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**Comparison of linguistic expression and cultural
references in selected American and British comedy
television series**

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Prohlašuji, že jsem práci zpracovala samostatně a použila jen uvedených pramenů a literatury.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS:

1. INTRODUCTION.....	1
2. THEORETICAL ANALYSES	3
2.1 HUMOUR	3
2.2 THE BASIS OF BRITISH HUMOUR	4
2.3 THE BASIS OF AMERICAN HUMOUR.....	5
2.4 TERMINOLOGY.....	6
2.5 HISTORY OF SITCOM FROM 1950 TO 2000, Britain, US	14
3. THE BIG BANG THEORY	23
3.1 INTRODUCTION TO THE CHARACTERS OF THE BIG BANG THEORY.....	23
3.2 TYPICAL JOKES IN 'THE BIG BANG THEORY'	26
3.3 IDIOMS IN THE BIG BANG THEORY	34
3.4 CULTURAL REFERENCES THE BIG BANG THEORY.....	38
4 THE IT CROWD	40
4.1 INTRODUCTION TO THE CHARACTERS OF IT CROWD	40
4.2 TYPICAL JOKES IN 'THE IT CROWD'	43
4.3 IDIOMS IN IT CROWD.....	50
4.4 CULTURAL REFERENCES IN IT CROWD.....	56
5. DIFFERENCES	58
5.1 DIFFERENCE FIND OUT IN SITCOMS.....	58
6. SIMILARITIES	60
6.1 SIMILARITIES FIND OUT IN SITCOMS.....	60
7. CONCLUSION	62
8. BIBLIOGRAPHY	63
8.1 Print Sources	63

8.2 Internet Sources	64
8.3 Film sources	68
9. ABSRACT	69
10. RESUMÉ	70

1. INTRODUCTION

The comparison of linguistic expressions and cultural references in American and British television series is the objective of this Bachelor's Thesis. To find these expressions it was necessary to sort the series. The Bachelor's Thesis comprises the American sitcom *The Big Bang Theory* and the British sitcom *The IT Crowd*. Both of them are situation comedies standing in every day life situation, based on socializing and brief, sharp humour typical for the chosen countries. British humour and American humour are the main keys in the sitcoms. The essential content of the thesis is to find either differences or similarities, between American and British series, concerning humour, language, idioms and slang words. Each chapter explains how they are used in the sitcoms and regarding the jokes, why they are amusing. The humour or the jokes made in sitcoms, are explained by examples used from *The Big Bang Theory* and *The IT Crowd* DVDs followed by transcription found out on particular websites.

It is divided into two main parts, theoretical and practical. The theoretical part examines the humour itself. The following two chapters define British and American humour and their uniquenesses. From these chapters one could already find both differences or similarities between the two.

The next chapter is served for its terminology and the explanation of situation comedy. Situation comedy consists of certain aspects that are used in the following chapters (3.3/4.3), concretely defined as the setting, narrative or aesthetic which are used in the practical part further on and the history of the humour on TV follows. It has been chosen more than fifteen top watched sitcoms in each country. It deals with American and British sitcoms describing a short plot.

The practical part is divided into two sections. The first section consists of the sitcom *The Big Bang Theory* and the second one consists of the sitcom *IT Crowd*. Both of them are distinguished into four smaller chapters. The first chapter introduces the readers to the characters of each series, their sense of humour and qualities they possess.

The second chapter uses selected examples of jokes taken from scripts and *The Big Bang Theory* and *The IT Crowd* DVDs. Every example is explained to clarify the humour.

The third chapter is about sitcom idioms and the fourth one consists of cultural references one can find when watching the sitcoms mentioned.

The last part deals with the differences and similarities as mentioned above in each part. They are compared and examined. The objective of this Bachelor's Thesis is to explain to the reader the main characteristics of sitcom, explain the jokes which are the main key to every sitcom and examine if the sitcoms, American and British, are rather similar or different. Not forgetting the idioms and cultural references which have the same importance.

A great number of sources has been used, particularly the Internet sources as scripts helping the author to decode the hidden jokes. As well as watching sitcoms on DVD was helpful. Also, some books were beneficial, mainly 'Best of the Britcoms', 'Aspects of Verbal Humour in English' or 'The Mammoth Book of Great British Humour'.

2. THEORETICAL ANALYSES

2.1 HUMOUR

Humour is certified and taken as an aspect of human social communication all over the world. For most of the people, to understanding a language, understand it thoroughly helps us to communicate. This ability allows us to appreciate and to engage in humour. It is a part of human language behaviour.¹

'I had an amazing cab driver. He was smiling and whistling - clearly in a brilliant mood.

He said, "I love my job, I'm my own boss. Nobody tells me what to do."

I said, "Left here".' (Jimmy Carr, British comedian)²

'Look, we all have something to bring to this discussion. But I think from now on one thing you should bring is silence'

(Arnold Rimmer, character of Red Dwarf)²

Both examples express sarcasm and irony which are explained in chapter 2.3 in addition, they are a typical example of humour.

¹ Alexander, Aspects of Verbal Humour in English ,1997, p. 3. Print

² Powell, The Mammoth book of Great British Humour, 2010, p.12 ,554 , Print

2.2 THE BASIS OF BRITISH HUMOUR

This chapter examines British humour in general. British humour is a specific term indicating the type of humour that makes people laugh. It is said that Britons have a very strong sense of humour based on irony, black humour or puns. British people are reserved in manners and speech and their humour is sophisticated using mainly wordplays. The author observed that this idea is supported by Huffingtonpost Student's article by Julian Tan³.

The colossal achievement of British humour on TV was started by Monty Python. Monty Python is a British group of comedians that made a show on late night television in the year 1969 which continued up to 1974. It has a huge success even after 40 years of broadcasting. The first episode of Monty Python Flying Circus in Britain was broadcasted on October 5th 1969. It had an excessive success and it was a pattern for situation comedies that followed after.⁴ Monty Python is a typical example of British humour.

British humour is established on sarcasm, although dry humour has the same importance. According to the Oxford English Dictionary⁵ 'a dry sense of humour is based on what somebody says, or somebody's way of speaking which is amusing, although it sounds serious.' The British are well known for their hidden jokes and it is claimed that one needs to read between the lines. They fancy mocking of their own failures and troubles as well as those of the others. In tough situations, one could easily bear things as they are. They also use cynicism which can be seen from Black Adder, a popular sitcom in Britain.⁶

Britons cherish 'foibles and quirks' and are known to favour their own country.⁷

The following example is a typical mocking situation that characterizes Britons as how they are fond of their own qualities, products and style.

³ Tan, 'Six Years and I Still Don't Get It', Huffpost students[online]

⁴ Morgan, Monty Python Speaks ,1999, p.1-3,317, Print

⁵ "Dry." The Oxford English Dictionary, 2010 , Print

⁶ British Humour, British Culture, British Customs and British Traditions LEO Network [online]

⁷ Reid, 'ThePlanet Ivy poket guide to the British sense of humour' [online]

*'Being British is about driving in a German car, wearing Italian clothes, heading to an Irish pub for a Belgian beer and some Greek olives, then going for an Indian curry washed down with some Australian beer before going home to collapse on your Swedish furniture to watch American shows on a Japanese TV. And the most British thing of all? Being suspicious of anything foreign.'*⁸

2.3 THE BASIS OF AMERICAN HUMOUR

American humour does not generally use irony as other nations do. Americans tend to use irony only when the situation calls for it. Concerning the sitcoms, they do not have many hidden jokes. They may fear to offend someone so after a joke they tend to use the expression: 'I'm kidding'. The author observed that this idea was supported by Simon's Pegg article in the Guardian newspaper⁹ which also agrees with the author on further ideas as that American jokes are more obvious than the British ones and there is no need to think about them. They directly point out to whom one speaks and they are obvious. They are different to the self-mocking dry British humour. In every sitcom all over the world, one can find running jokes which are typical humorous features. Running jokes are the jokes that a group of people continue to refer to and find amusing over a period of time.¹⁰

In The Big Bang Theory 'Soft Kitty', Sheldon's ill song, the joke 'Howard and Raj are a gay couple', 'Howard Master's degree' or Sheldon's constantly repeating sentence: 'You are in my spot!' are examples of running jokes.¹¹

Americans are a bit 'down the line'¹¹ and they do not hide their problems. They are not embarrassed by their emotions and they are open and loud. The author observed that this idea was supported by the article in the Time newspaper by Ricky Gervais¹² Americans do not use other nations, minorities or disabled people in their jokes. However, they tend to make fun of people based on their profession, especially lawyers. Americans rarely laugh at their own foibles.

⁸ Brooke, 'Britishness - Foreigners' [online]

⁹ Pegg, 'What are you laughing at?' [online]

¹⁰ 'Running joke' The Macmillan Dictionary, [online]

¹¹ Watchmojo, 'Top 10 The Big Bang Theory Running Gags' [online]

¹² Gervais, The difference Between American and British Humour [online]

American humour contains slapstick and physical comedy. Slapstick, according to the Oxford English dictionary, 'is a type of humour that is based on simple physical jokes, for example people falling over or hitting each other.'¹³

Physical comedy involves watching another person fall down, getting dirty, getting slapped or tripping over the obstacles, for example. Jim Carrey is an example of a physical comedian because he makes fun of himself all the time. The famous Tom and Jerry cartoon is a physical comedy as well.¹⁴

2.4 TERMINOLOGY

Actcom

It is an Action-Based-Situation Comedy. Actcom is one of the most common subcategories of a sitcom. It is a form of a comedy, there is emphasize on action. Characters make many mistakes and easily misunderstand each other. Characters often exaggerate their emotions and action. In actcom one character lead and is usually accompanied by second leading character. Members have quite often unusual skills as intelligence or ability to do something. The setting is simple and functional. (More about setting chapter 2.3.1,)¹⁵

'The word actcom was formed from blending which is joining parts of two or more older words' - Action + Comedy¹⁶

Domcom

It applies to characters. It means concentrating on each problem of typical character in the series and find a solution. Characters in domcom have real emotions and motivations as opposed actcom. There is established the atmosphere as well and the place where the characters live. The setting is more of a part of the show. It is mostly house with a family inside.¹⁷

'The word domcom was formed from blending which is joining parts of two or more older words' - Domestic + Comedy¹⁶

¹³ 'Slapstick', The Oxford English Dictionary, 2010, Print

¹⁴ Pollick, 'What is Physical Comedy', [online]

¹⁵ Taflinger. 'Actcom - Action Based situation comedies'[online]

¹⁶ Bc. Kobylak, KATA, 2014

¹⁷ Taflinger, 'Domcom - Character Based situation comedies'[online]

Britcom

A series of television comedy programs which are produced in Great Britain and have a distinct style of humour. It was created by American commentators, who expressed the British sitcom as Britcom.¹⁸

'The word Britcom was formed from blending which is joining parts of two or more words' - British – comedy.¹⁶

Dramedy

It focuses on thoughts. It is the only subcategory of sitcom that could have two plots in one episode. One, which is the main plot and second one, which is smaller however important enough. Its setting is more in an open area than in a house. It is usually a workplace. The place is not a home, it is not a place where everybody wants to live.¹⁹

Comedy Variety show

This all started as a 'vaudeville'. Many musicians, comics, dancers, jugglers and animals performed arts in the United States. They round about towns and were performing their humour. 'Vaudeville' expresses the form of comedy variety show. In late 40' many of these artists and comedians broadcasted on radio and later on television. Comedy Variety Show comprises emcee, a live audience, a curtain and comedians which are known all over the United States.²⁰

Idiom

Is an expression whose meaning is different from the meanings of the individual words in it.²¹ For example, Kicking the bucket, means pass away, die. The meaning of an idiomatic phrase differs from one each word in it. An idiom is a phrase that was common among people that after some time, it became natural and part of everybody's language.

¹⁸ Berman, Best of the Britcoms ,2011,p.3, Print

¹⁹ Taflinger, 'Dramedy- Character Based situation comedies' [online]

²⁰ Thompson, 'Television in United States [online]

²¹ 'Idiom', The Oxford English Dictionary, 2010, Print

Types of Humour

Aside: a thought added, as if something the speaker was saying reminded him of it.

Banter: good-natured back and forth joking

Black (Dark) humour: taking topics and events that are usually regarded as taboo and treating them in a satirical or humorous manner while retaining their seriousness.

Blue humour: humour based on offensive subjects like sex, body parts and bodily functions.

Bull: a humorous statement that is based on an outrageous contradiction.

Burlesque: a form of a satire. Burlesque ridicules some basic style of speech or writing

Caricature: exaggeration of a person's mental, physical, or personality traits, in wisecrack form.

Epigram: clever, short saying about a general group. It is a mostly satire about mankind.

Exaggerism: an exaggerated witticism that overstates the features, defects, or the strangeness of someone or something.

Farce: light dramatic work in which highly improbable plot situations, exaggerated characters, and often slapstick elements are used for humorous effect

Freudian Slip: a funny statement which seems to just pop out, but which actually comes from the person's subconscious thoughts

Gag: a short joke or quip

Innuendo: an indirect remark about somebody or something, usually suggesting something bad or rude.

Irony: a leading part of humour. Irony is using words to express something completely different from the literal meaning. Usually, someone says the opposite of what they mean and the listener believes the opposite of what they said.

Joke: *A short story ending with a funny climactic twist.*

Parody: *Humorous version of any well-known writing.*

Quip: *a smart, sarcastic retort*

Recovery: *a combination of blunder and wit, where a person makes an error, and then saves himself with a fast correction*

Repartee: *includes clever replies and retorts. The most common form is the insult.*

Sarcasm: *using witty language to convey insults or scorn.*

Satire: *wit that is critical humour. Satire is sarcasm that makes fun of something.*

Slapstick: *a boisterous form of comedy marked by chases, collisions, and crude practical jokes, like slipping on banana skins. It gets its name from a paddle designed to produce a loud whacking sound, which was formally used by performers in farces.*

Switching: *a common form of switching is changing the main parts of the story, such as the setup or the punch line, and creating a new joke.*

Wordplay: *a humorous play on words with witty verbal exchanges.*²²

2.4.1 SITCOM

*Noun, (On television or radio) a comedy series involving the same characters in various day-to-day situations which are developed as separate stories for each episode. Also called: **sitcom***²³

Sitcom

Firstly, sitcoms were seen as a radio program in the middle of the 20th century in the US and UK. Whereas the television starts, it appeared there as well.²⁴

It has many subcategories for example: actcom, domcom, character comedy, britcom, or dramedy (chapter 2.3), the author observed that this dividing was supported by Václav Slunčák in his scripts *The Sitcom*.²⁵

²² British Humour, British Culture, British Customs and British Traditions, LEO Network [online]

²³ 'Situation Comedy', Collins English Dictionary [online]

²⁴ Taflinger, A History of Comedy on Television. Sitcom [online]

Slunčák also stated that the first sitcom I love Lucy appeared on CBS (acronym – Columbia Broadcasting System) in the United States in 1950. Describing differences between US and UK sitcoms, it has been considered that Britain sitcom has principally six episodes. These are written by one or two writers, unlike the United States. The sitcom tends to have a better actors, they play in front of a live audience and the sitcom depends on their performance. Jokes, gags or wit situations are essential part of a sitcom, that is why the scenarist have to create well done scripts.²⁴

Three main features are typical for a sitcom, namely setting, aesthetics and narrative.

Setting - It means, where the sitcom is placed, it could be home, work, school or any place typical for the sitcom.

Aesthetic- The text, notes and outline of a sitcom.

*Narrative - These are texts which tell a story, they usually have a plot with a definite beginning and the end.*²⁶

From the point of view of watching the series it has been considered that sitcom has a few actors, fewer places and there does not have to be a continuation in episodes as opposed to other television genres. The episodes are self-contained. What happened in one episode stays in it. However the plot ends with particular episode. Although certain sitcom may differ from the standard. There could be mentioned something from an early episode, however it is not a duty. Each character has its own sense of humour and each character in sitcom has its own role. There is approximately five or six, the most seven main characters and they make the whole scene. It could be their home, favourite place or school (setting). Those places are always the same and the scene is pictured there. Typical insult, sarcasm, irony and teasing are the daily bread for the sitcom. (aesthetics)

In general, it is not a long episode, approximately twenty minutes of recording. In sitcom there is possible to hear the laugh which is called the laugh track, which could be from the audience or the directors upload it into a sitcom on purpose to help viewers laugh, especially in certain moments. In the humorous parts no one wants to laugh alone.

²⁵ Slunčák, Sitcom for AMU, development a realization

²⁶ Mills, The Sitcom , 2009, page 28, Print

One of the most important features on which the sitcom is recognized is the genre. A simple definition finds out by the Oxford English Dictionary as 'A particular type or style of literature, art, film or music that can be recognized because of its special characteristics.'²⁷ According to genre the sitcom could be distinguished as a family, romantic, sci-fi perhaps war sitcom. The sitcoms is either in front of a live audience or the canned laughter is being used.

The author observed that these ideas were supported by Václav Slunčík's scripts²⁸

Laugh Track

"See? The laugh track tells you what's funny. You don't even need to think!"

*(Granddad, The Boondocks)*²⁹

'Laugh tracks are also known as 'canned laughter' - an artificial audience that did nothing but react uproariously to anything and everything'²⁹

History of Laugh track

According to An Interview with Ben Glenn II, Television Historian³⁰

How did canned laughter come about?

The concept actually goes back at least five hundred years. History tells us that there were audience "plants" in the crowds at Shakespearean performances in the 16th century. They spurred on audience reactions, including laughter and cheering—as well as jeers.

How about more recently?

Canned laughter was used to a certain degree in radio, but its first TV appearance was in 1950, on a rather obscure NBC situation comedy, The Hank McCune Show. Remarkably, there are a couple of clips from the show on YouTube. Shortly after the show's debut, there was an article in Variety noting that the show's canned laughter was a new innovation, and that its potential for providing a wide-range of reactions was great. Of course, that eventually came true.

²⁷ 'Genre', The Oxford English Dictionary

²⁸ Slunčík, op.cit. [online]

²⁹ Laugh Track, Television Tropes & Idioms. [online]

³⁰ Glen., 'An Interview with Ben Glenn II, Television Historian'[online]

Who invented the canned-laughter machine?

Actually, its official name is the Laff Box, and it was invented by a man named Charles Rolland Douglass. He served in World War II, and when he returned to civilian life, he worked as a broadcast engineer at CBS. Douglass was responsible for everything from recording sound levels during production to adjusting them in post-production.

Where did the laughs on the Laff Box originate?

Reportedly, the earliest reactions came from a Marcel Marceau performance in Los Angeles in 1955 or 1956, during his world premiere North American tour. This would make sense, because Marceau was, of course, a mime, and therefore, the only sound in the theatre was the audience's reaction.

Other reactions are widely thought to have come from The Red Skelton Show, especially the show's mime sketches. I can state this with relative certainty, as it has been reported repeatedly by various sound engineers who worked closely with Douglass. It's interesting to note that the Skelton show aired on CBS, where Douglass worked. So, in theory, he would have had access to those tapes. But, in the end, it's also important to note that we may never know his exact sources.

As far as my research shows, there were never any interviews with Douglass or with anyone who worked at his company, Northridge Electronics. The secrecy surrounding his work is a Hollywood legend. Only a very few people witnessed him using his machine, and it was always kept padlocked when not in use. Part of this secrecy was to protect his invention, to be sure. But part of it, too, was that, for some, inserting a laugh track may have been the same as admitting that a show wasn't funny—or not “funny enough.” There was a real stigma surrounding the use of the laugh track, which continues to this day.

What made Douglass so good, exactly? Is there an art to canned laughter?

Douglass's work was crisp and clean. It was a real craft. And the range of reactions that he was able to find was incredible. Some of the big belly laughs are great. You just don't hear laughs like that anymore. I also love the “shock” and “surprise” reactions, such as when a big audience says, in unison, “Whoa!” Those were used frequently on The Munsters when something extra-outrageous happened.

Artificial canned laughter comes actually from the Shakespearean era, where the audience was performing the canned laughter, however, concentrating on more recent events, Ben Glenn says that it appeared in 1950 and it was Charles Rolland Douglass, who invented the canned-laughter machine. He called it 'Laff Track'. Charles Rolland Douglass was an American soldier after retired, he worked as a sound engineer for US television. The sound of a laugh, perhaps, comes from the mime's show. The only thing one could hear was a laugh. However, one could guess where does it come from because in the time when the Laff Track was invented part of secrecy did not want to show who was the inventor and how he manages to do the laughter. They thought the show 'would not be funny' or 'not funny enough.' Actually, they were afraid of what people might think.

Douglass made sound for surprise, shock, whoa reactions and big belly laughs, which is very hard to find.

2.5 HISTORY OF SITCOM FROM 1950 TO 2000, Britain, US

There are a great number of sitcoms in British and American history. The best known and most watched sitcoms in history have been selected to show the progress of sitcoms from 1950 to 2010.

2.5.1 BRITISH SITUATION COMEDIES

50'

Hancock's Half Hour

This was written by Alan Simpson and Ray Galton. It is about a life of John Hancock who is a comedian waiting for his achievement. He has a friend Sid James. Occasionally Hancock's love life is presented. Nevertheless, it is supposed to be an inception of British sitcoms.³¹

60'

Steptoe and Son

This was written by same writers - Ray Galton and Alan Simpson as Hancock's Half Hour. It is a sitcom about a father Albert and his son Harold. They work together in a family business, however, Harold wants to have his own life alone. They have to solve many problems among each other and fill 'the generation gap'.³²

Dad's Army

This is set in the fictional south coast seaside town of Walmington-On-Sea during the World War II. It is a character comedy concerning the misadventures of the local voluntary defence force Home Guard led by Mainwaring, who is a manager of the local bank. There are ten Guards including Mainwaring.³³

³¹BBC - comedy- Hancock's Half hour.[online]

³² Bryant, 'Steptoe and Son' The Museum of Broadcast communication [online]

³³ Berman, 2011, p.5-7

70' The Golden Age of British sitcom

Fawlty Towers

The series is set in Fawlty Towers, a fictional hotel in the seaside town of Torquay, The principal characters are Basil Fawlty, who is posh and arrogant director of the hotel, his wife Sybil and waiter Manuel who has a Spanish origin. Fawlty Towers is a slapstick comedy³⁴.

The Good Life

Tom Good and his wife Barbara decide to quit their jobs and start a farm in the front and back garden of their house. They wanted to be self-sufficient so they grow soft fruit and vegetable, they bought pigs and chickens and a goat, they generate their own electricity, The other characters are the Leadbetters, Margot and Jerry, the neighbours.³⁵

The Good Life is a Actcom.

Are You Being Served?

This is set in department store in London in the company of Grace Brothers. The sitcom is about the people who work there. Each worker has odd specific characters. It is mostly in one floor, where the action takes place.(Setting) The characters are Mr. Granger, Mr, Humphries, Mr. Lucas, Mrs. Slocombe and Miss Brahms all work for the company of Grace Brothers.³⁶

Porridge

Norman Stanley Fletcher is a leading character of the sitcom Porridge. He is a criminal, he is sent to prison in Cumberland. Other characters are Norman's cellmate, his warden and warden's subordinate.³⁷ According to Oxford English Dictionary 'Doing Porridge means informally to spend time in prison'.³⁸

³⁴ *ibid*, p.17-20

³⁵ *ibid*, 2011, p.21-24

³⁶ *ibid* 2011 p. 11-13

³⁷ BBC – Comedy , 'Porridge' ,[online]

³⁸ 'Porridge' , Oxford Dictionary [online]

80'

Red Dwarf

'The plot was based on scripts that the writers had written for the radio series. 'Son of Cliche was the name of the radio series.'⁴¹ This is a sitcom that takes place in space shift. It is a science-fiction sitcom. The main character is Lister, who survives in the ship and wakes up after 3 million years. Other characters are Holly, the computer voice, Rimmer - the hologram of his roommate Rimmer who is irritating as he was when he was alive and Kryten - android who joins them later in a sitcom.³⁹

Yes, Minister

British Minister for Administrative Affairs James Hacker tries to do something to cut government waste, however, he is continually held back by the Sir Humphrey Appleby. There is a third character Bernard Woolley, who is Hecker's secretary. Bernard is caught between the Hecker and Sir Humphrey. According to Berman's Best of the Britcoms 'The feature that distinguishes Yes, Minister from the other sitcoms is the heavily verbal nature and the fact that the dialogue moves at a brisk pace and requires to pay attention.'⁴⁰

Only Fools and Horses

The misadventures of two brothers Del Boy and Rodney Trotter accompanied by their grandfather who lives with them. Del wants to be a millionaire and live a better life. The plots centre around these problems. The actor of grandfather died in the year of 1983 and was replaced by Del and Rodney's uncle.⁴¹

Black Adder

According to the article in the British newspaper Digital spy, this sitcom was voted by 13,500 people on the Internet as the best British sitcom throughout the history, followed by Fawlty Towers.⁴² This is a historical sitcom. Each series was set in different periods in history and Rowen Atkinson as Black Adder who struggles in each part of a history

³⁹ Berman ,op.cit., p73-76

⁴⁰ ibid, p.44-47.

⁴¹ ibid, 2011 p.48-50.

⁴² Digital Spy 'Blackadder' voted best British TV show of all time [online]

with the power, he wants to be the king or leader however more often than not, he somehow fails⁴³

90'

The Vicar of Dibley

The old vicar has passed away and new vicar has been requested for a replacement. Geraldine Grandier is not a typical vicar, she is a woman. The second character David Horton is against the idea of woman to be vicar in their village, however, after the congregation Geraldine impress the villagers even David and she becomes a vicar⁴⁴

Father Ted

There are three priests, Father Ted, Father Jack and the youngest one Father Dougal. They live together in one small house on an Irish island. Each of them has individual character of from the humour is specific. The oldest Father Jack drinks a lot. Father Ted has many little vices and Dougal seems to be away with the fairies. It is a mock of clergy.⁴⁵

One Foot in the Grave

This is about Victor Meldrew who was working as a security guard, however, he was replaced by a machine. The second character is his wife accompanied by her female friend. Victor, as an involuntary pensioner, struggles with many situations and misunderstanding in his life. He tries to keep himself busy.⁴⁶

2000

Black Books

The main character is Leonard Black who is the owner of Black Books, the bookstore, he is alcohol addict, sarcastic and he hates his customers in the shop while they buy books. Two other characters are Manny and Fran. Manny works for Leonard and Frann is a friend of Leonard. It is a sitcom of black humour, sarcasm and irony. It was written by Graham Linehan, the writer and director of IT Crowd.

⁴³ Berman, op.cit,55-58

⁴⁴ ibid, p.113-116.

⁴⁵ ibid, 2011, p.121-123

⁴⁶ ibid 2011,p. 83-87

The Office⁴⁷

It is a sitcom set in the fictional Wernham Hogg Paper company concerns day-to-day lives of office employees.

2.5.2 AMERICAN SITUATION COMEDIES

The Golden Age of Television:

50'

I love Lucy

This is about life of Lucy and Ricky, her husband. Lucy is a naive and energetic girl who thinks she can achieve everything. After The World War II, it outbalanced the attitude of families togetherness and it was shifted on TV.⁴⁸ I love Lucy is an Actcom.

The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet

This was the longest-running situation comedy in history lasting for 14 years.⁴⁹

It is about the adventures of Ozzie and Harriet and their two sons Ricky and David. The sitcom revolves around their family and deals with daily problems. There are a great number of misunderstandings and comedy situations. It is a sitcom of Ozzie Nelson's family, which was based on a real family.⁵⁰

Amos 'n' Andy

Amos 'n' Andy is a situation comedy set in Harlem. The characters include Kingfish who does not like his work and he tries to take any advantage of Andy, the second character. The sitcom portrays black professionals and shows them in a good light. It could be said that they were positive role models for American society as is stated on the Jim Crow Museum website.⁵¹

⁴⁷ *ibid*, 2011, p.138-140

⁴⁸ Slunčik, op.cit[online]

⁴⁹ Taflinger, op.cit [online]

⁵⁰ Weisblat, 'The adventures of Ozzie and Harriet The Museum of Broadcast communications, [online]

⁵¹ Freeman, 'Amos 'n' Andy' ,Mark Freeman Films [online]

Caesar's hours

Caesar's Hours is Sid Caesar's artistic autobiography. In his show he told people the truth, he believed in something and he had a huge success on stage. He gave birth to a great American comedy and comedy performance. It was a year for a new type of situation comedy for television and Sid was one aspect of it.⁵²

60'

The Dick Van Dyke Show

This sitcom is about Rob played by Dick Van Dyke, his wife Laura and their married friends. Dick and Laura have a son Richie. It is a family sitcom dealing with daily family relationship issues.⁵³ The Dick Van Dyke Show is a Domcom.

The Beverly Hillbillies

This is about the family of Jad Clampitt who live in a place where black oil spurts and they get 1 million dollars and move to Beverly Hills. Due to the fact that they are poor and from the village, they do not know how to behave in such a place as Beverly Hills.⁵⁴ The Beverly Hillbillies is a Domcom.

70'

-The Mary Tyler Moore Show

This is a sitcom based on the life of Mary, a single woman, works for a television show. The actress starred in the Dick Van Dyke show as well. In the Dick Van Dyke show, she portrayed the wife of the main character.⁵⁵

M*A*S*H

This sitcom is set in the middle of Korean land where the temporary American hospital is. It is a camp of American doctors and nurses who live together separate from the others during the Korean war and help the soldiers. It does not matter if they are Americans or Koreans either way they live and spend time together. M*A*S*H

is a Dramey.

⁵² Ceasar, Sid, 2003, Print

⁵³ The Dick Van Dyke show, The Dick Van Dyke show Channel, [online]

⁵⁴ Hawdon, The Beverly Hillbillies (Season 1 - Ep. 1) [online]

⁵⁵ Hammil, 'The Mary Tyler Moore Show', The Museum of Broadcast Communications, [online]

Happy Days

This sitcom reveals the life of the 50's and 60's in the US. It is about a family of Richie Cunningham, his friends and school. ⁵⁶ Happy Days is an Actcom.

80'

The Simpsons

It is a cartoon sitcom where the main characters are the Simpsons family comprising of Marge, Bart, Maggie, Homer and Lisa. Lisa is a very intelligent pupil and she differs from Bart, who is a bad boy. Father Homer is very stupid and their mother Marge has very long blue hair. They live their lives in a small village called Springfield. Famous people often appear as visiting characters and episodes are often based on current events or movies. The Simpsons is a Domcom

Saved by the Bell

The main characters are Zack Morris and his friends. The sitcom could be characterized as a Teenage sitcom. It is located at Bayside High School in California.(Setting) Zack and his friends try to fool the principal of the Bayside school and a great number of comic situations happen in this sitcom. ⁵⁷ Saved by the Bell is an Actcom.

Who's The Boss?

Angela is the mother of Jonathan and she needs someone to take care of her son. Tony, who has a daughter Samantha becomes the housekeeper of Angela. Together they raise their children with the assistance from Mona, Angela's mother. ⁵⁸ Who's the Boss is a Domcom

Married... with children

The Bundys is a family who is always together, even if they do not like each other much. The main character is Al, the father of the family According to the webpage which is called Bandedology, it is said that Married...with children is a sitcom's parody on The Cosby Show ⁵⁹

⁵⁶ Lewis, Happy Days, The Museum of Broadcast Communications [online]

⁵⁷ Tv.com, 'Saved by the bell', [online]

⁵⁷ Tv.com, 'Who's the Boss' [online]

⁵⁹ Carl, 'Married...With Children', [online]

The Cosby show, which is the sitcom from 80' as well, is a sitcom where Bill Cosby portrays the main character. He has its own stand up show. Without his real family stories The Cosby show sitcom could not have happened.⁶⁰

90'

South Park

Due to its dark and vulgar language as well as black humour, satire and many sexual topics. The sitcom comprises of four school boys - Stan, Kyle, Eric and Kenny. They live a life in a Colorado town.⁶¹ South Park is an Actcom.

Futurama

American adult animated sci-fi sitcom from the future. It is about a pizza boy Phillip, who has been frozen in the year of 1999. He has been sent to another planet. He woke up after a thousand years and the adventure continues.⁶²

The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air

The Banks family comes from California. They are a wealthy family and the head of the family, is Will's uncle, Phil. Will is a street-smart kid who is supposed to live with his uncle and his relatives. They think they can change him, however Will does not want this change.⁶³ The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air is an Actcom

Everybody Loves Raymond

Everybody loves Raymond is another family sitcom about Ray and his relatives. The actor Ray Roman portrays his own experience on the show and a few scenarists portrays so as well. Ray's parents live beside his family and they are not ashamed to visit his house without notice.⁶⁴ Everybody Loves Raymond is a Domcom.

The Nanny

This is based on the lives of a family of a widower Maxwell and his three kids. Their mother died and Mr. Sheffield tries to find a nanny. Fran, the main character is chosen. She differs from others. She is young, beautiful and she brings a fresh air into the family. Kids love her and in the future Maxwell fall in love with her as well.

⁶⁰ The Cosby Show, Bill Cosby[online]

⁶¹ Tv.com, 'South Park' [online]

⁶² Tv.com, 'Futurama' [online]

⁶³ IMDb, 'Fresh Princ of Bel-Air' [online]

⁶⁴ IMDb, 'Everybody Loves Raymond' [online]

Friends

There are 6 friends. It comprises Monica, Rachel, Phoebe, Ross, Chandler and Joey. They spend time in a coffee house Central Perk and also in Monica's apartment. This sitcom comprises of humour from everyday situations, their love lives and friendships.

Friends is a Domcom.

2000 -2010

How I met your mother

There is Ted, Marshall, Lilly, Barney and Robin. Ted, the main character, tells the story of his life to his children. Each episode begins with - 'Kids, when I was...' and then each episode explains the story of how he met their mother.

How I met your mother is a Dramey.

Two and a Half men

The main character is Charlie, a single man, who constantly has relationships with different women. His life changes when his freshly divorced brother moved in with his son Jake. Two and a Half men is a Domcom.

3. THE BIG BANG THEORY

3.1 INTRODUCTION TO THE CHARACTERS OF THE BIG BANG THEORY

Four men are scientist working for the University in Pasadena, they are 'nerds' and all of them have a lack of social skills. (The word nerd is used in both sitcoms either The Big Bang Theory either IT crowd, it is a word expressing character of its owner. Technical oriented with lack of social attitudes. Synonyms: geek, fool, dweeb, note from the author) It is hard for them to find a girl. Their world comprises the comics, Darth Vader, Star Trek, philosophy, mathematics and biology and a great number of other branches. Their sport is Paintball. Once Penny appears their world quite changes the line.

Sheldon's character

Sheldon behaves as a child in certain situations. He still somehow posses the child qualities. For example, he has no driving license and everybody from the group. They have to take him to the comic book store, supermarket, to a Pottery shop where he can change his Star Wars sheets because buses don't have seatbelts and the others sit there, are weird. He thinks he's Homo Novus, he cannot accept he's wrong, he says he's smart enough to do such simple things such as driving, he says these things once he is not able to do them⁶⁵. He has a lack of empathy, social skills and he is very bad at relationships. He hates every human exchange of any kind of liquid which means kissing, having sex and touching. In the 7th season he finds out that kissing Amy is a rather pleasant thing. He doesn't recognize sarcasm, he uses it badly as well. His humour, mostly comes from misunderstandings. It helps his lack of empathy and social situations in these humorous parts, because every time he comes up with very funny jokes, mostly they concern sexual subtext. He is logical and this logic, he transfers to the relationship as well. Either Amy and Sheldon's document concerning their relationship or Leonard and Sheldon's roommate agreement is the fact of it. The author observed that these ideas were supported by the article in the International Movie Database⁶⁶

⁶⁵ Big Bang Theory Transcripts, 'Big Bang Theory Transcripts[online] (S02E05)

⁶⁶ IMDb, 'Biography for Sheldon Cooper [online]

Penny's character

She is the beautiful neighbour, she graduated and she is a waitress at Cheesecake Factory. She has a lack of advanced education, although she is very smart in other parts of life. She is insightful and very empathetic. There are certain jokes about her sex life partners and her addiction on alcohol. She has apt comments every time she does not know what her friends are talking about.

*1. That's the most romantic thing somebody said to me and I didn't understand.*⁶⁷

She is messy and disorganized that is also a point to make fun of. The author observed that these ideas were supported by an article in The Big Bang Theory wiki webpage⁶⁸.

Raj's character

He is from India. He has a problem talking to women. Once he gets drunk, he is very talkative. There are certain jokes concerning his accent and intonation in English. His wordplay is very funny. Despite being from India he hates Indian food.

He is shy and the main problem for him is to have a girlfriend and talk to one.

Howard's character

His character is based on awkward situations to women, his Master's degree which is not good enough for the rest of the group and the fact that he still lives with his mother.. He is very small and thin and this, he substitutes by big buckle belts and extravagant way of dressing.

Leonard's character

For most of the time he is with Penny or Sheldon. In case of Penny, there are many awkward situations concerns intimacy. He has very famous mother who is psychiatric and a writer. She analyses Leonard awkwardness in her book. A great number of jokes concerning Leonard are based on lack of social situation or intime life with Penny.

⁶⁷ Big Bang Theory Transcripts, 'Big Bang Theory Transcripts'[online] (S03E01)

⁶⁸ The Big Bang Theory Wiki 'Penny'. [online]

Bernadette's character

She is a very envied person. She is a small and thin and looks innocent, she is nice to everyone, however she gets angry she is loud, mean and terrifying Her voice is on abnormally high level and she sounds like a Smurf. She is Howard's wife. She is very rich.

Amy's character

She is an outsider and her humour is based on this fact.

S06E01, 00:03:29

Amy: *How long does this stay on?*

Penny: *Just a couple of minutes. You've really never done this before?*

Amy: *Once in high school, but I dozed off and woke up with second-degree chemical burns on my face.*

Penny: *Oh, my gosh, that's awful. The other kids make fun of you?*

Amy: *No, I had a cover story, I told everyone it was herpes.*

In an attempt to save the situation, she made it worse. The fact, that she told everyone she has herpes, was a laughing matter more than second-degree chemical burns

Type of humour: Understatement

Setting: Penny's apartment

She desperately wants to have a romantic and intime relationship with Sheldon and it contains amusing situations between two of them.

3.2 TYPICAL JOKES IN 'THE BIG BANG THEORY'⁶⁹

Season 2, episode 6

00:00:33

Leonard: So, if any of you are considering going into experimental physics, my door is always open. Once again, I'm sorry that the demonstration didn't quite work out, but now we know what happens when you accidentally spill peach Snapple into a helium neon laser. The short answer is... don't. And now to tell you about the theoretical physics department is Dr. Sheldon Cooper. Dr. Cooper?

Sheldon (off): Forget it

Leonard: Excuse me. Sheldon, we both agreed to do this.

Sheldon (off): It's a waste of time. I might as well explain the laws of thermodynamics to a bunch of Labradoodles.

Leonard: If you don't do this, I won't take you to the comic book store.

The part where Leonard spill peach Snapple into a helium neon laser is satire. Leonard behaves as a parent to Sheldon and it works. Sheldon is doing the presentation only if Leonard takes him later to a comic book store. They are grownups, friends, doing what they want without necessity of permission, however, Sheldon still, in certain ways, behaves as a child under the condition he gets something later.

Type of humour: Caricature

Setting: University Campus

⁶⁹ Big Bang Theory Transcripts, 'Big Bang Theory Transcripts'[online]

00:06:46

Ramona: *Oh, sorry I'm late. I just got so caught up reading the draft of your latest paper.*

Sheldon: *Did you enjoy the humorous footnote where I illustrate mirror-symmetry by likening it to the Flash playing tennis with himself?*

Ramona: *So funny. But the idea that you might be able to incorporate gravity, I have to tell you, I found it physically exhilarating.*

Sheldon: *My hypotheses tend to have that effect*

This situation seems as a flirt between Sheldon and Ramona however what is it really for Sheldon is not flirting , he is confident in his hypotheses. Every time he tries to be a bit show off, it turns out to be flirtatious or awkward situation.

Type of humour: Wordplay, Blue Humour

Setting: Sheldon and Leonard's apartment

Season 7, episode 1

00:00:00

Scene: On the deck of a ship on the North Sea, in the middle of a storm. Leonard is on a sat-phone.

Leonard: *Sheldon, it's not a great time, what do you want?*

Sheldon: *(in the apartment): Hello to you, too. I'm sorry, but this is important.*

Leonard: *What is it?*

Sheldon: *Back to the Future II was in the Back to the Future III case, and Back to the Future III was, get this, in the Back to the Future II case.*

Leonard: *So?*

Sheldon: *So, did you do that, or am I in the house with an intruder?*

Back to the Future II and Back to the Future III are movies directed by Robert Zemeckis the first Back to the Future movie was filmed in 1985 in USA. Starred by Michael J. Fox the main character.⁷⁰ It's sci-fi movie where the time machine plays a main role.

Sheldon considers changing CDs so important, that he calls Leonard, who is far away in North Sea to tell him about it.

Type of humour: Exaggerism.

Setting: Ship, Sheldon and Leonard's apartment

00:04:40

Girls are on the phone.

Bernadette: Howie, stop. I can't talk like that. Amy's right here.

Amy: Shedon, stop. For the last time, I will not bring home bed bugs.

Bernadette: The hotel's nice. There's a pool, a gym, the bar looks like fun.

Amy: Because I looked in the bed, and there are no bugs.

Amy: Good night. No, I will not consider sleeping in my garmet bag.

There is a contrast between Amy and Bernadette, one could guess what Howard and Sheldon are talking about. It is necessary to compare these two phone calls to define the humour. One, that is full of love and missing each other and the other one is based on a conversation which includes bugs in the bed. According to The Big Bang Theory DVD Amy's voice is upset, she may want the same love conversation as Bernadette, however, she talks to Sheldon for whom this is normal. Amusing situation is that both of the girls are in a relationship, they go to sleep, they call their boyfriends and Amy talks with Sheldon, who consider using a garmet bag because of bugs.

Type of humour: Epigram

Setting: Hotel

⁷⁰ Csfed, 'Back to the Future' [online]

00:05:20

Sheldon: *Do I miss how he makes a face on my toaster waffle with syrup? No. Do I miss how he fixes the zipper on my jacket when it gets stuck? I don't think so. Do I miss how we say good night to each other through the walls of our bedroom using Morse code? (Taps out 'No' in morse code on the table)*

Penny: *Okay, I get it, I get it. You are an emotionless robot.*

Sheldon: *Well, I try.*

Penny: *All right, let's just get this stupid game over with*

Sheldon: *Great. I'll go first*

Penny: *Okay.*

Sheldon: *By the way, how are you with zippers?*

Penny: *Why?*

Sheldon: *Well, I really need to go to the bathroom, and this one's gone all cattywampus.*

Firstly, it is obvious that Sheldon misses Leonard, however, he does not want to express it at all. The second situation is again, with Sheldon and his lack of social awkwardness. He asks Penny to help him with a zipper which is at his intimate place. For Sheldon, that is just a broken zipper. For the rest, it is a flirting or more, a sexual invitation, perhaps. According to The online slang dictionary, 'cattywampus' is a slang word for something diagonal, synonyms are awry, oblique or crooked. In this example it means his zipper is broken.

Type of humour: Blue humour.

Setting: Sheldon and Leonard's apartment

00:12:56

Penny: *No. Come on, you're supposed to say, of course he misses you
The only reason he's partying is to cover up his pain.*

Sheldon: *Oh, no, I don't think that's true at all.*

Penny: *This is ridiculous. Why am I upset just because he's off having a good
time?*

Sheldon: *Well, perhaps you're obsessively picturing him engaged in drunken
coitus with another woman. (Pause) Is that it? Did I get it right?*

Sheldon is really bad in social comforting. Penny wants him to comfort her, but he says what he thinks and that makes the situation very funny. Although Sheldon does not intend to mock of Penny he does.

Type of humour: Burlesque

Setting: Sheldon and Leonard's apartment

Season 7, episode 2

00:07:54

They are talking about his mother

Bernadette: *Why can't she do it?*

Howard: *'Cause we've got a deeply unhealthy relationship. Which reminds me,
do you think you can get any samples of this from work? This was supposed to
last her a month, but they didn't take into account the square footage of her
back.*

Bernadette: *Let me see. How long have you been putting this on her?*

Howard: *I don't know. Few weeks.*

Bernadette: *Let me see. How long have you been putting this on her?*

Howard: *I don't know. Few weeks.*

Bernadette: *This is the really strong oestrogen cream. Please tell me you've
been wearing gloves.*

Howard: *Like these swollen sausages could fit in gloves. (Black humour base
on what women say)*

Bernadette: *Howie, the oestrogen's absorbed by your skin. That's why you've been all bloated and moody and a giant pain in the ass.*

Howard: *You're full of oestrogen and you don't act like that.*

Bernadette: *That's 'cause I'm a woman. I've had years of practice riding the dragon.*

(.....)

Howard: *I feel so stupid. And fat.*

Bernadette: *It's okay. You still look great to me. In fact, why don't we go in the bedroom and I'll prove it to you?*

Howard: *Sex? Really? I mean, that's just your solution to everything*

Howard speech about his mother's back is a black humour. Bernadette speech about Howard's appearance is a type of blue humour.

The idiom - I've had years of practice riding the dragon She means by this to control her emotions and feelings on certain level. These jokes are against women. Generally known women say this 'sex solution sentence' to men, when they do not want to have sexual intercourse. As well they complain about their body very often. And because Howard has tons of oestrogen in his body, though he was using oestrogen lotion on his mum without gloves, he behaves as a woman.

Setting: Howard and Bernadette's apartment

00:20:30

Sheldon: *And I'm glad you and I are friends again, too.*

Penny: *Aw.*

Sheldon: *Which reminds me. This came in the mail, and I want you to have it.*

Penny: *Fifty cents off Vagisil.*

Sheldon: *Think of me when you apply it*

Vagisil, a lotion which is used by girls on their women's parts when they have genital problems. Sheldon gives this reduce to Penny by telling her, in his good asexual mind, to apply it and think of him, but once again Sheldon said this and it came out as a blue humour.

Type of humour: Blue humour, burlesque

Season 7 episode 15

00:01:11

Sheldon: What are the sleeping arrangements? We've only been dating for three years. If we were to share a room people might talk.

Sheldon speaks to Amy. In relationship one could be married after three years and one could also have children. This joke is based on the fact, that what is wrong, is to have separate rooms and stay away from each other. Sheldon has a problem to have intimacy with another person.

Type of humour: burlesque, exaggerism

Setting: Sheldon and Leonard's apartment

00:03:50

Raj: I don't have (Valentine's) plans, which is why I booked time on the big telescope that night.

Amy: An evening looking at the stars, that's still kinda romantic.

Raj: Except I'd be alone.

Amy: I'm trying to put lipstick on a pig here. Work with me.

Amy there was trying to make the way that Rajesh is alone on Valentine's day a little better using the sentence: 'That's still kinda romantic' and she uses an idiom to put lipstick on a pig which means to try to change something, hoping that it will look better. The funny situation is when she tries to explain Raj what she tried to do.

Type of humour: Banter, joke

Setting: Sheldon and Leonard's apartment

00:14:05

Earlier that day, Penny and Leonard had sexual intercourse which lasted only 9 minutes. In this example, Raj is with the woman vet taking care of Cinnamon, Raj's dog

Leonard: *They've been in there for like half an hour.*

Penny: *Yeah, for future reference that's a while.*

This is a black and blue humour. Penny mocks of Leonard because he was rather fast. However, for Leonard it was long for Penny was not. It is a sexual allusion.

Type of humour: Blue Humour

Setting: Surgery

00:15:50

Amy to train man: *Why are you still here?*

Sheldon: *Excuse me, I think you're being a little rude.*

Amy: *I'm being rude? You've been rude to me this entire evening!*

Sheldon: *How is that possible. I've hardly spoken to you since we got on the train.*

Amy is rude because Sheldon has not spoken to her since they got on the train and she's upset about it and she wants to talk with his boyfriend alone, so she sent the guy who is Sheldon's new friend away angrily. Sheldon does not understand it and he asks why is she rude. She said, that he is being rude and Sheldon is asking loudly why, after all he hardly has spoken to her. He does not understand that being on Valentine's date with his girlfriend is important. The joke is that he says it aloud.

Type of humour: of black humour

Setting: Train

00:18:20

Raj: Cinnamon, she gave me her phone number! If I'd known it was that easy, I'd have considered poisoning you months ago.

Rajesh has a problem to meet a girl. This situation came along after Cinnamon. Raj's dog ate chocolate and had to go to the vet. Amusing part here is when Raj considers poisoning his dog to meet a girlfriend. It expresses his desperation to meet a girl and sense of humour based on animal treat, although he cherishes the dog as a baby and he would never do such a thing.

Type of humour: Black humour

3.3 IDIOMS IN THE BIG BANG THEORY

Season 6, Episode 1

Leonard: What are you doing here? I thought you were out with Sheldon and Amy.

*Raj: I was, but it's their anniversary and **I didn't want to be a third wheel**, so I figured I'd come over here and hang out with you and Penny on your date.*

I didn't want to be a third wheel

There is a couple (Leonard and Penny) and their friend (Raj). Raj may feel awkward alone. They have together a special night and the person who is there alone suffers because he does not have a relationship which they have. On the other hand, in this example for Raj is completely normal to stay and hang out with them.

Leonard: Penny and I have some issues we need to talk about.

*Raj: **Oh pish on your issues.** You guys are fine. Yes, **you hit some bumps along the way.** I mean, Penny, you've always known how this man has felt about you, but you made him grovel for affection.*

Penny: Okay, hold on...

*Raj: Now, don't blame yourself. He was a growler from way back. But the point is, **the two of you got past it.** And, Leonard, you go and propose to this poor girl in the middle of sex? That was some weak tea, dude*

Oh pish on your issues

Stop worrying about your problems.

You hit some bumps along the way

You had many discussions or arguments, problems among each other in your relationship.

Two of you got past it.

It means, that the problem has already been finished or done and now you get through and forget perhaps.

Raj: Hey Stuart?

Stuart: Yeah?

Raj: Do you wanna hang out tomorrow night, maybe grab a bite to eat, catch a late movie?

*Stuart: Yeah, I would like to but I'm a little **tight on funds***

*Raj: Don't worry, **my treat**. I'll swing by after work.*

Tight on funds

It means he has no money or not enough to spend it on cinema.

My treat

He is going to pay for Stuart

Season 6, Episode 2

Sheldon: Yeah, just a heads-up: Penny knows that you blabbed about Leonard.

She's pretty mad

Amy: I know. She's yelling at me right now.

Sheldon: All right then, so we're all on the same page.

We are all on the same page

The group has the same decisions, ideas, plans. In this case it means that Penny yells at Amy and Sheldon together.

Season 6, Episode 5

Scene: Howard and Bernadette's bedroom. Howard and Bernadette dress as Smurfs.

Bernadette: How do I look?

Howard: Fine

Bernadette: Uh-oh, is **someone a little blue**? Come on, Howie, that's like the funniest thing I've ever said in my life. What do you say? You ready to go?

Someone's a little blue?

Bernadette was asking Howard if he is a bit upset about a certain situation. Blue is an idiom for being upset, angry, stubborn

Season 7, Episode 2

Howard: I'm sorry, I've been kind of snippy lately. It's probably this stupid diet I'm on.

Raj: Why are you on a diet?

Howard: I've put on a couple pounds. I had to buy these pants in the men's section.

Raj: Well, we've all seen your mum. That Butterball turkey was bound to come home to roost.

The Butterball turkey was bound to come home to roost.

It is an idiom. It means that his mother is very fat and that the genes had to appear someday.

The fact is, that Howard is an adult, however, he still buy clothes in the children's section which is rather odd and express that he is very small.

Type of humour: Caricature

Season 6, Episode 6

Sheldon: *Oh, my friend Stephen just played the word act for 18 points. That's right, I call him Stephen now, because I checked, and he was not okay with Wheels.*

Amy: *Oh, you could turn his act into extract and it would be for double points.*

Sheldon: *Amy, why would you give me a word?*

Why would you give me a word?

This idiom means, why would someone help somebody else. Why would Amy help Sheldon with the crossword.

Season 6, Episode 9

Leonard: *Well, he's not wrong. Howard did go to the International Space Station.*

Sheldon: *Yeah, that was five weeks ago. How much longer is he gonna milk that cow:*

How long would he milk that cow?

For how long will Howard say he was on a space station. For Sheldon this is irritating and well-worn.

Season 6, Episode 12

Sheldon: *Ladies, ladies, please. We're not here to talk about Penny, okay? We're here to talk about me. Uh, I mean Einstein Von Brainstorm. Oh, damn it! All right, I guess the cat's out of the bag. Let me explain what's going on. Ricardo is really Leonard.*

Cats out of the bag

It means to reveal a secret or surprise or by an accident.

Season 6, Episode 15

Sheldon: It's Penny's fault.

Amy: Why?

Sheldon: She doesn't want to live with Leonard, so he has to come live here again. She's the snake in our garden. She's the reason we can't be happy.

She is the snake of our garden.

This idiom is from the Bible. Adam and Eve were in the garden and on one concrete tree was a snake who has suppose to be a mean and bad character and tempted Adam and Eve to eat the apple from that tree - forbidden fruit. This is the same example where according to Leonard, the snake is Penny.

3.4 CULTURAL REFERENCES THE BIG BANG THEORY

Season 6, Episode 4

-Star Trek

Star Trek is an American sci-fi serial, movie and book derived from the original series Star Trek from the 60' ⁷¹

Klingon

'An imaginary race of aggressive people from another planet, who appeared in the television series Star Trek ⁷²

Season 6, Episode 15

Harry Potter

Harry Potter is a 7 part movie about a wizard Harry Potter who's main enemy is Lord Voldermort who killed his parents and wants to kill him either. Harry discovers he is a wizard and then he attends Wizardry school of Magic where he meet Hermione and Ron, his best friends. It is based on J. K. Rowling's book about Harry Potter.

⁷¹ Longman 'Star Trek' Dictionary of Contemporary English [online]

⁷² Longman 'Klingon' Dictionary of Contemporary English [online]

Burt and Ernie from Sesame Street

Burt and Ernie are Muppets. They play in a US television show in a show called Sesame Street.

Xanax

It is a pill used when one has a depression or feels anxiety or panic.⁷³

Game of Thrones

This is an American fantasy-dramatic serial

Season6, Episode 18

Soul Calibur V

This is a game, where a player is a character mostly a warrior and this character is able to reach a certain level and beat other players. Its origin comes from Japan.⁷⁴

Batman 17 -Death of the Family

It is a comic book about Batman and Joker fight.⁷⁵

Fantastic Four's Human Torch

It is a character from comic book and movie as well. There are four fantastic characters. One of them is he, Human Torch - once he gets angry he burns, he can fly with it, his temperature is very high.

The author observed that the cultural references were supported by an article from Matt Halsdorff⁷⁶

⁷³ Google definition 'Xanax' [online]

⁷⁴ Namco games community, 'Soul Calibur' [online]

⁷⁵ Comic Book Cast. 'Batman 17 - The Death of the family' [online]

⁷⁶ Halsdorff, 'Big Bang Theory - Cultural Reference Analyzed' [online]

4 THE IT CROWD

4.1 INTRODUCTION TO THE CHARACTERS OF IT CROWD

This sitcom is about Maurice Moss, Roy Trenneman and Jenn Barber, who make up the team of I.T department workers in the basement of a fictional company called Reynholm Industries. Jenn does not know anything about computers and Roy and Moss on the other hand do not know anything about normal social behaviour. Together they help each other not only in work but they become friends.

Maurice Moss' character

He works in Reynholm Industries for IT department in a basement. He is a computer expert and computer 'nerd'. The word nerd comes from the sitcom, which is the name for all people who have abilities to technical things and lack of social skills. His humour comes from his awkward social situations with women and very amusing moments with Roy. In following example, his lack of empathy he does not seem to understand is presented.

Season1 Episode 1

(Moss and Roy enter out of Jen's sight. Retreat then re-enters.)

Roy: Yes, I believe it was Tolstoy who said.... Ooh, it seems we have a visitor. I'm sorry, myself and Maurice were just engaged in quite a serious discussion about books and such. And didn't hear you come in.

Moss: Wait a second, you said it was Tolstoy who said what?

Roy: Ah, never mind that now Maurice.

Moss: When have you read Tolstoy?

Roy: Shut up Maurice.

Moss: Why are you speaking in that weird voice. When did.. I don't remember this conversation at all.

Jenn: Don't let me disturb you, I just wanted to come down...

Roy: Oh, don't be silly you'd never disturb us..(Falls over) - (Physical Comedy)

No, err... many people come down here to visit.

Moss: What are you talking about. Who comes down? What people? Why are you giving me the secret signal to shut up?

He does not understand sarcasm, irony and his lack of empathy and ingenuity makes the situations wittier. He lives with his mother who takes care of his clothes. It is interesting to mention Moss' spray he wears on his belt.⁷⁷ He says he needs to use it when his head is overheated. He has incredibly excellent memory, he can remember just everything.

Roy Trenneman's character

Roy's Irish. We can easily find out when we hear his accent. He has very specific

T-shirts comprise 'Pac Man shirts, Valve's game, Nothing is any good if other people like it, NO., I don't work here, I read your emails' (more in the chapter 4.4).⁸² He rarely wears a suit – it was once only in the moment when Denholm died, he wore the suit to his funeral.

He is a geek as well and his only friend is Moss however unlike Moss, Roy likes the girls from the upper departments and any attempt is rarely satisfied. He is the first to ask the upper departments if they turn their computer off and on again - the IT Crowd catchphrase of the whole series. Or the running joke one could say though.

He is not far away from vulgar words and informal English. These vulgarism or arguing and shouting to his colleagues upstairs brings him many difficulties. He cherishes playing video games and eating muffins and reading comic books.

Jenn Barber's character

This woman is a director of the IT department except that she knows nothing about IT.

This case leads Roy and Moss mock of her many times. She does not even know what the IT means (IT means Information Technology, note from the author) as it is presented in the example below:

⁷⁷ Springfield, 'The IT Crowd Episode Scripts' (S01E01)

Season 1, Episode 1

00:01:27

Denholm: I'm gonna put you in I.T. Because you said on your CV, you have a lot of experience with computers.

Jenn: I did say that on my CV, yes. I have a lot of experience with the whole computer thing you know, emails, sending emails, receiving emails, deleting emails, I could go on.

Denholm: Do.

Jenn: The web. Using a mouse, mices, using mice. Clicking, double clicking. The computer screen, of course. The keyboard. The... bit that goes on the floor down there.

Denholm: The hard drive.

Jenn: Correct.⁷⁸

On the other hand, she is a very good in communication with other people. She is a very good liar that is why she get the job Her relationship with Roy and Moss, despite their differences is very good

Denholm's character

He is a very rich and self-confident director of Reynholm Industries. In the example below he confirms that fact:

Brilliant! Gentleman, when I first started Reynholm Industries, I had just two things in my possession: a dream and 6 million pounds. Today I have a business empire, the like of which the world has never seen the like of which.

Hope it doesn't sound arrogant when I say that I am the greatest man in the world! Gentleman, to the future!

As well he likes declaring war. One episode deals with Denholm and his serious war speech to his employees to show them how to use a bike to avoid the stress. After the first series, he jumps out of the window and kill himself because of irregularities in the pension fund.

⁷⁸ ibid

4.2 TYPICAL JOKES IN 'THE IT CROWD'⁷⁹

Season 1, Episode 2

00:00:43

TV spot: 'Has this ever happen to you?' (an old lady is falling down from the stairs)

'From today dialing 999 won't get you the emergency services and that's not the only thing that's changing, nicer ambulances, faster responds time and better looking drivers, they're not just the emergency services their your emergency services so remember the new number

0118999 881 999119 725 3' (shot on an old lady) *'that's 0118999 881 999119 725 3.'*

Old lady: *'Hello, I've had a bit of a tumble.'*

Moss: *'Oh, that's easy to remember 0118999 881 999119 725 3*

It is not easy to remember it at all. The number is too long and to remember such numbers are too complicated.

Type of humour: Sarcasm, irony

The scene where the old lady falls down from the stairs: Physical comedy.

Setting: TV Commercial on TV

00:03:06

Phone is ringing and Roy is drinking coffee and licking doughnut sugar from his fingers after 40 seconds he answers the phone.

Roy: *Hello IT.*

Have you tried turning it off and on again?

OK, well, the button on the side. Is it glowing?

Yeah, you need to turn it on. Err, the button turns it on.

Enter Moss, who tosses Roy a muffin

⁷⁹ The IT Crowd Episaode Scripts [online]

Yeah, you do know how a button works, don't you? No, not on clothes.

Moss's phone rings. He answers it.

Moss: *Hello IT.*

Yuhuh. Have you tried forcing an unexpected reboot?

Roy: *No, there you go, I just heard it come on. No, that's the music you hear when it comes on. No, that's the music you hear when... I'm sorry, are you from the past?*

Moss: *You see the drive hooks a function by patching the system core table so it's not safe to unload it unless another thread is about to jump in there and do its stuff. And you don't want to end up in the middle of invalid memory.*

(Laughs) Hello?.

Roy and Moss work for IT, they help other people to repair their computers. Here one could see, that even if Roy tries to tell the women on the phone how to repair her computer, in a simple way, it does not work. Or Moss, who speaks IT language, however, say the same thing. None of these work. The amusing part is when both of them try to say the same thing, however, none of it has any success.

Type of humour: Sarcasm, Wit

Setting: Office

00:02:06

Roy: *I don't know why they just couldn't keep it as it was. How hard is it to remember 911?*

Moss: *You mean 999*

Roy: *I mean 999*

Moss: *That's the American one, you Berk!*

Roy says that it's not difficult to remember just three numbers, but saying this he makes a mistake of the particular number. That is the joke. And then Moss uses the vulgar word 'Berk' which is not typical for him.

Type of humour: Recovery

00:12:42

Moss is responsible for the fire in his office.

Moss: *Oh four I mean five I mean fire!!*

He brings fire-extinguisher and he starts to examine its instructions

Moss: *Now let's see what we have here. Stand upright* (He stands up)

Now, I can't read it..Oh, not me! I am a giddy-goat.

Ok. Remove the safety clip (...) aim nozzle at base of fire

(the fire-extinguisher starts burning because Moss put the nozzle into the fire)

Moss: *Oh that is typical, where they have done that?*

(On the fire-extinguisher is written - Made in Britain.)

Moss: *Ahm...*

He examines the instruction very slowly. Below the instructions he has to pull the extinguisher upright, but instead of the extinguisher himself upright himself. The extinguisher starts burning and he wants to know from which country is it from and there is 'Made in Britain' which means they mock of their own country and their products . According to The Phrase Finder, the online dictionary, giddy goat is a British expression for to behave foolishly.

Type of humour: Satire

Setting: Office

00:14:35

Moss tries to do something to stop the fire, well he writes an email to certain organizations to solve the problem of fire.

Subject: Fire

Dear Sir stroke Madam, I am writing to inform you of a fire which has broken out on the premises of... no, that's too formal.

Dear Sir stroke Madam. Fire!... exclamation mark. Fire!... exclamation mark. Help me!... exclamation mark. 123 Carrendon Road. Looking forward to hearing from you. All the best, Maurice Moss

There is a danger right before Moss' eyes and instead of calling help, he attempts to write an e-mail to certain institutes. That is the humorous situation of it. He gives a stress when he writes 'Fire! Exclamation mark.' After all that he sits back in his chair and he is satisfied with what he has done. The fire is still on.

Type of humour: Black humour, Burlesque

Setting: Office

Season 1, Episode 4

00:00:36

(Roy is singing)

Roy: We don't need no education.

Moss: Yes, you do. You've just used a double negative.

Roy sings a song that is known worldwide, but grammar is incorrect. Using double negative is not correct for English language, however, in songs these grammatical incorrectness is allowed, although Moss does not understand it. It is a song therefore Roy had made any mistake

Type of humour: Quip, gag.

Setting: Office

Season 1, Episode 6

00:00:39

Denholm, every time he speaks he looks at Roy, Moss and Jenn who are responsible for the success but then nothing.

Denholm: I know you want a party! But I have to say thank you to a few people after what has been a momentous week for this company. Project Icarus has increased our productivity.. 10 folds. Every department is working at three times the usual speed due to the increased interconnectivity of our computer system! How could I talk about all that computer stuff all.. Of that computer gobbledegook without saying a word about the lawyers! They cut the red tape! They cut the red tape!

They cut the red tape! (..) And when you're talking about computers, how can you fail to mention accounts!

Jenn: He's building up to us! He must be!

Denholm: And finally, last but not least.. Champagne.. These three people proved time and again, that they have the right stuff! The toilet cleaners!

Typical example of British humour. The humorous situation is following. Denholm supposes to thanks to IT department comprise Roy, Moss and Jenn, however, instead of that he thanks to the others, not involve at all in Project Icarus. The toilet cleaners have nothing to do with success of computers.

Type of humour: Black humour, Epigram

Setting: Company gallery

00:02:26

Roy: Hello IT, have you tried turning it off and on again?

Well have you tried showing it up your arse? (He hangs up the phone)

Oh, yeah, I just realized that that was my mother.

The first sentence is the most famous one of the whole IT Crowd. It is Catch Phrase and Running Joke. They are talking about computers. Amusing moment is when he realises that he was talking to his mother.

Type of humour: Farce

Setting: Office

00:04:08

Jenn: I've got you know.. I've got you know... at the moment.. So..

Moss and Roy: What?

Jenn: I have aunt Irma visiting...

Moss: you do not like aunt Irma... I've got.. I've got an aunt like that!

Jenn: It's my term for.. My time of the month

Roy: Ohhhh

Moss: What time of the month? The weekend?

Jenn: No

Moss: Does Aunt Irma visit on the weekend?

Roy: Moss

Jenn: You know, it's high tide

Moss: But we're not on the coast!

Jenn is talking about her period, however, it is taboo to talk about these things, she is talking about it as 'Aunt Irma' visits her. Moss does not understand it and thinks Aunt Irma is real aunt Irma and the joke is based on that. He misunderstood her.

Type of humour: Blue humour, Black humour

Setting: Office

00:05:52

Moss: Oh my appointment. I've got to go and see the psychiatrist.

Roy: I can't believe there's a psychiatrist in the building. All because those two from accounts just had enough of everything and wanted to go to the seaside.

Moss: The seaside? They committed suicide, Roy!

Roy: That's right, yes of course.

Roy heard badly what the accounts did, he thought they went to the seaside. Instead of this they commit a suicide. It is a black humour. People rarely talk about death.

Type of Humour: Black Humour, Recovery.

Setting: Office

Season 2, Episode 2

00:10:40

(Richmond is wearing black suit)

Jenn: Noooo, Richmond, you are NOT coming to the funeral?

Richmond: What funeral?

Apparently Richmond's dress is black. He is Goth. He wears such a dress normally and he did not know about the funeral. And Jen thought he did. The fun part was made by the misunderstanding from Jenn's part.

Type of Humour: Black humour

Setting: Office

00:00:52

Denholm: When I started Renholm Industries I had just 2 things in my possession. A dream and 6 million pounds. Today I have a business empire the like of which the world has never seen the like of which. I hope it doesn't sound arrogant, when I say that I am the greatest man in the world

He is aware of being rich. People do not usually say it aloud. People normally do not say how proud they are, how great they are. It is easy to build up a company with 6 million pounds.

Type of humour: Joke

Setting: Denholm's office

Season2, Episode 5

00:03:49

John: I don't think that's true.

Jenn: With all due respect John, I am the head of IT and I have it on good authority. If you type 'Google' into Google, you can break the Internet. So please, no one try it, even for a joke. (The executives laugh)

It's not a laughing matter. You can break the Internet.

Roy and Moss told her that you can break the Internet typing Google into Goggle. That is a nonsense. She thought it was true and that was the joke she was sure about it.

Types of humour: Bull

Setting: Boardroom

Season 4, Episode 4

00:19:17

Jenn is supposed to welcome an Italian guest, but she cannot speak Italian and nobody knows

Jenn: Viennetta Fiat Punto

Jenn used a brand name of a car to welcome the Italian director. Fiat Punto is a type of a car. She pretends to speak Italian, although she only sounds Italian. She makes a fool of herself in front of the Italian shareholder to keep her job or to impress Douglass, the director of Reynholm Industries.

Type of humour: Joke

Setting: Douglass' office

4.3 IDIOMS USED IN IT CROWD

Season 2, Episode 1

00:06:26

Moss: It's set in the 80!

Roy: Graphic homo eroticism? Is that mean they are gonna get them out?

Jenn: You're not comfortable with your sexuality?

*Roy: I'm very comfortable with my sexuality. I just don't wanna **be slapped in the face** with their sexuality.*

Slapped in the face

An action that insults or upsets someone In this case Roy does not want to face the situation that they might be homosexuals.

00:09:30

Actor in the theatre: I'm a friend of Dorothy! She is my friend!

Moss: This is insanely brilliant!

Actor in the theatre: Hold my hand. No, that's not my hand! I love willies!

Roy: Okay, I'm completely satisfied!

Moss: Don't leave! It's rude'

*Roy: It's too gay for me. **I thought I could handle it**, but I can't.*

I could handle it

It means the person tries to do it, to be good about it, feel good about it. He was certain at that moment that the situation is under his control.

00:22:23

Phillip: What on earth made you think I was gay?

Jenn: Well, you know I didn't just pull it out of the air.

Pull something out of the air

It means she wouldn't have thought about it if he hadn't given her a reason. It's just that the fact she thought he is a gay haven't come on purpose. He helped her to think he is a gay man.

Season2 , Episode 2

02:10:00

*Roy: So let's say I wanted to call my mum, I just have to say 'mum' and it calls her. I don't need to do anything. **It's the dog's bollocks.***

Dog's bollocks

It's cool, great, awesome

Moss: Sorry for your loss.

Mrs. Denholm: Thank you

Moss: It's not like you've lost a pen, is it? It's so much worse. Would you like a pen? I have this spare one.

Mrs. Denholm: Oh no, thank you.

Moss: Please, take it

Mrs. Denholm: Why are you giving it to me?

*Moss: I don't know. **Swings and roundabouts!***

Swings and roundabouts

(British & Australian idiom) - something that you say to describe a situation in which there are as many advantages as there are problems⁸⁰

⁸⁰ Swings and roundabouts , Cambridge Idioms Dictionary,2006, Print

00:21:35

Roy: ***I sorted out this for you.*** Now, I'm afraid the vibrate setting is still a little weedy. So, you may wanna put it all the way up to ten.

Douglas: ***Ten! Shall I do done and done! Sorry about this, old man! (He put the picture of his father from the wall) Now, I like that! Nearly at the station! (His phone vibrate in his pocket)***

Sort something out

In this case it means it was figured out. There was found a solution for the situation.

Nearly at the station

This is an expression used by Douglas when his phone was ringing in his pocket and it makes him excited.

00:05:23

(Moss enters the room, jumps on the sofa and looks upset)

Jenn: ***You all right, Moss? - I've got the blues, Jen.***

Jenn: ***Why?***

Moss: ***Roy and I look like an old married couple***

I have got the blues

When someone has the blues it means he feels sad or he is depressed

00:08:15

(Roy and Douglas arrange a night together)

Douglas: ***I'll get my PA to phone you with my name and address,***

(He went to Jenn's office)

Whoa, there. That's not my office.

Roy: ***Well, what's good for the goose is good for the gender. And I'm the gender.***

What's good for the goose is good for the gender.

It is something that you say to suggest that if a particular type of behaviour is acceptable for one person, it should also be acceptable for another person⁸¹

00:13:53

(Douglas's apartment)

Douglas: *I hate the whole boss/employee thing, don't you?*

Roy: *Yeah*

Douglas: *You wanna **seal the deal** with a high five?*

Roy: *Yes*

Seal the deal

It means to decide on a certain thing, 'to come to an agreement'. To agree with someone.⁸²

00:17:23

(They talk about a German cannibal with whom Moss spent last night)

Jenn: *But eating people is illegal'*

Moss: *Only without their consent.*

Jenn: *No Moss, no.*

Moss: ***It's a grey area**, give me that.*

It's a grey area

A subject or problem that people do not know how to deal with because there are no clear rules⁸³

Jenn: *You can't wait to take her to court **to get rid of her!** What are you doing?*

⁸¹ 'What's good for the Goose', Cambridge Idioms Dictionary, 2006, Print

⁸² 'Seal the deal' Dictionary.com's 21st Century Lexicon. [online]

⁸³ 'A grey area', Cambridge Idioms Dictionary, 2006, Print

*Roy: Well, not that it's **any of your business**, but I was planning to have a little poo.*

Get rid of someone/something

It means to dispose of somebody, do not see him/her/it anymore.

It's any of your business

It means that the thing the person is going to have not anything in common with the person who wants to know it. It is not a thing the other person needs to know. It could be personal, secret or appropriate.

00:10:39

Roy: Moss, I don't like to be negative about it, but everything you invent is worthless.

Moss: Ah, well, prepare to put mustard on those words, for you will soon be consuming them, along with this slice of humble pie that comes direct from the oven of shame set at gas mark egg-on-your-face

Soon you will be consuming them, along with this slice of humble pie that comes direct from the oven of shame set at gas mark egg-on-your-face

It means Roy is going to pay for his negativism about Moss' inventions and because Moss do not have a clue about swear at somebody he uses this way how to express his feelings.

00:13:07

Moss: I chose Stephen Fennal because it's easy to remember.

Roy: Right, Except, well, you did say Stephen Jennal earlier.

Moss: Smoke and mirrors, Roy

Smoke and mirrors

It is a deception or confusion. It is said of statements or more complicated rhetoric used to mislead people rather than inform. Alludes to the way a magician uses optical illusion to create credibility while performing a trick.⁸⁴

⁸⁴ 'Smoke and mirrors' Cambridge Idioms Dictionary, 2006, Print

Season 3, Episode 1

00:12:57

Builder: Look Jen, I know what's going on.

Jenn: You do?

Builder: And it's fine, I understand, I really do.

Jenn: So, you understand how I feel.

Builder: Yeah, but you are barking up on a wrong tree. I mean I think you're a top bird and everything but you're not really my type. I mean I like tall beautiful girls.

Barking up on a wrong tree

The builder thought Jen likes him, however, he does not like her and he uses the idiom to tell her, that he is not the one she looks for. She may try however, it won't work because she is not his type.

4.4 CULTURAL REFERENCES IN IT CROWD

Friend face /Facebook

It is an internet page where one can create a profile and share the information with his or her friends, upload the pictures and see the other profiles.

Dungeons and Dragons

It is the world's most popular pen & paper Role playing game where one person is the 'dungeon master' and the rest of the players are 'player characters'⁸⁵

Star Trek

Is an American sci-fi serial, movie and book as well the video games derived from the original series Star Trek from the 60' ⁶⁹

Frank

It is a cartoon character. Looks like a big cat with beaver teeth. He is purple and the comics is named after him. It is a US comics.⁸⁶

Roy's T-shirts

Space Invader's T-shirt

Space Invaders is an arcade video shooting game from Japan⁸⁷

Pac man T-shirt

It is a video game first released in Japan in 1980.⁸⁸

Undo

On Roy's T-shirt there is a keyboard button for MAC computer that expresses 'undo'

V for Vendetta mask

This mask we could see in the office of Raynholm Industries in a basement where I.T department takes place. V for Vendetta is a graphic novel written by Alan Moore and it is about the world has been destroyed and many murders occur there.⁸⁹

⁸⁵ Google definition, Dangeons & Dragons [online]

⁸⁶ Wikipedia, Frank, [online]

⁸⁷ Doctorow, 'All of Roy's T-shirts' [online]

⁸⁸ Google definition, 'Pac Man'[online]

⁸⁹ Google definition, 'V for Vendetta' [online]

Fantastic four comics

It is a comic book of four people who were in Space and they ran into a radiation and they became the superheroes.

The Haunting of Bill Crouse

It is a reference to the Shirley Jackson novel The Haunting of Hill House -it is about a Hill House and four characters live there. It is evident that a ghost lives with them.⁹⁰

⁹⁰ Guran, 'Haunting of hill house' [online]

5. DIFFERENCES

5.1 DIFFERENCE FIND OUT IN SITCOMS

5.1.1. Difference in slang

Firstly the slang is different, there are few examples chosen from scripts of each sitcom

SLANG IN THE IT CROWD

In The IT Crowd, words such as 'Bollocks, Bugger off, Collywobbles, Dog's Bollocks, Spend a Penny, Willy, Arse or Bender' have been used.

***Bollocks** - it describes something extremely negative or lacking in value. Although when it's dog's bollocks, it means something very good and valuable.*

***Bugger off!** Go away! Or Leave me alone!*

***Spend a penny** - to use the restroom (used both in IT Crowd as well as TBBT)*

***Arse** - This is a word that doesn't seem to exist in America. It basically meant the same as 'ass' but is much ruder.*

***Bender** - pub crawl or a heavy drinking session*

***Willy** - another word for penis. It is a nicer alternative of the this word⁹¹*

SLANG IN TBBT

Californian Slang - TBBT is from California, Pasadena

Hella

It means hell of, lots of. It is a shortening of the word 'hell of' ⁹²

Yolla

Penny says it often. She opens her apartment's door and asks Sheldon : 'Yolla' It basically means Yes?, What do you want?, What's up?

Weed

It is a slang word for marijuana. American synonyms could be dank or bud

⁹¹ Eththerington Mike, 'The very best of British, The American's guide to speaking British' 2000, Print

Sausage fest

It means it is going to be a party full of men. No women.

Something's bugging you

This means something is bothering you, there could be a problem that the person who has it does not know what to do with it and still think about it.

All-ears

This means that the person is fully listening to what is being said

5.1.2 Difference in humour

As mentioned in the chapter of British and American humour (2.3, 2.4) there is a big difference in sarcasm and irony. Britons are not afraid to make fun of others, using cruel words, hidden jokes and black humour. Americans use these things as well, but at the end to make the situation more polite use 'just kidding'. American jokes are more obvious, more suspicious, they react on everyday situations and it is easy to understand the joke in the particular moment. British humour tends to have the effect of a sharp, dry humour and the viewer has to concentrate and be prepared for everything.

5.1.3 Difference in sitcoms

There is a huge difference between these two sitcoms. First of all, it is necessary to mention the continuation of the sitcom. As was said above in the chapter of the Sitcom, (2.1.1) it is not common to have continuation between episodes, it is not necessary to know the plot. That is true for IT Crowd, but less for The Big Bang Theory. As the series continues in The Big Bang Theory, characters start to be a less geeky, less abnormal and each character has their own story. The IT Crowd geeks Roy and Moss are nerds in the right way, they react to others in their awkward and nerdy way and jokes are made from this. In American sitcoms we can assume that there is always one character to be focused on more than the others. For example Friends - Rachel and Chandler, The Big Bang Theory - Sheldon, Two and a Half Men - Charlie. As opposed to British sitcoms where each character is involved in the scripts the same. In the IT Crowd, it is not necessary to know the plot, the sitcom is made to mainly amuse the audience by embarrassing situations that Roy and Moss get themselves into.

6. SIMILARITIES

6.1 SIMILARITIES FIND OUT IN SITCOMS

Humour has already been discussed several times in the chapters 2.3 (British) and 2.4 (American.) In this chapter, similarities in sitcoms, language and expressions used in chosen sitcoms are going to be compared. Concerning the situation comedies there are plenty of similarities between them.

Firstly, it is necessary to mention the characters. IT Crowd has got three main characters - Moss, 'the geek, nerd, weirdo' who is very intelligent but behaves like an alien. He has a lack of social norms, skills and lack of empathy. With him we can always find Roy. Less geeky, but weird enough to notice, and finally Jen, who is a relationship manager working for the IT department and thinks it stands for Internet things. ('It stands for Information Technology'). She is a complete stranger in the department of IT.

As we speak about the American sitcom characters we could start with Sheldon, who may possibly substitute Moss' role. He is exactly the same. He wears geeky T-shirts as Roy does. (chapter 3.4/4.4) He has the same qualities as Moss, he is very intelligent, he knows all the definitions you could possibly think of, and math formulae, he knows all the scientists and their inventions, but concerning socialising, he is lost as Moss is. Another character is Penny, who is similar to Jenn ('Jenn Barber, IT Crowd') both excel in relationships, communication skills and empathy, but they are far away from technical and scientific part of life. They are not as smart as their colleagues. Other similar characters are Roy and Leonard. They are both 'buddies' of Moss and Sheldon, they play the less weird guy, the more normal one in their friendship.

Many similarities have been found between these two situation comedies. From the point of view of characters, they are more or less the same. There have been changes only in the places and the environments, therefore they could seem different, but there are many things the same. In both sitcoms, the world of nerds is expressed, intelligent, very smart guys, who have concrete experience with their individual fields. They are accompanied by a girl, who does not know much about these fields. She is there to introduce their purpose and their knowledge to the audience, even if it is science in The Big Bang Theory or Information Technology in IT Crowd. The girl helps the audience to understand all the technical, smart definitions of their work.

Concerning humour both British and Americans use sarcasm and irony. They both mock themselves as well as mocking each other. They are not afraid to use black humour and offensive jokes to put the viewer into the sitcom.

The directors focus on one particular character and those are Sheldon Cooper for The Big Bang Theory and Maurice Moss for IT Crowd. Their misunderstandings and funny situations consist of girls, girls' problems, flirting, sexual subtext and irony, and are the daily bread for the laughs of the audience.

Secondly, catchphrases and running jokes are a part of every sitcom. For IT Crowd it is the sentence 'Have you tried turning it off and on again?' Moss, Roy and Jenn use this catch phrase/running joke when their colleagues from upstairs think their computer is broken. The Big Bang Theory has more than one running joke (chapter 2.2) and surprisingly character of Sheldon Cooper made all of them. Sheldon knocks on the door three times, the song Soft Kitty for Sheldon once he is sick, 'Bazinga' - Sheldon's imagine word for 'just kidding'.

7. CONCLUSION

Comparison of linguistic expressions in the United States and Britain, using sitcoms, was the objective of the Bachelor Thesis. To find out whether the language and humour in the sitcoms are similar or different the author worked with scripts of both sitcoms and found that the sitcoms differ, however, they are based on the same genre, using similar features and cultural references.

The theoretical part described the definitions which the author could apply to the practical part. Useful definitions such as setting, narrative, aesthetics, types of humour or types of sitcoms helped the author to recognize the jokes. The most watched sitcoms in Britain and the United States from the year 1950 have been chosen.

The practical part of the thesis examined the details of the sitcom, including the jokes, cultural references, idioms and slang words. It used examples from the scripts of both sitcoms namely *The Big Bang Theory* and *The IT Crowd*. The type of humour in the British sitcom *IT Crowd* is predominantly black humour and sarcasm. The American sitcom *The Big Bang Theory* is predominantly blue humour and burlesque. Both sitcoms have practically the same genre. Often the cultural references are similar. In the office of the *IT Crowd* and in the apartment of *The Big Bang Theory* one could find the same props featuring the Darth Vader helmet, comics V for Vendetta or T-shirts Roy and Sheldon wear.

In general terms, the sitcoms have the same premise, cultural references, genre or characters, however the essential difference is in the language and humour. Language comprises idioms, those are a part of every sitcom and there is a difference between American and British language, they have a different slang and even accent. Generally it depends if the person is able to appreciate the British black humour and sarcasm or American blue humour.

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9. ABSRACT

The key objective of the Bachelor Thesis is to compare linguistic expressions in selected American and British sitcoms. For this purpose it has been chosen American The Big Bang Theory and British IT Crowd.

In the first three chapters, it explains the theory itself accompanied by a history of sitcoms from the year 1950. The theory is later used for explaining the practical part of jokes taken from the sitcoms mentioned.

Following chapters deal with the jokes, idioms and cultural references which are presented in both sitcoms. The purpose of it is to present the type of humour and style. The objective was to give the readers insight of the country's humour.

The final chapters tend to conclude the concept. The last part of Differences and Similarities are the summary of what has been done in previous chapters.

It has been observed that generally sitcoms are similar, in certain aspects they are the same. Nevertheless, as concern the language, slang and linguistic expressions the author observed humour and sitcoms different.

10. RESUMÉ

Stěžejní cíl Bakalářské práce je srovnání lingvistických výrazů ve vybraných Amerických a Britských sitcomech. Za tímto účelem byly vybrány, americký sitcom Teorie Velkého Třesku a britský sitcom Ajtáci.

V prvních třech kapitolách je vysvětlena samotná teorie, doprovázená historií sitcomů od roku 1950. Teorie je později použita pro vysvětlení vtipů v praxi, které jsou převzaty z uvedených sitcomů.

Následující kapitoly se konkrétně zabývají vtipy, idiomy a kulturními rozdíly, které jsou v obou sitcomech prezentovány. Cílem je ukázat druh humoru a styl. Cílem také bylo, přiblížit čtenářům humor dané země.

Závěrečné kapitoly uzavírají celý koncept. Poslední část nazvaná Rozdíly a Podobnosti je shrnutím toho, co bylo sepsáno v předešlých kapitolách.

Bylo zjištěno, že sitcomy jsou si podobné, v některých případech stejné, nicméně co se týče jazyka, slangu a lingvistických výrazů, autor shledal sitcomy a humor rozdílné.