

English Subtitles of the Songs in the Film *Miś* by Stanisław Bareja

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Abstract

*The paper presents an analysis of the role of the lyrics in the film *Miś* by Stanisław Bareja as well as an answer to the question why and how they should be subtitled into English. It also discusses a number of translation problems and considers possible solutions. The material under analysis is the original script for *Miś* and three versions of the English subtitles. The songs present in *Miś* have been analysed to define their most important features that should be preserved in subtitles, taking into account the limitations of translating lyrics and the constraints resulting from subtitling technical requirements*

*Keywords: *Miś*, Stanisław Bareja, translating lyrics, English subtitles, songs*

Streszczenie

Tłumaczenie tekstów piosenek z filmu *Miś* Stanisława Barei na język angielski w formie napisów filmowych

*Celem artykułu jest zbadanie, jaką rolę w filmie *Miś* Stanisława Barei odgrywają wszechobecne tam piosenki, a także próba odpowiedzi na pytanie, dlaczego napisy filmowe powinny zawierać ich tłumaczenie. W artykule omówiono problemy związane z przekładem na język angielski słów piosenek wykonywanych w filmie oraz wskazano możliwe rozwiązania translatorskie. Materiał badawczy stanowi scenariusz filmu *Miś* oraz trzy wersje napisów w języku angielskim. Teksty piosenek poddano analizie mającej na celu wyodrębnienie ich najważniejszych cech, które należy koniecznie zachować w tłumaczeniu, uwzględniając zarówno ograniczenia dotyczące tłumaczenia słów do muzyki, jak i wynikające ze specyfiki napisów filmowych*

*Słowa kluczowe: *Miś*, Stanisław Bareja, tłumaczenie tekstów piosenek, napisy filmowe w języku angielskim, piosenki*

1. Introduction

- Powiedz mi po co jest ten miś?
- Właśnie, po co?
- Otóż to! Nikt nie wie po co, więc nie musisz się obawiać, że ktoś zapyta. Wiesz, co robi ten miś? On odpowiada żywotnym potrzebom całego społeczeństwa. To jest miś na skalę naszych możliwości. Ty wiesz, co my robimy tym misiem? My otwieramy oczy niedowiarkom. Patrzcie - mówimy - to nasze, przez nas wykonane i to jest nasze ostatnie słowo¹.

(*Miś*, 1980)

The above dialogue comes from *Miś (Teddy Bear)* directed by Stanisław Bareja, a film which is regarded by many as the best Polish comedy ever made. Maciej Łuczak (2007: 25) claims that “in the Polish cinema Bareja was second to none in telling jokes.” Although the type of humour that can be found in *Miś* may not necessarily appeal to everyone, what makes the film so entertaining is, among others, the numerous songs performed by the characters. All the musical numbers from *Miś* are well known in Poland and some of them are either still sung by their original artists (e.g. this is the case of the Christmas carol *Lulejże mi, lulej* which is sometimes performed by Ewa Bem who sings it in the final scene of the film) or recorded in cover versions (e.g. by Kazik Staszewski who included the song *Hej Młody Junaku* in his album *Zakazone piosenki* or by Zakopower whose album *Kolędowo* features a folk version of *Lulejże mi, lulej*).

Even though it was released almost 40 years ago, Bareja’s film holds a prominent place in Polish popular culture and still stirs up some controversy. Once regarded as the embodiment of kitsch and a bad taste, it has achieved a cult status and is watched by younger and older viewers alike. A number of quotations from *Miś* has entered everyday Polish. Poles are using sayings from Bareja’s film, sometimes not even being aware of the fact. Quotations from or allusions to *Miś* are present almost everywhere: on the radio, on television, on the internet, in newspapers, and even in the discourse of Polish politicians. Despite being set in the Poland of the 1970s, Bareja’s film tells some universal truths about the world and human nature. Moreover, for a foreigner who is interested in Polish language and culture *Miś* is a must. It is a mine of knowledge of Poland, and not only the Polish People’s Republic, but Poland in general. Although Polish reality has changed, people have remained the same. Bareja like none other director managed to capture Polish society with their peculiarities and vices. One may venture to say that it is virtually impossible to understand contemporary Poland without knowing *Miś*.

¹ ‘What do we need this teddy bear for?’

‘What for?’

‘That’s it! No one knows, so no one will ask about it. You know what this teddy bear does? It answers the real needs of our society. This is a teddy bear on a scale of our potential. You know what we’re doing with this teddy bear? We’re opening the eyes of disbelievers. We say: ‘this is ours, made by us and this is not our last word.’

[Unless stated otherwise all translations from Polish are mine -MO]

However, the context in which the film is set, full of allusions to real people and events, the script peppered with songs, poems, rhymed sayings, puns and numerous references to Polish as well as European or American culture, finally, the diversity of the linguistic aspect of the film, make this comedy difficult to understand even for the native Poles, let alone the outsiders. Thus, any attempt to render in another language a film so deeply embedded in a specific cultural context seems to be doomed to failure. Nevertheless, it does not mean that one should not try. The task undertaken in this paper is to “open the eyes of disbelievers” and try to demonstrate that subtitling the lyrics of the songs present in *Miś* into English may be a difficult yet feasible task².

The material under analysis is the original script for *Miś* and three versions of the English subtitles: one being an official yet anonymous version of the English subtitles for the DVD release distributed by MGE, Inc³, the second made by Magdalena Olech-Barrau and Piotr Zieliński for Studio Printel⁴, and the third provided by the author of this paper⁵.

2. Constraints of lyrics subtitling

If translating lyrics is a demanding task in itself⁶, then translating the lyrics of film songs seems to be even more challenging. On the one hand, the subtitler has to bear in mind the constraints that apply to translating lyrics in general, and, on the other, he or she cannot forget about the constraints resulting from the very nature of subtitling.

Before discussing in more detail what those constraints are, it should be noted that not all film songs are subtitled due to the fact that in most cases they serve as a kind of background⁷. Their role is to create an appropriate atmosphere and to emphasize the course of events on the screen. Usually, the understanding of the lyrics is not necessary to comprehend the meaning of a particular scene. The target audience can easily follow the plot even without being able to

² The problem of subtitling *Miś* into English was discussed in greater detail in my MA thesis (2007).

³ The anonymous version of the English subtitles made for Studio Filmowe Perspektywa and MGE, Inc. Hereinafter referred to as the SFP version.

⁴ The English subtitles made by Magdalena Olech-Barrau and Piotr Zieliński for Studio Printel. Hereinafter referred to as the MOBPZ version.

⁵ Hereinafter referred to as the MO version. The subtitles have been prepared in accordance with the principles formulated by Karamitroglou (1998).

⁶ The problem of translating lyrics has been thoroughly discussed, among others, by Peter Low (2005a: 185) who introduces the notion of ‘pentathlon approach’ to translating song lyrics. The criteria that the translator of song lyrics should take into account are the following: singability, sense, naturalness, rhythm and rhyme.

⁷ Johan Franzon (2014: 378) claims that “Reasons for the non-translation in these cases may have to do with the assumption that the lyrics are not that relevant to the rest of the narrative (for example, songs sung on the soundtrack as part of the background music in films are regularly not subtitled), or that retaining the original lyrics enhances authenticity.”

understand the lyrics. But the musical numbers performed in Bareja's cult comedy do not serve as a mere background or embellishment. On the contrary, the songs constitute an indispensable ingredient of the film, and the lyrics are an integral part of the screenplay. The lyrics and the dialogues interweave, complementing each other. On the one hand, the songs provide a commentary on the plot, and, on the other hand, the characters make remarks about the songs. If the target audience are not given a translation of the lyrics, they not only receive an incomplete and impoverished version of the film, but also may not understand some of the scenes, interpret them wrongly, or even miss the links between the scenes. What is more, the comic effect the songs create in the original is lost, which is rather a substantial loss in the case of a comedy. Thus, subtitling the lyrics that are included in Bareja's film seems to be indispensable.

According to Barbara Schwarz, translating lyrics resembles in a way translating poetry. One has to bear in mind not only 'the content' of the song but also its 'form.' Consider the point Schwarz makes on translating lyrics of film songs:

For the translator, songs bring most of the problems of poetry (rhyme and rhythm constraints) while still having to conform to syntactic rules and retain the content. When they are presented, the sub-titles will usually be shown two lines at a time to viewers who are simultaneously following a tune with lyrics (even if they do not understand them). The natural tendency is to try to read and fit the words into the original song. While it may not be possible to find rhyming words, it may be possible to keep some of the character of a song by preserving rhythm. To this end, the sub-titler can search for words with a similar number of syllables and even word stress. This will enhance the pleasure for the viewer, who can read along with the SL version.

(Schwarz 2003: n. pag.)

The claim to preserve not only 'the content' but also 'the form' of a song seems to be particularly valid in the case of Bareja's film as all the songs appearing in *Miś* rhyme. It is not accidental by any means. The role of the rhymes in this film is primarily either to make the song sound silly or even absurd, or to emphasize the crudity and dullness of its performers and authors (two songs are being written in front of the viewers' eyes). As regards the final lullaby, which can also be considered a Christmas carol, the rhymes are required by the very genre of the song. They introduce melodiousness, which is one of the most important features of a lullaby.

Another aspect that makes the lyrics appearing in *Miś* difficult to be subtitled is the presence of culture-specific terms, such as proper names or names of Polish food. What is more, some songs include cultural and historical references and allusions that are not likely to be understood by the viewers who do not have insight into Polish history and culture. On top of that, one should add the constraints specific to subtitles. Subtitling is often attached the label of 'constrained

translation'⁸. This concept has been widely discussed in the literature⁹. Gottlieb (1992: 164–165) distinguishes two types of constraints: (1) formal or quantitative and (2) textual or qualitative.

The first category consists of two factors that play a vital role in the decision making process in subtitling, namely space and time factors. The former refers to the fact that the space on the screen available for subtitles is limited and, therefore, no more than two lines are allowed at a time, with a maximum of 35 characters per line. The latter has even greater influence on the choices made by the subtitler. This is due to the fact that an average viewer takes approximately 5–6 seconds to read a two-liner¹⁰.

According to Gottlieb (1992: 162), the second category comprises the constraints that stem from the additive and polymedial nature of subtitling. On the one hand, subtitles impinge on the picture and assume the role of the original dialogue but do not replace it, as it is still audible. On the other hand, they are conditioned by the picture and by the original dialogue. Subtitles have to match the visual component of the film (e.g. when characters are talking about something that the viewers can see) and reflect the style, nature and form of the original dialogue.

Basil Hatim and Ian Mason, in turn, argue that subtitling is subject to four types of constraints, which are as follows:

- 1) the shift in mode from speech to writing;
- 2) time and space factors;
- 3) the reduction of the source text and no back-tracking to retrieve meaning;
- 4) the requirement of matching the visual image.

(Hatim, Mason 2001: 430-431)

The first constraint means that certain features of speech such as non-standard dialect or intonation will not automatically be rendered in the subtitles. According to the scholars, there is

⁸ The term, coined by Christopher Titford who applied it to subtitling, has been borrowed and further explored by Roberto Mayoral et al (1998). C. Titford, Sub-titling – Constrained Translation in *Lebende Sprachen*. III. 113-116 as quoted after Mayoral *et al*. The scholars argue that “when translation is required not only of written texts alone, but of texts in association with other communication media (image, music, oral sources, etc.), the translator’s task is complicated and at the same time constrained by the latter.”

⁹ Łukasz Bogucki (2004: 86) suggests yet another typology of constraints on subtitling. Those constraints are as follows: 1) relevance; 2) target audience expectations – norms and conventions; 3) technical limitations.

¹⁰ Jorge Díaz Cintas (2010: 345) points out that “the viewers’s increased exposure to reading text on screen and enormous technical advances in recent decades have brought considerable changes. The sacred rule of having a maximum of two lines in a subtitle so as to minimise their impact on the photography is being broken daily by the emergence of three, four and even five-liners notably in the subtitling being done on the internet. (...) Likewise, restricting the number of characters per line to 35, 39 or even 43 is not an important factor anymore. Most professional subtitling programs work now with pixels, allowing for proportional lettering, which means that subtitlers can write as much text as possible, depending on the font size being used and the actual space available on screen.”

a tendency to eliminate from the subtitles the non-standard features of speech. The second and the fourth of the above categories seem to correspond to the formal and the textual constraints, respectively. The constraints belonging to the third category result in simplification and shortening of the verbal information presented in the target version.

As Gottlieb (1992: 166) rightly points out “[i]n subtitling, constraints are not always rocks to steer clear of. Quite often, they are stepping stones in the river of transmission.” Anyone who, at least once, has tried to cross a river jumping from one wobbly and slippery stone to another knows how risky this might be. Therefore, in order to cross ‘the river of transmission’ dry-shod the subtitler may need some guidance. Fotios Karamitroglou compiles a long list of detailed requirements that may serve as ‘stepping stones.’ The most important requirements are as follows:

- 1) not more than two lines are allowed on the screen at a time;
- 2) the number of characters per line should not exceed 35;
- 3) a full two-line subtitle should remain on the screen for approximately 6 seconds, a full single-line subtitle should be displayed for a maximum of 3.5 seconds, and a single-word subtitle - for a minimum of 1.5 seconds;
- 4) subtitles should be italicized only in the case of an off-screen source of the spoken text or to retain foreign-language words in their original form;
- 5) subtitles typed only in upper-case letters should be used to render a written text appearing in the film;
- 6) boldface and underlining are not allowed in subtitling;
- 7) longer subtitles should be divided at the highest syntactic nodes possible;
- 8) a maximum of two sentences is allowed on the same subtitle;
- 9) padding expressions, tautological cumulative adjectives and adverbs, and responsive expressions tend to be eliminated;
- 10) there are five possible alternatives for rendering culture-specific elements in the subtitles: a) cultural transfer, b) transposition, c) transposition with explanation, d) neutralisation (plain explanation), e) omission.

(Karamitroglou 1998: n. pag.)

3. Subtitling the Lyrics of the Songs in *Miś*

In *Miś* there are seven different songs performed by the characters, some of them even several times. However, due to a limited scope of this article, only five examples will be discussed in

detail. Johan Franzon observes that “[g]enerally, songs may be a) not subtitled at all, b) subtitled with a mainly literal, semantically close rendering, c) or subtitled with some indication of singability” (Franzon 2015: 336). The analysis below will show which approaches have been used to translate the lyrics of the songs in *Miś* and which have proved to work best.

3.1. The song about Trasa Łazienkowska (*Hej młody Junaku...*)

The first song that appears in the film concerns *Trasa Łazienkowska* ‘the Łazienki Route’, a road in Warsaw, and is being written before the viewers’ eyes by two militiamen: Commissioner and Włodarczyk. The lyrics are first read aloud by its authors. Then, after some changes have been introduced, the song is performed by a singer called Cwynkar and, later on, a part of it, by the authors themselves. The song appears once again in a theatre show. Each time a slightly different version is presented:

Table 1. *Hej młody Junaku*. Original Script (*Miś*, 1980)

Original Script:		
Lyrics Version	Character	Lyrics text
1)	Włodarczyk [reads]	Hej młody Junaku, smutek zwalcz i strach. Może na tym piachu za trzydzieści lat przebiegnie, być może, jasna, długa, prosta, szeroka jak morze Trasa Łazienkowska!
	Cwynkar [sings]	Hej młody Junaku, smutek zwalcz i strach! Przecież na tym piachu za trzydzieści lat, przebiegnie z pewnością jasna, długa, prosta, Szeroka jak morze Trasa Łazienkowska! I z brzegiem zepnie drugi brzeg, na którym twój ojciec legł !
2)	Włodarczyk and Commissioner [sing together]	I z brzegiem zepnie drugi brzeg, na którym twój ojciec biegł!

3)	Actors [sing]	Hej młody gwardzisto smutek zwalcz i strach. Przecież na tym piachu za trzydzieści lat Przebiegnie z pewnością, Jasna, długa, prosta, Szeroka jak morze Trasa Łazienkowska I z brzegiem zetknie drugi brzeg, Na którym twój ojciec legł,
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One of the first difficulties the subtitler encounters while attempting to render the lyrics of this song into English is the notion of ‘junak’ which could be defined as follows: “1. young swashbuckler, dashing young blade; 2. a member of a former Polish youth organisation”¹¹. Neither of the above-mentioned definitions is an ideal solution for the subtitling purposes, as the former does not contain the idea of Polish youth organisation and the latter is too long (i.e. it exceeds the number of characters allowed per line) and it would disturb the rhythm of the song. Therefore, one may ask whether this troublesome word could not be simply omitted. This solution can be observed in the SFP version:

Table 2. *Hej młody Junaku*. The SFP Version of the Subtitles (*Miś*, 1980)

SFP Version:		
Lyrics Version	Character	Subtitles
1)	Włodarczyk	‘Hey, one day the sadness will overcome the fear.
		Maybe in thirty years, on this sand there will be a long,
		Straight and as wide as the sea - Trasa Łazienkowska.’

It turns out, however, to be inappropriate. First of all, it is a gross distortion of the source text. In the Polish original, the young man should overcome both sadness and fear, while in the English translation it is only the fear that shall be overcome and not by the young man but by the sadness (sic!).

¹¹ ‘Junak.’ (2004) *Wielki Multimedialny Słownik Angielsko Polski Polsko Angielski PWN Oxford*.

Another objection to this rendition of the lyrics is that it lacks the image of the young man who should overcome fear and sadness. There are at least two reasons why this image should be preserved in the translation.

The first one is that in the conversation that immediately follows the creation of the lyrics, the authors are making reference to the young man from the song using the pronoun (Pol.) *on* 'he', and the audience may become confused who the pronoun 'he' refers to, unless the young man is mentioned before in the subtitles for the lyrics. Furthermore, the lyrical situation of the song is being imagined by Commissioner, and, as he describes his vision to Włodarczyk, the viewers can actually see a young man in a uniform of Polish youth organisation sitting on the bank of the Vistula, absorbed in his thoughts, while his friends visible in the background are digging the ground with pickaxes and shovels. The man is woken up from his reveries by a young woman who pats him on the shoulder and points her finger into the distance. The scene ends with a close up of the highway described in the song. By omitting the notion of 'junak' in their translation, the person responsible for the SFP version broke Hatim and Mason's requirement of matching the visual image.

The second reason why the concept of 'junak' should be rendered in the translation is that this is probably the only way to make the target audience aware of the fact that the song sung by Cwynkar and the one performed by the actors in a theatre show differ. The expression *młody junak* which is present in the version originally written by the militiamen is replaced with (Pol.) *młody gwardzista* 'young guardsman' in the version sung by the actors. This may seem to be an unimportant alteration. However, it makes a viewer realize that the audience is being manipulated and lied to. One hears a song that just a moment ago was written by two militiamen but is told by the narrator that the same song was sung by the Poles during the Second World War. Not only is it a lie but also an illogical one, as it is highly unlikely that a Polish soldier during the war would be thinking about building a road in thirty years' time. One realizes that this is a propaganda song aiming at distorting Polish history. Thus, this song tells the target audience between the lines something extremely important about the reality in the Polish People's Republic.

Another difference between the first and the second version of the song can be observed in the last line. By changing just one word, the authors of the lyrics distorted the meaning of the whole song. The verb (Pol.) *legł* 'fell' used in the first version is replaced with the verb (Pol.) *biegł* 'ran' in the second one. At first sight, this change may seem unimportant and it could pass imperceptibly as both verbs rhyme with the noun (Pol.) *brzeg* 'a riverbank', but at a closer look,

one realizes that it is a rather significant alteration. In the first version the young man's father is seen as a hero who died for his country, while in the second rendition he is portrayed as a man who happened to run, but nobody knows what for. Was he a coward who fled the enemy? Or perhaps just a jogger? This change is not accidental. It shows how easily the history could be (and actually was) manipulated and distorted at the time of communist regime. Therefore, it seems important to preserve this subtle alteration in the subtitles.

The last but not least problem with the above-mentioned translation of the lyrics is that it does not preserve two distinctive features of this song: a pompous style, and forced and imprecise rhymes. It seems, however, that the translator(s) tried to preserve the rhythm of the song. The original song is very rhythmical (the number of syllables alternates between six and five, with the exception of the last two lines that have eight and seven syllables, respectively) and gives the impression of a marching soldier. In the SFP version, the number of syllables is six in the first three lines and alternates between eight and five in the last three. Unfortunately, these attempts were not particularly successful, as the subtitled version of the lyrics does not preserve the rhythmical pattern of the original song and the target viewer will have problems with fitting the lyrics into the melody.

A version made by the tandem of translators reads as follows:

Table 3. *Hej młody Junaku*. The MOBPZ Version of the Subtitles (*Miś*, 1980)

MOBPZ Version		
Lyrics Version	Character	Subtitles
1)	Włodarczyk	“Hey, young blade, Forget your sorrows and fears.
		Maybe in 30 years on this sand,
		A route long, straight and clear Will lead.
		It will be as wide as the sea And Lazienki Route called it'll be.”
	Cwynkar	<i>Hey, young blade, Forget your sorrows and fears.</i>
		<i>In 30 years on this sand, for sure!</i>
		<i>A route long, straight and clear Will lead.</i>
		<i>It will be as wide as the sea And Lazienki Route called it'll be.</i>
		<i>It will link two banks together,</i>

		<i>Where your father at wartime fell.</i>
2)	Włodarczyk and Commissioner	<i>It will link two banks together, Where your father at wartime fell!</i>
3)	Actors	<i>Hey young guardsman, Fight your sorrows and fears. In 30 years on this sand, A route long, straight and clear Will lead. It will be as wide as the sea, Lazienki Route called it will be. It will link two banks together, Where your father at wartime fell.</i>

In this version the translators managed to preserve the image of a young man standing on the Vistula riverbank. However, what they did not preserve is the regular rhythm of the original as the subtitlers focused on the ‘content’ rather than the ‘form’ of the song. What is more, the translators decided to provide the target viewer with an additional explanation for the lexeme ‘legł’ and decided to add a prepositional phrase ‘at wartime’, which is not present in the original. However, they did not decide to preserve the alteration made by the authors of the lyrics when they sing the song themselves and change the original ‘legł’ for the verb ‘biegł’, which also rhymes with ‘brzeg’ but introduces new possibly humorous meanings to the song.

Another difference in comparison to the SFP version is that in the MOBPZ version the lyrics are italicized, which, according to Karamitroglou, should only be done for an off-screen spoken text or foreign words preserved in their original form¹².

Another possible rendition of the lyrics could be as follows:

Table 4. *Hej młody Junaku*. The MO Version of the Subtitles (*Miś*, 1980)

MO Version		
Lyrics Version	Character	Subtitles
1)	Włodarczyk	Hey, young blade, fight down sadness And don't be afraid
		'Cause in 30 years This sandy river bank
		Perhaps will transmute Into a long and straight

¹² It should be noted, however, that other scholars, e.g. Jorge Díaz Cintas and Aline Remael (2007) recommend using italics to translate the lyrics of songs.

		As wide as the sea the Łazienki Route.
	Cwynkar	Hey, young blade, fight down sadness And don't be afraid
		'Cause in 30 years This sandy river bank
		For sure will transmute Into a long and straight
		As wide as the sea the Łazienki Route.
		It'll link one bank with the other One on which fell your father
2)	Włodarczyk and Commissioner	It'll link one bank with the other One on which ran your father.
3)	Actors	Hey, young guardsman, fight down sadness And don't be afraid
		'Cause in 30 years This sandy river bank
		For sure will transmute Into a long and straight
		As wide as the sea the Łazienki Route
		It'll link one bank with the other One on which fell your father.

In this translation the regular rhythm and the forced rhymes have been preserved in order to render the melodiousness and the pompous style of the original song. The requirement of matching the visual element of the film has been met, as the image of the young man has been preserved. Finally, unlike the previous versions, this rendition makes it possible for the target viewers to perceive the changes made by the militiamen who are writing the lyrics, and, thus, understand that it is a propaganda song.

3.2. A merry song performed by Wesoly Romek (*Dzień dobry, cześć i czolem...*)

Probably the best known song from *Miś* is the one performed by the man who calls himself 'Wesoly Romek.' This very vivid character appears in the film three times each time playing the banjo and singing his weird, merry song:

Table 5. *Dzień dobry, cześć i czolem*. Original Script (*Miś*, 1980)

Original Script:	
Character	Lyrics

Wesoły Romek	Dzień dobry, cześć i czołem! Pytacie skąd się wziąłem?! Jestem Wesoły Romek! Mam na przedmieściu domek, A w domku wodę, światło, gaz! Powtarzam zatem jeszcze raz:
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Translating the lyrics of this song into English seems to be a great challenge for the subtitler. Firstly, the song is very regular: the number of syllables per line is seven in the first four lines and eight in the last two. Secondly, the song rhymes. Thirdly, there is a proper name ‘Romek’ accompanied by an ambiguous epithet (as it may be interpreted as the character’s surname, his nickname, or a distinctive feature) and, to make things even worse for the translator (at least one who would like to preserve the rhyme scheme of the original), the proper name is placed in the final position.

The subtitler has several options to choose from while translating this song into English. Firstly, he or she may decide not to translate it at all, assuming that the character himself with his mimics, gestures and the way he is dressed, is expressive enough to get even a non-Polish speaking viewer understand the absurdity of the situation and, consequently, to make him or her smile or even laugh. However, later on, it turns out that this solution is not entirely possible. The third time the character appears on the screen singing his song, a man in the audience makes a sarcastic comment that the singer should not be so happy about having a small house with gas, water and electricity, because, sooner or later, all the facilities will be cut off. This little comment cannot be understood if the lyrics are not translated.

Secondly, the subtitler may go for translating the song literally without preserving the rhyme scheme and the rhythm; though by doing so, he or she deprives the viewer of all the humour and charm this little merry song possesses.

Thirdly, the translator may choose to preserve the rhyme scheme. However, the cost is that either the proper name ‘Romek,’ (a diminutive of the first name ‘Roman’) which in the original rhymes with the noun (Pol.) *domek* ‘a small house’, may have to be changed, as it seems difficult, if not impossible, to find an English word that would both rhyme with ‘Romek’ and mean ‘a small house,’ or the word order in this line may have to be changed so that the character’s name will not be in the final position. The problem with the latter solution is that by changing the word order, one risks making this simple and clear statement sound bizarre or surprising as the adjective (Pol.) *wesoły* ‘cheerful, jolly, merry’ would have to be translated to preserve the rhyme and it would be interpreted as become the character’s surname (a possible

translation could be, for example, as follows: “I’m Romek Grin/ I have a cabin”). The former solution is not perfect, either. One may ask whether the translator in pursuit of rhyme has the right to change the Polish proper name and substitute it with an English one. Nonetheless, the proper name is an integral element of this song and it exists in the minds of the Polish viewers with all the potential associations it may evoke.

From the translator’s point of view a crucial problem is first to find out what those associations might be and which are the most important, and then, to decide whether there is a possibility to render at least some of them into English. It seems impossible to describe all the associations with ‘Wesoły Romek’ that the source audience may have as those associations will not only differ from one person to another but also will be changing with time. For some Poles, mostly the older generation, ‘Wesoły Romek’, wearing a checked jacket, may evoke associations with the street musicians who used to play in Warsaw in the 1920s and 1930s, or with their continuators, such as Kapela Czerniakowska, while others, especially the younger generation, may mistake him for a ‘*disco polo*’ star. Luckily, the very character comes to the translator’s aid and, by introducing himself as ‘Wesoły Romek,’ gives a hint what associations he would like to evoke in the audience. Those associations are all included in the adjective ‘wesoły’, which is a keyword of the whole song. Jerzy Bralczyk (2005: 104) claims that the strongest accent in the line “Jestem Wesoły Romek” falls on the syllable ‘we’ of the word ‘wesoły’, which suggests that this adjective indicates the most important feature of the performer. The epithet ‘wesoły’ precedes the character’s first name. This is rather an unusual way of introducing oneself. According to Bralczyk (2005: 104), the feature and the proper name should be regarded as an inseparable whole as in the English expression ‘Jolly Roger’ or, as a pseudonym or a nick name like ‘Czarna Mańka’ but not as historical name like ‘Ivan the Terrible,’ because in that case the feature would follow the proper name. Bralczyk (2005: 104) also points out that “such names show how by associating a feature with a person one makes that person the embodiment of the feature”. ‘Wesoły Romek’ becomes, therefore, the embodiment of cheerfulness. He should be regarded, according to Bralczyk (2005: 104), as a person who is in high spirits all the time and who has turned this trait of the character into ‘a kind of profession’:

Romek knows that he is a cheerful person and he knows he should be regarded and treated as a cheerful person and, what is more, he is perfectly happy about the fact. This type of social identification seems to suit him very well, and one may suspect that he would be inclined to profit from it. Who knows, perhaps he could make money on it. And why should he not do so,

if his cheerfulness raises other people's spirits? Even if it does not, is it not supposed to do so? (...). Cheerfulness, seen from a cultural perspective, should bring cheerfulness.

(Bralczyk 2005: 105)

One may venture to say that 'Wesoły Romek' could be seen not only as a continuator of the tradition of street musicians, but also as a kind of a clown or a court jester.

It is high time one returned to the original question whether the translator has the right to replace a proper name with another one in order to preserve the rhyme scheme. It is generally agreed that the meaning and the form of a song constitute an inseparable whole, and, ideally, they both should be preserved in the translation. However, it is not always possible to produce such a translation that would be close to the original both in terms of the form and the meaning. Sometimes, the subtitler has to make a choice, however painful or subjective this choice might be. One may venture to say that the form of the song constitutes a part of its meaning, and if the form is not preserved in the translation, the effect this song has on the audience will be spoilt. It seems, therefore, that some changes can be justified. This, however, does not mean that translator's freedom is unlimited. One should bear in mind that the subtitler, unlike the author of the lyrics, has no influence on the screenplay and is bounded by the plot of the film. The subtitles for the lyrics must match the visual component of the film. Therefore, the translator cannot depart too far from the original in terms of meaning as any incautious change may result in a clash between the subtitles and the narrative.

The person responsible for the SFP version subtitled only the third and the last performance of 'Wesoły Romek' and opted for a literal translation:

Table 6. *Dzień dobry, cześć i czołem*. The SFP Version of the Subtitles (*Miś*, 1980)

SFP Version	
Character	Subtitles
Wesoły Romek	Hi, hi. Hello! You're asking where I'm from?
	I'm Jolly Romek. I have a house in the suburbs.
	And in the house I have water, Energy, gas

The adjective 'wesoly' has been translated here as 'jolly' and the Polish proper name 'Romek' has been preserved. The problem with this rendition is that it may make the target

viewer think of ‘Jolly Roger’¹³, which is not necessarily a desirable association here. What is more, although the flavour of foreignness is preserved in this translation, the associations that the proper name evokes in the original are not rendered. It seems, therefore, that simply preserving the Polish proper name is not enough. The subtitler, unlike the translator of literature, does not have the opportunity to explain to the viewer those associations in the form of a footnote; hence, the subtitles have to speak for themselves.

In this version the translator gave priority to the lexical meaning of the song and did not preserve the rhymed form of the original. As a result, although the meaning of the original has been roughly rendered, the translation lacks the lightness and the humour of the original. It seems, therefore, that the only way to convey the spirit and the mood of this song is to preserve both the form and the meaning.

Another translation of this song reads as follows:

Table 7. *Dzień dobry, cześć i czołem*. The MOBZP Version of the Subtitles (Miś, 1980)

MOBZP Version	
Character	Subtitles
Wesoły Romek	<i>Good morning, good day, hello!</i> <i>You're asking where I'm from?</i>
	<i>I'm jolly Romek!</i> <i>I live in suburbs in a little hut,</i>
	<i>I've got water, electricity and gas!</i> <i>Soo I'll repeat one more time.</i>

This version is very similar to the previous one. The tandem of translators also decided to use the technique of transposition and preserve the proper name. The main difference is that in their rendition the adjective ‘jolly’ is written with a small letter. This apparently minor alteration results in a substantial change in the meaning. In this translation ‘jolly’ is just an attributive adjective modifying the proper name and not a part of an inseparable whole that could not be replaced by anything else. Another difference consists in the fact that the lyrics here are written in italics. Finally, what spoils the effect of the translation is a spelling mistake in the word ‘so’ which is spelt ‘soo’. In the MOBZP version the lyrics of the song are subtitled all three times

¹³ ‘Jolly Roger’: “A pirate's flag with a white skull and crossbones on a black background.”, https://www.lexico.com/definition/jolly_roger

the song is sung on the screen and the spelling mistake appears only in the first scene with ‘Wesoły Romek’.

Another possible rendition of this song could read as follows:

Table 8. *Dzień dobry, cześć i czolem*. The MO Version of the Subtitles (*Miś*, 1980)

MO Version	
Character	Subtitles
Wesoły Romek	Hello guys, what’s your game Do you want to know my name
	Just call me Merry Andrew I’ve got a house in purlieus
	With water, light and heating Shall I keep repeating...

In this version the technique of cultural transfer was used and ‘Wesoły Romek’ has been translated as ‘Merry Andrew.’ The expression ‘merry-andrew’ can be defined as: “a person who amuses others by ridiculous behaviour”¹⁴, “a person who entertains others by means of comic antics; a clown”¹⁵ or “a person who clowns publicly”¹⁶. It seems, therefore, that this expression renders the most important association the character is supposed to evoke in the source audience. What is more, the subtitler can preserve the rhyme scheme as the expression ‘Merry Andrew’ rhymes with the noun ‘purlieus.’ The latter is a synonym of ‘suburbs’ or ‘outskirts.’ Although it is not the word that would be used on regular basis, it should not be a disadvantage here. On the contrary, it seems that using a rather sophisticated adjective to talk about trifling matters, may heighten the comic effect created by the song.

The form of the song has been rendered in this version by preserving the rhyme scheme and retaining the same number of syllables per line as there is in the original. An attempt to preserve the form usually involves modifying the meaning. It seems that some changes are inevitable if the subtitler wishes to preserve the rhyme scheme. Those changes, however, should not distort the general meaning of the song.

¹⁴ ‘Merry andrew’ <https://www.vocabulary.com/dictionary/merry%20andrew>

¹⁵ ‘Merry andrew’ https://www.lexico.com/definition/merry_andrew

¹⁶ ‘Merry-andrew’ (1967) *Webster’s Third New International Dictionary of the English Language Unabridged*.

3.3. A eulogy to Mr Ochódzki (*Łubu-dubu*)

Another cult song from *Miś* is the one performed by the coach Jarząbek in front of a wardrobe in Ochódzki's office. First, he recites a doggerel hymn of praise to the president Ochódzki, and then he sings a silly rhyming song:

Table 9. *Łubu-dubu*. Original Script (*Miś*, 1980)

Original Script:	
Character	Lyrics
Wacław Jarząbek [to the wardrobe]	Łubu dubu, łubu dubu, niech żyje nam prezes naszego klubu. Niech żyje nam.

The most distinctive feature of this short song is the usage of the neologism 'łubu dubu,' which has been formed based on the onomatopoeic word (Pol.) *łubu-du* 'thud', and which rhymes with the noun (Pol.) *klubu* (the noun 'club' in the genitive case). The rhymes make this song sound ridiculous and, at the same time, emphasize Jarząbek's servility towards his superiors. The question arises how the subtitler should approach this song and what strategy would work best here.

Consider the following translation:

Table 10. *Łubu-dubu*. The SFP Version of the Subtitles (*Miś*, 1980)

SFP Version	
Character	Subtitles
Wacław Jarząbek	Long live the president of our club!
	Long live the president!

One possible solution, which can be observed in the SFP version, is to omit the first line with the onomatopoeic neologism and translate only the second line of the lyrics. One may assume that the scene is comical in itself, and the target audience will laugh even not knowing that the protagonist is a rhymester. However, this solution entails an impoverishment of the original text.

Another solution, which can be found in the MOBZ version, is to preserve the nonsense onomatopoeic phrase in the translation:

Table 11. *Łubu-dubu*. The MOBZ Version of the Subtitles (*Miś*, 1980)

MOBZ Version	
Character	Subtitles
Wacław Jarząbek	Woo, boo, doo, boo, long live the president of our club!
	100 years!

In this version the subtitlors decided to translate the nonsense rhymed phrase ‘łubu-dubu’ as ‘woo, boo, doo, boo’, which is a rendition of the original pronunciation in accordance with the English spelling rules. It seems that although the onomatopoeic effect of the phrase has been preserved, the humorous effect of the rhyme is lost.

Yet another possible solution would be to coin an onomatopoeic neologism, similar to the one present in the original that would rhyme with the noun ‘club.’ Alternatively, the subtitler may decide to utilize a phrase taken from a different well-known doggerel, counting-out rhyme or nursery rhyme, preferably a nonsense or an onomatopoeic one that would rhyme with the noun ‘club.’

The third rendition of the lyrics, in which the last of the above-mentioned strategies has been adopted, reads as follows:

Table 12. *Łubu-dubu*. The MO Version of the Subtitles (*Miś*, 1980)

MO Version	
Character	Subtitles
Wacław Jarząbek	Rub-a-dub-dub! Rub-a-dub-dub! Up with the president of our club!

This version preserves the rhymes, and aims at showing the target audience the ridiculousness of the situation. The first line has been taken from a well know nursery rhyme entitled *Rub A Dub Dub*. This expression has become a catch phrase and is used not only in everyday conversations but also in a number of poems and songs. It has several different meanings. First of all, it can be understood as “[t]he sound of a drum being beaten; hence any clattering, clamorous, continuous noise”¹⁷. Secondly, in the Cockney rhyming slang the expression ‘rub-a-dub-dub’ means ‘a pub’ or ‘a club.’ It may be understood as well as a nonsense

¹⁷ ‘Rub-a-dub’ (1971) *Webster’s New Twentieth Century Dictionary of the English Language Unabridged*. 2nd ed.

line used only in order to achieve a rhyme as in the case of the poem for children entitled *Sounds Like It* by Arden Davidson¹⁸.

3.4. The war-time song *Teraz jest wojna*

The next song to be discussed in this paper originally comes from Leonard Buczkowski's cult film entitled *Zakazane piosenki (Forbidden Songs)* from 1947 and tells about the everyday reality in Poland during the Nazi occupation. In Bareja's film this song is performed by the actors in a theatre show:

Table 13. *Teraz jest wojna*. Original Script (*Miś*, 1980)

Original Script	
Character	Lyrics
Actors [sing]	Teraz jest wojna. Kto handluje, ten żyje. Jak sprzedam kaszanke, słoninę, rąbanke to bimbru się też napiję. Spod serca, kap, kap, słonina i schab, salceson i dwa balerony...
Father [in the audience, talking to his son]	Widzisz synku? Tak wygląda baleron!
Son	Aha...
Actors [sing]	Zabrali kaszanke, słoninę, rąbanke i boczek nieposolony.

Though the song refers to the years of the Nazi occupation, the problems it raises are not very distant from the everyday experience of the audience watching the performance. Maciej Łuczak (2001: 10) claims that “the director of *Miś* often tried to imply to the viewer that the reality of the [Nazi] occupation has much in common with the world of real socialism”. According to Łuczak, one of those similarities is the problem with supplies:

In the socialist Poland, just as at the time of the Nazi occupation, there were constant problems with supplies: in 1976 so called ‘sugar ration coupons’ and in 1981 ‘meat ration coupons’ were introduced, and then, successively, other products, including industrial ones, became rationed.

¹⁸ A. Davidson, *Sounds Like It To Me!*, Retrieved from <http://www.angelfire.com/md/byme/pocket/soundslike.html> Sounds Like It! 19 .12. 2017

(Łuczak 2001: 11)

Those constant problems with supplies, which the official propaganda preferred to call ‘minor transitional problems,’ forced the Polish people to live by their wits in order to survive, just as they did during the war. The performance is not only a history lesson for the people gathered in the theatre but also their unique opportunity to see cold meat they could not buy at the groceries. This can be seen in a comment made by a man in the audience to his little son for whom it was the first occasion to see cured pork shoulder. Łuczak (2001: 14) goes even as far as to assert that “the film characters watch the performance not out of patriotic need but because they could see real cold meat. (...). Cured pork shoulder already belonged to the national history just like the Grunwald battle did”.

It seems, therefore, that this song should be subtitled because otherwise the target audience may not understand what the actors are doing on the stage with cured pork shoulders hidden under their coats, and, consequently, may not catch the situational comedy of the scene. What is more, they may not understand the parallel between the times of occupation and the reality of the Communist Poland. This song is not subtitled in the SFP version.

The MOBPZ version reads as follows:

Table 14. *Teraz jest wojna*. The MOBPZ Version of the Subtitles (*Miś*, 1980)

MOBPZ Version	
Character	Subtitles
Actors	<i>The war is on...</i>
	<i>Who can sell, will survive.</i>
	<i>If I sell black pudding, lard, bacon, I'll drink some moonshine</i>
	<i>I keep close to my heart pork fat and loin, brawn and two smoked hams...</i>
Father	Look, my son. This is ham!
Son	Ah...
Actors	[no subtitles]

In this translation the lyrics lost their rhythmical lightness. The song seems dull and sad. The names of cold meat have been simplified: (Pol.) *baleron* ‘cured pork shoulder’ has become

‘ham’ and (Pol.) *rąbanka* ‘hacked-up meat’ has become ‘bacon’. This simplification can be justified by the requirement of conciseness due to the limited space on the screen.

Another possible rendition of the lyrics could be as follows:

Table 15. *Teraz jest wojna*. The MO Version of the Subtitles (*Miś*, 1980)

MO Version	
Character	Subtitles
Actors	There is war now Trade and you'll be fine
	When I sell some sausage Black pudding and flitch
	I'll have some moonshine From my bosom I take
	A flitch and a steak <i>Salceson</i> and <i>baleron</i>
Father	Son, now you know what <i>baleron</i> looks like.
Actors	They took the black pudding they took the sausage
	They took even the flitch And the bacon unsalted

The song is very melodious thanks to the regular rhythm¹⁹ and the rhymes. The number of syllables fluctuates from five to nine. What seems to be the principal source of difficulty for the subtitler is the names of different types of meat and cold meat. The majority of the names mentioned in the song are typical of Polish cuisine and do not have exact counterparts in English. This is reflected by the fact that some names do not have one-word equivalents in English and are rendered in a descriptive way as in the case of the lexeme (Pol.) *baleron*, which can be translated as ‘cured pork shoulder’²⁰. However, this expression is too long to be used in the subtitles. Fortunately, the object to which it refers is shown on the screen, so the technique of transposition could be used here and the Polish name ‘baleron’ could be left in its original form as the viewer will be able to understand its meaning thanks to the visual image. The word should be written in italics to indicate that it is a foreign name.

¹⁹ The rhythm of the song consists mainly of amphibrachs.

²⁰ ‘Baleron’ (2004) *Wielki Multimedialny Słownik Angielsko Polski Polsko Angielski PWN Oxford*.

Another problem that the subtitler has to solve is that most of the names of meat or cold meat mentioned in the song rhyme. The last but one obstacle is that the lyrics of this song are strictly connected with the visual image, i.e. the actors performing the song show the audience the meat and cold meat they are singing about. The expression “spod serca kap kap”, which has been translated here as “from my bossum I take”, corresponds to the visual component of the film. The moment those words are sung, a large, middle-aged actress on the stage opens her coat to show a display of cold meat (including ‘baleron’) hidden underneath. This means that the subtitler cannot depart too far from the original in terms of meaning as this may result in a clash between the subtitles and the visual component of the film.

The last but not least problem is that the meat and charcuterie mentioned in the song have different names in British English and in American English. A good example of this could be the word ‘salceson,’ which in British English is translated as ‘brawn,’ while in American English is known as ‘head cheese’²¹. A possible solution to this problem could be to use the technique of transposition and to leave the Polish name ‘salceson.’ The advantage of this solution is that, on the one hand, it would make the subtitles more universal, and, on the other hand, it would make the target audience discover something about Polish cuisine.

3.5. A lullaby or a Christmas carol (*Lulejże mi, lulej*)

The last song to be discussed herein is the one that appears in the final scene. It is performed at the frozen lake at which coalmen have come to catch fish for Christmas Eve supper. There is a woman holding a little baby in her arms singing a song that resembles a Christmas carol or a lullaby. Next to the woman, there are two men playing the flute and a man chopping firewood. Behind them, there is an old wooden hut. The whole picture reminds of the Bethlehem stable. This scene is very different from the rest of the film, as it is calmer, and it is not intended to be funny. The song, which is performed by a Woman with a Baby, is interrupted by an old wise man’s speech about tradition. The woman singing a lullaby to her newborn child embodies all the Polish people who are tired of the absurdity of their everyday life and want to live a peaceful and, above all, a normal life. She hopes that her child will be living in a different Poland, in a land of milk and honey. She is, however, brutally woken up from her reveries when a huge straw teddy bear that has been attached to a helicopter falls down spattering all of the people gathered at the frozen lake with mud. The teddy bear hits the ground exactly at the moment when the woman sings that she wants this land to be generous to all the people. This makes the contrast

²¹ ‘Salceson’ (2004) *Wielki Multimedialny Słownik Angielsko Polski Polsko Angielski PWN Oxford*.

between the innocence of the lullaby and the brutality of the communist regime symbolized by the teddy bear even sharper. It is a symbolic and a rather pessimistic ending.

The lyrics of the lullaby read as follows:

Table 16. *Lulejże mi lulej*. Original Script (*Miś*, 1980)

Original Script:	
Character	Lyrics
Woman with a Baby [sings]	Lulejże mi, lulej, we wszechświecie całym, tyś jest moim królem mój syneczku mały.
	Ciebie ja otulę, ciebie ja nakarmię, nim świąteczna nocka cały świat ogarnie. Nie płacz mi, na przyszłe dni, gdy cię spotka krzywda, bieda. Śpij mi, śpij, lulaj mi ukołysać się daj.
	Uśnijże mi dziecię, już oczkami swemi, śnij o całym świecie, śnij ty o tej ziemi. By to była ziemia spokojna i dobra, ziemia sprawiedliwa, wszystkim ludziom szczodra. Lu li la, pięknie gra, fujareczka, fujareczka Tysiąc gwiazd, świeci tam, dla mego syneczka.
	Lulejże mi, lulej, we wszechświecie całym, tyś jest moim królem, mój syneczku mały.

One may ask whether the target audience really needs the lyrics of this lullaby to be translated. The person responsible for the SFP version must have decided against it, and did not subtitle the lyrics. It seems, however, that without understanding of the lyrics the target audience may not understand this scene fully or may interpret it wrongly. Bearing in mind that this scene is the key to the understanding of the whole film, this would be a shame.

Translating this song seems to be a great challenge for the translator. An ideal translation should have the form of a lullaby and be melodious. The form of a lullaby can be preserved by introducing the expressions characteristic for lullabies. The melodiousness is achieved in the original by a regular rhythm and paired rhymes. The song starts with a two-line chorus which is followed by two verses of five and six lines, and then again the chorus. The refrain and most lines of the stanzas consist of twelve syllables. The distribution of stressed and unstressed syllables is also very regular²². The tandem of translators, however, must have thought that the ‘content’ was more important than the ‘form’:

²² The first line of the chorus consists of two amphibrachs, followed by a tertius paeon and a trochee, while the second line is composed of a tertius paeon, a trochee, a tertius paeon, and a trochee. This pattern is repeated in the

Table 17. *Lulejże mi, lulej*. The MOBZ Version of the Subtitles (*Miś*, 1980)

MOBZ Version	
Character	Subtitles
Woman with a Baby	<i>Sleep, my dear, sleep.</i>
	<i>In the whole universe,</i>
	<i>You are my king,</i>
	<i>My little son.</i>
	<i>I will wrap you warm,</i>
	<i>I will feed you too,</i>
	<i>Before the Christmas night</i>
	<i>Comes over the whole world.</i>
	<i>Don't cry for the future,</i>
	<i>When you are hurt and poor.</i>
	<i>Sleep, my dear, sleep...</i>
	<i>Fall asleep my dear,</i>
	<i>Close your little eyes,</i>
	<i>Dream about the whole world,</i>
	<i>Dream about this land.</i>
	<i>May it be a land</i>
	<i>Of peace and good,</i>
	<i>Land of justice,</i>
	<i>Generous for everyone.</i>
	<i>Loo, lee, lay, it's a beautiful song</i>
<i>Played on a flute, on a flute.</i>	
<i>Thousand stars are shining there</i>	
<i>For my little son.</i>	
<i>Sleep, my dear, sleep.</i>	

first two lines of the first stanza and then followed by an amphibrach and two iambs in the third line and two tertius paeons in the fourth line. The rhythm in the fifth line is the same as in the first line of the chorus. The rhythm of the first two lines of the second stanza repeats that of the first two lines of the first stanza. The third and the fourth lines follow the rhythm of the second line (i.e. a tertius paeon, a trochee, a tertius paeon, a trochee). The fifth line is composed of two amphibrachs and two tertius paeons. The sixth line has the same rhythm as the first line of the chorus. It would be difficult to recreate exactly the same rhythm in the subtitles, but it seems that they should sound rhythmical to give some indication of singability.

	<i>In the whole universe,</i>
	<i>You are my king,</i>
	<i>My little son.</i>

In this version of the subtitles the translators opted for literal translation of the lyrics and did not try to preserve the rhymes present in the original. The English speaking viewer will understand that what he or she can hear is a lullaby and having read the subtitles will roughly know what the song is about. However, because the form of a lullaby has been neglected in the translation, he or she will not be able to fully appreciate the beauty and melodiousness of the original lyrics of the song. What is more, the English speaking viewer may be, at the very least, surprised by the phrase ‘Loo, lee, lay’, which is a rendition of the original pronunciation of the onomatopoeic word ‘lu-li-la’ in accordance with the English spelling rules. The problem, however, is that ‘loo’, ‘lee’ and ‘lay’ are not just onomatopoeic renditions of the Polish syllables ‘lu’, ‘li’ ‘la’ but have their own meanings in the target language: (En.) ‘toilet’ , ‘the side of hill, wall, etc. that provides shelter from the wind’, and ‘to put something in especially a flat or horizontal position, usually carefully or for a particular purpose’²³, respectively. They may be confusing for the viewer and may evoke a humorous effect which was not intended in the original and, thus, should be avoided.

Another possible rendition of the lyrics could be as follows:

Table 18. *Lulejże mi lulej*. The MO Version of the Subtitles (*Miś*, 1980)

MO Version	
Character	Subtitles
Woman with a Baby	Hush my baby now don't you cry 'Cause under the sun
	There's no other king But my little baby son
	Mummy's gonna feed you Mummy's gonna tuck you in
	Before it gets dark And the holy night closes in
	Don't cry for days to come You'll be wronged you'll get hurt
	Hush my baby now don't you cry Close your eyes and build on sand

²³ All definitions here taken from *Cambridge Dictionary*, <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english>

	Dream about the world Dream about this land
	May this land be just and peaceful Giving to all everything in handfuls
	Listen to a sweet sound of the flute A myriad of stars is shining for you
	Hush my baby now don't you cry 'Cause under the sun
	There's no other king But my little baby son

In this version of the lyrics not only its content has been preserved but also the rhyme scheme. The onomatopoeic word 'lulila' has been omitted, and instead, an image of a sweet sounding flute has been introduced. The form of a lullaby has been rendered by introducing the expressions that are characteristic of lullabies such as 'hush my baby' or 'don't you cry'²⁴.

4. Conclusion

The analysis of *Miś* has confirmed that the songs appearing in the film are not mere embellishments but constitute an integral part of this cult comedy. Furthermore, they play a vital role in the film: either creating a comic effect or drawing the audience's attention to the most important scenes. The lyrics of the songs in *Miś* are inextricably linked with the plot and are necessary for the viewer to fully understand and appreciate this cult comedy. Therefore, subtitling them is indispensable. Unfortunately, in one of the versions of the English subtitles (the SFP) some songs have not been translated at all and others only partially. As a result, the English speaking viewers may not fully understand some of the scenes or interpret them wrongly.

It has also been shown that in the case of the lyrics present in *Miś* 'the form' (i.e. the rhyme scheme and the rhythm) is as important as 'the content' and, therefore, both of them should be rendered in the English subtitles in order to allow the target audience to appreciate the songs fully. The analysis of the SFP and the MOBPZ versions has indicated that both not translating the lyrics and translating them literally result in an impoverishment of the original. It seems that a better solution would be to render not only the denotative meaning of a given song but also

²⁴ The following line: "Hush my baby now don't you cry" comes from a lullaby by Maureen Davison and has been retrieved from: http://www.songpeddler.com/MaureenDavison/HushMyBaby_MDavison.asp

the connotations it evokes. The songs that are funny in the original (all except the final lullaby) should be funny in the target version as well. Likewise, the humorous effect that was not intended in the original should be avoided in the subtitles.

The analysis has indicated that the subtitlers used a range of translation techniques to render culture specific elements. The technique of omission (frequently used in the SFP version) proved to be the least successful as it led to impoverishment or distortion of the original. The technique of transposition (in the case of the song *Teraz jest wojna*) or that of cultural transfer (in the case of the song *Dzień dobry, cześć i czolem*) seem to work better.

Finally, it could be argued that the lyrics of the songs appearing in the film are subject to two types of constraints: those that apply to lyrics translation in general and those that result from the nature of subtitling. It seems that the latter type was easier to obey as in all versions the subtitlers managed to keep the limit of 35 characters per line, used no more than two lines for a single subtitle, and opted for conciseness. It may be concluded that subtitling lyrics is more difficult than translating the lyrics which do not appear in a film insofar as the subtitler's freedom is limited by a number of subtitling constraints. This, however, gives him or her an enormous scope for creativity. The subtitler should, therefore, treat those constraints not as stumbling blocks in his or her way but as stepping stones.

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(MOBPZ Version)