

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

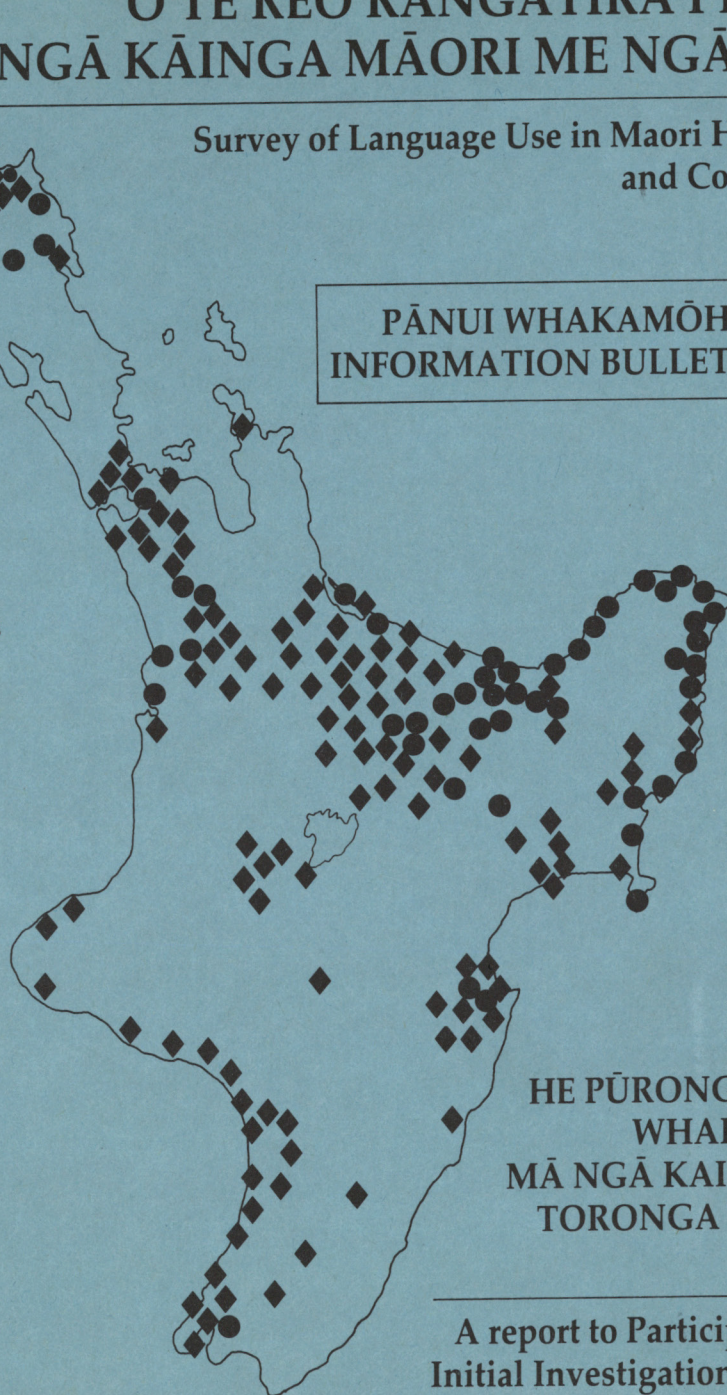
PĀNUI WHAKAMŌHIO
INFORMATION BULLETIN

19

Localities in which
ten or more households
were visited

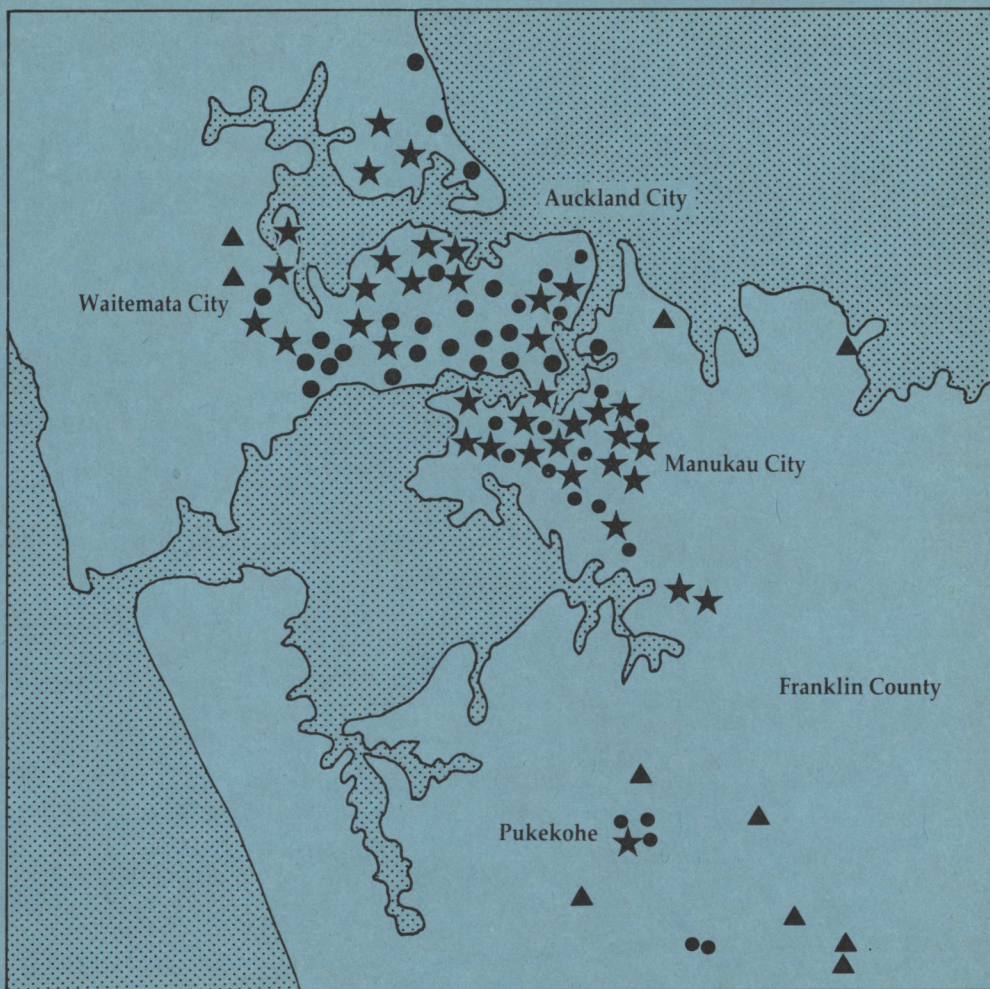
● Two thirds or
more of adults were
fluent speakers of
Maori

◆ 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



Maori Speakers in the Greater Auckland Area

This map shows the approximate number of people able to understand Maori with ease in the Greater Auckland Area, based on the results of the Socio-Linguistic Survey (1974-76). Each star ★ represents 500 people, and each dot ● a further 100 people. Small towns and rural localities visited in the survey with less than 100 speakers are represented by a triangle ▲.

THE MAORI LANGUAGE IN OTARA

Fieldwork for the census of language use in Maori communities took place in 154 households in Otara in August 1975. The interviewers were May Adlam (Ngapuhi), Lynette Anderson (Ngati Awa), Audrey Cooper (Waikato), Judith Brown Hawera (Waikato), Pare Irwin (Ngati Kahungunu), Rowena Kingi (Ngati Awa), John Miller (Ngapuhi), Carol Milne (Ngapuhi), Kathleen Grace Potae (Tuwharetoa), Maku Potae (Ngati Porou), Kahu Waititi (Te Whanau-a-Apanui/Ngapuhi), Iriaka Wensor (Ngapuhi), Peter Wensor (Ngapuhi), Shannon Wetere (Waikato) and Alicia White (Tuhoe). Thirty-five interviews were carried out partly or entirely in Maori; 120 interviews were in English.

The households surveyed had a total population of 946, of whom 930 were of Maori descent. This was about an eighth of the Maori population of Otara at the time.

RESULTS OF THE LINGUISTIC SURVEY

Iwi Affiliation

The people interviewed mentioned 32 major iwi to which they or members of their households belonged. The largest iwi in the Otara survey was Ngapuhi with 505 members, just over half of the total. Waikato with 96 members (or 10 percent) was the second largest tribal group mentioned.

Ability To Speak And Understand Maori

The information in the table on page 2 shows that a little less than a quarter of the people surveyed were fluent speakers of Maori and that by far the most of these (175 out of 200), were over 25. Nearly three-quarters of the adults also had a good understanding of the language, as many had gone to live in Otara

from Maori-speaking country areas. However this move had a bad effect on the children's use of Maori: only 8 out of 453 children could speak Maori well, and only 42 had a good understanding of the language.

KNOWLEDGE OF SPOKEN MAORI IN OTARA, 1975

Age Group	Fluent Speakers		Understand Easily		Limited Understanding		No Knowledge	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
45 & over	88	86	95	93	5	5	2	2
25-44	87	43	124	61	45	22	34	17
15-24	17	11	38	26	38	26	73	49
2-14	8	2	42	9	119	26	304	65
Overall	200	22	299	33	207	23	413	45

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

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The Use Of Maori Language In The Household

In most of the 154 households visited, English was the main language spoken. There were 133 households with dependent children, and in 107 of them English was mostly or always spoken. In two homes Maori was the main language used, while in two others Maori and English were used equally. In the remaining households English was the main language, although Maori was spoken occasionally.

There were 21 childless households, and in 8 of them Maori was spoken most of the time. In 5 other households only English was spoken; in 7 other homes more English than Maori was spoken,

while in the remaining childless homes Maori was spoken with Maori-speaking visitors.

The Maori Language In The Community

English was the main language spoken in the Otara community. Many fluent speakers of Maori knew that those Maori people who move to the towns and cities spoke English more and more, not only in the household, but also in the community. They have few chances to speak Maori in such areas, since most shop-keepers, teachers, doctors and neighbours are neither Maori nor Maori-speakers. If any two members of the Otara Maori community were to meet unexpectedly the chances were about 1 in 15 that they could understand each other in Maori. If both people were adults over 25, the chances were much greater, at least 1 in 2, but it was unlikely that school age children would be able to chat with each other in Maori. However, although not many families, as a whole, used much Maori at home, most regarded it as important, and used the language during formal gatherings on the marae, and in services of various kinds at home and in church.

Knowledge of Maori was highly valued by both speakers and non-speakers of the language. Many people were sorry they did not teach their own children Maori, and, while they were for teaching it in schools, many parents said that the learning had to begin in the home, in a Maori environment. They were well aware that television, and radio, in particular, had a big influence on their lives, and not always a good one, and so they tried to get more and better broadcasting programmes for Maori people, especially for children. One or two said that their children were learning Spanish from TV, through watching *Sesame Street*, but there were no programmes which gave them a chance to learn Maori.

Many people spoke of their difficulties in holding on to Maori, and the few opportunities they had to use Maori in this rapidly growing city area. However, there are now signs that changes are being made to give Maori an important place in the homes, local schools and the community.

CONCLUSION

Although three-quarters of the fluent speakers surveyed belonged to the adult-kaumatua age groups, most informants stressed that not only people of Maori descent but all New Zealanders would understand Maoritanga better if they knew some Maori. Many were pleased that schools and community groups were helping parents in what may have seemed at first an impossible task in keeping the Maori language alive in this fast-growing urban area, which has a little more than half of its Maori population under the age of 15. Only 4 percent of the fluent speakers recorded in the survey came from this younger group.

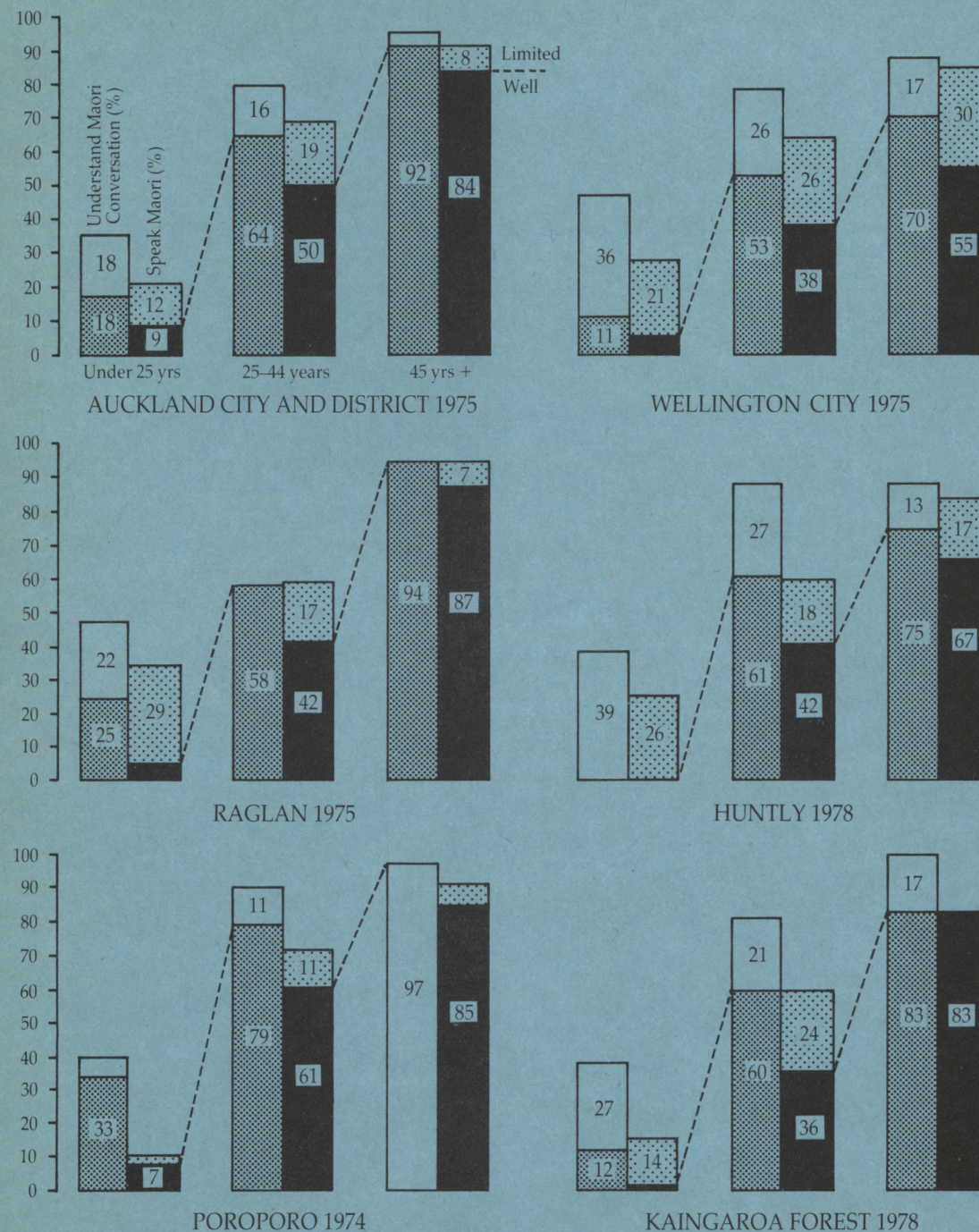
At the request of the community, the Manukau City Council gave the Maori language official and equal status with English in 1981. This decision will allow the use of Maori in all dealings with the Council and is seen as a positive move in support of the teaching and learning of Maori in local schools and the community.

The number of fluent speakers of Maori in Otara is still fairly high. These people are surely possible teachers of the language in the homes, where as many people stated, the learning must begin. It would help them greatly, of course, if bilingual classes were set up in some of the local schools, and if radio and television programmes made greater use of the Maori language.

This report was prepared by Lee Smith (Ngati Kahungunu).

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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.