

Dr. Doodle and Charlie

These figures were created to elicit descriptions involving the expression of Manner and Change of State in locative motion events. Original source of images: Stringer, D. (2012). The lexical interface in L1 acquisition: What children have to say about radical concept nativism. *First Language*, 32(1-2): 116-136.



Figure 1. Dr. Doodle.

Dr. Doodle was created to elicit a nonce verb intended to specify a Manner of Motion, in the context of an agent moving an object to a location. Test subjects were shown a small plastic character in the form of an amiable-looking, slightly disheveled, bespectacled professor, as shown in Figure 1. He was introduced as ‘my friend, Dr. Doodle’. Inside the lower part of the figure, above the plastic base, was a round magnet. Dr. Doodle acted as the Agent, whilst the object to be moved was a round magnetic counter (introduced to the younger children as ‘a wheel’). The poles of the magnets in Dr. Doodle and the counter were oriented so as to repel each other (one north-side-up, one north-side-down); in this way the professor appeared to cause the counter to move without touching it. The Goal was a hole cut into the cardboard surface of the upturned box on which the event took place, and the target response was, ‘He’s *pooking* the wheel into the hole’. The intended meaning of the novel verb thus encoded Manner, and whether interpreted as ‘cause to move without touching’ or ‘cause to move magnetically’ or even ‘cause to move magically’, Manner of Motion was intended to be the salient characteristic.



Figure 2. Charlie, front view.



Figure 3. Charlie, rear view.

These materials were used to elicit a nonce verb encoding Change of State. Charlie was a toy figure with two hats, one of which was a 'magic hat'. His body was painted onto a small, upturned polystyrene cup, the narrow end of which was cut and lined with glue to accommodate the head. Charlie's head was a table-tennis ball with a painted face, inside of which was a miniature alarm system, comprising a bulb, an oscillating bell and a battery. The electrical circuit was broken, with the positive and negative terminals situated close together on the surface of the table-tennis ball (the back of Charlie's head). The terminals remained unseen by test subjects during the experiment. When the terminals were connected with a conductor (e.g. a finger), Charlie's head behaved with the characteristics of a miniature alarm, flashing red and beeping. The novel verb *zike* was coined to describe the causing of Charlie to enter such a state. The hats were made from pieces of egg carton cut to fit the head. The magic hat was covered inside and out with a layer of aluminum foil, and decorated with shiny stickers. The foil acted as a conductor, so that it was possible to zike Charlie by placing the hat on his head, thus connecting the circuit. The target response was, 'You're ziking Charlie (his head) with the hat'. Compare the real Change verb *cover*: You're covering his head with the hat / *You're covering the hat onto his head.