:

- 1) establishing the stylistics of the comics. Is there a functional equivalent of the register used by characters in the target language? Do characters use different registers? At this stage we should make at least a mental note on these issues.
- 2) What is the sense of humour like? Is it situational or language-based? Is multimodality involved in that the reader would have to look at the picture to understand the joke?
- 3) Is the comics highly intertextual? Are references easily recognizable or do they require expert knowledge of the source culture? Is intertextuality highly bound with a certain age, occupational or social background group? At this stage one

⁸ It was only much later that I came across an explanation of sorts on an Internet forum. The current team of Internet Garfield translators made the decision not to delete the old, now perceived as erroneous, translations out of respect for their early efforts but currently any translations with expletives are consistently rejected by website moderators

could consider consulting a native speaker (or more than one, if possible) or using Internet search engines to do more research on quotes, references and mentions. Is it necessary to translate them?

- 4) Are there any other pictorial or other non-linguistic elements one should consider in the process of translation? (see 3.3 What to translate)
- 5) Are there any fragments that one should not translate? And conversely, are there any (usually intertextual) elements that have already been translated and function in the language?
- 6) Do readers have certain expectations towards the translator and the translation. How should these expectations be addressed?

If all these elements are taken into account, we could claim that a comics have been read and analysed for the purposes of translation.

3.3 What to translate?

Text in comics appears in many different places and its position has significance in the choice of translation technique. Klaus Kindle divides the text elements in comics into:

- dialogue texts



- narrations

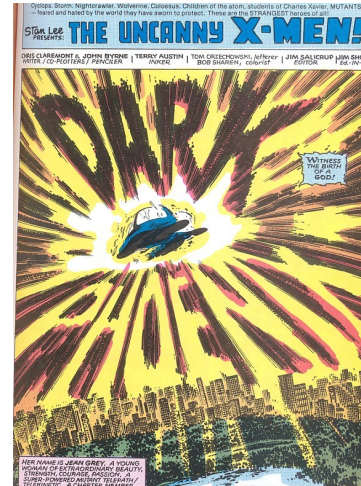


While narrations tend to take up more space and are not subject to space limitations of balloons, it is usually easier to translate them. The contents of balloons, however, are packed with meaning and there will usually be two or three sentences in one balloon at its most loquacious

- onomatopoeia



– Inscriptions



– titles



It is a neverending dilemma for translators if absolutely everything should be translated. While it is obvious that balloon content should be, what about inscriptions? Sometimes, the artist's help is indispensable in changing those elements of the comics which demand artistry and skill. Fortunately, now that most translators have at their disposal very advanced graphic editors, they can work mostly without any outside help. In the next chapter I shall try and give a tentative answer as to when and how all these elements can, should or must be translated and by analysing comics in translation I shall analyse translators' strategic mistakes in approaching comics.

3.4 How to translate

Having carried out the analysis, the translator may feel properly equipped to commence translation. Klaus Kaindl signals that Delabastita's use of rhetoric in film analysis can be applied to translating comics (273-280)

Delabastita's categories are as follows:

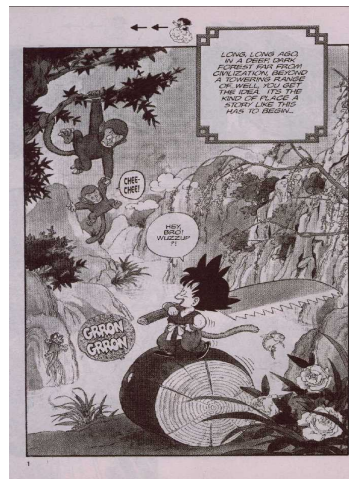
- Repetitio – retaining certain elements in their identical form (usually onomatopoeic signs)



(Zanettin 20)

- Adjectio – adding elements which did not exist in the original text. Kaindl notices that while Japanese comics are in black-and-white, their translations are often in colour. The addition of colour is normally done in case of very popular comics as printing a comics in colour tends to be much more expensive.

One of the most popular comics, Dragonball Z, is now available in an 'ultimate edition' (Kanzaban) with new artwork and an improved translation.



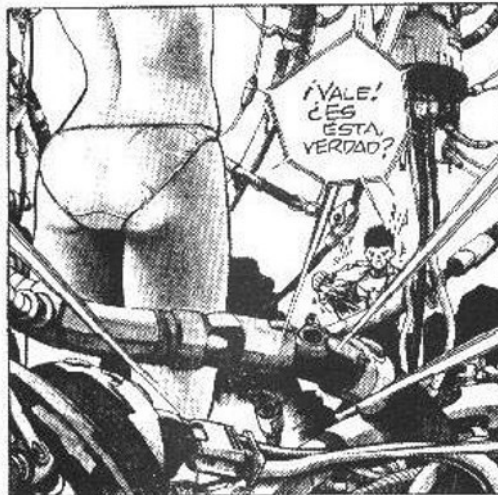
- Deletio – removing chunks of text or individual pictures



Internet 120

In the Arabic version of the Superman, any American phrases inscribed in the background were scrambled probably to avoid offending the general public.

- Detractio – removing some elements of the text or pictures (usually to adapt the text to a different age group by removing elements associated with violence, sex etc.)



Video Girl, Vol. 9, p.33 (Internet 26)

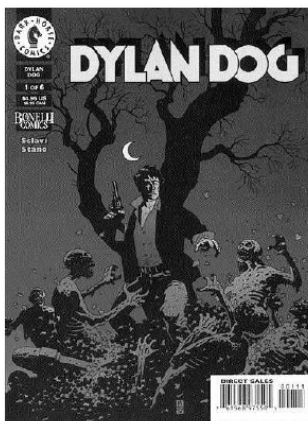
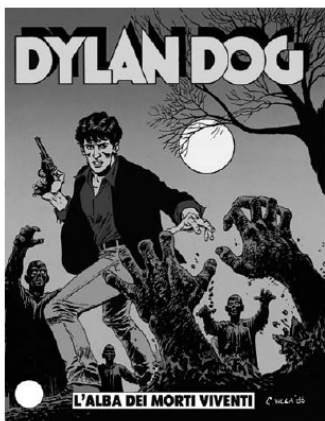
- Transmutatio – a change in the order of source language or pictorial elements



Japanese picture has been reversed in English translation to reflect a different reading order (Sjogren 38)



- Substitutio – replacing linguistic/typographic/pictorial elements by more or less equivalent material.



The cover of Dylan Dog was replaced to make the comic look more natural (and less Italian, Bonelli-like) for the buyer (Zanettin 9)

Figure 1
 A: Dylan Dog issue no. 1: L'alba dei morti viventi (SBE 1986, cover art by Claudio Villa);
 B: Dylan Dog issue no. 1: Dawn of the living dead (DH 1999, cover art by Mike Mignola)

3.5 TRANSLATING HUMOUR IN COMICS



Peanuts 1957

Recognizing an occurrence of humour does not mean that we are able to understand why we have found a particular phrase funny. Historically, humour theories have been divided into various groups:

- incongruity,
- superiority
- relief theories.

Another division is also well established:

- **structuralist**,
- **semiotic**,
- **sociolinguistic**,
- **script-based** theories

However, these theories all give answers to why (or rather what for) we laugh but do not pinpoint particular elements which, when combined together, make one think that a phrase or a sentence is 'funny'. As this essay is very much practical-minded, I shall focus on the practical aspects of translating humour.

Laurian claims that "while verbal humour may not be translatable within strict formal equivalence, it can, depending on the capacity of a translator, be translated functionally" (Internet 8). Furthermore, because telling a joke makes a number of assumptions (both cultural and social) about the listener, the gap between SL and TL culture will define the boundary between translatability or rewriting (retelling) the joke to suit the otherness of TL culture.

Therefore, if we follow the division of jokes into

- Linguistic
 - Cultural jokes
 - Universal (unexpected, bizarre)
- (Raphaelson-West 130)

We will find that universal jokes might be the easiest to translate, cultural jokes depend on the proximity of cultures while the linguistic jokes may well have to be rewritten or adapted. Leppihalme finds that when translating wordplay, the translator has basically three options available: wordplay, some other rhetorical device or no wordplay (ibid.)

An interesting development in humour analysis is Attardo's General Theory of Verbal Humour. Attardo's hierarchy of knowledge resources helps the translator find any differences between SL joke and the translation so that mistakes can be corrected at any level of the hierarchy.

Script opposition

Logical mechanism

Situation

Target

Narrative strategy

Language

Joke text

“The higher up the difference is traced, the more dissimilar the joke”(Asimakoulas 823)

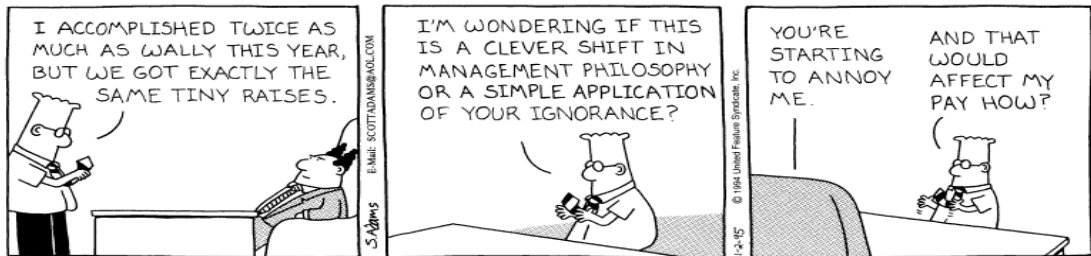
Another tool, perhaps a more practical one, is used by Dilbert's creator Scott Adams. In his blog he once revealed that in his creative process he uses a '2-of-6' theory of humour which divides plot elements into six categories:

- Cute
- Naughty
- Bizarre
- Clever
- Cruel
- Recognizable

In theory, a combination of any two elements should prove funny.



Cute + (all)
Clever + (the dialogue)



Dilbert by Scott Adams From the ClariNet electronic newspaper Redistribution prohibited info@clarinet.com

Recognizable + (a familiar office situation)
Clever + (Dilbert's rant and a rhetorical question)



Cute + (garfield)
Clever + (the earflaps made him hit Jon)
Cruel + (the hit)



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Recognizable + (the recent writers' strike)

Bizarre + (the king)

Clever + (the negotiation gambit)

Theoretically then, if we are able to keep the binary features positive in the target language, the end result should be equally funny. It appears that in the aforementioned comics the most difficult binary feature from the point of view of the translator is the recognizability. Even though the general public in Poland definitely heard about the writers' strike, there was much less coverage on that than in the US. Similarly, corporate life is much less familiar to an average comics reader in Poland and the other way round – the odds are rather against a high ranking manager in Warsaw reading Dilbert.

I have now presented some theory on translating humour together with some useful tools for checking if the result can be described as having an equivalent effect. However, what remains is the practical part of the task.

According to many veteran translators the biggest hurdle in translating humour appears to be the size of balloons, the multimodality of the genre and its intertextuality.

Therefore, translations of jokes and puns have to be concise or they must go and a loss occurs. There is no place to compensate the joke.

Zanetti gives us an example of Dylan Dog where many jokes cracked by one character have been deleted, which changes our perception of the main character, which should be one of a 'funny guy' as in the original version.



Zanettin explain that Groucho’s first sentence could be literally translated as “Do you know what twelve eskimos do at the North Pole?” Eskimos in Italian is “esquimesi”, which can be taken to be a compound word, formed by “esqui” and “mesi”, this latter word meaning “months”. Twelve “esquimonths” make an “esquieyear”, or “esquianno”. (Zanettin 10)

Moreover, the translator cannot just come up with a different joke as the accompanying picture shows us what is currently happening. It gets even worse if the humour is deeply enrooted in culture. Tomasz Pindel gives an example from a Spanish comics 'El gordo mutante del espacio exterior'. “The comics describes the adventures of an Earthling on a strange planet where everything happens the other way round than on Earth. In one episode the main protagonist gets kidnapped by two giant grapes while running out of the gym around midnight. Without an insight into Spanish culture this joke falls flat. In Spain there is a custom to eat twelve grapes on the dot of midnight on New Year's Eve, which ensures the eater's good fortune throughout the whole next year. (...) What can be done ? Should we do away with the joke altogether or come up with another one? But can we do either? (Skibińska 115). A visualized idiom puts the translator in a particular predicament.



Garfield, May 05, 1980

Pindel explains his stance on where a change or deletion is permissible. In *Mafalda*, a popular Spanish comic, one of the children is watching *Mafalda's* father whose behaviour they are finding more interesting than watching television. In the Polish translation one of the children says: You don't need to watch cartoons while in Spanish the child says: You don't need to hate ads. Such a change seems sensible – at the time there were no ads in Poland.

In another episode *Mafalda* and Miguelito meet a worker with a jackhammer. In the Polish version Miguelito says:

“Dziwny jest ten świat dorosłych. On za to “trrrr” bierze grube pieniądze, a człowiek oddałby nawet lizaka, żeby tak trrrrochę popracować”. (Pindel)

In the original (translated literally into English) he ruminates :

“Technological progress is way too slow. Dinosaurs would have so wanted to have one of these”.

One could wonder what prompted the translator to change the joke as it could be translated literally without any meaning loss.

Sometimes a pun goes uncompensated for, especially if it is a short comic strip where there is little room for the translator to use complex strategies. A good example is the following *Dilbert* strip, where “duh” inside “man-duh-tory gets lost in translation for



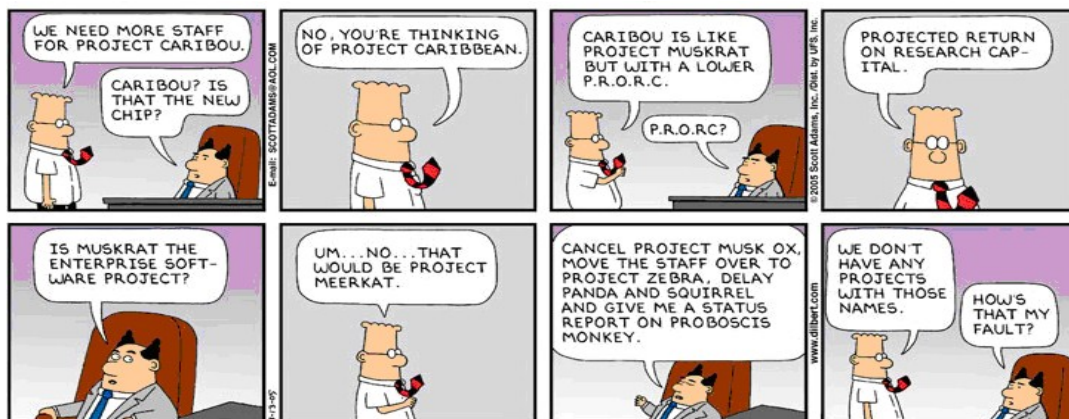
grammatical reasons as there are no infixes in the Polish language ⁹

⁹ Alternatively, the translator could have tried to make up an entirely new joke.



In practice, translators of comics strips often simply skip the ‘untranslatable’ and replace the troublesome strip with another one. A good example is the correlation between Dilbert comic strips in Gazeta Wyborcza and www.dilbert.com. Translations always appear two weeks before their appearance on Dilbert website but every now and again we get a translated strip which is chosen randomly from past strips. As weekend strips do not have a continuous plot, such a replacement does not have any consequences for the reader.

In the following strip the translator attempted to preserve the phonetic aspect of the original, the side effect of which is that the end result is not funny anymore.





Evidently, the translator either did not realize that caribou and muskrat are animal names or thought that the average Polish reader knows that karibu is a deer, ‘muskrat’ a funny-looking rodent and a meerkat is a bit like a lemur. As it is the first part of the cartoon, it forms no logical connection with the pointy-haired boss’ monologue about cancelling animal-named projects in the second part of the strip. Thus, the comics is a classic case of a ‘Dollerupian’ loss. In order to achieve some ‘gain’ , the translation would need to have a phrase with an added meaning to the TL reader, for instance:

Potrzebujemy nowych ludzi do projektu Kolczatka.

Kolczatka? Czy to nowy mikroprocesor?

Nie, masz na myśli projekt Kamczatka...

Kolczatka to to samo co jeż tylko z niższym pznb

Czy jeż to ...?

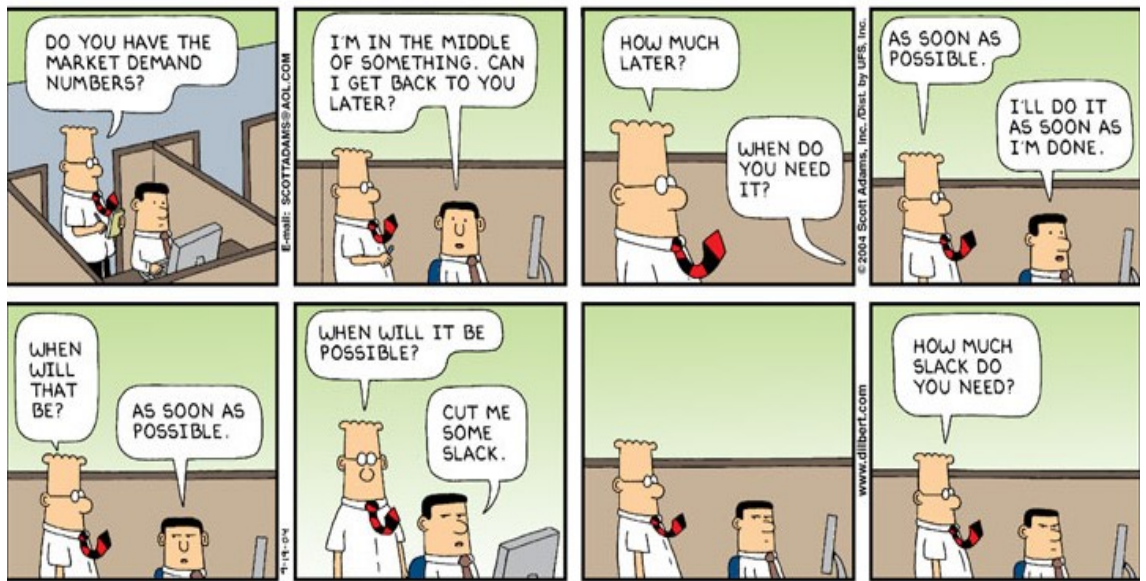
Nie, masz na myśli jerzyka

There are a number of possibilities: puchacz/puszczyk, kuna/kura, mrówka/mrówkojad etc.

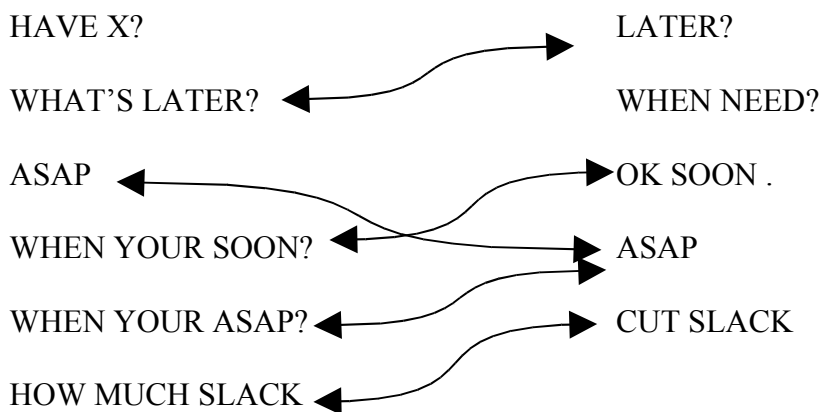
However, apart from the semantics we also need to pay attention to what I shall loosely call the ‘rhythm’ or “flow” of the dialogues. Rhythm is one of the elements on Antoine

Berman's list of source text characteristics which most often get 'lost in translation'.

Let's focus on the following strips



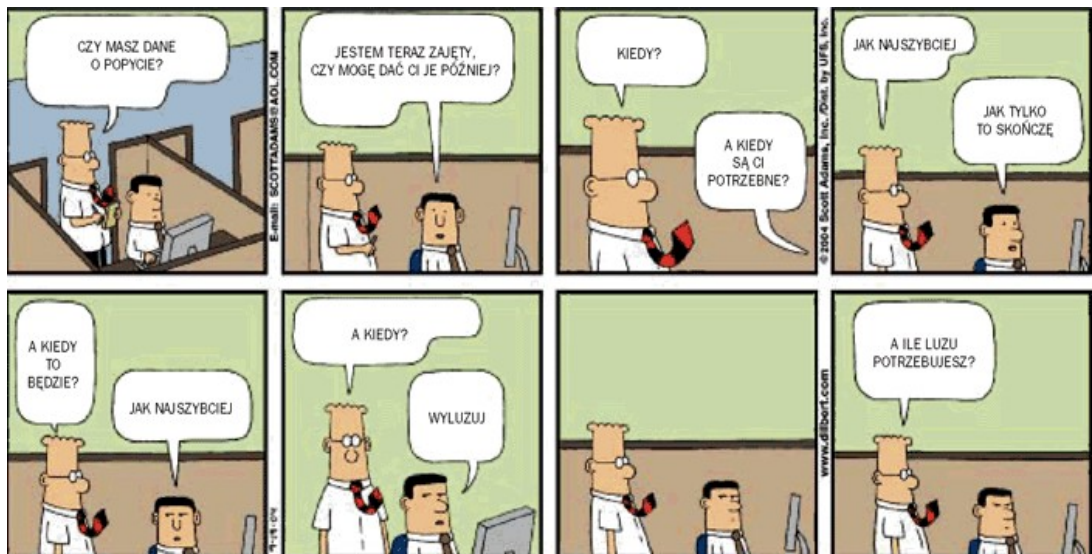
Here is a simplified model of this rather impatient conversation:



This 'bullet exchange' involves:

- 1) the use of utterances rather than full sentences with a verb which gives an aura of abruptness.
- 2) Repetitions of the words used by the interlocutor
- 3) a funny play on the idiom "cut me some slack" which is deliberately misinterpreted by Dilbert as an expression of a need.

Let's now have a look at the translation.



MASZ DANE?

PÓŹNIEJ?

KIEDY?

KIEDY POTRZEBUJESZ?

JAK NAJSZYBCIEJ

OK WKRÓTCE

A KIEDY TO BĘDZIE?

JAK NAJSZYBCIEJ

A KIEDY?

WYLUZUJ

ILE LUZU POTRZEBUJESZ?

As you can see almost all connections are gone – here words are not repeated and the idiom doesn't make sense as 'wyluzuj' is directed at Dilbert and is not an expression of a need.

For the translation to be successful, the analysis should read like this

MASZ DANE?

PÓŹNIEJ?

KIEDY PÓŹNIEJ?

KIEDY POTRZEBUJESZ?

JAK NAJSZYBCIEJ

OK WKRÓTCE

KIEDY JEST WKRÓTCE?

JAK NAJSZYBCIEJ

KIEDY NAJSZYBCIEJ?

<I HAVE A NEED>

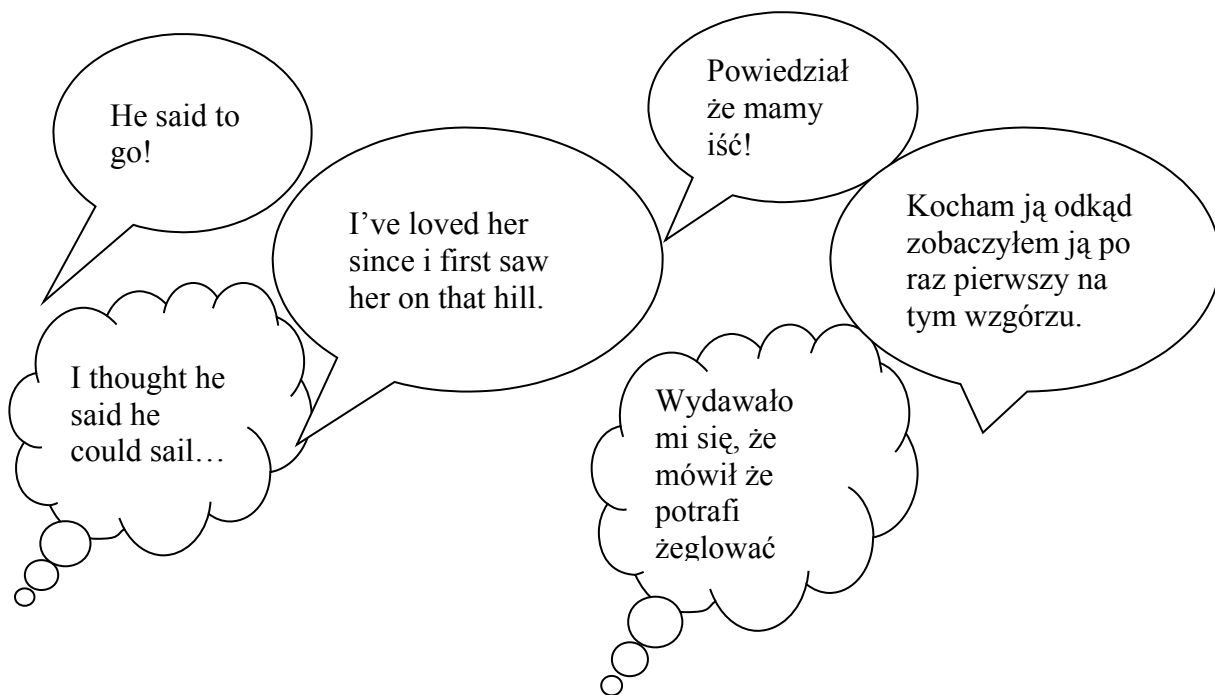
<HOW DO I FILL NEED> ?

AS IN:

Masz (może) dane o popycie?		<czy masz dane o popycie>
7 syllables		8 syllables
Sorki ale jestem zajęty. Za chwilę?		<Jestem teraz zajęty. Czy mogę dać ci je później?>
9	3	7 8
Za jaką chwilę?		<kiedy>
5		2
A na kiedy trzeba?		<A kiedy są ci potrzebne>
6		8
Prędko.		<jak najszybciej>
2		4
Dobra dam ci jak skończę.		<Jak tylko to skończę>
7		6
A kiedy skończysz?		<A kiedy to będzie>
5		6
Prędko.		<jak najszybciej>
2		4
Dałoby się prędzej?		<a kiedy>
6		3
Daj se siana.		<wyluzuj>
4		3
Ile siana?		<ile luzu potrzebujesz>
1		8
59	:	67

The suggested translation has fewer syllables which is very relevant if we remember the fact that in English not all syllables are accented and the text reads faster.

Another problem is that words in Polish are a bit longer than their English equivalents. Very often the translator must give up an idea just because the translated fragment wouldn't fit into the speech or thought balloon. Let's look at the following example:



In extreme cases the translator must sacrifice some information hoping the decision is not going to come back with a vengeance a couple of episode later. Alternatively, the translator can increase the size of the balloon or decrease the font size. Dilbert strip translation illustrates that technique quite neatly – the fonts are smaller and in some strips the panels have been enlarged and characters look slimmer. Retaining the original size would make the font look unreadable.



The author of the article 1970 edition of Aramco recalls how difficult it was to launch the Arabic edition of Superman: “Until translators and calligraphers (...) got the hang of it, the crisp English, neatly fitted into balloons often expanded into enough text to fill a pamphlet” Internet 18

Zanettin mentions another aspect of speech balloon translation. He notices that comic characters in some countries speak more than in others. Consequently, a translator aware of such ‘ethnopragmatic’ differences may employ a domesticating strategy and

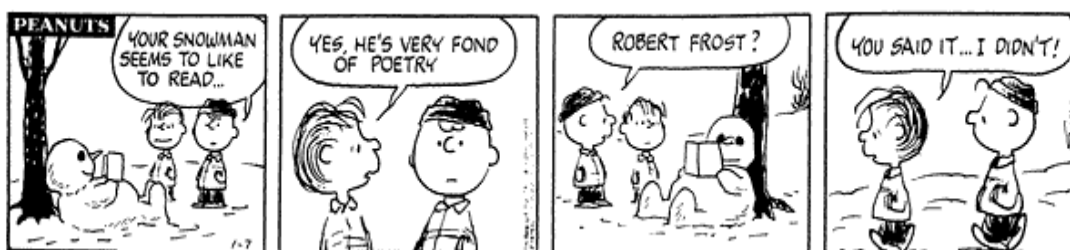
consequently eliminate excessive wordiness to make the comic sound and look more natural to the TL reader. Again, the example from Dylan Dog shows that Felix is slightly less loquacious than its Italian counterpart Groucho as well as the fact that there is more space left in the speech balloon in the American version. Since the plot is set in London, such changes seem desirable. The new audience expects British and American characters to avoid any unnecessary wordiness (as stated in the Gricean ‘be brief’ rule). Zanettin notices that the proportion of the text with respect to the images is lower, highlighting the action and requiring less reading time. (Zanettin 11)



A perceptive reader will notice two other differences, the first being the change of the font. The question has now become ‘quieter’ which signals another aspect of a standardizing or ‘internationalizing’ translation where certain national qualities disappear to give place to standard, expected traits.

The second difference is the disappearance of the moustache. This difference is also connected with the issue of the name change. Groucho has been dropped in favour of Felix as the name as well as certain images and postures of Groucho are copyright in the US. Hence the moustache loss (Zanettin 12)

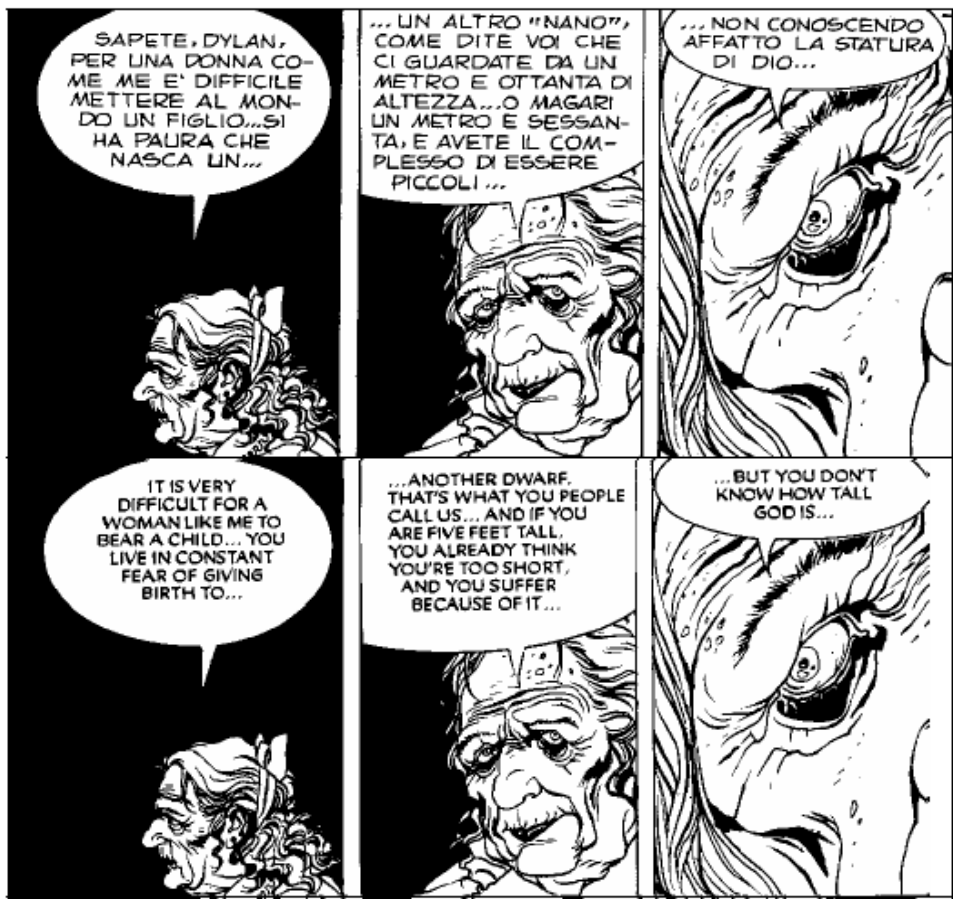
3.6 TRANSLATING CULTURE IN COMICS



Peanuts 1952

Some comics can be highly intertextual which poses another interesting dilemma for translators. Should references be domesticated or foreignized? To add an explanation at the bottom helps broaden readers' knowledge but destroys the rhythm of reading. If the reference had an element of humour in it, the explanation is unlikely to be funny for the reader where the original is probably a sidesplitter for an American. Translators of *V for Vendetta*, a comics presenting a dystopian image of Britain, had to grapple with the question of whether to replace certain "culture-laden" quotes or leave them thus risking the reader's less than perfect understanding of the plot. The first 'intercultural' change was replacing the title of chapter 1 – 'Europe after the reign' to 'Nowa wschodnia Brytania'. The reasoning was that the title which was a clear reference to Max Ernst's painting and an anticipation of developments in the plot would be too obscure for a Polish reader. To cap it all, there is a pun on the word 'reign' which the authors thought would be challenging to translate. The phrase 'Nowa wschodnia Brytania' may be clearer bearing in mind that a Polish high school leaver is more likely to recognize a reference to Aldous Huxley's masterpiece than to a painting. In another tome the translator changed the quote from a song by a cult band the Velvet Underground – 'I'm waiting for the man' to "czekam na sygnał z centrali – centrala nas ocali" - a quote from a song by a Polish cult band Brygada Kryzys. (Internet 7)

It's well worth asking the question if that decision was right. Does Brygada Kryzys evoke the same memories and feelings in Polish readers as the Velvet Underground in American readers? Are these equivalent concepts? Zanettin mentions the example from *Dylan Dog* where a clear reference to a famous Italian song was omitted in the translation.



Zanettin points out that “This quotation (“non conoscendo affatto la statura di Dio”, literally “not knowing how tall God is”) is very telling for an Italian reader, being deeply embedded in the Italian popular culture of the 1970s.¹⁵ The reference is missing in the American translation, and thus Tabitha’s sentence becomes only linked to her psychological experience, eliminating the added value this quote has for an Italian reader” (Zanettin 19)



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As you can see, it is one thing to recognize the rib-tickling reference to Shakespeare, it is quite another to translate it in a manner which will reflect the intertextuality of the strip while retaining the ‘funny’ factor.¹⁰ Alexis Siegel recalls a particular translation of Vampire Love where we have two female characters, Aspirine and Josacine. Aspirine worked fine in translation it being an international brand but Josacine only worked in French ‘because it’s a brand name for an antibiotic that became famous throughout France following a sordid murder case several years ago where someone had laced a Josacine cough syrup with cyanide.’ Siegel then goes on to explain his solution to the problem: “In the English version the older sister became Ritaline, seeing that the name vaguely reminds you of a certain stimulant that helps focus the attention of children, it seemed appropriate for this bombshell of a redhead who has that effect on men” (Internet 25)

Interestingly, even speakers of the same language might have difficulty recognizing words or taking them for brand names. Siegel’s favourite example is the translation of Pyongyang.

“At one point the author and narrator describes his weekly trip to the diplomatic mission in Pyongyang, the only shopping place that has a little bit of variety in the hermit country. He says he has an opportunity to buy a gift for his North Korean hosts, and his text bubble in the English version says ‘clopes or gnôle?’ What happened there is that the translator, a native of Quebec where Drawn & Quarterly is based, probably thought those two words were brand names, while in France they’re simply slang for ‘cigarettes or booze?’ Although Delisle is a Quebecker, he’s been in France many years and published his book for a French audience. And there’s even more of a difference in the French slang of Quebec and France than in the English slang of England and the US.” One cannot overestimate the effectiveness of search engines in looking up such words as even the first page of results leaves little doubt that gnole is a functional equivalent of booze in French.

This ability to recognize even the slightest of nuances is proof of the translators deep insight into the culture he translates from. The problem is that the reader might feel confused encountering references to, say, Polish symbols while reading a comics like V

¹⁰ As luck would have it, Poland has always been favoured with fast-talking and slow-thinking presidents and prime ministers bestowing on us such amusingly kinky remarks as : “Lewica jest jak prawa noga, prawica jak prawa noga, a ja jestem posrodku”.

for Victory whose whole idea is based so strongly on one of the seminal points in British history – the Guy Fawkes Conspiracy. Why would V quote Tomek Lipiński? Are such replacements a source of confusion for the reader? As usual, the answer depends on who the reader is. Elżbieta Skibińska ventured to find the answer to that question by asking small children what they thought about it on reading “Jacek i Tosia” - the Polish version of Tom Tom et Nana, a French popular comics. Here the translator chose to domesticise some aspects and foreignize the others offering us what Skibińska calls an “interworld” (Skibińska 100) , a world which shares the features of both French and Polish reality. Names have been changed so children are inclined to think that the comics tells a story of a Polish family yet might be puzzled by small details such as their staple diet – mutton with peas, a meal which is extremely rare in Poland. The children’s responses were very perceptive.

“Jacek and Tosia live in Poland, but not in Wrocław because houses here are different”
“they live in Poland but not a real Poland because they don't really exist” (103)

Skibińska notes that “Ilder children were slightly more inquisitive in wondering how it is possible that Jacek and Tosia live in some odd country where houses are different and where there is so many Black people” (103) Generally though we may observe a great deal of “suspension of disbelief” on the part of readers who are more than willing to deal with certain discrepancies between the reality and the world depicted in the comics. The decision to domesticate or foreignize should be made bearing in mind the target reader group but an occasional stray from the chosen path is not necessarily a mistake. It is a mistake, though, to apply a domesticating strategy to only some elements of a set which as a whole is heavily exotic, an example of which was one translation of Lord of the Rings with Frodo Bagoosz and Łazik among such outlandish names as Galadriela or Gollum.

Another example of culture laden concepts under translation can be found in the following cartoon





Dilbert: The treasury of Sunday Stories, 134

The very first question that strikes an average reader is “who is doctor kevorkian”. This infamous doctor is known for his steadfast support of euthanasia and claims to have aided 130 patients to that end (Internet 22). However, Dr Kervorkian is unknown to the Polish reader. Therefore, it would be a good idea to replace the name with a more familiar name or concept. If we assume that the translation was made around 2002 (which we cannot be sure of, though, as the book also came out in 2002), we might assert that the translator must have been aware of the nationwide scandal involving emergency services in Łódź (Wyborcza published its first big report on the case on January 23, 2002). Maybe if the intern tried to get through to ‘łódzkie pogotowie’ (or dr. G.) , the joke could strike a funnier chord. Of course, the odds are against finding a functional equivalent of every translation unit.



The obvious problem is that any ‘current’ or fashionable translation is going to fade into obscurity rather sooner than later ¹¹. Hence the unsuccessful translation of the following comics:

¹¹ However, the truth is that any comic strip usually needs to be understandable for as long as the newspaper remains away from the bin.



Frank Zappa's daughter, Moon Unit Zappa, certainly had an unusual name; the difficulty in rendering here a good 'gain only' translation lies in the fact that in Poland the tradition of giving children unusual names is virtually unknown. However, we do have a number of pup culture icons with funny nicknames and today the translator could simply translate "Moon Unit" to Doda which is evocative of eccentricity and flash. Again, such a translation would have to be redone every couple of years to keep it up-to-date.

3.6.1 VISUAL EVIDENCE OF CULTURE DIFFERENCES

In Chapter 1 I have demonstrated how the visual differences between Japanese and European can be revealed in statistical data. Those differences, however, are noticeable only in bulk and, more importantly, do not pose a difficulty for the reader in terms of understanding the plot. What is far less clear are culture-specific graphical elements used commonly in Japanese comics.” ...the greenish tint of nausea on a person’s face, common in the west, is replaced in Japan by greyishness and a set of lines over the upper part of a person’s face. Instead of a line of zz’s with the possible addition of a saw, it is a bubble of mucus from the character’s nose or mouth that indicates deep sleep. (...) humoristic anticlimax is indicated by the background being replaced by stars or similar elements and the characters being shown in postures of disappointment (Sjogren 42) Leaving such symbols untranslated means foreignizing the comics under translation.



Most of these are self-explanatory with the exception of super-deformation. This type of drawing is used if a situation is comical. The bigger the proportion of the head to the rest of the body, the more comical the situation is. In the picture above, the head is almost as big as the rest which suggests hilarity. (Internet 21) If we once again employ the theory of relevance, we could say that culture-specific visual symbols hold implicatures. Left untranslated (not redrawn) they theoretically lose their implicatures (no common ground) and constitute translation errors. However, the usage overrides the

theory and by no means should we even attempt redrawing faces so characteristic of the genre.

The complete list of all Japanese visuals is truly immense and it takes a long time to learn to be able to decipher all symbols. Among the less perspicacious one are the one where the character ‘loses colour’ and becomes black and white, blossoming cherries, enlarging ears and freezing faces. Fortunately, the context makes it easier to work out the significance of most symbols.



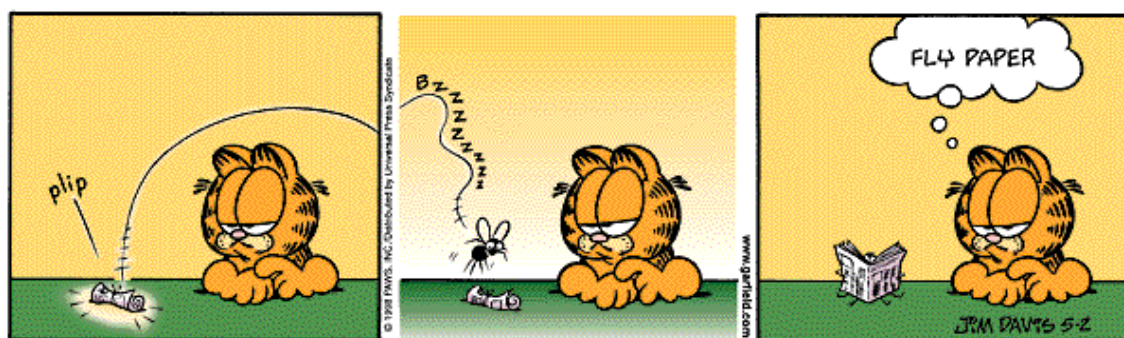
Occasionally, ideas (or sounds) may be expressed in hiragana symbols (zapożyczzone z www.) It is customary to translate them next to the symbol or at the bottom of the pages



It is very clear that the task of translating cultural references is a very tricky one and poses a lot of theoretical problems. First of all, how can we be sure that our translation has the same cultural status as the original phrase? Are Brygada Kryzys the cultural equivalent of the Velvet Underground? Are they as famous and universal so as to be recognized by every TT reader? Secondly, in many cases there are no equivalent concepts. The translation of dr Kevorkian into ‘łódzkie pogotowie’ might not be possible were it not for its felicitous time overlap. A few years before the translator could not have been able to translate it in this way. In a few years, though, the reference is going to become opaque. If we are stalwarts proponents of the idea that the translator’s task is to bring the text closer to the reader and not the other way round, we need to make our peace with the fact that since cultures are far from parallel, it may well be impossible to find equivalent terms and ideas. Of course every text can be changed or adapted to a varying extent but one would be hard put to define where a translation ends and adaptation begins.

3.7 Other issues in comics translation

Kaindl points to an interesting technique commonly used in Scandinavia: The comics is not translated but subtitled instead. We can think of this technique as constituting the equivalent of the pre-teach phase from the methodology of learning languages. The reader benefits from this strategy in that they learn the target language prior to reading so that their pleasure of reading is theoretically not interrupted by having to browse the comics to find the author's explanation or to look at the footnote. However, it seems that the vast majority of comics readers 'skip' the learning phase and start reading the strip before reading the subtitles and only on finding that they do not understand do they actually look them up. The example of this translation technique can be seen below.



GRA SŁÓW: FLY PAPER: 1. LEP NA MUCHY, 2. MUSZA GAZETA

Garfield, May 05, 1998

Another interesting, if a bit bizarre aspect of translating comics is the translation of idiosyncratic interjections. Some authors come up with funny ways for their characters to express their surprise or outrage. Such 'trademark' interjections as Stephen King's "Jesus Christ Bananas" , Alice from Wonderland's "Stuff and nonsense", "Leapin Lizards" linger in the reader's memory for years. An example of a well-known comic strip interjection is Good Grief, which forever puts us in the mind of Peanuts. It would seem almost blasphemous to "lose in translation" such a peculiarly endearing characteristic of one character. However, sometimes the translator will choose an unlikely technique of deleting such characteristic elements.



Dylan Dog's characteristic "Dancing Ballerina" is either deleted or translated as "Dear God", "Drop Dead", "Hey" or "What now". Readers who are familiar with the original may well feel disappointed as it is such peculiar details as create the ambience of the series. A similar "deletion" technique was used in making a comics based on Neil Gaiman's Neverland, where many of the main villains' favourite sayings from the book are nowhere to be found in the comics.

Another aspect to consider is the readers' expectations as to how certain phrases should be translated. Many comics fans have repeatedly expressed their wish to be consulted with in the translation process. In the situation where readers' level of expertise is not unlikely to be higher than that of the translator, such a wish is understandable. Thanks to such 'fandom feedback', Egmont publishing house was able to avoid a terrible botch up when it announced that it would be publishing a translation of "Animal Farm" as "Farma dla Zwierząt". Needless to say, comic pundits had a field day. In fact the lambasting was so severe that it provoked an irked response from Egmont who (in an aggressive-assertive manner) announced that they never issued a "Farma dla Zwierząt" and that the title would naturally be changed to "folwark zwierzęcy", and in the same announcement dutifully criticized its translator who should have known better.

SUMMARY

Comics translation is undoubtedly a process studded with obstacles but I strongly believe that by establishing some order, putting certain procedures in place and reviewing the translation it is possible to render a translation which can function in any culture and with any reader. Comics translation is long past its infancy and consequently there are few trails to blaze and brave new worlds to discover but there is a great deal to be done in the area of professional workmanship. If the comics has been read and examined in detail by a linguistically competent translator with an insight into both the source and the target culture as well as with a good grasp of translation theory, if enough thought has been given as to the prospective reader groups and appropriate translation strategies are employed with the help of a drawing team if necessary, the outcome can be nothing short of a success.

However, we are never at liberty to forget that comics are ultimately translated for buyers and it is their opinion and their demands that we as translators should take into account in the decision making process. It is my firm belief that the most important part of translating is being able to explain why a particular decision had been made and how it made reading a more satisfactory experience for most readers. Of course, in the end it is the buyers who vote with their feet and money.

Lastly, I am fully aware that this paper is far from comprehensive. While editing, one often makes painful choices and consequently there are many phenomena one could conceivably include in the scope of this paper, notably scanlations and translations of web comics. Similarly, it would be highly interesting to examine the actual step-by-step process of translation as carried out by students or professional translations against such factors as field-dependence and research the impact of formal translation teaching on the strategies employed in this process; one could also discuss the potential application of the ethnoprismatic theory to comics translations. I believe, though, that these are issues which, mostly for their complexity, need to be addressed elsewhere.

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Streszczenie pracy.

Praca jest próbą przedstawienia strategii i technik stosowanych w tłumaczeniu komiksów. Rozdział pierwszy wprowadza czytelnika w terminologię komiksową, a także zawiera skrót historii gatunku oraz jego typologię. W rozdziale drugim przedstawione są podstawy teorii tłumaczeń ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem terminów i zagadnień kluczowych dla prawidłowego omówienia kwestii tłumaczeń komiksu, która jest przedstawiona w rozdziale trzecim. Rozdział ten dyskutuje różne przykłady istniejących tłumaczeń w świetle istniejącego zaplecza teoretycznego oraz multimodalności komiksu - synergii wszystkich kanałów percepcji. Praca kładzie nacisk na konieczność uwzględnienia wielu czynników typowych dla gatunku komiksu m.in, różnic etnoprarmatycznych w procesie tłumaczenia, cech gatunku charakterystycznych dla komiksu 'narodowego', a także na potrzebę brania pod uwagę oczekiwań czytelnika ukształtowanych przez poprzednie tłumaczenia innych komiksów. Rozdział trzeci zawiera także propozycję procedury usprawniającej tłumaczenie komiksu.