Subtitling Humor - the Case Study of The Big Bang Theory

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Odjel za anglistiku
Preddiplomski sveučilišni studij engleskog jezika i književnosti (dvopredmetni)

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Zadar, 2016.

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Subtitling Humor – The Case Study of *The Big Bang Theory*

Abstract

This thesis presents the detailed study of audiovisual translation within the wider discipline of Translation Studies, its two main modalities, dubbing and subtitling as well as their theory, practice and issues met in the process. One particular challenge analyzed in the case of subtitling is the translation of humor, being the focus of many academics in the field and outside of it. Given the fact that audiovisual translation of humor exemplifies an enterprising task, there are several factors taken into account, including cultural and linguistic aspects of the target and the source language. Thus, the aim of this thesis is to present these challenges, as well as to portray how the elements of humor navigate from one culture to another (English to Croatian) through the translational method of subtitling in the case of the American situational comedy *The Big Bang Theory*.

Key words: *Audiovisual Translation, Subtitling, Humor*

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Introduction

The significance of image and sound in our everyday lives is unquestionable since we live in a digital era, where communication, broadcasting information and entertainment depend on the use of screens and technology, marking the importance of a field like audiovisual translation. This thesis will examine the concept of audiovisual translation as an area of study in the field of Translation Studies, with focus being on the modality of subtitling, introducing it as one of the most developing areas of audiovisual translation and analyzing its characteristics and issues through different practical approaches and inner functional relations.

Also I have dedicated a segment of the paper to the interpretation of humor and the process of its translation, guided by its linguistic and cultural aspects and the way they are transferred in the process of subtitling. When we study humor, we have to analyze its fundamental functions in society in general. Being one of the essential segments of culture, it is considered that detailed signification of humor is crucial in coordinating national practice, as well as understanding a foreign culture and language.

Thus, the focal point of this study will be an examination of the subtitling of humor in the case of an American sitcom *The Big Bang Theory*, with distinct interpretation of its humorous instances, issues that occur in the process of its translation and the way they were presented in the target culture. The aim of this study is thus not only to bring awareness to the disregarded area of audiovisual translation, but also to review the various properties considered important in the evaluation of humor translation in the specific case of subtitling, including types of humor, as well as practical and technical difficulties.

1. Audiovisual Translation (AVT) – Theory, Modalities and Issues

1.1. The Theory of Audiovisual Translation

Firstly, in order to precisely define and analyze the notion of audiovisual translation, it is of high relevance to delve into a more thorough examination of Translation Studies (TS) itself, as it is undergoing an exceptional growth in interest as a field of studies in general.

Namely, the field of Translation Studies has experienced unparalleled development over the course of last few decades both as an academic discipline as well as a field of research and training, resulting in the rise of academic courses on translation, together with many organizations and publications being pursued, which is relevant for the translation issues and other under researched areas of Translation Studies, such as audiovisual translation itself. Although translation, for a long period of time, held a rather vague and imprecise position in academic practices, mostly just for acquiring new languages, lately it has obtained a sort of sovereignty when it comes to education, since it is no longer used merely as a tool for learning and teaching languages, but is being coached on its own and pursued as a professional career. Jorge Díaz-Cintas, the author of *The Didactics of Audiovisual Translation*, stated how with the expansion of honors degrees and new variety of postgraduate courses dedicated to translation and interpreting, "we have experienced a change of perception from academic translation to 'professional translation'" (3).

However, even though this upsurge of translation studies has brought awareness to the otherwise neglected area of audiovisual translation, audiovisual translation as a particular area of translation studies still remains quite disregarded both in theory and practice, and has yet to be fully evaluated and studied outside the general translation issues, which I will further analyze in the upcoming section.

1.1.1. The Historical Development of Audiovisual Translation

Primarily, we must assert how it is imperative for each particular discipline to be able to outline and portray all segments considered to be their object of study, as well as to securely tackle issues that come along with it (Chaume 1). Thus, an author of numerous articles and volumes on audiovisual translation and a professional translator for different TV channels, Frederic Chaume explains how audiovisual translation, being one of the fastest developing sectors within the field of translation, has yet to "find its rightful place in Translation Studies" (1).

Since the beginning of research on audiovisual translation, in the field of Translation Studies, there is an eager need for more vigorous theoretical structures to explore emerging textual concepts, new methodological challenges and apprehend new discourse communities brought together by the manufacture of audiovisual works. That is to say, besides certain studies on dubbing and subtitling, an insufficient number of authors have actually touched on the particularities regarding the creation of audiovisual texts, the type of communication produced in this synchronized emanation of text and image and its overall outcomes in the process of translation.

Even though audiovisual translation existed as a professional practice since the beginning of cinema, it only recently got the attention it deserved from the very start. Nonetheless, there are a selected few of pioneering works in this field, which attended to the difficulties of translation in general with reference to audiovisual translation. For example, there exist several articles from the 60s and 70s that cover subjects of subtitling and dubbing. The first studies in this field were mostly unofficial publications, and occasionally those papers would be simply passed around among professionals and academics, which unfortunately put a barrier on the bibliographical search into the beginnings of the discipline (Díaz-Cintas, *New Trends*

in Audiovisual Translation 1). Only in 1957, Lak's *Le sous-titrage de film* marked the very beginning of the research in this field, and is considered "the first volume ever to have been written on subtitling" (Díaz-Cintas, *New Trends in Audiovisual Translation* 2). Furthermore, Díaz-Cintas discusses how the 1960s and 1970s were barely focused on the subject of subtitling, although some articles on dubbing were published. Most of the works of this period primarily touched on the figure of the audiovisual translator, on the different translational stages as well as typical distinctions between subtitling and dubbing (2). In addition, Chaume proclaims Fodor's work (1976) to be the first to have set forth to the research in this area of study, which he defines as "the analysis of the process from a professional perspective and in the insistence/fixation on the adaptation of translation to the movements of the mouths of screen characters" (3). Chaume then continues to list other authors who contributed to the development of research on AVT, such as Titford, Mayoral, Kelly, Gallardo, Whitman and Ivarsson, as well as the most notable ones: Luyken at al. with his descriptive study (1991) and Gottlieb's work on subtitles and idioms (1997) (3). The proper beginning of a real outbreak of audiovisual research can be traced to the 1990s which Díaz-Cintas calls the "AVT's golden age", when "the field became the object of more systematic research from a translational perspective in educational, scholarly and professional circles" (*The Didactics of Audiovisual Translation* 3). All of these aforementioned researchers are immensely responsible for the growing interest in AVT studies in the last couple of decades which has caused audiovisual translation to "come of age", as Díaz-Cintas would put it (*The Didactics of Audiovisual Translation* 2) and now has become one of the most productive sub-disciplines of translation studies.

Yet, from an educational viewpoint, audiovisual translation has not been well institutionalized in the global educational system, at least not to the extent as the general disciplines of translation studies. The number of institutions, that have assigned independent modules and courses on any kind of audiovisual translation, subtitling, dubbing or voice-over, unfortunately is very scarce. On the bright side, the condition has improved immensely in recent years, since more and more universities offer modules on AVT, as well as undergraduate and postgraduate programs.

Furthermore, Díaz-Cintas goes on to describe how the first technological revolution that occurred in the second half of the 1990s was introduced into the training and the beginning of professional practice of AVT (*The Didactics of Audiovisual Translation* 5). Computer alone accompanied with specific subtitling software and the upcoming developments in digital technology unquestionably facilitated the process of audiovisual translation and have become an integral part of both the AVT industry and academic training (Díaz-Cintas, *The Didactics of Audiovisual Translation* 5). Likewise, with the advanced technologies and globalization initiating a new digital age, the production and distribution of audiovisual text will inevitably grow and spread even more rapidly and AVT itself might eventually have a chance on receiving the well-deserved attention.

1.2. Modalities of Audiovisual Translation

Nowadays, audiovisual translation incorporates a selection of different methods, which fall into two main categories: subtitling and revoicing (including lip-synchronized dubbing, voice-over, narration, free commentary, and simultaneous interpreting), along with the so-called assistive forms of AVT (such as subtitling for the hard of hearing, respeaking and audio description) providing those with sensory

impairment with a fitting source of information and amusement (Luis Pérez-González 12). Despite the fact that scholars like Gambier (1994) and Díaz Cintas (1999) characterize almost ten distinctive methods of translating audiovisual texts, in this section I will mainly focus on the two major modalities: subtitling and dubbing, delivering a more detailed presentation with the aim of introducing their most important characteristics and showcasing how they have progressed over time.

1.2.1 Subtitling – Definition, Practice and Issues

Firstly, we generally define subtitling as a "translational practice" in cinematic media that encompasses a precisely configured written text, commonly presented in the shape of one or several lines on the lower part of the screen, which thus attempts to communicate the original verbal messages of the speakers in a more condensed manner, "as well as the discursive elements that appear in the image (letters, inserts, graffiti, inscriptions, placards, and the like), and the information that is contained on the soundtrack (songs, voices off)", as Díaz Cintas and Aline Remael indicated in their book *Audiovisual Translation: Subtitling* (8). In other words, subtitling could be described as "the rendering in a different language" of a certain dialogue or narration being "in sync with the original written message" (Gottlieb 87), which is after all the ultimate goal of the whole process itself.

However, the existence of a variety of restrictions and rules imposed on the process of subtitling makes the aim of transferring the original message in the target language that much more complex and challenging. Audiovisual programs contain two codes, image and sound, so, as Díaz Cintas and Aline Remael state, unlike literature which induces, films and TV shows essentially embody and actualize the reality based on the combination of these codes (9). Therefore, the interaction of these

two codes with the subtitles, along with the observer's capability to simultaneously and quickly absorb the images and the provided text are continually taken into consideration in the process of subtitling.

Additionally, there are various other perplexing factors that characterize as well as constrain the complete process of subtitling. Besides the basic need for image-text synchrony (meaning the subtitles being in linear relationship with the characters' actions and speech), subtitles must "provide a semantically adequate account of the SL dialogue, and remain displayed on screen long enough for the viewers to be able to read them" (Díaz Cintas and Remael 9).

Moreover, subtitling has been described as a "diasemiotic" or "intermodal" form of audiovisual translation (Gottlieb 95), since it demands a transition from oral to written, which inevitably involves certain lexical elements to be omitted from the original text in order to fit the spatial and temporal requirements. This suggests that the dimensions of the screen are fixed, hence requiring the target text to be adapted and essentially abridged.

Another reason for this reduction is the fact that the viewer should be given enough time to read the subtitles while at the same time paying attention to the imagery, some might even say subconsciously, as if they are not even aware that they are reading. And, since subtitling is "a form of linguistic transfer characterized by the fact that only two lines of text can appear on the screen" (Antonini 213), this oral to written transition is one of the most demanding tasks for audiovisual translators and is extremely important for the viewers' understanding of the translated text. For this reason, Rachele Antonini, an Italian researcher in audiovisual translation and humor studies, claims that the text appearing on the screen should contain "in general terms, to international standards and more specifically, to the subtitling system employed, a

number of characters between 20 and 40 per line", reducing the original dialogue from forty to even seventy-five percent (213).

Furthermore, the fact that audiovisual translators are principally guided by these principles of reduction and summarization of the original discourse has set out to "compromise the interpersonal pragmatics of subtitled dialogue" (Luis Pérez-González 16). For instance, audiovisual translators usually gravitate towards avoiding ambiguity of the original text even though it might have had a significant meaning and should have been introduced in the translation as well (Hatim and Mason 1997). What is more, Pérez-González observes in his *Audiovisual Translation: Theories, Methods and Issues* how obeying to these restrictions "proves detrimental to the dynamics of dramatic characterization envisaged by the creator of the original audiovisual text" (16), especially in films and TV series. This often resulted in characters' personalities to be portrayed differently than the film director has envisioned in the original, which consequently led to many film directors to criticize the outcomes of these restraints in the process of subtitling.

As another result of these restrictions, a question of characterization of audiovisual production arises, since there is an ongoing debate in the field whether audiovisual production is rather a form of adaptation than a type of translation, which might have contributed to the fact that AVT has not yet found its rightful place within the field of Translation Studies and has been regarded as a practice of lesser value, "a linguistic transfer that is clearly inadequate but nonetheless justified since it is only a case of adaptation" (Díaz Cintas and Remael 9).

Diaz-Cintas and Remael further mention another scholar, Katharina Reiss, who was one of the first to eliminate this doubt and to underpin and advance the idea of audiovisual production being an actual type of translation. She generated a

classification of different types of texts of "greater semiotic complexity" along with an extra "hyper-text type" called "audio-medial text type", which she describes as "a superstructure that takes into account the special characteristics of the spoken language and oral communication, and sits above the three basic communicative situations and corresponding text types" (qtd. in *Audiovisual Translation: Subtitling* 10). Likewise, they agree with Mayoral Asensio's approach on this issue who goes on to say, "Our role is not to close the door on new realities but to favor and encourage them. We need open definitions that can be modified both to envelop new realities (sign language interpretation, multimedia, text production), and to get rid of those that have ceased to be useful and necessary" (qtd. in *Audiovisual Translation: Subtitling* 10), as they also believe translation should be evaluated from a more adaptable, open-minded and unfixed standpoint, one that accepts the fluidity of translational practice and understands the flexible nature of translation itself (Díaz Cintas and Remael 10-11).

Even so, despite it receiving a vast amount of criticism and disapproval, subtitling as a form of audiovisual translation has numerous advantages and is definitely more positively embraced than any other type of audiovisual translation (i.e. dubbing), as it is usually linked with intellectual and prestigious audience. Equally, there are no significant alterations of the original, source language when it comes to the subtitling process, since the original dialogue remains intact while subtitles only supplement it, which gives the viewers, who are acquainted with the language of the source dialogue, an opportunity to follow it simultaneously (Munday 150). On that note, we might even add how subtitles potentially support learning foreign languages or at least serve as a teaching tool when it comes to learning them.

Finally, it is important to state that subtitling is definitely a distinctive type of translation, for two particular reasons: 1) the translation is added and does not replace the original, source text, unlike other types of translation; 2) all the components that are undesirable (e.g. hesitations, false starts, taboo, language, etc.), are omitted in the transfer from oral to written, thus making subtitling as a process "unable to conform to 'real' writing by virtue of the fact that they are reflecting speech" (Munday 151).

When it comes to classifying subtitles, they are typically categorized from the linguistic perspective, through which Díaz-Cintas distinguishes the following types: 'intralingual', 'interlingual' and 'bilingual' subtitles, for which I will provide a brief explanation based on Diaz-Cintas and Remael's detailed analysis of linguistic parameters (14-17):

Firstly, intralingual subtitling encompasses several subtypes (SDH or subtitles for the deaf and the hard-of-hearing, subtitles for language learning purposes, subtitles for Karaoke effect and subtitles for dialects of the same language, for notices and announcements), and it does naturally demand a shift from oral to written, but it remains in the sphere of only one language. The first type, SDH, is devoted to people with hearing impairment, both for their interest and for the interest of the industry to secure a bigger demography. Second type of intralingual subtitling plays a role of a didactic tool for both teaching and learning of foreign languages. The authors continue to emphasize how watching films subtitled from other languages is beneficial for language learning, as it improves our linguistic skills and helps us "contextualize" both the language and the culture of a particular country. Furthermore, in this practice the soundtrack (vocabulary, intonation, pronunciation) is very much taken into account, since it assists us to further acquaint ourselves with peculiarities of a certain language. Along with that, images accustom us to the general

behavior and mannerisms characteristic of the culture, such as gesticulation, style and interpersonal relationships. Similarly, it can be argued that SDH also might serve as a useful educational tool for people who have a partial knowledge of a country's language or have recently been immersed in a new, unknown culture, such as immigrants and foreign students. The third type, which is karaoke, although mainly used for entertainment, has recently gained extreme popularity and is being used in songs and musicals for the audience to sing along to. Moreover, there exists another type of intralingual subtitling which is used in films for the dialogues of people who have an incomprehensible accent that requires subtitles for the audience even though they speak the same language. This type of intralingual subtitling habitually occurs in languages that are spoken throughout the whole world, such as English, Spanish and French, where the instances of various accents are more common. One example would be the British film *Trainspotting* where the actors spoke with a strong Scottish accent which audiences of other English speaking countries would not necessarily understand so the movie had to be featured in United States with English subtitles. The final category of intralingual subtitling that the author describes we might encounter in underground stations and other public areas where subtitling is used for advertisement purposes, permitting the information to be delivered without sound, so it does not interrupt the public.

The second major type of subtitling called interlingual subtitling entails the aforementioned mainstream type of translation from source to a target language, which includes a shift from one language to another, as well as from oral to written. Until several years back, there was a general distinction between interlingual subtitling, considered to be for the "hearers", and intralingual, for the deaf, which now is being discounted thanks to the introduction of interlingual subtitling for the deaf

through DVD distribution. Generally, in the countries where dubbing is preferred to subtitling, such as Spain, Germany, Austria, France or Italy, people with hearing impairment could only watch programs that had been initially produced in the languages of that country, and subsequently subtitled intralingually into these languages, which made it very hard for the deaf and hearing impaired to access differently distributed information. Yet, with the introduction of the DVD the situation has immensely improved.

The third type is bilingual subtitling, which is employed in areas and countries where two languages are spoken. For example, in Belgian cinemas subtitles are both in French and Flemish in order to please both communities of the country. In Finland, bilingualism is equally respected, since Swedish is, along with Finnish, an official language. There are other examples as well, such as countries like Jordan and Israel, where Hebrew and Arabic are mutually presented on the bottom of the screen. Usually, to prevent the image to get overloaded with text, subtitlers use only two-liners, although four lines are not completely excluded. Ultimately, international film festivals also adopt bilingual subtitling, since utilizing them gives them a chance of appealing to a different range of audiences: film directors, producers, actors and viewers from all around the world.

In addition, Diaz-Cintas and Remael identify several other types of subtitle categorization: according to the time available for preparation, from a technical perspective, by the projection methods as well as by distribution format, which I will quickly examine in the following paragraph. Thus, from the first perspective, we distinguish the 'pre-prepared subtitles' ('offline subtitling') and live or 'real-time subtitles' ('online subtitling'). While the first are made after the program has been shot so the translators have enough time to prepare the work, the online subtitling or

live subtitling is, as the name says, performed live, simultaneously with the original program (Díaz Cintas and Remael 19). As for the second, technical perspective, we can identify two categories of subtitles: open and closed. Basically, in the case of open subtitles, they are "burned" or "projected" onto the image and cannot be detached, while the closed ones can be added to the program depending on the viewer's will (Díaz Cintas and Remael 21). Furthermore, there are various methods of projecting the subtitles, out of which the authors distinguish the following: mechanical and thermal subtitling, photochemical subtitling, optical subtitling, laser subtitling and electronic subtitling (Díaz Cintas and Remael 22). Lastly, we divide the subtitles into categories according to their distribution format (cinema, television, video or VHS, DVD, Internet), which highly affects the way subtitles are manufactured.

Likewise, subtitling has been proven useful for improving both reading and foreign-language skills. As featured in *Topics in Audiovisual Translation* by Pilar Orero*,* Henrik Gottlieb discusses how in a culture where the audiovisual media dominates, subtitles establish a successful reading practice for both adults and children (88). Also, as certain Belgian studies (Van de Poel and d'Ydewalle 2001) have shown, reading target-language subtitles while watching a production in a foreign language advances one's foreign-language vocabulary skills and overall language comprehension (Orero 88). Given the fact that Anglophone TV and film productions prevail the global audiences, learning of English language has been additionally heightened by the use of subtitles, and there is much evidence how people in European subtitling communities are more inclined to be fluent in English than those in dubbing countries (Orero 88).

All in all, the ongoing revolutions in the area of audiovisual translation in general, particularly "the mutually shaping relationship between audiovisual translation and technological innovation" (Pérez-González 13) generate new methods of production and distribution of audiovisual products as well as new "subtitling cultures" (such as 'fansubbing'), which intend to showcase the limitations of conventional subtitling (Pérez-González 17). More precisely, 'fansubbing', which Pérez-González defines as the subtitling of films and television series by "networked fan communities", produce and distribute their own original and more 'authentic' subtitled versions through Internet platforms, thus bringing awareness to the otherwise culturally insensitive, conventional translations (17).

1.2.2. Dubbing – Definition, Practice and Issues

After a detailed clarification of subtitling as one of the key methodologies of audiovisual translation, I will continue the analysis with a little less detailed examination of the second most developed approach to dealing with the transfer of source language of the original program into another language, which is dubbing. Before I give any further details on dubbing, there is an important distinction to be clarified. Namely, when speaking of oral output of the source dialogue remaining in the same format in the target language, where the original soundtrack is substituted with a new one in the target language, the process is commonly known as 'revoicing' (Díaz-Cintas *New Trends in Audiovisual Translation* 4). This is when we distinguish between 'dubbing' and 'voiceover', where in the first case the viewer can no longer hear the "original exchanges" (which is also known as lip-syncing), while in the second one, the replacement is partial, which means that the original dialogue may still be heard in the background (Díaz-Cintas *New Trends in Audiovisual Translation*

4). Thus, to properly define dubbing, we might say it is a process of audiovisual translation, which involves "the replacement of the original speech by a voice track which attempts to follow as closely as possible the timing, phrasing and lip-movements of the original dialogue" (Luyken *et al*. 31), endeavoring to achieve a certain level of synchronicity so that the viewers get the impression of actors actually speaking their, in fact target, language.

Secondly, I would like to inquire into the whole process of dubbing, for which we usually discern two different methods, one of which is the traditional, more complex, 'artisan' way of producing, while the second one, which is quite a recent development in the dubbing process, is more digitally supported.

As a rule, there exist four necessary steps into successfully accomplishing the traditional dubbing process, which I will concisely identify based on Delia Chiaro's interpretation featured in *The Routledge Companion to Translation Studies* edited by Jeremy Munday (144-146). In the first place, the original script is translated, usually being a 'word for word' translation, and the dubbing industry even hires translators purely to deliver a literal translation of the original script which is afterwards adapted to sound as close as possible to the target-language dialogue. Chiaro, an Interpreting and Translation professor and researcher at Università di Bologna, points out that it is required of the 'dubbing translator' to be highly competent in the source language, and yet resourceful and imaginative enough in the target language to provide a substantial result. The second step equals adaptation, since the process further demands the translated dialogue to accommodate well with the image and visual aspects, such as lip movement, facial expressions, gestures etc. In the meantime, 'the dubbing director', whom she defines as "a project manager who supervises the entire dubbing process" (Munday 145) selects the 'dubbing actors' that will fulfill the

requirements, regarding their voice quality and talent. Simultaneously, the 'dubbing assistant' splits the film track into the so-called 'takes' or loops, marking them with a 'time code' at their beginning and end. The actors then watch the recordings, and listen to the dialogues in each of the takes, at the same time preparing the translated script. When the actors' speech reaches synchrony with the original visual features, the recording of the final dialogue begins. Afterwards, the crew takes care of certain details, such as harmonizing the dubbed tracks with the international one as well as with the music and background noises, as to make the final product as convincing as possible.

Comparatively, Chiaro also references the second, quite recent approach to dubbing, which involves digital technology as the basic tool and entails a simplified, less expensive dubbing process. This new approach has many advantages, especially since it is faster, cheaper and gives the actors more liberty while recording. Also, she states how with this method, there is no need for the dubbing assistant to divide the original footage into takes since the actors did not need to be separated into numerous shifts, and each of them could record their part individually at different times, whose recordings would then be edited together using a special software. Besides simplifying the recording part of the dubbing process, this new technology enabled new lip sync and improved voice quality modifications, to put it differently, "the original sequence can be modified to sync the actors' lip motions to the new soundtrack" (Munday 146).

With all of this in mind, I feel the need to also address some additional general advantages and disadvantages covered in Delia Chiaro's study, since dubbing has always been instinctively associated with its rivalry with subtitling, and has, since the beginning of research on AVT, been denounced as well as praised for various reasons.

In comparison to subtitling, dubbing has always been accused of spoiling the original soundtrack and not giving audiences the privilege of hearing the original soundtrack. Nevertheless, the author argues that dubbing is actually the only modality of audiovisual translation that is "able to fulfill the greatest filmic uniformity with the original simply by virtue of the fact that there is no need to reduce or condense the source dialogues as in subtitling" (Munday 147). On the other hand, when a film or a TV series is dubbed, the viewers actually have the opportunity to absorb the movie as a whole since there are no subtitles there to distract them in an attempt to concentrate on reading the dialogues. Indeed, dubbing is unquestionably more complex, arduous and thus more expensive than subtitling, especially given the fact that more people are involved in the whole process, such as the aforementioned dubbing director, translator, dubbing translator, actors, sound engineers, etc. Finally, the author concludes that even though digital technology might ease the process both temporally and financially, it is still questionable whether the quality is as respectable as the one of the 'artisan' approach to dubbing.

1.3. General Issues in Audiovisual Translation

Even though both subtitling and dubbing have their differences and face their specific set of issues, they still do encounter several common problems. Given the fact that translating filmic products requires the translator to take into consideration the synchrony of both acoustic and visual elements makes the process that much more perplexed. Nevertheless, besides their individual tussles, both subtitlers and dubbing translators have to also withstand these three categories of translational struggles: highly culture-specific references, language-specific features and areas of overlap between language and culture (Munday 155).

To begin with, culture-specific references (shortly CSRs) are defined as "entities that are typical of one particular culture, and that culture alone, either exclusively or predominantly visual (an image of a local or national figure, a local dance, pet funerals, baby showers), exclusively verbal or else both visual and verbal in nature" (Munday 156). Antonini has acknowledged ten different areas of CSRs in her work *The Perception of Subtitled Humour in Italy: An Empirical Study*, in D. Chiaro (ed.) *Humor International Journal of Humor Research*, thus listing the following: institutions (judiciary, police, military, such as legal formulae and topography), educational references to 'high school' culture (grading systems, sororities, etc.), place names (The District of Columbia, 42nd Street, etc.), units of measurement (ounces, pounds, yards), monetary systems (dollars, pounds), national sports and pastimes (American football, baseball: The Nicks, Brooklyn Dodgers, etc.), food and drink (pancakes), holidays and festivities (Halloween, St Patrick's, 4th of July, Thanksgiving, etc.), books, films and TV programs, and lastly, celebrities and personalities (39).

Chiaro then addresses the usual three ways of dealing with these kinds of references: the first one being 'chunking up', or generalizing the CSR in the target language "through the adoption of hyperonymy"; the second one, called 'chunking down', which is substituting them with more specific references in the target language; and thirdly, 'chunking sideways' and substituting the CSR with same level equivalents (qtd. in Katan 147).

Moreover, in regards to language-specific features it is crucial to address the fact that there is a tendency in AVT to efface the sociolinguistic markers such as accent, variety and slang of the characters, as they all in the process of translation embrace a standard variety of the target language. In the matter of subtitling, the

translator might focus on attempting to distinguish the characters' speeches, even though Chairo argues how "transcribing the subtitles in any variety other than the standard would be unprecedented" (Munday 158).

Lastly, it is important to discuss the pragmatic features such as politeness and forms of address that also are a source of struggle for audiovisual translators. Markedly, standard modern English has a single 'you' form, which consequently has to be distinguished in languages that have both informal and polite forms of this address (like French and Japanese) (Munday 160). Besides, translator also have to keep in mind the obstacle that are the discourse markers and fillers, which are often first to be omitted for the sake of the numerous restrictions being imposed in the process. The author also claims that audiovisual translators "have to deal with what many consider to be offensive language" (Munday 160). Finally, there are certain 'fuzzy areas' such as songs, metaphors, rhymes and verbally expressed humor, which are considered to be exceedingly challenging. In the process of dubbing, the songs are traditionally both translated and sung in the target language, but can be also remain in their original form, either subtitled or left untranslated (Munday 162). Remarkably, the category of verbally expressed humor is regarded as especially complex and demanding to translate and incorporate in the final audiovisual product, for which reason I will dedicate a whole chapter explaining the issues and the process itself.

2. Humor and Translation of Humorous Audiovisual Texts

2.1. The Concept of Humor in Translation Studies

When we refer to humor as a precisely human capacity or quality for acquiring and using systems of communication "to make a situation or entertainment funny" (MacMillan English Dictionary for Advanced Learners 702), we frequently introduce it as a social and cultural phenomenon, profoundly ingrained in each culture and its linguistic context. To understand a certain nation or culture's humor, it is important for the translator to acquire knowledge of that particular culture, and give meaning to social relations experienced. Study of humor itself is important on its own terms and is difficult to advance on the topic of its translation without a clear sense on the adaptive quality of language functionality and cultural background. Some argue that the question of humor and its translatability, among other under-researched areas, remains unresolved in the field of Translation Studies. However, others state that the audiovisual practice of comedic translating has proved humor to be somehow translatable (Díaz Cintas and Remael 212).

Even other fields of studies make humor their object of study, such as psychology, sociology and linguistics, trying to clarify the sources of humor and to portray its features. Therefore, many linguists, among which Salvatore Attardo, professor and the editor-in-chief of *Humor*, the journal for the International Society of Humor Research, outline the concept of humor as an "all-encompassing category, covering any event or object that elicits laughter, amuses, or is felt to be funny" (Attardo 4). Yet, the author resumes by saying how this common principle that inspires the working definition of humor – laughter, brings us to an assumption that what makes people laugh is necessarily humorous. Thus, author continues, "the

property is incorrectly seen as symmetrical", meaning that what is funny makes you laugh and what makes you laugh is funny (10).

Furthermore, as I have mentioned before, cultural and social references play an important role in the translation of humor, since humor by itself does not function in isolation, but is always imbedded in its own context (dialogue in which it occurs) as well as socio-cultural and linguistic one (Díaz Cintas and Remael 214). To return to the question of humor's translation, it is important to testify the extent to which humor can be transferred from one language to another and how. It is a well-known fact that humor represents a great challenge for translators, as in the process of its translation many factors have to be taken into account. The translator has to decide whether the target language viewer comprehends the humor, and then make source humor efficient in the target culture.

Díaz-Cintas and Remael break down a set of steps translators give thought to in order to overcome this challenge: firstly, they have to understand the humoristic aspect of the text, pinpointing the clues, the "incongruities", but also the "comic repertoires" associated with a particular humoristic genre or frequently applied tricks like exaggeration and understatement (214). Formerly, they must discover how to transfer the source humor into the target language and then contrive it into the final outcome, which will incite a similar humorous effect as the source text.

On the topic of translating humorous texts, it is crucial to anticipate the general translation issues that translators often encounter, such as the presence of puns, wordplay, stereotypes or the aforementioned cultural references. This is what Díaz Cintas calls 'realia', which he explicates as "cultural realities that do not have an exact equivalent in the target culture, which tend to be very difficult to translate" (*New Trends in Audiovisual Translation* 134). This means that if the translator cannot

necessarily find the equivalent in the target language, he might opt for literal translation or completely omitting the elements.

Moreover, several authors differentiate between verbal and referential humor, regarding the nature of the disjunctor and connector. Attardo describes the referential humor to be "based exclusively on the meaning of the text and do not make any reference to the phonological realization of the lexical items (or of other units in the text)", while the verbal humor additionally refers to the phonological realization of the text (95). He further stresses how both referential and verbal jokes are 'verbalized' jokes, jokes that are communicated through a linguistic system (96).

On the subject of their translation, verbal humor is considered to be one of the most puzzling areas of translation since it depends on the nature of language for which it is extremely difficult to find proper equivalents. Nevertheless, referential humor, which refers to a situation, is much simpler to translate because the translator has the possibility to change the situation and adjust it to fit the requirements of the target language. The issue with referential humor is that when it is audiovisually translated, the translator has to give thought to both the language and the audiovisual effects. In this case, mutual respect between the joke and image is crucial, which definitely limits translator's options.

2.2. Subtitling of Humorous Audiovisual Texts and Its Issues

Initially, considering the fact that translators generally already have a demanding task when it comes to verbal humor, it can be disclosed that the challenge is further increased in the context of audiovisual translation. Having been extensively researched in the field of psychology, the perception of humor was, however, severely neglected in its relationship with translation (Antonini 209). And when we immerge

in the research on the perception of translated humor, especially one rendered into another language by subtitles, we discover how it is an even more overlooked area of study (Antonini 210), for which reason I chose to additionally address the issue.

As Chiaro stated in *On the (Un)Translatability of Puns on Screen* (2000), translation (precisely the one abbreviated in the form of subtitles) "is not as straightforward as the translation of written, totally verbal word play, or even of the interpretation of an orally produced pun" (qtd. in Antonini 212). Since in the audiovisual context humor is transferred both verbally and visually and depends both on images and words to achieve its main goal (i.e. to entice laughter) (Antonini 212), its translation remains undoubtedly one of the most demanding tasks in the field of audiovisual translation where the translation's choice is reduced by the visual and audial aspect of the medium. So, since the visual and audial aspect of the medium reduces the translator's choice, subtitling it further obliges translators' discernment and resourcefulness, as well as their prioritizing skills (Díaz-Cintas and Remael 215).

Also, Díaz-Cintas and Remael point out how humor can appear in different scenarios: "it can arise from the interaction between word and image, or a play on words, but it can just as well be an integral part of the story plot, reside in experiments with genre features and intertextuality, etc.", which then specifies the degree of its translatability (215). However, occasionally laughter is more vital than transferring the accurate meaning of the text, and sometimes it is the other way round, which is why Patrick Zabalbeascoa suggests in his study *Translating Jokes for Dubbed Television Situation Comedies* three planes according to which translators' priorities should be arranged. First, he marks a vertical scale of importance, where a certain example may be of top priority, a very low one or somewhere in between. Secondly, there exists a horizontal scale, which designates if humor is a global priority (for the

whole text) or a rhetorical device used locally (in an exchange). Lastly, there is a scale of the so-called equivalence-non-equivalence, which decides whether there is a need for translation equivalence to the source text (qtd. in Díaz-Cintas and Remael 215).

Not only is the translation of humor dictated by the genre of audiovisual text, but also by many external factors, since translation is not always the most practical choice. On the other hand, many clashes with the images or the logic might stem from the adaptation. Nevertheless, both the target context and the genre should be taken into account when it comes to subtitling and this is the reason why translators tend to be more careful when it comes to translating classics rather than soap operas and sitcoms. Whatever the case, it is of high significance to accurately estimate the importance of humorous instances in the text, as it will enable translators to produce suitable equivalents.

In some television sitcoms and soaps, humor can even be revealed by the use of 'canned' laughter, which showcases the exact place where the humor occurs and thus easily attracts translators' attention on what exactly to focus (Díaz-Cintas and Remael 216). However, just as in each field of study, mistakes can happen, thus subtitles may sometimes fail to contrive a humorous translation at the exact time as in the source text because it might enter into a conflict with the image and the soundtrack. Still, the authors argue how this lack of synchrony is not always due to a meager translation, but can also be because of "inaccurate spotting" or other common differences between the source and target language (Díaz-Cintas and Remael 215). Despite that, in the end, the most important thing is that similar emotions are induced and that subtitles continue to support the bigger picture, keeping the audiences satisfied.

2.2.1. Classification of Audiovisual Humor

Having argued in the previous section that there are some challenges in subtitling humorous audiovisual material even in all the right circumstances, the question however surfaces as to which is the best way to go about translating it. Thus, this section will provide an overview of different types of humor that are consistently found in audiovisual products and strategies subtitlers use in their approach to translating them. This classification and its clarification are based on Zabalbeascoa's study *Translating Jokes for Dubbed Television Situation Comedies* (1996) and the six types of jokes in television comedies he distinguishes.

The first group the author comments are 'international' or 'bi-national' jokes where the humorous effect "does not depend on either language-specific word play or familiarity with unknown specific aspects of the source culture" (Zabalbeascoa 251). Díaz-Cintas and Remael further explain this in *Audiovisual Translation: Subtitling* by saying that "the referent of such jokes is part of the source culture, but the humorous effect is retained if the joke is transferred to the target text by way of a calque" and adds examples that are the object of this type of humor, such as internationally know celebrities, popular tourist destinations, notorious politicians or global events known by the general public, etc. (217).

Zabalbeascoa further unfolds another type: jokes referring to a national culture or institution, which are usually centered on an institution or other cultural reference that is unfamiliar to the audience of a target language. Thus, this type of humor unquestionably mandates the use of adaptation in order to somehow keep the humoristic effect (252). However, if the general perception is that the audience might have knowledge about the particular reference, the item may be preserved. Nonetheless, translators should be cautious, as Díaz-Cintas argues, "borderline

between 'international', 'bi-national' or 'national' can be a tenuous and a subjective one" (220). He further gives an example of Halloween, a celebration widely celebrated among Anglophone cultures, which has become globally known due to North American horror movies, and now falls into the category of 'international' cultural references.

Furthermore, the third group refers to the jokes reflecting a community's sense of humor, which connotes a humor of a slightly different nature, humor that is defined as a country's or nationality's archetype (Zabalbeascoa 252). These kinds of jokes usually reflect one nation's 'inside jokes' targeting certain national communities or other nations, and often include religious undertones, prejudices, stereotypes or even racist instances. However, in her book *Foreword. Verbally Expressed Humor and Translation: An Overview of a Neglected Field,* Chiaro discusses a potential issue regarding community-based humor: she justifies how the translation of humor may be challenging between countries that speak the same language but are of a different culture, like UK and USA, showcasing how translation of humor is also a cultural and not only a linguistic issue (137-138).

To go back to the concept of verbally expressed humor, Zabalbeascoa features language-based jokes, which rely upon "features of natural language for their effect" (253), and comprise of puns and wordplay. This type of humor is habitually translated literally, and some scholars like Chiaro argue that substitution and compensation are sometimes the best method of translation in this case (136), even though results may not always be the most successful.

On that note, the authors mention Delabastita's (1996) classification of the most common types of lexical wordplay: "homophones (different writing, identical pronunciation), homographs (same spelling, different pronunciation), homonyms

(same spelling and pronunciation, different meaning), and paronyms (approximate sound and spelling)" (Díaz-Cintas and Remael 223), the reason being the fact that all of them are frequently featured in audiovisual products. The first step in translating these forms is to identify the envisioned purpose of the wordplay, which might not always be to achieve a humorous effect. Lastly, the author states how it is crucial for the language-dependent humor to be analyzed inside their co-text, as it will reduce the risk of translators pursuing word-by-word approaches.

The fifth category in Zabalbeascoa's classification are visual jokes, which convey the humorous effect through visually delivered information, commonly through characters' gestures, facial expressions or the 'typical suspense set-up' in which the viewer knows more about the situation than the characters themselves. Moreover, Díaz-Cintas enhanced Zabalbeascoa's categorization by adding another type – aural jokes, which incorporate noises, accents and intonation (Díaz-Cintas and Remael 227). Sometimes these metalinguistic features ask for translation, but in most cases they do not, since they often 'speak for themselves' (Díaz-Cintas and Remael 227).

Lastly, there exist 'complex jokes,' ones that integrate two or more of the aforementioned types, where cultural references, image, sound and linguistics might be intertwined. The author argues how the grouping of visual information and metaphor in particular, or culture-bound references and wordplay can be overwhelming for both the translator and the viewer (Díaz-Cintas and Remael 228).

Finally, I would like to point out that most of the literature on the subject of screen translation, whether general or the translation of humor, is mostly based on descriptive or prescriptive studies based on the comparative analysis of an audiovisual text both in their original and subtitled form, and rarely do we encounter any research

on the actual perception of translated humor. This issue was discussed in Antonini's *The Perception of Subtitled Humour in Italy: An Empirical Study*, where the author analyzed current research on the perception of translated humor and indicated that the usual approach does "uncover and analyze all the possible translating techniques and choices applied to screen translation and the point of view and the experience of the translator/subtitler", but it does not inform us about the audiences' perception of the final, subtitled version of the product nor its quality (215).

However, the author mentions one of the few contributions to this otherwise neglected approach to screen translation, which is the work of Fuentes Luque (2001), whose study on the perception of translated humor (*Estudio empírico sobre la recepción del humor audiovisual,* 2001) was based on the analysis of reactions of two groups of Spanish-speaking and one group of English-speaking viewers to an episode of Marx Brothers in its dubbed, subtitled as well as original forms (Antonini 215). This research proved his hypotheses which were "that Spanish viewers would prefer dubbing over subtitling, that humor is lost in translation, that people of different nationalities laugh at different things and that a literal translation of word play or other allusions hinders understanding" (Antonini 215).

3. Analysis of Subtitling Humor in the Case of *The Big Bang Theory*

3.1. Humor in the Case of The Big Bang Theory

Situational comedy is "a genre of comedy performance in which some recurring characters showcase audiences a series of humorous stories in a familiar environment such as a family home, workplace stores and so forth" (Ma, Jiang 2013). American sitcoms usually feature a 22 minutes long episodes with usually about 20 episodes per season. M. Ioppi Chile states in *The Sitcom Revisited: The Translation of Humor in A Polysemiotic Text* how sitcoms are suitable for humor analysis, for they "display different types of incongruities and superiority, as the result of audiovisual and linguistic elements interconnected; in addition, it usually reveals humor related to culture and to the world in the general" (168).

The Big Bang Theory, a popular American 'sitcom' (situational comedy) created and produced by Warner Bros Television and Chuck Lorre Productions, is "centered on physicists Sheldon Cooper and Leonard Hofstadter, whose geeky and introverted lives are changed when Penny, an attractive waitress and aspiring actress, moves into the apartment across from theirs" (*The Big Bang Theory About*). Penny soon joins their social group, which includes the equally geeky engineer Howard Wolowitz and astrophysicist Raj Koothrappali, "with Penny's common sense and social skills and the guys' geeky interests expanding each other's worlds" (*The Big Bang Theory About*). The newest additions to the group are Howard's wife Bernadette Rostenkowski-Wolowitz and Sheldon's girlfriend Amy Farrah Fowler. The sitcom aired in 2007, and its subtitled version has been broadcasting on Croatian television for years on the RTL2 channel.

In *The Big Bang Theory*, humor is extremely culture-specific which makes it a great challenge to translate. Actually, most of the humorous elements engage the

translator to tackle the obvious differences in culture, while still preserving the meaning of a joke in order to incite the same effect without compromising the overall coherence. Luckily, particular humorous instances are universal, comprehensive in any language or culture, thus in Croatian as well, and they are undeniably perceived as funny. The recurrent themes in the sitcom usually contain references to racism, religion, sex, sci-fi subculture, as well as the more general aspects, like politics and social institutions. The humor is mostly based on the usage of puns, sarcasm and insinuations about the American pop-culture, making the source-target language transfer rather a demanding task, which I will further analyze in the following section.

3.2. Analysis of Subtitling Humor from English to Croatian

In this section, the main goal will be to analyze the translation of humor into Croatian of the sitcom *The Big Bang Theory*, originally in English, according to Zabalbaescoa's and Díaz-Cintas' classification of jokes, the focal point being on evaluating the humorous outcome and the general quality of its translation into Croatian, in regards to the audiovisual synchrony, source-target language fidelity and overall comprehension. Also, I will pinpoint certain challenges and difficulties imaginably encountered in the process of its translation, making certain remarks and adding my own suggestions with other possible translational approaches and more suitable options. In this analysis I used examples from the following episodes: Season 1, episodes 16 (*The Peanut Reaction*) and 17 (*The Tangerine Factor*), Season 2, episode 1 (*The Bad Fish Paradigm*) and season 7, episodes 17 (*The Friendship Turbulence*), 18 (*The Mommy Observation*), 19 (*The Indecision Amalgamation*).

To begin with, one distinctive aspect of the sitcom is the fact that the all the main characters embody a certain stereotype, including racial and religious ones,

predominant in the American culture and society. For example, Penny embodies the typical "dumb blonde", an aspiring actress currently working as a waitress; Leonard, a typical nerd in love with a woman who is 'out of his league'; Sheldon, a former child prodigy coming from a typical Texas Christian background, now a successful physicist, who is an extremely socially incompetent 'sci-fi freak'; Raj, Indian astrophysicist, and Howard, a 'creepy Jewish nerd'. Through the portrayal of their stereotypical personalities and behavior, which heavily rely on exaggeration, a humorous effect is produced.

These stereotypes and culture-bound references form a humoristic base of the plot, since they are reflected in the majority of the sitcom's jokes and puns. Looking from Zabalbeascoa's point of view, we could view them as jokes reflecting a certain community's sense of humor, in this case the American culture. The translation of the culture-based humor is certainly problematic, especially when translating for a culture completely different from the source culture, such as the Croatian one. Thus, the audiences might not be acquainted with the culture-specific references and stereotypes, which becomes sort of a barrier for the translator. As inconvenient as it can be, the subtitlers usually tackle the stereotypes well by translating them literally, and in the case of cultural references, they stick with the original version or opt for adaptation, which I will observe in the following examples.

In S07E17, an educational reference important for the final humorous effect appears in the sentence "While showering topless, 16 minutes after brief side butt during a pillow fight with her *sorority* sisters." where the translator had chosen to "chunk sideways" and employ an equivalent "za vrijeme tučnjave u *sestrinstvu*", which exists in Croatian thanks to the popularity of American film and TV production in the country. However, later on we encounter a similar reference to a sorority, this

time with its specific name "Amy: Oh, she's cute. And smart. *Phi Beta Kappa*." which the translator could not avoid keeping it in its original form, leaving however a dose of uncertainty in the translation, as the audience might not be familiar with the use of Greek letters for American sorority names.

Another educational reference occurs in S02E01 where Penny tells Sheldon that she lied to Leonard about finishing community college. Here, the reference "community college" was wisely translated into "viša škola", which is the closest Croatian equivalent for this type of secondary school, which is usually looked down on. Also, in several episodes (including S07E19) there is a reference to The Cheesecake Factory, a popular American food chain, which the translator often omits for the sake of audience's comprehension. For instance, in this episode Penny comments how even her agent is thinking of taking a job at The Cheesecake Factory, which was subtitles as "Razmišlja da postane konobarica". Some of the aforementioned examples are not necessarily humorous, but do play a role in the production of humor by making us understand the overall context.

Another cultural reference in the S01E16 can be seen in Howard's inappropriate joke in an attempt to bribe the African American nurse by offering her money ("how about if I were to introduce you (holding up a five dollar bill) to the man who freed your people"), to which she responded with "unless my people were freed by Benjamin Franklin and his five twin brothers you are wasting your time" referring to a hundred dollar bill. This particular situation is a bit challenging, as literal translation is quite inevitable, which nevertheless gives the impression that the translator expects the audience to be informed about the American history and monetary system.

Furthermore, in S07E18 we find a joke about the perception of a religious community of Jews in Texas where Howards tells Sheldon how when "a Jew sits in front of a house in Texas that long, For Sale signs start to go up", which speaks for itself and highly unlikely loses the effect in translation ("Kad je Židov u Teksasu tako dugo pred kućom, ljudi se počnu seliti"), but still might be new information for the foreign audience who then in turn might not find it funny.

Lastly, another culture-based reference used as a joke referring to a national culture can be spotted in this episode "No, I'm just going to tell her I'm coming so she can give that *good time Charlie* the heave-ho" where Sheldon refers to his mother's new lover. "Good-Time Charlie" is an informal expression defined as "a carefree and convivial person given to frequent pursuit of fun and amusement" (Merriam-Webster Dictionary), often used by Texan people (such as Sheldon) as it frequently associated with a notorious Texas politician Charlie Wilson, who lived a careless and flamboyant life. This is a prime example of a cultural reference unknown to foreigners, thus being adapted into Croatian as "veseljak" in order to achieve a similar humorous effect to some extent.

Furthermore, language-dependent jokes are yet another humorous category we repeatedly encounter in the sitcom, since it is widely characterized by numerous puns and wordplays. In S01E16, Howard explains to Penny *Trestling*, a made-up game played by Raj and Sheldon, which implies arm wrestling and playing Tetris. Even the name is sort of a compound of the names of the two activities, which unfortunately was not transferred into the target dialogue. The translator wanted to keep the original form, but misspelled it as "Tressling", even though it could have even been translated in a more imaginative way. For instance, I would suggest "Tetranje", as a Croatian compound equivalent of words "Tetris" and "hrvanje".

Additional example of humorous wordplay can be noticed in S01E17 when Penny approaches Sheldon from the back and scares him. She says, "I'm sorry. Look, do you have a *second*." to which Sheldon responds, "A *second what? Pair of underwear?*" I can imagine that this was a bit of a struggle to translate, but I have to praise the translator's excellent choice of words: "Imaš malo vremena? / Za što? Da presvučem gaće?", where he managed to keep the humorous effect of the homonyms in the source language, while still paying attention to the syntactic aspect of the target text.

Also, in this episode Leonard complains to Sheldon how he is not excited about going out with Penny, but "nauseous", to which Sheldon later replies with a snide comment "You also made a common grammatical mistake, you said *nauseous* when you meant *nauseated*. But go on." The translator subtitled this as "Sad kada trebam izaći s njom nisam uzbuđen. Muka mi je./ "Rekao si muka umjesto mučnina.". In my opinion, it was a good choice of words, but I would have phrased it differently, since if Leonard actually used the word "mučnina" in a sentence "Mučnina mi je" it would not make much sense as it is not an expression commonly used. I would perhaps suggest translating it as: "Rekao si muka, umjesto mučno mi je."

However, there are some examples of problematic instances and their confusing translation, such as in S07E19 when Sheldon complains how he needs to "pee" but first has to decide whether to buy Xbox One or PS4. After articulating "PS4" he then adds "Oh, P (pee), why'd I say that?", jokingly suggesting how he reminded himself that he needs to urinate. This instance was translated literally, as "Zašto sam rekao P?", which should be adjusted, since it completely eradicated the humor of the original joke in the target language.

The last example of funny wordplay I will mention occurs in S02E01, when Howard and Raj try to figure out why Sheldon decided to move out by asking Leonard if he somehow got on Sheldon's nerves. Raj then asks him if he has "adjusted the thermostat, cooked with cilantro or *pronounced the 't' in often*?" Here, the translator found a perfect solution to adjust the joke in the target language: "govorio podaTci?", which is an excellent linguistic equivalent.

Lastly, it is worth mentioning that there are plenty examples of international and bi-national jokes (names of famous Hollywood film stars, well-know scientists, artists, musicians, etc.), which stay intact in the translation; numerous visual, aural and complex jokes manifested through characters gestures, facial expressions, sounds they produce and pauses they make in conversation which in turn produce a humorous effect (e.g. Sheldon's knocking, Sheldon imitating Batman, Sheldon's "Bazinga!" interjection of choice after sarcastic comments and his "classic pranks", Howard's reaction when on the phone with Penny, after she suggests introducing him to her friends, etc.). These types of jokes are quite recognizable and easy for the audience to notice by themselves, although translator sometimes inserts certain indications in the subtitles (writing in italic, special punctuation, etc.). Also, frequent idioms are tackled with ease, and subtitled with Croatian equivalents ("When hell freezes over"/ "Kad na vrbi rodi grožđe"; "Silver linings"/ "Svako zlo za neko dobro" and so on).

All in all, while some of the translator's choices were lacking understanding, the solutions were generally efficacious. Some culture-based and linguistic jokes were adapted to the Croatian culture and language, while other instances of humor were replicated without bearing in mind the target context. Nevertheless, in most cases, the humorous elements were effectively transferred in the target dialogue and translation was successful.

Conclusion

Having analyzed the notion of audiovisual translation, reflecting its theory, methodologies and issues, the need for a greater visibility of the field has been justified, as the socio-cultural function of audiovisual translation plays a crucial role in today's society of digital entertainment and technological advancements.

The methodology used in this paper was based on the assessment of subtitling and dubbing, referring to their main features, techniques as well as issues encountered in their manufacture, along with the detailed breakdown and classification of humorous instances. Having assimilated and applied this information into the particular study of the English-Croatian subtitled translation of the sitcom *The Big Bang Theory*, it can be concluded that culture is an integral factor in humor translation. Thus, by judging the fact that subtitles cannot be valued simply by its linguistic properties, since they rely upon other elements such as images and sounds, the idea that incorporating humor into the process further challenges the translator, has been settled, as he/she is set out to have the knowledge of all the linguistic, audiovisual and socio-cultural aspects of humor translation, as well as the technical and practical problems of the subtitling process itself.

As the results of the present work concluded, these problems were produced by both the contrast of the source (English) and target (Croatian) language and culture, as well as by the (un)translatability of the English language and certain culture-bound instances of the American society. The findings of this study have the capacity to make the phenomena of subtitling issues more intelligible, since in this particular case the translator, despite the great number of constraints, usually opted for adaptation or literal translation, producing a legitimate translation of the original while more or less successfully delivering the intended humorous effect.

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Podslovljavanje humora – primjer prijevoda *Teorije velikog praska*

Sažetak

Ovaj završni rad predstavlja cjelovitu analizu audiovizualnog prevođenja kao jedne od prevoditeljskih disciplina, s naglaskom na metodologiju podslovljavanja i sinkronizacije, njihovu teoriju, praksu i problematiku u procesu prevođenja. Jedan od posebnih izazova izučavanih na primjeru podslovljavanja prijevod je humora, ujedino i područje interesa mnogih stručnjaka u tom polju te izvan njega. S obzirom da audiovizualno prevođenje humora predstavlja zahtjevan izazov, potrebno je obratiti pažnju na nekoliko čimbenika, kao što su kulturalni i lingvistički aspekti ciljnog i izvornog jezika. Stoga, cilj ovog rada jest analizirati te izazove te prikazati kako se humoristični elementi prenose iz jedne u drugu kulturu (iz engleske u hrvatsku) putem metode titlovanja podslovljavanja na primjeru američke humoristične serije *Teorije velikog praska*.

Ključne riječi: audiovizualno prevođenje, podslovljavanje, humor