Intercultural Cohesion in the Japanese-Italian Netflix Subtitles: The Failure of Cultural Mediation

Francesco Vitucci

University of Bologna, Italy

francesco.vitucci@unibo.it

Abstract

This study presents a preliminary survey carried out on Netflix in 2018 with a special focus on six Japanese TV series subtitled in Italian. The survey has identified some common categories of intercultural impasses and shows how the lack of intercultural cohesion observed in Italian subtitles is primarily due to underestimating both the mono- and micro-cultural elements present in the source texts. The observations produced by this study lead to in-depth reflections on the qualitative characteristics of current Japanese-Italian interlinguistic subtitling. Considering that the skopos of the translations on paid streaming platforms such as Netflix is the ability to meet the requirements of a general audience, one not necessarily familiar with the Japanese culture, then high-quality translations together with adequate semantic coherence able to ensure a clear use of the translated texts should always be the prerequisites of any interlinguistic audio-visual subtitling. This is important to prevent intercultural inconsistencies that risk corroborating and validating stereotypes or being denied the pleasure of discovery that underlies the audio-visual experience.

Keywords

intercultural cohesion, interlinguistic subtitling, loan word, ethnocentrism