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**EUPHEMISMS AND THEIR TRANSLATION IN
SITUATIONAL COMEDY**

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Tutkielman tarkoituksena on selvittää eufemismien merkitystä, käyttöä ja käännettävyyttä tilannekomedioissa. Materiaali koostuu *Friends* (suom. Frendit) ja *Keeping up Appearances* (suom. Pokka pitää) sarjoista valittujen 20 jakson sisältämistä esimerkkitapauksista sekä niiden tekstityksistä poimituista käänöksistä. Ensisijaisesti tutkielmassa selvitetään perustuuko eufemismien käyttö tilannekomediassa pääasiassa tabu-aihealueisiin ja kohteliaisuuteen, kuten on todettu todellisessa elämässä olevan. Lisäksi selvitetään, minkä tyyppisiä eufemismeja tilannekomedian kirjoittajat käyttävät. Toissijaisesti tutkitaan miten englannin kielen eufemistiset ja dysfemistiset piirteet voidaan kääntää suomen kielelle ja onko kääntäjille mahdollisesti taipumusta käyttää eufemismeja kääntäessään suurempia ilmaisuja kuin mitä alkuperäisessä dialogissa oli käytetty. Lisäksi tutkitaan kääntäjien käyttämiä käänösstrategioita.

Tutkielman teoriaosa koostuu eufemismin ja sen eri tyyppien määrittelyistä, eufemismien käytön perusteiden kartoittamisesta, katsauksesta eri käännösteorioihin sekä tilannekomedian rakenteen selvittämisestä. Itse tutkimusmetodi on kuvaileva ja perustuu esimerkkien sekä niiden käännösten analysointiin, käännösvaihtoehtojen tarjoamiseen sekä esimerkkien jaotteluun eufemismien käytön syiden suhteen.

Analysoiduissa komedioissa eufemismien, vaikka ne suurimmaksi osaksi perustuivatkin tabuihin ja kohteliaisuuteen, tärkein pragmaattinen tarkoitus oli toimia joko vitsin perustana tai itsenäisenä vitseinä eikä ikävien tai nolostuttavien keskustelutilanteiden helpottajina. Eufemismeja käytetään ylenmäärin myös sellaisissa konteksteissa, joissa niitä ei normaalisti tarvittaisi. Tärkein eufemismien käyttötarkoitus oli seksiin liittyvissä aiheissa. Muita aiheita olivat mm. alkoholi, huumeet, ruumiintoiminnot, kohteliaisuus ja tunteet sekä kuulijan harhauttaminen. Tärkein yksittäinen eufemismin tyyppi oli metafora. Kääntäessään eufemismeja kääntäjät joutuivat usein uhraamaan eufemistisen voiman merkityksen välittämisen tieltä. Yleisesti ottaen tabu-aiheiset eufemismit olivat helppoiten käännettävissä.

Parafrastinen kääntäminen on usein ainoa tapa, jolla eufemistinen voima voidaan välittää. Eufemismien kääntämiseen tulisi kiinnittää enemmän huomiota, koska ne heijastavat asioita puhujasta, aiheesta sekä aikamme yhteiskunnan moraalisisista käsityksistä.

Asiasanat: dysphemism. euphemism. politeness. situational comedy. subtitling. taboo. translation.

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1 INTRODUCTION

During the last few decades, restrictions on the kinds of vocabulary, visual images and subjects that can be presented to a public have decreased considerably. Television, radio and other forms of mass media no longer censor the material they bring forward as strongly as they used to do. As a result, many topics that were unspeakable earlier have now become a common part of our language behaviour. According to Slotkin (1994: 220), there is probably nothing that better shows the way in which linguistic attitudes have liberalised during the past few decades than the media's use of "obscenities". Despite this, the need for a means to avoid speaking of some subjects with their real names lives on.

If we cannot say something the way we want, for example because of social pressure brought on by a need to avoid being impolite, we have a tendency to downsize our language by using euphemisms. A euphemism, shortly defined, is a neutral word or phrase that is designed to avoid a harsh or distasteful reality (Lutz 1987: 382). They are best suited for this purpose because they are mild, vague and more tactful expressions for things of unpleasant, distressing or delicate nature, such as death or bodily functions. Euphemisms exist in all languages of the world and they are always in close relation to the culture and the society in which the language in question is spoken.

According to Allan and Burridge (1991), euphemisms can be found in all kinds of texts, but they are more closely linked to spoken than to written language. Euphemisms used in written texts also tend to be more conservative and older than the ones heard in spoken language. This is one of the reasons why I have chosen to use television and subtitles as the source of data instead of translated novels, even though the genuineness of the discourse as spoken language in TV-programs can be questioned. The material is taken from two situational comedies *Friends* (MTV3) and *Keeping up Appearances* (TV1). These programs are based on verbal comedy and as such they contain plenty of

euphemistic expressions developed to refer to sex, drunkenness and basic biological functions. These expressions are in many ways a source of humour and they are skilfully exploited by the writers of this type of television entertainment. Furthermore, situational comedy is a form of family entertainment and therefore, it cannot include explicit dialogue, nor can it present topics which are socially unacceptable without careful disguising.

The primary objective of this study is to find out which types of euphemisms are used in situational comedy and whether their usage can be explained by taboos and politeness as is often suggested. I will also try to find out what type of euphemisms, if any, are typically used and what are the most important uses for euphemisms in situational comedy. The secondary objective of this study is to look at the translatability of euphemistic features of language in general. I will especially be looking for possible mismatches between the source dialogue and the subtitles. By this I mean that I will try to find out whether the translators have a tendency to use more straightforward expressions in Finnish than were found in the original dialogue or vice versa. I will also suggest reasons for such mismatches and possibly offer alternative translations. In addition, I will attempt to clarify the translation strategies used in translating euphemisms.

The thesis begins with the definitions of euphemism and its negative counterpart dysphemism in chapter two. I will also present a more detailed classification of the types of euphemisms and their origins, including politically correct language and jargon. Special attention will be paid to euphemisms deriving from semantic innovation, i.e. the ones that include changes in the meaning of words, which are also the most frequently used type of euphemisms.

In chapter three I will discuss the reasons generally agreed to be the prime motivators for the use of euphemisms. The two most important reasons taboos and politeness are handled in more detail. In chapter four I will move on to the

theories of translation with emphasis on communicative translation and especially on the main principles and restrictions brought on by the special requirements and features of subtitling. Chapter five will be a presentation of the two series providing the data and the genre of "sit-com" and the methods used in the analysis in chapter six. It will include examples and discussion based on the material from the series. The results and the conclusions will be discussed in chapter seven.

2 EUPHEMISMS

Probably the most typical way to avoid directly mentioning something is to use a euphemism. The Faber Dictionary of Euphemisms (1989: 7) describes euphemism as the language of evasion, prudery and deceit. Allan and Burrige (1991:11) define euphemism as "an alternative to a dispreferred expression, in order to avoid possible loss of face: either one's own face or, through giving offence, that of the audience or of a third party." This means that the concept of face-saving, which will be discussed in chapter 3.2, is also an important part of explaining the use of euphemisms. Furthermore, according to Allan and Burrige (1991:7), the potential face affronts are typically offensive by nature and therefore they are sometimes avoided or at least ameliorated by the use of euphemisms.

Warren (1992:135) suggests a more exhaustive definition than the previous by Allan and Burrige (1991). She postulates that an expression is a euphemism if the interpreter perceives the use of some word or expression as evidence of a wish on the part of the speaker to denote some sensitive matter in a tactful manner. Furthermore, she adds three prerequisites for this definition. Firstly, the topic must be considered to be a sensitive phenomenon. Sensitive topics usually include areas such as death, crime, politics, physical and mental defects, bodily functions and sex. Secondly, the expression used has to be considered less harsh or coarse and less direct than some other alternative. This

implies that euphemisms tend to only name phenomena that are already named. Thirdly, the interpreter has to perceive that the speaker's choice of words is dictated by considerations of tact or embarrassment with the referent. This means that what is actually considered euphemistic depends on the speaker and the receiver's interpretation of the message or as Warren (1992:135) puts it, "what is a euphemism is in the eye/ear of the beholder and cannot be strictly speaking objectively verified, although normally of course there is consensus among language users as to what words are euphemistic".

Because the social context plays such an important role in determining whether a word or an expression is a euphemism or dysphemism, linguists have coined the term **X-phemism**, to refer collectively to both groups. The main reason for this is simple. A phrase such as *to kick the bucket* meaning "to die" is usually considered euphemistic as it covers up the unpleasant. However, if the expression was said about one's own grandfather it would be considered dysphemistic, some might even find it insulting to the deceased. However, in order to explain the nature and typologies of euphemisms and dysphemisms, the terms are kept separate in the following subchapters.

2.1 Euphemisms Derived from Formal Innovation

In order to better understand the division and the definitions of euphemisms which are to follow it is necessary to present two semantic definitions. In speaking about meaning of words and how they change it is important to be familiar with the concepts of **sense** and **referent**. Lyons (1977: 206) states that "**sense** holds between words or expressions of a single language independently of the relationship, if any, which holds between those words or expressions and their referents or denotata". That is to say, words and expressions can have multiple senses. In the discussion to follow I will use **sense** and **meaning** as synonymous expressions even though they strictly speaking do not mean the same thing. According to Lyons (1977:177), the **referent** is the person or thing which is identified either correctly or incorrectly from an utterance or a

sentence. It is possible to say that an expression refers to its referent. In addition, I will use the term **conventional referent** in referring to the dictionary senses of words and **contextual referent** in referring to those senses of words that have to be concluded from the context in which they are used.

According to Warren (1992:132), there are four main ways in which euphemisms may be constructed. Firstly, it is possible to make use of the word formation devices of the language in question. These devices include compounding (*comfort station*), derivation (*sanguinary*), acronyms (*SAPFU*, a military blunder for *Surpassing All Previous Fuck Ups*), blends (*smog*) and onomatopoeia (*bow wow* for "dog"). Secondly, loan words can be used. Such words as *lingerie* from French, *calaboose* "jail" from Spanish and *sativa* "marijuana" from Latin together with other classical loans which imply learnedness (*phenomenon*, *perspire*, *urine*) are common foreign loans. Thirdly, the form of an offensive word can be modified and altered according to certain rules of phonemic modification. Common examples of phonemic replacement are *divil*, *divel* for "devil" or *gad*, *gosh*, *golly* for "God" and *fug* used instead of "fuck". In back slang words are spelled from right to left, *epar* "rape", and in rhyming slang phonemic similarity is used, as *darn* can be used instead of "damn". Allan and Burridge (1991:15) have used the term **remodelling** to describe different phonemic alterations. Nevertheless, these modifications present only a marginal share of all euphemisms and are in many ways closer to slang than they are to euphemisms. The first three discussed above are derived from **formal innovation**. By this I mean that with the exception of loan words, they can be formed according to certain rules, usually phonemic or lexical, and more importantly that they do not involve any sense changes to the already established meanings of words or expressions. The fourth and final way for forming euphemisms is to create a new sense for an established sense of a word or combination of words. For example *growth* can mean "tumour", *extra curricular activities* can mean "adultery", *sanitary engineer* is a euphemism for "garbage man" and so on. The fourth type of euphemisms are derived from **semantic innovation** and they will be discussed in more detail in chapter 2.2.

To sum up, the four main devices described above can be said to produce either a new form consisting of a new sequence of phonemes or morphemes not previously used in the language in question, or a new sense for an already established form is presented. The figure below by Warren (1992:134) is an exhaustive classification of euphemisms and their origins. The most common euphemisms are the ones in the lower half of the figure which derive from semantic innovation. A similar framework, though not as comprehensive and detailed, has also been suggested by Allan and Burridge (1991).

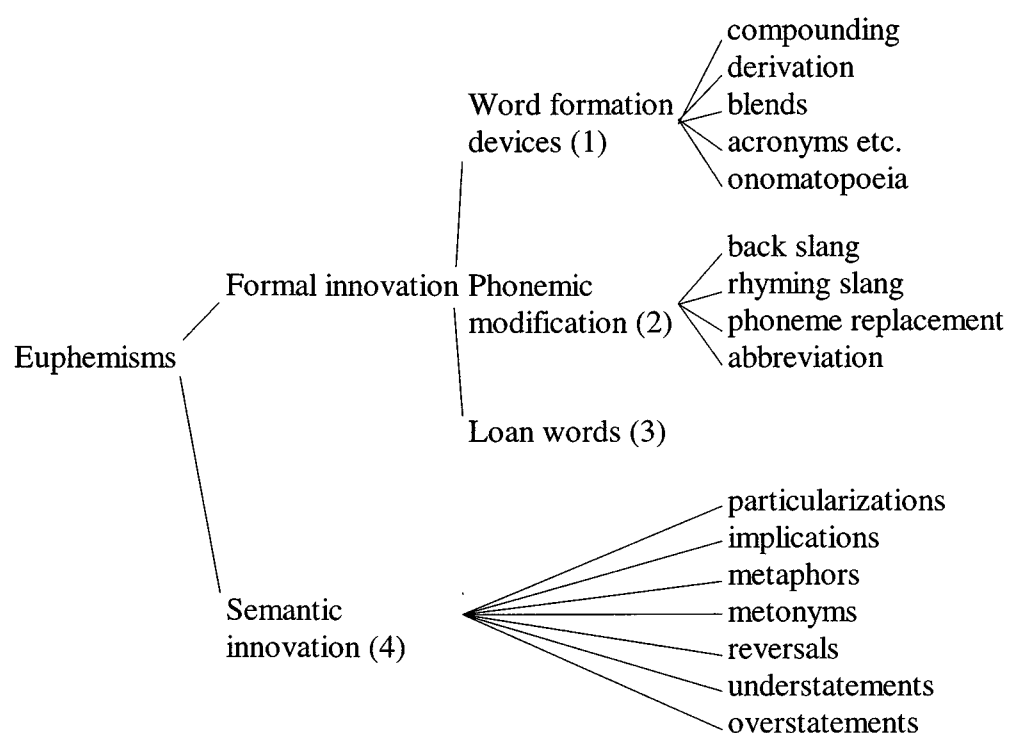


Figure 1. Classification of Euphemisms (Warren 1992: 134)

There are other devices besides the above four but they are much less common. For example, the offensive word can simply be omitted and possibly replaced with some unarticulated noise or a grunt. There are also cases where a particular term is used as a euphemism without any real reason. Of most interest to this study is the semantic innovation branch, as the euphemisms at the lower half of the figure, which deal with actual sense changes, are sometimes less obvious and especially interesting from the point of view of translating.

2.2 Euphemisms Derived from Semantic Innovation

As we will see, euphemisms help us to cope with troublesome situations and many of them can also act as a source of amusement. If a euphemism is funny, it is likely to be remembered and to gain popularity among language users. This happens especially if the euphemism is adopted by the mass media and is thus available for a larger audience. This type of euphemisms are usually derived from **semantic innovation**, i.e. are formed by devices causing changes in the established meanings of words and expressions. The following framework based on Warren (1992) and Allan and Burridge (1991) shows that euphemisms derived from semantic innovation can be classified according to relatively clear rules. I will briefly discuss the seven types of euphemism, mentioned in figure 1, which are particularization, implication, metaphor, metonymy, reversal, understatement and overstatement and give examples to show how they can be used in practice.

2.2.1 Particularization

Particularization is a frequently used device for creating euphemisms. Warren (1992:138-143) defines particularization as the use of a general term which in the context where it is used has to be particularized to make sense, in other words, particularization is the selection of a specific sense for an expression. The sentence *she is still innocent* can be understood to mean "she is not guilty", or it could be particularized and understood to mean "she is sexually inexperienced". The meaning of the word *innocent* is thus entirely context dependent. Also, the relation between the out-of-context referent and the referent of the euphemistic expression has to be of a certain form, meaning that the referent of the euphemistic sense has to be a subcategory of the referent of the dictionary sense from which it is derived. Typically, the specification of the distinct sense for a word or an expression involves the retrieval of a particular subcategory. If one hears the question "where is the sand-box?", one has to be able to retrieve the appropriate subcategory of *sand-box* to understand that with

it was meant "cat toilet". This is needed especially often with nouns used as euphemisms.

In particularization the interpreter or the receiver of the message will have to use his general knowledge of the world, the situation and the context at hand in the search for the missing information. The interpreter is guided by the demand that the "end result must be a referent or some referents which fit the context". (Warren 1992: 140). By no means can it be said that the particularized expressions are permanently fixed. An established particularization of a sense can develop further and acquire another new meaning. For example, the familiar expression *cut out to be a gentleman* has the established meaning particularization "destined to be a gentleman". Now, according to Spears (1991: 109), it has acquired a new sense "circumcised" as a further meaning particularization.

Warren (1992) concludes that for semantic theory the process of particularization is of crucial importance. It does not only explain how the meanings of established forms may become particularized, but it can also help to explain how, among others, new coinages and phrases of different kinds acquire their idiomatic meanings. In other words, particularization can be used to explain why meanings are not necessarily composed of the senses of the parts of an expression and the relations between them.

2.2.2 Implications

Implications, according to Warren (1992:131, 143-146), are a phenomenon caused by a clear causal connection between the contextual and the conventional referents. For example, the phrase *he went home in a box* used in the meaning "he died" shows a clear antecedent-consequent relationship: **if** one goes home in a coffin (established sense), **then** one must be dead (new euphemistic sense). However, the relationship does not always have to be that of antecedent-consequent but the roles can also be reversed. In a few cases the

conventional sense can present the consequent and the novel sense the antecedent. For example, the phrase *to bend an elbow* used in the meaning "to drink": **then** one bends one's arm (established sense), **if** one drinks (new euphemistic sense) Fairly often, the conventional sense and the novel sense can equally well be either consequent or antecedent. For example the phrase *do one's bit*: **if/then** "one does one's duty" (established sense), **then/if** "one dies in service" (new euphemistic sense) (Warren 1992: 143-144).

Implications are extremely vague because the intended sense has to be concluded by the interpreter from the context and the situation where they are used. Implications differ from particularizations in the sense that for example *inner city* can in an utterance mean both the "inner parts of a city" and "ghetto, slum". Whereas in particularizing, *sand-box* cannot be used in an utterance to mean both "any sand-box" and "the sand-box acting as a cat toilet". In other words, particularizations cannot have secondary senses whereas implications can. The second difference between particularizations and implications is that with implications the novel set of referents does not need to be properly included in the conventional set of referents. A *slum* is not necessarily a "city centre" but *dope* has to be a "drug".

However, these two differences are not mutually exclusive and it is sometimes hard to distinguish between particularizations and implications. A case like this is the expression *odd* used in the implicating sense "homosexual" (if one is homosexual, one is odd) and yet, in particularizing, homosexuals would be seen by many as a subcategory of odd people. Along this line of thought, it is not impossible to think of a context where *odd* would mean both "curious" and "homosexual". This shows that implications can be used to imply things and their use forces the interpreter to conclude from circumstantial evidence whether they are intended or not. Nevertheless, particularizations and implications are not to be mistaken as figurative expressions, as they are literal senses and do not violate any of the defining features of words and expressions used in this role, which is opposite of, for example, metaphors (Warren 1992:145-146).

2.2.3 Figurative Expressions

Metaphor, as a meaning formation system, is one of the most extensively covered areas of linguistic phenomena. According to, among others, Levinson (1983: 148), divergent classifications and terminologies usually plague the discussions on metaphor. The distinctions made between for example metaphor and metonymy are often contradictory and different classification models may yield different results. It should be noted that there are many scholars, for example Krikmann (1992), who argue against the identification of metonyms as a special case of metaphor. In this study these two, metaphor and metonymy along with idioms, will be discussed under the heading "figurative expressions", as suggested by Allan and Burridge (1991). However, I will present some of the main differences between the three, as they can be used to explain why a word or expressions is, or is not, a euphemism.

Idioms, which Ingo (1990: 245) broadly defines as fixed expressions which have meanings that cannot be concluded from the individual words they consist of, are often formed with metaphoric elements. As a type of euphemism, metaphor can be frequently found in almost all kinds of texts. Allan and Burridge (1991:15) choose to call metaphors simply "figurative expressions". Warren (1992:131-132, 146-149) narrows this definition down by presenting the Aristotelian view on metaphors. The meaning for a metaphor is formed in a process which is largely similar to the forming of particularizations presented above. Again, we are dealing with the conventional and the contextual referents and the arguments we associate with an expression. This means that the metaphor obtains its figurative qualities due to some common property between the conventional and the contextual referent. Levinson (1983: 161) says that the interpretation of a metaphor must rely on features of our general ability to reason analogically. For example, in the phrase *he is a mole*, the association between the word *mole* and its metaphoric meaning "secret agent" can be concluded from the common property that both the contextual and the conventional referent share: both the animal and the secret agent work under cover. Similarly, the word *headlights* can be used as a metaphor for "breasts",

as they have similar shape, degree of noticability and positioning. Levinson (1983) and Kerry et al. (1997) describe the interpretation process as the "mapping" of some features from one lexical item to another. For example, in the case of the metaphor *love is a journey*, our concrete knowledge of journeys is mapped onto, and partially structures, our concept of love.

Newmark (1988: 106-113) distinguishes six different types of metaphor: dead, cliché, stock, adapted, recent and original. A **dead metaphor**, "where one is hardly conscious of the image", frequently relates to universal terms of time and space, the main part of the body, general ecological features and the main human activities. Expressions involving words such as *space*, *foot*, *mouth* and *fall* belong to this group. **Cliché metaphors** as metaphors have outlived their usefulness and are used as a substitute for clear thought, often emotively, but without corresponding to the facts of the matter as in the phrase "*breakthrough* in education". Newmark (1988: 108) defines **stock metaphor** as an established metaphor which in an informal context is an efficient and concise method of covering a physical and mental situation both referentially and pragmatically. For example the expression *the ball is in their court* is a stock metaphor. **Adapted metaphor** is usually an altered stock metaphor such as *the ball is a little in their court*. The **recent metaphors** are new metaphors which have spread rapidly. The sixth type of metaphor is the **original metaphor**, created or quoted by the writer in question.

The most important feature of metaphors in this study is their ability to stand as names for the things that are otherwise inexpressible. But by no means are all metaphors euphemisms. For example, in the phrase *she is a sunny girl* the word *sunny* is figurative but there is nothing euphemistic about it. Metaphors are a very flexible means for creating euphemisms as the only limit to the amount of metaphors is human imagination. They also have the power to surprise the interpreter as they may suggest unexpected parallels drawn between two concepts. This can be done in order to get a humorous response from the audience or the interpreter, as seen in the examples above.

The third type of figurative expression discussed in this study is **metonymy**. Allan and Burridge (1991: 14) define metonymy in terms of substituting words with other words, including one-for-one substitution, general-for-specific and part-for-whole substitutions. The examples below represent just a small part of all the possible variations. The number of general-for-specific subclasses like this is probably limitless. Warren's (1992:149) more complicated definition of metonymy is that it is a word that is applied to referents that are not included in the conventional set of its referents, but which are connected to the conventional set of referents in some other way. The relation may be causal (*heartburn*, used for "jealousy"), whole-part (*nether regions*, for "genitals"), locative (*bathroom*, for "WC") or equative (*killer-weed*, for "PCP-drug"). Krikmann (1992: 81-82) lists some uses of metonyms which also show how they can be used as euphemisms:

- referring to entirety instead of a part of it (or vice versa)
- referring to an institution instead of a person
- referring to a quality / characteristic instead of its bearer
- referring to an object / a thing used instead of its user
- referring to a location of an event instead of the event itself etc.

Warren (1992:149-152) distinguishes between implications defined in chapter 2.2.2 and metonyms which are often mistaken to be the same thing, even though there are some differences between the two. Firstly, implications start off as literal, secondary senses, whereas the metonymic senses are non-literal senses, which do not exist together with the senses from which they are derived. Secondly, implications may take the form of a verb, noun or an adjective while metonyms are almost always nouns. The relationship between an implication and a metonym can best be illustrated with an example. In the sentence "What our business needs is some muscle", the word *muscle* is a metonym. The interpretation of *muscle* can be paraphrased "that which muscles produce, i.e. power". In the sentence, "We need muscular doormen for this restaurant" the word *muscular* is an implication since it simply implies "strong".

According to Warren (1992:152), the difference between a metaphor and a metonymy is "that the connector in the case of metaphors is a resemblance-type relation, which may involve more than one shared property, whereas in the case of metonyms there is one and only one connector". She also states that in creating metaphors and metonyms at least one of the defining features of the established meaning is violated. It follows from this that the interpreter will think of the new referent as an unorthodox one and the new meaning as transferred or figurative.

2.2.4 Reversals, Understatements and Overstatements

Particularization, implication, metaphor and metonymy are the four most important devices in forming new euphemistic meanings for already existing expressions. Nevertheless, there are three more devices suited especially well for the creation of euphemisms: reversals (irony), understatements (litotes) and overstatements (hyperboles). These are often seen as minor devices in forming euphemisms and in the semantic meaning extension theories as well (Warren 1992:153).

According to Warren (1992:154) reversals can most often be found in cases where a person expresses "something bad" by referring to it with its opposite. Usually, this means that a conventional meaning of a word fits our favoured contextual referent provided we reverse it, so that *huge* means (contextually) "unusually small" or *early* "late" (Warren 1992:132). Another well-known example of this is *blessed* in the meaning "damned". Reversals are euphemisms which are usually carefully planned and like many euphemisms are extremely context dependent. The tone of reversals is often ironic, as they are used to place emphasis on the opposite concept.

Based on Warren (1992:152-153), understatements are instances where the conventional meaning of a word fits the favoured contextual referent provided that the degree to which some feature of meaning applies is made stronger. For

example, *(drug) habit* used for "drug addiction". In other words, in the case of understatement the undesirable feature is downgraded. Overstatements, on the other hand, are instances of euphemism where the conventional meaning of a word fits the favoured contextual referent provided that the degree to which some feature of meaning applies is weakened. That is to say, a desirable feature is upgraded. For example, *flight to glory* used for "death".

However, many of the examples presented in the earlier sections could be placed in a class of their own, namely double classifications. For example, one lengthy metaphor can also contain particularizations and metonymies. Since the borders between some classes are very thin, or as often is the case, there can be no distinct lines drawn between them at all, intuition may be the only guide to be used in classifying euphemisms derived from semantic innovation (Warren 1992:155-157).

2.3 Dysphemism

The opposite phenomenon to euphemism is dysphemism. Dysphemisms are rude or vulgar expressions used as weapons against others, and as release valves for frustration or anger. This means that they are normally used in talking about one's opponents, things that one wishes to express disapproval of, or of things one wants to downgrade. Allan and Burrige (1991:26) define dysphemism as follows: "A dysphemism is an expression with connotations that are offensive either about the denotatum or to the audience, or both, and it is substituted for a neutral or a euphemistic expression for just that reason."

According to Allan and Burrige (1991:27), dysphemism employs most of the same strategies as euphemism. Nevertheless, there are two main differences between the strategies the two use. Firstly, part-for-whole dysphemisms are used more frequently than the general-for-specific ones, which is the opposite to euphemisms. Secondly, in dysphemism understatement and overstatement cannot really be seen as opposite concepts as overstatement can also be used to

magnify the offence, as is done for example in the sentence *He is the greatest idiot on earth*.

As the use of dysphemisms is often connected to personal disputes, many of the terms are used as insults. In these situations, according to Allan and Burrige (1991), there are four main ways in which the dysphemistic expressions are formed. Firstly, comparisons of people can be made in relation to animals or certain behaviour that they are deemed to have. For example, somebody can be called a *pig*, *cow*, *fox*, *ape*, *snake* or a *rabbit*. Secondly, the insult can be derived from tabooed bodily organs, effluvia or sexual behaviours. Expressions such as "*You prick / shithead / whore!*" are commonly used in all languages. Thirdly, insults can be based on mental or physical inadequacy, including such expressions as *idiot*, *four-eyes*, *baldy* and *maniac* etc. Finally, terms of insult or disrespect can be targeted towards a person's character, as with for instance *stingy* or *grump*. However, neither euphemism nor dysphemism is an inherent property of a word itself, but is naturally determined by the way it is used (Allan and Burrige 1991:26-29).

As mentioned above, it is sometimes impossible to tell whether an expression is a euphemism or a dysphemism, since ultimately it is the intended hearer who decides and then reacts accordingly. It has also been said (Bolinger 1980:73) that, if a euphemism becomes too well known, it may turn into a dysphemism. Warren (1992:136) states that this phenomenon occurs when a euphemism is used so frequently as a designator of a taboo phenomenon that strong associations are formed with the word and the taboo referent. This results in the disappearance of the **euphemistic force**. Moreover, she also regards euphemistic force to be primarily a matter of contrast between the basic and the new sense of a word. An example of this is the word *disease* which originally meant "discomfort". Since this sense has disappeared we cannot think of it as a pleasant and mild way of talking about illness. The contrast can also lie between the common, vulgar term, and the learned elevated term. As an example of this can be mentioned *piss* and "urine" or *exodus* and "emigration".

Dysphemisms can be used as a source of humour as their offensiveness can be found funny, for example in situations where an absent third party or a minority is made the target of a dysphemistic expression. Allan and Burridge (1991:29) state that "like euphemisms, dysphemisms interact with style and therefore have the potential to produce stylistic discord". This discord is then often used as a source of amusement, especially in television comedies. Furthermore, because of their offensive nature, dysphemisms are more likely to draw attention of the reader / viewer than the more inadvertent euphemisms.

2.4 Politically Correct Language and Jargon

Politically correct language and jargon are two quite different phenomena where euphemizing in some form is in central position. Politically correct language is a clear case of the kind of use of language which seeks to embellish and possibly alter our perception of the reality, whereas jargon's definition as euphemistic stems on one hand from its ability to facilitate communication and on the other hand from its ability to raise barriers between participants of a conversation as well.

Politically correct language (PC), also known as **culturally sensitive language (CS)** is a movement which makes use of old words and expressions and a new set of their combinations to avoid explicit reference to gender, race, sexual preference, disabilities and ethnicity (Andrews 1996:390). This is to say, political correctness is a movement which aims at tolerance, by suppressing thoughts that somebody might think of as stereotypical, prejudicial or offensive. Probably the most widely known examples of politically correct language are the PC terms *African-American* used instead of "black" or "negro" and *Native American* used for "an indian" in the United States.

Burridge (1996:42) suggests that politically correct terms are "euphemisms with attitude". There are many similarities in the use and the motivation of use between politically correct terms and euphemisms. Indeed, it would not be

wrong to classify PC terms as euphemisms. Andrews (1996:390) sees this relation especially with the newer PC / CS terms which "seem to function as euphemisms of alternative names that have become taboo". Therefore, I think it is necessary to include politically correct language in this framework as it is nowadays a common phenomenon and can be found in all kinds of texts.

Politically correct language, according to Andrews (1996), is particularly often concerned with the linguistic problem of naming. This results from the strive for "correct speech" which is deemed appropriate to use in public and in other socially determined contexts. Further examples of politically correct terms are such expressions as *fire fighter* for "fireman", *Asian* for "oriental", *senior citizen* for "old people" or *visually impaired* for "blind".

According to Andrews, it is obvious that not all PC terms are equal. While some of the terms are becoming more like norms, others are still restricted to small social circles. In some cases a PC/CS term is only one of many synonymous alternatives. Indeed, it would not be wrong to say that some of these terms are simply distorted and awkward, while others are simple and stylistically elegant. Andrews also points out that CS/PC usage can and should be treated as the consequence of both concept and word taboo, discussed below in chapter 3.1 (Andrews 1996:399).

Jargon is usually defined as the language peculiar to a trade, profession or other group. It is a highly specialised language which has the primary function of allowing the members of the group to communicate with each other clearly, efficiently and quickly (Lutz 1987: 382). Jargons are used by such groups as doctors, lawyers, engineers and politicians. For example educationalese, a kind of a "teacher jargon", has sought to abandon assessment based terms such as *lazy*, *stupid* or *clever* and replaced them with expressions like *underachievers*, *socially disadvantaged groups*, *high verbal-ability subjects* or *those at the lower end of the ability scale*, in order to make it appear as such that the

principle of "equal opportunity for all" really works at least in education (Allan and Burrige 1991: 197).

According to Allan and Burrige (1991) the second function of jargon is to promote in-group solidarity and to exclude those people who do not use the jargon as out-groupers. Therefore, jargon is defined as euphemistic for the people inside the group who understand it. This can be seen for example in military talk and with the jargon that the staff of a hospital uses. To the outsiders of the group, those who are not doctors or soldiers, the jargon used is usually dysphemistic because the outsiders cannot understand it. Jargon is also used because it helps the insiders of the group in question to cope with the unpleasant aspects of their work. For example, death and dying in medical jargon may be hidden into expressions such as *negative patient care outcome* or *D.O.A*, "Dead On Arrival" (Allan and Burrige 1991: 196-198). On the other hand, if jargon is used knowing that the receiver cannot understand it, we are dealing with "doublespeak". In such cases, jargon is used to deceive the receiver (Lutz 1987: 383). The motives for euphemising are discussed in more detail in the following chapter.

3 BASIS FOR THE USE OF EUPHEMISMS

There are two primary instigators, taboos and politeness, which are generally agreed to be the most important motivators for the use of euphemisms. However, there are other motives for creating euphemisms as well. Neaman and Silver (1983: 13-14) state that the motives for euphemizing are as diverse and as universal as the range of human emotions. They also consider "sentimentalising tendency" to be an ever present force behind euphemisms, as we may refer to "the wife" as *the little woman* or to "old age" as *the golden years*. The importance of sentimentalising tendency as a motive for euphemizing may be decreasing as the spirit of the new frankness of speech is taking over. However, it is likely that it will be replaced by other motivations

for creating euphemisms, possibly by some hitherto unconsidered subject. Euphemisms may also be used to mislead, deceive or cover up the unpleasant, in which case we are talking about **doublespeak** as discussed above.

Until this century, taboos and the superstitious belief in the consequences of breaking them, were the main reasons for employing euphemisms. At worst, it was believed that if someone made the mistake of uttering a taboo word such as *bear* or *God*, this would lead to personal suffering or even death. Nowadays, the overwhelming majority of the euphemisms are motivated by politeness, as we do not want to embarrass other people by talking about unpleasant subjects in public.

We all use different types of euphemisms in discussing matters that we find awkward to talk about. Usually, we do not even notice the euphemisms we use, as with frequent usage many of them have become an indistinguishable part of our vocabulary. According to Allan and Burridge (1991:4-10), the strategies we employ in choosing the type and the tone of the euphemism depend on things such as the speaker's attitudes and preferences, the speaker's relationship with the listener and their relationship to the issue being euphemised, which is often culture bound. Additionally, the situation, the context and the place where the discussion happens can affect the choice of euphemism. In written texts, at least the text type, the type of audience and the purpose of the text, have a strong influence on the variety of euphemisms that can be found. However, euphemisms are still often about taboos, things we for one reason or another do not want to discuss.

3.1 Taboos and Euphemisms

In every society, there are taboos, things that we simply try to avoid either doing or talking about. In this context, it is useful to separate what Andersson and Trudgill (1990:55) call **taboo behaviour** and **taboo words**, of which the latter term is better known as **linguistic taboo**. The relationship between the

two is somewhat problematic. It has been suggested that for every behavioural taboo there is a linguistic taboo. However, the relationship is not quite that simple even though the taboo behaviours usually do have corresponding linguistic taboos. For example, cannibalism is a taboo behaviour in Europe and yet there seem to be no taboo words for it in the western world (Andersson and Trudgill 1990:58).

Often the linguistic taboos are further categorised in taboos of concept, taboos of word and projected taboos. **Taboo of concept** can be simply described as the avoidance of a topic or subject that is not suitable for the occasion. **Taboo of word** occurs when a topic is valid for discussion, but euphemistic terms are required. If a word does not have the force of a genuine word taboo, but its usage evokes a lesser degree of embarrassment (e.g. the word *sweat*), we are dealing with a **projected taboo** (Adler, as quoted by Andrews 1996: 396).

It should be noted that sometimes taboo words give rise to taboo behaviours for phonetic reasons. Usually, the birth of a behavioural taboo caused by a linguistic taboo results from bilingualism. Wardhaugh (1992: 237) gives an example of Thai students learning English who avoid Thai words like *fag* "sheath" and *phrig* "chili" in the presence of native speakers of English because those words resemble certain English taboo words. The same phenomenon can also occur reversed as certain words in English may be avoided due to their resemblance to some vulgar terms in a speaker's mother tongue.

Behavioural taboos may lead to certain things not being said, not because they cannot be said but because "people just do not talk about those things". As Wardhaugh (1992:236) states, these are instances of linguistic taboos and they are one way in which a society shows that it disapproves of certain kinds of behaviour that is believed to be harmful to its members. According to Wardhaugh (1992:236), the reasons for the disapproval of certain kind of behaviour can be supernatural or the behaviour can be in conflict with the moral code of the society. This leads to the use of euphemisms, as we need

means to avoid directly mentioning a tabooed matter. Even very young children learn which expressions to use and which ones not to use.

Topics which become taboos, usually concentrate on few specific areas in society. Naturally, there is a lot of variation between different cultures according to how strong the feelings and reactions are to the topic in question. Many of the items on the list that is to follow are there because they represent things that people are simply afraid of. Some are there because we do not find ourselves at ease when talking about a matter such as the mentally handicapped. Nor would parents want to talk about their daughter who is a prostitute or using drugs. I have compiled a more complete list of typical tabooed matters based on the studies of Andersson (1986:79), Andrews (1996:394-395) and Mencken (1982:355-367).

- Death
- Love, sex, prostitution and unconventional sexual behaviour (e.g. incest)
- Human body and bodily functions: physical differences and mental handicaps etc.
- Women and pregnancy (e.g. menstruation)
- Ethnic, sexual and other minorities with lower prestige
- Animals (often mythical and dangerous animals, e.g. bear, wolf)
- Certain words relating to religion (e.g. God)
- Names and kinship words
- Professions with lower prestige (e.g. undertaker, janitor)
- Things related to war and prisons
- Alcohol, drinking and drugs
- Toilets, doctors, hospitals, nursery homes for the elderly, ...
- Other culture specific fields

It is not always quite clear which terms or subjects are to be considered a taboo. Adler (quoted in Andrews 1978: 395) claims that in a modern society "taboos are dictated by the upper, the ruling class". Even though this claim may be in dispute, social class is to be considered a factor influencing the occurrence of euphemisms.

Adler also presents a few reasons for why linguistic taboos do not disappear because of the lack of usage. Firstly, taboos are maintained or broken by all

classes of the society. Secondly, taboos change constantly, sometimes very rapidly, and thirdly, some taboos are self-imposed due to particular stereotypes. Alternatively, the power of linguistic taboo is so strong in some societies that it leads to linguistic change (Adler, as quoted by Andrews 1996: 396-397).

It can be said that the linguistic taboos and the things that are euphemised mirror the social and moral attitudes of the time. Burchfield (1985: 28) states that our present age, like those in the past, produces euphemisms to conceal or take attention away from its particular embarrassments and unsolved problems. Thus, by analysing the euphemisms of a time we can conclude a lot about our attitudes towards death, sex, women, minorities, war and many other socially important issues (Andersson & Trudgill 1990:191). To sum up, there definitely seem to be some sort of constraints in every society as regards the topics we discuss and the manner in which they are discussed. The manner is usually linked with the politeness phenomenon.

3.2 Politeness and Euphemisms

Politeness is contemporarily suggested as the most important motivator for the use of euphemisms. Politeness as a concept has intrigued many sociolinguists and pragmatists, but, despite the many efforts, a really good definition for "politeness" is still to come. By politeness, we usually understand behaviour that enforces good manners and even more importantly consideration for other people.

Our strong desire to avoid offending others with words can be explained with reference to the system of **face-work** (Goffman 1967). This involves the process of face-maintaining. The expressions "to save one's face" or "to lose one's face" are generally known in many cultures and face-saving is a typical act which euphemism and dysphemism are capable of facilitating. Generally speaking, face-work can be said to represent the social skills of an individual as a member of a social circle. Social interaction is generally oriented towards

maintaining face. All the members of a social circle are expected to have some knowledge of the face-maintaining acts and their usage (Goffman 1967: 13-14).

Face is something that can be lost or maintained and in interaction it has to be constantly attended to. Goffman (1967:5) defines **face** as "the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact". Brown and Levinson (1987: 61) have based their definition of **face** on Goffman's work and state that it is the public self-image that everyone lays claim to, consisting of two related aspects:

- a) **negative face**: the basic claim for freedom of action and freedom from imposition.
- b) **positive face**: positive self-image and the desire that this self-image should be appreciated and approved of by interactants.

These definitions entail that all adult members of a society have the capacity of reasoning and that they have "face" and know the others to have it as well. Like "face", politeness can be similarly divided into **positive politeness** and **negative politeness**. Positive politeness is oriented towards the positive face of the hearer, i.e. the positive self-image he claims for himself. This is usually realised by the speaker showing that he at least in some ways shares the hearer's opinions and needs and appreciates them. Negative politeness, on the other hand, is oriented toward satisfying the hearer's negative face, i.e. his basic want to maintain claims of self-territory and self-determination. This means that the speaker will not interfere with the hearer's freedom of action and shows appreciation of the hearer's negative face (Brown and Levinson 1987: 70). To sum up, "face" mostly deals with such feelings as embarrassment, humiliation and appreciation and how these feelings can be ameliorated or enhanced, and the choosing of a strategy to be employed in doing so.

Allan and Burridge (1991: 4) state that euphemisms and dysphemisms are developed and defined by reference to concerns about face, which are of immense importance on all occasions of language interchange. An individual's face is something that is always seen in relation to other peoples' behaviour and it is evaluated according to the expected and socially desirable behaviour in a particular group and / or situation (Brown and Levinson 1987: 61). Every time we decide to say something, we must consider whether what we are going to say will damage, maintain or enhance our own face and equally, we must consider what the utterance's effect will be on others.

According to Goffman (1967:15-18), if a person feels his own face threatened or wants to maintain someone else's face, he is likely to resort to different avoidance processes. It is possible to avoid situations and contacts where face threats are likely to occur. However, if such a contact occurs, as defensive actions it is possible to keep off topics and activities that might lead to the revealing of information that would be inconsistent with the face the person is trying to maintain. As protective manoeuvres the person is likely to show politeness and respect to others by being discrete. He will leave out facts, employ euphemisms and doubletalk and formulate replies and phrases with careful ambiguity so that his own and the hearers' faces will be preserved as well as possible.

Euphemism used in a communicative act has the potential of being ambiguous, and therefore, it is not always possible to identify one clear communicative goal that it might have. Brown and Levinson (1987: 211) call this a communicative act that is done **off record**. This is a way in which the speaker can be intentionally vague and leave the interpretation of the utterance to the hearer. The off record strategies of Brown and Levinson (1987: 213-227) are largely consistent with the framework presented for classifying euphemisms. Their strategies include among others implications, understating, overstating, irony and metaphor.

Grice (1975) developed guidelines for achieving maximally efficient communication. These were also the norms of co-operative behaviour that participants are expected to observe during discussion even though they may occasionally choose not to do so. The co-operative principle and the matters of face are important for this study, even though the main focus lies on euphemisms and their translations. This is because both euphemism and dysphemism can be explained in terms of face effects. According to Allan and Burridge (1991: 5), violations of Grice's four maxims of quality (speak the truth), quantity (do not give too much or too little information), relevance (be relevant in reference to the context) and manner (be clear, avoid ambiguity) are usually dysphemistic by nature. On the other hand, the relationship between politeness and maximally efficient communication is somewhat contradictory. In order to be polite, it is sometimes necessary to flout the Gricean maxims by for example not telling the (whole) truth or by being intentionally ambiguous. To continue along these lines of thought, it could be said that it is typical of dysphemisms and euphemisms not to strive for the maximally efficient communication, but rather to be consciously employed by the speaker to violate the maxims in order to reach personal goals without making it too obvious or threatening to others.

4 THEORIES ON TRANSLATION AND SCREEN SUBTITLING

The purpose of this chapter is to review some of the theories developed for defining translation and to provide some initial steps in forming a framework for the translation of euphemisms. The translation of euphemisms and the preservation of euphemistic force in translation are to a large extent still unexplored areas in translation theory. Furthermore, I will present some of the main ideas of the theory and practice of subtitling. This is done because this study is based on the analysis of screen subtitles, which is an altogether different mode of translation, with differing goals from those of the conventional form (from written to written language) of translation.

Hatim and Mason (1997: 1) see translation as an act of communication which attempts to relay, across cultural and linguistic boundaries, another act of communication. This view shows the striking uniformity of the problems that the translators working with different fields and modes, e.g. in subtitling, share. Since the goal of subtitling is not to translate everything, but rather as much as possible within the restrictions of time and space on the TV screen, many of the theories developed for the conventional form of translation are not applicable to subtitling. In fact there are scholars, e.g. House (1981: 30) and Delabastita (1989: 213), who argue against the identification of subtitling as a form of translation and prefer the terms **interpretation** or **adaptation** to be used for the translation of oral texts. Catford (1965: 53) goes even further and claims that translation between media is impossible, meaning that translation cannot be done from spoken language to written language or vice versa. However, there are notions such as translation equivalence with its semantic and pragmatic aspects which can be applied to subtitling and this study as well.

4.1 Some Views on Translation

Ingo (1990: 11) states that translating in some form is as old as language itself but that translation has become the target of serious studies only in the past few decades. Translation theory's main concern, according to Newmark (1981:19), is to determine appropriate translation methods for the widest possible range of texts, provide a framework of principles, restricted rules and hints for translating and criticising texts and to give some insight into the relation between thought, meaning and language. All of these factors have contributed to the birth of a variety of different schools of thought on what should be the primary concern of the translator and what actually constitutes a good translation.

Translation has been defined by many linguists in almost as many ways. Catford (1965:20) defines translation as the replacement of textual material in one language by equivalent textual material in another language. Some of the

pioneering work in the field was done by Nida and Taber (1969: 12), who define translation as the reproducing of the Source Language (SL) message into the Target Language (TL) by replacing it with the closest natural equivalent. Furthermore, they state that translating should be done first in terms of meaning and secondly in terms of style and that the translator must aim at reproducing the message, to do anything else is essentially false of the translator's task. House (1981: 29-30) defines translation as "the replacement of the text in the source language by a semantically and pragmatically equivalent text in the target language". The notion of translation equivalence, even though it, according to Ingo (1990: 96), has turned out to be a very broad concept, is of crucial importance to all definitions of translation and a fundamental criterion of translation quality.

Two of the most important factors of translation equivalence are its semantic and pragmatic aspects. According to House (1981: 25), the semantic aspect of meaning consists of "the relationship of reference or denotation, i.e., the relationship of linguistic units or symbols to their referents in some possible world". The presence of equivalence in translation can be seen easily with the semantic aspect of meaning, as the referential aspect of meaning is readily accessible. Thus, semantic equivalence refers to the closest possible equivalence in meaning and form between SL and TL text. The pragmatic aspect of meaning, according to House (1981: 27), is "the illocutionary force that an utterance is said to have, i.e., the particular use of an expression on a particular occasion". In other words, the pragmatic equivalence refers to equivalence of effect of the text on the SL and TL reader.

House (1981: 28) also postulates that in translation it is always necessary to aim at pragmatic equivalence, if needed, even at the expense of semantic equivalence. Moreover, according to Newmark (1981: 10) there is wide but not universal agreement that the main aim and the desirable result of the translator's work is to produce as nearly as possible the same effect on his readers as was produced on the readers of the original. This approach to translation is known as the principle of **equivalent effect** or in Nida's (1969)

terms **dynamic equivalence**. Newmark (1981: 39) further proposes the wider term **communicative translation** to be used in cases where the aim is not **semantic translation**, the rendering of the semantic and syntactic structures of the second language, to reach the exact contextual meaning of the original. The main difference between the two is that semantic translation remains within the original culture and helps the reader only in its connotations if they constitute the essential message of the text, whereas communicative translation offers a generous transfer of foreign elements into both the reader's culture and language where necessary.

The same aspects of translation theory have also been addressed by House (1981:188-204), who uses the term **overt translation** in referring to texts which are overtly translations. It is typical of the overt translations not to be able to achieve exactly the same function as the TL version, because the receivers represent a different culture and possibly a different era. Therefore, the translator has to be content with **second level function**. Those translations which can enjoy the status of an original SL text are called **covert translations**. The translation is covert because it is not marked as a SL or a TL text, but may have been created in its own right. Furthermore, with covert translation the translator has to place a cultural filter between the SL and TL texts to achieve equivalent effect by taking into account the different cultural presuppositions in the two language communities.

On the basis of the framework above, it seems quite natural that subtitling should fall into the categories of communicative and overt translation. According to Newmark (1981: 39) another basic difference between communicative and semantic translation is the fact that where there is conflict, the communicative must emphasise the 'force' rather than the content of the message. However, in both communicative and semantic translation, provided that the equivalent effect is secured, the literal word-for-word translation is not only the best, but the only valid method of translation. These factors are important in translating euphemisms as well because the translator has to make decisions between the preservation euphemistic force, relaying the content of

the message and the selection of an appropriate translation strategy to ensure 'the equivalent effect' on the receivers.

4.2 Translation of Euphemisms

Studies on euphemisms looked at from the point of view of translation are still extremely rare. There are of course studies on the translation of for example figurative expressions, acronyms, jargon or taboos, but not on the translatability of the euphemistic force they may carry or enforce. The primary concern of these studies is to propose models for selecting the best translation strategy for each type of expression and the matter of euphemistic force only appears randomly as a side-track. Furthermore, the studies have been developed in the first place for the translation of "written informative" type of texts and as such cannot be directly applied to subtitling. However, I will present some of the guidelines developed for the translation of neologisms, metaphors and idioms because they do offer some initial information and suggestions on the translation of euphemisms.

Closest to the translation of euphemisms in the translation theory is the study of **neologisms**, which Newmark (1988: 140) defines as newly coined lexical units or existing lexical units that acquire a new sense. But not even in these cases is any attention paid to the euphemistic properties of these new forms and senses. However, study of the translation of neologisms does provide some additional background information for this thesis and help in identifying the translation strategies used and offer hints for the treatment of euphemisms in subtitling.

Newmark (1988: 140-150) lists 12 different types of neologisms, which include for example new coinages, derived words, abbreviations, collocations and acronyms. Similarly to the division of euphemisms they can be divided into two categories: old words with new senses and new forms. The old words with new senses tend to be non-cultural and non-technical and they should

usually be translated with a word that already exists in TL or with a brief functional or descriptive term. The new forms, on the other hand, should be re-created on the basis of the SL neologism, if a translation does not already exist. However, these guidelines aim at the preservation of meaning in translation, not at the preservation of euphemistic force which makes them hard to fully comply with.

The studies on the translation of metaphor also give some hints to the translation of those metaphors acting as euphemisms. Hatim and Mason (1990) and Newmark (1981) suggest that the existence of metaphor constitutes one of the key problems in linguistics whether looked at from the point of view of translation theory or semantics. The division of metaphors into six different types by Newmark (1988), discussed above in chapter 2.2.3, has also led to a framework for how the different metaphors should be translated. Normally, the "dead metaphors" are not difficult to translate, but they do often defy literal translation. The translator should get rid of the "cliché metaphors" at least in informative texts or possibly replace them with less tarnished metaphors. "Stock metaphors" may be difficult to translate because their equivalents may be out of date or used by a different social or age group. With stock metaphor the translator should aim at reproducing the SL image into the TL. "Adapted metaphors" should be translated by an equivalent adapted metaphor or replaced with a non-figurative expression. "Recent metaphors" designating new objects or processes should be translated with particular reference to the translation of the referent and the level of language of the metaphor. "Original metaphors" should be translated literally because they reflect the writer's personality and style and enrich the TL. (Newmark 1988:104-113)

In addition to the definition of idiom in chapter 2.2.3, Ingo (1990: 245-248) also offers guidelines for their translation. The SL idiom, where possible, should be translated with a semantically equivalent TL idiom. The literal translation of the SL idiom rarely works and normally requires additional explaining in the TL. Furthermore, if even after a thorough search an equivalent TL idiom has not been found, the translator may use a non-

figurative expression in translating the SL idiom. However, this will lead to changes in the style of the text. Finally, it is possible to use a TL idiom even in a case where an idiom was not used in the SL text. This is normally done for style preserving purposes in cases where the translator wants to make up for those idioms which could not be translated adequately. However, the framework for the translation of euphemisms provided in this chapter is largely incomplete, as it does only cover the form of some of the types of euphemisms but not their function. Nevertheless, I will try to apply these very broad guidelines in my analysis where possible.

4.3 Subtitling

Due to the fact that the portion of imported programs on the Finnish television, depending on the network, is 42-48% and in some program types even as high as 95%, the amount of programs which need to go through some form of translation is also high (Statistics Finland 1998). In Finland, screen subtitles are by far the most popular type of TV-translation. In a few cases, such as in children's programs and documentaries the other form of TV-translating, dubbing, is sometimes used. But even then it would be better to talk about voice-overs, as the dubbing is done in a narrative tone by a single reader and is not synchronised to match the lip movements of the characters. However, since this study is based on subtitles there is no need for further accounts of the techniques of dubbing.

According to Siltanen (1993: 4) and Vöge (1977: 120), out of all the types of translated texts TV-translations reach the largest audience. Siltanen (1993: 4) also mentions that subtitling differs from other types of translating in the respect that subtitles can be constantly compared and reviewed with the source text by the viewers who know both the target and the source language. She also states that the primary goal of subtitling is to interpret the contents of the program to the viewer who does not understand the source language. Hatim and Mason (1997: 82) state that subtitles are "a target language guide" to what

is going on in the source text and that meaning is to be retrieved by the viewers by a process of matching this target text guide with visual perception of the action on the screen, including paralinguistic features.

The most important factors influencing the appearance of the subtitles are the technical limitations brought on by considerations of time and space available. The actual subtitling process is nowadays done with the help of computers. The subtitles appear at the bottom of the television screen usually as the actor utters the lines. Koljonen (1998: 37-38) and Kukkonen (1995: 159), among others, report that on the Finnish television the text blocks are formed by one or two lines, which can consist of 28-34 letters depending on the properties chosen for the subtitles in the program in question. It is possible to use *italics* and CAPITAL letters within the text, but there are no other devices within the medium of subtitles capable of conveying variation and contrasts present on the soundtrack of a program (Battarbee 1986: 155). According to Rainó (1997: 610), the subtitles are normally shown on the screen 4-6 seconds, but in some cases such as children's programs, even 8 seconds. The average time needed for a person to observe and read one word from the subtitles takes 1½ seconds, to read a line takes 4 seconds and two lines 6 seconds, which results in requirements concerning the time subtitles are shown on the screen.

Probably the most significant difference between translated texts and translated TV-programs is the fact that subtitling always involves the need to abbreviate the original dialogue. In doing this, the translators have to reassess the coherence strategies of the text in order to maximize the retrievability of the intended meaning from the condensed target language version of the dialogue (Hatim and Mason 1997: 79). According to Siltanen (1993: 4), the primary goal for a subtitler in forming text blocks is to have them form understandable wholes. The fact that the viewer normally cannot look back at the previous text block means that they have to be syntactically and logically intact. Koljonen (1998: 38) adds this in addition means for example that the subject and the predicate, or the verb and its obligatory complements cannot be located in different text blocks.

In the actual condensing process about 30% of the original text material is lost (Koljonen 1998: 50). The strategies used in the condensing process include changing the sentence structure, avoidance of repetition, extensive use of passive voice, omission of certain parts of speech (e.g. copula), use of pronouns and synonyms, as well as generalising. However, all this should be done in a way that would not change the style and nuances of the original dialogue (Koljonen 1994: 119-123). In addition, other factors influencing the condensing process are of course the events on the screen, the actors' body language, gestures and other possible non-verbal signs. They contribute to the message because it is audio-visual and thus formed by the sound, picture and the subtitles (Kukkonen 1995: 160-161). Hatim and Mason (1997: 79) state that this requirement of the subtitles matching the visual images, in other words, the requirement on coherence between the subtitles and the moving picture, may create an additional constraint for subtitling.

Nir (1984: 83-84) and Lung (1998: 97), among others, report that subtitling differs from the translating of texts, such as novels, in two main respects: Firstly, the purpose of the subtitles is not to translate everything, but rather as much as possible within the constraints of time and space. Secondly, subtitling involves double conversion, from one language to another and from spoken to written language. Nir (1984) also points out that subtitles primarily convey translated dialogues and that they need the support they get from sound and picture. In other words, subtitles do not form an understandable text on their own. According to Hatim and Mason (1997: 78) and Halliday (1985: 30-32), in this change of mode from spoken to written language, certain features of speech such as non-standard dialects, emphatic devices (e.g. intonation), code-switching, style-shifting and turn-taking will not be automatically represented in the written form of the target text.

Nir (1984: 86-89) discusses the differences between the spoken dialogue and the written subtitles and states that the translators will tend to use a "neutral" unmarked style in subtitling. This results from the difficulties of finding markers in subtitling with which to convey for example that the speaker is

using Black English. The end result is that the translation of the mimetic dialogue will be more homogenous than the original speech. In addition, slang, colloquial expressions, taboo subjects and obscenities are often omitted or replaced with a "higher" mild translation, causing an artificial rise in the registerial level of the dialogue. The situation is contradictory in the respect that, as it is sometimes difficult to put certain informal expressions (dysphemisms, obscenities etc.) into writing, the translators also have a certain "professional pride" that does not permit conspicuous registerial deviations. Therefore, it is still often seen that the obscenities or slang expressions have been put in quotation marks, indicating that their inclusion is somewhat exceptional. Through the use of quotation marks the marked expression is given a certain justification to appear in writing and, in addition, the appearance of the marked expression is mitigated in the eyes of the audience.

In order to understand the nature of film dialogue, a closer look at its principles is needed. According to Hatim and Mason (1997: 82), as with all works of fiction, the dialogue is "authentic" only in the sense that characters on screen address each other as if they were real persons. In reality, the script-writer constructs the discourse for the sake of the effect it will have on its receivers, in this case the television viewers. However, there are more levels to be taken into consideration when analysing the effect of the relationship between text producer and text receiver on subtitling in general and the analysis of the data in chapter six. Adapting the lines provided by Hatim and Mason (1997: 83), there are two potential text producers in the fictional television program type analysed in this study: (1) the script writer (with possible contributions from the film director, producer etc.) and (2) character A on screen. Secondly, there are two potential text receivers: (1) character B on screen and (2) the television audience. This is an important point to make, because in the analysis of the translations, the primary emphasis will lie on the behaviour and the relationships between the characters on the screen, and the secondary emphasis will be on the motivation and the goals of the script writer as regards the television audience. This also means that the characters on the screen will be

considered as real persons who show politeness and discuss tabooed matters in a manner that at least resembles real life discussions.

There has been only little research done in the area of politeness phenomena in subtitling and therefore the reported findings are also scarce. Hatim and Mason (1997: 79-82) report that interpersonal pragmatics, in particular politeness, is one of the first areas of meaning that tend to be constantly sacrificed in subtitling. They also state that in some cases this will inevitably lead to misleading impressions on characters' directness or indirectness. However, in their work the aim has been to see to what extent the politeness strategies of Brown and Levinson (1987) are transferred to subtitles from the original dialogue. Since the aim of this study is to look at individual fragments of language used as euphemisms, rather than larger wholes, making such comparisons here would be superfluous.

5 DATA AND METHODS

As mentioned above, I have chosen two situational comedies as the source of data for this study. Neale and Krutnik (1990), Steinbock (1988) and Fiske (1987) list the characteristic features of situational comedy, most of which can be easily identified in the two sit-coms chosen for this study. Moreover, some of these features are likely to influence the occurrence of euphemisms in the two programs. The factors are concerned with aspects such as the basic situation, characters and typical themes of sit-coms and will be discussed below in relation to the two serials providing the data for this study.

According to Fiske (1987: 108), **genres** are cultural practices which attempt to structure some order into the wide range of texts and meanings in our culture for the convenience of both producers and audiences. Television programs can equally well be divided into genres, like cop shows, sit-coms, quiz shows etc.

Neale and Krutnik (1990: 233) define **sit-com** as a short narrative-series comedy, which usually consists of 24 to 30 minute episodes with regular characters and setting. Sit-com is a mode of repeatable narrative which is particularly well suited for the demands of the broadcast media because it allows it to draw and maintain a regular audience and income. Steinbock (1988: 101) also points out that it is not expected of the viewers to be interested in what is going to happen to the characters of a situational comedy but rather to miss the humour which is typical of the serial.

5.1 Description of the Serials

The first of the two serials is *Friends*, translated into Finnish as "Frendit", which is one of the most popular situational comedies in the USA and Finland since the mid 90's. The second serial is *Keeping up Appearances*, translated into Finnish as "Pokka pitää", which is a British comedy series from the first half of the 1990's. All the episodes of *Friends* are translated by Pentti Nissilä and the episodes of *Keeping up Appearances* by Annu James. The episodes of *Friends* included in the analysis were broadcast on MTV3 during a time period from the beginning of 1996 until May 1999. The episodes of "Pokka pitää" have all been broadcast in 1999. The episodes of *Keeping up Appearances* have all been written by Roy Clarke, whereas the episodes of *Friends* have been written by a team of writers. The fact that *Friends* is an American sit-com and *Keeping up Appearances* a British sit-com causes some differences in the structuring of the two. An episode of *Friends* is approximately 5 minutes shorter than an episode of *Keeping up Appearances* and it is divided into two scenes by a commercial break.

The basic situation in the American serial *Friends* portrays the family-like lives of six people in their late 20's living in New York. Joey, Chandler, Rachel, Phoebe, Ross and his sister Monica are best friends and next door neighbours. They are also the main characters of the serial, even though there are a few other regular characters (their building superintendent, coffee shop waiter etc.)

as well. Almost all of the action is set in the two apartments shared by Joey and Chandler and Monica and Rachel. Phoebe and Ross live elsewhere but seem to stay at their friends' apartments nearly all the time. Regular setting also includes their neighbourhood coffee shop "Central Perk".

Much of the popularity of the series is based on the events and relationships between the characters of the show. Phoebe, Rachel and Joey are clearly written out to be the "intellectually handicapped" characters in the show, opposite to Monica, Chandler and Ross, allowing the writers to invent jokes at the "dumb" characters' expense. However, it would be fair to say that *Friends* is a verbal comedy even more than it is a character comedy, since language itself is made a constant cause of amusement by for example using puns and verbal play in all possible contexts. This was the main factor influencing the choice of this serial as one of the two to be used in the analysis.

The basic situation in the British serial *Keeping up Appearances* is somewhat different from that of *Friends*. It consists of one main character, the snobbish Hyacinth Bucket (she insists it is pronounced "Bouquet") and the fact that everyone except her husband Richard, dislikes her and tries to avoid encounters with her. There are other almost equally important characters, such as Hyacinth's three sisters Violet, Rose and Daisy, all of which in Hyacinth's opinion are not the same social class as she is. In addition, the regular characters feature their demented father, Daisy's husband Onslow and Hyacinth's next-door neighbours. The setting changes between Hyacinth's home and the homes of the other main characters. Some scenes are filmed outdoors, which is never the case with *Friends*. The main idea of the series is based on Hyacinth's snobbery and her attempts to maintain the outward appearance of her family in the eyes of the socially important people of the neighbourhood. This is problematic because her family constantly causes potentially embarrassing situations.

The popularity of *Keeping up Appearances* is at least partially based on the renowned acting skills of Patricia Routledge, who plays Hyacinth, and the way in which the writers make the viewers anticipate the next embarrassment that faces Hyacinth. The reason for this serial to be chosen as the other sit-com to be used in the analysis is the mainly based on the dialogue used by Hyacinth. As she tries hard to be of equal social standard as some of the people she admires, she also uses language which avoids taboos and possible impolite and "common" expressions, thus providing material for this study.

According to Fiske (1987: 145), the basic situation is the "soul" of almost any sit-com. The comedy may be resolved every week but the situation never is. This means that in sit-coms the end of every episode represents a return to the initial situation. Thus, it is a common feature of the sit-com to refamiliarize the recurring situation, to protect it and redefine it in accordance to various disruptions and transgressions. Every episode holds usually a destabilization-restabilization process before returning to the basic situation. This holds true in *Friends* as well as in *Keeping up Appearances*.

Neale and Krutnik (1990: 235) also state that the sit-com encourages the viewer to "forget" many of the events of the preceding episodes and that sit-com sometimes allows some modification of the basic situation. In *Friends*, many developments are allowed to be carried across episodes, but they are never of the type which would be potentially dangerous to the basic situation. In *Keeping up Appearances* the "encouragement to forget" is the key notion. All of the episodes could equally well be regarded as separate stories, as there is no sense of the on-going temporal development, which is clearly present in *Friends*.

According to Steinbock (1987:96-102), there are some recurring themes in sit-coms. They often portray the life of a family, a family-like commune or a workplace. The "family" represents the inside circle and the next-door neighbours or boy/girl friends etc. the outer circle, mediating between the

family as a segregated unit and the outside world of social relations. In *Friends*, the six friends represent the family and the outer circle is almost solely represented by the constantly changing boy- and girlfriends and colleagues that they have. In *Keeping up Appearances*, the family is the centre around which everything evolves and the outer circle is clearly represented by Hyacinth and Richard's neighbours and other local inhabitants. Situational comedy also adapts itself to the prevailing moral censorship and values. This means that it almost totally expected to lack violence and obscenities, even though there might be some sexually suggestive dialogue. The use of obscenities is extremely rare in both of these serials. However, it could be said that the topics in *Friends* are more likely to produce sexually suggestive material than the ones in *Keeping up Appearances*.

5.2 Description of the Procedures

In this study I have decided to concentrate on the characteristics of euphemisms and their translations. As explained in the framework in chapter 2, the matter of deciding what word or expression is to be considered a euphemism, is often subjected to speculations. It is equally hard to find agreement among linguists on just what the requirements/criteria are that the word or expression has to meet to be accepted as a euphemism. Therefore, there is some need to clarify what kind of material I have included in the data of this study, as the matter was also the main factor influencing the choice of a qualitative method for the analysis.

In the analysis I will mainly follow the definition of euphemism provided by Warren (1992), which was presented in chapter 2 above. This means that I have accepted, for example in the case of metaphors, only those which show some considerations of tact. If a metaphor is used in the dialogue solely because of it is funny, it has not been included in the data. Also, for the purposes of this study I find it useful to include those occurrences of euphemisms which are motivated by the will to deceive the listener/viewer by

using them as doublespeak. These are cases where unpleasant reality is deliberately avoided by the characters on the shows in order to mislead the receivers.

However, as stated in the theoretical background, what is actually to be considered a euphemism depends on the receiver's interpretation of the message. Therefore, to a great extent, I have had to use my own judgement in deciding what to accept into the data. Moreover, because of the difficulties in being able to strictly and objectively define what expressions to accept as euphemisms, it would not be practical to use a quantitative method. Neither would it be very useful to even attempt to give specific numbers on the amount of euphemisms found in the material, even though there is generally speaking consensus among language users on what is euphemistic and what is not. In addition, dysphemisms, when they have been used as insults or are otherwise used simply with the purpose of offending someone, as such have not been included in the analysis. However, I have accepted into the data those cases of dysphemisms in which an expression was originally a euphemism, or if it can in some contexts be used equally well as a euphemism as it can as a dysphemism.

In order collect sufficient amount of data, I viewed a total of 50 episodes, from which I selected 20 episodes, ten from each series. To my mind the selected episodes represented the most interesting and varying material. In other words, the simple number of euphemisms found in an episode was not always the deciding factor. After the selection of the episodes, I picked up all the cases of euphemism and their translations based on the criteria mentioned above. The data were gathered by transcribing the relevant dialogue and the Finnish subtitles from videotapes. The analysis is based on studying the examples of euphemisms and their translations, as well as categorising them according to topic areas and in some cases the offering of translation alternatives.

6 ANALYSIS OF DATA

In the analysis the data is broadly divided into three main categories according to motivation of usage, *taboos*, *politeness and emotions* and *deception*. The first group *taboos* are further divided into subcategories in accordance to the topics which they handle. The second group *politeness and emotions* covers cases linked to politeness and to the human emotions which were attached to the occurrence of the euphemism in question. The different emotions alone would have been far too numerous and vague to be used as the basis for categories. The third group *deception*, in addition to those euphemisms which have the primary purpose of misleading the receiver, includes politically correct terms and jargon, as they are also cases where the primary motive for euphemizing can be said to be the avoidance of reality, though not straightforward deception.

The analysis is not carried out by classifying different types of euphemisms mainly because they are sometimes very hard to distinguish from each other and in many cases the same euphemism can fill the qualifications of more than one class of euphemisms. Moreover, by using a division based on the motivators of euphemisms I want to avoid the jungle of vague classifications often connected to studies on euphemisms. Furthermore, since the two concepts taboo and politeness are so closely interwoven, in a few cases the examples and scenes presented in the analysis under the heading *taboos*, could have equally well be located under *politeness and emotions*. The same principle applies to *deception*, as the topics which it handles are often taboo based. However, in my opinion this is not harmful for the study, for it is not my intent to make too far reaching conclusions based on the division of the topic areas, but rather to see what kind of euphemisms and translations are used within a certain motivator such as for example *taboos*.

In the translations of the passages taken from the dialogues, I have used the slash '/' to indicate the division of the text block in the form in which it appeared in the subtitles. The examples have all been numbered. Moreover,

the three full stops '...' in the English transcripts indicate a pause in the speech flow and '[...]' indicates that parts of dialogue have been omitted. I have also underlined the euphemisms in the original dialogues. Other punctuation marks have been used in their normal functions. In some places I have included some explanatory comments, such as [*Eddie leaves*] within the dialogues to give the reader a perception of what is happening on the screen.

In searching for the euphemistic meanings of some of the examples and their origins I have used in addition to my own general knowledge a number of different dictionaries, some specialising in euphemisms and idioms. In some cases, where it is possible, I will present some information on the origins and the age of a euphemism, as it is an important factor which influences the strength of the euphemistic force along with the frequency of usage.

6.1 Euphemisms Based on Taboos

Taboo subjects which are usually handled with the help of euphemisms include many of the topics suggested in chapter 3.1. I have divided the examples into the following groups: sexually suggestive material, alcohol, drinking and drugs, body and bodily functions, and miscellaneous. They are the topics which appeared in biggest numbers in the two situational comedies studied here. However, as said above, sit-com has clear restrictions concerning the ways in which these topics may be presented. This is where euphemisms have come to play an important role.

6.1.1 Sexually Suggestive Material

Judging by the number of occurrences, the most important use for euphemisms in situational comedies is to present sexually suggestive material in a way

which is acceptable to the audience. By far the most common type of non-figurative expressions used in referring to sex are the phrases built around the verb *sleep*. Such structures as *to sleep with someone* and *to sleep together* are two of the oldest euphemisms developed for referring to sex and date back to the year 900 (Neaman and Silver 1983: 231). In the episodes chosen for this study they appeared altogether 20 times and out of these the translators used the Finnish equivalent built around the verb "maata" with only one exception. In the sit-coms studied here, the euphemistic expressions used in referring to sex typically include such phrases as *to do it* "tehdä se", *to mess about* "pelehtiä", *make out* "rakastella" and *to be with somebody* "olla jonkun kanssa". These expressions can be said to have at least one thing in common: they all have to go through some form of particularization in order to be understood to refer to sex, as their conventional senses have nothing to do with it. Nevertheless, it is questionable whether a phrase such as *to sleep together* or *to be with somebody* should be considered euphemisms at all. They are phrases used to refer to sex so frequently that they have lost most of the euphemistic features they once may have had. However, in my opinion they will not lose all of their euphemistic force, even though they are almost standard expressions used in referring to sex. This can be explained by the fact that both the verbs *sleep* and *be* are such essential parts of the vocabulary and that their euphemistic senses are only secondary to the most important senses of 'sleeping' and 'being'. A few typical ways used in referring to sex in the two serials are presented below.

- | | | |
|----|--|---|
| 1) | Monica: Joey, she was listing the countries she <u>has done it</u> in. | Hän luetteli maat, joissa hän on "tehnyt sen"/ |
| 2) | Man 1: I have a feeling...I, my wife <u>is sleeping with</u> her gynecologist. | Minusta tuntuu että vaimoni makaa gynekologinsa kanssa/ |
| 3) | Rose: I am a working girl, I haven't time for <u>messin' about</u> . | Työtä tekevällä työllä ei ole aikaa muhinointiin/ |
| 4) | Mrs. Greene: The only man I've ever <u>been with</u> is your father | Isäsi on ainoa mies jonka kanssa olen ollut/ |

In conclusion it could be said that there is nothing metaphoric about these expressions because they are nevertheless direct references to sex therefore leave almost no room at all for other interpretations.

Even though sex is rarely discussed straightforwardly in situational comedies it is a frequently occurring topic, especially in *Friends*. In many cases metaphors and other figurative expressions are employed in these discussions. As mentioned above, they can be said to be an important tool for the script writers because especially metaphors are capable of being funny on their own. In other words, plot development is not always required to make the audience laugh, when a single funny metaphor can do the same thing. Sexually suggestive metaphors appear in the dialogues quite often and their primary purpose seems to be to amuse the audience.

In *Keeping up Appearances* sex is discussed far less frequently. In addition, the viewer has a lot bigger role in determining the true intended senses of the euphemisms used, as their interpretation is left to the imagination of the viewers. This can be explained by at least two factors: cultural differences between Great Britain and USA, and perhaps even more importantly, simply with the differences between the nature of the two series in question. *Friends* is clearly geared toward a younger audience than *Keeping up Appearances*, which also means that sex is not likely to be as central a topic as in *Friends*. The following dialogues are examples of various funny figurative expressions used in referring to sex in *Friends* and in *Keeping up Appearances*.

In the following example (5) Monica and her boyfriend Richard are discussing the number of sex partners they have had. Richard has been given the idea that Monica has been with a lot of men. However, he needs to avoid showing his fear that she might be more experienced than he himself. This example shows metonymic and metaphoric use of two nouns as euphemisms for numbers.

5)

Richard: Ya know, I don't need the actual number, just a ballpark.

En tarvitse tarkkaa lukua, kunhan osuu edes naapuristoon/

[...]

Richard: Well, that's not bad at all. I mean, you had me thinkin' it was like a fleet.

Ei se ole ollenkaan paha. Sait minut ajattelemaan jotain komppaniaa/

With the general-for-specific type of metonym, *ballpark*, Richard means that he would like to know some sort of an estimate. *Ballpark* refers to children's playground, where there normally are a lot of children playing. The translator has opted to translate this as "naapuristo", which I think is an excellent choice, because it also suggests a place where there usually are a lot of children or people in general. The word *fleet* is a metaphor rather than a metonym because it has one of the basic properties of metaphors, namely the use of the word like (a fleet) with a parallel drawing purpose. *Fleet* has been translated as "komppania", which works well too. "Komppania" and *fleet* are both military terms and can be used to imply a large number of men on duty. Therefore, the translation does not lead to any great differences in the euphemistic forces of the original and its translation.

In the following scenes (6, 7) Joey is telling one of the friends about an embarrassing situation involving a job he is interested in. Joey who is an actor, has been interviewed for a role in a soap opera. The woman in charge of the casting has let Joey to believe that if he would sleep with her his chances of getting the role would be dramatically improved.

6)

Joey: Oh yeah, yeah, she's great, but... I kinda got the feeling that she was sort of... coming on to me. And I definitely would get the part if I would've... you know... if I would have sent the Little General in.

On, hän on huippu, mutta minusta tuntui että hän lähenteli minua-/
Ja saisin varmasti sen roolin,
jos menisin.../
Jos lähettäisin
Pikku Kenraalin hommiin/

[...]

7)

Joey: I just...I just don't think that I want it that way though y' know? I mean, let's say <u>I do make it</u> , alright? I'm always gonna look back and wonder if it was because of my talent or because of y'know, <u>the Little General</u> .	Minusta vain tuntuu etten tahdo saada sitä sillä tavalla/ No jos tekisin sen mieltisin aina myöhemmin/ Sainko homman lahjojeni takia-/ vai Pikku Kenraalin takia/
Chandler: Didn't you use to call <u>it</u> <u>the Little Major</u> ?	Etkö ennen sanonut sitä "Pikku Majuriksi"?/
Joey: Yeah, but after Denise Demarco I had to promote <u>it</u> .	Kyllä, mutta Denise Demarcon jouduin ylentämään hänet/

The first euphemism in Joey's line (6) is the phrase *come on to someone*, "to lure someone sexually" (Spears 1991: 93). This euphemism is also over 100 years old and has lost much of the euphemistic force that it originally had. Its translation "lähennellä" is a euphemism in Finnish and therefore an excellent translation. Furthermore, it is not the purpose of this euphemism to be funny which in my opinion makes the translation process of a euphemism easier. However, this is not the case with the second euphemism *to send in the Little General*. On one hand this metaphor draws a parallel between war and sex and on the other hand it benefits from the practice of men sometimes giving nicknames to their genitals. The latter point is illustrated better by the expression *Little Major* (7). Because these are original metaphors created by the script writers, the literal translations "lähettää Pikku Kenraali hommiin" and "Pikku Majuri" are good equivalents for the original euphemisms. The only questionable choice made is the translation of *...promote it* as "...ylentämään hänet". In my opinion, the personification is needless and the logical choice of translation would have been "...ylentämään sen".

A further example of a similar type of euphemism is Ross's line (8) where he tries to convince Chandler to not get involved with a secretary in Chandler's working place. Chandler, who was supposed to fire the secretary, did not have

the heart to do it and ended up asking her on a date instead. In the second scene (9) Rachel is commenting on Chandler's incapability to proceed with the firing of the secretary. In the third example (10), Mrs. Geller has found out that a family friend is dating a much younger woman. At this point, she does not yet know that the woman is her daughter Monica.

8)

Ross:	It doesn't matter. <u>You don't dip your pen in the company ink.</u>	Viis siitä. Kynää ei Kasteta yhtiön musteeseen/
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9)

Rachel:	Oh, well, that shouldn't be so hard, now that you're dating. Sweetheart, you're fired, but how 'bout <u>a quickie</u> before I go to work.	Se löytyykin varmaan helposti nyt kun te seurustelette/ Kulta, saat potkut. Otetaanko nopsat ennenkuin menen töihin?/
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10)

Mrs. Geller:	Sooo, <u>Richard's shopping in the junior section.</u>	Vai asioi Richard nuoriso-osastolla/
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The word *pen* is a common euphemism for penis, but this metaphor (8) does not rely entirely on this connotation to make it work. *Company ink* of course represents the secretary. A literal translation is a natural choice here as well since the translator is dealing with an original metaphor. The euphemistic values of the SL and TL metaphor match each other quite well. The translation is not more straightforward than its SL counterpart and it conveys the idea of the original dialogue. In addition, the pragmatic function of the SL metaphor, which is to be funny, transmits through the translation very well. The euphemism *to have a quickie* (9) dates back to the mid 19th century but presently lacks euphemistic force because of the frequency of usage in this sense. Its translation "otetaanko nopsat", in my opinion is slightly awkward, but nevertheless it conveys the meaning of the original expression. The third example (10) could almost be called a prototype of the funny metaphors found in *Friends*. Because this metaphor is original as well, it presents no problems for the translator.

Funny metaphors can be found in *Keeping up Appearances* as well. As mentioned above, the metaphors in the series are often much more vague than in *Friends*, thus leaving more room for imagination and interpretations. In the following scene (11) Hyacinth is travelling in a car with a commodore who has the reputation of a womanizer. On the way the commodore starts making advances at Hyacinth and while doing so he talks in metaphors, using sailor vocabulary.

11)		
Commo-	I must say, you're a <u>fine</u>	Onpa mukava saada
dore	<u>looking frigate</u> to come	noin komea fregatti viereensä/
	along beside.	
Hyacinth:	Pardon?	
Commo-	Yes, a <u>well built solid</u>	Oikein tukevatekoinen alus/
dore	<u>looking craft</u> ...maybe	Ehkä.../
	<u>a little re-corking here</u>	Kaipaa pientä tilkintää/
	<u>and there...</u>	
Commo-	<u>I wouldn't mind being</u>	Sinun kanssasi voisin
dore	<u>shipwrecked with you,</u>	vaikka haaksirikkoutua/
	my darling.	

It is clear that the purpose of these metaphors is to make the audience laugh. The discussion resembles jargon, but the vocabulary (*frigate*, *craft*, *re-corking*) is not quite specific enough to make the dialogue qualify as such. However, the discussion can be interpreted in many ways. It is left unclear to the viewer whether the commodore is actually making sexual advances or just flirting with Hyacinth. Especially the intention of the line where the commodore says that Hyacinth needs *a little re-corking* can be questioned.

Vagueness is also a key notion in the following dialogues. Only in these cases euphemisms are not used because of the audience, but rather to give credibility to the characters by representing the delicate matter in a way it might be discussed in real life as well. In the scene Hyacinth is being asked for advice by Daisy who is concerned of the diminishing sex life in her marriage with Onslow (12). Daisy wants to know if the same thing has happened to Hyacinth and Richard (13).

- 12)
 Daisy: It's just that we don't seem to be...as close as we used to be. I was wondering if a...
 you and Richard are... you know... as close as you used to be? Me ei vain olla enää...tiiäthän/
 Niin läheisiä kuin ennen/
 Ootteko te...tiiäthän...
 yhtä läheisiä kuin ennen?/

[At the same time Onslow is asking Hyacinth's husband for advice on how to handle the situations where the Daisy expects sex.]

- 13)
 Onslow: Just between you and me, how do you handle things when Hyacinth gets a bit ... you know...friendly? Ihan näin miesten kesken-/
 Mitä teet kun se heittäytyy...ystävälliseksi?/

In both scenes (12, 13), the person who is presenting the delicate matter, seeks for conformation of understanding from the listener with the phrase ...*you know*...With this conforming act the true meanings of the lines are also explicated to the viewers. Interestingly the translator has chosen to translate these markers, in Finnish "tiiäthän", only in the first line by Daisy. In Onslow's line "tiiäthän" has been replaced by three full stops. The subtitler obviously trusts to the implying force of the three full stops as much as in the word "tiiäthän". The actual expressions which are used in referring to sex, ...*as close as...* and *to get a bit friendly*, would perhaps be best described as understatements but they do share some features of implication as well. The translations are close to literal and have the approximately the same effect as the original dialogue.

As mentioned above, the degree of disguising matters of sexual nature is higher in *Keeping up Appearances* than it is in *Friends*. All the four examples below include sexual euphemisms, but they are all carefully hidden as implications.

14) [Richard's opinion about his life with Hyacinth.]

- Richard: I think you lost interest in me once you had Sheridan. Sinun kiinnostuksesi lopahti, kun Sheridan syntyi/

15) [*Daisy asks Hyacinth for advice on her marriage with Onslow.*]

Daisy: How do you keep Richard's attention? Miten saat Richardin huomion heräämään?

16) [*Rose praises her new gentleman friend Mr. Helliwell to Daisy. Daisy replies by commenting her relationship with Onslow.*]

Rose: I've never known anyone quite so instantly passionate as Mr. Helliwell. En ole ikinä ennen tuntenut niin räjähtävän intohimoista miestä/

Daisy: Onslow is a bit slipshort passion wise. Onslow'n intohimopuoli on päässy repsahtamaan/

17) [*Rose hopes that Richard would ask the local vicar a question for her. Rose has a crush on the vicar.*]

Rose: Can you ask our vicar, if he has a vacancy for an experienced helper of willing nature. Kysy pastorilta-/ tarviiko se kokenutta apulaista joka on aulis luonnoltansa/

The euphemisms *interest*, *attention*, *instantly passionate*, *slipshort passion wise*, *experienced* and *willing nature* are implications of the antecedent-consequent type. This can be illustrated by the following paraphrase. If Hyacinth has lost *interest* in Richard -> **then** they will not have a meaningful sex life. The same principle can be applied to the other examples as well. Implications are almost always vague because the intended sense has to be concluded by the viewer from the context and the situation where they are used. The first two translations (14, 15) "kiinnostus" and "huomio" are literal translations and good equivalents to be used as euphemisms in Finnish as well. The replacement of *instantly* with "räjähtävä" (16) changes the nature of the line when compared with the original *instantly passionate*. The word "räjähtävä" has associations to many other thing than time as well. The other translations have preserved their functionality as euphemisms in Finnish quite well too.

In some cases expressions are left intentionally too vague for the viewers to understand. However, the explanation for the expression is usually given later at some point. These features are present in the next two scenes. In the first dialogue (18) Daisy and Onslow are picking up Rose from a hotel where she

has spent a weekend with her new "gentleman friend". Onslow and Daisy discuss the situation in the car while they are waiting for Rose to appear. In the second example (19) Rose comments on the good behaviour of the gentleman friend.

18)

- | | | |
|---------|--|--|
| Onslow: | I thought your Rose was ready. | Rosen piti olla valmiina.
- Jättää vain hyvästit/ |
| Daisy: | She's just saying goodbye. | |
| Onslow: | I hope it is not <u>one of their long goodbyes</u> . If it is <u>one of your Rose's long goodbyes</u> we'll be here all afternoon. | Kunhan ei pitkiä hyvästejään.
Muuten tässä istutaan koko päivä/ |
| Daisy: | I remember when we used to have <u>long goodbyes</u> ... | Muistan kun me hyvästeltiin pitkään/ |
| Onslow: | Back in the bus shelter on Garibaldi street. | Garibaldi streetin bussikatoksessa. - Muistat/ |
| Daisy: | You remember! | |

19)

- | | | |
|-------|--|---|
| Rose: | I've never known him <u>take a liberty</u> without removing his hat. | Ei ole ikinä lähennellyt ottamatta hattua päästä/ |
|-------|--|---|

In the first dialogue (18) the act of saying goodbye is used in a sexually suggestive manner. These suggestions get their final confirmation in Onslow's last line. The discussion can be thought of as perfectly innocent if read without the aid of television picture and the gestures and facial expressions by the actors. Nevertheless, at least those viewers who have watched the show regularly and are aware of the traits of the characters, are able to interpret the nature of the goodbyes discussed here. In the second example (19) the innocent phrase to *take a liberty* turns into a sexually suggestive euphemism because of the determining phrase *without removing his hat*. The translator has chosen to translate *to take a liberty* as "lähennellä" which is not as mild as its counterpart. This takes away some of the humour from the scene because the joke is based on the contrast between the innocence of *to take a liberty* and its determiner *without removing his hat*. The contrast decreases with the translation.

Within the genre of sit-com it is quite normal to come across new, previously unused euphemisms. This is partly due to the fact that it is an important aspect of the euphemisms used in sit-coms and in TV-programs in general that they are often created with word formations which suite only the specific events on the screen. By this I mean that such expressions are unique references used as euphemisms, in other words they can not be found in dictionaries of euphemisms and have been tailored to carry a specific task in a scene. Normally, if a unique reference used as a euphemism is separated from the context, the reader will not have any way of knowing what its euphemistic sense is. This is illustrated by the next two examples. In the first example (20), in a scene preceding this, the viewers have been told that Joey has played the role of Hamlet in a neighbourhood theatre. Phoebe tells him that something bothered her in the play. In the second example (21), Rose has asked Onslow to take a look outside the house because she thinks there might be something dangerous outside. She promises to hold Onslow's sandwich while he is checking.

20)

Phoebe:	Although, you know what? You might want to consider wearing underwear next time. Yeah, cause when you sat down on your throne, you could kind of see your... <u>royal subjects</u> .	Ensi kerralla voisit kyllä laittaa alushousutkin/ Kun istut valtaistuimella, sinulta näkyvät-/ Kuninkaalliset alamaiset/
---------	--	--

21)

Rose:	I'll hold your bacon sandwich for you.	Minä pitelen pekonivoikkarias. -Et pitele!/ Oon nähny miten miesparkojen käy kun pääset lihan makuun/
Onslow:	No you won't! I've seen you before with some poor block's <u>bacon</u> .	

Royal subjects and *bacon* are used as euphemisms in referring to genitals because they fit the events on the screen. Also, they introduce a new figurative expression which of course has a surprising effect. If the phrases *royal subjects* or *bacon* would be separated from the multimedial context in which they appear, it would be hard to link them to the sense in which they are presented in

Friends and in *Keeping up Appearances*. On the other hand, the visual images on the screen can also limit the translator's possibilities even though this was the case here only in the second example (21).

Unique references used as a euphemisms do not even always have to be words at all. Sometimes an unarticulated grunt or an onomatopoeic sound can be a substitute for an offensive word. The following scene (22) is a discussion between Monica and her new boyfriend Pete. He has taken an interest in Ultimate Fighting, which is a particularly brutal form of free fighting. Pete has just finished practising with his trainer. The trainer overhears them and quickly interrupts the discussion.

22)

Monica:	Hey are we still on for tonight?	Tavataanko illalla? - Kyllä/
Pete:	Yeah.	
Monica:	Okay, good 'cause umm, maybe we could have <u>a little workout of our own</u> .	Ehkä voidaan pitää ottaa omat pikku jumpat/
Trainer:	No! No <u>boom-boom</u> before big fight.	Ei! Ei pum-pum ennen isoa ottelua!/?
Monica:	How about just a <u>boom</u> ?	Entä vain pum?/

Again, sex is discussed with the help of a jocular stock metaphor *a workout of our own*, but the more interesting euphemism is the *boom-boom* used by the trainer. The trainer, who is from Asia, has a limited vocabulary in English, but he still manages to avoid the use of an offensive term by constructing a simple euphemism. *Boom-boom* does not follow any of the rules presented for forming euphemisms in chapter 2. However, the closest equivalent is probably the word formation device onomatopoeia, a word imitating a sound in the nature. The sound in this case is something like an explosion, which can be said to have some metaphoric features as well. In this case, the word *boom-boom* is used in mapping our knowledge of explosions onto our concept of sex. The translation rarely causes difficulties in cases like this because onomatopoeia, imitating sounds, is rather similar regardless of the language in question. Similar

examples are discussed in accordance to the other topics in chapters below as well.

Even though it is the primary function of euphemism to help people discuss matters involving embarrassing aspects, their usage in sit-coms has another role as well. Metaphors are not the only type of euphemisms that can cause amusement, even though they are the most common type used for this purpose. However, it can be said that the writers of this type of television entertainment use euphemisms with the main objective of making the audience laugh. In the following scene (23) two men are loudly discussing their private affairs in the cafeteria "Central Perk" and the friends cannot help overhearing their interesting conversation.

23)

Man 1:	I have a feeling...I, my wife is <u>sleeping with her</u> gynaecologist.	Minusta tuntuu että vaimoni makaa gynekologinsa kanssa/
Man 2:	How do you know?	Mistä tiedät?
Man 1:	Well you know... <u>he's got access.</u>	-Sillä miehellä on reitti selvänä/
Man 2:	Yeah.	
Man 1:	You know it's the feeling you get, you know?	Sain sellaisen tuntemuksen/
Man 2:	<u>Like when you go bowling and you know you're in somebody else's shoes.</u>	Kuin jos tietää keilaavansa toisen kengissä/

The word *gynaecologist* is not a euphemism even though it is derived from a Latin loan word and resembles a euphemism. This can be explained by the fact that it is a basic characteristic of a euphemism to be a synonym or a close equivalent of the word that is avoided. In this case, there are no real synonyms for the word *gynaecologist* and therefore, it cannot be a euphemism. Omission is also one of the strategies with which euphemistic force can be achieved. The line *he's got access* omits the place where the gynaecologist has access to and leaves it to the imagination of the viewers. The metaphor in the last line is also written out to be funny as it maps our concrete knowledge of putting on shoes

onto our concept of sex. The literal translation, as suggested to be the strategy used with original metaphors by Newmark (1988), functions well here too.

Total omission of a word is also possible in television since the events or an object on the screen can be used to fill the gap which the omission causes. The next passage (24) is taken from a conversation between Rachel and Monica who both have their boyfriends spending the night in their shared apartment. Monica is going through a drawer in the bathroom trying to find something when Rachel appears at the door.

24)

Monica:	I know. I just can't find...	En vain löydä...
Rachel:	Oh <u>they</u> 're in the top drawer. Hurry.	-Ylälaatikossa/
Monica:	You need <u>one</u> too?	Tarvitsetko sinäkin?/

Monica and Rachel never say out loud what they are looking for but it is still quite obvious to the viewers, because of the preceding events. This is how the topic of birth control is avoided even though it is clear to the audience that they are looking for condoms. Instead in referring to condoms the girls use vague pronouns *they* and *one*. In the translation the omission has been taken one step further and even the pronouns have been omitted. Pronouns are often used in referring to sexual body parts, as shown by the excerpt of a dialogue below.

25)

Woman:	She's probably not even very pretty, just young enough so that <u>everything</u> is still pointing up.	Tuskin on edes nätti. Vain nuori, niin että kaikki sojottaa yhä ylös /
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In my opinion, in the first dialogue (24) it would have been clearer from the point of view of those viewers who can not understand English to include pronouns in the translations. This would make it sure that the audience would be given enough hints to know what the girls were looking for. The second case (25) is different because pronouns can be equally well be used in referring

to body parts in Finnish. Therefore, the translation of *everything* (in the sense "breasts") as "kaikki" presents no problems for the translator.

An important difference in the use of euphemisms on television and for example in literature is that in television gestures can be used to achieve euphemistic force. In my opinion, gestures are well suited for compensating for the omitted parts of sentences which include offensive material as is done in the next example. Ross and Joey are discussing a girl Ross is attracted to and has invited to his apartment. Joey wants to know if Ross thinks the girl is going to sleep with her.

26)

Joey: Sooo... back to your place... Vai asuntoosi.
 you thinking maybe.. hmm- Luuletko ehkä että.../
 hmm?

Joey ends his line (26) with an implying *hmm-hmm* and while uttering his line he rubs his hands together and gives a meaningful look at Ross. It is obvious that the reason for such secrecy is the fact that there are women in the room who might overhear their conversation. Ross replies with a similar pattern.

27)

Ross: Well, I don't know En tiedä siitä.../
 hmm-hmm...
 but I'm hoping hmm- mutta toivon.../
 hmm...

Ross means that he does not know about sex, but is still hoping that something romantic would happen. This is illustrated by the differences in the tone of voice between the two *hmm-hmms* in his line (27). Ross also repeats the gestures made earlier by Joey. The translator has no problems with this scene because the gestures used here are universal as well as the *hmm* sounds and require no further explanation. However, the translator has used three full stops "... " to add to the implying effect brought on by the gestures and the *hmms*. This is probably the only way within subtitling with which the translator can achieve this effect without using words.

Idioms and idiomatic structures are also often used as euphemisms in sit-coms. The following scene presents the idiom *to sow one's wild oats*, which according to The Wordsworth Dictionary of Idioms (1993: 420) means "to live a life of wild enjoyment before settling down". In the scene Monica is worried that her boyfriend Richard, who is about 15 years older than Monica, might not be serious with her. Richard, who has been married to the same woman his entire life and is recently divorced, has little experience of women despite his age.

28)

<p>Monica: And, well, don't you <u>have</u> <u>a lot of wild oats to sew</u>? Or is that what you're doing with me? Oh my God, am I <u>an oat</u>?</p>	<p>Eikö sinulla ole kovasti villää kauraa kylvettävänä?/ Vai sitäkö teet kanssani? Luoja, olenko minä kaura?!</p>
--	--

<p>Richard: Honey, you are not <u>an oat</u>. I, I mean I don't know, I, I guess I'm just not <u>an oat</u> <u>guy</u>. <u>I've only slept with</u> <u>women</u> I've been in love with.</p>	<p>Et sinä ole kaura./ Minä en vain taida olla kauramiehiä/ Olen maannut vain naisten kanssa joihin olen ollut rakastunut/</p>
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This type of relatively well-known fixed metaphors and word play based on them are a common phenomenon in *Friends*. It is also typical of the script writers in *Friends* to take a much used idiom and modify it to suite the scene in question. In this case the word *oat* has been separated from the idiom to illustrate the oldness of the idiom and also to make the scene funnier. The translator has chosen the literal translation for *wild oats to sow*, "kauraa kylvettävänä" which does not quite qualify as a Finnish idiom. In my opinion, the logical translation would have been a pragmatic equivalent "kauraa korjattavana", as it would probably relay better the effect of the original dialogue. Nevertheless, the idea of meeting other women just to gain experiences is still well preserved in the Finnish translation.

6.1.2 Alcohol, Drinking and Drugs

Behaviour which is in some way harmful to peoples' health is often treated as taboo behaviour. Alcohol, smoking, drugs and the places where these actions

take place are on many occasions spoken of in a manner which is designed to understate the possible consequences these habits may have. As with sexually explicit material, the occurrence of matters involving "bad habits" is likely to go through some form of censoring by the writers and producers. Euphemisms are an important tool in avoiding the reality of the world of, for example, alcoholics and drug addicts. Along with such topics as death and sex, the group of euphemisms developed for expressing intoxication has the most members.

A typical way with which drunkenness can be presented is by metaphoric expressions which associate excessive drinking with weaponry, war and devastation. In the following excerpt from a dialogue, Phoebe and the other friends are discussing a man who they think may have a drinking problem.

29)

Phoebe:	Yeah. Oh, OOOH, yeah, you know, did you notice how he always starts his stories with, um, OK, 'I <u>was soooo wasted,</u> ' or, 'Oh, <u>we were soooo bombed,</u> ' or, ummm, ooh, ooh, 'So I wake up, and I'm in this dumpster in Connecticut.'	Hän aloittaa aina tarinansakin sanoilla "olin niin jurrissa"-/ Tai "oltiin ihan nakit"/ Tai heräsin joltain roskalavalta Connecticutissa/
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The euphemism *wasted* was previously a gangster term for "killed", which was adopted in the 1960's by the drug culture to mean "doped" or "overdosed". Nowadays, it can also be used in the sense "to be drunk". The euphemism *bombed* has its origins in World War I, as do many other similar expressions such as 'gassed' or 'loaded' (Neaman and Silver 1983: 89-90). The euphemistic force of these expressions may have is nevertheless small, because at least in my opinion the euphemistic senses may already be their most important senses, especially so with *wasted*. Their translations "olla jurrissa" and "olla nakit" do not share any of the connotations resulting from the origins of their counterparts, but are nevertheless functionally equivalent. Nor are they metaphors, because "jurri" is simply a synonym for 'humala' and "olla nakit" is a direct reference to intoxication as well. Interestingly, Finnish euphemisms for

excessive drinking which can be linked to war or devastation are not that easy to come up with. "Olla kaasussa" might be one of the those which may have its origins in a war and could have easily been used here as well. However, not all euphemisms for intoxication have their origins in war and devastation as is seen by the next example:

30)

Man:	Well, <u>I got tanked</u> myself last night.	Otin itsekin kännit eilen/
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The metaphor *tanked* is an American euphemism and implies that one has fallen into one's tankard and is thoroughly drunk (Neaman and Silver 1983: 92). This time the translator has not tried to come up with a euphemism at all and has simply used a direct term "ottaa känni" which, as I see it, is a dysphemism and therefore has no alleviating effect what so ever. This causes a small change in the tone of the dialogue which might make the viewer's perception of the character's manners suffer.

In the next example from a dialogue in *Keeping up Appearances*, the writers have used euphemisms of drinking in order to cause amusement. In the scene Hyacinth has heard that her sister Rose is dating a Greek shipping millionaire and wants to invite people over for cocktails so that she could boast about it to the neighbours. Now she is on the phone inviting an old friend who is a retired major. Hyacinth wants to know if he speaks any Greek.

31)

Major:	Do I <u>speak Greek</u> ? Only when <u>seriously under</u> <u>the influence</u> old gal, and they tell me I'm fluent.	Että puhunko kreikkaa?/ Vain kovassa tuiskeessa, mutta silloin kuulemma sujuvasti/
--------	--	--

The major's line (31) includes two euphemisms, *to speak Greek* and *under the influence*. The first one is a quite common metaphor which can mean either "to vomit" or "to slur words when drunk". Generally speaking a euphemism like this depends on the country and is normally formed by referring to a language that sounds particularly difficult and strange to the listeners in question. The Finnish equivalent for *to speak Greek* is usually "puhua norjaa". The translator

has opted for the exact semantic equivalence "puhua kreikkaa" even though she could have chosen the pragmatic equivalent "puhua norjaa". The reason for the choosing of "puhua kreikkaa" is probably the fact that the Greeks are even better known for their shipping industry than the Norwegians and more importantly because the shipping millionaire's name is Marinopoulos. The second euphemism *under the influence* is an omission which naturally omits the phrase *of alcohol* from the end (Neaman and Silver 1983: 100). The Finnish equivalent is "vaikutuksen alaisena" which the translator has replaced with "kovassa tuiskeessa" in the subtitles. The change has no serious consequences since "kovassa tuiskeessa" is pragmatically equivalent to *under the influence* and preserves the idea of the original joke very well.

Many of the expressions discussed here can be listed as idioms as well. Another example of this phenomenon involves the idiom *to fall off the wagon*, which in plain terms means "to be drunk". Its opposite is of course *to be on the wagon* which is used when one is sober or has renounced a drink (Neaman and Silver 1983: 91). In the scene (32) Monica is worried that her boyfriend has begun to drink again. When the boyfriend appears at the door and tells Monica that he has something important to tell her, Monica takes a guess:

32)

Monica: Oh God, you fell off - ratkesit ryypäämään/
 the wagon?!

Again, the translation is more straightforward than the original line in English but in this case to find an equivalently mild expression or an idiom is hard. Therefore, the translator has been forced to interpret the idiom by explicating its meaning so that the Finnish viewers can associate the expression with drinking. The semantically equivalent translation "putosit kärryiltä" can not be used here because it is an idiom in Finnish which is linked to the capability to understand something. The translation expresses what has happened, but it is still somewhat different in tone than the original line. Monica's question / statement is more harsh in Finnish than it is in English.

Drugs and drug addiction are not common topics in situational comedy. It appears that drunkenness is a topic which can be discussed in sit-coms whereas hard drugs almost never are. Marijuana is the only drug which was ever mentioned in the episodes selected for this study. The following two examples are typical ways in which marijuana is discussed in sit-com. In the first scene (33) Phoebe and Rachel discuss a visitor they have. Phoebe is trying to tell Rachel that she saw him smoke marijuana on the way over, which Rachel at first does not understand. In the second scene (34) Rachel's mother, after spending a few days with the girls, wants to feel young again and asks the girls if they have any marijuana.

33)

Phoebe:	In the cab, on the way over, Steve <u>blazed up</u> <u>a doobie.</u>	Taksissa tänne tullessa Steve veti heinäkepin/
Rachel:	What?	Mitä?
Phoebe:	<u>Smoked a joint?</u> You know, <u>lit a bone?</u> <u>Weed?</u> <u>Hemp?</u> <u>Ganja?</u>	Poltti maria, ruohoa, ganjaa/
Rachel:	Ok, I'm with you cheech	

34)

Mrs. Greene:	This is so much fun, just the girls. You know what we should do? Does anybody have any marijuana?	Onko kenelläkään marijuanaa? - Luoja...! /
Rachel:	God!	
Monica:	All right, look, nobody's <u>smoking pot</u> around all this food.	Kukaan ei polta maria tämän ruoan lähellä/

The euphemisms used here (33,34) are a form of drug talk which includes words and phrases employed by drug users and addicts since the mid 1900s. Part of the reason for their use can be explained by the fact that since drugs are illegal, their users have developed a special slang in order to distract the law by making it harder to understand for those who are not familiar with this constantly changing jargon. Marijuana is a relatively popular drug especially among students in the USA. It is also seen by many as one of the less harmful drugs available. Thus, the inclusion of discussions of marijuana in sit-com is

not so surprising. *Doobie, hemp, joint, weed, ganja* and *pot* are all euphemisms for marijuana (cigarettes) used from the mid 1900s until present time (Spears 1991). They are also all somewhat amusing names for the otherwise inexpressible and make a bad thing seem a little less bad. The expressions in the examples are all one-for-one substitutions of marijuana. The translator has been well aware of Finnish equivalents even though the genuineness of some of them can be doubted. Of these euphemistic expressions *pot*, always translated as "mari(a)", is the only one which appears in the episodes for more than once. However, the main thing is that the translator has found terms in Finnish and used them systematically even though the use and the slang names of marijuana are probably not as common in Finland as they are in the USA.

Similar nicknames were in some cases given to the more common drugs as well, namely alcohol and cigarettes. Alternative names were sometimes given to beer "a bevvy" (from beverage), a drink "a stiffener" (from stiff, "drunk") and a cigarette "a ciggy" or "a fag". These were translated into Finnish as "kalja", "paukku", and "rööki". Since one of the aims of the use of euphemisms is to make bad things seem less bad it is questionable whether all of these are euphemisms at all.

6.1.3 Human Body and Bodily Functions

Euphemisms are often needed in referring to human body and bodily functions which are thought of as somehow embarrassing. In sit-coms writers use this embarrassment factor to their advantage. According to Neaman and Silver (1983: 15-16), euphemisms for the sexual portions of the body tend to function in two ways: they either enhance and glamorise or they conceal and banalize, as for example the female genitalia can be referred to as *the forest of the righteous truth* or and the male as *the thing*. Therefore, the forbidden territories of the body are referred to either as "an exotic paradise" or "a footworn path unworthy of notice".

In the episodes of *Friends* and *Keeping up Appearances* I watched, euphemisms were always used when referring to sexual body parts. As mentioned in the analysis of euphemisms of sex, all references made to sexual body parts are jocular and their purpose is to make the audience laugh. Expressions such as *bacon* "pekoni", *the little general* "pikku kenraali", *the little major* "pikku majuri", *the good stuff* "namut" and *favourite area* "suosikkialue" are quite normal names for male taboo body parts in situational comedy. Interestingly there were no jocular references at all to female genitalia in the 20 episodes selected as the source of data. *Boobs* is used regularly in referring to "breasts", but it seems that the male body is more likely to be used in constructing jokes on taboo body parts.

The references to 'the posterior' have the most variation in the material. The words *butt* "peppu", "pepa", "peffa", *rump* "lautaset", *buttock* "pakarat", *posterior* "takalisto" occur in the material in varying numbers. These expressions are as varying in Finnish as they are in English, but in the translation process the amount of variation decreases as seen in the next example (35).

35)

Chandler:	Today my boss kept slapping my <u>butt</u> and he was acting like it was no big deal.	Tänään pomo lätkäisi pepaani ja oli kuin ei mitään/
Phoebe:	Yes, what did you do about it?	Mitä teit asialle? -En mitään/
Chandler:	Well, I didn't do anything I didn't want to be the guy who has a problem with his boss slapping his <u>bottom</u> .	En tahdo olla mies jolla on ongelma pepalle lätkivästä pomosta/

The decrease is not harmful as long as the translator uses similarly euphemised expressions in the subtitles as well. The ruder term *ass* also appears in the episodes and has been translated with an equally rude term "perse" in Finnish. The word *ass* is probably altogether the rudest word which appeared in the episodes, which confirms the fact that in situational comedy vulgar language

and swearing are avoided even if they might be used in similar situations in normal life.

Jokes on bodily functions are often used in comedies geared towards young teenagers but in the two situational comedies providing the data for this study they are not used as the base for jokes. One exception is the euphemism *pee*, which is simply a spelling out of the first letter from 'piss' which until the 19th century was considered standard dialect (Neaman and Silver 1983: 54). The words *pee* and *pee-ed* occur in *Friends* quite repeatedly and are always laughed at by the studio audience. Therefore, it can be said that it seems that there is something intrinsically funny in the word or the action which may be the reasons for its frequent use in sit-com. Also, it is a word which is important in children's' bathroom vocabulary and thereby its use by adults may be found somewhat amusing. The euphemism used in referring to 'WC' are *toilet* "veski", "vessa" and *bathroom* "veski", "kylppäri". According to Neaman and Silver (1983: 64) the word *bathroom* in Britain means simply the place where one bathes. In America it is the commonest euphemism for toilet. The phrase commonly used in referring to the visits to the toilet in *Friends* is *to go the bathroom*, which seems to be the standard expression in American sit-coms. The phrase *to go to the toilet* is used in *Keeping up Appearances*.

The first scene below shows a typical use for the word *pee*. In the scene (36) Joey is complemented by Phoebe on his decorating skills, especially on a small indoor fountain. The second scene (37) shows a generalisation with which bodily functions are expressed in *Keeping up Appearances*, which does not have any other even mildly specific references to bodily functions. In the third example (38), Joey has just come out of a stylish bathroom.

36)

Joey:	Thanks, yeah. I love this but ya know what, it makes me wanna <u>pee</u> .	Se on kiva mutta tekee minulle pissahädän/
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37)
Hyacinth: You'd think by now evolution would have replaced our unfortunate bodily functions with something more tasteful.
Elintoimintojemme olisi luullut jo kehittyneen hienostuneemmiksi/

38)
Joey: Ah, I was just in the bathroom, and there's mirrors on both sides of you. So when you're in there it's like you're peein' with the Rockettes.
Kävin veskissä Peili kummallakin puolella/ Tuntee kusevansa triossa/

The translations "pissa" and "pissata" are good euphemistic equivalents for *pee* and *pee-ed*, as they are equally childish as the original expressions. On one occasion (38) the translator has used a more offensive translation "kusta" which in my opinion has a surprising and confusing effect, as its use is probably not expected by the Finnish viewers. The example (38) shows a clear mismatch in the register levels caused by a bad choice by the translator. In addition, such a translation causes a clear decrease in the euphemistic force from the expressions of the original text.

Other bodily waste products are not mentioned in the material, but one of the rare euphemisms formed with phonemic modification can be included in this chapter. Phonemic modifications occur seldom and naturally they are often impossible to translate. This type of euphemism is so closely linked to the language in question that efforts to achieve semantic equivalence usually are futile. The following line from *Friends* includes two translations of a phonemic modification of the word 'shit'.

39)
Monica: Oh... Shoot!
Voi pahus!
also:
Voi harmi!

The word *Shoot* is a common remodelling of the word "shit" (Spears 1991: 397). It is normally used to express anger and frustration. These kinds of remodellings of a word taboo are often used by adults in the presence of

children. They are lenient forms of the "bad" word, which is not dared to say out loud. By saying *shoot* instead of 'shit' the speaker accomplishes a dysphemistic illocutionary act with a euphemistic locution. From the point of view of the translator, at least in this case the way to translate phonemic modification is to strive for equal effect. The original euphemistic force of the word *shoot* is not directly transferred to the translations, but they are nevertheless not offensive by nature.

6.1.4 Miscellaneous

In addition to the topic areas presented above, there are other taboos which appear in the material. These topics include death, professions of lower prestige and war. These appear in the discussions very rarely so that they do not include enough material to justify separate chapters, but instead are all presented under the heading "miscellaneous".

One of the most popular uses for euphemisms in real life is in connection to professions of lower prestige, such as the people dealing with garbage collection, building maintenance personnel or funeral administrators. The following example is built entirely around this phenomenon. In the scene (40) Hyacinth receives a call from the company responsible for the waste collection and disposal in the neighbourhood. She has been complaining about their trucks using the road which passes her house as a shortcut. The voice of the person calling cannot be heard.

40)

Hyacinth:	Who? <u>The Department of Refuse Service Offices?</u>	Jätehuoltopalvelusta/
	Oh, you mean the rubbish people.	Siis roskäväkeä/
	My complaint is about your dustbin lorries...	Valitukseni koskee jäteautoja/
	Alright, your <u>collection vehicles</u> .	Olkoot sitten keräys ajoneuvoja/

Allan and Burridge (1991: 18) state that the names of government offices can be said to illustrate one basic rule: the longer the title, the lower is the rank of the office. This is done presumably to upgrade the lower ranks in at least this one inexpensive respect. The translation "Jätehuoltopalvelu" is a fairly good equivalent in meaning but not in form for the English company name. Grammatically it is simpler than the English name which causes some loss of contrast between "Jätehuoltopalvelu" and "roskaväkeä". The English name of the company *The Department of Refuse Service Offices* is already euphemistic and designed to remind people of the things they deal with (garbage) as little as possible. This is emphasised by Hyacinth's first two lines, where she at first does not understand where the call is coming from, which probably would not happen with the Finnish translation. Her interpretation of the company's name is also dysphemistic and has double meaning, but *rubbish people* and "roskaväkeä" are both semantically and pragmatically equivalent. The telephone conversation continues with a similar pattern only this time it is reversed. Hyacinth uses too direct a term *dustbin lorries* and is immediately corrected by the clerk she is speaking with. The translator has been well aware of the cause of amusement in the whole scene and has maintained its original structure. Basically, for the joke to be able to work there has to be a clear difference between the euphemistic forces of the two expressions "jäteautoja" and "keräys ajoneuvoja". In my opinion, the translator could have chosen to use "roska-autoja" in the first line to emphasise the difference even more, but in general this translation works very well.

In *Friends* there are two clear cases representing the same phenomenon of artificially rising the prestige of a profession. The first one is '(building) maintenance supervisor', which actually is one of the many euphemisms developed for 'janitor'. In *Friends* this title always appears in its clipped form *super*, which is probably an even bigger overstatement of some of the aspects of the profession. It is translated as "talkkari" which hardly shares the upgraded features that *maintenance supervisor* has. A better translation might for example be "kiinteistöhoitaja", but this would make the dialogue sound too

formal. The second case is illustrated in the next scene (41). Ross has started to date a colleague who works at the same museum as he does. She studies insects.

41)

Chandler:	Who are you going out with?	Kenen kanssa sinä menet? - Sen ötökkänaisenko?/
Phoebe:	Oh, is this the bug lady?	
Rachel:	[<i>tries to sound like a bug</i>] Bzzz...I love you, Ross	Olet ihana Ross/
Ross:	Her name is Celia. She is not a bug lady. She's a <u>curator of insects</u> at the museum.	Hänen nimesä on Celia, hän ei ole ötökkänainen,-/ hän on museossa hyönteisten intendentti/

Insects are by many people considered to be a particularly small and revolting species among animals, and therefore, a person studying them might want to upgrade the name of the profession to make it sound more important. In the scene above the insignificance of the profession in the friends' minds is illustrated by them calling the woman 'a bug lady'. *Curator of insects* "hyönteisten intendentti" is a good example of a tendency to artificially raise the prestige of a profession. The examples involving professions of lower prestige are also clear cases of avoidance of reality, but they are also derived from the taboos which are associated with the professions in question.

The following example is taken from *Friends* and it features phonemic modification by clipping. War is a topic which acquires a high degree of euphemising, but it is also a subject which is not very likely to appear in sitcom. However, there is one case in the material where the topic is Vietnam war, which is to be considered a delicate matter in American culture. Ross asks an older man if he had served in Vietnam. The pragmatic aim of this question is to emphasise the age difference between the two men in the scene, but that is not important here.

42)

Ross:	So were you in <u>Nam</u> ?	Olitko Vietnamissa?/
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The translator has felt it necessary to replace *Nam* in the translation with the full word "Vietnamissa" in stead of opting for the clipped "Namissa", which is sometimes used in Finnish as well. It is probable that the change of culture along with the change of language has caused this change. The Vietnam war naturally does not have the same meaning in our culture nor is it as delicate a matter. Therefore, there is no need to euphemise the idea of someone having taken part in it. However, the translation "Olitko Namissa?" would have better preserved the tone of the original dialogue.

Euphemisms of death are used in real life very frequently as they make it possible for people to distance themselves from death and dying. However, writing jokes about death is not easy, nor is it generally regarded as tasteful. Therefore, the examples on euphemisms of death are not a common feature of sit-coms. *Make the ultimate sacrifice* "uhrata itsensä", *pass on* "nukkua pois" and *a little bit more relaxed than you want him to get* "rentoutua hieman yli odotusten" are the only euphemisms of death occurring in the material and confirm the fact that death is not a common topic in sit-com.

6.2 Euphemisms Based on Politeness and Emotions

Even though the line between politeness motivated and taboo motivated euphemisms is often thin, in some cases this distinction can be made. Taboos lead to the politeness phenomenon, but there are at least as many cases where the delicacy of a matter, which is not taboo based, instigates the use of a euphemism. This is also where the relationships between people come to play a bigger role than with the taboo motivated euphemisms. Therefore, the euphemisms which are analysed in this chapter have to be presented with more explanations of previous plot developments and more comments on the relationships between the characters.

The relationships between the characters on the shows, as between people in general, are largely based on emotions. As stated by Neaman and Silver (1983)

above, the motives for euphemising are as varying as is the range of human emotions. Emotions are an important motivator for euphemising. For example, if a person is angry, frustrated or criticising a friend, he is likely to soften down the tone of the message with the help of euphemisms. The following examples of politeness/emotion motivated euphemisms represent the type found in the selected episodes of *Friends* and *Keeping up Appearances*.

In the following example, Joey has just told after a big fight to his roommate Chandler that he is going to move out of their shared apartment. In this scene (43) they have already made up, but Joey still wants to try living by himself for a change. Because they are such good friends, the matter is very delicate and euphemisms are employed in order to soften down the tone of the dialogue.

(43)

Joey:	Why are you <u>gettin' so bent out of shape</u> for? It is not like we agreed to live together forever. <u>We are not Bert and Ernie.</u>	Miksi olet noin tohkeissasi. Ei me sovittu ikuisesta yhteisasumisesta/ Ei olla siamilaiset kaksoset/
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[...]

(44)

Joey:	Hey, are you cool with this. I mean, <u>I don't want to leave you high and dry.</u>	Onko tämä nyt okei? En tahdo jättää sinua karille keikkumaan/
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Chandler:	Hey, no, <u>I've never been lower or wetter.</u> I'll be fine.	En ole koskaan ollut syvemmissä vedessä/
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The first line (43) is already euphemistic as it features the idiomatic expression *bend out of shape* and the metaphor *we are not (like) Bert and Ernie*. In the next line (44), with the metaphor *I don't want leave you high and dry* Joey wants to make sure that he does not leave Chandler alone. Chandler insures Joey of the opposite by formulating the answer *I've never been lower and wetter*, which fits the earlier metaphor. Joey's concern for his friend's well being is disguised carefully, even though it is obvious to the viewers that they both know what they really are talking about. The translator has chosen to remove the culture specific element *Bert and Ernie* and replaced it with a more

general "siamilaiset kaksoset", because *Bert and Ernie* are not generally known characters in Finland. The translations of the metaphors are quite good too, even though the antonym pairs *high-low* and *dry-wet* are not translated with their semantic equivalents. The euphemistic force between the SL and TL text also remains well preserved, so that the awkwardness of the situation transmits to the Finnish audience in full.

The next lengthy scene is a continuation from the one above and presents a dialogue between Joey and Chandler. Joey has moved out of their shared apartment, because he has got a well paying role in a soap opera so that he can now afford an apartment of his own. However, he has started to regret his decision and comes to see how Chandler is doing with his new roommate Eddie. Joey is becoming jealous of the relationship between Chandler and Eddie, because it reminds him of the relationship that he used to have with Chandler.

45) [*Eddie is cooking Chandler breakfast. Joey observes.*]

Eddie: Alright, here you go my friend. Eggs-a-la Eddie.

Tästä näin ystäväni,
munia à la Eddie/
Herkkua

Chandler: Ooh! Great.

Joey: Huh?

Chandler: What?

Mitä?/

Joey: No I just thought you liked your eggs with the bread, with the hole in the middle, a-la me.

Luulin että pidät
munista leivällä, à la minä/

Chandler: Well I do, but uh, Eddie makes them this way and well they are pretty darn good.

Niin pidänkin, muutta Eddie tekee ne näin. Ovat aika hemmetin hyviä/

Eddie: Well you guys, I am outta here. See ya pals.

No niin kaverit,
minä lähden. Nähdään/

Chandler: See ya. [*Eddie leaves*]

Joey: So, how are you two getting along?

Miten tulette toimeen?
- Olen tosi tyytyväinen/

Chandler: Oh, I couldn't be happier.

>>>

<p>Joey: Great, well, I'm happy for ya. [<i>picks up the orange juice carton and it's empty</i>] Alright that's it. He just comes in here, Mr. Johnny Neweggs, with his, his, his movin' the mail and his, his 'see ya pals'. And now there's no juice. There's no <u>juice</u> for the people who need <u>juice</u> and want the <u>juice</u>. I need the <u>juice</u>.</p>	<p>Hienoa. Olen iloinen puolestasi/ Nyt riitti! Herra uusimuna vain kävelee sisään, - / siirtelemään postia ja morjestelemaan! Ja nyt ei ole mehua ihmisille jotka sitä tarvitsevat! Tahdon mehua! /</p>
<p>Chandler: There's another carton right over there.</p>	<p>Tuolla on toinen purkki/</p>

At this point Joey is really jealous and frustrated. Instead of being able to talk straightforwardly of their friendship, he starts talking about it as *juice* and so disguises his true feelings. Joey soon notices that Chandler does not quite understand what he is striving for with *juice*. He tries to express his emotions another way and this time starts talking about eggs, as it also fits the previous events of the scene.

<p>Joey: Hey, this isn't about the <u>juice</u> anymore, alright man.</p>	<p>Ei tässä ole kysymys mistään mehusta/</p>
<p>Chandler: Alright, so what's it about.</p>	<p>No mistä on kysymys/</p>
<p>Joey: <u>Eggs</u>. Who's eggs do you like better, his or mine?</p>	<p>Munista! Kumman munista pidät enemmän, hänen vai minun?/</p>
<p>Chandler: Well, I like both eggs equally.</p>	<p>Molemmista yhtä paljon.</p>
<p>Joey: Oh come on. Nobody likes two different kinds of <u>eggs</u> equally. You like one better than the other and I wanna know which.</p>	<p>Alä yritä...!/ Ei erilaisista munista voi pitää yhtä paljon! Kummista pidät enemmän? /</p>
<p>Chandler: Well what's the difference? Your <u>eggs</u> aren't here anymore, are they? You took your <u>eggs</u> and you left. You really expect me to never find new <u>eggs</u>?</p>	<p>Mitä väliä sillä on. Sinun munasi eivät ole enää täällä! / Otit munasi ja häivyit! / Luulitko etten koskaan löytäisi uusia munia? /</p>

The situation and the topic of discussion, friendship between two men, is a delicate one. It is shown in the fact that neither one of the men wants to admit that they care about each other because they are afraid of losing face. *Juice* and *eggs* are used euphemistically to stand for the friendship and the bond between them. The scene is an example of a quite common practice in sit-coms. The writers have used words that are in no way connected to the true emotions involved in the situation in order to cause amusement. Especially so with *eggs*, as the word can also be used in referring to testicles, as can its translation "munia". A part of the amusement is brought on by making the conversation sound like a discussion expected from a male-female couple which is breaking up. Since the euphemisms are made-up unique references and apply to this scene only, they present no problems to the translator.

Another purpose for using euphemisms in sit-coms is criticising or blaming a friend or an otherwise close person. This kind of situation always seems to be delicate enough to justify the use of euphemisms. The next example illustrates a situation in which a word is in the centre of the joke, in other words, the joke is made about a word. In the scene (46), all the friends are talking about a poker game which they have just finished. Rachel, Phoebe and Monica played poker for the first time in their lives, lost their money to the boys and now blame them, especially Ross, for taking their money.

46)

Rachel:	So, basically you get your <u>ya-yas</u> by takin' money from your friends.	Te hankitte siis sävärinne ottamalla rahaa ystäviltänne. -Niin
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Ross: Yeah.

Chandler:	Yes, and I get my <u>ya-yas</u> from IKEA. You have to put them together yourself, but they cost a little less.	Ja minä hankin sävärini Ikeasta/ Ne täytyy koota itse mutta tulevat vähän halvemmiksi/
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In this case, the meaning of the euphemism *ya-ya* has to be determined from the context in which it is used. Here it is at first used in the meaning "to get one's kicks from something". The expression *ya-ya* can be considered as an onomatopoeic word (such as 'oink'), the type of which usually is omitted from the subtitles. The use of *ya-ya* is an example of the type of euphemism where

the expression used is not a word at all. In the last line *ya-ya* is used by Chandler to refer to a piece of furniture and to stress the fact they all had noticed the strange expression and that nobody really knows what it actually means. The translation of *ya-ya* as "säväri" is in my opinion an excellent choice. Similarly to *ya-ya*, the word "säväri" does not have a specific meaning, but it allows the Finnish viewers to determine what Rachel means. The Finnish translation works just as well as the line in English.

Agreeing and disagreeing are also functions of euphemisms. The following scene (47) takes place around a table after the poker game, which the girls have lost. The boys are collecting their winnings and Ross makes a sarcastic comment on Rachel, who has lost the most money. Rachel replies by calling him a typical male who has to win money to show that he has power over women. Then Monica makes a comment in which she does exactly the thing of which Rachel had accused men for in her line. Of particular interest is the last line by Rachel and its translation.

47)

Rachel:	Mmm-hmm. Oh, so typical. Oo, I am a man, I have a penis. Oo, I have to win money to exert my power over women.	Tyypillistä:/ "Olen mies minulla on penis Alistan naisia voittamalla rahaa"/
Monica:	You know what? This is not over. We will play you again, and we will win, and you will lose, and you will beg, and we will laugh, and we will take every last dime you have, and you will hate yourself forever.	Tämä ei lopu tähän. Vielä me voitamme teidät-/ Ja te kerjäätte, me nauramme ja Voitamme teiltä joka lantin/ Ja te vihaatte itseänne ikuisesti
Rachel:	Hmm, <u>kinda stepped on my point there</u> , Mon.	-Veit sanat suustani!/

The last line by Rachel is derived from the idiom 'to make a point'. Rachel made her point in the first line and now Monica has "stepped on it" and ruined it. Rachel wants to be as subtle as possible to Monica and also does not want

the male characters in the room to start teasing them. The translator has chosen a euphemism resembling an idiom with an actual Finnish idiom "veit sanat suustani" and by doing so he has changed the meaning of the sentence into just the opposite from its original purpose. In the SL dialogue the function of the last line was to notify Monica that with her comment she had ruined Rachel's theory and made her look foolish in the eyes of the male characters. In the translation it would appear that Rachel actually agrees with Monica's comment, which is not the case. The mistake here causes the joke to go a bit flat, unless the translation is meant to be taken as a sarcastic remark meaning exactly the opposite, which seems a little far fetched. A better translation for *Kinda stepped on my point there, Mon* could be for example "Siinä hävisi se teoria, vai mitä Monica" or something of that nature.

In *Friends* there is an example of defending oneself against accusations by using euphemisms. The pragmatic aim of the line is to be funny, as with most of the euphemisms in sit-com. In the scene (48) Chandler inconsiderately implies to Monica that she will never find a husband. Monica starts asking him for grounds to the claim in a badgering manner. Chandler notices that he cannot talk himself out of the mess without hurting Monica's feelings and instead turns the situation into a joke.

48) [*Upset Monica walks towards Chandler, who sits on a chair.*]

Chandler: Dear god! <u>This parachute</u>	Hyvä luoja tämä laskuvarjo
<u>is a knapsack.</u>	onkin selkäreppu!/?

While uttering the line, Chandler throws himself over the back of the chair on which he sits and reaches for his back as if he was trying to find the launching cord of an imaginary parachute and not being able find it. The line (metaphor) and the act itself are both euphemistic. Chandler knows that he has no grounds for making an assumption of Monica's chances of getting married, but neither does he want to directly admit that he was wrong. Therefore, he uses a joke to save his face from the potential threat by Monica. In my opinion, the word-for-word translation is the only really good translation for the line, also because of the events on the screen.

A rather similar line is used in the next example to express disgust towards the behaviour of a friend. Chandler has just noticed that Joey did not wash the spoon that he used to eat but instead just licked it clean and put it back in the drawer. Chandler starts lecturing Joey about hygiene and finds out that Joey has also mixed up the toothbrushes and used Chandler's red toothbrush to unclog a drain.

49)

Chandler: Mine is the red one!
Oh god. Can open,
worms everywhere.

Vitsausten purkki on avattu,
tuholaisia ympäriinsä/

Chandler expresses his disgust by uttering the line *can open, worms everywhere* even though there are no cans or worms present in the scene. The line is derived from an old idiom 'to open a can of worms' which according to Collins Cobuild English Dictionary (1995: 1935) means that someone is about to talk of a subject which might be more unpleasant and difficult than they realise and that that subject might be better left alone. Chandler uses this expression to indicate that Joey has already opened *the can* and also because he wants to express extreme disgust since he has already used the toothbrush since the drain cleaning. On the other hand, he does not want to be too harsh towards his best friend and uses an expression which he knows Joey cannot fully understand. The translation "vitsausten purkki", as I see it, is good because "vitsaus" has biblical connotations, which makes it easier for the viewers to associate the line with the function it has in the original dialogue. To my mind, with his line Chandler is covering up a dysphemistic act by using a euphemistic expression.

One of the most frequent types of euphemism in situational comedy is reversal which was discussed above in chapter 2.2.4. In the scene below (50), Rachel who is upset because his ex-boyfriend Ross has brought his new girlfriend to a place where all the friends are on holiday. The others are not bothered about it but Rachel is not having a good time, which she expresses to the others with a reversal.

50)

Rachel: Well. Is everybody else Onko kaikilla muilla
 having just the best time!? hirmuhauskaa?/

Reversal is a type of euphemism which is normally used to criticise and ironize a situation or a person. It occurs quite frequently in both of the sit-coms analysed here. I think that reversal is always connected with the politeness phenomenon, as it is a tool which is not used to disguise taboos but rather to express emotions of disappointment, frustration or even anger. Its ability to ironize situations is equally important. Furthermore, it appears that reversal is typically a type of euphemism which benefits the most from the speaker's facial movements and intonation patterns in the speaker's voice, as reversals are almost always somehow emphasised by the speaker to indicate that the real meaning of the utterance is just the opposite of its literary sense. From the translator's point of view, reversal is probably the easiest type of euphemism to translate because it does not require any interpreting within the source language. However, I suggest that italics could be used here, and with reversals in general, to give similar emphasis to it as is given to its spoken counterpart and to make it stand out from the subtitles.

Another topic which often requires euphemising is money. Many find it embarrassing to admit that they are poor or well off. Generally speaking, it can be said that it is not considered socially acceptable to discuss one's own financial matters, especially so if one is rich. Indeed it is probable that some aspects of the topic of money are very close to becoming modern-day taboos. The following three examples (51, 52, 53) exemplify the manner in which this topic is handled in *Keeping up Appearances*.

(51) [*Hyacinth to Richard when he is reluctant to buy an expensive gift to Hyacinth's brother-in-law.*]

Hyacinth: I hope you are not going Älä rupea kitsastelemaan/
 to be a pinchpenny.

(52 and 53) [*Rose is discussing her new rich boyfriend on the phone with Hyacinth.*]

Rose: It's a big car. He is not without means. Iso auto. Se mies ei ole mikään tyhjätasku/

[...]

Rose: He is not short of a bob or two. Rahasta ei ole pulaa/

The metaphor *pinchpenny* (51) dates back to the 15th century and refers to a person who not only wrings money out of others but also counts his own pennies (Neaman and Silver 1983: 79-80). The other two (52,53)...*not without means* and ...*not short of a bob or two* are almost synonymic idiomatic structures which naturally mean that "he is rich". The feeling of envy is often present in discussions on money and is probably one of the most important reasons for the use of euphemisms in this topic area. Also, the reluctance to admit that one is wealthy is an important reason for this. The paraphrased translations are all good pragmatic equivalents causing no big changes in the euphemistic forces of the SL and TL dialogues.

In the following two examples Elisabeth, the neighbour of Hyacinth, is giving advice on how to cope with Hyacinth's constant complaints. In the scenes euphemisms are used because, even though Elisabeth thinks that Hyacinth is extremely annoying most of the time, she is not a really bad person.

54)

Elisabeth: Just let your mind go blank, I do. Älä lotkauta korvaasi. Niin minä teen/

55)

Elisabeth: The trick with Hyacinth is to just let things wash over you, I think that's how Richard survives. Anna kaiken mennä toisesta korvasta sisään ja toisesta ulos/ Niin Richard selviää/

Generally speaking, it is not deemed good behaviour to speak badly about a person behind his or her back, and therefore in this kind of situations euphemisms are used to mitigate the offensiveness of the act. The translations of the idioms *let your mind go blank* "Älä lotkauta korvaasi" and *let things wash over you* "Anna kaiken mennä toisesta korvasta sisään ja toisesta ulos"

are good pragmatic equivalents. To my mind, the euphemistic forces of the expressions show a slight decrease from the originals. The translations put the listener into a more active role with "Älä..." and "Anna...", whereas in the original lines starting with *let...* the listener is almost merely a passive, rather than active receiver.

As mentioned above, in *Friends* fixed phrases sometimes work as the base upon which the joke is constructed. In the following example the original idiom has been altered to suite the purposes of the scene in question. It involves the expression *pot calling the kettle black* or "pata kattilaa soimaa" as it is known in Finnish. According to Allan and Burridge (1991:17), the phrase *pot calling the kettle black* actually already includes a type euphemism, namely it omits the word 'arse' at the end. In the scene (56), the friends have been playing poker and the girls are not happy with Ross's behaviour in the game. Ross's sister Monica calls him competitive and gets blamed for the same thing by Phoebe.

56)

Rachel:	Can you believe what a jerk Ross was being?	Eikö Ross ollut uskomattoman taukki?/
Monica:	Yeah, I know. He can get really competitive.	-Oli. Hän voi olla kamalan kilpailuhenkinen/
Phoebe:	Ha. Ha ha	
Monica:	What?	Mitä?
Phoebe:	[<i>Gestures as if she was on the phone</i>] <u>Oh, hello kettle? This is Monica. You're black.</u>	Haloo kattila? Monica täällä. Sinulla on musta kylki/

Phoebe feels uncomfortable telling Monica that she is just like her brother and therefore turns the discussion into a joke. Thus, the original underlying function of the phrase is to let Monica know that she is sometimes just as competitive as Ross. In order to make the otherwise common and not so amusing idiom more funny the word "pot" is replaced with the word *Monica* and the non-verbal element of Phoebe gesturing as if she was actually calling the *kettle* on the phone is added. The purpose of the line is of course to be funny. In this case, the translator has avoided the temptations of using the original Finnish idiom "pata kattilaa soimaa" and decided to work on a literal translation of the original

script. I think that the translation does not quite achieve the fluency of the original text, partly because the translator has chosen a semantically equivalent expression, which lacks the familiar elements, mainly the verb "soimata", of the original Finnish idiom. The line *Sinulla on musta kylki* does not relate strongly enough to the meaning of the verb "soimata" - to blame somebody, whereas in the original text the verb "to call" and *You're black* match perfectly even with the actual phone call mimicking on the screen. However, I think that there really is no perfect translation to use here and that the translator has chosen probably the best alternative considering the euphemistic value of the dialogue and its translation. The translation, as I see it, is no more direct or harsh than the original line in English. In addition, the viewers can still find this scene funny because of its amusing non-verbal elements.

Respect towards old people often prevents direct accusations and remarks concerning them. In the following scene (57), Phoebe is talking with her grandmother and suspects that she is lying to her about her father's whereabouts. However, she cannot directly accuse her, especially since it is her own grandmother, and instead, she uses an evasive jocular line to achieve the same effect.

57)

Phoebe:	OK, I smell smoke. Maybe	Haistan palaneen käryä.
	that's <u>'cause someone's</u>	Ehkä jonkun housut ovat tulesa/
	<u>pants are on fire.</u>	

In this case the original purpose of the writer has been to work with a relatively well known children's rhyme "liar, liar, pants on fire ...". The translator has opted for using a pragmatically corresponding idiom that can be found in Finnish. The translation is not as directly linked to lying as is the original line. However, both the original dialogue and the translation share similar connotations that can be made to the idiom *no smoke without fire* or "ei savua ilman tulta" as it is known in Finnish. Nevertheless, the reason for the use of such a structure is the fact that it is considered rude behaviour to call an older person a liar to his/her face. On the other hand, in this case since the grandmother in question is still rather young and in full health, the primary

motivator for the use of this structure is the fact that it is funny rather than its euphemistic force.

Sometimes translators, especially in subtitling, have a tendency to interpret the euphemistic or in some cases dysphemistic expressions for the reader / viewer. This explication / paraphrasing is understandable, since in subtitling the limitations on time and space are an important factor in condensing for example lengthy metaphors. However, this is also often done even when there is no apparent need to do it. The following example of this phenomenon is taken from *Keeping up Appearances* and in the scene Hyacinth is on the phone to her sister, who has a troublesome husband.

58)

Hyacinth: Now, look. <u>Take a firm</u>	Sinun on ruvettava
<u>stand. It is time you begun</u>	olemaan isäntä talossa/
<u>wearing the trousers.</u>	

The example (58) shows how the translator has in fact left the SL stock metaphor untranslated and replaced it with its interpretation. Even though, the translation conveys the underlying meaning of Hyacinth's line, there really is no need to interpret and explicate the metaphor for the viewers. The translation "Sinun on ruvettava olemaan isäntä talossa" is much more direct than its English version. This is not a good translation, because it totally destroys the funniness of the conversation. With the line *You should start wearing the trousers* Hyacinth is referring to the strange behaviour of her sister's husband, whose desire it is to wear women's clothes. The translator could just as well have opted to translate the metaphor literally and leave its interpretation to the viewers. For example, she could have translated the line as "Sinun on oltava se, jolla perheessänne on housut". This would have saved the joke of the original dialogue and made it possible for the rest of the scene work as well.

6.3 Euphemisms Based on Deception

As mentioned above, one of the most important functions of euphemism is its use in disguising the unpleasant reality. Euphemisms are especially popular for example in the language of politics and law. They may be employed to deliberately mislead the listeners or just to make the unpleasant sound less unattractive and displeasing. Thus, it can be said that euphemism used with this purpose is language designed to alter our perception of reality. Considerations of tact are not in as big a role as they are with taboo and politeness motivated euphemisms.

6.3.1 Altering Reality

The uses of euphemisms in reality avoiding purposes in sit-com are quite rare. However, there are instances especially in *Keeping up Appearances* where reality, or our perception of it, is altered with the help of euphemism. In the two following scenes (59, 60), Hyacinth is discussing the second apartment she and Richard have just bought. The apartment is located on the top floor of an old castle-like mansion. It has very small impractical rooms and floor plan, but Hyacinth insisted on buying it because she thinks it would enhance their social status to have a second apartment.

59)

Hyacinth: You'll love our flat. It is quite bijou, but we have some splendid neighbours.

Huoneisto on bijou, mutta meillä on aivan suurenmoisia naapureita/

60)

Richard: I feel boxed in. This place is too small.

Seinät tuntuvat kaatuvan päälle. Tämä asunto on liian pieni/

Hyacinth: Richard, I would ask you please to remember that our apartment in this great mansion is not small, it's old world bijou.

Ole hyvä ja muista-/ että huoneistomme tässä arvoluokan kartanossa ei ole pieni/ Tämä on vanhan ajan *bijou*/

Richard: Well, I am gonna make some old world bijou tea.

Minä menen laittamaan vanhan ajan *bijou* teetä/

Hyacinth: Oh, why not dear. An impromptu midnight snack.

Miksipä ei. Yöllinen extempore välipala/

The French loan word *bijou* is used here (59, 60) to replace the word 'small'. According to the Collins Cobuild English Dictionary (1995: 152) small houses are sometimes called *bijou* in order to make them sound attractive or fashionable. The translator has left *bijou* untranslated which in my opinion in this case is an understandable choice, since there is no really good equivalent for *bijou* in Finnish. Especially since she compensates for the unfamiliarity of the word *bijou* (60) to the Finnish viewers by adding italics and also by translating *old world* as "wanhan ajan" and spelling it fashionably with the letter "w" instead of "v" as it would normally be done. Nevertheless, there is a clear difference between the euphemistic forces of the original dialogue and the subtitles. To me the word *bijou* in the translation is likely to acquire all its meaning from the context in which it is used, which is not the case with *bijou* in the original dialogue. Interestingly the translator has in the subtitles used the Latin phrase "extempore" for *impromptu*, probably in order to better illustrate and maintain the sophisticated tone of the original dialogue.

Translating euphemistic loan words can be problematic, as the translator has to decide whether to translate the expression or not. This is done in accordance to the translator's perception of the familiarity of the loan word for the Finnish viewers. In the next example (61) the translator has chosen to explicate the loan word, even though she could have used the same expression in subtitles as well.

61)

Hyacinth: I think barbecues are
rather passé.

Grillijuhlat eivät
ole enää muodissakaan/

Passé, which is also a French loan word, means "out of style" or "old fashioned". The word is used in the same meaning in Finnish, but the translator has nevertheless decided to interpret the meaning as "...eivät ole enää muodissakaan". This causes a change in the style of the dialogue. However, it is probable that the word *passé* is slightly better known for the British than for the Finnish viewers, which is possibly the reason for the translator's choice.

Possibly the most important areas for the use of euphemisms as doublespeak is in politics. The language of politicians is often filled with deceiving euphemisms. However, neither of the two sit-coms handle politics, and therefore, there are only a few instances of political euphemisms. In the following two examples (62, 63) Hyacinth is describing her husband's position in the local town council, which is not as high as Hyacinth makes it appear to be.

62)

Hyacinth: You must make her realise at once that you are a power in local authority circles.

Osoita oitis rouvalle, että olet hallinnon voimahahmoja/

63)

Hyacinth: My husband is a power in local authority, a man at the height of his executive skills.

Mieheni on paikallishallinnon vaikutusvaltaisia johtajia -/

Hyacinth's husband Richard is in reality a member in a board of the local town council, but he does not have any real power over the town affairs. Hyacinth is eager to make Richard seem like the head of the local government. This type of deceiving expressions are naturally hard to translate. The original dialogue balances on a thin line between truth and deceit. My interpretation is such that with *a power in local authority* Hyacinth is not exactly lying since she does not say anything about the kind of power Richard has. The translation "paikallishallinnon vaikutusvaltainen johtaja", however, in fact turns Hyacinth's line into an obvious lie.

Since the avoidance of harsh or distasteful reality is not typically linked to the topics of the two sit-coms analysed in this thesis or even with comedy in general, the occurrence of this type of euphemisms is quite random. There are, however, a few additional examples of this purpose. *Secondhand*, which is a euphemism designed to divert attention from the fact that the it really applies to things which are "used", is translated as "sekunda" in *Keeping up Appearances*. "Sekunda" in Finnish does not mean "used" but rather something that is not of

good quality. *Doctored*, in this case said of a castrated dog, is translated with a good euphemistic equivalent "leikattu" in *Keeping up Appearances*.

In *Friends* reality is altered with the help of euphemistic expressions only with the topic of firing somebody from a job. The expressions used vary from the dysphemistic *to fire somebody* "erottaa" and *to lay someone off* "irtisanoa", to the euphemistic *to let someone go* "erottaa". *To let someone go* is clearly developed in order to express an intolerable fact in a tolerable way and it also suggests that the boss by firing someone, is more likely to do him a favour (Bruce 1991: 40). Interestingly it has also been translated as "erottaa" which does not transmit any of the euphemistic force of the original expression. On the other hand, to come up with euphemisms for "erottaa" in Finnish is not easy. The only word I can think of which has gained popularity as a euphemism for "erottaa" or "saada / antaa potkut" is the word "saneerata".

6.3.2 Politically Correct Language and Jargon

The occurrences of the PC phenomenon are also extremely rare in both *Friends* and *Keeping up Appearances*. In *Friends* the expressions *fashion impaired* "muotitiedottomat" and *financially challenged* "raharajoitteiset" are the only clear cases of politically correct expressions. However, the motivation for their usage in the programs is not to be politically correct, but rather simply to illustrate some of the silly aspects that the politically correct terms may have. In *Keeping up Appearances* the only example of politically correct language is the rather frequent use of expression *senior citizen(s)* instead of the somewhat offensive 'old people'. This expression has been developed to refer to old people in such a way that it also implies that they are people of "higher rank" and that as such they deserve the younger generation's respect. On the occasions when this expression was used it was translated into Finnish as "vanhukset" or as "ikäihmiset", of which the latter I think is closer to politically correct language. It appears that there is no word or expression in Finnish so far that would have similar connotations as *senior citizen* has in English. It would be too far reaching to say that the Finnish society does not hold its old

people in the same value as the American or the British societies do, but the absence of such a politically correct term in Finnish is nevertheless puzzling.

The occurrences of jargon in the material are quite rare as well, but as seen in the next examples it presents the translators with problems. In the following scene (64), the euphemistic and dysphemistic features of jargon discussed above in chapter 2.4 are illustrated. As mentioned there, jargon is euphemistic for the people inside the group who understand it and possibly dysphemistic for those outside the group. The scene from *Friends* takes place in a hospital, where Ross's ex-wife Carol is at the early stages of giving birth to their child. Rachel, Joey and Chandler are keeping her company while waiting for Ross to arrive.

64)

Rachel:	Yeah, honey, they wouldn't miss this.	
Joey:	Relax. You're only at nine centimetres. And <u>the baby is at zero station.</u>	Eivät he jätä tulematta. -Olet auki vasta 9 cm, vauva on varikolla/
Chandler:	Hey, you are really frightening me.	Sinä todella pelotat minua/

The joke in the scene is in fact based on the very characteristics of jargon mentioned above. Joey, who already had seen another woman give birth at the hospital the same day, is simply quoting the doctor who delivered the baby. Chandler finds his comment threatening because he really cannot understand what Joey meant or how is it possible that he could know such things. The interesting aspect of the translation is the line *the baby is at zero station*, which obviously refers to the position of the baby in the uterus before the birth or to the fact that it is in waiting. The translation "vauva on varikolla" hardly refers to that in the mind of the average Finnish viewer, even though the aspect of waiting can be derived from "varikko". The pragmatic purpose of the line is for Joey to amaze Chandler with his knowledge by using what apparently is a common term used by obstetricians. The problem is that the translation can be more closely linked to race cars and driving than to childbirth. The idea of course would be to use a Finnish expression that would at the same time sound

equally professional and vague to the viewer. For example, "vauva on nollatilassa" would sound much better and would not hold any of the same connotations as "varikko" does. Equally, the euphemistic force of the jargon used disappears with the translator's choice. Newmark (1988) suggests that the translator should get rid of jargon which is ambiguous or difficult to understand. However, here it is not possible since the joke in the scene is based on the characteristics of jargon.

Euphemisms which have been formed with word formation devices also often occur in jargon and present problems for the translator. In the following scene (65) the translator has to deal with a new form, an acronym, which has no equivalent expression in Finnish. The example is taken from *Friends*, where Chandler uses the acronym in talking about a boring aspect of his work. He is reprimanding his secretary for not delivering the numbers he needed on time. He does not immediately realise that the secretary is not yet familiar with the term everybody else uses casually at work.

65)

Chandler:	Well, it throws my <u>WENUS</u> out of whack.	Se panee minun mulkkuseni sekaisin/
Nina:	Your... Excuse me?	Anteeksi?/
Chandler:	<u>WENUS</u> ... Weekly Estimated Nett Usage Statistics.	"Määräaikais-uloitteinen käyttökontakti-ultimointi"/
Nina:	Oh, right. Gotcha. It won't happen again. I wouldn't want to do anything to hurt your... <u>WENUS</u> .	En tahtoisi mitenkään vahingoittaa sinun mulkkustasi/

The term *WENUS* is used by the accountants in the firm where Chandler works. In this particular scene, the joke is based on the fact that the acronym itself forms a euphemistic word *WENUS*, which of course sounds like "Venus", a term for female genitals or sexuality in general (Spears 1991: 466). The translator has maintained the original structure of the joke, but has changed the euphemistic acronym to a dysphemistic expression in Finnish. The Finnish translation "mulkkunen" is a far more explicit reference to the male genitals that the original *WENUS* is to the female. In my opinion, the scene maintains

7 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The main results and the discussion based on them are discussed in this chapter in the same order as the topics in the analysis. Based on the number and division of cases of euphemism found in the data, it is obvious that by far the most important use of euphemisms in situational comedy is in matters involving sex or some aspect of it. As mentioned above, sit-coms almost never display sexually explicit dialogue and therefore euphemisms are intentionally employed in order to disguise and embellish the topic.

TABOOS: Sexually Suggestive Material

According to my findings, the euphemisms found in discussions on sex can be divided into five main categories: 1) non-figurative expressions, 2) figurative expressions, 3) implications, 4) omissions and 5) non words, sounds and gestures used as euphemisms. The first group which I call **non-figurative expressions** includes such references to sex which generally speaking cannot, in the context in which they are used, be mistaken to refer to anything else. Expressions such as to *sleep with someone* or to *be with someone* are included in this category. These expressions allow no room for other interpretations and are direct references to sex in the sense that there is nothing figurative about them. However, they do have to go through a process of particularization in the receiver's mind, as the conventional senses of these expressions do not have anything to do with sex. In addition, these kinds of expressions are so frequently used in referring to sex that they have lost most of their euphemistic force, but they are still preferred expressions for the act.

In an even bigger role in situational comedy are the references to sex which belong to the group I have named **figurative expressions**. The group includes metaphors, idioms and metonyms. By far the most important of these is metaphor, which especially in *Friends* seems to be an endless resource for the writers to resort to for laughs. It also seems that the metaphors are used in excessive amounts because they are easy to come up with and the audience

expects them because they are a characteristic feature of the series. Usually the metaphors in *Friends* are previously unused and have been created to suite a specific event in a specific episode. Typically the sexual metaphors also suggest an "extreme" form of the mapping procedure suggested by Levinson (1983) by attempting to draw the parallel between the two concepts (i.e. *shopping* and *dating*) which are as little related to each other as possible.

Idioms and metonymies were found in much smaller numbers. As mentioned above, idioms in *Friends* are usually mainly the base upon which a joke is constructed and do not appear in their conventional and better known forms and functions. It seems that this is done because the viewers are likely to be familiar with the old idioms and anticipate the "standard" way of use even before the actor has had a chance to finish his line. The surprise effect is then brought on by giving the cliché like idiom a new form and possibly new ways of usage as well. Metonymies are harder to identify and, in the few cases where they were found, they were used as the general-for-specific type replacements.

In *Keeping up Appearances*, the third group **implications** was clearly the main tool used in discussing sex. I think that implication is the tool which leaves the most room for the imagination of the viewer. It allows every viewer to understand the expression, such as *excited* or *passionate*, as sexually hinting or as quite innocent according to its literal meaning. Since I find the degree of euphemising to be higher in *Keeping up Appearances* than it is in *Friends*, this was not a commonly used by the writers of *Friends*. This is of course partly due to the fact that sex is not as important in the lives of the characters in the series *Keeping up Appearances* as it is in *Friends*, and therefore, the topic is not discussed as often.

The fourth group of euphemisms used in discussing sex is **omissions**. Omissions seem to function in many ways according to the same principle as implications do. With omissions the "unspeakable" word or idea is left to the imagination of the viewer. In some cases the actor opens his mouth to utter the

word but then suddenly stops before even starting. In both cases it is usually obvious what the word omitted is. As a type of euphemism, omission is especially well suited for use in TV-programs since the omitted word can be compensated by the picture or in some cases even by the soundtrack.

The omitted word is sometimes replaced by phenomena which constitute the fifth main group of euphemisms used in discussing sex, namely **non words, sounds and gestures**. This is due to the fact that words are not always needed in forming euphemisms, as an unarticulated sound or even a grunt can stand in for the avoided expression. Based on my findings, contrary to Warren's (1992) claim, in sit-com these are not minor tools for forming euphemisms. Instead, all of these seemed to be used on regular basis. Especially gestures are combined to many euphemisms partly in order to ensure that the viewers understand that the real intended meaning of an expression is not its literal and, in many cases, its conventional meaning.

To sum up on euphemisms used in referring to sex in the two sit-coms studied here, it can be said that sex itself is not a taboo subject. However, interestingly it can not be discussed in an open manner, but is instead used as a topic around which a lot of the jokes are arranged. This is best illustrated by the fact that in the data selected for this study euphemisms were used in all discussions on sex. The main reason for this is probably the fact that it is generally not thought of as appropriate to discuss it openly in programs which might be watched by children. Moreover, matters involving human sexuality are always likely to cause controversial responses from the audience and are likely to be disapproved by some. In addition, as mentioned above sit-coms usually are prime time TV, broadcast in the early evening time slot or even during day time. Any, even slightly, explicit material would probably postpone the broadcast time till late evening and would thus result in a significant decrease in the amount of potential viewers. This is also a factor influencing the occurrence of euphemisms as it could be suggested that the need for euphemising decreases in TV-programs broadcast after prime time.

The calculation of the target audience of a program can also be referred to as **audience planning** (Hatim and Mason 1997). It is probably the main factor influencing the occurrence of euphemisms in sexual and other adult matters. The second factor is the cultural differences between the countries Great Britain and USA. However, it would not be wise to make too far reaching conclusions about the attitude towards sex, alcohol, death etc. in the two countries based on studying fictional television programs. The writers of these comedies are likely, at least in some points, to use features characteristic to their country and citizens by emphasising them, which would result in inaccuracies. However, cultural differences in a sense were a factor to be considered in analysing the translations, as the subtitles had gone through the cultural filter provided by the translator in question.

Alcohol, Drinking and Drugs

Alcohol, drinking and drugs are also topics that are usually not discussed in plain terms in situational comedy. But there are some different aspects in euphemising them when compared with sex. Unlike with sex, there is something intrinsically bad with behaviour that is harmful to ourselves as human beings. Therefore, the euphemisms which are used in matters related to this topic are mostly designed to make a bad thing seem a little less bad and harmful. This is possibly done in order to make us feel a bit better about ourselves and our self-destructive behaviour. It can also be said that the topics in this area are not as fruitful for the script writers as is for example sex. Metaphors and other expressions are used for euphemistic purposes in this topic area as well, but not in as various positions and purposes as is the case with sexually suggestive euphemisms. The use of alcohol, smoking and marijuana are generally speaking considered behaviour which is undesirable, but probably not as embarrassing to talk about as sex.

On the basis of the analysis of the topics alcohol, drinking and drugs, it can also be concluded that drugs require a higher degree of euphemising than for example alcohol and smoking. These taboo topics discussed occurred in *Friends* and in *Keeping up Appearances* surprisingly seldom. If they were

discussed, the topics were presented in a way which usually does not criticise their use in any way but rather turns them into a joke, similarly to matters involving sex. Most of the euphemisms found in the material in this field were either ways of expressing drunkenness or synonyms for marijuana. In my opinion, these expressions seemed quite common when compared for example to the innovative use of euphemisms found in discussing sex. However, these were topics which in some cases could be discussed in a direct manner as well, especially with the milder vices of alcohol and smoking.

Human Body and Bodily Functions

Human body and bodily functions formed the third larger taboo topic area in the analysis. It is one of the oldest areas used in comedies to get a laugh from the audience. However, this cannot be said to be the case with the two sit-coms analysed here as they are at least somewhat more sophisticated in the respect that they do not feature that many attempts to exploit bodily functions for this purpose. The norms of social acceptability are probably the most important factor defining which parts of the human body are to be euphemised in situational comedy.

According to Neaman and Silver (1983: 15), if terms of anatomy arise and multiply, it tells us something about which specific parts of the human body are particularly fascinating or forbidden at a given time. By looking at the data it can be suggested that at the moment the references to sexual body parts seem to be the fastest growing group dealing with human anatomy, as many of the taboo body parts of the past are not taboos anymore. Other taboo topics occurred randomly in the material, but it appears that the list of topics in chapter 3.1 covers well the cases of taboo based euphemisms found in the data. In the past euphemisms were additionally needed for other body parts, such as legs, as it was considered improper to mention the word in public. Nowadays, such word taboos have disappeared but there are clearly some that still persist and probably will continue to do so.

Body and bodily functions in these two situational comedies were topics which required euphemizing in cases where sexual body parts or visits to the toilet were mentioned. Interestingly, even though the general procedure was to use euphemisms in referring to body parts such as *the posterior* etc., the ruder colloquial term *ass* could be used almost equally well. This is in clear contradiction to the observations made so far, and in my opinion, it is also atypical of the genre of sit-com. This could be explained by the fact that even the younger viewers in the target audience are likely to be familiar with the ruder names for non-sexual body parts. However, since the situational comedy is family entertainment it is likely to follow the norms of social acceptability in dialogues involving human body as well. It seems to me that privacy, intimacy and repression can be suggested to be the main reasons for euphemising topics in this area.

To sum up the discussion on taboos the following conclusions can be made. As stated above, the most important use for euphemisms in situational comedy is with matters that have something to do with sex. Even though generally speaking attitudes have liberalised in this respect as well, it is still a topic that often requires heavy disguising. As mentioned above, sex is a topic which is frequently discussed in sit-com, but this cannot be done in an open manner. It is also a subject that the writers seem to use as the base upon which jokes are constructed. In most cases a primary factor in making these jokes work is the manner in which the writers knowingly point out for the viewers some of the "silly" aspects about our behaviour when dealing with taboo concepts. In real life there are also things that cannot be discussed in an open manner, but in situational comedy the level of euphemising is raised artificially to a level that probably would not be reached as consistently in real life discussions. Therefore, it is well justified to say that the writers of this type of television comedy employ excessive amounts of euphemisms, because if they are constructed cleverly enough and preferably new, they are a practical means to make the audience laugh.

POLITENESS AND EMOTIONS

Typical situations and emotions which often were expressed with the help of euphemisms in *Friends* and *Keeping up Appearances* included for example giving advice to a friend on a delicate matter, making accusations of a close person, showing disgust and disagreeing. However, based on the analysis of the examples, it is clear that the most important task of politeness motivated euphemisms is to hide emotions and thus be a part in the process of face-saving. This is done partly in order to make it apparent for the receiver that there is a wish on the part of the speaker to discuss the sensitive matter in a tactful manner and show consideration for the receiver's feelings. Friendship in general seemed to be in many cases a factor on which the sensitivity of a matter was based. In addition, it can be said that the vast majority of politeness based euphemisms can be categorised as idioms and metaphors, in other words, figurative expressions. They can be explained by the differences in nature between taboo and politeness based euphemisms discussed below.

Since taboo based euphemisms are in the first place caused by the topic, politeness motivated euphemisms are then, as I see it, primarily the result of the relationship between the speaker and the receiver(s). In other words, with politeness motivated euphemisms concerns about face are even more crucial than with taboo motivated euphemisms. The fact that in this case the listeners and receivers are characters on the screen makes no difference. When taboo motivated euphemisms are used in sit-com, the primary concern of the writers is, while also being funny, to make the dialogue socially acceptable in the eyes of the audience, whereas politeness motivated euphemisms are used simply in order to make the characters seem more believable and behave more like real life persons. I propose that this phenomenon is the single most important difference between the taboo and politeness motivated euphemisms.

Moreover, I suggest that in sit-com the different nature of politeness motivated euphemisms is the primary reason for their much smaller number when compared to taboo motivated euphemisms. As stated above, the primary motivator for the use of euphemisms in everyday life is politeness, whereas in

situational comedy the politeness usage is overwhelmed by taboo based usage of euphemisms. Furthermore, it can be postulated that taboos in general are a more fruitful area than politeness for the writers to come up with amusing euphemisms. Politeness based euphemisms, on the other hand, are likely to be more restricted to figurative expressions because the other types of euphemisms cannot be as easily employed in politeness purposes as is also suggested by Warren's (1992) theory.

DECEPTION

The third and also the smallest group of euphemisms found in the data are based on a desire to deceive. The deception can be categorised either as self-deception or deception of the receivers. Naturally, the uses of these kinds of euphemisms in television comedy are quite coincidental, which accounts for their small number. However, in my opinion the motivations for self-deception are quite different from those of deception of the receivers. It seems to me that self-deception is caused by a desire to distance oneself from the unpleasant, whereas the motivations for deceiving others are far more instrumental and based on self-interest.

Politically correct language and jargon fall into this category of deceit on the basis that they both show clear attempts of self-deception. The PC phenomenon, though generally thought of being a movement aimed at tolerance, illustrates self-deception in that it, in a way, "denies" the existence of for example disabilities or different races. However, the few cases of politically correct language found in the data were, with the exception of *senior citizen*, always used to comment on the PC phenomenon itself. By using the same method with which many politically correct terms such as *visually impaired* are formed, the writers point out the artificial aspects of PC language by creating humorous PC forms such as for example *financially challenged* or *fashion impaired*.

Jargon can also be geared towards self-deception because it is a convenient way to talk about the boring or unpleasant aspects of one's profession. However, in the data jargon's dysphemistic features were of even greater importance than its euphemistic properties, as the occurrences emphasised the outsiders' point of view to jargon. In other words, jargon's meaning to sit-com is very similar to that of politically correct language, as they both are employed by the writers because they have features which can be used as the base for a joke.

SUMMING UP: Euphemisms

In conclusion, the primary usage of euphemism in situational comedy is as the base of a joke in word plays, idioms and puns of all sorts. The analysis and its results show that people are assumed to be well aware of euphemisms and the reasons for their use. The writers take advantage of the fact that euphemisms usually deal with topics which are likely to cause and are potentially linked with the feeling of embarrassment. The viewers are given an outsider's opportunity to observe the embarrassing situation and the often humorous ways in which the characters deal with them, partly by using euphemisms of different kinds. Therefore, I suggest that in situational comedy the motive for euphemising is not in the first place taboo or politeness but rather their capability to cause amusement. The question of whether a euphemism is taboo or politeness based or motivated by something else is overridden by the pragmatic aim of the script writers. Because so many euphemisms are also funny, they are used in excessive amounts even in discussions which could be handled in a more open manner.

The translations

I think that the translations and translatability of the euphemisms of especially taboo subjects were generally speaking of good quality. There was no evidence on the part of the translators to skip translating or play down, for example sexually suggestive material, which was observed by Lung (1998) in English-Chinese subtitling of comedy series. The good quality of the translations, as I see it, can be explained by at least two factors. Firstly, the taboos discussed in

the series were rather universal, at least when speaking of western culture. Therefore, they did not present the translators with big cultural gaps to fill in order to make the viewers understand the secrecy / straightforwardness of the dialogue. Secondly, many, though not all, of the euphemisms which occurred were new and did not have previously established euphemistic meanings. By this I mean that the expressions acting as euphemisms acquired their meanings from the multimedial context in which they appeared and thus, the semantically equivalent word-for-word translations normally functioned well also in Finnish. In addition, the aid which the translators get from the sound and the picture giving additional information in general allowed more inaccuracies and omissions in the subtitles.

The strategies that were used in translating euphemisms included, in Newmark's (1988: 68-91) terms, literal word-for-word translation, compensation, paraphrasing and omission. The literal translation was the most frequently used and, in my opinion, the correct choice if it secured the referential and pragmatic equivalence of the original euphemism. Literal translation was mostly used in translating "original metaphors", for the semantic equivalent was in most cases also the best pragmatic equivalent. Compensation and explication happened when loss of meaning occurred in one part of a sentence and was then compensated in another part. However, paraphrasing, which according to, among others, Newmark (1981: 31) and Ingo (1990: 81), is the translator's last resort, was needed frequently. Nevertheless, paraphrasing seems to be one of the best methods in translating euphemisms because it allows the preservation of euphemistic force. Also, compensation and paraphrasing were used in those cases where literal translation was not an option and where there was no equivalent expression to be found in Finnish. Omission of the euphemism also occurred but only in very few insignificant cases, as for example with some occurrences of the expletive *shoot!*

However, these general translation strategies were by no means a guarantee for the transmission of the euphemistic force of an expression from the TL to SL.

This is where I found the clearest differences between the euphemisms of the source dialogue and the subtitles. In my opinion, euphemisms always require interpreting within the SL before any attempts are made to translate them into TL. As seen above, in many cases it is impossible to find expressions which would be equally vague or specific in the TL and SL, nor is it easy to even estimate the level of strength of euphemistic force between the SL and TL expressions. Nevertheless, the translators have been well aware of the taboo aspects of the source dialogues. This is best shown by the fact that the translators have very rarely ignored euphemistic expressions and translated them without any effort of being equally indirect in TL.

However, despite these efforts I found that, generally speaking, the translations were more direct than the original euphemisms in English. Some, but not all, of the cases where the translation was less euphemistic than its English counterpart can be explained by the technical limitations of subtitling. Politeness, as Hatim and Mason (1997: 79-82) also suggest, is one of the first areas of meaning to be neglected in subtitling. The failure to transfer euphemistic force from the original dialogue to the subtitles is likely to give the viewer a wrong impression of the character's manners. This, in my opinion, happens with both taboo and politeness based euphemisms. Nevertheless, to use excessively euphemistic translations would be equally damaging.

8 CONCLUSION

In this thesis I have studied the purpose of euphemisms and euphemizing in two situational comedies. As I see it, situational comedy is a program type in which almost any topic is valid for discussion as long as it has some potential for laughter. But it is also the program type which is under heavy restrictions when its language is concerned, partly due to its audience. Out of this conflict between the need of being able address topics of delicate nature and the obvious need to disguise and avoid the taboo or otherwise face-threatening situations, rises euphemism as a writers tool for writing comedy.

The previous studies on euphemisms have mainly concentrated on creating dictionaries or thesauruses and on the etymology of the euphemistic expressions. Attention has not been paid to their roles in context or to their translation. Taboos, politeness and deception are nearly always suggested as the three most important motivators for their use. However, the analysis of the data in this study showed that in situational comedy the taboo based usage is actually more important than the politeness based usage of euphemisms. Also, the analysis led me to suggest still another motivator for the use of euphemisms: its ability to cause amusement. This seemed to be reason enough in its own right for employing a euphemism, even in contexts which necessarily would not require disguising.

The biggest problem in this study was the definition of euphemism. The nature of euphemism is such that each person is likely to experience the shield it provides against face-threatening situations differently. Therefore, defining whether a word is euphemistic or not, even though there is consensus among language users in most cases, cannot be done objectively. There were many borderline cases of euphemizing in the data which I left out but which someone else might have included in the analysis. There were also expressions which were not euphemisms in the context where they were found in the data but could have been used as euphemisms in another context. This ruled out the possibility of making a quantitative study on the subject. Nevertheless, the main principles and purposes of euphemizing in situational comedies were easily identifiable.

As stated above, from the use of euphemisms we can conclude a lot about the moral conventions of our time and society. To my mind, this enables the study of euphemism to work as a tool in many research areas, not necessarily only in linguistics. The changes in the history of the usage of euphemism and the present-day developments, changes in taboo topic areas or the euphemistic properties of politically correct language could all be subjects to further studies. However, presently euphemizing is still a relatively unexplored area in linguistics, though also the target of growing interest.

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