

CULTURAL AND LINGUISTIC ISSUES OF SITCOM DUBBING: AN ANALYSIS OF
"FRIENDS"

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ABSTRACT

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In this thesis, I analyze the different obstacles of audiovisual translation, in particular those of dubbing, by reference to the German dubbing of the American Sitcom *Friends*. One of the main reasons why audiovisual translation is so complex is that it requires interdisciplinary knowledge. Being fluent in the source and target language is not enough anymore, Translation Studies must open up to Communication Studies, Media and Film Studies, Cultural Studies, as well as to Semiotics, Sociology, Anthropology” (Gambier and Gottlieb xii), and possibly other disciplines, in order to provide a sufficient translation that does not lose the entertaining value of the source text, within the new environment of the target language. The following analysis investigates the balance between translating cultural and linguistic aspects, and their effects on humor retention in the target text. Therefore, the first part of this thesis provides an overview of translation theory, and in particular humor translation, and translation of culture-bound references. In the next part, I analyze a selection of dubbing examples from the fourth season of *Friends*, divided into intra-linguistic culture-bound references and extra-linguistic culture-bound references. After comparing those results, my final claim is that giving precedence to the translation of stylistic devices over cultural references, often results in loss of humor, context, and sometimes even sense. Since humor and socio-critical references are the two main components of sitcoms, the translation of culture-bound reference plays a big part in whether a dubbed version is successful in the target culture or not.

To my best friend, Christina, because watching *Friends* with you never gets old!

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INTRODUCTION

The process of globalization has always had supporters and opponents; however, there is one country that has been at its center from the start. Beginning with the “Pax Americana,” America appointed itself as the leader of the nations, which is why globalization and Americanization seem to be interchangeable terms; or, in Thomas Friedman’s more metaphorical words, “globalization wears Mickey Mouse ears, it drinks Pepsi and Coke, eats Big Macs, [and] does its computing on an I.B.M laptop.” The idea behind the concept is one of intercultural exchange and collaboration, yet in reality the “global traffic in information and ideas” (Rothkopf 446) is dominated by the United States. From an American point of view, Americanization is closely related to assimilation, which in this case means “emerging similarities in particular domains between populations of immigration origin and ‘host’ population” (Brubaker 535), while from an international perspective, it describes the influence that American culture and information technology have on other countries.

For this thesis, we will look at the dominance of American culture within international mass media, which began in the early twentieth century with the rise of Hollywood and grew significantly after World War II. Due to the country’s cultural, political, and economic influence in the post-war period, the 20th century has often been called “The American century.” The introduction of the world-wide web has made the distribution of American products easier than it has ever been before. “American music, American movies, American television, and American software are so dominant, so sought after, and so visible that they are now available [in] virtually every nation” (Rothkopf 3). The influence on the international market is enormous and the access is as simple as it is for national products. “Flick a remote control almost anywhere on earth, and you will see American products: Hollywood films, the CNN news channel, and

television shows such as *Friends* or *The X-Files*” (Chiou 1180). Seven of the ten leading media groups worldwide, ranked by audiovisual turnover, are American, one is Japanese and two are European (Lange 6).

While Europe has one of the bigger media industries, most of their programs are of non-European origin. A study in the 2006 yearbook of the European Audiovisual Observatory reviewed 124 television networks in thirteen European countries and revealed that in the mid-2000s, the percentage of non-European fiction programs was slightly above 70%, a big portion of which were American TV shows (Lange 130, 148). However, it is important to mention that these numbers vary drastically between countries. In 2007, 56.6% of the programs aired in France were of European origin, whereas Denmark only had 19% European programs.

Americanization of the German Television Market

Within Europe, Germany has always had one of the bigger television industries. Not only is Bertelsmann one of the top ten leading media groups worldwide, but Germany also has over 140 nationwide channels and 28 channels targeting foreign markets. One of them is “Deutsche Welle TV,” which reached 28 million viewers daily in 2006 and is the European international TV channel with the widest coverage. For some time, German productions remained competitive, at least domestically, until they were slowly but surely displaced by American shows (Wolter 16). In the 1990s, American movies and TV shows reached an average market share of 70 percent (Beck 191). The question is, what makes American television productions so much more intriguing for the audience? Based on Wolter’s findings, it seems to be a combination of three factors, which I call: innovation, relatability, and hybridity.

The first one is innovation, for new and innovative concepts evoke curiosity and potential viewers are more inclined to take a look at a new show if it promises something they have not

already seen. Unfortunately, the German television industry tends to rely on what has been tried and tested, rather than experimenting with new ideas, and one of their most popular genres is the soap opera (called “daily soap” in Germany), which is a drama series that airs daily in 30-minute episodes. Typical for this genre is a large number of characters, who seem to maneuver from one emotional drama to the next, including but not limited to relationship issues, social problems, terminal illness, mental illness, imprisonment, or death. The forerunner in Germany in this category is *Lindenstraße*, which revolves around a group of neighbors on a fictional street in Munich. It was first aired in 1985 and is still airing on the same station and at the same time 31 years later. The current cast includes 39 actors, eight of whom have been with the show from the beginning.

About a decade after the start of *Lindenstraße*, it seemed to be time for something new, and within a couple of years, several other soap operas had their debut on German television. Two of the most popular ones are *Gute Zeiten Schlechte Zeiten* (1992-present) and *Unter Uns* (1994-present). The story is mainly the same; the only differences are the cities the neighbors live in and the average age of the characters, which dropped significantly. While the characters in *Lindenstraße* range from children to couples in their 70s and even older, most of the main cast in *Gute Zeiten Schlechte Zeiten* is comprised of teenagers and young couples in their 20s and 30s, with the oldest character, Dr. Jo Gerner, being in his 50s. Another ten years later, yet another new wave of soap operas made their way onto the German market, this time with a few more changes. For example, the show *Alles was Zählt* (2006-present) started out with one main character, who wants to become a world-class ice skater and joins a sport center run by a power-hungry family. Soon enough, she gets emotionally involved with the son of the owner and the drama takes its course.

In comparison, the American television industry moved away from soap operas and produced a plethora of TV shows with new and different concepts.¹ There are the traditional medical dramas, like *ER* (German title: *Emergency Room: Die Notaufnahme*), or *Grey's Anatomy*, which focus on a rather large main cast of doctors and nurses and their daily struggles, and then there are the less traditional ones like *House M.D.* (German title: *Dr. House*), which was very popular in Germany and differs from the other two by its smaller cast and its comedic elements. *Desperate Housewives* is a comedy-drama and mystery series, where the narrator is a housewife who has killed herself prior to the first episode and tells the story of the lives of the friends she left behind. Here, the housewives are the stars of the show and their husbands are more in the background. Another comedy-drama series with women as the central characters is *Gilmore Girls*, a show that follows the life of a single mother and her 16-year-old daughter, who are both very independent and intelligent women. The main issues of the show are family, romantic relationships, and education, as well as the problems of generational and class divides. These are only a few examples, but the variety of new and innovative American television shows is vast and outshines the less-varied programs of the German television industry in both quality and quantity.

This also leads to the second factor, relatability. While innovative new concepts arouse curiosity in potential viewers and get them to start watching a television show, it takes more than that to maintain the audience's interest. Once they have watched a few episodes, what has been new becomes familiar and the excitement ebbs away, but by then, the audience has had the chance to get attached to the characters of the show, which is most successfully achieved through

¹ The list of these shows is obviously endless; therefore, I chose my examples based on the most popular ones in Germany.

identification. If viewers can see bits of themselves or of people close to them in one or more of the characters and can also relate parts of their own life to situations and issues addressed in the show, they become emotionally attached. They want to find out how certain issues are resolved in the show, whether the characters end up with the partner or the job they wanted or have to settle for second best. Therefore, producers need to be aware of the needs and expectations of their target audience in order to attain the highest possible ratings (Wolter 16). They need to create diverse characters with everyday problems reflecting issues that are predominant within the current society.

The third and last factor is hybridity. Hybridity in general is a crossing between two separate entities; in this particular case, it is the mixture of two or more genres. The engagement with current political and societal problems has a different meaning for everyone. It might be dull to some, depressing to others, but it definitely does not fall under the category of light entertainment, which is why many viewers might be reluctant to spend their evenings watching a television show that revolves around those issues. The simple yet brilliant solution is to combine different genres and conceal these serious topics with humor. This insight led to the birth of a new genre, Quality TV, which offers both open and veiled criticism against different political or societal issues and is meant to be both thought provoking and entertaining (Wolter 13). Ashley Sayeau defines this new genre as “politically engaged, often independent TV that aims to enlighten, as well as entertain” (qtd. in Fricker 14). In the USA, Quality TV was introduced as early as the 1950s and slowly but surely began to grow in popularity.

The Sitcom

The most popular and influential, yet undervalued Quality TV hybrid genre, in the United States as well as in Germany and most other countries, is the sitcom. At the base of every sitcom

is comedy, which makes it appear like any other typical television show, meant to entertain without requiring the audience to think. However, the concept behind it is anything but mundane; in fact, “the sitcom is a genre which is highly complex but which must pretend it isn’t” (Mills 5). Sitcoms usually revolve around a small, recurring main cast that represents authentic characters, each of whom offers an example of a different lifestyle that viewers can identify with and use as a means of inspiration and guidance (Wolter 18). In order to fit into the lives of its viewers, sitcoms subtly raise and question social norms, conventions and generic rules, under the guise of simple, light comedic entertainment (Mills 4-5). This two-layered concept makes it an entertaining genre for everyone. The viewers who do not catch the underlying social criticism can still laugh about the joke, while those who watch the show more critically will appreciate it even more. Another aspect that makes the sitcom so intriguing is that every episode can be watched out of context of the entire series. While there is an ongoing plot line that runs through the entire series and links the episodes together, every episode also has its individual main storyline that concludes at the end and does not require the viewer to be familiar with the rest of the show in order to understand and enjoy watching it.

The first-ever televised sitcom was the British production *Pinwright’s Progress* (1946-1947), which was only 10 episodes long but inspired many others to follow, not only in the UK, but all over the world. In the United States, the television industry grew rapidly after WWII, when men had returned from war and women were expected to return to their duties as housewives and mothers. Soon, “television [had] replaced radio and movies as the most popular pastime” (Spangler 25) and the first American sitcom, *Mary Kay and Johnny*, aired in 1947. At that time, most television programs sent the message that women had to stay in their rightful place, meaning at home rather than in the workforce. The first exception was introduced in the

1950s with *I Love Lucy* (1951-1957). At the center of the show were Lucy's "struggles to become more than a housewife" (25), her friendship with Ethel, and her resistance against her domineering husband, Ricky. Most sitcoms focused either on a young women's desire to get married, like *Our Miss Brooks* (1952-1956), or the later stage, where a woman's purpose was to be a good wife and mother.

"The 1960s began much like the 1950s ended, with the ideal of the suburban, nuclear family intact and mom at home" (Spangler 61). Yet first changes could be seen and the first sitcoms that did not focus on women with only domestic roles but as independent career women started airing. *That Girl* (1966-1971) has at its center a young actress trying to make her way in New York City, and *Julia* (1968-1971) was "[t]he first television series to star an African American woman as someone other than a domestic" (91), as the title character is a single mother, who lost her husband to the Vietnam War and raises her six-year-old son while working as a nurse.

The early 1970s are renowned as the golden age of comedy. Building on the topics introduced in the previous decade, sitcoms and other TV shows increasingly dealt with "new lifestyles and social issues" (Spangler 104). Due to the long-lasting conflict in Vietnam, antiwar messages were sent out through TV shows, and minorities were cast in primary roles. Sitcoms like *Sanford & Son* (1972-1977) and *Good Times* (1974-1979) featured an all-black cast, and not only were more women cast in primary roles, but taboo topics like abortion and divorce were also treated, as for example in *Maude* (1972-1978). Towards the end of the decade, however, this progressive quality ebbed away and "[a]ny turbulence in the news rarely made it into story lines" (Spangler 103) anymore.

These problems carried over into the next decade and with the transformation of the television business and the concomitant increase in competition, it was widely believed that TV comedy was past its peak and would soon be replaced by something new. Thankfully, “comedy made a comeback as the most popular genre in the latter half of the 1980s” (Spangler 151), with a new wave of successful sitcoms like *The Cosby Show* (1984-1992), *Full House* (1987-1995), and *Roseanne* (1988-1997).

The 1990s began with more “[s]ocially conscious comedies [featuring] Caucasian stars” (Spangler 192); with *Ellen* (1994-1998), the first prime-time sitcom starring a lesbian main character was aired. Additionally, sitcoms featuring African Americans like *The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air* (1990-1996) were produced to target a young, primarily black audience. The late 1990s and early 2000s were difficult years for the sitcom, due to the rise in popularity of narrative comedy shows² like *Ally McBeal* (1997-2002) and *Sex and the City* (1998-2004). Sitcom producers, however, rose to the occasion with new formats like *Friends* (1994-2004), which became one of the most popular and most influential sitcoms in the United States. The show’s immense popularity and its effect on the audience are only two of the reasons, which will be elaborated on later in this chapter, why *Friends* is the focus of this thesis.

Friends

As the title implies, *Friends* is a show about six friends in their early twenties who live in New York City. The plot revolves around the lives of the three male and three female characters, who hang out daily at a coffee shop named “Central Perk.” The six of them come from different backgrounds and have different jobs but somehow all came together and became friends, the circumstances of which will be revealed through flashback throughout the show. According to

² In this case, “narrative” means that a narrator guides the audience through the show.

Brett Mills, “[t]he key thing about *Friends* is that it's about people working out how they are going to live their lives - what kind of relationship are they going to have, what kind of job, the difficulties of settling down. You're engaged in all these questions about escaping from your family, becoming an adult and working out what you want to be” (qtd. in Davies 2). While previous sitcoms primarily focused on family life, *Friends* was the first sitcom that changed course and had friendship at its center³ instead, which is a very important part of a teenager’s and young adult’s life. All six characters are unique, but at the same time each has characteristics that seem familiar to the viewer, because everyone has a friend who is somewhat like one of the *Friends* characters and everyone finds some of their own characteristics mirrored in them. However, it is not only the relatability of the characters that made the show such a success, but also the combination of simple yet effective humor and references to different socio-critical topics. It is a mix of observational comedy, seemingly incongruous surprise elements, sarcasm, and perfectly-timed punchlines (Aniket). The characters are witty and quick on the comeback, and a large and dedicated team of writers worked on including taboo topics and “allowing jokes about surrogacy, same-sex marriage, STDs, infidelity and suicide to be made without offending” (Davies 2).

Friends was not only another successful television show; it was a trend-setter and had an impact “far beyond the realms of television” (Davies 2). Every woman wanted Jennifer Aniston’s hairstyle, guys attempted to impress women by using Joey’s famous pick-up line “How you doin’?” and being a nerd and interested in academia was suddenly made acceptable thanks to Ross. When Rachel gave birth to her daughter Emma, it suddenly became one of the

³ It needs to be mentioned here that previous sitcoms did involve friendships in their storyline; they were just never the main focus. Even *Seinfeld*, which has a set-up very similar to *Friends*, focused more on humor and cynicism rather than on the characters’ background stories and their development through friendship.

most popular baby names. Perhaps most interestingly of all, even linguistic trademarks of the show found their way into the English-speaking world. Sali Tagliamonte and Chris Roberts, both professors of linguistics at the University of Toronto, conducted a study on the use of intensifiers in *Friends* and came to the conclusion that it has influenced the use of intensifiers within the American and British population.⁴ Before *Friends*, “very” was the most commonly used intensifier in England, while “really” was most popular in the United States, and both were equally popular in the Canadian language area, “whereas in the *Friends* data, *so* is by far the front-runner, representing nearly half of all the intensifiers used. [Not only the American but also data about Britain and Canada] reveal that *so* is accelerating among the youngest generation” (288). They came to the conclusion that media language not only “reflect[s] what is going on in language” (296), but also influences and shapes the language use of the general population.

In another study about *Friends*, Jyh-Shen Chiou and Jasi Lee from the department of international business at the Chengchi University in Taipei found the same interaction in regards to culture. Television programs and movies function as transmitters of the cultural environment in which they are produced and even have the power to influence the different cultural environments in which they are screened (1180). Since *Friends* has been distributed all over the globe, the reach of its cultural influence is enormous.

The global distribution of replicas of the show’s signature coffee house “Central Perk” is just one example of the vast influence of the sitcom. In Pakistan, there are two *Friends*-themed cafes: the “Friends Cafe” in Lahore and the “Central Perk” in Peshawar (Rizvi). Both cafes have a replica of the couch the friends always sit on in the show, a guitar for spontaneous

⁴ The authors note that “[t]he frame of reference for *Friends* is very much middle class as well as highly circumscribed to a particular sector of the American population. Study of other sectors of the sociocultural spectrum as well as different media and other genres would undoubtedly yield interesting comparative data” (Tagliamonte 297).

interpretations of “smelly cat” (Phoebe’s signature song), and a foosball table. The walls are decorated with quotations from the show and reruns of the episodes run continuously. They are now planning to hire a Gunther, the waiter from the show. The Iranian businessman Mojtaba Asadian took this idea a step further. He started with a “Central Perk” café in Dubai and has registered his trademark in 32 countries so far (Kalsi). The interior is also a replica of the *Friends* coffee house; episodes are played on televisions and the walls are decorated with paintings of the show’s characters. As a special guest, Asadian managed to get James Michael Tyler, who played Gunther in the series, to fly to Dubai and attend the grand opening of the Dubai cafe, where he even worked as a waiter. Other replicas of the famous “Central Perk” are, for example, in London and Beijing (Hong and Kent).

In the United States, *Friends* averaged 23.6 million viewers per episode over its 10-year run and the series finale is ranked number four on the list of most-watched series finales with 52.5 million viewers (Tagliamonte 281). What is most remarkable, however, is that over 20 years after the first episode was aired, it seems to have lost none of its popularity. Countless reruns have been aired all over the world, with Comedy Central on top of the list, screening up to 17 episodes a day, especially during school holidays. Even with the show now being available on Netflix and the countless streaming opportunities on the internet, the sales figures for DVDs are still going strong. For example, in 2013, 77.700 DVDs were sold in the UK alone (Davies 1).

***Friends* in Germany**

In Germany, the show has even gained popularity over the years. It had a very slow start and was not really popular throughout the first eight seasons. One of the reasons behind this is most likely the frequent change of the show’s time slot on the German television network SAT 1, and the episodes were not even aired in chronological order. Both factors make it very hard to

gain a large regular audience. In 2000, PRO 7 bought the rights for the show and gave it a regular time slot, airing the episodes in chronological order beginning with season one, and it became more popular and gained in market share. In 2003, when the show went into its eighth season (it was first aired in the USA in September 2001 and in Germany in February 2003), it finally also reached top ratings in Germany. Since the season finale, PRO 7 has been airing reruns, which are still popular today, but the show has been even more popular on DVD.

Numerous fan pages⁵ were created, with updates on new DVD releases and instructions on how to preorder both the German and the original English DVD sets. *Friends* quickly became one of the best-selling TV box sets in Germany. At the beginning of 2015, *Friends* was finally added to Netflix; however, it was only available in Canada and the United States. Since this was not commonly known, the internet forums were soon filled with desperate questions from German *Friends* fans, who wanted to know why they could not access their favorite TV show on Netflix. Many also said that they would even be willing to pay more if that is what it takes for Netflix Deutschland to acquire the license for *Friends*, which they finally did in November 2016.

The very likely reason behind the growing popularity of the show and the demand to put it on Netflix is that, while the show on TV is exclusively in German, the German *Friends* DVD boxes give viewers the option to watch it either in the dubbed German version, or in the original English version, with or without German subtitles. This option seems more intriguing to many because Arena Synchron Berlin, the company responsible for the German dubbing of the show,

⁵ Some examples are:

<http://www.always-friends.de/news/news2003.html>

<https://www.techfak.uni-bielefeld.de/~joern/dev/xsl/friends/>

http://de.friends.wikia.com/wiki/Friends_Wiki

<http://www.bento.de/tv/friends-wie-gut-kennst-du-dich-mit-rachel-chandler-co-aus-800444/>

<http://www.serienjunkies.de/Friends/news/>

has been critiqued for the poor quality of the translation, which results in the loss of many of the comical references (Holzer 16), which will be discussed in more detail later in this thesis.

Why is *Friends* so Popular?

So what is the reason behind the continuing popularity of *Friends* that has lasted for over 20 years and the still-rising number of fans? As Davies put it:

The show continues to open up to a whole new audience - many of whom weren't even born when it debuted. Parents who loved the show in their 20s now sit down to watch the repeats with their teens, while students who were toddlers when it first aired proclaim their appreciation on Twitter as they become hooked on Ross and Rachel's will-they-won't-they storyline (even though they know the outcome). (1)

This seems to be in contrast with the mass media's concept of constant and rapid change. A new and different product is already in planning before the current one is even finished. The resulting perpetual supply of new formats makes most of them rather short-lived. "Comedy as a genre has been present on television since time immemorial, but the interesting fact is that, [*sic*] the face of the genre changes every few years. The way in which stories are told, characters behave and people are made to laugh changes tremendously over the years" (Aniket). The secret behind the longevity of *Friends* is the show's timelessness. It addresses daily topics that still matter most to the average young person between the mid-teens and mid-thirties, namely relationships, careers, settling down, and friendships. It is not only about success but also about failure, which is something almost everyone can relate to. Throughout the ten seasons, the six friends had many unsuccessful relationships, lost their jobs, or were stuck with a low-income job or a career they never wanted, topics that were relevant for people in the nineties and are still relevant for people today.

In the past few years, scholars have denounced *Friends* for being racist and homophobic. Their main reasoning for the show being racist is that the cast is comprised exclusively of white people. The claim that it is homophobic is more related to certain jokes made at the expense of gays. For example, one of the reoccurring jokes is Chandler's insecurity about people thinking he might be gay, causing him to go to great lengths to reassure people that he is very straight indeed. David Crane, the co-creator of the show, who is openly gay himself, strongly objects to this interpretation of the character by saying that: "[h]e has his own anxieties and issues, but I don't think the character was homophobic in the least" (qtd. in Butler 1). Another critique is how the show deals with Chandler's father, Charles Bing, a transgender woman (played by Kathleen Turner), who is referred to in the show as a gay drag queen. While Bethonie Butler admits that the audience's laughter at Chandler's discomfort and awkwardness is rather cringe-worthy from today's perspective, she says it should not be neglected that these jokes are part of a growth experience, which results in Chandler's acceptance of his father (1). Contrary to the critics' opinion, this is a positive message, riddled with occasional awkward jokes. Ray Bradford, director of entertainment media for the LGBT advocacy organization GLAAD, reminds those critics that they cannot make accusations by taking the show out of its temporal context, for it was written in the nineties and therefore cannot be held to contemporary standards: "Images don't exist in a vacuum -- you look at where they were at that time of progression of TV and our country, and also where we are now and the standard" (qtd. in Butler, 2). And he adds that even by today's standards, Turner's character "wasn't what we hate seeing on TV by a mile. [...] When I looked at Kathleen Turner's character, there was nothing tragic about it. It was not a story line depicting her as a killer or a psychopath or a sex worker or anything like that" (2).

***Friends* and the Global Influence of American Media**

Despite these controversies, it cannot be denied that the producers of *Friends* have created a sitcom that has fascinated, entertained, and influenced people all over the world. It has also inspired a large number of new sitcoms that revolve around the same core idea of a group of friends living in a big city, who help each other through everyday struggles with their jobs or relationship situations.

The most obvious example is *How I met your Mother*, which premiered only one year after the final episode of *Friends* was aired. The show is also set around a group of friends, five instead of six, who live in New York City and get together at their regular meeting place, a bar instead of a coffee shop. Even the characters are very similar. The cool ladies' man Barney strongly reminds us of Joey. The roller-coaster relationship between the insecure nerd and the hot independent woman, Ross and Rachel in the original, is now Ted and Robin, and the more steadfast relationship between two neurotic people who seem to complement each other perfectly, which used to be portrayed by Monica and Chandler, has been taken over by Lilly and Marshall. Although the similarities are strikingly obvious, the producers made sure to include various new aspects in order to make it more than just a simple copy.

The show is structured as a flashback, since the present day of the story is 2030, when Ted tells his two children the story of how he met their mother. This results in two new and interesting opportunities. Firstly, it already reveals the end of the show, namely Ted finding his wife and getting married, but it leaves open the questions of who it will be and how it will happen, which completely changes the way the audience experiences the show, because everyone is looking for hints and clues that are randomly dropped by the producers throughout the show. Secondly, the show is much more flexible with its timeline. Flashbacks are sometimes added within the flashback or one event is shown from different viewpoints of the main

characters. Apart from this, a few other new ideas were introduced, like Barney's playbook,⁶ which never fails to amaze the audience. Other shows with striking similarities to *Friends* are *New Girl*, *The Big Bang Theory* and *Girls*.

This seems to lead us to the answer to the previously raised question about the influence of the American television industry on the global market. What sets it apart from others is an excellent understanding of the consumer demand paired with the ability to quickly and efficiently adapt and produce new shows according to these changing demands.⁷ Aniket explains the production of comedy TV by drawing a parallel to Theodore Adorno's theory on popular music, which "claims that all popular music has a standardized format, and is pseudo individualized just to make it look unique." The easiest way to produce a new successful television show is to firstly identify the components that were responsible for the success of previous shows, and secondly to find the thin line between changing too much and simply copying an existing format. German television producers, among others, have repeatedly attempted to imitate American Quality TV shows, with only little success, which according to Wolter is due to the German audience's familiarity with the original American show. They regard the German productions as cheap imitations and prefer to watch the original (16-17).

There is an interesting incongruity here between the success rates of imitations of American Quality TV shows and imitations of other television formats. Reality television series (in particular casting shows like *Deutschland Sucht den Superstar*, *Popstars*, and *The Voice of*

⁶ The playbook is a collection of Barney's strategies on how to pick up women. They are equally as elaborate and ridiculous as they are entertaining.

⁷ Material factors also play a crucial role in this and are the reason why the American media industry is capable of supplying these productions. Global distribution has allowed American media to siphon huge resources from its secondary markets, which is why they can afford costlier productions, with famous actors and beautiful locations (Beck 191-192). Through the vast distribution of American media productions, American culture and taste penetrate countries all over the world, which makes international audiences more and more susceptible to and familiar with American culture, leading to higher chances of success for following productions (193).

Germany) are all adaptations of foreign formats but have been extremely popular in Germany. The reason behind this discordance can only be speculated about; however, three possibilities seem to be more likely than others. First of all, casting and reality-TV shows are based on the concept that anyone in the audience could become a participant. This makes it more appealing to watch a show set within your own culture, for even if one is not interested in participating, they might be familiar with the location or know one of the participants, and can therefore relate more to the show. The second reason might be a lack of quality in regards to the production of German adaptations of American Quality TV shows, such as direction, sound, camera, or script. And the last one could be related to the far lower popularity of German actors compared to those from the United States. Viewers would rather see their favorite American actress, whom they have followed on Twitter for the past five years, than some unknown German actress that they have never heard of before.

The Challenges of Audiovisual Translation

This thesis is not concerned with whatever might be the underlying cause, but rather with the resulting effect, which is the high demand for German-dubbed versions of American television shows, which falls under the research category of multimedia translation or audiovisual translation. For several years now, scholars of this field have been trying to separate it from the field of traditional translation, by stressing that audiovisual translation is a new academic discipline that requires much more than what the current research on translation theory has to offer. Gambier and Gottlieb identify the two main aspects that make the demands of audiovisual translation unique. Firstly, it is not merely a process of translating a text anymore, which is still widely considered synonymous with word-for-word transcoding, but it rather includes a large number of tasks, such as: “localization, language transfer, adaptation, editing,

revision, [...] co-authoring, [...] multilingual text creation, [...] converting currencies and ways of giving time, dates, and addresses, minding legal, fiscal, and security regulations, etc.” (ix-x), which might all be performed by one single person. Secondly, fluency in the source and target language is not enough anymore. The complex task of audiovisual translation requires an interdisciplinary approach. “Translation Studies must open up to Communication Studies, Media and Film Studies, Cultural Studies, as well as to Semiotics, Sociology, Anthropology” (xii), and possibly other disciplines, in order to provide a sufficient translation without losing the entertainment value of the source text within the new environment of the target language.

Karin Wehn claims that most processes of audiovisual translation cannot even be called translation anymore but are rather an act of transformation (70). Instead of viewing it as an entirely language-based process, the importance of visual objects needs to be considered as well. The meaning of signs and symbols varies between different languages and cultures, and even “[b]ody language and gestures are culture-specific” (66), which poses the need to translate visual aspects in combination with words. To illustrate how important the culture-bound meaning of images can be, Wehn mentions an example from the commercial sector. An ad for soap was aired in the Middle East that showed dirty clothes on the left, the soap in the middle, and clean clothes on the right. Instead of just translating the text that went with the commercial, the producers should have been aware that in the Middle East, people read from right to left, so they appeared to be advertising a product that would stain clean clothes (67). Another translation faux-pas of even larger magnitude happened in Saudi Arabia, when an airline advertisement showed an attractive young hostess serving champagne to a cockpit full of smiling passengers. As a result, many passengers cancelled their flights because the consumption of alcohol is not allowed in Saudi Arabia and neither is the contact of unveiled women and men. These two

examples show that even such seemingly simple things as commercials can lose their effect or even reverse it when the translator only focuses on the language and not on the included images.

The most difficult form of audiovisual translation is dubbing. It requires the translation of text and image and adds many restrictions that need to be considered, for example that the sentences in the target language need to be exactly as long as those in the source language so that the dialogue does not overlap, or even more difficult, the lip movements of the words in the target language need to match those of the words in the source language, to make it look like the actors are actually speaking the target language.

For the viewer, dubbing may be less distracting than subtitles, which is why dubbing is the preferred option on the German television market. Since the nineties, it has become an increasingly competitive field with more than 20 dubbing companies in Berlin alone, which has resulted in lower prices and time pressure, but also in a higher quality of the final product (Müntefering 15). Potential customers send a copy of their product to several dubbing companies, which then “have a screening and send a final budget for the dubbing costs” (15). Since the customer will usually pick the cheapest offer, dubbing companies are walking a thin line between getting the job and losing it to another company that has made a cheaper offer.

The first to suffer from this are the translators, for in order to keep the offers low, they have to produce more work in a shorter amount of time and for less money (15). Contrary to common belief, dubbing is not the same task as translating and it is also not performed by the same person. The translator performs the first step of the procedure and prepares the text for the dubbing writer, who has to rewrite the script so that it fits the lip movement of the actors, conveys the same or at least a similar meaning without losing important content, and can be understood by the target audience, which does not have the same background knowledge as the

source audience. Since this is a much more complicated process and the entire success of the end product depends on it, dubbing writers are chosen very carefully and are better paid than translators. A translator only gets about 1.5% of the dubbing budget and the only specialization distinctions are made between British English or American English. A dubbing writer, however, gets about 10% of the budget and is chosen based on the genre of the translation, which is also a significant factor for the price of the dubbed product (Müntefering 15). Matthias Müntefering, the head of the dubbing department of Deutsche Synchron in Berlin, says that they do not have set wages but that it can be summarized this way: “Action is cheap. Humor is expensive. Culture is impossibly expensive” (15).

Because sitcoms combine the most difficult categories, humor and culture, they are one of the best paid but also most demanding jobs. The dubbing writer has to be familiar with both the cultural and historical background and the colloquial language of the show’s time and location. In addition to understanding these references and finding a way to make them meaningful within the target culture, they also have to convey the intended humor, which gets even more difficult when linguistic devices are added, like idioms and puns.

In some cases, however, the expertise of the dubbing writer alone is not enough and specialists have to be consulted. One of the most common examples is hospital shows, which require a certain amount of medical knowledge in order to produce a translation that makes sense in the target language, can be understood by the average viewer, and does not digress too far from the original meaning, potentially changing important details. Müntefering recalls that one of the shows Deutsche Synchron had to consult specialists for was the American medical-drama *E R*, for which they had to “employ two surgeons, who first check[ed] the translation and then the dubbing script. To adapt the script to fit a German setting they may have [had] to change the

names of medicines, the size of the doses and the structure of the hospital, which is very different in the United States and pose[d] the most problems” (16). Despite such efforts, there were still aspects of the show, like the existence of a medical director, that were not realistic in a German setting, but could not be omitted or adapted in any way. Yet, even with these discrepancies, *E R* was much more successful than any German hospital show in the 1990s and 2000s.

While this was only a brief overview of dubbing, a more detailed explanation of procedures and difficulties will follow in chapter one, together with humor translation and translation in general. Chapters two and three will then deal with an analysis of the German-dubbed version of *Friends*, including suggestions for alternative solutions. The reason for choosing *Friends* as the object of this thesis is a combination of the above-mentioned factors. The sitcom’s exceptional overall popularity makes it relevant from a cultural perspective, and its interesting development within the German consumer culture, in particular the connection between delayed popularity, dubbing critique, and TV-audience figures versus DVD-sales figures, makes it the perfect object for the analysis of dubbing and its effects in the target culture.

CHAPTER 1 - THEORY

Theories of Translation

Before going into detail about sitcom-specific translation strategies, it is necessary to provide a basis for understanding translation in general. In *Thinking German Translation*, Sándor Hervey et al. suggest certain degrees of freedom of translation: every translator has to decide which degree of freedom is best suited for the respective text they are working with. This ranges from extreme source language bias on the one end of the spectrum, to extreme target language bias on the other. As with most things, neither extreme is recommendable and translations tend to be best if they are situated somewhere in the middle (although there are exceptions of course, especially when it comes to translating cultural references). Hervey et al. identify five degrees of freedom on a scale between these two extremes, namely literal, faithful, balanced, idiomizing, and free translation (16-17).

A literal translation is on the source-language-biased end of the spectrum. In this case, a sentence is translated word for word and the meaning is taken out of any context or implied connotation. More idiomatic, but still strongly dependent on the source language, is faithful translation. Balanced translation is set in the middle between source language and target language and has at its core grammatical transpositions that make the target text more natural to the recipients. Hervey et. al. define the transposition of adverbial phrases,⁸ which are natural in German but not so much in English, as the “most frequent of all grammatical transpositions in German-English translation” (18). Closer to the target-language-biased end of the spectrum is idiomizing translation, where the translator respects the source language but uses idioms and

⁸ Example: “Die bei der letzten Vollversammlung vor Wut laut schreienden Mitglieder...“
 Literal translation: “The at the last plenary assembly out of anger loudly shouting members,...”
 Balanced translation: “The angry members that were shouting loudly at the last plenary assembly,...”

patterns that are familiar to the target language, therefore moving away from the literal meaning of the words in the source language. Finally, on the target-language-biased end of the spectrum is free translation, which only keeps the core content of the source text but has its own grammatical structure and form, completely independent from the source text. Free translation is most commonly used in situations where a standard expression in the source language has an equivalent standard expression in the target language, such as idioms or proverbs. This process is called communicative translation. One of the examples in Hervey et al. is the idiom “to jump out of the frying pan into the fire” (19). The German equivalent is “vom Regen in die Traufe kommen,” which literally translates as “to come out of the rain into the eavestrough.” A literal translation would only confuse the target audience and lose the connotation of the reference. This is an example of an intra-linguistic culture-bound reference, which will be discussed further on in this chapter.

The “[d]ividing lines between [these five degrees of freedom] are fluid” (18) and several options can be applied to the same translation. Therefore, the translator has to make a decision based on factors like the context of the translation and more importantly the kind of target audience to be addressed with the final product. For the purpose of dubbing, either balanced, idiomizing, or free translation is most useful, depending on the context and the options in regards to lip-synchronicity. All three are idiomatic translations, meaning that they produce a text that sounds natural in the target language.

Humor (Types and Translation)

When it comes to humor translation, researchers like Thomas Herbst, Sándor Hervey, and Dirk Delabastita, have focused on the translation of purely linguistic features like puns. They have either taken these out of the context of their cultural references, or only briefly mentioned

the influence of the cultural background, and therefore analyzed the form of the humorous expression rather than the underlying meaning. The cultural context, however, is precisely what lies at the center of this analysis. Especially when it comes to sitcoms, which are very culture-heavy, the audience needs to be familiar with the cultural framework of the source text in order to understand the joke references. It is therefore important for a dubbing translator to be familiar with the “pragmatic presuppositions and the corresponding intertextual context[s]” (Alexander 60), meaning not only with the language but also with the culture of the source text, as well as the culture of the target text, in order to determine how a certain joke can or cannot be translated.

It is nevertheless important to first identify and categorize the different types of humor and humorous utterances. Defining humor is difficult because the categories and sub-categories are endless and there is also always the important aspect of subjectivity. What seems to be humorous to one, might not be to the other and vice versa (Attardo 9-10). According to Salvatore Attardo, humor “is whatever a social group defines as such” (9).

The question of what is humor has concerned researchers for a long time and would need its own chapter. Therefore, I will only point out two of the early works that have had an impact on the definition of humor. The first one is Henri Bergson’s *Laughter: An Essay on the Meaning of the Comic*, where he identifies three pillars in defining laughter. Firstly, it is a strictly human phenomenon; secondly, laughter requires a certain detachment of emotions; and thirdly, laughter has social meaning because it connects people (3-5). Sigmund Freud approaches the joke from a different perspective. In his usual way, in *Der Witz und Seine Beziehung zum Unbewussten*, he analyses how the joke is related to pleasure: “Wir können auch noch gar nicht verstehen, wie aus [dem Vorgang] all das Wertvolle des Witzes, der Lustgewinn, den der Witz uns bringt, entstehen

kann” (18). However, for the purposes of this thesis it is not necessary to dig deeply into the origin of laughter and humor, but rather to categorize it according to linguistic terms.

One of the first main distinctions is between verbal and non-verbal humor, for which Richard Alexander offers two possible interpretations. The first one, and also the one he favors, does not equate verbal humor with language but rather with its linguistic features as such. Verbal humor is created by text-intrinsic features like vocabulary, syntax, semantics, and grammar, whereas non-verbal humor is dependent on text-extrinsic features (13). Therefore, a joke might be uttered verbally, meaning through the use of language, but if it relies on logic rather than grammatical structure it is considered non-verbal humor. The second one, which is also the one that will be used in this thesis, divides humorous instances between those “which function via the medium of words or language or not” (16). In this case, verbal humor combines anything that is uttered using language and is divided into two subcategories, linguistic and non-linguistic. The former refers to humor “represented in language which depend[s] on language or linguistic mechanisms [and the latter to humor] transported *by* language but working *outside* language, i.e. through the force of logic for their functioning” (16). Non-verbal humor is then everything else, any type of humor that is not rendered through language, such as visual, musical, and kinetic (17). This includes but is not limited to facial expressions, gestures, body language, or whistling.

In the case of verbal humor, Alexander defines six criteria that can be used to ascertain different types of humor. Criterion 1 questions the intention of the speaker, which is connected to criterion 2, the consciousness of the humor on both the speaker’s and the listener’s part. Criterion 3 divides humor into malevolent and benevolent. The former aims to hurt people with “ridicule, making fun, insulting, or simply attacking verbally” (9), while the latter is well-intended and can be subdivided into criterion 4, the desire to amuse people, and criterion 5, acting in a light-

hearted fashion. Finally, criterion 6 asks whether the humorous reference is witty or not. He understands witty as “power of giving sudden intellectual pleasure by unexpected combining or contrasting of previously unconnected ideas or expressions” (9). Neither one of these criteria is isolated from the others, for they are overlapping and blending into one another so that a humorous reference can be ascribed to more than one of them. For example, a humorous utterance can be intentional, benevolent, light-hearted, and witty at the same time. Even seemingly irreconcilable criteria can occur at the same time, if for instance a joke is malevolent towards one person but benevolent towards another, or if a humorous reference is made intentionally but carries another unintentional meaning as well.

Alexander then continues to combine these six categories with 16 types of humor. While some of them “correspond to types of text, others focus on linguistic features or extra-linguistic intentions, etc.” (9).⁹ By comparing which types of humor fulfill the same criteria, they can be grouped into three overarching categories. Category one includes the types that are intentional as well as witty, which are joke, gag, epigram, and crack. The second category is comprised of unintentional humorous utterances that may or may not be witty, albeit without the speaker’s knowledge. These are spoonerisms, howlers, and misprints. Finally, the third category contains references that are made at someone else’s expense, such as irony, satire, lampoon, caricature,

⁹ These types are: 1. joke; 2. gag (“a laugh-provoking remark or act”); 3. epigram (“a terse, sage, or witty and often paradoxical saying; a concise poem dealing pointedly and often satirically with a single thought or event and often ending with an ingenious turn of thought”); 4. crack (“a sharp witty remark”); 5. pun; 6. spoonerism (“a humorous mistake in which a speaker switches the first sounds of two or more words [as in *tons of soil* for *sons of toil*]”); 7. howler (“a humorous and ridiculous blunder”); 8. misprint; 9. irony; 10. satire; 11. lampoon (“a harsh satire usually directed against an individual”); 12. caricature (“exaggeration by means of often ludicrous distortion of parts or characteristics”); 13. parody; 14. impersonation; 15. sarcasm; 16. sardonic (“disdainfully or skeptically humorous; derisively mocking”)

(All definitions are taken from the Merriam-Webster online dictionary: <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary>)

parody, impersonation, sarcasm, and sardonic utterances. They are usually intended to amuse people with similar views or social status, by making fun of those who differ from them (10-11).

One distinction that is important in order to understand the dynamics of the humor in *Friends* is the one between “saying things funny [and] saying funny things” (Morreal qtd. in Alexander 11). The TV show mainly focuses on humor that is context-bound, meaning that rather than simply saying funny things they say certain things in a funny way. This makes it necessary to be familiar with the source culture in order to understand the contextual reference and therefore the humor beneath it. Therefore, in order to analyze verbal humor, one has to go “beyond the core areas of the lexicogrammar [and look at the] ‘context’ in a broad sense” (Alexander 59). Ragnar Johnson considers the joke as a “means of communicating information” (310), with its success being dependent on the social setting. He suggests the model of a “joking frame” as the basis of all theoretical models. This frame consists of the following six variables (310-311):

1. The object of the joke
2. The joker
3. The audience
4. The context
5. Shared knowledge
6. The joke

Through these six variables he describes “the process of social transaction through which the joke emerges as a communications utterance in any given social situation” (311). The success of any joke is dependent on the interaction and compatibility of the first five variables. Many jokes

depend on certain pragmatic presuppositions, and therefore the joker has to be aware of their audience and their contextual background.

This kind of awareness is also particularly important when it comes to textual analysis for the purpose of translating humorous references, which can be divided into three categories: the “pragmatic dimension,” the “semiotic dimension,” and the “communicative dimension” (Lorenzo et al. 271-273). The pragmatic dimension refers to the relationship between the author and/or translator and the text, which is of less importance to this thesis. More important are the two aspects of the semiotic dimension. The first one deals with strategies for transferring “ideological and cultural aspects” of the source culture into the target culture. This refers to elements that “make one society different from another [like] specific geographical locations, references to the history, art and culture [...], well-known people and celebrities, [...] etc.” (272). The four basic strategies Lorenzo names for transferring such elements are: “no translation, cultural adaptation (the source elements are replaced by (quasi) equivalents in the target culture), explanatory translation (the original elements are paraphrased) and omission” (272). The second one is “intertextuality,” meaning any reference to other texts, or movies, or different episodes of the TV show. For example, if someone were to mention a movie that is only known in the source culture but not in the target culture, the translator has to find a way around this reference. Finally, the communicative dimension comprises those kinds of linguistic variation that can be attributed to age, gender, social class, time, etc., and is divided into “use” and “user varieties.” The former includes three categories: firstly, “field,” which describes “the subject of the audiovisual text and the way in which it is constructed (technical vs. everyday language)” (273); secondly, “tenor,” which refers to “the social interaction between the characters (formal vs. informal)” (273); and thirdly, “mode,” which differentiates between the

channels that transmit the text. For audiovisual products, it “is defined by a combination of the linguistic code (oral) and the visual code (image)” (273). Complementary to the types of language use are the “user varieties,” which refer to certain aspects that are specific to the speakers. Lorenzo identifies the following translation problems:

[P]roblems derived from chronological variation (linguistic differences between generations, historical periods, etc.), problems derived from geographical variation (linguistic differences that may be observed within a language from a dialectal perspective), problems derived from social variation (different ways of speaking depending on education, sex, social status and religion), problems derived from idiolectal variation (characteristic forms of a language used by an individual), and problems derived from age variation (ways in which children express themselves compared with adults) (273).

This shows that in many aspects, humor is closely related to culture. Not only the perception of humorous references, but also the choice of style and content is determined by a person’s cultural background.

Intra vs. Extra-Linguistic Culture-Bound References

Lorenzo’s semiotic and communicative dimensions are both highly dependent on the cultural context of the source text. Since this is a very important factor in *Friends*, it is necessary to go into more detail in regards to the translation of cultural references. Within translation studies there has always been a debate between those who see language and culture as two different categories and those who see language as part of culture and vice versa. This thesis supports the latter theory, in which a translator is also seen as an intercultural mediator, which is defined by R. Taft as follows:

A cultural mediator is a person who facilitates communication, understanding, and action between persons or groups who differ with respect to language and culture. The role of the mediator is performed by interpreting the expressions, intentions, perceptions, and expectations of each cultural group to the other, that is, by establishing and balancing the communication between them. In order to serve as a link in this sense, the mediator must be able to participate to some extent in both cultures. Thus, a mediator must be to a certain extent bicultural. (53)

Mosisili Sebotsa is one translator who considers “language as a culture-bound phenomenon [and therefore] a reflection of the society owning it” (106). Very often, culture-bound concepts of the source language either do not exist in the target language, or they do not have the same semantic range, which makes them very difficult to translate and often leads to misconceptions between different cultures.

Jan Pedersen divides culture-bound references into two groups, namely intra-linguistic and extra-linguistic culture-bound references. Intra-linguistic culture-bound references are rather straightforward and, as the name implies, rely on their linguistic structure, as in idioms and proverbs. An extra-linguistic culture-bound reference is a “reference that is attempted by means of any culture-bound linguistic expression, which refers to an extra-linguistic entity or process, and which is assumed to have a discourse referent that is identifiable to a relevant audience as this referent is within the encyclopedic knowledge of this audience” (2). In simpler terms, these are “expressions pertaining to realia, to cultural items, which are not part of a language system” (2). This concept of extra-linguistic culture-bound references is connected to Peter Newmark’s definition of culture as “the way of life and its manifestations that are peculiar to a community

that uses a particular language as its means of expression. More specifically, [he] distinguish[es] ‘cultural’ from ‘universal’ and ‘personal’ language” (94).

Sebotsa claims that words belonging to this universal language like “sky, cloud, life, animal, etc.” (107) do not usually cause any issues for the translator. Cultural words, however, can be very difficult to translate because the equivalent word in the target language might have a very different connotation than the word in the source language. A simple example is the word “pizza,” which does not even need to be translated for it is the same in most languages, but the implications are quite different in the United States and Europe. For most North Americans, a pizza has a thick crust, a lot of toppings, and a thick layer of cheese. One pizza can usually be divided by several people and is very popular at parties and other gatherings for it is cheap and can be eaten without cutlery. In Europe and especially in Italy, however, a pizza has a very thin crust and is only thinly covered with toppings and cheese. It is usually part of a nice meal, eaten at a restaurant and because it is much thinner than an American pizza, it is only enough for one person and cutlery is needed. While these differences might seem negligible, the idea of a pizza party, where people stand around having casual conversations with a slice of pizza in their hands, would be as strange for an Italian as it would be for an American to imagine a steak party, where people stand around with big pieces of meat in their hands. Therefore, a translator has to be very careful when translating these cultural words, for even if the word has the exact same linguistic form in both source language and target language, its semantic and pragmatic meanings might be very different.

Sebotsa continues by saying that these cultural words would not pose a translation problem if “there [was] an already existing cultural overlap between the SL and the TL including the readership, as in the case of the United Kingdom and the United States, Spain and Portugal

and Latin America, the Sotho-speaking part of South Africa and Lesotho, etc.” (107). Quite to the contrary, however, it might be even more complicated when one language is spoken in different countries and can therefore have several varying meanings even within this one language, depending on the culture it is used in: for example, German spoken in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland, or English spoken in the United States, England, Canada, India, and many other countries. When translating from one language into another, cultural differences are expected and taken into consideration by the translator. But if the source language and the target language are the same, differences in connotation or even meaning can easily be overlooked.

A well-known example for the necessity of translating British English into American English is the book *Harry Potter*, which has been edited for American readers. In the original version of the first book, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, Professor Dumbledore's favorite candy is called “sherbet lemon,” which is known in the U.K. as a type of hard candy with a fizzy powder inside. In the U.S., the word sherbet refers to a kind of water-ice and so it was changed to “lemon drop.” Since Professor Dumbledore pulls some of them out of his pocket and offers them to Professor McGonagall, it would have been odd for the American reader to picture him carrying lemon-flavored water-ice around in his pocket. This translation is also used in *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*, while in *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*, the original word is kept in the American version, leading to the assumption that the translator changed and did not check their predecessor's work. Throughout the books, quite a few words were changed from the British to the American version. “Jumper” turned into “sweater,” “roundabout” was changed to “carousel,” “crisps” to “chips,” and of course, “football” was changed to “soccer.” The most obvious and most controversial one, however, was the change from the original title of the first book, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* to *Harry Potter*

and the Sorcerer's Stone. There are many unconfirmed theories as to why this change was made, but according to the Scholastic Corporation, the American editor thought that American children would not be familiar with the concept of the “philosopher’s stone.” They assumed that, instead of drawing a parallel to the legend of a substance that can turn base metals into gold and bestow immortality upon its owner, American children would merely think of philosophy, which neither makes any sense in the given context, nor does it sound like an appealing title. By changing it to “sorcerer’s stone,” they wanted to convey the more compelling idea of witchcraft and sorcery.

Translation Strategies for Extra-Linguistic Culture-Bound References

More relevant for this thesis is the translation of cultural words from one language into another, for which I will rely on the theories of Pedersen. Here it is important to recognize that many of them, as in the case of extra-linguistic culture-bound elements, cannot be approached from a purely linguistic angle. Since they are not determined by linguistic factors but by cultural, social, or literary ones, a literal translation would be more than impractical and lose or change the meaning of the elements. Depending on the context and functionality, several different translation techniques can be used to convey the meaning of the source text within the target text. These can be divided into two main categories, one being source-language-oriented and the other one target-language-oriented (Pedersen 3), which recalls Hervey’s continuum from source-language bias to target-language bias. Each category is comprised of three techniques. For the source-language-oriented one they are “retention, specification, and direct translation,” and for the target-language-oriented one they are “substitution, generalization, and omission” (see fig. 1). The only instance where translation is not necessary is if an Official Equivalent exists in the target language. Pedersen mentions the example of “Donald Duck,” who is called “Kalle Anka” in Swedish (Pedersen 3). From a translator’s point of view, there is no reason to

change the name “Donald Duck.” This use of a different version of the name “is evidence of the [extra-linguistic culture-bound reference] having entered the” (3) target language.

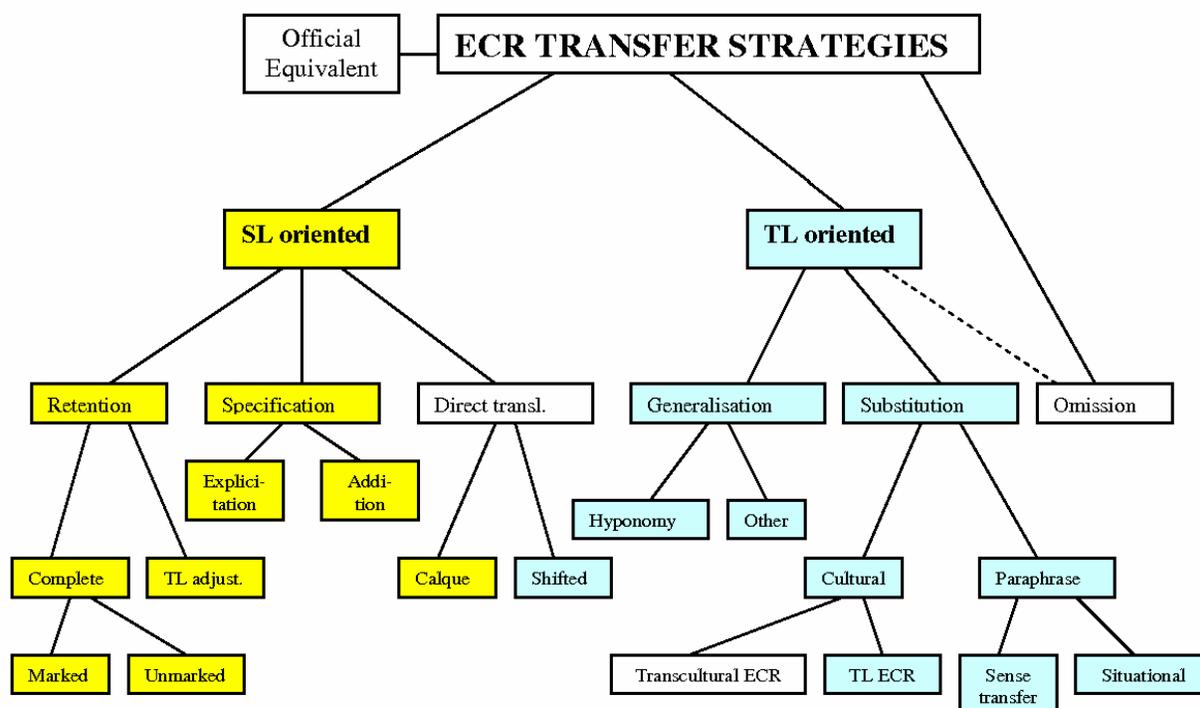


Figure 1: Taxonomy of extra-cultural reference transfer strategies (Pedersen 4)

According to Pedersen, retention is the “most common strategy for rendering” (4) extra-linguistic culture-bound references. The word is simply taken over from the source language as it is, sometimes with small adjustments such as dropping an article or changing the pronunciation to better match the target language. It is at the same time the most truthful and the least felicitous option because it leaves the job of translating to the target audience. In a written text, the translator could provide a footnote with a translation, which is not possible when it comes to dubbing or subtitling.

Specification is very similar to retention, with the difference that additional information is provided in order to explain underlying meaning that might not be understood by the target

audience. This can be done through explication, which is a strategy “involving expansion of the text, or spelling out anything that is implicit” (4) in the source language. Examples are adding the first name of a person mentioned in order to help the target audience identify who that person is, or spelling out acronyms and abbreviations that might not be common in the target language. The other option is addition, which simply means adding information in order to provide the context of the utterance. For example, if the source text mentions a public figure who is not known internationally, the translator can add information about them. While the sentence “he can throw a ball like Tom Brady” would make sense to an American audience, most Europeans would not know who that is. Therefore, the translator could turn it into “he can throw a ball like that famous quarterback Tom Brady,” providing a context for the person mentioned. When it comes to dubbing, the problem with specification is that it lengthens the utterance, making it more difficult to match it to the actor’s lip movements and speaking time. Pedersen also says that it “could be regarded as patronizing” (5) if the audience was aware of the connotation.

The final source-language-oriented strategy is closest to being target-language-oriented and actually bridges the gap between the two. In direct translation, “nothing [is] added, or subtracted. There is no effort made to transfer connotations or guide the [target] audience in any way” (5). There are two subcategories with different outcomes. One of them is Calque, where a source-text reference is translated in a strictly linguistic way, which might appear odd to the target audience. The other one is shifted, where the translator “perform[s] some optional shifts” (5) in order to make it sound less obtrusive in the target language. An example here is the English word “private,” as in the lowest enlisted rank in the military. The calque would be “Gefreiter,” which is the correct technical term for a “private” but is not well known among the majority of Germans, since military jargon is not as commonly used as in the US. A shifted

translation would be “Soldat,” which technically translates to “soldier” but is more familiar to the target audience and therefore sounds more natural in a conversation. This is also very likely the reason why the German title of the movie *Saving Private Ryan* was translated to *Der Soldat James Ryan*.

Pedersen’s first source-language-oriented strategy is generalization, which, as its name implies, replaces the reference to something specific by something more general. “Typically, this involves hyponymy, but in a wide sense, as the form of the [extra-linguistic culture-bound reference] may [or may not] retain uniqueness of referent” (6) in the target language. This strategy seems to have similarities with the above-mentioned addition, when the added information is a hyperonym, and therefore a combination of generalization and retention. However, Pedersen points out that the difference between addition and generalization is of a linguistic nature, “based on the perspective of the [reference in the source language]. In generalization, there is an upward movement on a hyponymy scale, producing a [target text] item that is less specific than the [source text item]. When using addition, the movement goes in the opposite direction, and the technique involves not as much hyponymy as meronymy” (6).

Substitution is the strategy comprised of the most subcategories. It can first be divided into cultural substitution and paraphrase. The former refers to the replacement of an extra-linguistic culture-bound reference known to the source audience, with an extra-linguistic culture-bound reference known to the target audience. This can either be done by using a transcultural reference – meaning a reference that is known in both the source culture and the target culture – or by using a reference that is only known within the target culture. An example of such a substitution can be found in the Hebrew version of *Harry Potter*. When faced with the issue of how to translate the above-mentioned candy “sherbet lemon,” Gili Bar-Hillel decided to use the

term “krembo,” which is an Israeli chocolate covered marshmallow treat and has no trace of lemon in it whatsoever. She explained her decision as follows:

The point of the lemon sherbets is to tell us something about Dumbledore’s character in that this wise old wizard with a long white beard carries around a children’s treat in his pocket. The equivalent children’s dessert in Israel is the krembo. If I’d translated it as a lemon sucking candy, it wouldn’t have imparted the same image of Dumbledore. (qtd. in Bronson)

Pedersen identifies cultural substitution, which is most often used for official institutions and titles, as “the most domesticating of all strategies to rendering” (7) extra-linguistic culture-bound references. The problem with this form of substitution is credibility. The fact that the entire text and the protagonists are embedded within the source culture and suddenly, an extra-linguistic culture-bound reference from the target culture is treated as though it were part of the source culture, creates a credibility gap. “The strategy could therefore hardly be used in texts where information is the primary skopos¹⁰ (cf. Vermeer 1989/2000), but the strategy appears in texts that have other primary skopoi, particularly humor” (7). If there is no equivalent reference within the target culture, and therefore cultural substitution is not possible, and it is “too complex for Generalization or Specification” (7), the translator can use paraphrase. The first option is sense transfer, where the extra-linguistic culture-bound reference is left out but replaced by a phrase that conveys the same connotation. This technique can be particularly difficult for dubbing purposes since the reference in the source text and the paraphrase in the target text might differ by a lot in length and complexity, making it hard to match the utterance with the length and form

¹⁰ Skopos theory was first introduced by the German linguists Hans Vermeer and Katharina Reiß and puts emphasis on the target text rather than the source text, since a translation is created for a target audience. Therefore, the skopos is the objective of a translation. (Prunč 144)

of the actor's lip movement. The second option is situational paraphrase, which is closely related to omission because the paraphrase in the target text is made to fit the situation but has a completely different meaning than the extra-linguistic culture-bound reference in the source text. According to Pedersen, “[t]his method seems to be used a lot when it comes to [...] puns” (9).

Finally, omission can be seen as the last resort when all other strategies fail, or when the translator does not want to put more effort into the translation. As Leppihalm states, “a translator may choose omission responsibly, after rejecting all alternative strategies, or irresponsibly, to save him/herself the trouble of looking up something s/he does not know” (qtd. in Pedersen 9).

All these are strategies to translate an extra-linguistic culture-bound reference into the target language. However, some of them do not actually involve translation, which is why Pedersen refers to the process as “rendering” rather than translating. He also adds that they can be, and often are, combined in order to find the most suitable product for the target audience. A common example in subtitling is that the source text reference “is explicated before being directly translated” (9). For the same reasons as mentioned above with sense transfer, this is much more difficult for dubbed texts and might not always be possible to the same extent as it is in subtitling. Pedersen's strategies seem to be an expansion of those mentioned above by Lorenzo for the transference of “ideological and cultural aspects.” Pedersen's retention, cultural substitution, paraphrase, and omission, are what Lorenzo calls no translation, cultural adaptation, explanatory translation, and omission. This analysis will focus on the strategies proposed by Pedersen since they are more detailed and offer more options.

Special Dubbing-Related Issues

As already mentioned in the introduction, dubbing is a very specific kind of translation that requires a certain skill set on the part of the dubbing translator and calls for an

interdisciplinary approach. Gerhard Pisek points out that both dubbing and subtitling used to be considered as a “cinematic rather than a literary activity” (39) and were therefore not acknowledged as forms of translation. This notion, however, has changed today and both are seen as subcategories of the interdisciplinary field of translation. The current discussion deals more with the rivalry between the supporters of subtitling and the supporters of dubbing. Both have their advantages and disadvantages. On the one hand, those in support of subtitling claim their strategy to be more honest because it “is an *overt* type of translation, retaining the original version, thus laying itself bare to criticism from everybody with the slightest knowledge of the source language” (Gottlieb qtd. in Pisek 39). This is not the case in dubbing, since the audience has no access to the original text and has therefore fewer options to criticize the translated version (Pisek 39). On the other hand, those in support of dubbing refer to more recent translation strategies, like skopos theory, which favor a more functional approach over a truthful translation. In addition, if a movie or TV show is dubbed, the audience can focus on the images, while in subtitled versions their attention is always divided between text and images. This is countered by subtitle supporters with the claim that “subtitles have the advantage of allowing the audience to hear the voices of the original actors and actresses, which may contribute greatly to the overall aesthetic experience of enjoying a film” (40).

While both sides have valid arguments, there is one big drawback for subtitles in the case of sitcoms. Very often the translation has to be shortened so that the viewer can read fast enough to keep up. This means that sometimes only the important content can be translated and humorous elements need to be neglected. This simply defeats the purpose of a sitcom, which is based on humor. A similar problem with dubbing is the loss of the actor’s original voice and therefore their intonation, cadence, inflection, and trademark voices of certain actors, which are

often important attributes of the performance. This, however, can be solved by carefully choosing the dubbing actors, who are specifically trained for this purpose. “Dubbing has the great advantage that - if it is well done - its audience has the impression of watching something as close to the original as possible. Achieving such quality can, however, be extremely demanding, which is why this form of translation is sometimes seen as representing the highest level in the art of translation” (Pisek 41).

Since dubbing is a form of audiovisual translation, it is not enough to merely analyze the translated text, but it is also important to include the visual context it is set in, meaning gestures, placement of characters, camera angles, etc. According to Delia Chiaro, this is exactly what makes dubbing the most complex form of translation. “Films are multifaceted semiotic entities simultaneously communicating verbal signs acoustically (dialogue, song lyrics, etc.), visually (written texts, such as letters, newspaper headlines, banners, etc.), non-verbally but acoustically (music, background noises, etc.), and non-verbally but visually (actor’s movements, facial expressions, setting, etc.)” (198). Out of all these factors, the translator can only manipulate the verbal aspect, and has to do so in such a way that it matches all the other factors which remain in their original form, for the “verbal elements are inseparable from the situational frame of reference” (Pisek 39). This leads to a dynamic relationship between source culture and target culture, for even when the words are translated within the context of the target culture, the visual elements will always remain within the context of the source culture.

This connection between audio text and visual images is precisely what makes dubbing such a complicated task. In addition to synchronicity between text and body language, the dubbing translator must also be mindful of synchronicity between the spoken words and the movement of the actor’s lips. Lorenzo et. al. distinguish three types of synchronism that are

important for the dubbing process: “**content synchronism** (agreement between the translated version of the text and the original story line), **visual synchronism** (harmony between the visible lip movements and the sounds that are heard), and **character synchronism** (harmony between the voice of the dubbing artist and the appearance and gestures of the actor or actress)” (271).

Thomas Herbst goes into even more detail when it comes to visual synchronism, which he refers to as lip-synchronicity, and divides it into four categories: quantitative lip-synchronicity, speech tempo synchronicity, qualitative lip-synchronicity, and paralinguistic synchronicity.¹¹

Quantitative lip-synchronicity refers merely to simultaneity between the spoken words and the movement of the lips, without any regard to form. In this first step, the dubbing translator has to find a translation that matches the original in length. Instances where the actor is filmed from behind and their mouth cannot be seen or when their lips are slightly apart even though they are not speaking anymore, make it easier for the dubber, because the text in the target language can be slightly longer than the original without the audience noticing it. Some final syllables in German can be articulated with compressed lips, which allows the dubbing actor to finish certain sentences later than the on-screen actor, without the audience noticing (Herbst 34).

Speech tempo synchronicity is an important factor in achieving quantitative lip-synchronicity and refers to the number of syllables a person can articulate within a set amount of time. Herbst conducted a study where he compared the number of phonemes and syllables in a variety of English texts and their German dubbed versions. He came to the conclusion that an increase of up to 50% from English to German is hardly noticeable (38). This is another factor that makes it easier for the dubbing translator; however, they have to be careful because the

¹¹These are my translations for Herbst’s terms: “quantitative Lippensynchronität,” “Synchronität in Bezug auf die Sprechgeschwindigkeit,” “qualitative Lippensynchronität,” and “paralinguistische Synchronität” (33-35).

meaning of an utterance can in certain instances be conveyed through speech tempo. For example, if someone speaks very fast, it might indicate excitement, impatience, or interest, whereas someone who speaks slowly might do so out of boredom, lack of interest, or to lend weight to their words. Therefore, changing the speech tempo of the original text can be a helpful tool for the dubbing translator, but they have to be very cautious to maintain the underlying meaning of the utterance.

Qualitative lip-synchronicity refers to what most people associate with lip-synchronicity in general, which is the synchronicity of lip movement for individual sounds (Herbst 39). Since most people in the audience are not proficient in reading lips, there is some leeway in this category; however, if the lip movements of the actor differ too much from what is said in the dubbed version, the movie or television show loses authenticity. In addition to lip movement, this also includes the position of the tongue, accentuation, and intonation. According to Herbst, the main parameters of qualitative lip-synchronicity are “Grad der Mundöffnung und die auch durch intonatorische Faktoren bedingte Ausprägtheit der Lippenbewegungen” (50), meaning the degree to which someone opens their mouth and how distinctively their lips move through the influence of intonation. When it comes to translating English into German, there are a few vowel and consonant sounds that can pose difficulties, but the one that is most difficult is the “th” sound (ð and Θ). Since there is no German sound that would require this particular position of the tongue, Herbst identifies this as an insoluble problem of English-German synchronization (44).

Finally, paralinguistic synchronicity is similar to what Lorenzo calls character synchronism. It refers to the actor’s display of emotions through gestures and facial expressions, as well as the way in which certain syllables are emphasized through different degrees of stress.

Paralinguistic synchronicity and qualitative lip-synchronicity are therefore closely related because it is not only the lip movement but also the meaning of the stressed syllables that has to match (50). The different syntactic structures in English and German can be problematic in this case because in the translated version stressed words are often in completely different positions within the sentence. This is the point where the dubbing translator has to decide which type of synchronicity is more important. They can either follow the rules of qualitative lip-synchronicity, by stressing the target text syllable that is uttered at the same time as the source text syllable, or they can follow the rules of paralinguistic synchronicity, by stressing the target text syllable that is the direct equivalent of the stressed syllable in the source text and risking a visual mismatch between lip movement and synchronized text.

The combination of all the factors mentioned above – different types of synchronicity, translation of humorous elements and cultural references, dependence on visual objects, functional versus truthful translation, etc. – is exactly the reason why dubbing is such a complex task and finding the one “correct” solution is impossible. The following analysis will look at examples of the fourth season of *Friends* in order to demonstrate the multifaceted challenges of dubbing, in particular those related to cultural discrepancies between source text and target text, and the resulting necessity for a multidisciplinary approach. I will identify certain issues and offer an alternative solution that is aimed at improving the viewing experience of the target audience. These examples are divided into intra-linguistic culture-bound references such as puns and idioms, and extra-linguistic culture-bound references such as geographic locations or historical references.

CHAPTER 2 – INTRA-LINGUISTIC CULTURE-BOUND REFERENCES

Cultural Parameters of *Friends*

Every season of *Friends* revolves around the six main characters: Rachel, Monica, Phoebe, Ross, Chandler, and Joey. In addition to the never-changing main cast, which is very rare in a show that airs for ten years, there are also several secondary characters. Some of them are an integral part of the sitcom, like the owner of their favorite coffee shop, Gunther, or Chandler's annoying on-and-off girlfriend Janice. Others are part of one season or only a few episodes. In the last few seasons, when *Friends* was at the height of its popularity, cameo appearances of favorite actors like Brad Pitt and Julia Roberts became a regular feature. According to the usual practice of sitcoms, *Friends* was shot in a studio with a live audience and a limited number of main settings: the coffee shop "Central Perk," Monica's and Rachel's apartment, and Chandler's and Joey's apartment.

Every episode comprises several different plotlines that revolve around all or some of the six main characters and vary in length. The sub-plots vary in length and can be stretched over a few episodes, an entire season, or even the entire show. In the case of Ross's and Rachel's roller-coaster-like relationship, it starts in the very first episode and does not get resolved until the very last. The main plot is introduced at the beginning of every episode and resolved at the end. It is indicated by the title, which is always a variation of "the one with..." For example, "the one with Joey's girlfriend" indicates that he will start dating a girl. Knowing Joey, it is not surprising that his relationship only lasts for one episode. The title already poses the first translation issue. Although an equivalent structure, "die mit..." is available in German, the translator chose to forgo this stylistic device and use a free translation of the original title instead. In this case,

sacrificing the stylistic device is the better option. While a direct translation might be possible, it would sound very unidiomatic.

Season four seemed to be the most suitable for this analysis, due to the fact that Ross is dating a woman from England. This relationship alone is the basis for a plethora of jokes related to culture, accents, and dialects.

For clarity reasons, I have decided to structure the following analysis not chronologically but based on the category of the translation issue. Some of the scenes show characteristics of more than one category; in this case, they are categorized according to the feature that is most prominent. Antecedent to every scene is a short introduction of the context it is set in, which is often necessary to understand the humorous reference. This chapter focuses on intra-linguistic culture-bound references, divided into four groups: puns, idioms and proverbs, Anglicism, and lip-synching.

Wordplays/Puns

The pun is one of the most common humorous elements in sitcoms but also one of the most difficult to translate. It is a play on the structural characteristics of a language, usually a combination of linguistic forms that look or sound the same but are different in meaning, which then cause certain semantic and pragmatic effects. Dirk Delabastita defines the pun as follows:

Wordplay is the general name indicating the various textual phenomena in which certain features inherent in the structure of the language used are exploited in such a way as to establish a communicatively significant, (near)-simultaneous confrontation of at least two linguistic structures with more or less dissimilar meanings (signifieds) and more or less similar forms (signifiers). (57)

There are many different kinds of wordplays and it depends on the scholar whether they want to define the term in a broader or more narrow way. Chiaro, for example, uses it as a blanket term: “the term word play includes every conceivable way in which language is used with the intent to amuse” (*The Language of Jokes 2*). Delabastita, on the other hand, identifies four types, namely homonymy, homophony, homography, and paronymy (“Introduction” 128).

Homonyms (or Polysemes) are words that are spelled and pronounced the exact same way, but have two different meanings. These words are a result of the constant progression of language and the consequent derivation of new terms (Linke et al. 159). Examples are the words *head* (as in the body part or the head of an organization) and *march* (either the month or to march as a troop).

Homophones are words that sound the same but are spelled differently and therefore have different meanings. Alexander claims that due to the structure of the language, “homophones are the source of by far the most widespread puns in English” (25). Two examples are the words *feat* and *feet*, as well as *marshal* and *martial*.

Homographs are the exact opposite of homophones, meaning words that are spelled the same way but pronounced differently. An example is the word *tear*, which can either be a noun [tɪə], or a verb [teə], based on the pronunciation of the word and its placement in the sentence. They are acoustically distinguishable, but not optically and are therefore not very common in TV shows for they would have to be in some written form, such as on a billboard or the like.

Paronyms are words that differ slightly in both pronunciation and spelling and can therefore easily be mixed up. An example is the phrase “adding **in salt/insult** to injury.”

Another form of wordplay that should be added here is the rhyme. It is a combination of two words that are similar in sound, usually because they end in the same syllable. They are

often used in songs, which occur quite a lot in *Friends* due to Phoebe, and pose a particularly difficult translation task. While these are the most common types of word play, the list is endless and other examples will also be considered in the following analysis

Delabastita (*There's a Double Tongue* 191-218) proposes nine translation strategies exclusively for puns:

- 1) Pun → pun (The original pun is replaced by a pun in the target language.)
- 2) Pun → non-pun (The pun is substituted by a phrase that conveys one or both senses of the original.)
 - a) *Non-selective non-pun* (Both original meanings are rendered, none is selected over the other)
 - b) *Selective* (Only one of the meanings is transferred into the source text.)
 - c) *Diffuse paraphrase* (Both meanings are transferred 'beyond recognition'.)
- 3) Pun → Punoid (The pun is replaced by a related rhetorical device, attempting to recreate the effect of the pun. For example: irony, rhyme, repetition, etc.)
- 4) Pun → Zero (The pun is simply omitted.)
- 5) Direct copy: Pun ST = Pun TT (The source text pun is reproduced rather than actually translated.)
- 6) Transference: Pun ST = Pun TT (Similar to direct copy, except that by imposing the source language signified (meaning or idea of a sign), semantic consequences are taken into consideration.)
- 7) Addition: Non-pun → Pun (A pun is used although there is no pun in the original.)
- 8) Zero → Pun (New material is added.)
- 9) Editorial techniques (Footnotes, comments, etc. are used for explanations.)

Episode Analysis

As already mentioned in the previous chapter, the sole focus on translating the linguistic features of stylistic devices like wordplays is not sufficient for sitcoms, since the cultural aspect has to be taken into consideration as well. Therefore, the following analysis will focus on both structural and cultural elements.

S04E01 20:18 – 20:28 In the previous episode, Rachel had written Ross a letter that he pretended to have read. Since the letter was 18 pages long, he fell asleep but did not want to admit it so instead he told her that he agreed with everything she had said. In this episode, it finally comes out that he did not read the letter and he also does not actually agree with what Rachel said; the two have a big fight and Ross tauntingly points out a spelling mistake that she seems to have made consistently.

Ross: Oh oh oh and by the way: Y-O-U
apostrophe R-E means you are, Y-O-U-R
means your.

Ross: Ach eins wollt ich dir übrigens
noch sagen: Das Wort „dir“ wird
nebenbei gemerkt ohne „e“ in der Mitte
geschrieben. Hast du gehört? Du bist
doch sonst so gebildet.

While it should be expected that an educated American knows the difference between the homonyms “you’re” and “your,” it is still a rather common mistake in writing. This scene references one of the issues in Ross’s and Rachel’s relationship, namely that he is better educated and earns more money as a paleontologist than she does as a personal shopper. However, it is not so much the fact that Rachel made this mistake that is foregrounded, but rather Ross’s tendency to be a know-it-all, which is often critiqued by his friends. In the German version, the dubber

decided to go with a slightly shifted direct translation, proposing that Rachel misspelled the word “dir,” which is an inflected form of “you,” by adding an “e,” turning it into “dier.” One problem with this translation is that “dier” does not exist, so Rachel did not mix up the spelling of two homonyms but simply misspelled a word that should not be misspelled by anyone of average intelligence. Another problem is that since Ross spells out the words in the original, the German text is too short and the sentence “du bist doch sonst so gebildet” was added. This sarcastic remark makes Ross seem a lot meaner than he actually is. A better solution could have been not to focus so much on the direct translation of the misspelled word, but to transfer the cultural reference of the source text into a cultural reference suited for the target text, for example, by choosing a word that is commonly misspelled in German, such as “ein bisschen” (either spelled with only one “s” or with an “ß”). This would make Rachel sound less uneducated and because it also takes more time to say, the sardonic remark at the end would not have been needed.

S04E03 08:53 – 08:57 Rachel’s colleague walks into the office with a macaroon for their boss. Their boss, however, is not very fond of her assistant and reacts harshly to this.	
Assistant: I brought you a macaroon.	Assistant: Hi ich hab hier ne Makrone für Sie.
Joanna: <u>Oh, great I’ll keep it in my butt with your nose.</u>	Joanna: <u>Danke auch wenn mir diese Anbiederei zuwider ist.</u>

“I’ll keep it in my butt together with your nose” is a play on the idiomatic expression “brown noser,” meaning that the assistant always tries to ingratiate herself with her boss, who is not pleased by that sort of behavior. The German equivalent is “Arschkriecher.” The wordplay is

omitted in the German version, which is not a bad solution. However, this sounds much more formal than the English version, for she is basically saying: “thanks, even though I am repulsed by your ingratiation.” In this case, it would have been hard to transfer the same wordplay into German, yet not impossible. For example: “toll, dann könnt ihr mir ja gemeinsam in den Hintern kriechen.” This way, the humorous reference would also be maintained, which otherwise gets lost in the German version. However, omission is still not a bad option but it needs to be less formal, and therefore the word “Anbiederei” should have been replaced with something like “Arschkriecherei.”

S04E06 03:35 – 03:44 Monica tells the gang that she had to reject a catering job for 60 people because she has neither enough equipment nor the means to hire the personnel she would need. Phoebe does not approve of Monica giving up so easily and tries to motivate her.

Phoebe: Wow what is with all the negativity?

You sound like Moni-can't not Moni-can

(looks confused) ... Moni-ca?!

Phoebe: Was ist denn das für eine

negative Einstellung? Immerhin ist dein

Name schon eine Verpflichtung, oder?

Du musst dir immer sagen: Moni-kann!

Phoebe’s confused expression stems from the fact that she just figured out that her wordplay does not work because Monica’s name is not actually Monican, but Monica. This joke gets lost in the German translation because the negation of “kann” is “kann nicht,” which cannot as easily be added to the name as the “t” in “can’t.” However, this still seems to be a good solution because the reference that Monica needs to be more positive is still conveyed and the way Phoebe does it is charmingly awkward in both languages.

S04E10 03:35 – 03:40 Monica comes into the café and tells the others that her work colleagues still hate her. She proves her point by showing them her chef’s hat, which has “quit bitch” written on it in all caps. In the German version, this is translated to “Zieh Leine, Miststück.” Phoebe is trying to cheer Monica up by assuming a spelling error.

Phoebe: Hey maybe they meant “quiet bitch!”

Phoebe: Hey vielleicht wollten sie dir nur sagen „Wir fühlen uns so alleine, Miststück!“

Since the paronyms “quit” and “quiet” are only distinguishable by one letter, a spelling mistake can be assumed. In the German version, however, the dubber decided to opt for a pun-to-punoid translation with the rhyming phrases “Zieh Leine, Miststück” and “Wir fühlen uns so alleine, Miststück.” Not only would the lengthy phrase not have fit on the hat but it also makes no sense to assume a spelling mistake of this magnitude. Additionally, part of the joke in the original is that Phoebe tries to cheer Monica up by suggesting an alternative option that is equally as bad as the actual one, while the German solution shifts from “Get lost, bitch” to “we are feeling so lonely, bitch,” which not only makes little sense but is also not as insulting anymore. In this case, it would be best to either find a different paronym that makes more sense within the context, or move away from the spelling mistake and find a situational paraphrase. For example, Phoebe could just comment on the fact that it is written in English and suggest that the person was not aware of what they were writing, or that they seem to be a foreigner and therefore might misunderstand what Monica is saying at work.

S04E10 06:21 – 06:35 Phoebe tells the friends that she has composed a Christmas song that includes all their names and plays it for them.

Phoebe: Happy Hanukkah, Monica. May your Christmas be snowy, Joey. Happy New Year Chandler and Ross, spin the dreidel, Rachel.

Phoebe: Happy Hanukkah, Monica. Und ich denke, für Joey gibt's Geschenke. Ich wünsche Chandler und Ross noch viel „Spoß“. Spiel mit dem Kreisel Rachel.

This is an example of a very successful translation. The German text rhymes in the same places as the English one and even the imperfect rhyme between “dreidel” and “Rachel” – which is the reason for the following humorous conversation – is mirrored with an also imperfect rhyme between “Kreisel” and “Rachel.” The content had to be adjusted slightly but it still matches the Christmas theme.

S04E10 20:18 - 21:07 After getting some critique from the group about her song, Phoebe makes some changes and presents the final version at the café in front of all the guests.

Phoebe: Went to the store, sat on Santa's lap, asked him to bring my friends all kinds of crap. Said all you need is to write them a song, now you haven't heard it yet so don't try to sing along. No don't sing along. Monica, Monica, have a happy Hanukkah. Saw Santa Claus, he said hello to Ross. And

Phoebe: Ich setzte mich auf den Schoß vom lieben, lieben Weihnachtsmann, ich sagte er soll meinen Freunden so viel schenken wie er nur tragen kann. Er sagte ich solle ein Lied für euch bringen, Ihr kennt es noch nicht versucht also nicht mitzusingen. Nein

<p>please tell <u>Joey</u>, Christmas will be <u>snowy</u>.</p> <p>And Rachel and <u>Chandler</u>, *random syllables* has-nhm-<u>haenggleer</u>.</p>	<p>singt bitte nicht! Monica, <u>Monica</u>, ich wünsch dir ein super <u>Hanukkah</u>. Ich fragte Santa <u>Claus</u>, er sendet Grüße an <u>Ross</u>. Auch an Joey schickt er viele <u>Grüße</u>, alles Liebe und keine kalten <u>Füße</u>. Und Rachel und <u>Chandler</u>, sind *mumbling* sehr gute <u>Händler</u>.</p>
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Here as well, the rhymes work well in the German translation. The only joke that gets lost is the pun with “lap” and “crap.” The last line, however, is questionable. In the English version, Phoebe just mumbles random syllables because she cannot find anything that rhymes with either Rachel or Chandler, which refers back to the previously discussed scene. In the German version, Phoebe mumbles the part with “sind sehr gute Händler.” Granted, the sentence does not make a lot of sense within this context but it still is a grammatical sentence and the word also rhymes with Chandler. By simply switching the words “Chandler” and “Rachel,” for which there really is no German word that rhymes, Phoebe could have also mumbled nonsensical syllables in the German version.

S04E17 10:00 - 10:02 Rachel has a song stuck in her head but cannot remember the title so she asks the others if they can tell her what song it is.	
Chandler: It’s the theme from “Good Will <u>Humping</u> .”	Chandler: Aus dem Film „Good Will <u>Perversling</u> “.

The title that Chandler references here is obviously a porn movie. The pun is created by switching two letters of the last word of the movie title *Good Will Hunting*. In the German version, the word “humping” is translated as “Perversling,” which means “pervert.” While this makes it quite clear that Chandler is referencing a pornographic movie, the title makes absolutely no sense because it is half in English and half in German. This is also a good example for an extra-linguistic culture-bound reference, because the dubber could have simply picked any German movie title that can be turned into a porn title by switching a few letters, therefore both maintaining the wordplay and using a title that makes sense within the German culture. For example, *Der mit dem Wolf Bumst* (*Der mit dem Wolf tanzt*), or *Pulp Fickschön* (*Pulp Fiction*).

Anglicisms, Idioms and Proverbs

The Oxford dictionary defines an Anglicism as “[a] word or phrase borrowed from English into a foreign language” (Anglicism). Due to the rising influence of the English language, Anglicisms are becoming more and more common in countries all over the world, including Germany. Anglicisms can be divided into several sub-categories. The most important ones for this thesis are idioms and proverbs.¹²

When it comes to translating idioms and proverbs, the dubber has three options. The first one is a literal translation of the phrase, creating a new idiom that makes sense in the target language. An example for this is the English proverb “the early bird catches the worm,” which is often translated to “der frühe Vogel fängt den Wurm.” Originally, this was not a German proverb, but it makes sense and has therefore been adopted into German usage. The traditional

¹² This does not mean that all idioms and proverbs are automatically Anglicisms, but merely that some Anglicisms are idioms and proverbs. Herbst identifies seven of these sub-categories: “Fremd- und Lehnwörter, ” “Lehnübersetzungen und Lehnübertragungen, ” “Frequenzsteigerung, Lehnbedeutung, ” “Sprichwörter und Redewendungen, ” “Verletzungen auf der Ebene der Pragmatik, ” “Anglizismen im Bereich der Grammatik, ” and “unidiomatische Sprache.” For a more detailed account of these categories, see Herbst 130-137.

German proverbs that convey the same meaning are “Wer zuerst kommt, mahlt zuerst,” or “Morgenstund’ hat Gold im Mund.” This translation on the semantic level is the second option, which is only rarely useful for dubbing, since it is very unlikely to match the lip movements of the actors. The third and least desirable method is a literal translation that does not make any sense in the target language. For example, the English idiom “paint the town red,” is known in German as “einen drauf machen” or “die Stadt unsicher machen.” The literal translation, “die Stadt rot anmalen” makes no sense because one would picture people with red paint and a brush, coloring the town. A reversed example is the German expression “es muss Hand und Fuß haben,” which means that something needs to make sense or be concrete, while the literal translation, “it has to have hand and foot,” is not even grammatically correct.

Episode Analysis

The following examples show the difficulties of translating idioms and puns and deciding whether to coin an Anglicism or opt for a more target-language-oriented technique.

S04E03 06:51 – 06:54 Monica has landed a catering job for her mother. During the party, she notices that one of her fake nails is gone and she comes to the conclusion that it must have fallen into the quiche. When Monica tells her mother, she grabs a few frozen lasagnas out of the freezer, which she bought just in case her daughter made a mistake.	
Monica’s Mutter: This was just in case <u>you</u> pulled a Monica.	Monicas Mutter: Das war nur für den Fall <u>das du ne Monica abziehst.</u>

The direct translation of the phrase “to pull a (insert name),” as “eine/n (insert name) abziehen,” is not something commonly said in German. However, in this case there seems to be

no option for a better translation, which is why the dubber opted for this slightly unidiomatic expression. Apparently, this was successful because the phrase “eine Monica abziehen” is now occasionally used within the German language to refer to someone who just messed something up. There is no proof that this term has been coined by the dubbed version of *Friends*, but it is at least very likely.

S04E12 17:02 – 17:05 In order to see whether the in vitro fertilization was successful, Phoebe goes into the bathroom to take a pregnancy test. When she comes back out, Monica asks her about the result.	
Monica: Well?	Monica: Und?
Phoebe: Nope, not <u>knocked up</u> , yet.	Phoebe: Ich hab <u>keine Ahnung ob ich Mutter werd'</u> .

“Knocked up” is slang for being pregnant and is usually used by the youth or to express a negative undertone. A woman like Phoebe would normally not use this term, especially not when she is talking about herself and wants to be pregnant. The German version, “keine Ahnung ob ich Mutter werd’,” merely means “I don’t know whether I will become a mother.” Since this is not an unusual way of saying this, the humorous element gets lost completely. A better solution is to pick one of the German slang terms for pregnant, like “einen Braten in der Röhre haben,” or “angebufft sein.” It seems like the dubber opted for this solution to achieve lip-synchronicity, but since there is a variety of expressions to choose from it would not have been hard to find one that matches the lip movements.

S04E15 05:49 – 05:54 Chandler and Janice are talking about their relationship and he tells her that this is all going too fast for him, since he has just gotten out of another relationship.	
Chandler: Right but I just think this is happening <u>too soon</u> .	Chandler: Aber ich finde, dass das mit uns beiden einfach <u>zu schnell</u> geht.
Janice: <u>Oh, too soon too shmoon.</u>	Janice: <u>Ach, was, zu schnell! Nein wie Originell!</u>

Making a nonsensical rhyme to express disapproval, is common in English but usually used either by children or by adults to make fun of someone. In this instance, it is an expression of Janice’s childish behavior. Since this cannot be done in German, the dubber decided to keep the rhyme but turn it into one that makes sense with “Ach, was, zu schnell! Nein wie originell!” meaning “Come off it! Too fast? How witty of you!” The problem is that the point of Janice’s utterance was not the rhyme itself, but the fact that she used this childish expression during a serious conversation about her relationship. Instead of focusing on the linguistic form, it would make more sense to keep the culturally-dependent effect of Janice’s utterance, which references her immaturity.

S04E16 00:06 – 00:13 Phoebe is in the kitchen and gets frustrated about something, so Monica asks her what is wrong.	
Phoebe: I can’t find anything that I wanna eat. Everything makes me nauseous. I am telling you <u>being pregnant is no piece of cake. Uh cake!</u>	Phoebe: Ich würd so gern was essen, ich weiß nur nicht was, mir wird bei allem schlecht. <u>Schwangerschaft ist</u>

	<u>wirklich kein Kinderspiel Leute. Hey Kuchen!</u>
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By using the idiom “piece of cake” and having Phoebe’s mind jump to the food item, two things are referenced. Firstly, that Phoebe has had problems finding something she likes to eat since she has been pregnant – as it turns out later, her pregnant self craves meat although she is a vegetarian – and secondly, that Phoebe is scatterbrained and jumps from one topic to the next, which she has always done but does even more so now that she is pregnant. Since a direct translation of the idiom would not make sense in German, the dubber decided to use an idiom that conveys the same meaning, for “kein Kinderspiel” simply means “not all fun and games” The jump from “child’s play” to “cake,” however, makes no sense and the reference gets lost. A different German proverb is “Das ist wirklich kein Honiglecken,” with “Honig” meaning “honey.” Phoebe could have then jumped to “Hey Honig!,” which is not the same as “cake,” but that is a small sacrifice since the more important elements of the utterance are transferred.

S04E17 11:33 - 11:36 Ross tells the others that he said “I love you” to Emily but she did not say it back.	
Ross: what do I do now?	Ross: ich weiß einfach nicht weiter.
Joey: You <u>play hard-to-get</u> .	Joey: Hör zu <u>sie darf dich nicht so leicht kriegen.</u>

“You play hard-to-get” is a response that is typical for Joey, because he is incapable of maintaining an actual relationship but great at getting women to go out with him. The German version, “sie darf dich nicht so leicht kriegen,” neither conveys Joey’s level of immaturity when

it comes to women, nor does it have the exact same meaning. It can be interpreted as both “she can’t get you that easily” or “she can’t get to you that easily.” The phrase also sounds awkward, because the typical, more idiomatic German expression is “du darfst dich nicht so leicht kriegen lassen,” which is in the passive rather than the active form. A less ambiguous and more accurate German translation would be “sich zieren,” or “sich rar machen,” which express the meaning of being hard-to-get, but in a more sophisticated way. Fortunately, in this case the English word “get” and the German word “kriegen” have the same double meaning and so it would be easy to use a phrase such as “spiel hart/schwer zu kriegen,” which is not as commonly used in German but everyone understands what it means and it has the same denotation as well as the same connotation as the original.

Lip-Synching

As already mentioned in the previous chapter, lip-synchronicity and therefore, lip-synching are important aspects of the dubbing process and can be divided into different kinds of synching, which all have to be taken into consideration. Therefore, every example mentioned here includes an aspect of lip-synching, even if it is not particularly mentioned because it is not the most prominent translation issue. Since it is the common denominator of all dubbing problems, I have decided to pick one example that highlights the issue.

S04E06 10:10 – 10:20 Joey has bought a ball-point pen as a birthday present for his girlfriend. Subsequently, Chandler and Rachel tell him that his present is not an appropriate birthday gift for a girlfriend. Joey complains that he does not have time anymore to get her something different and that he is also not good at picking gifts, so Chandler offers to get one for him.

Joey: And oh, while you're at it, could you get her a card?	Joey: Und äh könntest du ihr vielleicht noch eine schöne Karte kaufen?
Chandler: Would you like me <u>to write her a little poem</u> as well?	Chandler: Und möchtest du auch, dass ich für sie einen <u>Blumenstrauß besorge</u> ?
Joey: Or just get a card <u>that has a poem already in it.</u>	Joey: Oder du kaufst ihr eine Karte <u>auf der schon Blumen drauf sind.</u>

In this case, a direct translation would have made sense and seems like the best option. The problem is that the English word “poem” has two labial sounds, one at the beginning [p], and one at the end [m], whereas the German translation, “Gedicht,” has none and the lips never touch during its pronunciation. Therefore, the translator chose the word “Blume,” which is of similar length and also has two labials, [b] and [m]. By Chandler asking if he should buy her flowers as well, and Joey responding that he could just buy a card that has flowers on it, the idea of Joey always trying to find an easy way out is also conveyed. Therefore, this is a very good solution for the scene.

Conclusion

By looking at both the examples analyzed in this chapter and the ones added in Appendix 1, it is notable that lip-synching and lip-synchronicity seem to take precedence over any other translation aspect. Many of the issues in the pun and idiom/proverb sections can be traced back to the synchronization of the actors' lip movements and the words spoken in the German version. The second most important aspect is the retention of humorous elements. In order to achieve this, the dubber tried to transfer stylistic devices into the target language, which unfortunately often had the reverse effect. For example, in episode 10, the original humorous reference lay in the

paronyms “quit” and “quiet,” which were transferred to a rhyme in the German version that neither made much sense, nor was it particularly funny. Cultural references seem to be of least importance and are only transferred if the other requirements, lip-synching and stylistic devices, can be fulfilled as well. In episode 1, it was more important to retain the pun involving the two homonyms “your” and “you’re,” rather than finding a substitute that would convey similar cultural implications. The translation of cultural elements needs to be analyzed further, however, before solidifying this statement. This will be done in the next chapter, which focuses on extra-linguistic culture-bound references.

CHAPTER 3 – EXTRA-LINGUISTIC CULTURE-BOUND REFERENCES

This chapter primarily focuses on scenes with extra-linguistic culture-bound references, hereafter referred to as ECRs, which for the sake of completeness I have grouped into two categories: first, accents, dialects, and multilingualism,¹³ and second, cultural references. As already mentioned in the previous chapter, Season 4 is particularly interesting because of Ross's girlfriend Emily, who is from England and is therefore the constant focus of accent-related jokes. Obviously, all the translation examples in this chapter and the previous chapter are culture-related, so the term cultural references in this case simply means those references that relate to culture in the general sense. For example, particular geographic locations, historical references to events that are of interest for certain cultural groups, or celebrities that are not well-known internationally, all fall under this category. *Friends* offers a variety of such references, and the ones that are most interesting in regards to their dubbing solution were chosen for the following analysis.

Accents, Dialects, and Multilingualism

The main issue with the translation of accents and dialects is to find an accent or dialect in the target language that conveys the same, or at least similar social and societal connotation as in the source language. Since this is almost impossible, accents and dialects are usually not translated, and the dubbing actor speaks like all the other characters. Herbst also mentions the issue that some dialects are ascribed to certain social classes (97). If two characters have a conversation and one of them is obviously socially superior to the other due to their different use of language, this cannot be translated realistically, for it raises two problems. On the one hand,

¹³ Although only accents are purely extra-linguistic, for the sake of completeness I have also included dialects and multilingualism in this group, which have intra-linguistic traits. However, the main focus of the actual analysis of this category lies on accents and therefore extra-linguistic culture-bound references.

the dubber has to find a German dialect that matches the social connotation of the dialect in the source language, and on the other hand, even if they find a suitable dialect, the audience is still aware that the show is set in the US and might therefore find it implausible, to suddenly hear one of the characters speaking Bavarian.

This would not be such a big issue if the social differences were expressed in other ways as well, through certain comments made by the characters for example. However, this is usually not the case, because the American audience can easily deduce the social hierarchy from the characters' accents. Therefore, if two characters have a conversation in which one of them speaks standard American English and the other one speaks in a southern drawl, the latter will automatically be perceived (by a Yankee audience) as less educated than the former, without having to explicitly mention it. This effect gets lost in the dubbed version if both characters speak standard German.

Episode Analysis

It becomes still more difficult when the regional origin of a character is substantial to understanding the plot. This is the case in *Friends* with Ross's girlfriend Emily. The following analysis shows that all the references and jokes made about her British heritage and accent are lost in the German version, where she speaks the same standard German as all the other characters.

S04E14 08:05 – 08:13 Emily, the daughter of Rachel's boss, is standing at Rachel's door, telling her about her horrible trip and the awful first day she had in the US. When Rachel also tells her that she has to cancel their plans to go to the opera, Emily gets angry and storms off.
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Rachel: I'll get her!	Rachel: Soll ich ihr nachgehen?
Ross: Please hurry!	Ross: Ja beeil dich, geh!
Rachel: <u>Okay!</u>	Phoebe: <u>Einfach toll wie ihr</u>
Phoebe: <u>Don't you just love the way they</u> <u>talk? (Attempting to imitate British accent)</u>	<u>miteinander redet. Ja beeil dich, geh.</u>
<u>Ooh...uh...ooh...you know.</u>	

Emily has a very strong British accent, which is what Phoebe talks about in the original version. As mentioned above, Emily's German dubbing actress does not have a different accent and therefore, any joke like this that revolves around her speaking differently cannot simply be translated. Therefore, instead of talking about Emily, Phoebe comments on the way Rachel and Ross talk to each other. Unfortunately, there is nothing humorous about their conversation so it seems odd that Phoebe finds this entertaining and that the audience laughs about it. In this case, there are two alternatives that might have been better: either to completely move away from the joke about how people talk and come up with something else Phoebe can find humorous, or to let Rachel utter a sassy comeback, which is then something Phoebe could have talked about. The latter is probably the easier one, since the camera switches between Ross and Rachel and the audience cannot see her lips when she says "okay." So instead of elongating Ross's sentence and omitting Rachel's response, she could have simply said something else without the audience noticing.

S04E15 04:33 - 04:42 Ross and Emily meet two old friends of hers, who have obviously just played some sort of sport.

<p>Ross: So, eh what, were you guys playing <u>soccer</u> or something or should I call it <u>“football?”</u> (in fake British accent)</p>	<p>Ross: habt ihr euch beim <u>Fußball</u> vergnügt oder vielleicht beim <u>„Football“</u>?</p>
<p>Emily’s Friend: We were playing <u>rugby</u>.</p>	<p>Emilys Freund: Wir beide spielen nur <u>Rugby</u>.</p>

With his fake British pronunciation of “football,” Ross mocks the fact that in British English, “soccer” is known as “football” and “football” is known as “American football.” The reason is that soccer has always been a very popular sport in Europe and that English people do not think a sport like American football that is mainly played with your hands should be called “football.” Their response that they were playing rugby further highlights their Britishness in the American version, while from a European standpoint it addresses another issue of dispute between English and American people. While football players jump at their opponents head-first – for they are wearing helmets and are covered in protective gear – rugby players have no protective gear and have to be much more technically accurate about their tackling and everything else they do. Therefore, American football is frowned upon by most Europeans, which made it easy for the dubber to use a transcultural ECR (see chapter 1 page 32). The connotation might be slightly different in the American and German version but the main point is brought across. In the German version, the language issue between “soccer” and “football” can obviously not be addressed. However, by first using the word for “soccer,” “Fußball,” and then keeping the word “football,” which in German automatically means “American football,” the joke is slightly different but still works just the same. By adding the word “nur” to their

response, they are saying that they “only” play rugby, hence telling Ross that they do not engage in such ridiculous sports as American football, or even European soccer. Neither rugby nor American football are very popular in Germany, but everyone knows the difference and the rivalry between the two and so the introduction to what happens later, when Ross is asked to play rugby and he is obviously not “man” enough for this sport, does not get lost in the German version. The only element that gets lost is the comedic effect when Ross awkwardly tries to imitate the British accent by saying “football.”

S04E15 14:52 - 15:00 Joey, Phoebe und Emily watch Ross playing rugby where he is getting beaten up by the other team.	
<p>Emily: I can't believe they're doing that to him. I told them to go easy on him.</p> <p>Phoebe: No offense, but <u>sometimes it is hard to understand you, you know with the accent.</u></p>	<p>Emily: (sighs) also das versteh ich einfach nicht. Er hat mir doch versprochen, dass er sanft mit Ross umgeht.</p> <p>Phoebe: <u>Manchmal sprechen wir Menschen verschiedene Sprachen, deswegen verstehen wir uns auch oft nicht</u> das ist schon traurig.</p>

Phoebe's remark about Emily's accent is absurd not only because it is not as difficult to understand as she always claims it is, but also because Emily was talking to her friends, who are from London as well and should therefore not have any difficulties understanding her. Again, the lack of Emily's accent in the German version poses a problem. The solution here is to keep the language reference but turn it into a metaphorical one. Phoebe is saying that it is a sad thing that

sometimes people cannot understand each other because they speak different languages, not literally but metaphorically. This way, the two aspects that made Phoebe's utterance funny in the original are lost and not replaced in the synchronized version. It also does not really fit within the context, because instead of sounding like her careless, ditzy self, Phoebe sounds like she is trying to make some kind of profound statement.

S04E16 02:25 – 02:29 Ross and Emily have just returned from a museum tour, and Emily tells the others about the fascinating things she has seen, and shows them a pair of earrings she brought with her.	
Monica: I don't know <u>how museums work in England</u> , but here you're not supposed to take stuff.	Monica: ich weiß nicht <u>wie das bei euch in den Museen ist</u> , aber bei uns darf man nie stehlen.

This is one of the many scenes in which the friends make fun of Emily for being British, which does not need any further explanation because of her accent. Since this cannot be used in the German version, instead of saying that she does not know how museums work in England, she says that she doesn't know how museums work at wherever Emily is from. The utterance is still fairly funny in general but without the context it definitely loses a big portion of its humor. By adding a short explanation like "wie Museen bei euch auf dem Land sind," or "wie das bei euch im Osten früher war," the audience would have known where Emily is from and also, why Monica is making this comment. The first option would be a transfer to a transcultural ECR, since the bias against people growing up and living in the country, not knowing how things work in the city is a universal one. The second option references the German East-West conflict, making it a target culture ECR. On the one hand, luxury items that were easily accessible in

West Germany were hard to come by in the East, and on the other hand, after the fall of the Berlin wall, people from West Germany were complaining about people from the East invading their territory and taking their jobs and other things.

S04E17 03:45 – 03:54 Monica and Ross are talking about his relationship with Emily and where the two stand at the moment. Ross reenacts a conversation between himself and Emily, when Monica interrupts him.	
<p>Ross: I mean whenever I brought it up with her she said: „This is so fantastic. Why do we have to talk about the future? Let’s just enjoy--,,</p> <p>Monica: Erm don’t, <u>don’t do the accent.</u></p>	<p>Ross: Immer wenn ich darauf zu sprechen kam dann sagte sie: „Es läuft doch alles ganz fantastisch. Wieso müssen wir denn jetzt über die Zukunft sprechen? Genießen wir einfach die--,,</p> <p>Monica: Ross, <u>kannst du nicht mit normaler Stimme reden?</u></p>

In the original, Ross imitates Emily’s British accent. Since this is yet another reference that cannot be used in the German version, he merely speaks in a higher voice. While this does not have the same humorous effect, it is still a very good solution to transfer the source culture ECR to a transcultural ECR.

Considering the large number of references made to Emily’s accent, the better solution for all these scenes would have been to also give her an accent in the German version. This could have been an accent from a different German region, like East Germany, or a rural area in Bavaria, or even better, an accent from a different country. For the latter, a French accent would be a good choice, since Germans view the French as snobbish and conceited as the Americans

view the English, and even the gay touch that is referenced with Emily's father,¹⁴ could be transferred that way.

Cultural References

Cultural references are statements that require a particular amount of knowledge about a certain culture in order to be understood. These are problematic for the dubber, because for every one of these references, they have to make an assumption about the target audience and their knowledge of the source culture. Based on this assumption they will decide whether to simply translate the cultural reference into the target language, or to use one of the transfer techniques (see chapter 1 page 29) to turn the reference into one that is more familiar to the target audience (Mimovic 34).

Whitman-Linsen demonstrates this problem based on several examples, taken from various scripts, like the following:

English/p.20

Cliff: Didn't I get honorable mention at the festival in...

Wendy: In Cincinnati? The Cincinnati Documentary Film Festival? Is that what you're clinging to? Everybody got honorable mention who showed up.

German/p.16

Hab ich nicht diese lobende Erwähnung erhalten, auf dem Festival in...

In Cincinnati. Dem Cincinnati Dokumentarfilm-Festival. Daran ziehst du dich jetzt hoch? Jeder, der da war, hat 'ne lobende Erwähnung bekommen. (316)

¹⁴ In the English version, the British accent and mannerisms of Emily's father often lead Rachel and the others to assume that he is gay.

In order to understand this scene, one has to know that Cincinnati is not known for its intellectual or cultural value. Therefore, most Americans get the reference that a documentary film festival in Cincinnati is most likely not very prestigious and therefore attended by would-be filmmakers. Since the story takes place in the US, it would be odd to choose a German city with a similar reputation, which is why the translator decided to keep the name of the city (Whitman-Linsen 316). While it is questionable whether everyone in the German audience has heard of Cincinnati and also knows about its reputation, in this case it should be clear from the context, making a substitution of the cultural reference unnecessary.

In his chapter “Grenzen der Synchronisierbarkeit” (limits of synchronization), Herbst claims that these limits are reached when the cultural references are so numerous and essential to the plot that they cannot be omitted and the dubber cannot find an equivalent in the target language (274). In this case, the cultural references could just be paraphrased or explained in the target text; however, this would deprive the film of any authenticity.

Episode Analysis

The following scenes are examples of both successful and less successful solutions for the translation of cultural references.

S04E08 01:27 – 01:35 Chandler walks into Monica’s apartment where all the others are busy with Thanksgiving preparations. Since he is currently fighting with Joey for having kissed his girlfriend, he is in a bad mood.	
Chandler: Urgh Turkey! Urgh giving Thanks!	Chandler: Urgh Truthahn! Urgh welche Köstlichkeit!
Phoebe: Look everyone! <u>It’s the spirit of Thanksgiving!</u>	Phoebe: Seht ihn euch an <u>er freut sich auf den Truthahn.</u> Ist das nicht rührend?

Thanksgiving is a holiday of high significance in the USA, but not so much in Germany. By switching “Thanksgiving” for “Truthahn,” the lip movement of the t-sounds match and the source culture ECR is simply omitted. While this solution is not a bad one, the reference to giving thanks is lost. The German equivalent to Thanksgiving is the “Erntedankfest,” which is not much celebrated anymore, except in rural areas where farming is an important source of income. However, the concept and the history of it are taught in primary school so everyone knows what it is about and how it is celebrated. By using an Anglicism and turning “the spirit of Thanksgiving” into “der Geist des Erntedank/Dankens,” the references to why they are having a turkey and Chandler’s bad mood in connection to the idea of giving thanks could have been transferred into the target text.

S04E11 12:41 – 12:43 Chandler walks into the apartment and sees Phoebe sitting on the couch with a boxer puppy in her arms, happily humming to him.	
Chandler: Why is Phoebe <u>singing to Karl Malden?</u>	Chandler: <u>Seit wann kannst du denn singen</u> Phoebe?

Karl Malden is an American actor born in 1912, and not well-known among the German audience in the 1990s, and so it was a good choice not to mention him. Instead, Chandler asks Phoebe “since when can you sing?” One issue with this translation is that Phoebe has been singing all the time and so his comment sounds a lot meaner than it actually is, similar to the scene mentioned above with Ross and Rachel’s letter. Another issue is that the reference to Phoebe holding a pug and singing to it gets lost completely. A better way would be to transfer

the source culture ECR into a target culture ECR by using a celebrity who is known in Germany and also resembles a boxer, like Peter Ustinov or Marcel Reich-Ranicki.

S04E12 07:32 - 07:49 Ross has invented a game for Rachel, Monica, Chandler, and Joey, to figure out whether the guys know the girls better than the girls know the guys. In order to decide who gets to go first, he tosses a coin.	
Ross: Now... The coin toss to see who goes first... <u>okay, somebody call it this time.</u>	Ross: Also diese Münze hier wird nun entscheiden wer anfängt... <u>ja okay ich hab da wohl ne Kleinigkeit vergessen.</u>
Rachel: Tails!	Rachel: Zahl!

While it is common in the USA to call “heads” or “tails,” In Germany the person who tosses the coin usually asks both parties before the coin toss what they want to choose and tosses the coin then. This is the reason why in the German version, Ross does not tell them to call it, but rather confesses that he forgot something, meaning to ask them beforehand what they want to call. The problem is that he will still not ask but simply tosses it again and Rachel yells tails. It would have been better to use a shifted direct translation (chapter 1 page 31) and make it clear that Ross expected them to call it, which might be a rather uncommon way to do it, yet it is still a known possibility and the dialogue would also make sense.

S04E13 11:56 – 12:02 Chandler walks into the apartment, drunk.	
Chandler: So, then I went over to <u>Beefsteak Chewley’s...</u>	Chandler: Also bin ich in <u>die nächste Bar</u> gegangen und...
Rachel: <u>Beefsteak Charlie’s?</u>	Rachel: <u>hast dich volllaufen lassen?</u>
Chandler: Yes!	Chandler: Genau!

Beefsteak Charlie's is a New York restaurant chain and most of the German audience will not know what it is. The translation with Chandler saying "I went to the next bar," and Rachel responding "and got completely wasted," completely omits the source text ECR, and with it the humorous reference. It would not have been difficult to transfer this to a target language ECR or a transcultural ECR, in order to maintain the comic element and still make it understandable for the target audience.

S04E13 15:25 – 15:34 Chandler tells Ross and Joey about a fight he had with his girlfriend for cheating on him. The guys thought he actually caught her cheating when in fact he just assumed she was cheating due to a theory put forward by Joey, who said that actors only have chemistry on stage if they are not involved off stage. So, when Chandler went to see her play and noticed the lack of chemistry, he automatically assumed she was cheating on him.	
<p>Joey: Woh woh! That was just a theory. There's a lot of theories that didn't pan out. Lone gunman, communism, geometry.</p>	<p>Joey: Okay halt halt halt Chandler das war nur eine Theorie. Und viele Theorien haben mit der Praxis nichts zu tun. Die Wettervorhersage stimmt nie. Oder ich glaub ich krieg sie rum und dann klappt's doch nicht. Und so weiter.</p>

In this scene, Joey is most likely referencing the "lone gunman theory" in connection to the assassination of John F. Kennedy, which is assumedly not that well-known among the

German audience. However, “The Lone Gunman” is also an *X-files* spin-off from 2001, which was not very successful and got cancelled after only twelve episodes. It was never broadcast in Germany and therefore this reference would have also gone amiss. In the dubbed version, Joey says that the weather report is never accurate or that you think you can get a girl and then it does not work out after all, which is a situational paraphrase (see chapter 1 page 33). While the second part aims at Joey’s reputation of trying to get a different woman almost every day, it does not have the same comic effect as him questioning something as basic as geometry. Additionally, him questioning his success with women is very unlikely, since he is known for being very successful in that area and never has any problems finding someone else to stay over for the night. The part with the weather forecast works very well lip-sync wise and since it ends on “gunman” and the German words for “communism” and “geometry” (“Kommunismus” and “Geometrie”) sound very similar and match the lip movements, it would have been better to directly translate these two.

S04E17 04:20 - 04:24 Monica tells Ross that he has to make up with Emily because he is living her secret fantasy of dating a partner from a different country. Thereupon, Ross asks her if that was the reason for her spending so much time with the guy from the Ukraine, back in high school.

Monica: Yeah that. Plus, his mom used to put sour cream on everything.

Monica: Jaja schon aber der zweite Grund war das mir seine Mutter immer Schokolade geschenkt hat.

While sour cream is part of many American dishes and a lot of people like to add it to their food or use it as a dipping sauce, it is not very common in Germany. Therefore, the dubber

decided to use a transcultural ECR and substitute sour cream with chocolate. The humorous element in this scene is not the type of food, but the reference to Monica’s eating behavior when she was a teenager and was often made fun of for being extremely overweight. Hence, this is a very good solution because the comic element is maintained and it is also ensured that the target audience can relate to the reference, since Germans are particularly fond of chocolate. In 2014, Germany had the highest per capita consumption of chocolate out of all European countries (statista.com).

S04E18 03:57 – 04:07 Phoebe’s brother told her that she is allowed to pick one of the triplets’ names. While she is really excited about this, she seems to struggle with finding a good name and tells Chandler and Joey about it.	
Phoebe: I want a name that’s really like you know, strong and confident. You know, like... Exxon.	Phoebe: Und ich möchte einen Namen haben der irgendwie stark und selbstsicher klingt. Also sowas
Chandler: Ah it certainly worked for that Valdez kid.	ähnliches wie Cassius. Chandler: Na mit dem Namen kann man sich durchs Leben boxen.

Exxon Valdez was an American oil tanker that grounded in 1989 and is considered one of the largest human-made environmental disasters in American history. It can be expected that while the news made it to Germany, most people will not have remembered the name of the ship. The name Phoebe suggests is Cassius, referencing the boxer Cassius Clay (Muhammad Ali). When Chandler uses the German idiom “mit dem Namen kann man sich durchs Leben boxen,” meaning to struggle through life, it literally says one can “box” his way through life, therefore

making the connection to the boxer. However, the name does not have the same negative connotation as the oil tanker has and it might have been better to choose a target language ECR, like Adolf, or maybe something less radical, rather than a transcultural ECR.

Conclusion

As already mentioned above, ignoring Emily's accent in the German version caused many translation problems and led to content confusion and humor loss. Among the five examples analyzed in this chapter, three have lost their humorous reference completely and only two were able to maintain at least parts of it. When it comes to content, all of the examples at least lose the reference to Emily being British, but the scene from Episode 14 and second scene from Episode 15 do not even make sense anymore in the German version. Even the scene from Episode 17, which is the most successful translation out of the five, suffers in both content and humor. While using a form of cultural substitution seems to be the most successful option in this case, it would have still been more beneficial to hire a dubbing actress with a different accent.

Concerning the cultural references, omission is the most frequently applied transfer technique for both the scenes analyzed in this chapter, as well as those in Appendix 1. In all four analyzed instances, omission leads to humor loss, and in two of them, it also leads to complete loss of content and sense (Episode 11 and Episode 12). For the other two scenes (Episode 8 and Episode 13), the omission technique was an acceptable solution; however, the substitution with a target culture ECR or a transcultural ECR would have obtained a more favorable result. An interesting example is the "lone gunman" scene in Episode 13, because it uses situational paraphrase for three ECRs. The first one is successful, whereas the other two result in loss of humor and sense, and a direct translation would have been a better solution. By using a transcultural ECR, the "chocolate" scene in Episode 17 is the most successful, for neither humor

nor important content gets lost in the dubbed version. For the cultural references analyzed in this chapter, either a form of cultural substitution or direct translation would have been most successful in maintaining humor and content.

CONCLUSION

The scenes analyzed in this thesis only represent a small selection of the many difficult translation choices that the dubbers of *Friends* had to make. For reasons of readability I did not include every example in this text; Appendix 1 contains additional instances and analyses that support my conclusions. This shows that the process of dubbing a sitcom is highly challenging and requires a variety of different skills. The difficulty lies in the combination of linguistic features, humor, cultural references, and lip-synching. Therefore, in addition to being trained as a translator, a dubber needs to be familiar with the source culture, both in the present and historically; they have to be able to make accurate assumptions about the target audience's knowledge of the source culture, and know enough about the target culture to find a suitable equivalent. Additionally, the matching of lip movements requires detailed knowledge of phonetics in both languages. For reasons of clarity, I have categorized the scenes according to their most prominent translation-related features; however, most of them combine several, if not all of the features. Therefore, the most important skill of a dubber is to find a way to transfer all these aspects into the target language. Since it is often impossible to do so while maintaining similar lip movements, they also have to decide which of them has to take precedence over the other and how much of the content can be changed without affecting the coherence of the plot.

In the case of Season 4 of *Friends*, the hierarchical structure observed by the translator appears to be lip-synching first, then stylistic devices and humor, content, and finally cultural references. Throughout the entire season, there were no scenes found where the synchronization of lip movements and dubbed text did not match. On the contrary, in many instances, other aspects of the scene were sacrificed in order to match the sounds of source text and target text, as for example in the Thanksgiving scene in Episode 8, or the translation of “knocked up” in

Episode 12. Prioritizing lip-synchronization obviously makes sense, for authenticity is the most important aspect of dubbing. It would simply look strange if the words did not match the movement of the actors' lips.

The rest of the scenes with a focus on the translation of intra-linguistic culture-bound references show that the dubber tried to transfer stylistic devices like rhymes or paronyms into the target text, in order to maintain the humorous element. Unfortunately, this often had the reverse effect and the scene was simply not funny anymore. Out of the twelve analyzed scenes that include puns, idioms, and proverbs, ten result in humor loss and only two managed to convey the humorous reference in the German version. Often, a form of cultural substitution rather than direct translation would have solved this problem. For example, in Episode 17, the German title “Good Will *Perversling*” is a mix of retention and direct translation. In this case, it is not only the humorous reference that is lost, but the title also does not make much sense anymore. This could have been solved by substituting the source text ECR with a target text ECR. In terms of content, however, only minor details were sacrificed where necessary, and successfully so, at least when it comes to intra-linguistic culture-bound references. Of the twelve scenes, eight had no content loss, and the other four showed a slight change in content that did not, however, affect the coherence of the plot.

Cultural references seem to be of least importance to the translators of *Friends* and also caused more problems than any of the other categories. The five examples regarding Emily's accent all result in humor and content loss, and some of them do not even make sense anymore, as in Episode 14, when Phoebe makes a comment about the way Ross and Rachel talk to each other, which she apparently finds very entertaining, yet there is nothing comical about it. By

giving Emily an accent in the German version, it would have been much easier to transfer both humor and content into the target language.

Concerning cultural references, six out of the seven analyzed scenes suffer from humor loss, and five of them suffer from either loss of content or loss of sense. As already mentioned in chapter 3, omission is the most frequently used technique for transferring cultural references. While there were instances where the use of omission was an acceptable option, most of them could have had a better effect by using a substitute¹⁵ for the cultural reference of the source text. For example, “Beefsteak Charlie’s” in Episode 13 could have simply been replaced by either a German, or an internationally known restaurant. In those cases, where the source text ECR is also known within the target culture, like the terms “communism” and “geometry” in the second scene of Episode 13, a direct translation is most desirable, since it will be understood by the target audience and does not result in the loss of any of the references.

Comparing the results of the analysis of intra-linguistic culture-bound references and extra-linguistic culture-bound references, it often seems difficult to strictly distinguish between the two in the source text, because they often appear together. In this case, the dubber has to decide which of them they want to maintain. For example, the pun in Episode 1 where Rachel misspells the word “your” is directly translated, hence maintaining the ICR. The ECR of the pun, however, namely the cultural and social implications that are linked to the misspelling of this particular word, are not only lost, but shifted towards a more negative connotation. This could be

¹⁵ The question why omission was the preferred technique over substitution can only be speculated about here. One very likely possibility is the immense time pressure which dubbers of TV shows have to work under. Omitting the ECR simply takes less time than coming up with an equivalent in the source language. Another possibility could be that the dubbers were simply not as familiar with the cultural implications of the source text and/or the target audience. This however, would require more research and is not the main concern of this thesis.

prevented simply by transferring the cultural reference into a target language ECR, as proposed in chapter 2.

The continuously expanding Americanization of mass media entails a rising demand for dubbed versions of American movies and TV shows. As shown in this thesis, the primary focus on linguistic aspects of the text comes at the expense of humor and cultural references, which are a main constituent of sitcoms and often make the difference between so-called Quality TV and light entertainment. It has already been mentioned in the introduction that the poor dubbing job of the first eight seasons of *Friends* is considered one of the main reasons why the sitcom could not gain much popularity in Germany. The audience did not experience what the show was praised for in the US, its witty and subtle way of criticizing current societal norms.

Finally, the German audience these days is a lot more familiar with American culture than they were 20 years ago. Therefore, the kind of dubbing translation that is demanded by the audience has changed, too. On the one hand, this means that in addition to the target-language-oriented approaches, source-language-oriented transfer strategies can also be used more often. In many cases, the audience has enough background knowledge to still understand the reference if the dubbing translator uses retention, specification, or direct translation (see chapter 1), giving them more options and making it easier to create an authentic target text. One example is the previously mentioned Thanksgiving scene (see chapter 3 page 70). Nowadays, it is no longer necessary to find a substitute for the word Thanksgiving because most Germans are familiar with the term and know that it is an important American holiday. On the other hand, this also means that the demand for cultural references is higher than it ever has been. German viewers no longer watch American sitcoms only for their entertainment factor, but also for their clever innuendos and critique on society, making omission one of the least desirable transfer strategies. Therefore,

not only, but especially in sitcoms, it is important to transfer both denotation and connotation of an utterance. Rather than focusing on mainly maintaining the intra-linguistic culture-bound references, the dubber should pay as much attention, if not more, to extra-linguistic culture-bound references.

As this study of the translation of one American sitcom into German has shown, the Americanization of global mass media entails problems on a cultural level. In the case of *Friends*, inadequacies were found pertaining to the translation of cultural references. Although the target audiences of the American media's secondary markets are more familiar with and accustomed to American culture than it was 20 years ago, it is still difficult to combine cultural references of an American TV show with the target language and a supposed setting within the target culture without sacrificing its authenticity. While this thesis focuses on a German context, this is a global issue, for as shown in the introduction, American productions dominate the media industry all over the world.

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APPENDIX A. PUNS

S04E11 02:27 – 02:49 Joey storms into Monica’s apartment wearing a very uncharacteristic blue suit jacket. He excitedly asks the others to guess what kind of new job he got and Chandler cannot pass this opportunity to make fun of him.

Chandler: I don’t know but Donald Trump wants his blue blazer black.

Ross: What?

Chandler: Blue blazer back. He wants it back.

Rachel: You said „black.” Why would he want his blue blazer black?

Chandler: Well you know what I mean.

Monica: You messed it up. You’re stupid.

Chandler: Weiß nicht aber Donald Trump will bestimmt seinen Blazer wiederhaben.

Ross: Was?

Chandler: Ich glaub das er ihn wiederhaben möchte. Du musst ihn wieder zurückgeben Joey.

Rachel: Wieso sollte der Trump gehören? Was hat unser Joey mit Mister Trump zu tun?

Chandler: Du wirst doch wohl wissen was ich gemeint habe.

Monica: Das hast du falsch verstanden. Du kleines kleines Dummchen.

S04E14 15:32 – 16:00 Joey comes back from a three-day fishing trip and falls asleep without taking a shower first. The next morning, he oversleeps and rushes out of the apartment without taking a shower, because he is late for work where he is supposed to film a scene with Charlton Heston. When he gets to the set, the director tells him that

they are running behind and it will be another 30 minutes before they start with the scene. He also tells Joey that he reeks of old fish. When Joey finds out that Heston is the only one on set who has a shower in his dressing room, he decides to sneak into Heston's room. While he is in the shower, Heston walks in, catches him in the act, and asks him to explain what he is doing.

Joey: I am Joey Tribbiani, I am doing a scene with you today and well, I stink. [...]

Heston: Every actor one time or another...

Every actor thinks he stinks.

Joey: Ich bin Joey Tribbiani, ich habe heute eine Szene mit Ihnen und ich habe gar kein Talent. [...]

Heston: Jeder Schauspieler stellt sich mal in Frage.

S04E15 09:43 – 09:51 Ross agreed to play rugby with Emily's friends in the park.

Since he knows nothing about the sport, he watches a rugby match on TV. When Joey comes in he tries to explain some of the basic rules to Ross.

Joey: okay Ross, look look look, this right here, it's called a scrum. It's kind of like a huddle.

Ross: And is a hum kind of like a scruddle?

Joey: Also okay Ross, das was du hier siehst ist so eine Art zusammenkauern. Auch Gedränge genannt.

Ross: Wenn wir uns im Kaufhaus zusammenkauern, dann drängeln wir also!

S04E15 11:04 – 11:13 Right before Ross’s first rugby match, Joey studies the English guys who are on the opposing team to give Ross some tips on whom he has to stay away from.

Joey: Dude they’re all huge.

Ross: They don’t look any bigger than me.

Joey: Well maybe that’s cause you’re closer to you, so you look bigger to you from where you are.

Joey: Was sind das alles für Klötze?

Ross: Ich bin auch so stark wie diese

Männer. Joey: Ich meinte nicht die geistige Ebene Ross. Hier geht’s um Sport und nicht um Wissenschaftliche Forschung.

S04E17 12:52 - 12:55 For some unexplained reason, Chandler and Joey get access to a pay-tv porn-channel that they did not subscribe to. After a while, Chandler asks Monica if they can watch TV at their place for a little bit. He and Joey need a change from all the porn but do not want to switch channels for fear that they might not be able to find it again.

Chandler: We spent the last two hours watching “In and out and in again.”

Chandler: Wisst ihr wir haben uns gerade einen Film angesehen der „komm doch mal rein“ heißt.

APPENDIX B. IDIOMS AND PROVERBS

S04E08 06:12 – 06:20 Ross talks to Joey, who is still mad at Chandler for kissing his girlfriend.

Ross: How long are you gonna punish him?

Joey: Five years.

Ross: You sentenced him?

Joey: Don't do the crime if you can't do the time.

Ross: Wie lange willst du ihn dafür bestrafen? **Joey:** Fünf Jahre!

Ross: Fünf Jahre gibst du ihm dafür?

Joey: Geh niemals ein Versprechen ein sonst fällst du später selber rein.

S04E10 12:18 – 12:21 Since Monica is still bullied by her kitchen staff, she talks to them about the lack of respect they are showing her and that she will start firing people if they continue like this.

Monica: From now on it's gonna be my way or the highway.

Monica: Von heute an wird nur noch nach meinen Bedingungen gearbeitet.
Oder sie fliegen hier raus.

S04E15 02:29 – 02:31 Chandler walks into the door, followed by Janice, who tells them about her divorce.

Janice: I'm riding the alimony pony.

Janice: Und daher bin ich in der Lage Alimente abzusahnen.

APPENDIX C. LIP-SYNC

S04E07 08:24 – 08:28 Chandler tells Joey's girlfriend that his appointment at the barber got cancelled, to which she replies that she could give him a haircut because she learned how to do it at her aunt's dog parlor.

Chandler: Dog grooming? Don't make my tail too poofy.

Chandler: Im Hundetrimmsalon? Naja gut aber nur, wenn du keinen Pudel aus mir machst.

S04E12 09:40 – 09:43 Since Phoebe's brother and his wife cannot have children of their own, they asked her to carry their baby for them. Right before her in vitro fertilization, she is sitting at the gynecologist with the petri dish in front of her, giving the oocytes a pep talk.

Phoebe: Ehm I'm hoping to be your uterus for the next nine months.

Phoebe: Ich hoffe das ihr euch die nächsten neun Monate in meiner Gebärmutter wohlfühlen werdet.

APPENDIX D. ACCENTS, DIALECTS, MULTILINGUALISM

S04E13 17:09 – 17:10 Rachel has a crush on her new customer, Joshua, and she is particularly fond of his behind. At the exact moment when Joshua leaves the room, Rachel's boss walks in. He tilts his head to the side and watches Joshua's butt while he leaves.

Rachel's Chef: Good morning!

Rachels Chef: Guten Morgen! (stares at Joshua's butt)

APPENDIX E. CULTURE

S04E02 14:52 – 14:59 Monica and one of her old friends from high school are talking about their old classmates and whom they are still in contact with.

Chip: Me and Simens gave him a wedgie.

Monica: Isn't he an architect?

Chip: They still wear underwear.

Chip: Simens und ich haben ihm
Strapse verpasst.

Monica: Ist er nicht Architekt
geworden?

Chip: Ja aber sonst ist er ganz „die
Alte“

**APPENDIX F. OTHERS THAT DON'T FALL UNDER ONE OF THE FIVE
CATEGORIES OR ARE AMBIGUOUS**

S04E01 18:38 – 18:46 Phoebe meets her biological mother for the first time. In order to show her daughter how much they actually have in common, she responds with “me too,” to everything Phoebe tells her she likes.

Phoebe: Okay ahm do you wanna get something to eat? Because I'm kinda hungry.

Mother: Hey, me too.

Phoebe: Alright, stop it! Now you're just doing it to freak me out.

Phoebe: Eine Frage ähm wollen wir zwei nicht was Essen gehen? Ich hab solchen Hunger.

Mutter: Hey ich hab auch Hunger.

Phoebe: Jetzt hör aber auf, das sagst du doch nur um mich zu besänftigen.

S04E02 08:45 - 08:55 Phoebe thinks that her adoptive mother's ghost came back from the dead in the body of a stray cat. Phoebe does not want her to be jealous that she recently found her biological mother, whom she is about to call, and therefore tries to hide this from the cat.

Phoebe: Okay, I have to return a call in the other room.

Monica: Why can't you use the phone in here?

Phoebe: Well, I'm returning a call from a certain Mom at the B-E-A-C-H. I just spelled the wrong word.

Phoebe: Okay ich geh schnell rüber, ich muss mal telefonieren.

Monica: Wieso telefonierst du nicht von hier?

Phoebe: Naja, weil ich eine gewisse Mom am S-T-R-A-N-T anrufen will.
Äh irgendein Buchstabe war hier falsch.

S04E02 09:26 - 09:36 Ross wants to convince the others to tell Phoebe that the stray cat is not her mother. Rachel however, disagrees and says that he needs to stop wanting to be right all the time.

Rachel: ... because you always have to be right.

Ross: I do not... okay, okay.

Rachel: Jurassic Park could happen.

Rachel: ... weil du nämlich immer recht haben musst, nicht wahr?

Ross: Nein ich muss nicht... Na gut, okay.

Rachel: Ich wünsche dir einen wunderbaren Tag und alles Liebe.

S04E03 01:50 – 01:45 Rachel enters Joey's and Chandler's apartment and asks for juice.

Rachel: Hey you guys have any juice?

Joey: Just pickle.

Rachel: Hi, habt ihr Saft da?

Joey: Nein, nur Zwiebeln.

S04E06 00:07 – 00:014 The friends are watching how Ross says good bye to a good-looking woman.

Phoebe: Hey what are you guys looking at?

Chandler: Ross and the most beautiful girl in the world.

Phoebe: Yeah come to Papa.

Phoebe: Was gibt's denn da zu sehen?

Chandler: Ross und die bestaussehendste Frau der Welt.

	Phoebe: <u>Naja, es gibt hübschere Blondinen.</u>
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S04E08 02:08 – 02:15 Phoebe suggests that they should do Secret Santa for Christmas.

Phoebe: And, there is the added mystery of you know, <u>who gets who.</u>	Phoebe: Und es ist doch witziger, wenn keiner weiß <u>wer wer kriegt.</u>
Ross: <u>Who gets “whom.”</u>	Ross: <u>Wer „wen“ kriegt.</u>

S04E11 03:04 – 03:18 Joey has a new job as a guide in Ross’s museum. When they ask him if he has to be an expert on dinosaurs for this job, he responds that he only has to memorize the text and demonstrates this.

Joey: And on your left, Tyrannosaurus rex, a carnivore from the Jurassic Period.	Joey: Und auf der linken Seite sehen Sie Tyrannosaurus Rex, ein
Ross: Yeah, actually, Joey it’s the <u>Cretaceous Period.</u>	Fleischfresser aus der Jurazeit meine Damen und Herren.
Joey: Yeah but <u>I can pronounce Jurassic.</u>	Ross: Na gut, das war zwar die <u>Kreidezeit</u> aber das macht ja nichts.
	Joey: Ja aber ich finde <u>Jura Zeit</u> hört sich viel klüger an.

S04E13 06:57 – 07:01 Rachel’s new and very handsome customer tells her that he needs new clothes because his newly divorced wife threw all of his old ones away.

Joshua: I need everything down to underwear, so if you're willing I'm eh <u>I'm all yours.</u>	Joshua: Ich brauche einfach eine völlig neue Garderobe also wenn Sie Lust haben, <u>fangen wir doch bei der Unterwäsche an.</u>

S04E14 00:04 – 00:13 Phoebe goes through Joey's fishing equipment.	
Phoebe: So, what is this now?	Phoebe: Und was ist das hier?
Joey: <u>Googlie Worm.</u>	Joey: Das ist ein <u>Wurm.</u>
Phoebe: And this?	Phoebe: Igitt! Und das?
Joey: <u>Glow Pop Jiggly Jam.</u>	Joey: Das ist <u>dummerweise kein Wurm.</u>
Phoebe: It is so funny.	Phoebe: Das ist wirklich witzig.

S04E16 02:59 – 03:05 Ross tells the friends, how much of a positive influence Emily was on him.	
Ross: I even signed up for helicopter classes. She's leaving in two days. <u>I don't have to do it.</u>	Ross: Übrigens hab ich mich für Hubschrauber Flugstunden angemeldet, <u>ist doch super, was?</u> In zwei Tagen ist sie wieder in England, <u>ich hab's nicht für sie getan.</u>

S04E16 09:19 – 09:25 Rachel tries everything to get Joshua’s attention and make him fall in love with her. Joey tells her to take off her bra underneath her shirt, like the girl from “Flashdance.”

Joey: She takes of her bra, under the shirt and pulls it out the sleeve. Very sexy and classy.

Joey: Jedenfalls hat sie ihren BH aufgemacht und zwar unter dem T-Shirt. Sie hat ihn aus dem Ärmel rausgezogen, das war irre sexy und große klasse.

S04E16 12:03 - 12:09 Ever since Phoebe got pregnant, she has been craving meat, which she cannot eat since she is a vegetarian. When she sees Chandler’s meat sandwich, she can’t stop herself and takes a bite out of it. In response, Joey takes two large steaks out of the freezer and shows them to Phoebe.

Joey: If you gonna do something wrong... do it right!

Joey: wenn du schon einen Fehler machen willst... dann tu es richtig!

S04E16 14:05 - 14:08 Rachel tries to impress Joshua by dressing as a Cheerleader and showing him some of her moves. Her attempt at a graceful finish by performing a cartwheel, however, does not go as planned.

Rachel: I’m fine! I’m fine! I just loosened a tooth. It’s no big deal. I have a dentist.

Rachel: Ach es geht mir gut! Ich hab zwar einen Zahn verloren aber was solls.

S04E17 13:22 – 13:26 Phoebe decides to start a new career as a knife sales person and cuts open a can with a knife so that Monica, Rachel, Chandler, and Joey can guess what her new profession is.

Phoebe: Now I know what you are thinking.

Chandler: Pregnant woman slays four?

Phoebe: Also ich weiß ganz genau was ihr jetzt denkt.

Chandler: Vier halten eine schwangere für verrückt.