

# 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

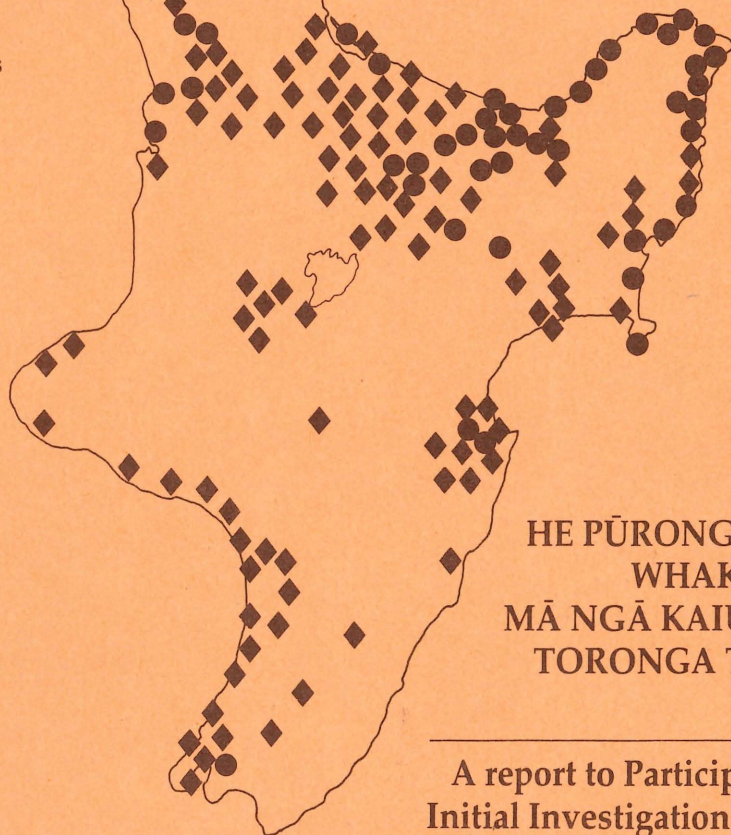
PĀNUI WHAKAMŌHIO  
INFORMATION BULLETIN

111

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 Tokoroa

Fieldwork for the survey of language use in Maori communities was carried out in Tokoroa in August and December of 1977 and December 1979.

The interviewers were Judith Brown Hawera (Waikato), Phillip Hawera (Tuhoe/Ngai te Rangi/Ngati Awa), Ameria Ponika (Tuhoe), Joe Rua (Te Whanau-a-Apanui), Allan Hawea (Ngati Awa) and Numia Ponika (Tuhoe).

Fifty-three households with a total population of 257 were included in our survey. Of these 257, 249 people were of Maori descent - about six percent of Tokoroa's total Maori population at that time.

Two interviews were carried out entirely in Maori, four in Maori and English and the rest entirely in English.



### =====

#### Knowledge of Spoken Maori in Tokoroa (1977)

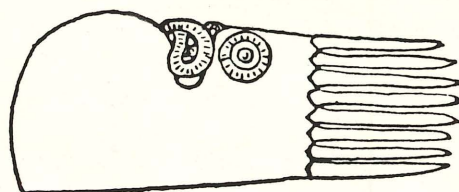
### -----

| Age Group       | Fluent Speakers | Understand Easily | Limited Understanding | No Knowledge |
|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------|-----------------------|--------------|
| 45 years & over | 25 (69%)        | 31 (86%)          | 2 ( 6%)               | 3 ( 8%)      |
| 25-44 yrs       | 19 (38%)        | 25 (50%)          | 16 (32%)              | 9 (18%)      |
| 15-24 yrs       | 2 ( 5%)         | 8 (21%)           | 12 (31%)              | 19 (49%)     |
| 2-14 yrs        | 0 ( 0%)         | 4 ( 3%)           | 36 (28%)              | 87 (69%)     |
| Overall         | 46 (18%)        | 68 (27%)          | 66 (26%)              | 118 (47%)    |

-----

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

=====



#### Results of the Linguistic Survey

##### Iwi Affiliation

Our informants named a total of 18 major iwi to which they or the members of their household belonged. Ngapuhi with 68 members (or 27 percent of the total) was the iwi mentioned most often. Thirty-three people (13 percent) claimed affiliation with Waikato while 28 (11 percent) were from Maniapoto.

#### Ability to Speak and Understand Maori

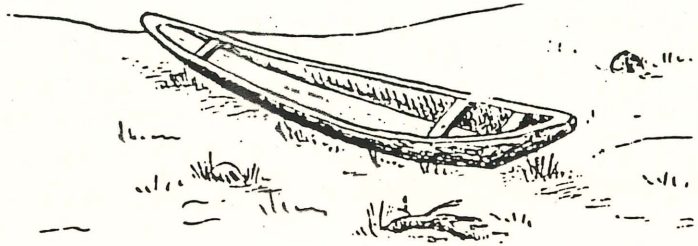
The information in the table shows that a much higher proportion of the people included in our survey of Tokoroa over 45, could speak and understand Maori better than people under 25. While most people over 25 had a partial or thorough understanding of spoken Maori, nearly two thirds of people under 25 had absolutely no knowledge of Maori. Overall, nearly half the people in our Tokoroa survey had no knowledge of Maori. Ninety percent of these were under 25, although this age group made up only two-thirds of the total.





### Use of Maori Language in the Household

English was the main or only language used in all 46 of the households with dependent children that we visited. Maori was used in only one of the six childless households and the rest used English most or all of the time.



### The Maori Language in the Community

Most people used English for everyday talking with children, neighbours and visitors. About one third used some Maori with visitors, and about one fifth used some with neighbours. One person used mostly Maori in both circumstances.

However, some Maori was much more likely to be used in religious ceremonies and on the marae in both formal and informal situations. Many people were more likely to use only Maori in informal chatting on the marae than they were on other occasions.

If two adults from Tokoroa 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 about one in three. However, if one or both people were children, the chances of a conversation in Maori would have been practically nil.

This is a purely imaginary map of the district covered by this report, on which the households included in the survey have been located to show the Maori language resources of the area.

Knowledge of Maori among Household Heads

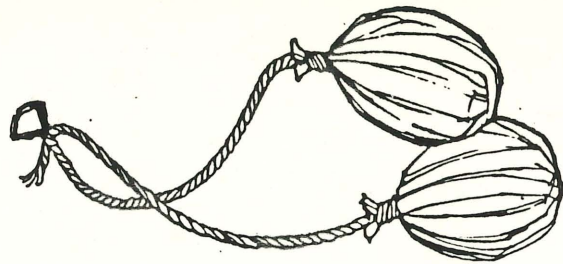
- Both fluent speakers
- ▲ One fluent speaker
- ▽ Some understanding
- Little or no knowledge

### Attitudes Towards the Maori Language

Two fifths of our informants said that Maori was the first language they had understood. Three fifths said that Maori was the language they preferred to use most for everyday conversation, and a further one fifth stated both Maori and English as their preference.

Many of the people we spoke to in Tokoroa expressed a general interest in Maoritanga and particularly in Maori language. Several people were keen for their children to learn to speak Maori and some who did not already know Maori wanted to learn themselves. One couple who said they would like to know Maori, said that it would be too difficult as lack of use would mean they would lose it anyway. The scarcity of opportunities to use Maori was expressed by other people who spoke of feelings of isolation in a predominantly Pakeha community, and that having no one to speak Maori with regularly meant they were gradually losing their ability in the





language. Some people only spoke Maori when they went home to their own areas where family and friends spoke mainly Maori.

Several people said that the large number of people from different iwi meant that dialect differences caused many problems. This ranged from people from different iwi not being able to have a conversation in Maori, to arguments about which dialects should be taught in schools, and also in community culture groups. From many people's comments, it seemed that no agreement could be reached and consequently school lesson had stopped and culture clubs had found it difficult to keep going.

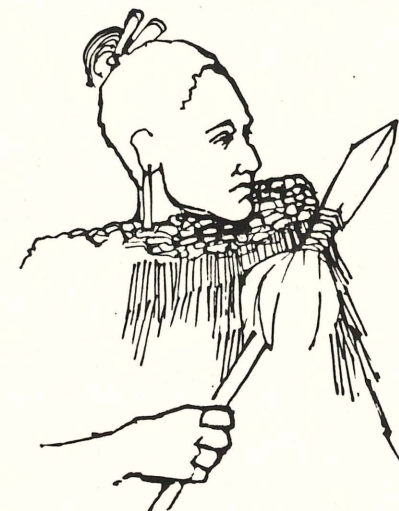
Some people made specific efforts to speak Maori to their children but others did not. One woman told us she spoke Maori to her husband only and not to her children. Another spoke Maori to elders but not younger people saying they wouldn't understand her anyway. Fear of making a mistake stopped one woman from using Maori except when she was in her home area.

Others did not speak any Maori because they thought it was of no use or too late to start trying to revive the language. Although several people said teaching Maori in schools was a good thing, one man said that it should have begun years ago and was now far too late.

About two fifths of our informants had experienced general negative attitudes or been punished at school for speaking Maori.

Punished at school for speaking Maori had caused one man to lose his ability to speak Maori and now, he said, there is no incentive to even try to speak it because of his isolation from other Maori speakers in the community.

Another woman told us her mother had been beaten at school for speaking Maori and so had never taught her children the language, saying English was more important. When her mother tried to teach her Maori later, this person and her brothers and sisters just laughed, so now they know no Maori.





## Conclusion

English was the main language of the Tokoroa community as a whole; in the nineteen-seventies there were few people under 25 who could speak Maori well. Many adults and kaumatua, however, used at least some Maori in their everyday conversations, Maori was also a formal or ceremonial language to be used on marae or in churches. One of the major obstacles preventing more younger people from becoming fluent was the isolation their parents and kaumatua felt in the community which stopped them from using Maori more often. As well as this, dialect differences seemed to be another barrier. Although many people were keen for their children to learn Maori, it seemed that some people wanted their children to learn their own dialect or not learn at all.

These attitudes have probably softened over the years, not that people realize the danger which the Maori language faces. The kohanga reo, and Ataarangi movements also offer new hope to those people wishing to create conditions under which the Maori language could thrive among the new generation of Maori people.

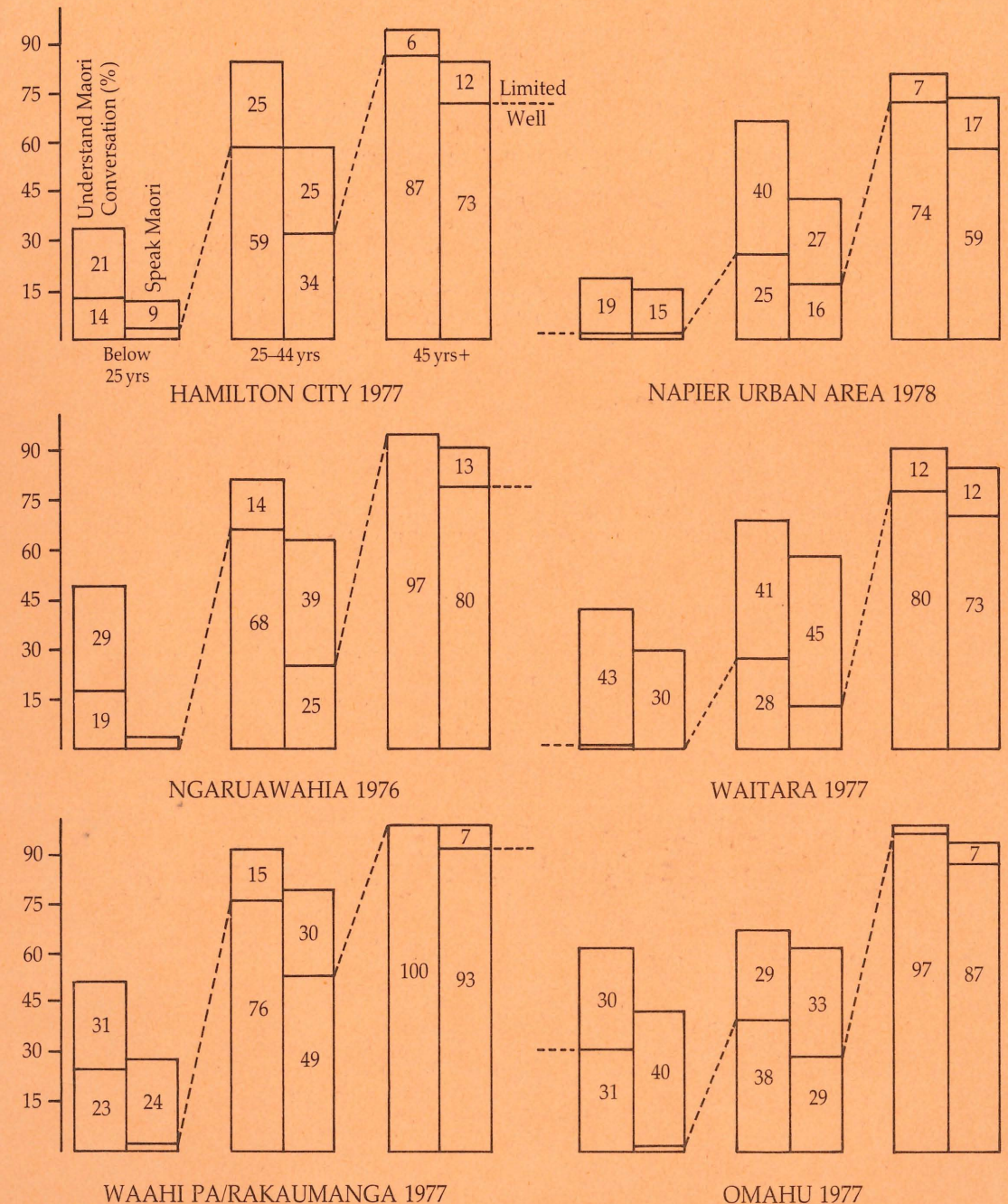


This report was written by:

Paula Martin  
(Ngai Tahu/Rangitane)

(c) Copyright, Maori Unit, NZCER, Wellington  
July 1986 (111)

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.