

Rewriting Official Documents into “Easy Japanese”

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The number of expatriates living in Japan is over 2.21 million, which is a 46.6% increase compared to 10 years ago. We therefore have to devise ways to make communication easier by using “Easy Japanese” in official documents. As the first step towards this goal, we have rewritten 10 official documents (notices distributed by public offices) into “Easy Japanese.” Following this, we analyzed the problems associated with the rewriting of official documents. We realized that translating documents from Japanese to “Easy Japanese” cannot be achieved by simple rule-based methods. Even if a large number of rules could be created for rewriting, it would still be difficult to rewrite official documents into “Easy Japanese.” We have to consider the contents of official documents as well as control of lexicon. The purpose of this paper is to describe some rules and discuss the problems associated with the process of rewriting. This is the first step towards creating an automatic Japanese-to-“Easy Japanese” translation system in the future.