Expert and Novice Performance in Japanese Subtitling:
From the Perspectives of Readability and Translation Strategies[*]

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1. Introduction

This study aims to investigate expert-novice differences in Japanese subtitling from the standpoints of readability and translation strategies by using subtitle data from a translation contest, ALC Translation Grand Prix, for the period 1999 to 2018. Subtitling is now gaining a critical foothold as the fastest growing area of research in translation studies. Munday (2012) mentions that 'very dramatic developments in translation studies have occurred in the field of audiovisual translation, most notably subtitling' (268). Indeed, many scholars have emerged in this area who analyse and discuss subtitles and subtitling from a variety of angles. However, few studies from the comparative viewpoint in expert and novice subtitles have been conducted so far. Knowledge of the proficient techniques of expert subtitlers must have profound significance in both the industry and the research field of subtitle translation. This study, therefore, attempts a comparative analysis between novice and expert translated subtitles, mainly focusing on the number of letters, ratio of character types, readability, and translation strategies to examine several characteristics of experts' works. Although it is not easy for beginners to achieve experts' level of performance, the result of this study may provide some clues for helping their technical improvement.

2. Background Research
2.1. Main characteristics of subtitles

Audiovisual translation, subtitling in particular, differs from other type of translations such as literary translations and technical translations in several ways because audiovisual media includes a variety of elements such as sound, image, and text. Subtitling has four special characteristics (Shinohara 2018: 96-101).

First, one of the most notable characteristics of subtitling is character limit, which depends on time and space constraints. The time constraint means that the number of characters in subtitles is limited depending on the amount of time in which dialogue is spoken. Subtitlers must consider whether to cut any information in case the speech time is too short to translate all the dialogue information. Additionally, a maximum length of two lines is recommended in subtitles; this is known as the space constraint (Diaz-Cintas & Remael, 2007: 82-83). In the Japanese translation industry, the 4CPS (character per second) rule is the current norm for subtitling, and this rule has not changed for more than eighty years.

Shinohara (2013), however, stated that viewers are not always satisfied with subtitles, especially when information is omitted or paraphrased. Hence, further studies that consider the CPS rule and the condition of ideal subtitle creation are required because achieving viewers' satisfaction is one of the most important factors when subtitling.

The second feature of audiovisual translation is multiple codes. According to Diaz-Cintas & Remael (2007: 8-9):

> Subtitling may be defined as a translation practice that consists of presenting a written text, generally on the lower part of the screen, that endeavours to recount the original dialogue of the speakers, as well as the discursive elements that appear in the image (letters, inserts, graffiti, inscriptions, placards, and the like), and the information that is contained on the soundtrack (songs, voice off). In some languages, like Japanese, cinema subtitles are presented vertically and appear on the right-hand side of the screen.

This definition implies that subtitlers need to pay careful attention to multiple elements on the screen. In addition to the above statement, facial expressions and physical movements of the characters are important signs for creating suitable subtitles in context. Watching audiovisual media with subtitles gives viewers a higher cognitive load. Thus, reducing viewers' cognitive burden is the key issue to consider when subtitling.

Third, subtitles are often described using the concept of 'vulnerable translation' (Diaz-Cintas & Remael 2007: 57). The co-existence of source text (ST) soundtrack and target text (TT) subtitles is the most notable characteristic of subtitling. In this condition, viewers can compare ST sound track to TT subtitles, and they tend to feel distrust when the translated subtitle does not reflect the source dialogue. In this situation, subtitlers are in the vulnerable position of being criticised by viewers. This vulnerability is quite rare in other types of translation and puts enormous pressure on subtitle translators (Munday 2012: 312).

Transforming from speech language to written language is a fourth characteristic of subtitling. As Gottlieb (1994) argues, subtitling is 'diagonal translation'; its language transfer occurs in a diagonal way, whereas other types of translation, such as dubbing (speech-speech transfer) and literary translation (written-written transfer), occur in a horizontal way. This characteristic leads most often to a standardisation strategy in translating. The specific properties of original text tend to be reduced or paraphrased, and slang and dialect are eliminated in some cases (Shinohara 2018: 100).[1]

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[1] However, this tendency is not applicable to fansubs, which have different characteristics (Shinohara 2018: 100).

In Japan, the foundation of subtitling know-how was established in the early to mid-1900s by pioneers such as Yukihiko Tamura and Shunji Shimizu (Shimizu 1987, Toda 1994), and the subtitling process based on their practices has been carried on by practising subtitle translators ever since. Over time, audiovisual media has evolved, the market has been transformed, and the audiences' sense of values has diversified because of changes in society and the rapid growth of technology. The traditional subtitling theory, however, has continued to function as a benchmark of the current practice in Japan, even though new technological developments in subtitling have allowed audiences to participate in subtitling activities such as fansubs. Subtitlers need to be conscious of viewers' expectations to create reader-friendly subtitles. Whether the subtitling is done by amateurs or professionals, the objective may be the same as long as there are viewers to consider.

2.2. Translation strategy for subtitling

Extensive research has been conducted on the field of translation strategies in the past few decades. One of the major theories in the subtitling field is the one Gottlieb (1992) proposed. He classified subtitling strategies into 10 types by considering media-specific constraints. Someya (2009) discussed four types of strategies in reference to Gottliebs' theory for proposing a teaching model for college students in Japan (Table 1).

Gottlieb (1992)		Someya (2009)
1) Expansion	6) Dislocation	1) "As is", *or* straight translation
2) Paraphrase	7) Condensation	2) Deletion, *or* partial translation
3) Transfer	8) Decimation	3) Complementation, *or* explication
4) Imitation	9) Deletion	4) Paraphrase, *or* semantic translation
5) Transcription	10) Resignation	

Table 1: Gottlieb's and Someya's translation strategies

In this paper, Someya's theory will be reviewed because his strategy has an applicability to not only education for students but also to English-Japanese translation in the professional field. The order of application is proposed as follows:

'As is' > Deletion or Complementation > Paraphrase

First, 'as is', or 'straight translation' is applied when direct translation can be done within the limit of number of characters and can reflect the intention of ST both semantically and pragmatically. Second, 'deletion' or 'partial translation' is used if the original intention can be sufficiently reflected just by partially deleting some words. In this strategy, a subtitle is created with the necessary minimum number of words, centring around keywords that carry important information in ST. The third strategy is 'complementation' or 'explication', which involves adding a minimum necessary complement. This strategy is used to clarify the

intention of ST when a straight translation cannot adequately convey the nuance of the original text. Finally, 'paraphrase' or 'semantic translation' is the last-resort strategy when 'as is', 'deletion', and 'complementation' are all inapplicable. In that case, the whole subtitle or a part thereof is rephrased in another expression. Thus, 'as is' and 'deletion' are a kind of text-based translation, whereas 'complementation' and 'paraphrase' are meaning-based translations (Someya 2009).

2.3. Readability and document structure

Subtitlers are responsible for creating readable subtitles, and they make efforts to create them as easy to read as possible by considering viewers.

In creating Japanese subtitles, it is important to consider the balance of character types such as *kanji*, *hiragana*, and *katakana*. There are a large number of statements on character type in many translation magazines. The following are excerpts from some of the articles on the types of characters and the balance of letters of subtitles:

> There are three kinds of letters, *kanji*, *katakana* and *hiragana*, in Japanese. Because *kanji* character is an ideographic character, it can be said that its meaning is easy to grasp at a glance. Subtitle translators make excellent use of these three kinds of letters to create readable captions (Osawa 2013: 152).

> We, audiovisual translators, value the 'physical appearance of letters[2]' in creating Japanese subtitles. Even if a good Japanese expression comes to mind, we have to think about another expression when the characters are not beautifully balanced. With subtitle translation, it is very important not to mistranslate, of course, to devise good-looking subtitles (Shioike 2008: 155).

Although there is no research regarding the character ratio of Japanese subtitles, in some Japanese studies, the character ratios of various media types are investigated based on the Japanese corpus. Satake (1982) examined the character type ratio of *kanji*, *katakana*, and *hiragana* in 63 magazines in 7 genres[3]. In his report, the average proportion of each character in the articles is 26.52% for *kanji*, 57.29% for *hiragana*, and 6.95% for *katakana* (the rest are numerals, alphabets, and punctuation marks). He mentioned that although character ratios have various numeral values depending on the type of magazine article, the result of the study shows some kind of trend depending on the type of article as the genre with the highest *kanji* ratio is the critique (31.99%) and the lowest *kanji* ratio is the interview (22.89%). Mabuchi

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[2] Among subtitle translators, it is usually called *jidzura* (字面) in Japanese.

[3] He examined the following seven genres: novels, critiques, commentaries, reportages, interviews, essays and reader's posts.

(2010) et al. also calculated the character type ratio by genre of document in their study on the document structure at BCCWJ[4] (Figure 1). Their study also indicated that the ratio differs from its genre.
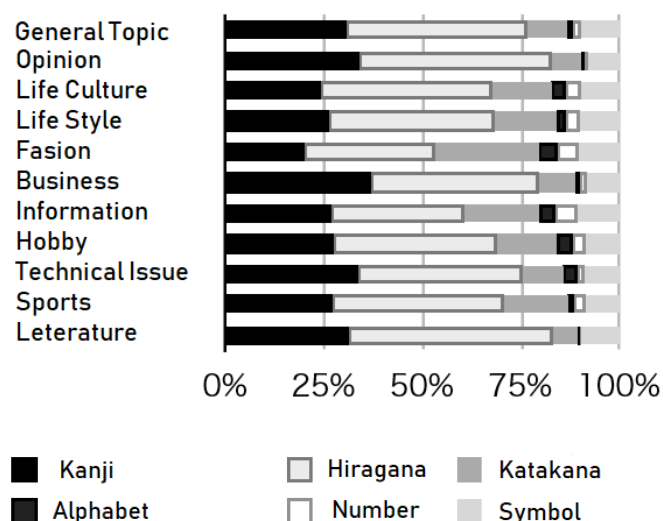

Figure 1. Character type ratio for text genre (Mabuchi, et al. 2010:317)

Hasebe and Lee (2015) developed an online readability evaluation system called 'jReadability'[5] to analyse input Japanese text and measure its readability in six-level categories ('lower elementary', 'upper elementary', 'lower intermediate', 'upper intermediate', 'lower advanced', and 'upper advanced'). They proposed a readability calculation formula based on multi-regression analysis and listed five factors for determining the difficulty level: average length of sentence, percentage of *kango*, percentage of *wago*, percentage of verbs, and percentage of particles. The system was made for educators and learners of Japanese, and 100 textbooks and the BCCWJ corpus were used for developing the system (19). The interpretive criteria of each readability level is as shown in Table 2. The authors examined the difficulty level of randomly extracted text data using the system. They selected four genre of text data, books, web ('Yahoo! Chiebukuro'), whitepapers, and newspapers, and found that web text is the easiest and whitepaper text is the most difficult among those four genres (Figure 2). Although they discussed the limitations of their readability system and the necessity of further study, their analysis results can be considered the foundation material for future readability studies.

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[4] Balanced Corpus of Contemporary Written Japanese.

[5] This is a readability evaluation system for Japanese language education (https://jreadability.net/),   and I used it as an analytical material in this study.

Readability level	Range of value
Lower elementary	5.5 - 6.4
Upper elementary	4.5 - 5.4
Lower intermediate	3.5 - 4.4
Upper intermediate	2.5 - 3.4
Lower advanced	1.5 - 2.4
Upper advanced	0.5 - 1.4

Table 2. Criterion for interpreting readability value (Lee and Hasebe 2017: 187)
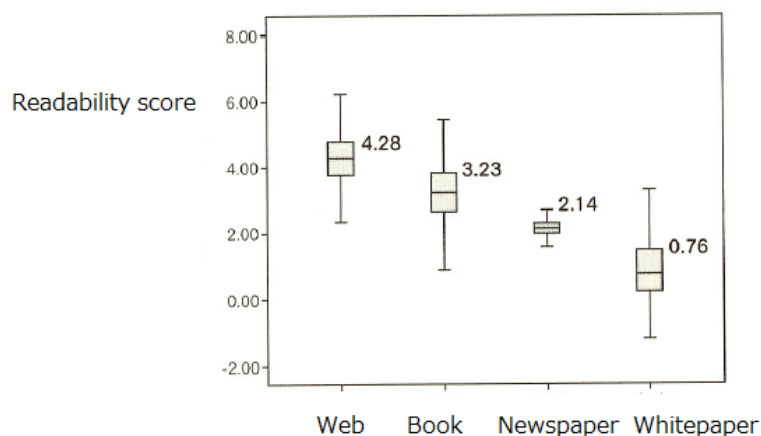

Figure 2. Distribution chart of readability value (Lee and Hasebe 2017: 190)

2.4. Research questions

Previous studies on subtitle translation have not conducted any research focusing on expert-novice differences in Japanese subtitling, and text readability in subtitling has also not been examined much so far. Knowledge of proficient techniques of expert subtitlers must have a profound significance for both the industry and the research field of subtitle translation. Given this background, the following research question was proposed:

What are the distinguishing features of experts in comparison to those of novices in Japanese subtitling?

3. Research Method

To answer these questions, a comparative study of expert and novice performance in English-Japanese subtitling is conducted. Specifically, the number of characters in subtitles, ratio of character types (*kanji*, *hiragana*, and *katakana*), readability of Japanese subtitles, and translation strategies are compared.

3.1. Data collection method

To carry out the comparative study, translated subtitles from the ALC Translation Grand Prix for the period 1999 to 2018 obtained from a translation magazine called *Honyaku Jiten*, were

collected as research data. The reason for choosing these data was that the original English text, the translated subtitles by experts who adjudicated in the contest, and the translated subtitles by novices who were awarded in the contest are displayed side by side in the magazine. This is the best condition for comparing experts' and novices' works.

3.2. Analysis methods

To analyse the differences between experts and novices in subtitling, first, the number of subtitle characters and ratio of character types (*kanji*, *hiragana*, and *katakana*) in each contest is measured. In the contest, there is a character limit for each dialogue, and applicants are required to make subtitles within the number of characters specified.

The next step is measuring the readability score of the subtitles using the 'jReadability' software. Although the system was developed for educators and learners of Japanese for measuring the difficulty level of Japanese text, this study uses the system as a medium for judging the readability of Japanese subtitles.

The last analysis involves the translation strategy. In this study, the translation strategy proposed by Someya (2009) is applied. To analyse the characteristics between experts and novices, Someya's four strategies ('as is', deletion, complementation, and paraphrase) that are applicable to each subtitle are tagged, and the overall use ratio is observed. Furthermore, subtitles with noticeable differences between experts and novices are presented and analysed.

4. Results of the Study: Expert-Novice Differences

Translated subtitle data from the ALC Translation Grand Prix for the period 1999 to 2018 are collected. First, contest year, number of subtitles offered, contest judge, and title and genre of the film used in each contest are listed in Table 3. Each year, partial dialogue from one film is presented, and various genres of film and judges are selected. The results of the contest are published in the magazine with the original English script, translated subtitles by experts and novices (awardees). The observations of subtitles by experts (the contest judges) and novices (the awardees of each contest) are presented in the following section.

Year	Number of subtitles	Contest judge	Film titles used in the contest	Genre
1999	27	Yukiko Furuta	BOOGIE NIGHTS	Drama
2000	38	Yukiko Furuta	RUNAWAY BRIDE	Romance
2001	17	Yukiko Furuta	TITUS	Drama/ History/ Art
2002	23	Naoko Ohta	THE OTHERS	Suspense/ Horror
2003	25	Souhei Okada	JOHN Q	Drama/ Suspense
2005	25	Kanji Hayashi	THE NEGOTIATOR	Suspense/ Crime
2006	26	Kanji Hayashi	AROUND THE WORLD IN 80 DAYS	Adventure/ Comedy
2007	20	Kanji Hayashi	A SOUND OF THUNDER	SF/ Panic
2008	21	Kanji Hayashi	MICHAEL CLAYTON	Suspense/ Crime/ Mistery
2010	30	Keiko Sato	BALLS OF FURY	Comedy
2011	34	Keiko Kishida	THE BURNING PLAIN	Drama
2012	40	Tomoko Sugita	INCENDIARY BLOWN APART	Drama
2013	37	Mayumi Kato	THE GOOD DOCTOR	Suspense
2014	49	Yoko Kodera	CONAN THE BARBARIAN	Action/ Adventure
2015	51	Katsutosi Katsumata	SIDE EFFECTS	Suspense
2016	39	Fumiko Nozaki	MOOMING ON THE RIVIERA	Family/ Fantasy
2017	38	Keiko Kishida	PADDINGTON	Comedy/ Adventure/ Family
2018	47	Kiyoshi Takahashi	NERVE	Suspense

Table 3. Details of the contest[6]

4.1. The number of characters and the character type ratio

One of the outstanding features is that experts tend to create subtitles with fewer characters than novices even though both keep the constraint of the number of characters in each contest (Figure 3). As a reference, the total number of limited characters in the contest was 6,501, the total number of subtitle characters created by experts was 6,015, and the total number of subtitle characters created by novices was 6,182. In 13 contest out of 18, the results showed that experts were making subtitles with fewer characters. On average, novices were making subtitles that had 10 characters more for each contest, or 0.33 characters more for each subtitle.
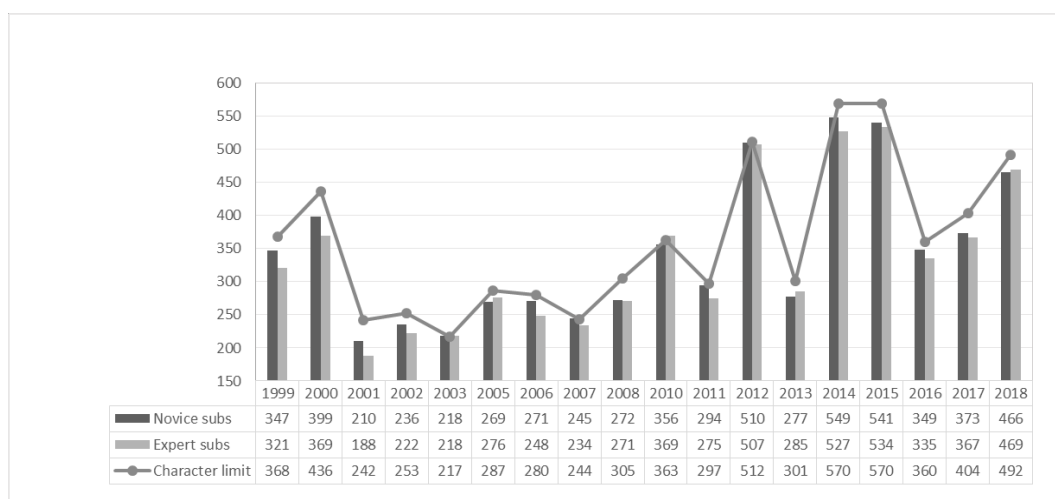

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2005	2006	2007	2008	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Novice subs	347	399	210	236	218	269	271	245	272	356	294	510	277	549	541	349	373	466
Expert subs	321	369	188	222	218	276	248	234	271	369	275	507	285	527	534	335	367	469
Character limit	368	436	242	253	217	287	280	244	305	363	297	512	301	570	570	360	404	492

Figure 3. The number of characters created by experts and novices within the character limit in each contest

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[6] With regard to 2004 and 2009, data could not be obtained because no contest was held in 2004, and nobody was awarded in 2009.

The next feature is the character type ratio. What is distinctive here is that experts used *katakana* more frequently than novices, whereas novices used more *hiragana* than experts (Figure 4 and Table 4). Specifically, in 13 contests out of 18, experts' *katakana* usage rate was higher, and novices' *hiragana* usage rate was higher. On the other hand, there was no outstanding difference in the proportion of *kanji* usage in each contest, while the usage ratio of the novice was slightly higher. On average, the usage ratio of *katakana* of experts was 2.1% higher than that of novices.
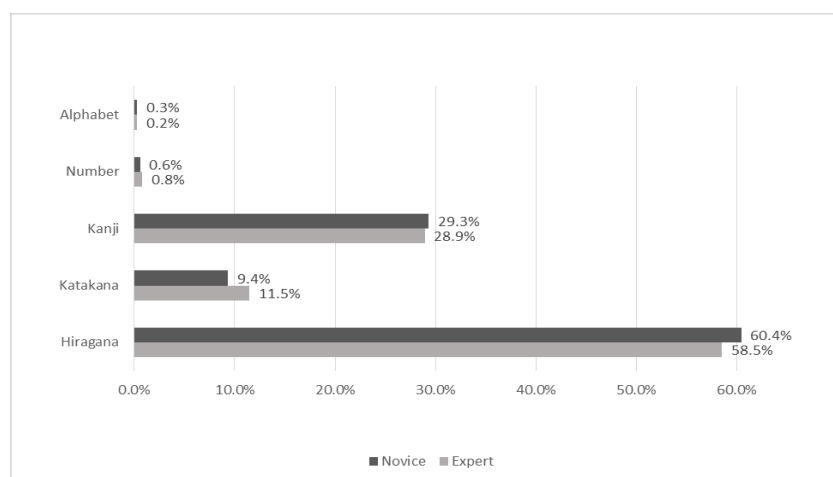

Figure 4. Usage ratio of character types for experts and novices

Novice

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2005	2006	2007	2008	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Hiragana	57.6%	68.2%	61.9%	66.5%	69.7%	60.7%	59.4%	39.2%	43.8%	60.4%	70.4%	64.7%	63.5%	51.2%	56.4%	67.4%	64.9%	61.4%
Katakana	4.3%	13.3%	1.4%	0.0%	3.2%	11.9%	5.9%	24.9%	23.2%	16.3%	3.4%	6.1%	3.2%	12.2%	12.8%	4.6%	8.8%	12.9%
Kanji	37.5%	16.0%	36.7%	33.1%	27.1%	27.4%	33.9%	35.5%	26.4%	23.0%	25.9%	29.2%	33.2%	36.2%	28.9%	27.4%	25.7%	24.2%
Number	0.6%	2.5%	0.0%	0.4%	0.0%	0.0%	0.7%	0.4%	3.3%	0.3%	0.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.4%	0.4%	0.6%	0.5%	0.0%
Alphabet	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	3.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

Expert

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2005	2006	2007	2008	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Hiragana	56.1%	58.5%	59.0%	65.8%	67.9%	63.9%	55.2%	38.0%	41.6%	65.9%	65.5%	67.1%	57.9%	51.8%	54.9%	62.8%	65.1%	56.1%
Katakana	11.8%	20.1%	3.2%	0.0%	3.2%	11.6%	8.9%	31.2%	28.1%	7.0%	8.0%	5.7%	7.4%	14.6%	15.6%	8.0%	9.3%	13.2%
Kanji	31.5%	18.2%	37.2%	33.8%	28.9%	24.2%	35.1%	30.3%	23.7%	26.6%	26.2%	27.2%	34.7%	33.2%	28.0%	27.7%	24.8%	29.2%
Number	0.6%	3.3%	0.5%	0.5%	0.0%	0.4%	0.8%	0.4%	3.3%	0.5%	0.4%	0.0%	0.0%	0.4%	0.4%	1.5%	0.8%	0.0%
Alphabet	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	3.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

Table 4. Details of usage ratio

Examples (1) to (3) are striking cases of an experts' excellent use of each character type, and *katakana* in particular. The expert was strongly conscious of the balance of character type and especially regarded *katakana* as an important element to create readable subtitles.

(1)

	Novice	Expert
I'll have my hair up somehow.	髪は上げて	髪の毛はアップにして
Maybe with a little… in the back.	後ろに飾りでも つけようかな	飾りをつけるの

(2000)

(2)

	Novice	Expert
[…] the biggest pimp that I know, super-fly Agent Flynn, ladies and gentlemen. Agent Flynn.	最高に優秀な旦那 フリン特別捜査官だ	マジでブッ飛んでる フリン特別捜査官だぜ

(2008)

(3)

	Novice	Expert
It's been flattened by storms and flooded out and rotted with plague.	嵐や洪水や疫病でも 破壊できなかった	嵐にも洪水にも ペスHにも負けなかった

(2012)

4.2. Readability score: Difficulty level of each subtitle

The readability score of each Japanese subtitle text measured by the readability evaluation system 'jReadability' is shown in Table 5. The results show that novices had a relatively high score even though there was no major difference between experts and novices in each contest. The subtitles of both experts and novices ranged from 'upper elementary' to 'upper intermediate'. The highest score and the lowest score for experts was 4.76 and 3.12, while the scores for novices were 4.93 and 2.92. This indicates that novices tend to have a slightly larger variation in numerical value. The distribution of each value is shown in following boxplot (Figure 5). The average values were 3.96 for expert and 4.02 for novices. These scores are in the range of 'lower intermediate'.

Year	Novice	Expert
1999	3.69	3.93
2000	4.93	4.73
2001	3.42	3.38
2002	3.87	3.47
2003	3.73	3.43
2005	3.65	4.01
2006	3.59	3.62
2007	3.85	4.48
2008	4.85	4.76
2010	4.57	3.89
2011	4.28	4.28
2012	3.55	3.76
2013	4.09	3.59
2014	2.92	3.12
2015	4.07	3.89
2016	4.53	4.38
2017	4.46	4.42
2018	4.35	4.13
Average	4.02	3.96

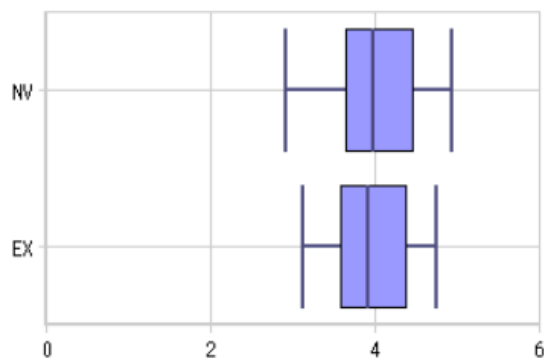**Table 5. Readability scores for subtitles in each contest**

Figure 5. Distribution of readability values for experts (EX) and novices (NV)

4.3. Expert-novice differences in translation strategy

The investigation of translation strategies for each subtitle found differences between experts and novices, especially in 'deletion' and 'paraphrase' (Table 6). Moreover, experts used far more 'as is' strategies than novices, implying that they were more faithful to the original text within character restrictions.

Strategy	Novice	Expert
'As is'	68.1%	81.3%
Deletion	9.8%	5.9%
Complementation	3.0%	1.9%
Paraphrase	19.1%	10.9%

Table 6. Usage ratio of each translation strategy

Examples (4) to (6) are cases where deletions by novices were often seen. The underlining indicates that experts translated words like 'to the newspaper' and 'it takes two to tango', while novices deleted these words. That is, experts avoided omitting the words in the original sentences as much as possible and were still able to adhere to the character limit while making subtitles. There was also a difference between experts and novices in the method of choosing information.

(4)

	Novice	Expert
<u>This letter</u> should have been collected and delivered <u>to the newspaper</u> five days ago.	これは 5日前に 出すはずだったの	5日前 <u>新聞社に</u> 出したはずの<u>手紙</u>

（2002）

(5)

	Novice	Expert
28: The Sun, says you are an evil monster but I don't believe in evil. I know <u>it takes two to tango</u>.	サン紙はあなたのことを 邪悪な極悪人と言うけど――	新聞はあなたを悪魔だと 言うけど<u>責任は双方にある</u>
29: I know you're <u>vexed at</u> the leaders of the Western world. Well, I'll be writing to them, too.	私は西側の偉い人たちにも 同様に手紙を書くつもり	西側に<u>文句があるんでしょ</u> 私が各国の指導者に手紙を

（2012）

(6)

	Novice	Expert
8: And… (chuckles)	彼ったら――	ある晩――
9: One night, he <u>climbed over the bar</u> and offered to teach me how to make them.	ある晩とうとう私に 作り方を教えたの	<u>カウンターを越え</u> 作り方を教えてくれた

（2015）

Paraphrase strategy was also often observed in novices' works. Examples (7) to (9) are some of the cases where novices paraphrased the original words, which are underlined. These examples indicate that novices tend to generalise or condense information, whereas experts translate the details of the original text within the character limit.

(7)

	Novice	Expert
There were a <u>few millions</u> left over when I bought <u>my bikini and the evening dress</u>, and the cocktail pyjamas, and?	<u>お買い物の残り</u>が <u>何百万か</u>あるの	<u>ビキニやドレス</u>を買った 残りが<u>200〜300万</u>

(20

16)

(8)

	Novice	Expert
9: Bet you thought, "she's an <u>East End girl</u>. She's bound to have a <u>Gran and a Mum and her fourteen Aunts</u> all rallying around saying:	<u>労働者階級</u>の出身だから <u>大家族</u>が寄ってたかって――	<u>イースト・エンド</u>育ちなら 慰めてくれる<u>祖母や母</u>や――
10: 'you'll get over it, love. How about a nice cup of rosie?'"	見舞いに来るとでも?	<u>おば</u>がいるはずだと

（2012）

(9)

	Novice	Expert
I remember she had problems with sleep and nausea. Chills….	どれも<u>副作用</u>が強く出て	<u>睡眠障害に吐き気に悪寒</u>…

(2015)

Examples (10) and (11) below also indicate the use of paraphrase strategy by novices. Although experts applied 'as is' strategy, novices completely paraphrased the original sentences without selecting any details from the ST. Regarding (11), Kanji Hayashi (2006), the judge of the contest of that year, commented that 'it was a bit disappointing that her translation was a little far from the original text' (141).

(10)

	Novice	Expert
Well, that is always assuming that the walls haven't sprouted legs and moved in the meantime.	何も変わっていなければの話ですけど	壁に足が生えて動いてなければですが

(2002)

(11)

	Novice	Expert
Today is the day I will finally achieve what has been deemed impossible.	今日は人類にとって歴史に残る日となる	今日 私はついに不可能を可能にする

(2006)

5. Discussion and Practical Implications

The results of the investigation can be summarised using the following three points, and they are the possible answers to the research question, 'What are the distinguishing features of experts in comparison to those of novices in Japanese subtitling?'

First, experts create subtitles with fewer characters than novices within a limited number of characters, and they pay attention to the balance of character types by effectively using *katakana*. Second, novices have relatively higher readability scores in their texts. This means the difficulty level of their Japanese texts is lower compared to those of experts even though there was no big difference between them in the contest. To stretch the point a bit, the results suggest that experts write more sophisticated Japanese sentences, but further investigation is needed on this because the evaluation system applied in this study is not necessarily suitable for analysing subtitle texts. Third, experts translate the original texts more faithfully into within character restrictions. In the study, for experts, the use of 'as is' strategy was about 80% of the total, whereas for novices, it was less than 70%. Instead, novices used more strategies of 'deletion' and 'paraphrase' in contrast to experts.

Although they should be verified with more cases in to achieve generalisation, the results of this study have practical implications for the translation industry. At the same time, their educational significance can be suggested for learners of subtitle translation. Recognising differences between experts and novices in subtitling performance would provide many practical tips for creating viewer-friendly subtitles. Ohta (2013), who adjudicated in the contest in 2002, mentioned, on an empirical basis, that the use of *katakana* in Japanese subtitles tends to increase relatively (70). This study quantitatively proved the validity of her statement. The proportion of the use of *kanji*, *hiragana*, and *katakana* in subtitling was thought provoking. This study showed that the character ratio of expert subtitles was 28.9% (*kanji*), 58.5% (*hiragana*), and 11.5% (*katakana*) on average. In comparison to other media types, such as magazines and newspapers, as mentioned previously in the background research section, there was not much difference in the character ratio except for a slightly larger number of *katakana* in subtitles. Further, observing translated subtitles from the perspective of translation strategy was meaningful for learners of subtitles. In most studies of subtitle translation, indirect translations such as deletion or paraphrase is focused on as research objects. It is widely known to the general public that all the information in the original text cannot be subtitled because of character limits. This paper, however, would like to contend that indirect translations such as deletion and paraphrase are just one of the features of subtitling, and the usage ratios of these strategies are not necessarily high. Expert subtitlers try to translate all the details of the original text within character restrictions, and they struggle not to omit words as much as possible.

6. Conclusion and Further Research

This paper showed expert-novice differences in Japanese subtitling. The results of this study may provide some clues for considering translation methods and readable Japanese subtitles. However, further research is required because the amount of data collected in this study is not enough to determine the general characteristics of experts and novices. Moreover, to examine the condition of readable subtitles, knowledge of the viewers' impression is also required. Therefore, in the future, it would be useful to conduct interviews or questionnaire survey among audiences.

The rapid development of technology has an important effect on subtitling practice and allows anyone to participate in subtitling activity. Subtitling is now created not only by professionals but also, in some cases, by amateurs. However, one concern in such situations is that elaborate professional works by experts tend to be neglected. As this study has shown, experts create subtitles while considering various things such as the balance of character type and the fidelity to the original text within character limits. Their fine techniques have supported Japanese film subtitles so far, and their thoughtful subtitles have raised the language awareness of Japanese people. How many amateurs or fansubbers have the competence to write correct Japanese and yet be make subtitles with well-balanced

characters? In this era when anyone can make subtitles, I believe that focusing on readable subtitles by reviewing professional techniques would have a positive effect on future subtitling practices and the language activity of human beings even if subtitle translation is replaced by machines in the future.

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