

TE TIROHANGA I TE KŌREROTANGA 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

122

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



Map showing Towns and Localities of the Waikato Region of the North Island visited during the Census of Language use

Percentage of Fluent Speakers of Maori Among Persons Aged 25 and over in Households visited

★ 70% or more

◆ 55% to 69%

● 40% to 54%

▼ Less than 40%

○ Fewer than 10 households visited

THE MAORI LANGUAGE IN PUTARURU AND NEIGHBOURING DISTRICTS

Fieldwork for the survey of language use in Maori communities was carried out in Putaruru in January 1978 and in four surrounding communities in February 1978. The interviewers were Taari Nicholas (Ngati Ranginui/Ngaiterangi/Ngapuhi), Tom Rangihuna (Ngati Porou), Himiona Henry (Waikato/Maniapoto), Patricia Parata (Ngati Porou/Ngai Tahu) and Awhina Ngatai (Ngaiterangi).

Twenty six households were visited in Putaruru as part of the survey. These households had a total population of 128 - 122 of whom were of Maori descent. This was about 15 percent of Putaruru's total Maori population at that time. In Tirau, 17 households with a population of 89 were included in the survey. Of these 89, 86 people were of Maori descent (nearly half of Tirau's total Maori population at that time). Another ten households were included in Pinedale. These had a total of 45 people (44 of Maori descent - just over two fifths of the total Maori population). In Okoroire eight households with 27 people were visited (all of Maori descent - 40 percent of the total Maori population) and in Tapapa another five homes were included (a total of 26 people, 23 of Maori descent - about one third of Tapapa's total Maori population at that time).

Four interviews were carried out in Maori, three in both Maori and English and the remaining sixty were in English.

Results of the Linguistic Survey

Iwi Affiliation

The people interviewed mentioned a total of 16 major iwi to which they or the members of their household belonged. The iwi with the largest number of members amongst our informants was Ngati Raukawa with 83 people overall (or 26 percent of the total). The iwi with the second largest number of members was Ngapuhi (the largest iwi in Pinedale) to which 64 people (or 20 percent) belonged; 27 people (9 percent) claimed affiliation with Maniapoto.



Ability to Speak and Understand Maori

We can see from the information in the tables that only a small number of the people that we came across in the Putaruru area could speak and understand Maori well. Out of a total of 285 people only 46 (16 percent) could speak Maori fluently and 58 (20 percent) could understand it easily. All but one of those who could speak fluently were over the age of 25. Nearly a quarter of the people included in the survey had a limited knowledge of spoken Maori but in all areas except Tapapa virtually no one under 15 had any knowledge of Maori. Overall, nearly three fifths of the total had no knowledge of Maori at all and the highest proportion of these were under 25.

KNOWLEDGE OF SPOKEN MAORI IN TIRAU, PINEDALE, OKOROIRE AND TAPAPA (1978)

	Tirau		Pinedale		Okoroire		Tapapa	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
<i>Fluent Speakers</i>								
45 yrs & over	5	50	3	75	4	100	3	43
25 to 44 yrs	4	22	3	27	2	25	0	0
15 to 24 yrs	0	0	0	0	1	50	0	0
2 to 14 yrs	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Overall	9	11	6	15	7	28	3	12
<i>Understand Easily</i>								
45 yrs & over	5	50	3	75	4	100	3	43
25 to 44 yrs	4	22	4	36	3	38	0	0
15 to 24 yrs	0	0	1	13	1	50	2	25
2 to 14 yrs	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	14
Overall	9	11	8	20	8	32	6	23
<i>Limited Understanding</i>								
45 yrs & over	4	40	0	0	0	0	2	29
25 to 44 yrs	7	39	3	27	5	63	1	25
15 to 24 yrs	1	11	2	25	0	0	1	13
2 to 14 yrs	3	7	3	18	2	18	3	43
Overall	15	19	8	20	7	28	7	27
<i>No Knowledge</i>								
45 yrs & over	1	10	1	25	0	0	2	29
25 to 44 yrs	7	39	4	36	0	0	3	75
15 to 24 yrs	8	89	5	63	1	50	5	63
2 to 14 yrs	41	93	14	82	9	82	3	43
Overall	57	70	24	60	10	40	13	50

(Numbers and percentages refer to members of households visited.
percentages have been rounded to nearest whole number).

Knowledge of Spoken Maori in Putaruru (1978)

Age Group	Fluent Speakers	Understand Easily	Limited Understanding	No Knowledge
45 years & over	12 (67%)	13 (72%)	4 (22%)	1 (6%)
25-44 yrs	9 (29%)	11 (35%)	7 (23%)	13 (42%)
15-24 yrs	0 (0%)	1 (5%)	9 (41%)	12 (55%)
2-14 yrs	0 (0%)	2 (4%)	11 (21%)	39 (75%)
Overall	21 (17%)	27 (22%)	31 (25%)	65 (53%)

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

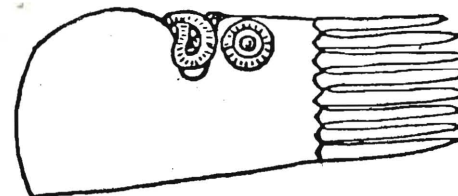
Use of the Maori Language in the Household

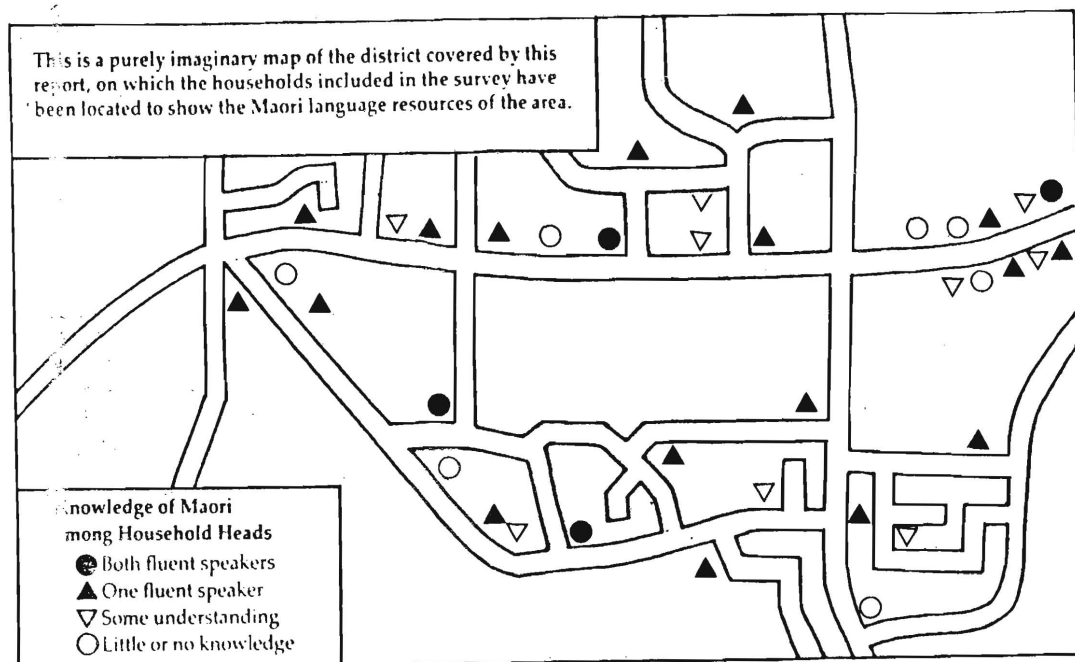
In nearly all the households we visited English was the only language used between family members for everyday conversations. Of the 52 families with dependent children included in the survey, Maori was the main language of only one. All the rest used English although a few families used small amounts of Maori. It was much the same in those homes with no children with people using mostly or entirely English among themselves and English also being the main language used with visitors.

Maori Language in the Community

English was also the main language used by most people when talking with neighbours, visitors and children. A few people, however, said that they used some Maori as well, particularly people in Putaruru. About a third of the people in Pinedale also said that Maori was the main language they used with visitors. Most people said that Maori was the main language used in religious ceremonies and also on the marae in formal situations such as whaikorero. Many people said that they themselves were more likely to use Maori for informal conversations on the marae than they were in other situations.

If any two people included in our survey in these districts were to have met unexpectedly, and they were both adults, the chances that they would have been able to have a conversation in Maori would have ranged from less than one in ten in Tapapa up to about three in ten in Okoroire. In all communities, if one of the people had been a child the chances would have been very low -- the highest being about one in ten, in Okoroire.





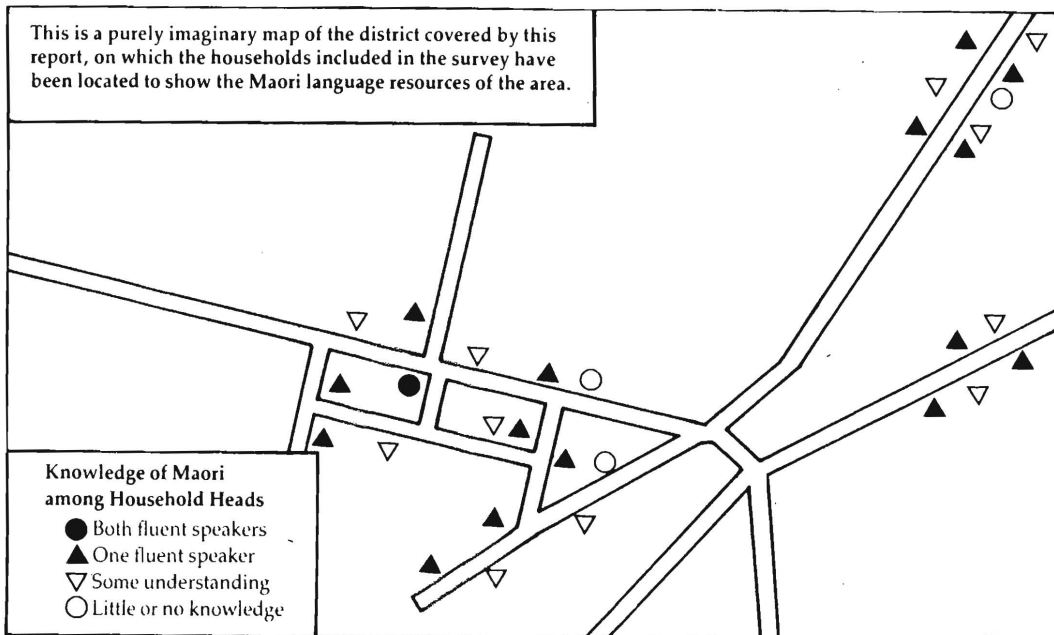
PUTARURU and PINEDALE.

Attitudes Towards the Maori Language

Maori was the first language understood by about two fifths of the adults we spoke to and a further quarter said they had first understood both Maori and English. The same numbers of people when asked what language they preferred to use most for everyday conversation said Maori or both Maori and English.

Many of the people who said that the first language they understood had been English had been children or grandchildren of fluent speakers of Maori. Several people said that when they had been young their parents or grandparents had tried to teach them to speak Maori but they had not been interested and had either ignored them or laughed at them. At the time of the survey, however, many people stated that they regretted this as they were now unable to speak Maori. A number of these people were trying to learn Maori through various night classes or other courses.



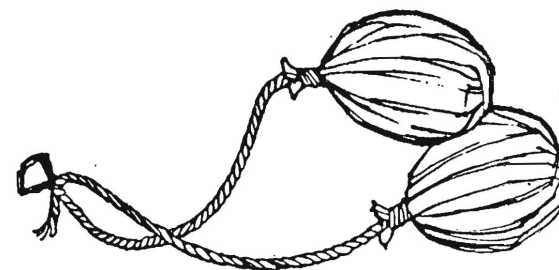


TIRAU, OKOROIRE and TAPAPA.

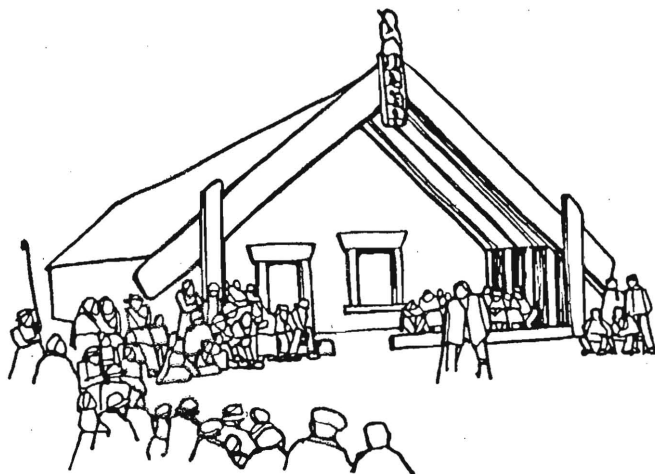
There were a number of people who were very keen for their children to learn Maori but, as one woman put it, "while many parents want their children to learn Maori they are not in a position to help them." Consequently many people supported the teaching of Maori language in schools, which one woman said was essential as so few young people could speak or understand Maori to prevent it dying out. Although, as one woman pointed out, to learn the language properly, a child would have to hear it spoken in more places than just school, which meant that some follow up in the home and the rest of the community was also necessary. Some people, mainly grandparents, were making an effort to teach their mokopuna to speak Maori and for the most part said they were fairly successful.

In all the communities we visited, fluent Maori speakers mentioned that the main problem they have is finding other people who can also speak Maori. For some this lack of other people to converse with in Maori contributed to feelings of isolation and loneliness. For others it meant they were losing the ability to speak Maori altogether. Some people were lucky, such as the man in Putaruru whose workmates were able to speak Maori and so was able to speak it quite often and retain his ability in the language.

Some people mentioned regret or embarrassment that they could not speak Maori. One woman who was able to speak Maori fluently said that she understands what it is like for a Maori person who cannot speak or understand their own language. Her husband, she said, always feels lost when they go to marae and she has to translate for him as he does not know what is going on.



Two people, both in Putaruru, told us they felt embarrassed when they spoke Maori to someone, especially an elder, who turned out to be unable to understand. Both said they therefore tend to speak more English to save other people being embarrassed.



Conclusion

At the time of the survey, use of the Maori language in the Putaruru area was restricted mainly to adults and kaumatua and fairly confined to marae and religious occasions. Many of the people we came across who could speak Maori were unable to find opportunities to use their knowledge as so few people around them could speak or even understand it. However, there was a clear feeling that for many people in these communities, even those with little or no knowledge of the language, Maori was a very important part of life. Subsequently, there was a lot of support for Maori in schools and several grandparents were already teaching their mokopuna the

basics of the language. This sort of encouragement and interest in the language on the part of so many of the people we interviewed should go a long way to ensuring that more young people become fluent speakers of the Maori language, now that they have additional support through the ataarangi movement, kohanga reo, the inclusion of "taha Maori" in the primary school curriculum, and increased provisions for bilingual education where parents request this.

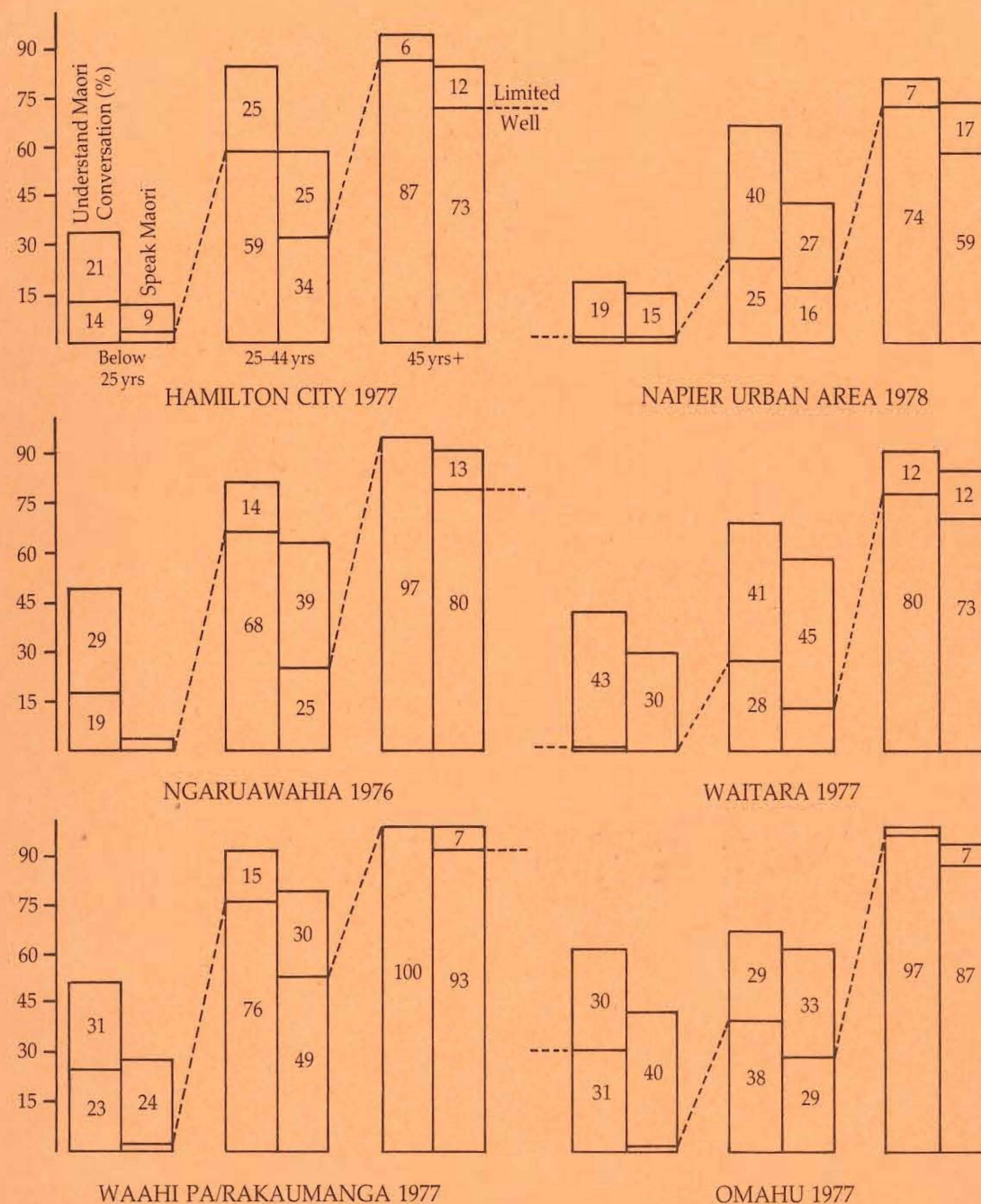


This report was prepared by:

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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.