

Censorship and Manipulation in the Italian Dubbing of LGBT-Themed Series: An Analysis of Will & Grace and Modern Family

Giulia Magazzù

“Gabriele d’Annunzio” University of Chieti-Pescara, Italy

giulia.magazzu1@gmail.com

giulia.magazzu@unich.it

Abstract

The manipulation and censorship of sensitive materials in audiovisual translation studies have attracted the interest of a number of scholars over the last few years. It has been argued that the presence of LGBT characters is still rather rare in Italian TV series and films; gay issues are less mainstream on Italian TV than in the UK and USA, and the gay lexicon is not shared by the general population (Ranzato 2012). Thus, the aim of this paper is to analyse the Italian dubbing of two American TV series, Will & Grace and Modern Family, chosen because they treat homosexuality without having only a gayoriented target. After a brief overview of the available literature on the dubbing of potentially disturbing items, including references to sex and homosexuality, the series will be presented along with the corpus used for our analysis. Then, the Italian dubbed dialogues will be analysed, in order to detect instances of actual censorship and cases of manipulation in the translation of references to sexual orientation or roles. The analysis will also try to demonstrate whether the lexical imbalance between English and Italian plays a role in the translation of sexual orientation terms and of expressions of dysphemism for homosexuality. Overall, our analysis aims at exploring whether the Italian dubbed versions have the potential to promote a change in the stereotypes of homosexuality.

Keywords

dubbing, LGBT, manipulation