

Using Sakai for linguistic experiments

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1 Introduction

- (1) Virtues of using online system to get judgment data (see ?, ? for general discussion of pros and cons)
 - a. It is easy and automatic once you set up the site properly—you don't have to sit down with your consultants.
 - b. Thanks to this convenience, it is easy to get a large number of participants as well.
 - c. In particular, if you're interested in non-English data, getting enough speakers around could be challenging.
 - d. For these reasons, this approach is getting popularity both in syntax (?, ?) and phonology (?, ?, ?).
- (2) Virtues of using in Sakai in particular
 - a. It is free.
 - b. The IRB office is probably happier with Sakai than other commercial softwares (like GoogleDoc or Survey Monkey), because all the data will be stored on Rutgers's server.
 - c. You already know how to use Sakai (more or less).
- (3) Disadvantages
 - a. The consultants may not focus as much as we would like them to. They may be listening to music while answering our questionnaires.
 - b. Their attention may not last as long as it would in a more "proper" experimental setting.
 - c. We cannot measure RT, cannot play sounds in a controlled condition, etc...

2 The first step: IRB

- (4) Getting an IRB approval
 - a. You need to get a human subject study certificate from Rutgers, if you haven't. Go to <http://orsp.rutgers.edu/Humans/default.php> and take an online test, or watch a 4-hour long film.
 - b. File a protocol. My study was initially approved under the exempt category, although this does not allow me to use Rutgers students. I am happy to share my application.
 - c. Later I incorporated this study under my general linguistic elicitation protocol under the expedite category, which now allows me to use Rutgers students.

- d. In some universities, this sort of study may not require an IRB approval because the data are completely anonymous. But Rutgers DOES require an approval.
- e. International studies need an additional form, and need to be approved by a country-by-country basis. Getting an international approval is no big deal either—you just need to show that your studies are not unethical in the country where your participants reside.
- f. Please don't ever skip this step. It takes only about a few weeks for them to get back if it is an exempt category.

3 Setting up a test site

1. Log in to Sakai
2. Create a project site. Make sure to add the “Tests & Quizzes” module.
3. Go to “Tests & Quizzes” module.
4. Create a “new assessment”¹
5. Click on “Settings” on the menu bar.
6. Click “Open”, which allows you to set all parameters.
 1. Put in your instructions and approved consent form in the “Description/Intro” box.²
 2. Set “Delivery dates” if you wish to (if you want to make your test available in public for a certain duration of time).
 3. Set “Assessment Released to” to Anonymous Users. This setting allows you to invite people who do not have Sakai ID. (It is possible to publish your questionnaire to only those who have their Sakai ID, and keep track of who took the tests.)
 4. “Submission Message”: say something nice to your participants when they are done. If you're offering extra credit, you can write up your receipt here.
 5. “Feedback”: don't give feedback. Since we are using a test-tool, Sakai requires us to put a right answer. Usually in linguistic studies there are no right answers, though; so we put a random “correct” answer. If you put feedback, then they will be notified whether their answers are correct or not (when there's no correct answers).
 6. That's it! Now click on “save settings”.

4 Setting up a questionnaire

Let's take a simple study where you want a wellformedness judgment of [blik] and [bnik] in a 1-to-4 scale.

¹For now, assessment types do not matter. Assessment types allow you to start with certain default settings. Once you're familiar with the settings (see below), you can create your own template from “Create new assessment types.”

²It gives me an error if this text is too long—make sure that the consent form is concise.

1. Select “Multiple Choice” as Question Type.
2. Assign any “Answer Point Value” you like.
3. In the “Question text” box you write in your instructions. “Please rate how likely [blik] is going to become an English word in the future. ”
4. Go down, and mark on “A” as “Correct Answer” (it does not matter which one you use as a correct answer).
 1. In the box next to A, write in “Likely”
 2. In the box next to B, write in “Possible”
 3. In the box next to C, write in “Unlikely”
 4. In the box next to D, write in “Impossible”
5. Randomization is up to you. If you want to randomize answers, tell it to randomize.
6. Click on “Save”.
7. From the “Add Question” menu bar, you can add a new question (say for [bnik]) and repeat the procedure above.
8. Once you are done with typing in all the questions, and if you want to randomize the order of the questions, hit “Edit” to the right where it says “Part 1 Default”.
9. Hit “save” to go back.
10. Down below at the setting page, you click on “Save settings and publish”. Once you see the screen, you see the url. Send it to your friends and you just wait.

5 Making it a large questionnaire with breaks

- (5) You may want to include more than 10 questions.
 - a. Hayes et al (?) say that 12 questions is the maximum limite—participants cannot concentrate any longer without a break.
 - b. I sort of agree based on my personal experience—so you should include a break if your question contains more than 10 questions.
 - c. To do so, you should create Part 1 with questions, Part 2 with a break sign, and Part 3 with more questions.
 - d. Go to “Add Part” and add parts, and order them as you need.
 - e. While we are on this topic, you may include a practice session as well in Part 1.
- (6) A sample structure
 - a. Part I—Practice
 - b. Part II—Target questions I
 - c. Part III—Break
 - d. Part IV—Target questions II

6 Recording

- (7) Sakai allows you to record participants.
 - a. xx
 - b. xx

7 How to distribute your tests

- (8) Possible ways to distribute your tests
 - a. Ask your friends: a lot of people ignore the invitation emails. Ask your colleagues in other schools to send the link to their students. You may avoid wording like “online survey” in your invitation email because people—or their mailing softwares—think that it is a junk mail.
 - b. If approved under an expedite category, you can announce it as an extra credit opportunity.
 - c. An online distribution site: <http://psych.hanover.edu/research/exponnet.html>
 - d. A future plan: have a departmental page once enough people are interested.

8 Other tips

- (9) Other notes
 - a. When I did a picture-naming study, Sakai had a hard time publishing my pictures. A solution to that problem was to insert pictures from a rich-text editor window.
 - b. Upload your pictures and make them available to publish (otherwise, they won't be visible to your participants).
 - c. If you have questions, email the help desk. They're pretty responsive and helpful.

References

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