

## PECULARITIES OF COMICS IN TRANSLATION PROCESS: COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF ENGLISH AND UZBEK LANGUAGES

Çeviri Sürecinde Çizgi Roman Özgünlüklerinin İngilizce ve Özbekçe  
Karşılaştırmalı Analizi

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**Öz:** Bu makale çeviride çizgi roman tanımı ve özelliklerini, onların çevirisindeki farklı dilbilimsel sorunları, İngiliz ve Özbek dilleri arasında karşılaştırmalar ile ve anekdot örnekleri incelemeyi hedefliyor.

**Anahtar kelimeler:** çizgi roman, yorum, karikatür, çeviri, kültür, üslup cihazlar, anekdotlar, edebiyat, işaretler, özel kültür, komik.

**Abstract:** This article examines the definition of comics, different linguist's issues, peculiarities of comics in translation and examples of anecdotes of comparisons between the English and Uzbek languages.

**Keywords:** comics, comments, cartoons, translation, culture, stylistic devices, anecdotes, literary, signs, culture-specific, funny.

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## INTRODUCTION

The present article is devoted to the study of comics in linguistics and translation process in English with their different peculiarities. As is known, there are various analysis of comics by different scientists, such as, L.S.Barxudarov, V.N. Komissarov, A.T.Kazakova, B.Martin, C.Nadine, O.M.Muminov.<sup>1</sup> The first examples of comics stories however, are much older than that. The end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century is traditionally considered to be the era in which comics began.

They can be found among the creations of the ancient cultures like Egyptians, Chinese or Greek. The Egyptian paintings of everyday life or the French Bayeux Tapestry depicting the Norman Conquest are basically sequential images with written comments and they can be considered to be the predecessors to comics.<sup>2</sup>

Comics are a literary and artistic form which is based on the interaction of two semiotic systems – pictures and writing. Thanks to its history and tradition it is a very culture-specific form as well. Both of these facts influence the process of translation and give it certain specifics of which a translator intending to translate comics should be aware.

Comic translation can be seen as an easy task and both the specifics of comics translation and the unique traits of comics are often neglected when possible difficulties of comics translation are considered. “A number of studies use comics mostly as a source of examples to discuss the translation of puns, proper names, onomatopoeias, citations, allusions and other features of language which are often found in comics but are not specific to them”.<sup>3</sup>

Even though the necessity to deal with the translation of onomatopoeic words, proper names etc. does not arise exclusively in comics translation, there are some specific usages of these forms which can be found only in comics and together with other various specifics of comic translation, they deserve a special attention.

For a translator it is useful not only to be aware of the specifics of comic translation, but also to understand comics. In that way s/he can make sure, that the quality of translation will not suffer.

For some people comics are a funny collection of cartoons aimed at children, for others it is a colorful magazine presenting superheroes aimed at adolescents and for another group of people it can be a profound art with a deep meaning aimed at adults.

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<sup>1</sup> Zanettin, Federico. “Comics in Translation Studies. An Overview and Suggestions for Research.” In Traduction et Interculturalisme. VIIe Seminaire de Traduction Scientifique et Technique en Langue Portugaise, Lisbonne, 15 novembre 2004, 93 – 98. Web.

<sup>2</sup> McCloud, Scott. Understanding Comics. New York: Harper Paperback, 1994. Print.

<sup>3</sup> Zanettin, Federico. “Comics in Translation Studies. An Overview and Suggestions for Research.” In Traduction et Interculturalisme. VIIe Seminaire de Traduction Scientifique et Technique en Langue Portugaise, Lisbonne, 15 novembre 2004, 93 – 98. Web.

In *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* published in 2005 “comics” are defined as “the section of a newspaper that contains COMIC STRIPS”; however, throughout the years comics developed from comic strips into a very variable art form. According to Zanettin’s opinion “Depending on the theoretical framework adopted and on the context in which the term is used, comics have been variously termed a ‘genre’, ‘medium’, ‘language’, ‘semiotic system’ etc.”<sup>4</sup>

William Eisner considers comics a form of “a sequential art” which he sees as a “means of creative expression, a distinct discipline, an art and literary form that deal with the arrangement of pictures or images and words to narrate a story or dramatic idea”<sup>5</sup>. In his work *Comics and Sequential Art* he discusses, together with periodical comics or graphic novels, instructional manuals and storyboards. His definition of comics encompasses works which are not considered as comics, for example, animations.

Scott McCloud in his work *Understanding Comics* starts his attempt at defining comics with Eisner’s definition and tries to narrow it down. He defines comics as “juxtaposed pictorial and other images in deliberate sequence intended to convey information and/or to produce an aesthetic response in the viewer”.<sup>6</sup> Both Eisner’s and McCloud’s definitions have in common one major flaw – they exclude works which are generally considered to be works of comics – single panelled cartoons.

“When comics are translated a change of genre, readership, publication format (or a combination of the three) may be involved which will then govern primary translation choices”.<sup>7</sup>

The textual elements of comics are then modified by the letterer – the translated text is put into balloons and the translated titles and the onomatopoeic expressions located outside the balloons are graphically changed. The letterer has to deal with several aspects that influence the reading of the comics: **special signs** (the placement of asterisks, breath signs, note signs etc) **the choice of font** (which should be as close to the original one as possible), **the visual disproportion of various language sign systems** (signs which overlap into the space between lines), **the disproportion of the text length of various languages, graphical renderings of the textual content**. Not only the letterer, but the translator also, should pay attention to these aspects when translating, because his translation choices, as far as these aspects

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<sup>4</sup> Zanettin, Federico. “Comics in Translation Studies. An Overview and Suggestions for Research.” In *Traduction et Interculturalisme. VIIe Seminaire de Traduction Scientifique et Technique en Langue Portugaise*, Lisbonne, 15 novembre 2004, 93 – 98. Web.

<sup>5</sup> Eisner, Will. *Comics and Sequential Art*. Tamarac: Poorhouse Press, 2000. Print.

<sup>6</sup> McCloud, Scott. *Understanding Comics*. New York: Harper Paperback, 1994. Print.

<sup>7</sup> Zanettin, Federico. “Comics in Translation Studies. An Overview and Suggestions for Research.” In *Traduction et Interculturalisme. VIIe Seminaire de Traduction Scientifique et Technique en Langue Portugaise*, Lisbonne, 15 novembre 2004.

are concerned, can make the letterer's job easier or more difficult and subsequently they may improve or worsen the overall impression of comics.

As soon as the matter of what is unnecessary for the translator to translate is settled, and the question of the degree of adaptation resolved, the translator proceeds with the translation. Peter Newmark in his *Paragraphs on Translation* lists "a golden rule for translating comics strips"<sup>8</sup> coined by Anthea and Derek Hockridge:

Keep the feel of the original.

Don't try to translate puns literally. Make a different joke to fit the spirit of the French one.

Make sure the English fits the drawings [and diagrams in technical texts], particularly facial expressions

Have roughly the same number of jokes – knockout and literary – even if they aren't quite in the same places as in the original strip.

Comics are of various genres and use various narrative techniques. Texts in comics usually appear in balloons, in caption boxes, as titles and as linguistic pare texts.<sup>9</sup> All these forms may seem as limiting and separating text into smaller independent units.

Here we can see some examples:

*Once a sparrow was flying and suddenly it crashed a motorcyclist and it lost its senses. Then a boy brought it home and cleaned it, and then he put it in the case. When the sparrow opened its eyes it lay in the case. And it said: "It is pity, the motorcyclist is dead".*

Let's pay attention to Uzbek translation of this anecdote:

*Бир куни чумчуқ учиб кетаётган экан бир матсеклчига урилиб кетибди ва ҳушидан кетибди. Бир бола уни уйига олиб бориб яшиглаб тозалаб қафасга солиб қўйиб олди дон, сув қўйибди. Чумчуқ кўзини очиб қараса қафасда ётибди ва ўзига дермиш: "Эҳ, аттанг, матсеклчи ўлибдида".*

This comic text is called an anecdote. It is written in easy language. If we translate it we can use the translation method-word by word translation. The personification type of stylistic device is used in this anecdote. That's why, it is very funny.

Here is another example. This anecdote is from collections of Uzbek national humor by the character Nasriddin Afandi:

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<sup>8</sup> Peter Newmark. Approach to translation. New York: 1980. p.78-80

<sup>9</sup> Celotti, Nadine. "The Translator of Comics as a Semiotic Investigator." In Comics in Translation. Manchester: St. Jerome Publishing, 2008.

*Бир куни Афанди эшагига тескари миниб кетаётган экан бир киши сўрабди:*

*-Эй Афанди, сиз қизиқ экансиз, нимага эшагингизга тескари миниб олдингиз? –деса, Афанди жавоб берибди:*

*-Сиз сўраманг мен айтмай, мен бу кишини хафа қилиб қўйдим, шунинг учун уларни юзларига қарай олмаяпман.*

Let's pay attention to English translation of this anecdote:

*Once Afandi was riding back to front his own donkey and a man asked for him: Eh, Afandi, you are foolish though, why are you riding back to front your own donkey? Then Afandi answered:*

*I am ashamed of it very much. I made it distressed. That's why; I cannot look at its face.*

If we analyze this text we can say it is an anecdote. It is translated with the method of word by word translation. The personification type of stylistic device is used in this anecdote. The donkey is an animal. But, Afandi tried to personify it to be funny. Afandi was always with his donkey according to the legends. He approached his donkey like he approached people. In reality, we don't consider animals to be people. We don't respect them as a person. We make different anecdotes with using animals as a character to be funny.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, we can say that the article presented should increase the awareness of the specifics of comic translation and improve translators' understanding of comics. Prior to the publication of comics, every publisher has to decide whether to preserve the original format in which the comics was published.

Finally, the analyses of comic translations presented here show that the specifics of comic translation do not differ substantially for various types of comics. The variety of the specifics exemplified in the analyses actually shows that the translator can encounter any specific introduced here in any kind of comics. Yet, the translator can encounter some specificities more often in certain types of comics. For example, if all three analyzed comics are compared from the point of view of pictures being constraints for the translator, this comparison reveals that pictures are more often a limiting constraint for the translator of comic strips than for the translator of regular fantastic comic book stories.

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