

Making Memories: Reminiscing

DAVIDSON

with New Zealand Children

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Introduction

- Narrating about the past is critical to the development of autobiographical memory in children (Van Bergen & Salmon, 2010)
- How and why we remember are influenced by different cultural practices.
 - Maori: Aboriginal population in New Zealand
 - Pakeha: European-descent New Zealand population
- What role do **culture, gender, and individual differences** play in memory development?

The Present Study

- Data were part of a larger project (70 families)
- This study: 42 families
 - Children's age range = 42-59 months ($M = 50.84$; $SD = 4.08$)
 - Participants were Pakeha or mixed (Maori and Pakeha)
 - Measures:
 - Reminiscing Task
 - Family Demographic Survey



Reminiscing Task:

- Researcher asked the child four questions:
 1. Angry 😡
 2. Naughty 😈
 3. Messy 🗑️
 4. Fun 😄
- Conversations were audiotaped and transcribed verbatim by a research assistant.



Coding and Reliability

- Adapted from Wang (2001)
 - specific memory units
 - general memory units
 - emotion units
 - cognition words
 - volume of the narrative
- 25% of transcripts double-coded, 75% coded independently, average percentage of agreement = 94%

Evidence from Transcripts

GRFS 55- ANGRY

-Female, 45 months, maternal education= 1 (less than Polytech)
R: You have both? Wow. Well tell me about a time you got angry or mad with your brother or sister
P: Um, at twelve
R: Yeah? Tell me more about that
P: Um, when I'm sad, I go at, at the clock's at 30.
R: The clock's at 30, wow, anything else?
P: And when I'm happy, the clock's at 1.

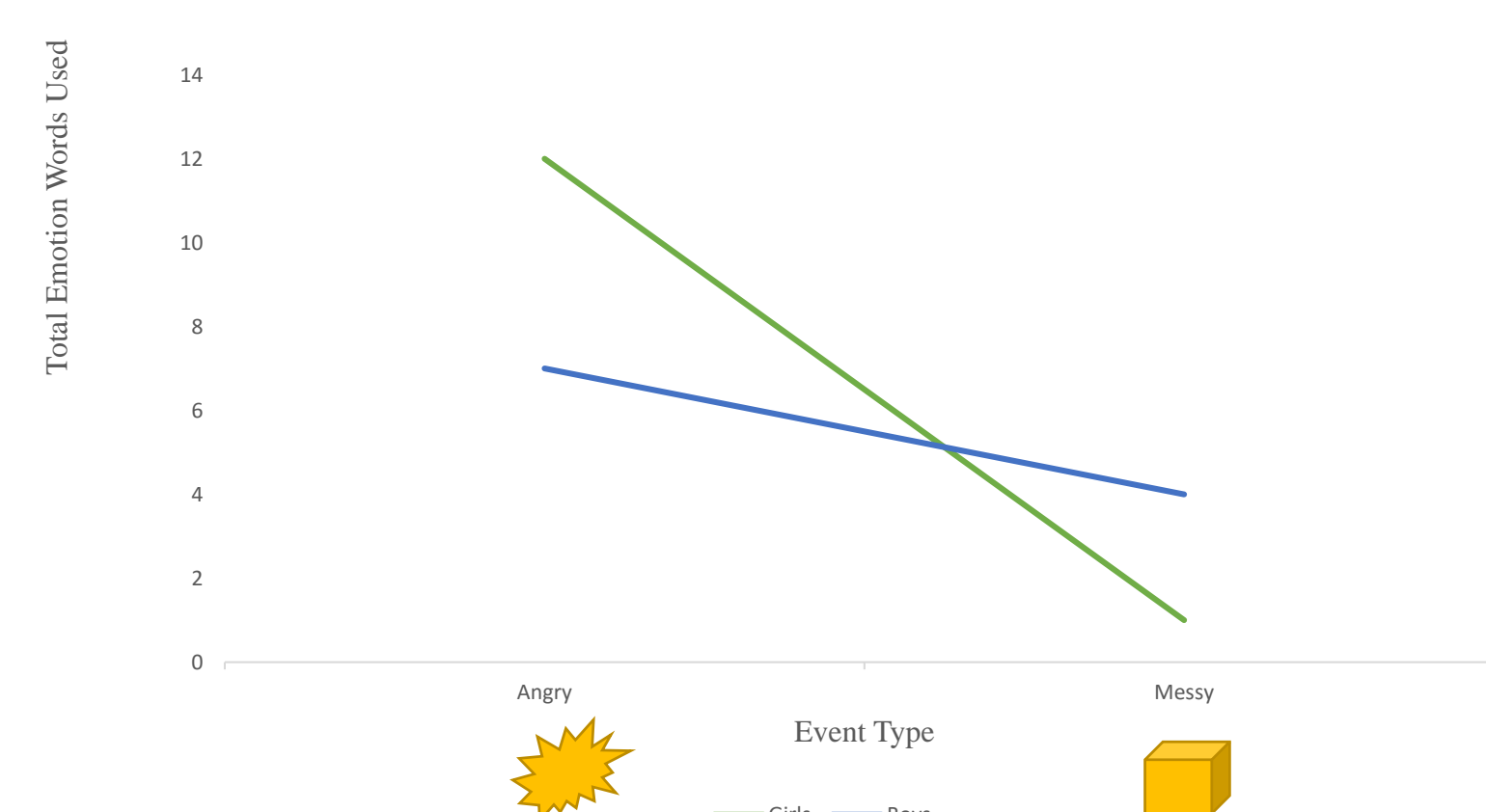
GRFS16- MESSY

-Male, 52 months, maternal education= 3 (more than Polytech)
R: Well how about... now I want you to tell me about a time you made a big mess
P: Hmm... when I was making a tower and my brother tipped it down and he laughed, and I cried

Bonus Finding!

- Boys used significantly more emotion words than girls when discussing messy events
- Girls used significantly more emotion words than boys when discussing angry events.

$F(3,17) = 8.53, p < .01, \eta^2 = 0.30$ for gender;
 $F(1,25) = 8.65, p < .01, \eta^2 = 0.26$ for event



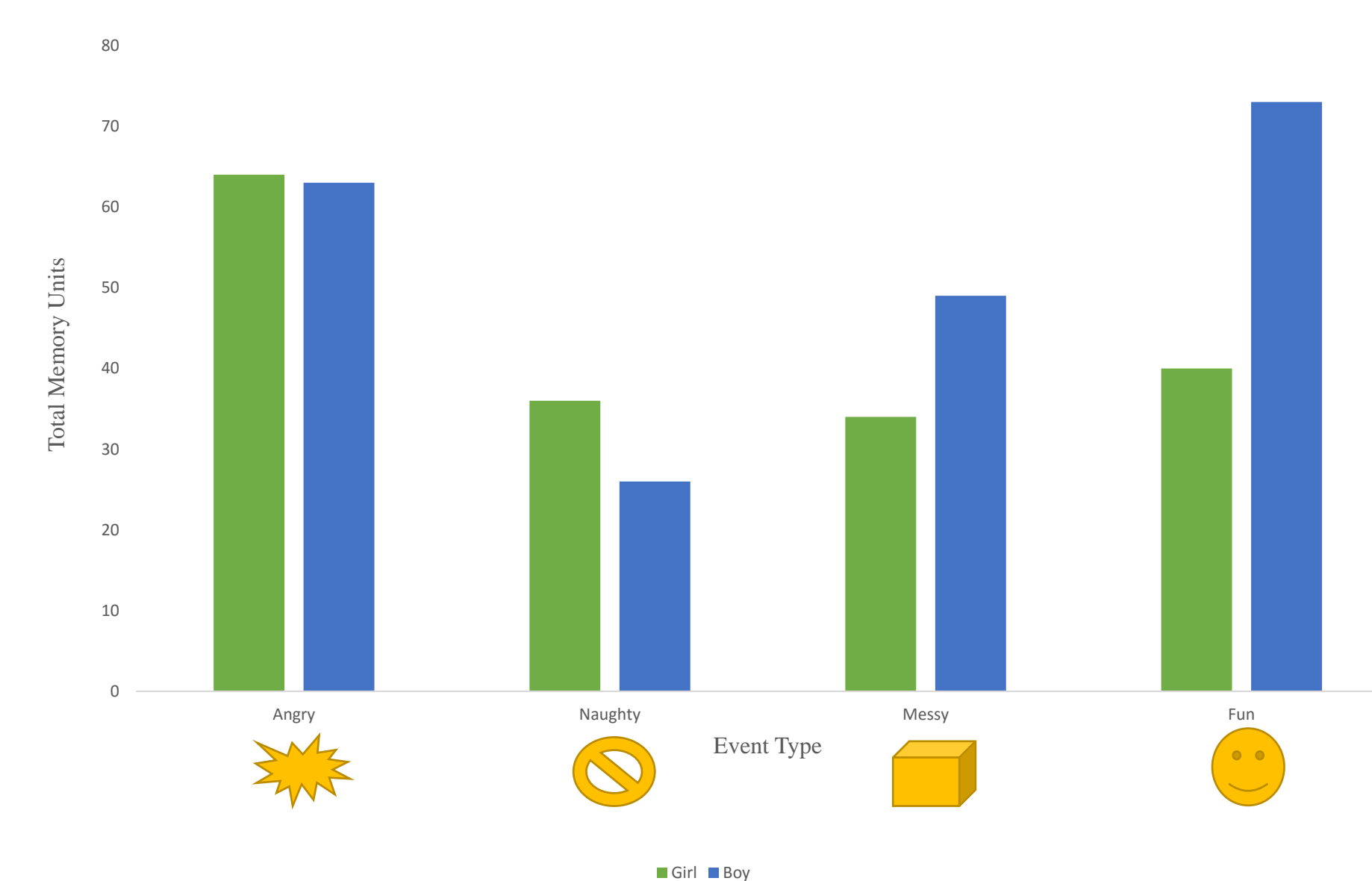
Research Questions and Results

When measuring memory ability (total memories and word count)

RQ1. Mixed ethnicity (Maori and Pakeha) > Pakeha ?

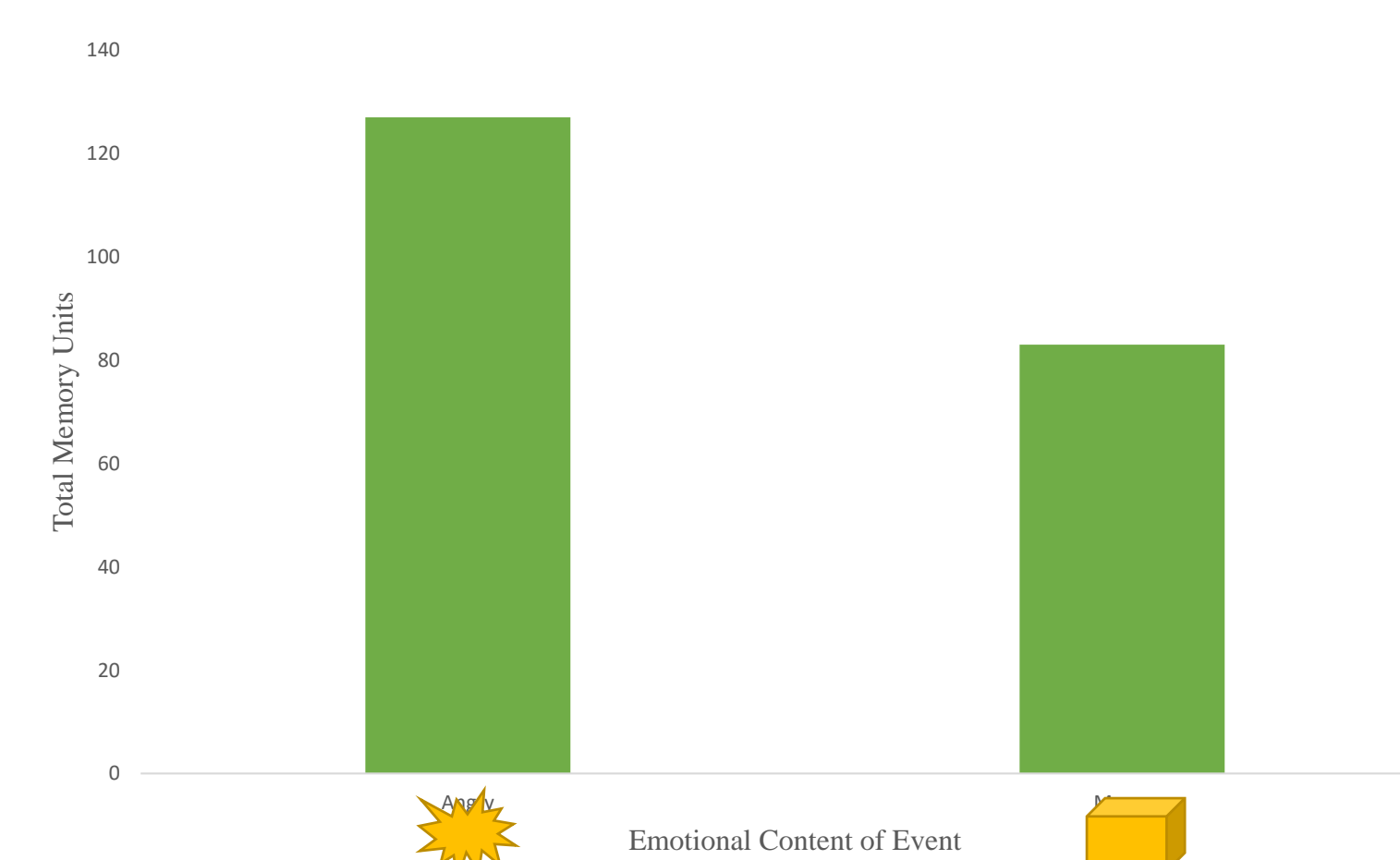
Ethnicity is not a significant predictor of memory ability, $B = .09$, $S.E. = .08, p > .10$.

RQ2. Girls > Boys?



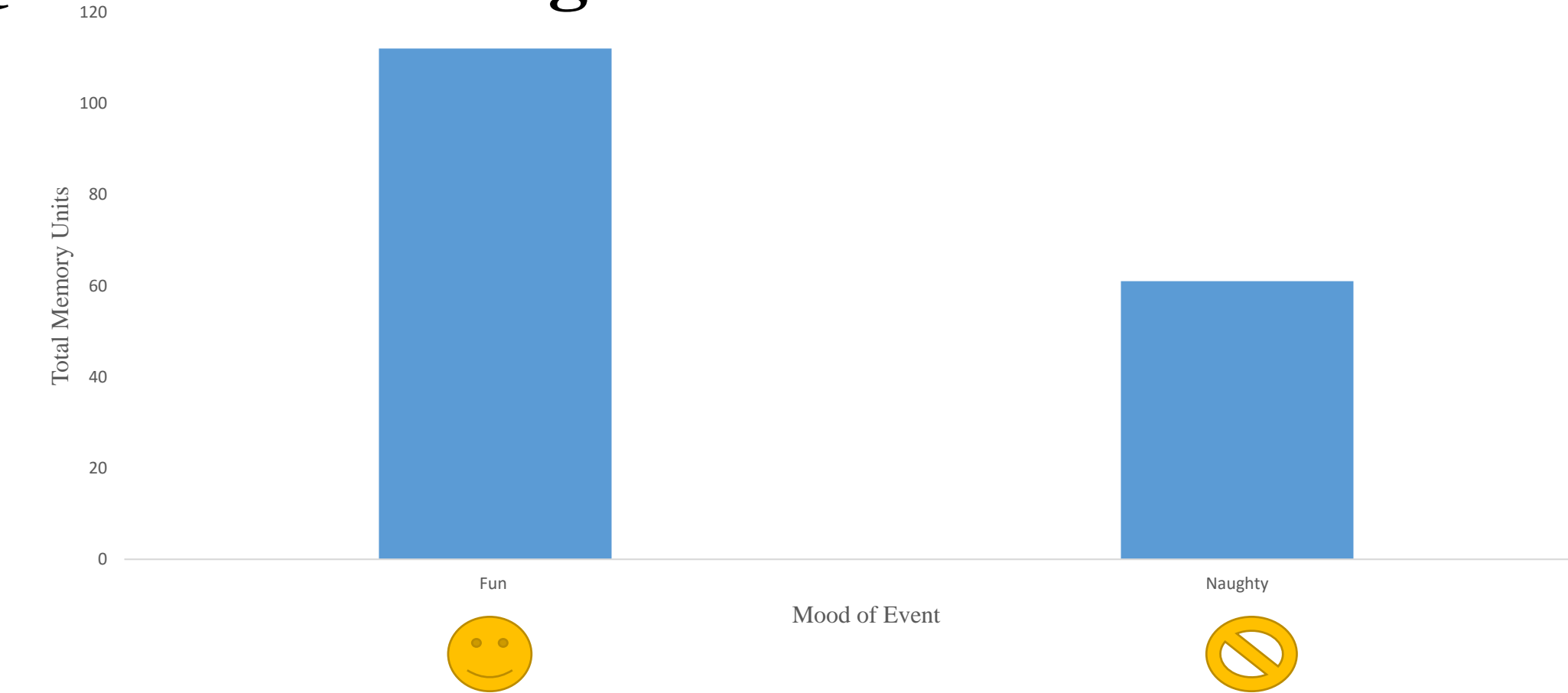
No significant gender differences in memory ability, $F(3,17) = 1.50, p > .10$.

RQ3. Emotional Events > Non Emotional Events?



No significant differences in memory ability between emotional and non-emotional events, $F(1,26) = 0.95, p > .10$.

RQ4. Positive > Negative?



Marginally significant differences in memory ability; Positive > Negative, $F(1,24) = 3.45, p = 0.07, \eta^2 = 0.13$.

Discussion

Limitations: small sample size, no children who identified solely as Maori, research assistants in place of parents

Future Research: Parents performing the Reminiscing Task with their children, counterbalance questions, longitudinal study

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References

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