

How to Collect a 50 Utterance Language Sample

General Suggestions:

1. Record the entire language sample.
2. For young preschool children, play with the children to elicit language. Playdoh is a good activity to use during the sample. Comment on the child's play. Ask open ended questions.
3. For older children, ask them to tell you a story, explain how to play their favorite game, or describe a favorite toy. Use play as needed.

Transcription:

1. After the language sample, transcribe everything into a word document. Write each utterance on a separate line. Do not use punctuation.
2. Type contractions as they are said.(i.e. "they're, don't)
3. Omit fillers, dysfluencies, and repeated words (unless they are made for emphasis)
4. If a word is unintelligible, write xxx
5. If an utterance combines two joined clauses with "and," consider it a run on and divide it as follows:
 "We went to the store and I got a cupcake
 My mom gave me milk and I saw a balloon."
6. Use the numbering feature on the top of the word screen to ensure that you have 50 utterances.

Analysis:

Word Count:

- Take off the numbers on the utterances
- Highlight the entire sample
- Click “Review” and “word Count”

MLU:

Using the language sample, separate each word into morphemes using the space bar
Count the following as one morpheme:

- Reduplications (choo choo)
- Irregular past tense(went)
- Diminutive(doggy)
- Auxillary verbs
- Irregular plurals (men)
- Each word in a proper name

Count as two morphemes(separate with a space)

- Possessive nouns (noun 's)
- Plural noun (noun s)
- Third person singular present tense verbs (verb s)
- Present progressive verbs (verb ing)
- Bound morphemes that have meaning (-ful, -ly, -y, -en, ish)
- Contractions (don 't, he 's)

Highlight the entire sample again with the words into spaces by morphemes.

Click Review and Word Count.

Words/Sentence:

- Using an original copy of the language transcription.
- Turn off the numbering feature
- Delete all utterances that are not full sentences.
- Highlight the entire sample
- Click “Review” and “word Count”
- Divide word count by number of sentences

Rules for determining a sentence:

- Must contain a subject and a verb. A sentence can have more than one clause.
- Count imperatives as clauses. The subject is understood to be 'you' (i.e. come here)
- Count compound subjects or verbs as a single sentence
- Count as a clause and a sentence when either the subject or a portion of the verb is omitted due to ellipsis. (Who can go with me? I can)

Clauses Per Sentence

- Using the transcription from the words/sentence, count the number of clauses.
- Divide by the total number of sentences.
- The clauses do not have to be grammatically correct.
- For example "They boy who's in my class is yucky counts as 2 clauses)

Adapted from: Robert Owens, PhD; Stacey Pavelko, PhD; Meredith Laverdure ASHA Presentation (2014)

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