

ELAN as a tool for oral history

CLARIN Oral History Workshop
Oxford

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ELAN as a tool for oral history

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1. Introducing the ELAN tool

- Around 15 years of development
- Developed at the Max-Planck-Institute for Psycholinguistics in Nijmegen and by partners
- Main developer Han Sloetjes (more than 10 years)
- Used in particular in the context of:
 - Language documentation (DOBES)
 - Language acquisition studies (MPI, CHILDES)
 - Gesture studies
 - Sign language studies

1. Introducing the ELAN tool

The screenshot displays the website for The Language Archive. At the top, there are logos for the Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics, The Language Archive, the Max-Planck-Gesellschaft, and KNAW. A navigation bar includes links for Home, Team, Projects, Tools, Resources, Forums, and Contact. The main content area is titled 'The Language Archive > Tools > TLA Tools > ELAN'. The 'ELAN' section describes it as a professional tool for creating complex annotations on video and audio resources. It provides links for more information, system requirements, supporting organizations, release history, sources release history, third party resources, and how to cite ELAN. A 'Download & Demo' section features a 'Download the latest version' button, a 'USA download mirror', and a link for 'ELAN 4.6.1 with CorpAfroAs extension'. A 'Documentation' section lists links for a User Guide (Online), Full manual (Online), A4 Guide, User Guide (PDF), Full manual (PDF), and How-to Guide (PDF). On the right, there is a search box, quick links, and contact information for the Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics, including street and mailing addresses, a phone number, and email instructions.

TLA Tools
Other Tools

ELAN

The Language Archive > Tools > TLA Tools > ELAN

ELAN is a professional tool for the creation of complex annotations on video and audio resources.

[More information](#) [System requirements](#) [Supporting organizations](#)
[Release history](#) [Sources release history](#)
[Third party resources](#) [How to cite ELAN](#)

Download & Demo

[Download the latest version](#)

[USA download mirror](#)
[ELAN 4.6.1 with CorpAfroAs extension](#)

Documentation

[User Guide \(Online\)](#) [Full manual \(Online\)](#) [A4 Guide](#)
[User Guide \(PDF\)](#) [Full manual \(PDF\)](#) [How-to Guide \(PDF\)](#)

Search

Quick links
[TLA tools](#)
[Access the Archive](#)

You are not logged in.
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The Language Archive

Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics

Street address:
Wundtlaan 1
6525 XD Nijmegen
The Netherlands

Mailing address:
P.O. Box 310
6500 AH Nijmegen
The Netherlands

+31 24 3521 911
(Reception)

Email: please use the [contact form](#) or the [support forums](#)

The Language Archive:

- Data archive about languages worldwide
- Data creation, management and exploration tools
- Archiving and software expertise for the Digital Humanities

A unit of the [Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics](#).
Funded by [BBAW](#), [KNAW](#) (in cooperation with [DANS](#)) and [MPG](#).

2. Overview of basic features

- Manual annotation of audio and video recordings
- Several video streams are possible (dialogues...)
- Unlimited tiers for annotating all kind of information (“linguistic types” go beyond linguistics)
- Tiers can repeat for unlimited participants
- Hierarchy of tiers; tiers can inherit time marks
- Different input methods (support for various scripts)
- Multi-tier regular expression search
- Several in- and export formats, print

2. Overview of basic features

The screenshot displays the ELAN 4.9.3 software interface for the file 'elan-example3.eaf'. The interface is divided into several sections:

- Top Left:** A video window showing two men sitting and talking in an office setting.
- Top Right:** A 'Controls' panel with tabs for Grid, Text, Subtitles, Lexicon, Comments, Recognizers, Metadata, and Controls. It includes volume sliders for 'elan-example1.mpg' and 'elan-example1.wav', and a 'Rate' slider.
- Middle:** A playback control bar with buttons for play, stop, previous, next, and other navigation functions. It shows a selection range of 00:00:00.000 - 00:00:00.000.
- Bottom:** A multi-layered timeline for the audio file 'elan-example1.w...'. The timeline is marked with time intervals from 00:00:00.000 to 00:00:09.000. The layers include:
 - K-Spch (7):** Keyframes for speech, with labels like 'so from here.' and 'yeah'.
 - W-Spch (15):** Word-level transcription: 'so you go out of the Institute to the Saint Anna Straat. and then you go the other, Saint Anna Straat to this to the center of the town, to this big round'.
 - W-Words (97):** Individual word segmentation: 'so | yo | go | ou | of | the | Institute | to | th | S | Ann | Straa | an | th | you | g | th | ot | Sa | A | Stra | to | this | to | th | cent | o | t | town | t | t | big | rotund'.
 - W-POS (97):** Part-of-speech tagging: 'pro v | ad | pr | art | n | p | a | n | n | co | ad | pro | v | art | ad | n | n | pr | dem | prep | art | n | p | a | n | p | d | adj | n'.
 - W-IPA (15):** International Phonetic Alphabet transcription: 'səʊ ju: ɡo aʊt əf ðə ɪnˌstɪtjuːt tʊ zə sɑnt ˌɑnə stɹɑ:t | ənd ðen ju: ɡəʊ ðɪ ɔtə sɑnt ˌɑnə stɹɑ:t tʊ ðɪs tʊ ðə sɛntə əf ðə taʊn tʊ ðɪs bɪɡ rɒndaʊnd'.
 - W-RGU (1):** Gesture Unit label: 'R Gesture Unit 1'.
 - W-RGph (59):** Gesture phases: 'prepar | preparation | stroke | hold | preparati | stroke | hold | preparation | stroke | hold | part.retract | h | pre | stro | preparatio | stroke'.
 - W-RGMe (19):** Gesture movement labels: 'Going out | Going o | Going alon | Goi | A roundabout'.
 - K-RGU (1):** Keyframes for gesture units.
 - K-RGph:** Keyframes for gesture phases.

2. Overview of basic features

ELAN 4.9.3 - NGT_AH_fab5.eaf

File Edit Annotation Tier Type Search View Options Window Help

Grid Text Subtitles Lexicon Comments Recognizers Metadata Controls

Volume: 100

NGT_AH_fab5_b.mpg 0 50

NGT_AH_fab5_f.mpg 0 25

Rate: 100

00:00:09.190 Selection: 00:00:08.260 - 00:00:09.190 930

file:///D:/EVENTS/2016-04-18-Oxford... CAM 3

Translation Engl [20]
 Translation [20] op zijn gemak. Toen hij bij een slagerszaak kwam, zag hij een bot liggen.
 king around. When he came across a butcher, he saw a bone.

Gloss RH Engls [82] (p-) walking dog | IND | BUTCHE | IND | MEAT | PRESEN | BONE | I | LOCATE

Gloss LH Engls [39] (p-) walking dog (-h) | | | | MEAT | | BONE | LOCALIZE

Gloss RH [82] (p-) lopen hond | IND | SLAGER | IND | VLEES | AANWEZ | BOT | I | PLAATSEN | (p-) poot hond | LEKKER | ROND-KIJKEN | NIETS | (p-) re

Dir&Loc RH [29] r | r | r (slightly) | r

Rep RH [9] 4a | | | | | | | 3 | 3

Gloss LH [39] (p-) lopen hond (-h) | | | | VLEES | BOT | PLAATSEN | (p-) poot hond | NIETS | (p-) re

Dir&Loc LH [2] 4a | | | | | | | 3 | 3

Rep LH [9] | | | | | | | | | 3 | 3

Mouth [61] closed, forward | open | 'slager' | open | open, st | 'bot' | | closed>closed, tongue-30% | bialabial | 'niets' | open

Brows [7] | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Eye aperture [24] b | s | w | | b | | w | | b | | b | | s

2. Overview of basic features

Tier ‘Stereotypes’

- **none**: segments can be freely set (root mother tier):
e.g., transcription on “sentence” level
- **symbolic association**: segments have identical start- and endpoints as in the mother tier:
e.g., translation on “sentence” level, glosses for individual word forms or morphs
- **included in**: segments can only be created within the boundaries of a segment on the mother tier:
e.g., certain constituents of a sentence

2. Overview of basic features

Tier ‘Stereotypes’

- **time subdivison**: a segment on the mother tier is completely covered by one or several adjacent segments; inner boundaries can be freely set:
e.g., individual word forms
- **symbolic subdivison**: a segment on the mother tier is completely covered by one or several adjacent segments; inner boundaries are not related to times:
e.g., individual morphs within word forms

2. Overview of basic features

Twin-tool ANNEX (online visualization tool)

The screenshot displays the ANNEX interface with the following components:

- Header:** "Annex 1.6.42702" with navigation links for "manual", "embed", and "Show tooltips". It also includes a "Compact" vs "Spacious" toggle and a user profile "user: seba@mpi.nl" with a "logout" link.
- Left Panel:** A vertical menu with options: "Text", "Grid", "Subtitle", "Waveform", "Timeline" (highlighted with a mouse cursor), and "Combined". Below this are control buttons: "Play selection", "Clear selection", "Create bookmark", and navigation arrows (<|, >|, <<, >>, <, >, +, -). At the bottom, there are radio buttons for "Play screen by screen" and "Play continually", and a "Tier text font:" dropdown set to "Arial Unicode MS".
- Video display:** A video player showing a scene with three people in traditional attire. It includes a progress bar at 1:44 / 12:36 and playback controls (play, stop, previous, next, full, buffer).
- Information:** A panel with tabs for "General", "Session", and "Technical". It displays metadata: "Resource: old_villages.eaf", "Media file: hartmann_book4.mp4", "Elapsed time: 00:00:00:000", and "Selected chunk: Begin time: 00:00:00:000, End time: 00:00:03:797, Text: Amanajup".
- Mini Data Frame:** A panel with tabs for "Tier" and "Comments". It shows a text excerpt: "that is the place from where we came, Sebastian, from over there from there we came from there we came a short time ago, from there we came from there we moved here from there we moved, we went to that place there there we stayed, from there we moved there, we went to that place in the end there we stayed, there it was no good, so we returned here for some reason we went again from there to that place (called) Typakajuti, we went (there) to stay from that old village, our former village to Typakajuti, where we stayed there it was that we stayed white people were working there, Orlando was working there at that place (called) Leonardo, there to make a runway we went there, the Awetí went there there we stayed, we built a runway, finished it we finished it, went home we came home, we". It also features a "Tier:" dropdown set to "SmngE@026" and a "Font size:" dropdown set to "14".
- Timeline:** A horizontal timeline at the bottom with a "Comments overlay" checkbox. It shows a list of segments on the left: "SmngE@026", "SmngE@026+0", "SmngE@030", "SmngE@030+0", "SmngE@030+S", "SmngE@083", "SmngE@SD", "SmngP@026", "SmngP@026+0", "SmngP@030", "SmngP@030+0", "SmngP@030+S", "SmngP@083", "SmngP@083+0". The timeline itself shows colored bars for these segments and text annotations: "what is it? Tell him about our village, about our old village" and "o que tem? Conta da nossa aldeia, da nossa aldeia antiga".

3. Advanced features

Additional modes:

- Segmentation mode, transcription mode

Interaction with online services:

- Alignment of Transcriptions and Audio (MAUS)
- Automated recognition of speech vs. silence, speaker differentiation
- Automated recognition of moving hands & heads

ELAN Annotation Format in workflow tools

4. Desiderata

Flexibility creates a need for standards:

- Which type of information is in a tier?
(tier naming)
- How is the information encoded?
(conventions, abbreviations)

Independent of ELAN:

- Automatized transcription (speech recognition)
- Applying NLP-tools to (originally) oral data
(named entity recognition, topic extraction...)

5. Oral history

- Useful for manual annotation: transcription, notes, tags
- Using advanced features, automatization (e.g. alignment of existing transcripts)
- What kinds of annotation are typically needed?
- Template for specific needs for O.H.?
- Are there technical opportunities to improve ELAN for O.H.?
- Specific metadata for O.H.?

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