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 pocketsize 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.

Protocol

Prompt: *"I brought some photos to show you".* Talk about the photos as outlined below. If the child responds "no", go to the next photo. If the child says "yes", ask him/her "**Can you tell me about it?**"

Prompts	
Oh look who's this? (Ronald McDonald). I went to a birthday party at McDonald's last year. Have you ever been to McDonald's?	Yes No
We went to the beach in the holidays. These children dug a big hole in the sand and waited for the sea to fill it up. Have you been to the beach? What happened last time you went to the beach.	Yes No
This little girl had to go to the Doctor, cause she had a bad cough. Have you ever been to the Doctor's?	Yes No
These friends are watching somebody arriving on a big plane. Have you ever been on a plane? Have you ever been out to the airport to watch the planes?	Yes No
Oh look, this girl fell off the bars and hurt her knee. She had to go to the sick-bay and they put a plaster on. Have you ever broken anything? Did you ever hurt yourself in the playground?	Yes No
These children went on a school-trip. They all went on a bus to Motat. (a museum with lots of old cars). Have you ever been on a school-trip?	Yes No
Can you see the bee on the flower? I got stung by a bee once. On my big toe! Did a bee ever sting you?	Yes No
Look, this is Santa. He visited my daughter's school in a fire engine. Has Santa ever been to your school? Have you ever seen Santa anywhere?	Yes No
The dental nurse visited my daughter's school last year. All the children had to go for a check-up. Have you ever had a tooth-ache? Have you ever been to the dental nurse?	Yes No
Look, there's my daughter/niece/nephew ………He/ she was in a play at her school. They did the pied piper. All the children had to dress up and perform in the school hall. Have you ever been in a play? Have you ever seen a play?	Yes No
We went to the movies in the holidays. Have you ever been to the Movies? Which one did you go to?	Yes No

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.

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, e.g., C And he shout/ed and[EW] to the frog.
- [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.*

Subordination Index (SI) Coding - Australia

SI coding was applied to the samples from Australia only. SI is a measure of syntactic complexity which produces a ratio of the total number of clauses (main and subordinate clauses) to the number of C-units. A clause, whether it is main or subordinate, is a statement containing both a subject and a predicate. Grammatically, a subject is a noun phrase and a predicate is a verb phrase. Main clauses can stand by themselves. Subordinate clauses depend on the main clause to make sense. They are embedded within an utterance as noun, adjective or adverbial clauses.

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

+ Context: Nar
+ Subgroup: NZPN
+ Ethnicity: Maori (if comparing with Maori subset)

Although you can type these plus lines into your transcript, the easiest way is to select the correct sampling context (Nar) and subgroup (NZPN) when first creating a new transcript (by completing the New Transcript Header information dialogue box). Select the "NZ-AU Personal Narrative.sltdb" by clicking the browse button to select the database for comparison in the right lower corner of the dialogue box.

Acknowledgements

Protocol and Photos to Elicit Personal Narratives

You can download the 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 NZ-AU Personal Narratives database.

Photos Used to Elicit Personal Narratives