

# Re: Amazing subtitles

---

*Source:* <http://sci.tech-archive.net/Archive/sci.lang.japan/2007-03/msg00175.html>

---

- *From:* Travers Naran <[tnaran@xx](mailto:tnaran@xx)>
  - *Date:* Fri, 09 Mar 2007 05:31:42 GMT
- 

pieter mioch wrote:

I think that there are plenty of doubtful translations made on purpose to fit the screen and to make the Japanese more natural but at the same time it seems that in an average movie the translator hasn't got the first clue 5~10 times. Perhaps this is especially so when translating (modern) USA idiom.

Same thing happens with the unmentionable sub-genre of (whispers) anime & manga. That's why there is such interest in learning Japanese to escape the (maybe) well-meaning intentions of the "professional" adapter classes. Not the translators -- the 'adapters'. The people who only speak English and take the translators' work to try to mold it into natural English. They try to overcome cultural and linguistic references with suitable English/American replacements. Supposedly. Sometimes they just make up dialog because they find it too hard to adapt the original.

I've lost track of the number of dubious Japanese to English translations from early releases into English, but it has become a LOT better now. Especially since releasing companies have all but given up trying to hide that these stories take place in Japan.[1] :-)

But as I understand, the same thing happens with classic literature. Wasn't the classic English translation of the Book of Genji by Waley supposed to have taking significant liberties?

[1] 4-Kids entertainment and Funimation are the last hold-outs, but at least Funimation limits it to the "kids" shows. 4-Kids is just eeevilll.