COLLECTIVE ACHIEVEMENT OF MAKING IN COSPLAY CULTURE

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INTRODUCTION

Cosplay is a Japlish combining of Costume and Play. The majority of cosplayers in Japan are women, mostly high school and college students and people in their twenties.

Cosplay is a female DIY culture. The DIY spirit embodied by this practice has become a standard in the cosplay community. Cosplay can be seen at dedicated cosplay parties at amusement parks and events for fanzine sale. They gather in cosplay events with costumes of their own sawing or ready-made ones, and are photographed by the audiences or each others. Cosplay events and dedicated SNSs for cosplayer's are a valuable venue for exchanging information, peer reviewing, and collective learning from each other about costume making, as well as for evaluating each other's work.

Ito et al (2013) study the possibilities of learning with friends and peers in fan culture in the US. They said that learning in fan culture is characterized as peer-based and friendship-based learning. First, according to their perspectives, we will indicate the cosplay community characterized as interest-driven, peer-based reciprocal learning environment.

Then, we will focus on how do women's cosplayers socialize and learn with their friends and in information and knowledge ecology from the point of view of Brunner's "Scaffolding" theory. The original notion of Scaffolding assumed that more the knowledgeable person, such as a teacher, helps individual learners, providing them with the support they need to move forward (e.g., Bruner, 1975; Wood et al., 1976). We think that the notion of Scaffolding might be expanded in this networked and connected world.

Compared to learning environments in most schools, the cosplay community has always been based on peer-based, reciprocal learning, with members creating their own rules and codes of conduct. We might look to them as models for designing interest-driven communities and collaborative learning environments.

RESEARCH & ANALYTICAL METHOD

The data introduced in this section were collected using ethnographic methods, a combination of interviews and field observations.

Ten informants, all female, were interviewed (see Table 1). Because the majority of cosplayers in Japan are female, I focused my research on female cosplayers. The informants' preferred cosplay genres were either listed on their websites or deduced through interviews. The study was conducted between August 2011 and December 2013.

The interview transcripts were analyzed according to the "Steps for coding and Theorization" method, a qualitative data analysis technique by Otani (2008). It consists of steps of coding from open to selective, a story-line writing using the final selective codes, and writing theories from the story-line. Starting from the left, text, pick out words, in other words, concept(explain left word), theme. In this study, I focus on only one category about Scaffolding and cosplayers' behavior.

Table 1: The list of informants

ID	Age	Sex	Occupation	Years
info. 1	22	Female	College student	4
info. 2	22	Female	College student	4
info. 3	22	Female	Undergraduate	6
info. 4	25	Female	Corporate employee	6
info. 5	21	Female	Professional school student	3
info. 6	22	Female	College student	8
info. 7	22	Female	College student	6
info. 8	20	Female	College student	1
info. 9	23	Female	Undergraduate	8
info.10	20	Female	College student	8

RESULT

Learning in the cosplay community does not involve guidebooks or top-down teaching. It has no institutionalized hierarchies, no formal assessments, and no applications or official markers of member-ship. Consequently, the learning environment differs from traditional classrooms and apprenticeships, and it is grounded in the reciprocal nature of learning

between members. Collaborative problem solving takes place when somebody raises a question. We could see the following conversation at the cosplay events. “I wonder how you can make this drill-like hairstyle. Probably with glue… wrapping hair around some mold and making a cone shape. Maybe attach it to a hair band…”

Novices learn the ropes from veterans through “guided participation” and through the reciprocal learning structure of the community that enables everyone to become a knowledge provider. In addition, you can observe these reciprocal situations on online. “Cure” is a community SNS site for cosplayers. They upload photos. Cosplayers use “twitter”, and upload photos about the making of costumes and items. Cosplayers use other cosplayers’ photos on the web as a reference. They expect that other cosplayers will we their photos as a reference in turn (see interview data 1 and figure 1). Cosplayers use pictures on the Web as “scaffolding” and they interact with each other, and they achieve “what they can not achieve by themselves”.

interview data 1: “You can see how to make the weapon on Twitter. So it’s possible to make it, but most people don’t pay attention to the painting. If you don’t paint it properly, it doesn't match the character. When I make this weapon. I’m really careful with the painting process.” (Info.10)

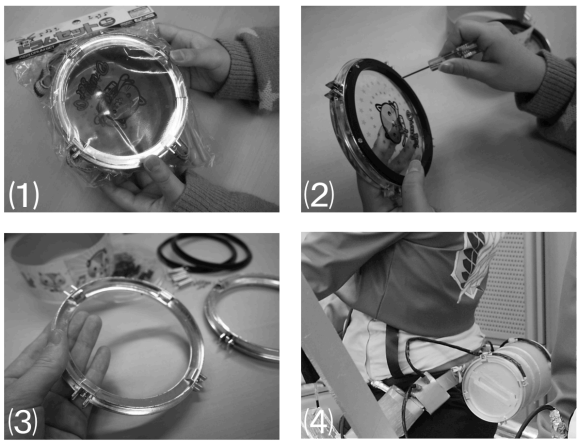

Figure 1: Making weapon with the information from SNSs.

They can challenge to make difficult costumes and enjoy new cosplay activities. When a famous cosplayer uploads photos of how to make difficult costumes, those pictures are retweeted instantly.

Then, this knowledge is shared among the other cosplayers and they can challenge to make difficult costumes and enjoy new cosplay activities. Then many cosplayer get this knowledge can make difficult costume. We consider the whole system or whole activities including this kind of interaction to be scaffolding.

CONCLUSION

In traditional scaffolding, a supporter supports an explicit learner the concept of scaffolding includes direct interaction with learner. On the other hand, cosplayers use SNS sites for archiving pictures as scaffolding, using another cosplayers photo as a reference. They can achieve “what they can not achieve by themselves.” We can expand the concept of scaffolding as a whole system including both SNS and peer interaction with cosplayers. In doing so, cosplayers are producing and standardizing available ZPD(Zone of Proximal Development) for their cosplay performing, and in doing so, they are designing their learning agencies.

The DIY ethic and practices of peer-based niche knowledge ex- change make the cosplay community distinct and a meaningful object of study. For example, some schools are engaged in efforts to design a learning environment that encourages peer-based, reciprocal learning (for example, Johnson et al. 1993). This kind of learning environment goes against the dominance of top-down instruction that has been institutionalized in most schools. The cosplay community, in contrast, has always been based on peer-based, reciprocal learning, with members creating their own rules and codes of conduct. School learning, with its superior/subordinate teacher/learner relationships, has become the norm, and interest-driven learning has become marginalized. That may be why cosplayers appear so odd to the main- stream. Rather than marginalize or stigmatized these groups, however, we might look to them as models for designing interest-driven communities and collaborative learning environments.

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