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ТЕХНИЧЕСКИЕ ОГРАНИЧЕНИЯ СУБТИТРОВ TECHICAL REQUIREMENTS FOR SUBTITLES

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Аннотация. В статье рассматриваются технические требования к субтитрам, которые нужно обязательно учитывать при их создании. За основу исследования взят стайлгайд компании Netflix, одного из ведущих производителей аудиовизуального контента. Главными требованиями к субтитрам являются деление, скорость чтения, длительность и тайминг субтитра. Так, например, субтитр на английском не может состоять из более чем двух строк по 42 символов в каждой, а скорость чтения не должна превышать 20 символов в секунду. В статье также рассматриваются требования по разрыву между субтитрами, минимальной и

максимальной длительности субтитра, а также кратко приводится история субтитров.

Abstract. The article discusses the technical requirements for subtitles, which must be taken into account when creating them. The study is based on the style guide of Netflix, one of the leading producers of audiovisual content. The main requirements for subtitles are the division, reading speed, duration and timing of the subtitle. For example, a subtitle in English cannot consist of more than two lines of 42 characters each, and the reading speed should not exceed 20 characters per second. The article also discusses the requirements for the gap between subtitles, the minimum and maximum duration of the subtitle, and also briefly describes the history of subtitles.

Ключевые слова: *субтитрование, аудиовизуальный перевод, лингвистика*

Keywords: *subtitling, audiovisual translation, linguistics*

A NOTION OF SUBTITLE

A subtitle is a condensed version of the original dialogue. It usually takes the shape of two lines of text at the bottom of the screen. Subtitles are frequently used in movies, television shows, conferences, and other public speaking occasions. The subtitle momentarily appears on the screen as a speaker begins to utter a line before disappearing once the speaker is finished. Usually, this text appears at the bottom of the screen. Nevertheless, some languages, like Japanese, have subtitles in a vertical format that normally appear on the right side of the screen.

The three main elements of all subtitled programs are the spoken word, the visual, and the subtitles themselves. The interaction of these three elements, as well as the viewer's ability to read both the written text and the visuals at a specified rate of speed, and the actual size of the screen itself, determine the fundamental characteristics of an audiovisual medium. The subtitles must appear simultaneously with the image and the speech, provide a semantically appropriate description of the spoken language, and remain on the screen for long enough for the audience to be able to read them.

Subtitles were first used around at the same time as movies were invented. Subtitles were the most effective approach to explain what was happening in the silent movies of that time period. Additionally, they were reasonably priced for studios, and only the subtitles needed to be translated in order to release a film in another country.

During the era of silent movies, intertitles were the most often utilized type of subtitles. The intertitles were composed of a few short phrases written in white script on a black backdrop. Their dialogue's main function was to repeat what a character had spoken or to explain what was happening on screen. Although they were typically used for communication, some directors also used them to improve the aesthetic. However, the need for intertitles was eliminated when sound was added to movies. Currently, they are only visible in audiovisual works as inserts, such as to name a location or time period, as well as titles for various things.

Subtitles could only be considered successful if the viewer does not realize that they are on the screen. The subtitles must meet a set of standards and have an acceptable level of compression in order to achieve this result. The percentage of time spent reading the subtitles shouldn't be more than 30%; the remaining time should be spent enjoying the aural and visual aspects of the audiovisual production.

The division of the subtitle, the reading speed, the duration of the subtitle, and the number of characters are the primary technical parameters of subtitles (see for example, Diaz Cintas, 2009).

DIVISION OF SUBTITLE

The division of the subtitle is made up of the technical component of the number of lines in the subtitle, as well as the syntactic structure of the subtitle. It is common to prohibit subtitles that consist of more than two lines.

Movie theaters are permitted to use a line length of no more than 40 or 41 characters, however some film festivals permit a line length of 43 characters. The reason for this is that viewers can read subtitles more quickly and readily on a movie theater screen than they can on a television screen. On the other hand, television usually allows for a maximum of 37 characters per line.

Less than 4 or 5 characters in a subtitle are quite rare. The bare minimum number of characters for a subtitle is not, however, a set requirement.

It is not advisable, from the standpoint of syntactic organization, to divide subtitles into numerous semantic pieces. A subtitle often consists of a complete sentence or a complete clause from another sentence. Only if the subtitle will be longer than the number of characters that can fit on a single line should it be split into two lines.

There is no need to use two lines if a relatively short subtitle may be written on one. This is the usual practice. There is no need to force the eyes to go from one line to the next when all of the information may be presented in a single line that viewers can read at a glance without having to move their eyes.

The line break should not be used to separate a verb from a subject pronoun, a prepositional verb from its preposition, an auxiliary verb, a reflexive pronoun, a negative, or a noun from an adjective. The heavy-base pyramid style should be used if there are numerous options for line breaks in the subtitles.

READING SPEED

Depending on the client and the target audience that the subtitles are for, the maximum number of characters that are permitted per line may fluctuate. It's crucial to keep in mind that, in addition to reading the subtitles' written content, viewers also require enough time to scan the images and "read" the visuals when estimating the typical reading speed of the audience. When estimating the audience's average reading speed, this is a factor that must be taken into account.

The unit of measurement used to describe how quickly someone can read is characters per second (CPS). Netflix has one of the most widely accepted style guide across the industry. For English subtitles, it assigns 17 cps as a norm for children's programming and 20 cps for adult-oriented content. This, of course, varies by language. For example, for Russian subtitles the numbers are 13 and 17 respectfully.

Additionally, each project's speed settings can be set separately. For example, subtitlers try to make the reading experience less taxing on the audience and slow down the rate at which the text is read when the topic is somewhat complex because it takes more time to

comprehend a text. Love comedies tend to be somewhat boring and predictable most of the time. The viewers will lose interest in the subtitles for a considerable amount of time because the same lines are reused from one movie to the next. Contrarily, the objective of a crime drama or scientific presentation is to reflect the subject matter as accurately as possible; if this is not done, there is a chance that the speech will be utterly misunderstood. The subtitler won't encounter any major difficulties while attempting to fully translate the content into the target language if the original text is spoken at a moderate pace. The problem arises when the speakers on screen speak too quickly for the audience to understand what they are saying in their translation. When the subtitle begins to fade from the screen before we have finished reading it, or when we experience stress from having to read too quickly and not having enough time to take in the images, we feel as though we have "read" the movie rather than "watched" it.

DURATION OF THE SUBTITLE

A subtitle may never be more than seven seconds and must always be at least one second long. Although it is not unusual to see subtitles that stay on screen for as little as 21 or 22 frames, it is preferable for any subtitle to stay on screen for at least one second so that the viewer's eye can register its presence. This is so that the viewer's eye can recognize the presence of any subtitle, which should stay on screen for at least one second.

Additionally, each pair of subtitles must be separated by two frames. If this step is skipped, the subtitles won't "blink," making it possible for the viewer to miss the addition of new text. Each pair of successive subtitles must be separated by a clear and brief gap in order for the spectator to notice a change in the written content that is being displayed on screen.

A shorter duration of time for the subtitles on the screen increases the likelihood that they will appear and vanish like ash, rendering the viewer unable to read them. On the other hand, viewers will have the chance to read a very brief subtitle numerous times if it is displayed on the screen for an excessive amount of time, which is bothersome and can mess up the rhythm of reading. In other words, it is best to only use highly succinct subtitles when there is a compelling reason to do so, and the time should be carefully

examined. A single-word subtitle might, in some cases, be better integrated into the one that comes before or after it.

The golden rule of timing right is that subtitles must keep up with the speaker's utterances in terms of timing. If at all possible, a subtitle should show at the precise moment the speaker starts speaking and should vanish as soon as the speaker is done. Thanks to the use of an eight-digit timecode, the precise cues, measured in hours, minutes, seconds, and frames, have been identified. Furthermore, it is strongly advised against showing subtitles on-screen after more than two frame changes.

CONCLUSION

All in all, the technical requirements for subtitles are the main reason why most times the text in subtitles is merely a brief recounting of the utterance, rather than a perfect copy. Subtitles cannot be created without omitting some of the content and it is up to the subtitler to decide what takes prevalence and what could be lost without damaging the meaning. While Netflix style guide is the most used and well-known throughout the industry, there are many more and the requirements for subtitles may vary from project to project. Nevertheless, the requirements themselves are constant: there will always be a rule for the division, reading speed, and duration of the subtitle.

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