

# Language Sampling Protocol

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## INTRODUCTION

This document outlines the procedures and techniques of the Language Sampling Protocol used in the SALT - NZ Database (Systematic Analysis of Language Transcripts-New Zealand Version) (Gillon, Miller, Schwarz, & Westerveld, 2002). Background information on the development and piloting of the protocol is reported in Westerveld and Gillon (1999/2000; in press). The protocol incorporates optimal sampling conditions and elicitation techniques based on an extensive review of the literature. Results from the pilot study indicated that the language sampling protocol developed was a useful and efficient tool in eliciting oral language samples of adequate length and complexity for analyses in 6-year-old children.



Each child is asked eight questions about the story, immediately following the first story telling to evaluate story comprehension. Four questions tap factual comprehension, i.e., information that has been explicitly stated in the story (e.g., “Where did Anna go to find her parents?”). Four questions concern causal relations, tapping inferential comprehension (e.g., “Why did Anna get scared?”). The responses to the story comprehension questions should be tape recorded and scored. To reduce the influence of story comprehension on the child's retelling performance, the child should be provided with the correct information after answering the questions.

The child is asked to listen to the story twice, approximately 10 minutes apart, before being asked to retell the story without the support of pictures. Because of logistical difficulties utilising a naïve listener, it was decided to mimic an uninformed listener situation by creating a real communicative purpose. The child is therefore told: “*Let’s listen to the story a second time. Afterwards we will put a new tape in the recorder and then I would like you to tell the story, so that other children can listen to it later*”. The prompts used to encourage children to retell the story are included in the Language Sampling Protocol.

It is anticipated that some children will have difficulty with this particular task. Therefore, children who are unsuccessful (even after the encouraging prompts) or who generate less than five consecutive utterances are asked to retell the story a second time, while using the pictures as a referent.

#### Personal narratives.

Elicitation of personal narratives is adapted from a conversational technique developed by Peterson and McCabe (1983), called the *Conversational Map*. A pocket-size photo album is used to prompt personal narratives. (The photos used in the language sampling protocol are at the end of this document. Each photo is presented individually in separate sleeves of a photo album). The examiner introduces the activity as a natural progression from the warm-up activity, the conversation, and the story book activity: “*I also brought some photos to show you*”. The examiner provides a short prompting narrative with each photo, followed by a question of the form: “*Did anything like that ever happen to you?*” If the child responds “*no*”, the examiner turns the page of the photo album to the next photo. If the child says “*yes*” a follow-up question is asked “*Can you tell me about it?*” Further information on the Conversational Map Technique and prompts used to respond to the child's narrative are provided in Appendix B. A sample transcript is given in Appendix C.

## WESTERVELD AND GILLON LANGUAGE SAMPLING PROTOCOL

Name \_\_\_\_\_ D.o.b. \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_  
Examiner \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_  
Ethnicity \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_

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### INTRODUCTION/WARM-UP

(2 - 5 minutes)

Show the child the book “where’s Wally?” *“I brought a book to show you”*.

### CONVERSATIONAL CONTEXT

(10 minutes, use stopwatch)

Interview with the child. Respond to the child with rewording of child’s comments or “that’s interesting, tell me some more about that.” Try to avoid leading questions. Allow the child to take the lead. Start with the first question and introduce the remaining questions when appropriate.

- “What did you bring to show me?” **Object discussed** \_\_\_\_\_ “Can you tell me about it?”
- “Tell me about the sorts of things you do in the classroom“.
- “What do you like to do when you’re not in school?”
- “Do you have any brothers or sisters?”

### STORY RETELLING 1

*“I also brought a book to show you. We can’t read this book as it is written in another language, but I have the story on tape, in English. Let’s listen to the tape. I will ask you some questions about the story afterwards”*.

To reduce the influence of story comprehension on individual children’s retelling performance, all children are provided with the correct information after answering the questions. It is essential that children listen to the story twice before attempting to retell the story. Instead of listening to the tape twice in a row, either the Personal narrative section could be administered or a different activity of approximately 10 minute duration could be introduced.

Questions	Correct		Incorrect	No response	Comment
	I	F			

Who is the author of the book 'The Language Acquisition of English as a Second Language'?





## APPENDIX A

### Story used in the Story Retelling Task - Anna Gets Lost

One Saturday morning, Anna's mum and dad went fishing on the beach.  
Anna had been sick all week, so she had to stay at home with her big brother, Tom.  
She asked Tom if he wanted to play with her.  
No thanks, he said, I want to read a Sports Magazine.

Anna got bored, so when Tom fell asleep,  
she decided to go looking for her mum and dad.  
She quietly opened the front door and went outside.

Anna walked towards the beach, but she got lost.  
She kept walking until it got dark.  
Anna got very scared and she started to cry.  
She stopped outside a dairy.  
She was still crying and didn't know what to do.

Then Anna felt a pat on her shoulder.  
She looked around and saw a policeman.  
Hello, he said, are you Anna?  
Yes, said Anna, giving him a big smile.

The policeman took Anna home in the police car.  
Mum and Dad were very happy to see Anna.  
They thanked the policeman for finding Anna, and bringing her home safely.  
The policeman told Anna not to get lost

## **APPENDIX B**

### **Personal Narrative Elicitation Procedures**

Personal narratives are elicited using the Conversational Map, a procedure developed by Peterson and McCabe (1983). This technique uses story prompts to encourage the children to tell

21. C AND A MCDONALDS CAKE.
22. C AND WE HAD A TADPOLE CAKE.
23. C AND WE EVEN GOT>
24. C I/'LL SHOW YOU HOW BIG IT WAS.
25. C IT WAS THIS BIG.
26. C ALL THE FROM HERE TO HERE TO THERE TO HERE.
27. **E WOW.**
28. **E IT WAS HUGE.**
29. **E I DON'T SUPPOSE YOU COULD EAT IT ALL AT ONCE.**
30. C WE TOOK SPOONFUL/S.

In this narrative the child seems to build up to a high point in utterances 24 to 26. Because the examiner provides an evaluation (utterances 27 to 29), the narrative is brought to an abrupt end.

- =BEE
1. E I GOT STUNG BY A BEE ONCE.
  2. C I HAVE ON MY EAR.
  3. E OH, TELL ME.
  4. C (WHEN I WAS WA\* WHEN I WAS UHM) WHEN I WAS LITTLE.
  5. E UHUH.
  6. C I GOT STUNG BY A BEE WHEN I WAS (WA\*) GO/ING ON MY BIKE.
  7. E UHUH.
  8. C YES BECAUSE (UHM) I WENT TO (UHM) RIDE MY BIKE.
  9. C AND I WENT TO STOP (UHM) FROM THE BIKE.
  10. C THEN I SAW THE BEE.
  11. C THEN IT STANG [EW:STUNG] ME ON THE EAR.
  12. E IT STUNG YOU ON THE EAR.
  13. E AND THEN WHAT HAPPEN/ED?
  14. C I HAD TO GO HOME AND PUT SOME COLD WATER ON ME.
  15. E HM.

In this narrative the examiner uses some neutral prompts to encourage the child to continue the narrative. It would have been very easy to evaluate this narrative in utterances 12 and 13 (e.g., "oh, that must have hurt!").

Appendix C provides a sample transcript, demonstrating the prompts outlined above.

**APPENDIX C**  
**Sample Personal Narrative Transcript**

Please note that only successful narratives were transcribed. For information on coding conventions (such as [EW], [EO] etc. refer to the SALT manual (Miller & Chapman, 1998)).

\$ CHILD, EXAMINER

+ Name: CINDY

+ Gender: F

+ CA: 6:4

+ Context: PERSONAL NARRATIVES

+ E: MW

= SANTA

E HE CAME TO <VISIT>^

C (<THE LAST>) THE LAST TIME I WENT TO SANTAPARADE.

C AND RICHARD GOT A BALLOON.

C AND HE WENT HOME.

C BECAUSE [EW: BUT] I DID/N'T GET A BALLOON.

E OH.

C BUT WHEN I CAME HOME SOMEBODY MUST/'VE DROP/ED A BALLOON ON MY STEP/S [D].

C AND SANTA DID.

E OH SANTA DROP/ED A BALLOON ON YOUR STEP?

C AND IT HURT MY CHEEK/S!

C CAUSE THE BALLOON GOT SORE.

C IT HURT MY CHEEK/S.

E OH, THE BALLOON GOT SORE AND HURT YOUR CHEEK/S?

C YES, MUM BLOW/ED IT UP<> FOR ME.

E <OH>OK.

= DOCTOR

E HAVE YOU EVER BEEN TO THE DOCTOR/Z?

C {SHAKES HEAD}.

E NO?

C CAUSE A LONG TIME AGO I HAD A PAIN IN MY ARM.

C AND IT DID/N'T GO AWAY FOR EVER.

E UHUH.

C BUT I HAD TO GO TO THE STARSHIP HOSPITAL.

C AND I HAD A NEEDLE IN IT SO IT GOT AWAY [D].

E UHUH.

C AND IT WENT AWAY.

C CAUSE A LONG TIME AGO (ONE OF MY FRIEND/S CAME OVER AND SWANG ME OH) JULIE CAME TO MY HOUSE.

C AND SHE SWANG ME ALL BY ONE ARM.

C AND (MY)ONE OF MY BONE/S (STICK) STICK/ED OUT HERE.

E OH DEAR.  
C MUM HAD TO PUT HEAPS OF BANDAID/S ON IT TO (S\*) MAKE IT STICK  
DOWN.  
E RIGHT.  
C AND I HAD TO GO TO THE HOSPITAL AGAIN.  
E AGAIN, OH.  
C CAUSE OUR DAD/'S GOT A BROKEN RIB.  
E RIGHT.  
C BECAUSE [EW:AND] IT HURT/3S [EW:HURT].  
C (CAUSE HE/'S) CAUSE ONE OF HIS FRIEND/S PUNCH/ED HIM IN THE  
BACK.  
E HM, PUNCH/ED HIM IN THE BACK?  
C {NODS}.  
E HM, WOW.

=MCDONALDS.

E HAVE YOU EVER BEEN TO MCDONALDS?  
C {NODS}.  
E CAN YOU TELL ME ABOUT IT?  
C AT OUR SCHOOL WE WENT TO THE HALL.  
E UHUH.  
C AND WE SAW HIM WALK/ING DOWN THE ROAD.  
=C IS THAT A REAL PICTURE?  
=E YES, (IT/'S A) IT/'S A POSTCARD.  
=E BUT IT IS (YES)A PHOTO OF HIM.  
E SO WHAT HAPPEN/ED?  
C WE SAW HIM WALK/ING DOWN THE ROAD.  
E UHUH.  
C AND HIS CAR GOT CRASH/ED.  
E HIS CAR GOT CRASH/ED?  
C AND HE BLOW/ED [EO:BLEW] IT UP AS A BALLOON.  
E HIS CAR?  
C AND HE MADE IT INTO A BALLOONCAR.  
C OPEN/ED THE BALLOONCAR DOOR.  
E RIGHT, ARE YOU SURE?  
E SO THEN WHAT HAPPEN/ED?  
C THAT WAS IT.

=PLANE

E HAVE YOU EVER BEEN ON A PLANE?  
C {NODS}.  
E CAN YOU TELL^  
C WE WENT ON ONE THAT GO/3S AROUND AND AROUND AND AROUND AND  
AROUND AND AROUND.  
E A HELICOPTER, OH, TELL ME ABOUT IT?  
C WE WAS [EW:WERE]AT THE AIRPORT.  
C AND WE SAW THIS HELICOPTER.



## REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Evans, J. L., & Craig, H. K. (1992). Language sample collection and analysis: Interview compared to freeplay assessment contexts. *Journal of Speech and Hearing Research*, 35, 343-353.

Gillon, G., Miller, J., Schwarz, I., & Westerveld, M. (2002). *The spoken language sample of New*