

# Acquisition Sketch Project Meeting

3:

Who and where to record?

How to record?

18th October 2023

# Who to record



# Guidelines

Number of children	Minimally 2
Age of children	5 ages – 2, 2½, 3, 3½, 4 years
Gender of children	Ideally mix of genders
Type of data	Natural(istic) interactions with children and adults
Recording schedule	Longitudinal, cross-lagged, or cross-sectional
Data to record	Minimally 10 hours - 60 minutes per child per age
Data to process	Minimally 5 hours – 30 minutes per child per age

# Ideal criteria

## Talkative

- Will produce more data in the allotted time

## Clear speech

- Loud enough to hear well, clear pronunciation
- Easier to understand and transcribe

## No developmental disorders

- As far as you can tell
- Goal is to document typical development first

# How to find children

## Ask adults in the community

- Which families have children of the right age?
  - Are they suitable for the project (social standing, language use, etc.)?
  - Do they have time and inclination to participate?
- Which children are suitable for the project (language abilities, delays, etc.)?

## Observe children in interaction

- Loud enough to hear well, clear pronunciation
- Talkative, interact easily with others

## Advertise / ask around (if appropriate)

- Local radio station, newspaper, community meetings, posters, word of mouth, etc.
- Helps to ensure that all have opportunity to participate

# Meeting with families

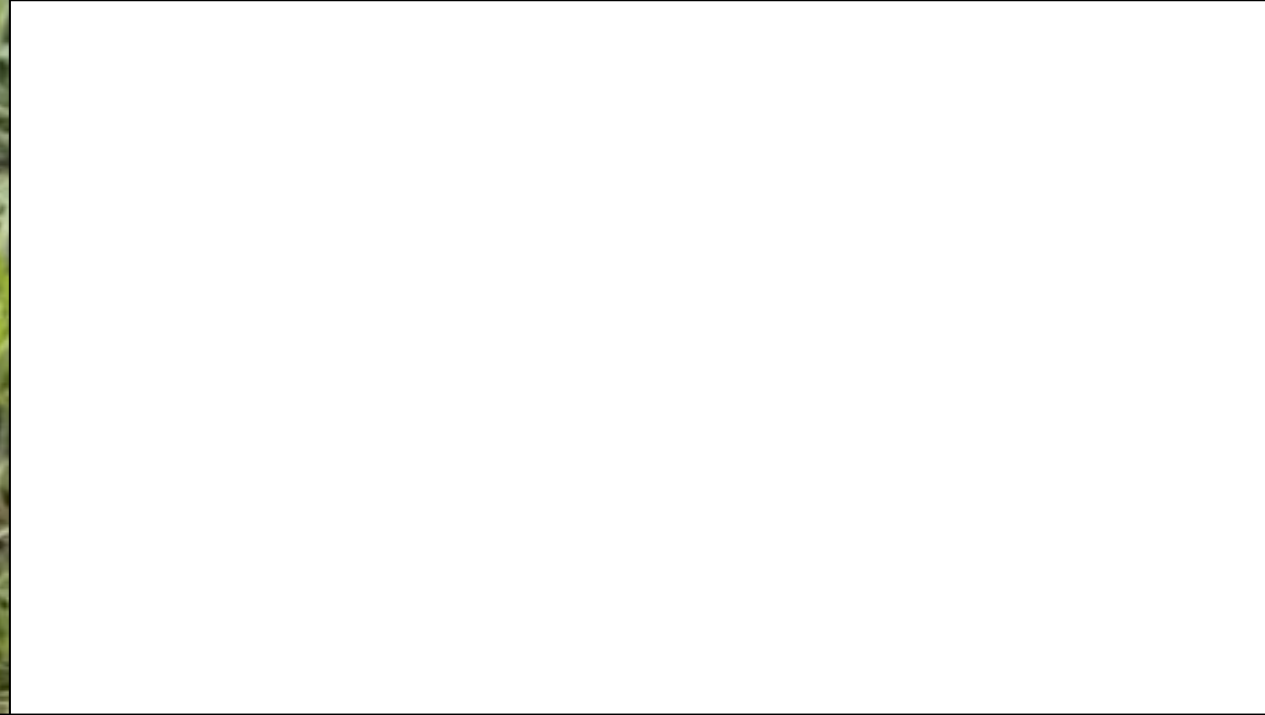
## Meet with each prospective family

- Explain your project and how the family would be involved
- Explain how data is collected, the desired schedule, the goal of taping
- Explain who else would be involved from your side (data collectors, etc.)
- Explain who you hope would be involved from their side (interlocutors, etc.)
- Give lots of opportunity to ask questions

## Tips from Maria Bardají, working with Totoli

- Take someone with you who has already been involved in the project – nice for new family to hear personal experience from someone they know and trust
- Take video of another child to show the family what the taping will be like
- Discuss specific activities or areas of the house that should/could be avoided for privacy reasons, or to ensure that visitors aren't unwillingly caught on tape

# Where to record



# Ideal criteria

## Natural(istic)

- Authentic interactions in familiar situations
- Representative of typical activities (play, meals, helping with chores, etc.)

## Variety of interlocutors

- Caregivers (CDS), peers, siblings, etc.
- Ideally not too many people at once so easier to transcribe

## No (or little) background noise

- Wind, dishwasher, vehicles passing by, nearby conversations, animals, etc.
- Easier to understand and transcribe



# How to decide on recording contexts

## Ask adults in the community and family

- What are typical activities of children? At what times of day?
- What does a typical day look like?
- In what contexts do children typically interact with others?
- Who do children typically interact with?

## Observe children in interaction

- Accompany the family for some time to get an idea of their activities and schedule
- See who the child interacts with well
- See what contexts facilitate interaction that yields good language

# Other factors to consider for recording contexts

## People with whom recording is not appropriate

- Rules/traditions around non-community members, gender, status, etc.?
- Consider hiring an appropriate community member to record data
- Consider having the family record themselves

## Locations or situations where recording is not appropriate or easy

- Consider non-home locations (community center, school, outdoors, etc.)
- Consider setting up a play situation, providing toys, providing food
- Make sure to respect family and community privacy

## Balance contexts

- All recordings in same context – consistency, comparability
- All in different contexts – representativeness, diversity

# How to record



# Ideal (and contradictory) criteria

## High quality audio and video

- High sample rate, limited wind noise, good lighting...
- One microphone on each person, close to the mouth
- Everyone clearly visible in video frame
- Camera on tripod, with as little movement/panning/zooming as possible

## Comfortable and non-restrictive

- Doesn't draw attention, can be forgotten
- Doesn't restrict activity
- Isn't irritating

Clearly visible so people don't unknowingly join the recording

# Recording equipment



What is best depends on the particular context

A single video camera with a shotgun mic attached

Wireless recording devices attached to the children themselves, plus a video camera with a shotgun mic as backup audio

2 video cameras

WARNING:  
children who are  
able to walk  
will **not** stay still  
near a stationary  
microphone



## On-person audio recording devices

Lightweight

Secured in a small, comfortable bag/vest

Ideally mic positioned close to child's mouth

# Neutralising presence of microphone

Cover the microphone

Make it invisible

Untouchable

Not (easily) removable



# Audio recording devices

Language Environment Analysis System (LENA)  
Can record for up to 24 hours



Expensive!

Are day-long recordings even an option?

# Audio recording devices

Wireless transmitter/receiver +  
lapel mic



Zoom H1 (+ wind sock)



# What to put the recording devices in



Buckle clips – very useful if using a bag



Adjustable to fit children of different sizes snugly

Recording device  
-securely placed in the bag  
- not easily removed by child

Microphone - ideally close to child's mouth (i.e. on the front of their body)

# Adapt a pre-made bag

Small backpack  
e.g. toddler harness/leash bags (with  
leash removed!)



Buckle clips

# Ideas for home-made options

Transmitter inside bag  
(which is velcro'd shut)



Padding sewn into bag



Lapel mic in little  
velcro'd pocket

Transmitter-receiver method  
-Audio aligned with video  
-Can listen to the audio while it is recording



Tie threaded through loops and secured around child



Zoom H1 in windsock placed in here (foam inside) Velcro'd shut

Slit for little stills camera (clipped onto foam) to peep out through

Zoom H1 in  
windsock  
placed in  
here



Rolled up and secured with velcro





# Neutralising presence of camera



Extra 'dummy'  
film makers

# Video from child's perspective

GoPro

Veho camera  
custom headband

Jessica Sullivan, Michelle Mei, Andrew Perfors, Erica Wojcik, Michael C. Frank; SAYCam: A Large, Longitudinal Audiovisual Dataset Recorded From the Infant's Perspective. *Open Mind* 2022; 5 20–29.

doi: [https://doi.org/10.1162/opmi\\_a\\_00039](https://doi.org/10.1162/opmi_a_00039)



**Narrative clip**, not currently available



Small stills camera  
Fisheye lens (glued on), clip on the back  
Captures still images from child's  
perspective every 5 seconds





# Useful tips

- If combining audio/video from multiple sources – auto align tool - [https://coedl-knowledgebase.readthedocs.io/en/latest/posts/20170509\\_av\\_align-intro-tutorial/index.html](https://coedl-knowledgebase.readthedocs.io/en/latest/posts/20170509_av_align-intro-tutorial/index.html)
- If combining still images with audio - <https://github.com/marisacasillas/Weave>
- Highly recommend

Casillas, M., and Cristia, A. (2019). A step-by-step guide to collecting and analyzing long-format speech environment (LFSE) recordings. *Collabra: Psychology*, 5(1): 24. DOI:

<https://doi.org/10.1525/collabra.209>

Alex Cristia and colleague's guide to long form recordings <https://bookdown.org/alecristia/az-lfr/>

# Recording practicalities – final points

- Only **you** know what the best recording set up is for your particular context
- Trial and error is a valid strategy when finding what works!
- **Any** child language data is better than none