

# New Zealand Personal Narrative Database

Database	Context (Subgroup)	Age Range	# Samples	Location
New Zealand Personal Narrative	Nar (NZPN)	4;5 – 7;7	228	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 successful narratives 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 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. E.g., with the first prompt (McDonald's), only transcribe the underlined italicised 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)

When comparing samples to this database, you have the option of restricting the comparison to the Maori subset.

## Acknowledgements

The New Zealand databases are a result of the collaboration with Gail Gillon and Marleen Westerveld from the Department of Communication Disorders, University of Canterbury. 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.

## Photos Used to Elicit Personal Narratives

You can download the photos used to elicit the samples from the SALT Web site at [www.saltsoftware.com/resources/](http://www.saltsoftware.com/resources/).

