

The Global Format Trade: A Contrastive analysis of the U.S. sitcom *Married... with children*
and its Bulgarian remake



Seleytin Dzhelilov

6332129

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Utrecht University

Supervisor: Dr. Roselinde Supheert

Second reader: Dr. Deborah Cole

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Abstract

The following study analyzes the popular U.S. sitcom *Married... with children* (1987 – 1997) by comparing it to its Bulgarian remake (2012). Drawing on a previous analysis (Beeden & de Bruin, 2010), which stressed the importance of cultural proximity between the new production and the target audience, this investigation aims to establish the strategies available for generating different layers of proximity. Accordingly, the main question behind this contrastive analysis was: what strategies were employed in the Bulgarian adaptation of the U.S. sitcom *Married... with Children* to achieve proximity? The analysis, based on a two-episode corpus, identified three distinct strategies of proximity creation. First of all, adding, altering or omitting extralinguistic cultural references (ECRs) results in the generation or modification of proximity layers. This strategy was most frequently used as in the form of adding or changing celebrity or institutional names. Secondly, proximity is also induced by adjusting non-verbal language. Lastly, proximity was brought about by emphasizing manners and values.

Keywords: Format trade; Sitcom; Cultural discount; Cultural proximity; Cultural substitution; Extralinguistic cultural references (ECRs); Non-verbal language;

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1. Introduction

This analysis examines the first two episodes of the popular U.S. sitcom *Married... with Children* (Fox, 1987 – 1997) by comparing it to its Bulgarian remake (Nova TV, 2012).

The concept of a *remake* is defined by Oxford English Dictionary (OED) as “[a] remaking of a film or of a script, usually with the roles played by different actors”. This practice, however is not limited solely to the film genre as this analysis investigates the remake of a TV program. The title page of this paper illustrates the posters of all of the productions based on the original format, and so far 15 remakes have been produced globally. This is an indication of the popularity of the sitcom. Prior to the Bulgarian remake’s premiere, the original was aired in Bulgaria on four different TV channels. The first broadcast was during the 2003-2004 season and the show has been on the air ever since. Another indication of the popularity of the show is that in 2019 the original is still being broadcast and on 17th January 2019 a new cast of Bulgarian actors was assembled to dub the last season once more. Consequently, the overall popularity of the original format and the still present demand of the original program in Bulgaria could be indicated as major incentives as to why this show was chosen for analysis and subsequently through which strategies of proximity generation were distinguished.

The analysis focuses on the scripts, the original and the rewritten/translated version, which is in Bulgarian and of which excerpts have been translated by the author of this paper. Furthermore, other aspects such as non-verbal language will be contrasted and analyzed. Methodologically, the analysis is, mainly but not solely, based on the paper “The Office: Articulations of National Identity in Television Format Adaptation” by Alexandra Beeden and Joost de Bruin (2010), in which the British sitcom *The Office* is compared with its U.S. adaptation and which concluded that the remade show’s success largely depended on its ability to create cultural proximity between the new show and the target audience as viewers

prefer settings/situations they recognize and identify with. A significant difference between their research and this, however, is that both versions of the shows in the earlier study aired in anglophone countries. This analysis, on the other hand, investigates the adaptation of a U.S. show in a slavophone nation. Moreover, the earlier study sought the reasons for the success of the adaptation; this study, on the other hand, aims to clarify how distinct layers of proximity are achieved.

During the analysis, distinct strategies are identified through which proximity is introduced, retained or altered. Ultimately, the results of the analysis could help develop awareness of the issue of *cultural discount*, i.e. failure to achieve recognition among the target audience, and how it can be avoided (Hoskins et al., 1997). The main beneficiaries of the investigation could be the broadcasting companies which choose to format a show instead of airing the original. A note should be made here that this study does not attempt to provide answers as to why the new production of *Married... with children* has failed to gain support from the local audience since it was cancelled after season one. The main aim is to determine the methods that are available to generate proximities while producing a remake based on a foreign TV format. Therefore, the following research question was formulated:

What strategies were employed in the Bulgarian adaptation of the U.S. sitcom Married... with Children to achieve proximity?

A corpus based on the first two episodes of the shows has been constructed to answer this question. Four initial labels derived from Beeden & de Bruin's (2010) paper were used to start the coding process. Additionally, new coding units were distinguished based on the data under investigation.

This thesis consists of 5 chapters in total. The second chapter of the paper is devoted to the literature that was used to analyze the data. The concluding words in this section outline

the main and secondary research questions. The subsequent chapter describes in detail the employed materials and procedure, i.e. the methods of analysis. Chapter four consists of the analysis of the data and discussion of the results. The final chapter provides a brief summary of the conducted study and an overall discussion. It also reviews the limitations of the analysis and suggests ideas for future research.

2. Overview of the academic discussion

This chapter sketches out the relevant theory that is used to analyze the shows under investigation. First of all, given the focus on foreign program formatting, the practice of format trade is outlined and further clarifications are given to the concept of format. Consequently, since this study analyzes a U.S. sitcom and its Bulgarian reboot, the genre itself deserves a brief elaboration. Furthermore, issues pertinent to format adaptation are discussed, such as layers of proximity and extralinguistic cultural references (ECRs). Finally, the scope of the inquiry is further widened by paying attention to peculiarities of non-verbal language since Bulgaria and the USA have not only different national but also distinct non-verbal languages.

2.1 Format trade

In 2012 the Bulgarian TV channel Nova TV produced a local adaptation of the popular U.S. sitcom *Married... with children*. It is safe to say that everyone to a certain degree is familiar with the practice of TV show adaptation. However, not many are aware that this is also referred to as formatting (Fletcher, 2015). What exactly is a format though? In his in-depth investigation, *Copycat TV*, Moran (1998) outlines the global trade of TV formats as “a process of licensing or franchising, whereby the owner of a television program format contracts with another party to allow that party legal access to the format for the purpose of producing an adaptation” (p. X). Straubhaar (2007) further clarifies the concept of a *format* by comparing it to that of a *genre*. A clear distinction between the two notions is drawn with the

example of the popular U.S. TV show *Desperate Housewives*. In essence, this show is a prominent example of a melodrama, which is a genre. If a foreign broadcasting company, however, wishes to produce a local version of it, the exporting company could potentially sell the “the concept, script, and production guidelines” of the cultural product and these are then often referred to as the format of a TV show (Straubhaar, 2007, p. 181). Beeden & de Bruin (2010) contribute to the discussion by adding that in order for a show to be successful in its new environment, it has to interpret and not simply copy the original concept. In a similar vein, Moran (1998) notes that “[t]he original formula does not have to be slavishly imitated but rather serves as a general framework or guide within which it is possible to introduce various changes to the original formula” (p. 21). *Desperate Housewives* may serve as an example again. In 2011 Walt Disney produced a Turkish version of the format and this localized *Housewives* became a huge hit in Turkey. An aspect of the reboot that is of relevance for this discussion is the changes applied to one of the characters. The U.S. version features a character that is openly gay, whereas his Turkish counterpart is straight. This is a perfect instance of character adaptation to meet local viewers’ expectations. The alteration is striking, but it is an indication of the freedom the new producers could afford while interpreting the purchased concept and “[b]y adapting the original for local audiences, producers are able to make adjustments to better situate the show within the context of the local culture” (Griffin, 2008, p. 155).

2.2 The sitcom genre

The sitcom genre has been defined as a show that “revolves around a group of characters trapped within a continuous cycle of disrupted equilibrium, conflict, and return to the status quo” (Beeden & de Bruin, 2010, p. 7). The same authors argue that sitcoms tend to feature a focus on social issues such as class and gender, which is what makes it so challenging when there is an attempt to adapt them to local conditions. Another hurdle that needs to be cleared

is anticipating what will entertain the audience and producing a comedy program of this type is a complex endeavor since “sitcoms are notoriously more difficult to adapt due to cultural differences in comedic preferences” (Fletcher, 2015, p. 120). There is always the risk that “regional or local culture will deem specific subjects and situations to be taboo and will not entertain them on local television screens” (Moran, 2009, 121). With respect to this issue, Beeden & de Bruin (2010) provide the example of an Australian sitcom and how it failed to gain viewership in China. The show in question was directly imported without any attempts of adapting it first. The main issue, according to the authors was that the local viewers took offense at the way the younger generation treated the elderly. The important point that is being put forward is that in spite of the rise of the format trade “humor remains a locally based phenomenon (Beeden & de Bruin, 2010, p. 6). In the same vein, comedy, in general, is a cumbersome endeavor to translate (Ockers, 2000) and when the point of focus is producing a local version matters are further complicated since “comedy genres... tend to have many local or at least intracultural references” (Straubhaar, 2007, p. 162).

2.3 Layers of proximity

In contrastive analyses, such as this study, the success or failure of local adaptations of foreign shows is usually attributed to the theory of cultural proximity. Essentially, this entails “the tendency to prefer media products from... [one’s] own culture or the most similar culture” (Straubhaar, 2007, p. 203). Straubhaar (2007) however, further notes that in addition to cultural proximity, there exist other forms of proximity. For instance, La Pastina & Straubhaar (2005) provide the example of a Mexican telenovela and how it managed to achieve success in Brazil despite the abundance of local productions. Cultural or national proximity would entail that the audience would prefer a program produced within the national culture instead of an import. However, the Brazilian audience preferred the slower tempo with which the love story in the Mexican melodrama developed over the Brazilian shows also

available at the time of broadcast. Essentially, the reason for this inclination was that the pace of courtship in the foreign program managed to correspond to the conservative values of the local viewers. Proximity, based on values, in the end, turned out to be more powerful than the national one (as outlined in Straubhaar, 2007). Similarly, proximity could be based on a specific type of genre such as melodrama. Consequently, the audience follows a particular program simply because of its genre even though this cannot relate to it in any other way. Furthermore, a sense of shared historical experience has the potential of invoking proximity of its own. This has been illustrated with the example of a Brazilian telenovela and how it achieved success in southern Italy. Accordingly, this was due to the fact that the show's storyline featured Italian emigrants migrating to Brazil and this is why the program was so popular in southern Italy, but not in the North since in reality, only southern Italians migrated to Brazil. In turn, this past experience serves as a prerequisite for this form of proximity. Specific themes could also play an important role, whether or not the audience will follow a particular show. For instance, the reason why the audience follows a show could be that they are drawn to the romantic ups and downs of the characters. Moreover, ideology or worldview could also act as a determinant whether or not a show strikes as appealing. What is more, given the popularity of U.S. productions these have come to be known as second culture, at least in regions that are regular importers of American cultural products. Long-lasting exposure to foreign shows could lead these to become so familiar to the extent that these are considered a new layer to the home culture and this is said to give rise to the proximity based on second culture. Finally, the trend to prefer U.S. productions could be explained by the desired proximity with modernity. The general perception is that following shows, originated from developed countries, will provide immediate access to modernity (Straubhaar, 2007). The-above described proximities are by no means exhaustive and during the analysis, only those proximities will be discussed that have been identified in the data. Meanwhile, the

important point is that numerous factors could induce proximity or attraction toward a particular media content.

2.4 Extralinguistic cultural references (ECRs)

The U.S. show features references that are quite peculiar in that rendering those from the original to the new production was deemed relatively problematic by the new producers. For instance, in addition to omitting or coming up with new references, the remake contains allusions that are lacking in the original. By and large, these take the form of names of people, places, various local institutions, brands of food and beverages etc. typical for the home culture. Pederson (2007) refers to these as *extralinguistic cultural references (ECRs)*. Above all, three types of ECRs are distinguished, and these are structured in a framework referred to as levels of transculturality (see Fig. 1, Appendix A). The concept of transculturality implies that the boundaries between the distinct levels of ECRs are becoming increasingly blurred, but this blurriness is not the focus of this enquiry. This study will scrutinize the different categories in their own right.

To begin with, ECRs that are only familiar to the ST (source text) audience are referred to as *monocultural ECRs*. These pose challenges during the translation process since they are said to lead to “a translation crisis point, which arises when the referent of an ECR can be assumed to be less identifiable to the majority of the relevant TT [target text] audience than it is to the relevant ST audience, due to differences in encyclopedic [or general] knowledge” (Pederson, 2005, p. 11). *Transcultural ECRs* on the other hand, involve instances of references to people and places that are known in both cultures. Accordingly, this type of ECR is “not bound to the Source Culture, but. . . should be retrievable from common encyclopedic knowledge of the ST and the TT audiences, as it could be assumed to be known in both the SC and the TC” (Pederson, 2005, p. 10). A third and final form of ECR has also been identified, namely that of *microcultural ECRs*. What is characteristic about this form is

that its chances of being known by the audience are relatively slim. It stands in relation to the SC but it may be too specific for the TT as well as the ST audience to be familiar with it.

The difficulty in rendering these references was a reason enough to believe that different types of ECRs stand in close relation with distinct layers of proximity. In other words, it is plausible to believe that a local celebrity name (a monocultural ECR) would entail a different layer of proximity than a world-famous personality (a transcultural ECR).

2.5 Cultural substitution

Drawing on Leppihalme (1994), Pederson (2007) outlines several strategies on how to deal with the issue of rendering ECRs. In addition to the commonly mentioned translation tactics of generalization, specification, direct translation or omission, an approach that could be identified in the current study is cultural substitution. Pederson (2007) defines this translation strategy as the practice of “replac[ing] an unknown reference with a known one, either from the source culture (SC) or from the target culture (TC)” (p. 31). The options are not, however, limited only to source or target culture, given that in order to facilitate comprehensibility of the new text the translator could also draw on third culture references (Pederson, 2007). To recap, in total three ways have been identified in which ECRs could be rendered in the TT. In order to make the new text accessible in the new environment the translator could opt for a TC ECR which would only make sense to the target audience; another possibility is to choose for ECRs that are known to both cultures, namely transcultural ECRs; finally, the new production team could show preference for ECRs from a third culture, known to both the SC and TC audience.

It is important to note that cultural substitution does not entail making the same reference but transferring a reference from ST to TT while the main objective is to achieve the same connotation featuring the original (Pederson, 2007). As the author eloquently has put it, the translator aims to achieve “equivalence of effect, rather than equivalence of information”

(Pederson, 2007, p. 33). Usually, the main purpose in the sitcom genre is to achieve humorous effects and this could be accomplished without being factually correct with respect to the original.

2.6 Non-verbal language

Another aspect of the shows in question that deserves the readers' attention is non-verbal language. The programs are produced in different nations, which have different non-verbal languages. An objective of the analysis was to identify instances of non-verbal language and to see whether there were significant differences or similarities between the remake and original.

First of all, it is in order to define what is meant by non-verbal communication. According to Oomkes (2001) communicating non-verbally entails having a conversation without availing oneself of words. Furthermore, a distinction is drawn between *analogous* and *digital language*. The former type is said to be expressive in that the means via which something is communicated always stands in close relation, for instance with the object or action that is being referred to. Therefore, in analogous language, the context in which something is 'uttered' would play a significant role regarding the true message of a 'sentence'. In other words, a gesture could have different meanings depending on the situation. By a way of illustration Oomkes (2001) depicts the case when someone describes a fight that has taken place. Accordingly, in analogous language, the speaker could express the severity of the fight by demonstrating visually, the way a punch has been thrown. By contrast, *digital language* involves symbols (letters and numbers) and these are said to bear no relation to the objects and actions they signify. So, back to the example with the fight: an interlocutor who wishes to perform the same speech act, namely talking about how serious and dangerous a fight was, only this time in digital language, could simply say "That was tough, man!". This distinction between analogous and digital language has been touched upon because

communication that is characterized by the use of words is said to be digital whereas all non-verbal communication equals analogous language (Oomkes, 2001). The latter type is the focus of this section.

The analysis chapter discusses only two instances of non-verbal language and even though analogous languages could have various functions, for this discussion it would suffice to note that a message expressed verbally could be accompanied by gestures or facial expressions in order to complement the message. Moreover, there is the case when non-verbal means of communication are used in order to emphasize the significance of the information that is being transmitted (Oomkes, 2001). Finally, since this study compares two distinct cultural products it is important to note that analogous languages could be categorized by taking into account the extent to which these are shared by specific groups of a population. Even though non-verbal languages cannot be clearly demarcated a yardstick for division that is frequently used is the nation-state. To conclude, as can be inferred from the provided examples the significance of non-verbal language cannot be denied. The main aim during analysis is to see whether analogous language, along with its multiple variations have been taken into account by the Bulgarian producers and more importantly whether substantial changes have taken place in order to localize the new production.

Previous research has noted the multitude of factors that give rise to proximity. The following contrastive analysis aims to identify the methods of achieving proximity that were used in producing the Bulgarian remake of *Married... with Children*. The main research question that this paper aims to address is:

What strategies were employed in the Bulgarian adaptation of the U.S. sitcom Married... with Children to achieve proximity?

The RQ is analyzed through answering the following sub-questions:

SQ1: Is there a relation between extralinguistic cultural references (ECRs) and layers of proximity?

SQ2: To what extent the importance of non-verbal language was taken into account?

SQ3: Could manners and values typical of the importing culture also be employed to render a foreign program local?

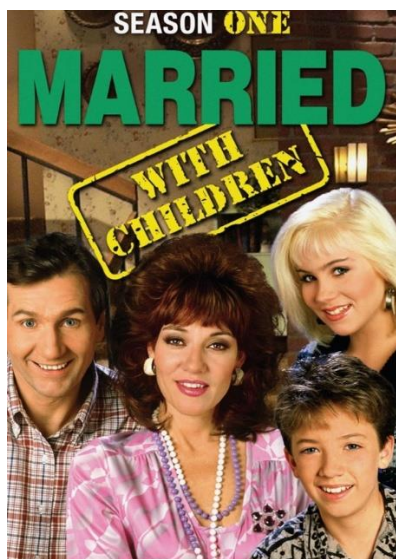
3. Method

This chapter aims to brief the reader about the method that was employed during analysis.

Firstly, after giving a short outline of the shows under investigation, the materials utilized during analysis are specified. This is followed by a definition and an outline of the method of corpus analysis. The final focus is on the way data is collected and also the coding process is delineated.

3.1. The sitcoms

Before delving into the method of this investigation the shows under scrutiny deserve a brief outline. To begin with, the first season of the original program contains 13 episodes and the pilot episode was broadcast on 5th April 1987 on Fox. The remake on the other hand, for its first and final season has produced 16 episodes. Important to note is that the way the remake was broadcast was peculiar in that two episodes, one after the other, were made available every week. The Bulgarian version hit the screens after 25 years since the original's premiere, namely on 26th March 2012 (Nova TV). The original posters of the shows are displayed below.



Married with... children

Married with children in Bulgaria

An aspect of the episodes that made the analysis easier is that original and remake are nearly identical in both length and content. The following table provides further details about the analyzed episodes, both original and remake.

No. in season	Title (US)	Original air date	Written by	Duration episode	Title (BG)	Remake air date	Written by	Duration episode
1.	"Pilot"	April 5, 1987	Ron Leavitt and Michael G. Moyer	22:50	"Pilot"	26 March, 2012	Miron Krumov	22:40
2.	"Thinergy"	April 12, 1987	Ron Leavitt and Michael G. Moyer	23:16	"Fructo-disiacs"	26 March, 2012	Miron Krumov	27:24

Table 1

3.2 Materials

In total this paper focused on two episodes and eight excerpts of the shows, both original and remake. Only those excerpts that contributed to a proximity layer were taken into

consideration. Some, however, would deem the scope of this study to be problematic since according to Handford (2016) many linguists are ardent proponents of the principle that the size of the corpora is an indication of the quality of the conducted research. Dörnyei's (2007) argument on the other hand, that the sample size of the data to be collected should be and usually is in accordance with the time and financial constraints, could be put forward to refute this argument to a certain extent. Moreover, drawing on Glaser and Straus (1967), Dörnyei (2007) refers to the concept of *saturation* which he defines "as the point when additional data do not seem to develop the concepts any further" (p. 127). Given that saturation in prior studies (Beeden & de Bruin, 2010) was reached with data relatively smaller in size focusing on an entire season was thought to be redundant. It was therefore believed that two episodes were sufficient enough to draw reliable conclusions.

As was already mentioned, the Bulgarian remake has been cancelled after season one, which inevitably excluded the option to take into consideration other seasons of the remake. In order to ensure that the storyline remained intact, which could have turned out to be of relevance for the analysis, consecutive order was followed while selecting the episodes. For instance, if episode one contained a reference, this could have been elaborated upon in the following installment. The order in which the fragments were analyzed, however, is based on theory and not on consecutive order of appearance in the episodes. Finally, the episodes under analysis were not substantial in number nor in duration and the English scripts of the original were already freely available online, the remake, however, posed some challenges. In the case of the original version, every unit of interest had to be transcribed and these subsequently needed to be translated into English (see Appendix B).

3.3 Procedure

In order to answer the research question, the method of corpus analysis was employed. This method has been outlined by Handford (2016) as "the 'principled' collection of texts,

meaning that it should be suitably compiled to address a particular purpose” (p. 312). For instance, Handford (2014), on the basis of a corpus, analyzed professional meetings in order to find out the cultural identities indexed by the personal pronoun of ‘we’ (as outlined in Handford, 2016). In other words, data collection was motivated by a specific objective, namely inquiry about the identities invoked by the said personal pronoun during professional meetings. What is more, for the analysis of various types of discourse Braun & Clarke (2006) distinguish two distinct starting points. According to the authors, there are two approaches of conducting research with the aim of looking for themes and arriving at categories. The researcher could proceed either inductively or deductively. The former, also known as the bottom-up approach, refers to a research process in which the author departs from the data and arrives at the coding units. The top-down approach, on the other hand, concerns the case in which “the researcher brings to the data a series of concepts, ideas, or topics that they use to code and interpret the data” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 58). To put it differently, data collection begins with pre-defined coding units. In a similar vein, Handford (2016) notes that “[c]orpora can be approached either bottom-up or top-down, that is, from the lexical, grammatical and textual level, or from a more social contextual level” (p. 312). An important point, however, that Braun & Clarke (2006) put forward is that adhering strictly to the one or the other approach is not possible, i.e. these are not mutually exclusive and in reality, they are usually combined. This inquiry makes use of both of the approaches in that it assigns categories and delineates new ones.

A corpus from scratch was built following Baker’s (2006) cautions that corpora mainly contain decontextualized data. Moreover, there have been listed several advantages of the case when one and the same person builds the corpus and conducts the research (Baker, 2006). So far as this study is concerned, the very fact that every episode had to be viewed carefully enabled the researcher to get to know the data better. By the same token, with

regards to the research question Baker (2006) indicates a significant benefit of gathering one's own data instead of making use of freely available corpora. Accordingly, self-built corpora would mean that the author is exposed more directly to the data and he/she is more likely to notice patterns emerging from it and this, in turn, would "provide the researcher with initial hypotheses" (Baker, 2006, p. 25). All in all, building a corpus is a cumbersome and time-consuming endeavor, but as was outlined, it clearly has its merits. The aforementioned benefits of co-relation between corpus author and researcher were evident during this analysis since during data collection the research questions were adjusted several times. Dörnyei (2007) refers to this as the *emergent* nature of the research process.

The analysis proceeded by first watching the original and then the remake. The episodes were viewed with the aim of developing or assigning categories. In other words, the focus was on coding the data under investigation. Even though in the theoretical framework a substantial focus is laid upon the different types of ECRs these are not the coding units. Every analyzed excerpt was assigned a proximity label, but not every fragment contained an ECR. The main focus of this paper was layers of proximity and how these are achieved. Accordingly, four initial coding units, based on Beeden & de Bruin's paper (2010), were used to begin the coding process and these were *historical references*, *recognizable situations*, *references to people and characters from popular culture* and *social issues relevant to the nation* hence the initial approach was deductive. If needed, however, new categories were added based on the data under investigation, consequently, the inductive approach was also present. The employed coding was either descriptive or interpretative. While the former provides a "pithy summary of a portion of data or describe[s] the content of the data" the latter aims to "identify meanings that lie beneath the semantic surface of the data" (Braun & Clarke, 2014, p. 61).

The overall purpose was to look for significant changes in the script or in non-verbal language as well as for the presence of ECRs in both productions. All peculiarities were assigned a label and divided into categories. For instance, if the original and subsequently the remake mentioned a celebrity name in one of the episodes, this excerpt was then assigned the category of *references to people and characters from popular culture*. Subsequently, based on the coding unit a layer of proximity was derived, namely *proximity based on popular culture*. It was important to see whether proximity invoked by the original also featured in the remake.

4. Results

This chapter outlines the results of the analysis. There are several points of focus. First of all, the type of ECRs, if there are any, and the respective strategies of cultural substitution are identified. It was important to see whether both original and remake contained instances of ECRs and whether the adding a reference, omitting one or changing its type resulted in changes in the layer of proximity or gave rise to a new stratum. Secondly, the investigation focused on non-verbal language with the aim of detecting significant alterations since it was hypothesized that non-verbal language could also be a determining factor for generating proximities. In addition to the aforementioned determinants, two other aspects such as manners and values turned out to be potential factors that induce proximity. Finally, in each fragment, the coding unit used to label the excerpt is identified and through which a proximity layer is derived.

4.1 Proximity generation with ECRs

This subsection outlines several strategies that make use of ECRs while creating strata of proximity. Different types of references could be added, replaced or omitted. Each method is touched upon briefly.

4.1.1 TC (monocultural) ECR added

This section analyzes an excerpt in which the remake features a reference that is familiar solely to the target audience. Before going into detail, however, it is in order first to describe the situation from which the following excerpt was taken. The husband from the show, called Al, after working the whole day intends to go to a game, a basketball game in the U.S. version and a football game in the remake. The wife, Peg, on the other hand, informs him that he cannot go to the game because she has invited company over. Surprised by her statement the husband exclaims (Leavitt & Moye, 1987),

(US) AL: Company? Who the hell would want to come over here?!

(BG) AL: Company? What kinda idiot would want to come over here?! They even stopped coming from the **Water supply and sewerage company** to check their water-meters!

(00:09:11 / 00:09:21) [excerpt 1]

(Krumov et al., 2012, ep. 1), [my translation]

To begin with, as can be observed an additional sentence has been added in the new version.

The remake has been strikingly altered in that the name of a Bulgarian organization, Water supply and sewerage company, responsible for water supply in the country is introduced.

Drawing on Pederson (2007) this is an instance of an *extralinguistic cultural reference (ECR)*.

The excerpt under analysis, however, does not involve any attempts of rendering a Source culture ECR since the original does not contain any but while readjusting the original script the new writers have decided to include this new reference. Important for this discussion is that the name of the firm is an instance of a *Target culture (monocultural) ECR*.

What is more, in the method section four distinct coding units have been specified.

The excerpt in question was labelled with the category of *recognizable situations*. This point warrants further elaboration. As was already specified the Bulgarian husband expresses his wonder by pointing out that even employees of the said company have stopped checking the water-meters in order to avoid coming to their house. This makes the pun of the joke and the

excerpt entertaining, but one has to know that in Bulgaria it is the practice that once a month someone from the said company comes to everyone's house to check the amount of water that has been consumed. In the literature review, it was mentioned that proximity towards a particular media content could be invoked by various factors (Straubhaar, 2007). The current study found that proximity, in this case, is achieved by making a reference to everyday practice. Consequently, the added Target culture (monocultural) ECR helps to form *proximity based on recognizable situations*.

4.1.2 Third culture transcultural ECR added

As already mentioned some references are characterized with their overall familiarity, i.e. known to both ST and TT audience. With regards to this, the following excerpt is considered. In this fragment, Al's son who is called Bud is about to go out with a friend to watch the game mentioned in the previous excerpt. Before going out, however, he asks his father for money. His father, on the other hand, tries to teach him a lesson that money has to be earned and when he was a kid he had to work for his money. Bud decides to play along and in exchange for the money that he gets the child discloses to his father where his sister, namely Kelly has spent her afternoon that day (Leavitt & Moye, 1987).

(US) BUD: You know the kid they call Cobra? The kid with the sore on his mouth?

(BG) BUD: You know the kid they call the **Nazi**? He's had **Göring** tattooed on his head.

(00:11:47 / 00:12:30) [excerpt 2]

(Krumov et al., 2012, ep. 1), [my translation]

As can be seen from the provided excerpt the original version does not contain any ECRs. The remake on the hand has been adapted substantially. The boyfriend in the new version has a new nickname, the epithet of a Nazi is used to denote the character. Moreover, an extra sentence has been added which contains the name of a historical figure from Nazi Germany. This excerpt was chosen for analysis because the most surprising aspect of it, as was the case

in the previous fragment, is that an ECR has been added even though the original does not contain any. There is, however, a significant difference between the ECR in the previous excerpt and this one. The type of the new ECR, namely the one containing the name of Göring is a *third culture transcultural ECR* in that it is expected to be known not only to Bulgarian viewers. (cf. Pederson, 2005).

An interesting feature of this excerpt is that it invokes a third culture reference in order to achieve humorous effects. This was an unanticipated finding because a third culture transcultural ECR has been added in a fragment where it was not necessary that is to say even a direct translation would have sufficed. It is somewhat illogical to keep a foreign program alien for the local audience by adding a new reference that is to a certain degree still foreign. However, it could be argued that having a transcultural reference is a more favorable case than having none. It is perfectly plausible that the reason for adding the ECR may have something to do with ensuring that new production is even more entertaining. It appears that it was deemed too risky to opt for direct translation and prior studies have noted the importance of interpreting the original concept of the cultural product instead of simply copying it (Beeden & de Bruin, 2010; Moran, 1998). It could be therefore argued that the excerpt under analysis was an attempt of the Bulgarian production team to interpret the foreign concept.

What the coding units are concerned, this excerpt fits under the label of *historical references*. On the basis of this category, proximity was coined namely that of *proximity based on historical references*. An important point, however, deserves further attention. In the theoretical framework drawing on Straubhaar (2007) a distinct layer of proximity was distinguished which was argued to be a consequence of sustained exposure to second culture media content. For this reason, the provided excerpt warrants further discussion. The Second World War was a fundamental event in human history. There have been a lot of books written about Nazi Germany as well as numerous films regardless of genre and country of origin have

been produced. The main point is that a lot of people are familiar with this period in history. The exposure thereof has been constant and is still omnipresent be that in the works of art and academic ones that are solely dedicated to it or in brief references as in this case. The subculture of Nazi Germany can be therefore argued to have managed to establish itself through continuous media exposure as an additional layer of culture in many nations.

To sum up, the reference in question is a *third culture transcultural ECR*, i.e. familiar to many viewers. The coding units which it takes and subsequently the layers of proximity which it makes part of in this analysis, however, are two. First of all, it forms *proximity based on historical references* and secondly based on the coding unit of *second culture media content* it gives rise to *proximity based on second culture*. As can be inferred instead of making use of direct translation by adding one single reference the new production team gave the local audience two points of identification with the remake given the two layers of proximity.

4.1.3 SC (microcultural) ECR replaced by Third culture transcultural ECR

Some references could be problematic not only because they are familiar only to the ST audience but there are cases in which even the ST audience would fail to recognize the reference since it is too specific. This section explores a case like this in further detail. Here it is important to mention that the main male character, Al, works at a women's shoe store and this excerpt depicts the following situation. Al is at work and there is a customer that Al is trying to provide services for. The client is accompanied by a child, and while his mother is trying on shoes the kid is playing with one of the shoes that are lying around. The issue that irritates the main character is that the child is not simply playing with the shoes but he is knocking with one of them on the ground (Leavitt & Moye, 1987).

(US) Al: By the way, you want to tell **John Henry** there to give the \$100 pumps a rest?

(BG) AL: Could you tell **the Count of Monte Cristo** to stop digging a tunnel with a shoe worth 100 lev?

(00:05:12 / 00:04:40) [excerpt 3]

(Krumov et al., 2012, ep. 1), [my translation]

In this particular case Al, original, utters a sentence asking the woman to tell the kid to stop the banging. In the utterance, however, Al calls the kid John Henry and makes a reference to a popular African American folk hero. Accordingly, this particular figure is said to have hammered steel drills into mountain rocks as a way to earn his living. The overall purpose of this practice was to make holes in which explosives were placed which were then blasted in order to make tunnels through which trains would pass. Legend has it that he was really skilled at his job that once he even tried to compete against a steam drill to determine which would hammer drills faster. Allegedly he won the race, but apparently the experience was too taxing for him and as a consequence thereof the Afro-American legend passed away (Hause, 2013).

This reference, however, is problematic for the Bulgarian viewer. One could only get the joke in this excerpt provided that he/she is familiar with this figure and the different tales about him. Consequently, the results in this section broadly support the work of other studies, in that number Straubhaar (2007), which maintain a higher level of susceptibility of the sitcom genre to cultural discount because these tend to feature local references. As can be inferred from the new excerpt this has been avoided by altering the source ECR.

What is more, it could be argued that the reference in question is too specific even for the mainstream U.S. viewer to be familiar with it, hence it is a *SC (microcultural) ECR*. As a potential solution for this issue, the Bulgarian writers have decided to substitute this local reference with a new *third culture transcultural ECR*. In the remake Al refers to the kid by calling him the Count of Monte Cristo. It is expected that both American and Bulgarian viewers are at least partially familiar with this character and the storyline of the classic French novel because of its popularity. Furthermore, what the practice of cultural substitution is

concerned prior studies have noted the importance of rendering the same connotation rather than looking for ways of incorporating a foreign ECR within the new production (Pederson, 2007). A note should be made here that this is the first case that contains an instance of cultural substitution, i.e. a SC (microcultural) ECR is replaced by a third culture transcultural ECR. The so far considered excerpts, namely excerpt 1 and 2, on the other hand, were cases where in the remake ECRs have been added even though the original version does not contain any. It could be well argued that the cultural substitution in this excerpt is successful. The new production has replaced a reference with limited familiarity with one that is known to both cultures given the popularity of the said novel. By now two cases were examined in which transcultural ECRs were introduced and even though these are not local references per se they nonetheless help render the remake more familiar. On that note, this unit of analysis is coded under the label of *historical references*, both original and remake. Consequently, this gives rise to the layer of *proximity based on historical references*.

4.1.4 Omission of Macrocultural ECR

This section discusses an ECR that was seen as too problematic by the Bulgarian production team that it was omitted altogether without any attempts of transfer or compensation. In this case, the neighbors, Steve and Marcy, are coming over and when they arrive, they find Al watching an erotic movie. In the remake instead of an erotic movie, even though the themes are similar, the Bulgarian husband is watching German porn. Once more, a third culture ECR is included in the new production, but this is not the focus in this section and an excerpt to which an ECR of this sort has been added was already discussed. In this fragment after building the case about men's rights Al, both original and remake, makes an inquiry as in why and since when men are expected to apologize for enjoying sports and smut/porn (Leavitt & Moye, 1987).

(US) AL: Damn it, Steve, we're men. It's our God given right to watch sports and smut. Since when do we have to apologize for that?

- STEVE: **I think since the '70s.**

(BG) AL: Damn it, Steve! The hell you care? You're a guy. God has created us the way we are. It's men's sacred right to watch sports and porn. Who said that we have to apologize for that?

- STEVE: **The marriage officiant. After we signed the certificate.**

(00:03:35 / 00:04:06) [excerpt 4]

(Krumov, 2012 et al., ep. 2), [my translation]

A striking aspect of these excerpts is the different answers given by the male neighbors. Steve, U.S. version, indicates as a potential explanation for their 'predicament' the 1970's. His Bulgarian counterpart, however, provides a different answer to Al's question and according to him the marriage officiant is to blame and as a potential starting point of their struggles is indicated the moment they have signed the marriage certificate.

The original deserves further elaboration. The '70s in the U.S. and elsewhere is associated with the women's liberation movement which is characterized by protests and conferences in order to ensure that women gained equality (Kohn, 2015). The initial intention was to categorize this ECR as a monocultural or transcultural one. The incentive for hypothesizing in favor of the former case was that the said movement took place mainly in the U.S. and approximately forty years ago since the reboot's premiere in Bulgaria. With respect to the latter case, however, feminism and the ensuing events are not exclusively an American phenomenon. Other women in various parts of the world in the same period were also active in the fight for equality. This reasoning would be sufficient enough to persuade the reader that the ECR in question is more likely to be categorized as a transcultural one. After careful thought, however, another solution for the issue of classifying the ECR has been reached. The framework offered by Pederson (2005) outlines three distinct levels of transculturality (see Fig. 1, Appendix A) and these, in descending order, signify overall familiarity, single culture familiarity and finally sub-culture familiarity. This study, however, wishes to revise the said framework in that a new level is being put forward, namely *macrocultural ECR* (see Fig. 2, Appendix A). The concept of macrocultural ECR could be used to denote references that are

too general. The issue is not the fact that viewers would not be familiar with the reference, but are not enabled to do so because of its form. By a way of illustration, excerpt 7 is considered again. The character of the male neighbor simply says ‘since the 70s’ but a lot of events took place in that period. It is highly likely that not all viewers, in that number the local ones, would get the reference since it is too broad in its current form. As a way of distinguishing cases like this, a new category that of macrocultural ECRs is being put forward. What the strategy of cultural substitution is concerned, the reader can easily discern that there is a new strategy at play, namely that of omission. The years of the ‘70s have been altered to a marriage officiant.

Moreover, the excerpt of the remake was assigned the coding unit of *recognizable situations* and the respective proximity to which it contributes is *proximity based on recognizable situations*. Finally, important to point out is that, the original features *proximity based on social issues relevant to the nation*, namely feminism. Prior studies have noted that it is typical for sitcoms to feature allusions to social issues. More importantly, it has been argued that these type of references render the genre difficult for an adaptation process (Beeden & de Bruin, 2010). This argument in addition to the ECR’s current form could be a potential explanation as to why the Bulgarian production team has opted for omitting the reference. Finally, the overall purpose of the discussion in this section was to indicate that not only adding or substituting but also omitting ECRs could contribute to a proximity layer. Furthermore, the proposed change in the transculturality framework provides further evidence for the correlation between levels of ECRs and layers of proximity since for a proximity layer it is of relevance whether the ECR is transcultural or conversely a macrocultural one. In other words, different types of ECRs induce different layers of proximity.

4.2 Proximity based on non-verbal language

In order to make the analysis as comprehensive as possible instead of solely focusing on the scripts this investigation also took into consideration other aspects of the shows which manifest significant alterations. Accordingly, proximity generation is not limited to ECRs and this section demonstrates that non-verbal language could also play a role in rendering a media content appealing.

(US) PEG is **shaking her leg**.

(BG) PEG is **playing with her hair**.

(00:10:43 / 00:11:16) [excerpt 5]

(00:19:48 / 00:20:04) [excerpt 6]

(Krumov, 2012 et al., ep. 1)

Drawing on Oomkes (2001) some of the functions of non-verbal language were outlined in the theoretical framework such as completing and/or emphasizing the message of the sender. The above-described instances of non-verbal language are to be seen twice in episode 1. The first case is when the hosts, Al and Peg, are sitting on the couch and waiting for the guests to arrive. In both, original and remake, in this excerpt, Peg gives the impression of being bored (see Appendix C, photo 1 & 2). A difference between the two versions is that in the original Peg is shaking her leg, the Bulgarian wife, on the other hand, is playing with her hair (Leavitt & Moye, 1987). Oomkes (2001) has pointed out that communication is a never-ending practice in that even when people are not talking they are still conveying a message, i.e. communicating. In this particular case even though the characters are not talking by looking at the different instances of non-verbal language, it can indeed be inferred that the characters are bored.

The second situation in which the same body language is seen is toward the end of episodes 1. In this case, the hosts and the guests are talking about sports and whether or not watching sports could have detrimental effects on children. It seems that the guests are in a bit of a disagreement when the male guest joins Al in watching the game on TV. After expressing

her irritation verbally Marcy, the female neighbor also engages in non-verbal communication (see Appendix C, photo 3 & 4). The U.S. Marcy starts shaking her leg, her Bulgarian counterpart, on the other hand, starts playing with her hair (Leavitt & Moye, 1987). Even though these are different ways of expressing oneself in non-verbal language the message is nevertheless the same, the wife is annoyed. Falling back on Oomkes (2001) the function that non-verbal language serves, in this case, could be identified as emphasizing the message since it has been already conveyed verbally and body language is used to make it more clear. What is more, the above-considered excerpts are a perfect example for the argument that analogous language is situation-bound in that one and the same instance of non-verbal language is used to convey different messages depending on the context (Oomkes, 2001). In the former case, non-verbal language is used to express boredom and the latter denotes irritation.

Furthermore, the cases with non-verbal language required a new coding unit, namely that of *non-verbal language typical of the home nation*. As mentioned in the literature review, non-verbal language is not a single language, but there are different varieties of it. The criteria of division, which was emphasized upon, was that non-verbal languages can be classified on the basis of geographic division, that is to say, the extent to which a given non-verbal language is shared by the people inhabiting a region (Oomkes, 2001). No arguments, however, are being furthered that shaking one's leg while expressing boredom/irritation is a distinctively American practice, but the fact that it has been altered in the new production to playing with one's hair indicates that it may be the case that it is more likely for Bulgarian women to play with their hair when bored/annoyed. The point being here is that whenever a viewer sees that a character on a TV program engages in non-verbal language which he/she would recognize or relate to could be a determining factor whether the same viewer would find the show appealing. The incentive as to why the new production has made adjustments should be clear by now, namely to make the remake more recognizable or appealing. As a

result, a new layer of proximity is identified, namely *proximity based on non-verbal language*.

4.3 Proximity based on manners and values

Furthermore, another interesting finding is that proximity is also generated by emphasizing the way people are expected to behave in the home culture. For this situation, the reader does not require a lot of additional information about the context since the excerpts are self-explanatory. As in almost every episode, the neighbors pop up at Al and Peg's house. The hosts ask the neighbors in and as is usually the case with house visits the hostess offers the guests some coffee and cake. In this case, however, after offering refreshments to Marcy, Peg asks her whether she has brought a cake. Since it is not the most courteous thing to say and it is rather unexpected, this is how the humorous effect is achieved in this fragment (Leavitt & Moye, 1987).

(US) PEG: Did you bring cake?

- MARCY: No.

- PEG: Well, we'll use ours.

(BG) PEG: Did you bring cake?

- MARCY: No

- PEG: **What kind of neighbor are you?!** Okay, I'll give you a piece from mine.

(00:02:59 / 00:02:54) [excerpt 7]

(Krumov, 2012 et al., ep. 2), [my translation]

Inasmuch as the remake is concerned, as in some of the previously analyzed excerpts it contains additional information. The Bulgarian wife not only asks the same impertinent question, but she also scolds her neighbor by questioning her qualities of being a proper neighbor. Put simply, almost every Bulgarian viewer would agree that in Bulgaria there exists an unwritten rule that whenever someone pays a visit to a friend or a neighbor it is customary to bring along something, mostly food as in snacks or sweets. Otherwise, it would be considered bad manners to show up empty-handed. This excerpt does not contain any

instances of ECRs, therefore, it cannot be analyzed through the respective theoretical framework. Nor any peculiar instances of non-verbal language have been introduced but by simply making a remark about neighbor etiquette the new production is brought closer to the local audience. Furthermore, the coding units at the researcher's disposal did not correspond to the situation in question and the peculiarity of the case warranted for the coinage of a new one. The situation under investigation has a lot to do with manners and that is why for the coding unit of *manners* was opted. This, in turn, initiated *proximity based on manners*.

Finally, once again a casual remark has caught the researcher's attention. This comment was deemed striking because of its nature since it is argued to have been introduced to emphasize values typical of the home culture. Accordingly, this is said to bring about an additional layer of proximity. To go into detail, it was already mentioned that in excerpt 4 the U.S. Al is watching an erotic movie, whereas the Bulgarian character's movie has been altered to German porn. In this fragment, which takes the viewer to the next day, Al is at work and his neighbor decides to pay him a visit. However, Steve has a hidden agenda because he does not stop by, only to chat with Al but as a matter of fact, he is there to inquire the name of the movie they were watching at Al's place (Leavitt & Moye, 1987).

(US) STEVE: Do you remember that movie we were watching the other night?

- AL: Patsy: Portrait of a Stewardess in Training.

(BG) STEVE: What was the name of the movie we were watching at your place, with the flight attendants? I could kill some time with lessons in German.

- AL: Gretchen, the stewardess in training 2. **Careful not to download the first one cause it's only with pilots.**

(00:13:40 / 00:17:25) [excerpt 8]

(Krumov, 2012 et al., ep. 2), [my translation]

In this excerpt, the original cannot be further delved into since Steve asks the questions and Al provides the answer. The remake on the other hand, once again, features additional information. It is argued that the added sentence serves an underlying purpose. Without

beating around the bush, the caution advised not to download the wrong series of the movie is a homophobic joke. This excerpt was chosen for analysis because the original does not contain similar attempts at achieving humorous effects. Moreover, currently, LGBTI rights in Bulgaria do not enjoy significant recognition. In addition to a lack of proper media representation depicting the LGBTI community unfavorably is still a common practice (Filipova, 2017). These type of references could be therefore argued to be an indication of the conservative values held by the majority of Bulgarians. In actual fact, the remake features a relatively higher number of newly added homophobic jokes as opposed to the original, but no additional examples are provided because of space restrictions and the limited size of the corpus. That being the case, in order to fit the new context, i.e. for the new show to correspond to the conservative values of the local audience the above-mentioned alteration has taken place. This, in turn, supports previous claims that the foreign program formats are subject to adjustment in order to be well received by the local viewers (Griffin, 2008). A note of caution, however, is due here since it is not the case that homophobic views are being attributed to all Bulgarians. The key point here is that with respect to domestic media, be that an original idea or a remake, it is relatively rare for these to feature any positive LGBTI representation. It is possible therefore to hypothesize that these conditions are an indication of the conservative values which form a new layer of proximity. Accordingly, the situation is labeled with the coding unit of *common values* and it helps shape *proximity based on values*.

4.4 Conclusion

To sum up, it can be concluded that adding ECRs (1 & 2) is an efficient way of inducing strata of proximity even though the original production does not require any cultural substitution. What is more, another strategy of proximity generation is the case when the source production already features ECRs and layers of proximity and references need to be rendered in the target production. In these conditions (3) the old ECR is replaced with a new

one and the source proximity is retained in the remake. For instance, in excerpt 3 *proximity based on historical references* has been retained by replacing the SC (microcultural) ECR with a Third culture transcultural one. A case also was encountered when the remake omits an ECR and this changes the layer of proximity (4). An interesting finding during analysis was the cases when proximity is achieved only with non-verbal language (5 & 6). Proximity generation is not limited, however, to ECRs or non-verbal language, it could be also achieved by simply localizing the dialogue through emphasizing manners (7) or values typical of the home nation (8).

The main aim of this discussion was to identify strategies of proximity generation. All in all, ECRs and instances of non-verbal language were identified as the most frequently encountered ones, but other approaches are also on hand, such as emphasizing manners or common values. With respect to SQ1: is there a relation between extralinguistic cultural references (ECRs) and layers of proximity?, it was found that there is indeed a strong relation between extralinguistic cultural references (ECRs) and strata of proximity since adding, substituting or omitting an ECR leads to a change in the proximity layer. Furthermore, in regards to SQ2: to what extent the importance of non-verbal language was taken into account?, it cannot be denied that the new producers were also alert to differences in non-verbal language. Namely, an instance of non-verbal language has been altered in the new production. Finally, what SQ3 is concerned: could manners and values typical of the importing culture also be employed to render a foreign program local?, it was argued that emphasizing manners and values forms a distinct strategy of proximity generation, especially in the form of casual remarks. All in all, these findings corroborate Straubhaar's (2007) claims that factors that could induce proximity layers are numerous.

5. Conclusion and Discussion

This chapter briefly outlines the conducted study and its conclusion. After discussing some of the findings attention is paid to the limitations of this inquiry. Finally, the concluding words are devoted to ideas for future research.

5.1 Summary of the present study

The main goal of the current study was to determine the strategies of proximity generation used while adapting a U.S. sitcom for the Bulgarian audience. Consequently, the main research question was: what strategies were employed in the Bulgarian adaptation of the U.S. sitcom *Married... with Children* to achieve proximity? To answer this question a corpus was built based on the first two episodes of the original and the new production, respectively. The installments were carefully viewed with the aim of assigning or delineating categories, i.e. coding the data. Drawing on Beeden & de Bruin (2010) the inquiry began with four initial coding units: *historical references, recognizable situations, references to people and characters from popular culture and social issues relevant to the nation*. During data collection and analysis, however, new coding units were added: *second culture media content, non-verbal language typical of the home nation, manners and common values*. Subsequently, based on these units layers of proximity were identified.

The findings of this analysis broadly supported the work of other studies (Straubhaar, 2007) which have demonstrated that proximity can be based on numerous factors. To go into detail, in several excerpts in the remake extralinguistic cultural references (ECRs) have been added where the original did not contain any. This, in turn, was argued to be an attempt at interpreting the original program and more specifically an effort to make the new production more appealing and entertaining. Accordingly, this accorded with earlier observations, which have emphasized the importance of interpreting the format of the original show instead of copying it for the remake (Beeden & de Bruin, 2010; Moran, 1998). Another previous claim

that found support in this analysis was that sitcoms feature references to social issues relevant to the nation which is what makes them troublesome for adaptation (Beeden & de Bruin, 2010). The omission of an ECR, with no attempts of transfer to the remake, was explained with respect to this. Furthermore, since the omitted ECR that has induced *proximity based on social issues relevant to the nation* was too broad in its current form a new category was suggested to be added to the framework offered by Pederson (2005), namely Macrocultural ECR. Subsequently, this offered another explanation as to why the new ECR was left out in the new production. What is more, the results of this study are also consistent with earlier observations according to which the sitcom genre is susceptible to cultural discount because of the intracultural references it features (Straubhaar, 2007). That is to say, failed cultural substitution would result in low ratings. The data under analysis nonetheless featured successful attempts of cultural substitution, which in turn supported Pederson's (2007) claims that when adapting ECRs the main objective should be to transfer the connotations of the original to the remake. With respect to the distinct types of ECRs, adding, removing or substituting a reference was argued to lead to changes in the layer of proximity. This, in turn, provided an answer to SQ1: is there a relation between extralinguistic cultural references (ECRs) and layers of proximity?, that there is indeed a connection between ECRs and strata of proximity since proximity layers could be brought about via ECRs or by the alteration thereof.

The study had as its secondary focus non-verbal language. This, in turn, was argued to give rise to a new layer of proximity, based on non-verbal language. Consistent with the literature (Oomkes, 2001) this research found that communication is a never-ending process and it can be achieved also without making use of words. Furthermore, the results are in accord with previous findings stating that non-verbal language has several functions. In one of the analyzed excerpts, it was found that the characters of the show use body language to

emphasize their message. Moreover, given that one and the same instance of non-verbal language has been used to convey different messages provided support for the claim that analogous language is situation-bound (Oomkes, 2001). Finally, even though no irrefutable claims could be furthered that the observed instances of non-verbal language are distinctively American or Bulgarian, the alteration itself was an indication enough that non-verbal language could be employed to generate proximity. Since, as it was argued, the main objective for doing so was a localization attempt. More importantly though, by providing an answer to SQ2: to what extent the importance of non-verbal language was taken into account?, it was argued that the new producers indeed have borne in mind the peculiarities of non-verbal language.

In regards to SQ3: could manners and values typical of the importing culture also be employed to render a foreign program local, two excerpts were analyzed. The first fragment confirmed the assumption that proximity could also be based on manners characteristic of the importing nation. By emphasizing specific manners, in the form of a casual remark, the new show has been rendered more appealing. Finally, another curious finding was that the new production was characterized by the insertion of additional gay jokes, in the disguise of teasing comments. Given their connotations, it was argued that this is an indication of conservative values. This, in turn, was said to give rise to a proximity layer based on values, hence another strategy of proximity generation.

As can be concluded the analysis revealed that there are three ways of inducing proximity. First of all, media content could be rendered more appealing by making use of ECRs. Secondly, the alteration of instances of non-verbal language could also contribute to a proximity layer. Finally, a foreign show is localized by emphasizing manners or values typical of the importing nation.

5.2 Limitations and future research

A substantial limitation of this study was the time and space constraints. The initial aim was to focus on the first five episodes of the shows, but analyzing such a large corpus in extensive detail was not feasible. The conducted inquiry was solely a qualitative one which allowed the study to be kept open and its focus repeatedly adjusted, hence its *emergent* aspect. The conclusions, however, based on a two-episode corpus, pertain solely to the shows under investigation. Furthermore, besides the researcher's subjective interpretations there are no numeric data that would, additionally, support the made claims.

This study nonetheless has its merits because departing from its results, i.e. based on the developed coding framework, additional studies could analyze all of the available episodes of the remake. However, instead of analyzing each excerpt of interest in extensive detail further analyses could proceed quantitatively. Several methods of proximity generation were identified in this study and it is worth hypothesizing that there are more and it is more attainable to investigate this by approaching the data quantitatively. More importantly, a quantitative approach would render results that would identify the most frequently used, hence the most optimal strategy of proximity generation.

The same framework of analysis could be adopted to investigate the same issue, but this time by making use of different data, i.e. another remake from the remainder of 14 productions could easily serve to corroborate or contradict the results of this study. Moreover, similar analyses could be conducted by taking into consideration genres other than comedy, such as drama or melodrama. Analyzing other remakes based on the same original or more importantly other TV shows of different genres would render results and subsequently conclusions which would have a stronger bearing on the foreign format trade in general.

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Appendix A: Levels of Transculturality

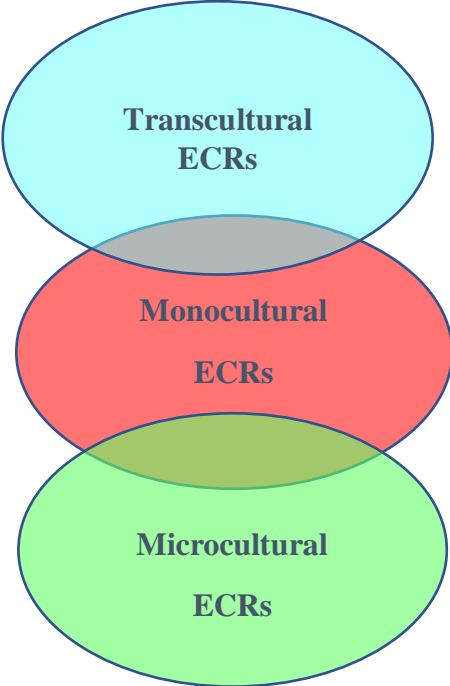


Fig. 1: Levels of Transculturality
Adapted from Pederson (2005)

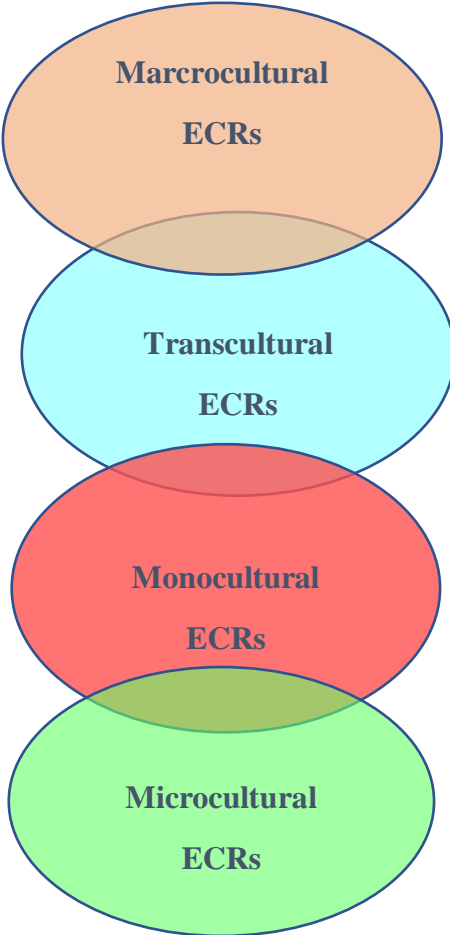


Fig. 2: Levels of Transculturality
(Revised)

Appendix B: Analyzed excerpts

Episode 1			US (original)	BG (remake)
e x c e r p t	Title		"Pilot"	„Пилотен епизод“ "Pilot"
	Layer of proximity	Cultural substitution strategy		
1.	Proximity based on recognizable situations (remake only) (00:09:11 / 00:09:21)	Target culture (mono-cultural) ECR (added)	AL: Company? Who the hell would want to come over here?!	AL: Гости? У нас? Кой идиот ще дойде в нас на гости? Те от БуК не идват да си гледат водомера вече AL: Company? What kinda idiot would want to come over here?! They even stopped coming from the Water supply and sewerage company to check their water-meters!
2.	Proximity based on historical references & Proximity based on second culture (remake only) (00:11:47 / 00:12:30)	Third culture transcultural ECR (added)	BUD: You know the kid they call Cobra? The kid with the sore on his mouth?	BUD: Сега ли се тоя дете му викат фашигата ? Татуирал си е Гьоринг на главата. BUD: You know the kid they call the nazi ? He's had Göring tattooed on his head.
3.	Proximity based on historical references (both versions) (00:05:12 / 00:04:40)	Source culture (micro-cultural) ECR replaced by Third culture transcultural ECR	AL: By the way, you want to tell John Henry there to give the \$100 pumps a rest? [referring to an African American folk hero]	AL: Кажете на граф Монте Кристо да спре да копае тунел с обувка за 100 лв. AL: Could you tell the Count of Monte Cristo to stop digging a tunnel with a shoe worth 100 lev?

4.	Proximity based on social issues (original only) to Proximity based on recognizable situations (remake only) (00:03:35 / 00:04:06)	Macro-cultural ECR (original) to Omission (remake)	AL: Damn it, Steve, we're men. It's our God given right to watch sports and smut. Since when do we have to apologize for that? STEVE: I think since the '70s.	<i>AL: Майната му бе, Мишо! Дреме ти? Ти си мъж. Бог ни е направил такива каквито сме. Свещено право на мъжа е да гледа спорт и порно. Кой е казал, че трябва да се оправдаваме ние?</i> <i>STEVE: Гражданското лице. След като подписахме.</i> AL: Damnt it, Misho! The hell you care? You're a guy. God has created us the way we are. It's men's sacred right to watch sports and porn. Who said that we have to apologize for that? STEVE: The marriage officiant. After we signed the certificate.
5/ 6.	Proximity based on non-verbal language (both versions) (00:10:43 / 00:11:16) (00:19:48 / 00:20:04)	***	PEG is shaking her leg.	PEG is playing with her hair.

Episode 2			US (original)	BG (remake)
scene	Title		"Thinnergy"	„Фруктодизиици“ "Fructodisiacs"
	Layer of proximity	Cultural substitution strategy		
7.	Proximity based on manners (remake only) (00:02:59 / 00:02:54)	***	PEG: Did you bring cake? MARCY: No. PEG: Well, we'll use ours.	<i>PEG: Кекс носиш ли?</i> <i>MARCY: Не.</i> <i>PEG: Ех, и ти си една съседка! Айде ела, ще ти дам от моя.</i> PEG: Did you bring cake? MARCY: No PEG: What kind of neighbor are you?! Okay, I'll give you a piece from mine

8.	Proximity based on values (remake only) (00:13:40 / 00:17:25)	***	STEVE: Do you remember that movie we were watching the other night? AL: Patsy: Portrait of a Stewardess in Training.	<p><i>STEVE: Как се казваше тоя филм дето го гледахме у вас, със стюардесите? Мисля да си уплътня обедната почивка с малко уроци по немски.</i></p> <p><i>AL: Гретхен стюардесата стажант 2. Да не сваляш 1, че е само с пилоти.</i></p> <p>STEVE: What was the name of the movie we were watching at your place, with the flight attendants? I could kill some time with lessons in German.</p> <p>AL: Gretchen, the stewardess in training 2. Careful not to download the first one cause it's only with pilots.</p>
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Appendix C: Excerpts with non-verbal language

Excerpt 5 (00:10:43 / 00:11:16)



Photo 1 (US)



Photo 2 (BG)

Excerpt 6 (00:19:48 / 00:20:04)



Photo 3 (US)



Photo 4 (BG)