Researching Inter-Asian Audiovisual Translation

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Abstract: This paper first outlines the digital interaction and integration in the dynamic process of production, circulation and consumption of Asia-produced media that evoke the shared values and traditions among Asian audiences. It then introduces the papers collected in this special issue, which explore a variety of widespread but underexplored phenomena in the newly interconnected Asian cultural industries and the sites of digital convergence between production and consumption (digital prosumption). In regard to future research, it suggests that multidisciplinary expertise in and from the region should maintain a critical, dialogical connection with Western scholarship in order to contribute to a holistic understanding of the constantly evolving translational creativity in the global audiovisual world. Simultaneously, novel practices in new media habitats, such as danmaku-titling and video remixes, pose new conceptual and ethical challenges to the present scholarship in user-generated AVT and calls for further theoretical revision.

Keywords: AVT, East Asia, Asianisation, multidisciplinary, digital prosumption

Premises

Many Asian countries share historical and cultural linkages but at the same time conflicts with each other over territorial and ethnic issues. In the wake of post-colonial sentiments, they strove to maintain information independency and to avoid cultural domination by the West (Nordenstreng, 2012). As restrive politics is increasingly replaced by openness and innovation (Chadha & Kavoori, 2015), Asian media industries have also witnessed expanding partnerships between local media producers and Western media companies, and the success of

local creative industries in global markets (Huat & Jung, 2014). While the media contents most widely distributed and consumed are still commercially and ideologically hegemonic, the consumption of popular culture has inspired significant cross-border dialogue "in the sense of crucially and self-reflexively reconsidering one's own life, society, and culture, as well as socio-historically, constituted relations with and perceptions of others" (Iwabuchi, 2017, p.31). This reminds us of what Yoichi Funabashi (1993) called 'Asianisation' to refer to the shared experience of Asia-produced audiovisual entertainment media in the region:

> [T]he cultural links between the middle classes of various Asian countries are strengthening through the power of electronic communications technology. Asia, which lacks a common heritage of aristocratic classes and culture, has increasingly become a hotbed of middle-class globalism. The Hong Kong-based Star Television Network was quick to create an Asia-wide entertainment network. On its broadcasts, top-selling Thai or Japanese singers croon the hit songs of Hong Kong and Guangdong. Under pressure from Star TV, Indian Public Television has fought back by broadcasting Japan's hit drama series, "Oshin," now shown in 30 countries, most of them in Asia. A Japanese children's cartoon whose popularity is now exploding in Vietnam is "Doraemon," about a group of contemporary children and their robot playmate. It is an optimistic, amusing portrayal of unassuming, middle-class children entranced and befuddled by futuristic technology. Pirate editions of the cartoon book have been best-sellers in Vietnam and Thailand. (Funabashi, 1993, pp.78-79)

At present, the enhanced digitisation and media interconnectivity may hinder rather than strengthen a shared cultural consciousness as a result of zealous promotions of national interests. Asianisation is frequently confronted with the resurgence of nationalism amid soft-power competition and cyber-driven jingoism and renationalisation (Iwabuchi, 2019). For instance, Japan continues to exploit creative media production for counteracting the media representations deployed by its neighbouring others concerning its imperial past (Zahlten, 2019). Joint ventures between South Korean and Chinese creative industries are criticised in China due to the seemingly cultural infiltration from South Korea, especially when diplomatic tension arises between the two nations (Shim, 2017). Under such dynamic circumstances, what

kinds of mutual understanding have been promoted in what media formats and through whose voices? What issues remain underexplored in the newly interconnected East Asia and Inter-Asia translocality? How does the new media ecology enable the unprecedented border-crossing of marginalised voices? And how are cultural differences, inequality and marginalisation within and across nation-state borders represented in the transnational expansion of popular-culture media? These are the questions that the authors in this special issue seek to answer.

Audiovisual Translation (AVT) has grown into a mature field of research in Translation Studies, reflecting the exponential increase in the circulation of audiovisual content in varied forms with "detached, comprehensive, descriptive and scientific approaches" (Remael, Orero, & Carroll, 2012, p.13). AVT is carried out not only to produce different language versions of featured films but also to enhance accessibility in a vast array of media, including television programmes and video games (Bogucki, 2013). During the last decade, AVT research has contributed to enhancing accessibility modes such as audio description and re-speaking as well as to new approaches such as integrated titles. AVT scholars have extensively examined issues of a linguistic, cultural, socio-political and ideological nature while addressing and encompassing the impact of technologies on all aspects of AVT (Díaz-Cintas, 2012; Pérez-González, 2014). Owing to the establishment and development of national and international associations focusing on AVT, the field has received increasing attention, with actions taken to improve AVT courses at postgraduate levels in some parts of the world in recent years. However, such progress, if visible, can only be traced in the AVT communities within Europe, where both the profession and discipline are much more developed than in Asia.

AVT is indeed a burgeoning area in Translation Studies (Díaz Cintas, Neves, & Matamala, 2010; Diaz Cintas & Orero, 2003; Xiao & Peng, 2019). However, the progress of AVT research in the East seems rather meagre despite its long history of professional practice in the region. Since the conference 'Dubbing and Subtitling in a World Context' held in Hong

Kong eighteen years ago (see Fong & Au, 2009), a number of monographs focusing on the Asian context have been published (e.g. Du, Li, & Cheng, 2013; Ma, 2019; Nornes, 2007; Shinohara, 2018; Yuan, 2012), addressing history, intercultural mediation, technology, and disciplinarisation of AVT in different linguacultural contexts within the region. AVT-related subjects have been consistently addressed in a growing number of postgraduates theses (e.g. Cheng, 2014; Kuo, 2014; Liang, 2017; S.-J. Lu, forthcoming; S.-W. Lu, forthcoming; Oh, 2011; Wang, 2015a; Zhang, 2016). A broader scope of inquiry is found in secondary literature, in which authors have shed light on the general status of practice (and research) in different Asian countries (e.g. Hamilton, 2002; Wang, 2015b), cases of linguistic and cultural mediation (e.g. Arunsamrana & Tungtang, 2015; Cho, 2014; E. S. Lee, 2010; Tang, 2014), AVT and foreign-language acquisition (e.g. Chung, 1999; Pak, 2012), and challenges posed by the new media to translation ethics (e.g. Hsiao, 2014; Lee, 2011; Nornes, 2017).

To better understand the development of AVT studies in China, Xiao and Peng (2019) carried out a corpus study based on the database of the Chinese National Knowledge Infrastructure (hereinafter CNKI) for the period from 2003 to 2017, and stressed the huge gap in AVT scholarship between China and its counterparts in the West, particularly in the areas of media accessibility, such as subtitling for the deaf and hard-of-hearing (SDH) and audio description (AD), and non-professional subtitling. In line with Xiao and Peng's research findings, Zhang (2018) also indicated the relative narrowness in the research scope of AVT scholars in China as compared with that of European scholars. Despite the fact that there is an increasing interest in the AVT topics, most publications centring on the Chinese language are in Chinese. A recent special issue of the *Journal of Chinese Cinemas* edited by Haina Jin (2018) mapped for the first time the agential networks, cultural politics, and local and deterritorialised cultural intermediaries involved in the translation and dissemination of Chinese films. AVT research projects focusing on other Asian languages such as Korean and Japanese are in a

similar situation, as their international visibility is significantly reduced due to the dominance of English in global scholarly publishing. It is only in the past few years that we have started to see some edited volumes dedicated to Asian languages written in English, albeit mostly in the wider scope of translation studies (e.g. Shei and Gao, 2017; Kang and Wakbayashi, 2019; Han and Li, 2019; Sato-Rossenberg and Uchiyama, 2019).

Despite the steady progress in AVT research in Asia, AVT has yet been recognised as a full-fledged professional filed, neither increasing with the passing of time nor growing with the development of the discipline. The working conditions of audiovisual transaltors are still largely veiled in mystery, although there have been a few studies carried out to shed light on the professional realities of the AVT industry; for example, Kuo's (2014) survey on the working conditions of subtitlers whose working languages include Chinese, Leung's (2015) elaboration on the status quo of audio description services in Hong Kong, and Pidchamook's (2019) survey on the perceived subtitling quality from the perspective of key stakeholders in the Thai market. In addition to the professional setting, scholars have investigated the thriving of non-professional activities, discussing the making and development of fansubbing groups (e.g. Wang & Zhang, 2017; Rong, 2017; Wongseree, O'Hagan & Sasamoto, 2019). However, the existing literature indicates that it will be a long journey before we gain a better understanding of AVT and promote it as a profession in different Asian regions. The fact that the majority of translators tend to work on a freelance basis and in isolation not only leads to the opacity of information among these professionals but also poses difficulties for academics to gather information concerning their profession and working conditions. The development of translators' associations in Asia is not yet as mature as it is in some Western countries, where freelance translators may receive better support. Progress has been made, rather slowly, thanks to recently founded associations, such as the Audio Description Association (Hong Kong) and the Audiovisual Translation and Dissemination Council of the China Alliance of Radio, Film

and Television, which actively bridges communication between research and professional fields and raises public awareness of professional AVT practices.

About this special issue

In response to the present status of AVT as a profession and a research discipline, this special issue seeks to strengthen AVT research in the broader East Asian context and beyond by bringing together scholastic exchanges on translation practices in the contexts of Japan, Thailand, China, Singapore, and South Korea. The authors take on prevalent and emerging subjects, theories and methodologies in AVT research but also revise the present (Western) scholarship in light of Asian phenomena. In doing so, they not only achieve the inclusion of hitherto unfamiliar and unrecognised examples, but also critically recalibrate the latest exploration of intercultural mediation (see Guillot, 2019; Ranzato and Zanotti, 2018), paving the way to a more holistic view on what is at stake in processes of interlingual mediation through AVT, what kind of cultural and linguistic representations have been projected to the public, how audiences of translated multimedia texts understand and respond to such representations, and to what extent AVT can promote intercultural literacy in the target context.

Subtitling is most heavily represented in this special issue with six articles dedicated to this translation mode, covering the subtitling of films, political documentaries, and Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs). Ji-Hae Kang and Kyung-hye Kim studied the collaborative translation of the American film *Spy* in South Korea. Dang Li conducted a case study on *EduInfinity Translation Group*, a non-profit volunteer organisation which subtitles MOOCs provided by overseas educational intuitions into Chinese. The translation of MOOCs also drew the attention of Ke Hu, Sharon O'Brien and Dorothy Kenny, who examined the impact machine-translated subtitles have on the Chinese viewer's reception of MOOC contents. By using a mixed-methods approach combining eye-tracking and questionnaire methods, they

investigated the Chinese viewers' reception of subtitles for MOOCs by conducting eye-tracking experiments and surveys directly with the audience. Thandao Wongseree investigated the interrelationships between fan subtitlers and digital technologies in selected fansubbing communities in a Thai context. Jingjing Li examined ideo-political manipulations in the official subtitling of political documentaries in China, i.e. "documentaries covering political themes, funded and sanctioned by the Chinese government" (J. Li). Along with subtitling, Haina Jin analysed the practice of dubbing Mandarin films into ethnic minority languages in China from the 1950s to the present day. Further at the margins of Chineseness, Arista Szu-Yu Kuo looked into the subtitling practice of language variations in the Singaporean context and its relationship with the bilingual policy and language campaigns in Singapore. In addition to the translation of video-based audiovisual materials, video game localisation has emerged as an area of research in AVT, demonstrating the translation of interactive media products. Wes Robertson focused on the creative rendition via kanji-dependent wordplay in the Japanese localisation of *Hearthstone*, an online card game in the *Warcraft* universe. Including and going beyond audiovisual materials, Mingming Yuan investigated the translational creativity in Chinese online discourse, unpacking the interaction between translation, cultural intervention, and ideological struggle in China.

In terms of methodologies, Wes Robertson and Jingjing Li adopted linguistic approaches. Robertson conducted text analysis of a corpus including 21 instances of kanji-dependent wordplay found in the investigation of the names of the 1,324 collectable cards in the Japanese *Hearthstone* game. Game localisers exploited the ideographic orthography of kanji, primarily borrowed from traditional Chinese characters, for enhancing the gaming experience with extraneous communicative and interpretative processes which were not found in the English-language version. Although kanji-dependent wordplay has been an essential element employed by Japanese localisers to translate humour, the ways in which they were

used in the localised game are highly experimental and fulfil a rather non-linear transfer of a humour-intense gaming experience into the Japanese context of playing. The deconstruction of the orthodox kanji script not only recreated "the wordplay-heavy user experience from the English *Hearthstone* version" (Robertson) but also weighed on the visual, intersemiotic dimension of communication. It was through the visual representation of the kanji-dependent wordplay that targeted players accessed the nuances of the original text and the intertextual world-building between the *Hearthstone* and the *Warcraft* universes.

Jingjing Li employed critical discourse analysis (CDA) for her analysis of textual data collected from two Chinese political documentaries. Li demonstrated the cluster of contesting discursive forces behind the seemingly ideologically motivated distortion, alternation and elimination of source information. She suggested that ideo-political considerations still constituted the underlying forms of manipulation that function in a more hidden manner in China. Rather than quibbling with a restricted range of choices, subtitlers resorted to creative solutions that showcased the meta-discursive construction of a dynamic national image of China on a global scale.

Audiences at present are becoming increasingly active in searching for means to secure their "increased control over the production and distribution of media content" (Turner, 2010, p.127). In response, both academia and the industry have made a tremendous effort to study audiences' behaviours and actively engage them in the production, translation, and distribution of audiovisual products. In this volume, Ji-Hae Kang and Kyung-hye Kim focused on the collaborative Korean subtitling of the American film *Spy* (2015), which involved a professional translator, a renowned comedian, and scriptwriters who were working for a Korean late-night live TV comedy show. Kang and Kim examined media reports, messages from distributors on various social media platforms, and critical reviews given by audiences on the patriarchial voice in the Korean subtitles. Kim and Kang unveiled the process of collective discoursing on

collaborative translation from the perspectives of the distributor as well as the audience who resisted the framing from the former by evaluating, analysing and drawing their own conclusion on the quality of translation.

Netnography, a robust method in online research which involves immersive participant-observation of computer-mediated communications (Kozinets, 2010), seems to be "one of the most exciting methodological developments in our field" (Pérez-González, 2019, p.8). In her critical analysis of ideological resistance in the China-shaped online environment, Mingming Yuan drew on a corpus of over a hundred text-based and multimodal online posts. Yuan identified the ways technology enables netizens in China to choose to interact with each other and participate in the co-construction of alternative online discourses. Ultimately, internet users in China exploit translational creativity for their social and ideological resistance against a wide range of issues.

Thandao Wongseree conducted data analysis based on her survey of Thai fans and interviews with Thai fansubbers of Korean TV programmes. She used her native status and fan identity, as well as experience in the AVT industry, to approach the participants and collect the survey and interview data. She identified the actors in a fansubbing network and the interrelations between them so as to unpack the way fansubbers collaborate with each other while interacting with other actors in processes of translation and socialisation. Wongseree emphasised the pervasive roles played by digital technologies in serving as platforms and tools for fansubbers to produce and distribute translations to the fandom community. In comparison, the application of netnography is more fully showcased by Dang Li in her exploration of the self-organising emergence of Chinese amateur translators in their collaborative process of subtitling MOOCs; the group *EduInfinity* developed a technological structure and a social structure to maintain and reproduce itself. Li analysed and interpreted data on social interaction within *EduInfinity* on a range of software applications, including the website of the subtitling

group, their communication tools, as well as their computer-mediated collaboration. Rather than hailing the user-productivity uncritically, Li's case study warned us about the extent to which "the internet and new digital media amplify human actions so profoundly and significantly that they affect all subsystems of society in both transcendent and threatening ways" (D. Li).

Adopting a historical research approach, Haina Jin drew on data collected from official regulations, newspapers, memoirs, and oral history. She reported the history and development of film translation into ethnic minority languages in China, which contributes to the practice and reflections on language diversity and languages policies. In comparison, Arista Szu-Yu Kuo took on a more complex heterogeneous conception of 'the Chinese language' in the multicultural society of Singapore. In addition to the subtitling mediation of a domestic screen production for local audiences, Kuo also provides a snapshot of the use of Singlish and its relationship with the language policy of Singapore and with the nation's promotion of using standard languages. Her case study on subtitling from Singlish into English and Mandarin has enriched the understanding of linguistic divergence in the globally dispersed 'Chinese' population. Although neither refers to Sinophone articulations, both have scrutinised the "places of cultural production outside China and on the margins of China and Chineseness" (Shih, 2007, p.6). Yet, it depends on future studies to determine in what directions and how far the conversation between AVT and Sinophone Studies would progress.

On the whole, the nine contributions provide a view of some of the ways in which AVT can be approached from academic and professional perspectives in the context of East Asia. While urging to reengage underexplored and unrecognised AVT phenomena and media cultures, research should refrain from a simplistic retreat into intra-regional discourses with outright resistance to the prevalent Western scholarship. In line with the aims of the articles in this issue, future research should continue to work on similar phenomena, such as those

reflecting contesting values on feminism (Kang & Kim), alternative economies of amateurs (Li; Wongseree), and minority languages (Jin). Studies will need to critically review rather than deliberately oppose existing concepts so as to add new insights to the present state of theory-building in AVT Studies. The following section aims to propose several research directions, suggesting that future studies should not only highlight the shared issues and challenges which arise within and beyond the regional borders but also seek to underpin the links, disparities and interactions between East Asian and Western contexts.

Future Directions

The findings presented in this special issue have significant implications for future exploration of intra-regional and inter-Asian discourses on translocal visions and experiences of audiovisual products. Future research needs to engage the deep-seated Western inflections on AVT in a reciprocal and self-critical manner, in order to further the critical dialogue on the transnational flows of capital, people and media in the context of Asianising interconnectivity and cultural diversity. In presenting the following propositions, we emphasise the significance of consistent transnational collaboration and dialogue between scholars working in and from East Asian and other global locations rather than evoking a closed-minded, essentialist regionalism.

      As indicated by several authors in this special issue (Hu, Dorothy & O'Brien; Kang & Kim; D. Li; Wongseree), the translational genesis in processes of participatory digital communication brings about the issue of (dis)trust. Although the present disciplinary discourse on non-professional subtitling has found a new fertile ground for theorical inquisition in the danmaku-based participatory viewing, research has yet approached the ethical challenge posed by the novel (sub)titling practice in new media habitats. The danamaku-commenting function allows registered viewers of streaming platforms to upload real-time comments which will

appear on and scroll across the screen from right to left in two or three seconds. Whereas non-translational danmaku titles can appear in clusters and obscure the entire image when the commentary participation reaches its peak, forcing the original into the background, with the translational titles confined at the bottom of the screen (Yang, 2019a).

Pérez-González (2019) observed that ordinary citizen-turned-subtitlers at danmaku-featured streaming platofmrs can subvert the status of the original and transform the diegetic world into "collective discursive spaces of transaltorship involving complex negotiations of mundane or ethical identity" (p. 106). According to Yang (2019b), the process of danmaku-titling accommodates an ongoing co-occurrence of multiple renditions which proceed non-linearly in negotiation, knowledge-sharing and corrections. In this respect, translational genesis at danmaku platforms shares common ground with co-creational labours in fan AVT in terms of their trust-building processes, in which cognitive, socially interrelated individuals negotiate the quality of translation while running the risk of being misinformed (Wongseree, O'Hagan & Sasamoto, 2019). What kinds of negotiation, conflict, and dissent may arise from the emergent translation collaboration on danmaku platforms? Whose voices can be heard in such communicative processes? By what and whose standards will the quality of translation be evaluated? And how should the volunteers of translation be kept accountable to the non-translating participants? While seeking answers to these questions, researchers should remain alert to rapid-evolving ethical challenges brought by new influencers in the digital economy, who are either affiliated with or detached from regional and global platform capitals (Steinberg & Li, 2017), sparking issues such as piracy, censorship, data mining, and freedom of expression (Wang, forthcoming).

Another area which awaits further East-West dialogue is video game localisation. As a significant form of worldwide entertainment, video games have significant influence over the culture, politics, education, healthcare and many other aspects of contemporary societies. Game

localisation has played a significant role in facilitating the economic globalisation of games and turning them into a global phenomenon. Japanese games are particulary prominent in the West with numerous games translated and localised from Japanese into many languages in the past decades. Not surprisingly, a handful of studies have focused on various aspects in the localisation of Japanese games, including translation strategies (Fernández-Costales, 2012), cultural adaptation (Mangiron, 2012, 2016), and the translation of humour (Mangiron, 2010). In addition, O'Hagan and Mangiron (2013) have placed a strong focus on the Japanese context with case studies focusing on Japanese game companies. Regarding localisation in China, the existing discussions cover topics such as the network and key actors in the country (Zhang, 2016), censorship issues (Zhang, 2012), terminology management (Zhang, 2014), culture adaptation (Dong & Mangiron, 2018), and transcreation (Zhang & O'Hagan, 2019). Apart from Japan and China, Jin (2011) mapped out the process of Korean online games for Western game users through content hybridisation and glocalisation.

Several urgent issues in game localisation remain unacknowledged. First, while strategies for linguistic and cultural mediations (as explored by Robertson in this special issue) will continue to draw research attention, relevant findings should also be verified by reception studies which need to draw on the perspectives of gamers. One of the core principles of game localisation is to provide players with a similar gameplay experience in the localised version to those playing the original version, which has been used to justify different translation strategies applied in games. However, this is yet to be tested by studying the player's views and experiences. Secondly, game accessibility is an area that is yet to be addressed in Asia. Media accessibility has become one of the most vibrant areas of AVT in the West. The research and practice of making video games accessible for sensory-impaired players require urgent attention to develop inclusive societies further. Thirdly, the teaching practice in game localisation in Aisa has not been widely reported and discussed. Pedagogical issues such as

curriculum design, assessment methods, and teaching approaches require constant updates and reflection to better prepare and equip future game translators.

Furthermore, we are aware of the conspicuous gap in the present AVT scholarship in dealing with fannish practices such as fanvidding. Taking video remixes in China as an example, fannish video-makers, or fan remixers, repurpose the meaning of distributed commercial audiovisual products by excerpting short portions from the much larger corpus of the original and re-editing them into new audiovisual units with reworked narrative logic. Fan remixers harvest still and moving images and audio fragments from a translated (fansubbed) film and other sources and pair them with self-reflexive interpretations. The visual movement remains unchanged, but most of the original dialogue, among other audio tracks, can largely be altered to foster the transmedia extension of the original in the affective and playful dimension of digital communication. The mode of listening to commentaries while watching a remixed film footage conjures up cinematic memories of "the *benshi*-voiced, theatrical screen" (Yeh, 2018, p.7), a fine art of voice performance which proliferated in Japan and across East Asia during the silent era (Norne, 2007, pp.110-119; Wen, 2018), and those of *yi-yi-feng*, the consecutive interpreting service which was employed as the substitute for dubbing in cinemas across major Chinese cities such as Shanghai back before the first Chinese-dubbed film was produced in 1948 (Qian, 2009; Yu, 2015).

Given the occurring presence of fansubbed video clips in their video remixes, it can be assured that the mediation of Chinese fansubbing is crucial to their translingual interpretations of films which are produced in a variety of languages (e.g. English, French, German, Japanese, Korean, etc.), as well as multilingual films. Many remixers also seek to reach a broader audienceship outside China by sharing their works on global platforms such as YouTube.

Channels such as *Wei Suo Dian Ying* (Condensed Films)[1] and *Yue Ge Shuo Dian Ying* (Brother Yue's Film Commentaries)[2] have 68,100 and 341,000 subscribers respectively by the time of writing. In contrast to their formal register, *Niu Shu Shuo Dian Ying* (Uncle Niu's Movie Commentaries)[3], attracts 497,000 subscribers, perhaps because of his intertextual parodies which traverse original films and Chinese popular-culture discourses. While it is worthwhile comparing their distinctive linguistic and essayistic styles with the remixing practices found in other linguacultural contexts, fan remixers practising in the Chinese language also pose extraneous ethical challenges to contemporary digital economies due to their reuse of fansubbed conetents.

Last but not least, we would like to highlight the tropes of translational practice at cross-generic, intersemiotic, and transmedial interfaces. In addition to the hybrid modes of meaning-making explored by Yuan, we draw attention to the experimental hybrid between local literary and cultural traditions and globalised popular-culture franchises, such as transmedia adaptations of Japanese manga series, *Marvel* Comics, *Harry Potter*, and Tolkien's Middle Earth legendarium in the narrative medium of traditional Chinese oral fiction known as *ping-shu*, and the *kabuki* version of *Star Wars* in Japanese Theatre. Research can also delve into the "massively open translation" (O'Hagan, 2016) in the large-scale user-driven transcreative processing of webtoons; the thousands of oft inconspicuous volunteer Internet users collaborate not only to facilitate access to an ever-expanding collection of comic episodes in more than thirty languages but also participate in the transmedia world-building which traverses webtoon sites, audiovisual adaptations and networks of commercial tie-ins (Jin, 2019).

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[1] See https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCf6CIi1YQycHW8q4AYKFiPA
[2] See https://www.youtube.com/channel/UChgCVolsF6L7DWmOpWKSkMA
[3] See https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCJP8p8a_w5qIQk5PAMNzz8Q

Concluding remarks

The concept and definition of translation will continue to "extend to encompass a wide range of activities and products that do not necessarily involve an identifiable relationship with a discrete source text" (Baker, 2014, p.15). Meanwhile, the Asianisation of media is increasingly driven by new trends and influencers in the proto-industrial network of "communitainment" (Cunningham and Craig 2016), where the careers of content creators are intertwined with and sustained by fans, subscribers and supporters. The precarious labour of cultural intermediaries in the mediated public sphere of the digital economy has a growing impact on the expanding cultural industries of Asia, albeit in uneven and geographically dispersed ways. The emerging alternative Asian cultural economies are imbricated with the broader discourse of on-screen sociability, which continually evolves in an ever-intensifying interactive media ecology. It is in this dynamic digital economy that the discursive and communicative contents, genres and formats in Asian digital production-consumption (prosumption) have an escalating global presence. Against this backdrop, research in and from East Asian contexts will have much more to contribute to a sophisticated understanding of global and local audiovisual ecosystems. We hope that this special issue will serve as a step towards the development of this flourishing discipline in Asia and beyond.

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