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# REALITY SHOW AND ITS ADAPTATION IN SLOVAK TELEVISION PRODUCTION

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## **Abstract**

Globalisation processes are discussed especially in connection with audiovisual production in North America. Slovak television production is heavily influenced by products originating from the United States as well. The main aim of the present study is to clarify the globalisation tendencies of the media industry with regard to television production in post-communist countries, specifically in Slovakia. The research focuses on the sub-genre of reality TV called *container reality game show*, which is currently perceived as a globally popular media phenomenon. To fulfil the primary purpose of the study, it is necessary to clarify the key terms, describe the essence of reality TV and its basic characteristics. The follow-up case study offers an assessment of the globalisation processes resonating in contemporary Slovak television production, specifically in reality TV products. We work with the assumption that the foreign globalised theme and its adaptation in the form of a

glocalised title are qualitatively more or less identical, but that there are always several content changes in the domestic title that reflect the local interests, attitudes, and habits of the respective media audiences.

**Key words:** container reality game show, globalisation, glocalisation, media industry, reality shows, Slovak television production, television industry.

## INTRODUCTION

Globalisation, defined as the creation of numerous international connections merging various services and goods related to all areas of human life, is significant in the economic, political, socio-cultural spheres as well as in the media. The purpose of the present study on Slovak television industry is to assess the globalisation tendencies resonating in it. We work with the fact that Slovak television production is significantly influenced and determined by North American production. The latter has long maintained its dominant influence [see, e.g., Radošinská 2014; Rivkin 2020; Prostináková Hossová & Rusňáková 2022; Filmed Entertainment and Streaming Sector 2023] expressed through a range of globally popular audiovisual works of (not only) an episodic nature. The importance of the issue under study lies precisely in the reflection on the ways in which Slovakia, as a post-communist country, works with globalised themes and modifies them into their glocalised versions. Looking at the otherwise controversial sub-genre of reality TV called reality shows further emphasises the topicality of the problem addressed in the environment of Slovak television production, which is perceived as conservative in comparison to North American media production (given the current social, cultural, and political situation in Slovakia).

The globalisation tendencies of the American television industry are clearly identifiable in several television genres preferred in Slovakia, including reality TV genres – amongst them reality shows, which, due to their ability to achieve stable viewership and appeal to the ever-changing preferences of media audiences, become a suitable object for our investigation. Therefore, the main aim of the present study is to clarify the globalisation tendencies of the television industry, specifically in relation to the reality TV genre and its sub-genre of “container” (dating) reality game shows. It is also noteworthy to observe how the given media content is glocalised or adapted to the preferences of the domestic (Slovak) audience and the socio-cultural and media conditions in the country. This is original research aimed at clarifying the ways of adapting a selected reality show in terms of Slovak television production.

The associated sub-objective of the study is to familiarise the reader with the theoretical essence of the addressed problem by defining the relevant terminology (the terms globalisation, glocalisation, media industry, television industry, reality TV, reality show, container (dating) reality game show) and the characteristic structural-globalisation processes. While elaborating the theoretical part of the study, we primarily focus on knowledge from the fields of media and communication studies and cultural studies, media sociology, and several associated scientific disciplines. This theoretical reflection allows us to conduct a follow-up qualitative content analysis; a case study involving specific research material. We discuss a foreign television format, specifically the “container” reality game show *The Bachelor* [Graebner et al. 2002], the concept of which has been modified and used successfully in several countries around the world, including Slovakia. In the Slovak Republic, the format has been glocalised and adapted to the domestic context through the reality TV product entitled *Ruža pre nevestu* [*A Rose for the Bride*] [Alchus et al. 2023]. We assume that the foreign (North American) globalised theme of looking for love (a life partner) and its glocalised (Slovak) adaptation are qualitatively similar. However, the domestic version contains several content changes reflecting the social, cultural and media conditions of the country and the expectations of Slovak media audiences.

## **1. REALITY TV AS AN ENVIRONMENT REFLECTING MULTIPLE GLOBALISATION PROCESSES**

Globalisation processes are primarily defined as economic processes and secondarily as political, social, and cultural processes. In all cases, globalisation refers in its etymology to the term *global*, which means *the whole, the totality, the total*. The rapid expansion of globalisation is linked to the development and subsequent spread of information and communication technologies, which also means that the globalisation processes were, at first, seriously discussed only in relation to media technologies [see, e.g., Pravdová & Volková 2016; Radošinská et al. 2020]. Globalisation of the media is nowadays characterised by mass consumption of media products and (multi)media communication or other means of disseminating services and goods produced by media conglomerates. Globalised *media industries* are emerging, seen by many as the most progressive and highly profitable business sectors producing a variety of easily commodifiable goods and services. It is also important to mention that the media industries offer interesting content able to satisfy the natural human need to be entertained, which is why entertainment has become the driving force of the commercialisation of the media

industries, and entertainment is usually seen as the main feature of media content [see, e.g., Moravčíková 2013; Radošinská et al. 2020; Radošinská et al. 2022; Rusňáková & Prostináková Hossová 2022]. At the same time, globalisation is also associated with the spread of consumerism and the Americanisation of society and culture. In general terms, we can say that globalisation of the media refers to the efforts of (mostly) North American multinational corporations to spread media content (goods and services), and thus ideas, thoughts, values, or aesthetic schemes, around the world. This is why we consider these corporations to be the obvious initiators of social change not only at the international level, but also at the local, regional, or national levels.

*Glocalisation* is one of the major strategies global media corporations utilise to promote the idea that the local is not in opposition to the global, because what is perceived as local is, in fact, an integral part of the global [Robertson 1995]. The etymology of the word in question (*globalisation* – *global* and *localisation* – *local*), understood in the context of the media industry's operation schemes, suggests that this is a process initiated by media conglomerates. Their ambition is to penetrate local markets with their media content – goods or services – and adapt them to the conditions of a given country. The establishment of local branches employing domestic media professionals and content creators, marketing of universal but easily adaptable media content and other glocalisation strategies are identifiable in all sectors of the contemporary media industry. The television industry, with its formats and genres, is an ideal example of the massive export and domestication of media (television) content to adapt it to the national environment (e.g., by casting local protagonists, making partial or significant changes to the original script, etc.). In this context, the television industry can be characterised as one of the media industries shaped by several important structural changes and globalisation and glocalisation processes [Višňovský et al. 2022].

*Reality shows* are the most commonly globalised and glocalised television products. The term in question is widely debated within the professional public and amongst the audiences because it is often used in a broader sense (as synonymous with *reality TV*). Thus, many understand the expression as an umbrella term defining the entire genre group. However, in a narrower (and academically relevant) sense, reality show is a specific sub-genre of reality TV which is typically based on either the acting aspect and the so-called container environment, or centred on talent-seeking shows [see, e.g., Mikuláš 2011; Radošinská 2017; Hudíková & Pravdová 2022]. In the present study, we view reality shows as a sub-genre of reality TV where any

informational value is overshadowed by spectacular presentation and the entertainment imperative [Kunczik 1995]. It is a television show portraying a series of artificially created, staged situations and environments, in which the actions and usually authentic (genuine) reactions of ordinary people – the performers – are displayed. The competitors or performers are selected for the show most often based on auditions, and their task is to behave “naturally” in “artificially designed” conditions.

There are several categorisations of genres and sub-genres associated with reality TV. However, we believe that the conditions of the Slovak media environment and the national television market are currently best suited to the division of reality TV into four basic genres [see, e.g., Dovey 2000; Bondebjerg 2002; Kilborn 2003; Mikuláš 2011; Moravčíková 2013; Moravčíková & Radošínská 2018], namely:

1. *Reality-magazine* – it is dominated by authentic footage, i.e., by reality captured by the camera. The product involves a real storyline that has been filmed accidentally or deliberately, for example, by a person witnessing to the event or by a professional crew, most often by the emergency services, see *Cops* [Langley & Babour 1989] and *112* [Šesták 2006]. Other Slovak television products following this model are *Rodinné prípady* [*Family Cases*] [Zavarský 2012] and *Policajti v akcii – škandalózne prípady* [*Cops in Action – Scandalous Cases*] [Roháč et al. 2016] are merely hybrids of modern television genres that only seem to present truth and reality. The performers (whether we are talking about witnesses or professional cast members) are, in this case, actresses and actors involved in staged situations based mostly on real events that take place in everyday socio-cultural reality.
2. *Docu-soap* – records situations in documentary form and processes them as a soap opera. Docu-soap usually does not follow a specific plot; it depicts a story of people who are connected by a certain environment and explains the development of their relationships. The episodes build on each other, featuring non-actresses and non-actors, i.e., “ordinary people” in their natural environment. The audience – unlike the characters in a reality-magazine – can develop a certain relationship with the characters presented. This product offers a relatively high degree of reality portrayal as it tries to capture the course of everyday life of selected individuals, most often “celebrities”, see *Keeping Up with the Kardashians* [Seacrest 2007] or *Mojsejovci* [*The Mojsejs*] [Minařík & Lachovic 2005].
3. *Reality show, or reality game show* – the goal of the participants in this kind of television show is to win and get a reward, while its course is continuously

monitored by cameras and/or other recording devices, e.g., by the virtual person Lana in the globalised format *Too Hot to Handle* [Gibson & Bennett 2020] or the artificial intelligence called Alice in the thirteenth season of the reality game show *Farma [The Farm]* [Kodoň 2011]. Based on specific rules, the contestants are gradually eliminated; the situations are presented as authentic, although they are stylised, guided by a pre-prepared scenario, and supplemented by moderator inputs. The most important aspect of a reality game show is the fact that the actresses and actors are mostly isolated in a specific location under the constant supervision of advanced technology, which is why this sub-genre of reality TV is often associated with the term *container reality game show* – see *Big Brother* [Wollman 2000] and *VyVolení [The Chosen Ones]* [Eibner 2005]. An interesting type of the container reality game show is the so-called *dating show*, the main goal of which is – in contrast to winning the cash prize in the aforementioned TV shows – to find a partner for whose favour and affection the participants are actively competing, e.g., *The Bachelor* [Graebner et al. 2002] and *Ruža pre nevestu [A Rose for the Bride]* [Alchus et al. 2023]. Apart from borderline situations and plots, scenes with sexual overtones or other presentations characterised by the ability to shock and push the boundaries of human dignity are considered the most attractive for the audience. The considerable interest in the intimacies of others and the direct references to the principles of media voyeurism and exhibitionism are the reasons why this format can achieve such a high viewership not only in Slovakia but also abroad, despite the sub-genre's significant criticism, in particular from the professional public.

4. *Reality series* bears the characteristics of a social experiment and an observational documentary. Its common attributes are the search for borderline situations, the use of moderator “voice-over” or application of sensory technologies. The reality series casts actresses and actors who mostly live in critical social conditions, need money and are willing to endure and cope with almost anything in the show. It is a kind of “social probe” into the lives of ordinary people, processed into the form of a reality series, see *Wife Swap: USA* [Schwab & Lee 2004] and *Zámena manželiek [Wife Swap]* [Pazderová 2004].

In addition to the categories mentioned above, there are other sub-genres of reality TV that have gradually been formed through the hybridisation of other audiovisual content. For example, a recent trend is to involve celebrities in the creation of such

TV projects, resulting in several variations of *competition shows* (e.g., *Survivor* [Parsons et al. 2000] and *Survivor Česko & Slovensko* [*Survivor Czech & Slovakia*] [Orlík 2022]), *singing, dancing and other talent or knowledge shows* (e.g., *Sing Your Face Off* [Hurford-Jones 2014]; *Tvoja tvár znie povedome* [*Your Face Sounds Familiar*] [Majeský 2016]; *Dancing with the Stars* [Rudzinski & Heyes 2005]; *Let's Dance* [Núñez 2006] or *Milujem Slovensko* [*I Love Slovakia*] [Koleková et al. 2013]), but we also record many *adventure-competition entertainment shows* created directly for celebrities and their presentation (e.g., *I'm a Celebrity... Get Me Out of Here* [Cowles et al. 2002]; *Pevnosť Boyard* [*Fort Boyard*] [Šesták 1998]), or other projects. When trying to categorise the sub-genres of reality TV, it is necessary to mention their division according to their thematic focus. In this regard, we recognise, for example, the *makeover* – aiming to capture the visual transformation of a person or object (e.g., *Extreme Weight Loss* [Whitaker 2011] or *O 10 rokov mladší* [*10 Years Younger*] [Pazderová 2017]), *lifestyle show* – focusing on the lifestyle of the performers (e.g., *Nákupné maniačky* [*Shopping Maniacs*] [Eibner 2013]), *culinary show* – showcasing the culinary skills and abilities of the participants (e.g., *Iron Chef USA/America* [Marks 2005]; *Bez servítky* [*Without a Napkin*] [Eibner 2021] or *Na nože* [*Knives Out*] [Lamošová & Šulc 2023]), *mockumentaries* – a kind of “fake documentary” depicting fictitious events, characterised by irony, satire or parody (e.g., *De Grote Donnor Show* [Endemol 2007] and *Beyond the Pole* [Williams et al. 2009]), etc. Again, we note that there is currently an intermingling of different sub-genres of reality TV. This means that the range of TV programmes associated with this genre group can be – and often is – complemented by multiple “genre hybrids” (e.g., celebrity lifestyle docu-soap products). Commenting on the process of genre hybridisation and the inconsistent classification of reality TV sub-genres, Koščo [1984] speaks of an ever-evolving genre system that needs to be continuously examined, considering all the changes taking place in the television industry and its programming structure.

The audience's belief that they are watching real events unfold in real time on reality TV and capturing authentic people adds to the appeal of all sub-genres of reality TV. The creators of this content are aware of the wide popularity of their work and therefore invest a lot of money in promoting these products. They use practices that have been successful in the past, either trying to globalise the content or producing glocalised versions of successful foreign projects, but often at the expense of their quality. The preference for quantity over quality stems from the fact that reality TV sub-genres are broadcast for mass audiences, which results in

the creation of mainstream TV shows that achieve high viewership ratings. Given that, reality TV can be seen as a cultural phenomenon that has changed the historical development and current position of television as a mass medium [Giles 2012]. An assessment of the specific globalising tendencies and processes resonating within contemporary television production is offered in the following case study. Its aim is to point out the ways and possibilities of adapting a globalised theme, namely a foreign container reality game show, to produce its glocalised (Slovak) version. Effective methodological procedures and qualitative research methods are applied for this purpose.

## **2. METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH**

Qualitative research of this kind is not standardised and, due to its flexibility and openness of research questions and analytical categories, it allows the researchers to analyse the problem in more depth. The object of qualitative analysis is, in addition to the observation of persons (research participants), to examine different contents (research material) and their means of expression [see, e.g., Gavora 2006; Trampota & Vojtěchovská 2010].

Considering the topic and the main objective of the present study, we focus on television contents and their meanings, and therefore we employ qualitative content analysis as the primary research method. This type of qualitative analysis examines the collected data or analyses specific media products (research material) while emphasising their “quality” (the meaning of the analytical categories contained in the research material) rather than “quantity” (the multiplicity, frequency of the analytical categories contained in the research material). However, if qualitative content analysis is to fulfil its main purpose, several methodological procedures need to be undertaken prior to its implementation. In the first step, it is important to establish and justify the selection of appropriate research material and, therefore, the objects of investigation. At the same time, we emphasise that this type of analysis focuses on a smaller number of research units and is characterised by subjectivity. This means that a possible change of the researcher or the research unit itself could affect the outcome of the research. Therefore, the data obtained should only be interpreted in the context of the issue under study.

The selection of relevant research materials is based on the main objective of the study, which is to shed light on the globalisation tendencies of the media industry, specifically on the television sub-genre called *the container dating reality game show*. The popular North American title called *The Bachelor* [Graebner et al. 2002], which has been globalised to several countries around the world, determines our



choice and becomes our first research material. *The Bachelor* is a popular American *container dating game show* or *container dating reality game show* that has been broadcast for over twenty years. The concept of this show is that its participants, potential brides, fight for the opportunity to win the affection of one man. The contestant, who is proposed to by an attractive and well-situated single man, wins. It is essentially a dating and relationship-based television format. It debuted on March 25, 2002, on the American television station ABC and currently includes several so-called spin-off television shows, podcasts and other related material, which, together with *The Bachelor* format, form a media franchise. To date, a total of 27 seasons of the title in question have been produced. The 28<sup>th</sup> season has been produced since May 16, 2023, and has been produced and broadcast until now. Thus, for the purposes of qualitative content analysis, we select the last completed season (27<sup>th</sup>), which is also associated with high viewership (e.g., the first episode was watched by 2.96 million U.S. viewers and the final episode was watched by 3.40 million U.S. viewers). As indicated above, this attractive theme has been globalised and adapted by television productions in several countries and parts of the world, e.g., in Africa – *The Bachelor Afrique* [Gatto & Pierre 2022]; UK – *The Bachelor UK* [Atkins et al. 2003] and many others [Episode List: The Bachelor 2023]. Slovakia is no exception with the format called *Ruža pre nevestu* [*A Rose for the Bride*] [Alchus et al. 2023]. The first Slovak adaptation of the foreign format *The Bachelor* could also be considered a container dating reality game show called *Nevesta pre miliónára* [*A Bride for a Millionaire*] [Núñez 2006]. In this case, however, it is not a faithful adaptation of the globalised format *The Bachelor*. Although the main idea of this Slovak TV show is preserved (the female contestants' individual struggles to charm one man), there are several significant narrative-conceptual changes in *Nevesta pre miliónára* that distinguish it from the aforementioned original version. The title *Ruža pre nevestu* becomes the second part of our research material, and in this case we emphasise once again its extraordinary success amongst Slovak television viewers (e.g., the final episode was the most watched programme of the day in the offer of all Slovak television stations) [Vávra 2023]. Thanks to this commercial success, TV Markíza has confirmed the second season, *Ruža pre nevestu 2*. It is scheduled to be broadcast in 2024 on TV Markíza in association with the local Internet-distributed television channel Voyo.

The empirical part of the study is based on the qualitative content analysis defined above. To achieve relevant qualitative results, we not only select appropriate research material, but we also construct indicative analytical categories. By compiling them, we assume that the similarity between the two parts of the

research material is considerable. Yet, we believe that the globalised product and its glocalised version are not entirely identical in terms of either form or content. Several content changes are present in the domestic (adapted) version, reflecting the social, cultural, and media conditions and expectations of Slovak media audiences. Aiming to test our assumption, we determine the following analytical categories (abbreviated AC) and the related research questions (abbreviated RQ). Defining the analytical categories, we draw upon Lacey's model designed for the fictionalisation of TV genres [see, e.g., Lacey 2000; Mikuláš 2008; Bučková 2019]:

AC1: *Scene* (location and anchoring of the research material in time and space).

AC2: *Characters* (the contestants, the presentation of their characteristics and the stereotypes they personify in the research material; the presence and role of the moderator in the research material).

AC3: *Narrative* (the plot, or the way of conducting and developing the action in the research material – e.g., through the depiction of interpersonal relationships, conflict situations or the development of the action through the implementation of various games and competitions, etc.; description of the main idea and theme of the analysed research material).

AC4: *Iconography and style* (the means of expression present in the research material, which tend towards the genre of the container dating reality game show; the technical, semiotic and artistic grasp of the research material – e.g., the editing process, the possibilities and ways of using camera technology and/or artificial intelligence in order to capture the contestants, etc.).

RQ1: How are the scene (location), characters (reality show participants and presenter) and narratives (how the story is conducted and developed) portrayed in the research material? Is it possible to identify specific characteristics and stereotypes represented by the persons present in the research material? Do the themes and main ideas of the analysed research units differ?

RQ2: To what extent do the means of expression present in the selected research units represent the sub-genre of reality TV – the container dating reality game show? What are the differences between both research units in terms of their iconography and style, or the ways of their technical, semiotic and artistic representation?

RQ3: What type of adaptation is used when modifying the first research unit (the globalised title) to produce the second research unit (the glocalised title)?

### 3. RESULTS AND DISSCUSSION

Within the qualitative content analysis, we focus on a reflection on the globalising and glocalising tendencies applied within the creation of two “container-style” reality game shows. The purpose of the case study is to highlight selected production practices used by the creators of *The Bachelor* and *Ruža pre nevestu* formats, through which the reality shows in question became widely popular television programmes achieving high ratings amongst domestic and foreign media audiences. Attention is paid to the ways and possibilities of adapting the globalised title (*The Bachelor*) into its glocalised version (*Ruža pre nevestu*), and thus to comparing the results obtained.

Although the qualitative analysis of the American reality game show *The Bachelor* is limited to its 27<sup>th</sup> season, we emphasise that stylistically and iconographically, all its previous seasons are more or less identical. However, the narrative elements are changed or modified in each season due to dramatization and the producers’ efforts to bring something different and specific, and thus attractive to the audience, with each new season (e.g., change of location, nature of sub-competitions, host, number of contestants, etc.). However, the principle of the whole format, especially when it comes to the assessment of the theme, topic, or main idea, remains the same across all its seasons. For this reason, the results of the qualitative content analysis of the selected seasons – *The Bachelor: Season 27* [Graebner et al. 2023] and *Ruža pre nevestu 1* [*A Rose for the Bride: Season 1*] [Alchus et al. 2023] – can be generalised to the specific TV formats called *The Bachelor* and *Ruža pre nevestu*. This is somewhat similar to comparing the talent-based reality show *America's Got Talent* [Cowell 2006] with its adaptation *Československo má talent* [*Czechoslovakia Has Talent*] [Minařík & Minarčín 2010], where we would not focus on specific seasons and/or episodes but would consider the *America's Got Talent* and *Československo má talent* television formats as two similar television products.

The first research unit, titled *The Bachelor: Season 27* (hereinafter referred to as *The Bachelor*), premiered on January 23, 2023, with a final cast of thirty women, potential “brides”, and a “groom” being announced on January 4, 2023. Production began on September 26, 2022, in Agoura Hills, California, with the contestants and the entire cast and crew relocating to Tallinn, the capital city of Estonia, a month later [Simpson 2023]. These two locations (Agoura Hills and Tallinn) became the central locations for the creation of the container dating reality game show in question. Other locations, in which (specific parts of) the project took place as well, included the Bahamas, England (London), and Hungary (Budapest), with the final episodes depicting the environment of Krabi Province in Thailand. Thus, six

different locations were selected to produce the analysed research unit. For the first time ever, during that season ABC Television did not focus on one primary “competition location”, but instead presented several world-famous cities and luxury destinations. The ambition of the “bride” to win her “groom” was portrayed as a travel documentary spanning over a period of almost two months (filming began in late September 2022 and concluded in mid-November 2022). Regardless of the numerous changes in locations, the contestants were continuously filmed by cameras and were subject to rules that, amongst other things, did not allow them to go beyond the boundaries of the defined territory. For this reason, this season of *The Bachelor* can be considered a “container-style” reality game show.

The final, eleventh episode was broadcast by ABC on March 27, 2023. The individual episodes were presented once a week, continuously over a period of just over two months (January 23, 2023 – March 27, 2023). The only exceptions were the eighth and ninth episodes, which were released on subsequent days. The day and time of the broadcast was set by ABC on Mondays, and the title earned prime-time position in the television programming structure (20:00 – 22:00 p.m., a total of 120 minutes of airtime, including commercial breaks).

The show was hosted by Jesse Palmer, the Canadian television personality, sports announcer and former professional NFL football player. His role was not only to guide the competition (e.g., during the rose ceremony, while introducing the rules of the sub-games, coordinating the potential “brides” and the “groom” during their meetings, etc.), but also to act as an intimate friend of the “groom” on the show. Thus, the host acted as a legitimate participant in the show in question and to some extent influenced the decisions of the contestants. Interestingly, Jesse Palmer himself became the main personality of *The Bachelor: Season 5* [Graebner et al. 2004], but the relationship with his “bride” did not continue after the show had ended. The narrative aspect of the analysed title, or rather the dramaturgical structure of the narrative of each episode, was constructed from the statements of the performers – they commented on the course of actions and on the arising, often conflicting or emotionally demanding situations. Another “team member” who would have occupied the position of a show announcer (either present “in the picture” or as a voice-over, i.e., “out of the picture”) was not present in the material under study. In fact, the narrators were the show participants themselves, including the host, Jesse Palmer.

Zach Shallcross, a 27-year-old American “bachelor” and technical manager of a software company located in Austin, Texas, was selected as the main character. His past was marked by excellent academic results achieved at college and also by

interest in professional sports. Zach Shallcross only became famous based on his performance in the nineteenth season of the spin-off title *The Bachelorette* [Gale 2022] working with the concept of searching for the right “groom” (amongst a group of male contestants) involving two different “brides” – Rachel Recchia and Gabby Windey – both of whom were also runners-up on the version of *The Bachelor: Season 26* [Graebner et al. 2022] starring Clayton Echard as the “groom” [Kassabian 2022]. Zach Shallcross (hereinafter referred to as “The Groom”) was one of the finalists in the nineteenth season of *The Bachelorette*, which brought him to the attention of both media audiences and audiovisual content creators. He thus secured his participation in reality TV projects with a similar focus, including the analysed research unit. Considering that, we reasonably argue that the selection of contestants in the examined season of *The Bachelor* was, to a significant extent, determined by the popularity that the performers had achieved in previous seasons or within the show’s associated spin-off versions. This was also evident in relation to the choice of contestants, i.e., the potential “brides”. These included, for example, the niece of a popular country singer, Miss Southern California, Miss Florida, and many other well-known names present in American show business. However, according to statements made by the ABC television company and the show’s host himself, Jesse Palmer, the research unit in question “... *didn’t focus on gratuitous drama. It was, in fact, the most emotional and nostalgic season ever, with an extraordinary emphasis on relationships and true love. Zach was unlike some of the other ‘grooms’ in that he was very poised and not dramatic, focused on finding love and his person, which, after all, he proved during the previous show he was a part of, The Bachelorette*” [Wagmeister 2023]. Based on the above, the season we are examining could be seen as a kind of reflection of a love story, or as an emotional drama. The creators of the show also adapted the choice of contestants to the given concept – in addition to the “groom”, who presented himself through his visual appeal, charisma, but above all honesty, sincerity and lack of side interests, along with female personalities popular in American show business, there were also a number of “brides” occupying common professions in everyday reality (e.g., licensed medical professionals, marketers, real estate brokers, etc.) and characterised by “non-intrusive” natures (the choice of “ordinary women from the crowd”). It was as if by selecting suitable candidates, the producers were trying to create a functional relationship between the “bride” and the “groom”, with the real possibility of it continuing beyond the show. However, physical attractiveness, sex appeal, charisma, and the age of the contestants (all the show’s participants were between 23 and 30 years old, including the “groom”) were still amongst the conditions for

participation in this dating container reality game show. The external and internal character traits of those present then determined the stereotypes that the contestants – one groom and thirty potential “brides” – were to represent during the show. Even though the most recent season of *The Bachelor* format sought to move beyond the “stale narrative” of the submissive woman who is meant to support the dominant man, it is still media content in which one man is given the opportunity to choose his “true love” from several dozen women vying for his favour. With the intention of reducing such gender disparities, the producers focused (amongst other things) on creating a spin-off format called *The Bachelorette*, where a woman (the “bride”) chooses her man (the “groom”). However, despite these production efforts, there was, and still is, a constant presentation of a narrative which does not portray gender roles in a well-balanced manner.

The analysed TV show, *The Bachelor*, presented a single man who was expected to choose his fiancée and life partner from thirty possible “brides”. The main idea of this reality game show was to create an ideal pairing. The primary task of the “groom” was to decide as to which of the contestants would become his potential wife and who he wanted to share his life with after the competition was over. In terms of the dramaturgical structure of the narrative, the “groom” eliminated some of the candidates each week. This entire elimination process and essentially the complete show culminated in the handing over of the last rose, and thus the selection of the most suitable “bride” of all the participating persons. This person eventually became the winner in the “battle for the groom’s heart”, but also the winner of the competition itself. The participants present in the media content under study travelled individually or in groups to several romantic and exotic locations to spend some time with the “groom”. All the situations they experienced and the conflicts they faced were constantly recorded by cameras. It is emphasised that the way the dramatic and often controversial or incriminating footage was handled, edited, and compiled into a specific format followed the common iconography of the container reality game show format focused on dating. The title *The Bachelor* was a depiction of a group of contestants living together, “trapped” in one place, or in multiple restricted locations, with their actions continuously captured by cameras (hence the label *container show*). The contestants performed daily activities or participated in several sub-competitions (that is why we speak of a *game show*), with the aim of attracting the “groom’s” attention or obtaining individual opportunities to meet the “groom” and, above all, to win his affections (that is why we justifiably speak of a *dating show*, and therefore of so-called *dating programme*). However, in the described research unit, the established dramaturgical

structure was not always followed (e.g., the “groom” gave out more or fewer roses than originally planned; the “groom” eliminated a candidate outside the normal elimination process based on (not) offering roses; the candidate withdrew from the show or received a rose based on a Twitter/X vote of the audience or thanks to the “groom’s” first impression, etc.). All these narrative variations became sources of drama and conflict, leading to the gradual revelation of the true intentions and characters of the individual “brides” and thus towards their gradual elimination. In the final episodes, the two remaining “brides” met the family of the “groom”. Based on the course of the dates in question, he chose one of them and offered her “the last rose” (Kaitlyn “Kaity” Biggar, 27, Kingston, Ontario, a nurse with whom the “groom” Zach Shallcross is still a couple) in the exotic surroundings of Krabi Province, Thailand. In the *After the Final Rose* episode, which immediately followed the conclusion of the entire “final act”, the “groom” and the “bride” – the finalists – participated in a talk show where, amongst other things, the identities of the main protagonists of the currently planned seasons of *The Bachelor* and *The Bachelorette* were revealed. Also of note was an episode called *The Women Tell All*, in which the women already eliminated from the competition met to discuss their thoughts and experiences with *The Bachelor* format and with “The Groom” himself.

Luxury and exoticism defined all the environments in which the analysed show took place. Variable camera techniques – static or dynamic – were used to capture all the places and scenes involved. The footage, as mentioned above, was later edited, and supplemented by the performers’ statements. This dating container reality game show and the way it was narratively, iconographically or stylistically treated primarily focused on the depiction of (un)friendly relationships between the same-sex contestants. The presentation of male-female relationships, especially in the sense of depicting intimate scenes, as was the case, for example, in *Too Hot to Handle* [Gibson & Bennett 2020] or *Big Brother USA* [Walsh et al. 2000], was not significant. The first season of our second research unit, the Slovak reality game show *Ruža pre nevestu* was largely set in exotic Turkey (specifically its ten episodes), and only the last two episodes were produced in Slovakia (depicting Košice, Žilina, and Bratislava – the hometowns of the final three contestants). This container dating reality game show, abbreviated as dating programme, consisted of twelve episodes in total, broadcast by TV Markíza from March 3, 2023, to June 2, 2023 (three months in total), every Friday during prime-time at 20:30 p.m., with one episode lasting approximately 110 minutes of airtime (including commercials). The selected “Turkish location”, according to the directors M. Liška, M. Varga and M. Ondruš, was, in fact, created using three luxurious villas inhabited by one “groom” and

eighteen potential “brides”, and almost continuously filmed. At the same time, the participants of the show – the male player (“groom”) and the female players (“brides”) – were not allowed to arbitrarily cross the boundaries of these territories [Pravidlá šou Ruža pre nevestu: S niektorými drsnými podmienkami nerátali ani súťažiaci [Rules of the Show Rose for the Bride: Some Harsh Conditions Weren't Even Foreseen by the Contestants] 2023]. Because of the competitive nature of the described research unit, its strictly defined spatial and temporal frame, and the main intention of the “groom” to find the right “bride” for himself, the title *Ruža pre nevestu* can reasonably be described as a container dating reality game show.

The host of the show was a young Slovak actor and model Krištof Králik, known mainly from the episodic comedy TV show *Pán profesor* [*Mr. Professor*] [Dubovská et al. 2020], where he played one of the supporting roles. His role was to guide the “groom” throughout making decisions, to give him friendly advice regarding the show, but above all to supervise the organisation of the various competitions that the show’s participants had to take part in during the filming, including the staging of the final, knock-out “rose ceremony”. The narrator was the “groom” himself, Tomáš Tarr, and his “brides” – together they commented on the situations and interrelationships that arose, thus essentially determining the course and direction of the described show (together with other narrative, iconographic, stylistic, or technical, semiotic, and artistic elements). The voice-over was not present in the analysed work, and the whole show, from the point of view of the narrator’s position in the story, was based on the performers’ utterances, supplemented by the host’s accompanying words.

The main character, and therefore the “groom”, was a single 30-year-old man, Tomáš Tarr, a businessman, model and occasional actor, who accepted TV Markiza’s offer to participate in the *Ruža pre nevestu* project. The “groom’s” reach on the social networking site TikTok [Tarr 2023], his overall charisma and the way he acts in front of the camera were, in the words of the creators of the analysed show, the reason why they decided to approach this native of Štúrovo, Southern Slovakia, currently living and working in Bangkok, Thailand [Tomáš Tarr – osobnosti [Tomas Tarr – Personalities] 2023]. The stereotype of a successful, financially secure, yet physically attractive, charming, seemingly kind and affectionate “bachelor” who is looking for a bride because several of his relationships have ended due to cultural differences or different mentality of women [Ruža pre nevestu dobehla do finále s rekordom. Prinesie Markíza druhú sériu? [A Rose for the Bride Reached the Finals with a Record. Will Markiza Bring a Second Series?] 2023] was



portrayed convincingly in the show *Ruža pre nevestu*. The “groom” chose his “bride” from eighteen unmarried women. These represented different, often hyperbolised depictions of several female stereotypes. In general, many of the participants in this reality game show were described as overly emotional, jealous, possessive, vulgar, aggressive, or mentally unstable. However, the focus of the analysed reality game show was on classifying its participants into groups of *bad girls* (they were part of the show for ulterior reasons, or their negative qualities were emphasised, such as being calculating, manipulative, aggressive, affective; in the case of *Ruža pre nevestu* it was the so-called *bad girls gang*) and *good girls* (they were part of the show to express genuine love interest; their positive qualities such as empathy, tolerance, intelligence were emphasised; a group called the *normal ones* was thus featured as well). The selection of “suitable” contestants and the creation of stereotyped images of men and women were greatly influenced by the decisions of the creators themselves, and almost all of the participants in *Ruža pre nevestu* could be categorised as *good and bad girls* (these were Slovak women aged between 21 and 34 years old, performing various professions in ordinary reality, characterised by certain charisma, sex appeal, distinctive characters or external traits, or by certain achieved popularity status on social media platforms). In terms of the portrayal of characters and the qualities or stereotypes they represent, we can say that *Ruža pre nevestu* is a format that reflects a long-gone narrative about gender roles and marriage (e.g., the submissive, obedient woman does her best to support the dominant man, the breadwinner in a patriarchal world).

The theme of the reality game show *Ruža pre nevestu* is the presentation of a successful single man who is looking for a life partner amongst eighteen single women, candidates for a “bride”. Since we are talking about a reality game show, the basis of this “game” is respecting the predetermined rules which define the show’s course. Within the format, several meetings took place, during which the “groom” chose one of the participants to get to know her better. These were mostly original, luxurious encounters (e.g., boating, motorbike riding, convertible driving, scuba diving, flying) ending with a romantic dinner for two. The time that the “groom” spent with the potential “bride” on an individual date was limited, and at the end of the day each of the couple returned to their respective villas. In a few cases, the “groom” also participated in several group meetings, the course of which could greatly influence the “groom’s” decisions as to whom he would not give the rose to, and thus whom he would eliminate from the competition in the next “rose ceremony” (the origin of the established phrase *Will you accept my rose?*). The

elimination of the show's female participants took place once a week. In some cases, however, the "groom" did not eliminate any of the contestants (all of them received a rose) or, on the contrary, he did not give the rose to several "brides" at the same time (several contestants were eliminated in one week), or some of the contestants quit the show of their own free will or were disqualified because of a violation of the rules. Sub-competitions were also an essential element of *Ruža pre nevestu*. The "brides" were involved individually, but also in groups. Winning then provided them with immunity during the next "rose ceremony" or with a meeting with the "groom" on a joint date. In the final two episodes, the last three contestants met the "groom" in Slovakia, which gave them the opportunity to get to know their families in person. The last episode presented the final decision of the "groom" and thus the answer to the question of which of the two finalists he would finally choose as his "bride". She eventually won by receiving the last rose and a wedding ring (the contestant Petrana Galatea Oráčová, 21 years old, from Bratislava, Slovakia, an ASMR YouTuber, college student, but with whom the "groom" Tomáš Tarr is no longer in a relationship).

A container reality game show of this type is an ideal environment for recording interpersonal relationships, partner conflicts or disagreements between the contestants. *Ruža pre nevestu* presented authentic emotions, the battles of two constantly fighting "camps", friendships, but also betrayal and hatred. The depiction of intrigues between the various candidates in the struggle for the favour of the "groom" by its iconographic, stylistic or narrative treatment clearly referred to the sub-genre of reality TV called *container dating reality game show*, to which the research unit in question belongs.

The scenery of the show was, as mentioned above, set in three luxurious Turkish villas. The largest one housed the "groom", the remaining two housed the contestants. The complex included a swimming pool, and luxuriously furnished interior and exterior. However, various camera techniques (e.g., fly-on-the-wall, drones, static or dynamic shots created by cameramen, etc.) were only used to capture the accommodation where the female participants of the show resided. The footage was later edited and intertwined with the performers' statements. The aim of *Ruža pre nevestu* became an attempt to capture the tense atmosphere in often escalated situations. It could also be said that this container reality game show-type dating programme concentrated more on depicting (un)friendly relationships between the same-sex contestants than on reflecting on male-female relationships, including the presentation of intimate scenes, as was the case, for example, in

*Svadba na prvý pohľad* [*Wedding at First Sight*] [Núñez 2020] or *Love Island* [Jaško & Bors 2021]. The daily routines of the prospective “brides” in the villa were recorded, as well as the competitions, the moments they spent together with the “groom” in Slovakia or in the Turkish residence, the closing ceremony, and so on. The depiction of deeply private or intimate scenes, typical, for example, for the titles *Big Brother: Súboj* [*Big Brother: Duel*] [Jaško 2005] and *Hotel Paradise* [Jaško 2012], was not the primary essence of the analysed show. This kind of “compromising” audiovisual material, when available, was only discussed in detail in the context of the associated online entertainment show *Bez ruže* [*Without a Rose*] [Alchus et al. 2023] broadcast on the Voyo platform in the late evening.

In the *Discussion* section, we focus on answering the research questions posed in the methodology, drawing on the results of the qualitative content analysis conducted above. The first research question (RQ1) concerns the analytical categories of *scene* (AC1), *characters* (AC2) and *narrative* (AC3). Our aim is to compare the research materials through these three variables specifically. Based on our qualitative content analysis, we found obvious differences in the use of *scenes* (in terms of their number) in the selected research units. While in the first analysed show, *The Bachelor: Season 27* (*The Bachelor*), individual performers visited a greater number of locations (namely Agoura Hills, USA, Tallinn, Estonia, Bahamas, London, England, Budapest, Hungary, and Krabi, Thailand), the second title, *Ruža pre nevestu 1* (*Ruža pre nevestu*) was set exclusively in exotic Turkey followed by various locations in Slovakia (Košice, Žilina, and Bratislava). As far as the specific *characters* (*reality show participants and presenter*) are concerned, significant differences can be seen exclusively in the number of the participating “brides”. The creators of *The Bachelor* cast thirty women, while the number of candidates in the show *Ruža pre nevestu* was much smaller (eighteen single contestants). However, both TV shows involved one “groom” and one host. Both hosts of the aforementioned titles (Jesse Palmer and Krištof Králik) can be identified as public figures whose identical efforts were to direct the course of the show, to supervise the organisational structure of the various competitions, and to act as a “groom’s advisory body”, thus to some extent being able to influence the decisions of the present contestants. Zach Shallcross, a 27-year-old American “bachelor” and technical manager of a software company in Austin, Texas, was selected as the protagonist (the “groom”) in *The Bachelor*. In the Slovak show, the desired “groom” was a single 30-year-old man, Tomáš Tarr, a businessman, model, and occasional actor, currently based in Bangkok, Thailand. In both cases it is obvious that not only the American but also the domestic (Slovak) production deliberately chose a

young, professionally successful and charismatic candidate for their projects. The only difference between the “grooms” can be registered in the acquisition of their previously existing media popularity. Zach Shallcross became publicly known thanks to his performance in the nineteenth season of the spin-off title *The Bachelorette*, while Tomáš Tarr gained significant social media admiration through his previous work on the social platform TikTok (with a reach of 1.2 million followers). Some differences between the two analysed television products can also be observed in the selection of the shows’ participants themselves. The choice of contestants on *The Bachelor* was largely determined by the already existing popularity of the adepts (e.g., niece of a famous country singer, Miss Southern California, Miss Florida, etc.), although it is true that some of the “brides” were not in any way active in the media and were affiliated with ordinary professions (e.g., a nurse, a real estate broker, a business manager, etc.). On the contrary, most of the participants of the title *Ruža pre nevestu* – with a few exceptions (e.g., former participants of the reality show *Farma [The Farm]* [Kodoň 2011] or the talent show *Česko-Slovenská SuperStar [Czech-Slovak SuperStar]* [Žilák et al. 2009], a winner of a beauty contest in Slovakia) – were not celebrities or well-known media personalities before they took part in the show. Their faces and names were not known to the general public, although many of them engaged in media-related activities long before their participation in the analysed show (e.g., an ASMR YouTuber, a manager for creating strategies for companies or brands and their communication on social platforms, etc.). However, physical attractiveness, sex appeal, charisma and relatively young age were among the conditions for participation in these dating container reality game shows in both studied cases. At the same time, in both cases the creators focused on selecting participants who possessed a certain potential for presenting their TV projects towards pre-arranged media audiences (e.g., most of the contestants had created accounts on social platforms with a relatively significant reach, which were later used as media channels further promoting these TV projects).

*The narration* (the way the story was built and developed) was similar in both titles. The essence of the American version of the reality game show was, in the scope of eleven episodes, to reflect the individual decisions of the “groom” when choosing his potential wife. Television audiences were informed of that verdict in the form of a weekly “elimination process”, at the end of which one of the remaining contestants became the rightful winner. The actual unfolding of the story was mainly based on the personal (individual or collective) encounters of the show’s participants with the “groom” himself and the resulting, mostly conflicting situations. However, in the

first research unit, the established dramaturgical structure was not always followed (e.g., the “groom” eliminated the candidate outside the normal elimination process, etc.). In the final episodes of the American version of the show under study, the remaining “brides” met the family of the “groom”. However, in the Slovak title *Ruža pre nevestu*, the oppositional dramaturgical intention in the given situation occurred, and thus it was the “groom” who got to know the families of the finalists. Based on the course of the given meetings, in both cases the “grooms” chose their “brides” – these women became the winners of the shows. The container dating reality game show *Ruža pre nevestu* consisted of twelve parts where, like in *The Bachelor*, the “groom” participated in multiple meetings with the potential “brides”, with the intention of getting to know them better. The elimination of the participants by not handing them over the rose (a symbol of advancement in the game) occurred once a week until the last contestant, the winner, remained. The imaginary storyline was identically complemented by the performers’ statements or comments on the course of the show and the often conflicting or emotionally charged situations that arose. In this title, too, there were circumstances that deviated from the predetermined narrative structure (e.g., the “groom” did not exclude any of the participants, etc.). Considering all the above-mentioned facts, we conclude that the way the narrative was conducted and developed was almost identical in both analysed research units.

As far as the *specific characteristics and stereotypes* represented by the individual participants of the analysed reality game shows are concerned, several of them could be identified. *The Bachelor* and *Ruža pre nevestu* similarly represented the stereotype of the submissive woman and the dominant man who has the right to choose the “love of his life” from a considerable number of candidates “fighting for his heart”. In both cases, the stereotype of the single, successful, financially secure, yet physically attractive young man was also present. In terms of the portrayal of women and the stereotypes or characteristics associated with them, we observed some differences between the analysed programmes. The Slovak version of the container reality show was based on the selection of several characters representing various “escalated” female stereotypes (e.g., many participants were described and portrayed as too emotional, jealous, possessive, vulgar, aggressive, or mentally unstable). Based on the typology of candidates mentioned above, there was a natural division into two groups (*bad girls* – possessing qualities such as being calculating, manipulative, affective, and *good girls* – characterised by empathy, tolerance, intelligence). Conversely, the American title *The Bachelor* sought to

“soften” the references to patriarchal society and the “exacerbated” female stereotypes represented by the show’s female participants by selecting candidates with predominantly non-conflicted natures, and by creating a “sister” show, *The Bachelorette*, where a woman (the future “bride”) chooses a man (the “groom”). However, despite a few differences in describing the characteristics and stereotypes of the show’s male and female participants, it can be stated that *the theme* and *the main idea* were the same for both research units – the shared main idea of both media products was the creation of an ideal partner pairing, with the ultimate choice of the ideal partner being “in the hands” of the man. Their common theme was the idea of a single, young, ambitious man who can find, or choose, a fiancée, a “true love”, from a certain number of candidates pre-selected by the production.

The answer to the second research question (RQ2) is based on an assessment of the analytical categories of *iconography and style* (AC4). By comparing the data collected through the above-mentioned variables, we will evaluate both research units in terms of the use of expressive devices typical for a container dating reality game show. Thanks to the successful implementation of qualitative content analysis, we found that the *iconographic and stylistic means of expression* present in the selected research material largely represent the genre of reality TV – a container reality game show focused on dating. Indeed, in *The Bachelor*, all situations (within the significant number of locations used, to which the individual participants were taken) were continuously captured by cameras – which corresponds to the essence of a reality show. The contestants were obliged to abide by predetermined rules (game show), while not being allowed to cross the boundaries of the predefined game territory, or luxury dwellings across diverse landscapes (container show). Moreover, its primary essence was the competition of several women for the favour of one man (dating programme). Thus, it can be comprehensively stated that the way of working with dramatic, often controversial shots and their post-production correspond to the iconography of the genre of the container reality game show centred on dating. The homogeneous iconographic classification is also represented by the Slovak format *Ruža pre nevestu*. The show was about depicting interpersonal, conflicted, or friendly relationships between the contestants living in several luxury villas, two of which, where the female participants of the show lived, were constantly under surveillance of camera systems (container reality show). The intention of the “groom” to find a life partner, but under the condition of following certain rules, classifies the title as a dating show. We can see that both research units, by their iconographic, stylistic and narrative treatment, refer to the sub-genre of reality TV called *the container dating reality game show*.

*The iconography and style*, namely the work with the technical, semiotic or artistic representation of the shows in question is identical both in the American theme and in its glocalised, Slovak version (although there are some differences determined exclusively by the socio-cultural and media conditions of the given country). In general, however, the environments in which the studied shows were set can be defined as luxurious, sumptuous, or exotic. The technical aspect of the TV shows was mainly represented by static and dynamic camera shots, supplemented in the final stage of production by the actresses and actors' statements, while the latest technological achievements, such as drones were also used. Both shows, *The Bachelor* and *Ruža pre nevestu*, despite sharing their main intention to create an ideal "married couple", also focused on presenting the tense atmosphere and (un)friendly relationships between the same-sex contestants. In an identical way, both products also approached the revelation of intimate or otherwise incriminating scenes exclusively concerning the participating candidates. However, their presence in the programmes broadcast in prime-time was limited, sidelined at the expense of depicting the daily routines of the prospective "grooms", the competitions conducted, the individual and group meetings with the "groom", or the final ceremony.

## CONCLUSION

With the development of digital media and the proliferation of possibilities for unrestricted consumption of media content (e.g., through Internet-distributed television), television genres are growing in popularity. Paradoxically, the increased demand for television products, including reality TV genres, is followed by a decline in their quality caused by their heavily standardised production. Nevertheless, the unsophisticated mass viewer often fails to notice the repetitive elements contained in "TV stories", which are constantly recycled by producers into more and more titles and/or glocalised versions adapted to local cultural conditions. It is globalisation that is "opening up" the media market to the whole world, with overseas production playing an important role in this process, disseminating stories in a way that the majority audiences can understand.

A qualitative content analysis of *The Bachelor* and *Ruža pre nevestu* television formats and their specific seasons provided us with a closer look at current trends in reality show production. By identifying the analytical categories in the research material and comparing them, we answered the first two research questions, which gave us an opportunity to comprehensively assess the globalising tendencies of the television industry with respect to a particular genre of reality TV, the container

dating reality game show. Respecting the established methodological procedure, we are able to make a relevant assessment of the final, third research question (RQ3) concerning similarities and differences between the analysed reality TV product and its glocalised (Slovak) version.

Attempting to answer the question at hand, we start from the definition according to which adaptation is seen as the translation of stories into other works. Its main task is to preserve as faithfully as possible the idea of the original work and to find the most appropriate way of expressing it. Referring to the words of Levinský and Stránský [1974], we argue that the globalised television format *The Bachelor* becomes a theme, or a template for the creation of its glocalised Slovak version called *Ruža pre nevestu*, and thus *Ruža pre nevestu* is, in a way, an adaptation. However, several procedures are applied in the creation of the adapted work. Leitch [2009] speaks of *transposition* (the theme/preface is transferred into the adaptation without any interventions or with a minimal amount of changes; this is the so-called *literal adaptation*), *commentary* (the theme/premise is either intentionally or unintentionally altered in the adaptation; this is the so-called *faithful adaptation*) and *analogy* (it represents a significant departure of the adaptation from the original (theme/premise) in order to create a new work; this is the most common type of adaptation, and thus the so-called *free adaptation*). The mentioned adaptation procedures can be used not only when analysing film works in relation to their literary sources, but also when trying to evaluate a television show and its topic (if, of course, this work is based on a particular source). In our case, it is essentially a matter of assessing the similarities between the globalised (American) television show and its glocalised (Slovak) version.

Even though we subjected specific seasons of *The Bachelor* (Season 27) and *Ruža pre nevestu* (Season 1) to qualitative content analysis, we generalise the results to the entire television formats, which we have already adequately justified in the methodology section of the study. In this context, we can claim that the formats of *The Bachelor* and its Slovak variant called *Ruža pre nevestu* are qualitatively more or less identical in several aspects, which was also demonstrated by the results of the content analysis. We found that both container dating reality game shows apply identical *iconographic and stylistic means of expression* to their form and content (identical way of working with auditory, visual, and audiovisual elements or semiotic, technical and artistic components that correspond to the iconography of this sub-genre of reality TV).

However, the conducted case study reveals one significant fact – the detailed examination of the narrative elements contained in the second research unit (the



first season of the title *Ruža pre nevestu*) identifies the presence of several narrative differences compared to the first research unit, the twenty-seventh season of the television format *The Bachelor*. We mention, for example, the different choice of locations, the different number of contestants with differentiated character traits and represented stereotypes, the number of aired episodes, the nature of the sub-tasks, or the course of individual and group encounters between the “brides” and the “groom”. These changes are deliberately applied to the production strategies utilised by domestic (Slovak) producers to gain the attention of domestic media audiences, that is, Slovak television viewers, while respecting their cultural habits, attitudes, traditions, opinions, and expectations. This is exemplified by casting more contestants with different skin colours representing African-American or Asian-American people (the twenty-seventh season of *The Bachelor*) in contrast with the representation of contestants with exclusively White/Caucasian features and traces, which is in line with ethnic composition of Slovak population (the first season of *Ruža pre nevestu*). The deliberate selection of “bride” candidates with mostly non-conflicted natures and serious jobs, with the aim of creating a “love story” with a happy ending and a functional relationship off-camera (the twenty-seventh season of *The Bachelor*) at the same time contrasts with the constant emphasis on various affairs, intrigues and other dramatic scenes occurring within the all-female ensemble, which is also matched by the choice of contestants with eccentric looks, expressions and characters (the first season of the title *Ruža pre nevestu*). However, by focusing on *The Bachelor* and *Ruža pre nevestu* formats, despite several differences in the narrative details of the specific seasons mentioned above, we can say that the *narrative structure* (*scene, characters and the narrative itself*) has a similar essence in both analysed formats – luxurious locations are used, all of them are temporally and spatially limited; the contained characters present certain qualities and stereotypes dramatizing the plot; the presence of a single male host with a friendly attitude towards the show’s participants is noticeable; interpersonal relationships, conflicted situations or the development of the plot through the realisation of various sub-competitions are depicted; and both formats refer to the identical main idea and the depicted theme. Thus, the basic principle of *The Bachelor* and *Ruža pre nevestu* television formats remains the same across all their seasons, including Seasons 27 and 1 under scrutiny. We therefore consider the assumption we made in the introduction of the study (*the American globalised theme and its adaptation in the form of a glocalised title are qualitatively more or less identical, but there are several content changes in the domestic title that*

*accept local interests, attitudes, and customs*) to be adequately substantiated and confirmed. In this context, we refer again to the fact that the format of *The Bachelor* becomes the theme, or rather the template, for the creation of its glocalised version named *Ruža pre nevestu*, respecting specific adaptation practices.

The answers to the research questions show that the template, the North American format of *The Bachelor*, is in many respects deliberately altered by the Slovak production because of its domestication, i.e., the attempt to adapt the presented media content to the social, cultural, and media conditions of the country and the expectations of Slovak media audiences. Based on the categorisation of adaptation practices proposed by Leitch [2009], we therefore consider the format of *Ruža pre nevestu* to be a *commentary* or a *faithful adaptation* of the original work *The Bachelor*, where the theme/preface is deliberately altered during the adaptation by the producers in order to accept the local interests, customs, needs and expectations of the local media audiences. Paradoxically, when looking at the specific seasons associated with the mentioned formats, which are characterised by several significant narrative differences mentioned in the empirical part of the study, we would be more inclined towards the so-called *anthology*, i.e., a *free adaptation*, representing a significant departure of the adapted work (the first season of the format *Ruža pre nevestu*) from its possible theme/preface (the twenty-seventh season of the format *The Bachelor*) in order to create a new work. For the reasons stated above, we find it more than problematic to assess the relationship between the first research unit (the globalised title) and the second research unit (the glocalised title), in terms of identifying certain adaptation practices. Definitively, however, it can be said that the production of Slovak reality TV formats, including reality shows, is specific in that it adapts foreign themes and adjusts them to the cultural, social, and political conditions of the country, which was also confirmed by the results of the case study.

However, the main aim of the study was to clarify the globalisation tendencies of the media industry, with regard to television production and the sub-genre called *the container dating reality game show*, which we fulfilled by qualitative content analysis of the research material – the selected television formats and their specific seasons. We also created a space for further exploration of the issue at hand (e.g., evaluation of the impact of technology on the production of the given sub-genre of reality TV, assessment of the position of the “storyteller” or the host of a container dating reality game show in terms of the use of camera technology and artificial intelligence, etc.).

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