



FANSUBBING, PIRACY & LOCALIZATION OF JAPANESE MEDIA

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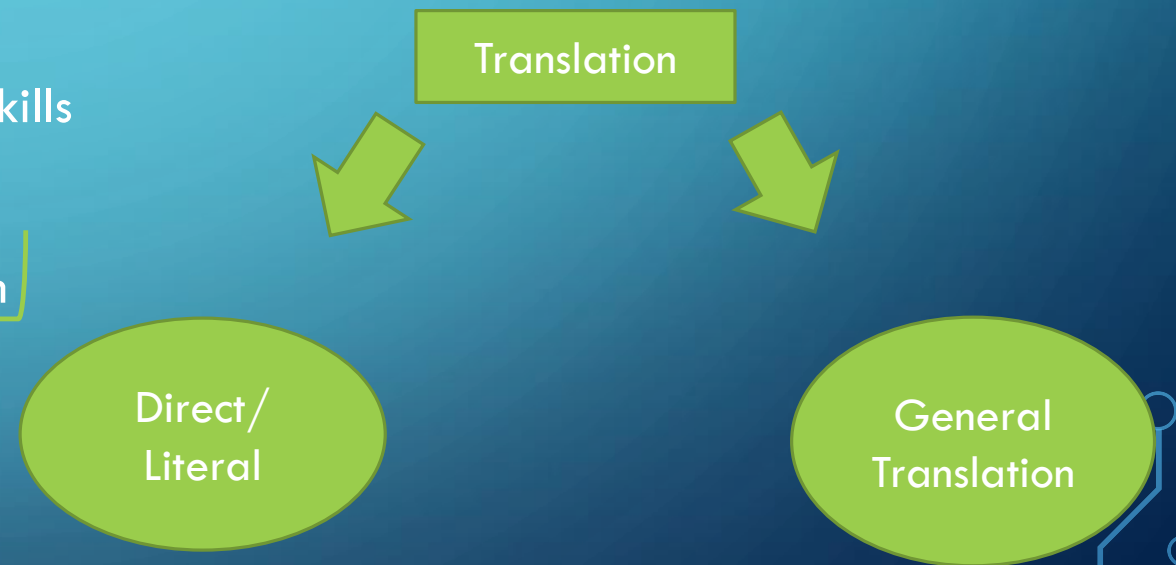
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INTRODUCTION

- Despite the rapid interest and demand for products of Japan, exporting is still in the early stages of infancy, and products are not being brought into America as fast as the fans want them to be. Because of this lack of exporting and localization of Japanese media, anime especially, has led to the recent rapid development of fansubbing groups and bootleggers in order to for the foreign fans to get what they want.

What is Fansubbing

- Fansubbing/Fansubbing Groups: Fan that form a group to obtain raw footage of foreign show then they proceed to translate it and subtitles before uploading and distributing on the internet for free.
- Fansubbing helped pushed Japan in to exporting more dramas and anime
- The process:
 - Need to have the technology and the language skills
 - Technology = easy once obtained and learned
 - Language skill = harder and more difficult obtain



WHAT ARE THE POSITIVE ASPECTS OF FANSUBBING?

- It gives foreigners a chance to watch and enjoy Japanese shows that may never be exported.
- Anime and dramas are given exposure to other countries and widens the audience because people from another country are fully able to watch and understand what is happen, verses if they were only able to see the raw, original show without subtitles.
- Lastly, producers can see what would be successful outside of Japan if they were start to export at particular show. They would already know the fan-base so they could also sell other miscellaneous products in foreign markets.

WHAT ARE THE NEGATIVE ASPECTS OF FANSUBBING?

- The largest and most obvious negative issues would be the issue of copyrights. Since technically, fansubbers have to illegally download the show and then they are illegally distributing it without the company and creator's consent.
 - Although since fansubbers don't ask for money in return for what they distribute, copyright companies tend to ignore them since they are not making a profit from doing this.
 - The unspoken rule is that "fansubbers must respect the licensing announcements of the cable networks and stop distributing a title if a cable network decides to broadcast it (Lukacs, 2010)."
- The possibility of grammatical/spelling errors in subtitles or mistranslating in general.

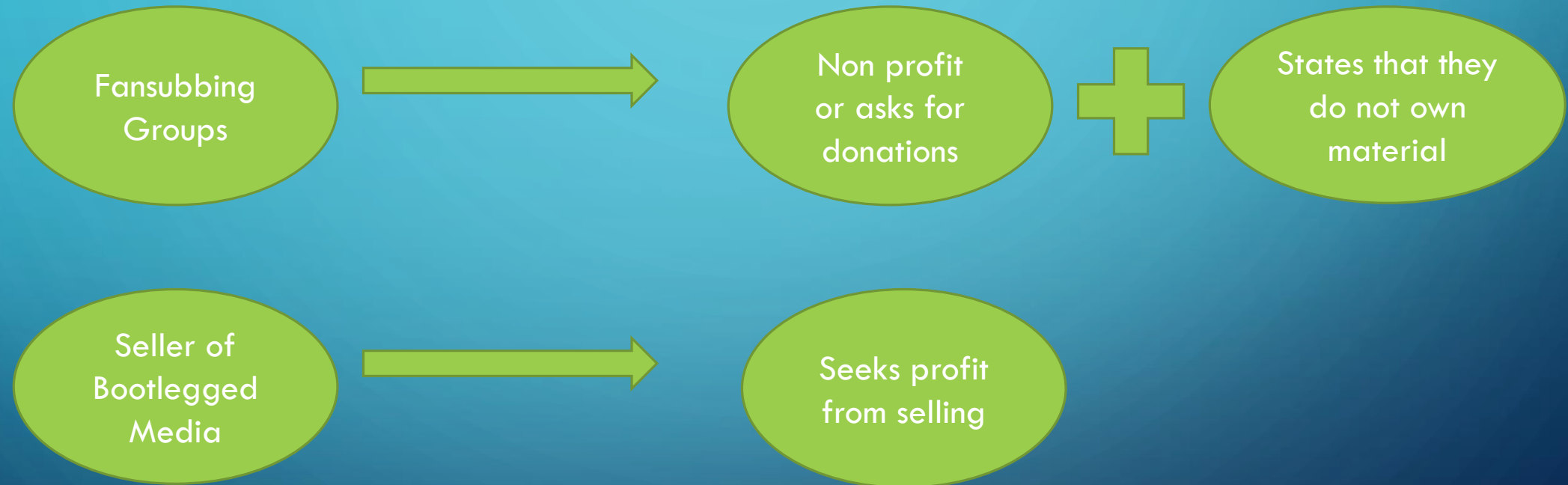


What is Bootlegging/Piracy

- Bootlegging and piracy is the illegal streaming, downloading, copying, filming, and distributing of media. In more severe cases doing these actions with the intent to make a profit from it.
- Before Japan began exporting to other Asian countries in the 1990's, bootlegging and piracy was big deal.
 - Eastern and Southern Asian countries wanted these popular Japanese dramas because there was an interest in the trendy fashions, lifestyle and other Japanese pop culture.
 - Putting bootlegged media onto video CDs and selling them began
 - Bootlegged tapes usually were very poor in quality and could have other technical issues
 - Problem: people may become unknown victims of buying illegal copies.
 - Ex) EBay, reports of people receiving factor sealed illegal copies of media.

HOW IS IT DIFFERENT FROM FANSUBBING?

- Main difference:



What is Localization of media?

- Localization of media is the adoption and broadcasting of media by another country.
 - Localization of Anime began in 1970s by America
 - Editing and dubbing of the original show can occur so that it fits into the American culture and network time slots.

• Positives

- Things that are viewed as inappropriate, such as violence, blood, or smoking, etc., in America can and most likely will be edited out.

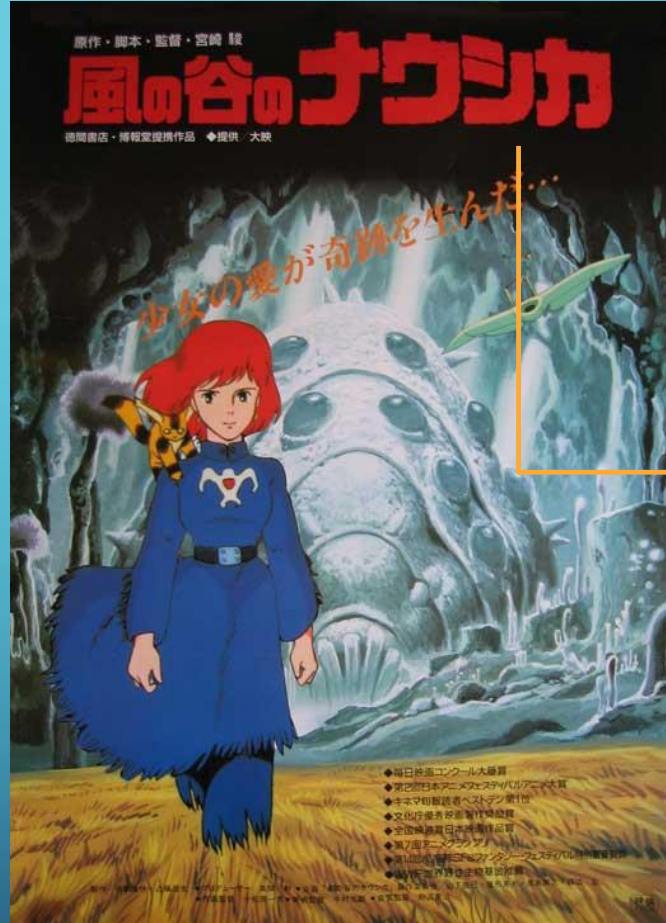
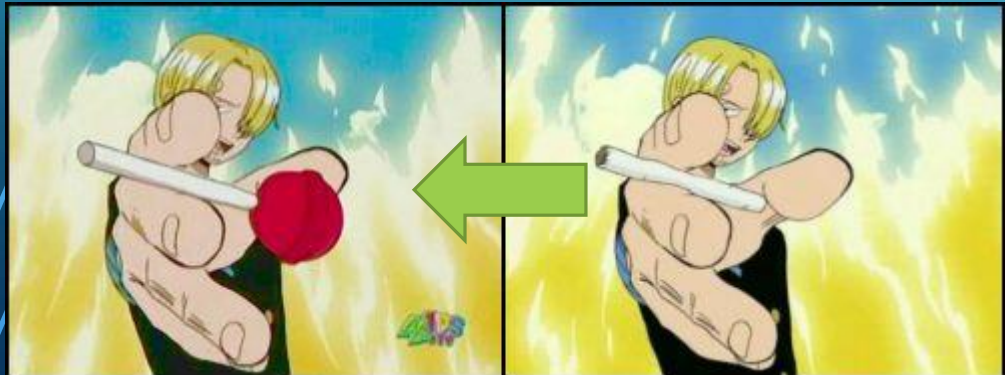
• Negative

- The chance to learn about another culture is lost because of pointless editing
- If original Japanese names/words are used, there is a chance of it being mispronounced





Comparison of the Anime *Pokémon*. Ash Ketchum is carrying a submarine sandwich in the U.S. dub edited by 4Kids Entertainment (left) vs. Satoshi carrying an Onigiri, a food item unfamiliar to most Americans, in the Japanese version (right).



WHY COULD SUBTITLING THE ORIGINAL BE BETTER THAN LOCALIZING MEDIA?

- Could prevent pointless editing out or changing of scenes in order to Americanize it
 - Ex) food items, clothing, etc.
- It would allow for viewers to watch something closer to the original Japanese version
 - It would also allow viewers to view bits Japanese culture and customs and as well as learn a bit of the language.
 - Could encourage people to learn more about Japanese culture and language

Conclusion

- To conclude, Fansubbing, while it does have its legal issues, may actually be a more successful path to follow for importing Japanese media.
 - It would allow viewer to experience another culture, without it being edited to by the foreign country's expectation and cultural understanding
 - Be able to show what the creator(s) had fully intended their audiences to see
 - Ex) Studio Ghibli movies after the fail of *Warriors of the Wind*
 - It would allow for fast exporting to other countries
 - Would not have to create a new cast of voice actors
 - Fansubbing groups can have a new episode out within hours of its original airing
 - Since watching fansubs is very common and also the importing of anime is slow and limited, fans of anime general like the original Japanese versions better.
 - And are general disappointed in the choice of voice actors for localized versions.
 - Also allow for more J-dramas to be imported
- In the end, subtitling could open new and more doors for anime and j-dramas to be imported, and allow for a wider selection of shows to be exported.

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