

## Fan-Subbing in East Asia: Audience Involvement in Transnational Media Flows

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**Abstract :** This paper examines the nature of transnational media flows in East Asia, specifically expounding on the popularity of Korean dramas in China and Taiwan. Situated in interdisciplinary academic work from cultural studies, media studies, and linguistics, this project locates the significance of certain genres and regions in determining why some are subject to flow while others remain within domestic borders. Moreover, transnational flows can take one of two routes –official translations and adaptations by media corporations and subtitles written by fans in online communities. The work of 'fan-subbing' has allowed for a more democratized showcase of what bilingual fans consume and are invested in sharing, rather than what major media companies deem relevant and monetizable. This reflects a culture of relatability driven by audiences rather than by corporate direction. Of course, a variety of technological, political, and economic factors play imperative roles in how both professional and fan-made subtitles flowed across borders and between nations. While fan-subbed media may be subject to criticism because of a lack of formal regulation, these limitations can, in some cases, be overcome by the agency afforded to audiences in the digital landscape. Finally, this paper offers a critical lens for deliberating the lasting impact of fan involvement on both professional practices and the flows of mainstream media throughout East Asia.

**Keywords :** audience studies, bilingual, cultural proximity, fan-subbing, online communities, subtitles

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