

## **On the importance of audio material in spoken corpus linguistics: A case study of the London–Lund Corpus 2**

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The London–Lund Corpus 2 (LLC–2) is a new corpus of spoken British English, modeled on the same principles as the world’s first machine-readable spoken corpus, the London–Lund Corpus (LLC–1). An important novelty of LLC–2 is that its transcriptions are released together with the audio files. This feature is important because, in contrast to LLC–1, the transcriptions in LLC–2 are orthographic and not annotated for prosodic features. Instead, the end user can extend the transcriptions relative to their own research interests, whether these concern prosodic information or other aspects of speech production. In this paper, we present a case study of the prosodic and temporal aspects of impromptu speech to demonstrate the importance of LLC–2 audio material.

The case study focuses on a powerful source of coordination in language, namely dialogic resonance, or when speakers reproduce constructions from prior turns. Consider (1) where resonance is achieved through B’s choice of words and structures.

- (1) A: she hasn’t hitherto been particularly interested in religious things [has she]  
B: [you mean] she hasn’t particularly been up at seven AM

According to Du Bois (2014), dialogic resonance draws on conscious strategies of interpersonal engagement. While Du Bois acknowledges the role of automatic priming, this is not tested in his work. Instead, priming is the central mechanism of Garrod’s and Pickering’s (2004) interactive alignment theory, which states that primed linguistic material becomes available for interlocutors to use with reduced cognitive effort. In order to straddle the gap between these two research traditions, we carried out a corpus-based study in LLC–2 where we explored the social functions that resonance has in discourse (whether it expresses agreement or disagreement) and where priming was operationalized as the time it takes for speakers to respond to the interlocutor’s prior turn. The results revealed that (i) resonance was more likely to express disagreement than non-resonance, which we interpreted as being due to the mitigating function of resonance, and (ii) it also led to faster turn transitions, showing that priming gives speakers the cognitive tools to counter the pressures of impromptu speech. Therefore, while social motivations encourage speakers to respond early, cognitive mechanisms give them the necessary tools, thus pointing to an intricate interplay between the processes.

This case study, however, would not have been possible without the LLC–2 audio files. We discuss two reasons. First, resonance manifests itself not only at the level of words and structures but also prosodically. When imported into Praat, the original audio file of (1) reveals that both utterances carry a rising–falling pitch, suggesting that prosody is an important component of B’s desire to mitigate her response further. Second, while orthographic transcriptions may reveal whether turn transitions involve gaps or overlaps, they do not provide detailed information about their duration. Yet, there are important differences between, say, slight overlaps, as in (1), and outright interruptions. We used ELAN to gauge these differences and to extract accurate measurements of turn transitions in the data.

## **References**

- Du Bois, J. W. (2014). Towards a dialogic syntax. *Cognitive Linguistics*, 25(3), 359–410.
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