

# Translation of Informal Language in the Croatian Subtitles of the TV Series The Wire and Oz

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Studij: dvopredmetni sveučilišni diplomski studij engleskoga jezika i književnosti i  
hrvatskoga jezika i književnosti

Arian Pandža

**Prevođenje neformalnog jezika u hrvatskim titlovima TV serija *The Wire***

**i *Oz***

Diplomski rad

Mentor: izv. prof. dr. sc. Goran Schmidt

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IZJAVA

Izjavljujem s punom materijalnom i moralnom odgovornošću da sam ovaj rad samostalno napravio te da u njemu nema kopiranih ili prepisanih dijelova teksta tuđih radova, a da nisu označeni kao citati s napisanim izvorom odakle su preneseni. Svojim vlastoručnim potpisom potvrđujem da sam suglasan da Filozofski fakultet Osijek trajno pohrani i javno objavi ovaj moj rad u internetskoj bazi završnih i diplomskih radova knjižnice Filozofskog fakulteta Osijek, knjižnice Sveučilišta Josipa Jurja Strossmayera u Osijeku i Nacionalne i sveučilišne knjižnice u Zagrebu.

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## **Abstract**

This thesis aims to explore challenges and strategies involved in translating informal language in the Croatian subtitles of the TV series *The Wire* and *Oz*. In both TV series, informal language plays a powerful role in reflecting the realities of characters' lives in their respective surroundings. The Croatian translators are faced with different linguistic and cultural challenges in the translation of such informal language. The research examines the translation methods used by the translators, as well as the extent to which the informal language has been preserved in Croatian subtitles. It analyzes specific examples of translation choices, comparing the original English dialogue with Croatian subtitles, assessing the impact the translator's choices have on the viewer's understanding and experience.

Keywords: informal language, subtitling, challenges, translation methods

## Sažetak

Cilj je ovoga rada istražiti izazove i strategije prevođenja neformalnog jezika u hrvatskim titlovima TV serija *The Wire* i *Oz*. U obje TV serije, neformalni jezik ima iznimno važnu ulogu predstavljanja stvarnosti života likova u njihovim dotičnim okruženjima. Hrvatski prevoditelji susreću se s različitim lingvističkim i kulturnim izazovima pri prevođenju takvog neformalnog jezika. Istraživanje proučava metode prevođenja koje su koristili prevoditelji te do koje je mjere sačuvan neformalni jezik u hrvatskim titlovima. Analizira specifične izbore prevođenja, uspoređujući originalni engleski dijalog s hrvatskim titlovima te procjenjuje utjecaj koji su prevoditeljski izbori imali na gledateljevo razumijevanje i iskustvo.

Ključne riječi: neformalni jezik, titlovanje, izazovi, metode prevođenja



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## 1. Introduction

The need for subtitling has never been higher. Technological advancements have resulted in a world in which we are surrounded by screens. And what is most commonly found on those screens are different types of audiovisual content (TV series, movies, news, documentaries, etc.) that people love to watch. With the advancements of technology and globalization, audiovisual content has never been easier to gain access to, and this accessibility has created a demand for high-quality translations, specifically in the form of subtitles. Subtitles are a form of audiovisual translation that bridges both the linguistic and cultural gap, and they play a crucial role in conveying the atmosphere, tone, and cultural references from the original audiovisual content.

However, the process of subtitling comes with all its different challenges. Translators encounter issues with time and space constraints because subtitles must be brief enough to be read quickly, but clear enough to still convey the meaning of the dialogue. Furthermore, translators encounter linguistic challenges when translating from one language to another as each language has its own characteristics and properties. There are also cultural challenges that can come in the form of informal language because informal language is an important component of cultural expression. It reflects the dynamics of a community, everyday speech, and attitudes, and it is for that reason that informal language is viewed as a marker of identity.

These challenges are evident in the Croatian subtitling of the TV series *The Wire* and *Oz*, because in both TV series informal language is used as a tool to reflect the socio-cultural context surrounding the characters. Therefore, Croatian translators are met not only with the task of a linguistic translation, but also with the task of culturally adapting the show for the Croatian audience.

This thesis aims to explore the difficulties of this process, focusing on how the informal language has been translated into Croatian subtitles. It will examine different translation methods that the translators have employed, the challenges they have encountered, and the impact that their choices might have had on the viewer's experience.

## 2. Translation Studies

This section delves into the theoretical foundations of translation to facilitate a deeper understanding of the research. While it is impossible to attribute the invention of translation to a single person, translation has existed for thousands of years as a practice which bridges linguistic gaps. Eric Jacobsen claims that translation was a Roman invention and that is often the starting point for analyzing the role of translation within a society. In his division of history of translation into four periods, George Steiner uses the Romans as a starting point as well. More precisely, Cicero's and Horace's statements on translation, both of which are thought to have "great influence on successive generations of translators, and both discuss translation within the wider context of the two main functions of the poet: the universal human duty of acquiring and disseminating wisdom and the special art of making and shaping a poem" (Bassnett, 2002: 50). Both Horace and Cicero emphasize the importance of distinction between 'word for word' translation and 'sense for sense' translation. Horace advises against a slavish translator that imitates the source text without considering the context.

Catford (1965: 20) defines translation as "the replacement of textual material (Source Text) in one language (Source Language) by equivalent textual material in another language (Target Language)". Catford uses the term 'textual material' to refer to the fact that under normal conditions, the Source Language text is not entirely translated, i.e., replaced by Target Language (TL) equivalents. He claims that at one or more levels of language there may be simple replacement by non-equivalent Target Language (TL) material, as the equivalent may not exist in the Target Language (TL). That is the reason for his distinction between a full translation and a partial translation. "In a full translation the entire text is submitted to the translation process: that is, every part of the Source Language (SL) text is replaced by Target Language (TL) text material", whereas "in a partial translation some part or parts of the SL text are left untranslated: they are simply transferred to and incorporated in the TL text" (Catford, 1965: 21). He also differentiates between total and restricted translation where distinction relates to the levels of language which were involved in translation. Total translation is defined as the "replacement of SL grammar and lexis by equivalent TL grammar and lexis with consequential replacement of SL phonology/graphology by (non-equivalent) TL phonology/graphology" and partial translation is defined as the "replacement of SL textual material by equivalent TL textual material, at only one level (Catford, 1965: 22).

In 1959, Roman Jakobson published an essay called “On Linguistic Aspects of Translation” in which he categorized 3 different types of translation:

- a) Intralingual translation or *rewording*
  - an interpretation of verbal signs by means of other signs of the same language
  - involves translating within the same language through paraphrasing, summarizing, or explaining concepts in different words (e.g. translating a complex medical term in simpler language for a lay audience)
  - highlights that there are different ways to express the same concept even within a single language
  
- b) Interlingual translation or *translation proper*
  - an interpretation of verbal signs by means of some other language
  - represents the traditional concept of translation, where a text is translated from one language to another
  - emphasizes the importance of conveying meaning, cultural nuances, and context as opposed to word for word translation
  
- c) Intersemiotic translation or *transmutation*
  - an interpretation of verbal signs by means of signs of nonverbal sign systems
  - involves translating a literary text into a different mode such as music, film, or painting
  - the original context is interpreted and expressed through a different medium whilst preserving the core meaning
  - broadens the traditional understanding of translation (Jakobson, 1959: 233)

In the essay, Jakobson also highlighted the equivalence in difference, calling it “the cardinal problem of language and the pivotal concern of linguistics” (Jakobson, 1959: 233). As any receiver of a verbal message, the linguist acts as their interpreter, and Jakobson strongly advises that the translating activities must be kept under constant scrutiny by linguistic sciences.

### 3. Audiovisual Translation

Rapidly evolving technologies have greatly influenced the development of Audiovisual Translation (AVT). For the better part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the scholars have not been studying

AVT extensively as the field of audiovisual media (film, television, and video games) was still relatively new in the early to middle 20<sup>th</sup> century. Therefore, the demand for audiovisual translation was more limited, and the field itself has not yet developed into a major area of study. It was in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century and the 21<sup>st</sup> century that AVT rose in importance and visibility when the world became technologically driven.

“Audiovisual translation (AVT) is an academic discipline and professional activity that involves the localization of audiovisual media content by means of different translation practices” (Cintas, 2019: 1). What differs AVT from other translations is the material it translates as the audiovisual material is meant to be seen and heard simultaneously, whereas the translations of written text are only meant to be read. This type of translation requires understanding of the coexistence between the acoustic and visual communication channels in which both verbal and nonverbal information is conveyed. In 1998, Henrik Gottlieb categorized four main channels of information which translators need to consider whilst translating:

- 1) Verbal audio channel: dialogues, songs, off-screen voices
- 2) Nonverbal audio channel: music, sound effects, off-screen sounds
- 3) Verbal and visual channel: subtitles, notes, signs, inscriptions that appear on the screen
- 4) Nonverbal visual channel: picture on the screen (Gottlieb, 1998).

The aforementioned equivalence Catford used in his definition of translating expands with AVT. In AVT, it is not enough for the translation to be equivalent only in the linguistic elements of two languages, but it also must be equivalent in the verbal and nonverbal forms between the source material and its translation.

Scholars approximate that there are ten types of audiovisual translation. They can be divided into two larger subgroups: revoicing and subtitling. Revoicing “consists of substituting the original soundtrack with a newly recorded or live soundtrack in the target language” (Chaume, 2006: 6), whereas subtitling “operates by maintaining the original speech and images, which are accompanied by written stretches of text that correspond to synchronized translations or transcriptions of the original dialogue” (Escribano and Cintas, 2019: 2).

## 4. Subtitling

As previously explained, subtitling is one of the two subgroups of audiovisual translations. For the purpose of this thesis, greater emphasis will be placed on the theoretical background of subtitling as it was the topic of the research.

Subtitling is considered to be the most thriving area of research within Translation Studies. Baker (1998) notes that subtitling has been used in Europe since 1929 when sound films first arrived in Europe. Since the 1990s, it has been gaining visibility in large part due to the proliferation and distribution of audiovisual material. Each movie or TV show we encounter on any screen, whether in the workplace, on public transport, at home, at a bar or a restaurant, has subtitles on. Subtitling's popularity is rooted in its ability to make content accessible, especially in situations where the environment is noisy, or if silent viewing is required in situations where noise would be disruptive. Subtitling retains the original dialogue, and voice acting in comparison to dubbing while it is also more cost-effective because it does not require hiring of voice actors or creating of new audio tracks. Gottlieb (2004: 220) notes that in most European speech communities with fewer than 25 million speakers, subtitling has been the favored method of screen translation since the introduction of sound films in the late 1920s.

Cintas (2010: 344) explains that subtitling “consists in rendering in writing the translation into a target language of the original dialogue exchanges uttered by the different speakers, as well as of all other verbal information that is transmitted visually (letters, banners, inserts) or aurally (lyrics, voices off)”. Gottlieb (2001: 15) indicates that “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”.

### 4.1. Subtitling criteria

In his book titled *Ingmar Bergman Abroad: The Problems of Subtitling*, Egil Tornqvist (1998: 10) pointed out four main differences that separate subtitling from the translation of written texts:

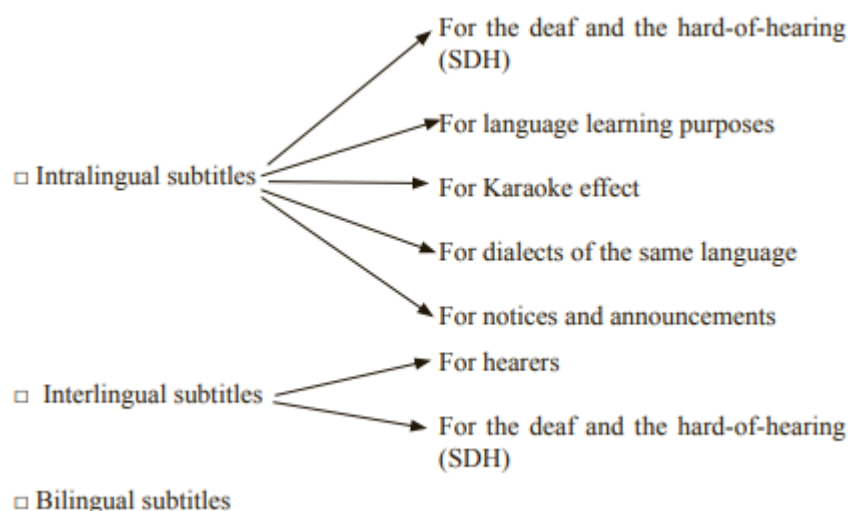
1. The reader of translated text does not compare the source text with the target, while in the subtitle, this comparison happens automatically especially if the viewer speaks the source language.
2. The translator of written text has more space to add explanations, footnotes, etc. when there is something difficult in the source text while the subtitler cannot do this.
3. The inter-textual translation involves translation from written text to written one, but subtitling involves the translation from spoken language into written text.
4. In subtitling, extended messages have to be condensed to subtitling requirements which written texts have more space to present them.

## 4.2. Classification of subtitling

Cintas and Remael (2007: 13) explain that subtitles can be categorized based on the criteria used. Due to its close ties with technology, the rapid pace of technological advancements presents a great issue in creating a fixed classification. The oldest and most used classification is based on linguistic parameters, but Cintas and Remael also group them based on time available for preparation, technical parameters, methods of projection, and distribution format.

### 4.2.1. Linguistic parameters

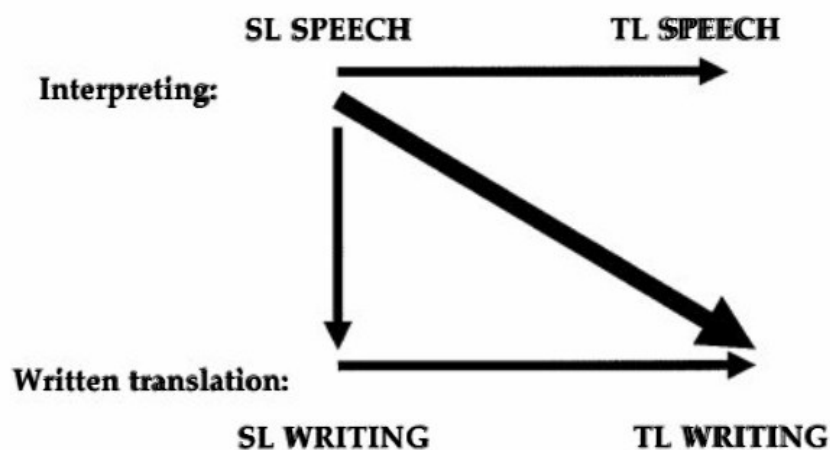
Classification based on linguistic parameters is the most traditional classification of subtitles. Dries (1995) divided subtitling into the types as shown on the diagram.



**Figure 1** Types of subtitles based on linguistic parameters (Dries 1995)

Intralingual subtitling, also known as captions in American English, refers to subtitles in which the language of the subtitles and the programme are identical. In addition to the dialogue, intralingual subtitles also include all paralinguistic information that contributes to the plot's development or the creation of atmosphere – elements that a deaf person cannot perceive from the soundtrack (irony in a statement, laughter, applause, etc.).

Interlingual subtitling is a process that “provides a written rendition of the source speech in the target language” (Perez-Gonzalez, 2019: 32). This is the most widespread type of subtitling which is essential for making content accessible to viewers who do not speak the source language. Gottlieb called this type of subtitling ‘diagonal subtitling’ because of its shift from one language to another while also switching from oral to written mode, which he visualized with a graph.



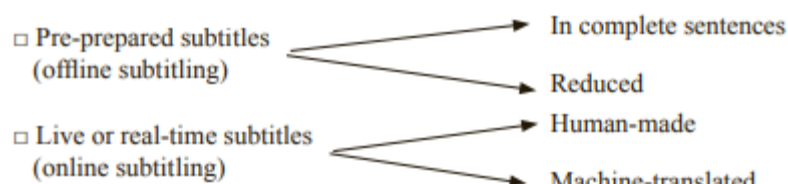
**Figure 2** Diagonal subtitling (Gottlieb 1994)

Bilingual subtitles are a part of interlingual subtitles that provide two language versions of the same source speech with each version displayed on one of the two lines of the subtitle (Gambier, 2003). They are a common practice in countries that have two domestic languages such as Finland (Finnish and Swedish), Belgium (Flemish and French), Israel (Hebrew and Arabic).

#### 4.2.2. Time available for preparation

Looking at subtitles from the perspective of time available for preparing the subtitles, Cintas and Remael distinguish between types shown on the diagram.





**Figure 3** Types of subtitles based on time available for preparation (Cintas and Remael, 2007: 19)

The key distinction between these two categories is that pre-prepared subtitles are made after the audiovisual content has been created, allowing translators sufficient time to complete their translations. On the other hand, real-time subtitles are generated simultaneously with the live broadcast or airing of the original programme (Cintas and Remael, 2007: 19)

Pre-prepared subtitles can be further categorized based on their lexical density. The most common form involves subtitling in complete sentences within the constraints of the medium, whereas the reduced form is used for television content (interviews, documentaries, news) where only the essential information is translated because it is considered relevant. Conversely, real-time subtitles are additionally divided into two categories: human-made subtitles and machine-translated subtitles. Human-made subtitles are often done by a stenographer who types on a special keyboard which allows them to reach the necessary speed and accuracy needed for live subtitling (Cintas and Remael, 2007: 19).

#### 4.2.3. Technical parameters

Based on the technical parameters, there are two types of subtitles: open and closed subtitles.

Open subtitles are embedded into the original film or broadcast and cannot be removed from the screen. They are also known as burnt-on subtitles, a term which originates from the practice of etching them onto film celluloid with acid, a process that is now replaced by laser technology (O’Connell, 2007).

Closed subtitles, otherwise known as ‘captions’ in the US, first appeared in the 1970s with the development of technology (Teletext technology, cable channels) (O’Connell, 2007). The intended audience includes individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing, who rely on subtitles –

primarily intralingual subtitles – that feature extended exposure time and additional explanatory details, such as “The phone rings.” to convey sound.

#### 4.2.4. Distribution format

The final category that Cintas and Remael identified is based on the medium used for distributing the programme because the medium can influence how subtitles are created. According to the medium, the subtitles can be made for the cinema, television, video (VHS), DVD, and Internet.

Even though convention for subtitling a programme is ultimately determined by the specific company, client instructions, or the subtitling software used, there are certain variations across different media. ‘The six-second rule’ is usually applied to calculate the reading speed of a viewer and how long a subtitle should stay on the screen for. It refers to the time it takes the average viewer to read and comprehend the information presented in a two-line subtitle with each line typically containing 35-37 characters. Using this rule, the appropriate amount of text for shorter subtitles can be determined (Cintas and Remael, 2007: 24).

#### 4.3. Subtitling process

In 2018, Kelly O’Donovan explained the subtitling process through different phases after which one should achieve the ideal subtitles. According to O’Donovan, the ideal subtitles harmonize with the audio, making them sound so natural and fluent that the viewer is not distracted by them and barely notices they are reading. The process of subtitling comprises the following phases: spotting, translation, correction, and simulation.

The first phase is spotting which involves determining the start and end times of each subtitle to ensure they are synchronized with the audio. The timing must align with the shot changes and follow the minimum and maximum duration set in the subtitling guidelines

The second phase entails translating, localizing, and adapting the content from source language while also ensuring the text fits within the character limits of the subtitling guidelines. It is common for the translator to receive a written version of the audio, but if it is not available, the translator must first transcribe the original recording.

Once the first two phases are complete, the translator must go through their translation and revise it in the correction phase. This phase refers to refining of the sentence structures, clarity, and the flow of the dialogue. The subtitles should read naturally, follow the standard punctuation, spelling, and language conventions while also being split in a way that allows for an easy read. The most notable areas of correction are punctuation, line breaks, hyphens, ellipsis and italics.

The final phase O'Donovan explains is the simulation phase. In it the film is reviewed in a simulation session where the subtitles are displayed on the screen in the same way they will appear on the final product. This allows for adjustments to text and timing to be made (O'Donovan, 2018).

Due to the complexity and dynamic nature of subtitling, each subtitling process may take on more steps such as dealing with the different subtitling requirements or overcoming different challenges and constraints. However, the phases O'Donovan explained are present in every subtitling process.

#### 4.4. Subtitling challenges

Like every other genre of audiovisual translation, subtitling has its own range of difficulties and constraints. What makes subtitling particularly complex is the intricate nature of multimodal texts that involve unique semiotic, interlingual, and cultural characteristics. This section of the thesis will deal with the three main categories of challenges: technical, cultural, and linguistic challenges. However, it is important to note that there are other challenges to as Mudawe highlights (2023: 3) in their research paper: "Social communication among subtitling parties, personal traits, and the nature of the translation task is among the factors that contribute to the complexity of subtitling".

##### 4.4.1. Technical challenges

The technical challenges are the most prominent challenges the translators face as their translations are limited by different technical restrictions. Cintas and Remael (2010: 19-21) categorized them into five different categories:

1. **The space:** There is a limited number of characters that is normally around 37 characters per-line with maximum two lines per image. This may take away the translator's freedom because limited space also limits their ability to properly formulate and translate the sentences.
2. **Time:** Subtitles cannot remain on the screen for longer than six seconds resulting in content having to be condensed. This impacts the viewer's ability to read and understand the subtitles. It is important for the translator to select the right words to convey the meaning effectively.
3. **Spotting:** Even though O'Donovan presented it as a crucial phase in the subtitling process, spotting is still a technical restriction in which the translator must match the dialogue with the subtitles. Outside of the dialogues, the subtitles must be matched to any meaningful written words on the screen.
4. **Position on screen:** The general requirement for the position of subtitles on the screen is the middle lower part of the screen where generally the least amount of screen action is happening. The subtitles can be moved when the bottom of the screen is too bright or if relevant information is positioned where the subtitles are.
5. **Font:** The font type, size, and color is important for legibility across various screen sizes and resolutions. Translator must also avoid visual clutter, and the font should support special characters and accents from different languages. Poorly chosen font can hinder readability and detract from the viewing experience.

#### 4.4.2. Cultural challenges

Cultural challenges in subtitling refer to the difficulties and complexities that arise when translating dialogue and content from one culture to another. This is especially prominent in audiovisual translation because it deals with images, and cultural references are "either exclusively or predominantly visual (an image of a local or national figure, a local dance, pet funerals, baby showers), exclusively verbal or else both visual and verbal in nature" (Chiaro, 2009: 156).

Khalaf (2016: 125) proposes the usage of domestication, foreignization, functionalism for the names of famous places, characters, etc. as a way of dealing with the cultural references. Translating humor and sarcasm can be difficult as both often rely on cultural context and linguistic nuances that are difficult to translate in a manner that resonates with the target

audience. The translator must also ensure that the translation is presented in a way that is respectful and considerate towards cultural norms and values of the target audience because certain material can be inappropriate or potentially offensive.

#### 4.4.3. Linguistic challenges

Linguistic choices that translators face when subtitling are not random as every character in audiovisual programmes or films convey certain effects through their syntax, lexicon, and grammar which carry connotative meanings in addition to the denotative meanings. Ideally, the connotative meanings should be preserved when translating from the source into target language (Cintas and Remael, 2010).

Cintas and Remael distinguish between two types of linguistic challenges. The first one refers to the accents and pronunciation which require skill or experience to properly deal with them. More precisely, translators must deal with different dialects, idiolects (unique way an individual speaks), and sociolects (language used by a particular social group). The other type involves grammatical mistakes in a dialogue which must be corrected. “The transition from oral to written poses certain challenges and raises the question of whether non-standard speech, like accents and very colloquial traits, can be effectively rendered in writing” (Cintas 2010: 346).

#### 4.5. Subtitling strategies

Schjoldager have come up with many different strategies to deal with all the challenges that the subtitling process presents. The purpose of subtitling strategies is to ensure that subtitles effectively convey the meaning, tone, and context of the original dialogue while also accommodating the aforementioned linguistic, cultural, and technical challenges.

Schjoldager (as cited in Khalaf, 2016) highlighted two different types of strategies: macro-strategies and micro-strategies. “Macro-strategies affect the text as a whole. These strategies emphasize a larger unit of discourse as their target. Furthermore, the strategies involve both TL and SL culture as the most important factor in translation work” (Nugroho, 2013: 5). Macro-strategies have been given many different names by different scholars as is shown in the following table:

<b>Translation scholar</b>	<b>Predominantly SL-Orientation</b>	<b>Predominantly TL-Orientation</b>
Jean-Paul Vinay and Jean Darbelnet	Direct translation	Oblique translation
Eugene Nida	Formal equivalence	Dynamic equivalence
Peter Newmark	Semantic translation	Communicative translation
Gideon Toury	Adequate translation	Acceptable translation
Laurence Venuti	Foreignising translation	Domesticating translation
Christiane Nord	Documentary translation	Instrumental translation

**Table 1** Macro-strategies (Schjoldager in Jensen 2009: 30)

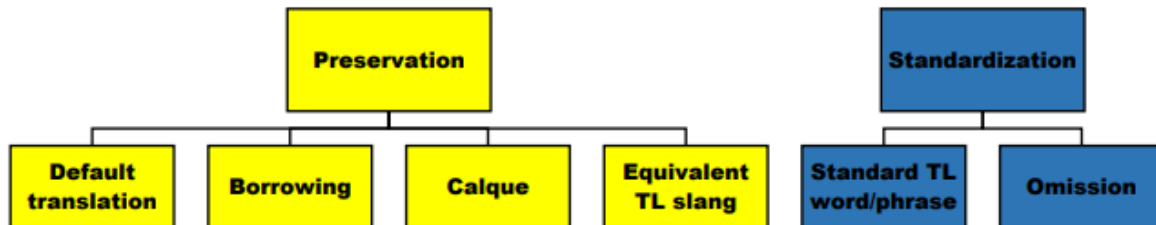
Conversely, micro-strategies affect translations on a more specific level. Chesterman (as cited in Nugroho 2013: 6) indicates that with micro-strategies “the problem in translation to be solved is something like ‘how to translate this structure/this idea/this item’”. Schjoldager proposed twelve different micro-strategies for translation. They are:

Direct transfer	Transfers something unchanged
Calque	Transfers the structure or makes a very close translation
Direct translation	Translation in a word-for-word procedure
Oblique translation	Translation in a sense-for-sense procedure
Explication	Makes implicit information explicit
Paraphrase	Translates rather freely
Condensation	Translates in a shorter way, which may involve implication
Adaptation	Recreates the effect, entirely or partially
Addition	Adds a unit of meaning
Substitution	Changes the meaning
Deletion	Leaves out a unit of meaning
Permutation	Translates in a different place

**Table 2** Micro-strategies (Schjoldager in Holst 2010: 7)

Holst (2010: 8) divided these micro-strategies into two subgroups: high degree of creativity and non-creative translations. High degree of creativity translations include permutation, adaptation, paraphrase, addition, deletion, condensation, explication, and substitution. The remaining micro-strategies belong to the non-creative translations.

In his research, Boričević (2022: 16) modified Pedersen’s taxonomy of ECR transfer strategies to strategies that are used for translating informal language and slang. The following is his taxonomy of slang translation strategies:



*Figure 4* Taxonomy of slang translation strategies

According to Schmidt (as cited in Boričević, 2022: 16), default translation is a method that is used when the literal translation of a slang expression is also considered a pre-established translation via an intertextual corpus in the target language, i.e., when a slang expression is the exact same in both the source language and the target language when translated literally.

Borrowing is a translation method that most closely aligns with the source language as it involves slightly modifying the source language word to fit the target language syntax. Loanwords are the most common solution when using the borrowing method (Boričević, 2022: 17).

Calque is a word-for-word translation method in which the source language is translated directly into the target language by translating each of its components literally. As this method strives to mirror the structure of the source language, the translations may lose the natural flow of a sentence.

Substitution with an equivalent slang expression is a translation method that involves translating slang with an equivalent in the target language. The translations are often the culture-specific items which Aixela (1996: 58) defined as “textually actualised items whose function and connotations in a source text involve a translation problem in their transference to a target text, whenever this problem is a product of the non-existence of the referred item or of its different intertextual status in the cultural system of the readers of the target text”.

Substitution with a standard word or phrase is a translation method in which a slang expression in source language is replaced with a standard word or phrase in the target language. Schmidt (as cited in Boričević, 2022: 18) refers to this translation method as ‘absolute universalization’.

Omission is a translation method in which a culture-specific item is left out, whether due to constraints like limited space, lack of effort, or the absence of a better alternative.

## 5. Informal language in *The Wire* and *Oz*

Cambridge dictionary defines informal language as language “commonly used in situations that are more relaxed and involve people we know well. It is more common when we speak. Contractions, relative clauses without a relative pronoun and ellipsis are more common in informal language” (Cambridge University Press, n.d.). It includes slang, colloquial expressions, and it tends to be more personal by including humor, idioms, and regional dialects.

Language is a tool used in *The Wire* to showcase the authenticity of the social and cultural realities of Baltimore. Characters speak in a way that reflects their backgrounds, professions, and environments. The language residents of Baltimore’s inner city, including the gang members and drug dealers, use is filled with street slang, regional dialects, and profanities. This highly informal language conveys the harshness and struggles of life in the community. The show features a diverse cast of characters from different backgrounds that each bring their own linguistic style.

Similarly to *The Wire*, the TV series *Oz* also uses language to reflect the harsh and violent environment the show is set in, which is a maximum-security prison. The dialogue is filled with profanities, street slang, and colloquial expressions. Characters speak in a direct manner, often using aggressive or demeaning language which underscores the racial tensions, power struggles, and brutal realities of prison life. Same as in *The Wire*, *Oz* features a cast of inmates that have diverse backgrounds resulting in a mix of different dialects and cultural references.

The importance of language in the two TV series cannot be understated as it is vital for preserving the authenticity, character integrity, and thematic depths of the shows. Accurate translations of the informal language in these shows enable the viewer to engage fully with the narratives and appreciate the social commentaries embedded within the dialogue.



## 6. Research

This chapter, and the following sections, present a detailed analysis of the translation strategies employed in the Croatian subtitles of the TV series *The Wire* and *Oz*, with a specific focus on how the informal language is translated. The main aim is to identify the translation methods used by translators to capture the nuances of informal language, including syntactic informalities, swearwords, idiomatic expressions, and slang, and to assess the effectiveness of these translations in conveying the intended meaning and tone to a Croatian audience.

### 6.1. Methodology and corpus

The research employs a qualitative comparative methodology to conduct a thorough analysis of informal language in the TV series *The Wire* and *Oz*. The corpus comprises the first seasons of both series. Instances of informal language in the source text is extracted along with its context and compared with the professional Croatian subtitling on HBO Max. Translated instances are grouped based on the aspect of the informal language they represent (syntactic informalities, swearwords, idioms, slang), and translation methods from Table 4 are used to show whether the informal language has been preserved or standardized. Using descriptive qualitative approach, possible explanations as to why a certain translation method is used will be given, as well as the comparisons between the translations of informal language between the two TV series. The rationale behind choosing these two TV series is the importance of informal language that the characters use. Ensuring accurate subtitling for the Croatian audience fosters a deeper understanding and appreciation of these groundbreaking series. This research aims to provide an overview of the translation strategies employed, and the challenges encountered in translating informal language for a Croatian-speaking audience.

### 6.2. Analysis

The analysis of the TV series *The Wire* and *Oz* will focus on the strategies applied in translating the English subtitles into Croatian. More precisely, the examples extracted from both shows will be analyzed based on the translation strategy used and a possible explanation as to why a certain translation was used will be given. Moreover, the examples from both series will be shown in separate tables and the translations in both series of the same type of informal language will be compared.

### 6.2.1. Syntactical informalities

Syntactical informalities in the examples presented in Table 3 and 4 below either have grammar that deviates from the standard grammatical rules, or they are incomplete sentences. Even though they deviate from the standard grammar, these examples belong to the African American English (AAE) variation of the English language, and they follow a coherent system.

<b>Original</b>	<b>HBO translation</b>	<b>Translation strategy</b>
He like the name?	Sviđalo mu se to ime?	Calque
I ain't going to no court.	Ne idem na sud.	Standard TL phrase
This look like money, motherfucker? Money be green.	Tebi ovo izgleda kao novac, seronjo? Novac je zelen.	Calque Standard TL phrase
This America, man.	Ovo je Amerika, čovječe.	Standard TL phrase
Believe.	Vjeruj to.	Standard TL phrase
Yo, Kima, where you taking us?	Kima, kamo nas vodiš?	Standard TL phrase
Been napping.	Drijemao je.	Standard TL phrase
What was you writing then?	Što si onda pisao?	Standard TL phrase
Yeah, y'all being heard.	Sve se zna.	Standard TL phrase
Why we ain't in a real police office?	Zašto nismo u pravome uredu?	Standard TL phrase

*Table 3* Syntactical informalities in *The Wire*

Original	HBO translation	Translation strategy
I'm guessing you ain't Italian.	Očito nisi Talijan.	Standard TL phrase
You like being on your knees?	Voliš biti na koljenima?	Calque
Hey, Jeanie. How you doing, baby?	Zdravo, Ginny. Kako si?	Standard TL phrase
What we were don't matter.	Nije važno što smo bili.	Standard TL phrase
They treating you ok?	Dobri su prema tebi?	Calque
Cause I say.	Zato što ti kažem.	Standard TL phrase
Why you here, McManus?	Zašto si došao?	Standard TL phrase
No, I ain't done nothing.	Ništa nisam učinio.	Standard TL phrase
I been clean since my time in the hole.	Ne drogiram se otkako sam izašao iz rupe.	Standard TL phrase
My question is, are them hicks in the midwest whacked out or what?	Pitam se jesu li ljudi koji ondje žive drogirani.	Standard TL phrase

**Table 4** Syntactical informalities in *Oz*

The contraction *ain't* is used in the AAE to refer to *am not*, *isn't*, *haven't*, *aren't*, and every example in which *ain't* is used has been standardized in the Croatian subtitles of both *The Wire* and *Oz*. The reason for this may be that the Croatian language does not have a word that can match the level of versatility and informality that *ain't* has.

The AAE also tends to drop the auxiliary verbs in different tenses. All but one example in this section where the original subtitles have not been standardized are the examples with omitted auxiliaries that have been translated with the calque method. In the example “They treating you ok”, the auxiliary verb *are* is omitted at the beginning of the sentence, and the Croatian translator translated the original as “Dobri su prema tebi?” in which the Croatian article *li* is

omitted, as well as the auxiliary verb *jesu*. Article *li* has also been omitted in the translations of these examples: “This look like money, motherfucker?”, “You like being on your knees?”, “He like the name?”. In the other examples where the auxiliary verb has been omitted, the translator translated it to the standard Croatian language as the sentences would not make sense had the auxiliary verb or article been omitted.

Negative concord is a common occurrence in the AAE. “Negative concord, popularly known as double negatives, is a phenomenon in which more than one negative element occurs in a sentence, but the sentence is interpreted as only being negated once” (Matyiku, 2011). In the *Oz* example of negative concord “No, I ain’t done nothing.”, there is a triple negation. Croatian translator kept two of the negatives as it is not deemed incorrect in the Croatian grammar, but they omitted the first negative in *No*, resulting in a translation: “Nisam ništa učinio.” Negative concord example from *The Wire* “I ain’t going to no court.” has been translated as “Ne idem na sud.”. The translator omitted one of the negatives.

“Believe.” and “Cause I say.” are both examples of incomplete sentences in which an object or a complement is lacking to fulfill its meaning. “Believe” is an example from *The Wire* which was translated in Croatian as “Vjeruj to.”. The translator decided to translate it with an added object *to*, even though “Vjeruj.” could have worked as an imperative and would have been a more accurate translation of the original while still being grammatically correct. In the example from *Oz* “Cause I say.”, the translator applied the calque method and followed the original structure of the sentence without an object, translating the example as: “Zato što ti kažem”.

It is expected for the grammatical aspects of the English informal language to be translated into standard Croatian because the Croatian grammar is not as flexible, nor versatile as the grammar in the English language. For that reason, Croatian subtitles in both TV series regarding the syntactic informalities are similar with the most applied translation strategy being substitution with a standard word or phrase. However, the translators for the subtitles of both shows have shown a tendency to preserve the deviation from standard grammar in certain cases by using the calque method.

### 6.2.2. Swearwords

While swearwords are a common occurrence in everyday language, the translators are met with a difficult choice when translating swearwords. “A text containing swearing, individual objects

in the source text, or the potential equivalents on offer for the target text may cause the translation to trigger emotional reactions, and steer the translator towards or away from certain choices” (Hjort, 2017: 166). Accurately translating swearwords is particularly important in both *The Wire* and *Oz* because swearing is a key element of the characters’ informal language, reflecting the harsh realities of life in the inner city (*The Wire*) and in a maximum-security prison (*Oz*). Tables 5 and 6 below contain examples of swearwords and their Croatian translations.

Original	HBO Translation	Translation strategy
Gave that <b>shit</b> to my old lady.	Prenio sam je ženskoj.	Standard TL phrase
<b>Fuck</b> it, Kima.	<b>Jebi</b> ga, Kima.	Default translation
<b>Fuck</b> the paperwork.	<b>Jebeš</b> papirologiju.	Default translation
Mouldering <b>motherfucker</b> .	Ti pljesnivi <b>gade</b> .	Equivalent TL slang
What the <b>fuck</b> you doing over at the courthouse anyway?	Koji si <b>kurac</b> radio na sudu?	Equivalent TL slang
Why the <b>fuck</b> are you talking to some <b>shitbag</b> judge?	Zašto si razgovarao s nekim <b>jebenim</b> sucem?	Standard TL phrase Equivalent TL slang
And this bad boy over here is in your <b>fuckin’</b> eye.	A ovaj opaki momak ide ti u oko.	Omission
<b>Niggers</b> crazy in there, yo.	<b>Crnje</b> su ondje ljudi.	Default translation
What happened to the <b>faggot</b> ?	Što se dogodilo s onom <b>pederčinom</b> ?	Default translation
<b>Motherfucker</b> who robbed the stash shot Sterling.	<b>Pizdun</b> koji je opljačkao robu upucao je Sterlinga.	Equivalent TL slang
Get in line, what the <b>fuck</b> ? Line the <b>fuck</b> up.	Stanite u red, koji vam je <b>kurac</b> ? U red.	Equivalent TL slang Omission
You all both here on my guarantee, so respect that <b>shit</b> and say what you feel.	Pod mojim ste jamstvom, poštujte to i recite što osjećate.	Standard TL phrase

<b>Motherfucker!</b>	<b>Đubre! Pizduni</b> , kradete	Equivalent TL slang
<b>Motherfuckers</b> , trying to steal our shit.	naše stvari. <b>Đubre!</b>	Equivalent TL slang
<b>Motherfucker!</b>		Equivalent TL slang
Me ain't got <b>shit</b> .	Nemam ništa.	Standard TL phrase
This some of Avon's <b>shit</b> .	Ovo je Avonovo.	Omission
<b>Shit</b> .	<b>Sranje</b> .	Default translation
<b>Nigger</b> ring me up twice a day whether he got <b>shit</b> to say or not.	<b>Crnjo</b> me zove dvaput na dan ima li što reći ili ne.	Default translation Standard TL phrase
He said he all <b>faggot</b> . A <b>faggot</b> ?	Kaže da je <b>pederčina</b> . <b>Pederčina</b> ?	Default translation Default translation
Me and Bey, we gonna take care of that <b>shit</b> .	Ja i Bey obavljat ćemo to.	Standard TL phrase
<b>Fuck</b> .	<b>Jebemti</b> .	Default translation

*Table 5* Swearwords in *The Wire*

Compared to syntactic informalities examples, the translator had more freedom when deciding how to translate the swearwords as they are more common in the Croatian language, and they could match the versatility found in the English language.

The word *fuck* is one of the most versatile and widely recognized swearwords in the English language, and there is no shortage of it in *The Wire*. When used as a standalone sentence and an expression of anger, or frustration, fuck is translated as *jebemti*. In the examples where *fuck* is used as a verb, the translator applied the default translation method because *jebati* is the literal translation of the word *fuck* and it is used in the same way in the Croatian language. When *fuck* is used as an intensifier like in the example “What the fuck you doing at the courthouse anyway?”, translator replaced the *what the fuck* phrase from the original subtitles with an equivalent phrase in Croatian which is *koji kurac*. However, in a similar example “Why the fuck are you talking to some shitbag judge?”, translator did not translate *why the fuck* as *koji kurac* but has decided to omit the swearword and has used the standard Croatian language resulting in: “Zašto si razgovarao s nekim jebenim sucem?”. Despite that, the translator did not omit the other swearword in that example, translating *shitbag judge* as *jebenim sucem*. Example

“Get in like, what the fuck? Line the fuck up.” shares similarities with the previous two examples. While *what the fuck* has been substituted with the Croatian phrase *koji kurac*, the swearword from the second part of the subtitle has been omitted in the translation, resulting in: “Stanite u red, koji vam je kurac? U red.”. While it is unclear why the second swearword has been omitted, a possible translation could have been “U jebeni red.”, which works syntactically and semantically in Croatian language. The same is the case with the example “And this bad boy over here is in your fuckin’ eye.” in which *fuckin’* was omitted from the Croatian translation.

Other common swearwords in *The Wire* were *motherfucker*, *faggot* and *nigger*. As shown in the examples, both *faggot* and *nigger* have been translated consistently in the series as *pederčina* and *crnjo*. On the other hand, translation for *motherfucker* varies for seemingly no reason. Example “Motherfucker! Motherfuckers, trying to steal our shit. Motherfucker!” represents three consecutive sentences uttered by one character towards other characters that were stealing his drugs, and it was translated in Croatian as “Đubre! Pizduni, kradete naše stvari. Đubre!”. It is unclear why the translator used different equivalents from the Croatian language. One possible explanation is that *đubre* is used for singular, and *pizduni* for plural, but that is disproved by the example “Motherfucker who robbed the stash shot Sterling.” which was translated as “Pizdun koji je opljačkao robu upucaao je Sterlinga.”. In another example, *motherfucker* is translated as *gade*, which is yet another equivalent in the Croatian language.

Substitution with a standard word or phrase was the most applied strategy when translating swearword *shit*. The only time it is translated using the default translation method is when *shit* is used as an exclamation, i.e., as an expression of surprise, anger, or frustration. In the examples where *shit* is used as a noun, the translator substitutes it with pronouns *to*, *što*, *ništa*, *je*.

Original	HBO Translation	Translation strategy
Another <b>nigger</b> ’s going down.	Ubit će još jednog <b>crnčugu</b> .	Default translation
<b>Fucking</b> bunch of <b>niggers</b> !	<b>Usrani crnje!</b>	Equivalent TL slang Default translation

Do not <b>fuck</b> with me, <b>prag</b> !	Ne <b>zafrkavaj</b> me!	Standard TL phrase Omission
The <b>mick</b> and <b>dago</b> .	<b>Irca</b> i <b>Digića</b> .	Standard TL phrase Default translation
<b>Shit!</b>	<b>Sranje!</b>	Default translation
<b>Fuck!</b>	<b>Sranje!</b>	Equivalent TL slang
It was more a sign to Glynn, don't <b>fuck</b> with us.	Htio sam Glynnu pokazati da nema zafrkancije.	Standard TL phrase
Man, I <b>fucking</b> hate lockdowns.	Mrzim kad nas ne puštaju van.	Omission
You <b>fucking</b> prick!	Kretene!	Omission Equivalent TL slang
Yeah, <b>motherfucker</b> , how's that?	<b>Gade</b> , što sada kažeš?	Equivalent TL slang
<b>Fuck</b> that pretty little <b>mick</b> !	<b>Nabijem</b> ga.	Equivalent TL slang Omission
Take that, <b>motherfucker</b> .	Evo ti, <b>gade</b> .	Equivalent TL slang
<b>Fucking</b> cocksucker!	<b>Gade!</b>	Equivalent TL slang
<b>Fucking</b> faggot!	<b>Pederu usrani!</b>	Equivalent TL slang Default translation
No, I never liked that <b>shit</b> .	Nikada to nisam volio.	Standard TL phrase
So the <b>fucking</b> pussy took the state to court, said smoking was bad for his health. What the <b>fuck</b> ?	Neki <b>kreten</b> žalio se da je pušenje nezdravo.	Omission Equivalent TL slang Omission

*Table 6* Swearwords in *Oz*

When it comes to translating the swearword *fuck*, there are apparent differences between the Croatian subtitles in *The Wire* and in *Oz*. The translator avoided the default translation of the swearword *fuck* which is *jebati*, and the only similarity found between the examples using *fuck* is the application of the omission strategy in examples where *fucking* is used. In *Oz*, when *fuck* is used as a standalone sentence, it is translated as *sranje*, and *sranje* is also the translation when *shit* is used as a standalone sentence. In the examples “Do not fuck with me, prag”, and “It was



more a sign to Glynn, don't fuck with us.”, the translator substituted the phrase *fuck with someone* with the verb *zafrkavati* which is a part of the standard Croatian language. A possible translation the translator could have used to preserve the informal language would be the verb *zajebavati*. The phrase *what the fuck* which has been translated as *koji kurac* in *The Wire* has been completely omitted in the example from *Oz* shown in Table 6. Judging by the examples using the swearword *fuck*, it may be that the use of the word *jebati* as an appropriate substitution for *fuck* was disallowed in the subtitling requirements.

The translations of swearwords *motherfucker*, *nigger*, and *faggot* in *The Wire* and *Oz* share ample similarities. *Motherfucker* has been translated in *Oz* as *gade*, corresponding to one of the translations in *The Wire*. However, unlike the varying Croatian translations of *motherfucker* in *The Wire*, the translations were consistent in *Oz*. Swearwords *faggot*, and *nigger* were translated as *pederu*, and *crnjo/crnčuga* in *Oz*. In *The Wire*, translator used the augmentative of *pederu* for *faggot*, and *crnjo* for *nigger* which corresponds with the translation in *Oz*.

In *Oz*, swearword *mick* which is used as a derogatory term for Irish people has been omitted in one of the examples, and in the other example it was substituted with the standard Croatian word *Irac*, meaning the man of Irish descent. On the other hand, derogatory term *dago* was used in the original subtitles, and its translation was *digić*. The translator applied the default translation method as there is a literal translation of the word in the Croatian language.

Overall, in both Croatian subtitles, there has been an increase in preserving of the informal language in comparison with syntactic informalities. That is because the Croatian language can match the versatility of English swearwords, unlike with syntactic informalities where the flexibility of sentence structures and verbs is not on the same level as the English language.

### 6.2.3. Idiomatic expressions

Idiomatic expressions, or idioms, are phrases or expressions whose meanings cannot be deduced from the individual words they contain. They are unique to a language and culture they belong to, reflecting the cultural norms, values, and common experiences. Idioms used in *The Wire* and *Oz* often draw from street slang, or prison jargon.

Original	HBO translation	Translation strategy
Motherfucker ain't have to <b>put no cap in him</b> though.	Gad ga nije morao <b>ucmekati</b> .	Equivalent TL slang

You are having the deputy <b>bust my balls</b> over a prior-year case?	Zamjenik mi je <b>sjeo za vrat</b> zbog prošlogodišnjeg slučaja?	Equivalent TL slang
Look, <b>you're my eyes and ears</b> in this mess, right?	<b>Ti si moje oči i uši</b> u ovoj kaši.	Default translation
Excuse me for <b>giving a shit</b> .	Ispričavam se što mi je stalo.	Standard TL phrase
Shit, <b>you married to the needle</b> , boy.	Sranje, dečko, <b>oženjen si za iglu</b> .	Calque
Who <b>ain't</b> even <b>in the game</b> ...	Koji čak <b>nije u igri</b> ...	Calque
You ever <b>caught a body</b> ?	<b>Koknuo si</b> koga?	Equivalent TL slang

*Table 7* Idiomatic expressions in *The Wire*

Translator has failed to preserve the idiomatic expression in only one example from Table 7. The idiom in question is *giving a shit* which is also the only vulgar idiom among the examples. *Giving a shit* is an idiom used to express lack of concern about something or someone. The translator substituted the idiom with a standard phrase in the Croatian language, but a possible translation in which the informal language could have been preserved is: “Ispričavam se što me bilo briga.”.

The idiomatic expression *you're my eyes and ears* presented in one example works as a literal translation in the Croatian informal language as *ti si moje oči i uši*, and the idiom is referring to a person who trustworthily reports information to another person. The translator applied the calque method for two idioms from *The Wire* which are *being married to the needle* and *being in the game*. There are no equivalents for this phrase in the Croatian language, so the translator decided to translate the idioms literally as *biti oženjen za iglu* and *biti u igri*. By doing that, the translator successfully preserved the informal language, and the meaning of the idiom can be extracted by Croatian viewers using the context of the TV series, but also the context of the scene.

In three different examples, the translator had to substitute the original idiom with an idiom from the Croatian language. The idiom *put a cap in someone*, meaning to kill someone, was substituted with *ucmekati nekoga*. The idiom *bust someone's balls*, meaning to give someone a

hard time, was translated as *sjesti za vrat nekome*. Finally, the idiom *to catch a body*, meaning also to kill someone, was translated as *koknuti nekoga*.

Original	HBO translation	Translation strategy
Why you busting my balls?	Čemu ovo?	Standard TL phrase
I don't <b>give a shit</b> about you.	<b>Boli me kita</b> za tebe.	Equivalent TL slang
Why am I gonna <b>shit you</b> about that scum?	Zašto bih <b>srao</b> ?	Default translation
I'm gonna <b>cap that motherfucker!</b>	Ubit ću ga!	Standard TL phrase
Once in a while one of these guys, who is married, tries <b>to pull off a fast one on me</b> and pass off a hooker as his mate.	Katkad netko tko je oženjen pokušava dovesti kurvu i <b>prevariti me.</b>	Standard TL phrase
I ain't <b>got no beef with y'all.</b>	<b>Nemam ništa protiv vas.</b>	Equivalent TL slang

**Table 8** Idiomatic expressions in *Oz*

Idioms *busting someone's balls* and *giving a shit* have been translated differently in *Oz* than in *The Wire*. In *The Wire*, the translator decided to substitute *giving a shit* with a standard phrase from the Croatian language, while in *Oz*, the translator substituted the idiom with a vulgar idiom *boli me kita* from the Croatian language. Conversely, in *The Wire*, the idiom *busting someone's balls* was replaced with an informal equivalent, while in *Oz*, it was standardized as “Čemu ovo?”.

The substitution with a phrase from the standard Croatian language is more common in the examples from *Oz*. Aside from the idiom *busting someone's balls*, idioms *to cap someone* and *to pull off a fast one on someone* have both been standardized. *To cap someone*, meaning to kill someone, has been translated as *ubiti nekoga*. In *The Wire*, a similar idiom *to put a cap in someone* which also means to kill someone has been substituted with an informal Croatian idiom. *To pull off a fast one* is an idiom meaning to trick someone, and it was substituted with a standard Croatian verb *prevariti*. A possible translation that the translator could have used for that idiom is *preveslati nekoga*.

The idiom *shit someone* has been translated as *srati* which is the default translation for it as the same idiom exists in the Croatian informal language. Substitution with an equivalent idiom has been applied in the translation of the idiom *have beef with someone*, which was translated as *nemati ništa protiv nekoga*.

#### 6.2.4. Slang

Merriam-Webster (n.d.) defines slang as “an informal nonstandard vocabulary composed typically of coinages, arbitrarily changed words, and extravagant, forced, or facetious figures of speech”. In *The Wire* and *Oz*, it further adds to the authenticity of their respective surroundings, and it presents a challenge for the translator to find accurate translations for certain terms without hurting the cultural context surrounding the slang.

Original	HBO translation	Translation strategy
You people bring me something that needs <b>OT</b> , you'll get <b>OT</b> ...	Donesite mi nešto što zahtijeva <b>prekovremene</b> , i dobit ćete <b>prekovremene</b> .	Standard TL phrase Standard TL phrase
Ye, they're still <b>vialin' up</b> .	Još <b>pune ampule</b> .	Standard TL phrase
Got any <b>testers</b> , man?	Imaš <b>testera</b> ?	Borrowing
Man, <b>Five-O</b> be down here about the bodies.	<b>Murja</b> dolazi zbog leševa.	Equivalent TL slang
<b>Re-up</b> 's late.	<b>Opskrba</b> kasni.	Standard TL phrase
Young-ass <b>hoppers</b> .	Mladi <b>teklići</b> .	Standard TL phrase
Two <b>G-packs</b> . Let's roll.	Dva <b>paketa</b> . Idemo.	Standard TL phrase
Put \$500 in Wee-Bey and Bird's hands for doing the <b>muscling up</b> .	Po petsto Wee-Beyu i Birdu za <b>fizički rad</b> .	Standard TL phrase
You ain't heard nothing from the <b>knockos</b> yet, right?	Još se nisu javili iz <b>Odjela za narkotike</b> ?	Standard TL phrase

*Table 9* Slang in *The Wire*

As is shown in Table 9, many of the slang words found in *The Wire* have been standardized in Croatian subtitles. This should come as no surprise as slang in *The Wire* is highly localized, and there are no direct equivalents for this slang in the Croatian language as the slang is not culturally relevant in Croatia. By standardizing terms such as *re-up*, *hoppers*, *G-packs*, *muscling up*, *knockos*, *OT*, *vialin' up*, the translator made the show more accessible to the Croatian audience, but it was to the detriment of characters' backgrounds and personalities as these slang terms reflect that.

However, two of the examples from the table have not been standardized. In the example "Got any testers, man?", the slang *testers* was borrowed from the English language and implemented in the Croatian language, resulting in the translation: *Imaš testera?*. While the term *tester* does exist in the Croatian dictionary, it does not refer to free vials of drug given out when a new drug appears. In the other example, slang for police, *Five-O*, has been substituted with a Croatian slang term for police, *murja*.

Original	HBO translation	Translation strategy
After that, we can bury him in <b>gen pop</b> .	Poslije ga možemo prebaciti među <b>ostale</b> .	Standard TL phrase
Saw you being all palsie with that <b>hack</b> .	Vidio sam da ti je <b>čuvar</b> kompić.	Standard TL phrase
Johnnie, you're up. Why don't you go in the hole and <b>whack</b> that wop.	Johnnie, idi do samice i <b>ubij</b> ga.	Standard TL phrase
I wanna be <b>G</b> .	Želim raditi za vas.	Standard TL phrase
<b>Homeboy</b> getting soft.	Smekšao je.	Omission
You know Adebisi's gonna <b>shank</b> you the first chance he gets.	Adebisi će te <b>ubiti</b> prvom prilikom.	Standard TL phrase

Hey, we supply <b>tits</b> to this whole fucking prison, all right?	Cijeli zatvor snabdijevamo <b>sisama!</b>	Calque
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**Table 10** Slang in *Oz*

Similarly to the examples from *The Wire*, the slang in *Oz* has also been mostly standardized. *Gen pop* referring to the general population in prison has been translated as *ostali*, and *hack* which is a slang for a prison guard has been translated as *čuvar*. *Shank* and *whack* are two slang terms that refer to killing a person, and both have been translated with the standard Croatian verb for killing which is *ubiti*. The term *G*, which is an abbreviation for *gangster*, has been omitted in the Croatian translation and replaced with standardized Croatian phrasing. In the example “Homeboy getting soft.”, the translator standardized the translation by omitting the word *homeboy*.

The only example from Table 10 in which the informal language has been preserved is the example including the slang term *tits*. In this instance, *tits* refer to drugs inside the prison (mainly heroin), and the translator translated it as *sise* which is the literal translation of the English word.

The translators of both TV series had the most issues with preserving the informal language when it comes to slang. The biggest obstacle in translating the slang terms from *The Wire* and *Oz* is the large cultural gap that exists. Slang is deeply embedded in the cultures that are represented, and the Croatian translators can struggle with finding equivalents that convey the same cultural significance. For that reason, the translators decided to capture the sense of each sentence, as word-for-word translation was an issue. While the avoidance of the slang terms has contributed to the better understanding of the TV series for the Croatian audience, the standardization of slang has also negatively impacted the character dynamics and their authenticity.

## 7. Conclusion

This research revealed the significant challenges the Croatian translators have encountered in translating the informal language of *The Wire* and *Oz* from English into Croatian. These challenges have affected the authenticity of both TV series as the Croatian translators had to resort to standardization of informal language to properly convey the meaning. Linguistic challenges mainly occurred in the examples containing syntactic informalities, such as deviation from the standard grammar or incomplete sentences. In the Croatian subtitles of both TV series, the translators had to standardize many of the sentences because their structure was not possible in the Croatian grammar which is a lot more rigid than the English grammar, more specifically African American English grammar. This standardization hindered the natural flow of a conversation. Moreover, contraction *ain't* has been consistently omitted in the Croatian subtitles due to the lack of a directly equivalent contraction. The examples in which auxiliary verbs have been omitted in the original are the only translations containing informal Croatian sentence structures as the translators applied the calque method in several of such examples. Cultural challenges were most present in the translation of slang. Due to the lack of culturally relevant terms in the Croatian language, translators of both TV series have standardized the terms and captured the sense of the sentence instead of translating word-for-word. The types of informal language in which the biggest part of informal language has been preserved are swearwords and idiomatic expressions. As the Croatian language is filled with many swearwords and different idioms, the translators have managed to substitute many of the swearwords and idioms from the source text with the appropriate Croatian equivalents. Overall, the many difficulties translators encounter while subtitling have also been present in these translations. The constraints of the Croatian grammar, as well as the vast cultural differences, have resulted in translations that enhance understanding for the Croatian audience, but sacrifice cultural context and characters' portrayals. Preserving the informal language in TV series like *The Wire* and *Oz* is crucial for maintaining the authenticity of the original, but finding a balance between authenticity and accessibility for the audience remains a significant challenge for translators.

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