Automatic alignment of annotations in Praat

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Automatic transcription of speech, or automatic alignment of speech with existing annotations, is high on the list of most wanted techniques for disclosing large datasets. David Weenink and Paul Boersma have made available in Praat a moderately successful automated transcription technique, based on analysis-by-synthesis with the help of the text-to-speech system Espeak. Being easy to use (two clicks), this can already help 20,000 linguists when transcribing 50 languages. Better techniques (HMM-based) do exist, and if anybody in the audience can program these in an open-source-compatible way, they can be distributed (in Praat) in a way that makes them accessible to nontechnical users the world round. For understudied languages, an "IPA" language model seems to have to be created.