

Creativity in Thai Fansubbing: A Creative Translation Practice as Perceived by Fan Audiences of the Korean Variety Show *Running Man*

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Abstract

This paper examines Thai fansubbing as a ‘creative’ activity, namely, the realisation of a socio-cultural phenomenon. The unconventional styles of fansubs have been addressed as “*creative subtitling*” in a number of recent fansubbing studies (Secară 2011; McClarty 2013; Pérez-González 2013) although they do not present a clear definition of creativity. This paper attempts to demonstrate creativity in fansubbing as a social activity, drawing on McIntyre’s (2012) conceptualisation of creativity as an activity which is socially constructed by the interactions of individuals who are influenced by social and cultural environments. By overcoming challenges in performing tasks, the creative ideas or products are produced and accepted among audiences in a particular setting. The findings of an online fan survey suggest that fan audiences, who are influenced by their fandom, ethical and legal beliefs, and online environments, are more engaged when viewing the fan translations of their favourite foreign programme. This encourages fansubbers to accommodate constraints in translation, leading to creative translation practices.

Keywords: Thai fansubbing, creativity, social activity

Introduction: Background to Fansubbing Research in Audiovisual Translation

Audiovisual translation (AVT) practices at present are not solely limited to professional translation. The advent of Web 2.0 has provided opportunities for non-professionals to take part in the translation of media texts (Dwyer 2012; Fernández Costales 2012; O’Hagan 2013a). Fansubbing, i.e. subtitling by fans, has been steadily expanding in terms of production and distribution on the Internet, leading to an increasing visibility of their activities. This signifies changes in the media landscape, where audiences are encouraged to produce translational works facilitated by online viewing platforms and technological resources. This has led to novel styles of subtitling, including the use of a wide variety of fonts and colours and the collaboration of fans in fansub communities, in a way which did not formerly occur in AVT. In order to

demonstrate fansub practice as a novel subtitling practice performed by fans as strongly engaged audiences in the digital era, this study aims to elaborate fansubbing as a social phenomenon in Thai contexts with reference to the concept of creativity.

Fansubbing practices emerged around the 1980s notably with Japanese *anime* fans (Leonard 2005: 290-291), who were producing and distributing fansubs for other fans through *anime* clubs. Given its origins, fansubbing can be considered as a subtitling practice performed by fans for fans (Díaz-Cintas and Sánchez 2006). The practice is an instantiation of *fandom* which demonstrates “the social structures and cultural practices created by the most passionately engaged consumers of mass media properties” (Jenkins 2010). Based on the fandom motivation, the practice clearly shows how fansubbers are making a contribution to their favourite programmes and for other non-translating fans. The deep engagement of fansubbers with their favourite programmes typically makes them highly knowledgeable about the programmes as their fan status allows them to have a clear and better understanding of the contexts of the chosen media texts. Therefore, fansubbers could be regarded as experts in the genre (O’Hagan 2013a). In addition, some fansubbing studies assert that the practice shows the resistance of fansubbers to the norms of mainstream subtitles, which are normally determined by the media industries (Nornes 2007; Pérez-González 2007). A number of studies pay particular attention to the collaboration of fansubbers in the fansubbing process (Bold 2011; Lee 2011; Orrego-Carmona 2011). These studies demonstrate a new form of participatory culture, which is initiated by some highly active media consumers who generally do not follow translation norms. This participatory culture in fansubbing also suggests a power shift from media industries to audiences. The collaborative working process in fansubbing indicates the shared responsibilities of fansubbers, depending on their technical and language skills (Díaz-Cintas and Sánchez 2006). This suggests that the practice is performed in a well-organised manner (Orrego-Carmona 2011; Fernández Costales 2012).

By virtue of deliberate defiance, the subtitles made by fansubbers show an unconventional style of subtitling in relation to visual elements, such as colours and positioning, and lexical choices, such as the addition of glosses for the explanation of culture-specific references. The arrival and development of digital technologies has also facilitated the development of the fansub production

into a digital form, which may be distinguished as *digisubbing* (Leonard 2005). Such novel styles of fansubs are seen to be combined with mainstream subtitles, at least in some instances, leading to a hybrid form of subtitles in AVT (Díaz-Cintas 2010; Massidda 2012). Although some studies limit fansubbing to the subtitling of Japanese *anime* (Díaz-Cintas and Sánchez 2006; Mattar 2008; Ito 2012), this subtitling practice by fans has since expanded to various genres of foreign programmes (Barra 2009; Orrego-Carmona 2011), including feature films and TV programmes, such as dramas and variety shows. For example, the growing number of Korean cultural products in Thailand has led to a rise in Korean fandom in the country (Siriyuvasak and Hyunjoon 2007). This fandom has been the driving force behind fan productivity, including fansubbing of Korean audiovisual texts. As such, the present study focuses on Thai fansubbing of the Korean TV variety show, *Running Man*, which will be discussed in detail.

Fansub production and circulation flourished in the last decade or so, thanks to free and open space on the internet. However, at the same time, their activities have given rise to legal issues due to the use of copyright materials typically appropriated without permission of the content owner. However, the fans' effort and contribution to increasing the visibility of the given fansubbed programmes cannot be overlooked. The conflict about legality and ethics in fansubbing practice has been discussed in a number of studies (Hatcher 2005; Leonard 2005; Condry 2010), but it calls for further insights as each social context has distinct characteristics in terms of their legislation and moral/ ethical beliefs.

Fansubbing activities have been investigated in terms of translated products, translation processes, as well as from ethical and legal perspectives. These studies show the development of AVT practices, which extend to the subtitling activities performed by the audience. In recent years, there has been an increasing amount of literature on the topic of fansubbing in AVT, covering a broad range of target languages, including Chinese (Zhang and Mao 2013), Italian (Massidda 2012) and Spanish (Orrego-Carmona 2011). However, so far, no study has been undertaken for Thai contexts despite its increasing popularity as demonstrated by the wide fansub circulation in Thailand. For example, there are over a hundred fansubbing groups of

anime programmes operating in Thailand.¹ Against this backdrop, this study is motivated to fill this research gap by investigating the fansubbing phenomenon in Thailand.

The fansubbing phenomenon strongly points to a change in media culture, online environments, legal enforcement and ethical beliefs with a significant impact on the viewing perceptions of foreign programmes with fan audiences, amongst whom are fansubbers. Some authors (Secară 2011; McClarty 2013) link the novelty aspects of fansubbing to creativity but typically without a clear definition of what they mean by creativity. Therefore, this study will investigate fansubbing practices, along with the attendant social and cultural practices, by linking creativity to particular Thai cultural contexts.

Creativity as a social activity

The notion of creativity has been well discussed in Translation Studies. For example, Kenny (2001) explores creativity based on a textual analysis and investigates linguistic transfer from the source to the target texts in order to identify creativity in literary translation. Although Kenny (2001) does not discuss them in detail, her analysis implies cultural influences of both the source and target languages on the lexical choices in the translation. Bayer-Hohenwarter (2013) takes the translator-oriented approach and views creativity as coming from the translator's conscious working process when solving translation problems in non-literary texts. The study places emphasis on the role of translators in producing translations, but it does not investigate how social and cultural circumstances have an impact upon translators in decision making during the translation process.

As mentioned earlier, creativity in translation has been explored in AVT for fansubs which are often recognised by their specific form and styles since they are not restricted to subtitling norms such as use of fonts, colours or positioning. Nornes (2007) argues that the unconventional styles of fansubs, identified by him as “abusive” subtitling, could present the visibility of translators in the media texts as a form of resistance against overly norm-driven professional subtitles. This very concept of breaking the norms in subtitling is often linked to creativity in fansubbing. For

¹ <http://forum.tirkx.com/main/forum.php> (Last accessed: 27 April, 2015)

example, some studies develop this line of inquiry vis-à-vis the viewing experiences of audiences (Secară 2011; McClarty 2013). Creativity, according to Secară (2011), is about the practicality of the novel form of subtitles, which is the text messaging style in abbreviated forms, such as the one adopted in fansubs. She argues that this form of subtitle could alleviate the spatial-temporal limitations in audiovisual texts. On the other hand, creative subtitling, proposed by McClarty (2013), would vary in style, depending on the types of media texts and the culture of target audiences. Despite focusing on primarily solving the spatial and temporal constraints in subtitles, she aims to develop visually striking styles, which normally appear in fansubs, to create new viewing experiences.

Not only do fansubbers collaboratively produce unconventional subtitles in visual styles, their manipulation of semiotic codes and subtitles, as shown in translated texts, could be viewed as creative (Pérez-González 2013). According to Pérez-González (2013), fansubbers intervene in the translated texts, by adding glosses for the explanation of the scene on screen in order to create immersive experiences for audiences. His study emphasises the creative manner in which translators collaborate.

So far, previous studies on translation practices attempt to show creativity with either a product-oriented focus (Kenny 2001; Secară 2011; McClarty 2013) or process-oriented one (Bayer-Hohenwarter 2013; Pérez-González 2013), without a clear definition of creativity. To clarify the concept of creativity in fansubbing, this study proposes to approach creativity, not from translation product- or translation process-oriented perspectives, but as a social activity.

This study intends to capture creativity in fansubbing as a translation practice as a whole from a sociological approach. It draws on the view that creativity does not emerge from an instant idea, but is socially constructed through the process of idea development by creators “immersing themselves in a domain of knowledge and the selection and validation of the variation being socio-culturally dependent” (McIntyre 2012: 197). This perspective emphasises the roles of agents and social and cultural factors, such as norms in viewing media texts and legal enforcement, as an integral part of the explanation of creativity in fansubbing practice.

Accordingly, the present paper adopts the conceptualisation of creativity proposed by McIntyre

(2012) in order to demonstrate creativity in fansubbing as a socially developed translation activity.

In his analysis of creativity, McIntyre (2012) discusses creativity from a media-cultural perspective by using the examples of cultural production in media businesses, e.g. radio, journalism, film and television. According to McIntyre (2012: 116), creativity is developed when individuals are fully engaged in performing their tasks or overcoming challenges of such tasks in their familiar social environment. Their engagement is encouraged by intrinsic and/or extrinsic motivations. This means that individuals can be motivated by the aim of gaining satisfaction or achieving rewards or praise in such an activity.

In McIntyre's view, creativity is socially formed in a systemic and constructive way by individuals who rely on their social and cultural experiences. The social and cultural environments in a particular setting play crucial roles in influencing the individual's experience and knowledge. What the individual learns forms part of their cognitive environment and is further applied and negotiated during the invention of ideas and products. This shows the recognition of "the individual agent's ability to make choices out of a set of structures that bound their actions" (McIntyre 2012: 89). The enhancement of the creative activity also requires the collaboration of individuals in order to exchange ideas and take different responsibilities in the production. The production of a TV series, for example, requires the coordination of individuals from different work areas, such as writers, directors, and actors (McIntyre 2012: 131).

Furthermore, during the production process, creators have to ensure that their creative ideas or products are accepted and deemed fit in their cultural setting. Therefore, the judgement of the audiences in that particular setting plays a significant role in the development of creativity, which can be seen in an example from television, namely, that "the audiences' expectation...draws them into actively participating in the ongoing process of the creative work" (McIntyre 2012: 125).

Drawing on McIntyre (2012), this paper attempts to approach creativity in fansubbing as socially constructed, giving shape to this unique form of translation practice. Therefore, it does not focus

on only the unconventional styles of fansubs and the fansubbing process in fansub production, but broader factors are also taken into account, such as the viewing perceptions of fan audiences in watching Thai fansubs of their favourite programme, along with social and cultural influences on these fan audiences, including fandom, ethical and legal beliefs and online environments. This view of creativity will enable us to approach fansubbing as a social phenomenon which is developed by the shared interests of fan audiences, whether they are fansubbers or non-translating fans. The following section provides some background for the Thai setting.

Background to Thai TV Media and AVT Modes in Use – Popularity of Korean Programmes

Television, as broadcast in Thailand, is currently undergoing a significant change with its digital system in operation since April 2014. The number of channels broadcast under the digital system has increased to 48, compared to the six main channels in the analogue system. Another change is that there is now more diversity in programmes, including news, dramas, and variety shows, which are broadcast via the digital channels. The growing number of foreign programmes, imported from both Western and Asian countries, is showcased through the new Thai digital channels. Due to the change in the television systems, the Office of The National Broadcasting and Telecommunications Commission (NBTC) reported that 78% of approximately 24 million households had watched digital television channels by the end of 2014 (The Office of the National Broadcasting and Telecommunications Commission 2015; Matichon 2015). It is also forecast that there will be more intense competition among television media broadcasters in order to gain higher viewing ratings from Thai audiences and more revenue from television advertisements (Bangkokbiznews 2015).

In Thailand, different translation modes are adopted for foreign movies and programmes. In cinemas, Western movies are mainly shown in subtitled form. However, in some cases, blockbusters and cartoons are shown in both dubbed and subtitled versions. Similarly, both dubbed and subtitled versions are also provided in the case of Asian movies. On the other hand, when broadcast on television, especially on free-to-air channels, foreign programmes are mostly dubbed. The development of digital television in Thailand, at present, is leading to wider

selections of translation modes. Some free-to-air digital channels, such as *Now26*² and *ThaiPBS*³, offer options for Thai viewers to select from either the dubbed version or the original with Thai subtitles.

The global circulation of Korean dramas and Korean pop music (K-pop) has led to the popularity of Korean cultural products among Asian countries, including China, Singapore and Thailand (Jin and Yoon 2014). In Thailand, Korean culture started to captivate audience attention over the last few decades (Siriyuvasak and Hyunjoon 2007). The significant increase in Korean television programmes on Thai channels and the promotional visits to Thailand by Korean artists for marketing purposes show the popularity of Korean culture in the country at the moment.

One of the most popular Korean programmes in Thailand is a variety show entitled *Running Man*. This is an entertainment television programme belonging to the “variety show” genre which is hosted by masters of ceremonies and presents variety acts, such as humorous scenes and games. This programme was aired on 11 July 2010 for the first time on the *SBS* Channel in South Korea. In each episode of the programme, the main cast and guests play various games to complete a mission in different locations in order to win the competition. To date, around 200 episodes have been broadcast in Korea. Thai fansubs of the first episode were distributed roughly a month later, following the first broadcast of the original version in 2010, while the officially dubbed version in Thai has been broadcast on cable television in Thailand since 9 October 2011. In making the Thai fansubs of the programme, Thai fansubbers rely on the English language fansubs, which are provided through online streaming platforms. In Thailand, the programme’s popularity is demonstrated, for example, by the presence of 358,000 followers in unofficial *Running Man* fan pages on Facebook in Thailand.⁴ Due to such a high visibility of this particular show, involving a significant number of fans and Thai fansubbing groups, the fansubbing practice of this programme is selected as the main focus of this study.

² *Now26* is a digital television broadcaster operated by Bangkok Business Broadcasting Co., Ltd. (<http://www.now26.tv/>)

³ Thai Public Broadcasting Service (*Thai PBS*) is Thailand’s first public broadcasting service. (<http://www.thaipbs.or.th/>)

⁴ <https://www.facebook.com/runningmanthailand?ref=ts&fref=ts> (Last accessed: 26 May, 2015)

Research Method: Online Survey

In order to explore fan audiences' perceptions of Thai fansubs of the *Running Man* programme, this study adopted an online survey method. This qualitative method is selected because it is "an excellent way to gain a particular kind of understanding about online communities and culture" (Kozinets 2010: 43). The online survey⁵ was designed with the aim of gaining an initial overview of Thai fans' perception of Thai fansubbing activities online, mainly in the case of the *Running Man* television programme. The survey was distributed to Thai fans of the programme and also to those who do not belong to fan communities, who have less frequent viewing habits.⁶ The results from the survey on the non-fans are expected to provide further evidence in relation to the viewers' perceptions regarding fansubbing activities. However, due to space constraints, this paper only reports the survey results from the fans of the programme. It seems reasonable to argue, at this stage, that the preliminary results are still productive in supporting (or otherwise) the research direction for a study on Thai fansubbing that is focused on creativity.

The survey seeks to address broad contexts in which fansubbing in Thailand is created and received, and consists of five sections: (1) viewer habits and attitudes of foreign programmes in Thailand; (2) fansubbing in general; (3) the fansubs of the *Running Man* programme; (4) subtitling experiences; and (5) ethical and legal issues (see Appendix A). The survey was created using the Google Form platform (see Appendix B). The survey was posted on two Facebook fan pages of the *Running Man* programme in August 2014, and it was left open for one week. There were 88 responses, of which one was discarded due to incompleteness of the answers. 87 valid responses, of which 9 respondents had fansubbing experiences, were used for the initial analysis as discussed in the next section.

Data analysis - Thai Fansubbing as a Creative Practice

In an attempt to gain an insight into creativity as a social activity, survey results were analysed in terms of the engagement of fan audiences, both fansubbers and non-translating fans, and their

⁵ The survey was conducted in accordance with the ethical procedures, set out by the researcher's home institution.

⁶ Since the target respondents are Thai, the survey questions and the responses are in the Thai language. Therefore, the sample results shown in this paper are the author's translation.

expectation in viewing the translation of their favourite programme, as a potential factor to encourage fansubbers to overcome challenges in translation within the Thai contexts. The challenges in fansubbing include the timing of release, translation mode, the treatment of “impact captions” (see Figure 4), which refers to “intra-lingual subtitles used for humorous effect and carrying out a wide range of functions...” (Park 2009: 550), and legal and ethical issues in fansubbing practice. The survey findings also present whether the way in which Thai fansubbers adapt to accommodate the constraints in fansubbing can fulfil the viewing expectation of a group of fan audiences.

The survey question, of why the respondents like fan translations, where they can choose multiple answers, shows the aspects which fan audiences appreciate (see Figure 1).

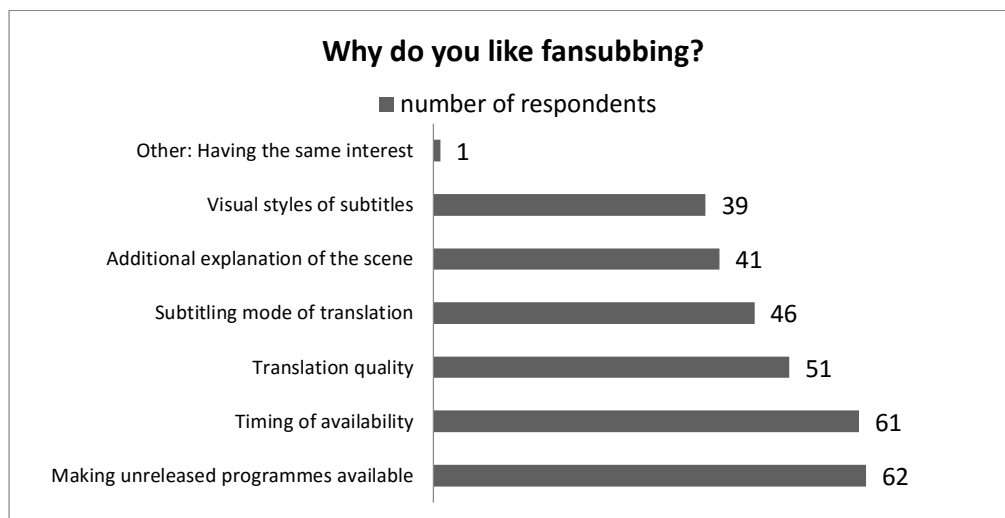


Figure 1: Reasons why fans like fan translations

Timing of availability

One of the constraints in the consumption of foreign programmes is the timing of release. The difference in timing of availability between the official release and fan subbed version indicates that fansubbers act independently of the media company when creating and distributing fansubs. In the case of the timing of release of the officially dubbed version of *Running Man*, it started broadcasting around one year after the original broadcast of the programme in Korea. In contrast, Thai fansubbed versions were appearing with the interval of only one or two weeks, following the online release of the English fansub version shortly after the broadcast of the original

programme (see Figure 2). This suggests that fandom encourages, if implicitly, Thai fansubbers to overcome the constraint in the timing of availability by taking advantage of online environments. Furthermore, the survey results show that 61 out of 87 respondents (70%) appreciate the timing of availability (see Figure 1). This suggests that the timing of release of fansubs can meet the expectations of fan audiences since fansubs are released faster than the official translation.

In the translation of the programme into Thai, fansubbers usually rely on the English language fansubs of the programme which are typically released one or two days after the broadcast of the original version (see Figure 2). According to survey results, 13 out of 87 respondents can understand the original Korean programme without translation while one out of nine respondents, who have fansub experience, understands Korean. This implies that many Thai fansubbers do not understand the source language i.e. Korean. Therefore, they rely on English as a pivot language in translating from Korean into Thai. Relying on English fansubs also suggests a possible influence of fansubbing groups in another cultural setting on Thai fansub production.

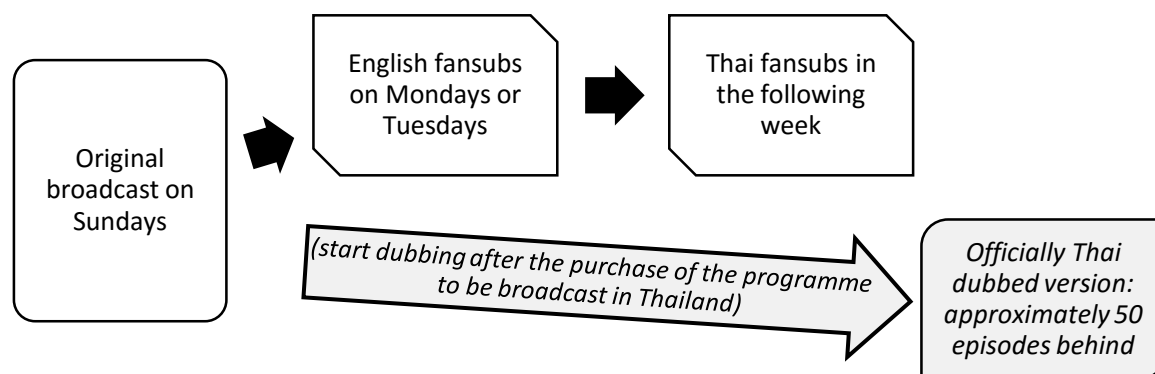


Figure 2: Comparison of the timing of availability between fansubbed versions versus official translated version

Translation mode

Another difference in viewers' responses between the fansubbed version and the official version of the programme was shown in the translation mode. As mentioned it is common in Thailand to select dubbing when it comes to foreign programmes to be broadcast on TV as is also applied in the official release of the translation of the *Running Man* programme in Thailand. However,

according to those surveyed, 94% of the respondents selected subtitles as their preferred translation mode (see Figure 3). The results indicate that the subtitled version is perceived as more satisfying than the dubbed version by the fans.

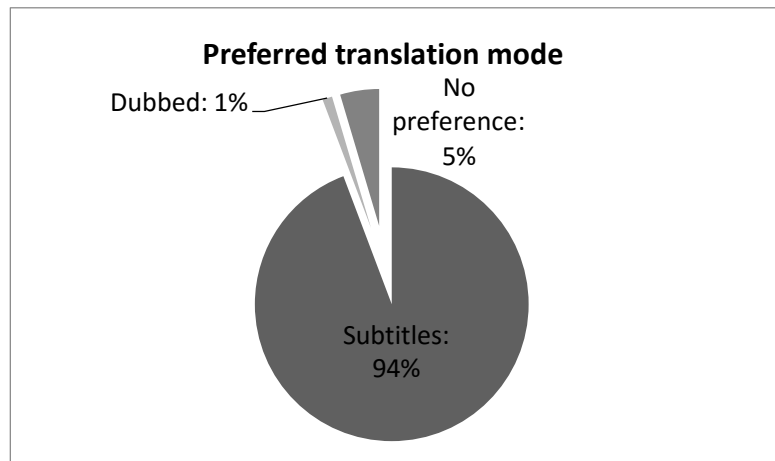


Figure 3: Preferred translation mode

Furthermore, the survey reveals that many respondents complain about the dubbed version, as shown in the following examples:

The dubbed quality is quite low because the overlapping of voices in the original soundtrack causes difficulties in dubbing [Respondent No 42]

The Thai dubbed version fails to express the emotions of the *Running Man* members and the guests of the programme [Respondent No 68]

The official version shows poor quality of dubbing. It fails to express the feelings of [the Running Man] members. The dubbers just said everything they want. The personal characters of the members are all disappearing. I really don't like it! [Respondent No 79]

These responses demonstrate that the official translation of the foreign programmes on Thai television channels was not sensitive to the preference of Thai fans of the programme. The dubbed version is seen by these viewers as impeding them from gaining immersive experiences.

Thai fansubbing teams do not follow convention in terms of AVT mode and provide a subtitled version for which they use free video editing tools and subtitling software, such as Aegisub and

AVI Recomp, to produce fansubs in digital form. This seems to be one of the reasons why fan viewers like the non-official fan versions, where 46 respondents (53%) recognise the subtitling mode of fansubbing as their favourite aspect (see Figure 1). Moreover, as compared to the dissatisfaction expressed about the officially dubbed version, the fans who responded to the survey show the opposite attitudes towards the fansubbed version. Most state that they could “gain more pleasure” when viewing the programme with Thai fan subtitles, adding that it was “more enjoyable” to view the fansubbed version of the programme.

The results relating to the translation mode suggest that Thai fans feel the official conventions adopted in Thailand do not fulfil their fandom in the programme when watching the dubbed version because of the loss of personal characteristics of the key cast, which was mentioned by the respondents. By comparison, the subtitled version seems to help fans gain more immersive viewing experiences because it gives them an opportunity to listen to the original Korean soundtrack of the programme.

Treatment of the translation of impact captions



Figure 4: *Running Man* Episode 204, SBS TV Channel (Broadcast 13 July 2014)⁷

⁷ The Korean impact caption describes the female artist in the scene and states that she is deceiving the male artist in order to win the race by lying to him that the only way they can win is to complete the mission together.

In Figure 4, we can see intralingual captions in Korean at the bottom of the screen. Such impact captions have been widely used in Japanese, Chinese and Korean television programmes (O'Hagan 2010). They are open captions and cannot be turned off by the viewer and differ in nature from the subtitles for the deaf and hard-of-hearing (SDH) (O'Hagan 2013b). These impact captions function as textual props on the screen (Sasamoto 2014), added by the directors of the programmes (Park 2009: 550). However, such captions are not used on Thai TV programmes, and the viewers would not be familiar with them. For this reason, these captions are largely ignored in the official dubbed version. As such, the Thai fans needed to come up with their own translation solutions, which can therefore be considered a novel element added to Thai audiovisual translation practices. The approach taken by Thai fansubbers to deal with these impact captions show their creativity, as conceptualised by McIntyre (2012), where the fans' own viewing experiences of the source version albeit via English fansubbed versions and their preferences have manifested in a novel style of translation.

In cases where there are such additional texts appearing on the screen in a foreign language and a nonverbal item/ image, most of the respondents expect them to be explained; either by subtitles or annotation (see Figure 5). However, as mentioned above, the translation of impact captions is not provided in the official Thai version of *Running Man*. In contrast, relying on the English fansubbed version online, Thai fansubbers try to maintain the visual style of the original version and translate the impact captions. Freely available software and tools afford Thai fansubbers the opportunity to keep the visual appearances, including fonts, colours and positioning, in some detail. As shown in Figure 1, the non-translating fan respondents specified the reasons for their preferences of fansubbed versions over the official versions as the additional explanation of the given scene (41 respondents, 47%) and also the visual styles of subtitles (39 respondents, 45%).

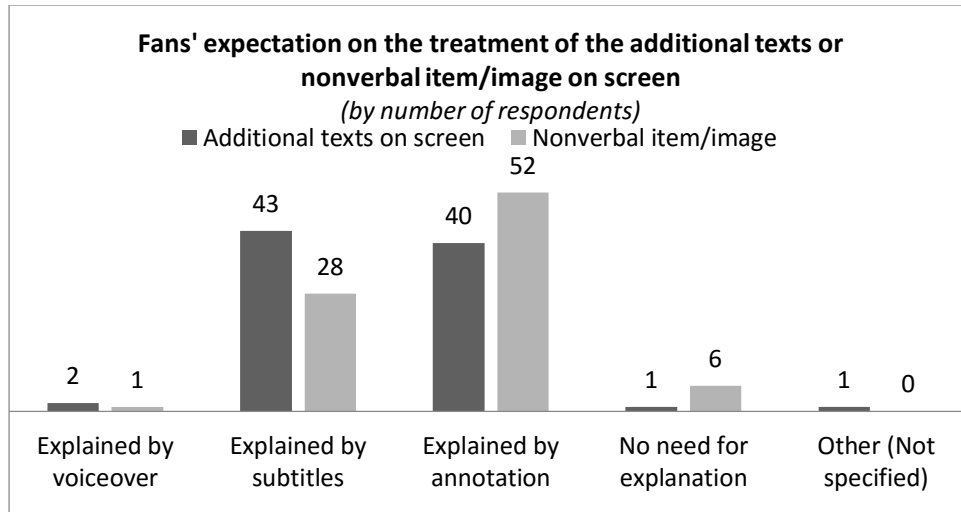


Figure 5: Fans' expectation of the treatment of the additional texts or nonverbal item/image on screen

Reading the translations of impact captions is also a challenge for Thai viewers because of the spatial and temporal constraints in subtitling. Thai fans of the programme have to read both the fansubs of the impact captions and dialogues, which is nearly impossible in some scenes due to the large amount of text which appears in quick succession. However, according to the survey, Thai fans appreciate the translation of these impact captions. They also feel that the translation of impact captions should not be omitted because they play a crucial role in informing the viewers of the content of *Running Man* along with the dialogue, catering to fans' desire to be as faithful as possible to the source materials.

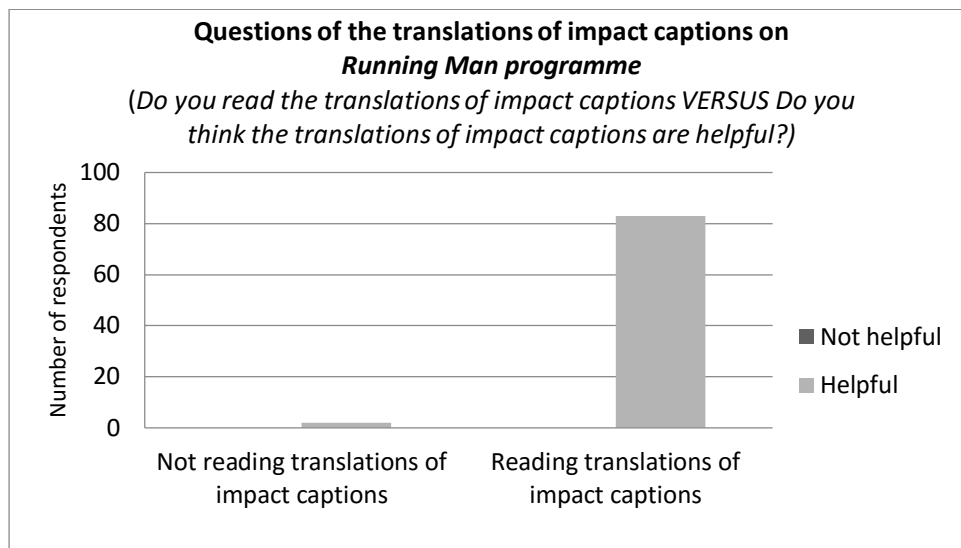


Figure 6: Fan attitude towards the fansubs of impact captions

Figure 6 reveals that very few respondents (two responses) ignore the translation of impact captions. Moreover, all of the respondents who regularly watch *Running Man*, regardless of whether they read or do not read the translations of impact captions, show positive attitudes towards such translations. Many survey respondents gave reasons as to why they think the translation of impact captions is helpful, stating that it assists them in gaining an understanding of the contents of the texts. This could suggest Thai fans' desire to understand the content of the programme in full, supporting the importance of gaining immersive viewing experiences among fans. The results confirm that the majority of the respondents accept this novel subtitling form (i.e. providing additional texts of the scene) even though they are not familiar with impact captions in their experiences with local Thai media.

Ethical and legal issues of fansubbing practice

Since fansub creation involves the use of the source media texts, without the permission of copyright holders, the legal status of such activities is dubious. In the case of the fansubbing of *Running Man*, its Thai fansubbed videos have been removed from the Internet twice, in November 2013 and July 2014, due to such reasons. As we can see in the discussions on many Thai *Running Man* fan pages on Facebook, the fans believe that the removal has been implemented from the US tracking server.⁸ Apart from those instances, there has been no serious measure implemented for tackling copyright infringement in Thailand by either Thai legal authorities or media companies, particularly regarding those involving online activities. Somewhat more relaxed attitudes of legal issues in Thailand probably influence Thai fans to also support fansubbing activities. The impression of fans, regarding the legal issue, reflects social reactions, which can affect fan translation practices online. Among the surveyed fans who support Thai fansubs, some of them show awareness of legal issues, i.e. that fansubbing entails copyright infringement; however, they still show an appreciation for the effort of Thai fansubbers. The following extracts show sympathetic responses by Thai fans:

I understand that it [fansubbing practice] involves copyright infringement, but I still feel sympathetic towards fansubbers [Respondent No. 33]

⁸<https://www.facebook.com/RunningManLand?fref=ts> (Last accessed: 23 November 2013);
<https://www.facebook.com/pages/KSfunny-runningman-Fan/498337666906080#> (Last accessed: 12 December 2013)

I feel sorry for them [Thai fansubbers] because they have no intention to infringe upon the copyright of foreign programmes. They make fansubs because they truly engage in their favourite programmes and would like to share with those who have the same preferences [Respondent No. 38]

It [Removing the fansubbed materials from the Internet] is a right measure due to the copyright law. However, when will copyright holders seek ways to make them [fansubs] to become legal? ... the copyright holders should sense why their programmes have gained this much popularity overseas [Respondent No. 44]

These examples indicate the ethical support of Thai fans for the fansubbers. It also implies that these Thai fans appreciate fansubbers' laborious efforts, which are evident in fansub creations. On the other hand, from the point of view of Thai fans who have fansubbing experience, most of them stated that the satisfaction Thai fan viewers gain through their fansubs is their reward for doing the translations. This seems to suggest that Thai fansubbers prioritise fellow fans' reactions in the fansub production process above all else. The appreciation of the fans, who are social actors, plays a significant role in encouraging Thai fansubbers to perform a creative practice of fansubbing in accordance with McIntyre's view of creativity (2012), which values the reception of audiences in the development of creativity as a social activity.

The loyalty of Thai fans to *Running Man* and the relaxed attitudes towards copyright issues seem to drive fans to interact and share the same interest among like-minded people. These interactions can arguably be seen as leading to the formation of a novel element in fansubbing activities in these particular Thai contexts. Thai fansubbers who are driven by their strong interest and in turn endorsed by other non-translating fans have built fansubbing communities online for fansub production, distribution and consumption, despite the burden of copyright violation. Furthermore, the fans' engagement makes them have equally high expectations for gaining pleasure from the fansubs.

Conclusion

The findings from the survey demonstrate that creativity in fansubbing does not include only unconventional styles of fansubs or fansubbing processes. It also stems from the presence of fan

audiences, whose attitudes are influenced by their fandom, ethical and legal beliefs and online environments, and their expectation and appreciation in viewing the translation of their favourite foreign programmes. Such evidence can support Thai fansubbing as a ‘creative’ practice as socio-culturally motivated on the basis of McIntyre’s conceptualisation of creativity (2012). The fansubbing practice of *Running Man* in Thailand illustrates that the engagement of fan audiences, both fansubbers and non-translating fans, in viewing their favourite programme encourages Thai fansubbers to address challenges in translation. Strongly attached to their favourite programme, Thai fansubbers release fansubs faster than the official translation, and fan audiences appreciate these efforts. The selection of the translation mode of subtitling for a foreign television programme signifies the fansubbers’ intention to cater to fellow fans’ preferences rather than merely following the Thai media industry conventions. Moreover, the treatment of the impact captions of the *Running Man* programme can be seen as evidence of the creative manner in which Thai fansubbers deal with translation problems. Appreciation from fans and their relaxed attitudes towards legal enforcement in Thailand also drives Thai fansubbers to continue with their voluntary translation activities. These interactions could therefore be considered a new critical nexus between translators and viewers in emerging Thai audiovisual translation practices. The fan survey analysis demonstrates that Thai fansubbing practice, with the above-mentioned features, meets the viewing expectations among Thai fan viewers, helping them to gain an immersive experience when watching foreign programmes. In conclusion, the study provides initial evidence that McIntyre’s theoretical framework, focused on creativity as something which is embedded in socio-cultural contexts, can be effectively applied to shed light on creativity in fansubbing practices in general, and in Thai contexts in particular.

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Appendices

Appendix A: List of survey questions in English

Survey Questions in English

Survey on subtitled/dubbed foreign media consumption

[Translated Version (The survey was distributed in the Thai language.)]

The purpose of the survey

This survey is conducted as part of my PhD research at Dublin City University (DCU) in Ireland. My research topic is “fan translation”, which refers to translation practices by media consumers to share their favourite content with others. The survey is aimed at understanding broad contexts in which fan translations in Thailand are created and received.

This survey is anonymous and your participation is voluntary. The information you provide will only be used for my research. All answers will be kept confidential. If you have any questions or concerns about the survey, please contact ethics@dcu.ie. This survey is approved by DCU’s Ethics Committee.

- I have read the above information and consent that the survey results are used for research purposes.

Respondent Information

1. Your gender
 - Male
 - Female
 - Prefer not to specify
2. Your age group
 - 20 or under 20
 - 21-30
 - 31-40
 - 41-50
 - Over 51
 - Prefer not to specify
3. What is your occupation?
 - Student
 - Employee working for a private company
 - Government or state enterprise employee
 - Self-employed
 - Unemployed
 - Other: (please specify)
4. Access to TV
 - TV belonging to the whole family
 - TV of your own
 - Any other arrangements (please specify):
 - No TV

5. How long do you spend on watching TV (hours/week)?

- less than 5
- 5 – 10
- 11 – 15
- 16 – 20
- More than 20

Behaviour of watching foreign programmes

For some questions in this section when specified you are able to select a multiple number of answers for some of the items.

6. Do you watch foreign programmes?

- Yes
- No

7. Which types of subtitled/dubbed foreign programmes do you normally watch?

You can choose multiple answers for this item.

- Films/movies
- Documentary
- Drama series
- Sitcom
- Animation/cartoon series
- Entertainment shows (including variety shows, game shows, talk shows: American Idol, TV Champion, Running Man)
- Other: (please specify)

8. What is the country of origin of your favourite programme(s)?

You can choose multiple answers for this item.

- USA, UK or Europe
- China
- Japan
- Korea
- Other: (please specify)

9. Which language(s) do you know to the level at which you can follow foreign TV programmes without subtitles/dubbed?

You can choose multiple answers for this item.

- English
- Chinese
- Japanese
- Korean
- None (Thai translation needed)
- Other: (please specify)

10. Which is your preferred mode of translation of foreign programmes?

- Subtitles
- Dubbed
- No preference

11. Why?

12. If there are any texts in foreign languages on screen, how would you like them to be dealt with? (For example, street names, billboards, letters, game instructions, etc.)

- Explained by voiceover
- Explained by subtitles
- Explained by annotation
- No need for explanation
- Other: (please specify)

13. With a nonverbal item/image you do not understand on screen, how would you like it to be dealt with? (For example, *dango* refers to Japanese dumpling and sweet made from rice flour.)

- Explained by voiceover
- Explained by subtitles
- Explained by annotation
- No need for explanation
- Other: (please specify)

14. Which of the following mediums do you normally watch subtitled/dubbed foreign programmes on?

You are able to choose a multiple number of answers.

- Broadcast channels (e.g. Channel 3, 5, 7; Workpoint TV, MCOT HD)
- Cable/satellite channels (e.g. TrueVisions)
- DVD/Blu-ray
- Paid streaming channels (e.g. Netflix, Doonung.com)
- Free streaming channels (e.g. Youtube, Dailymotion)
- Download
- Cinema
- Other: (please specify)

15. Which of the following devices do you normally use to watch subtitled/dubbed foreign programmes?

You are able to choose a multiple number of answers.

- TV
- Desktop Computer
- Laptop
- DVD
- Tablet
- Mobile phone
- Other: (please specify)

16. How long would you normally spend on watching subtitled/dubbed foreign programmes (hours/ week)?

- less than 5
- 5 – 10
- 11 – 15
- 16 – 20
- More than 20

Fan translation

Fan translation refers to translations of television programmes performed and distributed by fans, such as translations created by fans of Chinese, Japanese or Korean drama series, of TV programmes, or of foreign artists, etc.

17. Are you aware of fan-translated/subtitled programmes? (If the answer is 'No', please skip to Item 23)
- Yes
 - No
18. (If yes) How do you know which one is fan translation or not?
19. How do you access fan-translated programmes?
You can choose multiple answers for this item.
- By searching on search engines (e.g. Google, Yahoo)
 - By using specific websites
 - Via Facebook fan pages
 - Other: (please specify)
20. (If choosing websites and Facebook fan pages) Please specify the name of your favourite websites/ Facebook fan pages.
21. Why do you like fan translation?
You can choose multiple answers for this item.
- Timing of availability
 - Quality of translation
 - Subtitling mode rather than dubbed
 - Additional explanation of the scene on screen
 - Making unreleased programmes available in Thailand
 - Styles of subtitles (such as selections of fonts or colours of the subtitles)
 - Other: (please specify)
22. From Item 21, which one do you like the most?

Running Man fansubs

23. Have you watched the variety show called "Running Man" before? (If the answer is 'No', please skip to Item 34)
- Yes
 - No
24. If answered yes to the previous question, what do you like about the programme? (e.g. game themes, members, translation)
25. How do you access the "Running Man" programme?
(e.g. TrueVisions' channel, KShownow, Facebook group pages, other websites, etc.)

26. In which language do you normally watch this programme?

You can choose multiple answers for this item.

- Korean original without translation
- Korean original subtitled in English
- Korean original subtitled in Thai
- Korean original dubbed in Thai
- Other: (please specify)

27. What is your favourite mode do you like to watch?

- (Officially) dubbed
- (Unofficial) fan subtitles
- No preference

28. Why?

29. When there are additional texts (e.g. comments, game rules) appearing on “Running Man” programme, do you read the translations of such texts?

- Yes
- No

30. Do you think the translations of such texts are helpful?

(e.g. adding the comedic effect of the show, facilitating better comprehension and authentic experience)

- Yes
- No

31. Why do you think so?

32. Do you have any favourite group(s) of fan translators?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know.

33. If yes, please specify the names of your favourite group(s)

Subtitling/ dubbing experiences

34. Have you ever involved in creating fan subtitles yourself? (If the answer is 'No', please skip to Item 41)

- Yes
- No

35. If yes, what are the names of programmes you subtitled?

36. Why did you start subtitling?

37. How did you learn the subtitling skills?

38. When you subtitle, do you do it alone or as a group?

- Alone
- Group
- Both

39. What do you do with your subtitles or subtitled videos?

(e.g. uploading them on video sharing websites, distributing them only in closed groups, keep them only to yourself)

40. In your opinion, what are rewards you get from making fansubs?

Ethics and Legal issues

41. How do you view fansubs?

- Positively
- Negatively
- I don't know

42. When your favourite fansubbed materials are removed, how do you feel about it?

43. Who do you think should make decision to remove fansubs?

44. Who do you think should be blamed for the removal of fansubs?

45. Do you think fansubs can contribute the programme in any way?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

46. If yes, what do you think it is?

47. Do you think there would be a potential negative impact to the programme because of fansubs?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

48. If yes, what would that be?

If you are a fansubber and willing to give an interview, please leave your email below. (It is on a voluntary basis.)

If you have any additional comments, please contact me at the email:

thandao.wongseree2@mail.dcu.ie

This is the end of the survey. Thank you very much for your participation.

Appendix B: First page of the survey in Thai

แบบสำรวจการแปลโดยกลุ่มแฟน (fan translations)

วัตถุประสงค์
แบบสำรวจนี้จัดทำขึ้นเพื่อเป็นส่วนหนึ่งของงานวิจัยระดับปริญญาเอกที่มหาวิทยาลัย Dublin City University ประเทศไอร์แลนด์ หัวข้องานวิจัยคือ "การแปลของกลุ่มแฟน" ซึ่งหมายถึงการแปลโดยกลุ่มผู้ชมรายการต่างๆ ที่ต้องการแบ่งปันเนื้อหาที่ตนเองชื่นชอบให้กับบุคคลอื่นๆ แบบสำรวจนี้มุ่งหวังที่จะทำความเข้าใจภาพโดยรวมของการแปลของกลุ่มแฟนในประเทศไทยว่ามีมุมมองอย่างไร

แบบสำรวจมีประมาณ 40 ข้อจัดทำขึ้นโดยผู้ตอบไม่ต้องลงชื่อ และการตอบแบบสำรวจเป็นไปด้วยความสมัครใจ ข้อมูลที่ท่านตอบจะใช้เพื่องานวิจัยของข้าพเจ้าเท่านั้น ค่าตอบแทนจะเก็บไว้เป็นความลับ หากมีข้อสงสัยหรือข้อสอบถามใดๆ เกี่ยวกับแบบสำรวจ กรุณาติดต่ออีเมล ethics@dcu.ie แบบสำรวจนี้ได้รับการพิจารณาอนุมัติจากคณะกรรมการจริยธรรมของมหาวิทยาลัย Dublin City University แล้ว

*จำเป็น

ข้าพเจ้าได้อ่านข้อมูลข้างต้นและอนุญาตให้ใช้ข้อมูลจากแบบสำรวจเพื่องานวิจัยดังกล่าว

ข้อมูลของผู้แบบสอบถาม

เพศ *

ชาย

หญิง

ไม่ระบุ

ช่วงอายุ *

20 หรือน้อยกว่า 20

21-30

31-40

41-50

51 ขึ้นไป

ไม่ระบุ

อาชีพ *

นักเรียน นักศึกษา

พนักงานบริษัท

ข้าราชการหรือพนักงานรัฐวิสาหกิจ

อาชีพส่วนตัว

ทำงาน

ไม่ระบุ

อื่นๆ: