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FANSUBBING AND COMERCIAL SUBTITLING IN BRAZIL A COMPARATIVE STUDY USING THE AMERICAN TV-SERIE GOSSIP GIRL

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1. Introdução

At the beginning of the 2000s, an internet revolution was made and the era of web 2.0 was established, this concept could be considered a more abstract term to define a change on the way people on the internet would start to interact, the idea was that applications would be developed by their own users and would become available for free, this way, internet users could share their opinions and get along, nowadays a strong example of web 2.0 are the social networks. A wide range of new technologies came along with this new concept, making the access to web much easier and variable than before. The access given was mainly to information, new products and free tools, that allowed us to develop our computer skills and our interests in general. Several of this technology development has influenced in the field of Audiovisual Translation, also known as AVT, a practice that works with source texts, audio and visual communication channels, which pretty much consists of all the written, dubbed or voiced-over translations and transcriptions of the original audio we see on TV and DVD nowadays. However, the most part of the studies related to the AVT are based on the professional subtitling field and not on the subtitles made by fans, also known as fansubbing. Fansubbing is a new way of translation, created to supply the scarcity of translated media material to the ones who do not speak the language where the original material is found, those translations are made by fans who have some kind of knowledge of the language where the material is available and are transformed into subtitles to their mother-tongue. Those subtitlers are volunteers, they reunite in a determined community online to divide their tasks and establish what each one is going to be in charge of, for instance, for a TV-Serie: one person is in charge of collecting the episode and when possible, making the original language transcription, after this, other people are in charge of translating those transcriptions, and finally, one person of the team is in charge of the synchronization and uploading the content. After all those processes, the subtitle of the TV-Serie is available online for download free. Eight or seven years ago, the ones interested in downloading this material would have to download the video (episode) and the subtitles separately and only then, build-in into the episode, nowadays, the most part of the materials are already integrated with the translated subtitles. The fansubbing area has grown beyond expectations in this last decade, and nowadays, we can say that at least on the Internet is dominant. The fansubbing phenomenon, speaking in terms of TV-Series, exploded in Brazil in mid-2004, where the acclaimed TV-Show Lost had its first team of fansubbers, that made it possible for fans to watch episodes two or three days after airing in US, through their computers. This new way of watching their favorite show changed the fans, transforming them from a simple passive audience to an active one, by discussing the last episodes, commenting spoilers and sharing opinions and theories about the Show. This kind of interaction made it possible a massive approximation between Brazilian and foreign fans through the Internet (Bandeira, 2009).

2. Objetivos

This academic paper intends to compare the subtitles created by fans on the Internet with the ones created by professionals of the area (since there are not many studies covering this topic) and answer the following question: How do the professional subtitles differ from the amateur subtitles (fansubbing)? In order to answer these questions I propose to compare the subtitles created by fans on the

Internet for the first season of the American TV-Series Gossip Girl to the commercial subtitles contained in its respective DVD. This TV-Series was chosen in particular because of its rich and updated vocabulary among adolescents, and because, besides being created for teenagers, it is being translated on the internet by teenagers as well, so, it will be interesting to compare the lexical used for young fansubbers with the lexical and structural choices made by professionals of the area. The study will be taken under two different variants: the commercial subtitle in Portuguese, found in its Brazilian DVD and the amateur subtitle made by fans, available on the internet. The data from these amateur subtitles will come from a team of fansubbers denominated InSubs and the episodes will be in the RMVB format, with all the respective subtitles already built-in. Even though the focus will be on the comparison between interlingual subtitles (source language -> target language), the original subtitle in English (also found in the DVD) will be needed as a way of getting access to the original audio in its written form, making it easier the whole process of comparing the data achieved. The first season of the Show is compounded of eighteen episodes but this paper will not work with all of them. It will be selected extracts from random episodes with specific scenes which illustrate better some translation differences between the subtitles made by amateurs and the other one made by professionals, differences such as: idiom, idiomatic expressions, slangs and cultural references. As this form of translation is fairly new, where the fastest you subtitle and make the material available, more recognition you have from that fan-community (amateur subtitlers and fans), the area lacks of more studies to be made, more analysis and researches in order to understand this fansubbing phenomenon. RMVB stands for RealMedia Variable Bitrate, RMVB is a new video format which is the extension upgrading from RealMedia multimedia container format. (0800 Soft, on-line)

3. Desenvolvimento

About translating Over the decades, the conception of what would be a good translation has changed. The poet and translator Dryden (1961) came with the concept that translation should have its own principles, and along with that, some concepts were created, such as : metaphrase, which consists of literal translation- when you translate each word, paraphrase, when the sense of a sentence is amplified but there's no change in the meaning (Vila, Martí & Rodríguez 2011) and mimesis (from the greek- imitation) which for translation purposes stands for the representation of another person's words in a speech. This last one, opening a whole new discussion about the fidelity of the original source when it is translated to determined language. A more recent definition of what translation should consider, says that: Translation is also creative and not just an automatic process. By this, I mean that you will need to exercise your interpreting and editing skills since, in many cases, the person who has written the source text may not have been entirely clear in what he has written. It is then your job as a translator to endeavour to understand what the writer wishes to say and then express that clearly in the target language. (Brown, Geoffrey Samuel. A Practical Guide for Translators, 2010, p.XV)

The Audiovisual translation market (Subtitling) With new medias available in the market, DVDs and Blu-rays being released with extra material, VHS materials (before, only available dubbed) being switched for all those new technologies, AVT has never been so present when it comes to technology and translation (Cintas & Andermann, 2009). According to this same book, Días Cintas (2009, p. 4) defines the term subtitling as: When the decision has been taken to keep the original soundtrack and to switch from the spoken to the written mode, by adding text to the screen, the technique is known as subtitling. Yet, another definition was given by Luyken et al. (1991, p31) defining subtitles as: ... condensed written translations of original dialogue which appear as lines of text, usually positioned towards the foot of the screen. Subtitles appear and disappear to coincide in time with the corresponding portion of the original dialogue and are almost always added to the screen image at a later date as a post-production activity. We have different types of subtitles, the most common are: SDH/ Closed Captions - Subtitles for the deaf and hard-of-hearing: Original audio subtitles that add informations like: who is uttering the sentence and describes sounds and music styles playing during the scene. The only difference between SDH and Close Captions is on the formatting, CC still uses a white text with a black background, while SDH has its formatting closer to the dvds subtitles (in terms of text, color, etc) Surtitles: While subtitles are translated texts usually displayed below the image, as on a cinema or television screen, surtitles are most often displayed above the stage, in live opera and theatre performances. (Cintas & Anderman, 2009, p.10)

Subtitles can be intralingual (source language -> source language) ex: English to English or interlingual (source language -> target language) ex: English to Portuguese.

Cultural and Translation Problems & Technical Constraints Different genres and audiences ask for different approaches (Cintas, 2009), so, it is completely acceptable different types of translation when subtitling. Sometimes a Sitcom, because of some cultural references and other factors, requires a more free translation in order to the audience understand a joke, making laugh is the purpose of a Sitcom and this should not be ignored when translating in the first place, a Drama series, instead, can be more faithful to the original in general. Díaz Cintas also comments that due to linguistic limitations, there is a potential mismatch between cultural identity and stereotypes presented in the source language, with the translation to the target language, this mismatch will be discussed further.

According to the author, AVT is always constrained by the presence of the original production, which lives on semiotically through images (and sound) in the adoptive culture. (Cintas, 2009, p.09). So, the semiotic complexity presented in an AVT material should not be ignored, since the audience will have access to that, so if the translation is not tied with the actions, sounds and other symbols, the audience will notice.

From a professional perspective, AVT carries out several other problems in this case, the technology used to translate and create the subtitle influences a lot. Cintas (2009) states that most part of audiovisual materials which are in languages not so common spoken by people in general, are translated to english first and only after, they are translated to another specific language, in this case, the translation decisions are made taking into consideration the English language first and its respective culture, not the target language spoken by the audience

where these materials will head to, which will imply into a set of translation problems as well as the loss of the material originality. Technical constraints can also influence the tone of the material and sometimes the loss of meaning is inevitable. Several limitations are brought to the subtitling process, such as: synchronization between audio, image and content, in addition to the time of exposure of the subtitle on screen, the size of the text and the space provided on screen to add its written form. All those concerns reinforce that sometimes, the original content must be succinct in order to the viewer be able to read, even that this implicates in dropping out some of the interests from the English-speaking audiences. At last, this whole discussion leads to a greater question of whether, in translation we should aim to take the text closer to the reader, or to take the reader towards the text (Gartzonika and Serban, 2009, 245). This is still a common debate theme among translation researchers.

4. Resultado e Discussão

Until that moment, the research points out that several of the factors cited above influenced the tone of the translated material. The episodes and scenes selected has presented differences in terms of meaning and time of reading speed. The professional subtitles created for the season of this TV-Serie shows that the translators who work for the company in charge of releasing the material in Brazil are being limited, due to technical constraints, imposed by the company, they cannot translate faithfully some localisms and cultural expressions, because it is very likely that a new audience here in Brazil would not understand, so, they have to adapt some of the dialogues on the episodes to Brazilians reality, making that sometimes the translation turns out lame, mainly when we consider that the audience is having access to the original audio, so if the person watching the episode knows something about English (the source language), the incompatibility between what he is listening with what he is reading, may give a feeling of frustration whenever he finishes an episode. In the case of the amateur subtitlers, it could be noticed that sometimes the fansubber allows the localisms to be in English, and he chooses not to adapt some of the cultural references, considering that the audience (the ones who download the episodes from the internet) can understand, or at least look for these informations later on, using the internet itself. Some of the subtitled dialogues were not so worried with reading speed, and the amateur subtitlers would put more characters than an average audience could read.

5. Considerações Finais

As this is a work in progress, it could not be established a final consideration.

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