An Edinburgh Speech Production Facility

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1 Introduction

This unique facility is designed for the collection of articulatory and acoustic data from two synchronised dialogue participants, or single speakers. It will be open to the international research community for funded use as of September, 2010. Services will include data collection (preparation, sensor attachment, and recording), sensor position estimation at each sample point, head movement correction, synchronization (articulation to acoustics; speaker to speaker), and data archiving. The first product of the facility is a corpus of recorded dialogue, also available in September, 2010.

2 The Facility

The facility is built around two Cartesius AG 5000 electromagnetic articulographs (EMA) and acoustic recording equipment (see Fig. 1). EMA recordings provide detailed information about speech movements. Each machine records 3D positions and rotations of 12 sensors every 5 ms. These sensors can be glued anywhere on the lips, tongue, jaw, and head. Acoustic recordings are made via an AKG C900 hypercardioid mic, sampling rate 32 kHz, bit rate 16. The EMA machines are positioned 8.5 m apart to avoid electromagnetically induced interference. Communication among participants and experimenters is regulated via a talkback system (see Fig. 2).

2.1 Synchronization

Synchronization of both EMA data sources and the acoustic waveform is achieved by capturing (a) impulsions of both machines and (b) the acoustic waveform of both speakers by means of Articulate Instruments Ltd. hardware. After correcting for TCP/IP inter-machine communication delays, our inter-machine asynchrony is less than 1 ms. The hardware is also capable of synchronizing other time series data (EPG).

2.2 Data Accuracy

Position-estimation procedures include those described in Hauck & Zeiser (in press) (TAPAD) and uncented Kalman filtering-based algorithms, developed by K. Richmond. Analyses for rigid body sensors suggest that accuracy is within 1 mm (see Fig. 3). Data accuracy for non-rigid body sensors is assumed by comparing position results from TAPAD vs. Kalman filtering methods (cf. Fig. 3).

3 The Dialogue Corpus

So far, we have recorded 9 dual participant sessions primarily between Scottish and Southern British English speaking participants. Each session involves synchronized recordings of both EMA and acoustic data, and includes 30-60 minutes of speech. The corpus will be available in Sept. 2010 via a web-based, searchable archive system.

3.1 Sensor Positions

Sensors were attached behind the ears, to the bridge of the nose, to the upper jaw, lower jaw, upper lip, lower lip, tongue front, tongue mid and tongue back.

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3.3 Annotation

Annotation files include orthographic transcription and long pauses. Disfluency annotation is in preparation, and we are developing a guide for prosodic labeling (simplified ToBI).