

# Conversation Analysis

Studies from the first generation

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# Glossary of transcript symbols with an introduction

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Although I'd probably rather transcribe than any do any other part of the work (analyzing, theorizing, lecturing, teaching, etc.), the one thing I'd rather *not* do is talk about transcribing. It's not a topic. You might as well talk about typewriting. Transcribing is just something one does to prepare materials for analysis, theorizing, etc. Do the best you can, but what is there to talk about?

On the other hand, there might be something to talk about if we compare a 1964 transcript by Harvey Sacks,

(1) [Sacks GTS trans:1964]

- A. I started work at a buck thirty an hour and he said if I work a month you get a buck thirty five an hour and every month there be a raise-
- T. Howd you get the job?
- A. I just went down there and asked him for it.
- T. Last week you were mentioning something about the fact that you-
- A. I got lost in one job, yeah.
- T. Got lost in it, and your father-
- C. He know your father? Yeah.
- [ A. Sure he knows my father, but my father's got nothing to do with it.
- [ C. Ok he gave you the job.
- A. No, he's got nothing to do with it. Huh uh, My father's not buying beer anymore

with a transcript that I did in 1985.

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(2) [GTS:I:2:3:R:1-5:3-4]

Ken: I started workin etta buck thirty en hour  
(0.4)

Ken: en'e sid that if I work fer a month: yih getta buck,h ·h thi[rty ↓fi:ve=  
(Dan): [(sniff)]

Ken: ='n hour en (·) ev'ry month he uh ( ) he rai[ses you ]°( )°  
Dan: [How'dju]g e t th]e jo:b,  
(1.0)

Ken: ↑I js wen' down there'n ↓a:st eem for it  
(1.8)

Dan: °Cz° la:st week you were mentioning something about th' fa:ct °thet you  
↓u[h°

Ken: [I got ul u -got (·) lost in one jub=↓Yea:h.  
(0.5)

(i t bo:th[ered] )  
Dan: Got lo:st innit ↓e[r (y'r fa:th[e r ) ]°( )°

Ken: [ w h h h h [h h h h]h h

Al: [Dz 'ee ] know yer father?  
(0.2)

Al: ↓Yah.  
(0.6)

Ken: Sure 'ee knows my father [ b't my f a t h e r's g't ] nothina ] do with it.

Al: [( ) they gave you] th' jo:b,  
(0.7)

Ken: No: he's got nothin d'do w'th it. Huh-uh, my fa(h)ather's not buyin beer  
innymo:re

Fragment (1) is concise, and readable; fragment (2) is a nightmare.

Or, for example, we could look at a recently produced, succinct and readable transcript from Stanley I. Kutler's *Abuse of Power* (1997:253),<sup>1</sup>

(3) [AbPow:253]

((re the "seamy things" Hunt says he did for the White House Plumbers))

DEAN: I don't know the full extent of it,

PRESIDENT NIXON: I don't know about anything else.

→ DEAN: I don't know either, and I [*laughs*] almost hate to learn some of these things.

and ask why I feel compelled to produce something like this:<sup>2</sup>

(4) [Jeff:Canc:40:10-20]

Dean: I ↑don't know the (·) full extent ↓'v it.↓  
(0.7)

Dean: °↓Uh::eh°  
(0.9)

Nixon: °I don'noo° 'bout anything else exc<sup>hh</sup>e[pt

Dean: → [I don't either in I: °w'd (h)als(h)o  
→ hate tuh learn [some a'] these thi]ngs. ·hh·hh·hh·hh

Nixon: [W e l l ] y a : h ]  
(0.2)

Dean: So ↑That's,hhhh that's that situation.

Why put all that stuff in? Well, as they say, because it's there. Of course there's a whole lot of stuff "there," i.e., in the tapes, and it doesn't all show up in my transcripts; so it's because it's there, plus I think it's interesting. Things like overlap, laughter, and 'pronunciational particulars', (what others call 'comic book' and/or stereotyped renderings), for example. My transcripts pay a lot of attention to those sorts of features.

What good are they? I suppose that could be argued in principle, but it seems to me that one cannot know what one will find until one finds it, so what I'll do is show some places where attention to such features turned out to be fruitful.

First of all, we can compare bits of fragments (1) and (2), and then do the same with fragments (3) and (4).

Starting off with fragments (1) and (2), I'll focus on the most irritating segment of the latter, and see what might be gotten from it. Recalling three lines from fragment (1):

A: I got lost in one job, yeah.

T: Got lost in it, and your father-

C. He know your father? Yeah.

and the jumble from fragment (2):

Ken: I got ul-got (·) lost in one jub=↓Yea:h.  
(0.5)

(i t bo:th[ered] )  
Dan: Got lo:st innit ↓e[r (y'r fa:th[e r ) ]°( )°

Ken: [ w h h h h [h h h h]h h

Al: [Dz 'ee ] know yer father?  
(0.2)

Al: ↓Yah.



forming up, and starts to talk at that point. This ‘recognitional- response’ is a not-uncommon phenomenon. Here are a couple of cases.<sup>4</sup>

- (6) [Rah:II:11:R]  
 Jessie: °two pihleece cah:rs’d° stopped outsi:de.=  
 Ada: =eeYe::[s?  
 Jessie: → [·h An’ that whether he thow:t that I ed’n  
 ac[cidn’t] [ohr someth]ing...  
 Ada: → [I:::]:[kneow]

In fragment (6) above, just as Jessie starts to say the dreaded word “ac[cident]”, Ada starts her comforting “I::: know”. And in fragment (7) below, just as Mr. Bryant is pointing out that with the credit note his firm is offering Miss Sokol, their services won’t “co[st] her anything, she starts up with her acceptance of his offer:

- (7) [SCC:DCD:37:R]  
 Bryant: → ...but ·hh if you’ve gohtta credit neote ih weon’t  
 co[st you anything anyw]ay.  
 Sokol: → [ Wul ɔwright the:n, ]  
 Sokol: That’s faiuh.

Similarly, with “exce...”, Dean may hear the word ‘except’ forming up. Hearing that, he may hear that Nixon is starting to mention something else, knowledge of which Dean doesn’t want to be burdened with. It may be that Dean moves then and there to stop any possible revelations by cutting in on the alerting word ‘except’, prior to its completion, with an agreement that specifically ignores its projection of further things (i.e., his “I don’t either” targets Nixon’s initial proposal, “I don’t know about anything else”), and then goes on to announce his unwillingness to know any more.

Then there is the laughter. It appears that there is not merely laughter in the utterance with which Dean may be declining to hear what Nixon started to say, but that Nixon, in projecting such talk, himself produces something that might be taken for laughter. That is, fragment (4) shows that he produces the word “except” with some breathiness and an unvocalized mid-vowel: “exc<sup>hh</sup>ept”. Again, here is a possible case of a recurrent phenomenon: A recipient of someone’s utterance may treat something in that utterance as laughter, and respond with laughter of his own. Here’s a simple case:<sup>5</sup>

(8) [Schenkein:II]

- Bill: Dju watch by any chance Miss International Showcase las’ night?  
 Ellen: n:No I didn’ [I w’z reading my-  
 Bill: → [You missed a really great pro(h)]gram.  
 Ellen: → [O(hh)h i(h)t wa(hh)s?=  
 Ellen: =ehh heh heh heh!

Here, just after a plosive breath occurs in the course of Bill’s utterance, Ellen produces a laughter-loaded response.

In fragment (4), Dean may be doing something similar, but less directly – and less transparently – reciprocal. That is, he does not immediately start to laugh, but first produces a bit of talk. He’s not, then, to be heard as slavishly laughing just because the President is laughing. As well, the work he’s doing with that bit of talk may be enhanced by his not only ignoring the word “except”, but declining to reciprocate the laughter with which the problematic word is being produced.

Furthermore, his delayed laughter, while perhaps taking Nixon’s prior laughter as a warrant (i.e., it is all right for him to laugh since the President has just laughed), can, by its delay, be heard for the work it may independently be doing, e.g., as tempering his declination to hear what the President was perhaps about to tell him.<sup>6</sup>

Yet another point can be made. It is possible that the transcriber of fragment (3), by not attending the details of the laughter, but just noting that it occurred, misheard the talk in which that laughter occurs, i.e., fragment (3) shows Dean saying “I [laughs] almost...”, while fragment (4) shows him saying “I: w’d (h)als(h)o...” (in standard orthography, “I would also”).

In an early paper on laughter (Jefferson 1985), I proposed that laughter can make an utterance less (or un-) intelligible, and may possibly be used for that feature. In the case at hand, Dean’s laughter, while not being deployed for that purpose, may have made the utterance that I hear as “I would also...” less intelligible, resulting in its being heard by another transcriber as “I almost...”.

Here’s another sort of thing that can be noticed in a comparison of fragments (3) and (4). In the former, Dean, shown of course in standard orthography, is saying “...I [laughs] almost hate to learn some of these things.” In the latter, among other pronunciation particulars, he’s shown as saying “tuh learn”.

In an early paper on this issue (Jefferson 1983), I point out that “the sort of ‘comic book’ orthography I use (e.g., for ‘What are you doing?’, ‘Wutche doin?’) is considered objectionable in that it makes the speakers look ‘stupid’;

it seems to caricature them rather than illuminate features of their talk”, and that “experts on phonetics such as William Labov, propose that someone who, for example, says ‘dat’ instead of ‘that’, is not producing defective English but is speaking correctly in his dialect, and thus should not be transcript-displayed as producing an object which is commonly treated as defective.”

In that paper, as part of my defense of ‘pronunciational particulars’ I show several fragments in which speakers of one or another ‘dialect’ can be found to be varying their pronunciations; for example, a member of the California motorcycle gang, the Hell’s Angels, produces “them” followed by “dere” (‘their’):

(9) [KPFK:GJ]

Joe: I tell them right t’dere face ...

For example, a Bronx janitor produces several versions of ‘there’ (and ‘they’re’): “theyuh”, “they’re”, “deyuh”, and “dere”, while consistently using “th” for (two different versions of) ‘the’:

(10) [Frankel:USI:117:R]

Vic: We get in they:uh (0.5) en they’re uh (0.2) the tu- (·) u (·) t-two ↓guys uh deyuh, ’n me ’n James ↑Wal↓kuh’s dere ’n th’ broa:d is in th’ bed.

For example, A Philadelphia-Italian meatcutter uses both “dis” and “this”:

(11) [Goodwin:M:3-4]

Frank: → Fu(h)ck you. Dis g[uy is-  
Joe: [Hey wait.

Frank: → I definitely ain’t goi(h)in’ ou(h)t with this chick again.

And, for example, in a fragment of a transcript I made of a tape collected by Labov, we find both Mez, a member of a black teenage street gang, and B.J., a black social worker/ ex-street gang member, producing “d” and “th”; Mez saying “Hey lookih dat”, “Who’s that. Who’s that punk right there.”, (and also producing a vowel-begun version of ‘that’s’, “Ahz Davey More.”), B.J., saying things like “y’all see these pictichiz...”, “y’know who dat is”, and “That’s Davey More”.

(12) [Labov:Jets:3-5]

Mez: → Hey lookih dat.

B.J.: → Jo man, we gonna talk about fights man y’all see these pictchiz

→ up here man y’know who dat is,

Mez: → Who’s that. Who that punk right there.

Mayall: Mothuhfuck[im!!

B.J.: → [A punk, [That’s-

Mayall: [He stinks!

Alex: [Shuddup Mayall!!

Leonard: [Man- eh heh! [khkhkhkhkhkhkhkhkh[khkhkh

B.J.: [Davey More. [

Mez: → [Ahz Davey More

B.J.: → Th-that’s Davey More en that’s- Benny Kid Paret.

I then go on to locate some possible systematicities and interactional phenomena that can be found by looking at pronunciational details, concluding that by omitting such particulars from our transcripts, we are obliterating a potentially fruitful data base.

Now, that paper specifically focused on talk by people who stereotypically mispronounce (or, as Labov has it, correctly-for-their-dialect pronounce) various words, who can be found to do correct (or incorrect-for-their-dialect) pronunciations, as well. But if we look at the talk of John Dean, surely an epitome of WASP, middle class, etc. etc., we also find variation.

So, for example, in a fragment from *Abuse of Power*, Dean uses the word “to”, three times within a short spate of talk:

(13) [AbPow:247-248]

↓ ↓

DEAN: It started with an instruction to me from Bob Haldeman to see if we couldn’t set up a perfectly legitimate campaign intelligence operation over at the Re-Election Committee.

PRESIDENT NIXON: Hm-hm. ↓

DEAN: Not being in this business, I turned to somebody who had been in this business, Jack Caulfield, who is, I don’t know if you remember Jack or not. He was...

My transcript shows that on each of the three occasions of its occurrence, Dean pronounces the word ‘to’ differently: “to”, “tuh”, and “dih”:

(14) [Jeff:Canc:7:27-8:9]

Dean: → ↑Started with (1.0) en instruction to me:: (0.9) from Bob ↓Haldeman.  
→ (0.4) tuh see if we couldn't set up ay perfectly le↓git'mate (0.3) campaign  
intelligence operation over et the ReElection Committee.  
(.)

Nixon: Mmhm,  
(0.8)

Dean: → Not being in this business?=I turned dih somebuddy who: ·h had been  
in this business: (·) Jack Cau'field who: w'z I don' know if you r'member  
Ja:ck er not he w'z...

We can at least note that the 'correct' pronunciation, "to", coincides with a stress on that word, while the two 'incorrect' pronunciations, "tuh" and "dih" occur at points where the word is not being stressed. Also, we can at least account for the occurrence of the 'd'-begun "dih", as conditioned by the preceding, 'd'-ended word, "turned". Who knows what other orderlinesses will emerge as attention is given to such details?

Harvey Sacks often spoke of the possibility of "order at all points", and in one of his lectures (Sacks 1966 [1992:I:238]) tells us that "we're dealing with something real and powerful. And not just grossly powerful, like, it provides for the rate of industrial development, but it provides for little tiny things that God might have overlooked, perhaps." Most of the things Sacks dealt with, while not as gross as the rate of industrial development, were on a larger scale than tracking the variations in a Bronx janitor's pronunciations of 'there', or John Dean's pronunciations of 'to'. But now and then, something in one of our more detailed transcripts would catch his attention, and we'd be treated to "a little something I find enormously amusing", having to do with someone's spelling out their name in a traffic court, producing it as "M-a-u-e-r, (pause) h-a-n.", the point being that "pause distributions are kind of important...in this sense at least: You can do them wrong.", which led to a consideration of the "normative" character of pausings (Sacks 1968 [1992:I:784]). Or, for example, we'd be told of "a fascination" he had with "[t]hings like 'didje' and 'wanche'", and his having "noticed several differences between them", which led to an exploration of the phenomenon of "transformation" in actual talk (Sacks 1969 [1992:II:137-139]). (I have a feeling that Sacks' specifically formulating this sort of material as something he found "enormously amusing", or had "a fascination" with, was dealing with their on-the-face-of-it utter trivialness, even for the sort of mundane stuff he was known to work with. *These* "little tiny things" were perhaps beginning to be just a bit too tiny for comfort.)

But they're "there" in the talk recorded on the tapes, and many of them are captured in the transcripts that use the system explicated in the ensuing glossary of transcript symbols. Some of them have led to the discovery of ranges of orderlinesses; most of them are yet to be explored.

## Notes

1. In his introduction, Kutler says "I have edited the conversations with an eye toward eliminating what I believe insignificant, trivial, or repetitious ... and often have omitted dutiful choruses of agreement by those present unless I believed them particularly important. The dialogue of innumerable uses of 'right', 'yeah', 'okay' often has been dropped ... The 'uhs' and 'ahs' usually have been eliminated". (p. vii)
2. This and subsequent fragments titled and referred to as "Jeff:Canc" are from a transcript I did in October, 2000 of the March 21, 1973 'Cancer on the Presidency' meeting between Nixon and Dean.
3. Another possibility it raises is that Dan did say "bothered", that Al did hear it as such, and that the sound- similarity of the first syllables of "both[er]ed" and "fath[er]" triggered Al's question to Ken about "father".
4. For a discussion, and further cases, of this phenomenon, see Jefferson (1984: esp. 28-29). In its way, fragment (2) is also a case of 'recognitional' onset of talk, if not specifically of recognitional 'response'.
5. A version of fragment (8), and a discussion of this phenomenon can be found in Jefferson (1979:82-83).
6. Transcribing the Watergate materials, I've been struck by the delicacy of some of Dean's interactional work. I didn't notice anything of that nature in this particular fragment until I focused on it for this exercise, having chosen the fragment simply because it gave more detail to the *Abuse of Power* version, "...and I [laughs] almost hate to learn some of these things".

## References

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## Glossary of transcript symbols

// *Double obliques* indicate the point at which a current speaker's talk is overlapped by the talk of another. ((No longer in use.<sup>1</sup>))

Louise: 'N how t//all are you, Al,  
Roger: How tall'r you Al.

[ *A left bracket* indicates the point of overlap onset. ((The currently-used alternative to the double obliques. Note also, a change in descriptive language.))

Louise: 'N how tall [are you, Al,  
Roger: [How tall 'r you Al.

] *A right bracket* indicates the point at which two overlapping utterances end, if they end simultaneously, or the point at which one of them ends in the course of the other. It also is used to parse out segments of overlapping utterances.

Louise: 'N how t[a l l u h r ] you ]↓A:]l,  
Roger: [How tall 'r] ↓you] Al,]

= *Equal signs* indicate no break or gap.

*A pair of equal signs*, one at the end of one line and one at the beginning of a next, indicate no break between the two lines.

Maggie: ...en 'e weighs about a hunnerd 'n thirdy five pounds.=  
Ronald: =AAUUGH! WHADDA L-LIE!

The pair is also used as a transcript convenience when a single speaker's talk is broken up in the transcript, but is actually through-produced by its speaker.

Pammy: Yeah well okeedoe=  
Myra: =[Yeah.  
Pammy: [I j's thought I'd ask

In this case, Pammy's utterance is produced as "Yeah well okeedoe I j's thought I'd ask", with Myra's "Yeah" starting up immediately upon completion of "okeedoe", and simultaneously with "I j's...".

*A single equal sign* indicates no break in an ongoing piece of talk, where one might otherwise expect it, e.g., after a completed sentence.

Ehrlichman: ... so I said I jis' find that hard to ima↓gine.=Now  
(0.4) ·p ↑since ↓then I've retained coun↓sel.

(0.0) *Numbers in parentheses* indicate elapsed time by tenths of seconds.

Al: ...j's be a lot'v (shh) lotta work- lotta hassle.  
(0.2)

Al: =[Well,  
Roger: [Well if yer goin' t' all that trouble,

-- *Double dashes* indicate a short, untimed interval without talk, e.g., a 'beat'. ((no longer in use))

Vic: I'm intuh my thing, intuh my -- attitude  
against othuh pih- ·hh

(·) *A dot in parentheses* indicates a brief interval ( $\pm$  a tenth of a second) within or between utterances.

Mrs A: 'Ello:?  
Guy: 'Ello is Curly there?

→ (·)

Mrs A: → Oo jis (·) è-Who:?

Guy: Johnny?h An[sin?]

Mrs A: [Oo j]ist ↑a minnih,

┌ *Numbers in parentheses bracketing several lines of transcript* indicate time  
(0.0) elapsed between the end of the utterance or sound in the first bracketed  
└ line and the start of the utterance or sound in the last bracketed line.

Mrs A: ┌ Oo jist ↑a minnih,  
└ (0.6)

Kid: (1.2) ( )

Mrs A: ┌ [It's fer you dea:r,

— *Underscoring* indicates some form of stress, via pitch and/or amplitude. A short underscore indicates lighter stress than does a long underscore.

Ehrlichman: Well Dean has: uh:,h totally coop'rated  
with the U.S. Attorney.

:: *Colons* indicate prolongation of the immediately prior sound. The longer the colon row, the longer the prolongation.

1. The asterisk (\*) was used by some transcribers to indicate termination of simultaneous speech in conjunction with double obliques (//). (Ed.)





t\*, d\* In early computer transcripts, *an asterisk following a consonant* replaces the single sub- or superimposed dot which serves as a ‘hardener’ in my non-computer transcripts.

Kalmbach: I w'j<sup>st</sup> (-) understa:nd thet\* uh: you en I are deh-abs'ooly dihg<sup>th</sup>er on tha:t,

Ehrlichman: No question about it\*?=uh hHerb

In this case, while Kalmbach produces “j<sup>st</sup>” and “tha:t,” with the American-standard, soft ‘t’, the ‘t’ in his “thet\*” is crisp, dentalized, i.e., ‘hard’.

Similarly, while Ehrlichman produces “about” with the soft ‘t’, the ‘t’ in his “it\*” is ‘hard’.

t, d In more recent computer transcripts, *a boldface consonant* replaces the single sub- or superimposed dot which serves as a ‘hardener’ in my non-computer transcripts. The above fragment would now be shown as:

Kalmbach: I w'j<sup>st</sup> (-) understa:nd thet uh: you en I are deh-abs'ooly dihg<sup>th</sup>er on tha:t,

Ehrlichman: No question about it?=uh hHerb

a, è, ì When a *single dot* is not available, *two dots over a vowel* replace the single sub- or superimposed dot which, as well as a ‘hardener’, serves as a ‘shortener’ in my non-computer transcripts.

Ehrlichman: è-he:: told me::? .. .an:d uh, h ì-he sid ...

Here, while conceivably the ‘e-’ in “e-he” and the ‘i-’ in “i-he” could be read as long sounds, “ee” and “eye”, the single dot over the ‘e-’ and the double dots over the ‘i-’, confirm that those sounds are short. I don’t show the sounds as “eh” and “ih” because they are more fleeting than those spellings indicate.

The *dots* do an additional job in transcripts where I use non-standard orthography. Many words get a range of oddball spellings, in keeping with the range of pronunciations they are subject to. On occasion such a word appears in its standard spelling. If that word carries the dot(s), it means that while such a spelling could be the result of a lapse of transcriber concentration, in this case the standard spelling does indicate the way the word was pronounced.

Emma: En ar air conditioner went out. comin' ba:ck

Here, while ‘air conditioner’ is routinely pronounced as ‘air c'nditioner’, it is being given a fully formed vowel, shown as “c<sup>o</sup>nditioner”.

...

(a) Kalmbach: Ehm: I:'m uh scheduled for ↑two duhmorrow afternoo:n.

(b) Kalmbach: ...he said the ↑rea:son thet wz: ù-fer the ca:ll w'z. ...

In this case, while at point (b) Kalmbach is shown pronouncing the word ‘for’ as “fer”, the dot below the ‘o’ in “for” at point (a) indicates that it’s not that the transcriber had simply written the word in its standard orthography, but that it is there fully pronounced as “for”.

(b) A *parenthesized italicized letter* replaces the parenthesized letter with a sub- or superscribed degree sign which, in my non-computer transcripts, indicates an ‘incipient sound’.

Emma: you couldn' ev'n putcher hand ou:ts:I:de the CAR ih jiz'(b)bu:rn.

...

Ehrlichman: But they- (-) the(p) the point is. ...

whord An *italicized ‘h’ appearing in such a word as ‘which’ ‘where’, ‘what’ ‘when’, ‘whether’, etc.*, indicates that while such words are often produced with the ‘h’ silent (as if they were the words ‘witch’, ‘wear’, ‘wen’, ‘weather’, etc.), in this case the ‘h’ was sounded.

Ehrlichman: En I said well Joh:n what 'n the world er yih talking ↓about\*.

.

.

Ehrlichman: See ↑what they’ve said duh Dean is. ...

While at one point in a conversation Ehrlichman pronounces the word ‘what’ with the ‘h’ sounded, at a later point, the ‘what’ is produced with no ‘h’.

word An *italicized letter* replaces the sub- or superscribed degree sign which, in my non-computer transcripts, indicates unvoiced production.

Ehrlichman:→ He said we:ll?=hmhh è-I came dih you:,hh fr'm Mitchell,hh en I sai:d\*,h uh↓ : Mitchell needs money?

(Kalmbach):→ (°°Right°°)

Ehrlichman: Uh:: could\*=uh we:: ca:ll Herb Kalmbach en ask 'im duh raise ↓some.

Kalmbach: → °°Yeah.°°

<word A *pre-positioned left carat* is a ‘left push’, indicating a hurried start; in effect, an utterance trying to have started a bit sooner than it actually did. This can be heard, for example, as a compressed onset of the utterance or utterance-part in question. A common locus of this phenomenon is ‘self repair’.

- Ruth: Monday nights we play, (0.3) <I mean we go to ceramics,  
 ...  
 Polly: Y'see it's diff'rent f'me:. <eh f'(\cdot) the othuh boy:s,  
 word< A *post-positioned left carat* indicates that while a word is fully completed, it seems to stop suddenly.  
 Meier: Uh well I fel' like my lef' side of my (\cdot) chest I c'd (\cdot) mah had a k- cramp<  
 - A *dash* indicates a cut-off.  
 Vic: He said- yihknow, I get- I get sick behind it.  
 > < *Right/left carats* bracketing an utterance or utterance-part indicate that the bracketed material is speeded up, compared to the surrounding talk.  
 < > *Left/right carats* bracketing an utterance or utterance-part indicate that the bracketed material is slowed down, compared to the surrounding talk.  
 .hhh A *dot-prefixed row of 'h's* indicates an inbreath. Without the dot, the 'h's indicate an outbreath.  
 wohhrd A *row of 'h's within a word* indicates breathiness. In some transcripts the 'h's are italicized, in some not.  
 Colson: ...a ghhy wh(h)o's also totally loyal<  
 And in computer transcripts, the 'h's are sometimes also superscribed.  
 Colson: Th:e ↑thing that worries me is the(p)(\cdot) is the p<sup>hh</sup>ossibility'v...  
 (h) *Parenthesized 'h'* indicates plosiveness. This can be associated with laughter, crying, breathlessness, etc.  
 Jim: Don't sound so (h)amp(h)itious fer Ch(h)rise'sake  
 (h)ih suh ·hh sou' l(h)i' yuh k(h)uh g(h)o tuh sleep  
 'n the pho(h)one.  
 ...  
 Maggie: I j'st ran up th' stai(hh)rs that's wh(h)y I'm huffing en puffing.  
 £ The *pound-sterling sign* indicates a certain quality of voice which conveys 'suppressed laughter' (various transcripts have other symbols, e.g., the Dutch guilder-sign which no longer exists).  
 Ken: ah ha £I don' know who's payin' fer thi(h)s I  
 ↑think ih my fa:-ther.£  
 wghord A *'gh' stuck into a word* indicates gutturalness. In some transcripts the 'gh' is italicized, in others, not.  
 Mike: Ah don' think 'ee lives onna ↓groun' flo↓ :h.  
 (0.3)  
 James: The: ghghroun' flo'

In this case, a speaker with phlegm in his throat is saying "the ground floor", with the word 'ground' heavily gutturalized.

- ( ) *Empty parentheses* indicate that the transcriber was unable to get what was said. The length of the parenthesized space reflects the length of the un-gotten talk.

Mike: No.

(0.4)

Mike: ( ),

In the speaker-designation column, the empty parentheses indicate transcriber's inability to identify a speaker.

Roger: Paz'm z'm Miller Highlit\*e.h

(0.5)

( ): hnh Yhehh

- (word) *Parenthesized words and speaker* designations are especially dubious.

(Mike) [(Lee me alone.)]

Carol: [Mike I know yu]h' love' m

- (blerf) *Nonsense syllables* are sometimes provided, to give at least an indication of various features of the un-gotten material.

Nixon: Jerry sh'd talk to ↑Witnaw. (0.5) And uh: (\cdot) jis brace eem 'n tell 'im tih (\cdot)(offih sebbatikiss)...

- (∅) A *nul sign* indicates that there may not be talk occurring; that what is being heard as possibly talk might also be ambient noise.

Nixon: \_\_\_\_\_ °(Well ah'll protect chu but\* uh)°

(∅): (0.7) (Okay.)

Nixon: \_\_\_\_\_ °(Thet uh)° that's that's why:. (0.9) °I° (0.5) can't let chu ↓go (0.2) go dow:n.

- (( )) *Doubled parentheses* contain transcriber's descriptions.

Ray: eh-h-heh-heh-heh-heh-he:h-eh=

Maggie: =((dainty snort))

...

Vic: ((dumb slob voice)) Well we usetuh do dis