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NAVIGATING SPECIFICS OF COMICS TRANSLATION INTO ENGLISH, UKRAINIAN AND GERMAN

Abstract

This article examines the specifics of translating comics into English, Ukrainian, and German, highlighting the unique challenges and techniques required for each language pair. Comic translation extends beyond mere textual conversion, and as it concerns the intricate interplay between linguistic adaptation, imagery, and cultural nuances, it requires an approach that balances humor, colloquialisms, visual elements, and cultural references while maintaining the integrity of the original narrative. The study explores specific features and methods in translating comics across the languages under analysis, focusing on the adaptation of proper names (including transliteration and transcription in compliance with the orthographic and phonetic norms of the target language, as well as calque translation of proper names taking into account word-formation patterns), specific onomatopoeic expressions and grammatical features of the languages under consideration. Particular attention is given to cross-linguistic similarities and differences, highlighting the importance of taking them into concideration during translation particularly the one of comics. The research is based on a comparative analysis of Neil Gaiman's graphic novel *The Sandman* and its Ukrainian and German translations, examining both successful translation strategies and the challenges encountered in the process.The study explores the role of the translator in preserving the narrative integrity, tone, and impact of the original work while ensuring accessibility and engagement for the target audience. Special attention is given to how the design elements of *The Sandman*, such as panel layouts, color schemes, and typography, interact with the translated dialogues, maintaining the original aesthetic while ensuring clarity and emotional impact for the audience. Through case studies and examples, this article provides insights into the art of comic translation, shedding light on how language, culture, and visual storytelling intersect in the creation of a localized comic experience.

Keywords: comics, translation, onomatopoeia, proper names, linguistic adaptation, cultural references, visual storytelling.

Анотація

У статті розглянуто особливості перекладу коміксів англійською, українською та німецькою мовами, висвітлено унікальні виклики та прийоми, необхідні для кожної мовної пари. Переклад коміксів виходить за межі простої лінгвістичної трансформації, оскільки він стосується складної взаємодії між мовною адаптацією, образністю та культурними нюансами і вимагає підходу, який збалансовує гумор, розмовну лексику, візуальні елементи та культурні посилання, зберігаючи цілісність оригінального наративу. У статті описано особливості й методи перекладу коміксів досліджуваними мовами з акцентом на адаптацію власних назв (включаючи транслітерацію та транскрипцію з дотриманням орфографічних і фонетичних норм мови перекладу, а також калькування власних назв з урахуванням словотвірних моделей), специфічних випадків звуконаслідування та граматичних особливостей досліджуваних мов. Значну увагу приділено міжмовним подібностям і відмінностям, підкреслено важливість їхнього врахування під час перекладу, зокрема, коли йдеться про комікси. Дослідження ґрунтується на порівняльному аналізі графічного роману Ніла Ґеймана "The Sandman" та його українських і німецьких перекладів.

Розглянуто як успішні перекладацькі стратегії, так і виклики, що виникають у процесі перекладу. У дослідженні окреслено роль перекладача в збереженні наративної цілісності, тональності та впливу оригінального твору, забезпечуючи при цьому доступність і залучення цільової аудиторії. Особливу увагу приділено тому, як елементи дизайну "The Sandman", такі як розміщення панелей, кольорові гами та шрифти, взаємодіють з перекладеними діалогами, зберігаючи оригінальну естетику, водночас забезпечуючи зрозумілість та емоційний вплив на аудиторію. На конкретних прикладах у статті подано уявлення про мистецтво перекладу коміксів, висвітлено те, як взаємодіють мова, культура й візуальна розповідь у створенні локалізацій коміксів.

Ключові слова: комікси, переклад, ономатопея, власні назви, мовна адаптація, культурні відсилки, візуальна розповідь.

Introduction. Comics translation research and analysis are becoming increasingly relevant due to several key factors, such as the growing importance of comics as a cultural force, the unique challenges associated with their translation, and the impact of globalisation and digitalisation. Comics have long evolved from niche entertainment to a widely recognised and influential medium, appealing not only to children but also to a diverse adult audience. This growing interest has led to an increased demand for their translation, which in turn has revealed the specific challenges of translating this genre. Comics combine visual and verbal elements, requiring translators to consider not only linguistic accuracy but also the preservation of visual and narrative integrity. This multimodal nature requires a specialised approach to translation. Furthermore, the globalisation of culture and the advancement of digital technologies have further accelerated the need for comic book translation. With comics increasingly being consumed across borders, it is important to make them available through translation. For example, the well-known US-South Korean webcomic platform WEBTOON offers its users a variety of titles in more than 30 languages, many of which are translated, as digital platforms have also facilitated the distribution of translated comics, expanding their audience globally.

All the aspects mentioned above contribute to the relevance of this study. By understanding the specific nuances of comics translation, researchers and translators can develop effective strategies to ensure that translated comics retain their artistic and cultural value for a diverse global audience. By analyzing selected translations of Neil Gaiman's "Sandman. Preludes & Nocturnes" – namely, the Ukrainian version "The Sandman. Пісочний чоловік. Том 1. Прелюдії і ноктюрни" translated from English into Ukrainian by Olena Oksenych and the German version "Sandman – Präludien und Notturni" translated into German by Gerlinde Althoff, – this article aims to examine key translation strategies and their effectiveness in preserving the artistic and cultural essence of the original work.

Literature review. The translation of comics into various languages has garnered significant scholarly interest among both foreign and domestic scholars. Among Ukrainian researchers, comics have been studied by Kosmatska (2012), Hudoshnyk (2017), and Bielov (2018). In light of limited data in this area, some scholars, for instance, Morozova and Pozharnytska (2023) drew upon established theoretical frameworks and empirical findings from related fields (i.e. computer games translation) to expand their analysis. Despite the fact that comics first gained considerable popularity abroad, in particular in the United States, the theoretical aspect of comic book translation is a relatively new field of study, its foundations laid by the works of Kaindl (1999), Zanettin (2008), and Celotti (2008). These scholars, as well as others from mostly non-English-speaking countries, have made significant contributions to the theoretical understanding of comic book translation. For example, Celotti (2008) aptly compares the comic book translator to a "semiotician", i.e. a scholar of signs, emphasising the multimodal nature of comics. Sommer (2015) also attempted a holistic approach to the analysis of comic book translation, exploring the relationship between nonverbal signals and cognitive linguistics in the translation process.

In the Ukrainian context, research on comics translation remains underdeveloped. Several factors contribute to this, including lack of development of Ukrainian-origin comics and the relative "youth" of comics translation into Ukrainian.

At the same time, comic book translation is becoming increasingly important in Ukraine, in particular, due to the growing demand for graphic novels and the expanding number of publishers engaged in this field. In 2020 alone, 163 comics were published in Ukraine, most of which were translated from English (Kurinnyi, 2020). As of 2023–2024, the number of new translations is only growing. Publishers are actively filling niches, offering Ukrainian readers more and more translated works, in particular from the Western comics industry, as well as working on original Ukrainian projects. This trend not only promotes cultural exchange but also helps to increase the popularity of comics among the general public in Ukraine.

Being aimed at a broad mass audience, comics often experience cyclical fluctuations in popularity. Thus, their ideas go from being actualised and becoming trends to the moment when interest in the genre gradually decreases, and even a certain "fatigue" of the genre arises (Hudoshnyk, 2017). Scholars can analyse comics as a cultural phenomenon that reflects social and psychological trends. However, scholars often overlook the specifics of translating comics as a special multimodal genre, especially when comparing several languages.

The aim of our research is to study the specifics of comic book translation from English, Ukrainian and German, as well as to identify the main challenges faced by translators, and to identify effective methods and strategies for adapting text and visual elements. The article aims to explore how to preserve the artistic integrity of the original work, taking into account the linguistic, cultural and genre specifics of each language. Additionally, the research seeks to define the role of the translator in preserving the emotional and stylistic expressiveness of the work. The primary **tasks** of this study include identifying the key difficulties faced by translators when translating comics from English, Ukrainian and German, as well as to analyze the strategies used by translators to adapt textual elements and visual components to ensure their perception in a different cultural and linguistic context.

The research employs the methods of continuous sampling and analysis. The comparative method was used to study the English, German and Ukrainian versions enabling a systematic analysis of translation techniques and their impact on meaning and reception.

Results and discussion. Comics translation is a distinctive field that requires not only linguistic skills, but also a deep understanding of cultural contexts, artistic features, and communication nuances. A comparative study of the original text and the translation can provide insights into how cultural identities are constructed, communicated, and negotiated in graphic narratives. Recognising the identity of the narrator's voice in a translated comic strip is consistent with the fact that translation is not only the result of the translator's work with the target language but also the work of the recipient culture (Altenberg, Tilmann & Owen, 2017).

Before starting the analysis, it is necessary to define what constitutes a comic. Several interpretations exist, but broadly, comics function as a multimodal communication medium that integrates images, words, and their sequences. Comics are institutionalised, i.e., there are established and fixed patterns; in the United States, for example, this happened through popular comic book publishers such as DC and Marvel (Kukkonen, 2013).

According to the Cambridge Dictionary, a comic is "a magazine or book that contains a set of stories told in pictures with a small amount of writing". In the past, comics often served as entertainment, where a humorous tone was the main element, as is seen even from the etymology of the word itself: "comic" means "related to comedy". However, modern comics are less associated with comedy. With the development of genres and themes, comics have

become more serious, sometimes even tragic. Many works now address social, political, or psychological issues, for example, famous comics like "Batman: The Dark Knight Returns" by Frank Miller or "Watchmen" by Alan Moore. Similarly, Ukrainian-language comics have also evolved from purely entertaining and child-oriented, such as Anatoliy Vasylenko's "Пригоди Тимка-Звіролова (eng. Adventures of Tymko, the Beastmaster)" (1970), to Oleksandr Koreshkov's "Серед овець (eng. Among the Sheep)" (2016 to present), which raises philosophical themes. Comics work as a way of communication because they tell stories in a certain way, combining images and words. Cohn (2013) conceptualizes comics as a "visual language" rather than just a mode of expression.

In addition to comics proper, a variation of them, graphic novels, has now gained popularity. In the West, the term "graphic novel" was first popularised by Will Eisner in 1978 with the publication of "A Contract with God", and then, starting in the 1980s, it was used to refer to works such as "Maus. Confessions of a Survivor" (1986–1991) by Art Spiegelman, which won the Pulitzer Prize.

Comics translation is more than just transferring the meaning of a text or spoken word from one language to another. It's a synthesis of creativity, cultural adaptation, and the ability to preserve the emotional power and visual expressiveness of the original. Successful translation requires not only knowledge of the language, but also a deep understanding of the context, humor, style, and specifics of the comic genre. Mohamed (2016) reflects on the self-translation of his webcomic "Qahera" from English into Arabic, showing the transformations the original work underwent to adapt the story of the adventures of a Muslim superheroine fighting Islamophobia and misogyny to a different culture and audience.

Comics have several characteristic features that help convey mood and emotions. These include the use of different formats and special fonts to display the intonation of statements and dialogues. Authors use a variety of graphic techniques, where the only limit is their own imagination. The most popular method of conveying the content of a message is to use boldface fonts that emphasise important ideas and key points. For a comprehensive and complete analysis of comic book translation, all factors should be taken into account, which may relate not only to the text itself but also to "the unique facets raised by comics' multimodality, the "co-deployment and interplay" (Zanfei, 2008).

Below the key aspects that determine the specifics of translating comics into English, Ukrainian, and German are considered. When translating comics, it is necessary to take into account the cultural context. Comics often contain elements that reflect the specifics of the culture in which they were created. Jokes, references to popular culture, social norms, and even political contexts can only be understood by native speakers. When translating, it is important to adapt these elements so that the reader can understand them.

Jokes and idioms often lose their meaning in direct translation. The translator can use similar jokes in the target language or create new ones that are appropriate to the context but remain humorous to the reader.

Another aspect that can cause difficulties in translation is graphic elements. Comics combine text and pictures, so a translator has to take into account not only words but also visual content. The size of text blocks, the design of dialogues the and the so-called "bubbles" can affect the final look of the comic. For example, short Ukrainian phrases can fit into the allocated area, while longer ones may require design adjustments. The text in comics is limited by space, so one needs to be able to compress ideas while retaining their meaning. In comics, text often interacts with illustrations. The translator should take into account how changing the text will affect the perception of the pictures.

A speech bubble, also referred to as a speech balloon, is a graphic convention used in comics to represent what a character is saying. A speech bubble consists of two parts:

the bubble itself, where the text is placed, and its tail, which points towards the speaker. Conventionally, a speech bubble is a white oval of various proportions with a black outline. Depending on the intonation, a speech bubble can have a different shape: when a character shouts, the bubble around the words is drawn as an asterisk, and the words are in bold italics or written in a different font, with the words bursting out of the bubble for extremely loud screams or animal roars. Bubbles also come in a variety of "thought bubbles" that represent the thoughts of characters.

Speech bubbles can range from serious to comical. Each bubble conveys not only the text, but also emotions, mood, and tone. Therefore, the translator must adapt the utterances so that they organically fit into the overall style and tone of the comic. The style of the original text can vary from formal to colloquial. The translator must preserve this style to convey the atmosphere and emotion of the comic. This is especially important for genres where style is a key element (for example, in a thriller).

Different comics may have different target audiences. For example, comics intended for children require simpler and more straightforward language, while adult comics may include more complex topics and vocabulary. The translator should take into account who the publication is intended for. Then it becomes possible to convey highly stylised vocabulary with more neutral equivalents in the target language.

Comic book translation is a complex and multifaceted process that requires creativity and attention to detail. A successful translation not only conveys the meaning of the original but also adapts it to a new culture while preserving the artistic value of the work. For example, in Neil Gaiman's graphic novel "The Sandman", the balloons have different colours, enhancing the narrative structure. White bubbles stand for people's dialogues, yellow background indicates memories and dreams, and black background is used for the Dream Lord himself. When translating, it is important to preserve this visual illustration, as it helps the reader navigate the narrative structure. Also, the keywords are highlighted in bold, which is appropriate to take into account when translating, as it was done in the Ukrainian translation. The German translation partially omits this technique, leaving it only in the most emotional moments, such as Sandman's conversation with Alex Burgess, but omitting it in less emotional moments (such as the description of the sea and sand).

Such a change is a rather subjective decision, because, for example, in the same scene with the sea and the beach, one of the bolded words is *"SAND"*, which hints at and foreshadows the name of the main character who has not yet revealed his name – *"Sandman"* (a literary technique called foreshadowing). However, in German, even despite the identical spelling of the word (*"SAND"*), there is no bolding.

Translating a speech bubble in a comic book is a complex process that requires the ability to combine linguistic skills with a creative approach. A successful translation not only preserves the meaning of the original but also conveys its atmosphere, which is key to creating a high-quality comic in a new language.

Ukrainian and German have a high degree of inflexion and specific sentence structures, which can lead to longer translated sentences than the original text. This can create significant problems when translating media with limited space, such as comics. Consequently, translators must take into account the visual component of the translation and find creative solutions to fit longer text into the existing space, often requiring hyphenation, adjustments to font size, line spacing, or even the layout of the panels themselves. For example, on page 24, there are two instances of hyphenation in the German translation: *"ken-nen"* and *"wirkungs-los"*. Both of them are correct (according to the hyphenation rules in the Duden dictionary), but they have a small aesthetic flaw: they are the only parts of a word in the last

lines of their bubbles. This could have been avoided by reducing the font size, but then the font size in different bubbles on the same page would have been different.

Sometimes, due to the limited space of speech bubbles, translators resort to omitting some information or shortening it. For example, in the original *"Oh my Lord, oh my Lord"* is repeated twice, while in the German translation *"Oh mein Gebieter"* (Gaiman, 2007, p. 19) is used only once, given the complex morphological structure of the word and, as a result, its length, but leaving the main information, because the refrain does not add the semantic load, and its stylistic function is compensated by the preserved repetition of *"Komm"*. On the other hand, the opposite is also possible when the source text is shorter than the original, which forces you to leave half the space in the bubble empty.

Sometimes the graphic composition makes translation virtually impossible, forcing translators to leave the text in the original language and resort to notes, such as the title of the chapter *"Sleep of the Just"* on page 20 in the German edition, which is left in English and translated in the bubble by the authors, because each letter of the words "sleep" and "just" is graphically arranged in a separate rectangular bubble, and the German translation of *"Der Schlaf der Gerechten"* is much longer than the original. Adapting the layout to the style of the original would require redrawing most of the page and changing the proportions.

At the phonological level, one of the primary challenges in comic book translation is the rendering of onomatopoeia, or linguistic imitation of sounds. Graphic works are filled with the sounds of fighting, screaming, shouting, etc. Translating onomatopoeia from one language into another is one of the most difficult tasks in literary translation, especially when it comes to comics, where sound has not only phonetic but also graphic embodiment. In comics, sounds are often conveyed through specialised expressions that reflect not only the sound itself, but also its emotional colouring, the context of the situation, and the speed or intensity of the event. Many sounds depicted in comics have cultural specifications that may not be understood or exist in a different form in another language. For example, a sound that describes an explosion or impact may have different phonetic forms depending on culture or sound associations. In one linguistic context, it may be *"bam!"* or *"boom!"*, while in another it may be *"quack!"*, *"pop!"*, etc., as in German, where the English *"uh"* can be rendered as *"äh"* or *"uh"*. Basically, translators use transliteration or transcription or find an equivalent. It is important that the sound not only conveys the essence but is also emotionally coloured according to the context. However, if a translator uses an equivalent that is not quite accurate, it may lose the emotional connotation of the original. For example, a sound that expresses shock or fear may require the use of certain sounds that are associated with these emotions in a given culture.

Onomatopoeia in comics is often not only textual elements but also graphic ones, meaning that their shape and style can emphasise the intensity of sound. The translator must find the right word and take into account its interaction with the graphic design. For example, in "the Sandman", the exclamation *"No!"* is not only written in bold but also highlighted in red, which reinforces it. The German *"NEIN"* also retains the formatting of the original, but uses a different shade of dark pink.

Comics may include specific sounds that are difficult to translate due to the lack of a corresponding analogue. For example, a sound that imitates air fluctuations, or specific sounds for fantastic or absurd situations (e.g., sounds of magic or mythical creatures). In this case, the translator may have to invent new words, which requires creativity and a deep understanding of the context. For example, the translation of *"SNUR. NO. NO... NO... PLEASE. URF. SHUJ. JM."* into *"ХРРР. НІ. НІ… НІ… ПРОШУ. ХРФ. ША. ХМ."* in the Ukrainian translation and *"SCHNF. NEIN. NEIN... NEIN. SCHNF. BITTE. URF. JM."* in German (p. 52). Here, the translators used transcoding to convey the character's sleepy speech.

The translation of the onomatopoeia *"Shusshhh…"* as *"Тссссссс…"* is an interesting example of the adaptation of sound elements of language. The original *"Shusshhh"* conveys a quiet sound, which is usually used to calm someone down or indicate the need for silence, and this effect is preserved in the translation by using *"Тссссссс…"*. The Ukrainian version accurately reproduces the meaning and tone of the original, as the sound of *"Тссссссс…"* is associated with the same gesture of calming or warning about silence. The German version retains the same sound as in the original – *"Schschscht"* – because in this case, the onomatopoeia of the two cognate languages coincides, unlike the translation of *"khoff"* (the sound of coughing on page 32) as *"hust"*, which is the correct version of the sound imitation in German. In the translation of onomatopoeia from Ukrainian into English, one can notice certain differences in the way sounds are rendered through letters. For example, the Ukrainian *"БУФ"*, which reproduces the sound of a blow or explosion, is rendered in English as *"Bang"*, which has a similar sound and conveys the impression of a loud sound. The sounds of *"Вжух"*, describing the fall of an aeroplane, are transformed into the English *"Whooosh"*, reflecting the speed and movement of air, and *"БУМ"*, the sound of an explosion, is rendered in English as *"Boom"* – short and expressive. The sound of a helicopter, the Ukrainian *"Трр"*, is transformed into the English *"Thith-thith-thith"*, which tries to convey the characteristic rhythmic thumping of the blades. In each case, the translation not only captures the sound itself but also tries to preserve its emotional perception in another language culture. Overall, the translation of onomatopoeia in comics requires a multidimensional approach, balancing linguistic adaptation, cultural context, and visual integration.

When translating comics, lexical features play an important role in preserving humour and style, as well as in conveying the author's intent. Among these, proper names and titles are of the greatest interest, as they often carry a symbolic or lexical meaning. When translating, it may be necessary either to leave the name unchanged (especially if it has become a symbol) or to adapt it to the language.

Syniavska (2023) identifies calquing as the most productive way to translate names, also because it is possible to convey the meaning of the name. For example, *"The Endless"* became *"Безмежні"* in Ukrainian and *"Ewigen"* in German, which perfectly conveys the connotations of their name. Also, *"Death"*, *"Dream"*, *"Desire"*, *"Destiny"*, *"Despair"*, and *"Delirium"* were translated into Ukrainian as *"Смерть"*, *"Сон"*, *"Снага"*, *"Судьба"*, *"Страждання"*, *"Схибленість"*. The fact that the English names begin with the letter *d*, which ties the characters together, remains a challenge. In the Ukrainian translation, they managed to preserve this by choosing equivalents that begin with the letter "с". The German translation took a different approach, resorting to transliteration, thus preserving the alliteration. Calquing is also used to translate names of places and phenomena/fictional realia: *Dreamtime – Сно-час, Час снів, Traumzeit; the Dreamworld – Світ снів, Traumreich, the Witching hour – Відьомська година, Geisterstunde*. The translation of morphologically complex words is not difficult when translating into German, as the language is characterised by the compounding of stems as a form of word formation. For instance, the translation of *"the witching hour"* as *"Geisterstunde"*, despite it not being a literal equivalent (Geisterstunde is literally "the hour of ghosts"), is a well-established expression in German that denotes the same concept. However, in this context, such a translation loses the hint of the phenomenon's name to the actual character (the Hecateae), which can be associated with a witch/witches, but not with ghosts.

Ukrainian and German translators also often make good use of transliteration and transcription, particularly for names of characters, places, or mythological figures, such as *Gregory – Ґреґорі, Gregory*; *Gormigom – Гормагон, Gormigom*; *Ganimead – Ганімед, Ganymed*. This way, names become universal because they do not depend on the language.

The main disadvantage of transliteration is the difficulty of reading names by foreign readers. In this case, names are often modified to come closer to the phonetic norms and rules of the target language. It is also important that the translation preserves the nationality of the characters.

In some cases, however, the traditional means of the name translation mentioned above can prove to be insufficient, as with the translation of the name *"the Hecateae"*. In the original, *"the Hecateae"* is a derivative of the name *"Hecate"*, an ancient Greek goddess associated with magic, crossroads, and spiritual worlds. In the context of the comic, this is the name of three characters that are one. However, in Ukrainian, it was translated as *"Геката"*, which does not indicate plurality but is commonly used. In German, the plural, *"die Hekaten"*, was preserved by using the typical German ending for the feminine plural, "-n", since Hekate is a feminine name in the singular. The translation of *"The One Who Is Three"* as *"Одна, що є трійцею"* conveys a complex metaphysical concept. In classical mythology, Hecate is often described as a "triune" deity – one in three aspects: a girl, a mother, and an old woman. That is why the translation of *"The One Who Is Three"* as *"Одна, що є трійцею"* is a faithful one. This preserves conceptual integrity and allows us to retain the metaphorical load of the original, because the phrase "trinity" in Ukrainian culture has religious and philosophical connotations (Trinity in Christianity). The German translation is more literal – *"die Eine, die Drei ist"* – which completely calibrates the English expression, while remaining natural for the German language. Another original phrase related to the character in question, *"the we who are they"*, emphasises universality and collective essence, indicating the transition from a single identity to a plural. In translation, this is expressed as *"Ми, що є ними"*, *"Das wir, dass ein sie ist"*. The German version practically repeats the structure of the English expression, taking into account the peculiarities of German grammar, but adds the indefinite article "ein" before the pronoun "sie", which is atypical of the standard language, but emphasises the relativity of the concept. Both translations achieve the idea that we (people or a certain group) are simultaneously part of a larger whole, which is *"ними"*, an abstract *"sie"*. This creates ambiguity and emphasises the interchangeability of roles, which is an important aspect in the context of the Hecateae.

The translation of biblical names found in a graphic novel is a complex and multifaceted process that depends on many factors, such as linguistic tradition, historical contextuality, culture, and religious beliefs. For example, *Cain* as *Каїн, Kain*; *Abel* as *Авель, Abel*. Biblical names often have ancient origins, so when translating them into other languages, it is important to preserve the sound of the original. However, this is not always possible due to the different phonetic systems of languages.

When translating real-life words, their explanation is important. For example, when translating *"penny dreadfuls"* on page 60 as *"копійчані страхіття"* was followed by an explanation of this term that was used in England in the mid-nineteenth century to describe cheap, sensationalised adventure brochures. The addition of explanations helps to preserve the meaning and enables the reader to connect with the realities they know. In German, a concept that is similar in German culture, i.e. adaptation, was used, namely *"Groschengrusel"*, a German term for cheap, sensationalised horror stories that can often be found in journalistic magazines or low-budget films and does not require explanation.

In comics, artists may resort to nonce-word creation. This process should be reproduced in translation. *"Страх шуму, зараз скажу. Латина. Strepens, "галасливий". Може, стрепентофобія?"* came from the English *"Fear of noise. Latin, strepens, "noisy"... Strepentophobia, perhaps?"* In fact, both roots are Greek, and the correct term is ligyrophobia.

The author employs various techniques to convey the emotions, states and feelings of the characters. For example, to convey a sense of fear, he emphasises certain letters or sounds

to show that the character has difficulty pronouncing words: *"Umm. No. I, uh… Don't, do I?"* or *"You, uh, p-promise it isn't going to, hmmm, explode? Promise?"* (Gaiman, 1991, p. 58). There are also many pauses in the phrases to show nervousness and uncertainty, with ellipses or dashes indicating such pauses. Uncertain sounds or words show the character's fear. Additionally, comics often employ different fonts to convey emotions. For fear, for example, italics or a large font are typically used to intensify the emotion.

The modern slang of many languages is influenced by cultural phenomena, and English is no exception. Famous words and expressions such as *"supercalifragilisticexpialidocious"* or *"ginchy, gnarly, peachy keen"*, have gained popularity thanks to movies, music, and street culture. In the Ukrainian translation, we found interesting analogues for these words that not only retain the original meaning but also add local flavour. For example, *"supercalifragilisticexpialidocious"* became *"супергіпермегаофігістикально"* which sounds like an exaggerated praise of something absolutely incredible. And expressions like *"ginchy, gnarly, peachy keen"* were adapted to the Ukrainian context as *"шик, відпад, колосально"*, retaining the emotional charge and impression of something stunningly cool. Such translations not only convey the meaning but also create new opportunities for creative expression in the native language. For the German word *"supercalifragilisticexpialidocious"*, the translator used a morphological translation, translating the suffix "-ious" as "-isch" and transliterating most of the word (except for the penultimate syllable, which was changed to resemble the sound of the German words) into *"superkalifragilistigexplialigetisch"*. The adverbs ginchy and gnarly were also rendered by the slang words *"scharf"* ("hot" in a figurative sense) and *"spitze"* ("peak"). For the translation of "peachy keen" the popular youth anglicism *"megacool"* was used, which perfectly conveys the character of the heroine who uses this word.

The grammatical level requires accuracy in preserving the structure of the characters' speech. Since the comic is a genre in which dialogues often have limited space in bubbles and can be abbreviated, the translator must work with brevity and clarity. Preserving the grammatical features of the original language is important, but it is not always possible without changes.

The phrases *"What's been happening here?"* and *"Що тут відбувається?"* have a similar meaning, but from a grammatical point of view, they belong to different tenses and constructions in the two languages. *"What's been happening here?"* indicates that the action has been going on for some time, probably still going on at the time of the question. In the Ukrainian translation, the question indicates an action that is happening at the moment or over a certain period of time. It also refers to a situation that is happening now, but without emphasising that the action has been going on up to this point.

When translating from English into German, the translator must also take into account the stylistic and grammatical features of the target language, starting with the familiar and simple "you", which in German has three equivalents – "du" (similar to the Ukrainian "ти"), "Sie", which is used in polite addresses to both one person and a group of people, and "ihr", which is used to address a group of people, each of whom can be addressed individually as "du" (informally). In addition, the inflectional nature of German means that verb endings, for example, will differ for each of these pronouns, which requires a translator to have a fine understanding of the connotations of usage. For example, in the first chapter of "The Sandman", when the ritual of summoning "Death" fails, the original uses the imperative form of the verb *"come"*, which is the only one in modern English and is universal for any person. However, in German it was adapted as *"Komm"*, which is the imperative second person singular ("du"), which at first glance may not seem like the most appropriate option, because they are addressing *"mein Gebieter"* ("my lord"), which

seems to imply respect. However, the choice of this particular address is not accidental or erroneous, but rather aptly emphasises the contempt, arrogance, and arrogance of the people who dared to order "Death" around.

Idiomatic expressions, metaphors, and other figures of speech are another important component of comic book style. They are often used to convey the emotional state of a character or to give his or her speech a specific flavour. It is important that these figurative expressions do not lose their expressiveness in translation. For example, the expression *"cat got your tongue"* which is used in English when someone suddenly stops talking or is at a loss for words. In direct translation, *"кіт відкусив твого язика"* will usually sound very strange and will not convey the same effect. Therefore, it is important to find an equivalent that would retain the emotional and semantic significance. The Ukrainian equivalent for this expression could be, for instance, *"відняло мову"*. In the original text, however, there is a certain play on words related to the fact that the character has turned into a cat, which is emphasised by the formatting of the text *"CAT got your TONGUE?"*, and in the translation, it was adapted to this situation, both in Ukrainian and German. However, the German translation also contains a play on words – *"Hat die Katze deine Zunge gemaust?"*. The verb "mausen", the past participle form of which is used in the sentence, means "to steal, especially something small" or "to catch mice" – etymologically derived from the noun *Maus*, mouse. Cats are known to be one of the most prolific mouse catchers. This choice of verb hints at how the protagonist perceives his interlocutor. However, this metaphor is not a constant expression and without a graphic context it might seem out of place. This points to the importance of the interaction between text and image in comics. In this genre, text (dialogues, descriptions, sound effects) and images (illustrations, panels, facial expressions) work together to create a rich and meaningful narrative, where one without the other can lose some of its meaning. Thus, the use of literal translation is conditioned by the preservation of context.

The graphic novel also uses the idiom *"a castle made of clouds"*, which is literally translated as *"замок із хмар"*. In the original, it means something of dreams, hopes, or plans that are unrealistic or have very little chance of success. That is, the hero's fantasies are destroyed here. The translation *"замок із хмар"* does not explain this cultural context and idiomatic meaning. To preserve the meaning, the phrase could be adapted to better convey the idea of impossibility.

The kinship between English and German (both are West Germanic languages) and the relative closeness of worldviews partially help translators when working with idiomatic expressions and wordplay. For example, the phraseme *"killing time"* in the German version is translated literally as *"schlagen Zeit tot"*. Both the translation and the original are set phrases that denote a waste of time, but with the same literal meaning. The choice of the verb is not accidental, as it refers to a nursing home where patients are actually waiting to die.

The syntactic features of comics are partly explained by the dialogic nature of the characters' speech. It is necessary to combine the images of the characters, their surroundings and the text, which leads to shorter lines, simplified syntax and the elimination of cumbersome phrases. Such an organisation of the text contributes to its maximum comprehensibility and quick perception.

Dialogues in comics can be stylised for certain characters. It is important to preserve their individuality in translation. Taking into account the dialogic nature of comic book characters' speech, authors strive to make their statements as concise as possible while conveying important information. The comics use a style close to everyday speech, with elements of conversational communication, which makes the dialogues natural and realistic.

The characters' remarks not only reveal their characters but also develop the main ideas of the work. Imperative sentences, rhetorical questions, and exclamation marks increase the emotional tension of the dialogues. The sentence structure is often elliptical, which adds dynamism and reflects the lively communication between the characters.

By combining different stylistic devices, authors try to convey spoken English with a distinct accent or dialect, such as British, as in the following example: *"Now you lissen ter me, John Constanteen. I sed the sandman, an' I mean the bleedin' sandman! 'E's back, John. Ans 'e wants 'is own."* (Gaiman, 1991, p. 89). *"lissen"* is a variant of *"listen"*, *"ter"*, *"an'"*, *"sed"* – forms of *"to"*, *"and"* and *"said"* respectively, which are also characteristics of informal speech. Just as *"'E's"* is a dialectal contraction of *"He's"* that is common in spoken English, *"bleedin'"* is a slang word that can express intensity or emotion, similar to *"bloody"* in British slang. This sentence belongs to the category of spoken English using dialect. It has many contractions and "street" forms of words, which gives the language a certain unrestrained and emotional colour. This style can emphasise a certain social context or environment of a character (for example, he or she may represent the working class). In the Ukrainian translation, the speech was rendered as: *"Ану слухай сюда, Джоне Константине, мерзотнитник ти малий. К'жу, пісочний чоловік, знач бісів пісочний чоловік! Він оп'ять тут, Джоне. І хоче забрати своє"*. In German, this colloquialism was also conveyed very skillfully: *"Jetz hör mal gut zu, John Constantine, kleiner Schieter! Ich sach der Sandman und ich mein der Sandman! Er is wieder da, John, sucht sein' Kram."* In the words *"jetz"* (jetzt) and *"is"* (ist), there are phonetic simplifications typical of regional variants. The endings of verbs and adjectives that are important for standard German are also dropped – *"ich mein"* instead of "ich meine", *"sein' Kram"* instead of "seinen Kram", or a combination of phonetic and grammatical changes – *"ich sach"* instead of "ich sage".

Parodies of regional accents are also common. For example, *"Hoh 'hits a jolly 'oliedye wiv yew, Mairee Pawpins!"* – *"Йак же уесело з уами уідпочиуати, мері поупінс"*. This translation from the British accent brings to the surface an interesting linguistic game that demonstrates how the phonetic features of a language can be transformed depending on the dialect. The phrase *"Hoh hits a jolly oliedye wiv yew, Mairee Pawpins!"* is a variation of the classic English greeting from the movie "Mary Poppins" that adapts to the specifics of a British accent, such as a London or Cockney accent. The replacement of sounds, such as *"with"* with *"wiv"*, are typical features of this dialect, where individual sounds are often omitted or changed, which gives the language a more informal and colloquial character. In the context of such a translation, it is important to understand that it can be not only comical or ironic but also culturally specific, as accents and dialects in the UK often reflect social and regional differences. This type of linguistic adaptation allows us to better understand the richness of the English language, where the same phrase can have different variations depending on where and how it is spoken. The German translation of *"Soo ain schöhna färjentack mit Määhry"* is a distorted version of "So ein schöner Ferientag mit Mary", a line from the official translation song for the movie "Mary Poppins", which mocks high German pronunciation, similar to the mockery of "high" British pronunciation.

Conclusion. Comics translation is not just a simple translation of text from one language into another. It is a complex process that involves preserving stylistic features, cultural realities, and the interaction between text and image. Therefore, a translator must be not only a language specialist but also a creative person who is able to adapt the original to a new cultural and linguistic situation while preserving all the elements that make a comic book unique.

The study of the specifics of comic book translation into English, Ukrainian and German has revealed several key aspects that significantly affect the process of adapting this genre. Effective translation of comics requires not only an accurate rendering of the content but

also taking into account cultural, linguistic and social differences between languages. In the case of translation from English into Ukrainian and German, it is important to take into account different linguistic traditions, idiomatic expressions, and cultural contexts that may not be present in the original.

Furthermore, comics combine text and images, which puts additional demands on translation. It is especially important to correctly convey the style and emotional colour of the text within a limited space. Any imbalance between text and image can lead to the loss of some of the meaning or the intended comic effect.

To achieve effective communication with the target audience, it is necessary to adapt not only the language material but also sometimes the graphic elements. Certain language features can significantly change the perception of a text. German, with its strict grammar, and Ukrainian, with its rich inflexion, require different approaches to conveying stylistic nuances.

Additionally, comics often contain culturally specific elements, such as local slang or humour, which are difficult to translate. Translators have to choose between literal translation, adaptation, or a complete change of context, which can affect the perception of the work.

An in-depth study of how comics adapt to different cultural contexts will help to develop universal strategies for effective translation of this genre. This applies to both language and cultural adaptation. Since comic book translation is a multifaceted process that requires consideration of both linguistics and graphic design, further research could contribute to the development of interdisciplinary approaches in the field of translation that include the collaboration of linguists, designers, and cultural studies. Further research should focus on developing specialised skills of translators capable of working in this complex and specific field, taking into account technological innovations such as automated translation systems.

Thus, the study of the specifics of comic book translation is an important step in the development of translation theory and practice, allowing for a better understanding and adaptation of cultural products for different linguistic and cultural environments.

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Use of Artificial Intelligence
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Василенко Ірина Юріївна, викладач кафедри теорії і практики перекладу з англійської мови Київського національного лінгвістичного університету e-mail: iryna.vasylenko@knlu.edu.ua		Коло наукових інтересів: перекладознавство, теорія і практика перекладу
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