



Maria Korochkina

What kinds of words do children encounter when reading for pleasure?

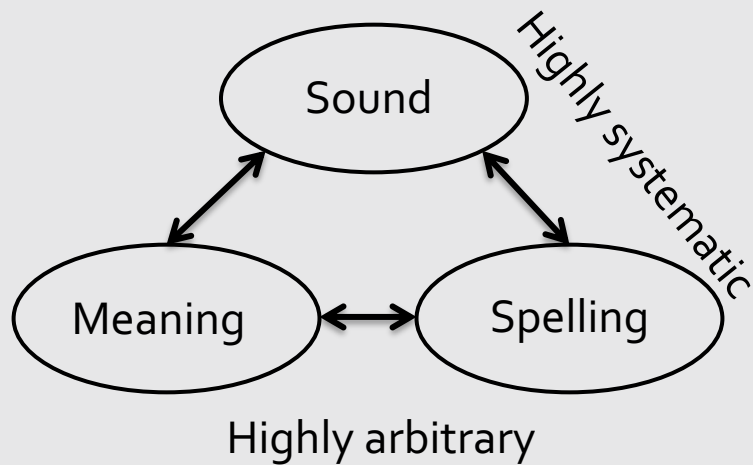
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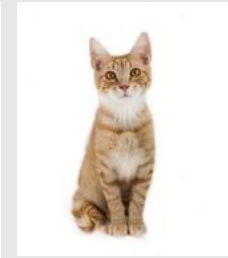
The tools for reading



CUT



CAT



CAN



- Arbitrary learning is very hard
- Not possible in languages with very large vocabularies
- Spelling-sound mapping enormously efficient; learned quickly via phonics
- Extensive practice via independent reading builds fluency and vocabulary

The CYP-LEX project



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National reading surveys, publisher data, & book sales statistics from Amazon, BookTrust, Goodreads, LoveReading4Kids, etc.

1,200 popular fiction & non-fiction e-books, 400 books per age band

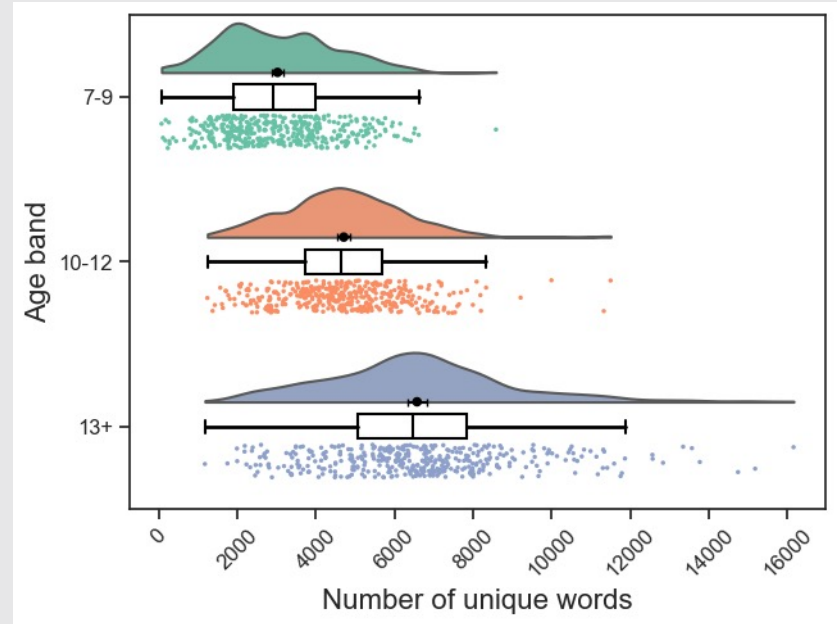
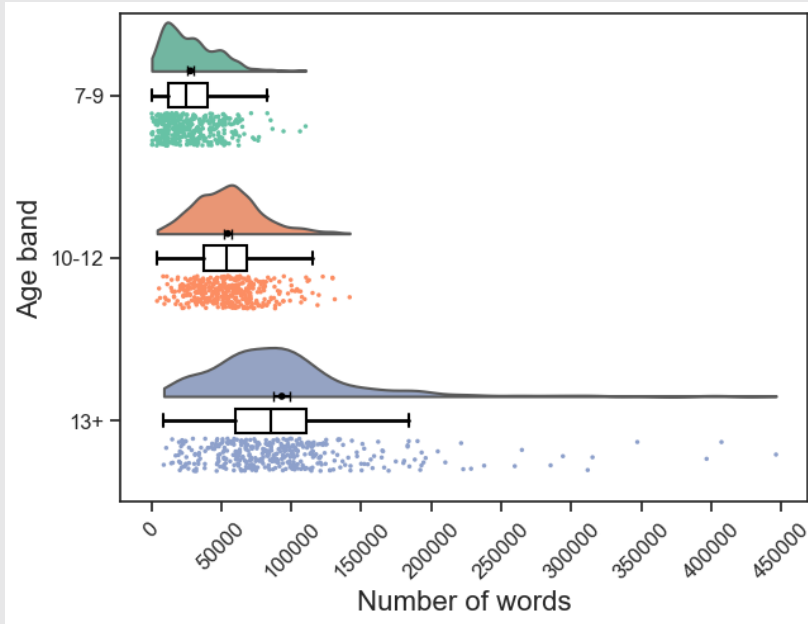
7-9 years

10-12 years

13+ years



Many words in each band!!

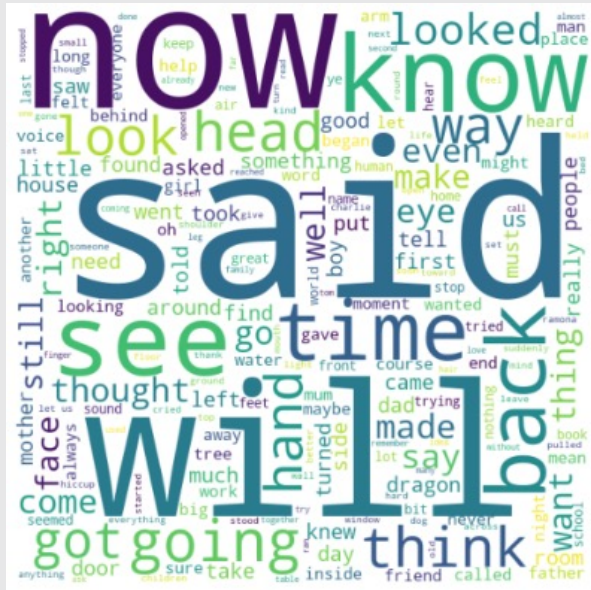


	7-9	10-12	13+
Number of words	11,162,653	21,837,794	37,286,770
Average number of words per book	27,907	54,594	93,217
Number of unique words	52,851	70,945	90,980
Average number of unique words per book	3,028	4,713	6,447

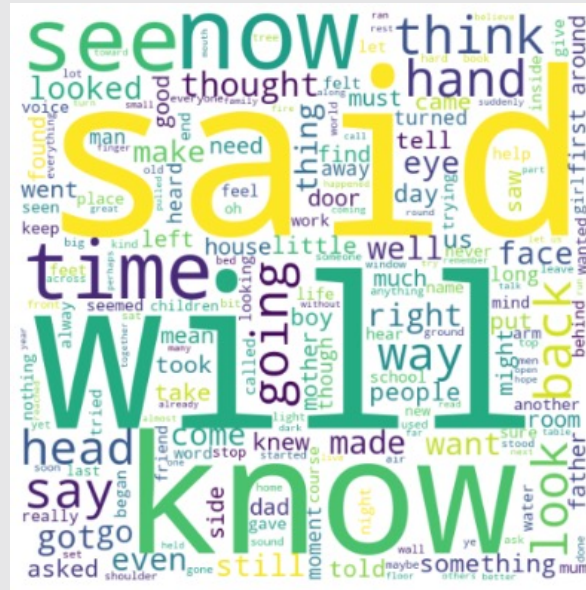
Some words occur very widely



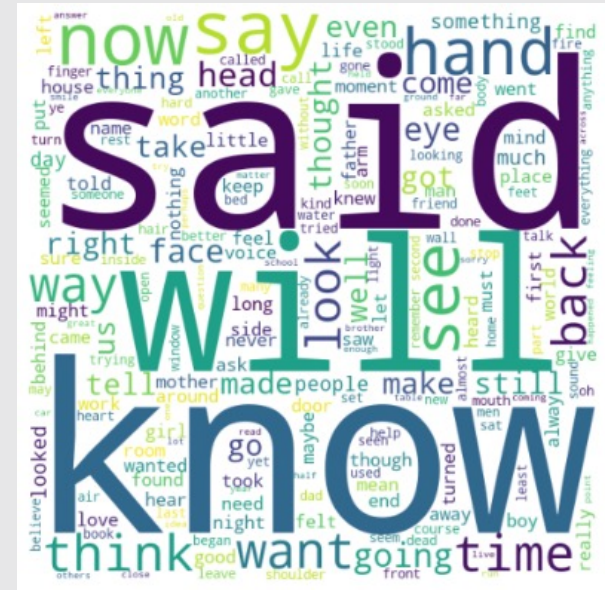
7-9



10-12



13+



But they aren't very useful for understanding



“ ”

The to too.

“ ”

“ !”

“The is a with !”

“This be on the !”

now, was if there was he could do?

Could be intc a ? There was only way

to out.

The n't know he in and had, in ,

that very was “ , !”.

So, the in his head, he out the of the

“ ”

then in the that would his

The her head and looked at the as if he was

by this, . The

“ ”

her head to the . Then a her

, and she her and her

“ ”

A out, again the with

“ with that !” a from

“ you'll be it to the !”

“Or for the !”

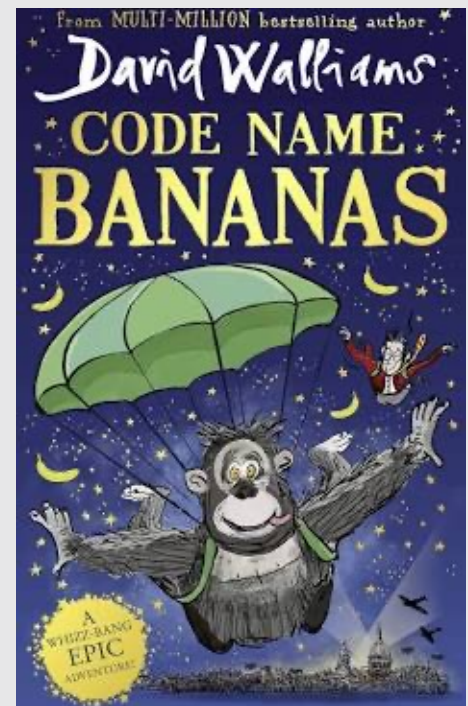
“ ”

could , but he was it was more

“ ”

This time the in!

“ ”



Unfamiliar words are important too



Percentage of CYP-LEX words that children encounter on TV

	Cbeebies <i>0-6 years</i> 27,236 words	CBBC <i>6-12 years</i> 58,691 words	SUBTLEX-UK <i>Adults</i> 160,024 words
CYP-LEX 7-9	39%	70%	91%
CYP-LEX 10-12	30%	58%	86%
CYP-LEX 13+	24%	48%	79%

New words encountered in each band



25,627 new words encountered in 10-12 age band

73% encountered infrequently

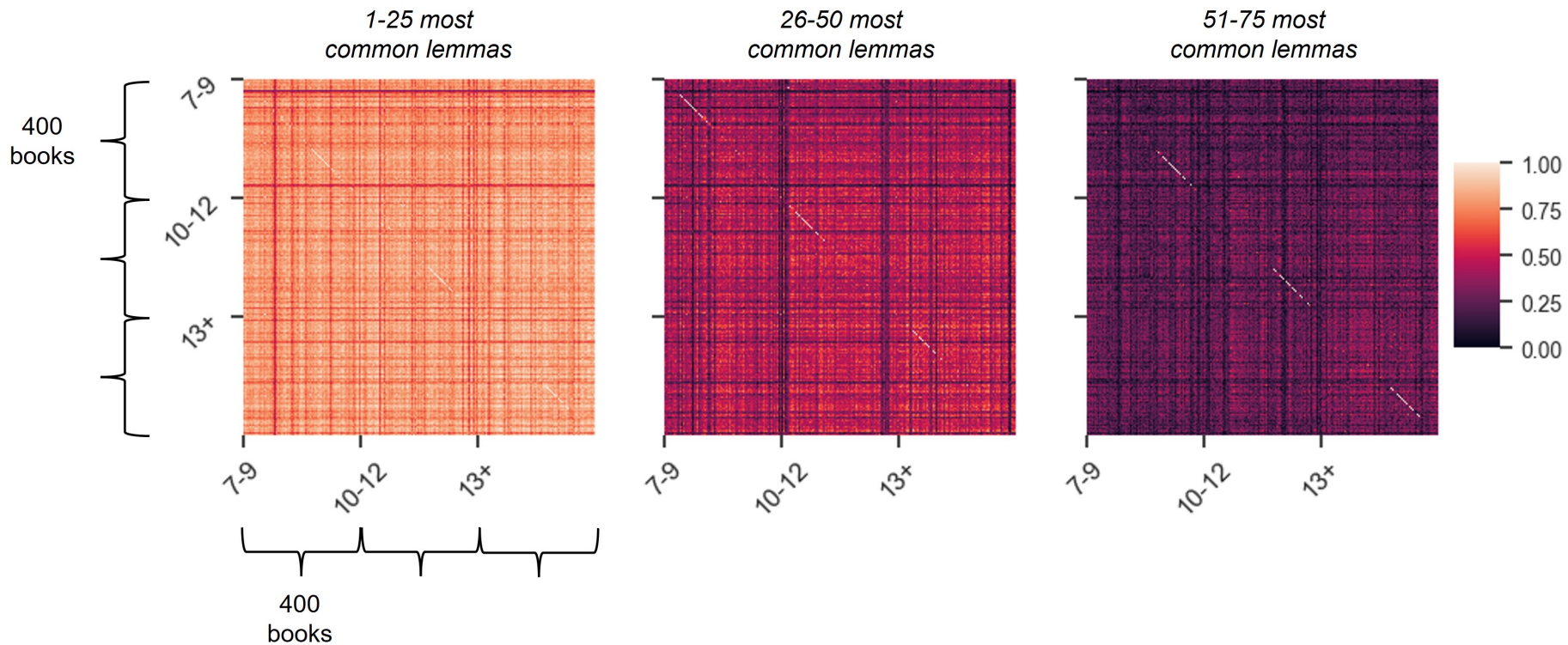
1% encountered very frequently



Do books use similar vocabulary?



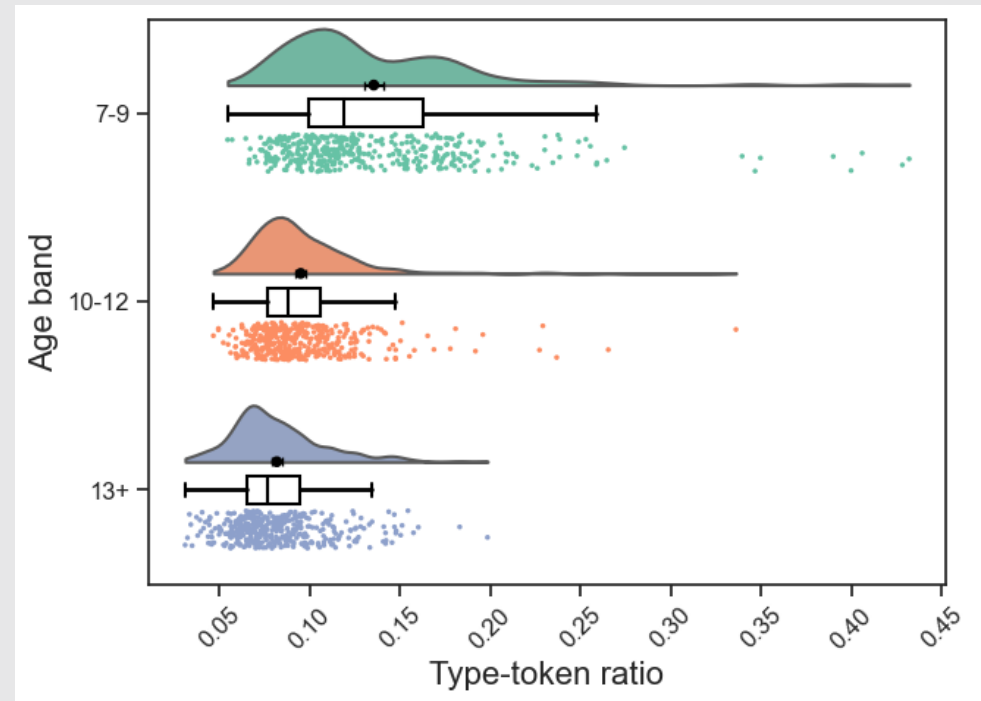
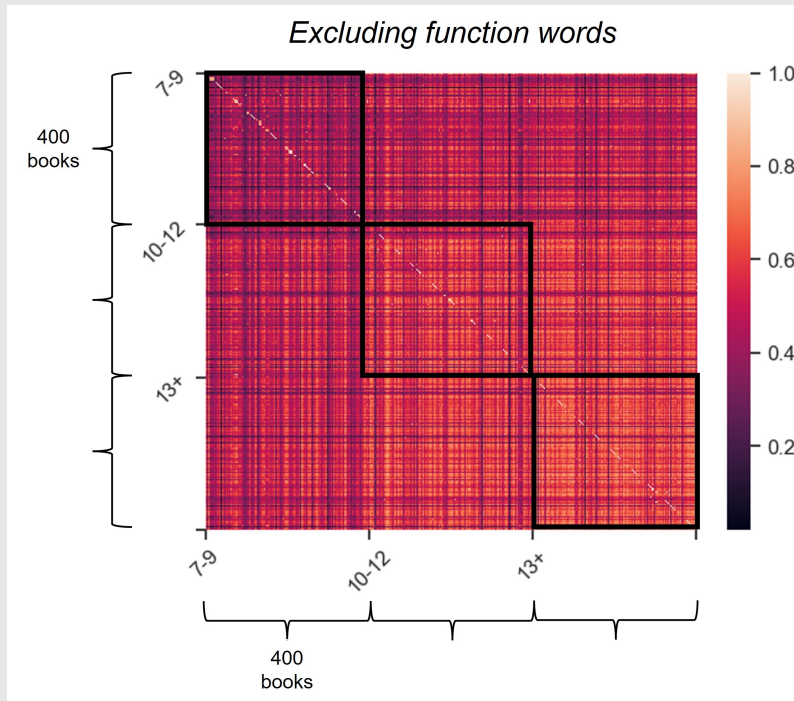
Books quite similar in terms of their most frequent words but rapidly diverge



Intensity of vocabulary in 7-9 age band



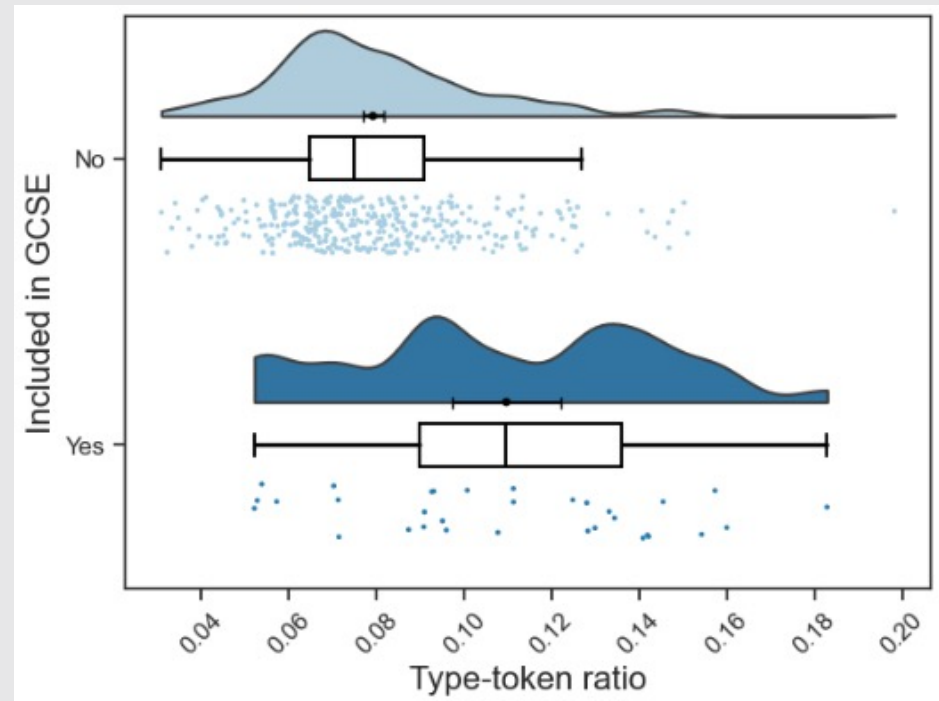
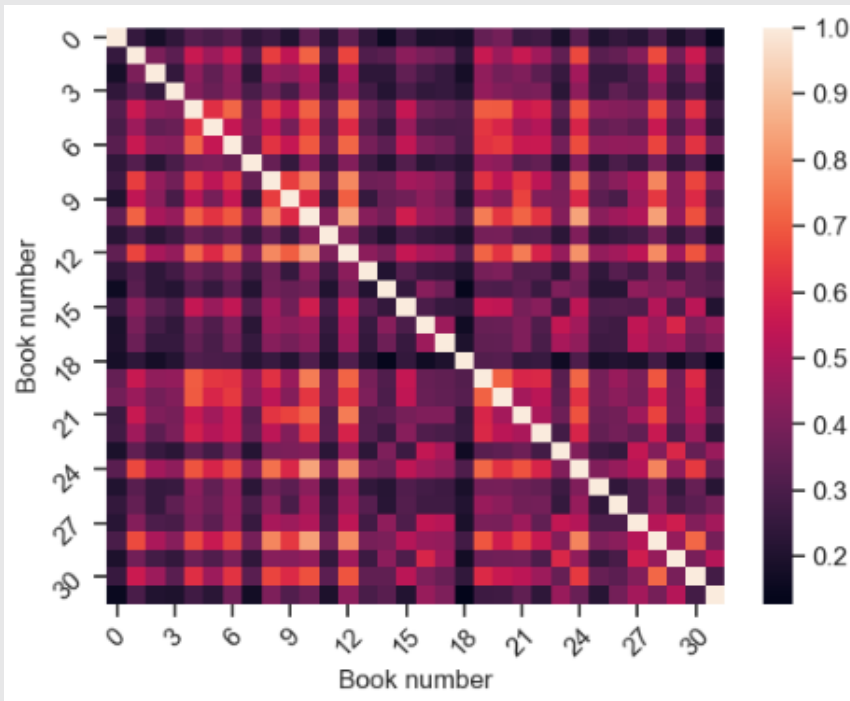
Books in 7-9 age band are less similar to one another than in the other age bands



The challenge of GCSE texts



English Literature (GCSE) texts have greater lexical intensity than books in the 13+ band and have low similarity to one another



Conclusions



- Vast number of (new) words in children's books.
➡ Importance of tools to decode these words.
- Initial experience of independent reading (7-9 age band) is intense and vitally important for building word knowledge.
➡ Importance of developing reading skill and motivation early.
- Beyond main function words, children's books have low similarity to one another.
➡ Importance of reading widely.

Thank you!



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