



Subtitling Style Guide

Japanese (JA)



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Please ensure that you always consult the latest Style Guide, by visiting the certification website on <https://avtpro.oona.net>

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Technical dimension

T1. Video framerate

T1.1 All videos run at 25 frames per second (fps).

T2. Text formatting

T2.1 Font type: HC Maru Gothic.

T2.2 Font size: point 30.

T2.3 Font color: white with black outline.

T3. Minimum subtitle duration

T3.1 The minimum duration of a subtitle on screen is 20 frames.

T4. Maximum subtitle duration

T4.1 The maximum duration of a subtitle on screen is 6 seconds.

T4.2 In some exceptional cases (e.g., song lyrics), the maximum duration can be exceeded to 7 seconds.

T5. Maximum display rate

T5.1 The maximum reading speed is 4.0 characters per second (cps).

T5.2 Half-width characters (半角) are counted as 0.5 characters.

T5.3 The following are not counted for reading speed:

Punctuation marks: ? !

Punctuation spaces (See T6)

Continuity marks: ... —

Ampersand: &

Quotation marks: “ ” 「 」 〈 〉 ()

T6. Punctuation

T6.1 ○ Full stops should be replaced by a full-width (全角) space:

うれしい ありがとう

T6.2 、 Commas should be replaced by a half-width (半角) space:

では よろしく

T7. Line limitations

T7.1 Maximum of 2 lines.

T7.2 Horizontal: 15 characters per line (cpl).

T7.3 Vertical: 11 characters per line.

T7.4 Half-width characters (半角) are counted as 0.5 characters.

T7.5 See T5.3 for the punctuation marks not counted as characters for reading speed, and bear in mind that those marks do count toward the cpl.

T8. Positioning and alignment – Horizontal

T8.1 Subtitles should be placed horizontally at the bottom of the screen.

T8.2 Horizontal subtitles should be centre-aligned and left-justified.

水平方向の字幕の場合は
中央配置で左寄せ

T8.3 Horizontal subtitles should not be placed at the top of the screen.

T9. Positioning and alignment – Vertical

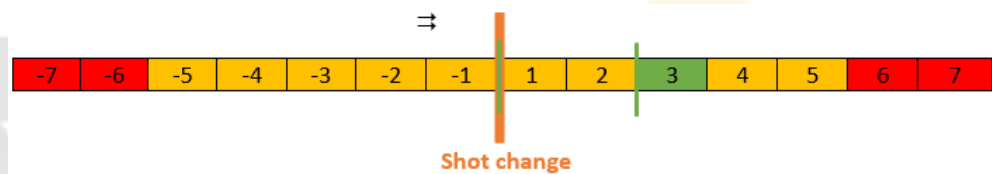
- T9.1 Vertical positioning should be used when a horizontally positioned subtitle would otherwise obstruct text or action occurring on screen.
- T9.2 Vertical positioning should be top-aligned and default to the right unless the subtitle obstructs text or action occurring on the right side of the screen.
- T9.3 When dialogue and onscreen text occur simultaneously, dialogue subtitles should be placed horizontally at the bottom, while narrative subtitles should appear vertically on the right (or left). The spotting of each of the subtitles should follow standard timing rules.
- T9.4 If onscreen text is present at the bottom of the screen, the dialogue subtitle should be placed vertically on the right and the narrative subtitle should appear vertically on the left.

T10. Timing

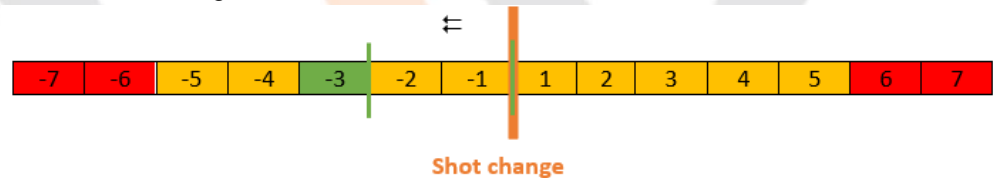
- T10.1 The in-time of subtitles should be 1 or 2 frames before the audio.
- T10.2 The out-time can be extended by a maximum of 12 frames after the end of audio, when not interrupted by another audio or a shot change.

T11. Spotting around shot changes

T11.1 Where dialogue starts on the shot change, or within 5 frames before or past the shot change, set the in-time to 2 frames after the shot change:



T11.2 Where the end of audio is within 5 frames before or past the shot change, extend or cut short the out-time so that the subtitle leaves the screen 2 frames before the actual shot change:



Linguistic dimension

L1. Line treatment

- L1.1 Line breaks, within and across subtitles, should be syntactically segmented, keeping linguistic units together.
- L1.2 Avoid having long sentences run over more than 3 subtitles. If possible, try to merge subtitles together, or break the sentence into several shorter units.

L2. Italics

- L2.1 Use italics with all onscreen text.
- L2.2 Dialogue that is heard through electronic media, such as a phone, television set or computer.
- L2.3 Song lyrics and recited poems.

- L2.4 Voiceovers (including monologues and audio flashbacks) and off-screen narration, unless a large majority of the content consists of off-screen speech. Only use italics when the speaker is not in the scene(s), not merely off-screen or off-camera.

L3. Text on screen

- L3.1 Text inserted or burnt on screen, known as forced narrative (テロップ), should be translated.
- L3.2 For opening and end credits, only translate the main roles or the ones that are relevant.
- L3.3 The translation of onscreen text should be in italics (see L2).
- L3.4 Never combine the translation of dialogue and onscreen text in the same subtitle.
- L3.5 See T9 on vertical subtitles for guidance on how to translate onscreen text and dialogue that happen at the same time.
- L3.6 If there is simultaneous, plot-pertinent speech, and no time to accommodate both spoken and written text, the dialogue should be given priority.
- L3.7 Written text which is visible in the scene, such as signs and newspapers news read by characters, should be translated if plot pertinent, in italics and between quotation marks (see L12).

L4. Names

- L4.1 Transliterate character names, unless approved translations are provided.
- L4.2 Foreign first and last names should be separated using half-width *nakaguro* (・)

スティーブ・ジョブズ

- L4.3 Hyphens in hyphenated names should be replaced by double hyphens:

ジョセフ・ゴードン＝レヴィット

- L4.4 Nicknames should only be translated if they convey a specific meaning.
- L4.5 When dealing with historical / mythical characters, use language-specific translations that are most recognized in the market:

サンタクロース (not 聖ニコラス)

L5. Rubies (ルビ)

- L5.1 In the case of single-line subtitles with horizontal alignment, position the ruby above the character.

ルビを^ふ振^ぼる場合

- L5.2 In the case of single-line subtitles with vertical alignment, position the ruby on the right side of the character.
- L5.3 When the ruby is in the second line of a two-line horizontal subtitle, position the ruby below the ruby base.
- L5.4 When the ruby is in the second line of a two-line vertical subtitle, position the ruby on the left side of the ruby base.
- L5.5 The ruby should be added only the first time that the term appears, with the exception of children's programmes, where the ruby should be used every time the term appears.

L6. Boten (傍点)

- L6.1 In the case of single-line subtitles with horizontal alignment, position the boten above the character.
- L6.2 In the case of single-line subtitles with vertical alignment, position the boten on the right side of the character.
- L6.3 When the boten is in the second line of a two-line horizontal subtitle, position the boten below the character.

L6.4 When the boten is in the second line of a two-line vertical subtitle, position the boten on the left side of the character.

L7. Numbers

L7.1 Horizontal subtitles:

- Single-digit numbers (0 to 9) should be written with full-width alphanumeric characters.
- Numbers made of two or more digits should be written using half-width characters.

2 8 22 88 105

L7.2 Vertical subtitles:

- Single-digit numbers (0 to 9) should be written with full-width alphanumeric characters.
- Numbers made of two or three digits should be written using half-width characters and positioned horizontally.
- Numbers made of four or more digits should be written using full-width characters and positioned vertically.

L7.3 Numbers made of five digits should use Japanese characters:

1万2000....1億

L7.4 Four-digit numbers should not use spaces or separators:

1500 (not 1,500)

L7.5 Decimal points:

- Horizontal: use half-width period:

60.01

- Vertical: use half-width *nakaguro*:

6
.
5

L8. Time

L8.1 With times, use 時 (hour) · 分 (minute) · 秒 (second):

11時35分 (not 11:35)

L8.2 Use the 12-hour format unless the 24-hour format is plot-pertinent, as in the case of military or crime-investigation-related dialogue:

10時 (not 22時)

L9. Dates

L9.1 Dates must be expressed in Japanese format, namely year / month / day:

1977年11月23日

L10. Currency and measurements

L10.1 Do not convert currency unless required by the context.

L10.2 Currency symbols should be spelled out in Japanese:

ドル、ユーロ

- L10.3 Convert measurements to the metric system, unless leaving the original units is required by the context or the images, or there are instructions to keep the original units:

15 度 (not °C)

L11. Question / Exclamation marks

- L11.1 Question marks (?) and exclamation marks (!) should be written as full-width characters (全角) followed by a full-width space when a new sentence starts on the same line:

まさか? そんな!

- L11.2 These marks are not counted in the reading speed, but they do count when calculating the characters per line.

L12. Quotation marks

- L12.1 All the quotation marks should be full-width (全角).

- L12.2 “ ” 二重引用符 Quotations, song titles:

彼は“さよなら”と言った

- L12.3 “ ” 二重引用符 + italics

Written text in the scene (e.g., signs, newspaper), which is clearly visible and plot pertinent:

“立入禁止”

- L12.4 「 」 カギ括弧

Titles of books, albums and programmes:

「マトリックス」は名作だ

- L12.5 〈 〉 山括弧

Words and expressions in a foreign language, different to the main language spoken in the film: they are plot-pertinent and / or have to be highlighted to convey the original's creative intent (e.g., there is a language barrier between some of the characters):

Adiós 〈さよなら〉

- L12.6 () 丸括弧

Used only for unheard utterances when the speaker's mouth is visible.

L13. Continuity — (ダッシュ)

- L13.1 Use a two-em dash (—) when it's not clear that the ongoing sentence continues in the next subtitle.

- L13.2 Do not use two-em dashes when it's grammatically clear that the sentence continues in the next subtitle:

明日は雨だから—

ここには来られないの

L14. Continuity … (三点リーダー)

- L14.1 Use an ellipsis (three dots) to indicate abrupt interruptions:

というか…

- L14.2 Use ellipsis to indicate a pause in the delivery of the original, an intentional or accidental suspension of a part of the sentence:

今
...

- L14.3 Do not use ellipsis at the beginning of a sentence and avoid using too many ellipses in the middle of a sentence.

L15. Titles

- L15.1 In the case of titles of published works, existing movies and TV shows, use official or well-known translations, if available.
- L15.2 If the approved Japanese title uses symbols, punctuation marks or characters that go against this Japanese style guide (e.g., half-width question mark) correct the title so that it adheres to the instructions in this subtitling style guide.

L16. Songs

- L16.1 Songs are only subtitled if they are plot-relevant or part of the film (e.g., a character performs a song).
- L16.2 Italicize lyrics.
- L16.3 When lyrics coincide with dialogue, whichever is more plot-pertinent should be subtitled.
- L16.4 Use **Chidori**-style placement for songs: the second line must be two full-width spaces (全角) behind the first line:

*あなたに夢中なの
そのままのあなたでいて*

- L16.5 If the first line is longer than the second line, place the second line two full-width spaces past the right alignment:

*そのままのあなたでいて
あなたに夢中なの*

Reference

『字幕とは何か 1枚の字幕に込められた技能と理論』 日本映像翻訳アカデミー