



Subtitling Style Guide

Chinese, Simplified (ZH-SIM)



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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. Line limitations

T2.1 16 characters per line (cpl).

T2.2 Maximum of 2 lines.

T3. Text formatting

T3.1 Font type: SimHei.

T3.2 Font size: point 35.

T3.3 Font colour: white

T4. Background

T4.1 Do not use subtitle background.

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 long opening credit sequences, avoid switching forth and back between bottom- and top-positioned subtitles and stick to the same position throughout the sequence as much as possible. In these cases, it is recommended to keep all subtitles aligned at the top.

T6. Maximum display rate

T6.1 9 characters per second (cps).

T6.2 The absolute maximum you are allowed to go is 11.0 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, 11.0 cps.

T7. Minimum subtitle duration

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

T7.2 In exceptional cases only, e.g., for only one word, the minimum duration can be 20 frames.

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 up to 7 seconds.

T9. Minimum gap between subtitles

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

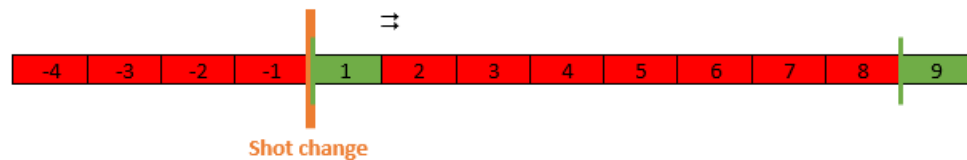
T10. Timing (see T12 Chaining subtitles)

T10.1 Subtitles should be timed to audio (within 3 frames).

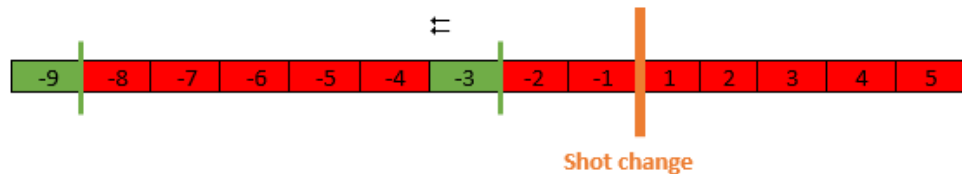
T10.2 If extra time is needed for the reading speed, the out-time can be extended by a maximum of 12 frames after the end of audio.

T11. Spotting around shot changes

T11.1 Where dialogue starts on the shot change, or within 8 frames past the shot change, set the in-time to coincide with the shot change:



- T11.2 If the out-time is within 8 frames before the shot change, extend the out-time so that the subtitle leaves the screen two frames before the actual shot change:



T12. Chaining subtitles

- T12.1 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.

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 and across subtitles, should be syntactically segmented, keeping linguistic units together.

Incorrect	Correct
中央编译局首次 发布的 30 条术语	中央编译局 首次发布的 30 条术语

- L1.3 In some cases, to enhance readability, it may be justified to use two lines even if the text is shorter than 16 characters. For instance, to break up the text when it consists of two or more clauses, to highlight rhyming patterns (e.g., poetry and songs):

人间四月芳菲尽
山寺桃花始盛开

Or to mimic the line break of onscreen text for better viewer experience:

(拉斯维加斯
直走)

- 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:

I was born in a quaint suburban community nestled between rolling hills and filled with the scent of freshly cut grass and the sound of birds singing.

Incorrect	Correct
我出生在连绵群山之间	我出生在一个古朴的郊区社区
充满新鲜草地的气息	那里群山环绕
和鸟儿的鸣唱的	充满了新鲜草地的气息
一个古朴的郊区社区	和鸟儿的鸣唱

L2. Names

- L2.1 Use a full-width interpunct (·) to divide transliterated given names and family names when necessary. Use a well-established Chinese translation to translate the names of well-known individuals:

Charles Dickens	查尔斯·狄更斯
Momoe Yamaguchi	山口百惠
Song Joong-ki	宋仲基
Ho Chi Minh	胡志明
John King Fairbank	费正清

L3. Symbols

- L3.1 Avoid using symbols:

1314 公里 not 1314 km

L4. Dual speakers

- L4.1 Use a hyphen without a space to indicate two speakers in one subtitle, with a maximum of one speaker per line:

-最近好吗?
-挺好的

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

L5. Italics

- L5.1 No italics should be used for simplified Chinese.

L6. Numbers

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

一 二 三

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

13 239 3762

- L6.3 Combine numbers with Chinese characters to take up less space:

11 亿 500 万

- L6.4 For days of the week, use Chinese characters:

星期六

- L6.5 Use Arabic numerals for apartment numbers, street numbers, phone numbers, measurements, chapter numbers, page numbers, addresses, time, flight numbers, and dates:

他住在世纪大道 200 号

我搭乘的是东航 334 航班

我的电话号码是 6525-8858

L7. Time

- L7.1 Use a colon with non-rounded times:

19:35 02:45

- L7.2 Use the 24-hour format to indicate the time rather than "am" and "pm".

- L7.3 For rounded times, use Chinese characters:

五点

L8. Dates

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

1996 年 7 月 21 日

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/images, or there are instructions to keep the original units:

千米 摄氏度 千克

L10. Punctuation

- L10.1 All punctuation signs used in simplified Chinese subtitles should be double-byte, except where single-byte colons are used to indicate time.

- L10.2 Do not use commas or periods. Use one single space instead, but only where necessary.

- L10.3 Use enumeration commas for lists:

一、二、三 开始

- L10.4 Use question marks to indicate questions and exclamation marks to stress the tone. Do not combine question and exclamation marks or double question/exclamation marks (? !, ! ?, ? ? or ! !).

- L10.5 Use double-byte ellipsis dots by pressing Shift+6 and then delete one set of three dots:

这个嘛...我不知道

L11. Quotation marks

- L11.1 Use full width quotation marks: “ ”

- L11.2 Direct speech is introduced by a full width colon, followed by double quotation marks:

我说：“你别走啊”

- L11.3 Use double quotation marks without spaces for regular citations, making sure that the punctuation comes after the quotation when only a part of a sentence is in quotes:

他刚才说“不行”？

- 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 the quote:

“原谅我的懦弱

我的不辞而别

祝你幸福”

L11.5 Book chapters, articles and song titles should be wrapped in title marks:

《飘》

L11.6 Use double quotation marks without spaces for agrammatical phrases, neologisms, made-up expressions, and speech impediments or disorderly speech, if relevant for the plot, and when someone is imitating another person or placing special emphasis on a particular word or phrase.

L11.7 Use double quotation marks without spaces when a character reads out or quotes someone else.

L11.8 Use double quotation marks without spaces when employing metalinguistic references:

她刚刚给我说 “嘘”

L11.9 When using quotation marks within other quotation marks, use single quotation marks (' ') within double quotation marks (" "):

他告诉你: “老师说让你‘放学别走’ ”

L12. Continuity

L12.1 Do not use ellipsis (…) when an ongoing sentence is split between two or more consecutive subtitles:

我不知道

你有几部手机

L13. Continuity (interruptions)

L13.1 Use an ellipsis (…) to indicate abrupt interruptions:

可是我…

L13.2 Use ellipsis to indicate a pause in the delivery of the original, an intentional or accidental suspension of a part of the sentence, or an abrupt interruption:

我其实想说…你忘了关灯

L13.3 Use ellipsis, without a space, to indicate that a subtitle is starting mid-sentence, e.g., when a character turns on the radio:

…我也不知道

L13.4 The ellipsis can be used when an utterance is interrupted by another character or by a forced narrative:

Example 1:

我们还是…

还是什么?

…还是走吧

Example 2:

我的客户在加州有一栋别墅...

-在哪里?
 ----想要出售

L14. Profanity and taboo language

- L14.1 The original content's dialogue must never be censored in the translated version. Expletives should be rendered as faithfully as possible, without using expressions that would otherwise introduce a level of obscenity not implied in the original dialogue.

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, provide your own translation.

L16. Songs

- L16.1 Song lyrics are only subtitled if they are relevant for the plot or part of the film (e.g., a character performs a song).
 L16.2 If coinciding with dialogue, whatever is more plot-pertinent should be subtitled.
 L16.3 Follow regular Chinese punctuation rules. Use exclamation and question marks as and when appropriate.

L17. Text on screen

- L17.1 Text on screen should be translated when it is relevant and 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, subtitling the dialogue should be given priority.
 L17.3 Text on screen should be enclosed in full-width brackets:

(燃料不足)
 (2024 年 1 月 巴西)

L18. Repetitions

- L18.1 Do not translate words or phrases that are repeated more than once by the same speaker, unless the context uses repetition for emphasis or comedic effect.
 L18.2 If the repeated word or phrase is said twice in a row, time subtitle to the audio, but translate only once.
 L18.3 Where the words or phrases are repeated emphatically, it is permissible to write the repeated word twice and place a comma or an ellipsis between them to indicate repetition:

No, no, no, no, no! You can't do that!	不不不! 不能这样!
Go, go, go, go, go.	去...快去

L19. Foreign Dialogue

- L19.1 Foreign dialogue that is meant to be understood by the viewer of the original production should be translated or transliterated when no accurate translation is available.
 L19.2 Foreign dialogue that is not meant to be understood by the viewer of the original production should not be translated or transliterated.
 L19.3 Sometimes, it is necessary to transliterate a foreign word, in which case, double quotes should be used to offset the word:

-How do you say "goodbye" in Spanish? -Adiós.	-西班牙语“再见”怎么说? -“阿迪奥斯”
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