

# Subtitling Strategies: Analysis of Croatian translations of Netflix Drama Series

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Erceg, Dora

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Sveučilište J.J. Strossmayera u Osijeku

Filozofski fakultet Osijek

Studij: dvopredmetni sveučilišni diplomski studij engleskog jezika i književnosti  
i hrvatskog jezika i književnosti

Dora Erceg

**Strategije podslavljanja: analiza hrvatskih prijevoda  
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Mentor: doc. dr. sc. Goran Schmidt

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U Osijeku, datum

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Dora Erceg, O122223008  
ime i prezime studenta, JMBAG

## Abstract

Every translation is a new challenge because there is not one universal way in which a translator can or must work. It is true that there are some translation strategies that can be helpful, but every text that needs to be translated requires the translator to have an individual approach. In addition to understanding the source language and target language, translator has to be very creative in overcoming many obstacles in the process of translation. This is especially the case for subtitling, because there are many additional constraints that have to be respected. Therefore, translators have to put in extra work while making subtitles; they have to be familiar with subtitling strategies, but also, to know when each of the strategies is most useful and appropriate. In this paper, the main subtitling strategies will be shown on Netflix Croatian translations. Since Netflix is a global streaming service of a wide variety of movies and series, it now offers subtitles in many different languages. Croatian users are one of the lucky ones because there are more than a thousand movies and series on Netflix that have been translated into Croatian. However, in addition to subtitling constraints that already exist, Netflix also has some own rules when it comes to making subtitles, and rules vary depending on the language in question. These restrictions, obstacles, and strategies will be mentioned and analysed through the examples; more precisely through the Croatian translation of Netflix drama series (*Dead to Me*, *Virgin River*, *The Crown*).

**Keywords:** Croatian translation, subtitling, Netflix, drama series

## Sažetak

Svaki je prijevod novi izazov jer ne postoji univerzalan način na koji prevoditelj može ili mora raditi. Istina je da postoje određene prijevodne strategije koje mogu biti korisne, ali prevoditelj svakom prijevodnom zadatku mora pristupiti individualno. Osim razumijevanja izvornog i ciljnog jezika, prevoditelj mora biti vrlo kreativan u prevladavanju mnogih prepreka na koje nailazi u procesu prevođenja. Osobito se to odnosi na titlovanje, budući da postoje razna dodatna ograničenja koja se moraju poštivati. Stoga prevoditelji moraju uložiti dodatni napor pri izradi titlova; moraju biti upoznati s prijevodnim strategijama, ali i znati kada je svaka od strategija korisna i prikladna. U ovom se radu na primjeru hrvatskih prijevoda s Netflix-a prikazuju strategije za titlovanje. Budući da je Netflix globalna kompanija za prikazivanje širokog spektra filmova i serija, sada se nude i titlovi na mnogo različitih jezika. Hrvati su jedni od sretnika jer na Netflixu postoji više od tisuću filmova i serija koji su prevedeni na hrvatski jezik. No, osim ograničenja koja već postoje u titlovanju, Netflix ima i neka vlastita pravila o stvaranju titlova, a pravila se razlikuju ovisno o jeziku na koji se prevodi. Ta će se ograničenja, prepreke i strategije spomenuti i analizirati kroz primjere; konkretnije kroz hrvatske titlove Netflixovih dramskih serija (*Ubojite prijateljice*, *Virgin River*, *Kruna*).

**Ključne riječi:** hrvatski prijevod, titlovanje, Netflix, dramske serije



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## Introduction

People are nowadays constantly surrounded by screens, which play such an important role in everyone's lives, whether it is to find information, to run business, or simply for pleasure. There are many streaming services for movies and series, and the need for subtitling becomes greater with every day that passes. Subtitles make audio-visual materials more accessible to a wider audience, which means that anyone can watch a movie or series from whatever part of the world and in whatever language. Apart from the globalization, there are other reasons why subtitles play a huge role in people's lives. For example, the number of viewers which prefer to watch videos without sound (especially when in public) has been increasing. Furthermore, there are many individuals who have problems with hearing and cannot listen to the audio, so they rely only on subtitles. There are also a lot of people who try to learn a new language, and "subtitling is nonetheless a versatile and useful means of learning [it]: the learner has all languages involved under control at the same time, and can immediately check their functioning, and widen his/her lexical knowledge in a faster and more diversified way" (Fois, 2012: 5). This means that subtitles are not just a means to have fun while watching a series, but also a great and useful tool to quickly learn a language. Because of the mentioned reasons, and many others, it is clear that subtitles play a very important role in today's world that mostly relies on technology. However, not everyone is aware of the right definition and importance of subtitling, and especially of the challenges and obstacles that a translator has to deal with when making subtitles. Because of that, the first chapter of this paper focuses on screen translation and subtitling in general; the definition, phases, requirements and challenges. Secondly, the paper deals with Netflix, its General Subtitling Requirements, and its Croatian Timed Text Style Guide, which covers the language specific guidelines for Croatian. The final chapters of the paper deal with Gottlieb's Subtitling Strategies, and how they can be applied to Croatian translations of Netflix drama series.

## 1. Screen Translation: Subtitling

Simply put, subtitling is audio-visual translation, “which includes dubbing, voiceover and audio description” (Khalaf, 2016: 122). More precisely, Gottlieb (2001: 15) states that “the subtitling consists of verbal messages in filmic media, which are rendered into a different language. These verbal messages are in the shape of one or more lines of a written text and presented on the screen; in sync with the original verbal message.” By this definition, it can be seen that subtitling differs from the translation of written texts in many ways.

“[Firstly], the reader of translated text does not compare the source text with the target, while in the subtitle, this comparison happens automatically especially if the viewer speaks the source language. [Secondly], the translator of written text has more space to add explanations, footnotes, etc. when there is something difficult in the source text while the subtitler cannot do this. [Thirdly], the intertextual translation involves translation from written text to written one, but subtitling involves the translation from spoken language into written text. [Fourthly], in subtitling, extended messages have to be condensed to subtitling requirements which written texts have more space to present them” (Khalaf, 2016: 123).

Like every type of translation, subtitling also requires of a translator to make certain priorities because “different media and different types of discourse naturally impose different constraints, or leave the translator with different sets of clues for dealing with the particular issues at stake” (Gottlieb, 2001: 20). The constraints of an audio-visual context are different from the constraints of the written text with no visuals, so it is natural that subtitling and written translation differ in some aspects. When it comes to subtitling, “the speech act is in focus; verbal intentions and visual effects are more important than lexical elements in isolation” (ib.), so it is important to consider not just words and phrases, but also whole dialogues, genre and the scenes of the movie/series, target audience, etc.

For all of the mentioned reasons, subtitling is often considered to be a very unique type of translation, which has a majorly important role in today’s digital world, and requires a lot of work, creativity, and long process of researching and learning. However, the simplest definition and the conclusion of the previously mentioned is that the ideal subtitles should contain the meaning of the original audio in very short and simple sentences that are understandable and sound natural to the viewers.

### 1.1.Subtitling Phases

Firstly, it should be stated that there are no absolute and canonized solutions with any type of translation, and the same applies to subtitling. However, there are certain phases that a translator can and should follow while making subtitles. O'Donovan (2021) explains that the process of the subtitling consists of the following phases; translation, spotting, correction, and simulation.

First, a translator has to translate a text from the source into the target language. Usually, there is a written version of the audio, but if there isn't one, a translator also has to become a transcriber; listen to the original recording and write down the translation. The translation comes with many challenges and adaptations that are to be described in the following chapters of this paper.

The next job that the translator has to do is the spotting, which is the process of marking the start and the end of an individual subtitle which has to appear and disappear from the screen at the right time. This means that subtitles must be synchronized with the original text, or more precisely, with the audio and the video.

Every translation, no matter how perfect it may seem on the first sight, has to go through the process of revision, which helps a translator to correct any minor or major mistakes that were made. The dialogues, meaning of words, syntax, punctuations, italics, number of characters per line, etc. are just some of the criteria that have to be checked and corrected to make each subtitle comprehensive and understandable for the viewers.

However, even after the revision and correction of the subtitles, one must be aware that certain mistakes can be noticed only when seeing the simulation of the final product. This means that a translator should watch a screening with subtitles that are made and it would certainly help to easily notice if there are certain mistakes with the meaning, grammar, timing, etc.

The mentioned phases are something that every translator has to go through when producing subtitles. However, there is more to these phases because they come along with many requirements and challenges that a translator has to face with.

## 1.2. Requirements and challenges

Every translation “is always subject to constraints” (Bogucki, 2004: 72), and so are subtitles. They are “based on a target-oriented approach, for their function is to help the audience to fully understand the movie, at the expense of source-text specificities” (Fois, 2012: 5), which means that the challenges that a subtitler deals with are numerous. While working on subtitling, the translator has to deal with the shift in mode from speech to writing, with the reduction of the source text, with the meaning that has to be conveyed, and with the matching of the visual image. However, all of these challenges can be examined more closely by being divided into the three main categories: technical challenges, cultural challenges, and linguistic challenges. Because the “translation of subtitles commonly involves reductions due to certain reasons, [they] become [rather] interesting to be analysed” (Widiastuti, 2013: 1).

### 1.2.1. Technical challenges

It often seems that technical challenges are the ones that cause the most problems because “a subtitler normally translates and formulates subtitles in accordance with three rhythms; the visual rhythm of the film as defined by the cuts, the rhythm of the actors’ speech, and an audience reading rhythm” (Carroll, Ivarson, 1998: 4). Khalaf (2016: 124) describes technical challenges that are classified into the spotting, space, time, and position on screen.

It has previously been mentioned that spotting is very crucial in subtitling, and that it is a phase that a translator has to deal with and cannot avoid. It is very important that the subtitle on the screen is precisely matched with the original audio and the video. However, spotting also depends on the space and time limitations.

Subtitlers have a limited space to translate, or more precisely, a limited number of characters they can use. This means that they do not have a freedom like those who translate written texts and have all the space they need to formulate and translate the sentence. Subtitlers have to restrict their translation “to 37 (+, -)<sup>1</sup> characters per-line with maximum two lines for one image” (ib.). It seems that, “considering the difficulties in translating subtitles and the

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<sup>1</sup> This number may vary, because different streaming service or TV networks have their own rules about the number of characters per line, but the restriction to 37 characters is the most common one.

constraints of subtitles, reductions of parts of the utterances or dialogs are unavoidable” (Widiastuti, 2013: 2).

Another important technical limitation is timing. The time factor is the one that “plays a pivotal role in the decisions translators have to make, although traditionally five to six seconds have been considered to be sufficient for reading a two-line sentence” (ib.). However, this number, like the character restriction per line, might vary, depending on different rules and requirements. Sometimes “the content has to be cut down to fit the limits of characters as well as the time of the shown subtitle on screen” (Khalaf, 2016: 124). It is also important that a subtitle stays on the screen for at least two seconds, so that the viewers have time to read it. However, if one line of subtitle contains one to three words, then it can appear on the screen for a shorter amount of time. All of this can have an “effect on how the viewers will be able to catch the subtitle and understand the content” (ib.). Therefore, it means that it is very important to choose the correct words and phrases to present the content with a limited number of characters and limited time.

Another technical challenge is the position of subtitles on the screen. The general requirement is that subtitles should be positioned at the lower part of the screen, so that the viewers are able to see everything on the screen, and so that the letters do not cover the image. Furthermore, “the subtitle must be positioned between 10% from each frame edge to be in the centre and at the bottom of the screen” (ib.). However, sometimes a visual or textual information that is important for the comprehension of the film/series might appear on the screen where subtitles are usually inserted. Only in those cases can subtitles be positioned on the other part of the screen; usually on the upper part.

The mentioned “formal constraints should be highly considered by the translator in producing understandable translation” (Widiastuti, 2013: 2), so it sometimes might seem that a translator who deals with subtitles does more of a technical work than a mere translation. However, the technical details are not imposed “just because”, but rather with the aim to make it easier for the viewers to follow the dialogues and plot of the movie/series. The translation has to be perfectly synchronized with the image and the audio, and it has to be placed and timed properly in order for the viewers to actually enjoy the subtitles, and not think of them as an interference.

### 1.2.2. Cultural challenges

It is no longer thought that the translation has to be the exact copy of the original; language is a dynamic system, and the main goal of every translator is to provide a translation for the target audience and their culture. Different countries have different cultural norms, and they are often shown and expressed through the usage of language. Because of the “cultural or social gaps, the effect of the dialogue uttered by the characters [is sometimes] more important than merely translating the uttered words” (Ghaemi, Benyamin, 2010: 46).

Cultural challenges can be “represented through the adopted style of the subtitler; using domestication, foreignization, functionalism, etc. for example names of famous places, characters, etc. which the audience is familiar or not familiar with” (Khalaf, 2016: 125). When there are two different languages that belong to different religions, cultural backgrounds, or there is some cultural nuance that cannot be transferred to the target language, then the translator faces a great challenge, and has to use one (or more) of the subtitling strategies that will be mentioned later on.

### 1.2.3. Linguistic challenges

It is “needless to say that linguistic problems constitute a challenge for the translator, and such challenge becomes even enormous as for the subtitler due to the additional technical constraints” (Thawabteh, 2011: 27). There are many linguistic constraints related to subtitling; accents, pronunciation, dialects connected to certain geographical areas, idiolects, idioms, syntax, collocations, lexical choice, different grammatical mistakes, etc. It is important for the “language register [to] be appropriate and correspond with the spoken word, and to be (grammatically) ‘correct’ since subtitles serve as a model for literacy” (Carroll, Ivarsson, 1998: 2).

From all the above mentioned, the conclusion is that, “considering the nature of the process of film [and series] translation, the translators’ work is not only to cross linguistic barriers, which often means reading between the lines and referring to the target culture of the potential audience, but also to overcome technical constraints, which entails fitting in the imposed limits of the time and space meant for subtitles projected on screen” (Bağ, Gwóźdz, 2016: 110).

## 2. Netflix: General Subtitle Requirements

“We want our members to feel like they are watching our content, not reading it” (“Timed Text Style Guide: Subtitle Timing Guidelines”). The previous sentence perfectly explains what Netflix wants from translators when making subtitles. As previously said, even though there are certain rules and constraints to follow when making subtitles, every TV network or a streaming service have their own individual rules that might vary a bit from the others. This also applies to Netflix, which has certain general requirements when it comes to translating, but there are also various style guides for each language.

The general requirements contain timing rules/duration, line treatment, positioning, consistency, Netflix credit translations, title cards, currency, brand names treatment, quotations, and translator credit.<sup>2</sup> These requirements should always be followed along with the language specific rules.

### 1. Timing rules/Duration

As with every subtitle, Netflix rules also state that subtitles should be in sync with both the audio and the image, and that they “should sit neatly within shots creating an effortless viewing experience which is easy on the eye” (ib.) The minimum duration of a subtitle is five-sixths of a second, while the maximum duration of on-screen subtitles is seven seconds. This proves the thesis from the beginning, and that is that the maximum and minimum duration of the subtitle are not always the same, but can vary depending on the rules of the streaming service or a TV network. Timing is something that is of extreme importance when it comes to subtitling, and it should not be done superficially. Netflix has very strict rules about timing, and the translators should “always exercise good judgement when timing subtitles and ensure the file is watched back in full during the origination stage to ensure timings are even and any flashy sections are corrected” (ib.).

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<sup>2</sup> Source of the mentioned rules: <https://partnerhelp.netflixstudios.com/hc/en-us/articles/215758617> (Accessed 25th May 2021)



## 2. Line Treatment

The maximum number of lines that appear on the screen at the same time is usually two. The same applies for Netflix. However, the recommendation is that the text is kept to one line, unless it goes beyond the character limitation, and then has to be broken into two lines. By the basic Netflix principles, “the line should be broken after punctuation marks, before conjunctions, [and] before prepositions, [but] the line break should not separate a noun from an article, a noun from an adjective, a first name from a last name, a verb from a subject pronoun, a prepositional verb from its preposition, a verb from an auxiliary, reflexive pronoun or negation” (ib.).

## 3. Positioning

The usual rule is that subtitles should be centred, and placed at the bottom of the screen. Netflix has the same rule, but it is also allowed to place subtitles at the top of the screen, when it seems like it is a better option. The more important thing is to “ensure [that] subtitles are positioned accordingly to avoid overlap with onscreen text” (ib.). If there are some cases where, because of the overlap, the text cannot be at the top or the bottom of the screen, Netflix also allows the subtitle to be placed wherever it is easier to read them.

## 4. Consistency

Netflix requires the KNP<sup>3</sup>/formality tables to be “created and used for translation to ensure consistency across episodes and seasons” (ib.). The best example of why it should be done is the Netflix drama series *The Crown*, where there are many repetitions of words such as *Majesty*, *Your Royal Highness*, *Ma'am*, etc., which should always be translated the same; *Veličanstvo*, *Kraljevsko Visočanstvo*, *Milosti*. KNP tables are especially useful when several translators work simultaneously on the same or related material, so the tables help them to achieve consistency.

## 5. Netflix Credit/Translator Credit

It is important for Netflix that translations for Netflix Originals title cards are included in full subtitle streams. As every other subtitle, this one should also be timed to match the exact duration of the Original Credit that is on screen. This means that it should be stated before the beginning of every episode what the viewers are watching, and whether it is an original

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<sup>3</sup> Key Names and Phrases Tool

Netflix series or not. However, the translation of credit cannot be translated freely and differently every time, but it should rather be the official translation that Netflix requires and provides for every language they are working with. Specifically, each of the Netflix drama series which have been translated into Croatian and analysed for the purpose of this paper, starts with “ORIGINALNA NETFLIXOVA SERIJA,” and that is something that changes only if Netflix decides to make a different rule.<sup>4</sup>

Furthermore, it is important to include the translator credit at the ending of the subtitle file, “using the approved translation provided in the Original Credits translation document” (ib.).

#### 6. Title Cards/Dedications

Everything that is relevant and significant for the plot should also be translated into the target language, even though it is not a part of a dialogue:

- a) EPIZODA SADRŽI PRIZORE POREMEĆAJA PREHRANE KOJI MOGU UZNEMIRITI. (Morgan et al., 2020: S04/E03<sup>5</sup>)
- b) NERISSA BOWLES-LYON  
18. VELJAČE 1919. – 22. SIJEČNJA 1986. (ib.: S04/E07)
- c) IN MEMORIAM  
KAREN SMITH  
1968. – 2020. (ib.: S04/E03)

#### 7. Currency

Netflix requires the currencies not to be converted. Therefore, money should always remain in the original currency, and there is no need to localize it. Also, currencies should be written out, and the symbol is never to be used:

- a) It’s seeing a terrifying run on **sterling**.  
**Funta** snažno pada. (ib. S03/E02)

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<sup>4</sup> It is worth noting that, until it was changed, the previous official translation was „ORIGINALNA NETFLIX SERIJA“.

<sup>5</sup> S = season, E = episode

- b) The cartel was sending back half a million **dollars**' worth of fentanyl every week.

Kartel mu je svaki tjedan slao fentanil u vrijednosti pola milijuna **dolara**.  
(Tenney et al., 2020: S02/E10)

- c) Eight hundred **pounds** goes on secretarial expenses.

Na tajničke troškove otpada 800 **funta**. (Morgan et al., 2020: S04/E04)

## 8. Brand Names Treatment

Brand names can be handled in different ways. Netflix allows the brand name to be used in the original language, and therefore not translated, if the name is widely known for the target audience and commonly used in the country and culture:

- a) Nearest **Starbucks**, 80 miles away.

**Starbucks**a nema u krugu 130 km. (Tenney et al., 2019: S01/E01)

- b) Not unless you brought your own **Cointreau**.

Samo ako ste ponijeli **Cointreau**. (ib.)

- c) All right, make it a **Jim** straight.

Onda molim čisti **Jim**. (ib.)

Starbucks, Cointreau, and Jimmy Walker are generally very popular with Croatian audience, and almost everyone's heard of them, so there is no reason for the brand to be omitted from the subtitle. However, if that is not the case, then the brand should be translated with a name, or simply with a generic noun that the target audience is familiar with:

- a) Can I get a **Reuben**?

Mogu li dobiti **sendvič**? (Tenney et al., 2020: S02/E01)

- b) He vandalised a **Carl's Jr**.

Vandalizirao je **restoran**. (Feldman et al., 2020: S02/E02)

- c) I kicked his ass at **Cruis'n World**.

Rasturio sam ga u **igri**. (ib.: S02/E07)

## 9. Quotations

Netflix requirements state that “it is best practice to originate new translations for any quoted texts, as this allows for a translation free of rights issues” (“Timed Text Style Guide: General Requirements”). However, if there is an important cultural or artistic reason to use the quotations, then they can only be used with the granted documented permission received by the author, or if the translation is in the public domain, which means that the text is more than a hundred years old:

- a) As king Lear wonderfully says, “**ebb and flow by the moon.**”  
Kako je rekao kralj Lear, „**mijenjaju se kako se mijenja mjesec.**”  
(Morgan et al., 2017: S02/E05)
- b) “Take but degree away, untune that string, And, hark, what discord follows.”<sup>6</sup>  
„Oduzmi samo stupanj, razgodi tu strunu, i čuj kakav razdor slijedi.“ (ib.: S02/E01)
- c) “There’s a special providence in the fall of a sparrow. If it be now, ’tis not to come. If it be not to come, it will be now. If it be not now, yet it will come. The readiness is all.”<sup>7</sup>  
„I u takvu je padu osobiti promisao. Ako bude sada, neće biti poslije. Ako neće biti poslije, bit će sada. Ako ne bude sada, ipak će jednom doći. Glavno je da smo spremni.“ (ib.: S03/E05)

It can be seen in the examples above that Netflix’s general subtitling requirements have been respected and followed by the Croatian translators. However, as previously said, it is important to combine them with language specific rules that exist, and these are to be explained and analysed in the following chapter.

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<sup>6</sup> William Shakespeare, *Troilus and Cressida*

<sup>7</sup> William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*

### 3. Netflix: Croatian Timed Text Style Guide

There are certain language-specific guidelines and comprehensive instructions that every translator has to follow when making subtitles for Netflix. The guidelines below apply to Croatian translations.<sup>8</sup>

#### 1. Abbreviations and Acronyms

Abbreviations that should be written without period are; **gđa** (gospođa), **gđica** (gospođica), **h** (sat). On the other hand, **g.** (gospodin), **dr.** (doktor), **br.** (broj), **npr.** (na primjer), **itd.** (i tako dalje), should be written with a period:

- a) Bojnik i **gđa** Shand, Veličanstvo, i **g.** i **gđa** Parker Bowles. (Morgan et al., 2019: S03/E09)
- b) **Gđo** Shand. (ib.)
- c) U 18 **h** je piće prije večere. (Morgan et al., 2020: S04/E02)
- d) Martine, možda bi bilo dobro da imam kratak dokument o svakom, o hobijima, interesima, **itd.** (ib.: S04/E04)

Acronyms should be written without periods between letters:

- a) *Kad prema **BBC-u** vozim nakon pet [...]* (Morgan et al., 2019: S03/E10)
- b) **IRA** je, bojim se, već preuzela odgovornost. (Morgan et al., 2016: S01/E04)
- c) -Nakon **IVF-a**, inseminacije, **PGD-a**... (Feldman et al., 2019: S01/E05)

There should be no spaces between the characters and punctuation marks in general.

#### 2. Character Limitation and Reading Speed

The limitation of characters per line on Netflix is 42 characters for Croatian translations, and it is to be adjusted to the reading speed, which is 17 characters per second for adult programs, and 13 characters per second for children's programs.

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<sup>8</sup> Source of the mentioned rules: <https://partnerhelp.netflixstudios.com/hc/en-us/articles/115002790368-Croatian-Timed-Text-Style-Guide> (Accessed 25<sup>th</sup> May 2021)

### 3. Character Names

Netflix requires proper names and nicknames not to be translated, unless they convey a specific meaning or Netflix provides an approved translation:

- a) -Margaret?  
-Margareta?
- b) -Philip!  
-Filipe!
- c) King George.  
Kralj Đuro.
- d) Flute, Snout, Goodfellow...  
Frula, Gubac, Puk...
- e) Snug, Quince...  
Spretko, Dunja...<sup>9</sup>

However, the names and nicknames of historical/mythical characters, such as Father Christmas/Djed Božićnjak should always be translated.

### 4. Continuity and Line Treatment

There is a maximum of two lines that are to appear on the screen at the same time, and Netflix requires the text to be kept to one line whenever it is possible, and when there is no exceed of the character limitation.

When including ellipses in subtitles, it is important not to use an ellipsis when a sentence is split between two continuous subtitles. However, the ellipsis should be used to indicate an interruption or pause, but only at the end of the first subtitle, and not at the beginning of the second subtitle:

- a) Mislim da sada razumiješ što govorim  
i zašto ću trebati tvoju pomoć....  
s obitelji. (Morgan et al., 2019: S03/E09)
- b) A mi imamo svoju...  
i nećemo ni mi. (ib.)

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<sup>9</sup> The examples from a) to e) are from Netflix show *The Crown*.

- c) Govori se...  
da je pravi virtuoz. (Morgan et al., 2019: S03/E10)

Also, an ellipsis should be used when it is necessary to indicate that a subtitle starts mid-sentence:

- a) ...krasan dan. (Morgan et al., 2020: S04/E01)  
b) ...sindikalni sporazum sad je mrtav, premda to ne znači... (ib.)  
c) ...nastrijelio je i ranio odraslog jelena. (Morgan et al., 2020: S04/E02)  
d) ...kazneno je djelo ubiti tako zdrava jelena u naponu snage. (ib.)

## 5. Dual Speakers

A hyphen should be used “without a space to indicate two speakers in one subtitle, with a maximum of one character speaking per line:” (“Croatian Timed Text Style Guide”)

- a) -Što god ti...  
-Koliko god ti treba. (Feldman et al., 2019: S01/02)  
b) -Dok god želiš.  
-Dok god ti želiš. (ib.)  
c) -Zvuči dobro.  
-Dobro. (ib.)

However, there is also one important rule, and that is that a “text in each line in a dual speaker subtitle must be a contained sentence and should not carry into the preceding or subsequent subtitle.” (“Croatian Timed Text Style Guide”) This can be solved properly by creating shorter sentences and timing appropriately.

## 6. On-screen text

Forced narrative titles<sup>10</sup> for on-screen text should not be included if they are not relevant to the plot. If there is an overlap of on-screen text and dialogue, then the message that is more significant for the plot should be given precedence. If on-screen text is important, then it should always be in all caps, except for very long passages:

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<sup>10</sup> A text overlay that is not a part of the dialogue, but clarifies or gives an important piece of information.

- a) DAMA I SKITNICA (Morgan et al., 2019: S03/E10)
- b) IZGLEDAŠ POPUT JEFTINE PANTOMIMIČARKE (ib.)
- c) KRALJICA SMRTI (Morgan et al., 2020: S04/E01)

An on-screen text or any sound that is heard, should never be combined with the dialogue in the same subtitle, which means that the ellipsis should be used at the end of the sentence of the preceding subtitle, and at the beginning of the following one. In the example below, the text in the italics is a sound from the radio. However, the non-italicized text is a sound from a person that was present in the scene, and, because of the precedence rule, the sound from the radio was interrupted and was not included in the subtitle.

- a) *Kažem da podrijetlo,*  
*to odakle ste, nije važno,*  
*jer ako dokažete da vrijedite ekonomiji*  
*da možete doprinijeti*  
*ako možete povećati vlastiti prosperitet*  
*na dobrobit drugih...*  
 Daj odjebi!  
*...poduzetni koji stvaraju radna mjesta,*  
*uspješni ljudi,*  
*ljudi koji mogu pokazati*  
*da su odlučni ići naprijed.* (Morgan et al., 2020: S04/E05)

## 7. Foreign dialogue

Foreign dialogue should only be translated if it was subtitled in the original version, because it means that the viewer was meant to hear it and understand it, and that it is relevant to the plot.

## 8. Italics

The album, book, film, newspaper and program titles should always be italicized:

- a) A research assistant of the College of Arms.  
*Znanstveni suradnik, College of Arms.* (Morgan et al., 2019: S03/E10)
- b) You're not familiar with *The Awakening of Emily*?  
 Ne znaš film *Buđenje Emily*? (Morgan et al., 2020: S04/E04)



- c) *Ulysses*, please.  
*Uliks*, molit ću. (ib.: S04/E08)

However, song titles should be written with quotation marks.

- a) Kao u pjesmici „Veliki vojvoda.“ (ib.: S04/E04)
- b) “Uptown girl.” (ib.: S04/E09)

Foreign words are also to be italicized, unless they are part of a regular usage:

- a) *Više cri de couer, nego coup de grâce?* (Morgan et al., 2019: S03/E10)
- b) *Prepao sam se kad sam čuo da želiš ručak à deux.* (Morgan et al., 2020: S04/E04)
- c) *To mi je bilo privlačno. Tabula rasa.* (ib.)

Dialogue that is heard through electronic media should always be italicized:

- a) *Ali ono što imamo je posebno.* (Morgan et al., 2019: S03/E09) – a phone conversation
- b) *Premijer se našao na udaru kritika zbog sve veće krize.* (Morgan et al., 2016: S01/E04) - radio
- c) *Britanija je u središtu sve većih napetosti između Istoka i Zapada.* (Morgan et al., 2017: S02/E01) – TV

Italics should be used when the speaker is not in the scene, but not when a person is merely off screen. Here are the two examples of when the speaker was not a part of the on-screen scenes at first, but when the scene and the audio became synchronized, there was no more need to continue italicizing:

- a) *Kad god je moguće,  
nemoj mijenjati ništa.  
Radi onako kako se radilo prije.  
Kad je riječ o ustoličenju  
princa Charlesa princem od Walesa,  
ne vidim nijedan razlog  
zašto ne bismo potpuno ponovili  
ceremoniju ustoličenja  
prethodnog princa od Walesa 1911.* (Morgan et al., 2019: S03/E06)

- b) *Bilo je nevjerovatno.*  
*Ne samo njihovi objekti,*  
*kompletan stav prema uzgoju,*  
*nego to što ždrjebad i*  
*jednogodišnjake drže tako blizu,*  
 dok mi naše šaljemo na ispašu u Irsku. (ib.: S03/E05)

It is important to try to avoid going back and forth between italicized and non-italicized subtitles, and not to italicize when the speaker can be seen for at least one part of the scene.

Song lyrics, as opposed to the song titles, should be italicized, but they should be translated only if rights have been granted and if the lyrics are relevant to the plot or if the translator is instructed by Netflix to do so. The example below shows the translation of a song that actually does not exist, but is an improvisation of a character who is expressing his feelings, and is therefore important for the scene:

- a) *Biti zbunjen nije čudo*  
*Kad s nekim novim provedeš noć*  
*Osobito kad je on kiropraktičar smotan*  
*Ali zato moraš znati jedan faktor bitan*  
*On misli da si ti izvanredna.* (Feldman et al., 2020: S02/07)

Here is another, not very common example of subtitling the song lyrics:

- b) *Nema više govora o tmini*  
*Zaboravi te velike strahove*  
*Tu sam, nitko ti ništa ne može*  
*Moje riječi neka ti utjehu pruže*  
*Neka budem tvoja sloboda* (Morgan et al., 2020: S04/E09)<sup>11</sup>

If a dialogue appears and if it is more important than the song that is being subtitled (and that is usually the case), then a translator should use ellipsis to indicate that a song continues in the background, but that a dialogue now has precedence.

Italics in Croatian should not be used to indicate emphasis on specific words, which is the opposite from the rule in written translation, when such thing is often done.

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<sup>11</sup> The translation of „The Phantom of the Opera”

### 13. Numbers

Numbers from one to ten have be written out, while every number above ten should be written numerically:

- a) Imam samo **pet-šest** pa neće zauzeti puno mjesta u hladnjaku. (Tenney et al., 2019: S01/E08)
- b) **Tripud** hura za to. (Morgan et al., 2017: S02/E08)
- c) Prolazimo kroz razinu **17**, spuštamo se na **2500**. (Morgan et al., 2019: S03/E09)

Next, it is important to know that numbers, main and ordinals, should always be spelled out if they are at the beginning of a sentence:

- a) **Osam** mjeseci na Karibima. (ib.)
- b) **Prvi** ju je upotrijebio kralj Eduard VII. (Morgan et al., 2020: S04/E03)
- c) **Dvadeset i osam** bež. (ib.: S04/E05)

Whenever possible and if not relevant to the plot, the measurements should be converted to the metric system:

- a) Anyone who lives within **50 miles** of here knows the McCrea cabin.  
Svatko tko živi u krugu od **80 km** zna gdje je McCreaina koliba. (Tenney et al., 2019: S01/E01)
- b) All of Preacher's vegetables are farm-to-table, and the farm is about **50 feet** from the table.  
Preacherovo povrće stiže izravno iz vrta **15 metara** od stola. (ib.)
- c) **Five pounds**, Sir.  
**2,3 kilograma**, Visočanstvo. (Morgan et al., 2016: S01/E05)
- d) **Quarter of an inch**.  
**Pola centimetra**. (Morgan et al., 2017: S02/E09)
- e) I put on **4 LBs**.  
Nabacio sam **dvije kile**. (Feldman et al., 2020: S02/06)
- f) 80 miles an hour.  
130 km/h. (Feldman et al., 2019: S01/02)
- g) Five.  
Trideset osam. (Morgan et al., 2020: S04/E02) – shoe size

Time should be noted in the 24-hour format:

- a) “U **13:05** britanski veleposlanik je obaviješten da se dogodila eksplozija na čamu lorda Mountbattena u okrugu Sligo.”(Morgan et al., 2016: S01/E04)
- b) Što misliš da je u **18 h**? (Morgan et al., 2020: S04/E02)
- e) Samo da kažem da premijerka i gospodin Thatcher trebaju stići sutra otprilike u **15 h**. (ib.)

Dates and years also have a specified form, and the biggest difference is that there is a full stop after the year in Croatian, while there are no full stops in English form:

- a) May 11<sup>th</sup> 1937  
11. svibnja 1937. (Morgan et al., 2016: S01/E05)
- b) 26<sup>th</sup> February 1983  
26. veljače 1983. (Morgan et al., 2020: S04/E06)
- c) Bois de Bolugne, Paris, **1970**  
Bulonjska šuma, Pariz, **1970**. (Morgan et al., 2019: S03/E08)
- d) Windsor Castle, **1981**  
Dvorac Windsor, **1981**. (Morgan et al., 2020: S04/E03)

Numbers, except for decimals, are never written with a comma. Numbers up to 9999 are written with no spaces, while numbers from 10 000 are written with spaces before the last three digits:

- a) Da, svih **20 000**. (Morgan et al., 2020: S04/E04)
- b) Loše je što nam ostaje pretražiti područje od otprilike **337 000** četvornih kilometara. (ib.)
- c) Mornarica **479** potvrđuje nisko prelijetanje prema istoku, ne iznad **500** stopa na londonskom QNH-u, **1013**. (ib.)

A space should be used before %:

- a) Upravo objavljeno ispitivanje javnog mnijenja torijevcima daje prednost od **16 %**. (Morgan et al., 2020: S04/E01)
- b) ...ili **21 %**... (ib.)
- c) Pogodila sam **90 %**. (ib.)

## 14. Quotes

Quotations (double regular ones, without spaces) are not to be used at the start and the ending of every subtitle, but rather just when there is an applicable dialogue. It is important to be careful because the quotation marks for Croatian („ “) are different than those in English (“ ”):

- a) „Kako može biti gore?”  
„Što može krenuti krivo?”<sup>12</sup> (Morgan et al., 2019: S03/E10)
- b) Eto upravo tako. „Kako je Mark?”<sup>13</sup> (Morgan et al., 2020: S04/E04)
- c) „Sredio sam ga“, pomisli.  
No netko ga potapša po ramenu.  
Bio je to medvjed koji kaže...  
„Kažnjavam svakog  
tko me pokuša ubiti.“ (ib.: S04/E06)

Single quotation marks should be used for quotes within quotes:

- a) „Ljudi diljem Europe,“ napisao je,  
vide kako naša premijerka maše prstom  
i kako strastveno govori: 'ne'  
mnogo jasnije od formulacija  
pomno sastavljenih službenih dokumenata.“ (ib.: S04/E10)

Quotation marks should also be used when a person is reading something aloud, specifically in these cases, the newspapers:

- a) „Flundra i grebator.”  
„Dama i skitnica.” (Morgan et al., 2019: S03/E10)
- b) Ovdje piše: „Kao mlada,  
prijavila se za posao kemičarke,  
a odbijena je nakon što je procijenjeno  
da je svojeglava,  
teška i opasno umišljena.“ (Morgan et al., 2016: S01/E04)
- c) „Buckinghamska palača  
imala je buran tjedan.“ (Morgan et al., 2020: S04/E08)

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<sup>12</sup> The person is referring to someone else's words.

<sup>13</sup> The person is referring to many people who always keep asking the same question.

## 15. Repetitions

Netflix does not require from a translator to translate words or phrases that are said twice (or more times) in a row by the same speaker. It is only important to time the subtitle to the audio so they are synchronised, but to translate only once.

- a) Oh, fuck off! Fuck off! Fuck off!  
Daj odjebi! (Morgan et al., 2020: S04/E05)
- b) In and out. In and out.  
Unutra i van. (ib.: S04/E09)

## 16. Titles

Main title of the movie/series should not be subtitled on the screen, and the same rules apply for episode titles. Episode titles should only be translated if they are voiced-over, and if they appear on screen, which is not always the case. However, if that happens, it is necessary to reference the approved translations from the KNP tool.

Titles of movies, TV shows, and written works should be translated only if they are well-known translations for the target audience; in these cases, the Croatian audience:

- a) We're doing *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at school.  
U školi izvodimo *San ivanjske noći*. (Morgan et al., 2020: S04/E01)
- b) No need to *Sixth Sense* ourselves into a fucking heart attack.  
Ne moramo se odmah usрати, nije ovo *Šesto čulo*. (Feldman et al., 2020: S02/03)
- c) Your very own *War and Peace*.  
Tvoj vlastiti *Rat i mir*. (Morgan et al., 2020: S04/E08)

If that is not the case, then the title should be left in its original form.

However, if there is a sound from a TV, radio, the other scene, etc., or any other sound which has to be in italics, than the title of movie, TV show, newspapers, or written work should not be italicized.

- a) *Joan Collins iz TV-serije Dinastija*. (ib.: S04/E07)
- b) *Kraljica je ozbiljno pogriješila, a ovaj članak u Sunday Timesu potpalio je stanje koje bi se moglo brzo pretvoriti u ustavnu krizu*. (ib.: S04/E08)

## 17. Special Instructions

A very strict rule is that the dialogue should never be censored, and that it has to be as faithful as possible:

- a) You better fuckin' believe it.  
Nego kako, jebote. (Feldman et al., 2019: S01/03)
- b) It's fucked up, you know, but...  
U kurcu je to, znaš, ali... (ib.: S01/01)
- c) Yes, it was the same asshole, still speeding, and the fucker spit at me.  
Ista šupčina, opet prebrzo vozi i pizda je pljunula na mene. (ib.: S01/02)

The tone of the translation of the dialogue should always be matched with the original content so as to remain faithful for the target audience. The tone, register, formality, and class should be replicated so that they are equivalently transferred to the target viewers. Also, the plot-pertinent dialogue is always more important than the background dialogue. When sound words (e.g. wow...) in dialogues are used in isolation, and if they are understandable to the Croatian audience, then they should not be translated.

## 18. Subtitles for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (SDH) Guidelines

Netflix requires the translators to always include as much of the original content as possible, and not to simplify too much if it is not necessary. Sometimes, there will be an interference which will not allow to translate everything, but it is important to give precedence to text that is more plot-pertinent. If there are songs that do not interfere with dialogues or anything else important for the plot, then they should be translated (again, if the rights have been granted). When making subtitles for the deaf, it is important that song lyrics are enclosed with a music note (♪) at the beginning and the end of each subtitle.

Furthermore, the reading speed can be increased to 20 characters per second for adult programs, and to 17 characters per second for children's programs.

If characters are not yet identified, then [muškarac], [žena] or [muški glas], [ženski glas] should be used to provide the lacking information. More specific identifiers, such as [professor]/[profesorica], [pjevač]/[pjevačica], [vozač]/[vozačica] can also be used if necessary. [nepoznati glas] can be used if it is not very clear about who is talking.

It is important to try to describe the ambient music, e.g. [svira pop glazba], [rock svira na radiju]. If the source of the music is not clear, then at least the verb should be included. If the “source is identifiable and needs to be included in the identifier, the verb may be omitted” (Croatian Timed Text Style Guide).

It is also important to indicate any sound effect that is relevant for the plot, but sometimes also silence, if it is important for the plot. Furthermore, description in detail has to be made whenever possible, and nouns are to be used with verbs to describe sounds minutely.

If a foreign language is translated in the original, then it should also be translated into Croatian. However, when it comes to subtitles for the deaf and hard of hearing, it should also be stated which language is in use, etc. [na francuskom], [govori francuski], while [govori stranim jezikom] should never be used.

## 19. Reference

Last but not least, it is important to stress once more that a translator also deals with linguistic challenges. Therefore, Netflix encourages Croatian translators to refer to *Hrvatski pravopis*, *Hrvatski jezični portal*, and *Bujica riječi* for every language-related issue.



#### 4. Subtitling Strategies: Croatian Translations of Netflix Drama Series

The previous chapter dealt with special Netflix requirements, and the Croatian style guide. However, these mostly refer to technical details, while translators also deal with the “inner” problems, which means that they have to find the best way to transfer the meaning of what was said into the target language. Since it is now evident that subtitling comes with many restrictions, there are certain strategies that help translators in overcoming the obstacles and transferring the text as equivalently as possible. Gottlieb (as cited in Dehbashi Sharif and Sohrabi, 2015: 80) has devised ten subtitling strategies, and his classification includes the following:

1. Expansion is used when it is necessary to add explanatory material because the original text might not be retrievable in the target language, which is usually the case because of some cultural nuance.
2. Paraphrase “is resorted to in cases where the phraseology of the original cannot be reconstructed in the same syntactic way in the target language” (Dehbashi Sharif, Sohrabi, 2015: 80).
3. Transfer is “a complete and faithful translation” (Božić, 2010: 12), which means that the source text is translated completely accurately.
4. Imitation means that something maintains the same form, and is not transposed to the target language. This usually happens with names of people and places.
5. Transcription is “used in those cases where a term is unusual even in the source text, for example, the use of a third language or nonsense language” (Dehbashi Sharif, Sohrabi, 2015: 80).
6. Dislocation means that a translator will use special means if they are necessary for the translation to maintain the same effect as the original, “e.g., a silly song in a cartoon film where the translation of the effect is more important than the content” (ib.).
7. Condensation is the shortening of the text, but without eliminating the material in an obtrusive way.

8. Decimation, on the other hand, is “an extreme form of condensation where perhaps for reasons of discourse speed, even potentially important elements are omitted” (ib.).

9. Deletion is a total elimination of some parts of a text.

10. Resignation is a “strategy adopted when no translation solution can be found and meaning is inevitably lost” (ib.).

Gottlieb’s ten mentioned strategies will be analysed on the examples of Croatian translations of Netflix drama series; *Dead to Me*, *Virgin River*, *The Crown*.

#### 4.1.Expansion

Because of the character, space and time limitations in subtitling, there is rarely an expansion, or an added material in the subtitle. However, sometimes there is a need to add explanatory material to the original content, in order for it to be more understandable for the target audience.

d) **The PM** will not be joining us this morning.

**Premijer** nam se jutros neće pridružiti. (Morgan et al., 2016: S01/E02)

In the example above, the abbreviation PM stands for the “prime minister”. However, the abbreviation such as PV for „predsjednik vlade“ is not understandable for Croatian audience, because it is never used. Therefore, the translator had to expand subtitles a little bit, and translate the abbreviation with a full word.

e) Such an act could backfire.

Moglo bi se vratiti **kao bumerang**. (ib.: S01/E06)

Cambridge dictionary defines the verb “backfire” as the plan of the opposite result from the one someone intended. Even though the verb „vratiti (se)” has a similar meaning<sup>14</sup>, its meaning is too literal. Therefore, the translator decided to add more description to the subtitle to make it fully understandable and unambiguous, and to make it sound more metaphorical.

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<sup>14</sup> It means that someone or something will come back, or that something will be restored to the previous state.

f) We must restore **the status quo**.

Moramo vratiti **stanje kakvo je bilo**. (Morgan et al., 2017: S02/E01)

“The status quo” is a phrase which can be heard in Croatia, and a part of the Croatian audience is probably familiar with the phrase. However, to be completely sure that everyone understands the foreign phrase, and since there is enough space and time, the translator decided to explain the phrase with its definition.

g) They also have him on **CCTV**.

Snimila ga je i **nadzorna kamera**. (Feldman et al., 2020: S02/09)

The example above includes another abbreviation. Cambridge dictionary says that CCTV is an abbreviation for “closed circuit television”, and it is defined as a system that sends television signals to a number of screens and is often used in stores as protection against thieves. However, the Croatian audience is probably not very familiar with the abbreviation, and there is no equivalent abbreviation in Croatian language. Therefore, the translator had to expand it and write the full noun instead.

h) -Refill?

-Još **kave**? (ib.: S02/04)

Even though a viewer might recognize from the scene that the characters are drinking coffee, the translator still used expansion as a subtitling strategy. The main reason is because the verb “refill” means that something needs to be filled again, usually with liquid, and therefore it is clear that the character wants to fill more coffee to the cup. However, the Croatian adverb “još” is not precise enough because it can refer to anything. It is not clear that it refers to the liquid, or more precisely to coffee.

#### 4.2. Paraphrase

Paraphrasing gives “more freedom for the translator to formulate the meaning of the target according to his preference and preserving the main content of the source” (Khalaf, 2016: 128). Translators usually “paraphrase the source text to clarify and simplify the meaning for the target audience” (Božić, 2010: 14).

The examples below all demonstrate that a translator was not able to translate directly, using word-by-word translation, but rather had to paraphrase the sentence in order for it to be understandable for the Croatian audience.

- a) My aunt fell down a flight of stairs, and **cracked her head open** and bled out.

Moja je strina pala niz stube, **sломila lubanju** i iskrvarila. (Feldman et al., 2019: S01/01)

The example a) demonstrates the paraphrasing of one part of the sentence, or more specifically the phrase “crack someone’s head open”. The phrase in question means that someone had a head injury, whether it is a minor or a major one. However, it cannot be translated directly because the phrase in question is a bit of an exaggeration and does not necessarily mean that someone’s head actually cracked open. Therefore, translation such as “glava joj se rastvorila” would not be very appropriate.

- b) Because I don't know if you can tell, but this store is, like, **depressing the shit out of me.**

Ne znam kuži li se, ali ova me trgovina **deprimira do jaja.** (ib.: S01/03)

According to the Cambridge Dictionary, the combination of a verb and a phrase “shit out of sb/sth” in the example b) is used to emphasize/intensify some action or force. The Croatian phrase “do jaja” is used for the same purpose, and has a very similar meaning. Therefore, the direct translation of the phrase would not be appropriate, since the meaning of the sentence would not be understandable for Croatian audience.

- c) Don't wanna walk into a situation totally blind.

Uvijek se morate pripremiti. (Tenney et al., 2019: S01/E01)

The direct Croatian translation of an English sentence in the example c) would be *\*Ne želite ušetati u situaciju potpuno slijepi*, which sounds extremely weird. However, if we look into the metaphorical meaning of the sentence, then we can understand that it actually means that it is not very smart to do something without any preparation, help or instructions. Therefore, the Croatian sentence had to be paraphrased to get the desired meaning across.

- d) You don't wear cranky well.  
Mrzovolja vam ne stoji. (ib.)

The verb “wear” is in English usually referred to clothing and dressing up, and is mostly translated into Croatian as „nositi”. However, Cambridge Dictionary states that the verb “wear” can also mean “to show a particular emotion on your face”. The same thing does not apply to the verb „nositi“. Therefore, the direct translation of example d) *\*Ne nosite dobro mrzovolju* sounds very unnatural and is never used in Croatian. Because of that, the verb „nositi” was replaced with „stajati”, which is commonly used when describing clothes, but can also describe emotions.

- e) I have a short day.  
Ranije završavam. (Tenney et al., 2019: S01/E04)

The direct translation in the example e) would be *\*Imam kratak dan*. Such sentence is grammatically correct, but semantically does not function. The English sentence actually implies that a speaker is leaving work sooner than usual, so it was necessary to paraphrase.

- f) The question **we in the fourth estate** should be asking ourselves is [...]  
**Mi kao sedma sila** trebamo se zapitati [...] (Morgan et al., 2016: S01/E06)

Cambridge Dictionary defines the fourth state as “newspapers, magazines, television, and radio stations, [...] that have a lot of political influence.” In the past, it was considered that there are three estates that have power; the clergy, nobility, and common people, while the press only later became the fourth estate. In the United States, this term is nowadays used to emphasize that, alongside the three government branches (legislative, executive, judicial), press has almost an equivalent power, and is therefore considered to be the fourth estate. Even though the phrase „četvrta sila” can sometimes be heard in Croatian, the more common expression is „sedma sila“. One possible reason for that might be because each country has its own „path“, and different political influences, so the phrase also has a different origin. More precisely, it is thought that the expression „sedma sila“ has been used in Croatia since the 19th century, when Croatia was under the influence of some very big and powerful countries, such as Russia, England, France, Germany, The Austro-Hungarian Empire, and Italy. Therefore, the press was not considered the fourth estate, but the seventh.

g) You can get very leaky.

Nekad riječi samo istječu iz tebe. (Feldman et al., 2020: S02/08)

To translate directly and to say that someone is „jako propustan“, does not have the intended meaning in the Croatian language. The adjective „propustan“ can be referred to some material object, but it cannot be used to describe a person. Therefore, the paraphrasing was necessary.

h) It was kind of a blackout situation.

Ne sjećam se ničega previše. (ib.)

A “blackout” is translated into Croatian as „zamračenje“, and it usually refers to the loss of the electric power. However, it is clear from the scene that the speaker is actually talking about the memory loss, so the verb “blackout” here has a different meaning. Therefore, the direct translation into *\*Bila je to zamračena situacija* sounds very unnatural and does not function semantically. For that reason, the sentence had to be paraphrased.

i) That's a „hashtag never forget” for me.

Ja to nikad neću zaboraviti. (Feldman et al., 2019: S01/07)

Hashtag is a word or a phrase preceded by a (#) sign which is used on social media to identify keywords for a specific topic, and to make the search easier. Even though almost every Internet user nowadays knows the meaning of hashtag and what its purpose is, there are still many cultures in which it is not mentioned in real-life conversations, and is reserved only for social media. Therefore, the direct translation would sound a bit strange, and unnatural, since Croats use hashtags mostly on social media, and rarely refer to them in their *offline* conversations.

j) So, last week, we started talking about **the F-word**.

Prošli smo tjedan počeli razgovarati o **riječi na P**. (ib.: S01/01)

k) I mean, there, I just summed up culinary school for you in **three words**.

Eto ti sažetak kulinarske škole u **četiri riječi**. (Feldman et al., 2020: S02/05)

The paraphrasing in the examples j) and k) was especially necessary. The example j) actually refers to the word “forgiveness”, which cannot be translated into Croatian so that it starts with the same letter. One possible option is „praštanje“, therefore the other elements also had to be changed. The example k) shows a similar problem. The three words in the original *It's just butter* were translated with four words *To je zbog maslaca*. Therefore, the k) example also had to be paraphrased.

#### 4.3. Transfer

Transfer is Gottlieb’s most frequent subtitling strategy, and there is no “need for explanation because it represents a direct transfer of the source meaning to the target” (Khalaf, 2016: 127).

- a) I really hope that someday you can see yourself the way I see you.  
Nadam se da ćeš se jednog dana vidjeti kako te ja vidim. (Feldman et al., 2020: S02/09)
- b) You have a family; you have a life.  
Imaš obitelj, imaš svoj život. (ib.)
- c) That is not what I said.  
Nisam to rekla. (Palmer Robertson et al., 2019: S01/E03)
- d) They can come true when you least expect it.  
Mogu se ispuniti kad najmanje očekuješ. (ib.)
- e) That must have been horrible.  
To je sigurno bilo grozno. (Tenney et al., 2019: S01/E05)

#### 4.4. Imitation

Imitation is “an intact transposition of the source language” (Božić, 2010: 12), and a subtitling strategy which usually refers to the names of people, and places. Names ought to remain the same and are not to be translated. Netflix usually follows the same rule, and requires translators not to translate any names unless there is a Netflix suggestion or an official translation.

- a) Je li to **Hope McCrea**?  
Tražim **Mel**.  
**Mel Monroe**. (Tenney et al., 2019: S01/E05)

- b) Njezina sestra, **Joey Barnes**. (ib.)
- c) Ja sam pastor **Wayne**. (Feldman et al., 2019: S01/01)
- d) Slijedi **Mark Watson** iz **Jedburgha**, sadašnji vlasnik u bacanju kladiva tu u **Braemaru**. Mora pobijediti **Francisa Stewarta** iz **Fort Williama**. (Morgan et al., 2020: S04/E02)
- e) Načula sam da idu na obalu jezera **Muick**, milostiva. (ib.)

Even if someone's name is also a proper noun, and is important for the context, it should not be simply translated into target language. The name should rather be left in the original form, and then, if necessary, translated and placed along the original form. The following example serves as a good illustration of that rule. In the Croatian translation, the name Hazel was left in the original, but it was also translated as „lijeska“, because the second subtitle mentions that Hazel is also the name of the tree. If the name had been left in its original form without the translation, then the Croatian audience probably would not realize how it is connected to the tree. However, with the translation into „lijeska“, the audience can understand the reference.

- a) Yes. There is. Hazel.  
Strange, I think, to name a child after a tree.

Da, Hazel, **lijeska**.

Neobično je djetetu dati ime po stablu. (Morgan et al., 2020: S04/E06)

#### 4.5. Transcription

Gottlieb's subtitling strategy called transcription "is the translator's attempt to reproduce unusual sounds. In most cases those are the sounds produced by animals, but also non-articulated sounds produced by humans" (Božić, 2010: 18), such as *wow*, *oh*, *hmm*, etc. This strategy applies to Netflix only in some cases. As previously mentioned, Netflix has a rule for not translating sounds that are in isolation and familiar to the target audience. However, if those sounds are not isolated, if they repeat, and if they are followed by a word, then they are translated:



- a) **Oh**...oprosti. (Feldman et al., 2019: S01/01)
- b) **O**, Bože. (Morgan et al., 2020: S04/E02)
- c) Oj, oj, oj! (ib.: S04/E05)

#### 4.6. Dislocation

Sometimes “the translator has to use completely different linguistic expressions in order to preserve the meaning and to maintain the same effect. Usually, this happens when translating idioms and collocations from the SL which do not have equivalents in the TL” (Božić, 2010: 18). The reason for not having equivalents is because, according to the Cambridge Dictionary, idioms and collocations are a group of words in a fixed order that have a particular meaning which is different from the meanings of each word on its own.

- a) The view is always better from the high road.

Čiste savjesti čovjek bolje spava. (Palmer Robertson et al., 2019: S01/E06)

The direct translation of the English sentence above would be *\*Pogled je uvijek bolji s autoceste*. However, such translation means nothing for the Croatian audience, since idioms are almost never translatable word-by-word. Cambridge dictionary explains that the used English idiom means “to behave in a moral way when other people are not behaving morally”. Therefore, the structure of the words and syntax in the Croatian translation was completely changed for the sake of conveying the same meaning and sending the same message for the viewers.

- b) We will fly right under the radar.

Nitko nas neće primijetiti. (Feldman et al., 2020: S02/07)

The Idioms by Free Dictionary defines the idiom in the English sentence above as “to go without being noticed, detected, or addressed”. Since there is no equivalent idiom in Croatian language, the idiom was not translated directly or with an equivalent idiom, but was rather explained by its definition.

- c) That's quite the feather in your cap.

Ovo je veliko postignuće za tebe. (ib.: S02/202)

According to the Cambridge Dictionary, the English idiom from the c) example means “to have an achievement to be proud of”. If it had been translated directly, it would just be a set of words that, put together, have no meaning in Croatian language. Therefore, the idiom is once again explained by its definition. However, there are some examples where it is possible to find an equivalent idiom in the target language, which means that the form and the choice of words are not the same, but the meaning of idiom is.

d) Guests and fish...

Svakog gosta... (Morgan et al., 2016: S01/E08)

The English subtitle in the example above is actually the short version of a famous Benjamin Franklin’s quote; *Guests, like fish, begin to smell after three days*. The Croatian version of the same idiom is *Svakog gosta, tri dana dosta*, but the idiom was shortened to be as equivalent as possible to the original.

Here are some other examples where it is not possible to translate directly, but rather an appropriate and equivalent idiom has to be found:

e) This horse has already bolted.

Prošla baba s kolačima. (ib.: S01/E06)

f) You would never hurt a fly.

Ne bi ni mrava zgazila. (Feldman et al., 2019: S01/E04)

g) I'm not made of money.

Novac mi ne raste na drvetu. (Tenney et al., 2019: S01/E01)

h) No sooner does someone in the family **pop their clogs**, they ask [...]

Čim netko u obitelji **otegne papke** zapitaju se [...] (Morgan et al., 2016: S01/E05)

i) Like moths to a flame.

Kao muhe na med. (Feldman et al., 2020: S02/07)

j) Yeah, but he’s so good looking that it, like, **comes back around the other side**.

Toliko je zgodan da **u nečemu mora biti kvaka**. (Feldman et al., 2019: S01/04)

#### 4.7. Shortening Strategies

Because of the character/space and timing limitations, “translators very often eliminate parts of the original discourse by which they adjust the translation to the requirements of screen translation. Naturally, the elimination can be done only when there is no risk of losing the meaning” (Božić, 2010: 21). More precisely, according to Diaz Cintas and Remael (2007), there are three main reasons for text reduction. Firstly, viewers can absorb speech more quickly than they can read, so subtitles must give them enough time to register and comprehend what is written at the bottom of the screen. Secondly, viewers have to pay attention to the action on screen and listen to the soundtrack, so subtitles must give them sufficient time to combine reading with watching and listening. Thirdly, subtitles are limited to a maximum of two lines. Therefore, it can be said that these strategies are “applied when an element from the source text is excluded for some technical, cultural or linguistic constraints” (Khalaf, 2016: 128).

- a) Someone you can chat with about the racing, someone well-bred, highborn, who knows how to hold his cutlery, as opposed to a ruffian like me.  
Nekoga tko zna čavrljati o konjičkim utrkama, tko zna držati pribor za jelo, za razliku od mene grubijana. (Morgan et al., 2019: S03/E01)

The example above shows a significantly shorter Croatian translation, where a part “someone well-bred, highborn” has been omitted because of the insufficient space, character limitations, and a fast-speaking character. One might argue that the technical constraints did not cause the loss of the original meaning, because it seems that the definition of a well-bred<sup>15</sup>, highborn<sup>16</sup> person is well described by the rest of the content. On the other hand, the fact that someone knows how to ride horses, and to use curious sets of cutleries, does not necessarily make them a part of an elite or aristocratic family. Therefore, it can be said that, in this particular example, Croatian subtitles do lack certain pieces of information that are important, but not of such importance that they distort the meaning of the whole scene, or the plot of the series.

- b) -You should’ve seen the look on her face.  
**-She's not as doe-eyed as you think.**

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<sup>15</sup> Well-bred - coming from a family that has a high social position. (Cambridge Dictionary)

<sup>16</sup> Highborn - of noble birth. (Merriam-Webster Dictionary)

-Da si joj vidjela izraz na licu.

-**Nije naivna.** (Tenney et al., 2019: S02/E06)

In the example b), it is clear that the Croatian translation of the second sentence is shorter than the original one in English. The sentence could have also been translated as *Nije toliko naivna koliko misliš*, but it has been shortened for two reasons. First, there is another speaker who started talking and interrupted the sentence. Secondly, there were already two lines on the screen, so the interruption of a speaker meant that the subtitle had to be quickly replaced with another one. Therefore, the condensation was in this case necessary, but it was not very abrupt, and had no effect whatsoever on the dialogue, scene, or plot of the series.

c) **Asking directions to a pot farm** is still a little bit new to me.

Oprosti što nisam upućena u **to**. (Palmer Robertson et al., 2020: S02/E09)

The sentence above is not just shortened, but is also paraphrased and simplified. Because of the on-going conversation, its topic, and clear knowledge of the viewers about what is going on, the syntagm “asking directions to a pot farm” has been transferred into the Croatian demonstrative pronoun „to“. The pronoun is an appropriate fit, because, according to the Cambridge dictionary, demonstrative pronoun is usually “used to refer to something that has been mentioned or was involved earlier, or to something that is already known about.” Of course, the translator could have also translated the sentence directly, without decimation and without trying to simplify it. This is a case where both options are possible, and the translator chose the one that seemed the most appropriate at the moment.

d) The eyes of the world will be on us, Britain will be on show, and we must put our best foot forward.

Cijeli će svijet oči uprti u Britaniju i moramo se pokazati u najboljem svjetlu. (Morgan et al., 2016: S01/E05)

According to the Cambridge dictionary, the idiom “to be on the show” means that something is “available for the public to look at”, while The Free Dictionary by Farlex defines the idiom “to have eyes on something” as “to monitor someone or something continuously”. From these definitions, it can be stated that both idioms have very similar meanings, and that there is no need to translate them both. Therefore, the omission and shortening in this particular case did not do any harm for the content.

e) This is a lot of work for a stupid stop sign.

Puno posla za znak za zaustavljanje. (Feldman et al., 2020: S02/07)

In the example above, the translator chose to delete the word “stupid”, and not to translate it. It can be argued whether this was the right choice or not. One reason why the deletion had to be done might be because of the character limitation per line. However, the subtitles could have been broken into two lines, and there would be no need for the omission (since the dialogue was not moving too fast). Even though such deletion did not do a lot of harm for the content, because it can be recognized from the translation that the speaker is annoyed with the work he has to do, it was not entirely necessary and could have been avoided.

f) But he'd rather call up his cop friends and file a restraining order to keep me from telling him how hurt I am.

On bi radije tražio zabranu prilaska, nego čuo koliko sam povrijeđena.  
(Feldman et al., 2019: S01/02)

The above sentence is an excellent example of when the omission should actually be done. Since everyone should know that only court and police are those that can give someone a restraining order, and since the act of filing the order is more important for the plot than who did it, there was no need for the translator to mention cops in the translation.

g) This isn't brain surgery. Can't you just put them in a bag?

Ne mogu ih samo dobiti? (Petersen et al., 2020: S02/E08)

The example above shows the deletion of the whole sentence. The deleted sentence does not play an important role for the plot of the whole series, but it might emphasize and additionally demonstrate the speakers' annoyance, and irritation. However, the deletion is justified since the dialogue was moving fast, and the translator had to use a shortening strategy.

While translators doing different types of translation also deal with problems such as paraphrasing, translating idioms and collocations, etc., only subtitling has to deal with condensation (shortening), “particularly as regards the problem of condensing rapidly-spoken dialogue into easily-readable chunks on the screen” (Taylor, 1998: 219). Therefore, Gottlieb's subtitling strategies are of great importance and help to every subtitler, who has to use imagination, creativity, and intuition in order to estimate when to apply a certain strategy, and to preserve the original meaning of the text.

## Conclusion

The first part of this paper elaborates on the definition, requirements and challenges of subtitling. In conclusion, subtitling “involves the translation of the spoken language to the written language within the time restrictions presented by moving images on the screen, and as such would seem to be governed by a series of parameters not met with other types of translation” (Taylor, 1998: 219). Therefore, “subtitling does not differ from literary translation in that it constrains the translator, but rather because the constraints of an audiovisual context are different from those of the patient, yet impotent paper” (Gottlieb, 2001: 19). It was emphasized a few times that there is no one way, or set of rules and methods that can be universally applied in translation process.

The second part of this paper analyses the technical aspects of the Croatian translations of Netflix drama series. Netflix, as a global streaming service that has users all over the world, gives much importance to the quality of subtitles. That is why Netflix has general requirements and style guides for every language, and they have to be followed in order to produce high quality subtitles that are understandable to the target audience. The Croatian subtitles that are analysed in this paper were all made in accordance with Netflix requirements and guides because, when it comes to technical constraints, there is not much room for liberty.

Furthermore, the paper shows that, alongside the technical requirements that can be solved easily when following the rules, there are also cultural and linguistic issues, which are usually more challenging, because there are no style guides for them. That is why, in the making of the analysed Croatian subtitles for drama series, Gottlieb’s subtitling strategies were used a lot. The mentioned strategies help translators to make the best possible subtitle; a short and simple sentence in a target language conveying the same meaning as the original content.

Being aware of the huge number of users, which is now more than 200 million, Netflix now offers high quality subtitles in more than 60 languages. Because of the meticulously made rules, and the translators that have a lot of experience in choosing when to use which subtitling strategy, Netflix drama series analysed in this paper offer first-rate subtitles, which give the viewers around the globe an enjoyable streaming experience.

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