

Please cite as:

Bowerman, Melissa & Asifa Majid. 2003. Kids' cut & break. In N.J. Enfield (ed.), Field Research Manual 2003, part I: multimodal interaction, Space, event representation, 70-71. Nijmegen: Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics.

You can find this entry on:

<http://fieldmanuals.mpi.nl/volumes/2003-1/kids-cut-break/>

REGULATIONS ON USE**Stephen C. Levinson and Asifa Majid**

This website and the materials herewith supplied have been developed by members of the Language and Cognition Department of the Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics (formerly the Cognitive Anthropology Research Group). In a number of cases materials were designed in collaboration with staff from other MPI departments.

Proper attribution

Any use of the materials should be acknowledged in publications, presentations and other public materials. Entries have been developed by different individuals. Please cite authors as indicated on the webpage and front page of the pdf entry. Use of associated stimuli should also be cited by acknowledging the field manual entry. Intellectual property rights are hereby asserted.

No redistribution

We urge you not to redistribute these files yourself; instead point people to the appropriate page on the Field Manual archives site. This is important for the continuing presence of the website. We will be updating materials, correcting errors and adding information over time. The most recent versions of materials can always be found on our website.

Be in touch

The materials are being released in the spirit of intellectual co-operation. In some cases the authors of entries have not had the chance to publish results yet. It is expected that users will share results garnered from use of these materials in free intellectual exchange before publication. You are encouraged to get in touch with us if you are going to use these materials for collecting data. These manuals were originally intended as working documents for internal use only. They were supplemented by verbal instructions and additional guidelines in many cases.

The contents of manuals, entries therein and field-kit materials are modified from time to time, and this provides an additional motivation for keeping close contact with the Language and Cognition Department. We would welcome suggestions for changes and additions, and comments on the viability of different materials and techniques in various field situations.

Contact

Email us via <http://fieldmanuals.mpi.nl/contact/>
Language and Cognition Department
Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics
Postbox310, 6500AH, Nijmegen, The Netherlands

Kids' Cut & Break

Melissa Bowerman and Asifa Majid

Kids' Cut & Break is a new task, inspired by the original Cut & Break task (see MPI L&C Group Field Manual 2001), but designed for use with children as well as adults. There are fewer videoclips to be described (34 as opposed to 61), and they are "friendlier" and more interesting: the actors wear colorful clothes, smile, and don't act like zombies.

The first 2 items are warm-ups and 4 more items are fillers (interspersed with test items), so only 28 of the items are actually "test items". In the original Cut & Break, each clip is in a separate file. In Kids' Cut & Break, all 34 clips are edited into a single file, which plays the clips successively with 5 seconds of black screen between each clip.

1. If possible, test people in a quiet environment where there are not kibbitzers around, all giving their own opinion. Of course, this may be difficult, this is often a snag in field situations. So if you can't help having more than one person looking on and volunteering opinions at a time, then you can sometimes turn this to your advantage: each person in turn is allowed to give an opinion; sometimes they will argue a bit, and this can be quite informative. More than one at a time works OK for adults and relatively fluent kids, but of course don't have small children doing it soon after they hear how a more fluent speaker does it.

2. Tell the viewer that you will show them some little movies showing people doing things, and you'd like them to describe what they are doing. For older kids and adults, this is pretty straightforward. It should be possible to motivate the request by pointing out that you are trying to learn the language and they can help you by telling you the right way to talk about things -- they are the expert. For young kids, depending on how shy they are, etc., it can be helpful to enlist the help of another, older native speaker -- adult or older child -- who will sit nearby but can't see the screen; the child's job is then to tell this addressee what is happening. The addressee, if trained a little, can help by asking leading questions if the child is producing very little, or only deictic expressions ("he did like this").

3. You can take as long over each clip as you need to, including replaying it if the viewer wants to see it again -- offer to replay whenever you think they are hesitant. [See footnote 1 on how to do this.¹] Especially with younger kids it's helpful to keep up a patter of interaction that of course should avoid the target description. This will be hard for you unless you are very fluent in the language; if possible, try to get an assistant to collect the child data, who can talk naturally to the child about the objects, and also, in general terms, the event, e.g. "What is this?" (hammer), "Oh, do you have one of these at home?" "Oh, is that different from how your mother does it?", etc. etc. (Make sure assistants realize they should not describe the event themselves!)

4. There are four versions of the full file, with all the same clips but ordered differently. Within a set of speakers that are of approximately the same age (e.g., "adults"), rotate which version you show; this will help control for order effects (i.e., influences on the description that come from what has been described earlier). Thus: show Film 1 to the first adult, Film 2 to the second adult, and so on through all four films, then start over again.

1

To VIEW full screen	Alt + Enter
To VIEW large screen – but with menu still available	Alt + 3
PLAY/PAUSE	Ctrl + P
STOP (this will make the film start from the beginning again)	Ctrl + S

If you wish to REWIND to play back a clip, then PAUSE, go to scroll bar at bottom and drag back, then PLAY.

5. Age groups. An age group is an averaged notion: e.g., “6 year olds” might have an average age of 6;0, but range in age between e.g. 5;5 and 6;7. If you have access to lots of children, e.g. in age-graded school classes, try to test around 10 subjects in each of three age groups: 4 years old, 6 years olds, and adults. In many field situations this will be impossible -- you may need to take what you can get. If you have a random assortment of kids between, say, 3 or 4 and 9 or 10, go ahead and test as many as possible, they can be divided into age groups later for comparison (assuming ages are available; if not, make an estimate). Remember to get a reasonable sample of adult data too (at least three speakers)!

6. "Lead the witness", if necessary: participants should not be left entirely free to describe the event in any terms they want. If they say "she's making rags" in response to a picture of e.g. ripping cloth, or "she's getting ready to eat a banana" for chopping a banana, they should be probed further to describe the intended event. These events are all caused state changes; you can get a sense of what is intended by looking at the descriptions of the events in Table 1, which lists all the clips ordered as in Film 1. (For clarity, the descriptions for the test clips all include an instrument, but speakers may well omit these; that's OK.)

We are really pleased you are using Kids Cut&Break, and look forward to seeing your results!

Table 1: Description of clips, ordered as in Film 1 (items in italics are warm-ups or fillers)

- 1 *drink_juice*
- 2 *throw_ball*
- 3 cut_paper_scissors
- 4 break_twig_hands
- 5 cut_bread_knife
- 6 tear_paper_knife
- 7 tear_cloth_hand
- 8 *draw_picture*
- 9 cut_nails_nailclipper
- 10 break_chocolate-bar_hand
- 11 cut_cake_piece of broken pot
- 12 cut_egg_eggcutter
- 13 break_pot_hammer
- 14 *eat_cookie*
- 15 cut_twig_knife
- 16 cut_nail_tang
- 17 cut_cardboard_knife
- 18 tear_piece of bread_hand
- 19 cut_hair_scissors
- 20 tear_plastic-bag_hand
- 21 cut_banana_knife
- 22 *kick_ball*
- 23 break_baguette_hand
- 24 tear_banana-peel_tong
- 25 tear_sheet off pad_hand
- 26 cut_cloth_scissors
- 27 cut_bread_scissors
- 28 *open_jar*
- 29 cut_grass_against scythe
- 30 cut_twig_axe
- 31 break_glass_elbow
- 32 break_rope_chisel+hammer
- 33 cut_banana_scissors
- 34 cut_rope_knife