

# CONSTRUCCIÓN DEL CONOCIMIENTO EDUCATIVO: ESTUDIOS EMPÍRICOS, EXPERIENCIAS Y ANÁLISIS TEÓRICO

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# **Construcción del conocimiento educativo: estudios empíricos, experiencias y análisis teórico**

María Soledad Villarrubia Zúñiga, Paula González García,  
Leyre Alejaldre Biel y Antonio Martínez-Arboleda

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# Fans as translators: para-institutional training and translational capital in manga and anime translation

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**Abstract:** This chapter examines how fan translation of manga and anime constitutes an informal pedagogical environment that enables the acquisition of key competencies for professional translation. Through empirical observation and professional experience, it analyzes how these communities form an experiential learning ecosystem that includes editorial hierarchies, peer review, multimodal fluency, and ethical decision-making. Far from being a mere hobby, fan translation is presented as a practical training ground for future translators, blurring the lines between amateur and professional work. This paper proposes the concept of translational capital to describe the knowledge and skills acquired in “parainstitutional” environments and explores how these experiences contribute to shaping a translator identity prior to entry into formal contexts. It also highlights the critical dimension of fan translation, addressing issues of access, censorship, and representation. Finally, it proposes ways to integrate these practices into university-level training.

**Keywords:** manga, anime, translation, fansub, scanlation

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The global success of manga and anime has generated unprecedented demand for skilled translators capable of navigating the complexities of audiovisual localization. Yet, while the international media industries continue to expand, most academic institutions have been slow to adapt. Few translation programs offer targeted training for the specific demands of manga and anime, leaving a significant gap between formal education and market realities. In this vacuum, fan translation communities, often dismissed as amateur or unauthorized—have become vital sites of non-formal learning, paraprofessional practice, and translator formation. Beyond skill acquisition, these communities also function as critical spaces where participants reflect on localization norms, challenge censorship or editorial decisions, and debate the ethics and politics of translation itself. Such dynamics have been documented in early fan practices, where grassroots publications and discussions around naming, characterization, and authenticity anticipated many of today’s debates around media localization (Doncel-Moriano Urbano, 2019a, 2019b).

This paper explores how fan translation, particularly in the domains of scanlation and fansubbing, serves as a rich pedagogical environment where participants acquire not only linguistic and technical skills, but also a robust sense of translational identity. Within these informal ecosystems, aspiring translators develop competencies that align closely with those required in professional settings: textual analysis, multimodal literacy, project management, peer collaboration, and intercultural negotiation. These communities operate with distinct editorial hierarchies, role specializations, and workflows that, while

decentralized, mirror the collaborative structures of the translation industry (O'Hagan, 2008, 2009; Lee, 2011; Pérez-González, 2014). As such, they offer more than practice: they offer a path to becoming.

Drawing from both empirical observation and personal experience as a professional translator, this reflection examines fan translation as a form of para-institutional translator training. It introduces the concept of translational capital to describe the repertoire of skills, dispositions, and ethical sensibilities developed in these communities, often in the absence of formal accreditation. By highlighting the trajectories of translators who transitioned from fandom to industry, including professionals in Spain, U.S.A., and United Kingdom, this paper underscores the international relevance of these pathways and their transformative potential.

Crucially, fan translation is not only instrumental but also critical. It is a form of media engagement where ethical questions of censorship, authorship, localization, and access are constantly negotiated. These communities do not merely produce translations—they cultivate awareness, agency, and resistance. They function as affective publics, where knowledge circulates laterally and where translation becomes both a skill and a stance. By revaluing the educational and political dimensions of these spaces, this paper aims to contribute to a broader rethinking of how we conceptualize translator training in an era defined by global flows, digital networks, and participatory cultures.

## **2. FROM AMATEURISM TO PROFESSIONALISATION: TRACING TRANSLATIONAL CAPITAL**

The divide between amateur and professional translation is often presented as a binary: one formal and market-driven, the other informal and passion-fuelled. Yet, in the case of fan translation, this dichotomy fails to capture the increasingly fluid boundary between both spheres. Translators who begin their journey subtitling anime or scanlating manga for free are not merely hobbyists—they are engaging in a process of training, identity formation, and community-validated competence.

To describe this phenomenon, this paper proposes the concept of “translational capital”. While the term translational capital has previously appeared in the context of multilingual academic competence (Rajkumar, 2025), this paper develops the concept within a different framework: as the cumulative repertoire of skills, dispositions, and ethical reflexes formed in para-institutional spaces such as fansubbing and scanlation groups.

Unlike institutional forms of training, which often prioritize theory and prescriptive norms, translational capital is built through immersion in real, high-stakes tasks—translating culturally loaded content for a discerning audience of fellow fans. This form of capital encompasses technical competencies (e.g., subtitling software, typesetting, quality control), linguistic intuition and sensitivity to tone and register, as well as intercultural agility. It also includes values rarely emphasized in formal training programs: community accountability, transparency of revisions, and responsiveness to feedback.

Importantly, this capital is not merely a substitute for formal education but a complementary ecology. In some cases, it precedes academic instruction entirely, offering early exposure to translation as practice. In others, it runs parallel, providing opportunities to apply and test classroom knowledge in dynamic, evolving environments. The translators formed in these communities often demonstrate a readiness to handle the demands of real-world localization work, such as tight deadlines, fluid team dynamics,

genre-specific conventions, and fandom criticism that many traditionally trained graduates lack.

Professional success stories underscore this reality. Figures such as Alessandra Moura, who began translating *Dr. Slump* for fan communities, soon became the official Spanish translator of both the manga and anime *Marmalade Boy* by Wataru Yoshizumi, and has remained active in the field for over three decades. Similarly, Frederick Schodt's early involvement with the fan group *Dadakai* led to their translation of Osamu Tezuka's manga *Phoenix* becoming the first officially licensed English edition—an example of how informal engagement can scaffold professional legitimacy. Schodt later became a seminal figure in manga studies, authoring influential works such as *Manga! Manga! The World of Japanese Comics* and *Dreamland Japan*, which helped introduce manga culture to global academic and popular audiences.

Their transitions from hobbyist to recognized expert are echoed in the paths of Clyde Mandelin, whose fan translation of the video game *Mother 3* helped launch his career in game localization; Andrew Hodgson, who moved from fansubbing the anime *Steins;Gate* to leading official localizations at PQube; and the Geofront team, whose work on the game *The Legend of Heroes* was later adopted by NIS America. Fan-led initiatives such as *Sekai Project* and *Dakkodango* have likewise evolved into established players within the industry.

These instances show that the shift from fan to professional is no longer exceptional but increasingly normalized, particularly in sectors underserved by formal translator training. Rather than framing this transition as strictly linear, research points to a hybrid system in which fansubbing coexists with, and even informs, professional subtitling practices (Massidda, 2015). Fan translations often serve as rough drafts for subtitling companies, offering “ideas, tips and hints,” and at times even being used wholesale without credit—what Massidda (2015, p. 95), citing Vellar, describes as a form of “legal plagiarism” that reflects both the exploitation and undervalued creative power of fan labor. More provocatively, she suggests that fansubbers, if they fully recognized their contribution to the industry, might hold the key to reshaping professional subtitling norms and challenging exploitative industry practices. Rather than imagining fan translation solely as a gateway to professionalism, it may be more accurate and politically urgent to frame it as a critical site of negotiation, resistance, and norm innovation within audiovisual translation itself.

At the individual level, this same space becomes not only a zone of critique but also one of identity formation. Fan translation, then, is not a detour from the professional path; it is, for many, its point of origin. As such, it demands recognition not as a deviant or preparatory stage, but as a valid, identity-defining experience that produces a form of translational capital aligned with contemporary industry expectations. By observing this transition from hobby to profession, we gain insight into how many of today's translators begin their journeys—not only in formal classrooms, but also within the dynamic, self-regulated spaces of online fandom.

### **3. DECENTRALIZED PEDAGOGIES OF PRACTICE**

Fan translation communities function as learning environments, but not in the conventional sense. They operate without syllabi, grades, or instructors. Instead, they foster what this paper calls decentralized pedagogies of practice—learning structures that emerge organically through participation, feedback, and task repetition. Within these ecosystems, aspiring translators don't acquire skills through formal instruction but

through active engagement with real-world content, collaborative workflows, and peer-guided revision processes.

These communities mirror the apprenticeship model, but without a master. Rather than top-down transmission of knowledge, fan translation groups rely on horizontal structures, where learning occurs through contribution, observation, and mentorship embedded in collective labour. New members typically start with simpler roles—proofreading or editing—and gradually move into more complex tasks such as translation, typesetting, or timecoding. Skill development is recursive: it emerges through exposure to real texts, iterative revision, and constant dialogue with others in the group (O’Hagan, 2009; Massidda, 2015).

This model reflects principles common to vocational and sociocultural education, such as “learning by doing” and situated practice. In fan translation, however, this learning is not only procedural—it is deeply affective. Members are emotionally invested in both the source material and the fan community, creating a motivational ecosystem that fosters sustained engagement and long-term skill retention. As shown in studies of cosplay, particularly Lamerichs’ (2018) analysis of affect and identity in fan costuming, fan cultures frequently function as informal classrooms where skill acquisition, community mentorship, and identity formation are intertwined. The intense emotional attachment cosplayers develop toward the characters they embody parallels the affection that fan translators feel toward the works they localize—both practices are grounded in a desire to connect with, reinterpret, and circulate media that hold personal meaning. This dynamic of affect-driven learning applies equally to fansubbing and scanlation.

The internal logic of these communities, as detailed by Massidda (2015), reflects a structured yet flexible approach to collective translation. Teams typically assign clear roles (translator, editor, quality checker, uploader), utilize version control tools, and follow established workflows. However, unlike academic institutions, there is no fixed curriculum. Learning happens through doing, failing, and receiving feedback from peers who are themselves learners and mentors (Massidda, 2015).

This pedagogical model is increasingly recognized within translation studies as a valuable supplement—or even alternative—to formal instruction. Sauro and Zourou (2019) describe the “digital wilds” as user-driven learning environments that foster informal, affective, and participatory engagement, difficult to replicate in institutional settings. They cite examples such as language learning through online gaming communities, fan subtitling groups, and collaborative storytelling platforms, where learners acquire skills through immersion and social interaction. Similarly, Taibi and Ozolins’ (2016) work on community translation highlights how non-institutional, volunteer-based initiatives—such as multilingual translation for local migrant communities or cultural mediation in grassroots NGOs—promote inclusivity, flexibility, and collaborative competence beyond rigid academic frameworks.

Importantly, decentralized pedagogy also fosters resilience. Translators must often navigate incomplete or low-quality source material, resolve cross-cultural ambiguities, and manage divergent audience expectations, which are critical skills in professional contexts. They also develop a sense of ownership over their work, reinforcing internalized quality standards and ethical responsibility.

Ultimately, the pedagogical model of fan translation is not merely informal. It is intensely situated, collaborative, and purpose-driven. It challenges dominant paradigms of translator education by showing that some of the most effective and sustainable forms of

training happen beyond university walls, in platforms like IRC channels, Discord threads, and the ever-evolving spaces of fandom.

#### **4. INSIDE THE FAN TRANSLATION CELL: ROLES, HIERARCHIES, AND WORKFLOWS**

Beneath the informal surface of fan translation communities lies a surprisingly intricate infrastructure. Far from being chaotic collectives, scanlation and fansubbing groups operate with well-defined roles, task hierarchies, and project workflows that simulate professional environments. Understanding these structures is essential to appreciating how fans learn, collaborate, and transition into professional translation roles.

A typical scanlation or fansub group functions like a miniature localization studio. Team members assume specialized roles: translators convert Japanese (or sometimes intermediary English) texts into the target language; editors or proofreaders review for grammar, coherence, and fluency; typesetters match dialogue with speech bubbles and adjust fonts; timecoders synchronize subtitles with audio; and quality checkers oversee final reviews. Additional roles may include project managers, recruitment officers, or “raw providers” who acquire source material. Coordination is typically handled through chat platforms like Discord, IRC, or dedicated forums, where updates, assignments, and revisions are tracked—a workflow structure that, as recent research shows, increasingly parallels those found in professional subtitling environments (Massidda, 2015; Bolaños García-Escribano, Díaz-Cintas y Massidda, 2021).

These workflows are often systematized. Many groups use shared spreadsheets, versioning systems, or even Git repositories to manage files and progress. Clear deadlines, internal style guides, and house rules govern the translation process. Projects are released under group banners—complete with watermarks or credits—signaling a strong internal culture of authorship and responsibility. Despite lacking formal supervision, these fan groups enforce rigorous standards through peer review and collective accountability (Massidda, 2015; Pérez-González, 2012). These fan-built systems are not only just efficient but also influential. Interestingly, professional platforms such as Netflix’s Authoring system now employ similar collaborative architectures, combining cloud-based translation environments with centralized terminology tools like the KNP (Key Names and Phrases) system. These infrastructures mirror long-standing fansubbing practices—distributed roles, iterative revisions, and collective quality control—highlighting how informal communities have anticipated, and perhaps influenced, professional standards (Doncel-Moriano Urbano, 2025).

What makes these structures pedagogically significant is their function as informal learning incubators. New recruits rarely start as translators. Instead, they begin with roles like cleaning, typesetting, or simple proofreading—gradually gaining access to more complex tasks. This layered model not only reinforces skill acquisition through repetition but also fosters a meritocratic ethos where advancement is tied to effort, consistency, and community trust (O’Hagan, 2009; Massidda, 2015).

The editorial practices of these groups also provide crucial training in ethical and stylistic negotiation. Editors often debate terminology choices, cultural notes, honorific retention, and localization strategies with fan translators, mirroring professional dilemmas in the field of media translation, where dubbing directors and ADR script adapters typically take on these responsibilities. As Díaz-Cintas and Muñoz Sánchez (2006) emphasize in their study of fansubbing ethics, many groups develop internal consensus on translation norms, balancing fidelity to the source with accessibility for their audience. These practices cultivate translators who are not just technically competent but ethically reflexive.

While such workflows might initially appear ad hoc, they reflect mature systems of knowledge production, not unlike those found in the industry. Bolaños García-Escribano, Díaz-Cintas, and Massidda (2021) show that professional subtitling environments—such as cloud-based platforms like Ooona and Amara—are increasingly adopting collaborative dynamics long pioneered by fansub groups. This resemblance underscores the value of fan workflows as proto-professional models and calls into question rigid academic assumptions about where legitimate training occurs.

Moreover, the cultural cohesion within fan groups generates affective economies of belonging, mentorship, and shared purpose. These factors enhance retention, motivation, and collaborative resilience—especially in long-running projects that require sustained engagement. As discussed in the context of community translation by Taibi and Ozolins (2016), such dynamics position participants not only as learners but as co-producers of meaning and practice.

By investigating the internal architecture of scanlation and fansubbing groups, we move beyond seeing fans as isolated enthusiasts. Instead, we recognize them as participants in structured ecosystems of production, where workflow, feedback, and role progression coalesce into authentic, scalable forms of translator education.

## **5. FAN ARCHIVES AS SHADOW CORPORA FOR MEDIA LOCALIZATION RESEARCH**

One of the most overlooked contributions of fan translation communities is the vast body of translations they have collectively produced and informally archived. Fansubs and scanlations—though unofficial and often ephemeral—constitute what this paper terms a shadow corpus: an uncurated, decentralized body of translation work assembled outside academic or corporate control. Unlike institutional corpora, which are carefully selected, cleaned, and annotated, shadow corpora emerge organically from grassroots practices. They offer unparalleled insight into the evolving norms, strategies, and ideologies of media localization in the digital age, serving as vernacular archives that reflect how fans interpret, negotiate, and circulate translated media across cultural and linguistic boundaries.

The scope of this material is remarkable: thousands of manga chapters, anime episodes, drama series, and even niche media such as visual novels have been translated by fans across multiple languages and hosted on forums, torrent trackers, wikis, and private archives. These texts reflect not only linguistic choices but also cultural negotiations—how fan translators interpret and mediate culturally specific content, character speech styles, honorifics, taboo terms, or humor. These fan-mediated texts help document the shifts in translation norms over time, including the increasing preference for cultural retention and hybridization strategies in manga localization.

The concept of shadow corpora builds on traditions in corpus-based translation studies, where patterns of variation in translation are analyzed across large datasets. However, fan translations offer something that curated corpora often cannot: a vernacular perspective. These texts are unfiltered by corporate gatekeeping and often represent what the translator genuinely believes to be “good,” “natural,” or “faithful” translation. They serve as linguistic artifacts of community-driven quality standards, target audience expectations, and evolving fan ethics.

There are limitations, of course. Fan archives are unstable and legally precarious. Many are taken down due to copyright enforcement or suffer from link rot and data loss. Unlike academic corpora, they lack metadata, standard formatting, or stable identifiers. Yet, as

Bréan (2014) notes, the sustained activity of fansubbing communities—despite legal and institutional marginality—demonstrates a durable, self-sustaining model of cultural participation. These communities continue to organize, archive, and transmit translation practices across generations, blurring the line between amateur passion and professional craft. In several cases, individual projects have even migrated to industry contexts with minimal alteration, suggesting continuity between informal and formal modes of media localization.

From a research standpoint, these shadow corpora offer valuable opportunities for longitudinal studies. By comparing older and newer fansubs of the same series, or examining recurring lexical choices across different fan groups, scholars can trace how specific terms, cultural references, or stylistic norms evolve. They also provide a testing ground for exploring how non-institutional translation practices respond to globalization, genre conventions, and technological platforms.

In short, while fan translations may lack the formality and stability of institutional corpora, they offer something perhaps more valuable: a window into the living, breathing dynamics of informal translation culture. These corpora deserve to be acknowledged not merely as curiosities, but as serious resources for research, pedagogy, and our broader understanding of how translation norms are negotiated in participatory media environments.

## **6. ETHICS AND AGENCY: FAN TRANSLATION AS CRITICAL ENGAGEMENT**

Fan translation is often understood as a stepping stone toward professionalization or as a collaborative hobby. Yet beyond these functions, it also constitutes a space of critical media engagement. Fan translators are not only linguistic mediators—they are cultural agents who make interpretive and political decisions with every line of dialogue they translate, every localization strategy they debate, and every instance of censorship they resist or reproduce.

At the heart of these decisions is a recurring tension between fidelity and adaptation, a long-standing concern in translation studies. The process of adapting media—especially popular culture—rarely entails a neutral transfer of meaning. Instead, it involves deliberate choices about rewriting, reframing, and recoding content to meet audience expectations, cultural norms, and genre conventions. Fan translators, often working without institutional oversight, are deeply aware of these stakes. They are the ones who must decide whether to preserve honorifics, transliterate food names, retain queer-coded speech patterns, or censor nudity or violence based on platform policies or cultural sensitivity.

These decisions become particularly charged in media franchises with a long history of contested localization practices. One illustrative case is *Sailor Moon*, a globally popular series that has undergone multiple waves of translation and censorship. As recent research has shown (Doncel-Moriano Urbano, 2025), later adaptations such as *Eternal* and *Cosmos* mark a return to creator-controlled localization with rigid terminology management, contrasting sharply with earlier versions that erased or distorted queer character identities to align with heteronormative broadcast norms. Fan translators, by contrast, have frequently resisted such interventions. They restore same-sex relationships, retain gender-fluid language, and use translation notes to foreground the original intent. In doing so, they engage in what I propose to call “restorative translation”: the intentional act of reclaiming narrative and representational integrity for marginalized identities through corrective retranslation. This aligns with Dwyer’s (2021) broader framing of fan

audiovisual translation (AVT) as a form of grassroots cultural intervention—one that resists top-down editorial control and instead fosters decentralized, peer-driven systems of access, critique, and advocacy.

The political dimensions of fan translation also extend to access and linguistic ownership. By translating untranslated or commercially unavailable content, fans democratize access to media that would otherwise remain inaccessible due to region-locking, language barriers, or censorship. In doing so, they assert a form of linguistic agency, shaping how their language communities experience global content. This aligns with existing scholarship on translation as an inherently ethical and participatory act in digitally mediated communities, where translators not only transfer meaning but negotiate visibility, identity, and access.

Moreover, fan translation allows participants to reflect not only on how they translate, but on why they translate. In many fan communities, discussions of ethics, representation, and translator positionality are as prominent as technical debates. Translators reflect on their motives—whether to challenge misrepresentation, support linguistic preservation, or elevate underrepresented narratives. These reflections often manifest in paratexts such as translator notes, manifestos, or introductory disclaimers, which serve as metacommentaries on the act of translation itself.

Ultimately, fan translation is not a value-neutral practice. It is a cultural intervention, situated within broader discourses of identity, power, and globalization. Whether resisting erasure, asserting linguistic norms, or navigating cultural friction, fan translators exercise a distinct form of agency, one that underscores the ethical and critical dimensions of translation in participatory media culture.

## **7. REFRAMING TRANSLATION PEDAGOGY: WHAT CAN ACADEMIA LEARN FROM THE WILD?**

The pedagogical model that emerges from fan translation communities—decentralized, collaborative, purpose-driven—stands in sharp contrast to traditional translation training in academic settings. Most university programs still prioritize literary, legal, or institutional translation tracks, often neglecting the cultural and technical specificity required in audiovisual and entertainment fields. At the same time, fan translators, operating in what Sauro and Zourou (2019) call the “digital wilds”, are engaging in sophisticated translation workflows, acquiring terminology expertise, mastering multimedia tools, and negotiating intercultural meaning—all without institutional guidance or recognition.

This disconnect between academic curricula and informal practice raises a crucial question: What can translator education learn from the wild?

First, universities can acknowledge and validate the translational capital students bring with them from fan communities. Many aspiring translators have already contributed to scanlations, fansubs, or community game localization projects long before entering a classroom. Institutions could utilize experiential learning as a pedagogic tool through portfolios, interviews, or reflective essays, formally recognizing the value of fan translation as an alternative form of training.

Second, translation programs can adopt hybrid pedagogical models that integrate fan-based workflows into the classroom. One approach is the creation of scanlation or fansubbing labs, where students form editorial teams and complete real translation projects under academic supervision. These labs would simulate the workflow of fan

communities (division of roles, peer review, quality control) but introduce layers of metacritical reflection and theoretical grounding.

Third, universities could forge partnerships with fan communities and digital platforms to create collaborative translation projects. These could include subtitling for underrepresented media, annotating fan translations for linguistic analysis, or co-hosting workshops with experienced fan translators. These projects blur the line between amateur and academic practice and expose students to real-world audience expectations, ethical dilemmas, and digital tools.

As Jenkins, Ito, and boyd (2015) argue, participatory culture in the digital age has evolved from individualized, DIY media engagement toward collaborative, socially embedded forms of co-creation. Fan translation exemplifies this ethos: it is not merely an act of linguistic transfer, but a situated, networked practice rooted in shared purpose, ethical reflection, and cultural intervention. It requires not only technical skill but also cultural fluency, collaborative agility, and ethical awareness—traits that should be at the heart of any modern translator training program.

To embrace this shift, institutions must move beyond the classroom-as-sanctuary model and embrace a dynamic ecosystem of learning. This ecosystem recognizes that translation expertise is not always cultivated in the lecture hall but often emerges through peer feedback on Discord, heated debates over terminology on forums, and late-night edits for unreleased anime. Integrating these realities into curricula means preparing translators not just for certification, but for cultural relevance and adaptability in a fast-moving industry.

In sum, the time has come to reframe translator education not as a linear path but as a rhizomatic journey that weaves together informal, institutional, and affective learning spaces. By learning from the wild, academia can better cultivate translators who are not only market-ready, but globally literate, ethically grounded, and critically engaged.

## **8. CONCLUSION: NOT JUST LEARNING, BUT BECOMING**

Fan translation is more than an informal learning practice. It is a transformative process of becoming. For many fans, translating manga, anime, or games in community settings is not simply a way to build skills or gain recognition; it is how they come to see themselves as translators. Through participation in collaborative workflows, ethical debates, and culturally charged decision-making, fan translators develop not only technical proficiency but also a sense of professional identity, even before entering formal institutions or receiving official credentials.

Throughout this paper, we have seen how scanlation and fansubbing communities serve as decentralized pedagogical spaces, offering opportunities for skill acquisition, cultural negotiation, and ethical reflection. These communities operate with rigor, structure, and creativity, often rivaling or anticipating professional standards. They produce what this paper has called translational capital: a hybrid repertoire of competencies and values cultivated outside academic frameworks but increasingly recognized within the industry.

Fan archives, though unofficial and unstable, offer a shadow corpus for researchers and educators to trace shifts in translation norms and audience expectations. These texts reflect vernacular standards and grassroots strategies—insights rarely captured in curated institutional corpora. Moreover, fan translation invites its practitioners to become critical agents of mediation. Their work challenges censorship, resists domestication, and restores marginalized identities, turning translation into an act of resistance, care, and representation.

The implications for translation pedagogy are clear: we must expand our understanding of where and how translators are trained. Rather than viewing the classroom as the sole or superior site of learning, educators should recognize the value of informal, experiential, and community-based practice. By incorporating fan translation into curricula through project-based labs, and partnerships with fan communities, universities can train translators who are not only technically competent but critically engaged and culturally fluent.

Future research can extend this inquiry through comparative analyses across platforms (e.g., Discord vs. IRC), languages, or national fandoms. We need more data on how gender, race, queerness, and digital infrastructure shape translation experiences in different contexts. Likewise, longitudinal studies could explore how early fan engagement influences professional success and ethical stances later in a translator's career.

Ultimately, this paper calls for a paradigm shift: to reframe translation training not as a top-down transmission of rules, but as a networked, affective, and situated practice. In recognizing fan translation as a space of becoming, we affirm its central role in shaping the translators of today and tomorrow, no longer in the margins, but at the forefront of global media flows and cultural dialogue.

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