

Japanese fanspeak in the Anglophone *manga* and *anime* fan culture

MA Thesis Asian Studies

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1. Introduction

The concept of ‘fanspeak’ is most known in the context of Western science fiction fan subcultures, but fan cultures around modern Japanese media like *manga* (comics) and *anime* (animation), also have their own set of jargon terminology. On English-language internet forums and blogs for fans of Japanese *anime* and *manga*, one might find the following kind of discourse:

1) A: LOOK AT MY BEAUTIFUL *KAWAII SHOTAS* PEOPLE THEY'RE IN A SUIT.

B: *Sugoi*~~! \ (* \geq ω \leq)! * They're all so *kawaii desu*~~

2) how do u make ur *kokoro* stop going *doki doki* over a boy?

3) I am in love of *Animes* and *Mangas* plus fanfictions. I love *Yaois* but I love hetero pairings more of course!

To people not familiar with the *manga* and *anime* fan culture, this kind of language may seem incomprehensible. However, this terminology is becoming a transnational phenomenon, as overseas fans of Japanese *manga* and *anime* are adopting these Japanese terms to use their own languages. Especially in computer-mediated communication in English, the abundant use of Japanese loanwords is striking. Despite its prominence in the online *manga* and *anime* fan culture, this linguistic phenomenon has never been mapped or analyzed before. This thesis aims to be the first sociolinguistic study examining the characteristics of fanspeak in the *manga* and *anime* fan culture on the internet, such as its social functions, semantics and morphology.

In the second chapter I will give a brief background on the rise of the *manga* and *anime* culture in Japan and its spread overseas, and show how this once niche group of nerds and geeks has become a large and respectable subculture in its own right. In the third chapter I will outline my research methods, and in the fourth chapter I try to define in more detail what fanspeak is exactly, and examine its origins and social functions. I will illustrate the reasons for the use of fanspeak by anecdotes from interviews with fans who engage in such online discourse at a regular basis. The fifth chapter will be a semantic analysis of fanspeak; I will show which Japanese words are used and what they mean in an Anglophone context, and analyze how their meaning has shifted from the original Japanese meaning as the words are adapted for use in English, illustrated by examples collected from the internet. The sixth chapter will contain a grammatical analysis of fanspeak, showing which transformations Japanese words undergo in their adaptation to English, and how these should be classified; to what extent are they absorbed into the English language? In the seventh and concluding chapter I will consider the significance of this study and discuss some suggestions for further research.

2. Rise of *manga* and *anime* fan culture

The *manga* and *anime* fan culture had become the largest youth subculture in contemporary Japan by the early 90s, and has continued to expand since then, both in Japan and overseas (Kinsella, 1998). In this section I briefly examine the scale and characteristics of fan cultures both in and outside of Japan, and outline some of the differences between Japanese and overseas fan culture.

2.1 Fan culture in Japan

In Japan, the rise of *doujinshi* movements in the 1980s and 1990s has been a main driving force behind the expansion of *manga* and *anime* fan culture. *Doujinshi*, meaning ‘self-published materials’, refers to amateur comics, animation, games, or merchandise which are not officially distributed by publishers, but instead are published by individual artists or groups (‘circles’). These artists create materials which are often derivative works based on popular professional *manga*. Comic Market, the largest amateur *manga* convention in Japan, attracted over a quarter of a million attendants in 1992 (Kinsella, 1998). Attendance numbers have been steadily growing since then, only showing a small dip in 2011 with the Great Eastern Japan Earthquake cited as the cause. In 2012 the event continued growing and drew over 560,000 attendants, and in summer 2013 this number grew even further, to a total attendance of 590,000 people (Mantan-web). Roughly 70% of participating artists are female, and the vast majority of attendees are aged between 20 and 34 years old (Comic Market Preparatory Committee, 2005).

It might just be because of the sheer number of fans, but fan culture in Japan seems to revolve around group activities more so than overseas. The aforementioned *doujinshi* circles work together to publish anthologies containing comics by multiple artists, and many schools and universities have an *anime* or *manga* club, which often functions in a similar way as a *doujinshi* circle. Members have regular meetings where they discuss the latest series they watched or read, and work together to publish a comic or magazine. Activities also include visiting *manga*-related events and exhibitions, and going to *karaoke* together, where the latest *anime* song hits are sung. Despite the old stereotype of the *anime otaku* (*anime* nerd) supposedly being socially inept and isolated (Kinsella, 1998), modern fan culture in Japan is a highly social world.

2.2 Fan culture overseas

In overseas fan culture, there is less of a focus on the publication of new material, and rather on the consumption and enjoyment of existing *manga* from Japan. There are fans who draw their own ‘fan art’, which are amateur illustrations based on professional *manga*, or write ‘fan fiction’, stories using the characters from popular *manga* or *anime*. However, unlike in Japan, this fan art and fan fiction is rarely published in hard copy. It is primarily distributed on the internet. This distribution is done by individuals, rather than by groups, and communication regarding these works primarily takes place online. There exist a plethora of internet message boards and blogs where fans discuss their

favorite series with each other. While there are some offline events and *anime* conventions, overseas fan culture mainly seems to spread itself online (Fukunaga 2006).

The largest *manga* and *anime* convention in the United States, Anime Expo, attracted 61,000 visitors in summer 2013 (Anime-Expo.org). This is a notably smaller attendance number than at the Japanese Comic Market of the same year, but still remarkable, considering that so many people gather to be part of a subculture which is inherently foreign to them. It is difficult to say how large the Anglophone *manga* and *anime* fan culture exactly is, but due to the prominence of the internet it can be assumed that the real numbers are much larger than the attendance numbers of conventions. It is certain that interest in Japanese popular culture among youth in the United States is growing rapidly (Napier, 2001), and interest is also growing in other parts of the world. For example, in the Netherlands there are at least 7 established annual *anime* conventions as of 2014, the largest one drawing over 4500 visitors (animecon.nl).

2.3 Previous studies regarding fan culture

Despite these large numbers, the topic of Japanese fanspeak in Anglophone fan culture has not been investigated before. The phenomenon of fan culture itself, both in Japan and overseas, has been analyzed in depth by various authors however. Since the 80s, fan cultures have been researched in various manners; with earnest curiosity (Grey et al, 2007), as a mode of cultural consumption (Noppe, 2011), or as a collective strategy against the power of mass media and commercialization (Hellekson, 2009). Jenson (1992) describes how fan subculture has been characterized by scholars as a social and psychological pathology, with the fan being a “potential fanatic, referencing the term’s origins”. People who are fans of something show “excessive, bordering on deranged, behavior”. It was considered a social dysfunction. By referring to fans as ‘them’ as opposed to ‘us’, the ‘normal people’, this characterization of fan subculture as pathology is disrespectful and justifies elitist beliefs about the scholars’ common lives. In early fan subculture studies, fans were seen as the deviants, the ‘odd ones out’ of society, and the discourse about fan subculture was a completely separate one from for example, contemporary media studies.

Gray et al. (2007) however, argue that we should not regard studies on fan subculture as their own, separate thing anymore. By introducing new concepts and conducting case studies on previously underexposed issues, studies on fan subculture can broaden the current views on media and society. Fan subculture is becoming more and more a part of mainstream culture, and Gray argues that the line between what consists of ‘fan studies’ and what does not, will eventually fade away. No matter how it is viewed, fan subculture remains a force to be reckoned with. Most, if not all people are fans of something, whether it is sports, a writer, actor or singer, certain brands, or movies and television. Fandom inspires people, creates communities, and in the age of the internet, which allows fans from all over the world to freely communicate, it also contributes to the diversification of language. Fans

have developed their own jargon in order to communicate about the things they are fans of, which only those involved in the subculture use and understand.

Yet previous research regarding *manga* and *anime* fan subculture has disregarded this linguistic phenomenon, and concerns mainly the culture itself from sociological and anthropological points of view. Therefore, I believe that an analysis of the language use of *manga* and *anime* fans would provide interesting new insights into the workings of this group, and will also function as a case study of language adaptation and language diversity, because their jargon involves a large amount of borrowing, adopting and adapting vocabulary from the Japanese language. Otake (2010) has argued that “the study of loanwords from Japanese, because of their distinctly different form from words borrowed from European languages and because of their rather recent entry into English, provides a good way to study language adaptation”.

3. Research methods

Since there have been no previous studies on this exact topic, this thesis aims to be a pilot study on the topic, examining the characteristics of Japanese fanspeak in Anglophone fan culture from multiple angles. In order to do so, I ask the following questions:

- 1) Why does fanspeak exist? What are its origins and social functions?
- 2) Which Japanese lexical items did Anglophone fan culture adopt and in which meaning are they used? Are the meanings or connotations the same or different from the original meaning in Japanese?
- 3) What kind of grammatical transformations do Japanese words undergo in their adaptation for use in the English language? How should these be classified?

In order to examine the origins and social functions of fanspeak, I will review previous research on other subcultural jargons and draw comparisons between those and the case of *anime* fan culture; do general theories about the functions and social significance of subcultural jargons apply in on this case, or should the origin of fanspeak be sought elsewhere? In addition to referring to existing studies, I interviewed 8 English-speaking fans who participate in online discourse about *anime* and *manga* regularly, to get suggestions for the reasons behind the use of Japanese, from the users of fanspeak themselves. The interviewed fans are all young women between 18 and 25 years of age, as they are a prominent group in the *anime* and *manga* fan community. I asked them for their motivations in using Japanese fanspeak and the connotations they had with certain words they reported to use. The interviews were conducted in English and Dutch, through online messaging via Skype and Livejournal.

Next, I will discuss examples of fanspeak taken from actual communication between fans, in order to examine its semantic properties. For this analysis, I will use online discourse on English language internet forums about *manga* and *anime*, such as AnimeNewsNetwork.com and

MyAnimeList.net, where users can comment on news and reviews, and on popular blogging websites such as Livejournal.com and Tumblr.com, where users can freely write blog entries about their favorite series. As the internet has played a large role in the spread of *anime* and *manga* fan subculture, it is *the* place where the creation and development of fanspeak is taking place. This internet communication is a form of natural interaction close to spontaneous speech, and its publicly accessible character makes it a suitable subject of study. By collecting examples of uses of Japanese words in English language discourse on these websites, it can be determined which words are used frequently and have been generally accepted into the language of fan culture. By analyzing the context and asking the interviewed fans their intended meaning of these words, a comparison to the original meanings in Japanese can be made. In order to understand the original meaning of the terms in Japanese, Japanese ‘dictionaries’ of *otaku* language were consulted, and I discussed the definitions in Japanese with 8 Japanese speaking fans from the Tokyo University of Foreign Studies *anime* club. There are many more fanspeak terms in Japanese than the ones that will be discussed in this thesis, but for the sake of comparison and brevity I will limit myself to analyzing terms that are found in Anglophone discourse as well.

Lastly, I will examine the grammatical proportions of fanspeak. Is it merely a case of borrowing in the lexical domain, or could it be classified as a type of code switching between English and Japanese? Various studies have attempted to define what borrowing and code-switching entail exactly, with the exact definitions differing per study. Therefore is still unclear in which category a phenomenon such as fanspeak could be placed. By reviewing studies on code-switching and borrowing I will first clarify what the difference between the two is, and then I will analyze where the examples of fanspeak seen on the internet can be placed in this framework. If they fit in the framework of code switching, it may imply that fanspeak is merely a case of a small group of eccentric bilinguals mixing Japanese and English. However, if it turns out to be a case of borrowing, with Japanese words being morphologically adapted to the English language in a consistent manner, it may imply that new loanwords from Japanese are entering the English language, with *manga* and *anime* fan culture functioning as their gateway.

By addressing these issues I hope to clarify to what extent Japanese fanspeak has been incorporated into English internet discourse, and why and how this is diversifying the subcultural language of English speaking *manga* and *anime* fans.

4. Defining fanspeak

The languages spoken within various subcultural groups have been studied in a number of ways. The variety of studies of jargon and slang in subcultures has increased since the end of the 19th century, however, a clear definition of ‘slang’ or ‘jargon’ is still lacking. This is a controversial issue within this relatively new field; finding the correct etymology of words, and finding satisfactory definitions to describe what they are (Zoltan, 2009). For many subcultures, the term ‘slang’ is used to describe their

specialized language use. The term originally referred to ‘vulgar language’, specialized language use by underworld groups, used to prevent outsiders from understanding the conversation. ‘Slang’ has come to be used for any non-mainstream language used within subcultures, but still carries this negative connotation.

The word ‘jargon’, which tends to be used synonymously with ‘slang’, does not have this negative image. Mizrach (1997) has previously investigated the functions of jargon in American youth subcultures. He sees it as a continuing innovation of language, as a means of challenging the norms of mainstream society, and as the key to maintaining solidarity and cohesiveness within the subculture. He claims that alternative language use is a means of marking sociocultural identity, and that members of subcultures feel that ordinary language is too impoverished to express the concepts found within their subculture. Therefore, they create new words or borrow from other languages. Edwards (2004) has also touched upon how the use of a different language can be used as a means of expressing ones identity as part of a group: “Speaking a particular language means belonging to a particular speech community”. In using language, there is the intent to communicate, and the manner in which one communicates may imply acceptance and membership into a certain group or subculture.

These ideas about subcultural jargons and bilingualism can be applied to *manga* and *anime* fan subculture as well. When asked why they used Japanese words, one fan answered: “Because *anime* and *manga* fans are fairly rare in the west, I want to express my love for my fandom as much as possible.” *Manga* and *anime* fans tend to identify strongly with Japanese culture though the media they idolize, and therefore they will want to use pieces of the language of that culture they identify with. This type of vocabulary is specific to *anime* and *manga* fan subculture, and bears resemblance to the specialized vocabulary used in western fan subcultures, where it is called ‘fanspeak’.

4.1 Origins of fanspeak

The term ‘fanspeak’ itself is derived from ‘newspeak’, the language of the dystopian future described in George Orwell’s book, *1984*. Fanspeak in American science fiction fan culture in the 70’s has been observed and described as “a literary language”, “a colloquial style” with “considerable use of words and phrases in and from foreign languages whenever the writer feels like it” and “an extensive specialized vocabulary” (Cohen 1975). These observations still apply today, as the term ‘fanspeak’ is still used to refer to jargon in Western fan cultures.

The specific jargon in *manga* and *anime* fan culture shows the same characteristics, using many words from Japanese and having very specific terms to denote only slightly differing concepts. This has been called ‘weeaboo speak’ (The term ‘weeaboo’ originates arbitrarily from a Perry Bible Fellowship comic strip wherein a man was paddled by a crowd chanting “Weeaboo! Weeaboo!”), or ‘Wapanese’, as a contraction of ‘weeaboo Japanese’ (UrbanDictionary.com). Both of these terms are used by people outside of the fan community in a derogatory manner however, so there does not seem to be a universally accepted neutral term. However, going by Cohen’s description, the term ‘fanspeak’

perfectly embodies the language phenomena in *manga* and *anime* fan culture that this thesis examines, and it does not have any offensive or negative associations. Therefore, this term is what I chose to use in this study.

4.2 Reasons for the use of Japanese words in fanspeak

The use of many Japanese words is the most notable characteristic of fanspeak in Anglophone *manga* and *anime* fan culture. In this section I will examine the means and the possible reasons for this prolific borrowing from Japanese, as suggested by previous studies and by English speaking fans themselves.

The borrowing of Japanese vocabulary items into English has been an ongoing process since the twentieth century, especially seeing an increase with the growth of Japan's cultural and economic influence after World War II (Cannon, 1981). However, the amount of Japanese vocabulary items entering English has increased sharply in recent years (Otake, 2010). The borrowing of so many new words in a relatively short time span was made possible by the increased ease of access to information on the internet, allowing for closer contacts with the donor language, the language from which new loanwords are taken.

According to Weinreich (1953) and others (Ogaeri, 1960; Honna, 1995; Edwards, 2004; Mizrach, 2009) a main reason for borrowing words from other languages is the need to fill lexical gaps. Loanwords enrich a language by allowing the expression of new concepts previously unknown in a culture, which is an inevitable part of lexical innovation. It is true that certain fanspeak terms express concepts not previously known in English, those terms are indeed filling a lexical gap. An example would be the word *moe* and its various transformations it has undergone in its adaptation to English.

4) It's weird to see Kurapika crying. But it's very *moe*.

5) Whether you like it or not, you cannot deny the impact that K-On! has had on the *moefication* of *anime* today.

There does not seem to be one clear translation or definition of this. "Strong interest in, and especially fetishistic attraction toward, fictional characters in *anime*, *manga*, video games, and/or similar media." (Wiktionary) would be a close description but doesn't quite cover its full range of possible meanings. These uses can indeed be seen as means for filling a lexical gap. Many Japanese fanspeak terms however do have acceptable English translation, for example, "a voice actor or actress", yet fans choose to use the Japanese:

6) I've been praising Yuki Kaida for being a nice *seiyuu*

Or the words for “animation” and “comics” themselves:

7) The *manga* inspired two television *anime* series including one that has been running since 2011.

These words are not untranslatable, so why not use “animation” and “comics” when speaking English? When asked that question, one English-speaking fan answered: “Because they are *manga*, not comics”. Others started explaining what makes *manga* different from other types of comics: “*Manga* is not like comics for children, it is aimed at people in their teens, twenties and older, with more detailed artwork and deeper plotlines.” So the answer seems to lie in the need to distinguish Japanese media from western ones as something unique. Filling lexical gaps is not the main purpose of fanspeak in these cases.

Tomoda (1999) suggests a number of other possible reasons for adapting words from different languages; their emotional appeal and use in advertising and mass media, and their status and usage by the elite. Tomoda’s study focuses on the use of English loanwords in Japanese, but the framework of reasoning can be applied in the reverse situation: Japanese words might sound exotic and appealing to English speaking *manga* and *anime* fans. They see *manga* as something fundamentally different from western comics, and a set of unique vocabulary fits that image they want to project. According to Otake (2010), when cultural images that make a strong impact, the word from the culture where the image originally occurred, will be the term adopted. This is why loanwords often refer exclusively to things from their country of origin, like the word *manga* being used to refer to comics from Japan only. This is possibly also related to the international character of the English speaking fan subculture, as one Dutch fan notes:

Say everyone would translate the words to their own language, it'd be extremely annoying, because it'll result in multiple words being the same things. And then we would know the Dutch words, but possibly not be familiar with the corresponding English words. So when it comes to translations, it'll be really hard to make everyone use the exact same word and decided what is equal to what. If we stick to the Japanese word, we'll be at least sure we'll all talk about the same thing. ^-^

If fans from all over the world use the same terms, it is easier to participate in discourse with fans from other countries; the terms create precision and cohesion in the discourse. Since they are talking about Japanese media, it makes sense to adapt the Japanese terms, because it is the origin of the concepts and images that fans of all nationalities are familiar with.

This purpose of loanwords is also illustrated by Daulton (2003), who focused on the use of loanwords in the media. Here, the purpose is not increasing intelligibility, but making an emotional impact. When media use loanwords, there is no expectation that all the words themselves will be

understood. On the contrary, it is the novel and unknown loanwords that make the strongest impact and create an atmosphere. For example, the use of Japanese words by a *manga* publishing company may raise an atmosphere of authenticity and uniqueness.

Indeed, it is not only the fans, but also the official publishing companies overseas that use Japanese words to some extent. An example is the mere fact that they refer to *manga* and *anime* by their Japanese names in their advertising, rather than calling them “comics” and “animation”, as would be acceptable English translations. Since the early 2000s, western companies publishing translated *manga* started to opt for keeping many Japanese words in the original text untranslated, most notably honorific suffixes (-*chan*, -*san*) and other terms of address, like familial terms such as *onii-chan* (older brother) or *okaasan* (mother). *Manga* translated in this style were marketed as providing the hardcore fans with something of an “authentic Japanese cultural experience”. A typical introductory page in one *manga* by publisher Del Rey explains:

In the context of *manga* and *anime*, honorifics give insight into the nature of the relationship between characters. Many English translations leave out these important honorifics and therefore distort the feel of the original Japanese. Because Japanese honorifics contain nuances that English honorifics lack, it is our policy at Del Rey not to translate them.” (Ai Morinaga, 2008. “My Heavenly Hockey club”, volume 5. Del Rey)

In 2008, *anime* distributor Bandai Entertainment even chose to include Japanese honorifics in spoken English conversation in their English dub of the *anime* ‘Lucky Star’. This adaptation of Japanese words in the official industry, explaining them as an essential aspect of Japanese *manga* and *anime* which cannot be expressed adequately in English, appeals to the fans’ ideas about the uniqueness and ‘Japaneseness’ of *manga* and *anime*. The use of untranslated Japanese words in official publications encourages fans to start using the words themselves too, which further contributes to the spread of fanspeak. One fan from the Netherlands confirmed this effect: “I only read the English releases, and if they use Japanese words which are untranslatable, I will probably use them too.”

Another reason that came up in the interviews was the use of Japanese to prevent ‘outsiders’ from understanding the content of a conversation:

Of course we use words in a different language from our own. When we talk about it in public nobody will know what you are talking about and *yaoi* is not a hobby you wanna let the world know about. I mean, talking about *yaoi* in the train is alright, talking about “boy's love” is kinda awkward. [...]in certain cases it allows you to talk about a topic (like *yaoi*), without being embarrassed, because the whole world knows what you're talking about. (On the contrary, people may ask you what it means and that could be even worse...)

Yaoi refers to a genre of *manga* containing explicit homosexual content. In western science fiction fan subcultures this is called ‘slash’. The word ‘slash’ refers to the manner in which the pairings are written, a famous example being “Kirk/Spock” from Star Trek (Kinsella, 1998). The term ‘slash’ might already be too well known in the Anglophone world, therefore fans of the Japanese *yaoi* genre chose to adapt the Japanese term to hide what they are talking about. It is interesting that in Japanese-speaking fan culture, the English term ‘boys love’ (abbreviated as BL) is preferred nowadays (Oosaki, 2009). In these case, the reasons for using a loanword is indeed “to alienate the outsider” (Mizrach, 1997), and perhaps even distance themselves from the topic, because fans find it embarrassing to openly talk about adult genres. Studies like Dawaele’s (2004) have shown that in multilinguals, certain swearwords and taboo words are more easily expressed in their second language, rather than their native language, because “Ideas that would be too disturbing when expressed in the first language are less anxiety-provoking in a second language”. This likely also contributes to fans’ decisions to use Japanese instead of English in certain cases.

4.3 Fanspeak as an L2 learning tool and status symbol

Black (2005) briefly mentions the role of Japanese words in English language fan fiction, original stories based on popular *manga* and *anime*. Similarly to what Weinreich (1953) and others (Tomoda, 1999; Edwards, 2004) have suggested, it seems to have some sort of elitist status. There is a certain prestige associated with borrowed words. As Weinreich puts it: “If one language is endowed with prestige, the bilingual is likely to use what are identifiable loanwords from it as a means of displaying the social status which its knowledge symbolizes.” Whether these fans are truly ‘bilinguals’ can be debated, since most do not seem to have a full grasp of Japanese grammar and do not use the Japanese writing system. Regardless, using some Japanese shows other fans that you are in the ‘know’ about popular culture (Otake, 2010). One interviewed fan confirmed this as follows: “I think it’s a kind of showing off, like ‘Look at me! I know all the terms so I’m a good *otaku desu!*’ ”

Fan fiction with added Japanese vocabulary are seen as more authentic and realistic, and authors may deliberately search for Japanese translations of random English words, just to add them to their stories, creating linguistically hybrid texts. On fanfiction.net, a popular website for uploading and sharing fan fiction, many stories contain the following kind of language:

8) "*Ne*, Oishi." "Yes, Eiji?" "If we were the sole survivors of a shipwreck, lost at sea with no food or water, I want you to eat me." [...] "*Datte*." Eiji twisted the hem of his shirt anxiously before looking up, large blue eyes filled with concern. "I don't want us both to die *nya!*" "I bet Echizen would make a tasty morsel." "Eh? How so? He's so *chibi!*" "That's true *nya!* But *mou!* We have to get Fuji-*sempai* first!" [...] "*Baka hentai!*" "*Itai!* Echizen! You didn't need to hit so hard!"

The wrong use of Japanese words is criticized by readers in this context, and Black (2005) observed that the ‘correct’ use of Japanese words seems to act as a ‘badge of membership’ in the *manga*-based *fan fiction* community, and assists in the construction of identity within the subculture.

Taking this phenomenon a step further, Fukunaga (2006) suggests that the use of Japanese words by non-Japanese fans contributes to foreign language literacy. She describes how Japanese popular culture motivates students to study foreign language, society and culture. Japanese language learners in JFL classes are getting younger, and the amount of learners has grown rapidly, at least in the United States, where Japanese classes are commonly offered at schools (Rodes&Branaman, 1999). Fukunaga (2006) interviewed young JFL students and found that their interest in *manga* and *anime* was their main motivation to learn the language. Therefore, she argues that *manga* and *anime* have high value for students as an out-of-class L2 learning tool. Whether one can correctly learn the entire Japanese language just from *manga* and *anime* is questionable, but the truth seems to be that these media create a high integrative motivation to study in learners, which could create a gateway into studying other domains of the language besides those used in fan culture. In a survey conducted by The Japan Foundation in 2009, it was found that “learning about *manga*, *anime*, etc” was the main motivation of 50.6% of all surveyed learners. A genuine interest and affinity with the language and culture one studies has been proven to increase the chances of successful language learning (Edwards, 2004), so these fans are likely to attain some degree of fluency in Japanese. This increase of Japanese language learners might also contribute to the use of Japanese words in fanspeak, since bilinguals have more words available to them, and are more likely to understand, accept and spread the loanwords that others use (Weinreich, 1953).

A recent development is the establishment of a Tokyo-based group called ‘*Otome’s Way*’, which has published the first volume of a Japanese language learning textbook called ‘*A Fujoshi’s guide to Japanese*’ in April 2013, with the second volume being currently in the works (otomesway.com). This textbook is geared specifically towards English-speaking fans of homoerotic *manga* who wish to study Japanese. This highly specialized textbook freely uses Japanese fanspeak terms in its example sentences and conversations. Therefore, if projects like this catch on, it will lead to the further dissemination of Japanese fanspeak into Anglophone fan culture.

Not all fans would go as far as trying to become fluent in an entire new language for the sake of enjoying popular media, studying all aspects of the language, including grammar and the writing system. However, these examples do show that the interest in Japanese *manga* and *anime* is often paired with an interest in the Japanese language. Despite not fully understanding the grammar of Japanese, they will pick up vocabulary that is relevant to their interests, and try to use it within the context of conversations about *anime* and *manga*.

5. Semantics of fanspeak: analysis by word category

Daulton (2009) has noted that the more a word from a foreign language is used, the farther its meaning tends to stray away from its original meaning in the donor language. This can be observed in fanspeak as well, where Japanese terms take on different connotations in English. Weinreich (1953) also observed that the intrusion of foreign words into a language is sure to influence the recipient language in a number of possible manners:

Except for loanwords with entirely new content, the transfer or reproduction of foreign words must affect the existing vocabulary in one of three ways: (1) Confusion between the content of the new and old word; (2) disappearance of the old word; (3) survival of both the new and old word, with a specialization in content.

As discussed in section 4.2, some fanspeak terms do convey entirely new concepts into English, and for those terms which do have acceptable English equivalents, (3) can be observed frequently, with Japanese terms in fanspeak having undergone a semantic narrowing or specialization. In this section I will illustrate this through the analysis of examples found in online discourse.

The Japanese words used in English language discourse about *anime* and *manga* can be roughly divided into the following four categories: Media, people, genres and characters. ‘Media’ contains the terms used to describe the different types of materials that members of the fan subculture enjoy, for example comics or animation. ‘People’ are terms to refer to different kinds of people involved in the *manga* and *anime* industry and fan subculture; writers, artists, actors and fans themselves. ‘Genres’ contains terms to describe the different types of *manga* and *anime* that exist, their many genres and subgenres. ‘Characters’ includes terms used to describe the various types of fictional characters that appear in these *manga* and *anime*, and their traits and features.

I have also created a ‘miscellaneous’ category for Japanese words that do not fit in with any of the four categories I proposed. Observed examples include are terms of address, honorifics, and other basic Japanese vocabulary which is not necessarily considered fanspeak in Japan, but is used by fans in Anglophone discourse.

5.1 Media

The most frequently encountered Japanese terms are *anime* and *manga* themselves. Conversations such as the following can be commonly found on internet forums:

9) A: Which *manga* series would you really like to see as an *anime*?

B: I'm still waiting for more *anime* adaptations of Yuu Watase's *manga*.

The meaning of these words seems to be universally known within the subculture, as everybody uses them without any further clarification. Needless to say that all interviewed fans also reported to know and use them. In a study by Otake (2010), it was described how the words *anime* and *manga* have started appearing in English dictionaries recently, starting with the Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary in 2009. So they seem to be widely recognized in English as loanwords, to the extent of being considered an established part of English vocabulary. However, in Japan the words *manga* and *anime* are used to refer to comics and animation in general, including western ones (Fujiwara, 2009), but the Gecktionary (Bergman, G. and Lambert, J. 2011), which gives definitions as generally accepted in Anglophone fan culture, defines *manga* as: "Comic books produced in Japan that read from right to left." As discussed in section 4.2, English speaking fans also defined it as such, clearly distinguishing it from comics produced in other countries. So in English speaking fan culture, the meaning of the terms *manga* and *anime* is semantically narrowed, referring exclusively to Japanese comics and animation.

Another type of media that is usually referred to in Japanese is the aforementioned *doujinshi*, amateur comics. Interestingly enough, this term is used to describe any unofficial comic based on *manga*, regardless of whether it is drawn by a Japanese artist or not. Consider the following example:

10) I drew a Sanada/Yukimura *doujinshi* since I love this pairing so much hehe *w*;;;

Here, the author is a non-Japanese fan who drew their own comic based on an existing *manga*, and they refer to it as a *doujinshi*. The following example further illustrates this universal use of the term:

11) A: Does anyone know, where I could find English Pokemon *doujinshi*

B: English pokemon *doujinshi*? As in North American made *doujinshi*? Because people who actually self publish their *doujinshi* here are far and few in between, but I can easily point you in the direction of where to buy Japanese pokemon *doujinshi* and maybe some groups that translation *doujinshi*.

In this conversation, B has to ask for clarification, because the word *doujinshi* apparently does not specify whether A is looking for translated Japanese amateur comics, or for amateur comics originally published in English. Just as in Japanese, *doujinshi* refers to any self-published comics. So contrary to the previously discussed *manga* and *anime*, the meaning of *doujinshi* is not narrowed when used in English. Referring back to Daulton (2009), who found that more commonly used loanwords are more likely to undergo semantic changes, this could be because the word *doujinshi* is not found in any English language dictionaries as of yet, and is used less frequently than *manga* or *anime* are.

Doujinshi exclusively refers to printed physical copies of the works, anything in the same form with the same content, but which is published only online, is called *nijisousaku* (derivative works) in Japan and ‘fan art’ in English, a term which was already common across other English speaking fan cultures. More recently, *doujin* without the *-shi* has broadened to include amateur publications that are not magazines; there are now also *doujin* game software, *doujin* figurines, *doujin* goods and other merchandise. This usage of the term also seems to be carrying over into English without any changes:

12) The *doujin* (self-published) circle Manpuku Jinja began streaming a second promotional video on Monday.

13) I’m selling *doujinshi* and *doujin goods*!

As seen above, it is used commonly on *anime* news websites and blogs, but as it seems to require an explanation or translation sometimes, it does not seem to be as widely used and understood yet.

5.2 People

Japanese words referring to the people involved in the *manga* and *anime* subculture are also widely adapted. Most notable is the term *otaku* (a *manga* fan or “nerd”), which has an extremely negative image in Japan. The term was coined by *manga* artists and fans themselves in the 1980s. *Otaku* originally means ‘your house’ and is a distant, formal way of address. At the same time, its meaning of ‘house’ induces the image of someone who spends their time alone at their house, reading *manga*. A murder incident by a *manga otaku* further worsened this image (Kinsella, 1998), and *otaku* came to be seen as people incapable of social functioning. According to the Japanese fans at the TUFUS *anime* club, this negative image has slightly weakened recently, but people would still never use *otaku* to refer to themselves outside of the fan culture, and if they do use it, they mean it in a self-derogatory manner: “An *otaku* is somebody who really loves a specific hobby and is very knowledgeable about it, but doesn’t know much about the general workings of society.”

In English, the word has not appeared in any dictionaries in print yet, and was one of the least recognized words in a survey about the perception of Japanese loanwords in English by native English speakers (Otake, 2010). While unknown to the general public, it is widely known within the *manga* and *anime* fan culture, all fans interviewed for this thesis knew it. In English it does not seem to have such a negative connotation as in Japanese. In Otake’s (2010) survey, only one older respondent referred to its negative image when asked for its meaning. Some fan subculture members would even go as far as to proudly declare themselves *otaku*:

12) This was my proud *otaku* moment. I'd gotten my DAD into *anime* enough that he was willing to watch it on his own, and really enjoy it!

Others use the word in the descriptive meaning of 'fan', without any negative or positive connotations:

13) I'm an *anime otaku* who also enjoys Paradox Interactive games and is studying history at Boston University's Metropolitan school

When asked whether they would call themselves *otaku* or not and why, the interviewed fans had the tendency to define their level of 'otaku-ness' by the number of *anime* they watched or the amount of time they spent on related activities. The Geektionary (2011) also defines *otaku* as "A fan with an obsession, often unhealthy, for *manga*, *anime* or video games." So the negative connotations of 'obsessiveness' do seem to be acknowledged in English fan culture to some extent, but *otaku* does not have such an extreme negative meaning as in Japan. As to why this is the case, one could speculate that it is because the original meaning of the word and the incidents that strengthened the negative image of *otaku* or are simply not well-known outside of Japan.

The word *fujoshi* has been popularized fairly recently, in the early 2000s, and refers to female fans of the aforementioned *yaoi*, homoerotic *manga* and *anime*. It was originally coined as a self-deprecating label (Suzuki, 2013). Members of the TUFS *anime* club stressed that *fujoshi* is not synonymous with 'female *otaku*', there are also female *otaku* who are not *fujoshi*, and might be offended if they are called *fujoshi*, as in Japanese it is written with the *kanji* characters meaning 'rotten girl'. But within the club it is normal to introduce yourself as a *fujoshi* or to ask "how many of you are rotten?" Its slightly negative connotation can be observed in English uses of the word as well. One male fan (A) complaining about excessive homoerotic subtext in a certain *anime* wrote the following:

14) A: Oh, i can smell *fujoshis* everywhere

B: Well don't blame the *fujoshis* if togashi's the one giving hints and winks

However, it can also be observed in a more neutral usage, as a general term for 'female fans', presuming that *otaku* refers to male fans only:

15) I guess their idea was to target *otaku* and *fujoshi* at the same time but it rarely works out.

One interviewed English speaking fan noted that she doesn't feel anything negative from the word in English, because if you write it in the alphabet, it's meaning of 'rotten' that the word in Japanese *kanji* characters carries is not present. In Japanese, the term *fudanshi*, males who like BL also

exists (Oosaki, 2009; Suzuki 2013), but that does not seem to be well known in English fan subculture yet. While all interviewed fans reported to know *fujoshi*, only 2 had heard *fudanshi* before.

Terms referring to people involved in the *manga* and *anime* industry are also used in English language discourse. For example the word *seiyuu*, simply defined as “an *anime* voice actor” in the Geektionary (2011):

16) I've been praising Yuki Kaida for being a nice *seiyuu* for Kurapika.
[...] and to think that the Filipino *seiyuu* of Kurapika is the one who voiced Chi!

Interestingly enough, *seiyuu* here is used to refer to any voice actor involved in the *anime* industry, not exclusively to Japanese actors. As one English-speaking fan explained: “A voice actor who does voices for *anime* is a *seiyuu*, a voice actor in western cartoons is just a voice actor”. Japanese fans did not make this difference, defining a *seiyuu* as “Someone who does voice acting.” The English definition is more specialized than the definition in Japanese, conforming to Weinreich’s (1953) option of “survival of both the new and old word, with a specialization in content.”

The word *mangaka*, “the artist or writer of a *manga*” (Geektionary, 2011), is narrowed again, to refer to Japanese artists only:

17) In a recent post on her personal blog, *mangaka* Yuu Watase wrote openly about her negative experiences with a former editor

Japanese fans defined *mangaka* as “anyone who writes *manga* professionally and is able to make a living from it.” However, one English speaking fan defined it as “The writer of a Japanese comic”, emphasizing the fact that they had to be Japanese, or write in Japanese, and disregarding the issue whether they can live off it. This is likely related to the word *manga* being used exclusively for Japanese comics, and the exotic and unique image that these terms represent.

5.3 Genres

Just like music fan subcultures have an extensive jargon to name the different music subgenres (Mizrach, 1997), *manga* and *anime* fans employ a wide range of Japanese terms to denote different subgenres. The main subgenres seem to be defined by intended demographic, rather than by contents:

18) Action-battle *shounen* series will nearly always be that way.

The four generally used demographics are *shounen* (boys), *shoujo* (girls), *seinen* (men) and *josei* (women). There seems to be some kind of general consensus of what a ‘typical *shounen* series’ should be like, because this kind of vague Japanese description is apparently enough for other English

speaking fans to understand what kind of series they are talking about. All of the interviewed fans knew them and could provide clear definitions of what a certain genre consists of to them. But their views might not always be the same as other fans' views on this, English speaking fans are often seen arguing over whether something should be considered, for example *shounen* or *seinen*:

19) A: Tbh, i see Hunter x Hunter as a much more mature work than most *seinen mangas* are.

B: At it's core, Hunter x Hunter is a *SHOUNEN manga/anime*. And no, portraying blood and lots of body parts being cut does NOT make it a *seinen*. Hunter x Hunter is a DECONSTRUCTION of the *shounen* genre. Look it up and then come back when you actually know something.

A: (...) Hunter x Hunter may be a deconstruction of the *shounen* genre, but some of it's individual arcs are more like *seinen* than *shounen*. (...)

These kinds of debates are unheard of in Japan, as the TUFs *anime* club members seemed baffled by this example. While the demographics of *manga* can be defined as *shounen manga* (boys' comics) or *shoujo manga* (girls' comics) for a general public, 'insiders' of the fan subculture prefer making distinctions in whether a work is specifically catered towards *otaku* or not (*otaku-kei*), or which magazine a *manga* is published in (e.g. *Jump-kei*, 'Shounen Jump type'), or which studio produces an *anime* (e.g. *kyou-ani-kei*, 'Kyoto Animation type'). So what English speaking fans might call *shounen-esque*, would be referred to as *Jump-kei* in Japanese, after the *manga* magazine that publishes *manga* targeted towards boys. So the use of *shounen*, *shoujo*, *seinen* and *josei* as genre denotations seems unique to the English-speaking fan subculture.

Adult genres of *anime* and *manga* contain the largest specialized set of Japanese jargon, to describe every imaginable perverse fetish that appears in *hentai*, which is *manga* or *anime* of a pornographic nature. McLelland (2006) describes how the term *hentai* itself is used in Japan to denote extremely unusual sexual content, while outside of Japan it is broadened to denote any kind of sexual content. Homoerotic *manga* is especially popular, both in and outside of Japan (McLelland, 2005; Suzuki, 2013), and in Japanese there is a plethora of terms to denote this genre (e.g. *june*, *tanbi*, *yaoi*, *BL*). All have slightly different nuances, but refer to *manga* involving homosexual relationships between two men, which are written by women for a female demographic (Fujimoto, 1991; Wood, 2006). The term *yaoi* is an anagram of *yama nashi*, *ochi nashi*, *imi nashi* (No peak, no punch line, no meaning), which refers to the lack of a strong narrative structure in these works (Oosaki, 2009). In Japan, the English term BL (Boys' Love) is preferred nowadays, but as shown in example 3 in section one, *yaoi* is still the generally accepted and understood denotation in English. Unique to the English speaking fan subculture is the clear distinction between erotic and non-erotic works:

20) A: i started to watch Gakuen Heaven, does anyone know is it *shounen ai* or *yaoi*?

B: I would say it's a *shounen ai* for there is no explicit sex scenes in it <3

Yaoi seems to refer solely to erotic works, while for less explicit works, *shounen ai* is commonly used. The following was observed in the preface of a piece of fan fiction that contained nothing more explicit than a kiss between two male characters:

21) WARNING: *Shounen-a.* (boy x boy). Don't like it, Don't read it.

Less commonly, the same distinction is made for *manga* and *anime* featuring lesbians, with *yuri* or *hentai* referring to explicit works and *shoujo-ai* to non-explicit works:

22) *Shoujo-ai* is allowed on icons, but no *hentai*.

The TUFS *anime* club members were confused when I brought up the term *shounen-ai*, unable to give a definition. When I showed how it was used in English to denote non-explicit works about homosexuality, they said to have never heard of this usage before. Rather, they felt a strong connotation with the age of the characters, with ‘normal’ *yaoi* or BL featuring adult or teenage characters, and *shounen ai* being erotic *manga* or *anime* involving underage boys. So it is only used when the young age of the featured characters is an important feature of the work, and it exclusively refers to erotically explicit works; the opposite of its meaning in English. One can speculate that English speaking fans, wanting to use more Japanese, literally attempted to translate the term ‘boy’s love’ to Japanese and came up with *shounen ai*, unaware of its connotations.

Curiously, the exact opposite is the case with the term *shota*. While in Japan, *shota* or *shotacon* just refers to “a person who likes works featuring cute young male characters” (Oosaki, 2009), in English it is used to refer the cute male characters themselves, or to a genre of erotically explicit works featuring underage boys.

23) *Boku No Pico* is nothing more than a very well animated *shota* with lots of sex scenes.

In this section only a limited selection of examples could be discussed, but in general, the meanings of terminology used within the *adult* genres of *anime* and *manga* seem to differ greatly between Japanese and English.

5.4 Characters

In Japanese fan culture there is also a plethora of words to describe the various character archetypes that appear in *manga* and *anime*. One of the first of these archetypes that became known overseas is the *bishoujo* (pretty girl), popularized by the 90’s television *anime Bishoujo Senshi Sailor Moon*. According to the TUFS *anime* club members, *bishoujo* is not a description specific to *manga*

and *anime* characters, it refers to any pretty girl, both real and fictional ones. In English it refers solely to *manga* and *anime* characters:

24) My favorite *bishoujo* are: Shana (Shakugan no Shana), Louise (Zero no Tsukaima) and others...

The same is the case for *bishounen* (pretty boy), with the meaning being specialized to refer to pretty boys in *manga* and *anime* only. This seems to be because English speaking *anime* fans learn these words through hearing them used in *anime*, therefore they only associate it with *anime* characters. One difference is that this word has undergone an abbreviation, with pretty male characters being called *bishie* in English by their female fans:

25) Hatsu is *such a bishie* now~ ♥.

This gives the word a more affectionate and cutesy connotation than the original Japanese term *bishounen*. This change may be related to its frequency of use (Daulton, 2009); the majority of participants in the online *manga* and *anime* subculture are female, and they are more interested in male characters than female characters. Hence, *bishounen* is used more frequently than *bishoujo*, so that is the term that has been altered.

While *bishoujo* and *bishounen* refers to pretty or beautiful young characters, there are also younger characters that would be considered ‘cute’ rather than ‘beautiful’. In Japanese these are called *loli-kyara* in the case of girl characters or *shota-kyara* in the case of boy characters (Oosaki, 2009). *Lolicon*, a portmanteau of ‘Lolita complex’ refers to an attraction to underage girls, and *loli-kyara* are the characters which are the objects of such affection. *Shota-kyara* has similar origins, being derived from the ‘Shotaro complex’ or *shotacon* mentioned in the previous section. In English fan culture, such characters are simply known as a *loli* or a *shota*.

26) Kagamine Len: DEFINITELY A SHOTA!!!!!!!!!!

(...) Kagamine Rin has been shown as a Loli in a few songs too

There doesn’t seem to be a consensus amongst fans about the connotations of these terms however; some interviewed fans associated *loli* and *shota* with erotic depictions of such characters and reported to use it “in negative content”, while others reported to use it neutrally to refer to any cute young girl or boy character. The lack of a consensus on the exact definition shows that these terms haven’t fully been absorbed into their English language yet.

Terms to describe characters’ personality traits, rather than their age, gender and looks, are also abundant. The most well known of these is *tsundere*, with 6 out of 8 interviewed fans reporting that they know and use this term. It refers to characters who usually have a cold attitude (*tsuntsun*) but

can act very sweet (*dere dere*) towards people they like (Oosaki, 2009). In English it seems to be used in the same way:

27) There's no disguising what sort of kid Hinata is and why we should like him, no hiding the fact that Kageyama will be *tsundere* for him soon enough.

Here, an *anime* blog author is talking about the seemingly very cold-hearted character Kageyama, predicting that this character will act nicer towards the likable character Hinata. The meaning of *tsundere* is already very specialized in Japanese, so it doesn't seem to have undergone any changes. Similar terms in Japanese are *yandere* (characters who express their affection through violence), *kuudere* (quiet and emotionless characters who only open up to the person they love) and *dandere* (a very shy character), but only two English speaking fans reported to know one or several of these, and examples of usage in discourse are sparse.

There are also terms denoting a character's place in a relationship, most notably used in the context of *yaoi manga*. The word *seme* is derived from the Japanese verb *semeru* (to attack) and in Japanese it is used as a noun with the meaning of "the dominant partner in a relationship", while *uke* is derived from *ukeru* (to receive) and refers to "the submissive partner" (Oosaki, 2009).

28) A: I'm writing a narutoXSasuke fanfic and I just decide who I should make *uke* and who i should make *seme*. Or do you think I should have them switch role's every once in a while?

B; Naruto to me should be *seme*, and Sasuke is *uke*.

All interviewed fans understood these and could define them in a similar manner: "top and bottom in *yaoi*", or "*seme* = attack, *uke* = receive. Terms to refer to who's "on top" and who's not during sex." There also seems to be a consensus about what type of characters these should be, with for example characters labelled as *uke* being emotionally fragile, childlike and short, and *seme* characters being cool, indifferent, older and taller. Therefore it seems that words have been absorbed into the vocabulary of English fans to a very high extent. The Japanese terms to distinguish various types of *seme* and *uke*, for example *sasoi-uke*, an *uke* with an inviting attitude, or *yancha-zeme*, a mischievous type of *seme* (Oosaki, 2009), were unknown amongst English speaking fans however, despite them being used fairly commonly in Japanese fan culture according to the female members of the TUFS *anime* club.

5.5 Miscellaneous Japanese words observed in English discourse

Japanese words that could not be classified in the previous categories can also be observed in online discourse. One term that no one seems to be able to define, is *moe*, briefly mentioned in section 4.2. Oosaki (2009) defines *moe* in Japanese as "the state which an *otaku* is in when he or she cherishes

feelings of affectionate pseudo-love towards characters etc. from *anime* and *manga*”, but amongst the TUFFS *anime* club, members could not come to a consensus on the exact definition, arguing that it can also refer to those feelings of love themselves, or to “anything that is cute in a two-dimensional sense”, in other words, limited to 2D artwork. In English fan culture it has taken on a similar variety of uses and meanings:

29) you know Killua's BMI!? for real!? woah...*shook head* you're... a *moe* >.<

30) i'm not sure how i'd react if i saw a 60 year old man cosplaying a 16 yr *moe* girl.

31) “GJ-bu” *moe anime* series debuts January 9

Looking at these various cases of usage (see also examples 4 and 5), *moe* seems to be one of the most flexible items in terms of semantics. It can be used to refer for a cute character, (*moe-chara*) or *anime* (*moe-anime*) that invokes emotions of affection in the viewer, but also to refer to these emotions themselves, or to the person experiencing them due to a certain taste they have (e.g. *shota-moe*, someone attracted to cute boy characters). While all interviewed English-speaking fans reported to know this word, no one could give a satisfactory definition either: “very very cute”, “fangirling”, “something that goes kyun in the heart”, or “the object of obsession” don’t quite cover the scope of meanings this term encompasses. Hence, most fans reported to use this word often because there is no English word that accurately expresses the same concept.

There are also numerous examples of words that are not necessarily fanspeak in Japanese, but seem to be used occasionally in English online discourse about *manga* and *anime*. For example *kawaii* (See also example 1):

32) Ehhhhhhh! He’s so *kawaii* I think I’m in love >u<

All interviewed fans knew this and defined it as “cute”, an accurate English translation, but a few associated it specifically with cute things in *anime*: “I know it just means 'cute', but it's so often used and showed in *anime*, it really has gotten an *anime/manga* feel to me.” Similarly, the word *baka* simply means ‘stupid’ or ‘idiot’ in Japanese and is not *anime*-specific, but is used occasionally in fan culture circles:

33) Its not like i want more followers or anything *b-baka*.

In this example, a fan is imitating the attitude of a typical *tsundere* type *anime* character. Three interviewed fans however reported that they didn’t like these uses of *baka* and *kawaii*. Recently, these

words are used to mock the language use of too enthusiastic *anime* fans, so they seem to be on their way out in actual fanspeak: “I used to think it was cool when I was in my early teens, for some reason now it kind of irritates me.” And as one fan wrote on their blog: “I have to admit I don't see too many people calling each other *baka* anymore. I think that was uniformly decried as silly and pointless.”

Lastly, familiar terms of address and honorific suffixes are also commonly known with English speaking fans. As discussed in section 4.2, publishers of English translated *manga* and *anime* choose not to translate these, resulting in an increased acceptance, with these words often being used in fan fiction:

34) Kuroko started chatting to his *onii-chan* about what they're going to do tomorrow.

Fans may also refer to each other using Japanese honorific terms of address, because, as one fan says, “it's totally impossible to translate them”. They seem to imitate the way in which these are used in the *manga* they read, which reflect Japanese society; the social status within the community determines which honorific suffix is attached to a fan's name:

35) Aki-*chan* took all the cosplay photos for me

36) Scans provided by Shinji-*san*

37) A: Another devastating comeback from Pich Chou -*sama*!!

B: Woa!!!! TAT I haven't read jeanna-*sama* chapter 4, and now this!!!

People who are friends on an equal level get *-chan*, and people who contribute something to the community, like those who provide translations, scans, or fan fiction, get *-san*. Fans who admire these contributors greatly and consider themselves of lower status, use *-sama* to refer to them. It can be speculated that the fans referred to with greater respect, are the ones who fulfill some kind of ‘gatekeeper’, functions; those who are the most respected may play a large role in the dissemination of certain terminology in the fan culture.

6 Syntactic properties of fanspeak

The most common word class seen in loanwords is nouns, with about 90 percent of loanwords being nouns (Honna, 1995). As seen in the previous section, nouns indeed make up the vast majority of Japanese words adopted in fanspeak. However, when being adapted to a different language, words can undergo transformations to make them more suitable for use in another language. In a study about the adaptation of English words into Japanese, Daulton (2009) noted that common transformations include shortening and hybridization. Fanspeak is an opposite case, with Japanese words being

adapted to English, but one can observe the same transformations; as seen in the previous section, Japanese words which are too long for English speakers to comfortably pronounce are shortened (e.g. *bishounen* → *bishie*). Moreover, Japanese words are also mixed with English suffixation to create hybrid derivative words, and in some cases Japanese grammar is even mixed into otherwise English sentences. In this section I will discuss this mixing of Japanese and English grammar on a lexical and sentential level, and question whether the latter can be classified as a case of code-switching.

6.1 Classifying fanspeak

It has become clear that fanspeak is a phenomenon caused by languages, in this case English and Japanese, coming in contact, with the same persons using bits of both languages within the same discourse. Going back to one of the first studies about languages coming in contact, Weinreich (1953) would have likely classified fanspeak as ‘lexical interference’ or ‘lexical borrowing’, where people who are not fluent enough in one language, will use words from the other language to make up for the deficiencies. In other words, the grammar from one language is used, but lexical items are taken from both languages. The word ‘interference’ has a negative connotation though, while the Japanese words in fanspeak are not generally frowned upon. Rather, within the fan subculture, they are used intentionally and fulfill several functions, as seen in section 4. Therefore, it cannot be referred to as ‘interference’.

As for borrowing, Weinreich (1953) mentions the following definition: “The use of a word from another language than the main language of the utterance, which has not become an established part of this language. Nonce borrowings are more or less equivalent to instances of single-word code switching.” However, in fanspeak, the Japanese words used have somewhat become an established part of the English language, albeit limited to the language used within one subculture. Also, instances in which Japanese grammar is used to some extent, or where Japanese words are transformed according to English grammar, can also be observed in fanspeak, therefore it can not be limited to nonce borrowings or single word code switching.

A more modern definition of interference is “cases where there is lexical material from only one language, but grammatical material from both” (Musyken, 2007). Fanspeak however, uses lexical material from both English and Japanese, and the grammar, while mainly based on English, also contains some elements of Japanese. As Muysken defines it: “Code switching contains both grammar and lexical material from two languages”. Therefore, it is difficult to unambiguously place fanspeak in one category or the other; it seems to fit somewhere in between borrowing and code switching.

6.2 Applying the theory of borrowing

According to Poplack (1980), borrowings function morphologically and syntactically as though they were part of the recipient language. So in the case of fanspeak, this would mean Japanese words that are transformed according to the rules of English grammar; hybridization on a lexical level.

Muysken (2007), who would call the cases described in this section ‘insertional code-switching’ also defines: “Separate constituents from language B are inserted into a frame constituted by the rules of language A. The majority of single constituents inserted are either single words or fixed phrases, which could be analyzed under borrowing”. So it seems like these examples should be classified as cases of borrowing:

- 38) A: I can't even *seme* Gakuto. ;_ ; He beats me by .6 of a centimeter
B: He can *seme* me any time he wants~

In this example, two fans are talking about their fantasies of having relationships with fictional *manga* characters, and they were discussing how the dominant or masculine partner (the *seme*) in a relationship should be taller than the submissive or feminine partner (the *uke*). The word *seme* is a noun. However, when used in English, this noun seems to be transformed into a verb, presumably meaning “to be the dominant partner”. These cases where the Japanese words are transformed according to the rules of English appear to be very abundant within fanspeak.

- 39) The story is typical and *shounen*-esque.

In this case, an English suffix is attached to a Japanese noun, which turns it into an adjective. As seen in section 5.3, the Japanese word *shounen* has undergone a semantic shift; In Japanese, the word simply means ‘boy’, but in English, it has come to be used in the meaning of “*manga* targeted towards a demographic of young boys”. Therefore, a ‘*shounen*-esque’ story may refer to a story which exhibits characteristics of a *manga* for boys.

- 40) OHMYGOD! 0_0 Its Pouf! The *Bishi*est Insect EVER!!!! <3 _ <3

In this example, both shortening and hybridization can be observed; *bishounen* has been shorted to *bishie*, and then the English superlative suffix *-est* is added. So apparently the noun *bishie* can also function as an adjective: *bishie – bishier – bishi*est? A further search for this phenomenon unearthed numerous examples of this kind of usage:

- 41) Atobe is *bishier* than Tezuka

So indeed, it seems like *bishounen* has been effectively transformed into an adjective, meaning ‘handsome’. On the other hand, adjectives can be turned into nouns too, for example by adding the English suffix *-ness*:

42) Obviously someone's jealous of your *kawaiiness* Nagisa bby~

42) I love Hidan in all his *chibiness*.

Japanese nouns are also turned into verbs as follows:

43) Armin might be seen as cute by a few fans (partly due to the *anime's shotafication* of him) but he isn't "sexy" the way Levi is seen as being.

In example 5 we already saw *moefication*, or "to make something *moe*", this example shows that this pattern can be applied on other Japanese words as well. As discussed in section 5.4, *shota* generally refers to a cute male character. Therefore, *shotafication* presumably means "to make a male character look young and cute". So essentially, 'to *moefy*' and 'to *shotafy*' are new verbs coined by the English-speaking *manga* and *anime* subculture. Indeed, other conjugations of these verbs can be found as well:

44) Hope you didnt expect me to *shotafy* Mituna because that boi is hella tougher than people make him out to be imo.

45) It's just a *moe-fied* parody of Francis Xavier and his visit to Tanegashima island.

These abundant examples of hybridization show that the English language of *manga* and *anime* fans is being innovated and diversified to a very high extent. In a study by Cannon (1994) on what at the time were recent borrowings from Japanese into English, more than half of the items found consisted of these hybrid or 'productive forms'. Cannon also noted that "Suffixation has been quite popular, producing, for example, *aikidoist*, *Atarize* and two *Atari* compounds, *judoist*, *kabukiesque*, and *karateist*." Going by the examples of fanspeak above, it can be said that this trend of suffixation in borrowings from Japanese into English is still continuing to this day.

Lastly, there is one easily overlooked transformation that many nouns can undergo:

46) Most people there are *fujoshis*.

Here, we can see that the English plural marker –s is affixed to a Japanese word (see also examples 1, 3 and 14), while Japanese nouns originally do not have a plural form. Canon (1981) noted that while some Japanese loanwords take –s plurals when used in English, many Japanese loanwords do not take a plural form. He speculated that the longer and the more frequently loanwords have been used, the more likely they are to be adapted to English morphology and take the plural –s, but this did not appear to be the case, as plural forms were observed in both older and newer

loanwords (Cannon, 1984). More recently, Shun (2013) re-examined this inconsistency, but could not find any satisfactory explanation as to why and when loanwords from Japanese take plural –s either. In fanspeak this seems to be the case as well. Both older words (“*mangas*”) and newer words (“*fujoshis*”) can be observed with plural forms occasionally, but also without. It seems to be a case of personal preference, with some fans using plurals while others do not. It could be speculated that fans that do not use plural forms, choose to do so because it sounds more authentic and ‘Japanese’ that way, because Japanese does not have plurals either, but further interviews would be needed to confirm this.

In this section it became clear that various theories of borrowing can be applied on cases of fanspeak. Japanese words are transformed according to the rules of English grammar, and previously observed trends in borrowing, like the creation of new hybrid loanwords through suffixation, can be confirmed to continue in fanspeak as well.

6.2 Applying the theory of code switching

Poplack (1980) has defined the concept of code-switching as follows: Code-switching is the alternation of two languages within a single discourse, sentence or constituent. It retains the inflections and syntactic characteristics of their donor language, respecting the grammar of both languages. In addition to that, code switches will tend to occur at points where the surface structures of the languages map onto each other (the equivalence constraint). In other words, code switching has to obey the grammar of both languages. The only instance of this found in fanspeak however, is the frequent use of the copula *desu* at the end of otherwise English sentences (see also example 1B):

47) He is my favourite *seiyuu desu*!!

Adding *desu* like this seems redundant, because the English verb ‘is’ already includes the same meaning as *desu* here. However, this sentence does not violate any grammatical rules of either English or Japanese. This is somewhat similar to examples of Japanese-English code switching observed by Nishimura (1997):

48) Look at all the things she buys for Sean *ni*

49) about five *gurai*

In example 48, the Japanese particle *ni* includes the same meaning as the English word ‘for’, but yet it is still added at the end of the sentence. The same goes for example 49, where ‘about’ and *gurai* carry the same meaning. Therefore, the adding of the copula *desu* in fanspeak in a similar manner can be seen as a case of code switching. The switches in examples 48 and 49 occur on a lexical level however, with only one word inserted, while further searches reveal that the switches

observed in fanspeak occur consistently in the middle of sentences, with the switch to Japanese grammar seemingly being triggered by the insertion of a borrowed Japanese noun or adjective:

50) This story's soooooooooooooooooooooo *amai desu!* (Sweet!)

51) This is Taiwan *doujinshi desu*

52) ASKING QUESTIONS IS *SUGOI DESU*

This is yet the only observed pattern which somewhat fits Poplack's equivalence constraint, so it is hard to make any generalizations about fanspeak as a whole. Also, these constraints were established by studying balanced bilinguals, who are equally fluent in both languages. Grosjean (1998) however, suggests that research with balanced bilinguals leads to erroneous claims about bilingualism. Not all bilinguals are fluent in both languages, so hypotheses and claims made based on research on balanced bilinguals may not apply in the case of people who are less fluent, therefore code switching patterns may depend on the proficiency of the speakers. Many fanspeak users who post this kind of language on the internet seem to be fluent in neither English nor Japanese, so they might simply not be able to respect the grammar of both languages. This can be illustrated by the following examples:

52) I AM GOING TO NIPPON AND BE A *MANGAKA DESU!*

53) how does it feel to be a *mangaka desu?*

If a sentence like 52 had to follow the same pattern as examples 47, 50 and 51, the 'correct' way to phrase this would be "I am going to be a *mangaka ni narimasu*", with *ni narimasu* being the Japanese equivalent of 'going to be'. So it is likely that *desu* is the only way of ending a sentence in Japanese that this fan knows. The same can be said for example 53. In Japanese, interrogative sentences should take the sentence final particle *ka*, but the fact that the author does not use this, shows that they have an insufficient knowledge of Japanese to truly mix the two grammars. In some extreme cases, mixed sentences turn out to be complete gibberish:

54) A: That first FAQ is amazing and I bow to your skills, *kawaii mangaka desu chan-sensei*.

B: Ah yes. *Desu desu sugoi*, my dear *gakusei*.

This extreme, unnecessary and incorrect use of random Japanese words tends to be looked down upon by other fans, and also by people outside of the fan culture, who may use this kind of language to make fun of these overly enthusiastic *manga* and *anime* fans in a critical manner:

55) At least this isn't a pairing where fangirls stick them together just because they're "*kawaii desu desu ne*".

The use of borrowing+ *desu* at the end of a sentence is the only observed pattern in fanspeak that resembles code switching as of now. And due to most fans' lack of fluency in Japanese, and others mocking them for attempting to 'sound Japanese' by code-switching, I do not think that the mixing of English and Japanese grammar will ever truly catch on in the *manga* and *anime* fan culture.

Lastly, it should be noted that the Japanese found in fanspeak is written phonetically in the roman alphabet, rather than in their original Japanese spelling. The majority of English-speaking *manga* and *anime* fans seem to be unable to use the Japanese writing system, and fans that are able to use it with a certain degree of proficiency, choose not to do so when using Japanese words in an otherwise English context. The Japanese elements in fanspeak have been adapted to the English language almost completely, both in writing system and grammatical aspects. These features show that fanspeak in *anime* and *manga* fan subculture cannot really be categorized as code switching, and that it should be analyzed as a case of borrowing instead.

7. Conclusions and discussion

Through numerous examples it has become clear that many Japanese terms are being adapted for use in English language online discourse about *manga* and *anime*, and absorbed into the language of *manga* and *anime* fans to some extent.

As to reasons why Japanese terms are adapted instead of translated, several possibilities were discussed. Sometimes it is to fill a lexical gap; but more often it is the case that the Japanese simply sounds more exotic and interesting. Fanspeak also helps fans express their sociocultural identity as members of the fan culture, to maintain solidarity and cohesiveness within the subcultural discourse, and in certain cases it prevents outsiders from understanding what the discourse is about. It also functions as a symbol of status within the subculture, and sometimes even as a L2 learning tool, as many fans of Japanese *anime* and *manga* are interested in learning the Japanese language.

While some terms are used in English in the same meaning as in Japanese, more often adopted terms gain different meanings and connotations in their transfer to English. This can happen in various ways. Common is semantic narrowing, where a word in Japanese referred to a broad spectrum of things, while the same word adapted in English only refers to a specific type of that thing, e.g. *manga* referring to comics from Japan only, while in Japanese it originally denoted all kinds of comics, or *bishoujo* referring to any beautiful girl in Japanese, but referring only to beautiful *anime* and *manga* characters in English. Specialization also takes place, with the word *seiyuu* originally referring to any voice actor in Japanese, while in English it specifically refers to voice actors involved in the *anime* industry, or *otaku* originally referring to a person with any type of obsessive hobby in Japanese, but referring only to people having *manga* and *anime* as their hobby in English. This is because fans learn

these Japanese words through watching *anime*, and hence associate them with things related to *anime* only. More frequently used terms are more susceptible to changes than less common words.

For other terms like *shota*, and *loli*, there doesn't seem to be a consensus about their meaning amongst fans, indicating that they haven't fully been absorbed as a part of the English language in fan culture yet. Other words like *kawaii* and *baka* also used to be popular, but have declined in popularity and will probably cease to be used in the future, due to them not having undergone any semantic shift and being fully translatable into English, and fans seeing it as 'silly' to use the Japanese in that case. English speaking fans have also coined their own 'Japanese' terms with very specialized meanings, like *shounen ai* and *shoujo ai*, which turned out to be unknown amongst Japanese fans. Negative connotations with certain terms are often lost, likely because the incidents that caused these connotations are relatively unknown outside of Japan, and the *romaji* spelling of the words does not carry over their original meaning.

After looking at numerous examples of mixed English and Japanese on the internet, it can be concluded that most cases would fit in the category of borrowing, rather than code switching. The people who write this kind of language, English-speaking fans of Japanese *manga* and *anime*, do not have a solid enough grasp on Japanese grammar to switch between English and Japanese within one sentence in a fluent manner. Therefore, the majority of the Japanese lexical items that are mixed into English sentences are adapted to the English syntax, and thus the main structure of the sentences remains in English. Suffixation is the most common manner of transforming Japanese words according to English rules, along with the occasional use of the plural *-s*. Both of these observations show that fans grammatically treat these words as if they were English, which implies that the used Japanese words are an established part of the language of English speaking *manga* and *anime* fans. A wave of new loanwords from Japanese is steadily making its way into English, and many appear to be here to stay.

However, these conclusions were deducted from a relatively small amount of data, and interviews with a limited number of informants, collected over the course of two years. In order to gain a better understanding, it is necessary to collect more data and survey a larger number of fans on their knowledge and attitudes regarding fanspeak. Interesting areas for potential future studies would be the multiple domains of discourse. This thesis has focused on computer-mediated communication, but some interviewed fans mentioned characteristics of spoken conversation, like the possibility of others overhearing, as a motivation to use Japanese fanspeak. It would be interesting to study whether fans speak out loud in a similar manner as how they type in online discourse. This could signify an even further general acceptance of new Japanese loanwords.

Another area still left unexplored is the extent to which Japanese fanspeak is known outside of the *anime* and *manga* culture. As of now, only the words *anime* and *manga* themselves have been found to appear in English language dictionaries, but if fan culture online keeps expanding at its current rate, it can be speculated that even people who are not fans of *anime* and *manga* may

eventually come in contact with other, more specialized terminology, and that some of these new Japanese loanwords will come into common use in the English language.

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