

Typical problems and challenges

- Spoken interaction usually does not unwind in clearly differentiated sentences, but rather in run-on sentences. The transcriber, therefore, needs to make a decision where to put a full stop and where to put a comma. This has to be done carefully, as the punctuation easily alters a meaning of the utterance.
- In case the interviewer is using acknowledging nods (“ehm”, “aha”, “ano”) to encourage the interviewee to proceed with their narration, these should not be transcribed as not to interrupt the flow of the speech. Such acknowledging nods should be transcribed only when appearing meaningful.
- In case the interviewee is re-phrasing a statement of someone else, this has to be clearly marked by quotation marks and eventually also by an explaining bracket, such as (imitating voice).
- By stopping and playing the recording some words might get lost. Therefore, it is very important to go back a second or two after each stop to catch all the words following the last noted word. Most of the transcription software has this function built-in, but still in some situation one might need to rewind a bit.
- In case it is unclear from the recording which word was used and it is impossible to determine it also based on a repeated listening, such a place has to be marked by empty bracket. If the transcriber has an assumption, such a word has to be put into brackets followed by a question mark, e.g. (consultation?) or (consultation/confrontation?)
- In case certain words are uttered repeatedly, e.g. “yeah...you told me, you told me that”, they all should be noted. The purpose of the transcriptions is to resemble the recording as closely as possible
- In order to enable easy navigation in the transcript, the transcriber should use time stamps and insert a time stamp after each paragraph. Most transcription softwares have time stamps as a built-in feature that can be switched on and the software then inserts the time stamp automatically.

Notation system

I: interviewer

Mnumber: interviewee (respondent), e.g. M01

- one hyphen at the end of one line and the second at the beginning of the other indicates

no break between the speech, e.g. when the speech is interrupted, e.g. I: Did you mean- R: -no,

I didn't.

(overlapping) In case parts of the speech are overlapping, this should be indicated in the brackets.

() empty brackets indicate a missing (inaudible) word. In case the transcriber has a guess but it is not sure, they can list the probable word in the brackets followed by a question mark (word?)

(()) double brackets indicate a paraphrases rather than a verbatim transcription. This could be used to paraphrase less important sections of the interview, such as an introduction

“ ” if the interviewee paraphrases or imitates someone else, quotation marks should be used to indicate the sentences or words. This can be also introduced by annotation, such as (in imitating voice)

(short pause) In case a silence lasts less than 5 seconds. E.g. thinking

(long pause) In case a silence lasts longer than 5 seconds E.g. thinking

EMPHASIS in case the interviewees emphasize parts of their speech, this should be capitalized.

[] square brackets should be used to mark a nonverbal speech or external interruptions, such as sighs [sighing], laughter [laughing], or disruptions [door opening]