



Segmenting, transcribing and translating in ELAN

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[draft version, to be expanded]

1. Background

This document takes you through the first steps of using ELAN to segment, transcribe and translate a recording. The instructions assume that you have already got a blank eaf file as created for example using the templates provided by Andrea Berez on the ELAN Third Party resources page, which can be downloaded via this direct link:

<http://paradisec.org.au/elansampletemplates.zip>

2. Use of fonts

IN SMALL CAPS SCRIPT	commands or buttons you can click on or keys you can press
in bold script	folder names, file names or parts of file names
<i>in italics</i>	terminology used in ELAN such as <i>Segmentation Mode</i>
“in inverted commas”	options that you can choose from in ELAN
in this font	what you yourself have to type or write

3. Opening a file in ELAN

- Start the ELAN programme.
- In the menu bar, click on FILE, then click on OPEN.
- Navigate to the folder where you keep all the video files, audio files and transcription files.
- For the transcription you want to work on, find the file with the extension **.eaf** and double-click on that file, e.g. **ikaan233.eaf**. Click on OK. This should open the transcription including the audio and video file that belong to it.
 - If ELAN does not find the audio or video file, a window will open that will tell you that the files are not found and will ask you to find the files by hand. In this case, navigate to the folder where your audio and video file are and select them manually, e.g. select a video file (**.mp4** such as **ikaan233.mp4**) and an audio file (**.wav** such as **ikaan233.wav**)

4. Segmenting a file

- Switch to *Segmentation Mode* by clicking on OPTIONS in the menu bar and selecting SEGMENTATION MODE.
- Choose “One keystroke per annotation (adjacent annotations)” by clicking into the circle to the left so that the circle becomes filled with a black dot.
- Click on the PLAY button (the one with the triangle pointing to the right) to play the file.
- When you hear the end of a sentence, press the ENTER button. This marks the end of this sentence and the beginning of the next sentence. Keep pressing the ENTER button every time you hear the end of a sentence.
 - There are no gaps between the sentences. This is fine.



- If there is a pause, you can mark the beginning and end of the pause the same way as you marked the beginning and end of the sentence, just by pressing ENTER. You can later delete this particular annotation if you want to, but for the purposes of the annotation it can also just stay like this.
- For the very first sentence, you have to mark the beginning and the end of the sentence because there is no end of a previous sentence that is simultaneously the beginning of the next sentence. Therefore, for the very first sentence, mark the beginning of the sentence by pressing ENTER, and mark the end of the sentence by pressing ENTER again.
- Listen through the whole file and press ENTER at the end of every sentence until you get to the end of the file.
- If you get some boundaries wrong, you can adjust the beginning and end while you are in *Segmentation Mode*.
 - In the line with the annotations, bring your mouse over the downward line that marks the beginning or the end of the annotation you want to change so that the pointed head of the cursor turns into a double-headed arrow. Then click and drag the boundary to the point where you want the boundary to be and let go with the mouse to drop the boundary there.
- If you want to delete all the annotations (be careful, this really deletes everything!), you can also do this while you are in *Segmentation Mode*.
 - In the menu bar, click on TIER > REMOVE ANNOTATIONS OR VALUES...
 - In the window that opens, select the tier from which you want to remove the annotations by ticking the box to the left of the tier.
 - If you want to delete the whole annotation including the beginning and end, i.e. you want to have a completely empty file, choose “Annotations” by clicking into the circle to the left so that the circle becomes filled with a black dot.
 - If you want to delete what you have written into the annotation but not the beginning and end of each annotation, choose “Annotation Values” by clicking into the circle to the left so that the circle becomes filled with a black dot.
 - Click OK.

5. Transcribing and translating the file

- Switch to *Transcription Mode* by clicking on OPTIONS > TRANSCRIPTION MODE.
- The *Transcription mode settings window* will pop up asking you to configure your transcription table.
 - If this window doesn't pop up, you can open it yourself: in the left column, at the very bottom, there is a button called CONFIGURE. Click on that to open the configuration window manually, or when you want to change the configuration to a different one.
 - In the *Transcription mode settings window*, in the first line and box you can change the font size to maybe something like 14 or bigger to be able to see everything well.
 - You can ignore the line that asks you to set the number of columns, this will be adjusted automatically.
 - In the table below, there will probably be cells with grey writing that says *<select a type>* or that already have the names of tiers written into them in black writing. Click into this cell to drop down the menu that lets you choose the columns you will have in the transcription table.



- Click APPLY to return to the *Transcription mode settings window* and APPLY again to return to the main transcription window itself.
- You can now click into any cell, listen to what the person is saying and either transcribe or translate into the cell.
- Every time you hit ENTER, you move to the cell below the one you have been writing into. If you want to move across rather than down when you hit ENTER you need to look at the left side where there is a tick box with “Navigate across column” written next to it. Click into the box to the left of the writing. If there is a tick, you will now move sideways across the table every time you hit ENTER.
- When you have finished for the day, go to the menu bar, click on FILE > SAVE to save your work.

6. Making copies of files to be able to return to the previous day's work

- Open Windows Explorer and navigate to the folder where you keep your annotations.
- Find the annotation file that you want to copy, e.g. **ikaan234.eaf**. Right-click on the file. In the context menu that opens, click on COPY.
- Right-click into some white space in the folder that you want to put the copy in. In the context menu that opens, click PASTE.
- Right-click on the copied file. In the context menu that opens, click on RENAME. The file name now appears in a small box where you can write into it. Change the name to the file name followed by an underscore (this symbol: `_`) followed by the day's date as year-month-day, e.g. **ikaan234_2012-06-18.eaf**. You can then leave this file and not touch it again. When you next want to work with your annotation, work with **ikaan234.eaf** again.
- Make regular copies like this.

7. Making backup of work you have done

- Keeping just one copy of a file is no good, it is not safe. The principle for data security is called LOCKSS - Lots Of Copies Keep Stuff Safe.
- Keep one copy on your computer, one on the external hard disk, one on a USB stick. You may also regularly put data on DVDs or CDs, but this is not very reliable because disks break easily.
- The different copies should also be in different places. It is no good having ten different copies in one room - if there is a fire or a robbery all may be lost in one go.
- You can also email small files such as annotation files to your email inbox and keep them there. This is not possible for big files such as audio files or video files though because they are too big and don't fit in the inbox.