

## SUBTITLING AND DUBBING IN *SEX AND THE CITY* AND *AND JUST LIKE THAT*: MEDIATED PERSPECTIVES FROM ENGLISH TO ITALIAN

MICHELE RUSSO\*

<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2539-626X>

UNIVERSITY OF FOGGIA

**Abstract:** The aim of this paper is to analyse the Italian dubbed and subtitled translations of selected episodes from the American TV series *Sex and the City* and its sequel *And Just Like That*. The analysis delves into the translation from English into Italian of the dialogues that are imbued with cultural references. The study examines the translation choices concerning swear words and idiomatic expressions by comparing the dubbed and subtitled versions. Starting from Munday's theories, it aims to identify critical points in translational decision-making, namely, phrases and fragments of dialogues that require particular interpretations on the part of the translator. The study attempts to determine the extent to which the approach to translation from English into Italian is target audience-oriented. Finally, by considering the concept of linguaculture, the work explores the impact of this approach on the target culture in order to compare the American and Italian linguacultures.

**Keywords:** Sex and the City; And Just like That; translation; critical points

### 1. Introduction

*Sex and the City* (hereafter, SATC) and its sequel *And Just like That* (hereafter, AJLT) owe much of their popularity to their representation of feminism and womanhood. Set in the vibrant atmosphere of Manhattan, SATC revolves around the lives of the four female protagonists amidst flirtations and intriguing situations. Moreover, some of the characters are gay and their dialogues often reflect particular idiolects. Much like the language used by the four protagonists, characterized by frequent vulgar expressions, the dialogues of the gay characters present swear words and sexual references. AJLT broadens this linguistic horizon by depicting gender fluid people, whose language not only spans beyond traditional gayspeak, but also incorporates terms and expressions referring to transsexuality and pansexuality.

The slang expressions of LGBTQ+ people in the two TV series are imbued with connotative and pragmatic nuances, emblematic of a speech community. As Ranzato (2012: 370) writes, “the members of a speech community are people who have habitual

---

\* [michele.russo@unifg.it](mailto:michele.russo@unifg.it)



contact with each other and have developed a shared use of the language, with a common lexicon and language practices.” In general, the gay community’s idiolect is known as gayspeak (Hayes 1976) and presents pragmatic, prosodic and lexical features that gay people share. Specifically, camp talk is the fictional language that homosexuals use in movies or TV series like SATC (Ranzato 2012).

This study dwells on the translation challenges pertaining to the features of gayspeak and, in general, of the language of the LGBTQ+ community, comparing the Italian translations of dubbed and subtitled dialogues. It analyses some episodes from the sixth season of SATC and others from the first season of AJLT. The methodological approach considers Munday’s (2012) concept of critical points in translational decision-making and then sheds light on the passage from the American linguaculture to the Italian linguaculture. The final aim of this study is to look into the specific expressions employed by the gay and gender fluid characters in the two TV series, in order to discuss the lexical and semantic potential of the Italian language to render gayspeak and non-binary language.

## 2. Gayspeak in SATC

Scholars have enquired into the relationships between language and sexuality with the spread of Queer Studies (Filmer 2021). As Ranzato (2012: 371) explains, “Homosexuals are America’s largest subculture, and [...] they (the men at least) have their own language.” To begin with, vulgar expressions and swear words are widely used by both gay and straight characters in SATC (Chiaro 2021). Some scenes of the episode “Lights, camera, relationship” are set in the Jewish community of New York. When Charlotte, one of the four protagonists, runs into a lady at the Jewish temple, the lady, who is eager to introduce her handsome son to Charlotte, says to her: “You went out with that faggot and you missed going out with my David?” (16:00-16:04)<sup>1</sup>. The Italian dubbing preserves the translation of the whole sentence: “Sei uscita con un finocchio [faggot] bruttino e ora non puoi uscire con il mio David?” (“You went out with an ugly faggot and now you cannot go out with my David?”)<sup>2</sup>. However, both the English and the Italian subtitles avoid using the derogatory “finocchio” and provide a filtered translation: “You went out with those two and not my David?” and “Sei uscita con quei due e ora non puoi uscire col mio David?” (“You went out with those two and now you cannot go out with my David?”).

Criticism has confirmed that the Italian translation concerning gayspeak “[...] shows how the Italian lexicon of homosexuality lacks the inventiveness of English, shies away from neologisms and prefers to resort to borrowing” (Ranzato 2012: 375; Sandrelli 2016). However, the Italian dubbing in SATC offers a variety of metaphorical expressions and lexical resources related to the sexual sphere and homosexuality. Such expressions and lexical resources effectively convey the ironic and playful nuances of gayspeak of the source text. The subtitled translation often

<sup>1</sup> All the dialogues quoted from SATC are from the DVD collection of the sixth season (see references).

<sup>2</sup> The dialogues translated in parentheses are back translations.

filters the text, hiding, for example, in the above-mentioned dialogue, “faggot.” The main gay characters in SATC are Anthony and Stanford. The former, Charlotte’s friend, is the most eccentric, sarcastic, grotesque and ironic character. His particular language provides further insights into the features of gayspeak in the TV series. One of the most relevant examples in this regard is the scene from the episode titled “The Catch.” Anthony goes to Charlotte’s house to see her wedding dress. When he talks on the phone at Charlotte’s home to order some decorations, he says: “We want candles, candle, candles. And I don’t want short, stubby, little broken-off dick candles. I want long tapers” (8:58-9:04). The Italian dubbed translation is as follows: “Voglio candele, candele, candele. E non voglio candele smozzicate lunghe quanto pisellini. Voglio dotatissimi ceri” (“I want candles, candles, candles. And I don’t want broken candles of a similar length to willies. I want well-endowed tapers”). The vocabulary used by Anthony often contains sexual references. In the above-mentioned sentence, Anthony uses the adjectives “broken-off” and “long.” The more general adjective “long” is used in the source dialogue, whereas the Italian dubbing employs the more sex-charged adjective “dotatissimi” (“well-endowed,” “well-hung”). The Italian subtitle uses playful terms that reduce sexual references: “Vogliamo delle candele. E non di quelle piccole che sembrano cazzetti mozzati. Vogliamo dei bei ceri” (“We want some candles. And not small candles which look like broken willies. We want beautiful tapers”). In the Italian subtitled translation, male genitals are referred to by means of a diminutive to highlight humorous overtones, while the sex-charged “dotatissimi” (“well-endowed”) is translated as “bei” (“beautiful”), thus reducing the references to the sexual sphere. Anthony’s vocabulary is the most emblematic and often evokes sexual images; his attitude to portray events and situations by means of sexual allusions is underscored by the Italian dubbing, which, unlike the Italian subtitle, maintains the sexually explicit language of the source text. In other words, to concur with Filmer (2021: 206), the Italian dubbing triggers “[...] processes of cultural contamination through the transfer of words and images from one linguacultural system to another.” The sexual references in the Italian dubbed translation depict the linguistic identity of the gay community in Manhattan.

In other episodes, the identity of the gay community stands out and the dialogues between gay characters reveal new features of camp talk. The episode titled “Boy, interrupted” is the most outstanding example in this regard and offers a variety of critical points in translational decision-making. The setting of a heated dialogue between Anthony and Stanford is a cafeteria in Chelsea. Charlotte and Anthony meet Stanford, Charlotte’s friend, who is with his boyfriend Markus. The dialogue begins when Anthony says: “Can’t swing your dick without running into someone you know” (9:08-9:11). The Italian dubbing offers a particular translation: “Se anche solo ti sgrulli il pisello incontri qualcuno” (“If only you swing your dick, you run into someone”). Once again, the Italian subtitled translation uses a more sanitized language than the Italian dubbing: “Non puoi fare due passettini senza imbatterti in qualcuno che conosci” (“As soon as you go for a stroll you bump into someone you know”). The sexual reference is totally hidden and replaced by the expression “as soon as you go for a stroll.” Moreover, in the episode “The Cold War,” when Anthony accompanies Charlotte to the dog competition and helps her to dress her dog before the dog show, he

says: “This was not the type of blowjob I was hoping for the day” (16:11-16:14). The Italian dubbing decreases, in this case, the sexual reference conveyed by “blowjob” and adopts a daily routine-bound term: “Non è questo il lavoretto che pensavo di fare oggi pomeriggio” (“This is not the kind of job I thought I would do this afternoon”). The Italian subtitled translation is once again filtered and turns Anthony’s sentence into a common statement, as all sexual references are avoided: “Questo non era proprio il tipo di serata che mi aspettavo” (“This was not the kind of evening I was expecting”). The examples of filtered subtitled translations in Italian address the need to condense on-screen subtitles, making them more concise and direct (Díaz Cintas and Remael 2014). Vulgar language, as Pavesi (2005) observes, does not contribute to the development of the plot. It is mostly used to comment on particular situations, to expand descriptions and to express people’s feelings and moods. As such, it is not necessary to translate the entire original message, especially when the goal is to create short and effective subtitled texts. At the same time, Anthony’s ironic vocabulary introduces the audience into the gay language and culture of New York.

### 3. The Gender Fluid and Non-Binary Language in AJLT

The stylistic features of the LGBTQ+ language used in SATC stand out in the sequel. However, the vocabulary used in AJLT goes beyond the borders of gayspeak used in SATC and extends to a much wider spectrum of sexuality. As a result, the connections between vulgar language and sexuality are particularly entangled in the sequel. While gayspeak prevails in SATC owing to the presence of gay characters, the traditional binary representation of sexuality is questioned by gender fluid people in AJLT, with effects on language use. SATC sometimes features transgender people, but they have a marginal role. Although gay characters form an integrated community in New York in SATC, the binary representation of sexuality still prevails. In spite of their different sexual orientation, the gay characters in SATC embody their biological gender and preserve the dichotomic image of sexuality. The sexual duality does not highly influence the conventions of language with regard to gender. Within such a duality, the features of gayspeak emerge in the form of a metaphorical “inversion of grammatical gender markers [...]” (Filmer 2021: 205), luderism, parody and swear words. Traditional biological genders are not blurred.

What stands out in the first episode of the sequel is the overt reference to different nuances of sexuality. Che, a podcaster and openly lesbian, is the most bizarre and eccentric character in AJLT. She is introduced in the first episode “Hello, it’s me,” through the first podcast of the series. Carrie works for her and the topic which is discussed in the podcast is about non-binary gender and the different nuances of sexuality. The audience makes the acquaintance with Che when she presents her podcast: “This is ‘X, Y, and Me,’ the podcast that talks about gender roles, sexual roles, and cinnamon rolls. [...] Representing the cisgender women is Carrie Bradshaw.

And representing the cishet men is the dude himself, Jackie Nee” (17:20-17:30)<sup>3</sup>. The Italian subtitle does not translate the words “cisgender” and “cishet.” After the introduction of the podcast, Che openly declares her sexual identity. When Jackie replies to Che’s introduction, he says: “What up, sista-brotha” (17:30-17:32); Che’s comment on Jackie’s greeting is “That’s right, because I’m both and neither” (17:33-17:35). Che goes on introducing herself: “I am Che Diaz, your host and queer, non-binary, Mexican-Irish diva representing everyone else outside these two boring genders” (17:35-17:43). Che’s statements aim to blur any fixed and stable distinction between the two sexes. Her claimed non-binary sexual identity reveals a multidimensional sexuality. In this context, language challenges the linguistic conventions associated with a binary mindset. As Cordoba (2022: 60) writes, “Language has been central to the continuous emergence of non-binary gender identities, as challenging cisnormativity [...] is at the heart of non-binary thinking.” Che’s vocabulary clearly aims to mis-gender and to de-gender (Cordoba 2020; Nielsen 2017) in order to disclose genderless sexual identities, in addition to the mainstream sexual identities represented by straight, gay and lesbian people.

Vulgar terms and expressions often represent a common lexical source for LGBTQ+ people. Such expressions are frequently used with an ironic and connotational overtone. After the podcast, Che expresses her disappointment to Carrie, as her participation in the podcast did not make the discussion as funny and spicy as expected. Carrie avoided vulgar expressions and sexual allusions during the podcast. Che says to Carrie: “you can’t just sit there giggling. [...] You’re the OG. You’re badass. Mmm, you might wanna step out of that box. [...] You better step your pussy up” (22:37-23:43). The Italian dubbed translation of “You better step your pussy up” is: “ci devi mettere cuore e fica” (“you must put your heart and pussy in it”), but the Italian subtitled translation uses “figa,” instead of “fica”<sup>4</sup>. As it happens in SATC, the Italian subtitled version often reduces sexual references. The choice of “figa” softens the more sex-charged word used in the Italian dubbed translation, as “figa” sounds more like a colloquial term to an Italian native than a common swear word. One of the most meaningful scenes, in which language is used as a negotiating means for mis-gendering and de-gendering (Nielsen 2017), is Che’s show in a club towards the end of the episode “When in Rome.” After the podcaster makes some jokes about sex, she goes straight to the point and says:

I think we all are [confused] these days. You know? It’s like “He, she, they, them. Please tell me which box to check!” [...] I say better to be confused than to be sure. Because when you’re sure, then nothing can change. And we all have something we need to change. [...] You’re not happy with who you are? Step out of that box and change it! [...] Change your address, change your job, change your...Change your mind. Change your gender. (35:07-35:44)

<sup>3</sup> All the dialogues quoted from AJLT are from the DVD collection of the first season (see references).

<sup>4</sup> For further information about the translation of vulgar language from English into Italian, see Morini’s (2016) *Tradurre l’inglese. Manuale pratico e teorico* (see references).

Che's speech represents the climax. She openly questions the conventional aspects of sexuality and considers liminality and in-betweenness the new frontiers of normality. As Moon (2019: 72) claims, "Liminality marks the 'betwixt and between' experiences of bodies that are no longer simply male/ female or masculine/feminine. Liminality acts as a form of social transition." Liminality, mis-gendering and de-gendering blur the social and gender parameters of the binaries of male and female, gay and straight. As a result, LGBTQ+ people can feel safer and free to identify themselves in the multiple facets of sexual in-betweenness. Their non-binary identity allows them to re-imagine, re-think and re-create their *selves*. Apart from some slight adaptations, the Italian dubbed and subtitled translations of Che's speech are not different from the source text.

As LGBTQ+ issues are increasingly addressed in the TV series, the LGBTQ+ language discloses several more features. When Anthony has lunch with the three protagonists (Samantha is absent in these episodes of AJLT) in "Tragically Hip," he makes an alliterative joke to mock Carrie, who is undergoing imminent hip surgery, as he perceives it as a sign of her aging. When Miranda says "Hip as an adjective is young, but hip as a noun is kinda old" (03:02-03:05), he adds: "If we're being honest, using hip as an adjective is knock-knock-knocking on the nursing home door too" (03:06-03:10). The Italian dubbed translation of Miranda's remark is "Sì, il lifting è ancora passabile, ma l'anca è da anziani" ("Yes, the facelift is still acceptable, but the hip surgery reminds me of the elderly"). Anthony's observation is translated as follows in the dubbed version: "A dire il vero il lifting è da anziani, a me l'anca fa pensare sempre a mia nonna centenaria" (Actually the facelift reminds me of the elderly, while the hip always reminds me of my hundred-year-old grandmother). The Italian subtitled translations of Miranda's and Anthony's remarks differ from the Italian dubbed translations. Miranda's comment is rendered as "Ancheggiare è da giovani, farsi operare alle anche non troppo" ("Walking with a wiggle is characteristic of the young, undergoing hip surgery is not); Anthony's comment is rendered as "Tutto ciò che riguarda le anche è l'anticamera della casa di riposo" ("All that is related to hips leads to the nursing home"). Miranda's mention of the various meanings of "hip," linked to its different grammatical functions, paves the way for Anthony's alliterative joke. Miranda's insightful observation regarding the dual meaning of "hip" as both an adjective and a noun is overshadowed by Anthony's non-binary remark. He emphasizes the monosemantic aspect of "hip," specifically recalling its association with the elderly. The Italian dubbed version of Miranda's observation renders the adjectival meaning of "hip" as "lifting" ("facelift"), while the subtitled translation uses "ancheggiare" ("walking with a wiggle"). The Italian translation of the above-mentioned dialogues aims to highlight how the dual view of cisgender people influences their use of the language. In contrast, Anthony's non-binary language attributes a monosemantic nuance to the word "hip."

While LGBTQ+ issues are explored through gay male characters in SATC, AJLT frequently features gay female characters. Charlotte and her husband, Harry, talk to the principal of Rose's (their daughter) school in "Tragically Hip." They are grappling with Rose's gender dysphoria as she expresses a desire to be a boy and be called Rock instead of Rose. The discussion with the principal leads Charlotte and Harry to realise

that their daughter is undergoing an identity change, prompting them to conform to the language of becoming, to “the social negotiation of gender-related language” (Cordoba 2020: 132). When Harry mentions that he was not informed about Rose’s decision to change her name, the psychologist sitting next to the principal remarks: “Rock never gave us any clue that *their* parents were resistant to *their* changing identity” (19:41-19:45)<sup>5</sup>. Harry’s reply is: “*Their?* Did you just say *their?*” (19:45-19:47). When the principal claims, that “This is a very supportive environment for all children. Cisgender, gender fluid, nonbinary, trans” (20:03-20:06), Charlotte and Harry are bewildered and surprised by the use of “their” to refer to their daughter. In this regard, Cordoba (2020: 55-56) claims that “In the 1300s, the word ‘they’ was employed as a genderless pronoun that was both singular and plural. [...] Nowadays, several grammarians anticipated the inevitable ‘return’ of the singular ‘they.’” Thus, the use of “they” as a gender-neutral pronoun represents the inclusive nature of non-binary language and highlights the need to move away from binary pronouns like “he” and “she.” The Italian language, which traditionally favours the masculine gender in grammatical conventions when referring to groups of both men and women, has been undergoing a process of de-gendering. This process involves the repetition or the clarification of gender-marking pronouns. The Italian dubbed translation does not highlight the use of “their” as in the source text: “Rock non ci ha fatto capire che i *loro* genitori si opponessero a questo” (“Rock never mentioned that *their* parents did not agree with this”). Similarly, the Italian subtitled translation uses “i loro” (“their”) only once, avoiding the double use of the possessive adjective, so as to convey that such non-binary linguistic adjustments are still not common in the Italian language.

In the episode “Tragically Hip,” Miranda questions her sexual preferences and becomes attracted to Che, with whom she has a liaison. When she reveals her affair with Che to Charlotte in front of Carrie in the episode “Diwali,” Charlotte is surprised and asks: “So, are you gay now?” (27:05-27:07), to which Miranda answers “No. I don’t know. [...] And anyway, it’s not as simple as gay or straight. Che identifies as non-binary” (27:08-27:21). The gender-neutral wave extends to people who have traditionally identified as heterosexual and adhered to conventional family norms, as is the case with Miranda. Meanwhile, Charlotte struggles with her daughter, finding it challenging to adapt to calling her Rock instead of Rose. In the episode “Tragically Hip,” when Charlotte discusses her daughter’s unconventional behaviour with Carrie, the latter quotes lines from Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet* (1595): “And just remember, a rose by any other name would smell as sweet” (33:32-33:39). She emphasizes that sexual preferences do not alter people’s inherent qualities and identities. Within the broader context of gender-neutral identity, the names Rock and Rose serve as contrasting alliterative examples that highlight the limitations imposed by binary conceptions of gender and sexuality.

The episode “Bewitched, Bothered and Bewildered” opens with a Gay Pride, in which Che delivers one of her humorous gender-inclusive talks:

---

<sup>5</sup> Hereafter, emphasis is mine.

If you're living your truth, then you're a part of the revolution. You're a part of the evolution. We know that visibility isn't justice. But visibility can be the key that unlocks it all, y'all. Okay? [...] Live your truth. You have nothing to hide. [...] Hiding takes away the bright light that you are. (00:06-01:18)

Apart from Che's use of alliterative sounds and wordplays, as well as the repetition of words like "visibility," "truth" and "hiding," the LGBTQ+ language is prominently displayed on numerous banners during the Gay Pride: "Your fight is my fight," "I cant even *thikn* straight," "We see you, we are you," "Love has no gender," "Equality 4 all," "Being gay is not a phase," "Indi-visible pride." The phrases and sentences on the banners are fragments of trans-emotional texts (Cordoba 2020), which express the emotional dimensions of genderless individuals and blur traditional distinctions between the sexes. Moreover, the LGBTQ+ world fully enters the Jewish community in AJLT. In the final episode of the first season of AJLT, "Seeing the Light," a trans rabbi is asked to officiate Rock's "They Mitzvah," a religious event celebrating her transition to her teenage years and her new identity. Towards the end of the episode, Rock expresses her real feelings when she reveals to her parents that she does not mean to join the celebration: "I don't wanna be labeled as anything. Not as a girl or boy, non-binary, a Jew, Christian, Muslim...or even a New Yorker. [...] Can't I just be me?" (29:21-29:39). The Italian translation of this sentence preserves the structure of the source text. However, it provides two perspectives of gender identity. On the one hand, the dubbed translation uses the masculine gender: "Io non voglio avere etichette, né da ragazza, né da maschio, da non *binario*, da *ebreo*, *cristiano*, *musulmano*...né da *uno* di New York." On the other hand, the subtitled translation uses the feminine gender: "Non voglio essere *etichettata* in nessun modo, né come ragazza né come ragazzo, né non *binaria*, *ebraica*, *cristiana*, *musulmana*...né newyorkese.<sup>6</sup>" The discrepancy in gender usage between the Italian dubbed translation and the Italian subtitled translation can be investigated from two points of view. First, adjectives in English do not specify gender; hence, the discrepancy in gender marking between the Italian dubbed version and the Italian subtitled version may be an attempt to underscore the ambiguity arising from the adjectives referring to Charlotte's daughter. Another interpretation could be attributed to the dubbers' intent to reflect, through this discrepancy, the linguistic limits of the Italian language in representing non-binary and transgender identities. Rock's response to Charlotte and Harry expresses her trans-emotional world, which challenges the borders of the cisgender framework. As Moon (2018: 74) writes, "Trans-emotionality captures the consolidation of dis-orientation and liminality. There is a sense of 'self' as somehow 'beyond' cis-gender male or female." Rock points out that the conventional dichotomy between "boyness" and "girlness" is constraining.

---

<sup>6</sup> The words in italics are respectively the Italian masculine forms of "non-binary," "Jew," "Christian," "Muslim," "a person from New York" and the Italian feminine forms of "labelled," "non-binary," "Jew," "Christian," "Muslim."



#### **4. Methodological Aspects: Critical Points and the Impact of LGBTQ+ Language on the Italian Linguaculture**

The dialogues analysed in the previous paragraphs are pervaded by the peculiarities of camp talk and non-binary language. Such dialogues are charged with particular cultural and semantic nuances, thereby necessitating accurate choices in the process of translational decision-making. From a methodological angle, the critical points have been mentioned in the previous paragraphs to refer to certain words and dialogues requiring particular attention on the part of the translator, as they convey cultural peculiarities exerting a significant influence on the whole text. As culture-bound markers, the critical points are, as Munday (2012: 41) writes,

[...] those points and lexical features in a text that in translation are most susceptible to and value manipulation; those points that most frequently show a shift in translation, and those that generate the most interpretive and evaluative potential; those that may be most revealing of the translator's values.

Critical points comprise dialogues and sentences that determine the meaning of the whole text. They are parts of a text whose cultural overtones may lead to multiperspective interpretations. They convey culture-bound messages through specific words and expressions, serving as lexical elements that play a decisive role in the transfer of cultural and linguistic elements from the American linguaculture to the Italian linguaculture. The concept of linguaculture, which has been mentioned more than once, encompasses different aspects related to the connections between language and culture. Such connections originate from specific linguistic dimensions: the semantic and pragmatic dimension, the poetic dimension and the identity dimension (Risager 2012). The first dimension refers to constancy and variability in the semantic and pragmatic aspects of a language. Languages are characterised by constant linguistic rules and patterns; however, they remain susceptible to personal and social changes. The poetic dimension is concerned with the meanings derived through phonological and syllabic devices of a language, while the identity dimension is related to the social and personal variation of a language. In light of the linguistic dimensions suggested by Risager (2012), the translation from the source language to the target language in SATC and AJLT is carried out through the semantic and pragmatic dimension of the source language. The process of translation is also shaped by poetic elements, such as specific sound effects, as well as by social and regional variations inherent in the source language. The three dimensions of the source language represent the semantic essence of the critical points. They encapsulate the facets of the source language, generating various interpretations through pragmatic, prosodic and sociolinguistic elements. Such linguistic dimensions exert a remarkable influence on the target culture in the process of translation, introducing new elements, in the specific case that is being examined, into the Italian linguaculture.

Following this theoretical model, the LGBTQ+-related phrases and lexis in the two TV series are the critical points of translation that lend themselves to different interpretations and influence the Italian linguaculture. They forge the target audience's cultural background, as they "affect the reception of the text" (Munday 2012: 14). The

critical points in SATC and AJLT are modelled by the translators to conform to the Italian cultural context and, at the same time, they are rendered in different ways in the dubbed version and in the subtitled version. The Italian dubbed version is more challenging and does not refrain from the translation of vulgar expressions. It reproduces the language and the atmosphere of the LGBTQ+ community in Manhattan from the perspectives of heterosexual, homosexual and non-binary characters. The critical points are thus translated by following a source culture-oriented approach in the Italian dubbed version. On the other hand, the approach to translation of the critical points in the Italian subtitled version is different, in particular in SATC, as it frequently omits or filters the translation of swear words and sexual references. As a result, the original message is not faithfully passed on to the target text. The decision to deliver a filtered version of the Italian subtitle is not only connected with the problem of lip synchronization or with the need to shorten and adapt the length of the dialogues to the screen, as explained in the paragraph about SATC; it is also due to the need to provide the audience with a varied communicative style. The dubbed translation exploits the lexical potential of the Italian language to render peculiar expressions pertaining to the LGBTQ+ community; the subtitled translation adheres to the conformism of good-mannered eastern American ladies, in particular in SATC. The Italian subtitled translation of sexual references emphasises the humorous features of the LGBTQ+ language and reduces the sex-charged meaning of vulgar expressions (Veiga 2009). Therefore, while the critical points in the Italian dubbed version offer a straightforward translation of the dialogues in order to provide a realistic representation of the LGBTQ+ community in New York, the critical points in the Italian subtitled version depict a more sanitized context. At the same time, the Italian dubbing produces a different effect in the LGBTQ+ communication style. Prosodic features, the poetic dimension of the language, to recall Risager (2012), and “para-verbal means of speech” (Pérez González 2014: 199; Bosseaux 2015) are frequently lost in the dubbing process and the two TV series are not exceptions in this regard, as the sarcastic and ironic intonations of such eccentric characters as Samantha, Anthony and Che are not often reproduced.

The release of SATC between the 90s and the 2000s has exerted a remarkable influence on the perception of the gay world in Italy. Considering that translation involves the knowledge of the cultures of the source language and of the target language (Agar 1994; Risager 2005; Zeng 2022), the reception of the American gay world in Italy occurred through the vocabulary of camp talk. Gay-related expressions represent the critical points of translation, as well as linguistic resources that foster communication between the American linguaculture and the Italian linguaculture. The translation of such expressions in SATC introduced new linguistic elements into the Italian language and reshaped perceptions of the gay world in the Italian culture. AJLT has been disclosing new aspects of gayspeak and its non-binary language has been questioning the gender-bound language of SATC (Staples 2022). The words in the dialogues expressing gender dysphoria and ambiguities represent the critical points of translation. They are phases of translation that negotiate the controversial meanings, in English and in Italian, of the language of the LGBTQ+ community. The critical points are thus communicative channels in AJLT that transfer non-binary language from the

American linguaculture to the Italian linguaculture. Although gay stereotypes have been overcome through SATC, the sequel brings to the fore new issues and problems related to the LGBTQ+ community and non-binary language. As a result, AJLT highlights the lives of certain social groups, “whose voices have long been silenced because they were minorities in a Western-patriarchal-heterosexual social system” (De Marco 2009: 177).

## 5. Conclusion

This study has shown how the LGBTQ+ language has been changing over time. From camp talk, mainly associated with the gay world in SATC, to non-binary language, which extends to different identities of the LGBTQ+ community in AJLT. The former is often pervaded by swear words and vulgar expressions, the latter questions the linguistic conventions used to mark gender and identity. Overall, the language of the LGBTQ+ community shows its fluid nature, as well as the evolution towards defining the complex process of identification, disidentification and cultural negotiation of LGBTQ+ people. It re-defines their inner worlds and re-designs the spaces and the places where LGBTQ+ people interact with the heteronormative world, thus removing invisible barriers (Harvey 2000). The Italian dubbing of LGBTQ+ people’s dialogues is characterised by a creative and insightful vocabulary. It has shed new light on gender issues and has contributed to introducing new cultural and linguistic elements into the Italian linguaculture.

## References

- Agar, Michael. 1994. “The Intercultural Frame.” *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* 18(2):221-37.
- Bosseaux, Charlotte. 2015. *Dubbing, Film and Performance. Uncanny Encounters. New Trends in Translation Studies. Volume 16*. Oxford: Peter Lang.
- Chiaro, Delia. 2021. “Not in Front of the Children? An Analysis of Sex on Screen in Italy.” *Linguistica Antverpiensia, New Series – Themes in Translation Studies* 6:255-76.
- Cordoba, Sebastian. 2023. *Non-Binary Gender Identity. The Language of Becoming*. London and New York: Routledge.
- De Marco, Marcella. 2009. “Gender Portrayal in Dubbed and Subtitled Comedies.” In *New Trends in Audiovisual Translation*, edited by Jorge Díaz Cintas. Bristol, Buffalo, Toronto: Multilingual Matters, 176-94.
- Díaz Cintas, Jorge, and Aline, Remael. 2014. *Audiovisual Translation: Subtitling*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Filmer, Denise. 2021. “Linguistic Representations of Homosexual Identity in *Bohemian Rhapsody* and *Rocketman* across English and Italian Linguacultures.” *Textus XXXIV* (1 – January-April):203-27.

- Harvey, Keith. 2000. "Gay Community, Gay Identity and the Translated Text." *TTR* 13(1):137-65.
- Hayes, Joseph J. 1976. "Gayspeak." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 62(3):256-66.
- Moon, Igi. 2019. "'Boying' the Boy and 'Girling' the Girl: From Affective Interpellation to Trans-emotionality." *Sexualities* 22(1-2):65-79.
- Morini, Massimiliano. 2016. *Tradurre l'inglese. Manuale pratico e teorico*. Bologna: Il Mulino.
- Munday, Jeremy. 2012. *Evaluation in Translation: Critical Points of Translator Decision-making*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Nielsen, Harriet, Bjerrum. 2017. *Feeling Gender. A Generational and Psychosocial Approach*. London: Palgrave MacMillan.
- Pavesi, Maria. 2005. *La traduzione filmica. Aspetti del parlato doppiato dall'inglese all'italiano*. Roma: Carocci.
- Pérez-González, Luis. 2014. *Audiovisual Translation. Theories, Methods and Issues*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Ranzato, Irene. 2012. "Gayspeak and Gay Subjects in Audiovisual Translation: Strategies in Italian Dubbing." *Meta* 57 (2 - June):369-84.
- Risager, Karen. 2005. "Linguaculture as a key concept in language and culture teaching." In *The Consequences of Mobility. Linguistic and Sociocultural Contact Zones*, edited by Bent Preisler, Anne H. Fabricius, Hartmut Haberland, Susanne Kjærbeck, and Karen Risager. Roskilde: Department of Language and Culture, Roskilde University, 185-96.
- Risager, Karen. 2012. "Linguaculture and Transnationality. The Cultural Dimensions of Language." In *The Routledge Handbook of Language and Intercultural Communication*, edited by Jane Jackson. London and New York: Routledge, 101-15.
- Sandrelli, Annalisa. 2016. "The Dubbing of Gay-Themed TV Series in Italy: Corpus-Based Evidence of Manipulation and Censorship." *Altre Modernità. Numero Speciale. Ideological Manipulation in Audiovisual Translation*, 124-43.
- Staples, Louis. 2022. "The Re-queering of *Sex and the City*." *Harpersbazaar*. Accessed November 6, 2023. <https://www.harpersbazaar.com/culture/film-tv/a38887399/and-just-like-that-queer-evolution-essay/>
- Veiga, Maria José. 2009. "The Translation of Audiovisual Humour in Just a Few Words." In *New Trends in Audiovisual Translation*, edited by Jorge Díaz Cintas. Bristol, Buffalo, Toronto: Multilingual Matters, 158-75.
- Zeng, Linxi. 2022. "The Role of Linguaculture in Foreign Language Education: The Case in China." In *Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research*. DOI: 10.2991/assehr.k.220706.148

## Filmography

- Coulter, Allen, King, Michael, Patrick, McDougall Charles, Spiller Michael, and Taylor Alan. 2006. *Sex and the City. La stagione completa 6*. DVD Video. HBO. USA.
- King, Michael, Patrick. 2021-2022. *And Just like That. Un nuovo capitolo di Sex and the City. La prima stagione completa*. DVD Video. HBO. USA.

## Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no ethical issues or conflicts of interest in this research.

## Ethical Standards

The author affirms this research did not involve human subjects.