

New Zealand-Australia Story Retell Database

Database	Age Range	# Participants	Context/Subgroup	Description
New Zealand Story Retell	NZ: 4;0 - 7;7 AU: 5;5 - 7;7 --- AU: 5;3 - 8;9	NZ: 264 AU: 85 --- AU: 127	+ Context: Nar + Subgroup: AGL --- + Context: Nar + Subgroup: BUS	using a story format and vocabulary that is familiar to young school aged children in New Zealand and Australia

General Description

This database contains spoken language samples collected from New Zealand children, aged 4;0 - 7;7, and from Australian children, aged 5;3 - 8;9. The language samples were collected from the participants in a story retelling context using a story format and vocabulary that is familiar to children in New Zealand and Australia.

The initial data were collected in 2000/2001 from 4;6 to 7;7 year-old children who had been randomly selected from kindergartens and 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%, Pacific Island 5%, Asian 3%, Other 8%.

A second set of data was collected in November 2009 from 76 children aged 4;0 to 4;11. All children attended their local kindergarten in Christchurch, New Zealand. The kindergartens reflected a range of socio-economic areas and English was the first language of all children. There were 58% girls and 42% boys. Ethnic make-up of the group was as follows: NZ European 89%, Maori 8%, Pacific island 1.5%, Other 1.5%.

Two sets of samples were collected in Australia in 2012. The first set was based on the story "Ana Gets Lost". These samples were collected from 85 children (ages 5;5 to 7;7) attending the first two years of primary school: Grade 0 (Prep or Foundation) and Grade 1 across Queensland, representing the full range of socio-economic areas (1 – 10). There were 44 (52%) girls and 41 (49%) boys. All children spoke English as their first language and were progressing normally at school as indicated by their teachers. Ethnic make-up of the group was as follows: Australian 80%, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander 4.7%, European 3.5%, unspecified 10.6%, other 1.2%.

The second set of samples collected in Australia was based on the BUS story. This database contains spoken language samples collected from Australian children attending the first three years of primary school: Grade 0 (Prep or Foundation Year), Grade 1, and Grade 2 across Queensland (regional: 55; City: 72), representing the full range of socio-economic areas (1 – 10). The language samples were collected from the participants in a narrative context, using the story retelling task "The Bus Story" (Renfrew, 1995). 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). Of the schools who agreed to participate, teachers were asked to identify children who 1) were in their first three years of primary schooling; 2) spoke English as their first language; 3) were progressing normally at school; and 4) 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, and an equal number of participants across the three grades. A total of 127 children participated in this study, from Grade 0 (n = 44), Grade 1 (41), and Grade 2 (n = 42). These children were from the following ethnic background, as indicated by their parents on the project consent forms:

Australian (85.5%), Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (3.9%), Pacific Island (.8%), Other (3.1%), and Non-specified (6.3%).

Other criteria

The therapists and educators 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 excluded from the database for reasons such as poor taping quality, not engaging in the task (i.e., unwilling to retell the story), or not able to retell the story without using the pictures in the book as a visual prompts.

Procedures in Collecting the Language Samples - Subgroup AGL

The child was required to listen to two audio-recordings of an unfamiliar story (while looking at pictures in the story book). Following the second listening of the story the child was asked to retell the story without the use of the pictures. The child listened to an English translation of the story "Ko au na galo" (Ana gets lost; (Swan, 1992). " The story is about a Pacific Islands girl who gets lost in the city, while looking for her mum and dad. It is a 10-page 'reader' (of the type typically used in New Zealand Year 1 and 2 classrooms) with coloured pictures and Tokelauan text. The story was selected for several reasons: The story has not been published in English, which minimized the chances of children being familiar with the book. Presenting text in an unknown language also prevented the children reading the text while they heard the story and thus removed any reading advantage. Having a text written in another language also provided a convincing reason for listening carefully to the tape recording of the English version of the text. Further, children from different cultures living in New Zealand or Australia were expected to be familiar with the story content and vocabulary translation, such as 'policeman', 'beach', and 'dairy'. The original translation of "Ko au na galo" was adapted to add a little further length and complexity to the story. [Ana Gets Lost story](#)

Following the first listening of the story, the child was asked eight questions about the story, to evaluate oral narrative comprehension. To reduce the influence of story comprehension on individual children's retelling performance, all children were provided with the correct information if their answers were clearly incorrect or if they did not provide an answer. [Further information on the prompts used and the comprehension questions asked.](#)

- [Oral Narrative Comprehension \(ONC\) Scoring](#)
[Oral Narrative Quality \(ONQ\) Rubric](#)

Procedures in Collecting the Language Samples - Subgroup BUS

The Bus Story (Renfrew, 1995) was administered using the standard elicitation guidelines as reported in the manual. In this task, the examiner reads the story, while the child follows along with the pictures in a wordless book (four pages containing three pictures each). After listening to the story, the child is asked " Now you tell me the story. Once upon a time, there was a ...? " (p. 5). Following the administration guidelines, only minimal or indirect prompts should be given, when needed. For example " and then? " or " so...? " . The model story contains: 15 utterances (UTT), MLU: 12.4, number of different words (NDW): 102, and clausal density (CD; total number of clauses divided by the number of utterances): 1.6.

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 following types of utterances were excluded from analysis by inserting an equal (=) sign in front of the utterance: 1) official title ('Ana gets lost), 2) comments unrelated to the story (e.g., child comments on someone

entering the room), 3) official ending (e.g., 'The end').

The following [error codes](#) were inserted in the transcripts: [EO:word] to mark overgeneralization errors, [EP:word] to mark pronoun errors, [EW:word] to mark other word-level errors, and [EU] to mark utterance-level errors. [NGA] was inserted to mark an utterance that is 'not grammatically accurate'.

All New Zealand samples contained the following plus lines:

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

All Australian samples contained the following plus lines:

- + Context: Nar
- + Subgroup: AGL or BUS

Database Location and Ethnicity Selection Options

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.

References

- Renfrew, C. E. (1995). *The Bus Story Test: A test of narrative speech (3rd edition)*. Oxford, UK.
- Westerveld, M. F., & Vidler, K. (2015). The use of the Renfrew Bus Story with 5- to 8-year-old Australian children. *International Journal of Speech-Language Pathology*, 17 (3), 304 - 313. doi: 10.3109/17549507.2015.1024168

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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.

[Procedures in Collecting Language Samples](#)

[Language Sampling Protocol](#)

[Example transcript](#)