

---

## Features of Elan that can change your data annotation practices

---

**Katya Aplonova**  
*LLACAN (CNRS)*  
aplooon@gmail.com

Elan, an annotation software developed in Max Planck Institute, is well-known by linguists working on minority languages. However, I witness that, in the majority of cases, not all its functionalities are used, as it is often reduced to just a transcription tool. In my talk, I will outline its potential by showing two case studies based on data of two South Mande languages: the quotative function of interjections in Wan and a sociolinguistic study of the use of reflexives by multilingual speakers of Mano.

In the study of the quotative function of interjections in Wan (Nikitina, Aplonova & Contreras Roa 2023), the **Elan template** allowed us to inspect the use of interjections in relation to the reported speech constructions in the corpus of traditional narratives. Using the **Structural search** in multiple files, we proved quantitatively that interjections signal discourse reports and negatively correlate with the use of a grammaticalized quotative marker. A **controlled vocabulary** function was used in order to optimize the annotation of reflexives in the questionnaire for the multilingual speakers of Mano (Khachaturyan, Moroz & Pé 2025). Diverse possibilities of **exporting** the data from Elan allowed the integration of the results in a master file for a further statistical analysis.

By discussing how annotation choices and tool-specific functionalities shape corpus exploration and interpretation, this talk contributes to broader discussions on annotation practices and methodological transparency. This talk is also an opportunity to present an open-access online course about Elan for the corpus building and exploration that is currently under development.

**References:** • ELAN (Version 7.0) [Computer software] (2025). Nijmegen: Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics, The Language Archive. Retrieved from <https://archive.mpi.nl/tla/elan>. • Khachaturyan, M., Moroz, G. & M. Pé (2025). Awareness of Grammatical Variability in Language Contact: The Case of Mano and Kpelle in Guinea. *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 29(4), 268–84, <https://doi.org/10.1111/josl.12705>. • Nikitina, T., Aplonova, E. & L. Contreras Roa (2023). The use of interjections as a discourse phenomenon: A contrastive study of Chuvash (Turkic) and Wan (Mande). In A. Barotto & S. Mattioli (eds). *Studies in Language Companion Series* 227, 65-89. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company, <https://doi.org/10.1075/slcs.227.04nik>.