This document describes how to convert ELAN (EAF) files to CHAT (CHA) files. Use CHAT2ELAN for conversion in the opposite direction.

If your data was originally formated in CLAN, then the conversion is straightforward. The You just type ELAN2CHAT filename.cha. If your file began in CHAT, then the tiers probably already have names that will pass on without problems during the conversion.

However, if your file was produced originally in ELAN, it may be necessary to rename the tiers to CHAT format before running elan2chat. There are basically two different pathways for conversion of ELAN to CHAT.

**Compatible ELAN**

The first pathway is the simplest. In this method, you create ELAN files from scratch that maximize CHAT compatibility. To do this, you give the main tier a 3-letter name, such as BET in the screencast example. Then, the %gpx dependent tier for that speaker is named gpx@BET and it should be a child under the BET top level tier. You should avoid use of **Time Subdivision** and **Symbolic Subdivision** tier type. Instead, please make use of the **Included In** tier type.

**Reorganizing ELAN files**

In the second pathway, you would be working with ELAN files that had not been structured from the beginning to maximize CHAT compatibility. In that case, there are ways to reorganize the ELAN files to increase compatibility. The steps are:

1. Renaming tiers. For this, you need to select one tier as the top-level tier. Usually this would be the main speaker tier(s) with one such tier for each speaker.
2. Then you would align the child or dependent tiers with the top level or main tiers. If you are coding three types of dependent information and you have three speakers, you would then end up with 9 tiers.
3. It is also possible to have tiers that are children of child tiers, if they are fully aligned. However, it is not possible to go further into embedding with a third level of dependency.
4. If a corpus has a mix of aligned and unaligned annotations on a **Symbolic Subdivision** tier, you should either convert the tier to **Included In** or make sure that all annotations are aligned.
5. Finally, you may wish to remove some tiers that don’t adapt well to the CHAT structure or which are not important for your general analysis.

When reorganizing ELAN tiers, you need to consider these operations:

1. Changing the hierarchy of tiers in ELAN is only possible via a copy operation (there is an option **Reparent Tier** but that also creates a copy of the tier). If the result is acceptable, the original tier can be removed. It is implemented this way because changing the hierarchy can involve changing the type of the tier and, therefore, the constraints applied to annotations (annotations can be removed or concatenated etc. by this operation).
2. Renaming of tiers can be applied to a set of files / a corpus (File->Multiple File Processing->Edit Multiple Files...). This (mainly) makes sense if there is some consistency of tier names in the set of files.