

A Study on Synonyms for “New Zealand English Vocabulary” Based upon Responses from New Zealanders

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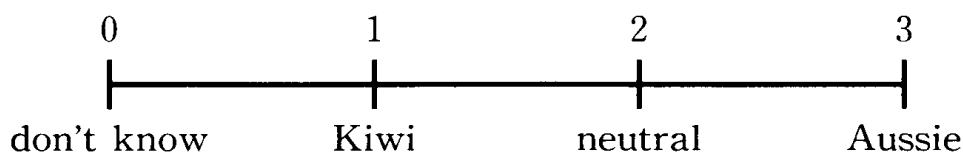
Introduction

A Personal Kiwi-Yankee Dictionary (2nd edition -- *PKYD*) written by Louis S. Leland Jr. (McIndoe Publishers, 1990) is a comparative collection of American and New Zealand English (NZE) vocabulary. Among the entry words in *PKYD*, much British English (BrE) or Australian English (AusE) vocabulary is included. Considering this, a question arises: ‘Do New Zealanders also view the vocabulary in *PKYD* as their own?’

The author carefully selected 165 nouns, which are considered to be influenced mainly by AusE, out of the entry vocabulary in *PKYD* and conducted a survey to determine whether speakers of NZE currently find them to be more NZE or AusE in usage. During the course of the research, 16 words were omitted from a list for certain reasons. Most of them caused the respondents some confusion in meaning or referent, and some were suggested as being BrE. The total vocabulary items investigated, therefore, are 149.

The questionnaire contained three columns and the questions appeared as follows:

- (1) In Column 1, please indicate whether you find the word more Kiwi or Aussie, using the following number:



- (2) If there is another word or words that you use with the same meaning, please write them in Column 2.

(3) If you have any comments, please write them in Column 3.

The following places were visited between August 18 and 25, 1997, to ask for their cooperation: Wairarapa Community Polytechnic in Masterton, Whitireia Community Polytechnic in Porirua, Otago Language Centre in Dunedin, and Christchurch. In Christchurch, Mr. Gary Lennon, Deputy Rector, St. Bedes College, was asked for assistance, and he and his wife, Claire, a primary school teacher, kindly agreed to the proposal and collected more than 30 responses for the author. The respondents in NZ belong to various age groups and occupations (including hotel receptionists), but more than half of them are teachers. The total number including 9 Britons was 207.

The same survey was conducted in Wollongong, Australia, from August 26 to September 19, 1997. The faculty and staff at Illawarra International College, Wollongong University, and host families of students were asked for their cooperation and 95 responses (including 5 responses from Britons) were received.

The results extrapolated from Column 1 in the questionnaire have been compiled into a paper entitled "New Zealanders Reactions' Towards 'New Zealand Vocabulary' In Contrast With Australians' Reactions" in Japanese. The author contributed this to *The Southern Hemisphere Review Vol. 13*, an annual bulletin of the Australia and New Zealand Literary Society of Japan and it is to be published in December, 1997. Consequently, this paper is concerned with the results of Column 2 and 3 in which the respondents will suggest some synonyms for the vocabulary investigated, which will reflect an aspect of language usage in the present-day NZ.

Aim of this study

This paper will illustrate that speakers of NZE are currently using vocabulary drawn from various regional forms of English. Traditionally, NZ people have looked to Britain as their home country, and they seem to have boasted that NZ (particularly

Christchurch) is more British than Britain. They have regarded BrE as their prestige model. No wonder there are still so many words and phrases of British origin in New Zealandisms. "As the political, economic and linguistic influence of Britain on NZ has decreased, however, the potential for influence on NZE from other sources has correspondingly grown (Vine 1995, p. 23)."

Nearly one third of the respondents completed Column 2 with words having the same meaning as those listed in the questionnaire. These suggested synonyms have been compiled and categorized into 6 groups in terms of regional varieties of English. By having this done, an indication of the way New Zealanders are currently using vocabulary from various sources will be given. Of 149 words, however, no alternatives for 34 words were given. These merit detailed examination.

Words for which no respondents suggested any synonyms

Among 149 words, there are 34 words for which no synonyms are suggested. This group of words can be divided into three categories: (1) words considered exclusive to NZ, (2) words considered exclusive to Australasia, and (3) words rarely used or outdated.

(1) Words considered exclusive to NZ

From the results of the survey or from various dictionaries and papers on NZE, the following 13 words can be currently considered as being more exclusive to NZ:

cattle-stop, colonial goose, freezer / freezing works, mai mai / mi mi, milk-treatment station, mini-tanker, oncer, number 8 wire, overstayer, Scotch chest, sharemilker, (aerial) topdressing, trundler.

The reason why no respondents give any other word or words with the same meaning is, probably, that they have so internalised these words that they had difficulty in recalling any alternative.

No equivalent word for *cattle-stop* was suggested, although it has synonyms in other regional forms of English:

NZE	AusE	BrE	AmE
<i>cattle-stop</i>	<i>run-through/cattle-grid</i>	<i>cattle-grid</i>	<i>cattle-guard</i>

With regard to *colonial goose* and *oncer*, both can be found in *AND*, but over 70 % of the Australian respondents indicated that they did not understand them, whereas more than 65 % of New Zealanders correctly identified them. Thus we can posit that both words are currently thought to be more NZE, although they sound a little old-fashioned. *Freezer / Freezing works* is also found in *AND* but it “is a venerable New Zealand phrase (Leek 1997, p. 40)”. This phrase is commonly equivalent to ‘slaughterhouse’ and, in BrE, ‘abattoir’. *Mai mai / mi mi* and *sharemilker* are variously referred to in AusE as ‘mia mia’ and ‘sharefarmer’ respectively. One of the “characteristic NZE items consisting of three or more words” is *milk-treatment station* (Deverson 1995, xxvi), which is, as some of the Australian respondents suggested, synonymous with ‘dairy factory’. *Mini-tanker*, *number 8 wire*, *overstayer*, and *Scotch chest* are given only in the NZE dictionaries (see: *DNZE*, *NZD*, *DKS*, *MDKCK*). *(Aerial) Topdressing* is well known and used both in NZ and in Australia but it was “pioneered in NZ (Deverson T and Gordon E 1985, p.39)”. *Trundler* is known in NZ as ‘gulf buggy’ or ‘shopping stroller’ (see: *MD²*), but on the other hand, more than 70 % of the Australian respondents did not recognize it as such.

(2) Words considered exclusive to Australasia

The following 13 words are found to be very familiar to both New Zealanders and Australians. Probably the NZ respondents could not think of any alternative word for them in the short response time allowed.

Chinese burn, defacto, ding, duster, flyswat, (kitchen) bench, marching girls, own-your-own, panel beaters, possie, rockmelon, spider, (wire) strainer

All the British respondents suggested that *Chinese burn*, *defacto*, and *panel beaters* were used in the UK but they were more frequently used in OZ and/or in NZ. *Chinese burn* is found in *DNZE*, *NZD*,

MKSCCK and *PBAS*. *Defacto* is originally a latin word desbased in meaning to ‘live-in-lover’ in AmE. The American equivalent of *panel beaters* is ‘(automobile) body shop’ (Bayard D 1996, p.26).

The rest of the words in this group may be labeled as Australasianisms. *Ding* (=dent) is “probably from archaic English word meaning ‘to strike’ (*DKS*)” and it is “now usually used in the bodywork of a car (*DNZE, NZD*)” (see: *MD², DAC, ODMS*). *Duster* (=blackboard eraser) is well known in NZ and Australia, but it is out of date because white boards are now widely used. *Flyswat* (short form of flyswatter) and (*kitchen*) *bench* (=kitchen counter) are not found in BrE and AmE dictionaries and appears in *MD²* only. *Marching girls* originated in NZ (*DNZE, AND*). *Own-your-own* or ‘OYO’ which is not found in the BrE or AmE dictionaries means ‘home unit’ (*MD²*). *Possie* (abbreviated form of position), *rockmelon* (often called ‘cantaloupe’ in the US), *spider*, and (*wire*) *strainer* are all distinctive NZ-AusE.

(3) Words rarely used or outdated

More than 50 % of all the respondents indicated that they did not know or rarely use the following 8 words:

duck-shoving, humpty, leg-in section, old identity, pongo, six oclock swill, toby, viyella.

Duck-shoving is given both in *DNZE* and *AND*, but 61 % of the NZ and 65 % of the Australian respondents did not recognize it. Three of the Australian respondents commented that they used *PASSING THE BUCK* instead of *duck-shoving*. No British respondent pointed out that *humpty* (=ottoman) is BrE, which in fact, it is (*Web³*). It follows from this that the expression is no longer used in the UK and it also sounds old-fashioned in NZ. *Leg-in section* is an exclusive New Zealandism, but it was known to only 23 % of the respondents. *Old identity* is a historical term which was originally used in the Otago region (see: *DNZE, NZD, DKS, MD²*). *Pongo* dates back to WWII. Since it is a “ruder term than bloody Pom (a British respondent in his 40s, ESL teacher)”, it is quite likely that people

have tried to avoid using it. Many people know what *six o'clock will* stands for, but it “was relevant when hotel bars shut at 6 pm and drinkers had to drink rapidly to finish before they were asked to leave. Once the licensing laws changed the colloquialism became redundant (Papprill A, Hartstone P and Harris G 1991, p. 12)”. A large number of respondents did not recognize *toby* and *viyella*, so both words are not considered to be frequently used in daily life.

Synonyms suggested as other New Zealandisms

- * Note that the head words printed in *italics* indicate vocabulary included in the survey and those which appear in capitals are synonyms suggested by the NZ respondents for these.

bach : WHARE

Bach itself is found to be distinctively NZE. It is certainly known in Australia, but as is suggested by some Australian respondents, its Australian equivalent is BATCH. WHARE, on the other hand, is never used in any other varieties. It is purely local (see: *DNZE*, *NZD*).

bush-shirt : SWANNNDRI, SWANNIE

Just 60 % of the NZ respondents indicated that *bush-shirt* was NZE, while 43 % of the Australians did not recognize the word. This suggests that *bush-shirt* is more NZE than AusE. SWANNNDRI, which was originally a proprietary name (*DNZE*, *NZE*, *DKS*), and its altered form SWANNIE are also exclusive to NZ.

bushwhacker : TIMBER-MAN, SCRUB-CUTTER

A little more than 70 % of the NZ and 88 % of the Australian respondents indicated that *bushwhacker* was AusE, whereas TIMBER-MAN and SCRUB-CUTTER are not listed in *AND* but they are found in *DNZE* and *NZD*.

kindy : PLAYCENTRE

Kindy, the abbreviated form of ‘kindergarten’, is very well known and used in both NZ and Australia. It “denotes an earlier

stage of pre-primary school than PLAY SCHOOL or PLAYCENTRE (Leek, p.39)”. PLAYCENTRE is “affiliated to the New Zealand Playcentre Federation (*DNZE*)”. In BrE it is called ‘infant school’ and in AmE ‘nursery school’.

gum-digger (=dentist) : MURDER HOUSE

Gum-digger meaning ‘dentist’ is less well known in Australia than in NZ. Even in NZ, about 40 % of the respondents indicated that they did not recognize it. MURDER HOUSE, ‘a children’s name for the school dental clinic (*DNZE, NZD*)’, is not exactly the same in referent, but it can be considered to be a synonym.

milkbar : DAIRY

DAIRY, which is also included in the survey, is found to be more exclusive to NZ than *milkbar* (first opened in Sydney in 1933—Dale 1996, p. 221). Every NZ respondent appeared to know DAIRY, whereas some of them suggested that *milkbar* was now outdated.

Synonyms suggested as British English

These synonyms suggested by the respondents are labeled as BrE in *LDELC* and/or *BALD*.

bottle store : OFF-LICENSE

Bottle store is found to be an exclusive New Zealandism. In AusE, it is called ‘bottle-shop’ or ‘bottle department (*MDKSCCK*)’. Some respondents suggested that BOTTLEY was an equivalent of *bottle store*, but it carries a different meaning (see: *AND*). OFF-LICENSE is also known or used in Australia because several Australians suggested that it was synonymous with ‘bottle-shop’.

carnie : SPROG

Carnie is little known in NZ and Australia, so probably SPROG is more familiar.

dairy : CORNER SHOP (see: *milkbar*)

The American equivalent of *dairy* and CORNER SHOP is

‘convenience (food) store’ or ‘neighborhood store’.

dome : PRESS-STUD

Dome is much better known in NZ than in Australia, so it may be labeled as NZE. PRESS-STUD is known elsewhere but it is originally BrE. In AmE, the same item is called ‘snap-fastener’.

glory box : BOTTOM DRAWER

Glory box and BOTTOM DRAWER are well known in Australia too, and some Australians suggested that ‘hope chest’ (AmE) was a synonym.

greasies : FISH & CHIPS , TAKE-AWAYS

More than 55 % of New Zealanders responded that *greasies* was NZE, while nearly half of the Australians did not recognize it. Thus it appears to be more familiar to New Zealanders than Australians. FISH & CHIPS and TAKE-AWAYS, on the other hand, are frequently used in NZ and Australia and they are originally BrE.

grunds / grundies : KNICKERS

Grunds and grundies meaning ‘underpants’ or ‘undies’ are well known terms in NZ and Australia. KNICKERS comes from the UK and it is now considered to be old-fashioned.

gutser / gutzer : CROPPER

One of the meanings of *gutser / gutzer* is a person who eats too much (MD²), but no NZ and Australian respondents suggested this implication. They seem to have understood it to mean: to fail miserably (*AND*). No wonder as there is a popular phrase ‘to come a *gutser* (or CROPPER in BrE)’ meaning ‘to fail significantly, to make a bad mistake (*DNZE*)’.

hair clip : (HAIR) SLIDE

Hair clip is used in the UK too but as a British respondent suggested, ‘hairgrip’ is considered to be more frequently used there. *Hair clip* and (HAIR) SLIDE are a little different in referent. Americans use ‘bobby pin’ for *hair clip* and ‘barrette’ for SLIDE.

ice block : ICE LOLLY

All respondents, including the Australians, recognized *ice block*. It is used in the UK too, so it may well be considered a general term. ICE LOLLY, originally BrE, is also widely known but ‘popsicle’ is the American form.

joker : BLOKE

BLOKE seems to be known or used elsewhere but is labeled as BrE in *WBD*. Both BLOKE and *joker* commonly appear in the phrase ‘ordinary BLOKE’ and ‘ordinary *joker*’ in NZ.

Synonyms suggested as Australasianisms

This group of words can be categorized into two parts: (1) synonyms exclusive to Australia, and (2) synonyms exclusive to Australasia.

(1) Synonyms exclusive to Australia

The following synonyms are found only in the AusE dictionaries, but since they were suggested by New Zealanders, they appear to be known or used in NZ as well as in Australia.

chillybin : ESKY

Chillybin is exclusive to NZ, while ESKY is exclusive to Australia. Both are proprietary names just as ‘styrofoam cooler’ in AmE.

cocky : BOGAN, SMARTARSE, SMARTIE

Cocky is mainly recognized as a ‘cockatoo farmer (*see: DAC*)’ and it is a famous item of AusE vocabulary. BOGAN is ‘a recent Australian borrowing (*DNZE*)’ meaning ‘a fool, idiot’, while SMARTARSE and SMARTIE are rather general terms.

hoon : PETROLHEAD, BOGAN (*see: cocky*)

Hoon is very well known in both NZ and Australia, and it originates in Australia (*DKS*). PETROLHEAD is given only in *MBS* and it is synonymous with *hoon* in the sense of ‘someone driving fast and aggressively (*DAC*)’.

no-hoper : BOGAN (*see: cocky*), BLUDGER

No-hoper is very well known in Australasia, as are BLUDGER (NZ-AusE) and BOGAN.

rager : PARTY ANIMAL

The verb 'rage' is labeled as 'Austral and NZ (ODMS)' and its noun form *rager* is defined as a 'dedicated party-goer' which is PARTY ANIMAL in AusE.

stockwhip : CATTLE PROD

Stockwhip is found to be exclusive to Australia. A compound word CATTLE PROD may be used elsewhere but it is found only in MD².

(2) Synonyms exclusive to Australasia

The following synonyms of 17 words are considered to be NZ-AusE.

ball of muscle : (BUILT LIKE A) TANK

Since *ball of muscle* is much less known in NZ than in Australia, the respondents suggested many other phrases such as MUSCLE-MAN, MUSCLE-NUT, and BUILT LIKE A BRICK SHITHOUSE. BUILT LIKE A TANK is a variation of the last phrase mentioned and it is given in the slang dictionary (MBS). The American equivalents are 'he-man' (used in Australia too) and 'ball of fire'.

bible-basher : FUNDIE

Bible-basher is a well-known NZ-AusE word. FUNDIE stands for "especially a religious fundamentalist or a member of a radical branch of the GREEN movement, a 'deep' green (ODNW)." In Australia, it is used to mean "a fundamentalist christian (MBS)" which is equivalent to RELIGIOUS NUT.

bucket of bolts : RUST BUCKET, BOMB

Bucket of bolts comes from an AmE slang (DAS) but it now seems to have been discarded in the US. 'Jalopy' is used instead. It sounds old-fashioned in NZ and Australia also because nearly half of the NZ and more than half of the Australian respondents did not recognize this phrase (although it can be found in DKS

and *PBAS*). Therefore, it seems that RUST BUCKET or BOMB is more familiar to Australians.

(real) dag : HARD CASE, JOKER (see: *joker*)

These three terms are very well known in NZ and Australia to mean 'a strong character'. 'Hard doer' is another substitute (*DKS, DAC*).

gink : SQUIZ

Gink (Prob. f. Br. dial. *geek* (*AND*)) is much less known than SQUIZ which means "a look; an inspection (*AND*)".

hard case : DAG, JOKER (see: *joker* and *(real) dag*)

littlie : ANKLE-BITER

Littlie or 'littly' is often used as an alternative for 'child'. ANKLE-BITER was first used in 1981 (*AND*).

9 o'clock flu : SIKIE

SIKIE may be more widely known or used than *9 o'clock flu* because about 62 % of the respondents indicated that they did not recognize the phrase.

rousie : ROUSEABOUT, SHED-HAND

Rousie seems to be more familiar in NZ than in Australia. ROUSEABOUT originates in the UK (*AND*) but it is now included in NZ-AusE along with SHED-HAND. These three words share a common connotation of 'being rough' or 'being unskilled'.

scone : MELON

The phrase 'to do one's *scone*' implies the same meaning as 'to do one's MELON' (see: *DNZE, NZD, DKS, AND, DAC* and *ODMS*), although MELON denotes a simpleton or fool but *scone* does not.

squiz : GINK (see: *gink*)

tucker : KAI, GRUB

As Deverson (xxi) puts it, "food and GRUB as well as KAI and *tucker*" are known and used in NZ. *Tucker* comes from the UK term 'tuck' and it is widely used in Australasia. GRUB is a

general term, whereas KAI is “widespread in Polynesian languages and adopted in its reduplicated form *kai-kai* in Pacific pidgins (*AND*).”

ug boots : UGS, SLIPPERS:

Ug boot means “a boot made of sheep-skin with the fleece on the inside lining (*PBAS*)”. UGS may be easily understood as the contraction of *ug boots*, whereas SLIPPER is “boot, and a euphemism for putting the boot in (*DKSCCK*)”.

unco : BOGAN (see: *cocky*)

Unco is originally Scottish and a contraction of ‘uncoordinated’.

uni : VARSITY

Uni is a NZ-AusE term and in the UK ‘the uni’ is used (suggested by a British respondent). VARSITY is an old-fashioned BrE term (*LDELIC*) and it is currently thought to be more frequently used in NZ and Australia.

yachtie : BOATIE

Yachtie and BOATIE are included in a list of informal abbreviated forms of NZE and AusE by Deverson (xxvii). One of the male respondents in his 20’s, a receptionist at Quality Hotel Central Christchurch, suggested RICH AUCKLANDER for *yachtie*.

wowser : PIKER

More than half of the NZ and Australian respondents thought that *wowser* was an AusE term. Deverson and Gordon (p.47) include PIKER in a selection of informal New Zealandisms and it can be found as an entry word in *AND*.

Synonyms suggested as American English

“American lexical influence has increased still more in the past quarter-century, and will doubtless continue to do so (Bayard, D, p. 202).” Here is some evidence for this statement.

big bickies : BIG BUCKS

Big bickies is a well-known phrase. BUCK is “orig. US, in freq.

NZ informal use since 1967, the year of the introduction of decimal coinage and the change from *pound* to *dollar* as the name of the main unit of currency (*DNZE*)."

boobhead : AIRHEAD

Since *boobhead* is an unfamiliar and outdated word, people use the alternatives such as DICKHEAD, THICK-HEADED, IDIOT and AIRHEAD. AIRHEAD is a comparatively new word invented in North America (*ODNW*), which is known in Australia too.

drongo : DUMMY

Drongo is labeled as AusE (*WBD*) and it is also known in the UK. DUMMY is also known in Australia (*MBS*) but it is labeled as "*sl. esp. AmE (LDELC)*".

juddar bar : SPEED BUMP

Juddar bar is exclusive to NZ. In Australia, it is usually called 'speed hump', sometimes 'bullbar' or 'kangaroo bar'. On the other hand, the British equivalent is 'sleeping policeman' (a Liverpullian wrote NUDGE BAR but this has not been found in any dictionaries). SPEED BUMP, AmE, is also known in Australia.

land agent : REALTOR

Land agent is much more familiar in NZ than in Australia. REALTOR is the name of an American real estate agent. If you are interested in real estate, you will encounter this word all over Australia too.

runholder : SQUATTER

Runholder has been thought to be well known in both NZ and Australia (Deverson T and Gordon E, p. 39), but in fact, the survey shows that about 30 % of the New Zealanders and 76 % of the Australians did not recognize it. From this it could be suggested that SQUATTER is more widely known than runholder. Squatter is originally a US term (*AND, DNZE*).

sheila : CHICK

Sheila is very well recognized as Australianism but it is “probably from *Sheila* an Irish girl’s name (*MBS*)”. *CHICK*, on the other hand, is “U.S. slang, early 1900s - pres. (*SE*)”. *CHICK* also used in Australia sounds offensive to women.

silly galoot : *DORK*

Galoot is BrE but *silly galoot* is much more frequently used in Australia. A little more than 56 % of the NZ respondents indicated that it was AusE. *DORK* is also known in Australia and it is “US slang, mid 1900s-pres. (*SE*)”.

ski bunny : *BP*

Sky bunny is less well known in Australia than in NZ. *BP* is the abbreviation for ‘beautiful people’ in AmE. One can hazard that *ski bunny* might be synonymous with ‘ski wannabee’ in the modern American term (see: *NNWD*).

strides : *PANTS*

PANTS is now known and used widely but originally it was “US colloquial, early 1800s-pres. (*SE*)”, whereas *strides* is used in the UK as well as NZ and Australia.

town bike : *TRAMP*

Town bike was known to nearly 70 % of the NZ respondents, but it is found to be more AusE than NZE. *TRAMP*, one of the alternatives suggested, is originally from AmE, as found in *SE*, *DAS*, *BALD* and *LDELC*. *SLUT* and *TART* are other synonyms for *town bike* suggested as general terms.

Yank Tank : *GAS GUZZLER*

Nearly 37 % of the New Zealanders did not recognize *Yank tank*, although it is given in *DNZE*, *NZD* and *DKS*. *GAS GUZZLER* is labeled as “US” in *WBD* and *ODMS*.

Synonyms suggested as mixed varieties

Synonyms for each of the words below are different in origin from each other.

chippies : *CHIPS*, *CRISPS*

It is widely known that CHIPS is AmE and CRISPS is BrE. *Chippies* is a well known term and is used in both NZ and Australia.

dunny : BOG, LAVVY, LOO, THUNDER-BOX

BOG, LAVVY, and LOO are originally BrE (*LDELC*) and they are all well known and/or used in Australia (*MBS, PBAS*). THUNDER-BOX, on the other hand, is AmE slang (*SE*) and it is also found in *MBS* and *PBAS*. *Dunny* may sound more AusE than NZE because nearly half of the NZ respondents indicated that it was AusE.

gumboots : WELLINGTONS, WELLIES, GUMMIES

Gumboots is “used elsewhere, but of significance as a commonplace and icon of New Zealand rural life (*DNZE, NZD*)” and it is very familiar to Australians as well. Deverson (xxii) gives *gumboots* (NZE) and WELLINGTONS (BrE) as an example of mutually exclusive synonyms but the survey shows that at least some New Zealanders knew both. WELLIES and GUMMIES are abbreviations for WELLINGTONS and *gumboots* respectively. GUMMIES are considered to be exclusive to NZ-AusE.

jandals : THONGS, FLIP-FLOPS

Jandals and FLIP-FLOPS (BrE) are also given as another example of mutually exclusive synonyms by Deverson but they cannot necessarily be seen as being mutually exclusive. New Zealanders know THONGS too. It is considered to be AusE as well as AmE.

scratcher : PIT, SACK

PIT is labeled as BrE (*LDELC*) and at the same time it is included under New Zealandisms (*DNZE, NZD*), while SACK is AmE slang used in the phrase ‘to hit the SACK’ and it is also given in the slang dictionaries of AusE (*MBS* and *PBAS*). Since *scratcher* is less well known (over 50 % of the NZ and 65 % of the Australian respondents did not recognize the word),

respondents from both countries might be more familiar with PIT and/or SACK.

spencer : SINGLET, VEST

Deverson, again. He differentiates SINGLET (NZE) from VEST (BrE), but seven of the NZ respondents wrote both words as alternatives for *spencer* which is known in the UK as well as in NZ and Australia.

stickybeak : NOSEY, NOSEY PARKER

Stickybeak is “Austral and NZ (ODMS)” and it is one of the most familiar words in both countries. New Zealanders suggested NOSEY only for NOSEY PARKER which is mainly considered BrE (ODMS). The American equivalent is ‘busybody’ (BALD).

Synonyms suggested as general terms

New Zealanders suggested replacements common to all varieties of English for the remaining 56 words. Examples include:

belly-buster : BELLY-FLOP ; *bikie* : MOTOR BIKE RIDER (‘biker’ in UK) ; *bludger / dole bludger* : BUM, LEECH, USER ; *bush carpenter* : ROUGH BUILDER ; *booze barn* : PUB; *cardie / cardy* : CARDIGAN ; *Claytons* : IMITATOR ; *earbashing* : TONGUE LASHING ; *housie* : BINGO ; *kitchen tidy* : BIN (‘waste basket’ in AmE) ; *kitchen whiz* : BLENDER ; *lamb’s fry* : LIVER ; *manchester goods* : LINEN ; *milk coffee* : LATTE (Italian) ; *offsider* : MATE, ASSISTANT ; *oldie* : WRINKLIE / PARENT ; *op shop* : SECONDS, SECOND-HAND SHOP (‘thrift shop’ in AmE) ; *piker* : SLACKER ; *skite* : BRAG / SHOW-OFF ; *standover merchant* : BULLY, SHARK ; *ratbag* : RASCAL ; *scungy* : SCUMMY, YUKKY ; *shearing gang* : SHEARERS ; *shit-stirrer* : TROUBLEMAKER ; *solo parent* : SINGLE PARENT ; *sulky* : BUGGY ; *washhouse* : LAUNDRY ; *wharfie* : DOCKER ; etc.

Conclusion

By categorizing the synonyms suggested by the NZ respondents into 6 groups in terms of varieties of English, this paper illustrates a considerable diversity in NZE vocabulary today. Traditionally it is thought that NZE has looked to BrE but the results of this research suggest that this is no longer true and that influence on NZE from other sources has become significant (nearly 80 % of the synonyms identified as the vocabulary of a specific variety were from regional forms of English other than BrE). We can hazard that most of the respondents probably noted down their synonyms for the vocabulary investigated in a relatively short time without considering what variety of English should be used: that is, the synonyms suggested in this survey are those that New Zealanders have learned and internalized. In this respect, this paper also illustrates an aspect of lexical shift and at the same time gives an indication of the way NZE is continuing to develop.

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Abbreviations

- AND: The Australian National Dictionary* 1988, OUP Melbourne
- BALD: British/American Language Dictionary* by Norman Moss 1991,
 Passport Books
- LDELC: Longman Dictionary of English Language and Culture* 1992,
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