

CASE transcription conventions

General Transcription Conventions

Each line of transcription represents spoken language as segmented into intonation units. In English, an intonation unit typically consists of about five to seven words and expresses one new idea unit. Intonation units are likely to begin with a brief pause and to end in a clause-final intonation contour; they often match grammatical clauses. Each idea unit typically contains a subject, or given information, and a predicate, or new information; this flow from given to new information is characteristic of spoken language (Chafe 1994). Arranging each intonation unit on a separate line displays the frequency of intonation units beginning with *and* and thus highlights the greater fragmentation inherent in spoken language (Chafe 1982).

Capitalization is reduced to the pronoun I and proper names, diacritics are used to mark features of prosody rather than grammatical units, and non-lexical items, for example pause fillers like *ehm* and *um*, affirmative particles like *aha* or surprise markers like *oh*, are included. The specific transcription conventions are as follows.

she's out.	Period shows falling tone in the preceding element; suggesting finality.
oh yeah?	Question mark shows rising tone in the preceding element.
so, now,	Comma indicates a level, continuing intonation; suggesting non-finality.
bu- but	A single dash indicates a cut-off (often with a glottal stop); including truncated intonation units.
DAMN	Capitals show heavy stress or indicate that speech is louder than surrounding discourse.
°dearest°	Utterances spoken more softly than the surrounding discourse are framed by degree signs.
says "oh"	Double quotes mark speech set off by a shift in the speaker's voice.
(2.0)	Numbers in parentheses indicate timed pauses.
	If the duration of the pauses is not crucial and not timed:
..	a truncated ellipsis is used to indicate pauses of one-half second or less.
...	An ellipsis is used to indicate a pause of more than a half-second.

ha:rd	The colon indicates the prolonging of the prior sound or syllable.
<no way>	Angle brackets pointing outward denote words or phrases that are spoken more slowly than the surrounding discourse.
>watch out<	Angle brackets pointing inward indicate words or phrases spoken more quickly than surrounding discourse.
[and so-] [WHY] her?	Square brackets on successive lines mark beginning and end of overlapping talk; multiple overlap is marked by aligning the brackets.
and= =then	Equal signs on successive lines show latching between turns of different speakers; they can also indicate that the turn of one speaker continues after e.g. backchannels of interlocutors.
H	Clearly audible breath sounds are indicated with a capital H.
.h	Inhalations are denoted with a period, followed by a small h. Longer inhalations are depicted by .h: (cf. prolonging colon above)
h	Exhalations are denoted with a small h (without a preceding period). A longer exhalation is denoted by h: (cf. prolonging colon above)
.t	Alveolar suction click
()	In the case that utterances cannot be transcribed with certainty empty parentheses are employed
(hard work)	If there is a likely interpretation, the questionable words appear within the parentheses.
/ /	slashes are used for phonemic transcriptions
((laughs))	Aspects of the utterance, such as whispers, coughing, and laughter, are indicated with double parentheses.
{waves}	Nonverbal behaviour, such as gestures, movements and looks, are indicated with curly brackets – for a more detailed overview of how to transcribe nonverbal behaviour see the separate taxonomy (http://umwelt-campus.de/case/conventions)
Numbering	Number each intonation unit consecutively (e.g. from 1 to n).

Conventions adapted from:

- Richard A. Dressler; and Roger J. Kreuz. 2000. "Transcribing oral discourse: A survey and model system." *Discourse Processes* 29. 25-36.
- Chafe, Wallace. 1982. "Integration and involvement in speaking, writing, and oral literature." *Spoken and written language: Advances in discourse processes*, vol. 9, ed. by Deborah Tannen, pp. 35-54. Norwood: Ablex.
- Chafe, Wallace. 1994. *Discourse, consciousness and time*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Specific Transcription Conventions

For CASE there are some additional specific transcription conventions reflecting the particular nature and medium of discourse. They are as follows.

Start every transcript with the name of the recording, press enter twice and then start your transcription.

LANGUAGE STANDARD

For the purpose of consistency and to avoid complicated search algorithms, we will only use **British** standard in our transcripts. (Please change your spell-checking options to English UK.)

All lexicalized items are transcribed. You can use traditional (online) dictionaries and the Urban Dictionary. Conventionalized contractions such as *I'm, you're, it's* are transcribed as they occur.

PUNCTUATION

There always has to be some kind of intonation **punctuation** at the *end* of the last *spoken* word of *every* intonation unit to indicate rising (?), falling (.) or continuing (,) intonation.

If aspects of the utterance occur **at the end** of an intonation unit, the punctuation precedes the feature.

okay. ((laughs))

If aspects of the utterance occur **while speaking**, the punctuation follows the feature, not the last word:

okay ((laughing)).

PAUSES

Commas are not to be used within intonation units, but only at the very end of them, to indicate a continuing intonation, as described in Dressler and Kreuz 2000.

Pauses between intonation units (n.x (tenths of a second), .. and ...) will begin the next intonation unit, not stand at the end of the preceding one.

CAPITALISATION

The **only** capitalised words are the first person pronoun **I**, **names**, and **nationalities**. Words or phrases that are spoken with a **higher volume** than the surrounding utterance are written in capital letters. The same applies to **especially stressed syllables**. (Do not capitalise regular stressing patterns.)

LAUGHTER

The following nine laughter types are distinguished in CASE:

((LAUGHS))	loud laughter (louder than surrounding discourse)
((laughs))	laugh pulse sequence
((laughing))	laughing while speaking
((chuckles))	chuckling, softer than laughter
((chuckling))	chuckling while speaking
((hehe))	short chuckling, two pulses
((thh))	aspirated minimum laughter starting with alveolar plosive sound
((ehh))	monosyllabic laugh pulse
((heh))	initially aspirated monosyllabic laugh pulse

ECHO

We will just transcribe echoes which are important for the discourse, i.e. which explain pauses/confusion because of speech delay, self-interruption etc.

€€€	normal echo
[€€€]	overlapping echo

Echoes are either transcribed as completely overlapping or not at all overlapping, i.e. there are no other transcription possibilities than the two above.

Each Echo is transcribed in a **separate line** as it occurs in the transcript, without indicating speaker provenance.

TECHNICAL INTERFERENCE (PACKET LOSS)

Technical interference will not be transcribed unless extensive and influencing the conversation. In contrast, stuttering and hesitation will be transcribed according to the guidelines.

If the recording is interrupted, please transcribe the interruption as follows:

#interruption of recording (3.7)#

CODE-SWITCHING

Code-switching will be transcribed.

If the speakers switch between two languages, indicate the language and the time (tenths of a second) this language is spoken: eg. **((Korean (3.4)))**

If you understand the language, include the transcription of it in your transcript.

PHONEMIC TRANSCRIPTIONS

We will not transcribe phonemically, except for mistakes in pronunciation, which might lead to confusion. First, write the word that was intended, then, indicate this particular pronunciation by placing **slashes** around the differing sounds and put it in **double brackets**. Example:

(1) SF13: so because I thought **((/t/ought))** if-

SF13 wanted to say “thought” but didn’t pronounce the <th> with its regular phoneme /θ/.

NUMBERS

Numbers (also years) will be spelled out: **two thousand (and) seven** instead of *2007*.

OVERLAPS

[Overlaps] can happen in between or within words.

If two speakers overlap, but one of the speakers has a hesitation or pause within his turn, while the other one continues speaking, **group these overlaps to one single overlap**:

(2) SB14: YES,
 ah sorry: for not informing you before ((laughing)),
 but I've started the re[ording right-
 ... °right in the beginning]°.
 SF13: [ye-eah it's- it's nice to do that],
 because I don't wanna say something which is not a-ppropriate,

The intonation sign is after the square bracket. Don't align overlap.

If one of the speakers continues his intonation unit after the overlap, make sure that the discontinued speaker has two turns.

SB01: ... okay,
 ... my recorder is running automatically,
 so I don't need to press anything,
 SF01: [uh huh],

SB01: [it just] starts with the Skype thingy,

SF01: okay mine does not do,

BACKCHANNELING

There are no specific symbols to mark backchanneling.

CLIPPING

Words should not be shortened in any way. They have to be transcribed exactly as they are spoken.

Okay cannot be spelled “~~ok~~”.

LIAISON

If a speaker jointly pronounces several words and/or non-lexical items in an unusual manner, indicate by joining the items with underscores:

She said_uh

UNDERSTANDING PROBLEMS

If you cannot understand what has been said use normal, empty brackets without space in between: ()

If you think you understood something but are not quite sure, write these parts within the brackets: (example xy)

Do not specifically mention that you could not understand it, as the use of empty brackets already indicates this.

CONTOURS

Contours will not be included at this point. The symbols / and \ should not be used in a transcript, except for phonemic transcriptions / /.

BRACKETS

Normal, single brackets are used for understanding problems (see above).

Normal, double brackets are used to indicate aspects of the utterance.

Curly brackets/braces are used to indicate nonverbal behaviour.

Square brackets are used to indicate overlapping.

Do not use these brackets for any other purpose than the ones mentioned above.

INDENTS

Indents have the function of structuring the F4 transcript into a word table.

The general rule is:

NAME: ---press tab once--- TEXT

or

NAME: ---press tab once--- TEXT ---press tab once--- TIME STAMP

UNDERSTANDING CHECKS and HESITATION

mhm	closed mouth, agreement or understanding
m/m:/mh/m:h	closed mouth, single sound
uh huh	open mouth
uh/u:h	open mouth, single sound, often with hesitations
e:r	open mouth, clear pronunciation or /r/, often with hesitations
uhm/u:hm	open mouth that is closed at the end, also with hesitations

NAMES

Use the University/Student coding (e.g. SB01) for the speakers, also if they refer to each other. First and last names of other participants, co-students, university staff, friends or family of participants, and other names related to the personal background of the speakers (street address, city district, but not city name, study subject, faculty etc.) will be anonymized later – please mark them in the transcript with “!” after the word like this: Mozartstrasse!

All other names (cities, regions, countries, names of celebrities, TV series, movies etc.) will be transcribed in full.

CONCISENESS

Be concise and consistent. This means:

Do not use different spellings for the same word.

Check unfamiliar words. (The game *Counter-Strike*, for example, is neither spelled Counterstrike nor Counter Strike, and especially not Contra Strike).

Transcribing a mispronunciation and then using it as a normal word is not possible.

Please use the following citation:

- CASE transcription conventions (2017). Birkenfeld: Trier University of Applied Sciences. [<http://umwelt-campus.de/case-conventions>]