

Understanding the Social Dynamics of Amateur Subtitling: A Bourdieusian Perspective on Fansubbing in China

Sijing Lu

University of Liverpool, UNITED KINGDOM
sijinglu@liverpool.ac.uk

ABSTRACT

This article uncovers the external and internal power relations of fansubbing in China and discusses the role of fansubbers as social agents that constitute hierarchies in the online environment. Adopting the concepts of *field* and *capital* from Pierre Bourdieu's sociology, the study investigates to what extent fansubbers are reproducing the accepted governmental ideologies through their supposedly autonomous activities, followed by an account of how fansubbers are maintaining or challenging the status quo through the pursuit of, and competition within, various forms of capital. The findings show that even though fansubbers have freedom through conducting self-selection and self-distribution, their compliance to dominant governmental policies, and their market-oriented material selection indicate fansubbing's heteronomous principle of hierarchisation that exists within the field of power. Additionally, fansubbing communities are centred on distinct capital accumulation and conversion among agents, and it is such diverse position-takings that enable a dynamic mechanism of fansubbing communities.

Keywords: Capital; fansubbing; field; Pierre Bourdieu; power relations