

立教大学学術推進特別重点資金(立教SFR)

個人研究

2017年度研究成果報告書

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研究課題	Ethics in piracy?:Regional motivations for the production and consumption of anime fansubs	
研究期間	2017年度	
研究経費 (1円単位)	(支出金額) 466,927円 / (採択金額) 494,000円	
<p>研究の概要(200~300字で記入、図・グラフは使用しないこと)</p> <p>The purpose of this research project was to begin gathering empirical evidence for the motivations fans have for the consumption and production of non-professional subtitles (NPT), also known as fansubs, for Japanese anime. It aimed to achieve this purpose by conducting interviews with fans of anime and former fansubbers at a major anime convention in the U.S.A.</p> <p>While the research was a preliminary step in a larger research project, with SFR funds I was able to collect approximately four hours of interviews. These were conducted on-site at the Anime USA convention in Washington, D.C. (December 7-12) with the help of the PR staff. Interviews involved convention attendees and planners; they were semi-structured in nature.</p>		

キーワード(研究内容をよく表しているものを3項目以内で記入。)

{ fan studies } { anime } { non-professional translations }

**研究成果の概要** (図・グラフ等は使用しないこと。)

This project represents the first stages in a multi-year project aimed at gathering empirical evidence for the motivations fans of Japanese anime have for the consumption and production of non-professional translations (NPT), also known more casually as fansubs. International in scope, this phase of the project sought to conduct interviews with fans at Anime USA, one of the major fan conventions, to ascertain to what extent NPTs and corporate translations differ in meeting the needs of fans. It pursued this broad theme by focusing on three overlapping objectives:

- 1) Ascertaining fan preferences when consuming anime
- 2) Exploring fan motivations for engaging with NPTs
- 3) Identifying any regional variations within these habits

While the initial results seem to support some of the academic literature on the subject with respect to the functioning of anime fan networks (see Patton and Ito), they also indicate that there is, as hypothesized, significant variation among the fandom with respect to the idea of fansubbing ethics, the function of fansubs in the global creative media ecology, and the status of these fansubs vis-à-vis corporate translation as Japanese cultural artifacts.

In sum, this project was able to gather approximately four hours of interviews across five informants. These interviews included three people who used to be involved with fansubs groups to various degrees (translators, cappers, distributors) and two people who watched fansubs. From an initial examination of these interviews, two general themes relevant to the project's overlapping objectives emerged:

- 1) NPTs as culturally authentic;
- 2) NPTs as promoting access;

With respect to the motivations fans have for consuming NPTs (objective 1 above), two informants explicitly indicated that they preferred fansubs to corporate translations as they found NPTs to be more "authentic" and "true" to the original Japanese. Likewise, as noted in the literature, these fans noted that their preferences were shaped by a desire to learn the Japanese language and Japanese culture; the fansubs they watched aimed in this task through translator's notes and the like, while they reported that they felt that corporate translations sanitized anime through significant localization. This theme was touched upon by those who produced fansubs, indicating that the choice to literally translate dialogue vs localization was a significant conversation within the community and different groups adopted different practices depending on their fan base.

The second emergent theme centered on engagement as it relates to access (objective 2 above). In this study, "engagement with fansubs" was defined broadly in order to include both fan consumption and production practices. Under this broad umbrella, all informants indicated that their engagement with fansubs was motivated, in part, by access. For those who created fansubs, the concept of access

**研究成果の概要** (つづき)

was framed as a way to introduce people outside of Japan to anime. At the same time, there was a tension between these members over what types of anime should be the focus of fansubbing: all anime, or only those that have not been licensed in American markets. While this finding supports other research into the “ethics” of anime fandom, this literature tends to paint the conversation in binary terms with little recognition of the nuanced rationales fans advance in staking their positions.

Although all of the fans interviewed were American (note: future stages of the project will explore this internationally), these interviews revealed that were keenly aware of licensing arrangements and their subsequent international distribution channels. In particular, they recognized that the consumption of fansubs was a global phenomenon and that an anime licensed in America did not mean that those located elsewhere (i.e Europe) would have access.

In a similar vein, the informants who consumed fansubs indicated that the lack of access to shows motivated their initial consumption of fansubs. Streaming services have slowly closed that gap, but the fans interviewed suggested, as noted above, that the perceived quality of these translations were lower than that they perceive with fansubs.

Based on these initial results, there is evidence that fan preferences vary within the communities. Rather than painting anime fandom as a static, singular entity as much of the literature does, we should examine how the cultures of these communities inform preferences. To that end, future analyses will examine the ways demographic factors (e.g. age and gender) influence fan relationships to anime and NPTs.

**研究発表** (研究によって得られた研究経過・成果を発表した①～④について、該当するものを記入してください。該当するものが多い場合は主要なものを抜粋してください。)

- ①雑誌論文 (著者名、論文標題、雑誌名、巻号、発行年、ページ)
- ②図書 (著者名、出版社、書名、発行年、総ページ数)
- ③シンポジウム・公開講演会等の開催 (会名、開催日、開催場所)
- ④その他 (学会発表、研究報告書の印刷等)

This is a multi-year project whose research was conducted during December of 2017; as a result, there has been insufficient time to properly analyze the data in depth, and publication in academic conferences or presentation at such societies would be premature at this stage. However, the purpose of this research was to provide data for an academic book whose anticipated publication date is 2019/2020.