

Publication

Contrastive analysis of English fan and professional subtitles of Korean TV Drama

Book Item (Buchkapitel, Lexikonartikel, jur. Kommentierung, Beiträge in Sammelbänden)

ID 4699596

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Year 2023

Title Contrastive analysis of English fan and professional subtitles of Korean TV Drama

Editor(s) Locher, Miriam A.; Dayter, Daria; Messerli, Thomas C.

Book title Pragmatics and Translation

Publisher John Benjamins

Place of publication Amsterdam

Pages 221-248

ISSN/ISBN 978-90-272-4941-8

Keywords pragmatics, translation, interpreting fan translation, domestication, foreignization, cultural ambassadors, corpus linguistics, viki.com

We compare fan subtitles and subtitles produced by professionals in order to detect what concepts each of them foreground, and how they differ in register and in translation strategy. Differences are systematically explored with the help of corpus-assisted discourse analysis to contrast two sets of English subtitles from 26 Korean dramas and 451 episodes - fan subtitles from Viki and professional subtitles from Netflix. Results reveal that professional translators show more target text orientation, whereas fan translators position themselves and their readers as expert members of their community, aiming for access to the source text. We find no clear difference in register, but professional subtitles are more concise, whereas Viki subtitles are longer and employ, e.g., hedges and disfluency markers.

URL <https://doi.org/10.1075/pbns.337.10mes>

edoc-URL <https://edoc.unibas.ch/95867/>

Full Text on edoc Available;

Digital Object Identifier DOI 10.1075/pbns.337.10mes