

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

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VDOE Webinar

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This is module number 2  
in a 5 part series.

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

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**Module 2: Overview**

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- 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

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### 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)

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### 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

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### 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.*

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## 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 1<sup>st</sup> sample, same 22 students each collected a second language sample from a different child

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## 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

(Owens, 2012)

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## 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

(Johnston, Miller, Curtiss, & Tallal, 1993)

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## 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)

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## 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?



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## Transcript of Adult



1. What did you do for your birthday?
2. Yeah?
3. Oh.
4. Tell me more.
5. Uhhuh.
6. Mhm.
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?

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## 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

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## Additional Resources



- Visit the VDOE website for additional webinars on LSA
- [http://www.doe.virginia.gov/special\\_ed/disabilities/speech\\_language\\_impairment/index.shtml](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/special_ed/disabilities/speech_language_impairment/index.shtml)
  - Module 3
    - How to transcribe and complete quick analysis
    - Handout
  - Module 4
    - How to complete deep analysis
  - Module 5
    - Time-saving Ideas

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## References



- Heilmann, R. (2010). Myths and realities of language sample analysis. *Perspectives*
- Johnston, J., Miller, J., Curtiss, S., & Tallal, P. (1993). Conversations with children who are language impaired: Asking questions, *Journal of Speech, Language and Hearing Research*, 36, 973-978.
- Owens, R. (2012, November). SUGAR (sampling utterances and grammatical analysis revisited): A sweet surprise. Paper presented at the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association National Convention, Atlanta, GA.

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