

Transcription Conventions

Each line of transcription represents spoken language as segmented into intonation units. In English, an intonation unit typically consists of about four to five 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; cf. yes-no question intonation
so, now,	Comma indicates a level, continuing intonation; suggesting non-finality.
bu- but	A single dash indicates a cutoff (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 <i>H</i> .
.h	Inhalations are denoted with a period, followed by a small <i>h</i> . Longer inhalations are depicted with multiple <i>hs</i> as in .hhhh
h	Exhalations are denoted with a small <i>h</i> (without a preceding period). A longer exhalation is denoted by multiple <i>hs</i> .
.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 phonetic transcriptions
((laugh))	Aspects of the utterance, such as whispers, coughing, and laughter, are indicated with double parentheses.
{points at board}	Nonverbal behavior, such as movements and looks, are indicated with braces.
Numbering conventions:	Number each intonation unit consecutively (e.g. from 1 to <i>n</i>).

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.