

***Colouring the News* – Hypocoristics of Nouns in Selected New  
Zealand Newspapers between 1996 and 2012**

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Tämä pro gradu -tutkielma käsittelee substantiivimuotoisten hypokorismien käyttöä Uuden Seelannin sanomalehtiteksteissä vuosina 1996–2012. Hypokorismit ovat sanan vaihtoehtoisia muotoja, joiden merkitys on usein sama, mutta jotka eroavat muodollisuusasteeltaan (vrt. esim. *journo* ja alkuperäinen muoto *journalist*), ja joilla on toisinaan alkuperäisestä sanasta poikkeavia konnotaatioita. Tutkielman keskiössä on näiden Uuden Seelannin englannille tyypillisten puhekielenomaisten ilmausten kasvanut käyttö mediassa. Tutkimushypoteesin mukaan hypokorismien laaja käyttö osana puhuttua kieltä heijastuu sanomalehdissä käytettävään kieleen ja saa lehdet tarkastelemaan olemassa olevia kielellisiä normejaan edustaakseen paremmin kansalaisten käyttämää kieltä. Tutkielma on jaettu teoriaosioon sekä empiiriseen korpusanalyysiin.

Tutkimuksen aineisto on peräisin Corpus of New Zealand Newspaper English -korpuksesta, joka koostuu kymmenestä sanomalehdestä kerätystä materiaalista. Korpus on jaettu kahteen osaan, joista ensimmäinen käsittää ajanjakson 1995–1998 ja toinen ajanjakson 2010–2012. Aineistosta valittiin kaksi sanomalehteä, paikallislehti *Nelson Mail* ja suurkaupunkialueen *The Press*, jotta voitaisiin tarkastella lehden levikin mahdollista vaikutusta hypokorismien käyttöön sekä diakronista muutosta ajanjaksojen välillä. Lisäksi tutkimus pyrkii valottamaan syitä hypokorismien käytön taustalla Uuden Seelannin sanomalehtiteksteissä.

Koska suurin osa hypokorismeista on substantiivimuotoisia, tutkimus ei käsittele verbi- tai adjektiivimuotoisia hypokorismeja. Lisäksi tutkimuksesta on rajattu pois muissa varieteeteissa esiintyvät vakiintuneet muodot (kuten *movie*) vertaamalla hakutuloksia The British National Corpus -korpuksen ja The Time Magazine Corpus of American English -korpuksen.

Tutkimuksessa korpusmateriaalista pyritään löytämään kaikki kantasanasta ja siihen liitetystä hypokoristisesta päätteestä koostuvat Uuden Seelannin englannille ominaiset termit ja analysoimaan teoriaosion pohjalta näiden termien muotoa, käyttötapaa ja merkitystä sanomalehtiteksteissä.

Tutkimuksessa todetaan *-ie* -päätteen olevan yleisin tapa muodostaa hypokorismeja, ja termien esiintyvän useammin *Nelson Mail* -lehdessä. Hypokorismien käyttö *The Press* -lehdessä yli kaksinkertaistuu tarkastelujakson aikana, mutta kokonaisuudessaan niiden esiintyminen jää tutkimuksessa korpuksen kokonaissanamäärään nähden marginaaliseksi. Hypokorismien käyttö sanomalehtiteksteissä kuitenkin monipuolistuu tarkastelujakson aikana huomattavasti.

**Avainsanat:** hypokorismi, Uuden Seelannin englanti, korpus tutkimus, sanomalehtiteksti

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## 1. Introduction

If you ever hear people discuss an interesting ‘doco’ they saw on television or budget cuts affecting the local ‘kindies’, take a look around because you are likely to find yourself in the company of New Zealanders. *Doco* is the hypocoristic form for ‘documentary’, and *kindy* that of ‘kindergarten’. Such forms are also often referred to as *clippies*, *pet-names* and *diminutive forms* (Bardsley 2010, 1) and considered a feature of informal spoken discourse. The focus of this diachronic study will be on the use of hypocoristics in New Zealand English. Hypocoristics like *doco* and *kindy* are formed by attaching a suffix such as *-o* or *-y* to a single syllable of the base form of a word and used for example to signal solidarity within a group (ibid. 3). Several recent studies (such as Bardsley and Simpson 2009, and Bardsley 2010) have shown that New Zealand hypocoristics (of nouns in particular) are no longer only a feature of spoken discourse, but have made their way into the written language as well, appearing particularly in newspapers. The present study looks at the use of hypocoristics in two New Zealand newspapers, *The Press* and the *Nelson Mail*, during two time periods.

My hypothesis is that the use of hypocoristics in spoken New Zealand English is increasingly reflected in the language of newspapers and, as part of a larger trend of *colloquialization* of the written English language, causing the newspapers to re-evaluate their pre-existing linguistic standards to better represent the language spoken by the people. For the purposes of verifying the hypothesis, the present study looks to answer the following research questions:

1. What sort of changes can be observed in the use of hypocoristics by the two newspapers over the period examined?
2. Does the use in the papers differ with regard to the form, function and semantic category of the hypocoristics?

3. What are the possible reasons underlying the use of hypocoristics in newspapers in New Zealand? Are there wider implications to their use in New Zealand?

This study is divided into two parts: the first part presents the background and methods for this study and the second part the empirical analysis of corpus data. Chapter 2 first provides a look into New Zealand English as a variety after which I discuss the word-formation theories of clipping and suffixation, and the concept of colloquialization. The chapter continues with a discussion on the form and functions of hypocoristics and sheds light on their earlier use in New Zealand. Chapter 2 concludes with a look into the conventions of written news texts with the help of Fairfax Media New Zealand Stylebook. The methods and materials in the present study are discussed in chapter 3 which begins with the introduction to the source material, the Corpus of New Zealand Newspaper English, and the two selected newspapers. The discussion is followed by an introduction to corpus linguistics and the methods used for analysing the data in the present study. Chapter 3 concludes with a discussion on Schneider's Dynamic Model of the evolution of Postcolonial Englishes. Chapter 4 is devoted to the data analysis itself. It begins with an overview of the analysis process, and is followed by a detailed examination of hypocoristics in the two papers in the two periods and a summary of the results. The last two sections look at the diachronic change in the use of hypocoristics from the first period to the second and the connection between the use of hypocoristic forms and the New Zealand linguistic identity. Chapter 5 provides a brief summary of the discussion and a conclusion to the present study.

## 2. Background

The first part (section 2.1) of this chapter offers a brief look into New Zealand English as a variety; how it has developed from the depreciated language of a colonised country to the rich and distinct variety of English it is known as today, and at the features which characterise its grammar and lexicon. Three explanations for the development of New Zealand English are discussed: the influence of Cockney, that of Australian English and lastly, Peter Trudgill's theory of new-dialect formation. In the second part (section 2.2) I present the word-formation theories of *clipping* and *suffixation*, and the linguistic phenomenon known as *colloquialization*. Section 2.3 is devoted to hypocoristics. I begin by discussing the form of the most common hypocoristics of nouns with a focus on the suffixes selected for the analysis in this paper after which I move on to the functions of hypocoristics. The following subsection (2.3.3) gives a brief account of the history of the use of hypocoristics down under and the chapter concludes with a previous study on the subject (2.3.4).

### 2.1 New Zealand English

Something that speaks for the changed attitudes towards post-colonial Englishes today is the fact that instead of regarding British English as the norm, British dictionaries are nowadays using labels such as 'British' and 'New Zealand' for words peculiar to a certain variety of English (Hay et al. 2008, 67). According to Gordon, it was in the 1960s that New Zealand speech began being treated as a 'variety in its own right' (2004, 6). Today, this former colonial variety is no longer seen as corrupted or inferior, but a native variety of English with its own distinguishing features. According to Kuiper and Bell (2000, 12), it is nowadays 'almost the only language' used in public domains in New Zealand, thus having replaced *te reo Māori* as the first language of the country. However, recent studies (see e.g. Davies and Maclagan 2006) have shown that Maori words have made their way into New Zealand English with words such as *hui* and *hikoi*, for 'meeting' and

‘march’, respectively, being used in newspapers nowadays even in non-Maori contexts. Yet, in comparison to other former British colonies, New Zealand stands out with its unusual monolingualism (ibid. 13–14), regardless of the fact that Asian languages are often heard in public in Auckland. Furthermore, the political distancing from both Great Britain and the United States has in recent years contributed to the development of a New Zealand linguistic identity (Hundt 1998, 2).

New Zealand English as a variety is some 150 years old (Hay et al. 2008, 84), which makes it one of the newest native speaker varieties of English. English is known to first have arrived in New Zealand with James Cook and his men in 1769 (Kuiper and Bell 2000, 11), but was only properly established around the time of the European settlement towards the end of the century. For a long time, it remained a minority language to Maori and for much of the colonial period it was regarded as the corrupted version of the prestige variety, British English. It was only in the 1980s that New Zealand English became officially adopted into the school syllabuses of secondary schools (Gordon 2004, 22).

As an object of study, New Zealand English was long grouped together with Australian English, with the studies often highlighting the similarities of the two varieties (Deveson 2000, 26) when they should have focussed on the distinctiveness of each variety. New Zealand English is exceptional in the sense that it enables studies of very early stages of a native English variety as shown for example by the Mobile Unit recordings of elderly speakers in the 1940s discussed in Gordon (2004). Much of the early work on New Zealand English focussed on its lexis and phonology (Kuiper and Bell 2000, 17). Since then, work has been done on New Zealand English grammar as well (see for example Hundt 1998), and in the future there is scope for research both in regional variation and in ethnically-based varieties (Kuiper and Bell 2000, 21).

### 2.1.1 Historical development

As for the development of New Zealand English, there are numerous linguists who have postulated different explanations and approaches to it, as discussed for example in Gordon (2004). What is clear, however, is that immigration to the islands has played a large role in the development of the language. For the purposes of the current study, only some of the theories will be introduced, so as to provide contrast for Edgar Schneider's Dynamic Model of the evolution of Postcolonial Englishes which will be discussed in greater detail in 3.2.4. The similarities between New Zealand English and Australian English have given rise to an explanation which suggests that Australian English was planted in New Zealand (Hay et al. 2008, 86). The two countries are closely connected historically, yet the amount of early settlers from Australia was roughly seven per cent of all settlers, which only indicates a possible influence of Australian English on the development of New Zealand English (ibid.). It has also been suggested that features of the East London variety of Cockney came to New Zealand through Australia, where it was spoken by the early settlers and convicts (Gordon 2004, 222).

The fact that the majority of immigrants came to New Zealand from South-East England has led some to suggest that the language is in fact modelled after the Cockney speakers of East London. However, an examination of the social class of the immigrants reveals that many of them belonged to a higher class and were likely to even have frowned upon the Cockney accent (Bauer in Gordon 2004, 221). Also, for example the diphthong shift and the use of 'h-dropping', which are typical of Cockney, are found outside London as well (ibid. 220). Another argument speaking against the Cockney explanation is that the language in London at the time of the early immigration to New Zealand was not homogeneous (ibid. 221). As explained in Gordon (2004, 223), New



Zealand English shares features with Cockney but the two also differ in many ways, so to assume Cockney formed the basis for New Zealand English would be misleading.

The third approach is that of new-dialect formation first put forward by Peter Trudgill in his 1986 work *Dialects in Contact*. As explained in Hay et al. (2008, 92), according to this approach, new dialect formation is not ‘a haphazard process’ but that for example the emergence of New Zealand English could be predicted based on the number of dialects spoken by the immigrants and the proportions of the speakers of each dialect. This would mean that as of the early immigrants to New Zealand 51 per cent came from the South of England, 27.3 per cent from Scotland and 22 percent from Ireland (ibid.), because the largest group of immigrants came from the South of England, albeit influenced by all three, the emerging variety would most likely bear the greatest resemblance to the speech of the English immigrants. There are three chronological stages to Trudgill’s theory of new-dialect formation: 1) *rudimentary levelling*, 2) *extreme variability* and 3) *focussing* (Trudgill et al. 2000, 303–307). In the first stage, rudimentary dialect levelling is the result of contact between adult speakers of different social and regional varieties at a given location, who begin to accommodate their speech to one another (ibid.). In the case of New Zealand, Trudgill et al. argue that the first stage may have already taken place during the 4-month boat trip to the islands. In the second stage, three types of variability are noted: 1) original combinations, 2) intra-individual variability and 3) inter-individual variability. According to Trudgill et al. (ibid. 305), original dialect combinations are formed in dialect-mixture situations because children lack a clear model dialect from their peers and are likely to select features from different dialects, on the basis of which new combinations are formed. As opposed to a more homogenous speech community, those growing up in a dialect-mixture situation are likely to demonstrate intra-individual variability, for example by producing different realizations of a vowel

(ibid. 306). Inter-individual variability means that two people who have grown up in the same area may still for example ‘differ from one another in their phonologies in a way which one would not expect at all in a more stable situation’ (ibid. 306). This type of variability is also a lot more common in an area where mixed dialects are spoken. The third stage of Trudgill’s new-dialect formation is focussing, which essentially means that, as a result of the two preceding stages, a stable new dialect emerges. Through the process known as *koinéization* (consisting of levelling and simplification), the variants in the mixture are reduced over time so that in the end usually a single variable remains (ibid. 308). Both demographic and linguistic factors (ibid.) are likely to influence the reduction process. Linguistic markers and variants used by a demographical minority, i.e. those which are sociolinguistically marked, are often levelled out. However, if the minority variants show more regularity than majority variants, they may survive through simplification. Trudgill’s approach has been criticised for overlooking the role of social factors in the formation of a new dialect (see for example Gordon, 2009).

### 2.1.2 Grammar

New Zealand English differs from other national varieties most distinctly in its vocabulary and phonology, but, as put forward by Marianne Hundt (1998, 3), the fact that it may not differ as drastically in its grammatical features is no reason not to talk about New Zealand English grammar. Some have previously supported a ‘null hypothesis’, calling New Zealand English grammar practically the same as that of British English (ibid.). In her 1998 study (ibid. 138-139), Hundt observed similarities in the grammar of New Zealand English with not only British, but also American and Australian English. To further support her hypothesis of a distinctive New Zealand English grammar and the development of an endonormative model (see 3.2.4) (ibid. 140), she lists

the use of *farewell* as a transitive verb (1) and the medio-passive *screen* (2), exemplified below (ibid. 114–115), which are both New Zealand idiosyncrasies.

- (1) They farewelled retiring members of staff.
- (2) This actor screens well.

### 2.1.3 Lexicon

The New Zealand English lexicon, in its early stages, developed via three processes of lexical change: existing words began to be used with new meanings (semantic change), new words were coined, and words were borrowed into the language from Maori (Hay et al. 2008, 66). For the most part, New Zealand vocabulary is shared by the rest of the English speaking world (ibid.).

The fairly large number of expressions borrowed from Maori is perhaps what most obviously sets New Zealand English apart from other varieties of English. Two periods of Maori borrowings are often recognized: up to 1860 and after 1970 (ibid.). Up until 1860, words were borrowed as a result of the contact between Maori speakers and European settlers (ibid. 68). The loan words often described aspects of Maori culture, but also many place names and words for flora and fauna were adopted (ibid. 68). The deterioration of Maori culture brought about by colonial rule is reflected linguistically in the virtual loss of borrowings in the period from 1860 to about 1970 (ibid. 70) which marks the beginning of the Maori renaissance. Since 1970, the situation of Maori has improved, which can be seen in the new flow of Maori terms into New Zealand English.

The development of new lexical items through semantic change originated as the early settlers to the islands used British words for the flora and fauna of New Zealand which resembled British varieties (Hay et al. 2008, 78). Words like *robin* and *birch* began to be used, each with referents different from the original (ibid.). Nowadays for example *football* in New Zealand refers not to ‘soccer’ as in Britain but to ‘rugby league’ (Grant 2012, 168). In some cases the original

meaning is retained and a new meaning develops alongside it, as with *unit*, the meaning of which has extended to refer to a suburban electric train in Wellington (ibid.).

When talking about ‘New Zealandisms’ in the broad sense (Deveson 2000, 24), the definition is taken to include all words and meanings that New Zealanders use, even those which are shared with other varieties of English. In the narrow sense, the term only includes words used by New Zealanders but rarely by speakers of other varieties of English, and which are distinct in the sense that they carry a specific association to New Zealand or that the words have originated there (ibid.). The name of the national rugby team *All Blacks* is one example of a New Zealandism in the narrow sense, since it was first coined in New Zealand (Hay et al. 2008, 67). Some other New Zealand coinages include *swapmeet* ‘an event where people meet to exchange goods and sell second-hand goods’ and *monsoon bucket* ‘a large container for water carried by helicopter, used to put out bush and shrub fires’ (ibid. 77).

According to Hay et al. (2008, 74), New Zealand shares a lot of vocabulary with the neighbouring Australia, much of which ‘originated in Australia and quickly passed across the Tasman [sea]’. The largest groups of terms shared by the two varieties include agricultural occupations and colloquialisms (Deveson 2000, 26) such as *bullock* for ‘a bullock driver’ (Bardsley and Simpson 2009, 51). There have also been studies (see e.g. Bayard 1989) indicating an increasing influence of American English on New Zealand English, demonstrated for example by the use of the word *elevator* instead of *a lift* (Hay et al. 2008, 76).

## 2.2 Word-formation and colloquialization

New words are said to be created in New Zealand English most often by affixation or by compounding, of which, according to Hay et al. (2008, 77–78), the latter is the most productive form of word-creation. However, in a study focussing on hypocoristics, I feel it useful to discuss

particularly the word-formation processes of clipping and suffixation, which are essential tools in the creation of hypocoristics of nouns, or to a lesser extent also those of adjectives or verbs. The first subsection looks at clipping in greater detail and the following subsection provides a glance into suffixation, which will further be examined in 2.3.1 dealing with the form of hypocoristics. Also included in this section is the linguistic phenomenon known as *colloquialization*, which, given the informal nature of hypocoristics, merits a detailed discussion.

### 2.2.1 Clipping

To be able to explain the makeup of a hypocoristic form it is necessary to look at the word-formation process of *clipping*, which means that a part of the original word is ‘clipped’ or removed to create a shortened form. As explained by Marchand (1969, 447), the use of clipping often starts in a special group in surroundings where one can presume the others will grasp what the speaker means without using the full original form of a word. For example, many clippings have their origins in school slang (e.g. *grad* for ‘a graduate’), from where they may pass into common usage (ibid.). Marchand (ibid. 448) goes on to argue that clippings have become so commonplace that we are often no longer aware of the original forms of the words. Clipped words are usually nouns (ibid. 447), although there are some examples of clipped adjectives as well (e.g. *comfy* for ‘comfortable’). Marchand (1969, 441) further distinguishes three types of clipping: *fore-clipping*, *back-clipping* and *clipping-compounds*.

As the name suggests, in fore-clipping the first syllable of a word is clipped (ibid. 443), as in the case of *phone* and *chute* (for *telephone* and *parachute*). First names are also typical clippings of this type, often with an added hypocoristic suffix as exemplified in Marchand (ibid.): *Fred* is a fore-clipping of *Alfred* and *Lottie* of *Charlotte* (with an added suffix). However, the more frequent type of clipping is back-clipping, in which the beginning of the original word is retained (ibid.

442). Some of the examples provided by Marchand (ibid.) include: *bike* (*bicycle*), *exam* (*examination*) and *gym* (*gymnastics, gymnasium*). Similarly to fore-clippings, back-clippings too can take a hypocoristic suffix, so that via clipping and subsequent suffixation for example *a bookmaker* becomes *a bookie* (ibid.). Clipping-compounds such as *paratrooper* (*parachutist trooper*) make up the third type. This type of clipping is used to shorten compounds which are otherwise felt to be overlong and can be expressed in a shorter way with the meaning still retained. It is generally the first element which is affected by the clipping as the example shows, but it is also possible for both parts to be clipped (ibid. 445), as in *navicert* (*navigation certificate*).

### 2.2.2 Suffixation

*The Oxford English Dictionary* (henceforth referred to as the *OED*) defines suffixation, as opposed to prefixation, as the process of attaching a verbal element to the end of a word ‘to form a new word [...] or as an inflectional formative.’ A suffix is placed after the base ‘usually with a change of word class’, as explained by Randolph Quirk and others in the *Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language* (1985, 1520). A suffix may thus be either a grammatical morpheme or a derivative one (Marchand 1969, 209). This can be explained for example using the word *citizen* with two different suffixes: *-s* and *-ry* (ibid.). By their surface structure, *citizens* and *citizenry* appear the same as they both consist of a base and a suffix, the difference is that whereas *-ry* is a derivative suffix semantically denoting a group, *-s* is a marker of the grammatical category of ‘plural’ (ibid.). Marchand further explains this by stating that the two-morpheme word *citizenry* could be replaced with a grammatically equivalent one-morpheme form such as *crowd* in a sentence without having to alter the other components of the sentence (ibid.), whereas the same does not apply to *citizens*. As explained in the *Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English* (Biber et al. 1999, 319), noun derivational suffixes often change the class of the word and are more

productive than prefixes. However, suffixes typically contribute less to the meaning than prefixes (ibid. 320–321) and their meanings cannot in many cases be fully understood by combining the meanings of the base and the suffix.

As the focus of the present study lies in hypocoristics, the suffixes *-y*, *-ie*, *-ey*, *-er*, *-o*, *-s* and their respective plural forms are of particular interest here, and for the current purposes only the aforementioned suffixes are examined in greater detail. To further illustrate suffixation, I will now take a brief look at the suffixes *-ie* and *-y*. A more detailed discussion on all the suffixes relevant to the present study shall follow in the subsection on hypocoristics and their form (2.3.1).

The suffix *-y* was originally used to form denominal adjectives such as *cloudy* and *handy* (Marchand 1969, 352) and deverbal derivatives like *drowsy* and *shaky*. According to Huddleston and Pullum (2002, 1677), *-ie* and *-y* can be used to form a noun of a verb or an adjective, so that for example the adjective *soft* and the verb *to cook* become *a softy* and *a cookie*, respectively (ibid.). As explained by Marchand (1969, 353), ‘there are no derivatives from other than everyday words’, and this may account for the ‘slangy character’ of words formed using the suffix *-y*. Huddleston and Pullum, too, note that where the suffix *-ie/-y* is used in a clipping or a coinage such as *greenie*, it often marks informal style or even adds ‘derogatory connotations’ (2002, 1677).

### 2.2.3 Colloquialization

Grammatical constructions such as the progressive and the *get*-passive have traditionally been associated with spoken discourse, which is why the recent increase in their use in written English, particularly in Australian English and New Zealand English, has led researchers to suggest that written English is adopting features of spoken language. Leech (2004, 72) refers to this phenomenon as *colloquialization*, ‘a tendency for the written language gradually to acquire norms

and characteristics associated with the spoken conversational language'. Leech and Mair (2006, 28) further suggest that the 'process has been at work in the written language for centuries'.

In their 2006 study, Leech and Mair (ibid. 22) look into the frequency of selected grammatical constructions in British and American English and note that the frequency of *be*-passives (strongly associated with written language) between the years 1961 and 1991/1992 has declined, while the frequency of *get*-passives (a feature of spoken language) has seen an increase. The *get*-passive (cf. *his car was stolen* and *his car got stolen*) is particularly frequent in New Zealand English (see Hundt et al 2004, 2008) but this change is seen as contributing to the 'colloquialization of standard English worldwide' (Peters and Burridge 2012, 243). The same is observed of the progressive *-ing* construction in Australia and New Zealand, and Peters goes on to suggest a general preference in Australian English and New Zealand English for using 'more informal elements in writing' (ibid. 245–6). Examination of recent changes in noun phrase structure provide additional arguments for colloquialization: *wh*-relativization, which has traditionally been associated with the written medium, is nowadays increasingly being substituted with either *that* or the zero-relative in British and American English (Leech and Mair 2006, 25).

Interestingly, Leech and Mair (ibid. 23) also observe an increase in the frequency of nouns in British and American English in their study, which, as spoken language is traditionally characterised by fewer nouns, appears to contradict the idea behind *colloquialization*. This is explained by a 'greater density of nouns and adjectives per noun phrase' (ibid.), as the number of adjectives has increased whereas the counts for pronouns, articles and other determiners have decreased. The fact that noun phrases in written language nowadays appear to be denser, according to Leech and Mair (ibid. 24), 'clearly goes against the tendency towards the informal and colloquial'.



It is important to note that colloquialization does not mean that a construction is necessarily being replaced by another, but that there can be several competing means of conveying a single meaning (ibid. 28). Leech and Mair (ibid. 23) also acknowledge the fact that writers are often influenced by prescriptive regulations and journalists have to adhere to the style of a particular newspaper. They go on to say that for this reason a community's preference for using a particular construction may have changed long before that change is reflected in corpus material (ibid.). Moreover, it should be noted that in their 2006 study Leech and Mair only talk about colloquialization with reference to syntactic change. For the purposes of this study, I will discuss colloquialization with reference to hypocoristics and see whether any conclusions can be made about their complementing role in the process, and if they support the idea of the 'socio-cultural preference for informality' down under (Peters in Peters and Burrige 2012, 140).

### 2.3 Hypocoristics

The *OED* defines the adjective *hypocoristic*<sup>1</sup> as '[o]f the nature of a pet name; pertaining to the habit of using endearing or euphemistic terms' and the derived noun as 'a pet name'. Linguists have agreed to talk about pet-names, diminutive forms or alternative forms when referring to hypocoristics (Bardsley 2010, 1). In Marchand (1969, 298–299) the term *hypocoristic* only appears in connection with the suffixes *-ie* and *-y*, which are collectively labelled 'the hypocoristic suffix'. For the purposes of the current study, his definition is felt to be outdated and insufficient, and given that the definition provided in Bardsley (2010, 1) better encompasses the variety of forms and suffixes found nowadays, the latter shall be adopted here. Bardsley's definition reads as follows:

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<sup>1</sup> According to the *New Zealand Oxford Dictionary*, the term *hypocoristic* originates from 19th century Greek *hupokoristikos* from the verb *hupokorizomai* 'call by pet names'.

‘hypocoristics are alternative forms usually sharing part of the same form and denotation, but with different levels of formality and sometimes, therefore, with different connotations’.

### 2.3.1 Form

This subsection begins with a discussion on the suffixes that were chosen for the present study and that together with the base form of a given noun, verb or adjective can be used to form hypocoristics. I will also briefly mention other ways of forming hypocoristics, which I chose not to incorporate in this study but which are nevertheless interesting and peculiar to New Zealand English. Hypocoristics can be formed in a number of different ways and it should be noted that for example not all nouns formed by adding the suffix *-er* to a noun or (a syllable of) a verb are hypocoristics (e.g. *lover* and *reader*). Additionally, as stated in Biber et al. (2002, 321), it is typical for suffixed nouns to ‘acquire meanings which cannot be fully understood by combining the suffix and base’, and knowledge of a specific culture is often key to deciphering the meanings behind hypocoristics. All of the examples in this subsection come from the New Zealand Dictionary Centre (henceforth NZDC) database of hypocoristics<sup>2</sup>, unless specified otherwise. The hypocoristic suffixes chosen for this study along with an example of each of their use are presented in Table 1. The meanings of the hypocoristics presented in Table 1 are listed in appendix 1.

Hypocoristics are generally formed ‘by abbreviating a polysyllabic word, compound or phrase to its first syllable’ (Peters and Burrige 2012, 236), i.e. the base, and attaching an appropriate suffix to the base form, as shown by the examples in Table 1. According to Peters and Burrige (237), New Zealand hypocoristics are typically derived from compounds, and generally consist of two syllables (Marchand 1969, 299). The formation process differs from that of more

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<sup>2</sup> Dr. Dianne Bardsley of University of Wellington kindly provided me with access to the NZDC database of hypocoristics, for which I am very grateful.

generally used English words such as *auntie*, in which the suffix is attached to a monosyllabic word which can function independently as well (ibid. 236–7).

Type of base	Possible suffix	Hypocoristic example(s)
a single syllable of a verb, noun or an adjective (or a noun consisting of a single syllable)	-ie	<i>freshie, howdie</i>
	-o	<i>journo, hospo</i>
	-er	<i>donger, beacher</i>
	-y	<i>fishy, granny</i>
	-ey	<i>statey, jockey</i>
	-s	<i>dreads</i>
	-ies	<i>greasies, shorties</i>
	-os	<i>the taipos, shameos</i>
	-ers	<i>benders, afters</i>
a single syllable of a verb, noun or an adjective (+ doubling of the final consonant)	-ie	<i>pressie, subbie, seggie</i>
	-y	<i>shotty, woolly, tinny</i>
	-a	<i>acca</i>
	-as	<i>accas</i>
	-ies	<i>pressies, subbies</i>

**Table 1.** Formation of hypocoristics with suffixes chosen for this study along with an example of each of their use.

Yet, hypocoristics can be formed in such a manner as well, as demonstrated by *streetie*, which is also a good example in the sense that it has several possible referents: ‘a homeless person who lives on the streets’, ‘a male who solicits for sex on the streets’, or it can be used to talk about the New Zealand soap opera *Shortland Street*. Leech and Svartvik (2002, 1584) note particularly the recurrence of the suffixes -y, -o, -er and -s in conjunction with hypocoristics.

Huddleston and Pullum (2000, 1677) label the suffixes -ie and -y ‘the most productive of the diminutive markers in present-day English’ (particularly in Scottish, Australian and New Zealand English), and it is therefore not surprising that the aforementioned suffixes are also most often

associated with hypocoristics. What accounts for part of their productivity is that they can be used to derive hypocoristics of proper nouns, common nouns and compounds (Peters and Burridge 2009, 237–8) as the following examples from the NZDC database demonstrate:

<i>Nellie</i>	‘Nelson’
<i>addy</i>	‘an address’
<i>soapie</i>	‘a soap opera’

As mentioned in subsection 2.2.2, *-ie* and *-y* can also be used to derive nouns from verbs, as in the case of *drinkie* for ‘an alcoholic’ (although in many cases the verb is identical to the form of a noun). Peters and Burridge go on to label the suffix *-ie/-y* ‘a distinctive areal feature of the morphology of both [Australian and New Zealand English]’. The *OED* defines *-ie/-y* in a general sense as ‘having the qualities of something’ or ‘being full of that which the noun denotes’ as demonstrated by *icy*. *Icy* is an example of what Marchand (1969, 352) calls denominal adjectives, illustrating the original use of the suffix *-y*, which continues to be a productive way of forming adjectives. The use of the suffix *-ey* (also listed in Table 1), is subject to the same rules as *-y*. Here are a few examples of its use in the NZDC database:

<i>jockey</i>	‘a sawyer’
<i>Crowey</i>	Martin Crowe (cricketer)

The frequency of the suffix *-o* is particularly high in Australian English (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 1678) and it is found in hypocoristics such as *compo* for ‘a worker’s compensation’. According to the *OED*, *-o* is used to form ‘slang and colloquial nouns, adjectives, and interjections’ and, although widespread across the English speaking world, is associated particularly with Australian English. Interestingly, its use down under differs from the use in British English in the sense that in the latter the suffix is often added to a monosyllabic noun or adjective whereas in Australian and New Zealand English the suffix is typically attached to an abbreviated polysyllabic word (Peters and Burridge 2009, 238). Although the suffixes *-o*, *-ie* and *-y* are used in British

English as well, they have much wider applications in Australian and New Zealand English. *-o* is seen as an ‘all-purpose abbreviatory device’ (ibid. 239) and in New Zealand English can even be used with local place names such as in *Wello* for ‘Wellington’. Furthermore, *corro* (‘corrugated iron’), *dissolvo* (‘dissolving stitches’) and *hospo* (‘worker in a hospitality industry’) are some examples of the productivity of the suffix *-o* in New Zealand English. The last example demonstrates the agentive function of the suffix, in which it appears in many coinings from the previous century (Bardsley and Simpson 2009, 62). The following subsection on the functions of hypocoristics will look at this in greater detail.

According to the *OED*, the suffix *-er* often refers to a profession or employment, although there are examples like *bencher* and *outsider* that do not fit the description. Generally it can be said to turn verbs into agential nouns such as in the case of *singer* (Leech and Svartvik 2002, 1550) and to be ‘relatively productive’ (Biber et al. 1999, 321). Although it is mainly used in words which denote persons (Marchand 1969, 279), according to the *OED*, *-er*, in modern colloquial language, is also used to refer to actions or things, such as in the case of *fivever* for ‘a five pound note’, and in the sense ‘a native of’ or ‘a resident in’ (e.g. *Icelander*). Biber et al (1999, 321) state that it can also be used to refer to ‘something used for doing something’ (what the *OED* calls instruments, such as *blotter*) or ‘a person concerned with something’. The following examples of the use of *-er* in hypocoristics come from the NZDC database:

*butterfatter* ‘a dairy farmer’  
*bender* ‘a catholic’  
*Godzoner* ‘a New Zealander’

Although the suffix *-er* is found in many hypocoristics such as *rugger* (‘rugby football’), it is used more commonly with *-s* to form hypocoristics of adjectives such as *preggers* for ‘pregnant’ (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 1678).

As explained in the *OED*, the suffix *-a* is generally known as a marker of the plural for Latin and Greek words, which end in *-um* or *-on* in the singular (e.g. *datum*). When used as part of a hypocoristic noun, the suffix *-a* appears almost exclusively with proper names (ibid.) such as *Shazza* for Sharon. *Acca* ('a cadet who enjoys academic work', example from Hay et al. 2008) is one of the few examples in which the suffix *-a* appears in a common noun. As proper nouns are excluded from the present study, the number of examples including *-a* cannot be expected to be high. In addition to its obvious role as the plural marker, the suffix *-s*, as explained in the *OED*, is 'a shortened form of the hypocoristics diminutive suffix *-sy*'. When used in combination with *-ie*, it is interesting in the sense that it does not function as a plural marker in all cases as for example with *greasies* and *shorties* in Table 1 (meaning 'shearing clothes' or 'fish and chips', and 'short pyjamas', respectively). The forms *greasy* and *shorty* are used with completely different meanings, whereas *pressies* and *subbies* (Table 1) are the plural forms of *pressie* and *subbie*, respectively, with the same denotation as the singular forms. Huddleston and Pullum (2002, 1678) also note the use of *-s* in terms of address.

In addition to the way of forming hypocoristics discussed above, in which a suffix is added to an abbreviated form of a noun, I will now briefly mention a few other ways in which they can be formed. Firstly, *Naki*, *pav* and *prep* are examples of what Bardsley and Simpson (2009, 58) call 'truncated' forms in which the hypocoristic form consists of either the first or final syllables of the original word (in the examples *Taranaki*, *pavlova* and *preparation*, respectively) without an added suffix. In New Zealand English as well as Australian English, this appears a particularly productive way of forming hypocoristics of place names, with the definite article added in front of the truncated form as in *the Berra* for Canberra (ibid.). In the case of a compound or a phrase, double abbreviation can be used to derive a hypocoristic form such as *clan lab* ('clandestine laboratory'),

even though characteristically only one part is abbreviated (ibid. 59). It is also possible to attach a hypocoristic suffix to both parts of a compound as demonstrated by *walkie-chalkie* ('a parking warden who marks tyres with chalk'). *Q-town* ('Queenstown') is an example of a hypocoristic formed using the suffix *-town*.

### 2.3.2 Functions

It was stated in 2.3.1 that the formation process of more generally used English diminutives ending in *-ie* (such as *auntie*) differs from the characteristic way of forming hypocoristics. Peters and Burrige (2009, 237) further note a difference in the association of the suffix *-ie/-y* in British English as opposed to Australian and New Zealand English, saying that in British English its use is restricted to 'discourse inside the family and talking with children'. However, in New Zealand and Australia hypocoristics are an inherent part of adult discourse and are used in 'mixed company and single-sex dialogue' (ibid.). Peters and Burrige (ibid.) continue that 'although this application of the *-ie/-y* suffix could be traced back to BrE, its use in Australia and New Zealand represents a significant change in register, a different derivational base, and [the suffix] enjoys heights of productivity which it does not have in the parent variety.' In everyday use, when one needs to refer to new concepts quickly, this productivity leads to ad hoc formations bound to a given situation and such use is therefore not visible in corpora based on written material (ibid.).

Leech and Svartvik (2002, 1584) characterise the hypocoristics *-ie*, *-y*, *-o*, *-er* and *-s* as familiarity markers with 'a highly informal tone'. In their definition, hypocoristics demonstrate a speaker's 'close community with [or even affection towards] what is referred to' and can thus be associated with the slang used in a particular group (e.g. schools, families or the military). It has been argued that the creation of hypocoristic forms for existing words can reflect a desire to identify with a particular group's way of talking (Bardsley and Simpson 2009, 65). According to

Bardsley (2010, 3) this solidarity function is seen for example in the use of hypocoristics of proper names such as *Debs* for Deborah. She also observes that the vocabulary used by criminals, which has ‘a characteristically high hypocoristic content’ is a good illustration of hypocoristics contributing to the solidarity established within a group (ibid.). Interestingly, Wierzbicka (quoted in Bardsley and Simpson 2009, 53) says that the use of hypocoristics reflects the ‘good humour, [...] jocular cynicism [and] love of informality’ typical of the ethos of both Australia and New Zealand.

Huddleston and Pullum (2002, 1677) talk about hypocoristic forms using the term ‘embellished clippings’, as such expressions are used for the purpose of decoration and/or rhythm (ibid. 1678) and they ‘tend to be less harsh in sound’ (Bardsley 2010, 4) as exemplified by *tummy* for ‘stomach’. Hypocoristics are seen as markers of informal style ‘often adding derogatory connotations’ (ibid.) and can also be used to patronizing effect, as when journalists use hypocoristic forms of surnames of well-known financial figures (Bardsley and Simpson 2009, 54). Yet, Bardsley (2010, 3), with her focus on New Zealand English in particular, notes that New Zealand hypocoristics rarely have a pejorative effect, but more of a ‘euphemistic function’. She sees hypocoristics’ primary function in the maintenance of relationships with other people as well as in ‘identity provision’ (ibid.). The identity can be assumed in a particular occupational role such as a *sparkie* (‘electrician’) or within organisations or institutions (ibid.). Peters and Burridge (2009, 238–9) note that *-o* is typically used in hypocoristics as an agentive suffix referring to professions, such as *journ-o* for ‘journalist’ as well as in identifying members of political, religious and educational groups as their examples demonstrate:

<i>Presbo</i>	‘Presbyterian’
<i>Salvo</i>	‘Member of the Salvation Army’
<i>Commo</i>	‘Communist’



The use of such hypocoristics to refer to institutional concepts is of particular value in informal conversation where time is often of the essence (ibid). This brings me to the abbreviating function of hypocoristics, which according to Bardsley (2010, 4), is typical of newspaper headlines. The abbreviated form often also appears in the actual news report. Overall, hypocoristics are nowadays said to be ‘increasingly evident in the media’ (ibid. 3) and are a part of the New Zealand ethos. Their prominence in the written media can be taken as a sign of what Peters (2001, 176) calls ‘continuous vitalisation of written style.’

### 2.3.3 History of use in New Zealand

Even though the use of hypocoristics may seem like a recent phenomenon, the use of such expressions in fact dates back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Bardsley and Simpson 2009, 50). The noun *beacher* (‘coastal settler; whaler or sailor from 1844’) is often cited as the first New Zealand hypocoristic (ibid.) and is seen as having paved the way for the many hypocoristics related to occupations that have followed since. It is not surprising that New Zealand English shares many hypocoristics with Australian English, because of the historical contact between the two countries: there are many duplicates already from the 1850s in the rural domain (Bardsley and Simpson 2009, 51). Interestingly, there are cases in which a single form developed different meanings in the two varieties (ibid.) as in the case of *bushie*, which in New Zealand means ‘a bush worker’ and in Australia stands for ‘someone who lives in the bush’. Interestingly, many hypocoristics still in use today date back to when the terms were used among New Zealand and Australian troops during World Wars I and II (ibid. 52). *Kriegie* (‘a prisoner of war’) and *homer* (‘wound that sends one home (WWI & II)’) are some examples of terms in this category. Nowadays hypocoristics appear regularly in newspapers and periodicals (Bardsley and Simpson 2009, 56) and continue to embellish the language used in particular groups, as mentioned in the previous subsection.

### 2.3.4 A previous study

Studies on hypocoristics in the neighbouring variety of Australian English are easier to come by but research has been done on their use in New Zealand English as well, notably by Dr Dianne Bardsley of Victoria University of Wellington. The proximity of Australia and New Zealand and the interchange between the two countries, along with the shared history of settlement, has led to similar patterns of word creation and accounts for the number of terms they share (Bardsley and Simpson 2009, 65). In this subsection I will present a comparative study on the use of hypocoristics in the two varieties of English down under, ‘Hypocoristics in New Zealand and Australian English’, by Bardsley and Simpson (2009).

The study compares the use of hypocoristics with a focus on their form and semantic domain in the neighbouring varieties of Australian English and New Zealand English. The source material for the study for New Zealand English is drawn from the NZDC database, which includes data from ‘two main metropolitan daily newspapers’ over a two-year period from 2005 to 2007 (ibid. 55). The NZDC database includes 1150 hypocoristics, whereas the data for Australian English consists of nearly 2000 examples collected by Simpson and Nash from 1987 onwards (ibid. 50). In their study, Bardsley and Simpson compare the distribution of hypocoristic forms (*-ie*, *-o*, *-os*, *-s*, *-a*, *-as*) with regard to various semantic domains (rural, crime, fishing, sport, occupational roles, marbles and military) in the data sets representing Australian and New Zealand English. With nouns as their focus, they also compare the distribution of types of hypocoristic suffixes used with proper names to those appearing with common nouns in the two varieties.

Bardsley and Simpson’s most interesting finding is that the hypocoristics formed using the suffix *-ie* are the most common in both Australian and New Zealand English data (ibid. 62). Moreover, the use of the suffix *-o* appears to be spreading in Australian English. With regard to

the distribution of the forms of proper names and common nouns, they observe that the suffixes examined appear with both types of nouns, regardless of the fact that the suffixes other than *-ie* are found much less frequently with common nouns. The suffixes appear more often with proper nouns, since, according to for example Poynton (quoted in *ibid.* 64) ‘proper names of people are most subject to hypocoristic formations’. The suffixes which are used vary according to time and fashion (*ibid.* 65). The large-scale conclusion Bardsley and Simpson draw is that the two countries’ similar patterns of settlement account for the similar patterns of word creation (*ibid.* 65) and that although most common in informal writing and casual speech, hypocoristics in both countries are nowadays ‘well represented in newspapers and periodicals’ (*ibid.* 56).

#### 2.4 A look into the conventions of written news texts

In this section I examine the conventions of written news texts, first by looking at the *Fairfax Media New Zealand Stylebook* because the writers of the *Nelson Mail* and *The Press* are expected to adhere to the guidelines of the company when producing content, and because the stylebook is New Zealand specific and can be expected to provide information the more general style guides lack. The other style guides discussed in 2.4.2 are those of *BBC news*, *the Reuters*, *the Guardian* (*The Guardian and Observer style guide*), and *the Telegraph*. The aforementioned style guides, in addition to the *Fairfax Media New Zealand Stylebook*, were chosen first of all because I failed to receive a response from APN News Media (the corporation which owns the other half of the newspapers published in New Zealand) regarding access to their style guide. Secondly, *BBC news*, *the Guardian*, *the Telegraph* and *Reuters* can be considered quality sources, and lastly because these news outlets have their style guides available online. As it seems unlikely that the style guides will mention the use of hypocoristics as such, I will see how they view the use of abbreviations and shortened forms, as the same rules can be expected to apply to the use of hypocoristic forms.

#### 2.4.1 *Fairfax Media New Zealand Stylebook*

*The Fairfax Media New Zealand Stylebook* is used ‘in all Fairfax Media daily and other newspapers published in New Zealand and by the digital websites on *Stuff* [www.stuff.co.nz]’. Consequently, the Fairfax style is something all editors working in the newspapers owned by Fairfax Media have agreed to. Essentially, the Fairfax Stylebook alphabetically lists the most common words or expressions with which the writers of the company’s publications are expected to require help. The stylebook does not comment on the use of hypocoristics as such but hypocoristic forms appear as examples of the use of shortened forms, something that is even encouraged in some places. When it comes to abbreviations, the stylebook has a clear line: an abbreviation is generally ‘OK in [a] long intro[duction]’, but the full title should appear early on in the story, after which the abbreviation can be used. For example *BNZ* should thus be spelled out as the ‘Bank of New Zealand’ early on in a text. In some cases, the abbreviation is seen as something most readers will understand, and its use is therefore accepted ‘at all mentions’ as with *Aids*, *Anzac* and *FBI*.

The use of *Aussie* for ‘Australian’ is accepted in headings (10) and *The Fairfax Media New Zealand Stylebook* similarly approves the use of *chopper* in a heading ‘when *helicopter* won’t fit’ (27). It seems that lack of space is the primary reason *the Fairfax Media New Zealand Stylebook* advises the writers to use shortened forms: for example the use of *ad* for the fairly long *advertisement* is encouraged in news headings. When writing headlines, the writers should aim to use verbs and nouns instead of adjectives and adverbs (47), and use the choice of verb to bring colour to the headline. There is no explicit mention with regard to using nouns to the same effect. However, the guideline reads that headings should be ‘simple and punchy’, which may oftentimes require a colourful noun or one that is shorter than the regular form. In the case of hypocoristics,

the difficulty is to define the extent to which the expression used is intelligible to ‘most readers’, because something that a local understands might not be as clear for example to a foreigner who has lived in the country for a few years.

#### 2.4.2 Other style guides

Many English language newspapers nowadays have their style guides available online, probably to show those interested that the newspapers have rules or guidelines that the journalists working for them are expected to follow, and to assert their traditional role as the guardians of ‘proper language’. Rightfully so, as most of us have certain expectations towards the language of the newspapers we read. The news outlets briefly discussed here are: *BBC news*, *the Reuters*, *the Guardian (The Guardian and Observer style guide)*, and *the Telegraph*. All of the aforementioned news outlets have structured their online style guides from A to Z, listing the correct forms of commonly misspelled words, the new chosen orthographic form for a word or name that can be written in different ways, and some more general rules regarding for example headlines. Rather unsurprisingly, like *the Fairfax Media Stylebook*, none of the style guides refer to the use of hypocoristics, pet names or colloquial forms as such, but the guidelines regarding the use of shortened forms or abbreviations in headlines would suggest that their use might in some cases be accounted for.

At first glance, it seems that all of the news outlets under discussion allow the use of shortened forms and abbreviations only in the case of headlines. Some examples include the use of *ex-* instead of *former*, *about* over *approximately* (*the Reuters*), and *advert* over *advertisement* (*the Telegraph*) – but ‘never *ad*’. The use of shortened forms in headlines most likely owes itself to the fact that the number of characters in a headline is often limited (for example for BBC news it is 30–36, that is, five to seven words). Yet, for example the *BBC news style guide* permits the

use of ‘journalese’ in text, ‘if used sparingly’, and mentions the hypocoristic form *cabbie* and the colloquial forms *mum*, *dad* and *kid* as examples of journalese. However, for BBC news, for example the word *Chunnel*, for the Channel Tunnel between England and France, is too colloquial, and its use even in headlines is forbidden. Overall, it seems that all the news outlets encourage the use of puns and, to quote *the Guardian and Observer style guide*, ‘original and witty headlines’. It could well be that the hypocoristics, such as *cabbie* for ‘a cab driver’, that are considered well established in the language spoken in the UK, can appear as part of a newspaper headline if the use of such a word is seen as contributing to the overall wittiness and originality of said headline. The decision of the aforementioned news outlets to build their style guides around examples tells of the fact that using abbreviations in news is difficult to instruct because their appropriateness is to a great extent dependent on context.

### 3. Methods and materials

Chapter 3 consists of the materials and methods used for the study at hand. First to be discussed are the materials, starting with the Corpus of New Zealand Newspaper English – the source of data for this study – after which the two following subsections offer a closer look at the two newspapers at the centre of this study: the *Nelson Mail* and *The Press*. The methods employed are presented in section 3.2 beginning with a general introduction to the field of corpus linguistics and corpus research with its pros and cons, followed by a brief discussion on normalizing frequencies. What follows is a closer look at the methodology used in this particular study from the formulation of a search string to categorizing individual examples of hypocoristics. The chapter concludes with a discussion on the Dynamic Model of the evolution of Postcolonial Englishes.

#### 3.1 Materials

Being one of the youngest national varieties of English, New Zealand English has not been studied as extensively as for example its ‘mother variety’ British English. Previous studies on New Zealand English have taken a particular focus on phonetics and phonology as it is those features that most obviously distinguish it from other varieties. There are differences on the level of grammar and lexicon as well, and particularly the influence of Maori words on New Zealand English has been the subject of a great number of lexical studies. As mentioned in the introduction, the use of hypocoristics has been studied more in Australia than in New Zealand and the material I found so far often focus on comparing their use in the two varieties. A diachronic study with focus on New Zealand English is therefore justified.

##### 3.1.1 The Corpus of New Zealand Newspaper English

The New Zealand section of the International Corpus of English (ICE-NZ) was first considered as a source of data for this study but the background material soon revealed that previous studies had

found both ICE-NZ and The Wellington Corpus of Spoken and Written English to be lacking in examples of hypocoristics. Bardsley and Simpson (2009, 54) explain this by the often informal and personal context of use which seldom makes it to print. For the purposes of this study the material in ICE-NZ also felt outdated since it only covers the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the number of written news texts in the corpus was considered insufficient.

It was then brought to my attention that the Corpus of New Zealand Newspaper English<sup>3</sup> was in the process of compilation at the University of Tampere, which I was able to use as a source of data for this study. The CNZNE comprises data from 10 newspapers owned by one of New Zealand's largest media companies, Fairfax Media. The corpus is divided into two sections (Section 1: 1995–1998 and Section 2: 2010–2012), thus making diachronic studies such as the present one possible. The first section of the CNZNE parallels the British National Corpus newspaper subsection (of 9,412,174 words). 1995 is the year the Fairfax archives were made electronic and thus the oldest data in the CNZNE is from the year 1995.

<b>Newspaper</b>	<b>Period sampled</b>	<b>Word tokens</b>
<i>Nelson Mail</i>	Jul 1997–Jun 1998	2,221,658
	Jan 2010–Dec 2010	4,668,709
<i>The Press</i>	Jun 1996–May 1997	3,710,614
	Jan 2012–Dec 2012	10,980,886

**Table 2.** Total number of words per period sampled in the CNZNE.

The data in CNZNE consists of a one-year sample of each of the 10 newspapers and two-year samples of two tabloids (for the purposes of better corresponding to the amount of data in the

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<sup>3</sup> The CNZNE was compiled by university instructor Paul Rickman of the University of Tampere, who kindly offered the corpus as a source material for this study and helped me select the two newspapers discussed, for which I am very grateful.



BNC). Due to the merging of two newspapers and the fact that a tabloid ceased to contribute, the second period only includes data from 10 newspapers. The CNZNE includes newspapers from as many regions of New Zealand as was possible (given that roughly half of the newspapers are owned by Fairfax), and can therefore be used for research in regional variation as well. The corpus is tagged for part-of speech. For the time being, making genre-specific searches of the corpus is not possible, which is why I opted for a diachronic approach. Two newspapers, the *Nelson Mail* and *The Press* were selected for this study, the former of which is a provincial newspaper serving the Nelson region (on the north coast of the South Island), and the latter is published in Christchurch (on the east coast of the South Island) and has a much wider circulation. The following subsections provide a closer look at the two newspapers. By normalizing the frequency of the results, comparisons can be made between these newspapers of different size. For the purposes of conducting a diachronic study on the use of hypocoristics in the *Nelson Mail* and *The Press*, two sets of data from different periods were chosen. The sample period along with the number of word tokens for each newspaper is provided in Table 2.

### 3.1.2 *Nelson Mail*

As already mentioned, the data for this study consists of two newspapers of different size and circulation. The *Nelson Mail* is the smaller of the two, with its emphasis on locality and its focus strongly on the Nelson region, but covering the whole of the Nelson-Tasman area. The newspaper also publishes two smaller community newspapers, focussing on the Nelson and Tasman regions, respectively. According to the Nelson Mail Media Kit (for details, see References), the *Nelson Mail* is said to have been ‘the voice of the Nelson-Tasman community for over 148 years’ and continues to reach 42 per cent of the people in the region on a daily basis and 63 per cent each

week. It has a strong customer base, with home subscriptions accounting for 77 per cent of the newspaper's circulation in 2014.

### 3.1.3 *The Press*

*The Press* advertises itself as 'the largest newspaper in the South Island'. It has been operating for a little over 150 years and focuses primarily on the area around the city of Christchurch. 183,000 people read *The Press* daily, which accounts for 40 per cent of residents in the greater Christchurch area. The weekly percentage of readers is 66. Like the *Nelson Mail*, *The Press* also publishes a smaller community newspaper, called the *Christchurch Mail* once a week, and three other community newspapers outside Christchurch. Fairfax Media as a whole reaches 79 per cent of New Zealanders (nearly 2.9 million people) each day across the company's multi-media platforms. According to The Press Media Kit (for details, see References), the company's webpage *stuff.co.nz* gathers the news from all newspapers published by Fairfax and is visited by 1.4 million new Zealanders on a monthly basis.

## 3.2 Methods

This section presents the methods used for the present paper in more detail. I begin with an introduction to the field of corpus linguistics and discuss some pros and cons of corpus methodology. What follows is a subsection on normalizing frequencies, an essential part of a comparative study such as this one. After that I move on to the methodology employed in this particular study and go through the analysis process from the formulation of a search string to find as many relevant examples as possible to classifying those examples into semantic categories. The section on methods concludes with a discussion on Schneider's model for the development of postcolonial Englishes (3.2.4) as it is seen to apply to New Zealand English.

### 3.2.1 Introduction to corpus linguistics

To introduce corpus linguistics, I shall begin by discussing the definition of the word *corpus* itself. The *OED* defines *corpus* in the sense related to linguistics as a) '[a] body or complete collection of writings or the like; the whole body of literature on any subject' or b) '[t]he body of written or spoken material upon which a linguistic analysis is based'. The underlying notion is that because corpus material is collected 'according to explicit design criteria' (Tognini-Bonelli 2001, 2) and for a specific purpose, it well represents a given language, or some part of a language, and is therefore a reliable source in linguistic research. According to Tognini-Bonelli (*ibid.*), there is a 'consensus that a corpus deals with natural, authentic language'.

Various kinds of corpora have been compiled for different purposes and electronic corpora have made it possible to process large quantities of information fast and to 'keep track of many contextual factors at the same time' (Biber et al. 1998, 3). Computers have thus enabled the analysis of complex patterns of language use (*ibid.* 4) and facilitated both the analysis and storing of information. In fact, according to Lindquist (2009, 3) the word *corpus* is nowadays 'almost always synonymous with *electronic corpus*'. Moreover, a corpus is designed according to what it is meant to represent and the types of research it can be used for and the way in which the results can be generalized are determined by its representativeness (*ibid.* 246). The Brown Corpus was the first one to be compiled in the 1960s and the following decades have seen a growing interest in corpus compilation (*ibid.* 4).

The *OED* further defines the field of *corpus linguistics* as 'the branch of linguistics concerned with analysis of corpora as a means of studying language'. It has often been connected to the usage-based view of the rules of language, according to which language changes as a result of user interaction (Lindquist 2009, 1). Typically, the results of a corpus search are presented either

as a concordance, ‘a list of all the contexts in which a word occurs in a particular text’ (ibid. 5) or as frequency figures. Many justifications have been given for the use of corpus linguistics in research, such as the speed and reliability of the method (ibid.) and the fact that results can be easily verified by other researchers (ibid. 9). However, corpus linguistics has also attracted some criticism, notably from generative linguists. For example Noam Chomsky regarded the findings of corpus linguistics as trivial (ibid. 8), and Lindquist himself says that corpora contain speech errors and mistakes and that a corpus will obviously never be able to contain ‘everything that is known by a speaker of a language (ibid. 10). Nevertheless, the number of electronic corpora readily available today enable endless possibilities in linguistic research and on a practical level contribute to increasing awareness of language variety (Tognini-Bonelli 2001, 6). Lexicography, grammar, gender studies and translation are just some of the areas to which the input of corpus linguistics has been beneficial (ibid. 1).

### 3.2.2 Normalizing frequencies

As stated above in 3.2.1, the results of corpus studies are typically presented as frequency figures. The primary reason for normalizing frequencies is that the data sets or different corpora that are studied are often of different size, which is why comparing the raw numbers of tokens (i.e. the raw frequencies) in different data sets would yield inaccurate results. To make the results comparable, as suggested for example by Biber et al. (1998, 263), the frequencies of the tokens found should be normalized. Normalization takes the size of different data sets into account and makes the results proportional to the size of each data set. To illustrate the normalization process, consider two data sets: one consisting of 5,000,000 words and the other of 10,000,000 words. There are 100 examples of a token in the first corpus and 250 in the second corpus. In order to compare the frequency of the tokens in the two corpora, the raw number of tokens is divided by the total number

of words in the data set and the result is multiplied by the number of words used to standardize the results, in this case 1,000,000. The normalized frequencies per million words are thus counted as follows:

$$(100/5,000,000)*1,000,000 = 20$$

$$(250/10,000,000)*1,000,000 = 25$$

The results illustrate that the difference in frequency is not as great as one might have thought based on the raw numbers of the tokens in the two corpora. In the present study, in order to compare the different data sets, the results will be normalized per 1,000,000 words as it is important that the conclusions based on the data are as accurate as possible.

### 3.2.3 Methods in the present study

As the majority of hypocoristic forms are nouns (Bardsley and Simpson 2009, 58), for the purposes of this study, a decision was made not to include verbs and adjectives in the search because their use is expected to be marginal. I will thus focus on hypocoristics of nouns and on distinctively New Zealand hypocoristics. Clearly well-established forms such as *movie* and personal names such as *Charlie* which are not restricted to New Zealand English will therefore be excluded from this study. In order to make conclusions about the change in the use of hypocoristics by the two newspapers examined, it was seen as necessary to locate as many hypocoristics of nouns as possible. In order to do this, a description of the makeup of a hypocoristic was formulated, which was then used as a basis for creating a Perl script<sup>4</sup>. The data is first searched for hypocoristics formed of the base form of a noun (with doubling of the last consonant of the base in some cases) and one of the following suffixes: *-ie*, *-o*, *-er*, *-y*, *-ey*, *-s*, *-a*, *-as*, *-ies*, *-os*, *-ers*. Truncated forms

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<sup>4</sup> Dr Sebastian Hoffman of University of Trier wrote the Perl script used in the search, for which I am very grateful.

such as *Heke/the Heke* for ‘Waiheke’ are excluded from this study because of the difficulty of formulating a search string to cover all such examples because their form follows no clear pattern.

The formulated Perl script is run over four sets of data: the *Nelson Mail* for the period between July 1997 and June 1998 and the second period from January 2010 to December 2010, and *The Press* for period 1 (June 1996 to May 1997) and the second period from January 2012 to December 2012. The total number of tokens for the data sets for each of the newspapers is listed in Table 2. In order to avoid unnecessary manual labour, the results of the search are automatically compared to the British National Corpus (BNC) and the Time Magazine Corpus of American English, and the tokens that appear in either of those corpora removed. This is a way to ensure as far as possible that the hypocoristics found are specific to New Zealand English, and that more established forms such as *movie* and *cabbie* found in most other varieties are not included.

The search results will first be categorized according to the newspaper and time period. Regardless of the careful formulation of the search string used, the search can be expected to yield tokens that are not hypocoristics and are thus irrelevant to this study (such as surnames and Maori words) – these are removed from the results next. The remaining tokens are then searched for in *the Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary* (henceforth referred to as the *OALD*), *the New Zealand Oxford Dictionary* and the NZDC list of hypocoristics. If an item appears in the *OALD* and is not marked ‘NZ’ and does not appear in either *the New Zealand Oxford Dictionary* or the NZDC list, it is possible that it is not specific to New Zealand. Examples that are clearly not New Zealand specific are classified as *excluded*, and borderline cases included. The excluded tokens and the reasons for excluding them are briefly discussed in 4.1. It should be acknowledged that in some cases it may be difficult to tell whether a hypocoristic form is only used in New Zealand English and that many of the forms are shared with Australian English. Furthermore, with some tokens it

may be necessary to discuss semantics as for example *fishy* can appear in the dictionary as both an adjective meaning something ‘that makes you suspicious because it seems dishonest’ (the *OALD*) or a hypocoristic noun denoting ‘an official’.

Once the meanings for the hypocoristics have been checked in the dictionaries and the NZDC list, they will be classified into four categories modified from the categorisation in the NZDC database of hypocoristics:

1. Occupation
2. Person or member of a group
3. Sports
4. General terms (e.g. an item, concept, building or a place)

The tokens that appear in a headline or a quotation will be marked for later discussion on the function of hypocoristics, and personal names and common nouns distinguished. Finally, each distinct token will be numbered to make it easier to tell the number of different tokens from a list of hypocoristics. Data for each newspaper will then be analysed and discussed first for period 1 (4.1) and then for period 2 (4.2). What follows is comparisons between the newspapers and with regard to the two time periods with the focus on frequency, form, function and semantic classification of the hypocoristics found.

#### 3.2.4 The Dynamic Model of the evolution of Postcolonial Englishes

Language contact situations resulting from colonization have led to the emergence of new varieties of English (or ‘New Englishes’) all over the world – New Zealand English is one example of this. Although they are each mostly regarded as a distinct variety nowadays, research has found that these postcolonial Englishes have developed as a result of a similar sociolinguistic process under similar circumstances, albeit at different points in time. Edgar Schneider discusses the evolution of these new varieties of English in his 2007 book *Postcolonial English: Varieties around the world*, in which he presents the famous Dynamic Model of the evolution of Postcolonial Englishes.

Said model posits that all historical instances of postcolonial Englishes (henceforth referred to as PCEs, following Schneider) in different corners of the world, as different as they may appear, have developed according to a shared underlying process (Schneider 2007, 21). Schneider (ibid 22) emphasizes the role of theories of language contact, Salikoko Mufwene's theory of the 'ecology' of language evolution, and the construction of social identity by symbolic linguistic means (i.e. speech accommodation) as a frame of reference in which the Dynamic Model should be viewed. Schneider's model is revolutionary in the sense that it is the first one that can be applied to a variety of PCEs, as the focus of previous research is on features of individual varieties (ibid. 29).

The Dynamic Model comprises five characteristic stages of the evolution of a PCE that describe the process from the transplantation of English to a new area to the emergence and stabilization of a new variety. The stages are listed below:

1. *Foundation*
2. *Exonormative stabilization*
3. *Nativization*
4. *Endonormative stabilization*
5. *Differentiation*

According to Schneider, (ibid.), the development process is driven by the reconstruction of group identities in a 'colonial-contact setting', on part of both the colonizer and the colonized. These two groups, for which Schneider uses the terms 'STL strand' and 'IDG strand' (*STL* for the perspective of the settlers and *IDG* for that of the indigenous people), represent two complementary communicative perspectives. In his view the two opposing perspectives are intertwined: in a situation where a piece of land is shared by two groups, dialect convergence is expected to occur (ibid. 32), although the formation of a uniform language community as a result is considered rare. In addition to the two complementary perspectives on communication, at each of the five evolutionary stages, it is possible to observe manifestations of the following four kind of



parameters, which have a ‘causal relationship operating between them’ (ibid. 30–31): (1) extralinguistic factors (such as the prevalent political situation or historical events), (2) characteristic identity constructions, (3) the contact setting’s sociolinguistic determinants and (4) structural effects in the variety in question. It is normal for different stages of the model to overlap, and Schneider further acknowledges the fact that the model ‘describes an ideal constellation’ (ibid. 31) and that in reality there should be room for variation. The model has since its publication gained the approval of many scholars and has been widely applied to more countries and contexts (Schneider 2011, 35). I will now move on to discuss the five phases of the Dynamic Model briefly as they are seen to apply to New Zealand English. The focus will be on phases four and five, the examination of which is deemed most relevant considering the timeframe of the data to be analysed.

The *foundation* phase of the development of New Zealand English is seen as having begun sometime towards the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century as the first whalers and traders came to the islands (Schneider 2007, 127) and to have lasted until 1840. At this stage New Zealand English bears a lot of resemblance to Australian English, because the founder populations originate in the same area and contribute to the emerging linguistic mixtures (Trudgill quoted in Schneider 2007, 127). The exposure to the local language at this stage is limited (Schneider 2011, 34), although there are early encounters with the Maori. The Treaty of Waitangi notably marks the start of the period of *exonormative stabilization* (phase two) of New Zealand English. The treaty in which the Maori signed the contract yielding sovereignty to the British (in exchange for protection) led to the establishment of English as language of education (Schneider 2007, 128) and to its further spread to all other fields. Lots of lexical borrowing, particularly in the domains of cultural terms and flora and fauna) takes place during this phase. Moreover, the Maori gradually adjust to the situation,

whilst the colonizers continue to maintain a strong affirmation to their country of origin (ibid.). New Zealand English is seen as entering the *nativization* phase (3) in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century with the newly-granted Dominion status (1907) and the following independence in 1947 weakening the ties with the British (ibid 129), although New Zealand's economy remains largely dependent on the 'mother country' toward which there is a continued loyalty. The distinct New Zealand accent becomes stable, although the British language norm prevails, giving rise to the 'complaint tradition' (ibid. 130) of language deterioration. According to Schneider, the nativization process is most clearly visible on the levels of vocabulary (e.g. in the form of new compounds and semantic shifts) and pronunciation (ibid.).

1973 marks the beginning of phase four: *endonormative stabilization*. Britain joining the European Union that year meant that New Zealand was suddenly in competition with other countries in the export market and was consequently forced to rethink its economy (ibid. 131). What followed was a reorientation towards the Asia-Pacific and a situation of self-dependence (ibid) which gave rise to the Maori renaissance mentioned briefly in 2.1.3. Bilingualism in New Zealand became official, although the number of people who spoke Maori regularly was low. In the endonormative stabilization phase, the identity construction typically inspires the creation of new literature in the new variety (Schneider 2011, 34) and in New Zealand many dictionaries were written towards the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and grammars some years later such as the one by Hundt in 2008. According to Schneider (2007, 132), in New Zealand Received Pronunciation is still appreciated to some extent although the orientation is mainly endonormative.

Schneider sees New Zealand entering the final phase of the Dynamic Model, *differentiation*, in the 1990s (ibid.) as signs of regional and social dialectal fragmentation in New Zealand English begin to emerge. Yet linguists continue to agree that there is very little regional variation in New

Zealand, although Schneider (ibid. 133) feels this may be changing. Interestingly, Schneider (ibid.) observes that the regional diversification in New Zealand appears to come a few decades after it began in Australia, as the 'Event X' that led to the change in linguistic identity in New Zealand took place later. Furthermore, studies on New Zealand phonology and 'ongoing sound changes' (ibid. 132) show its distinct character in comparison to the neighbouring variety of Australian English. Schneider (ibid. 127) goes on to call this a 'conscious drifting away of New Zealand accents'. The early stages of phase five have also seen the emergence of ethnic varieties amidst the Maori as well as the immigrants from Pacific islands (ibid. 133).

#### 4. Data analysis

I now move on to the second of the two parts of the study at hand: the data analysis. This chapter of the study is further divided into six sections, the first of which presents an overview of the results and explains the choices made to include certain terms and exclude others, which was not straightforward in all cases. The second section presents the search results for the first period examined, 1996–1998, for the *Nelson Mail* and *The Press*, each in separate subsections. Section 4.3 follows the same pattern for the second period with the data from 2010–2012. The results for both periods are summarized in 4.4. In section 4.5 I look at the diachronic change from the first period to the second within each newspaper with regard to the form, function and semantic category of the hypocoristics found. In the last section (4.6) I reflect on the relationship between the New Zealand linguistic identity and the use of hypocoristics in New Zealand English in the light of the results of the corpus analysis.

##### 4.1 Overview of the analysis process

In this section I will explain the process through which I arrived at the final sets of hypocoristics that will be the subject of analysis in the sections 4.2 and 4.3. As explained in 3.2.3, the CNZNE data was first searched for hypocoristics made up of the single-syllable noun base and one of the following suffixes: *-ie*, *-o*, *-er*, *-y*, *-ey*, *-s*, *-a*, *-as*, *-ies*, *-os*, *-ers*. The raw frequencies for the tokens yielded by the search based on the aforementioned criteria are presented in Table 3.

	<b>Period 1</b>	<b>Period 2</b>	<b>Total</b>
<i>Nelson Mail</i>	520	1592	2112
<i>The Press</i>	1107	3817	4924
<b>Total</b>	1627	5409	

**Table 3.** Raw frequencies for the total number of tokens yielded by the search.

Since the search results at this stage still contain many irrelevant examples, it was not seen as necessary to count the normalized frequencies for the different data sets. Instead, the normalized frequency counts will be presented for the tokens included in the scope of this study and those excluded on the basis of specific criteria. Once the search was done, the data was classified by the newspaper and period in question.

The next stage was dividing each of the four data sets into *included*, *excluded* and *irrelevant* tokens. The tokens that fit the preset criteria and were included in the scope of this study are discussed in greater detail in the subsections by newspaper and time period. This category includes hypocoristics of common nouns and personal names both made up of a single-syllable base and a suffix, and hypocoristics made up of an acronym base and an attached suffix. The following examples from the CNZNE illustrate the use of the hypocoristic form of ‘documentary’ (3) and that of a ‘small child’ (4):

- (3) Directed by Davis Guggenheim (*An Inconvenient Truth*), this doco is a bit messy but still fascinating.

*Nelson Mail*, 27 May 2010

- (4) A new release from Merino Kids proves that you're never too young to dress with style. Littlies can be snuggled stylishly and safely into the limited edition butterfly go go bag. . .

*The Press*, 31 October 2012

Table 4 presents the raw frequencies for the tokens relevant to this study by newspaper and period. By looking at Tables 3 and 4, it is easy to tell that quite a few tokens were either irrelevant or excluded. The total number of tokens included (452) represents roughly 6.4% of all tokens (7,036) yielded by the search. Therefore, regardless of the measures taken to automatically eliminate irrelevant tokens, some manual labour was required to arrive at the list of tokens that met the preset criteria for the hypocoristics at the centre of the study at hand.

	Period 1	Period 2	Total
<i>Nelson Mail</i>	74	129	203
<i>The Press</i>	26	223	249
<b>Total</b>	100	352	

**Table 4.** Raw frequencies for the total number of relevant tokens included in the analysis.

The search results also included several tokens that resembled the hypocoristics of nouns at the centre of study on the surface, but did not fulfil the preset criteria. These were therefore classified as ‘excluded’. Because the following sections on data analysis will focus on the discussion of the tokens that were included on the basis of the set criteria, I will now explain the reasons for the exclusion of certain tokens. The raw figures for the tokens excluded are listed in Table 5 below. As could be expected, the search returned first of all words that are identical to the form of a hypocoristic on the surface but are not hypocoristics. *Pearler* and *fopper* are examples of nouns made up of a single-syllable base and the suffix *-er*, but both of them were excluded for a reason. *Pearler* is found in *New Zealand Oxford Dictionary* and not marked colloquial and therefore an established word in New Zealand English, and not a hypocoristic form, whereas *fopper* is a name for a particular type of hamburger sold by Burger King and thus a proper noun.

The following are examples of the use of *pearler* and *fopper* in the CNZNE:

- (5) On a recent hardly-a-cloud-in-the-sky Christchurch pearler, the historic Governors Bay Hotel was the place to soak up sea views over Sunday lunch.

*The Press*, 25 July 2012

- (6) ...all patrons will be advised as to the proper pronunciation of the name of their product, the NZ Fopper Burger.

*Nelson Mail*, 8 May 2010

In the above example *pearler* functions as a part of a proper name, the ‘Christchurch pearler’ hotel. Words like *pearler*, that can be found in the *New Zealand Oxford Dictionary* but are not marked colloquial are thus established forms in New Zealand English and here classified as excluded (but not irrelevant) because even though they are not hypocoristics, they are regardless New Zealand specific.

	Period 1	Period 2	Total
<i>Nelson Mail</i>	10	32	42
<i>The Press</i>	31	147	178
<b>Total</b>	41	179	

**Table 5.** Raw frequencies for the number of tokens excluded from the analysis.

Also excluded were hypocoristics of proper nouns such as *Crowdies* (band, *Nelson Mail* 24 June 2010) and *Gardies* (the Gardies Tavern, *Nelson Mail* 19 June 2010), albeit a decision was made to include hypocoristics of personal names (i.e. proper names of people) such as *Banksie* for politician John Banks, because comparing the number of common nouns to that of personal names seemed worthwhile. The third reason for excluding tokens was that they were not hypocoristics of nouns, but of adjectives or verbs as the following CNZNE examples of *sciencey* and *croggie* illustrate:

- (7) Although his daughter had a ‘sciencey’ background, it was obvious that she was always going to be a teacher, he said.

*Nelson Mail*, 29 October 2010

- (8) . . . and just plain silly words – starp (to walk with long strides), croggie (to ride on the crossbar of another's bicycle), popnoddle (a somersault).

*The Press*, 17 February 2010

As explained in the introduction to this study, it was reasonable to expect that there would be so few examples of adjectives and verbs that they would frankly not merit the discussion. The search

returned a total of 22 examples of adjectives and verbs. As hypocoristic nouns are generally more frequent, I chose to focus on them. On the basis of excluding truncated forms from the present study (see subsection 3.2.3), also excluded are hypocoristics consisting of an acronym without an added suffix such as *Jafa*, meaning ‘Aucklander’ (originally ‘just another fucking Aucklander’) illustrated below.

- (9) ...people from Christchurch would never have gone to Auckland as they are rightfully suspicious of Jafas.

*The Press*, 4 April 2012

Hypocoristics that have a base made up of an acronym to which one of the suffixes *-ie*, *-o*, *-er*, *-y*, *-ey*, *-s*, *-a*, *-as*, *-ies*, *-os*, *-ers* is attached, are included in the scope of this study and discussed in the later subsections. Lastly, in the case of a handful of words returned by the corpus search it proved impossible to say whether the word in question was a hypocoristic form or not based on context, which is why those words were excluded.

A total of 6,364 tokens yielded by the search were discarded as irrelevant to this study. This amounts to 90.4 per cent of all tokens found. It was clear since the beginning that formulating a search string to find as many hypocoristic forms as possible would have its challenges and therefore the number of excluded and irrelevant tokens did not come as a complete surprise. The irrelevant category consists mainly of Maori words such as *Maunga*, *hongis* and *kainga*, and personal names: surnames such as *Bangma*, *Ayrey* and *Florris* and first names such as *Lyndey*, *Taasha* and *Luuka*. The category also included plenty of abbreviations, which, unlike the previously mentioned *Jafa*, have no hypocoristic functions. *EECA* for the Government’s ‘Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority’ (*The Press*, 13 December 2012) and *PANPA* for ‘Pacific Area Newspaper Publishers’ Association’ (*The Press*, 18 August 2012) are two examples of this.



Lastly, in some cases the system had interpreted two words as a single word that resembled the make-up of a hypocoristic as illustrated by example 10.

- (10) Sir, whywas there such lamentable lack of design on the roading, parking and covered ways around the airport?

*Nelson Mail*, 18 July 1997

- (11) The librarians received three or four requests a day for information from newsp apers, she said.

*Nelson Mail*, 20 February 1998

In the case of example 11 the situation was reversed and the system had split a compound and interpreted the latter part as a hypocoristic form.

#### 4.2 Period 1 (1995–1998)

This section will focus on the earlier of the two periods selected for the present study. For the *Nelson Mail* the data was collected between July 1997 and June 1998 whereas for *The Press* the collection period stretched from June 1996 to May 1997 (Table 2). Subsection 4.2.1 focuses on the *Nelson Mail* during the aforementioned period, beginning with the form of the hypocoristics that appear in the data. After the discussion on form, I will examine the function of the hypocoristics. To conclude the section, I will see how the hypocoristic terms that appear in the *Nelson Mail* during this period can be sorted into the four categories presented in 3.2.3. Subsection 4.2.2 follows the same pattern as 4.2.1 as I look into the form, function and semantic categories during the earlier period in *The Press*.

##### 4.2.1 *Nelson Mail*

I will begin the data analysis with the provincial newspaper *Nelson Mail* and look at the data during the period from 1997 to 1998. The complete data set for the *Nelson Mail* for this period contains 2,221,658 tokens, making it the smallest of the four data sets examined for the present study.

Because all four data sets are of different sizes, the results will be normalized to be able to make accurate comparisons between the data sets. This subsection begins with a discussion on the form of the hypocoristics found and the frequencies of selected suffixes in the *Nelson Mail* during the period sampled. After the process of excluding tokens and removing irrelevant tokens, as explained in the previous section 4.1, a total of 74 tokens are included for this period of analysis for the *Nelson Mail*.

The normalized frequency count tells that hypocoristics of nouns formed by attaching one of the suffixes *-ie*, *-o*, *-er*, *-y*, *-ey*, *-s*, *-a*, *-as*, *-ies*, *-os*, *-ers* to a single-syllable base appear in the data set 33.3 times per million words. The raw frequencies for the different suffixes and the corresponding normalized frequencies are presented in Table 6. The plural forms are counted together with the singular forms in Table 6. As illustrated by Table 6, three of the suffixes examined appear in the results for the *Nelson Mail*: *-ie*, *-y* and *-er*.

Suffix	Number of examples	Normalized frequency
<i>-ie</i>	69	31.1
<i>-y</i>	2	0.9
<i>-ey</i>	0	0
<i>-o</i>	0	0
<i>-er</i>	3	1.35
<i>-s</i>	0	0
<i>-a</i>	0	0
<b>Total</b>	74	33.3

**Table 6.** Raw and normalized frequencies for the hypocoristic suffixes in the *Nelson Mail* in the first period sampled.

The majority of the examples (93%) have been formed using the suffix *-ie*. In the entire data set for *Nelson Mail* in this earlier period, the hypocoristics formed using *-ie* represent a total of 31.1 hits per million words. The following examples of *stubbie* and *wharfie* illustrate the use of *-ie* in the CNZNE:

- (12) The Crown alleged Mr Jones struck Nelson man Justin Gunn three times in the head and face with a stubbie beer bottle outside a Bridge St shop in the early hours of April 11.

*Nelson Mail*, 11 September 1997

- (13) He was a wharfie for most of his working life and said the police only had to turn up on the Nelson wharf . . .

*Nelson Mail*, 11 October 1997

The *New Zealand Oxford Dictionary* defines *wharfie* as ‘a waterside worker; a wharf labourer’, whereas *stubbie*, according to the NZDC list of hypocoristics, is ‘a squat bottle of beer’. The triumph of *-ie* over the other hypocoristic suffixes in the *Nelson Mail* is not surprising, as for example Huddleston and Pullum (2.3.1) have said that along with *-y* it is ‘the most productive of the diminutive markers in present-day English’. Furthermore, also Bardsley and Simpson, in their study presented in 2.3.4, conclude that hypocoristics formed using the suffix *-ie* are the most common during the sampling period in both New Zealand and Australian English.

The other two suffixes that appear in this data set for the *Nelson Mail* are *-y* and *-er*, the former representing 2.7% of all examples and the latter 4%. In the data set, they appear with the frequency of 0.9 and 1.35 hits per million words and are therefore very infrequent. Examples (14) and (15) below illustrate the use of *-y* and *-er* in the corpus.

- (14) We also enjoy the company of school choirs, orchestras, kindys, youth groups, Guides and Scouts.

*Nelson Mail*, 7 November 1997

- (15) . . . the great shearing routes of outback New South Wales -- shearers, cooks, musterers, drovers, classers, owners and contractors, in days when wool was still king.

*Nelson Mail*, 13 January 1998

*Kindy* in (14) is the hypocoristic form of ‘kindergarten’, as specified for example in the NZDC list of hypocoristics. Based on the context in which it appears, the hypocoristic noun *classer* in (15) likely has its origins in the verb *to class*, which, according to *New Zealand Oxford Dictionary*, means to ‘grade (fleeces) in a shearing shed’. The examples of the suffix *-er* in the *Nelson Mail* during this period support Marchand’s (2.3.1) statement that it mainly appears in words denoting persons.

As stated earlier in this subsection, the first period sampled yielded 74 relevant tokens in the *Nelson Mail*. Amidst these tokens there are 16 different hypocoristics, of which the three most frequent, *boatie*, *bikie*, and *milkie* will be discussed here in more detail. As could be expected, all of the most frequent examples of hypocoristics are formed using the suffix *-ie*. Clearly the most frequent is *boatie*: it appears a total of 37 times in the corpus data (with a normalized frequency of 16.7 hits per million words). Its meaning is explained in the *New Zealand Oxford Dictionary* as follows: ‘a person who owns and runs a small (esp. power-driven) boat’. Examples (16) and (17) below illustrate the use of *boatie* in the CNZNE.

- (16) Totaranui camp manager Brian McKenna said he was impressed with the way other boaties in the vicinity helped out the stricken craft.

*Nelson Mail*, 6 January 1998

- (17) Nelson coastguard found no trace of a boatie in trouble after Wood residents reported seeing a flare north of Neale Park last night.

*Nelson Mail*, 20 January 1998

Interestingly, in 78% of the corpus examples, the hypocoristic form *boatie* appears in the plural. This could be a sign of New Zealand boaties being viewed as a unified group, which would explain why they are referred to in the plural much more often than the singular. *Bikie* and *milkie* are much less frequent in the earlier data for *Nelson Mail*, the former with 3.6 hits per million words and the latter with 2.7 hits. According to *New Zealand Oxford Dictionary*, *bikie* is a hypocoristic form

denoting ‘a member of a gang of motorcyclists’ whereas *milkie* is the hypocoristic form used for ‘a milkman’ (generally meaning the person who delivers and sells milk). The following are examples of the use of these two hypocoristic forms from the CNZNE:

- (18) But whether or not Highway 61 comes back to throw down the gauntlet again, the Nelson bikies face a more immediate challenge from the Fourth Reich.

*Nelson Mail*, 28 March 1998

- (19) By buying Meadow Fresh milk we may be being loyal to our original milkie but it is the Christchurch economy we are boosting.

*Nelson Mail*, 13 August 1997

To conclude the discussion on the form of hypocoristics in the *Nelson Mail* in the years 1997–1998, I will make a brief note about the singular/plural aspect of the examples yielded by the search. Looking at all the examples in the *Nelson Mail*, interestingly, the hypocoristic forms appear in plural 68 per cent of the time, with the normalized frequency of 22.5 hits per million words. Yet, considering the low frequency of the examples in the corpus, it is difficult to make any valid conclusions based on the fact. The normalized frequency for the appearance of hypocoristics in the singular is 10.8 hits per million words.

I will now move on to discuss the functions of the hypocoristics in the *Nelson Mail* during the earlier period sampled. As mentioned in subsection 3.2.3, all of the corpus examples for this study were marked as either common nouns or personal names, as it was considered interesting to see if one type would be much more frequent than the other. It is evident that, as Marchand posits (2.2.2), derivatives of everyday words can be expected to appear more often, but on the other hand the history of using hypocoristics to mark solidarity would suggest that there would also be some examples of hypocoristics of personal names used as markers of familiarity. In this particular data set, however, there is only a single example of a hypocoristic of a personal name, *Banksie*, and 99 per cent of the results are common nouns. The use of *Banksie* in the CNZNE is exemplified below.

The frequency of personal names is 0.45 hits per million words and that of common nouns 32.9 hits per million words

- (20) . . . those including radical Maori at one end, and ‘the other 10 percent who ring Banksie (talkback host and MP John Banks) every morning’.

*Nelson Mail*, 7 October 1997

All the above examples from (12) to (19), including *stubbie*, *bikie* and *kindy*, exemplify the use of common nouns in the corpus, and therefore no further examples are provided here.

Considering the context in which hypocoristics are used and the motivation behind the use of a hypocoristic form in place of the original, it is interesting to examine how large a part of the examples appears in headlines. The discussion on the conventions of written news texts (section 2.4) and the look into the selection of style guides made it clear that the use of an abbreviated form of a word is more acceptable in headlines where the number of words is often limited. As explained earlier in subsection 2.3.2, according to Bardsley, it is typical for hypocoristics to have an abbreviating function in headlines. On the basis of this it is reasonable to expect there to be several examples of the use of hypocoristic forms in news headings. However, in the earlier *Nelson Mail* data set a mere 18 per cent of all examples appear as part of a headline. The normalized frequency for hypocoristics in headlines during this period in the *Nelson Mail* is 5.85 hits per million words. The fact that most examples are therefore part of the news stories themselves suggests that it is reasonable to presume that in those cases the meaning of the hypocoristic is easy to deduce or that it is either explained or clear from the context in which the word appears. An explanation of the hypocoristic form follows its use only in 5% of the examples in the *Nelson Mail* during the period sampled. The normalized frequency for hypocoristic forms that are followed by an explanation of their meaning is 1.8 hits per million words. An example of this is the use of *stubbie* in example (12) in which the expression used has been clarified: ‘stubbie beer bottle’, although the form

*stubbie* in itself denotes a beer bottle. In most cases the meaning is evident based on the context, even for someone who is not a New Zealander.

Something else that should be mentioned in the discussion on the function of hypocoristics is quoted use. That is to say, some hypocoristics appear in quotation marks in a news story or a heading, as exemplified by *scarfie* below. The hypocoristic form is either a part of a quoted text or has been placed in quotation marks to draw attention to its colloquial nature.

- (21) It is said that one in six people in Dunedin is a ‘scarfie’ and that a third of those employed there work directly or indirectly for the university.

*Nelson Mail*, 25 March 1998

According to *New Zealand Oxford Dictionary*, *scarfie* is used to refer to a ‘student at the University of Otago’. The hypocoristic form has its origins in the wearing of a scarf in the university colours. Quoted use is fairly infrequent in this data set, with only 7 per cent of the examples appearing in quotation marks. Quotation marks are often used to call the reader’s attention to the expression used and perhaps means that it is one that the reader is not expected to be familiar with but should be able to understand based on the context. The normalized frequency for hypocoristics appearing as part of a quotation in the *Nelson Mail* is 2.25 per million words. To conclude the discussion on the function of hypocoristics in the *Nelson Mail*, some of the hypocoristics in the data set appear as part of a compound (14% to be exact), such as *bikie gang* exemplified below:

- (22) . . . few genuine members and will only survive by being absorbed by one or other of the bikie gangs.

*Nelson Mail*, 28 March 1998

The frequency for hypocoristics that appear as part of a compound in the *Nelson Mail* during the earlier period sampled is 4.5 hits per million words. Interestingly, 63 per cent of the examples of compounds include the hypocoristic *bikie*.

As explained in 3.2.3, after verifying the meanings of the hypocoristics found in the *Nelson Mail*, the terms were classified into the four categories modified from the NZDC database list of hypocoristics. This particular data set includes no examples in the category ‘sports’, but the frequencies for the examples in the other three categories are listed in Table 7.

Category	Raw no of examples	Percentage of all examples	Normalized frequency
Occupation	8	11%	3.6
Person or member of a group	58	78%	26.1
Sports	0	0%	0
General terms	8	11%	3.6
<b>Total</b>	74	100%	33.3

**Table 7.** Examples in different categories in the *Nelson Mail* during the period 1997–1998.

The largest category, representing 78 per cent of all examples in the data set is ‘person or member of a group’. The examples such as *boatie*, *bikie* and *scarfie* representing this category appear in the CNZNE at the normalized frequency of 26.1 hits per million words. The category of ‘occupation’ and that of ‘general terms’ are each represented by 11 per cent of the examples in the *Nelson Mail* in the years 1997–1998.

#### 4.2.2 *The Press*

The data analysis in the earlier period continues with the data from the metropolitan newspaper *The Press* as I look into the data during the period from June 1996 to May 1997. The complete data set for the *The Press* for this period consists of 3,710,614 tokens, making it the second smallest of the four data sets examined for the present study. As explained in the introduction above, this subsection follows the same pattern as 4.2.1: I will discuss the form, function and the



categorization of the hypocoristics found in *The Press* during the period examined. Also, as in the previous subsection, the normalized frequencies for the results will be counted and discussed. Once the irrelevant tokens were removed and those that did not meet the set criteria for the hypocoristics of nouns at the centre of this study were excluded, the total number of the tokens included for his period in *The Press* is 26. The raw and normalized frequencies for the hypocoristic suffixes in *The Press* in the first period sampled are listed in Table 8.

Suffix	Number of examples	Normalized frequency
-ie	22	5.93
-y	0	0
-ey	0	0
-o	0	0
-er	3	0.81
-s	0	0
-a	1	0.27
<b>Total</b>	26	7.01

**Table 8.** Raw and normalized frequencies for the hypocoristic suffixes in *The Press* in the first period sampled.

Looking at Table 8, it is clear to see that the suffixes -y, -ey, -o and -s do not appear in the data at all, and those that do appear (-ie, -er and -a) do so highly infrequently. Starting with the least frequent hypocoristic form, -a only appears in the data once (with the normalized frequency of 0.27 hits per million words), which was something that the fact that it mainly appears with proper names (see the discussion in 2.3.1) led one to expect, and therefore it does not offer much for further analysis. Nevertheless, the use of the suffix is exemplified by *doona*, the hypocoristic form of ‘duvet’ (chiefly of Australian usage) below.

- (23) Other ideas include unspun silk used to stuff doonas (Australian for duvet) and a steel grid to support a slate roof.

*The Press*, 13 August 1996

*-er* is the second most frequent, albeit highly infrequent as well, with 0.81 hits per million words in the earlier data set for *The Press*. The following example is deviant in the sense that the base form of the noun consists of two syllables instead of one. The search only recognized the latter syllable and the attached suffix, and since those corresponded to the set criteria, *skylarker* appeared in the results.

- (24) . . . he would have to refuse a passenger because of bulk. Sometimes the slow pick-up speed allowed skylarkers outside nightclubs to chase after the machines and tug on the mudguards. . .

*The Press*, 14 January 1997

Although it deviates from the majority of examples, *skylarker* is nevertheless an interesting one, and as those in the earlier data for *The Press* are few and far between, a decision was made to include it in the analysis. The term is not defined in the dictionaries used for this study or in the NZDC list of hypocoristics. However, for example Collins COBUILD defines the verb *skylark* as ‘to romp or play jokes’ and makes note of the noun *skylarker* in the same sense, which would fit the context of example (24).

Rather unsurprisingly, the most frequent hypocoristic suffix in *The Press*, too, is *-ie*. Its use is exemplified by *possie* and *cuzzie* below.

- (25) . . . his miamia is sited best for north-west and south-west winds. ‘It's not one of the great possies. On a poor day the bag is about four to five, but in a good weekend it can be up to 13 or 14.’

*The Press*, 3 May 1997

- (26) Her promotional material contains something about cleavers or cleavage, and her 39 cuzzies have described her as ‘funny, witty, and cute’.

*The Press*, 11 January 1997

The *New Zealand Oxford Dictionary* defines *possie* as ‘a position of supposed advantage to the occupant’ and makes a note of its colloquial use in both New Zealand and Australia. As mentioned in 2.3.3, owing to the close contact between the countries, New Zealand English shares plenty of hypocoristics with Australian English, of which *possie* is merely a single example. The NZDC database list of hypocoristics defines *cuz/cuzzy* as ‘a cousin’. Example (26) is interesting in the sense that if a hypocoristic form only appears in the plural with the suffix *-ies*, it is difficult to tell whether the singular form ends in *-y* or *-ie*, and the decision was made to include them in the category of suffixes ending in *-ie*. The suffix *-ie* appears in *The Press* during the earlier period with the frequency of 5.93 hits per million words, which, similarly to the findings in the *Nelson Mail* during 1997–1998 presented in the previous subsection, supports the results of the study by Bardsley and Simpson presented in 2.3.4 of *-ie* being the most frequent hypocoristic suffix.

In the examined data set for *The Press*, a total of 14 different hypocoristic terms appear. As mentioned in 4.2.1, in the *Nelson Mail* in the first period there are 16 different examples of hypocoristics. The most frequently appearing hypocoristic forms are *boatie*, *stubbie* and *bikie*, with each of the remaining 11 examples appearing in the data only once. Interestingly, of the three most frequent terms *boatie* and *bikie* were among the most frequent in the *Nelson Mail* during the first period sampled as well. Furthermore, all of the most frequent hypocoristics follow the same pattern of formation, with a single-syllable base and the suffix *-ie*. There are 10 instances of *boatie* in *The Press* and the normalized frequency for the hypocoristic form is 2.69 hits per million words. Its use in *The Press* is illustrated below.

- (27) The new sewage treatment plant benefits the local community as well as the boaties, swimmers, and fishermen from outside the area who use Lyttelton Harbour.

*The Press*, 29 August 1996

The second most frequent hypocoristic form in *The Press* is *stubbie*, ‘a squat bottle of beer’, as explained in 4.2.1. It appears in *The Press* data with the normalized frequency of 0.81 hits per million words. The following illustrates the use of *stubbie* in *The Press*:

- (28) The Dunn brothers, in separate cars, followed the accused. The Crown alleges the accused threw a stubbie at one of the cars.

*The Press*, 16 June 1996

*Bikie* is the third most frequent with the frequency of 0.54 hits per million words. An example of its use in *The Press* is provided below.

- (29) ‘I never heard from the majority of them again but on one occasion a couple of bikies ran out and I gave them some petrol. . .’

*The Press*, 11 July 1996

Overall, of the hypocoristics of nouns in *The Press* in the first period, 62 per cent appear in the plural and 38 per cent of the examples in the singular. The normalized frequency for singular use is 2.43 hits per million words and that of plural use 4.58 hits per million words. However, considering the low number of examples, it does not seem reasonable to make further conclusions based on the distribution.

The discussion now continues with the function of hypocoristic forms in *The Press* in the period 1996–1997. I will note any prominent differences to the results for the *Nelson Mail* in this earlier period. Looking at the frequency of common nouns and personal names in *The Press*, it is interesting to observe the same exact pattern as with the *Nelson Mail*: there is a single example of a personal name, *Banksie*, and the remainder (here 96 per cent) of the results are common nouns. The normalized frequency for the use of hypocoristics of personal names in this data set is 0.27 hits per million words and that of common nouns 6.74 hits per million words. The same hypocoristic form *Banksie* appears as the sole example of a personal name in both newspapers. Here is an illustration of its use in *The Press*:

- (30) . . . Peters said Mr Banks insulted him, and as a retort he asked him, ‘why do they call you Queensland Banksie?’ Mr Peters said he does not recall Mr Banks asking him to remove his hand.

*The Press*, 29 March 1997

All of the above examples from (23) to (29) are thus illustrations of the use of common nouns in *The Press*. As mentioned already in 4.2.1 the limited headline space might be the reason behind the use of hypocoristic forms in news headlines and this leads one to expect to find at least some examples of headline use. In *The Press* in the first period there are 5 cases of using hypocoristics of nouns in headlines, which amounts to 19 per cent of all examples. Hypocoristics in *The Press* headlines appear with the normalized frequency of 1.35 hits per million words. Based on these results it seems that lack of space is not the primary motivation for using hypocoristic forms as they mostly appear in the news stories instead. The writer counts on the reader’s ability to understand the meaning of the hypocoristic form based on context or a short explanation follows the hypocoristic form used. Perhaps the use in headlines is less frequent because, regardless of the potential lack of space, the writers want to be sure that the headline is understood by all readers, since a hypocoristic form easily understood by a New Zealander might leave a foreigner reading the newspaper in a state of puzzlement. In *The Press*, there is only one example, *doona*, in (23), in which a deliberate explanation follows the use of a hypocoristic form. The normalized frequency for hypocoristics of nouns followed by an explanation of their meaning is 0.27 hits per million words.

The use of hypocoristic forms in quotations is not very frequent in *The Press*: only 7.7 per cent of the examples appear as part of a quotation, as in the following:

- (31) Christchurch ‘skatie’ Terry Voice, 17, who was spoken to while practising his moves in Victoria Square, said there were. . .

*The Press*, 18 April 1997

Based on the context, *skatie* here is used in place of ‘skateboarder’, a meaning which is also found in the NZDC list of hypocoristics and the *New Zealand Oxford Dictionary*. The low frequency of hypocoristics in quotation marks speaks for the fact that when such a form is used as part of a news heading or a news story, it is generally expected that the reader will understand what is meant based on the context in which the term appears, so that there is no need to use quotation marks as a means to draw attention to the ‘non-standard’ form. The normalized frequency of quoted use in *The Press* in the first period is 1.35 examples per million words, which does not differ greatly from the corresponding result for the *Nelson Mail* at 2.25. At this stage of the analysis there are no clear examples of the use of hypocoristics in a derogatory way or to a patronizing effect, apart from perhaps the use of *Banksie* in example (30). Yet, without being familiar with the character of John Banks it is difficult to be sure of the motive behind the use of the hypocoristic form. The examples in which a hypocoristic form appears as part of a compound are also few and far between and only represent 7.7 per cent of the examples in *The Press* in 1996–1997. The normalized frequency for hypocoristics as part of a compound in *The Press* during this earlier period is 1.35 hits per million words. Hypocoristics as part of compounds are thus found somewhat more frequently in the *Nelson Mail*, for which the frequency is 4.5 hits per million words. Here is an example of the use of *bikie*, also found in the *Nelson Mail* during the earlier period, as part of a compound:

- (32) ‘I’m not saying anything more. There is a wicked bikie gang in Christchurch which would like to kill me because I co-operated with the police once . . .’

*The Press*, 29 August 1996

To conclude the discussion on *The Press* during the earlier period sampled, I shall examine the distribution of the relevant examples in relation to the categories chosen for this study. The raw and normalized frequencies for the different categories are presented in Table 9. Two of the categories are represented in *The Press* in the first period: ‘general terms’, and ‘person or member

of a group'. There are no examples in the categories of 'sports' or 'occupations'. The examples of general terms represent 35 per cent of all examples and 65 per cent are examples of the category 'person or member of a group'.

Category	Raw no of examples	Percentage of all examples	Normalized frequency
Occupation	0	0%	0
Person or member of a group	17	65%	4.58
Sports	0	0%	0
General terms	9	35%	2.43
<b>Total</b>	26	100%	7.01

**Table 9.** Examples in different categories in *The Press* in the first period (1996–1997).

The general terms appear in this subsection of the corpus with the frequency of 2.43 hits per million words. The category of general terms includes the likes of *possie* (25) and *stubbie* (28). Most examples in *The Press*, like in the *Nelson Mail* (see Table 7), belong to the category of 'person or member of a group'. In *The Press* the examples in this category appear at the frequency of 4.58 hits per million words, whereas the corresponding number in the *Nelson Mail* is 26.1. The category 'person or member of a group' includes hypocoristic forms such as *bikie* (29) and *skatie* (31) illustrated earlier on in this subsection. To conclude, the results of both periods examined for both newspapers will be summarized in 4.4 after the discussion on the newspapers during the second period.

### 4.3 Period 2 (2010–2012)

The discussion on hypocoristics of nouns now continues with the data for the second period. The sampled period for the *Nelson Mail* stretches from January to December in 2010, whereas the data for *The Press* spans the period between January and December 2012. As in 4.2, I begin the discussion with the smaller of the two newspapers, the *Nelson Mail*. Subsection 4.3.1 focuses on the hypocoristics of nouns in the *Nelson Mail* in 2010. First to be discussed is their form: the frequency of different hypocoristics and hypocoristic suffixes in the corpus data. I then move on to the functions of the different hypocoristics and examine for example their use in quotations and headlines. The subsection concludes with a look into the four categories selected for this study in relation to the terms found in the *Nelson Mail* in 2010. Subsection 4.3.2 follows the same pattern as 4.3.1 with its focus on the data from *The Press* in 2012. In 4.3.2 I will also make comparisons to the *Nelson Mail* when examining the data for *The Press*. The actual summary of the results of both periods one and two will be presented in 4.4.

#### 4.3.1 *Nelson Mail*

I begin the discussion with the form of the hypocoristics of nouns that the search returned for the year 2010 in the *Nelson Mail*. The complete data set for the *Nelson Mail* in this later period contains 4,668,709 words, which makes it the second largest of the four data sets examined for the present study. The hypocoristic suffixes *-ie*, *-o*, *-er*, *-y*, *-ey*, and *-a* appear in the data, but there are no examples of the use of the suffix *-s*. Table 10 displays the raw and normalized frequencies for the hypocoristic suffixes in the *Nelson Mail* in the second period sampled. For this period the search yielded 129 terms that met the preset criteria and together they appear in the *Nelson Mail* in 2010 with the normalized frequency of 27.61 hits per million words. Rather unsurprisingly, the most frequent suffix in the *Nelson Mail* in 2010 is *-ie*. There are a total of 91 examples of its use in the



data set, which account for 71 per cent of all examples in the *Nelson Mail*. This further confirms the findings of the study by Bardsley and Simpson presented in 2.3.4 that speak for *-ie* being the most frequent hypocoristic suffix in use in New Zealand and Australia.

Suffix	Number of examples	Normalized frequency
<i>-ie</i>	91	19.49
<i>-y</i>	10	2.14
<i>-ey</i>	1	0.21
<i>-o</i>	9	1.92
<i>-er</i>	17	3.64
<i>-s</i>	0	0
<i>-a</i>	1	0.21
<b>Total</b>	129	27.61

**Table 10.** Raw and normalized frequencies for the hypocoristic suffixes in the *Nelson Mail* in the second period sampled.

The suffix *-ie* appears in the *Nelson Mail* with the normalized frequency of 19.49 hits per million words. The examples (33) and (34) illustrate its use in the newspaper in question.

- (33) Maybe New Zealand could spare a few sparkies to send over and solve that big hurdle about no power points by the garage?

*Nelson Mail*, 14 May 2010

- (34) . . . two classes, streetstocks and production saloons. Although cast very much in minor roles, the streeties had a bit of fun with a couple of visiting cars getting off relatively cheaply as the locals . . .

*Nelson Mail*, 6 December 2010

*Sparkie* is a hypocoristic form derived from *sparks*, which according to the *New Zealand Oxford Dictionary*, stands for ‘a nickname for a radio operator or an electrician’. In example (33) the context in which the form appears reveals that in the example *sparkie* is used to denote an

electrician. *Streetie* in (34) has three definitions in the NZDC list of hypocoristics, and according to the list can be used to refer to ‘a homeless person who lives on the streets’, ‘a male who solicits for sex on the streets’ or the New Zealand soap opera ‘Shortland Street’. Yet, looking at the context in which the hypocoristic form is used, the more likely denotation of streeties is ‘streetstocks’, one of the feature classes in a race in which race cars compete for the ELF Super Cup on the South Island (<http://www.supersaloon.co.nz/index.html>).

The second most frequent suffix, regardless of being notably less frequent than *-ie*, is *-er*. It appears in the *Nelson Mail* with a normalized frequency of 3.64 hits per million words. The examples with the hypocoristic suffix *-er* account for 13 per cent of all examples of hypocoristics in the *Nelson Mail* in 2010. Examples (35) and (36) illustrate the use of *-er* in the CNZNE.

- (35) In the 17th century, a whiffler was a smoker of tobacco. In the underworld slang of Victorian times, it was one who cried in pain.

*Nelson Mail*, 17 February 2010

- (36) Enter the wwoofers. Wwoofers are Willing Worker[s] On Organic Farms, but since we are neither farmers nor . . .

*Nelson Mail*, 10 July 2010

Neither of the hypocoristic examples in (35) and (36) are found in the *OALD*, the *New Zealand Oxford Dictionary* or the NZDC list of hypocoristics. Instead, the explanation in both cases is provided in the news story itself: a *whiffler* is ‘a smoker of tobacco’ and a *wwoofer* a ‘willing worker on an organic farm’. The wwoofer network of organizations has operated since the 1970s ([www.wwoof.net](http://www.wwoof.net)). Both examples are somewhat peculiar: *whiffler* in the sense that the two examples of it in the corpus data both refer to the Victorian era which leads one to think the term is probably no longer in use, and *wwoofer* in the sense that the base form of the term is an acronym with an attached hypocoristic suffix. As mentioned in 4.1, the decision was made to exclude acronyms without an attached suffix, and therefore *wwoofer* meets the preset criteria. The

examples of the use of the suffix *-er* in this data set further verify Marchand's (2.3.1) statement that the suffix generally appears with words denoting persons as 76 per cent of all examples represent the semantic category 'a person or member of a group'.

The third most frequent of the hypocoristic suffixes in the *Nelson Mail* is *-y*. It appears in the *Nelson Mail* data set with the frequency of 2.14 hits per million words and accounts for 8 per cent of all examples of hypocoristics in the data set in question. The following is an example of the use of *-y* in the *Nelson Mail* in 2010.

- (37) There is a lot of trust in other guys in the squad. Clearly, everyone loves Kevvy and everyone knows what a gentleman he is and what a great, clean player he is, too.

*Nelson Mail*, 9 September 2010

*Kevvy* is a personal name that is not defined in the *OALD*, the *New Zealand Oxford Dictionary* or the NZDC list of hypocoristics. Yet, *Kevin* is one of the few male names that share the first syllable with *Kevvy* which leads one to deduce it is likely to be the original name behind the hypocoristic form.

The hypocoristic suffix *-o* is the third least frequent of the suffixes, appearing with a normalized frequency of 1.92 hits per million words in the data for the *Nelson Mail* in 2010. The examples with the hypocoristic suffix *-o* represent 7 per cent of all examples in the *Nelson Mail*. The following is an illustration of its use:

- (38) . . . sees Nelson's Craig Potton travelling five of New Zealand's key rivers in a five-part doco.

*Nelson Mail*, 9 September 2010

The *New Zealand Oxford Dictionary* defines *doco* as the colloquial form of 'a documentary'. The hypocoristic suffixes *-ey* and *-a* appear in the *Nelson Mail* data the least frequently, each with 0.21 hits per million words. *-a* appears as infrequently as during the first period, and the low frequency

of both suffixes does not invite further analysis, an example of each of the hypocoristics' use is provided below:

- (39) 'I reckon Hug a Ginga Day should go world-wide because gingas are all around the world and they need to be appreciated too.'

*Nelson Mail*, 29 May 2010

- (40) . . . spin in Annesbrook, leaving a 15-metre skid mark, told police he did it because he liked 'doing snakeys when no-one was on the road'.

*Nelson Mail*, 24 November 2010

Now that I have discussed all the hypocoristic suffixes that appear in the *Nelson Mail* during this period, I will move on to examine the distinct hypocoristic terms and their frequency in the corpus data.

Among the 129 examples in the *Nelson Mail* there are a total of 44 different hypocoristic terms of which the three most frequent: *boatie*, *bikie* and *woofer* will be discussed here in greater detail. Rather unsurprisingly, *boatie* is the most frequent of all terms, accounting for 28 per cent of the examples of hypocoristics in the *Nelson Mail* and appearing with the normalized frequency of 7.71 hits per million words. Even though the term was previously exemplified in (16), (17) and (27), one example from the *Nelson Mail* in 2010 is presented here.

- (41) '. . . when people were advised to stay clear of the beaches, he was disappointed with some boaties who chose to ignore the warnings and launch their boats in the face of an escalating threat.'

*Nelson Mail*, 1 March 2010

*Boatie* and the second most frequent hypocoristic term *bikie* were among the most frequent terms in the *Nelson Mail* and *The Press* during period 1 as well. It should be interesting to see whether the same pattern is true for *The Press* during the second period as well. *Bikie* represents 11 per cents of all examples in *Nelson Mail* in 2010, and appears with a normalized frequency of 3.0 hits per million words. Its use is illustrated below.

- (42) Though few from outside of the gang culture would be too concerned about straight out bikie v bikie confrontation, the main concern is that innocent people are frequently caught up when gang conflict . . .

*Nelson Mail*, 16 March 2010

The third most frequent is, somewhat unexpectedly, *wwoofer*, defined earlier on in this subsection as a ‘willing worker on an organic farm’. *Wwoofer* represents 6% of all *Nelson Mail* examples and appears in the corpus data with the normalized frequency of 1.71 hits per million words. To conclude the discussion on the form of hypocoristics of nouns in the *Nelson Mail* in 2010, I will look into the division in the use of singular and plural forms of the hypocoristics found. Here a clear pattern is visible: 66 per cent of the examples are in the plural form and 34 per cent in the singular. The normalized frequency for the plural forms is 14.1 hits per million words and the respective number for singular forms 9.4.

Next, the discussion turns to the function of hypocoristic of nouns in the *Nelson Mail* in 2010. I will first look at the frequency of common nouns versus personal names and then move on to the use of hypocoristics in headlines and quotations. To begin with personal names and common nouns, the division in *Nelson Mail* is clear: personal names account for 6 per cent and common nouns 94 per cent of all examples. The normalized frequency for the use of personal names is 1.71 hits per million words and that of common nouns 25.9 hits per million words. In addition to *Kevvy*, mentioned earlier on in this subsection, the examples of personal names include *Poffy* and *Diksy*, the use of which is illustrated below. All of the examples in this subsection (apart from *Kevvy*) so far (such as *doco*, *whiffler* and *bikie*) represent common nouns.

- (43) . . . there are a lot of familiar faces there and a lot of people I know I can lean on. ‘Obviously, Poffy [Jonathan Poff], with his experience in the Super 14. . .’

*Nelson Mail*, 21 June 2010

- (44) Their sentencing for the manslaughter of Richard ‘Diksy’ Jones, 64, has been set for December. The Crown is considering asking for the men to be retried. . .

*Nelson Mail*, 6 November 2010

16 per cent of the 129 examples in the *Nelson Mail* are used in headlines in the provincial newspaper. The remaining 84 per cent appear in the news stories. The normalized frequency for the examples that appear in headlines is 4.28 per million words. The following are headlines from the *Nelson Mail* in 2010.

- (45) A hunny of a treat for littlies and grans

*Nelson Mail*, 13 April 2010

- (46) Marine farms a risk for boaties

*Nelson Mail*, 12 January 2010

The numbers seem to follow a similar pattern to what we saw earlier during period 1: the number of hypocoristics used in headlines is clearly much lower than in the news stories. As mentioned in 4.2.2, it seems plausible that when hypocoristics are used in headlines, the meaning of the form is so obvious that the reader is expected to have no trouble in comprehending it in the context. One would think that perhaps in the news stories, where lack of space is less of an issue, the hypocoristic forms might be followed by a short explanation when they are first used. Yet, *Poffy*, in (43) and *culchie* in (48) are the only such cases in the *Nelson Mail* in 2010. The normalized frequency for the hypocoristic forms followed by an explanation is 0.42 hits per million words.

11 per cent of the examples in the *Nelson Mail* appear as part of a quotation or in quotation marks. The normalized frequency for the use of hypocoristics of nouns in quoted material is 3 hits per million words. It is important to note the use of hypocoristics in quotations since this sort of use does not reflect the style of the newspaper and quotations are often borrowed from different sources. Here are a couple of examples of quoted use of hypocoristics in the *Nelson Mail*:

- (47) These tend to be the same people who complain about the summer influx of 'loopies', as if it wasn't those summer sales spikes that sustain the town.

*Nelson Mail*, 30 October 2010

- (48) Rough lads from out of town are known as 'culchies'.

*Nelson Mail*, 20 March 2010

The NZDC list of hypocoristics defines *loopie* as 'a tourist or prying visitor'. The explanation for *culchie* is provided in the sentence in which it appears, yet it is not found in the *OALD*, NZDC list of hypocoristics or the *New Zealand Oxford Dictionary*. However, [www.oxforddictionaries.com](http://www.oxforddictionaries.com) provides the following definition of its informal use in Irish English: '[a]n unsophisticated country person'. It could be that the example sentence in (48) is part of a longer quotation in which the speaker being quoted is not a New Zealander. Based on such little context, it is difficult to say. *Culchie* is an example of a borderline case, mentioned in 3.2.3 and, albeit likely not specific to New Zealand English, thus included in the study. After all, there are few of such examples. None of the hypocoristics of nouns in the *Nelson Mail* are used to a derogatory effect or in a blatantly patronizing manner. The use of *sparkie* in (33) is one of the few examples of patronizing use. The interpretation of many of the examples would require more context and knowledge of for example the characters of the famous people that appear in the newspapers.

To conclude the discussion on the functions of hypocoristics in the *Nelson Mail* in 2010, a glance into the hypocoristic forms which appear as part of a compound. 8.5 per cent of all examples of hypocoristics in the *Nelson Mail* in 2010 function as part of a compound. The following examples of *greasie-lover* and *scarfie knot* illustrate the use of a hypocoristic form as part of a compound in the *Nelson Mail*.

- (49) . . . fish and chip retailers were defensive of their pricing; hopes of a popular uprising by aggrieved greasie-lovers were in vain.

*Nelson Mail*, 2 January 2010

- (50) However, for best effect I wear mine in a ‘scarfie knot’ – folded in half lengthways, with the two ends passed through the loop that is created .

..

*Nelson Mail*, 9 February 2010

The examples in which the hypocoristic is part of a compound appear with the normalized frequency of 2.36 hits per million words. As is their general nature, no hypocoristics in the *Nelson Mail* during this period are used in a derogatory manner. The patronizing effect of hypocoristics is slightly more difficult to analyze with little context and lack of the knowledge New Zealanders have of for example the politicians and other public figures that appear in news texts.

The discussion now turns to the meaning and semantic categorization of the hypocoristics found in the *Nelson Mail* in 2010. The raw and normalized frequencies of hypocoristics in the different categories and their percentage of all examples during the second period sampled are presented in Table 11. As Table 11 shows, ‘person or member of a group’ is clearly the most frequent category, which is something that the results for period 1 led one to expect. It represents 69 per cent of all examples found in the *Nelson Mail*. The category of ‘general terms’ is the second most frequent, accounting for 26 per cent of all examples.

Category	Raw no of examples	Percentage of all examples	Normalized frequency
Occupation	3	2.5%	0.64
Person or member of a group	89	69%	19.1
Sports	3	2.5%	0.64
General terms	34	26%	7.28
<b>Total</b>	129	100%	27.7

**Table 11.** Examples in different categories in the *Nelson Mail* in 2010.



Hypocoristics denoting ‘sports’ and ‘occupations’ are much less frequent, each category representing 2.5 per cent of all examples of hypocoristics. The hypocoristics in the most frequent category ‘person or member of a group’ appear in the *Nelson Mail* data set with the frequency of 19.1 hits per million words. Plenty of examples of this category have been provided earlier on in this subsection: *loopie*, *boatie*, *littlie*, and *Poffy* to name a few. The normalized frequency of ‘general terms’ is 7.28 hits per million words. This category has been previously exemplified in this subsection as well, with examples such as *doco* and *greasie*. The following example with *pozzie* further illustrates the hypocoristics classified as ‘general terms’:

- (51) The tallest of the cloud-piercers were trailing white flakes as they lumbered past my courtside pozzie. I was at my first game of basketball courtesy of one of the Giants' sponsors . . .

*Nelson Mail*, 12 June 2010

As mentioned in the discussion following example (25) *possie* above, the denotation of *pozzie* as well is ‘a position of supposed advantage to the occupant’. The categories of ‘sports’ and ‘occupations’ appear in the data set for *Nelson Mail* in the second period with the normalized frequency of 0.64 hits per million words each. Here is an example of each of those two categories in the *Nelson Mail*:

- (52) ‘. . . elected Mayor I would support such a facility as long as when I get to open it I can drop the first wheelly’. Good to see Gary has the heart of a younger demographic, if not the spelling.

*Nelson Mail*, 21 September 2010

- (53) . . . support the wool sector; \$130,000 funding for two years for shearing sports events and the wool classers' association for classer training (\$65,000 a year). . .

*Nelson Mail*, 30 November 2010

*Wheelly* is likely a misspelling of *wheelie*, which the *New Zealand Oxford Dictionary* defines as ‘the stunt of riding a bicycle or motorcycle for a short distance with the front wheel off the ground’ or ‘the stunt of violently accelerating a car so as to cause the wheels to spin’. *Classer* was defined

earlier following example (15), and most likely denotes a person who ‘grade[s] (fleeces) in a shearing shed’. The following subsection discusses the data for *The Press* in the second period sampled, after which in 4.4 the results of both periods will be summarized.

#### 4.3.2 *The Press*

I now move on to discuss the hypocoristics found in *The Press* during the second period examined, i.e. the period from January to December in 2012. The fourth set of data is by far the largest and contains 10,980,886 words. Similarly to the data set for the Nelson Mail during the second period sampled, there are no examples of the suffix *-s* in *The Press*. The suffix *-er* does not appear in the data either. The remaining suffixes: *-ie*, *-y*, *-ey*, *-o* and *-a* appear in the data, although some highly infrequently. The raw and normalized frequencies for the hypocoristic suffixes in *The Press* in the second period sampled are listed in Table 12 below.

Suffix	Number of examples	Normalized frequency
<i>-ie</i>	119	10.84
<i>-y</i>	13	1.18
<i>-ey</i>	0	0
<i>-o</i>	39	3.55
<i>-er</i>	49	4.46
<i>-s</i>	0	0
<i>-a</i>	2	0.18
<b>Total</b>	222	20.21

**Table 12.** Raw and normalized frequencies for the hypocoristic suffixes in *The Press* in the second period sampled.

In total, the search for *The Press* in 2012 yielded 222 relevant terms that met the criteria for hypocoristics of nouns included in this study. The total normalized frequency for all such hypocoristics in *The Press* during the second period examined is 20.21 hits per million words. As could be expected based on the results of the three other data sets examined, *-ie* is clearly the most frequent in the second data set for *The Press* as well. The next most frequent are *-er* and *-o*. This subsection follows the same pattern as the others before it: I will begin with the form of the hypocoristics found after which the discussion continues with their form and concludes with the semantic categorization.

The suffix *-ie* appears in the current data set with the normalized frequency of 10.84 hits per million words. The examples which include the suffix *-ie* account for 54 per cent of the examples in the current data set. The examples in (54) and (55) illustrate the use of *-ie* in hypocoristics.

- (54) Veteran wharfie Lane said he had set up the new union to support the remaining workers through the unrest.

*The Press*, 8 October 2012

- (55) . . . I see TV as an intrusion, something to be turned off if visitors arrive. The twirties regard TV as part of the background, like the sky and sunshine; they never turn the set off . . .

*The Press*, 11 February 2012

As explained in 4.2.1 *wharfie* is ‘a waterside worker’ or ‘a wharf labourer’, whereas *twirtie(s)* is not defined in the *OALD*, the *New Zealand Oxford Dictionary* or the NZDC list of hypocoristics but, based on the contexts in which it appears in the corpus, denotes a group of people in their twenties and thirties. It is therefore unclear whether the term is specific to New Zealand English. Hypocoristics formed using the suffix *-er* are the second most frequent in *The Press* in 2012, appear with the normalized frequency of 4.46 hits per million words, and account for 22 per cent of all examples in the current data set. 43 per cent of the examples which include the suffix *-er*

denote persons or members of a group, but contrary to what the *OED* suggests (2.3.1), only 6 per cent refer to an occupation. Examples (56) and (57) illustrate the use of *-er* in the CNZNE.

- (56) One of the key selling lines used by the spruikers is the rental potential of US properties.

*The Press*, 14 January 2012

- (57) ‘Not quite Prada chilly bins but definitely crayfish on the barbie.’ He says average Kiwi glampers are mostly families and couples who want a comfortable, relaxing holiday rather than just roughing. . .

*The Press*, 11 January 2012

The verb *spruik* is defined in the *New Zealand Oxford Dictionary* as to ‘hold forth in public; deliver a harangue, esp. to advertise a show etc.’ It also lists the derivative *spruiker* which, in the context of example (56), would seem to denote a sales person advertising a product. The *OALD* defines *glamping* as ‘a type of camping, using tents and other kinds of accommodation, facilities, etc. that are more comfortable and expensive than those usually used for camping’. This is likely the word from which the hypocoristic noun *glamper* is derived.

The hypocoristic suffix *-o* appears in the data at the frequency of 3.55 hits per million words. The examples of hypocoristics of nouns formed using the suffix *-o* account for 18 per cent of all examples in the data. The following examples of *doco* and *insto* illustrate the use of *-o* in the corpus data for *The Press*.

- (58) . . . expecting a musical celebration will be somewhat disappointed by this 2011 Aussie fly-on-the-wall doco that focuses more on the various endeavours and eccentricities of school's staff and students.

*The Press*, 25 September 2012

- (59) The balance went to local instos, clients of NZ brokers and ‘friends of Fonterra’ who included staff and Australian milk suppliers.

*The Press*, 5 December 2012

The meaning of *doco* was first explained in 4.1; it is the hypocoristic form of ‘documentary’. Based on the context in (59), *insto* stands for ‘an institution’, regardless of the fact that it is not defined

in the *OALD*, the *New Zealand Oxford Dictionary* or the NZDC list of hypocoristics. The normalized frequency for the hypocoristic suffix *-y* in the corpus is 1.18 hits per million words. This accounts for 6 per cent of all examples. Examples (60) and (61) illustrate the use of the hypocoristic suffix *-y* in *The Press*.

- (60) Be a polar ‘bare’ and brave a midwinter plunge in the nuddy to celebrate winter and the ‘health benefits of skinny-dipping’.

*The Press*, 23 June 2012

- (61) Pressed further, the skipper did express some guilt at the way Wright has gone out. ‘Wrighty’s been a good servant of New Zealand cricket and it was a bit disappointing to send him off on that . . .’

*The Press*, 7 August 2012

Even rarer are the examples of the suffix *-a*, such as the one in (62) appearing with the normalized frequency of 0.18 hits per million words. *Dunga* is likely a misspelling of *dunger* which, according to the *New Zealand Oxford Dictionary*, denotes ‘a worn-out vehicle or machine’.

- (62) . . . guileless statements he has called Mayor Bob Parker a ‘clown’, our precious old buildings ‘old dungas’, and who will forget his condemnation of complainers. . .

*The Press*, 17 November 2012

There are a total of 79 different hypocoristic forms in *The Press* data for the second period examined of which the three most common are *doco*, *boatie* and *dunger*. *Doco* appears in the data with the frequency of 2.64 hits per million words, and *boatie* and *dunger* with 1.64 and 1.55 hits per million words, respectively. What is interesting about the use of *dunger* is that it appears preceded by the adjective *old* in all cases, as demonstrated by example (62). To conclude the discussion on the form of hypocoristics in *The Press* in 2012, 49 per cent of the examples appear in the singular form and 51 in the plural. The normalized frequency for the singular use of hypocoristics is 9.93 hits per million words and 10.29 for the plural. Based on these results it can

only be concluded that neither the singular nor the plural is favoured with hypocoristic forms in the New Zealand newspapers examined.

I now move on to discuss the function of the hypocoristic forms found in the second data set for *The Press*. I begin with the distinction into common nouns and personal names, after which I look at the use in headlines and as part of quotations. 93 per cent of the examples in *The Press* are common nouns, and the remaining 7 per cent personal names, which is not surprising. The normalized frequency for hypocoristics of common nouns is 18.76 hits per million words and 1.46 hits per million words for hypocoristics of personal names. *Wrighty* in (61) is an example of hypocoristics of personal names and for example *insto* in (59) of hypocoristics of common nouns. 9 per cent of all examples of hypocoristics in *The Press* in the second period appear in headlines and the remaining 91 per cent in the news stories themselves. The normalized frequency for the hypocoristics that appear as part of headlines is 0.82 hits per million words. The examples (63) and (64) below illustrate the use of hypocoristics in headlines in *The Press*.

(63) Tradies seek love

*The Press*, 26 November 2012

(64) Call for boaties to take more care after boat flips

*The Press*, 22 May 2012

As in the three previous data sets, in *The Press* too some of the hypocoristics appear as part of a quotation, which is important to note as such use does not reveal anything of the newspaper's choice to use hypocoristics. 12 per cent of the examples in *The Press* appear in quotations. This corresponds to the normalized frequency of 2.46 hits per million words in the data set for *The Press*. The following exemplifies the use of a hypocoristic form in quotation marks:

(65) . . . on the radio by – of all macho things – a boxing match. I don't hold it against Howard 'Sobbo' Dobson, who explained later that a major health scare had made him feel a bit trembly lately.

*The Press*, 29 November 2012

In example (65) the context makes it clear that Howard Dobson gained the nickname *Sobbo* after sobbing, presumably during a radio interview, and the hypocoristic form in this case functions well in combination with the surname Dobson.

Looking at the number of hypocoristic forms that are followed with an explanation of what the form means, it can be concluded that in *The Press* during the second period they are virtually non-existent. However, it should be noted that the context is limited, and it is possible that an explanation follows later on in the news story, although the style guides discussed in 2.4 advise to use the full form early on in the news story. The explanation for the hypocoristic form is provided in less than 5 per cent of the examples in *The Press* during this period. Example (66) below of *twirties* is one such case.

- (66) Instead, I spent last week sharing the viewing patterns of the twirties, the young professionals in their 20s and 30s who form the most desirable demographic for. . .

*The Press*, 11 February 2012

The examples in which an explanation of the meaning of the hypocoristic form used follows the term appear at the normalized frequency of 0.91 hits per million words in the CNZNE, and are thus highly infrequent. The corresponding figure for the *Nelson Mail* during the second period is even lower: 0.42 hits per million words.

The discussion now turns to the categorisation of the hypocoristic forms found in *The Press* in 2012. Table 13 lists the raw and normalized frequencies for the terms found as well as the percentage of all examples represented by a category. Looking at Table 13, it is clear that the categories of ‘general terms’ and ‘person or member of a group’ are the two most frequent, the former representing 43% of the examples and the latter 45%. Both remaining categories, ‘occupation’ and ‘sports’, account for 6% of the terms found in *The Press* in 2012.

Category	Raw no of examples	Percentage of all examples	Normalized frequency
Occupation	13	6%	1.18
Person or member of a group	99	45%	9.01
Sports	14	6%	1.27
General terms	96	43%	8.74
<b>Total</b>	222	100%	20.2

**Table 13.** *Examples in different categories in The Press in 2012.*

Starting with the most frequent of the four categories, the examples denoting a ‘person or a member of a group’ appear in the corpus data for this period with the normalized frequency of 9.01 hits per million words. The same category was at the top of the list for the *Nelson Mail* for the second period as well, albeit with the normalized frequency of 19.1 hits per million words. The previously mentioned *tradie* (63), *twirties* (66), and *cuzzie* in (67) below, are some examples in this category.

(67) But it's nice to be down here catching up with the cuzzies. We'll go to the beach and Spencer Park.

*The Press*, 26 December 2012

Of the hypocoristics of nouns already discussed in this subsection, *doco* (58) and *dunger* (62) are examples in the category ‘general terms’. General terms represent 43 per cent of the examples in *The Press* during the second sampling period and appear in the data set with the frequency of 8.74 hits per million words. The frequency is very close to that of the same category in the *Nelson Mail* during the second period, 7.28 hits per million words. *Grundies* in (68), defined in the NZDC database list of hypocoristics as ‘underpants’, further illustrates the category of ‘general terms’.



- (68) Lily, follows him everywhere and is at immediate hand to discover the attractions of the abandoned grundies, warm and intoxicatingly fragrant with essence-of-man. Not just any man, but her man.

*The Press*, 9 February 2012

The examples in the category ‘sports’ appear with the normalized frequency of 1.27 hits per million words and those in ‘occupations’ with that of 1.18 hits per million words. (69) and (70) are examples in the categories of ‘sports’ and ‘occupations’, respectively.

- (69) ‘The ref was about to award the try but the touchie on the other side put his flag out,’ Lions manager Martin Cullen said.

*The Press*, 23 July 2012

- (70) The mud is ankle-deep, tradies are swarming everywhere and the noise levels are annoying.

*The Press*, 3 July 2012

*Touchie* is the hypocoristic form of ‘touch judge’ (NZDC list of hypocoristics) and *tradie* that of a ‘tradesman’. The following section 4.4 summarizes the results first for period 1 and then for period 2.

#### 4.4 Summary of results

In this section I provide a summary of the results of the analysis conducted in the preceding sections 4.2 and 4.3 and provide answers to the second research question *Does the use in the newspapers differ with regard to the form, function and semantic category of the hypocoristics?* I continue to follow the same pattern as in the aforementioned sections and thus in this summary first discuss the form of the hypocoristics of nouns found in the four data sets for the *Nelson Mail* and *The Press*, which will be followed by a summary on the function of the hypocoristics in news stories

I will first summarize the discussion on the form of the hypocoristics of nouns found in the *Nelson Mail* and *The Press* during the periods sampled. The normalized frequencies for the

selected hypocoristics in the *Nelson Mail* and *The Press* during the two periods sampled are shown in Table 14. To begin with the frequency of the different suffixes: *-ie*, *-o*, *-er*, *-y*, *-ey*, *-s*, *-a* (and each of their plural forms), the table shows that the same forms are found to some extent in both newspapers, and there does not seem to be a preference for a particular form that is tied to either one of the newspapers.

Suffix	Period 1		Period 2	
	<i>Nelson Mail</i>	<i>The Press</i>	<i>Nelson Mail</i>	<i>The Press</i>
<i>-ie</i>	31.1	5.93	19.49	10.84
<i>-o</i>	0	0	1.92	3.55
<i>-er</i>	1.35	0.81	3.64	4.46
<i>-y</i>	0.9	0	2.14	1.18
<i>-ey</i>	0	0	0.21	0
<i>-s</i>	0	0	0	0
<i>-a</i>	0	0.27	0.21	0.18
<b>Total</b>	33.35	7.01	27.61	20.21

**Table 14.** *The normalized frequencies for the selected hypocoristics in the Nelson Mail and The Press during the two periods sampled.*

It appears that the suffixes *-ie* and *-er* are the most consistent in that they appear in all four sets of data. The results are therefore well in keeping with the Bardsley and Simpson study presented in 2.3.4, in which they concluded that *-ie* is the most frequent hypocoristic suffix in use in New Zealand and Australia. However, the two suffixes differ with regard to their normalized frequencies in the two newspapers. As shown in Table 14, *-ie* is much more frequent in the *Nelson Mail* than in *The Press* during both periods, whereas the frequency of *-er* is less tied to the newspaper in which it appears, but is greater during the second period, regardless of still being

much less frequent than *-ie* (for example in the *Nelson Mail* during the second period the normalized frequency for *-ie* is 19.49 and *-er* 3.64 hits per million words). There are no examples of the suffix *-o* during the first period in either newspaper. Apart from a single example in the *Nelson Mail*, the same is true of the suffix *-y* for the first period. In the second period, the hypocoristic suffix *-o* appears in the *Nelson Mail* with the normalized frequency of 1.92 hits per million words, and in *The Press* with 3.55 hits per million words. *-y* is slightly more frequent than *-o* in the *Nelson Mail* in the second period with 2.14 hits per million words. In *The Press* the normalized frequency for *-y* is 1.18 hits per million words. As Table 14 shows, the appearance of the remaining suffixes *-ey* and *-a* is marginal and there are no examples of *-s* in any of the four sets of data. As mentioned in 2.3.1, *-a* is found almost exclusively with proper names which is why its frequency was expected to be low.

As for the number of different hypocoristics of nouns in the four sets of data, there are some differences: during the first period there are 16 different terms in the *Nelson Mail* and 14 in *The Press*, whereas the corresponding figures for the second period, rather interestingly, are 44 terms for the *Nelson Mail* and 79 for *The Press*. The data set for *The Press* in the second period is by far the largest, and it is therefore logical that the largest number of different terms should be found in that particular data set. In the preceding analysis sections I listed three of the most frequent hypocoristics of nouns for each set of data. *Boatie* is among the three most frequent terms in all four data sets, appearing in the *Nelson Mail* during the first period with the frequency of 16.7 hits per million words. The frequencies for the other data sets are presented in section 4.5 when I discuss the overall diachronic change. The other terms which appear most frequently in the two newspapers include *stubbie*, *bikie*, *milkie*, *woofer*, *doco* and *dunger*. The use of plural forms of hypocoristics of nouns is more frequent than the use of singular forms in all four sets of data and

varies from 4.58 (the *The Press*, period 1) to 14.1 hits per million words (the *Nelson Mail*, period 2). The frequency of singular use varies from the normalized frequency of 2.43 hits per million words in the *The Press* in the first period to 10.8 hits per million words in the *Nelson Mail* in the same period.

As for the function of the hypocoristics in the four data sets, hypocoristics of personal names are, perhaps somewhat surprisingly, marginal in all data sets, and the highest normalized frequency is 1.71 hits per million words in the *Nelson Mail* in 2010. The majority of examples are therefore hypocoristics of common nouns. The normalized frequencies for hypocoristics of common nouns are presented in Table 15. The discussion on diachronic change in the two newspapers follows in section 4.5, which is why I will not conduct a detailed analysis of the above table in this summary section. However, looking at Table 15 it is easy to see that the overall frequency of hypocoristics of common nouns is greater in the *Nelson Mail* during both periods. The use of hypocoristic forms of nouns in headlines in the four data sets varies from the frequency of 0.82 to 5.85 hits per million words and is notably less frequent than the use in the news stories themselves.

	<i>Nelson Mail</i>	<i>The Press</i>
<b>Period 1</b>	32.9	6.74
<b>Period 2</b>	25.9	18.76

**Table 15.** *The frequency of hypocoristics of common nouns in the Nelson Mail and The Press in the two periods sampled.*

The use of hypocoristics of nouns in quotation marks or as part of a quotation varies from 1.35 hits per million words (*The Press*, period 1) to 3 hits per million words in the *Nelson Mail* in the second period. Based on the results of this study the use in quotations is marginal and hypocoristics mostly appear in the news stories without quotation marks. Hypocoristics of nouns also appear as part of compounds, although based on my results this is not very frequent and is limited to certain

compounds. Such use is most frequent in the *Nelson Mail* during the first period (4.5 hits per million words), and the data set includes examples like *goatie beard* [*sic*] and *bikie gang*. The frequencies in the other data sets vary from 0.64 to 2.36 hits per million words.

To conclude this summary section, I will examine the frequencies of the different categories for the hypocoristics of nouns found in the four data sets (presented in Table 16). The average frequency of each category throughout the data examined is presented in the column on the far right. It is clear that two of the categories, ‘person or member of a group’ and ‘general terms’, are much more frequent than those of ‘sports’ and ‘occupations’. Something that could account for the frequency of hypocoristics denoting persons, and general terms is that the two most frequent hypocoristic suffixes in the data studied here are *-er* and *-ie*.

Suffix	Period 1		Period 2		Total average
	<i>Nelson Mail</i>	<i>The Press</i>	<i>Nelson Mail</i>	<i>The Press</i>	
Person or member of a group	26.1	4.58	19.1	9.01	14.70
Occupation	3.6	0	0.64	1.18	1.36
General terms	3.6	2.43	7.28	8.74	5.51
Sports	0	0	0.64	1.27	0.48
<b>Total</b>	33.3	7.01	27.66	20.2	

**Table 16.** *The frequency of hypocoristics of nouns in the selected categories in the Nelson Mail and The Press in the two periods sampled.*

The fact that the *OED* defines the noun ‘hypocoristic’ as ‘a pet name’ suggests that one of the key applications (if not the primary application) of hypocoristics has been to denote people. Thus it stands to reason that the category ‘person or member of a group’ should be the most frequent. The

theory in this study speaks for the position of *-ie* as the most frequently appearing hypocoristic suffix, and as mentioned in 2.3.1, *-er* mainly appears in words denoting persons.

General terms see an increase from the first period to the second whereas the hypocoristics denoting people or group members appear much more frequently in the *Nelson Mail* than in *The Press*. Interestingly, there are no examples that conform to the criteria for hypocoristics of nouns in the category ‘sports’ during the entire first period. During the first period, there are also no examples of hypocoristic forms of occupations in *The Press*. The categories will be discussed in greater detail in the following section on diachronic change. To conclude, the appearance of hypocoristics of personal names in the data, as well as the use of hypocoristics in headlines and quotations is marginal in all four data sets studied.

#### 4.5 Diachronic change

The focus of this section is on the changes in the frequency of form, function and semantic categories of the hypocoristics of nouns in the *Nelson Mail* and *The Press* from the first period (1996–1998) to the second period (2010–2012). I begin with the data for the *Nelson Mail* and move on to examine the changes in *The Press*, after which the discussion concludes with a brief summary of the overall change from the first period to the second.

As already mentioned, the *Nelson Mail* is the smaller, provincial newspaper, whereas the circulation of *The Press* is much wider. It therefore seems logical to begin the discussions with the smaller newspaper and move on to the larger one. As we saw in 4.4, the overall frequency of the different hypocoristic suffixes is greater in the *Nelson Mail* during both periods. The normalized frequency counts for the *Nelson Mail* are depicted in Table 17.

Beginning with the least frequent hypocoristic suffixes, there are no examples of *-s* in any of the data sets. During the first period, in the *Nelson Mail* there are also no examples of *-o*, *-ey*,

or *-a*. All of the three suffixes appear during the second period, albeit with very low frequencies: *-o* with 1.92 hits per million words and both *-ey* and *-a* with that of 0.21 hits per million words. The full hypocoristic forms that appear in the *Nelson Mail* during the second period are *doco*, *snakey* and *ginga*.

Suffix	Normalized frequency	
	Period 1	Period 2
<i>-ie</i>	31.1	19.49
<i>-y</i>	0.9	2.14
<i>-ey</i>	0	0.21
<i>-o</i>	0	1.92
<i>-er</i>	1.35	3.64
<i>-s</i>	0	0
<i>-a</i>	0	0.21
<b>Total</b>	33.3	27.61

**Table 17.** *The normalized frequency of the hypocoristic suffixes in the Nelson Mail.*

The frequency of both *-y* and *-er* increases from the first period to the second: for *-y* from 0.9 to 2.14 hits per million words, and for *-er* from 1.35 to 3.64 hits per million words. Yet the change is so small that not much can be concluded from it. There are only a few examples of the use of the hypocoristic suffix *-y* in the *Nelson Mail* in the first period, but in the second period the number rises particularly with the use of hypocoristics of proper names. The hypocoristic form *kindy* is the only form with the suffix *-y* that appears during both periods in the *Nelson Mail* whereas *classer* is the only form ending in *-er* that is found in the *Nelson Mail* during both periods. Of the forms ending in *-er*, *woofer* is particularly frequent during the second period, representing nearly half of the examples. Based on the data, there were two news items in which the term was

used, in which it appeared several times. What is particularly interesting about the change in the *Nelson Mail* is that the suffix *-ie*, which is overall the clearly most frequent of the hypocoristic suffixes in the data, is the only one that sees a decrease in its frequency from the first period to the second. Its frequency in the first period is 31.1 and it decreases to 19.49 hits per million words in the second period. Something that could account for the change is the fact that some terms which are found in the first period disappear by the second period and in the second period some new forms appear but it is only in time that they may become as frequent as the terms that disappeared.

As for the frequency of the different hypocoristic terms, *boatie* is the most frequent during both periods examined and *bikie* the second most frequent of the terms. The use of *bikie* decreases slightly (from 3.6 hits to 3 per million words), but as is the case with the overall frequency of the hypocoristics formed using the suffix *-ie*, the decrease in the use of *boatie* is larger: from 16.7 to 7.71 hits per million words. *Milkie*, which was the third most frequent in the first period (with 2.7 hits per million words), disappears completely in the second period. The reason for this is most likely the fact that the profession of a milkman no longer really exists in New Zealand in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. *Wwoofer* is the third most frequent hypocoristic term in the second period appearing with the frequency of 1.71 hits per million words. Overall, the number of different hypocoristics rises from 16 in the first period to 44 in the second period. However, following the overall decrease in frequency of hypocoristics in the *Nelson Mail*, a similar trend can be observed in the use of singular and plural forms. The change is small: the use of hypocoristics in the singular decreases with 1.4 hits per million words and the plural with 4.3 hits per million words from the first to the second period. The figures for each period are presented in Table 18.



	Normalized frequency Period 1	Normalized frequency Period 2
Singular	10.8	9.4
Plural	22.5	18.2
<b>Total</b>	33.3	27.6

**Table 18.** *The normalized frequency of the singular and plural forms of hypocoristics in the Nelson Mail.*

As mentioned earlier, the use of personal names in *Nelson Mail* increases from the first period to the second (from 0.45 to 1.71 hits per million words in the second period). However, the decrease in the overall frequency of hypocoristics is seen in the category of common nouns in Table 19. The use of hypocoristics in headlines in the *Nelson Mail* also sees a slight decrease, as does the use of hypocoristic forms as part of compounds.

	Normalized frequency Period 1	Normalized frequency Period 2
Personal name	0.45	1.71
Common noun	32.9	25.9
Headline	5.85	4.28
Quotation	2.25	3.0
Compound	4.5	2.36

**Table 19.** *The normalized frequency of the different functions of hypocoristics in the Nelson Mail.*

On the other hand, the use in quotations increases from 2.25 to 3 hits per million words. As for the change in the semantic categories in the *Nelson Mail* data, the categories of ‘occupation’ and

‘person or member of a group’ decrease after the first period: the former from 3.6 to 0.64 hits per million words and the latter from 26.1 to 19.1 hits per million words.

Furthermore, there is a marginal increase in the category of ‘sports’ and the frequency of ‘general terms’ increases from 3.6 hits per million words to 7.28 in the second period. The figures are displayed in Table 20. As the overall decrease is seen in the declining use of the suffix *-ie*, as mentioned in 4.4, because the suffix often denotes persons, it stands to reason that the decline should be visible particularly in the category of ‘person or member of a group’.

Category	Normalized frequency	Normalized frequency
	Period 1	Period 2
Occupation	3.6	0.64
Person or member of a group	26.1	19.1
Sports	0	0.64
General terms	3.6	7.28
<b>Total</b>	33.3	27.6

**Table 20.** *The normalized frequency of the different categories of hypocoristics in the Nelson Mail.*

As the analysis up until this point has shown, the frequency of hypocoristics of nouns in *The Press* is much lower than in the *Nelson Mail* during the periods examined. The normalized frequencies for the different hypocoristic suffixes in *The Press* are displayed in Table 21. The suffixes *-ey* and *-s* do not appear in *The Press* at all, and during the first period neither do *-y* or *-o*. The appearance of both *-er* and *-a* is less than 1 hit per million words, providing further proof of the dominance of *-ie*, the frequency of which in the first period is 5.93 hits per million words. Apart from the slight decrease in the use of *-a*, the use of both *-ie* and *-er* increases in the second

period. The frequency of *-ie* is almost doubled and is 10.84 hits per million words during the second period. It is interesting to see that the situation in *The Press* is the opposite of that in the *Nelson Mail*, in which the biggest change was the decrease in the use of *-ie*. The use of *-er* in *The Press* also increases from 0.81 to 4.46 hits per million words. Moreover, *-y* and *-o* make an appearance during the second period, the former with 1.18 and the latter with 3.55 hits per million words. Overall, the frequency of hypocoristics of nouns in *The Press* increases from 7.01 hits per million words to 20.21 in the second period.

Suffix	Normalized frequency Period 1	Normalized frequency Period 2
<i>-ie</i>	5.93	10.84
<i>-y</i>	0	1.18
<i>-ey</i>	0	0
<i>-o</i>	0	3.55
<i>-er</i>	0.81	4.46
<i>-s</i>	0	0
<i>-a</i>	0.27	0.18
<b>Total</b>	7.01	20.21

**Table 21.** *The normalized frequencies of the different hypocoristic suffixes in The Press.*

The figures contain 14 and 79 different hypocoristic terms in the first and second period, respectively. As mentioned in 4.4, the reason for the change is most likely the over 10-million-word data set for *The Press* in the second period, which is greater in variety than the smaller data sets. Many new terms therefore appear in *The Press* in the second period and a few that were highly infrequent already in the first period, like *skatie*, no longer appear in the second period. Likely owing to this increased variety, the three most frequent terms change as well by the second period.

*Boatie* is found during both periods but *stubbie* and *bikie* from the first period are replaced with *doco* (which is the most frequent in the second period) and *dunger* among the three most frequent forms in the second period. Both *stubbie* and *bikie* still appear during the second period. Regarding the singular/plural distribution of the hypocoristic nouns in *The Press*, Table 22 shows that both forms increase by the second period and are close to equal in their frequency.

	Normalized frequency Period 1	Normalized frequency Period 2
Singular	2.43	9.93
Plural	4.58	10.29
<b>Total</b>	7.01	20.21

**Table 22.** *The normalized frequency of the singular and plural forms of hypocoristics in The Press.*

The functions of hypocoristics in *The Press* are listed in Table 23 below. The table shows the low frequency of personal names and the marginal use of hypocoristics of nouns in headlines, quotations or as part of compounds.

	Normalized frequency Period 1	Normalized frequency Period 2
Personal name	0.27	1.46
Common noun	6.74	18.76
Headline	1.35	0.82
Quotation	1.35	2.46
Compound	1.35	0.64

**Table 23.** *The normalized frequency of the different functions of hypocoristics in The Press.*

As concluded already in 4.4, the majority of examples are common nouns and their frequency in *The Press* increases from 6.74 to 18.76 hits per million words during the period examined. As Table 24 shows, hypocoristics in both the categories of ‘occupation’ and ‘sports’ only appear in *The Press* in the second period, and even then are highly infrequent.

Category	Normalized frequency Period 1	Normalized frequency Period 2
Occupation	0	1.18
Person or member of a group	4.58	9.01
Sports	0	1.27
General terms	2.43	8.74
<b>Total</b>	7.01	20.21

**Table 24.** *The normalized frequency of the different semantic categories of hypocoristics in The Press.*

The categories of ‘general terms’ and ‘person or member of a group’ both increase in frequency from the first period to the second and are close to equal in their frequency in the second period.

To conclude the discussion on diachronic change in the two newspapers under scrutiny, the variety of suffixes used to form hypocoristics increases for the second period in both newspapers: in the first period three suffixes are used to form hypocoristics in the newspapers, and in the second period the numbers of different suffixes for the *Nelson Mail* and *The Press* are six and five out of the seven possible suffixes, respectively. Overall, the use of *-ie* sees a slight decrease since the first period, the likely explanation for this being is the increased variety in the use of different hypocoristic suffixes in the second period. The use of *-y*, *-o* and *-er* increases in both newspapers, whereas the change in the use of *-ey* and *-a* is marginal (the former sees a slight increase in the

*Nelson Mail* and a slight decrease in *The Press*.) Particularly interesting is the fact that the number of different hypocoristic terms notably increases by the second period: from 30 different terms in the first to 123 in the second period. Moreover, the hypocoristics of nouns found in this study, particularly those in the *Nelson Mail*, favour the plural form, which is overall more frequent during both periods. The use of personal names and common nouns increases slightly from the first period to the second, as does the use of hypocoristic forms in quotations. These results are not comparable to the study by Bardsley and Simpson (2009) presented in 2.3.4, in which they conclude that the suffixes *-s*, *-o* and *-a* appear more often with proper nouns because, as explained in 3.2.3, I made the decision to exclude truncated forms and hypocoristic forms of personal names which are established in other varieties. In the present study, headline use is even more infrequent in the second period as during the first, as is the use of hypocoristics in compounds.

‘Person or member of a group’ and ‘general terms’ are the two dominant semantic categories during both periods. The frequency of ‘person or member of a group’ remains nearly the same from the first period to the second but the frequency of ‘general terms’ is over twice as much in the second period as it is in the first period. In *The Press* the two categories are almost equally frequent in the second period (see Table 24) whereas in the *Nelson Mail* ‘person or member of a group’ is over twice as frequent as ‘general terms’. The use of hypocoristics in *The Press* is more than doubled by the second period (7.01 hits per million words in the first period), but at 20.21 hits per million words it is still lower than in the *Nelson Mail* in which the frequency in the second period is 27.61 hits per million words (a slight decrease from 33.3 hits per million words in the first period). Overall, there is a moderate increase in the use of hypocoristics of nouns in the second period, but the greatest change is seen in the variety of different suffixes and hypocoristic terms found.

#### 4.6 Hypocoristics and New Zealand linguistic identity

This section looks at the use of hypocoristics in New Zealand English in connection to the New Zealand linguistic identity. I will reflect on the potential reasons underlying the use of hypocoristics in New Zealand newspapers and discuss the results of my analysis in the light of the Dynamic Model of the evolution of Postcolonial Englishes presented in 3.2.4. I will also tie the discussion to the concept of colloquialization discussed in 2.2.3 and see if any wider implications for the use of hypocoristics in New Zealand emerge.

There is no simple answer to why hypocoristics are used in New Zealand newspapers, but many interesting aspects to be discussed. Firstly, the writers in a newspaper might for example wish to identify better with the target audience with their use of familiar language, terms which are inherent in everyday conversation, to draw the readers in. The use of colloquial forms may also serve to bridge the gap that used to separate the language of the media in New Zealand from that used by the general public when British English was the prestige variety (see 2.1), which might on some level continue to exist. Another reason for the use of hypocoristics in news stories might be the desire to show the readers that the language of the news does not have to be ‘dry’ and devoid of colour, but that the readers can expect to find hypocoristic forms in news texts that, if they are not familiar with already, they will recognize from the context. As more and more people nowadays read the news online, it may well be that the print media has already found itself in a situation where it has to think of ways to maintain its readership – and the use of hypocoristics can serve as a means of embellishing the text. In the same way hypocoristics in online news (particularly in headings) can function as a way of making news stories stand out for example in the Facebook news feed of a user who follows many different news outlets.

Yet another reason for using hypocoristics in news is their space-saving function, or the fact that they often add the aspect of punchiness to a headline, although based on the present study lack of space is not the primary motivation for their use as hypocoristics are found much more often in the news stories than in headings. Furthermore, there are hypocoristic forms like *boatie* for which there is no single-word original form but the definition is ‘a person who owns and runs a small (esp. power-driven) boat’. Not using the hypocoristic form would make an article about boaties a potentially tedious read. A few other good examples of this are *scarfie* (4.2.1), a clever way of referring to ‘a student at the University of Otago’, or using *woofer* to refer to a person that works for the organization Willing Workers on Organic Farms. As explained in 2.2.3, the use of informal elements in written language seems characteristic of New Zealand (and Australian) English, maybe even to the extent that hypocoristic forms that are very common in everyday speech become more established, which leads to their use in a newspapers becoming more acceptable. Moreover, it should be acknowledged that, as mentioned in 2.3.2, the use of hypocoristic forms still takes place primarily in everyday situations in which the speaker wants to refer to a new concept quickly or uses a shortened form to save time, a use which the corpus data for the present study does not reflect – the frequencies discussed in the present study are relatively low compared to what a researcher would be likely to find in spoken corpora.

As explained in 2.3.3, hypocoristics have been a part of New Zealand English since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and are something that many of us associate with the speech of New Zealanders or Australians. The more recent use of hypocoristics in news texts is likely to be connected to a larger trend towards colloquialization of the written medium, but also serves to affirm the linguistic identity of the speakers of a relatively new variety (see 2.1) that was long regarded inferior to British English. As mentioned in the discussion in (2.2), hypocoristic forms are a part of the New



Zealand ethos and express the laid-back attitude and good humour commonly associated with both New Zealand and Australia. Although the style guides discussed in 2.4.1 do not directly comment on the use of hypocoristic forms in news texts, the fact that their use in *The Press* in the second period is twice as frequent as in the first signals a change (even if only a minor one) in the metropolitan newspaper's stance towards using hypocoristics in news texts. Overall, the results of the studies by Bardsley and Simpson (2009), and Bardsley (2010) complemented by the present study show that hypocoristics are used increasingly in the media in New Zealand, and appear regularly and with increasing variety in newspapers (Bardsley and Simpson 2009, 56). Based on this, the use of hypocoristics seems to support the idea of a 'socio-cultural preference for informality' down under that Peters talks about (2.2.3). However, with regard to the larger trend towards colloquialization in the written English language, it must be acknowledged that the frequency of the forms found in the present study is low and making larger-scale conclusions would be better based on a study, or several studies, on more linguistic features. Yet, the definition of colloquialization presented in 2.2.3 well applies to the present study as the increasing use of hypocoristics forms in the newspapers is concrete proof of written language gradually incorporating 'norms and characteristics associated with the spoken conversational language.' Moreover, in the era of social media which has made the use of colloquial language in the written medium somehow more acceptable, it seems likely that written English should continue to be influenced by the spoken language, and not only in New Zealand.

Looking at the results of my data analysis in the light of the Dynamic Model (3.2.4), it appears that the fact that hypocoristics are used regularly in news texts in New Zealand and that the hypocoristic terms used have become, and perhaps continue to become, more diverse, as my results suggest, supports Schneider's position of New Zealand English being in the final

differentiation phase of the Dynamic Model. As mentioned earlier in this section, New Zealand English was long regarded as the corrupted version of British English (2.1), which brings me to the conclusion that perhaps the increasing use of hypocoristics (and of Maori terms) in newspapers tells of the fact that the features specific to New Zealand English are no longer something ‘lacking in prestige’ but something that even the media has begun to embrace. Schneider himself attributes the differentiation phase to regional and social dialectal fragmentation (3.2.4), but this may well be linked to the increasing appearance of different hypocoristic forms and other colloquial expressions in different areas as we already saw that hypocoristic forms appear more frequently in the *Nelson Mail* and that the hypocoristic terms used in some cases differ depending on the newspaper. To conclude, the relationship between the former colonizer and the colonized area is often complex to say the least and the identity construction for the formerly colonized may continue long after the country has become officially independent. In New Zealand this could be seen again in March 2016 as the country held another referendum on the change of the New Zealand flag (a little over half of the population voted to keep the old flag.) As for New Zealanders’ linguistic identity, Schneider (3.2.4) observes that Received Pronunciation continues to be appreciated to some extent, and that the greatest feature separating New Zealand English from other varieties of English continues to be its lexicon, as shown in the increasing use of both hypocoristic forms and Maori words.

## 5. Conclusion

In this concluding chapter I provide a brief summary of the preceding discussion on the role of hypocoristics of nouns in New Zealand English, the possible reasons underlying their use, and the changes that take place in the *Nelson Mail* and *The Press* between the two periods sampled. As mentioned before, the frequencies for most suffixes examined in this study proved low, yet the results reveal that hypocoristics of nouns appear with a greater frequency in the *Nelson Mail* than in *The Press*. The change in the *Nelson Mail* is marginal, whereas the frequency in *The Press* (still lower than in the *Nelson Mail*) increases from 7.01 to 20.2 hits per million words. This change is nevertheless interesting because the use of hypocoristics in the two newspapers becomes more diverse by the second period as the total number of different terms found rises from 30 to 123. This can be partly explained by the larger, over 10-million-word data set for *The Press* in the second period. Moreover, as mentioned in 4.5, the diversification of the results supports Schneider's position of New Zealand English being in the differentiation phase of the Dynamic Model.

Overall, of the seven suffixes examined in this study (*-ie*, *-o*, *-er*, *-y*, *-ey*, *-s*, and *-a*), the use of *-a* and *-ey* is marginal, and *-s* does not appear at all. The use of *-o*, *-er*, and *-y* is only really seen in the second period, their use ranging from 1.18 to 4.46 hits per million words. The most frequent suffix is clearly *-ie*, which is the only one with a frequency greater than 5 hits per million words during both periods and in both newspapers. One reason for this is that one of its primary uses in the past has been to denote people and the examples denoting people or members of a group are the most frequent in the present study as well. In the *Nelson Mail* *-ie* is the only suffix that sees a decrease in its frequency from the first period (31.1) to the second (19.49). In *The Press* the situation is reversed as the frequency of *-ie* almost doubles since the first period (increases from 5.93 to 10.84 hits per million words). The reason for the decrease of *-ie* in the *Nelson Mail* after

the first period is likely connected to the increase in the variety of suffixes used during the second period (see section 4.5), which likely contributes to the increase in the number of different terms. The hypocoristics of nouns found in the present study are mostly common nouns, with only a couple of examples of hypocoristics of personal names in all of the data sets. The plural form is favoured by the hypocoristics of nouns particularly in the *Nelson Mail* in which the plural is twice as frequent as the singular during both periods. In *The Press* the change is smaller but the hypocoristics appear more often in the plural. The use in quotations sees a moderate increase since the first period but the use in headlines or as part of a compound becomes even more infrequent in the second period. Hypocoristics of nouns denoting sports or occupations, based on this study, are rare and, as shown in Table 16, most examples are either general terms or denote a person or member of a group. The hypocoristics denoting occupations that appear in the *Nelson Mail* in the first period virtually disappear by the second period and are replaced by general terms. The increasing use of hypocoristics in *The Press* from the first period can be seen in the categories of ‘general terms’ and ‘person or member of a group’, which by the second period are close to equal in their frequency.

In the introduction I posed the question of the possible reasons for the use of hypocoristics in New Zealand, which I now conclude to be a sum of a variety of factors. As mentioned before, hypocoristics are still mostly used as part of spoken everyday discourse, yet, in news texts they serve for example to embellish the text and as a means of bringing the language of the news closer to the general public, all the while demonstrating language use that is distinctively New Zealand. Based on the results of the present study, the primary motivation for the use of hypocoristic forms is not the space-saving function in headlines, as most examples appear in the news stories. Instead, in most cases the hypocoristic form is simply a shorter but a descriptive enough way of referring

to a concept that would otherwise require several words (or a longer word) to explain, as illustrated for example by *boatie* in 4.5. On a larger scale, the use of New Zealand specific hypocoristics can be said to strengthen the New Zealand linguistic identity and, although the frequencies in the present study remain relatively small, their increasing use in newspapers be seen as contributing to the larger trend towards colloquialization of the written English language.

The present study on hypocoristics in New Zealand English provides further support to the previous findings of Bardsley and Simpson (2009) and Bardsley (2010) that have shown that hypocoristics of nouns are a part of the language of New Zealand newspapers, although their use in casual speech and informal writing continues to be more common. In this study I focussed on two newspapers, the examination of which gives an idea of the changes taking place in the language of the news, but there is definitely room for further research on hypocoristics in New Zealand English, which the increasingly available electronic corpora such as the CNZNE make possible. To conclude, hypocoristics have become a distinctive feature of New Zealand English that even the newspapers have begun to embrace, which suggests that the traditional line between spoken and written language is becoming blurred and written language is nowadays incorporating the colloquial expressions cultivated in spoken conversation.

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## Appendices

**Appendix 1.** Meanings of the hypocoristics presented in Table 1 in alphabetical order. The definition for *acca* is taken from Bardsley and Simpson (2009), all other definitions from the NZDC database of hypocoristics.

<i>acca(s)</i>	‘cadet who enjoys academic work’
<i>afters</i>	‘an after match function’, ‘afternoon tea’
<i>beacher</i>	‘a coastal settler’ (whaler or sailor from 1844)
<i>benders</i>	‘Catholics’
<i>donger</i>	‘a club for stunning fish’
<i>dreads</i>	‘dreadlocks’
<i>fishy</i>	‘an official’
<i>freshie</i>	‘fresh snowfall’, ‘a recent arrival’ (fresh off from the boat), ‘a freshwater fish’, ‘a new prison inmate’
<i>granny</i>	‘a conservative newspaper’
<i>greasies</i>	‘fish and chips’, ‘shearing clothes’
<i>hospo</i>	‘hospitality (industry)’
<i>howdie</i>	‘a midwife’
<i>jockey</i>	‘sawyer’
<i>journo</i>	‘journalist’
<i>placer</i>	‘sheep that stays in one place’
<i>pressie(s)</i>	‘present’, ‘Presbyterian’, ‘presidents grade rugby player’
<i>seggie</i>	‘a segregated prison inmate’
<i>shameos</i>	‘shame’
<i>shorties</i>	‘short pyjamas’
<i>shotty</i>	‘a firearm’ (from shotgun), ‘inhalation of drugs’
<i>statey</i>	‘a state house’
<i>subbie(s)</i>	‘a substitute’, ‘a subcontractor’
<i>the taipos</i>	‘a series of hills with pointed tops’
<i>tinny</i>	‘an aluminium dinghy’, ‘foil wrapped cannabis/marijuana’, ‘can of beer’
<i>woolly</i>	‘a full-woolled sheep’

**Appendix 2.** The different forms of hypocoristic of nouns found in the *Nelson Mail* and *The Press* during the two periods sampled and included in this study in alphabetical order<sup>5</sup>.

<i>alcho</i>	<i>greasie</i>	<i>rainers</i>	<i>whiffler</i>
<i>ANZer</i>	<i>grundies</i>	<i>right-armers</i>	<i>winkers</i>
<i>armers</i>	<i>hepers</i>	<i>rousie</i>	<i>woosies</i>
<i>Bairdo</i>	<i>incher</i>	<i>rugbies</i>	<i>Wrighty</i>
<i>Banksie</i>	<i>instos</i>	<i>savvie</i>	<i>Wwoofer</i>
<i>bikie</i>	<i>Kevvie</i>	<i>scarfie</i>	<i>woofers</i>
<i>bitsas</i>	<i>Kevvy</i>	<i>scragglers</i>	
<i>bivvies</i>	<i>kindie</i>	<i>scratchie</i>	
<i>bleaters</i>	<i>kindy</i>	<i>selfie</i>	
<i>blockies</i>	<i>knobblies</i>	<i>sheddiess</i>	
<i>bluffie</i>	<i>lappie</i>	<i>skatie</i>	
<i>boatie</i>	<i>leakies</i>	<i>skivvie</i>	
<i>bodgies</i>	<i>Lesby</i>	<i>sky-larkers</i>	
<i>boulers</i>	<i>Liftie</i>	<i>snakeys</i>	
<i>cashies</i>	<i>lippies</i>	<i>snarer</i>	
<i>chatties</i>	<i>littlie</i>	<i>Snellie</i>	
<i>cribbies</i>	<i>loopies</i>	<i>Sobbo</i>	
<i>crimer</i>	<i>Matchie</i>	<i>sosters</i>	
<i>classer</i>	<i>micers</i>	<i>soundie</i>	
<i>culchies</i>	<i>milkie</i>	<i>sozzies</i>	
<i>cuzzie</i>	<i>mounder</i>	<i>sparkie</i>	
<i>Diksy</i>	<i>mumsies</i>	<i>spotties</i>	
<i>dobber</i>	<i>noddie</i>	<i>spragger</i>	
<i>doco</i>	<i>nuddie</i>	<i>spruiker</i>	
<i>doonas</i>	<i>nuddy</i>	<i>staffy</i>	
<i>droppie</i>	<i>numpty</i>	<i>streeties</i>	
<i>dunga</i>	<i>offies</i>	<i>stubbie</i>	
<i>dunger</i>	<i>oncer</i>	<i>swaggie</i>	
<i>dunnies</i>	<i>oopsies</i>	<i>swooshers</i>	
<i>farties</i>	<i>pannies</i>	<i>touchie</i>	
<i>fluoros</i>	<i>Poffy</i>	<i>tradies</i>	
<i>gifters</i>	<i>possie</i>	<i>trailies</i>	
<i>ginga</i>	<i>pozzie</i>	<i>troughers</i>	
<i>glampers</i>	<i>pranker</i>	<i>tryer</i>	
<i>goatie</i>	<i>preppers</i>	<i>twirties</i>	
<i>green-bluers</i>	<i>pushie</i>	<i>wharfie</i>	
<i>grizzler</i>	<i>quaddie</i>	<i>wheelly</i>	

<sup>5</sup> The hypocoristics that only appear in the newspaper data in the plural are listed here in their plural form.