

Language Difference in the Telenovela Trade

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Abstract

Linguistic differences within and across language groups have challenged program export since the origins of television. This study examines telenovelas, which, despite an enduring basis in Spanish and Portuguese, have attracted worldwide audiences since the 1980s. The conceptual challenges of linguistic difference and the practical responses of industry participants are considered at three levels: within nations, among societies speaking the same or closely-related languages, and across language groups. More research is needed on how linguistic issues in the creation, distribution, and consumption of media texts interact with technological developments that address language differences.

As the staple of Latin American serial television, the telenovela has deep narrative roots as well as broad popular exposure in the region. Its history and pervasiveness lend the genre a multifaceted social influence that researchers have recognized and begun to study more thoroughly. One socio-cultural facet that remains woefully under investigated is the linguistic. This lacuna is both surprising and troubling for reasons I will take up below. Beginning in the 1980s, the export of telenovelas beyond the Americas became not only routine, but also profitable causing the genre to engage forces of globalization that, since the late twentieth century, have so dramatically shaped transnational cultural industries and their products. Although language has been identified as the last formidable barrier to fluid cross-national and cross-cultural communication (Ferguson, 1992), research on the topic has been sparse. As a television genre indigenous to a developing region and which is exported to more than 130 nations of various development levels, the telenovela represents an excellent case for studying media transnationalization. One of my objectives within the limited space here is to situate the telenovela among broader currents that are transforming contemporary international mass media. Following a brief outline of key trends since the 1980s, I discuss linguistic issues surrounding telenovela production and export both within and beyond the Spanish- and Portuguese-language market.

A driving force behind the expansion of Latin American media has been the steady growth of Spanish-speaking audiences and the efforts of marketers and advertisers to reach them (Sinclair, 1999; Dávila, 2001). As regards television, increased numbers of over-the-air channels and pay services has led to the introduction of "new" program formats, many of which are borrowed from other language markets, yet do not erode telenovelas' popularity or ratings dominance. The genre has maintained its strong presence in the region even as it gained global recognition. Furthermore, accelerated technological development has improved the quality and efficiency of traditional language translation through dubbing, subtitling, and second audio programs while digitization has enabled multiple audio tracks in new distribution channels such as direct-to-home satellite transmissions. Rapid growth of the internet beginning in the mid 1990s has challenged television for the eyeballs of well-to-do viewers, but also offers synergistic opportunities as Televisa's chief, Emilio Azcárraga Jean noted in calling the internet, "the most important project for Televisa today...all the Group's resources -- magazines, records, music, production, radio and television -- will support [the] new project" (Crane, 2000). Of course new communication technologies like the internet bring new concerns along with benefits, and a key one in international communication has been linguistic change. This threat has been partly responsible for the new urgency focused on a long-standing problem: how to both protect endogenous languages from exogenous influence or domination, and promote local languages' expansion. These were principal motivations behind the First International Congress on the Spanish Language held in Zacatecas, Mexico in 1997 where numerous participants discussed the state of Spanish in a variety of modern mass media[i] (Preston, 1997).

The Spanish and Portuguese Cultural-Linguistic Market

In bringing together experts from Spain and the Americas to discuss the contemporary state of the Spanish language, the Zacatecas congress organizers were underscoring a concept that communication researchers had been developing for more than a decade, and which I call the cultural linguistic market.[ii] The concept is grounded in the notion that culture consists of "webs of significance" spun over the generations from shared ethnic roots, political, economic and social histories, languages, religion, and value systems (Geertz 1973: 5). While diverse local, regional and national cultural webs clearly exist, so does a broader one that is shared among subgroups sharing cultural attributes in common. Ithiel de Sola Pool (1977) was among the first scholars to relate this idea to mass media by arguing that audiences prefer local or regional productions to those imported from more distant cultures. Mattelart, Delcourt and Mattelart (1984) advocated for linguistically-proximate nations to create and expand 'Latin' audiovisual space in order to counter language encroachment, especially by cultural products in English. As media multiply and cultural studies gains more adherents, a growing number of scholars are studying the central position of audiovisual media in audiences' interpreting, reinforcing, and modifying this shared culture. The telenovela is clearly an influential genre in Latin American media, and its worldwide influence increases (Allen, 1995; Matelski, 1999).

Language is commonly identified as a key element distinguishing among broad cultural groupings, such as Nordic versus Latin, as well as between ethnic subgroups sharing a common cultural base--like Argentine versus Central American Spanish (Mar-Molinero, 2000). Spanish and Portuguese, the dominant languages of Latin America, and the Iberian Peninsula, share grammatical structure, many cognates, and other important elements. This linguistic similarity, in combination with shared cultural, political and economic elements, facilitates the trade in cultural products among Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking nations, including the U.S. Spanish-language sector.[iii] Telenovelas are the most commonly exchanged television programs. Certainly local dialects vary widely across Portugal and Brazil as they do across Spanish-speaking countries, but as television markets have pervaded then transgressed national boundaries, audiences have become accustomed to the dialects spoken by performers in the principal production centers which over time accrue competitive advantages within the cultural linguistic market.[iv]

This indicates that economics and trade are significant components of cultural-linguistic markets, especially in the free trade era of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries which is characterized by foreign direct investment, privatization, mergers and acquisitions, deregulation, and the like (McAnany & Wilkinson, 1996). Economic considerations weigh heavily in production, distribution, and exhibition/transmission decisions, of course, and media tend to experience exaggerated effects of macroeconomic fluctuations as demonstrated during the market "bubble" of the late 1990s and the global economic downturn begun in 2000. It has been argued, however, that the demand for telenovelas is steadier than for other genres due to their entrenchment in the daily routines of millions of households (González, 1992; Martín-Barbero, 1995). The internal trade dynamics of media markets also influence production, distribution, and exhibition/transmission decisions, all of which are affected by linguistic considerations (Wilkinson, 1995). Jorge Serrano (personal communication, January 28, 1993), an international programming sales executive for the Venevisión network based in Venezuela, described the evolution of telenovela export: novelas started as a strictly regional product; they were introduced to Latin countries outside the region such as France and Italy, and finally were exported to the culturally and linguistically distant countries of Northern Europe, Asia and the Middle East. This suggests that penetration of a "Latin audiovisual space" akin to the one proposed by Mattelart, Delcourt and Mattelart serves as an intermediate market level between the regional and global. A valuable attribute of the cultural-linguistic market concept is its emphasis on regional markets as important intermediaries between the national and the global. The point I wish to stress here is that language difference impacts market participants' behavior and interactions as well as audiences' engagement with media texts both within the cultural linguistic market and across language groups.

Telenovelas and Language Within the Cultural-Linguistic Market

As noted above, in countries having prolific television industries the dialect spoken in the urban production center(s) gains national primacy through programs' creation and dissemination. Telenovelas are particularly influential in their position as the region's predominant form of television fiction (Larsen, 1990). This places language dominance among a number of concerns surrounding centralization that have challenged many Latin American countries, among others, since early in the twentieth century. While the direct impact on people's lives of linguistic difference is less weighty than other centralization issues like economic opportunity, political representation, access to social programs, and the like, we must recognize that language is a key marker that often lies behind those other problems. How language is situated in a country's political, economic, and social relations also varies widely and influences the structure and strength of its cultural industries.

Spain offers an intriguing case as a nation whose cultural industries, and audiences, are situated within two linguistic spaces. Spain participates in the Spanish and Portuguese cultural linguistic market due to its historic economic, political, cultural, and linguistic ties to Latin America, but is also part of the polyglot European Union which simultaneously endeavors to protect the continent's rich linguistic diversity and knit together a regional media market among eleven official languages (a number that would almost double in number if recent applicants to the Union are admitted). Latin American telenovelas began airing in Europe in 1975 when *Gabriela*, TV Globo's first export production, appeared in Portugal (Marques de Melo, 1988). Surprisingly enough, more than ten years passed before the Spanish-language novelas, *Los ricos también lloran* (Mexico) and *Cristal* (Venezuela), were broadcast and gained substantial viewership in Spain (O'Donnell, 2000). Shortly thereafter television producers began to adapt the genre, which came to reflect the country's political and linguistic divisions. As Hugh O'Donnell (2000) explains, productions in the Catalan and Basque languages appeared before any in Spanish; they were dubbed into the majority language and received national distribution before Spanish-language novela production engaged. O'Donnell comments on an interesting sociolinguistic impact of telenovela production and consumption in a minority language:

Though there is no reliable way of measuring the linguistic impact of productions such as these, there can be little doubt that they have been important elements in the process of normalization of Catalan, and there is some evidence of Castilian speakers learning Catalan in order to follow them better and participate in the discussions they evoke (p. 300).

Spain's experience raises some important questions concerning the relationships among popular culture, language, politics and notions of community that deserve to be explored at greater length. A distinguishing characteristic of mass media in Spain, however, is the existence of dynamic regional production centers enjoying national, and even international projection. Such has not been the case in Latin American nations where production tends to be centered in one city, or two in the case of Brazil, leading to less internal linguistic variation.

This is not to suggest that language has been overlooked. The experience of "talkie" films and radio broadcasting had alerted media entrepreneurs and government officials to questions surrounding accented language in regional mass media a quarter century before television began to take hold in Latin America. The link between accented language and the development of national television production industries was recognized by some observers quite early in television's history and has endured. América Rodríguez (1999) argues that the Spanish spoken by journalists on U.S.-based *noticieros* (news programs) is consciously "nationality-neutral" so as to be understood by the diverse audience, and to avoid associating the newscast, and thereby the network, with a particular sub-group of the U.S. Latino population. Networks' recognition of the linkages between language and identity have not fully masked the political and economic sensitivity issues of network ownership, network location, and editorial/creative control of programming as evidenced by the outcry from some Mexican Americans when the *Univisión* network announced in 1989 that it would relocate its headquarters from Southern California to Miami, where Cuban Americans wield considerable influence (Wilkinson, in press). During the globalization push from the mid 1980s on, discussion of neutral accents, dubbing and subtitling quality, second audio programs, and related linguistic issues became commonplace in the trade press and among industry

representatives (Wilkinson, 1995).

Academic researchers began exploring the linguistic dimensions of transnational media at about the same time. In a special issue of *Communication Research* devoted to television program flow in the Americas, Antola and Rogers (1984) maintained that Mexico's "broadcast Spanish" gained primacy in the region due to the Televisa network's barter arrangement with U.S. producers to dub programming free of charge in exchange for distribution rights within Mexico. According to this view, the profusion of U.S. programming dubbed in Mexico combined with Televisa's own prolific export of telenovelas to render Mexican broadcast Spanish palatable, even desirable, throughout the region. There is some evidence in support of Mexico's linguistic neutrality from my own research. In 1993 I conducted a region-wide survey of television producers, distributors and broadcasters (both over-the-air and pay TV). One question asked broadcasters to write in the most neutral national accent for dubbed programming among their audiences—Mexico was the most frequent response. Identified as most problematic were the accents of Spain and Argentina, and several respondents commented that "uppity" Spanish should be avoided (Wilkinson, 1995). Before focusing on Argentina's response to this long-standing challenge, I should emphasize that economic influences of language in the international television trade are intertwined with a broad array of market-related factors, a point I will return to below.

In the early years of television, some Argentines familiar with the industry recognized the export potential to other areas of Latin America, and also the challenges posed by the country's linguistic difference from its continental neighbors. Argentina's vibrant theatrical and musical traditions were tapped by the *teleteatro* (a common synonym there for telenovela) and musical/variety genres, both of which came to be exported (Silvio, 1972). However, just as the regional trade in programming, especially telenovelas, was beginning to mature in the mid 1970s, Argentina's military government took control of many television networks and production facilities, with the effect of reducing domestic production and increasing imports, especially from the United States (Rogoff, 1984; Santos Hernando, 1977: 306-307). Telenovelas were particularly hard hit (Mazziotti, 1996). This intervention put the country's television industry at a relative disadvantage to other telenovela exporting nations, especially Brazil, Mexico, and Venezuela.[v] Argentina re-emerged as an exporter of novelas during the early globalization years of the mid 1980s when concerns about the transnational appeal of programming content were reiterated.

Uneasiness regarding language difference in Argentine television was expressed as early as 1960 when a senator proposed that all imported programs be dubbed domestically to protect the country's linguistic identity. Similar proposals were introduced through the early 1970s, but all met strong resistance from the industry and none were promulgated. In opposing such legislation, U.S. companies whose programming sales stood to suffer argued that such legislation would harm the industry because the Argentine accent traveled poorly in Latin America, and dubbing for a single market was not cost effective (Silvio, 1972). This issue was revisited in a period of television internationalization, from the mid 1980s through mid 1990s, following the difficult years of military control. Nora Mazziotti (1996) documents Argentine producers' concerns over neutral accents during this period of industry reemergence, which was marked by increased co-production, and local investments by international media magnates such as Silvio Berlusconi (Fininvest, Italy) and Emilio Azcárraga Milmo (Televisa, Mexico). Certainly such savvy investors understood the importance of producing telenovelas and other fare in Spanish that would be broadly agreeable and readily translatable into other languages. A national law passed in 1986 stipulated, "dubbing should be executed in neutral Spanish, according to current national standards, but understandable to all Spanish-speakers in the Americas" (Petrella, 1998: 979; my translation). Specific changes that were implemented include eliminating Argentine slang and idiomatic expressions such as *che*, modifying intonation to conform more closely to continental standards, avoiding use of local dialects like the Italian-Creole, and using the pronoun *tu* in place of *vos* (Mazziotti, 1996: 114, 139).

Telenovelas and Language Across Cultural-Linguistic Markets

One of the most engaging cultural phenomena of media globalization has been the uptake of telenovelas in countries outside the Spanish and Portuguese cultural linguistic market. Following two decades of political conflict concerning world media domination by Western governments and corporations, particularly from the U.S., the homegrown Latin American genre matured and was exported to markets

outside its native region. By 1997 TV Globo (Brazil) and Televisa (Mexico) each claimed their telenovelas appeared in 130 countries; the Venezuelan producers Radio Caracas Television and Venevisión reached about half that amount (Sinclair, 1999: 161). As this intriguing growth was underway, a handful of scholars specializing in media economics began exploring language issues in transnational markets. Unfortunately, their attention focused on the transnational market for programming initially produced in English, and largely ignored the emergent “counter flow” originating in other languages. These scholars’ ideas merit brief discussion for two reasons: they integrate cultural, linguistic and economic elements in media markets, and data gathered from Latin American television representatives suggests some interesting parallels with the Spanish- and Portuguese-language market.

Collins, Garnham and Locksley (1988: 52) enumerate the factors contributing to the United States' and Great Britain's advantaged position in the international film and television program trade: the size and structure of domestic markets; ready access to financial, technological, and talent resources; the U.S., Canada, the U.K. and Australia are among the world's most profitable media markets and share a common language; English is the most widely spoken language in Western media markets. Thus, the argument goes, a cumulative linguistic advantage accrues among nations that host strong cultural industries and speak the same language. Wildman and Siwek (1988) add two more factors to Collins et al.'s list of benefits: a "natural" advantage in the domestic U.S. market derived from the productions' close cultural-linguistic fit with the domestic audience, and high-quality production values that export well. Certainly the United States' position as the principal innovator and exporter of television programming (and hardware) from the 1950s on contributed to its hegemony, especially in Latin America where its influence has been strongest (Fox, 1997).

In addressing U.S. products' appeal in non-English markets, Wildman and Siwek emphasize production values because the visual content is underscored after the linguistic appeal is diminished through dubbing or subtitling. Hoskins and Mirus (1988) introduced the useful "cultural discount" concept in asserting that audiovisual cultural products rooted in one culture will have diminished appeal in others because they portray non-native values, attitudes, behaviors, and social dynamics. Where language barriers are crossed, a heavier discount is imposed due to the imposition of over-dubbed speech or the requirement that viewers read subtitles. In accounting for U.S. preeminence when discounts apply to all exported cultural products, Hoskins and Mirus cite several of the aforementioned factors, and also stress the U.S. industry's long history of striving for audience maximization through its efforts to forge a single mass audience in a culturally-diverse nation. They further argue that the closed nature of the U.S. film and television market favors Hollywood producers and distributors, a dynamic that non-U.S. competitors have challenged, and which demands closer attention by media researchers.

There are some interesting contact points between the media economic theory I've outlined and the market perceptions of Latin American television executives at a high point of the Latin television trade. I conducted interviews with a number of such executives from 1992 through 1994, after which the so called “tequila effect” from the Mexican peso crisis dampened the vitality of telenovela production industries, if not the demand for those programs within and outside the Spanish and Portuguese cultural linguistic market (Mazziotti, 1996).

The media economists' argument that the size and structure of domestic markets offer competitive advantages to English-language producers must be considered in light of relative costs and levels of domestic market penetration. Although Mexico, Brazil and Venezuela are less wealthy national television markets than the U.S., they are relatively large and wealthy by Latin American standards, and, as Ana Lopez (1995) reminds us, the telenovela enjoys generic dominance in the region. Although executives for the principal telenovela-producing networks emphasize home market popularity as key to the regional success for their programming,[vi] we must recall that the cumulative wealth of other Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking markets is substantial, and production costs are significantly lower in Latin America than in the U.S. and other English-language markets. By the same token, while the collective financial, technological, and talent resources of Latin American television are limited in comparison with English-language markets, they have been concentrated among few competitors located in limited numbers of production centers scattered throughout Latin America. The position of English as the world's most widely spoken language (native and non-native speakers combined) gives it clear

advantages among non-translated media products. It should be noted, however, that more native speakers of Spanish are entering the world population than native speakers of English (Crystal, 1997). This suggests continued growth for the Spanish and Portuguese cultural linguistic market well into the future. Furthermore, international viewers appear to be more forgiving of cultural linguistic differences in telenovelas than other program genres, a topic I will return to below.

The argument that U.S. programming enjoys a "natural" advantage based on productions' close cultural-linguistic fit with the domestic audience has a largely unexplored parallel in Spanish- and Portuguese-language television. Although more research is needed on the comparative diversity of domestic markets as well as producers' efforts to unify and tap those markets, survey and interview data I have collected indicate that "fit" with local audiences is a key consideration in executives' decisions to air programming. The factor, "cultural fit with local audience" was ranked most important by pay television systems and second most important by broadcasters among eleven factors that influence executives' programming decisions. Other high-ranking factors included production values, audience demand, and price[vii] (Wilkinson, 1995). Recall that the Anglophone researchers identified high-quality production values as a trade advantage for English-language media—it is an important consideration for participants in the Spanish and Portuguese market as well.

Latin American program producers recognized, and bemoaned, the closed nature of the U.S. English-language market that media economists described. The linguistic barrier was, and continues to be, of particular concern. As Sheila Hall, then of Coral Pictures, the distribution company for Radio Caracas Televisión put it, "the U.S. is the only market which has no tolerance whatsoever for dubbed product" (S. Hall & J. Stone, personal communication, January 26, 1993). A strategy pursued by Coral Pictures and others in the early 1990s, though ultimately with little success, was to enter co-production partnerships with English-language associates and create programs that would bridge the linguistic divide. Coral Pictures negotiated with the NBC and Fox networks to produce novela-like fiction series in English and Spanish. NBC expressed interest in an English-language version of the telenovela "La dama de la rosa," but insisted that the actors have native English accents. A more ambitious joint venture was Marte TV, a telenovela production project between a Venezuelan company by the same name and Warner Bros. International Television. Productions in English were to include movies for television using U.S. and European actors along with the Latin Americans. The goal behind the company was summed up in a trade journal article that described the venture: "New markets for old genre" (1993).

I have argued here that several of the explanations media economists offer for U.S. hegemony in the international media trade also apply to Latin American telenovela production—at least when considered in the linguistic market's unique context. Within the industry, recognition of language barriers as impediments to broader market coverage by television programs (i.e. media globalization) led to cross-language collaborations that achieved little success in their first iteration, but are likely to be enjoined again when economic conditions improve.

Conclusion

This study has discussed the importance of language in television, especially telenovelas, at three levels: within national media markets, among nations speaking the same or closely-related languages, and traversing cultural-linguistic boundaries. One salient theme across as well as within these levels concerns the relationship between the commercial imperatives of the television industry and programming's linguistic fit with audiences. The recent experience of Spain's importation, then production of telenovelas in different languages reveals the potential for national-level linguistic diversity within a television genre where minority-language communities enjoy ample production resources. A charged political climate surrounding language use may pose an array of opportunities and challenges for television's success. In other national contexts, such as Mexico, language-related risks are diminished because many variants of Spanish, as well as indigenous languages that are spoken by the people are seldom heard on the air (Vilar & Alvarado, 1998).

Argentina's efforts to increase its productions' appeal among Spanish-speaking audiences through

legislation reflects a widely held concern for accommodating linguistic difference within the region. Such policy initiatives to render a nation's television programs more broadly palatable underscores not only the regional programming trade's economic significance, but also the imperative of increasing a country's presence in cultural exchange. I should convey to the reader a point stressed by television executives during interviews: television programs produced with the principal intent of export seldom succeed either domestically or internationally. Distributors are unlikely to acquire the rights to programs lacking solid evidence of national-level success, and cultural-linguistic elements are key to the domestic appeal of a program. This underscores the central challenge in producing telenovelas for domestic consumption and export: coming up with the proper combination of elements (e.g. story, settings, talent, language use, etc.) to attract and retain a committed viewership in the home market and garner cross-national appeal.

I noted above that a few Latin American producers have established solid footholds at the global, cross-linguistic market level and face similar constraints and opportunities as their English-language counterparts. A key question underlying the discussion must be addressed by international television researchers, especially those specializing in telenovelas, if we are to achieve deeper understanding of this phenomenon: What makes the genre so broadly engaging to audiences outside of the Spanish- and Portuguese-language market? Clearly the novelas hold an allure extending beyond linguistic proximity and all but the most general cultural traits. In fact some of the most surprising transcultural telenovela success stories, like Televisa's *Los ricos también lloran* in Russia in 1992 transcended poor and uninspired dubbing carried out by state television employees (Gutterman, 1992). There's also a puzzling story of Chinese television contracting with Televisa to produce a fiction series in which Latin American actors were made-up to appear Asian and mouthed dialog so that the actual words, spoken by Chinese actors, could be dubbed in at post-production (E. Giammarella, personal communication, January 26, 1994). These and other anecdotes suggest an intrinsic human appeal in telenovelas that industry representatives are quick to point out. Television executives offered these explanations for telenovelas' cross-cultural popularity: stories with universal human appeal (M. Vinay, personal communication, January 27, 1993); engaging stories, attractive actors and actresses in attractive settings, and happy endings (S. Hall & J Stone, personal communication, January 26, 1993), and "they speak a world-wide language" (J. Serrano, personal communication, January 28, 1993).[viii] These ties between novelas and international audiences have yet to be adequately explicated or theorized by scholars, yet promise to yield valuable findings when they are.

In closing I should identify a development that has been influencing the cross-lingual dynamics of telenovelas and other international television, albeit to limited scrutiny: language-related communication technologies. Technological advances associated with digitization have broadened the language-delivery capabilities of broadcast, multichannel and playback technologies by offering audiences various language tracks for the same visual content through second audio programs (SAP), multiple audio streams via cable or satellite, and viewer-selected audio/subtitling options in different languages. These technologies, and others under development, will narrow some of the breaches associated with the "cultural discount" against cross-lingual media. But they are also likely to pose new challenges or intensify existing ones, such as linking a viewer's ability to pay for services more directly to the level of her or his access to foreign-language programming. The point to stress here is that the international spread of popular cultural products like telenovelas is increasingly affected by rapid technological change, and vice versa. This indicates that researchers who are interested in language-related aspects of media need to be more sensitive to the influences of technological change, and that technologists should pay more attention to how media production, distribution and reception are developing in this transnational age.

Endnotes

[i] Many of the papers presented were published in the two volumes of *La lengua española y los medios de comunicación* (Cortes Bargalló et. al, 1998).

[ii] John Sinclair (1999) uses the term 'geolinguistic region' to identify a closely-related concept.

[iii] Telenovela coproduction agreements entered in 2000 among TV Globo (Brazil), Columbia TriStar (U.S.) and Telemundo (U.S.) as well as SBT (Brazil) and Televisa (Mexico) are evidence of the increasingly fluid movement of talent and texts between the Spanish- and Portuguese-language television industries (Cajueiro, 2000).

[iv] Vilar and Alvarado (1998) identify six cities in the Spanish-speaking world: Bogotá, Buenos Aires, Caracas, Madrid, Mexico City and Miami. In Brazil, Rio de Janeiro is most prolific, but São Paulo is also an active production center.

[v] Wilkinson (1995) identifies these countries as "first level" industries, Mazziotti (1996) calls them "principal industries."

[vi] Interviews were conducted with the following industry representatives at the annual meeting of the National Association of Television Program Executives (NATPE) in San Francisco, CA, January 26-28, 1993: Roberto Campbell (TV Globo), Sheila Hall and James Stone (Coral Pictures), Jorge Serrano (Venevisión) and Marcel Vinay (Televisa).

[vii] In the survey, respondents were asked to rank the importance of factors in their decisions to purchase programming where 1 = the most important and 4 = less important. Options left blank were coded with a 5. Among broadcasters (N=32) the results were as follows: Production values 2.5; Cultural fit with local audience 2.8; Price 3.1; Quality of script/story/concept 3.7; Popularity in original market 3.9; Reliability of distributor 4.5; Distribution arrangement 4.7; Corporate ties to distributor 4.8; Actors' appearance 4.9 Actors' accent 4.9; Actors' talent 4.9. These were the results among pay television system operators (N=10): Cultural fit with local audience 1.9; Subscriber demand 2.7; Quality of script/story/concept 3.6; Price 3.6; Program service's reputation 4.2; Production values 4.3; Actors' talent 4.8; Popularity in original market 4.9; Actors' appearance 5; Actors' accents 5; Program service's actions 5.

[viii] This quote points up a compelling association between media genre as its own linguistic system on the one hand, and the presence and use of verbal, nonverbal and textual language (in the case of subtitling) within media texts on the other. The topic merits further investigation, especially genre-specific analysis.

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