Fandubbing

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1. Introduction

The prevalence and 'virality' of audiovisual creations labelled as fandubs in online video repositories and streaming services stand in stark contrast with the lack of attention this phenomenon has received amongst the academic community so far, especially if compared to similar practices such as fansubbing (see the chapter by Massidda in this volume). The aim of this chapter is to give an overview of this underexplored fandom-related phenomenon focusing on its origins, evolution and characteristics, as well as on the motivations of those involved in these practices. To this end, the chapter will draw on the few academic publications dealing with this topic, either in detail or partially (Baños, 2019a; Chaume, 2018; Mereu Keating, 2018; Nord, Khoshsaligheh, & Ameri, 2015; Spina Ali, 2015; Wang & Zhang, 2016), but also on non-academic sources providing useful insight into these practices and revealing the point of view of the creators of fandubs. Although the focus is on fandubbing understood as a phenomenon encompassing a myriad of dubbing practices undertaken by amateur or non-expert users, it will inevitably document its use as an umbrella term to refer to various manifestations of participatory culture (Jenkins, 1992) involving the use of dubbing.

2. Definitions

Fandubbing has been defined by Wang and Zhang (2016, p. 173) as "the activity performed by Internet users who edit and dub video clips selected from some original contents [sic] (mostly

TV programmes and films) and share these self-made productions on video-streaming websites". The strong association between fandubs and the Internet, social media and new technologies is also emphasised by Chaume (2018, p. 87), who defines fandubs as:

> home-made dubbings of television series, cartoons (particularly the anime genre) and trailers for films that have not yet been released in the target language country or region. Fandubs are usually translated and recorded by fans of the said genres; they download the film texts from the Internet and use a digital sound editing program in order to manipulate or eliminate the soundtrack of the original version, to then insert a newly dubbed track which they record at home using a microphone […].

Although fandubbing is often perceived as an amateur and home-made practice, done by fans for fans, the limited research carried out in this field has already revealed that it can encompass a wide range of manifestations of dubbing undertaken not only by fans, but also by amateurs who do not deem themselves fans, and even by dubbing professionals (Baños, 2019a). In an attempt to make a distinction between these different manifestations, in their exploratory review of fandubbing in Iran, Nord *et. al.* (2015, p. 4) refer to "quasi-professional dubbing". Being unpaid, "unofficial" and not comparable in terms of quality to the dubbing carried out by official studios, the authors consider this as a type of fandubbing characterised by its high technical quality and distinguished from the other two categories they identify, namely proper fandubbing and fundubbing.

Understood as "the practice of replacing the original dialogue track of an audiovisual text with another track containing a mostly new script created with humoristic purposes" (Baños, 2019b, p. 172), fundubbing is very often associated with fandubbing. Indeed, this is how many fans and Internet users experimented with audiovisual content and dubbing in the origins of these practices, and it is a prevalent trend in online environments nowadays. In this vein, Chaume (2018, p. 87) argues that fandubs are "sometimes referred to as *fundubs*, when the main function of the

‘creative translation’ is parody” and that they are also called “*gag dubbing*, because of the witty and humorous nature of this type of home-developed dubbing”. However, it is important to note that fundubs are not the exclusive domain of amateurs, with parodic dubbing having been used “as a site of experimentation and innovation, and even as an ideological tool, by companies, media producers, film directors and political movements” (Baños, 2019b, p. 188).

It is also significant that some fandubbing communities use other denominations, such as independent or non-official dubbing, to advertise and present their work, avoiding the term ‘fan’. This could be an attempt to emphasise that some of the members of these communities are training or have been trained to become dubbing professionals and are not ‘mere’ amateurs or fans. Although some fandubbing groups would clearly associate their work to the motto ‘by fans, for fans’, especially those working with videogames and anime material, this label may have lost its appeal or relevance with time. Indeed, some home-made dubbings available online nowadays are not targeted at fans, but at a wide-range of Internet users.

Understanding fandubbing as a complex socio-cultural practice, difficult to be neatly labelled and slippery to be defined, and drawing on Díaz-Cintas (2018), in a previous publication I advocated using the term cyberdubbing to reflect the wide range of non-traditional online dubbing practices so prevalent nowadays (Baños, 2019a). Distinguishing between promotional dubbing, political or activist dubbing and altruist dubbing, this denomination includes both parodic and serious dubbing undertaken by fans, Internet users and digital influencers, be them professionals or amateurs. Within this framework, current manifestations of fandubbing are considered a type of cyberdubbing performed by Internet users who regard themselves as media fans and thus exhibit a positive emotional engagement with popular audiovisual culture. However, this definition is not applicable to fandubbing in its origins, and to fully grasp this phenomenon it

is necessary to understand the socio-cultural context in which it originated, as well as the ways in which it was nurtured and developed. This will be the focus of the following section, which draws largely on my previous research (Baños, 2019a).

3. A historical overview of fandubbing

As was the case with fansubs (Leonard, 2005), the first instances of fandubs date back to the 1980s and involve anime fans replacing the soundtrack of their favourite anime programmes with their own voices and recordings. Merrill (2008, online) conceives this as a natural development, given the familiarity of hard-core anime fans with home video technology and the fact that they only needed a microphone and "the audio dub button on VCRs". During the 1980s and the 1990s, fans were involved in these practices mainly with parodic purposes (fundubs), but also to overcome linguistic barriers, in an attempt to accurately reflect the content of the original programme being dubbed (i.e. serious or genuine dubs). According to Patten (2004), the first fan-made dubbing of an anime video took place in 1983, when two anime fans revoiced an episode from the legendary Japanese series *Star Blazers* with a parodic purpose, calling it 'You say Yamato'. This suggests that the first documented example of a fandub was indeed a fundub. In addition, if we assume that the first fansub dates back to 1986 (Leonard, 2005), this also indicates that fandubs (albeit rudimentary and in the form of parodic dubbing) precede fansubs.

Constrained by technological developments, during the 1980s fandubbing groups recorded their satiric interpretations at home, on the fly, using off the air recordings of their favourite anime programmes (Merrill, 2008). Their creations were disseminated amongst small groups of fans or in anime conventions, as with other anime productions of that time that were often showed

untranslated, in their original version (Jenkins, 2006), and sometimes accompanied with impromptu interpretations or rough explanations (Nornes, 2007). Some widely-known fandubbing groups active in the 1980s include Pinesalad Productions, Sherbert Productions, Seishun Shitemasu Productions or Corn Pone Flicks. Merrill (2008) posits that the work of Pinesalad Productions, especially their fundub of *Dirty Pair* episodes known as 'Dirty Pair *duz* dishes', was seminal and influential among fandubbing communities. This episode is currently available on YouTube[1] and some of the creations of this community are still available through their website, where they describe themselves as "a group of Southern California anime fans [who] decided to turn their favorite Robotech characters into pimps, prostitutes, drug abusers and anything else they could think of" (Pinesalad Productions, 2009, online).

The work of Sherbert Productions has been discussed by Nornes (2007, p. 196), who posits that despite not being "translations in the strictest sense", their creations were "extremely attuned to the original text while embedding it in a complex network of current events and popular culture". According to Nornes (2007), the first parodic fandub carried out by this community was also based on an episode of the anime series *Dirty Pair*, where Carl Macek, a controversial figure within anime fandom, co-founder of Streamline Pictures and firm proponent of dubbing and the alteration of original anime for a successful adaptation into the target market, was ridiculed. Some of these anime parody groups would also edit the original episodes heavily. This was the case with Corn Pone Flicks (Merrill, 2008) or with Seishun Shitemasu Productions, who deemed themselves as "a bunch of guys with a VCR", as well as "fan-dubbers who edit anime together and make new productions that are hopefully entertaining" (Sheishun Shitemasu, 2005, online).

Stimulated by the development of the Internet and digital technologies, fandubbing bloomed in the 1990s, as did fansubbing (Díaz-Cintas & Muñoz Sánchez, 2006). Yet, fandubbing

groups in the 1990s were still largely engaged in “overdub parodies” (Murray, n.d., online), or redubs (Pinesalad Productions, 2009), as some of them referred to their activity, and not in serious fandubs. This was presumably due to both technical and time constraints, given that dubbing technology at the time only offered rudimentary results and the dubbing process was very time-consuming, as well as to the preference of many anime fans towards subtitling.

Nevertheless, this does not mean there were no cases of serious fandubs during this period. The first documented case of a non-parodic fandub dates back to 1993, when Corn Pone Flicks dubbed four scenes from the film *Vampire Hunter D* (Toyoo Ashida, 1985). This anime parody group referred to this project as a “test dub” (Corn Pone Flicks, n.d., online), undertaken in 1990 in an attempt to persuade potential investors to acquire the rights to this film for its official distribution in the US. However, the project came to a stall after the official dubbed version of the film was released by Streamline Pictures, following the tacit agreement of pulling back “from circulating any title that had found a commercial distributor” (Jenkins, 2006, p. 159). Interestingly, the project was resumed after the Corn Pone Flicks team watched the official dubbed version, arguing that its translation and dialogue writing presented severe deficiencies. Confident in the higher quality of their dubbing script, this fandubbing group decided to go ahead and revoice four scenes of *Vampire Hunter D* (Corn Pone Flicks, n.d.). Screened only once at an anime fan convention soon after it was recorded, this fandub was complimented by the audience, impressed by the quality of the revoicing and the translation (Corn Pone Flicks, n.d.). Although those involved in these fan-related activities at the time acknowledge that, albeit scarce, other serious fandubs took place during the 1990s, tracing back such products is extremely challenging, thus highlighting the marginal nature of this phenomenon.

The discussion above has shown that, in its origins, fandubs were noticeably done by fans for fans, primarily for humoristic purposes, to be enjoyed only by those sharing a collective background and familiarity with anime productions. However, this trend has gradually changed, due to shifts in how fans engage with different forms of media consumption, distribution and appropriation. Nowadays, anime fandubbing groups no longer need to resort to VHS technology or disseminate their creations throughout fan conventions. Sharing their work with other like-minded users has been facilitated by the affordances of digital technologies, making it easy to upload, download, stream and share digital media content. Although a large amount of the examples of serious fandubs available online belong to *anime* (see, for instance, the work carried out by Kyotodubs[2] or Fighter4Luv Fandubs[3]), reflecting the origins of these practices, a wide range of genres and types of audiovisual texts are dubbed by fans nowadays. These include, among others, trailers, other types of animation, videogames (see the work of AliTake Studio[4]), and videos created by users or by independent studios, distributed solely online (see the work of Escardi Fandubs[5]).

The audiovisual genres transformed by those involved in parodic dubbing nowadays are even more varied, with users being particularly allured by cult products (Baños, 2019b), but also by their favourite films and TV series, as well as by documentaries and footage related to news and current affairs (see examples from the YouTube channel Bad Lip Reading[6]). New genres have also been created, as is the case with *abridging* or *abridged series*, which are parodic dubbings of anime where original anime episodes are edited, shortened and revoiced by fans, frequently mocking parts of the own series and characters.

These shifts in forms of engagement with media and culture have also been influenced by the evolution of the concept of media fan and fandom. The elusiveness of these notions is

highlighted by Duffett (2013), who postulates that the term ‘fan’ nowadays embodies a wide range of ordinary people who exhibit a positive emotional engagement with popular culture, thus involving different experiences, concerning different practices and meaning different things depending on the context. Many of the home-made dubbings available online nowadays are not targeted at fans, but at a wide-range of Internet users. This is the case with many of the parodic dubbings that abound online, aimed at achieving as many views as possible. A case in point is the extremely popular fundubs published on the YouTube channel Bad Lip Reading, which attract viewers who are not particularly interested or familiar with the original videos subject to parody. In the case of serious dubs (e.g. amateur dubbing of anime or user-generated videos), although these probably have a narrower target audience, there is always an attempt to capture a higher number of views. Fansubbing has also been affected by this shift, metamorphosing from a process instigated “by fans for fans” to one “by fans for all” (Díaz-Cintas, 2018, p. 133).

The consolidation of fandubbing practices that has taken place throughout the 2000s and 2010s has thus been nurtured by technological developments, the evolvement of fan practices and the changes in media consumption sparked by the “convergent media ecology” (Ito *et al*., 2010, p.10) we inhabit today. Whereas the influence of technology and the Internet in the proliferation of fandubbing is undeniable, this phenomenon cannot be reduced to a technological trend and needs to be framed considering the socio-cultural context in which it originated and was further developed. To this end, it is necessary to reflect on the motivations of fandubbers, as well as the needs met by fandubs at specific times.

4. Motivations behind fandubbing

The discussion above suggests that, unlike fansubbing, fandubbing practices were not solely triggered by the lack of official dubbings of specific material (anime in this case), but rather by a sense of belonging to a fan community. Drawing on the three genres of participation introduced by Ito *et al.* (2010) to understand how young users engage with media, it could be argued that the first examples of fandubs, which were of a parodic nature, were the result of anime fans "hanging out" in their community, and "messing around" with original anime and technological developments.

Later on, serious fandubs (see Corn Pone Flicks example above) were clearly motivated by the lack of official dubbings of anime at first, and then by fans' discontent with existing dubbing practices. Such motivations are also commonplace in current instances of fandubbing: official translations are still not available for many videogames, trailers and anime series, and users interested in these have to resort to unofficial translations, be it in the form of subtitles or dubs. Thanks to the fandubs released by fandubbing communities, anime fans can now enjoy watching some episodes of their favourite series dubbed into their target language, instead of watching the original untranslated or resorting to fansubs. Regarding the latter, fansubs are more widely available given that fandubbing practices are more time consuming and require the use of more advanced software to achieve higher quality, as well as the collaboration of different professionals (translators and voice talents, for example).

As a result, fansubs are promptly and more readily available than fandubs, and the latter tend to materialise only where specific audiences have a preference towards dubbing as an audiovisual translation (AVT) mode. This is the case with videogames, as some gamers seem to prefer playing specific titles dubbed, especially those featuring fast-paced action scenes requiring a great deal of concentration. While some argue this is because subtitles can hinder gameplay,

others simply prefer dubbing for a more immersive experience. Regardless of the actual reason, fandubbing practices illustrate such preferences, as shown in the Spanish fandub of the short videos created by Valve Corporation to promote the updates and patches within the videogame *Team Fortress 2* back in 2007. A few of the short videos belonging to the series 'Meet the Team', introducing the different characters of the game, were officially dubbed into Spanish. Those that were not dubbed officially were subtitled and dubbed by fans[7], in an attempt to address this shortage.

As discussed above, the fandub of *Vampire Hunter D* carried out by Corn Pone Flicks was motivated by their discontent with existing dubbing practices in general, and with the official dubbing released by Streamline Pictures in particular. As explained in Baños (2019a), one of the founders of this fandubbing group, Matt Murray, reported that the official version contained mistranslations and often strayed off the original intentionally. These strategies were apparently not justified by the need to keep lip synchrony, being implemented in an attempt to bring the dialogue closer to the target audience. Manipulation was also exerted in the form of additions, with intertextual references belonging to the target culture (e.g. to the *Star Wars* series) that were absent from the original being introduced in the English translation. This fandub clearly manifests the objections from the anime fan community to the extreme manipulation instigated by official anime distributors in the US at the time, demonstrating that dubbing anime into English without departing from the original substantially was indeed possible (Baños, 2019a.).

Current fandubbing practices have very similar purposes and motivations. In mainland China, for instance, "[d]isappointed by the quality of official dubbing, enthusiasts gathered online to form groups in order to perform dubbing in accordance with their own standards, or to use dubbing as a means for other purposes" (Wang & Zhang, 2016, p. 176). By such other purposes,

the authors refer to the use of parodic dubbing to protest against censorship, an issue they discuss in depth through the analysis of two fandubbed videos of *The Big Bang Theory,* a very popular US TV series banned from online broadcasts in China. They consider fandubbing a platform for internet activism, portraying fandubs as an opposing force to censorship. When discussing "quasi-professional dubbing" in Iran, Nord *et al.* (2015) also highlight the role of fandubs in this regard:

> One of the most important features of such quasi-professional dubbing is the lack of censorship. *Iranfilm* stated that they slightly censor certain scenes in compliance with the Iranian families' expectancy norms, but they barely censor visuals, and they mainly do not dub the socially unacceptable scenes. For example, in the movie *Pompeii* (2014), a segment was not dubbed but subtitled into Persian, as a female character was fairly scantily dressed (Nord *et al.*, 2015, p. 11).

These examples of 'self-censorship' from fandubbers reported by Nord *et al.* (2015) reveal how fandubbing materialises differently depending on the specific socio-cultural context in which these practices are implemented. They also help to understand the portrayal of fandubs as spaces of re-narration or rewriting of texts of an audiovisual nature (Baños, 2019a), influenced by a wide range of factors. In this case, it is viewers, users or fans deciding how to approach the dubbing of a particular programme, in their role as prosumers or co-creators, that is, as active participants, socially networked and deeply engaged in digital media consumption.

As also reported in Baños (2019a), fans might decide to perpetuate manipulative and censorial practices. This was the case with the fandubbing group Fighter4Luv Fandubs, formed in 2007 to oppose new anime dubbing practices, which adopted a more source-oriented approach in the 2000s. In particular, their aim was to dub the episodes of the last season of the anime series *Sailor Moon* into English (as these had not been dubbed) as well as to revive old dubbing practices and "bring back the nostalgia of the old English adaptation" (Fighter4Luv Fandubs, 2018, online). Dubbed originally in the 1990s by DiC Entertainment, the old US version was edited for age-

appropriateness, culture-specific references were adapted to the target culture (with 'pork buns' becoming 'doughnuts') and images were heavily manipulated: "scenes that depicted people driving cars were reversed so that the steering wheels were on the opposite sides, and Japanese writing was rotoscoped, or airbrushed, out" (McNally, 2014, online). While conforming to old-fashion conventions and somewhat supporting manipulation and censorship, the fandubs created by this community were still motivated by fans' discontent with the dominant anime dubbing conventions at the time.

The motivations behind fandubbing practices are therefore varied and dependent on the socio-cultural context in which they take place. While some fandubs are attempts to address the lack of official dubbing of specific material, in other cases the aim is to express discontent, satirise, experiment and entertain audiences. In addition to being commonly triggered by discontent and dissatisfaction, these practices are often fuelled by the sense of belonging to a community.

5. Research on fandubbing: key notions, insights into fandubbing practices and differences with 'official dubbing'

As Dwyer (2018) acknowledges, fan AVT discourse is often framed around the notion of "participatory culture" (Jenkins, 1992), and those involved in fan-related AVT practices (such as fandubbing or fansubbing) are often identified as 'prosumers', "who proactively contribute to the shaping and rewriting of cultural products" (Dwyer, 2018, p. 442). The term 'prosumer', as well as other related denominations such as 'pro-am', 'modding' or 'user-generated content' are conceived by Lange and Ito (2010, p. 246) as buzz words which underscore "how creative production at the 'consumer' layer is increasingly seen as a generative site of culture and knowledge". These notions have been widely applied in scholarly works on fansubbing, especially

within AVT studies. The limited studies on fandubbing have also taken a similar approach, especially when contextualising the motives of fandubbing communities and their discontent with existing dubbing practices, "demonstrating how media industries continue to be riven by language barriers and geographic borders despite the de-territorializing, transnational affordances of digital and networking technologies" (Dwyer, 2018, p. 443).

In addition to being framed around notions developed within Media Studies, fandubbing has been probed as a form of rewriting, drawing on theoretical perspectives within Translation Studies (Bassnett & Lefevere, 1990). This concept has been discussed especially in the case of parodic dubbing undertaken by fans (Baños, 2019b; Wang & Zhang, 2016), "in which the original images are preserved, while dialogue is manipulated to either challenge or fit in with the dominant poetics and ideology of a given place and time" (Baños, 2019b, p. 179). This manipulation of dialogue makes us wonder whether some types of fandubbing should be considered translation proper. Within this line of thought, Nornes (2007, p. 196), acknowledges that anime fan parodies are not "translations in the strictest sense", and Dwyer (2018, p. 437) considers that "'fanfic' (fan fiction), and fan parody, music and 'mashup' videos can but do not necessarily involve translation at all" and thus fall outside the scope of her discussion of media fandom and AVT practices. Yet, authors also argue that some of these creations are "extremely attuned to the original text" (Nornes, 2007, p. 196) and are 'faithful' or coherent to the visual information conveyed by the source text (Baños, 2019b).

Scholars within Translation Studies such as Chaume (2018) or Baños (2019b) posit that some fandubbing practices, considered as a form of rewriting, challenge traditional notions of equivalence, fidelity and authorship. Likewise, the few authors who have so far provided insight into the characteristics of serious fandubs have highlighted how these and official dubbing

practices differ from each other, and how they transgress existing dubbing conventions. Izwaini (2014), Nord *et al.* (2015) and Wang and Zhan (2016) concur that amateurs involved in dubbing practices (either parodic or serious) resort to features that are not always considered appropriate in professional dubbing, such as dialects. Whereas some of these features are more marked in parodic dubbing, fans involved in serious dubbing also seem to resort to these.

As with fansubbing practices, the lack of translation training from fans involved in fandubs can easily transpire in their creations. Nord *et al.* (2015, p. 8) posit that they are sometimes characterised by "a fairly poor translation", with a marked lack of naturalness, source-orientedness and the presence of mistranslations, issues that have also been highlighted in the case of fansubs. However, as has been discussed above, the expertise and background of those involved in fandubbing can vary significantly. In addition, as the authors (Nord *et al.,* 2015.) contend, some fandubs do not entail translation as such, but rather the adaptation of other texts in the target language, be it the official dubbing script, official subtitles or other fan translations (e.g. fansubs). Indeed, the source text used by 'fandubbers' might be formed by a variety of textual sources. For instance, to create the script to be used for Corn Pone Flicks fandub, Murray[8] explains how he had to consult the original Vampire *Hunter D* film comics in Japanese, "which used images from the film with accompanying text of the script". He also clarifies that he did not receive any formal training in Japanese (being self-taught) or translation, as seems to be often the case with those in charge of translation tasks in fandubbing groups.

This variety of sources could be one of the reasons why fandubbing communities rarely use the term 'translation' when referring to the creation of the dialogue to be revoiced by voice talents, using others such as 'scriptwriting' or 'adaptation' instead. However, this could also be a result of the role of the translator being taken for granted, which is unfortunately also commonplace

in the dubbing industry, where translators are sometimes forgotten and more emphasis seems to be placed on acting and dialogue writing.

Similarities between official dubbing and fandubbing practices are also evident when we consider workflows and the different roles undertaken by fans throughout the process of producing a fandub. This is an aspect that needs to be further investigated as hardly any references to workflows are made in the existing literature. However, judging by the recruitment adverts fandubbing communities post on social media and their own websites, as well as by the credits inserted in some fandubs, official workflows are mirrored, with fans unofficially adopting the roles of translator/dialogue writer/adapter, voice talents, dubbing director, sound and audio editor, etc. This reveals the complexity of the task at hand, as well as the sophistication of their modus operandi. As a result, and unlike fansubbing where fast turn-around projects are the norm, fandubbing is a lengthy and painstaking process, with many projects being abandoned and fans often enquiring about new releases and 'complaining' about timeframes.

The fluid communication between the consumers of these fandubs and their creators, inherent to the prosumer model, highlights a key difference with commercial dubbing. These amateur practices establish a more interactive, dynamic and equal relationship between producers and consumers, and even if viewers have more opportunities nowadays to provide feedback about the translation of audiovisual programmes available through more traditional channels, differences are still significant. In a similar vein, the standards by which fandubs are assessed are determined by viewers' preferences and feedback, and not necessarily by existing dubbing conventions. Chaume (2012, p. 15–20) contends that the following broad areas determine the set of dubbing standards to be complied with in commercial dubbing: credible and realistic dialogue lines, coherence between images and words, a loyal translation, acceptable lip-synch, clear sound

quality, and appropriate acting. While some of these standards seem to be relevant to fandubbing communities (e.g. a loyal translation in the case of *Vampire Hunter D* fandubs, or coherence between images and words in the case of parodic dubbing), others are disregarded or exaggerated. In addition, quality standards in fandubbing are determined by the context and the motivation behind the fandub.

Nord *et al.* (2015) illustrate how technical quality can vary substantially among fandubs in Iran depending on the profile of the fandubbing community and the background of its members. While some amateurs use more basic video editing programmes and achieve substandard results as regards technical aspects and voice acting, others use more advanced software and “manage to preserve the sound effects as much as possible, even though the performance of the voice-actors is far from professional” (Nord *et al.,* 2015, p. 8). As far as “quasi-professional dubbing” is concerned, they consider their output as being “of acceptable quality”, following similar operational norms as those complied with in professional dubbing (Nord *et al.*, 2015, p. 11).

From a technical point of view, dissimilarities are obvious if we consider the “home-grown” (Chaume, 2013, p. 111) nature of these practices, as well as the fact that they can now be performed with very basic software. As Wang and Zhang (2016, p. 178) acknowledge in the case of China, current mobile phone apps enable “users who have received no training in dubbing to create and share their dubbing on popular Chinese social networks”. Those fandubs of poor technical quality in terms of sound and acting also tend to disregard synchronisation, with the dialogue only roughly matching the lip movements of the characters on screen. Nevertheless, others might comply with synchronisation norms and provide a more polished product from a technical point of view. Following O’Hagan’s (2012, p. 30) reflection regarding quality standards in fansubbing, we could argue that “conventional translation quality measures are neither relevant

nor productive in assessing" fandubs as well. Especially if they serve "the intended purpose for the assumed viewers" (O'Hagan, 2012, p. 30.) caution must be exerted when labelling these creations as below par or as non-adequate, or when stating that "quality does not seem to be a priority for non-professional translators" (Izwaini, 2014, p. 107).

The first dubbing standard mentioned by Chaume, the creation of credible and realistic dialogue, seems to be particularly relevant for some fandubbbing communities, to the point of exaggeration at times. The limited studies available on fandubbing (Izwaini, 2014; Nord *et al.*, 2015; Wang & Zhang, 2016) have highlighted how non-experts involved in fandubs resort to dialects, slang, swearwords and overly colloquial register, which are not considered appropriate in professional dubbing. For example, Nord *et al.* (2015, p. 11) argue that "quasi-professional dubbers do not censor cultural taboos like alcoholic drinks, premarital teen relationships, while official Iranian AVT professionals tend to tone down such words or content". The insertion of dialectal features or overly colloquial register in fandubs can have an impact on other dubbing standards, resulting in incongruences between images (portraying a foreign reality) and words (referring to local or regional dialects or authentic expressions in the target language).

The discussion above has highlighted some of the similarities and divergences between amateur and commercial dubbing highlighted in existing research on this topic, which have been summarized in Table 1. As will be discussed in the following section, these traits need to be further investigated in a variety of contexts to ascertain their prevalence.

Divergences	Similarities
- Source text constituted by a variety of textual sources. - Governed by audience preferences. - Use of a wide range of tools, from basic to professional, to produce the final product.	- Complex dubbing workflow. - Time-consuming process. - The role of translators is often taken for granted.

- Dubbing conventions and standards are often challenged/transgressed: - Importance of synchrony. - Use of specific linguistic features (dialects, slang, swearwords and colloquial register). - Voice acting quality.	

TABLE 1. Overview of similarities and differences between amateur and commercial dubbing.

6. Implications and future prospects

The use of fan, amateur or non-professional practices in the translation industry in general, and within audiovisual translation in particular, leads to much debate, raising "concerns about quality standards and the risk of trivializing the translation-related professions" (Antonini & Bucaria, 2016, p. 11). For instance, in a recent public notice, AVTE, the European federation of national associations and organisations of audiovisual translators, warned about the "possible misappropriation" (AVTE, 2017, online) of voluntary subtitling work for commercial purposes. The prevalence of these practices and the controversy they spark foreground the need to address these issues from an academic perspective. Yet, fandubbing and other non-standard dubbing practices have been barely broached by the academic community and only briefly documented in the media, as illustrated by Mereu-Keating (2018) when discussing the case of the film *Chuck Norris vs. Communism* (Călugăreanu, 2015). However, as this film illustrates in the case of Romania during the Cold War, illegal and non-standard dubbing practices can have major implications.

Professionals and some scholars seem to concur that practices such as fansubbing can have a negative impact on the AVT industry. In the case of fandubbing, however, this opinion does not

seem so widespread, and fandubbing communities are often not portrayed as a threat to the dubbing industry. Chaume (2012, p. 42) contends that fandubbing and the traditional dubbing industry can coexist quite happily and that the former can even “act as a catalyst for professional dubbing”. This was indeed the original intention of Corn Pone Flicks when embarking in the fandub of *Vampire Hunter* D, and similar cases can also be found nowadays[9].

When discussing the influence of fan translation on professional practices in the case of China, Wang and Zhang (2016, p. 184) posit that “[t]he strategy of domestication as practiced by a large number of amateur fan translators has influenced official translation”. They also state that fandubbing groups have collaborated with digital game companies on dubbing projects, given the lack of well-trained and dedicated professionals in the dubbing industry (Wang & Zhang, 2016, p. 187). These interesting remarks reveal that the impact of fandubbing and other related practices depends greatly on the specific context being researched and highlight the need to carry on studying these collaborative and co-creational practices. Further investigation is also needed in order to ascertain the prevalence of these practices globally, as well as the traits discussed in the previous section, considering the specific factors motivating fandubs on a case-by-case basis. Such research could also shed light onto the characteristics of fandubs as regards specific linguistic and cultural traits, given that existing research has only addressed this superficially so far. Copyright and ethical implications of these practices also require our attention, as illustrated by the work of Spina Ali (2015, p. 756), who highlights the lack of a legislative regulation of parodies (and therefore of parodic dubbing) in Italy and the resulting “ambiguous position they occupy in the Italian copyright panorama”.

This chapter has provided an overview of fandubbing, understood as a term encompassing collaborative and co-creational dubbing practices performed by Internet users who exhibit a

positive emotional engagement with popular audiovisual culture. It has also highlighted the complexity of these practices and their marginal status both in the industry and the scholarly community. Against this backdrop, this chapter aims to promote research in this field and to contribute to our understanding of these practices, that are more far-reaching and prevalent than we might think.

7. Suggested reading

Baños, R. (2019a). Fandubbing across time and space: from dubbing 'by fans for fans' to cyberdubbing. In I. Ranzato & S. Zanotti (Eds.), *Reassessing Dubbing: Historical Approaches and Current Trends* (pp. 145–167). Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

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[1] See https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9zCdCwHqAjE (Consulted 25.04.2019).
[2] See https://www.facebook.com/Studios-Kyotodubs-491007407684206/ (Consulted 25.04.2019).
[3] See http://starsfandub.com/about/ (Consulted 25.04.2019).
[4] See https://www.youtube.com/user/AliTakeStudio/featured (Consulted 25.04.2019).
[5] See the fandub of the Cyanide & Happiness animated shorts created by the independent studio Explosm, uploaded by Escardi Fandubs in their channel https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9o94kJxYD5s&t (Consulted 25.04.2019).
[6] See https://www.youtube.com/user/BadLipReading (Consulted 25.04.2019).
[7] At the time of writing, the Spanish fandub of the short clip 'Meet the Medic' undertaken by AliTake Studio was available from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PBJAffrq4J0 (consulted 25.04.2019). The official dubbing of one of the clips within this series 'Meet the Snipper', can be consulted from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5wmyCSybhxM& (Consulted 25.04.2019).
[8] Matt Murray (Corn Pone Flicks founder), email messages to author, 4-6 August, 2018.
[9] This could have also been the intention of the group All Destiny Dubbing (http://www.dubbing.alldestinyproductions.es/) when dubbing the videogame *Kingdom Hearts: Dream Drop Distance* (Square Enix, 2012) into Spanish and Catalan, given that the developer of this game decided not to localise it.