SUGAR
Sampling Utterances & Grammatical Analysis Revisited: Getting a More Robust Sample

VDOE Webinar
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This is module number 2 in a 5 part series.

If you have not yet viewed module 1, please do so prior to participating in this module.

Module 2: Overview

• A more robust sample
• What does a robust sample mean?
• How to elicit a more robust sample
• Evidence to support shorter samples
• Example of robust sample
What is a more robust sample?

- Engages the child in a conversation that gives the child the opportunity to produce complex language
- Allows the child to control the interaction
- Children are more communicative and use more complex language
  ([Lapadat, 1983; Norris & Hoffman, 1990])

Strategies for Robust Sampling

- Turnabouts = Comment + Cue for child to talk
- Process Questions
  - How did...
  - What happened...
  - Tell me...
  - I wonder what you...
  - Why did...
  - More than one-word “why” questions
  - Not appropriate for children below 4.5 yrs

Strategies for Robust Sampling

- Use narrative elicitations instead of yes/no questions
  - Build on what the child says or on what you know
  - Begin with...
    - Your mom says you…. That sounds like fun. Tell me what happened.
    - I know that you…. Tell me what happened.
    - Did you ever…. Tell me what you did.
Improving the quality of samples

- 22 students each collected a language sample from a child
- Small group of student trainers
  - Prepared handout on collecting sample emphasizing narrative elicitation
  - Trained same 22 students via role-playing in elicitation techniques
- Six months after 1st sample, same 22 students each collected a second language sample from a different child

Results

- Significant Difference
  - Increase in child MLU
  - Decrease in the mean number of yes/no questions asked by adult
  - Decrease in the mean number of one-word child responses
- No significant difference
  - Mean number of child clauses per sentence
  - Mean number of child utterances per turn

Results from other researchers

- Examiner Questioning
  - Children with specific language impairment (SLI) used significantly more ellipsis when the examiner asked questions
  - Examiners asked more questions of children with SLI than of the children with typical language

(Owens, 2012)

[Johnston, Miller, Curtiss, & Tallal, 1993]
Evidence on Shorter Samples
• 50 utterances frequently cited as ideal
  (Lee, 1974; Templin, 1957)
• Collecting the sample
  • 4.5 minutes for children ages 2:6-6:5
  • 3.7 minutes for children ages 6:6-13:3
• Estimate 5 minutes to transcribe each minute of spoken language
  (Heilmann, 2010)

Example of Robust Sample
• Listen to the following sample (transcript of examiner’s utterances will be on the next slide)
• What do you notice about how the adult interacts with the child?
  • How long does she wait?
  • How many comments does she make?
  • How many examiner utterances?

Transcript of Adult
1. What did you do for your birthday?
2. Yeah?
3. Oh.
4. Tell me more.
5. Uhhuh.
6. Mmm.
7. He is?
8. Mmm. I wonder what else will happen.
9. Tell me more.
10. How do you play?
11. Oh.
12. How do you win?
You Try It!

- Find a partner and try collecting a language sample.
- Use your handout to help you
- Remember…
  - Wait
  - Balance questions and comments
  - Ask process questions

Additional Resources

- Visit the VDOE website for additional webinars on LSA
- Module 3
  - How to transcribe and complete quick analysis
  - Handout
- Module 4
  - How to complete deep analysis
- Module 5
  - Time-saving Ideas

References