

# Problems and Strategies of Translating Humor in Subtitling: Case Study of Friends

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Mikolčić, Monika

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Sveučilište J.J. Strossmayera u Osijeku

Filozofski fakultet Osijek

Diplomski studij engleskog jezika i književnosti – prevoditeljski smjer i hrvatskog  
jezika i književnosti – nastavnički smjer

Monika Mikolčić

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Mentor: doc. dr. sc. Goran Schmidt

Osijek, 2021.

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Mauka Mikotić 0122223034  
ime i prezime studenta, JMBAG

## **Abstract**

Audiovisual translation is crucial when it comes to importing foreign language TV series and movies. English language sitcoms have been extremely popular on Croatian television since the late 20<sup>th</sup> century and since then, the translators have had to overcome many obstacles in delivering the best translations. They mostly encounter culture-bound problems and language constraints, which require a great deal of creativity to resolve. The TV series *Friends* is well-known worldwide, as well as in Croatia, and the topic of this paper is to analyze the problems and strategies in the translation of verbally expressed humor in the TV show. The research is based on six joke categories proposed by Patrick Zabalbeascoa (1996), four translation strategies by Delia Chiaro (2010), and the pun translation strategies proposed by Katia Spankaki (2007). The first part of this paper will bring the theoretical background on audiovisual translation, humor, and culture-bound problems in translating humor. The second part of the paper presents the analysis, including the author's commentary on the used strategies, plays on words, and the explanation of the jokes.

**Keywords:** translation, subtitling, humor, puns, strategies

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# 1. Introduction

With the fast advances in high technology during the last century, more and more information has been presented in or transferred to audiovisual formats in recent years. That has amplified the interface between technologies, language, and culture. Amongst these media, subtitling is a crucial technique for simplifying communication with audiences and has recently been widely discussed, especially in contrast with dubbing which is another mainstream technique. (Liu; Zhang, 2009: 113) Audiovisual translation (AVT) is a long-established practice. For over 80 years now, it has played a significant role in satisfying the ever-growing need to make film products readily available in numerous countries worldwide. (Perego, 2014: 9)

This paper will deal with one of the most challenging aspects of AVT, and that is translating humor. Television nowadays offers TV series where humor is either a primary or a secondary element. Translators are often challenged to translate the seemingly untranslatable without reducing the humorous effect while working around the technical, textual, and linguistic restrictions in subtitling. Furthermore, finding an equivalent translation that makes the humorous element comprehensible is difficult because of the significant differences between some cultures, such as English and Croatian, and the lack of resemblance in their semantic and grammatical structures. In other words, linguistic features of the SL heavily constrain translating some types of humor, such as wordplay and puns, which entails providing some complex solutions. Another answer to why translating humorous elements is more complex than other various types of text is that humor is very subjective, and it relies on the perception of the audience, as well as the perception of the translator.

The main section of this paper is the research section which will explore all the problems translators deal with when translating humor and the strategies they might use to overcome these difficulties. A study was conducted based on the examples of the jokes found in the first season of the TV show *Friends*, which has 24 episodes, each lasting about 22 minutes. The research design is also further explained before the analysis of the examples.

## 1.1 Friends

*Friends* is an American TV sitcom created by David Crane and Marta Kauffman. It premiered on NBC on September 22, 1994, and lasted ten seasons. Courteney Cox, Lisa Kudrow, Jennifer Aniston, Matt LeBlanc, Matthew Perry, and David Schwimmer played the roles of six friends in their 20s and 30s living in Manhattan, New York City: Monica, Phoebe, Rachel, Joey, Chandler, and Ross. According to UselessDaily (Despotakis, 2020), all ten seasons of *Friends* ranked within the top ten of the final television season ratings. The series finale was watched by around 52.5 million American viewers, making it the fifth most-watched series finale in television history and the most-watched television episode of the 2000s. The finale aired on May 6, 2004, and the cast reunion special aired on HBO Max on May 27, 2021.

The story revolves around the six friends, who are making their way through their young adulthood. They encounter various situations and problems in their everyday life such as relationships, careers, family issues, marriage, divorce, pregnancy, children and many more. Along the way they learn from their mistakes and they grow and transform into successful adults. But none of it would be possible without their strong friendship which carried them through all the hardships and tied them together over the years.

## 2. Theoretical background

### 2.1 Subtitling

Henrik Gottlieb (1998: 244) states subtitling, along with dubbing, has been around since 1929 when the first sound films reached an international audience. He defines subtitles, sometimes referred to as captions, “as transcription of film or TV dialogue, presented simultaneously on the screen. They consist of one or two lines of an average maximum length of 35 characters and are mainly positioned at the bottom of the picture, often either centered or left-aligned.” (Gottlieb, 1998: 244-245) In his earlier work *Subtitling – A New University Discipline* from 1992, he defines subtitling as a 1) written, 2) additive, 3) immediate, 4) synchronous, and 5) polymedial translation:

1. Being of a written - as opposed to a spoken - nature, subtitling differs from all other types of screen translation,
2. The label additive indicates that in subtitling, verbal material is added to the original, maintaining the source language discourse.
3. The label immediate refers to the fact that in filmic media, all discourse is presented in a flowing manner, beyond the control of the listener-viewer-reader,
4. The label synchronous refers to the fact that the original film (at least its non-verbal part) and the translated dialog are presented simultaneously - unlike 'simultaneous' interpreting.
5. The term polymedial states the fact that at least two parallel channels are used to convey the total message of the original. (Gottlieb, 1992: 161-162)

Gottlieb later distinguishes two main types of subtitling from a linguistic standpoint; intralingual and interlingual subtitling. Intralingual subtitling is translating within one cultural language, while interlingual subtitling is translating between two cultural languages. He also mentions open subtitles (received with the original film or television version) and closed subtitles (optionally added to the original version) as the technically main distinction. (Gottlieb, 1992: 163)

## 2.2 Constraints of subtitling

Subtitle translation, unlike literary translation, is a process from verbal language into written text and is highly dependent on subtitling equipment to present or transfer information to its viewers. (Liu; Zhang, 2009: 114) Each translation type has its specific set of constraints. The main distinction between AVT and other forms of translation is that AVT comprises both technical and contextual constraints. Gottlieb (1992: 166) discusses textual (qualitative) and formal (quantitative) constraints on television subtitling. Textual constraints are those imposed on the subtitles by the visual context of the film, such as the need to reduce the original message. In contrast, formal constraints are the space factor (a maximum of two lines are allowed, with some 35 characters each) and the time factor. The time factor plays a key role in the choices that translators make. Conventionally 5-6 seconds have been considered sufficient for reading a two-liner. (Saba; Vosoughi, 2005: 4) Gottlieb (1992: 166) has devised a set of strategies used by translators:

- (1) Expansion,
- (2) Paraphrase,
- (3) Transfer,
- (4) Imitation,
- (5) Transcription,
- (6) Dislocation,
- (7) Condensation: retaining both meaning and most of the stylistic features of original,
- (8) Decimation: using abridged expressions and a reduction in content,
- (9) Deletion: deals with non-verbal content, and
- (10) Resignation.

Among the aforementioned strategies, condensation is usually seen as the essence of subtitling, and it can present a problem when dealing with culture-bound matters, which will later be further explained. According to Gottlieb, with strategies 1-7, the result is a more or less adequate rendering of the source text (ST) material into the target language (TL), whereas strategies 8-10 include some extent of semantic and stylistic loss. (Saba; Vosoughi, 2005: 4)

Another scholar Susanna Jaskanen divides the strategies employed by translators in terms of a ST-TL continuum into three categories: exoticization, naturalization, and neutralization:

Exoticization is here what Toury called 'adherence to source norms,' retaining culturally specific elements in the ST or slightly modifying them whereas naturalization means adapting the ST to target culture norms . . . There is the middle ground covered by neutralization between these two extremes, i.e., choosing a culturally neutral solution. However, she adds that drawing exact boundaries between the three categories is intricate. The researchers used this categorization as a general category for the translation strategies. (Saba; Vosoughi, 2005: 5)

In AVT, it is not merely a process of translating a text anymore, “but it rather consists of a significant 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.” (Vierrether, 2017: 17) Furthermore, being fluent in the SL and TL is insufficient. The intricate task of AVT involves an interdisciplinary approach:

“Translation Studies must open up to Communication Studies, Media and Film Studies, Cultural Studies, as well as to Semiotics, Sociology, Anthropology, 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.” (Vierrether, 2017: 17-18)

### 2.2.1 Culture-bound problems

As previously mentioned, being unfamiliar with the culture of the country of SL and TL presents one of the problems in translation. Jan Pedersen, Swedish Associate Professor in Translation Studies, dealt with Extralinguistic Cultural References (or ECR's for short) in his work since, according to him, cultural references constitute one of the most critical translation problems subtitlers deal with. (Caniato, 2017: 161) As he explains, “these are words or group of words, also known in Translation Studies as realia or culture-bound words, used to refer to persons, foods, games, institutions, etc. that are generally recognizable by speakers belonging to one country, but not necessarily to other countries.” (Caniato, 2017: 161) Many scholars of translation are concerned with the relation between language and culture, and thus the translators are seen as mediators:

“Translators mediate between cultures (including ideologies, moral systems, and socio-political structures), seeking to overcome those incompatibilities which stand in the way of transfer of meaning. What has value as a sign in one cultural community may be devoid of significance in another.” (Nedergaard-Larsen, 1993: 209)

Culture-bound problems within the language itself are abundant and widespread: “They may be grammatical categories that exist only in this one language, vocative forms, the use of certain rhetoric, metaphors and idioms etc.” (Nedergaard-Larsen, 1993: 210)

The main limiting factors and problems relating to subtitling, as stated earlier, are time and space, and “the answer to any translation problem in subtitling, whether culture-bound or not, will naturally be partly determined by the amount of time and space available.” (Nedergaard-Larsen, 1993: 213) It is also important to note that, in subtitling, the use of a footnote or a translator's note is unacceptable. “That is also a fact that makes the translator's task even harder, in terms of conveying the appropriate meaning in TL, when there is not a direct equivalent term, and the

translator is also forced to follow the 'rules' and make things work in the TL environment.” (Spankaki, 2007)

A media-specific factor that could present another problem in cross-cultural subtitling is what Nedergaard-Larsen refers to as is the feed-back effect.<sup>1</sup>:

“Subtitles are verbal visual signs that are added to the original image without changing the visuals or the soundtrack of the film . . . Precisely because subtitles are added, the so-called feed-back effect arises. There is a feed-back effect both from the visuals and from the soundtrack.” (1993: 213-214)

However, the author notes that cross-cultural translation problems can be either increased or diminished by the feed-back effect. In some cases, "the subtitler will have to depart from an otherwise suitable translation strategy because of the feed-back effect. At other times the feed-back effect will reduce or eliminate a translation problem if, for example, the institution or object mentioned is seen on the screen." (Nedergaard-Larsen, 1993: 214)

When it comes to strategies for culture-bound problems, Nedergaard-Larsen (1993: 219) lists six: transfer/loan, direct translation, explicitation, paraphrase, adaptation to TL-culture, and omission. They also claim that genre is decisive for the choice of translation strategy, and they divide visual media into genres where: language is central (satire, comedy, song programs), people are central (portraits, drama, feature films, shows), events are central (news, documentaries, sports). (Nedergaard-Larsen, 1993: 221) To focus on the main topic and the empirical of this paper, the following chapters will bring further explanation of the first category – comedy, or to be more specific – humor.

### 2.3 Humor

Since AVT has been ascribed a clear role within the field of Translation Studies and as a university discipline, many scholars have begun to dissect its numerous properties. As a result, a

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<sup>1</sup> The author further explains that “the strength of the feed-back effect from the dialogue depends partly on the audience's degree of familiarity with the language of the dialogue, partly on how closely this language is related to the language of the audience and thus, the feed-back effect is due partly to the fact that the subtitles are added while the original dialogue remains audible, partly to the fact that the visuals may contain elements that supply the dialogue.” (Nedergaard-Larsen, 1993: 214)

strong need arose to tackle more specific and particularly challenging areas. Humor is one of them. (Nash, 1985: 10) Walter Nash (1985: 12) defined humor in the following way:

“It is an occurrence in a social play. It characterizes the interaction of persons in situations in cultures, and our responses to it must be understood in that broad context, whether it makes the sudden demand of wit, or whether it has the more discursive appeal of description and anecdote”

Humor has been of interest to many influential philosophers, including Aristotle and Plato, ever since ancient times, even though nobody formulated a finite theory. Kant was arguably the first to approach humor scientifically. According to him, in any form of communication, people formulate expectations for further possible scenarios, and unfulfilled expectations lead to laughter. (Korostenskiënė; Pakrosnytė, 2017: 157)

From a psychological standpoint, according to Ostrower (as cited in Bruce, 2014), “Humor is a complex phenomenon. There is no general theory of humor or even an agreed definition . . . When we try to define exactly what counts as humor and what does not, or how humor operates, we find it quite difficult.” The author describes humor as a combination of three components functioning as a whole: “Wit, being the cognitive experience, mirth, being the emotional experience, and laughter, being the physiological experience.”

### 2.3.1 Translation of humor

When it comes to translating humor, it is crucial to identify and categorize the different types of humor first. Defining humor is problematic because the categories and sub-categories are infinite and prone to subjectivity. Different scholars describe numerous classifications of humor. Alison Ross in *The Language of Humour* (1998: 4) divides humor into wordplay and ambiguity (phonology, graphology, morphology, lexis, and syntax), taboo-breaking, attacking a target, allusion, and intertextuality, and nonsense or the absurd. John Robert Schmitz, in his *work Humor as a pedagogical tool in foreign language and translation courses* (2002: 7), classifies humor into three groups: humor that obtains mainly from the context and the general functioning of the world

(reality-based joke), the cultural joke or culture-based joke, and the linguistic joke or word-based joke based on specific features in the phonology, morphology, or syntax of particular languages.

Kim Ebensgaard Jensen (2009: 2) explains that Freud's distinction between verbal humor and conceptual humor is one that applies universally and which has to do with how the humorous effect is achieved, even though humor varies from person to person and from culture to culture. "Verbal humor is when an aspect of language, such as structural ambiguity, is exploited in order to achieve a humorous effect, while conceptual humor involves concepts or ideas that are thought of as humorous without using aspects of language for other purposes conveying the humorous message." (Ebensgaard Jensen, 2009: 2) Other than verbal and conceptual humor, the author also lists visual humor, slapstick humor, and musical humor.

In addition to the classifications mentioned above, the one that will be used in the continuation of this paper and the study of the jokes is the classification made by Patrick Zabalbeascoa. The classification organizes jokes into six categories as followed:

- 1) International joke: humor does not depend on the language (puns, wordplays, etc.) or a particular culture, and this type of joke functions when working with pairs of languages, considering that a portion of jokes may be international for some TLs but not for others.
- 2) National-culture-and-institutions joke: humor needs to be adapted in the TL for the audience to understand the meaning because there are national, cultural, or institutional references.
- 3) National-sense-of-humor joke: humor or themes that are culture-specific in certain places or countries and depend on the culture/country's history, religion, etc. of the culture/country. It is also considered the most controversial category.
- 4) Language-dependent jokes: humor that depends on properties of the language (i.e. homophony, polysemy). These jokes are often fairly international in terms of being culture-dependent. However, they pose a difficulty when translating the SL and TL that are not closely related, and considerable changes might be necessary.
- 5) Visual jokes: depend highly on the verbal, non-verbal combined, or iconic representation of idiom or metaphor factor of humor mentioned before. Humor is only visual when the joke depends only on what is seen on screen.
- 6) Complex joke: combines two or more of the categories mentioned. (as cited in Suy, 2018: 13-14)



After establishing the classification that will be used in this study, it is essential to list and explain some solutions and strategies for translating some problematic matters in the translation of humor. Delia Chiaro (2010: 11-12) proposes four strategies:

The first strategy she lists is leaving the verbally expressed humor (VEH) unchanged. Whenever possible, the translator should translate a joke into TL as literally as possible. She mentions it is the best strategy for getting a translation as accurate and similar to the original text.

The second strategy is to replace the SL VEH with a different instance of VEH in the TL. She notes that it is probably the most challenging for translators.

The third strategy is replacing the source VEH with an idiomatic expression in the TL. The strategy proposes that the translator tries to find an idiom or expression in the TL to preserve the humor of the joke in the SL. She comments that this strategy works best with visual puns.

The fourth and final strategy is to ignore the VEH altogether, where the translator chooses to ignore the SL and translates it literally, therefore ignoring the humorous situation.

It is also important to mention the translation of puns as some of the jokes in this study will contain this specific type of humor. Pun is a humorous use of a word or phrase that has several meanings or that sounds like another word. (Cambridge Dictionary) Translating puns is a tricky task in most cases, so it is important to find the strategies to do so successfully and to define different ways to translate puns. The chosen strategies for this paper are the ones suggested by Katia Spankaki (2007):

PUN ⇒ PUN (pun rendered as pun): the ST pun is translated by a TL pun

PUN ⇒ NON PUN (pun rendered as non-pun): a non-punning phrase which may retain all the initial senses (non-selective non-pun), or a non-punning phrase which renders only one of the pertinent senses (selective non-pun), or diffuse paraphrase or a combination of the above

PUN ⇒ RELATED RHETORICAL DEVICE [pun rendered with another rhetorical device, or punoid (repetition, alliteration, rhyme, referential vagueness, irony, paradox, etc.), which aims to recapture the effect of the ST pun]

PUN ⇒ ZERO (pun rendered with zero pun): the pun is simply omitted

PUN ST = PUN TT (ST pun copied as TT pun, without being translated)

NON PUN à PUN (a new pun introduced): a compensatory pun is inserted, where there was none in the ST, possibly making up for ST puns lost elsewhere (strategy 4 where no other solution was found), or for any other reason ZERO ⇒ PUN (addition of a new pun): totally new textual material is added, containing a wordplay as a compensatory device

EDITORIAL TECHNIQUES: explanatory footnotes or endnotes, comments in translator's forewords, 'anthological' presentation of different, complementary solutions, etc.

As mentioned earlier, subtitling, particularly subtitling humor, is an incredibly challenging task. "Translators often face the task of having to translate seemingly untranslatable humor, while not reducing the meaning effect, which invariably tests their capability for finding creative solutions." (Spankaki, 2007) Spankaki also notes that the audience's appreciation of humor is also one of the key factors in recognizing the humorous effect, as much as the translator's sense of humor and their ability to recognize the comic instance.

According to Margherita Dore (2020: 2), scholars have often debated the issues related to the translation of humor, often holding opposing views. She claims:

"If academics choose to adopt a pragmatic approach to studying humor translation, they will then have to consider which theoretical and practical issues this process poses and which possible solutions may be applied to overcome the challenges translators face (be they professional or amateur) when dealing with a wide range of texts and situations, as well as which tools and strategies are at their disposal to allow them to complete their task." (Dore, 2020: 2)

Korostenskienė and Pakrosnytė indicate that there is a widespread perception of humor as a very subjective and culture-specific phenomenon. "Meanwhile, humor translation is often criticized for being poor and vague, as humor in the target language is frequently blamed for contravening humor in the source language. Therefore, the two most common options to render humor in another language seem to be either to translate to transfer the effect or to provide a literal translation." (Korostenskienė; Pakrosnytė, 2017: 1-2) The authors conclude that the perfect translation is one that succeeds in delivering the point, and the punch line manages to make people laugh. (Korostenskienė; Pakrosnytė, 2017: 1-2)

### 3. Research design

In the empirical section of this paper, an attempt to analyze the translation and strategies used for translating the humorous elements will be made. The examples to be analyzed are collected from the first season of the American TV show *Friends*, translated into Croatian on the HBO Go platform. Each example will be presented as a dialogue in English (also available on HBO Go) and its translation into Croatian, as well as a back-translation into English where needed. All examples will be supplemented with a short background description and explanation of the joke, along with the name of the episode and the exact timestamp. After each dialogue, the strategy used by the translator will be identified and described, and, where possible, a suggestion for a more efficient translation will be given. As previously mentioned, this study will be using the classification of jokes made by Zabalbeascoa (as cited in Suy, 2018: 13-14) and strategies proposed by Chiaro (2010: 11-12) for analyzing the collected data.

#### 3.1. International joke

As mentioned, this analysis will follow Zabalbeascoa's classification of jokes. Therefore, the first examples to analyze will be international jokes, which are the least problematic type in terms of translating.

In the fourth episode, “The One With George Stephanopoulos” (00:02:45-00:02:57), Joey and Chandler surprise Ross with a ticket to a Rangers and Penguins hockey game. They both pretend that the tickets are a birthday present:

Ross: It's funny, my birthday was seven months ago.

Joey: So?

Ross: So I'm guessing you had an extra ticket, and couldn't decide which one of you got to bring a date?

Chandler: Aren't we Mr. The-Glass-is-Half-Empty?

Ross: *Rođendan mi je bio prije sedam mjeseci.*

Joey: *Pa što?*

Ross: *Imate kartu viška, a ne možete se dogovoriti čiju curu povesti.*

Chandler: *Ti si jedan od onih kojima je čaša napola prazna!*

The joke is international because the expression "The glass is half full/empty" exists in both English and Croatian ("*Čaša je napola puna/prazna*"). The expression denotes that a person whose glass is always half full is an optimist, while a person whose glass is always half empty is a pessimist. Therefore, the translator only had to opt for a literal translation with a slight change ("Mr. The-Glass-is-Half-Empty" became "*onaj kojemu je čaša napola prazna*") which is the first strategy proposed by Chiaro (2010: 11-12).

Later in the same episode (00:04:25-00:04:29), Rachel gets her first paycheck, and she is very excited to see how much money she has earned. She sits with her friends and opens the envelope. However, when she took a look at all the figures, she was disappointed and confused:

Rachel: *Who's FICA? Why's he getting all my money?*

Rachel: *Tko su porez i prirez i zašto su oni dobili sav moj novac?*

This joke is international because it can work in both languages. FICA (Federal Insurance Contributions Act) is the equivalent for the Croatian payroll tax, which is in this case called "porez i prirez." The humorous effect is slightly lost because "FICA" as an abbreviation could sound like a name to a person who does not know what it is, while "porez i prirez" are unabbreviated and do not resemble names in the Croatian language. However, since Rachel is a character who lived most of her life unaware of standard terms such as FICA, the humorous effect remained. The strategy used here was the third strategy proposed by Chiaro (2010: 11-12), which is replacing the source VEH with an equivalent in TL.

In the ninth episode, "The One Where Underdog Gets Away" (00:03:05-00:03-11), Joey walks into *Central Perk*, where his friends are hanging out, and tells them he is going to be a model

on an advertisement for a free clinic. He is going to represent a person who has a certain disease, but he does not know yet which disease it is going to be:

Chandler: You know which one you're gonna be?

Joey: No. But I hear Lyme disease is open, so, you know... (Joey crosses his fingers)

Chandler: Good luck, man. I hope you get it.

Chandler: *Znaš li što ćeš ti biti?*

Joey: *Još ne. Lajmsku boreliozu još nitko nema.*

Chandler: *Sretno! Valjda ćeš je dobiti!*

Lyme disease is commonly known in both SL and TL countries. Despite the joke being ambiguous (Chandler wants Joey to be on a poster for Lyme disease, not actually get the disease), the translator only needed to translate the joke literally for it to work in both languages. Therefore, the joke is international, and the translator used the first strategy proposed by Chiaro (2010).

Later in the same episode, "The One Where Underdog Gets Away" (00:10:14-00:10:21), Joey finds out that his face ended up being used for representing a person who has a sexually transmitted disease. After the whole city was plastered in those posters, humiliated Joey goes to Central Perk where all his friends were, and he catches them laughing:

Joey: So I guess you all saw it.

Ross: What?

Rachel: Saw what?

Phoebe: No, we're just laughing. You know how laughter can be infectious.

Joey: *Svi ste ga vidjeli?*

Ross: *Što to?*

Rachel: *Molim?*

Phoebe: *Bez razloga se smijemo. Smijeh je zarazan!*

This joke is evidently international because the same joke works for both English and Croatian. The expression of laughter being infectious is quite frequent as it is expected that once a person starts laughing, more people join. Translation in this instance was not challenging, as the expression exists in both languages. The translator only had to literally translate the dialogue for it to be comprehended without the humor getting lost. In this case, the first strategy proposed by Chiaro (2010: 11-12) applies as it is unchanged.

In the tenth episode, “The One With the Monkey” (00:17:50-00:17:52), Phoebe meets David, a scientist with whom she enters a relationship. David soon finds out that he and his friend Max got the scholarship to move to Minsk, Russia, to do research. Phoebe told David she does not want him to go, and he decided to stay, which made Max angry with her. At the New Year's party, Phoebe greets Max:

Phoebe: Hi, Max.

Max: Yoko.

Phoebe: *Zdravo, Max.*

Max: *Yoko!*

Max calls Phoebe Yoko as a comparison to Yoko Ono, who is widely known across the world, which makes the joke international. He calls her that because Yoko is often blamed for having something to do with The Beatles breaking up, and he believes Phoebe is the reason why they cannot go to Minsk together. The reference to Yoko Ono is assumed not to confuse the Croatian audience, so the translator decided to translate the joke literally, without changing her name, which means that they left the joke unchanged, as per Chiaro's (2010: 11-12) first strategy.

In the eighteenth episode, “The One With All the Poker” (00:08:23-00:08:25), Rachel, Monica, and Phoebe discuss the recent poker game against the boys. Rachel comments how Ross was acting like a jerk during the game, and Monica replies that he can get very competitive. Phoebe starts laughing because Monica is the most competitive one out of the six:

Phoebe: Hello, Kettle, this is Monica. You're black.

Phoebe: *Zdravo, sjenice, Monica ovdje. Da znaš, imaš velike oči!*

The joke here is the commonly known phrase “The pot calling the kettle black,” which is “something you say that means people should not criticize someone else for a fault that they have themselves.” (Cambridge Dictionary) A well-known Croatian equivalent is “*Rugala se sova sjenici da ima velike oči/glavu*” which is used here for translating the joke, therefore making it international. The translator decided to leave the same format of the joke in the SL and only replaced the phrase with the Croatian one, meaning that they used the third strategy proposed by Chiaro (2010: 11-12).

In the twenty-first episode, “The One with Fake Monica” (00:02:53-00:03:01), Joey and Chandler are sitting in Central Perk, discussing possible stage names for Joey because his agent told him he should consider a new one:

Chandler: How about Joey Paponi?

Joey: No, still too ethnic. My agent thinks I should have a name that's more neutral.

Chandler: Joey Switzerland?

Chandler: *Može li Joey Paponi?*

Joey: *Ne, zvuči previse talijanski. Agent kaže da mi treba neko neutralno ime.*

Chandler: *Joey Švicarska?*

Chandler proposes the name Joey Switzerland, implying that Switzerland is a neutral choice. Switzerland is known to be a country that has adhered to a policy of armed neutrality in global affairs, and that fact is known around the world. The joke is humorous in both SL and TL, and the translator only had to use the first Chiaro's (2010: 11-12) strategy and leave the joke unchanged.

### 3.2. National-culture-and-institution joke

The next category of jokes to be analyzed is the National-culture-and-institutions jokes. This category is more challenging than the previous one as it necessitates the adaptation in the TL.

In the second episode, “The One With the Sonogram at the End” (00:05:44-00:05:51), Rachel is upset because she needs to return the engagement ring to her ex-fiance Barry who she had left at the altar. The problem is that she has lost the ring and cannot find it and her friends decide to help her search for it:

Joey: When did you have it on last?

Phoebe: Doy. Probably right before she lost it.

Chandler: You don't get a lot of “doy” these days.

Joey: *Kad si ga zadnji put imala?*

Phoebe: *Prije nego što ga je izgubila.*

Chandler: *Ona cijeni tvoje mišljenje.*

The joke here revolves around Phoebe’s “Doy,” which is untranslatable in Croatian. It is a word used only in the country of the SL, which makes the joke belong to the national-culture-and-institutions category. “Doy” is used when a person wants to point out that something is obvious, similar to the more common “duh.” The translator chose to replace the SL VEH with a different instance of VEH in the TL, which is a second strategy proposed by Chiaro (2010: 11-12). They ignored the “doy” and chose to leave only the rest of the sentence, to which Chandler replies: “Ona cijeni tvoje mišljenje./*She values your opinion.*” Thus, the humorous effect is reduced, if not lost altogether. In Croatian, “dobro jutro” or “logično” would be used in this context instead of “doy,” so it might be more efficient and closer to the original joke if the translator has opted for using these expressions for the audience to understand the joke better. A suggestion for a translation that uses the mentioned expression could be the following solution:

Joey: *Kad si ga zadnji put imala?*

Phoebe: *Dobro jutro. Prije nego što ga je izgubila.*



Chandler: *Ne čuješ često dobro jutro u ovo doba dana.*

In the same episode, immediately after the previous scene (00:05:54-00:06:00) where Joey asked Rachel when was the last time she had her ring on, Rachel replies to him:

Rachel: I know I had it this morning, and I know I had it when I was in the kitchen with...

Chandler: ...Dinah?

Rachel: Imala sam ga jutros kad sam u kuhinji...

Chandler: Kuhala?

This type of joke is a national-culture-and-institution joke because of "Dinah," which is a line from the folk song "I've Been Working on the Railroad" ("*Someone's in the kitchen with Dinah*"). Unfortunately, the song is not recognized in Croatia, and therefore the joke would also fail to be humorous. For that reason, the translator decided to use the second Chiaro's (2010: 11-12) strategy and offer a new solution that could be humorous. Instead of translating it literally and leaving "Dinah," the translator used "Kuhala?" which is humorous in a different way, implying that Rachel was doing something obvious in the kitchen – cooking.

In the third episode, "The One With the Thumb" (00:09:25-00:09:36), friends discuss Monica's new date, Alan, whom they recently met, and they immediately took a liking to. Joey expressed how he likes the way his smile is kind of crooked, to which Phoebe replies:

Phoebe: Yes, like the man in the shoe.

Ross: What shoe?

Phoebe: From the nursery rhyme. There was a crooked man, who had a crooked smile, who lived in a shoe... for a while.

Phoebe: *Da, kao čovjek iz cipele!*

Ross: *Kakve cipele?*

Phoebe: *Iz one pjesmice "Stari je pokvarenjak u cipeli živio..."*

The situation here is challenging for the translator because the poem “There was a crooked man” is not recognizable in the TL culture. Therefore, this is a national-culture-and-institutions joke. The humorous effect in this situation is the fact that Phoebe said the wrong lyrics, which actually go: “There was a crooked man, and he walked a crooked mile, He found a crooked sixpence against a crooked stile; He bought a crooked cat which caught a crooked mouse, And they all lived together in a little crooked house.” (Poetry Foundation) There is no mention of the shoe, and that makes the joke humorous. The translator chose to translate Phoebe's lyrics literally, which abated the humor in the situation, mainly because the crooked man was translated as “*stari pokvarenjak*,” which usually carries a bad connotation, but in some cases can be used as an endearing way to describe a person. In this situation, everyone likes Alan and describing him as a “crook/pokvarenjak” could be a compliment in a way. There are no other possible solutions for the translation of this joke because there are no well-known poems about shoes in Croatian that could have replaced the original poem. For that reason, the translator opted for the fourth Chiaro’s (2010: 11-12) strategy – ignoring the humorous content of the situation and translating literally.

In the fourth episode, “The One With George Stephanopoulos” (00:10:43-00:10:46), Rachel feels like she had given up many things when she embraced her new way of living as an independent adult who makes her own money. Phoebe tries to comfort her by saying she is just like Jack from the fairy tale Jack and the Beanstalk:

Phoebe: He lived in a village and you lived in the Village.

Phoebe: *On je živio na selu, a i ti si tek došla u grad...*

The Village is a generic term referring to Manhattan between 14th and Houston, where Rachel and Monica live. This reference is not recognizable by most of the TL audience, so the joke is in the national-culture-and-institutions category. Being unable to translate both mentioned “villages” as “*selo*,” which would make the joke senseless and diminish the humorous ambiguity, the translator decided to opt for the second Chiaro’s (2010: 11-12) strategy and offer a new solution which is “a i ti si tek došla u grad/*and you’ve just moved to the city.*” Thus, the joke still keeps the same meaning to some extent, but the humorous effect is somewhat reduced.

In the fifth episode, “The One With the East German Laundry Detergent” (00:17:21-00:17:26), Joey notices his ex-girlfriend Angela walk into *Central Perk*. As soon as he sees her,

he wants to get back together and asks her out, but she informs him she has a new boyfriend, Bob. Still determined to be with her, Joey tells her he also has a new girlfriend (Monica) and asks her if she would be open to four of them having dinner as friends. He begs Monica to go on a double date with him so that he can win Angela back. However, he does not tell Monica that Bob is Angela's boyfriend, but her brother, who will be Monica's blind date, and she agrees to go. During the evening, she is repulsed by the fact that Angela and Bob are kissing and acting inappropriately for a brother and sister. She pulls Joey aside:

Monica: Hello! Were we at the same table? It's like cocktails in Appalachia.

Monica: *Sjedimo li za istim stolom? Incestuozna zabava!*

Monica uses the word "Appalachia" to refer to the Appalachia mountains, a region in America notorious for incest. This fact being widely popular in America makes Monica's joke belong to the national-culture-and-institutions category. Unfortunately, the translator did not have many options in this case, and, using the second Chiaro's (2010: 11-12) strategy, decided to translate the joke's meaning: "Incestuozna zabava!/*Incestuous party!*" which does not have the same humorous effect in TL as in SL.

In the sixth episode, "The One With the Butt" (00:08:47-00:08:50), friends tell Monica that she is extremely obsessed with tidying up and having them placed in a specific way. If someone moves her things, she becomes angry with them. She denies their claims, and Ross points out that she has behaved that way ever since she was a child:

Ross: When we were kids, yours was the only Raggedy Ann doll that wasn't raggedy.

Ross: *Kao dijete, zalizala bi kosu lutkama s afrofrizuram!*

Raggedy Ann dolls are well-known in America, and almost all families there own one. The word raggedy means untidy, torn and looking a little dirty (Cambridge Dictionary), and it has a crucial role in making this joke humorous. These dolls are culture-specific and unknown to the Croatian audience. Therefore, this joke is a national-culture-and-institutions joke. The problem in translating lies in the fact that there are no similar toys in Croatia. The joke is untranslatable unless the translator is creative and comes up with another habit that might make Monica an extremely meticulous person, which was done using the second Chiaro's (2010: 11-12) strategy. However,

the translation above is problematic because it might depict Monica as racist (“*As a child, you would straighten the hair of all the dolls who had afro curls.*”), The translation does denote that Monica was precise about the way she would like her things to be, but it could have been done in a less problematic way. An example of a solution that could work in depicting Monica in a non-controversial way but still keeping the idea of her being excessively fastidious is:

Ross: *Od djetinjstva nakon pranja ruku uvijek pereš i sapun!* (Since you were a child, you’ve always washed the soap after washing your hands.)

### 3.3. National-sense-of-humor joke

The next category to analyze is the national-sense-of-humor jokes. These jokes are not as challenging as the previous ones when it comes to translation. However, they undeniably need adaptation to a certain extent so the TL audience can understand them.

In the third episode, “The One With the Thumb” (00:10:52-00:10:59), Rachel, Ross, Chandler, and Joey walk into *Central Perk*, where Monica is drinking coffee. They are wearing sports attire, and Monica asks them about the game they played with Alan, the guy she is dating. They said they won because they had him on the team.

Rachel: It was like he made us into a team.

Chandler: Yep. We sure showed those Hasidic jewelers a thing or two about softball.

Rachel: *A od nas je napravio pravu momčad!*

Chandler: *Pokazao je židovskim draguljarima što je “softball”.*

As previously explained by Zabalbeascoa (1996), this category involves humor or themes which are particular or more prevalent in a certain culture or country and depends on history, religion, politics, etc. For this reason, the category is considered the most controversial one, and the translator needs to take that into account when translating. The Hasidic Jews are a very religious Jewish group of people, and many of them live in New York City. These people are stereotypically seen as working in the jewelry business. This joke belongs to the national-sense-of-humor jokes

because the mentioned group of people is mainly found in the SL culture, and the TL audience is not familiar with them or the jokes surrounding the stereotype. Moreover, Croatian people do not partake in this type of humor (surrounding Jews). The joke itself is not offensive, and it only refers to a specific group of people that are common in New York City. Hence, the translator provided a literal translation by using the first Chiaro's (2010: 11-12) strategy, only replacing the word "Hasidic" with "Jewish/*židovski*."

In the second episode, "The One With the Sonogram at the End" (00:09:28-00:09:36), Ross and Monica's parents are invited to have dinner at Monica's apartment. During the evening, they persistently comment on how Monica is still not married and many other things that make her feel attacked. Monica's dad, Jack, even makes a comment about her being overweight as a child:

Jack: Don't listen to your mother. You're independent and you always have been. Even when you were a kid, and you were chubby, and you had no friends, you were just fine.

Jack: *Ne slušaj majku. Ti si neovisna, uvijek si takva bila, čak i kao dijete. Debela i bez prijatelja, ali tebi je bilo dobro.*

In this scene, a fat joke is subtly made. In the nineties, when the show was filmed, this type of humor was widespread and accepted in America. In other countries, however, fat jokes are not taken lightly, which is why it is categorized in this analysis as a national-sense-of-humor joke. The translation was not problematic, and the first strategy proposed by Chiaro (2010: 11-12) was used.

In the thirteenth episode, "The One With the Boobies" (00:20:14-00:20:25), Joey finds out that his father has been having an affair with another woman. He feels angry and convinces his father to go back to his mother and apologize for cheating on her. However, his mother is furious with Joey for ruining the situation because she liked it when her husband had a "hobby" on the side, and she explained to Joey how he has been more attentive since meeting the other woman. Joey is confused by their relationship and talks to his friends about parents:

Rachel: And just think, in a couple of years we get to turn into them.

Chandler: If I turn into my parents, I'll either be an alcoholic blonde chasing after 20-year-old boys or... I'll end up like my mom.

Rachel: *A za samo koju godinu, i mi ćemo se u njih pretvoriti.*

Chandler: *Znači da ću biti plavokosi alkić i trčati za mladićima od 20 godina! Ili ću završiti kao moja mama!*

From the beginning of the show, Chandler has been informing his friends about the complicated situation in his family and how his parents had gotten divorced when he was a child. His mother is an author of erotic books and likes to date young men, and his father is transgender and works as a drag artist in Las Vegas. LGBTQ+ communities have been normalized in American culture, especially in the 21st century, whereas in Croatia, this topic is still considered taboo and controversial. Transgender people are not common in TL culture, and people often criticize them, even today in the age of media when this topic has been widely discussed worldwide. This topic is, therefore, also not usually joked about in the TL culture, so this joke belongs to a national-sense-of-humor joke. Regarding the strategy used, the translator had no challenges in this instance and used the first Chiaro's (2010: 11-12) strategy. However, the humorous effect is reduced in TL because in SL the word "blonde" can stand for both a male and a female person and the audience only finds out whom Chandler was referring to at the end of the joke. On the other hand, in TL, the translator had to opt for "plavokosi/*blonde man*," which ruins the revelation at the end of the joke.

In the fifteenth episode, "The One With the Stoned Guy" (00:04:19-00:04:25), Chandler informs his friends that he quit his job and wants to pursue something else but does not know what. He feels frustrated that even a career counselor could not help him find the right career path for him, and he compares himself to his friends:

Chandler: You know, you have goals. You have dreams. I don't have a dream.

Ross: Ah, the lesser known "I Don't Have a Dream" speech.

Chandler: *Imate ciljeve, imate snove. Ja nemam nikakav san!*

Ross: *Manje poznati govor "Ja nemam san"!*

"I Have a Dream" is a famous public speech delivered by American civil rights activist Martin Luther King Jr. in 1963. The aim of the speech was to bring an end to racism in the United States.

The speech is broadly known and studied in the SL culture because of its significance in US history. Therefore, this joke belongs to the national-sense-of-humor jokes. The speech and the joke itself are not as well-known in the TL culture. Nevertheless, the speech is recognized and, therefore, the translator opted for a literal translation - the first Chiaro's (2010: 11-12) strategy.

In the nineteenth episode, "The One Where the Monkey Gets Away" (00:06:49-00:07:05), Rachel is assigned to take care of Marcel, Ross' monkey, while he is away. Being irresponsible, she leaves the door open, and Marcel runs away. She is distraught because she cannot find him and her friends confront her about her being irresponsible:

Joey: How could you lose him?

Rachel: I don't know. We were watching TV, and then he pooped in Monica's shoe...

Monica: Wait. He pooped in my shoe? Which one?

Rachel: I don't know. The left one.

Monica: Which ones?

Rachel: Those little clunky Amish things you think go with everything.

Joey: *Kako si ga izgubila?*

Rachel: *Ne znam! Pokakao se u Monicinu cipelu...*

Monica: *Pokakao se u moju cipelu? U koju?*

Rachel: *Ne znam! Lijevu!*

Monica: *U koje cipele?*

Rachel: *One čudne za koje ti misliš da idu uza sve!*

The joke here revolves around referring to shoes as "Amish," which is a word that represents "members of a religious group in the US who live in a simple traditional way that often involves farming and no modern technology." (Cambridge Dictionary) By calling Monica's shoes Amish, she wanted to point out their conservative, closed look. This joke belongs to the national-sense-of-

humor joke category because the Amish community is not common and well-known in the TL, only in the SL culture. For that reason, the translator opted for translating the word “Amish” as “čudne/*weird*,” which can be interpreted as controversial in the SL culture, even though they also consider people from the Amish community odd. Using the second Chiaro’s (2010: 11-12) strategy, the translator has achieved a humorous effect, whereas if he/she had left the word “Amish” in the TL, the humor in the joke might not be recognized by the audience.

### 3.4. Language-dependent joke

The next category to be analyzed is the language-dependent jokes. These jokes require the highest level of creativity by the translator to deliver a translation that is as similar to the original in the SL, while retaining the humorous effect.

In the third episode, “The One With the Thumb” (00:11:01-00:11:20), Monica asks her friends about their opinion on her new date Alan. They absolutely love him, but she is skeptical:

Monica: Can I ask you guys a question? Do you ever think that Alan is maybe sometimes...

Ross: What?

Monica: I don’t know. A little too Alan?

Rachel: No. That’s not possible. You can never be too Alan.

Ross: Yeah, it’s his innate Alan-ness that we adore.

Chandler: I, personally, could have a gallon of Alan.

Monica: *Da vas nešto pitam. Ne čini li vam se da je Alan katkad...*

Ross: *Što?*

Monica: *Ne znam. Malo previše... Alan.*

Rachel: *Ne! To nije moguće! Ne može biti previše Alan.*



Ross: *Baš njegovu "alanost" mi i obožavamo!*

Chandler: *Ja bih osobno uživao u tonama Alana!*

The locus of the joke is the wordplay Ross and Chandler used to describe their adoration for Alan. For that reason, this case belongs to a language-dependent joke category. "alanness" is a combination created by using the name Alan and the suffix "-ness" – "When you add "-ness" to an adjective, it becomes a noun. The suffix "-ness" means "state, condition, quality." (Learners Dictionary) In TL, the suffix "-ost" serves the same purpose, so the translator used it to create a noun "alanost," which represents Alan's quality. Chandler's rhyme "gallon of Alan" is where the hard part of the translation comes into play. By using the fourth Chiaro's (2010: 11-12) strategy, the translator literally translated the joke and lost the humorous effect of the rhyme and the joke altogether. A solution that could be more efficient in preserving the humor of the joke is finding a rhyme that would work in the TL and still retain the idea that Chandler likes Alan, such as:

Chandler: *Meni je Alan fenomenalan! / I find Alan phenomenal.*

In the fourth episode, "The One With George Stephanopoulos" (00:00:32-00:00:51), friends are hanging out in Central Perk and discussing what they would do if they were omnipotent for a day. Joey comes in:

Monica: What would you do if you were omnipotent?

Joey: Probably kill myself.

Monica: Excuse me?

Joey: If Little Joey's dead, then I got no reason to live, you know?

Ross: Joey, omnipotent.

Joey: You are? Ross, I'm...

Monica: *Što bi ti da si omnipotentan?*

Joey: *Vjerojatno bih se ubio.*

Monica: *Što?*

Joey: *Umre li mi mali, ni ja nemam zašto živjeti.*

Ross: *Joey, omnipotentan!*

Joey: *Ti jesi? Stvarno mi je žao, Ross.*

This dialogue is humorous because Joey confused the word “omnipotent” with the word “impotent,” which is used to describe a man who is unable to have an erection and perform sexually. Ross tried to explain to him that Monica did not say “impotent” but “omnipotent” by putting the stress on the first syllable. What Joey heard was that Ross was saying: “Joey, I'm impotent,” and he replied that he was sorry to hear that. Regarding the translation, this is a more challenging case when it comes to language-dependent jokes. The translator used the fourth Chiaro's (2010: 11-12) strategy and ignored the joke because the way Ross pronounced the word cannot be translated to have an equal humorous effect in the TL. A possible solution, in this case, might be to use the second Chiaro's (2010: 11-12) strategy and, instead of “omnipotent,” put “not impotent.” That way, Ross is still implying to Joey that it is not what Monica has said:

Ross: *Joey, ne impotentan!/Joey, not impotent.*

Joey: *Ti jesi? Stvarno mi je žao, Ross.*

This way, to the TL audience, it might appear that Joey believes the right way to say the word “impotentan” is “neimpotentan,” and he understands Ross as if he is saying that he is impotent. Also, this suggestion might make the dialogue at least a bit more humorous to the TL audience.

In the fourth episode, “The One With George Stephanopoulos” 00:20:04-00:20:06), Ross is arguing with a child who had stolen his puck. Unfortunately, the child refuses to give it back to Ross, so Joey and Chandler encourage Ross to fight harder for it:

Ross: *I'm rubber you're glue. Whatever you...*

Ross: *Kaži “osam”, nos ti...*

The child used the expression “Finders keepers, losers weepers” to point out that the puck belongs to him now. Ross decided to fight back and imply that the child is the loser in this situation by using the expression children often use: “I'm *rubber, you're glue*. Whatever *you* say bounces off

me and sticks to *you*.” The TL does not have this expression, nor a similar one, so the translator used the third Chiaro’s (2010: 11-12) strategy and replaced the original VEH with another idiomatic expression in TL: “Kaži ‘osam,’ nos ti posran.” The expression in the TL is also something that a child would say in an argument, so this creative solution successfully retained the humorous effect.

In the eleventh episode, “The One With Mrs Bing” (00:21:29-00:21:36), Rachel feels inspired to write a book, and she takes the advice from Chandler's mom, an author of erotic books. She told Rachel that all it takes to create a successful book is to use 30 euphemisms for male genitalia, which she implemented in her story. However, Rachel is not very skilled at typing, so she made many mistakes, which her friends noticed and mocked:

Ross: Wait, did you get to the part about his “huge, throbbing pens”? Tell you, you don’t wanna be around when he starts writing with those.

Ross: *Čekaj da dođeš do njegova “pulsirajućeg spolnog rošana”. Da te taj nabode, ne bi ti bilo lako!*

Rachel clearly made a mistake when she was typing the word “penis.” The challenging part in the translation of this language-dependent joke was to find a word that would fit the joke both in the SL and the TL. The translator did an outstanding job keeping the same humorous effect as in the original dialogue by changing the word “organ” to “rošan/*one that has horns*.” Words “rošan” and “pens” both sound like typos, and both denote something that is pointy, sharp, and possibly dangerous, as Ross points out in his last sentence. Therefore, using the second Chiaro’s (2010: 11-12) strategy resulted in having a very successful and humorous translation.

In the twelfth episode, “The One With the Dozen Lasagnas” (00:05:26-00:05:38), Ross's ex-wife Carol had just found out the sex of the baby she is having with him. Ross comes over to her apartment, and she informs him that everything is fine with the baby. Then, Ross notices a photo of Carol, her lesbian life partner Susan, and their unattractive friend Tanya. Carol is surprised that Ross has not asked about the sex of the baby yet:

Carol: Don’t you wanna know about the sex?

Ross: The sex? Yeah, I'm having enough trouble with the image of you and Susan together. But when you throw in Tanya...

Carol: *Zanima li te ono spolno pitanje?*

Ross: *Spolno? Teško se privikavam i na to da si ti sa Susan. Još i da Tanyu ubacim...*

The humorous element of this joke is Ross assuming that Carol had asked him about the sex she is having with Susan and possibly their friend Tanya. What makes this joke language-dependent is the word “sex,” which has a double meaning in the SL (sexual intercourse and gender/sex), whereas in the TL, this word only represents sexual intercourse. Fortunately, the translator could use “spol” instead of “sex” to imply the same meaning by putting it in the appropriate context. He/she used the second strategy proposed by Chiaro (2010: 11-12) and delivered the same humorous effect in the TL. The translation of the pun in this joke revolving around the word “sex” was resolved by using the first Spankaki's (2007) strategy – the ST pun is translated by a TL pun.

In the eighteenth episode, “The One With All the Poker” (00:14:24-00:14:29), the friends are playing poker. At the end of this round, Rachel and Ross were the only ones that are left playing, and they reveal their cards:

Joey: All right. What do you got?

Ross: Well, you better hop out of the shower, because I got a flush.

Joey: *Što imaš?*

Ross: *Čuvaj se, zaslijepit će te moj fleš!*/Watch out, or you will get blinded by my flush!

This is an example of a very difficult to translate language-dependent joke. In the SL, the word “flush” can also be used to describe two different situations: flushing a toilet and having a flush in poker (a number of playing cards held by one player that are all from the same suit; color, and type). (Cambridge Dictionary) What Ross was referring to is a situation where the water in the shower drastically changes the temperature if the toilet is flushed at the same time. The translator opted for the second Chiaro's (2010: 11-12) strategy and replaced the VEH in the SL with a weak VEH in TL, which did not create the same humorous effect. He/she used the word “fleš” to translate “flush,” even though it could also be translated as “boja/color.” “Fleš” is only used when

discussing card games, so it does not provide any options to deliver an ambiguous translation. If he/she used the word “boja,” which is a frequently used word in the TL, they could have created a similar humorous effect as in the SL. For example:

Ross: Bolje ti je da sakriješ bojanku jer ja imam boju!*You better hide your coloring book because I got a flush!*

The translator chose the second Spankaki's (2007) strategy and rendered the pun in the joke as non-pun, while the suggestion using the word “color” resolves the joke by using the first strategy and delivering a pun in the TL.

In the nineteenth episode, “The One Where the Monkey Gets Away” (00:01:47-00:01:54), Rachel shows Monica a photo of Mindy, her ex-best friend who is now getting married to her ex-fiancée, Barry. Rachel is frustrated with the situation, and Monica comments on Mindy's looks:

Monica: That's Mindy? Wow, she is pretty. Lucky... to have had a friend like you.

Monica: *To je Mindy? Zgodna je! Sretna! Što ima prijateljicu poput tebe!*

In this instance, Monica wanted to say that Mindy looks pretty. When she saw the way Rachel looked at her, she used the word “pretty” as an adverb and added “lucky” to save herself from being confronted by Rachel. The problem in the translation of this language-dependent joke lies in the fact that the adverb “pretty” cannot have the same ambiguous meaning in the TL. Therefore, the translator translated the joke literally (the fourth strategy by Chiaro (2010: 11-12) by using both “pretty” and “lucky” as adjectives to describe Mindy, which does not carry the same level of humor as in the SL. Another possible solution in this case might be the following example:

Monica: To je Mindy? Vrlo je... Sretna! Što ima prijateljicu poput tebe!*That's Mindy? She's very... lucky... to have had a friend like you.*

Monica's astounded expression when she saw how pretty Mindy was could be used as leverage in the translation to imply that she was planning to say that she is pretty but did not say it. In the example above, it appears as though Monica meant to say “pretty,” but in the middle of the sentence changed her mind and said “lucky” to avoid annoying Rachel. This would be the case

where “pretty” is translated as an adverb, just like the original. Hence, the first Chiaro’s (2010) strategy would be used.

In the twentieth episode, “The One with the Evil Orthodontist” (00:15:45-00:15:50), Ross is solving a crossword in the newspaper. Meanwhile, Chandler is sitting behind him, staring at a phone and waiting for a girl to call him. He is impatient and frustrated that she has not called yet. Ross asks his friends for help to solve the crossword:

Ross: Four letters, “circle or hoop.”

Chandler: Ring, damn it, ring.

Ross: Thanks.

Ross: *Pet slova, što radi telefon?*/Five letters, what does the phone do?

Chandler: *Zvoni, zaboga!*

Ross: *Hvala.*

The humorous element in this language-dependent joke is that Chandler has accidentally helped Ross with the correct word he needed for his crossword by yelling at the phone. The word “ring” has a double meaning in this case. It denotes both the physical ring and the ringing of the phone in the SL. The translator decided to adapt Ross’ question to fit the joke in the TL by using the second Chiaro’s (2010) strategy. However, the humorous effect was slightly reduced because the adaptation involved the phone, to which Chandler was also referring. The translator chose the second Spankaki’s (2007) strategy when dealing with the pun in the joke. A possible translation that does not involve the phone but uses the word “zvoni/ring” could be:

Ross: *Pet slova, dovrši naslov Kome zvono...*/Five letters, finish the title For Whom the Bell...

Chandler: *Zvoni, zaboga!*

By implementing the title of a well-known Ernest Hemingway novel, the accidental-puzzle-solving element of the joke is retained, as well as the same humorous effect of the original joke.

### 3.5. Visual joke

The next category to be discussed is visual jokes. Although this type of humor is considered VEH, it depends on what is happening onscreen, and the translation needs to go along with that. However, in the first season of *Friends*, there are no challenging visual jokes. Nevertheless, there are a few examples that belong in the category. After each example, an explanation of what is happening onscreen will be added in the brackets.

In the first episode, “The Pilot” (00:03:10-00:03:21), Monica, Ross, Phoebe, Joey, and Chandler are hanging out in *Central Perk*. Ross is upset because he had just broken up with his wife. His friends are trying to cheer him up by saying that he should enjoy the fact that he is single now:

Ross: See, but I don’t want to be single, okay? I just wanna be married again.

(At that moment, Rachel walks into the bar wearing a wedding dress, and everyone is looking at her.)

Chandler: And I just want a million dollars!

(Chandler points at the door.)

Ross: *Ja ne želim biti samac! Samo želim opet biti u braku!*

Chandler: *A ja želim milijun dolara!*

This joke belongs to the visual jokes category because the humorous element lies in the fact that Rachel had walked in *Central Perk* at the exact moment Ross mentioned marriage. Chandler noticed that and followed with “I just want a million dollars!” hoping that money would also somehow enter through the door. A literal translation is provided, as per Chiaro’s (2010) first mentioned strategy.

In the fifteenth episode, “The One With the Stoned Guy” (00:07:51-00:07:58), Chandler is upset because he does not know which career is right for him and feels lost. Meanwhile, Monica

is preparing food to impress a man who might give her a job as a head chef in his restaurant. She offers the plate of the bite-size food to Chandler:

Monica: Here you go. Maybe this will cheer you up.

(Chandler takes a look at the tiny portion of the food she gave him.)

Chandler: You know, I had a grape about five hours ago, so I better split this with you.

Monica: *Izvoli, možda te to razvedri.*

Chandler: *Prije pet sati pojeo sam zrno grožđa, pošteno je da podijelimo.*

The humor in this situation is that Monica has offered Chandler a ridiculously small portion of food to cheer him up. He picks it up and sarcastically comments that the grape he had five hours ago was too much for him and that this is also a very large portion. The translation was not challenging and only required using the first Chiaro's (2010) strategy.

In the twenty-first episode, "The One with Fake Monica" (00:03:06-00:03:12), Joey and Chandler are hanging out in *Central Perk*. Joey is considering a new stage name:

Joey: Plus I think it should be Joe. Joey makes me sound like I'm... this big. (Gestures with fingers as he is holding a small object, and a waitress gives him a strange look, and he notices.) Which I'm not!

Joey: *A mislim da bi moralo biti Joe. Joey zvuči kao da sam ovolicki. A nisam!*

The moment the waitress comes to their table and hears Joey saying "...I'm this big" and gesturing it with a hand, makes the situation humorous. Joey immediately said he was not as small as he was gesturing because he assumed the waitress must have thought he was trying to depict the size of his male parts to Chandler. Since this case also depends heavily on what is seen on the screen, the translator had no difficulties translating the dialogue and only literally translated it (the first Chiaro's (2010) strategy).

### 3.6. Complex joke



The last category that will be analyzed is complex jokes. This category combines two or more of the categories mentioned and can also be challenging to translate. There are seven examples in this category.

In the eighteenth episode, “The One With All the Poker” (00:05:59-00:06:05), everyone is playing poker. After a lost game, Rachel decided to quit playing, and fax resumes. However, Chandler does not want her to quit playing:

Chandler: Rach, we’ve got to settle.

Rachel: Settle what?

Chandler: The Jamestown colony of Virginia.

Chandler: *Rach! Moramo izravnavati.*

Rachel: *Izravnavati?*

Chandler: *Grabe po cestama.*

This joke is complex because it belongs to both language-dependent and national-sense-of-humor jokes. After Rachel said she was leaving, Chandler wanted to settle, which means he wanted her to give them the money she owes them for the game. The humorous element is the other meaning of the word “settle,” “to arrive, especially from another country, in a new place and start to live there and use the land.” (Cambridge Dictionary) To make Rachel look dumb, Chandler referred to the well-known historical fact in the SL culture – the Jamestown settlement in the Colony of Virginia, the first permanent English settlement in America. The challenging part is translating “settle” into the TL so that it also has a double meaning. The translator decided to completely replace the VEH in the SL with a VEH in the TL, as mentioned in Chiaro’s (2010) second strategy. When discussing the pun in the joke, he/she used the first Spankaki’s (2007) strategy. Thus, he/she translated “settle” as “izravnavati/straighten things out/fix sth”. The Jamestown colony of Virginia was not mentioned in the TL as it would not fit in the joke, but instead, the translator opted for “grabe po cestama/potholes,” which is something that can be used with “izravnavati.”

In the thirteenth episode, “The One With the Boobies” (00:02:41-00:02:56), the friends are hanging out in *Central Perk*. Rachel is mad at Chandler because he walked into her apartment without knocking and saw her naked. More specifically, he saw her breasts:

Chandler: I don't know why you're so embarrassed. They were very nice boobies.

Rachel: Nice? They were nice? I mean, t-t-that's it? I mean, mittens are nice.

Chandler: Okay. Rock. Hard place. Me. (He moves his body forward in a way that depicts him moving between a rock and a hard place)

Chandler: *Ne znam zašto ti je neugodno! Vrlo lijepo cice!*

Rachel: *Lijepo? Lijepo su ti? Zar je to sve? Za rukavice se kaže da su “lijepo”!*

Chandler: *Kamen. Drugi kamen! Ja!*

According to Collins Dictionary, “if you are caught between a rock and a hard place, you are in a difficult situation where you have to choose between two equally unpleasant courses of action.” This example is a combination of a language-dependent joke and a visual joke. Chandler felt as if he could not rectify this situation and makes a joke out of it. In the TL, the expression “to be caught between a rock and a hard place” does not exist, so the translator opted for delivering humor in a different way by using the second Chiaro's (2010) strategy – replacing SL VEH with TL VEH. He/she translated both “rock” and “hard place” as “kamen/rock,” so that it seems as if Chandler wants to be removed from this situation by two rocks crushing him. This is a good option for delivering the same humorous effect as in the original dialogue, even though the meaning differs. It is also important to note that it would not have been humorous without the visual aspect of the joke.

Later in the same scene of the thirteenth episode explained above, “The One With the Boobies” (00:03:03-00:03:40), Roger, Phoebe's new boyfriend who is also a psychologist, starts laughing at the joke that was explained in the previous example:

Roger: You're... you're... you're so funny. He's really funny. I wouldn't want to be there when-when the laughter stops.

Chandler: Back up there, sparky. What did you mean by that?

Roger: Well, it just seems as though that maybe you have intimacy issues, you know that you use your humor as a way of keeping people at a distance.

Roger: I mean, hey. I just met you. I don't know you from Adam.

Roger: Only child, right? Parents divorced before you hit puberty.

Chandler: Uh-huh. How did you know that?

Roger: It's textbook.

Roger: *Tako si šaljiv! Doista je šaljiv! Ali sigurno je gadno kad smijeh utihne.*

Chandler: *Vratimo se na to! Što si htio reći?*

Roger: *Mislim da imaš problema i svojim humorom držiš ljude na distanci.*

Roger: *Shvaćaš, ipak sam te tek upoznao, ne znam sve o tebi.*

Roger: *Jedinac, zar ne? Roditelji su se rastali prije tvoga puberteta?*

Chandler: *Otkud znaš?*

Roger: *Knjiški slučaj.*

The first type of joke that is included in this example is the national-sense-of-humor joke. It belongs to this category because jokes revolving around psychological issues, especially ones stemming from dysfunctional families, were not common in Croatia at that time. The second type of joke is the language-dependent joke, and it occurs in two instances. Firstly, Roger says: “I don't know you from Adam,” which is an expression not used in the TL. It means that Roger and Chandler have just met. The translator used the fourth strategy mentioned by Chiaro (2010) and ignored the joke by only translating its meaning. Secondly, Roger claims that he knows all these facts about Chandler's behavior because they are “textbook.” The word “textbook” is used as an adjective in this case, and it denotes behavior that is “usual and typical” (Cambridge Dictionary) and, in Roger's case, probably an actual example from his textbooks when he studies to become a psychologist. Unfortunately, this term does not have its equivalent in the TL and, therefore, it

cannot be translated as an adjective. Nevertheless, the joke can still be humorous in the TL because the literal translation the translator opted for is not entirely unrecognizable.

In the same episode, “The One With the Boobies” (00:06:36-00:07:01), everyone is still discussing the fact that Chandler has accidentally seen Rachel’s breasts:

Ross: Since you saw her boobies, I think you're going to have to show her your pee-pee.

Chandler: You know, I don't see that happening.

Rachel: Come on. He's right. Tit for tat.

Chandler: Well, I'm not showing you my tat.

Ross: *Vidio si njezine cice, zato joj moraš pokazati svoj pimpek.*

Chandler: *Čisto sumnjam.*

Rachel: *Daj, ima on pravo! Oko za oko!*/Come on. He's right. Eye for an eye.

Chandler: *Neću ti pokazati svoje „oko“!*/Well, I'm not showing you my eye.

The above case is a complex joke because it consists of both a language-dependent joke and a national-sense-of-humor joke. The joke belongs to the latter category because joking about body parts that are usually sexualized was more common in the United States than in Croatia in the nineties. However, this is not a challenging part of the joke in terms of translation. What creates the problem is the idiom frequently used in the SL: “tit for tat,” which has its equivalent in Croatian “oko za oko/eye for an eye.” However, the expression itself is not problematic. It is the word “tit,” which also means “breast” in the SL. The humorous and tricky part is that the word has a double meaning, which cannot be translated in the TL without losing a certain extent of the humorous effect. Using the third strategy by Chiaro (2010) and the second strategy by Spankaki (2007), the translator has used a similar expression in the TL and reduced the humor in this language-dependent joke.

## 4. Conclusion

This study analyzed the translation of 6 categories of jokes (Zabalbeascoa, 1996): international joke, national-culture-and-institutions joke, national-sense-of-humor joke, language-dependent joke, visual joke, and complex joke. Each category was analyzed by using the most representative examples of the jokes in the first season of the TV show *Friends* on the platform HBO GO. Furthermore, there were different Chiaro's (2010) strategies used to deliver the translation in each category. There were 33 examples in total, and the findings of the study will be explained through each mentioned category.

The first category – international jokes – had 7 examples. The translator either used the first Chiaro's (2010) strategy and left the VEH (verbally expressed humor) unchanged, or the third strategy – replacing the source VEH with an idiomatic expression in the TL. In the translation of the international jokes, the first strategy was used 5 times, and the third strategy was used 2 times.

The next category – national-culture-and-institutions-jokes – had 6 examples. The strategies used in the translation of this category were either the second strategy – replacing the SL VEH with a different instance of VEH in the TL or the fourth strategy – ignoring the VEH altogether. The second strategy was used 5 times, while the fourth strategy was used in 1 example.

The third category – national-sense-of-humor jokes – had 5 examples. The translator either opted for the first or the second Chiaro's (2010) strategy. The first strategy was used in 4 examples, and the second strategy was used in 1 example.

The fourth category – language-dependent jokes – had 8 examples. Being the category that is the trickiest to translate and requires copious amounts of creativity, the translator opted for 3 different strategies when doing so. The second strategy by Chiaro (2010) was used in 4 examples, the third was used once, and the fourth strategy was used in 3 examples. This category also included puns, and here the translator opted for the first Spankaki's (2007) strategy once, and the second strategy twice.

The fifth category – visual jokes – had 3 examples. In all of the examples, the translator opted for the first Chiaro's (2010) strategy.

The last category – complex jokes – had 4 examples. Being the category that combines previously mentioned categories, the translator also worked with 3 different Chiaro's (2010) strategies. The second strategy was used in 2 examples, and the third strategy and the fourth strategy were used once. When dealing with puns, the translator opted for the first Spankaki's (2007) strategy in one example, and the second strategy in the other.

To conclude, in the 33 analyzed examples, the first and the second Chiaro's (2010) strategies were used in most cases (12 times each). The third strategy was used in 4 examples, and the fourth strategy in 5 examples. These numbers imply that the translator worked to deliver a translation as similar as possible to the original text and find the best VEH in the TL to replace the SL VEH. Where there was no possibility of delivering a successful and creative translation, the main reasons being the culture-bound problems or the language constraints, the translator opted to ignore the VEH. When it comes to translating puns, the translator only opted for the first (in 2 examples) and the second (in 3 examples) of Spankaki's (2007) strategies, meaning that SL puns were either translated by TL puns or rendered as non-puns or non-punning phrases.

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