The reception of translated comedy films: cultural difficulties in the translation of comedies from the People's Republic of Poland's era into English

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ABSTRACT
Audiovisual translation, although it appeared quite recently, is more and more common nowadays. Due to its specificity, it requires different techniques from traditional oral or written translation. As translation is restrained by such factors as time and space (especially in subtitling), when a cultural problem appears, there is no possibility to use explanations or footnotes. What is more, although contemporary films, because of globalisation and standardisation of human experiences, often do not cause many cultural problems, the historical films still pose a plethora of difficulties, and inappropriate translation may lead to the misunderstanding of often very sensitive matters. The aim of this paper is to present potential cultural difficulties in the translation of comedies of the People's Republic of Poland into English and methods of dealing with them, and to check, by means of surveys and other accessible tools, what the reception of translated film is today in the target culture, compared with reception in the source one.

Keywords: People's Republic of Poland, comedies, audiovisual translation, culturally specific items

1 Introduction

Topics such as rendering humour or cultural items often appear in translation studies research. One can mention here for instance David Katan’s Translating Cultures, An Introduction for Translators, Interpreters and Mediators or Patrick Zabalbeascoa’s “Humour and translation – an interdisciplinary”. Recently more and more works are devoted to rendering these issue in a very special kind of translation – audiovisual. Among some articles that deal with the topics one may enumerate “Translating Humor for Subtitling” by Katia Spanakaki. In her article she presents various methods of translating humour and also major constraints in translating humour for subtitling. “(...) When it comes on translating humor in subtitling, the subtitler needs to use the limited space and time in an optimal way, in order to virtually retain the meaning effect in the subtitle translation”, she writes (Spanakaki 2007). The exact topic of translating People’s Republic of Poland’s comedies has not been the subject of many papers. It is worth to mention here Karolina Glück’s MA thesis, „Kultura W Tłumaczeniu: Przypadek Filmów „MIŚ” I “ZMIENNICY” Barei”, that deals with specifically cultural items. The author concludes that such items are mostly neutralized in translation, the most common techniques being substitution and omission. Nevertheless it can be noticed that the topic of translating comedy movies and even more the topic of

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1 There appear also publications on translating humour in dubbing, which has its own specificity. (For example Zabalbeascoa’s “Factors in Dubbing Television Comedy” or “Translating Jokes for Dubbed Television Situation Comedies”. However, considerations regarding dubbing are not particularly relevant for the present article, as the comedies being its subject matter were not dubbed.)
the reception of such translations in not very widely undertaken and it definitely merits more attention.

2 The People’s Republic of Poland’s comedies – a brief outline

The People’s Republic of Poland (PRL) is a period that lasted from 1952-89, when Poland was under the communist regime. As far as the films are concerned, often in the Polish consciousness this period is perceived as the one in which the best comedies were produced. They started to be extremely popular already in the times they came from. Monika Talarczyk-Gubała, a researcher dealing with this topic, described a questionnaire from 1963 which showed that as many as 22.4 per cent of viewers chose a comedy as their favourite film genre (Talarczyk-Gubała 2007, 61). Why were they so attractive? Talarczyk-Gubała enumerates some of the reasons. First, there were not many alternative forms of entertainment during these times. Second, some exaggerated elements of the PRL reality helped viewers to experience some kind of catharsis, as they could see their every day tribulations in a different light and laugh at them. In case of “politically correct” comedies, the viewers, instead of laughing where they were supposed to, were amused because of the naivety of the comedies, and they rather laughed “against them”. Because of censorship filmmakers could not criticise the authorities directly. Therefore, some comedies contained subtle allusions to politics and catching them was another source of humour (Talarczyk-Gubała 2007, 11-2).

This paper aims to analyse the problems appearing in translating PRL comedies into English and their reception among Anglophones. Four People’s Republic of Poland films will be focused on, namely Sami swoi, Kochaj albo rzuć, Miś and Seksmisja. They were chosen due to the fact they have been watched by the greatest number of English native speakers who were willing to share their opinions, and therefore a comparison of their reception with the reception by Poles is possible.

The following short presentation of the plots is necessary to get an insight into the possible translation problems and difficulties:

Sami Swoi (translated as Own Folks) was directed by Sylwester Chęciński in 1967, and Kochaj albo rzuć (Love or Part) from 1977 is one of its sequels. They tell the life of two feuding families (the Pawlaks and the Karguls), who soon after the Second World War have to move from the Eastern Borderlands to the Recovered Territories in the west when the borders of Poland change. They keep quarrelling in the new place, but finally become reconciled after the Pawlaks’ son and the Karguls’ daughter get married. In Kochaj albo rzuć, Pawlak and Kargul fly to America with their granddaughter Ania to visit Pawlak’s brother. Unfortunately, he dies before their visit, but they get to know about their new relative – an illegitimate daughter of the deceased.
What cultural difficulties appear in the films? Undoubtedly, both parts are strongly rooted in Polish history – the Second World War, moving to the Recovered Territories, and the PRL reality. Such elements may be previously unknown to an Anglophone viewer. Moreover, as Talarczyk-Gubała notices, the films connect two Polish traditional images – of Polish nobility (Sarmatians, coming from Kresy, like the heroes) and the conventional character of Polish peasants (stubbornness, obstinacy) (Talarczyk-Gubała 2007, 184). Although not many allusions to PRL reality appear, some still exist (for example in the USA one of the characters says that in Poland you must listen to the radio and in America you can speak yourself, which meant people in the PRL could not openly express their opinions if they were not in accordance with the Party’s policy). The main difficulty English-speaker viewers may encounter is that the films analysed were translated by amateurs and posted on the Internet, and they are neither checked nor polished very well and contain many mistakes (it is hard to ascertain exactly which translations of the other two films the respondents viewed, but they mentioned watching them on various festivals or on DVD, which allows the supposition that the translations were professional, and as Bogucki (2009, 56) writes, “the quality of the translation of films differs greatly between amateur and professional subtitling”, and therefore it should be expected that *Sami swoi* and *Kochaj albo rzuć* may be received less well than the remaining two due to this factor).

The next film analysed is *Miś* directed by Stanisław Bareja in 1980 and translated as *Teddy Bear*. The film depicts a plethora of intrigues of the main character (Ochódzki, nicknamed Miś), aimed at his trip to England, where he wants to withdraw all the money from a bank account that he shares with his ex-wife. As Talarczyk-Gubała describes, the film is full of funny situations, complications and exaggerations about the image of the People’s Republic of Poland, and contains many political allusions in its many various scenes. It also depicts a typical character of PRL comedies – a hustler who strives for his aims using all means he can think of. A little pessimistic tone is seen in the final triumph of deception (Talarczyk-Gubała 2007, 209).

The last comedy that will be commented upon is *Seksmisja* (*Sexmission*) directed in 1983 by Juliusz Machulski. It is a science fiction story of two men, Maks and Albert, who wake up after a long period of hibernation in a world devoid of males. This comedy has the most universal character of the four films and seems to be a science fiction one, having nothing in common with the PRL period and therefore not causing any cultural problems. However, among the lines, as Talarczyk-Gubała notes, Polish viewers can notice an allegory to totalitarianism, visible for example in the lies regarding history, tradition and language, hatred sessions, politics present in all areas of life, some verbal allusions (Talarczyk-Gubała 2007 149-52), and its disquieting ending.
The comedies presented above are definitely different – from a fantastic, through a more realistic (but exaggerated), to quite a surrealistic one deeply rooted in the communist reality in many of its scenes and situations. All of them, however, are deeply rooted in their socio-cultural context.

3 Reception of PRL comedies in Poland

In Poland, as it was mentioned, PRL films were very well received at the time they were created, but today they are still looked at with sentiment, nostalgia, and regarded as “cult films”. They form a very essential part of Polish filmography and occupy high places on many top-lists.

Some examples (from September 2013) concerning only the four comedies analysed will illustrate the point:

**Table 1**
50 best Polish films ever, according to Esensja magazine (Magazyn Kultury Popularnej Esensja 2011):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place (out of 50):</th>
<th>Film</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Seksmisja</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Miś</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Sami Swoi</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 2**
Greatest number of viewers (Wikipedia.org):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place (out of 20):</th>
<th>Film</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Seksmisja</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Kochaj albo rzuć</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 3**
Best Polish films ever (according to FILMFEST PL) (Stopklatka.pl 2013)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place (out of 50):</th>
<th>Film</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Miś</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Despite the passing time, these films are still thought of as being excellent. It is also worth mentioning that although today it seems that young people from Poland (who did not live in/remember the PRL period) may have problems with full comprehension, they are still in a better situation than English-speaking people, as they have had many chances to hear about the PRL period from their parents, the media or learn about it at school. This is a frequent topic that they are still somehow saturated in. In addition, the inhabitants of other former communist countries may have similar experiences, which may help them better understand the films’ socio-cultural context, although for English-speaking people communism is rather something completely unknown. Especially in some comedies, when certain matters are not presented directly but in a form of an allusion, one must know the history and culture to be able to comprehend the content. Moreover, to fully appreciate these comedies, viewers must understand the humour. Any translation problems are even more discernible in the audiovisual translation, where no additional explanations such as footnotes are possible. Therefore, a question arises: is it possible to export this product abroad? Do these comedies have a chance of being understood by Anglo-Americans?

4 Translation strategies in rendering cultural problems

Translating culture into another language is not an easy undertaking. David Katan points out to strong connection between a language and its culture: “(...) how languages convey meaning is related to the culture (...) though languages can convey concepts from other cultures, people (...) tend not to realize that their perception (through language) is, in fact, bound by their own culture” (Katan, 1999, 86). This makes the understanding of foreign culture items problematic. As far as cultural difficulties in the PRL comedies are concerned, a translator must first deal with the visible objects and issues that are specifically Polish, such as names, food, holidays, customs, traditions and places. Sometimes there are no equivalents of such words in English. Next, there are problems connected with history: with the specific Communist reality, which very often is also a source of humour. Anglophone nations did not have such experience. How can a translator deal with these problems?

First, let us restate briefly some general ideas on translating culturally difficult items. The two basic strategies in translation for coping with culture problems are foreignisation and domestication (Venuti 1995, 19-20) and either of them may also be applied in AVT. As far as more
detailed techniques pertaining particularly to audiovisual translation are concerned, Tomaszkiewicz (2006, 152-75) in *Przekład audiowizualny* writes they should be adequate to the situation and among them she enumerates: omissions, direct transfer, literal translation, elaboration, periphrases, and various types of equivalence. According to her, images present in a movie may help to make cultural concepts more understandable. While dealing with numerous word level problems, a translator may use Mona Baker’s ideas (Baker 2011, 18-44), as she enumerated many ways of solving difficulties with word level equivalence. Her advice is to use such strategies as providing a more general word, a more neutral one, cultural substitution, omission or illustration.

Jan Pedersen in his article "How is culture rendered in subtitles?" presents seven major strategies for dealing with Extralinguistic Culture-bound References - official equivalent, retention, specification, direct translation, generalization, substitution and omission. Next, he enumerates also parameters influencing the subtitlers’ decision-making. It is important, among others, if a given cultural item is important for the context or not, if redundant information is accessible by other means or what the main goals of the translation are (Pedersen 2005, 122-127).

Translating humour poses another serious difficulty. In the comedies it is often a situational one, based on subtle allusions, connected with the reality of the Communist period, and very often the time and space do not allow translation of word plays properly in an understandable way. The connection between humour and culture has been noticed by a lot of researchers, for instance Bergson (2005, 7-8) writes:

> To understand laughter, we must put it back into its natural environment, which is society, and above all must we determine the utility of its function, which is a social one. Such, let us say at once, will be the leading idea of all our investigations. Laughter must answer to certain requirements of life in common. It must have a SOCIAL signification.

Another scholar, Vandeale claims: “the translator of humor has to cope with the fact that the “rules,” “expectations,” “solutions,” and agreements on “social play” are often group- or culture-specific” (Vandeale, 2010, 149).

Delabastita presents some ideas on how wordplays (being often very humorous and culture-rooted) can be translated. They may be rendered by a TL pun, non-pun, another rhetorical figure, omitted or copied from ST. It is also possible to introduce a compensatory pun in another place, add a new pun or provide an explanation (Delabastita in Spanakaki, 2007).

Tomaszkiewicz (2006, 182-91) also gives some advice concerning humour translation in AVT and its various aspects. First, it should be transferred; if it is not possible, compensation must be used. Word plays
and rhymes may be replaced by similar ones in the target language. The register should be translated equivalently. Irony and satire can be inferred from facial expressions, gestures, and so forth.

As it can be seen, the techniques for dealing with humour and culture items are sometimes named and divided differently by various researchers but they pertain more or less to the same activities. They are either closer to domestication or foreignization and either preserve or lose the intended effects.

5 Reception among Anglophones

In the light of the possible translation problems and solutions mentioned, let us examine the real difficulties which the receivers encountered, discuss some techniques used by translators, and compare the reception in Poland with the reception among English native speakers in order to know if similar level of understanding and appreciation of the comedies is possible; if their function – amusing the viewer can be equally fulfilled in Polish and in English.

At the beginning, it is worth mentioning that PRL comedies are not very popular among Anglophones and it is hard to reach those who have watched any of them. For the needs of the article some accessible Internet statements as well as a questionnaire involving fourteen English-speaking natives (from Great Britain, the USA, and Canada) are analysed. The survey was sent to them via Internet. The respondents differed in terms of age, sex, and education. They did not have much knowledge about Poland, but they often watched the films because they were interested in Polish culture and wanted to become familiar with it. In some cases they watched films with their Polish friends or relatives, who could help them. Judging from the viewers’ profile, it appears that foreignisation is a better strategy than domestication, as the viewers themselves want to learn something new, the reason for their watching is to get to know Polish culture. Moreover, as it was mentioned, often no equivalents from TL culture exist that would enhance their understanding.

The questionnaire contained open and closed questions relating to three aspects of reception that will be later elaborated on: general understanding, culture issues, and humour.

5.1 General understanding

As far as general understanding is concerned, let us first discuss the issue of the titles. Miś and Seksmisja are one-word titles that are relatively easy to translate, but the problems arise with the two remaining titles. Sami swoi was rendered as Own Folks, and Kochaj albo rzuć as Love or Part. Some respondents highlight the awkwardness of the Own Folks title, although they try to make sense of all the titles’ relatedness to
the contents. Another problem is inconsistency in translation: the expressions from the titles also appear in other places throughout the film. Although in Polish they are exactly the same, in English they are different than in the titles – “our people”, “we are all friends here”, “love or leave”, which is also noticed as confusing by some of the respondents.

The above mentioned questionnaire contained a question of whether the viewers understood everything. Only one person claimed he did (which does not necessarily mean he understood everything properly, but rather that he did not find anything incomprehensible), while others only partly understood. Their difficulties with understanding were cultural (for example whether the treatment of Kargul’s daughter was exaggerated or normal at that time), and linguistic (some scenes were interpreted solely through context, for example cutting off a Pawlaks’ horse’s tail by Kargul was understood only through context to be an insult). Nevertheless, sometimes the misunderstandings were quite serious, such as in the case when one person questioned did not understand “why in Sami swoi John picked up the soiled clay, measured it and said “three fingers””, whereas it was quite crucial for the plot (it was the reason for the families’ quarrel – Kargul ploughed the ground three fingers too far into the direction of the Pawlaks’ ground) and repeated in other parts of the film. Such cases may be caused by shortcomings in translation.

Successful translation is definitely a factor aiding comprehension. As one respondent wrote, he had almost no problems with understanding “because of good subtitles” (in the case of Seksmisja, however, this comedy was also the easiest to translate because of its universality).

It may seem that understanding comes when the receivers are not left alone with the film but can receive additional explanation from their Polish acquaintances, or read extra material about the film. They did not state this in the questionnaire, but such opinions appear sometimes when one reads English-speaking viewers’ comments on Polish movies in the Internet, e.g. one of Miś viewers writes (IMDb 2005):

First time I’ve seen it, I didn’t fully get the idea what this film is supposed to be about. Maybe a little bit funny, sometimes silly, but in overall, didn’t make sense. At all. But when you actually think about how life in Poland was at that time, and if you know somebody (preferably from Poland) who will guide you, you’ll find this film hilarious and love it. It shows, very sarcastically though, how the life in Poland in early 1980s was, and how people were dependent on each other. I don’t want to talk about it too much, but the score is 10 without doubts, and if you’re looking for a clever foreign comedy, that’s the one you should see [original spelling].

5.2 Culture issues
As far as potential cultural difficulties are concerned, the respondents were asked to enumerate typically Polish elements. It turned out that most of them were objects they could see (Polish girls, buildings, shrubs) and more abstract, but still very general ones (for instance Polish humour, closeness, spirituality, moaning, social dynamics, and gender roles). These elements were repeated in many scenes and were also presented in images, so the answers do not show that the English native speakers gained any cultural knowledge from the language (and thus from the translation).

The next question was similar but paid more attention to the films themselves (not only the Polish aspects the respondents might know from elsewhere): whether they had learned anything new about Poland from the comedies. Here, the most frequent answers were related to historical aspects, such as Communism or life after the Second World War, and the socio-cultural aspects: poverty or archetypes of male and female film figures. They were all rather general aspects, more visible in pictures than in language. No connections with Polish matters in Seksmisja were noticed; it was classified only as a fiction film. One of the questionnaire respondents claimed that Miś is so completely Polish that perhaps it was aimed only for Poles. He wrote:

I was wondering what the Director of this movie – Bareja really wanted to convey to the moviegoers. Was this movie aimed only for the Polish market? For one particular social group/class? Was it supposed to reflect the way he sees things himself as they are in his environment (Poland) or is it the way the majority of people see things? This movie is a comedy with many nuances.

However, like the person quoted earlier, he also thought better understanding depends on some additional help: “I think watching it with a Polish person who could make things a little clearer to me would make me appreciate the movie better.”

As it can be seen, English-language viewers take their knowledge from pictures rather than language. They get rather a general view than details, language allusions and single references to cultural items are hard to capture for them, although they are able to learn quite a lot about Poland. They often pay attention to matters that for Polish viewers (even those born after 1989) seem obvious.

5.3 Humour

Comical facets in PRL comedies are both situational and linguistic. Generally, grasping the humorous intention of the movies posed no greater problems among the Anglophones– as many as 71 per cent of the respondents asserted that the films were definitely funny. According to others, only some parts of them were amusing. One person, nonetheless,
claimed that *Kochaj albo rzuć* was sad. It did contain some sad moments (John’s death) but they were not conveyed in a very pessimistic way. The problem may lie in inadequate translation – losing elements of humour and clear transmission of sad moments, which is incompatible with the film’s genre. Nevertheless, the opinion may also stem from the respondent’s personal experiences and attitudes, as it was only a single statement. Humour was also mentioned in other parts of the questionnaire, where it was not the object of a question (for instance sense of humour as a typically Polish element, as an element the respondents most liked), thus it was definitely noticed and probably well rendered, although situational humour was still more discernible than the linguistic humour. The most amusing moments indicated by the respondents concerned scenes not language humour; they mentioned such scenes as: a cat tied up in the neighbour’s yard, the chief of the women clan turning out to be a man, chasing the cow, or the scene with the family and the taxi driver in the opening credits. Regarding humour, again, English-speaking respondents base it mainly on what they can see rather than on the language.

5.4 Lost in translation

From the receivers’ point of view, the problems of translation stem from the various losses of translation. Sometimes they created serious misunderstandings, or confusion; sometimes these were elements the viewers did not notice at all. Let us discuss some of the losses. The first and main problem, especially in the case of *Sami swoi* and *Kochaj albo rzuć* (which, as it was mentioned before, were translated by amateurs) are mistakes and inconsistency, for instance the already-mentioned problems with titles, spelling mistakes such as “we must be in hail” instead of “hell” or mistaken names, like Jan instead of Kazimierz. These problems may lead to misunderstandings in important matters, and make the films illogical and less funny.

Another issue definitely lost in translation, but not noticed by the receivers, are regionalisms in language. They are both a source of culture knowledge and of humour; they also create a certain atmosphere. It should be shown in a way that the language differs from the standard through a functional equivalent (more colloquial, rural English). Unfortunately, regionalisms are rendered in general English, not distinct from the rest. Similarly lost are half English/half Polish conversations in *Kochaj albo rzuć*, in which for example some English words are declined in Polish, or single English words are put into a Polish sentence, such as in: “nie eksajtuje” (= “it’s not exciting”, and *exciting* is both declined and written phonetically in Polish), “Wiem gdzie jest ten place” (= “I know where this place is”). The conversations are not translated at all, and may lose their comic aspect.
Next, there appear many expressions typical for the PRL period that are hard to understand. They are not very crucial to the whole plot, but inappropriate translation may create misunderstanding. For example, Polish *milicja* is generalized as ‘police’, *czyn społeczny* as “some kind of manifestation”, although it was something different – obligatory work for society. Such generalisations and also common omissions may cause some viewers to be confused, especially when there is no context to aid understanding; on the other hand, too many exoticised expressions may be hard to comprehend, especially when they appear quite densely.

Last, there are some cultural aspects understood only in their historical context which may still be funny, but whose cultural allusions are lost. This is the case especially with some expressions in Miś, for instance numerous parodies of PRL slogans such as, “Każdy kilogram obywatela z wyższym wykształceniem szczególnym dobrem narodu” (roughly meaning: “Each kilogram of a citizen with a higher education is a particular good of the nation”) or “Parówkowym skrytożercom mówimy nie!!!” (“We oppose secret sausages eaters”) appear. English-speakers may not perceive the parodies but still find the slogans amusing.

5.5 General reception

The answer to the question of whether PRL comedies are worth translating into English is not complete without discussing the general reception. So far, the consideration has been related to some single issues which were hard to translate or understand, but the discussion on reception would not be complete without answering the basic question: what is the English-speaking viewers’ reaction? Do they like the films?

In the questionnaire, the respondents were asked to enumerate elements they liked and did not like in the films. The positive elements definitely prevailed in their answers. They were mainly elements of a plot, for example that Ania and her grandfathers could see America, and that the families of Kargul and Pawlak did not hold grudges in the end in *Kochaj albo rzuć*. Some respondents also mentioned other, more general aspects such as the “long epic view the film provides”. They especially appreciated the humour, answers such as “taste of humour” or “funny behaviour” occurred frequently as the aspects they liked.

Among the issues they did not like, the respondents also most frequently indicated elements of a plot (for example the family were not able to see their relative John who passed away, quarrelling neighbours, the dishonesty of the hero). The feature they did not like, not connected with the plot, was that some cultural issues were hard to follow (which has been frequently mentioned earlier). The classification of plot elements into those appreciated and those not shows general understanding, as these are motives that Poles also categorise in the same way (like/did not like).

The next question was: “Is the message universal?” Only one person surveyed claimed that the message might not be understood on other
continents; while for the rest it was universal, and some of them also indicated this message, which testifies to the understanding of the films.

The general note given to the comedies by the English-speaking respondents was very high: 4.05/5, which is similarly high as in case of Polish notes. Although these were Anglophones already interested in Poland, such note shows that the films are worth translating.

6 Conclusions

In conclusion, PRL comedies are deeply rooted in Polish culture and history, and they should not be domesticated. A translator, therefore, will never achieve the same effect as in Poland; the films will have different functions, and the cultural/historical aspects will be rather informative for English-speaking people. It should be remembered that, as Nord wrote, sometimes it is impossible to keep the same function even if “source-culture function markers (...) are exactly reproduced in the target text. (...) where the source text refers to something that is familiar to its readers, the target text may refer to something unfamiliar” (Nord 1997, 45). Regarding the more detailed techniques, it should be said that there is no space for paraphrases and explanation in PRL comedies, as the dialogues are very dense. Hence, the most frequently used techniques are generalisation and omissions. Some minor cultural aspects do not need to be translated as this may create too much information for the receivers. Moreover, the images compensate for many losses and are of a great help when it comes to understanding. Humour is quite understandable from the context, but cultural issues and language matters pose more difficulties. Since the translation is deemed to fulfil a different function than the original, not everything must be explained, although great attention must be paid to the general understanding of plots, avoiding mistakes, proper rendition of register, consistency and careful translation. Perhaps some written explanation should be attached to DVDs in case of more complex films such as Miś, for those who may be interested to read them. Although the films are not received as well as they are in Poland, they are still received well, their universal message is understood, and at the same time respondents can learn something about Poland and they appreciate the humour. The humour is also very culture specific, but in the words of one English-speaking viewer: “Don't worry about the language, it’s not a barrier, funny is funny, in any language” (IMDb 2009). Therefore, it may be concluded that despite the Polish reality the films can be appreciated abroad and are worthy of being translated and promoted in English-speaking countries. More broadly, this may pertain also to other lesser-known language productions.

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