

## Transcriber: A Transcription-Audio Alignment Tool

### **Objective**

The objective of this session is to learn more about what can be accomplished using computer tools designed for working with sound. We will learn about programs for aligning each intonation unit in a transcription with the corresponding audio (e.g. Transcriber). (SoundForge can also be used for this function.)

### **Transcriber**

Transcriber is a program that lets you play back sound, transcribe the audio, and align your transcription with the corresponding audio. The program was designed for transcribers, although the primary orientation is for transcribing broadcast speech, rather than spontaneous conversation.

After you have selected the appropriate “**Ling212**” directory, click on the **Programs** folder, then the **Transcriber** folder. Then double-click on the icon labeled **trans** (the icon looks like Aladdin’s lamp). This will start the Transcriber program.

A dialog box will appear, with the message: “Open transcription or audio file:” From the files listed, click on the file named **frint980428.tris** (this is a demo file with a transcription in French). (The program should also open the corresponding audio file. If it does not, open a file as indicated below.)

To open an audio file, from the menu select **File/Open audio file**. When the dialog box appears, go to the directory you want. For the demo, select the **demo** directory, and then select the audio file **frint980428.wav**.

To **move** the **cursor**, you can click on a location in the waveform, or click on a sentence in the transcription.

To **play** the sound starting from your cursor position, press the **<TAB>** key.

To **pause** the sound, press the **<TAB>** key again.

To **insert** a **breakpoint** (that is, a boundary between one unit of sound and the next), hit the **enter** (or **return**) key while playing the sound.

To **move** a breakpoint (as displayed in the green sections at the bottom of the Transcriber window), use your **mouse** to **drag** the line to the left or right, holding the **<CTRL>** key and using the **left** mouse button.

For a good description of how to use the program for transcribing, select **Help/User Guide** from the menu. (In Transcriber it’s a good idea to maximize the Help window, making it fill your computer screen, so that it doesn’t disappear on you.) Then read the section on **A typical transcription session**.

To familiarize yourself with the functions of Transcriber, try out the useful functions listed under the menu options **Signal** (for sound playback) and **Segmentation** (for marking regions of the audio file, e.g. as intonation units). You may find it easier to use Transcriber if you learn the keyboard shortcuts listed under these two menu headings, after which you will be able work more conveniently.

As an exercise, improve the transcription of the French demo example given. Insert new breakpoints in the audio file at the intonation unit boundaries. Then go back and type in the transcription in the appropriate place corresponding to the units of sound you have defined.

### **SoundForge**

SoundForge can also be used for aligning transcriptions with your recording, using the Regions and Playlist functions (see the separate document devoted to SoundForge). *[rev. 7-Sep-2004]*