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## Translating words that depict sensory imagery in comics

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Ideophones are words that depict sensory imagery, including sound, movement, vision, inner feelings and mental states (Dingemanse 2012). They are both iconic and conventionalized in nature: their forms resemble their meanings, yet different languages use different forms for the same meanings. Something hitting water makes a *splash* in English but a *plask* in Swedish.

Ideophones are frequent in comics, where they add dimensions of sound, movement etc. and depict characters' emotions. Following a tradition established in the 1920s, they are often placed in the images, as part of the graphic representation, and in the speech bubbles; McCloud (2004), Zanettin (2008), Guynes (2014). The first set is known as sound effects, the second as vocalizations. This implies that sound effects are not part of language proper to the extent that vocalizations are.

Studies on the translation of comics have shown that the above distinction affects what is translated and how. Vocalizations tend to be translated more often than sound effects, which may be left in the original form or adjusted in terms of spelling. This is common especially in translations from English into other languages, including Spanish, French, German (Garces 2015), Italian (Pischedda 2017), Finnish, Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian (Takaki 2021). Apart from translations of Japanese manga, there are few studies on translation *into English*.

This paper examines the English translations of comics written in Swedish (*Rocky*, by Martin Kellerman) and Finnish (*Viivi ja Wagner*, by Juba). Although linguistic items in images and speech bubbles can be shown to have similar properties, the latter are translated more consistently. For the former, several strategies can be identified: material can be left unchanged, omitted (images 1-2) or adjusted in terms of spelling (3-4). When they are translated properly, there is no clear distinction between them and material in speech bubbles (5-6).

**Keywords:** comics; ideophones; translation; English; Swedish; Finnish



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## Images 1 and 2 (from Juba 1999; 2017)

Strippi 52 vuodelta 1997

19.10.2016



## Images 3 and 4 (from Kellerman 1999, 2005)

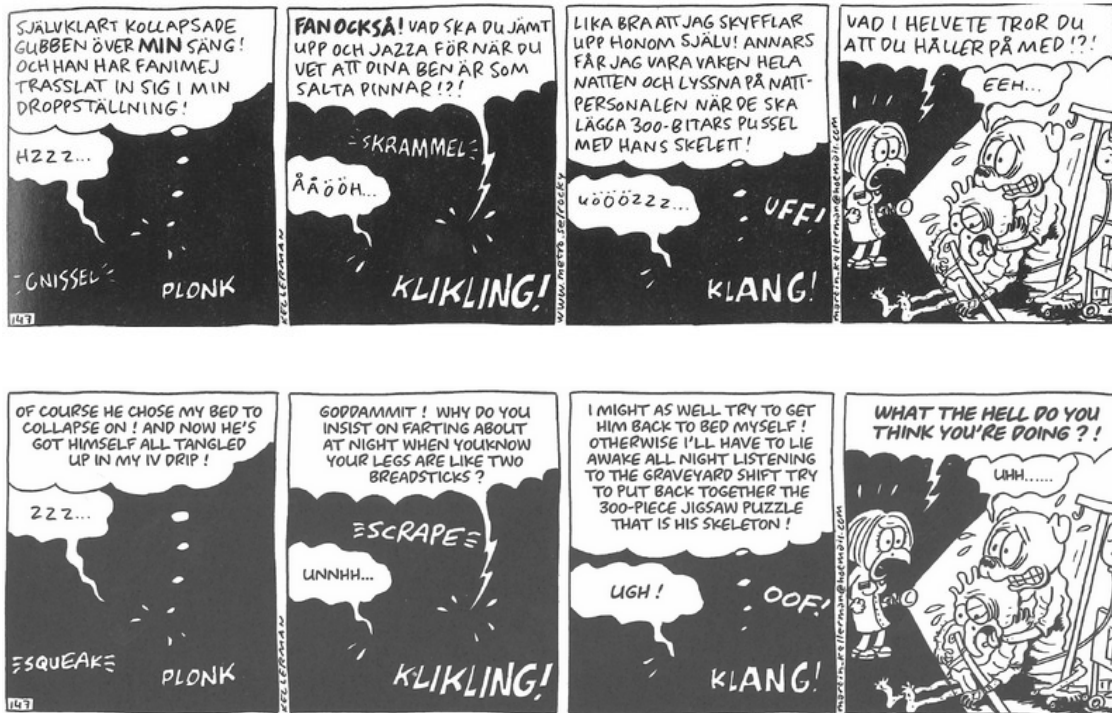




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## Images 5 and 6 (from Kellerman 1999, 2005)



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