

New Zealand - Australia Personal Narrative Database



| Database | Context (Subgroup) | Age Range | # Samples | Location |
|---------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|
| NZ-AU Personal Narrative | Nar (NZPN) | NZ: 4;5 - 7;7 AU: 5;5 - 8;4 | NZ: 228 AU: 127 | New Zealand Australia |

Participants and General Description

This database contains oral language samples collected from New Zealand children, aged 4;5 – 7;7, and from Australian children, aged 5;5 - 8;4. The language samples were collected from the participants in a personal narrative context (relating a personal experience).

The New Zealand data were collected in 2000/2001. The children were randomly selected from schools in Auckland, Hamilton, and Christchurch (major urban areas in New Zealand) as well as secondary urban areas surrounding Christchurch. Approximately 80% of the participants were from the Auckland/Hamilton region to reflect New Zealand's population density in these areas. Children with diagnosed disabilities were excluded from the sample. The schools reflected a range of socio-economic areas and English was the first language of all children included in the database. There was an even gender distribution. The ethnicity of the group comprised of the following: New Zealand European 62%, Maori 22%, Pacific Island 5%, Asian 3%, Other 8%.

The Australian data were collected in 2012 from 127 children (aged 5;5 to 8;4) attending the first three years of primary school: Grade 0 (Prep or Foundation, n = 44), Grade 1 (n = 41), or Grade 2 (n = 42) across Queensland (regional: 55, city: 72), representing the full range of socio-economic areas (1 – 10). There were 64 (50.4%) girls and 63 boys (49.6%). Of the schools who agreed to participate, teachers were asked to identify children who 1) spoke English as their first language; 2) were progressing normally at school; and 3) had no history of speech and/or language impairments. Consent forms were sent home to these children via the teachers. From the children for whom consent to participate was obtained, participants were randomly selected, making sure there was an equal distribution of girls and boys. Children were from Australian (85.2%), Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (4.0%), Pacific Island (0.8%), Other (3.2%), or Non-specified (6.4%) ethnic backgrounds, as indicated by their parents on the project consent forms.

The speech-language therapists involved in the project were trained by one of the researchers on the assessment procedures and language sampling protocol. Each child was seen individually in the child's school setting. Children's language samples were also excluded from the database for reasons such as poor recording quality and not engaging in the task (i.e., not giving any personal narratives).

Elicitation Procedures

The personal narrative protocol was adapted from a conversational technique developed by Peterson and McCabe (1983), called the Conversational Map. In adapting this technique, the examiner related a brief personal experience related to a photo prompt in order to encourage the child to share one of his or her personal experiences. A pocket-size photo album with a series of carefully selected photos was used for the stimulus items. Each photo was presented individually in separate sleeves of the photo album. The examiner provided a short prompting narrative with each photo followed by the question "Did anything like that ever happen to you?". If the child responded "no", the examiner turned the page of the photo album to the next photo. If the child responded "yes", a follow-up question was asked "Can you tell me about it?". The aim is to elicit at least 3 narratives and 50 C&I utterances.

The task is introduced as follows: "I brought some photos to show you." Talk about the photos as outlined in the protocol. If the child responds "no", go to the next photo. If the child says "yes", ask him/her "Can you tell me about it?"

To encourage the child to continue a personal narrative, the examiner can respond to the child's narrative by:

- Repeating the exact words of the children when they pause
- Using relatively neutral sub-prompts, such as "uh-huh"
- Saying "tell me more"
- Asking "and then what happened?"

It is very important that the examiner does NOT evaluate the child's narrative. This gives the children the opportunity to demonstrate what they can do on their own.

Transcription Notes

The utterances were segmented into Communication Units (C-units). A C-unit includes an independent clause with its modifiers (Loban, 1976). All transcripts were timed, and pauses, within and between utterances, of two or more seconds in length, were marked. Age and gender information is included for all participants.

The prompts were transcribed from (and including) the examiner's question that leads to a "yes" response from the child. For example, with the first prompt (McDonald's), only transcribe the underlined italicized utterances:

Oh look who's this? I went to a birthday party at McDonald's last year. *Have you ever been to McDonald's?* Child responds Yes or {Nods}. *What happened last time you went to McDonald's?*

The following plus lines were inserted as part of the header information:

- + Context: Nar
- + Subgroup: NZPN
- + Ethnicity: Maori (only included for Maori subset)

This database was created with two location options (New Zealand and Australia) and one ethnicity option (Maori). A language sample taken from a child can be compared against this population distribution as a whole or against a subset selected by location and/or including Maori (New Zealand) children only.

Acknowledgements

The New Zealand databases are a result of the collaboration with Gail Gillon from the Department of Communication Disorders, University of Canterbury and Marleen Westerveld from Griffith University. Speech-language therapists from Group Special Education in Auckland, Hamilton, Christchurch, and Canterbury districts in New Zealand were involved in the collection of the language samples. The New Zealand Ministry of Education allowed the participation of Special Education speech-language therapists in the project. Financial assistance for the project was provided by the University of Canterbury, The Don Bevan Travel Scholarship, and the New Zealand Speech Language Therapists' Association.

The Australian databases are the result of a collaboration between Dr. Marleen Westerveld from Griffith University, and Kath Vidler and Jennifer Peach from the Department of Education, Training, and Employment, Queensland. Speech pathologists employed by the Department of Education, Training, and Employment across the State of Queensland were involved in the collection of the language samples. Financial assistance for the project was provided through a Griffith University Emerging Researcher Grant and by SALT Software LLC.

Protocol and Photos to Elicit Personal Narratives

You can download the specific protocol and photos used to elicit the samples from the SALT web site at saltsoftware.com/resources/databases/. The link to download the photos is in the text describing the New Zealand - Australia Personal Narratives database.

Photos Used to Elicit Personal Narratives

