

Villanueva-Jordán, Iván (2024). *Traducción Audiovisual y teleficción queer: teoría y metodología*. Lima: Universidad Peruana de Ciencias Aplicadas, 300pp. 41.00€. ISBN: 9786123185152 (paperback).

The intersection between audiovisual translation (AVT), gender, and LGBTQ+ studies and queer media has attracted increasing scholarly attention, particularly within frameworks informed by gender and sexuality studies (Villanueva-Jordán & Chaume 2021, 2025). At the same time, in an increasingly diversified landscape of translation practices, the notion of specialisation has expanded beyond traditional domains such as legal, medical, or technical translation to embrace areas that require equally high levels of cultural, ideological, and discursive competence.

In this context, Iván Villanueva-Jordán's (2024a) *Traducción audiovisual y teleficción queer: teoría y metodología* stands out as a timely and intellectually rigorous contribution to Translation Studies, expanding the discussion of AVT beyond questions of linguistic transfer to the discursive and affective politics of representation (Villanueva-Jordán & Moura 2025). The author's concern with how meaning operates across multimodal and cultural dimensions can also be seen in his earlier studies on dubbing, homoeroticism, and affect in queer telefiction (Villanueva-Jordán, 2021, 2023, 2024b). Villanueva-Jordán's works fervently support the conviction that the translation of queer discourse — its language, aesthetics, and cultural markers — should be regarded as a form of specialised translation. Translation choices in subtitled and dubbed versions of LGBTQ+ television programmes and films, especially those featuring characters or themes explicitly tied to queer identities, can be critically examined in this light.

In this regard, what is often found is disappointing: linguistic features, affective intensity, and culturally embedded codes — so essential to queer expression — are frequently flattened, omitted, or misrepresented in translation. The subtle camp inflections of a drag queen's voice, the reclaimed slang and slurs within intra-community dialogue, or even the use of neutral pronouns in the speech of non-binary characters are all too often neutralised in favour of normative, mainstream legibility. These translation practices, while perhaps technically functional, fail to meet the demands of efficient and fair representation when the source text operates within a culturally specialised code — namely, queer discourse. Such omissions are not merely stylistic shortcomings; they represent lost opportunities for inclusive and culturally competent translation.

The notion of queer translation as a specialised practice acquires both theoretical and practical significance. As in legal or medical translation, translators working with queer content must engage with a distinct lexicon, culturally embedded discursive practices, and ideological nuances that demand expertise beyond linguistic proficiency. This domain therefore calls for specific competences — most notably, critical awareness of gendered language, gender performativity, sociocultural taboos, camp aesthetics, and camp talk. At the same time, the creative initiatives of translators who demonstrate sensitivity to the nuances of expressions and slang used within LGBTQ+ communities highlights that translation can function as an act of cultural mediation, rather than one

of erasure, when it bridges linguistic systems while preserving affective and ideological resonance.

From this perspective, queer translation — particularly within the audiovisual domain — is indeed a domain of specialisation, inasmuch as it is not simply about finding equivalent words; it is about interpreting worldviews, relationalities, and identities that exist outside hegemonic norms. Translation is never a neutral activity; it is intrinsically connected to cultural, political, and social contexts. It both reflects and influences the ideologies that uphold, reproduce, or contest the power relations embedded in specific (queer) discourses (Rodrigues-Júnior 2004).

Of course, defining what constitutes “queer language” or “queer discourse” is not without tension. To delineate queer linguistic codes too rigidly risks reifying stereotypes or producing reductive representations. Queerness, by its very nature, resists fixity — it is performative, fluid, context-dependent, and often intentionally subversive. Translating such discourse therefore entails navigating a series of contradictions: between visibility and overexposure, between intelligibility and domestication, between representation and commodification.

These paradoxes pose unique challenges for translators, who must balance competing ethical and aesthetic imperatives. Yet it is precisely this complexity that makes queer translation a compelling and necessary domain of specialisation — one that calls for translators who are not only linguistically competent but also culturally sensitive and critically aware. Examples include the many queer or LGBTQ+-specific sociolects — queer cryptolects — that frequently appear in films and television series, and which can, in some cases, be rendered through an equivalent cryptolect from another culture. Such is the case of *Swardspeak* in the Philippines (Hart & Hart 1990), *Gayle* in South Africa (Cage 2003), *Loxoro* in Peru (Rojas-Berscia 2016), *Polari* in the United Kingdom (Baker 2019), *Pajubá* in Brazil (Araújo 2022), *Kaliardá* in Greece (Ralli & Rouvalis 2023), and *Lubunca* in Turkey (Çakar 2023), among others.

Traducción audiovisual y teleficción queer: teoría y metodología not only consolidates the theoretical premises explained above but also anchors them within a robust scholarly framework that legitimises queer audiovisual translation as a recognised domain of research and professional practice. Published by the Peruvian university press of the University of Applied Sciences, this Spanish-language volume offers a sound theoretical and methodological basis for the analysis of queer representations in translated audiovisual narratives. The author combines his expertise in translation studies and queer cultural criticism to propose an innovative analytical model that foregrounds the queer potential of telefiction as both a representational and political space.

The book’s central aim is to examine how AVT — particularly dubbing — reshapes queer discourse through processes of resemiotisation. Structured in four chapters preceded by an introduction, the monograph maps the conceptual genealogy of queer translation studies and sets out the author’s methodological foundations. Using HBO’s *Looking* — noted for its authentic and nuanced portrayal of LGBTQ+ characters in their everyday lives and relationships — as a case study, Villanueva-Jordán underscores



the relevance of “quality television,” a category associated with programmes that transcend mere entertainment to engage with complex social issues and offer multifaceted depictions of human diversity.

Chapter 1, entitled “Televisión, homosexualidad y traductología” [Television, homosexuality, and Translation Studies], examines how television representations shape public perceptions of homosexuality while also addressing the role of translation norms in constructing LGBTQ+ identities. These norms, as Villanueva-Jordán discusses in detail, determine how queer identities are portrayed within target sociocultural systems, and significantly condition both the interpretive repertoires of translators and how such identities are negotiated within those systems. The author further argues that quality television has played a key role in the visibility and normalisation of gay communities worldwide, while translation norms remain crucial in shaping how queer identities are perceived and communicated within audiovisual media.

Chapter 2, “Traducción audiovisual y multimodalidad” [Audiovisual translation and multimodality], explores how analysing their interaction can provide a deeper understanding of the challenges involved in the production and interpretation of audiovisual texts, in which different semiotic codes play a role in the construction of meaning. Villanueva-Jordán explains that, from a socio-semiotic perspective, translated texts are historical semiotic constructs shaped by the resources and modes available within a given cultural system. He also highlights how AVT operates through signifying codes (Chaume 2004) within specific communities, stressing that translation strategies in dubbing and subtitling are constrained by the need to synchronise verbal and visual elements. From a critical standpoint, the chapter contends that translation is never a neutral process but one shaped by the translator’s sociocultural and ideological position. For the author, the way sex-related elements — such as bodily spaces, touch, caresses, sexual positions, etc. — are presented or translated reflects existing enunciation possibilities or potential shifts in the economy of pleasure within the languages or dubbed variants involved in the translation process.

In Chapter 3, entitled “Los discursos de *Looking* y su traducción” [The discourses in *Looking* and their translation], the author examines how gender and sexual identities are interpreted and adapted in the Spanish dubbed versions of this series for Latin America and Spain, revealing to what extent translation choices can either reinforce or challenge existing norms of gay masculinity. To this end, Villanueva-Jordán applies content and thematic analysis to conduct a systematic study of its dubbed dialogues, examining transcribed texts through predefined categories in order to trace patterns in the negotiation of the discourses and positionalities of gay characters. This methodological approach allows for a deeper grasp of how linguistic, visual, and aural modes interact in the construction of meaning, and how visual and sound elements shape the interpretation of messages and the representation of identities. The multimodal perspective adopted in this chapter further refines the semiotic analysis presented by the author addressing the constraints of dubbing, particularly those related to synchrony between sound and image.

Chapter 4, “Las funciones y la traducción del *camp*” [The functions and translation of camp], analyses camp aesthetics — marked by exaggeration, theatricality, and the subversion of heteronormative conventions — in *Looking* and its treatment in dubbed versions of this series. Villanueva-Jordán argues that camp plays a critical role in challenging social conventions around gender and sexuality, functioning both as a mode of performative display and as a form of resistance. Because sexual and cultural references are integral to this discourse, their translation requires sensitivity to context in order to adequately convey the nuances in the original, including its humour and political irony. The comparative analysis of the Latin American and Peninsular Spanish versions shows how linguistic and cultural adaptation strategies address the representation of camp differently. The chapter ultimately posits that translating camp in LGBTQ+ audiovisual content is a complex but necessary task, calling for translators to engage critically with the cultural hierarchies and ideological tensions inherent in the audiovisual text.

The comparative analysis of *Looking*’s dubbed versions reveals systematic strategies of neutralisation of queer features. Explicit references to sexual positions, body parts, or acts are frequently euphemised or omitted in both Spanish-speaking versions, although more extensively in the Latin American one. Villanueva-Jordán shows that the use of neutral Spanish — a long-standing convention in the region’s dubbing industry — acts as a linguistic technology of desexualisation, erasing regional and affective markers in favour of a purportedly “universal” standard. Moreover, the analysis exposes the interplay between taboo and normativity as structuring forces in audiovisual mediation. According to the author, even when the visual mode depicts homoerotic desire openly, the dubbed voices re-encode it through lexical moderation, reduced pitch variation, or heteronormative humour. The study demonstrates that the Spanish-speaking dubbed versions of this series modify the discourses present in the English source text, yet these transformations do not reflect an openly heterosexist or censorial agenda. Rather, in the author’s view, they arise from the integration of new semiotic repertoires — each with its own history and culturally situated ways of expressing and interpreting sexual diversity.

Traducción audiovisual y teleficción queer expands the still limited body of queer-centred books in Translation Studies, contributing to ongoing debates introduced in earlier works, including *Queering Translation*, *Translating the Queer: Theory, Practice, Activism* (Baer & Kaindl 2017), *Queer in Translation* (Epstein & Gillett 2017), and Martínez Pleguezuelos’s (2018) *Traducción audiovisual y teoría* queer. While Baer and Kaindl’s volume laid the groundwork for queer translation as an interdisciplinary field bridging theory, practice, and activism, Epstein and Gillett urged the discipline to address sexuality and gender as central social issues, and Martínez Pleguezuelos revealed how AVT often neutralised gay lexicon in TV series. Building upon and extending the reach of these contributions, Villanueva-Jordán delivers a theoretically ambitious yet empirically grounded exploration of how queer meanings circulate and shift within audiovisual media. His monograph reaffirms queer translation as a specialised practice — defined not merely by a specific subject matter but by a particularly complex epistemic object, i.e., the mediation of non-normative identities and pleasures through multimodal semiotic systems. Extending this rationale to AVT, where meaning emerges through verbal, vocal, visual, and kinetic modes, *Traducción*

audiovisual y teleficción queer shows that translating queer telefiction involves negotiating affect, ideology, and representations through the materiality of sound and image. In doing so, Villanueva-Jordán's study marks a key milestone in consolidating queer translation as a critical and specialised domain within AVT.

In sum, *Traducción audiovisual y teleficción queer: Teoría y metodología* sets a new benchmark for research at the crossroads of AVT and queer studies. This publication constitutes not only a major theoretical contribution, but also a valuable resource for enhancing the quality, sensitivity, and creativity of professional AVT practice. In an era when audiovisual media simultaneously foster visibility and perpetuate the erasure of sexual diversity, Villanueva-Jordán's monograph stands as an indispensable reference for translation scholars, trainers, and trainees committed to exploring the intersections of language, sexuality, and queer representation. More than a culmination, it marks a beginning — a cohesive work that opens fertile ground for further reflection, teaching, and research into how queerness might continue to travel, transform, and be translated across languages, screens, and borders.

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