

# What Do Children in India Talk About? Personal Narratives of Typically Developing Hindi-Speaking Children

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## Keywords

Personal narratives · Global TALES protocol · Hindi · Children · Cross-cultural comparisons

## Abstract

**Background:** The recent development of the Global TALES Protocol provides a unique opportunity to conduct systematic cross-linguistic and cross-cultural comparisons of children's personal narratives. This protocol contains 6 scripted prompts to elicit personal narratives in school-age children about times when they experienced feeling happy/excited, worried, annoyed, proud, being in a problem situation, something important. **Objectives:** The objectives of this study were to examine the topics of the children's narratives when they responded to the 6 prompts and draw comparisons with the topics of narratives spoken by children from 10 other countries speaking 8 other languages as described in the original feasibility paper. **Methods:** We translated the Global TALES Protocol into Hindi and collected personal narratives of thirty Hindi-speaking children (aged 6–9 years), residing in Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh, India. All personal narrative samples were elicited in person and audio recorded for manual coding of the topics. **Results:** Although we observed many similarities in the topics of children's personal narratives between

this dataset and the dataset reported on in the initial feasibility study, we also documented some novel topics, such as “welcoming guests” in response to the “excited” prompt; “financial problems” in response to the “worried” prompt; “helping someone by actions or by advising someone morally” in response to the “problem” prompt; and “mishap/personal loss” and “exams” in response to the “important” prompt. **Conclusion:** Some of these novel topics likely reflected the Indian culture. Because our study involved a group of children who are linguistically and culturally different from previous studies using the Global TALES protocol and, at ages 6–9 years, slightly younger than the 10-year-olds in prior studies, this study adds to the evidence that the Global TALES protocol can be used to elicit personal narratives of children from diverse languages and cultures, as young as age 6.

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## Introduction

The elementary function of narrative is not only to present a series of events chronologically, but also to indicate perspectives, painting different themes narrators derive from their own cultures and traditions [1].

Personal narratives, also referred to as accounts of personally experienced events, are commonly used by people of all ages and cultures to share their past experiences. The content of personal narratives represents the cultural values that prevail in a community [2, 3]. In a diverse world, where people belong to distinct cultures with varying sense of identities, their representations of narratives may reflect cross-cultural differences and similarities in values and beliefs [4, 5]. For a listener to fully understand the meaning and organization of a personal narrative, it is important for them to understand the cultural background of the narrator. Equally important, if a speech-language pathologist is to understand the cultural background of a client, personal narratives offer a rich linguistic context for doing so.

Many studies have explored how culture influences the style and content of the personal narratives shared. These studies have demonstrated that young children's personal narratives are influenced by their caregivers' style of telling these types of stories; hence cultural values are transmitted from one generation to the other. Examining the personal narratives of children can thus offer some insight into the cultural practices of the community [6]. For instance, McCabe and Peterson [7] studied the personal narratives of children during toy-play with their parents. They found that children's interaction styles were influenced by their parents' style and the parents' narrative style was influenced by their cultures and socio-economic status. Chang and McCabe [8] examined the personal narratives of three- to nine- year-old Mandarin speaking children from Taiwan and English-speaking children from the USA, using topic prompts like a visit to a doctor. The results from that study suggested that there is a deep cultural influence on the stories of these two groups of children. As discussed by Westby et al. [9], one likely explanation for differences in personal narratives produced by children from Asian countries and their European American counterparts may reflect individualistic versus collectivist traits of their societies. Collectivist traits may include a welcoming attitude towards relatives as well as virtues like respecting elders and politeness. In individualistic societies, people may be expected to take care of themselves. Not only would these societal traits influence parents' narrative style, they would also influence the topics of the children's personal narratives (see [9]).

Previous research has demonstrated that the content of personal narratives may vary due to cultural influences [e.g., 6, 10], thus, assessment of children's personal narratives from a cultural perspective is important to understanding the appropriateness of contents of a child's

narratives [4] and differentiating between a language difference (due to cultural influences) and a language disorder. In a recent study with a relatively large representation of different cultures, Westerveld et al. [11] analyzed the personal narratives of 10-year-old children from ten different countries speaking eight different languages on different aspects of narration. All narrative samples were elicited using the Global TALES Protocol [12] which allowed for cross-cultural and cross-linguistic comparisons. As acknowledged by the authors however, this study only included data from one Asian country (Taiwan), and the authors highlighted the importance of adapting the protocol to more languages and cultures. Though there is some research investigating cultural influence on the personal narratives of children from East-Asia, including Taiwan, China, and Japan [8, 13, 14], there is relatively little research examining the narratives of children from South-Asian countries like India and Pakistan [15–19]. One exception is a study by Kant et al. [15]. However, these authors did not study personal narratives, but analyzed the semantic features of picture descriptions, produced by 200 typically developing Hindi-speaking children (ages 3–7), with the aim of creating a reference database.

India is a highly multilingual and multicultural country, with 22 major official languages and hundreds of regional or local languages spoken and numerous cultures represented [20, 21]. However, there are some distinctive characteristics of the Indian culture that resonate across these diversities. For example, although India has been considered a culture that embraces collectivism, it also exhibits some characteristics of individualism. In the Indian culture, individualism is mainly exhibited in religion. In philosophical notions such as life after death, it is believed that the outcome of an individual's life after death is dependent on his or her deeds during mortal life [22–24]. On the other hand, adults place a strong emphasis on the virtues of collectivism when raising children [22]. In this context, such values as harmony and good relationships with family, relatives, and friends, as well as values for helping elders and friends are highly encouraged when bringing up a member of a community [25, 26]. Joint festival celebrations worshipping their honourable God are important family events. Moral values are also highly emphasized and are often taught to children at a very young age through famous fables like the "Panchatantra" (a fable in which there are short stories teaching priceless moral lessons, rich heritage values, and the principles of Dharma) with the aim that this will guide children in discerning right versus wrong and good versus bad later in life [18]. Although there is

some research on fictional narratives of children in India, speaking languages such as Tamil, Kannada [16, 17], to the authors' knowledge there is no literature documenting the personal narratives of Hindi-speaking children in India. Thus, there are no empirical data for one to reflect on how culture might influence the personal narratives of children from India. To address this research gap, this study is a first attempt to document the personal narratives of Hindi-speaking children in India.

In this study, we translated the Global TALES Protocol into Hindi. This protocol contains six emotion-based prompts that ask children to tell a story about a time when they felt happy, worried, annoyed, proud, a problem situation, and something important. Initial feasibility of the protocol was demonstrated in a study by Westerveld et al. [11] with children from the USA, Brazil, Croatia, Cyprus, Greece, Israel (Arabic speakers and Hebrew speakers), New Zealand, Russia, Taiwan, and Australia. The current study contributed to this body of knowledge by investigating the feasibility of using the Global TALES Protocol in an Indian context with Hindi-speaking children in India. We also examined the topics of children's personal narratives in response to the six prompts with a view to reporting the similarities and differences in the topics that children talked about in comparison to the children from other countries as reported in Westerveld et al. [11]. As argued by Westerveld et al. [11], investigating topics of children's personal narratives offers a window into the cultural values and beliefs associated with the child's upbringing [see also 27]. We chose to prioritize examining topics of children's personal stories because topics are developmentally significant. Topics are precursors to themes (which develop in adolescence [28]) and themes are associated with self-identity and mental health [29].

The following research questions were asked:

1. Is the Global TALES Protocol successful in eliciting personal narratives of Hindi-speaking children in India?
2. What are the topics of Hindi-speaking children when they respond to the six prompts in Global TALES and how are these topics different/similar from the observed topics in Westerveld et al. [11]?

Based on previous research, we expected the protocol to be successful in eliciting personal narratives from Hindi-speaking children [11], in terms of providing responses to the six protocol prompts. In addition, since these children share similar socio-communicative environments as the children in Westerveld et al. [11], such as being raised by parents and other family members at home, going to school, and interacting with peers, we

expected substantial commonalities in the topics between the narratives of these children and the narratives of children in other countries in [11]. However, we also expected some novel topics reflecting the distinctive characteristics of the Indian culture that are not represented in the personal narratives of the other children in Westerveld et al. [11], influenced, for instance, by the prominence of collectivism, festival celebrations worshipping their God, and moral values.

## Methods

### *Participants*

Thirty typically developing Hindi-English bilingual children (15 male) aged 6.1–9.0 ( $M = 7.8$ ;  $SD = 1.24$ ), speaking Hindi as their first and home language, participated. These children also acquired English as the second and school language from the age of four, when they started attending private schools for 6 h a day, 5 days a week, where the medium of instruction is English (and children are not encouraged to use the home language). All participants resided in Varanasi, an urban city in the south-eastern part of Uttar Pradesh, where the Hindi spoken is close to standard Hindi. These children met the following inclusion criteria: (a) children came from middle socio-economic status (SES) families, as indicated by the fee structure of the educational institutes the children were attending based on average family annual income and parental educational qualifications; (b) children were typically developing, based on the demographic form showing no expressed parental or school concerns on the child's speech and language development and other aspects of development and no history of reported speech and language difficulties.

### *Materials*

This study used the Hindi version of the Global TALES Protocol [30] to elicit personal narratives. The Global TALES Protocol comprises six emotion-based prompts (excited, worried, annoyed, proud, problem situation, something important). Each prompt encourages the child to tell a "story" about a personal experience. An initial feasibility study demonstrated that this tool was successful in eliciting language samples from 10-year-old children from 10 different countries, speaking 8 different languages [11]. The eight translated versions of the protocol followed a standardized adaptation process to ensure that the elicitation procedures were consistent across languages. For full access to the translated versions of the protocol, visit <https://osf.io/ztqg6/>.

### *Adaptation to Hindi*

Three translated Hindi versions were created from the original English version by the first author, a PhD student who is a native speaker of Hindi with linguistic training. These included (1) a word-to-word translation of the original English protocol; (2) a word-to-word translation, but with less frequent words replaced by more familiar words to ensure children would find all words comprehensible and familiar; and (3) a word-to-word translation, but with some words and phrases replaced by meaning-wise translations to increase naturalness. These versions were sent to five trained linguists, who were native speakers of Hindi and

experienced language professionals working with children. We asked them to

1. choose the version that would be the closest match to the original English version of the Global TALES, while ensuring that it would be culturally and linguistically appropriate and could be understood by Hindi-speaking children ages six or older;
2. double-check the translations to ensure that the translated versions would have the same instructions, protocol prompts, and scripted follow-up prompts as the original protocol.

The first author double-checked the translations to ensure that the protocol prompts and scripted follow-up prompts would tap into the same key emotions and type of events (excited, worried, annoyed, proud, problem situation, something important) and be culturally and linguistically appropriate. The linguists were also asked to identify any incongruities with the original protocol and/or suggest changes or edits to ensure appropriateness in all aspects. All five linguists selected version three as the best version, most closely related to the original protocol. To ensure cultural appropriateness, some follow-up protocol prompts and generic feedback on children's narratives were adjusted according to colloquial Hindi. For example, phrases like "it is interesting" and "aha" were changed to more neutral response feedback in Hindi like "oh! I see." Moreover, we also decided to provide a clearer explanation for certain prompts that were hard to comprehend for the children. For example, the literal translation of the protocol prompt "proud" is "garv" which is not a very frequently occurring word in day-to-day conversations in Hindi. After using the scripted prompt from the protocol, the examiner provided an elaborated explanation of the word "proud" by adding "tell me a time when you thought that you were a very good girl/boy."

#### *Procedures*

Data collection was conducted in a quiet room in a home or school setting. Children were interviewed individually by the first author, a native speaker who read aloud the prompt words on a stack of cards, so the child heard each protocol prompt asked by the examiner. The examiner followed the same administration procedures as outlined in the original protocol (i.e., avoiding leading questions), and the order of presenting the prompts was predetermined: i.e., excited, worried, annoyed, proud, problem, something important. All the sessions were audio recorded.

#### *Data Coding and Reliability*

The first author listened to the audio recordings and assigned a topic to each personal narrative based on its main content, following Westerveld et al. [11]. The audio recordings were also independently coded in terms of topics following Westerveld et al. [11] by another native speaker of Hindi who served as a research assistant and who was blind to the topics assigned by the first author. The two sets of topics were then compared by the first author, with agreement on 91.3% (disagreement on 8.7%) of the topics. The disagreements were mostly in cases where there were synonymous topics assigned to the same narrative; for example, the research assistant assigned a narrative as "being interrogated by someone," while the first author assigned the same narrative as "someone asks a question." Such cases were analyzed again by the two coders together to reach a consensus on the assigned topic. In this example, we observed that interrogation is usually used in a

formal context, but the child talked about a doctor asking her questions when she was ill in an informal manner, and then the child mentioned that she was intimidated and annoyed when someone asked her questions. So, the final topic assigned became "someone asks questions." Such discrepancies were discussed until full agreement was reached between the two coders.

The first round of coding generated a total of 69 different topics from the 6 protocol prompts, and these topics mostly overlapped with the topics listed in Westerveld et al. [11]. To facilitate comparisons with the results reported in Westerveld et al. [11], the first author further assigned these 69 topics according to the list of (broader) topics listed in Westerveld et al. [11]. For example, the topics "behaving nicely" and "being courageous" were subsumed under a broader topic called "personal achievement" (achieved something that was specifically relevant to themselves); see [11] S2 Appendix. This mapping resulted in merging of the 69 different topics into 31 broader topics.

## **Results**

Overall, the Global TALES protocol successfully elicited 179 personal narratives in response to the six protocol prompts. There was one non-response to the problem prompt.

The 31 topics coded in this study were compared to the topics reported in Westerveld et al. [11] (online suppl. Tables 2, 3 in Westerveld et al. [11]). Table 1 presents a comparison of the topics in the personal narratives of the Hindi-speaking children in India and the top 5 topics observed in the personal narratives produced by children from a wide range of countries and languages, as reported in Westerveld et al. [11]. The major findings noted for each prompt in terms of similarities and differences and the novel topics observed are highlighted below.

#### *Prompt 1: Excited*

In response to the excited prompt, most children talked about a family event, more specifically about celebrating their own birthday or receiving surprise birthday parties from their parents or family members. The second most frequent topic was spending time with family or playing with siblings. Although this topic was also assigned in the larger feasibility study ([11] S2 Appendix), it did not feature in the top 5. The third most frequent topic was personal achievement. Children also shared that they were happy when they behave nicely and finish all their work on time. The rest of the topics centred on school holidays or going to coaching classes. In India, coaching classes are mostly in a setup where a child goes to a specific place and receives academic support. A novel topic not mentioned in the dataset of Westerveld et al.

**Table 1.** Comparison of the topics in the narratives of Indian children and the narratives of children in Westerveld et al. [11] (2022)\*

Protocol prompts	Top 5 responses to protocol prompts across other countries*	Top 5 topics in India (n = 30)
Excited	Family Event New Experience or Item Personal achievement Personal growth or contribution Peer relationship	Family event (celebrating their own birthday) (14) Spending time with family/siblings (8) Personal achievement (4) Vacation (3) Welcoming guests (1)
Worried	School Task New Challenges Safety Concerns Illness, Injury or Death Family/friends relationships	School task (9) Injury/Illness (8) Fighting with family/friends/siblings (7) Decision making (3) Losing something (2)
Annoyed	Sibling/Peer Relationships Parental Issues Expectations of School/Others Personal frustration Injury/Illness	Sibling/peer relationships (12) Parental Issues (10) Personal Frustration (5) Expectations of teachers at School (2) Injury/pain (1)
Proud	Personal Achievement Personal Growth or Contribution Achievement involving others	Personal achievement (26) Contribution in helping others (3) Personal satisfaction (1)
Problem	Peer/family Relationships Finding or fixing Personal growth or contribution Safety or wellness Problem at school	Contribution (helping someone either by actions or by advising someone morally) (23) Self-improvement (4) Discussing, or resolving family conflicts (1) Finding a missing thing (1)
Important	Personal Achievement Family event or support Cultural Personal growth or contribution Peer relationships	Family events (11) Receiving gifts or new items (6) Personal achievement (5) Cultural: celebrating festivals (4) Mishaps/personal loss (3)

[11] was “welcoming guests” at home. One child expressed that welcoming guests at home gave him a sense of satisfaction. As P012T narrated, “*I feel contented when I have to serve my guests, I help my mother in preparing food for them and making them comfortable at my place.*”

#### Prompt 2: Worried

As shown in Table 1, similar to countries like Australia, Croatia, Greece, Israel, New Zealand, and Russia, about 30% of Indian children talked about missing their school tasks, not submitting project work on time, or not being able to finish their homework. The second most prevalent topic was personal injury and their mothers’ illnesses. One novel topic elicited was related to financial tension in the family. See the following quote (P024T): “We did not have money to pay our school fees, so I had to break my piggy bank and get the savings to help my family.”

These children came from families that represent the lower middle class of Indian society. Although they do

not struggle for the basic needs of food and living, financial tension is not uncommon when the family strives for a better quality of life [31, 32].

#### Prompt 3: Annoyed

The range of topics assigned to the Hindi-speaking children’s personal narratives in response to the annoyed topic was similar between the current dataset and that of Westerveld et al. [11]. Twelve children talked about fighting with their siblings and peers (the most common topic across all 11 participant groups [11]), for example, when others excluded them from playing, snatched things from them, blamed them for no reason, etc. The second most prevalent topic (similar to Greece, Russia, and Taiwan), shared by 10 children (“parental issues”), included being scolded by their parents or being upset with their parents for not taking them outside for a stroll. Other topics involved poor performance in exams or not putting in enough effort to do well in academics, leading to personal frustration.

#### *Prompt 4: Proud*

The most prevalent topic (similar to the most frequent topic across all participant groups reported on in the original feasibility study [11]) was personal achievement of the child, when they won prizes and medals in sports competition or improved in their studies. The second most prevalent topic related to their contribution in helping others, as some expressed being proud of themselves when they helped their mothers in the kitchen and other household chores. One child expressed that he was proud of himself when he ate good food and slept peacefully. This personal narrative topic may have been in response to the adaptation/elaboration of the “proud” prompt, in which children were asked, “Tell me a time when you thought that you were a very good girl/boy.”

#### *Prompt 5: Problem*

The problem-oriented prompt was the most challenging prompt for these participants. Most of the children required scripted follow-up prompts to answer this question. Most personal stories (23/30) were centred around helping someone either by actions or by advising someone morally, referred to as “personal growth or contribution” by Westerveld et al. [11]. This topic only reached the top 2 in Russia, Taiwan, and Israel (Hebrew-speaking children). Children shared that they often helped old people cross the roads and helped beggars on the street with food and other basic supplies to solve their problems. Some also shared stories in which they solved a problem by advising their peers and younger brothers to not steal or bully others at school and home. The second most observed topic (not observed in the larger feasibility project), called “self-improvement,” was about finding ways to strengthen their memory to perform well in exams or finding ways to improve their handwriting. The third-ranked topic was about discussing or resolving family conflicts. Only one child talked about finding a missing thing.

#### *Prompt 6: Important*

There were variations in topics assigned for this prompt (see Table 1). The most prevalent topic was about birthday celebrations with family or other family events like worshipping God at home together. The second-ranked topic was about receiving gifts or new items when they performed well in exams. One novel topic related to mishaps/personal loss events, such as one child sharing an incident when her father and she slipped in a manhole and other people had to come and rescue them. Another novel topic, expressed by one child, was related to exams, as exams are always important to him, and he never forgot anything during his exam.

## **Discussion**

In this study, we adapted the Global TALES Protocol into Hindi and used it to elicit personal narratives from Hindi-speaking children residing in Uttar Pradesh of India, where the Hindi spoken in this region is close to standard Hindi, among the 49 varieties of Hindi spoken in India [33]. In line with our expectations, the protocol was successful in eliciting contextually relevant personal narratives from these children, with only one non-response recorded (0.55%). Although children encountered some difficulties in responding to the “problem” prompt, relevant responses could still be elicited after the children were supported with the scripted follow-up prompts. As expected, we observed that the topics of narratives spoken by our Hindi-speaking children were similar to the topics of narratives spoken by children acquiring other languages and raised in other countries or cultures [11] in four out of the six prompts (excited, worried, annoyed, proud). Variations were observed in response to the problem prompt and the important prompt. Finally, as expected, there were some novel topics uniquely attested in our dataset, some of which may reflect the distinctive characteristics of the collectivist Indian culture.

When considering children’s overall responses, we noticed some similarities between the children from India and their Taiwanese counterparts (see [11]), which may reflect the influence of their collectivist societies on the children’s personal narratives. For example, “personal achievement” was observed in 43% of the Indian children’s narratives and was topic number 2 in Taiwan, unlike most of the other countries where children talked about receiving gifts or moving house. An example of personal achievement reflecting the collectivist trait is as follows: in response to the “excited” prompt, three Hindi-speaking children reported that they were happy when they behaved nicely in front of others, which could be taken as a personal achievement as a citizen for the benefit of their society.

Our speculation is that cultural influence may also have played a role in the topics of the children’s problem stories. We observed that the majority of children talked about “contribution” in response to the problem prompt, for example, helping someone either by actions or advising someone morally. In contrast, in most other countries (except Russia and Taiwan), children talked about peer/family relationships. Hindi-speaking children in Indian culture are influenced by the collectivist culture in terms of encouraging one to be helpful to others when others have problems. The power distance cultural dimension might also be relevant, as these children also mentioned helping the elders when they have a problem,

and children are being taught that respecting the elders is a valuable trait in the collectivist culture. Another possibility could be related to the scripted follow-up prompt (“other children tell me about a time when they helped someone in problem or when they had a problem and they had to figure out what they had to do”), which was needed to elicit responses in most children. This follow-up prompt may have primed these children to mention a situation in which they helped someone in need who has a problem. Finally, it seems plausible that both factors, cultural and methodological, act in synergy in promoting these children to tell stories about helping others in problem situations.

Some novel topics were observed, which occurred in the stories of some children (see Table 1 for the exact number of children for each topic). For example, one child talked about “welcoming guests” when asked to tell a story about an exciting moment. This topic likely reflects the importance of respecting guests in the Indian culture. Guests are treated as “God,” as it is believed that an encounter with God can be beyond religious places of worship [12]. The Indian culture imparts great value to welcoming guests, and these values are transmitted from generation to generation via moral stories and phrases like “अतिथिर्देवो भवः” meaning “Guest is God.” In response to the “problem” prompt, 23 children talked about helping someone either by their actions or by morally advising their peers. These stories highlight that even at a young age, moral values, such as helping others and the virtue of morally advising others, are infused in these children. This too reflects the collectivist characteristics in the society along with showcasing that the society values developing moral values in children [18].

#### *Limitations and Future Directions*

This study presents an initial evaluation of the topics of Hindi-speaking children’s personal narratives in response to six emotion-based prompts. Although we found many similarities and some differences between the topics of these children’s stories and those reported on by Westerveld et al. [11], we acknowledge that this study featured a relatively small group of 6- to 9-year-olds from one region in India and of similar lower middle-class socio-economic status who were younger than the sample of 10-year-olds in Westerveld et al. [11]. A follow-up study, including a larger, more representative group of Hindi-speaking children, including 10-year-olds, is now needed to substantiate these preliminary findings. Given that India is a multicultural and multilingual country, with different regions having different cultures and languages, social paradigms, and power relations, comparing how similar and different the personal narratives of children raised in different regions of India are

allows a rich context for research to tap further into how these sociocultural factors affect the development of personal narratives in children growing up in India [34, 35]. Furthermore, future studies could analyze children’s personal narrative samples in other dimensions such as lexical diversity, productivity, and syntactic complexity, using measures such as number of different words, total number of words, and sentence length, to explore linguistic variations in personal narrative performance in Hindi-speaking children.

Future studies should go beyond a simple coding of “topics” to reveal in more detail the content of the children’s stories. For example, although personal achievement was the most frequent topic of children’s stories across all countries [11], few (if any) Australian children talked about being proud of themselves for helping with household chores or when sleeping peacefully. Extending the cross-linguistic and cross-cultural comparisons of topics to examine the themes of children’s stories will provide a deeper understanding of cultural and linguistic influences. For instance, Westby et al. [9] noted that although the personal narratives of English-speaking children from English-speaking countries (Australia, New Zealand, and the USA) and Mandarin-, Korean-, and Cantonese-speaking children from Taiwan, Korea, and Hong Kong shared similar topics, the themes of their narratives differed, showing variations of how the Eastern culture influenced the personal stories of children from Taiwan, Korea, and Hong Kong and how the Western culture influenced the personal narratives of children from these English-speaking countries. From a developmental perspective, since topics are precursors to themes and themes are linked to the development of a sense of self-identity that arises in adolescence, future research could study the evolution of topics of stories in a group of children when they are in elementary school years, following the same children longitudinally into their adolescent years. These attempts will require the use of not only Global TALES but also other turning-point stories or life stories when testing older ages and will generate valuable language datasets that could bear richly on the self-identity and mental health of a child’s development as an individual.

#### **Conclusion**

The recent development of the Global TALES Protocol provides researchers and practitioners with a unique opportunity to conduct systematic cross-linguistic and cross-cultural comparisons of children’s personal narratives, both within a country and across countries worldwide. This small-scale study has demonstrated the initial feasibility of the protocol with Hindi-speaking



children in India who reside in Varanasi, a city in the south-eastern part of Uttar Pradesh, who were slightly younger (ages 6–9 years) than the 10-year-olds who participated in the original research with this protocol [11]. We are excited about the possibility of extending this work to other areas in India to better understand both cultural and linguistic influences on children's personal narrative skills and development. Moreover, understanding the content (topics) of children's stories, their variations, and their links to cultural influences could inspire speech-language pathologists when they work with children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and have to consider what topics are functional and important/meaningful for the children and their families in assessment and intervention.

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### Statement of Ethics

This study was carried out in accordance with the recommendations of the Institutional Review Board for human subjects ethics at the Hong Kong Polytechnic University (reference number:

HSEARS20230303002). Written informed consent was also obtained from the parents of each participant. The Griffith University Human Ethics Research Committee provided initial approval for the study (HREC: 2018/273).

### Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

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### Author Contributions

A.C. and M.W. conceptualized the study, V.S. was responsible for data collection, coding, analyzing, and supervising the reliability checks. V.S. and A.C. wrote the first draft of the paper. M.W. helped in revising and editing the first draft. Subsequently all authors worked on refining and revising the text. All authors approve of the final version.

### Data Availability Statement

The consent form, approved by the Institutional Review Board for human subjects ethics at the Hong Kong Polytechnic University (reference number: HSEARS20230303002), and signed by the parents of the children participants in this study, mentioned that the data will not be shared publicly. On the other hand, de-identified data from this study may be shared upon reasonable request to the corresponding author.

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