

HUES-HONOR:

Houston Urban English Study – Harvey Oral Narratives on Record

- Rice Dept. of Linguistics
- Robert Englebretson,
- Nancy Niedzielski,
- Suzanne Kemmer

Thanks and Acknowledgements

- Funding from the Rice Houston Engagement and Recovery Effort.
- The 118 Houstonians (so far) who have shared their stories with us.
- Natalie Grothues: research team coordinator.
- Student Assistants:
 - Rachel Carlton

- Meredith Church
- Natalia Salazar
- Elise Tan
- Taylor Williams

Harvey Oral Narratives on Record: Overview

- A curated corpus of oral history interviews for the purpose of conducting qualitative research.
- Seeking to HONOR Houstonians' lived experiences with Harvey and its aftermath.
- Enabling individual Houstonians to tell their personal stories.
- The corpus will be available to researchers via Kinder Institute's Urban Data Platform.

- Stereo wav audio files.
- Transcripts (Du Bois et al. 1993 *Discourse Transcription* format).
- Interview summaries.
- Metadata.

HONOR is designed as a research corpus, not as a public archive.

- Available in the Urban Data Platform to those who have completed CITI training for the use of data collected from human subjects.
- Honor seeks to respect the dignity and privacy of participants, many of whom are sharing very personal and difficult details of their lives.
- Per our IRB, the data is anonymized as follows.
 - In the transcripts, pseudonyms are used for participant names and the names of

- relatives and close friends.
- In the recordings, names of participants and relatives/friends are obscured using a low-pass filter algorithm.
- Per our IRB, participants have consented to the use of audio excerpts in presentations, publications, and research papers.

Examples of Potential Qualitative Research Uses

- Thematic Analysis.
- Lessons from the particularities, to inform future responses.
- How people put their experience with disaster and trauma into language.
- How the expression of emotions correlates with resilience and overcoming trauma.
- Conceptualization and metaphors of

salient/difficult experiences.

- Narrative structure.
- Sociolinguistic variation.

Excerpts #1-3: The narration of salient and difficult experience

- Excerpt #1.

[CLICK HERE TO PLAY EXCERPT 1 AUDIO](#)

or [click here to read the transcript.](#)

- Showering outdoors in the rain, naked in downtown Houston. And then “watching the slow death of a building”, “watching this building die” (the Houston Ballet).

This excerpt is from an interview we conducted in April 2018 that lasted nearly 1.5 hours. Cam and Jake (pseudonyms), both 35-year-old Caucasian men, were co-workers who ended up stuck in their work building for several days during and after the storm. They had a work studio in the basement of the post office building at 401 Franklin. (The Houston Ballet building was visible from there.)

- Excerpt #2.

[Click here to play Excerpt 2 audio](#)

or [click here to read the transcript.](#)

- The sound of a house “drowning” .

This excerpt is from an interview we conducted in February 2018, which lasted an hour and 10 minutes. Tammy (pseudonym) is a 57-year-old Caucasian woman who was living in Spring during the storm. Notice the same conceptualization of a "building dying" as in the previous excerpt, but in this case it was her own house, and her focus on what it sounded like.

- Excerpt #3.

[Click here to play Excerpt 3 audio](#)

or [click here to read the transcript.](#)

- Feeling vulnerable and exposed “you have everyone in your stuff”.

Excerpt #3 is from an interview we conducted in June 2018 which lasted an hour and 10 minutes. Adam (a pseudonym) is a 57-year-old Caucasian man who was born and raised in Houston, and was living in Bellaire during the storm. He talks about how uncomfortable he found it to have volunteers help clean out his house. While at the same time participants are thankful and appreciative of the help,, this participant also highlights the experience of vulnerability and feeling "naked" and "exposed" in the aftermath of the storm.

Excerpts #4-5:

Lived experiences can be

informative for future responses:

Particular experiences of Houstonians with disabilities.

- Excerpt #4.

[Click here to play Excerpt 4 audio](#)

or [click here to read the transcript.](#)

- Motorized wheelchair vs canoe.

This is an excerpt from an interview we conducted in July 2018 that lasted just over 30 minutes. Melissa (pseudonym) is a 41-year-old Caucasian woman who was born in Houston and lived in Braeswood during the storm.

- Excerpt #5.

[Click here to play Excerpt 5 audio](#)

or [click here to read the transcript.](#)

- Unique issues that blind people faced during cleanup and rebuilding, e.g. having to take pictures for insurance claims.

This excerpt comes from an interview we conducted in July 2018 which lasted around 27 minutes. Kay (pseudonym) is a 36-year-old Caucasian woman who was living in a townhouse in the Medical Center area, the entire downstairs of which was destroyed in the storm.

The corpus so far

- 95 oral history interviews ranging from 15 minutes to 1.5 hours in length.
 - 118 participants total
 - In addition to individuals, many participants chose to be interviewed with a spouse, family member, co-worker, or friend with whom they went through the storm and its aftermath.
- We are still seeking additional participants
 - Conducting interviews through Nov. 15
 - Especially interested in people from diverse backgrounds and neighborhoods.
 - If you wish to tell your story, or if you know of groups or individuals who would be interested, please email me for more information before Nov. 15:
reng@rice.edu

Conclusion – in the words of one of

the participants

- Excerpt #6.

[Click here to play Excerpt 6 audio](#)

or [click here to read the transcript.](#)

This excerpt is from a nearly 1.5 hour interview we conducted in early August 2018 in the Kashmere Gardens neighborhood of Houston. Sheila (a pseudonym) is an African American woman in her early 60s who lives in Kashmere Gardens and whose house was completely destroyed. She talked about a range of difficult issues that she and her family faced during and after the storm. Here's how she concludes her interview:

(A note on transcription symbols: .. and ... indicate short and long pauses, respectively. (H) indicates an in-breath and (TSK)a tongue-click.)

- SHEILA: ... (H) (TSK) So,
- I thank you guys for letting me .. vent.
- ... I apologize if I went ... way over,
- (H) but when you've gone through something as devastating as this,
- (H) you just cannot give your name,
- ... and then share,
- (H) ... something to benefit people,

- (H) (TSK) without the emotional ties coming in.

The HUES_HONOR corpus is all about highlighting the particularities of Houstonians' lived experiences during the storm. This project is more than just collecting a name and some basic information. It is about highlighting the emotional ties—the ties among community members, families, and even among strangers. And it is a collection of the stories and lived experiences that Houstonians wish to share. The HUES-HONOR corpus enables the conducting of rich qualitative research based on these narratives.