

1. Record Nr.	UNINA9910796572803321
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Titolo	Research methods in language acquisition : principles, procedures, and practices / / Maria Blume and Barbara C. Lust
Pubbl/distr/stampa	Washington, District of Columbia : , : De Gruyter Mouton : , : American Psychological Association, , 2017 ©2017
ISBN	3-11-041560-7 3-11-041533-X
Edizione	[First edition.]
Descrizione fisica	1 online resource (324 pages)
Collana	Language and the Human Lifespan Series
Disciplina	401/.930721
Soggetti	Language acquisition - Research - Methodology Language acquisition - Research - Data processing Language acquisition - Psychological aspects - Research Language and languages - Age differences Children - Language - Psychological aspects Speech acts (Linguistics) - Research Psycholinguistics
Lingua di pubblicazione	Inglese
Formato	Materiale a stampa
Livello bibliografico	Monografia
Nota di bibliografia	Includes bibliographical references and index.
Nota di contenuto	Frontmatter -- Contents -- Preface -- Acknowledgments -- Introduction -- 1. The Challenge of Studying Language -- 2. Preparing to Work With Children, Schools, and Families -- 3. Creating the Data I: Working in Teams, Basic Data Collection, Data Sharing, and Data Management -- 4. Studying Language Acquisition Through Collecting Speech -- 5. Introduction to Experimental Methods: Design and Analysis -- 6. Experimental Tasks for Generating Language Production Data -- 7. Experimental Tasks for Generating Language Comprehension Data -- 8. The Grammaticality Judgment Task -- 9. Creating the Data II: Begin Data Processing -- 10. Creating the Data III: Preparing for Data Analysis -- 11. Interpreting the Data: Scientific Inference -- 12. Assessing Multilingual Acquisition -- 13. Introduction to Infant Testing Methods in Language Acquisition Research -- 14. Conclusions and Proceeding to the Future -- Appendix A: Transcription

Sommario/riassunto

Language acquisition research is challenging—the intricate behavioral and cognitive foundations of speech are difficult to measure objectively. The audible components of speech, however, are quantifiable and thus provide crucial data. This practical guide synthesizes the authors' decades of experience into a comprehensive set of tools that will allow students and early career researchers in the field to design and conduct rigorous studies that produce reliable and valid speech data and interpretations. The authors thoroughly review specific techniques for obtaining qualitative and quantitative speech data, including how to tailor the testing environments for optimal results. They explore observational tasks for collecting natural speech and experimental tasks for eliciting specific types of speech. Language comprehension tasks are also reviewed so researchers can study participants' interpretations of speech and conceptualizations of grammar. Most tasks are oriented towards children, but special considerations for infants are also reviewed, as well as multilingual children. Chapters also provide strategies for transcribing and coding raw speech data into reliable data sets that can be scientifically analyzed. Furthermore, they investigate the intricacies of interpretation so that researchers can make empirically sound inferences from their data and avoid common pitfalls that can lead to unscientific conclusions.
