

The following abstract will be presented at SARMAC VI (the Society for Applied Memory and Cognition), January 5-8 2005, Wellington, New Zealand.

Title: A Quantitative Method for Counting Recollections in Written Free-Recall Accounts

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Abstract: A method was developed in order to analyze the number of autobiographical recollections in written free-recall accounts, without checking the validity. This method focuses on Event-Specific Knowledge (Conway and Pleydell-Pearce, 2000). ESKs were identified based on grammar, thereby avoiding interpretation of the accounts. In addition to identifying individual ESKs, the number of details contained in each ESK was counted and a general ESK-type was identified (either describing perception, reflection, state, action or object).

The high interrater reliability (.97 for the number of ESKs) shows that this method is an objective and reliable measure for a quantitative analysis of written accounts.