



## Audio and video annotation tool

### Developed by

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### General Information

- » free and open source software
- » available for Windows, Mac OS X, Linux
- » <http://tla.mpi.nl/tools/tla-tools/elan/>



### Introduction



ELAN is a generic annotation tool for audio and video recordings. Although it is not only applied in language documentation, sign language and gesture researchers are well represented in the user community as well, it is an application that has benefited considerably from the DoBeS programme. With an average of two to three major releases per year it has evolved from version 1.2 to versions 4.x during the DoBeS life span. During this period of time an increase in size and quality of video recordings has been observed, as well as an increase in the number of levels of annotation, resulting in new requirements for the application.

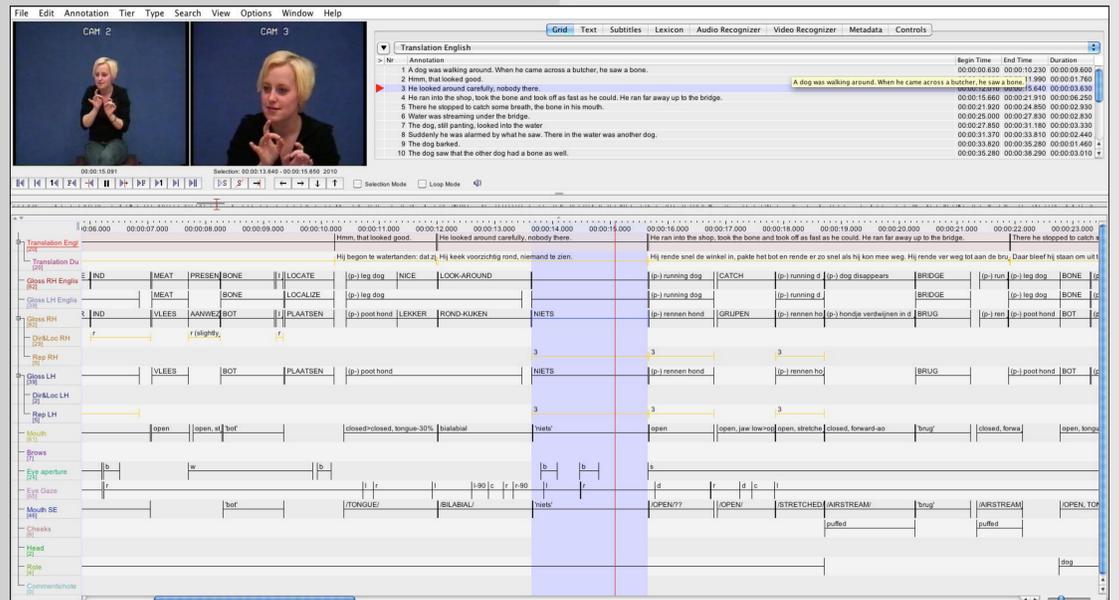


An ELAN window showing two videos annotated on multiple tiers

### The basics

ELAN is an annotation and transcription tool that accepts both digitized video and audio recordings as the basis for annotations. The most elementary form of an annotation consists of a textual label attached to a segment of the primary data, identified by a begin time and end time. A second type of annotation is that of an annotation referring to another annotation.

ELAN supports multileveled transcription. Each annotation is added to a tier, a container for annotations. A transcription can consist of any number of tiers and tiers can



An ELAN window showing two videos annotated on multiple tiers

be grouped hierarchically, i.e. a tier can have a parent tier and multiple child tiers.



ELAN window with visualization of audio and timeseries data

### Task oriented working modes

ELAN features different working modes designed and optimized for a specific tasks. The default "Annotation Mode" is the best option for precise segmentation and allows to enter text into annotations as well. The "Transcription Mode" is optimized for entering text into existing annotations quickly and conveniently. In the "Segmentation Mode" empty segments can be created while the media is playing and the "Synchronization Mode" allows for synchronizing multiple audio and video streams.

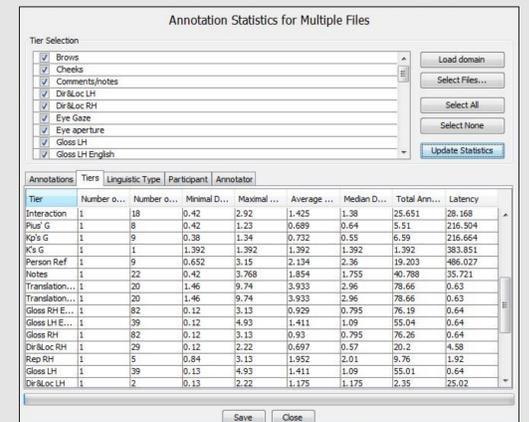


The Transcription mode for high speed transcription of linguistic data

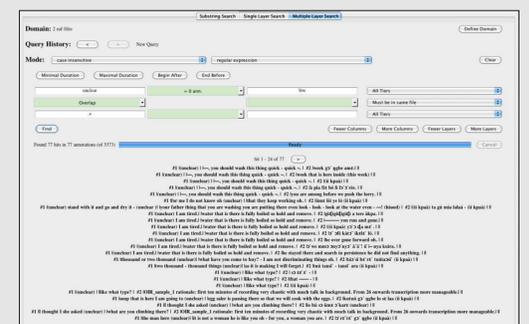
### Working with a local corpus

Annotation of recordings has to be performed per file. A corpus typically contains many annotation documents and ELAN offers several tools for corpus-based analysis, description and enrichment. The multi-layered corpus search facilitates queries for occurrences of a particular word, discontinuous sequences and co-occurring events. The results are shown in concordance or by frequency.

Simple statistical overviews can be created for an entire corpus or a part of it and there are options for adding information to all files or perform tier-based operations on them.



Basic statistics created for an entire corpus



The multiple file search interface allows construction of complex queries

### Interoperability

Import and export of data from and to several other file formats guarantee a certain level of interoperability with tools that are often used in language documentation. Praat, Toolbox and FieldWorks are frequently used in combination with ELAN.

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