

Designing a Transcription System for Face-to-face PhD Supervisory Discourse: A Selective-specificity Model

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Proceedings of the International Conference: Doing Research in Applied Linguistics

Abstract

Much attention in transcription research has been paid to transcription principles and conventions, whereas less interest has been directed to the process during which transcriptional decisions are made in designing a transcription system for a particular set of data. This study aims to share a hands-on experience in transcribing audio-taped face-to-face PhD supervisory talks. We first provide an overview of data. Then, we discuss our theoretical and methodological considerations by reviewing the existing transcription principles and conventions. Third, procedures and data examples are presented to illustrate how decisions were made. To conclude, a selective-specificity model is proposed by viewing transcription as a selective, interpretive and reflective process involving a series of theoretical, methodological and analytical decisions. It is hoped that the our hands-on experience can shed some lights on conducting transcription and boost novices' confidence in designing practical transcription systems to meet their particular research interests and needs.

Key words: data transcription process, transcriptional decisions, selective-specificity model

Introduction

Transcription practice as a behind-the-scene technical task has attracted great research interest over last three decades. Recent research has been dominantly focused on reviewing transcription principles and comparing transcription conventions (e.g., Cook, 1995; Johansson, 1995; Dressler & Kreuz, 2000; Du Bois, 2010; Gumpertz & Berenz, 1993; O'Connell & Kowal, 1999, 2010). However, despite the centrality to transcription principles and conventions, the theoretical and methodological decisions associated with the transcription process involving both interpretive decisions (What is transcribed?) and representational decisions (How is it transcribed?) has received disproportionately little attention (Bucholtz, 2000; Lapadat & Lindsay, 1998). This imbalance might be traced in researchers' common claim in their method section reporting that spoken data is transcribed verbatim without providing empirical accounts of transcription process (Davidson, 2009; Lapadat & Lindsay, 1998). Tilley (2003) attributes this inattention to the requirement of words limitation for paper publication. Consequently, many qualitative studies end up with several lines for documenting the transcription process as a take-for-grant method rather than the result of a series of choices in need of explication (Davidson, 2009; Ochs, 1979). After reviewing 42 articles published in nursing research journals over a one-year period, Wellard and McKenna (2001) notice that 66% just mentioning that data were "transcribed", 21% claiming that "verbatim" transcription was completed, and 12% reporting that "full" transcription was conducted. Krista and Ross (2010) further point out that transcription practices are glossed over with few implications and suggestions for managing spoken data in qualitative methodological texts of published articles.

Since Ochs (1977) proposed that 'transcription is theory', much of the literature has examined transcription based on her central claim that "transcription is a selective process reflecting theoretical goals and definitions" (p. 44), which still stands as a motto for researchers working with transcription (Duranti, 2007). Krista (2010) recently argues that 'transcription is innately theoretical, interpretive, and subjective task rather than a mechanistic, objective endeavor. In this paper, we are to unfold the process of our hands-on experience in transcribing audio-taped face-to-face PhD supervisory talks. In this paper, we first provide an overview of data. Then, we discuss our theoretical and methodological considerations by reviewing the existing transcription principles and conventions. Third, we elaborate how our transcription system was developed by illustrating problematic situations and methodological

decisions with data examples. Finally, we propose a selective-specificity model for designing transcription system is proposed. We conclude that transcription is a process-based rather than product-oriented, in a sense that it involves the researcher's subjective decisions at different research stages.

Overview of data

Audio-taped recordings were obtained from three supervisory groups involving seven participants from June 2010 to September 2010 within one academic semester. The medium language during supervisory meetings was English since all participants were from an international doctoral program in Applied Linguistics. The current paper is generated from the first author's PhD thesis research, which aims to investigate knowledge building and power manifestation by exploring linguistic features (e.g., modal verbs, questions, explanations) and supervisory discourse patterns (e.g., discourse patterns like knowledge-transmission, knowledge construction and knowledge creation) in PhD face-to-face supervisory talks. The research is exploratory and descriptive. It should be noted that since our study is exploratory in nature, we were unable to make any decisions about what and how to transcribe from the very beginning of data transcription. At this point, we turned to the relevant literature in order to get theoretical background for doing transcription.

Theoretical background

A transcript is not an objective record of some bits of reality since the researcher needs to weigh up many practical issues in a transcription process. In this section, we describe our considerations for designing a transcription system from three dimensions.

Transcription as theory: Theoretical consideration

The first dimension is to assess the researcher's goals for using the transcriptions. What is to transcribe? Who will transcribe or use the transcriptions for what purposes? What features will best accommodate the researcher's goals? These questions primarily posit to an issue of the researcher's representational decision. In her seminal paper on transcription as theory, Ochs (1979) proposes that "transcription is a selective process reflecting theoretical goals and definitions" (p. 44). According to Lapadat and Lindsay (1998, 1999), transcription is theory-laden and the researcher's transcriptional choices endorse their discourse theories they hold and influence the interpretations of data. If the researcher believes that transcriptions can honestly reflect in text the 'hard reality' as captures in audio- or video-taped events, s/he might note down as many as details. This claim is echoed by Oliver, et al. (2005), they discussed transcription choices by viewing discourse theories as a continuum with two dominant modes: naturalism, in which every utterance is transcribed in as much detail as possible, and denaturalism, in which idiosyncratic elements of speech (e.g., stutters, pauses, nonverbal, involuntary vocalizations) are removed. These two ends correspond to certain views about the representation of language. With a naturalized approach, language represents the real world. Therefore, the transcript reflects a verbatim depiction of speech (Schegloff, 1997). Denaturalized transcripts, however, suggest that within speech are meanings and perceptions that construct our reality (Cameron, 2001). However, what have been overlooked so far are other possible choices along the continuum. Since many qualitative studies involving spoken data are exploratory in nature, researchers normally need to immerse themselves into data by moving back and forth along the discourse continuum in order to capture what can be interesting and useful for their research purposes. At theoretical stage, we are selective and reflective by taking a dynamic position along the discourse theories continuum.

Transcription as a method: Methodological consideration

The second consideration is to decide how to transcribe, which is viewed as a research method (Lapadat & Lindsay, 1998). How to organize the layout of the transcripts? What conventions should be used to present transcripts? How paralinguistic and nonverbal information should be symbolized? This phase is characterized as a series of methodological choices and subjective decisions to select and develop a transcription system for specific analytical purposes (Du, Bois, 2010; Ochs, 1979). Each methodological decision represents a choice to include or exclude specific instances or meanings (Ross, 2010). The specificity of transcription work extends beyond recorded verbal utterances to the myriad non-verbal aspects of conversation since “talk is peppered with verbal and non-verbal signals that can change the tenor of conversations and meaning” (Oliver et al., 2005, p. 1276). It essentially involves decisions at different levels, such as details of transcription (e.g. omitting or including non-verbal dimensions of interaction), data interpretation (e.g. distinguishing ‘I see, yes’ from ‘I say yes’), and data representation (e.g. representing the verbalization ‘I’d like to say’ as ‘I would like to say?’). Ochs (1979) argues that developing a set of transcription symbols leaves room for selectivity to meet the researchers’ specific interests. To reflect children’s language, she specifies her decisions about page layout, notations of nonverbal information (e.g., timing, overlaps, pausing), choices of orthographic versus phonetic representation, and choice of discourse segmentation. In doing so, transcription can be viewed as a technical process of representing discourse events through transcription symbols. The style of transcription can influence the possible types of analyses and therefore, every form of transcript is a form of construction in order to facilitate the following analysis (Bucholtz, 2007; Mishler, 1991).

Transcription as a tool for data analysis: Analytical consideration

The third consideration is interpretive and reflective for analytical purpose. Different transcription conventions are apt for different analytic perspectives. Psathas and Anderson (1990) reckon that the process of transcribing is analytical to some degree; therefore, the audio- or video-tapes are the data for analysis before they are transformed into written texts. Likewise, Bailey (2008) perceives transcription as an interpretive process therefore the first step in analyzing data. It is emphasized that the methodical back-and-forth listening to and reviewing the recorded interactions is an interpretive and reflective process through which details fit the researcher’s analysis interests become explicit. The process is inevitably a selective one whereby certain phenomena or features of interaction are transcribed. Rather than being a problem to overcome, selectivity needs also to be understood as a practical and theoretical necessity (Cook, 1990; Duranti, 1997). Transcription choices therefore may lead to self-fulfilling analyses. Bucholtz (2000) argues that transcription is a reflective discourse analysis involving both interpretive and representational processes. He exemplifies how data can be transcribed and interpreted differently by citing a video-taped police interrogation between a police and a criminal.

It is evident that two lines (line 6 and line 7) are erased from the police’s version. Meanwhile, line 3 and line 4 are inconsistent in these two versions. Due to the removal and the inconsistency, different understandings can be: the police version shows that the policeman tries to persuade the client to confess his criminal. However, it is crucially revealing that the client tries to make a deal (line 6) and the policeman possible acceptance (line 7 and line 9). Moreover, the ‘unintelligible’ slot is also worth further exploring and interpreting. This example indicates how interpretation and representation might influence the judgments of what and how to transcribe the same data.

Two versions of a police interrogation

Police transcript

Q = Police officer, A = Client

1 A. I'll tell you every - every single thing.

2 Q. Okay.

3 A. I mean what - see you got to understand

4 (unintelligible).

5 Q. (Unintelligible.)

6 A. Yeah.

7 Q. Yeah, you've got to understand (unintelligible) house?

8 A. Yeah.

Bucholtz's (2000) transcript (extracted)

Pol = Police officer, Cli = Client

1 Cli: I'll tell you every - every single thing.

2 Pol: Okay.

3 Cli: I mean what-

4 Pol: See you got to understand

5 (unintelligible).

6 Cli." Do me one favor, man, that's it.

7 Pol: Yeah?

8 Cli: Yeah.

9 Pol: Yeah, you've got to understand (unintelligible).

10 Cli: Yeah.

Adapted from Bucholtz (2000, p.1443)

At this point, it becomes necessary to design a practical transcription system for our particular study based on its research interests and analysis needs. As mentioned beforehand, we took a dynamic position along the discourse theories continuum since we should be reflective and stay open-minded for any interesting features emerging from data. The procedures in next section depict how we make decisions at each stage.

Procedures of designing a transcription system

Stage one: Select basic principles for designing a transcription system

After gathering data, we attempted to design a transcription system. Since many conventions and symbols have been established and recognized in transcription research, we cannot be completely creative for novel symbols and conventions just for our study. Being practical and theoretically-guided to make a selective decision at this stage, we prefer a 'buffet' style, selecting from a multiplicity, to an established 'pre-set menu'. The selections were based on O'Connell & Kowal (2010) review of four oft-cited transcription systems (see Table 1) which have been most explicitly referred in transcription literature.

To be specific, the development of a transcription system at this stage is a 'buffet' selecting approach. First, Du Bois (1991) proposes notion 'broad-to-narrow' and five maxims are considered useful in the current study as follows: a) Category definition: Define good categories; b) Accessibility: Make the system accessible; c) Robustness: Make representations robust; d) Economy: Make representations economical, and e) Adaptability: Make the system adaptable. He introduces the first principle by emphasizing making definitions of categories as "The most basic issue in designing a discourse transcription system is not choosing symbols, but defining the analytical categories for which the symbols will stand (p.78)."

O'Connell & Kowal (2010) recommend that category definition must be conducted according to specific research purposes by claiming that category definition is both independent of and antecedent to transcription design. Bearing in mind the exploratory nature of our study, we argue that the foremost step in designing a discourse transcription system is neither to choose symbols nor to define categories, but to interact with data for capturing potentially interesting instances. The second principle is accessibility, which is essentially a bid for familiar, easily accessible notations. "A sequence of three dots to mark a pause (p.82)" is generated by Du Bois et al. (1993) as an example to indicate short pause adopted from literary tradition. The third is robustness, the advocate to "use widely available characters' is indeed very practical. It is in essence a vote for adopting the current available set of symbols. We wondered, are the

available symbols applicable to a particular data? Should some symbols be replaced or new ones should be added? The fourth (Economy) and the fifth (Adaptability) complement the third. It is the specific purpose of research that calls on the implements of the last two principles. Finally, we selected the following principles: 1) be flexible enough to accommodate the needs of the research (Du Bois, 2010, p.74); 2) be interpretative and reflective in transcription process (Ehlich, 1993); 3) Be practical by expanding the focus on pure text meaning from conversation analysis to both text and contextual meanings for international analysis. Finally, Machinery's (1991) notion 'computer compatibility' and maxim 'clarity' should be considered for a possible combination of manual and technological data analysis. In the following parts, we illustrate how transcriptional decisions were made by quoting data examples.

Table 1 A summary of four oft-cited transcription systems

Author	Title	Principles	Maxims
Du Bois (2010)	Transcription design principles for spoken Discourse research (DT)	Transcription is a broad-to-narrow way of understanding and representing data.	- Category definition - Accessibility - Robustness - Economy - Adaptability
Ehlich (1993)	Heuristic Interpretative Auditory Transcription (HIAT)	Transcription is interpretative, and segmentation and commentary of data are based on researchers' reflective knowledge.	- Simplicity and validity - Good readability and correctability - Minimum of transcriber and user training
Jefferson (1984, 1989)	Transcription notation	Transcription is practical for apprehending naturally occurred conversation and making it available for extended analysis	- Explanatory - Readability - Systematic
MacWhinney (1991)	Codes for the Human Analysis of Transcripts (CHAT)	Making the data compatible for computer data entry	- Readability - Clarity

Stage two: Labeling data

At this stage, our position on the discourse continuum was close to naturalism in order to be open for all linguistic and non-linguistic features. Before transcribing data, the first researcher listened to all recordings back and forth to understand and categorize data. The data was divided into three supervisory groups, namely, Group 1, Group 2, and Group 3. The numerating is based on the PhD students' academic years. Since the main supervisor was the same for these three groups, he was assigned a pseudonym A. Then, the three co-supervisors were labeled B1, B2, and B3. And the three PhD students were tagged C1, C2, and C3. Sessions from three supervisory groups were saved in separate folders. Each session was labeled at the top of the document like: Group name and session number, date, length of the recording, and a short remark of opening (see Example 1). This step can be seen as categorizing data type.

Example 1

C2's session: 2

Date: 06-07-2010, 1:30 am

Length: 17 minutes and 18 seconds

Note: C2 recorded her session and transferred data to R immediately after her supervisory meeting. It should be noted that her 5-year-old son was sick that day and the young boy was playing alone outside A's office when C2 had her supervision.

Stage three: Selecting transcription symbols for a broad transcription

After categorizing data type, we attempted to do a broad transcription by following several established transcription conventions (e.g., Bucholtz, 2007; Dressler & Kreuz, 2000; Du Bois et al., 1993; Jefferson, 1984, 1989; Schifffrin, 1994; Tannen, 1989). It was found out that the existing transcription systems were not applicable to the current data. Then, being reflective on our research goals, we decided to focus mainly on the linguistic features by using less complex symbols. A rough transcription was conducted by selecting some transcription symbols from existing transcription symbols in literature. The selected transcription symbols are presented in Table 2. The purpose at this stage was to get a sketch of each supervisory session and note down constraints and problems of using the selected transcription symbols. In doing so, we moved our position closer to the denaturalism end along the discourse theories continuum.

Table 2 Selected Symbols for a Broad Transcription

Symbols	Descriptions
...	Three dots indicate a perceptible pause less more than 3 seconds within a turn.
(.3)	Numbers in parentheses show length of pauses which are more than 3 seconds.
.	A full stop indicates a sentence-final falling intonation
?	A question mark indicates rising inflection not necessarily indicating a question.
CAPS	Capitals indicate an emphatic tone
/	A forward slash indicates repeated utterances by a same speaker.
=	Equal signs indicate latched utterances spoken one after the other without a pause.
{ }	A description enclosed in an empty parenthesis indicates transcriber's comments
(?)	A question mark in bracket indicates an unclear fragment on the tape.
@	An "@" mark indicates laughter of a speaker.

After selecting the above symbols, one session from each group was chosen to try out them in order to decide: a) whether we should transcribe the whole sequence; b) the level of details we should document; c) whether we should mark out the boundaries which indicate different events. Gumperz and Berenz (1993) perceive this as 'events within the encounter as a whole' by segmenting the whole interaction into 'thematically coherent and empirically bondable portion (p. 4)'.

Stage four: Identifying problematic cases and providing solutions

In general, the selected symbols can accommodate for most data phenomena. However, we found that some unexpected or accidental events cannot be annotated.

Case 1: Unexpected visitor

Example 2

A: =Come in. {from 7 minutes 35 seconds until 9 minutes, someone comes in to talk to A in Thai about A's supervisees' proposal}

Example 3

C2: What do you mean by my agenda? You mean he can help with my particular?

A: I think he can help you a lot <B2: Uhn> I wouldn't...I don't think you should be making any definite agenda after you study with Bob...come in {someone knocks the door} go away <B2: @>

In this case, we decided to highlight the turn in blue color and type the commentary in uppercase letters (see Example 2 and 3). Meanwhile, the time duration of an unexpected visitor's staying and his/her purpose is also documented. During this time, the participants' talk is transcribed but the visitor's purpose would be briefed as commentary.

Case 2: Sensitive information

It can be observed from the above-cited examples that an individual may mention explicitly other names, locations, organizations, and so on during the supervisory talks. To cope with information that cannot be revealed, we decided that firstly, keep their names as what we got from recording and highlight them in green color. Second, use the capitalized initials for them if their data will be analyzed and presented in thesis writing or publication (see example 3).

Example 4

C2: Ok...I talked about sharing knowledge with B...and he said=

A: =I talked to J through nice net in Australia...J was the regular one on nice net before. (B & J: refers to PhD students)

Case 3: Overlapped turn

In literature, the most popular symbol for annotating overlapped turns is “[’”. In this study, we created a symbol “< >” to indicate an overlapped turn within another speaker's talk. Response/non-response tokens (e.g., Uh huh, Mm, Yeah, right, and etc.) were noted as inserted turns within a stream of talk (see Example 5).

Example 5

A: Ok...saying ‘I guess EAP’ doesn't seem very good...because you need to know what journals you are writing for before you write an article <C1: Uhn> I mean if you are writing this for EAP compare with...say something in Higher Education...the whole of your introduction will be very different <C1: Uhn> the way of framing it...the way moving it will be very different <C1: Yeah> make sure you know what the journal is before you write it.

Case 4: Laughter

The selected symbol “@” is legible to indicate a laughter of a speaker. However, it fails to explain when two or three group members laugh simultaneously. As a result, it was refined as: one or more “@” indicate the quality of one speaker's laughter and “(@)” indicates two or three group members laugh simultaneously (see Example 6).

Example 6

A: See how good student she is...not handing anything in <C2: @>

B2: That's it.

C2: Don't forget the homework.

B2: @@@@

C2: I tried to hand in...but not today...will be tomorrow...because you told me=

B2: =Yeah...she came to my office yesterday and gave me a homework <C2: @> knocked my door and I saw...it was homework <A, B2, C2: (@)>

Case 5: Silence gaps within and between utterances

When intervals in the stream of a speaker's talk, they are timed in seconds and inserted within parentheses. However, a problem arises when the intervals occur at the end of a speaker's utterances.

Example 7

C1: And then if (.4) if I actually change to this=

A: =I am not saying you should change it...don't...follow what you think...follow what you do...you will not...it's about...when you say I guess EAP...I mean if you need to know the journal you need to know what's the main argument to argue before you try to write...so if you are looking at this...even you can write for EAP you can write in two completely different ways...one will be criticizing the nature of doing research and one will be looking at ways to improve Thai research...I know you are in the first...obviously...first one or second one...the absolute one...but be aware of the other one...and you may need to...in your discussion somewhere...you may need to acknowledge these results could be interpreted in another way...but justify why your interpretations are based on your perspective on the issue.

(.7)

C1: So the findings are the same...but making interpretations can be different.

A: Yeah...if you end up with two complete arguments coming up from the same findings depending on the philosophy you're working from...which shows there are loads of rubbish researchers...no I am @

B1 & C1: (@)

(.8)

C1: But it is ok to work from perspective now...what I mean is just I want to=

It is arguable that from whom the pauses are generated. It can be a waiting time from the previous turn, and it can be a possible thinking time from the following speaker. Alternatively, it can be a collective thinking time. Considering these possibilities, we decided to note them without assigning them to any speaker.

Case 6: Unclear utterances

After generating rough transcripts for each session, we attempted to analyze them by using corpus analysis to identify questions. At this stage, one symbol was found bewildering, that is "(?)", which indicates unclear utterances. When we search for questions by using question mark symbol "?" symbol, the results would be jumbled by showing unclear utterances. Therefore, it was replaced by "(xxx)".

Case 7: Errors and slips

Even though the errors and slips are not in the scope of research interests and data analysis, the transcript should not be "cleaned up" by removing foul language, grammatical errors, or misuse of words or concepts (Chiari, 2006). In this study, if an incorrect or unexpected pronunciation results in difficulties with comprehension of the text, the correct word were typed in square brackets.

Conclusion and Implications

To conclude, we propose a selective-specificity model (see Figure 1) and list the transcription symbols (see Appendix).

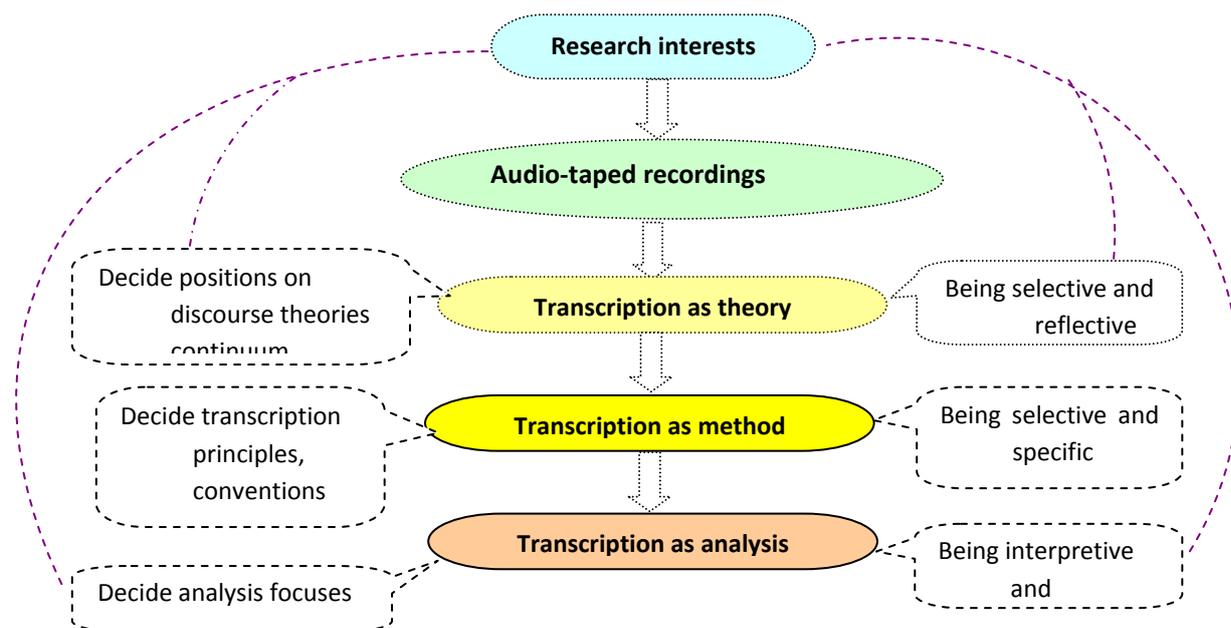


Figure 1 A selective-specificity model for designing a transcription system

Figure 1 shows that there is a link vertically going through research interest down to transcription as analysis. By dividing the transcription process into stages, we were aware of its mixed-facet nature since there are no clear cuts among these stages along the process. To make it explicit, first, being selective is to choose an appropriate theoretical principles and suitable symbols from the literature. Second, being interpretive is to find a reasonable position along the discourse continuum and interact with data sufficiently in order to create symbols which can accommodate unique features of the data. Third, being reflective is to set a thread for a thinking spiral over the course of the study about the research goals, choices and decisions during the transcription process, and focuses of data analysis. At this point, designing a transcription system as well as a transcription task should be an on-the-stage episode of the whole research process rather than a mysterious and behind-the-scene behavior. Put it another way, designing a transcription system is the first step to interpret and represent spoken data. This interpretation and representation can decide how data are conceptualized and transcribed.

If the whole transcription process can be viewed as cooking soup, the audio-taped data should be seen as plain water, and the designing of a transcription system is choosing ingredients. The procedures of ‘cooking data’ should be the followings: 1) Interacting with data to get the water heated; 2) Preparing ingredients by selecting and creating symbols to develop a transcription system; 3) Flavoring the water by using the designed system; 4) Getting a soup ready in form of organized transcripts; 5) Tasting soup by initial analysis and coding; 6) Serving soup by presenting data examples. In doing so, we argue that transcription is a selective, interpretive and reflective process involving a series of decisions shaped by research goals, discourse theories and methodological decisions.

To reflect on the pains and gains in this hands-on experience of designing a transcription system, we would say that the gains overwhelm the pains in two aspects. Firstly, by reviewing the relevant literature, we were well-informed with various transcription principles, criteria and conventions even though we underwent hardships of being daunting with the massy recordings, confusing with existing literature, and frustrated with my inadequacy. Second, being interpretive and reflective in interacting with data, our awareness was raised to problematic cases

which could not be captured with the selective symbols. Thereby, we attempted to adapt and create new symbols to cater for our specific research interests and data analysis needs. In doing this, the following transcriptions turned out to be more systematic and convenient. To emphasize, we were especially interested in 'trouble cases' because these problematic cases could provide more opportunities for a better understating of the data and the research design. At this point, instead of following a fixed menu, we argue that the process of designing transcription would be incorporated suitably into qualitative research designs and methodologies. Reflection at different research stages like selecting, creating and implementation of transcription symbols may provide a valuable exercise in honoring both the refinement of the research process and the researchers' knowledge. Although the literature illustrates a surging consolidation of transcription as theory, as method, as representative and as interpretive, further studies are needed to explore the impact of the literature on researchers' approaches to design a transcription system and doing transcription. Hence, future research efforts can be made to explore transcription process in empirical inquiry. In this paper, we argue that researchers working with spoken data should give considerable attention to the designing a transcription system as well as a transcription task and provide detailed descriptions about the process and practices along the path of the whole research. Since the current paper's focus is more on the process of designing a transcription system, we suggest taking one more step forward to explore the follow-up process of doing transcription. According to Bucholtz (2005), transcriptions are to be perceived as a 'sociocultural practice of representing discourse (p.785)', and researchers should be aware that transcriptions can never be complete by staying open-minded for potentially interesting features emerging along the transcription process. Finally, it is hoped that our hands-on experience with empirical data examples for developing a transcription system will contribute to the future research by shedding some lights on transcription process and boosting confidence for novice researchers

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Appendix

Transcription Symbols

A	Main supervisor
B1, B2, B3	Co-supervisor in different supervisory teams
C1, C2, C3	PhD student in different supervisory teams
D, J, O, T, U, W, R	Pseudonyms for people who appear or being mentioned
...	Three dots indicate a perceptible pause less than 3 seconds within a turn.
(.3)	Numbers in parentheses show a pause more than 3 seconds.
.	A full stop indicates a sentence-final falling intonation.
?	A question mark indicates a question or a rising intonation statement.
CAPS	Capitals indicate an emphatic tone.
/	A forward slash indicates repeated utterances by a same speaker.
=	Equal signs indicate latched utterances spoken one after the other without a pause.
< >	Pointed brackets indicate an inserted turn within a stream of talk.
{ }	A description enclosed in an empty parenthesis indicates transcriber's comments
@ @ @	One or more "@" indicate quality of laughter of a speaker
(@)	A "@" mark in a bracket indicates shared-laughter of speakers.
(xxx)	Three xs in a bracket indicate unclear utterances