

J. Maxwell Atkinson and John Heritage

JEFFERSON'S TRANSCRIPT NOTATION

THE TRANSCRIPT NOTATION often used in conversation analytic research, has been developed by Gail Jefferson. It is a system that continues to evolve in response to current research interests. Sometimes it has been necessary to incorporate symbols for representing various non-vocal activities, such as gaze, gestures, and applause.

Previous experience suggests that it is useful to group symbols with reference to the phenomena they represent.

Simultaneous utterances

Utterances starting simultaneously are linked together with either double or single left-hand brackets:

[[Tom: I used to smoke a lot when I was young
Bob: I used to smoke Camels

Overlapping utterances

When overlapping utterances do not start simultaneously, the point at which an ongoing utterance is joined by another is marked with a single left-hand

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bracket, linking an ongoing with an overlapping utterance at the point where overlap begins:

[Tom: I used to smoke [a lot
 Bob: He thinks he's real tough

The point where overlapping utterances stop overlapping is marked with a single right-hand bracket:

[Tom: I used to smoke [a lot] more than this
 Bob: [I see]

Contiguous utterances

When there is no interval between adjacent utterances, the second being latched immediately to the first (without overlapping it), the utterances are linked together with equal signs:

= Tom: I used to smoke a lot=
 Bob: =He thinks he's real tough

The equal signs are also used to link different parts of a single speaker's utterance when those parts constitute a continuous flow of speech that has been carried over to another line, by transcript design, to accommodate an intervening interruption:

Tom: I used to smoke [a lot more than this=
 Bob: [You used to smoke
 Tom: =but I never inhaled the smoke

Sometimes more than one speaker latches directly onto a just-completed utterance, and a case of this sort is marked with a combination of equal signs and double left-hand brackets:

=[[Tom: I used to smoke a lot=
 Bob: =[[He thinks he's tough
 Ann: =[[So did I

When overlapping utterances end simultaneously and are latched onto by a subsequent utterance, the link is marked by a single right-handed bracket and equal signs:

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Tom: I used to smoke a lot
] = Bob: [I see] =
 Ann: =So did I

Intervals within and between utterances

When intervals in the stream of talk occur, they are timed in tenths of a second and inserted within parentheses, either within an utterance:

(0.0) Lil: When I was (0.6) oh nine or ten

or between utterances:

Hal: step right up
 (1.3)

Hal: I said step right up
 (0.8)

Joe: Are you talking to me

A short untimed pause within an utterance is indicated by a dash:

– Dee: Umm – my mother will be right in

Unlimited intervals heard between utterances are described within double parentheses and inserted where they occur:

((pause)) Rex: Are you ready to order
 ((pause))

Pam: Yes thank you we are

Characteristics of speech delivery

In these transcripts, punctuation is used to mark not conventional grammatical units but, rather, attempts to capture characteristics of speech delivery. For example, a colon indicates an extension of the sound or syllable it follows:

co:lon Ron: What ha:ppened to you

and more colons prolong the stretch:

co :: lons Mae: I ju::ss can't come
 Tim: I'm so:::sorry re:::ally I am

The other punctuation marks are used as follows:

- . A period indicates a stopping fall in tone, not necessarily the end of a sentence.
- , A comma indicates a continuing intonation, not necessarily between clauses of sentences.
- ? A question mark indicates a rising inflection, not necessarily a question.
- ? A combined question mark/comma indicates a rising intonation weaker than that indicated by a question mark.
- ! An exclamation point indicates an animated tone, not necessarily an exclamation.
- A single dash indicates a halting, abrupt cutoff, or, when multiple dashes hyphenate the syllables of a word or connect strings of words, the stream of talk so marked has a stammering quality.

Marked rising and falling shifts in intonation are indicated by upward and downward pointing arrows immediately prior to the rise or fall:

↓↑ Thatcher: I am however (0.2) very ↓fortunate (0.4) in
 having (0.6) ↑mar:vulous dep↓uty

Emphasis is indicated by underlining:

Ann: It happens to be mine

Capital letters are used to indicate an utterance, or part thereof, that is spoken much louder than the surrounding talk:

Announcer: an the winner: ↓iz:s (1.4) RACHEL ROBERTS for
 Y↑ANKS

A degree sign is used to indicate a passage of talk which is quieter than the surrounding talk:

°° M: ·hhhh (.)°Um ::°Ow is yih mother by: th'wa:y.h

Audible aspirations (hhh) and inhalations (·hhh) are inserted in the speech where they occur:

hhh Pam: An thi(hh)s is for you hhh
·hhh Don: ·hhhh O(hh) tha(h)nk you rea(hh)lly

A 'gh' placed within a word indicates gutturalness:

gh J: Ohgh(h)h hhuh huh huh ·huh

A subscribed dot is used as a "hardener." In this capacity it can indicate, for example, an especially dentalized "t":

dot J: Was it ↑ la:s' night.

Double parentheses are used to enclose a description of some phenomenon with which the transcriptionist does not want to wrestle.

These can be vocalizations that are not, for example, spelled gracefully or recognizably:

(()) Tom: I used to ((cough)) smoke a lot
Bob: ((sniff)) He thinks he's tough
Ann: ((snorts))

or other details of the conversational scene:

Jan: This is just delicious
((telephone rings))
Kim: I'll get it

or various characterizations of the talk:

Ron: ((in falsetto)) I can do it now
Max: ((whispered)) He'll never do it

When part of an utterance is delivered at a pace quicker than the surrounding talk, it is indicated by being enclosed between "less than" signs:

>< Steel: the Guar:dian newspaper looked through >the
manifestoes< la:st ↑week

the speech

Transcriptionist doubt

In addition to the timings of intervals and inserted aspirations and inhalations, items enclosed within single parentheses are in doubt, as in:

() Ted: I ('spose I'm not)
(Ben): We all (t-)

Here "spose I'm not," the identity of the second speaker, and "t-" represent different varieties of transcriptionist doubt.

ndicate, for

Sometimes multiple possibilities are indicated:

Ted: I (spoke to Mark)
('spose I'm not)
Ben: We all try to figure a (tough angle) for it
(stuffing girl)

phenomenon

d gracefully

When single parentheses are empty, no hearing could be achieved for the string of talk or item in question:

Todd: My () catching
(): In the highest ()

Here the middle of Todd's utterance, the speaker of the subsequent utterance, and the end of the subsequent utterance could not be recovered.

Gaze direction

The gaze of the speaker is marked above an utterance, and that of the addressee below it. A line indicates that the party marked is gazing toward the other. The absence of a line indicates lack of gaze. Dots mark the transition movement from nongaze to gaze, and the point where the gaze reaches the other is marked with an X:

surrounding

Beth: X _____
Terry - | Jerry's fa scinated with elephants
Don: | X _____

>the

Here Beth moves her gaze toward Don while saying "Terry"; Don's gaze shifts toward and reaches hers just after she starts to say "fascinated."

If gaze arrives within a pause each tenth of a second within the pause is marked with a dash:

Ann: _____ . . . X _____
 Well (--- -) We coulda used [a liddle, marijuana. =
 Beth: _____ [X _____

Here Beth's gaze reaches Ann three-tenths of a second after she has said "Well-" and one-tenth of a second before she continues with "We coulda used . . ."

Commas are used to indicate the dropping of gaze:

Ann: _____
 Karen has this new hou:se. en it's got all this
 Beth: _____ , , ,

Here Beth's gaze starts to drop away as Ann begins to say "new." Movements like head nodding are marked at points in the talk where they occur:

Ann: _____
 Karen has this new hou:se. en it's got all this
 Beth: _____ , , , (Nod)

Here Beth, who is no longer gazing at Ann, nods as the latter says "got." Asterisks are used in a more ad hoc fashion to indicate particular phenomena discussed in the text. In the following fragment, for example, Goodwin uses them to indicate the position where Beth puts food in her mouth:

Ann: _____
 =like-(0.2) ssilver: :g-go : ld wwa:llpaper.
 Beth: _____ ***** [. .] X _____

Applause

Strings of X's are used to indicate applause, with lower- and uppercase letters marking quiet and loud applause respectively:

Audience: xxXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXxxx

Here applause amplitude increases and then decreases.

An isolated single clap is indicated by dashes on each side of the x:

Audience: -x-

Spasmodic or hesitant clapping is indicated by a chain punctuated by dashes:

Audience: -x-x-x

A line broken by numbers in parentheses indicates the duration of applause from the point of onset (or prior object) to the nearest tenth of a second. The number of X's does *not* indicate applause duration except where it overlaps with talk, as in the second of the following examples:

Speaker: I beg >to supp↓ort the m↓otion<=
 ───────────────────────────────────┐
 ───────────────────────────────────┘
 (8.0)

Audience: =xx-xxXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXxx-x

Speaker: THIS ↓WEEK SO >THAT YOU CAN STILL MAKE
 ───────────────────────────────────┐
 ───────────────────────────────────┘
 [xx-XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX]=

Speaker: = [YER MINDS UP <

Audience: = [XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX ((edited cut))

Other transcript symbols

The left-hand margin of the transcript is sometimes used to point to a feature of interest to the analyst at the time the fragment is introduced in the text. Lines in the transcript where the phenomenon of interest occurs are frequently indicated by arrows in the left-hand margin. For example, if the analyst had been involved in a discussion of continuations and introduced the following fragment:

- Don: I like that blue one very much
- Sam: And I'll bet your wife would like it
- Don: If I had the money I'd get one for her
- Sam: And one for your mother too I'll bet

the arrows in the margin would call attention to Sam's utterances as instances of continuations.

Horizontal ellipses indicate that an utterance is being reported only in part, with additional speech coming before, in the middle of, or after the reported

fragment, depending on the location of the ellipses. Thus, in the following example, the parts of Don's utterance between "said" and "y'know" are omitted:

Don: But I said . . . y' know

Vertical ellipses indicate that intervening turns at talking have been omitted from the fragment:

Bob: Well I always say give it your all

Bob: And I always say give it everything

Codes that identify fragments being quoted designate parts of the chapter authors' own tape collections.