

**ELAN Course
for Sign Language Researchers**

August 8, 2003 10:00 – 16:00 hr

Structure of the course:

- 10.00-12.30 Introduction to ELAN: demonstrating its functionality
- 12.30-14.00 Lunch break
giving the participants the opportunity to attend a lunch talk at the MPI (by Nicla Rossini: “Linguistics and Gesture Studies”)
- 13.00-15.30 Practice session
(starting at 13.00 for those who did not attend the lunch talk, and at 14.00 for those who attended it)
- 15.30-16.00 Summing up; Questions and Answers; Brief demonstration of ELAN 2.0

Participants:

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Discussion points:

Generally, the participant were impressed with the functionality of ELAN, and were looking forward to working with ELAN from now on. They expressed the following suggestions concerning the further development of ELAN:

- A simplified installation procedure:

Most people experienced difficulties installing ELAN on their laptops and computers at home/work. Difficulties arose especially with (a) installing the various components (Java, Webstart, Unicode Font) and (b) digitization procedures.

I suggest we provide users with a step-by-step instruction of the installation process, a trouble-shooting section, and a list of video/audio formats that are supported by the different versions of ELAN.

- It would be very nice if – for a selected time interval – each video frame could be displayed in the form of stills, so that people would be able to simultaneously see the sequence of frames.
- They re-iterated the importance of being able to see multiple videos.
- Would it be possible to change the size of the video manually? In principle, the current size is satisfactory, but they would like to be able to zoom into the video occasionally.
- They asked for a more powerful search tool. In particular, they asked for the following functionality:
 - to be able to search across multiple files;
 - to be able to search in the whole transcript (not only in a single tier), or to search in all tiers that have the language encoding XY;
 - to be able to combine search queries by 'and', 'or', 'but not', etc.
- They asked about a print function (independent of the export as tab-delimited text), and about the possibility of printing/exporting a piece of annotation together with video stills.
- Would it be possible to manually alter the begin/end time of annotations in the Grid Viewer?
- Would it be possible to incorporate the font that was specifically designed for sign languages (HamNoSys)? Apparently, the font is not unicode, but somebody in Hamburg seems to be working on making it unicode-compatible.
- A few participants worked on the MAC, giving me the following feedback:
 - On one of the MACs, the symbolic subdivision and the symbolic association tiers did not work (they were treated as dependent tiers, but they were still linked to the time axis). On the other MAC it worked okay. So I don't know what happened, but I just wanted to let you know for the record.
 - If you close ELAN by clicking on the MAC-equivalent of the cross icon, ELAN is not really closed: it is still there in the background, but you cannot open any files anymore.
 - One MAC-person worked with MPEG-1 files that were too big for the screen. It was possible to reduce their size by opening them in Quicktime, clicking on "half size" and then saving them as MOV files. ELAN then accepted these files. This is not a big problem, but we should inform people about it, and how they can fix it. (This is a piece of information that should go into a general trouble-shooting section).