Reframing Queer Pop in digital media: Translation of Chinese TV drama *World of Honor* through media paratexts

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Abstract

Boys'Love (BL) or *danmei*, refers to a genre of female-oriented romance between beautiful boys or young men. In recent years, the television adaptation of *danmei* cyber-literature has become a new trend in China. *World of Honor*, a *danmei*-adapted Chinese television drama, was not only one of the most-watched TV series in China in 2021 but also gained international popularity. Conceptualising translation as a rewriting practice (Gentzler 2017), based on a theoretical framework drawn from paratext studies (Gray 2010; Rockenberger 2014) and media studies (Jenkins 1992, 2006), this study investigates how audience-created paratexts reframe queer pop in the translation of *World of Honor,* that is, how the audience-created paratextual translation practices of the TV drama influence the understanding of Chinese *danmei* products and the representation of *danmei* subculture in cyberspace. The research results show that comments and fanvids, as audience-created paratexts on YouTube, serve to render the implicit male-male romance between the two main characters in the TV drama more explicit in the streaming media. The comments help to interpret the homoerotic subtexts in the translation of subtitles and bridge cultural gaps for international audiences, while fanvids direct the storyline towards a *danmei* theme with the interplay of music and televisual footage. These media paratexts provide a communal space for audiences to interpret, communicate and participate, and enhance our understanding of *danmei* subculture within online communications. It is hoped that this study could enrich our understanding of translation practices in the digital media and provide implications for interdisciplinary research beween translation studies and new media studies.

Biography

Dr. Xi CHEN is an Assistant Professor at the University International College, the Macau University of Science and Technology. Her research interests are in multimodal translation studies, picturebook translation, translation and cross-cultural studies. Her recent publications include "Representing cultures through language and image: a multimodal approach to translations of the Chinese classic Mulan" (2018) in *Perspectives*, "When the classic speaks for children: retranslation of Bob Dylan's songs in bilingual picture books" (2020) in *Babel*, and "Exploring the translation-development interactions from an emergent semiotic perspective: a case study of the Greater Bay Area, China" (2022) in *Linguistica Antverpiensia, New Series: Themes in Translation Studies*.