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Character voice in subtitles: a case study of the Japanese subtitles of *The Witcher*

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Abstract:

In storytelling, one of the most important functions of dialogue is to create characterisation. Character voice is each character's unique style of speaking, which can impart explicit or implicit information about characters, such as their personality, age, or gender. Japanese language texts are known to use gendered language and role language (*yakuwarigo*) as a way of creating characterisation and character voice.

This case study examines the English dialogue and the Japanese subtitles of four characters (Tissaia, Yennefer, Geralt, and Jaskier) from the series *The Witcher*. The aim was to categorize the strategies used to recreate the original character voice, to mark the differences in the character voices, and to examine their possible impact on the overall characterisations. The study concludes that the main strategy in creating character voice was gendered language and role language. Overall, the English and Japanese character voices were roughly equivalent with each other, and the used gendered language was supported by the characters' personalities or appearance. The character Jaskier had the most differences between his English and Japanese dialogue, most likely due to the difficulties in recreating his brand of humorous tone in subtitle form.

Keywords: Japanese, translation, subtitles, character voice, characterisation, characterization, role language, *yakuwarigo*, *The Witcher*

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1. Introduction

As someone who both writes and consumes plenty of literary fiction and other types of fictional media, I have always held a deep interest in characterisation and character voice, and the way even the smallest of details in dialogue can change the audience's perception of a character. When it comes to translation, this is something that can sometimes either make or break a good translation. If a character's dialogue is not translated accurately enough or some important details are left out or changed, the audience's impression of that character and their personality can change drastically. These sort of changes can even have an effect on the character's popularity within the fanbase. In other words, the translator's choices can greatly affect the way the audience or the reader react to a character. It is because of this deeply held personal interest, and character voice's general importance in storytelling and translation, that I chose character voice as the topic for this case study.

The structure of this thesis is the following. In this introductory section, the aim and research questions are explained. After that comes a section on background and relevant theories. These sections take a brief look at the background of this study and concepts such as character voice, dialogue, and the problems and constraints that come with subtitling audiovisual media. These are then followed by previous studies, which as the name suggests, casts a look at some previous studies in the field of subtitle translation, role language, and character voice. After previous studies follows the material and method section, which describes both the material and methodology used in this case study.

After these theory-focused sections follows the results section, which shortly explains the main findings of the study. The results are followed by analysis, where the findings are analysed in more detail alongside with concrete examples. These findings are expanded upon in the discussion section, and finally followed by the conclusion of the thesis.

1.2. Aim and research questions

The main aim of this case study is to find out how the translation process affects character voice in the subtitles of the Netflix-produced TV series *The Witcher*. Through this case study, I hope to categorise and describe different strategies which help to carry over character voice through subtitles.

The research questions are:

1. What kind of strategies were used to recreate the original character voices in the target text?

2. If there are clear differences between the character voices in the source text (ST) and the target text (TT), how do they affect the characterisation?

2. Background and relevant theories

2.1. Background

Dialogue forms a large part of fictional narrative in all forms of storytelling, but when it comes to film narrative, dialogue makes up most of it. One of the most important functions of dialogue in film is to create characterisation (Kozzloff, qtd. in Howell 292). This lets the audience know about who the characters are, what they want, or even where they come from. Dialogue can contain explicit information, like when the characters clearly talk about other characters or events and give the audience information in order to move the story forwards (Howell 2007, 292). However, dialogue can also contain implicit information, something which is implied but not outright said, such as when a character speaks in a dialect, imparting more subtle information about the character's background. A character's unique style of speaking and personality is called 'character voice'.

Creating subtitles for an audiovisual media, i.e. media with both picture and sound, has its own constraints. According to Howell (2007, 293), in the case of Japanese and English, there are two barriers to recreating character voice: the pragmatic and socio-linguistic differences between the two languages, and the technical constraints of subtitling, such as a character limit. De Linde (1997) found that linguistic items which carry interpersonal and textual functions are omitted more readily than carriers of representative functions. In other words, if the audience can understand the situation without that particular piece of information that would tell something about the character, but is not strictly necessary for understanding the situation or plot of the story, the translator is more likely to omit it due to time and character restrictions (qtd. In Howell 2007, 295).

Dialects and accents can pose a problem for the translator. While it is not possible to entirely reproduce a dialect or an accent in translation, one should try to reproduce the general connotations implied by the dialect in the source culture (Howell 2007, 293). Japanese uses linguistic and sociocultural resources such as sentence-final particles, gendered first-person pronouns, and suffixes to create pragmatic meanings which have no direct equivalents in English. This turns the frequent use of role language in Japanese fiction into a translation problem.

2.2. Relevant theories

Kinsui's research on role language (Teshigawara and Kinsui 2011) and gendered language is the most important theory behind this study. The characters whose dialogue is analysed will also be described using Vogler's character archetypes (2007).

Satoshi Kinsui coined the term 'role language' (*yakuwarigo*) back in 2000, and a large part of this study is based on the previous research into this phenomenon. Role language is defined as a set of spoken language features and phonetic characteristics associated with particular character types (Teshigawara and Kinsui 2011, 38). In other words, the vocabulary and grammar of a character's speech varies depending on the character's attributes (gender, age, social status, birthplace, etc.). Some extralinguistic variables can be taken into consideration too, like appearance, personality, and whether the character is human or non-human.

Vogler's book, *The Writer's Journey: Mythic Structure for Writers* (2007), is a guide to screenwriting. The character types discussed within it are based on an earlier work of comparative mythology by Joseph Campbell, author of *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (1949). The theories and archetypes by Vogler and Campbell are widely used by modern writers, but these aspects are also recognisable in old tales and myths that long precede Vogler and Campbell's findings. To put it shortly, these theories describe common story structure and patterns which can be observed in myths and stories all over the world. Vogler has talked extensively about character archetypes such as the hero, the mentor, and the ally. These archetypes are used to support the character profiles in this study. To be clear, each character archetype has several subtypes underneath them, for example there are multiple subtypes of the hero archetype. One of these hero subtypes is a loner hero, someone who acts outside of the society or community and might not be looked upon kindly by other characters (Vogler 2007, 60).

According to Teshigawara and Kinsui (2011), role language allows readers to easily recognise these archetypes, and to impart information about the characters to the audience. It can be used to characterize minor characters in a story in order to highlight the main characters, and should be looked at as a code; a shared knowledge between the creator and the audience. The use of role language is not exclusively Japanese (Teshigawara and Kinsui 2011, 38), but English does not use role language as extensively.

Gendered role language differs from the actual language used by men and women. The male role language developed language used during the Edo period (1600-1868) and was further influenced by male student language during the Meiji period (1868-1912). The female role language on the other hand was influenced by schoolgirl language and used by female students during the Meiji period.

Although these do not reflect real life language use, their style and usage has changed over time and it is influenced by real social changes (Teshigawara and Kinsui 2011, 49-50). According to Furukawa (2010, 182), characters in Japanese translations often tend to be more clearly feminine or masculine than in their ST counterparts.

3. Previous studies

In this section, relevant previous studies in the field of audiovisual translation and subtitles, role language, and character voice will be discussed.

3.1. Audiovisual translation and subtitles

There have been plenty of previous studies done on the field of audiovisual translation (AVT) and in the creation of translated subtitles. In *Subtitling: A new university discipline*, Henrik Gottlieb (1992) discusses what makes subtitling a unique form of translation. Gottlieb defines the five characteristics that make subtitling a unique form of translation as such; it is written, additive, immediate, synchronous and polymedial. Then he compares the six major types of translation, using the above five characteristics.

Gottlieb (1992) defines different types of subtitling, such as intralingual and interlingual subtitling, and subtypes under these. Then he discusses the constraints of subtitling. Formal (quantitative) constraints include the size of the screen which limits the number of characters, and the speed of spoken dialogue versus audience's reading speed. Textual (qualitative) constraints include the way subtitles intrude into the picture and challenge the audible dialogue. The article also showcases some subtitle-specific translation strategies and presents a pilot study on the loss of information in translation.

On the other hand, in *Language-political implications of subtitling*, Gottlieb offers insight into subtitling and its language-political implications (Gottlieb 2004). First, different subtexts of subtitling are discussed, such as comparing pro-subtitle countries and pro-dub countries, and there's even examples of 'exotic' subtitling, such as when using subtitling as a tool to show the audience unspoken thoughts, or when subtitling another language in a film so that the English audience can understand it. Next, he writes about the role of English in the modern world and how it has established itself as the second language for many. Dubbing and subtitling are also compared: the history of the debate is described and the pros and cons of both are considered, such as the fact that subtitling tends to condensate the original dialogue somewhat and is governed by the norms of written language. The article questions the implications of subtitles, such as improved reading skills, improved foreign

language skills, and others, and points out how the abundance of original English media leads towards anglicisation.

In *Subtitling Norms for Television: An Exploration Focussing on Extralinguistic Cultural References*, Pedersen studies the translation of Extralinguistic Cultural References (ECRs) in subtitles. He explains the nature of subtitles and goes into more detail about the constraints of subtitling (Pedersen 2011, 19-23). Relevant to this study is Pedersen's findings on the constraints of subtitles, and the loss of information which happens when subtitles are forced to be condensed, i.e. shortened due to these constraints.

While subtitling is often called "constrained translation", Pedersen points out that all forms of translation could be called constrained. He argues that the biggest constraints of subtitling are the semiotic switch from spoken to written language, and the spatial and temporal constraints i.e., limitation on characters and the number of seconds the subtitles can stay on the screen. For example, subtitles meant for children's programming often have longer exposure times, because children are generally slower readers. Action-packed scenes might lower the viewer's reading speed, and more complex words and sentences often require more exposure time (Pedersen 2011, 20).

Not all the verbal content can be represented via subtitles, and something has to be left out, and this condensation is very common in subtitling. However, Pedersen argues that condensation is not necessarily a bad thing; in fact, while the quantitative condensation rate is about a third of the source text, the qualitative loss of information is not as large. Instead, what gets condensed is usually "intra-semiotic redundancy", in other words, spoken language features such as repetitions and false starts. In addition, viewers can pick up additional missing details in other ways, such as via actions happening on the screen. Because of this, the total loss of information is not as large as it would seem (Pedersen 2011, 21).

Pedersen also points out the importance of suspension of disbelief in subtitling. Even though subtitles are written and not spoken, the language is cleaned up by removing hesitations and false starts, the dialogue itself is condensed to fit into the space, and the subtitles are written in another language, the viewers suspend their disbelief and choose to believe that the subtitles are same as the dialogue. On the other hand, traditionally the subtitlers try to compliment the viewers suspension of disbelief by making the subtitles as unobtrusive as possible, meaning that they should be clearly and immediately understood by the viewer (Pedersen 2011, 22).

The field of AVT has changed along with technology in the past few decades, and a recent article titled *Subtitling on the cusp of its futures* by Marie-Noëll Guillot (2019) describes some of the old and new challenges with subtitling. Most notable of these are spatial and temporal factors, and source and target text linguistic mismatches. Relevant to this study is Guillot's categorisation of accents and colloquial traits as translation problems.

3.2. Role language studies

Satoshi Kinsui coined the term role language (*yakuwarigo*) back in 2000, and a large part of this study is based on the previous research into this phenomenon (Teshigawara and Kinsui 2011). Role language is defined as a set of spoken language features and phonetic characteristics associated with particular character types (Teshigawara and Kinsui 2011, 38). In other words, the vocabulary and grammar of a character's speech varies depending on the character's attributes (gender, age, social status, birthplace, etc.). Some extra-linguistic variables can be taken into consideration too, like appearance, personality, and whether the character is human or non-human.

The use of role language in English to Japanese translation has been studied before, but a lot of the research seems to be focused on Japanese to English translation. For example, *Hey, You're a Girl?: Gendered Expressions in the Popular Anime, Cowboy Bebop* (Hiramoto 2013, 74) examined the Japanese-English translation of the anime series *Cowboy Bebop* from the point of view of heterosexual normativity constructed through gendered language and role language. The study found that desirable characters were paired with ideal normativity, and this was shown both visually (in the characters' appearance) and linguistically (in the character's speech patterns). Shortly, both the language and artwork of the animated series emphasized the masculinity or the femininity of the characters. In contrast, more undesirable side characters were less attractive, and their speech had linguistic features which did not conform to these heterosexual and gendered norms.

At the undergraduate level, *Characterisation in two translations of "I am a cat"* (Nilsson, 2018) examined the two types of role language called 'student language' (*shoseikotoba*) and Downtown Tokyo (*shitamachi*) dialect in Natsume Sôseki's 1905 novel *I am a Cat*, and the differences in the characterisation in two of its English translations. Another similar study, *A comparative study of translation strategies applied in dealing with role languages: a translation analysis of the video game Final Fantasy XIV* (Chiang, 2016), analysed the English localisation of the aforementioned video game's dialogue, and similarly used role language as the framework for the study.

3.3 Character voice

In *Character voice in anime subtitles*, Howell (2007) studies dialogue in film narrative. According to Howell, character voice is constructed in film dialogue through socio-linguistic and pragmatic language resources, and there exists two barriers to recreating the function character voice in translation: the pragmatic and socio-linguistic differences between Japanese and English, and the technical constraints of subtitling.

Howell points out that previous research into the topic of film dialogue has been done, and Kozzloff (qtd. in Howell 2007, 292) indicates that film dialogue has two layers of pragmatic context; the inner layer where dialogue is addressed mainly to other characters, and the outer layer where dialogue is addressed to an overhearing audience, for the purpose of fulfilling narrative functions. In film, characterisation is one of the main functions of dialogue, and character voice even works as an implicit badge of identity (Kozzloff qtd. in Howell 2007, 292). Since language varieties are linked to cultures and societies, this can lead to translation problems when translating dialogue. Because Japanese and English-speaking countries differ in language and society, this makes it difficult to create corresponding character voices, especially with the technical constraints of subtitling.

In his study, Howell compared and analysed Japanese-English subtitles of four Japanese animations: *Grave of the Fireflies*, *Revolutionary Girl Utena*, *Slayers Try*, and *Akira*. His conclusion was that denser subtitles are better able to reproduce characterisation in Japanese to English translation (Howell 2007, 305). Howell suggests that future studies could be made in investigating the relationship of subtitling between quantitative factors (reading speed, subtitle length) and the recreation of character voice.

4. Material and methodology

4.1. Material

The primary material for the study is the TV series, *The Witcher* (2019), created by Lauren S. Hissrich, and based on books written by Andrzej Sapkowski. The study will look at the original English dialogue transcribed by the author of this study (with the help of the closed captions provided by Netflix, since no official script is available at the time of writing), and the Japanese subtitles, as provided by Netflix. The first season of *The Witcher* has eight episodes, with episode lengths which vary from 46 to 67 minutes. The amount of dialogue varies depending on the episodes, since episodes with longer action scenes have less dialogue. However, due to time constraints, this study will be focused on just one episode (episode two, "Four Marks"), because that episode had a good amount of dialogue for all the characters whose dialogue will be analysed.

The Witcher is set in a fantasy world, and tells the story of Geralt, the main character of the series. Geralt is a witcher, a synthetically mutated person who has magical powers and superhuman strength, and who hunts and kills monsters in exchange for monetary compensation. In addition to the main character, there are secondary characters such as Jaskier, a bard who follows Geralt around and writes songs about their adventures together. There is also Yennefer, a mage who trains at a magical institute called Aretuza, and her magical mentor Tissaia De Vries. Lastly, there is Princess Cirilla,

who spends the first season looking for Geralt after escaping her fallen kingdom. The study analyses dialogue from four of these five characters: Tissaia, Yennefer, Geralt, and Jaskier.

The Witcher was chosen as the material for this study because it is a good representation of the fantasy genre, and because the show had near overnight popularity worldwide when it first premiered on Netflix back in December 2019. I also suspected that there might be interesting translation strategies used in the translation of this series, since many of the characters seem to more or less fit into some of the established character archetypes.

4.2. Methodology

By comparing the original English dialogue and the Japanese subtitles, the specific translation strategies used by the translators are categorized, analysed, and evaluated to see whether they preserve the original characterisation or deviate from it. Additionally, character profiles are written for the characters whose dialogue is analysed. These profiles are supported by character archetypes which most fit each character's place within the story, as described by Vogler (2007).

The method for gathering and analysing the data is the following: the original English dialogue and the Japanese subtitles from the chosen cast of characters are transcribed. Relevant details, such as possible context, non-verbal actions of the characters, and timestamps for every new scene are recorded. Netflix uses "reversed" timestamps, which means that instead of indicating the time occurred from the beginning of the episode, it indicates the minutes and seconds remaining in the episode. Additionally, instead of marking the timestamp for each line of dialogue, the episode will be divided into scenes. For example, the second scene of the episode might start at 40:15 minutes. In this case, the dialogue's timestamp will read "Scene 2". Once that scene ends, and the next scene begins at 33:55 minutes, it will be marked as "Scene 3". The exhaustive list of scenes and their respective time stamps are provided in the appendix.

Within the transcribed dialogue, aspects of role language and gendered language, such as sentence ending particles and the choice of first-person pronouns are marked, alongside with any unusual speech patterns or noticeable social and tonal register. One example of these would be the use of curse words or humorous language, because depending on how these are translated, they can have a notable effect on character voice and overall impression of the character's personality. There is a focus on these aforementioned details and omissions and additions concerning them because they can affect the character voice and the viewer's impression of the characters.

After gathering the data and marking these details, the ST and the TT are compared, and cases with noticeable differences are identified, with a focus on how each character's character voice has been carried over from the ST to the TT. These marked features are then analysed for their impact on

the character voice and the overall characterisation of the four characters. All of the data is displayed in a table so that the ST and TT can be easily compared.

5. Results

In this section, the main results of the case study are presented.

Total 312 cases (lines of dialogue) were collected from the four characters. 102 cases were from Tissaia, 71 cases from Yennefer, 55 cases from Geralt, and 84 cases from Jaskier. For each character, only some of those cases had features which notably affected the character voice or overall impression of that character. For Tissaia, this was 31 (30,4%) cases out of 102. For Yennefer, it was 28 (39,4%) cases out of 71. For Geralt, it was 31 (56,4%) cases out of 55, and for Jaskier 29 (34,5%) cases out of 84.

Table 1: Comparing total number cases and cases with notable effect on character voice

Character	Total number of cases	Cases with notable effect on character voice	%
Tissaia	102	31	30,4%
Yennefer	71	28	39,4%
Geralt	55	31	56,4%
Jaskier	84	29	34,5%

In the next section, these relevant cases are divided into three categories: personal pronouns, sentence ending particles, and other. The latter category includes any relevant features which do not fit into the first two categories.

When it comes to the overall findings of this study, it seems to be the case that for most of the characters, their character voice and characterisation was kept intact in the TT. The most notable exception seems to be the character Jaskier, whose dialogue included quite a lot of jokes and references that broke the fourth wall, some of which were left untranslated. This changes the perception of his character somewhat.

All of the characters used gendered language in one way or another. Tissaia and Yennefer's dialogue had feminine role language which fit both of their characterisations when compared to the source text. Geralt's dialogue had masculine and coarse role language. His dialogue stands out next to the two female characters and Jaskier, whose dialogue utilizes more boyish and neutral masculine elements. Although Geralt's dialogue had a largest percentage of marked features which affect character voice, these features supported his ST characterisation instead of deviating from it.

6. Analysis

This section analyses the features of character voice found in the ST and the TT for each character. Each character is first introduced with a short character profile, followed by some examples and analysis of their character voice in the ST. Lastly, their most notable character voice related features in the TT are presented with relevant examples, followed by a short analysis. Bold effects are added for emphasis by the author of this study.

6.1. Tissaia

6.1.1. Character profile

Name: Tissaia de Vries

Gender: female

Age: adult (older)

Character archetype: mentor (Vogler 2007, 63)

Description: Tissaia is one of the Rectoresses of Aretuza. In episode two, she buys Yennefer from her parents, takes her to Aretuza, and starts teaching her and a few other female students to become sorcerers. She seems to be strict and quite stoic, but her appearance is feminine. Like the other sorcerers within the story, she too uses magic to stay young and beautiful. Out of her students, she seems to be closest with Yennefer, even though their relationship has a troublesome start.

6.1.2. Speech patterns in the ST

As one of the Rectoress of Aretuza, Tissaia is a character in a powerful position. She has considerable power over her students and she is not afraid to showcase that. She speaks in a confident manner and gives out orders, as can be seen from examples (1) and (2).

(1) Case 7

Tissaia: You get to live.

(2) Case 27

Tissaia: Listen closely. Your survival depends on it.

Another notable character voice feature from the source text is the way Tissaia sometimes addresses the character Yennefer, who is one of her students. As shown in example (3), Tissaia calls her “piglet”, because she bought her from her parents who were pig-farmers, and paid as much as one would pay for a pig.

(3) Case 10

Tissaia: Oh, that's adorable, piglet.

6.1.3. Target text

Tissaia uses the neutral first-person pronoun *watashi*. Although in Tissaia’s case, *watashi* could also be interpreted as feminine rather than neutral. Seeing as her speech has other feminine markers, this is most likely the case. In example (5), she uses the second person pronoun *anata*, which can be read as neutral or as feminine.

(4) Case 80

Tissaia: And then there are mages like us who are consumed by them.

私たちのように感情に駆られる者がいる。

(5) Case 88

Tissaia: Mine for letting you ascend.

あなたを昇給させる私よ。

Examples (6) and (7) have the same combination of sentence-final particles: *-wane*.

(6) Case 21

Tissaia: Anika, you saved a drowning boy with your mind.

アニカ 溺れた少年を救ったわね？

(7) Case 81

Tissaia: Your first night here at Aretuza, you tried to kill yourself.

ここに来た最初の夜 自殺を図ったわね。

This is a combination of two particles, *-wa* and *-ne*. Firstly, *-wa* is a feminine particle used to soften the speech, which works as a part of Tissaia’s character voice, since she is a feminine character. Secondly,

-ne is used as a confirmation for a statement. Together these particles create something akin to a rhetoric question, all the while supporting her feminine speech style.

(8) Case 52

Tissai: And now you lie to me?

その上ウソをつくの？

In example (8), the sentence ending particle *-no* is added to soften the question. All three of these sentence ending particles are features of gendered language, and while some people use them in real life conversations, they are also a significant marker of feminine role language in fiction.

Tissaia is in a position of power over her students; she can give them orders and expects to be obeyed. True to this, she uses the imperative form *-nasai*, as demonstrated in example (9). This imperative form is something that might be used when a parent is speaking to a child, and it creates a motherly tone, which holds true for Tissaia's character. The students have come to live and train at the school, and Tissaia is stepping in as a mother figure for all of them. However, this command form gives her character a slightly patronizing aspect. She uses this multiple times in the episode.

(9) Case 36

Tissaia: Lift your stone without touching it.

石に触らず浮かせなさい。

When Tissaia is lecturing to her students, she seems to use a mixture of short form and *-masu/-desu* forms, as seen from examples (9) and (10). It seems like she mostly uses *-masu/-desu* for more general statements about magical theory. This adds another layer of politeness and distance, and perhaps a hint of professionalism to her speech.

(10) Case 28

Tissaia: Magic is organized chaos.

魔法とは混沌を操ることです。

(11) Case 35

Tissaia: Between your flower and your stone lies the balance.

目の前の花と石の間には均衡があります。

6.2. Yennefer

6.2.1. Character profile

Name: Yennefer of Vengerberg

Gender: female

Age: young adult

Character archetype: shapeshifter (Vogler 2007, 80) and Geralt's love interest

Description: Yennefer is half-elf with a hunchback appearance. She was an outcast in her home, and when she was found to have a skill for magic, her parents sold her to Aretuza to become a sorcerer. At first, she has trouble with learning magic and an antagonistic relationship with her mentor Tissaia, but soon she proves herself to be more powerful than her fellow students. Upon graduating from the academy, her hunchback is fixed, and she becomes supernaturally beautiful.

6.2.2. Speech patterns in the ST

In the beginning, Yennefer seems to be a person in a position with no power and no real knowledge of her own capabilities. When she speaks, her lines are short and to the point, as seen in example (12).

(12) Case 11

Yennefer: Please help me!

However, Yennefer gradually begins to demonstrate character growth despite her sparse dialogue. She talks back to her mentor, and even shows that she is capable of manipulating other people. When her mentor Tissaia requests her to show that she is capable enough to become a sorceress, Yennefer pretends that she is to be sent away because she is failing to learn magic, and thus successfully manipulates her lover Istredd to tell her the secret incantation to his special portal magic.

6.2.3. Target text

Similar to Tissaia, Yennefer also uses the neutral/feminine first-person pronoun *watashi*, as seen from example (13). It is quite neutral on its own, but combined with her otherwise feminine speech style, this choice of pronoun could be considered feminine.

(13) Case 14

Yennefer: I can do it!

私がやる。

Yennefer's dialogue has quite a lot of feminine elements in it. Most of these come from the sentence ending particles. First, as seen in example (14), there is the question particle *-no*. This particle is added to many of Yennefer's questions. It gives her speech a softer, more feminine tone.

(14) Case 2

Yennefer: What is all this?

どうなってるの？

Another commonly seen sentence ending particle in Yennefer's speech is *-wa*, as shown in example (15). It is a common sentence ending particle for female characters, and it is found in Yennefer's dialogue several times during the episode.

(15) Case 25

Yennefer: You were right. She found me.

彼女に見つかったわ。

Finally, there is the combination of the two particles *-no* and *-ne* as seen in example (16). Although the ST line is more of a statement, these two particles create a feminine and affirming feeling for the question in Japanese.

(16) Case 70

Yennefer: She's a conduit.

脈になるのね？

Yennefer's very first line of dialogue is yelled at two villagers who are bullying her. She yells for them to let go of her and leave her alone. As seen in example (17), while this request is written in the order form in the English ST, the Japanese TT translates this with the *-te* form, which is softer and a bit more feminine than a clear order form.

(17) Case 1

Yennefer: Leave me alone!

放して

6.3. Geralt

6.3.1. Character profile

Name: Geralt of Rivia

Gender: male

Age: adult (older)

Character archetype: loner hero (Vogler 2007, pp.60)

Description: Geralt is a Witcher, a mutated human who has more strength and magical capabilities compared to normal humans, all in order to hunt and kill monsters in exchange for pay. Even normal Witchers are outcasts in society, but Geralt is a special case; his white hair is proof of taking on more mutations than the average Witcher. On top of that, he had some trouble in the past and ended up with a fearsome reputation. His reputation gets better after he meets the bard Jaskier, who starts writing flattering songs about his heroic deeds. Later in the story, Yennefer and Geralt enter into a romantic relationship.

6.3.2. Speech patterns in the ST

In the source text, Geralt speaks shortly and succinctly. He gets to the point quickly and does not mince his words for the sake of others, instead choosing to say what is on his mind, even if it ends up sounding rude or off-putting, as shown in examples (18) and (19).

(18) Case 2

Geralt: They don't exist.

(19) Case 5

Geralt: Go away.

Geralt also swears quite a lot and sometimes uses coarse language, as shown in example (20), where he both curses and talks in a rude manner to another character, insulting both their appearance and their mother in the same breath.

(20) Case 18

Geralt: What happened to you? Your mother fuck a goat?

6.3.3. Target text

As shown by example (21), Geralt uses the first-person personal pronoun *ore*. This is a very masculine choice for a personal pronoun, and it has a bit of a rough and informal feeling to it. This choice fits his character well, as he is very coarse in the ST as well. Although the ST line is a bit more detailed, and

the TT meaning is more akin to “Don’t bother me”, the deeper meaning behind the remark remains the same.

(21) Case 1

Geralt: I'm here to drink alone.

俺に構うな。

Geralt does not seem to use many sentence ending particles in this episode. In fact, he only had this one single usage of it in example (22), when he is talking to his horse and just about to leave the annoying bard Jaskier behind. The sentence particle in question is *-zo*, which is a standard masculine sentence ending particle. In this case, it gives Geralt’s line masculine emphasis and energy.

(22) Case 8

Geralt: Come on, Roach.

行くぞ ローチ。

Instead of using the more polite copula *desu*, Geralt noticeably uses the more casual version *da*, as shown in examples (23) and (24). This fits well with his masculine and casual way of speaking.

(23) Case 4

Geralt: One fifty.

150 だ。

(24) Case 29

Geralt: One human.

1 人だ。

Finally, Geralt’s word choices for relaying requests or orders give quite a lot of information about his character. In examples (25) and (26), he uses the command form to convey orders and demands. It is a strong choice, and it makes him sound very impolite, especially considering Geralt uses it with people who are strangers to him.

(25) Case 24

Geralt: Shut up!

黙れ。

(26) Case 51

Geralt: Don’t call me human.

人間とは呼ぶな。

6.4. Jaskier

6.4.1. Character profile

Name: “Jaskier” / Julian Alfred Pankratz, Viscount de Lettenhove

Gender: male

Age: young adult

Character archetype: ally (Vogler 2007, 91)

Description: Jaskier is a young bard who meets Geralt at a tavern and begs to join him for an adventure. Afterwards, he writes a successful song about the adventure and becomes famous for his music. His songs improve Geralt’s reputation as a Witcher and a hero. Jaskier is a romantic who seems to be always flirting with people or making jokes, and he is often the one lightening the mood when things get serious.

6.4.2. Speech patterns in the ST

In the source text, one of the most notable features of Jaskier’s dialogue are the numerous jokes he makes. Most of them are based on funny word choices or on hesitation and awkwardness, as can be seen from example (27).

(27) Case 19

Jaskier: Ah. Need a hand? I've got two. One for each of the, uh, devil's horns.

At one point, he asks Geralt if he can ride his horse (28), citing his bad choice of footwear as a reason he should be allowed to join Geralt on horseback, even though just moments earlier Jaskier was begging to join the adventure and claiming he would be the perfect companion and would stay silent unless Geralt needed backup. Jaskier’s pleading leads to a humorous situation because Geralt really does not want anyone else to touch his horse, and he gruffly tells him so (29).

(28) Case 37

Jaskier: Mind if I hop up there with you? It's just I'm not really wearing the right kind of footwear.

(29) Case 10

Geralt (angrily): Don’t touch Roach.

As a storyteller and a bard, Jaskier also makes several meta jokes during the episode, referring to the current events as if it all were happening inside a story. This kind of behaviour is sometimes called

“breaking the fourth wall”, although in Jaskier’s case he does not directly address the viewer but instead seems to be aiming his retorts at himself or at Geralt.

(30) Case 40

Jaskier: There I go again, just... delivering exposition.

(31) Case 55

Jaskier: This is the part where we escape.

(32) Case 73

Jaskier: That's the conclusion.

6.4.3. Target text

When it comes to the choice of pronouns, Jaskier uses the first-person pronoun *boku*, as seen from examples (33) and (34). This reflects his younger age and gives him a more boyish impression compared to Geralt, who is significantly older than Jaskier.

(33) Case 40

Jaskier: There I go again, just... delivering exposition.

詩人の僕が説明するだけとはね。

(34) Case 48

Jaskier: Obviously. Then, uh... then what are we doing?

だろうね では僕らは何をしてるんだ？

Jaskier’s dialogue has multiple instances of the sentence ending particle *-ze*. This is a masculine sentence ending particle, which gives his speech a rather informal feeling. It also adds some emphasis. Considering Jaskier’s character and his reaction to meeting Geralt, it could be said that his informal and familiar way of speaking with Geralt implies that he is not afraid of him despite the negative rumours and his intimidating figure.

(35) Case 16

Jaskier: I know who you are.

君を知ってるぜ。

Another sentence ending particle used by Jaskier is *-sa*, as seen in example (36). This generally denotes assertiveness. It could be even said to give him a bit of an air of over-confidence or self-importance,

which would certainly be in line with how Jaskier proclaims to become Geralt's silent backup, but will not in fact stay silent at all.

(36) Case 20

Jaskier: I won't be but silent backup.

静かに援護するからさ。

In example (37), Jaskier uses the question particle *-kai*, which is an interesting choice. It has masculine connotations, but depending on the situation, it could also make him sound a bit older. Interestingly enough, this version of the question particle is often seen in song lyrics. For example, this phenomenon can be seen in the lyrics of the song 前前前世 by the Japanese rock band RADWIMPS, from the 2016 animated movie 君の名は (*Your name*, produced by Comix Wave Films).

(37) Case 27

Jaskier: Right, yea. Yeah.

そうかい。

As mentioned earlier, a notable feature of Jaskier's dialogue in the source text is his particular brand of humour. Some of that humour is not easily translated, so when it is left out, his character voice changes slightly. In example (38), Jaskier's humorous choice of words is replaced with a quite generic statement ("That's impossible" or "Can't be done").

(38) Case 45

Jaskier: Yeah, I don't really go in for that.

それはムリ。

Example (39) is one of the many meta jokes Jaskier makes in the episode, where he breaks the fourth wall by referencing a story's structure while in the middle of the story himself. However, in the TT, this is translated with an equivalent of "Shouldn't we escape?". This translation completely ignores Jaskier's fourth wall break.

(39) Case 55

Jaskier: This is the part where we escape.

逃げるべきじゃない？

Example (40) is another case of humour lost in translation. The original has a humorous choice of words, where the noun “Witcher” has been made into a verb “witchering”. However, the TT just translates this to “magic”, which is very generic and does not reflect the humorous tone of the original line in the slightest.

(40) Case 58

Jaskier: Quick, Geralt. Do your--your witchering--

ゲラルト 魔法は？

Upon addressing one of the elves who attacked Jaskier and Geralt, in example (41) Jaskier calls one of them by a derogatory and slightly humorous nickname “pointy”, which is a reference to the pointy ears of the elves. In the TT, this is just translated as generally “elf”.

(41) Case 65

Jaskier: Yeah, take that, pointy.

ざまみろ エルフめ。

7. Discussion

The choice of first-person pronouns is a quite large translation problem when translating into Japanese. It is not an aspect that is much present in English dialogue. As shown in the analysis above, when it comes to the Japanese subtitles of *The Witcher*, it seems like the choice of first-person pronouns accurately fits the original characterisation and the outward appearances of the characters whose dialogue was studied. While none of the female characters used the more feminine *atashi*, they both did use the feminine/neutral *watashi* combined with more feminine choice of words and sentence ending particles. The two male characters on the other hand use masculine first-person pronouns, *ore* for Geralt and *boku* for Jaskier. Both of these fit their characters, since Geralt is older than Jaskier and also quite a lot rougher in his speech and mannerisms. Jaskier is younger and more boyish, and while his speech is masculine, it is somewhat softer than Geralt’s.

As mentioned above, all of these pronoun choices are supported and accentuated with other aspects of gendered language, such as the use of short and long forms, sentence ending particles, and different choices of order or imperative forms. These different aspects add more to the dialogue than just the personal pronouns could do on their own. With the female characters Tissaia and Yennefer, these choices soften their language and make it more feminine. Tissaia’s choice of order form makes her position in the hierarchy of the school clearer, since she uses the *-nasai* form, indicating her higher

status, power, and matronly position over her students. Additionally, both of these characters use similar sentence ending particles, although Tissaia seems to use the feminine sentence ending particles *-wa* and *-wane* more than Yennefer. This is most probably due to the nature of dialogue Yennefer had in this episode, since quite a lot of her lines were questions, so instead of ending with *-wa* or *-wane*, she ends the questioning lines with *-no*. Overall, even though their subtitled dialogue ends up being more gendered than the source text, it seems to fit with the characterisation of Tissaia and Yennefer, since they are both definitely feminine characters, both with their actions and respective positions within the series, and with their outward appearance taken into account.

Geralt and Jaskier's subtitled dialogue is also supported with similarly gendered language. Both of their TT ends up having more masculine sentence ending particles, short form, and use of the rougher imperative form. Their choice of curse words or otherwise rude speech also carries over from the ST over to the TT. Although again, the more gendered aspects are an addition not found in the original English ST, all these additions fit with the overall view of the characters and their words and actions within the story. Geralt, especially, comes off as rude and standoffish based on his original dialogue, appearance, and actions within the episode, and that feeling carries successfully over to the Japanese translation of the dialogue. Out of all the four characters, Geralt has the largest percentage of cases that affect his characterisation. Despite this, he is not the character whose overall characterisation was affected the most, because all or most of these features support his original characterisation in the ST rather than deviating from it.

When it comes to Jaskier's overall characterisation in the subtitles, his impression is mostly accurate. The only thing which does not carry over that well seems to be his particular brand of comedy, and most of what ended up being left out from the subtitles is somehow related to humour or jokes. Some of the more humorous choices of words would be hard to replicate in Japanese, since they are not outright jokes but are instead more based on the specific combination of word choice and a humorous tone of voice, which indicates that a joke is being made. For example, finding an accurate and equally effective translation for words such as "witchering" is quite challenging. Additionally, some of the humour provided by Jaskier's dialogue relies heavily on the actor's performance; he seems to portray Jaskier as someone who fumbles and hesitates quite a lot, a striking contrast to some of the other characters who seem surer of their words and speak very clearly. On top of that, some of the fourth wall breaking references were left out. It is difficult to speculate on the translator's choices regarding these instances, but one possibility is that they were not seen to be that relevant to the plot and his character, since irrelevant information is usually first to be left out when you have limited time or space to create a translation, as supported by earlier finds by Pedersen (2011, 21), who points out that false starts and repetitions are often what ends up missing from subtitles.

This sounds quite similar to Jaskier's fumbling and hesitating speech style in the ST, so it is not that peculiar that this aspect would be the first thing missing from the subtitles.

Netflix produces quite a lot of their own shows and provides subtitles in multiple languages for each of the shows available on their service. On top of this, Netflix-produced series are usually released as complete seasons, instead of being released one episode per week like more traditional TV series. It probably would not be that big of a stretch to imagine that the translators and subtitle providers work with very limited time frames. To make it worse, sometimes subtitlers do not even have access to the actual audiovisual media they are creating the subtitles for, so it is possible that the translator misses out on the humorous tone of the original dialogue completely, which could certainly explain the discrepancy between the ST and TT character voices. Personally, I have noticed translation errors or missing information on the subtitles provided by Netflix, and it does not even seem to be that rare of an occurrence.

8. Conclusion

When it comes to the main strategies of recreating the original character voices, the Japanese subtitles of *The Witcher* mostly use gendered language to achieve this task. Overall, the ST and TT end up having roughly equal impression of the four characters and their character voices. Although it could be said that the original English dialogue is more gender neutral and the addition of gendered language is something not found in the original, the role language and gendered language are required in order to make the Japanese dialogue sound more natural. Additionally, these choices of gendered language are fully supported by the original ST and the characters appearance and actions within the story. The only big difference between the ST and the TT would be the lack of Jaskier's humour in the TT and some of his untranslated jokes, which are mostly left out due to space and time restrictions and the inability to translate something which is so reliant upon the actor's tone of voice and overall acting performance.

It should be noted that this was a case study done with a limited amount of time, and as such, its scope was very limited as well. If one wanted to make a more comprehensive study about the character voice and translation in this particular TV series, then most likely it would be advisable to study more than one episode worth of dialogue. Perhaps, with similar time limitations, one could focus on just one character's dialogue, but gather dialogue from multiple episodes. It would also be possible to carry out a wider study with the focus on multiple characters, but with dialogue gathered from multiple episodes. Another interesting avenue of study would be to compare the Japanese dubbed version of *The Witcher* against the original English audio track, since it is possible that some of the

humour that was lost in translation might be a bit more present in the Japanese dub, since humour can sometimes rely on the actor's performance of the lines.

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Appendices

List of scenes and their “reversed” time stamps on Netflix

Scene	Timestamp
1	1:00:44
2	57:15
3	55:28
4	53:51
5	49:01
6	46:26
7	45:35
8	44:30
9	40:33
10	39:41
11	36:12
12	33:17
13	31:17
14	29:01
15	27:58
16	23:48
17	22:18
18	16:25
19	11:18
20	10:33
21	10:11
22	8:50
23	6:21
24	5:12
25	4:33
26	3:42

Dialogue by Tissaia

Scene	Case	ST	TT	Type	Comments
2	1	How much for a pig?	ブタはいくら？		
2	2	Well, I'm here today.	今日 買う		
2	3	How much for this beast?	そこの獣は？		
2	4	Four.	4ね	fem	
2	5	Excellent. We'll be going.	よろしい 行くわよ	fem	
7	6	Do you know how many people wouldn't blink if you died?	あなたが死んでも誰も 気にしない		
7	7	You get to live.	生きなさい	imperative nasai	imperative form demonstrates power over Yennefer as a teacher and mentor (= Mentor archetype)
7	8	Tissaia de Vries.	ティサイア・ド・ブリ エス		
7	9	Rectoress of Aretuza.	アレッツァの学長		
7	10	Oh, that's adorable, <u>piglet</u> .	可愛らしいこと		"piglet" omitted
7	11	You weren't taking control. You were losing it.	むしろ自由を失うところ だったのに		
7	12	Be in the greenhouse in 20 minutes.	20分後に温室へ		
8	13	I sense your terror. And you are right to be afraid.	あなたがたは恐れている 恐れて当然です		
8	14	Chaos is the most dangerous thing in this world.	混沌（カオス）はこの 世で最も危険なものです		

8	15	It is all around us all the time.	そして常に 私たちの 周りがある		
8	16	Volatile and powerful.	気まぐれでパワフル		
8	17	But... each one of you...	あなたがたはその力の 脈とー		
8	18	... showed and aptitude for channeling it.	交信する適性を見せた		
8	19	Your conduit moment created a new ripple in the chaos,	交信した瞬間に 波紋 が広がってー		
8	20	reaching me here in Aretuza.	このアレッツザに伝わり ました		
8	21	Anika, you saved a drowning boy <u>with your mind</u> .	アニカ 溺れた少年を 救ったわね?	fem	"with your mind" omitted
8	22	Fringilla froze a cat.	フリンギラは猫を殺し た		
8	23	Sabrina... turned her mother fat.	サブリーナは母親を太ら せてしまった		
8	24	But just because you are conduits of chaos...	でもね 混沌と交信で きたとしても		
8	25	... does not mean that you are capable of magic.	魔法を使うちからがあ るとは言い切れないわ	fem	
8	26	This is your home.	ここが家よ		
8	27	Listen closely. Your survival depends on it.	生き抜く覚悟をなさい	imperative nasai	

8	28	Magic is organized chaos.	魔法とは混沌を操ることです		
8	29	And while oceans of mystery remain,	数多くの謎は残るもののー		
8	30	... we have deduced that this requires two things.	操るためには 2つの要素が重要と考えます		
8	31	Balance and control.	均衡（バランス）と制御（コントロール）です		
8	32	Without them, chaos will kill you.	これを欠くと混沌に殺される		
8	33	This is the simplest of trials...	ごく簡単な試験で		
8	34	... to see whether you are worthy of the ascension.	昇給できるか見定めます		
8	35	Between your flower and your stone lies the balance.	目の前の花と石の間には均衡があります		
8	36	Lift your stone without touching it.	石に触らず浮かせなさい	imperative nasai	
8	37	Use the incantation [speaking Elder]	こう唱えて		
8	38	This is the balance.	これが均衡よ	fem / assertive	
8	39	Demonstrated beautifully. Thank you, Fringilla.	いい見本だったわ フリンギラ	fem	

8	40	There is no conjuring something from nothing.	無からは何も生じません		
8	41	There is a give and a take.	常に犠牲が伴います		
8	42	You've lost a lot of blood, <u>piglet</u> .	血を失ったからよ	fem / assertive	"piglet" omitted
8	43	Sometimes a flower is just a flower...	変われぬ平凡な花は		
8	44	... and the best thing it can do for us is to die.	死んで役立つしかない		
13	45	Look into her eyes.	相手の目を見るの		
13	46	Look until a door becomes a window	扉が窓になるまで見つめて		

13	47	Seek to understand your partner's greatest fears.	相手が一番恐れていることを理解しなさい	imperative nasai	
13	48	Come here.	来なさい	imperative nasai	
13	49	You take weeks to lift your stone.	石を浮かすのに1週間・・・		
13	50	You can't bend water.	水は曲げられない		
13	51	You struggle to perform even the simplest physical tasks.	簡単な物理の課題に苦戦してー		
13	52	And now you lie to me?	その上ウソをつくの？	fem	
13	53	Your worst fear makes sense.	あなたの恐れは当然ね	fem / confirming	

13	54	Even if you were a beauty, no one would love you.	美しかったとしても誰も愛してくれないわ		
16	55	Get up.	起きなさい	imperative nasai	
16	56	Welcome, Fringilla.	ようこそ フリンギラ		
16	57	Welcome, Lark.	ラーク		
16	58	Welcome, Doralis.	ドラリス		
16	59	Welcome, Sabrina.	ようこそ サブリナ		
16	60	And welcome back, piglet.	お帰り 子ブタ		
16	61	Tor Lara, the Tower of the Gull.	ここは”トル・ララ” カモメの塔です		
16	62	The most potent place on the continent.	大陸の最も力が集まる場所		
16	63	Off-limits, except to the Brotherhood of Sorcerers.	魔法教会の会員以外は立入禁止よ		

16	64	This trial tests your ability to control the ultimate expression of chaos.	この試験では混沌の究極の力を制御できるかを見ます		
16	65	Catch lightning in a bottle.	雷をビンに封じ込めなさい	imperative nasai	
16	66	No, it's magic.	できるわ 魔法を使えばね	fem	
16	67	Doralis.	ドラリス		
16	68	Bottle up.	ビンを上へ		

16	69	Now.	早く		
16	70	Lark, move Doralis aside.	ラーク ドラリスをど けて		
16	71	Anica, your turn next.	次はアニカ		
16	72	Quickly.	急いで		
16	73	Quickly!	早く！		
16	74	Piglet, your turn.	子ブタの番よ	fem / assertive	
16	75	Faster.	早く		
16	76	Sabrina, show these girls how it's done.	サブリーナ 手本を見せて あげて		
16	77	The strong amongst the weak.	あなたの心は誰よりも 強いわね	fem	
16	78	What you did there was pathetic and dangerous.	無様で危険なマネをし たものね	fem / confirming	
16	79	There are mages like Sabrina who ignore their emotions.	サブリーナのように感情 に左右されない者と		
16	80	And then there are mages like us who are consumed by them.	私たちのように感情に 駆られる者がいる		
16	81	Your first night here <u>at Aretuza</u> , you tried to kill yourself.	ここに来た最初の夜自 殺を図ったわね	fem	"at Aretuza" omitted

16	82	And tonight, you almost killed someone else.	そして今夜誰かを殺しかけた		
16	83	It is your job to control chaos, not become it.	混沌になるのではなく制御なさい	imperative nasai	
16	84	But if I send you to advise a king, and your precious little feelings get hurt when he won't listen...	王付きになっても助言を無視さあれ傷ついて		
16	85	... and you submit to chaos, he dies, his people turn on us.	王を殺せば魔法使い全員が敵視される		
16	86	Whose fault would that be?	誰のせい？		
16	87	No.	いいえ		
16	88	Mine for letting you ascend.	あなたを昇給させる私よ	fem / assertive	
16	89	Do you?	そう？		
16	90	You lie. You keep secrets.	ウソをついて隠している		
16	91	You succumb to emotion, to weakness.	屈してるわ 自分の弱さにね	fem	
16	92	Do you actually have what it takes?	あなたに素質はある？		
19	93	Nothing.	別に		
19	94	Simply wanted to know that you could control your emotions and get it from the boy.	恋愛感情を抑えられるのか知りたかった		

19	95	That you would. You may go...	抑えられるわね 退室していいわ	fem	
19	96	Yennefer.	イエネファー		
19	97	Listen for the knock.	ノックを待ちなさい	imperative nasai	
22	98	Come forth, Yennefer.	来て イエネファー		
22	99	An eel.	ウナギよ	fem / assertive	
22	100	Come. Push your friend into the pool.	さあ 彼女たちを水に入れて		
22	101	Yes.	入れて		
22	102	I took away her control, but she still has power.	自由を奪っただけ魔力はある		

Dialogue by Yennefer

Scene	Case	ST	TT	Type	Comments
1	1	Leave me alone!	放して		
1	2	What is all this?	どうなってるの？	fem Q	
1	3	Am I dead?	死んだの？	fem Q	
1	4	How did I get here?	なぜ ここに？		
1	5	I what?	何て？		
1	6	I'm sorry	ごめん		
1	7	I'm sorry	ごめんなさい		
1	8	My what?	私の何？	1st person pronoun	
1	9	What's wrong?	何なの？	fem Q	
1	10	She? She who?	彼女って誰のこと？		
1	11	What are you doing?	何してるの？	fem Q	
1	12	What's that?	それは？		
1	13	What's your name?	名前は？		
2	14	I can do it!	私がやる	1st person pronoun	
2	15	Mother!	お母さん		
2	16	Please help me!	助けて		
2	17	You can't take me!	私は行かない	1st person pronoun	
2	18	I won't go	絶対に		
3	19	Let me out!	出して！		
3	20	Let me out!	出してよ！		

3	21	Four marks...	4 マルク...		
7	22	Who are you?	あなたは誰？		
7	23	You should've let me die. At least I had control over that.	死なせてよ そのくらい自由にさせて		
9	24	Istredd.	イストレド		
9	25	You were right. She found me.	彼女に見つかったわ	fem	

9	26	My name.	私の名前は...	1 st person pronoun	
9	27	It's Yennefer.	イエネファー		
13	28	With our eyes?	目だけで？		
13	29	Anika's worst fear is snakes.	アニカはヘビが怖い		
14	30	Tissaia's right.	先生は正しい		
14	31	I've been here for weeks and can barely do shit.	何週間経っても落第生よ		
14	32	I want to be good. Good at something.	私も何かに秀でたい	1st person pronoun	
14	33	Great. Is that what you're doing?	私の心も読んでるわけ？	1st person pronoun	
14	34	I don't think it's working.	ムリよ	fem / assertive	
14	35	I see them.	見える・・・		
14	36	What are they?	それは何？		
14	37	I... I can hear them.	聞こえるわ	fem	
14	38	I can taste it.	味がする		
14	39	Are these the things you love?	好きなもの？		
16	40	It felt pretty powerful to me.	でも強かった		

16	41	Like us?	私たち？		
16	42	I can.	できる		
16	43	Mine.	私？	1st person pronoun	
16	44	I understand.	分かったわ	fem	
18	45	She knows about us.	先生にバレた		
18	46	I'm gonna be sent home. We'll never see each other again.	家に帰される 二度と会えないわ	fem	
18	47	How?	どんな？		
18	48	W-With one of those extra-special portals?	例の門（ポータル）の作り方を教えてくる？		
18	49	Why?	なぜ？		
18	50	I don't understand.	分からないわ	fem	

18	51	My worst fear is true.	恐れたとおりよ	fem / assertive	
18	52	I'm still not enough. Even for you.	私は劣等生なのね あなたにとっても	1st person pronoun	
18	53	Dead people?	死んだ人？		
18	54	You mean as slaves?	奴隷だったの？	fem Q	
18	55	What?	何て？		
18	56	I should go.	行くわ	fem	
18	57	My father..	父さんは・・・		
18	58	My real father...	本当の父さんは		

18	59	... he was half-elf.	半分エルフなの		
18	60	Do you remember the Great Cleansing?	”浄化”を覚えてる？		
18	61	That's how my father died.	その時に父さんも・・・		
18	62	His blood is... why I'm cursed with a twisted spine.	父さんの血で私は呪われて背骨が曲がっている		
18	63	Why I'm only worth four marks.	4 マルクで売られた		
18	64	Why no one could ever love me.	誰にも愛されない		
18	65	What will you do with it?	花が何なの？	fem Q	
19	66	Does this mean I get to ascend?	昇給できるの？	fem Q	
19	67	I'm ready.	やれるわ	fem	
22	68	You turned my friend into a slug.	ナメクジに変えた		
22	69	No.	イヤよ	fem / assertive	
22	70	She's a conduit.	脈になるのね？	fem / confirming	
22	71	For Aretuza.	ここにつながる		

Dialogue by Geralt

Scene	Case	ST	TT	Type	Comments
5	1	I'm here to drink alone	俺に構うな	pronoun, rough/masc speech	
5	2	They don't exist.	存在しない		
5	3	The creatures in your song.	お前が歌った怪物だ		
5	4	One fifty.	150 だ		
6	5	Go away.	来るな	rough/masc speech	

6	6	It's onion.	タマネギだ		
6	7	Come here.	来い	rough/masc speech	
6	8	Come on, Roach.	行くぞ ローチ	rough/masc speech	
6	9	Butcher is right.	殺し屋だ		
6	10	Don't touch Roach.	触るな	rough/masc speech	
12	11	Blessed silence.	静かにしてろ	rough imperative	
12	12	Devils don't exist.	悪魔はいない		
12	13	Sometimes there's monsters, sometime's there's money.	怪物が居るか カネが あるか		
12	14	Rarely both.	どちらかだ		
12	15	That's the life.	それが人生		
12	16	Shit!	クソ!		
12	17	You talk.	話すのか		
12	18	What happened with you? Your mother fuck a goat?	母親がヤギとヤツた か?	rough/informal Q	
12	19	<u>You're a dick. With balls.</u>	バカだが度胸はある		very different translation, original joke is omitted
12	20	You are intelligent, I'll give you that.	知性があるのは認め る		
12	21	So I won't kill you, but you can't stay here.	だから殺さんがこの 地は去れ	rough imperative	
17	22	This is the part where they kill us.	奴らを殺してやる		

17	23	Elves.	エルフめ！		
17	24	Shut up!	黙れ	rough imperative	
17	25	<u>As opposed to later?</u>	どうせ殺す		"in any case they'll kill us"
17	26	Leave off!	やめろ！	rough imperative	
17	27	He's just a bard.	ただの吟遊詩人だ		
17	28	You were stealing for them.	盗みはエルフのためか	rough/informal Q	
17	29	One human.	1人だ		
17	30	And you can let him go.	こいつはに逃がせ	rough imperative	
17	31	The lesser evil.	必要な悪だ		lesser evil = necessary evil
17	32	No matter what you choose....	どちらを選んでも		
17	33	...you'll come out bloody and hating yourself.	血に染まれば自分を憎むことになる		
17	34	Trust me.	信じろ		
17	35	I understand.	分かった		
17	36	As long as you understand...	お前も分かるよな？		
17	37	... that it won't be long before you follow me in death.	俺を殺しても先は長くない	1st person pronoun	
17	38	Chaos is the same as it's always been.	混沌はこれまでと何も変わってない		

17	39	Humans just adapted better.	人間は適応しただけだ		
17	40	You are choosing to starve.	あんたんは自ら飢えを選んでいる	rough/masc speech	
17	41	<u>You're cutting of your ear to spite your face.</u>	いら立ちで自滅の道を選んでいる		different translation for the proverb ("you're walking the path of self destruction out of frustration")
17	42	Then go somewhere else.	ならばどこか別の土地へ行け	rough imperative	
17	43	Rebuild.	再建しろ	rough imperative	
17	44	Get strong again.	力を取り戻すんだ		
17	45	Show the humans that you are more than what they fear you to be.	人間が思うより恐ろしい存在だと見せつけろ	rough imperative	
17	46	I have learned to live with them.	俺は人間と組む		
17	47	So that I may live.	生きるためだ		
17	48	If you must kill me...	殺すならー		
17	49	... I am ready.	好きにしろ	rough imperative	
17	50	But the Sylvan is right.	だが言っておく		
17	51	Don't call me human.	人間とは呼ぶな	rough/masc speech / imperative	
23	52	Filavandrel's lute not gift enough for you?	エルフの王のリュートは不満か?	rough / informal Q	

23	53	This is where we part ways, bard, for good.	ここでお別れだ 永遠にな		
25	54	That's now how it happened.	事実と違う		
25	55	Where's your newfound respect?	敬意はどうした？		

Dialogue by Jaskier

Scene	Case	ST	TT	Type	Comments
5	1	Oi, oi, stop! Fuck off!	おい よせよ		
5	2	I'm so glad that I could bring you all together like this.	連帯感ができてよかった		
5	3	Unbelievable.	チクショウめ		cursing instead of direct translation
5	4	Love the way you just... sit in the corner and brood.	渋いね 静かに考え事？		
5	5	Good. Yeah, good.	そうだよね		
5	6	No one else hesitated to comment on the quality of my performance, except...	みんながヤジを飛ばすのに君だけは...		
5	7	... for you.	沈黙だ		
5	8	<u>Come on. You don't want to keep a man with... bread in his pants waiting.</u>	もったいぶらずに 君の感想をきかせてくれよ		joke lost in translation, "I would like to hear your (honest) thoughts"
5	10	You must have some review for me. Three words or less.	ひと言ふた言でいいんだ		
5		What don't exist?	何がだい？		

5	11	And how would you know?	なぜ分かる？		
5	12	<u>Oh, fun.</u>	なるほど		oh fun -> I see
5	13	White hair...	白い髪. . .		
5	14	... big, old loner, two very...	一匹狼で2本の...		
5	15	...very scary-looking swords.	恐ろしげな剣. . .		
5	16	I know who you are.	君を知ってるぜ	masc. particle, emph asis	
5	17	You're the Witcher, Geralt of Rivia.	ウィッチャーだろ リヴィアのゲラルト		
5	18	Called it!	当たりだ		

6	19	Ah. Need a hand? <u>I've got two. One for each of the, uh, devil's horns.</u>	手伝うよ 悪魔の角ならつかめるぜ	masc particle, emphasis	joke lost in translation
6	20	I won't be but silent backup.	静かに援護するからさ	filler particle	a little cocky?? would fit his character
6	21	Look, I heard your note, and yes, you're right, maybe real adventures would make better stories.	感想はごもつとも 冒険こそ いい詩になる		
6	22	And you, sir, smell chock-full of them.	君からはそのにおいがふんぶんするぜ	masc. particle, emphasis	
6	23	Amongst other things. I mean, what is that? Is that onion?	とにかく 強烈だ タマネギか？		
6	24	It doesn't matter.	いずれにせよ		
6	25	Whatever it is, you smell of death and destiny.	死のにおいだ		

6	26	Heroics and heartbreak.	運命てきで英雄てきで悲恋の香りもする		
6	27	Right, yea. Yeah.	そうかい		lyrical form of か, masc?
6	28	Oh, I could be your barker...	宣伝役になろう		
6	29	... spreading the tales of Geralt of Rivia...	ゲラルトの物語を広める		
6	30	...the-- the Butcher of Blaviken.	ブラビケンの殺し屋!		
12	31	Reading between the lines and the gut punches, chum...	話し方やパンチのことを思うに		
12	32	... I'd say you have got a bit of an ... image problem.	少々イメージに問題があるね		
12	33	Were I to join you on this... feat to defeat the evil of Posada...	ポサダの悪魔退治に同行させてくれたら		
12	34	...I could relieve you of that title.	悪評を塗り替えてやろう		
12	35	All the North would be too busy singing the tales of...	北方諸国は高らかに歌うだろう		
12	36	... Geralt of Rivia, the-the White Wolf or-or something.	”リヴィアのゲラルト””白狼”とか何とか・・・		
12	37	Mind if I hop up there with you? It's just I'm not really wearing the right kind of footwear.			
12	38	Yeah, right, yeah.	はいはい		

12	39	You know, the elves called this Dol Blathanna before bequeathing it to the humans and retreating into their golden palaces in the mountains.	エルフはこの土地をどる・ブラサンナと呼んだ 人間に奪われて 山に逃げ込む前だ		
12	40	<u>There I go again, just... delivering exposition.</u>	詩人の僕が説明するだけとはね		
12	41	<u>Geralt?</u>	おい		
12	42	Geralt? Wh-where are you going?	ゲラルト どこに行くんだ？		
12	43	Geralt, don't leave me.	置いていくなよ		
12	44	Hello? What are we looking for again?	もしもし 何を捜してる？		
12	45	<u>Yeah, I don't really go in for that.</u>	それはムリ		slightly different translation
12	46	Have you ever hunted a devil before, Geralt?	悪魔退治の経験は？		
12	47	Right.	そう		
12	48	Right.	だろうね では僕らは何をしてるんだ？	pronoun (boyish)	
12	49	<u>Act Two begins!</u>	第2幕の始まり！		meta joke/4th wall break translated this time
12	50	What was that?	何だ？		
12	51	Looks like a tiny cannonball from a...	小さな砲弾みたいな・・・		
12	52	Oh my gosh.	ウソだろ？		

12	53	Geralt... it is a devil.	ゲラルト 悪魔だ		
12	54	<u>Ooh, I have to see this magical, this mythi--</u>	これは魔法か神話か・・・		slightly different translation
17	55	<u>This is the part where we escape.</u>	逃げるべきじゃない？		meta joke is not translated ("this is the part...", reference to a story's arc), instead "shouldn't we escape?"
17	56	Who's they?	奴ら？		
17	57	Oi, that's my lute! Give that back!.	リュートを返せ		
17	58	<u>Quick, Geralt. Do your--your witchering--</u>	ゲラルト 魔法は？		"Witchering" joke not translated
17	59	Oh, my Elder speech is rough. <u>I only got part of that.</u>	古代語はは苦手だ		omission, Elder speech -> 古代語 (ancient Japanese)
17	60				
17	61	[In Elder] Ah, got it, thanks so much.	(古代語) はいはい		
17	62	<u>No, please, not the lu--</u>	楽器が！		no begging in TT
17	63	You hide in your <u>golden palaces.</u>	隠れ家で威張りやがって		golden palaces -> hideout
17	64	You beat a <u>bound man</u> , too scared to even look him in the eye!	無抵抗な男を殴ってそのくせ目も見られない		bound -> nonresistant
17	65	Yeah, take that, <u>pointy.</u>	ざまみろ エルフめ		pointy -> elf
17	66	Wait, what's-- what's wrong with her?	急にどうした？		
17	67	Oh and who's this?	そいつは？		
17	68	Forced out? No, they chose--	出て行ったんだ		

23	70	That whole reverse-psychology thing you did on them was brilliant, by the way.	奴らの心理を逆を突くと は頭がいい		
23	71				
23	72	[Imitates Geralt] "Kill me. I'm ready."	”殺すな好きにしろ”		
23	73	<u>That's the conclusion.</u>	解放されたがー		"That's the the conclusion" (reference to a story/adventure) is omitted entirely
23	74	They just let us go, and you give all of <u>Nettly's</u> coin to the elves.	あんたは奴らに報酬を全 てやっちまった		name not mentioned
23	75	Yeah she is a bit sexy, isn't she?	色っぽ過ぎない?		
23	76	I do have respect for <u>Filavandrel</u> . He survived the Great Cleansing once.	あの王に敬意はもってる よ ”浄化”を生き延びた		name not mentioned, instead あ の王
23	77	Who knows, maybe he can do it again.	きっと生きてー		
23	78	Be reborn.	国を再建する		国 added
23	79	Will the elf king heed	ウィッチャーは		(singing)
23	81	Is history a wheel?	歴史は車輪か?		
23	82	Doomed to repeat?	繰り返す定め		
23	83	No, that's... that's shit.	ダメだ つまらない		(talking)
23	84	Look, I promised to change the public's tune about you. At least allow me to try.	あんたの評判を変えたい 試させてくれよ	anta instead of anata	