

Samurai, Ninja and Little Monsters:
The influence of the audience on anime localization

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1. Introduction

Audiovisual translation (AVT) is still relatively new amongst academically acknowledged fields of research. While hardly any research on the subject had been done in the 1980s, the 1990s saw a sudden surge in the number of articles discussing AVT, multiplying it six fold as opposed to a decade earlier (Zojer 2011: 394). Many of these articles seem to focus on either cultural references and the translation thereof, or subtitling (also known as subbing) and the many hurdles translators have to overcome while doing so. The subject of dubbing (or lip-synchronization), the alternative to subbing, has been studied far less, possibly because the difficulties encountered by translators during subtitling are generally deemed to be more noteworthy. This is odd, considering that dubbing is one of the major forms of screen translation practiced all over the world. According to Chaume-Varela, it can be defined as a “type of audiovisual translation [...] consisting of a replacement of the original track of a film containing the source language dialogs, for another track on which translated dialogs in the target language are recorded” (Chaume-Varela 2006: 6). It seems to have originated in the United States, after which it came to Europe in 1936 (Zojer 2011: 397). Since then, dubbing has mostly flourished in parts of Europe, Asia and South America, but not in the US. This is likely because much of the televised content in the US is also US-made, and therefore translation (whether through subbing or dubbing) does not come into play much. The few foreign films that do make it to the US are usually subtitled. One of the major exceptions to this rule, however, is anime.

The Oxford Dictionary defines anime as ‘a style of Japanese film and television animation, typically aimed at adults as well as children’ (“anime”, Oxford Dictionaries, n.d.). Japanese culture had already established itself in the United States to some extent in the 1970s and 1980s, as the US experienced a few Japan-originated hypes at the time (such as the hypes around martial arts and giant robots - for further reading, see Thompson 2013). This trend of the US familiarizing itself more and more with aspects of Japanese culture continued with the anime boom of the 1990s and 2000s. Series such as *Dragon Ball*, *Neon Genesis Evangelion* and *Pokémon* (first appearing on US television in 1995, 2000 and 1997, respectively), as well as movies like *Akira* and the Academy Award-winning *Spirited Away* (with English adaptations first appearing in 1989 and 2002, respectively) became immensely popular outside of Japan and greatly increased the global fanbase of the anime phenomenon. Due to its increased popularity in the West, the demand for more syndicated English versions grew as well. In the late 1990s and early 2000s, dubbed anime began airing on select US television

networks, such as The WB and Cartoon Network's Adult Swim ("Anime," Wikipedia, n.d.), two networks which greatly boosted the general audience's interest in Japanese animation.

The difference between Japanese anime and Western animation is that Western animation is mostly geared towards children (of course there are exceptions, such as *The Simpsons*, *South Park* and *Family Guy*), while anime is seen as an age-less genre; it can be aimed towards young children, teenage boys or girls, and even adults, depending on the series. A show such as *Doraemon*, which is about a robotic cat that travels back in time to help a young boy using a magical pouch, is mostly geared towards kids, but a series such as *Hellsing*, which deals with vampires and vampire hunters and involves a lot of blood and violence, is obviously aimed more at adolescents and adults. I will discuss the difference in the audiences of anime and Western animation in more detail in chapter 2.

However, among Western localization companies, there seems to have been a general consensus that anime was just another form of Saturday morning children's cartoons, and the fact that anime can be enjoyed by people of all ages was largely lost in translation; many localized anime were adapted quite extensively to make them kid-friendly. Fortunately, anime audiences are able to take matters into their own hands these days, because of the rise of the internet. A new type of fan has emerged, known as the *otaku*. In her article 'Anime, DVDs, and the Authentic Text', Cubbison provides an explanation of the term:

Strictly speaking, in Japanese, *otaku* is a pejorative term for an obsessive geek. The object of the obsession could be comics, cars, animation, sports, television shows, music—any set of objects that inspire an obsessive level of expertise. The obsession is likely to be accompanied by poor social skills and hoarding tendencies (Newitz; Kinsella 310). In short, this variety of geek is known as the fanboy or fangirl, but non-Japanese fanboys and fangirls have adopted the term to identify themselves proudly as obsessive fans of anime.

(Cubbison 2005: 45)

These *otaku* have specific wants and needs when it comes to their anime, which differ from the needs of more casual viewers. Casual viewers tend to care very little, if any, about whether an anime is subbed or dubbed. However, the hardcore fans, or *otaku*, want their viewing experience to be as authentic as possible, which means that they want the uncensored, uncut Japanese version with good subtitles that leave out as little information as possible. Back when the VCR was still widely used, distributors could only provide home

videos with either the subbed or the dubbed version, much to the dismay of many *otaku* (and their wallets). But once DVDs entered the picture, distributors could provide both the subbed and the dubbed version together, and even include some extras such as commentary audio tracks (Cubbison 2005: 51). Distributors gradually began to realize that the *otaku* represented a whole new market, with different needs, and thus started putting more effort into providing both better quality and quantity on their DVDs, catering to the *otaku*'s wishes. And as the market kept growing over time, more and more anime were licensed in the United States.

As mentioned above, different anime are aimed at different audiences with differing ages and preferences. This raises the following question: do differences in the intended target audience of certain anime affect the way in which those anime have been localized? In this thesis, I will analyze three different anime TV series aimed at different audiences, and determine the way in which they have been localized in their respective translations, focusing mostly on the degree of domestication used in the process. With this in-depth analysis, I hope to show that factors like the average age of the audience and their assumed background knowledge influence the translation choices made when dubbing an anime TV series.

This thesis is set up as follows. Chapter 2 will provide a theoretical framework. I will explain the different topics and terms used in this thesis and provide background information. Chapter 3 will introduce the material used in this thesis, the three different anime and their background. I will also discuss my methodology; I will explain how my research is set up and outline the order in which I will deal with the different subtopics. Chapter 4, then, contains the results of my research. For each anime series, the chapter will discuss the different subtopics previously outlined in chapter 3 by looking at examples from all three series, respectively. Finally, chapter 5 will discuss the different series in relation to one another through a cross-analysis of the different subtopics, all the while looking at how audience influences the localization process, and will also provide my conclusion.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1 Localization, Foreignization and Domestication

It is important to keep in mind the differences between the terms ‘localization’, ‘foreignization’ and ‘domestication’ as they are used in this thesis. Localization here is the process of adapting and translating a series to make it suitable for audiences of a different region or country to watch. According to LISA, the Localisation Industry Standards Association, which existed from 1990 to 2011, ‘localization involves taking a product and making it linguistically and culturally appropriate to the target locale (country/region and language) where it will be used and sold’ (Munday 2012: 281). So in the case of anime being localized for an American audience, the process of localization ensures that the English-speaking audience receives the same (or at least a similar) viewing experience as the original Japanese audience, but in their own language and with cultural references made more transparent.

The localization of an anime series or film in terms of the extent to which it preserves the original source culture can range from very foreignizing to very domesticating. The terms ‘foreignization’ and ‘domestication’ in this sense were originally coined by Venuti, though different terms have also been used to describe these phenomena, including ‘exoticization’ or ‘exoticism’ and ‘assimilation’ or ‘naturalization’ (Ramière 2006: 153-154). Unfortunately, very little has been written on the foreignization and domestication of anime specifically. For lack of anything more fitting, I will be using the following definitions given by Carlson and Corliss in their article on video game localization, as they also apply in the context of anime localization:

Foreignizing translations attempt to retain the cultural and historical provenance of the source text while domesticating translations work toward crafting a translated text that appears as if it is in fact an original target language text. A domesticating translation might replace details that are deemed too culturally specific to the source language with parallel materials more familiar to the target language reader—substituting slot machines for pachinko and dollars for yen as a text moves from Japanese to English, for example. A foreignizing translation would, of course, retain the pachinko and yen.

(Carlson & Corliss 2011: 72-73)

What this comes down to is that domestication means that the translation process is mostly target culture-oriented and as such, items that are specific to the source culture (that of Japan, in this case) are translated into the target language instead of retained, or changed to be more familiar to the target culture (that of the West). For example, when it comes to food items, a rice ball may be changed to a hamburger, and in terms of street signs, Japanese kanji signs may be replaced by English using the Latin alphabet. Foreignization, on the other hand, means that the localization process is more source culture-oriented, and Japanese elements are retained, as audiences are often well aware that the series was originally Japanese and will therefore not be confused by the sudden appearance of Japanese kanji on a sign, for example.

2.2 Anime

As mentioned before, the term ‘anime’ is a Japanese shortened form of the term ‘animation’ and refers to Japanese animated productions, either hand-drawn or computer-made. To someone unfamiliar with the concept, anime may be no more than ‘Japanese cartoons’, which is why the genre is often seen as ‘childish’. But there is much more to anime than that. According to Napier, a recognized expert on anime in both the United States and Japan, many definitions of anime used in the West attempt to explain anime by comparing it to American animation, specifically Disney (Napier 2005: 6). There is some logic to this, as the two types of animation are not completely unrelated. For example, Osamu Tezuka, the creator of *Astro Boy* and the man who is widely regarded as the ‘godfather of anime’, was greatly influenced by Walt Disney’s work, and he set the standard for the majority of Japanese animation today. But Napier explains that anime is more than that:

Time [...] attempts to answer the question by suggesting that in comparison to Disney “anime is all kinds of different [sic]... Anime is kids’ cartoons: *Pokemon* yes, and *Sailor Moon*... But it’s also post-doomsday fantasies (*Akira*), schizo-psycho thrill machines (*Perfect Blue*), sex and samurai sagas – the works.” If anything, *Time*’s focus on the more extreme visions of anime actually minimizes the variety of the form, since anime also includes everything from animations of children’s classics such as *Heidi* to romantic comedies such as *No Need for Tenchi*. Nor do the insistent comparisons with Disney permit the appreciation of the fact that anime does not deal only with what American viewers would regard as cartoon situations. Essentially, anime works include everything that Western audiences are accustomed to seeing in live-action films – romance, comedy,

tragedy, adventure, even psychological probing of a kind seldom attempted in recent mass-culture Western film or television.

(Napier 2005: 6-7)

It should come as no surprise, therefore, that anime is so popular in Japan. Anime series and films are viewed by both children and adults alike, unlike in the West, where cartoons are mostly watched by a younger audience. Anime series are often just as popular and mainstream in Japan as live-action shows like *Breaking Bad* or *Game of Thrones* are in the West. It is for this reason that many anime fans get upset when critics refer to anime as merely ‘cartoons’.

2.3 Translation of Cultural References

In the translation of anime, or in any type of translation for that matter, a translator will often come across culture-specific elements, i.e. cultural references, that are hard or sometimes even impossible to translate. These include customs, terms and dialects specific to the target culture, to name a few. Since cultural references like these are discussed many times throughout this thesis, it is important for the reader to have some background knowledge on the matter. However, according to Zojer, the study of cultural references in audiovisual translation remains almost virgin territory, with most of the research consisting of MA theses or equivalents thereof, and very little work of a more advanced level having been done (Zojer 2011: 396). It is therefore hard to give background information on the stances held on the topic within the field of translation studies; there simply is very little material to draw from. Zojer herself does have a few comments on the matter. She states that there is a rapidly growing trend of not translating cultural references, but leaving them intact. She claims this trend is present not just in, for example, the Netherlands and Flanders, countries that are well-known for source culture-oriented translation practices, but even in countries that are known to strongly prefer target culture-oriented translations instead, such as Spain and Italy. The first reason she identifies for this trend is the internet and rapid digital globalization, which opens the world up to other cultures and lifestyles, digitally abolishing national and geographic borders. Secondly, this dissolving of cultural borders causes a global ‘melting-pot culture’ to emerge, in which cultural identity is being redefined due to the merging of local and global, own and foreign. This particular form of globalization, which does not promote cultural unification but instead accepts local identities and idiosyncrasies, allows localizers to leave cultural references untouched, not because they are too difficult to

translate, but because they have become (or are on their way to becoming) their own generally recognized cultural items, known even in the target culture, which therefore need not be translated (Zojer 2011: 406-408)¹. This is why many anime localizers nowadays tend to leave a lot of cultural references untranslated; the majority of anime audiences are sufficiently familiar with Japan and Japanese culture so as not to be bothered by untranslated cultural references.

There are many different techniques translators can employ to tackle translating cultural references, and over the years, various scholars in the field of translation studies have attempted to develop models outlining these various techniques (for instance, Pedersen 2005: 3-9 and Díaz Cintas & Remael 2007: 200-207). Such models usually list the techniques that are at a translator's disposal on a scale from most foreignizing to most domesticating (Pedersen calls this a 'Venutian scale' in reference to Venuti (Pedersen 2005: 3)). The main problem with translation models like this is that scholars tend to disagree on how many distinct categories to differentiate between. While the models all conform to the organizing principle outlined above and largely overlap in terms of overarching ideas and notions about translation, they all distinguish between slightly different categories and thus their terminology can never be used interchangeably. This causes an overabundance of terminology in the field, makes discussion of the topic at hand more difficult and clearly does the whole field of translation studies a disservice.

It is therefore hard to figure out which translation model would best serve to analyze dubbing. Many include categories that do not apply to audiovisual translation. Therefore, I have opted for the translation model as described by Vinay and Darbelnet in 1995 (and again in 2004). It has a very broad scope since it does not focus on one type of translation in particular, and can thus be applied to many different media, including audiovisual material.

Vinay and Darbelnet identify two translation strategies: direct translation and oblique ('free') translation. Together they comprise seven translation procedures (the first three are forms of direct translation while the latter four are forms of oblique translation):

- 1) Borrowing: the target language (TL) directly copies the term from the source language (SL)
- 2) Calque: the SL expression or structure is directly transferred in a literal translation

¹ Even though Zojer mostly looks at how cultural references are dealt with in subtitling, the above also applies to dubbing, which is the main focus of this thesis.

- 3) Literal translation: a word-for-word translation
- 4) Transposition: changing one part of speech for another (e.g. noun for verb) without changing the sense
- 5) Modulation: changing the semantics and point of view of the SL
- 6) Équivalence: describing the same situation by different stylistic or structural means
- 7) Adaptation: changing the cultural reference when a situation in the source culture does not exist in the target culture

Besides these seven procedures, Vinay and Darbelnet identify several other translation techniques, including:

- Amplification: the TL uses more words due to syntactic expansion
- Economy: the opposite of amplification
- False friend: a structurally similar term in both the SL and the TL, deceiving the user into thinking the meaning is the same
- Loss, gain and compensation: it is often impossible to preserve the entire source text (ST) in the translation, resulting in a loss of certain elements. A target text (TT) might make up for this by gaining text at another point, thereby compensating for the loss.
- Explicitation: making implicit information in the ST explicit in the TT, either through grammar, semantics, pragmatics or discourse
- Generalization: using a more general term in the TT

(Munday 2012: 86-90)

The odd thing about this model is that Vinay and Darbelnet list seven main translation techniques, then list another several techniques that they apparently think do not fit with the rest, without giving any explanation as to why. Furthermore, some of the terms in the second list, such as ‘false friend’ and ‘loss’ cannot be considered techniques, as they are simply phenomena that a translator may come across. Nevertheless, all models have their flaws, and I still agree with the general taxonomy as stated above as it seems most appropriate for this thesis. However, I will be adding one translation strategy not mentioned by Vinay and Darbelnet: omission, where a term is left out entirely, because it is deemed untranslatable or because it hinders the translator’s goal of domestication. Even though Vinay and Darbelnet talk about loss, I feel there is a difference between loss and omission, as loss is the (often unintended) sacrifice of one element in the text, often benefiting another element, while omission is the intentional leaving out of a term.

2.4 Japanese Honorifics

In this thesis I will also be talking about Japanese honorifics, or *keigo*. It is therefore important for the reader to have a basic understanding of this phenomenon. The Japanese language uses three distinct levels of politeness, depending on the context of the conversation and the person one is speaking to. The first is the casual form, used with friends, subordinates, or children, for instance. The speaker considers themselves to be on the same social level as, or even a higher level than, the listener. Speakers of Japanese do need to be cautious in using this form, as it can easily be interpreted as rude or impolite. Secondly, there is the polite form (sometimes referred to as the *masu*-form, after the verb ending used in this form). It is the most commonly used form in Japanese and it is also the form people learn first when studying Japanese. It can be used with almost anyone, including strangers or people you do not know all that well. If used with friends, people might comment on how you are being too polite or formal, but that is less of a social faux-pas than assuming too much familiarity by using the casual form too easily. Furthermore, the polite form can be used when referring to a person of your family or in-group in conversation with a third party. Lastly, there is the humble form. It is considered very formal and is mainly used when addressing someone who is obviously of higher status, such as a superior at work. It is also often found in writing, such as in newspapers or on posters. The three forms are distinct in both grammatical and stylistic features. The casual form, for instance, tends to use short sentences, often using the infinitive verb form and leaving out any information that is not absolutely necessary for understanding the sentence. It also often dispenses with the polite suffixes commonly attached to people's names in Japanese, like *-san* and *-kun*. The humble form, on the other hand, does quite the opposite. Simply said, it often uses more lengthy expressions, uses more respectful synonyms for certain verbs and nouns, and uses honorific suffixes and prefixes. Altogether this causes the sentence to become a lot more roundabout, but much more respectful to Japanese ears (Oxford Japanese Grammar & Verbs 2003: 213-223). There is much more to be said about Japanese politeness levels, but I will not go into the topic any more than I have just done, since the finer points of the system are not relevant to this thesis. For more information on Japanese grammar, I advise the reader to turn to Oxford Japanese Grammar and Verbs.

3. Methodology

3.1 Introduction of Materials

3.1.1 Rurouni Kenshin

Rurouni Kenshin (sometimes known as *Samurai X*) is an anime series based on a manga (Japanese comic) created by Nobuhiro Watsuki. It started out as a manga series in Shueisha's *Weekly Shōnen Jump*, running from April 25, 1994, to November 4, 1999 ("Rurouni Kenshin," n.d.). Following its popularity as a manga, the show was adapted into an anime series which ran on Japanese television from January 10, 1996, to September 8, 1998. Furthermore, it has been adapted into two original video animations (OVAs), several video games, a few light novels, an animated film with an original story, three live-action movies, a plethora of other merchandise, and most recently, a two-part animated reboot of the Kyoto Arc, the most infamous part of the story. In short, the series is hugely popular, as evidenced by the large variety of adaptations it has spawned.

The manga series was licensed in the United States by Viz Media, while the anime series was licensed by Media Blasters, though other dub versions have been made by, for example, Sony. The Media Blasters version is the one that is most commonly viewed in the West and is the most well-known. I will therefore be analyzing that version in this thesis.

The name Rurouni Kenshin roughly translates to 'Kenshin the Wandering Swordsman'; 'Rurouni' is a neologism created by Watsuki, a variation of the term *rōnin*, which refers to a wandering samurai without a master. *Rurouni Kenshin* is a work of historical fiction that takes place in the early Meiji era (1868-1912) in Japanese history. Before 1868, Japan had enjoyed a time of peace under the rule of the Tokugawa Shogunate (the last feudal Japanese military government). This period is known as the Edo period, after the capital at the time (Edo is the former name of Tokyo). The shogunate held all of the actual political power in the country while the Emperor was relegated to the position of a ceremonial figure with little influence ("The Meiji Restoration in a Nutshell", 2013). During the Edo period, Japan had become isolated from the rest of the world, save for a few nations who had limited trading rights (such as the Dutch). This policy of isolation changed when other Western nations, such as the British in 1808 and the Americans (under Commodore Matthew Perry) in 1853, came to Japan and made the Japanese realize how far behind they were to the Western nations in terms of technology. Meanwhile, the Satcho Alliance, an alliance of the military leaders of the Satsuma and Chōshū regions in Japan, sought to overthrow the Tokugawa Shogunate and put the Emperor back in his rightful place as ruler of the country. The war that followed is known as the Bakumatsu War or the Boshin War. It featured the Imperialists on one side, seeking to

overthrow the ruling class, and the supporters of the shogunate on the other, seeking to defend it, with both sides being supplied with firearms and ships by Western nations (the British and the French, respectively). The Imperialists eventually took the victory in 1868. At that point, political power was restored to the emperor, Meiji, who had ascended the throne the year before at the age of 15 (Varley 2000: 237). This was the start of the Meiji era. He moved his residence from Edo to Kyoto and set up a Japanese parliament there. Under his rule, Japan experienced industrialization at an unprecedented rate; this is why the era is also known as the Meiji Revolution. Several important political changes were made. The most controversial one was the outright banning of the samurai class and a prohibition against carrying swords, because the samurai had always been avid supporters of the Emperor. Many of the samurai managed to get new jobs as merchants or administrators, but many were also simply left to fend for themselves (“The Meiji Restoration in a Nutshell”, 2013).

It is in this early Meiji era that the story of *Rurouni Kenshin* takes place. Kenshin Himura is a wandering swordsman and a former notorious assassin known as the Hitokiri Battōsai (‘Battōsai the Manslayer’ in the Media Blasters dub). After the Bakumatsu War is over, he decides to repent for the murders he committed during the war by becoming a wandering swordsman and helping people wherever he goes. In order for him to be able to protect people without killing, he uses a Sakabatō (‘Reverse-Blade Sword’ in the dub), which, as the dub name implies, is a sword with the sharp edge of the blade forged on the opposite side (so that when handled the way one would wield a regular *katana* (Japanese sword), it cannot draw blood). While wandering through Tokyo, he meets a young woman named Kaoru Kamiya. After helping her fight a murderer (who incidentally claims to be the legendary Battōsai), Kaoru lets him stay at her dojo. After several months of living there, Kenshin learns that Makoto Shishio, another former assassin from the Bakumatsu, is trying to take over the country, working from Kyoto. Together with his friends, Kenshin sets off to defeat Shishio in Kyoto and save the nation.

As one might imagine, *Rurouni Kenshin* is aimed at teenagers. Western audiences, however, might lack basic knowledge of Japanese history and culture needed to get the full experience from the series. In short, while the series is very accessible for Japanese teenagers, not all teenagers here in the West would be able to grasp all of it. The distinctly Japanese cultural aspects of the show, as well as a few linguistic ones, make *Rurouni Kenshin* a difficult series to localize.

3.1.2 Naruto

The second anime series I will be looking at is *Naruto*. *Naruto* is a popular anime series based on a manga written and illustrated by Masashi Kishimoto. The manga ran in *Weekly Shōnen Jump* from September 1999 to November 2014. The series consists of two parts. The first, *Naruto*, ran from October 2002 to February 2007 and covered the first half of the manga. The second, *Naruto Shippuden*, which is set two and a half years later, began immediately after the first part ended and covers the rest of the story. The series has gained immense popularity all over the world and has become one of Viz Media's best-selling manga in North America. In fact, it is the third best-selling manga series in history overall ("Naruto," n.d.). As of today, the series has spawned a multitude of video games, multiple OVAs, eleven animated movies, several light novels, a trading card game, a few spinoff manga series (one of which was turned into an anime) and a plethora of other merchandise. Both the manga and the anime have been licensed in North America by Viz Media.

The story of *Naruto* takes place in a fictional world where the main vocation available is being a ninja. Kids are trained from an early age to become full-fledged ninja, taking on all kinds of different missions depending on their rank, varying from plucking weeds to being a bodyguard to defeating other ninja, in exchange for money. By using their inner energy, or chakra, ninja are able to perform magical attacks like breathing fire or making temporary clones of themselves.

Within this world are several 'hidden villages', the villages where the ninja live. There are five main ones which are the most powerful, and one of them is the village of Konoha ('Hidden Leaf' in the dub). Twelve years before the start of the series, this village was attacked by a giant nine-tailed fox demon. A man known as the Fourth Hokage, the leader of the village, was able to prevent total devastation of the village by sealing the fox inside the body of a newborn boy named Naruto Uzumaki. Growing up without his parents, Naruto was shunned and rejected by the villagers because he had the demon fox inside of him, something he himself was not aware of as the villagers were not allowed to talk about it. Even so, instead of resenting the villagers, he dreams to one day become the Hokage, the leader and strongest ninja of the village, so everyone will look up to him and respect him for who he really is. He eventually manages to graduate from the Ninja Academy and gets put into a trainee team with Sasuke Uchiha, the secondary protagonist of the story. Sasuke is the last surviving member of his clan and seeks power in order to kill the person responsible for slaughtering his entire family. Sasuke is an anti-hero and a mirror to Naruto, and their relationship (they are both each other's best friends and biggest enemies) is one of the driving forces of the story. Their

third teammate is Sakura Haruno, Naruto's main love interest, though she only has eyes for Sasuke. Under the guidance of their teacher, Kakashi Hatake, they go on missions and end up fighting incredibly strong enemies, with the ultimate goal of protecting their village.

Naruto and *Naruto Shippuden* are generally aimed at a teenage audience, though it is still a great series for adults as well. The *Naruto* series has some Japanese influences and contains some elements that are very obviously Japanese in origin; the nine-tailed fox demon, for instance, stems from Japanese mythology. Even so, Viz Media's translation has made it very accessible to Western audiences, maybe even more so than *Rurouni Kenshin*. The ways in which Viz has dealt with the Japanese elements, especially the linguistic ones such as names and terms, are quite interesting, and I will be looking at them later on. For the sake of readability, both parts of the series (*Naruto* and *Naruto Shippuden*) will be collectively referred to as *Naruto* (unless otherwise specified).

3.1.3 Pokémon

The final anime series I will be covering in this thesis is *Pokémon*. Probably the most well-known of the three anime, it is also the only one that was not based on a manga, but is instead based on a video game series. The name is a romanized contraction of the brand name *Pocket Monsters*. *Pokémon* started out as a pair of video games in Japan, *Pokémon Red* and *Pokémon Green*, released in Japan in 1996 on the Nintendo Game Boy. They were released in the United States in 1998, with *Pokémon Blue* replacing the original *Green* version. An anime version based on the games quickly followed, first airing in 1997 in Japan and in 1998 in the US. What started as a simple pair of video games quickly grew to be a globally recognized pop culture sensation. There are very few people today that have never heard of *Pokémon*, and the popularity of its mascot, Pikachu, is comparable to that of Mickey Mouse, while the catchphrase "Gotta catch 'em all!" ("Get da ze!" in Japanese) has become irrevocably connected to the series. The franchise has spawned several spinoff manga, dozens of video games (both mainstream and spinoff), a trading card game, eighteen movies (so far), musicals, toys and tons of other merchandise.

Pokémon was originally created by Satoshi Tajiri. The anime was licensed in the United States by 4Kids Entertainment² from 1998 to 2006, after which The Pokémon Company International obtained the license, which it still holds to this day. The *Pokémon* anime series is actually divided into several series, five as of now, all of which form one continuous story. The series are based on each new generation of games (except the first two generations, *Red/Blue* and *Gold/Silver* which are both part of the first series). As with *Naruto*, I will be covering all of them and will refer to them collectively as *Pokémon*, for the sake of readability.

The story is a rather simple one. Ash Ketchum (who is named Satoshi in the original Japanese version, after the series' creator) is a young boy from Pallet Town (Masara Town in the Japanese) who dreams of becoming the greatest Pokémon master in the world. Pokémon are creatures that live in forests, cities, caves, mountains, oceans, basically all over the world, and Pokémon trainers are people that try to catch these creatures using Pokéballs, little red and white baseball-sized balls that can somehow house creatures ranging from two to two hundred times the ball's own size. The trainers then pit their Pokémon against each other in battles to see who is the best trainer. In order for them to compete in the big Pokémon League tournament, trainers must travel from city to city and defeat the Gym Leader of the local Pokémon Gym in each city, earning a badge in the process. Once they have eight badges, they can compete in the Pokémon League.

At the start of their Pokémon journey, a trainer receives a starter Pokémon to get them going. In Ash's case, that Pokémon is Pikachu, who becomes his best friend. Together with their other human friends, Misty and Brock (Kasumi and Takeshi in Japan, respectively), they travel around the land with the goal of defeating all the Gym Leaders and competing in the Pokémon League (Ash's travelling companions change with every new series, though). However, the evil Team Rocket, consisting of Jessie, James and their Pokémon Meowth, tries its best in every episode to steal Pikachu and all the other Pokémon for their boss. And of course, it's always up to Ash and his friends to make sure they don't succeed.

The series is primarily aimed at children, both the original version and the Western dubbed version. There are some small elements of Japanese culture in the series, though the localizers have tried to still make it as accessible as possible for Western children. As this

² 4Kids Entertainment filed for bankruptcy in April 2011. It exited bankruptcy in December 2012, being reincorporated as 4Licensing Corporation ("4Licensing Corporation", n.d.). For convenience's sake, the company will be referred to in this thesis as 4Kids, as that was how it was known while licensing *Pokémon*.

anime was localized in a very different manner to both *Naruto* and *Rurouni Kenshin*, it serves as an interesting contrast to them. I will discuss the three anime and their localization in relation to one another in more detail in chapter 5.

3.2 Method

I will be analyzing the three series by comparing elements from the dubbed versions to the original Japanese versions. These include names of characters, organizations and official functions, weapons and attacks, as well as idiolects. For every series, I will start off with a small introduction describing the intended audience. The following section, 'Names', will look at the translation of names and titles of characters, organizations, places, and objects and techniques, respectively. The next section, 'Dialogue', mainly focuses on characters' distinct idiolects, which includes accents, dialects and catchphrases, but also looks at other elements of dialogue if relevant for that particular series. Next, the 'Music' section looks at how the music used in the show was changed (or retained) compared to the original version. Finally, 'Visual Alterations' looks at whether or not any alterations were made in the visuals.

4. Analysis

4.1 Rurouni Kenshin

4.1.1 Audience

As mentioned before, *Rurouni Kenshin* is a series primarily directed at teenagers. The story is set in Japan and discusses actual Japanese historical developments, and features obviously Japanese characters – it even features cameo appearances by actual Japanese historical figures such as Aritomo Yamagata, the ‘father of Japanese militarism’ (“Yamagata Aritomo”, n.d.). It is no stretch to say that Western audiences would enjoy the story more if they were at the very least familiar with the most important events of the period of Japanese history the anime is set in (such as the Meiji revolution and the Bakumatsu war). Moreover, not only would a Western audience with such knowledge enjoy the show more, but they would also be more likely to watch the show to begin with. In this sense, *Rurouni Kenshin* attracts a very specific audience. It would seem that Media Blasters was aware of this and took it into account when they set out to localize the series, because the localized anime stays true to the original in many ways (barring, of course, any changes that are simply necessary for the audience’s understanding of the story or the events therein).

4.1.2 Names

In Japan, it is common practice to say or write someone’s family name first, followed by their given name, whereas it is done the other way around in the West. Therefore, Japanese names are often reversed in the West, making them conform to the conventions of Western culture, in order to avoid confusion. This is also the case with anime localization. For instance, the main character in *Rurouni Kenshin* is named Kenshin Himura in the West, but Himura Kenshin in Japan, as Himura is his family name and Kenshin is his given name. I use the Western order in this thesis as well. However, other than the name reversal, which is necessary to avoid confusing everyone but the viewers that are explicitly aware of the Japanese naming convention, the English dub uses the same names as the original version.

There are several organizations in *Rurouni Kenshin*, the names of which are all borrowed at least to some extent. One of these is the Shinsengumi. The Shinsengumi was a real special police force during the Bakumatsu period, organized by the shogunate. At the start of the Meiji era, the commanding officers of the Shinsengumi were all killed, marking the end of the organization, even though several individual members managed to survive the war. One of these survivors was Hajime Saitō, an actual historical figure who appears in *Rurouni Kenshin*. The name ‘Shinsengumi’ is simply borrowed in the dub. Another real-

world organization mentioned in the series is the Sekihōtai, a group of political extremists operating during the Bakumatsu; they traveled the countryside spreading news of the upcoming change of regime. When the Meiji government couldn't keep all of its promises, they blamed it on the Sekihōtai for raising expectations too high, calling them a 'false army', and many of them were arrested and executed ("Sekihōtai," n.d.). One of their leaders was Sōzō Sagara, who also appears in the series in flashbacks of one of the main characters, Sanosuke Sagara, who was also a member of the Sekihōtai (to be clear, Sanosuke is fictional while Sōzō actually existed). The name 'Sekihōtai' is borrowed without any change. A third prominent real-world organization which features in the anime are the Oniwabanshū, a group of spies and undercover detectives employed by the government during the Edo period. After the start of the Meiji era, they were unfortunately left unemployed. The Oniwabanshū also appear in the anime. Their organization is translated using a mixture of two translation strategies in the dub; they are called the 'Oniwaban Group' in the Media Blasters dub, which is part borrowing and part literal translation. The fourth and final organization I want to mention is the Juppongatana, which literally means 'Ten Swords'. It is a fictional group of ten elite warriors employed by the villain Makoto Shishio. The name is borrowed in the dub. In short, other than the minor change of 'Oniwabanshū' to 'Oniwaban Group', the localizers borrowed the Japanese names of all historical organizations mentioned in the anime, and they used the same strategy for fictional ones like the Juppongatana. This is an indication of the translators' foreignizing approach.

This trend continues in the translation of the names of locations. Place names such as Tokyo and Kyoto are simply borrowed; after all, the English dub also takes place in Japan, and these places are known by their Japanese names all over the world, so making any changes there would be very odd. However, even the names of fictional places such as the Akabeko restaurant in Tokyo and the Aoiya inn in Kyoto are borrowed.

Similar to the other categories of names previously discussed, the names of sword styles have also been borrowed in the dub. A sword style is the style of fighting a Japanese swordsman uses, which can differ depending on the dojo they learned it from. Examples from the series are the Hiten Mitsurugi-ryu, used by Kenshin, and the Kamiya Kasshin-ryu, used by Kaoru and her apprentice Yahiko. These are only altered to 'Hiten Mitsurugi style' and 'Kamiya Kasshin style', respectively, so while the names are borrowed, the word 'style' is translated literally. Similarly, names of attacks are simply borrowed, such as Kenshin's sword attack Sō Ryū Sen (literally 'Twin Dragon Flash') or Sanosuke's martial arts-move Futae no Kiwami (literally 'Two-Fold Extremity').

The only name translation in the dub that really deviates from the pattern described above is the translation of Kenshin's sword, the Sakabatō. The name is literally translated to 'Reverse-Blade Sword' in the dub. The Sakabatō is a regular *katana* (Japanese sword) with the only exception being that the sharp end is on the wrong side of the blade. Therefore, the sword is not suited for killing; it is Kenshin's way of defending himself and being able to help others without having to break his vow of never killing again. The Reverse-Blade Sword is an important plot point and keeps coming back in the story. It therefore makes sense to translate it in such a way that viewers won't be left wondering just what makes it so special. In an interview with Dub Review, Clark Cheng, one of the localizers for *Rurouni Kenshin*, commented on the rationales for the translation choice:

The rationales were simple. While [*obi, kimono* and *taiyaki*] [traditional Japanese forms of dress and foods - my note] do not have a direct English equivalent, that is not the case with "sakabato" which does directly translate into reverse-blade sword. Secondly, both terms also have four syllables, so there usually isn't any problem with lip-flap. Lastly, Rika [one of the other localizers] knew that people would be watching this series both sequentially and randomly. Because the term is used so frequently, it made more sense to translate it. That way, people wouldn't have to go scrambling for Japanese-English dictionaries or the liner notes if they didn't remember the term or if they started watching from the middle of the series. In retrospect, it was probably a good idea that we did translate it. After all, the show is on Cartoon Network now and being seen by a lot of different people who may or may not have watched it from the very beginning. They might probably wonder what the heck a "sakabato" is, and why it doesn't cut or kill anyone who gets hit by it when it's obviously a sword.

(“Interview with Clark Cheng,” n.d.)

4.1.3 Dialogue

Anime characters often speak in non-standard ways; they tend to have idiolects that are uniquely their own. These speech features have many different purposes. For example, characters often have specific catchphrases which are characteristic of them alone; these help the audience identify and distinguish between the characters. Speech features also enhance characters' personalities, and can thus be an aid that anime creators use for characterization purposes. Moreover, they enable the creator to subtly provide the audience with information.

For example, if a character has a particular accent, that can clue the audience in as to the region or city they originate from. Beyond that, if there are stereotypes surrounding people from that region, a character having that accent thus can have an effect on the audience's perception of them. It is important for distinctive idiolects to be preserved in translation, precisely because they add so much to a character's personality and background. *Rurouni Kenshin*, unlike most anime, does not contain an awful lot of characters that use very distinctive idiolects, but there are some, and the most noteworthy of these is the main character. Kenshin has several idiolects that may prove difficult for translators to deal with.

The main character Kenshin's idiolect does include a few noteworthy features that could be potentially difficult to translate. Kenshin has a very archaic way of speaking. His most well-known trait is that he ends many of his sentences with *de gozaru*, an archaic, polite verb which can be translated as the verb 'to be'. This phrase in itself means nothing; it is simply a manner of speaking, with no real semantic value behind it, and the translators could have easily left it out entirely, were it not for the fact that the feature is explicitly referenced by other characters a couple of times throughout the series, thus forcing the translators' hands; they have to either find a translation for the phrase, or completely change the situations that occur throughout the series when other characters specifically comment on the feature. In the Media Blasters dub, Kenshin ends his sentences with phrases like 'that I do' and 'that I am' (for example, in episode 1, Kenshin states: "I am merely a wandering swordsman, that I am."). It is a surprisingly effective solution. Japanese and English differ in that politeness is indicated a lot more obviously in Japanese, through the use of different grammatical forms, while in English it remains very much implicit. Therefore, the English translation cannot convey the same level of politeness, at least not through any explicit linguistic means, as English does not have set expressions for this purpose, as Japanese does. However, the English translation does echo the use of a meaningless phrase, and it does have a certain archaic quality to it. In the interview with Dub Review, Clark Cheng said the following about *de gozaru*:

Well, first of all, we had to determine whether [Kenshin's speech patterns] were something we wanted to represent. Initially, Rika wanted to just represent Kenshin's "de gozaru" with formal speech. It probably would have been a fine way to represent that particular characteristic, but I had watched ahead in the series, and I knew that there were references to that specific phrase in future episodes. Those references were also a fairly significant part of the story and

would probably be very tricky to write around since they were directly referred to in the dialogue. It also turned out to be a rather significant way to differentiate the Battousai Kenshin from the wanderer Kenshin, at least in the first few episodes. I asked Rika to take a look at a few of the problematic segments, and we agreed that it ought to be represented in some way, though we didn't come up with a solution at that time.

A few days later, we received her translation at the office and it had these that-I-do's and that-I-am's in it. I thought it was quite ingenious because it worked well with the later episodes, both in terms of intent and in terms of lip-flap. But when I originally looked at those problematic segments, I was looking pretty far into the series. I had totally missed the fact that it came up earlier in the series, specifically in the 7th episode with Kaoru's mimicking of Kenshin's speech patterns [...] In my opinion, it worked quite well in that episode, as well as in the future episodes, too. I especially liked how the part with Iori, the little baby in the Chou the Swordhunter episodes, worked out.

(“Interview with Clark Cheng,” n.d.)

In the instances that Cheng mentions (episode 7 and ‘the part with Iori’), Kenshin’s *de gozaru* is repeated by other characters, Kaoru and Iori, respectively. The localizers did the exact same thing in the dub, with the characters repeating Kenshin’s (basically meaningless) words, so that even in the dub, the fact that Kenshin has a unique way of speaking is still referenced, even if the exact details of how he speaks are of course not literally translated. The best way to describe the translation choice in terms of procedures used is as a type of *équivalence*, as the situation described in the original series is preserved, though through different means.

Another one of Kenshin’s traits is the use of *oro*. It is an odd pronunciation of *ara*, a meaningless exclamatory word without any real semantic value, and thus no real direct English equivalent. The phrase is used in moments of clumsiness, surprise, and clownishness. Even though it’s a phrase that is very characteristic of Kenshin, it is not as important to the dialogue or story as *de gozaru*. The translators decided to leave it out and just replace it with ‘huah’ or meaningless funny sounds:

As for the "oro", I felt it was important to have since it was Kenshin's signature exclamation. Rika and I had decided to leave it untranslated in the subtitled version of RK for various reasons. As for the dubbed version, I asked Eric to keep

it in when he wrote the first scripts, and we agreed that it couldn't be left as is since it would be pretty strange to American ears. If I recall, "oro" was supposed to be a made-up derivation of "ara", which is easy enough to figure out if you're Japanese, I guess. We wanted to maintain the Japanese feel of the show, but we felt this particular idiosyncrasy needed to be changed if it were to make sense. Plus, the terms that we left in Japanese were all proper names or Japanese objects, and we already had set a precedence of translating made-up words like "rurouni." Also, it was referred to directly in the dialogue in future episodes, so representing it would be a good thing if we wanted to avoid sketchy rewrites. To make an already long story shorter, Eric told me he'd just do a funny sound to represent it. The rest is history. From the second volume on, it was just written in the script as "trademark 'huah' react."

(“Interview with Clark Cheng,” n.d.)

So in short, the translators thought that borrowing the Japanese element, even if it's just a tiny, meaningless word, would sound strange to American ears, and so they decided to translate it freely using adaptation, while at the same time making sure that Kenshin still had a trademark exclamation, as he does in the original.

The final noteworthy feature in Kenshin's idiolect is very much a part of his tendency to speak in an archaic manner: he refers to people with the honorific suffix *-dono*. It is a suffix that is considered extremely polite and is nowadays mostly used by public offices after the addressee's name in a formal letter, as opposed to the much more common and still current *-sama* which is used by private individuals (Kenkyusha, 2003). Kenshin uses *-dono* mostly with women, even the ones he knows very well, as a sign of respect (such as Kaoru-*dono* and Megumi-*dono*, his two closest female friends), but also with men to whom he is not very close. The Media Blasters dub uses equivalent terms; it translates the phrase *-dono* as 'Miss' or 'Sir', simply using English polite forms of address where the original employs Japanese forms of address. The only difference is that 'Miss' and 'Sir' do not carry an archaic connotation as well as a polite one³. Kenshin doesn't use the phrase with his close male friends Sanosuke and Yahiko. Another archaic form of address that he uses is *sessha*, which is

³ In a similar fashion, Megumi always refers to Kenshin as 'Ken-san', the honorific *-san* being polite and somewhat comparable to 'mister'. The English dub uses an equivalent term by translating it as 'Sir Ken', translating *-dono* and *-san* the same way in this case, even though they are on different levels of politeness.

used to refer to oneself in an extremely humble way. Japanese people normally use *watashi*, *ore* or *boku* (depending on the situation) when referring to themselves. As English does not have any way to refer to oneself other than ‘I’, the localizers decided to omit this feature entirely in the dub (though it is worth noting that the Viz translation of the manga translates the phrase as ‘this one’).

The features mentioned above are highly important to Kenshin’s character. They signify Kenshin’s respect for others and his humility, which lead to those who do not know him to view him as ineffectual or easily exploitable. That being said, “more perceptive people become aware in short order that his gift for placatory eloquence and veiled redirection of disagreeable situations suggest a deep wisdom belied by his youthful, unassuming visage” (“Himura Kenshin,” n.d.). However, these linguistic features disappear whenever Kenshin reverts back to his Battōsai mentality from his days as an assassin during the War. This happens when he is pushed too far during fights or when he is very angry or emotionally agitated. He almost has a split personality, and when he is pushed too far, he turns into a ruthless version of himself without any concern for politeness or decorum. Because the idiolects serve to contrast Kenshin’s two personalities, they are an important aspect to keep in mind when localizing *Rurouni Kenshin*.

Besides Kenshin, there are not a lot of characters in *Rurouni Kenshin* with noteworthy idiolects. The only character worth mentioning is Chō Sawagejō, nicknamed Chō the Swordhunter. He is an enemy that Kenshin faces during the story arc set in Kyoto and a member of the aforementioned Juppongatana. He hails from Osaka, and therefore speaks in a Kansai dialect in the Japanese version, Kansai being the region Osaka is in. The dub also mentions that he comes from Osaka. However, he obviously does not speak Kansai dialect in the dub; mimicking any Japanese dialectal features in English would be awkward and would most likely only come across as mockery. The localizers chose to give him a southern US accent instead. This is an approach that is not uncommon to localizers when dealing with Kansai accents, as the southern US accent is often seen as somewhat equivalent to that of Kansai for Japan (“Kansai dialect,” Wikipedia, n.d.).

Other than Kenshin and Chō’s idiolects, there is not much else to say about the dialogue in *Rurouni Kenshin*. The characters’ lines are on the whole translated relatively literally and there is no noteworthy censoring of dialogue.

4.1.4 Music

The English dub uses all the background music from the original version. However, the first opening song, as well as the first two ending songs, were dubbed into English, while the subsequent opening and ending songs were borrowed in their untranslated form. The reason for this is unknown, though I suspect it may be due to the localizers' habit of providing English opening and ending themes in the early days of anime localization, when anime was still growing in popularity among Western audiences, and coming across a foreign language opening theme could have possibly alienated new or casual viewers. Once the demand for authentic versions started growing, localization companies started using original opening and ending themes as well.

4.1.5 Visual Alterations

There are no noteworthy visual alterations in the English dub of *Rurouni Kenshin*. Elements such as blood and violence were neither omitted nor toned down, and all the images were kept the same as the original version. The fact that there is no real censoring, unlike with the localization of the other anime I will discuss, most likely has something to do with the fact that, as said before, *Rurouni Kenshin*'s historical basis and the prevalence of Japanese facts and features in it attract a more mature audience (teen and up), and thus localizers need not be concerned about possible detrimental effects to young audiences. We will see that the situation is very different in the case of an anime like *Pokémon* that is specifically marketed towards children in the West, when this was not necessarily the intended audience in Japan.

4.2 Naruto

4.2.1 Audience

Naruto is a series that is primarily directed at teenagers, though its immense popularity suggests that many people from other age groups enjoy it as well. The story is set in a fictional world where the majority of the population are ninjas, a concept which, of course, hails from Japan. The fact that it is set in a fantasy world instead of a real historical context like *Rurouni Kenshin* is one of the reasons why it is much more accessible to a wider audience than the former. There are definitely a lot of Japanese influences visible in the series, though these do not necessarily play an important role in the story, and as such, the viewer requires less knowledge of Japanese culture in order to enjoy the series properly than with a show like *Rurouni Kenshin*. For instance, the viewer does not need to know that the nine-tailed demon fox sealed within Naruto hails from Japanese folklore in order to understand the implications it has for Naruto. The mythical origin of the demon is interesting,

but the background knowledge is not required and does not affect the audience's understanding of or level of enjoyment derived from the story. The fact that *Naruto* is not as heavy on the Japanese cultural elements as *Rurouni Kenshin* suggests that it may be easier to localize. The translators do not have to focus as much on culturally-bound terms and can instead spend more energy on the issue of how to translate story-related elements, as there are quite a few of those; I will name several examples later.

4.2.2 Names

As with *Rurouni Kenshin*, names in *Naruto* have been reversed in order to match Western standards (e.g. Naruto Uzumaki instead of Uzumaki Naruto), except, of course, for characters who only go by a single name (Gaara, who does not use his last name, is still just Gaara) and a few English-sounding names (Rock Lee is still Rock Lee). However, there is another category of names that's relevant in *Naruto*, which did not feature prominently in the case of *Rurouni Kenshin*, namely nicknames. They are usually translated literally, with a few minor deviations. Gaara, for instance, is nicknamed 'Sabaku no Gaara', which literally means 'Gaara of the Desert', and the dub thus refers to him as 'Gaara of the Desert'. Naruto's nickname for Rock Lee, 'Gejimayu', a reference to Lee's massive eyebrows which literally means 'Centipede Brow', is localized as 'Bushy Brow'. In short, nicknames are either literally translated or receive an equivalent nickname expressing the same notion but in slightly more natural terms when the original nickname would have sounded odd in English.

I briefly looked at honorific suffixes (*-san*, *-chan*, *-sama*, *-sensei* etc.) while discussing *Rurouni Kenshin*. With *Naruto*, most of the honorifics are simply omitted in the dub. However, the polite ones which actually serve to indicate someone's higher rank are sometimes replaced with an equivalent term such as 'sir' or 'mister'. The only notable exception is *-sensei*, used to address teachers, which is almost always borrowed directly, and also kept in its Japanese location as a suffix, as in *Kakashi-sensei*, when it would be much more natural in English to say 'mister Kakashi'. The suffix was possibly retained to preserve the important Japanese cultural concept of respecting one's teachers, or just because it is used so often that it would possibly cause difficulty with lip movements. Suffixes that function as terms of endearment in Japanese, such as *-chan*, used with girls (e.g. *Sakura-chan*) and *-kun*, used with boys (e.g. *Sasuke-kun*) are always omitted, as there is simply no comparable equivalent in English. Using actual English terms of endearment, like 'Sasuke-dear' or something, would feel awkward and over the top.

Official titles in *Naruto* are usually translated. A *daimyō*, for instance, which is the leader of a country, is literally translated as ‘feudal lord’. In the feudal times before the Meiji Revolution in Japan, the *daimyō* were the leaders of the lands. Even in history textbooks, the term ‘feudal lord’ is commonly used in English to replace *daimyō*, so it only seems apt to do the same in this case. The five main nations in the *Naruto* world each have a ‘hidden village’, a ninja village, led by a village leader, collectively named the five Kage; the Hokage, Kazekage, Mizukage, Raikage and Tsuchikage (literally Fire Shadow, Wind Shadow, Water Shadow, Lightning Shadow and Earth Shadow). The localizers borrowed these titles, even though they could have been translated literally. This is most likely because the Japanese terms sound more like official titles to a foreign audience, whereas calling them ‘shadows’ would seem odd. Yet, when referring to a specific Kage, e.g. the Shodai Hokage or the Yondaime Hokage⁴, the English dub uses First Hokage and Fourth Hokage. The common ninja led by the Kage are divided into three categories, Jōnin, Chūnin and Genin (literally ‘High Ninja’, ‘Middle Ninja’ and ‘Low Ninja’, respectively). These titles are also borrowed in the English dub.

Konohamaru, one of *Naruto*’s younger friends, addresses everyone with *nii-san* and *nee-san* (e.g. ‘*Naruto nii-san*’ or ‘*Sakura nee-san*’). These are terms commonly used for older brothers and sisters, but the use of them can be extended to include friends and comrades. Phrases like these are translated literally as ‘big brother *Naruto*’ and ‘big sister *Sakura*’ in the English dub. One of *Naruto*’s teachers, who is also a captain in an elite ninja fighting force, is often referred to as ‘*Yamato-taichō*’, which means, and is localized as, ‘Captain *Yamato*’. A *bijū*, one of the nine animal spirit demons in the *Naruto* world of which the nine-tailed fox sealed away inside *Naruto* is one, is translated literally as ‘tailed beast’. However, the host in which a tailed beast is sealed, like *Naruto*, is called ‘*jinchūriki*’ in both the Japanese and the English version. The term was most likely borrowed because its literal translation, ‘power of human sacrifice’, not only sounds very dramatic but also in no way fits the lip movements. Borrowing the original term is the best option here.

Next, let’s look at some names of organizations and institutions. First of all, there is the Akatsuki, a group of very strong rogue ninja and the primary antagonists in *Naruto*

⁴ All of the Kage other than the first ones are referred to this way. *Ni*, *San*, *Yon* etc. mean ‘two’, ‘three’ and ‘four’, while *dai* means ‘generation’ and *me* is a suffix denoting order. *Yondaime* therefore literally means ‘fourth generation’. *Shodai* is the exception, as *sho* doesn’t mean ‘one’ but rather ‘beginning’ or ‘primary’. Saying *shodaim*e would be the same as saying ‘beginningth’.

Shippuden. Their name literally means ‘red moon’, which is the Japanese term for ‘dawn’. The Japanese name is borrowed in the dub. Another organization features in *Naruto Shippuden*, when Sasuke has defected from the Hidden Leaf village and gathers a group of ninja to help him now that he is on his own. Their first team name is Hebi, which means ‘snake’, and they later change it to Taka, which means ‘hawk’. Both of these Japanese names are borrowed in the English dub. Finally, working directly underneath the Kage are an elite ninja squad who function as a sort of undercover agency within the ninja community, known as Anbu. Anbu is short for *Ansatsu Senjutsu Tokushu Butai*, literally the ‘Special Assassination and Tactical Squad’. Just like the names of the Kage, the name Anbu is borrowed in the English dub, and adapted somewhat into ‘Anbu Black Ops’. The name ‘Anbu’ receives no further explanation in the dub; it is portrayed as just a name, not an abbreviation with further meaning behind it.

The village that Naruto lives in is called Konohagakure, or Konoha for short. This is literally translated to ‘Village Hidden in the Leaves’, or ‘Hidden Leaf Village’ for short. The names of all of the other hidden villages are translated literally as well.

The names of the weapons the characters use are also mostly borrowed. A shuriken (throwing star) is still called a shuriken and a kunai (throwing knife) is still called a kunai in the dub, most likely because those terms are also already existing loanwords in English. However, weapons that are not already known to the English audience through loanwords are translated literally; for example, a *kibaku fuda* (an exploding piece of paper) is a ‘paper bomb’ in English. All ninja use these kinds of weapons, so they are not very distinct, but there are also some ninja that use more individual weapons. The character Kisame, for instance, uses a giant sword called ‘Samehada’, which literally means ‘Sharkskin’. In the earlier *Naruto* series, the name is translated literally as Sharkskin. However, later on, in *Naruto Shippuden*, the localizers decided to foreignize the term after all. As the sword was first known as Sharkskin, they first have Kisame talk about ‘Samehada, Sharkskin’, stating the original name and then ‘explaining’ the name in English. Then, later on in the series, they drop the English translation ‘Sharkskin’ altogether and just have him say ‘Samehada’. It is interesting to see the localizers change their view on the localization of a term as the series progresses. The notion that the localizers decided to adopt a more foreignizing stance as time went by is supported by the fact that other weapons that are introduced later on in *Naruto Shippuden* without having featured in the first series *Naruto* at all are never known as anything but their original Japanese name; for example, the sword Hiramekarei is never known under any other name, even though the Japanese name is a reference to the flounder fish and thus, a translation

playing on flounder fish could have been used instead. The fact that the localization team borrowed the Japanese instead proves that they were not looking for a domesticating option to begin with.

Other than weapons, the ninja are able to use their chakra (inner bodily energy, known as 'chakra' both in Japanese and English) to execute powerful 'magical' attacks. These are known as 'jutsu' in both the original and the dub, even though the localizers could have used the literal translation 'technique'. They apparently deliberately chose not to, possibly because they didn't find it to be appealing enough. Attacks include spitting fire and creating temporary clones of oneself. Most of the more common attacks which have a long, descriptive name are translated directly into English; Kage Bunshin no Jutsu or Kuchiyose no Jutsu are literally translated to 'Shadow Clone Jutsu' and 'Summoning Jutsu'. Other attacks, particularly ones that are specific to a single or only a few individuals, however, are often borrowed, such as the Rasengan (literally 'Spiralling Sphere', a powerful spherical blast of energy) or Sharingan (literally 'Copy Wheel Eye', a visual technique that allows the user to manipulate an enemy's mind by catching their eye). This could be because the names of the attacks are typically shouted while they are being executed, and the Japanese names sound more exotic and cool. The lightning-based attack Chidori is special. When used by Sasuke, it is known as Chidori in both languages. When used by Kakashi, it is known as Raikiri in Japanese and Lightning Blade in English. The reason why Raikiri was translated while Chidori wasn't, even though it's the same attack, is unknown.

4.2.3 Dialogue

Unlike *Rurouni Kenshin*, *Naruto* has a few more characters with a noteworthy idiolect. One of these is the main character, Naruto Uzumaki. The most characteristic and well-known feature of his speech is the fact that he ends many of his sentences with the catchphrase (*dattebayo*). The term itself doesn't really mean anything, it mostly serves to make his speech more unique. Kishimoto wanted to give Naruto a childlike catchphrase, and "*dattebayo*" came to mind; the creator believed that the phrase complements Naruto's character, and serves as a verbal tic that illustrates his (initially) brattish personality ("Naruto Uzumaki," n.d.). The term has the same effect in Japanese as the phrase 'you know?' at the end of an English sentence, in that it is mostly filler language. The early episodes of the anime translated the catchphrase as 'Believe it!', which became an often-mocked phrase among fans of the series. 'Believe it!' somewhat mirrored the obnoxious effect of *dattebayo*, and it also matches the lip movements of the original. However, after the first story arc of *Naruto*, the localizers omitted the phrase,

presumably because viewers mostly found it annoying. It was referenced a few times throughout the rest of the series, but the translators were mostly able to work around those instances and change the dialogue so that there need not be mention of a catchphrase in the translation. However, in *Naruto Shippuden*, the phrase becomes important to the story, in that it is something which makes Naruto feel connected to the mother he, as an orphan, never knew, who he finds out used a similar phrase. In this instance, the phrase played too big of a role in the story for the translators to omit it. They decided to translate it as ‘you know?’, which is a lot more natural to say often than ‘believe it!’.

Another character, Shikamaru, also has a well-known catchphrase. Shikamaru is a lazy, pensive character who would rather avoid a fight and spend the entire day lying on his back and watching the clouds. When asked to do something, he often replies with the rather rude phrase *mendokusē* (a slur of the word *mendokusai*, which means ‘troublesome’). The English translation used ‘What a drag...’, a free translation which captures the same sense, but fits the lip movements perfectly, unlike the more literal ‘troublesome’.

I have previously discussed Japanese honorifics and the polite form. *Naruto* features a character whose idiolect is mostly set apart from that of others by his use of these features of Japanese. The character Rock Lee always uses the polite *masu*-form in Japanese, even with his friends and close acquaintances, even though doing so is often considered to be too formal and even a little stiff in Japan. He also never uses swearwords and always uses the proper honorific suffixes for everyone he addresses; the only exceptions to this are Neji and Tenten, his teammates, to whom he refers by their given names. The fact that Lee never takes such liberties suggests that he feels very close to the two of them. A trait like this is difficult to localize, because English does not have any grammatical features that communicate politeness, like Japanese does. To communicate the same sense of formality and stiffness through means that can be achieved in English, the localizers instead have him refrain from using any contractions in the dub; Lee always says ‘it is’ instead of ‘it’s’ and ‘does not’ instead of ‘doesn’t’. This is a good example of the localizers being unable to foreignize an element of the series and therefore being forced to domesticate the feature in order to be able to preserve it at all.

Another character with an interesting idiolect is Killer B. He is a very cool, swanky character who has his own way of doing things. What is most interesting about him is that he expresses himself through rap (though the people around him don’t necessarily think he’s very good at it). This constant rapping and rhyming obviously creates an interesting challenge for localizers, who will want to try and mimic his interesting speech as much as possible, as it

is a very defining feature of his personality. The translation does not always get the rhythm right, but most of the time the English translated rap lines still rhyme. Killer B also constantly throws in phrases like ‘Oh yeah!’ and ‘Baby!’, which are simply borrowed in the English dub, as they are already English to begin with. B is also one of the people who references Naruto’s constant use of *-tebayo*, calling him the *tebayo no gaki*, or the ‘ya know brat’ in English. This is not a literal translation, apart from the ‘brat’ part, but it does correspond to previous translation choices made concerning the translation of (*da*)*tebayo* in *Naruto Shippuden*. Lastly, Killer B also often ends his sentences with his own trademark catchphrase, *Bakayarō! Konoyarō!* *Baka* means ‘fool’ or ‘idiot’, and *kono* means ‘this’. It’s a phrase that is hard to translate, but suffice it to say that he is swearing, albeit often only mockingly, in a good-natured manner. The English dub translates the phrase as ‘Fool! Ya fool!’, which is not strictly speaking a literal translation, but it does capture the main gist of the phrase and does so in a cool-sounding manner that fits Killer B’s character, and thus does the original justice.

The character Shino, one of Naruto’s friends, is known for speaking in a very roundabout way, much to the annoyance of his friends. Shino is very nitpicky and uses the word ‘because’ (*nazenara*) quite frequently, with his tendency to go into too much detail. He speaks in run-on sentences consisting of many clauses, which are strung together using *nazenara* as the conjunction. The localizers have tried to copy his way of speaking in the dub as much as possible, but are not wholly successful. The fact that he speaks oddly does come across, but not as well as in the original Japanese. However, conversations in which Shino’s friends express their annoyance at the way he talks are preserved, which indicates that the localizers did try to preserve his idiolectal features and thought it worth the trouble.

Just like in *Rurouni Kenshin*, there is also a character who speaks with a regional accent in *Naruto*, namely Kankurō who uses a distinctive Yokohama dialect. He often ends his sentences with *-jaan*, which is more of a sound effect than an actual word. This makes him sound tough, because the accent is often used for biker gang members or punk kids and therefore carries connotations of toughness. It is possible that he was given this accent to make him sound different from the main characters’ standard Tokyo Japanese (“Kankurō,” n.d.), as Kankurō hails from a different part of the fictional *Naruto* world than most of the main characters, though this seems unlikely as his siblings do not speak use a Yokohama dialect. However, in the English dub, Kankurō doesn’t have a prominent accent, or any noteworthy features in his idiolect. The localizers decided to omit the feature, either because it was too hard to communicate in English, or because they didn’t think it was important enough to retain.

As for other dialogue-related elements, the show contains a running gag which involves the Fifth Mizukage mishearing things said to her or about her as being insults. The supposed ‘insults’ are usually said by Ao, one of her servants, and they tend to be things concerning her love life, a topic she is very sensitive about. For example, when we first meet them, Ao mentions something about young people nowadays lacking perseverance, referring to the Mizukage’s other servant, Chōjūrō. He uses the word 根氣 (pronounced *konki*), which means ‘perseverance’. The Mizukage, however, believes he is talking about her and using the word 婚期 (also pronounced *konki*), which means ‘marriageable age’. A little later, someone mentions that they’re going to be late (遅れる, pronounced *okureru*, ‘being late’), and the Mizukage believes they’re saying it’s too late for her to get married. She proceeds to threaten Ao to shut up or she’ll kill him. The joke is made more obvious by the kanji (Japanese symbols) seen on screen. A pun such as this one is very hard to translate. The localizers left the kanji on screen, but do not refer to them or draw attention to them, and worked the joke into the dialogue. In the English dub, Ao says that ‘the youth these days are just all made of weakness’. The Mizukage mishears ‘all made’, thinking he’s calling her an ‘old maid’. When they’re told that they’re going to be late, the Mizukage, still in her ticked-off state of mind from the first ‘insult’, thinks they’re talking about it being ‘too late for marriage’, after which she threatens Ao. Situations such as this occur several more times later on in the series. This shows a very creative solution on the translators’ part for a linguistic phenomenon which is known to be very hard to translate, namely puns, in a situation which is made even more complicated because part of the original Japanese joke lies in the visuals, the kanji shown on the screen, which have no meaning to a Western audience.

4.2.4 Music

Naruto and *Naruto Shippuden* both use the original background music in the English dub. At first, Viz Media created their own opening theme for *Naruto*, using visuals from the original opening but with their own song as the audio. For the ending song, they reprised the opening song with the credits rolling on screen. They soon switched to using all the original opening and ending songs and animations, however. This is an example of how Viz Media went from a relatively domesticating approach in their localization of *Naruto* to a more foreignizing one.

4.2.5 Visual Alterations

Viz Media is known for not making a lot of visual alterations to the series they localize. Nevertheless, in the beginning, they did remove blood from some scenes. They later stopped doing so, as the demand for uncensored anime kept growing. Even so, they still censor extreme violence sometimes for broadcast on child-friendly networks such as Nickelodeon, holding the uncensored version back for later DVD releases and for networks aimed at an older audience.

4.3 Pokémon

4.3.1 Audience

Compared to the other two anime discussed here, *Pokémon* is the odd one out. From the moment it first aired, *Pokémon* has always been aimed at kids. This was the case in Japan, but also in every other country the series has aired in. Because of this, translated versions of *Pokémon* have always been heavily domesticating, not just in the United States, but in other countries such as Italy and the Netherlands as well. A significant amount of alterations are usually made to the anime during the localization process, some more significant than others. I will not be going into all changes as *Pokémon* has over 800 episodes to date and covering everything would take far too much time, but I will discuss the most prominent and relevant examples of such heavy editing.

4.3.2 Names

Many of the names in *Pokémon* are changed in the dub. The main character is called Ash Ketchum in the dub, even though he was only known as Satoshi in the original (without a family name). His last name is not only a pun on the series' catchphrase 'Gotta catch 'em all', but it was possibly added to match lip movements, as 'Ash' and 'Satoshi' differ quite a bit in length. On the other hand, the characters Kasumi and Takeshi, Ash's best friends, are called Misty and Brock, the translated names being shorter than the original names in both cases. Musashi and Kojirō of Team Rocket, the main antagonists, instead have the alliterating names Jessie and James. Ash's rival Shigeru is called Gary and Dr. Okido becomes Professor Oak. Many of the Pokémon themselves are renamed as well. Pikachu, the most well-known Pokémon and the unofficial mascot of the series, is still Pikachu, which sounds exotic to Western audiences, but many others were domesticated into more English-sounding neologisms; for example, Bulbasaur, Charmander and Squirtle were originally named Fushigidane, Hitokage and Zenigame, respectively, and Jigglypuff and Meowth were originally named Purin and Nyarth. Because of these name changes, many of the Pokémon's

voices had to be re-recorded in English, as Pokémon only ever say their own names, and the names used in the original audio of course did not match the English names. Exceptions are Pokémon who just roar or squeak or make other sounds as opposed to actually using words, and Pokémon whose name stayed the same, like Pikachu. For the Pokémon whose names stayed the same, 4Kids simply used the original Japanese sound files.

There are not many organizations in *Pokémon*, other than the evil organizations such as Team Rocket, Team Magma and Team Aqua, which are known in Japan as Rocket-*dan*, Magma-*dan* and Aqua-*dan* (literally Rocket Gang, Magma Gang and Aqua Gang). Other than *dan* being translated with the equivalent term ‘team’, all the names are borrowed. The only exception is Ginga-*dan*, which translates to ‘Galaxy Gang’ but was localized as Team Galactic as opposed to Team Galaxy.

Towns and locations are typically also renamed in the dub. In the original Japanese, names of towns often have a color or nature theme. The English dub tries to mimic these themes most of the time. For example, the name Tokiwa City refers to *tokiwa*, a term for a greenish color, often used in relation to evergreen trees. The city is called Viridian City in the dub, ‘viridian’ being a blue-green color. The exception to the rule is the starting town in a new region, which often has a name that refers to new beginnings or new life, a theme which is not always mimicked in the English dub. The *masara* in Masara Town, for instance, can either come from *massara*, which means ‘brand new’, or *masshiro*, which means ‘pure white’. The dub name, Pallet Town, does not refer to a new beginning. The English translations for names of locations other than cities are usually also (loosely) based on their original Japanese names. Mt. Moon, for instance, is the translation for the Japanese Mt. Otsukimi, with *Otsukimi* being a Japanese moon-viewing festival.

A Pokémon trainer, gym, battle or center is the same in both Japanese and English versions. You could say that the English borrows the terms from Japanese, though since they are already English terms, the term ‘borrowing’ is debatable. However, not all terms related to the training of Pokémon are simply borrowed from the Japanese. For example, the Pokédex, a computer device which provides Pokémon trainers with information on Pokémon, is originally named a *Pokémon Zukan*, literally ‘Pokémon picture book’. Pokéballs are known as ‘monster balls’ in Japan, another instance of the term used in the Japanese original being an English loan, as with Pokémon gym, Pokémon trainer, etc., and yet in this case the term is not borrowed into the translation. This might be because the localizers did not want to deal with the possible negative connotations arising from the use of the word ‘monsters’. Lastly, the translation approaches taken for translating the names of attacks vary greatly. Some attack

names, such as Karate Chop or Thunder Punch, are literally translated from the original, while others, such as Razor Leaf or Flamethrower (known as Leaf Cutter and Flame Emission in the original), were translated with roughly equivalent names.

4.3.3 Dialogue

Pokémon does not have any notable idiolects. The only one possibly worth mentioning is that of the talking cat-like Pokémon Meowth of Team Rocket. In the Japanese version, he often uses *nya* in his sentences. This is an often seen trait of anthropomorphic cat characters in anime, as the Japanese onomatopoeia for ‘meow’ is *nyan*. This feature has not been fully preserved; Meowth does not say ‘meow’ in every other sentence in the dub, unlike in the original. He says it enough to make the audience aware of it and recognize it as a feature of his speech, but not enough to become annoying.

One linguistic element that differs from the original is the use of puns. The English dub often uses puns in the episode titles, something which isn’t the case in the original Japanese; instead, the original uses long descriptive titles, usually consisting of one or two full sentences, not just a single phrase. An example would be an episode starring the Pokémon Absol. The Japanese title is ‘Absol! Creeping Shadow of Disaster!!’ while the dub title is ‘Absol-ute Disaster’. Moreover, the episode titles aren’t the only aspect of the series to which jokes were added; the same applies for Team Rocket’s dialogue in the dub. The members of Team Rocket do tend to use puns here and there even in the original Japanese, but not nearly as often as in the English dub.

Team Rocket’s trademark motto has also been changed in the dub. In the original, the first two lines don’t rhyme, and the third to last line only rhymes with the last line. In the dub, every line rhymes, including the last three lines. Apart from this, the text is also very different. It definitely was not translated literally, although the final message stays the more or less same; the motto boasts about how amazing Team Rocket is and claims they will change the world. For instance, part of the motto in Japanese is ‘To stand by the evils of love and truth! The lovely, charmy villains!’. In the dub version, they say ‘To denounce the evils of truth and love! To extend our reach to the stars above!’.

Finally, much of the dialogue in the series has been altered, still following the original story, but with many roughly equivalent translations and adaptations as opposed to literal translations. Some of these changes are to make the series more accessible to a foreign audience, and are thus deliberate domesticating choices. For example, in one episode Brock offers his friends a ‘jelly-filled donut’, even though he is clearly holding a rice ball. On the

other hand, the reason for a lot of the changes may very well be to match the characters' lip movements.

4.3.4 Music

The background music for *Pokémon* is generally the same as in the Japanese original, though 4Kids Entertainment did add part of their own musical score to the first two seasons. Then, from the third season up to when 4Kids lost the license to The Pokémon Company before season nine, they replaced most of the Japanese background music with their own ("4Kids Entertainment", n.d.). As for the opening and ending theme songs, 4Kids always used their own original music (such as the infamous opening song *Gotta Catch 'em All*) along with visual footage from the series and the Japanese openings and endings to create their own versions. The Pokémon Company continued this practice when it took over the show.

4.3.5 Visual Alterations

4Kids had a tendency of changing actual things on screen in an attempt to remove any Japanese influences. The reason for this is unknown, but it might be because they believed that children wouldn't understand these influences. Examples include removing Japanese kanji and/or replacing them with English text, having characters refer to traditional Japanese rice balls (*onigiri*) as donuts, which creates a disconnect between the visual and auditory information given to the audience, or using the even more domesticating approach of visually pasting a sandwich or a hamburger over said rice balls. 4Kids was known for its strict censoring policies, so changes like these were common practice with their licensed shows. This censoring also included the removal of scenes deemed inappropriate for children, such as a scene where James is dressed up as a large-breasted bikini-clad girl. A few episodes were even removed altogether, the most infamous one being 'Electric Soldier Porygon'. This episode caused several hundred Japanese kids to suffer epileptic seizures (though it should be noted that, after the incident, this episode was never again aired on Japanese television either). Another episode that was removed involved Ash being threatened by a gun several times, which was deemed too violent for children. Another censored episode involved the Pokémon Jynx, which closely resembled an African-American racial stereotype. The episode was later released with Jynx's face having been made purple instead of black. Other than scenes within the actual episodes, 4Kids also edited the *Dare da?* segments which feature in the middle of episodes as intermissions. In these segments, a Pokémon's darkened silhouette would be shown to the audience and the viewer would have to guess which Pokémon it was, with the

answer being revealed after the commercial break. *Dare da?* means ‘Who is it?’, but the segment title was translated as ‘Who’s That Pokémon?’ The concept was kept the same as in the original, but the layout, presentation and choice of Pokémon were different. Moreover, the segment eventually disappeared in the original Japanese version, but it was kept in the English dub for a long time after. Finally, 4Kids often added a musical segment known as the Pokérap at the end of the episode, with a rapper naming all the Pokémon, or Karaokémon, featuring several new songs created especially for the English dub. This segment was also not in the original Japanese version.

When The Pokémon Company took over the license for localizing *Pokémon* in season 9, they kept up the practice of making changes to the dubbed version, though their changes were much more limited in scope. In those seasons produced by The Pokémon Company, music edits are common, the dub still uses its own opening and ending themes, and dialogue is sometimes altered, but only to remove references to religion or death (“The Pokémon Company International”, n.d.). Actual on-screen edits like the ones 4Kids used to make are rarely done by The Pokémon Company.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

5.1 Discussion

I will now look back at the original question posed in this thesis: do differences in the intended target audience of certain anime affect the way in which those anime have been localized? To answer this, I will look at the different elements analyzed in the previous chapter and compare them to one another. I will first address the intended audiences of these three series.

Naruto is classified as a *shōnen* anime or ‘young boy anime’, a type of anime aimed at male teenagers both in terms of content and characters, with the protagonists often being male. Traditionally, *shōnen* anime “fall into the action and adventure genres[;] they often contain elements of violence, [...] and can be graphic and contain mature themes” (“What You Need To Know About The Shonen Genre”, 2014). However, despite the generally intended demographic of *shōnen* anime, they can be and often are “enjoyed by readers of all ages and genders” (“What You Need To Know About The Shonen Genre”, 2014). This is certainly the case for *Naruto*; while the original intended audience was male, many teenage girls and adult men and women watch the show as well. The show does shift towards a slightly darker, less carefree tone in *Naruto Shippuden*, featuring more moral dilemmas and threatening adversaries, suggesting that it intends to appeal more to an older audience. Even so, the series manages to maintain the somewhat goofy, mostly carefree attitude present in *Naruto* on plenty occasions, thereby managing to still appeal to a younger audience as well. In a way, the development of the story from *Naruto* to *Naruto Shippuden* allows young fans to keep enjoying the show while they watch it over a span of multiple years, aging themselves as the show becomes more mature. Another important feature of *Naruto* is that the viewer does not need to be familiar with Japanese culture in order to understand the story. This makes it appealing to a non-Japanese audience as well, once it’s been localized. The Japanese influences are just that: mere influences. They are not focal points in the story, nor are they crucial for the audience’s understanding and/or enjoyment of it. This is different with *Rurouni Kenshin*. Like *Naruto*, it is classified as a *shōnen* anime, but the historical setting and the slightly darker parts of the story also allow the series to appeal to an older audience. One of the main differences with *Naruto*, however, is that in *Rurouni Kenshin*, Japanese cultural influences and references are a major part of the story. *Naruto* has a Japanese feel, and incorporates Japanese elements such as ninja, ramen noodles, etc., but one does not have to be a japanophile in order to enjoy it. Of course, *Rurouni Kenshin* is still enjoyable without prior knowledge of Japan’s culture and history, as the basic story line of a wandering swordsman

fighting for justice and protecting the innocent can still be understood, but having that bit of extra knowledge does increase the viewing pleasure. The spark of recognition when seeing historical figures like Aritomo Yamagata or the Shinsengumi adds another dimension to the viewer's experience. Such a spark of recognition is not possible with a show like *Naruto*, let alone *Pokémon*, because both of those have little to no basis in or link to Japanese history. In contrast to *Rurouni Kenshin* and *Naruto*, *Pokémon* is clearly aimed at younger children, both in the Japanese and in the heavily edited American version. There are very few references to Japanese culture, save from a few minor things like a food item (a rice ball) or a Japanese festival, and those references never have any real impact on the story. The story itself is not typically Japanese; in fact, it is very straightforward and could be taking place in any cultural setting. Most episodes follow roughly the same pattern: Ash and his friends help a person or a Pokémon in need, Team Rocket shows up to steal all the Pokémon, their plans are foiled by the protagonists, who then continue their journey, all the while following the main theme of catching new Pokémon and defeating all of the Pokémon Gym Leaders in order to participate in the Pokémon League. It's a story that is not too hard to localize.

Looking at the translation of names of characters, organizations, locations, objects and attacks, one observes clear differences between the localization approach taken with *Pokémon* as opposed to those taken with the other two series. While in *Rurouni Kenshin* and *Naruto*, characters' names are left mostly intact, apart from proper name and surname reversal to fit Western naming conventions, the characters in *Pokémon* get completely new names. In *Rurouni Kenshin*, most names have been left untranslated, with the exception of the Sakabatō (translated literally as Reverse-Blade Sword), an exception made only because of the sword's importance to the story and because so many events would not make sense to the audience if they did not understand the nature of the sword. These are signs of a foreignizing approach. *Pokémon* does the exact opposite, removing any and all Japanese elements in the series. Names are only borrowed from the original if they were already English to begin with. This indicates a very domesticating approach; the localizers clearly thought that any references to Japan would be too complicated for a young audience to grasp. Meanwhile, *Naruto* strikes a balance between the two extreme approaches taken with the other two anime, in that names are often borrowed (especially the proper names of characters), but translated if necessary, the latter of which mostly applies to location names and names of weapons or techniques. Some names, such as that of the sword Samehada or Sharkskin, were translated at first, but then the localizers changed their strategy and began borrowing the original Japanese instead. This shows a slight shift towards the foreignizing side as the show progresses.

Neither *Naruto* nor *Rurouni Kenshin* were subjected to much editing when it comes to the dialogue. The localizers of *Rurouni Kenshin* had little to concern them in terms of idiolect; the only notable unique idiolect in the series is Kenshin's, and they managed to find equivalent expressions for two of his three characteristic phrases, allowing them to stay relatively true to the original in terms of preserving the character's speech. The same goes for *Naruto*. The most difficult idiolects to translate are those of Naruto, Rock Lee and Killer B. After the audience's mocking response to the 'Believe it!' translation of Naruto's catchphrase *dattebayo*, the localizers decided to omit it in future episodes. However, when characters started referring to it in the story (similar to what happened with Kenshin's *de gozaru*), the localizers were forced to come up with a replacement translation. They opted for 'You know?', which makes a lot more sense in the context than 'Believe it!'. Japanese characters often have odd ways of ending their sentences, a feature of anime that Japanese audiences tend to have no problem with, as such catchphrases are simply a feature of their language. However, Western audiences are less used to such persistent catchphrases, and would most likely get annoyed at their prevalence (as the US audience of *Naruto* did with the 'Believe it!' translation). The phrase 'you know?', however, is uttered by many English-speaking people in general, so it does not feel unnatural to the audience and does not cause annoyance (or at the very least, less annoyance than a less common English phrase would). The approach taken by the localizers here is both foreignizing and domesticating; keeping Naruto's idiolect different from that of other characters instead of omitting this distinguishing feature was a foreignizing decision, but on the other hand, turning his catchphrase into a phrase that the audience is more comfortable with is a domesticating one. Thus, the *Naruto* localization team has managed to strike a balance between the two. The same applies to Rock Lee's idiolect. It is impossible to have him speak using the 'polite form' in English, as English simply does not have distinctions in politeness level in its grammar. By having Lee refrain from using contractions, the localizers managed to retain the fact that his idiolect is different from that of other characters, but in such a way that his way of speaking is still clear to a Western audience. The approach can therefore be considered both domesticating and foreignizing. With *Pokémon* however, the localization approach is, once again, very domesticating. A lot of the dialogue was changed from the original. Characters' lines are generally very plain and simple English, making it easy to understand for children. Furthermore, a lot of (simple) puns and instances of wordplay were added for humorous effect. This further shows that the localization was aimed specifically at a younger audience, especially when compared to the other two series.

We see further differences in the localization approaches taken with the three series when we look at the use of music in the respective series. The dubbed *Rurouni Kenshin*, first of all, uses the same background music as the original Japanese series. The first two ending songs, as well as the first opening song, were dubbed to English. This is possibly because, in the early days of anime dubbing when anime started appealing to a broader Western audience, localizers generally had a habit of providing English opening and ending themes for their shows (this can also be seen in the use of an original English opening theme in the first season of *Naruto*). This habit mostly died out once anime fans began to want series to remain as authentic as possible. It also explains why the rest of the opening and ending themes were not dubbed. Both the use of the original themes as well as the dubbing of the original theme for *Rurouni Kenshin* (instead of creating a whole new theme entirely) indicate a foreignizing approach. With *Naruto*, a whole new opening theme was made for the first season, which was reprised at the end of every episode as the ending theme. After that, Viz Media started using all the original Japanese opening and ending themes, both in *Naruto* and in *Naruto Shippuden*. Any subsequent rereleases (such as on DVD) of the first season of *Naruto* also featured the original Japanese theme instead of the English one. This again shows a shift from a domesticating approach to a foreignizing one which was already indicated by some of the choices made in name translation. The background music was the same as the original in both series. In contrast, *Pokémon* used some of the original background music in the first two seasons, but after that, it started using the 4Kids musical score almost exclusively. The opening and ending themes were always created especially for the English dub, using visuals from the original themes. This was most likely done to avoid confusion among the young audience, who don't always realize that the show was originally Japanese.

Finally, I looked at the issue of visual alterations. For the *Rurouni Kenshin* dub, no visual alterations were made compared to the original. For *Naruto*, some blood and violence in the earlier episodes was removed, but as time went on, less and less censoring took place; at the time of writing, censored versions of episodes are made solely for airing on child-friendly television stations, meaning Viz Media usually makes both a censored and an uncensored version of an episode. This again shows the *Naruto* localization team's effort to strike a balance between domestication and foreignization. As for *Pokémon*, all traces of Japanese language and culture are removed. Typically Japanese food items are replaced by Western ones, both visually and verbally, and kanji (on signs for instance) are replaced with English text. This shows the extremely domesticating localization approach 4Kids took, which was often condemned by anime fans for being too invasive.

5.2 Conclusion

As the popularity of anime in the Western world has begun to grow since the early 2000s, the influence of the audience in the localization of those shows has also increased. By examining three completely different anime, I was able to observe differences in the way the shows were localized in terms of domestication and foreignization. I found that *Rurouni Kenshin*, a show with a real-world historical basis and more mature themes, has been localized with a very foreignizing approach, while *Pokémon*, a lighthearted show aimed at children, was heavily domesticated in order to make it appropriate for Western kids. Meanwhile, the dub of *Naruto*, one of the most popular and long-running anime series there is, was more domesticating in its approach in the beginning than it is now. These differences in localization approach are easily understood when one takes into account the intended audience of each anime. *Rurouni Kenshin* is mostly geared towards true anime fans who are at least somewhat familiar with Japan and Japanese history and tend to be in their teens and twenties; they typically want the most authentic viewing experience possible, and as such, the localization team responsible for the *Rurouni Kenshin* dub implemented very few changes. *Naruto* was originally intended to be aimed towards children and younger teens, as many people thought of anime as just another form of kids' cartoons, only made in Japan, even though the definition of anime goes far beyond that. With such a long-running show, however, the audience matures over the years and Viz Media responded to this trend by switching to a less censored approach, honoring the increasingly mature tone of the original Japanese series. Meanwhile, *Pokémon* has always been geared towards young children, both in the original Japanese and the English dubbed version. This means that, in the dubbed version, virtually everything considered remotely Japanese is removed in order to make it as understandable and enjoyable for young children, who are unfamiliar with foreign cultures, as any American cartoon. Due to its audience, the approach taken for *Pokémon*'s localization has always been a very domesticating one, just like how the localization choices made in the dubs of *Rurouni Kenshin* and *Naruto* are much more foreignizing because of those shows' respective audiences. It is therefore clear that the audience plays a big role in the decision process of how to localize an anime series.

As the influence of Japanese culture and the popularity of anime keep growing, chances are that localization companies will become more and more foreignizing in their approach when handling new series, considering the increasing amount of anime fans whose interest in anime is directly linked to a cultural interest in Japan as well, making it less and

less likely that they will appreciate dubs which are localized in such a way that they lose any connection to anime's home country. It will be interesting to see how this trend continues to develop in the years to come.

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