

# New Zealand Conversation Database

Database	Context (Subgroup)	Age Range	# Samples	Location
New Zealand Conversation	Con	4;5 – 7;7	248	New Zealand

## Participants

This database contains spoken language samples collected from New Zealand children aged 4;5 - 7;7. The language samples were collected from the participants in a conversational context. The children were randomly selected from schools in Auckland, Hamilton, 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%, Pasifika 5%, Asian 3%, and Other 8%.

The Group Special Education 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 and was administered a New Zealand speech and language screening test and reading or letter knowledge test to gain information regarding the child's general language development. Any child who performed very poorly on the receptive language screening task (i.e., could not follow basic instructions) was excluded from the database. Children's language samples were also excluded from the database for reasons such as poor taping quality and not engaging in the task (i.e., not willing to talk). Only samples that contained over 45 complete and intelligible utterances were included.

This database was created with two options. A language sample taken from a child can be compared against this population distribution as a whole or against a database including Maori children only.

## Elicitation Protocol

The protocol was adapted from interview procedures described by Evans and Craig (1992). The child was asked to bring an object from the classroom to discuss with the examiner. The examiner encouraged the child to talk about the object. The child was then asked to talk about his or her family, school, and after-school activities. To establish and maintain a productive communicative interaction, the suggestions listed by Miller (1981) were followed. These included listening and following the child's lead, maintaining the child's pace, using open-ended prompts, and adding new information when appropriate. The conversation protocol aimed to elicit 50 complete and intelligible utterances from the child in 10 minutes of conversation. In the reference database (RDB) developed by Miller (1992), 6-year-old children produced an average of 154 utterances (SD 33) in 12 minutes of conversation. In the New Zealand database more than 90% of the children assessed produced at least 50 clear and intelligible utterances in 10 minutes of conversation. A stopwatch should be used to time the conversation.

## Transcription Notes

The utterances were segmented into communication units (C-units). A C-unit includes an independent clause with its modifiers (Loban, 1976). The following error codes were inserted in the transcripts: [EW:word] to mark word-level errors and [EU] to mark utterance-level errors.

## Acknowledgements

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