

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

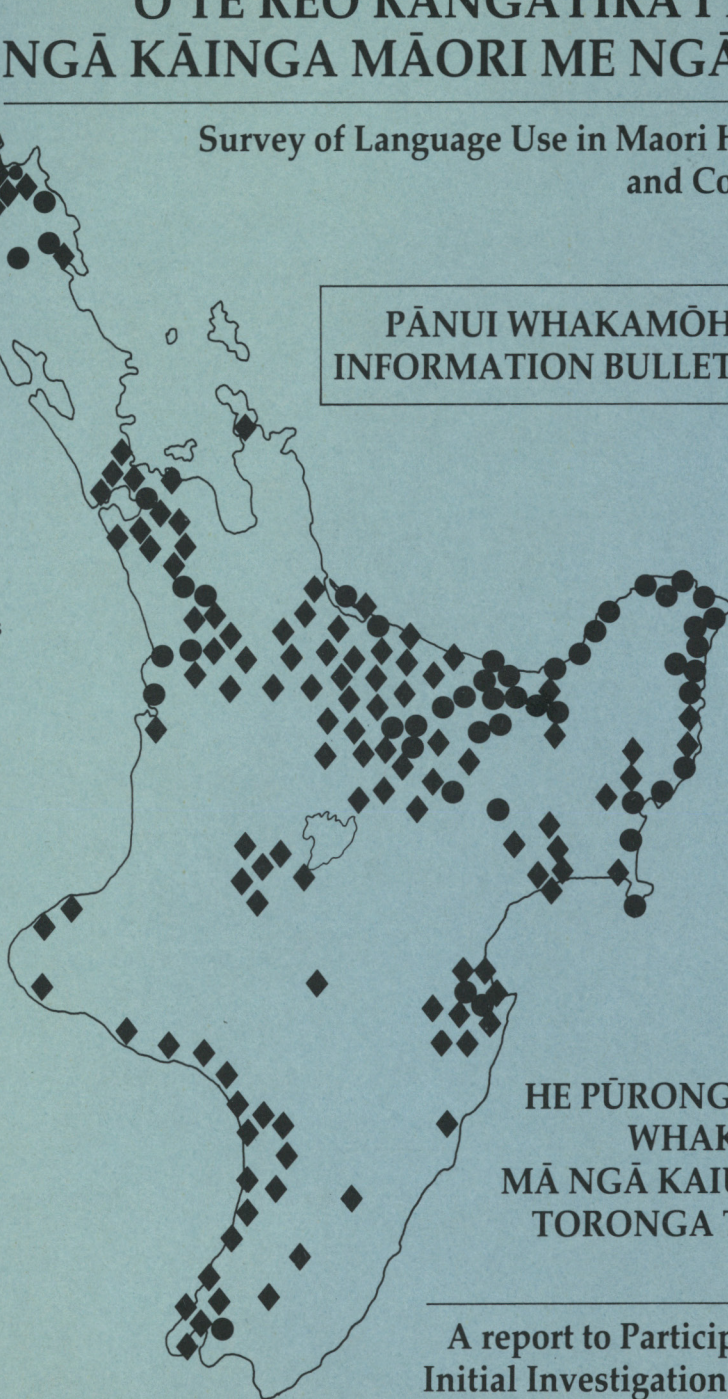
PĀNUI WHAKAMŌHIO
INFORMATION BULLETIN

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Localities in which
ten or more households
were visited

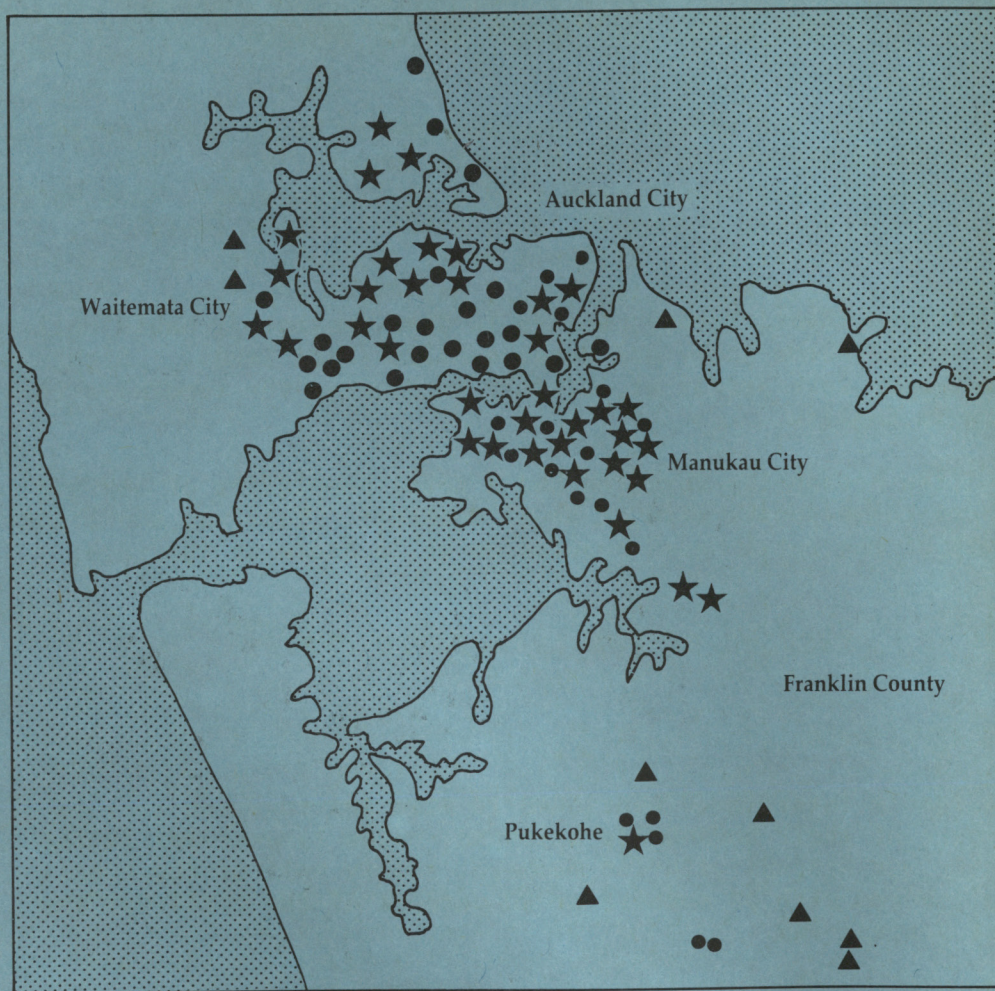
● Two thirds or
more of adults were
fluent speakers of
Maori

◆ 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 TE ATATU

Fieldwork for the census of language use in Maori communities took place in 53 households in Te Atatu in January 1975. The interviewers were John Tapene (Maniapoto/Tuwharetoa), Kahu Waititi (Ngapuhi/Te Whanau-a-Apanui), Judith Brown Hawera (Waikato), Tira Pryor (Ngati Awa), Titihuia Pryor (Tuhoe), Iriaka Wensor (Ngapuhi), Peter Wensor (Ngapuhi), May Adlam (Ngapuhi), Lorna O'Sullivan (Ngati Porou), Evelyn Te Uira (Waikato), Mahia Wallace (Te Arawa), John Ranby and Suzanne Hills (Ngai Tahu). Eighteen interviews were partly or entirely in Maori; the remainder (35) were in English.

The households surveyed had a total population of 299 and 298 of these people were of Maori descent. This was about one-sixth of the total Maori population of Te Atatu at the time.

RESULTS OF THE LINGUISTIC SURVEY

Iwi Affiliation

The people interviewed mentioned 18 main iwi to which they or members of their households belonged. The largest iwi in the survey was Ngapuhi with 146 members, nearly half of the total. Ngati Porou with 53 members or 20 percent of the total was the next largest iwi.

Ability To Speak And Understand Maori

The table on the next page shows that a quarter of the people surveyed spoke Maori well, while more than a third of them understood it well. Nearly all these good speakers were adults over 25, while there were very few speakers of Maori under this age. Nearly two-thirds of the school age children did not understand the language at all at that time.

KNOWLEDGE OF SPOKEN MAORI IN TE ATATU (1975)

Age Group	Fluent Speakers		Understand Easily		Limited Understanding		No Knowledge	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
45 & over	25	76	29	88	2	6	2	6
25-44	39	53	52	71	8	11	13	18
15-24	1	2	5	11	15	32	27	58
2-14	2	2	17	14	27	22	80	65
Overall	67	24	103	37	52	19	122	44

(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

English was the main language for everyday use in most households visited. There were 46 homes with dependent children, and in 39 of them people spoke mostly or entirely in English. Maori and English were used equally often in two homes, while more English than Maori was spoken in the other five households.

There were seven childless homes visited and English was the main language spoken by members of five of them, with each other and with their visitors. In two households, Maori was the main language spoken by residents and with visitors who spoke Maori.

The Maori Language In The Community

English was also the main language spoken in the community. The good speakers of Maori, who were usually kaumatua, preferred to speak in their mother tongue with friends and neighbours who spoke Maori. However, most of the people in Te Atatu spoke only English.

Adults from Northland and the East Coast, where they had been brought up to speak Maori as children, were the people who were most likely to speak Maori with each other in the community. However, the language still remained important for everyone in ceremonies on the marae and in certain religious services.

Community centres in Te Atatu were used just like the country marae, especially for birthdays and weddings as well as practices of local Maori clubs. At these times, the formalities on the marae were carried out in Maori.

If any two members of the Maori community in Te Atatu were to meet unexpectedly, the chances were one in ten that they could understand each other in Maori. If both people were adults over 25, the chances were one in two, but if both people were under 25, the chances would be almost nil.

Attitudes Towards The Language

Although English had taken over from Maori as the everyday language in the household and community, many people still felt that Maori was an important part of their cultural lives. There were a lot of parents who were sorry that they could not speak the language and teach it to their children. Some adults believed they were too old to start learning Maori themselves, but they wanted it taught in schools. Courses in Maori have been started in the community and have been very successful. (Interested people should get in touch with the local Department of Maori Affairs officers for further information.)

Some people said that they only spoke Maori in Te Atatu to the very elderly people. Their everyday use of English with family, neighbours and workmates often meant that their Maori became rusty. Others spoke Maori only in their country homelands, but had to use English as the everyday language in their new town or city lives.

CONCLUSION

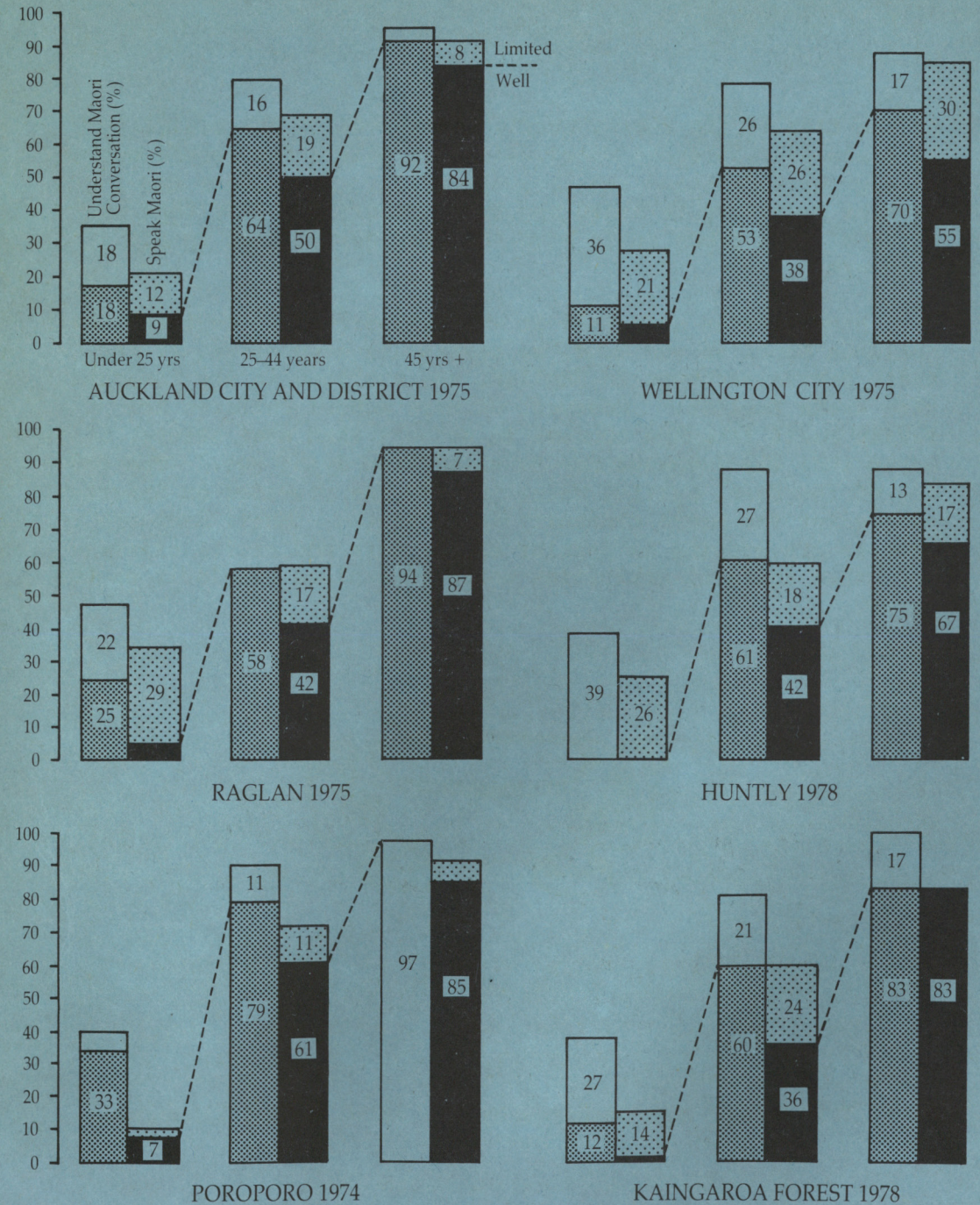
At the time of the survey nearly two-thirds of the adults in Te Atatu over 25 spoke Maori well, but only a few people outside this group understood the language well. There were few younger people in Te Atatu who spoke Maori, but less than one-fifth of this group could have followed normal talk in the language.

Many parents said that it was very difficult to teach their children Maori in the home, as nearly all newspapers, TV and radio programmes were in English, and everyone in the community also spoke English. However, as more school children are taking Maori language courses in schools than ever before, it is hoped that the language may be saved from dying out. The opening of the Hoani Waititi Marae in 1980 has provided an important centre for the Maori community in Te Atatu. Maori language courses are proving as popular as the arts and crafts classes and other cultural activities which take place regularly on the marae.



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

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.