Application 2: Analysis of spontaneous child speech

Important note: This is a real application which has been doctored for the purposes of training. Information has been removed from the application and the application has been anonymised. The UREC does not endorse this application as a model.

The application, shown on the following pages, was discussed at the workshop. A summary of the key points raised by the participants and the UREC follows (this is not an exhaustive list):

- It does not state whether the data will be used for this research only or for future use.
- It does not state who will have access to listen to the recordings.
- If the participants are known to the researcher then there could be a risk of coercion. It should be clear that they do not have to take part and that they can withdraw from the research at any time.
- The application mentions an information sheet, consent form and letter but these are not provided with the application.
- Although consent will be obtained from the parents, there should be a consideration of obtaining assent from the child.
- Although the researcher knows the participants there could still be a risk of personal safety to the researcher as they are entering their homes; there should be an agreed safety procedure in place (e.g. to tell someone where they are going and to arrange a check-in phone call at a specified time).
- There is no detail about the how the data will be stored securely.
- There is no information about when the data will be deleted.
- Given that this is a generic research ethics application, it would be good practice to ask students to fill in an ethics application form as part of their education.
Complete this form if you are a member of staff or a postgraduate research student who plans to undertake a research project which requires ethics approval via the University Ethics Review Procedure.

or

Complete this form if you plan to submit a ‘generic’ research ethics application (i.e. an application that will cover several sufficiently similar research projects). Information on the ‘generic’ route is at: www.sheffield.ac.uk/ris/other/gov-ethics/ethicspolicy/approval-procedure/review-procedure/generic-research-projects

If you are an undergraduate or a postgraduate-taught student, this is the wrong form.

PLEASE NOTE THAT YOUR DEPARTMENT MAY USE A VARIATION OF THIS FORM: PLEASE CHECK WITH THE ETHICS ADMINISTRATOR IN YOUR DEPARTMENT

This form should be accompanied, where appropriate, by all Information Sheets/Covering Letters/Written Scripts which you propose to use to inform the prospective participants about the proposed research, and/or by a Consent Form where you need to use one.

Further guidance on how to apply is at: www.shef.ac.uk/ris/other/gov-ethics/ethicspolicy/approval-procedure/review-procedure

Guidance on the possible routes for obtaining ethics approval (i.e. on the University Ethics Review Procedure, the NHS procedure and the Social Care Research Ethics Committee, and the Alternative procedure) is at: www.shef.ac.uk/ris/other/gov-ethics/ethicspolicy/approval-procedure/ethics-approval

Once you have completed this research ethics application form in full, and other documents where appropriate, check that your name, the title of your research project and the date is contained in the footer of each page and email it to the Ethics Administrator of your academic department. Please note that the original signed and dated version of ‘Part B’ of the application form should also be provided to the Ethics Administrator in hard copy. Ethics Administrators are listed at: www.shef.ac.uk/polopoly_fs/1.99105!/file/Ethics-Administrators.pdf

I confirm that I have read the current version of the University of Sheffield ‘Ethics Policy Governing Research Involving Human Participants, Personal Data and Human Tissue’, as shown on the University’s research ethics website at: www.shef.ac.uk/ris/other/gov-ethics/ethicspolicy
Part A

A1. Title of Research Project: Analysis of spontaneous child speech

A2. Contact person (normally the Principal Investigator, in the case of staff-led research projects, or the student in the case of supervised-postgraduate researcher projects):

Title: ***
Post: ***
Email: ***
Name: ***
Department: ***
Telephone: ***

A2.1. Is this a postgraduate researcher project? If yes, please provide the Supervisor's contact details:

Title: 
Post: 
Email: 
Name: 
Department: 
Telephone: 

A2.2. Other key investigators/co-applicants (within/outside University), where applicable. Please list all (add more if necessary):

Title: 
Post: 
Email: 
Name: 
Department: 
Telephone: 

Title: 
Post: 
Email: 
Name: 
Department: 
Telephone: 

A3. Proposed Project Duration:

Start date: ***
End date: ***

A4. Mark 'X' in one or more of the following boxes if your research:

- involves adults with mental incapacity or mental illness
- involves prisoners or others in custodial care (e.g. young offenders)
- involves children or young people aged under 18 years
- involves using samples of human biological material collected before for another purpose
- involves taking new samples of human biological material (e.g. blood, tissue)
- involves testing a medicinal product
- involves taking new samples of human biological material (e.g. blood, tissue)
- involves additional radiation above that required for clinical care
- involves investigating a medical device
- is social care research
- is ESRC funded

* If you have marked boxes marked * then you also need to obtain confirmation that appropriate University insurance is in place. The procedure for doing so is entirely by email. Please send an email addressed to insurance@shef.ac.uk and request a copy of the ‘Clinical Trial Insurance Application Form’. 
It is recommended that you familiarise yourself with the University’s Ethics Policy Governing Research Involving Human Participants, Personal Data and Human Tissue before completing the following questions. Please note that if you provide sufficient information about the research (what you intend to do, how it will be carried out and how you intend to minimise any risks), this will help the ethics reviewers to make an informed judgement quickly without having to ask for further details.

A5. Briefly summarise:

i. The project’s aims and objectives:
   (this must be in language comprehensible to a lay person)

This project is an assessment for students taking *** module. They will be required to record 1 hour of speech from a child in a natural setting, transcribe the recording, and undertake an analysis of the features of the child’s speech using frameworks discussed in class.

ii. The project’s methodology:
   (this must be in language comprehensible to a lay person)

The students will audio record a child in a natural setting for a period of one hour. During this time, they may interact with the child and play games, or may simply observe the child interacting with their parent/caregiver. The child will not be required to do anything other than their normal play/activities, since the focus is on obtaining data as close as possible to the child’s natural language.

A6. What is the potential for physical and/or psychological harm/distress to participants?

None. However, one important consideration is that the nature and duration of the project means that the students will not have time to obtain CRB Disclosure Certificates to enable them to work in nurseries/schools etc. For this reason, they will be instructed only to approach friends and family when finding participants, so that the child – or at least the parents – will know them. Further, they will be asked to remain present throughout the data collection and only agree to their child’s taking part if they know and trust the student who has approached them.

A7. Does your research raise any issues of personal safety for you or other researchers involved in the project? (especially if taking place outside working hours or off University premises)

No. Students will be working in child-friendly settings, and with children/parents they know.

If yes, explain how these issues will be managed.
A8. How will the potential participants in the project be:

i. Identified?

Participants will be the children of parents known to the students undertaking the research.

ii. Approached?

The initial approach will be by the students themselves, but this will be followed up by a letter from the supervisor, as part of establishing the informed consent process, explaining the purpose of the request, and making very clear that it is up to the parents to decide whether or not to allow their child to participate.

iii. Recruited?

Parents will agree to their child’s participation after having spoken with the student and received a letter from the supervisor.

A9. Will informed consent be obtained from the participants?

Yes [X] No [ ]

If informed consent or consent is NOT to be obtained please explain why. Further guidance is at: www.shef.ac.uk/ris/other/gov-ethics/ethicspolicy/policy-notes/consent

A9.1. This question is only applicable if you are planning to obtain informed consent:

How do you plan to obtain informed consent? (i.e. the proposed process?):

Parents will sign a consent form after having read an information sheet and a letter from the supervisor.

Since the children will be very young, they will not be explicitly asked to take part in a study, but they will be asked if they would like to take part in the games/activities during the session, and thus have the opportunity to refuse or to choose to do something else.

Remember to attach your consent form and information sheet (where appropriate)
A10. What measures will be put in place to ensure confidentiality of personal data, where appropriate?

This will be handled through student briefing, prior to starting the project. They will be asked to use pseudonyms when referring to the child, and will only collect minimal data to allow analysis of the child’s speech (e.g. age, sex)

A11. Will financial/in kind payments (other than reasonable expenses and compensation for time) be offered to participants? (Indicate how much and on what basis this has been decided)

No financial reward/recompense will be offered. The only benefit to the child is that participation in this study gives them an addition opportunity for interaction with others.

A12. Will the research involve the production of recorded media such as audio and/or video recordings?

YES X NO

A12.1. This question is only applicable if you are planning to produce recorded media:

How will you ensure that there is a clear agreement with participants as to how these recorded media may be stored, used and (if appropriate) destroyed?

As part of the introductory letter from the supervisor and the information given to parents by the students, it will be made clear that the session will be audio recorded for later transcription.

Guidance on a range of ethical issues, including safety and well-being, consent and anonymity, confidentiality and data protection are available at: www.shef.ac.uk/ris/other/gov-ethics/ethicspolicy/policy-notes
Title of Research Project:

Analysis of spontaneous child speech

I confirm my responsibility to deliver the research project in accordance with the University of Sheffield’s policies and procedures, which include the University’s ‘Financial Regulations’, ‘Good Research Practice Standards’ and the ‘Ethics Policy Governing Research Involving Human Participants, Personal Data and Human Tissue’ (Ethics Policy) and, where externally funded, with the terms and conditions of the research funder.

In signing this research ethics application form I am also confirming that:

- The form is accurate to the best of my knowledge and belief.
- The project will abide by the University’s Ethics Policy.
- There is no potential material interest that may, or may appear to, impair the independence and objectivity of researchers conducting this project.
- Subject to the research being approved, I undertake to adhere to the project protocol without unagreed deviation and to comply with any conditions set out in the letter from the University ethics reviewers notifying me of this.
- I undertake to inform the ethics reviewers of significant changes to the protocol (by contacting my academic department’s Ethics Administrator in the first instance).
- I am aware of my responsibility to be up to date and comply with the requirements of the law and relevant guidelines relating to security and confidentiality of personal data, including the need to register when necessary with the appropriate Data Protection Officer (within the University the Data Protection Officer is based in CiCS).
- I understand that the project, including research records and data, may be subject to inspection for audit purposes, if required in future.
- I understand that personal data about me as a researcher in this form will be held by those involved in the ethics review procedure (e.g. the Ethics Administrator and/or ethics reviewers) and that this will be managed according to Data Protection Act principles.
- If this is an application for a ‘generic’ project, all the individual projects that fit under the generic project are compatible with this application.
- I understand that this project cannot be submitted for ethics approval in more than one department, and that if I wish to appeal against the decision made, this must be done through the original department.

Name of the Principal Investigator (or the name of the Supervisor if this is a postgraduate researcher project):

***

If this is a postgraduate researcher project, insert the student’s name here:


Signature of Principal Investigator (or the Supervisor):

*** Date:***

Email the completed application form and provide a signed, hard copy of ‘Part B’ to the Ethics Administrator (also enclose, if relevant, other documents).