# Analysis of the development trend of China's dubbing industry and the methodological skills of voice actors

# Suli Liu\*

Communication University of China, Beijing 100024,China \*Corresponding author: cuczsb@cuc.edu.cn

Keywords: dubbing; film and television dubbing; animation dubbing.

**Abstract:** The dubbing industry has been flooding into the public eye more and more in recent years, and the industry has received a certain amount of attention and increased competition and heat. From this paper, we explore and analyze the development prospect and trend of the dubbing industry. It also introduces the different characteristics and styles of different kinds of dubbing from two aspects of film and television dubbing and animation dubbing, and explores the dubbing skills and methods of voice actors.

## 1. Introduction

In recent years, variety shows like " The Sound " and " Voice Monster " have appeared and the heat keeps rising, and dubbing has opened a brand new track among many variety subjects. The professional ability of Chinese voice actors is also like a treasure buried under the sand and gravel. As the sand blows by, the talents of these voice actors are being discovered by more and more people. At the same time, the rise of more related industries has allowed the dubbing industry to flourish with a bright future.

#### 2. The development trend and prospects of the dubbing industry

The rapid development of film and television dramas, movies and other industries, the high demand for sound effects and the high demand for dubbing roles. In many video broadcasting platforms, round after round of new IP TV dramas are emerging. Whether it is a costume drama or a modern drama, various roles have certain dubbing needs due to factors such as role presentation effect requirements and live radio problems. In addition, the dubbing has a certain auxiliary and reinforcing effect on the actor's performance, the demand for dubbing in the film and television drama market is still relatively large.

The development of national comics has increased, and the anime industry is increasingly booming. All along, China still has a certain gap compared with the United States and Japan in terms of technology and hotness of the animation industry, and the proportion of audience corresponding to the animation products is small and far from being able to climb up to the mainstream. However, in recent years, the emergence of animated movies such as " Nezha: Birth of the Demon Child " and " White Snake " seems to have broken the status quo that animated movies are difficult to make a big hit at the box office. "Nezha: Birth of the Demon Child " had won the 2019 annual box office championship with a cumulative box office of 5.035 billion, winning 28 daily box office championships, which is undoubtedly a very positive figure for animated movies. For the network animation, such as "Under One People", "Fights Break Sphere", "Soul Land", "The Fox Spirit Matchmaker", "INCARNATION", etc., are also the current extremely hot anime works, in part under the influence of the original IP, these anime also at the same time cohesion of the original powder and anime powder of the dual support, the heat is considerable. This year just aired the "The Island of Siliang" is also set off a hot debate, more and more sophisticated character modeling and beautiful picture texture caused a lot of praise. National comics are exporting a lot of high quality works, which means more and more anime characters need to be dubbed. There is also the popularity of anime online and handheld games, like '

Published by CSP © 2022 the Authors

"Honor of Kings", "Onmyoji", "Genshin Impact ", and a series of handheld games derived from book originals and anime works, such as "Buliangren" and "Swords of Legends", which also cover a wide range of needs. Dubbing plays a vital role in anime works and has a promising future.

The new media is renewed and the sound economy is booming. Radio dramas, audiobooks, comic dramas and other fields have grown and developed to varying degrees and have now sunk in all directions. For example, the more representative audiobook works " The three body problem ", radio drama works " Kill Zone ", "Silent Reading", etc., all hit a world with high-quality content, excellent production, and powerful dubbing lineup. After the audiodrama " The three body problem " was launched in Himalaya, the first season alone broke through 10 million plays. At present, the audio market is evolving in many aspects such as content selection, post-production, and business operation mode, and will become more systematic and standardized in the future.

Dubbing studios increase to create personalized IPs and grow team strength. With the rising heat of the sound industry, the industry has gradually formed two major dubbing circles in the north and south. Large studios, such as Voicegem, Trionespenguin Studio, 729 Voice Studio, VOICE BEAR studio, and others, have been providing the industry with major dubbing power. At the same time, there are also many start-up studios springing up, creating their own brands and new teams, participating in the competitive flow together and injecting new forces into the industry progress.

Voice actors are commercialized, and the power of fans is gradually huge. In today's new media era, voice actors have gradually broken the traditional definition and stereotypes, and no longer only hide behind the curtain, but gradually come to the front to show themselves in many aspects. In the offline activities, some dubbing companies learn from the operation of Japanese voice actor companies and start to try to idolize voice actors. For many "voice control" fans, at the beginning, people's perception of voice actors is only limited to "I know this voice" and "this voice has recorded such and such role", but now. Now, we are able to know more and more about the person behind the voice. Animation characters, radio drama characters, behind-the-scenes work routine of voice actors, and interactive footage are all available to satisfy the curiosity of fans. It provides a way to further understand the working status of the dubbing industry and the real personality characteristics of the dubbing actors themselves, to break the mystery and to break the circle of communication. In addition, the launch of the voice actors through the self media platform, but also to further attract traffic, and fans to interact.

The increase of variety shows with dubbing themes. After its broadcast, " The Sound " has been gaining a lot of attention. The program has not only allowed many actors to show their dubbing talents, but also given many dubbing actors and dubbing celebrities many opportunities to showcase their talents. The exposure has increased and the chain reaction is better.

## 3. The basic broad categories of dubbing

Nijen once wrote in an article, "In film and television works, excellent dubbing works can often impress the audience, thus adding color to the whole film." It can be said that dubbing is one of the important factors for the good effect of film and television works.

Dubbings are generally artistic and different from people's daily speech. Dubbing can be broadly divided into news dubbing, film and television dubbing, animation dubbing and so on. Different types of dubbing have different styles and emphases. For example, film and television dubbing focuses more on the fullness of the character's emotions, the transmission of emotions and delicate expressions, and restores the actor's own state in the situation. Anime dubbing highlights the vividness and characteristics of the characters, more dramatic effects and animation, more tension, more free play and more creativity. News dubbing, on the other hand, is about persuasiveness and regularity, and requires correctness of words. Therefore, each type of dubbing has different sound requirements, and in order to achieve harmony between sound and picture, it is necessary to choose a sound effect with overall suitability. [1].

#### 4. Exploration of dubbing methods and techniques

# 4.1 Film and television dubbing

It can be said that the film and television dubbing is based on the creation of the director and actors, and I think it belongs to the four degrees of creation. The first degree is the creation of the script, the second degree is the creation of the director, the third degree is the creation of the actors, and the fourth degree is the creation of the voice actors. If it is a translated film, the translation process will be added as the fourth degree of creation, and the dubbing will be the fifth degree of creation. So for the voice actors, this creative process is subject to multiple restrictions and the role is very constrained. In this case, they have to "act" the role again behind the scenes.

In order to complete the work with high quality, the voice actor must first be familiar with the background of the subject matter, the identity of the character and the direction of fate. This will strengthen the understanding of the characters in the work and fully grasp their character. According to the character's experience at different times, the character's personality and mood will change and the character's hierarchy will be completed. In addition, because the identity of each character is different, the emotional attitude of the opposing scene is also different, which means that the voice actor should not only know the character he or she is supporting, but also be familiar with other characters that intersect.

Any character has its own mission and meaning of existence, regardless of the importance of the role. And whether the voice actor can make the character full and three-dimensional, the sense of conviction is of paramount importance. When dubbing, one must be convinced that one is the character himself, that one is experiencing what the character sees, hears and feels, and that one brings in one's own real emotions. This means that the voice actor also has to overcome the limitations of the environment. Unlike an actor, who is on the set of a performance and is able to bring his or her own identity and emotions into the character through scenery and costumes. A voice actor, on the other hand, is in a recording studio and can only try to complete the process of character substitution through his or her imagination. But when we receive obstacles, we can also be appropriate according to the plot of the picture, "real listening, real watching and real feeling" to improve the rendering power. For example, in the variety show " The Sound ", Han Xue performed a clip from the classic movie "Titanic". Before dubbing, she took off her high heels and stood barefoot on the stage, letting her skin come in contact with the cold floor, giving her body a source of experience to further vicariously immerse herself in the film's icy environmental background and and character states. When she opened her mouth, the trembling in her voice also let us clearly feel the cold, and she was fully committed to her role. The hero and heroine float on the pontoon of the sea for the final dialogue. When the male character voiced by Zhang Luyi stops breathing, Han Xue's eyes are also soaked with tears, you can see the hurt and reluctance in her eyes, which are closely linked to the female character's emotions. When the final whistle was blown, Han Xue's body also trembled slightly because of the emotional ups and downs. One of the main reasons why the director and the audience on stage appreciated it was because her emotions were brought in, real and moving.

Real emotional expression is a necessary skill for voice actors, and the grasp of the details of the tone of the lines is the difference between the levels of voice actors. The "little bit" of detail often makes a huge difference in the final result. For new voice actors, the process of refining the details is long and difficult, but it is also necessary to grow up. The detailing and presentation of the lines will give the film a more exciting effect. We can take a passage from a classic movie for analysis. For example, in the movie "The Message" performed by Zhou Xun and Li Bingbing, there is a scene between Gu Xiaomeng and Li Ningyu. Li Ningyu walked up to Gu Xiaomeng and opened her mouth with the phrase "Yesterday was really a scary day". This sentence Li Ninyu's tone is not just an exclamation of yesterday's events, but with a slightly stronger tone to play a move that is a test, waiting to see Gu Xiaomeng's reaction. And Gu Xiaomeng avoided the topic and spoke in a relaxed tone about the topic of altering clothes. Then Li Ninyu strengthened her tone, "You're locked in, you two are locked in." For Gu Xiaomeng to avoid the topic, Li Ninyu's tone was slightly urgent, and the reminder was even stronger. "Wu Zhiguo is not willing to ah, has been backbiting me." Gu Xiaomeng here tail

tone processing slightly upward, with raised eyebrows facial expression, the matter does not care about the innocent emotions will be shown in the details. Li Ningyu this time close to her ear, whispered "I know it is not Captain Wu, do not worry, I will never expose you. You can clearly feel her tone of voice here changed to a soft and slow expression, reflecting the inner hope to get Gu Xiaomeng to drop her guard and trust her. After hearing this, Gu Xiaomeng did not give a clear answer, but used hand gestures to tell the other side that there was a wire under the table, implying that she already trusted Li Ninyu. The two moved to the safety of the balcony, Gu Xiaomeng lit a cigarette and asked in a low voice "When did you know?" Her tone here is also different from the previous distant feeling, but soft down, can sense that her defenses have been lowered. Li Ninyu replied "now", and after a moment's pause, said "I just guessed blindly." The word " blindly " in this sentence is slightly heavier, with a sense of gratitude, Li Ninyu will be the hundreds of guesses and temptations to finally get the affirmation and trust of the emotion to show. This rivalry scene, the lines are not dense, each sentence is also very concise, but the two actors use details to show the complex psychological state of the best. Whether it is the actor himself or the voice actor, the high level of line skills will play a great role in supporting the performance style and the presentation of the film.

However, in reality, some of the real actors have certain limitations in the simultaneous sound of the movie. During the filming process, the actors' own voices may not be clearly included because of the scene environment. At the same time, many actors have limited strength in their line work. They may be able to interpret the emotions of the characters in the script with body language and facial expressions, but may not be able to control them with the right voice and language. Under such conditions, the director has to put more effort on the actors' line skills, and then achieve better results in the form of voice actors dubbing later. But in today's film and television context, the audience's aesthetic for the film is more inclined to the actors' original voice interpretation, which allows them to feel more immersive effect and the original style of the film. In addition, the reason why audiences do not buy the post-dubbing of some TV dramas or movies is partly due to the pattern of the current dubbing style. In this regard, film and television dramas are particularly obvious. Fixed intonation style, tone aesthetics, line processing, so that many characters in different films and TV dramas open their mouths is a familiar recipe. Audiences often have the feeling of "skipping scenes" and "crosstalk". This, coupled with the lack of detail in ambient sound, special effects sound, and other sounds, as well as the flowing rush of work, greatly reduces the credibility and immersion of the characters, and makes it difficult to highlight the personal characteristics of the characters. The sound of film and television is based on the script to help actors reasonably shape their characters, and the presentation of sound should be subtle and silent, portrayed in a natural and delicate way, avoiding abrupt and superficial superficiality and creating discord.

## 4.2 Animation dubbing

If it is said that in film and television works, dubbing is more of an auxiliary and enriching role for characters, then in anime works, dubbing gives characters a soul.

Scholar Yao Guoqiang says, "Unlike live-action movies, cartoon characters in cartoons do not exist in real life and are completely drawn artificially, while the addition of sound injects life and vitality into these virtually existing cartoon characters, making the audience believe in its reality and identify with its existence." [2] Unlike film and television dubbing, cartoon characters are virtual images rather than real-life interpretations, and the graphic presentation of the characters is not as rich and animated as that of real people, and the emotionality and deep meaning of the images are somewhat reduced. Therefore, the dubbing style is a bit more exaggerated than that of live-action films and TV dramas, and there is more room to play and more freedom.

Anime dubbing requires dubbing actors to give full play to their imagination. Generally speaking, anime dubbing is done during the half-finished animation production. During the dubbing process, the voice actors may not be able to see the complete and smooth, rich and diverse picture effects, and sometimes they can only see one picture after another framed. Many of the images and tasks that occur in the context of the state of detail can only be made up by their own brains. In my own case, this process is somewhat difficult. As a voice actor new to the dubbing industry, when I first came into

contact with anime dubbing, I was not able to adapt and get used to it quickly. It is easy to be confined because the reference images are not rich enough, and you can't be flexible, or you can't create flexibly, and you can only stagnate in the patterned dubbing. Unlike film and television dubbing, you can refer to the actors' performances, adjust the mood of the context according to the actors' details and adjust the speed of speech according to the actors' mouth patterns. Anime dubbing requires more of our own imagination, we need to take this fictional character that does not exist and make it three-dimensional. We need to grasp the character's personality characteristics, understand his age, appearance, identity, social class, backstory and other information, on this basis and to shape, boldly add their own personality points for the character.

In addition to their own tone and style matching the positioning of the character, the most important thing is to fully bring in the character, which also requires the voice actor to have a stronger sense of conviction and to imagine themselves as the character himself. This is the kind of deep thinking that every voice actor needs to think about and exercise. It is difficult to impress the audience with a voice that floats on the surface if it stays on speaking out the lines without sounding from the heart. For example, I, my major is broadcasting, in the initial into the dubbing studio, I always habitually every line, every word said round and full. I would even worry about whether my tone was pleasing to the ear, which is not true. Dubbing is different from broadcasting, the lines should be handled in a loose and natural way as if you were speaking in an everyday context. If we are thinking only about our own tone and our own diction during the dubbing process, it means we are not fully immersed in the character.

To achieve unity with the character, to achieve the complete integration of "you are me, I am you", voice actors need to dig deeper into the logical thinking and inner relationship of the plot. We need to understand the core concept and spirit of the anime work, and set an overall positioning and tone for the character. We need to understand the background framework and be familiar with the plot direction of each associated character. What kind of expression and emotion does the character have when he says the line, what is the purpose of saying it, and what state should he be in when he speaks to this object? To understand these, we have to further think about the inner language in the dialogue and figure out the character's inner emotion. We should pinpoint the inner emotions that cannot be expressed or are not fully expressed in the utterance, and release the information through subtle and precise control of tone and intonation. When the inner language is handled brilliantly, the character will become more profound and the emotional color of each stage will be pinpointed. Giving anime characters with human emotional value and thinking is what can resonate with the audience. To stimulate emotions, we need to imagine ourselves into the situation, fully mobilize our creative ability and passion, and enter the inner world of the character. After doing this, we then use dubbing skills to sculpt. Because it is not enough just to have full of emotions, voice actors also need to use their own ability to show their emotions and understanding of the character, to practice "sound with the heart", to improve their voice potential and plasticity, to achieve emotional visualization. We can refer to some of the classic characters in the biggest anime hits, which are also impressive because of their human values and light as mentioned above. For example, the voice actor of Nezha in " Nezha: Birth of the Demon Child " is a unique small smoky voice color, different from the public perception of the main character's style, both in terms of character design and timbre selection. Nezha's character changes throughout the film's plot, from rebellious and dark to the later transformation of goodness and justice, and at each different period, the voice actor renders the corresponding state of voice and tone with precision, fully expressing Nezha's state of mind. [3] It is for this reason that we can be so impressed by the character.

In addition, the expressions in anime can be further subdivided. From the dubbing effect, the image of 2D anime is a flat presentation, which is far from reality, and many times it will be handled with a more contrasting cartoonish image. In order to make it more vivid and interesting, the dubbing will favor an extremely exaggerated and undulating way to increase the animativeness. For example, it can be felt in works such as "The Fox Spirit Matchmaker" and "Under One People". And 3D anime, such as "The Legend of Qin ", " Fights Break Sphere " and other works, the character modeling design is more close to the real person, infinitely close to the real person, in the character's expression, action,

proportion, in the scene modeling of the picture, all tend to the real world. Therefore, the dubbing effect is more natural and everyday compared to 2D anime, and the tone and context will also be more natural and everyday in the way of dealing with film and TV dramas. But no matter what type of dubbing, the key is to make the virtual character have a solid emotional core support under the non-realistic appearance, so that it can really go to the audience's heart. This is also a major task for voice actors.

# 5. Conclusion

Nowadays, the dubbing industry is stepping into the public's attention more and more. From the progress of film and television recording, the introduction of advanced technology, the innovation of recording thinking, the rise of animation IP, the rise of dubbing brands, and the popularity of radio dramas in recent years. All of these prove that the expressive power and development prospects of the dubbing industry are very optimistic. Of course, the presentation and expression of sound art is inseparably linked to the innovation and progress of recording technology. But the progress and upgrading of technology is not only to achieve certain technological indicators, the real purpose is to serve the creation of art, to serve the audience's experience, and to pave the way for more diversified possible development of China's dubbing industry. It is believed that in the future, China's dubbing industry will follow the trend of the times and media, enhance the degree of innovation and development, improve its competitiveness in the international market. Let the "Chinese dubbing" rise.

# References

[1] Zhang Song, Thought on Broadcasting and Hosting Arts, Communication University of China Press, Beijing, 2009 edition.

[2] Yao Guoqiang, "Aesthetic Space Extension and Expansion--Theories of Film Sound Art", published by China Film Society, 2002 edition, p. 162

[3] Wang Shuailong. Feeling the Art of Sound - An Analysis of the Dubbing of the Animation Masterpiece " Nezha: Birth of the Demon Child ". Voice & Screen World 2021 (1) 30-31.