New Zealand - Australia Expository Database

Database	Context (Subgroup)	Age Range	# Samples	Location
NZ-AU Expository	Expo	NZ: 6;1 - 7;11 AU: 7;4 - 8;4	NZ: 65 AU: 42	New Zealand Australia

Participants and General Description

A total of 65 six- and seven-year-old participants were recruited from three primary schools located in suburban Auckland, New Zealand (NZ). The schools were awarded mid socio-economic status based on the Ministry of Education ranking system. These children had no known history of hearing disorder, neurological disorder, or speech-language therapy, spoke English as their first language, and were progressing normally at school. The group consisted of 37 girls and 28 boys from NZ European (74%), Maori (14%), Pasifika (8%), and Other (4%) ethnic backgrounds.

A second set of data was collected in 2013 from 42 children aged 7;5 to 8;4 who attended Year 2 (year of schooling 3) of their local primary school in Queensland, Australia. Ethics approval for this project was granted by the University Human Ethics Committee (PES/31/12/HREC). Approval was also granted by the Department of Education and Training, Queensland Government (550/27/1258). The schools reflected the full range of socio-economic areas. 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, and 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. The group consisted of 19 girls and 23 boys, from Australian (90.5%), Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (2.4 %), or Non-specified (7.1%) ethnic backgrounds.

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 NZ or AU children only.

Elicitation Procedures

Expository language generation samples were elicited using the Favorite Game or Sports (FGS) task, developed by Nippold, et al. (2005). In this task, the examiner carefully follows a script. First, the child is asked what his or her favorite game or sport is and why. The examiner then asks the child to explain the game or sport, using the pragmatically felicitous prompt "I am not too familiar with the game of [..]". Finally, the child is asked what a player should do to win a game of [..]. The child should be allowed as much time as necessary to finish the explanation. The examiner needs to make sure to show interest in the child's explanation and only use neutral responses as needed to encourage the child to continue.

Favorite Game or Sport (FGS) Task Protocol

This task was developed by Nippold, et al. (2005).
To elicit the sample, the examiner reads out the following script:

I am hoping to learn what people of different ages know about certain topics.
1. *What is your favorite game or sport?*
2. *Why is [chess, soccer, etc.] your favorite game/sport?*
3. *I'm not too familiar with the game of (chess), so I would like you to tell me all about it. For example, tell me what the goals are, and how many people may play a game. Also, tell me about the rules the*

players need to follow. Tell me everything you can think of about the game of (chess) so that someone who has never played it before will know how to play.

4. *Now I would like you to tell me what a player should do in order to win the game of (chess). In other words, what are some key strategies that every good player should know?*

Following each prompt, the interviewer pauses, displays interest in the response, and allows the child as much time as necessary to complete the response. If the child fails to address a question or requests for the question to be repeated, the interviewer is allowed to ask the question again.

Transcription Notes

The utterances were segmented into Communication Units (C-units). A C-unit includes an independent clause with its modifiers. Utterances that did not contain a subject and a predicate were coded as fragments, i.e., [FRG] code inserted at the end of these utterances, so they could be easily excluded from analysis. The transcripts begin with the student's first utterance which pertains to the child's answer to the question what his or her favorite game or sport is. All transcripts were timed and pauses, within and between utterances, of two or more seconds in length, were marked.

Coding Notes

- [EO:word] marks overgeneralization error
- [EP:word] marks pronoun error
- [EW] marks an extraneous or unnecessary word in the utterance that, if omitted, would make the utterance syntactically correct
- [EW:word] marks other word-level error
- [EU] marks utterance-level error (*also marks utterances with 3 or more errors*)
- [FP] marks filled pause words such as *like*, e.g., *You (like[FP]) get six card/s.*
- [FRG] marks utterance fragments
- [NGA] marks utterances that are 'not grammatically accurate'

- All Australian samples were also coded for dependent clauses [D].

The following three types of dependent clauses were identified and coded:

- Adverbial clauses [AVC] begin with a subordinating conjunction. Examples include:
  And if they get the highest number [AVC] when the game's finished [AVC], they win [IC].
  And then once you've done that [AVC] (um) we pull out the blue mats and the (o other k*) white mat [IC].*
  And if you remember that [AVC] and you don't get hit [AVC] you win the game [IC].
- Relative clauses [RC] describe a noun and generally immediately follow the noun they describe. Examples include:
  But we (like) have to hit the person [IC] who's (um) doing that [RC].
  And he brings me to all the games [IC] that I can go to [RC].
  And you've got lines [IC] where you're allowed to go up to [RC].
- Nominal clauses name persons, places, things or ideas. These clauses often answer the question 'what'? Examples include:
  And whoever grabs the ball (um) [NOM] they (um) get to start with the ball in centre [IC].
  And that's [IC] how they lose the game sometimes [Nom].
  And whoever finishes all their beads [NOM] wins [IC].

Using SALT to Compare Samples to the NZ-AU Expository Database

Use SALT's Database menu to compare your sample with age or grade-matched samples selected from the NZ-AU Expository database. SALT looks at the "+ Context" plus line in your transcript to determine which database to pre-select. To pre-select the NZ-AU Expository database, include the following plus lines in your transcript:

+ Context: Expo

When first creating a new transcript using the New Transcript Header information dialogue box:

- Click on the "browse" button in the lower right corner of the dialogue box to select database for comparison
- select NZ-AU Expository.sltdb

References

Nippold, M. A., Hesketh, L. J., Duthie, J. K., & Mansfield, T. C. (2005). Conversational versus expository discourse: A study of syntactic development in children, adolescents, and adults. Journal of Speech, Language, and Hearing Research, 48(5), 1048-1064.

Acknowledgements

This project was supported by a Massey University Research Fund awarded to Marleen Westerveld. All samples were collected by student clinicians under supervision, and were transcribed and coded by Massey University students. This project was funded in part by SALT Software, LLC.

The Australian database was 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, Queenland. Speech pathologists employed by the Department of Education and Training 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.