



Direct and Indirect Non-binary Language in English to Spanish Translation

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Quick accessibility housekeeping

Here are the slideshow and references as a PDF



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- Since it's a PDF, you can copy the text directly from the slide and paste it into the alt text field
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Overview

1. Traditional Spanish grammatical gender
2. Women-inclusive approaches
3. Non-binary approaches: in/direct non-binary language
4. Case studies
 - Chilling Adventures of Sabrina
 - One Day at a Time

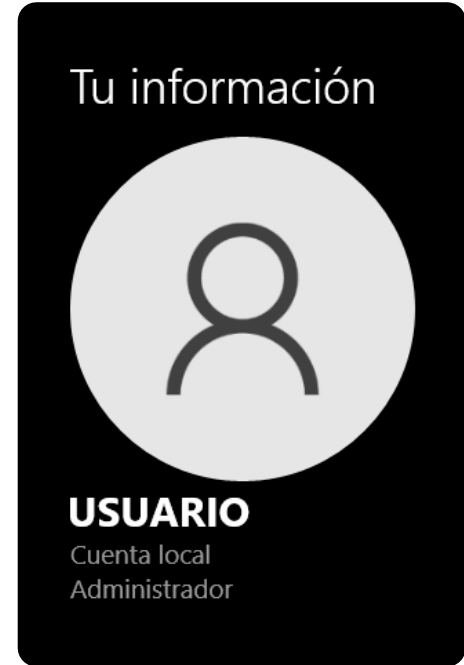
Traditional grammatical gender in Spanish



- Overwhelmingly expressed through morphemes
 - {-a} is f.
 - {-o} and {-∅} are m.
- Seen in adjectives, articles, nouns, participles, and pronouns
- Traditionally binary system, also applies to objects and ideas (f. **la alegría**, m. **el frío**)
- Grammatical gender ≠ social gender (**la persona**)

Traditional grammatical gender in Spanish

- The norm says m. is unmarked, simultaneously m. and n.
 - Evidence to the contrary as far back as Medieval Spanish (Almeida 2012)
- m. is used for mixed groups, generic/undefined referents...



Women-inclusive language



1. Todos los niños son listos
(m.) All (m.) children are (m.) smart
2. Todas las niñas son listas
(f.) All girls are (f.) smart
3. Todos los niños y todas las niñas son listos
(m.) All boys and (f.) all girls are (m.) smart

Women-inclusive language



1. Todos los niños son listos
(m.) All (m.) children are (m.) smart
4. Todos/as los/as niños/as son listos/as
(m./f.) All (m./f.) children are (m./f.) smart
5. Tod@s l@s niñ@s son list@s
(m./f.) All (m./f.) children are (m./f.) smart

The generic masculine and “linguistic sexism”



- The Real Academia Española’s official position is that sentence 2 (f. only) is incorrect if there are any boys in the group, and that 3–5 are incorrect regardless of the gender makeup of the referent (RAE 2014)
- Spanish prescriptivists pose a “linguistic sexism” v. “social sexism” dichotomy which implies that “linguistic sexism” is a lesser concern (Cabeza Pereiro and Rodríguez Barcia 2018)

**Indirect Non-binary Language (INL)
sheds all gender marks**

**Direct and Indirect
Non-binary Language**

**Direct Non-binary Language (DNL) uses
neologisms, neopronouns, neomorphemes, etc.**

(López 2019)

Indirect Non-binary Language (INL)



1. Todos los niños son listos
(m.) All (m.) children are (m.) smart
6. Cada estudiante es inteligente
Each student is intelligent
7. Todas las criaturas son listas
All little ones are smart

Direct Non-binary Language (DNL)



1. Todos los niños son listos
(m.) All (m.) children are (m.) smart
 8. Todes les niñes son listes
All children are smart
 9. Todxs lxs niñxs son listxs
All children are smart
- {-e}, {-x}: neomorphemes

DNL: Neomorphemes



- {-e} and {-x} are most common
- {-i}, {-u}, symbols are less common
- {-☀️}, {-❤️} used by political parties



- {-e} in the 70s (López 2019), boomed in late 2010s
- {-*} and {-@} in the 90s (López Forthcoming)
- {-x} around 2000 (Milian 2017)



Case studies in audiovisual translation



Audiovisual translation



- A broad field
- Many different players
- A driver of linguistic change
- Usually provides 4 versions into ES:
 - Dubbing v subbing
 - European v Latin American Spanish

The case studies



INL: Chilling Adventures of Sabrina

- Theo (Lachlan Watson)
- Parts 1–2 (2018–19)
- Interested in 1st person
- (López 2020)

DNL: One Day at a Time

- Syd (Sheridan Pierce)
- Seasons 2–3 (2018–19)
- Interested in Syd as a referent
- (López Forthcoming)

Chilling Adventures of Sabrina



- Theo is introduced in part 1
- He never genders himself in EN
- He comes out as trans (he/him) in part 2 episode 1
- Theo is trans-coded for EN fans from the beginning

Chilling Adventures of Sabrina

Part 1 (2018)

EN original	LatAm sub	LatAm dub	Spain sub	Spain dub
I'm stuck at home by myself.	F	F	F	F
I was ready for the responsibility.		F		F
Wild horses couldn't drag me back there.			F	
[I felt] scared. But really good, too.		F	F	
It's my pleasure.			F	

Chilling Adventures of Sabrina

Part 2 (2019)

EN original	LatAm sub	LatAm dub	Spain sub	Spain dub
Hey Harvey, I'm open.			F	
I was just so angry at Billy...	M	M	M	M
... angrier than I'd ever been before.	M	M	M	
I feel more myself in boys' clothes.		F		
I already see myself...		M		
If I was gonna do it, I'd do it for me.			M	
Because I'm not broken.	M	M	M	M

Other translations of INL

She-Ra (Double Trouble)

John Wick 3 (The Adjudicator)

Osmosis (Billie)

Good Omens (God and Pollution)

One Day at a Time



- Syd (they/them) is introduced in season 2
- Their girlfriend, Elena, is a lesbian and an activist
- The sitcom uses comedy to help educate audiences in trans issues

One Day at a Time: the bad



- The Latin American subbing and dubbing, and the European subbing
 - Consistent misgendering of non-binary characters
 - Queer comprehension errors
 - Some translations deliver a different message

One Day at a Time: misgendering



- Syd consistently referred to as female or plural

	LatAm sub	LatAm dub	Spain sub	Spain dub
f.	13	13	16	1
∅	11	13	8	13
DNL	0	0	(6)	19
pl.	7	6	2	0

Lines with Syd as a referent in seasons 2 and 3

One Day at a Time: comprehension errors



- Overall queer context

“Queer theory” (Season 2, episode 11)

“Teoría homosexual” (LatAm dubbing)

“Teoría gay” (European subbing)

One Day at a Time: comprehension errors



- Singular *they* translated in the plural

“Who is he? Or she? Or they?” (Season 2, episode 7)

“¿Quién es él? ¿O ella? ¿O ellos?” (LatAm subbing + dubbing
+ European subbing)

One Day at a Time: comprehension errors



- Singular *they* translated in the plural
 - I was just wondering if I could have ice cream with them.
 - And by "them" you mean just Syd? (Season 2, episode 3)
 - Quisiera tomar un helado con **ellos**.
 - Y con "ellos" ¿te refieres solo a Syd? (LatAm subbing)
 - Quería saber si podía ir a tomar helado con **ellas**.
 - Y con "ellas" ¿te refieres a Syd? (LatAm dubbing)

One Day at a Time: the good



- The European dubbing
 - Everyone uses {-e} for Syd
 - Elena uses {-e} for generics
 - The family comes across as more accepting

Other translations of DNL

We're Here (Various)

Star Trek: Discovery (Adira)

City of Ghosts (Thomas)

Billions (Taylor)

In review



- Non-binary Spanish is not new, but is gaining ground
- Indirect Non-binary Language (INL) can be safer but is also hard to detect
- Direct Non-binary Language (DNL) is visible but its context is not always understood
- Audiovisual works can aid this language development but can also erase trans and non-binary people

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Thank you!

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