



# Eligibility of First Language Speakers for Scholarship Awards: NZALT Pilot Questionnaire

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# Background

- Rationale
  - Minister of Education's announcement
  - July07 AGM motion
  - Meeting with Steve Maharey
  - October Exec meeting appointment of Research Officer
  - Ongoing dialogue with Bali Haque (NZQA)
- Timeline - urgency / ethics low-risk approval gained
- Method - two questionnaires - via networks - Advisory and NZALT

# NZALT motion

- The motion was passed at the NZALT AGM held in July 2007 that “NZALT instigate and co-ordinate the gathering of data relating to languages students’ subject selection in Years 12 and 13, and monitor issues relating to first language speakers being eligible for monetary rewards from 2008.”

# NZAJLT president's view

- Native speakers can receive a monetary award in Scholarship Education Minister, Steve Maharey and Associate Education Minister, Parekura Horomia announced the final phase of improvements to New Zealand Scholarship examinations on 20 June. As one of three changes they announced, students now can receive a monetary award for all languages, including their first or native language. Steve Maharey says the decision to make both first and second language speakers eligible for Scholarship monetary awards in those languages is a matter of fairness, "This creates a level playing field for all students, regardless of their first language."

# Questions Asked -Year 12

Questions 1-3 Gender/Ethnicity/Language being studied

4. Is this your 1st language?
5. Do you intend to sit scholarship in any subject in 2008?
6. Do you intend to continue to study this language /or other in 2008?
7. Do you intend to sit scholarship in this language in 2008?
8. Are you aware that first-language speakers will be eligible for monetary rewards for languages scholarships as of 2008?
9. Does this have an impact on your decision to sit scholarship in this language in 2008?
10. Does this have an impact on your decision to continue to study this language in 2008?

# Questions Asked -Year 13

Questions 1-3 Gender/Ethnicity/Language being studied

4. Is this your 1st language?

5. Are you entered to sit scholarship in any subject in 2007?

6. Are you entered to sit scholarship in this language in 2007?

7. Are you aware that first-language speakers will be eligible for monetary rewards for languages scholarships as of 2008?

8. Would this have had any impact on your decision to sit scholarship in this language in 2007?

9. Do you intend to continue to study this language /or other in 2008?

# 1026 students responded

## Who were they?

### Year levels

- Year 12                      727 (70.9%)
- Year 13                      299 (29.1%)

### Gender

- Female                      747 (72.8%)
- Male                         269 (26.2%)

## *Favourite Year 12 student comments*

"How is it supposed to promote French learning and advancement when the native speakers have such an advanced foundation? It's like asking Ian Thorpe to race against me in swimming."

# *Year 13 student comments*

- “If they are already fluent in their language it’s unfair on people who are sitting the exam as a 2<sup>nd</sup> language they should be competing against others who are at the same level, not judged with people whose language is native.”
- “Because then people who are not fluent aren’t likely to win the award and that’s just mean and then why the heck would we sit it if we know we won’t get it.”

- And an interesting suggestion from a year 13 student: "There should be a separate set of judging criteria for native speakers - perhaps similar to the Goethe society competition's advantaged speaker category."

- In response to the question about whether this decision would have any impact on their decision to continue studying this language in 2008, the Year 12 students who responded to this questionnaire for the most part said that the 1<sup>st</sup> language speaker would not affect their decision to continue with a language. However, about one fifth of respondents said it would affect their continuing to study the language. Their comments can be similarly grouped into our three themes from above.

## *Comments from year 12 students*

- "I am slightly put off taking my language skills further if my scholarship dreams are shattered and taken from underneath me by French native speakers."
- "I don't want to study the language now that native speakers can earn money from the scholarship."
- "Just a little influence because I feel cheated from an award that I may have got. I could use my time more valuably on another subject."

# Ethnicity

	Frequency	Percent
New Zealander	664	64.7
M ori	42	4.1
Pasifika	15	1.5
Asian/I ndian	207	20.2
Other	75	7.3
Missing	23	2.2
Total	1026	100.0

# Language Studying

	Frequency	Percent
Chinese	48	4.7
French	279	27.2
German	212	20.7
Japanese	307	29.9
Spanish	125	12.2
More than one language	55	5.4
Total	1026	100.0

Is the Language you are studying your first language?

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	68	6.6
No	956	93.2
Missing	2	0.2
Total	1026	100.0

# Conclusion

- This research is the first step in gathering longitudinal data to determine the impact of cabinet's decision.
- NOT ALL Qualitative comments align with quantitative results
- Of those who commented, there was an overwhelming sense of unfairness. First Language speakers for the most part did not comment.

# Where to from here?

- Do we continue with this study?
- What data will help us have a case for including second language in the title or for increasing numbers at senior levels?