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计算机辅助翻译技术在网络字幕组中的应用——以美剧《绝望主妇》字幕汉译过程为例

Computer-aided Translation Technology to Fansubbing: A
Case Study of the Process of English-Chinese Translation of
Desperate Housewives

杜雪辉

指导教师姓名：纪玉华 教授
专业名称：英语语言文学
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Abstract

With the rapid development of internet technology and cultural globalization, an increasing number of overseas films and TV programs have been introduced to China and enjoyed great popularity among Chinese netizens. However, the majority of netizens are unable to understand overseas TV programs in the original language. And it often takes years for official channels to present a popular foreign show with Chinese subtitles and more often than not, even Chinese dubbing which quite ruined the original exotic flavors. Under such circumstances, a voluntary online organization called fansub group came into being. Over the past decade, online fansub groups in China have flourished and enjoyed a great reputation among netizens for subtitling foreign shows purely out of interest and love without any material returns. The fansubbing phenomenon has attracted increasingly attention from the academic community over the past decade. However, previous researches on fansub groups have focused on describing the operation mechanism of fansub groups, criticizing the quality of fansubs and discussing the legality of fansub groups. Unlike researches in the past, this study approaches online fansub groups from the perspective of modern technology and translation and analyzes in a detailed way the great significance of CAT technology for online fansub groups.

The author first gives a detailed account of how CAT technology can be applied to fansubbing based on the case study of the fansubbing process of *Desperate Housewives* Season 8 Episode 20 aided by Jeemaa.com. Then the author conducts a comparative study by subtitling *Desperate Housewives* Season 8 Episode 21 in the traditional process of fansubbing to serve as a contrast to fansubbing aided with modern CAT technology so as to present more objectively the great significance of CAT technology to online fansub groups.

The results of this study show that CAT technology is of great use throughout the subtitling process and can significantly increase the work

efficiency of fansubbers while enhancing their translation quality at the same time. Traditionally, the subtitle translation of a 40-minute long episode of American TV series needs 8 to 10 fansubbers to work four hours. However, aided with modern CAT technology, the amount of time it takes to translate and revise the original subtitles of a 40-minute long episode of American TV series can be reduced to 1 hour or so, which means that fansub groups will be able to launch the subtitled resources three hours earlier, a great breakthrough for any fansub group. And given that CAT technology will automatically detect any simple mistakes and inconsistencies in the translations, the quality of fansubs can also be improved by a large extent, so does the watching experience of audiences.

Key words: Online Fansub Group; Computer-aided Translation; Subtitle Translation; English-Chinese Translation; *Desperate Housewives*

摘 要

随着互联网技术的发展和全球化加速，越来越多海外热播的影视剧传入国内。然而大部分国民的外语能力尚不足以直接观看原版海外影视剧，而官方译制人力和财力问题重重。在这种情况下，网络字幕组应运而生。近十年来，各大网络字幕组蓬勃发展，吸引了越来越多研究者的关注，但大多数研究均集中在描述网络字幕组现象、点评翻译质量以及探讨其合法性上。本研究则全面分析计算机辅助翻译技术对于网络字幕组这一特殊群体的重大意义，尝试将计算机辅助翻译技术引入网络字幕组的英译汉流程中，助力网络字幕组在更短的时间内完成质量更高的字幕翻译工作。

笔者通过创建真实的字幕翻译项目，首先借助计算机辅助翻译平台译马网，和团队成员一起合作翻译了《绝望主妇》第 8 季第 20 集的英文字幕，实际演示计算机辅助翻译技术在字幕翻译过程的译前、译中和译后三个阶段中的应用；随后，笔者又和团队成员一起采用传统字幕翻译流程合作翻译了《绝望主妇》第 8 季第 21 集英文字幕，与使用现代计算机辅助翻译技术的字幕翻译流程进行对比，用具体数据论证计算机辅助翻译技术对于网络字幕组的意义。本文研究结果表明：计算机辅助翻译技术可以显著提升网络字幕组的翻大作译工作效率，传统手工翻译的速度仅为计算机辅助翻译速度的四分之一。另外，计算机辅助翻译技术在译后的质量检查上更高效更可靠，能够快速检测出译文中所有非语义性的错误，从而提升翻译质量。

关键词：网络字幕组 计算机辅助翻译 字幕翻译 英译汉 《绝望主妇》

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Chapter One Introduction

In this paper, the author intends to carry out a research on the application of computer-aided translation technology to fansub translation with an aim to optimize the working process of online fansub groups, boost their efficiency and improve their translation quality.

1.1 Background of this Study

Under the big backdrop of cultural globalization, overseas films and TV shows as well as other similar programs produced by foreign countries have flooded into the domestic market in the past decades and permeated into the daily lives of people of all walks, college students and white-collar workers in particular. Over the past few years, thanks to the revolutionary advance in the field of the internet and digital technology, foreign films and TV shows with their exotic features have further gained tremendous popularity among Chinese audiences. For people with better education, watching foreign entertainment programs, especially Western films and TV shows, have become their first choice when they want to relax themselves. This is mainly due to the fact that educated people are more willing to accept the foreign culture and can easily get accustomed to the foreign settings and characters in these programs. As a result, the unprecedented popularity of foreign films and TV shows across the nation has triggered a huge demand of foreign works with translated subtitles as not everyone can understand foreign languages. “Translation carried out in the audiovisual field currently accounts for an increasingly large proportion of translation activity” (Díaz-Cintas, 2006: 193). In the past, Chinese audiences had no other choice but to watch films and TV programs officially imported by China Central Television Channel and other TV and film authorities in order to have a glimpse of foreign cultures. However, it took an extremely time-consuming process, sometimes as long

as a decade, for these official channels to present a popular foreign show with Chinese subtitles and more often than not, even Chinese dubbing which quite ruined the original exotic flavors. It was due to the high inefficiency and inappropriate adaptations made by these licensed channels, further prompted by the rapid advances of internet technology, coupled with the domestic boom of foreign shows that led to the advent of an online voluntary organization dedicated to translating foreign programs without any payment, namely the online fansub group. A fansub, which is short for fan-subtitled, refers to the version of overseas films and TV series that are subtitled by amateur translators like fans into their native languages, as opposed to official subtitles translated by professional translators. Fansubbing, which is done by fansubbers, refers to the practice of making fansubs. And fansubbers usually form groups called online fansub groups to collaborate on the process of fansubbing. Generally, the fansub groups are made up of fans equipped with foreign language skills and necessary computer skills to help subtitle foreign shows into their native languages and then spread it through the internet solely out of interest and passion for foreign programs without any commercial purposes. Thanks to the great devotion of these online fansub groups, people who have access to internet can download their favorite foreign shows with Chinese subtitles from the internet almost several hours after they are first broadcasted abroad instead of waiting for years to watch the officially imported versions with professional translations and native language dubbing. With the popularity of American TV series such as *The Desperate Housewives*, *The Big Bang Theory*, *The Diaries of Vampires* and the like, the internet-based fansub communities have soon flourished and become the dominating force of subtitling foreign shows in China and enjoyed a very good reputation among foreign shows and films lovers. They have also made an important contribution to the rapid development of cultural globalization. Now an increasing number of young people in China celebrate Western festivals like the Christmas, Thanksgiving, Valentines' Day and Halloween with passion that has never been seen in the

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