A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF SILENT PAUSES AND RATE OF ARTICULATION IN THE DISCOURSE OF SITCOM

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Abstract
The objective of the present paper is to provide the results of follow-up research into conversations in an episode of the sitcom *Friends*. The study is based on two selected phonetic features: ungrammatical silent pauses and rate of articulation, in order to substantiate whether these features contribute to the spokenness of the film dialogue in the focal sitcom and to explore in what manner these features are produced in the original version and the dubbed version (Slovak).

Key words
within-speaker silent pause, rate of articulation, dubbing, spokenness, writtenness

1 Introduction

The aim of the present paper is to introduce the results of research into dialogue in an episode of the sitcom *Friends*. The investigation is targeted at two selected phonetic features: ungrammatical silent pauses and rate of articulation, in order to discover whether these features contribute to the spokenness of the film dialogue in the focal sitcom. Another objective of the analysis is to compare in what manner ungrammatical silent pauses and rate of articulation are realized in the original version and the dubbed version (Slovak).

A number of researchers have been attracted by exploring sitcom conversation either as an object itself or by comparing its linguistic features to features of spontaneous conversation. Sitcom dialogue writers aim at representing the everyday exchanges people engage in; in other words, they strive for naturalness. Sitcoms are typified by a complex procedure of planning and production and, as a rule, a number of writers participate in the script and dialogue writing, hence they are characterized by multiple authorship (e.g. Mills 2009, Quaglio 2009, Romero Fresco 2009).

Sitcom conversations enable the viewer to recognize the fictional location, time and characters. Conversations help viewers comprehend the characters’ personal traits and their motivation to act in a certain manner. Therefore, script writers disperse a variety of idiosyncrasies (such as slang, dialect expressions, catchphrases, etc.) throughout the characters’ speech. Further, script writers use dialogues to guide the viewer and relate to the audience through the characters’ conversation (cf. Quaglio 2009).