

Two and a Half Men: A Linguistic Analysis of an American Sitcom

Veronika Haščáková

Bachelor Thesis
2014



Tomas Bata University in Zlín
Faculty of Humanities

Univerzita Tomáše Bati ve Zlíně

Fakulta humanitních studií

Ústav moderních jazyků a literatur

akademický rok: 2013/2014

ZADÁNÍ BAKALÁŘSKÉ PRÁCE

(PROJEKTU, UMĚLECKÉHO DÍLA, UMĚLECKÉHO VÝKONU)

Jméno a příjmení: **Veronika Haščáková**
Osobní číslo: **H11321**
Studijní program: **B7310 Filologie**
Studijní obor: **Anglický jazyk pro manažerskou praxi**
Forma studia: **prezenční**

Téma práce: **Dva a půl chlapa: Lingvistická analýza amerického sitkomu**

Zásady pro vypracování:

Studium odborné literatury vztahující se k tématu práce
Výběr a shromáždění scénářů sitkomu pro praktický výzkum
Vytyčení cílů práce
Analýza vybraných scénářů na základě vytyčených cílů
Vyhodnocení výsledků analýzy a vyvození závěrů

Rozsah bakalářské práce:

Rozsah příloh:

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

Seznam odborné literatury:

Blake, Marc. 2005. How to Be a Sitcom Writer: Secrets from the Inside. Chichester: Summersdale Publishers.

Davies, Christopher. 2007. Divided by a Common Language: A Guide to British and American English. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

Finegan, Edward, and John R. Rickford, eds. 2004. Language in the U.S.A.: Themes for the 21st Century. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Herbst, Thomas. 2010. English Linguistics: A Coursebook for Students of English. New York: De Gruyter Mouton.

Mattiello, Elisa. 2008. An Introduction to English Slang: A Description of Its Morphology, Semantics and Sociology. Milano: Polimetrica International Scientific Publisher.

Vedoucí bakalářské práce:

Mgr. Lenka Drábková, Ph.D.

Ústav moderních jazyků a literatur

Datum zadání bakalářské práce:

29. listopadu 2013

Termín odevzdání bakalářské práce:

2. května 2014

Ve Zlíně dne 22. ledna 2014


doc. Ing. Anežka Lengálová, Ph.D.
děkanka




PhDr. Katarína Nemčoková, Ph.D.
ředitelka ústavu

PROHLÁŠENÍ AUTORA BAKALÁŘSKÉ PRÁCE

Beru na vědomí, že

- odevzdáním bakalářské práce souhlasím se zveřejněním své práce podle zákona č. 111/1998 Sb. o vysokých školách a o změně a doplnění dalších zákonů (zákon o vysokých školách), ve znění pozdějších právních předpisů, bez ohledu na výsledek obhajoby ¹⁾;
- beru na vědomí, že bakalářská práce bude uložena v elektronické podobě v univerzitním informačním systému dostupná k nahlédnutí;
- na moji bakalářskou práci se plně vztahuje zákon č. 121/2000 Sb. o právu autorském, o právech souvisejících s právem autorským a o změně některých zákonů (autorský zákon) ve znění pozdějších právních předpisů, zejm. § 35 odst. 3 ²⁾;
- podle § 60 ³⁾ odst. 1 autorského zákona má UTB ve Zlíně právo na uzavření licenční smlouvy o užití školního díla v rozsahu § 12 odst. 4 autorského zákona;
- podle § 60 ³⁾ odst. 2 a 3 mohu užit své dílo – bakalářskou práci - nebo poskytnout licenci k jejímu využití jen s předchozím písemným souhlasem Univerzity Tomáše Bati ve Zlíně, která je oprávněna v takovém případě ode mne požadovat přiměřený příspěvek na úhradu nákladů, které byly Univerzitou Tomáše Bati ve Zlíně na vytvoření díla vynaloženy (až do jejich skutečné výše);
- pokud bylo k vypracování bakalářské práce využito softwaru poskytnutého Univerzitou Tomáše Bati ve Zlíně nebo jinými subjekty pouze ke studijním a výzkumným účelům (tj. k nekomerčnímu využití), nelze výsledky bakalářské práce využít ke komerčním účelům.

Prohlašuji, že

- elektronická a tištěná verze bakalářské práce jsou totožné;
- na bakalářské práci jsem pracoval samostatně a použitou literaturu jsem citoval. V případě publikace výsledků budu uveden jako spoluautor.

Ve Zlíně 21.4.2014

Štěpánka Haščáková

¹⁾ zákon č. 111/1998 Sb. o vysokých školách a o změně a doplnění dalších zákonů (zákon o vysokých školách), ve znění pozdějších právních předpisů, § 47b Zveřejňování závěrečných prací

⁽¹⁾ Vysoká škola nevydělečně zveřejňuje disertační, diplomové, bakalářské a rigorózní práce, u kterých proběhla obhajoba, včetně posudků oponentů a výsledku obhajoby prostřednictvím databáze kvalifikačních prací, kterou spravuje. Způsob zveřejnění stanoví vnitřní předpis vysoké školy.

(2) Disertační, diplomové, bakalářské a rigorózní práce odevzdané uchazečem k obhajobě musí být též nejméně pět pracovních dnů před konáním obhajoby zveřejněny k nahlázení veřejnosti v místě určeném vnitřním předpisem vysoké školy nebo není-li tak určeno, v místě pracoviště vysoké školy, kde se má konat obhajoba práce. Každý si může ze zveřejněné práce pořizovat na své náklady výpisy, opisy nebo rozmnoženiny.

(3) Platí, že odevzdáním práce autor souhlasí se zveřejněním své práce podle tohoto zákona, bez ohledu na výsledek obhajoby.

2) zákon č. 121/2000 Sb. o právu autorském, o právech souvisejících s právem autorským a o změně některých zákonů (autorský zákon) ve znění pozdějších právních předpisů, § 35 odst. 3:

(3) Do práva autorského také nezasahuje škola nebo školské či vzdělávací zařízení, užije-li nikoli za účelem přímého nebo nepřímého hospodářského nebo obchodního prospěchu k výuce nebo k vlastní potřebě dílo vytvořené žákem nebo studentem ke splnění školních nebo studijních povinností vyplývajících z jeho právního vztahu ke škole nebo školskému či vzdělávacímu zařízení (školní dílo).

3) zákon č. 121/2000 Sb. o právu autorském, o právech souvisejících s právem autorským a o změně některých zákonů (autorský zákon) ve znění pozdějších právních předpisů, § 60 Školní dílo:

(1) Škola nebo školské či vzdělávací zařízení mají za obvyklých podmínek právo na uzavření licenční smlouvy o užití školního díla (§ 35 odst.

3) Odírá-li autor takového díla udělit svolení bez vážného důvodu, mohou se tyto osoby domáhat nahrazení chybějícího projevu jeho vůle u soudu. Ustanovení § 35 odst. 3 zůstává nedotčeno.

(2) Není-li sjednáno jinak, může autor školního díla své dílo užit či poskytnout jinému licenci, není-li to v rozporu s oprávněnými zájmy školy nebo školského či vzdělávacího zařízení.

(3) Škola nebo školské či vzdělávací zařízení jsou oprávněny požadovat, aby jim autor školního díla z výdělku jím dosaženého v souvislosti s užitím díla či poskytnutím licence podle odstavce 2 přiměřeně přispěl na úhradu nákladů, které na vytvoření díla vynaložily, a to podle okolností až do jejich skutečné výše, přitom se přihlídnou k výši výdělku dosaženého školou nebo školským či vzdělávacím zařízením z užití školního díla podle odstavce 1.

ABSTRAKT

Cílem této bakalářské práce je analýza amerického sitkomu *Dva a půl chlapa* ve snaze prozkoumat jazyk, kterým je sitkom proslulý, tj. vulgární, obscénní a urážející jazyk. Práce také sleduje, zda změna hlavního hereckého obsazení ovlivnila používaný jazyk a způsob vyjadřování jednotlivých postav.

Teoretická část popisuje žánr sitkomu včetně jeho vývoje, charakteristických znaků a jazykových zvláštností, které jsou dále rozděleny na verbální a neverbální. Součástí teoretické části je rovněž charakteristika americké angličtiny z hlediska vývoje i lingvistiky.

Praktická část v úvodu přibližuje sitkom *Dva a půl chlapa* včetně hlavního hereckého obsazení a vizuální stránky scénářů tohoto sitkomu. Práce následně analyzuje sestavený korpus vybraných dílů sitkomu na základě předem definovaných lingvistických hledisek. Závěrem bakalářské práce je shrnutí dosažených poznatků a vyvození závěrů.

Klíčová slova: sitkom, verbální a neverbální prvky, slang, americká angličtina, *Dva a půl chlapa*, vulgarita, obscénnost, humor

ABSTRACT

The aim of this bachelor thesis is to analyze the American sitcom *Two and a Half Men* in an effort to examine the language that this sitcom is renowned for, i.e. profane, obscene and offensive language, and consequently determine whether the different main cast has impacted this language and the way it is conveyed by its characters.

The theoretical part offers coverage on the nature of sitcoms including their evolution, salient features and language peculiar to sitcoms that is divided into verbal and non-verbal aspects. This is followed by the description of American English from the historical and linguistic perspective.

The practical part introduces the sitcom *Two and a Half Men* along with its main cast and visual aspects of the sitcom script. Subsequently, a corpus is selected and the theoretical background is used to explore the linguistic peculiarities gathered from the examined corpus. At the end of the thesis, the main findings are summarized and conclusions are set out.

Keywords: sitcom, verbal and non-verbal aspects, slang, American English, *Two and a Half Men*, vulgarity, obscenity, humor

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First of all, I would like to express gratitude to my supervisor Mgr. Lenka Drábková, Ph.D. for her time and patience devoted to me and my bachelor thesis since her valuable guidance has considerably contributed to the final outcome of this thesis. Consequently, I would like to thank my husband who has supported and encouraged me throughout my studies.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	10
I THEORY.....	11
1 DEFINITION OF SITCOM	12
1.1 SITCOM EVOLUTION	12
1.1.1 Early History of Sitcoms	13
1.1.2 From the 1960s to the Present	14
1.2 KEY FEATURES OF SITCOM.....	14
1.2.1 Sitcom Humor	15
1.2.2 Characters	15
1.2.3 Location	16
1.2.4 Methods of Shooting	16
1.2.5 Structure	17
2 SITCOM LANGUAGE	19
2.1 BASIC TRIPLE STRUCTURE.....	19
2.2 VERBAL ASPECTS	19
2.2.1 Informal Language	19
2.2.2 Slang	20
2.2.3 Colloquialisms vs. Slang	21
2.2.4 Tabooing and Swearing	22
2.2.5 Word Creations.....	23
2.2.6 Marginal Forms of Humor.....	23
2.2.7 Word Playing	24
2.2.8 Idiomatic Language	25
2.2.9 Figurative Language	25
2.3 NON-VERBAL ASPECTS	27
2.3.1 Paralanguage.....	27
2.3.2 Kinesics	28
2.3.3 Proxemics	28
3 AMERICAN ENGLISH.....	29
3.1 DEVELOPMENT OF AMERICAN ENGLISH	29
3.1.1 Colonial Period	29
3.1.2 National Period.....	30
3.1.3 International Period	31
3.2 FEATURES OF AMERICAN ENGLISH.....	32
3.2.1 Pronunciation.....	32
3.2.2 Spelling.....	33
3.2.3 Vocabulary.....	33
3.2.4 Grammar	34
II ANALYSIS	37
4 THE AIM OF THE ANALYSIS	38
4.1 CORPUS	38
5 TWO AND A HALF MEN.....	39

5.1	DEVELOPMENT OF TWO AND A HALF MEN	39
5.1.1	Original Show	39
5.1.2	Revamped Show	40
5.2	PERSONALITY TYPES	40
5.3	SITCOM SCRIPT STYLE.....	42
5.3.1	Dialogue	42
6	WAYS OF ADDRESSING PEOPLE.....	43
6.1	SLANG IN ADDRESSING.....	43
6.2	COLLOQUIALISMS IN ADDRESSING	44
6.3	METAPHORS IN ADDRESSING.....	44
6.4	VERBAL IRONY IN ADDRESSING	46
6.5	ALLUSION IN ADDRESSING	47
6.6	IDIOMS IN ADDRESSING	48
7	EXPRESSING PROFANITY	49
7.1	EXPLICITLY CONVEYED PROFANITY.....	49
7.1.1	Vulgar Language	49
7.1.2	Avoidance of Tabooing and Swearing	52
7.2	ALLUSION TO PROFANITY	53
7.2.1	Metaphor.....	54
7.2.2	Hyperbole	54
7.2.3	Personification	55
7.2.4	Parallelism	55
8	VULGARITY AND AMBIGUITY	56
8.1	WORD PLAYING.....	56
8.1.1	Malapropisms	56
8.1.2	Punning.....	57
8.2	MARGINAL FORMS OF HUMOR	58
8.2.1	Sarcasm.....	58
	CONCLUSION	60
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	62
	LIST OF TABLES	66
	APPENDICES	67

INTRODUCTION

The ardent sitcom viewers have their favorite characters emblazoned on hoodies, hats, mugs, and other merchandise, they place their admirable heroes on the screensavers of their laptops and mobile phones, and they post an infinite amount of enthusiastic comments on sitcom fan pages. Sitcom catchphrases and jingles can be heard as ringtones at almost every corner. All in the pursuit of demonstrating how much these diehard fans enjoy watching their favorite sitcoms along with the likeable characters with whom the fans long to identify.

There certainly is a particular fondness for this form of scripted comedies and there are several reasons why people love to watch them. The consensus is that sitcoms are favored mostly owing to their comic impetus. The question remains what makes sitcoms so funny and appealing that they keep us coming back for more? Their success is often attributed to the talented cast of characters, however, characters would hardly be so hilarious without precisely prepared scripts which they stick to. Not everybody realizes that what elicits raucous laughter when indulging our favorite sitcom episodes each week, might be grounded in the elaborated and witty language that is neatly enciphered in distinctive linguistic devices. Each sitcom relies heavily on its own effective language which ensures that its audience remains riveted to the television screens.

It has always been puzzling me how it is possible that some sitcoms lose their spark and fade from our memory after a while, whereas others are still gaining on popularity and remain at the top of our viewing for several years. This fact inflamed me to explore my favorite sitcom *Two and a Half Men* in order to ascertain how its unique language ensures this sitcom the long-term success.

The beginning of the theoretical part is devoted to the definition of a situation comedy, its evolution from the early history to the present times, and its salient features. Further, the language characteristic of sitcoms is divided into verbal and non-verbal aspects that are explored in detail. At the conclusion of the theoretical part, American English, as the source language of the analyzed sitcom, is characterized.

The practical part outlines the sitcom *Two and a Half Men*. The main emphasis is put on the lexical analysis of the established corpus with the intention to explore the creativity in expressing profane, obscene and offensive language that is peculiar to this sitcom, and thereby support the assumption that the sitcom excels only “as being the best at being the worst” (Beane 2007). The secondary intention is to find out whether the different main cast has influenced this language and the way it is expressed after ten years from its debut.

I. THEORY

1 DEFINITION OF SITCOM

Sitcom, commonly used as an abbreviation for a situation comedy, is a specific genre of comedy that is nowadays featured mainly on television. Sayre and King define sitcom as “a comedy series that involves a continuing cast of characters in a common environment or situation such as family, home or workplace” (2010, 90). Thus, “each week we encounter the same people in essentially the same setting” (Mills 2009, 28). The opinions on what causes the fondness for sitcoms diverge. According to Wilkinson, “sitcoms appeal to people of all ages, classes, nationalities and races, because they focus on certain situations that everyone can relate to” (2011). Similar point of view is provided by Butsch who claims that situation comedies are built around a humorous situation which intensifies in tension, and thereby amuses the audience (2005, 111). According to Blake, however, it is a common mistake to assume that the situation is salient in sitcoms. He stresses that the mainstay of sitcoms are their characters (2005, 11). All these opinions complement each other and they define the nature of sitcoms quite accurately. Therefore, it can be concluded that not only the comic situation is enough, but also individual characters are crucial since they deliver these funny situations.

Sitcoms serve as a kind of escapism from everyday problems since they make people laugh, which might be the reason why they are so favored by numerous numbers of viewers who watch them on regular basis. However, it needs to be mentioned that their purpose is not solely confined to the entertaining function. Watching sitcoms may also provide educational benefit in terms of broadening the knowledge of vocabulary, improving listening skills and learning more about a specific culture and the use of humor. Besides, according to Lopez et al., some sitcoms are supposed to criticize and ridicule society and they can contain a serious message that is presented in a funny and non-serious way (2000, 42).

1.1 Sitcom Evolution

Certainly, it has taken a long time for sitcoms to develop into today's form. Even though they had to undergo numerous alterations, it would be incorrect to claim that they considerably deviate from their early forms because early sitcoms are sure to have left substantial impact on their successors. Besides a variety of new themes that sitcoms break down nowadays, they have technically advanced throughout the years. Despite this fact, Medoff and Kaye claim that modern sitcoms still continue displaying taboos in a humorous way and they poke fun at serious issues, which implies that their nature has remained the same (2011, 105).

1.1.1 Early History of Sitcoms

As Slunčík states, origins of sitcoms are associated with the United States and Great Britain where this genre appeared for the first time in the 1920s (2010, 8). First sitcoms were originally devised for the radio as 15-minute programs. There appeared numerous sitcoms on the radio during the 1930s and the 1940s. According to Sayre and King, the first situation comedy was *Sam and Henry* that debuted on WGN radio in 1926 (2010, 90). This sitcom had domestic setting and it dealt with family problems concerning raising a child (Blake 2005, 24). According to Feasey, *Sam and Henry* was followed by *The Goldbergs*, *Mama* and *Beulah* where ethnicity was presented for the first time (2008, 21). Since all cinemas and theatres were shut down when the Second World War broke out, the radio providing entertainment became especially important as keeping up people's morale.

Feasey points out that in the late 1940s and early 1950s, sitcoms pierced into television as adaptations of established radio programs (2008, 20). Such sitcom evolution brought more entertainment to television screens and caused significant development in television industry. As stated by Sayre and King, the world's first television sitcom was *Pinwright's Progress* which reflected changes in Britain's society (2010, 90). This British sitcom was broadcast live from the BBC studios since 1946. The very first American television sitcom was *Mary Kay and Johnny* that initially debuted on the Dumont Network in 1947 and later appeared on CBS and NBC (Sayre and King 2010, 90). This sitcom depicted the beginnings of American post-war prosperity and the start of the baby boom. However, the term *sitcom* was coined in 1951 and thus its primacy is often associated with a domestic family-based sitcom *I love Lucy* that appeared on CBS in 1951 (Sayre and King 2010, 90). This sitcom experienced not only tremendous success, but it also introduced the idea of a live audience and new camera techniques that enabled the use of different sets by using three cameras (Bent 2009, 198). *I love Lucy* is significant because it set the patterns that were followed by future sitcoms. Since then, "situation comedy has been the mainstay, the bread and butter, of prime-time television," as stated by Butsch (2005, 111).

As Bent remarks, first television sitcoms were performed in front of live studio audiences and the technique with three cameras was used (2009, 198). Sitcoms of the 1940s and the 1950s were mainly dominated by interaction among family members and later, sitcoms about co-workers or roommates began to emerge on television screens more often (Slunčík 2010, 8).

1.1.2 From the 1960s to the Present

In the 1960s and 1970s, sitcoms continued to be family-centered but the high-concept shows, combining fantasy with comedy, came into existence. Fantastical elements began to be featured in sitcoms such as *The Munsters* or *The Addams Family*. By the 1960s, most sitcoms stopped being filmed in the presence of live audiences and a laugh track was employed as a result of the film art development. In the 1970s sitcoms started to deal with social issues (e.g. *All in the Family*), sex (e.g. *Three's Company*) and controversy. Among other themes, which arose during the 70s, belonged also women's liberation (e.g. *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*) and the topic of war (*M*A*S*H*). According to Bent, all these elements caused a significant change in the medium of future sitcoms (2009, 198-199).

The high-concept reappeared in the 1980s (e.g. *Alf*) and sitcoms in workplaces were replaced by sitcoms revolving around nuclear families (e.g. *Cheers*) (Bent 2009, 199). Moreover, situation comedies that were built around popular stand-up comedians pioneered in the 1980s and they continued later in the 1990s (e.g. *The Cosby Show*, *Seinfeld*, *Roseanne* or *Everybody Loves Raymond*) (Bent 2009, 200). During the 1990s, many sitcoms were aimed at children (e.g. *Sabrina, the Teenage Witch*), and cartoon sitcoms became favored, e.g. *The Simpsons* that is the longest-running sitcom in history, as remarked by Bent (2009, 199).

The first decade of the twenty first century caused many changes in American sitcoms. In the 2000s, three camera shooting was replaced by single camera shooting and laugh tracks along with studio audiences began to disappear because many sitcoms were shot on location or studio sets (e.g. *The Office*, *Arrested Development*, *30 Rock*) (Bent 2009, 185).

Besides technical capabilities that advanced in the first decade of the twenty-first century, even the way people watch television has become very different. Nowadays, there is no need to schedule a day so as to watch favorite sitcoms because it is possible to download them from the Internet and watch them anytime.

1.2 Key Features of Sitcom

There exist several features typical of sitcoms that have a considerable impact on their success since their employment manages to rivet viewers to the screen. There might be a consensus that people watch naturally funny characters, however, Blake explains that it is “an immense amount of work in creating a unique world” which must be taken by both cast and crew (2005, 8). The most significant features of sitcoms are clarified below.

1.2.1 Sitcom Humor

An indispensable part of all sitcoms is the humor, which is undoubtedly one of the keys to a successful sitcom. Therefore, all sitcoms ought to be “gloriously, unpredictably, irrelevantly hilarious” in order to amuse people enough to make them keep watching and tune in again (Blake 2005, 13). In sitcoms, the humor is encoded in hilarious dialogues and situations that are delivered by the characters who are always pulled into trouble (Butsch 2005, 111). As Duncan states, sitcoms exploit predicaments and rely heavily on various misunderstandings, hooks and twists (2006, 296). They draw on daily troubles and they are full of embarrassing mistakes. However, Lopez et al. note that each episode features also some sort of conflict or a central problem in order to keep the storyline dynamic (2000, 42).

1.2.1.1 Devices of Sitcom Humor

According to Savorelli, running gags and inside jokes are two devices that are characteristic of sitcoms (2010, 28). They contribute to their comedic nature, and therefore they are employed plentifully. These two devices complement each other and they enable to build rapport with the audience as well as avoid monotony.

Running gag is either verbal or visual joke that is repeated during the show “at seemingly random moments,” explains Bontjes (2013, 31). At first, running gags are used unintentionally but when the audience reacts favorably, they are inserted in a storyline more frequently and the audience can often anticipate them. Owing to these recurring occurrences, they seem to be even funnier than before. (Bontjes 2013, 31)

Savorelli explains the importance of inside jokes that should be employed because they help to avoid dysphoria by making unexpected turns (2010, 8). Inside jokes are jokes that can solely be familiar to a particular group of people, e.g. the group of friends or co-workers. Only the members of such in-group can understand them properly, thereby outsiders are excluded since they are not able to comprehend them.

1.2.2 Characters

One of the most important features is a recurring cast of characters. According to Lopez et al., sitcoms have central and minor characters who perform supporting roles (2000, 42). Central characters are likely to have “very definable characteristics and exaggerated traits” (Lopez et al. 2000, 42). As Blake claims “there is little character development in sitcom” (2005, 13). As a result, characters stick to their role, they are stifled by their lives and in most cases they tend to remain trapped throughout the sitcom. The disappointment and dissatisfaction with their life becomes a common source of humor (Lopez et al. 2000, 42).

Medoff and Kaye state that this small cast is caught up in some humorous situation that is supposed to be resolved until the end of each episode (2011, 105). Butsch adds that this situation remains to be similar as being incessantly re-created (2005, 111). In most cases, characters are faced with situations that are close to regular people and they usually tackle daily and hence not very serious problems. Slunčik considers this particularly important because the audience can identify with characters and also with their problems (2010, 7).

In addition, Blake stresses the importance of believability, familiarity and surprise (2005, 15-17). It is necessary for characters and their actions to be credible for the audience. People should not ask why characters behaved in that way and not differently and all their actions should be plausible. The element of familiarity should not be neglected either. TV viewers ought to be familiar with characters so that they could properly understand their motives. Obviously, it usually requires certain time for sitcoms to become settled. Blake also pinpoints that each sitcom should not forget to surprise its fans. He suggests that the cast should perform something unexpected in order to remain appealing for its audience (2005, 16). On the contrary, Slunčik disagrees with Blake because he is convinced that sitcoms should be foreseeable and a viewer should know what to expect in episode after episode (2010, 8).

1.2.3 Location

Another typical characteristic of sitcoms is their distinctive location where characters interact. Sitcoms have a limited number of settings where plot usually takes place, such as flats, detached houses, pubs, offices or other workplaces. According to Lopez et al., sitcoms take place in one or two central locations and other settings are added only occasionally for variety (2000, 42). The prevailing are domestic and workplace settings that might be combined, as Blake observes (2005, 13).

1.2.4 Methods of Shooting

Nowadays, sitcoms are either shot in front of a live studio audience or directed in a television studio where laugh tracks are employed to highlight the jokes and simulate the response of the audience (Lopez et al. 2000, 42). Savorelli assumes that the use of laugh tracks is crucial because sitcoms “need an audience to function properly, even when the audience is nothing but the recording,” which is associated with the fact that sitcoms are closely linked to their theatrical origins (2010, 31). Today’s sitcoms are usually edited before transmission, but Blake highlights the importance of a live audience as it prompts the characters to provide the best possible performance and it also examines the effectiveness of jokes (2005, 11).

Sitcoms can be shot with multiple cameras, which creates a linear storyline confined to a limited number of places, however, this is not a strict rule (Slunčík 2010, 7). They can be filmed with a single camera, which allows wide shots, close-up scenes and lots of movement. These sitcoms commonly use a non-linear narrative enabling flashbacks, flash forwards, split screen, on location filming etc., as Slunčík points out (2010, 7).

1.2.5 Structure

One of the most apparent features of all situation comedies is their length. According to Duncan, sitcoms are always about half-hour programs (2006, 300), but Blake remarks that on the commercial networks their time can be reduced to 25 minutes (2005, 12).

Sitcoms have no real ending and although each episode contains some small stories, “the situation itself never ends” (Bent 2009, 198). Therefore, they can be characterized by an ongoing plot. Bent describes that the basic is “A” story, which serves as a main story and remains unresolved until the final scene, and “B” story that is a smaller story of the more dramatic flow (2009, 200-201). Apart from these two storylines, other subplots can be added, which entails “C” and possibly further storylines. As Cook explains, these secondary stories can be either completely separate from the main story or they can become part of it (2013, 50). According to Thompson, multiple storylines are essential because they “do give the impression of cramming a great deal of action into a relatively short time span” (2003, 57). As a result, each episode usually tells more than a single story.

Duncan claims that the basic sitcom structure is very simple as following a two-act model (2006, 300). Cook adds that these two acts consist of a series of scenes that are supposed to tell a story (2013, 48). The typical script of sitcoms is illustrated below:

Table 1. Sitcom Story Structure

Structure	Pacing	Dramatic Goal
Teaser	2-4 pages	Funny runner or introduction to the A-story
Act One	25 pages	Introduce problem-predicament, protagonist(s) gets involved, complicating it
Act Two	25 pages	Protagonist tries to solve problem, intensifies it, creates a setback (reversal)
Tag	1-4 pages	Wrap up loose ends, or funny outtakes, reinforce theme “we're all in this together”

Source: Data from Duncan (2006, 301)

Sitcoms usually start with teasers that are also known as cold openings. Duncan defines teasers as brief scenes that should “grab and draw in the viewer” (2006, 300). Teasers ought to convince the audience not to switch channels during commercial breaks, nonetheless, they should not reveal much about the story to follow. Duncan adds that teasers may not relate to the basic storylines and he clarifies that they should not be longer than two minutes, which approximately equals to four script pages (2006, 300).

Teasers are followed by the first act that sets up the story. In this act, the main problem is introduced and all characters become aware of the problem. This embroilment of characters intensifies the particular obstacle even more. According to Cook, “it is where you get your character(s) into hot water” (2013, 48). The length of the first act is about twenty-five pages, which is roughly twelve minutes.

In the second act, a main character tries to figure out the problem by which he or she worsens the situation. This effort creates a reversal in the story, which is known as the act two bump. This bump ought to be surprising for both the audience and the protagonist and the result should be the resolution of the problem (Duncan 2006, 300). The length of the second act is the same as the length of the first act.

The whole sitcom structure ends with a tag which Cook defines as “a little two or three minutes segment that comes at the end of a show after the final commercial break and right before the end credits” (2013, 53). Its length can span from one page (thirty seconds) to four pages (two minutes).

2 SITCOM LANGUAGE

Sitcoms are watched and favored particularly because they can create laughter, amuse the viewers and help them to relax. Thus, they serve as a distraction from the audience's daily problems. That is to say, every time when sitcom viewers burst out laughing when watching their favorite sitcom in weekly installments, it is most likely achieved by the language. The reason is that the humor of sitcoms is chiefly encoded in the seemingly witty but much elaborated language. Each sitcom is unique and has its own linguistic peculiarities.

2.1 Basic Triple Structure

As Fischer and Jensen point out, sitcoms can be considered as the blend of verbal and non-verbal communication (2012, 169). This interplay succeeds in entertaining their audience via a series of humorous situations that are delivered by characters. At this point, the notion of the basic triple structure needs to be clarified. This structure consists of language itself, paralinguistics and kinesics that further subsumes proxemics. According to Fischer and Jensen, the language-paralinguistics-kinesics triad becomes particularly important in this genre of script comedy (2012, 169). Thus in addition to verbal competencies, also paralinguistics and kinesics should be mastered by the performers so as to achieve the best possible result, which means to generate big laughs of the audience.

2.2 Verbal Aspects

Since practical part analyzes the written discourse, the main emphasis will be placed on the verbal aspects of sitcoms. More specifically, this section describes primarily aspects that are relevant for the further analysis, although many of them are applicable to sitcoms as such.

As Hu states, "humor, especially verbal humor is the most important feature of sitcoms and also the main mechanism to proceed" (2012, 1185). Since sitcoms are "restricted by the particular setting, most humorous effects or punch lines could only be displayed by designed linguistic performance rather than body languages," add Zhu-Hui and Miao (2012, 1221). These verbal aspects are not spontaneous actions of the characters, but they are a variety of premeditated rhetorical devices that create audience-understandable language aiming to entertain sitcom viewers as well as ensure that sitcoms are well attended.

2.2.1 Informal Language

Even though formal language has its place in sitcoms since it can be used as a source of ridiculing or mimicking pompous and authoritative characters, as Lopez et al. explain, it is

rather seldom and avoided (2000, 43). The use of informal spoken language is predominant and salient in sitcoms. The reason why informality prevails is that sitcom language attempts to resemble everyday talk in order to approach the viewers. As a result, sitcoms are characteristic of “a high level of colloquialisms and slang to give the audience a sense that they are watching ordinary people like themselves” (Lopez et al. 2000, 43).

2.2.2 Slang

Slang is associated with very informal language that is created and used by a particular subgroup whose members “know each other well or share the same social background,” as explained by Kolář (2006, 85). Sitcom characters form such a subgroup which frequently uses a variety of slangy expressions. As a result, slang is barely intelligible to outsiders (i.e. occasional viewers) and thus strengthens affinity and creates certain intimacy and rapport between sitcom characters and its regular viewers. According to Crystal, this incomprehensibility is one of the reasons why slang words are coined within particular groups and contexts (2003, 182). Another reason is the attempt to create concise, easy and highly personal language, adds Miššíková (2003, 109). However, Mattiello suggests that slang does not have to be familiar only within a certain subgroup and he emphasizes that “some slang words can be of more general use or they happen to be understood by practically anyone within the language community” (2008, 37). This implies that slang employed in sitcoms can be sometimes comprehended by a wider range of people who do not have to be necessarily devoted viewers. Spears clarifies that this happens because certain slang words comprise enough information and hence with the needed context, setting and background knowledge, they can be deciphered (2006, x).

2.2.2.1 Slang Ephemerality

Although all slang comes from the spoken language, which triggers its recognition and acceptance, its further development is uncertain because slang can be characterized as “ever-changing vocabulary” (Mattiello 2008, 48). With respect to this phenomenon, Mattiello distinguishes temporary slang that is popular only for a short time (e.g. *massive*, *paranoid*, *reckon*), slang expressions that remain fashionable for a long time (e.g. *chap*, *buck*, *jerk*), and slang expressions that are no longer perceived as slang, but rather as colloquialisms (e.g. *bus*, *phone*, *pub*) (2008, 47). Miššíková adds another category as she suggests that some slang can be incorporated into standard speech (e.g. *O.K.*, *jazz*, *A-bomb*) (2003, 109). This is supported by Spears who emphasizes that slang and standard language should not be considered as complete opposites (2006, ix).

2.2.2.2 *Enriching vs. Degrading Nature of Slang*

As Mattiello states, slang has often been rather considered as subordinate and debate speech that degrades the language (2008, 50). In fact, slang is often created as a reaction to taboo subjects related to sexual activity (e.g. *fuck, wank, shag*), excretion (e.g. *crap, cack, shit*), religion (e.g. *goddamn, for fuck's sake*) and the like (Mattiello 2008, 48). This vulgar and obscene slang is used in order to arouse strong reactions among its listeners. Owing to these derogatory appellations that are disrespectful of people's feelings, slang is inherently labelled as impertinent, offensive and abusive. Sometimes it can be even aggressive in order to express mockery, hostility and dislike, thereby demean and challenge the addressee.

On the other hand, slang is also described as “a fresh vital vocabulary that keeps language alive and growing” (Mattiello 2008, 47). According to Crystal, it helps to avoid monotony and clichés of the ordinary language, which is vital for sitcoms so as to remain attractive for its audience (2003, 182). Spears stresses that not all slang expressions must be necessarily dysphemistic, some slang words serve as euphemisms (e.g. *poop* instead of *shit*, or *blouse bunnies* instead of *breasts*) (2006, x). In addition, slang expressions are usually more efficient than standard descriptions because they are direct and brief. Slang has a capacity to render sitcom language more colorful, creative, original and unconventional.

2.2.2.3 *Humorous Nature of Slang*

One of the main purposes of slang is to amuse the hearers and make them laugh. This comic effect of slang is salient in sitcoms. “An element of humor is almost always present in slang, usually as humorous exaggeration,” remarks Mattiello (2008, 50). Spears supports this claim by stating that “slang vocabulary is viewed as fun to hear and fun to use” (2006, x). The listeners can enjoy the mere hearing or seeing slang expressions although they do not intend to include them in their word stock. Slang humor can be delivered either explicitly by ironic antiphrasis or implicitly by punning or ambiguous slang words. The latter implies that slang is very playful as “it manipulates words and their meanings” (Mattiello 2008, 48).

2.2.3 *Colloquialisms vs. Slang*

According to Mattiello, slang does not correspond to colloquial language, even though both overlap considerably since both depart from formal style where their use is inappropriate (2008, 38). Kolář admits that boundaries between them may be difficult to establish, but he assumes that colloquial expressions are still considered as part of the standard language, unlike slang that is considered as highly informal and thus non-standard language (2006, 78). Consequently, they differ at the level of familiarity because slang is usually restricted

to the particular context among the particular group of people (Mattiello 2008, 50). Therefore, slang expressions can be misleading to outsiders, while colloquialisms are more widespread and easily understood by nearly everyone in everyday situations (e.g. *ad, dad, mom, kid, hot, pal, guy*) (Kolář 2006, 78). The users of slang “enjoy a special fraternity,” explains Miššíková, “but the use of colloquialisms emphasizes only the informality and familiarity of a general social situation” (2003, 108). Another difference is pointed out by Spears who claims that colloquialisms “tend not to arise from in-group jargon or patter, and they are rarely entertaining conundrums, unlike slang” (2006, xv).

2.2.4 Tabooing and Swearing

According to Medoff and Kaye, sitcoms are characteristic of portraying long-standing taboos, which society is sensitive to talk about, “with raunchy, cruel and offensive situations in the guise of humor” (2011, 105). This necessarily entails the usage of taboo words in sitcoms. Taboo words are perceived as offensive, embarrassing and harmful expressions “constrained by the culture, religion, generation, social group, etc.” (Kolář 2006, 87). Crystal explains that harm is associated with death and the supernatural, embarrassment with sexual activity, and offensiveness with body parts (2003, 172). However, it is possible to avoid taboo words by using technical terms (e.g. *anus, penis, vagina*), part-spelling (e.g. *f—k*), or euphemisms (e.g. *pass away* for *die*, *spend a penny* for *urinate*, *adult video* for *porno*) (Crystal 2003, 172). Kolář states that they can be concentrated into the following four groups: (a) religion (e.g. *damn, hell, god*), (b) parts of the body (e.g. *arse, balls, cock*), (c) sexual activity (e.g. *fuck, wank, bugger*), and (d) elimination of bodily wastes (e.g. *fart, shit, piss*) (2006, 87-88).

Taboo words are source of swear words, but their use differs when they are employed in swearing since “swearing refers to the strongly emotive use of a taboo word or phrase” (Crystal 2003, 173). There are numerous functions that swear words can serve, e.g. exclamation of annoyance (e.g. *God! Jesus! Damn! Shit! Fuck!*), exclamation of surprise (e.g. *Bugger me! My God!*), surprised questions (*What the hell ...*), insult (e.g. *SOB, asshole, stupid fucker*), insulting request to go away (e.g. *Fuck off! Piss off!*), violent refusal (e.g. *Get stuffed! Stuff it up your ass!*), intensifiers (e.g. *It's bloody well raining again.*) (Kolář 2006, 88-89). All these functions are important in sitcoms because, as Crystal states, these obscene, profane and blasphemous words can express a variety of emotions ranging from a mere annoyance to the anger (2003, 173). Therefore, under emotional pressure imposed by a variety of unpredictable situations, swear words occur in the speech of sitcom characters.

2.2.5 Word Creations

Herbst suggests that one of the functions of lexemes is “to enable the speakers of a language to express certain concepts or ideas” (2010, 98). This might be achieved either by creating new lexical items or transferring the meaning of already established words (Herbst 2010, 98). According to Crystal, neologisms belong to the categories of lexical humor, which might be the reason why sitcoms are inventive in the devising of new words and phrases (2003, 408). These coinages are initially used by a limited number of speakers but if they are catchy enough, they might become the hallmark either of a particular character or the sitcom itself and they are likely to enter everyday use and become imitated. One such example is Homer Simpson’s *Doh!* that is nowadays commonly used as “a universal exclamation for anyone doing something foolish” (Lopez et al. 2000, 43).

2.2.6 Marginal Forms of Humor

Humor is delivered via a variety of linguistic stratagems. The employment of irony and sarcasm in sitcom utterances serves irreplaceable function since both are used as a humorous framework. Although they are not constrained to create the amusing effect, in sitcoms, their entertaining function prevails and the laugh is generated to the detriment of the addressee.

2.2.6.1 Irony

Irony is referred to as a literary device “that achieves emphasis by saying the opposite of what is meant” (Zhu-Hui and Miao 2012, 1221). The result is that the conveyed meaning is contradicted to the intended meaning. Oliveira distinguishes three basic types of irony that all can be found in situation comedies, namely (a) verbal irony, where the speaker intentionally states something but he implies the exact opposite (e.g. *I can’t wait to learn for my state exams*), (b) dramatic irony, where the audience knows something that the character is not aware of (e.g. the audience knows that the main character’s wife is cheating on him but the character himself does not know it), and (c) situational irony, where the outcome of a situation is different from what is expected by the audience (e.g. the character who is always unlucky suddenly wins the jackpot) (2011, 73).

2.2.6.2 Sarcasm

Even though there is no consensus whether sarcasm and irony should be treated as completely distinctive devices, according to Oliveira, sarcasm is more deliberate and its main purpose is to express mockery and criticism (2011, 73). Similarly to verbal irony, “the expression of sarcasm in speech is characterized by indirect language meant to be interpreted

non-literally by the listener” (Cheang and Pell 2011, 203). This implies that both devices are expressed indirectly but compared to irony, sarcasm intends to disparage and wound the addressee through eroding his confidence and self-esteem. Although the utterance is seemingly positive, “it is intended to have a negative impact” (Hahn and Hensley 2000, 15). According to Cheang and Pell, the crucial role play paralanguage, specific context and selected vocabulary that facilitate to reveal sarcastic remarks (2011, 203). Sitcom characters employ this form of indirect communication because they should be funny, no matter how painful their messages can be for other characters in the show.

2.2.7 Word Playing

As Crystal states, “much of the linguistic deviance which occurs in informal conversation stems from a humorous use of word play” (2003, 404). Lopez et al. suggest that devices based on word playing, such as puns and malapropisms are an indispensable part of all sitcoms (2000, 43). According to Mills, many verbal jokes that are employed in sitcoms are constructed around linguistic devices which draw on word playing (2009, 84).

2.2.7.1 Punning

Hahn and Hensley refer to the punning as “a humorous play on words derived from the similar sounds of words or dual meanings” (2000, 318). In puns, “two unrelated meanings are suddenly and unexpectedly brought together in a single word, and the incongruity makes us laugh or groan” (Crystal 2003, 405). Owing to their comic impetus, puns are present in the sitcom discourse. Miššíková assumes that puns are frequently used in jokes and they are very often homophonic, e.g. *Why is six afraid of seven? Because seven ate nine* (2003, 45). The result is an ambiguous sentence that can be semantically interpreted in two different ways, where both captured meanings make sense.

2.2.7.2 Malapropisms

In certain respect, malapropisms resemble puns since they rely on the similar sounds of words. More specifically, malapropisms are associated with the “use of a similar sounding but incorrect word” (Lopez et al. 2000, 43). These deliberate but seemingly accidental mistakes of sound-alike words are effective comic device, e.g. *You need to see an optimist to get your glasses changed* instead of *You need to see an optometrist to get your glasses changed* (Hahn and Hensley 2000, 318). The result is a grammatically correct but semantically nonsensical and thus funny sentence. Similarly to puns, malapropisms are favored by sitcoms mainly due to their funny outcome that is generated by the characters.

2.2.8 Idiomatic Language

Sitcoms take pleasure in using idioms because of their ability to make the language more vivid and colorful. They enrich the language and thereby help to avoid monotony that could lead to a high failure rate. Besides, idiomatic expressions often express the verbal message more clearly and briefly unlike lengthy literal explanations. Kvetko defines idioms as relatively fixed combinations of words operating as single semantic units with non-literal meaning that is either partially or fully figurative (2005, 103). Crystal shares similar point of view as he assumes that their intended meaning cannot be deduced by examining the meanings of the individual components (2003, 163). However, Crystal disagrees with Kvetko in terms of their fixedness since he claims that idioms are grammatically and lexically frozen, which means that even the slightest modification could result in a loss of the idiomatic meaning (2003, 163). Despite the lack of flexibility, internal variations are possible because with certain idioms, as Kvetko states, “whatever variations the idiom undergoes, it expresses the same meaning with the same imaginary” (2005, 104). There exist several variations among changeable idioms, namely (a) grammatical (e.g. *turn up one’s one/turn one’s nose up*), (b) lexical (e.g. *cross sb’s palm/cross sb’s hand*), (c) spelling (e.g. *run amuck/run amok*), and (d) geographical (e.g. BrE: *too many cooks spoil the broth* vs. AmE: *too many cooks spoil the soup*) (Kvetko 2005, 105).

Idioms can be classified according to various properties. A division based on the degree of opacity divides idioms semantically into (a) pure idioms, where there is no connection between the meaning of individual words and the meaning of the whole (e.g. *kick the bucket, white elephant*), (b) semi-opaque idioms, where there exists a certain connection between the meaning of the whole and the meaning of individual words (e.g. *behind closed doors, have a free hand*), and (c) semi-idioms, where one part is figurative and the second one is literal (e.g. *foot the bill, horse sense*) (Kvetko 2005, 106).

2.2.9 Figurative Language

Figurative language embraces all kinds of devices that are mainly employed “to achieve an effect beyond the range of ordinary language” (Hahn and Hensley 2000, 10). Therefore, figurative language enriches sitcoms and makes them more interesting and engaging for their audience. In sitcoms, figures of speech are mainly confined to create amusing effect and they are used with the presumption that the audience will recognize their intended meaning. There are numerous figures of speech that are mostly diverse in their nature, but this section defines only those which are relevant for the analysis.

2.2.9.1 *Metaphor*

Kvetko defines metaphor as a transfer of meaning based on similarity of the referents (2005, 55). Peprník adds that this transfer happens on the basis of exterior features. He refers to metaphor as a shortened simile (1998, 44). However, Lethbridge and Mildorf stress that this interplay is achieved without asserting an explicit comparison, unlike simile where particle of comparison is used (2004, 33). Hahn and Hensley emphasize that metaphor can work only when there is at least one shared characteristic between the replaced words (2000, 12). According to Perník, the resemblance may be based on color (e.g. *bloody*), shape (e.g. *needle* = for sewing vs. needle of a dial), location (e.g. *foot* = a body part vs. the foot of a hill), function (e.g. *leg* = a body part vs. a piece of furniture) or extent (e.g. *large* = *oceans of*) (1998, 44-45).

Miššíková provides the basic division of metaphors determined by their originality and expectedness, i.e. genuine metaphors that are original and unpredictable (e.g. *She was a flesh-eating orchid, the rape of Sarajevo*) and trite metaphors that are rather overused and highly predictable (e.g. *floods of tears, a ray of hope*). She adds that metaphoric expressions appear frequently in everyday discourse, e.g. witty nicknames derived from the characteristic traits of people. These names usually belong to the colloquial or slangy language (e.g. *egghead* for an intellectual, *culture vulture* for a person interested in arts) (2003, 40).

2.2.9.2 *Hyperbole*

According to Lopez et al., exaggerated language belongs to one of the most characteristic features of sitcoms (2000, 43). Much of the humor comes from the usage of hyperbole that is understood as an obvious and deliberate overstatement or exaggeration of the meaning that should not be taken literally (e.g. *I haven't seen you for ages!*) (Hahn and Hensley 2000, 10). Lethbridge and Mildorf add that this figure of speech is primarily employed for emphasizing or creating a rhetorical effect among the audience (2004, 27).

2.2.9.3 *Allusion*

Allusion is “an indirect reference, by word or phrase, to a historical, literary, mythological or biblical fact or to a fact of everyday life ...” (Miššíková 2003, 53). There is no indication or description of the source, it is rather a passing comment that presupposes that the addressees, i.e. sitcom viewers, possess enough knowledge to become quickly familiar with the alluded fact, thing or person. For this reason, the background and cultural knowledge play crucial role (e.g. *He was a real Romeo with the ladies* as a reference to the literary work *Romeo and Juliet*).

2.2.9.4 Personification

According to Kvetko's definition, personification is a figure of speech in which human attributes or feelings are assigned to non-human things, i.e. animals, inanimate objects, or abstract concepts, as in *the paper says, sun smiles, wind whispers* (2005, 55). In sitcoms, personification is mostly employed in order to produce comic effect.

2.2.9.5 Parallelism

Parallelism belongs to the rhetorical devices at the sentence level because it manipulates the word-order of utterances. In parallelism, a similar or identical structural pattern (word, phrase, clause) is repeated within a single utterance (e.g. *Women represent the triumph of matter over mind, just as men represent the triumph of mind over morals*) (Lethbridge and Mildorf 2004, 26). This results in sentences with resembling word-order that seek to elicit laughter in sitcoms. These constructions can be easily recognized because they "belong to the main foregrounded features on a syntactic level," as Miššíková remarks (2003, 73).

2.3 Non-Verbal Aspects

Although the practical analysis does not focus on non-verbal aspects, they will be briefly described because they are important when analyzing sarcasm.

Miššíková emphasizes that communication carried out in the spoken medium comprises "not only utterances that realize language, but also other systems of signs that are non-verbal" (2003, 87). The written medium cannot capture the whole dynamics of sitcom humor and therefore, it is necessary to mention other ways upon which sitcoms are heavily depending. The mere verbal components are not enough to succeed in sitcoms because "it is not a half-hour of one-liners and gags strung together," say Fischer and Jensen, "the laughs should come from the situation and the way the characters behave in that situation" (2012, 169). Thus except for verbal aspects, extra-linguistic expressive means are vital components of sitcoms, through which both the humor and meaning can be often conveyed more directly than by any linguistic devices. These non-verbalized aspects reinforce the verbal message, intensify the situation and indicate characters' attitudes and a variety of emotions.

2.3.1 Paralanguage

Paralanguage is referred to as "a non-verbal, but vocal system" (Miššíková 2003, 87). More specifically, Jiaoqian provides the basic distinction of paralanguage into the following three categories: (a) vocal characterizers (e.g. laughing, crying, yawning, yelling), (b) vocal qualifiers (e.g. pitch, resonance, volume, intonation, tempo of speech), and (c) vocal

segregates (e.g. “ooh”, “shh”, “uh”) (2004). For the sake of comedy, these features are very often exaggerated, e.g. high or low pitch voice, sudden changes of intonation, fast pace of conversation. By paralinguistics it is possible to emphasize the situation, express speakers’ temporary thoughts and feelings, and even indicate characters’ personality traits. Paralinguistic features, such as giggles, snorts or exclamations of boredom, disgust, disapproval, sarcasm, can communicate a specific meaning even more successfully than any verbal features. Even though paralinguistics is associated with spoken discourse, it can be substituted in written discourse by graphics, interjections, font, capitalization or other ways of foregrounding the text. This implies that paralinguistics has the capacity to “cross linguistic borders” (Fischer and Jensen 2012, 169).

2.3.2 Kinesics

Considerable amount of the sitcom humor is communicated visually, which is achieved through kinesics. It is a non-verbal communication system consisting of mimetic movements (i.e. facial expressions), gestures (i.e. hand movements), and body language (i.e. body movements) (Miššíková 2003, 91). In sitcoms, these movements are similarly to prosodic features very often exaggerated in order to intensify the situation. By a variety of motions, characters can effectively convey jokes and project their emotional state. Moreover, all these visual aspects provide valuable feedback to the actors about how successfully the message is being received by the audience. Since kinesic signals may happen on both conscious and unconscious levels, they can be even more revealing than words themselves. Unlike paralinguistics, however, kinesics cannot be reflected in written discourse, as pointed out by Fischer and Jensen (2012, 169).

2.3.3 Proxemics

As it was mentioned, proxemics is often understood as a subcategory of kinesics. It can be characterized as the distance between the speaker and the recipient, based on which we can deduce what relationship exists between the speakers. It can also give us an indication of particular situation, personal characteristics and regional habits. Miššíková states that proximity reflects “the degree of intimacy, familiarity or formality in the utterance” (2003, 91). The closer the interlocutors are, the more intimate, familiar and less formal the conversation.

3 AMERICAN ENGLISH

American English is one of the geographical varieties of the English language that is used in the USA. In general, there are two major geographical varieties of the English language, namely British and American English that are considered as national standards (Kvetko 2005, 85).

Since the sitcom *Two and a Half Men* is of American origin, American English will be briefly described with the underlying focus on its linguistic diversity but also on its development. British English will be mentioned too so as to emphasize the magnitude of the differences between the two seemingly identical languages.

3.1 Development of American English

American English has developed on the basis of historical events. Algeo differentiates three early periods pertaining to the history of American English, namely *the Colonial period*, *the National period* and *the International period*. These periods played a significant role in the shaping of American English (2001, 4).

3.1.1 Colonial Period

The first period is associated with the early settlements which were established by the first settlers of North America during the seventeenth century (Kövecses 2000, 19). According to Algeo, the very first successful colony Jamestown, founded by English settlers in 1607, initiated the creation of a new language variety (2001, 4). Therefore, English Puritans are attributed to pioneer the English language into North America.

3.1.1.1 Language of First Settlers

Babich assumes that the first American expressions that enriched the English language came from the need to name unfamiliar landscape, weather, animals and plants (2006, 148). Thus, new words were borrowed and coined. These words were coming from the English language (e.g. *corn* or *catfish*) and from Native American languages (e.g. *moose* or *raccoon*) (Babich 2006, 148). These newly coined terms might be referred to as first Americanisms although the term was invented later on. However, not only the English language imported from Britain occurred at that time. This period is known for the importation of African slaves who also enriched the gestating American English (Finegan and Rickford 2004, 3). This interaction with other communities (European immigrants, African slaves and Amerindians) resulted in the expansion of the forming variety.

As Peprník emphasizes, the first settlers did not intend to renounce their mother tongue (1985, 7). Algeo clarifies that since the first settlers were exposed to the daily contact with indigenous population, British English appeared to be insufficient for the purpose of communication (2001, 4). Another aspect that contributed to the existence of a new variety of the English language, was the weakening contact with the motherland that caused the language of the colonists to drift apart from mother tongue gradually (Algeo 2001, 4).

According to Kövecses, this period is linguistically considered the most significant because the population of the first thirteen colonies marked the beginnings of the language that would later become known as American English (2000, 19).

3.1.2 National Period

The national period spans from the end of the American Revolution and covers the nineteenth century (Kövecses 2000, 19). With the mass influx of especially European immigrants, the process of assimilating foreign influences continued. Their impact was immense and the end of the eighteenth century is thus associated with high multilingualism (Finegan and Rickford 2004, 3).

Until the eighteenth century American and British English were still merged, but the War of Independence along with the Declaration of Independence marked the turning point in the shaping of this variety. Algeo emphasizes that the Declaration brought not only political independence, which the Atlantic colonies longed for, but also a quest for a language that would not be restricted by British influences (2001, 4). The creation of a separate variety and its expansion across the whole nation became the priority of this period.

3.1.2.1 American English as Separate Variety

Finegan and Rickford claim that the two streams with opposing opinions on the future of American English emerged at the beginning of the nineteenth century (2004, 12). The first stream was made up of American patriots who endeavored to create a distinct variety of American English because they were convinced that America, as an independent nation, deserved its own language. Therefore, they were in favor of fostering the language change and embracing new terms. One of the main representatives was American lexicographer Noah Webster according to whom it was necessary and inevitable for American English to be separated from its British influence (Kövecses 2000, 7).

By contrast, conservatives did not want the language to drift away from the British influence out of fear that this could cause English to belong among unintelligible languages, as Finegan and Rickford state (2004, 12). Despite the disapproval of conservatives, the

separation of American language took place later in the nineteenth century particularly owing to the efforts of American patriots (Finegan and Rickford 2004, 13). Davies points out that the independence of American English became chiefly apparent during the Industrial Revolution when newly coined words varied in each variety (e.g. AmE *railroad*, *windshield* unlike BrE *railway* and *windscreen*) (2007, 3). From this time on, they were moving away from each other increasingly.

3.1.3 International Period

The International period represents the last period that stretches from the end of the nineteenth century to present times (Kövecses 2000, 21). As its name indicates, it was the time when America expanded enormously. According to Algeo, the Spanish-American War that initiated this period was a turning point in foreign policy since it caused that both the USA and American English became internationally important and recognized (2001, 5). This war was a presage of the future American English expansion since it “marked the maturity of American English and its entrance onto the world stage” (Algeo 2001, 6).

3.1.3.1 Rise of American English

The twentieth century is characterized by a new wave of immigrants. The immigration influx reached its peak before the First World War and soon after the war, there were employed restrictions on immigration which caused that multilingualism was considered unpatriotic (Finegan and Rickford 2004, 3). According to Davies, American and British English became greatly distinctive before the Second World War but soon after, the two varieties were getting closer again (2007, 3). As Crystal states, a massive growth in the use of American English was caused by a natural process of assimilation of most immigrants (2003, 35). Graddol assumes that the Second World War caused the extension of American influence over the world and from the twentieth century, the USA was gradually becoming a superpower spreading the English language through its economic, technological and cultural influence all over the world, as he clarifies (2000, 8). Nowadays, American English is widely spoken and extremely influential variety that has crucial impact not only on British English but also on other English varieties. However, as Graddol remarks, it is owing to the British colonial influence that American English has become an enormously popular world language because Britain set up pre-conditions for its success (2000, 8).

3.2 Features of American English

There exists a considerable number of linguistic phenomena that are specific to American English since its speakers share certain features of pronunciation, vocabulary, spelling and grammar that are in some respects distinct from British English.

Even though the contrasts between the two varieties have been slowly disappearing as both become mutually intelligible, there are enough differences that can occasionally lead to misunderstandings in communication. The following section provides the most relevant peculiarities from the area of pronunciation, spelling, vocabulary and grammar.

3.2.1 Pronunciation

There are certain differences between American and British English pronunciation. In Peprník's opinion, some of the features of American English pronunciation may seem to be rather "rough" and even vulgar to the British (1985, 15). On the contrary, Americans may consider British pronunciation to be clipped and too softened. In particular, pronunciation of some consonants and vowels differs considerably in the two varieties. The most remarkable differences perceived by Swan (2005, 43-44) and Tottie (2002, 16-21) are listed below.

3.2.1.1 Consonants

The most noticeable difference is post-vocalic /r/ that is pronounced in all positions in AmE, unlike BrE that tends to drop the /r/ sound when it appears in monosyllabic words after vowels (e.g. *turn, farm, work*) and at the end of the words (e.g. *other, clever, director*). Another peculiarity of AmE is intervocalic /t/ and /d/. AmE drops /t/ when it appears in final positions (e.g. *what, cut*) or after the /n/ sound (e.g. *centre, internet, interview*). AmE also does not distinguish between "clear l" and "dark l" thus /l/ in words like *feel* and *live* sounds very similar.

3.2.1.2 Vowels

In AmE, words where vowel *a* is followed by consonants (e.g. *bath, half, dance*) are pronounced with /æ/ but BrE produces them with /ɑ/ that is recognized in AmE only before /r/ and words ending in *-lm* (e.g. *car, calm*). Another significant discrepancy is that AmE lacks the vowel sound /ɒ/ that is present in BrE in words like *hot, top* or *coffee*. As a result, Americans tend to pronounce these words rather with /ɑ:/ or /ɔ:/. AmE prioritizes the diphthong /ou/ in place where British English tends to pronounce /əʊ/ (e.g. *go, home, open*), and similarly it adopts /u:/ rather than British /ju:/ when dental or alveolar consonants precede the vowel (e.g. *tuna, duty, new*).

3.2.2 Spelling

Although most American and British words are written in the same way, there are a few eye-catching deviations. American spelling was reformed by lexicographer Noah Webster who introduced the use of a different spelling system to that of British English (Babich 2006, 150). Thereby he helped to standardize American spelling and contributed to the distinctiveness of American English. In majority of cases, American spelling tends to be simplified and thus vocabulary inclines to be shorter. The most relevant spelling properties of AmE are systematic and it is possible to reduce them into several following rules (Tottie 2002, 10-11).

3.2.2.1 Suffixation

AmE prioritizes the suffix *-or* over *-our* and thus American speakers use simplified lexemes *color, humor, favor* whereas British usage is *colour, humour, favour*. Similarly, there are preferences for *-er* over *-re* (e.g. *center, theater, meager*) and *-se* over *-ce* (e.g. *defense, offense, license*). Another important feature is that AmE prefers the suffix *-ize/ization* over British *-ise/isation* (e.g. *recognize, organize, subsidize*). The AmE usage of *-ction* instead of *-xion* (e.g. *connection, inflection*) and *-log* instead of *-logue* (e.g. *catalog, dialog*) is typical too.

3.2.2.2 Internal Changes

Unlike British English, AmE also does not double final *l* when adding postfixes beginning with vowels (e.g. *marvelous, canceled, traveling*). However, Americans double *l* with stressed syllables (e.g. *skillful, willful, fulfill*) in contrast to Britons. In the words of Greek and Latin origin, AmE prefers simplified spellings with the vowel *e* (e.g. *diarrhea, encyclopedia, esthetic*) over vowels *ae, oe* (*diarrhoea, encyclopaedia, aesthetic*) that are used sparingly in BrE.

3.2.3 Vocabulary

According to Babich, the most distinctive features between American and British English occur in the choice of vocabulary. He attributes the discrepancy particularly to the expansion from the nineteenth century, when American English was no longer restricted by British rules and thus vocabulary of purely American origin began to be created (2006, 157). The major differences in the use of vocabulary within American and British English are provided in the following division.

3.2.3.1 *Different Words with the Same Meanings*

This category consists of words that are completely different but they are semantically equal to each other. Each of them has its own counterpart either in British or American English, however, they can considerably differ in terms of frequency, style and connotation in both varieties (e.g. AmE *hood*, *drugstore*, *downtown* vs. BrE *bonnet*, *chemist*, *town centre*). (Tottie 2001, 100)

3.2.3.2 *The Same Words with Additional Meanings*

This group comprises words that have the same form but their meaning has expanded in one of the varieties. They are formed by adding a new meaning to the already existing word when there is a need to express something new in the most convenient way (e.g. *bathroom* = AmE/BrE “a room containing a bath or shower” vs. AmE “a room containing a toilet”; AmE/BrE *momentarily* = “for a moment or an instant” vs. AmE “in a moment, very soon”). (Tottie 2001, 100-101)

3.2.3.3 *The Same Words with Different Meanings*

Over time, it might happen that the previously used meaning falls into disuse entirely and a new meaning is coined. Thus words with the exactly same form may vary semantically in both varieties (e.g. *mad* = BrE “crazy” vs. AmE “angry”; *mean* = BrE “not generous, tight fisted” vs. AmE = “angry, bad humored”; *wash up* = BrE “wash dishes after a meal” vs. AmE “wash face and hands”). (Tottie 2001, 101)

3.2.3.4 *Different Word Forms with the Same Meanings*

The last group consists of vocabulary that is almost identical and expresses the same idea but it differs in terms of spelling. These expressions ought not to be misleading to the speakers of the two varieties (e.g. AmE *pay raise*, *driver's license*, *candidacy* vs. BrE *pay rise*, *driving licence*, *candidature*). (Finnegan and Rickford 2004, 20)

3.2.4 Grammar

In terms of grammar properties, American English attempts to be simplistic again. It has developed its own distinctive grammatical rules that are subtle as they are mostly in agreement with British English, however, a number of deviations occurs between the two varieties. As a result, these deviations can exert influence on interpersonal communication. The most remarkable differences are listed below (Babich 2006, 153-156).

3.2.4.1 Tenses

One of the most striking features of AmE is the specific usage of the simple past tense instead of the present perfect and the past perfect. Although both forms are possible, the simple past tense is generally adopted in the cases where Britons would normally use the present perfect, which means to talk about a past action that has impact on the present, or with words like *just*, *already* and *yet* (e.g. AmE *I just had lunch.* vs. BrE *I have just had lunch.*)

3.2.4.2 Verb Forms

American grammar differs from British grammar in terms of the verb forms of the past simple and the past participle. The regular form is more common to AmE (e.g. *burned*, *learned*, *smelled*), on the contrary, BrE prioritizes the irregular form (e.g. *burnt*, *learnt*, *smelt*). The past participle of the verb *get* is both *got* and *gotten* in AmE, however, *gotten* is not used in the sense of possession but it resembles more *obtain* (e.g. *They have gotten a new car.*) or *become* (e.g. *Your English has gotten much better.*)

3.2.4.3 Possession

The English language can express possession either by *have* or *have got*. In AmE both options are possible but there is a tendency to use *have* instead of *have got*, which means that in questions and negation *do*-support is required. By contrast, British English employs the verb structure *have got* where *has* performs the function of the operator in questions and negation itself (e.g. AmE *He has a new car./Does he have a new car?* vs. BrE *He has got a new car./Has he got a new car?*)

3.2.4.4 Collective and Compound Nouns

Another characteristic feature of AmE is the verb agreement with collective nouns (e.g. *staff*, *family*, *committee*), the names of sports teams (e.g. *Manchester*), or certain organizations and institutions (e.g. *the government*). All these require solely singular verb in AmE, whereas British English allows both singular and plural verb (e.g. AmE *staff was invited* vs. BrE *staff was/were invited*).

There is a tendency to use singular number with nouns that appear in compounds in AmE, whereas in BrE plural number is employed (e.g. AmE *a drug problem*, *a wage ordinance* vs. BrE *a drugs problem*, *a wages ordinance*).

3.2.4.5 Subjunctive Mode

The subjunctive mode is employed more often in American grammar than British grammar. Words like *demand, suggest, insist* etc. are followed by the present tense in AmE, but BrE prioritizes *should* or the past tense with subjunctive (e.g. AmE *I demanded that he apologize.* vs. BrE *I demanded that he apologized/should apologize.*)

3.2.4.6 Prepositions

American prepositions can differ from their British counterparts in the construction of phrases (e.g. AmE *on the weekend/different than/fill out a form* vs. BrE *at the weekend/different from/fill in a form*) or they may be omitted entirely (e.g. AmE *a bottle wine/write me soon/see you Tuesday* vs. BrE *a bottle of wine/write to me soon/see you on Tuesday*).

3.2.4.7 Miscellaneous Differences

The grammatical distinctions among the below mentioned can be perceived as relatively small, but they are still significant for the complete picture of the distinctiveness of American English. By all means, there exist many other deviations except for the below listed.

Table 2. Grammar Differences

AmE:	BrE:
<i>in the hospital, at the university</i>	<i>in hospital, at university</i>
<i>don't need to, don't dare to</i>	<i>needn't, daren't</i>
<i>will, won't</i>	<i>shall, shan't</i>
<i>take a look</i>	<i>have a look</i>
<i>real tall</i>	<i>really tall</i>
<i>anyone, someplace</i>	<i>anybody, somewhere</i>
<i>help establish</i>	<i>help to establish</i>

Source: Own creation based on Finnegan and Rickford (2004, 29-33)

II. ANALYSIS

4 THE AIM OF THE ANALYSIS

I am going to analyze the selected corpus of *Two and a Half Men* in order to find out how creatively the profane, obscene and offensive language that makes the sitcom peculiar, is expressed by the sitcom. By virtue of the analysis, it will be also found out whether the different main cast has changed this language and the way of its expressing after ten years. This will be achieved by the usage of the linguistic aspects that were described in the theoretical part, which simultaneously proves their applicability in the practical usage.

For the sake of the further research, the sitcom *Two and a Half Men*, its development and characters are introduced, and the style of the sitcom scripts including dialogue will be shortly described. The main objective is to determine how the profane and abusive language is conveyed through various linguistic devices and whether these devices are still employed by the sitcom. In conclusion of the thesis, the results gathered from the examined corpus will be summarized and the statement that the sitcom excels only “as being the best at being the worst” (Beane 2007) will be taken a stand to.

4.1 Corpus

The language of *Two and a Half Men* will be analyzed based on the findings gathered from the screenplays and subtitles. The reason why screenplays will be combined with subtitles is that I am going to break down the original show’s episodes from 2003-2004 and the revamped show’s episodes from 2013-2014 which are not available in the form of scripts yet. However, the very small discrepancies that might appear are negligible and thus not relevant for my lexical analysis.

The corpus comprises a compilation of two scripts from 2003-2004, each consisting of approximately fifty pages, and two sets of subtitles from 2013-2014. In total, four sitcom’s episodes will be analyzed. For the sake of clarity and language economy, the following abbreviations will be used, i.e. the scripts from 2003-2004 will be marked as S1 and S2 while the subtitles from 2013-2014 will be referred to as S3 and S4. These abbreviations will be accompanied by the exact page where each example was found and all the elements will be inserted in the square brackets, e.g. [S1, p. 12]. The analyzed corpus can be found in Appendix P 1 as the recording on a CD that is enclosed to this bachelor thesis for a more convenient interpretation of the results.

5 TWO AND A HALF MEN

Two and a Half Men is an American television sitcom which was created by producers Chuck Lorre and Lee Aronsohn. It debuted on the television network CBS in 2003 and since then it has been shot to the present. This teleplay has been broadcast in about 60 countries all over the world including the Czech Republic where it has been aired by the commercial television station Nova and its sister Nova Cinema. (Moultrie 2010, 9-14) The relatively high number of broadcasting countries together with the impressive eleven seasons that the sitcom has reached so far, implies its popularity. In addition, as Moultrie states, the sitcom has received numerous award nominations (2010, 16). It has also gained recognition from a number of reviewers and according to The New York Times it is the best sitcom of the past decade (Wakefield 2012, 14).

5.1 Development of Two and a Half Men

Since its long existence the sitcom has undergone some considerable changes especially in terms of characters. Nonetheless, the nature of the sitcom has remained the same because the episodes of the show still explore the themes of men, women, dating, sex, money, love, single parenthood and friendship.

5.1.1 Original Show

First eight seasons of the show revolved around a character Charlie Harper who was performed by the actor Charlie Sheen. These seasons are about a jingle writer Charlie, who lives in his Malibu beach house where he indulges a hedonistic and frivolous life that suddenly becomes disrupted when his financially pressed and newly divorced brother Alan decides to move in together with his teenage son Jake (Moultrie 2010, 10). The original show explores the brothers' contradictory personalities and their different attitudes toward child-raising and life as a whole.

The name Charlie Sheen is closely tied with the show because the sitcom centered upon him for many years. He certainly ensured the show huge success and it is to his credit that the sitcom has many devoted viewers nowadays. In reality, Charlie Sheen resembles his freewheeling character substantially and his rebellious nature caused him difficulties later in the show. According to Wakefield (2012, 14), due to his rejection to enter drug and alcohol rehabilitation along with his disrespect for the producer Chuck Lorre, Charlie Sheen was fired from the show in 2011.

5.1.2 Revamped Show

Currently the sitcom stars Ashton Kutcher as Walden Schmidt who took over the lead role of Charlie Sheen from the ninth season. Although average ratings have slipped a bit when Charlie Sheen disappeared from *Two and a Half Men*, as pointed out by Pomerantz, each episode of the sitcom still attracts more than 12 million viewers to CBS and the show remains one of the most watched sitcoms on TV (2012).

Besides, there is another significant change concerning one of the starring roles. August T. Jones, better known as Jake Harper, decided not to appear in the show any longer. Thus he currently occurs in the show only as a recurring role. His character enters the Army and his role is replaced by Charlie's previously unknown daughter Jenny.

5.2 Personality Types

Even when analyzing language of the sitcom, it is important to be familiar with the personality traits of characters so as to understand their thought processes properly. In the sitcom *Two and a Half Men*, there have appeared numerous characters including many notable guest stars. The description provided below concerns only those characters who are relevant to the sitcom and who perform either starring or recurring roles. Based on the sitcom episodes, I have gathered necessary information about the characters on my own.

Charlie Harper is an affluent bachelor who spends most of his time drinking alcohol, smoking, watching television and flattering women. Charlie gives priority to casual sexual relationships and does his best to avoid any commitments. Despite the complicated relationship with his brother Alan, whom he tries to humiliate whenever it is possible, he lets him and his nephew live in his house, which shows that he cares for them. His life ends as being struck by a train when he is in pursuit of his stalker Rose who turns out to be his love.

Walden Schmidt is a billionaire Internet entrepreneur and a computer programmer. His emotional immaturity results in a divorce and he tries to drown himself in the ocean near the beach house of the deceased Charlie. After unsuccessful suicide attempt and no place to go, he buys the house and invites Alan and his son Jake to stay with him not to feel so lonely. In spite of Alan's shrewdness, which Walden later learns about, he wants to have Alan around and they become close friends. Unlike Charlie, Walden is not infatuated with women and alcohol. In fact, he is generous and he cares about the environment. Over time, his personality matures and he starts to savor life again.

Alan Harper is Charlie's younger brother and later a roommate of Walden. Alan works as a chiropractor but his job is not appreciated at all. He is a very unlucky man who constantly

struggles with extreme misfortunes. After a financially demanding divorce, he becomes fully reliant on his brother and later on Walden. Alan is very cunning and he misuses other people's hospitality and generosity. He is incessantly teased because of his inability to become independent. When it comes to women, Alan is hopelessly inept and he usually puts them off.

Jake Harper is Alan and Judith's son. At the very beginning of the show he is a 10-year old boy and later he turns into a teenager among whose favorite activities belong sleeping, playing the guitar, computer games and particularly eating. Jake lacks basic knowledge and understanding of the world and his ignorance prompts his relatives to often make fun of him. He is very insecure and as a student he does not excel. On the other hand, he is very skillful at cooking, which comes in handy when he joins the Army.

Berta works in Charlie's and later Walden's house as a housekeeper who is rather lax on her job. She stands out by her sharp tongue, apt comments and quips that are aimed especially at Alan's failures. Despite her impudence and sarcasm, her employers respect and appreciate her. Berta takes pleasure in making fun of the Harper family and their faults but deep down she cares for them. In fact, Charlie and Berta are very good friends though neither of them would ever admit it and when Walden appears, they form a friendship too.

Evelyn Harper is Charlie's and Alan's mother and Jake's grandmother. She is a successful real estate agent who lives in a sumptuous house. She considers herself to be a loving and caring mother. Although she disapproves of Charlie's behavior and the way of his life, she is a self-centered and cold-hearted manipulator. She marries only influential elderly men who bequeath her money after their death. Her sons refer to her as devilish, unbearable and cold, and they try to avoid any contact with her.

Judith is Alan's ex-wife and Jake's mother. She is neurotic, selfish and lacks a sense of humor. She relishes in making Alan's life even more miserable and misuses high monthly alimony from Alan for her own purposes.

Rose is Charlie's and later Walden's next-door neighbor. At the very beginning of the story, she spends a night with Charlie and becomes obsessed with him. At first, Charlie cannot stand her but over time they become close friends and he realizes that he has feelings for her. After Charlie's death she keeps on stalking the Harper family as well as Walden.

Jenny is Charlie's lesbian daughter who appears after Charlie's death. She resembles her father a lot, particularly in terms of women and alcohol. She shares Malibu beach house together with Walden and her uncle Alan.

5.3 Sitcom Script Style

The sitcom *Two and a Half Men* uses a specific script format which follows certain rules. The cover page includes the name of the sitcom, the title of the episode, the name of the author, the draft date, and since this sitcom is adapted for teleplay, it also includes the names of teleplay creators and the name of the director. The title page contains the sitcom name and the episode title again and the cast that appears in the episode is introduced here.

Each page is numbered and each script spans from forty to fifty pages. As for running time, two pages of the script are approximately equivalent to one minute. In general, the script is divided into acts and scenes. As it was described in the theoretical part, the script starts with cold opening that seeks to keep the audience interested from the very beginning of the show. The script beginning is signaled by the word *fade in*. This sitcom sometimes consists of more cold openings that are always followed by main titles. Then, there are act one and act two that tell a story and within these two acts, there are numerous scenes that are marked with letters (e.g. scene B). Each scene has its capitalized and underlined heading that specifies, when a scene takes place, at what time of day and whether it should be shot outdoors or indoors. At the beginning of each scene, there is a list of characters who are supposed to appear in that scene. The transitions between scenes are signaled by words like *cut to*, *reset to*, *dissolve to*, etc. The script closes with a short tag, the words that signal the end (*fade out* and *end of show*) and the closing credits.

5.3.1 Dialogue

The screenplay of *Two and a Half Men* is written in a form of a dialogue. The dialogue is double spaced due to legibility and there is a lot of room for making notes. The script must be written comprehensibly so as not to be misleading or confusing for the actors. Therefore, it contains *stage directions* that enable actors to understand each scene better. These directions are instructions to the actors indicating physical movement and setting (e.g. *Charlie takes his pants off* or *Alan enters from the house*). They are capitalized and single spaced in order to be clearly separated from and not confused with dialogues. Besides them, the script also includes *personal direction* that tells an individual actor what he or she should do (e.g. *stares off into space*, *switches cartons*, *sings*). These are capitalized, inserted in parenthesis and they are placed within the dialogue on the same line.

6 WAYS OF ADDRESSING PEOPLE

What caught my attention when I was analyzing the selected corpus was a distinctive way of calling individual characters. The names given to them are sometimes very accurate and they provide an apt description of a person's appearance or his or her personality traits. However, this sitcom usually does not stick to a single nickname that would be strictly associated with each character throughout the episodes, but it invents distinguishing and often very offensive names that are used momentarily according to a given situation instead.

6.1 Slang in Addressing

In the sitcom, slang expressions are very popular and productive especially in terms of addressing people. Slang employed in addressing people is used both positively and negatively but negative associations prevail in the older as well as the newer episodes and they are represented in equal numbers as the examples prove. Some slangy expressions are created within a particular context, whereas others are more universal and reappear.

There appears a low occurrence of slang that is positive and friendly, namely *sport* [S1, p. 14] for someone who lives a jolly life, or *shorty* [S1, p. 16] and *grasshopper* [S2, p. 3] denoting a young person who is inexperienced and needs to learn a lot. This slang naming is aimed at Jake but it disappears entirely in the new episodes where Jake is not present and thus there is no need creating and using slang that would be suitable for children. As a result, the new episodes look for other slang naming that can be used more neutrally such as *dude* [S4, p. 33, 42, 45] that is used as a form of address for a male.

However, more slang in addressing is purely negative and vulgar i.e. the noun *bastard* [S3, p. 13] for a mean person, *phony* [S2, p.31] for a fake person who acts insincerely and pretentiously, *S.O.B.* [S1, p. 2] as an initialism of the swear word *son of a bitch* and *loser* [S3, p. 16] both denoting a worthless person. These forms of addressing are used with the intention to insult the addressee. The largest proportion refers to sexual innuendo in association with attractive women, i.e. *freak* [S1, p. 17] that is used for a sexually adventurous woman, or sparingly used forms of slang addressing of young attractive women who are referred to offensively as *chicks* [S1, p. 37, 49], [S2, p. 38], [S3, p. 22], *broads* [S2, p. 25], *hookers* [S3, p. 30] and *bitches* [S4, p. 23, 26], whereas similar slang aimed at men is not so common, i.e. the noun *man whore* [S3, p. 19] used for a promiscuous man, and *babe magnet* [S1, p. 23] for a man whom most women find attractive, are the only examples from the whole corpus. This proves that regardless of the time gap, women are continued to be negatively or at least offensively portrayed by the sitcom as objects of the sexual desire.

6.2 Colloquialisms in Addressing

I found numerous expressions that are informal but they either do not reach the level of slang informality or their usage has gained mainstream acceptance. Although colloquialisms used in addressing do not aim to insult anybody and they are used in a positive sense by the older as well as the newer episodes, I decided to include them in order to demonstrate that they are used in a new direction by the revamped episodes as being associated with carnal desires, i.e. obscene language that is typical of the sitcom.

The largest group of colloquialisms relates to the family members and since they reoccur throughout the entire script, I do not provide the exact pages where they were found, i.e. *mom* or *mommy* (from *mother*), *dad* (from *father*), *kid* (*child*), and *grandma* (from *grandmother*). Based on the theoretical part, the following expressions are already classified as colloquialisms too, i.e. *buddy* [S2, p. 4], [S1, p. 23], and *pal* [S1, p. 25, 35] instead of a friend that are primarily favored by the earlier episodes, or *guy* [S2, p. 20], [S1, p. 23], [S3, p. 5, 22, 24, 40, 43], [S4, p. 2, 13, 14, 21, 27, 29, 39] whose frequency implies that this colloquialism is especially popular with the revamped sitcom where it even appears in the new context as a part of the more complex addressing, i.e. in the complex noun phrases such as *a casual sex kind of guy* [S3, p. 22], *a guy who got hit by a train so I could by his beach house* [S3, p. 40] as a reference to Charlie, or *the big picture guy* [S3, p. 5] by which Alan calls himself as a person who has the overall view of the issue and thus is needed. Similarly, Jenny coins a compound with a sexual overtone *step-hot-guy* [S3, p. 24] that she devises for Walden when she sees him for the first time and does not know his name. She uses the adjective *hot* because she finds Walden attractive and *step* because he is considered almost as a family member.

6.3 Metaphors in Addressing

Metaphors used in addressing are relevant to the peculiar sitcom language and they are employed in the original as well as the revamped episodes in the same amount. In the sitcom, they serve primarily when a character wants to address another character negatively or offensively. This rule is predominant in both the older and the newer episodes. The characters receive this metaphorical addressing based on some of their characteristic properties or certain similarity. This metaphorical naming does not reoccur implying that it is created and given to the individual characters exclusively according to a given situation, which conveys the sitcom creativity. The examples are listed below and they are immediately followed by explanations in quotation marks to expound the background.

[S1, p. 14] Jake: *Grandma says you're a bitter disappointment.*

“Jake reveals that Charlie fails to satisfy his mother’s expectations”

[S1, p. 46] Charlie: *That's too much. Piranha's can strip an entire cow in an hour.*

“Evelyn is referred to as *Piranha* because she is assumed to be agile in catching preys”

[S1, p. 46] Charlie: *...I want Jake to come back and live with me, but you're a package deal.*

“Alan is offensively called *a package deal*, the unwanted but indispensable part of what is desired”

[S2, p. 18] Charlie: *Now let me tell you about Revenge Sex's little sister, Casual.*

“*Revenge Sex* is used as the name for a woman with whom Charlie is planning revenge sex and *Casual* is used as the name for her sister, a random sexual encounter for Alan”

[S2, p. 31] Charlie: *But you chiropractor guys are just masseuses without the happy endings, right?*

“Charlie refers to chiropractors as unlucky masseuses to degrade Alan’s occupation”

[S2, p. 32] Alan: *...what I think about what you do, Mr. Jingle Writer.*

“Alan intends to degrade Charlie’s occupation”

[S3, p. 31] Evelyn: *You father was the apple of my eye. My greatest gift. My reason for living.*

“After Charlie’s death, Evelyn exaggerates and speaks of him warmly but when he was alive, she would use negative addressing”

[S3, p. 39] Evelyn: *Uh, and Alan is...the reason I had my tubes tied.*

“Alan is the reason why Evelyn decided to undergo tubal ligation not to have other children”

[S3, p. 36] Walden: *I can think of two reasons.*

“Walden thinks that Evelyn and Alan were *reasons* why Jenny ran away”

[S3, p. 7] Alan: *Huh, my 12:00 must be early.*

“In order to show his superiority, Alan uses the time for a person who is expected to come at that time for an interview”

[S3, p. 7] Alan: *Too late, Harvard.*

“Alan calls the interviewee by the name of the university that he studied to stress that prestigious education is not enough to fill the vacancy”

[S4, p. 20] Walden: *I'll... be your **number two**.*

“Walden discontentedly refers to himself as the second important person in the company”

[S4, p. 25] Berry: *You go it, **number three**.*

“Berry calls Walden *number three* to show him his subordinate position in the company”

6.4 Verbal Irony in Addressing

The sitcom uses regularly the terms of address conveying affection to another person. Although these lexemes have positive emotional overtones, in fact they are ironical and they express ridiculing, degradation or reprimanding. These terms are solely associated with Evelyn who uses primarily *darling*, *sweetheart* and *angel* to address her relatives. Evelyn uses these lexemes to be considered as a caring mother and grandmother deliberately and disingenuously except for the last example, when Evelyn is honest with her feelings to her newly found granddaughter Jenny. Terms of endearment are used similarly regardless the time gap between the episodes and their occurrence depends on the frequency of Evelyn's presence in the episodes. In S4, no terms of endearment are used because she does not appear in this episode. Otherwise, they are always used as the following examples prove.

[S1, p. 27] Jake: *Here's your iced tea, Grandma.*

Evelyn: *Oh, thank you my little **angel!** **Darling**, I asked for a lemon wedge.*

Jake: *Sorry.*

[S1, p. 28] Alan: *Mom, that's very considerate, but as soon as Judith and I work things out, I'll be back in my own house.*

Evelyn: *Oh, **sweetheart**, grow up.*

[S1, p. 48] Evelyn: *Stand up straight, **darling**. Who taught you to slouch like that?*

[S2, p. 13] Alan: *Mom. I'm sick.*

Evelyn: *We're all sick, **darling**, but we use discretion.*

[S3, p. 32] Jenny: *Actually, it's Jenny.*

Evelyn: ***Darling**, you're not 12 anymore. It's Jennifer.*

[S3, p. 42] Evelyn: *Don't worry, **darling**. There's a little something in my will.*

[S3, p. 39] Evelyn: *Please, **sweetheart**, I just found you. I can't lose you now.*

6.5 Allusion in Addressing

Allusion is a very effective device which fulfills its purpose only in case the audience is familiar with the related work. In the sitcom, it is used when the characters do not want to describe another person directly but they rather want the audience to realize the intended relation themselves. Allusion is used with the intention to insult the recipient, nevertheless, all the devised addressing seeks to amuse the audience. The analysis revealed that approximately one allusion is used in each analyzed episode, which proves that it is still a significant tool of the sitcom that enriches its language.

Most of such addressing refers to movies and it is devised according to a particular context, i.e. Alan offensively calls one of his ex-girlfriends *Hulk* [S2, p. 19], which is a reference to the movie of the same name that centers on a bulky superhero. When the audience is familiar with that film, they can easily deduce how the ex-girlfriend looked like, i.e. stout and strong. During the poker game, Jake is due to his shrewdness called *Mighty Mouse* [S1, p. 35], which is the reference to the American cartoon in which a brave fictional mouse is endowed with enormous power. In S4, Walden uses the reference to the famous *James Bond* series by referring to Nicole as *evil Bond villain* [p. 20], and the reference to the sitcom *Friends* is made by addressing to Barry and Nicole as *Ross and Rachel* [p. 30] to ridicule their complicated relationship that is similar to that of the sitcom characters. Despite the prevalence of allusion to movies, another reference was found, i.e. when Jenny calls Walden offensively as *Abercrombie and Fitch* [S3, p. 14] because of his unsightly checkered shirt that is associated with the clothing brand of the same name.

Besides the naming that does not reappear, the nicknames that are associated with individual characters throughout the sitcom are also used. However, the analyzed corpus cannot offer enough examples because these nicknames are solely used by Berta and Rose who are not present in each episode. These are Charlie and Alan's nicknames which both are derived from a monkey, i.e. Berta's *Zippy* [S4, p. 35] by which she calls Alan who reminds her of a chimp, which is a reference to the children's program *Zippy the Chimp* where the main character was a trained monkey, and similarly, Rose refers to Charlie as *Monkey Man* [S1, p. 2, 9, 43], which is derived from his unrequited wish to own a monkey when he was a child. This information cannot be found in the corpus but as the ardent viewer I am aware of this fact. Since Charlie does not appear in the revamped show and Rose's presence also diminishes, *Monkey Man* fell into disuse gradually but *Zippy* is still used by Berta because her role has maintained.

6.6 Idioms in Addressing

Although idiomatic language has crucial role in the sitcom as enlivening the language, idioms are not very productive in this way. I have looked up only the following idioms that are used in addressing, namely *a blank slate* [S2, p. 2] denoting that a person is inexperienced and needs to learn a lot, and *a wise-ass* [S1, p. 11] that is offensively used to describe an insolent person who makes smart remarks.

Both these idioms are negative and they are aimed at the youngest character Jake. Idioms are presumably used instead of slang that is more direct and more offensive thereby not suitable for children. On the contrary, idioms are more vivid and even though they are used with the intention to offend, they are not perceived as impertinent as slang. Jake's absence might have caused the zero occurrence of idiomatic language employed in addressing in the revamped show.

7 EXPRESSING PROFANITY

The sitcom *Two and a Half Men* is particularly known for the usage of vulgar and obscene language or allusion to such language. Thus the language of this sitcom might be considered as very abusive, offensive and inappropriate by many people. On the other hand, many people have become fond of this sitcom especially because it breaks taboos and uses indecent expressions. The sitcom uses various linguistic devices through which profanity is conveyed and it expresses this vulgar and offensive language directly and indirectly.

7.1 Explicitly Conveyed Profanity

The sitcom uses words and phrases that themselves express profane and obscene words. These direct expressions are sometimes associated with slang. Even though slang can be misleading and it implicitly carries the literal meaning, its intended meaning is coined in slang dictionaries and thus can be understood immediately. The context does not play indispensable role in this case as these words and phrases can be understood in isolation.

7.1.1 Vulgar Language

The usage of swear and taboo words is salient in *Two and a Half Men*. Their appearance makes the text vulgar, which reliably indicates high informality of the sitcom. In the analyzed scripts, I found numerous words and phrases that signal vulgarity and obscenity. The following examples of taboo and swear words that were gathered from the entire corpus prove that the sitcom relishes in the usage of vulgar and offensive language. Based on the four analyzed episodes, it cannot be unequivocally concluded that some taboo or swear expressions are used more than the others because it considerably depends on the issues discussed in each episode, however, what is important is that each episode employs them and the sitcom continues to use them regardless of the time gap because publicly avoided topics have remained the mainstay of the revamped sitcom regardless of the change in the main cast.

7.1.1.1 Taboo Words

As it was described in the theoretical part, slang is often coined as a reaction to taboo subjects. This observation proves to be valid when it comes to this particular sitcom. Since the indecent expressions are of the sexual nature or they refer to the body parts and the elimination of bodily waste, taboo words are classified into the following three categories of the same name, similarly to the division provided in the theoretical part. Moreover, I have added the fourth category where taboo words are employed in devising new lexis.

a) Parts of Body

The sitcom is characteristic of vulgar expressions that convey the body parts in a non-standard way. The expressions that were found in the analyzed episodes are associated with the female body parts, namely *boobs* [S2, p. 20] and *lady nuts* [S4, p. 6] that non-standardly replace *woman's breasts*, whereas others replace male genitalia, such as slang nouns *schlong* [S3, p. 20] and *junk* [S4, p. 34, 47] that are used instead of *penis*, or *nuts* [S4, p. 5], *nads* [S4, p. 35], *gonads* [S4, p. 35] and *balls* [S4, p. 33, 34, 41, 47] used instead of *testicles*. The newer episodes are very productive in such expressions. The last category comprises taboo words that are not gender-specific, namely the noun *ass* [S1, p. 11], [S3, p. 7], [S4, p. 2] and the clipping *butt* [S4, p. 2] which are both used for *buttocks*.

b) Sexual Activity

Since sex is one of the main themes of the sitcom, I surmised that taboo words would be very productive in this area. However, the selected corpus did not offer many examples. On the other hand, even a low incidence is not negligible because it implies obscenity of the sitcom. The corpus provides the following taboo words, i.e. slangy adjectives *sick* [S2, p. 13] that is used instead of *perverse*, or *horny* [S1, p. 43] and *hot* [S2, p. 22] used to convey that a person is *sexually aroused*. The slang verb *shake up* [S1, p. 27] replaces *infidelity* and the slang verbs *nail* [S3, p. 22] and *make out* [S4, p. 13] are used for having sexual intercourse. Besides, expressions used in addressing people (e.g. *bitch*, *bastard*, *men whore*) can be listed in this category, however, they were already described when focusing on the ways of addressing.

c) Elimination of Bodily Waste

The expressions associated with the elimination of body waste are represented in the newer as well as the older episodes in the same amount with a penchant for urinating and defecating. The analyzed corpus comprises the slang phrase *frumunda sauce* [S2, p. 1] that appears in the text in association with food, but it is a reference to a substance coming from the buildup of sweat from under (i.e. *frumunda*) male genitals. Another word that can be labeled as vulgar and belongs to this category is a slang expression *snot* [S2, p. 2] that is used in this context instead of *nasal mucus*. Another example is the noun *crap* [S2, p. 32] that occurs instead of *excrement* and similarly the slang noun *pooping* [S4, p. 1] or *code brown* [S4, p. 7] is used for defecating. The verb *urinate* is replaced by the phrase *take a squirt* [S1, p. 23], *pee* [S3, p. 43] and *take a leak* [S4, p. 34].

d) *Taboo Words as a Source of Word Coinage*

In the sitcom, taboo words do not necessarily serve as a mere lexical replacement of a standard expression, but they are used in a different way as employed in more complex elements that express different notions and ideas. These words partly serve as a vulgar replacement of a standard word, however, they seek to express something else. Since they do not appear in isolation, they might be perceived as less vulgar and thereby less offensive. These expressions were found in the same amount in both the older and the newer episodes.

The analyzed corpus comprises primarily examples of expressions that are not devised by the sitcom, i.e. the taboo word *ass* that creates both the adjectival idiom *bare-ass* [S2, p. 23] and the vulgar slang noun *wise-ass* [S1, p. 11]. Both of them do not aim to replace any body part. The first one is used synonymously to *completely naked* and the second one describes an insolent person who is making smart remarks. This taboo word is also used in the verb *kiss ass* [S3, p. 7] that means to flatter a superior in order to gain his or her favor. Another example is the phrase *arm farts* [S2, p. 3], where vulgar expression *fart*, which is normally used for *intestinal gas*, is employed to express a simulation of the sound of flatulence by using the air in armpits. The next example is the verb *bitch about* [S2, p. 6] that is used when somebody makes critical comments, but the word *bitch* is a denigrating term for a woman when used in isolation. Similarly, the verb *piss off* [S3, p. 15] is used to anger or annoy somebody, but the verb *piss* equals to the verb *urinate*.

Moreover, I found out that new episodes invent their own expressions, i.e. the name of the application called *Crapster* [S4, p. 11] that helps to find a clean public bathroom. The name is formed by the noun *crap* used for *excrement* accompanied by the inflectional morpheme *-er*. In this context, the compound *arriva-doody* [S4, p. 12] is devised for the sudden need to *defecate*, where *arriva* is an Italian word for *arrive* and *doody* is the slang noun for *feces*.

7.1.1.2 *Swear Words*

In the analyzed corpus, the vast majority of swear words are blasphemous and they effectively emphasize and communicate strong emotional reactions. Since I watch the sitcom on regular basis, I was not surprised by frequent usage of swearing, nonetheless, I did not presume that the original and the revamped episodes would considerably differ in terms of their frequency. I found out that the newer episodes are more apt to use these expressions because swear words are employed approximately three times more by them.

Swear words appear as exclamations of annoyance where blasphemy prevails, namely *hell* [S1, p. 24], *for god's sake* [S2, p. 13], [S1, p. 12], *damn it* [S3, p. 9], *oh, God* [S3, p. 36], *Geez* [S3, p. 29], *God* [S3, p. 27], while swear words that are not blasphemous are not so frequent, i.e. *crap* [S4, p. 43], *oh, snap* [S4, p. 28, 44]. They are also used in surprised questions, i.e. *What the hell?* [S2, p. 36], [S4, p. 33, 42], as exclamations of surprise, as in *oh, my God* [S3, p. 30, 44], [S4, p. 16, 38, 40], *oh, God* [S4, p. 31, 34, 35, 37], *oh, thank God* [S3, p. 15], [S4, p. 21], intensifiers: *damn telemarketers* [S1, p. 2], *the damn cabinets shuts* [S1, p. 24], *a wicked hangover* [S4, p. 9] or as an insult, i.e. *shut up* [S1, p. 16], [S3, p. 46] by which the speaker demands another person to stop talking, or the slang initialism S.O.B. [S1, p. 2] as *son of a bitch* used for a worthless and contemptible person.

7.1.2 Avoidance of Tabooing and Swearing

As it was described in the theoretical part, it is possible to avoid taboo and swear words. There are three ways how the sitcom alludes to the obscene and abusive topics without mentioning them, namely ellipses, technical terms and euphemisms. Their usage makes the language seem less vulgar, however, their appearance still signals the vulgarity of the sitcom because although they are expressed differently, they still remain the common theme of the episodes. The avoidance of tabooing and swearing occurs exclusively in the newer episodes.

a) Ellipses

The sitcom uses ellipses only in case when it is not necessary to state the rest of the utterance because the audience possess the background knowledge through which they can penetrate to the meaning of the omitted part as in the following examples.

[S4, p. 9] Jenny: *My favorite color's pink, my favorite singer is Pink, my favorite body part is...*

“the slang noun *pink* that is used for vagina is omitted because it can be easily derived even though we are not familiar with this slang expression”

[S3, p. 35] Alan: *Son of a...*

“the swear word *son of a bitch* is unfinished because it is easy to understand even when it is not expressed directly”

b) Technical Terms

I found out that the episodes use also medical terminology to avoid tabooing. In my opinion, technical terms are used because their slangy and non-standard counterparts were already

used in the episode and the sitcom tries to use as much naming as possible to avoid repetition and monotony. Unlike their taboo counterparts that themselves convey comic impetus, these medical terms need to be used in more humorous contexts as the following examples show.

[S4, p. 46] Alan: *Um, I just, uh, want to point out that, uh, due to my engorged **testicles**, uh, my **penis** is not currently to scale.*

[S3, p. 11] Jenny: *I have a picture of us together. It's in here somewhere. Oh, look. My **vagina**. Oh, wait that's not mine.*

[S3, p. 29] Berta: *...and he decided to have his **sphincter** bleached.*

Walden/Alan: *Whoa! Whoa! What? Why?*

Berta: *Because he cared about women.*

c) Euphemisms

Euphemisms were found in the situations where more offensive expressions or phrases would be expected. Based on the analysis, I assume that euphemistic replacement is used when the characters are in public and they do not want to appear to be rude and vulgar as happens in the listed examples.

[S3, p. 40] Jenny: *So, is that the bathroom where **the miracle of my life began**?*
 “*the miracle of my life began* is used by Jenny in the bar to express the place of her conception but also to add a romantic overtone to the apparently repulsive place”

[S3, p. 30] Berta: *...it got infected, and he needed me to dab **a little ointment**.*
 “Berta uses *a little ointment* to refer to the infected area of Charlie’s sphincter”

[S4, p. 1] Alan: *Yeah, I know, but I got to go. **The sit-down go**.*
 “*the sit-down go* is used when Alan faces a sudden need to defecate and since he is in the cafeteria among many people, he uses this euphemistic and creative expression”

7.2 Allusion to Profanity

Profanity does not have to be expressed only explicitly. The language of *Two and a Half Men* is very creative and thus the words concerning publicly avoided topics can be encrypted e.g. via figurative language. To recognize this reference, the context becomes especially important and determinant. Allusion is present in the original as well as the revamped episodes, however, it appears twice as much with the newer ones. Each linguistic device that was found in this context is supported by examples along with explanations.

7.2.1 Metaphor

Metaphor is one of the figures of speech that is capable of disguising indecent expressions and allusions to them. It is the most productive linguistic device used in such allusions. The outcome is a sentence that may seem to be non-vulgar, however, a reference to a taboo expression is concealed there. Metaphorical allusions are used as references to the body parts or bodily waste and they are favored by the older as well as the newer episodes.

[S1, p. 1] Charlie: *...There's not enough blood left in my **legs** to go anywhere.*

“Charlie is sexually aroused and he uses *legs* to refer to his penis”

[S2, p. 9] Charlie: *...Which is why we're gonna make like hockey players and get the **puck** outta here.*

“the noun *puck* alludes to the male genitalia”

[S2, p. 10] Jake: *...Let's make like soccer players and get our big letter **balls** out of here.*

“the noun *balls* alludes to the male genitalia”

[S3, p. 3] Walden: *Except the pot at the end doesn't have any **gold** in it.*

“Walden indirectly refers to excrements as *gold*”

[S4, p. 13] Jenny: *I'd rather stay home and yodel in your **canyon**.*

“Jenny emphasizes that she would prefer to have sex rather than go hiking by the noun *canyon* that alludes to female genitalia”

[S4, p. 13] Brooke: *You can never have too much **wood** in the forest.*

“Brooke uses *wood* for male genitalia”

7.2.2 Hyperbole

Another figure of speech that can indirectly refer to some profane expressions is hyperbole. The following hyperboles refer to the sexual activity and therefore they are solely associated with Charlie and his daughter Jenny. After his death, allusions to Charlie's sexual activity are made by Walden, which can be considered as a crutch for the newer episodes.

[S1, p. 1] Charlie: *...There's not enough blood left in my legs to go anywhere.*

“Charlie stresses that he is sexually aroused”

[S3, p. 46] Jenny: *I'm surprised I can even talk.*

“Jenny stresses that she had much oral sex”

[S3, p. 20] Walden: *I got a new mattress, and I replaced the carpets and the drapes and pretty much anything that could absorb fluid.*

“Walden stresses that he got rid of everything that could have been involved in Charlie’s sexual activities”

[S3, p. 45] Walden: *I slept in the guest room of my own house, and I’m pretty sure I still have some of your brother in my ear.*

“Walden again stresses the Charlie’s room and his sexual merrymaking”

7.2.3 Personification

By personification, the sitcom indirectly expresses the obscene language. In the following examples of personification, the Malibu beach house is given the human properties. Allusion by personification was found only in the later episodes. Similarly to allusion by hyperbole, Walden uses allusion as a reference to Charlie’s unfettered life.

[S3, p. 44] Jenny: *Malibu beach house gets you laid every time.*

“Jenny stresses that when you own a Malibu beach house, you can have any woman”

[S3, p. 21] Jenny. *If these walls could talk.*

Walden: *They’d probably say, “Can I get a towel?”*

“Walden refers to Charlie’s notorious room where he was indulging his hedonistic life”

7.2.4 Parallelism

By parallel constructions it is possible to allude to the sexual activity too. The structure of the sentences is very similar but there is one crucial replacement that gives the utterance a completely different tone, i.e. sexual innuendo. Even though allusion by parallelisms is not used sparingly, the important is that it still appears in the similar context regardless of the time gap.

[S4, p. 8] Brooke: *...thanks for letting me stay **over**.*

Jenny: *Thanks for letting me stay **under**.*

“the preposition *over* changes into *under*”

[S1, p. 25] Alan: *At least I care **what** I sleep on, or should I say **who** I sleep on.*

“the relative pronoun *what* is replaced by *who* in the second clause”

8 VULGARITY AND AMBIGUITY

Language that is employed in the sitcom seeks to elicit laughter. The previous sections exploring different ways of addressing people and expressing profanity are also used as a humorous framework even though their mainstay is negative and offensive language. Besides the humor that can be understood immediately, the sitcom also delivers different type of humor that, from the linguistic point of view, catches our attention more because it requires us to expend certain amount of effort to decipher it. It is up to the author whether he or she wants the audience to comprehend the humor effortlessly or whether he or she decides for cunningly ambiguous humor. This requires the author's creativity as well as certain linguistic knowledge to devise such humor.

8.1 Word Playing

Playing with words is a favorite linguistic technique employed by the sitcom. I think that this technique can unequivocally denote the creativity of *Two and a Half Men*. On the basis of the theoretical part, I have divided word playing into two categories, namely malapropisms and punning that both seek to generate laughs in the sitcom.

8.1.1 Malapropisms

The sitcom employs sentences with deliberate mistakes to evoke laugh. Initially, the youngest character is entrusted with this ability implying that malapropisms are associated with Jake who uses contextually incorrect expressions that allude to correct expressions. In the newer episodes, malapropisms are used by other characters because of Jake's absence, which allows the usage of more taboo and swear words. Another significant difference is that Jake is not aware of the mistakes, while other characters use them on purpose. This misusing results in a grammatically correct but semantically nonsensical and jocular utterance as show the following examples which were discovered in the analyzed corpus.

[S2, p. 4] Jake: *You think I'm just a kid but I'm **snot**. Wait, that isn't right.*

"Jake wants to imitate Charlie's joke, i.e. *He thinks it's a head cold but it's snot*, where *snot* is used for *nasal mucus* but the sentence is homophonic and thus another interpretation could be also *not*, however, Jake should use only *not* in this context"

[S2, p. 23] Jake: *There's this priest, a minister and **a rabbit**.*

"Jake wants to tell a joke but he spoils it as using the noun *rabbit* instead of *a rabbi*"

[S2, p. 25] Jake: *Okay. A priest, a minister and a rabbi walk into a barn.*
 “Jake wants to repeat the joke but he spoils it again as using the noun *barn* instead of a *bar*”

[S3, p. 6] Alan: *Schmidt happens.*
 “Walden’s surname is used instead of the vulgar slang *shit happens*”

[S3, p. 6] Alan: *No bull-Schmidt.*
 “Walden’s surname is used instead of the vulgar slang *bull-shit*”

[S3, p. 6] Walden: *You’re a Schmidt head.*
 “Walden’s surname is used instead of the vulgar slang *shithead*”

[S3, p. 10] Jenny: *It was like a freakin’ Disney movie. Poke-a-hot-ass.*
 “the slang verb *poke* for *coitus* together with the colloquial adjective *hot* and the taboo word *ass* is used as a reference to the Disney movie *Pocahontas*”

[S4, p. 15] Berry: *Holly Schmidt!*
 “Walden’s surname is used instead of the exclamation of surprise *holly shit!*”

8.1.2 Punning

The ambiguity can be also the result of elaborated punning. Unlike malapropisms, the characters use semantically correct expressions which allude to humorous and often colloquial or even vulgar expressions. In the sitcom, puns are usually clarified soon afterwards to ensure that their taboo nature is comprehended by the audience. In the later episodes, there was found the only example of punning in which the profanity and obscenity is no longer present, otherwise, punning is mainly associated with Charlie who uses them vulgarly in the original episodes. I found the following puns that are based on homophony.

[S1, p. 1] Charlie: *...It’s chicken in frumunda sauce.*
 Charlie: *Yeah, from unda’ the toilet.*

[S1, p. 2] Charlie: *Oh no. He thinks it’s a head cold but it’s snot.*

[S1, p. 23] Charlie: *Wait. You know why they call this a European health spa?*
 Charlie: *’Cause you’re a pee – in’.*

[S1, p. 19] Charlie: *Desiree, Alan. That’s like desire with a “yay!” at the end...*

[S3, p. 7] Jenny: *Your niece.*
 Alan: *Eurniece? That’s a pretty name.*

8.2 Marginal Forms of Humor

As it was clarified in the theoretical part, irony and sarcasm are used due to their comic impetus. The verbal irony is very productive in the sitcom, however, it does not aim to be perceived offensively except the irony employed in addressing which was already dealt with. Therefore, the emphasis will be put on sarcasm that is more relevant for this research. I daresay it is one of the most difficult linguistic devices to identify and since it can be better recognized based on how it manipulates paralanguage, which cannot be perceived in the written discourse, I supported myself by watching the selected episodes.

8.2.1 Sarcasm

By sarcasm, the sitcom elicits laughter to the detriment of the recipient. In *Two and a Half Men*, characters demean each other on regular basis and thus sarcastic remarks remain the mainstay of both the older as well as the newer episodes. In the original sitcom, these harsh remarks are aimed at both Charlie's hedonistic way of life as well as Alan's dependence on others. In the revamped show, Alan remains the often target of mockery. The number of following examples shows that the sitcom is very productive in terms of sarcasm.

[S1, p. 25] Charlie: *...of the two of us, I'll bet I'm the only one who's slept with a married woman recently.*

Evelyn: *And isn't that something to brag about?*

“Evelyn suggests that Charlie should not brag about his lifestyle that she disapproves of”

[S1, p. 38] Charlie: *Are you sure? Maybe we should make a list!*

“Charlie makes fun of Alan's list of pros and cons that he compiled to save his marriage”

[S2, p. 16] Charlie: *Hey, lookin' good.*

“Charlie teases disheveled and bleary Alan who is ill”

[S2, p. 5] Alan: *So the sanctity of marriage does slow you a bit. I'm impressed.*

“Alan teases Charlie for his immorality”

[S2, p. 6] Charlie: *You see it too, huh?*

Alan: *Yeah, you're going to exploit someone's grief and anger for your own animal gratification.*

“Alan again teases Charlie for his immoral ideas”

[S2, p. 5] Alan: *Anything else I can do to enhance your evening?*

“Alan is not enamored of Charlie’s demand to stay in his room not to spoil the atmosphere when Charlie’s casual acquaintance comes”

[S2, p. 10] Rose: *Hi.*
Alan: *Oh, perfect.*

“Alan does not like Rose and he shows that he is not pleased with her unexpected visit”

[S2, p. 30] Alan: *No, I was thinking that I could give you a chiropractor adjustment.*
Charlie: *You could also do my hair, but what would be the point?*

“Charlie shows disrespect for Alan’s job”

[S3, p. 14] Walden: *No, I own the house.*
Jenny: *Oh, I assumed it was Alan’s.*
Walden: *So does he.*

“Walden mocks Alan who treats with Walden’s house as if it belonged to him”

[S3, p. 16] Jenny: *He moved in with us and never looked for a job, but he’s been sponging off of her ever since.*
Walden: *Who does that?*

“Walden attacks Alan who lives in his house on Walden’s expenses.”

[S3, p. 16] Walden: *And you got a place to stay? He asks, knowing full well she’s a Harper.*

“Walden uses *a Harper* to demean Alan who has no place to stay and sticks to Walden”

[S3, p. 17] Walden: *That’s great. Friends are great. You should make some friends, Alan.*

“Walden suggests Alan he should find some friends and stay with them”

[S3, p. 35] Evelyn: *Nice job Alan. You made another woman disappear.*

“Evelyn blames Alan for his marital breakdown as well as Jenny’s getaway”

[S4, p. 11] Walden: *Yeah, as good of an idea as that is...*

“Walden degrades Alan’s idea that he considers to be worthless”

[S4, p. 35] Berta: *Huh. I never thought anything could live off Zippy.*

“Alan has a tick on his penis and Berta is surprised that Alan can provide for somebody”

[S4, p. 44] Nicole: *Well, it’s gonna take me a day to undo your help.*

“Nicole emphasizes that Walden caused her even more trouble that she had had before”

CONCLUSION

In this bachelor thesis, I put emphasis on exploring how creatively the sitcom *Two and a Half Men* expresses vulgar, obscene and offensive language which this sitcom is notorious for. Subsequently, I intended to ascertain whether the new main cast has changed this foul language and the way it is delivered to the audience after ten years from its debut.

By virtue of the analysis, it was discovered that the sitcom has a relish for offending and demeaning individual characters. It prefers to devise distinguishing offensive names according to a given situation rather than stick to long-term nicknames. For this purpose, the sitcom sparingly employs slang, metaphors, verbal irony, allusion, and to a lesser extent also idioms and colloquialisms. Besides characters who are ridiculed on regular basis, women as such are sexually objectified by the sitcom. Negative associations are not always glaringly obvious since the offensive language is also expressed indirectly by marginal forms of humor, i.e. verbal irony and sarcasm. In particular, verbal irony used in addressing was found interesting because it is solely associated with Evelyn's terms of endearment which seemingly carry positive connotations, but they actually elicit displeasing emotional responses. In order to mock and degrade each other indirectly, characters use sarcasm that belongs to the most favored devices of the sitcom regardless of the time gap.

Explicitly conveyed tabooing related to sexual activity, body parts and elimination of bodily wastes is very productive and it has not undergone any significant changes because the analysis proved that publicly avoided topics have remained the mainstay of the sitcom. Taboo words appear also as a source of word coinage where the sitcom proves its creativity. The most striking difference is that the revamped episodes can avoid tabooing and swearing by the usage of ellipses, euphemisms and technical terms. Although such taboo words are not used directly, their occurrence signals that the theme of vulgarity is still present. Apart from literally conveyed profanity, both the older and even more the newer episodes make implicit allusions to vulgar language by metaphorical allusions that outnumber hyperbole, personification and parallel constructions which are also used in this context. The research revealed that vulgarity is even present in the elaborated word playing typical of the sitcom, namely punning and malapropisms, which reaffirms its dependence on vulgarity.

Having analyzed the selected facetious episodes, it was discovered that the sitcom *Two and a Half Men* is highly inventive as employing a variety of either explicit or implicit ways how it delivers vulgarity to the audience. Based on the results, it can be assumed that the sitcom mainly favors metaphors, sarcasm and slang to convey vulgar and offensive

language. The findings sufficiently confirm that vulgarity is the mainstay of the sitcom as sparingly occurring across the entire corpus, which simultaneously and conclusively supports the previously questioned assumption that the sitcom excels only “as being the best at being the worst” (Beane 2007).

In terms of the different main cast, however, the findings did not fulfill my expectations as I had surmised a shift towards significantly less vulgar language because of the change in the leading role. Although Charlie’s drinking mishaps along with his casual sexual relationships disappeared entirely, as Charlie was replaced by Walden who is neither in favor of playboy lifestyle nor alcohol, the analysis disproved this erroneous assumption. I suppose that this might be attributed to the appearance of Charlie’s daughter Jenny who fulfils the same function in the sitcom as she delivers the vulgar and obscene language similarly to formerly starring Charlie. Moreover, numerous references to Charlie’s hedonistic way of life are made and they provide the newer episodes with enough taboo topics despite his absence. The research shows that Jake’s absence has impacted the revamped sitcom because as there is no child in the show, it is not necessary to create the language that would be suitable for children. This becomes apparent in negative idioms that are solely devised for Jake, but the revamped episodes lack them. Similarly, positive slangy expressions have disappeared and quite complex colloquialisms with sexual innuendos were found in the new episodes. His absence has also influenced malapropisms that were originally used by him unconsciously, but in the newer episodes they are used deliberately by all characters and they employ more taboo and particularly swear words. On the whole, the decline in vulgarity can be refuted since the sitcom *Two and a Half Men* is still coming up with the new ways of expressing this foul language.

To sum up, I hope this thesis will show that vulgar language does not have to be necessarily considered inferior, but it can be much elaborated and thus linguistically catchy. In addition, the findings might also undeceive those ardent viewers of the sitcom who are under the false impression that the different main cast has made its language less vulgar.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Printed Sources

- Algeo, John, ed. 2001. *The Cambridge History of the English Language*. Vol. 6, *English in North America*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Babich, G. N. 2006. *Lexicology: A Current Guide*. Moscow: Ural Publishers.
- Bent, Mike. 2009. *The Everything Guide to Comedy Writing: From Stand-up to Sketch, All You Need to Succeed in the World of Comedy*. Avon: Adams Media.
- Blake, Marc. 2005. *How to Be a Sitcom Writer: Secrets from the Inside*. Chichester: Summersdale Publishers Ltd.
- Bontjes, Christopher J. 2013. *Create Captivating Classes: Why NCLB Should Mean No Child Left Bored*. Lanham: R&L Education.
- Butsch, Richard. 2005. "Five Decades and Three Hundred Sitcoms about Class and Gender." In *Thinking outside the Box: A Contemporary Television Genre Reader*, edited by Gary R. Edgerton, and Brian Rose, 111-135. Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky.
- Cook, Martie. 2013. *Write to TV: Out of Your Head and onto the Screen*. Burlington: Focal Press.
- Crystal, David. 2003. *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of the English Language*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Davies, Christopher. 2007. *Divided by a Common Language: A Guide to British and American English*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.
- Duncan, Stephen V. 2006. *A Guide to Screenwriting Success: Writing for Film and Television*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Feasey, Rebecca. 2008. *Masculinity and Popular Television*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Finegan, Edward, and John R. Rickford, eds. 2004. *Language in the U.S.A.: Themes for the 21st Century*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Fischer, Beatrice, and Matilde Nisbeth Jensen, eds. 2012. *Translation and the Reconfiguration of Power Relations: Revisiting Role and Context of Translation and Interpreting*. Münster: Lit Verlag.
- Hahn, Pamela Rice, and Dennis E. Hensley. 2000. *Alpha Teach Yourself Grammar and Style in 24 Hours*. Indianapolis: Pearson Education Macmillan USA.

- Herbst, Thomas. 2010. *English Linguistics: A Coursebook for Students of English*. New York: De Gruyter Mouton.
- Kövecses, Zoltán. 2000. *American English: An Introduction*. Peterborough: Broadview Press.
- Kolář, Pavel. 2006. *A Guide to English Lexicon*. Opava: Slezská univerzita v Opavě.
- Kvetko, Pavol. 2005. *English Lexicology: In Theory and Practice*. Trnava: Univerzita sv. Cyrila a Metoda v Trnave.
- Lopez, A., K. Woods, L. Fisher, G. Perrine, and R. McLean. 2000. *Targeting Media: Television and Film*. Glebe: Blake Education.
- Mattiello, Elisa. 2008. *An Introduction to English Slang: A Description of Its Morphology, Semantics and Sociology*. Milano: Polimetrica International Scientific Publisher.
- Medoff, Norman J., and Barbara K. Kaye. 2011. *Electronic Media: Then, Now, and Later*. 2nd ed. Burlington: Focal Press.
- Mills, Brett. 2009. *The Sitcom*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Miššíková, Gabriela. 2003. *Linguistic Stylistics*. Nitra: Univerzita Konštantína Filozofa.
- Moultrie, Vivian. 2010. *The Charlie Sheen Handbook: Everything You Need to Know about Charlie Sheen*. La Vergne: Lightning Source Inc.
- Peprník, Jaroslav. 1985. *Slovník amerikanismů*. Praha: Státní pedagogické nakladatelství.
- . 1998. *English Lexicology*. Olomouc: Univerzita Palackého.
- Savorelli, Antonio. 2010. *Beyond Sitcom: New Directions in American Television Comedy*. Jefferson: McFarland.
- Sayre, Shay, and Cynthia King. 2010. *Entertainment and Society: Influences, Impacts, and Innovations*. 2nd ed. New York: Routledge.
- Slunčík, Václav. 2010. *Sitcom: vývoj a realizace*. Praha: Akademie múzických umění v Praze.
- Swan, Michael. 2005. *Practical English Usage*. 3th ed. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Thompson, Kristin. 2003. *Storytelling in Film and Television*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Tottie, Gunnel. 2002. *An Introduction to American English*. Malden: Blackwell Publishers.
- Wakefield, Cassey. 2012. *Hollywood's Next Generation: The Hottest Male Stars You Haven't Heard of...Yet!* Denver: Ebook. Gd Publishing.

Online Sources

- Beane, Nora. 2007. "The Whole Truth about Two and a Half Men." Yahoo Voices. Accessed March 10, 2014. <http://voices.yahoo.com/the-whole-truth-two-half-men-237837.html?cat=40>.
- Cheang, Henry S., and Marc D. Pell. 2011. "Recognizing Sarcasm without Language: A Cross-Linguistic Study of English and Cantonese." *Pragmatics & Cognition* 19, no. 2 (2011): 203-223. Accessed April 5, 2014. http://www.academia.edu/2584478/Recognizing_sarcasm_without_language_A_cross-linguistic_study_of_English_and_Cantonese.
- Graddol, David. 2000. *The Future of English? A Guide to Forecasting the Popularity of the English Language in the 21st Century*. United Kingdom: The English Company Ltd. Accessed February 16, 2014. http://www.officiallanguages.gc.ca/docs/f/Future_of_English.pdf.
- Hu, Shuqin. 2012. "An Analysis of Humor in The Big Bang Theory from Pragmatic Perspectives." *Theory and Practice in Language Studies* 2, no. 6 (June): 1185-1190. Accessed February 17, 2014. [file:///C:/Users/Veronika/Downloads/7393-16409-1-PB%20\(1\).pdf](file:///C:/Users/Veronika/Downloads/7393-16409-1-PB%20(1).pdf).
- Jiaoqian, Bao QinDuan. 2004. "Application of the Skills of Nonverbal Communication in Classroom Teaching." *ELT Express*. Accessed March 16, 2014. <http://www1.open.edu.cn/elt/8/5.htm>.
- Lethbridge, Stefanie, and Jarmila Mildorf. 2004. *Basics of English Studies: An Introductory Course for Students of Literary Studies in English*. Accessed March 3, 2014. <http://www2.anglistik.uni-freiburg.de/intranet/englishbasics/PDF/BasicConcepts.pdf>.
- Oliveira, Karla Camila. 2011. "The Analysis of Irony through Relevance Theory in The Big Bang Theory Sitcom." *BELT Journal* 2, no. 1 (January): 69-83. Accessed February 14, 2024. <http://revistaseletronicas.pucrs.br/ojs/index.php/belt/article/viewFile/8919/7018>.
- Pomerantz, Dorothy. 2012. "Sorry, Charlie: Ashton Kutcher Tops Our List of the Highest Paid TV Actors." *Information for the World's Business Leaders*. Accessed October 12, 2013. <http://www.forbes.com/sites/dorothypomerantz/2012/10/17/sorry-charlie-ashton-kutcher-tops-our-list-of-the-highest-paid-tv-actors/>.
- Wilkinson, Michelle. 2011. "Why Sitcoms Are so Appealing." *Entertainment Scene* 360. Accessed January 2, 2014. <http://www.entertainmentscene360.com/index.php/why-sitcoms-are-so-appealing-3-7922/>.

Zhu-Hui, Yin, and Miao YUN. 2012. "Rhetorical Devices in Dialogues of The Big Bang Theory." *Sino-US English Teaching* 9, no. 6 (June): 1220-1229. Accessed February 22, 2014. <http://www.davidpublishing.com/davidpublishing/Upfile/7/23/2012/2012072382010977.pdf>.

Corpora Sources

DigiTitles.com. <http://www.digititles.com/>.

Unimatrix-One. <http://www.sub-titles.net/>.

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Sitcom Story Structure.....17
Table 2. Grammar Differences36

APPENDICES

P I Corpus of analyzed screenplays and subtitles (see the enclosed CD)