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**The Art of Translating Music:
A Comparative Analysis of Song
Translation from English into Italian
in the film *Wonka***

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ABSTRACT

This thesis proposes an analysis of the translation and adaptation of the songs from the film *Wonka* (2023) from English into Italian. This study aims to identify both the differences and similarities between the original versions of the songs and their corresponding translations, highlighting the strategies used to produce songs that are catchy and singable while sounding as if they were originally written in Italian.

The work is divided into three chapters. The first chapter provides a theoretical background on song translation, with a particular focus on two important works by Franzon (2008) and Low (2003).

The second chapter offers a general overview of the film *Wonka* (2023), including information about the plot and the original soundtrack. This context will be used to illustrate how the lyrics relate to the story.

The last chapter compares the original English songs with their Italian translations, examining the strategies used to produce translated versions of the songs that are as powerful as their original counterparts as well as almost perfectly synchronised with the actor's lip movements while singing.

INTRODUCTION

The aim of this thesis is to offer an insight into the art of translating music, by carrying out a comparative analysis of song translation from English into Italian in the film *Wonka*, which premiered in theatres worldwide in winter 2023.

The reasons justifying the selection of this film mostly lie in the nature of the film itself, a musical full of songs which play a key role in moving the plot forward, and the effective work carried out by the translators. Indeed, they succeeded in producing Italian translations of the original English songs that are highly singable and performable, flowing so naturally and matching the actors' lip movements so perfectly that the texts are not perceived as translations. Therefore, the translators achieved a goal that every translator of songs in an audiovisual product wishes to reach, but that it is very difficult to achieve. Additionally, this thesis aims to spark curiosity and unveil the challenges behind song translation to make the hard work of translators visible.

The work is divided into three chapters. The first chapter provides an overview of song translation from a theoretical perspective, starting with the explanation of some basic differences between terms and concepts frequently used in this field, and then going into more detail with the identification of problems and challenges characterising the task of song translation. After that, a few methods proposed by different scholars will be illustrated, focusing particularly on the important works of Franzone (2008) and Low (2003), who extensively investigated song translation.

The second chapter is dedicated to the film *Wonka* (2023) and its main character. The description of Willy Wonka's evolution through the many portrayals, both in literature and at the cinema, will serve to better understand the plot of the most recent film adaptation, *Wonka* (2023). Then, information about its soundtrack will be provided to acknowledge the importance of translating the songs in this film. This leads to the final section of this chapter, where technical information about the dubbing process and the concept of synchronisation will serve as a preparation for the last chapter.

The third chapter entirely focuses on the analysis of the Italian translations of the English songs of the film *Wonka* (2023). The analysis will be carried out by using the *pentathlon principle* introduced by Low (2003), trying to highlight the strategies applied

by the translators to achieve highly singable songs, which are also almost perfectly synchronised with the actors' lip movements.

The results of this comparative analysis and the hypothetical motivations behind every choice made by the translators will be discussed in the conclusions.

CHAPTER 1

SONG TRANSLATION: THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The aim of this chapter is to provide a theoretical background on song translation based on pre-existing studies in this field, in order to explain some basic differences between definitions of terms commonly used by scholars and practitioners, identify the problems that translators often encounter when translating songs, and highlight the challenges they need to face to achieve the best result possible. Furthermore, different methods used by some scholars will be presented. Finally, a particular emphasis will be given to two important works by Franzon (2008) on the theory of the five choices in translation and the importance of the concept of *singability*, and by Low (2003) on the *pentathlon principle* as a strategy for translating songs.

1. The art of translating songs: definitions, problems, challenges and methods

Although deep research on song translation is a recent development, music and songs have always been a vital part of our daily lives. We are constantly exposed to songs in many different contexts: at the theatre while attending a show, at the cinema while listening to the actors singing, on the radio, on TV, and on today's social media such as Instagram and TikTok. We may be exposed to original songs written and sung in a foreign language or to what we consider translations.

However, the growing interest in the field of song translation can be considered a relatively new phenomenon. As a matter of fact, in one of his articles Low notices that very few scholars have studied the translation of songs until the early 2000s, by saying that “although vocal music constantly crosses language borders and has often been performed in non-original languages, until recently there has been little serious discussion of song translating – certainly relative to poetry translating” (Low, 2013: 229).

When we hear a song in our native language, knowing that it was originally produced in another language, we may think that we are listening to a translation. Yet we may be wrong. In fact, the task of translating songs cannot be easily considered “the replacement of textual material in one language (SL) by equivalent material in another language (TL)” (Catford, 1965: 20). Instead, it can be more accurately described as a “creative

transposition” (Jakobson, 1959: 238), very similar to the translation of poetry. Hence, a song sung in a non-original language could be a translation, an adaptation or what Low calls a ‘replacement text’ (2013: 229). Therefore, it is crucial to define the meaning of these three concepts – ‘translation’, ‘adaptation’ and ‘replacement text’ – to clarify distinctions and be aware of the terminology we use, depending on the process involved. This is extremely important in song translation as in this task the translator needs to take into account a series of aspects, including non-semantic ones, such as *rhythm*, *rhyme* and *singability*, which are definitely more significant than the mere transfer of semantic aspects.

Low suggests the use of the term ‘translations’ to describe “texts where there is extensive transfer of material from the ST, with a reasonably high degree of semantic fidelity, particularly with respect to its main features” (2013: 231). This means that most of the content and the meaning of the source text (henceforth ST) are retained in the target text (henceforth TT) without significant changes. This term becomes unsuitable when talking about “a TT showing extensive and significant departures from semantic fidelity [...]” (Low, 2013: 231). In this case, a more appropriate term to use is ‘adaptation’, as the translator may have deliberately changed the cultural context, names, metaphors and other aspects of the ST to meet the *skopos*¹ of the TT. The word ‘adaptation’ is not new to the field of Translation Studies, since it has been already used to indicate “a TT that draws on a ST but which has extensively modified it for a new cultural context” (Munday 2009: 166). Instead, ‘replacement text’ refers to a completely different concept, which indicates the creation of a new text that will ‘replace’ the original one. Hence, when talking about songs, the meaning of ‘replacement text’ identifies “a song lyric created to be used with a pre-existing melody, yet manifesting no semantic transfer from the text previously sung to that melody” (Low, 2013: 231). Therefore, the music is left untouched, while new words are written in the target language to fit the original melody. Yet the new text has no semantic relation to the source lyric, as the process involves the creation of a new lyric rather than a semantic transfer of the original *sense*.

¹ The term *skopos* was first introduced by Vermeer (1978) when he presented his ‘skopos theory’ at the end of the 1970s. This theory claims that “the overall frame of reference for the translator should not be the original and its function, as equivalence-based translation theory would have it, but the function (or set of functions) the target text is to achieve in the target culture” (Nord, 1992: 39).

It may seem difficult to draw the line between the three phenomena and establish whether a text is a ‘translation’, an ‘adaptation’ or a ‘replacement text’. This is why Low (2013: 239) proposes a way to determine the type of phenomenon in question, as follows: “a translation is a TT where all significant details of meaning have been transferred, whereas an adaptation is a derivative text where significant details of meaning have not been transferred which easily could have been” (Low, 2013: 237). While a ‘replacement text’ is a “text written for a song which had words already”.

We may argue that the definitions of the three terms operate a distinction mainly at a semantic level. Consequently, the only way to be sure about which term to use is by comparing the words of the ST with those of the TT, identifying correspondences, changes, or completely different words, depending on the specific case of analysis.

Once the difference between ‘translation’, ‘adaptation’ and ‘replacement text’ has been set, the identification of the problems concerning the art of translating songs comes next. As a matter of fact, dealing with the lyric of a song and rendering it into another language is a very complex task for the translator, especially when the purpose is to perform the song and not simply understand its lyrics written in a foreign language (Franzon, 2008: 374). Song-texts are nothing like the texts translators normally handle in other fields of translation: they serve a specific purpose; they are meant to be sung in other languages in such a way that the listeners do not realise they are listening to translated songs. The audience should perceive them as natural texts written in their own mother tongue. To achieve this goal, the translator needs to solve some problems and face challenges “resembling sometimes those of poetry and sometimes those of drama” (Low, 2003: 87).

In the process of song translation, some elements of the original version inevitably get lost to preserve more important aspects, such as *singability*, *rhyme* and *rhythm*. For example, “the sense and the facts of the source texts are often changed” (Franzon, 2005: 263). These changes are justified by the fact that what is most important is to produce a TT that fits the original melody while respecting both its *rhyme* and *rhythm*. However, there are also elements that the translator does not completely lose by making adaptations, as explained by Franzon (2005: 282): “translators often make large or small adaptations of culture-specific items. As the transposition of song lyrics seems to give free rein to such adaptation, importance should be placed on how the changes are suited to the

narrative and presentational contexts”. These adaptations of cultural elements for the receiving culture are examples of what Franzon (2005: 282) calls ‘acculturation’. This often happens when a literary allusion in the ST is replaced by a different one which functions better in the TT. This is a strategy that can be applied every time a culture-specific item appears in the original lyric and can be replaced by a similar culture-specific item in the target language without compromising the performability of the song.

One of the biggest challenges that translators of songs need to face is that “a singable song translation must be coherent with the music. The prosodic comprehensibility, structural patterning, and semantic reflection may show varying degrees of fidelity in target lyrics [...]” (Franzon, 2005: 287). What Franzon means is that the translator inevitably has to make choices when translating songs, which leads to a different level of fidelity in the translated version, depending on what he/she wants to prioritise, either “the original sense, which may impede the musical fit, or keeping as little as necessary, to allow greater musical coherence” (2005: 287). Of course, the decisions taken by the translator are influenced by the guidelines he/she received from the commissioner.

As it often happens in the field of translation, not everyone believes that translating songs is a good idea. In fact, Low (2003: 88) highlights that it is common belief among scholars that “only the source text offers the actual words set by the composer, with all their phonic features such as rhymes and vowel-sounds, and of course their integral meaning”. Furthermore, they claim that most translated songs fail to reproduce the *naturalness* of the original, ending up sounding bad in the target language and “[...] they are often marred by forced rhymes and unnatural language, so that performers simply cannot sing them with conviction” (Low, 2003: 88).

In line with what Low says, it needs to be outlined that many years before him, Brewerton (1924) dedicated an entire article to show his point of view and offer arguments in support of his belief that songs should, in most cases, be left untouched and untranslated. He was convinced that even though singing in a foreign language bore several problems, they could be easily solved (Brewerton, 1924: 893). Referring to old arias, he stated that “it is obviously best to sing the original words to which the song was written”. Arias belong to a peculiar genre and are made of words which are easy to learn, where the emotions transferred to the audience are far more important than the literal meaning of the words. Therefore, translating the lyrics is not essential, since it is not about

their meaning, it is about the feelings they evoke in the listeners. The same applies to ‘art songs²’, as Brewerton called them (1924: 893). In this case, the translated words of the original song need to be accurately chosen to fit the original melody which remains unchanged, and the final result may not always be so pleasant for the target audience:

In these so-called ‘art-songs’ it is understood that the verse should be closely woven into the texture of the music. The inflections of the speaking voice as we read through the phrases have their corresponding inflections in the singing voice. A translation, therefore, is bound to be unsatisfactory, for while the words which form the verbal phrases change, the notes which form the musical phrases remain the same (Brewerton, 1924: 893).

Nevertheless, the author acknowledges the presence of song translations when they are not meant to be performed but are simply used as a written support to those who do not know the foreign language very well. He concludes by saying that “there are times when a song, if sung at all, must be sung in the original words when there is no good translation, or when the singer believes that the nature of the poem is such as to defy a good translation” (Brewerton, 1924: 893). The only exceptions recognised by Brewerton (1924: 893-894) are those very rare, above-average translations that have made the works of today’s most famous composers – such as Schumann, Rubinstein, Grieg – known around the world.

That said, it is also true that the failures of the past in translating songs should not represent an obstacle for contemporary translators. Perhaps the previous attempts at making singable translations proved defective because of the complexity of the task, and the ineffective methods of those who tried (Low, 2003: 88). This is why it is crucial to take a step forward and acknowledge that not every translated text can be analysed by using the same criteria, as “with songs, the criteria are different, and so are the means of meeting them” (Low, 2003: 88).

Two other important concepts in song translation that deserve further explanation are ‘fidelity’ and ‘format’. The former is defined by Franzon as “what distinguishes a translated song from all-new lyrics to old music” (2005: 266), the latter is related to “what may transform a useless (literal) lyric translation into a singable and performable one”

² a type of classical song, usually for one singer, that is accompanied by a piano or other instrument (source: <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/art-song>).

(2005: 266). Hence, according to the concept of ‘fidelity’ “the recreation of source text qualities – of rhymes, vowel sounds, semantic, stylistic, or narrative content, or a little bit of each – is necessarily a selective task” (Franzon, 2005: 266). Meanwhile, the idea of ‘formatting’ a song-text is associated with “the functional design of a text for a presentational situation that involves non-verbal elements” (Franzon, 2005: 266). This means that when translators are asked to translate songs, they need to be aware of the situation and context in which they will appear and translate songs accordingly. As a result, song translations can be considered “indirect translations” (Gutt, 2000: 107), since they simply resemble the original texts. It is the translator who decides “in what respects the translation should resemble the original – only in those respects that can be expected to make it adequately relevant to the receptor language audience” (Gutt, 2000: 107). For instance, the translations of the songs from a play performed at the theatre need to prioritise the resemblance of those elements of the ST more relevant to their presentation as a staged narrative to music (Franzon, 2005: 267). Hence, when translating songs of a play to be performed at the theatre, the dramatic and theatrical context in which songs are embedded becomes as central to the translation task as the different cultural context of the target audience.

Bringing a musical as a practical example can help clarify the meaning of what has been said so far. A musical is a play usually performed at the theatre in which the actors tell a story not only through spoken dialogues, but more importantly through songs. The narrative of the play, the lyrics sung by the actors, and the performance on stage are all elements that translators need to look at and consider. The close link between the narrative of the play and the staging level becomes central to their task, to the extent that “there may sometimes be a choice between serving the narrative and serving the stage” (Franzon, 2005: 278). Much of what happens on stage can be understood by the audience through the context and situation in which they find themselves in, as well as through the actors’ movements, actions, facial expressions, and all the other staged activities performed in front of them. This connection between the narrative and the stage level proves useful in translation. In fact, as Franzon explains, “the translators have used the potential coherence with staging to gain manoeuvring space for their musical versification” (2005: 279).

For instance, translators often make use of deictic words to create connections between what the actors say or sing and their context. Deictic words, such as personal and possessive pronouns, adverbs of place, demonstratives and so on, when accompanied by a gesture, a physical orientation towards something or someone, an interaction between characters and more, can help translators solve problems and guarantee cohesion and coherence between the spoken and sung words and the visual representation of the play. Therefore, “[...] deictic units are vital tools for the formatting of the creative transposition [...]” (Franzon, 2005: 281).

Another example of song translation is when a song is studied as literature. To carry out this specific task, Bahr (1983) proposes a method that “gives primacy to textual analysis and assumes in effect that song is a special way of telling stories” (Bahr, 1983: 180). This approach is useful when conducting an analysis of song-texts as STs and comparing them with their translated versions. It can also help both the source and target audience get a better understanding of the real meaning of the songs analysed.

According to Bahr (1983: 170), “contrary to one might think, the literal translation is not the basis for the ordinary language version. Instead, the relation is reversed. The result is a close match between meaning and form across the two languages in question”. Rather than beginning with a literal translation directly from the source language into the target language, Bahr (1983: 170) suggests producing a ‘native ordinary language’ version which explains the meaning of the ST using plain words in the source language, maintaining the ellipses and ambiguities of the original but eliminating its ornamentation. Based on this plain version, an ordinary language version is then created in the target language as well. Finally, a ‘reornamented’ literal translation (Bahr, 1983: 170) is created from the target-language plain version. The goal of this method is to convey the meaning of the ST as precisely as possible into the ordinary target language translation and provide an approximation of the poetic and musical form of the original in the literal version.

Once problems, challenges and different methods related to the translation of songs as a general practice have been discussed, regardless of the context in which they appear, the following section will focus on the works of Franzon (2008) and Low (2003) who offer a deeper insight into the art of translating songs in audiovisual products.

2. Franzon and his five choices in song translation

Going into more detail about the art of translating songs, this section analyses the five possible choices in song translation identified by Franzon (2008). He starts by stating that translators commissioned to translate songs have five different options at disposal. Sometimes the purpose of their task is simply to guarantee the comprehension and accessibility of the foreign lyrics, and in this case a prose translation is enough. However, there are many other situations in which the purpose of song translation changes, for instance “if a song is to be performed in another language, the assignment calls for a ‘singable’ target text” (Franzon, 2008: 374). A ‘singable’ translation is one that fulfils a specific purpose, and it is easy for the singer to sing. Then, questions of fidelity towards the lyricist and the composer of the original song may arise. Different translators may work differently, either paying huge respect to both the original lyricist and composer or taking a certain distance from them and taking more liberties when translating. There may be also cases in which the translator chooses to disregard the original music. There are also opposite attitudes that translators show towards their own work. Some of them do not even consider song translations as proper ‘translations’. In Reynolds’s words (1964: 6), “you don’t really translate, of course. You make a singing song of it, near as you can to the meaning and feeling of the original”. Yet others do not agree with this perspective. For example, Franzon (2008: 377) insists on “call[ing] this practice translation, since a singable song translation is inevitably a compromise between fidelity to the music, lyrics and performance”.

However, according to the theory of ‘functionality + loyalty’ proposed by Nord (1992), which applies perfectly to song translation, “the translator should aim at producing a functional target text which conforms to the requirements of the translation scopos fixed by the initiator, respecting, at the same time, if necessary, the legitimate interests of both the author of the original and the readers of the translation” (1992: 40). Hence, the purpose that the TT is intended to serve within the target culture is what should guide the translator’s decisions and choices. Thanks to this approach, “the translator can focus on particular aspects of the source text and disregard others, if this is required by the translation scopos” (Nord, 1992: 40).

After analysing several types of songs created for different purposes, Franzon (2008: 375) illustrates ‘five theoretically-distinct choices’ available to translators when they are

commissioned to translate a song. First of all, Franzon (2008: 376) defines a ‘song’ as “a piece of music and lyrics – in which one has been adapted to the other, or both to one another – designed for a singing performance”.

Hence, a song consists of both words and melody. The creation process is not always the same, though: it does not follow any specific rule, as sometimes words are written before the music is composed, or vice versa. There are also cases in which both the writing and the composition are done simultaneously. The third aspect – the fact that the song is designed to be performed – becomes central to the task of song translation. Knowing that, the translator has a number of choices at his/her disposal to achieve the best possible result. The ones identified by Franzon (2008: 376) are the following:

1. leaving the song untranslated;
2. translating the lyrics but not taking the music into account;
3. writing new lyrics to the original music with no overt relation to the original lyrics;
4. translating the lyrics and adapting the music accordingly – sometimes to the extent that a brand new composition is deemed necessary;
5. adapting the translation to the original music.

Many films contain songs that are left untranslated. Translators who decide not to translate songs may do so for a variety of reasons. Perhaps, the client specifically asked the translator to translate the dialogues and leave the songs in their original version, or this choice was made because of lack of time or low pay. Franzon (2008: 378) also identifies cases where it may be better not to translate songs, particularly when the presence of the original versions enhances authenticity or simply because their lyrics are not relevant to the narrative of the film. In fact, there are films in which the songs contribute to moving the plot forward since they tell a specific aspect of the story. In others, however, songs do not carry important meanings to understand the plot, consequently it is not necessary to translate them.

The second choice – translating the words without considering the music – is usually applied in subtitling. Franzon (2008: 387) explains that when a song is left in the original language and its translation appears in the subtitles, “a translator may translate the lyrics as if they were just another (piece of the) source text [...]”. What is important in this case is to transfer the real meaning of the song successfully, because all its musical properties can still be heard and enjoyed by the audience while reading the subtitles. Since the

translated version is meant to be read rather than sung, *singability* is not required, and the reproduction of the original *rhyme* and *rhythm* is not of primary importance. This is the best option to choose when the translation is used as a support to help viewers understand the *sense* of the original lyrics.

In the third case, new lyrics are written to the original music. Translators or writers usually take into account this option when the music of a song is more important than its words. Hence, the purpose changes, as it is not about rendering the meaning of the source song accessible to a target audience but allowing the music to spread to different cultures. Even though Franzon (2008) mentions this option as one of the five that the translator has at his/her disposal when translating songs, he also outlines that he considers it “not translation proper in the linguistic sense, this is nevertheless a transactional action: a result of importation and marketing of musico-verbal material between languages and cultures” (Franzon, 2008: 380). The relation between the original and new lyrics is not entirely lost; as a matter of fact, it is somehow still preserved, as the rewritten text often retains a word, a phrase, an image or any other element of the ST. Additionally, Franzon (2008: 380) points out that “the original lyrics (and singing performance) may influence the translator’s impression of the melody, and thus the production of the new lyrics” (Franzon, 2008: 380). This practice is often adopted when dealing with certain musical genres, such as popular songs, and it is a very powerful choice, because “if the new lyrics allow the song, as a cultural artefact, to cross linguistic borders, the practice can be seen as translation action” (Franzon, 2008: 380), giving the translator/writer the possibility to make foreign music known across different cultures around the world.

As a fourth option, Franzon (2008) identifies the translation of the original lyrics and the adaptation of the music to it. In this case the verbal component is more important than the music, although the song is still meant to be performed. Thus, the music may undergo some changes. Franzon suggests translators to consider this option because “in general, a line-by-line translation of lyrics rarely resembles a song, but sometimes a fairly close, if partial approximation may be achieved by slightly modifying the melody” (Franzon, 2008: 381). The choice to translate the text of the song and its music is usually made by translators when translating poems written by authoritative writers, biblical texts and other canonical pieces of writing. The changes to the music are minimal and listeners do not even notice them. They may involve, for instance, “splitting, merging or adding notes

and splitting or creating melismas³ [...]” (Franzon, 2008: 384). The success of this strategy generally increases when the source and target languages share structural or phonological similarities. It comes naturally that the changes to the original music cannot be applied freely, but it is the commissioner who needs to be willing to accept them. There may be more or less willingness to adapt the music to the translated lyrics depending on the nature of the song.

The fifth and final choice that translators may consider is the adaptation of the translated text to the original music. This option may be regarded as the most frequently used one in the case of singable song translation (Franzon, 2008: 386). In these situations, the translator is asked to provide a translation of the original text of the song, leaving the music untouched. There are many different ways in which the translator can carry out this task, for instance “[...] by approximating more loosely, by paraphrasing or by deleting from and adding to the content of the source lyrics” (Franzon, 2008, 386). The purpose of song translation in this case is to preserve the prosody of the original song as much as possible and adapt the translation to the appropriate context in which it will be performed. This fifth practice recognised by Franzon (2008) is frequently applied to the translation of songs from musicals or operas that will be sung live at the theatre. Another context of application is the dubbing of films that include songs requiring translation. Here, the number of limits to be respected grows; there is no possibility of modifying the music or the movements and gestures of the characters, and a further challenge is to provide a TT that can be easy to synchronise with the actors’ lip movement. As a conclusion, Franzon (2008: 389) claims that “function and performance are of primary importance for singable song translation and that respect for the original lyrics must be shown, or assessed, contextually: in relation to both music and intended function”.

3. Understanding the concept of *singability*

The concept of ‘singable song translation’ has appeared in more than one case, especially in connection with the last three options identified by Franzon (2008). Therefore, it is essential to understand what it truly means and why it is one of the most crucial aspects to take into account when translating songs from one language into another. Furthermore,

³ “Melisma refers to a single syllable of text sung on two or more notes of music” (Franzon, 2008: 384).

the so-called *singability* of translated songs is one of the key principles in Low's (2003) 'pentathlon strategy', which will be illustrated in section 4.

First of all, as Franzon points out (2008: 389), "when the main purpose of a translational action is to deliver a singable translation, there are certain aspects of the musico-textual fit which seem to require particular attention and which lead to further choices". Based on this statement, the text and the music of a song need to be considered strongly intertwined and depending on each other; thus, the choices concerning one will inevitably influence the other and vice versa. To obtain a successful translation, one that can be performed naturally and easily, it is important to always be aware of this connection between words and music and make all the necessary adjustments to produce a text that satisfies the requirements that the translator is expected to meet to carry out this task. Franzon (2008: 390) further notes that "the way the lyrics function for an audience will inevitably be influenced, if not decided by the way the music functions simultaneously".

Franzon (2008: 390) also makes a reference to the European melopoetic norm to discuss the three different levels of correspondence between the lyric of a song and its music, which a translator needs to pay attention to when aiming to produce a singable translation of a song in another language. The three levels are the following: prosodic, poetic and semantic-reflexive.

Prosody is a very important element to use in order to achieve a prosodic match between the lyrics and the music. This means focusing on some aspects of speech that also appear in singing, such as *rhythm*, stress and intonation. For instance, from a phonetic point of view, it is important to choose words in the target language whose vowels and consonants are not difficult to articulate and vocalise. Franzon analysed the case of subtitles and observed that "[...] most subtitlers may not feel obliged to deliver more than a prose rendering of source lyrics; yet there are exceptions" (2008: 391). Which means that most of the time, when subtitling a song, subtitlers tend to focus their attention on the *sense* of the song, which they consider the most important element to transfer from the source language into the target language. As a result, they translate the song as if they were translating any other text, leaving out the rest of the elements which are characteristic of a song. However, there are also exceptions, when subtitles do mirror the music in terms of *rhythm* and stress, thus achieving a prosodic match. The result is a

translation that, when read by the viewers while listening to the original song, matches its original melody.

As far as the poetic level is concerned, this is “[...] most closely interwoven with the harmonic structure of a piece of music” (Franzon, 2008: 390). Hence, it is crucial to look at the main structure of the music itself and make word choices that reflect such structure, to guarantee some correspondence at the poetic level as well. As a matter of fact, “lyrics can mirror such structures and properties by verbal means, such as stylistic figures [...]” (Franzon, 2008: 390). For example, the use of *rhyme* in a song is quite helpful, as it contributes to creating a poetic match between the structure of the music and its lyrics. However, *rhyme* is not the only element that carries a poetic function. Syntactic parallelisms obtained by changing the word order, alliteration, and the use of onomatopoeic words are all strategies that can be used to achieve a poetic match.

The semantic-reflexive correspondence between music and lyrics is what makes a song expressive and persuasive, since it is related to what the music expresses in terms of mood, feelings, emotions and meanings. Hence, to achieve this type of match, not only do the lyrics need to reflect the *sense* of the song, but they also need to mirror the mood, feelings and emotions that the music conveys. Franzon (2008: 391) also adds that “the principle may equally apply to a general likeness, such as the notion that happy lyrics should be accompanied by joyful music, or to instances where words reflect or feed on a musical movement and what it appears to express”. The use of the word ‘reflexive’ (Franzon, 2008: 391) is based on an analysis of songs carried out by Banfield (1993) after which he could state that the best lyrics are usually those that reflect the movement or structure of the music.

As a conclusion, Franzon (2008: 391) presents “[...] these aspects as layers, relevant up to a different degree in each case”. Indeed, Franzon (2008: 391) specifies that “a prosodic match would be the most basic requirement, since in its absence it may technically be impossible to sing the lyrics”. Therefore, it is always the translator the one who decides what the most important aspect to prioritise is, depending on the purpose of the translation, the context, and the song to be translated. Nevertheless, trying to achieve a prosodic match becomes central to the task of song translating, otherwise the result cannot be considered a ‘singable’ song. In fact, Franzon (2008: 396) specifies that at the

end of the day, when “choosing among the various options available for translating a song as (part of) a source text, the main factor seems to be the mode of presentation”.

The concept of *singability* is quite complex as it can be defined in different ways and it turns out to be as ambiguous as the concept of ‘fidelity’ in translation. However, Franzon (2008: 397) suggests considering it a “practical term to sum up everything that makes words and music function together in a song”. Thus, *singability* is related to all those aspects that need to be taken into account when translating a song from one language into another, so as to make the lyrics and the music work together to guarantee the best possible result.

4. The *pentathlon principle*

Low is another scholar who discusses the importance of *singability* to the extent that he considers it one of the most important principles of his strategy for translating songs. In his view, “the making of singable translations of songs is a complex task, chiefly because the target text must be compatible with the pre-existing music” (Low, 2003: 87). Because of the complexity of this task, Low discusses and recommends strategies for doing so, through what he calls the *pentathlon principle*. Therefore, as he puts it (2003: 88), his aim is not to explain why or whether the task of translating songs is important; instead, he wants to focus the attention on how to carry out this particularly challenging job and provide singable song translations that can actually be sung.

The reason why Low calls his strategy *the pentathlon principle* can only be understood by making a reference to Olympic pentathletes. The author himself explains the metaphor as follows:

Olympic pentathletes must compete in five events, and optimize their scoring overall – they must not omit to train for javelin and discus, and they must hold some energy in reserve for the 1,500 metres. So they sometimes choose to come second or third in one event, keeping their eyes on the whole day’s challenge. According to this metaphor, the translator of a song has five events to compete in – five criteria to satisfy – and must aim for the best aggregate (Low, 2003: 92).

Following this metaphor, translators are expected to act like pentathletes in order to reach their goal and produce the best possible outcome. To do so, they have five different

criteria to meet, just like pentathletes need to compete in five sports. What is important in both situations is not the score they get in each sport or criterion, but the final result. Hence, athletes and translators consciously decide which sport or criterion is the most important one and put a lot of energy on that, while always keeping in mind the other four which they still need to fully succeed.

The five criteria identified by Low (2003: 92) when using the *pentathlon principle* to translate songs are the following:

- *singability*;
- *sense*;
- *naturalness*;
- *rhythm*;
- *rhyme*.

The first criterion, *singability*, must receive great importance when translating songs. It is a pragmatic criterion, as it is “the result of thinking in terms of the target text’s specific purpose, its ‘skopos’” (Low, 2003: 93). Just like in the case of drama translation, in which words need to be translated accurately to ensure coherence with the gesture, acting, costumes, lighting and all the other aspects concerning a staged performance, a singable song translation needs to be easy for the singer, actor or dubber to perform. Furthermore, the translated text “must function as an oral text delivered at performance speed – whereas the reader of a written text has a chance to pause, reflect, and even re-read” (Low, 2003: 93). One of the main difficulties in song translation, in terms of *singability*, is making a translation that can be performed at the same speed as the original, while trying to make it sound as natural as possible. To produce a singable song translation, it is crucial to identify consonant clusters, vowel sounds, words or phrases that might cause problems with diction for the singer or dubber, if the song appears in a film to be dubbed. Finding the best solution is challenging, because many times “[...] the best semantic solution may be hard to sing [...]” (Low, 2003: 93).

Low (2003: 93-94) mentions another strategy to enhance the *singability* of a song, related to “the highlighting of particular words in the source text by musical means – they may be high-pitched, for example, or marked fortissimo”. This phenomenon is quite common in sung performances and should be reproduced as faithfully as possible to preserve the same effect. Moreover, the highlighted words should be rendered accurately

and at the time in which they appear in the original song. If the translator fails to do so, the emphasis may fall on another word, changing the expressed meaning as well.

Another important aspect of *singability*, which also relates to another criterion of the *pentathlon principle*, *rhythm*, which will be discussed later, is “the pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables in any line in the translated text” (Low, 2003: 94).

The second criterion identified by Low (2003) is *sense*, which is related to the transfer of the meaning of a song from the source language into the target language. It is worth mentioning that, although the problem of rendering the meaning of the ST through semantic accuracy and perfection is important in song translation, it is not as important as it is in the translation of informative texts. In fact, as Low points out (2008: 12), “the need for flexibility in song-translating is seldom doubted in the matter of sense”. When translating songs, translators have more freedom and are allowed to “make use of standard ‘creative tools’ of good wordsmiths, such as transposition, modulation, paraphrase and compensation” (Low 2008: 12), which sometimes leads them to “make semantic compromises that would be unacceptable in, say, scientific translation” (Low, 2008: 12). Therefore, when translating songs, the choice to slightly change their meaning, whenever is needed, becomes acceptable and it is justified by the fact that “[...] the constraints of song translation call for some stretching or manipulation of sense” (Low, 2003: 94). This also explains why, in many cases, a translated song does not perfectly correspond to the original from a semantic point of view. Finding precise lexical equivalents that respect all the criteria is extremely difficult and not always possible throughout the song. As a result, translators adopt strategies to face these problems. For instance, “[...] a precise lexical equivalent may be replaced by a near-synonym, a narrow term by a superordinate term, a particular metaphor by another one which functions in a similar way in the context” (Low, 2003: 94).

Of course, the idea of manipulating the *sense* may not be considered so well by older and more conservative translators, yet “in a genre where the number of syllables is strictly constrained, the need to stretch sense arises just normally” (Low, 2003: 94). In fact, instead of translating using words that are semantically perfect, but that make the text of the song difficult to sing, increase the number of syllables per line or fail to meet the other criteria, it is better to slightly change the meaning, or use strategies to produce a singable song. Drinker (1952: 235) also points out that in song translation “the translator must try

primarily to reproduce the *spirit* and *mood* of the original” (emphasis in the original). This can be done even without translating literally, by using different words from the original that are still capable of expressing the original *sense* as the words in the source language do. As a consequence, the translator is not obliged to translate line by line, as “very often, also, the order in which the thought is expressed in the foreign language can be rearranged as between the several lines, thus giving more latitude in finding sets of rhyming words” (Drinker, 1952: 234).

The third criterion of the *pentathlon principle* asks for the *naturalness* of the TT, which is of great importance to facilitate the comprehension and interpretation of the translated song to the target audience. It is also true that unnaturalness should always be avoided, not only in song translation. In fact, Gutt (1991: 389) observes that “‘unnaturalness’ in translated texts often seems to involve gratuitous processing effort on the receptor audience’s part: perhaps due to interference from the original language or insufficient mastery of the receptor language, the expression used by the translator may turn out to require more than optimal processing cost on the audience’s part”.

In song translation, the use of the so-called “translationese” must be absolutely avoided. As a matter of fact, “abominable language and oddly stilted ‘translationese’ reveal either a failure to express oneself naturally in the target language or an insistence that semantic accuracy is the sole goal” (Low, 2003: 95). Once again, translating the ST literally to transfer its meaning into the TT turns out to be the wrong choice to make and the wrong way to carry out this task properly. Another problem of translating word by word is that in the end, the result is a text that may render the original meaning perfectly from a semantic point of view, but it sounds unnatural in the target language on a grammatical and syntactical level.

The best way to analyse a translated song in terms of *naturalness* is by looking at both the register used, and the word order chosen, as Low (2003: 95) suggests by stating that “the criterion that a target-language text must sound (reasonably) natural involves considerations of features such as register and word order”. Sometimes the register in a translated song does not mirror that of the original. Low (2008: 16-17) notices that there is often an unnecessary tendency to elevate it by using archaic words for the sake of the preservation of the *rhyme* between the lines, and regarding word order, the use of inversions seems a widespread phenomenon in song translation. However, in many cases,

the inverted word order is already a characteristic of the ST, thus typical in song writing. What justifies the high frequency of inversions is that “song-texts, of course, are not spontaneous pieces of language, and may contain departures from natural expression” (Low, 2008: 16). The reason why these phenomena frequently appear in songs can be justified by considering the high degree of resemblance between songs and poetry. Indeed, poets very often use inversions in their poems to create rhymes, play with *rhythm* and produce rhetorical figures to come up with pieces of writing that are much more expressive and poetic. Translators tend to work in a very similar way. For instance, sometimes the use of the inverted word order is a strategy “in view of the necessity of putting a particular word on a particular note or a particularly strong word at the beginning or end of a musical line” (Drinker, 1952: 232). Therefore, a certain degree of unnaturalness can be accepted, provided it can be reasonably justified and does not compromise the comprehension of the song. Low (2003: 95) concludes by clarifying that his view does not involve “avoid[ing] unnatural language at all costs”; what he means, instead, is “only that naturalness is one of the five criteria which the translator must strive for”.

The fourth criterion of the *pentathlon principle* focuses the translator’s attention on an aspect which is very important in songs: *rhyme*. This issue was – and continues to be – subject of debate among different scholars and translators, who propose a variety of arguments both in favour and against the preservation of *rhyme*. In all those cases in which “rhyme is present in the source text, some translators simply do without it – and in cases where the rhyme can be lost without cost, this is a good option” (Low, 2003: 95-96). However, “other translators may say ‘Yes, I will retain rhyme’, and will then render perfect rhymes as numerous as those in the original and in the same location” (Low, 2003: 95-96). Apart from the translator’s personal point of view, the decision to either keep the *rhyme* in the TT or not lies in the purpose of the translation itself. For instance, sometimes translations of songs are needed because they may be used as a support when studying or when they are simply meant to be read silently. Yet, if a translator is asked to translate a song that will be performed, the issue of *rhyme* gets more complicated. The most interesting and important aspect of *rhyme* is that “[it] exploits the phonic features of language. It creates echoes – audible links – between syllables at the end (usually) of lines of verse. It is associated particularly with writing that manipulates another phonic feature:

rhythm” (Low, 2008: 7). The use of *rhyme* is what pleases the listeners’ ears and makes the song catchy to the extent that it becomes easy to remember and sing. It needs to be said that not every song necessarily contains rhymes, but when these are present, the translator cannot simply ignore them and translate the song just like any other text, he/she needs to take rhymes into account and consider when and how to retain them. It is also true that not every *rhyme* has to be maintained, as there are different types of rhymes that serve different functions. For instance, “when rhymes are emphasized by the music, the translator can hardly afford to omit them. But usually a modification is permissible [...]” (Spaeth, 1915: 297). Therefore, it is not the frequency of rhymes that matters, as a translated song is not supposed to show the exact same amount of *rhyme* as the ST, but rhymes cannot be avoided on the mere assumption that they do not matter. Low (2003: 96) highlights the fact that there is no need to always find words that create perfect rhymes, which means those sharing the same phonemes at the end of the lines, as there are cases in which imperfect rhymes work just as fine. Hence, if translators want to apply the *pentathlon principle*, they need to show flexibility towards rhymes: they are required to carefully analyse them and understand which are essential to retain and which can be modified or omitted. They also need to bear in mind that “[...] rhymes will not have to be as perfect or numerous as in the original, and the rhyme scheme need not be observed strictly” (Low, 2003: 96). Ultimately, if translators need any help in finding the right words to create rhymes or face rhyming problems, Drinker (1952) suggests the use of rhyming dictionaries and of a Thesaurus.

The fifth and last criterion of the *pentathlon principle* to observe is *rhythm*. This is, perhaps, the most important aspect of songs. It is what catches and engages the listeners, it accompanies the lyrics creating an ensemble that determines the success of a song. *Rhythm* is closely related to the number of syllables, which becomes a key issue and a quite difficult challenge to face when a song is to be translated. According to Nida, song translators are asked to reproduce several fundamental aspects of a song, such as “(1) a fixed length for each phrase, with precisely the right number of syllables, (2) the observation of syllabic prominence (the accented vowels or long syllables must match correspondingly emphasized notes in the music)” (Nida, 1964: 177). The same perspective is shared by another scholar, Noske, who argues that “musical prosody requires that the *rhythm* and number of syllables be identical with those of the original

lines” (Noske, 1970: 30). What both Nida and Noske say is something extremely difficult to achieve in the practice of song translation. Furthermore, it must be said that there are many types of songs and not every one of them requires a perfect syllabic correspondence between the ST and the TT. Apart from the problem relating to the number of syllables, another constraint is the need to make the verbal stresses match those present in the music. Lees (1981: 31) points out that “it is absolutely necessary to fit unstressed syllables to unstressed notes, stressed syllables to stressed notes”. In situations where a translator is obliged to make a decision between replicating the exact number of syllables and respecting the pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables to fit the melody of the song, it is always better to choose the latter. The only possible solution to overcome these problems is altering the number of syllables by addition or omission. Naturally, translators need to be cautious when deciding to alter the syllable count of the lines, since it is not something that can be done randomly or when it is most convenient, since there are places in which a syllable more or a syllable less will not be noticed by the listeners and will not alter the original melody. As Low rightly notices (2008: 15), “if one has to add a syllable, the best place is where two notes are already slurred together. If one has to subtract a syllable, the best place is where two notes are sung at the same pitch”. There may be also instances in which the initial translation of some lines shows too few syllables compared to the original. In such cases the translator may choose between three different options: “adding a new word or phrase, repeating a word or phrase, or dropping notes from the music” (Low, 2003: 97). The preferred solution, according to Low (2003), is the first one, as long as the added word or phrase shows some connection to the ST.

Another aspect worth mentioning is that in song translation the number of syllables is not always a reliable indicator of *rhythm*. In fact, translators must also take into account the length of notes, as the translated words are meant to mirror the original musical stresses and fit the length of notes.

Finally, Low is not absolutely against modifications to the melody of the song. In fact, he states that “even changes to the melody are not completely out of the question” (Low, 2003: 97). By saying that, the author is not giving the translators complete freedom to adapt the melody of a song based on their translation every time they find themselves in a difficult situation. On the contrary, his advice is to always try an opt for solutions that do not require changing the original melody; yet, in desperate cases in which this cannot

be avoided, little changes to the melody become acceptable. In his view, this is not to be intended as “a general licence to rewrite melodies”, but, “merely a suggestion that an occasional subtle piece of musical ‘tweaking’ may be preferable to a glaring verbal gaffe” (Low, 2003: 97). Hence, the reason why the author accepts minor changes to the original melody of a song is always in favour of the overall *sense* of the musical text, to ensure its *singability* and comprehensibility that may be compromised if the words do not fit the music. Of course, there are scholars who seem to have a completely opposite idea about changing original melodies, like Drinker who says that “to change the music to suit the convenience of the translator is akin to blasphemy” (1952: 227). However, considering any modification to the melody as blasphemy may be reasonably considered an extreme stance, especially since Low refers to small changes that are unlikely to be noticed by the audience, rather than to a complete rewriting of the original music. Additionally, Low repeats several times that any change should be done judiciously.

After outlining the five criteria of the *pentathlon principle*, Low concludes by saying that “a song text is in essence an oral, not a written text, and it is not worth making a translation unless it can be understood during performance while the song is sung at a tempo predetermined by the composer” (Low, 2003: 98).

Following this conclusion, Low (2003: 98-99) gives some advice to translators of songs that are worth mentioning. First of all, he suggests identifying the most important parts of a song and work on them first. For instance, it could be better to start from the refrain or from the beginning and the ending lines, as they usually carry more important contents than those appearing in the middle. It is also advisable to face more problematic sections first and then focus on the easy ones at the end. Then, he encourages translators to be clear about the decisions they are going to make in relation to the five criteria of the *pentathlon principle*. Therefore, it is important to set priorities and establish areas where they can be more flexible. Low (2003: 99) stresses the importance of “ask[ing] yourself what features of the original song make it worth translating, and try[ing] to minimize loss of these features”, and “not apply[ing] any rigid formula such as ‘form always overrules content’” (Low, 2003: 99). Lastly, if the original songs contain rhymes and translators decide to keep them, Low (2003: 99) suggests “adopt[ing] the old trick of working backwards from the last line, which helps to ensure that the rhymes do not appear progressively more forced or laboured”.

To conclude, we may argue that the *pentathlon principle* proposed by Low (2003) is probably one of the best strategies to use if translators want to cautiously carry out this task taking into account the five most important aspects of songs that cannot be left out. Translating songs has little or nothing to do with translating normal texts that are simply meant to be read, since the constraints that translators are expected to observe grow in terms of number and nature. Apart from a great expertise, “song-translators must bring their skill, lateral thinking, and their creativity to the service of songs, singers and listeners” (Low, 2008: 19).

5. Application of Franzon and Low’s methods: analysing songs through their examples

Both Franzon (2008) and Low (2003) include some examples in their articles to better explain and give a practical demonstration of their methods.

Starting with Franzon (2008), after listing the five options that translators have at their disposal when translating songs, he dedicates a sub section of his article to describe them and provides examples that clearly show the type of choice translators made in all specific cases of analysis.

For instance, when he talks about leaving the song untranslated (Franzon, 2008: 378), the first option of his list, he mentions *Mamma Mia!* (1999). He chooses this well-known English musical because songs constitute a great part of it. Franzon (2008: 378) explains that the songs were originally written by two Swedish songwriters – Benny Andersson and Björn Ulvaeus – who mostly wrote them in English. The musical quickly gained popularity all around the world, together with its iconic songs which were left untranslated. When in 2005 the musical was to be produced in Sweden, Franzon (2008: 378) tells us that “the initial plan was [...] to leave the songs in English; after all, most of them were originally written in that language and were known worldwide in their original versions”. The main reasons why it was opted for a non-translation in this case could be related to “the assumption that the lyrics are not that relevant to the rest of the narrative [...], or that retaining the original lyrics enhances authenticity” (Franzon, 2008: 378).

Moving on to the next option, Franzon (2008: 379) offers an example in which the lyric of a song from the film musical *The Sound of Music* was translated without taking

the music into account. The author provides an excerpt from a song of the film musical and compares the English ST with its Swedish subtitles. Table 1 reports the comparison made by Franzon (2008: 379):

Table 1: example 1 taken from Franzon (2008: 379)

English source text	Swedish subtitles
High on a hill was a lonely goatherd 1	Uppe på berget gick getaherden 1
Lay ee odl lay ee odl lay hee hoo 2	
Loud was the voice of the lonely goatherd 3	Han joddlade högt vår getaherde 2
Lay ee odl lay ee odl lay hee hoo 4	
Loud was the voice of the lonely goatherd 5	Folket i staden som låg långt bort 3
Lay ee odl lay ee odl lay hee hoo 6	
Lusty and clear from the goatherd's throat heard 7	Hörde tydligt hur herden joddla' 4
Lay ee odl lay ee odl-oo 8	
...	

The purpose of this example is to show a particular case in which the meaning of the lyrics is more important than its music, and therefore the best choice to make is to translate the text, without taking the music into account. The Swedish subtitles in Table 1 clearly demonstrate that when subtitling “the musico-poetic qualities – the repetition and the onomatopoeia (yodelling) in this example – are not and need not be transferred, as they are readily available for the enjoyment of the audience in their original form” (Franzon, 2008: 379). The author is referring specifically to the repetition of *Lay ee odl lay ee odl lay hee hoo*, which, in fact, does not appear in the subtitles, as it can still be heard from the target audience while watching the film.

Regarding the third option, Franzon (2008: 380) analyses the song *Sadie, the Cleaning Lady* and its Swedish version, entitled *Mamma är lik sin mamma*, to illustrate how a song originally written in one language can be re-written and make it fit the original music without changing its melody.

Table 2 shows the comparison made by Franzon (2008: 381) between the English version of the song and the Swedish version, and a back-translation that translates the Swedish lyrics back to English.

Table 2: example 2 taken from Franzon (2008: 381)

English source text	Swedish target text	Back-translation
Sadie, the cleaning lady 1	Mamma är lik sin mamma 1	Mother is like her mother 1
With trusty scrubbing brush and pail of water 2	Ja kvinnans lott i livet är densamma 2	Yes the woman's lot in life is the same 2
Worked her fingers to the bone 3	Det sa farmor mormors mor 3	So said grandma's grandma's mother 3
For the life she had at home 4	Till sin farmors morbrors bror 4	To her grandma's uncle's brother 4
Providing at the same time for her daughter 5	Att livet är ett enda damma-damma 5	That life is nothing but dusting and dusting 5
...

Franzon (2008: 380) explains the reason why this song was re-written into Swedish, by saying that “the original version of this song was an international hit. This motivated the importation and re-recording of a Swedish version, which also became a hit in Sweden”.

As it can be noticed by the comparing the English version with the back-translation, the Swedish TT seems to have nothing to do with the original lyrics, in fact “not a single word has been directly translated, but the source lyrics still seem to have served as a model” (Franzon, 2008: 380). Indeed, the rhyme scheme of the English text was retained in the Swedish version as well, including the internal rhyme characterising the first line. In the English ST *Sadie* rhymes with *lady* in the first line, producing an internal rhyme that was maintained in the Swedish TT thanks to the repetition of the word *mamma*. Moreover, as it often happens when new lyrics are written to the original music, “some notions and images in the original lyrics have evidently inspired Anderson⁴” (Franzon, 2008: 380). In the Swedish version there is no reference to either Sadie or her daughter, yet the link between these two figures “is turned into the connection between generations of women [...]” (Franzon, 2008: 380). Finally, the concept of *cleaning* does not entirely get lost, as it implicitly appears in the word *damma* meaning *dusting*. What contributed

⁴ Stikkan Anderson is the writer of the lyrics of the Swedish version of the English song *Sadie, the Cleaning Lady*.

to increase the connection with the original song is the fact that “the Swedish singer used to perform the song comically dressed as a cleaning lady, with scrubbing brush in hand” (Franzon, 2008: 380), thus allowing “some of the source song’s performance potential to be carried over into Swedish” (Franzon, 2008: 380).

As an example of the fourth option, Franzon (2008: 381) provides us with different versions of a Biblical text, Matthew 21:9, in the form of Bible translations and their corresponding hymnals. The purpose is to demonstrate that very often when such canonical texts are translated, their music needs to be adapted accordingly. Table 3 illustrates the Swedish and Finnish versions of Matthew 21:9 provided by Franzon (2008: 382):

Table 3: example 3 taken from Franzon (2008: 382)

Swedish lyrics	Finnish lyrics
Hosianna 1	Hoosianna 1
Davids son 2	Daavidin Poika 2
välsignad vare han 3	kiitetty olkoon hän 3
välsignad Davids son 4	Kiitetty Daavidin Poika 4
som kommer i 5	joka tulee Herran 5
Herrens namn 6	nimeen 6
Hosianna i höjden 7	Hoosianna 7
Hosianna 8	Hoosianna 8
Hosianna 9	Hoosianna 9
Välsignad 10	Hoosianna 10
Davids son 11	Kiitetty Daavidin Poika 11
som kommer i 12	joka tulee Herran 12
Herrens namn 13	nimeen 13

Franzon (2008: 384) outlines that “the Swedish *son* (son) and *namm* (name) are the bisyllabic *poika* and *nimeen* in Finnish, respectively”. This problem could easily be solved by slightly adjusting the music to fit the lyrics, by “put[ting] both these words on two-note melismas [...]” (Franzon, 2008: 384). Another important change to the music

regards a quarter note⁵ that “was split into two eighth notes⁶ to make room for *Daavidin*, instead of *Davids* [...]” (Franzon, 2008: 384).

Finally, the application of the last option is illustrated through the song *Show Me* from the musical *My Fair Lady*. This song was translated into many other languages for similar purposes, hence the different translations of its text needed to be adapted to the original music without changing it. Table 4 shows the English ST and its translation into Swedish, which is one of the five versions analysed by Franzon (2008: 386-387).

Table 4: example 6 taken from Franzon (2008: 386)

Ensligh source text	Swedish target text
...	...
Don't talk of stars 1	Du lovar att 1
Burning above 2	månen ta ner 2
If you're in love 3	säj inte mer 3
Show me 4	gör det 4
Tell me no dreams 5	Stjärndiadem 5
Filled with desire 6	vill du mig ge 6
If you're on fire 7	Det vill jag se 7
Show me ... 8	Gör det ... 8

Franzon (2008: 388) helps us notice that the TT successfully preserves the prosody of the original, by retaining the metric and rhyme scheme. In fact, even if we do not know Swedish, we can still clearly see that in the TT *ner* in the second line rhymes with *mer* in the third line, just like *above* in the second line of the ST rhymes with *love* in the third line. The same applies to *ge* in the sixth line that rhymes with *se* in the seventh line, replicating the *rhyme* of the original between *desire* and *fire*.

Additionally, both the position and the repetition of *Show me* in the fifth and eight line of the ST were maintained in the TT, “although this phrase may not always mean ‘show me’” (Franzon, 2008: 388).

⁵ a note that is typically played for one beat
(source: <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/it/dizionario/inglese/quarter-note>).

⁶ a note that is typically equal to half the length of a quarter note
(source: <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/eighth-note>).

As a conclusion, it can be said that in contexts like this, “it is clear that an assessment of the fidelity of a singable translation should be based not so much on word-by-word comparison, but on contextual appropriateness” (Franzon, 2008: 388). When translators decide to opt for the fifth choice proposed by Franzon (2008), they must bear in mind that “a singable translation must fit the music and the situation in which it will be performed, even while trying to approximate the source text as much as necessary or possible” (Franzon, 2008: 388).

As for the application of the *pentathlon principle* by Low (2003), in one of his articles the author illustrates how he evaluates translated texts based on the criteria of *singability, sense, naturalness, rhyme and rhythm*.

A clear example is the analysis of the translation of a few lines of the second stanza of the twentieth song of *Die schöne Müllerin*, ‘Des Baches Wiegenlied’ (Low, 2008: 17). Table 5 illustrates the German ST and its English translation in a comparison made by Low (2008: 17).

Table 5: example taken from Low (2008: 17)

German source text	English target text
Will betten dich kühl 1	Cool, cool be thy bed 1
Auf weichem Pfühl 2	Soft to thy head 2
In dem blauen kristallinen Kammerlein 3	In the chamber of crystal blue 3
Heran, heran 4	Come ye pale nymphs 4
Was wiegen kann 5	Of forest and spring 5
Woget und wiebet den Knaben mir ein 6	To rock him and swing him, my boy fond and true 6

In terms of *singability* (Low, 2003), the English TT proves not so easy to be sung, in fact “despite the easy open syllables which end lines 3 and 6, this text is defective for singing” (Low, 2008: 17). Some words chosen by translators and the positions they occupy within certain lines make them difficult to articulate for the singer, as explained by Low (2008: 17): “the adjacent ‘t’s mean that line 2 will surely emerge as ‘soff to’. Besides, the word ‘nymphs’ is something of a tongue-twister”.

As for *sense* (Low, 2003), the English translation uses words that the German writer did not use, such as *nymphs*, *fond* and *true* (Low, 2008: 18). However, Low (2008: 18) argues that the translator may have found them in the subtext of the song.

Moving on into the next criterion, the English translator seems to have failed to reproduce the *naturalness* (Low, 2003) of the song. To demonstrate it, Low (2008: 17) points out that “line 4 uses an archaic word ‘ye’ in an archaic construction. Even worse are lines 3 and 6, where the adjective follow nouns”.

A better job was done with *rhyme* (Low, 2008: 18), to which Low assigns a total of six points, by saying that “this is the average from 8 points for bed/head, 2 for nymphs/spring, and 7 for blue/true, with a bonus point for this clinching rhyme” (Low, 2008: 18). At least the original rhyme scheme of the ST was preserved in the TT as well.

Finally, Low (2008: 18) notices that the English translation matches the German ST in terms of *rhythm* (Low, 2003). However, there is something that could have been improved, for instance “in lines 2 and 4, [...] the downbeats fall awkwardly on the weak words ‘to’ and ‘ye’” (Low, 2008: 18).

Low’s *pentathlon principle* (2003) is the method that will be used in chapter 3 to analyse the Italian translations of the English songs in the film *Wonka* (2023), and to demonstrate all the efforts that the translators made to carry out their task and produce highly performable songs.

CHAPTER 2

WONKA (2023)

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a general overview of the film *Wonka (2023)*. Before illustrating its plot and presenting its soundtrack, the focus will be placed on the character of Willy Wonka and his evolution over the years and the different forms of representation, from his first appearance in the children's novel written by Roald Dahl to his different portrayals in the three film adaptations. Then, information about the plot and the original soundtrack will serve as a guide to illustrate the strong connection between the lyrics and the story, underlining the importance of translating the songs for an international audience to enable them to fully experience and enjoy the film. Finally, the last section will address more technical aspects of the practice of dubbing, along with other key concepts, such as synchronisation.

1. The origins of the famous chocolatier

At the beginning of December 2023, the film *Wonka*, directed by Paul King, made its debut all around the world, presenting for the first time ever the origins of the most famous chocolatier that has ever existed. In fact, the film is a prequel to the children's novel *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, written by Roald Dahl and published in 1964. As a prequel, it explores Wonka's past, focusing particularly on his dreams and the challenges he had to face to finally become who he had always wanted to be.

Nowadays, the character of Willy Wonka is identified as an eccentric man with an impressive creative mind, who succeeded in conquering the world with his amazing creations. What largely contributed to creating this image of Wonka were the iconic films presenting his qualities and emphasising his eccentricity. However, it is important to remember that everything started with the book. It was the British novelist Roald Dahl who invented the character of Willy Wonka, a figure that soon started to be appreciated by everyone, both children and adults. Then, seven years after the book's publication, the first film adaptation was released, when Mel Stuart decided to bring Dahl's story to life. The result was the 1971 film *Willy Wonka & the Chocolate Factory*, which offers an almost faithful visual representation of the original novel. The first film was a success,

and it received appreciation from audiences around the world, becoming a classic that continued to be broadcast on television for years.

In 2005, Wonka's fame was still going strong, to the point that the famous American director Tim Burton proposed his own version of the novel, offering a slightly different interpretation of Dahl's character. He added flashbacks that explored Wonka's background, helping the audience to better understand his complex personality and his attitude towards other people and the world around him. This second film was another success, reaffirming Wonka's popularity and continuing to keep Dahl's story alive.

As the years went by, both films became Christmas classics as they were, and still are, shown on television during the Christmas holidays, since they are based on a story which talks about family, relationships, dreams, parenting, vices and virtues, inviting both children and adults to reflect upon their behaviour and the consequences of their actions.

In 2023, the character of Wonka was ready to appear once again on the big screen in a film that narrates his past, his dreams, and the many challenges he had to face to finally become the world's most beloved chocolatier. The third film, directed by Paul King, was still inspired by Dahl's novel but also tried to unveil Wonka's past creating a new storyline, enriched with constant references to the original book.

It is important to point out that the facts and events portrayed in *Wonka* (2023) are based on the free interpretation of the director Paul King, who analysed the characters and the story written by Roald Dahl to develop a personal vision of Wonka's early life. As a matter of fact, the British novelist never wrote or said anything about Willy's origins that led him to success.

The third film presents another version of Willy Wonka, emphasising new facets of his personality. The character successfully carries on the legacy of the past portrayals; his clothes and eccentric style are the same, yet he has a pure heart and soul that had never been shown before.

Wonka (2023) preserves the magic and dreamy atmosphere that characterised the other two films as well. Moreover, what truly makes everything special is the nature of the film. Indeed, it is a musical full of songs that accompany the story and perfectly capture the characters' mood and feelings depending on the situation they find themselves in.

2. The many facets of Willy Wonka through the years

As mentioned in the previous section, the character of Willy Wonka has undergone many changes due to the different interpretations of the directors who brought him to life. Their portrayals of Wonka slightly differ from its original representation in *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* by Roal Dahl. Although Mel Stuart, Tim Burton, and Paul King remained faithful to the way the British novelist described the character in his book – particularly in presenting Willy Wonka as an eccentric, little bizarre man, full of weird ideas but with a very creative mind – each director decided to add new elements to his personality. Such additions, influenced by their personal interpretation, were never mentioned in Dahl’s novel or, perhaps, the author intentionally left them unclear. The aim was to give audiences the best representation possible for them to empathise with him and understand his manners and behaviour.

The result is that we now have three slightly different versions of the same character that enrich Dahl’s original portrayal. Therefore, it is important to analyse and clarify the way Wonka is described by the original author of the book to fully appreciate the evolution of his persona across the various adaptations.

In the children’s novel *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, published in 1964, Roal Dahl presents Willy Wonka as the owner of a magnificent chocolate factory, an extraordinary man who succeeded in making his dreams come true. He is soon described as a person with a very creative mind, capable of producing chocolates and sweets which are out of the ordinary, to please both children and adults. Since its first appearance, he is portrayed as an excited man, often jumping around when walking, and speaking with great enthusiasm about his chocolate factory. However, in some passages of the book, his attitude suddenly changes, and the readers can perceive him as an egocentric and selfish man who often praises himself, his achievements and his chocolate factory. Wonka seems well aware of the love and appreciation he receives, and he knows he has a unique mind that allows him to come up with wonderful ideas for everyone to enjoy.

Another aspect of Wonka’s personality that emerges during his interactions with the children is his jealousy towards his factory and his creations. He becomes aggressive and starts scolding the children when they touch or do something without his permission, especially if their actions can lead to severe consequences for them and his beloved factory. Additionally, he occasionally makes fun of the children.

His past is not clear in the novel; Roal Dahl only writes that before reopening the factory he had suddenly closed it without any explanation, thus arousing mystery among people.

2.1. *Willy Wonka & the Chocolate Factory* (1971)

In the first film adaptation, *Willy Wonka & the Chocolate Factory* (1971), the director Mel Stuart proposed his version of Willy Wonka that remained as faithful as possible to the description of the character in Dahl's novel. In fact, in Stuart's representation, Wonka maintains the eccentricity, craziness and weirdness that mark his literary counterpart. Yet, he also differs from Dahl's portrayal in some respects. For instance, in *Willy Wonka & the Chocolate Factory* (1971) Wonka is unpredictable: no one ever knows what to expect from him and his intentions are often unclear, and he constantly surprises everyone with his actions. Wonka tends to smile as much as possible in every situation, but his smile does not appear entirely true. It is like a mask that he puts on to please others because he knows everyone adores him.

Another important difference can be noticed in those scenes in which something bad happens to the children who are visiting the factory when they do something that goes against Wonka's rules and recommendations. He simply stares at them doing nothing, impassive, remaining calm while the parents desperately ask for his help.

The aggressiveness and rudeness outlined in the novel is preserved in the film as well, particularly in one of the final scenes when he gets angry at Charlie – one of the children – for having broken the rules during the visit at the factory. However, he immediately softens when Charlie performs an act of kindness and shows him humanity.

Although his past remains unclear and mysterious, what emerges from the film is the image of a lonely man who decided to take distance from the entire world just for fear of being hurt. This is an aspect of Wonka's personality that was not explicitly mentioned in the book, but it is the result of Mel Stuart's interpretation of the character. It helps the viewers understand Wonka and offers them a possible reason to justify some of his actions.

2.2. *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* (2005)

When thirty-four years after the first film Wonka returned to the big screen, Tim Burton made sure to deliver a much more complex version of the character. Hence, he started from Dahl's description and then developed the character more deeply, trying to unveil part of the mystery of his past.

In the second film adaptation, *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* (2005), Tim Burton deliberately decided to introduce some flashback scenes to explain Wonka's past and help the audience understand his personality, motivations, behaviour and attitude. Indeed, through these scenes, the audience learns that Wonka comes from a rich household, where his authoritative and strict father – a dentist – is obsessively concerned with his son's dental health. Therefore, chocolates and sweets were prohibited in Wonka's house during his childhood. For this reason, in the context of this film, the opening of the chocolate factory can also be seen as an act of rebellion against his father. In the novel, though, Roal Dahl does not specify to which social class Wonka belongs to, nor does he mention his parents. Hence, Tim Burton freely interpreted the book and decided to invent a part of the character's past to give an explanation to his weirdness, lack of affection, coldness and loneliness. In fact, in both Stuart and Burton's versions, Wonka seems to suffer from a self-imposed isolation. The adult version of Willy Wonka in the 2005 film appears to have lost all the joy and happiness that once characterised him as a child. Interestingly, it is the only version in which Wonka's face is pale, almost white.

As for those aspects that make Wonka unique and constitute a continuum with Dahl and Stuart's versions, Tim Burton's interpretation of the character faithfully preserves his eccentricity, weirdness and bizarreness. Surprisingly, at the end of *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* (2005), thanks to Charlie, Wonka rediscovers a sense of humanity that he had lost. Hence, the character's evolution in this film is much clearer and complete.

2.3. *Wonka* (2023)

As for the most recent adaptation which came out in 2023, Paul King, proposed an almost completely new portrayal of Wonka. The decision to deliver a very different version of the character is justified by the fact that the third film is a prequel to the original novel, focusing on Wonka's early adventures which led him to fame. In *Wonka* (2023), the character is much younger and more eccentric than ever.

Contrary to Tim Burton's representation of Wonka's wealthy family, Paul King adds flashback scenes showing Wonka and his mother living in poverty. Furthermore, through these scenes, the audience learns that Willy inherited his passion for chocolate-making from his beloved mother. Now that he is older, he wants to open a chocolate store in her honour. This younger version of Wonka is still poor but full of creative ideas and determined to make his dreams come true. In line with the previous portrayals, Wonka remains eccentric and weird. However, he still has a lot to learn in life, as he is an innocent and gullible young man, which often leads him to be deceived and scammed.

Through this film, the audience learns that before becoming the world's most famous chocolatier, Wonka was just a young man facing problems and challenges while following his dreams. He is one of the outcasts to the point that he finds himself living and teaming up with them. For the first time, Wonka is not entirely alone in the world, he finds a group of people who support and help him. He needs them to make his chocolates and open his dream store. They soon bond and collaborate as a great team to fight against injustice. Moreover, in this film Wonka still has a pure heart and a sense of humanity that was only briefly shown in the previous films.

Although this version is partially invented by the British director Paul King, it loses the mysterious side that marked the other portrayals and perfectly represents those early years of adulthood that are still dominated by innocence, hopes and dreams.

3. Plot of the film *Wonka* (2023)

As mentioned above, *Wonka* (2023) is a prequel to the children's novel *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*. It narrates the events occurring before those described in the book. Although the story is inspired by Dahl's novel, it was written and developed by Paul King, who also directed the film. Some elements, such as the peculiar way Wonka is dressed, how he speaks, and certain types of chocolates share similarities with the descriptions in the original novel and the previous film adaptations. Nevertheless, the entire narrative arc is invented by King, as are the parts depicting Wonka's adventures and difficult situations in which he finds himself as a young man trying to make his dreams come true.

The story begins with Wonka's arrival in the city – which is never specified in the film – because, after seven years spent sailing, he is finally ready to follow his dream: opening a chocolate store at the famous *Gallery Gourmet*. He is all alone and does not have much

money, and he soon realises how difficult it is to live in the city. However, he never lets anyone or anything take him down.

Soon after his arrival, he falls victim to Mrs Scrubitt and Bleacher's deceptions because of his innocence and little knowledge of the world. In fact, Bleacher notices Wonka sitting on a bench ready to spend the night there in the cold and kindly offers him a place to stay: Mrs Scrubitt's guesthouse and laundry. Mrs Scrubitt is the owner of the place and Bleacher is her co-worker. They seem very kind and generous people, but Wonka will soon learn that they are actually untrustworthy. As a matter of fact, they make him sign what appears to be an ordinary contract to let him stay at the guesthouse. However, since Wonka cannot read, he signs the contract without knowing what the clauses say. Unfortunately, Wonka will come to understand them through his own experience.

The next day, he goes to the *Gallery Gourmet* and introduces to everyone one of his creations: the *hoverchoc*, a particular type of chocolate that once eaten makes you fly. His bizarre yet surprising invention catches the attention of the most famous chocolatiers in the city – Slugworth, Prodnose and Fickelgruber – who feel intimidated by Wonka and call the police to stop him. Wonka comes back to Mrs Scrubitt's guesthouse with no money, unable to pay her. Consequently, Mrs Scrubitt gets angry and forces him to work in the laundry to repay his debt.

It is in the laundry that Wonka finds a group of people who will become his friends and will help him make his dreams come true. They have all fallen into Mrs Scrubitt and Bleacher's trap and are now forced to work under poor and bad conditions to repay their debts and regain their freedom. Among them there is an orphan girl with whom Wonka establishes a strong bond and starts telling her about his past and his dreams. Then, he produces a special chocolate for her and together they begin devising a plan for Wonka to sell his chocolate without letting Mrs Scrubitt and Bleacher know it.

Meanwhile, we learn more about the secret deal between the police and Slugworth, Prodnose and Fickelgruber. They have bribed the chief of police to stop Wonka and make him disappear.

Despite everything, Wonka and Noodle, the orphan girl, manage to get out of Mrs Scrubitt's guesthouse at night so that Wonka can gather the ingredients he needs to produce his chocolates and sell them in secret. When they come back, they discover

something very important from one of the men working in the laundry, Abacus Crunch. He was Slugworth's accountant and knows details and secrets that can be helpful. Mr Crunch reveals that Slugworth, Prodnose and Fickelgruber have a secret vault hidden in the basement of a cathedral where they store chocolate that they use to bribe the chief of police. Mr Crunch also tells them about the secret way to reach the basement.

To avoid the police while selling chocolates, Wonka and his team come up with the idea of using storm drains to quickly hide, run away and disappear whenever the police arrive. This way, they can sell chocolates and make money without getting caught. Everything seems to go as planned. One night, Wonka even manages to catch the mysterious little man who has been stealing his chocolates while he sleeps. The little man, only a few centimetres tall, with an orange face and green hair, turns out to be an Oompa Loompa.

In *Wonka* (2023) the Oompa Loompa is stealing chocolates from Wonka because he once visited Loompaland and stole a lot of their cocoa beans. In this film adaptation, there is only one Oompa Loompa, who closely resembles the many Oompa Loompas of the first film, *Willy Wonka & the Chocolate Factory* (1971). None of the three films faithfully represents the way Oompa Loompas are described in the book. However, Paul King decided to adopt Mel Stuart's visual representation of these funny creatures for his own version as well.

Wonka finally opens his chocolate store at the *Gallery Gourmet*. Unfortunately, during its opening, the customers start experiencing weird reactions after eating his chocolates. Wonka realises that his chocolates have been poisoned, and this leads to the complete destruction of the store. Slugworth, Prodnose and Fickelgruber, in collaboration with Mrs Scrubitt, poisoned the chocolates and ruined Wonka. Consequently, Wonka receives an offer from the three chocolatiers, which consists of a huge amount of money to pay off his friends' debts on the following condition: he must leave the city on a boat and never return. Wonka accepts and his friends are freed, except for Noodle. In fact, Slugworth paid Mrs Scrubitt extra money to keep her under her watch.

While Wonka is on the boat, the mysterious Oompa Loompa reappears and thanks to him Wonka understands that Slugworth and Noodle are related and manages to escape before the boat explodes. Wonka then reunites the team and goes rescuing Noodle at Mrs Scrubitt's guesthouse.

Finally, they decide to end the reign of Slugworth, Prodnose and Fickelgruber, and expose the corruption within the Church and the police. To achieve that, they manage to infiltrate the three chocolatiers' secret hideout to steal their account book and reveal their misdeeds to the world. Unfortunately, Slugworth, Prodnose and Fickelgruber surprise them; Noodle finally learns the truth about her past and, together with Wonka, they are taken to the chocolate vault and locked inside. They nearly drown as the chocolate rises around them, but the Oompa Loompa saves them.

Once they are out, Wonka and Noodle tell the entire city the truth about Slugworth, Prodnose, Fickelgruber and their corrupted relationship with the chief of police. As a result, they are ruined, and Wonka's chocolate makes them fly away, while the chief of police gets arrested.

Thanks to her friends, Noodle finds her mother and reunites with her. As for Wonka, he creates the chocolate factory of his dreams and embarks on this new adventure with the Oompa Loompa by his side.

4. Original soundtrack

The film *Wonka* (2023) is a real musical full of original songs that perfectly mirror the atmosphere of the film and contribute to moving the plot forward, supporting the narrative and expressing the characters' feelings and emotions.

Songs have always been present in every adaptation of Dahl's novel, as the original book itself contains a few songs which are usually sung by the Oompa Loompas. However, the use of songs varies across the three films.

The first and third film share several similarities, as they can be considered real musicals in which the songs play a fundamental role in telling the story and enhancing the audience's experience. Unfortunately, in the Italian version of the oldest film, only the dialogues were translated and dubbed, while the songs remained in English. Tim Burton's film, instead, is not a musical, as it only has a few short songs performed by the Oompa Loompas. However, the texts of these songs are very similar to the ones written by Roal Dahl in his novel. The first and third film include many newly composed songs, specifically written and produced to support the narrative. The songs of the two films are not the same, except for *Pure Imagination* and *Oompa Loompa*, which were originally

created for *Willy Wonka & the Chocolate Factory* (1971) and reappear in *Wonka* (2023) to establish a continuum with the first film and honour it.

In *Wonka* (2023) there are eight songs, which will be analysed in more detail in chapter 3. The music of the eight songs was composed by Neil Hannon, who also wrote their lyrics. Simon Farnaby and the film's director, Paul King, contributed to the lyrics of four songs – *A Hatful of Dreams*, *You've Never had Chocolate like this*, *Scrub scrub*, and *A World of Your Own*, – while the score of the film was composed by Joby Talbot. The only two exceptions are *Pure Imagination* and *Oompa Loompa*, whose music and lyrics were originally written by Leslie Bricusse and Anthony Newley. The *Oompa Loompa* song remains unchanged, while the music of *Pure Imagination* was rearranged by Neil Hannon for the new film *Wonka* (2023).

The songs of *Wonka* (2023) fit seamlessly into the film, successfully creating the right atmosphere for each part of the story they accompany. The lyrics appear carefully crafted to make the audience share in the characters' emotions. Most of the songs are joyful, humorous, rhythmical and very catchy, yet some are slower and much more intimate. The catchy lines of the songs often hide deeper meanings and even criticise wrong behaviours and social injustices.

As for the Italian translations of the songs, Valerio Piccolo was responsible for translating and adapting the lyrics into Italian, with the support of Roberta Schiavon. In terms of *singability*, they succeeded in producing song-texts which sound natural in Italian and align excellently with the actors' lip movements. Therefore, the translated and adapted songs do not remind the Italian audience that they are listening to translations. The translated versions flow naturally, are catchy and easy to understand. The wording never leaves space for ambiguities, misunderstandings or doubts. Moreover, the intersemiotic correspondence between the verbal messages conveyed through the lyrics and the on-screen visuals is skilfully accomplished.

5. The dubbing process and the importance of synchronisation

Before going into more detail and analyse the Italian translations of the songs in *Wonka* (2023), it is important to understand what dubbing and other key concepts, such as lip synchronisation, really mean in the context of audiovisual translation (henceforth AVT). The purpose is to emphasise technical strategies and different practices which are

necessary to overcome linguistic barriers and reach international audiences. Translators and other professionals working in the field of AVT play a fundamental role in providing versions of a film in multiple languages, enabling different audiences to experience and enjoy a film in their own mother tongue.

The practice of translating films demands a wide range of skills, expertise and a considerable amount of creativity. It is not an easy task, as in most cases it involves facing challenges and overcoming obstacles. From a more technical perspective, in film dubbing there are different steps to follow, and many professionals are involved in the process. As a matter of fact, “the audiovisual dubbing process comprises several closely linked phases, which must follow an established order and rhythm, something akin to a production line” (Martínez, 2004: 3). Such process can only begin after the commissioner decides to have a dubbed version of the film and therefore sends a copy of the film to a dubbing studio. Martínez (2004: 3) further explains that the original script is usually sent along with the copy of the film and specific guidelines regarding the dubbing of songs, the subtitling of certain parts and more. Once the dubbing studio has everything it needs, the material is sent to a translator who is responsible for translating the original script. Occasionally, the translation can also be sent to a proof-reader for further checks.

However, what mostly interests us for the purposes of the present thesis is the “synchronisation of the translated dialogue so that it matches the actors’ mouth movements and the other images as closely as possible” (Martínez, 2004: 4). The so-called synchronisation is also applied when a film contains dubbed songs, as in the case of *Wonka* (2023). To achieve precise synchronisation and make sure that both dialogues and songs flow naturally in the target language, the translation needs to undergo some changes. In doing so, Martín (2004: 4) points out that “the synchroniser, like the proof-reader, must try to ensure that the modifications do not stray too far from the meaning of the original text; he may have to eliminate superfluous information or add additional sound effects, such as the background noise for a football match or a hospital emergency ward”.

Once the synchronisation phase is complete, the resulting text is sent to the production department where it is submitted to final checks before the dubbing process takes place. At the production department the text is divided into several takes, and a

specific number of takes is assigned to each character, in order to organise the dubbing sessions for the actors.

After that, the recording is carried out under the director's supervision. Once this phase is finished, "[...] the only remaining task is to add in subtitles to the dubbed material, should there be any, and to carry out the final mix, that is, coordination and fine-tuning of the image and sound between the various channels on which the dubbed voices have been recorded" (Martínez, 2004: 5).

As it has been pointed out earlier, the translated text produced by the translator is rarely used verbatim in dubbing sessions. Indeed, it inevitably undergoes major or minor changes, especially when it is checked by the proof-reader and during the synchronisation phase. Hence, the final text may differ from the original text. This often happens because "[...] form is a priority in both cases, while content receives rather less attention" (Martínez, 2004: 5). For instance, some changes involve the replacement of words or phrases to make phonemes match or to enable articulatory movements that resemble those of the original version. Unfortunately, "on occasions [...] information is lost for the sake of synchronisation" (Martínez, 2004: 6). Sometimes small changes, such as the use of synonyms to achieve phonetic correspondence, are not enough. Therefore, the synchroniser may need to intervene on the meaning of a word, phrase or sentence to ensure precise synchronisation. There may also be cases in which modifications to the text are deemed necessary even after the synchronisation phase. Indeed, Martínez (2004: 6) adds that "the text may also be modified during the final dubbing phase; if synchronisation was not carried out by the director, he may wish to make certain minor changes in keeping with personal taste or because there are errors. In addition, the actors may also change the text, through improvisation or because of difficulties with a given phrase or word [...]".

Synchronisation is an aspect of AVT that should be given great prominence, especially in the case of dubbing. In fact, as Chaume (2004: 35) points out, "synchronization undeniably has a direct impact on the translation process and product, and as such, it should be given due consideration in Translation Studies and, in particular, in the study of audiovisual translation".

Over the years, different approaches have been developed by both scholars and practitioners to deal with the practice of synchronisation, often called lip-sync. For

instance, professionals believe that a successful synchronisation, one that can be considered good, is achieved in all those cases in which “[...] what the viewer hears on the screen does not sound like a translation, but rather that the utterances in the target language appear to have been spoken by the very actors they are watching” (Chaume, 2004: 36). Synchronisation is important to the extent that “[...] the quality of a translation is judged in terms of whether or not ‘it matched the lips’, in other words, whether the translation corresponds both to the screen characters’ movements of the lips (lip synchrony), and particularly to the duration of the screen character’s utterance, from the instant his or her mouth opens to speak to the instant it shuts [...]” (Chaume, 2004: 36). Therefore, the professional approach is merely a functional one, mainly focused on meeting the commissioner’s needs and applying the conventions of the target culture regarding synchronisation. Most of these conventions simply ask the dubbing studio to produce a dubbed version of a film which sounds natural like the original, without anything disrupting this perception.

Professionals are convinced that both the dialogue writers and the dubbing director are responsible for the production of a good synchronisation. However, Martín believes that the dialogue writer is the only person who holds such responsibility, describing his/her role as follows:

[The dialogue writer] should modify the words that do not phonetically coincide with the screen actors’ lip movements and expediate the synchronizing work of the dubbing actor. Principally, closed or open vowels, bilabials etc. must be noted [...]. The responsibility for ensuring that the lip movement of the dialogues is as close as possible to that of the original actors therefore lies firmly with the dialogue writer (quoted and translated in Chaume, 2004: 36).

Instead, the dubbing director is the one who can apply modifications to facilitate the dubbers’ pronunciation of certain phonemes or words and make the final result much more natural.

However, according to Chaume (2004: 37), such changes should be made by translators only, given that “the translator is the sole link in the dubbing chain that is able to make such changes and at the same time take into account both the source and target

texts, as he or she, unlike the dialogue writer or the director, is the only person who is familiar with both languages at stake”.

Functionalist approaches share some similarities with those adopted by professionals, as both methods consider synchronisation as fundamental to fulfil the purposes and complete the function of a translation. However, the authors of the functionalist approaches “[...] have indeed undertaken an academic reflection on synchronization. We are not dealing with a simple list of instructions for professional practice, but rather with a theoretical reflection on the language of cinema, on its role and on the role of translation” (Chaume, 2004: 38). Hence, the main difference is that functionalists tend to look at synchronisation from a theoretical point of view instead of simply focusing their attention on its practice.

In contrast, polysystemic approaches consider synchronisation from a completely different perspective, specified by Chaume as follows:

The descriptive studies in this field shift the focus of attention away from the function of the translation to the conventions of the target culture. Synchronisation is analyzed as a translational norm for a particular target culture that, for historical, social, political or economic reasons, seeks to domesticate a foreign product and to make both the translator and the translation invisible (2004: 39).

Hence, shifting the focus away from the function of a translation means that the quality of synchronisation and strategies used to solve translation problems and face challenges are not of primary importance in the polysystemic approach, which rather considers the practice of synchronisation “[...] as a dubbing technique that responds to specific socio-political and economic realities” (Chaume, 2004: 40).

More recently, new ideas and perspectives have begun to circulate among several authors which have been grouped by Chaume (2004: 40) under the name of ‘cinematographic approaches’. These authors often talk about another common practice in the film industry, called postsynchronisation, which is the process of recording the dialogues of a film after the actors have already shot the scenes, to remove unwanted background noises that may disrupt the audience’s experience. This is an intralinguistic dubbing process, since the actors record their own voices in their native language, which is also the language of the film. However, postsynchronisation can also be an

interlinguistic dubbing process when the language used in the dubbing sessions differs from that of the original film. Regardless of whether the process is intralinguistic or interlinguistic, there are some conventions that should be followed and that may change depending on the target culture. Nevertheless, there are three conventions which are usually applied in every culture.

Firstly,

The lip movements in close-up shots and extreme close-ups (detailing the lips or the whole face, for example) must be respected. In other words, the source text (in the case of postsynchronization) or the translated dialogue (in the case of dubbing) must coincide with the screen actor's lip movements [...] The task of matching the translation with the actor's articulatory movements is called lip-sync or lip synchrony" (Chaume, 2004: 41).

Following this convention is extremely important, especially when dubbing films or any other audiovisual product appearing on a screen, because in scenes where the actors' faces and lips are clearly visible to the audience, the words they pronounce should give the target audience the impression that the actors are saying those exact words. If the translation does not match the actors' articulatory movements, the overall experience of the audience will be ruined.

Secondly, "the body movements of the screen actors must also be respected. In other words, the source text (in the case of postsynchronization) or the translated dialogue (in the case of dubbing) must coincide with the head, arm or body movements of the characters on screen (assent, negation, surprise etc.). This kind of adaptation is called kinetic synchrony" (Chaume, 2004: 41). Finding the perfect wording, especially in dubbing, to mirror the actors' body movements may be regarded as something easy to achieve, but it is not. Coming up with a translation that ensures that a specific word is uttered at the same time a certain movement is made is not always easy, and changes may be necessary in this case as well.

Thirdly,

The timing of the screen characters' utterances must be respected too. In other words, the source text (in the case of postsynchronization) or the translated dialogue (in the case of dubbing) must fit exactly in the time between the instant the screen actor opens his/her mouth

to deliver the lines from the source text and the instant in which he/she closes his/her mouth.

This kind of synchrony is known as isochrony” (Chaume, 2004: 41).

This is one of the reasons why, in many dubbed versions of films, the translated dialogues are often inevitably different from the original ones in the source language. Some lexical items may get lost, and some sentences are shortened or entirely reformulated to respect the original timing. Otherwise, the target audience would hear the dubbers talking while the actors’ mouths on screen are shut.

It is important to outline that “not all synchronization types require the same degree of perfection in translation” (Chaume, 2004: 50). For instance, there are cases in which “[...] lip synchrony does not require that a source language bilabial consonant be substituted for a target language bilabial consonant, but rather, any other labio-dental consonant will suffice. Open vowels can be replaced by any other open vowel [...]” (Chaume, 2004: 50). Finding exact phonetic equivalents across languages can be extremely difficult. In such cases, replicating similar articulatory movements of the mouth is enough. For instance, the vowel sound /a/, an open, front vowel, can be replaced with any other vowel sound marked by the openness of the mouth, as it is not the phoneme itself that matters, but the reproduction of the movements of the lips and mouth.

A certain degree of flexibility is also accepted in kinetic synchrony, especially “[...] where rotations between interjections are concerned, except in affirmative or negative head movements, which do require a non-ambiguous solution” (Chaume, 2004: 50).

Flexibility is allowed in the case of isochrony as well. Indeed, when translating from one language into another, challenges may arise due to differences in word length, number of syllables per word, and stress patterns. Hence “[...] one syllable before the screen actor opens his mouth, and even two syllables after he or she has closed are quite acceptable, as the effect will go practically unnoticed by the viewer” (Chaume, 2004: 50). This is often the case when translating from English into Italian.

Regardless of the level of perfection expected for each synchronisation type, respecting the three conventions highlighted earlier is crucial due to the nature of the audiovisual text, described by Chaume as follows:

The audiovisual text is a verbal-iconic construct that transmits codified information via two channels: acoustic, through sound waves, and visual, through light signals. Cinematic

language is not only codified linguistically, but also through numerous codes that contribute to make up the final message. The former consists of linguistic, paralinguistic, musical, special effects and sound arrangement codes, whereas visual codes include iconographic, photographic, graphic, planning, syntactic or montage, and mobility codes. The signs we are now analyzing, the screen actors' lip movements and body movements fall into this last group (2004: 41-42).

If we take this perspective into account, it becomes clearer that synchronisation must be regarded as one of the many aspects that help shape the narrative of the film and its message, hence it should be carried out properly.

However, in the case of dubbing, different audiovisual genres may demand different levels of precision. During the synchronisation process, the translator, synchroniser or dialogue writer should consider a variety of factors to know what to prioritise. For instance, identifying the genre of the audiovisual product, understanding its function in both the source and target culture, and analysing the audience to which it is addressed can help determine which aspects of synchronisation can be sacrificed and which cannot.

For instance, “[...] synchronization is not a priority in the genre of documentaries, which often uses voice-over, enabling the viewer to hear the original sound, at a lower volume, at the same time” (Chaume, 2004: 45). A documentary is an audiovisual product whose function is to inform people about a specific topic. Therefore, lip synchrony is not a necessary requirement to meet, since “[...] the aim of convincing the viewer that the text in question is a target text, or that the actor or narrator is speaking the target language is not as important as getting across certain information or ideas with the greatest possible respect for the source text” (Chaume, 2004: 46).

As for the other three audiovisual genres that are usually dubbed – cartoons, television series and films – they require a much more precise synchronisation, since this practice in these genres acquires great importance. In the case of cartoons, television series and film, we are dealing with audiovisual products that mainly fulfil an expressive function. Hence, the role of the translator, synchroniser or dialogue writer is to produce a translation that conveys the exact same emotions as the original, provoking the same reactions in the target audience and granting them the same experience as if they were watching the audiovisual product in the original language.

Nevertheless, differences in the application of synchronisation can still be identified among the three afore-mentioned genres. For instance, lip synchrony in cartoons is usually minimal and Chaume (2004: 46) explains that “because the characters obviously do not speak, but rather move their lips almost randomly without actually pronouncing the words, a precise phonetic adaptation is not necessary, except in the case of extreme close-ups or detailed shots in which the character seemingly pronounces an open vowel”. Additionally, cartoons are usually made for children who do not tend to focus their attention on the characters’ lips while watching, but are rather much more attracted by body movements. Consequently, kinetic synchrony should be given priority and every gesture or movement carefully associated with the most appropriate translation.

Moving on to television series, “a thorough application of all synchronization types is required by the television series genre. Although the degree of perfection is not as high as that demanded by the cinema, television series do show the three synchronization types in all their forms” (Chaume, 2004: 46). Hence, in television series lip synchrony, kinetic synchrony and isochrony are on the same level and should always be respected without sacrificing one of the three.

Finally, dubbed films are the genres where the highest degree of synchronisation is demanded, to the extent that even “producers, distributors and exhibitors are fully aware of the fact that the success or failure of a dubbed film depends on its synchronization” (Chaume, 2004: 46-47).

Generally speaking, the quality of synchronisation is closely related to the target audience. Adults are far more demanding than younger people and children, as they do notice whether a dubbing job was done well or poorly. They pay attention to the actors’ lip movements while watching and can judge a translation based on how fully they enjoyed the television series or film, even though they are no experts in the field of AVT.

CHAPTER 3

A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE ORIGINAL ENGLISH SONGS OF THE FILM *WONKA* (2023) AND THEIR ITALIAN TRANSLATIONS

This chapter presents an analysis of the Italian translations of the original English songs of the film *Wonka* (2023). Each song is introduced by a short summary of the context in which it appears, the characters performing it, and its role in the narrative. The analysis was carried out by applying the strategy of the *pentathlon principle* proposed by Low (2003) to compare the Italian translations with their original English versions in terms of *singability*, *sense*, *naturalness*, *rhyme* and *rhythm*. The purpose of this analysis is to highlight the strategies used to produce highly singable songs, while respecting synchronisation – a crucial aspect in dubbed films, especially those featuring songs that are important for the plot's development.

1. *A Hatful of Dreams*

A Hatful of Dreams is the first song appearing in the film. It is sung by Willy Wonka and played by Timothée Chalamet. It is placed in the opening scene to introduce the main character, alongside references to his past, his current social status, and his dreams. He is about to begin a new chapter of his life; he is full of hope, yet he will soon realise that life in the city is filled with challenges and obstacles that he will need to face and overcome. After spending seven years sailing, now it is time to reach the city and make his dreams come true. He is just a poor young man, with his coat, boots, hat, and suitcase, but what is most important to him are his dreams, ideas, recipes, and his famous chocolate. He soon realises that, with his few *silver sovereigns*, life will be difficult, as everything is expensive in the city. But then he sees it: the *Gallery Gourmet*, where the most famous chocolate stores can be found and where he hopes to open his own one day in the future.

Applying the *pentathlon principle* by Low (2003) to analyse the translation of this song from English into Italian, we may argue that the translated song satisfies the first principle of *singability*. In fact, it is clear and easy to sing, since the words chosen belong to the everyday language and are not difficult to articulate for the dubber or hard to sing.

Table 6 below shows an example, presenting some words in italics to underline their importance in the discussion of a specific aspect of song translation.

Table 6: excerpt from *A Hatful of Dreams*

Source text	Target text
After seven years of life upon the <i>ocean</i> 1	Dopo sette anni in nave tra le <i>onde</i> 1
it is time to bid the Seven Seas farewell 2	ora ai Sette Mari dico addio da qua 2

In the first line, the word *ocean* was translated into *onde*, which is not its literal translation but in terms of *singability* this word ends up being more singable than *oceano*, which is the literal translation, because it is a two-syllable word just like *ocean*, while *oceano* is a four-syllable word, hence it is longer and it requires slightly more time to pronounce it. Even though the difference in the duration of the two words is very little, it is always advisable, whenever possible, to use the word that closely matches the number of syllables in the ST in order to respect the metrics and the *rhythm* of the song (Low, 2003: 97). Another example of *singability* is shown in Table 7:

Table 7: excerpt from *A Hatful of Dreams*

Source text	Target text
I've poured everything I've got into my chocolate 1	Ho investito quel che avevo in cioccolato 1
now it's time to show the world <i>my recipes</i> 2	ora il mondo assaggerà <i>ricette mie</i> 2

The second line of the TT illustrates an inversion between the possessive adjective *mie* and the noun *ricette*. This altered word order is less frequent in Italian but is commonly found in music and poetry to produce the desired effect. Here, the purpose of this choice is to achieve a phonetic match, since in the English version the third syllable of the word *recipes* is sustained, and the phoneme articulated is /i/, which is also present in the Italian word *mie*, where the second syllable containing the phoneme /i/ is articulated and sustained.

Moving to the *sense* of the song, which is the second aspect of the *pentathlon principle* (Low 2003), there are no significant differences between the original song and the

translation. The number of lexical equivalents outweighs instances of stretching or manipulation of the meaning, to use Low's words (2003: 94). However, the second stanza of the song was rewritten as shown in Table 8:

Table 8: excerpt from *A Hatful of Dreams*

Source text	Target text
Got a <i>tattered overcoat and battered suitcase</i> 1	Vado in giro con addosso un po' di <i>stracci</i> 1
got a pair of <i>leaky boots</i> upon my feet 2	e <i>stivali</i> , che anche <i>l'acqua fanno entrar</i> 2

In the first line, *tattered overcoat* and *battered suitcase* were translated into *stracci*, a superordinate term, applying a strategy often used when replacing a precise lexical equivalent with an element that functions in a similar way in the context (Low, 2003: 94). Even though there is an omission of both *overcoat* and *suitcase*, this cannot be considered a loss, as the word *stracci* perfectly gives the idea of his poor condition. Moreover, the viewers have an immediate correspondence while watching the film. In fact, the word *stracci* is pronounced when he wears his coat, and someone gives him the suitcase, as shown in Picture 1:



Screenshot 1 taken from the film *Wonka* (2023) min. 00:01:56

The same also applies to the translation of the second line, where the concept expressed by *leaky boots* was conveyed through the expression *stivali che anche l'acqua fanno entrar*. The meaning is the same, regardless of the different words chosen. Additionally, the word *entrare* has undergone an apocope, through the elimination of the final *e*, otherwise the verse would have been too long, with two syllables more instead of one.

Thanks to the apocope, the extra syllable in the Italian translation does not interfere with the original *rhythm* of the song, allowing the prolongation of the vowel sound in the last syllable *-trar* and matching the prolonged /i/ of *feet* at the end of the original line. There is also an intersemiotic redundancy between what the actor is singing and the images on screen, as shown in Picture 2:



Screenshot 2 taken from the film *Wonka* (2023) min. 00:02:21

Another significant change was made in the translation of the title of this song, which also happens to be the refrain. *A Hatful of dreams* was translated into *Nel cilindro tanti sogni e magie*. The word *hatful* in English refers to the amount a hat can hold⁷, and it was used intentionally to also hint at the famous hat associated with Wonka. Therefore, the Italian translation results in a very clever solution, as it renders both the explicit and implicit meanings of the original by relying on the intersemiotic redundancy.

Regarding the principle of *naturalness* in Low's model (2003), the TT in Italian may be considered to sound very natural, with no cases of unnatural or uncommon language use. There are only a few instances where the word order of some sentences was changed to fulfil other purposes, like those of *singability* and *rhyme*. An example is shown in Table 9:

Table 9: excerpt from *A Hatful of Dreams*

Source text	Target text
it is time to <i>bid the Seven Seas farewell</i> 1 and the <i>city I've pinned seven years of</i> <i>hopes on</i> 2	Ora ai <i>Sette Mari dico addio da qua</i> 1 <i>la città su cui ho speranze assai profonde</i> 2

⁷ <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/hatful>

The first and second line illustrate two examples of marked use of the syntactic-grammatical structure, which is typical in songwriting. In the first case, *it is time to bid the Seven Seas farewell*, the word *farewell* appears at the end of the sentence, after *Seven Seas*. In the Italian translation, the order of the components is not exactly the same as in the English version, as the word *addio*, which translates *farewell*, was placed after *Sette Mari*. Hence, the result is *ora ai Sette Mari dico addio da qua*, where a marked use of the grammatical structure – the inversion between the verb and the indirect object, and consequently the indirect object preceding the verb – is still kept making it more singable than the unmarked version *ora dico addio ai Sette Mari*, since it better fits the *rhythm* of the original song. The same strategy was applied to the translation of the second line, where the noun *city* appears at the beginning of the sentence in thematic position to put the emphasis on it and stress its importance: *and the city I've pinned seven years of hopes on*. In order to achieve the same effect in the TT, the marked sequence of the words was maintained, so that the word *città* appears in a thematic position, keeping the intended emphasis and respecting the *rhythm*: *la città su cui ho speranze assai profonde*.

As for *rhyme* (Low 2003), the English song consists of stanzas with four lines each and an ABAB rhyme scheme, meaning that every first line of each stanza rhymes with the third one and the second line rhymes with the fourth one. This rhyme scheme was retained; however, the rhyming phonemes at the end of each line were adjusted based on the translation choices made. In several parts of the song, it is evident that the ending words selected do not correspond to the exact literal translation of the English words but were chosen to keep the ABAB rhyme scheme while trying to convey the same meaning. Some examples are shown in Table 10:

Table 10: excerpt from *A Hatful of Dreams*

Source text	Target text
In this city, anyone can be success ^{ful} 1 if they've talent and work hard, or so they say 2 but they didn't mention it would be so stress ^{ful} 3 just to make a dozen silver sovereigns last more than a day 4	In città il successo è assicurato 1 se hai talento, voglia e anche gioventù 2 ma non mi hanno detto che era complicato 3 far bastare le sovrane una giornata, o poco più 4

The literal translation of the first line of the ST is *In questa città, tutti possono avere successo*, but it is too long and difficult to make it rhyme with the adjective *stressante*, which is the literal translation of *stressful* in the third line. Hence, the first line was translated using a very common Italian way of saying, *il successo è assicurato*, which is easier to make it rhyme with a word ending in -ato, like *complicato*, a solution that conveys to the viewers the idea of the difficulty of life in the city. The same approach was used in the second line, where the last words *or so they say* were changed into *e anche gioventù* to make it rhyme with *o poco più*. These examples demonstrate that when translating songs that rhyme, there is some margin of flexibility (Low, 2003: 96), because when the translator decides or is asked to retain the rhymes, he/she needs to take into account different translation solutions that better fulfil the purpose.

Regarding the last principle mentioned by Low (2003), the *rhythm* of the song was successfully maintained. Overall, the number of syllables in each line was respected, with only a few instances where the Italian translation may have one or two extra syllables. However, the difference is so minimal that viewers are very unlikely to even notice it, since the *singability* of the song is not compromised. In fact, what is most important is maintaining the syllabic stress and the length of the notes to avoid destroying the melody (Low, 2003: 97-98).

2. *You've Never had Chocolate like this*

This song is the longest one in the film and appears in two separate moments. In the first one, Wonka is at the *Gallery Gourmet* the day after his arrival in the city. He places

himself at the centre of the gallery and gathers people around him. For the first time ever, he presents one of his creations to the public: the *hoverchoc*, a special type of chocolate that, once eaten, literally makes you fly. This song expresses Wonka’s joy and enthusiasm, as he is finally where he has always wanted to be, trying to make his dreams come true. He is eager to let other people taste his magical chocolates and start his own business.

Then, around the middle of the film, the song is reprised. This second time, the audience sees Wonka secretly selling his extraordinary chocolates to avoid the police, who are trying to catch him and stop his illegal activities. The entire song focuses on Wonka’s chocolates, their magical effects, and the uniqueness of his creations.

The Italian translation of *You’ve never had chocolate like this* fulfils the principle of *singability* (Low 2003), as it sounds natural and perfectly matches the actor’s lip movements, facilitating the dubber’s work.

We will begin with the lines reported in Table 11:

Table 11: excerpt from *You’ve Never had Chocolate like this*

Source text	Target text
In a <i>jungle</i> near <i>Mumbai</i> 1 there’s a little <i>hoverfly</i> 2 whose wings go at a thousand flaps a second, that’s no lie 3 These microscopic <i>fleas</i> 4 like chocolate more than <i>leaves</i> 5	Nella <i>giungla</i> di <i>Mumbai</i> 1 vive un’ <i>ape</i> e tu non sai 2 che sbatte, sbatte le sue ali e non le ferma mai 3 È piccola <i>così</i> 4 ama i <i>cioccolatin</i> 5

The translation of the first line of the ST did not present any issues in terms of *singability*, as *jungle* and *Mumbai* are phonetically quite similar in Italian. Hence, from a phonetic point of view, the difference is minimal and difficult for the audience to perceive. As for the second line, a small change was necessary in the TT to ensure it ended with the sound /ai/ and maintained the rhyme with *Mumbai*. The word *hoverfly*, which indicates a specific type of fly⁸ that resembles a bee, was translated as *ape* and moved to the beginning of the line, after the verb. Meanwhile, *e tu non sai* was added to make the

⁸ <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/it/dizionario/inglese/hoverfly>

line end with the diphthong /ai/, which corresponds phonetically to the stressed diphthong /aɪ/ in *hoverfly*. As a matter of fact, both diphthongs consist of an /a/, an open front vowel, followed by either /i/, a close, front vowel, or /ɪ/, a near-close, front vowel. As a result, the pronunciation of *hoverfly* and *sai* is consistent and coherent with what the audience hears and sees. The openness of the mouth shown in Picture 3 matches both *hoverfly* and *sai*, enhancing the *singability* of the song.



Screenshot 3 taken from the film *Wonka* (2023) min. 00:12:12

The same principle applies to the translation of the fourth and fifth line of the ST. Both *fleas* and *leaves* contain the long vowel /i:/; thus, in order to keep the vowel sound at the end of the lines in the Italian translation, the fourth line was translated as *è piccola così*, with *così* creating both a kinetic synchrony (Chaume, 2004: 41) with the gesture Wonka makes to indicate the small size of the *hoverfly*, and a phonetic match, as *così* ends in /i/. The fifth line was shortened to *ama i cioccolatin*, omitting *more than leaves* in order to reduce the length of the line and emphasise the phoneme /i/.

The translation of some lines in terms of *sense* (Low 2003) was particularly tricky. This song is highly humorous and plays with invented words derived from existing ones, aiming to create rhymes and reflect Wonka's eccentricity. Unfortunately, some of the humorous terms he uses were inevitably lost in translation. Table 12 illustrates an example:

Table 12: excerpt from *You've Never had Chocolate like this*

Source text	Target text
Well, there's chocolate 1 and there's chocolate 2 but only Wonka's makes your eyes pop out their <i>socketlets</i> 3 Put your hand into your <i>pockelet</i> 4 get yourself some Wonka chocolate 5	Cioccolato, sai 1 ce n'è tanto ormai 2 ma solo Wonka fa volare se lo mangerai 3 Forza, andiamo, non perdetelo 4 mani in <i>tasca</i> , su, compratelo 5

In the third and fourth line of the ST, Wonka plays with the words *sockets* and *pocket*, adding an *l* sound to create the words *socketlets* and *pockelet*, thus achieving a phonetic correspondence with the word *chocolate*, which is repeated in the first, second and fifth line. Unfortunately, retaining both elements in the Italian translation was far too difficult. However, through the process of reformulation, part of the meaning of these lines was preserved. Indeed, the third line was completely altered: instead of using an equivalent idiomatic expression to render *makes your eyes pop out their socketlets* – such as *lasciare a bocca aperta*, which conveys surprise and astonishment – the translation refers to the effect of the *hoverchoc*, which makes people fly, as previously mentioned in the text. Whereas the meaning of the fourth line was not completely lost, since its almost literal translation appears in the fifth line of the TT. It is worth noticing that, despite changes in meaning and structural reorganisation of the text, the rhyme scheme was maintained.

Other challenging elements to translate were the hilarious names of the chocolates he produces. Table 13 shows an example:

Table 13: excerpt from *You've Never had Chocolate like this*

Source text	Target text
But this should lift the gloom 1 my <i>giraffe-milk macaron</i> 2	Se soffre il corazón 1 ho per te un bel <i>giraffon</i> 2

In this case, *giraffe-milk macaron*, in the second line of the ST, refers to a specific type of macaron that Wonka created using giraffe milk. It was translated as *giraffon*, an invented word formed by adding the suffix *-on* to the root of the word *giraffa*. This

creative solution allowed the translator to reproduce the humorous and playful tone of the song, which was lost in other parts of the translation. Even though some information is not directly conveyed to the target audience – such as the fact that the product is a macaron made with milk – it is still easy to understand that Wonka is talking about one of his creations, thanks to the image shown in Picture 4.



Screenshot 4 taken from the film *Wonka* (2023) min. 00:54:47

Regarding the *naturalness* (Low 2003) of the song, the lyric provides several examples in which verbs are placed at the end of the lines to preserve *rhyme*. Although verbs come naturally after nouns in the standard Italian syntactic structure, this variation in word order is common in songwriting and does not sound unnatural. This is shown in Table 14:

Table 14: excerpt from *You've Never had Chocolate like this*

Source text	Target text
Goodbye to feeling small 1 and frightened of it all 2 just eat a few of these and you'll be feeling ten feet tall 3	Niente paura <i>avrai</i> 1 né piccolo <i>sarai</i> 2 se mangi questi ben più alto tu ti <i>sentirai</i> 3

Delaying verbs and placing them at the end of lines help preserve the *rhyme*, which would otherwise be lost, while maintaining the *singability* of the song. Furthermore, it is the use of the future tense in Italian that makes it easier to retain rhymes.

Regarding the *rhyme* (Low 2003), the song primarily consists of three-line stanzas that share the same rhyme or stressed phoneme, even in cases of imperfect rhyme. There are also longer stanzas with lines that repeat the same rhyme and individual lines that do not

rhyme. However, the example shown in Table 15 represents the most common type of rhyme that can be found in the song.

Table 15: excerpt from *You've Never had Chocolate like this*

Source text	Target text
It's made from ground van ^{illa} 1	Vaniglia macinata 1
from the markets of Man ^{ila} 2	dal mercato di Sumat ^{ra} 2
take heed, eat more than three, and you'll end up like a gor ^{illa} 3	con più di tre la crescita diventa esagerata 3

In this part of the song, Wonka describes the effect of a particular chocolate that makes someone's hair grow soon after eating it. The three lines of the ST end with the same phonemes /ɪlə/, creating rhymes. Unfortunately, it was not possible to retain these exact sounds in Italian and achieve perfect rhymes, as /ɪ/ and /ə/ – a near-close, front vowel, and a mid, neutral vowel – do not belong to the Italian phonetic system. What is important is that the rhyming scheme was preserved. In fact, the three lines of the TT end with the phonemes /ata/, creating rhymes, even though *Sumatra* in the second line has an extra sound /r/ that does not appear in the other two lines. The choice to replace *Manila* with *Sumatra* proves to be strategic from different points of view. As a matter of fact, not only does it facilitate the creation of rhymes, but it also allows the translators to maintain the reference to a geographical area located in Southeast Asia. Additionally, both Manila and Sumatra are well-known worldwide for their chaotic, colourful and vibrant markets selling a wide range of products, including spices like *ground vanilla*.

Speaking of *rhythm* (Low 2003), this song alternates long lines with short ones. Maintaining this alternation was crucial to preserve the original melody and avoid any disruption. However, fitting the translation into the original melody while respecting the length of the notes and syllabic stresses proved challenging. The result is a successful translation, in which the long and short lines correspond to those in the ST, with careful attention to matching the number of syllables as closely as possible. Table 16 provides a visual representation of this corresponding alternation between short and long lines in the ST and the TT:

Table 16: excerpt from *You've Never had Chocolate like this*

Source text	Target text
So the taxis never stop 1 the girls think you're a flop 2 you're wet and cold, you're getting old, your confidence is shot 3	Quindi il taxi ti ha ignorato 1 la tizia ti ha mollato 2 ti senti vecchio e la fiducia ormai ti ha abbandonato 3

In some cases, certain lines needed to be reduced to stay as close as possible to the original number of syllables. For instance, the title of the song *You've never had chocolate like this*, which is repeated throughout the text as the refrain, was translated as *Non c'è cioccolato così*. Thanks to the strategy of reduction, the Italian line counts eight syllables, *non-c'è-cioc-co-la-to-co-sì*, which is much closer to the original, which counts nine syllables, *you've-ne-ver-had-cho-co-late-like-this*. Furthermore, *così* and *this* are not so different, as they may be characterised by different phonemes, but they are very similar due to their assonance and share almost the same articulatory movements when pronounced. In contrast, the literal translation *Non hai mai mangiato cioccolato come questo* consists of fourteen syllables, making it too long to fit the original melody, causing the loss of the assonance and failing to reproduce the actors' lip movements.

3. *Scrub scrub*

Scrub scrub is a very humorous song that the people living in Mrs Scrubitt and Bleahcer's guesthouse and laundry start singing to complain about the working conditions they are forced to endure. In fact, behind this ironic song lies a deeper meaning: a complaint against Mrs Scrubitt and Bleacher's fraudulent practices.

The owner of the guesthouse and laundry, Mrs Scrubitt, and her co-worker, Bleacher, offer Wonka and the other characters a place to stay and make them sign a contract that looks like any other normal contract, except for some clauses written in such small print that no one ever bothers to read, especially Wonka who does not know how to read. These clauses are absurd, because the characters need to pay for everything, including for using the stairs to get to their rooms every time. Consequently, Wonka and the others end up in debt, and instead of giving them money, they are forced to work in the laundry under poor conditions.

The Italian translation of this song provides great examples of *singability* (Low 2003). In fact, the original version is characterised by the repetition of some words that can be considered the refrain of the song, emphasising the working conditions the characters are forced to endure, as shown in Table 17:

Table 17: excerpt from *Scrub scrub*

Source text	Target text
First, you pick up the apparel 1 and you stick it in the barrel 2 Scrub scrub 3	Metti dentro tutto quanto 1 dove l'acqua bolle tanto 2 lava lava 3
Then you take it to the mangle 4 and you turn a giant handle 5 Scrub scrub 6	Poi lo strizzi in questo affare 4 anche se mi fa sudare 5 lava lava 6
Then it's hung up really high 7 until it's nearly dry 8 Scrub scrub 9	E quassù lo stenderai 7 e asciutto poi lo troverai 8
But when we sing this song 10 the day don't seem so long 11 Scrub scrub 12	Se canti insieme a noi 9 vedrai che non ti annoi 10 Lava lava 11
Gotta press out all the creases 13 from the dresses and chemises 14 rub rub 15	Ogni panno va stirato 12 Muovi il ferro infuocato 13 piano piano 14
Gotta fold 'em like they told us 16 or they'll scold us and withhold our 17 grub grub 18	Piega come ti hanno detto 15 o vai senza cena a letto 16 bravo bravo 17
We all signed the dotted line 19 so we've gotta do our time 20 Scrub scrub 21	Perché tu hai firmato ormai 18 quindi reclamare mai 19 potrai potrai 20

The words highlighted in yellow are inserted every two lines as a refrain. In the ST, the terms *scrub* and *rub* are two verbs that describe the actions the characters are forced to perform while working at the laundry. As for the word *grub*, in this specific context it

is not used as a verb but as a noun, referring to *food*. These terms are not used randomly; they have something in common: the stressed phoneme is always /ʌ/, an open-mid, back vowel. To successfully achieve *singability*, it was crucial to find Italian words having the same phoneme to facilitate the dubbers' work. Furthermore, the translation of these terms had to consider that when sung by the actors, there are often close-ups, meaning that the lip movements are clearly visible to the audience. Therefore, it was essential to find phonetic matches so that when the dubbers sing, the target audience believes the song was originally written in Italian and is not merely a translation. This is the reason why *scrub* was translated as *lava*, while *rub* and *grub* needed to be adapted as *piano* and *bravo* which have no semantic link to the words used in English, but they were selected to ensure a good synchronisation with the actors' lip movements. There is only one exception at the end of the song, where *scrub* was translated as *potrai*. Obviously, the lexical choices that were made also depend on the translation of the other lines, but what is important is that *lava*, *piano*, *bravo*, and *potrai* share the same stressed phoneme, just like the ST items they are replacing. The phoneme articulated is /a/, an open, front vowel. Although /ʌ/ and /a/ are not exactly the same, both are marked by the openness of the mouth, as shown in Picture 5:



Screenshot 5 taken from the film *Wonka* (2023) min. 00:20:48

In terms of *sense* (Low 2003), the translated version of this song is a great example of creativity, yet it does not fail to render the meaning of the original. This is the case where, in AVT, the visual support on the screen proves useful. As a matter of fact, the images that the audience sees while listening help compensate for those elements that get lost in translation. Table 18 shows an example:

Table 18: excerpt from *Scrub scrub*

Source text	Target text
First, you pick up the <i>apparel</i> 1 and you stick it in the <i>barrel</i> 2	Metti dentro <i>tutto quanto</i> 1 <i>dove l'acqua bolle tanto</i> 2

The word *apparel* in the first line of the ST, which refers to sheets and clothing, gets lost in the translation, since it is translated using a pronominal phrase, *tutto quanto*. However, the target audience is still able to understand, because when the dubber pronounces *tutto quanto*, there is an intersemiotic redundancy with the images shown on the screen, as demonstrated in Picture 6:



Screenshot 6 taken from the film *Wonka* (2023) min. 00:19:45

The same applies to the word *barrel* in the second line of the ST, which refers to the place where they need to put sheets and clothes. The term gets lost in the Italian translation; yet the original meaning is not compromised, since the images clearly show a large barrel and boiling water. Hence, the Italian translation of the second line matches the images and effectively renders the meaning. Table 19 shows another example:

Table 19: excerpt from *Scrub scrub*

Source text	Target text
Then you take it to the <i>mangle</i> 1 and you turn the giant handle 2	Poi lo strizzi in questo <i>affare</i> 1 anche se mi fa sudare 2

Here, once again, the TT substantially detaches from the ST, but the meaning is conveyed. The term *mangle* in the first line of the ST was translated as *affare*, preceded

by *questo*, which is an example of exophoric reference, as it directly points to the *mangle* appearing on the screen. Furthermore, the verb *strizzare*, in the first line of the TT refers to what the *mangle* is used for. In fact, a *mangle* is a machine used for pressing water out of clothes by placing the clothes between two heavy, smooth, round bars⁹. The second line of the TT conveys the idea of how hard it is to use the machine. Furthermore, apart from rhyming with the first line, it corresponds to the actors' facial expressions, as shown in Picture 7:



Screenshot 7 taken from the film *Wonka* (2023) min. 00:19:54

In terms of *naturalness* (Low 2003), once again, the word order was altered in several lines. As mentioned earlier, the fact that the word order of some sentences does not always respect the standard Italian syntax does not make the song difficult to follow or unnatural. On the contrary, it helps keep the *rhythm* alive, it creates rhymes, and it becomes easier for the audience to remember and sing it. Table 20 illustrates an example:

Table 20: excerpt from *Scrub scrub*

Source text	Target text
Then it's hung up really high 1 until it's nearly dry 2	E quassù lo <i>stenderai</i> 1 e asciutto poi lo <i>troverai</i> 2

Translating the two lines in the TT as *E lo stenderai quassù/e poi lo troverai asciutto*, thus making the word order correspond to that of the ST, would be the perfect choice if these sentences were uttered in a normal, everyday situation in which someone is giving instructions to another person and explaining what to do. However, in the context of this song, which is very rhythmical and full of rhymes, it does not work at all. Hence, both

⁹ <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/it/dizionario/inglese/mangle>

verbs, *stenderai* and *troverai*, are moved to the end of the sentences, making them much more singable. The decision to use *stendere* and *trovare* in the simple future form is strategic, since all verbs in Italian take the ending -ai in this tense for the second person singular, which also makes it easier to create rhymes.

Regarding the *rhyme* (Low 2003) of this song, it was successfully retained. In fact, the original is a song consisting of twenty-one lines divided into seven pairs, each separated by a recurring refrain. The seven pairs are characterised by rhymed couplets. The same rhyming scheme was preserved in the Italian translation, as demonstrated in Table 21:

Table 21: excerpt from *Scrub scrub*

Source text	Target text
But when we sing this song 1	Se canti insieme a noi 1
the day don't seem so long 2	vedrai che non ti anno io 2
Scrub scrub 3	lava, lava 3
Gotta press out all the crea ses 4	Ogni panno va stira to 4
from the dresses and chemi ses 5	muovi il ferro infuoca to 5
rub, rub 6	piano, piano 6

The literal translation of the ST needed to be adjusted to adapt it to the rhyming scheme of the original song, to avoid losing its *rhythm* while also keeping the humorous tone characterising it.

Finally, it has been repeatedly mentioned that the *rhythm* (Low 2003) of the song was maintained. The number of syllables in the ST corresponds to that of the TT. As always, there are only a few cases where there may be an extra syllable, either in the English version or in the Italian one, but this does not interfere with the overall *singability* of the song. However, it is worth mentioning that the English terms *scrub*, *rub* and *grub* are monosyllabic words, while the Italian words *lava*, *piano*, *bravo* and *potrai* have two syllables (*la-va*, *pia-no*, *bra-vo*, *po-trai*). This difference is not problematic, as in both the English and Italian version all the words fit the notes in terms of length and the stressed vowels share the same duration because their places of articulation are very close.

4. *Sweet Tooth*

The characters singing this song in the film are Slugworth, Fickelgruber and Prodnose, the owners of the three most important and renowned chocolate stores in the city. After noticing that Wonka has been selling chocolates at a very low price, stealing their clients, they want to force him out of the business to avoid any competition and establish their supremacy and power. For this reason, they involve the chief of police by bribing him: if he succeeds in sending Wonka away, they will pay him a lot of money and grant him a huge supply of chocolates.

The purpose of this song is to emphasise all the benefits that the chief of police will gain if he collaborates. The tone of this song is very convincing and persuasive; in fact, by the end of the song, the audience understands that the chief of police agrees and makes a deal with them.

This song is a bit different from the others, as it is sung by more characters than usual. It can be considered a conversation transposed into music, reflecting more the characteristics of spoken language, with some exclamations inserted between lines.

Some aspects of the translation of this song proved to be challenging, and the following analysis will provide an explanation. The *singability* (Low 2003) of the Italian translation of this text is evident in many passages of the song. Table 22 shows a few examples:

Table 22: excerpt from *Sweet Tooth*

Source text	Target text
Have you got a sweet tooth? 1	Lei di dolci è ghiotto? 1
I do 2	Un po' 2
A hunger that you have to <i>feed</i> ? 3	E ha sempre un certo <i>languorin</i> ? 3

The table above illustrates the first example of *singability*. More specifically, the sound /i:/ in the word *feed* in the third line of the ST is a long vowel and it is also prolonged, shown by a close-up of the actor's face while he sings. Therefore, it was crucial to find a word with the same stressed phoneme to place at the end of the line, ensuring a perfect correspondence between the original and the Italian version and maintaining coherence with what the audience sees on the screen. The /i:/ sound is a close, front, long vowel, characterised by a minimal openness of the mouth. Fortunately, the Italian language

includes this vowel sound in its phonetic system. The Italian word *languorin*, at the end of the third line, was chosen to allow the dubber to replicate the prolongation of the phoneme /i/ (which in turns matches vowel length), which occurs at the end of the word, in the last syllable *-rin*, making it sound very natural. The elision of the -o in *languorino* is what ensures the preservation of the vowel /i/ and forces its prolongation, bringing it closer to the original phoneme. Table 23 illustrates another example:

Table 23: excerpt from *Sweet Tooth*

Source text	Target text
Have you got a sweet tooth? 1	Lei di dolci è ghiotto? 1
I do 2	Un po' 2
Well, we've got everything you need 3	Allora il paradiso è qui 3
Don't give me that <i>conscience nonsense</i> 4	Rischio di <i>coscienza non c'è</i> 4

What is interesting in terms of *singability* in these lines is the Italian translation of the fourth line. In the original version of the song, the actor makes a small pause between *conscience* and *nonsense*, and then another even smaller one when singing the word *nonsense*, which is split into *non* and *sense*. This way of pronouncing these words is obviously justified by the need to respect the *rhythm* of the song. To reproduce the same effect in Italian, the word *conscience* was translated literally into *coscienza* because it works perfectly and shares approximately the same articulation. Meanwhile, *nonsense* was changed into *non c'è*, to retain the pause between the two items more easily and achieve a phonetic match. In fact, *nonsense*, split into two, is characterised by two stressed phonemes – /ɑ/ and /e/ (an open, back vowel and a close, front vowel) – and the articulation of these sounds is very close to that of the Italian stressed phonemes in *non* and *c'è* (/ɔ/ an open-mid, back vowel and /ɛ/ an open-mid, front vowel).

When analysing the *sense* (Low 2003) of the text, we may argue that the overall meaning was conveyed without changing much of the original version. Obviously, sometimes different word choices were necessary to meet other purposes, such as *rhyme*, *rhythm* and *singability*. However, this was done only in a very few cases, without affecting the original meaning of the song. One of these cases is shown in Table 24:

Table 24: excerpt from *Sweet Tooth*

Source text	Target text
<i>Have you got the hots for chocs?</i> 1	Il dolce le dà un <i>gusto shock?</i> 1
I do, really, yeah 2	Sì, in effetti sì 2

The first line of the ST includes an informal expression, *have (got) the hots for*¹⁰, which means ‘having a strong attraction to someone or something’ – in this case, a strong attraction to chocolates. This way of saying plays with the words *hots* and *chocs*, as they both share very similar sounds. In fact, as it can be seen from their phonetic transcriptions – /hɒts/ and /tʃɒks/ – the phonemes they have in common are the following: /ɒ/, an open, back vowel, and /s/, a voiceless alveolar fricative. Unfortunately, this pun could not be retained in the Italian translation. However, the original meaning is not completely lost, as *hots for chocs* expresses a strong desire and attraction towards chocolates, and *gusto shock* refers to an intense and surprising reaction to sweets and chocolate. In both cases, the focus is on an exaggerated desire or reaction to sweets and chocolate. Furthermore, the word *shock* in the first line of the TT, with the stress on /ɔ/, an open-mid, back vowel, creates a phonetic correspondence with *chocs*, as the articulation of both vowels is very similar and the difference almost invisible.

Picture 8 shows the openness of the mouth when pronouncing the word *chocs*, which also perfectly matches the pronunciation of *shock* in the Italian version, creating a perfect synchronisation.



Screenshot 8 taken from the film *Wonka* (2023) min. 00:32:48

¹⁰ <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/have-got-the-hots-for>

Another case in which the meaning of the original song was slightly changed is shown in Table 25:

Table 25: excerpt from *Sweet Tooth*

Source text	Target text
Do you think the <i>candy's dandy</i> ? 1	<i>Ciocco-caramelle belle</i> 1
Oh, yeah! 2	Oh, sì! 2

In the first line of the ST, there is another pun, *candy's dandy*, used to create *rhyme*, add a playful tone, and make the song catchier and funnier. The word *dandy* is used as an adjective meaning that something is really good¹¹. In the Italian translation, the original question was changed into an affirmative sentence in the first line, but the pun was successfully maintained. As a matter of fact, *caramelle* and *belle* reproduce the *rhyme*, the playful tone of the ST, and the original meaning is also conveyed effectively.

When analysing the song in terms of *naturalness* (Low 2003), a significant difference that can be noticed is that the syntactic structure of the sentences in Italian adheres more to the SVO (subject, verb, object) standard; whereas the previously analysed songs illustrated several instances of marked sentence structure. The reason why *Sweet Tooth* respects more the normal and expected word order is related to the fact that this song is actually a musical transposition of a conversation. The only case in which the order of the elements within the sentence was altered is in the question *Lei di dolci è ghiotto?*, where normally the complement follows the verb phrase in Italian.

In addition to word order, the informal and colloquial register of the ST is also maintained. Table 26 shows an example:

Table 26: excerpt from *Sweet Tooth*

Source text	Target text
A <i>naughty</i> little sweet tooth 1	Che voglie <i>birichine</i> 1
It's true 2	Eh già 2
The only thing that brings you joy 3	Non le verranno mai a noia 3

¹¹ <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/dandy>

The word *birichine* in the TT translates the English word *naughty*, maintaining the same informal and colloquial register and the playful tone of the original song.

This song is also different from the others in terms of *rhyme* (Low 2003): while the previous songs had a fixed rhyming scheme, in this one only some lines rhyme with each other. In cases where the lines in the ST rhyme, the *rhyme* was retained in the Italian version but, at times, the original meaning of the text needed to be changed and adapted, as shown in Table 27:

Table 27: excerpt from *Sweet Tooth*

Source text	Target text
Have you got a sweet tooth? 1	Lei di dolci è ghiotto? 1
I do 2	Un po' 2
A hunger that you have to feed? 3	E ha sempre un certo languorin? 3
Have you got a sweet tooth? 4	Lei di dolci è ghiotto? 4
I do 5	Un po' 5
Well, we've got everything you need 6	Allora il paradiso è qui 6

Every time the question *Have you got a sweet tooth?* is asked, the chief of police answers *I do*, to achieve a phonetic match, as both *tooth* and *do* stress the vowel sound /u:/. Therefore, in the Italian translation, this pattern is always preserved in these cases. In fact, the answer to the question *Lei di dolci è ghiotto?* is always *un po'*, which is not the literal translation of *I do*, but the item *po'* in the elliptical adverbial phrase *un po'* was selected to make the stressed phoneme /ɔ/ in both *ghiotto* and *po'* correspond. The *rhyme* between the third and the sixth line is one of the few sporadic rhymes in the song. Here, the *rhyme* was maintained, but the original *sense* was changed and adapted. Even though the third line of the TT uses different words, it conveys more or less the same meaning as the ST, as *languorin* is an Italian word that indicates that someone is not really hungry but desires something to eat, thus making a connection with *hunger* and *feed*. The translation of the sixth line, instead, is completely different from the original, as it was changed to make it rhyme with *languorin*. Indeed, it ends in *qui*, which has the same vowel sound, /i/.

As for the *rhythm* (Low 2003), it was respected in the Italian translation, and every prolongation of sound and strategic pause between words was carefully reproduced, as outlined in the section analysing the *singability* of the song.

5. For a Moment

This song is a little different from the others that have been analysed so far. It is sung by Willy Wonka (Timothée Chalamet), and Noodle (played by Calah Lane), who is the youngest girl living and working in Mrs Scrubbit's guesthouse. The two of them start spending a lot of time together. Noodle is fascinated by Wonka after having heard of his personal life story and his dreams of opening a chocolate store. Hence, she decides to help him in any possible way, as she knows the city very well, unlike Wonka.

When this song starts playing, they are at the zoo at night because Wonka needs to produce more chocolates and to do so he needs a specific type of milk: that of a giraffe. That is why Noodle brings him to the zoo because she knows that they have a giraffe there. Once they manage to enter the zoo and find the animal, they start talking, and he asks the little girl about her name, which he finds very curious. Noodle starts opening up about her past, explaining that she is an orphan, she has never had the possibility to know her parents and she started to have this name, Noodle, because of a necklace her parents left her with a pendant with the letter "N" engraved. But it could be any other name beginning with that letter.

Talking about her past makes her sad, so she starts singing *For a moment*, reflecting on how much happier she is now after meeting him. As the song continues, Wonka intervenes, singing and trying to find rhymes with her name. Hence, this song is more intimate and nostalgic than the others but with that touch of joy and cheerfulness that characterises the whole film.

From the perspective of *singability* (Low 2003), this song works pretty well; it is easy for the dubbers to sing and clear for the Italian audience to understand. Starting from the title, which is repeated several times in the song, it represents one of the few cases in which there is no need to change the title and adapt it to the target language and its phonetics, since *moment* and *momento* perfectly translate each other and share the same articulatory movements. Another example of *singability* appears at the beginning of the song, where there is a close-up of Noodle's face as she sings the first lines. Her lip

movements are perfectly visible, so the Italian translation needed to fit those movements to be singable and sound natural. Table 28 shows an example:

Table 28: excerpt from *For a Moment*

Source text	Target text
For a moment 1	È un momento 1
<i>life doesn't seem quite so bad</i> 2	<i>la gioia sembra realtà</i> 2
For a moment 3	È un momento 3
<i>I kind of forgot to be sad</i> 4	<i>il pianto svanisce di già</i> 4

As mentioned earlier, the translation of *For a moment* did not raise any particular issues, as the literal translation of *moment* into *momento* replicates the same articulatory movements. On the contrary, the translation of the second and fourth line required an adaptation to the Italian phonetics in order to retain the original *rhyme* and make the song easier to sing. In fact, the literal translation of the second line is *la vita non sembra così brutta*, and that of the fourth line is *ho quasi dimenticato di essere triste*. Unfortunately, *brutta* and *triste* do not rhyme in Italian the way *bad* and *sad* do in English, and the stressed phonemes in these words differ significantly from those in the original version. In the ST, *bad* and *sad* stress the phoneme /æ/, a near-open, front vowel, while the stressed phonemes in *brutta* and *triste* are respectively /u/, a close, back vowel, and /i/, a close, front vowel, respectively. Therefore, the second and fourth line were reinterpreted and translated using different words from the original to make them end in *realtà* and *già*, which both have /a/, an open, front vowel, as their stressed phoneme. This was done to reproduce the openness of the mouth visible on the screen while Noodle sings, as shown in Picture 9:



Screenshot 9 taken from the film *Wonka* (2023) min. 00:44:25

Moving on to the analysis of the *sense* (Low 2003) of this song, it is important to highlight that conveying the original meaning proved to be quite challenging, especially when Wonka starts improvising to find words rhyming with *Noodle*. Table 29 shows how this part of the song was translated into Italian:

Table 29: excerpt from *For a Moment*

Source text	Target text
Noodle, Noodle, apple <i>strudel</i> 1	Noodle, Noodle, fai lo <i>strudel</i> 1
some people don't and some people <i>dodle</i> 2	e lo prepari a mani <i>nudel</i> 2
Snakes, flamingos, bears, and <i>poodles</i> 3	Bella è la tua <i>gioventudel</i> 3
singing this song will improve your <i>moodle</i> 4	canta con me per tirarti <i>sudel</i> 4
Noodle-dee-dee, Noodle-dee-dum 5	Noodle di di, Noodle di dà 5
we're having <i>oodles</i> and <i>oodles</i> of fun! 6	cercare <i>rime</i> che <i>ridere</i> fa! 6

In this specific case, the Italian translation often differs from the original version in terms of *sense*. Hence, it was necessary to come up with a new, creative translation to maintain the rhymes with *Noodle* and to keep a playful tone. This example illustrates that sometimes, in translation – especially in song-translation – the original *sense* may be put aside in favour of a more important purpose. In this part of the song, reproducing the original effect of the ST comes before anything else. Moreover, the partial loss of the original meaning does not affect the comprehension of the song, since it does not add anything to the story. Instead, it simply aims to make Noodle, and the audience, laugh and enjoy the rhymes.

For instance, the translation of the second and third line has nothing to do with the original meaning, but it was creatively changed to rhyme with *Noodle*. In fact, both *nudel* and *gioventudel* were created by adding /l/ and /del/ to the existing Italian words *nude* and *gioventù* respectively, so that the pronunciation of the ending phonemes in these invented words is closer to /dl/ in *Noodle*.

However, the translation of the first and fourth line is closer to the meaning of the English song. In fact, the word *strudel* was retained in both versions, since it comes from German and its pronunciation is the same in both English and Italian. As for the fourth line of the TT, it is not a literal translation of the ST, but the message is preserved, since *canta con me* renders the meaning of *singing this song*, and *per tirarti sudel* – which derives from the common Italian expression *per tirarti su*¹², with the addition of /del/ at the end of *su* to make it rhyme with *Noodle* – that humorously translates *will improve your moodle*.

As for the sixth line of the ST, the term *oodles* is repeated twice, meaning a very large amount of something pleasant¹³. It is used strategically to indicate that they are having fun, and also because it is phonetically linked to *Noodle*'s name. Unfortunately, in Italian, it was very difficult to find an equivalent word or expression conveying the same meaning while maintaining the original sound of *oodles*, as it is not a common sound in Italian. Thus, the sixth line of the TT is simply a translation that renders the meaning of the ST, but it keeps the repetition of the English. In fact, *rime* and *ridere* create an alliteration with the sound /ri/, which mirrors the repetition of *oodles* in the original version.

In terms of *naturalness* (Low 2003), as noted in the previous translations, the word order of some sentences was altered to fulfil other purposes – mainly in terms of *rhyme* and coherence with what the audience sees on the screen. Table 30 illustrates an example:

Table 30: excerpt from *For a Moment*

Source text	Target text
Never let down your <i>guard</i> 1 let them into your <i>heart</i> 2	Sempre attenta sarò 1 e il mio cuore aprirò 2

¹² <https://dizionario.internazionale.it/parola/tirarsi-su>

¹³ <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/it/dizionario/inglese/oodles>

In both the first and second line of the TT, the verbs *sarò* and *aprirò* are moved to the end of the sentences. Even though the verb usually follows the subject in Italian, there are cases in which it is placed at the end to emphasise something or to produce a certain effect, often seen in literary texts to create *rhythm*. Hence, in this case the decision was stylistic, making the song comparable to the way poems are often written. Furthermore, both *sarò* and *aprirò* perfectly match the openness of the mouth visible when Noodle sings the words *guard* and *heart*. In fact, the stressed phonemes in Italian and English are /ɔ/ and /ɑ/, which are respectively a mid-open vowel and an open back vowel.

Regarding the principle of *rhyme* (Low 2003), the song mainly consists of rhymed couplets. This rhyming scheme was successfully maintained, as it was in the other songs. This aspect is particularly relevant in this song, since it revolves around the curious name of the little girl, Noodle, and Wonka's determination to find words that rhyme with it at all costs. Examples illustrating the constant need to adapt the Italian translation appropriately to preserve all the rhymes have already been discussed in the previous section regarding *singability*.

Talking about the *rhythm* (Low 2003) of this song, there are no significant differences in the number of syllables per line. As with the other songs analysed before, the difference is minimal and imperceptible when listening to the Italian version. However, there are certain lines that seem longer in the original version but are not. For instance, *Snakes, flamingos, bears, and poodles* was translated as *Bella è la tua gioventudel* for the reasons mentioned above. What is interesting in terms of *rhythm* is that the English line seems longer, thus requiring more time to perform, while the Italian one seems shorter and faster to sing. As a matter of fact, the Italian translation has two syllables more than the original version, which does not pose any problems because the translation fits the length of the notes. The reason why some lines in the ST seem longer is that English has a lot of silent letters or combinations of letters that correspond to a single phoneme or syllable, such as *snakes* which is monosyllabic but is made up of five phonemes. Therefore, what is important when speaking of *rhythm* is that the length of the sung words respects the length of the original notes.

6. Oompa Loompa

Oompa Loompa is one of the few songs taken from the first film ever made presenting the character of Wonka: *Willy Wonka & the Chocolate Factory* (1971). It is an iconic song, so catchy that everyone who watched the film can still remember and sing. Inserting this song in the 2023 version of the film is a way to both honour the first film and its legacy, while giving it a new life. In fact, the song went viral on social media, as soon as the film was released in theatres, and the dance accompanying the song, performed by the Oompa Loompa, played by Hugh Grant, started to be replicated by teenagers, adults, and children all around the world.

The song appears at a specific moment in the film, precisely when Willy Wonka is sleeping at night, and an Oompa Loompa enters his room through the window to steal all his chocolate. Since it was not the first time that Wonka had woken up and could not find his chocolate, he finally managed to catch the Oompa Loompa thanks to a brilliant trap that he had set up before going to sleep. This moment marks the first encounter between the two characters, and it can be considered an important part of the narrative because it is here that the audience first learns where Wonka's chocolate comes from.

Oompa Loompa is a song that tells a story; hence it is not just an accessory song, but a relevant one that moves the plot forward. Therefore, its Italian translation needs to be carried out carefully to ensure that the Italian audience fully understands its meaning.

In terms of *singability* (Low 2003), this can be considered a highly singable song, as catchy as the original in English and easy for the dubber to sing. The translation of this song displays many phonetic matches, as shown in Table 31:

Table 31: excerpt from *Oompa Loompa*

Source text	Target text
Oompa loompa doompety doo 1	Oompa Loompa dumpa di dū 1
I've got a tragic tale for you 2	è una tragedia del tempo che fu 2
Oompa loompa doompety dee 3	Oompa Loompa dumpa di dī 3
if you are wise, you'll listen to me 4	ora saprai cosa accadde quel dī 4

These examples demonstrate that keeping the original phonemes in the TT was easy in the first and third line because they are completely made up of invented words in the

ST, hence they were kept and simply adjusted to the Italian writing. Making these invented words rhyme with the existing words of the second and fourth line was far more challenging. In the ST, *doo* rhymes with *you* and *dee* rhymes with *me*, with the phonemes involved being /u/ and /i/, respectively. These phonemes were retained by changing *you* and *me* into *fu* and *dì*, so that the articulation of the original sounds perfectly corresponds to that of the translated words. This is an example of lip or phonetic synchrony (Agost and Chaume, 1996: 208), which consists of adapting the translation to the articulatory movements of the on-screen characters, especially in close-ups and extreme close-ups (Chaume, 2004: 44). The same strategy was adopted when translating the lines in Table 32:

Table 32: excerpt from *Oompa Loompa*

Source text	Target text
Oompa loompa doompety day 1	Oompa Loompa dumpa di dèi 1
when I awoke, they sent me away 2	via mi han mandato gli amici miei 2

In the ST the word *day* in the first line rhymes with *away* in the second line, and the phoneme articulated is /ei/. In the Italian translation, the word *day* was translated as *dèi* to maintain the original sound, and it was made to rhyme with *miei*. The phoneme articulated in Italian is /ei/ in both words. Even though they are not exactly the same – since /e/ is a close-mid, front vowel and /ɛ/ is an open-mid, front vowel – their places of articulation are still close to each other. The same can be said for /i/ and /i/, a near-close, near-front vowel and a close, front vowel, respectively.

Moving forward with the analysis of the song, the overall *sense* (Low 2003) of the original song was conveyed in the Italian TT with a few changes to meet other needs, like those of *singability* and *rhythm*. Table 33 shows an example:

Table 33: excerpt from Oompa Loompa

Source text	Target text
I'm disgraced, cast out in the cold 1 'til I've paid my friends back a thousandfold! 2	In disgrazia ed esilio vivrò 1 <i>se per mille il furto non pagherò!</i> 2
I repeat, a thousandfold! 3	Se non pagherò! 3

The literal translation of the second line of the ST is *fino a quando non avrò restituito ai miei amici mille volte tanto!*, yet it is too long and not so easy to sing, since it does not respect the original *rhythm* of the song. Therefore, the final solution is *se per mille il furto non pagherò!*, which is definitely shorter and much more *singable*, as it respects the original *rhythm*, and the intended message does not get lost. The addition of the word *furto* is not random; it shows consistency with what the Oompa Loompa sang in the previous lines when referring to the fact that Wonka stole the beans from Loompaland to make his chocolate while he was supposed to guard them. Hence, even though the lines in Table 28 were not translated literally, the contents of the ST were retained, and the original message reformulated for purposes of *singability*, *rhythm* and *rhyme*. For instance, in the first line of the ST the Oompa Loompa uses the first person singular and the verb *to be* to say that he is disgraced and cast out in the cold, while in the Italian translation the Oompa Loompa still uses the first person singular but the verb changes, he uses *vivere* which perfectly adapts to the words *disgrazia* and *esilio* and renders the meaning of the ST.

Regarding the principle of *naturalness* (Low 2003), the Italian translation of this song illustrates some cases in which the word order of the sentences does not always follow the standard syntactic structure SVO, to fulfil other purposes, such as *singability* and *rhyme*. Once again, finding marked language use in songwriting is not surprising. Table 34 shows an example:

Table 34: excerpt from *Oompa Loompa*

Source text	Target text
Here in Loompa land, <i>it's both luscious and green</i> 1 <i>but not conducive to growing the bean</i> 2	Lì a Loompalandia <i>di verde ce n'è</i> 1 <i>ma di cacao non ne cresce granché</i> 2

In both the first and second line of the TT, the most crucial elements that need to be emphasised are *verde* and *cacao*, which is why they are anticipated instead of being left at the end of the lines. There are other reasons justifying this choice, such as making these lines more singable and keeping the *rhyme* that would otherwise be lost, since the literal translations of *green* and *bean* are *verde* and *fava*, and they do not rhyme.

Even though the word order of the sentences is sometimes different from what Italian speakers normally hear, this does not compromise the *naturalness* of the song. On the contrary, it becomes catchier and more singable.

As for the *rhyme* (Low 2003), the original English song consists of twelve lines characterised by rhyming couplets. This rhyming scheme was retained in the Italian translation, where perfect rhymes can be found. This means that there are identical phonemes at the end of the lines (Low, 2003: 96), just like in the English version. However, it is important to mention that to have rhyming couplets in Italian, the literal translation of the text was replaced with a more creative one, while always conveying the original meaning of the song. Table 35 shows an example:

Table 35: excerpt from *Oompa Loompa*

Source text	Target text
My job was guarding what little we <i>got</i> 1 you came along and pinched the <i>lot!</i> 2	Ero il guardiano del poco <i>che c'era</i> 1 tu ci hai fregato la scorta <i>intera!</i> 2

In the ST, the last word of the first line, *got*, rhymes with the last word of the second line, *lot*, creating a perfect phonetic match. The natural translation of the ST could be “*il mio lavoro era proteggere quel poco che avevamo, sei arrivato e hai rubato tutto*”, yet this cannot be considered a suitable translation for a song because both the original *rhythm* and *rhyme* are lost, because *avevamo* and *tutto* do not share the same ending phonemes.

Hence, different words conveying the same meaning were chosen to keep the *rhyme*. For instance, *we got*, which is the short and colloquial form of *we have got*, was translated as *che c'era*, instead of *che avevamo*, to make it rhyme with the second line. Consequently, *the lot* in the second line was translated into *intera* to preserve the rhyming scheme. These choices were made to ensure that the meaning of the TT did not stray too much from that of the ST.

As for the *rhythm* (Low 2003), it was respected throughout the entire song. The number of syllables per line creates an almost exact correspondence between the original version and its translation. The extra syllables in some lines of the TT do not interrupt the flow of the song, therefore they do not compromise its *rhythm*.

7. *A World of Your Own*

When the song *A World of your own* starts playing, Wonka and his friends are at the *Gallery Gourmet*, where he has finally managed to open his chocolate store in a place that houses the best chocolate stores in the city. Wonka is ready to let people taste his chocolates, so he catches the attention of those who are passing by and invites them to enter the store and try his special chocolates.

Through this song, Wonka wants to create a dreamy atmosphere, as the store represents the concrete realisation of his dreams. The lyrics focus on what can be found inside the store and the importance it has, not only for Wonka but for everyone, since it is described as a place to escape to, where anyone can be free, everything is allowed, and no one ever feels sad.

This song is characterised by the frequent use of words referring to different types of chocolates and sweets, as well as other lexical elements that refer to things that the audience can clearly see on the screen. Therefore, the decisions regarding which elements to maintain, change or omit were critical in producing a TT that sounds as natural as possible.

The first example of *singability* (Low 2003) can be immediately noticed in the Italian translation of the title of the song, which is repeated several times throughout the song. As a matter of fact, *A World of your own*, whose literal translation could be *Un mondo tutto tuo*, was slightly modified and translated as *Il mondo che vuoi*. The reason justifying this translation lies, once again, in the phonetic realisation of *own*. In fact, the phonetic

transcription of this English term is /əʊn/, characterised by two vowel sounds: a central, neutral one /ə/ and a near-close, back one /ʊ/. These phonemes, particularly /ʊ/, create a phonetic match with the stressed sound in the Italian word *vuoi*, /ɔ/, an open-mid, back vowel. Although /ʊ/ and /ɔ/ differ in the degree of openness of the mouth, they are both back vowels, meaning that they share the same place of articulation, making them similar and minimising the difference. To be honest, the literal translation *Un mondo tutto tuo* might have worked, as the stressed sound /u/ in the word *tuo* is also a back vowel. However, the problem with this translation is that it is too long and does not fit the original melody.

Table 36 illustrates other examples of *singability* which concern the translation of certain words which are completely different from those in the ST, to create phonetic matches.

Table 36: excerpt from *A World of Your Own*

Source text	Target text
Close your eyes and count to ten 1	Chiuda gli occhi, e ora con me 1
make a wish, now open <i>them</i> 2	pensi a un sogno e guardi <i>ben</i> 2
[...]	[...]
Chocolate memories that <i>a boy once saved</i> 3	Tra memorie che <i>con me portai</i> 3
before they melted away 4	e non si sciolgono mai 4

The word *them* in the second line of the ST was translated as *ben* so that the pronunciation of the Italian word matches that of the English one. In fact, the stressed phoneme in *them* is /e/, a close-mid, front vowel, while that of *ben* is /ɛ/, an open-mid, front vowel. Hence, the articulation of these sounds is almost the same, creating a phonetic match and making the TT sound very natural. The ending of the third line of the ST was translated as *con me portai* because, when Wonka utters the words *a boy once saved*, there is a close-up of his face, clearly showing the movements of his mouth, especially when he articulates the voiced bilabial plosive /b/ in *boy* and the voiced labio-velar approximant /w/ in *once*. Therefore, *boy* was translated as *me*, where /m/ is a voiced bilabial nasal, thus sharing the same place of articulation as /b/, and *once saved* as *portai*,

where the first phoneme, a voiceless bilabial plosive /p/, replicates an articulatory movement very close to the pronunciation of /w/.

Regarding the *sense* (Low 2003) of the song, the Italian translation often reformulates the original lines while trying to keep the same lexical elements and convey the same meaning. The translation of the *sense* of this song allowed a certain degree of freedom and creativity, since for most of the time when Wonka sings, the camera moves around the store and shows its uniqueness. As a result, there are many moments in which there is no direct correspondence between what he sings and what is shown on the screen. However, there are also a few parts in which there are close-ups of particular types of chocolates, sweets and other wonders. Table 37 shows an example:

Table 37: excerpt from *A World of Your Own*

Source text	Target text
Chocolate bushes, chocolate trees 1	Cioccolato in foglie qui 1
chocolate flowers and chocolate bees 2	dolci fiori e api lì 2

The repetition of the word *chocolate* in the ST was not retained in the TT, as this would have made the Italian translation too long. In fact, the literal translation of these two lines is *Cespugli di cioccolato, alberi di cioccolato/fiori di cioccolato e api di cioccolato*. To solve this problem, some words were omitted, and others were slightly altered from the original, while always respecting the images appearing on the screen when these lines are sung.

Picture 10 shows what the audience sees when Timothée Chalamet sings *Chocolate bushes, chocolate trees*: the bush appears first, and then the tree.



Screenshot 10 taken from the film *Wonka* (2023) min. 01:08:18

The Italian translation *Cioccolato in foglie qui* maintains the term *chocolate*, rendered as *cioccolato*, and then chooses the term *foglie*, an element that both bushes and trees have in common. In this way, the *rhythm* of the original song is respected, and the *rhyme* with the following line is preserved as well.

Pictures 11 and 12 illustrate the images corresponding to the second line: *chocolate flowers and chocolate bees*.



Screenshot 11 taken from the film *Wonka* (2023) min. 01:08:19



Screenshot 12 taken from the film *Wonka* (2023) min. 01:08:23

The flowers in the first screenshot and the bees in the second one are perfectly visible to the audience. In fact, both *fiori* and *api* were maintained, while the rest of the line was adapted to respect the *rhythm* and keep the *rhyme*. These examples demonstrate that, on some occasions, translators need to choose between which lexical elements to retain and which to omit or change, while ensuring that the TT makes sense, and remains coherent with the images.

Another example of manipulation of the *sense* of the original text is the Italian translation of the following line: *Humbugs, gumdrops, and aniseed balls*. This line aims to emphasise the variety of sweets and chocolates available in the store by using specific

terms. Translating them literally into Italian would have meant adapting them to the target culture, as they are very famous in the United Kingdom, and therefore culture specific. Moreover, the literal translation of these words would have been too long. This is why, through the process of generalisation, this line was changed to *cioccolato a volontà*, which still conveys the idea of the vast quantity of sweets and chocolates available. This choice also ensures *singability*, as the stressed phoneme /a/ in *volontà*, an open front vowel, corresponds to the openness of the mouth when Wonka pronounces the open-mid, back vowel /ɔ/ in the word *balls*.

The analysis of the song in terms of *naturalness* (Low 2003), provided a few examples in which the word order was changed. The most significant one can be noticed in the lines shown in Table 38:

Table 38: excerpt from *A World of Your Own*

Source text	Target text
Let's go strolling in the clouds 1 grab a handful, it's allowed 2	Tra le nubi <i>girerai</i> 1 e assaggiare tu <i>potrai</i> 2

The verbs *girerai* and *potrai* are moved to the end of the lines in the TT, reflecting a word order commonly found in songwriting, especially for *rhyme* reasons, as is the case in this part of the song. Once again, placing these verbs at the end of the sentences produces an almost perfect phonetic match, given that in the simple future tense all verbs take the same endings in Italian, ensuring the *singability* of the song and facilitating the creation of rhymes. *Clouds* and *allowed* stress the diphthong /aʊ/, which consists of an open, front vowel /a/ and a near-close, back vowel /ʊ/. Similarly, *girerai* and *potrai* stress the diphthong /ai/, where only the second vowel differs – it is a front vowel rather than a back vowel – but the degree of openness of the mouth is quite similar.

In terms of *rhyme* (Low 2003), this song consists of several stanzas, each characterised by two lines and rhymed couplets. The only exception is the refrain, in which the lines do not rhyme with each other. In parts where the lines do rhyme, it was not always easy to achieve perfect rhymes (Low 2003: 96) in Italian, but the rhyming scheme was preserved. Table 39 shows some examples:

Table 39: excerpt from *A World of Your Own*

Source text	Target text
Here is the child that you left behind 1	Ecco il bambino che c'era in te 1
here is the kid with the curious mind 2	il giovane più curioso che c'è 2
Here is the wonder we used to feel 3	La meraviglia di chi sa già 3
back when the magic was real 4	che la magia è realtà 4

In *A World of your own*, the use of *rhyme* contributes to creating the dreamy atmosphere, making the song catchy and easy to sing. Hence, preserving the rhyming scheme was important. However, there were cases where the lines needed to be revisited – some words changed, omitted or added – to produce effective rhymes without altering the message conveyed by the original version. The table above illustrates some instances in which changing the ST was necessary to preserve the rhymes, but this does not mean creating a completely different text. In fact, some words or concepts are retained in the Italian translation; the only difference is that they are expressed in other ways.

To maintain the original *rhythm* (Low 2003) of the song, many lines of the TT had to be shortened, otherwise the number of syllables would have differed excessively from that of the ST. Obviously, obtaining the exact same number of syllables per line is very difficult; in fact, the lines of the Italian lyrics often include one-to-three extra syllables. However, this does not affect the *rhythm* of the song because, when sung, they fit the length of the notes and respect the syllabic stress of the original text.

A significant example of reduction can be seen in the translation of the line *Humbugs, gumdrops, and aniseed balls*, which has nine syllables: *Hum-bugs, gum-drops, and an-i-seed balls*. Its Italian translation, *Cioccolato a volontà*, has eight syllables: *Cioc-co-la-to a vo-lon-tà*. Adopting this strategy led to the creation of a line which has one syllable less than the original, respects the *rhythm* and works much better than the literal translation, which has twenty-three syllables: *ca-ra-mel-le al-la men-ta, ca-ra-mel-le gom-mo-se e pal-li-ne di a-ni-ce*.

8. Pure Imagination

This is the last song of the film and an adaptation of the same song which appeared in *Willy Wonka & the Chocolate Factory* in 1971. This song is an invitation to keep

dreaming and using imagination until dreams come true. Through this song, Wonka allows the audience to enter his imagination and see the factory he has always wanted to open. It is also a celebration of freedom and creativity; this song carries an important message and aims to teach something valuable. Its message is to be strong enough to overcome all the obstacles in life and to never forget our dreams, nor let other people ruin them.

The analysis of this song in terms of *singability* (Low 2003) proves that the translated version is highly singable. The TT flows naturally, as the selected words fit the original *rhythm* of the song and are easy to sing. Phonetic matches were also achieved, particularly in close-ups. Table 40 shows an example:

Table 40: excerpt from *Pure Imagination*

Source text	Target text
Don't be shy, it's <i>alright</i> 1 if you feel a little trepidation 2	Forse un po' <i>sentirai</i> 1 che poi sale la trepidazione 2

The meaning of these two lines of the ST was slightly altered to achieve better *singability*. The literal translation is *Non essere timido, va bene/se senti un po' di trepidazione*. There are three main issues with this literal translation: the first one is that *Non essere timido, va bene* has four extra syllables compared to the original, disrupting the *rhythm*; the second one is that the pause between *timido* and *va bene* makes it more difficult to match the original pause between *shy* and *it's alright*; and the third one is that *va bene* does not create a phonetic match with *alright* in the ST. As a result, the information of the first line of the English version was omitted and the verb *sentire*, which translates *feel* in the first line of the TT, was anticipated. This was preceded by *Forse un po'*, so that the number of syllables is similar to that of the ST. This adjustment also makes it easier for the dubber to align the pause between *po'* and *sentirai* with the original pause. Moreover, *sentirai* consists of three syllables, *sen-ti-rai*, and the stressed phoneme of the last syllable is the diphthong /ai/, which creates a phonetic match with *alright*, as both end with the same diphthong.

The translation of the second line of the TT uses a common Italian expression, *sale la trepidazione*, to finish the sentence, while maintaining *trepidazione* at the end in order to preserve the correspondence with *trepidation*.

Another example of *singability* is illustrated in Table 41:

Table 41: excerpt from *Pure Imagination*

Source text	Target text
There is <i>no</i> life I know 1 to compare with pure imagination 2	Non <i>conosco</i> realtà 1 come la pura immaginazione 2

In this case, the lyrics of the original were slightly changed so that the stressed syllable *-no* of the Italian word *conosco* precisely matches the pronunciation of *no* in the ST. This creates a visual correspondence between the dubber's singing and the movement of Wonka's mouth, which is visible to the audience.

As it has been already noticed, the *sense* (Low 2003) of the song was occasionally modified to fulfil other purposes, such as *singability*, *rhythm* and *rhyme*. However, there is always a connection between the Italian translation and the original version, even though some concepts are rendered through different words or expressions that sound more natural in Italian, making the song much more singable. Table 42 illustrates a few examples:

Table 42: excerpt from *Pure Imagination*

Source text	Target text
Come with me and <i>you'll be</i> 1 in a world of pure imagination 2	Segui me e <i>vedrai</i> 1 mondi di pura immaginazione 2
Take a look and <i>you'll see</i> 3 into your imagination 4	Guarda qua: <i>entrerai</i> 3 nella tua immaginazione 4
We'll begin with a spin 5 traveling in the world of my creation 6	Se tu vuoi viaggerai 5 qui nel mondo che è una mia creazione 6
what we'll see will defy explanation 7	sfida già ogni tua spiegazione 7

In the first four lines, what is different in terms of *sense* is the translation of *you'll be* and *you'll see* in the first and third line. Basically, the translation of the verb *see* appears in the first line of the TT as *vedrai*, while the translation of *be in* as *entrerai* appears in the third line. Hence, the two verbs were swapped. The reason why the translators decided to translate *be in* as *entrare* can be explained by looking at the whole sentence in which the verb appears. Indeed, *Come with me and you'll be/in a world of pure imagination* literally means *Vieni con me e sarai/in un mondo di pura immaginazione*, however, in this case is much more natural to use the verb *entrare* instead of *essere* in Italian. Additionally, when these lines are sung, the scene clearly shows Wonka and the Oompa Loompa entering the factory of Willy's dreams.

Meanwhile, the translation of the other three lines marks a shift in perspective. The ST uses the inclusive *we*, as Wonka is trying to convince the Oompa Loompa to follow him and be by his side. However, the TT maintains the use of the second-person pronoun *tu*, continuing to address the Oompa Loompa directly, as in the previous lines. Additionally, the fifth line of the ST was not translated literally; instead, the verb *travel* in the sixth line was anticipated, while the original meaning was preserved. Finally, the translation of the seventh line conveys the same meaning as the ST, but avoids repeating *what we'll see*, which would have made the line longer in Italian and compromised the *rhythm* of the song. Instead, the concept of *defying explanation* was retained, without affecting the comprehension and coherence of the lyrics, which remain consistent with what Wonka had sung before.

Regarding the *naturalness* (Low 2003) of this song, it can be observed that, overall, the Italian translation adheres to the standard SVO syntactic structure of the sentences. There are only a few instances in which verbs are moved towards the end of the lines for purposes of *singability* and *rhyme*, as shown in Table 43:

Table 43: excerpt from *Pure Imagination*

Source text	Target text
Living there, you'll be <i>free</i> 1 if you truly wish to <i>be</i> 2	Libero tu <i>sarai</i> 1 se davvero lo <i>vorrai</i> 2

For example, the verb *sarai* in the first line of the TT was moved to the end to make it rhyme with *vorrai* and achieve a phonetic match. The diphthong /ai/ in *sarai* and *vorrai* – which consists of an open, front vowel /a/ and a close, front vowel /i/ – corresponds to the final stressed phoneme of the words *free* and *be*, both of which feature a prolonged /i/ sound.

As for the *rhyme* (Low 2003), this song does not have a fixed rhyming scheme, as most of the time the lines do not rhyme with each other, except when the words *imagination*, *trepidation*, *explanation* and *creation* are used. These terms always rhyme with each other, either in two consecutive lines, creating a rhymed couplet, or in alternate lines, creating an alternate rhyme, as shown in Table 44:

Table 44: excerpt from *Pure Imagination*

Source text	Target text
Don't be shy, it's alright 1 if you feel a little <i>trepidation</i> 2 sometimes these things don't need <i>explanation</i> 3	Forse un po' sentirai 1 che poi sale la <i>trepidazione</i> 2 certe volte non c'è <i>spiegazione</i> 3

Table 45 shows another example in which the word *imagination* is used twice in alternate lines, creating an alternate rhyme:

Table 45: excerpt from *Pure Imagination*

Source text	Target text
Come with me and you'll <i>be</i> 1 in a world of pure <i>imagination</i> 2 Take a look and you'll <i>see</i> 3 into your <i>imagination</i> 4	Segui me e <i>vedrai</i> 1 mondi di pura <i>immaginazione</i> 2 Guarda qua: <i>entrerà</i> 3 nella tua <i>immaginazione</i> 4

In this case, the first line rhymes with the third, and the second with the fourth. The exact same rhyming scheme was retained in the Italian version of the song. Maintaining these few rhymes in this song did not require much effort in changing the meaning of the lyrics in favour of the *rhyme*, especially when translating words such as *imagination*,

trepidation, *explanation* and *creation*. Fortunately, these terms have Italian equivalents that share the same ending ‘-azione’, just as in English they all end in ‘-ation’.

Finally, the *rhythm* (Low 2003) of the song was successfully respected and preserved, as the translated lines were often adjusted to match the original number of syllables in the English version, resulting in an almost exact correspondence. A clear and significant example of reduction was applied to the translation of the English line *Reach out, touch what was once*, which consists of six syllables since all the words are monosyllabic. In Italian, this line was translated as *e darai la realtà*, which consists of seven syllables (*e da-rai la re-al-tà*), making it shorter than the literal translation *raggiungi, tocca ciò che era una volta*. Although it still has one more syllable, it adapts to the original *rhythm* and sounds natural when sung by the dubber.

9. Discussion of results

Based on the analysis carried out of the eight songs performed in the film *Wonka* (2023), we can now draw some conclusions.

First of all, going back to the five choices in song translation mentioned by Franzon (2008), it can reasonably be said that the translators of the songs deeply discussed in the present chapter chose the fifth option, that of “adapting the translation to the original music” (Franzon, 2008: 376). *Wonka* (2023) is a clear example of a film that was originally produced in English and then dubbed in Italian and many other languages to reach a wider audience. As a dubbed film, the translators had to face all the challenges that naturally come when there is no possibility to either change the original music of the actors’ movements and gestures. Therefore, they had to adapt and fit their translations of the lyrics into the original music to respect it and preserve the functionality of the songs. The limits were many, yet in most cases the translators successfully came up with very creative solutions and found the right compromises to reach the perfect balance. Through the many strategies and techniques of translation – such as paraphrasing, omissions and additions of contents, compensations and reductions to name a few – they successfully produced songs that are catchy and seem to have been written originally in Italian, as they flow quite naturally. Moreover, the purpose of producing singable translations of these songs was extensively fulfilled.

Additionally, the five criteria of the *pentathlon principle* by Low (2003) – *singability*, *sense*, *naturalness*, *rhyme* and *rhythm* – were all carefully considered and successfully met in every song. It is difficult to determine which of the five aspects the translators prioritised, since they are strongly related and each one influences the others, often leading to changes that appear to be closely intertwined. However, *singability*, *rhyme* and *rhythm* definitely played an important role in the translation phase, guiding the translators' decision-making process.

CONCLUSIONS

The analysis of the Italian translations of the songs in the film *Wonka* (2023) carried out in this thesis had the purpose of discussing and exploring the choices, techniques and strategies employed by the translators to produce Italian songs that are just as singable, enjoyable and powerful as the original ones.

The many examples of the excerpts from the different songs in the film aimed to reveal part of the process of translation and adaptation that lies behind the Italian lyrics that successfully rendered the dreamy atmosphere of the film and enabled the Italian audience to fully enjoy the story, empathise with the characters and live the same experience as that of the English-speaking audience.

References to the theory of song translation, together with technical information about the dubbing process and the importance of synchronisation, were fundamental to identifying problems and challenges that translators had to face and to making hypotheses about some of the choices that influenced the rendering of the song-texts in Italian.

Drawing on Franzon's five choices in song translation, the fifth option – “adapting the translation to the original music” (Franzon, 2008: 376) – appears to be the only reasonable one to choose, for a number of reasons. First of all, the translators could not have left the songs untranslated because in *Wonka* (2023) the words sung by the actors contribute to moving the plot forward, therefore conveying important information to fully understand the story. Leaving these songs in English would have left out the majority of the Italian audience, failing to ensure the complete comprehension of the film.

Secondly, translating the lyrics regardless of the music, thus choosing to subtitle the songs instead of translating and dubbing them, would have required too much effort from the Italian audience, since the songs in this film constitute a great part of it.

Thirdly, totally rewriting the lyrics of songs without taking the original lyrics into account was another impossible choice to make. As an audiovisual product, the scenes appearing on the screen while the actors sing, the movements and gestures they make, the contexts in which the songs appear and the functionality they serve, ask for a close match between the words they sing and their visual representation.

Finally, translating the lyrics and changing the original melody was not possible because the musical compositions of a film are protected by the copyright owned by the

composers of the music of the original film. Furthermore, it is very difficult, and in most cases unnecessary, to obtain the rights to change the original music of the songs. Therefore, translating the semantic contents of the texts and leave the music untouched is far less problematic.

The strategy of the *pentathlon principle* by Low (2003) was crucial to identify the most interesting parts of the songs and uncover the translation process that led to their rendering. The many creative results and effective adaptations were always justified by referring to the five criteria of the *pentathlon principle* (Low, 2003) – *singability*, *sense*, *naturalness*, *rhyme* and *rhythm*.

Overall, finding the best words with the same or similar stressed phonemes as those in the original lyrics, especially in the case of vowels, was the key to ensuring the *singability* of the songs in *Wonka* (2023). Few modifications of the *sense* of the songs were deemed necessary in the search for phonetic match. However, such changes were always made keeping the original text into account.

The *naturalness* of the songs was never sacrificed to meet the other criteria, and the different word order that can be found in some lines of the songs actually mirrors a marked use of the language in the ST or it is a consequence of the changes made for other purposes, such as *singability* and *rhyme*.

Speaking of *rhyme*, the translators decided to retain the rhyme scheme of every song, thanks to both perfect and imperfect rhymes.

Finally, the *rhythm* of the songs was respected without altering the original music. Although the TTs often show lines with more syllables than the original, they never exceed the length of the notes, resulting in a perfect synchronisation with the actors' lip movements.

In conclusion, the analysis of the Italian translations of the English songs in *Wonka* (2023) demonstrated that in song translation finding the best strategies and using the right amount of creativity can lead to excellent results. Achieving the goal of creating singable songs in the target language means allowing the target audience to fully appreciate the film in the same way the source audience does.

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