

Procedures for interviewing

Before meeting with the participant:

1. Think about the possible conversation topics for the interview
2. Create a plan
 - You will need to be flexible and adapt to your participant, but you do need a plan
 - We want to AVOID LANGUAGE related questions until the END of the interview
 - If the participant suspects the focus of the interview is about language, it will influence the way he/she speaks
3. You will need a recording device (an application on your smart phone will work)
 - Test the recorder/phone app a few times before the interview
 - Ensure that you know how to use it and that it will record
 - Listen to the recording
 - Make sure you can clearly make out what is recorded
 - Transfer the file from your device to a computer

When you arrive for the interview:

1. Before recording, talk for a little while with your participant, make him/her feel comfortable
 - This is especially important if you do not know the participant
2. Consent form
 - Give it to your participant CAREFULLY
 - Explain to him/her that it is just a formality
 - That it wouldn't be necessary except for the policies of the university
 - It is very important to make sure your participant doesn't see this as a formal situation

Starting the interview:

1. What should the conversation look like?
 - The participant speaks a lot and the interviewer speaks little
 - But the interview should follow a normal conversation flow
 - Ryan:** ¿Y de niña qué juegos jugabas?
 - Hillo003:** ¿Te los vas a saber?
 - Ryan:** A lo mejor no, pero luego me puedes explicar...

Hillo003: Ah ok, pues era uno que se llamaba la bebe leche..

Ryan: Ah esto es lo que contó tu mamá también.

Hillo003:

- You need to engage the participant.
 - Make eye contact
 - Be active in the conversation
 - You want to learn from the participant, their life, their experiences
 - This is the most interesting person in the world!!
 - (But: DON'T EXAGGERATE. Its easy to tell if you are being fake and this wont help)

- Problem: The observers paradox
 - "To obtain the data most important for linguistic theory, we have to observe how people speak when they are not being observed" (Labov 1972: 113).
 - Our job is to lessen the effects of the observers paradox
 - Try to make the interview as natural as possible
 - Try to make the interview as informal and as comfortable as possible
 - Always follow the instructions under the section "you need to engage the participant"
 - Según Labov, during the first 20 minutes (more or less) the participant is the most aware of the interviewer as an observer, but later, the conversation becomes more natural. This is when we can see the least effects of the paradox
 - For this reason, it is important to keep the environment a casual one and to find topics that are interesting to the participant
 - This is also why we do the demographic questions at the start of the interview, since this is the most formal part, we can ask the more formal questions and get ideas of what to ask later

- 2. The interview should last about an hour

- 3. During the interview you want to take notes about what the participant says or how the participant says them
 - It is best to take these notes mental and write them down right after the interview
 - If you are taking notes during the interview, the participant will not speak in an informal way
 - You can include these in the "Field Notes (FN)" document

- 4. At the end of the interview (the last 10 minutes) you can ask questions

about language.

5. Remember to be flexible with your plan

- You have to find themes that are of interest to the participant
- You need to ask follow up questions (to get the participant to talk)

Ryan: ¿Y has cruzado la frontera?

Hillo003: Sí

Ryan: ¿Y cuantas veces?

Hillo003: Pues más de veinte yo creo

Ryan: ¿Y que te gusta hacer al otro lado?

Hillo003: De compras jaja.

Ryan: ¿Como qué?

Hillo003: Pues ropa. Voy y compro ropa. Me ha gustado ir hacer otras cosas pero igual no tengo tiempo porque siempre voy como dos días o tres días y es que como he querido ir como al zoológico o ir a otras partes así a fuera. He ido al Gran Canyon también y así, y es muy bonito pero, es cuando tienes que tener mas días, pero por lo regular cuando voy es con lo de compras.

6. What do you do if the participant doesn't give a good response?

Ryan: Ok. Y ¿puedes recordar de un evento muy importante de tu vida?

Hillo 020: ¿Un evento muy importante? ¿Evento como qué?

Ryan: Como algo que te pasó muy bueno..quizás malo...

Hillo 020: Un evento...pues no es tan un evento... Yo estuve en un...concurso académico de la historia de México y soy una de las que si me das un libro para aprendérmelo de memoria con puntos y comas..yo me lo aprendo y así soy... Y estuve en la historia de México... Estuve en la historia de México cursando al nivel estatal y gané. Y pues pero pues, la historia de México. Imagínate. La cultura hasta Fox hasta ahí...muy... Tengo mm... Tengo la memoria..Tengo muy buena xxx de memoria. Y este fue un evento que porque a mí.. Yo estaba en una escuela y en ese escuela donde estaba los maestros apostaban... eh....si ganas te voy a dar esto, si ganas te voy a dar el otro...Entonces fueron muchas de que me tenían muy presionada y cuando logré no pensé que lo iba a lograr pero...era de los cinco mejores del estado en historia..

7. Different types of participants

- Some participants will talk a lot and make your job really easy
 - Husband after I interviewed his wife
- Other participants will not answer in many words and you have to find a theme that interests them
 - I had a participant that answered “yes” or “no” or in just a couple of words to every question (even open-ended

questions). He kept looking at this calendar on the wall that was filled with images of cars. So I asked “what was the make and model of your first car?” and he talked non-stop for the next five minutes.

After the interview:

1. Thank your participant for the time they spent talking to you
2. Ask your participant to fill out the "Bilingual Language Profile table (for speaker)"
3. Ask your participant to fill out the "Demographic information, participant (DI)"

At some point:

You need to fill out the "Demographic information for the interviewer"

-For non-native speakers (you learned Spanish in school) you will need to use the ACTFL guidelines to self-report your Spanish competence

[-http://actflproficiencyguidelines2012.org/speaking](http://actflproficiencyguidelines2012.org/speaking)

List of forms you need to turn in:

1. Bilingual Language Profile (BLP)
2. Demographic information, participant (DI)
3. Demographic information, interviewer (II)
4. Fieldnotes (FN)
5. Consent form (in language the participant prefers)