Translation Quality Assessment in Fansubbed English-Chinese Swearwords: A Corpus-Based Study of the Big Bang Theory

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Abstract : Fansubbing, the combination of fan and subtitling, is one of the main branches of Audiovisual Translation (AVT) having kindled more and more interest of researchers into the AVT field in recent decades. In particular, the quality of so-called non-professional translation seems questionable due to the non-transparent qualification of subtitlers in a huge community network. This paper attempts to figure out how YYeTs aka 'ZiMuZu', the largest fansubbing group in China, translates swearwords from English to Chinese for its fans of the prevalent American sitcom The Big Bang Theory, taking cultural, social and political elements into account in the context of China. By building a bilingual corpus containing both the source and target texts, this paper found that most of the original swearwords were translated in a toned-down manner, probably due to Chinese audiences' cultural and social network features as well as the strict censorship under the Chinese government. Additionally, House (2015)'s newly revised model of Translation Quality Assessment (TQA) was applied and examined. Results revealed that most of the subtitled swearwords achieved their pragmatic functions and exerted a communicative effect for audiences. In conclusion, this paper enriches the empirical research concerning House's new TQA model, gives a full picture of the subtitling of swearwords in AVT field and provides a practical guide for the practitioners in their career of subtitling.

Keywords : corpus-based approach, fansubbing, pragmatic functions, swearwords, translation quality assessment
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