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 Carstens’ AG500 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 gazed anywhere on the lips, tongue, jaw, and head. Acoustic recordings are made via an AKG CK58 hypercardoid mic, sampling rate 32 kHz, bit rate 16. The EMA machines are positioned 8.5 m apart to avoid electromagnetic inter-machine 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 waveforms is achieved by capturing (a) synch impulses of both sources and (b) waveforms. The transparent plastic box surrounding a participant’s head creates a comfortable experimental experience which enables data collection sessions of 1 hour and more.

2.2 Data Accuracy

Position-estimation procedures include those described in Hauke & Zinke (in press) (TAPAD) and uncentred 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 computing position results from TAPAD vs. Kalman filtering methods (cf. Fig. 3).

2.3 Data Analysis

Data analysis software (Articulate Assistant Advanced, EMA module) has been commissioned from Articulate Instruments Ltd. (2009). This software allows data visualisation, annotation and measurement extraction. It is user-friendly and does not require programming skills. The user interface provides a common platform for EMA, EPG and Ultrasound data. Analysts need only master one module) has been commissioned from Articulate Instruments Ltd.

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.

3.2 Speech Styles


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).

4 Data Preview

Figure 7. From a ‘Spot the difference’ dialogue. Although the speaker could have held his tongue dorsum in position for ‘d’ in kind, following the velar coda in ‘meeting’, tongue dorsum movement traces suggest his tongue dorsum has moved downward during the hesitation pause. Lip movement traces suggest he has closed his mouth and opened it again during this interval.

5 Acknowledgements

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