

UNIVERZITA PARDUBICE
FAKULTA FILOZOFICKÁ

BAKALÁŘSKÁ PRÁCE

2013

Jiří Fiedler

University of Pardubice

Faculty of Arts and Philosophy

Translating Humor in The Black Adder

Jiří Fiedler

Bachelor paper

2013

Univerzita Pardubice
Fakulta filozofická
Akademický rok: 2012/2013

ZADÁNÍ BAKALÁŘSKÉ PRÁCE

(PROJEKTU, UMĚLECKÉHO DÍLA, UMĚLECKÉHO VÝKONU)

Jméno a příjmení: **Jiří Fiedler**
Osobní číslo: **H10513**
Studijní program: **B7310 Filologie**
Studijní obor: **Anglický jazyk pro odbornou praxi**
Název tématu: **Překlad humoru v seriálu Černá zmije**
Zadávající katedra: **Katedra anglistiky a amerikanistiky**

Z á s a d y p r o v y p r a c o v á n í :

Práce se zaměří na prostředky, jimiž je v češtině interpretován humor zmíněného seriálu. Stručná osnova: 1) Úvod 2) Charakteristika a stručný přehled dějin anglického humoru 3) Jazyková a kulturní prprobematika překladu 4) Audiovizuální překládání 5) Závěr 6) Résumé 7) Bibliografie

Rozsah grafických prací:

Rozsah pracovní zprávy:

Forma zpracování bakalářské práce: **tištěná/elektronická**

Seznam odborné literatury:

BERMAN, Garry. Best of the Britcoms: From Fawly Towers to Absolutely Fabulous. Dallas, Tex: Taylor, 1999, 140 s. ISBN 08-783-3160-3. Folia translologica: international series of translation studies. Prague: Faculty of Philosophy & Arts, Charles University, [1992]- . PRIESTLEY, J. B. English Humour. 1. Publ. New York: Stein and Day, 1976. 208 s. KNITTLOVÁ, Dagmar. Teorie překladu. Vyd. 1. Olomouc: Vydavatelství Univerzity Palackého, 1995. 140 s. ISBN 80-7067-459-8. LEVÝ, Jiří. Umění překladu. Praha: Ivo Železný, 1998. 386 s. ISBN 80-237-3539-X. LLOYD, John, Rowan ATKINSON, Ben ELTON a Richard CURTIS. Blackadder: The Whole Damn Dynasty. London: Penguin, 1999. ISBN 01-402-8035-9. LLOYD, John, Rowan ATKINSON, Ben ELTON a Richard CURTIS. Černá zmije: Celá ta mizerná dynastie 1485-1917. Praha: XYZ, 2008. ISBN 80-870-2161-4. ROSS, Alison. The Language of Humour. New York: Routledge, 1998, 118 s. Intertext (London, England). ISBN 04-151-6912-7. ROZMAN, Renata. Lost in Translation: Difficulties in Translating English Humour. Saarbrücken: VDM, 2008. ISBN 978-363-9025-897. Topics in audiovisual translation [online]. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, c2004. Benjamins translation library, ISSN 0929-7316; v. 56 [cit. 2012-03-08]. Dostupné z: <<http://site.ebrary.com/lib/natl/Doc?id=10067167>>.

Vedoucí bakalářské práce:

prof. PhDr. Bohuslav Mánek, CSc.

Katedra anglistiky a amerikanistiky

Datum zadání bakalářské práce: **30. dubna 2012**

Termín odevzdání bakalářské práce: **31. března 2013**



prof. PhDr. Petr Vorel, CSc.

děkan

L.S.



Mgr. Šárka Bubíková, Ph.D.

vedoucí katedry

V Pardubicích dne 30. listopadu 2012

Prohlašuji:

Tuto práci jsem vypracoval samostatně. Veškeré literární prameny a informace, které jsem v práci využil, jsou uvedeny v seznamu použité literatury.

Byl jsem seznámen s tím, že se na moji práci vztahují práva a povinnosti vyplývající ze zákona č. 121/2000 Sb., autorský zákon, zejména se skutečností, že Univerzita Pardubice má právo na uzavření licenční smlouvy o užití této práce jako školního díla podle § 60 odst. 1 autorského zákona, a s tím, že pokud dojde k užití této práce mnou nebo bude poskytnuta licence o užití jinému subjektu, je Univerzita Pardubice oprávněna ode mne požadovat přiměřený příspěvek na úhradu nákladů, které na vytvoření díla vynaložila, a to podle okolností až do jejich skutečné výše.

Souhlasím s prezenčním zpřístupněním své práce v Univerzitní knihovně Univerzity Pardubice.

V Pardubicích dne 20. 06. 2013

Acknowledgement

I would like to express my thanks to my supervisor prof. PhDr. Bohuslav Mánek, CSc. for his guidance and valuable feedback on my work.

ANOTACE

Tato práce se zabývá překladem humoru, jehož problematiku sleduje v kontextu britského komediálního seriálu *Černá zmije*. Obsahuje stručnou charakteristiku hlavních rysů britského humoru a přehled jeho moderního vývoje, dále pak teoretickou část, jež zkoumá metodiku a úskalí překladu humoru, a také praktickou část, která analyzuje překlad humoru ve vybraných úryvcích ze scénáře seriálu.

KLÍČOVÁ SLOVA

překlad, humor, britský humor, Černá zmije

NÁZEV PRÁCE

Překlad humoru v seriálu *Černá zmije*

ANNOTATION

This paper deals with translation of humor and explores the issue within the *Black Adder* series. It contains an outline of the characteristic features of British humor and its recent history, a theoretical part, which examines issues of humor translation, and, lastly, a practical part, which analyzes how humor is translated in selected excerpts from the series script.

KEYWORDS

translation, humor, British humor, the Black Adder

Table of Contents

0. Introduction.....	7
1. History and Characteristics of British Comedy	8
1.1 History of British Comedy.....	8
1.2 Characteristics of British Comedy	10
1.2.1 Subject Matters	11
1.2.2 Butts of Jokes.....	16
1.2.3 Mediums for Expressing British Humor.....	19
2. Issues in Translating Humor	22
2.1 Typology of Jokes.....	23
2.1.1 International or Bi-national Jokes.....	23
2.1.2 Culture-bound Jokes	23
2.1.3 Community-based Jokes	24
2.1.4 Language-dependent Jokes	25
2.1.5 Visual Jokes	26
2.1.6 Complex Jokes.....	26
3. Translation Issues in Selected Extracts.....	28
3.1 Language-dependent Jokes	28
3.2 Culture-bound Jokes	39
3.3 Complex Jokes.....	41
4. Conclusion	45
5. Bibliography	47
I. Printed Sources.....	47
II. Online Sources	48
6. Appendix.....	55

0. Introduction

The *Black Adder* series, as this paper refers to the British comedy tetralogy composed of *The Black Adder* (1983), *Black Adder II* (1986), *Blackadder the Third* (1987), and *Blackadder Goes Forth* (1989), ranks among the most popular sitcoms in the United Kingdom. (Internet 1) Bearing many hallmarks of British humor, as expanded on below, the saga (especially since *Black Adder II*) appealed to millions of viewers (Berman, 55) with its memorable protagonists, such as the eloquent, sarcastic and artful Blackadder (Rowan Atkinson), his well-meaning but tremendously obtuse and dirty-looking servant Baldrick (Tony Robinson), the impish, happy-go-lucky and peculiar, if not insane, George (Hugh Laurie) or the slightly deranged, yet always jovial Melchett (Stephen Fry), and its popularity does not appear to have faded away. (Internet 2)

In translation, however, not all of the quintessential features of the series (and of British humor as a whole) are preserved as easily as the biting, ironic remarks or the extraordinarily vivid similes, with which the series abounds. Contrariwise, various forms of wordplay or culture-specific references can prove extremely challenging to translate and, more often than not, require replacements which need to be made so as to compensate for the original joke, thus offering the target culture a slightly or even completely different experience.

Using examples from the series (where possible), this thesis contains a characterization and an overview of British comedy and its recent history in Chapter 1, focusing mainly on subject matters and means of conveying humor. Chapter 2 deals with issues in humor translation such as puns or culture-bound references, and provides theoretical basis for Chapter 3, in which selected excerpts from the *Black Adder* series script and its Czech translation by Ivo Železný are analyzed.

1. History and Characteristics of British Comedy

This chapter will provide a brief outline of the recent history and development of British comedy, as well as identify and describe the characteristic qualities of British humor using selected examples from The *Black Adder* television series when possible in order to enhance the understanding of culture-specific phenomena, and thus offer additional insight into related translation issues, which will be scrutinized in Chapter 3.

1.1 History of British Comedy

From the perspective of popular culture, the origins of contemporary British comedy can be traced back to the Victorian age, during which a performer would entertain the clientele of a tavern, coffee house or a supper room, usually by means of music but also theatrical performances, whether serious or satirizing famous works, with Sam Cowell's burlesque rendition of *Hamlet* being a case in point. (Internet 3)

The prominent spots of such entertainment included The Green Gate Tavern, London, which might have been described as a pub theater, The Borough Music Hall, Southwark, known as Salmon Concert Room or Public House before the inception of music halls, and later as the Alexandra Music Hall or the Raglan Music Hall, and finally, The Eagle, London, a popular venue associated with personalities such as the famous novelist Charles Dickens or the music hall star Marie Lloyd.

As intimated, these places were the predecessors of "music halls" – facilities in which the entertainment could be portrayed as more cultivated in comparison with the inevitably riotous environment of taverns. To some extent, music halls could be likened to theaters, because they contained stages, sometimes balconies, and their overall architecture was quite reminiscent of that of a theatre (see Fig. 1); nonetheless, there were several elements which dispel the theater-like notion of music halls.

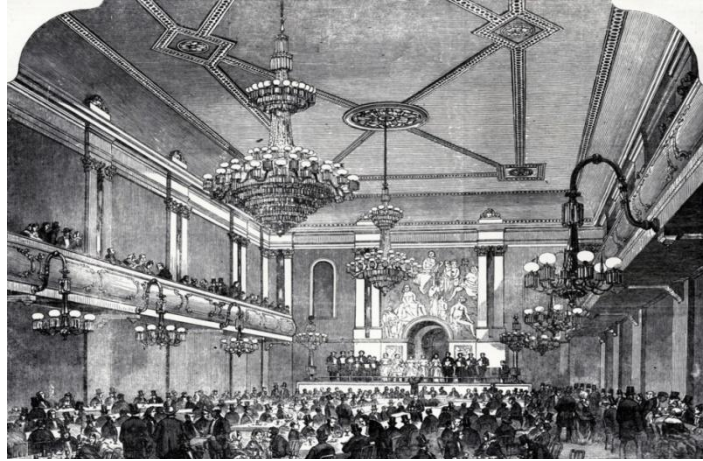


Fig. 1 – The Interior of Canterbury Music Hall, Lambeth, London, 19th century. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

Their insinuated theatrical glamor was spoiled by the fact that instead of seats, there were tables in front of the stage at which the audience would consume refreshment, which illustrates that the performance itself need not have been the primary motivation for the visitors. Young aristocrats and members of the working class representing the major part of the audience, music halls were, as a matter of fact, often looked upon as places of revelry and the high life, all the more so due to prostitutes being a frequent occurrence in the vicinity of music halls. (ibid.)

Having reached their heyday between 1890 and 1912 (Internet 4), music halls began to struggle with the "wireless" from the commencement of British Broadcasting Company (BBC) radio broadcast in 1922, as well as with the dearth of performers, as the following quotation from the official website of Victoria and Albert Museum indicates:

By the 1930s many theatres had closed or become cinemas. Other forms of entertainment, such as revue, had become popular and many variety performers made their names through radio, film and later, television. In World War I many former acrobats, aerialists and jugglers were killed or injured and could no longer perform, thus robbing the stage of the breadth and variety of acts previously available. (Internet 5)

Although music halls did not completely perish thereafter, the fact that a performance which an artist would have been able to give consecutively for at least a few weeks spent travelling from town to town could now be attended, in a way, by an incomparably larger audience, did

not exactly ameliorate the situation. Contrariwise, after the Variety department was established by the BBC in 1933, which later served to uplift the national spirit in wartime, the tradition of regularly broadcast comedy shows started, spearheaded by the comedy program *It's That Man Again* (1939 – 1949) and followed by a laundry list of shows (many of which were domestic comedies) such as *Little Britain*, *The Clitheroe Kid*, *The Navy Lark*, *The Goon Show*, *Hancock's Half Hour* (on television later on), etc.

Despite having survived the onset of the radio, music halls were severely afflicted by the television broadcast expansion in the 1950s. What the radio had been unable to provide and had kept the solo and variety entertainers alive – the visual part of a performance – the television brought, and the doom of music hall popularity was completed. (Internet 6) Still, there appeared traces of the music hall tradition; *The Goon Show*, for instance, featured musical passages.

The television paved the way for various sketch shows, sitcom (or rather, Britcom), and satire, while stand-up comedians had to contend with the growing influence of scriptwriters and the fact that their gags and jokes became rather short-lived, as opposed to their relative longevity in the golden age of music halls. (ibid.) From the university milieu stood out The Cambridge Foothills, a few members of which later became the prominent figures of *Monty Python's Flying Circus* (1969 – 1974), a popular comedy series composed of unrelated sketches, and along with David Frost's politically-oriented *That Was The Week That Was* (1962 – 1963) as well as the aforementioned *Hancock's Half Hour*, these shows, among others, made a considerable impact on the nature of British comedy. (Internet 7) (Internet 8)

In their wake, an array of comedy programs were created, ranging from *Fawlty Towers* (featuring John Cleese, one of the leading characters of *Monty Python's Flying Circus*), *Porridge* or *Rising Damp* to *Only Fools and Horses*, *Not the Nine O'Clock News*, the *Black Adder* series, *Yes, Minister*, *'Allo 'Allo!*, *Mr Bean*, *The Office*, *Black Books* or *The IT Crowd*. Doubtless many more creations could be listed, but it would be unnecessary for the purposes of this paper.

1.2 Characteristics of British Comedy

One aspect which could facilitate the understanding of what the term "British comedy" denotes has already been hinted: its preponderant types, i.e. stand-up comedy, sitcom, satire

and sketch shows. Within them, several distinctive features can be observed, subject matter of comedy being the first one at issue.

However, before examining its specific attributes, we might consider Took's remark concerning the richness of British humor:

"As a race, the British have one peculiarity that sets them apart from the rest of mankind: their extraordinary sense of humour; their ability to laugh at others, to laugh at the sublime *and* the ridiculous, to laugh at disaster and at triumph, to be indifferent to the subject of the joke but to seek and find humour in everything."
(Took, 1976, p.1)

It is imperative to add that, however multifarious British humor may appear from Took's account, there are still several prevailing subject matters, but it is because the very range of what the British can find amusing is one of its features, albeit rather an indefinite one, that the quotation has been mentioned. To be aware of the vast amount of material which can trigger laughter with British people may prove helpful in grasping their humor, inasmuch as other cultures or nations need not (and do not, as it would seem from Took's findings) see humor in as high a number of matters as the British do.

1.2.1 Subject Matters

According to Marc Duguid's¹ *British Sense of Humour Tour* on BFI (British Film Institute) Screenonline, an online encyclopedia of British film and television, the following fundamental subject matters of British comedy can be identified: class, sex, violence, work, the family, politics and society, fools and losers, madness and surrealism, and race.

Class

In his account, Duguid claims the deep-seated social stratification from Great Britain's past to constitute a fertile source of humor (and sometimes contempt as well), based on an individual's effort to improve his or her position in the class hierarchy or on a phantom affiliation to a class to which one did not belong. (Internet 9)

¹ A senior curator in the BFI National Archive, an editor of BFI Screenonline, and a contributor to the International Encyclopedia of Television

Harley Steptoe aspires fruitlessly to escape poverty in *Steptoe and Son*, Hyacinth Bucket is constantly embarrassed in the eyes of her neighbors by her lower-class relatives in *Keeping Up Appearances* (1990 – 1995), and the class system is also satirized in *The Frost Report*, the writing staff of which featured many future notables of British comedy (Internet 10) or in several sketches (for example in *The Upper Class Twit of the Year*) by the Python troupe.

Sex

Puritans having established it as a taboo and the Victorian era having rendered the situation tenser still, sex ranks among the most popular topics within British humor, as Duguid further asserts. From these historical stances, which today can readily be recognized as conservative, arose censorship rules pertaining to sex, "which have generally been much stricter than in the rest of Europe". (Internet 11) Seeking to circumvent the regulations, humorists and comedians devised cunning instruments by means of which they could infuse their works and performances with the forbidden content – notably innuendo and double entendre, two trademarks of British humor. (vide infra, section "Puns and Innuendo")

Inevitably, sex-oriented humor has aroused a certain amount of controversy (for example, the *Carry On* film series, known for its ribald or obscene humor, was censored heavily (Internet 12)) because what part of the audience may consider amusing, others perceive as sexist or chauvinistic. However, by no means is the choice of a subject matter which some could dismiss as depraved or even abhorrent a rare occurrence within British humor, as the paragraphs to follow demonstrate.

Violence

Violence, albeit none too amusing in real life, has also shown great potential for making the British audience laugh, whether it be the mild and grotesque kind of violence, typical of *Tom and Jerry*, for instance, or an extremity such as murder, which, Duguid alleges (Internet 13), is a quintessentially British trigger to laughter, and he also believes that films by Alfred Hitchcock (who, incidentally, was a Briton himself) represent ample proof of that. But much like sex, violent humor, too, is regarded as unbecoming (ibid.) by some viewers, while many others find it highly entertaining.

Work

Representing a major part of human lives, work has proved an appealing background for comedy as well, along with the perennial troubles related to it, i.e. stress, conflicts with superiors, colleagues or customers, tiredness, but also idleness, which was at the fore of the series *The Worker* (1965 – 1970)

Amidst "bawdy" innuendo, so to speak, the aforementioned film series *Carry On* (1958 – 1992) also utilized the workplace as a basis for humor, particularly hospitals with attractive nurses, conceited doctors, imperious matrons, etc. More recently, *The Office* (2001 – 2003), a series which ranked 25th in the Britain's Best Sitcom poll (see Appendix 1), captured similar problems, featuring Ricky Gervais as manager David Brent, "a grotesque but immediately recognisable type: vain, self-important and thoroughly insensitive, given to reciting meaningless jargon borrowed from half-understood 'management science' textbooks." (Internet 14)

Family

The next subject matter, the family, could be given a description similar to that of work, to some extent, because like workplaces, families also become riven by clashes and arguments, and it is those families that Duguid claims to provide a popular setting with comedy: "The British sitcom, in particular, has long chosen the family - especially the (very) dysfunctional family - as a favourite theme." (Internet 15)

It may well have been a sense of commiseration that drew the viewers' attention in sitcoms such as *Till Death Us Do Part* (1965 – 1975) or *Steptoe and Son* (1962 – 1974), in which the children had to deal with their abusive or narrow-minded parents, but in quibbling over superficialities, as shown in *The Royle Family* (1998 – present), the comedy of the situation was apparent, especially given the "seriousness" of the quarrels. Of course, there have appeared perhaps less stereotypical as well as more light-hearted concepts in this area, *Absolutely Fabulous* (1992 – 2012), where the daughter watches over her frivolous and maybe overly energetic mother, rather than vice versa, being a case in point.

Politics and Society

Prominent politicians and political or social attitudes have, understandably enough, been targeted for ridicule for centuries, but in the recent past, "strict censorship meant that satire in film and television was rare before the 1950s." (Internet 16) One such rarity was the film *The Life and Death of Colonel Blimp* (1943), which had so exasperated Winston Churchill that it nearly became banned. (Internet 17) Two decades later, the powers that be caused the cancellation of the satirical sketch show *That Was The Week That Was* (1962 – 1963), allegedly because of the upcoming general election in 1964. (Internet 18)

Furthermore, the inefficiency of political practice has been lampooned, as shown in the comedy series *Yes, Minister* (1980 – 1984) and *Yes, Prime Minister* (1986 – 1987), and Berman's closing remarks in his chapter on the series seem to only acknowledge the popularity of this subject matter:

"It appears, then, that the universal nature — and absurdity — of governmental [sic] bureaucracy will always be a rich source of comedy, as demonstrated with the enduring fun of *Yes, Minister/Yes, Prime Minister*." (Berman, 2011, p. 47)

Further comments on satire, which is closely linked to this subject matter, are included in the respective section below.

Fools and Losers

Next, Duguid suggests that there is one stereotype tremendously appealing to the British: the loser. (Internet 19) This may be ascribed to the mordant or even humiliating aspect of British humor, scrutinized in the "Sarcasm and Irony" section later in this chapter; Duguid, nevertheless, maintains that the reason why many find losers so interesting or entertaining is being relieved to be reminded of those who are less successful. (ibid.)

Unlike the typical television comedy losers such as Basil Fawlty of *Fawlty Towers* (1975 – 1979) or members of the Black Adder family in the *Black Adder* series, who usually pursue their questionable goals carelessly, but as a rule, ultimately fail in their effort, the fool, contrariwise, capitalizes on having honorable intentions and morally flawless ambitions like being loved, as exemplified by the character of Frank Spencer, the main character of the situation comedy *Some Mothers Do 'Ave 'Em* (1973 – 1978).

Duguid also mentions another type of fool, who supposedly represents a parallel to the Shakespearean "wise fools". According to him, these "are knowing entertainers, whose clowning around disguises a brilliant and original mind. Tommy Cooper, Ken Dodd and Eric Morecambe, favourites of TV audiences for decades, had an instinctive understanding, not just of comedy, but of the absurdity of life. " (ibid.)

Madness and Surrealism

Although surrealism has its origins outside the United Kingdom, surreal humor is one of the lineaments of British comedy, *Monty Python's Flying Circus* being a showcase for it. Featuring men who only speak the beginnings, middles or ends of words, talk in anagrams or are alternately rude and polite, as well as job interviewers and interviewees who make ridiculous faces and sounds once in a while, and even companies which specialize in confusing cats by staging grotesque performances, the Pythons' sketches have left an indelible mark in shaping British humor, notably by imprinting it with surreal elements.

Premiering on October 15, 1969, *Monty Python's Flying Circus* was not, however, the first broadcast to have achieved this; it had been preceded by the influential radio program *The Goon Show*, and its television follow-up *Q5* is believed to have impacted upon the Pythons. (Internet 20)

When examining the bizarre side of British humor, it would also be remiss not to mention Christopher Morris's *Jam* (March – April 2000),

"perhaps the strangest and most disturbing comedy ever seen on television, with its lizard-infested television sets, seven-year-old schoolgirl assassins and professional baby-fighting." (Internet 21)

Race

With the influx of immigrants to the United Kingdom starting in the middle of the 20th century, different peoples began to intermingle, and the issue of racism arose. Naturally, the topic of troublesome coexistence of the ever more multifarious mixture of inhabitants spread into comedy, too, and it was Alf Garnett's bigoted views full of hatred for black people (he was a white worker himself) in *Till Death Us Do Part* that made him and the series legendary.

(Internet 22). But instead of derision, as the author Johnny Speight intended, Garnett's attitudes were often greeted with empathy by those who saw a certain degree of validity in his tirades. (Ross, 1998, p.55)

Built around a white working-class couple getting along with their black neighbors, *Love Thy Neighbour* (1972 – 1976) was dogged by a similar amount of controversy as *Till Death Us Do Part*, as were the series *Mind Your Language* and *It Ain't Half Hot Mum*, both containing national stereotyping. Especially today, many shows of this sort are abominated on account of suspicions of being racist or xenophobic; for example, the BBC ruled out any potential reruns of *It Ain't Half Hot Mum*, and other shows had to undergo a certain degree of censorship. (Internet 23) (Internet 24)

Another prominent figure in the area of race-related humor is Ali G, the famed brainchild of the British actor and comedian Sacha Baron Cohen. Perceived as a tribute to, but also as a mockery of the hip-hop culture (Internet 25), Ali G with his urban style conduct, appearance and slang, has attracted a great deal of criticism and provoked allegations of racism, too, and yet, the character's idiosyncratic humor has found a great deal of favor with young audiences (Internet 26) (Internet 27) (Internet 28)

1.2.2 Butts of Jokes

As to the butts of jokes, Muir enumerates them concisely:

"The member of the family who suffers most from the attacks of vicious humour is the mother-in-law, who, along with Englishmen, Irishmen, Scotsmen, milkmen, policemen and commercial travellers, is part of our joke mythology." (Muir, 1978, p.28)

The implicit British fondness of making fun of themselves is embodied for example in General Melchett's comment with a perceptibly caustic undertone: "If nothing else works, a total pig-headed unwillingness to look facts in the face will see us through. [General Melchett about the Second World War]" (Curtis et al., 1999, p.261)

A recent survey (Internet 29), administered between the years 2006 and 2007, lists the most popular joke butts as follows (in descending order), indefinite as some of them may be:

ethnicity and nationality; sex, sexuality and gender; stupidity; religion; celebrity; aging (old age especially), and class.

This coincides partly with what King et. al. (1981) present as the subject matters of British jokes, which, inter alia, includes ridiculing the stereotypical Irish dullness and Scottish parsimony, youth and age (the punch line consisting in the generation gap) as well as men and women (the point being grounded in the gender gap).

Apart from that, they mention ambiguity, on which puns, as expanded on below, are based; Spoonerisms, which sometimes contain sexual innuendo (typical of *Up Pompeii!*, *Round the Horne*, *'Allo 'Allo!*, *Are You Being Served*, etc.), such as "Cupid Stunt", an actress impersonated by Kenny Everett in *The Kenny Everett Television Show*; black humor, a principal feature of many successful British sitcoms (for example *Black Books*², the *Black Adder* series, *The League of Gentlemen*³ or *One Foot in the Grave*⁴); and also "the ridiculous" or "the absurd", as King et. al chose to describe surreal humor, particularly noticeable in *The Goon Show*, *Monty Python's Flying Circus*, *The Young Ones*, *Spaced*, *The Office*, and the like.

Other butts, as Alexander further elaborates (Internet 30), include the Irish, the Jews, the "blackmen"[sic], workers, trade unionists and "the Great Beyond" denoting an unspecified group of foreigners, in which the French deserve to be highlighted, as illustrated in these extracts:

"BLACKADDER: Oh, God, God, God! What on earth was I drinking last night? My head feels like there's a Frenchman living in it." (Curtis et al., 1999, p.215)

"MRS MIGGINS: Bonjour, monsieur. It's French.

EDMUND BLACKADDER: So is eating frogs, cruelty to geese and urinating in the street. But that's no reason to inflict it on the rest of us." (Curtis et al., 1999, p.273)

"PRINCE GEORGE: I'm as happy as a Frenchman who has just invented a pair of self-removing trousers. " (Curtis et al., 1999, p.261)

² An award-winning Teddington Studios sitcom, originally aired between 2000 and 2004

³ A BBC television comedy series, although initially a radio program; aired between 1999 and 2002

⁴ A BBC sitcom, one of the most popular British comedy series (ranked 10. in Britain's Best Sitcom – see Appendix 1); aired from 1990 up to 2000

What is more, the last two of these examples ingeniously fuse some of the aforementioned characteristics; the stereotypical image of the French consuming frogs and being relentless lovers; a sample of rather obscene humor, and the sense of something quite ludicrous in the form of an absurd garment. The amount of ridiculousness or extremity in humor, is frequently the very essence of a jest, with the following trio of excerpts from the *Black Adder* series epitomizing that:

"EDMUND BLACKADDER: I'm as poor as a church mouse, that's just had an enormous tax bill on the very day his wife ran off with another mouse, taking all the cheese." (Curtis et al., 1999, p.309)

"PRIVATE BALDRICK: I have a plan, sir.

CAPTAIN BLACKADDER: Really, Baldrick? A cunning and subtle one?

PRIVATE BALDRICK: Yes, sir.

CAPTAIN BLACKADDER: As cunning as a fox who's just been appointed Professor of Cunning at Oxford University?(Curtis et al., 1999, p.452)"

"CAPTAIN BLACKADDER: This is a crisis. A large crisis. In fact, if you got a moment, it's a twelve-storey crisis with a magnificent entrance hall, carpeting throughout, 24-hour portage, and an enormous sign on the roof, saying 'This Is a Large Crisis'. A large crisis requires a large plan. Get me two pencils and a pair of underpants. " (Curtis et al., 1999, p.440)

It is the elaborateness, inventiveness and exaggeration of the similes, personifications, metaphors or other tropes, as the case may be, that function as the very source of amusement in these examples; there is no punch line hidden within the expressions, and their vivid or even surreal imagery is used for the sake of sheer absurdity.

Nevertheless, as to the nationality-based humor, it is necessary to add that it does not depend only upon the French, although they do appear to be taunted the most. Other nations did not remain unnoticed, as represented by Edmund, Duke of Edinburgh (who later proclaimed himself "The Black Adder") expressing his disinterest in Scotland:

"MCANGUS: I hope life doesn't get too dull for you, not being able to pass laws over Scotland any more. Ha-ha!

EDMUND: (*To himself*) Yes. Ha ha ha ha. I wouldn't pass water over Scotland." (Curtis et al., 1999, p.34)

The Welsh, too, have become the subject of jokes:

"CAPTAIN BLACKADDER: There is something wrong with your fiancé.

GENERAL MELCHETT: Oh my god, she is not Welsh, is she?" (Curtis et al., 1999, p.396)

and so have the Germans:

"EDMUND BLACKADDER: She is famous for having the worst personality in Germany and, as you can imagine, that's up against some pretty stiff competition. " (Curtis et al., 1999, p.310)

1.2.3 Mediums for Expressing British Humor

Satire

Although well-established in literature, satire, as hinted above, had been virtually inconceivable on television until the mid-twentieth century, after doubts began to arise over the conservatively-oriented government of the United Kingdom in the aftermath of the Suez crisis. (Internet 31) However, not only the decreasing esteem for politicians but also satire, namely the show *That Was The Week That Was*, is believed to have been instrumental in the victory of the Labour Party in the 1964 elections. (ibid.)

With *That Was The Week That Was* cancelled, its presenter David Frost continued in his satirical endeavor in *The Frost Report*, which featured comedians who were to create *Monty Python's Flying Circus*. Within its absurd and surreal sketches, there often appeared mockery of the British class system, army officers or statesmen.

Politics, or more specifically, the dubious practices in the civil service, were also satirized in *Yes, Minister* and *Yes, Prime Minister*, and even more thorough and aggressive was *Not the Nine O'Clock News*, which ridiculed political authorities, parties and attitudes, religion, the police, the royal family, and other subjects.

The hero of the satirical sitcom *The New Statesman* (1987–1992) was a careerist and money-driven Conservative Member of Parliament, the latex effigies in *Spitting Image* attacked the Thatcherite policies as well, and in the years of Tony Blair's premiership, the Labor Party was also met with criticism in the satirical show *Bremner, Bird and Fortune* (1999 – present). Leaving political affairs aside, other programs such as *Drop the Dead Donkey* (1990 – 1998) or *The Day Today* (1994) mocked the presentation of television news.

The *Black Adder* series, too, displays signs of satire through lampooning momentous events or prominent figures of British history, featuring hypocritical and depraved clerics, deriding the works of famous artists or academics or caricaturing stereotypical characteristics of nations.

Sarcasm and Disparagement

British humor has developed a special fondness for acerbic or even humiliating remarks, and as Dr Rod Martin from the University of Western Ontario suggests on the grounds of a research concerning American and British humor, which he led, there may even be a genetic justification for that: "It is possible that differences exist between these nations in their sense of humour and that these may be the result of different genetic and environmental influences." (Internet 32)

The research also indicated that the denigrating, racist or sexist elements are genetically linked only to the British, while traces of "positive humour – saying funny things, telling jokes, a humorous outlook on life," (Internet 33) were found both in the genes of Britons and their American counterparts.

The sarcastic and contemptuous aspect of British humor is amply illustrated in the excerpts from the *Black Adder* series below:

"PERCY: But the fashion today is towards the tiny.

BLACKADDER: In that case, Percy, you have the most fashionable brain in London." (Curtis et al., 1999, p.140)

"GEORGE: Oh, one thing. sir. If we should happen to tread on a mine, what do we do?

BLACKADDER: Well, normal procedure is to jump 200 feet into the air and scatter yourself over a wide area." (Curtis et al., 1999, pp.362–363)

Puns and Innuendo

As stated previously, puns and risqué innuendo are very common in British comedy, but while the commonness of the former could be considered a logical consequence of what the English language favors, given the frequent ambiguity of its words, the latter represents a comedic device chosen deliberately.

Shows such as *Are You Being Served*, *Round the Horne* or *'Allo 'Allo!* have made extensive use of ribaldry, be it by means of homonymy or polysemy or by drawing parallels between body parts or sex-related activities and other objects or actions of similar appearance or nature. Nevertheless, as one of the of following examples demonstrates, punning holds great potential for jokes without suggestive associations, too:

"FLASHEART: Right let's do-o-o-o it! The first thing to remember is: always treat your kite like you treat a woman!

LIEUTENANT GEORGE: How d'you mean, Sir? Do you mean take her home at the weekend to meet your mother?

FLASHEART: No, I mean get inside her five times a day and take her to heaven and back." (Curtis et al., 1999, p.409)

"BLACKADDER: Oh, God, bills, bills, bills. One is born, one runs up bills, one dies. Honestly, Baldrick, sometimes I feel like a pelican – whichever way I turn, I've still got an enormous bill in front of me." (Curtis et al., 1999, p.308)

2. Issues in Translating Humor

With the fundamental characteristics of British humor covered, this chapter deals with issues in translating humor with regard to these delineated features. In the theoretical part, the typology of jokes and the approaches to "mapping" and "prioritizing" (both explained below) humor are expounded. Drawing on the theoretical knowledge, the practical part in Chapter 3 scrutinizes the Czech translation of selected passages from the *Black Adder* series script, released in a publication named "*Blackadder: The Whole Damn Dynasty*".

Zabalabescoa (Internet 34) recommends two essential methods for humor translation: mapping, i.e. identifying where humor is located or by what means it is realized in the text, and prioritizing, which reflects the translator's decision on the significance of humor and its kind for the target text. Figure 2 below depicts the concept of Zabalabescoa's binary sets, and apart from step [4], which denotes "that the translation may not render the joke as a joke, but may compensate for this by resorting to some other device such as hyperbole or simile", is, in essence, self-explanatory.

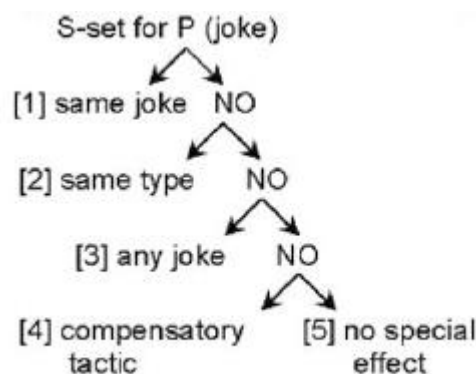


Fig. 2 – Set of solutions S: Binary branching tree structure for translating problem P according to Zabalabescoa

The trick to translating humor, Bellos argues in his book *Is That a Fish in Your Ear?: Translation and the Meaning of Everything*,

"is to abandon the idea of perfect fidelity and instead try to find a joke that rings some of the same bells as the original. By this standard, many simple punch lines, from the morbid to the absurd, are not that much harder to translate than the weather." (Internet 35)

What is more, Díaz-Cintas and Remael even mention the possibility of removing humor altogether, stating that "humour should not be preserved at all costs, and certainly not at the

expense of textual coherence, or loss of fluency and idiomatic language". (Díaz-Cintas and Remael, 2007, pp.215 – 216) Zabalabescoa holds a similar view, asserting that

"a dangerous simplification is to presume that humor will necessarily be equally important in both the translated version and its source text. Or that the nature of the humor must be the same in both source text and its translation." (Internet 36)

2.1 Typology of Jokes

For the purposes of this paper, the humor typology of Díaz-Cintas and Remael (2007) will be used, within which it is possible to distinguish seven categories of jokes. However, because the category of "Aural jokes" is irrelevant to translation (*ibid.*, pp.227 – 228), it will not be included.

2.1.1 International or Bi-national Jokes

Referring to entities which are parts of the source culture, but are well known in the target culture, the translation of such jokes can simply utilize the method of calque, for they are represented by "internationally known film stars, multinationals, well-known tourist attractions, famous artists or politicians, political events that have made the world news, well-known facts about a country's history, etc." (Díaz-Cintas and Remael, 2007, p.217)

Obscene and other morally offensive jokes, too, belong to this category, but it is, of course, the translator's responsibility to consider how they may be perceived in the target culture because while British humor abounds with these features, as expanded upon in the first chapter, their frequent occurrence in another cultural background might strike the audience or the reader as misplaced.

2.1.2 Culture-bound Jokes

The jokes which fall into this category are ones that refer to events, places, personalities or objects with which the target culture is not familiar. However, the boundary between international and culture-specific jokes may sometimes be blurred, and it is the translator that has to decide which case it is because the latter are sometimes removed altogether, as shown

below in Section 3.2 (Extract 4) , where a specific reference to a venue for dog shows is substituted by a generic remark about dog pounds.

Fluctuating between the two categories in question are, for example, national institutions or political offices, which are customarily translated using target culture terms in spite of not denoting completely identical realities as for their purposes, habits, local conventions or the extent of power:

"National institutions in film and TV genres are an example of CSRs: there are numerous North American screen products pertaining to 'legal' (e.g. *Ally McBeal*), 'police' (e.g. *CSI* and *Cold Case*) and 'hospital' (e.g. *ER* and *Grey's Anatomy*)¹⁰ which are translated for audiences worldwide.¹¹ These institutions rarely correspond to those in other countries but, while in English-speaking countries such as the UK the viewer simply 'learns' the additional procedures, practices and above all the specific language of different judiciary, police, health and school systems, elsewhere these are conveyed through diverse translational norms that accommodate these institutions to each target culture." (Chiaro in Munday, 2009, p.156)

2.1.3 Community-based Jokes

Including "jokes at the expense of sub-communities" or "other nationalities" (Díaz-Cintas and Remael, 2007, p.221), this category requires the knowledge of socio-cultural background of the in-groups which use such a brand of humor. Thus, it often relies on racism, sexism, and other forms of prejudice, be it social, political or religious, and, interestingly enough, the familiarity with these attitudes and facts, Díaz-Cintas and Remael believe, is of higher importance than linguistic skills of the translator because "translation of humour can even be problematic between countries sharing the same language, such as the UK and the USA". (ibid., p.222)

The translation technique that suggests itself for the kind of jokes at issue is localization; let us imagine and examine the following joke, which might have been heard in 2004 as a light-hearted, albeit biting, reaction of a fan of the Czech Extraliga team HC Moeller Pardubice:

"Commentator: 'Janecký strávil na ledě v uplynulých dvou třetinách více než dvacet minut, tak uvidíme, jak na tom bude se silami ve třetí třetině.' Fan: 'No, já bych se spíš divil, kdyby se dožil jejího konce.'"

To appreciate the comedy of the fan's remark, it is necessary to understand the reference to the Czech ice-hockey player Otakar Janecký, who retired after the 2003 – 2004 (Internet 37)

season at the age of 44 (Internet 38), making him the oldest player to have regularly played in the competition at that time. (Internet 39)

If this joke was to be translated into the German language, for instance, it would be utterly inappropriate to preserve the original reference because it is highly unlikely that a German listener could readily understand such a specific reference, considering that even people living in the Czech Republic who are not interested in ice hockey might not be able to unriddle it.

Furthermore, contemporization of such a joke may prove necessary if it was supposed to be translated, say, in 2213 because by then, hockey could cease to be played in Germany, in which case it would also be inevitable to adjust the joke to a sport and an athlete with which the nation was familiar. As Riker (in Paul, 2007, p.50) claims:

"If references are not obscure or difficult for the original audience, they should not be obscure or difficult for the new audience. Of course there are real limits to the extent to which it is possible to make such references familiar, but certain simple tricks can contextualize for the reader without damaging their experience of the book. For example, you can add an inconspicuous explanatory phrase, or mention that So-and-so is a "town," or add the word "Avenue" where it was left out of the original. Here as elsewhere the translation editor has to assume the position of the reader, and should consider the overall experience of reading the original and how best to approximate that experience for readers in English."

Nonetheless, Shteyngart warns that "nothing is worse than killing the joke by over--explaining." (Internet 40) Therefore, if the above-mentioned techniques cannot be utilized, the translator needs to strike a balance between providing the target audience with hints that may guide them to the source of amusement of a joke without ruining the punch line.

2.1.4 Language-dependent Jokes

Language-dependent or linguistic jokes reside in various forms of wordplay such as homography, homonymy, homophony, paronymy, but also zeugma, as Zabalabescoa (Internet 41) notes, which describes an instance in which "one word is made to refer to two or more other words, but has to be differently [corrected from "differently"] understood in the different contexts, e.g. went in *she went to the States and bankrupt.*" Verbally expressed humor, as Chiaro refers to it, "is notoriously difficult to translate when it is simply written or spoken" (Munday, 2009, p.162), and it will be given a great deal of attention in the practical

part of this paper, where selected examples of the challenging nature of humor translation, notably of puns, will be analyzed.

2.1.5 Visual Jokes

When dealing with humor conveyed on a purely visual basis (for example, Blackadder smashing a jug against Baldrick's head), there is no need for the translator to modify it in any way (for the moment, let us ignore that it is virtually impossible as of yet) as it is not dependent upon language. (Díaz-Cintas and Remael 2007, p.227) An amusing message of this type can also be communicated by gesticulation or facial expression, which, obviously, do not require any transformation, either.

2.1.6 Complex Jokes

As the name indicates, complex jokes are ones in which two or more of the stated types of jokes merge, creating highly challenging translation problems which may even defy translation, particularly if they involve a combination of metaphor and visual elements or culture-specific references with wordplay, as exemplified in an excerpt on page 43 (Extract 4) where Blackadder, Baldrick and George play the guessing game "I spy", and an amusing confusion arises owing to misunderstandings caused by homophony and polysemy.

There are also cases in which jokes stem from a blend of visual and linguistic aspects, resulting into barely (if at all) translatable situations, as Chiaro describes, continuing her previously mentioned quotation:

"...on screen it [verbally expressed humor] can become especially complex when visuals and vocals coalesce. A clear example of this difficulty can be found in a scene in *The Big Chill* (1983, Lawrence Kasdan, USA) in which one of the main characters, Sam, on being asked by Meg to father her child, replies : 'You're giving me a massive headache!', to which Meg replies: 'You're not gonna use that old excuse, are you? You've got genes!' In response, Sam looks down at his trousers and touches the jeans he is wearing, a bemused expression on his face. The Italian version of Meg's final utterance becomes *perché hai dei buoni geni* [lit. 'because you have good genes'] but the word *geni* is monosemous and can only refer to chemically patterned information ('genes'). Furthermore, it bears no phonological resemblance to the universal word for denim trousers, 'jeans'. Thus, Italian audiences must have wondered why Berenger should touch and glare at his jeans as he does." (Munday, 2009, p.162)

On a brighter note, Zabalabescoa (Internet 42) claims that thanks to the scientific progress being made in digital image processing, it is presumable that altering both the acoustic and visual elements will become feasible in the foreseeable future, allowing translators to at least entertain hopes of preserving presently well-nigh untranslatable features of the original.

3. Translation Issues in Selected Extracts

3.1 Language-dependent Jokes

Extract 1

"MCANGUS: I hope life doesn't get too dull for you, not being able to pass laws over Scotland any more. Ha-ha!

EDMUND: (To himself) Yes. Ha ha ha ha. I wouldn't pass water over Scotland."
(Curtis et al., 1999, p.34)

"MCANGUS: Doufám, že tě život nepřestane bavit, když nebudeš moct vydávat zákony proti Skotsku.

EDMUND: (Pod vousy) Ano. Ha ha ha ha. Já bych se na Skotsko ani nevydával."
(51)

The translation of this dialog is an excellent example of Zabalabescoa's technique of binary sets, as the original zeugma (the use of the verb "pass" in the collocation "pass laws", as well as in the idiomatic expression "pass water") was not preserved, but the type of joke and its nature in the target text are analogous to those in the source text. The only noticeable difference is that the Czech translation relies on a pun (vydávat – vydávit), while the original makes use of zeugma, but the taboo undertone of the joke is ingeniously retained since the idea of urination is replaced by the idea of vomiting.

Extract 2

"WITCHSMELLER: Milk, what did you mean by 'milk'?

EDMUND: I meant milk, bloody milk.

WITCHSMELLER: Bloody milk! A mixture of milk and blood." (Curtis et al., 1999, p.84)

"ČÁRYČIHAČ: Mlíčko, co jsi myslel tím „mlíčkem“?

EDMUND: Myslel jsem mléko, zatracené mléko.

ČÁRYČIHAČ: Zatracené mléko! Prokleté mléko!" (Curtis et al., 2008, p.98)

In this case, the pun presents a virtually untranslatable problem because it consists in the original literal meaning of the word bloody being used as a slang swear word similar to "damned" or "frigging". In the Czech translation, the adjective "zatracené" was chosen for a lack of a better term, but the wordplay is less apparent because of the shift in meaning, as the Czech adjective does not include any relation to blood whatsoever, and the connotation of moral or religious depravity is less explicit.

Extract 3

"WITCHSMELLER: A likely story. Black Satin, known in the hierarchy of evil as Black Satin the Loquacious. Are you, or are you not, a servant of Satan?

A man screams and faints. The horses neighs, many scream.

PRINCE HARRY: Sorry, was that a yea or a neigh?" (Curtis et al., 1999, p.85)

"ČÁRYČIHAČ: Pěkná výmluva, jen co je pravda. Černý satén, známý v hierarchii zla jako Černý satan Upovídáný. Jsi, nebo nejsi služebníkem d'ábla?

Muž vykřikne a omdlí. Kůň zařehtá, ozve se mnoho výkřiků.

PRINC JINDŘICH: Promiň, to bylo ano, nebo ne?" (Curtis et al., 2008, p.99)

As an indication of how challenging it can become to translate a pun, above is an example of one completely lost in translation, because it proved impossible to find equivalent polysemy in the Czech language for the phonetic wordplay based on the identical pronunciation of the verb "neigh" and the dated or dialectal usage of the interjection "nay" meaning "no".

Extract 4

"BLACKADDER: You're really just an old quack, aren't you?

DR LEECH: I'd rather be a quack than a ducky. Good day." (Curtis et al., 1999, p.126)

"ČERNÁ ZMIJE: Stejně jste jen starý mastičkář, že?

DR. PIJAVICE: Radši budu starý mastičkář než mastikulka. Nashle." (Curtis et al., 2008, p.142)

The Czech translation aptly imitates the close sense relation between the word "quack", the meaning of which is "charlatan" in the initial sentence, but it can also denote the sound that ducks make, and the word family of "duck" by using the stem "mast" in both expressions. Nevertheless, "mastikulka" functions as a nonce word in the given context, while the term "ducky" is used informally in British English as a derisive term for "darling", supposedly employed by homosexual partners to address each other, and unlike "ducky", the nonce word "mastikulka" does not contain explicit innuendo about homosexuality.

Extract 5

"BLACKADDER: Good.

A knock on the door.

Get the door, Baldrick.

Baldrick obeys and exits.

PERCY: Well, my lord, if things go as planned tonight, it would seem congratulations are in order.

BLACKADDER: Nice try, Percy, but forget it: you're not getting a penny.

There is a loud crash and Baldrick enters, carrying the door.

Baldrick, I would advise you to make the explanation you are about to give phenomenally good.

BALDRICK: You said, 'Get the door.'" (Curtis et al., 1999, p.194 – 195)

"ČERNÁ ZMIJE: No dobře.

Zaklepání na dveře.

Baldricku, dveře.

Baldrick poslechne a odejde.

PERCY: Můj pane, když to dnes večer dopadne podle plánu, budu ti moct pográtulovat.

ČERNÁ ZMIJE: Hezký pokus, Percy, ale na to zapomeň. Nedostaneš ani penny.

Ozve se hlasitá rána a vejde Baldrick, nese dveře.

Baldricku, doporučil bych ti, aby to vysvětlení, se kterým chceš přijít, bylo fenomenálně dobré.

BALDRICK: Řekl jsi: „Baldricku, dveře.“ " (Curtis et al., 2008, p.202)

In this case, the pun in the source text is grounded in Baldrick's literal interpretation of Blackadder's order "get the door", by which he naturally meant for Baldrick to answer. While in English, the ambiguity of the verb "get" allows for a wide range of understandings, including "bring", in Czech, an equivalent pun is impossible because Blackadder's request would have been "Jdi otevřít dveře", whereas the phrase as Baldrick understood it would have to be "Dones dveře."

Therefore, an ellipsis was chosen to preserve the ambiguity, but since the Czech translation uses no verb whatsoever, the wordplay is much less explicit as there are a myriad of possible

interpretations which Baldrick might put on such a sentence, as opposed to the original one, which was simply a case of an idiomatic expression understood literally.

Extract 6

"QUEEN: It all started last night at about two o'clock. I was tucked into bed, having this absolutely scrummy dream about ponies, when I was awakened by a terrific banging from Lord Melchett.

BLACKADDER: Well, I never knew he had it in him.

QUEEN: It's true, I promise. He was banging on the castle gates and falling over and singing a strange song about a girl who possessed something called a dickie die doe?" (Curtis et al., 1999, p.195)

"KRÁLOVNA: Začalo to včera v noci kolem druhé. Vlezla jsem do postele a měla jsem ten sen se spoustou poníků, když mě probudilo příšerné bušení od lorda Melchetta.

ČERNÁ ZMIJE: To bych do něj nikdy neřekl.

KRÁLOVNA: Je to pravda, na mou čest. Bušil na bránu, padal na zem a zpíval divnou písničku o dívce, která měla něco, čemu se říká befeleme peseveze." (Curtis et al., 2008, p.203)

Not only does his extract contain a pun for which no appropriate equivalent was found, but it also exemplifies a form of lexical impoverishment to which Levý (2011) refers as "nivelisation", explaining that "emotionally coloured expressive means sometimes lose their stylistic value in translation if rendered by a neutral, colourless expression." (Levý, 2011, 111)

While the original takes advantage of the ambiguity of the word "banging", which can either be understood the way that the Queen most likely meant it, i.e. the sound of Melchett's hammering at the door to her bedroom, or the way that Blackadder interpreted it, i.e. Melchett's having sexual intercourse with the Queen, the translation eliminates both the pun and the lexical richness of the discourse (and, ergo, the overall comedy of the conversation) , because the vulgarity of Blackadder's understanding of the word "banging" is not reflected in the Czech rendition.

Extract 7

"BLACKADDER: (*Reads medallion*) 'Mr Friskie. If found, please return to Emma Hamilton, Marine Parade, Portsmouth.' Damn! Oh, well. Who cares about a dead cat now that I'm a fat cat?" (Curtis et al., 1999, p.249)

"ČERNÁ ZMIJE: (*Čte medailonek*) Pan Nezbeda. Pokud se zaběhne, laskavě vraťte Emmě Hamiltonové, Přímořská promenáda, Portsmouth. Proklatě! No dobře. Koho by zajímala mrtvá kočka, když já teď budu tučný kocour?" (Curtis et al., 2008, p.253)

In this case, the wordplay is based on substituting the adjective "dead" with "fat", creating a completely different phrase ("a dead cat" meaning simply "a cat which has died" as opposed to "a fat cat" being used not in the literal, but idiomatic sense, denoting "a very rich person"). In the Czech translation, nevertheless, the phrase "tučný kocour" does not convey the same message because the adjective "tučný" is only associated with money in expressions such as "tučná odměna" or "tučný zisk", but it does not collocate with people. The translation of the idiom "fat cat" also exemplifies nivelization, as described above, for it carries negative connotations and is of an informal nature, which cannot be said for its Czech counterpart.

Extract 8

"BALDRICK: I thought he was the cleverest man in England.
BLACKADDER: Baldrick, I'd bump into cleverer people at a lodge meeting of the Guild of Village Idiots.
BALDRICK: That's not what you said when you sent him your navel.
BLACKADDER: *Novel*, Baldrick -- not navel. I sent him my *novel*.
BALDRICK: Novel or navel, it sounds a bit like a bag of grapefruits to me.
BLACKADDER: (*Bitterly*) The phrase, Baldrick, is a case of sour grapes and yes, it bloody well is. I mean, he might at least have written back, but no, nothing, not even a 'Dear Gertrude Perkins, thank you for your book. Get stuffed, Samuel Johnson.'" (Curtis et al., 1999, p.255)

"BALDRICK: Já myslel, že je to nejchytřejší pán v Anglii.
ČERNÁ ZMIJE: Baldricku, na chytřejší lidi bych narazil i na schůzi Cechu vesnických idiotů.
BALDRICK: To jste neříkal, když jste mu posílal svůj rumán.
ČERNÁ ZMIJE: Román, Baldricku, ne rumán. Poslal jsem mu svůj román.
BALDRICK: Rumán neromán, mně to stejně všechno zní trochu jako hrozné kyselý.
ČERNÁ ZMIJE: (*Hořce*) To rčení, Baldricku, je o kyselých hroznech, a to tedy rozhodně je ten případ. Aspoň mi mohl odepsat, ale to on ne, stačilo by: „Milá Gertrudo Perkinsová, děkuji ti za tvou knihu. Trhni si, Samuel Johnson.“" (Curtis et al., 2008, p.258)

The comedy of this conversation resides in Baldrick's poor vocabulary and the consequent corruption of the phrase "sour grapes", as well as the term "novel". In the translation, the nonce word "rumán" was used to reflect the way in which Baldrick mangled the name of a type of narrative.

Nonetheless, although this solution follows precisely the original pattern of changing just one sound of the term, it lacks the inappropriateness and hilariousness of the word Baldrick uttered because while "navel" refers to a part of the human body, "rumán" bears no discernible meaning. Therefore, a different choice of words might provide a more suitable alternative:

BALDRICK: To jste neřikal, když jste mu posílal svou omeletu.

ČERNÁ ZMIJE: Noveletu, Baldricku, ne omeletu. Poslal jsem mu svou noveletu.

The suggested version utilizes more extensive modifications of the proper term (noveleta – omeleta as opposed to román – rumán) than the original one, and it, too, translates the term "novel" with "noveleta", which is not its correct Czech equivalent, but the factual difference between the genres is of marginal relevance to the essence of the joke, which is preserved inasmuch as it lies in Baldrick not knowing a word commonly understood by cultured people, in this case, the name of a type of narrative. Furthermore, the suggested translation maintains the humorous atmosphere of the original discourse, which is established by the fact that the word used by Baldrick is wholly unbecoming for the context of the conversation since sending one's navel to a prominent figure of the English literature would appear to be similarly inappropriate and absurd as dispatching a hot dish to the same person.

Extract 9

"JOHNSON: Well, I simply observed, sir, that I'm felicitous, since, during the course of the penultimate solar sojourn, I terminated my uninterrupted categorisation of the vocabulary of our post-Norman tongue.

PRINCE GEORGE: Well, I don't know what you're talking about, but it sounds damn saucy, you lucky thing! I know some fairly liberal-minded girls, but I've never penultimated any of them in a solar sojourn, or, for that matter, been given any Norman tongue!" (Curtis et al., 1999, p.256)

"JOHNSON: Jen jsem prostě poznamenal, pane, že jsem blažen, neboť během penultimní solární periody jsem zdefinitivnil svou permanentní kategorizaci lexikonu našeho postnormanského jazyka.

PRINC JIŘÍ: Vůbec netuším, o čem to mluvíte, ale zní to náramně hogofogo, máte štígro! Zním pár svobodomyšlných holek, ale nikdy jsem je nepenultimoval v solární periodě, a když už jsme u toho, ani mi neudělaly normanský jazyk." (Curtis et al., 2008, p.259)

This extract, as well as the one to follow, offers an excellent example of linguistic humor consisting in the use of ceremonious expressions and nonce words designed to carry connotations of highly formal language.

The translation successfully preserves the flowery nature of the Johnson's diction, although a few changes (for instance the archaic infinitive form, as in "dovolil jsem si podotknouti", or the conjunction "neb" in place of "neboť") might shift the style even closer to the presumed scholarly language of that time.

The disputable point lies in the translation of the word "penultimate" and its amusing verbal version "penultimated" invented by Prince George. While "penultimate" is a word existent in the English language, "penultimní" represents a nonce word within the scope of the Czech lexis, as evidenced by the fact that it can be found neither in *Akademický slovník cizích slov* nor in *Slovník spisovné češtiny*. Thus, the humorous aspect of its verbalization, a fairly natural word-formation process in English, becomes dampened, since both "penultimní" and "penultimovat" occupy an equally peculiar position in Czech vocabulary, as opposed to the original text, in which Prince George transforms an unfamiliar but existing word into a nonce word with presumably sexual connotations.

Extract 10

"BLACKADDER: Leaving already, Doctor? Not staying for your pendigestatory interludicule?

JOHNSON: No, sir! Show me out!

BLACKADDER: Certainly, sir. Anything I can do to facilitate your velocitous extramuralization.

JOHNSON: (*To Prince George*) You will regret this doubly, sir. Not only have you impecuniated (*he glares with self-satisfaction at Blackadder, who is not impressed*) my dictionary, but you've also lost the chance to act as patron to the only book in the world that is even better." (Curtis et al., 1999, pp.258 – 259)

"ČERNÁ ZMIJE: Už odcházíte, pane doktore? Nezůstanete tu na pendigestatorickou interludikulu?

JOHNSON: Ne, pane, vyprovod'te mě ven!

ČERNÁ ZMIJE: Jak si přeje, pane. Milerád vám ulehčím velocitární extramuralizaci.

JOHNSON: (*K princí Jiřímu*) Budete toho litovat dvojnásob, pane. Nejenomže jste impekuloval (*se sebeuspokojením hodí pohled po Černé zmiji, ale na toho to žádný dojem neudělá*) můj slovník, ale také jste přišel o možnost být patronem jediné knihy na světě, která je ještě lepší." (Curtis et al., 2008, p.260)

Much like the previous passage, this one, too, contains several nonce words spitefully invented by Blackadder in order to undermine Johnson's authority. Consequently, analogous translation issues arise regarding the Czech counterparts of these terms because all the English expressions are based on existing vocabulary (digest, interlude, velocity, extramural, impecunious), which cannot be said for their translations such as "velocitární", "extramuralizace", or "impekulovat".

Hence, it is arguable whether these translations have a comparably comic effect on the reader as the original nonce words, even if they also represent words which do not exist in the target language.

Extract 11

"BLACKADDER: Sir, I come as emissary of the Prince Regent with the most splendid news. He wants your daughter Amy for his wife.

HARDWOOD: Well, his wife can't have her. Outrageous, sir, to come here with such a suggestion. Mind, sir, or I shall take off my belt and, by thunder, my trousers will fall down.

BLACKADDER: No, sir, you misunderstand, he wants to marry your lovely daughter." (Curtis et al., 1999, p.316)

"ČERNÁ ZMIJE: Pane, přicházím jako posel prince regenta se skvělou zprávou. Chce požádat o vaši dceru Amy za manželku.

HARDWOOD: No, ruku vám nedám. Jak jste, pane, mohl přijít s tak ohavným návrhem, copak jsem nějaký řezník? Dejte si pozor, pane, nebo vezmu pásek a u všech hromů, spadnou mi kalhoty.

ČERNÁ ZMIJE: Ne, pane, špatně jste mi rozuměl. Chce se s vaší roztomilou dcerou oženit." (Curtis et al., 2008, p.311)

In this passage, the jokes lies in the semantics of the sentence "He [Prince Geoge] wants your daughter for his wife", which can (and typically would) be perceived as the prince asking the father of his wife-to-be for permission to marry her. In this case, however, the father interpreted it as the prince wishing to have the daughter at the his wife's disposal, which is a request that infuriates him.

The Czech translation adopts an interesting solution which relies on the phrase "požádat o něčí ruku", and uses it as a pun, with Blackadder using it in the idiomatic sense and the father assuming that the meaning is literal. Therefore, the father protests angrily against the prince's asking for his daughter's limb, making a sarcastic remark about the work of a butcher. There

is, nonetheless, a slight discrepancy in the translation because Hardwood answers: "Ne, ruku vám nedám", although Blackadders request does not mention the word "ruka", which makes the pun much less obvious.

Extract 12

"BALDRICK: You know, the funny thing is, my father was a nun.

BLACKADDER: No, he wasn't.

BALDRICK: He was so, I know because whenever he was in court and the judge used to say 'occupation', he'd say 'Nun'." (Curtis et al., 1999, pp.356 – 357)

"BALDRICK: Víte, nejzvláštnější na tom je, že můj táta byl jeptiška.

ČERNÁ ZMIJE: To nebyl.

BALDRICK: Byl, protože kdykoli stál před soudem a soudce se ho ptal na rodinný stav, tak říkal, že ženatý není, ale že je věčně nadržený jak jeptiška." (Curtis et al., 2008, p.352)

Although the pun in this excerpt exceeds the limits of translatability, the Czech version does not provide another pun as a compensation. Rather, it adds a ribald joke, which does involve at least one of the words that the pronounced term [nʌn] can denote, namely a nun. However, this solution disrupts the coherence of the conversation because the simile that Baldrick's father allegedly used when asked in court does not provide explanation for Baldrick's stating that his father actually was a nun.

Extract 13

"DARLING: You're for it now, Blackadder. (*To Melchett*) Quite frankly I've suspected this for some time, sir. Captain Blackadder has clearly been disobeying orders with a breathtaking impertinence.

MELCHETT: I don't care if he's been rogering the Duke of York with a prize-winning leek! He shot my pigeon! Ahh! Ahh! Ahh!" (Curtis et al., 1999, p.369)

"DRAHOUŠEK: A teď jste v tom, Černá zmije. (*K Melchettovi*) Upřímně řečeno, já ho podezřívám už nějakou dobu, pane. Kapitán Černá zmije neposlouchal vaše rozkazy, až mi ta jeho drzost brala dech.

MELCHETT: Ať si třeba pro mě za mě opíchá vévodu z Yorku pórkem s medailí z výstavy. Zastřelil mi holuba! Ach, ach, ach!" (Curtis et al., 2008, p.363)

Semantically, the Czech translation is faithful to the original, but what eludes it is the structure (as depicted graphically below) of two of the sentences which utilize an almost identical construction because Darling's statement "Captain Blackadder | has clearly been

disobeying | orders | with a breathtaking impertinence." is followed by Melchett's jocular retort, exclaiming that he does not care if "He [Blackadder] | has been rogering | the Duke of York | with a prize-winning leek!"

As the structure is significant to the comedy of the situation, retaining it allows the dialog to give a similarly amusing impression in Czech, as the suggested version illustrates:

DRAHOUŠEK: Kapitán Černá zmije svou okázalou ignorací rozkazů hrubě podrýval vaši autoritu.

MECLCHETT: Bylo by mi fuk, i kdyby svou výstavní okurkou hrubě ošoustal vévodu z Yorku!

This translation relies on more extensive alterations of the text, which include slight semantic changes or additions to Darling's remark, using a different kind of vegetable because of the grammatical gender of the word "pórek" (which would disrupt the structure of the joke in Melchett's reaction as the form of the pronoun would have to be "svým", as opposed to "svou"), and replacing the expression "s medailí z výstavy" with the adjective "výstavní" because it conveys roughly the same message without deviating from the syntactic construction.

Extract 14

"BALDRICK: And they've overthrown Nicholas the Second who used to be bizarre.
BLACKADDER: Who used to be the *Czar*, Baldrick." (Curtis et al., 1999, p.386)

"BALDRICK: A svrhli Mikuláše II., co byl bizár.
ČERNÁ ZMIJE: Co byl car, Baldricku." (Curtis et al., 2008, p.378)

The pun in this excerpt consists in the phonetic similarity of the phrase "to be bizarre" and "to be the Czar", as demonstrated in the transcription: [tə bi: br'zɑ:r] and [tə bi: ðə 'zɑ:r]. However, not only do both of the phrases use very similar sounds, but also the rhythmic and stress pattern is identical, which, unfortunately, is not reflected in the Czech translation, where there is an unequal number of syllables in Baldrick's misinterpretation and Blackadder's subsequent correction.

Furthermore, Baldrick's statement in Czech uses the nonce word *bizár*, which somewhat diminishes the hilariousness of his erroneous interpretation because in the original text, his

mistake seems credible as he simply confuses two words because they are unfamiliar to him, which is only understandable considering that he represents a very poorly educated person.

A rendition which would perhaps respect the phonetic resemblance to the original more could read as follows:

BALDRICK: A svrhli Mikuláše II., který tam stanoval.
ČERNÁ ZMIJE: Který tam *panoval*, Baldricku.

Extract 15

"HAIG: Very well, listen carefully, Blackadder; I won't repeat this. Right – first put your underpants on your head, and two stick two pencils up your nose. They'll think you're crazy and send you home. Right, favour returned.

He hangs up. Blackadder is not amused.

BLACKADDER: I think the phrase rhymes with 'clucking bell'." (Curtis et al., 1999, p.450)

"HAIG: Tak dobře, poslouchej mě dobře, Černá zmije, nebudu to opakovat. Takže – nejdřív si natáhni spodňáry na hlavu a pak si do nosu vstrč dvě tužky. Budou si myslet, žeš zešilel, a pošlou tě domů. Tak, a už ti nic nedlužím.

"Zavěsí. Černá zmije nevypadá, že by ho to pobavilo.

ČERNÁ ZMIJE: Ty mně taky." (Curtis et al., 2008, p.437)

This translation completely disregards the linguistic joke (based on rhyme and a reference to a rude curse) that Blackadder makes. Instead, it makes use of a retort which is used in the Czech language as a reaction to an insult. Nonetheless, that is not suitable for the situation because Blackadder is not sworn at during the conversation, he is merely given a piece of advice which is useless to him.

It would not, however, appear entirely impossible to preserve the joke from the original statement, as the following translation shows:

ČERNÁ ZMIJE: Výraz, který mám právě na jazyku, se nápadně rýmuje se slovy „kopr celer“.

3.2 Culture-bound Jokes

Extract 1

"BLACKADDER: Have you ever *been* to Wales, Baldrick?

BALDRICK: No, but I've often thought I'd like to.

BLACKADDER: Well don't. It's a ghastly place, huge gangs of tough, sinewy men roam the valleys terrifying people with their close-harmony singing. You need half a pint of phlegm in your throat just to pronounce the place names. Never ask for directions in Wales, Baldrick, you'll be washing spit out of your hair for a fortnight." (Curtis et al., 1999, p.314)

"ČERNÁ ZMIJE: Byl jsi někdy ve Walesu, Baldricku?

BALDRICK: Ne, ale kolikrát jsem si říkal, že bych se tam rád podíval.

ČERNÁ ZMIJE: Radši nechtěj. Je to příšerné místo, velké bandy tvrdých, šlachovitých chlapů se tam potulují po údolích a děsí lidi zpěvem v úzké harmonii. Potřebuješ tak půl pinty hlenu v hrdle jen na to, abys vyslovil místní jména. Ve Walesu se nikdy neptej, jak se někam dostaneš, Baldricku – jinak si týden dva budeš vymývat chrchle z vlasů." (Curtis et al., 2008, pp.308 – 309)

The noteworthy aspect of this excerpt is not its translation in terms of language but in terms of culture. The Welsh as a common subject of British humor were mentioned in the first chapter, and Blackadder's opinion about them provides an excellent example; however, it is questionable whether the joke is preserved in the target text. Stereotypical as they may be, the customs and traditions of the Welsh, the characteristics of Welsh countryside, and the impression that the Welsh language can make are qualities most likely well-known with British people, yet it is presumable that a Czech audience might find them puzzling or not at all amusing because it would perceive the references as obscure, not being au fait with the cultural background.

Extract 2

"BLACKADDER: Baldrick, you are either lying, blind or mad. The lieutenant looks as all soldiers look on these occasions – about as feminine as W. G. Grace." (Curtis et al., 1999, p.389)

"ČERNÁ ZMIJE: Baldricku, buď lžeš, nebo jsi slepec nebo šílenec. Nadporučík vypadá jako všichni vojáci při této příležitosti – asi tak žensky jako pan W. G. Grace, i když do jeho plnovousu má ještě daleko a kriket hraje taky mnohem hůř." (Curtis et al., 2008, p.381)

In this case, the reference was deemed so cryptic that the translator added several explanatory elements because W. G. Grace, supposedly one of the greatest cricket players of all time

(Internet 43), was probably not considered a renowned sportsman for a Czech audience, inasmuch as cricket, although England's national sport (Internet 44) is not overly popular in the Czech Republic. (Internet 45) (Internet 46)

Thus, the Czech version of the simile was supplied with the word "pan" added in front of the cricketer's name to make it clear that the person being spoken about is a male, and the aspect of his appearance most relevant to the nature of the joke is mentioned, as is the fact that he was a cricket player, which, however, seems to both be rather necessary as the reference already lost some of its impact owing to the explanation and, additionally, barely of particular importance to a Czech viewer.

Extract 3

"FLASHHEART: Ha! Eat knuckle Fritz! How disgusting – a Boche on the sole of my boot! I shall have to find a patch of grass to wipe it on. Probably get shunned in the officers' mess . . . 'Sorry about the pong, you fellows, trod on a Boche and just can't get rid of the whiff . . .'" (Curtis et al., 1999, p.404)

"FLASHHEART: Ha! Tady máš do držky, fricku! Jak nechutné, mám na botě boše! Budu muset najít kus trávy, abych si ji otřel. Nejspíš se mi začnou vyhýbat v důstojnické jídelně... Omlouvám se za ten puch, chlapi, zrovna jsem šlápl do boše a nemůžu se toho smradu zbavit." (Curtis et al., 2008, p.394)

The interesting point of this extract lies in the translation of the derogatory terms for Germans, although this is perhaps not very obvious in the Czech language. As the recent history of Germany (notably the two world wars) has been intertwined to a great degree with that of the United Kingdom as well as of the Czech Republic, both English and Czech have developed several offensive nicknames for Germans, some of them being nearly identical such as the English "Fritz" and its Czech counterpart "fricek". Nonetheless, if the source text was to be translated into Hindi, for instance, the translation might prove fairly challenging and involve the addition of pejorative adjectives to retain similar connotations.

The Czech translation uses the word "boš", a French pejorative term for a German during and after World War I (Petráček et al., 1998, 111), which is a perfect equivalent of the English "Boche", although "Němčour" or "skopčák", which are not as specific, but equally insulting, might be more easily understood by Czech speakers.

Extract 4

"FLASHHEART: Tally-ho, Bobby! Hush, here comes a whiz bang, and I think you know what I'm talking about! Woof!

BOB: Woof!

BLACKADDER: God – it's like Crufts in here." (Curtis et al., 1999, p.406)

"FLASHHEART: Hola hej, Bobiku! Pst, přijde fik bum a já myslím, že víš, o čem mluvím. Vrrr!

BOB: Vrrr!

ČERNÁ ZMIJE: Bože můj, tady je to jak na psí výstavě." (Curtis et al., 2008, p.396)

In this translation, the original joke, which consists in a reference to a renowned venue for dog shows (Internet 47), was replaced by a generic reference, dimming its humorous impact. Nevertheless, if kept, the reference would likely not be appreciated by Czech, while this way, Blackadder's comment becomes at least understandable. Similarly, the following sarcastic remark by a Czech speaker "Tady je vzduch jak v Ostravě." would probably meet with little appreciation in most foreign countries. There would, however, be a possibility to replace the Czech city with a comparably industrial one in the target culture, provided that there is such a city in the given country. Otherwise, preserving the reference becomes practically impossible, as was the case with Crufts, for which no suitable replacement was found in the Czech cultural background.

3.3 Complex Jokes

Extract 1

"GEORGE: I'm thick. I'm as thick as the big print version of the Complete Works of Charles Dickens." (Curtis et al., 1999, p.379)

"GEORGE: Jsem tupec. Jsem tupý jako skotská žiletka." (Curtis et al., 2008, p.372)

The simile in this excerpt includes both a pun and a cultural reference, which was preserved in the translation, but some alterations were required. Since no similarly ambiguous word was found, the adjective "thick", meaning "stupid" but also "chunky" in the original text, was replaced by the word "tupý", which, too, can be used for describing an obtuse person, or it can denote the quality of being "blunt" (not sharp).

The Czech adjective, however, probably proved to be unsuitable for association with the Complete Works of Charles Dickens, so the reference to the famous English writer was substituted with a more general reference to a different nation, to wit the Scottish. Despite the additional element of ridicule, which the original simile did not contain, the translation perfectly mirrors Zabalabescoa's method of binary sets, as the type of joke (wordplay combined with a cultural reference) remains the same, and furthermore, the lexical colorfulness of the adjective "thick" is reflected faithfully in the Czech word "tupý".

Extract 2

"FLASHHEART: Well, well, well, if it isn't little Bobby Parkhurst, saucier than a direct hit on a Heinz factory." (Curtis et al., 1999, p.405)

"FLASHHEART: No ne, no ne, čert mě vem, jestli to není Bobík Parkhurstová, šťavnatější než přímý zásah do továrny na kečup." (Curtis et al., 2008, p.395)

In this case, the joke is based on the ambiguity of the adjective "saucy", which can mean both "pert" and "having the consistency of sauce", as well as on the following reference to the international food processing company Heinz. However, it was replaced in the Czech translation, albeit perhaps unnecessarily, with the generic term "továrna na kečup", and, more to the point, the wordplay also disappeared because the adjective "šťavnatý" is not commonly used for describing people, and thus renders the sentence stylistically awkward and unnatural, too.

Extract 3

"BLACKADDER: I'm beginning to see why the Suffragette Movement want the vote.

FLASHHEART: Any bird who wants to chain herself to my railings and suffer a jet movement (*another subtle thrust of the hips*) gets my vote. Right, that's it! See you in ten minutes for take-off." (Curtis et al., 1999, p.409)

"ČERNÁ ZMIJE: Začínám rozumět, proč sufražetky chtějí volební právo.

FLASHHEART: Každá kočka, která se bude chtít připoutat k mému klandru a zažít let (*další nenápadný pohyb boky*), má můj hlas. Tak je to a ne jinak! Uvidíme se za deset minut na startu." (Curtis et al., 2008, p.398)

The joke in this example presents a virtually untranslatable problem, as it is expressed by a pun created within a cultural reference, because Flashheart misconstrued Blackadder's reference to the early-twentieth century political movement as almost identically sounding

"suffer a jet movement", which, in light of his usual conduct throughout the story and the activity he pretends in the scene, represents obvious sexual innuendo.

Consequently, the Czech translation is devoid of the pun, and even another play on words in the excerpt, based on the noun "vote" meaning either "the right to vote" or "a decision to officially support", is not reflected in the Czech translation, imparting little more than an impression of Flashheart's obscenity to the conversation.

Extract 4

BLACKADDER: I spy with my bored little eye something beginning with . . . 'T'.
BALDRICK: Breakfast.
BLACKADDER: What?
BALDRICK: My breakfast always begins with tea, then I have a little sausage. Then an egg with some little soldiers.
BLACKADDER: Baldrick, when I said it begins with `T', I was talking about a letter.
BALDRICK: No, it never begins with a letter, the postman don't come until 10.30. (Curtis et al., 1999, p.420)

ČERNÁ ZMIJE: Á, moje očko, slídílek malý, znuďený, vidí něco, co začíná na písmeno té.
BALDRICK: Snídaně.
ČERNÁ ZMIJE: Cože?
BALDRICK: Vždycky si k snídani nejdřív dávám té, pak páreček. Potom vajíčko naměkko a pár topineček.
ČERNÁ ZMIJE: Když říkám, že to začíná na té, myslím tím písmeno, psaní, Baldricku.
BALDRICK: Ne, psaní k snídani nemám nikdy, pošťák chodí až v půl jedenácté. (Curtis et al., 2008, pp.408 – 409)

In this excerpt, there are several elements that deserve to be highlighted, the first being the translation of the nursery rhyme (here bitingly modified by Blackadder) used in the children's guessing game "I Spy". Since the translator did not manage to find an equivalent in Czech culture, (perhaps the phrase "Myslím si číslo" would have been the closest, but naturally, that is suitable solely for a number game) he decided for a rather poetic and playful wording which is, inevitably, devoid of its idiomatic as well as phonetic qualities.

Another point of interest lies in the translation of the two puns which occur in the text: firstly, the one based on the identical pronunciation of "T" and "tea", and secondly, semantic wordplay grounded in two different meanings of the noun "letter". These instances nearly

surpass the boundaries of translatability, yet remarkably corresponding formulations were devised.

The former pun was translated with absolute equivalence in terms of the ambiguity of the pronounced sound; however, the loanword "té" is inappropriate in that it fails to preserve the register of the original discourse, all the more so because the speaker, Baldrick, represents a tremendously obtuse person, and, ergo, is unlikely to be familiar with advanced vocabulary. Nonetheless, hardly would it be possible to find a translation with a degree of equivalence greater than that of the stated term.

Having no equally ambiguous counterpart (písmeno – dopis) in the Czech language, the latter wordplay was inventively translated with the help of the semantically related word "psaní" added as a further explanation of the intended meaning and also as a way of preserving the pun. Considering the narrowness of the meaning of the word "písmeno", the following specification seems redundant and, in fact, it damages the naturalness of the joke, but again, it is arguably the most faithful translation which does not remove the humor of the dialog altogether.

4. Conclusion

Translation of humor represents a complex issue, the full extent of which remains to be ascertained. It consists not only in identifying instances of humor, but also in determining its nature and significance for the text because what is accepted as a joke of in the source culture may be regarded as inappropriate, confusing or unfunny in the target culture. Also, when the translator focuses specifically on translating humor, it can be detrimental to the clarity of the text, as well as to the naturalness of the language. This approach is especially likely to occur in comedy translation, in which humor is of particular importance, and it needs to be avoided.

To recognize the significance and commonness of certain types of British humor, its recent history and characteristic features were examined in Chapter 1. A number of prevailing subject matters were found, such as politics, sex, race, madness and surrealism, cultural stereotyping, etc., and while it is presumable that areas like work, family or politics are universally popular, British humor very often involves fairly controversial issues, as mentioned above. It is, however, necessary to stress that the applicability of the word "controversial" is relative because the reception of, for example, sexist or racist jokes differs throughout cultures and also changes with time.

Likewise, the usual mediums for expressing British humor were mentioned, most prominent of which are sarcasm and disparagement, innuendo, and puns. As the English language allows for a great deal of ambiguity, the latter are fairly common but can prove particularly difficult to translate, especially into non-analytic languages. Much like the controversial subject matters, the other mediums also require to be approached carefully because denigrating or even humiliating jokes, for instance, can be unacceptable in some cultures.

With the characteristics of British humor covered, Chapter 2 provides the theoretical basis for the subsequent translation analysis of selected extracts from the *Black Adder* series script. It mentions two methods which are recommended for translation of humor: mapping and prioritizing, which denote locating the humor in the text and assessing its significance respectively. Also, for the purposes of prioritizing, the concept of Zabalbescoa's binary branching is adduced. Furthermore, Díaz-Cintas and Remael's typology of jokes is included, its categories are defined, and within them, several challenging aspects of humor translation are described.

The final chapter analyses a number of excerpts from the translation of the *Black Adder* series script, which are divided according to the aforementioned typology. Special attention is given to the translation of wordplay because it can become very complicated, but also interesting to translate from the English language to Czech. Where suitable, an alternative translation is provided and its advantages over the original one are explained.

By way of conclusion, it should be mentioned that translation of humor in the *Black Adder* series proved, for a variety of reasons such as its cultural bond or multifarious puns, to be fairly demanding. Sometimes, it was necessary to replace the original jokes with ones of another kind, and in several instances, humor even got lost in translation completely. Thus, the Czech viewer is, inevitably, offered a different experience as many compromises had to be made; for example, the very fact that the series takes place on the British Isles and its storyline spans a few centuries of British history can already distance it from a Czech audience, but this is a fundamental feature of the sitcom, and if it was altered, i.e. the tetralogy took place in the territory and the history of the Czech Republic, it might as well be considered a new series, for which the original *Black Adder* series was but a direct inspiration. Therefore, this aspect was preserved, which, nonetheless, cannot be said for many cultural references, as the last chapter indicates.

However, seeking perfect equivalence in humor translation is, as this paper documents, most futile as humor represents a quality which can sometimes be so specific and individual that it can elude understanding even among persons of the same nationality. Yet, this is not to say that translation of humor is pointless, it merely means that in many cases, it inherently requires a certain amount of compensation like modifying the subject matter or the type of joke.

5. Bibliography

I. Printed Sources

BERMAN, Garry. *Best of the Britcoms: from Fawlty Towers to The office*. Rev. ed. Lanham: Taylor Trade Pub., 2011, xix, 169 p. ISBN 978-158-9795-266.

CURTIS, Richard et al. *Blackadder: The Whole Damn Dynasty 1485 – 1917*. London: Penguin, 1999. ISBN 9780140280357.

CURTIS, Richard et al. *Černá zmije: Celá ta mizerná dynastie 1485-1917*. Prague: XYZ, 2008, 441 p. ISBN 9788087021613.

DÍAZ-CINTAS, Jorge and Aline REMAEL. *Audiovisual translation: subtitling*. Kinderhook, NY: St. Jerome Pub., 2007, 272 p. Translation practices explained. ISBN 19-006-5095-9

KING, Judith, Ronald RIDOUT and D K SWAN. *The book of British humour*. 12th imp. Harlow, Essex: Longman, 1981. ISBN 05-825-3695-2.

LEVÝ, Jiří. *The Art of Translation*. Philadelphia: John Benjamins Pub. Co., 2011, xxviii, 322 p. ISBN 90-272-8411-3.

MUIR, Frank and Simon BRETT. *Frank Muir Goes into...* London: Robson Books, 1978, 144 p. ISBN 08-605-1049-2.

MUNDAY, Jeremy. *The Routledge Companion to Translation Studies*. Revised edition. London: Routledge, 2009. ISBN 02-038-7945-7.

PAUL, Gill. *Translation in Practice: a symposium*. 1st ed. Champaign: Dalkey Archive Press, 2009, ii, 74 p. Dalkey Archive scholarly series. ISBN 15-647-8548-3.

PETRÁČKOVÁ, Věra et al. *Akademický slovník cizích slov: [A-Ž]*. 1. ed. Praha: Academia, 1998, 834 p. ISBN 80-200-0607-9.

ROSS, Alison. *The Language of Humour*. New York: Routledge, 1998, xiii, 114 p. Intertext (London, England). ISBN ISBN 0-203-98456-0.

TOOK, Barry. *Laughter in the Air: an informal history of British radio comedy*. London: Robson Books, 1976, x, 174 p. ISBN 09-038-9578-1.

II. Online Sources

Internet 1

Top 50 British Sitcoms. *British Comedy Guide* [online]. [cit. 2013-06-10]. Available from: <http://www.comedy.co.uk/guide/tv/top/>

Internet 2

Blackadder - BBC1 Sitcom. *British Comedy Guide* [online]. [cit. 2013-06-10]. Available from: <http://www.comedy.co.uk/guide/tv/blackadder/>

Internet 3

The Story of Music Hall. *Victoria and Albert Museum* [online]. [cit. 2013-06-10]. Available from: <http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/articles/t/the-story-of-music-halls/>

Internet 4

Alexander, British comedy and humour.pdf. ALEXANDER, Richard. *Englisches Seminar - Ruhr-Universität Bochum* [online]. 2005 [cit. 2012-12-03]. Available from: http://srv1.es.rub.de/main/versteegen/British_Humour/alexander,%20british%20comedy%20and%20humour.pdf

Internet 5

The Story of Music Hall. *Victoria and Albert Museum* [online]. [cit. 2013-06-10]. Available from: <http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/articles/t/the-story-of-music-halls/>

Internet 6

Alexander, British comedy and humour.pdf. ALEXANDER, Richard. *Englisches Seminar - Ruhr-Universität Bochum* [online]. 2005 [cit. 2012-12-03]. Available from: http://srv1.es.rub.de/main/versteegen/British_Humour/alexander,%20british%20comedy%20and%20humour.pdf

Internet 7

That Was The Week That Was - Definition and pronunciation. *Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary* [online]. [2011] [cit. 2013-06-10]. Available from: <http://oald8.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/dictionary/that+was+the+week>

Internet 8

Monty Python's Flying Circus - Definition and pronunciation. *Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary* [online]. [2011] [cit. 2013-06-10]. Available from: <http://oald8.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/dictionary/monty+python>

Internet 9

Class. *BFI Screenonline: British Sense of Humour Tour* [online]. [cit. 2013-06-10]. Available from: <http://www.screenonline.org.uk/tours/humour/tourBritHumour2.html>

Internet 10

The Frost Report. *BBC - Comedy* [online]. [cit. 2013-06-10]. Available from: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/comedy/thefrostreport/>

Internet 11

Sex. *BFI Screenonline: British Sense of Humour Tour* [online]. [cit. 2013-06-10]. Available from: <http://www.screenonline.org.uk/tours/humour/tourBritHumour3.html>

Internet 12

Censors were appalled by Carry On films and wanted to give many X rated certificates, new files reveal. *Mail Online* [online]. 2012 [cit. 2013-06-10]. Available from: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2207259/Censors-appalled-Carry-On-films-wanted-X-rated-certificates-new-files-reveal.html>

Internet 13

Violence. *BFI Screenonline: British Sense of Humour Tour* [online]. [cit. 2013-06-10]. Available from: <http://www.screenonline.org.uk/tours/humour/tourBritHumour4.html>

Internet 14

Work. *BFI Screenonline: British Sense of Humour Tour* [online]. [cit. 2013-06-10]. Available from: <http://www.screenonline.org.uk/tours/humour/tourBritHumour5.html>

Internet 15

Family. *BFI Screenonline: British Sense of Humour Tour* [online]. [cit. 2013-06-10]. Available from: <http://www.screenonline.org.uk/tours/humour/tourBritHumour6.html>

Internet 16

Politics and Society. *BFI Screenonline: British Sense of Humour Tour* [online]. [cit. 2013-06-10]. Available from: <http://www.screenonline.org.uk/tours/humour/tourBritHumour7.html>

Internet 17

The Life and Times of Colonel Blimp: why Churchill wanted it banned. *Telegraph* [online]. 2012 [cit. 2013-06-10]. Available from: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/film/classic-movies/9334436/The-Life-and-Times-of-Colonel-Blimp-why-Churchill-wanted-it-banned.html>

Internet 18

That Was The Week That Was is 50. *Telegraph* [online]. 2012 [cit. 2013-06-10]. Available from: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/tvandradio/9699468/That-Was-The-Week-That-Was-is-50.html>

Internet 19

Fools and Loosers. *BFI Screenonline: British Sense of Humour Tour* [online]. [cit. 2013-06-10]. Available from: <http://www.screenonline.org.uk/tours/humour/tourBritHumour8.html>

Internet 20

Q... *BBC - Comedy* [online]. [cit. 2013-06-10]. Available from: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/comedy/q/>

Internet 21

Madness and Surrealism. *BFI Screenonline: British Sense of Humour Tour* [online]. [cit. 2013-06-10]. Available from: <http://www.screenonline.org.uk/tours/humour/tourBritHumour9.html>

Internet 22

Till Death Us Do Part. *BBC - Comedy* [online]. [cit. 2013-06-10]. Available from: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/comedy/tilldeathusdopart/>

Internet 23

Mind Your Language. *British Comedy Guide* [online]. 2003 [cit. 2013-06-10]. Available from: http://www.sitcom.co.uk/mind_language/

Internet 24

It Ain't Half Hot Mum too 'racist' for the BBC. *British Comedy Guide* [online]. 2012 [cit. 2013-06-10]. Available from: http://www.comedy.co.uk/news/story/00000801/it_aint_half_hot_mum_racist_bbc_broadcast_ban/

Internet 25

Da Ali G Show (2000). *BFI Screenonline* [online]. [cit. 2013-06-10]. Available from: <http://www.screenonline.org.uk/tv/id/535258/>

Internet 26

Race protest at Ali G's film premiere. *The Guardian* [online]. 2002 [cit. 2013-06-10]. Available from: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2002/mar/21/filmnews.race>

Internet 27

Comics find Ali G is an alibi for racism. *Guardian.co.uk* [online]. 2000 [cit. 2013-06-10]. Available from: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2000/jan/11/race.janinegibson>

Internet 28

Da Ali G Show (2000). *BFI Screenonline* [online]. [cit. 2013-06-10]. Available from: <http://www.screenonline.org.uk/tv/id/535258/>

Internet 29

Just a bit of fun: A survey of British jokes. *OpenLearn - Open University* [online]. 2007 [cit. 2013-06-10]. Available from: <http://www.open.edu/openlearn/society/politics-policy-people/sociology/just-bit-fun-survey-british-jokes>

Internet 30

Alexander, British comedy and humour.pdf. ALEXANDER, Richard. *Englisches Seminar - Ruhr-Universität Bochum* [online]. 2005 [cit. 2012-12-03]. Available from: http://srv1.es.rub.de/main/versteegen/British_Humour/alexander,%20british%20comedy%20and%20humour.pdf

Internet 31

TV Satire. *BFI Screenonline* [online]. [cit. 2013-06-10]. Available from: <http://www.screenonline.org.uk/tv/id/946719/index.html>

Internet 32

British humour 'dictated by genetics'. *Telegraph* [online]. 2008 [cit. 2013-06-10]. Available from: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/1581251/British-humour-dictated-by-genetics.html>

Internet 33

Joking aside, British really do have unique sense of humour. *The Independent* [online]. 2008 [cit. 2013-06-10]. Available from: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/this-britain/joking-aside-british-really-do-have-unique-sense-of-humour-793491.html>

Internet 34

Humor and Translation: an Interdiscipline. *Academia.edu* [online]. [2005] [cit. 2013-06-10]. Available from: http://www.academia.edu/3239448/Humor_and_Translation_an_Interdiscipline

Internet 35

The Challenges of Translating Humor. *NYTimes.com* [online]. 2012 [cit. 2013-06-10]. Available from: http://www.nytimes.com/2012/10/21/books/review/the-challenges-of-translating-humor.html?pagewanted=all&_r=1&

Internet 36

Humor and Translation: an Interdiscipline. *Academia.edu* [online]. [2005] [cit. 2013-06-10]. Available from: http://www.academia.edu/3239448/Humor_and_Translation_an_Interdiscipline

Internet 37

Otakar Janecky hockey statistics and profile. *Hockeydb.com* [online]. [cit. 2013-06-10]. Available from: <http://www.hockeydb.com/ihdb/stats/pdisplay.php?pid=34119>

Internet 38

Tým – Soupiska muži 2003/2004. *HC ČSOB POJIŠŤOVNA PARDUBICE* [online]. [cit. 2013-06-10]. Available from: <http://www.hcpce.cz/soupiska.asp?sezona=2004>

Internet 39

Hokejová legenda Otakar Janecký oslaví padesátku. *Sport.cz* [online]. 2010 [cit. 2013-06-10]. Available from: <http://www.sport.cz/hokej/ostatni/clanek/180186-hokejova-legenda-otakar-janecky-oslavi-padesatku.html>

Internet 40

The Challenges of Translating Humor. *NYTimes.com* [online]. 2012 [cit. 2013-06-10]. Available from: http://www.nytimes.com/2012/10/21/books/review/the-challenges-of-translating-humor.html?pagewanted=all&_r=1&

Internet 41

Translating for dubbed television comedy. *Scribd.com* [online]. [1996] [cit. 2013-06-10]. Available from: <http://www.scribd.com/doc/8067393/Translating-for-dubbed-television-comedy>

Internet 42

Translating for dubbed television comedy. *Scribd.com* [online]. [1996] [cit. 2013-06-10]. Available from: <http://www.scribd.com/doc/8067393/Translating-for-dubbed-television-comedy>

Internet 43

W G Grace - Definition and pronunciation. *Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary at OxfordLearnersDictionaries.com* [online]. 2011 [cit. 2013-06-10]. Available from: <http://oald8.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/dictionary/w-g-grace>

Internet 44

Cricket (sport). *Britannica Online Encyclopedia* [online]. 2013 [cit. 2013-06-10]. Available from: <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/142911/cricket>

Internet 45

Golf, florbal a hokejbal pronikly mezi nejoblíbenější české sporty. *IDNES.cz* [online]. 2009 [cit. 2013-06-10]. Available from: http://sport.idnes.cz/golf-florbal-a-hokejbal-pronikly-mezí-nejoblibenejsi-ceske-sporty-1cv-/sporty.aspx?c=A091011_125801_sporty_par

Internet 46

Který sport je v ČR nejoblíbenější?. *Proti šedi* [online]. 2012 [cit. 2013-06-10]. Available from: <http://www.protisedi.cz/article/ktery-sport-je-v-cr-nejoblibenejsi>

Internet 47

Crufts - The World's Largest Dog Show, presented by the Kennel Club [online]. [2013] [cit. 2013-06-10]. Available from: <http://www.crufts.org.uk/>

6. Appendix

Appendix 1 - The Top 50 British TV Sitcoms according to a 2004 poll conducted by BBC2

Rank No.	Sitcom Name
1	Only Fools and Horses
2	Blackadder
3	The Vicar of Dibley
4	Dad's Army
5	Fawlty Towers
6	Yes Minister/Yes Prime Minister
7	Porridge
7	Going Straight
8	Open All Hours
9	The Good Life
10	One Foot in the Grave
11	Father Ted
12	Keeping Up Appearances
13	'Allo 'Allo!
14	Last of the Summer Wine
14	First of the Summer Wine
15	Steptoe and Son
16	Men Behaving Badly
17	Absolutely Fabulous
18	Red Dwarf
19	The Royle Family
20	Are You Being Served?
20	Grace & Favour
21	To the Manor Born
22	Some Mothers Do 'Ave 'Em
23	The Likely Lads
23	Whatever Happened to the Likely Lads?

24	My Family
25	The Office
26	Drop the Dead Donkey
27	Rising Damp
28	Dinnerladies
29	As Time Goes By
30	Hancock's Half Hour
31	The Young Ones
32	Till Death Us Do Part
32	Till Death...
32	In Sickness and in Health
33	Butterflies
34	The Thin Blue Line
35	The Fall and Rise of Reginald Perrin
35	The Legacy of Reginald Perrin
36	Phoenix Nights
37	Waiting for God
38	Birds of a Feather
39	Bread
40	Hi-de-Hi!
41	The League of Gentlemen
42	I'm Alan Partridge
43	Just Good Friends
44	2point4 children
45	Bottom
46	It Ain't Half Hot Mum
47	The Brittas Empire
48	Gimme Gimme Gimme
49	Rab C. Nesbitt
50	Goodnight Sweetheart