

## School Visits

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In the final stage of the project, 33 schools were visited by Laurie Bauer. The purpose of these visits was to enable us to clarify the children's intentions in answers they had provided, to check on the accuracy of the information originally provided, to ask whether things reported from nearby schools were also known in the schools visited, and we also followed up a number of new suggestions concerning terms likely to be regionalised.

The schools visited were selected from those which had initially indicated a willingness to receive a visit. The target number was 30 schools. However, a better sampling was obtained by increasing the number to 32, and an extra school was added when it became clear that the researcher would be passing another school door on a school day, with time to make the visit. Two were selected from each of the 11 sub-regions identified in the main study. Where possible, we selected one high decile school and one low decile school, one urban school and one rural school. Because it was not possible always to get this mix with just two schools, in some of the larger sub-regions, further schools were added. In particular, the Central North Island was sampled much more densely. However, it was also necessary to consider the accessibility of the schools, and the travelling distance between them. The location and profiles of the schools visited were as follows:

West Northland		rural low decile; urban, low decile	(no high decile schools in our sample)
East Northland		rural high-decile; urban mid-decile	
Auckland		low decile urban; high decile urban; high decile rural	
Central N. Island	Hauraki Plains	low decile, rural	
	Bay of Plenty-Rotorua	high decile rural; mid-decile urban	
	Waikato	high decile urban	
	King Country	low decile rural	
	Taranaki	mid decile urban	
	Poverty Bay	low decile rural	
Hawkes Bay-Wairarapa		rural low decile; urban high decile; rural mid decile	
Wellington		rural high decile; urban high decile; urban low decile	
Nelson-Marlborough		urban high decile; rural low decile	
West Coast		rural mid decile;	(no clearly urban

		rural mid decile	schools here)
Canterbury		high decile urban; low decile urban; high decile rural	
Timaru-Central Lakes		high decile rural; low decile rural	(no clearly urban schools in our sample here)
Southland-Otago		low decile rural; mid-decile rural; high decile urban	

Scheduling the visits meant ensuring that any very long journeys between schools took place over a weekend. The proposed schedule had very little flexibility, and we wish to thank the schools for their understanding of the constraints, and their willingness to receive a visitor on the scheduled day. While one or two of the originally-selected schools had to be replaced because the proposed day was impossible, most were able to accommodate the visit as requested.

The schools were asked to distribute parent/care-giver permission slips prior to the visit. These requested permission to interview the children. These slips were returned to the school, and children were only interviewed if permission was given. We also requested permission to keep the tapes of the interviews for further linguistic research. It was not practical to interview children unless permission was given to keep the tape. A mini-disk recorder was used during the interviews. (Many of the children, particularly the boys were interested in this technology, and in many cases, it gave an easy start to the interview.)

The interviewer requested a quiet room away from the classroom in which to conduct the interviews. The interviewer did not ask the names of the children, and in this way, the tapes are anonymous. The children were interviewed in small groups (necessary to keep the recordings intelligible). These were usually natural friendship groups. One result of this was that a lot of groups were single gender groups. This proved useful, as it often brought out gender differences in usage which were suspected in the original data, but could not be confirmed. The interviewer had a standard set of questions, and began the interviews with the intention of following that. However, it was always necessary to remain sensitive to the group dynamics, and if the questions were not being successful in getting the children to talk, then the process was changed. For this reason, not all the questions were asked in all schools.

The South Island interviews were first, and certain improvements were made before the North Island interviews. In particular, pictures of a crane fly and a slater were found, since it had proved difficult to ask these questions without such props. The questions about marbles were asked with the help of a bag of mixed marbles.

Following the interviews, the tapes were played back, and the useful information was extracted. This data was then entered into data files, and sorted as was appropriate. Where the data supplemented the original data, the additional data was added to the original files, annotated to indicate its source. Thus where a school had failed to produce an answer for an important question (e.g. some

intermediate schools had responded to the question about the chasing game by saying that they did not play it, but during the interviews, they were asked what they had called it at primary school), the interview responses were added to the original files.

Where the material was new, these files were analysed. Of course, because of the small number of schools visited, the responses were only indicative of possible regionalisation or social differentiation, but any such appearances were documented.

In general, the data obtained from school visits confirmed any regional patterns noticed in the original data, and suggested that the patterns of regionalisation were even stronger than the original data had suggested. Thus in Southland, one of the schools visited had originally reported only *Tag* (the Central form) as the name of the chasing game. At the time of the visit, no children used this name, but instead they all used the expected Southern name, *Tig*. In another Southland school which had reported both *Tag* and *Tig*, it was clear that *Tig* was the normal term, although there were children who knew *Tag*. Over the border, in the Timaru-Central Lakes area, the reverse was the case: in a school which had reported both, the normal term was *Tag*, although there were individuals who knew *Tig*. The data from the visits gave us confidence that in the cases where there was a strong regional correlation, it was a true reflection of the linguistic situation.