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)

Speech Language Literacy Lab, LLC
SI3contact@gmail.com