



Subtitling Style Guide

Polish (PL)

EN

PL

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Technical dimension..... 3

- T1. Video frame rate..... 3
- T2. Line limitations..... 3
- T3. Text formatting 3
- T4. Background 3
- T5. Positioning..... 3
- T6. Maximum display rate 3
- T7. Minimum subtitle duration 3
- T8. Maximum subtitle duration 3
- T9. Minimum gap between subtitles..... 3
- T10. Timing..... 3
- T11. Spotting around shot changes..... 4
- T12. Hierarchy of rules 4

Linguistic dimension 5

- L1. Line treatment..... 5
- L2. Abbreviations..... 5
- L3. Symbols 5
- L4. Dual speakers..... 6
- L5. Italics..... 6
- L6. Numbers 6
- L7. Time..... 7
- L8. Dates 8
- L9. Currency and measurements 8
- L10. Hyphenation..... 8
- L11. Quotation marks 8
- L12. Other punctuation marks 9
- L13. Continuity (interruptions) 10
- L14. Profanity and taboo language..... 11
- L15. Titles 11
- L16. Songs..... 11
- L17. Text on screen..... 11
- L18. Other linguistic considerations..... 12

Technical dimension

T1. Video frame rate

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

T2. Line limitations

T2.1 42 characters per line (cpl).

T2.2 Maximum of 2 lines.

T3. Text formatting

T3.1 Font type: Arial.

T3.2 Font size: point 30.

T3.3 Font color: white.

T4. Background

T4.1 Use a subtitle background to enhance the visibility of subtitles where appropriate.

T5. Positioning

T5.1 Horizontal: center-aligned.

T5.2 Vertical: bottom of the screen.

T5.3 Subtitles should be moved to the top of the screen to avoid overlap with onscreen text or other important information contained in the images.

T5.4 In a scene when some subtitles need to be raised (such as opening credits), avoid switching back and forth between bottom- and top-positioned subtitles and stick to the same position (raised) throughout the sequence as much as possible.

T6. Maximum display rate

T6.1 15 characters per second (cps).

T6.2 The absolute maximum you are allowed to go is 20 cps, but only in a limited number of cases (see T6.3).

T6.3 If need be, up to a maximum of 10% of the subtitles in any given file can be over the reading-speed limit, that is, between 15.1 and 20.0, but remember that no display rate should be 20.1 cps or above.

T6.4 Before leaving subtitles above 15 cps, consider solutions such as editing the text (condensing the meaning), extending the subtitle out-time, re-segmenting subtitles (merging or splitting) or a combination of these solutions.

T7. Minimum subtitle duration

T7.1 The minimum duration of a subtitle on screen is 1 second.

T8. Maximum subtitle duration

T8.1 The maximum duration of a subtitle on screen is 6 seconds.

T8.2 In exceptional cases only, e.g., for song lyrics, the maximum duration can be exceeded.

T9. Minimum gap between subtitles

T9.1 Leave a minimum gap of 2 frames between subtitles.

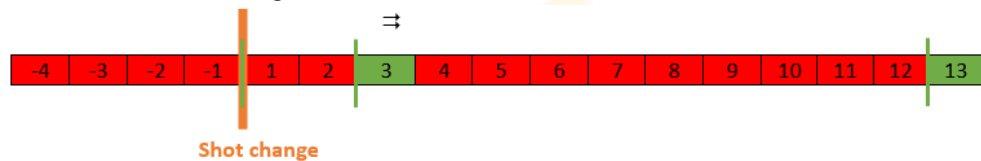
T10. Timing

T10.1 When timing subtitles, the utmost consideration is to provide a comfortable viewing experience. Whenever choosing between various allowed options, give preference to the one that results in a better viewing experience.

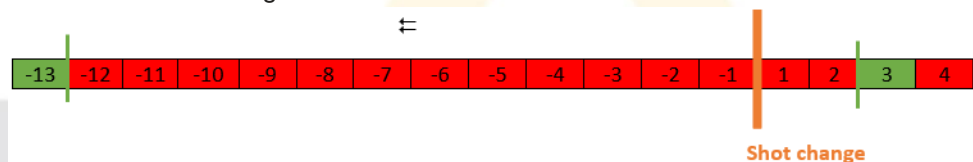
- T10.2 As a general rule, subtitles should be timed to audio so as to appear when the dialogue starts and disappear when it ends.
- T10.3 To allow for more comfortable reading, the out-time can be extended by a maximum of one second after the end of audio.
- T10.4 When extending the out-time, avoid crossing shot changes.
- T10.5 Chaining subtitles: in the case of consecutive subtitles, any gaps of 3 to 11 frames inclusive must be closed to 2 frames (chained subtitles). That is, the gap can be either 2 or a minimum of 12 frames.

T11. Spotting around shot changes

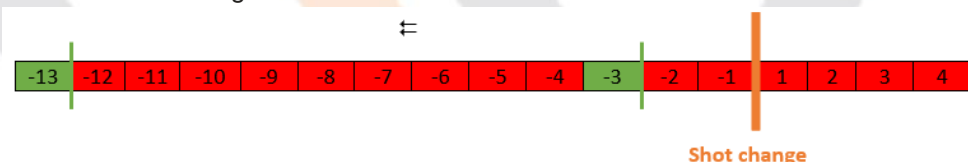
T11.1 Where dialogue starts on the shot change, or within half a second (12 frames) past the shot change, set the in-time on the 3rd frame, leaving a 2-frame gap from the shot change:



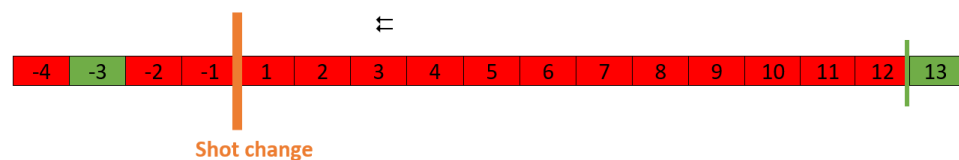
T11.2 Where dialogue starts within half a second (12 frames) before the shot change, set the in-time either on the 13th frame before the shot change or the 3rd frame after the shot change:



T11.3 Where dialogue ends within half a second (12 frames) before the shot change, extend the out-time so that the subtitle leaves the screen two frames before the actual shot change:



T11.4 Where dialogue ends within half a second (12 frames) after the shot change, set the out-time either on the 13th frame after the shot change or the 3rd before the shot change.



T12. Hierarchy of rules

T12.1 Occasionally, timing rules can be in conflict. If all rules cannot be followed, give precedence to minimum and maximum duration, followed by rules on spotting around shot changes and reading speed considerations. These requirements override the rule of having subtitles aligned exactly with the audio's start and end times.

Linguistic dimension

L1. Line treatment

- L1.1 Text should normally be kept to one line unless it exceeds the character limitation.
- L1.2 Line breaks within subtitles and splits between subtitles should segment text in a syntactically logical way, keeping linguistic units together.
- L1.3 In some cases, to enhance readability, it may be justified to use two lines even if the text is shorter than 42 characters. For instance, to break up syntactical units when a subtitle consists of two or more phrases, to highlight rhyming patterns (e.g., poetry and songs), to reflect a longer pause between two utterances or to follow the line break of an onscreen message:

*Nagle – gwizd!
Nagle – świst!*

- L1.4 Avoid having long sentences run over more than 3 or 4 subtitles. If possible, try to merge subtitles together, or break the sentence into several, shorter units.

L2. Abbreviations

- L2.1 The use of abbreviations should be avoided, especially in fictional content, unless there are space or time limitations. In these cases, only use abbreviations that are easy to understand and retrievable in dictionaries of the Polish language such as:

np., m.in., tzw., itd., nr, godz., ul.

- L2.2 Titles such as *pan, pani, doktor, profesor* etc. can only be abbreviated if used in combination with a name:

Konsultowałem się z prof. Konopnicką.

Profesor zmarł nad ranem.

L3. Symbols

- L3.1 Avoid the use of currency symbols (such as € or \$) and use instead full words whenever possible.

20 € 99 \$

20 euro 99 dolarów

- L3.2 Avoid the use of abbreviations such as *dol.* or *zł*, especially in fictional content.
- L3.3 Add a space between a number and an abbreviation of a unit of measure:

Zwykle na świat patrzy z wysokości 213 cm.

- L3.4 Do not add a space before a percentage sign % or a degree symbol:

Temperatura w mieście wyniesie 11°C.

L4. Dual speakers

L4.1 Use a hyphen followed by a space to indicate two speakers in one subtitle, with a maximum of one speaker per line:

- Gdzie jesteś?
- Zatrzasnąłem się w piwnicy.

L4.2 Always use the shorter hyphen (-), as opposed to the en- and em-dashes (*—) when indicating dual speakers.

L4.3 Do not include utterances of more than two speakers in one subtitle:

- Zgadzasz się? - Nie.
- A ty? - Też nie.

- Zgadzasz się?
- Nie.

L4.4 The utterance of each speaker should be in a separate line:

- Nie idziesz? - Nie, i tobie
też to stanowczo odradzam.

- Nie idziesz?
- Nie, i tobie też to stanowczo odradzam.

L5. Italics

L5.1 Titles of albums, books, films, and audiovisual productions, including titles of songs, book chapters and press articles.

L5.2 Foreign words unless they are part of regular usage. Please note this does not apply to proper names.

L5.3 Dialogue that is heard through electronic media, such as a phone, television set or computer unless the speaker is present in the scene (for instance, speaking to a microphone).

L5.4 Song lyrics and recited poems.

L5.5 Voiceovers and off-screen narration unless most of the content consists of off-screen speech.

L5.6 Dialogue by a speaker who is not in the scene (but do not use italics when the speaker is merely off screen or off camera).

L5.7 The voice of a visible character expressing unspoken thoughts, flashbacks or inner monologue.

L5.8 Do not use italics to indicate emphasis on specific words.

L6. Numbers

L6.1 From 0 to 10, numbers should be written out, unless there are space or time limitations, in which figures can be used:

jeden pięć dziesięć

L6.2 From 11 and above, numbers should be written numerically:

13 23 37

- L6.3 Exceptions to these rules can be allowed to avoid inconsistent spelling of various numbers in one subtitle or when a number is used as standalone lexical item:

Ministerstwo Zdrowia kupiło 9 respiratorów,
a WOŚP – 11 respiratorów.

Skoczył na odległość 5 metrów,
a potem 6 i 11.

Wkrótce stuknie mu czterdziestka.

- L6.4 Numbers that form compound words can be written numerically or as words:

To jedyny 30-piętrowy budynek w okolicy.

To dobra opcja dla dwudziestolatków.

- L6.5 Four-digit numbers should not use spaces or separators:

3500 złotych ~~3.500-złotych~~ ~~3-500-złotych~~

- L6.6 Use a blank space as a thousand separator for five-digit numbers and above:

60 000 333 333

- L6.7 With large numbers, to avoid a long sequence of zeroes, it is better to combine digits with words such as *tysiąc*, *milion* or their abbreviations:

25 tysięcy 11 milionów 210 mln
~~210-000-000~~

- L6.8 Use a comma for decimals:

7,5 23,81

- L6.9 When numbers are written as digits, do not add inflectional suffixes to them:

~~Zajął 15-te miejsce w wyścigu.~~
Zajął 15. miejsce w wyścigu.

- L6.10 Do not start a subtitle with a number. If necessary, spell out the number:

Jedenaście osób jest wciąż zagubionych.

L7. Time

- L7.1 Use a full stop with times:

8.45 19.30

- L7.2 Use the 24-hour format to indicate the time.

- L7.3 In informal contexts, time can also be expressed in letters, unless there are space and/or time limitations:

Siedzę tu od siódmej.

L8. Dates

L8.1 Dates must be expressed with numerals, in the following format:

Urodził się 23 kwietnia 1977 roku.

L9. Currency and measurements

L9.1 Do not convert currency unless required by the context.

L9.2 Convert measurements to the metric system, unless leaving the original units is required by the context (e.g., in period drama), on-screen images, or there are instructions to keep the original units:

kilometry (km) stopnie Celsjusza (°C) kilogramy (kg)

Każ budowniczym, by mury
miały grubość co najmniej ośmiu stóp.

L10. Hyphenation

L10.1 Do not split words with a hyphen over two lines.

L11. Quotation marks

L11.1 Use lower and upper double quotation marks without spaces: „ ”.

L11.2 Direct speech is introduced by a colon, followed by double quotation marks and capital case:

Powiedział:
„Mam co do tego złe przeczucia”.

L11.3 Use quotation marks for regular citations, making sure that the closing quotes end before the full stop:

Powiedział nam: „Wrócę jutro”.

„Sąd sądem, a sprawiedliwość
musi być po naszej stronie”.

L11.4 If a quote carries over more than one subtitle, quotation marks should be used only at the start and at the end of a quote:

Przypomniałem sobie ten cytat:
„Gdy ktoś kocha różę,

której jedyny okaz
znajduje się na jednej z milionów gwiazd,

wystarczy mu na nie spojrzeć,
aby być szczęśliwym”.

L11.5 When the final punctuation mark, other than a full stop, is part of the quote, it should be enclosed within quotation marks:

„Nie wierzycie mi?”

„Jak śmiesz!”

„Nas nie przekonają,
że białe jest białe, a czarne – czarne”.

- L11.6 When the final punctuation mark is not part of the quote, it should follow the upper quotation mark:

Odpowiedział:
„To nie tak. Uwierzycie mi?”.

Odpowiedział:
„To nie tak. Nie wierzycie mi...”.

- L11.7 Use quotation marks for agrammatical phrases and instances of speech impediments or disorderly speech. However, as a general rule, avoid the use of such non-standard forms unless they are relevant for the plot or essential for understanding character behaviour.
- L11.8 Use quotation marks when a character invents a word or an expression. However, quotation marks are unnecessary for made-up words that are part of a fictional world's vernacular.

Skoro Batman ma batmobil,
to Superman powinien mieć „supermobil”.

Z zębów czerwi
Fremeni wytwarzają krysnoże.

Jak wyglądają takie świstokliki?

- L11.9 Use quotation marks when a character reads out or quotes someone else:

Juliusz Cezar miał kiedyś powiedzieć:
„Kocham zdradę, ale nienawidzę zdrajcy”.

- L11.10 Use quotation marks when employing metalinguistic references:

Słowo „ministra”
coraz częściej gości na łamach gazet.

- L11.11 When using quotation marks within other quotation marks, use chevrons (» «) within double curly quotation marks („ ”):

„Odpowiedział mu: »Wolę umrzeć,
niż być twoim niewolnikiem«”.

L12. Other punctuation marks

- L12.1 When using dashes as a punctuation device, use an en-dash character (–) rather than a hyphen (-) or an em-dash (—).
- L12.2 As dashes can be confused with hyphens used to mark the utterance of two speakers, avoid the use of dashes to signal parenthetical phrases and use commas instead. When possible, consider rephrasing the sentence to simplify it:

To jest - jak już wiele razy mówiłem -
nie do zaakceptowania.

To jest, jak już wiele razy mówiłem,
nie do zaakceptowania.

Jak już wiele razy mówiłem,
to jest nie do zaakceptowania.

- L12.3 When the use of a single dash is necessary and the dash coincides with a line break, the dash should stay in the upper line:

Minister zaproponował ostateczność -
likwidację ZUS.

Minister zaproponował ostateczność
- likwidację ZUS.

- L12.4 Avoid the use parenthesis () in subtitles.
L12.5 Avoid the use of semicolon (;) in subtitles. When needed, rephrase a longer, complex sentence as shorter, simpler sentences that end with a full stop.
L12.6 Do not use straight apostrophes and go for curled ones instead (').
L12.7 Use apostrophes only when they are a part of a proper name or when distinguishing inflectional endings in foreign names:

To on zabił prezydenta Kennedy'ego.

- L12.8 Use ellipsis as a single character (...) as opposed to three separate dots.

L13. Continuity (interruptions)

- L13.1 Do not use ellipses or dashes when an ongoing sentence is split between two or more consecutive subtitles:

Na najbliższym posiedzeniu
rząd podejmie decyzję

o stworzeniu strategicznego programu
usuwania skutków powodzi.

- L13.2 Use an ellipsis (three dots) to indicate abrupt interruptions:

Nie wiedziała, czy on...

- L13.3 Use ellipsis to indicate a longer pause in the delivery of the original, an intentional or accidental suspension of a part of the sentence, or an abrupt interruption:

Idź do domu i... przemyśl to dobrze.

- L13.4 Use ellipsis, without a space, to indicate that an utterance is starting mid-sentence, e.g., when a character turns on the radio:

...i tak to się zaczęło.

L13.5 The ellipsis can be used when an utterance is interrupted by another character or by a forced narrative:

- Nie mogę już znieść...
- Uwaga, czerwone!

...tego jej gładzenia.

L14. Profanity and taboo language

- L14.1 When dealing with strong language, the general level of profanity should be preserved.
- L14.2 When rendering specific expletives, consider that the usage of expletives and their perceived strength can vary between languages. Avoid using dialects or words that would otherwise introduce a level of obscenity not implied in the original dialogue.
- L14.3 Avoid rendering expletives literally when to do so would not sound natural in Polish. When possible, substitute them with idiomatic Polish expletives or compensate for omitting them by using idiomatic strong language elsewhere when appropriate.

L15. Titles

- L15.1 Titles of published works, existing movies, and TV shows: if available, use official or well-known translations. If none are available, leave titles in the original language.
- L15.2 Existing titles which do not have an official translation can be translated into Polish if necessary for the comprehension of dialogue or the scene.
- L15.3 Capitalization of titles: only the first letter of the title should be capitalized:

*Kupił jej **O dwóch takich,**
co ukradli księżyc.*

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 If lyrics coincide with dialogue, whatever is more plot-pertinent should be subtitled.
- L16.3 When a song continues but is no longer subtitled to give precedence to dialogue, this should be indicated by ellipsis.
- L16.4 Song lyrics should be italicized.
- L16.5 Capitalization: use an uppercase letter at the beginning of each line.
- L16.6 Punctuation: only question and exclamation marks should be used at the end of a line – no commas or full stops. Punctuation marks such as dashes or commas can be used within the lyric line, if necessary.

L17. Text on screen

- L17.1 Text on screen should be translated when it is relevant, not redundant, and does not coincide with dialogue.
- L17.2 If there is simultaneous, plot-pertinent speech, and no time to accommodate both spoken and written text, the more plot-pertinent message should be given priority. While usually the dialogue takes precedence over onscreen text, plot-pertinent onscreen text might need to take precedence over background dialogue.

- L17.3 Text on screen should be in ALL CAPS.
- L17.4 To improve readability, sentence case can be used for long passages of onscreen text (e.g., long written passages used as prologue or epilogue).

L18. Other linguistic considerations

- L18.1 The use of capital letters to indicate respect (*Twoje, dla Ciebie, dla Pani*), which is typical of personal messages, should not be used in subtitling. An exception to this rule can be allowed in religious contexts (for instance, if a character is saying prayers):

Dla ciebie zrobię wszystko, kochanie.

- L18.2 Misspellings and mispronunciations should not be reproduced in the translation unless plot pertinent.
- L18.3 For other linguistic issues not covered in this style guide, please refer to reputable dictionaries of Polish language, giving preference to:
- *Wielki słownik języka polskiego*, <http://www.wsjp.pl>
 - *Wielki słownik poprawnej polszczyzny*, PWN