

Formatting and Analysing a Learner Corpus with CHAT and CLAN

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Introduction to CHILDES

- **Child Language Data Exchange System / CHILDES**
(for a useful introduction to CHILDES see MacWhinney 2000 or <http://chilDES.psy.cmu.edu/>)
- **Talkbank**– The Database – primarily child language but also some language disorder data and bilingual data
- **CHAT** (Codes for the Human Analysis of Transcripts) – transcription procedures, a system for notation and coding
- **CLAN** (Computerised Language Analysis) – computer programs for searching and manipulating the data.

Why do researchers use CHILDES?

- Well-supported; list-serves available
- International standing (over 1300 published studies)
- Flexible (not language-specific)
- Powerful (over 40 commands)
- Morphosyntactic tagger & direct search for morphosyntactic variables
- It's free!

Example SLA Projects using CHAT/CLAN

- FLLOC (French Learner Language Oral Corpora) Project
 - 3.5 million words
- SPLLOC (Spanish Learner Language Oral Corpora) Project
 - 330,000 words
- LANG-SNAP (Language and Social Networks Abroad Project)
 - 680,000 words

The FLLOC and SPLLOC projects

flloc.soton.ac.uk & splloc.soton.ac.uk

- Focus in on instructed learners of French and Spanish
- Dual aim:
 - constructing databases of oral learner data freely available to the research community
 - Substantive research agenda on French and Spanish SLA
- Collaboration between the Universities of Essex, Newcastle, Southampton and York
- Team Members: Florence Myles, Rosamond Mitchell, Laura Domínguez, Emma Marsden, Sarah Rule, Annabelle David, Maria Arche, Nicole Tracy-Ventura, Kevin McManus, Christophe dos Santos, Administrative and IT support

LANG-SNAP project: langsnap.soton.ac.uk

- French and Spanish L2
- Focus on speech and writing
- Longitudinal: 6 data collection cycles over 20 months
- Use of CHILDES Procedures: soundfiles, bulleted transcripts, tagged transcripts
- Advanced learners, native speaker controls
- Eventually accessible on the web via Talkbank and langsnap.soton.ac.uk/
- 680,000 words

CHAT/CLAN Getting Started

- Download the CLAN program from the Childes website
 - childes.psy.cmu.edu/clan/
 - It is already on the computers in this lab.
- Download both the CHAT & CLAN manuals
 - [CHAT: childes.psy.cmu.edu/manuals/chat.pdf](http://childes.psy.cmu.edu/manuals/chat.pdf)
 - [CLAN: childes.psy.cmu.edu/manuals/clan.pdf](http://childes.psy.cmu.edu/manuals/clan.pdf)

CHAT: Codes for the Human Analysis of Transcripts

- CHAT is the set of transcription conventions you need to follow.

Header

Start of transcript.
Each t-unit goes on a separate line

```
Clan - [lean11a.cha]
File Edit View Tiers Mode Window Help
@Begin
@Languages: eng, ita
@Participants: INM margaret_simonot Investigator, INN netta_protano_biggs Investigator, SAN andrea Subject
@ID: eng, ita|esf|INM|||||Investigator|||
@ID: eng, ita|esf|INN|||||Investigator|||
@ID: eng, ita|esf|SAN|||||Subject|||
@Media: lean11a, audio
@Date: 13-DEC-1983
@Tape Location: it.lg.3
@Comment: general conversation as substitute for broken off film experiment
@Comment: Keywords are thematic structure, temporal reference, narrative socio-bio
@New Episode
@Comment: 1 on PRT
@Comment: Odette Scharenborg, 22-01-1997
*SAN: I want one (.) er in@s pianto@s . •
*INM: don't know . •
*SAN: er system (.) for er tape . •
*INM: mhm hhh . •
*SAN: is very good . •
*INM: yes ?
*INM: hhh . •
*SAN: very expensive . •
*INM: uhuh uhuh (.) .
*INM: and how many years did you play the guitar ? •
*SAN: (.) twelve . •
*INM: twelve ?
*INM: mm . •
*SAN: yeah .
*INM: that's really hhh .
*INM: and whats [?] when you play with the group do you play bass or ? •
*SAN: in italy ? •
```


Bulleting: Linking the transcript and audio/video

```
Clan - [lean11a.cha]
File Edit View Tiers Mode Window Help
@Begin
@Languages: eng, ita
@Participants: INM margaret_simonot Investigator, INN netta_protano_biggs Investi
@ID: eng, ita|esf|INM||||Investigator|||
@ID: eng, ita|esf|INN||||Investigator|||
@ID: eng, ita|esf|SAN||||Subject|||
@Media: lean11a, audio
@Date: 13-DEC-1983
@Tape Location: it.Ig.3
@Comment: general conversation as substitute for broken off film experiment
@Comment: Keywords are thematic structure, temporal reference, narrative soci
@New Episode
@Comment: 1 on PRT
@Comment: Odette Scharenborg, 27-01-1997
*SAN: I want one (.) er in@s pianto@: . •
*INM: don't know (. •
*SAN: er system (.) for er tape . •
*INM: mhm hhh . •
*SAN: is very good . •
*INM: yes ?
*INM: hhh . •
*SAN: very expensive . •
*INM: uhuh uhuh (. •
*INM: and how many years did you play the guitar ? •
*SAN: (.) twelve . •
*INM: twelve ?
*INM: mm . •
*SAN: yeah .
*INM: that's really hhh .
*INM: and whats [ ] when you play with the group do you play bass or ? •
*SAN: in italy ? •
```

Bullets show that the audio and transcript are linked.

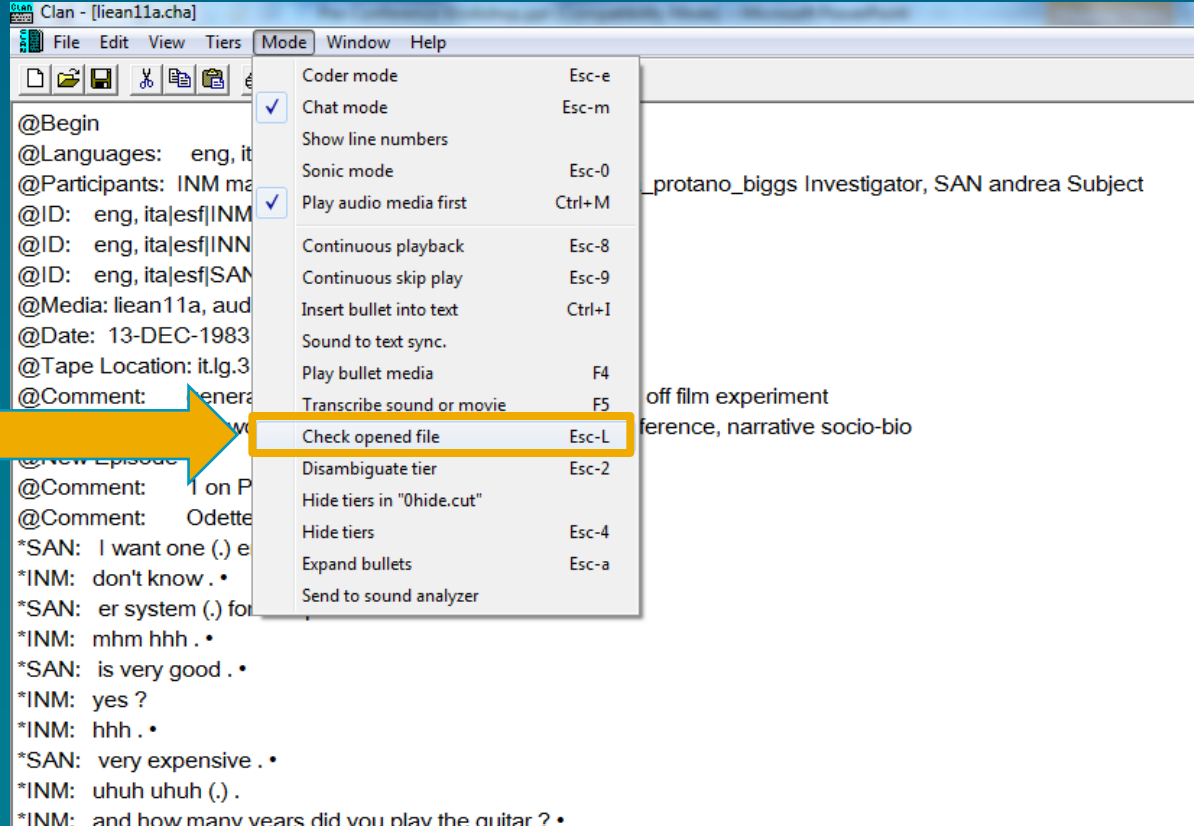
Now you can play any line in the transcript by pressing F4 when the cursor is over that line

Transcribing in the CLAN Program

- 'Sonic Mode': transcribe and bullet at the same time.
- 'Transcriber Mode': transcribe with video and link already transcribed files with audio.
- 'Soundwalker': similar to the old transcriber foot pedal.

Once you've finished transcribing: The 'Check' command

- Used to make sure your transcript doesn't include any technical errors.

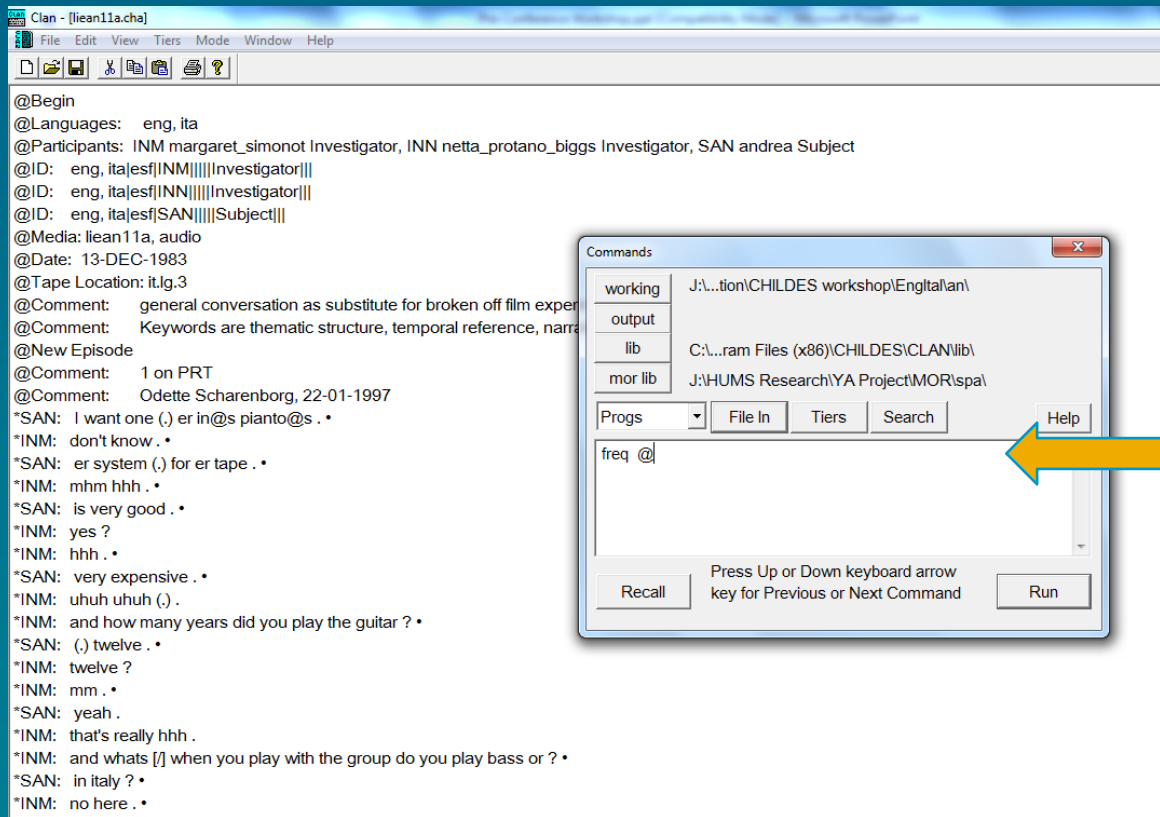


CLAN, the analysis program

- Over 40 built-in programs that work on CHAT files
 - Windows and Mac versions
- Some commands are run on the CHAT file.
- Some commands are run on the 'tagged' or 'MOR' file

Obtaining a Frequency List

- Command: freq




To run commands you need to type them in the 'Commands Window' or select them from the 'Progs' menu

'Freq' is the command to get a frequency count. You also need to specify the file you want to use.

Freq results

Type and token counts
are provided too



```
Clan - [CLAN Output]
File Edit View Tiers Mode Window Help
[Icons]
2 up
3 used
13 very
1 visit
2 wait
1 waitress
2 want
1 warm
5 was
1 washer
1 watch
7 we
2 week
5 well
4 went
1 westminster
7 what
8 when
4 where
3 which
1 who
4 will
4 with
1 wonder
1 words
12 work
1 write
54 yeah
1 year
6 years
25 yes
69 you
6 your
2 youre
-----
304 Total number of different item types used
1282 Total number of items (tokens)
0.237 Type/Token ratio
04dec12[E|TEXT] 148
```

Saving results in a separate file: +f

- By adding +f to your command, the CLAN program will save the results in a separate file.



The screenshot shows the CLAN program interface. The main window, titled 'Clan - [CLAN Output]', displays the following text:

```
> freq @ +f
freq @ +f
Tue Mar 12 13:16:51 2013
freq (04-Dec-2012) is conducting analyses on:
  ALL speaker tiers
*****
From file <j:\HUMS Research\YA Project\Dissemination\CHILDES workshop\Engl\lan\lean11a.cha>
Output file <j:\HUMS Research\YA Project\Dissemination\CHILDES workshop\Engl\lan\lean11a.frq.cex>
>
```

Overlaid on this is a 'Commands' dialog box. It contains a table of paths:

working	J:\...tion\CHILDES workshop\Engl\lan\
output	
lib	C:\...ram Files (x86)\CHILDES\CLAN\lib\
mor lib	J:\HUMS Research\YA Project\MOR\spa\

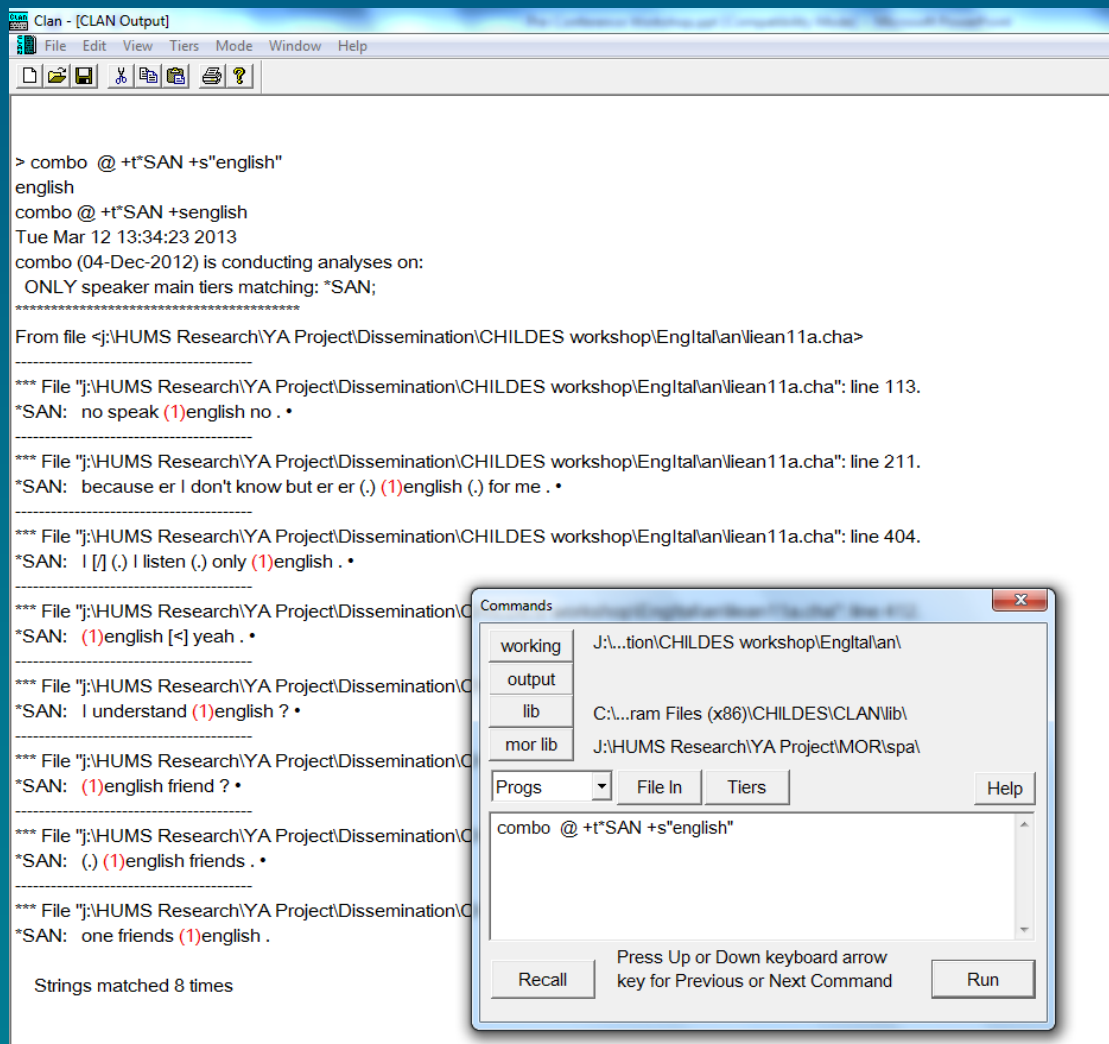
Below the table are buttons for 'Progs', 'File In', 'Tiers', 'Search', and 'Help'. A text field contains the command 'freq @ +f'. At the bottom, there are 'Recall' and 'Run' buttons, with a note: 'Press Up or Down keyboard arrow key for Previous or Next Command'.

Considerations for D

- Run freq to see what words get counted 'as words'. Spelling mistakes could impact the result
- You can have some 'words' excluded from the D calculation using some additional commands
- You may only want the result from a specific speaker so you need to specify in the command

Search for words or sequence of words: COMBO

- Command=
combo
- Use +s (string)
and add the word
in quotes: e.g.,
"english"



```
Clan - [CLAN Output]
File Edit View Tiers Mode Window Help

> combo @ +t*SAN +s"english"
english
combo @ +t*SAN +senglish
Tue Mar 12 13:34:23 2013
combo (04-Dec-2012) is conducting analyses on:
  ONLY speaker main tiers matching: *SAN;
*****
From file <j:\HUMS Research\YA Project\Dissemination\CHILDES workshop\Engl\lan\lean11a.cha>
-----
*** File "j:\HUMS Research\YA Project\Dissemination\CHILDES workshop\Engl\lan\lean11a.cha": line 113.
*SAN: no speak (1)english no . •
-----
*** File "j:\HUMS Research\YA Project\Dissemination\CHILDES workshop\Engl\lan\lean11a.cha": line 211.
*SAN: because er I don't know but er er (.) (1)english (.) for me . •
-----
*** File "j:\HUMS Research\YA Project\Dissemination\CHILDES workshop\Engl\lan\lean11a.cha": line 404.
*SAN: I [j] (.) I listen (.) only (1)english . •
-----
*** File "j:\HUMS Research\YA Project\Dissemination\CHILDES workshop\Engl\lan\lean11a.cha": line 404.
*SAN: (1)english [<] yeah . •
-----
*** File "j:\HUMS Research\YA Project\Dissemination\CHILDES workshop\Engl\lan\lean11a.cha": line 404.
*SAN: I understand (1)english ? •
-----
*** File "j:\HUMS Research\YA Project\Dissemination\CHILDES workshop\Engl\lan\lean11a.cha": line 404.
*SAN: (1)english friend ? •
-----
*** File "j:\HUMS Research\YA Project\Dissemination\CHILDES workshop\Engl\lan\lean11a.cha": line 404.
*SAN: (.) (1)english friends . •
-----
*** File "j:\HUMS Research\YA Project\Dissemination\CHILDES workshop\Engl\lan\lean11a.cha": line 404.
*SAN: one friends (1)english .

Strings matched 8 times
```

Commands

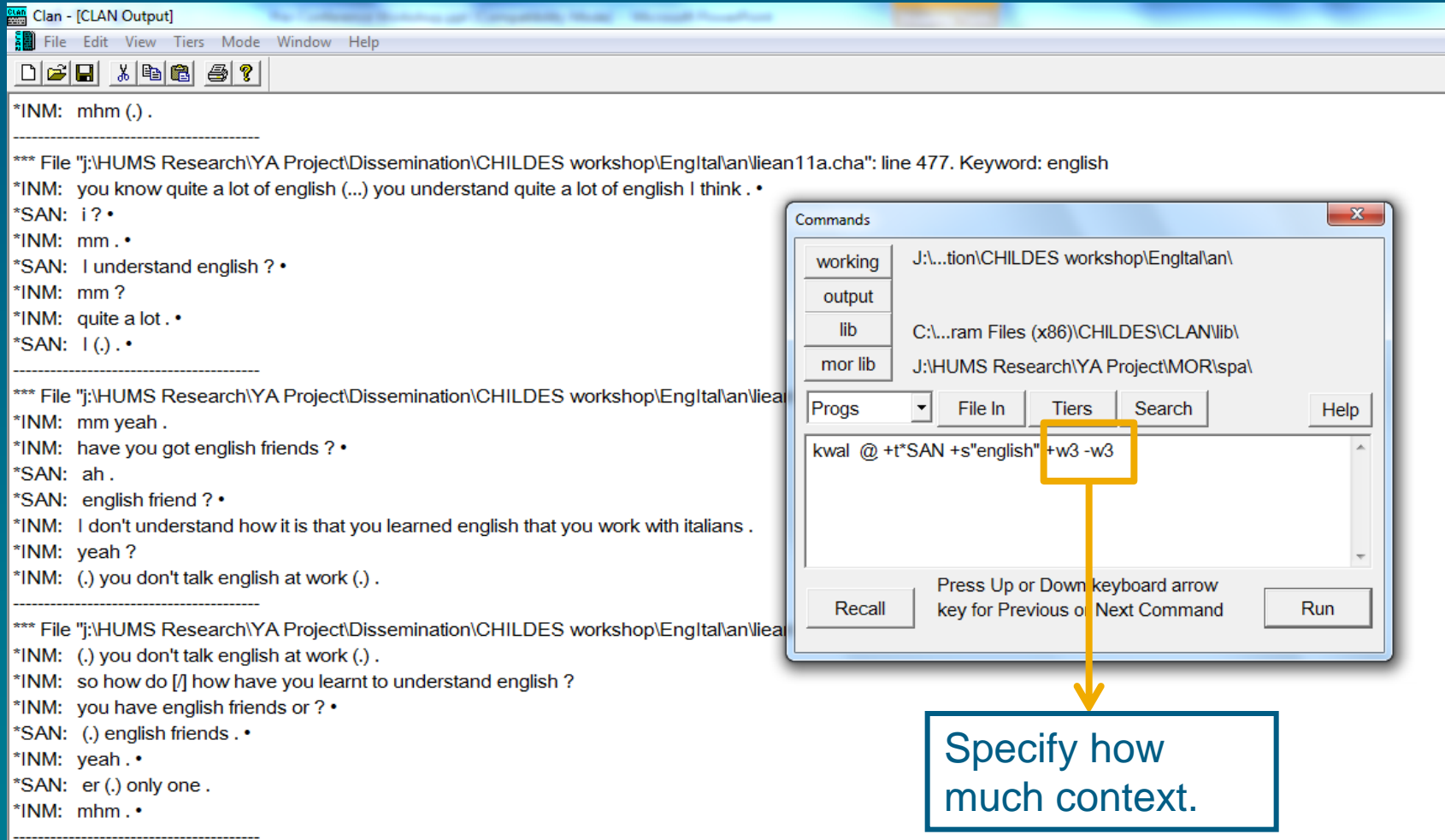
working	J:\...tion\CHILDES workshop\Engl\lan\
output	
lib	C:\...ram Files (x86)\CHILDES\CLAN\lib\
mor lib	J:\HUMS Research\YA Project\MOR\spa\

Progs [v] File In Tiers Help

combo @ +t*SAN +s"english"

Recall Press Up or Down keyboard arrow key for Previous or Next Command Run

Search for words in context: KWAL



Clan - [CLAN Output]

File Edit View Tiers Mode Window Help

*INM: mhm (.).

*** File "J:\HUMS Research\YA Project\Dissemination\CHILDES workshop\Engl\an\lean11a.cha": line 477. Keyword: english

*INM: you know quite a lot of english (...) you understand quite a lot of english I think . •

*SAN: i ? •

*INM: mm . •

*SAN: I understand english ? •

*INM: mm ?

*INM: quite a lot . •

*SAN: I (.). •

*** File "J:\HUMS Research\YA Project\Dissemination\CHILDES workshop\Engl\an\lean11a.cha": line 477. Keyword: english

*INM: mm yeah .

*INM: have you got english friends ? •

*SAN: ah .

*SAN: english friend ? •

*INM: I don't understand how it is that you learned english that you work with italians .

*INM: yeah ?

*INM: (.) you don't talk english at work (.).

*** File "J:\HUMS Research\YA Project\Dissemination\CHILDES workshop\Engl\an\lean11a.cha": line 477. Keyword: english

*INM: (.) you don't talk english at work (.).

*INM: so how do [I] how have you learnt to understand english ?

*INM: you have english friends or ? •

*SAN: (.) english friends . •

*INM: yeah . •

*SAN: er (.) only one .

*INM: mhm . •

Commands

working	J:\...tion\CHILDES workshop\Engl\an\
output	
lib	C:\...ram Files (x86)\CHILDES\CLAN\lib\
mor lib	J:\HUMS Research\YA Project\MOR\spa\

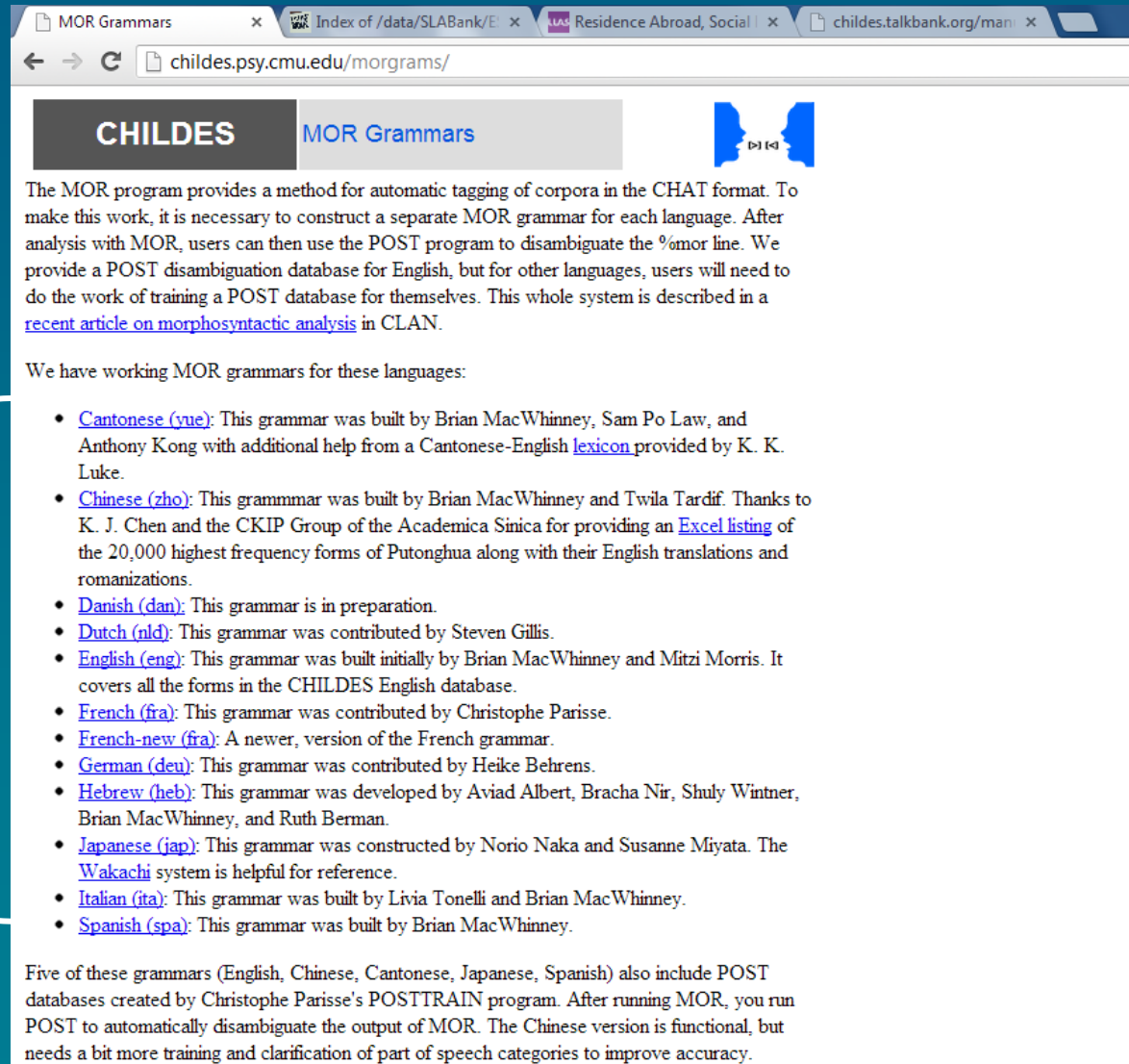
Progs File In Tiers Search Help

kwal @ +t*SAN +s"english" +w3 -w3

Recall Press Up or Down keyboard arrow key for Previous or Next Command Run

Specify how much context.

Part of Speech Tagger: MOR



The screenshot shows a web browser with the URL `chilides.psy.cmu.edu/morgrams/`. The page has a header with "CHILDES" and "MOR Grammars" tabs, and a logo of two blue silhouettes of heads facing each other. The main text explains the MOR program's purpose for automatic tagging of corpora in the CHAT format, noting that separate MOR grammars are needed for each language. It also mentions a POST program for disambiguation. A list of working MOR grammars is provided for various languages, including Cantonese, Chinese, Danish, Dutch, English, French, German, Hebrew, Japanese, and Spanish. A note at the bottom states that five of these grammars (English, Chinese, Cantonese, Japanese, Spanish) also include POST databases created by Christophe Parisse's POSTTRAIN program.

CHILDES MOR Grammars

The MOR program provides a method for automatic tagging of corpora in the CHAT format. To make this work, it is necessary to construct a separate MOR grammar for each language. After analysis with MOR, users can then use the POST program to disambiguate the %mor line. We provide a POST disambiguation database for English, but for other languages, users will need to do the work of training a POST database for themselves. This whole system is described in a [recent article on morphosyntactic analysis](#) in CLAN.

We have working MOR grammars for these languages:

- [Cantonese \(yue\)](#): This grammar was built by Brian MacWhinney, Sam Po Law, and Anthony Kong with additional help from a Cantonese-English [lexicon](#) provided by K. K. Luke.
- [Chinese \(zho\)](#): This grammar was built by Brian MacWhinney and Twila Tardif. Thanks to K. J. Chen and the CKIP Group of the Academia Sinica for providing an [Excel listing](#) of the 20,000 highest frequency forms of Putonghua along with their English translations and romanizations.
- [Danish \(dan\)](#): This grammar is in preparation.
- [Dutch \(nld\)](#): This grammar was contributed by Steven Gillis.
- [English \(eng\)](#): This grammar was built initially by Brian MacWhinney and Mitzi Morris. It covers all the forms in the CHILDES English database.
- [French \(fra\)](#): This grammar was contributed by Christophe Parisse.
- [French-new \(fra\)](#): A newer, version of the French grammar.
- [German \(deu\)](#): This grammar was contributed by Heike Behrens.
- [Hebrew \(heb\)](#): This grammar was developed by Aviad Albert, Bracha Nir, Shuly Wintner, Brian MacWhinney, and Ruth Berman.
- [Japanese \(jap\)](#): This grammar was constructed by Norio Naka and Susanne Miyata. The [Wakachi](#) system is helpful for reference.
- [Italian \(ita\)](#): This grammar was built by Livia Tonelli and Brian MacWhinney.
- [Spanish \(spa\)](#): This grammar was built by Brian MacWhinney.

Five of these grammars (English, Chinese, Cantonese, Japanese, Spanish) also include POST databases created by Christophe Parisse's POSTTRAIN program. After running MOR, you run POST to automatically disambiguate the output of MOR. The Chinese version is functional, but needs a bit more training and clarification of part of speech categories to improve accuracy.

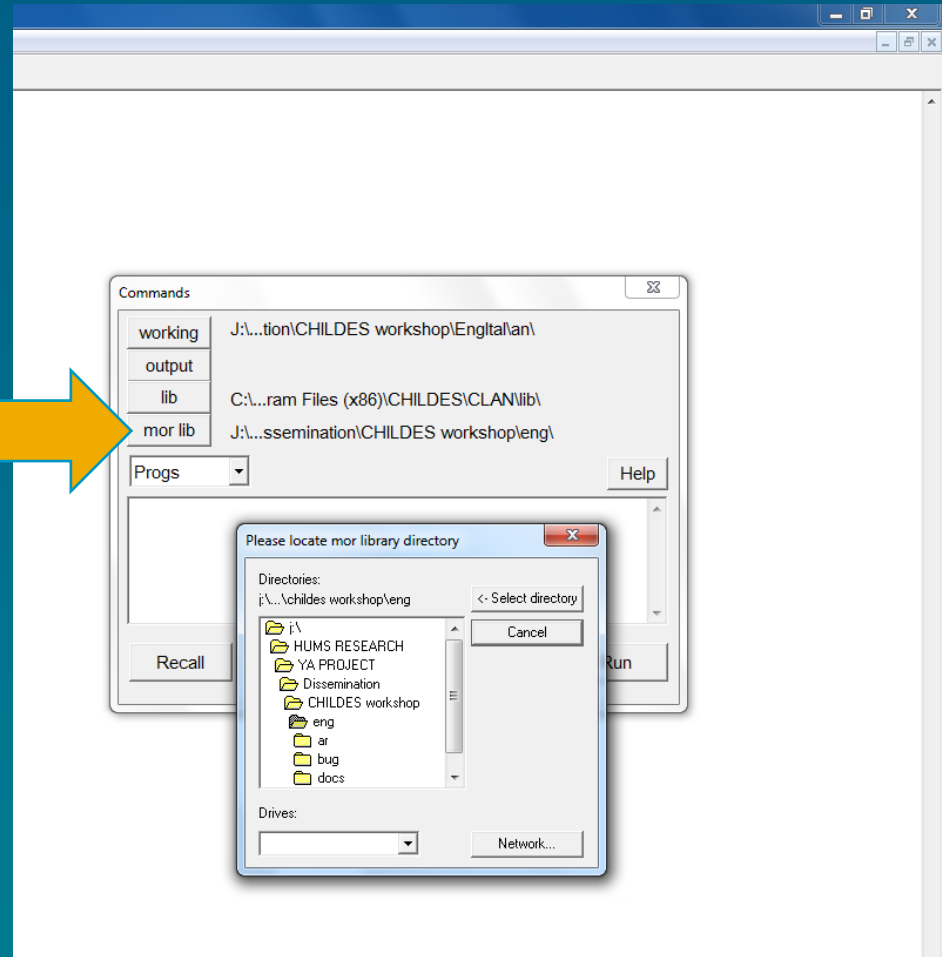
Available in a number of languages

English MOR

- You must first download the MOR onto your computer. Make sure you know where to locate it.
- MOR provides a morphosyntactic ‘tag’ for each word in the corpus, adding an additional layer of grammatical information
- The benefits of having a tagged text is that you can search by grammatical category (e.g., noun, verb, etc).

Selecting the MOR Library

- Make sure you select the right location

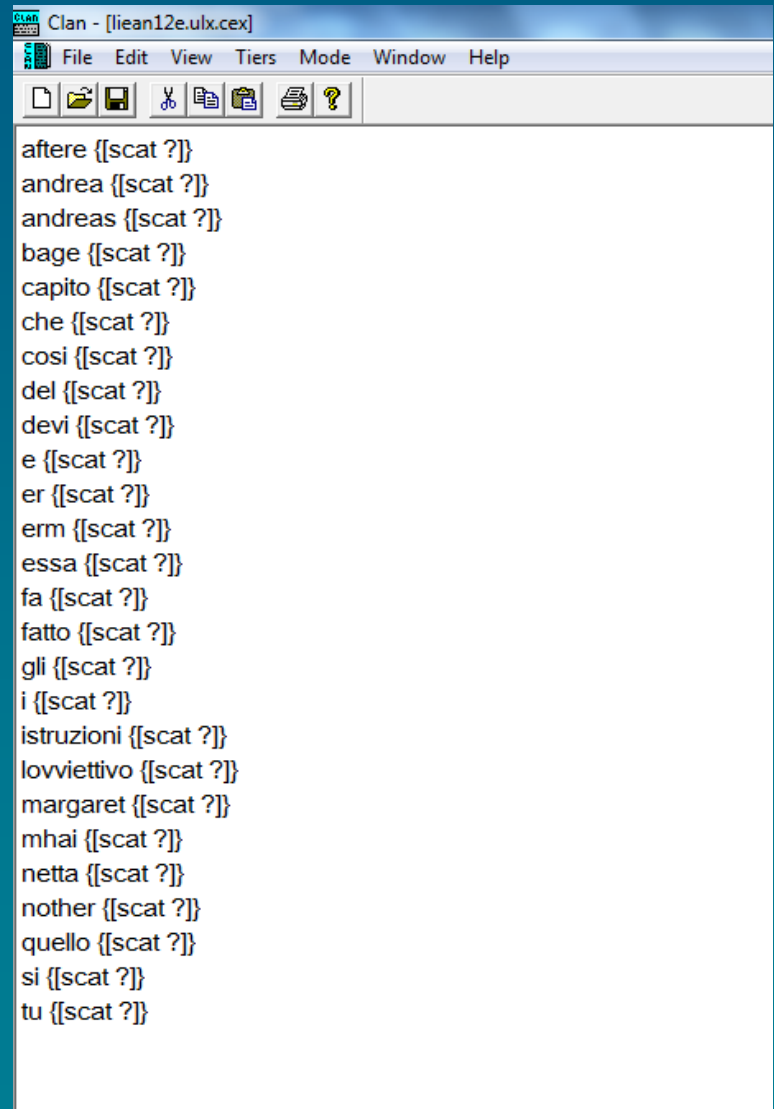


MOR-ing Files: Step 1

- Check for ‘new’ vocabulary
- The MOR dictionary or ‘lexicon’ that the program uses has been built word by word.
- Therefore, some real words in your corpus may not already be in the lexicon and you will need to add them manually.

Checking for 'new' words

- Command=
mor +xl
- A list of these words
is automatically
created in a new file.
- Some will be words
to add to the lexicon.
Others might be
transcription errors

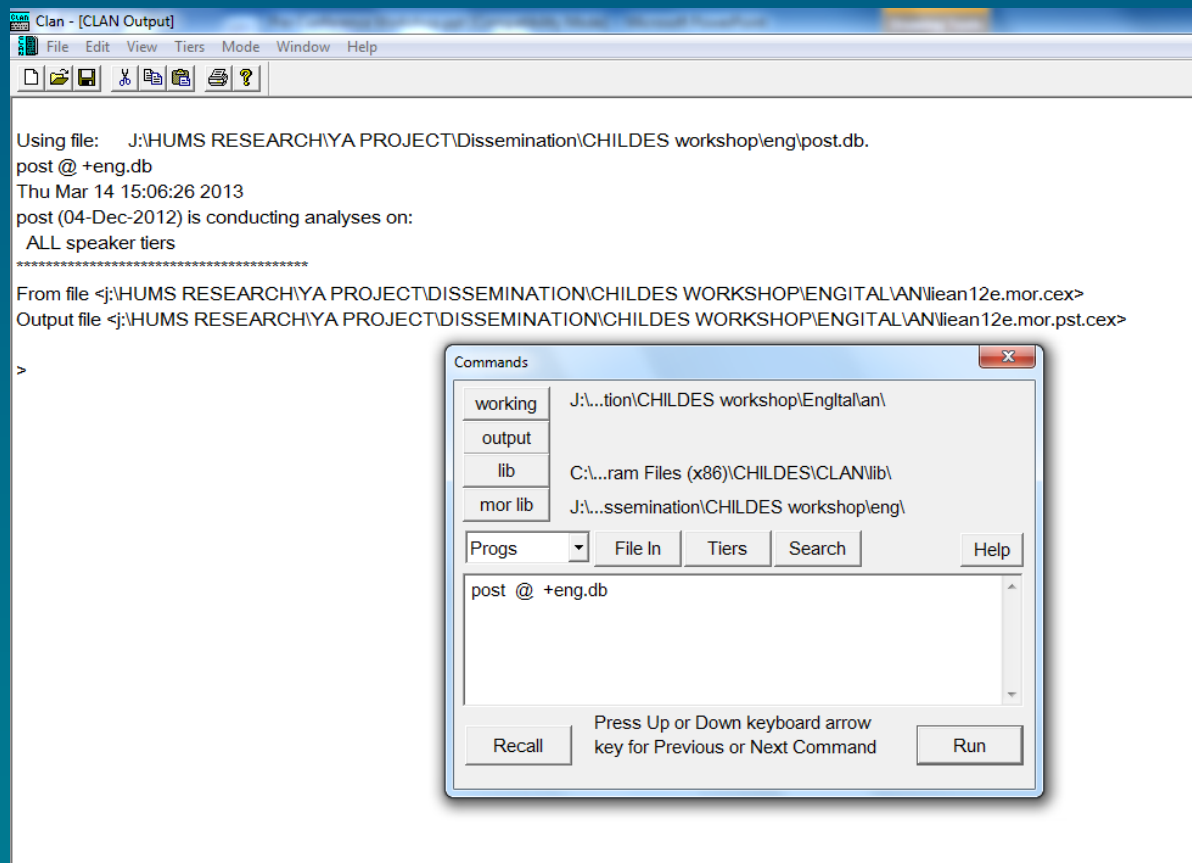


The screenshot shows a window titled "Clan - [lean12e.ulx.cex]" with a menu bar (File, Edit, View, Tiers, Mode, Window, Help) and a toolbar. The main text area contains a list of words, each followed by a SCAT code in curly braces. The words listed are: aftere, andrea, andreas, bage, capito, che, cosi, del, devi, e, er, erm, essa, fa, fatto, gli, i, istruzioni, lovviettivo, margaret, mhai, netta, nother, quello, si, and tu.

```
aftere {[scat ?]}
andrea {[scat ?]}
andreas {[scat ?]}
bage {[scat ?]}
capito {[scat ?]}
che {[scat ?]}
cosi {[scat ?]}
del {[scat ?]}
devi {[scat ?]}
e {[scat ?]}
er {[scat ?]}
erm {[scat ?]}
essa {[scat ?]}
fa {[scat ?]}
fatto {[scat ?]}
gli {[scat ?]}
i {[scat ?]}
istruzioni {[scat ?]}
lovviettivo {[scat ?]}
margaret {[scat ?]}
mhai {[scat ?]}
netta {[scat ?]}
nother {[scat ?]}
quello {[scat ?]}
si {[scat ?]}
tu {[scat ?]}
```

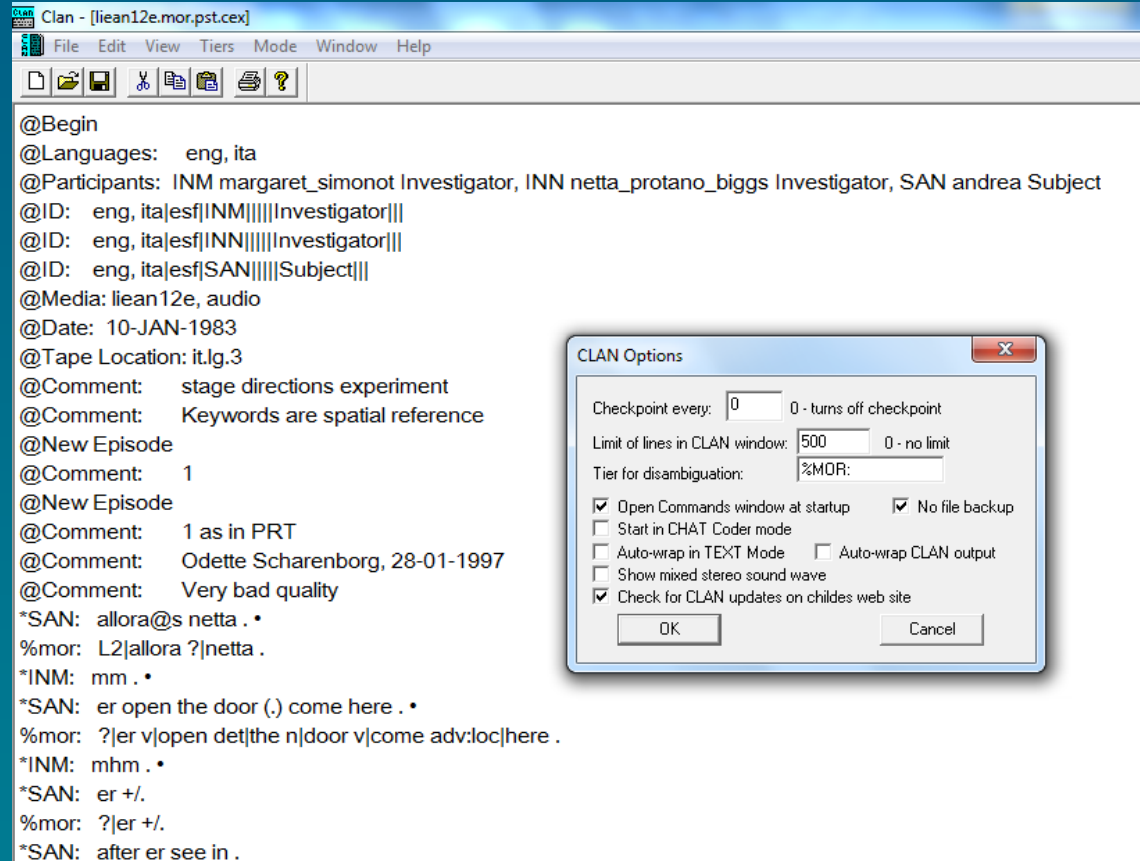

Step 3: Automatic Disambiguation

- Command:
post +eng.db
- The program
creates a new
file with a new
extension



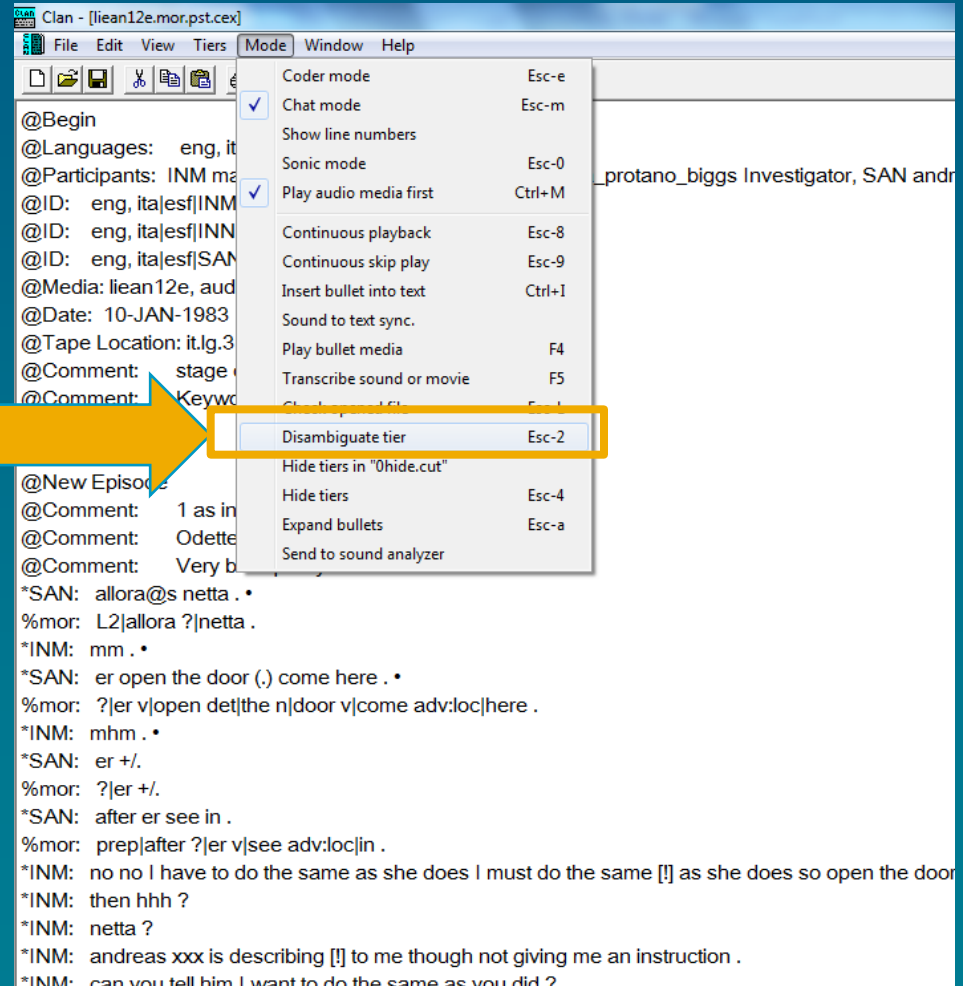
Step 4: Manual Disambiguation

- Open CLAN
- Under 'Edit', select 'CLAN Option'
- Make sure the 'tier for disambiguation' is %MOR



Manual Disambiguation

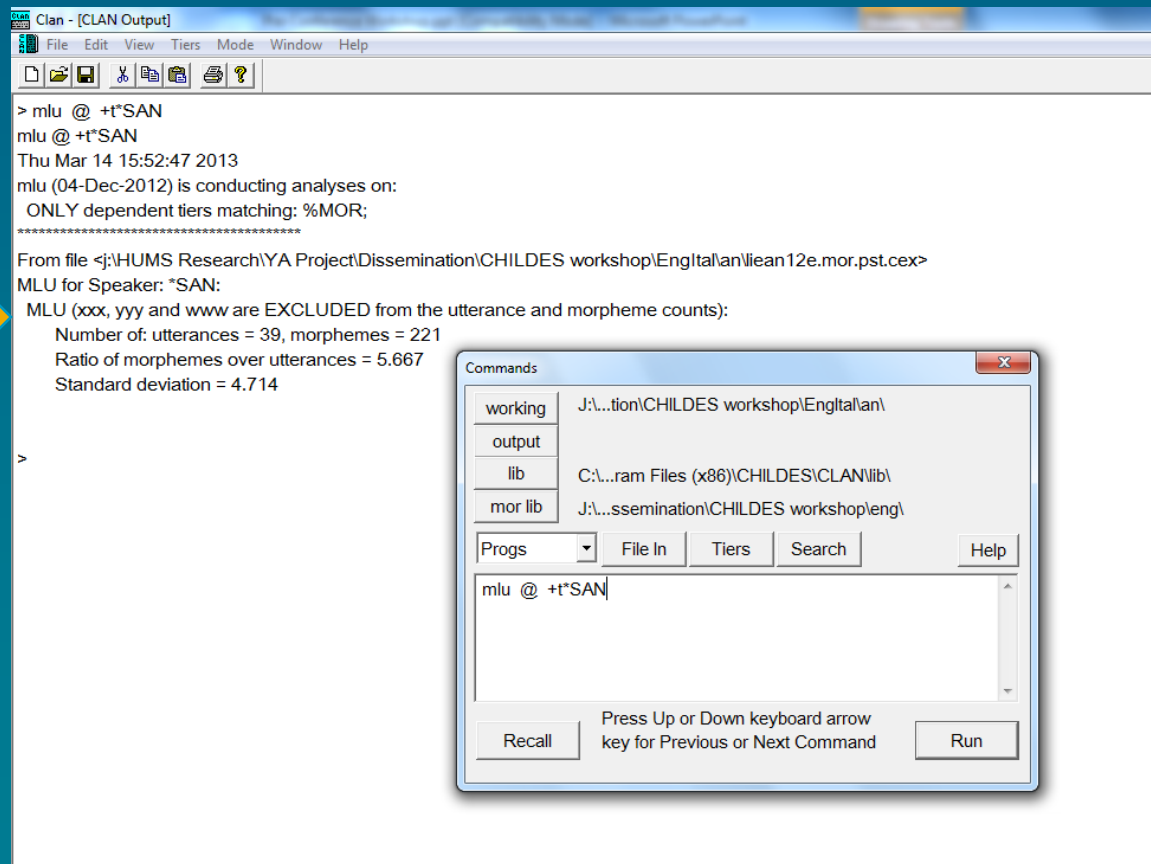
- Under 'mode', select 'Disambiguation tier'
- If any tags need disambiguating, you'll be asked at the bottom of the page.



Programs with a MOR file: Mean Length of Utterance (MLU)

- Command:
mlu

Results are provided automatically or you can save in a separate file with +f command.



```
Clan - [CLAN Output]
File Edit View Tiers Mode Window Help

> mlu @ +t*SAN
mlu @ +t*SAN
Thu Mar 14 15:52:47 2013
mlu (04-Dec-2012) is conducting analyses on:
  ONLY dependent tiers matching: %MOR;
*****
From file <j:\HUMS Research\YA Project\Dissemination\CHILDES workshop\Engl\lan\lean12e.mor.pst.cex>
MLU for Speaker: *SAN:
MLU (xxx, yyy and www are EXCLUDED from the utterance and morpheme counts):
  Number of: utterances = 39, morphemes = 221
  Ratio of morphemes over utterances = 5.667
  Standard deviation = 4.714

>
```

Commands

working	J:\...tion\CHILDES workshop\Engl\lan\
output	
lib	C:\...ram Files (x86)\CHILDES\CLAN\lib\
mor lib	J:\...ssemination\CHILDES workshop\engl\

Progs [v] File In Tiers Search Help

mlu @ +t*SAN

Recall Press Up or Down keyboard arrow key for Previous or Next Command Run

Frequency list of tags

- For example:
We can use the freq command to get a list of verbs

The screenshot displays the CLAN software interface. The main window, titled "Clan - [CLAN Output]", shows the following text:

```
> freq +t%mor +s@|v* @ +t*SAN
freq +t%mor +s@"|v*" @ +t*SAN
Thu Mar 14 16:16:37 2013
freq (04-Dec-2012) is conducting analyses on:
  ONLY speaker main tiers matching: *SAN;
  and those speakers' ONLY dependent tiers matching: %MOR;
*****
From file <j:\HUMS Research\YA Project\Dissemination\CHILDES workshop\Engl\itan\lean12e.mor.pst.cex>
Speaker: *SAN:
1 v|bag
7 v|bring
3 v|come
1 v|get
1 v|go
3 v|know
1 v|leave&PAST
2 v|open
1 v|pen-3S
1 v|put&ZERO
9 v|see
2 v|sit
-----
12 Total number of different item types used
32 Total number of items (tokens)
0.375 Type/Token ratio
>
```

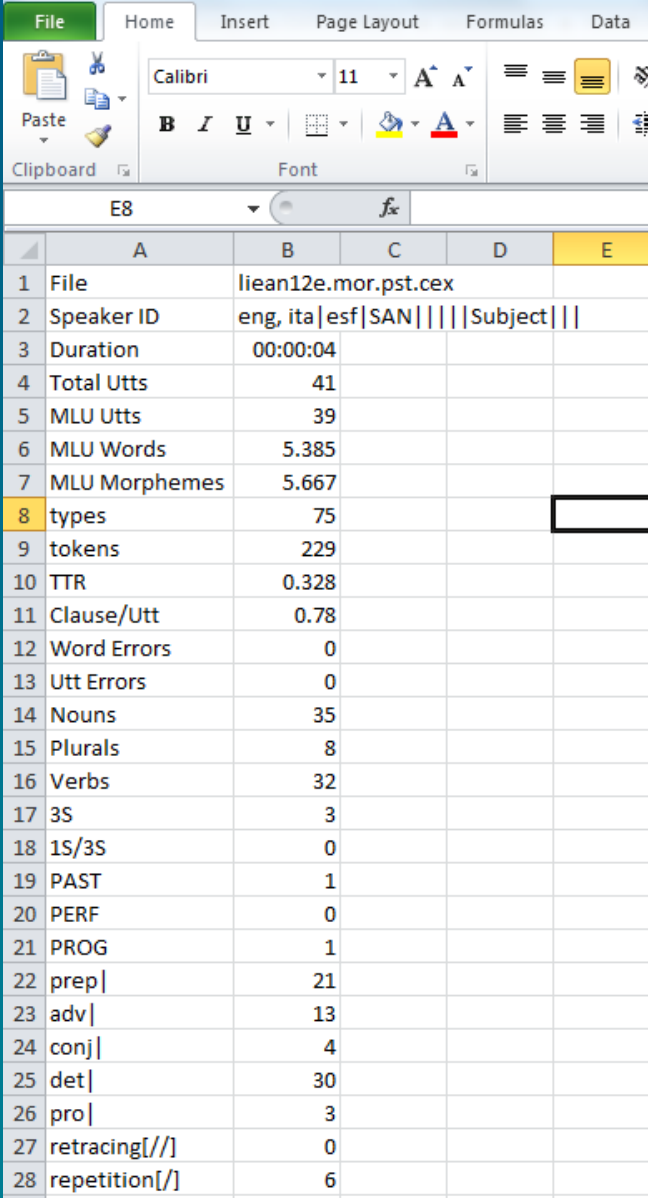
Overlaid on the bottom right is the "Commands" dialog box. It contains the following fields and controls:

- working**: J:\...tion\CHILDES workshop\Engl\itan\
- output**: (empty)
- lib**: C:\...ram Files (x86)\CHILDES\CLAN\lib\
- mor lib**: J:\...ssemination\CHILDES workshop\eng\
- Progs**: (dropdown menu)
- File In**: (button)
- Tiers**: (button)
- Search**: (button)
- Help**: (button)
- Command text area**: freq +t%mor +s@|v* @ +t*SAN
- Recall**: (button)
- Run**: (button)
- Instructions**: Press Up or Down keyboard arrow key for Previous or Next Command

EVAL: results of many commands all at once

- Currently works for English files only

type, tokens, TTR, number of nouns, amount of retracing, repetition, etc



The screenshot shows a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet with the following data:

	A	B	C	D	E
1	File	lean12e.mor.pst.cex			
2	Speaker ID	eng, ita esf SAN Subject			
3	Duration	00:00:04			
4	Total Utts	41			
5	MLU Utts	39			
6	MLU Words	5.385			
7	MLU Morphemes	5.667			
8	types	75			
9	tokens	229			
10	TTR	0.328			
11	Clause/Utt	0.78			
12	Word Errors	0			
13	Utt Errors	0			
14	Nouns	35			
15	Plurals	8			
16	Verbs	32			
17	3S	3			
18	1S/3S	0			
19	PAST	1			
20	PERF	0			
21	PROG	1			
22	prep	21			
23	adv	13			
24	conj	4			
25	det	30			
26	pro	3			
27	retracing[//]	0			
28	repetition[/]	6			

Exporting files to/from other programs

- Commands: CHAT2ELAN, CHAT2PRAAT
- Also, text files can be imported into CHAT:
 - Command: TEXTIN

Let's do some practice!

- Download 'Englta.zip' from Talkbank:
 - talkbank.org/data/SLABank/ESF/
- Move the files to an appropriate folder
- Open CLAN and click on 'working'. Locate the folder with these files.

Run some commands!

- Try the ones we've demonstrated on the plain transcripts:
 - Freq
 - Vocd
 - Combo
 - Kwal
- You can also try MORing. First, download the English MOR:
 - childes.psy.cmu.edu/morgrams/

To learn more:

- Join the CHILDES online community
 - childes.psy.cmu.edu/tools/email.html
 - Visit the FLLOC and SPLLOC websites

Thank you!

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N.Tracy-Ventura@soton.ac.uk