**LSA FAQs**

Here are some of the most frequently asked questions about language sampling analysis (LSA). I’ve tried to group them by areas of concern.

**Utterances**

* It’s not okay to pick and choose. To keep it more scientific, we should take 50 consecutive utterances, so we're not making subjective choices about utterances. Even if there’s a lot of topic-jumping it’s fine. That's what little kids do.
* You cannot have more than two clauses joined by *and.* The reason is because *and* is simply additive and even 4-year-olds will string several clauses together with it. Other conjunctions are more complex so as long as there are no other obvious breaks, we can have several utterances joined by these.
* If an entire utterance is a noise or has three unintelligible words, omit the utterance. Mark the occasional noise or unintelligible word as X and count as both 1 morpheme and 1 word. It won't change the overall count much.
* Occasionally young children begin an utterance with *and*. That’s fine. As adults we begin about 20% of our utterances that way.
* Some children will use “starters” or words that help them hold their place while they get the utterance together. Examples include *well, oh, and,* and *so.* If you see a recurring pattern, omit the starters but note their use.
* Omit memorized utterances such as ABCs and counting. If the child is pretending to read or sing a song and obviously has not memorized the words, count the words and morphemes.

**MLU**

* Count morphological markers even if the child makes a mistake, as in “He’s turns into a jet.” *He’s* is incorrect but counts as 2 morphemes. The data is what it is, and we can’t change it.
* *Does, has*, and *says* are irregular third person singular forms and count as one morpheme. The test is in pronunciations: *eat-eats* (regular) but *say-says* (irregular). There is often confusion with goes which looks like the same form as does. Again, the test is in pronunciations: *do-does* (irregular), *go-goes* (regular).
* Consider words such as *M&M* or *ABC* to be one word and one morpheme.

**Clauses and sentences**

* A clause needs a subject and a verb. Therefore, “Mommy ate cookies” is a clause. It’s also a sentence.
* The subject may be understood, such as *you* in an imperative. In other words, “Jump!” is a clause and a sentence.
* As adults we typically add that a sentence expresses a complete thought. Not so for kids. As long as the subject and verb are there, count it.
* Conjoined clauses usually have a conjunction but not always, as in “I was sick; I went to school anyway. Decisions about one 2-clause or two 1-clause sentences are best made by the amount of pause if any and the intonation of the speaker.
* Conjunctions sometimes occur at the beginning of the sentence instead of in between the two clauses, as in “*Because* I was sick, I stayed home.”
* Embedded clauses are tricky. Embedded noun phrase complements finish the thought and often follow cognitive verbs such as *think, know, remember* and *forget*; sensory verbs such as *hear* and *see*, and verbs such as *say*, as in “Mom said, ‘The dog needs to be let out’.” Often there is a connecting word, such as *what, where, when, ho*w or *that* as in “I saw what you did” or “I know that you lied.” The word *that* is often omitted as in “I know you lied.”

**Subanalysis grammatical categories**

* Not every word will fit into the categories on the analysis form. That’s okay.
* The word *ones* in *the nice ones* is a noun with an article and an adjective. It is not a numerical term. Numerical terms modify nouns as in *one puppy*.
* Words such as *have, do*, and *be* are either auxiliary verbs or main verbs, not both.
	+ *Does* she study after school = Auxiliary verb
	+ She *does* her homework after school = Main verb
	+ He *has* gone to school = Auxiliary verb
	+ He *has* a cookie = Main verb
* The word *that* can be a demonstrative, as in “*that* car,” or a pronoun, as in “Give me *that*.” Do NOT check in both columns.
* Contracted verbs, such as *he’s, I’ve*, and *we’ll*, are still verbs and should be placed in the appropriate category.
* Adverbs can go in either the NP of the VP. Make sure that you get it in the right place. In the VP an adverb modifies the verb, as in “He *really* jumped.” There is no column for VP adverbs. In the NP, an adverb can be in two places, before or after the noun. Before the noun, adverbs modify the adjective, as in “a *really* nasty dog.” There is nowhere on the form to mark this. After the noun, adverbs (*Adverbial* column) are generally limited to place (here) and time (now), as in “this dog *here*.”
* Prepositions include *about, above, across, after, against, along, among, around, at, before, behind, below, beneath, beside, between, by, down, during , except, for (person), for, from, , in, inside, instead of, into, like, near, next to, of, on, onto, out of, over, past, since, through, to, toward, under, underneath, until, up, upon, with, within,* and *without*. Be extremely careful because many of these words have multiple function, such as the use of *to* in the infinitive and *since* as a conjunction. In addition, *up* and *down* can be prepositions (when followed by a NP) or adverbs (He fell *down*).
* Note that prepositional phrases can appear in either the NP or the VP. In “He is making something *for you*,” the prepositional phrase describes something. In “Put the book *on the table*,” the prepositional phrase completes the verb; otherwise *put* makes no sense. We wouldn’t say “Put the book.”
* Under NP, a descriptor is another noun used to modify the noun in the NP, as in *teacher* thing, *clown* face, *car* key, *shoe* stand, *pet* doggy, and *soda* can. Even a gerund can serve as a descriptor, as in *swimming pool*. If the word is a compound one, such as *baseball* or *railroad*, it is a noun. Do NOT divide it into two words and then mark the first as a descriptor.
* In phrases such as “a rock with feet” and “a piece of paper,” you have a noun (*rock, piece)* modified by a post-noun modifier, a prepositional phrase. Each prepositional phrase also contains a noun (*feet, paper*).
* “I’m going to…” is the present progressive even though it is a form of future meaning *I will*.
* A gerund is like a noun as “It was my big *opening*.” In this case “my big opening” is a NP with *possessive pronoun + adjective + N*.
* The word *let’s* is NOT the possessive or a contraction of *is*. It is a contraction of *let us*.
* *It’s* and *its* are two different forms. The first, *it’s*, is a contracted form of *it is*. The second, *its*, is a possessive pronoun, much like *his*. When in doubt, see if *it is* works instead. If not, then you have the possessive pronoun.
* Likewise, the contraction *he’s* is made up of *he* + *is*. IT IS NOT POSSESSIVE!
* Be careful with verbs ending in “t”, such as *cut* and *hurt*. They do not change when they are past tense, as in evident in “I cut my hand yesterday.” The form is irregular past.
* Modal auxiliary verbs express mood or feeling relative to the main verb and include *can, could, would, should, may, might, must, will* and others. *I can go, I should go, I might go, I will go*.
* Not every word ending in *–ed* or *-ing* is a verb. There are other uses for *-ed* and *–ing*. They are used for adjectives, as in *bearded man,* and descriptors, as in *dancing bear*.

**Author:** Emily Matthews
**Date:** Tuesday, October 25, 2011 8:38:12 PM EDT
**Subject:** fillers

My subject stated, "Oh yeah!". Is oh considered a true filler here so this would only be one morpheme? He also stated, "He he turns into a jet like the other one turns into a jet." Is like considered a filler here and not counted as a morpheme? My gut feeling is that in both contexts, both would be counted as morphemes.