

Charles University in Prague
Faculty of Education
Department of English Language and Literature



Diploma Thesis

Use of 'Friends' series in Teaching English on B2 level

Lenka Kohútová

Supervisor: Mgr. Karel Žďárek

Study Programme: Teacher Training for Secondary Schools

Field of Study: Training Teachers of General Subjects at Lower and Higher
Secondary Schools - English Language and History

June 17, 2011

Poděkování

I would like to express my sincerest gratitude to the principal and the whole department of English of the Gymnasium and Sport Gymnasium in Přípotoční, Prague 10, for allowing me to test the use of *Friends* on their students. My special thanks belongs to Mgr. Barbora Vítková for lending me her classes. My thanks go to my parents and my fiancé for their care and support during the course of my studies and the writing of this thesis, and to my little sister, whose addiction to various series has been my inspiration in choosing the subject of this thesis. I would also like to thank my supervisor for his support and guidance.

Prohlášení

Prohlašuji, že jsem práci vypracoval samostatně a použil jsem pouze podklady uvedené v příloženém seznamu.

Nemám závažný důvod proti užití tohoto školního díla ve smyslu §60 Zákona č. 121/2000 Sb., o právu autorském, o právech souvisejících s právem autorským a o změně některých zákonů (autorský zákon).

V Praze, 17.6.2011

.....

Abstract

This thesis deals with the possibilities of using television series 'Friends' in teaching English on B2 level to further linguistic and communicative competences of the students. The purpose of this thesis was to find out, whether a systematic use of the series, as a motivation to the students, for sparking a discussion or conversation among them or as means of immersion in the language and acquisition of the language, would be possible in a high school English teaching environment for a prolonged period of time. The thesis also debates the advantages and disadvantages of using series, compared to the advantages and disadvantages of using different multimedia. The thesis contains a list of activities that have been used during the testing of the series and several ideas on their modification.

Abstrakt

Tato práce se zabývá možnostmi využití seriálu Přátelé ve výuce žáků na úrovni B2, přičemž použití seriálu má přispívat k rozvoji lingvistických a komunikačních kompetencí studentů. Účelem práce bylo zjistit, zda je možné v rámci středoškolské výuky angličtiny systematicky dlouhodobě pracovat se seriálem jako prostředkem k motivaci studentů, podnětem ke konverzaci a diskuzím i jako předmětem nápodoby a vstřebávání autentického jazyka. Práce rovněž srovnává výhody a nevýhody využití seriálu oproti výhodám a nevýhodám využívání jiných multimediálních materiálů. Součástí práce je též seznam aktivit použitých při testování použití seriálu a několik nápadů na další modifikaci k nim.

Contents

1	Introduction	1
1.1	Thesis structure	1
2	Theoretical Background	3
2.1	Communicative Approach	3
2.1.1	Notional-functional syllabus	4
2.2	Humanist Approach	5
2.2.1	Cooperative language learning	6
2.2.2	Motivation	7
3	Series in classroom	9
3.1	Using Video in English Classroom	9
3.1.1	Problems with using video	9
3.1.2	Reasons for using video	10
3.1.3	Advantages of using a series	10
3.1.4	Disadvantages of using a series	11
3.2	Comparing <i>Friends</i> and other series	11
3.3	Creating syllabus for the series	12
3.3.1	Occasional Use	13
3.3.2	Continuous Use	14
3.3.2.1	Syllabus	15
4	Friends	16
4.1	Cultural analysis	16
4.1.1	Portrait of culture	17
4.1.1.1	Apartments	17
4.1.1.2	Places to relax	18
4.1.1.3	Places of work	20
4.1.1.4	Hospital environment	22
4.1.1.5	Holidays and feasts	23
4.1.2	Cultural impact	25
4.2	Language analysis	26
4.2.1	Character's speech	26
4.2.2	Influence of the series	27
4.3	History of the series	28

4.3.1	Casting	29
4.3.2	Acclaim of the Series	30
5	Application to Practice	31
5.1	Activities used	31
5.1.1	Pre-watching activities	32
5.1.2	While-watching activities	32
5.1.3	Post-watching activities	34
5.2	Student evaluation	36
5.2.1	Series or textbook	36
5.2.2	Favourite activity	38
5.2.3	<i>Friends</i> or other series	38
5.3	Possible modifications	39
6	Conclusion	42
	Bibliography	45
7	List of Acronyms	46
A		47
B		48
C		49
D		51
E		52
F		56
G		58
H		59
I		61
J		62

List of Figures

- 5.1 Series vs. Textbook Chart 37
- 5.2 Favourite Activity 38
- 5.3 Friends vs. other series 39

- E.1 Mind map template 55

- F.1 Changed apartment 57

- H.1 Uncut comics in correct order 59

Chapter 1

Introduction

Ever since learning foreign languages became a necessity, new strategies have been developed to make this endeavour easier and more pleasurable for all parties involved. Various theories have existed, about how the learning works and how to make it more effective. Various methods have been based on these theories, trying to bring them into everyday practice of teaching foreign languages in general and English language in particular. Yet it seems that this field of study will never be researched quite in its entirety. Various sciences come up every day with new theories and conclusions about how the human brain works in regards to, among other things, language acquisition and production. And with these new findings new theories of teaching and learning are formulated and new methods are created and tried out.

During the last ten to twenty years, a prominent field of foreign language teaching methodology research has been in using video and computers in the classroom. These fields have been given even more attention since the interactive boards have been introduced to the majority of schools in the Czech Republic. This thesis will draw on researches in both these directions, its aim being to widen their scope by exploring the possibilities of using TV series in the English language teaching. The specifics of working with a series as opposed to a single movie or programme will be discussed; advantages and disadvantages compared, and solutions to potential problems proposed. The TV series chosen for this research is a well-known and successful American series *Friends*.

1.1 Thesis structure

This thesis is divided into six chapters as follows:

Chapter 2 Theoretical Background will provide an overall introduction to the key methods of work with authentic materials in the English language classroom, especially the Communicative Approach and humanistic methods, in which the use of aids such as video footages and movies have a strong tradition.

In *Chapter 3 Series* a theoretical basis of using a TV series in an English language classroom will be set out. The chapter will focus on issues specific to the use of a series, as opposed to general advantages

and disadvantages of using audio-visual aids. The suitability of various types of series will be discussed and an simplified outline of syllabus proposed.

Other more particular issues will then be discussed in the *Chapter 4 Friends*, where the chosen series will be analysed in greater detail from a cultural and linguistic points of view and the reasons for choosing this particular series will be explained. The chapter will also give examples of topics featured in the series, that a teacher can utilize in English language classroom.

Chapter 5 Application will provide the results of testing of prepared materials on B2 level students. It will describe some of the activities and methods used in greater detail. The chapter will focus mainly on how the students responded to the use of the series, which activities were the most popular and what the students found most beneficial.

The last *Chapter 6 Conclusion*, will then sum up how the practice agrees with the theories and what problems still have to be solved.

Chapter 2

Theoretical Background

Before proceeding any further down the path to a practical use of series in class, the theoretical and methodological base should be set down. The place of audiovisual aids in teaching foreign languages has already been firmly established, as was the use of authentic materials. This chapter should provide an overview of the theories and methods of language teaching, on which this thesis will draw.

When we look back on the 20th century with the second language teaching in mind, we see a turmoil of theories and methods that have risen and fallen in popularity. Albert Marckwardt called these paradigms “changing winds and shifting sands” [16]. Each of the methods had left its mark in language teaching and each had aspects that are still useful and used today. For the purpose of this work it is, however, not necessary to go further into the history than thirty or forty years.

2.1 Communicative Approach

The 1970's and 1980's were marked by a growth of the interest in interpersonal relationships in psychology. The linguists of that era were trying to find the key to the explanation of the interactive process of language, nature of communication and communicative competence. This prompted the language teaching profession, always eager to put linguistic theories into practice, to develop methods focused on students' cooperation, developing individual strategies for success, personal self-esteem and above all on communicative process in second language learning. At that point the teachers realized, it is necessary to dial back on the teaching of rules, definitions, patterns and other information *about* language and allow the students to learn how to genuinely, spontaneously and meaningfully communicate in a second language. It was from these tendencies, that the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) was born. And as Brown points out: “Today the term ‘communicative language teaching’ is a byword for language teachers.” [5]

The beginnings of the forming of CLT were quite spontaneous and the approaches to “going communicative” [20], as Richards puts it, considerably varied. The CLT thus started not as a coherent method, but more as “a set of changes in assumptions about the nature of the language, the nature of goals, objectives, and the syllabus in language teaching, and a search for an appropriate methodology in the light of these changes.” [20] The role of the core component of language teaching has shifted from grammar to the

somewhat mysterious *communicative competence*, a construct that has been defined and redefined by researches hundred times over, as it reaches into every aspect and function of language - e.g.: spoken and written discourse, non-verbal communication and registers. And with the redefinitions of the *communicative competence* the whole CLT was redefined over and over again, to the point that it is not possible any more to synthesize all the definitions that have been offered. The definition used for this thesis comes from Brown and consists of “four interconnected characteristics of CLT”:[6]

1. Classroom goals are focused on all of the components of communicative competence and not restricted to grammatical or linguistic competence.
2. *Form* is not the primary framework for organizing and sequencing lessons. *Function* is the framework through forms are taught.
3. Accuracy is secondary to *conveying a message*. Fluency may take on more importance than accuracy. The ultimate criterion for communicative success is the actual transmission and receiving of intended meaning.
4. In the communicative classroom, students ultimately have to *use* the language, productively and receptively, in *unrehearsed* contexts.

What these four characteristics mean for language teaching is quite clear. They signal a departure from the grammatically sequenced curricula and propose that the grammatical structures be subsumed under various functional categories. CLT deals significantly less with overt presentation and grammatical rules drill and focuses more on means of building fluency. CLT also puts more weight to spontaneity and dealing with unrehearsed situation under the guidance, but *not control* of the teacher. Neither spontaneity nor fluency should, however, stand in the way of unambiguous, clear communication.

In the CLT or Communicative Approach (CA) a shift can be seen from the teacher-centered to learner-centered teaching or lessons. The class interaction becomes more varied, no longer reserved to teacher-learner and teacher-learners, but spread out to pair work and group work, providing interactions among the learners. An important part of preparing a CLT course is a needs analysis of the students, as they should be able to learn what they need most for their communication in foreign language.

The CA, while certainly advantageous for the learners, is not suited for all teachers of the foreign language. To be able to deal with “unrehearsed situations” and guide the learners through their own paths, the teacher herself must be proficient in the target language, which makes this kind of teaching difficult for a non-native speaker. Nonetheless, even the not-very-proficient teacher may pursue communicative goals in her classroom with the aid of technology and authentic materials, which can help the students achieve fluency, which is exactly the purpose of using a series for teaching English at school.

2.1.1 Notional-functional syllabus

When talking about CLT it is impossible not to mention the special syllabus created for teaching and promoting communicative competence. The first one to research this field was a special committee established by the Council of Europe. The results of the research were published under the title *Threshold Level* [23], specifications of which were published in 1980. However, during the 1970's in the UK gained popularity “notional-functional syllabi”. In 1976 one of the members of the committee - Wilkins

- decided to formulate a new syllabus based on what he called *analytic approach*, of which he claimed that: “there is no attempt at this careful linguistic control of the learning environment. Components of language are not seen as building blocks which have to be progressively accumulated. Much greater variety of linguistic structure is permitted from the beginning and the learner’s task is to approximate his behaviour more and more closely to the global language...Analytic approaches are behavioral(though not behaviorist). They are organized in terms of the purposes for which people are learning languages and the kind of language performance that are necessary to meet those purposes.” [27]

He picked up the term “notions” coined by, among others, Van Ek and Alexander [23] Notions are concepts in language and can be both general and specific. General notions are mostly abstract concepts, while specific notions could be described as *contexts*, things with which we have certain personal experience.

The term “function”, or functional approach to language, has British roots with linguist J.R.Firth, who viewed language as interactive and interpersonal. Since then the term “function” has been variously interpreted but the best set, in regards to the linguistics, was a list of seven language functions by Michael Halliday, published in 1973. [10] Under these seven functions, however, is masked an almost infinite variety and complexity of the language and functions possible to accomplish through it. Van Ek and Alexander [23] published in 1975 a taxonomy, which includes almost 70 different functions for the English curricula. This list has become the basic reference for the development of notional-functional syllabus. These approaches to language have become popular underpinnings for the development of textbooks and materials for the communicative approach.

A flaw on the seemingly flawless face of the NFS is, that it is not as free as Wilkins claims it to be. According to Henry Widdowson, the NFS just replaces the inventory of grammatical units, inherent to the structural syllabus, with the functional units of its own and thus cuts language into a building blocks, all the same as the grammatical syllabus. He also states that “Communicative competence is not a compilation of items in memory, but a set of strategies or creative procedures for realizing the value of linguistic elements in contexts of use, an ability to make sense as a participant in discourse, whether spoken or written, by the skilful deployment of shared knowledge of code resources and rules of language use.” [26] The notional-functional syllabus is not perfect and might not be the last word for language teaching, but provides an organization of language content by functional categories and gives the teachers space to develop structural (or grammatical) categories within the general consideration of the functions of language. This concept was accepted eagerly, especially in the ranks of applied linguists, who reacted most positively to the idea of expressing a syllabus in terms of communicative units rather than grammatical ones

2.2 Humanist Approach

The CLT is not the only method or approach focusing less on grammar and more at the productive skills of the learners. On the contrary, some of the methods take the refocusing even a step further than the CLT. These are the methods of the humanistic approach (HA). While some of them are usually called the “designer methods” and are viewed as somewhat eccentric and unsuitable for use in the school environment, the main ideas of the HA stay valid and inspire some less controversial applications to practice.

The HA differs from the others, because, while the CLT and other theories started focusing on the linguistic and practical needs of learners, the HA took into account one other component of learning - the affective or emotional component. While the interest in affective factors in education was not entirely new, it gained importance and prominence with the growth of the humanistic psychology during the 1960's. [1] The relationship between cognition and emotion has been a controversial issue for a long time, however more and more researches suggested, that the cognition is not and cannot be entirely independent on emotion and both of them together cannot be view as independent from personality.

These discoveries has led to the formulation of a holistic approach to learners and learning. For the first time, the learners were seen as whole persons, with their feelings, attitudes and motivation taken fully into account. With that the learners were given more responsibility for their learning process, they were given greater autonomy. The stress shifted to the active nature of the learner to the potential of their personal learning abilities as well as the cooperation with other learners in group learning. At the same time, the learning environment should such as to minimize anxiety on the learners' part, allowing the affective component to be utilized to its full potential. Effectively, the role of the teacher is to remove obstacles, which prevent students from reaching their potential and to increase their range of experience; the success of the teaching depends on the extent, to which the teacher caters to learner's affective domain.

2.2.1 Cooperative language learning

As was already mentioned, many of the humanist methods are not suitable for generic school environment, there are some that are well-researched for use in the school foreign language learning. One of them is Cooperative language learning (CoLL). This method grows into popularity since it allows the students to develop a range of cognitive, metacognitive and social, as well as linguistic skills while interacting and negotiating in the classroom. As any other method, the CoLL has its advocates and its opponents. To the most often used argument against the method belong complaints, that the method is only beneficial for 'good students', or conversely, that it only helps 'poor students'. There is, however, sufficient research to prove, that the students profit from being both tutor and tutee. As Crandall points out in her paper: "As its base, cooperative learning requires social interaction and negotiation of meaning among heterogenous group members engaged in tasks in which all group members have both something to contribute and to learn from the other members." [8]

There is an extensive research to the affective value of the cooperative activities and the results show, that the CoLL encourages and supports most of the affective factors that correlate positively with language learning. It can reduce negative anxiety, help increase motivation and facilitate the development of positive attitudes towards learning, as well as promote self-esteem, provide a supporting "net" in the difficult and confusing process of language learning and encourage the use of different language styles. The essential characteristics of CoLL, that have an impact on the affective nature of the language classroom are the following:

1. **Positive interdependence** - sharing a common goal in a group, which cannot be achieved unless everyone does their part

2. **Face-to-face, group interaction** - purposefully heterogenous groups, ideally of 4 or 6 members (to make pair work possible without changing groups)
3. **Individual and group accountability** - specific roles and tasks for every individual, self-evaluation and accountability for the other members
4. **Development of small group social skills** - communication (negotiation, group interaction skills), leadership, problem-solving and decision-making in group interaction
5. **Group processing** - reflection upon learners' group experience

Although using the CoLL in full can be very demanding (especially for the teacher, who has to prepare the tasks for individual students), there are activities that are and can be made more cooperative, that are used in virtually every classroom. Whether they are jigsaw reading/listening or simple think-pair-share activity, where the students are supposed to formulate their opinion about some topic, first alone, then share it in pairs and then speak in front of the whole class, they can encourage the students and have a positive effect on their affective learning.

The affective component aside, there are other reasons for use of the CoLL in class. It increases the opportunities for the learners to listen to and produce language, as more than one student can talk at a time and the safety of the small group encourages participation. Students with more limited language proficiency also have been reported to speak more in cooperative contexts, as Sharan and Shachar point out. [21] The use of cooperative environment also widens the range of language functions performed by the students, as they are required to partially take over the role of the teacher, which has another positive consequence in developing positive social skills for respecting alternative opinions and achieving consensus. Kagan even believes, that cooperative learning can help students learn to function in a democratic society. [11] The CoLL might also be seen as one of the most learner-centered and learner-directed methods used, which not only lets the learners benefit from each other's help and support, but it also gradually leads the learners from the initial interdependence into independence.

Even though a series might not be judged at first sight to be an instrument for the CoLL, by providing topics for discussion and diminishing the role of the teacher it can be seen as one of the steps leading to a cooperative learning environment.

2.2.2 Motivation

There are many factors, which correlate positively with the language learning. One of the key ones is the motivation. As Brown says, "motivation is probably the most often used catch-all term for explaining the success or failure of virtually any complex task." [7] Of course, if a teacher is to cater to learners' affective needs and one of the key needs is that of motivation, it presents a question: *how can learners' motivation be tended to?* Many books have been written on motivation alone and on ways to motivate learners in a language classroom. However, it will not do any harm to go over the basics of what motivation is, how it can be divided and what are the basic principles of motivating students, before the main reason why the topic was introduced will be set out.

The most common view of motivation is that of an inner drive, impulse or desire to perform a particular action. Many psychologists have dedicated their lives to recounting and qualifying human needs in the

hopes of finding the ultimate motivator, the perpetual drive. While Maslow in 1970's constructed his pyramid of human needs, others who came after him piled even more needs on top of it. However, the most relevant in relation to second language acquisition is the division used by Ausubel [2]:

1. **Exploration** - the need to see the unknown
2. **Manipulation** - causing change to one's environment
3. **Activity** - physical and mental movement and exercise
4. **Stimulation** - the need to feel the influence of the environment, people or thoughts and ideas
5. **Knowledge** - processing and internalizing the results of fulfilment of the needs above, resolving contradictions
6. **Ego Enhancement** - the self has to be known, accepted and approved by the others

Motivation might be seen as fulfilment of the aforementioned needs, which would connect her closely to the behavioristic reinforcement theory. Inasmuch as certain needs are being met in person, reinforcement occurs. But it is not that simple. In second language learning there can be two basic types of motivation for the learners (see Gardner and Lambert (1972) [9]). The two different clusters of attitudes - or types of motivation - for the second language learning are *instrumental* and *integrative* motivation. The difference between them is that the instrumental motivation seeks to acquire language as means for attaining instrumental goals (getting a job), while the integrative motivation urges the learner to study the language in order to communicate with, or find out about members of the second language group or, in extreme cases to assimilate themselves into the culture or language environment.

This division is further complicated with the differences between *intrinsic* and *extrinsic* motivations [1]. It may therefore be complicated, yet essential for the teacher to discern the sources of learners' motivation.

Now to the part, that is the most interesting in regards to using series in English language teaching - *motivating language learners through authentic materials*[18]. As mentioned earlier, one of the needs that can create motivation in students is *exploration*. Alas, in most cases when a teacher uses an authentic material, she gives the students all the information straight away with the material, thus preventing them from discovering the culture and language themselves. This is not only robbing students of the direct approach to the culture, but it also prevents the teacher from exploiting the material in full, since the students loose interest in it the minute they think they have all the information they need. These principles apply to any authentic material, including the series or perhaps especially to a material as complex as the series.

The advantage of the series is, that it is ready-made, with the culture breathing out of each scene. All the teacher has to do at that point is just to step back and let the learners immerse in the language and culture, let them explore. Series are good motivators in themselves, because the learners like them and watching them is a natural activity to them. However, this exactly may prove tricky to the motivation, since watching series is usually a relaxing activity for the students and therefore they have to be stimulated to take the series as a learning material that they should explore, rather than as something they can ignore, while relaxing. Tasks to focus learners' attention to the important things (without giving them away) should help the put the learners to the right track.

Chapter 3

Series in classroom

After a brief theoretical introduction it is now time to focus on the specific topic of this thesis, which is using series to teach English at a secondary school. While there is not much methodological research to draw on in the case of series, using video and other audio-visual aids and materials has a long practice in foreign language teaching and is the subject of many books, theses and articles, both printed and electronic. The use of video will therefore be the starting point from which the common problems and later the specific problems of the series will be pointed out and evaluated. At the end of this chapter a brief outline of methodology proposed for the use of the series will be given.

3.1 Using Video in English Classroom

Using video in English language teaching (ELT) presents almost countless possibilities today. While couple years ago the only video in the ELT classroom was a VHS series of educational sketches complementary to the textbook used, today the teacher can choose among feature films on DVDs, various real-life sketches downloaded from the internet, music videos, self-made situational skits or countless TV series from all over the world. Each of the forms of video material has advantages and disadvantages, when it is intended for use in class.

3.1.1 Problems with using video

The aforementioned educational videos or sketches were a huge success, when they first came on the market, but within a relatively short time, the students started to get bored by the unrealistic situations and dialogues rustling with paper. The student were asked to perform exercises which interfered with their immersion to the language, as they were constantly asked to scrutinize the language. The purely educational videos have not changed much in time and are possibly a good start for those who begin with the language, however on higher levels the students would not gain anything by watching them systematically.

Real life sketches from the internet or short situational skits that the teacher prepares herself may be funny, but they with the internet videos the language or sound may not be as good and the self-made

videos risk looking amateurish, shaky, with a lot of noise interference, if they are filmed outside. However, with careful consideration these short videos may provide a valuable material and inspire the students to try and make their own.

Music videos entertaining though they might be, lack one distinct feature. There is seldom any plot or story. Thus watching the music video is from the language point of view hardly any better than a pure listening exercise. Though it might be a good idea to use the music video as an inspiration and make the students dance or prepare a little choreography, which will help them remember the words.

Feature films are more intrinsically motivating than videos made for EFL/ESL teaching because they embody the notion that "a film with a story that wants to be told rather than a lesson that needs to be taught". [25] Feature films on DVDs have a bonus of many added features, such as trailers, bloopers, behind the scenes commentary and more. They are the perfect authentic material to use in EFL, with one slight flaw. Most of the feature films are at least an hour and a half long, many even longer. With the EFL teachers especially on high schools, that causes a problem, because their time is limited and they do not know how to utilize the film properly during or after watching. These problems are, however, not the focus of this work, and there are people, who are more qualified to write about them. (See [13, 12, 22])

3.1.2 Reasons for using video

So far it could seem, that using video in class is more troubles, than it is worth. What then are the reasons for using video in EFL/ESL class?

First of all, the video allows multi-sensory perception. The students hear the language and observe the non-verbal communication at the same time. Secondly, the films and series offer authentic language, which is priceless as it helps the students achieve fluency and allows them to submerge themselves and acquire the language naturally. They are exposed to an authentic language in its natural form, in a safe environment. Moreover, the realism of movies provides a wealth of contextualized linguistic, paralinguistic and authentic cross-cultural information, classroom listening comprehension and fluency practice. [22, 4, 17, 28] Films are such valuable and rich resources for teaching for they present colloquial English in real life contexts rather than artificial situations; an opportunity of being exposed to different native speaker voices, slang, reduced speeches, stress, accents, and dialects. [13]

A wonderful quote that summarizes all the aspects of using authentic video materials in ESL classroom comes from Dr. Rammal: "If used well, video can provide the most useful and most interesting lessons. The best TV shows and movies have natural, funny, dramatic, engaging dialogue, giving students excellent listening practice. TV and movies also touch on a variety of interesting topics, giving teachers a springboard for creating all kinds of discussion and debate." [19] His words focus our attention to the main topic and that is:

3.1.3 Advantages of using a series

Unlike feature films, most of the episodes of series are short. It is possible to use series with 40 minutes per episode, or sitcoms and animated series, which last about 20 minutes per episode. For the Czech

high school environment forty minutes would mean that nothing else but watching the series can be done during the lesson. Therefore it is better to select one of the sitcoms, such as *Friends* as it allows for enough student talking time before or after the watching.

Another advantage of using series is that while the individual episodes are shorter, the total time students can spend with the series is longer, which means more exposure to the language, better promotion of fluency and more second language acquisition (SLA). For the *Friends* the total viewing time is 86,5 hours. While a film is usually too short to picture daily life of the characters in much detail, the length of the series allows for regular situations to occur and the characters to react to them, which adds to the credibility and authenticity of the experience the students get, while also having time to focus on details.

Moreover, with the many different episodes of the series, there are more topics, that are touched upon, which provide prompts for discussions or other activities and show more daily problems solved, than any single movie. Yet, despite the diversity the series still provides one continuous storyarc through which the characters are developing and changing. This creates an “addiction” to the series, which then serves as motivation for the students.

The last advantage of using the series is the amount of colloquial and slang language that can be heard there, notwithstanding idiomatic expressions, metaphors and double-entendrees, including different accents of various guest stars. Also jokes and puns are more frequent in a series including running gags and repeated expressions that help the students to memorize them.

3.1.4 Disadvantages of using a series

Not a disadvantage per se, but a possible problem with using a series in a continual way, is that the ideas for the activities (especially the while-watching activities) begins to dry up and have to be repeated, which may lead to students getting bored with the series.

Another disadvantage of using a series is that there is not much diversity, especially in genre. While with films you can take once a romantic comedy and other time an action movie or a horror, the series is more or less the same sitcom as ever. Even if the vast majority of the class seems to like the series, there is a probability, that there will be someone, albeit only one person, who does not like it and will be miserable because of it during the lessons, with disastrous consequences for his motivation for English.

From the students’ point of view, another disadvantage might be, that if they have a series lesson once a week, the teacher probably won’t be too willing to assign additional time to watching films or such activities during the regular lessons, which could reinforce the attitude, that a series should be watched at home, since most of the students do it anyway and it is an entertainment, not at school, where the students should be learning serious stuff.

3.2 Comparing *Friends* and other series

Eventhough *Friends* was the first American situational comedy series to gain a worldwide acclaim, it was not the last or the only. More and more American, British and even Australian series have been

brought to the Czech viewers and gained their love. This section will provide a comparison between *Friends* and some of the other well-known series, explaining why *Friends* was chosen as a testing series.

The first consideration, which has already been mentioned in Subsection 3.1.3 was time. There are two basic types of series on the market. One is suited for an airing time of one hour, which makes the episodes about 40-45 minutes long. While many series in this category would be well suited for use in ELT, their use would be precluded, as the lessons on most high schools last exactly 45 minutes. If such series were to be used it would mean either no student production activities during the lesson, or cutting the episodes, neither of which seems as the best solution. The second type of the series, into which *Friends* belong, is suited for an airing time of thirty minutes, which makes the episode length average between 20 and 22 minutes. This is still slightly longer, than some of the methodologists recommend for a class video, however, it still allows for 20 to 25 minutes of student talking time within the lesson, which, with the right choice of activities, is sufficient.

It is apparent, that *Friends* are not the only series with the half an hour airing time. This time schedule is usually opted for by sitcoms or animated series, such as “The Simpsons”. Czech television market has recently been taken over by various sitcoms and all of them has gained a positive feedback. Every one of the shows has found its fans. It will now be explained, what recommended *Friends* over the rest of the series.

The best acclaimed of the new sitcoms have been *How I Met Your Mother*. This series started out as a *Friends*wannabe, its advertising slogan being “...because hanging out in a bar is so much cooler than hanging out in a cafe.” The two series are very similar in the choice of topics and themes and HIMYM strives for the same ensemble format that *Friends* so successfully promoted. HIMYM might even be better than *Friends*, in one aspect, and that is cultural impact. While there were several things in which *Friends* have influenced culture (for details see Subsection 4.1.2) the HIMYM catchphrases “Suit up!” and “It’s gonna be legen...wait for it...dary!” circled the world and have become a regular part of young people’s vernacular. The ultimate reason for choosing *Friends* over HIMYM was, that the humour in the latter is slightly more overt and often dirtier than the jokes in the former series and HIMYM lacks the multiple storylines per episode format, that can be exploited when using *Friends*.

Other very well received sitcoms are the two geeky shows IT Crowd and The Big Bang Theory. IT Crowd has a slight advantage against The Big Bang Theory in being of British origin, because there are not many series that could help students acquire British English. While they have many fans, these series are quite narrowly specialized as far as topics dealt with in the show are concerned, at least in comparison to the *Friends*. They are also linguistically specific, using terms and slang or jargon of the IT guys in the first case and physicists in the second case. These were the reasons for choosing *Friends* over the other two.

3.3 Creating syllabus for the series

Stempelski, (2000) states, that: ”making the most of movies” has been adopted as a motto for teachers who defend the merits of films as a powerful tool for language acquisition. In other words, teachers need to make the most of learning opportunities by means of films to justify the use of films in the classroom. [22] The same, nevertheless goes for the series. It is necessary to try and make the most

out of every episode and every topic. To do that, it is necessary to have a frame of reference, a plan, since the use of the series is long term, as opposed to use of a film. As the only methodological material about using series in teaching English available, is a paper on Enhancing Subjects from the Curriculum By Using “The Simpsons” from Norway [14], and an article on using series to learn English at home [24], it is necessary to create at least an overview of the methodology for the use of the series in high school environment. There are two ways that the series can be used. The first will be for the Occasional use, found in the *Subsection 3.3.1*, while the second and preferred is the Continuous use, presented in *Subsection 3.3.2*. These two approaches differ in aims, frequency of use of the series, episode choice and activities used to accompany the watching.

One of the questions that arises, when working with authentic films or series is, whether to use subtitles or not. The consensus, at least here in Czech Republic, seems to be, that using Czech subtitles is rather counter-productive, as the students then do not focus on what they hearing and rely just on reading the subtitles.[24] As to the use of English subtitles, most of the learners and teachers think, using them is a big help. But, some would argue, that: “EFL learners, who are eager to comprehend spoken materials intended for native speakers of English, but, at the same time, have misgivings their own proficiency levels, experience mixed feelings about non-captioned films. They are worried that they might end up becoming confused and frustrated when fast-paced dialogues in English-only films whiz by them. Several apparent difficulties of watching non-captioned films arise mainly from language difficulty: the rapid pace of speech; unclear speech and accents; technical or specialized terminology; overload of archaic slang and idioms; unfamiliarity of cultural background/ knowledge; culturally specific humor, etc. Exposing learners to authentic materials, however, is a necessary stage in the learning process to help them master listening strategies.”[13] Thus the use of the subtitles remains an open question, but at least in the beginnings of work with the series, it is better to have subtitles, as it helps the students’ confidence.

With a series that the students like, the experience does not have to end with the end of the episode or end of the lesson. The students can revise at home, watch the episode again to understand better or watch some episodes beforehand. The students should be encouraged to have a special notebook for vocabulary learned in the series. It would also be possible to create a website or a blog where the students could share ideas, discuss the episodes and post their writing assignments.

3.3.1 Occasional Use

This method treats the series just like any other video or movie used during the lessons. The series is watched to entertain the students, let them relax or to illustrate some topic of the regular English curriculum. The episodes are not watched in order, they are picked and chosen either by the teacher or by the students.

There are several disadvantages in using this approach. The teacher loses the main advantage of using the series - the continuity of the story and the development of the characters. It also defeats the purpose of getting the students acquainted with daily life and problems of both the characters and the culture, that the series presents. Moreover, watching the series (much like any other video) is perceived by the students as a treat, not a part of the regular learning process, which leads to decreased activity in the tasks given.

The advantages of using this approach are that the teacher can choose only episodes which she thinks are relevant to the rest of the curriculum and runs lower risk of repeating the same activities. She also does not have to use the whole episodes, which provides more time for student speaking and active participation, as well as allows use of other materials and aids, but at the same time shortens the time during which the students are exposed to the authentic language. The irregularity of the watching in this case prevents students from getting bored by the series.

The aims of this kind of use of the series should be to motivate students and interest them in a topic, to demonstrate some linguistic phenomenon or to provide a role model for the students' production. Alternately the possible purpose could be to get the students to pick a topic to talk about and then pick a thematic episode to enhance their vocabulary, help them with pronunciation or just show them a different approach towards the problem.

In this case there would be no special syllabus necessary for the series and neither would there be the need to use subtitles for the shorter clips, since watching would be just a part of (or an enhancement to) regular lessons. Possible activities would include role-play, discussion, jigsaw watching, watching without picture, watching without sound.[3]

3.3.2 Continuous Use

This method takes full advantage of the special features provided by the characteristics of the series. It deals with whole episodes and the series as a whole, because: "if communication is to be emphasized, the complete communicative process of a movie is in order as the vehicle for study. Obsessive word-by-word study approaches can be avoided by training students to develop gist understanding via key conversations and lines of dialogue and thus producing many extra opportunities for language development in every possible skill direction". [28] In other words if the students are to focus on the language and communication in the episode as a whole, they need to see the whole episode, without worrying that some words escaped them.

The disadvantage of this approach is that it is not possible to shorten the episodes and provide more time for the students to talk, unless the teacher assigns watching the episode as a homework, which may cause problems, because not everybody will have the series at home in English and watching it in Czech would be meaningless. Another disadvantage is that the regularity might make it boring for the students, but that depends on the creativity of the teacher and her ability to come up with new, surprising activities or other motivation. Another slight disadvantage might be that some of the holiday episodes might have to be watched "out of season".

The advantages of this approach are that it allows for the series to become a regular part of the ELT. The continuity makes it possible for the students to see the whole picture and watch the progress of the characters. It provides time and space for a variety of activities and allows the students to practice different skills. The students are also given an opportunity to regularly check their progress in understanding the series.

3.3.2.1 Syllabus

Since the lessons taught with the series should be held once a week as a conversation lessons for the students at B2 level, the courses primary aim is communication and the development of production skills in individual topics.

This is the simplified topic-based/communicative syllabus for teaching EFL/ESL with the use of the series *Friends*.

1. **Jobs, occupations** - the students are able to write a CV and a simple motivational letter
2. **Ideals, plans** - the students are able to express their wishes and desires for the future, they are able to distinguish linguistically the probability of something happening
3. **Complaining** - the students are able to file a complaint and support it with appropriate arguments
4. **Health insurance** - the students are able complete a medical admission form and understand the differences between the system of health insurance in Czech Republic and in the USA
5. **Profession of love** - the students are able to write a love letter using appropriate idioms and metaphors
6. **Emotions** - the students are able to express emotions using intonation and distinguish emotions expressed by someone else
7. **During a Blackout** - the students are able to distinguish important parts of a story and retell the story using the outline
8. **At the Funeral** - the students are able to write a eulogy
9. **Thanksgiving** - the students are able to describe Thanksgiving's history and traditions
10. **Animal Rights** - the students are able to formulate arguments for and against testing on animals and discuss the topic

This list of topics and competences for the first ten episodes of the series is by no means exhaustive, as in every episode there are multiple possible topics touched upon. It is however necessary, due to time restrictions of the lessons, to always focus just on one topic, helping students build one or more linguistic or communicative competences related to the topic.

Chapter 4

Friends

Friends was the first American sitcom to gain worldwide acclaim. It is one of the best loved series in television history and even now, seven years after its finale the fans all over the world still hope for the series to be renewed or at least for a film version to be released (as it was for *Sex and the City*).

What recommends it for use in the English classroom? There are several factors, that make it a perfect candidate for this kind of use. First of all, it is about young people. Eventhough the characters are older then the students, many of their problems are similar to what the students are going through. An example might be trying to be independent on one's parents(Rachel) or coping with their critique(Monica). And of course the quest for a partner and a stable relationship transcends all ages.

Second reason for using this series is that it was created to be universal, to deal with problems that are not time or culture specific, thus allowing the young people all over the world to understand the joys and sorrows of the characters, even now, seventeen years after the first season was first aired in America.

As a sitcom, the series' first aim is to be entertaining, which is another reason, why it is a good teaching material. If the students are having fun, they do not realize they are learning, but they remember things better afterwards. Also quite a number of the students already knows *Friends* and like them, so it is easier for them to understand the plot, which allows them to focus more on the language.

Last but not least, in contrast to other series, sitcoms generally and *Friends* specifically last only 20 to 22 minutes per episode, giving the teacher time to work with the students before or after watching the episode, which, of course, is necessary for the students to feel that they are still learning.

4.1 Cultural analysis

There are two viewpoints that can be taken when talking about culture and a television series as successful as *Friends*. The first is how the show portrays the reality and culture that it is set in, that created it. For the purpose of this thesis it is also crucial to take note of the differences between said (American) culture and the culture the students come from. The second point of view on culture, is what impact (if any) the show had on the culture of the country it was created in, as well as any other, where it was aired.

4.1.1 Portrait of culture

”It’s about sex, love, relationships, careers, a time in your life when everything’s possible. And it’s about friendship because when you’re single and in the city, your friends are your family.” These are the words describing the series in the original treatment used by the producers, Crane, Kauffman and Bright, to pitch the series to NBC [15].

Friends is a series about a group of young adults living together in New York City. Some of them seem to always struggle financially, others live quite comfortably, albeit not in luxury. Not much of the city itself is seen in the series; not surprisingly perhaps, since the series was never filmed in New York; yet the viewer is provided with enough snapshots and skits from the characters lives to piece together a picture of the city’s atmosphere and some of its workings. The show depicts mostly everyday life of the group of six friends, taking us to their apartments, places of work, places to relax and even hospital environment. Each of these environments provides a fine sample of an aspect of culture that can be exemplified in class. Another aspect of culture that the series deals with, and that can be used in class, are various holidays and feasts, eventhough in most cases the celebrations presented are a little unorthodox.

4.1.1.1 Apartments

The apartments of one or another of the friends are where most of the show takes place. Each of their apartments has its unique characteristics in compliance with the personality of its inhabitants. An interesting thing about the apartments is that they change between the episodes even without the characters making any changes. This is sometimes because of the director or writer wants to have their mark on the episode, other times just because it has been so long since the apartment set has been used, that no one really remembers the details. This can be exploited by various activities in class.

Monica’s (and Rachel’s) apartment seems to serve as a hub, where the group gathers to watch TV, play games, resolve problems or just chat, which probably leads to Monica’s tendency to act like a “Mother Hen” to the rest of the bunch. The apartment has two bedrooms a large living area joint with kitchen, where everything is kept meticulously clean by obsessive Monica, and a balcony, which is a favourite place for personal revelations as well as spying on neighbours (as pictured e.g. in “The One with George Stephanopoulos”). There is also a small closet right next to the balcony window, which prompts Chandler’s and Joey’s curiosity in “The One with the Secret Closet” and is revealed to contain all the broken things and pieces of mess that Monica did not feel like cleaning up. Eventhough the apartment is spacious and otherwise perfectly equipped, the girls do not have their own washing machine and so have to go to the buildings laundry room, or to a laundromat. That leads to Ross helping Rachel out when she does the laundry all by herself for the first time in “The One with the East German Laundry Detergent”. This apartment is also the only one (as revealed in “The Last One”) in which all the friends live at one point or another.

Joey’s and Chandler’s apartment is smaller than the girls’ and as a true bachelors’ pad is far from clean. Neither do the boys care too much about their furniture, as long as it serves its purpose or provides entertainment - as evidenced by their shopping for a kitchen table and ending up with a foosball table. Joey decides to build an entertainment center for the apartment, which, he claims, is a day’s job. It ends up being more difficult, than he thought and when the center is finished, it is so wide, it takes up half of each bedroom doors. Chandler convinces Joey to sell it, which leads to them being robbed

of almost every other piece of equipment by a potential buyer in “The One with the Cat”. After this incident, they procure a canoe (by trading it for the entertainment center) and rusty patio furniture. Chandler later in “The One with Chandler in the Box” buys new furniture for the living room to make amends for kissing Joey’s girlfriend. The most prominent pieces of furniture in the guys’ apartment are two barcaloungers.

Ross is the only one of the friends, who permanently changed a place of residence in the course of the series. In “The Pilot” Joey and Chandler helps him furnish his apartment after his ex-wife taking all the stuff he previously owned. His apartment is probably the smallest one on the show and the only part of it, that is shown, is the kitchen and part of the living area in “The One with Phoebe’s Husband”. In fifth season, Ross moves to an apartment rented by his girlfriend’s Emily cousin. This proves to be a bad move after he and Emily divorce and he is forced to move out and stay with Joey and Chandler, driving both of them crazy. Finally in “The One where Everybody Finds Out” Ugly Naked Guy’s apartment goes up for rent and Ross manages to bond with him and bribe him, so that he can have the apartment. Thus he happens to live just across the street from the rest of the bunch (with the exception of Phoebe). The apartment shows all the signs of Ross being a scientist who very much enjoys his job, as it features various fossils and other paleontology paraphernalia. The apartment is almost as meticulous as Monica’s - at least until Rachel with baby Emma move in. It is the only one of the apartments that have kitchen in a separate room from the living area.

Phoebe’s apartment is not featured prominently in the series but we ma catch couple glimpses of it when Frank Jr. visits her in “The One with Frank Jr.” and later when Rachel moves in, for example in “The One with the Apothecary Table”, where Rachel sneaks in furniture from the Pottery Barn, which is against Phoebe’s beliefs. At the end of the episode, however, Phoebe concedes that the furniture is nice and forces Rachel to state that she will move out, unless they buy a Pottery Barn lamp which Phoebe likes. Cohabitation with Rachel leads to a fire in the apartment and when it is rebuilt it only has one bedroom as opposed to the two it had before. Phoebe then lives alone until she marries Mike.

The show was criticised on a number of occasions for not depicting the New York life accurately, since the friends would not be able to afford flats as spacious as are seen on the show, were their financial situation such as they claim. The producers conceded, that this might be true, nevertheless the apartment sizes were determined predominantly by the necessity of fitting all the vital filming equipment in, as well as providing the actors with enough space to execute the funny scripts and the audience with enough space to see, what is actually going on.

4.1.1.2 Places to relax

When it comes to free time, the friends have one clear preference: hanging out in the coffee house closest to their apartments - the Central Perk. Nevertheless, during the course of the show, many other places and means to relax were introduced.

Sports Neither of the friends (with the possible exception of Rachel) is exceptionally nimble, when it comes to sports, which, however, does not mean they do not like or play sports. In “The One with the Thumb” we see the group coming back from a softball game, which they won, albeit only thanks to Monica’s then-boyfriend Allan. In “The One with George Stephanopoulos” the guys decide to spend

a typical guys night out on a Rangers vs. Penguins hockey game. The girls go to a step lesson to try and discover the woman who stole Monica's credit card and Monica returns to yet another lesson to convince herself that she can do whatever she wants in "The One with the Fake Monica". After putting on a little extra weight Chandler makes Monica his new personal coach and regrets it soon after in "The One where Ross Finds Out". In "The One with the Football" we see the group play football on Thanksgiving, satisfying Monica's and Ross' competitiveness in contest for the "Geller cup". In "The One with All the Rugby" Ross tries to win the heart of Emily in a rough game against her British mates. An all time favourite American everyday city sport - jogging - is pictured in "The One where Phoebe runs". Ross and Monica like to dance as we discover in "The One with the Routine". Ross is concerned about Phoebe's and Rachel's safety and tries to teach them martial arts in "The One with Unagi". And finally in "The One where Rachel's sister Baby-Sits" Phoebe's boyfriend Mike takes her to a basketball game to ask for her hand in marriage on "the big screen".

Hotels and holiday houses From time to time the friends decide to travel somewhere, either as the whole group, or just several of them. Thus we can find them enjoying a trip to a holiday house on the beach, a "destination wedding" in London, which Phoebe has to skip because of her pregnancy; Monica-and-Chandler's-one-year-anniversary trip to Las Vegas where Rachel and Ross get drunk and get married; and a stay at a conference center on Barbados, where Ross is about to give a keynote speech. But some of them occasionally use travelling as a means to enjoy some privacy, as shown in "The One where Paul's the Man", where both Rachel and Ross spend a weekend at a private mountain cabin with their respective partners (a man who owns the cabin and his daughter); or in "The One with the Kips", where Chandler and Monica try to get some secret quality time together by going on a trip to Atlantic City.

One of the sources of hilarity, while in a hotel somewhere, is Ross's obsession with getting as much free hotel stuff as possible, ranging from various toiletries to lightbulbs from the lamps in the room. His obsession might be seen as bordering on slight kleptomania. In one of the episodes Ross teaches Chandler, which parts of the hotel equipment he is allowed to take and which are off-limits.

Central Perk The series trademark coffee shop is definitely the most important place to relax for the whole group. Originally, it was suggested that the coffee house is too hip and the NBC executives asked the creators to change the setting to a diner. The authors have managed to hold their ground against the company, thus giving rise to the lovely Central Perk coffee house.

The Central Perk is a cosy little coffee house in the middle of the City. It is not a luxurious venue but it provides privacy and serves as a natural backdrop for various more or less philosophical discussions of the group. Many fights, break-ups and reconciliations take place in the coffee house including the famous Rachel and Ross first kiss in "The One where Ross Finds Out". In "The One with George Stephanopoulos" Joey proves to Chandler that the coffee house is less than a hundred steps from their flat, making it the best hang-out spot one can wish for. But it is much more than just a hang-out spot for them.

4.1.1.3 Places of work

While it certainly seems that the friends have more leisure time than they should have, they all have jobs and the series takes us to their workplaces. As their jobs are varied, and each of them changes jobs during the series, we get a look into various working environments.

Restaurants Monica works at various restaurants during the show. She starts out as a chef and we see her working in the pilot episode as well as in e.g. “The One with the Thumb”. In “The One with Five Steaks and an Eggplant” she is first promoted to a head-chef, but shortly thereafter fired for breaking company policy by accepting (unknowingly) a bribe from a new meat supplier. She later finds a job at a diner, where she has to dress like a character from the fifties and dance on the bar. The job brings her luck in the shape of a young extravagant millionaire, who comes in and falls in love with her. To get together with her, he buys a restaurant and gives Monica the position of a head chef in “The One with a Chick and a Duck”, which makes her fall in love with him. However, when he decides to become the Ultimate Fighting Champion, gets beaten badly and refuses to quit, Monica breaks up with him and leaves the job. In “The one with the Dirty Girl” she starts a catering business with Phoebe. Later in “The One where they are going to party” she writes a bad review on one restaurant and the owner offers her a job as head-chef when she shows him how to make a good sauce. The other employees of the restaurant are not very friendly to her, because she got their relation and friend Emilio. The only way for her to gain their respect is to hire Joey only to fire him in front of the others. She quits this job after she gets married to Chandler and he agrees to run an office of his company in Tulsa, Oklahoma and she wants to move there with him. But when she calls a headhunter to inquire about job opportunities in Tulsa (in “The One with the Pediatrician”) she is offered a job as head-chef in a prestige restaurant Javu on Manhattan and decides to take it and stay in the City.

Massage parlours Phoebe is a masseuse working presumably mainly in smaller parlours. She can be seen working in “The One with the Dozen Lasagnas”, massaging Paolo, who tries to hit on her, which leads to his breakup with Rachel, when she finds out. When Phoebe finds out she has a half-brother and invites him over for a weekend in “The One with Frank Jr.”, she is called to work and offers him to come with her, which he accepts, because he mistakenly assumes she works in a red-light establishment. Later on, in “The One with the Ballroom Dancing” Phoebe is fired when her boss walks in on her making out with a client and calls her a whore. She then tries to find a new job, but does not have much success at the interviews, because she naïvely recounts the story of being fired. Finally, in “The One with the Fertility Test” Phoebe tries to convince Rachel not to redeem a massage spa certificate, because such corporations put independent masseurs out of job. When Rachel actually goes to the spa, she finds out Phoebe works there. She claims it is “because of the good money, benefits, and 401(k) plan” (she even exclaims that she has to “pay taxes!”).

When she is not working as a masseuse, Phoebe plays guitar in various venues, in the subway, in front of restaurants or in Central Perk. She does not consider it a job, though, as she points out to Rachel in “The One with the Baby on the Bus”, when, after being replaced at Central Perk by a professional singer, she sings in front of the coffee house, she is trying to make more money than the professional gets for her performance inside.

Academic ground Ross starts out as a paleontologist working in the Museum of the Prehistoric History. The first time the Museum is presented in “The One with the Sonogram at the End”, he is shown preparing a Cave people exhibit with his co-worker, joking about what sort of problems the cave people had. He is very fond of the work in the Museum, as proven by “The One where Ross and Rachel... You Know”, where they lie together in one of the Museum’s exhibitions. However, even he loses his job - is forced to take a sabbatical from the Museum - in “The One with Ross’ Sandwich”, after he leashes out at his boss, when he discovers that it was the boss, who took his Thanksgiving leftovers sandwich and, moreover, ate only half of it and threw the other half away.

He then finds a part-time job as a guest lecturer at university in “The One where Joey Loses His Insurance” and despite dating a student (a short storyarc starting with “The One where Ross Dates a Student” and ending in “The One with the Proposal 1”) and being generally not very popular with the students he manages to get a tenure, which he finds out in “The One with Princess Consuela”.

Fashion industry After running from the altar and being financially cut off from her father, Rachel starts to work as a waitress in Central Perk. She is not very good at that and she hates the job, especially after she gets her first paycheck in “The One with George Stephanopoulos” and finds out how little money she gets for her efforts. Yet, for the lack of better options, she stays at her temporary job for two years. Being told that the owner wants her to take training again is the last straw and Rachel quits her job in “The One where Rachel Quits”.

Joey helps her out by setting her up an interview at Fortunata Fashions and she gets the job there, hoping she will finally work in the fashion industry and will never have to serve coffee again. The job, however, turns out to be less glamorous than she expected and she is happy to exchange it for a real fashion-related job at Bloomigdales only one week after starting it, in “The One where Chandler Doesn’t Remember which Sister”. Her new job as an assistant buyer suits her well and she is even considered for a promotion in “The One where They Are Going to Party”, which is thwarted by her boss, Joanna, who does not want to lose Rachel to another department and offers her a position of a personal assistant. Things get a bad turn when Joanna dies and Rachel is demoted to a personal shopper. The only silver lining she finds in her situation is, that she gets to help a handsome Joshua in “The One with Rachel’s Crush”. Rachel is then after some time presented with an opportunity of a lifetime, when she gets an interview to become an assistant buyer at Ralph Lauren. In “Rachel’s Inadvertent Kiss” she kisses the interviewer goodbye and is convinced that she ruined her chances, but she is hired in the end anyway. She then tries to pick up smoking to bond with her new boss, but fails in the attempts. After some time, she is promoted to a head of a division and hires a personal assistant (in “The One with Rachel’s Assistant”). In the last season, she loses her job, after her boss overhears her being interviewed for competing company (Gucci), and is offered a new job for Luis Vuitton in Paris.

Data processing Chandler works as a data analyst in a big corporation. He is not very fond of his job and thinks it is largely meaningless. He works in a large open-space, in his cubicle, stealing puffs off cigarette under a NO SMOKING sign in “The One with the Thumb”. His colleagues like him, but some of them think he is gay and try to set him up with other men. When his boss offers him a promotion in “The One with the Stoned Guy”, Chandler quits because “it was supposed to be a temp job” and accepting the promotion would mean it is serious. He is, nevertheless, persuaded by the benefits offered and returns. He gets his own office and a secretary. He is now the boss and, as he finds

out in “The One with the Ick Factor”, that means his colleagues do not like him any more. His job then remains stable until “The One where Emma Cries”, where he falls asleep in an important meeting and subsequently agrees to head company offices in Tulsa. This finally leads to his quitting the job he does not like in “The One with Christmas in Tulsa”. Monica then helps him find a new job in advertising, however only as an unpaid intern in “The One with the Mugging”.

Stages and sets Joey, being an actor, is the one of the friends who changes jobs most often. In “The One with the Butt” he stars in an off-Broadway musical *Freud!* and is given a part in a movie as an Al Pacino’s “butt double”, which he promptly loses due to overacting. He then goes through a series of fails, after which, in “The One with Russ”, he gets a role of Dr. Drake Ramoray in *Days of Our Lives*, which turns out to be a big break for him, until his tongue slips in an interview for *Soap Opera Digest* and his character is killed off in “The One where Dr. Ramoray Dies”. He then, in “The One with the Screamer” got a part in a stage play *Boxing Day*, which had terrible reviews and he fell in love with his leading lady, who left him for a better job in Los Angeles. In “The One with Joey’s Dirty Day” he gets a part in a nameless movie, but upsets the main star by using his shower. When it does seem that Joey has a chance on his big break in an independent film *Shutter Speed* shot just outside Las Vegas in “The One with Joey’s Big Break”, he is thrilled and arrives on the set only to find out, that the film has been cancelled. Later he is cast as the main character (next to a robot) in a detective series *Mac & C.H.E.E.S.E.* which is soon cancelled as well. However, he gets a chance to return to his old part of now resurrected Dr. Drake Ramoray. He even gets Phoebe a job as an extra on the show in “The One where Rachel Goes Back to Work”.

Joey is seen in quite a number of non-acting jobs during the show as well. In “The One with the Breast Milk” he works as an after-shave salesman, in “The One where Rachel Quits” he upsets Phoebe by selling only nice green Christmas trees and letting the rest be thrown into the cutter, he works as a guide in the Museum of Prehistoric History for a brief period of time in “The One with Phoebe’s Uterus”, and starting with “The One with the Joke” he picks up work as a waiter in Central Perk.

4.1.1.4 Hospital environment

For a series that is not specialized on medicine, the characters spend a surprising amount of time in hospital environment. While a significant amount of that time is spent on maternity wards, celebrating the birth of one of the friend’s child, most of the visits to the hospital are not all that pleasant. The very first trip to the ER happens when Ross is hit by a puck in “The One with George Stephanopoulos” and reveals a very unpleasant admissions nurse, who is more interested in a candy bar than the patients. Ross seems to be the most accident prone of the group, as he ends up in the ER again in “The One with the Baby on the Bus”, after Monica forgets he is allergic to kiwi and serves a kiwi pie. The issue of medical insurance is touched upon couple times in the series. First when Rachel sprains her ankle in “The One with Two Parts” and because she does not have an insurance, talks Monica into putting her information in the forms instead, which both of them later regret and Rachel decides to pay for the treatment in cash instead and second in “The One where Joey Loses His Insurance”, where Joey gets a hernia and has to wait until he is given a part that would cover his insurance and let him get the medical help he needs. Yet another issue is touched upon when the girls are repeatedly smitten by handsome young (and in Monica’s case not so young) doctors. This is first seen in “The One with Two

Parts”, where Monica and Rachel get a date with two doctors, then in “The One with the Birth” where Rachel flirts with an gynaecologist, in “The One where Ross and Rachel...You Know”, where Monica starts seeing Richard (a doctor twice her age), and for the last time in “The One with Chandler in the Box”, where she briefly considers dating Richard’s son. But it is not only the doctors, that the girls fall in love with in hospital. Phoebe and Monica cause a traffic accident in “The One with Mrs. Bing” and idealize the man in a coma, whom they take care of after they bring him to the hospital. And while in the hospital, waiting for Carol to give birth to Ben, Joey meets a young single pregnant girl, with whom he then stays and helps her during her labour. The last snippet of medical environment can be seen in “The One with the Pediatrician”, where it is revealed, that Ross still goes to the same doctor as when he was a child.

4.1.1.5 Holidays and feasts

The most celebrated holiday in the series seems to be the Thanksgiving, closely followed by Christmas and New Year.

Thanksgiving The celebration of the Thanksgiving is featured nine times in the series, usually going awry in one way or another. It is always Monica, who prepares the Thanksgiving dinner for everybody, however, she rarely receives any gratitude from the others for all her hard work. The first Thanksgiving episode is “The One where the Underdog Gets Away”. Monica strives to prepare perfect dinner for everyone, which means making three types of potatoes, but her efforts are ruined when everybody runs to the roof to look at the runaway balloon and the doors of the apartment are slammed shut without either of the girls having keys. In this episode it is also explained, why Chandler does not like Thanksgiving (and all the Pilgrim holidays for that matter). Second celebration is ruined in “The One with the Football”, when due to a rematch for the long lost Geller Cup, Monica forgets all about the roasting turkey. The third Thanksgiving preparation in “The One with Chandler in the Box” results in Monica getting a chip of ice in her eye, meeting Richard’s son Timothy, who is an ophthalmologist and inviting him over for dinner. In “The One with All the Thanksgivings”, which is the fourth celebration, the friends talk about their worst Thanksgiving memories to cheer up Ross, who has gone through a divorce and an eviction just before the Thanksgiving. The fifth celebration is probably the most important one, because Ross’ and Monica’s parents are invited over and Chandler is trying to bond with them, so he could tell them he is dating Monica. In this episode (“The One were Ross Got High”) Rachel tries to cook a desert but fails miserably, because two of the cookbook pages were stuck together, causing her to mix up two recipes. The sixth celebration takes place in “The One with the Dog”. Phoebe, who is staying with Chandler and Monica after the fire in her own apartment is taking care of a dog secretly. When Chandler finds out, he freaks out and the dog has to be taken to Ross’ apartment. Monica brings it back and Chandler, after learning from Ross that Monica is in the bedroom crying because the dog had to be taken away spends the evening looking for it, after he does not find it at Ross’. Seventh Thanksgiving in “The One with the Rumor” brings a surprise for Rachel, who learns that Ross has co-founded an “I Hate Rachel Club” in high school and spread a nasty rumour about her. “The ONE with Rachel’s other sister” brings Amy to the eighth Thanksgiving and she spices it up with some inconsiderate observations, delivered over dinner. Monica is terrified because Chandler made her bring out their wedding china and she worries that it will be harmed. The last Thanksgiving Monica does not want to cook the dinner, but lets herself be persuaded by Phoebe. However as the title of the

episode (“The One with the Late Thanksgiving”) suggests, with the exception of Chandler, everybody is running late - the girls because of Emma’s beauty pageant and the boys because of a hockey game.

Christmas Christmas is featured in every season of the series, with the exception of the sixth and the tenth. In the first season, the Christmas mood is brought on by Joey, who is working as one of the Santa’s Elves in a shopping center in “The One with the Monkey”. As a matter of fact, since neither of the characters have small kids until later seasons, Christmas celebration is always kind of glided over. In “The One with Phoebe’s Dad” the friends have a Christmas party, where they exchange presents. The third Christmas is not much more festive, with the apartment being decorated by the dry unsold trees from Joey’s gig as a salesman in “The One where Rachel Quits” to cheer up Phoebe. In the fourth season the Christmas episode is “The One with the Girl from Poughkeepsie”, in which Rachel laments being alone in the festive season and Phoebe decides to write a special holiday song for her friends. In “The One with the Inappropriate Sister” Phoebe decides to spread the holiday spirit as Santa’s Elf collecting for charity, however her attitude drives people off and she is eventually moved to a less frequented location. In the seventh season “The One with All the Candy” shows Monica preparing Christmas candies for the whole apartment building but is eventually so exhausted, that Chandler has to step in and tell the neighbours to go home and be ashamed of themselves for just taking the candies and not thanking Monica properly nor seeking her acquaintance. Ross finds out Phoebe never had a bike and buys her one. The next episode (“The One with the Holiday Armadillo) features Ross trying to teach his son Ben about the Jewish holiday Hanukkah. He is unable to rent any holiday costume, so he makes up a Holiday Armadillo. This is one of the rare occasions where the show touches the topic of religion. The eighth season again has two Christmas themed episodes, as in “The One with Monica’s Boots” Chandler and Monica go to his company’s Christmas party and in “The One with Ross’ Step Forward” Ross and his current girlfriend Mona discuss sending holiday cards together, which causes Ross to freak out. The last Christmas episode on the series is “The One with the Christmas in Tulsa”, where Chandler has deadlines to meet, preventing him from spending Christmas with his wife and friends. That causes him to quit the job and come home right in time for Christmas dinner.

Other holidays New Year is celebrated three times throughout the series. In the very first season Chandler declares a no-dates-on-New-Year’s-Eve-party pact. However everybody invites a date to said party, except for Ross, who brings Marcel the monkey (hence the name of the episode “The One with the Monkey). All of the dates go awry and the friends end up standing together during the countdown. Chandler demands someone kissed him and Joey, tired of his moaning, obliges. In season five “The One with All the Resolutions” brings a test for all of the friends, as they strive to start the year of on the right foot. Last mention of New Year is in “The One with the Routine”, where Joey, Monica and Ross are invited by Joey’s new roommate Janine to the taping of Dick Clark’s New Year’s Rockin’ Eve and have high expectations about it. Halloween (which is usually the prominent holiday of the year in other series) is celebrated only once in *Friends*, in “The One with the Halloween party”. Some of the friends have strange costumes, like Ross, who tries to be clever, claiming he is a “Spudnik” - a cross between Sputnik and a potato (or spud). Chandler ends up worst of all in a costume of big fluffy pink Easter bunny.

4.1.2 Cultural impact

Although the producers thought of *Friends* as “only a TV show”, numerous psychologists investigated the cultural impact of *Friends* during the series run. Eventhough it may seem, that in this area the show is lacking in comparison to some other series, it is impossible to say that there was no impact whatsoever.

While none of the characters have any distinguishable trademark choice of clothes (as opposed to e.g. Barney Stinson of *How I Met Your Mother*) and the series thus lacks influence in this category, it certainly provided a role model for several other fields. One example may be the aforementioned episode “The One with the Apothecary Table”, which has earned the title of Best Product Placement in TV History and is said to still boost Pottery Barn sales, whenever it airs.

Another furniture related cultural impact was created the Joey’s barcalounger (affectionately nicknamed Rosita) when Joey explained to Rachel in “The One where Rosita Dies”, why “Rosita does not move!” His explanation was, that “it is in equal distance from the kitchen and bathroom, and prevents any glare from Stevee(the TV)”. Later in *The Big Bang Theory* Sheldon Cooper gives very similar reasons to why he has to sit in a precise spot on the couch.

Probably the best known thing that was copied from the show was Jennifer Aniston’s hairstyle of the first few seasons, also known as “the Rachel”. Women all around the world went to their hairdressers demanding this haircut, regardless of their age or physical disposition.

There is hardly any young adult who would not know the *Friends*’ theme song, and in 2009 another song from the show circled the world, when a dance remix of Phoebe’s *Smelly Cat* became a popular internet meme.

The most prominent cultural impact must, however, be credited to the principal stage of the series: the Central Perk coffee house. When the series aired in the Czech Republic, many a young person wished for such a hang out spot for them and their friends. In many countries the coffee house featured in the show has inspired imitation. In 2006, Iranian businessman Mojtaba Asadian started a Central Perk franchise, registering the name in 32 countries. The decor of the coffee houses is inspired by *Friends*, featuring replica couches, counters, neon signage and bricks. The coffee houses also contain paintings of the various characters from the series, and televisions playing *Friends* episodes. James Michael Tyler, who plays the Central Perk manager in the series, Gunther, attended the grand opening of the Dubai cafe, where he worked as a waiter. From September 24 to October 7, 2009, a Central Perk replica was based at Broadwick Street, Soho, London. The coffee house sold real coffee to customers and featured a display of *Friends* memorabilia and props, such as the Geller Cup from “The One with the Football”. In Beijing, business owner Du Xin opened a coffee shop named Central Perk in March 2010. The original set of Central Perk itself was rebuilt as part of a museum exhibit at Warner Bros. Studios, and was shown on The Ellen DeGeneres Show in October 2008. Jennifer Aniston revisited the set for the first time since the series finale in 2004.

4.2 Language analysis

The series is American, as is everyone of its main cast. Therefore the main language featured is American English. As a series about a group of young people, it features ample examples of colloquial language and even slang. Each of the characters, moreover, has his or her catchphrases and manner of speech, which will be commented on later.

As a sitcom (or situation comedy), the series relies heavily on words and dialogues to create entertaining situations, whether through common everyday expressions used in an atypical context or the use of metaphors, euphemisms, ellipses, misunderstood irony or misplaced sincerity.

Thus the series can teach the students, how to use expressions and phrases correctly, as well as widen their vocabulary and show them creative ways to play on words, which is very important part of using English. It is also instrumental in teaching the students the correct (and incorrect but tolerated) stress placement and intonation, which can be very different in English than they are in Czech. As a real life material, not tailored for the educational purposes, it also forces the students to get used to the differences in English used by different characters and compels them not to rely on knowing every single word but to draw on the context of the sentence, and take clues from the non-verbal communication used by the characters as well.

4.2.1 Character's speech

In “The One with the Thumb” Chandler says that Ross is “overpronouncing every single word” to which Ross replies, in a strongly overemphasized way, that “There is **nothing** wrong with speaking **correctly**”, which prompts Rachel to mock him by saying “Indeed there **isn't**”. Barring this scene, Ross is usually the one who corrects the others' grammar, especially later on in the series. He is also the one to use longest and most complicated sentences, especially when talking about something related to his job or science in general. This however does not prevent him from using colloquial inserts as *like* and *I mean* in his speech. His trademark phrase is a really depressed “Hi.” when something unpleasant happens to him. This can be heard for example both in “The Pilot” and “The One with the Sonogram at the End”, first time commented on by Joey: “This guy says ‘Hello’, I wanna kill myself.” and second time by Monica: “This is not a happy ‘Hi.’”

On the other hand Chandler himself has the most memorable manner of speech of all the friends, always overemphasizing the last part of his sentences. This is especially true for his rhetorical questions: “Could this girl **be** any hotter?” In “The One with the Ick Factor” his manner of speech becomes ridiculed by his former friends from work. This prompts him to emphasize it even more in front of them: “I want the report on my desk **by** nine o'clock tomorrow.” He also has the tendency to think out loud, or speak before thinking, thus often being the one to accidentally let someone else's secret slip - most notably in “The One where Rachel Finds Out”, where after Rachel opens her present from Ross and wonders that he remember what she wanted, Chandler retorts by: “You know Ross, back in college, when he fell in love with Carol, he bought her this ridiculously expensive crystal duck...” From which Rachel deduces that Ross is in love with her.

Rachel's manner of speech starts on an almost valley-girl quality, but improves through time. She overuses “like” most of all the friends. She also has the most memorable intonation, especially in times

when she is frustrated or agitated by something. She then speaks very rapidly and her voice pitches in a kind of a shrill shriek. Best example of that is the first scene with Rachel in “The Pilot”, where she explains why she ran from the altar. She is also not very good in hiding her emotions, often trying to deny in words what she gives away by non-verbal communication, as in “The One with Ross’ New Girlfriend”.

Phoebe has a special way of expressing herself. She often strives to find the right word to describe something and failing that, she thinks up and uses new words, like “flupie” in “The One with George Stephanopoulos” or uses words in wrong connotations as in “The One with the Sonogram at the End”, where she calls Monica “twirly”. Her songs show problems of this kind as well, most notably in “The One with the Girl From Poughkeepsie”, where she has problems rhyming Chandler’s and Rachel’s names to anything in her special holiday song, so she ends up just muttering something unrecognizable. She does not understand the concept of rhetorical questions and gives answers to them.

Monica’s manner of speech mirrors her character. Most of her sentences sound like commands and when she says “we should” she usually mean “everybody else should” or “I will, because the rest of you would screw it up”. Like most of the others, she uses simple short sentences, but she is prone to throwing tantrums when things do not go as planned, as in “The One where the Underdog Gets Away”. Her trademark phrase is “...I know!”, when talking about something surprising or frustrating.

Joey’s catchphrase, “How you doin’?”, is probably the best known on the show. Apart from this catchphrase, Joey’s lines are usually the simplest, since the character is a little dim. This often leads to him misunderstanding some of the more complicated words and expressions, as in “The One with George Stephanopoulos”, where he gets “omnipotent” confused with “impotent”. Another one of his often used phrases is “...if you know, what I mean”, after he uses even the most simple metaphor, prompting Monica to answer “Joey, we always know, what you mean.” in “The One where Rachel Finds Out”. Eventhough he sometimes uses euphemisms and metaphors himself, when the metaphor gets picked up and widened by the others, he becomes uncertain about the meaning, as shown in “The One with the Sonogram at the End”.

While the main characters all use American English, Ross’ second wife, Emily, is from Great Britain and her British English (accent and vocabulary) is in sharp contrast to the rest of the group. The episodes with her start with “The One with Joey’s Dirty Day” and end with “The One with the Yeti”.

4.2.2 Influence of the series

The influence of the series on the English language was not as big as with some other series, mainly because the series tried more to mirror the everyday language of the young people than to create its own slang for them. However, according to a study by a linguistics professor at the University of Toronto, the series influenced the English language nevertheless. The professor found that the characters used the word “so” to modify adjectives more often than other intensifiers, such as “very” and “really”. Although the preference had already made its way into the American vernacular, usage on the series may, according to his findings, have accelerated the change.

The only phrase from the show that can be presented as newly invented and implanted to the language is Joey’s catchphrase, “How you doin’?”. This phrase became a popular part of Western English slang,

often used as a pick-up line or when greeting friends. It did not, however, have the worldwide influence that phrases from some of the more recent sitcoms have achieved.

4.3 History of the series

The history of the *Friends* began in 1993, when David Crane and Marta Kauffman started to develop an idea for a series under a working title *Insomnia Café*. They presented this idea to Kevin S. Bright and in cooperation with him presented a seven-page treatment of the series to NBC. Incidentally, the television's president was at that time looking for a series just like the one Bright, Kauffman and Crane presented - a series about young people, living in the big city, sharing expenses and becoming one another's "surrogate family" more than just friends. He was impressed by their idea and their vision of the characters, however he wanted them to make the series to represent Generation X and present the new kind of "tribal bonding" formed among the young people of that generation. This was refused by the trio of authors, with Crane arguing that it was not a series for just one generation and they want to create something everybody would enjoy watching.

After these initial negotiations and couple changes in script and the title - *Insomnia Café* was changed to *Friends like Us* in writing of the pilot script and the NBC briefly considered renaming the series to *Six for One* in order to differentiate from ABC's *These Friends of Mine* - the series, under its final title *Friends*, first premiered on September 22, 1994 on NBC's coveted Thursday 8:30 pm timeslot. The series was produced by Bright/Kauffman/Crane Productions, in association with Warner Bros. Television. While the opening title sequence with the theme song are well known, the titles of individual episodes are known only to a handful of fans, since they are not featured in the opening titles, which led the authors to the somewhat working-title format in naming the episodes: "The One with/where..."

For the most part, the series was filmed at Warner Bros. Studios in Burbank, California, in front of a live studio audience, which the producers, especially Bright, thought of as an integral part of the series, maintaining, that filming outside was making the episodes less funny. The famous opening title fountain sequence was filmed at a Warner Bros. Ranch in Burbank at 4 am on a particularly cold morning. As an exception to the rule, the fourth season finale was shot in London, because the producers were aware of the show's popularity in Great Britain.

Another key or trademark feature of the show, introduced by the producers, was the ensemble format, meaning that the focus have been put on all the six characters equally, instead of emphasizing one or two. That gave the screen writers a variety of fields to choose from, in regard to the character development and plot possibilities. In the words of the authors, having six equal characters would allow for "*myriad storylines and give the show legs*". The series managed to keep to this format throughout the whole ten years, eventhough some of the characters (namely Phoebe and Joey) have been regarded as a little less developed than the rest. With Joey it was one of the reasons that resulted in the creation of the shows spin-off *Joey*.

4.3.1 Casting

The series might have been very different, were other actors cast for the six leading roles. This is just a quick overview of how the cast of *Friends* was formed.

After the commission of the pilot, the series came to be regarded as NBC's "pet project", which created a great stir among actors. Over 1.000 actors responded to the callouts. Only 75 of them were called to read in front of the casting director. Those who received callback then read for the trio of producers and finally, with only three or four actors remaining for each role, they were asked to read for the then-president of the Warner Bros. Television.

Ross The first one to actually be cast was David Schwimmer for the role of Ross Geller. He had a minor advantage, since the authors wrote the character with him already in mind, as they remembered him from one of their former show's castings. He was, however, reluctant to even apply for the role at first, since he was not interested in television acting. He changed his mind only after he found out that it should be an ensemble show.

Phoebe Second one to get a part on the show was Lisa Kudrow for Phoebe. The authors like her in another sitcom, where she played a waitress named Ursula Buffay. This led them to the idea of taking the same surname for Phoebe and bringing Ursula the waitress into the series as Phoebe's evil twin and a source of hilarity.

Chandler The character of Chandler was regarded by the authors as the easiest to cast - until the castings themselves began. Matthew Perry requested to audition for the part of Chandler because he felt, he can identify with the character, describing Chandler as "an observer of other people's lives". He was refused at first, because he was working on a pilot for another potential series. Luckily the other project did not take off and the creators decided to grant Perry a chance to audition and gave him the part shortly thereafter.

Joey Since Joey's character was not very developed in the pilot script, the actors auditioning for the role did not have much to go on. Most of the actors came in with a kind of "hard on macho approach". Matt LeBlanc, who ended up getting the part, took a different approach, and portrayed Joey as "this Italian, somewhat dim character", drawing on his experience from *Winnie and Bobby*, a show he starred in previously. He was not the creators' first choice for the role, but they were told by the network to cast him and as time went by, this "new spin, he put on the character" proved to be a major source of comedy. However not all the critiques were thrilled by him after the airing of the pilot, some even saying that: LeBlanc is "relying too much on the same brain-dead stud routine that was already tired the last two times he tried it".

Rachel Jennifer Aniston was first called to read for the part of Monica, but fared much better as Rachel and was given her part instead. As Perry, she had been working at another potential series project, the creators and producers of which would have not let her leave, had the show proved as successful. And

much as in Perry's case the other project did not do as well as it was expected to and a deal was struck between the two television companies on Aniston's work on *Friends*.

Monica Last but not least, the best known actress on the show - at least initially - Courtney Cox Arquette was to audition for the role of Rachel. She, nevertheless, surprised the authors by reading for Monica. Prior to her audition the producers thought she is much too energetic and upbeat, which is not how they pictured Monica. Nevertheless once she was done reading for the role, the authors agreed with her and gave her the part.

4.3.2 Acclaim of the Series

After ten seasons on the network, the series finale was promoted by NBC, and viewing parties were organized around the U.S. The series finale (the 236th episode), airing on May 6, 2004, was watched by 51.1 million American viewers, making it the fourth most-watched series finale in television history and the most watched episode of the decade.

Friends received positive reviews throughout most of its run, becoming one of the most popular sitcoms of all time. The series won many awards and was nominated for 63 Primetime Emmy Awards. Readers of TV Guide voted the cast of Friends their Best Comedy cast of all time, ranking at 29% of the votes. The series, an instant hit from its debut, was also very successful in the ratings, consistently ranking in the top ten in the final primetime ratings. Many critics now regard it as one of the finest shows in television history. The series continues in syndication worldwide. All 10 seasons are available on DVD. The spin-off series *Joey* was created to follow up with the series after the finale

Chapter 5

Application to Practice

This chapter should provide an insight into the testing of the use of *Friends* in lessons of English language on the B2 level. The activities used during the testing will be described and a short evaluation for each one will be provided. The second part of the chapter will present the students' review of the lessons taught using *Friends*. In the last part of the chapter several modifications to the lessons will be proposed.

The use of the series *Friends* in English lessons in school environment was tested at the **Gymnasium and Sport Gymnasium in Přípotoční**, Prague 10. The classes took place in specialized multimedia classrooms, where the students had more space and freedom to move around after the watching. The groups of students involved in the testing were designated as B2 level, although some individual students would with their knowledge of English belong to B1 level. The lessons were tested in two groups of which one was more active and the other, while not entirely passive, was less willing to cooperate. 92% of the students involved in the testing were girls, but there seemed to be no major difference between the girls and the boys when it came to participation or attitude to the series watched.

5.1 Activities used

For the testing it was viewed as better to use a wide variety of activities during the lessons, the purpose of which was to determine, what kinds of activities can be used in a series-based lesson and what language competences can thus be developed. Another aim was to find out which of these activities stimulate students the most, as well as which of them are the easiest and which are the hardest for the students. While the second aim can be highly individual and depend on many factors, the first should be universal or objective.

As one of the key advantages of using a series is the continuity, the students watched the series during the lessons starting with the first episode and ending with the tenth episode. For this overview, however, the activities will be presented in three groups, rather than divided according to the episodes. The division will be into pre-watching activities, while-watching activities and post-watching activities. The full lesson plans and materials used for the testing are provided in the appendices of this thesis.

5.1.1 Pre-watching activities

The first pre-watching activity was used before “The Pilot”. The word FRIENDS was written on the blackboard and the students were asked to brainstorm about the possible meanings and connotations of the word. In each class about ten words were elicited. The students were active not only in thinking up the words but also in providing explanations to how their word relates to the starting word. It is a quick starting activity, that lets the students think in relations.

The simplest pre-watching activity, that was used, was to ask the students to put together a start for the episode recounting what happened “previously on *Friends*”. This activity helps students remember, use vocabulary they learned before and distinguish facts important for the continuity of the series. It was used before the watching of the fifth episode “The One with East German Laundry Detergent” and as at the beginning of the first season of the series the episodes are not arched together too closely, the students had some problems picking out the significant moments of the former episodes.

For other pre-watching activity the class was divided into groups and the groups had five minutes to come up with as many things to do when the power is out as they can possibly think of. By this activity students are encouraged to be creative, and are motivated, as the groups compete against each other. The top score for both classes was twenty five ideas from one group. The number of unique activities from the lists of all the groups put together was in the end forty two. The students had fun during this activity, even though some had difficulties with the concept of not having electricity and proposed activities like “playing with a console”. This activity preceded the seventh episode - “The One with the Blackout”.

Before watching the eighth episode named “The One where Nana Dies Twice”, the students were given cut pieces of comics with the old urban legend about a person buried alive. They were asked to put the pictures into the correct order and then retell the story in pairs. The purpose of the activity was for the students to practice fluent speech in telling a well known story. The first part of the task was easy for the students, and during the second part they had no problems describing single pictures. There were, however, some difficulties in joining the descriptions of the pictures into a continuous story.

In the last pre-watching activity used in the testing, the students were given a task to match each of the characters with a pet that they think is the best suited for him or her. They could choose any pet, ordinary or exotic, but they had to formulate a reason why they think the pet would be best suited for the character they assigned it to. To conclude, the class had a discussion about various characters and various pets. It was a warming up exercise for “The One with the Monkey” episode and it’s aim was to practice characterising a person as well as present arguments for and against a statement. The students were very creative in coming up with possible (and impossible) pets for the characters. Coming up with the reasons was more difficult for the students, especially due to the time limit of the activity.

5.1.2 While-watching activities

Most of the while-watching activities serve the express purpose of reminding the students that they are still supposed to be learning and that the series is not there for relaxation. That said it is clear that each episode had at least one while watching activity assigned.

The while-watching activities for “The Pilot” were two and were aimed at introducing the characters to the students and making them focus on getting information they need from the episode. The first activity consisted of five introductory questions to which the students had to find answers in the episode. Two of them required only single word answers, two required longer sentences and one had to be answer by a list of names and occupations of the friends. The second activity was to find out which character fits a short description given in the exercise. Both of the activities were easy and the students had no problem with completing them.

For the second episode - “The One with the Sonogram at the End” - the two while-watching activities were focused on phrases and expressions used in the episode. The first of them was finishing the sentences that were said during the episode with an appropriate phrase or expression. This was probably the hardest activity for the students, since even if they caught the right sentence, it was far too quick for them to catch the whole target expression or phrase. However, with most of the sentences they were able to say when in the episode they could be heard and who was the speaker. The second activity was answering questions clarifying other expressions used in the episode (for example “shooting for the stars” or “welling up”). This activity was easier than the first, but the students still found most of the expressions hard to understand, including colloquial expression “to dump someone”, which came as a bit of a surprise.

For “The One with the Thumb” (the third episode) there was no while-watching activity per se, nonetheless the students were asked to pay close attention to two scenes of the episode, which they subsequently had to act out in front of the whole class. This activity will be evaluated more closely in the post-watching activities.

After watching several episodes of the series, people start to skip over the opening title sequence, or have a tendency to just ignore it. To prevent that, the while-watching activity for “The One with George Stephanopoulos” was to fill in the gaps in the lyrics of the theme song. The theme song of the *Friends* is extremely popular and extremely well known, but few people actually know the lyrics, except for the “I’ll be there for you” line repeated in the chorus. The students enjoyed this activity, but it was necessary to preteach some vocabulary (like the abbreviation DOA - Dead On Arrival). For better effect, the theme song was played once again after the lyrics where completed, for the students to check what they are hearing. Second while-watching activity for this episode was to jot down things that girls do on a typical girl’s night in and things that guys do on a typical guy’s night out. This activity prodded a post-watching discussion, as the students argued if the girls night in and guys night out pictured in the episode might be considered typical or not.

“The One with the East German Laundry Detergent” has several scenes with Ross and Rachel in the laundromat. The students were given screenshots from these scenes and their task was to put them into the correct order and match each one with a sentence, which their were given separately. This activity was a pairwork aimed at combining the aural and visual impressions. Putting pictures in the correct order was easy for the students, matching sentences caused a few problems, mostly because they were so focused at the image that they temporarily forgot to listen.

As the series progresses, parts of the apartments of the friends change. For this activity the students were given a picture of Monica’s apartment from a different episode and were asked to find as many changes to the apartment as they can. The episode was stopped for a minute at one point, showing the best view of the apartment, to allow the students to focus at the details. Of course, they could check

their observations and add more during the rest of the episode. This activity was used with “The One with the Butt” and its aim was to let the students practice comparisons. The students liked this activity and tried to find differences in the tiniest details.

During the next episode the students were asked to identify the main storylines and important points in them and write them down. When the episode ended, they compared their notes in pairs, then in groups of four, eight and finally as the whole class. By comparing their answers and re-evaluating the importance of individual points in the growing groups, the students were able to create an outline of the individual storylines. The activity was surprisingly short, as the students’ notes were very similar and so they did not have many problems with coming to a consensus in the groups. This activity was used for “The One with the Blackout”.

The next while-watching activity was aimed at practice of making predictions about the future. During the watching, the episode was stopped five times and the students were asked to guess what is going to happen next. The students found this activity a little annoying and the predictions made were far-fetched, especially at the beginning. It was used for the eighth episode, “The One where Nana Dies Twice”, which prompted the students to predict, that the deceased grandmother will rise from the dead again and again. Apart from that, the students were asked to try to write down all(or as many as they can manage) of the words from the episode that they do not understand or do not know what the words mean. This activity was aimed at helping students understand and develop their vocabulary. An average number of words that needed explanation was seven per student and while it was not the most entertaining activity, the students appreciated it.

The ninth episode, “The One where the Underdog Gets Away”, is a Thanksgiving themed episode. As it is the first in the series, the characters’ attitude towards this holiday is explained. The students were given pieces of paper with the names of the characters and various Thanksgiving activities, likes and dislikes, and were asked to match them together and form whole sentences about what each character likes and does not like about Thanksgiving. The aim of this activity was to bring students attention to various Thanksgiving traditions, as well as different habits of the characters and to make them compare those. The students had some problems in matching the likes and dislikes to the characters, but the subsequent forming of the sentences and comparing the characters’ habit was smooth.

For “The One with the Monkey” the while-watching activity was again to finish the given sentences. The aim was to find out, whether the students made any progress in understanding and being able to write down longer phrases. It was obvious, that the students find it easier than in the second episode, however most of them were still not able to finish all the sentences.

5.1.3 Post-watching activities

The post-watching activities’ main aim is to check students’ understanding, focus their attention at the important parts of the episode and reinforce their memory. They are also the activities that should emphasize student production of the language, or student talking time.

For “The Pilot” the main emphasis was on finding work. Therefore the students were divided into groups after the watching and they were to discuss three questions about friends, their jobs and Rachel’s attitude towards getting a job. The aim was to revise the vocabulary relating to jobs and occupations

that the students have been taught in the last lessons before the testing of the series. The discussion was lively, though some groups kept slipping into Czech, when they encountered a vocabulary problem. When asked about the conclusions of their discussions, the students were able to give answers to the questions, as well as reasons for them.

Another group activity was used after watching “The One with the Sonogram at the End”. This time a quote from one of the characters was used as a prompt. The students were asked to share their ideals and fantasies about their future after they leave high school. The purpose was to make the students use sentences with future tenses and express their desires. This activity seemed to amuse the students, as they pictured their future in wealth and luxury, as well as provoke serious thoughts about going to university and the demands that the studies will put on them. All of the students were actively participating in the discussions and each of them was able to recount his or her ideal or fantasy future.

As mentioned above in the *Subsection 5.1.2*, the activity related to “The One with the Thumb” episode started during the watching of the episode and continued after the watching by role-playing the scenes from the episode. In each scene there were six people talking, however, in smaller groups the student who had the least lines took up the odd lines as well and it worked out fine. The goal for the students was to come as close as they can to the original pronunciation and intonation of the scene. They were allowed to read their lines, since there was not enough time to practise. This activity was one of the best liked.

The activity for the next episode (“The One with George Stephanopoulos”) started with writing. The students wrote the answers to five “What if...” questions, practising the first conditional sentences. When they were done writing, for each question two students were chosen in each class, to read their answers out loud. The answers were in some cases very imaginative and entertaining. It was another activity that the students liked very much.

The students need to find their own methods to help their memory and the teacher should be the one to introduce at least some possibilities for that, which was the purpose of the activity after “The One with the East German Laundry Detergent”. The students made a mind-map in groups, starting with the word *laundry*. The students had to brainstorm about terms connected to laundry in some way and organize them into groups, or branches around the original word. The approach most of the groups took was to assign a question to each branch and put the words that answer the question on it (e.g. Where can I do the laundry? - at home, at building’s washroom, at laundromat, at my parents’). The final map had twenty words around the original. One of the mind-maps is now hanging one of the classes for the students to revise the words.

In “The One with the Butt” Joey loses his acting gig, because he overacts the role. To imitate that, each student was given a picture of an emotion, and was asked to try and ‘overact’ that emotion in a single sentence. The rest of the students were guessing, what emotion was being conveyed to them. It was a revision of the emotions and feelings vocabulary, as well as practice of different intonations and stress placement. In most cases the students were successful and had a lot of fun.

The post-watching activity for the seventh episode was a continuation of the while-watching activity listed in *Subsection 5.1.2*. After creating the outline of the individual storylines of the episode, the students were again divided into pairs and each of them retold one of the stories of the episode to the other, using the outlines. The purpose of this exercise was to teach the students to talk fluently with only the most important points written down for support. The students had minor troubles in leading

the story naturally from one point to another. They tried to use just sentences built around the main points, which was not sufficient.

For “The One where Nana Dies Twice” the post-watching activity was writing. The students were given a short story about a gay in a shopping center and were asked to write two hundred words on stereotypes about homosexuals and their opinion on them. This was the only homework activity that the students were given during the testing. The short reflections, it resulted in, were interesting and in many cases brought a surprising insight into the problem, although the students were not thrilled by the task at first.

Since the students enjoyed role-playing so much, after “The One where the Underdog Gets Away” their task was to create a dialogue between Rachel and her father about money for the skiing trip, Ross and his mother about the parents going away for Thanksgiving or Joey and his parents about his ‘ inappropriate illness’ and then role-play them in pairs. It was harder for the students because they did not have the actual wording of the dialogue ready-made. The resultant sketches were shorter than the copied scenes in the first role-playing, but most of the students managed to act out the overall atmosphere of the conversation better this time around.

The last post-watching activity was to draw a simple comics version of the New Year’s Eve party at Monica’s from “The One with the Monkey”, choosing just one of the main characters and giving their story an alternative ending. This focused the students attention to important moments of a story of an individual person’s evening and provided space for the students’ creativity both in artistic expression and choosing or inventing the right lines for the dialogue. Regardless of comics-drawing talent, the resultant stories were resourceful and for the most part hilarious. Perhaps a little surprising was that, much like the original story, a vast majority of the comics stories did not end with a New Year’s midnight kiss.

5.2 Student evaluation

The students’ participation in the lessons was active during the whole time of the testing, they seemed to enjoy the activities and especially discussions in groups. At the end of the testing period, the students were asked to write a short evaluation of their learning experience after the last lesson with *Friends*. The questions they were asked to answer were:

1. Do you prefer learning English from a series or from a textbook?
2. Which activity did you like the most?
3. Do you think Friends is a good series for learning English or would you recommend some other?

5.2.1 Series or textbook

As shown in the *Chart 5.2.1* 50% people thought both a series and a textbook should be used, 29% people said they prefer series to textbook and 21% people chose the textbook as their preferred learning material. The reasons, that the students gave, for using both textbook and series were ranging from “the

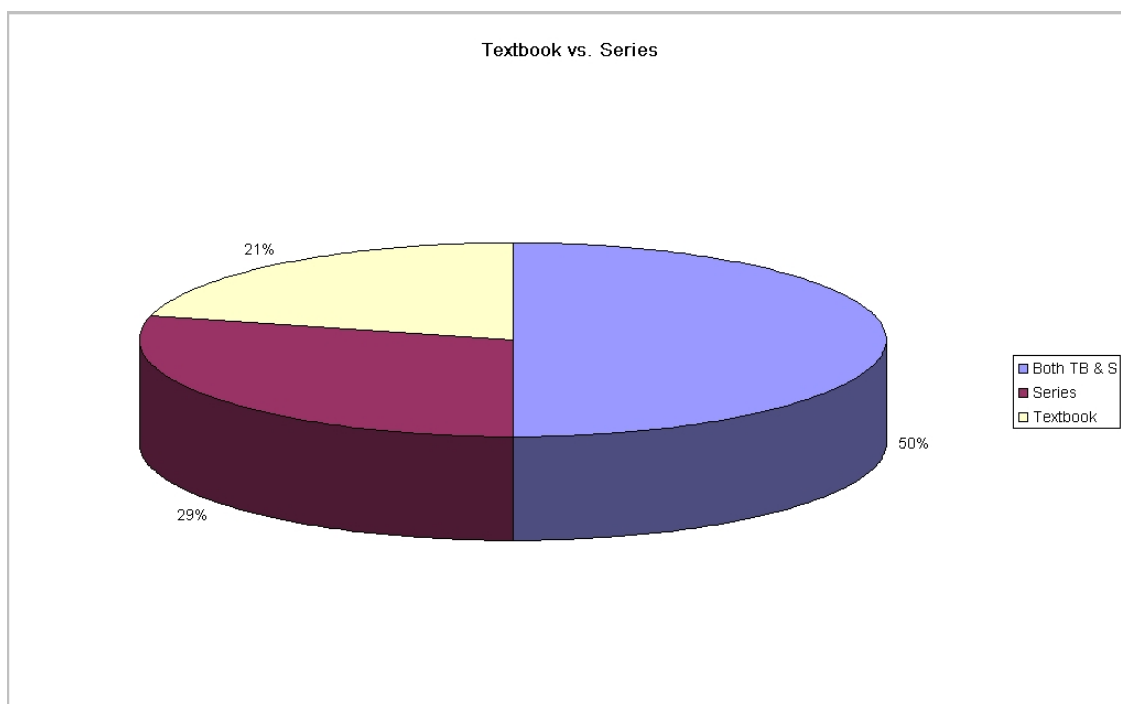


Figure 5.1: The relative numbers of students preferring each material

series, like the textbook, would grow boring if it was used exclusively through longer period of time” to “textbook is more effective, but the series is more fun”. Most of the students, however, expressed, that they feel the need for both, as the textbook gives them the basics and the grammar they need, while the series prepares them better for understanding real-life English and is invaluable as a material for conversation. The overall consensus seemed to be, that learning with textbook seems more like learning, while learning with the series is a good verification of the knowledge the students already have, which possibly helps widen the vocabulary.

The students who preferred the series shared the conviction that learning English through series is more fun than learning by the conventional methods (through textbook), which was the heart of their reasoning. Nevertheless some decided to go deeper and reasoned, that the series are better, because they know them and like them; because they allow the students to learn proper pronunciation and even some slang words that are in no textbook. There were even some students in this group, who confessed to not always understanding everything in the series, without condemning the show for it.

Of those who chose textbook over the series, only one student commented further on the reason for the choice. The reason given was that the student expects to be taught grammar and tested from vocabulary at school, while series are for watching at home. Since no other reason why some of the students prefer textbook was stated, it may be assumed, that their reasons were similar to the aforementioned one and to those given by the students who voted for the combination of textbook and series.

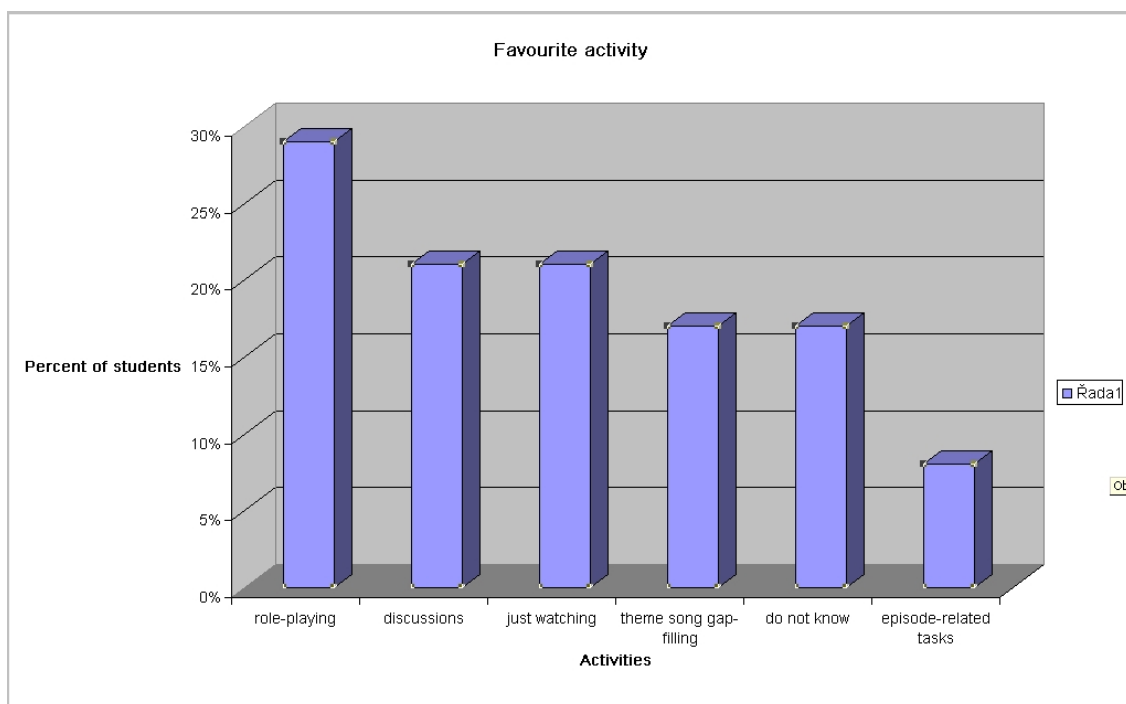


Figure 5.2: The numbers of students preferring each activity

5.2.2 Favourite activity

The *Chart 5.2.2* shows the results for the second question. The numbers do not add up to 100% since some of the students have picked two activities they liked best. Of all the activities, 29% of the students picked role-playing, 21% liked discussions and having to express their own opinion the most, 21% would rather just watch the episodes in peace, 17% are happy that they finally understand the theme-song thanks to the gap-filling, equally 17% did not have a favourite activity and 8% voted for any and all of the episode related tasks like answering questions or putting quotes and images in the correct order. From that it is plain to see, that a majority of the students appreciated the activities where they were given space to speak and practise the newly acquired vocabulary and hone their skills in pronunciation and intonation as well as communicative competences for various situations.

On the other hand, almost a half of the students did not choose any activity as their favourite, either because they could not remember any that they liked or in the case of slightly less than a quarter of the total number, they effectively stated, that they liked none of the activities whatsoever. It is, however, necessary to point out, that though they did not choose their favourite activity, the students were actively participating in all the activities.

5.2.3 Friends or other series

The results for the third question are recorded in *Chart 5.2.3*: 50% of the students think *Friends* is a great series for learning English and 21% think the series is good but would prefer something a little easier to understand, while other students agree that *Friends* is good, but 12,5% suggested *How I Met*

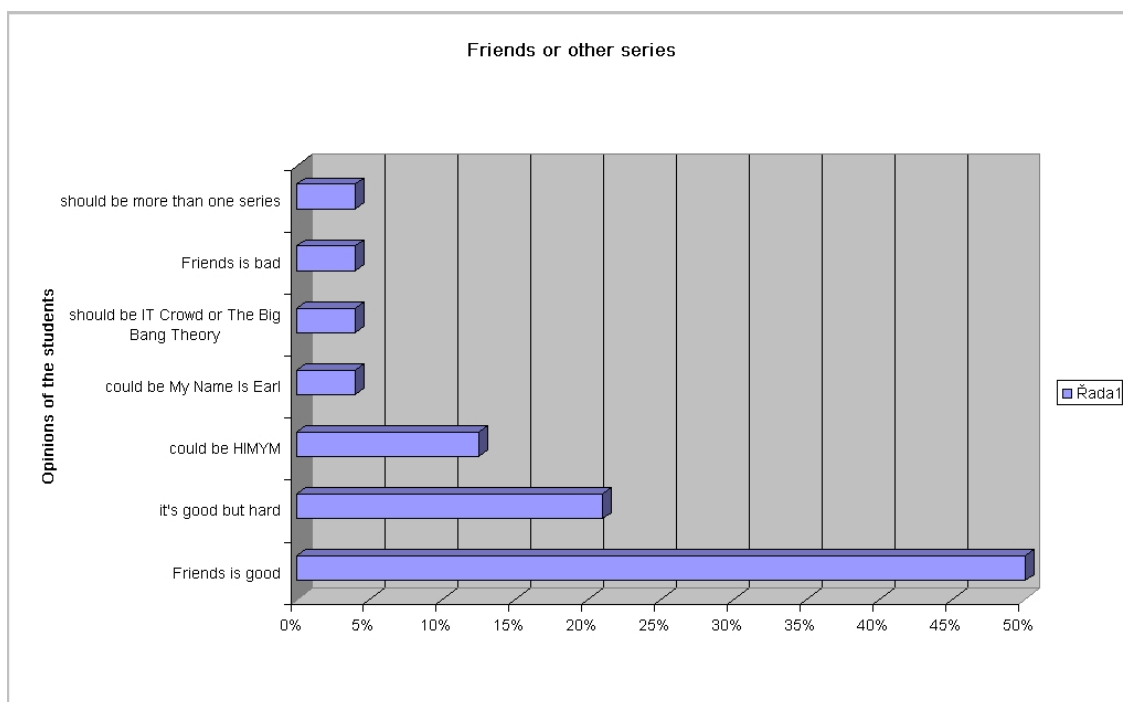


Figure 5.3: The relative numbers of students preferring each series

Your Mother as its equal or slightly better, 4% brought forth *My Name Is Earl* as another possibility, and 4% thinks using more than one series would be best. The rest of the students are not that enthusiastic about the chosen series: 4% suggests using *IT Crowd* or *The Big Bang Theory* instead of *Friends* and 4% just thinks *Friends* are not good. The answers to this question were especially interesting, as there was sharp contrast in judging the series difficulty in relation to the students' level. While some stated, that the series is easy to understand especially with the use of English subtitles, others had a very different opinion, saying that the speech on the show is too rapid and hard to understand. Some of the students even said that the series is fun, provided that you can understand it.

As for using multiple series, the reasons given for that were that each of the series uses a different English and any other sitcom would be as good as *Friends*, simply because it is fun. One of the students suggested, that it would be better to use children fairy tales, since they are easiest to understand.

5.3 Possible modifications

Each of the episodes of the *Friends* has multiple storylines, equal in importance and prominence. Since the average episode is 22 minutes long, it is impossible to exploit and exhaust all the possible activities and topics in the rest of a standard school lesson. This part of the chapter will provide several ideas for activities, that were not used during the testing, but could be used in connection with the first ten episodes of the series.

During the testing, the main topic drawn on from the first episode was "Jobs and Occupations". To further develop that topic, the students might be asked to write their CV or role-play a job interview.

Moreover, the second storyline in that episode is about relationships, which could be used as an alternative topic for discussion, or can lead to an activity, where the students would be talking from the point of view of one of the characters (Monica, Ross or Rachel would be the best) about that character's no-longer-significant other.

The activities for the second episode, that were tested, left the plot of the episode virtually untouched as they focused more on the phraseology and students' projections. Even if the idea of expecting a baby may be too far from the minds of high school students, the one story of the episode that might have been exploited, was the visit of Ross' and Monica's parents. It can be made into a role-play or the students can think of some witty retorts to the criticism. Or, as a while-watching activity, the students can jot down all the covert insults, that the parents threw at poor Monica.

In the third episode the focus was on just two scenes. The main story of the episode is that one of the characters gets money, she did not earn and is upset about it. That could be a wonderful topic for a group discussion and practising conditionals. Since she ends up giving the money to a homeless woman, another activity might be making a poster for a local charity or writing up an article to *Novy Prostor*. The second topic touched upon in the episode is, whether it is good when someone's friends like their partner and how much should they like each other. The activity for this might be splitting the class into two groups with one maintaining, that it is awesome when friends and partner do get along, while the other is adamant, that it is better, when they do not mix too much.

For "The One with George Stephanopoulos" the activities touched upon all the main topics of the episode, however, it might be fun for the students to for example try and order pizza in English (with one or two of them being the pizza delivery boys, trying to remember all the orders). If the class needs an active break, it is always possible to let them organize a Twister tournament. It is nevertheless advised to first put all the sharp edges as far away as possible.

The fifth episode is about laundry, dating and splitting up. One of the characters is trying to break up with his girlfriend, but does not know how to do it painlessly. Another character offers him help. Let the class brainstorm about what she could possibly say to both her boyfriend and her friend's girlfriend, that makes the break ups so calm. Or let one half act out a peaceful split up, while the other half will act out a stormy break up.

As the issue of the episode is Monica's obsessive cleanliness, the class can play a little game on cleanup. Put two piles of various things to the middle of the classroom. Prepare cards with instructions that will say where the individual things have their proper place. Split the class into two groups and give each group the first card. After they have placed the first object, give them a second card and so on.

The seventh episode is, among other things, about Ross' unsuccessful attempt to tell Rachel, how he feels about her. A possible, albeit a little old-school activity, is to ask the students to write a love letter. If, for some reason old-school is not cool anymore, there can always be love sms, messages on Facebook wall, emails and ICQ messages. Second activity, this time drawing on the fact that Paolo does not speak English, might be to give one of the students a message, which he then has to mime for the rest of the class (or make it a competition with two mimes acting for two groups). Those who guess have to write the message down and show it to the teacher, or if the whole class is playing together, just shout it out loud.

In "The One where Nana Dies Twice" Ross says, that what he remembers about his grandmother is that

she always took the sweeteners from everywhere. He later finds out, that she kept a collection of them in her wardrobe. What do the students collect? Let them talk about their collections, write an essay about all the weird things people collect or bring the more portable collections to school and prepare an exhibition.

Thanksgiving is a yearly classic in the high school lessons on holidays and feasts. Still a wonderful activity may be, if the students make a poster listing all the things they are grateful for. Or if the class is more into speaking than art, let them discuss whether a fetus (or for example a person in a coma) can or cannot hear other people talking or singing to them.

Yet another holiday episode - this time about New Year's Eve. It never hurts to practise comparing the Czech and American traditions, but for the students, talking about exotic and illegal pets might be a more interesting topic. For that matter, Ross says, that the monkey was saved from some laboratory, which can lead to a discussion on animal rights or straight to court. Divide the class into three groups - prosecutors, defendants and jury - give them a rough draft of their perspectives and attitudes and let them act out a trial.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

Discussions about using video in ESL classrooms are abundant on the internet and discussions about using series for TESL are not much behind. Usually, though, these discussions do not consider using a series continually over a longer period of time, at least not in the classroom environment. Many students of EFL and ESL courses do watch series at home. Some watch them in English, because the newest episodes will not be translated and dubbed into Czech for another couple months, at best, some are waiting impatiently at least for the Czech subtitles to come out, some watch them in English, because they think it is a good way to learn, some even watch them in English with English subtitles for hearing-impaired. As a self-improvement in English and a spare time activity the series are great. The numbers of people, who claimed they learned English thanks to one series or another, is rising. But is this method suitable for classroom environment as well, or should it stay a last resort for those, whom years of language instruction at school have given nothing but wrecked nerves any time a test draws near?

The testing, done for this thesis, confirmed that a television series can be successfully used in a class environment in a succession of lessons, without any recognizable diminishing of activity or interest of the students. *Friends* has proved as a suitable series for classroom use, since the length of the episodes is not excessive and leaves enough time for post-watching activities. The episodes provide abundant inspiration for students' work and more topics than can possibly be exploited in one lesson. The language of the series is appropriate for the B2 level, since the students can understand most of the dialogues and are able to devise the rest from context. And, what is more, nobody complained that they do not like the series or that they would rather watch something else. One or two students expressed in the evaluation that they were not completely satisfied with the choice, but it was not apparent from their performance in the lessons.

Several problems appeared during the testing. The first was the lack of subtitles in the first episode, which made it harder for the students to understand. At their level, the subtitles would not be necessary, it is however better to use them, as the sound in the classrooms is not always the best. Moreover, it gives the students more confidence and helps them in identifying words, that they do not know and are not able to guess from the context. Second problem, that, fortunately, occurred only once, was that neither of the multimedia labs was available. This could, however, present a serious problem on some school, that have less equipment available, especially if the groups of students are more numerous and the situation therefore cannot be solved by using portable equipment (e.g. a laptop). Apart from that,

another trouble was, that in some classes the screen hides the white board and therefore they cannot be used simultaneously.

To sum up, it may be said, that the testing of the first ten episodes of the television series *Friends* in the environment of a high school ESL class on B2 level was a complete success and confirmed the theoretical assumptions, both in terms of interest and motivation of the students and their participation on the lessons, and in terms of fulfilling the aims set for individual activities as well as for the whole course. The students, albeit willing to participate, was a little sceptical about how much can they learn from the series. However both the activities, that were repeated (role-playing and finishing sentences from the episode) have shown improvement of the students' performance.

Based on the results of the testing it may be postulated, that series should have their, if possible, regular place in the English classroom, eventhough the students can watch them at home in their free time. Among the reasons for the inclusion of the series is the fact, that while watching a series alone can help improve someone's English, the improvement is in the passive language knowledge, while by bringing the series to the classroom, the students can improve their active knowledge, thus gaining the most important language skills.

Bibliography

- [1] ARNOLD, J., AND BROWN, H. A map of the terrain. In *Affect in Language Learning*, J. Arnold, Ed. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK, 2000, pp. 1–24.
- [2] AUSUBEL, D. A. *Educational Psychology: A Cognitive View*. Holt, Reinhart and Winston, New York, NY, USA, 1968.
- [3] BASE, E. Using dvd and video in your esl class. <http://www.eslbase.com/articles/video>.
- [4] BRADDOCK, B. *Using films in the English class*. Hemel Hemstead, Phoenix, ELT, 1996.
- [5] BROWN, H. D. *Principles of Language Learning and Teaching*. Prentice Halls, Inc., New Jersey, USA, 1987, pp. 11–13.
- [6] BROWN, H. D. *Principles of Language Learning and Teaching*. Prentice Halls, Inc., New Jersey, USA, 1987, pp. 212–213.
- [7] BROWN, H. D. *Principles of Language Learning and Teaching*. Prentice Halls, Inc., New Jersey, USA, 1987, pp. 114–115.
- [8] CRANDALL, J. J. Cooperative language learning and affective factors. In *Affect in Language Learning*, J. Arnold, Ed. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK, 2000, pp. 177–193.
- [9] GARDNER, R. C., AND LAMBERT, W. E. *Attitudes and Motivation in Second Language Learning*. Newbury House Publishers, Rowley, MA, USA, 1972.
- [10] HALLIDAY, M. *Explorations in the Functions of Language*. Edward Arnold, London, UK, 1973.
- [11] KAGAN, S. Cooperative learning and sociocultural factors in schooling. In *Beyond Language: Social and Cultural Factors in Schooling Language Minority Students* (Los Angeles, USA, 1986), California State University.
- [12] KING, J. Motivating learning through multimedia film projects. available at request on jane@mail.scu.edu.tw, 2002.
- [13] KING, J. Using dvd feature films in the efl classroom. *ELT Newsletter 2/2002* (2002).
- [14] KRISTIENSEN, A. Enhancing subjects of the curriculum by using "the simpsons" in high school english teaching. <<http://www.snpp.com/other/papers/ak.paper.html>>, 2001–2011.

- [15] LAUER, M. 'friends' creators share the story of their beginning, 2004.
- [16] MARCKWARDT, A. D. Changing winds and shifting sands. *MST English Quarterly* 21 (1972), 3–11.
- [17] MEJIA, E., XIAO, M., AND KENNEY, J. *102 very teachable films*. Prentice Hall Regents, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1994.
- [18] MELVIN, B. S., AND STOUT, D. F. Motivating language learners through authentic materials. In *Interactive Language Teaching*, W. M. Rivers, Ed. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK, 1990, pp. 44–56.
- [19] RAMMAL, S. M. Using video in the efl classroom. <http://www3.telus.net/linguisticsissues/using>
- [20] RICHARDS, J. C. *Curriculum Development in Language Teaching*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK, 2001, pp. 36–38.
- [21] SHARAN, S., AND SHACHAR, H. *Language and Learning in the Cooperative Classroom*. Springer-Verlag., New York, NY, USA, 1988.
- [22] STEPELSKI, S. Video in the esl classroom: Making the most of the movies. *ESL Magazine* 2/2000 (March/April 2000), 10–12.
- [23] VAN EK, J., AND ALEXANDER, L. *Threshold Level English*. Pergamon Press, Oxford, UK, 1975.
- [24] VÍT, M. Učíme se anglicky s televizními seriály. <<http://www.helpforenglish.cz/tipy-a-triky/ruzne/c2008110602-ucime-se-anglicky-s-televiznimi-serialy.html>>, 2011.
- [25] WARD, J., AND LEPEINTRE. The creative connection in movies and tv: What degrassi high teach teachers. *The Journal of the Imagination in Language Learning and Teaching* III. (1995-1996).
- [26] WIDDOWSON, H. *Notional-functional syllabuses* 1978. Blachford and Schachter, 1978.
- [27] WILKINS, D. A. *Notional syllabuses*. Oxford University Press, Oxford, UK, 1976.
- [28] WOOD, D. Film communication in tefl. *Video Rising: Newsletter of the Japan Assoc. for Language Teaching* 7 (1995).

Chapter 7

List of Acronyms

CA Communicative Approach

CoLL Cooperative Language Learning

CLT Communicative Language Teaching

ELT English Language Teaching

EFL English as a Foreign Language

ESL English as a Second Language

HA Humanistic Approach

HIMYM How I Met Your Mother

SLA Second Language Acquisition

TEFL Teaching English as a Foreign Language

Appendix A

Friends – lesson plan 1

Pre-watching activity:

- T writes FRIENDS on the blackboard, Ss brainstorming

While-watching

Answer these questions:

- What is the name of the guy Monica has a date with?
- Why did Rachel come to the café in her wedding dress?
- How old was Phoebe when she came to the city?
- What are some of the friends doing – what are their jobs?
- What seems to be a favourite passtime for the friends?

Find out who:

- Says “This guy says hello — I wanna kill myself.”
- Buys new shoes?
- Had a lesbian wife?
- Lived with an albino guy?
- Had been tricked into sleeping with someone?
- Has weird dreams?

Appendix B

Friends lesson plan 2

While-watching activity

Finish the sentences according to the episode:

- See, I wrote a note for myself, then I realized I don't need the note, so I balled it up and now...
- Ew ew ew ew ew...What?!...
- When did you last have it on? – Oh, probably...
- Well, at least she...
- These people are pros: they know what they're doing...
- We agreed on Minnie! – We agreed on....
- My maid-of-honor Mindy? – Yeah, we're...
- What are we supposed to be seeing here? – I don't know, but I think...
- If you end up getting married and having kids, I just hope they have....

Post-watching activity

Daydreaming about the future

T divides Ss into groups for discussion

T says: Think about the quote below. Do you think things are going to be easy after high school? What are your plans, your dreams, your ideals?

“When did it become so complicated? Remember when we are in highschool together? Didn't you think you're just going to meet someone, fall in love and that'd be it?”

Appendix C

Friends lesson plan 3

While- and Post- watching activity

T gives out the papers and tell the Ss: “Watch the scenes closely, try to remember the intonation and stresses”

After the episode Ss rehearse the scenes in groups. They read the lines, trying to imitate the intonation of the character.

Roleplay:

All: Put it out!

Ra: It’s worse than the thumb!

Ch: Hey, this is SO unfair!

M: Why is it unfair?

Ch: So I have a flaw. Big deal. Like Joey’s constant knuckle-cracking isn’t annoying! And Ross, with his overpronouncing every single word. And Monica, with that snort, when she laughs – I mean, what the hell is that thing? I accept all those flaws, why can’t you accept me for this?

J: Does the knuckle-cracking bother everybody, or just him?

Ra: Well, I could live without it.

J: Is it like a little annoying, or is it like when Phoebe chews her hair?

R: Hey, don’t listen to him, Phoebes, I think it’s endearing.

J: Oh, you do, do you?

R: Now, there is nothing wrong with speaking correctly.

Ra: Indeed, there isn’t. – I should really get back to work.

P: Yeah, otherwise someone might get what they actually ordered.

Ra: Oho – the hair comes out and the gloves come off.

Roleplay 2:

M: We have to talk. Okay, it's about Alan. There is something, you should know. Oh, man, there is really no easy way, to say this. I've decided to break up with Alan.

R: Is there somebody else?

M: No, no, no, no, it's just...things change. People change. **Ra:** We didn't change.

J: So that's it? It's over? Just like that?

P: You know, you let your guard down, you know, you start to really care about someone, and I just...I...

M: Look, I can go on pretending...

J + Ch: Okay!

M: ...no, that wouldn't be fair to me, it wouldn't be fair to Alan and it wouldn't be fair to you.

R: Yeah, well, who wants fair? I mean, I just want things back, you know, the way they were.

M: I'm sorry.

Ch: Oh, she's sorry! I feel better.

Ra: I just can't believe this! I mean with the holidays coming up, I wanted him to meet my family...

M: I'll meet someone else. There will be other Alans.

All: Yeah, right. You believe it...

M: Are you guys gonna be okay?

R: Hey, hey, we'll be fine. We're just gonna need a little time.

M: I understand.

Appendix D

Friends lesson plan 4

While-watching activities:

Friends theme – lyrics

Fill in the gaps:

So no one told you _____ was going to be this way.
_____'s a joke, you're broke, you're love life's DOA.
It's like you're always stuck in _____ gear,
Well, it hasn't _____, your week, your month,
or even your year.

But, I'll be there for you, when the _____ to pour.
I'll be _____, like I've been there before.
I'll be there for you, cause _____.

Write down things typical for "girls' night" and a typical "guys' night"

Post-watching activity:

What if.....

Answer these questions:

- What would you do, if you were omnipotent for a day?
- What would you buy, if you got your first paycheck money?
- How would you react, if one of your friends told you, she was pregnant?
- What would you do, if you were hit by a puck?
- What would you do, if you found out that a really cute guy lives across the street from you?

Appendix E

Friends lesson plan 5

Pre-watching activity

Make an intro for the episode

T: What do you remember from the previous episode? Put together five images to form a ...

“Previously on Friends”

while-watching activity

Putting things into correct order

T gives each pair a set of images [E](#) and sentences.

Your task is to put them into the correct order, as appear in the episode.

The Sentences Excuse me!

It's a song that we sing...o-oh, the laundry's done.

You will have to take me with it!

Are you going to separate that?

Screenshots

Post-watching activity

Creating a mind-map

T draws an outline of a mind-map [E.1](#) on the board, places the word LAUNDRY in the middle and asks students to create a mind-map around it.





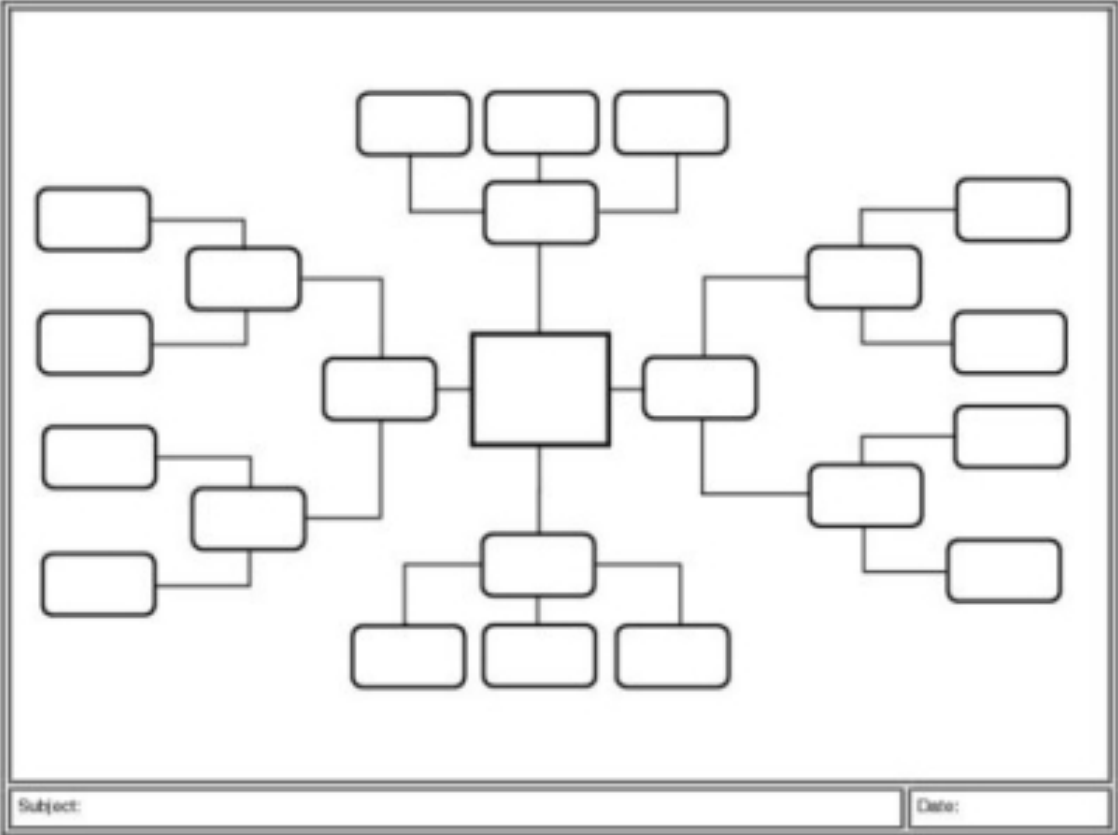


Figure E.1: Mind map template

Appendix F

Friends lesson plan 6

While-watching activity

Changing apartment

Compare the apartment in the episode and the picture you have been given.

Post-watching activity *Overacting emotions with voice*

Emotions (either in pictures or just written on pieces of paper):

- Sorrow
- Joy
- Tiredness
- Anger
- Being shy
- Flirt
- Fright



Figure F.1: Changed apartment

Appendix G

Friends lesson plan 7

Pre-watching activity

What would you do in a blackout? Divide into groups and write down as many activities as you can. Whichever group will have the most earns a small but important plus

While-watching activity

Outline of the story

There are two prominent storylines in this episode. Write down the important moments for each one of them.

Post-watching activity

Now divide into pairs, each pick one of the stories and retell it using the outline you prepared while watching.

Appendix H

Friends lesson plan 8

Pre-watching activity

Buried alive

Divide into pairs

Put the pictures [H.1](#) into correct order, then tell the story to your partner.

While-watching activity

Predict what will happen next

The episode was stopped:

- When Ross closed in to Nana's death bed (before she woke up)
- As he dives for the "right" shoes (before the Sweet'n'Lows come pouring down)
- As the Friends walk through the graveyard (before Ross falls into an open grave)
- When Monica's father finds out Joey has a portable TV (before he joins him)



Figure H.1: Uncut comics in correct order

- After Chandler is told Brian is out of his league (before Brian walks into the door)

Post-watching activity

Stereotypes Ss are given this story:

A guy sits in the clothes section of a mall, obviously wanting to be anywhere else. A shop assistant walks up to him: "Has your girlfriends taken you shopping?" "No," he says. "It's worse, actually. My female friend yesterday found out that I am gay..." Just then a lady steps up to him: "So, how do I look?" "I don't care, really. I hate shopping." "You are no good, if you are gay and hate shopping!"

And a homework assignment to write 200 words on stereotypes about homosexuals.

Appendix I

Friends lesson plan 9

While-watching activity

Matching likes and dislikes to the characters

- Dislikes pilgrim holidays
- Likes skiing
- Hates being left behind for holiday
- Loves mum's potatoes with lumps
- Hates free clinics
- Likes toasts with cheese
- Dislikes money problems
- Likes potatoes with peas and onion
- Dislikes that none asks his/her opinion about festive food
- Likes keys

Post-watching activity

Role-play Choose one of the three dialogues, write it up in pairs and then role-play it.

The three dialogues:

Ross finds out his parents are going to spend the Thanksgiving away from home.

Rachel finds out her father will not pay for her ticket, since she is 'independent'.

Joey finds out he is not allowed to come home, because of the ads all over the City.

Appendix J

Friends lesson plan 10

Pre-watching activity

Who would suit which pet?

Which pet do you think would each of the characters want? And why?

While-watching activity

Finishing the sentences

- Hey, that monkey has a
- Some fat guy's....
- Is it something you'd like to
- You should just do it. Just
- So on our no-date evening, three
- So I'm gonna be the only one
- If I showed up with my

Post-watching activity

Alternative ending

Choose one of the main characters and draw a comics about the New Year's party with an alternative ending for the character.