

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

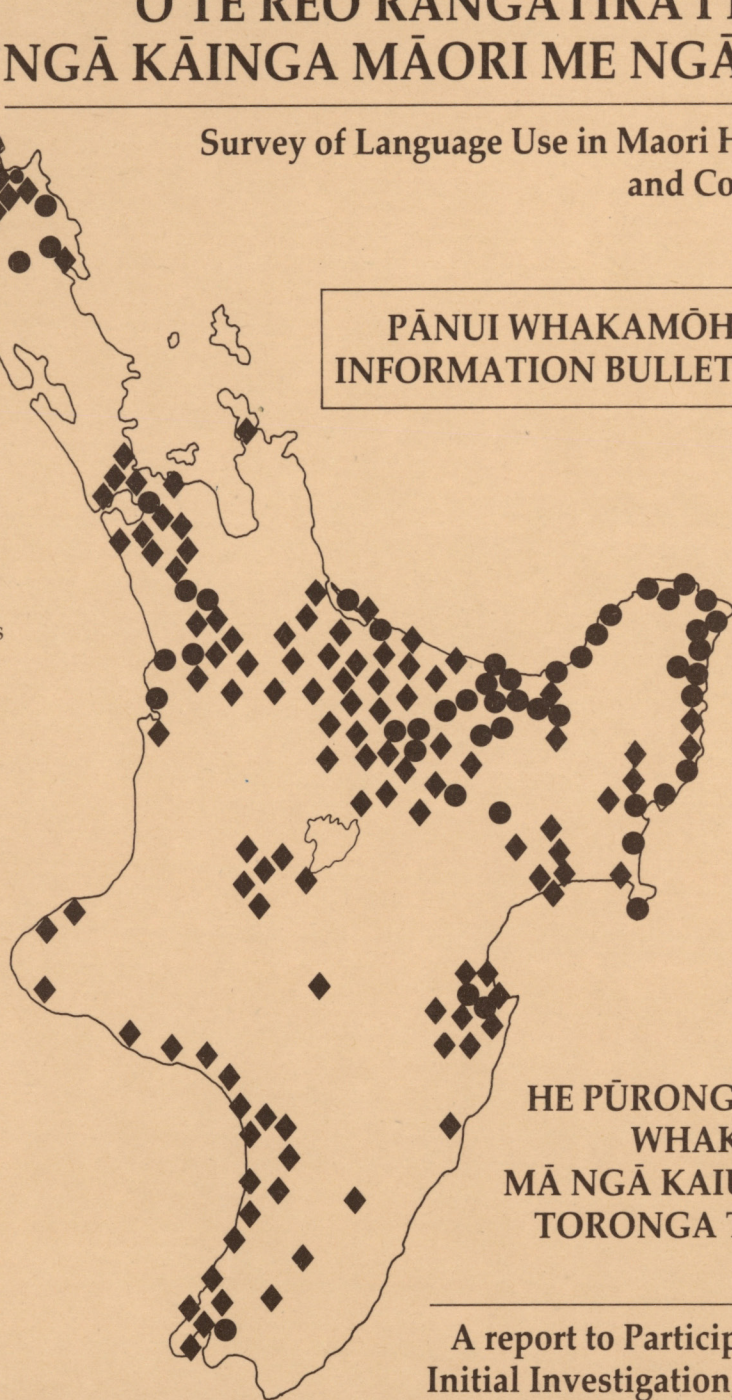
PĀNUI WHAKAMŌHIO
INFORMATION BULLETIN

23

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 MOTATAU, OPAHI AND TAIKIRAU

Fieldwork for census of language use in Maori communities took place in 26 households in Motatau, Opahei and Taikirau in January 1975. Twenty-two interviews were carried out partly or entirely in Maori; the other 4 were in English.

The interviewers were: Joan Walker (Ngapuhi), Rena Tito (Ngati Whatua), Rangi Nicholson (Ngati Raukawa), Awa Hudson (Ngati Whatua), Hiiti Tientjes (Tuhoe), John Miller (Ngapuhi), Lorraine Williams, Ameria Ponika (Tuhoe), Joe Rua (Te Whanau a Apanui), Lorna O'Sullivan (Ngati Porou), Mahia Wallace (Te Arawa) and Kahu Waititi (Ngapuhi).

The households surveyed had a combined population of 138, of whom 137 were of Maori descent. This was just over three-quarters of the total Maori population at the time.

RESULTS OF THE LINGUISTIC SURVEY

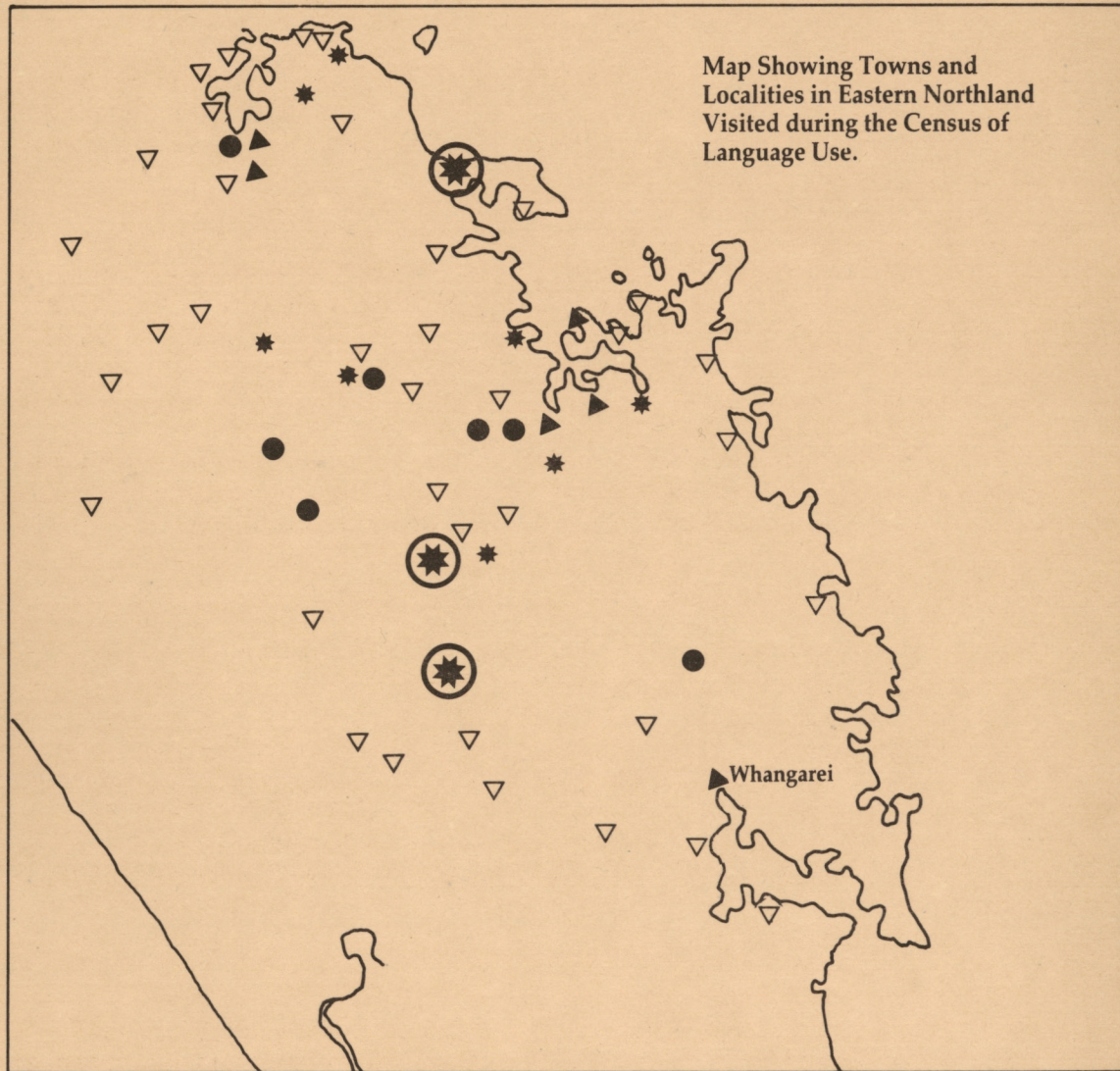
Iwi Affiliation

The people interviewed mentioned 5 major iwi to which they or members of their households belonged. The largest iwi represented was Ngapuhi with 134 members or almost the full total.

Ability to Speak and Understand Maori

The information in the table on page 2 tells us that over half the people surveyed spoke Maori fluently, and nearly three-quarters of them understood the language well. However, not only adults knew the language well (unlike what was found in most areas

Map Showing Towns and Localities in Eastern Northland Visited during the Census of Language Use.



Percentage of Fluent Speakers of Maori among Persons Aged 25 and Over in Households Visited.

★ 90% or more

★ 75% to 89%

● 60% to 74%

▲ 50% to 59%

▽ Fewer than 8 households visited

surveyed); more than a quarter of the school-age children spoke Maori fluently, and over half of them also had a good understanding of it. A tenth of the people had no knowledge of Maori, and nearly all of these were under 14.

KNOWLEDGE OF SPOKEN MAORI IN MOTATAU AND DISTRICT (1975)

Age Group	Fluent Speakers		Understand Easily		Limited Understanding		No Knowledge	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
45 & over	26	90	28	97	0	0	1	3
25-44	20	80	23	92	1	4	1	4
15-24	11	52	14	67	6	29	1	5
2-14	15	28	34	57	15	25	11	18
Overall	72	56	99	73	22	16	14	10

(Numbers and percentages refer to those people included in the survey; percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole number).

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The Use of Maori Language In The Household

Maori was the main language of communication in most households visited. There were 21 households with children, and in 5 of them people spoke entirely or mostly in Maori, while in 11 others both Maori and English were spoken about equally. In the remaining 5 households, more English than Maori was used.

In the 5 childless households, three families spoke entirely in Maori, and those in 1 spoke both languages equally. The person who lived in the remaining household, usually spoke Maori to visitors.

The Maori Language In The Community

Most people interviewed spoke both Maori and English well, and used both languages at home and in the community. This meant that most adults could speak in either language, depending on the person they spoke to and where they were. For example, Maori was usually spoken with neighbours and friends, while at work English was spoken with non-Maori speakers. Although they preferred to use Maori with Maori-speakers, they didn't always do so.

Maori was regarded as the proper language for hui held on the marae, for speeches and also ordinary chat. In certain religious services also, Maori played an important part. As 56 percent of the entire community spoke Maori well, the chances were that if two adults met unexpectedly they would be able to talk with each other in Maori. However, with younger children, English was more likely to be spoken, as many of them were not fluent in Maori.

Attitudes Towards The Language

Nearly three-quarters of the adults stated that they had been punished as children at school for speaking Maori. This did not stop them from teaching the language to their own children, as they will always regard it as a very important part of being Maori. Most of the kaumatua preferred Maori to English as the language of everyday use, especially with their mokopuna. Since Maori was the main language spoken in many homes, no one was worried that it might be lost as a living language in these communities, at least at the time our survey took place.

CONCLUSION

Over half the people surveyed in Motatau, Opaki and Taikirau spoke Maori well, as did a little more than a quarter of the school-age children. However, one suspects that among these children more and more English than Maori is being spoken. Many people said that when their children and mokopuna were spoken to in Maori, they often replied to their parents in English. However, since over three-quarters of the adults speak Maori well, and most seem determined to use and keep that language alive in the home and community, it is unlikely that English will replace Maori in the near future as the main language for everyday use for the whole community. However, in the long run, English may come close to replacing Maori, even in Motatau. At the moment, though, Motatau seems to be an ideal place for an English-Maori bilingual school, if the parents wanted the Maori language to play its proper role in the education of their children.

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.