

## Data from School Visits

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During the school visits, questions were asked about a number of terms which were not in the original questionnaire, but which had been suggested as possible sites of regional variation by various people in discussions about our findings. It must be remembered that only 33 schools were visited.

### Slang terms for money

During the school visits, we decided to pursue the question of slang words for money, following suggestions that these varied from one part of the country to another. In particular, the use of the term *pingers* was researched.

*Pingers* was much more widely known in the North Island than the South, especially in the Northern Region. It was much more likely to be known by children who were ethnically Maori. Some regarded it as belonging to their parents' generation. It shows every sign of being another contribution of the Maori population to the distinctness of the Northern Region: 9 of the 15 schools where it was known to at least one child were in the Northern Region. However, within that region, it was not reported from the Auckland sub-region.

The children were also asked for other terms they use for money. The only two that were at all common were *dosh* and *dough*. *Dough* was reported from 13 schools, 7 of them in the South Island, suggesting a slight tendency for this to be a South Island form. *Dosh* was reported from 12 schools, 8 of them in the South Island, again suggesting that this is to some extent regionalised.

The other terms were reported from isolated schools: *ching-ching* (or *ka-ching*) from 3 schools, *smackeroos*, *loot* and *shraps* from 2 each, and *paper*, *shrapnel*, *huck* and *sugar* from one school each.

One child commented that you just said "Got anything on you?"

Because we did not include this item in the original questionnaire, we do not have sufficient data to undertake statistical analysis. However, the results are suggestive: *pingers*, at least, appears likely to be regionalised in the North.

### Couch

One of the additional questions asked during school visits was what name the children use for a padded seat for two or more people. There were four answers, *couch*, *sofa*, *two-seater*, *settee*. *Couch* was the most usual term, reported from all schools but two (and in those the question was not asked). *Sofa* was reported from 19 schools spread throughout the country. The other two were only very sporadically known, *two-seater* in 4 schools dotted found the country, and *settee* in 3, also scattered.

There is thus no sign of regional variation in these terms, and nor were they socially marked. *Sofa* was associated with a variety of comments such as that it was old-fashioned, that it was up-market, etc, indicating that although the children were familiar with it, it was not their normal usage. One child commented that a *sofa* is a for a more formal object than *couch*.

## Duvet

The children were asked what they called a bed-cover stuffed with feathers which you sleep under for warmth, without blankets. Again, one term dominated the responses: *duvet*, reported from 29 schools (and in three of the remaining four, the question was not asked). *Quilt*, with 6 responses, was next in frequency, dotted round the country. Several responses were provided twice: *doona*, *blanket*, *continental* (both responses from the Northern Region), *cover* (likewise) and *feather duvet* (again, from the Northern Region). *Eiderdown* and *blankie* were one-off responses.

However, there were two reports of the word *mink* for a 'snuggle-rug', a thick fluffy blanket with patterns.

Again, it is clear that there is no significant variation in usage here.

## Things that are not cool

We did not specifically ask in the questionnaire what the children would say if something was not cool, although this sort of vocabulary was elicited in several questions: the question about the poor painting and the question about the bad performance in the speech competition. However, during the visits, we specifically asked whether they could say something was "not cool", and what else they might say instead.

One of the points of interest was the degree to which the expression "so not cool" is widespread in NZ. The responses to this expression for the most part confirmed that this is not standard in children of this age, although it was recognised in 14 of the 33 schools visited. Many felt obliged to adopt a pseudo-American accent to say it. Some regarded it as "posh". Some said it was old; some said it was only used by little kids; some said it was a put-down from someone older to someone younger. In one school, only girls said it. It was rejected outright in the four schools in our Northland regions, but was at least recognised sporadically elsewhere.

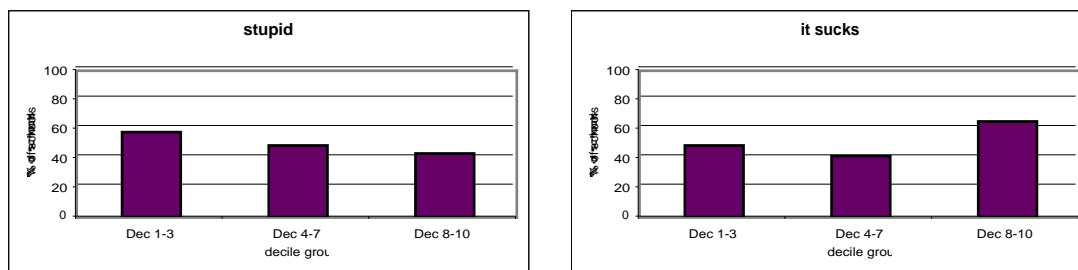
In most schools the children completely rejected the phrase "not cool": they said they could not say "That is not cool". Only four schools of the 33 visited accepted it, and three of those were in the Northern Region (and the other in Dunedin).

One volunteered "It's cool – not!".

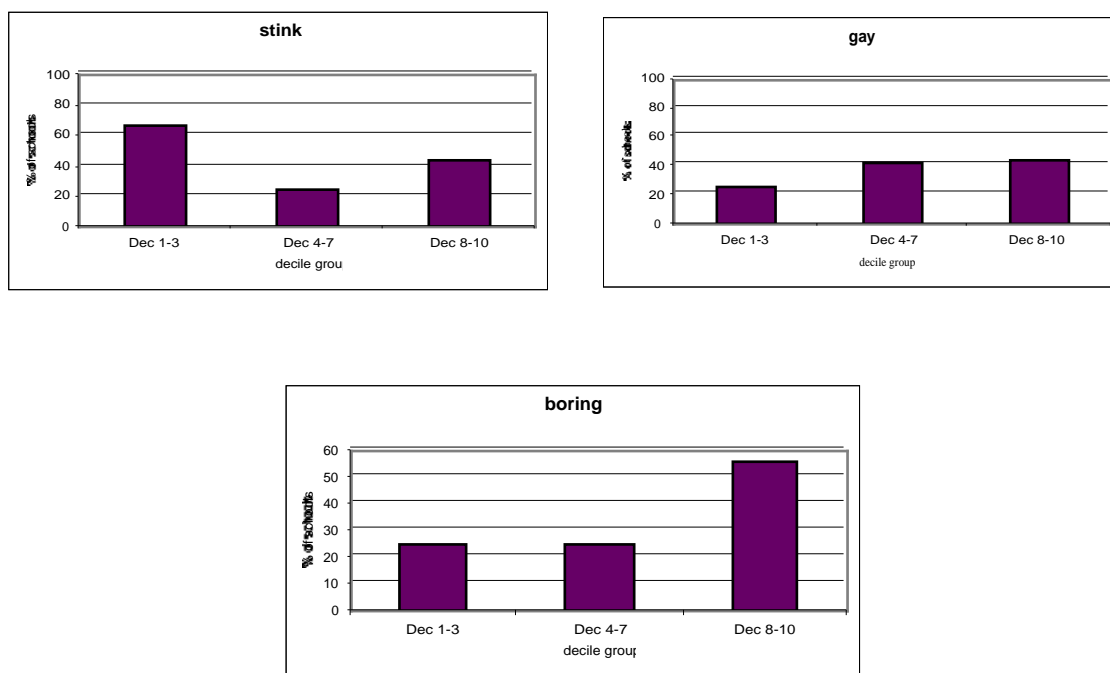
Instead, they offered a selection of the phrases we had found in the original questionnaires. The commonest was *It's dumb*, from 25 of the 33 schools. Next in frequency were *It's stupid* and *It sucks*, both reported from 17 schools. *It's stupid* showed a slight tendency to be more common in low decile schools. Because the numbers were small, the schools were bundled into three decile groups, low decile (deciles 1–3), middle decile (deciles 4–7) and high decile (deciles 8–10). There are more decile bands in the middle group, but there were 12 schools in each of the lower two groups, and nine in the high decile group, so the imbalance of having more bands in the middle is probably not particularly great. The differences with *it's stupid* were not dramatic, but the tendency seems to be there. A graph can be found below.

*It sucks*, in contrast shows a tendency to be high decile. This fits with the general tendency observed in our data for these originally impolite but now widely used expressions to be high decile. The decile graph is below.

Next came *It's stink*, reported by 15 schools. This was more common in the North Island than the South: only two of the reports came from the South Island. As the graph below shows, it is also a low decile form.



The next two expressions were *gay* (from 12 schools) and *boring* (from 11 schools). *Gay* was a little more common in the South Island than the North (half the reports came from each Island, but there were only 13 schools in the South Island sample against 20 in the North). *Gay* was also more likely to be reported by high decile schools. *Boring* also showed a tendency to be high decile.



The remainder were *crap(py)* (from 7 schools), *lame* (from 6), *sucky* (from 4), *crud(dy)* (from 3) and *unco* (from 3, two in Wellington, and one in Dunedin). There was thus something of interest in this data, including confirmation of the fact that *boring* has changed from being a fairly specific complaint to being a general negative.

Because the number of schools was so small, it was not worth the cost to undertake statistical analysis of the results, so we cannot provide a particularly

high degree of assurance that the observed patterns are significant. However, given the rest of the original data, it seems likely that they would be.

### Far out!

In answer to several questions, we got *far out*, and it appeared from these that it might be used by some as a positive expression, and by others as a negative expression.

During school visits, an attempt was made to find out the children's reactions to this expression. They were asked:

If someone said they were going to Fiji for their holidays, and you said *Far out*, what would it mean?

The overwhelming reaction was that this was neither positive nor negative: it was just a neutral exclamation. However, from Wellington south, there were a small number who felt it was a positive expression. This area also contained all but one of the schools where the children said they did not use it. There were only two schools where children thought it was negative.

Some of the comments made indicated that it had quite a variety of different associations and usages.

In S4, it was used for people like hippies.

In T5, it was used to replace the f\* word.

In X9, the children use *far* alone. *Far out* simply meant 'missing by a large distance'.

In Z10, *far* alone is used as an exclamation.

In T15, *far* and *far out* are used.

In e15, *far* is used alone with negative connotations.

In b16, *far* alone is used as equivalent to 'cool', i.e. as a purr word.

In W18, *far* alone is deemed equivalent to *far out*, 'extreme'. If somebody is unreasonable, you say "Far out" and walk away.

In V21, *far out* was deemed to be good or bad depending on the tone of voice. Comments like these make it clear that there is little apparent consensus in the use of this word.

### Blood nose

We also asked this question:

If someone kicks a ball, and it accidentally hits you on the nose, and makes your nose bleed, what do you say about your nose?

The most common response to this was *bleeding nose*, reported from 27 of the 33 schools visited. It was reported by every school south of Taranaki and Central Hawkes Bay.

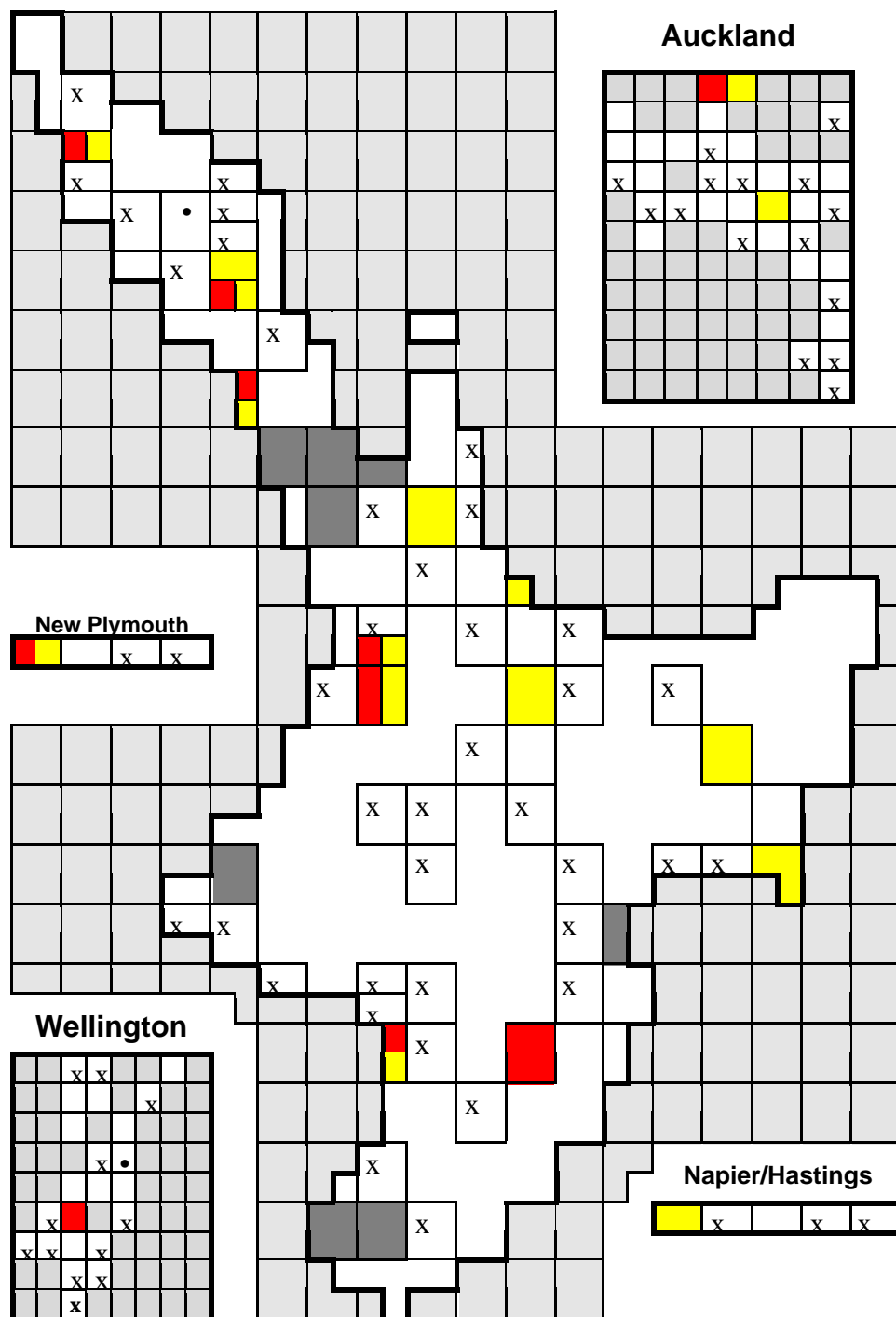
Next in frequency was *blood nose*, reported by 22 of the 33 schools, but explicitly rejected by 5. All the schools bar one in the Northern Region reported *blood nose*, and it was common in Hawkes Bay as well. It was much less common in the Central and Southern Regions.

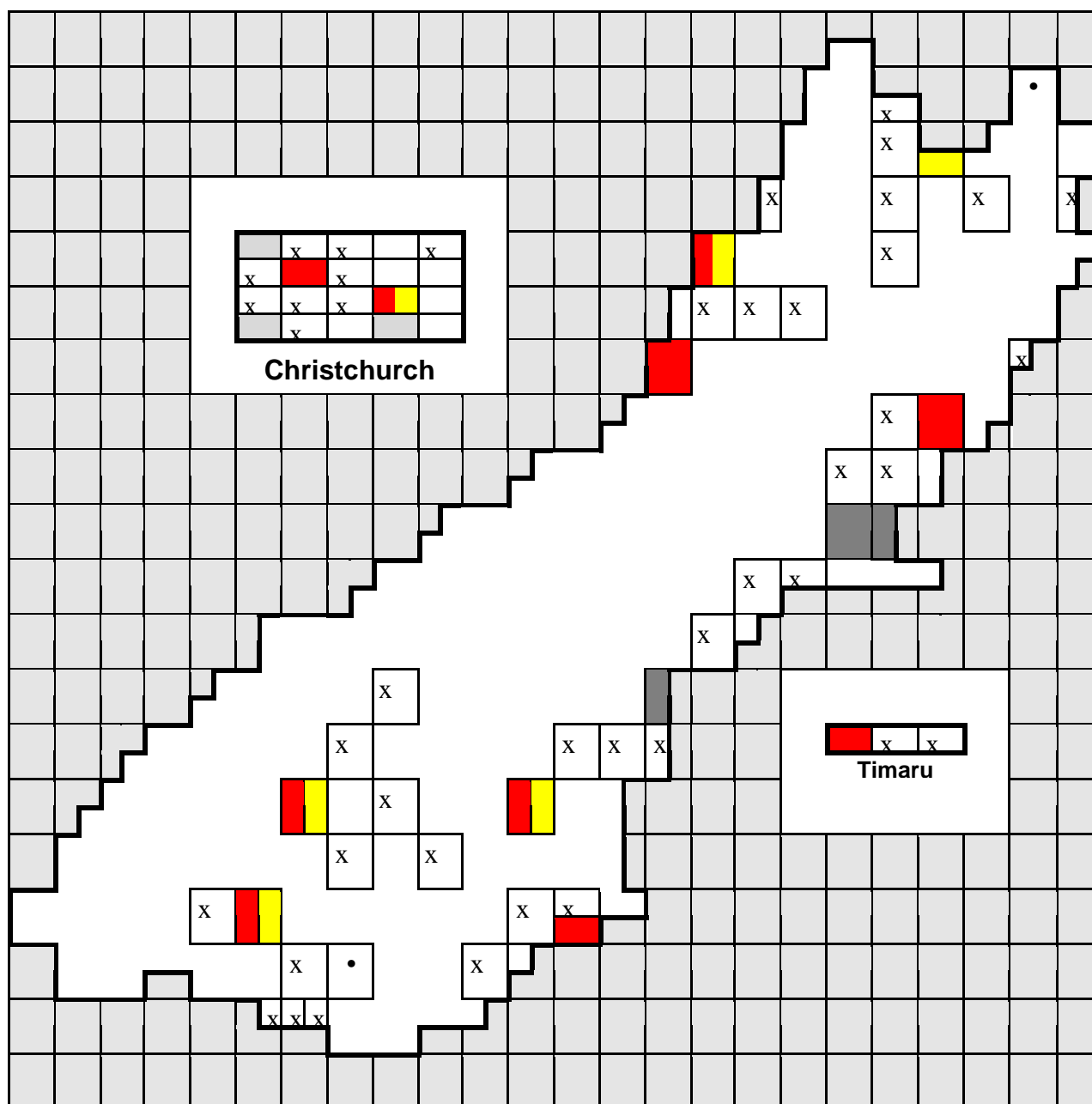
Third most often reported was *nosebleed*, with 20 schools reporting this. It was reported by all the schools visited in the South Island with the exception of those in Nelson-Marlborough and one in Southland. It was much more sporadic in the North Island, and was explicitly rejected by 7 North Island schools.

The only other common response was *bloody nose*, reported by 13 schools. These reports were dotted round the country.

It thus appears likely that *blood nose* is the normal Northern Region form, and that *nosebleed* is the predominant South Island form. We regret that we did not include this in our questionnaire, and thus do not have statistical support for this distribution. However, the map perhaps provides visual confirmation of the likelihood that the terms for this phenomenon are to some extent regionalised.


**Map: Terms for a bleeding nose (school visits)**





## Key

Note that the insets are not to scale, nor all on the same scale for practical reasons. Each box represents one school in both urban and rural areas.

	nosebleed		See urban map insert
	blood nose		school not visited
	neither		

## Slaters and Daddy Longlegs

During school visits, we asked about the name for slaters, since it had been suggested to us that they were not always known by that name. In all the schools visited there were at least some children who knew the name *slater*, and in most schools this was clearly the normal term. However, in the Central Region area of the South Island, there was at least one child in every school who also knew the term *woodlouse*. This term was not found outside this area.

It is possible that this uniformity is, like that for the game Bullrush, due to the influence of the school system. Slaters are an object of study in many primary schools, and it seems likely that the teaching materials use the term *slater*, and thus *slater* is the term known by the children.

We also asked whether a daddy longlegs was a spider or a fly, since there seems to be some uncertainty about whether it is appropriate to call a crane fly a *daddy longlegs*. The question was asked in terms of the number of legs. In all schools, the children were sure that a daddy longlegs was a spider. However, the two West Coast schools had children who thought it could be a fly as well. In the North Island, the children were shown a picture of a crane fly, and asked what they called it. Most said they had no name for it (some said things like "I don't call them anything, I just squash them!"). In five schools there were individual children who knew the name *crane fly*. In seven schools, the children used *daddy longlegs*, and in one *daddy longlegs fly*. Two said *daddy longlegs with wings*. Other suggestions from isolated individuals were *water fly*, *damsel fly*, *mayfly* and *gnat*. Thus it appears that this is not a matter of regionalisation, but a matter of finding a label if you need one for a creature for which you do not have a definite name. One of the strange by-products of this research is the finding that there are widespread school myths about the daddy longlegs, which, according to the Te Papa spider expert have no basis in fact. The comments are reproduced here to show the uniformity of the beliefs:

From Q3: they try to poison you but can't.

From S4: they have the most venom of any spider in the world but can't hurt you.

From T5-WR2: the most poisonous spider in the world.

From T5: they are really poisonous, but their fangs are not long enough to do any harm to people.

From T7: the most poisonous spider in the world.

From V8-AK1: the most poisonous spider in the world but their fangs are too small.

From X9: they are harmless. They have no teeth.

From Z10: the most poisonous in the world, but not long enough fangs to cause harm to people.

From W11-HM6: most venomous spider in the world, but fangs are too short to harm humans.

From W12: the most poisonous spider in the world, but with tiny fangs.

From Z12-RT3: the most poisonous in the world but no fangs.

From d13: 'if it knew how to use its fangs it would be the deadliest spider in the world'

From T15-NP1: poisonous to other spiders but not to us; most poisonous but fangs too short/soft



From b16-HS4: the 2nd most or the most poisonous spider in the world but it doesn't have enough poison or its fangs are too short.

From Z18: its blood is poisonous.

From W18: the most poisonous spider in the world, can't bite because its fangs will fall off, or are too small, or it doesn't have enough poison.

The myth is clearly widespread, and although this was not asked specifically in the South Island, the information was produced sufficiently often to make it likely that it is as widespread there.