Introduction

• Spring 2016 I worked with Dr. Lizbeth Finestack in the Department of Speech-Language-Hearing Sciences as part of the CLA Freshman Research Award.

• In the Child Language Intervention Lab, I worked on a variety of tasks including training and becoming reliable in the transcription of child language samples.

Transcription

• Transcription is the process of obtaining a physical written or printed representation of verbal communication.

• Transcribing any type of communication or speech allows for the statistical analysis of many aspects of language.

• In the Child Language Intervention Lab we use the Systematic Analysis of Language Transcripts (SALT) system to ensure consistency in transcription.

• SALT provides clinicians and researchers with a means to transcribe language samples into a common format and to compute a series of general analyses of lexical, syntactic, semantic, pragmatic, rate, fluency, and error measures.

Training

• I completed intensive training to become proficient in SALT transcription conventions through a series of eight online training modules.

• These modules taught me the rules and codes for transcribing, and provided me with sample conversations and narratives to transcribe.

Reliability

• Once I learned the transcription conventions I was provided with conversation and narrative samples to ensure that I was at least 80% reliable.

• These samples were all samples that senior transcribers has already transcribed so once I finished my transcription I compared it to their transcriptions.

• To obtain a quantitative representation of reliability we entered both transcriptions side by side into an excel sheet and compared them word for word for elements, such as segmentation, number of mazes, number of marked morphemes and so on.

Performance

• When I first started transcribing I was right at the 80% reliability point then saw a sharp increase as I practiced more that eventually evened out to steadily remain over 80% reliability.

Overall Reliability Percentage

Performance cont.

• Over time, my reliability increased across all categories.

• Some categories (mazes) tended to have lower reliability than others (word by word agree) because they occur much less frequently so there is much less room for error.

My experience working in the lab has taught me a wide variety of concepts and skills:

• I realized that there are so many parts of language that we do not usually consciously recognize when listening to someone speak and we have to train ourselves to recognize certain repetitions and mistakes.

• I have become better at recognizing language errors, especially in young children’s speech.

• I have become proficient with a coding system (SALT) that is very important in my field of study.

• I have improved my time management skills as research is very time intensive.

• I have learned what it is to be part of a lab and work with teams on projects and participate in meetings.

• I have learned that research is a long process that relies upon the contribution of many different individuals.

The skills I have learned through transcription and my time in the lab have a wide variety of academic and real world applications and have made me overall more aware and conscious of the aspects of language and the interworking’s of a research lab.