

Translation and Telefiction: Multimodal Analysis of Paratextual Pieces for HBO's Looking

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ABSTRACT

This paper presents an analysis of the trailers for a telefiction series originally produced in English and simultaneously distributed in Spanish in Latin America. *Looking* (aired between 2014 and 2016 by HBO) was a contemporary dramedy series, a hybrid genre typical of the quality TV promoted by HBO, that told the story of three gay friends living in San Francisco. The aesthetics of the series reveals the auteur cinematic work of Andrew Haigh, a film director who applied his visual narrative repertoire to *Looking*. Using the multimodal analysis model proposed by Kaindl (2020) and the structure of communicative modes proposed by Chaume (2004) and Stöckl (2004), this paper analyzes the translation and Latin American adaptation of two trailers of the series to understand whether the semiotic integration of the paratexts represents or intensifies the narrative aspects of the hybrid genre series.

Keywords: *translation; multimodality; telefiction; Looking; HBO*

I. INTRODUCTION

Television content produced in the United States has evolved from its early stages, when its target audience was mainly domestic (from the 1940s to the 1970s), to the 1980s when consumption and production were aimed at specific audiences—a symptom of a post-Fordist economy—to the mid-1990s when a qualitative change influenced drama and comedy productions, which were exported worldwide (Rogers et al., 2002). The “quality TV” production model—a concept that appeared in the *MTM* publication: *Quality Television* (Feuer et al., 1984)—strengthened based on a series of characteristics of television production from this decade, mainly, the relevance of genre hybridization (and the emergence of dramedy), the independence of creators and the notion of authorship (Thompson, 1996). The release of *The Sopranos* in 1999 marked a turning point in the production of quality TV and, in particular, in HBO’s programming, which had begun in 1980.

At the start of the new century, HBO’s *modus operandi* of exploiting the macro-genre of drama to produce content deemed successful by audiences and critics alike was also challenged by historical events that marked milestones in the transformation of American television (Cascajosa Virino, 2009, p. 26). Following the 9/11 attack in New York, identity and gender representations that were believed to be monolithic began to collapse. This change in television representations had to do with the gradual fragmentation of audiences and the development of new content production strategies focused on specific groups. The debut of the American adaptation of the British drama series *Queer as Folk* in 2000, along with productions such as *The L Word* in 2004, or the important run of *Will & Grace* between 1998 and 2005 are clear examples of the path towards the representation of minoritized groups that were beginning to gain more visibility in telefiction.

Looking (Haigh, 2014, 2015, 2016) was aired on HBO in 2014, when broadcast television networks had already capitalized on the representation of sexual diversity. That year, there were 64 main and 41 recurring LGBTQ+ characters (GLAAD, 2014, p. 10). In 2014, HBO was the most inclusive network, with 15 LGBTQ+ characters in main and supporting roles, and “[t]he majority of those characters are found on *Looking*, which boasts the most out characters of any scripted series on the air” (GLAAD, 2014, p. 11). *Looking* tells

the story of three gay friends living in San Francisco, and it focuses not only on their romantic relationships but also on their journey towards emotional stability, which is influenced by their age, aspirations, and the social changes in a city that has been historically progressive regarding diverse sexualities.

The purpose of this paper is to analyze *Looking* as a telefiction translated into Spanish for Latin America. *Looking* is a critical case study because of its telecinematic aesthetics and its authorship dimension that also include its advertising pieces or paratexts, particularly its trailers. From a multimodal approach, this study seeks to explore the way in which these paratexts integrate the aesthetic elements of the TV series into their composition and editing, and how these elements are resemiotized in their translated versions for Latin America. The study, therefore, is not only based on the interlingual dimension of translation, but also integrates notions of inter/intra-genre translation proposed within the framework of multimodal translation theory (Kaindl, 2020).

II. **LOOKING: AUTHORSHIP, AESTHETICS AND NARRATIVE**

The synopsis on the series' website reads: "Three thirtysomething friends living in San Francisco explore the exciting, sometimes overwhelming, options available to a new generation of gay men" (HBO, 2016). *Looking* can be understood as a choral television series, in which each main character—Patrick Murray (portrayed by Jonathan Groff), Agustin Lanuez (Frankie J. Alvarez), and Dom Basaluzzo (Murray Bartlett)—has a storyline of his own that contributes to the narrative of the series. Nelson (2007) identifies this characteristic in quality TV productions, where the characters serve as multi-accentual components so that the viewers are not only entertained but also see themselves or something of themselves in the telefiction. In addition, the challenges that the characters face and overcome explain their actions—what Nelson (2007) calls "resolution without closure" (p. 50).

Regarding the characterization of the three gay protagonists, the series has been criticized for depicting situations that are so mundane they end up being "boring," and its critics have also lamented that the series feels like an independent movie that has been serialized (Lowry, 2015; Moylan, 2015, para. 1). However, it has also been argued

that the lives depicted on screen would be commonplace only in cities with an urban, commercial, and cultural development similar to that of San Francisco, and not every member of the audience is a gay person living in a cosmopolitan city (Manganas, 2015, p. 39). Also, the experiences of the main character Patrick Murray, a middle-class white man, do not demonstrate a clear interest in portraying race, class or age diversity, among other standpoints, which in fact are part of gay and queer communities in these cities (Lang, 2013; Villarreal, 2015, para. 6).

The cinematography of *Looking* is defined by the aesthetics of Andrew Haigh, who directed five of the eight episodes of the first season, five of the ten episodes of the second season, and *Looking: The Movie*. Haigh's professional trajectory plays a key role in understanding *Looking's* aesthetics; he went from big-budget film editor to independent director, and later was critically acclaimed for his film *Weekend* (Haigh, 2011). In terms of the color palette, lighting, camera work, and even the work with the actors, *Weekend* serves as a direct reference for *Looking's* cinematography. In fact, different authors (Clare, 2013; Cortvriend, 2018; Hargraves, 2020) identify telecinematic aesthetics in *Looking* that, although framed by the general model of HBO's quality TV, they are ultimately authored by Haigh.

Looking is not isolated from television trends; rather, television is the technology that mediates its production and consumption. The television in which *Looking* exists is situated in a specific space (the global North) and time (a new golden age of telefiction and a time of hypervisibility for the LGBTQ+ community). These media coordinates are genetically related to the hybridization of television narrative genres, in particular through quality TV as a production model. Since the beginning, quality TV has proposed conventions, particularly in relation to dramedy, which have been widely used, thus defining audience expectations for such products. Therefore, *Looking* should be interpreted as a television product marked by the audience's expectations and the aesthetic repertoires of the producers of a network such as HBO (Cascajosa Virino, 2006, p. 30). In other words, television genres become cognitive constructs, as well as semiotic designs, which need to be effectively interpreted by a target audience (Bateman, 2008, p. 248; Gibbons & Whiteley, 2018, p. 254). The study of a quality TV series about gay men during a time of hypervisibility entails the exploration of specific interpretative

repertoires and conceptual frameworks that have been established even prior to the series' premiere; these frameworks and repertoires should also be taken into account during the promotion of the series as a consumable and potentially attractive television product.

III. TRANSLATION AND SEMIOTIC RESOURCES

Multimodal approaches to translation studies focus on resemiotization processes, which can be interpreted as a semiotic perspective on postmodernist concepts of translation. A recent proposal by Kress (2020) on translation suggests that it consists of reconstituting meaning, i.e., is analyzable from a social semiotic perspective. In translation, knowledge—a set of meanings with value in a given culture (Kress, 2010, p. 14)—is reconstituted, supported by a multimodal text and with the aim of reaching new receivers that do not know how to use or do not have access to the semiotic resources of the multimodal source text.

Additionally, the relationship between multimodality and translation studies is not unidirectional. Kaindl (2020) states that the transcultural factor of transposing meaning, which is the basis of translation studies, was a dimension that had not received attention in social semiotic theory:

While Kress and van Leeuwen pointed out the characteristics of multimodality in their theory with the transcultural aspect hardly playing a role, Holz-Mänttari above all investigated the steps of actions which are relevant for producing multimodal texts across language and cultural barriers. Thus, both theoretical approaches can additionally be related to each other for perceiving multimodality in translation studies (Kaindl, 2020, p. 55).

Kaindl (2020) reaffirms that, in translation, the source text ceases to play a key role. Instead, emphasis is placed on the function that the target text must serve in the receivers' context, in particular, in relation to their horizon of knowledge. In addition, he emphasizes that translation is equivalent to designing multimodal texts. "Translation cannot be reduced to the transfer of linguistic meaning, but it is designing texts across cultural barriers" (Kaindl, 2020, p. 54). Based on these cross-cultural coordinates, the profile of the receiver as well as the material, historical, and social characteristics of the modes that make up the multimodal text, Kaindl (2012) proposes

a social semiotic definition of translation: “a conventionalized cultural interaction which modally and medially transfers texts from a communication entity for a target group that is different from the initially intended target group” (p. 261).

Thus, when the concept of translation shifts from a monomodal to a multimodal framework, modes as material elements of texts are of foremost importance. A set of descriptive concepts makes it possible to analyze the translated/new multimodal text as a link in the chain of resemiotization, an instance where it is possible to see how meanings are materialized through the transformation and interaction of modes (Pessoa do Nascimento, 2011). This is a key factor in understanding that each translated version is a transmodal moment or a specific case study that must be understood as a new representation with a configuration of meanings potentially different from the initial text.

Chaume's (2004) integrated model of film-and-translation-studies concepts and Stöckl's (2004) structure of modes and submodes are two relevant analytical approaches that can be merged and applied to translated multimodal texts and resemiotization processes. The structure proposed by Stöckl (2004) classifies semiotic resources into core modes, peripheral modes, and submodes. Core modes can be identified as forms of communication in general (image, language, sound, music...); however, they must also be understood as modes that are subject to specific media. Thus, for example, spoken language is a particular mode and written language is another. The division by influence of the realization medium or media—print, cinema, television, radio, among others—of the modes takes place between the core and the peripheral modal level, as shown in Figure 1 below. This division does not imply that the peripheral modes have less semiotic potential or are less important. Instead, they occur along with the core modes. Therefore, the peripheral modes vary according to the media; that is, once the mode materializes through a medium, the peripheral modes emerge.

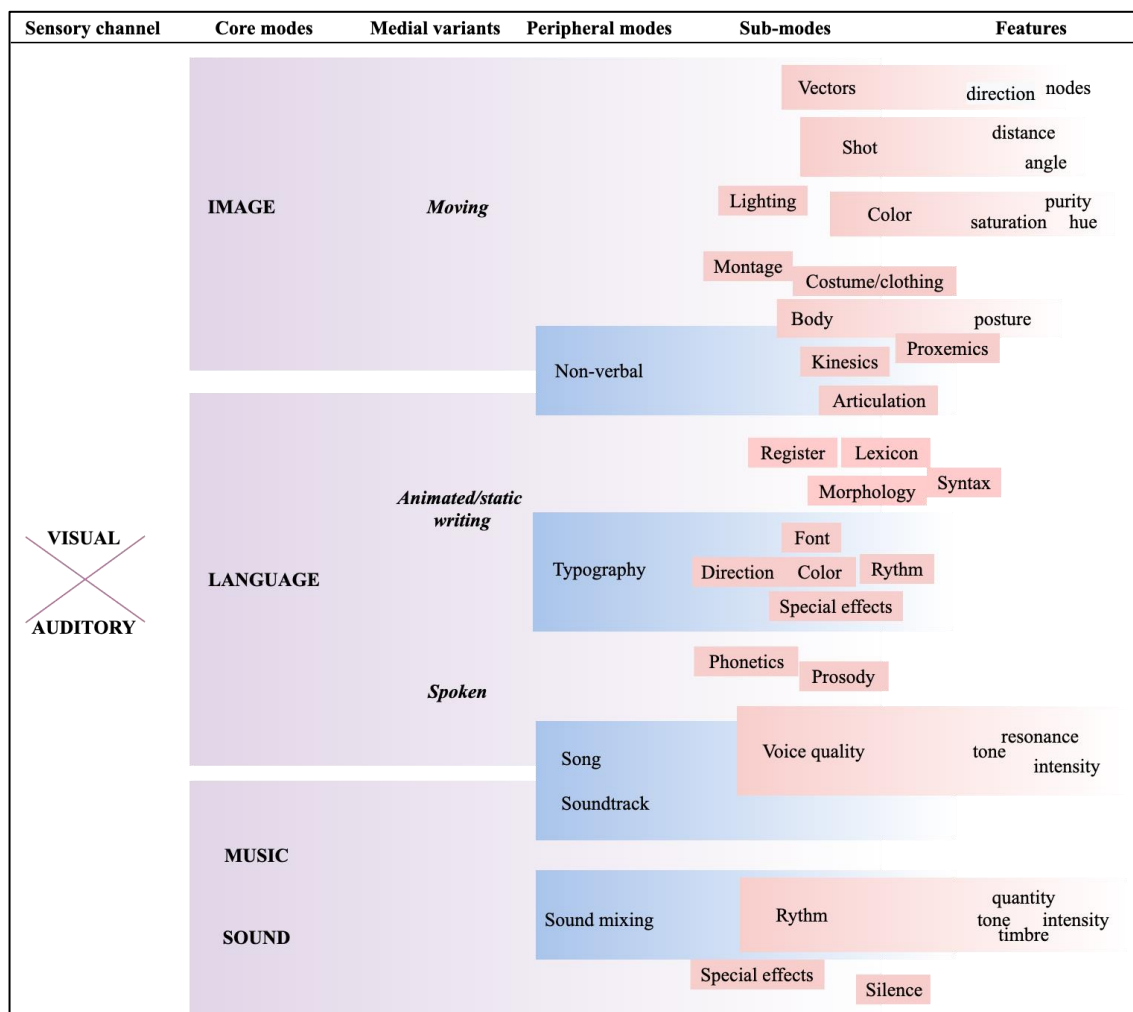


Figure 1. Modes for analyzing audiovisual translation adapted from Chaume (2004) and Stöckl (2004)

The set of modes in Figure 1 is not intended to be exhaustive. Rather, it suggests that the semiotic resources relevant to the multimodal analysis of a text have blurry boundaries and that different signifying systems may overlap. Thus, rather than the existence of a closed set of signifying codes, it is important to consider that the multimodal text proposes combinations that change depending on the context. Analytical models are relevant insofar as they reveal how the semiotic resources used in texts achieve their metafunctions when interacting with other semiotic resources. Chaume’s (2004) analytical model of audiovisual texts brings together most of the elements in Figure 1. The purpose of his model is to present potential interactions of signifying codes that may have implications for the audiovisual translation process (mainly dubbing and subtitling) (Chaume, 2004). It is worth pointing out that his model highlights the role of linguistic elements among the cinematographic signifying codes. This interdisciplinary proposal is relevant due, partially, to the fact that canonical film

studies have neglected the analysis of dialog because their contribution is supposedly obvious, when compared to the more studied dimensions of composition and editing (Kozloff, 2000).

IV. TRANSLATION AND SEMIOTIC RESOURCES

From a multimodal perspective, the concept of text has an inherent characteristic: it always integrates resources of different semiotic order. Text is always multimodal. In audiovisual translation, the acoustic and visual channels have been highlighted as the basis for understanding the semiotic resources in media products such as films, television series, video games, and others (Chaume, 2013; Zabalbeascoa, 2008). Based on the notion of the audiovisual text, audiovisual paratexts are also part of the semiotic network that contributes to the hermeneutics of texts (Genette, 1991; Matamala, 2012). Paratexts influence the reading and interpretation of the audience, who, when approaching a text, also have semiotic experiences stemming from the material elements that frame such text, as happens with reviews of a novel or interviews with an author (epitexts), the book cover, the texts that serve as prologues or comments on the novel (peritexts) (Genette, 1991).

As audiovisual texts, films or television series also exist in a semiotic network constituted by paratexts. However, Genette's (1991) theoretical arguments must be adapted to the different ways in which audiovisual texts are conveyed and played in different media (cinema, television, cable television, streaming television) (Stanitzek, 2005). For example in translated audiovisual products, subtitles (the lines of text that appear at the bottom of the images) constitute an additional semiotic layer; they are very similar to peritexts that mediate linguistic content. Other cases of epitext, such as trailers—which Genette even recognized (2001, p. 351)—are also relevant because they are a hybrid genre with advertising and narrative functions (Klecker, 2015). The relationship between films or television series and *their* trailers should be understood within the framework of the notion of thresholds (*seuils*) developed by Genette (2001), insofar as paratexts occupy an intermediate position, not as boundaries, but rather as entities that contribute to a notion of unity of the text, of extension of authorship, and, at the same

time, as interpretative frameworks or pieces that contribute to potential interpretations by the audience (Klecker, 2015; Šidiškytė, 2015; Stanitzek, 2005).

The available paratextual elements for *Looking* focus primarily on Patrick's story arc, but they also showcase the telecinematic aesthetics of the series and highlight the producers' creative intention and the actors' interpretive skills. The trailers can be classified into the following groups:

- those used to promote each season debut, with content from the first two or three episodes
- previews shown at the end of an episode that had just been aired and shown during the week prior to the premiere of the new episode
- the movie trailer
- promotional videos, such as short documentaries, aired during the seasons

All these trailers show HBO's logo as a means to guarantee the quality TV status of the series. These videos were mainly broadcasted by HBO channels. To date (March 2021), only a partial record of these promotional pieces remains. However, these trailers show how *Looking's* promotion was also constant in Latin America. On the HBO Latino channel on YouTube, the previews of the first and second seasons are still available with subtitles in Spanish. Among these previews, two trailers for the second season that was released in 2015 seem relevant for research on translation and multimodality; each of them have American and LatAm versions.

- Trailer 1: aired to promote the start of the second season; it features a montage of different scenes from the first episodes of the new season; it is 1 minute and 20 seconds long.
- Trailer 2: aired to promote the start of the second season. It does not focus on the series' story; it is more of a promotional piece focused on the actors who play the characters. It has a duration of 30 seconds.

Both pieces are analyzed in the following sections, considering their semiotic components, paratextuality related to translation and its specific resemiotization for Latin America, as well as the differences between the original and adapted versions.

IV.1. Trailer 1: Emphasis on genre hybridization

For the analysis of this trailer, the multimodal transcription models proposed by Baldry and Thibault (2006) were taken as a reference. The transcription template was structured according to the acoustic and visual channels as shown in Figure 1. For the Latin American version, a column for Spanish subtitles was also included, and, in case of changes in other semiotic components, the label "LatAm" was included. The complete template contains 40 segments covering the entire trailer. The trailer can be divided into 4 sections marked by the presence of the main characters; the presentation of the secondary characters and the connection they have with the main characters; the transitions; the insertion of texts on the screen; and the intensity of the music. The trailer structure is presented in the following figure.

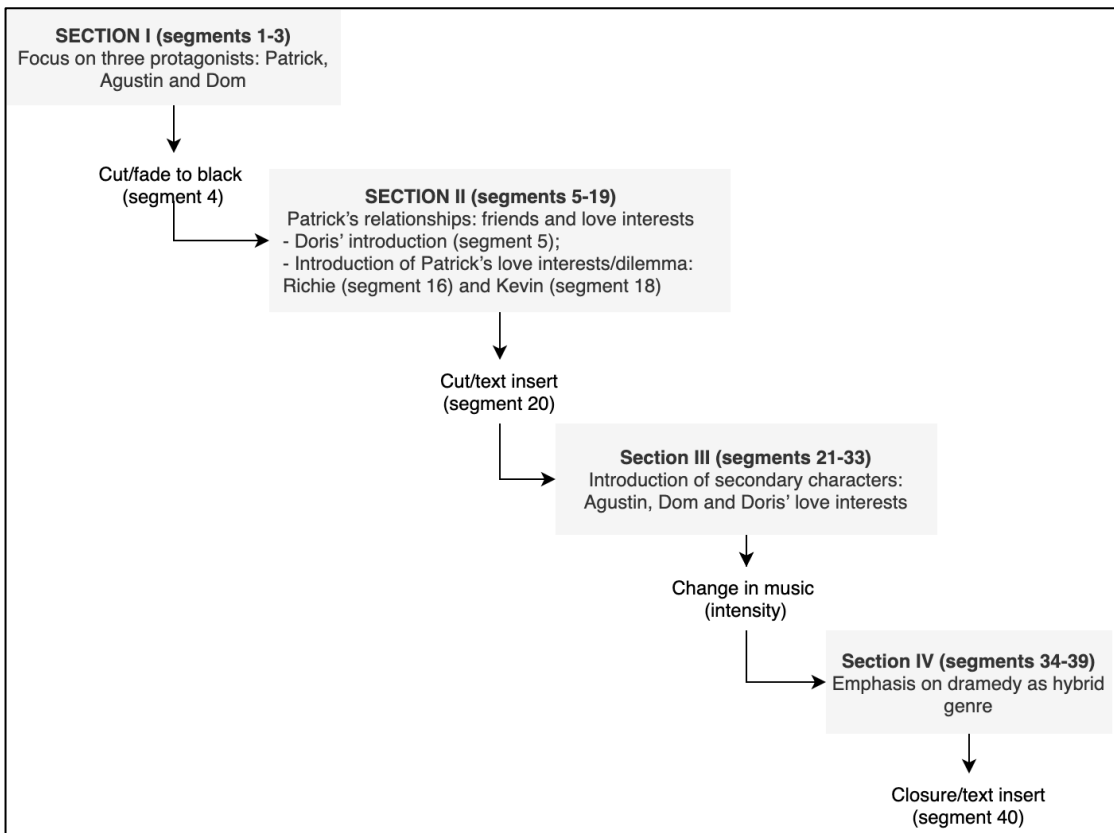


Figure 2. Structure of trailer 1 (Looking, season 2)

The first section is characterized by the “semiotic cohesion” (Chaume, 2004) between visual and spoken linguistic elements (see Table 1 below). For example, the words *peace* and *tranquility* (segment 2) are uttered and coincide with the changes in framing, from the panoramic shot of a river to a long shot of a house in the woods. Something similar happens in segment 3. When Patrick’s line ends with “around us,” the camera frames the three friends in a group full shot. In the subtitled (LatAm) version, the written text at the bottom of the screen reinforces the relationship between the image and the spoken language. As for acoustic resources, these first three segments are marked by a sound that intensifies, has no rhythm, and cuts off before the second section begins.

Table 1. *Trailer 1 (Looking, season 2), segments 1-3*

Time	Visual		Auditory	
	Composition	Subtitles (LatAm)	Language	Paraverbal
1 00.00.01	Camera in motion; shot from a low angle; image of treetops	<i>Es lo que necesitábamos.</i>	[Patrick (off)] This is exactly what we need.	[Sound] Smooth Slowly intensifying
2 00.00.03	Pan shot; calm river with a boat in the middle, trees in the background	<i>Paz, tranquilidad</i>	[Patrick (off)] Peace, tranquility.	
3 00.00.04-00.00.06	Long shot; country house in the middle of a forest of tall trees → the camera descends with a vertical tracking shot and changes to a group full shot of Patrick, Agustin, Dom.	<i>Y el esplendor de la naturaleza // alrededor nuestro</i>	[Patrick (off)] Nature’s majesty just all around us.	

From the second section onward, the images of the preview suggest a humorous tone in the series, particularly with the introduction of Doris (Lauren Weedman) and the line “Hello, bitches,” a device of feminization as part of camp speech among gay men. The fact that Doris uses this expression positions her as a member of the homosocial group. The bond between Patrick, Doris, Agustin, and Dom is told through group full shots, which show a degree of trust and friendship (because of the proxemics). Also, in what could be understood as irony with respect to the content of the first section (the forest that implied peace and tranquility), in the second section, the friends are shown using a substance before attending a party in the forest. From the symbols of the party (the neon lights, the type of dancing), it is suggested that it is a Radical Fairies party.

However, the light tone built through humor is also complemented by recurring close-ups of the three protagonists. The close-ups initially focus mainly on the smiles on Patrick's face. However, in segment 13, when Dom and Patrick are talking alone (group close-up), a close-up of Richie comes in. The second section then presents the tension of the series around Patrick's love interests, which solidifies the homoerotic theme. Indeed, the tension only grows starting from segment 17, due to the use of the shot/reverse shot between Kevin and Patrick, the linguistic content, and the serious tone of their voices. Nevertheless, the tension breaks, and the scene's montage of the friends having dinner (segment 18) and Dom's phrase "You are his dirty little secret" set an ironic tone again.

Table 2. Trailer 1 (Looking, season 2), segments 13-19

Time	Visual Composition	Subtitles (LatAm)	Auditory	
			Language	Paraverbal
13 00.00.20	From a high angle, group close-up of Dom and Patrick talking to each other lying down → Change to another scene; close-up of Richie.	Está todo bien con Richie, ¿no?	[Dom] You care about Richie, you know, right?	
14 00.00.22-00.00.25	Close-up/reverse shot of Richie and Patrick as they talk to each other.	-¿Estás saliendo con alguien? -¿Y tú?	[Patrick] Are you seeing anyone? [Richie] Are you?	
15 00.00.26	Medium two shot of Richie and Patrick.	Es complicado.	[Patrick] Uhh... It's complicated.	
16 00.00.27-00.00.30	Close-up of Kevin and Patrick (from behind). → Patrick walks through the streets of San Francisco (El Castro).	Si cuentas lo que pasó, // todo San Francisco lo sabrá.	[Kevin] You tell someone what happened, then suddenly it's all over San Francisco.	[Paraverbal] Low, serious/worried voice
17 00.00.31	Close-up of Kevin/reverse shot of Patrick (with a serious, sad look)	No quiero que eso suceda.	[Kevin] I really don't want that to happen.	[Paraverbal] Serious voice
18 00.00.32-00.00.34	Medium group shot of Patrick, Agustin, and Dom sitting around a table, talking	Eres su sucio secreto.	[Dom] You are his dirty little secret.	[Sound] Hard cut of sound
19 00.00.35	Close-up of Patrick; he turns his face with a despaired look.			[Paraverbal] Sigh [Patrick]

In addition to the focus on the bond among the main characters, the romantic aspect of the plot is exploited through medium shots (two shots and group shots) that are recurrent throughout the trailer. There are a total of 25 two shots throughout the trailer (see Figure 3). These establish the romantic bonds among the characters as well as characterize the friendship among the three protagonists, who appear talking to each other in several scenes. There is a total of 21 individual shots, and 14 of them are close-

ups. In this sense, shot selection is an important resource used to present the bonds of friendship and romance among the different characters. The central framing of the faces of the actors/characters also supports the spoken language mode, as their names quickly swipe across the frame and are ephemeral in comparison with the editing speed. In addition to the interaction between modes, the shots fulfill a textual function because they place the series in the generic field of drama (Sikov, 2010). The framing that focuses on the characters' faces and their prominent kinesics highlights the actors' interpretative skills, the drama of the scenes, and the nuances in their gestures that the viewer sees in detail.

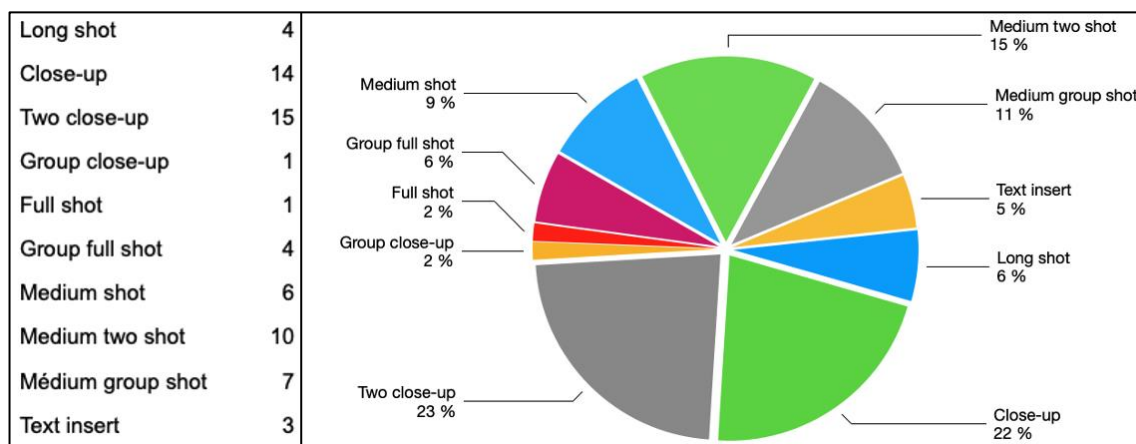


Figure 3. Shot count of trailer 1 (Looking, season 2)

The third section begins after segment 20, an intertitle in English that functions as an advertisement for the series itself. Up to this point, the subtitles in the LatAm version have accompanied the spoken texts, but they also appear in segment 20. Although the reference to the critics is omitted (probably due to time constraints inherent to this audiovisual translation modality) in the phrase “La aclamada serie regresa” (The acclaimed series returns), it is relevant because the interpersonal metafunction of the trailer is to awaken the audience’s interest in watching both the new season (which still has no critic reviews) and the already released episodes, due to their stated quality. The third section is also relevant because differences between the American and LatAm versions start appearing. As shown in the paraverbal modes column, in segment 21 of the American version, the song “Alive” by Empire of the Sun starts to play, while in the LatAm version, the song has been replaced by electronic music without lyrics.

Table 3. Trailer 1 (Looking, season 2), segments 20-27

Time	Visual		Auditory	
	Composition	Subtitles (LatAm)	Language	Paraverbal
20 00.00.36	THE CRITICALLY ACCLAIMED SERIES RETURNS (<i>Looking</i> font, with blinking neon lights effect)	LA SERIE ACLAMADA REGRESA		
21 00.00.37	Close-up group shot; Agustin looks at Patrick and smiles → medium shot of the three friends.	Agustin hizo un nuevo amigo.	[Dom] Agustin made a new friend.	[Music] Empire of the Sun's "Alive" song starts. [Music LatAm] Energetic, electronic music starts.
22 00.00.38	Long shot of a beach → full group shot of Patrick, Agustin, and Dom on a boat; Eddie waves from the beach.	-Hola. -Hola.	[Eddie] -Hey [Agustin]-Hey there.	
23 00.00.41	Medium group shot; Eddie and Agustin swim by themselves in the river at night.	¿Estás soltero?	[Eddie] So are you single?	
24 00.00.43	Full shot of Agustin in a club; he is by himself and looks at the people dancing.	<i>Desde hace poco.</i>	[Agustin] Only recently.	
25 00.00.44-00.00.47	Close-up of Patrick and Agustin → close-up of Agustin; he kisses Patrick on the cheek.	Lentamente, regresas// al mundo de los vivos. ///Muy lentamente.	[Patrick] You are slowly returning to the world of the living. [Agustin] Ever so slowly.	
26 00.00.48-00.00.49	Group shot of Doris, Patrick, and Augustin; they cheer for Dom at a football game → full shot of Eddie dancing on the benches.			[Music] "Days go by my window World slows down as it goes"
27 00.00.50-00.00.52	Medium two shot of Dom and Lynn in the kitchen of Lynn's house → close-up of Lynn looking up → close-up two shot of Lynn with someone else in a hot tub; Dom looks on in jealousy.	Parece que te estás retrayendo.	[Dom] It's like you are withholding.	

During the third section of the American version, scenes are shown symbolizing friendship (segments 21, 25), romantic interest (segment 23), homoerotic desire based on the central framing of the body (segment 22; third frame of segment 27), as well as loneliness (segment 24) and heartbreak (segment 27). The editing of these images is also framed by a song with a hopeful tone, almost like an anthem, which appeals precisely to the notions of friendship and love. The synchrony between images and music highlights the fundamental themes of the series (friendship and love), as well as the dramatic tone created by the different bonds and relationships among the characters. The song "Alive" plays a significant role as the lyrics are heard in the background,

underneath the dialog; and, in four moments (segments 26, 30, 34, 40), the music is intensified so that the lyrics of the song frame the images. The LatAm version does not present variations in the editing of the images. However, the fact that the music accompanying the scenes in the LatAm version does not have lyrics highlights the conflict between the characters shown in the images; the hopeful frame created by the song in English is lost. In that sense, the focus on the relationships is not based so much on the juxtaposition of moments of joy and tension but rather suggests that homoeroticism and homosexuality are the mobilizing themes of the series.

The last section of the source trailer is driven by the editing and use of music. In opposition to the previous section, the characters are shown in moments of joy and tranquility; only Patrick appears as a sign of unease in relation to his objects of desire that always precede and accompany his image (segments 35 and 36). The Empire of the Sun song, which plays in the last section, evokes the campy images in the “Alive” video clip, in particular, the ABBA-esque two shots and close-ups and the characterization of vocalist Luke Steele. This resource is interesting, insofar as it allows *Looking* to be part of the group of television productions on gay identities without resorting to the overexploited humorous dimension of camp or allusions aiming to capture an audience. Instead, it appeals to a more immaterial camp register without direct references. As mentioned before, the LatAm version lacks this semiotic layer, so the semiotic density is only restored by the editing. Section four concludes with an inconsistency between the intended ceremoniousness of quoting a Walt Whitman verse (as a symbol of gay culture) and Dom’s mocking laughter (segment 38).

Table 3. *Trailer 1 (Looking, season 2), segments 34-40*

Time	Visual Composition	Subtitles (LatAm)	Language	Auditory Paraverbal
34 00.01.06	Doris dances on someone’s shoulders at the forest party → Close-up, Lynn, and Dom laugh.			[Music] Song intensifies: “Loving every minute cause...” [Music LatAm] Energetic, electronic music intensifies.
35 00.01.08	Medium shot of Richie → medium group shot of Patrick and Kevin while they are about to kiss each other.	¿Estás enamorado de él o qué?	[Richie] Are you in love with him or what?	[Paraverbal] Serious voice
36 00.01.10-00.01.12	Medium shot of Patrick; exiting a club confused → close-up of Richie → close-up of Dom and	“La felicidad no está// en otro lugar, sino aquí.	[Patrick (off)] Happiness not in	[Music] Song intensifies: “Loving

		Lynn in bed smiling → medium shot of Eddie as he dances.		another place but this place.	every minute cause you make me feel alive... alive"
37	00.01.13-00.01.15		No en otra hora, sino ahora".	[Patrick (off)] Not for another hour, but this hour.	[Sound] Hard cut of sound
38	00.01.16-00.01.19	Fade out → black screen → close-up of Patrick and Dom.	-¿En serio? ///-Es Walt Whitman.// Es una buena cita. ///No me importa quién es.	[Dom] -Really? [Patrick] -It's Walt Whitman. It's a great quote. [Dom] -I don't care who he is.	[Paraverbal] Laughs [Dom]
39	00.01.20	Close-up group shot of Patrick and Richie.			[Paraverbal] Laugh [Patrick]
40	00.01.20	LOOKING			[Music] Song intensifies: "Loving every minute cause you make me feel alive... alive"

Finally, in segment 40, the title of the series appears centered and with dynamic typography. The letters are illuminated with a flicker and a slight electric sound, like a damaged neon sign. These are a reference to a sense of insecurity in the characters, their lack of set careers, and they allude to their non-linear or precarious pursuit of success. The combination of all the semiotic codes of trailer 1 build the hybrid genre of the series, which is neither a comedy nor a drama, but a dramedy in the style of HBO's quality TV.

IV.2. Trailer 2: Music and inter-genre translation

The second trailer, barely 30 seconds long, focuses on the main characters Patrick, Agustin, and Dom, as well as Patrick's love interests: Richie (Raúl Castillo) and Kevin (Russell Tovey). In both versions of the trailer, the images (close-ups of the five characters, each with a dominant hue, changing with the rhythm of a song), their composition, and editing remain the same, except for the translation of the text insert in the penultimate frame that reads "the new season//Looking" or "nueva temporada//Looking." The difference between the two versions of the trailer resides in the music. The change of song in the LatAm version constitutes a resemiotization or inter-genre translation that is analyzed later.

The images in the trailers can be analyzed through their compositional elements, such as close-ups, lighting, and the color that dominates each frame. The colors of the image come from the lighting and probably from the use of filters; in that sense, some contrast is also achieved through the use of black and the purity of the tone, which highlights the contours of the faces and add volume. Initially, the three main characters appear; each character is assigned a color: Patrick (blue), Agustin (red), and Dom (purple, a non-spectral color derived from the first two). Then Kevin (green) and finally Richie (orange) appear, with a clear reference to cold and warm tones, respectively. Agustin and Richie, the Latino characters, have the warmest colors (red and orange, respectively). There is a concentration of light on the faces, which reinforces their volume, but also outlines the vectors. The very reflection or concentration of light on the faces reflects the tones off the screen, that is to say, there is a sort of light projection effect from the screen itself.

Transitions with an optical effect (the fade to black of the previous frame) establish the dynamics among the initial frames and individualize each character. The transitions are then followed by sharp cuts, with short frames in which the characters begin to appear one after the other quickly. This editing contributes to the rhythm, but it also creates semiotic density due to the composition and the characters' actions (facial gestures, especially gazes).

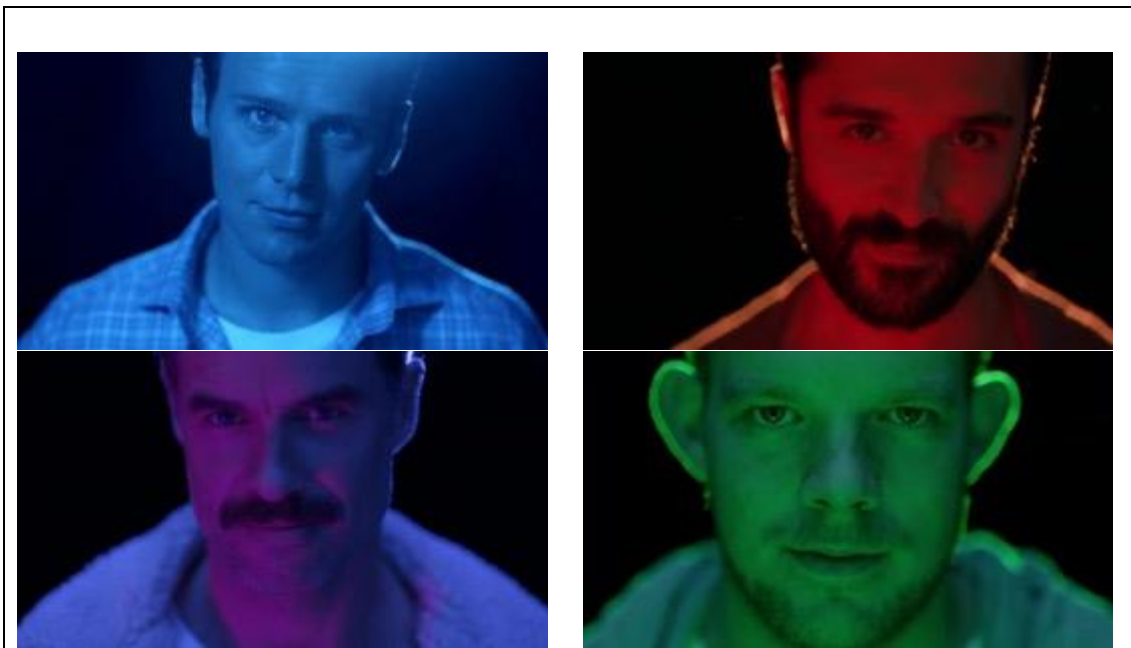




Figure 4. *Shots of the characters*

The use of colors may refer to the gay flag as an easily identifiable symbol of this community. However, the color choices also refer to the narrative of the series, as Kevin and Richie represent Patrick's objects of desire. Thus, after the individual frames, Patrick and Richie appear face to face in a two shot, lit in orange. In the next frame, it is Patrick and Kevin, in green. In the first two shot, Richie averts his gaze, thus breaking the fourth wall, the limit of the series' diegesis. In this sense, the gaze in the individual frames and throughout the trailer is a meaningful semiotic resource.

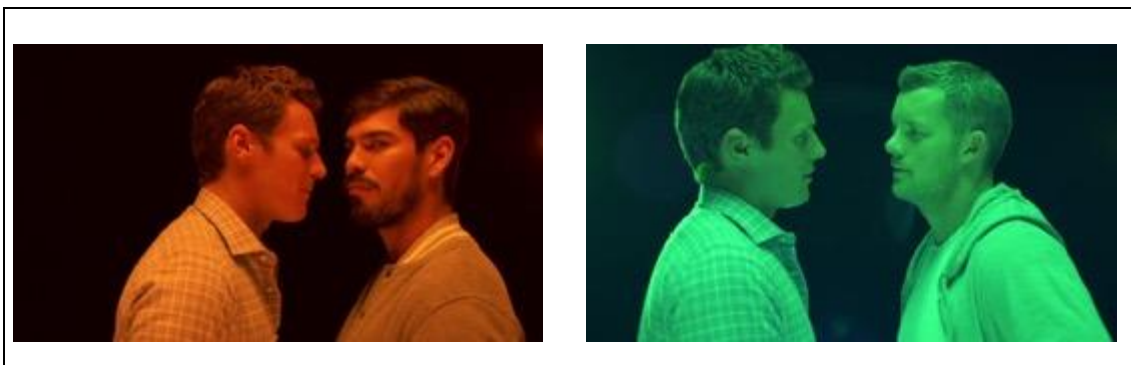


Figure 5. *Two shots of Patrick and Richie, and Patrick and Kevin*

In the first frames, the characters' gazes could be understood as directed away from the field of view—the virtual, imaginary field, that dialectically feeds meaning to what can be seen on the screen (Bedoya & León Frías, 2011). However, Richie's action of looking or turning his gaze is an ironic commentary on Patrick's desire and how he ended their relationship at the end of the first season. From this brief scene, it is understood that the characters' gazes, as signifiers of an action, are directed away from the field of view in the framing, towards the viewer; the character, as an actor that releases the force of the action, questions the subject looking at the screen. The viewer's gaze is a common theme in discussions on film semiotics with a gender perspective (Mulvey, 2012).

Nonetheless, in this particular case, it is a reflective gaze from the screen to the viewer (de Lauretis, 1987), which appeals to the male position and homoerotic desire, taking into account those who constitute the target audience of *Looking*. Although the viewer is out of the frame, which could lead one to understand that the process initiated by the actor through the vector of his gaze is an intransitive or non-transactional action, the viewer is indeed the object of the vector. It is an extradiegetic action through which the characters/actors establish a symbolic relationship with the viewer (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 117).

The five characters/actors take turns in this position on the screen before the speed of the shot changes begins to vary according to the rhythm of the song. It is then revealed that all the characters/actors are in a single space, on a platform that rotates until they appear in front of the camera. This alludes to a store window, through which the actors seem to be available. The vectors and the semiotic density of the gaze have a bearing on the notion of cruising and flirting, in which the gazing subject is positioned as a potential object of desire (Langarita Adiego, 2017). Facial gestures also produce slight changes in the gaze, but the object remains the same. Consequently, although the images give the impression of being static, they do show characters performing a transitive action.

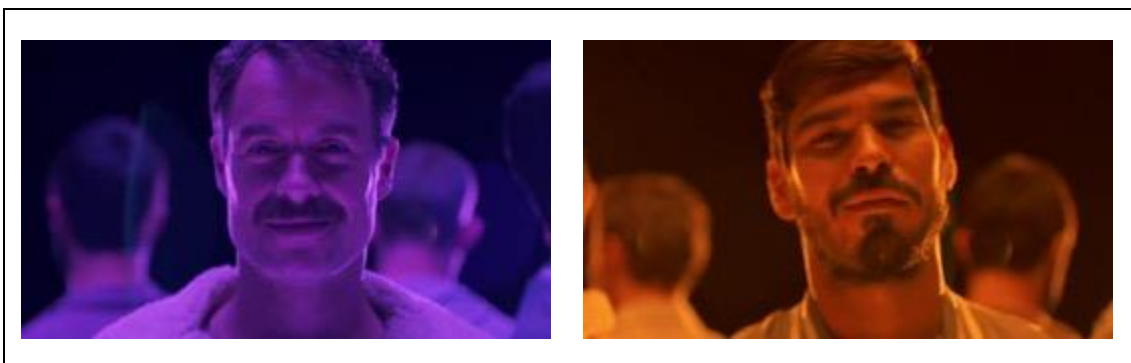


Figure 6. *Dom and Richie's gazes and facial gestures*

In a moment of semiotic interaction emphasized by the electronic percussion setting the pulse, frames that change from vertical to horizontal stripes are manipulated in order to highlight the faces, gestures, and how they supplant the generation of gaze vectors (e.g., lip gestures). As Boeriis and van Leeuwen (2017) point out in relation to this type of vector configuration:

The eyebrows, the mouth, and the wrinkles and folds of the smiles and frowns that can contract or open up the face all clearly delineate vectors, resulting from the tension of facial muscles [...] the person whose face is in question is the Actor, and facial expressions are communicative, expressing reactions in most cases [...] combinations of these, for instance pursed lips and widened eyes, can modify these expressions. In short, facial expression vectors realize a specific kind of reaction, different from the gaze (p. 29).



Figure 7. *Reduced framing*

There is a relationship between the reduced framing and the rhythm of the songs in both the American and LatAm versions of the trailer. In the American version, the song is “(Far From) Home (The Speed of Sexor Reprise)” by Tiga, a Canadian musician. The song falls into the synthpop genre and is a remix of a slower song from the 2006 album *Sexor*. Therefore, this version works as a dance version or a club mix. The song has been edited in the trailer to synchronize the framing and the lyrics of the song and to articulate the images in order to recreate the pulse of the mix. The opening verses support the ideational function of the images as they reference the dilemmas Patrick faces and his relationship with his friends. “Hard not to be so hard on myself/I’m trying to learn to keep my mind in check/I listen to my friends when they say/It’s destiny, it’s meant to be this way.” The cut of the song leads the viewer to link the lyrics with the close-ups of the characters looking directly into the camera: “I see the boys stare and/I see the boys stare

and/I see the boys stare and/I hear them talk.” The topic of these verses is a reference to the series (*Looking*) which, together with the characters’ gazes, constitute a type of semiotic cohesion.

In the LatAm version, the montage of the images and music also produces a sense of synchrony. In this case, the song is “Deep Impact” by Nick Kingsley, an English musician. The song belongs to the electronic music genre, particularly house music, originated in the African-American community of Chicago (Thomas, 1995). This music genre has gone through a historical process marked by the aesthetics of inclusion and fraternity; that process was shaped by events like the Stonewall riots, processes like the gay liberation, the parallel development of disco music during the seventies, and the emergence of rave culture (Maloney, 2018). Thus, house music as a trope of gay space integrates a different layer of meanings in comparison with the song with lyrics in the American version of the trailer. In this transmodal moment, an echo emerges as a representation of gay identity, clubs, and the homosexual movement in large Latin American cities, where house music continues to be an index of freedom, eroticism, and queer culture.

V. FINAL REMARKS

This brief study was about two trailers of the series *Looking*, as well as the translated and adapted versions for Latin America. Regarding trailer 1, the analysis showed that Spanish subtitles work within the framework of audiovisual translation norms, particularly the synchrony between spoken and written linguistic modes. It was proposed that, through the combination of images and linguistic units that could refer to meanings through metonymies (tranquility and peace in relation to the images of lakes and forests), the interlingual subtitles served as elements of semiotic cohesion (Chaume, 2004). In terms of the visual communicative modes, it was noted that the shots (close-up, individual, and group shots) established the connections among the characters (friendships and romantic interests) and highlighted the dramatic nuances of the scenes, in particular the (facial) gestures of the characters/actors. In the analysis of editing and acoustic modes, this paper explored how sounds and music frame the images, thus modulating the tone of the visuals and emphasizing the hybrid genre of the series. It was further argued that the change of the musical piece in the version for Latin

America implied that the images and the homoerotic and homosexuality themes were more salient than the meanings triggered by the music in the American version.

In the case of the second trailer, it was argued that, although there is no linguistic material except for the insertion of the series title, the Latin American version is indeed localized. The noticeable change from the beginning is the song that, unlike the first trailer, not only frames the actions and images but also structures the shots, even to the point of proposing the topic of the visual meanings. The localized versions have only instrumental songs; therefore, the linguistic mediation of subtitles is not necessary. No assessment was made concerning whether one version is better than the other. Given that each trailer exists and works in specific contexts and for specific audiences, what is relevant is how the songs suggest different meanings.

In trailer 1, the interaction between the images and the song "Alive" proposes a camp register based on the intertextual relationship with the Empire of the Sun's video clip. This camp register does not take place in the Latin American version since the electronic music, without lyrics, highlights the homoerotic images and homosexual desire. In trailer 2, the song in the American version works by giving the images a humorous tone that modulates the configuration of homoerotic desire expressed through the male figures and the vectors that come out of the screen and question the audience. In the Latin American version, the symbolism of house music highlights the notion of homoerotic desire, possibly appealing to the immaterial gay culture related to this type of music. However, it does not function as a filter to modulate the density of the gazes from the actors/characters that are directed off the screen. In these cases, the changes in the musical components reveal the resemiotization or translation of the trailers. These are cases in which peripheral or non-existent linguistic modes show the relevance of translation understood as a multimodal process.

The fact that a series such as *Looking* pertains to a hybrid genre such as dramedy entails functions of identity and political representation that go beyond the humor or entertainment that one would expect from a sitcom. In other words, series such as *Looking* must integrate aesthetic and discursive components that demonstrate how a television narrative goes beyond the generic conventions of television and comes closer to telecinematic narratives with multiple story arcs, constellations of well-developed

characters, spectacular images, and social commentary. The trailers are also part of the series' paratexts. The cinematography of *Looking* is part of the vision of an author in search of representing real life. It is a bet on realistic fiction based on everyday life, entailing a series of aesthetic resources that are part of the semiotic configuration in both trailers and their Latin American versions.

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