

TE TIROHANGA I TE KÖREROTANGA O TE REO RANGATIRA I ROTO I NGĀ KĀINGA MĀORI ME NGĀ ROHE

Survey of Language Use in Maori Households
and Communities

PĀNUI WHAKAMŌHIO
INFORMATION BULLETIN

135

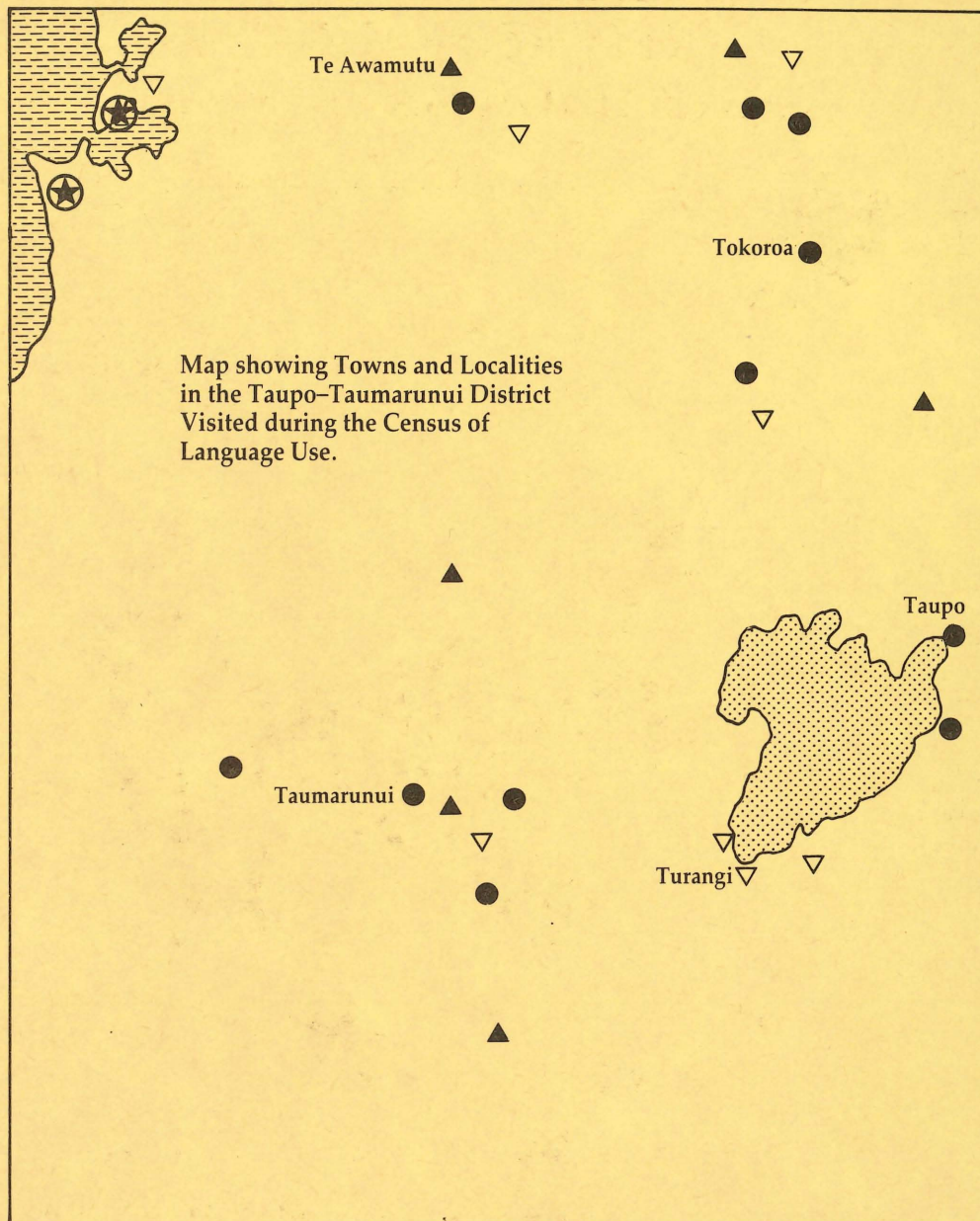
Localities in which
ten or more households
were visited

● Two thirds or
more of adults were
fluent speakers of
Maori

◆ Less than two
thirds of adults were
fluent speakers of
Maori

HE PŪRONGORONGO
WHAKAMŌHIO
MĀ NGĀ KAIURU KI TE
TORONGA TUATAHI,
1973-1978

A report to Participants in the
Initial Investigation, 1973-1978



THE MAORI LANGUAGE IN NATIONAL PARK AND NEIGHBOURING LOCALITIES

Fieldwork for the survey of language use in Maori communities was carried out in three localities in the National Park area in May 1978. The interviews were conducted by Evelyn Te Uira (Waikato), Phillip Hawera (Tuhoe/Ngaiterangi/Ngati Awa), Taari Nicholas (Ngati Ranginui/Ngaiterangi/Ngapuhi) and Arapeta Hamilton (Ngati Raukawa/Ngapuhi/Ngati Kahungunu/ Ngai Tai).

Thirteen households were visited as part of the survey in Owango. These had a total of 81 people, 75 of whom were of Maori descent (this was over half of Owango's total Maori population at that time). Another ten homes with 44 people were included in National Park (all were of Maori descent - about 58 percent of the Maori population) and two more with nine people were visited in Kakahi (all of Maori descent - about seven percent of the Maori population).

Two of the interviews were carried out entirely in Maori, one in both Maori and English and all the rest solely in English.

Results of the Linguistic Survey

Iwi Affiliation

The people interviewed in Owhango mentioned a total of eight major iwi to which they or the members of their household belonged. The iwi which most people were affiliated to was Tuwharetoa with 38 members (or 47 percent of the total). The second largest number of people belonged to Ngapuhi (23 or 28 percent). Seven iwi were mentioned in National Park and once again the iwi with the most members was Tuwharetoa (14 people or 32 percent). Ngapuhi was the next largest with 12 people (27 percent) and five (11 percent) were descendants of Arawa. Most of the included in the Kakahi survey were members of Tuwharetoa, while one person belonged to Ngapuhi and one to Te Whanau-a-Apanui.

Knowledge of Spoken Maori in National Park (1978)

| Age Group | Fluent Speakers | Understand Easily | Limited Understanding | No Knowledge |
|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------|-----------------------|--------------|
| 45 years & over | 6 (100%) | 6 (100%) | 0 (0%) | 0 (0%) |
| 25-44 yrs | 0 (0%) | 0 (0%) | 6 (50%) | 6 (50%) |
| 15-24 yrs | 0 (0%) | 0 (0%) | 0 (0%) | 2 (100%) |
| 2-14 yrs | 0 (0%) | 0 (0%) | 1 (4%) | 22 (96%) |
| Overall | 6 (14%) | 6 (14%) | 7 (16%) | 30 (70%) |

(Figures refer to members of households visited; percentages have been rounded to nearest whole number)

Knowledge of Spoken Maori in Owhango (1978)

| Age Group | Fluent Speakers | Understand Easily | Limited Understanding | No Knowledge |
|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------|-----------------------|--------------|
| 45 years & over | 8 (73%) | 10 (91%) | 0 (0%) | 1 (9%) |
| 25-44 yrs | 4 (20%) | 7 (35%) | 6 (30%) | 7 (35%) |
| 15-24 yrs | 0 (0%) | 0 (0%) | 4 (44%) | 5 (56%) |
| 2-14 yrs | 0 (0%) | 1 (3%) | 11 (29%) | 26 (68%) |
| Overall | 12 (15%) | 18 (23%) | 21 (27%) | 39 (50%) |

(Figures refer to members of households visited; percentages have been rounded to nearest whole number)

Ability to Speak and Understand Maori

Nearly all of the people we came across in the National Park area over the age of 45 were able to speak and understand Maori well. In Owhango, four adults aged between 25 and 44 could also speak Maori fluently and another three could understand it with ease. There was only one child under 15 who had more than a limited understanding of spoken Maori - the vast majority of this age group had absolutely no knowledge of Maori at all. About two fifths of the adults in the 25 to 44 age group had at least a partial knowledge of Maori as did about one third of the under 25 year olds in Owhango. Overall, however, it was really amongst the over 45 year olds that Maori was understood and spoken with ease.

Use of the Maori Language in the Household

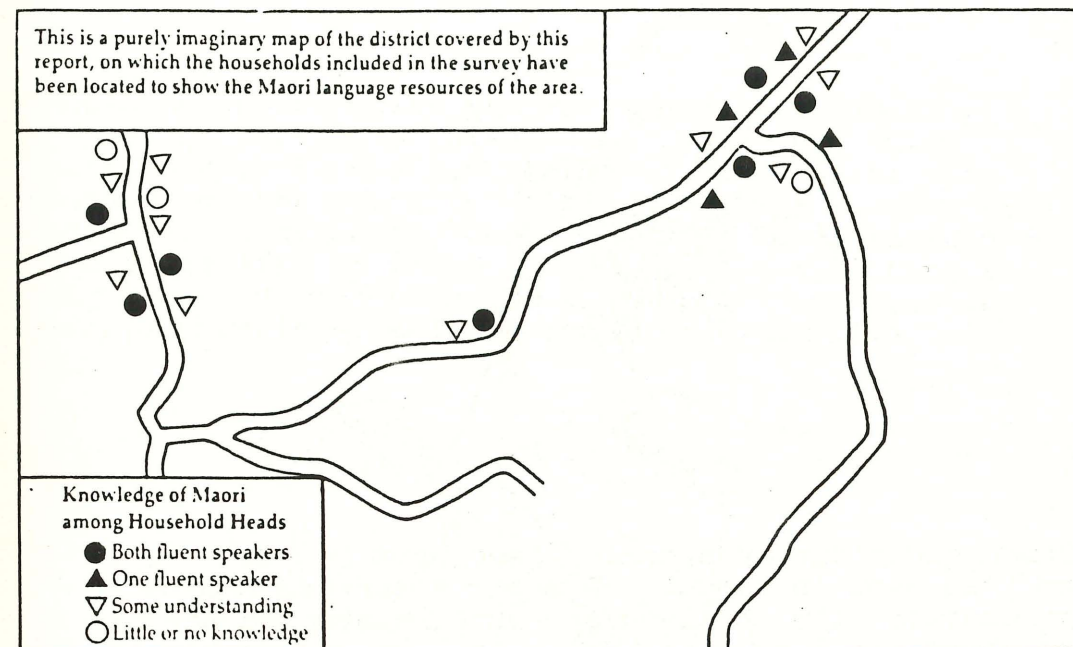
English was the main language spoken in most homes between family members. All but one household had dependent children. In the one childless home English was the most common language used although some Maori was spoken occasionally. Maori was the main language of only one home (in Kakahi) while in all others English was used most or all of the time.

Maori Language in the Community

English was also the main language used by the majority of household heads in everyday conversations in the community with neighbours, visitors and children. The most Maori spoken was in Owango where about half the people we spoke to used both Maori and English with their visitors. A few people in each community used both Maori and English with their neighbours and visitors and in Owango three people used some Maori with children in the neighbourhood.

It was much more likely, however, that Maori would be used in certain religious ceremonies. Only about half our informants said that English was the sole language used in these situations and this was also the case on marae in formal occasions such as whaikorero. A number of people also said that they were more likely to speak Maori on the marae during informal conversations than they were elsewhere.

If any two people included in our survey were to have met unexpectedly, the chances that they would have been able to have a conversation in Maori would have been less than one in twenty. If both people had been adults, however, the chances would have been much higher - ranging from about one in ten in National Park up to about one in four in Kakahi.

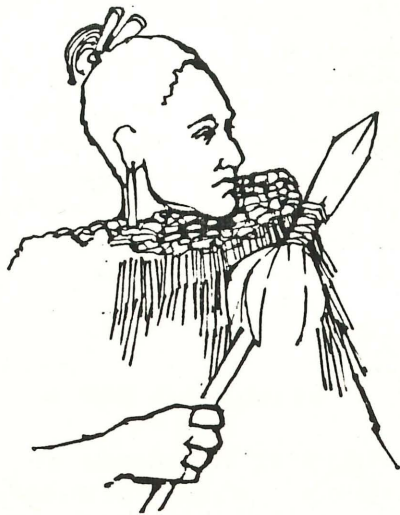


KAKAHI, NATIONAL PARK and OWANGO.

Attitudes Towards the Maori Language

Most of the parents and grandparents we spoke to were very keen on the Maori language. Many of those adults who were unable to speak the language expressed regret that they had not learnt when they were young. A number of people had not given up hope of one day learning but others felt it was too late to start.

Some people told us that although they had had parents who had spoken Maori fluently they had never bothered to take much notice and consequently never learnt to speak the language themselves.



Others had grown up speaking Maori but had lost it when they went to school. One man described how he lost contact with the language when he started school because no one else there spoke it. He was unable to pick it up again at home because his parents encouraged him to speak English.

Several people said they were whakama at the fact that they could not speak Maori. One woman said she feels this particularly when she is with the rest of her family who can all speak Maori fluently - even the little children. Others were afraid of making mistakes and being laughed at. In some cases this was preventing people from even trying to speak the language.

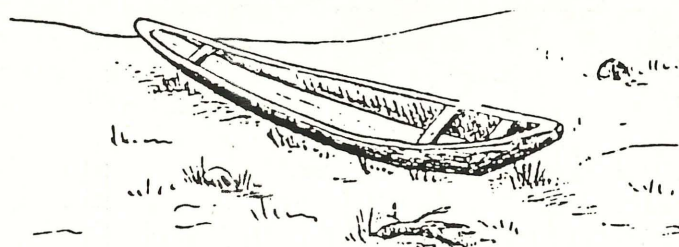
Most parents said that they would like their children to learn to speak Maori, and for this reason a number of people expressed support for the teaching of Maori in schools. The parents whose children were already learning at school were all very pleased about this.

Some of those adults who were able to speak Maori fluently, particularly kaumatua, said they found it difficult to find other people to speak Maori with because of the scarcity of fluent speakers. One kuia said she consequently does not speak Maori as much as she would like to while another couple said they felt disappointed when they speak Maori to people, even simple greetings, and the reply is in English.



Conclusion

Although only a few people included in the National Park survey were able to speak and understand Maori well, the survival of the language was obviously very important to many people in these districts. A number of people felt that not only was it important for themselves to learn to speak Maori, it was also important for their children and grandchildren to learn. To this end, there was much support for the teaching of Maori in schools and some people had already started teaching their mokopuna themselves. Hopefully these positive feelings towards the Maori language will not disappear so that more young people can be encouraged to become aware of the importance of the language and of the opportunities for learning it and take advantage of them.



This report was prepared by:
Paula Martin
(Ngai Tahu/Rangitane)

Design by Hone Whaanga (Ngati Kahungunu)

(c) Copyright, Maori Unit, NZCER, Wellington
December 1987 (135)

Knowledge of Maori Language by Age Groups in Selected Areas
at the Time of the Linguistic Census



The Survey of Language Use in Maori Households and Communities

The census of language use on which this report is based is the first part of a general study of the place of the Maori language in Maori communities, its structure, how it is spoken and written under modern conditions, and its relevance to New Zealand as a nation. This study is being conducted by the Maori Unit of the New Zealand Council for Educational Research. Fieldwork for the census phase began in Whangaroa County and Te Tii in August 1973, and ended in August 1978. Follow-up studies and studies in additional communities will be undertaken from time to time (the first of these was conducted in Waverley in August 1979).

The map on the front cover shows the approximate localities in which ten or more households were visited between 1973 and 1979. Since the linguistic census was completed, the major task of the Unit has been the analysing and reporting of the information collected. At the same time, however, studies of the structure and usage of the Maori language have commenced; these will result in a series of handbooks and other materials for teachers of Maori (including parents), and for people wishing to learn the language. An example of this is *The First Basic Maori Word List*, published in 1982. Other publications have included background studies for bilingual education projects, and reports on policy issues affecting the Maori language and Maori speakers – for example, the legal status of Maori in New Zealand.

The Purpose of This Report

This report has been prepared for the people who participated in the original survey and who provided the information on which it is based. It is hoped that it will encourage people to compare the situation now with that at the time covered by the report, and that this information will provide a basis for discussion and debate about what action, if any, each community might take to ensure that the Maori language is at least as important in the twenty-first century as it was in the 1970s.

Further Information

One copy of this report is provided free to each person interviewed during the linguistic census in the area concerned, and to local schools, Maori Language Boards, and Maori Committees. Further information about the linguistic survey, and lists of publications, may be obtained from the Maori Unit, New Zealand Council for Educational Research, P.O. Box 3237, Wellington.



Ngā Mihi/Special Thanks

Our first thanks must go to the 6,500 Maori families who entrusted us with the information presented in this series of reports. Fieldwork for the survey was funded substantially by contributions from the Lottery Board of Control, Fletcher Holdings Limited, the Maori Purposes Fund, and the Maori Education Foundation. The coding and analysis of the data was supported initially by a grant from Fletcher Holdings Limited, and further financial assistance for these purposes has been provided by Mobil Oil N.Z. Limited, the Post Primary Teachers Association, the New Zealand Educational Institute and the Raukawa Trustees. The writing of these reports was made possible by the generosity of the J.R. McKenzie Trust.