

This is a scene from Shrek 2, where the King, voiced by John Cleese, goes to consult with the ugly stepsister Doris, voiced by US TV Host Larry King. Except, in the UK, that's not Larry King. That's British TV host Jonathon Ross. But why is he here? And why were a bunch of other US movie characters redubbed when they came to the UK?

[Intro]

When we think of dubs we often think of something translated from other languages.

[Kung Pow clip 01:37 "Hey, who's he?" "I don't know"]

But sometimes we get the same language redub. For example taking American voiceovers and replacing them with British ones.

[Paw Patrol comparison]

This is usually to cater it to a different audience. British parents often don't like American voices in their children's pre-school shows **in case they grow up to be rooting tooting cowboys.**

Likewise, sometimes British productions get a full redub to appeal to an American audience.

[Robbie The Reindeer/Dougal/Magic Roundabout examples]

Even some Ghibli films, despite having English dubs, got dubbed again by Disney to add more famous names to the cast. Because they could.

[Ghibli examples]

[https://ghibli.fandom.com/wiki/The\\_Walt\\_Disney\\_Company](https://ghibli.fandom.com/wiki/The_Walt_Disney_Company)

This is sometimes down to localisation. Doing a straight translation of any language without careful rewording might have some strange results.

[Visual example "All Your Base"]

[Clip - Resident Evil "the master of unlocking" line]

[https://residentevil.fandom.com/wiki/Resident\\_Evil\\_\(1996\\_game\)/development#Sound](https://residentevil.fandom.com/wiki/Resident_Evil_(1996_game)/development#Sound)  
<http://web.archive.org/web/20190326044801/http://www.bioflames.com/miscsection5.htm>  
<https://archive.org/stream/GamefanVolume5Issue01January1997#page/n115/mode/2up>

Likewise, a term that's inoffensive in one country could be very offensive in another [Simpsons "Fanny"]. Like THIS word. Well I'm not gonna say it. But Weird Al did [Word Crimes]. In the US it's generally regarded as harmless, simply to mean erratic or clumsy. But in the UK it's a slur for disabled people, predominantly in the 1980s [Blue Peter] and remains one of the most offensive words banned from TV or radio without strict contextualisation. But Americans have no idea it's so offensive here and often get caught out when shipping it abroad. It's appeared in Friends and Rugrats and even Mario Party. Which just led to re-edits, replacements or even redubs. [Johnny Bravo]

Weird Al has always made a point to never swear in any of his songs, so he was naturally just as shocked to learn the offence it caused even to just one country. In fact, when I saw him perform live in the beforetimes (2015), he just stopped the song before it reached that part. So localisation is very important.

[Mario Party 8]

[https://www.ofcom.org.uk/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0023/91625/OfcomQRG-AOC.pdf](https://www.ofcom.org.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0023/91625/OfcomQRG-AOC.pdf)  
[https://www.mariowiki.com/List\\_of\\_Boos\\_in\\_Luigi%27s\\_Mansion:\\_Dark\\_Moon](https://www.mariowiki.com/List_of_Boos_in_Luigi%27s_Mansion:_Dark_Moon)

Another example of trans-atlantic localisation is Trainspotting, because for the US it had parts redubbed to help make, well this - [example] - a bit clearer for everyone. And only the first 20 minutes because, well, if you're not into it by that point, you probably won't like the rest, redubbed or not.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/trainspotting-made-easy-for-americans-1349197.html>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OwDmg74rhCw>

A similar situation could apply to the video computer game Destiny with the video computer game character Ghost. Originally voiced by Peter Dinklage, his performance was, what some call, bad. People said he sounded bored and this is your companion for the game so it's a lot to put up with. They tried to spruce it up with some roboty effects. But in the end they recast him with Nolan North. Bungie say it was because Peter Dinklage's schedule meant he couldn't record new lines and if that's the case then perhaps it's fortuitous win-win.

Maybe it was Destiny-aaaaaaaaah

<https://www.eurogamer.net/articles/2015-08-11-why-destiny-ditched-peter-dinklage>

<https://www.eurogamer.net/articles/2014-07-17-see-how-bungie-updated-destinys-dinklage-dialogue>

<https://www.wired.com/2015/08/destiny-dinklage/>

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/insertcoin/2015/08/04/destiny-is-erasing-peter-dinklages-ghost-replacing-him-with-nolan-north/?sh=40d79999623e>

<https://www.polygon.com/2015/8/11/9129947/why-is-destiny-replacing-peter-dinklage-nolan-north-bungie>

But that's an example of a same-language redub to help solve a problem, like Jim Cummings singing parts of Be Prepared because Jeremy Irons couldn't. In Pirates in an Adventure with Scientists, which also saw a couple of cast members recast for the US, early trailers showed this scene on a Leper Boat. This was understandably met with outcry from Leprosy Groups pointing out this being another example of an age-old stereotyping of Leprosy, so the scene got completely redubbed.

<https://www.theguardian.com/film/2012/jan/25/aardman-pirates-leprosy-gag>

<https://www.theguardian.com/film/filmblog/2012/apr/02/aardman-pirates-armless-leper-joke>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WNjh2dnyLgw>

Jim Cummings / Lion King

[https://www.huffpost.com/entry/lion-king-voice-actors\\_b\\_968140](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/lion-king-voice-actors_b_968140)

But what about Shrek 2. I mean sure Larry King isn't exactly a voice actor -

[Larry King/Sonic clip]

- but this redub isn't fixing anything broken.

In 1999 British TV host Andi Peters made a documentary called "Andi Meets Toy Story".

Footage is hard to find, but during this he was offered to voice a character in Toy Story 2.

[Andi Peters clip]

This isn't exclusive to the UK version of the film but it started a trend.

[Cars/Robots/Norm Of The North/Planes/Cars 2]

Like Andi Peters, in many cases, these aren't UK actors stepping into the roles, they're TV personalities, like Jamie Oliver.

[Ratatouille]

They're not there to improve any performance as demonstrated by Kate Thornton.

[Shrek 2 "Joan"]

And for a while at least, it wasn't purely for promotional purposes as, unlike Andi Peters, it wasn't part of some TV show at the time. They were reached out to be UK counterparts for a bit of fun. And maybe some promo too.

<https://www.irishexaminer.com/lifestyle/arid-30157946.html>

[Shark Tale]

Instead of a localised script it was a localised appeal. Arguably started by films like Aladdin and, of course, Shrek, animated movies more and more used it's star appeal as a marketing tool. So with this emphasis on national specificity, audiences would spot familiar voices, often in a movie already full of familiar voices, but for Brits these were OUR familiar voices. We can point at the screen and go "ooh look, it's them from the thing!"

[Trolls]

For a while this was kept to British TV personalities, but eventually it became...

**YouTubers...**

[Big Hero Six]

While these were perfectly fine performances for relatively tiny roles, a cynical view would see this as drifting away from the "UK Equivalent for fun" angle and more like using influencer appeal for promotion purposes.

[visuals from clips of Dan & Phil, DanTDM and Trolls YouTubers voice acting]

Not saying these are bad, it's just free publicity.

Personally I was conflicted on these UK Alternative Versions because it felt like a corruption of the supposed "true" version, but for many British people, this was their true version and hearing the original American voices is wrong and weird to them!

I call this a trend because, while Shrek started it and Disney/Pixar embraced it, ever since Ralph Breaks The Internet in 2018-

[Ralph 2 clip]

-there hasn't been a movie that has done the localised cameo role thing since. I've been so conditioned to this that when I heard UK TV show host Graham Norton in Pixar's Soul,

[oh look it's soul voice clip]

I was almost convinced this was another UK alternate version

[Soul clip]

But no. He's there reminding us he can be an actor too.

[Father Ted clip]