

# **Exploiting Film Discourse in the Foreign Language Classroom**

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# Presentation Outline

- Reasons for and against using film in the language classroom
- Some suggestions on how to exploit film effectively
- A short lesson in Japanese: Tampopo
- How to produce accurate film transcripts for language-learning materials
- Analysis of 4 sample transcripts using RANGE & factors influencing difficulty
- Trialling of Fawlty Towers materials in a Japanese university



# Why use film discourse in foreign language classrooms ?

- Worldwide availability of films - potential for intensive study (inside the classroom) and extensive study (outside the classroom)
- Content is often more interesting and motivating for students than textbook materials: leading to increased exposure to L2, greater levels of engagement & Sustained Deep Learning (Schumann 1997)
- Often closer to the attested language use of everyday life than textbooks (particularly for spoken discourse)
- Provide richer input that can meet the varying interlanguage needs of students
- Multisensory presentation allows new linguistic, paralinguistic and pragmatic meanings to be made in the L2 through auditory, visual and written signals (subtitles)



# Why isn't film discourse used more in foreign language classrooms?

- Time & syllabus constraints
- Perception of a lack of pedagogic value of film
- Lack of understanding of how to exploit film effectively
- Difficulty obtaining & analysing film transcripts (transcription is extremely time-consuming: 5 x length of interaction for native-speaker dyads, Johnson 1995)
- Lack of technical equipment & expertise
- Problems of language difficulty, language overload & length
- Problems of cultural appropriateness, taboo topics
- Copyright issues



# Some suggestions for exploiting film in the classroom

- Select varied & interesting texts (stimulus appraisal theory, Schumann 1997)
- Identify & meet learners' needs: contexts of L2 use? skills? communicative competence (linguistic, pragmalinguistic, sociopragmatic, strategic, discourse)?
- Consider text's difficulty: text length; proportion of low frequency vocabulary; lexical variety (T.T.R.); grammatical or syntactic complexity; genre (static? dynamic? abstract?); number of elements (characters, events); presumed background knowledge; metaphorical language; speech rates; accents; visual support offered (L1 or L2 subtitles, audio/visual match)



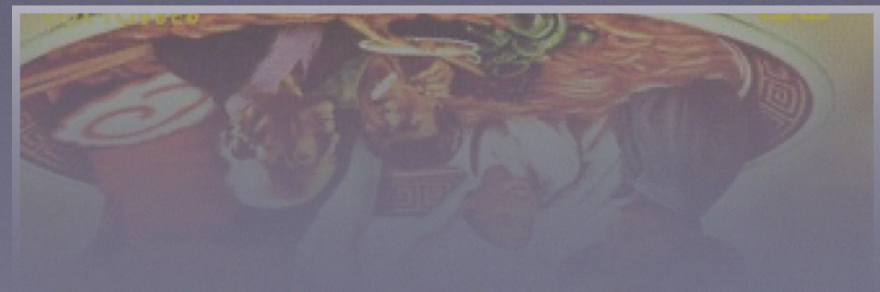
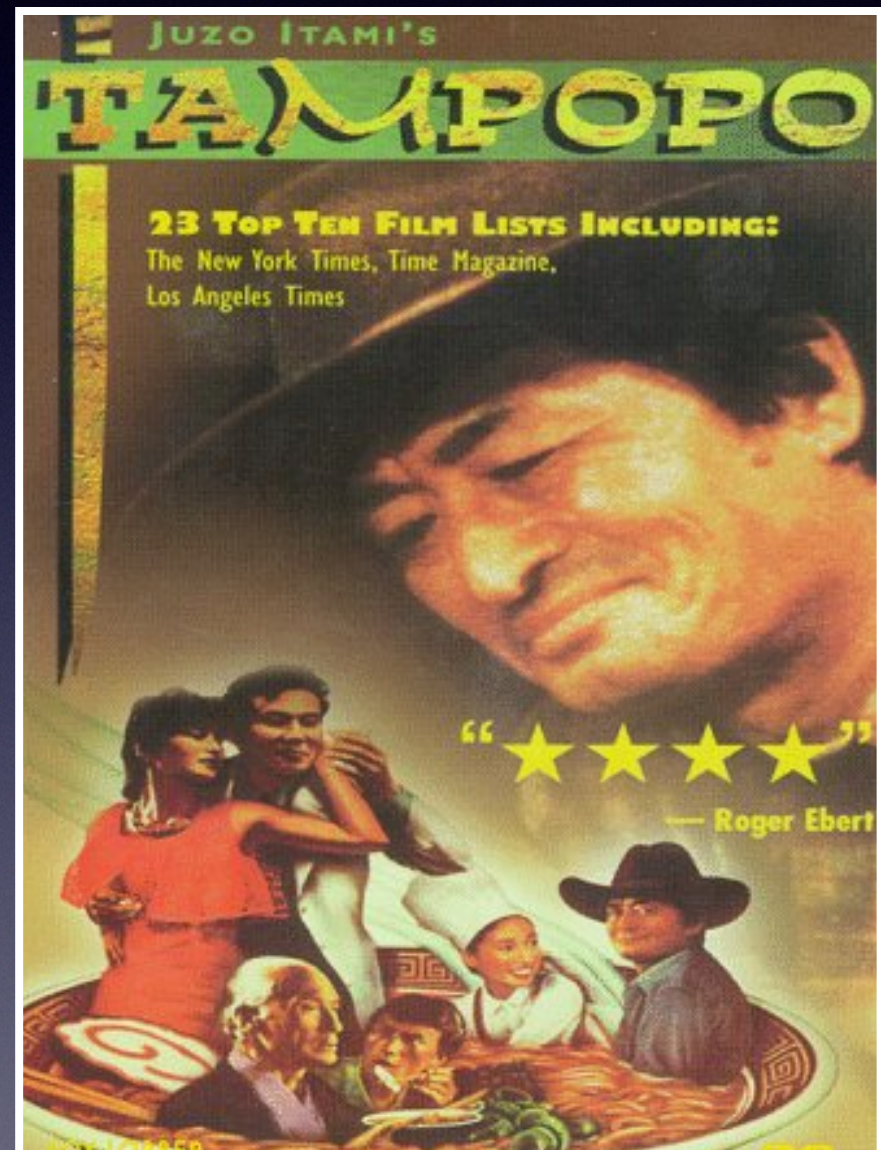
# Some suggestions for exploiting film in the classroom

- Select scenes which can 'stand alone'
- Make transcripts available at post-listening stages
- Select texts with a long 'shelf life'
- Build up a materials bank & categorize by theme, context, difficulty, target features, etc.
- Adapt tasks not text; provide both challenge & support (Mariani, 1997), so that learners are operating in their Z.P.D. (Vygotsky, 1978)
- The text suggest the task
- Include pre-,while- and post-listening tasks to exploit the target material to its full potential



# A short lesson in Japanese: 'Tampopo' (Juzo Itami, 1985)

- What features could be highlighted with these materials?
- How could it be exploited with low proficiency learners?





# A short lesson in Japanese: 'Tampopo' (Juzo Itami, 1985)





# **A short lesson in Japanese: 'Tampopo' (Juzo Itami, 1985)**

- 'Settai' meeting (wining & dining) in a private room
- Use of position (President/Vice-President) in preference to names (Vardaman & Ideno 2007)
- 'Kamiza' (seat of honour) nearest the 'tokonoma' (alcove) & furthest from the door
- Hierarchical or 'vertical' society (Nakane 1970) and Japanese are highly rank-conscious (Tomita 1996)



# **A short lesson in Japanese: ‘Tampopo’ (Juzo Itami, 1985)**

- “In everyday affairs a man who has no awareness of relative rank is not able to speak or even sit and eat. When speaking, he is expected always to be ready with differentiated, delicate degrees of honorific expressions appropriate to the rank order between himself and the person he addresses [...] In such contexts the English language is inadequate to supply appropriate equivalents. Behavior and language are intimately interwoven in Japan.”  
(Nakane 1970: 48)
- Advice for Japanese travelling abroad: “Except for inexpensive restaurants, the waiters and other personnel are professionals [...] Treat these people as equals. When you order, use the polite, ‘I’d like to have...’ rather than the brusque, arrogant ‘I want...’ (Vardaman & Ideno 2007).



# **A short lesson in Japanese: ‘Tampopo’ (Juzo Itami, 1985)**

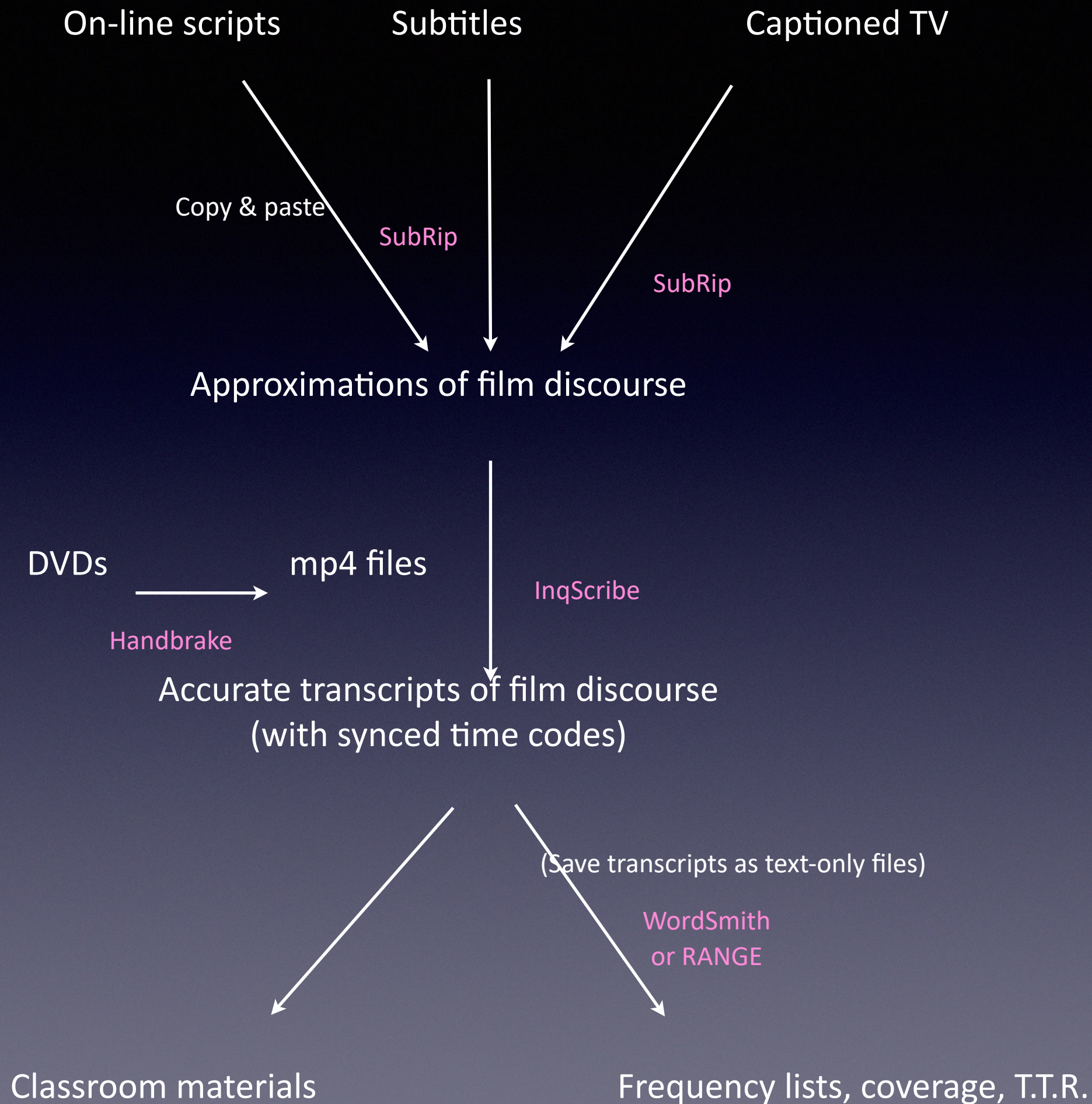
- Eye contact less frequent & threatening if excessive (Mitsuru 1996)
- ‘Enryo’ (reserve, constraint) is a cardinal principle of personal conduct in Japan (Tomita 1996)
- Maintaining ‘Wa’ (harmony) particularly important
- High prestige value for some foreign cultures (particularly European countries)
- Levels of formality expressed lexically and syntactically (miru, desu, de gozaimasu)



# Producing accurate film transcripts for classroom use

- Requires a variety of software:
  - MacTheRipper** - 'Rips' DVDs to extract VOB files
  - SubRip** - Optical Character Recognition (OCR) software, which converts subtitles or captions (stored as images) into text files
  - InqScribe** - Allows annotating and transcribing of digital media files (MP4)
  - Handbrake** - Converts DVDs into MP4 files
  - WordSmith** - Corpus analyzing software (frequency, concordance, keywords) (Scott, 2007)
  - RANGE** - Corpus analyzing software (frequency, coverage, T.T.R.) (Nation & Heatley, 2002)







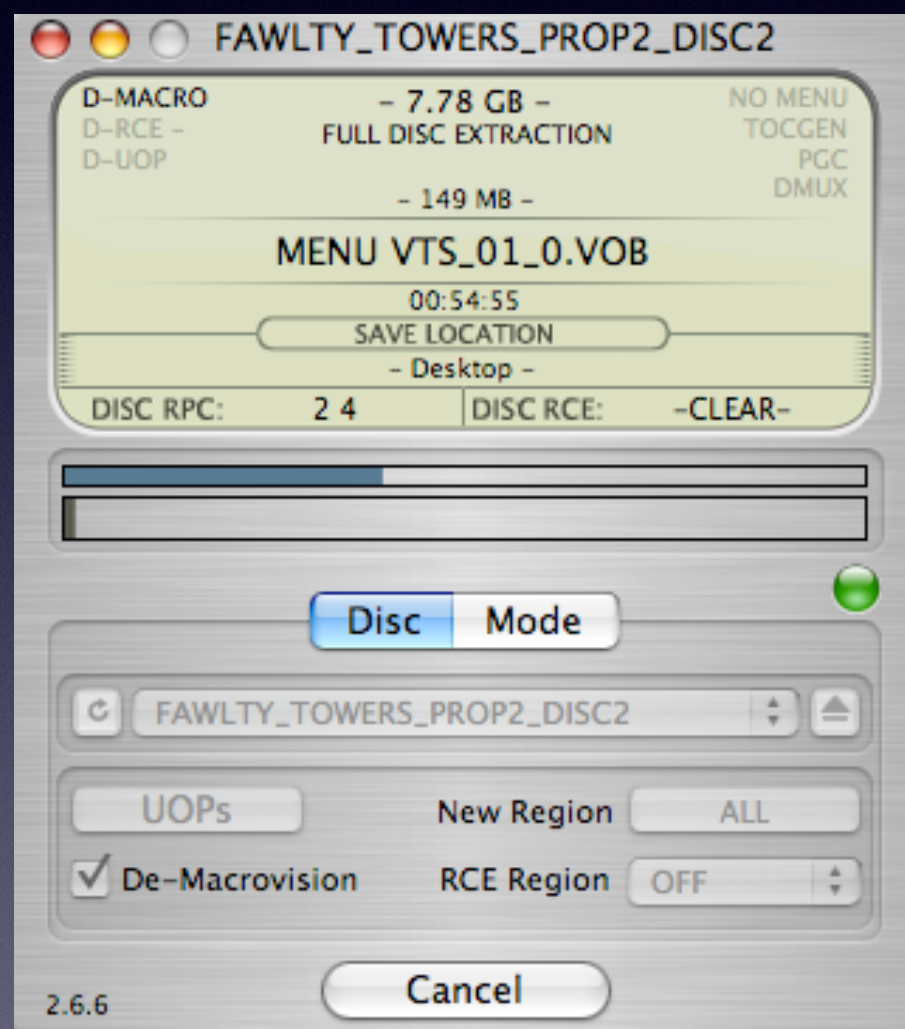
# Communication Problems (Fawlty Towers)

A troublesome guest causes Basil problems when she refuses to turn her hearing aid on. Meanwhile, Basil desperately tries to hide his winnings on a horse race from his wife, Sybil...



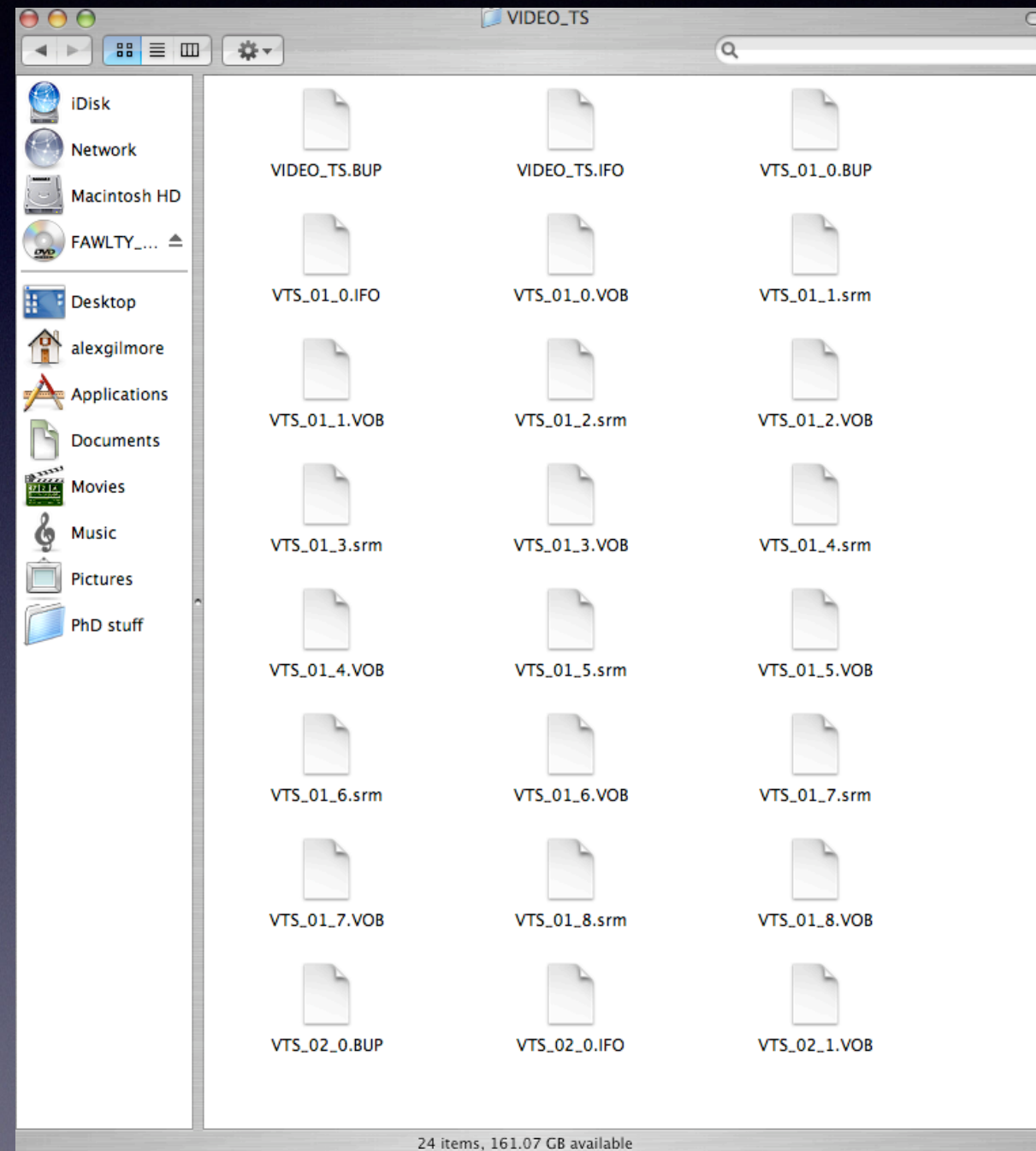


# Step 1: 'DVD ripping' (extraction of VOB files from DVD using MacTheRipper)



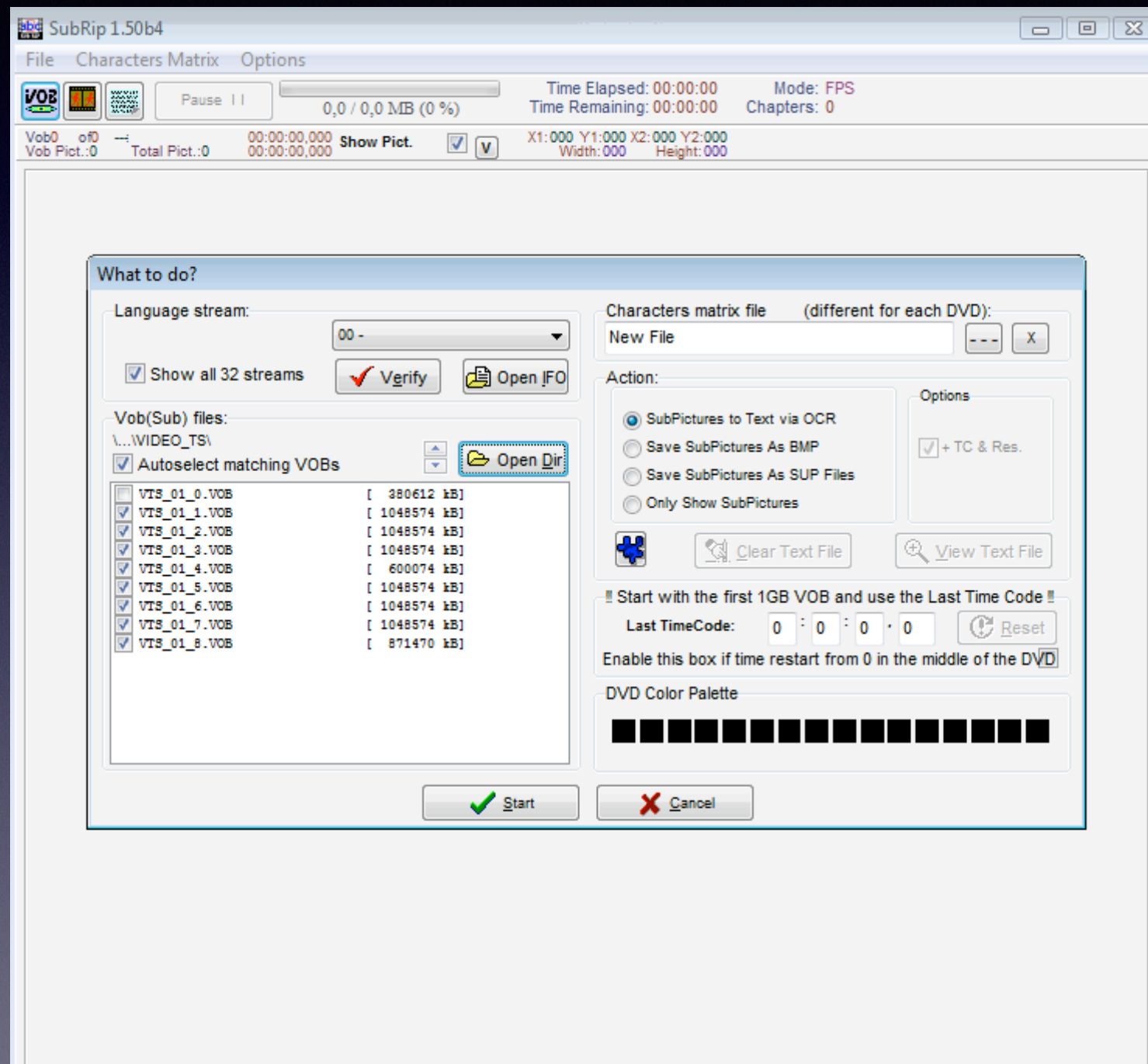


# Step 1: 'DVD ripping' (extraction of VOB files from DVD using MacTheRipper)



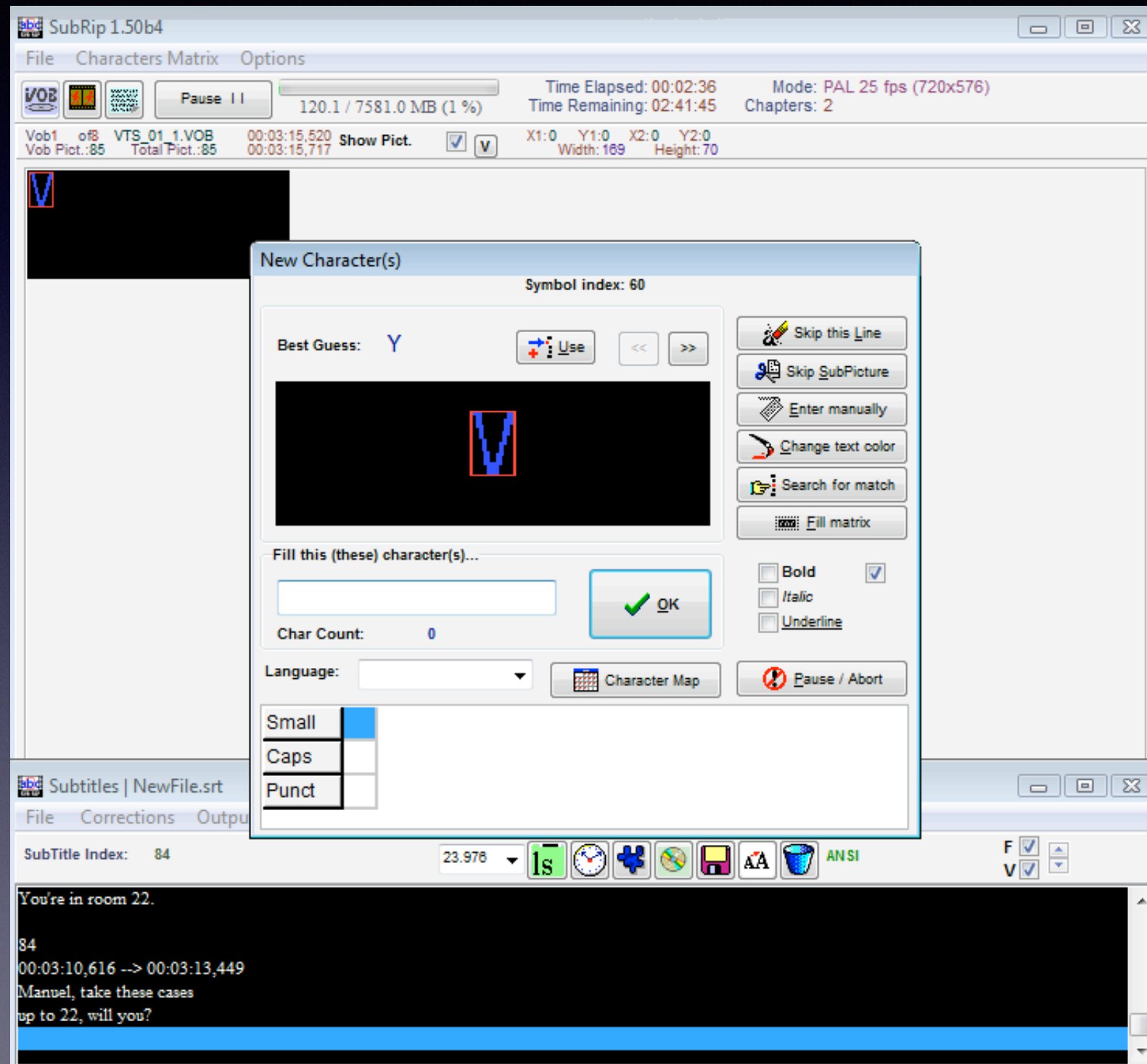


# Step 2: Conversion of subtitle images into text using SubRip (VOB files)



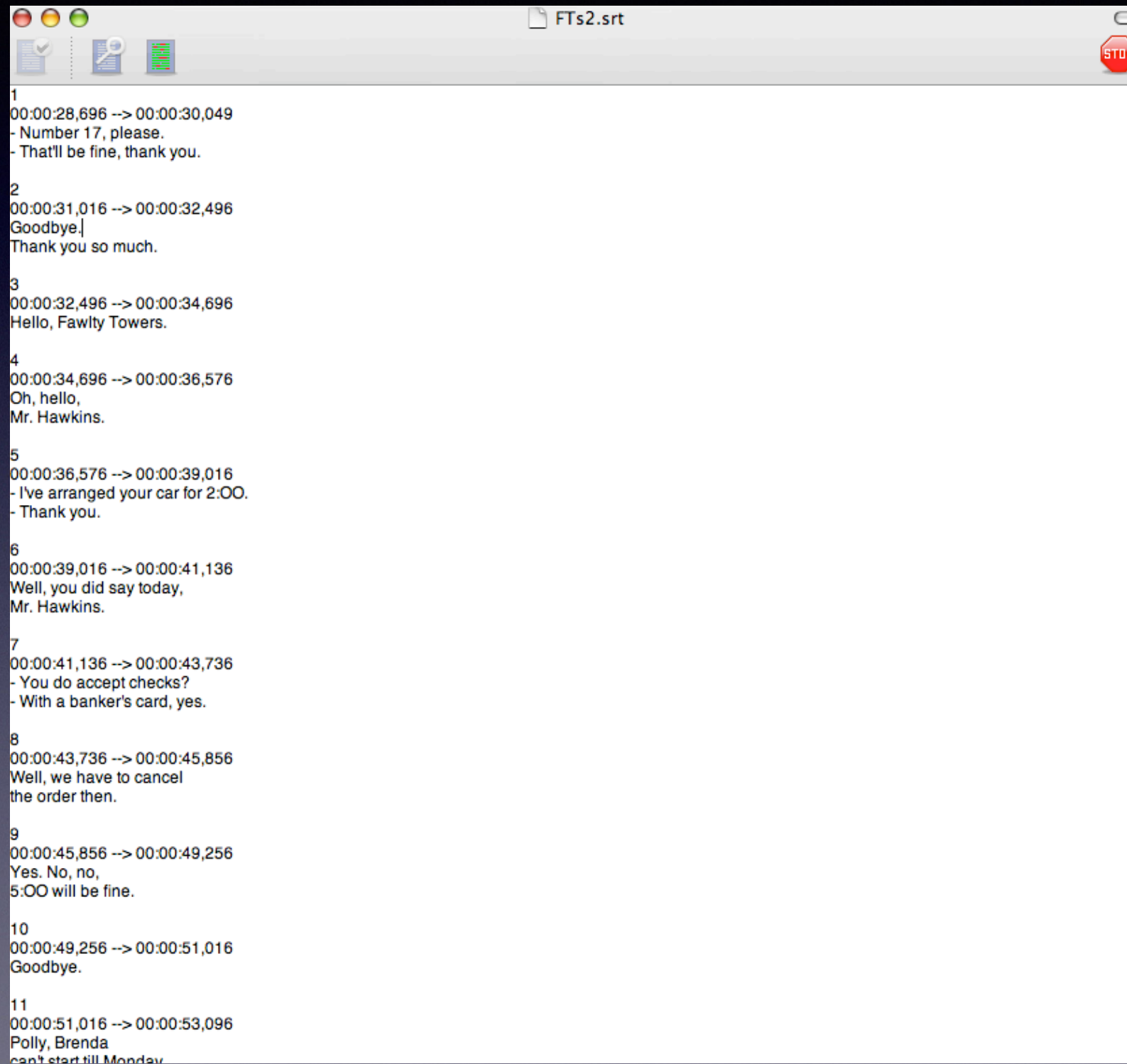


# Step 2: Conversion of subtitle images (training SubRip)





# Step 2: Conversion of subtitle images into text using SubRip (.srt files)



The screenshot shows a window titled "FTs2.srt" with a toolbar at the top containing icons for file operations and a red "STOP" button. The main area displays 11 subtitle entries, each with a line number, a timestamp range, and the subtitle text.

```
1
00:00:28,696 --> 00:00:30,049
- Number 17, please.
- That'll be fine, thank you.

2
00:00:31,016 --> 00:00:32,496
Goodbye.
Thank you so much.

3
00:00:32,496 --> 00:00:34,696
Hello, Fawlty Towers.

4
00:00:34,696 --> 00:00:36,576
Oh, hello,
Mr. Hawkins.

5
00:00:36,576 --> 00:00:39,016
- I've arranged your car for 2:00.
- Thank you.

6
00:00:39,016 --> 00:00:41,136
Well, you did say today,
Mr. Hawkins.

7
00:00:41,136 --> 00:00:43,736
- You do accept checks?
- With a banker's card, yes.

8
00:00:43,736 --> 00:00:45,856
Well, we have to cancel
the order then.

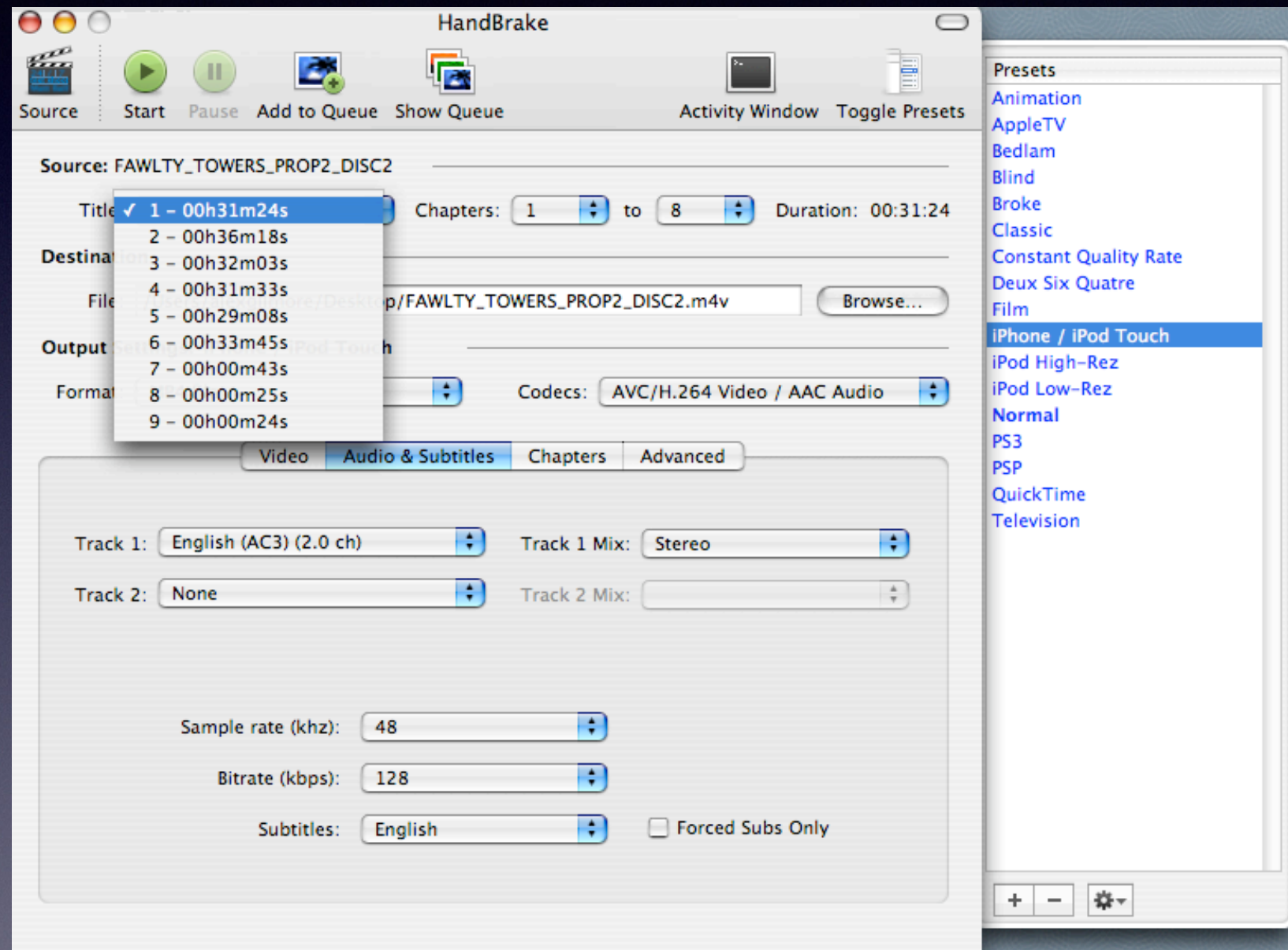
9
00:00:45,856 --> 00:00:49,256
Yes. No, no,
5:00 will be fine.

10
00:00:49,256 --> 00:00:51,016
Goodbye.

11
00:00:51,016 --> 00:00:53,096
Polly, Brenda
can't start till Monday.
```

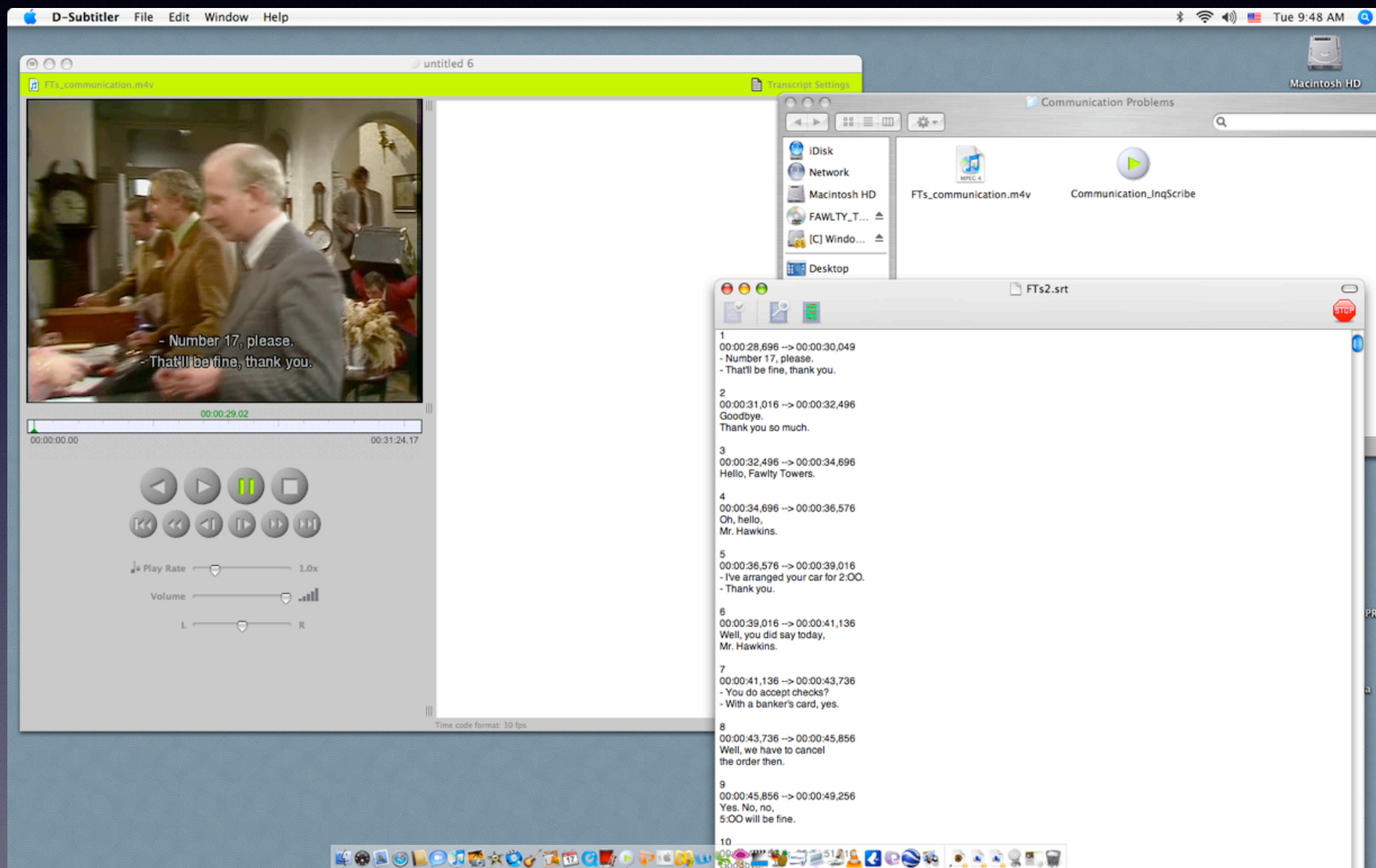


# Step 3: Conversion of DVD into MP4 file for iPods using Handbrake





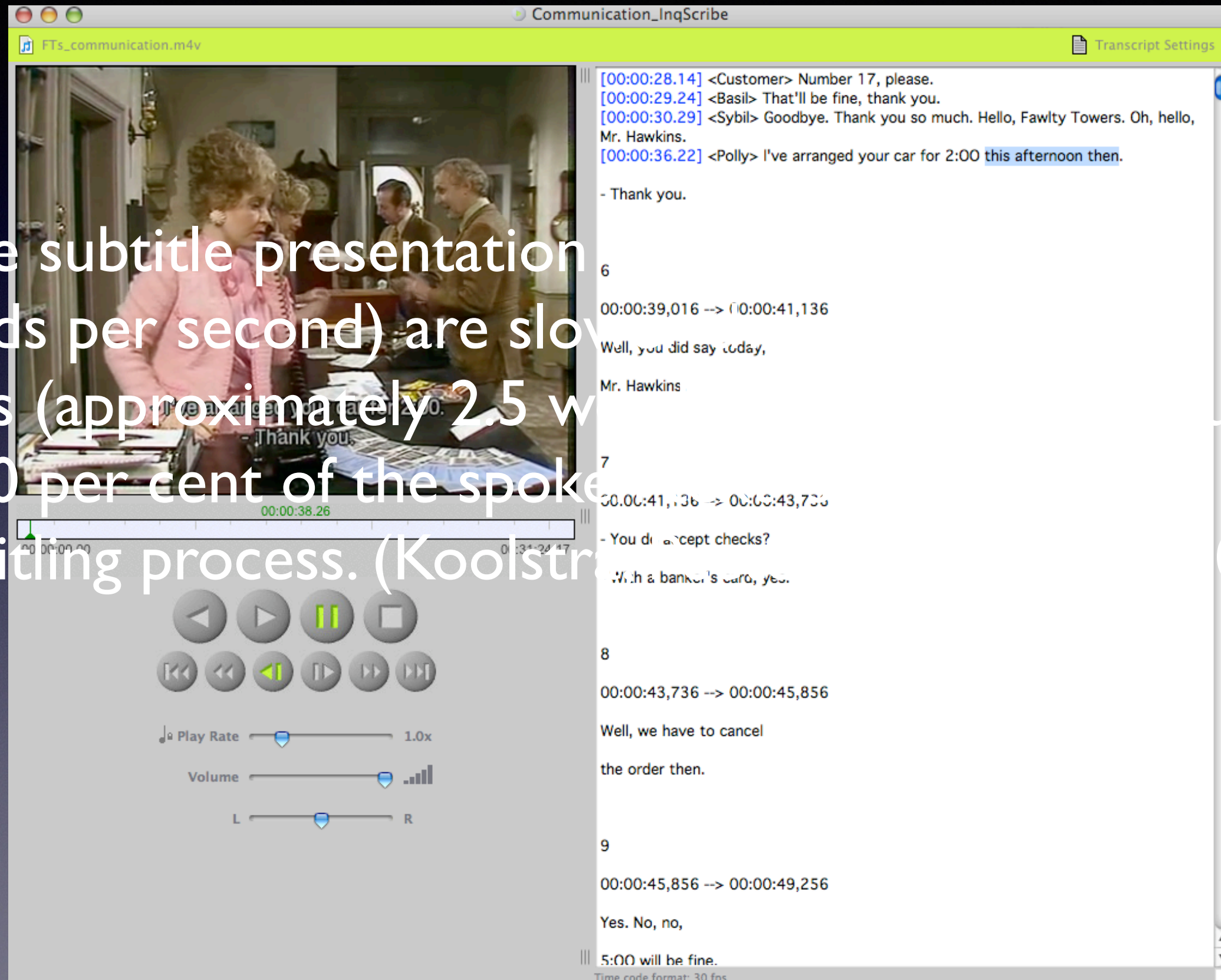
# Step 5: MP4 and .srt files imported into InqScribe





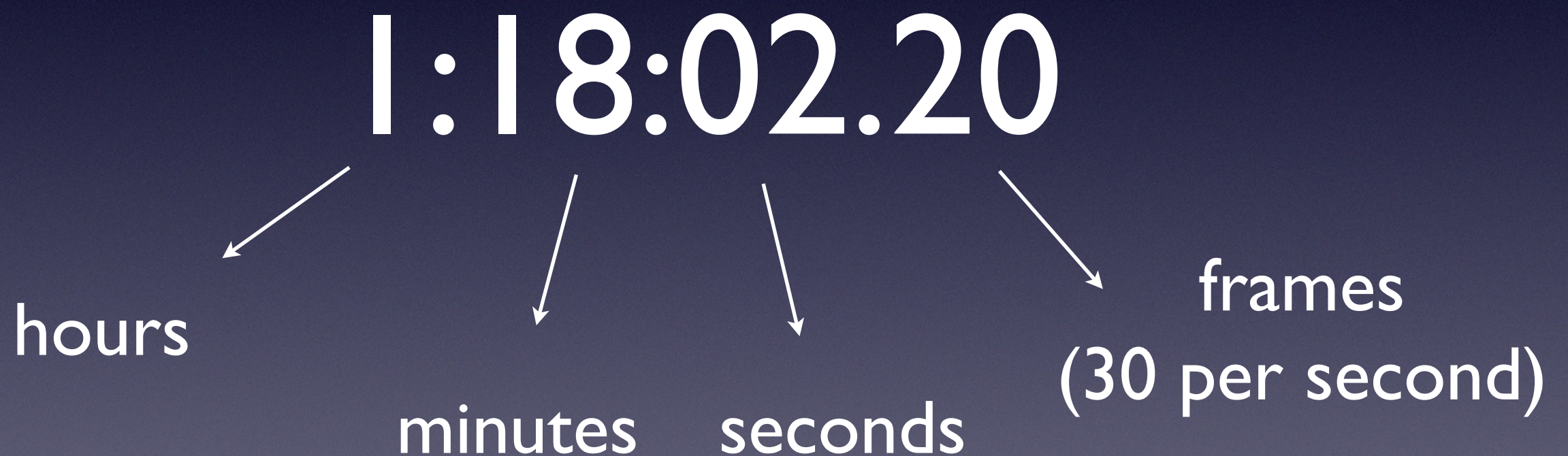
# Step 6: Transcript 'cleaned up' using InqScribe

Since subtitle presentation rates (approximately 2.5 words per second) are slower than the spoken rates (approximately 2.5 words per second), the subtitle presentation rates are slower than the spoken rates (approximately 30 per cent of the spoken rates) in the subtitling process. (Koolstra, 2002)



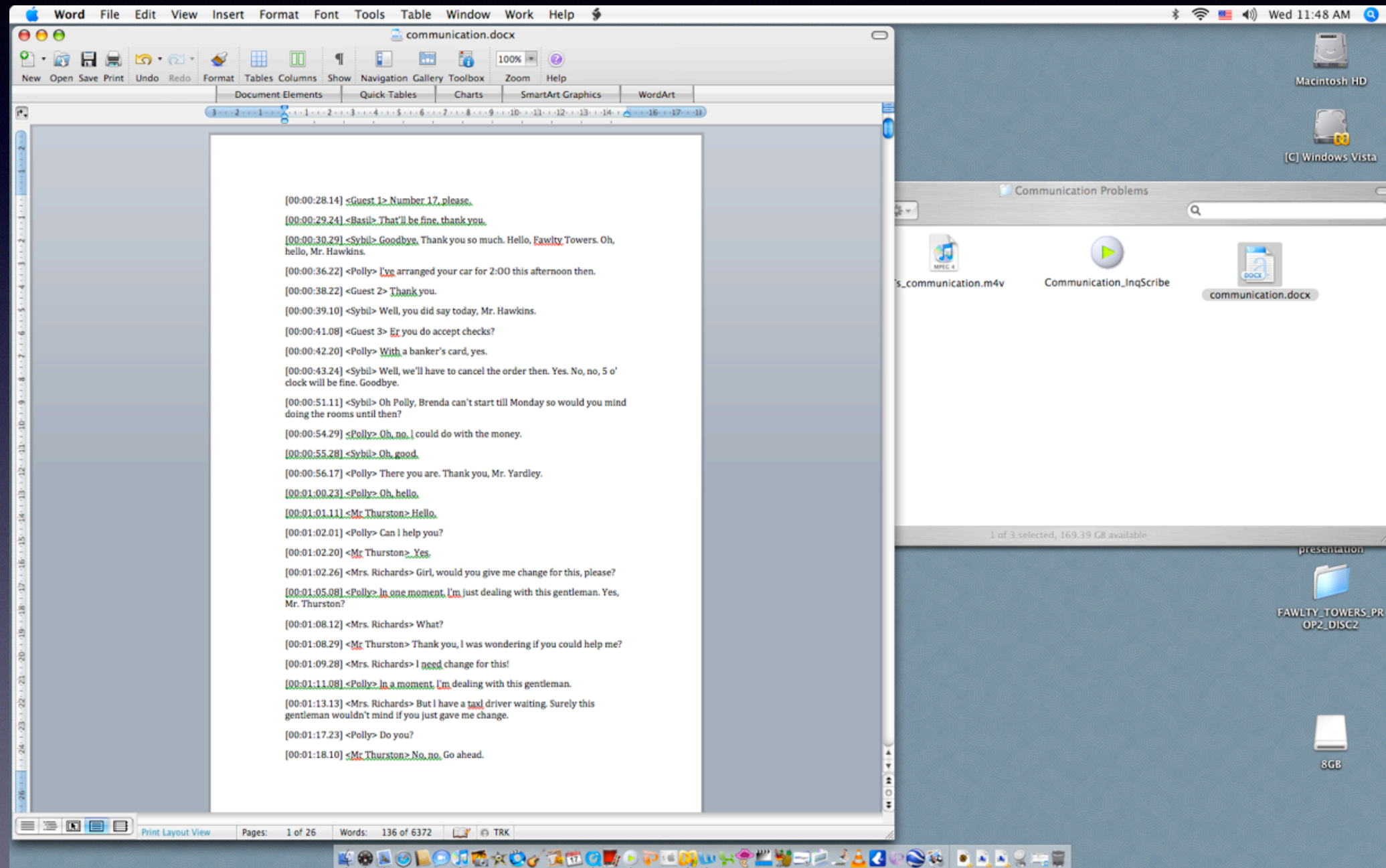


Step 6: Time codes inserted automatically into the transcript and linked to media file by InqScribe



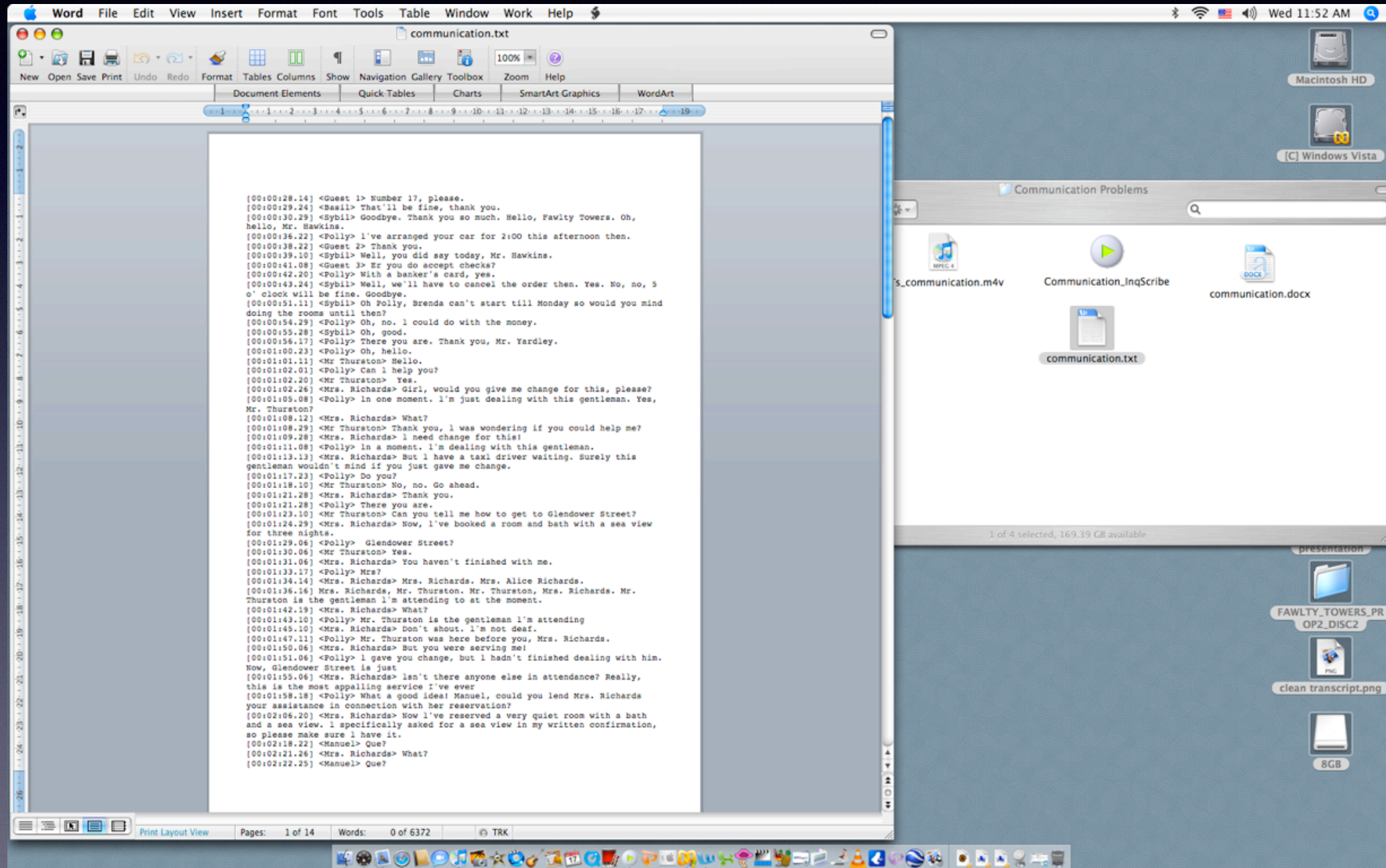


# Step 7: Clean transcript pasted into Word file for preparation of classroom materials





# Step 8: Transcript saved as .txt (text only) file for import into WordSmith or RANGE





# Step 9: Wordlist for transcript generated using WordSmith

The screenshot shows a Parallels Desktop window running Windows Vista. The Oxford WordSmith Tools application is open, and the WordList window is displayed. The WordList window shows a list of words and their frequencies. The word 'NITWIT' is highlighted in blue.

N	Word	Freq.	%	Texts	% emmas	Set
171	FORGET	5	0.05	1	100.00	
172	GENTLEMAN	5	0.05	1	100.00	
173	HAS	5	0.05	1	100.00	
174	HAVENT	5	0.05	1	100.00	
175	LISTEN	5	0.05	1	100.00	
176	LS	5	0.05	1	100.00	
177	LT	5	0.05	1	100.00	
178	LUCK	5	0.05	1	100.00	
179	MADAM	5	0.05	1	100.00	
180	MAKE	5	0.05	1	100.00	
181	MATTER	5	0.05	1	100.00	
182	MUCH	5	0.05	1	100.00	
183	NICE	5	0.05	1	100.00	
184	NITWIT	5	0.05	1	100.00	
185	OFF	5	0.05	1	100.00	
186	ROOMS	5	0.05	1	100.00	
187	SERVICE	5	0.05	1	100.00	
188	SHALL	5	0.05	1	100.00	
189	SHH	5	0.05	1	100.00	
190	SHOP	5	0.05	1	100.00	
191	SHORT	5	0.05	1	100.00	
192	SUCH	5	0.05	1	100.00	
193	TERRY	5	0.05	1	100.00	

frequency alphabetical statistics filenames notes

885 Type-in NITWIT



# Step 10: Concordance lines of target lexis explored using WordSmith (e.g. 'jolly')

The screenshot shows a Parallels Desktop environment running Windows Vista. The Oxford WordSmith Tools application is open, with the 'Concord' window displaying a concordance for the word 'JOLLY'. The concordance lists seven lines of text with timestamps and the word 'JOLLY' highlighted in blue. The 'WordList' window shows the word 'JOLLY' selected in a list of words.

**WordList Window:**

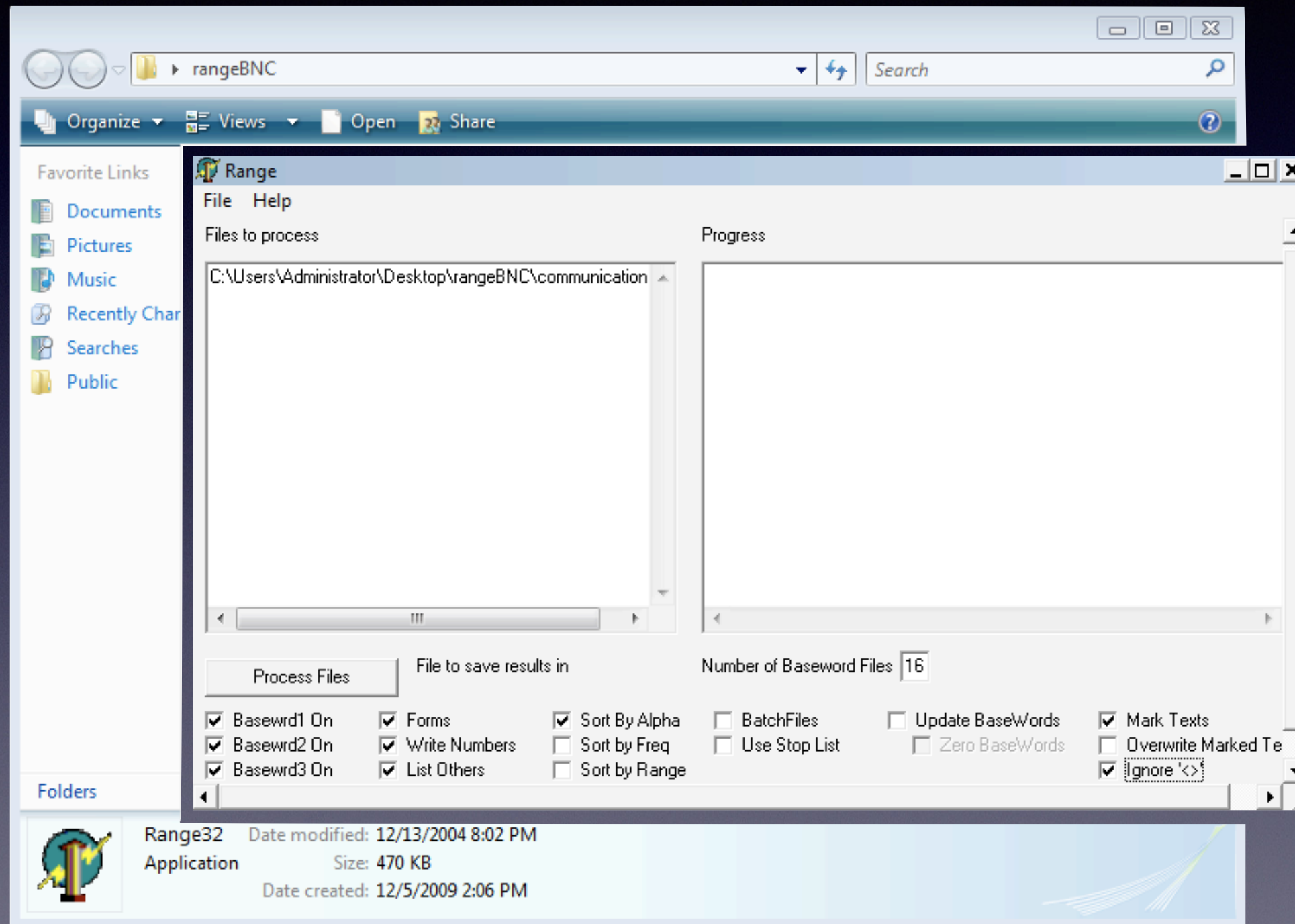
Word	Freq	%	Texts	% emmas	Set
EH	7	0.07	1	100.00	
FOUND	7	0.07	1	100.00	
HOW	7	0.07	1	100.00	
JOLLY	7	0.07	1	100.00	
LIFE	7	0.07	1	100.00	
PAPER	7	0.07	1	100.00	

**Concord Window:**

N	Concordance	Set	Tag	Word #	t	#	os	#	os	#	os	File	%
1	[00:19:39.06] Well, why not indeed eh? Jolly good question, eh, dear? Pity you			4,010	618	3%	0	4%	0	4%	mmunication.txt	65%	
2	[00:13:13.16] Jolly? [00:13:14.08] Yes, jolly. Sort of... happy. [00:13:16.22] Oh,			2,607	411	0%	0	2%	0	2%	mmunication.txt	43%	
3	You seem very jolly. [00:13:13.16] Jolly? [00:13:14.08] Yes, jolly. Sort of...			2,603	410	0%	0	2%	0	2%	mmunication.txt	43%	
4	Hmm? [00:13:11.26] You seem very jolly. [00:13:13.16] Jolly? [00:13:14.08]			2,600	409	0%	0	2%	0	2%	mmunication.txt	42%	
5	Rubbish. [00:13:09.00] You seem very jolly, Basil. [00:13:10.19] Hmm?			2,590	407	8%	0	2%	0	2%	mmunication.txt	42%	
6	[00:03:59.05] Yes, good luck! Jolly jolly good luck with it. [00:04:04.07]			788	154	3%	0	3%	0	3%	mmunication.txt	14%	
7	Right? [00:03:59.05] Yes, good luck! Jolly jolly good luck with it. [00:04:04.07]			787	154	9%	0	3%	0	3%	mmunication.txt	14%	



# Step 11: Frequency, coverage & T.T.R. data explored with RANGE





# Step 11: Frequency, coverage & T.T.R. data explored with RANGE (using spoken section of BNC)

fawlty towers\_range - Notepad

File Edit Format View Help

Reading: C:\Users\Administrator\Desktop\rangeBNC\BASEWRD16.txt

Marking file: C:\Users\Administrator\Desktop\rangeBNC\communication.txt  
as C:\Users\Administrator\Desktop\rangeBNC\communication.mrk

WORD LIST	TOKENS/%	TYPES/%	FAMILIES
one	4470/87.05	589/70.29	413
two	149/ 2.90	84/10.02	77
three	52/ 1.01	35/ 4.18	34
four	7/ 0.14	5/ 0.60	5
five	14/ 0.27	11/ 1.31	11
six	20/ 0.39	10/ 1.19	10
seven	1/ 0.02	1/ 0.12	1
eight	5/ 0.10	5/ 0.60	5
nine	29/ 0.56	5/ 0.60	5
ten	1/ 0.02	1/ 0.12	1
11	15/ 0.29	3/ 0.36	3
12	2/ 0.04	2/ 0.24	2
13	0/ 0.00	0/ 0.00	0
14	0/ 0.00	0/ 0.00	0
15	188/ 3.66	44/ 5.25	44
16	146/ 2.84	22/ 2.63	4
not in the lists	36/ 0.70	21/ 2.51	?????
Total	5135	838	615

Number of BASEWRD1.txt types: 6348    Number of BASEWRD1.txt families: 1000  
Number of BASEWRD2.txt types: 5593    Number of BASEWRD2.txt families: 1000  
Number of BASEWRD3.txt types: 4517    Number of BASEWRD3.txt families: 1000  
Number of BASEWRD4.txt types: 4288    Number of BASEWRD4.txt families: 1000  
Number of BASEWRD5.txt types: 3991    Number of BASEWRD5.txt families: 1000



# RANGE data (spoken section of BNC)

● Written section

● Spoken section

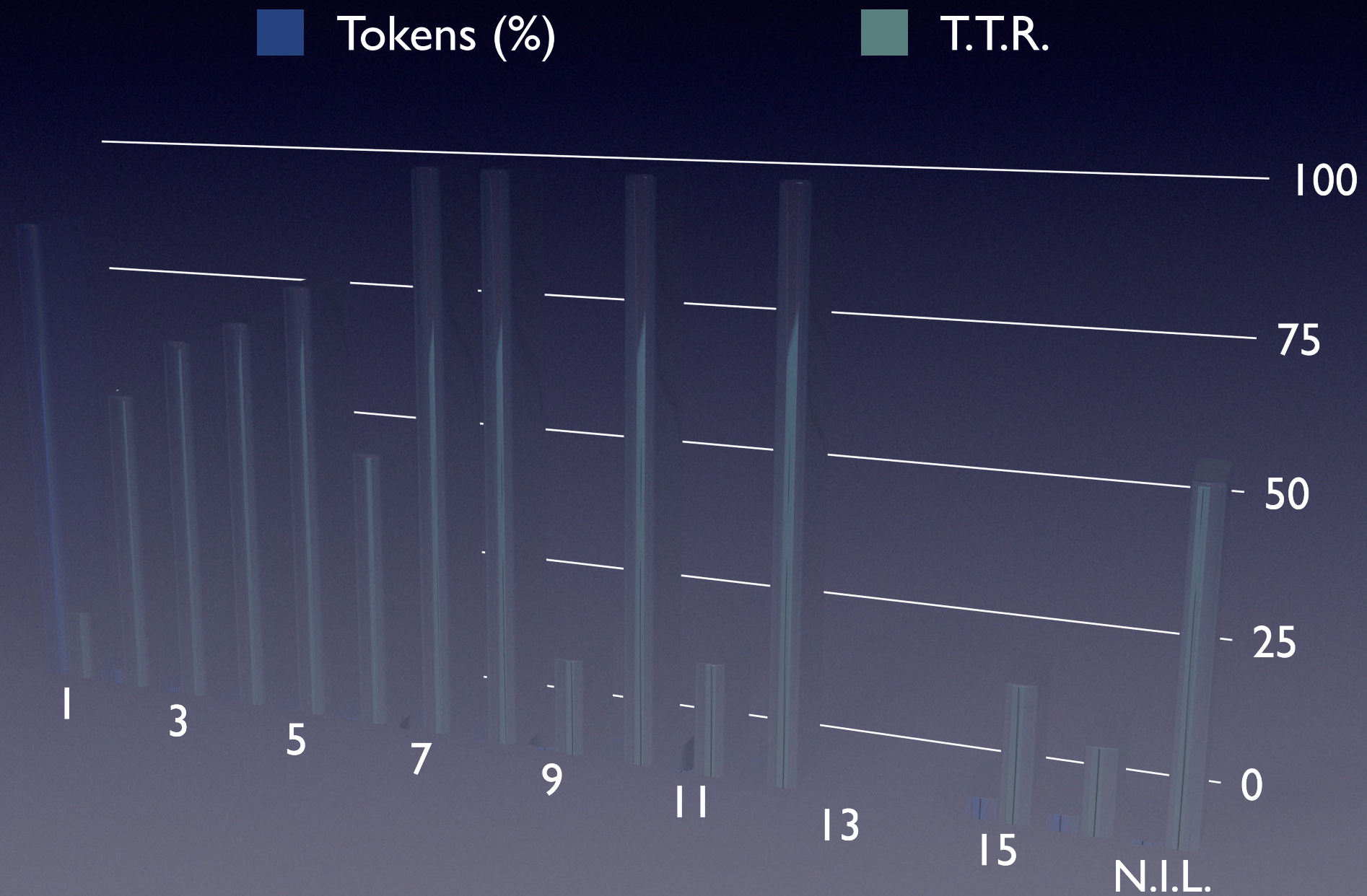


## Spoken Section of BNC

10 million words of unscripted, informal conversation from different contexts (formal business/government meetings, radio shows, phone-ins), demographically balanced for age, region & social class.



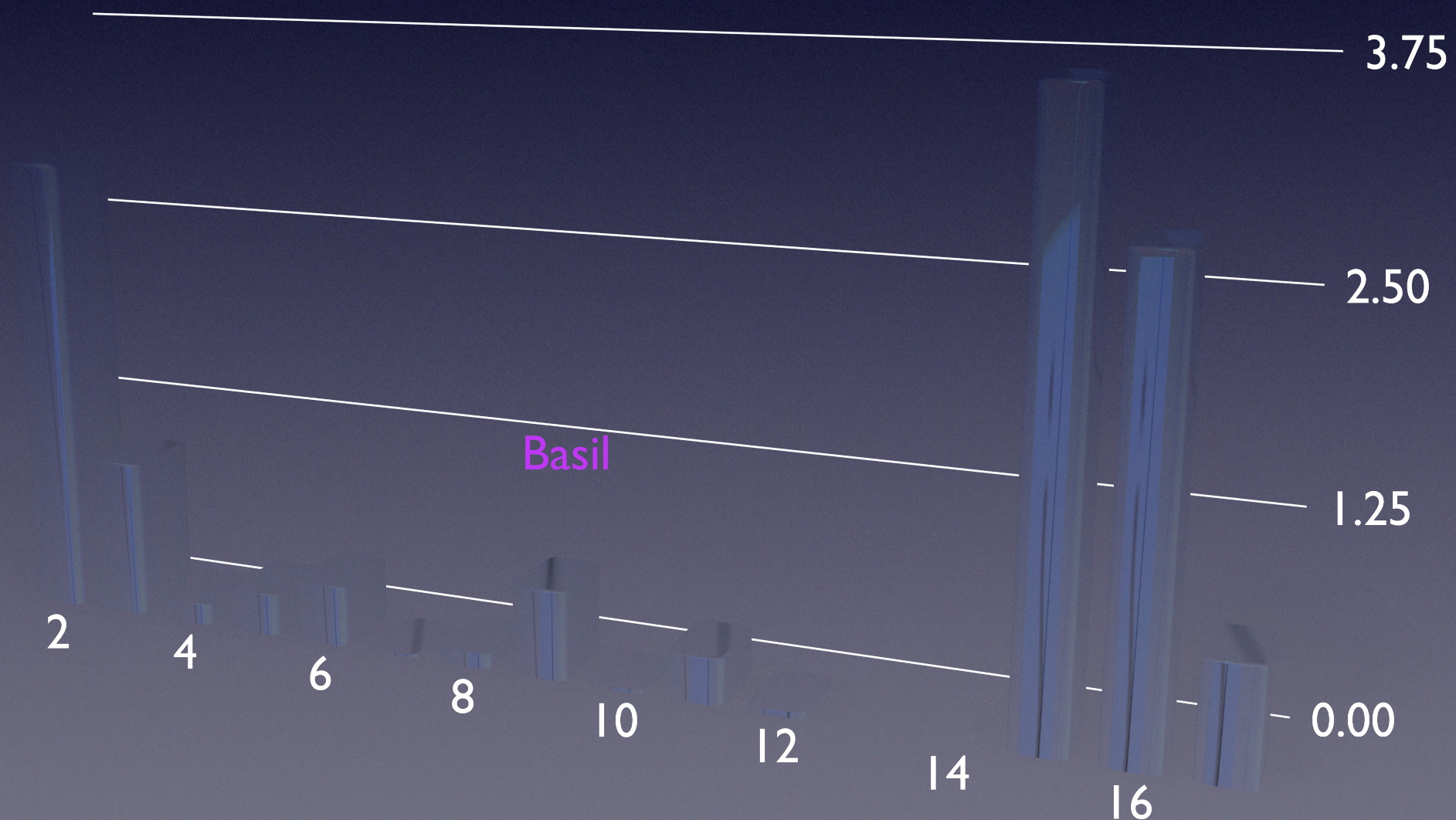
# Fawlty Towers RANGE results (% Tokens and T.T.R.)





# Fawlty Towers RANGE results

## % Tokens (baseword lists 2-14, proper nouns & interjections)





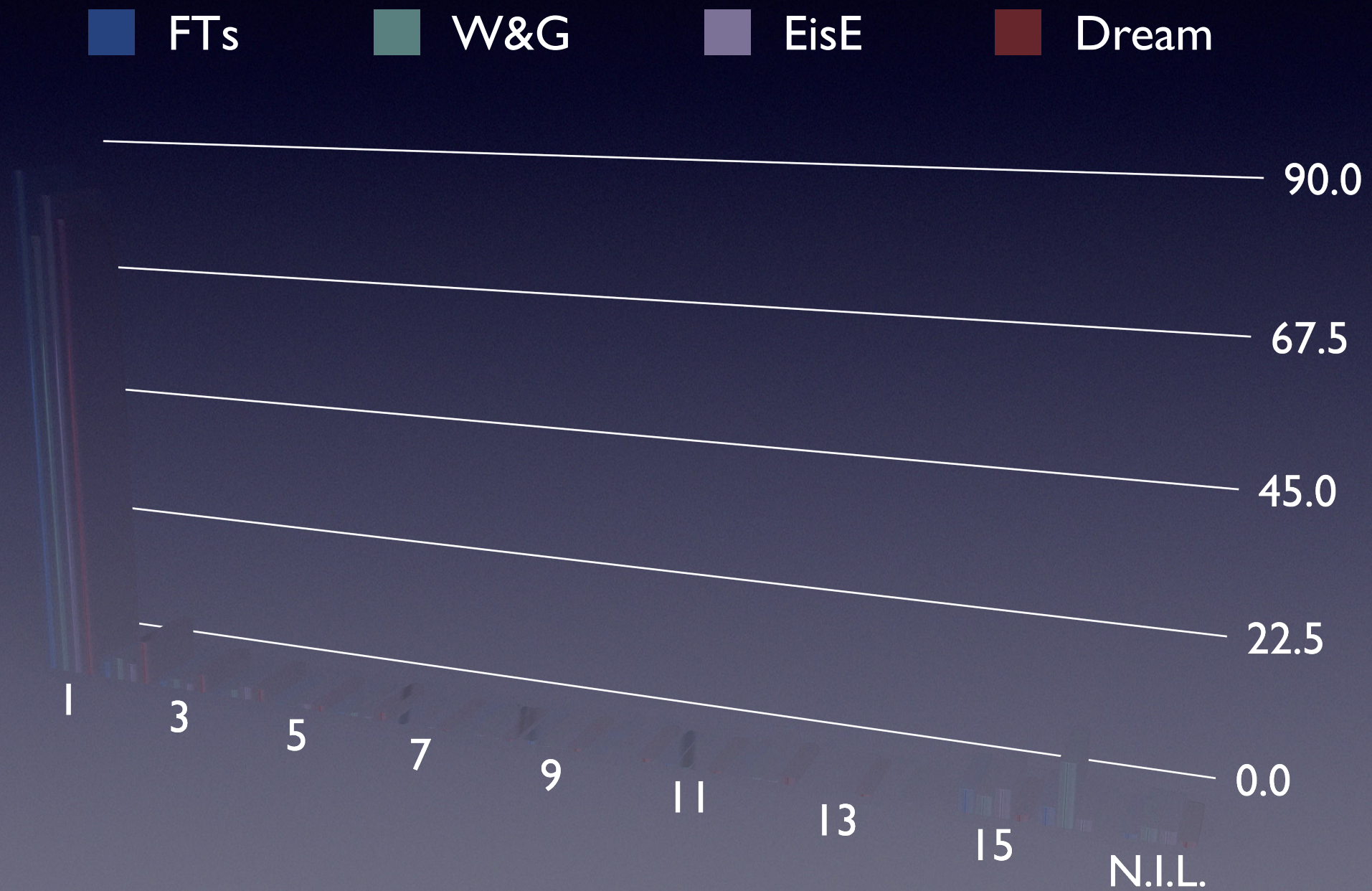
# Comparing RANGE results from four different sources

- Fawlty Towers: 'Communication problems'
- Wallace & Gromit: 'The Wrong Trousers'
- East is East
- Martin Luther King: 'I Have a Dream' speech



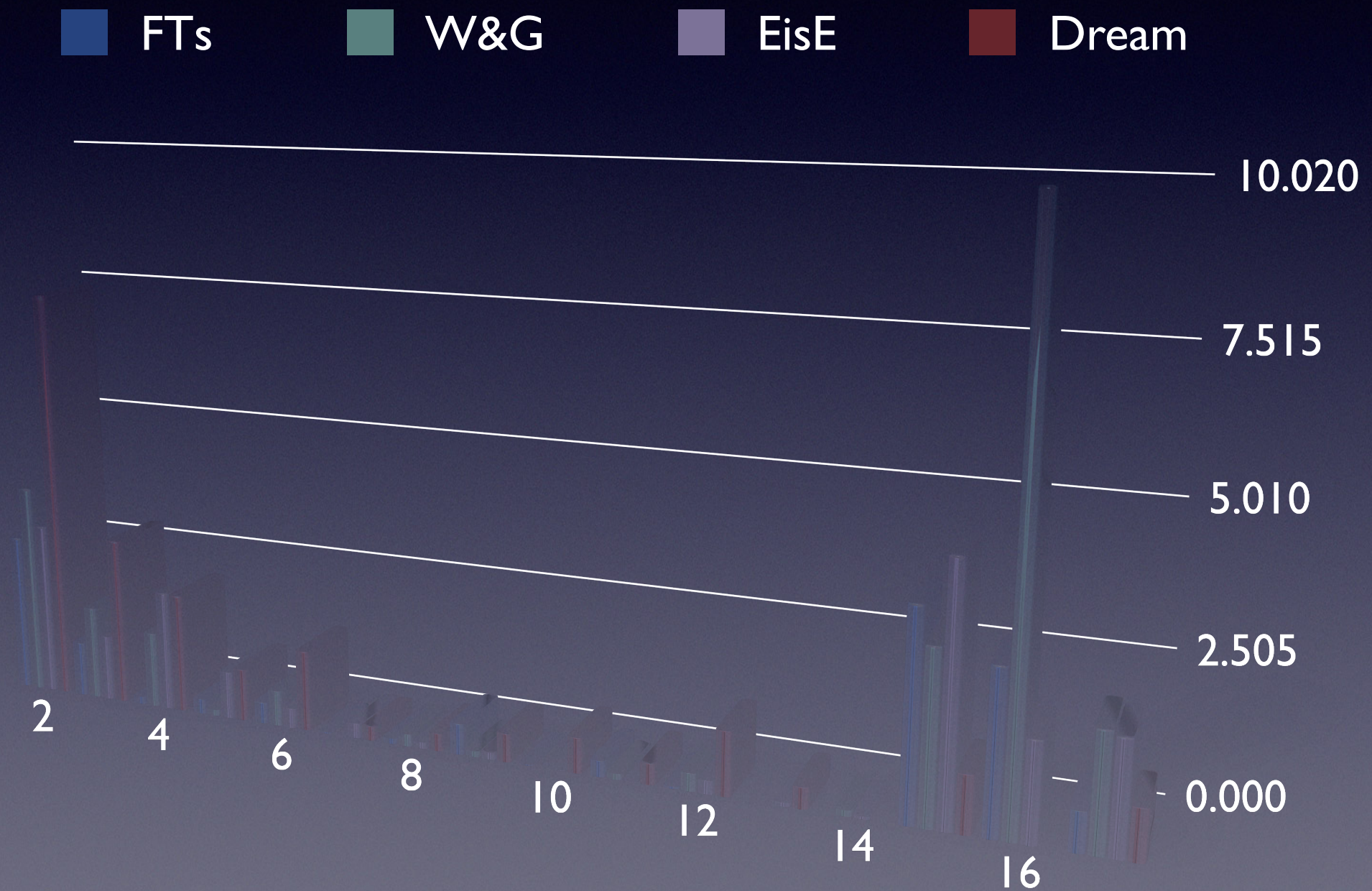


# RANGE results (% Tokens)





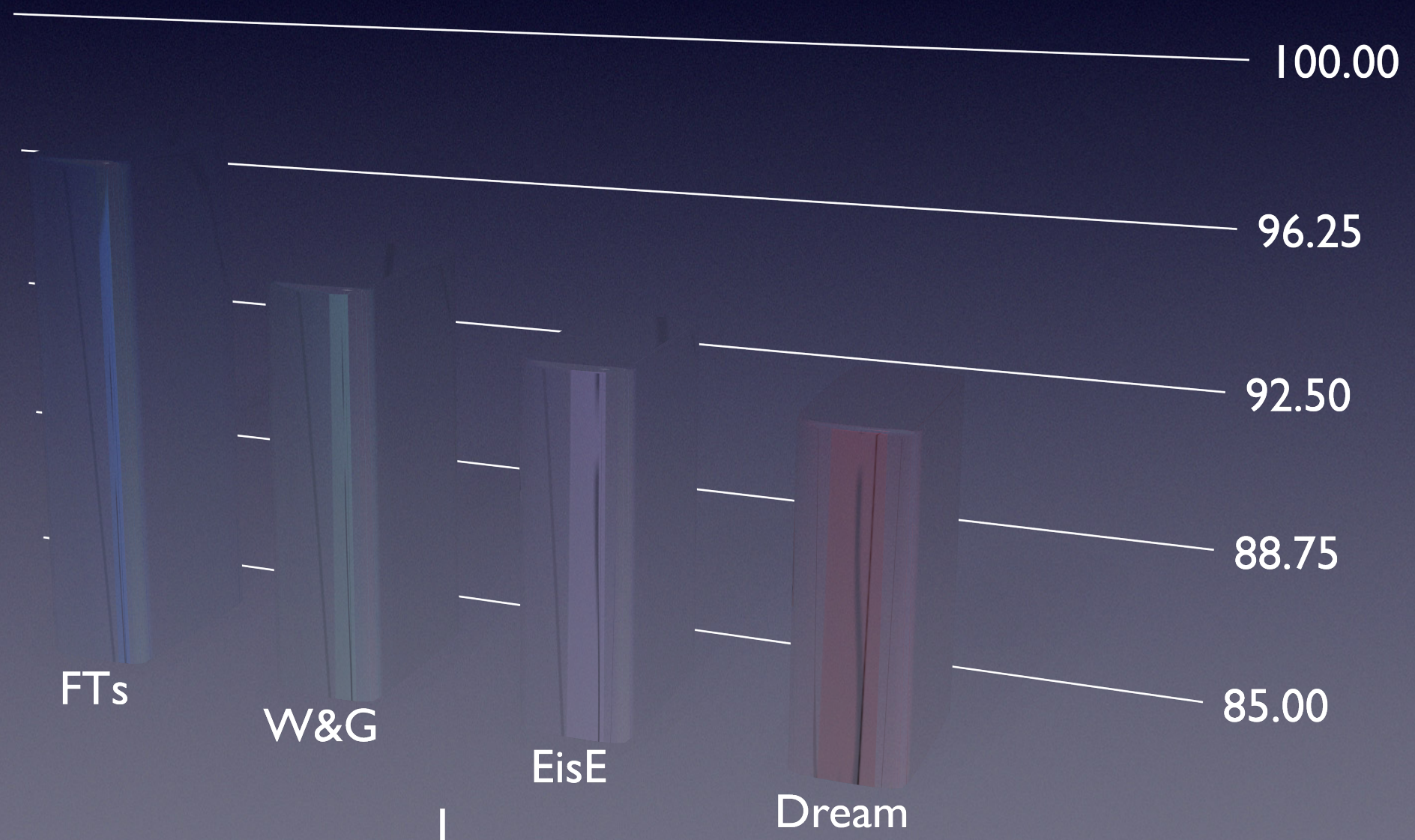
# RANGE results (% Tokens)





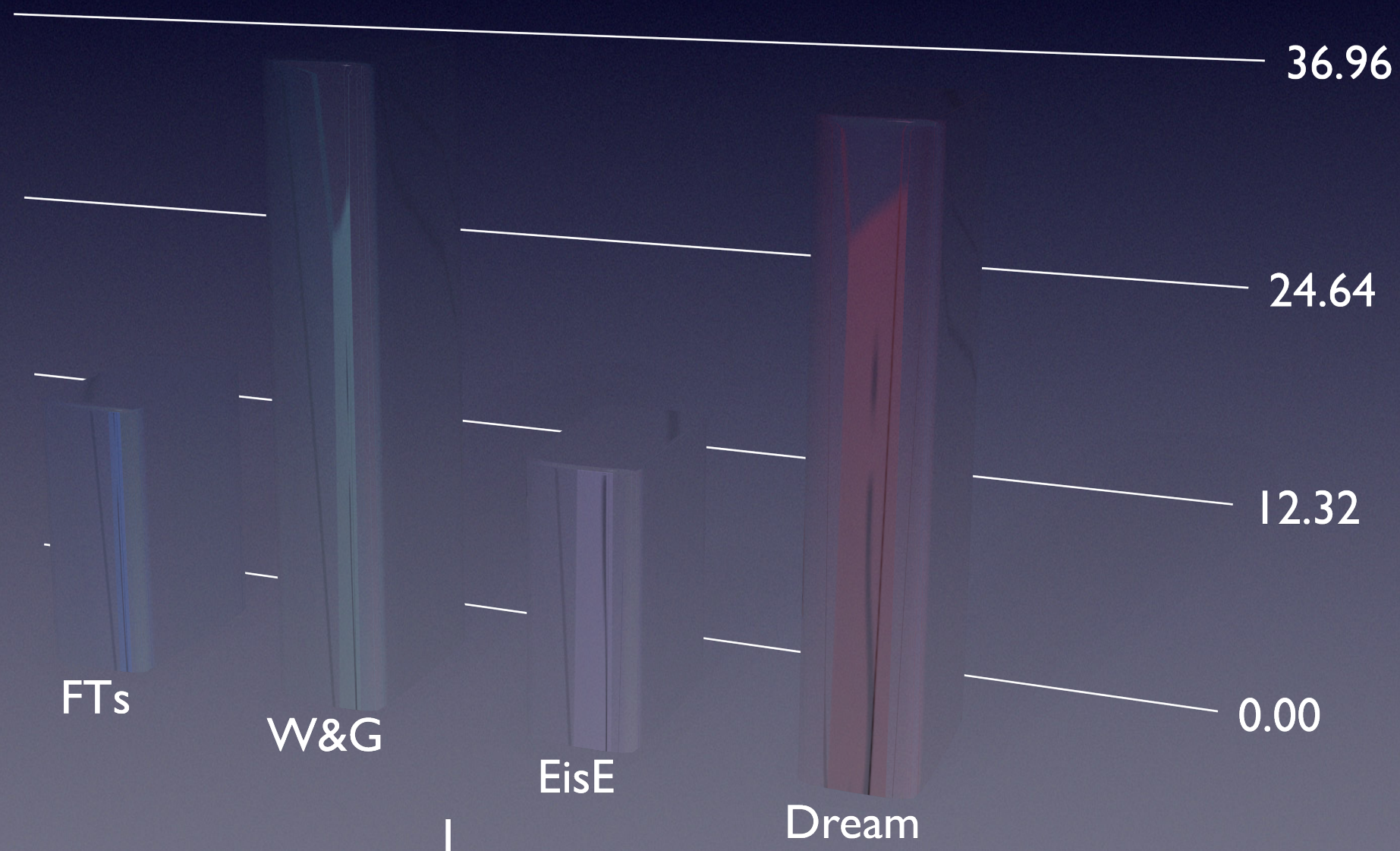
# RANGE results

## % Coverage (1-3,000 word level)





# RANGE results: Type Token Ratios

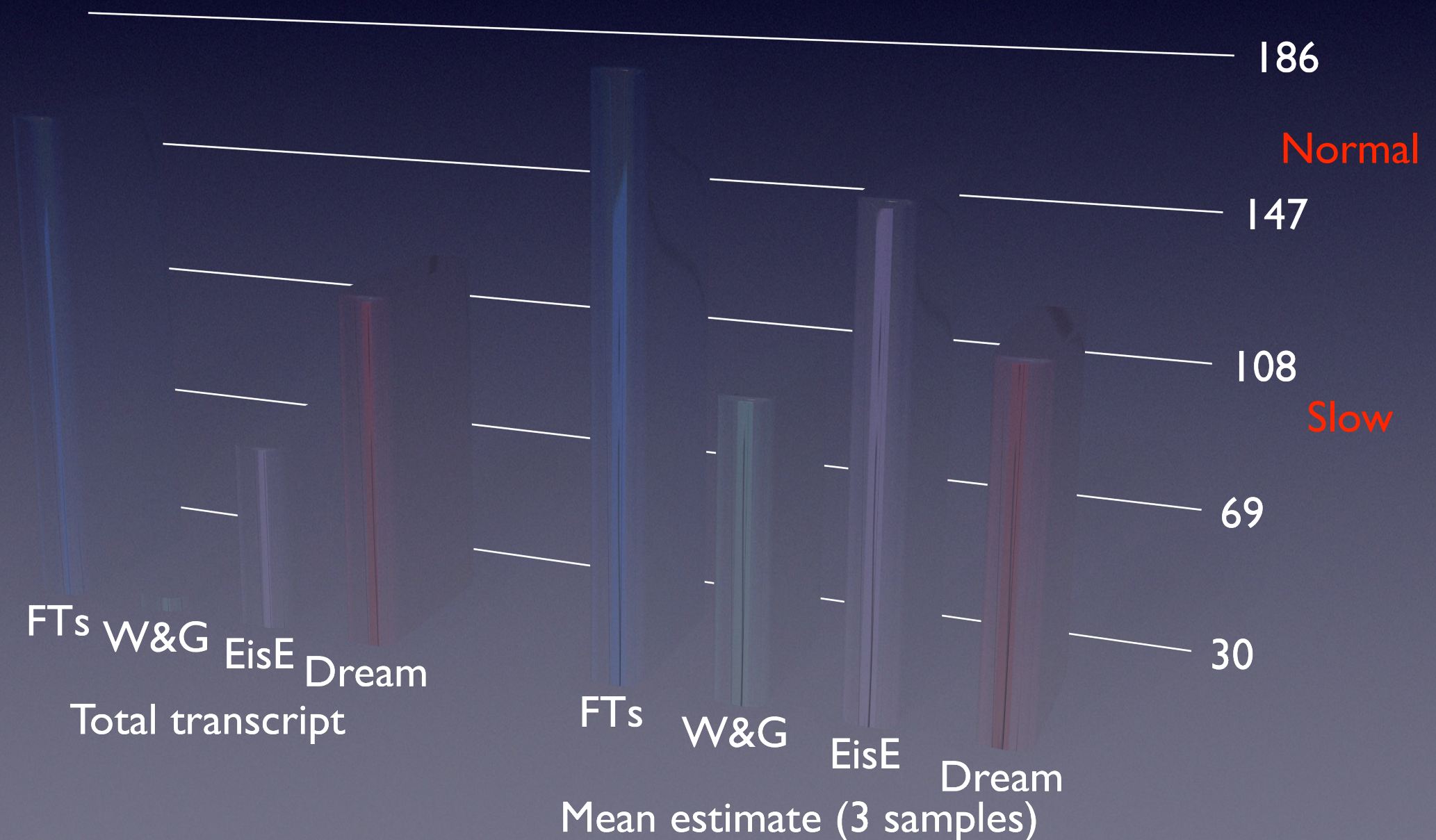




# 'Lexical load' & estimated speech rates (words per minute)

**Speech rates**  
(Griffiths, 1990)

Moderately fast





# How difficult are the 4 sample texts?

- **Text length (tokens):** EisE > FTs > W&G > Dream
- **% coverage (1-3,000 word level):** Dream > EisE > W&G > FTs
- **Lexical variety (TTR):** W&G > Dream > FTs > EisE
- **Lexical load (wpm):** FTs > Dream > EisE > W&G
- **Speech rate (wpm):** FTs > EisE > Dream > W&G
- **Other factors:** grammatical/syntactic complexity; number scenes/participants; presumed background knowledge; accents; visual support; etc.



# Trialling of 'Fawlty Towers' Materials

- Kyoto University, Japan (5 weeks trial)
- Advanced level graduate/post-graduate students in English Department.
- 'Mixed methods' approach:  
Quantitative data: Pre-/post-trial scores on receptive vocabulary test (control group N = 27, experimental group N = 20) for 60 low frequency tokens in Fawlty Towers.  
Qualitative data: Classroom diaries; classroom transcripts (ss-ss interaction); video recordings (student presentations)



# Staging of the investigation

- Pre-trial vocabulary test (60 low frequency items arising in Fawlty Towers transcript) & diary info.
- Lead-in: Introduction to main characters & context; pre-teaching selected vocabulary items
- Gist listening task (no sub-titles) & pairwork/ plenary feedback
- 2nd listening (with English sub-titles) to confirm answers to gist questions
- Post-listening task: Analysis of transcript section (in pairs) & preparation for presentation
- Presentations & final viewing of FTs sections
- Post-trial vocabulary test (identical to pre-test)



# Quantitative results: Mean scores & standard deviations on receptive vocabulary test (60 items)

Group	Scores (pre-trial)		Scores (post-trial)	
	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>
Control (N = 27)	33.33	4.76	35.30	5.46
Experimental (N = 20)	29.09	8.74	42.5	8.78



# Quantitative results: Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) of post-trial vocabulary scores (with pre-trial scores as co-variate)

Source	<i>df</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	Effect Size <sup>†</sup>
Within the experimental group, the gain percentage was three times higher for explicit than implicit vocabulary	1	1208.05	1208.05	58.65**	0.571
Vocabulary explicit	1	207.78	207.78	87.83**	0.666

\* $p < .05$  \*\* $p < .01$

<sup>†</sup>Eta squared



# Qualitative results: Typical comments from classroom diaries

- Lack of familiarity with informal varieties of English:  
“Today we had a vocabulary test. There were a lot of words unfamiliar to me, which didn’t appear in the study in high school, so I felt the test was difficult.”
- Effectiveness of film for language acquisition:  
“It’s good to study for better vocabulary with some videos using them. This is because impressive scenes or stories with new words may remain in our memories for a long time. For example, I think I will never forget what ‘pansy’ means.”



# Qualitative results: Typical comments from classroom diaries

- Difficulties coping with speech rate in FTs:  
“I couldn’t listen to people in the video very much because they spoke very fast, but I could enjoy the video by watching people’s actions.”
- Visuals provide effective scaffolding for comprehension task:  
“I found that I can enjoy it even by the comic gesture of the characters, and once I came to see the broad course of the story, the comedy became more like comedy. I learned here the effect of gesture and the importance of capturing the general outline at the first level.”



# Qualitative results: Typical comments from classroom diaries

- Students highly motivated by film materials:  
“I felt it very funny and hot. Especially, an hysterical woman, Mrs Richards and an Spanish waiter, Mr Manuel impressed me.”
- Subtitles provided effective scaffolding:  
“Next, we watched the comedy again. We could read the subtitles this time, so I was happy that I was able to understand more jokes.”



# Qualitative results: Sample scenes from the students' presentations





# Qualitative results: Features noticed in Fawlty Towers

- Fawlty Towers Presentations (Total time = 3 hours 42 minutes)

## A. Linguistic features

**Lexical (words/phrases):** [Section 0] That'll be fine; I could do with + N; What's going on here? (negative semantic prosody); Go ahead; [Section 1] filly (female horse); worth a flutter; Good luck with it; Jolly (old-fashioned, British English); ~ by any chance?; Any chance of ~?; That's it (2 meanings); warning off; hideous fire-eating dragon (Sybil); [Section 2] You scabby old bat; ~ by any chance?; [Section 3] rolls vs. pieces of lavatory paper; Don't you start!; keep an eye on sth; doesn't work; [Section 4] Tut; [Section 5] Can't get a word in edgeways/wise; deal with sth; It's a disgrace; What have you got to say for yourself?; Shut up; Give my best to sb; the small hours; come away; something happens (negative semantic prosody); [Section 6] Worth staying alive for; This is what ~ is all about; Short of money; Hang on (telephone language); Earlier on; sb's mind's gone blank; fly = zipper; Not a word to sb; Manacles; A stake (gambling); [Section 7] Old boy (old fashioned); A quick one (alcoholic drink); Chap; I'm a bit short; Mum's the word; [Section 8] Chap; lying hound; stuffed; pansy; Make a point of ~ing; [Section 9] Marvelous; turn up (found); short of sth; Have a whip-round; What on earth (for emphasis); pop up; [Section 9] Addictive vs. poisonous; Last night vs. the night before; If you can't *listen* to what I say vs. If you can't *hear* what I say (language clarification); [Section 10] rubbish (nonsense); till (register); Is she around?; remind me; all sorted out; Give sb the shirt off your back; onomatopoeia (chuu, whoosh, zoom, koro koro, mwah).

**Grammatical/Syntactical:** [Section 0] Change (money) uncountable; Meaning of *infinitive*; [Section 1] When *will* we *be seeing* you again? (future continuous); That particular avenue *has been closed off* to me (use of passive to avoid confrontation); [Section 2] I *do* have a hearing aid (auxiliary verbs for emphasis); phrasal verbs (run down = decline) more common in spoken English; [Section 3] Using 'y' to make adjectives from nouns (buttery, topazy); I've *got to* vs. I *have to*; *will* vs. *going to*; tag questions (~, isn't it?); [Section 4] Tag questions (~ ay?); nitwit; engaged (telephone); nag (horse); can't stand sth; [Section 4] one of us dies (why 3<sup>rd</sup> person 's?'); [Section 10] Is *a* Mrs Richards staying here? (indefinite article).

**Phonological:** [Section 2] PREferably (3 syllables, stress); [Section 3] reduced forms in spoken English ('cos, 'em); [Section 3] Intonation on tag questions (confirming or asking); Weak forms (got to = gotta); [Section 8] police (words stress).

**B. Pragmalinguistic features:** [Section 0] Would you mind ~; In one moment; I was wondering if you could + infinitive; I'm dealing with + N; I'm attending this gentleman; Good morning vs. morning; [Section 1] Basil uses vague language to talk about Dragonfly (feigning disinterest); [Section 2] Don't think me rude, but + face-threatening content; Why not ~? (suggestions); command a view (old fashioned); [Section 3] Appropriateness of reduced forms (informal contexts); [Section 5] Let me ~ (offers); you'd better ~ (advice); If I find out you've been ~ing, you know what I'll do (threat); [Section 8] Would you like to ~ (polite offers); [Section 9] I won't be a moment vs. Hold on a second; [Section 10] Yep/nope vs. yes/no.



# Conclusions

- It is now possible to produce accurate film transcripts for research and pedagogic purposes with relative ease
- Accurate transcripts can provide a) researchers, with invaluable data to analyse the characteristics of different genres of film discourse; b) materials designers with data to inform the design process; c) students with L2 data to support their language acquisition
- Film (with L2 subtitles & transcripts) is motivating and can act as a rich source of input to stimulate learners' development of a range of communicative competences



Thank you