Understanding the Social Dynamics of Online Amateur Subtitling Networks in China:
A Bourdieusian Perspective

Sijing Lu

University of Bristol, UK

Sijing.lu@bristol.ac.uk

ABSTRACT

The advent of new technologies has had a profound impact on translation practices. One of the practices that has arisen at the forefront of translation among others is the emergence and ongoing development of amateur subtitling, known as fansubbing. This thesis aims to analyse the relationship between social factors and various organisational activities in constructing and sustaining online fansubbing networks in China. It provides a new perspective through focusing on the interplay among different power struggles in Chinese fansubbing networks and revisits Pierre Bourdieu's sociology within a new digital context. Specifically, the three key notions in Bourdieusian theory, namely field, capital and habitus, have been used to facilitate a dynamic conceptualisation of the Chinese fansubbing network. Then, Levina and Arriage's (2014) theory of online field has been discussed to analyse the social relations between online and offline fields, and human and non-human factors in fansubbing. In order to understand and examine the relationship between social factors and organisational activities in Chinese fansubbing networks, three research questions of this thesis are:

1. Considering the Bourdieusian notion of field, to what extent can we define Chinese fansubbing as a socially situated activity?
2. What capital do fansubbers bring to the community and how do the conversions of capital between offline and online field(s) allow them to accumulate stakes and move up in the online community?

3. How is the online network of fansubbing constructed and sustained as a result of habitus, particularly primary habitus, communal habitus and translatorial habitus?

Methodologically, I have used a reflexive netnography to participate in three Chinese fansubbing communities for two years. During my participation, I wrote down reflexive fieldnotes, sent online questionnaires to 59 fansubbers and conducted in-depth interviews with 22 translators. The fieldnotes, questionnaires and interview transcripts then drew on a two-step coding analysis which includes an inductive and a deductive approach. The first-step coding mainly used the deductive approach by suggesting general categories that were determined by the theoretical framework and the objectives of this thesis. The second-step coding focused on the inductive approach, aiming to find specific sub-patterns which suit their wider categories as illustrated in the first-level coding.

Findings show that compared with the other two major agents in the field of Chinese subtitling (four state-run studios and private subtitling companies) who imply their heteronomous pole with the field of power, fansubbing has added new positions to the subtitling field in China and enjoyed a degree of autonomy. The online network of Chinese fansubbing is constructed and sustained as a result of four major types of communal habitus: a non-monetary motivation in joining the community, a strong sense of loyalty to the community, a negotiation between the collectivism and individualism, and an interaction between visibility and invisibility. These communal habitus are all internalised dispositions formed in fansubbing networks and in turn serve to stabilise and sustain their community as a whole.

KEYWORDS: Chinese subtitling, fansubbing, online collaborative translation, sociology of translation

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探究中国网络字幕的社会动态：
布迪厄社会学视角

Sijing Lu

University of Bristol, UK

Sijing.lu@bristol.ac.uk

摘要

新技术的出现对翻译实践产生了深远的影响。其中，在翻译前沿的实践之一是近些年网络字幕爱好者的出现和持续发展，即所谓的网络粉丝字幕。本论文旨在分析中国网络字幕社区的构建以及各种字幕组织活动和社会因素之间的关系。本文为中国网络字幕社区的发展和不同组织之间的相互作用提供了一个新的视角，并在新的数字背景下重新审视和运用布迪厄的社会学理论。具体来说，布迪厄理论中的三个关键概念，即场域、资本和惯习，被用来对中国网络字幕社区进行概念化。然后，本文讨论了里维纳和阿里亚加（2014）的在线场域理论，以分析在线和离线场域之间的社会关系，以及网络社区中的人和物的因素。为了探究中国网络字幕社区的构建及各种字幕组织活动和社会因素之间的关系，本文的三个研究问题是：

(1) 根据布迪厄的场域概念，我们可以在多大程度上将中国网络字幕社区定义为一种社会性的活动？

(2) 网络字幕社区中有哪些不同的资本存在，这些资本是如何在线下和线上之间转换的，以及这些资本是如何使字幕创作者在网络社区中立足和不断提升地位的？

(3) 网络字幕社区是如何通过惯习而构建和维持的，特指第一惯习、社区惯习和翻译惯习？

在方法论上，我使用了一种反思性的网络民族志，参与了三个中国网络字幕社区。在参与过程中，我写下了反思性的笔记，向59名字幕创作者发送了在线问卷，并对22名译者进行

了深度访谈。笔记、问卷调查和访谈记录采用了两步编码分析法，包括归纳法和演绎法。第一步编码主要采用演绎法，它主要基于理论框架和本论文的目标。第二步编码侧重于归纳法，旨在找到适合其更广泛类别的具体子模式。

研究结果显示，与中国字幕领域的其他两个主要主体（四大国营译制厂和私营字幕公司）相比，网络字幕社区在翻译中拥有一定程度的自主性和自主权。其次，中国网络字幕社区是由四种主要的社区惯习构建和维持的：加入社区的"非金钱"动机，对社区的强烈忠诚感，集体主义和个人主义之间的协商，以及对社区可见性和隐蔽性之间的互动。

关键词：在线合作翻译，网络字幕社区，中文字幕，社会翻译学