Phonetic transcription

Level of detail: Phonetic transcription is the most detailed system to convert the actual sounds, the phonemes, into text. Rather than using Latin characters, it is a graphic representation of language using phonetic symbols, with the effect that readability is reduced (AYAß, 2015, pp.508-509). One example of a phonetic transcription system is the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) (HESELWOOD, 2013, pp.112-119).

Research interest: Phonetic transcriptions are utilised not only in forensic phonetics and speech pathology and therapy, as well as in dictionaries and language learning, but also have significance for dialectology, accent studies, and sociophonetics. The latter fields share the assumption that the transcribed speech serves as a representative sample of a specific population of speakers, either geographically or socially defined. The objective is to study the phonetic patterns of this population (pp.251-263).

Example (p.133):

š̞w'ʊ̞́ p d l(ɣ) å d

{allegro? ? allegro} {L2 L 3}

("What's up lad?" in Northern British English)

Jeffersonian transcription

Level of detail: Probably the best-known transcription system is the "Jeffersonian" system, in which symbols or visual annotations within the transcript are used to express linguistic peculiarities and nonverbal characteristics such as pitches, simultaneous speech, breathing, laughing, coughing, and the duration of pauses and stresses. This, for instance, includes underlining words or parts of words that were emphasised, or the use of capitalised words for volume increase, colons for longer vowels, a full stop within brackets for a short pause, or arrows for pitch rises. Information about dialects and extra-linguistic events are also included (EVERS, 2011, §26-38; JEFFERSON, 2004; PAULUS, LESTER & DEMPSTER, 2014, pp.96-100; PSATHAS & ANDERSON, 1990). The system is pseudo-phonetic (HESELWOOD, 2013, p.262).

Research interest: This orthographic type of transcription, which also conveys extra- and intra-linguistic characteristics, was introduced by Gail JEFFERSON in the 1970s and especially developed for and used in conversation analysis. Conversation analysts are concerned with the detailed description of conversation, its elements, and the patterns within, and thereby focus on the microstructure of social interaction in order to reveal small social phenomena that shape larger social actions (JEFFERSON, 1985a, pp.26-27; SACKS, SCHEGLOFF & JEFFERSON, 1974).

¹ Jeffersonian transcriptions are very similar to what OLIVER, SEROVICH and MASON (2005, p.1275) called "naturalized transcription". Less detailed transcriptions can also be subsumed under "denaturalized transcriptions", meaning that in them informative content is prioritised over transcribing all statements made during a conversation in great detail. "Denaturalized transcriptions" can still include some intra- and extra-linguistic features, but only to the extent necessary for understanding the content.

Example:

I m:<u>ISSED</u> YO<u>U</u>: but I've been *ri-u (.) I've R<u>E</u>ALLY <u>ha</u>d a ve<u>ry</u> ni_:ce time <u>Sun</u>day was k_ind of a lo:ng da_:y but uh hmhh hh huhh

[Ye:a[:h,

I<u>··</u> 'M <u>u</u>sed to <u>e</u>verything no<u>:w</u> and (0.6) °I 'm° br<u>a</u>yh hh

[°Ye:ah,°]

(0.2)

I dMy toenails are falling off I don't *know-*

^{[t} Oh: []]wait a

minute. That's I'm glad you mentioned tha:t.=

= You know <u>l</u>:sabel <u>h</u>a:d her: <u>nai</u>:l taken o:ff like <u>yo</u>u had your (.) t<u>oena</u>il taken o :ff and it <u>just</u> ↓ abo<u>u</u>:t <u>kill</u>ed her= (JEFFERSON, 1985b, pp.451-452, see pp.463-466 for a glossary of transcript symbols)

Level of detail: Verbatim transcription is less detailed, meaning that all words are transcribed without additional grammatical corrections. Dialects or colloquial language are preserved. Word repetitions, utterances, word interruptions, and elisions are kept as well. It also contains some extra-linguistic rudimentary interview context information, such as information on breaks or laughter (EVERS, 2011, §26-38; PAULUS et al., 2014, pp. 96-100).

Verbatim transcription

Research interest: Such transcripts are used by researchers in various research traditions, such as critical discourse analysis, grounded theory studies, and ethnographical approaches (OLIVER et al., 2005, p.1277). Critical discourse analysts, for example, often use verbatim transcriptions as they study the power structures present in social or cultural discourses that affect the social actions of individuals, whereas conversation analysts are more concerned with how phenomena are constructed through language in a given situation (KOROBOV, 2001). Generally speaking, studies about the mechanics of speech and their related social phenomena, rather than the content of the dialogue, typically require detailed transcripts that include all pauses, laughter, stuttering, paraverbal utterances, and other linguistic characteristics (OLIVER et al., 2005, pp.1274-1278). It also seems to be the case that researchers who try to reconstruct processes or situations and who are more centred on the content of what is said in the interview tend to pay attention to detail only to the extent that it ensures that the content is not modified (GLÄSER & LAUDEL, 2010, p.194).

Er [clears throat] the football match was really amazing. Really. I enjoyed myself and uhm Nancy, and I got to have fun together again. Yeah. You know it's been a while since we went on a date. Awww man, I miss those intimate moments. [sniffs]

John Doe: Uhm ... so, like, I- I totally wanna go down to the bar, you know, and get uhm ... drunk.

Bob: So, I grew up in the South...

Q: Uh-huh.

Bob: ... and I really liked it there. So when I get a chance I'll go back. But until then I'm stuck here ...

Q: I see.

Bob: ... teaching a bunch of brats. Don't you hate this job?

Q: Yes. Bob: Me too.

Level of detail: Less detailed than verbatim is "gisted" transcription, where non-essential information (e.g. filler words, word fragments, repetition of words) is omitted, and the audio content is summarised or grammatically correctly rephrased for specific purposes of extraction (EVERS, 2011, §26-38; PAULUS et al., 2014, pp.96-100). This also includes, for instance, the smoothing of the language itself in cases of speakers using dialect. According to FUß and KARBACH (2019, p.42), in a heavily gisted transcript, incorrect expressions, incorrect sentence structure, colloquial language, dialect, and slang are corrected and brought into line with the standard language. In a mildly gisted transcript, the "broad" dialect is corrected and brought up to a generally accepted colloquial language.

Research interest: Fully gisted transcripts are often used for journalistic purposes because they allow for high readability by removing dialects, colloquial expressions, filler words, and/or grammatical errors (FUß & KARBACH, 2019, p.62). The literary style of a gisted transcript can be used to "highlight nuances of a statement and facilitate communication on the meaning of the subject's stories to readers" (KVALE & BRINKMANN, 2009, p.186). In practice, many transcripts that are used in social research for the analysis of content can be positioned between verbatim and gisted transcription as a "basic research transcript" (FUß & KARBACH, 2019, pp.64-65).

Gisted transcription³

² Examples for verbatim and gisted transcripts are from https://audext.com/what-is-a-verbatim-transcription/ [Accessed: June 8, 2023] and https://www.productiontranscripts.com/true-verbatim-versus-clean-verbatim/ [Accessed: June 8, 2023].

³ "Gisted" transcription is sometimes referred to as "clean verbatim" or "journalistic transcript", and this term is not as common as "verbatim" or "Jeffersonian".

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Table1

Examples:

The football match was amazing. Really. I enjoyed myself. Nancy and I got to have fun together again. You know it's been a while since we went on a date. Man, I miss those intimate moments.

John Doe: So I totally want to go down to the bar and get drunk.

Bob: So, I grew up in the South and I really liked it there. So when I get a chance I'll go back. But until then I'm stuck here teaching a bunch of brats. Don't you hate this job?

Q: Yes.

Bob: Me too.