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"Amateur subtitling practices: a netnographic study of communication and work practices in French online translation communities"

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VIDEO PRESENTATION: <https://youtu.be/C30uvoaVZ4w>

**ABSTRACT**

This paper examines workflow and communication practices in amateur French to English subtitling, also known as fansubbing. This kind of non-professional translation is performed in online communities by fans, for fans. An increasing number of scholars have studied online non-professional or collaborative translation (O'Hagan, 2009, 2011; Jiménez Crespo, 2017) and others have studied the different steps of the workflow in amateur translation communities (Massidda, 2015; Bogucki, 2009), such as the motivation behind volunteer translation (Fernández Costales, 2012), the role of fansubbing in the media industry (Pérez-Gonzalez, 2013) and the difference in reception between fansubs and professional subtitles (Orrego-Carmona, 2014; 2016). However, little research has been done on the specificities of community working practices in fansubbing. This study aims therefore to focus on amateur translators and their translation processes, rather than the final translated product. The ultimate objective of my Ph.D. research project is to later compare these practices to those of the professional and professional-amateur (pro-am) in the subtitling industry, in order to analyse and delineate the subtitlers' profession and translation conditions in different environments.

This paper focuses exclusively on the analysis of the fansubbing environment from an ethnographic perspective in order to obtain a complete and up-to-date understanding of the subtitling process and the communication which takes place in

these communities. There is a constant shift in the practice due to the many changes that have taken place in relation to online communication, which makes the evolution of this activity worth studying. In order to undertake an in-depth analysis of a fansubber community, it is necessary to join it as an observing member. This part of the research studies an online, English – French subtitling community through netnographic research (online ethnography) and aims to ascertain who the fansubbers are, what constitutes an amateur translation community, and how these communities work in terms of practice and communication. A similar approach has only been used by a few scholars in fansubbing research, such as Li (2017) and Massidda (2015), who examined the Chinese and Italian language contexts respectively. The netnographic approach, which was first mentioned in 1997 and developed by Kozinets (2015), will provide ethnographic data that will offer a new, updated perspective on English to French fansubbing practices. The data collected will provide a real insight into how the members communicate and exchange, if they communicate with other communities abroad, what guidelines they follow and how their workflow is organised. This paper focuses on the methodological and ethical aspects of this data collection. It explores the specificities of netnography, data analysis, and my experience as a member of a French fansubbing community. Due to the legally contentious nature of fansubbing, I will also examine the ethical implications of the data collection, such as confidentiality and anonymisation measures, highlighting the specific considerations that were made in order to conduct this research ethically.