

Západočeská univerzita v Plzni

Fakulta filozofická

Bakalářská práce

**The phenomenon of TV series with the main focus on
comparison of Czech and American soap-operas**

Martina Fridrichová

Plzeň 2007

Západočeská univerzita v Plzni

Fakulta filozofická

Katedra anglického jazyka a literatury

Studijní program Filologie

Studijní obor Cizí jazyky pro komerční praxi

Kombinace angličtina – francouzština

Bakalářská práce

**The phenomenon of TV series with the main focus on
comparison of Czech and American soap-operas**

Martina Fridrichová

Vedoucí práce:

Alok Kumar, M.A.

Katedra anglického jazyka a literatury

Fakulta filozofická Západočeské univerzity v Plzni

Plzeň 2007

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

Plzeň, duben 2017

.....

Poděkování

Na tomto místě bych ráda poděkovala vedoucímu mé bakalářské práce, panu Aloku Kumarovi, M.A., za pomoc, rady a trpělivost při jejím zpracování.

Table of contents

1	Introduction	1
2	Theoretical part.....	2
2.1	Leisure time and entertainment	2
2.1.1	Leisure: definition and division.....	2
2.1.2	Entertainment	3
2.2	Media.....	4
2.2.1	Analog and digital media.....	5
2.2.2	Newspapers	6
2.2.3	Radio	7
2.2.4	Television	8
2.2.5	Internet.....	8
2.3	Television	10
2.3.1	Channels and programs	10
2.3.2	Ratings.....	11
2.4	TV series.....	12
2.4.1	Sitcoms	12
2.4.2	Crime television shows.....	13
2.4.3	Reality show	14
2.4.4	Talk show	15
2.5	Soap operas.....	15
2.5.1	History	16
2.5.2	Topics and popularity	18
3	Practical Part.....	20
3.1	Questionnaire.....	20
3.1.1	Main hypotheses.....	20
3.1.2	Survey results	21
3.2	Linguistic phenomenon of television series	33
4	Conclusion.....	35
5	Resumé	36
6	Abstract	37
7	Bibliography	38

1 Introduction

The topic of this bachelor thesis deals with the phenomenon of television series and soap operas and its goal is to find out why TV series are so popular among people and whether it is possible to improve our knowledge of a foreign language by watching television series in original dubbing. While choosing the topic, I kept in mind that I would like to write my thesis about something which I am interested in. And thus, as I am a great enthusiast about television series, I wanted to explore what is the reason why television series are so well-liked and if they can be beneficial for my studies. Furthermore, I think that soap operas in general are rather controversial topic as some people are watching it regularly and would not miss any episode and others cannot abide a single thought of soap operas while thinking that it is a genre only for dull and foolish people.

The thesis is divided into two main parts: theoretical and practical. As far as the theoretical part is concerned, it is sorted into five main chapters where each of them is linked to the following one and they are gradually dealing with leisure and possibilities of spending free time, evolution and importance of mass media, television and its broadcast in particular, TV series and different types of them and finally soap operas in more detail and within the whole bachelor thesis, I will compare Czech and American mass media as well as television series. As for publications, I used monolingual as well as bilingual dictionaries, books, textbooks and articles on the Internet as well as official websites of television networks in both English and Czech language concerning the topics of leisure, mass media and TV series.

The practical part compiles of two main sections. Primarily, I will focus on evaluating a questionnaire which I created for these purposes trying to estimate the public opinion on television series among Czech people using also graphs to make the evaluation more comprehensible. The main goal of this questionnaire is to find out what people find the most interesting about television series, what they think about them in general and whether their opinions confirm my predefined hypotheses.

Secondly, I will focus on linguistic phenomenon trying to determine what language and vocabulary is mostly used in television series and how it can help us to improve our level of foreign language. I will proceed mainly from my own experience as well as from the results of the questionnaire as it includes a question dealing with these issues.

2 Theoretical part

2.1 Leisure time and entertainment

The life in the modern society is getting faster every day. Advanced technologies which influence our lives are getting more and more sophisticated and the science has progressed in a way most people cannot even understand. However, we have become obsessed with working and making money. Work and career has become one of the most important things in our lives. Caroline West, a lecturer at the University of Sydney, says in her article *“We live in an age offering unprecedented opportunity for us all to lead the kind of flourishing, leisurely existence of which the ancients could only dream. Yet many work harder and longer than ever before.[...] Working hard has come to be seen as a moral virtue; and prioritizing leisure is regarded variously as lazy, selfish, frivolous or irresponsible – unless, of course, the leisure is ‘well-earned’.”*¹ This in fact means that most people are trying to work harder and harder in order to make as much money as possible to be able to maintain a certain social status. But even in the busy lives that we are living, it is very important to be able to simply switch off and to find time to do something completely different to our job. It is important to be able to enjoy our free time.

2.1.1 Leisure: definition and division

According to The Penguin English Dictionary, leisure (as the free time is also called) is defined as *“freedom provided by the cessation of activities, especially time free from work or duties”*². It basically means that leisure is the time when we are free to do whatever we want. We are not working or studying, doing the housework but also not eating or having a shower. It is the time that we have fully for ourselves and we can do anything we like.

But what can we do with this time? Spending free time differs according to age, gender and even professions. For example, if someone’s job requires hours of sitting behind a desk or in front of a screen, this person will more likely prefer spending his free time more actively - doing some physical activities such as sports. On the other hand, if a person has physically demanding job, if he works manually, he will prefer more relaxing form of spending free time such as reading or watching television. But also, we are influenced by accessibility or availability of sufficient equipment or facilities. If we live near library, gym or

¹ (West, 2009)

² (Allen, 2005), p. 799

swimming pool, we will be using those facilities more often than a person who lives on the other side of the city.

We can divide leisure activities in two main groups: active and passive leisure activities. Active leisure is in fact a leisure which requires expending some energy, either physical or intellectual. This could include activities such as sports, jogging or simply walking as well as playing an instrument, painting or reading a book. As you can see, active leisure does not have to necessarily imply exercising or a lot of movement. When you are reading a book, you also have to expend energy - to read it, to understand it, to dive into it -, just in another way. This type of leisure has also other benefits than helping ourselves to relax. Exercising helps us with maintaining a healthy lifestyle and keeping fit. Also, it gives us an internal feeling of satisfaction with ourselves. Playing an instrument or painting helps us to develop certain skills and that is also a big advantage.

Passive leisure, on the other hand, does not require much energy. It includes for example watching television, listening to music, playing video games or reading newspaper or magazines. All these are activities that you can do without much effort. They are great when you need to have some rest after a busy day at work or at school. However, even though they are excellent for relaxing, they do not have any other perks as active leisure activities do. If we read a magazine, we do not have such inner satisfaction as if we read for example a book in foreign language. But then again, passive leisure helps us psychically. We all sometimes need a time only for ourselves when we can basically do nothing.

2.1.2 Entertainment

To enjoy our free time properly, we need something that will entertain us. We can, of course, simply lie down and look at the ceiling (and it would be a passive leisure) but we would soon get bored. People can get bored very easily actually. If we are not doing something we like, enjoy or are interested in, we get bored and sleepy and we look for something that will distract us. Nowadays, in the era of smartphones and tablets, the distraction is very easy to find. We chat with our friends via social media, play games on our mobile phones or surf on the internet. Basically, we do something that we enjoy or find amusing or interesting. And in fact, that is the very definition of entertainment. To quote The

Penguin English Dictionary, entertainment is “*something entertaining, diverting or engaging*”.³

However, every person has a different opinion, a different view on what is entertaining. For some people, a perfect example of entertainment is playing an instrument, going to the theatre, cinema or concert or reading a book, others find sport matches doing sports extremely entertaining. But also, for some people, the synonym of entertainment can be watching television, playing PC games, going out with friends or simply play, for example, board games with our family. But even though our tastes are different and every person enjoys something else, the important information is, that entertaining activity is an activity which we find amusing and which we enjoy doing.

2.2 Media

As we can see in the lists of activities included in active and passive leisure, a lot of passive leisure activities are associated with the media. Whether it is television, radio, internet, newspapers or magazines, media represent an essential part of our lives. As Mark Deuze says in his book *Media Life* “*You live in media. Who you are, what you do, and what all of this means to you does not exist outside of media.*”⁴ And in a way, it is true. The media surround us at each step. The first thing in the morning which most of us do is checking our mobile phones for messages or notifications from various social networks. During our morning routine (brushing the teeth, having breakfast, etc.) we are listening to music, checking weather forecast or traffic on the internet or television. Someone even watch an episode of their favourite show while they are having a breakfast. On our way to school or work, whether we are going by bus, car or walking on foot, we are listening the radio, or music from the mobile phones or mp3 players, we are reading the newspapers or checking the social media and chatting with our friends. In offices or shops and stores, the radio is playing practically nonstop. And when we finally come home, we turn on the television not only because we want to watch something, but more and more often simply to break the silence.

The Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary defines media as “*the main ways that large number of people receives information and entertainment (that is television, radio,*

³ (Allen, 2005), p. 463

⁴ (Deuze, 2015)

newspapers and the Internet)”⁵. The word itself originally comes from Latin expression “medium” which could mean “in the middle”⁶. We can say that their main purpose is to enable a communication between the sender (in our case mostly mass media) and the receiver (the audience, readers, etc.). They serve as tools to transfer a message. However, there is a large number of different types of media. That is why I would like to focus on mass media and later on television in particular.

Mass media are described as “*the technological tools, or channels, used to transmit the messages of mass communication*”⁷. They have two main characteristic features: they spread the message; they do not participate in any exchange; and the fact that their recipients (the audience) form a large, mixed and anonym group of various people which the sender does not know - also called the “mass”.

2.2.1 Analog and digital media

We are living in a period of time called Digital (or Information) Age. Cambridge dictionary defines Digital Age as “*the present time when most information is in a digital form, especially when compared to the time when computers were not used*”⁸. Essentially, we can say that digitization (“*putting) information into the form of a series of the numbers 0 and 1, usually so that it can be understood and used by a computer*”) affected media in particular, in divided them into two groups: analog and digital media. They are also sometimes called “new” and “old” media - which depends on the fact whether they were founded or fundamentally changed after the start of digitization.

There are some main differences between the two of them. As far as analog media are concerned, the recipient have a very small (practically no) possibility of changing the broadcasted message. His role is mostly passive and the whole communication process is not very interactive. The main examples of analog media are: newspapers, magazines, radio and analog television. On the other hand, digital (new) media enables the recipients to affect the final form of the message, their role is more active and the communication process seems to be more interactive. Digital media are represented mostly by internet and digital television broadcast which offers for example more television channels, etc.

⁵ (A. S. Hornby, 2005)

⁶ (Jan Jirák, 2003), p. 16

⁷ (Hanson, 2008), p. 9

⁸ (Cambridge University Press, 2011)

2.2.2 Newspapers

Now, I would like to focus my attention particular mass media. First mass media I would like to talk about is the oldest one - the press. The main development of spreading of the written word occurred with the invention of the printing press by Johannes Gutenberg in 15th century. At the beginning, it was used mostly for printing books or pamphlets but soon enough first newspapers started to appear. First newspaper written in English was called "Curanto" and it was published in 1618 in Amsterdam. "Publick Occurrences" is usually said to be the first newspaper published in the American colonies, however, this newspaper had only one issue printed in 1690 and then it was shut down by the government. So as the first continuously published American newspaper, we can count "The Boston News Letter" whose first issue was printed in 1704. As for the first newspaper written in Czech language, it was Pražské poštovské noviny. It was a weekly newspaper founded in 1719.

At the beginning, newspaper production was very costly so that only rich people could afford to buy it. However, with technical progress, the production as well as the price of newspaper was getting lower and lower and eventually, it became available to everyone and very popular among all people. Nowadays, they provide current news from various fields such as politics, economy, culture, sport or society.

Newspapers can be divided into two groups mostly according to their main focus. Firstly, there are so-called broadsheet newspapers: large format, longer articles focusing mostly on economy, politics or sport. Among the most famous American broadsheets, we can count USA Today and The Wall Street Journal on the national scale and then for example The New York Times, The Washington Post or The Los Angeles Times as far as the metropolitan press is concerned.⁹ As for Czech broadsheets, the most influential are Mladá Fronta DNES, Právo, Hospodářské noviny or Lidové noviny and then regional dailies, each dealing with news from a certain region.

Then there are so-called tabloids. These have smaller format, use more pictures and focus on news about celebrities, scandals and they are not seen as a part of serious press. Typical American tabloids are: New York Daily News, New York Post or Chicago Sun Times

⁹ metropolitan press: newspapers published in big American cities, usually dealing with issues concerning only the city itself or surrounding areas

but also Star and National Enquirer (these two are focusing mainly on celebrity gossips). Czech most famous tabloids are with no doubt Aha! and Blesk.

2.2.3 Radio

Another main type of mass media is undoubtedly the radio which is said to be the the oldest electronic medium of mass communication. Its development was as long as it was complicated. Through the first sound recording device, phonograph, and device which was able to replay pre-recorded sound, gramophone, we finally get to the invention of telegraph by Samuel Morse in 1844, "*the first system for using wires to send messages at a distance*", which gave rise to the electrical transmission of sound and radio in particular.

Initially, radio was used only for communication between two people or two places and it was not until 1915 when people started to imagine the radio becoming a mass medium. First commercial radio station in history was an American station based in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania called KDKA whose regular broadcasting started in 1920. In 1922, the British Broadcasting Company (BBC, later renamed to the British Broadcasting Corporation) was founded, becoming a milestone in broadcasting industry. Over the years, two main broadcasting networks were established, marking the great rivalry which lasts up until today - National Broadcasting Company (NBC) and Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS). The first radio broadcasting in then Czechoslovakia was recorded in May 10, 1923 by the first national radio station called Radiojournal.

Period between 1920s and 1940s is usually called "golden age of radio" as radio broadcasting became dominant and present in a vast majority of households. However, with the advent of television, popularity of radio started to fade and nowadays, radio is seen only as side (or secondary) medium. The biggest radio corporation is iHeartMedia, Inc. who offers more than 800 radio stations throughout the whole USA and reaches more than a quarter of a billion listeners each month¹⁰. In Czech Republic, radio station most listened to is Rádio Impuls however the largest radio corporation is still Český rozhlas (founded in 1923) which includes eight national radio stations and fourteen regional stations.

¹⁰ (Hanson, 2008)

2.2.4 Television

With the arrival of television, other mass media started to be sidelined. Whilst more and more people were watching television, mostly radio popularity was declining. The first television broadcast was launched in 1936 in Great Britain by one of the oldest and most respected television networks in the world, BBC - British Broadcasting Corporation. As far as the United States are concerned, their first broadcast was launched by NBC three years later, in 1939 from the World's Fair held in New York. Soon after, the Second World War started and the development of television stops for few years.¹¹ However, after the war, television experienced a boom. In Czech Republic, television broadcasting was announced as regular in 1954.

Currently, there are four major broadcasting networks in USA, so-called "Big Four" and they include the original rivals CBS and NBC which were over the time joined by ABC network (American Broadcasting Company) and Fox network owned by Rupert Murdoch. All these corporations include several smaller television stations as well as other projects connected with mass media and entertainment in general. As for our Czech television corporations, the two biggest commercial television networks are Nova and Prima, both owning several other stations. The biggest public television network is Česká televize. Its funding is totally independent from the governmental budget.

2.2.5 Internet

The Internet is the newest and the most recent means of mass communication. At its beginning, its main purpose was to connect academics or scientists and military researchers so that they can share information with one another. During years 1968 and 1969, the predecessor of Internet as how we know it now, so-called ARPANet¹², connected four American universities to enable them to share resources and information as well as to send messages to one another. Those four universities were: University of California - Los Angeles, Stanford Research Institute, University of California - Santa Barbara and University of Utah.

In 1989, World Wide Web is developed making the Internet accessible to everyone and not only researchers and military. During the years, the power and the importance of

¹¹ (Hanson, 2008)

¹² ARPA: The Advanced Research Projects Agency: division of US military; launched the first computer network in the country

Internet were rising and nowadays, we can find almost everything on the Internet. We can read news articles and sometimes even entire newspapers, we can listen to music, we can watch films and television broadcasts as well as send messages, play games and much more.¹³

¹³ (Hanson, 2008)

2.3 Television

As was said above, television became one of the leading mass media in our world, bringing information, education as well as entertainment into homes of millions of people. It accompanies us almost every day, it is becoming an inseparable part of our lives whether we like it or not.

2.3.1 Channels and programs

Every person is interested in different things and therefore, if television wants to satisfy everyone's needs, it has to develop a wide range of various programs and channels and be able to provide a sufficient amount of these programs. The main difference between the channel and the program is rather simple: channel (or also TV station such as NBC or Nova) provides an access to different programs (TV series, films, sports matches, etc.) or in other words: programs are being broadcasted in a particular channel.

To satisfy the needs of the wide audience with different tastes, there exist multiple genres of programs:

- 1) journalistic: TV news program, weather forecast but also publicistic programs
- 2) artistic: verbal or musical
- 3) educational: documentaries
- 4) entertaining: films, TV series, etc. ¹⁴

As majority of the viewers wants to be mostly entertained, it is without surprise that the leading role of television broadcasting belongs to TV series. Further in this work, we will discover main reasons, why TV series are so popular among people.

However, we would find a lot more in television than TV series and films. To satisfy our desire for information, we can watch a newscast multiple times per day where the anchor or anchors present political, economical as well as cultural and other interesting news not only on a national scale but also on the international one so that e.g. the Czech viewers can be familiar with what is happening in the world. These newscasts are usually accompanied by weather forecast and for example Czech newscast on Nova is accompanied also with news from sports. Some of the main channels which offer mostly newscasts are Fox News and

¹⁴ (Štroblová, 2009), p. 134

CNN in the United States and ČT24 in the Czech Republic. However, also other channels can provide a short newscast but these three cited above are known mostly for their reporting.

Other important part of television broadcast is live streaming. This feature is used fundamentally for sport matches and races which enables you to watch e.g. your favorite ice-hockey team in real time without any delay. But it can be also used for live broadcasting of a concert, elections or important speeches. Channels which focus mostly on sports broadcasting are: NBC Sports, ESPN, NBCSN, CBS Sports Network in the United States and ČT Sport and Nova Sport in the Czech Republic.

2.3.2 Ratings

To estimate how many people watch the television (and which program), television networks use viewership data, so-called ratings. According to Oxford's dictionary, the ratings are "*a set of figures that show how many people watch or listen to a particular television or radio program, [...] [it is] used to show how popular a program is*".¹⁵ The American television networks use Nielsen Media Research which is one of the biggest providers of these measurements.¹⁶ There are two major measurements which all television networks need in order to establish the approximate number of viewers: rating point and share.

Rating point (or TRP) is "*a percentage of the total potential television audience actually watching a particular show. One rating point indicates an audience of approximately 1 million viewers.*"¹⁷ Which in fact mean that we can potentially count on how many television sets that are turned on, people are watching a particular show. And share is "*the percentage of television sets actually in use that are turned to a particular show.*"¹⁸

¹⁵ (A. S. Hornby, 2005)

¹⁶ (Hanson, 2008), p. 301

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 302

¹⁸ (Hanson, 2008), p.302

2.4 TV series

As I stated in previous chapter, one of the most popular television programs is indisputably TV series. They are shorter than films and yet, you can stay in touch with your favorite character for a longer time than only 90 minutes (standard length of a film).

There are various types of TV series so that anyone can find exactly what they like. For small children, there are animated series such as SpongeBob SquarePants, Rick and Morty, The Simpsons or from Czech production: Bob a Bobek, Křemílek a Vochomůrka and many more. In the Czech Republic, we have a whole evening program for children called Večerníček whose main purpose is to broadcast bedtime stories for small children. It was created in 1965 and it still remains one of the most popular television programs in the whole country.¹⁹

Other types of TV series include sitcoms, crime television series, drama series, reality shows, talk shows, soap-operas as well as documentary series or quiz shows.

2.4.1 Sitcoms

People want to laugh as often as they possibly can. This has been a fact since antiquity and it is still true even today. And that is why sitcoms (short name for situation comedies) are one of the most popular television series among people of all ages. The main focus is set on humor and comic situations which the main characters have to face. Sitcom first appeared in the USA and UK as a radio program and later (in 1950s) was transformed in a television broadcast. The first sitcom on television was broadcasted in 1950 on CBS channel, it was called I love Lucy and it was a great success.

Main topics and motives for sitcoms are usually family, household or workplace. Sitcoms are based mostly on hilarious dialogues between the main characters; the decorations and the main plot are not very complex. Only small number of main characters appears in sitcoms, it is usually a small group of friends, co-workers or a family and each main character represents typical group of people (there is always a very intelligent person, very funny person, person always dealing with relationship problems, etc.) and it is very easy for the audience to identify themselves with these characters and their problems. The usual duration of one episode is from 22 to 28 minutes and each episode is shot in front of a live studio

¹⁹ (Kšajtová, 2005)

audience which represents one of the biggest differences between sitcoms and other television series. Some of all-time favourite American sitcoms are undoubtedly *Friends*, *The Fresh Prince of Bel Air*, *Two and a Half Men* and from more recent: *How I Met Your Mother*, *The Big Bang Theory* or animated sitcoms such as *The Simpsons* and *Family Guy*.

Czech sitcoms had it harder and at their beginnings, they were not very successful. One of the first attempts for a comedy series was *Taková normální rodinka* broadcasted in 1971 which showed several features of sitcom, however it was not a true sitcom as we know it. Over time, there have been few other attempts to create a Czech sitcom but almost all of them ended in failure. There are two Czech TV series which can be called proper sitcoms: *Hospoda* from 1996/1997 and more recently *Comeback* from 2008. They have the right characteristics of sitcoms and they were received with a great acclaim by the audience.²⁰

2.4.2 Crime television shows

Even though it can be seen negatively, one of the features which bring a lot of people to the screen is violence (murder, blood or simply a mystery) and that is why crime television shows belong also among the most popular TV shows. First crime TV show was aired on CBS in 1949 and it was called *Man Against Crime* and over time, this genre became more and more popular so that nowadays these shows belong among the most watched shows in the world.

As their name suggests, the main focus is set on crime, its investigation or criminals themselves. The most important thing crime TV show has to have in order to be successful is thrilling story. There has to be action and tension which make the audience dive into the story. And of course, a charismatic main character is also needed. There is a big variety of types of crime TV shows based on the main character: detective drama with usually one detective who is not a policeman and does not work for police (even though they can cooperate) such as the most iconic detective in the world: Sherlock Holmes; police drama where the main investigators are police officers or the experts who work for the police; judicial drama and other types focusing on different sections of crime and its investigation. The usual length of one episode is somewhere between 40 and 60 minutes.

²⁰ (Slunčík, 2010)

The main examples of American crime TV shows are: *Columbo*, *Law and Order*, *The X-Files*, *CSI: Crime Scene Investigation*, *Diagnosis: Murder*, *Criminal Minds*, *Bones*, *Cold Case*, *Prison break* or *Murder, She Wrote* and from more recent: *Narcos*, *The Sopranos*, *Breaking Bad* or *Elementary* (modern American version of Sherlock Holmes stories). As for Czech crime TV series, the first proper Czechoslovakian crime TV show was *Hříšní lidé města pražského* aired in 1969 and since then, we had several very popular shows of this genre: *30 případů majora Zemana*, *Dobrodružství kriminalistiky*, *Četnické humoresky*, *Malý pitaval z velkého města* and recently: *Kriminálka Anděl*, *Policie Modrava* or *Rapl*.²¹²²

2.4.3 Reality show

Inborn need for attention gave birth and brought popularity to another type of television shows: reality shows. In this genre, we do not find any actors or scripts, there are real people and their reactions and that is perhaps why these shows became one of the most popular shows as well. One of the first reality shows was called *Candid Camera* and the main principle was to approach a stranger on the street in weird or embarrassing situations and film their reaction with a hidden camera. It was created in 1948 by Allen Funt and it was aired on CBS.

Nowadays, we can find various types of reality shows:

- a) Talent shows where people show their skills and compete with one another in order to win (usually big amount of money); main examples: *American Idol*, *America's Got Talent*, *Česko hledá SuperStar*, *Česko Slovensko má talent*, etc.
- b) Relationship shows where one person is trying to find a partner (wife/husband) and he has to choose from a group of candidates; main examples: *The Bachelor*, *Vem si mě*, *Farmář hledá ženu*, etc.
- c) Game reality shows where people are living in an isolated place (a house or an island, etc.) under nonstop surveillance in order to win the prize money. Main examples: *Big Brother*, *Survivor*, *Vyvolení*, *Robinsonův ostrov*.
- d) Makeover shows where either people or places (houses, flats, etc.) are undergoing a makeover in order to be healthier, prettier, more beautiful etc. Main examples:

²¹ (Štroblová, 2009)

²² (Korda, České televizní krimi série a jejich žánrové souvislosti (1989-2009), 2012)

How Do I Look?, Extreme Makeover, America's Next Top Model, Vypadáš skvěle, Bydlení je hra, Jak se staví sen, etc.

e) Star shows where celebrities joined by professionals compete for a prize. Main examples: Dancing with the stars, Celebrity duets, StarDance... když hvězdy tančí, Tvoje tvář má známý hlas, etc.²³²⁴

2.4.4 Talk show

Another type of very popular TV series is talk show. It is a show where the host discusses various topics not only with celebrities invited to this show but also with the audience, because talk show are being filmed in front of a live studio audience and their reactions form a big part of the show. This genre started as a means how to discuss topics such as atheism, homosexuality but also politics, news or culture. Nowadays, their focus is mainly on entertainment. A lot of celebrities are invited and interviewed about their lives and work and also some hosts even play games with them.

Majority of talk shows are being broadcasted at night as usually their name shows. The most famous American talk shows are: Last Week Tonight with John Oliver, The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon, Ellen: The Ellen DeGeneres Show, Jimmy Kimmel Live, The Late Late Show with James Corden, Good morning America, The Oprah Winfrey Show and many many more. In Czech Republic, talk shows are not that popular as in America, however we do have a few of them as well: Banánové rybičky, Na plovárně, Mistr GS (those three has been already canceled); Otázky Václava Moravce (discussions between Czech politicians), Show Jana Krause, Manéž Bolka Bolívky or Všechnopárty.²⁵

2.5 Soap operas

One of the most controversial television genres are undoubtedly soap-operas. These long TV series have considerably big base of fans all over the world however, there can be found also a huge criticism towards this genre. Macmillan Dictionary defines soap-opera as *“a program in which the same small group of characters regularly appear in situations that are intended to be similar to those of ordinary life”*.²⁶ For their large number of episodes and

²³ (Štroblová, 2009)

²⁴ (kolektiv, 2012)

²⁵ (Štroblová, 2009)

²⁶ (Macmillan Education, 2002)

the fact that they are usually being broadcasted for several years, they are sometimes marked as so-called endless TV series.

2.5.1 History

Originally, soap operas (as well as other television series) started as radio broadcasts destined particularly for women. Their broadcast was sponsored by soap manufacturers and it was mostly their commercials which were run during the broadcast - and that is why soap operas are called soap operas. Each “episode” had approximately 15 minutes and it targeted mostly housewives (women who stayed at home and did not go to work) so obviously, the shows were dealing with issues which the women could identify with such as familial problems, relationship dramas, etc. and all this was accompanied by commercials for detergents, soap powders and cleansers.²⁷

According to Guinness World Records, the first soap opera was broadcasted in United States in 1930s and was called *Painted Dreams*.²⁸ Later on, its creator, Irna Phillips moved onto other projects, giving birth to one of the longest soap-operas in the world called the *Guiding Light*. It was first broadcasted on CBS in 1937 and it became a television series in 1952. The last episode of this almost cult TV series was aired in 2009.²⁹

As was said above, in the beginning, the target audience was women usually from working or middle class, however over the time soap-operas gained respect as well as popularity also among students, teenagers and even men.³⁰ Originally, soap-operas were seen very negatively, to quote Robert C. Allen, they were used as “*antiart, the parody of true art*”³¹ and even nowadays, they are not accepted very well by certain demographic groups (mostly by men). From the original length of 15 minutes per one episode, soap-operas have prolonged their broadcast time to approximately one hour and also the topics which they are dealing with have changed.³²

²⁷ (Hanson, 2008), p. 217

²⁸ <http://www.guinnessworldrecords.com/world-records/first-soap-opera>

²⁹ http://www.nytimes.com/2009/04/02/arts/television/02ligh.html?_r=0

³⁰ (Allen R. C., 1985), p. 3

³¹ (Allen R. C., 1985), p. 12

³² (Štroblová, 2009), p. 112

Soap operas gained the biggest popularity in 1970s and 1980s when various most famous soap-operas were broadcasted, such as *Dallas*, *Dynasty*, *Beverly Hills 90210*, *Days of our lives*, *The Young and the Restless* or *General Hospital*.³³

From this previous enumeration, only three of mentioned TV series are still being broadcasted even today. The oldest one, the medical drama *General Hospital* which premiered in April 1963, is widely known as the “*longest running American soap opera currently in production*”.³⁴

The most renowned soap operas, *Dallas* and *Dynasty* became the most popular icons even though they were not broadcasted as long as e.g. *The Young and the Restless* or *Days of our lives*. *Dallas*, a story about a family of oil magnate, ended after 14 years and *Dynasty*, which narrates about relationship of two rival rich families in Midwestern America, lasted only 8 years. And yet, they manage to become one of the most influential soap operas in history.

In Czech Republic, the first soap opera was aired in March, 2004 on Prima and it was called *Rodinná pouta*. After three seasons, Prima had to change the production company and due to several problems with label, the soap had to change the name as well and became *Velmi křehké vztahy*.³⁵

The biggest competitor for *Rodinná pouta* was another original Czech soap opera: *Ordinace v růžové zahradě* whose premiere was in September 2005 on Nova. Both soap operas were aired twice a week in the prime time - meaning after 8 o'clock in the evening. While *Rodinná pouta* are dealing with typical familial problems, *Ordinace v růžové zahradě* is focusing more on relationships outside the family and the main location is not a family house as in *Rodinná pouta* but a gynecologist's office. The main difference nowadays is the fact that while the soap opera *Rodinná pouta* was cancelled in 2009, *Ordinace v růžové zahradě* is still being broadcasted.

However, so far the most successful Czech soap opera is so called daily soap opera and its name is *Ulice*. Individual episodes are broadcasted every day of the working week

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ <http://abc.go.com/shows/general-hospital/about-the-show>

³⁵ (Moc, 2009), p. 201-203, 251-253

(Monday to Friday) and since its premier in September, 2005, there have been over 3200 episodes so far.³⁶ To quote Jiří Moc, Ulice is “*an endless series broadcasted daily, a series abounding with an enormous range of figures, a series broadcasted for a wide audience from housewives to academics, from teenagers to 80-years old seniors, from big cities to the last solitude in the mountains*”.³⁷ From this description, we can see, that Ulice was not supposed to target a particular demographic group. On the contrary, it was destined for everyone.

2.5.2 Topics and popularity

Originally, main topics and themes of soap operas were relatively simple: love, romance, relationships, family as well as crime, deceit, intrigues or revenge. However over the years, thanks to the modernization, new topics were introduced in this genre: racism, alcohol and drug addiction, sexism, problems encountered by gays, lesbian and transgendered people, child and women abuse or STDs (Sexually Transmitted Diseases).³⁸ The initial topics, love, adventure, romance, it all remained present but it was joined by some serious real-life issues which were supposed to bring awareness about these topics among ordinary people.

The fact that these series are broadcasted for many seasons, having hundreds and even thousands of episodes, gives the audience chance to stay with their favorite characters and live their lives with them and discover into deep all of these topics to that extent that the characters become a part of one’s family. This applies mostly do daily soap operas - we can meet our heroes and villains every day, making them a part of our own lives. That is probably one of the reasons why soap operas are so popular even after all these years.

In a way, we can compare Czech and American TV series as well. The topics remain unchanged and even the main idea is often very similar. For instance: General Hospital and Ordinace v růžové zahradě. Even though Ordinace (as it is usually called) started with focus only on a small gynecologist ambulance, in following years, the focus widened and nowadays, we can see doctors and nurses and patients from various hospital departments and explore relationships among the people all across the hospital as we can see in General Hospital. In soap opera Rodinná pouta (or later Velmi křehké vztahy) we can see also some

³⁶ Ibid., p. 244-245

³⁷ (Moc, 2009)

³⁸ <http://abc.go.com/shows/general-hospital/about-the-show>

similarities with its American counterpart Dallas - a rich family and relationships within the family as well as with their friends and colleagues.³⁹

³⁹ (Allen R. C., 1985) (Štroblová, 2009)

3 Practical Part

3.1 Questionnaire

Within the practical part of my bachelor thesis, I created an online questionnaire and distributed it via social media among people of my social circle and asked my friends to help me with its further distribution to get as diverse range of respondents as possible. The main goal of this survey was to ascertain public opinion on television series and soap operas. I tried to target different age groups in order to get a complete overview. I chose questionnaire as it is one of the easiest way how to collect a public opinion. It takes only several minutes and it can be easily distributed to a large number of people.

The survey itself is anonymous and it has fourteen questions from which ten of them are so-called multiple choice questions where respondents have to choose one or more options according to their opinion and in four other questions, I asked them to express in few short sentences what they think about the topic in their own words. First three questions ask about personal data (gender, age and the highest completed education) which should allow me evaluate better the results and get better overview.

I created the questionnaire in Czech because the target respondents are mostly Czech and even though some of them are Slovakian, the languages are very similar so that both nationalities can understand both languages very well. For the evaluation of this questionnaire I am going to translate every question and the final answers. The website which enabled me to create this survey is www.surveymonkey.com and I chose it mainly because it is very easy to create a questionnaire there and to spread it among people.⁴⁰

3.1.1 Main hypotheses

For this survey, I determined four main hypotheses:

- 1) People watch television series mostly to entertain themselves, to relax and to escape from daily problems.
- 2) Majority of people have at least one favorite TV series which they watch regularly.

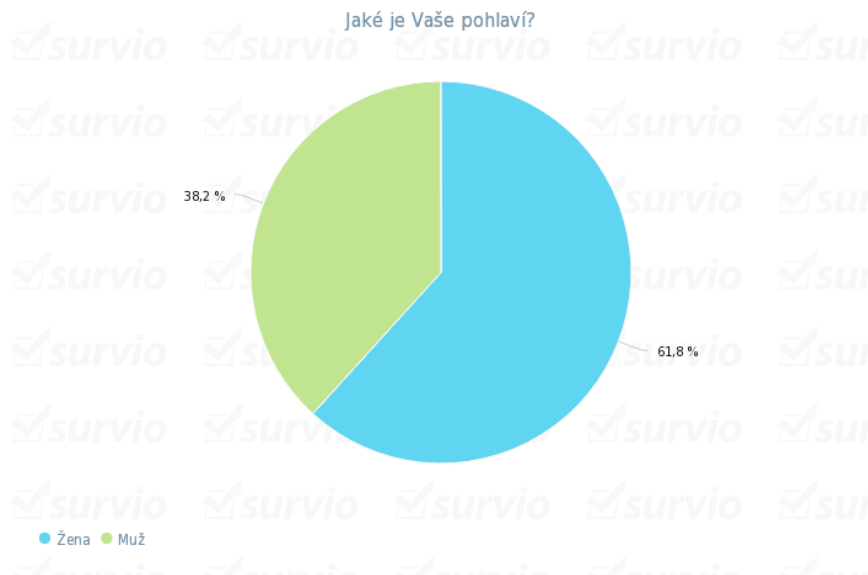
⁴⁰ <https://www.surveymonkey.com/survey/d/T8Y1P4V8I5O9Q3C1Y> - the link where the questionnaire I created can be found

- 3) By watching TV series in foreign languages, one is able to improve one's level of said foreign language.
- 4) Soap-operas are virtually seen negatively: as a waste of time or as a show primarily for dull or not so intelligent people.

3.1.2 Survey results

Question 1: What is your gender?

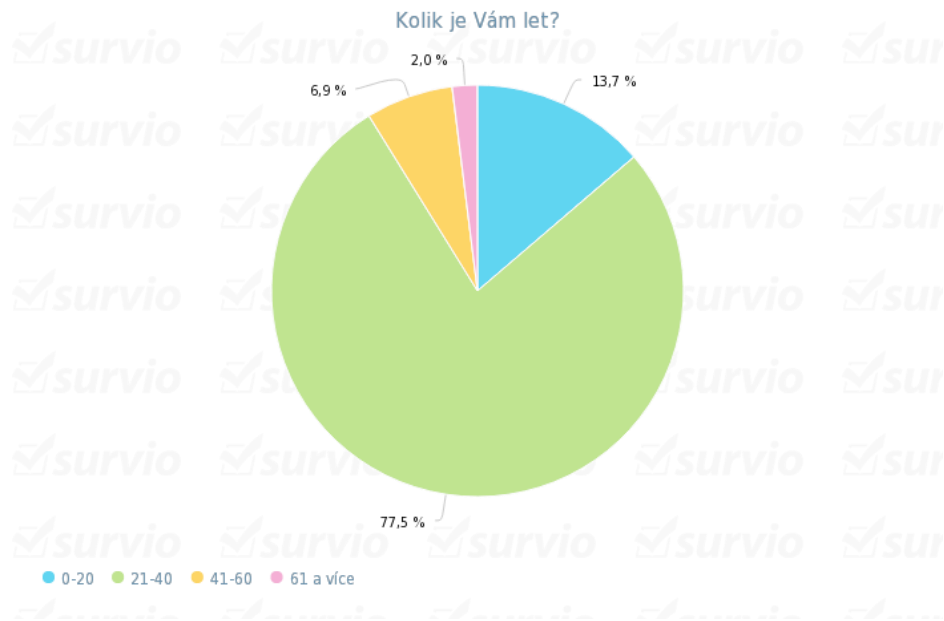
From the total number 102 respondents, 63 of them were women and the rest 39 was men. Higher number of female respondents is caused by the fact that in my social circle there is more female friends.



Graph 1: What is your gender? (www.surveio.cz)

Question 2: How old are you?

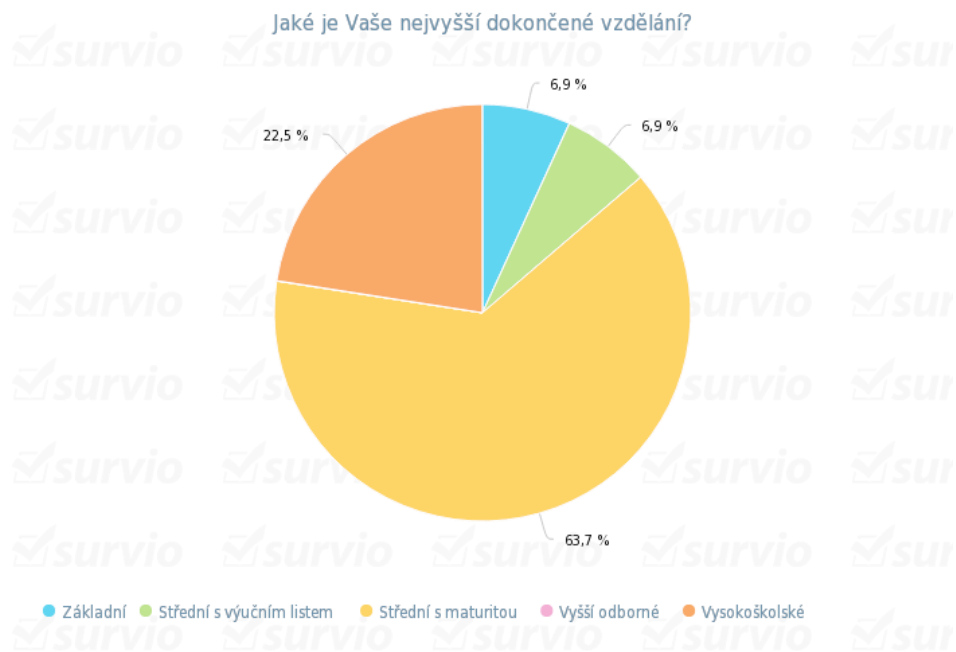
Second question is about the age of respondents. As can be seen in the graph below, the majority of respondents were in the age from 21 to 40, in total number of 79 respondents. 14 of respondents were younger than 20 years old, 7 of them were in the age from 41 to 60 and 2 were even older than 61 years old. I posted this questionnaire on social media which is used mostly by people in the age group 21 to 40 which could have affected the results as well.



Graph 2: How old are you? (www.surveio.cz)

Question 3: What is your highest level of education?

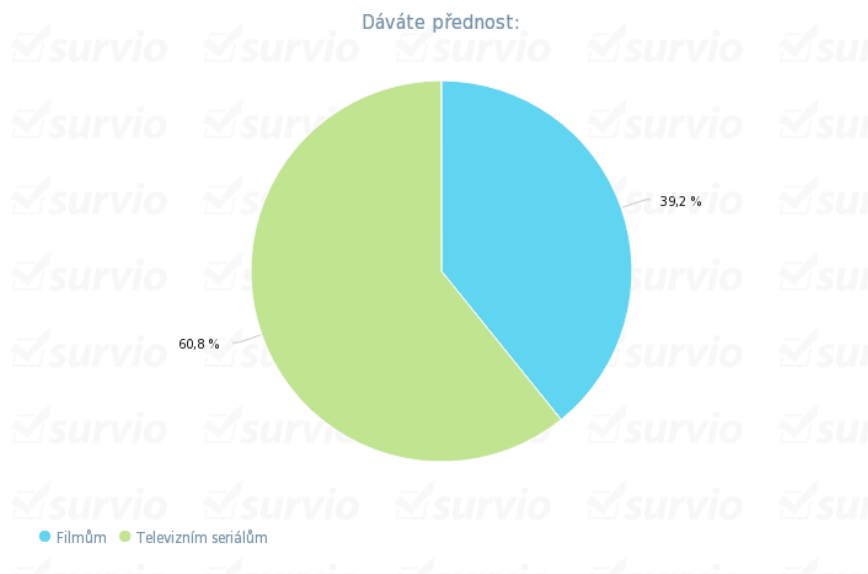
Third question is about the education level of respondents so that we can see whether and how the level of education affects people's taste and preferences in television series. The results suggest that the majority of respondents finished high school and passed school-leaving exam, more precisely 65 of all respondents. 23 of them have university degree, 7 finished vocational training in high school and another 7 respondents have only elementary school.



Graph 3: What is your highest level of education? (www.surveio.cz)

Question 4: Do you prefer films or TV series?

In this question I wanted to know which is more popular among the respondents, whether films or TV series. I found out that most respondents (62) prefer television series rather than films. Only 40 people stated that they like films more. It is probably due to the fact that TV series are shorter, easier to watch and to relax while watching it. Also, TV series enable you to stay with your favourite characters for a long time and follow their story which is something that could attract some viewers.



Graph 4: Do you prefer films or TV series? (www.surveio.cz)

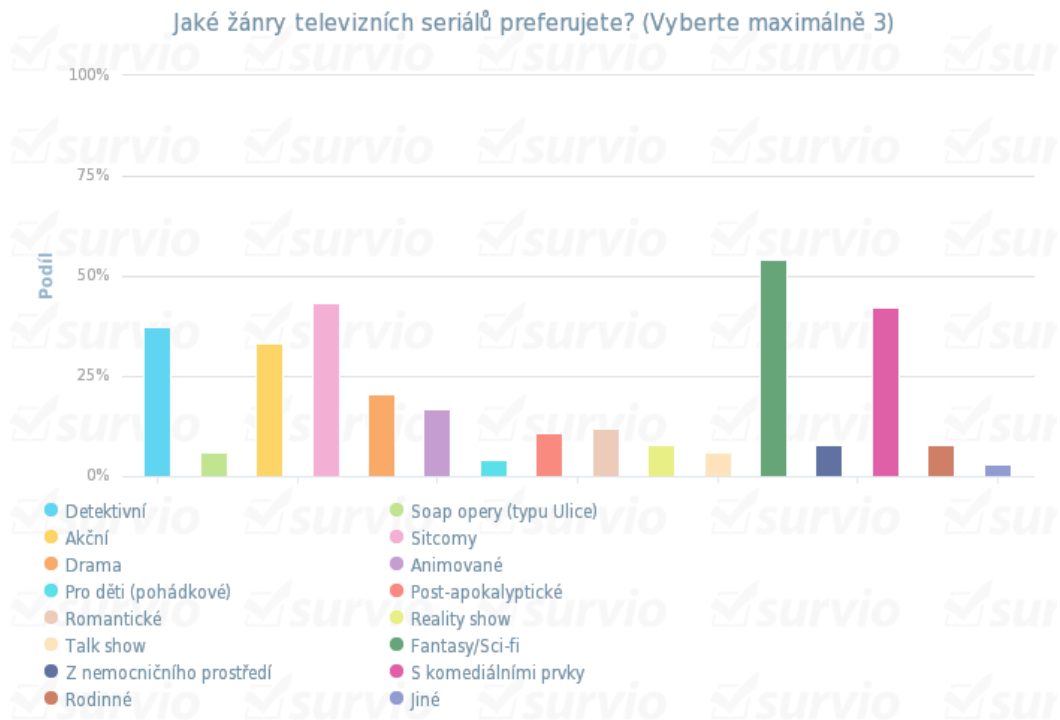
Question 5: Which genres of TV series do you prefer the most? (Pick max. 3)

Fifth question is about most favourite genres of television series. As we can see in the graph, there are many different genres. However, it is no surprise that 44 respondents chose sitcoms and 43 chose TV series with comic elements. This only confirms the premise which I stated in theoretical part of this work and that is: people want to laugh. What is more interesting is that the most favourite genre is fantasy and science fiction TV series as 55 respondents stated. As majority of respondents were in the age from 21 to 40 and since producers of fantasy and sci-fi shows target mostly this age group, these results only affirms that the producers' efforts did not go in vain.

As for other genres, I offered: detective (crime) TV series which got 38 votes, action TV series (34 votes), drama (21), animated TV series (17), romantic TV series (12), post-apocalyptic (11), family TV series (8), reality shows (8), series from the hospital environment (8), soap operas (6), talk shows (6), series for children with fairy tales motives (4) and others (3). From these three people who chose "others", two of them stated, they prefer historical series (both with a university degree) and the last one prefers series based on comics.

From the six people who prefer soap operas, all of them were women and four of them have graduated from high school. No person with university degree stated that they prefer this

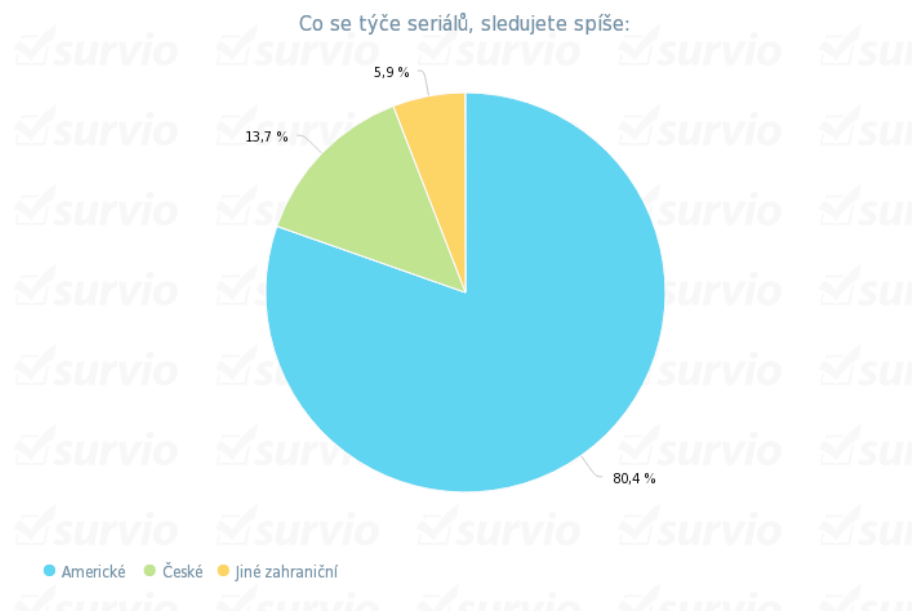
type of TV series, so based on these results we can assume that soap operas are watched mainly by women in their twenties, thirties and forties who do not have a university diploma.



Graph 5: Which genres of TV series do you prefer the most? (Pick max. 3) (www.surveio.cz)

Question 6: As for the television series, you prefer American, Czech or other foreign series?

This query is supposed to find out whether Czech audience prefers more American, Czech or other foreign TV series. In some books, we can find a premise that Czech audience prefers more domestic TV series and actors. And yet, this questionnaire shows that a vast majority of respondents prefers American series, more specifically 82 respondents which is a surprising number. 14 respondents prefer Czech series and 6 chose other foreign series. According to the results, it was mostly women in the age from 21 to 40 who chose Czech or other foreign series - from these 20 people, there were only five men which can be however caused by the lower overall number of male respondents.

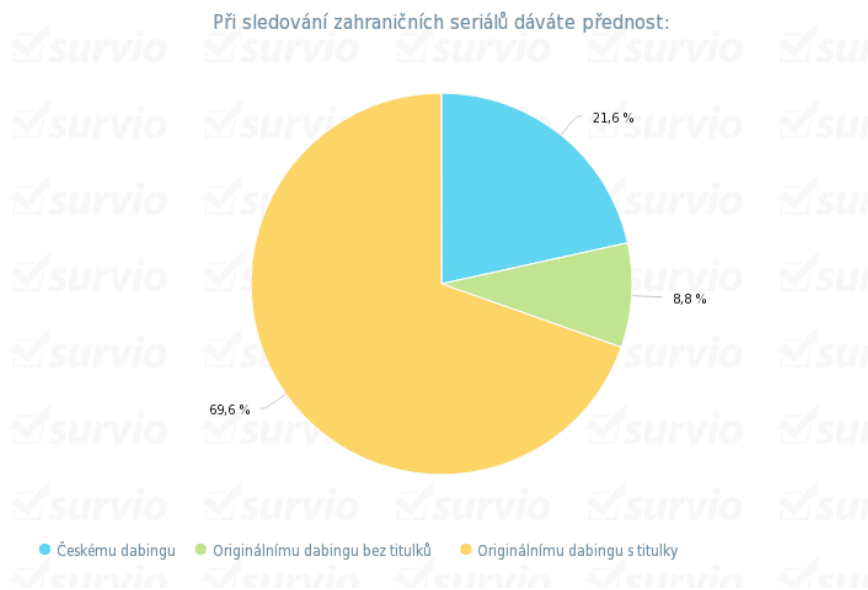


Graph 6: As for the television series, you prefer American, Czech or other foreign series?
 (www.surveo.cz)

Question 7: While watching foreign TV series, you prefer Czech dubbing, the original dubbing without subtitles or original dubbing with subtitles?

As our mother tongue is Czech language, it is more natural and easier to watch series in Czech rather than in English. But on the other hand, original dubbing is often much better than the Czech re-dubbing because, sometimes it is really hard to find a person with the right voice and also, some jokes or cues can never be translated properly and it could happen that the said joke or cue can be lost in translation and never fully understood. Therefore, I asked the respondents, what do they prefer - the Czech or original dubbing? And if original, do they need additional subtitles?

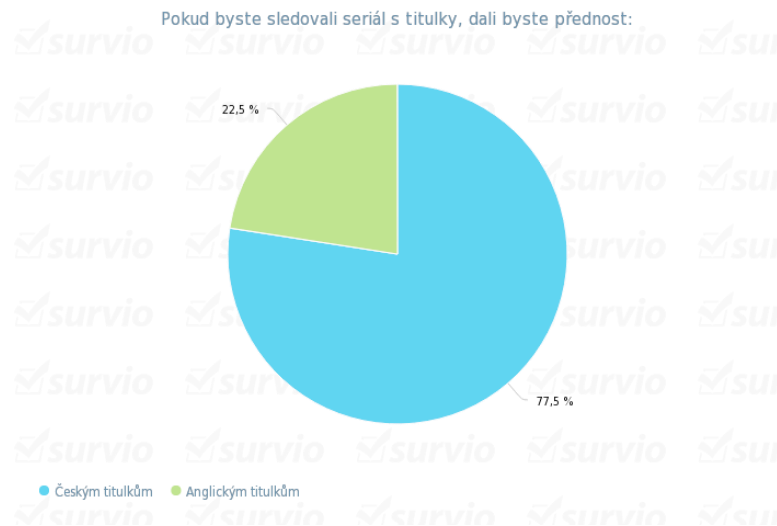
As the graph shows us, the majority of respondents, chose original dubbing with subtitles. This can represent a fair compromise: you get the original dubbing with actual voices of actors who are playing the characters and yet you can get subtitles in Czech, for instance, to help you to better understand what is said. 22 respondents chose Czech dubbing and the last 9 prefer original dubbing and do not need additional subtitles, probably because their level of English (or the language in which the TV series is broadcasted) is high enough so that they can understand it without any help.



Graph 7: While watching foreign TV series, you prefer Czech dubbing, the original dubbing without subtitles or original dubbing with subtitles? (www.survio.cz)

Question 8: If you watched a TV series with subtitles, would you prefer them to be Czech or English?

As was said earlier, subtitles can help us to better understand the original dubbing. And according to our level of the foreign language in which we are watching our favorite TV series, we can choose between Czech and English (or in other foreign language) subtitles. Here, vast majority of respondents (more specifically 79 of them) replied Czech subtitles and only 23 prefer English subtitles. It can be influenced by the level of English of each person because people with better knowledge of the language can easily understand it and use subtitles only when they have troubles with e.g. an accent of an actor or when there is more difficult terminology, etc. Or it can be simply due to the fact that it is easier for Czech people to at least read Czech subtitles because then they do not have to think about vocabulary and can relax their brain in a proper way.

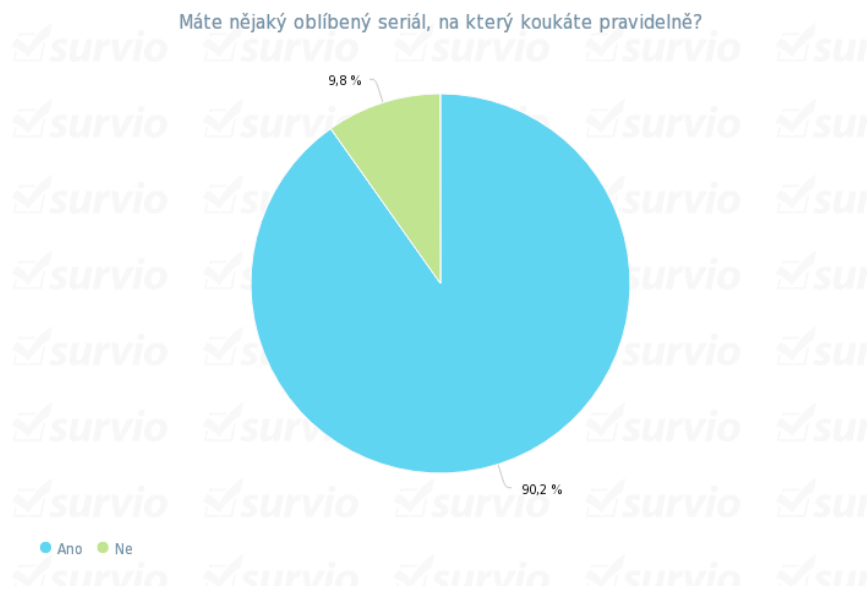


Graph 8: If you watched a TV series with subtitles, would you prefer them to be Czech or English? (www.survio.cz)

Question 9: Do you have a favorite TV series that you watch regularly?

Here, the question was supposed to determine, whether respondents watch a certain TV series regularly or not. And even though in the beginning of this questionnaire (more precisely in question 4) 40 respondents stated that they prefer films over TV series, according to results from this query, only 10 respondents do not watch any TV series regularly. This is an interesting result: on one hand, although 40 respondents like films more, 34 of them still have a favorite TV series and on the other hand, 62 respondents prefer TV series over films and yet, four of them do not have any favorite series.

These results confirm my hypothesis number 2 where I estimated that a majority of people have at least one favorite TV series. They are easily available; we can find multiple different genres and topics so that almost everyone can find a TV series which matches his or her taste.



Graph 9: Do you have a favorite TV series that you watch regularly? (www.surveio.cz)

Question 10: If yes, what do you like about it the most?

This is a follow-up question which relates to the previous point. Here, respondents who answered that they have a favorite TV series had to describe in their own words why they are watching this particular TV series. The most cited reason was plot or story. 35 respondents affirmed that they like the particular TV show mostly because of its plot and well written scripts. They appreciated the unexpected twists and turns in the storyline and the fact that they do not know what to expect from next episode and that the writers always surprise them with an unexpected situation.

The second most mentioned reason was humor. People watch TV series primarily for their entertainment, they want to be entertained and amused. And what better way to do it than with jokes and funny situations? 26 respondents find humor to be one of the key elements for a good TV show. They enjoy watching funny TV series as it helps them to relax better. Great popularity of comic TV series can be seen also in question 5 where this genre was one of the most favorite among respondents.

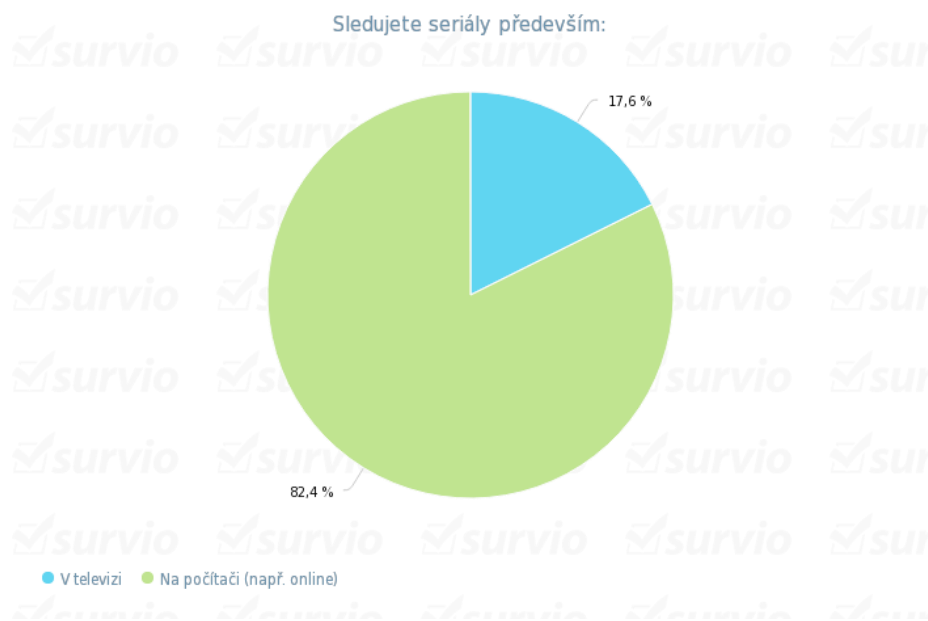
Third key element for a successful and popular TV series, according to the results of this questionnaire, is main characters and the actors' performances in general. Respondents highlight mostly the work of actors and their believability which they show in each episode.

For the general audience, it is always important to have at least one favorite character which one can identify with and to experience with them their joys and sorrows.

As for other reasons which respondents stated, it can be seen that they mostly appreciated also the emotions which are brought to them by a particular series, topicality (and the fact that some series are dealing with current issues) as well as originality, resourcefulness and action.

Question 11: Are you watching TV series mostly on television or on computer (e.g. online)?

Since we can find a television set in almost every household but since the same can be said about computers, I wanted to discover which device people are using the most for watching TV series. And as the graph below points out, 84 respondents chose computer and only 18 chose television. It is probably caused by the fact that a lot of people (and more specifically young people) have so-called laptops, computers which you can bring with you almost everywhere - and obviously, it can facilitate watching TV series for example in the bus, in trains but also anywhere else.



Graph 10: Are you watching TV series mostly on television or on computer (or online)? (www.surveio.cz)

Question 12: Do you think that watching TV series can help us learn a foreign language (e.g. English)? How?

In this point, I asked respondents to express their opinion on whether we can learn a foreign language by watching TV series. 6 respondents did not think it is helpful and 4 of them were not sure. However, the other 92 respondents expressed certainty that watching TV series or films in original dubbing with (and even without) subtitles would help us mainly to widen our knowledge of vocabulary and phrases of said foreign language generally by connecting English words we hear with the Czech meaning we can see in subtitles.

According to respondents' opinions, by watching TV series in original dubbing we can also improve our pronunciation as well as knowledge of syntax or a word order in a sentence. These general opinions also agree with my hypothesis number 3 where I express my belief that even by watching TV series; one can improve one's level of foreign language.

Question 13: In your opinion, what are the main reasons people are watching TV series? Write at least two.

In this open question, respondents were asked to write at least two reasons why people usually watch TV series. For 42 respondents, the main reason was relaxation - the fact that while watching TV series, you can "switch off", stop thinking about your problems and duties and simply enjoy these few moments of piece. Another often cited reason (33 votes) was fun - people like it, find it funny and interesting and want to laugh (hence the results from questions 5 and 10).

Third most popular reason - 26 votes - was the plot and the fact that when people start watching the series, they want to know what happens next and how the whole series will end. And this urge is what makes them keep watching. From the rest of reasons and opinions, we can pick also: boredom - when people do not know what to do, they watch few episodes to entertain themselves -; main character - one can identify with one of the characters and wants to know what will happen to him/her -; or foreign language which was discussed in previous point.

Final results of this query endorse the hypothesis number 1 which is that people watch TV series mostly to entertain themselves and to relax. Every person needs something that will

help him or her find a piece after a long day at work or at school. And what better way to forget about your problems than by watching your favorite character struggle with his owns.

Question 14: Soap operas are often objects of ridicule and misunderstanding. What do you think about them?

Finally, in this last question I asked respondents about their opinion on soap-operas. Based on the results, we can fundamentally divide them into three categories:

1) Those who like soap-operas and find it great for relaxation - 19 respondents and mostly women, which confirms that this genre targets and is watched mostly by women.

2) Those who do not like it at all, they think it is a waste of time, it is dull and according to some opinions, they are even stupid - 39 respondents belong to this group.

3) And the rest 44 respondents have a neutral opinion. Either they do not watch soap-operas or they simply do not have a clear opinion concerning them or as some of them stated do not have a problem with them but it is not their “cup of tea”, however they do not judge people who like it.

So essentially we can say that according to opinions of respondents who filled this questionnaire, the general attitude towards soap-operas is predominantly neutral with inclination to negativity which also corresponds with my initial presumption declared in hypothesis number 4.

In conclusion, it was showed that all of my initial hypotheses were confirmed by this questionnaire and even though this subject could be further pursued, the answers to these fourteen questions are able to give us a general overview of popularity of television series among Czech viewers.

3.2 Linguistic phenomenon of television series

All over this bachelor thesis, we have been talking about the fact that watching television series can help us improve our level of said foreign language. Majority of respondents expressed certainty that watching foreign television series in original dubbing helps us widen our vocabulary knowledge. But what vocabulary are we talking about?

The main issue is that while learning a foreign language (e.g. English) at school, professors are teaching us only the standard version of English, the one that follows all the rules and formally is absolutely correct. However, when one finally encounter a native speaker, one would not understand him whatever level of English one has.

It is caused primarily by accent of said native speaker. Whatever country he or she may be from, they will always have a certain accent and this could make the understanding harder. Usually, the easiest accent to understand is American. However, even there can be exceptions - e.g. Southerners (inhabitants of Southern states of the USA) tend to prolong pronunciation of certain words making them sound as something slightly different. For instance: “no” with a southerner accent might sound a bit like “now” - two different words, small change of pronunciation and suddenly we are confused. While watching TV series in English, we can learn to distinguish these changes and different accents which should facilitate us better comprehension.

Secondly, even though we are using a correct English grammar, native speakers are usually not because it does not feel natural for them, the same way the proper correct Czech grammar sounds to us like it is form a book. It is because we use non-standard, spoken language (e.g. dobrý den -> dobrej den, nashledanou -> nashle, etc.). In English, we can encounter a similar phenomenon with “is not” -> “ain’t” or “them” -> “’em”.

Furthermore, native speakers use phrases and collocations and even a certain colloquial terminology which cannot be taught at school exactly as we do when we are speaking Czech. Examples: “oki dokie” -> alright, OK; “oh, boy”, “holy guacamole” -> “oh my God”, etc. These collocations and many more cannot be learned in any other way, you have to hear them and remember them. Also, idioms are rather usually used in television series. The most famous English idiom: “it is raining cats and dogs”. These collocations

cannot be translated literally because it would not make any sense. Idioms commonly work like that and you will learn it only by listening and remembering.

According to the results of the questionnaire, majority of respondents agreed on the fact that watching TV series in original dubbing will help us improve this exact lack of knowledge of these familiar or even colloquial phrases.

As reported by some of the respondents, the best way how to learn English vocabulary from English television series is: gradually. First, you need to get at least some knowledge of the language and sentence structure and basic vocabulary skills. Then, you can proceed by watching the TV series in English dubbing but with Czech subtitles. This will allow you to connect in your brain the English word you have just heard with the Czech word you have read on the screen.

The moment you are certain you do not need Czech subtitles anymore because the quality of your knowledge of the language has improved, you may proceed and try original dubbing with English subtitles. It is going to be tricky but nevertheless, you will get used to this arrangement very soon. And in the case when you would not know a certain word which you think is fundamental, you can always interrupt the series and look the meaning up in a dictionary.

And over time, you will realize that if you really focus on it you do not need any subtitles at all because you can understand the majority of what was said.

Another issue which watching television series could help with is word order and syntax. By listening to the actors and native speakers, you can acquire and then master your skills in syntax and word order as well, you will do it automatically and you will not even realize that you did it because the wrong word order or syntax will suddenly feel unnatural and simply wrong.

4 Conclusion

While writing my bachelor thesis I focused not only on the popularity and benefits of watching television series but also on the role of leisure and mass media in our lives. I realized that leisure forms a big part of our private life and that it is strongly connected with mass media as we now, in the Digital Age, spend a majority of our free time using mass media - whether it is reading newspaper, listening to the radio, watching television or surfing on the Internet.

Mass media forms one of the main topics in my bachelor thesis and since media studies are currently very popular field of studies it is relatively easy to find sufficient amount of sources - books, textbooks, articles, etc. While studying mass media to be able to write the particular chapter, it become clear to me, how much media are interconnected with our lives.

As for television broadcast and TV series, soap opera included, I discovered several reasons, why they are so popular among the people - there is a large number of different genres and types so that anyone is able to find something which suits him/ her the most. Each genre is targeting a special demographic group even with little details.

The results from questionnaire basically confirmed my hypotheses that people watch television and TV series mainly to entertain themselves and to relax, that the majority of people has at least one favorite TV series that they watch regularly, that soap operas are not accepted very warmly and there is still a belief that they are only a waste of time and that they are watched mostly by women and men still have negative feelings towards them.

The questionnaire also confirmed that even by watching television series, one can improve one's level of foreign language especially as far as vocabulary, pronunciation, syntax and word order are concerned because by listening to foreign language regularly helps us to acquire a special level of certainty and therefore it is easier for us to learn new vocabulary and get new knowledge.

5 Resumé

Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá fenoménem seriálů a porovnáním českých a amerických soap-oper a jejím hlavním cílem je zjistit, proč se televizní seriály těší takové oblibě.

Práce je rozdělena do dvou částí: teoretické a praktické. V teoretické části je nejprve vysvětlena důležitost volného času a různé druhy jeho trávení, dále následuje popis médií a jak se masová media stala tak populární a před média a přes různé typy televizních pořadů přehází k televizním seriálům, jejich druhům, charakteristikám a příkladům a nakonec se zaměřuje na soap opery, jejich historii, hlavní znaky, motivy a příklady.

V praktické části se pak nachází vyhodnocení dotazníku, které zkoumá popularitu televizních seriálů mezi českými diváky a obsahuje také grafy pro snazší orientaci a na závěr následuje kapitola o jazykovém fenoménu u televizních seriálů a jak konkrétně nám mohou televizní seriály pomoci naučit se cizí jazyk.

6 Abstract

This bachelor thesis deals with the phenomenon of television series and the comparison of Czech and American soap-operas and its main goal is to determine why TV series are so popular.

The thesis itself is divided into two main parts theoretical and practical. Theoretical part explains the importance of free time and different types of its spending which is followed by the description of media and how mass media became so popular and through the mass media and through different television programs, the work reaches the television series, their types, characteristics and examples and finally focus on soap-operas, their history, main features motives and examples.

Practical part includes evaluation of a questionnaire which explore the popularity of television series among Czech viewers and also includes graphs which should facilitate the orientation and finally I conclude with a chapter about the linguistic phenomenon of television series and about how exactly can watching television series help us to learn a foreign language.

7 Bibliography

- A. S. Hornby, S. W. (2005). *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- ABC. (28. July 2013). *About General Hospital*. Získáno 19. April 2017, z ABC: http://www.nytimes.com/2009/04/02/arts/television/02ligh.html?_r=0
- ABC. (29. September 2016). *ABC Info*. Získáno 20. April 2017, z ABC: <http://abc.go.com/info>
- Allen, R. (2005). *The Penguin English Dictionary*. Praha: Euromedia Group k.s.
- Allen, R. C. (1985). *Speaking of soap operas*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press.
- Brineman, K. H. (2002). *Rozdej si to se svým špatným já: Americko-český slangový slovník*. Praha: Maťa.
- Cambridge University Press. (2011). *Cambridge Business English Dictionary*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Carter, B. (2009. April 1). *CBS Turns Our 'Guiding Light'*. Získáno 18. April 2017, z The New York Times: http://www.nytimes.com/2009/04/02/arts/television/02ligh.html?_r=0
- CBS. (18. October 2015). *CBS Corporation*. Získáno 20. April 2017, z CBS Corporation: <http://www.cbcorporation.com/>
- Deuze, M. (2015). *Media Life = Život v médiích*. Praha: Univerzita Karlova v Praze, nakladatelství Karolinum.
- Hanson, R. E. (2008). *Mass Communication: living in a media world*. Washington, DC: CQ Press.
- Indiewire. (20. August 2016). *Most watched TV shows 2015-2016*. Získáno 18. April 2017, z Indiewire: <http://www.indiewire.com/2016/05/most-watched-tv-show-2015-2016-season-game-of-thrones-the-walking-dead-football-1201682396/>
- Jan Jiráček, B. K. (2003). *Média a společnost: stručný úvod do studia médií a mediální komunikace*. Praha: Portál.
- Jiří Šaft, V. P. (7. May 2010). *Trávení volného času v České republice ve srovnání s evropskými zeměmi*. Získáno 28. March 2017, z Centrum pro výzkum veřejného mínění, Sociologický ústav AC ČR: http://cvvm.soc.cas.cz/media/com_form2content/documents/c3/a4013/f11/100119s_Traveni%20volneho%20casu.pdf
- kol., B. S. (2004). *Média - základní pojmy - návrhy - výroba*. Praha: Europa - Sobotáles cz. s.r.o.
- kolektiv, J. M. (2012). *Nové trendy v médiích: rozhlas a televize*. Brno: Masarykova Univerzita.

- Korda, J. (2012). *České televizní krimi série a jejich žánrové souvislosti (1989-2009)*. Olomouc: Univerzita Palackého v Olomouci.
- Korda, J. (2013). *Úvod do studia televize 2*. Olomouc: Univerzita Palackého v Olomouci.
- Kšajtová, M. (2005). *Velký příběh večerníčku: Historie nejslavnějšího televizního pořadu u nás*. Praha: Albatron nakladatelství a.s.
- Luhman, N. (2007). *The reality of the Mass Media*. Oxford: Polity Press.
- Macmillan Education. (2002). *Macmillan English Dictionary for Advanced Learners*. Oxford: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc.
- Marek Mičienka, J. J. (2007). *Základy mediální výchovy*. Praha: Portál s.r.o.
- Moc, J. (2009). *Seriály od A do Z: Lexikon českých seriálů*. Praha: Česká televize.
- NBC. (12. November 2016). *Days of our lives*. Načteno z NBC: <http://www.nbc.com/days-of-our-lives>
- NBC Universal. (11. December 2016). *NBC Universal*. Získáno 20. April 2017, z NBC Universal: <http://www.nbcuniversal.com/>
- NovaGroup. (30. November 2016). *Kdo jsme: Profil*. Získáno 20. April 2017, z NovaGroup: <http://www.novagroup.cz/kdo-jsme/profil>
- Silverstone, R. (1994). *Television and everyday life*. Oxon: Routledge.
- Slunčík, V. (2010). *Sitcom: vývoj a realizace*. Praha: Akademie múzických umění v Praze.
- Smetana, M. (2000). *Televizní seriál a jeho paradoxy*. Praha: ISV nakladatelství.
- Šloufová, A. (2012). *Ulice: Průvodce seriálem*. Praha: Nakladatelství Brána.
- Štroblová, S. (2009). *Film a televize jako audiovizuální zprostředkování světa: filmová a televizní dramaturgie a programová skladba*. Praha: Univerzita Jana Amose Komenského Praha.
- Turcot, L. (20. March 2015). *The Origins of Leisure*. Získáno 10. March 2017, z Academia: https://www.academia.edu/24771137/The_Origins_of_Leisure
- USA Network. (26. January 2017). *USA Network*. Získáno 20. April 2017, z USA Network: <http://www.usanetwork.com/>
- West, C. (2009, August 4). *Work four hours, then rest*. Retrieved March 10, 2017, from The Sydney Morning Herald: <http://www.smh.com.au/federal-politics/contributors/work-four-hours-then-rest-20090803-e770.html>