

Cultural clashes in understanding humour. Sitcom script in translation.

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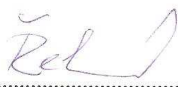
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ABSTRAKT

Překlad humoru je tématika široce debatovaná mezi lingvisty. Nejen, že se překladatel potýká se standardními překážkami překladu, ale je také nutné, aby byla provedena hloubková analýza jak výchozí, tak cílové kultury pro nalezení vhodného ekvivalentního řešení. Problematika ekvivalence je také v práci rozebírána, vzhledem k tomu, že názory lingvistů na tuto oblast se výrazně odlišují. Novou výzvou je pro současné překladatele audiovizuální překlad. Tato práce konkrétně využívá překladu seriálu Přátelé, coby ideální platformy pro analýzu překladatelských metod v situacích, kde se setkávají dvě problematická odvětví překladatelských věd.

Klíčová slova:

Humor, překlad, audiovizuální překlad, kultura, výchozí text, cílový text.

ABSTRACT

Translation of humour is a topic widely discussed among linguists. Apart from the standard constraints of translation, a thorough analysis of both source and target cultures have to be performed before an equivalent solution can be found. The issue of equivalency is also debated in this thesis as opinions of specialists in the field of linguistics differ immensely when it comes to this matter. A new challenge that temporary translators have to face is audiovisual translation. The thesis deals with translation of the sitcom Friends as the included dialogues provide a perfect basis for analysing translation methods in situations, where two problematic fields of translation studies encounter.

Keywords:

Humour, translation, audiovisual translation, culture, source text, target text.

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INTRODUCTION

Translation of humour is a field widely discussed among linguists. Some of them have made attempts to come up with appropriate methods of approach, some of them talk about „untranslatability“ of humour. As humour has always played an essential role in everyday life, it is necessary to find efficient ways for it to be transferred across cultures, especially nowadays in the world of globalization. There are many constraints in translation of humour, many of which are common with translation as such - culture-bound terms, grammatical and lexical differences, linguistic barriers, such as idioms and wordplays, the issue of politeness, dialects, slang, etc. All these categories are not easy to be dealt with. When they are, however, accompanied by humour, the translator is given a multiple task. Not only s/he has to produce a target text that resembles the source text in the most possible way but s/he also has to make this text comprehensible to the target audience and entertaining at the same time. Furthermore, it has to be stressed that what might be considered humorous in one country, can be perceived as inappropriate outside of its borders. Humour is therefore not universal and the translator has to possess deep background knowledge of both source and target culture to be able to assess the appropriateness of a joke. When a joke does not correspond to local standards it cannot be removed from the text completely but it should be replaced by another joke understood and accepted by target nation but still containing the original message of the source text. Given all these criteria no wonder the term „untranslatability“ emerged.

Another phenomenon that this work deals with is audiovisual translation. It is a new branch of linguistics that appeared with introduction and expansion of dubbing and subtitling. Even though many linguists have refused to acknowledge audiovisual translation as separate part of translation studies, it is an issue that should not be ignored. Audiovisual translation requires a whole new approach to dealing with translation so that the transfer of language in film and cinema production can be more efficient. The chapter first describes audiovisual translation as such and subsequently it focuses on two specific types of audiovisual translation in more details – dubbing and subtitling. Both of these methods have their advantages and disadvantages that are further elaborated in the chapter. Each method also has certain restrictions that need to be taken into consideration and these restrictions will be together with specific examples described in this chapter.

This paper will be divided into several chapters in which the main constraints of humour translation will be defined and examined. For each phenomenon different approaches of translation will be introduced and the theory will be demonstrated on examples from episodes of the series Friends. It is a very convenient choice for such analysis as every possible form of humour is introduced in this sitcom. Another reason for this particular choice was the fact that Friends episodes have been translated into several languages and have gained a great success worldwide. This is, in fact, quite bizarre considering that every country has different requirements when it comes to humour and that great majority of humour in Friends is closely connected with American culture. This bachelor thesis is organized in an unorthodox way as it is not divided into theoretical and practical part but the practical content is directly embedded in the theory. The purpose of this structure is to make the definitions and strategies introduced by individual linguists more understandable to the reader. Dividing these parts in two separate elements would be too complicated and illegible, especially for those who have no former knowledge of linguistics.

The aim of this paper is firstly to analyse errors in translation of humour that occurred in Friends and then suggest possible methods of translation that might have produced more effective result than the original ones. It is important to say that translators of Friends faced a very challenging task and they surely deserve acknowledgement for what they have achieved. Examples of translation errors in Friends should not be thus seen as criticism but as simple tool of demonstration of specific clashes that can emerge in humour translation.

1 HUMOUR

Humour is an inevitable part of everyday life, part of every culture and part of every individual person. It could be said that the mankind finds it essential as the most popular films, series, shows and books tend to be the ones promoting comedy. In linguistic fields, however, humour is considered to be a very tricky phenomenon. Although the theoretical meaning might be the same all around the world, the practical content of the word differs not only from country to country, but also from person to person. As one might assume, humour is a part of language. The basic definition and function of language is also commonly recognised – a way of information transfer unique to a human being. However, another fundamental role of language is that it functions as a tool for revealing one's personality. Through language not only thoughts are expressed but also inner essence of an individual is being reflected and brought to surface. As Halliday puts it: „Language is the medium through which a human being becomes a personality, in consequence of his membership of society and his occupancy of social roles“ (1974, 11). There is a deep truth in his words as it can be very often easily estimated which social group a person belongs to based only on his/her speech. We might consider humour to be an element embedded in that inner essence of man. Everyone finds different things humorous; everyone has their own taste and preferences. Talking of a good sense of humour might therefore erupt into a contentious discussion. One of the crucial things for humour is that it has to be recognized before it can be appreciated. This can be considered the very first step when it comes to understanding humour and in many situations this is also the step in which the humour is lost. There are some obvious ways how a joke can be presented, like using a well-know opening phrase. Some of them were mentioned by Alexander Richard (1977, 12) in his book *Aspects of Verbal Humour*, such as *Have you heard the one about the...*, *Have you ever stopped to think why...* or *What got x goes y and sounds like z?*. He calls this phenomenon a “metalanguage” of humour and he defines it as phrases of fixed expressions which has the „[...] purpose of indicating the shift in gear from the 'serious' to the 'unserious' or back again [...]“ (ibid., 13). Apart from these obvious signs one can get a lot from the intonation of the speaker as well as a great majority of jokes is based on intonation. In many jokes, however, it is necessary to have some kind of background, additional knowledge to grasp the meaning of theirs and that is an issue the following chapters deal with, focusing on translation of humour in particular.

1.1 Categorization and translation of humour

Translation of humour is a challenge that many translators have to face. Not only the appropriate translation and form has to be found but also the text should also fulfil the purpose of entertainment. The sitcom *Friends* found its fame due to humour. Its success is worldwide and translations have been made into many languages. This is considered to be something very strange to happen that even though a great part of *Friends* humour is based on the American culture, it has still been accepted in so many different countries. There is innumerable number of jokes throughout all episodes and thus the translators were not given an easy task. Apparently, however, they managed their job well as nowadays *Friends* might be thought of as the most popular sitcom of all time. Different methods of humour translation together with concrete examples will be further elaborated in the following chapters of this paper. Regarding the categorization of humour, it is not something that all linguists would generally agree upon as the term itself is very difficult to define. Taken from a very broad perspective however, Raphaelson-West (1989, 130) managed to define three main categories into which jokes can be divided. The examples are taken from episodes of *Friends*.

- **linguistic jokes** – the most difficult for translation, puns and other kinds of word-plays are involved here

example: episode 4 (Crane et al. 1994-95)

Monica: *Phoebe, do you have a plan?*

Phoebe: *I don't even have a pla.*

- **cultural jokes** – a background knowledge is needed for their comprehension

example: episode 12 (Crane et al. 2003-04)

(at Phoebe's wedding) Chandler: *Wow! Aren't you gonna be cold?*

Phoebe: *I don't care. I'll be my something blue.*

- **universal jokes** – the easiest type of jokes regarding the translation, either generally understood or easily substituted

example: episode 19 (Crane et al. 1998-99)

Caitlin: *Hey, where's the chicken?*

Chandler: *Oh, he's in the back. The duck pissed him off, said that eggs came first.*

Some of these categories will be further elaborated in the following chapters as part of other problematic issues of humour translation discussed in this paper.

2 LINGUISTIC CLASHES IN TRANSLATING HUMOUR

In translation not only an attempt is made to transfer the meaning in the most equivalent way but sometimes it is necessary for the translator to transfer the linguistic form as well, depending on the role of the text. Catford (1965, 20) therefore defined translation as “the replacement of textual material in one language (SL) by equivalent textual material in another language”. There are many linguistic aspects appearing in a text and it is important to stress that they are usually specific for each individual language therefore it might be quite complicated to preserve them in translation. In less difficult cases these specific linguistic features might be omitted and simply replaced by other linguistic means convenient for the general understanding of the text. This is what Nida (1964, 159) calls “dynamic equivalence”; it represents the thought that the most important thing is for the message to be preserved in the target language regardless the linguistic means that are used to achieve this, unlike “formal equivalence” which aims at keeping the same form and content. The main task of a translator is thus to create such target text that would have the exact same impact on the target audience as it has on the source audience. Sometimes, however, if a linguistic instrument has some particular role in a sentence or even more importantly if preserving this instrument is fundamental for the contextual meaning, a problem may arise. With reference to the sitcom *Friends*, for example, there are many humoristic elements which are linguistic-bound, meaning that humour is expressed through some kind of a word-play, rhyme or collocation. In such cases Nida's theory of dynamic equivalence is not the most appropriate method to be applied as the main focus would be only to keep the text amusing. If the source text, however, entertains by a particular linguistic mean, not only the entertaining effect but also the tool through which this effect was achieved should be preserved. Naturally, the text must be always adapted in translation in order to become comprehensible to the target community but if there is a joke based on idiomatic expression, for example, the translator does not necessarily use the exact same lexical expressions but s/he should develop a creative solution involving the humorous usage of a relevant idiom that the target audience would be familiar with. Catford (1965) introduces a term “total translation” explaining it as replacement of every single linguistic element in a sentence by the exact same element from the target language preserving their phonological, textual and grammatical form. Although Catford's strategy would be the most precise one in many cases, it might not be always possible to apply, especially in audiovisual translation where many other constraints mentioned in the previous chapters

need to be taken into consideration, such as synchronisation of the lip-movement. Therefore neither Catford's nor Nida's theories can be considered right or wrong as every text needs to have an individual approach of translation. Most of the time translators find the best solutions in the combination of several methods and strategies. In *Friends* there are some linguistic clashes in translation in nearly every episode. As it has been already mentioned in this paper, this sitcom is based on humour; therefore the translator's priority is usually to entertain rather than to transfer a particular form or content. Catford's theory of finding lexical and grammatical equivalents would not be very effective in such cases as humour is something very specific to each culture and therefore it needs a lot of adaptation in translation if the purpose of amusement is to be kept. There is part of Catford's theory, however, that the translator could take advantage of and that could be very useful in *Friends* translation in particular, and that is the substitution of SL phonology by TL phonology. In *Friends* there are many jokes based on phonetics such as rhymes or similarity of sounds and although it is usually not possible to preserve the same lexical and grammatical structure, at least the effect of rhyming and sounds can be (in some situations) assimilated. In many cases in *Friends* the humoristic usage of linguistic means is either replaced or avoided completely for the sake of easier perception. In the following part of this chapter several linguistic tools of entertainment which appeared in the sitcom will be introduced and defined together with concrete examples drawn from the sitcom.

2.1 Idioms

Idioms are fixed expressions whose meaning cannot be usually derived from the words but whose meaning has to be learned. Every language possesses different idioms and therefore they are often a problematic issue of translation. Baker (1992, 63) defined idioms as “[...] frozen patterns of language which allow little or no variation in form [...]” and she also added that exceptions are allowed only in order to make a joke or word-plays. She also points out that a translator may come across several types of such fixed expressions, some more recognizable than others, thus the crucial problem does not have to be finding an appropriate equivalent in the TL but recognizing the idiom in the first place. Once the idiom is recognized the translator has to find out if there is any equivalent idiom in the target language and if not, then s/he has to analyze the situation in which the idiom appears, go through the TL existing idioms and then try to find the one that fits into the

context. This was, however, very simplified considering of the fact mentioned earlier that every language and every culture has their own specific idiomatic expressions and that „[o]ne language may express a given meaning by means of a single word, another may express it by means of a transparent fixed expression, a third may express it by means of an idiom, and so on“ (Baker 1992, 68). Baker (ibid., 72-77) suggests several methods of idioms translation: a) using an idiom of similar meaning and form, b) using an idiom of similar meaning but dissimilar form, c) translation by paraphrase and d) translation by omission. In Friends idioms are very often used as humour tool and naturally not all of them can be translated efficiently. Luckily for the translator, however, in Friends one joke is usually immediately followed by another therefore avoiding an idiom translation does not necessarily create a gap in the situation. This is one of the big advantages of Friends; the episodes are so loaded with humour that one can be watching them several times in a row and still have a good laugh. It is nearly impossible to grasp all the jokes in just one session. Some of the idioms examples are listed below.

Example 1: episode 21 (Crane et al. 1995-96)

Phoebe: *Yeah, but he did have to have a bunch of stitches and he said that only once in a blue moon does a dog's ear grow back so...still hoping [Jo, ale mám tam prej hrozně moc stehů a zatím ještě nemáme jistotu, že mu to ucho přiroste, no...snad to bude dobrý.]*

Expression „once in a blue moon“ refers to something that is very rare and in this situation the doctor that gave Phoebe the information about the dog's health was obviously being sarcastic which Phoebe didn't quite get. In my opinion, this idiom could be quite easily substituted by the Czech expression *jednou za uherský rok*. Although there are some slight differences, it would fulfil the intended purpose.

Example 2: episode 1 (Crane et al. 1994-95)

Joey: *Welcome back to the world! Grab a spoon! [Vítej do života! Dej si do nosu starouši!]*

Ross (later on in that episode): *I grabbed a spoon. [Začnu si užívat.]*

To grab a spoon is an idiom usually used in a situation where one man is trying to convince his friend to get over his ex-wife or ex-girlfriend. As there is no such equivalent in Czech, this idiom was simply eliminated in both cases. The translator could have, however, at least chosen one phrase that s/he would be able to use in both of these situations. My suggestion

would be for example „Jdi do toho“ in the first sentence and „Jdu do toho“ in the second one so that there is a visible link between these two sentences just like in the original version.

2.2 Word-plays

Word-plays are intentional errors and changes in words. People find this entertaining as they have some learned standards of how language works and most of the time they can predict and know what to expect from a language. Word-plays, however, break these standards and they usually take the hearer by surprise. According to Delia Chiaro (1992, 2), “the term word play includes every conceivable way in which language is used with the intent to amuse” and that “the term word play conjures up an array of conceits ranging from puns and spoonerisms to wisecracks and funny stories” (ibid., 4). Word-plays can be therefore puns, phonetic errors, oddly-formed sentence structures or even creation of non-existing words. Idioms might be, to a certain extent, included in this category as well, provided they would be somehow changed or adjusted by the user.

Disputes have been led among linguists about the definition and categorization of word-plays and many different typologies have been developed over the years. Delabastita (1996, 128) distinguishes between six types of word-plays: homonymy (see example 5), homophony, homography, paronymy (see examples 3, 4), intertextual wordplay and portmanteau. Homography describes the situation when two words are spelled identically but pronounced differently, homophony (see example 6), on the other hand, refers to the situation where words have identical sounds but different spelling. Homonymy occurs when two words have the same sound and spelling but there is a difference in meaning and in paronymy two words share close resemblance, but there are slight differences in both spelling and sound.

Example 3: episode 4 (Crane et al. 1994-95)

Monica: *Hey, Joey, what would you do if you were omnipotent? [Joey, co bys dělal jako omnipotentní?]*

Joey: *Probably kill myself! [Patrně bych se zabil.]*

[...]

Ross: *Joey, uh...OMnipotent. [Neví co je omnipotentní.]*

Joey: *You are? Ross, I'm so sorry. [Ty už jo? Rossi, to mě mrzí.]*

First of all, the word *omnipotentní* is hardly a word that would appear in a casual Czech dialogue therefore there is a high chance that a great majority of the Czech audience would not even comprehend the proper meaning of it. And second of all, there was a word-play of paronymy in Ross' reaction as what he said could have been easily misheard as *I am impotent*. This is a situation, however, that probably could not have had a better or ideal solution.

Example 4: episode 2 (Crane et al. 1995-96)

Phoebe: *We went shopping for...for...for...fur! [Já jsem chtěla pár...pár těch...pár kožichů!]*

In the situation, Phoebe is trying to come up with a lie about what she had bought in the shops that day even though she did not go shopping at all in order to cover Monica's back. In American English specifically, the difference in pronunciation of the words *for* and *fur* is subtle. The same could not have been, unfortunately, done in Czech and therefore the whole word-play had to be omitted as the content of this word-play was crucial for the understanding of the follow-up dialogue.

Example 5: episode 22 (Crane et al. 1995-96)

Ross offers Mr. Green to get him something to drink, scotch in particular.

Mr. Green: *Neat. [Čistou.]*

Ross: *Cool. [S ledem.]*

Mr. Green: *Neat as in no rocks. [Nechci žádnéj led.]*

Ross: *I know. [Změna.]*

Neat can be understood in two ways, either it can mean *very good, pleasant* or it can appear in a collocation with alcoholic drinks, meaning no ice or anything else is added to it. One would hardly find a Czech equivalent to this typical example of homonymy word-play.

Example 6: episode 23 (Crane et al. 1995-96)

Phoebe: *We didn't do any of the romantic stuff I had planned like having a picnic in Central Park and coffee at Central Perk. Oh, I just got that! [Ani jsme nestihli tu romantiku, jak jsem plánovala. Jít na piknik do Centrálního parku, stavit se někde v*

kavárně. Ne, to jsme stihli!]

This word-play can be again recognised in American English only as the words *park* and *perk* are pronounced the same in the US. In my opinion the joke could have been at least partly preserved if *Central Perk* was simply translated as *Centrální perk*. Although it does not have a meaning in Czech, it would be clear to the audience that Phoebe refers to the coffeehouse as she was pointing directly to the glass window where the name of the coffeehouse was written and moreover, there would be the similarity in sounds – *park*, *perk*.

An “intertextual wordplay” is a term defined by Leppihalme (1997) and it is based on already existing phrase (like a verse, advertising slogan, proverb, the name of a book or film etc.). The phrase on which the wordplay is based on is called a “frame” (ibid., 141). In *Friends* the examples of intertextual wordplay are very often demonstrated on songs, rhymes or quotes of well-known characters from books, series and films. A phenomenon that Walter Nash (1985) named “portmanteaux” describes a situation where two meanings of two different words are squeezed into one single word. Nash (ibid.) also points out that the concept of portmanteau was originally introduced by Lewis Carroll. Both intertextual word-play (see examples 9, 10) and portmanteaux (see examples 7, 8) appear in *Friends*. From translator's point of view, these two phenomena leave much bigger space for creativity in comparison with the four types of word-plays identified above where the translation was considerably linguistically restricted.

Example 7: episode 6 (Crane et al. 2002-03)

Chandler is trying to convince Monica that he is funnier than some guy from Monica's work so he is trying to make up jokes all the time. Nobody else finds them too funny though.

Chandler: *Your new poodle could be your noodle and fried chicken could be fricken.* [Nové boty by byly noty a smažený řízek by byl smažek.]

Monica remembers of a joke the guy from her work made the other day and starts laughing. Phoebe is laughing with her.

Chandler: *Were you there?* [Byla si u toho?]

Phoebe: *No, but it sounds like it was fricken funny!* [Ne, ale je to smažkově směšný.]

In the first part the Czech translation was quite well adapted, although the lexical content

was changed, the joke was based on the same principle. In the second part, however, was the first joke elaborated and a homophony word-play was included therefore it was not possible to perform a faithful translation. The homophony in this case was the word *fricken* as it is pronounced the same was as *fricking* which is a slang expression used to stress excitement.

Example 8: episode 6 (Crane et al. 2002-03)

Chandler: *You got a man who's a nanny? You got a manny? [Chlap že dělá chůvu? Takže chůvák?]*

As I said earlier, it is so difficult for a translator to come up with a functional equivalence of portmanteaux. In this case even the lexical structure was more or less preserved. Similar example of such case is also the following one.

Eric: *You...you're blurry, but you still look like Ursula. You're Blursula. [Jsi jak v mlze, pořád ale celá Uršula. Mlhula.]*

Example 9: episode 2 (Crane et al. 1994-95)

Rachel is looking for an engagement ring that she has lost.

Rachel: *I know I had it this morning, and I know I had it when I was in the kitchen with... [Vím, že jsem ho měla ráno. Pak jsem ho měla, když jsem si sedla na...]*

Chandler: *Dinah? [Košťě?]*

Someone's in the kitchen with Dinah is a line from a famous song. My suggestion would be to substitute it with a line from some well-known Czech song, it could be adapted this way for example: Rachel: *Pak jsem ho měla, když jsem šla...*, Chandler: *Z Hradišťa?*

Example 10: episode 7 (Crane et al. 2003-04)

Ross is trying to convince Chandler who is dressed as Santa Claus to leave the room.

Chandler: *But I didn't get to shake my belly like a bowl full of jelly. [Ještě nemám plný pupek, není možné, abych utek.]*

The phrase that Chandler used is one of the phrases typically associated with Santa Claus. As the Czech community would not be familiar with this concept anyway having different Christmas customs, it was not necessary to keep the original lexical construction and the rhyme used instead of the original one fits the situation just as well.

2.2.1 Methods of word-play translation

Translating word-plays presents an enormous challenge to the translators of multimedia texts. It requires not only perfect knowledge of both of the languages but also a great amount of creativity. The translator cannot expect to find an equivalent solution every time and literal translation does not seem to be an acceptable option as the meaning would be most probably lost. Wordplays cannot be, however, completely ignored. Their appearance in the multimedia text is important as their recognition and comprehension gives the receiver certain intellectual satisfaction. Delabastita (1996, 134) has introduced the following translation methods for wordplay:

PUN -> PUN - the ST pun is simply substituted by a TL pun; it may differ from the original text in structure

PUN -> NON-PUN - the pun is replaced by a non-punning phrase which may save the original meaning of the word-play but in a non-punning way or one of the meanings of the word-play is sacrificed for the sake of the other one; the pun may be also neutralized in both meanings

PUN -> RELATED RHETORICAL DEVICE: substitution of the original pun by some wordplay-related rhetorical device, such as repetition, alliteration, rhymes, etc.

PUN -> ZERO: the text containing the pun is left out

PUN ST = PUN TT: a pun in the TT has an equivalent in the ST

NON-PUN -> PUN: pun in the TT appears in a place where there was no pun in the ST, it often works as compensation for the former omission of a pun

ZERO -> PUN: a new part of text is created containing a word-play, it has usually no other function than compensation

EDITORIAL TECHNIQUES: explanations might appear in footnotes or endnotes or some comments provided by the translator might be used

2.3 Brief note on grammatical differences

It can be supposed that each language has its own grammatical system applying different rules and following different guidelines. In translation the grammatical structures of sentences can be often adapted according to the needs and options of the target language. Sometimes, however, when there is a grammatical rule in the source language that does not correspond to any rule in the target language, a problem is likely to appear. As Baker

(1992, 86) pointed out these differences might even „[...] result in some change in the information content of the message during the process of translation”. An example of such grammatical difference, often appearing in *Friends*, is for instance the way nouns and adjectives are formed in English. Basically nearly every word or phrase can easily become a noun or an adjective which is a procedure unknown to the Czech speakers. There were several clashes in translation of humour in *Friends* resulting from this issue.

Example 11: episode 4 (Crane et al. 1994-95)

Chandler: *Well, aren't we Mr. „The glass is half empty“?* [Pořád říkám, že je tě u pračlověků škoda]

Although Czech people would understand the concept of *glass half empty*, there is probably no efficient way how imbed it in such a short sentence. If such case appeared in a book, there would be enough space to involve this phrase somehow. Nonetheless, given the restriction of synchronisation and limited space for subtitles on the screen, the literal translation might not be understandable enough for the target audience.

2.4 Other problematic issues in humour translation

There are, of course, other areas of translation that are not covered in this paper. The reason for that is that they are too complex to be examined in just a few paragraphs and as they are not pivotal for this thesis, they can be only briefly introduced. What is being referred to is among others politeness (see example 12), slang (see example 13) or dialects and accents of the English language. In *Friends* there are many situations where the British accent is involved. As the Czech community does not distinguish between different types of accents or dialects, it is difficult to include this phenomenon in the Czech translation. Once, the British accent was in the Czech dubbing changed to a general foreign accent. The other time the accent was omitted completely which is not a very good solution as some of the dialogues do not make sense without the presence of the accent. Other phenomena mentioned above will be only demonstrated on specific examples as their explanation, as I have already mentioned, would require deeper analysis.

Example 12: episode 17 (Crane et al. 1996-97)

Joey: *Can I see the comics?* [Dej mi ten komiks.]

Chandler: *It's the New York Times. [To je New York Times.]*

Joey: *Ok, MAY I see the comics? [No dobře a maj tam nějaký komiksy?]*

In this context it is important to know what kind of newspaper the New York Times is which is information the Czech audience might lack. Therefore it would be very difficult to express the original change of degree in politeness in the Czech translation.

Example 13: episode 5 (Crane et al. 1998-99)

Ross: *The world is your oyster. Kick up your heels. Paint the town red. [Celý svět ti leží u nohou. Vyhod' si z kopytka. Proflámuj noc.]*

Rachel: *You need to learn some new slang. [Zkus mluvit normálně]*

Only a native speaker would probably be able to grasp the usage of old fashion of these idioms and to reach the same effect in Czech as in English the situation would require finding equivalent Czech idioms of similar nature which could be possible but definitely time-consuming. Rachel's line was, in my opinion, changed for nothing. The text could have been translated literally.

3 AUDIOVISUAL TRANSLATION

Audiovisual translation is a topic widely discussed among linguists. There are many disputes how audiovisual translation should be defined and what should be the methods of approach. Audiovisual translation happens to be a brand new field in the translation studies as it has been brought to surface especially due to the technical developments of the mankind. Basically, we are talking about translation of films in form of dubbing or subtitling. Each of these methods needs to have a different approach as each of them has different requirements and constraints. In audiovisual translation not only the translator is dealing with the standard issues of translation, such as linguistic, ideological and cultural barriers, but he or she is also facing the multimedia constraints such as synchronisation in dubbing or limited space on the screen in subtitling. As I have already mentioned, this is a new field of research in translation studies therefore linguists had to come up with some name to this discipline. Nonetheless, they have not always seen eye to eye at this point. Debates are lead whether audiovisual translation can be even referred to as a translation (Munday 2008) or whether it should be considered rather an adaptation as Dalabastita (ibid., 184) pointed out. Gambier (ibid.), on the other hand, suggest terms such as screen translation or multimedia translation. Furthermore, some linguists even express doubts whether special attention should be paid to this particular field or not. Jeremy Munday (ibid., 183) said that Delabastita „[...] sees film translation as an extension of translation studies, requiring research into the specifics of each mode“. There is no doubt audiovisual translation raises wide range of interesting question from linguistic point of view. Therefore I have decided to devote one chapter of my bachelor thesis to this particular topic.

3.1 Transfer methods of audiovisual translation

Munday (ibid., 184-5) defined several categories into which audiovisual translation may be divided:

- **interlingual subtitling** – they are to be seen in various forms intended for film industry. There are two types of interlingual subtitling and that is „open“ (cinema and video) and „closed“ (DVD). When the subtitles are open, it means that they are part of the film and cannot be omitted whereas closed subtitles are the exact opposite – you can choose whether you want them in the film or not

- **bilingual subtitling** – a type of subtitling where there are two languages being displayed at the same time. It can be seen in multilingual countries, such as Belgium
- **intralingual subtitling** – intended for people with hearing impairment. Presently even the bonus parts of DVDs such as director's comments or deleted scenes are usually provided with intralingual subtitling
- **dubbing** – source language voice-track is rerecorded by a target language voice-track
- **voice-over** – very often used for documentaries or interviews. Lip synchronisation doesn't play an important role
- **surtitling** – used in theatres, a method where subtitles are displayed either above the stage or on the back of the seats in the theatre
- **audio description** – a commentary of what is happening on the stage or screen. This method is used especially for visually impaired people

Even this division, however, is something that the linguists haven't quite agreed upon. From linguist to linguist there are slight differences regarding either terminology or the content itself. Karamitroglou (2000, 4) presents several other alternatives of his colleagues in his book *Towards a methodology for the investigation of norms in audiovisual translation*. For example, he says that Gambier (ibid.) introduces the following transfer methods: a) subtitling, b) simultaneous subtitling, c) dubbing, d) interpreting (pre-recordive and consecutive), e) voice-over, f) narration, g) commentary, h) multilingual broadcast, i) surtitles and supratitles and j) simultaneous translation, whereas Lukylen (ibid.) thinks of subtitling and re-voicing as two main categories further divided into individual subcategories.

4 DUBBING

Dubbing is a replacement, or more precisely re-voicing of the original language on television and cinema. All the people that have ever seen both the original and the dubbed version of a film and have the knowledge of both of the languages can tell the huge difference. Not only the voices are usually completely different, but the translation of the scripts needs to undergo many and many adjustments as to be compatible not only with the local culture and humour but also with the lips movement of the actors. As Pilar Orero (2004, 7) said in his book *Topics in audiovisual translation*, which is devoted to this specific issue, “the translator’s work is often not the final product but a sort of draft version which is polished and adjusted to the needs and demands of the medium.” In the book he also describes the whole process of changes made before the final dubbing version is ready to be used. Orero (ibid.) describes audiovisual translation as a “[...] discipline in which the text undergoes most change from start to finish”.

4.1 Constraints in dubbing

In all stages of the process of audiovisual translation there are some modifications made. That means that what may seem as the most insignificant change in the first stage may result in a radical shift of meaning in the end. After translated text is submitted, it usually goes to a proof-reader and eventually synchronisation is made. In most situations, synchronisation doesn't mean that the words used in dubbing translation need to have the exact same vowels and consonants as the words in the English text (which would not be even possible to achieve). People focus rather on the whole image than the lips in particular, unless the person is shown in close-up which can be proved on an example from the series *Friends* below.

Example 1: episode 17 (Crane et al. 1998-99)

Ross: *I know this may sound a little... dzzzz... [Vím, že to může znít trošku...ujetě...]*

An interjection that Ross used in the original version was substituted by a word in the Czech version without attracting any attention. When the actor is in close-up, however, the dubbing translation should be adjusted according to the vowels and consonants pronounced. In *Friends* there is a situation where Ross says “hi” to his son and he repeats it several times in a row with the camera focusing just on his face. In Czech translation they

had to choose the word “pá” instead of “ahoj” for example, so that an open vowel appears in the word just as it does in the source text.

The most important thing is for the sentence to start and end at the same time as the actor's lips. In most translating agencies there is person in the function of a proof-reader and it is important to stress that this person does not necessarily have to speak the original language as their main task is to check if there are any errors in spelling or stylistics. Therefore they cannot be aware whether the corrections they make don't trail off the original meaning. If we compared the roles of a synchroniser and a translator, we would find out that they have very different targets. While the translator attempts to preserve the meaning of the original text as much as possible, the synchroniser's only priority is to make the words and the lips movement fit which means that the informative content is very often lost for the sake of synchronisation. Having some experience in translating and knowing how much effort it sometimes takes to find the right words and to come up with an appropriate solution, it might be often considered a waste of energy from translator's point of view. In my opinion, to achieve the most accurate result the translator and the synchroniser would have to cooperate, to make a certain compromise between their tasks. A big advantage of modern time is the accessibility of a foreign language. Most people nowadays have some knowledge of a foreign language. This fact is very convenient in case of directing when the director himself understands the source text and therefore he understands the information that is to be transferred and can precede the potential errors.

There are several forms how text can be adapted for dubbing. Sometimes, although the text is changed completely, the final output remains the same. I will demonstrate that on some examples from Friends dubbing, stating the Czech translation in square brackets next to the original sentences.

Example 2: episode 16 (Crane et al. 1998-99)

Chandler: *Do you know a six letter word for red?* [*Nenapadá tě jméno kočky na šest?*]

Joey: *Dark-red.* [*Madonna*]

Chandler: *How about maroon?* [*Co takhle Mourek?*]

Monica: *You are so smart.* [*Ty jsi můj mourek*]

Example 3: episode 1 (Crane et al. 1994-95)

Rachel: *I can see that, you look like you'd slept with a hanger in your mouth. [No to vidím, jako by se ti zasekly zuby.]*

As you can see the translated information differs from the original version completely, however, the humour is based on the same elements; therefore no big harm was done here. In other cases, not only the content differs, but there is also a general shift in the meaning.

Example 4: episode 1 (Crane et al. 1994-95)

Rachel: *All my life everybody keeps telling me: You're a shoe, you're a shoe, you're a shoe. But what if I don't want to be a shoe? What if I want to be a purse? Or a hat? [Všichni mi vždycky říkali: Jsi nula, jsi nula, jsi nula. Proč bych měla být nula? Proč ne třeba čtverka nebo pětka nebo jednička?]*

From the Czech translation we get this negative vibe as we use the phrase “*Jsi nula*” when we think less of a person and that is absolutely not what was intended in the first place. And the English version also sort of reflects Rachel’s personality as she is this spoiled girl from a rich family who is only interested in clothes, jewellery, accessories, etc. In my opinion, it wasn’t necessary to change the script so drastically in this case. In Czech this metaphor would have made just as much sense as it makes in English.

The hardest part in audiovisual translation is that there has to be an interaction between image and word. In such cases, translator’s options are very limited as he or she cannot substitute or adjust the source text as they wish and they also have to respect the synchronisation. A problem may arise when the translator is given only the script and therefore s/he cannot work with both the visual and the written form. Some of difficulties caused by the interaction between image and sound occurring in Friends are displayed on the examples below.

Example 5: episode 12 (Crane et al. 1994-95)

Rachel: *How can you not say that? Poconos. It's like poke-a-nose. (tapping with her finger on Paolo's nose) [To přece dělaj eskymáci, jasný? Nos o nos. Nos-o-nos.]*

Example 6: episode 11 (Crane et al. 1994-95)

Coma guy: *Nice hat! [Hezký den!]*

Phoebe and Monica simultaneously: *Thanks* (both touching their hats)

There were more complications that the translator had to deal with example 5. First of all, it was Poconos, a resort area in United States which the Czech audience would be hardly familiar with. Second of all, there was a word play referring to the name of the place mentioned before and thirdly it was the poking gesture of Rachel's. Thus the only thing that the translator focused on was the interaction between the image and word.

In example 6, I believe, synchronisation was the strongest constraint. Touching one's head can be, nevertheless, considered a gesture of timidity therefore the impression of Czech translation isn't completely out of the way. However, the funny part in the English version was that both the girls responded without knowing to whom the compliment was directed.

Another inconvenience of dubbing is the substitution of voices. When there is an audition for a role, the director has usually a very specific image in mind of what the actor should be like and his choice is determined not only by the abilities and looks of the participants but also by their general charisma in which voice plays a very important role. Therefore it seems to me that replacing the voice means changing something very fundamental. With reference to Friends again, there is a huge adaptation of Janice's (Chandler's girlfriend) character only due to the change of her voice. In the English version she has a very loud and annoying way of expressing herself and this is one of the key features associated with her character. I was merely surprised when I had heard the Czech dubbing for the very first time and found out that there isn't much resemblance to Janice's original voice. At that moment half of her personality was removed as her voice was what she was generally recognized for. Although her voice really is annoying and sometimes even a bit exaggerated in the original version, it is simply who she is and what makes her distinguishable. One of this reasons for this modification might have been the fact that Czech people consider the American way of expressing to be a little overreacted, which it surely is in comparison with the Czech intonation, and the production was simply too careful about the intensity of Janice's voice. It is important to realise, though, that it was irritating even for the American society and therefore lowering her voice to such a great extent was not really necessary.

4.2 Advantages and disadvantage of dubbing

Dubbing has both its advantages and disadvantages. One of the dubbing advantages is that it provides blind and visually impaired people with the possibility of “watching” films. Furthermore, it kind of helps to preserve one's own culture considering that many elements have to be localized, i.e. replaced by other elements corresponding to local standards. This was, actually, one of the major reasons for creating dubbing as I am going to explain in more details later. Not every country put dubbing to use, though. First of all, dubbing turns out to be much more financially demanding in comparison with subtitling. And second of all, preserving the source language of a film contributes to the general awareness of the nation of other cultures and languages. Based on my own experience I can say that in countries where subtitling is used instead of dubbing, people have notably better English than people in dubbing countries. A great proving example of this is Belgium - Brussels to be precise. The population there is basically divided into two individual but co-existing cultures – the Flemish, speaking Dutch and the Valons, speaking French. Not only do they have their own languages, but also e.g. universities or TV channels. From the very first moment you come in touch with these two communities, you have to wonder how come so many of Dutch people have such good knowledge of English, while the French rather lag behind them. And the answer is clear as soon as you turn on the TV. One can hear no Dutch dubbing there, all the films, sitcoms, documentaries, etc. are broadcast in the original language. One can witness the same when they go to Croatia and I myself find it very convenient as a foreigner to be able to watch their TV as I've been spending there every summer for the last couple of years. Other countries that prefer subtitling to dubbing are also Cyprus, Greece, Japan, the Netherlands, Portugal, and the Scandinavian countries (Gil Ariza 2004). As I see it, these people from non-dubbing countries have a great advantage over the other countries, especially with English becoming the universal language of the world. People nowadays spend fortunes on language courses and parents put their children in language schools from their very early age hoping their child will acquire the second language more naturally as researchers and scientists promise. In the book *An Introduction to Language* (Fromkin et al. 2003, 27) it can be found that “any normal child, born anywhere in the world, of any racial, geographical, social, or economic heritage, is capable of learning any language to which he or she is exposed. The differences we find among languages cannot be due to biological reasons”. How much easier, however, would it be if these children could just watch their favourite fairy tale in English? They

would not mind not understanding the language at first at such young age as they focus more on the images on the screen rather than the spoken word and eventually would be becoming more and more familiar with the language. In my opinion, exposing a child to a language, as was said in the previous statement, means creating such environment for the child where the language appears naturally and most of all regularly. Therefore, due to the increasing need of knowledge of English, and also due to economic and aesthetic reasons, dubbing might be in the future overshadowed by subtitling.

4.3 Brief note on development of dubbing

The purpose of dubbing nowadays is different from the times of its origin. In 1930's when dubbing started to appear in western countries like France, Italy, Germany and Spain, it had mainly politically and cultural reasons (Altman, 1992). In France, for example, they were only trying to protect their own language from foreign influence, especially American. Italy, Germany, and Spain, all of which faced cultural boycotts in the mid-1930s and were ruled by fascist governments, only allowed dubbed versions of foreign films. As early as 1929, Benito Mussolini's government decreed that all films projected on Italian screens must have an Italian-language sound track regardless of where it was produced (ibid., 149). Spain also established strict quotas regarding imports, almost all of which were dubbed (Gil Ariza 2004). As dubbing industry grew over many years, it gained a tradition. There are no such restrictions nowadays concerning the language on the screen but still, dubbing remained very popular in many countries. Whether this is about what the population demands or whether it has something to do with the influence of big dubbing industries, can be only argued. It is said, however, that due to globalisation some of the dubbing countries might consider the option of exchanging dubbing for subtitling. Whether people would appreciate or criticize this is a question. Basically there are two groups into which the audience is divided – supporters and objectors of dubbing. Objectors are usually people who have the knowledge of the source language and can observe how immensely it sometimes has to be changed for the sake of dubbing. There are, however, also people who despite not understanding the language prefer to watch a film non-dubbed, saying that they simply like hearing the original voices belonging to the actors. The group who is in favour of dubbing includes either children who have troubles with fast flow of subtitles or people who claim to enjoy a film more when it is in their mother tongue. I have decided to make a

small survey regarding the preferences of today's generation when it comes to dubbing and subtitling which is to be found at the end of this thesis.

5 INTERLINGUAL SUBTITLING

5.1 A word on history of subtitles

The history of subtitles dates back to 1903, which means nowadays subtitling has more than a hundred-year tradition. Karamitroglou (2000, 6-7), however, calls these beginnings rather an attempt at subtitling: „The first attempt was in 1903 with what is nowadays conventionally called 'intertitles' or 'insert titles'. At the time, these terms meant something totally different from what they mean today: an intertitle or an insert title was a replacement shot for a part of a film that contained verbal information in the original language. For example, if an American silent movie was shown in France and contained a scene where the contents of a handwritten letter were visible on the screen, this scene would be re-shot in France with the equivalent handwritten letter in French“. He also says that in 1909 the United States made first attempts to produce subtitles as we know them today. A turning point in subtitling was when a convenient method of inserting subtitles was invented in Hungary, which is still applicable even nowadays. It was the low-costs that made it interesting even for other countries.

5.2 Constraints of subtitling

Subtitles are an inevitable part of every film product that is intended to be exported to other countries. People usually think of them as of platitude without ever realising the complicated process that precedes. At first sight it seems very simple; people not involved in this field probably consider it to be an ordinary translation from one language into another. From linguistic point of view, however, two issues always being distinguished as two separate units, having their very own rules, standards and definitions, suddenly blend together. What I am referring to is a spoken and written language. Anyone who has ever strayed into the territory of linguistics knows, before even knowing what the term linguistics actually means, that it is studied from these two different perspectives. What happens when these two very different units have to cooperate side by side? The answer is simple; a whole new branch of study has to be introduced – audiovisual translation.

To apply my theory in practise, when subtitles are being created, there are many limitations that have to be kept in mind. Firstly, spoken form of a language has to be transferred into a

written one, and moreover, in a way comprehensible for the target audience. In spoken language one uses, without even realising it, a lot of extra material not really necessary to be included, although necessary for the speaker to express thoughts fluently. The difference between spoken and written language can be also demonstrated by an example from the book *An Introduction to Language* (Fromkin et al. 2003, 413) where there is a record of a frequency analysis of one million words of written and spoken American English originally presented by Kučera and Francis. The most frequent words occurring in written text were *the, of, and, to, a, in, that, is, was, and he*, taking 25% of the overall corpus, while in spoken language the winning words were *I, and, the, to, that, you, it, of, a, and know*, composing nearly 30% of the speech. Anyway, returning to my point, subtitling is a transfer from spoken to written language, which means the structure of the sentences has to be adjusted notably as they should be as simple as possible to make it easier for the reader to follow. Karamitroglou (1998) listed several methods how complex syntactic structure can be produced:

- active for passive constructions: E.g. “It is believed by many people.” (30 characters) => “Many people believe.” (20 characters)
- positive for negative expressions: E.g. “We went to a place we hadn’t been before.” (41 characters) => “We went to a new place.” (23 characters)
- temporal Prepositional Phrases for temporal subordinate clauses: E.g. “I’ll study when I finish watching this movie.” (46 characters) => “I’ll study after this movie.” (28 characters)
- modified nouns for the referring relative clauses: E.g. “What I’d like is a cup of coffee.” (33 characters) => “I’d like a cup of coffee.” (25 characters)
- gapping for double verb insertion: E.g. “John would like to work in Germany and Bill would like to work in France.” (73 characters) => “John would like to work in Germany and Bill in France.”; (54 characters)
- straightforward question sentences for indicative pragmatic requests: E.g. “I would like to know if you are coming.” (39 characters) => “Are you coming?” (15 characters)
- straightforward imperative sentences for indicative pragmatic requests: E.g. “I would like you to give me my keys back.” (41 characters) => “Give me my keys back.” (21 characters)

Not always, however, are shorter structures preferred. Sometimes, the spoken text might be edited in a way that the written text is longer in the result for the sake of comprehensibility:

- coherent phrase grouping for syntactical scrambling: E.g. “That a man should arrive with long hair did not surprise me.” (60 characters) => “It did not surprise me that a man with long hair should arrive.” (63 characters)

When attention is paid to subtitles one can see that there are nearly no speech fillers, such as *uh, um, you know, anyway, like*, etc. Nonetheless, even when focusing on the subtitles one does usually not stop noticing the speech of actors on the screen, therefore subtitles do not appear unnatural to the audience as they are always somehow combined with the acoustics.

Secondly, there is a limited space on the screen where the subtitles appear, that means not only fillers, but sometimes also whole parts of sentences that are not fundamental for the context understanding might be omitted. Karamitroglou (1988) defined two other word categories that might be elided from the text besides padding words that have been already mentioned, i.e. tautological cumulative adjectives/adverbs, such as *great big, super extra, teeny weeny* etc., as they can be usually substituted by a single-word equivalent and *responsive expressions*, e.g. *yes, no, ok, please, thank you, sorry*, as they are comprehended by majority of people, especially as far as Europe is concerned. Karamitroglou, however, stressed that this does not hold for slang equivalents of these words, however, such as *yup, nup, okey-dokey*, etc. as their recognition might be problematic.

Thirdly, as far as the flow of subtitles is concerned, studies have shown that human brain is capable of absorbing only certain amount of information per concrete intervals. According to Karamitroglou (1988), the average reading speed of subtitles is 150 – 180 words per minute, which is 2.5 – 3 words per second. A full two-line subtitle usually contains about 14 – 16 words, that means the length of its appearance on the screen should be approximately 5.5 seconds. Once the time necessary for the human eye to notice the subtitle is taken into account, it can be claimed that 6 seconds is the appropriate lasting of subtitle projection. It is important, however, that it should not exceed this limit as it would result in automatic re-reading of the lines and thus draw the attention away from the screen. And lastly, the translation itself cannot be forgotten. Following all the rules and facing all the constraints mentioned above, the translator still has to manage to transfer the message effectively. From my experience, subtitles are very often more precise than dubbing as for

translation. Although both dubbing and subtitling have their constraints they have to deal with, dubbing has the disadvantage of synchronisation. Therefore there are situations, where subtitle translation can preserve the original sentence whereas dubbing translation has to use a solution that corresponds to the lip-movement and that frequently trails off the original meaning.

A big disadvantage of subtitling is that it draws one's attention away from the screen. A film is not based on the dialogues only. Everybody is familiar with the term non-verbal communication but not everybody is aware of the fact that a great part of the dialogue is expressed through it, especially in comedies or sitcoms, such as Friends. Unfortunately, the image and text on the screen cannot be perceived equally at the same time. Especially when the dialogue is long, the reader might feel a pressure of not having enough time to read all the lines and thus pays minimum attention to the actors. This notably devaluates the enjoyment of the film.

Modern technologies brought frequent occurrence of amateur subtitles. Nowadays, anyone with an internet access can download a film within few minutes. As soon as a new film comes to the cinemas, it doesn't take too long before it is illegally spread all over internet, being downloaded by millions of people. It is necessary to realise, though, that subtitles available on the internet are usually of a very low quality and contain many errors and do not always follow the guidelines for subtitling, thus downloading such product is not recommended to people who want to have a proper experience from the film.

5.3 Final word on dubbing and subtitling

It cannot be said which of these methods, whether dubbing or subtitling, is better or more efficient. They both have their advantages, disadvantages and constraints they have to face. From my point of view, it would be always subtitling winning this battle. I would always rather go for cut sentence structures rather than a complete change of the scripts. I cannot say, nevertheless, whether I would be of that same opinion under different circumstances. Not having the knowledge of the language and being brought up in a different culture, my perspective might differ immensely. In Britain, for example, where politeness and directness of speech are important issues of linguistics, short sentence structures used in

subtitling might cause a bit of an embroilment. Being a Czech person myself, I don't find such types of sentences offensive, rude or inappropriate, having some background knowledge of Great Britain's population, however, I can see that this might be a problem. Therefore everyone has to decide according to their very own preferences whether to watch a film dubbed or subtitled.

6 ISSUES OF AUDIOVISUAL TRANSLATION

6.1 Globalisation vs. localisation

As it implies from the previous chapter, audiovisual translation is not a translation as we know it. Much more things have to be taken into consideration from lip-movement and screen space restrictions to coherence of the spoken word and the images. Very often a major shift is done to the original version of multimedia production in order to adjust it to different target culture conventions and customs. As the branch of audiovisual translation has not been properly developed so far, there are no approved methods of how to deal with the translation. Many linguists are, however, becoming aware of this phenomenon and some of them, such as Gambier and Gottlieb (2001), have made attempts to find appropriate solutions. In their book *(Multi)media translation: concepts, practises and research* they brought up a question of globalisation vs. localization. Not every product of film industry can be exported to other countries, firstly, it has to be proved as successful in the place of creation and secondly, it has to be suitable for translation into other languages. Films, shows and most importantly sitcoms that include too many features of one particular culture would probably not have high chances of gaining popularity anywhere else as the foreign audience would simply not be able to grasp half of the contextual meaning. One example of such case could be *Little Britain*, a widely popular sitcom in the United Kingdom. It is basically a parody of British people and situations that only the British and people with the inevitable background knowledge can be familiar with.

In Gambier's and Gottlieb's (ibid.) book a question was raised what criteria there are for a message to be suitable for translation. The answer was the following: "For a message to appeal to an international audience it must function in an efficient way in an international context" (Gambier et al 2001, 9). They also mentioned this is not related to genre in any way as in the past all kinds of genres that originated in one geographical area became successful outside the borders as well, such as the American Western (ibid., 9-10). There is also Aristotle's point of view defined in the book regarding the former question. According to the book "Aristotle distinguishes six levels of audience appeal: plot, character, language, theme, spectacle and song [...]" (ibid. 10), all of these features being considered to be crucial for the success. Not including cultural features does not therefore necessarily mean that the result will be welcomed by the international audience.

Returning once again to the original point, localization is a process commonly used in audiovisual translation; it means that one cultural reference is being modified to a similar cultural reference familiar for the country where the film is exported. This will be demonstrated on the examples below:

Example 1: episode 4 (Crane et al. 1994-95)

Rachel: *Who is FICA? Why's he getting all my money? [Kdo je Fin.úř.? Proč mi bere všechny peníze?]*

FICA means Federal Insurance Contribution Act and under its authority Social Security payroll taxes are collected. As Czech Republic possesses a similar system of handling taxes, it was not difficult for the translator to deal with this issue.

Example 2: episode 1 (Crane et al. 1996-97)

Chandler: *From now on I get the dates and you will have to stay home on Saturday nights watching Ready.. Set... Cook! [Od teď budu chodit na rande já a ty bude trčet doma a koukat na Vařím, vaříš, vaříme!]*

Ready.. Set... Cook is a well-known cooking game show in the US; although the Czech adaptation is not completely equivalent, is it understandable for the Czech audience and thus the original message was successfully transferred.

Due to globalisation, however, the line of disparity between individual cultures is slowly narrowing. Another question is therefore raised concerning the necessity of adaptation. A great part of television and cinema production imported to Czech Republic comes from the United States. Over the years, the Czech population acquired certain knowledge of the American culture, thus features that would have had to be adapted few years ago, can stay preserved nowadays. In the sitcom Friends for example, not too many adaptations are used, most of the time the source culture references are either preserved in the translation (example 3, 4, 5) or omitted completely – substituted by neutral expressions and structures (example 6).

Example 3: episode 16 (Crane et al. 1998-99)

Joey: *I had a dream...I don't want to talk about it. [Já měl takovej sen...Nechme to plavat.]*

Chandler: *Oh, come on! What if Martin Luther King had said that? [Ale no tak, jak by tohle řekl Martin Luther King?]*

Although Martin Luther King is a figure of American history, his famous 'I Have a Dream' speech is known all over the world. The translator therefore supposed that no adaptation had to be done.

Example 4: episode 16 (Crane et al. 1998-99)

Garry the cop: *I am not just going to take you out for doughnuts. [A nebojte, nezvu Vás na koblihy]*

The police officers in America are generally known for liking doughnuts. This is a stereotype existing for time immemorial. Even though this could be not applied on the Czech policemen, Czech people are somehow familiar with this fact as it has appeared throughout many films and sitcoms of American production that were introduced to Czech Republic.

Example 5: episode 4 (Crane et al. 1994-95)

Ross: *Oh my God, is today the twentieth, October twentieth? [Proboha, dnes je vážně 20. října?]*

Joey: *What's wrong with the twentieth? [Co se vám na tom nezdá?]*

Chandler: *Eleven days before Halloween, all the good costumes are gone? [Zbývá jen pár dní do Halloweenu, všechny dobrý masky jsou rozebrány, co?]*

Halloween is not a traditional holiday in the Czech Republic, although its meaning and activities connected with it are widely recognized in Europe. In recent years this holiday has been gaining more and more popularity in the European countries and the up-coming generations might as well become part of annual trick-or-treating.

Example 6: episode 10 (Crane et al. 1994-95)

Chandler: *I'm sick of being a victim of this Dick Clark holiday! [Už mě nebaví být obětí televizního silvestra!]*

Dick Clark is an American moderator known especially for his show Dick Clark's New Year's Rockin' Eve that has been aired every New Year's Eve since 1972. In the Czech translation this part had been avoided and substituted by a more general description.

There is another phenomenon connected with the New Year's Eve and that is the New Year's Eve Ball; it is ball made of Waterford Crystal and placed high above Times Square in New York City.

Rachel: *The ball is dropping! [Půlnoc je na spadnutí!]*

In the past hundred years at 11:59 the ball begins to descend together with the down-counting of millions of people. As there is no such tradition in the Czech Republic, the translator took the same steps as in the previous example.

The integration process of the world causes that localization is no more as widely needed as it was several years ago. People are becoming more and more aware of other cultures and there are not so many adaptations required anymore. A question is whether the target audience would not still prefer localisation to globalisation even despite being familiar with all the source culture references. Many nations have always been very patriotic after all.

6.2 Formal and dynamic equivalence

There are many areas concerning cultural differences, such as sport, literature, cinema and television, holidays and traditions, and there is no way a translator could avoid them in his/her career. To make the text understandable to the target reader/viewer, it has to be coherent. Mona Baker (1992, 219) introduced a well comprehensible explanation to this matter in her book *In Other Words*: „The coherence of a text is a result of the interaction between knowledge presented in the text and the reader's own knowledge and experience of the world, the latter being influenced by a variety of factors such as age, sex, race, nationality, education, occupation, and political and religious affiliations”. In translation it is therefore important to know the target group and to understand the purpose of the text. If the main aim of the text is to amuse, then the information in text is not the primary thing to keep in mind, the most important factor is for the translated text to stay just as well amusing, that means some parts of the text might be changed or even omitted completely. On the other hand, if the text is educational, the content should be always preserved and if it is necessary for the coherence of the text, some information might be even added such as an explanation of a term or feature that the target culture is not familiar with. Nida (1964, 159) defines this as formal and dynamic equivalence, where „formal equivalence focuses attention on the message itself, in both form and content [...]” and dynamic equivalence is

more receptor-oriented. In addition to dynamic equivalence, Nida claims that „the relationship between receptor and message should be substantially the same as that which existed between the original receptors and the message“ (ibid.). Jeremy Munday explains this with the following metaphor: „The message has to be tailored to the receptor's linguistic needs and cultural expectation [...]“. Nonetheless, as Baker (1992, 246) pinpointed, it is not always that simple: „It is very difficult indeed – for writers and translators alike – to judge what the average reader may or may not have at his/her disposal in terms of background information. Moreover, in the majority of cases, the translator is likely to be not as knowledgeable as the writer but rather as ignorant as the average reader, so that the translator's judgement is further hampered by his/her own lack of knowledge“. Thus it is very often necessary for the translator to do some research in the field of the topic concerned in the text so that he/she can make the translation coherent for the target group. Translators are therefore sometimes being teased that with years of practise not only they deepen their language skills but they also become specialists in many professional and scientific fields.

7 CONVENTIONAL METHODS OF TRANSLATION

Munday (2008, 56-58) mentioned two general translation strategies in his book which were originally identified by Vinay and Darbelnet - "direct translation" and "oblique translation". Altogether these strategies comprise seven procedures, direct translation covering three of them – borrowing, calque and literal translation – and oblique translation covering the further four procedures – transposition, modulation, equivalence, adaptation. The terminology, however, differs from linguist to linguist. Newmark (1988, 81), for instance, distinguishes between translation methods and translation procedures saying that "while translation methods relate to whole texts, translation procedures are used for sentences and the smaller units of language". Newmark (*ibid.*, 45-47) introduces the following eight translation methods:

- **word-for-word translation** – source language word order is preserved and the words are translated literally, usually out of context
- **literal translation** – grammatical constructions of the source text are converted to their nearest target language equivalents, lexical words being again translated literally
- **faithful translation** – an attempt is made to produce the precise contextual meaning of the original text
- **semantic translation** – similar to faithful translation only account of the aesthetic value of the source language text must be taken into consideration
- **adaptation** - which is the least constrained form of translation, used mainly for plays (comedies) and poetry
- **free translation** – the translated text is produced without the style, form, or content of the original
- **idiomatic translation** - it reproduces the message of the original but tends to distort nuances of meaning by preferring colloquialisms and idioms where these do not exist in the original
- **communicative translation** – an attempt is made to transfer the exact same contextual meaning from the source text to the target text in a way that is comprehensible to the target audience

The translation procedures proposed by Newmark (*ibid.*, 82-91) are the following:

- **transference** - process of transferring a source language (SL) word to a target language text (TT), it includes transliteration
- **naturalization** - SL word is first adapted to the normal pronunciation, then to the normal morphology of the target language (TL)
- **cultural equivalent** - it means replacing a culture-bound term (CBT) in the SL with a TL one
- **functional equivalent** - it requires the use of a culture-neutral word
- **descriptive equivalent** - in this procedure the meaning of the CBT is shortly explained
- **componential analysis** - SL word is compared to a similar TL word
- **synonymy** – an alternative of the TL word, it has nearly the same meaning
- **through-translation** - it is the literal translation of common collocations, names of organizations and components of compounds. It can also be called: calque or loan translation
- **shifts or transpositions** - it involves a change in the grammar from SL to TL, it is used when no grammar in the TT corresponds to the one used in the ST
- **modulation** - it occurs when the message of the ST is reproduced in the TL text in order to become compatible with the current norms of the TL
- **recognized translation** - it means that the translator "normally uses the official or the generally accepted translation of any institutional term"
- **compensation** - it occurs when loss of meaning in one part of a sentence is compensated in another part
- **paraphrase** - CBT is explained in this procedure, explanation being more detailed than that of descriptive equivalent
- **couplets** - it occurs when two different procedures are combined
- **notes** - additional information in a translation

8 CULTURE-BOUND HUMOUR

In sitcoms and other comedic shows it is twice as hard to stick to coherence. Not only the humoristic part should be transmitted but also the content of the message should be somehow preserved as it very often corresponds with the action on the screen; however, it has to be considered thoroughly which of these two elements should have priority. Sometimes humour must be sacrificed for the sake of information and vice versa. As it has been mentioned above, it is important for the translator to know the purpose of a text. Having the sitcom *Friends* as an example, it can be said that the main function of the dialogues is to entertain. A great majority of this sitcom is, however, based on culture-bound humour and that is the main source of troubles for the translator. Not only he/she has to come up with an appropriate solution for the translation and keep the text humoristic, the translator also has to realize whether the translated text will be comprehensible to the target culture. If not, an alternative solution needs to be found but once again, it is not so simple. In cases where there is an entertaining culture-bound reference related only to one particular scene or moment, then it can be easily substituted, adapted or even omitted. Nonetheless, if this culture-bound reference is somehow crucial for understanding of the context or for the further development of the story, then it has to be preserved. The script of the sitcom *Friends* is undoubtedly a masterpiece of comedy. The translator does not, however, possess an easy task as it is absolutely essential for him/her to have perfect knowledge of not just the language but also of the source and the target culture.

Mahmoud Ordudari (2007) cited in his article *Translation procedures, strategies and methods* Malcolm Harvey, who defined the culture-bound terms as references to concepts, institutions and personnel which are unique for one particular culture and he introduced the four following techniques for their translation: functional equivalence, formal equivalence, transcription or borrowing and descriptive or self-explanatory translation.

- **functional equivalence** - it means using a term in the TL culture whose function is similar as of the one in the ST
- **formal equivalence or 'linguistic equivalence'** – every word is translated individually

- **transcription or 'borrowing'** (i.e. reproducing or, where necessary, transliterating the original term) - if the meaning of the term is understood, it may be used without any further explanation unlike in cases where TL culture is not familiar with term
- **descriptive or self-explanatory translation** – only general terms are used in translation. it uses generic terms

The previous categorization is, however, very narrow and audiovisual translation in particular would require a much more detailed approach. Saeed Samakar (2010) used definitions introduced by Jan Pedersen. Pederson went more into details and he divided the culture-bound terms into two main types, intralinguistic and extralinguistic, the latter one including SL and TL oriented strategies. The source language oriented strategy has three other subcategories:

- **retention** - the most source language oriented strategy, an element from the source language penetrates into the target text; the retained culture-bound term can be marked off from the rest of the target text
- **specification** – it means leaving the culture-bound term in its untranslated form, but adding information that is not present in the source text, making the target culture-bound term more specific than the source culture-bound term; this is done in one of two ways – explicitation or addition; **explicitation** could be seen as any strategy involving expansion of the text, or spelling out anything that is implicit in the source text; this strategy would be however not probably possible in audiovisual translation due to dubbing and subtitling constraints; in **addition** is the added material hidden in the source culture-bound term, as part of the sense or connotations of the term
- **direct translation** – similar to literal translation, further divided into two subgroups – calque which might sound strange to target audience and shifted direct translation which refer to such terms that are recognized by the target culture

The target language oriented strategy can be also divided into the three following subcategories:

- **generalization** – a culture-bound term referring to something unique is replaced by something more general (see example 11)

- **substitution** – source culture-bound term is replaced either by a different term or a paraphrase which does not have to involve a culture-bound term; this strategy might be divided into two groups: cultural substitution and paraphrase
 - **cultural substitution** – source culture-bound term is replaced by target culture-bound term (see example 10)
 - **paraphrase** – source culture-bound term is rephrased, either through reduction to sense or by complete removal of all culture-bound term using a paraphrase that fits the context instead (see examples 8 and 9)
- **omission** – source culture-bound term is simply left out, not being replaced (see example 7)

Example 7: episode 20 (Crane et al. 1995-96)

Monica: *Go Knicks!* [*Rozbijte je!*]

Richard: *It's the college playoff.* [*Je to školní turnaj.*]

Monica: *Then, go Vassar!* [*Aha, tak zlomte vaz!*]

Richard: *They're not in it.* [*Naši nehrajou.*]

Monica: *Ok, then just go!* [*Dobře, tak už běž!*]

The translator supposed that the Czech audience would not be familiar with the American names of teams and players; therefore they were avoided in the translation. Nevertheless I do not find the Czech version too coherent. In my opinion it would be better to either substitute the references by names recognized by the Czech audience or to retain the original names, supposing that most people in our country would know the basketball team the New York Knicks and that they would figure out that Vassar is probably a name of a college.

Example 8: episode 20 (Crane et al. 1995-96)

Monica: *Not to sound too Florence Henderson but dinner is on the table.* [*Drahoušku, nechci tě rušit od zábavy, ale večeře je na stole.*]

Florence Henderson is a famous American actress and singer and to an American citizen her name evokes many connotations for sure. The Czech audience would not probably be familiar with this name, thus it was elided in the translation but there was a light nuance of the originally intended sarcasm in the expression *drahoušku*.

Example 9: episode 18 (Crane et al. 1995-96)

Pheobe: *I have to go because I'm late for my Green Eggs and Ham discussion group. Tonight it is about why he would not eat them on a train. [Musím jít, protože jdu na skupinovou terapii. Probíráme proč nejíst vejce ve vlaku.]*

This translation is completely out of context. Background knowledge is needed on what *Green Eggs and Ham* means; it is one of best known English-language children's books. The main character called Sam-I-am is trying to persuade the other unnamed character in the story to try green ham and eggs suggesting a variety of places where the unnamed character could eat them such as house, car, tree, box or train. The other character always refuses to do so starting with words *I could not, would not...* Rather than preserving part of the information from the source text, the translator should have found a functional equivalent – some kind of nursery rhyme or short story of the Czech origin.

Example 10: episode 1 (Crane et al. 1994-95)

Phoebe (singing): *Raindrops on roses and whiskers on kittens, bluebells and sleighbells and something with mittens, lalala something and noodles with strings... [Podívej kočička, macíček spí, zavři má holčičko očička svý, lálálá, v chaloupce bdí...]*

In the scene Rachel is sitting on a sofa breathing in a paperbag, trying to calm down as she had just run away from the altar. There were two funny elements in the English version; firstly the song comes from the legendary musical *Sound of Music* and it is sung in a scene where one of the main characters, Fräulein Maria, is trying to cheer the children during a storm. And secondly Phoebe gets the lyrics totally wrong. In the Czech translation something that might remind of a lullaby was created. It could be said that the main feature was transferred, even though the translation is not equivalent.

Example 11: episode 11 (Crane et al. 1994-95)

Coma guy: *So, the Etch-a-Sketch is from you, guys? [Takže ta tabulka je od vás?]*

Etch a Sketch is a toy for drawing which was actually imported to Czech Republic as well, however no specific name is associated with it. What helps this situation is that the toy is shown on the screen therefore at least people who are familiar with it are lead on the right track.

9 DUBBING VS. SUBTITLING: SURVEY

I did not want my bachelor thesis to be based on my personal point of view only and therefore I decided to realize a small survey. The aim of this survey was to find out the preferences of temporary generation regarding the option of dubbing and subtitling. The age group of my focus were people from 15 to 26 years of age, the number of respondents was 168 and the information concerning education and language skills of the participants is displayed in the graphs which are to be seen in the appendix of this thesis.

According to the survey 74.47% of the respondents would appreciate if the Czech Republic became a non-dubbing country that means all telecasting would be in the original language with subtitles and 90.07% believe it would help them to improve their language skills. 68.09% of the questioned also think that non-dubbing countries possess a great advantage in learning foreign languages.

What people considered to be the biggest disadvantage of dubbing were the errors in translation and differences between the source and the target text, on the other hand, the biggest constraint in subtitling seemed to be the disturbing effect of subtitles on the screen. Even despite this fact, however, 75% of participants still preferably watch films and other television programmes in the original language (when there is such option) and only 21.99% give priority to the dubbed version.

This survey shows that people who prefer subtitling to dubbing nowadays outnumber the group in favour of dubbing. This might have been caused by the fact that most of the film and cinema production imported to Czech Republic is either of British or American origin and the knowledge of English is presently remarkably higher than it used to be. In the future, subtitling could therefore at least partly replace dubbing, not only due to educational but also financial reasons.

CONCLUSION

The thesis starts with the definition of the term humour as such. This chapter highlights the importance of translator's perfect background knowledge of both source and target culture when translating humorous text. If this knowledge is not sufficient, the translator might not only get translation wrong but s/he might not even be aware of the appearance of humour in the text. The first step to successful translation of humour is thus its recognition within the text which might be quite complicated if there is no sound stage. Several methods of approach were introduced in this chapter and their appropriateness of usage in Friends translation was further debated. Later on, different linguistic clashes that might appear in humour translation were defined, such as idioms and word-plays. Based on observation, when an idiom appears in Friends it is usually omitted. The reason for this might be the fact that it would be too complicated to look for an idiomatic expression in Czech which would be equivalent and, moreover, in which the entertaining effect would be preserved. Omission of an idiom is not usually even observed by the target audience as the flow of humour in Friends is very fast, one joke being immediately followed another one. Translation of word-plays provides wider range of possibilities in comparison with translation of idioms which is proved on individual extracts from Friends. Several types of word-plays are presented together with possible solutions of their translation. The issue of translation of politeness, English dialects and slang is only briefly commented on as explanation of these phenomena would require much deeper focus and as they are not fundamental for this thesis, they are not discussed in more details.

Although all methods of transfer of audiovisual translation were defined, only two of them were elaborated as they are the ones used in Friends translation – dubbing and subtitling. Both dubbing and subtitling are influenced by several constraints which make these types of translation different from the literary one. As it implies from the thesis, there are many situations in which the textual content could be easily transferred but it has to be changed completely only due to synchronisation. Another significant constraint of audiovisual translation is the need of interaction between image and sound. This was, again, more closely displayed on several examples from Friends dubbing. Although the translation can be sometimes more precise in subtitling, there are some negative factors as well that have to be taken into consideration, such as limited space on the screen or the disturbing effect that does not enable the audience to focus on the image. To gain an objective picture of

what are the preferences of the Czech community when it comes to the choice between dubbing and subtitling, a small survey was done in the scope of this thesis. The survey focused on the age group from 15 to 26 and the results have shown that 75% prefer the original version to the dubbed one. 72,6% of the participants would also appreciate if Czech Republic became a non-dubbing country. Subtitling could therefore at least partly substitute dubbing in the future considering its not only educational but also financial advantages.

The last part of this thesis deals with the terms globalisation, localisation, formal and dynamic equivalence and culture-bound terms. One of the steps crucial for the translator is to realize whether a term needs to be localized or not, that means whether it has to be adapted to local standards which are familiar to the target audience. Nowadays, with the world becoming more and more integrated, it might happen that translators will experience troubles in the judgement of what is recognized by the target culture and what is not. Deeper knowledge of countries which most of the film and cinema production is exported from, such as America or England, might reduce the necessity of adaptation and thus the source text could gain more resemblance to the target text. The concept of formal and dynamic equivalence is explained in the paper from point of view of several linguists. The output of this chapter is that no method can be considered to be the most appropriate one. The translator has to assess the situation and sometimes create a mixture of several approaches at once to achieve the best result.

Both audiovisual translation and translation of humour undoubtedly deserve attention of temporary linguists. Multimedia are nowadays the main source of information and entertainment and therefore they very easily influence people's ways of thinking and expressing. Multimedia might become the main source of corpus in the future and that is why the development of multimedia translation should be under constant supervision of specialists.

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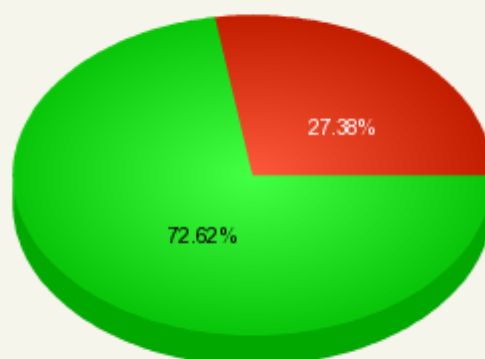
APPENDICES

Dubbing vs. Subtitling: Survey

APPENDIX: DUBBING VS. SUBTITLING: SURVEY



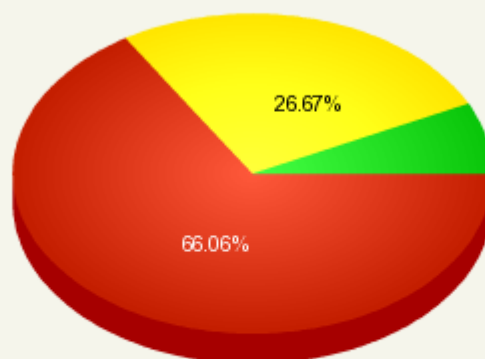
Přáli byste si, aby české televizní stanice vysílaly v originálním znění s titulky?



■ ano: 122 (72.62%)
■ ne: 46 (27.38%)

zdroj: <http://dabing-vs-titulky.vyplnto.cz>

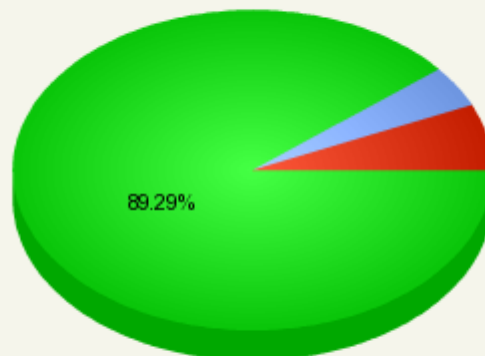
Jaké je Vaše nejvyšší dosažené vzdělání?



■ střední škola: 109 (66.06%)
■ vysoká škola: 44 (26.67%)
■ základní škola: 12 (7.27%)

zdroj: <http://dabing-vs-titulky.vyplnto.cz>

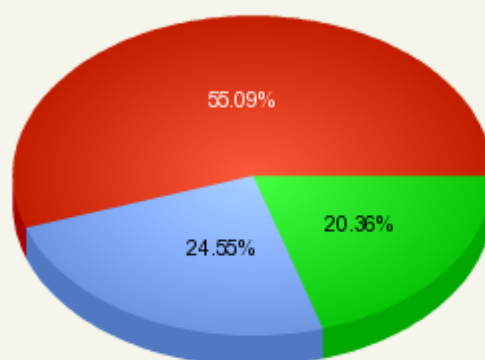
Myslíte si, že by vysílání v původním jazyce přispělo k prohlubování Vašich jazykových znalostí?



■ ano: 150 (89.29%)
■ nevím: 7 (4.17%)
■ ne: 11 (6.55%)

zdroj: <http://dabing-vs-titulky.vyplnto.cz>

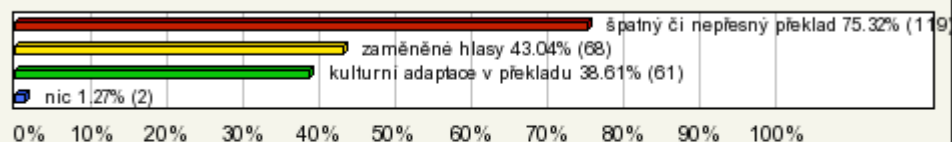
Myslíte, že by v budoucnu z důvodu globalizace mohly titulky úplně nahradit dabing?



■ ano: 34 (20.36%)
■ nevím: 41 (24.55%)
■ ne: 92 (55.09%)

zdroj: <http://dabing-vs-titulky.vyplnto.cz>

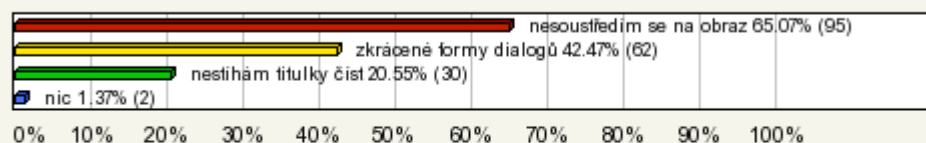
Co je podle Vás největší nevýhoda dabingu?



- špatný či nepřesný překlad: 119 (75.32%)
- zaměněné hlasy: 68 (43.04%)
- kulturní adaptace v překladu: 61 (38.61%)
- nic: 2 (1.27%)

zdroj: <http://dabing-vs-titulky.vyplnto.cz>

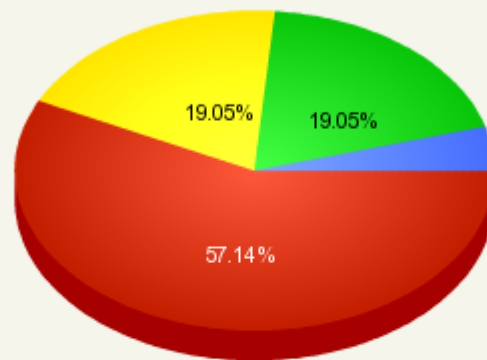
Co je podle Vás největší nevýhoda titulků?



- nesoustředím se na obraz: 95 (65.07%)
- zkrácené formy dialogů: 62 (42.47%)
- nestíhám titulky číst: 30 (20.55%)
- nic: 2 (1.37%)

zdroj: <http://dabing-vs-titulky.vyplnto.cz>

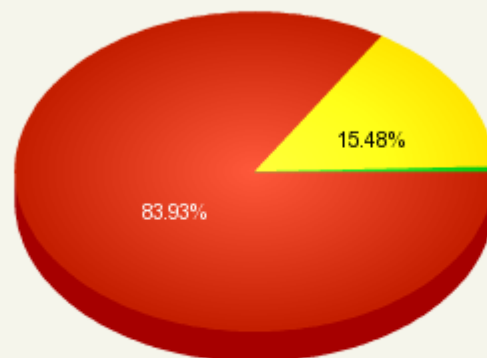
Jaká je Vaše znalost anglického jazyka?



- pokročilá: 96 (57.14%)
- plynulá: 32 (19.05%)
- základní: 32 (19.05%)
- žádná: 8 (4.76%)

zdroj: <http://dabing-vs-titulky.vyplnto.cz>

Jaký je Váš věk?



- 16-25: 141 (83.93%)
- 26 a více: 26 (15.48%)
- 0-15: 1 (0.6%)

zdroj: <http://dabing-vs-titulky.vyplnto.cz>