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## *Orange Is the New Black*. Popularizing gender and sexual identities

### Abstract

The Netflix series *Orange is the New Black* (OITNB) was released in 2013, and its seventh season is now in production. It narrates the story of Litchfield Women's Penitentiary and of its new inmate Piper Chapman. The storytelling goes beyond the main protagonist, presenting a variety of characters and thus a variety of female gender and sexual identities. This paper aims at investigating the series at the level of remediation and translation and explores the importance of these practices as forms of popularization. The first part of the analysis will look at the way in which the original memoir is remediated into the TV series. Secondly, it will focus on the linguistic choices of the original English dialogues and their Italian dubbed and subtitled versions. Lastly, starting from the central role that gender and sexual identities play in the TV series, the investigation will discuss the function of translation as a form of popularization of issues related to the phenomena.

### 1. Introduction

In July 2013, *Netflix*, the popular USA-based streaming entertainment provider, premiered the first season of *Orange Is the New Black* (2013 - ), a television series created by Jenji Kohan and produced by Titled Productions in association with Lionsgate Television. The series is based on the memoir *Orange Is the New Black: My Year in a Women's Prison*, written by Piper Kerman in 2010. *Orange Is the New Black* (henceforth, OITNB) recounts the story of Piper Chapman (played by Taylor Schilling), a blonde, white, middle-class woman in her thirties, sentenced to 15 months in Litchfield minimum-security women's penitentiary. Piper is convicted for transporting a suitcase full of drug money for her international drug smuggler ex-girlfriend Alex Vause (played by Laura Prepon). The seventh season of the series is currently in the making and in these five years the plot has undergone major changes, twists and turns of events. The cast of the show has also met with substantial

changes with new characters joining and many old ones leaving. The series was nominated for and won a number of awards. The first season alone received twelve Primetime Emmy Award nominations (three of which it won) including Outstanding Comedy Series, Outstanding Writing for a Comedy Series and Outstanding Directing for a Comedy Series, as well as six Golden Globe nominations and more.

The peculiarity of this series lies in its display of a multifaceted and diverse world through the eyes of the lives encountered and recounted by Piper, or better ‘Chapman’, as Morello (played by Yael Stone) teaches us in Episode 1 that in prison everybody is referred to by their last name. The series addresses issues of race, gender and sexuality, health, prison laws, family relationships and power relations at many different levels. For example, on the one hand we see the feeling of guilt of Piper towards her family and friends for her actions, while on the other we observe power forced upon the inmates by the prison guards, who manipulate and bribe them in order to get sexual favours or smuggle money. In the words of Artt and Schwan (2016: 468), “with its predominantly female and ethnically diverse cast [...] the series continues to contribute to the redrawing of a feminist-inflected popular culture”.

This paper aims at discussing the translation and retranslation or - as Chaume (this volume) puts it – simultaneous translation of Piper’s story with a particular focus on those issues presented in the series concerning gender and sexual identities. Section 2 discusses the remediation of the memoir into the original TV series. This first rewriting of the narrative can be considered as a primary form of translation. Section 3 considers the adaptation of the original dialogues into Italian, in both the dubbed and subtitled versions. The paper concludes with a consideration on the role of TV series, and more specifically of translation, in the popularization of issues related to gender and sexual identities, and to identity representation at large. The analysis focuses on season one, which is comprised of thirteen episodes for a total running time of approximately twelve hours.

## 2. From Kerman to Chapman

As Caputi (2016: 1130) points out, OITNB is “loosely based upon the best-selling 2010 memoir of Piper Kerman”, *Orange Is the New Black: My Year in a Women’s Prison*. The adverb ‘loosely’ was well chosen as the discussion presented here demonstrates. The process of transformation from a written text into an audiovisual one can be defined as remediation, that is to say: “the representation of a medium in another [medium]” (Bolter and Grusin, 1999: 45), in this case a memoir into a TV series. The already long tradition of remediation and adaptation of novels or, more generally speaking, written texts into filmed versions, became increasingly prominent in the mid-90s (Ibid. 44). This trend continued to grow in popularity as media outlets such as streaming platforms and on-demand television advanced their technology, resulting in easier access to audiovisual products, and therefore a growing demand from the audience.

To take the content from one medium and reuse it in another requires a degree of ‘redefinition’ (Ibid. 45). Here, redefinition not only stands as a way through which the product is manipulated in order to fit the standards of the new medium, but also as a form of rewriting that aims to create a new product that appeals to and attracts the new audience. Redefinition, with the function described here, is especially significant for OITNB; in fact, some of the key features of the memoir are lost or completely changed in the series. As mentioned earlier, the series was loosely inspired by the memoir, and in this section, I attempt to address the value that this adverb takes in the series.

The first level of redefinition in OITNB is observed in the choices of naming strategies, applied to both people and places. In the memoir the names of inmates and prison personnel are fictional to protect their identity and privacy. Table 1 below summarises the main characters in the memoir and the correspondent names of the characters that they presumably inspired.

**Table 1.** Names: memoir vs. TV series

Memoir	TV Series	Memoir	TV Series
Piper Kerman	Piper Chapman	Larry Smith	Larry Bloom
Nora Jensen	Alex Vause	Mr. Butorsky	Mr. Healy

Miss Natalie	Miss Claudette	Gay Pornstar	Pornestache
Pop	Red	DeSimone	Luschek
Minetta/Rosemarie	Lorna Morello	Sister Ardeth Platte	Sister Jane Ingalls
Yoga Janet	Yoga Jones	Pennsatucky	Pennsatucky
Delicious	Taystee	Vanessa	Sophia Buset
Nina	Nicky	Crazy Eyes	Crazy Eyes
Little Janet	Janae	Annette	Anita De Marco

Whereas some of the characters have a direct correspondence, as in the cases of the main character, Piper, and Red (played by Kate Mulgrew), the Russian woman who works as head of the kitchen, other characters do not always display a straightforward correspondence. Lorna Morello, for example, is one of the first inmates Chapman meets in the series as she drives the van that takes her inside the facility. A similar scene is described in the memoir; here the driver of the van is named ‘Minetta’. Morello and Minetta both drive the van, and this role seems to draw a straight line between the two characters. Later in the memoir, Kerman presents another character, ‘Rosemarie’. One of the characteristics of this inmate, highlighted by Kerman, is her obsession and passion for the organisation of her wedding. In the series, wedding planning has a fundamental role in the development of the character Morello. In the light of this, it seems that Morello is created through the combination of the main feature that Kerman illustrates when narrating about the two fellow inmates.

Similarly, Taystee (played by Danielle Brooks), one of the African-American inmates, who plays quite an important role in the series, can be associated with the inmate that Kerman names ‘Delicious’. Two main reasons validate this hypothesis: first, their names carry a semantic resemblance; and second, some of the dialogues that are reported from the memoir, namely the one in which Taystee/Delicious expresses her admiration for Chapman/Kerman’s breasts (reported in Section 3), are considerably similar. This same process of renaming is repeated throughout the series.

An example of remediation that is particularly relevant to the representation of gender and sexual identities is that of the character of Sophia Buset (played by Laverne Cox), in the memoir presented as ‘Vanessa’. She is a transgender

woman incarcerated for fraud, depicted in the series as a beautiful, strong transwoman who works as a hairdresser. In the memoir, Vanessa is not a hairdresser, nor is she granted hormone therapy. For this reason, her body does not conform to her gender identity, unlike what is depicted in the TV series.

Lastly, the two characters depicted in completely different roles in the memoir and in the series are Piper's lovers: Larry Bloom (played by Jason Biggs) in the series, known as Larry Smith in the memoir and real life, and Alex Vause, who in the memoir is known as Nora Jensen, and in real life as Catherine Cleary Wolters. Some of the main differences between the memoir and the TV series, in fact, are related to Piper's lovers. Kerman and her ex-girlfriend Nora never served time in prison together and, after their initial break-up, they never reconnected. Whereas the character playing Chapman strongly resembles Kerman, the same cannot be said for Nora and Alex. The intricate love affair between the two women presented in the series is simply a mechanism to involve the audience in the plot and never happened either in real life or in the memoir. On the contrary, Larry, who in the series ultimately ends his relationship with Piper and cheats on her (this only happens in season 2) with her best friend Polly (played by Maria Dizzia), in the memoir never doubts the relationship and supports Kerman throughout her time in prison.

Kerman's family and friends are also her strong advocates in the memoir, including her mother who visits her and is one of her points of reference throughout the prison experience. In the series, Chapman is eventually abandoned by her friends and her mother never accepts her homosexuality, nor her lifestyle and choice to surrender and consequently spend time in prison. Prison visits with her mother (played by Deborah Rush) are depicted in the series as uncomfortable moments in which Chapman's mother has no words of comfort for her nor is of any help in making her daughter's stay in prison less painful.

As the examples presented so far demonstrate, the process of remediation enacted in the TV series highlights one major shift in the representation of gender and sexual identities. This representation, in fact, becomes the focal point in the series while it is barely mentioned in the memoir. In the light of this shift, we can say that defining the series as being loosely inspired by the memoir is a proper choice. This shift in perspective, although giving visibility

to sexual and gender identities, and engendering a process of popularization of issues related to these identities, cannot always be valued as positive for the nature of the information the audience gains. A person who watches the series without further investigating prison laws might believe that federal prisons offer medical support for transgender inmates, for example. The lesbian affair between Piper and Vause, which never happens in the memoir, is exploited to attract viewers and create a plot twist. This type of depiction generates a negative representation of this lesbian character, who not only sends an 'innocent white rich' girl to prison, but also destroys her marriage by seducing her. The fact that the series is based on a memoir 'de-fictionalizes' these fictional events and endorses specific stereotypes in the mind of the viewer. Stereotypes not only relate to sexual identities but also, more generally speaking, to female representation, as for example Piper's mother who is represented as a shallow and insensitive rich white woman. In this sense, the audiovisual product and its translation and adaptation become "a site of discursive practice" (Diaz Cintas, 2012: 281) where specific cultural concepts such as gender prejudices and stereotypes are articulated and where "out-dated role models and concepts of *good* and *bad*" (Ibid. 282; emphasis in original) are perpetuated.

Another main difference that distinguishes the book from the series lies in the representation of the male gaze. The memoir is mainly focused on Piper, and as the genre implies, on her point of view on the events. Male figures and their perspectives are almost entirely absent in the memoir. On the contrary, the presence of the male gaze is prominent in the TV series. As Mulvey (1989: 25) already pointed out in the 70s, "[t]he actual image of woman as (passive) raw material for the (active) gaze of man takes the argument a step further into the content and structure of representation, adding a further layer of ideological significance demanded by the patriarchal order in its favourite cinematic form".

This type of representation is clearly identifiable in the series, where, despite the fact that female characters are obviously the majority and have a strong presence, male characters manage to steal some of that space and are represented, as in the cases of Pornstache, Mr. Healy and Mr. Caputo (played by Nick Sandow), in their position of power and hypermasculinity. There is an attempt at challenging their position through the role played by the character

of Miss Figueroa (played by Alysia Reiner), who is the Executive Assistant to the Warden, and is depicted as a strong independent woman in charge of the whole prison. Nonetheless, the scriptwriter chose to make her say sentences such as: “Why would anyone ever give up being a man? It’s like winning the lottery and giving the ticket back” (in a conversation with Mr. Healy about Sophia in episode 3, minute 13:40). This sentence diminishes, in just a few seconds, all of her power, revealing her fears as a female in charge. Sentences like the one presented here also highlight how, according to her, it is much better to be a man. For as much as the male roles are challenged, the results of these challenges in the end always favour men.

One last aspect that strongly differs between the memoir and the series is the number of sexual scenes present throughout the episodes. Kerman briefly mentions that lesbian sexual intercourse happens between inmates and that there are women who have relationships, but she does not go into detail and specifies that this is not common or explicit behaviour. Conversely, the representation of lesbian sexual intercourse in the series becomes explicit and central, again exploiting this sexual identity to create a more appealing product for the audience.

As we bear in mind that “[r]emediation always operates under the current cultural assumptions about immediacy and hypermediacy” (Bolter and Grusin, 1999: 21), the plot of the memoir undergoes a number of twists during its adaptation to the TV series. These adjustments are needed in order to feed upon the need for the televised product to appear attractive, binge-watchable and addictive to the viewer (Matrix, 2014). As Pérez Heredia (2016: 178) puts it: “Kohan produced a divergent rewriting that transformed a complacent written text into an archetype of new intersectional telefiction, populated by multiracial and transnational female prisoners of heterogeneous sexual orientation”.

### *3. Translation and re-translation in OITNB*

One of the main topics that the series focuses on is the representation of gender and sexual identities. This section focuses on the analysis of language used to

discuss issues related to gender and sexual identities and the translation choices made in both the dubbing and subtitling of the original version into Italian.

As one of the central and recurrent themes of the series is female gender and sexual identity, I will begin here by discussing the linguistic and translational choices related to this topic, bearing in mind that “what is translated, and how it is translated, is determined by the interests and structure of the host target cultural system” (Diaz Cintas, 2012: 284).

The literature on the translation of TV series and dialogues that include content related to homosexuality, sensitive language and subjects (Berseghi, 2016; Dore and Zarrelli, 2018; Ranzato, 2012; Sandrelli, 2016) clearly demonstrates that the norm in Italian dubbing and subtitling is to rely on manipulation and censorship. Some scholars claim this mitigation of the content into a less explicit form can also be due to the lack of equivalent or relevant terminology (Parini, 2014; Ranzato, 2012); others argue in favour of an authentic act of censorship (Bucaria, 2009; Chiaro, 2007; Diaz Cintas, 2012; Zanotti 2012). For example, Zanotti (2012), in her study on the manipulation of youth films, shows that some of the censoring and manipulative choices were requested by the distributors and were not only a consequence of self-censorship on the part of the translator. The manipulation and censorship of a text are inevitably linked to matters of politics and ideology, especially when it comes to gender related issues; this applies particularly to a historical time such as the one we are currently living. In fact, nowadays, issues of gender and sexual identity are still considered taboo and in many countries they are used as political campaign standpoints. Audiovisual products grant peculiar visibility, and therefore popularization, to some topics which are not always welcomed or judged positively.

### *3.1 Representing gender identity through ‘body parts’*

An analysis of the dialogues of the first season of OITNB shows that the main discursive patterns related to the representation of gender and sexual identities are built around two different variables that will be taken into consideration in this analysis. On the one hand, there is the peculiar use and corresponding

translational choices for those terms that indicate body parts; on the other hand, we can observe the use of terminology related to sexual preference and homosexual relationships in the representation of sexual identities. Table 2 summarises the examples found throughout the episodes of season 1 related to the first group of terms.<sup>1</sup>

**Table 2.** Examples of ‘Body parts’ and their translation

		Who	Original dialogue	Italian dubbing	Italian subtitling
ex. 1	Ep. 1	Taystee	nice titties	gran tette	gran tette
ex. 2	Ep. 3	Larry	cock	cazzo	cazzo
ex. 3	Ep. 3	Larry	ass	sedere	sedere
ex. 4	Ep. 4	Boo	saggy tits	tette floscie	tette cascanti
ex. 5	Ep. 4	Red	pussy	gnocche	fiche
ex. 6	Ep. 6	Nicky	cunt	fica	fica
ex. 7	Ep. 6	Polly	my tutu	sulla mia tutú	sul tutú
ex. 8	Ep. 9	Pennsatucky	hoo-ha	patata	vagina

Table 2 shows examples of body parts, mainly genitalia, mentioned throughout the series and their dubbed and subtitled equivalents. The prominent role played by female characters is mirrored by the fact that most of these examples refer to female body parts and more specifically to the vagina. There is only one example of male genitalia (ex. 2). Here, Larry is trying to have phone sex with Piper by describing an intimate scene involving his penis and Piper’s behind (the Italian dubbed and subtitled versions are the same).

### Episode 3 - cock and ass

English Version	Italian Version	Back Translation
Larry: And my <b>cock</b> is hard and I am rubbing it against your <b>ass</b> .	Ho il <b>cazzo</b> duro e te lo sto strofinando sul <b>sedere</b> .	My dick is hard and I am rubbing it on your behind.

<sup>1</sup> Table 2 serves only for reference purposes, as the single terms taken out of context lose their value; each term is discussed in context later.

The dialogue is taken from a scene that is nonetheless strongly sexually charged. The language choices in the English version, i.e. ‘cock’ and ‘ass’, reinforce this type of representation due to their vulgar connotation. The Italian version flattens the emphasis by using the most basic terms to translate the two terms: ‘cazzo’ [dick] and ‘sedere’ [behind]. The latter, in fact, is not even considered strong language, like the word ‘ass’. The dialogues are rendered in a milder, less aggressive way. The degree of ideological manipulation that is enacted in this translation is likely to be due to the taboo that Italian culture links to sex and even more to having sexual intercourse in a non-traditional manner (i.e. via the telephone). This manipulation interferes with the final objective of the conversation, and in a way makes the scene ridiculous, as in real life this conversation, with this specific wording, would most likely not happen. Moreover, unlike the example discussed above (Zanotti, 2012), where the censorship of given dialogues is requested by the distributors, in this case the manipulation can hardly be justified. Netflix’s style guide<sup>2</sup> explicitly states that dialogues must not be censored, therefore, censorship here appears to have been introduced despite the demands of the client.

Table 2 also gives evidence of the relatively low variation retrieved in the choices made in the Italian dubbed and subtitled versions. In fact, the only examples that present two completely different versions of the translation are ex. 5 and ex. 8.

In example 5, Red is talking to Boo (played by Lea DeLaria) who is upset because her ex-girlfriend is now paying attention to another inmate.

#### Episode 4 - pussy

<b>English Version</b>	<b>Italian Dubbing</b>	<b>Back Translation</b>	<b>Italian Subtitling</b>	<b>Back Translation</b>
Red: Plenty of other <b>pussy</b> in here. Let it go.	Ci sono un sacco di <b>gnocche</b> qui. Lascia perdere.	There are many other hotties here. Let it go.	Ci sono un sacco di altre <b>fiche</b> qui. Non pensarci.	There are many other babes here. Let it go.

<sup>2</sup> The style guide can be found here: <https://partnerhelp.netflixstudios.com/hc/en-us/articles/215349898-Italian-Timed-Text-Style-Guide>. Last accessed: 10 December 2018.

The example shows that the word ‘pussy’ is dubbed with the word ‘gnocche’ [hottie] and subtitled as ‘fiche’ [babe]. The semantic value that the three words carry is different. In the English dialogue, through the use of the word ‘pussy’ and through the context in which it is used, we are certain that Red is talking about the vagina and that this choice carries an implicit reference to the explicit homosexuality of Boo, and to the possible sexual favours that she can engage in. This is partially lost in the Italian versions. In fact, the two terms, ‘gnocche’ and ‘fiche’, are generally used to refer to very attractive women more than to the actual vagina. Additionally, the words, especially ‘gnocche’, are not considered as vulgar and offensive as the English counterpart, although the subtitled choice seems to be a more suitable solution as it keeps a double entendre. The Italian word ‘fica’ (the singular form of ‘fiche’, discussed in the previous example) is used to translate another term referring to the vagina. In episode 6, Nicky refers to Morello’s vagina with the term ‘cunt’ (again, the Italian dubbed and subtitled versions are the same).

Episode 6 - cunt

English Version	Italian Version	Back Translation
Nicky: Baby, it’s a <b>cunt</b> . Huh? It stretches.	Piccola, è una <b>fica</b> . Si allarga.	Baby, it’s a pussy. It stretches.

The variety presented in the English version is once again flattened by the repetition of the same word used previously. In fact, while ‘fiche’ is used figuratively in the example taken from Episode 4 discussed previously, in Episode 6 it is used as the literal translation for genitalia. The use of the same term does not highlight the different pragmatic function.

Ex. 8, reported in Table 2 above, represents the example that carries the greatest variation. In the original dialogue, we find the word ‘hoo-ha’, a childish and informal term used to indicate the vagina. Here, Pennsatucky (played by Taryn Manning) is reporting to Mr. Healy that Chapman and Vause are engaging in inappropriate behaviour.

Episode 9 – hoo-ha

<b>English Version</b>	<b>Italian Dubbing</b>	<b>Back Translation</b>	<b>Italian Subtitling</b>	<b>Back Translation</b>
Pennsatucky: They're <b>sexing</b> Mr. Healy, I've seen it. This morning in the bathroom one girl's face was all up in the other one's <b>hoo-haa</b> . It was so nasty. It's an abomination.	<b>Fanno sesso</b> , signor Healy, le ho viste. Stamattina nei bagni la faccia di una era appiccicata alla <b>patata</b> dell'altra. È una cosa disgustosa. È un abominio.	They are having sex Mr. Healy, I saw them. This morning in the bathroom one's face was glued to the other one's flower. It's disgusting. It's an abomination.	<b>Fanno sesso</b> , signor Healy, le ho viste. Stamattina nei bagni la faccia di una era sulla <b>vagina</b> dell'altra. È disgustoso. È un abominio.	They are having sex Mr. Healy, I saw them. This morning in the bathroom one's face was on the other one's vagina. It's disgusting. It's an abomination.
Healy: Ok... enough.	Ok! Ora basta	Ok! Enough.	Ok! Ora basta.	Ok! Enough.
Pennsatucky: They were moaning and everything. Speaking in tongues like it's some kind of revival.	Gemevano senza ritegno. Dicevano cose inconmprensibili, sembravano in trance.	They were moaning with no restraint. Saying incomprehensibile things, they seemed in a trance.	Gemevano come matte. Dicevano cose inconmprensibili, sembravano in trance.	They were moaning like crazy. Saying incomprehensibile things, they seemed in a trance.
Healy: Who? Who are you talking about?	Chi? Ho chiesto di chi stai parlando?	Who? Who are you talking about?	Chi? Si puo' sapere di chi stai parlando?	Who? Can I know who you are talking about?
Pennsatucky: Vause... and Chapman.	Vause e Chapman.	Vause and Chapman.	Vause e Chapman.	Vause and Chapman.
Healy: Chapman?	Chapman.	Chapman.	Chapman.	Chapman.
Pennsatucky: Mh... Chapman.	Chapman. Lei è <b>lesbica</b>	Chapman. She is lesbian. They lesbian together.	Chapman. È <b>lesbica</b> . Quelle <b>lesbicano</b>	Chapman. She is lesbian. They lesbian together.

She a <b>lesbian</b> . They're <b>lesbianing</b> together. They're in there right now, in front of everyone dancing all up on each other.	. Quelle <b>lesbicano</b> insieme. Sono lì dentro proprio adesso, di fronte a tutti. Ballano strusciandosi come due vermi.	They are in there now, in front of everybody. Dancing and crawling like two worms.	insieme. Sono lì dentro proprio adesso, di fronte a tutti. Ballano strusciandosi come due vermi.	They are in there now, in front of everybody. Dancing and crawling like two worms.
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The Italian subtitled version translates the term 'hoo-ha' with 'vagina', the official Italian medical term to indicate female genitalia, similar to its English homograph. The semantic value carried by this term is different from the source text (ST) in its usage and context of reference compared to 'hoo-ha', and it is more similar to the translation used in the dubbed version, 'patata'. The latter is a euphemism used in Italian in informal conversations, usually with children or when more sensitive or vulgar words cannot be used.

Similar to the use of 'patata' in Italian, we find one more occurrence of a synonym of vagina that is used in a playful and more childish way, 'tutu', in ex. 7. In this scene, Chapman is talking over the phone with her best friend Polly.

#### Episode 6 - tutu

English Version	Italian Dubbing	Back Translation	Italian Subtitling	Back Translation
Polly: Hey, if your mom has been telling me to rub cocoa butter on my <b>tutu</b> , what the fuck does she mean?	Tua madre mi ha detto di strofinarmi del burro di cacao <b>sulla mia tutú</b> , ma che cazzo vuol dire?	Your mom told me to rub some cocoa butter on my tutu, what the fuck does she mean?	Tua madre mi ha detto di strofinarmi del burro di cacao <b>sul tutú</b> , ma che cazzo vuol dire?	Your mom told me to rub some cocoa butter on my tutu, what the fuck does she mean?
Chapman: Oh Jesus! She used to call it that	Oh Gesù! Chiamava così la passera quando ero piccola.	Oh Jesus! She used to call my pussy like that when I was little.	Oh Gesù! Chiamava così la passera quando ero piccola.	Oh Jesus! She used call to my pussy like that when I was little.

when I was little.				
Polly: A <b>tutu</b> ? You heard that one before? My gyny loves it.	Oh la <b>tutú</b> ? L'aveva mai sentita questa? Il mio ginecologo l'adora.	Oh the tutu? Have you ever heard this one before? My gynaecologist loves it.	Ah <b>tutú</b> ? L'aveva mai sentito? Il mio ginecologo l'adora.	Oh the tutu? Have you ever heard this one before? My gynaecologist loves it.

The term in Italian remains almost untranslated. In fact, only an accent is added to it. The main problem with this choice is that term 'tutù' in Italian refers to the typical suit worn by ballerinas, and not to the female genitalia like the term 'patata'. Additionally, whereas in the dubbed version it is clear that this term refers to her vagina, as is hinted by the use of the feminine adjective that pre-modifies the term, the subtitled version is unclear about the reference since it is pre-modified by a preposition that can be translated as 'on the' (where 'the' is the masculine definite article).

The last examples presented in Table 2 refer to words used to indicate breasts, 'titties' in ex. 1 and 'tits' in ex. 4. In both cases, the term is translated with 'tette'. In this particular case, it is not the single word that makes the difference but the context in which it is used. Ex. 1 is taken from a short dialogue between Chapman and Taystee in episode 1 (the Italian dubbed and subtitled versions are the same).

#### Episode 1 - titties

English Version	Italian Version	Back Translation
Taystee: Damn, you got some nice <b>titties</b> .	Cavolo, hai proprio delle <b>gran tette</b> .	Damn, you have some big titties.
Chapman: Thank you.	Grazie.	Thank you.
Taystee: You got them TV <b>titties</b> . They stand up on their own, all perky and everything.	Hai le <b>tette</b> come le tipe in TV. Stanno su da sole con i <b>capezzoli</b> sull'attenti.	You have those titties like the women on TV. They stay up by themselves with the nipples at attention.

Taystee is impressed with the size and shape of Chapman's breasts, and, more specifically, by the fact that they are small, as the viewer clearly sees on screen,

contrary to what the choice in Italian hints at with ‘gran tette’ [big titties]. The pre-modifier used in Italian literally means ‘big’. In this case, its pragmatic function is not necessarily related to the size, although contemporarily it does not create in the mind of the viewer the association with something small. Additionally, the Italian version refers to ‘capezzoli’ [nipple], not mentioned in the ST.

The variety of terms used in the English version is not well represented in the Italian translation. The examples presented so far show a clear ideological manipulation (Diaz Cintas, 2012) of the text. The consequences of this manipulation fall directly on the pragmatic function of the specific choices made by the scriptwriter, since the Italian version does not recreate the same tension and connotation of the original text, flattening the meaning and omitting specific cultural/identity references. As Tveit (2004) posits, the way in which each character speaks contributes to the representation of their personality, and more specifically through the use of emotionally charged language the viewer is able to give a specific connotation to each character (Díaz-Cintas and Remael, 2007). Beseghi (2016: 229) explores the use of swear words and other offensive language in OITNB and concludes that the TV series presents an extensive use of strong language and is faithful to the original dialogues, as it is less manipulated than other case studies considered in their research. The same cannot be said for language patterns related to gender identities.

### *3.2 Translating lesbian-related terminology*

I will now move on to analyse the other set of terms that refer to lesbian identity. This specific identity is central to the series, which represents, on many occasions, the homosexual past and present of the main character Chapman, as well as of the many other characters portrayed as lesbians. Table 3 below summarises some of the examples found throughout the first season.

**Table 3.** Lesbian-related terminology

		Who	Original dialogue	Italian dubbing	Italian subtitling
ex. 9	Ep. 1	Healy	lesbians	lesbiche	lesbiche
ex. 10	Ep. 1	Healy	lesbian sex	rapporti sessuali	sessu lesbico
ex. 11	Ep. 3	Vause	back to boys	non sei più lesbica	non sei più lesbica
ex. 12	Ep. 3	Healy	hanky-panky	tresche	porcherie
ex. 13	Ep. 3	Healy	stud	stallone	stallone
ex. 14	Ep. 3	Healy	butch ones	quelle che sembrano uomini	quelle che sembrano uomini
ex. 15	Ep. 4	Tricia	butchy	maschiona	maschiona
ex. 16	Ep. 4	Boo	butch ass	culo maschio	culo maschio
ex. 17	Ep. 9	Pennsatucky	lesbian activity	stanno facendo le lesbiche	atteggiamento lesbico
ex. 18	Ep. 9	Pennsatucky	sexing	fanno sesso	fanno sesso
ex. 19	Ep. 9	Pennsatucky	lesbianing	lesbicano	lesbicano

This analysis begins by specifying that the term ‘lesbian’ can be used in English as an adjective (ex. 10) or as a noun (ex. 9), referring to the sexual preference of a woman towards a person of the same sex. In Italian, the term ‘lesbica’ (ex. 9 in its plural form) is a noun used to indicate a homosexual woman, equivalent to the adjective ‘lesbico’ (ex. 10), that, according to the gendered derivational nature of the Italian language, can become ‘lesbica’ if it modifies a feminine noun. The term has no verbal equivalent in either of the languages. Pennsatucky’s usages in OITNB are an exception to this rule. Ex. 19 shows the use of a verb created from the noun ‘lesbian’, used to indicate that Chapman and Vause are behaving in a way that suggests that they are lesbians (the full dialogue is reported above when discussing ex. 8). A similar degree of creative manipulation is found in Italian with the verb ‘lesbicano’. Pennsatucky is keen on using verbs that do not exist. In fact, ex. 18 points out the use of ‘sexing’. This time the translator does not exploit language and the English text is simply translated as ‘fanno sesso’ [have sex]. Pennsatucky is describing Chapman and Vause, who are dancing in a sexy way, using this verb that recalls the adjective ‘sexy’. In Italian, the verb is translated with an expression that means ‘having sex’. This translation does not correspond to the reality of the scene, in which

the two women are clearly not having sex but dancing. Moreover, this choice exacerbates Pennsatucky's accusation, which will later result in Chapman being sent to solitary confinement.

Moving on to the terms that directly refer to lesbians, we find a variety of terms in English that are translated into Italian with a number of periphrases. 'Butch ones' is translated as 'quelle che sembrano uomini' (those who look like men) (ex. 14), 'butchy' is translated as 'maschiona' (maschio=male + on=augmentative suffix + a=feminine suffix) (ex. 15) and 'butch ass' as 'culo maschio' [male butt] (ex. 16). As pointed out by other studies on terminology referring to homosexuality (Sandrelli, 2016; Ranzato, 2012), Italian lacks correspondent terms. In this case, the choice always relies on the use of words that pertain to the semantic group related to men or male (uomini, maschio). Whereas this translation seems appropriate in ex. 14, the same cannot be said for ex. 15.

#### Episode 4 - butch

English Version	Italian Dubbing	Back Translation	Italian Subtitling	Back Translation
Boo: Wigga please, Mercy gonna dump your ass the second she gets out of here. She likes new shiny things. And out of here you are as dull as an old pencil with saggy tits and a fucked up tattoo on its neck.	Fammi il piacere. Mercy ti scaricherà appena uscirà da qui. A lei piacciono le cose eccitanti, e tu fuori da qui sei del tutto insignificante con le tue tette flosce e quell'orrendo tatuaggio sul collo.	Give me a break. Mercy is going to dump you as soon as she gets out of here. She likes exciting things, and you out of here are totally unimportant with your saggy tits and that horrible tattoo on your neck.	Fammi il piacere. Mercy ti scaricherà appena uscirà da qui. A lei piace quello che brilla, e fuori di qui tu sei scialba come una vecchia scopa con le tette cascanti e un fottuto tatuaggio sul collo.	Give me a break. Mercy is going to dump you as soon as she gets out of here. She likes shiny things, and you out of here are dull as an old broom with saggy tits and that fucking tattoo on your neck.

Tricia: Oh <b>butchy</b> face it. I win you lose. She hates you. She loves me.	Ammettilo <b>maschiona</b> , io ho vinto tu hai perso, lei ti odia. Lei ama me.	Admit it big man, I win you lose, she hates you. She loves me.	Ammettilo maschiona, io ho vinto tu hai perso, lei ti odia. Lei ama me.	Admit it big man, I win you lose, she hates you. She loves me.
Boo: Yeah and she 'loved' me too. For two whole years and then she dropped my <b>butch ass</b> for you [...].	Già e ha amato anche me per due anni interi e poi ha scaricato il mio <b>culo maschio</b> per te [...].	Right and she loved me too for two whole years and then dumped my man ass for you [...].	Già e ha amato anche me per due anni interi e poi ha scaricato il mio <b>culo maschio</b> per te [...].	Right and she loved me too for two whole years and then dumped my man ass for you [...].

Here, Tricia is explicitly trying to insult Boo. Therefore, more dysphemic terms such as 'camionista' or 'leccafiga' could have been used, especially if the same term 'maschiona' is used in a different episode (5) to translate the term 'lady men' with which Pennsatucky refers to Sophia Burset, the transgender character.

Another term translated literally in the Italian version but used in English to indicate an African-American or Latina masculine lesbian (Green and Peterson, 2009) is 'stud'. In the Italian version, the term is translated with 'stallone' (male horse), the literal meaning of the English word. Italian does not have a corresponding translation for this term, but despite this, it is obvious that this choice does not convey the pragmatic function of the term and the meaning is lost in translation. The lack of creativity highlighted in ex. 3 (Table 3) is again observed here. In this case, even a slight creative variation such as 'stallona' (using the feminine instead of masculine noun) would have rendered the translation more effective.

Sexual intercourse between two lesbians is described as 'lesbian sex' (ex. 10) and 'hanky-panky' (ex. 12). In both cases, it is Mr. Healy giving these definitions. In both cases, the Italian subtitles differ from the dubbed version. As mentioned earlier for ex. 8, the dubbed version seems to tone down the

content and sounds less aggressive. Ex. 10 is translated as ‘rapporti sessuali’ (sexual intercourse) and ex. 12 as ‘tresche’ [affair], whereas the subtitles report ‘sesso lesbico’ [lesbian sex] and ‘porcherie’ [dirty sex] respectively. In ex. 12, the choice in the original dialogue does not carry any negative or positive connotation, which is nonetheless added by the context in which it is used, from the tone used by Mr. Healy to the overall dialogue. In the Italian dubbed version, ‘tresche’ can be seen as sexual intercourse between two people who should not be having this type of encounter, while the subtitled version ‘porcherie’ explicitly carries a negative connotation and refers to something dirty. Once again, the subtitles seem to represent more faithfully the pragmatic function of given choices.

Interestingly, whereas most of the examples point to the fact that the Italian version tries to censor and limit the use of given terminology, ex. 11 goes against the grain. The original dialogue uses the periphrasis ‘went back to boys’ which is translated in the Italian version with the sentence ‘da quando non sei più lesbica’ [since you are no longer a lesbian], making explicit reference to being a lesbian. In this scene, Chapman is queuing to obtain a pair of shoes from the prison stock and finds Vause working at the counter (the Italian dubbed and subtitled versions are the same).

### Episode 3 – back to boys

English Version	Italian Version	Back Translation
Vause: Nine and a half, right?	Quaranta, giusto?	Forty, right?
Chapman: Ten.	Quarantuno.	Forty-one.
Vause: Did your feet swell when you went back to boys?	Ti sono cresciuti i piedi da quando non sei più lesbica?	Did your feet grow since you are no longer a lesbian?
Chapman: Fuck you.	Fottiti.	Fuck you.

This choice might be related to isochrony, to follow a specific dubbing time, or for reasons related to lip-sync, but it is quite unusual to find similar translation choices within Italian dubbed or subtitled products

As Sandrelli (2016: 126) points out “[t]he presence of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) characters is still relatively rare in Italian domestic

series and films”. Against this backdrop, the character of Sophia Buset is particularly interesting. OITNB is one of the first TV series in which a transgender character has such a prominent role, and the first one in which the role is interpreted by a transgender actress. As for terminology related to lesbian identities, the Italian language is limited when it comes to transgender-related terminology, and terms such as ‘lady man’ (‘*maschiona*’), discussed earlier, ‘tranny’ (ep. 3, translated as ‘*una trans*’) and ‘transgender’ (ep. 5, translated as ‘*transessuale*’ [transsexual]) are approximately rendered. In fact, the term ‘trans’ is used to translate the term ‘tranny’ and carries a derogatory connotation in the episode, though it is normally used in an inclusive and positive way, whereas ‘transgender’, which in Italian remains untranslated, is rendered with the term ‘*transessuale*’ [transsexual], which carries a different meaning and refers to a different gender identity.

Translating terminology related to gender and sexual identities is not only concerned with providing a faithful and relevant translation but is related primarily to ideological choices and power relations, particularly when these products are consumed by a society (even more so for the Italian one) that still considers discussions about gender and sexual identities as taboo and where binary, heteronormative standards are still prominent. This condition is proved by the lack of equivalent terminology and by the attempt at manipulating and censoring given topics.

#### *4. Concluding remarks. Popularizing gender issues in TV series*

The fact that a popular TV series such as OITNB openly and straightforwardly introduces and displays scenes dedicated to gender and sexual female identities directly creates a link between the popularization of issues related to these identities and the thousands of people who have watched and will continue to watch this series. The bond created with the different characters inevitably leads the audience to reflect on the meaning of being imprisoned if you are a woman and a lesbian or transwoman.

It is well known that TV series have been a catalyst for the popularization of specialized fields such as the legal or the medical ones (Gülich, 2003; Isani,

2006; Laudisio, 2015; 2018), bringing specialized knowledge into the viewers' lives and acting as sources through which an understanding of these topics can begin to develop. Here, by 'popularization' I mean that process through which specialized knowledge is converted and transformed into easy and accessible knowledge (Calsamiglia and van Dijk, 2004). As Laudisio (2018: 5) puts it, "popularization is based on a reformulation of specialized discourse so as to enable non-specialized readers to construct lay versions of specialised knowledge and integrate them into their existing knowledge". Although terminology related to gender and sexual identities is not traditionally viewed as a specialized language, the analysis presented in sections 2 and 3 demonstrates that the process of popularization repeatedly takes place in OITNB. In fact, although it might be uncommon to categorise this terminology within the field of scientific or specialized language, it is clear that it is not always accessible to the lay public. The non-accessibility of terminology related to gender and sexual identities, the fact that it is used within specific communities of users, and its need to undergo a process of popularization allows us to argue that it can, after all, be defined as a Language for Specific Purposes (Zottola, Forthcoming), and, thus, is in need of explanation/popularization for the lay audience.

The audience, exposed to vocabulary related to lesbian identity, is able to understand which terms are used with a dysphemic function and which are accepted within the LGBT+ community. Non-binary identities are perceived as accepted and not the product of fiction. Episode after episode the viewers learn more about the characters and develop their own knowledge about these issues.

Additionally, for TV series and their receiving countries, such as Italy, in this case, translation becomes the main tool through which the popularization of given topics can be achieved. In fact, whereas it is clear that the Italian lexicon lacks a number of terms, as the analysis presented in sections 2 and 3 points out, it is this absence that carries the most important value. This absence can engender the need to deepen the study of given topics and initiate the creation of new, inclusive and non-discriminatory linguistic practices.

OITNB undergoes an initial transformation from the written to audiovisual media, in which the text witnesses a first change. Topics related to gender and

sexual identities are not only introduced in the audiovisual version but given a prominent role. Here, we can already observe popularization at work. Later, when the ST is translated into Italian, the process of popularization is reinforced and acquires even more importance as it becomes necessary to rethink and reformulate the linguistic system related to these topics. The degree of manipulation and censorship retrieved in the Italian subtitling and dubbing is proof of the importance that series like OITNB have in the Italian scenario where it is still considered a 'better' or easier practice to omit certain scenes or dialogues rather than work towards the creation of an inclusive and non-discriminatory language use and environment.

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