

Translating for the Stage: A Translation Analysis of *The Stand In* by Ladislav Smoljak and Zdeněk Svěrák

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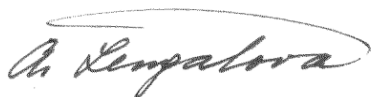
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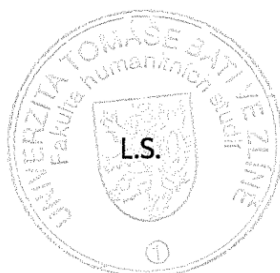
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ABSTRAKT

Cílem této práce je zanalyzovat anglický překlad české divadelní hry *Záskok*. Teoretická část se zabývá teorií překladu, metodami při hledání ekvivalentů, překladem kulturních výrazů a teorií překladu divadelních her. V praktické části se nachází konkrétní analyzované příklady z české i anglické verze a je-li to nutné, jsou navrženy změny.

Klíčová slova: *Záskok*; Jára Cimrman; překlad; divadlo; česká kultura

ABSTRACT

The aim of this work is to analyse the Czech play *The Stand In* translated into English language. Theoretical part is focused on the theory of translation, methods of equivalency, the translation of cultural words and theory of the translation of a play. Practical part is containing analysed extracts from both Czech and English version of the play and if it is necessary, there are also additional recommendation.

Keywords: *The Stand In*; Jára Cimrman; translation; theatre; Czech culture

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INTRODUCTION

Plays by Ladislav Smoljak, Zdeněk Svěrák and Jára Cimrman are typical of the Czech culture as is the character of Jára Cimrman himself. The authors like referring to the Czech history, culture and they use a lot of typical Czech expressions. Notwithstanding this fact, the daughter of Zdeněk Svěrák – Hana Jelínková, together with Brian Stewart and Emilia Machalová decided to translate the play and share it abroad.

The first part of the bachelor's thesis is focused on the theoretical part containing a translation theory. The translation theory includes methods of translation, how to deal with the equivalence and non-equivalence, and strategies of translating specific items in the text. As the analysed text is the typical Czech play, the theory of cultural translation and translation for a stage is also included. In the play, there also occur songs carrying the meaning and therefore, the introduction for the translation of songs is presented in the theoretical part.

The second part of the bachelor's thesis is dedicated to comparison of the Czech play *Záskok* (1994) and its translation into English language, *The Stand In* (2014). The play in English version was firstly performed in 2014, however, it has not been officially published. Hence, Jára Cimrman's theatre provided me the transcription of the play in English. This part is analysing translator's decisions according to the translation theory given in the theoretical part of this work. Chosen extracts are firstly analysed from the point of view of language, secondly the meaning and the humour of both versions are compared with additional comments. Many of these analyses examples also have recommendation for more accurate translation. The aim of this bachelor's thesis is to analyse and evaluate the translation of the play and to find out whether the translation preserved typical Jára Cimrman's humour and if it is understandable to the target audience.

I. THEORY

1 THE AIM OF THE TRANSLATION

According to Jiří Levý, the translation is a reproductive work, while a new work is not written. The aim is to preserve and convey the original text. The most of a translator's time takes searching for the right and accurate equivalent (Levý 1983, 27). As Peter Newmark published, the translation renders the meaning of the original text into target language with author's original intention of the text. During the translation process, the translator has to pretend that he is someone else as he is translating into target language (Newmark 1995, 5).

The creativity of the translator is limited by the language, he can teach his nation by creating new words called neologisms, or he can even naturalize exoticisms. As the translation is unobtrusive, the translator's work is better (Levý 1983, 40). However, the translation in its literal meaning is used mainly in case of concepts, terminology and text which is not based on historical context. In cases of a text based on historical context or national environment usually occurs to the substitution or transcription (Levý 1982, 43).

1.1 Loose and Exact Translation

The essential issue of the translator is the reproductive fidelity during the searching the right and accurate equivalent. The translator can choose either loose or exact translation (Levý 1987, 41). An exact translation is focused on the main and essential information from the text, the translator uses the exchange of the vocabulary and language material, special elements remain in the text. While a loose translation focuses on general information, the general context remains and the translator uses a substitution of the language and vocabulary (Levý 1987, 42). Then the text is adapted to the culture of the target language and also to the period of the translation. Both loose and exact translation usually meet in translations and as their connection is close, the more difficult are issues of translators (Levý 1987, 43).

1.2 Methods of Translation

- **Word-for-Word Translation:** As Peter Newmark stated, this translation is done by translation of words in their most common meaning according to the context while the word order from the source language is preserved. In case of cultural words, they are translated literally. The purpose of the word-for-word translation is to understand the mechanics of the source language, either as the first part of the translation process of difficult texts (Newmark 1995, 45). For example, the idiom *I am in the pickle* would be translated as *já jsem v láku*. However, the translation lost the original idiomatic

meaning intended by the author. This outcome of word-for-word translation is then considered as disadvantage of this method.

- **Literal translation:** This method is similar to previous one. The difference is that grammatical construction changes according to the target language. Words are translated into their common meaning, again according to the context of a text (Newmark 1995, 46). For instance, *na stole leží kniha* in Czech language is translated into English as *there is a book lying on the table*.
- **Faithful translation:** The faithful translation deals with the preserving of the original contextual meaning as accurately as possible. Cultural words are transferred from the source language into the target language. The grammatical structure of the target language is taken into account. The translation should be completely faithful to the original purpose (Newmark 1995, 46).
- **Semantic translation:** In comparison to the faithful translation, semantic translation is more flexible. Due to the fact that it should take in account the aesthetic value of the original text, it allows to translate cultural words into cultural neutral words or functional words. This method is very similar to the communicative translation in dealing with items, such as with dead metaphors, technical terms, slang and normal collocations. (Newmark 1995, 46-47). This method is illustrated by typical Czech cultural word *pomlázka*. One of the possible solution how to translate *pomlázka* into English, is the word *whip*, which is more neutral than *pomlázka*.
- **Adaptation:** This technique is mainly used in plays and poems. The culture of source language is transferred to the target language culture while a plot, theme and characters are preserved. The translation is later rewritten by a dramatist or poet. Adaptation is considered as the freest of methods (Newmark 1995, 46).
- **Free Translation:** Free translation presents the context without the form of the original text. By using this method, it occurs to reproducing the matter without the manner. The translation is usually prolonged due to paraphrasing in the translation (Newmark 1995, 46).
- **Idiomatic translation:** The translator transmits the meaning from the source language by using idiomatic expression which was not used in the original text. This method tends to slightly distort the original meaning (Newmark 1995, 47). Example of idiomatic translation is the Czech sentence *Vyzradil jsem tajemství* translated into English idiom *I let the cat out of the bag*.

- **Communicative translation:** This method preserve the same contextual meaning in way that both content and language are satisfactory for the reader. It concentrates on the main message of the text and the text is usually written in natural style. Communicative translation is mainly used in communicative texts (Newmark 1995, 47-48).

2 WORD EQUIVALENCE

According to Mona Baker, it is important to understand overall meaning of the text. However, to achieve understanding of the translated text, it is necessary to know the meaning of words in the text (Baker 2011, 9). Although the meaning of the word is essential, words are consisted of morphemes, also carrying the meaning. Thus, morphemes are the basic unit for the translation (Baker 2011, 10). Various types of dealing with word equivalence are further introduced.

2.1 Types of Equivalence

Anthony Pym in his book *Exploring Translation Theories* (2014) refers to the following types of Equivalence:

- **One-to-one:** In this type of equivalence one language item from the source language always corresponds with one language item in the target language. Such as English word a lion corresponds in Czech language with lev. This type of equivalence is also considered as ‘total equivalence’ until the culture of target language has different notion about particular word than culture of source language (Pym 2014, 29).
- **One-to-several or several-to-one:** In this case, one language item from the source language corresponds with more items from target language. For instance the English word *a key* have many meaning in Czech language, such as *klíč, řešení* or *tónina*. However, based on the context, the translator usually recognize which meaning was intended by the original text (Pym 2014, 29).
- **One-to-part:** The translator is able to find only a partial equivalent in the target language. This issue can be caused for example by cultural differences. For instance, the English expression *the brother*, does not have full equivalent in China or Korea. There is always appropriate to specify if the brother is older or younger (Pym 2014, 29).
- **One-to-none:** This is the case when the translator is not able to find any equivalent in the target language. One of possible solutions is to describe the expression in order to get understanding from the reader or familiarize the target audience with the term by generating it into the target language. The example of this one-to-none equivalence is a term *computer*, which was not known centuries ago. However, the translator should pay his attention to the fact that some cultures prefer importing new term into their language, some prefer generate new terms (Pym 2014, 29).

2.2 Non-equivalence

This issue means that target language does not have any accurate equivalent as was used in the source language. Non-equivalence is consequence by many factors acquiring different solutions and strategies (Baker 2011, 18). As there are many types of the problem of non-equivalence according to Mona Baker, the following ones are connected with the translation of *The Stand In* (2014).

- **Culture specific concept:** In cases such as the source language expresses something unknown to the target audience, occurs to the problem of explaining the particular meaning. Those expression might be connected with religion, customs or even food (Baker 2011, 18).
- **The target language lacks superordinate and vice versa:** The source language may use some superordinate expressions, while the target language does not have any equivalent and it can provide only hyponyms. The same problem can occurs when source language use a hyponym and the target language offers only superordinate expression (Baker 2011, 19-20).

2.3 Strategies of Solving Non-equivalence

As Mona Baker is describing types of non-equivalence, she also offers solutions and strategies used by professional translators.

- **Using more general word:** It is the most common strategy which is used among professional translators. It helps to overcome the issue of not finding an accurate equivalent, especially in specific expressions used in the source language. The example of this solution is the translation of the verb *shampoo*. Using this strategy in the translation into Czech language, the verb *umýt* is possible to use in order to express ‘to put shampoo on your hair’ in one general word (Baker 2011, 23-24).
- **Substitution and transcription:** The solution of the substitution is used mainly in situations where occurs expressions typical for the environment of the source language and also the text is mainly in general meaning. When the meaning of the expression is not very important for the context, the transcription can be used as a solution. In many cases, both of the solutions are possible (Levý 1983, 43). Substitution and transcription are connected also with translation of names, which are essential for plays.
 - **Names of characters:** The translators of the play *The Stand In* (2014) met many times during the play with typical Czech names. The name of the character can be translated only if it has a meaning. For example as it is in medieval allegories,

Frater is translated as *Mnich* in Czech language, or *Dottore* as *Doktor*. When the name of a character is given according to his behaviour such as *Charles Surface*, *Sir Peter Teazle* or *Ota Plk*, both substitution and transcription is possible. When the source language and the target language are related such as Czech and Russian, there is no need of substitution as the meaning is obvious. If the meaning of the name is lost, the transcription is possible, as it is for example in Gogol's *Chlestakov*. However, there is always necessary to take into account the context of the whole text (Levý 1983, 43-44).

- **Using neutral word:** Sometimes the target language does not offer a word with the totally same meaning due to the culture, religion or even position of the state. Mona Baker uses the example of *exotic lily*. In case that, the target audience are Chinese, they does not use the expression *exotic*. Exotic means something strange for people from Europe, something from the area of Asia. In this case, it would be appropriate to use the translation in Chinese expressing *strange unique lily* (Baker 2011, 27).
- **Translation by culture substitution:** In this strategy, the translator substitute culture-specific word by the word which is known and familiar to the target audience. This solution can be used in order to give the reader the concept of the text with familiar expressions. While using this strategy, the translator has to think about how much licence was given to him (Baker 2011, 36).
- **Translation by omission:** This strategy is possible to realize in case that the translator would have to provide a long distracting explanation for the reader. This strategy is recommended to use as the last option due to the change of lost in the translation (Baker 2011, 42-43).

2.4 Translation of specific items

- **Ambiguity:** The author of the original text uses ambiguity both deliberately and unintentionally. Deliberate ambiguity should be, if possible, retain in the translated text. However, it is important to distinguish these two kinds to avoid misunderstanding. Unintentional ambiguity is later on clarified in the context of the text (Newmark 1995, 206-207).
- **Geographical terms:** The first step, which the translator should do, is to check the term in the most recent atlases and maps. There is necessary to respect country's wish to call its own geographical features by their own choice of names. It is important to remember that the translator is not inventing new geographical term. When it comes to

the age of misprint, the translator should not believe any term which does not sound familiar to him (Newmark 1995, 216). For instance, in Czech language *Hořejší jezero* is in English *Lake Superior*, *Černá Hora* in Czech is in English *Montenegro*.

- **Idioms:** As Gabriella Kovács stated, there are 5 strategies how to translate idioms.
 1. **Using an idiom of similar meaning and form:** This strategy is based on using the idiom from target language of approximately similar meaning as was used in the original text. Solution of using idiom of similar meaning is ideal one, however, it is necessary to take into consideration style and rhetorical effect. While choosing the right equivalent, the translator should be always aware of using an inappropriate idiom (Kovács 2017, 67). Example of this strategy is the English idiom *the barking dog never bites* translated into Czech language as *pes, který štěká, nekouše*.
 2. **Using an idiom of similar meaning but different form:** The aim of this solution is to find idiom with similar meaning in the target language but with different lexical items (Kovács 2017, 68). For instance, English idiom *to kill two birds with one stone* is translated into Czech language as *zabít dvě mouchy jednou ranou*. The meaning is very similar, both of the idioms mean to solve more problems at once, however, used lexical items are different. English uses birds and stones, Czech language flies and a bash.
 3. **Translation by paraphrase:** Translation by paraphrase is the most common when the translator is not able to find any similar idiom in the target language (Kovács 2017, 68). The translator uses the paraphrasing or description of the idiom in the translation and original idiomatic translation is lost. For example, solution of the Czech idiom *nechal by si pro korunu koleno vrtat* could be *he is a scrooge*.
 4. **Translation by omission:** This strategy is possible only in certain situations. It allows to the translator to omit the idiom from the text. One of the situation might be the difficulty with paraphrasing the idiomatic expression or due to the stylistic aspects (Kovács 2017, 68).
 5. **Translation by compensation:** This strategy gives the translator the possibility to omit the idiomatic translation when it occurs, and use it elsewhere in the target text (Kovács 2017, 68).

3 TRANSLATION OF SONGS

As the analysed play *The Stand In* (2014) contains songs, it is necessary to have the overview of translation theory of lyrics. According to Elena Gritsenko and Evgeniya Aleshinskaya, the main purpose of the translation of songs is preserve the message in the target language while maintain matching words and music. The translator should put into the text accurate verbal components into its rhythm and melody. It is important to remember that translation of the song is not about being precise in lexical items (Gritsenko, Aleshinskaya 2016, 171)

In case of context, singing the song in the original version is usually symbolic. It helps to preserve the original flavour of the situation (Gritsenko, Aleshinskaya 2016, 171). The analysed play is translated into English language with the purpose to preserve Czech culture, on the other hand, songs in the play have its meaning which is important to communicate to the audience. Therefore, the translation of songs in this play is essential for the context and it is not possible to apply this technique.

4 ISSUES OF CULTURE

According to Xiao Geng, during the process of translation of culture, it is essential to take into account the faithfulness, expressiveness, elegance and the most important culture factor (Geng 2013, 977). While translating the text from the target language, there is necessity to recognize the cultural achievement referred in the source language. There are available two approaches dealing with the translation of culture elements – transference and componential analysis. The technique of transference preserves local atmosphere mainly in literary text, while on the other hand, componential analysis excludes the culture and focuses on the message of the text. The componential analysis uses components familiar both in source language and target language with the addition of extra contextual distinguishing components (Newmark 1995, 96).

- **Language and culture:** Culture is consisted of values, which people shared. It does not have to be tangible things but also way of life, behaviour and the language. Language is the key of cultural, it mediates religion, education and law (Geng 2013, 977). The language is a medium for expressing the society of an individual, also representing the social reality. There are not two existing languages which would represent the same social reality. Thus, any language cannot exist without the culture and any culture without a language (Bassnett 2014, 22).
- **Culture equivalent:** It is the situation when the word from source language is translated by a word which is familiar in the target language. However, this strategy is limited due to the fact that using culture equivalent might not be accurate. It can be used in general texts, propaganda, publicity or for brief explanation in the target language (Newmark 1995, 83). Due to the fact that almost every nation has its own national food, cultural equivalents are appropriate to use here. Instead of *haggis* can be used *tlačenka* in Czech language, or *frgál* from Czech culture can be translated as *a pie*.
- **Functional equivalent:** This is technique contains usage of a cultural free word, sometimes with new specific term. The effect of this solution is generalization or neutralising the word from the source language. This method is the most accurate for the translation of cultural words (Newmark 1995, 83). For instance, Czech *maturita* is according to functional equivalent translated into English as *a school leaving exam*.
- **Descriptive equivalent:** If there is no equivalent in the target language it is also appropriate to describe the word and its function as it is essential both for the text and

its translation. That means that for example the word *Samurai* is than translated as *the Japanese aristocracy from the eleventh to the nineteenth century with the function to provide officers and administrator* (Newmark 1995, 83).

5 TRANSLATION FOR A STAGE

As the translator decides to translate the play, he has to know that the text and the play itself is right for him, otherwise the translator does a disservice by the translation. There is also the question of preserving culture elements nevertheless, settings of the play should stay preserved. It is always useful to have some dramaturgical experience and see the original play in the source language in order to learn what the actor is able sensibly to speak (Mengel, Schauder, and Weiss 2010, 217-222). In comparison with translation of short stories and novels, the translation of a play is indented both for the reader and for the actor. Therefore the translator should use language which is actable for an actor (Carlson 1964, 55).

In translation theories, there is also a school, which claims that ideally the translator should know the actors and translate the text directly for them. This school is supported mainly by university professors, even though this case rarely useful due to the fact that usually the text is first translated and then there is the decision which theatre will perform the play (Mengel, Schnauder, Weiss 2010, 217-222). In case of Jára's Cimrman theatre, the translators knew in which theatre the play is going to be performed. However, the quality of the translation depends on the variety of solutions made by the translator and still stay faithful to the original play (Mengel, Schauder, and Weiss 2010, 217-222).

Time is also crucial issue for the translator of a play. There is a necessity to consider the length of the speech time at the stage and also the rate of delivery. The relation between those two aspects is crucial for the translation process (Carlson 1964, 55). When the play's duration time is meaningful for the context, than the translator should be comply. Due to the need of duration time, translated plays are often shortened and revised in the presented version, thus often it is also an actor's part to give the text full meaning which was intended by the playwright (Carlson 1964, 56-58).

I ANALYSIS

6 METHODOLOGY

6.1 Plays from Jára Cimrman's Theatre

The Stand In (2014) is the play written by Ladislav Smoljak and Zdeněk Svěrák. Zdeněk Svěrák and Jiří Šebánek, they together created a fictional character Jára Cimrman. The name was firstly mentioned in the radio session called 'Vinárna U pavouka', which authors were already mentioned Zdeněk Svěrák and Jiří Šebánek. The session was based on humour connected with a mystification. Jára Cimrman was firstly introduced as the driver of a steam roller. It was Jiří Šebánek's idea to establish Jára Cimrman's theatre and on 29th October 1996 he invited Miloň Čepelka, Ladislav Smoljak and Zdeněk Svěrák for the meeting about the establishment of the theatre (Smoljak, Svěrák, 1987, 9).

Notwithstanding the fact he has never existed, he is presented as one of the most famous Czechs by the theatre. Žižkovské divadlo Jára Cimrmana carries his name and ascribing the authorship of plays also to Jára Cimrman himself.

Plays usually have typical division – the seminar and the play itself. The seminars are usually based on Czech history connected to the play, and Cimrman's life. Seminars are performed usually by one actor, who occasionally invites his colleagues. The first part is dedicated to the seminars, the play is performed in the second part.

Plays have typical language and humour. The authors use neologism, usually created by Jára Cimrman, also archaisms and characters in plays talk in Prague dialect. Syntactical features such as metaphor, metonymy and idioms are often used in order to create humour typical for Cimrman's plays. Comicality is created also by basic knowledge of Czech culture and history.

6.2 *The Stand In*

As it was already mentioned in the chapter 3.1 plays are divided into seminars and the play. The play *The Stand In* (2014) is an exception due to the fact that the play is about the theatre performing the play *Vlasta*, which is a fictional play from the *The Stand In* (2014). So the play is divided into the seminar, the rehearsal of the play *Vlasta* and the performance of the play *Vlasta* as the last part.

The Stand In (2014) is the first play which was written after the fall of the totality and the authors took the inspiration in the play written by Božena Němcová. Zdeněk Svěrák considers the play as one of the most successful, they wrote it with the spirit of freedom. The

play has the idea of itinerant theatre company which were typical for the time of Jára Cimrman's life (Radiožurnál 2016).

6.3 The Translators

English translation of the play was firstly performed in 2014 at Žižkovské divadlo Jára Cimrmana. Emilia Machalová and Brian Stewart are the main translators, while Brian Stewart is responsible for the translation and Hana Jelínková as the script-editor was overseeing the project itself. As Brian Stewart said in the interview for Charles University, they wanted to leave the plays as Czech as possible (Svoboda, Doksanský 2017).

6.4 Analysis Approach

The analysis is done based on knowledge from theoretical part. Extracts from the original text and the translated text are compared firstly from the point of view of equivalence, secondly according to the meaning. After the comparison, differences are considered and commented. In case of dissension, there are added recommended solutions for the translation. Both English and Czech examples are marked. The letter A is used for the original Czech text, translated English text is marked as B and the last letter C represents suggested translations and corrections. Numbers of examples precede letter such as (1A). The analysed word or a phrase are in bold.

7 REFERRING TO OTHER AUTHORS

The play refers to both Czech and international authors. For names of works, the translators used official translations. Essential for the context of the play is not only the title of work but also the knowledge of the plot. That issue brings certain complication in case of English audience and their knowledge of the Czech environment and authors, especially knowledge of the plot.

7.1.1 Anton Pavlovich Chekhov

The first referred author is Anton Pavlovich Chekhov. In the following example, there is a little confusion both in the Czech and English text, where it may look like that Chekhov wrote both of the mentioned plays.

(1A) Odvážně například snížil počet sester v Čechovově hře na jednu, Alibabu a čtyřicet loupězníků úspěšně uváděl pod názvem Samotář Alibaba (Smoljak, Svěrák 1994, 5-6).

(1B) And it led to bold productions of Chekhov's – The Sister and Alibaba the Loner (Smoljak and Svěrák 2014, 4).

(1C) And it led to bold production of sisters in Chekhov's play to The Sister, also they reduced thieves and perform Alibaba the Loner.

Both in English and Czech language, authors assumed knowledge of Chekhov's works. The problem is that in (1A) the sentence is ambiguous due to the fact that it may seem like Chekhov wrote both *Three Sisters* and *Alibaba and Forty Thieves*. Smoljak and Svěrák started the sentence with Chekhov's play and after the comma they continued with another play without introducing the author. However, *Alibaba and 40 thieves* was just another example how Cimrman and his theatre was creative and capable of performing any play. Thus, the Czech sentence is quite ambiguous. In (1B) the authors came up with new title of Chekhov's play and connected it by the conjunction 'and' with another new title – *The Loner*. The conjunction 'and' resulted in connection of both plays and creating a new one consisted of *The Sister* and *Alibaba the Loner*. One of the possible solutions to avoid the connection of both plays, is to replace the conjunction by the comma as it is in (1C). The suggested version also added the object 'play' in order to explain that it is only one play in the sentence, which belongs to Chekhov.

7.1.2 Ladislav Stroupežnický

The play refers to the play *Our Loudmouth* by Ladislav Stroupežnický. This play does not have any official translation, therefore the translators used an ‘ad hoc’ translation. The word ‘Loudmouth’ is very close to the Czech word ‘Furiantí’, which means an arrogant person loudly expressing his self-confidence.

(2A) Po prohraném soudním sporu s Ladislavem Stroupežnických, **jehož Furianty sehrál ve třech lidech** (Smoljak, Svěrák 1994, 5).

(2B) His play *Our Loudmouth – a play based on the peasant folk from his own village - calls for a cast of over twenty yet*, with his mastery of the stage, Cimrman was able to distil the cast size down to three (Smoljak and Svěrák 2014, 4).

In (2B) the translators had to think about the fact that the most of English speaking audience probably do not know the play by Ladislav Stroupežnický and they needed to explain why this situation is unusual. As one of the translators said, they needed to quickly explain the plot in order to understand the joke (Brian Stewart, email to author, March 20, 2018). This solution (2B) is very creative and it does not prolong the play. The translation is well done thanks to its short explanation and thus understanding of the joke by the audience.

7.1.3 William Shakespeare

In case of William Shakespeare, the original text was used. While Czech language used the extract from the translation, English took the original text and as it is usually the familiar text for English speaking audience.

(3A) Hamlete, odlož konečně tu čerň,
a přátelsky hled’ na dánského krále,
nepátřej po své urozeném otci,
je to tak běžné, živý musí zemřít (Smoljak, Svěrák
1994, 6).

(3B) Good Hamlet, cast thy nighted colour off,
Do not for ever with thy vailed lids
Seek for thy noble father in the dust:
Thou know'st 'tis common; all that lives must die
(Smoljak, Svěrák 2014, 5).

To demonstrate the play *Hamlet* by William Shakespeare, the translation in (3A) was used the translation by Milan Lukeš¹. Lukeš was chosen probably due to his easier language in comparison with translation of e.g. Jiří Josek, which is more bookish. For the translation was used original text written by Shakespeare without any change in this particular example. Due to the fact that Shakespeare wrote his plays in English, the translators did not have to look for equivalents and they just used the original text. This translation is well done as a default solution.

7.1.4 Alois Jirásek

Alois Jirásek is one of writers who are mentioned many times during the play. As it is in the following example, Alois Jirásek's extract from his *Lucerna* was omitted in order to adapt the play to English language.

(4A) Ale té lípy se nevzdám! Je našeho rodu od nepaměti (Smoljak, Svěrák 1994, 32)!

(4B) To be or not be that is the question! Now 'tis the winter of our discontent (Smoljak and Svěrák 2014, 18)!

The original Czech text is referring to the well know Czech play *Lucerna*. However, this sentence was taken out of the context. Prácheňský used this sentence while he was examine acoustics in the theatre. Thus, this translation was well-done, because it does not matter what the actor says in order to examine the acoustic. As Svěrák and Smoljak supposed that Czech audience knows *Lucerna*, the translators wanted from the audience to be also familiar with the particular text (Brian Stewart, email to author, March 20, 2018). In this play, Czech text is referring to the same authors many times during the play, the same happened with the usage of *Hamlet*. *Hamlet* was used earlier in the play, more precisely in the seminar. Thanks to this fact, it looks coherently and it does not make the expression of confusion and referring to many authors during the play. This phenomenon is called translation by cultural substitution and it is more described in chapter 2.2. in the theoretical part.

¹ Checked in Shakespeare, William. 1974. *Hamlet, dánský princ*. Prague: Dilia.

The following example differs from the previous one by the translation solution. In this case, the play *Lucerna* was not omitted and what is more, it was explained.

(5A) Nebo **Lucerna**. To se taky líbí. Ovšem kněžna nesmí bejt těžká. Já jsem jednou přenášel přes močál Musilovou-Věbrovou... Znáte Musilovou-Věbrovou? Ona je **jak dvě**: Musilová, Věbrová (Smoljak, Svěrák 1994, 31)!

(5B) What about **Lantern** – another wonderful Czech play? Surrender not the Linden Tree. But find someone light to play the princess. There's a scene in the play where I have to carry the princess through the marsh. I once acted with Musilová-Věbrová: an actress with a double-barrelled name. Do you know her? If you knew her, you would know that she is actually **Musilova AND Věbrová**! It really was like carrying two barrels; I never thought I would make it through the marsh. (Smoljak and Svěrák 2014, 19)

The translators did not want to ignore Alois Jirásek, so they decided to leave him for the rest of the play. In the end of the play Prácheňský does not know the speech and he starts to talk about *The Lantern*.

VAVROCH: (The word "lantern" reminds him of his famous role.): Yes. Lantern, Yes. I will the princess light. (Smoljak, Svěrák 2014, 40).

So if they would exchange *Lucerna* for another play here, they would made problems in the future. In this case, Czech culture is preserved and typical humour remain the same. The explanation of the play and part of the plot mentioned in the Czech text, is useful for English audience not familiar with Czech plays. However, there should be definite article *The Lantern* as it is the title of the play.

In (5B) depends on the performance of the actor. In Czech text, there is used the adverb 'jak', which clarify that Musilová-Věbrová is one person. While in the English text, it looks like Musilová-Věbrová are actually two women due to the conjunction 'and'. In Czech played performance, the actor use his hands and gesticulation in order to show Musilová-Věbrová, so have to the English actor, or the adverb 'as' should precedes Musilová AND Věbrová.

8 VOCABULARY

Svěrák and Smoljak have very specific language, the authors use archaisms, neologisms, often refer to the Czech history or other Czech artists. As the play is typical Czech one, it brings complications how to express many words which does not have any equivalent in English. As it is in following examples.

(6A) Kdy Jára Cimrman jako **principál** herecké společnosti Lipany putoval od štace ke štaci (Smoljak, Svěrák 1994, 5).

(6B) As the **director** of the itinerant Lipany theatre company, travelled from place to place. (Smoljak and Svěrák 2014, 4)

(6C) As **chief** of the itinerant Lipany theatre company, travelled from place to place.

The word ‘principál’ in Czech language express the owner of a circus or also a theatre. The Lipany theatre company was very similar to the circus due to the way of its description during the seminar. More precisely, it is described as chaos and ability to perform everything no matter the number of necessary actors. Compared with English, ‘director’ is still frequently used in the meaning of manager or a filmmaker (Cambridge University Press, 2018). Therefore the translation is not very accurate. The expression ‘chief’ would be more compatible with the Czech expression ‘principál’ because of its non-specific meaning according to the Cambridge Dictionary explaining the word as a person in charge or the most important (Cambridge University Press, 2018).

(7A) Pokusme se na základě kusých svědectví **pamětníků** a obecních kronik vystopovat, čím byl Cimrmanův kočovný divadelní podnik tak zvláštní (Smoljak, Svěrák 1994, 5).

(7B) So now, let us, based on the fragmentary testimony of **witnesses** and the contemporary municipal chronicles, try and understand why the Cimrman touring theatre company was so unique. (Smoljak and Svěrák 2014, 4)

(7C) So now, let us, based on the fragmentary testimony of **elderly witness** and the contemporary municipal chronicles, try and understand why the Cimrman touring theatre company was so unique.

The term ‘pamětník’ represents usually a person who experienced some event. However, the important characteristics of the word is that the person is aged and that is not what can be said about a witness. A witness is a person who saw some event, but it does not consider the age of the person. In order to preserve the original meaning of the word

‘pamětník’, some adjective covering the age of witness should precede. It is recommended to use aged, senior or elderly, which is the most acceptable due to its formal form and respect.

In the next extract the translators used neutral word which is not much compatible with Czech word.

(8A) To je **machr**, přátelé! (Smoljak, Svěrák 1994, 30)

(8B) He’s the **consummate professional!** (Smoljak and Svěrák 2014, 18)

(8C) He’s the **whizz** at acting!

The expression ‘machr’ is more colloquial than English translation. The ‘consummate professional’ sounds very formal and considering the context, characters are talking with slang and very informal language. However, ‘the whizz at acting’ is much closer to the meaning of the Czech word ‘machr’. As characters speak not very formal and in dialect, ‘the consummate professional’ is not suitable to character’s temperament.

9 IDIOMS

As was mentioned before, Cimrman is characteristic for his language. Varied language and idioms with ambiguous meaning are typical both during the seminars and the play itself.

(9A) Ještě jednou sem páchněte a uvidíte, jaký **vám dám kapky** (Smoljak, Svěrák 1994, 14)!

(9B) Come back here again and **I'll give you a taste of my medicine** (Smoljak and Svěrák 2014, 8).

The sentence (9A) has two meanings. The first interpretation, typical for Cimrman's humour, is to give a lesson or wallop someone. However, the character stating this sentence is a pharmacist thus, the idiom 'dát někomu kapky' was used deliberately. It connects the profession of the character with the word 'kapky' which has two meanings – literal meaning as a medicine and the second meaning was already mentioned. English translation is done with perspicacity and it met both in literal and secondary meaning.

In the following extract there is shown loss of humour in the translation and also change of the context.

(10A) Času je málo, budu si muset vybrat - buď moje nová oblouková lampa, **nebo vaše stará** (Smoljak, Svěrák 1994, 17).

(10B) My philandering days are over. I mustn't waste time anyway, I must **concentrate on developing my arc lamp**. And now if you'll excuse me, I'll start up the generator (Smoljak and Svěrák 2014, 11).

(10C) I can't waste my time. I have to choose either **my new arc lamp or your old wife**.

František Křížík is still not decided which choice he will choose in his future in (10A). 'Nebo vaše stará' express the man's wife and it is used in contrast to the new lamp. The word 'stará' is ambiguous, it can substitute also man's old lamp but also it is the negative expression of a wife. Solution (10B) completely change the meaning and the humour. Křížík is already decided and he chose the new lamp. The humour of ambiguity and comparison of a new lamp and old wife is lost however, the joke remains in Křížík's decision. The first sentence in (10B) 'my philandering days are over' is added and there is not such a sentence in the original Czech text. In English, there is no idiom or phrase which would help to express the ambiguity of original Czech text. My translation (10C) is still considering Křížík's choices though the ambiguity is gone, the joke with contrast of the new lamp and old wife is remain.

The translators could find absolute equivalents in many cases, still there are several Czech idioms which was not possible translate and remain the humour and context.

(3A) Je jenom jeden Mirek. Druhej je tu **na ocet** (Smoljak, Svěrák 1994, 17).

(3B) There is only one Mirek, and although he's here **for the vinegar** – he's not the one in a pickle (Smoljak and Svěrák 2014, 11).

The idiom 'na ocet' is used for being single and unmarried. Nevertheless, 'ocet' or 'vinegar' was applied due to the context of the situation. Small Mirek came for the vinegar in literal meaning. Thus the idiom 'na ocet' is perfectly suitable in this sentence. The translators used 'vinegar' with its literal meaning and with additional idiom 'to be in the pickle' which means 'to be in a problem'. Notwithstanding the fact that the ambiguity is not so visible as in Czech language. This solution is the most alike as the Czech version of the text. Due to the fact that this extract is from the situation where the husband finds out that his wife is cheating on him with Křížík, Mirek, who come for the vinegar is not in troubles at all. Therefore the additional idiom 'be in the pickle' is on the right place.

10 ADDRESSING

Svěrák and Smoljak use variable addressing during the play. Most of them are obsolete and not really used nowadays. English language does not use so many various addressing as Czech language.

(11A) **Panstvo**, na Budějovice já mám ty nejhorší vzpomínky (Smoljak, Svěrák 1994, 32).

(11B) I have had the worst experience ever of České Budějovice (Smoljak and Svěrák 2014, 20).

(11C) **Guys**, I have had the worst experience ever of České Budějovice.

(11A) version uses general addressing to men. In English there is the possibility to translate ‘panstvo’ as already mentioned in the play ‘fellas’ or simply ‘guys’ which would be better choice than leave the addressing out.

(12A) Proč mi si dávno netykáme, **ty stará vojno** (Smoljak, Svěrák 1994, 24)?

(12C) How calm that we call ourselves by last names, **old friend**?

This is the extract from not translated part, as it is shown in the chapter 12.1.1. The expression ‘ty stará vojno’ is usually said to address an old friend. English language has possibilities such as ‘man’ and ‘old friend’. The addressing ‘man’ is not very personal expression, it is used in common conversation, while ‘old friend’ is mainly used for a person who the speaker really knows. This sentence was already mentioned in the previous chapter in the not translated part. The sentence is then not officially translated but the version (12C) suggest the expression ‘old friend’.

11 NAMES OF CHARACTERS

As *The Stand In* (2014) is the Czech play, not surprisingly there are found typically Czech names, which does not exist abroad, neither in translated version. The translators decided to not translate Czech names. As Brian Stewart said, they wanted to keep ‘Czechness’ in the translation and there is no need to translate names (Brian Stewart, email to author, April 5, 2018).

11.1.1 Ota Plk

In case of Ota Plk, occurred to the exception. Ota’s surname was translated into Ota Piffle, as it is in the following example.

(13A) Pozoruhodným fenoménem souboru byl jeho protagonista, všestranný **Ota Plk** (Smoljak, Svěrák 1994, 25).

(13B) A remarkable feature of the troupe was the versatile actor, **Ota Piffle**. (Smoljak and Svěrák 2014, 14)

The word ‘plk’ means ‘gossip’ or ‘nonsense’, ‘to chat with someone’ or ‘to jaw’ in English language. Ota Plk is a character of an actor, who intensely experiences his roles and literally becomes the character. English translation used the equivalent for the word ‘plk’ and that is ‘piffle’. The last name ‘Piffle’ was used in order to keep the content and the humour of the situation. The sound of ‘Piffle’ can be humours too if the actor put stress on Ota’s last name. (Brian Stewart, email to author, April 5, 2018)

As names of other characters were preserved, they were not connected to the content of the text. In those cases, it does not matter whether the name is translated or not. The decision to translate Ota’s surname was necessary in order to keep the content of the text.

12 NOT TRANSLATED TEXT

Referring to the Czech culture and Czech names brings certain complications during the translation. As it will be shown in the following chapters, the translators decided to omit the text at all, or modify the text in order to gain understanding of the audience.

12.1.1 Deleted Text

The translators met many times the problem of Czech puns during the play. They used the translation by omission, which was already mentioned in theoretical part in the chapter 2.2. The following example is the text which was omitted, due to the problem of equivalents to the Czech pun. Following example is from the context of exchanging letters between Ladislav Stroupežnický and Jára Cimrman, precisely, the last letter from Jára Cimrman after Ladislav Stroupežnický asked him not to write him again.

(14A) Milý Láďo,

proč my si dávno netykáme, ty stará vojno? Dočetl jsem se v Lumíru, žes chodil dva roky na reálku v Písku. I já jsem tam chvíli studoval, jsme tedy spolužáci. Rád bych se Ti něčím pochlubil. Hrajeme teď s mou společností na Poděbradsku. Byl zde velký nedostatek pracovních sil pro sklizeň cukrovky a pro celou řepnou kampaň. Na radu ředitele cukrovaru v Dymokurech pana Hlušiny jsem svou hru Čechové na Řípu mírně přepracoval. Na cedulích to teď píšeme s malým ř. Závěrečná píseň, v níž se titul Čechové na řípu! Čechové na řípu! opakuje ve sboru, strhuje diváky tak mocně, že cukrovar jede naplno jako nikdy. A do práce se díky mému divadlu přihlásilo dokonce pět Němců, dva Cikáni a zkusmo i jeden Žid (Smoljak, Svěrák 1994, 24-25).

(14C) Dear Ladislav, how come that we still call ourselves by the last name, old friend? I read in Lumír journal, which publishes work by Czech authors, that you went to the school in Písek for two years. And so did I for a while, so we are classmates then. I would like to boast you about something. We are playing with my theatre company in the area of Poděbrady now. There was a big lack of the work force for the harvest of the beet. Based on the advice of the director of the sugar refinery in Dymokury, Mr. Hlušina, I little bit rewrote my play called 'Czechs on Říp mountain'. We changed the play to get rid of Říp Mountain and include the beet on the signs. The final changed song, in which the title 'Czechs on Beet! Czechs on Beet!' repeats in choir, encouraged the audience so much,

that the sugar refinery works so hard as never. Even five Germans, two Gipsies and about one Jew joined them thanks to my theatre.

As it was mentioned before, this section was omitted due to the fact that in English does not exist any similar pun as it is in this example in Czech language. The text (14C) is one of the possible solutions. However, a big part of the comicality in the letter disappeared. In Czech, Cimrman called Stroupežnický by 'Lád'a', which is the shortage of Ladislav used mainly between people who know the person well. Due to the fact that Ladislav is typical Czech name, not translated into English, Ladislav remain the same in the English letter. In English, 'tykání' and 'vykání' do not exist. Thus, there is used 'call ourselves by the last names' in the text, which is close to 'vykání' even though it does not mean totally the same. The complication appears in 'Čechové na Řípu!'. The Czech pun is in words 'říp' and 'řepa', in English as 'rip' and 'beet'. Those English and Czech words are not similar both in visual and more important, spoken way. As 'Říp' is typically Czech name with the consonant 'ř' which does not exist in English, there is no chance to translate it into English. Thanks to the fact, that Jára Cimrman rewrote his play and did not say how precisely, the text suggests usage of signs with the translation of řepa, which is 'the beet', in order to make sense in the rest of the text and in the song. This is one of the possible solutions, however, the pun after the translation disappeared.

12.1.2 Substitution

Another examples is an extract of 'ten commandments' for actors invented by Jára Cimrman. There occurs to the substitution as it is shown in the following text.

(15A) 7. Hraješ-li čerta, uvědom si před usednutím, že máš ocas (Smoljak, Svěrák 1994, 27).

(15B) 10. At the curtain call, remember to bow low enough so that nobody can see that it is you calling out "Bravo!" (Smoljak and Svěrák 2014, 15).

(15C) If you play the devil, remember that you have a tail, before you sit down.

The seventh commandments is about playing the devil and sitting with the tail. English version skipped this part with devil and in the end, it was replaced by different advice. This solution was well done, with typical Cimrman's humour. Brian Stewart created this solution together with Hana Jelínková as funnier version (Brian Stewart, email to author, 5 April, 2018). However, there is no need to substitute the Czech version with the devil. The suggestion is to keep original content and keep the devil in the sentence.

13 SONGS IN THE PLAY

The translators also had to deal with songs in the play *The Stand In* (2014). Original Czech songs are written for the play by Ladislav Smoljak and Zdeněk Svěrák, they did not use any known Czech song. However, the melody of the following composition was taken from the Czech folk song ‘Čechy krásné, Čechy mé’.

(16A) Tuhle hru, co hrajem vám
napsal Jára Cimrman
Dílo je to zábavné
a dobře to dopadne
Řekněte všem sousedům
že je vstupné pár korun
a že tuhle novotu
hrajem taky v sobotu
a v neděli (Smoljak Svěrák, 1994, 27)

(16B) Oh Bohemia beautiful!
This play is just for you
Written by J Cimrman
Please catch it if you can.
Tell the people far and wide
It is cheap to get inside
To enjoy this funny play
That’s performed on Saturday
– and Sunday too (Smoljak, Svěrák 2014, 16).

The translator could not translate the first two lines from the Czech original text literally due to the couplet rhyme in the song. Instead, the first line of the English translation was done by translation of the first sentence of the folk song ‘Čechy krásné, Čechy mé’ in order to abide the couplet rhyme of the song. Though the beginning is slightly different than the Czech original, the meaning remains the same. They catch the meaning that the play is performed for the present audience, also the information about the author and price of ticket and days of performances. The translation of the song was well done because all the essential information about the play remained in the lyrics.

The next song is from the play *Vlasta* sung by the character of Vlasta during her ironing. The song is more just for amusement of the audience than for communicating of some information.

(17A) Žehlení, žehlení

konce tomu není

Vše je třeba nakropiti,

pak se prádlo pěkně svítí

Žehlení, žehlení (Smoljak, Svěrák 1994, 38).

(17B) Iron, ironing

Never ending All it takes is a little *sprinkle* (*when she says sprinkle there is bust of spit from her mouth*) ...

To make the clothes twinkle.

Get rid of all the wrinkles

Iron, ironing (Smoljak Svěrák 2014, 24).

As was already mentioned, the song's purpose is to amuse the audience. The translation carries all needed information such as it is never ending and it is necessary to sprinkle. However, the translators added the joke with the spitting from Vlasta's mouth. In Czech original text, Vlasta cannot pronounce 'r' and there are jokes with the spitting. In English text, Vlasta cannot pronounce the letter 's' and it sounds as a diphthong 'th' (Smoljak, Svěrák 2014, 24). As speech disorders in play important part of the humour in the Czech original text, the translators could not omit it. In this particular song, the translators transferred the joke from another part into this extract, as it was possible with the word 'sprinkle'. The translation is done in resourceful way, with the addition of a joke in typical Cimrman's kind of humour.

CONCLUSION

The main aim was to evaluate the translation of the play and to find out whether the translation is preserving the humour and if it is understandable to the target audience. The translators had to deal with issues of cultural expressions and culture itself. As their purpose was to preserve Czech culture as much as possible, it brought certain difficulties, such as the translation of titles by Czech authors, or the explanation of a context to the target audience which is not familiar with the Czech culture. However, the explanations caused that the translated version would be extended in comparison with the original version. Nevertheless, the translators omitted the part containing the pun with typical Czech consonant 'ř', which is does not exist in English language. The most striking part was referring to other writers and how the translators solved titles of their work. Due to the fact that some referred Czech works do not have any official translation, the translators had to use the 'ad-hoc' translation.

Though the authors made changes in context, which were not very necessary, they did everything with the circumspection to the typical Cimrman's humour and Czech culture. The translation itself was very well done, even though there were some occasional mistakes. On the other hand, the translators used both recorded video from the performance of the play and the book (Brian Stewart, email to author, March 20, 2018). Due to this fact, the translation does not have to be precise as Czech actors like improvising during the performance. According to Brian Stewart, actors are still coming up with new versions how to perform the script more accurate (Brian Stewart, email to author, March 20, 2018). Even though not all jokes were preserved due to the cultural aspects, the audience will understand the context perfectly with the humour, which is the inherent part of plays by Jára Cimrman.

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