

SCHOOL OF PSYCHOLOGICAL SCIENCES

Parent Information Sheet

Title of project: It goed like this: how children learn to form the past tense.

Introduction

When we hear children say things like '*It goed bang*' we know that they have picked up on some of the regularities of their language and put them to creative use. It is unlikely that they often hear the word '*goed*' but they can use it on the basis of a pattern they do hear very often: adding '*-ed*' to a verb to make a past tense. We are interested in how children learn this pattern and when and why they sometimes over-apply it, a process called *over-regularization*. We are also interested in why children sometimes fail to mark pastness, saying things like '*It go bang*' when they mean '*It went bang*'. Previous studies suggest that the likelihood of children producing a correct past tense form is determined by a number of factors including the amount of times a child has previously heard the past tense of the verb, how a verb sounds in its present and past tense forms, and the verb's meaning. In the current study we are interested in investigating these factors in more detail.

What will my child be asked to do if s/he takes part?

If your child takes part s/he will play a game with one of our researchers. S/he will be shown a series of pictures or short animations of a variety of characters and will hear sentences about their activities. We will encourage your child to produce a past tense form of a number of different verbs, for example, the researcher might say '*This duck likes to jump. Here he is jumping. Yesterday he did the same thing. Yesterday he*' or '*This is what the duck did yesterday, oh what happened? Yesterday he ...*' and your child might respond '*jumped*'. The experiment should last approximately 20 minutes and will be conducted at your child's nursery or school. Each session will be audio-recorded so we are able to check and code your child's responses.

Will my child's data be confidential?

Yes, only the researchers will have access to the data. Any identifying information will be removed from the data if they are used in research publications. The audio recordings will be stored in a secure unit in the School of Psychological Sciences and, unless you indicate otherwise, they will be kept in an anonymous form for future studies.

Does my child have to take part?

You do not have to allow your child to take part in the study. If you decide to allow your child to take part and then later change your mind (be that before your child starts the study, half way through it, or even after it) you can withdraw without giving your reasons, and, if you wish, your child's data will be destroyed.

Where can I obtain further information if I need it?

If you require any further details, please contact XXX on XXX, the Research Assistant responsible for data collection. This project is funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC grant no. RES-062-23-3062). The primary investigator responsible for the project is Dr Anna Theakston, Senior Lecturer in Developmental Psychology, Telephone: XXX, Email: anna.theakston@manchester.ac.uk

**This project has been approved by the
School of Psychological Sciences Research Ethics Committee**