

# 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

93

Localities in which  
ten or more households  
were visited

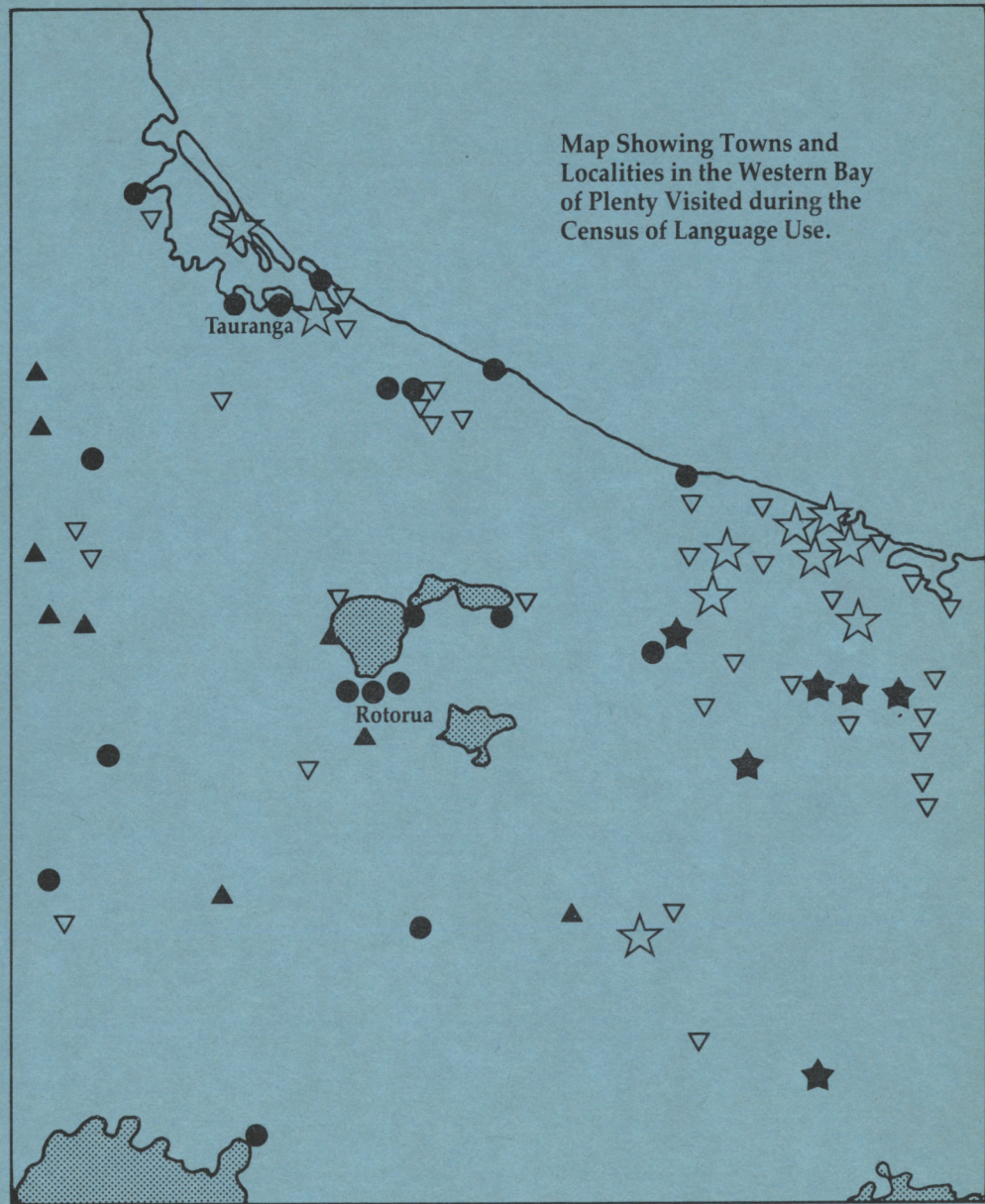
● Two thirds or  
more of adults were  
fluent speakers of  
Maori

◆ 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





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

- ★ 90% or more
- ☆ 66% to 89%
- 46% to 65%
- ▲ 45% or less
- ▽ Fewer than 10 households visited

Knowledge of Spoken Maori in Taneatua & Peketahi

The survey (1974) was conducted in the Western Bay of Plenty. The results are presented in the following table. The table shows the percentage of fluent speakers of Maori among persons aged 25 and over in households visited. The table also shows the number of households visited in each locality. The table is as follows:

Localities	Number of Households Visited	Percentage of Fluent Speakers of Maori among Persons Aged 25 and over
Taneatua	13	85%
Peketahi	5	40%

Overall 51 (49%)

THE MAORI LANGUAGE IN TANEATUA AND PEKETAHU

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

Fieldwork for the survey of language use in Maori communities took place in 13 households in Taneatua and in 5 households in Peketahi in January 1974.

The interviewers were Joe Rua (Te Whanau-a-Apanui), Merepeka Wharepapa (Te Whanau-a-Apanui), Yvonne Siggleko (Ngai Te Rangi), Maku Potae (Ngati Porou), Carol Hindmarsh Ngawati (Ngati Porou), Peter Wensor (Ngapuhi) and Iriaka Wensor (Ngapuhi).

The households surveyed in Taneatua had a total population of 76 all of whom were of Maori descent. This was about 13 percent of the total Maori population of Taneatua at that time. The 37 members of the households visited in Peketahi were all of Maori descent and made up about 80 percent of Peketahi's Maori population at the time. All but one of the interviews were carried out in English.



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**Knowledge of Spoken Maori in Taneatua & Peketahi**  
 (1974)  
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Age Group	Fluent Speakers	Understand Easily	Limited Understanding	No Knowledge
45 years & over	14 (74%)	16 (84%)	2 (11%)	1 ( 5%)
25-44 yrs	17 (89%)	17 (89%)	1 ( 5%)	1 ( 5%)
15-24 yrs	7 (39%)	9 (50%)	1 ( 6%)	8 (44%)
2-14 yrs	13 (27%)	22 (45%)	11 (22%)	17 (35%)
Overall	51 (49%)	64 (60%)	15 (14%)	27 (25%)

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 (Figures refer to members of households visited;  
 percentages have been rounded to nearest whole number)  
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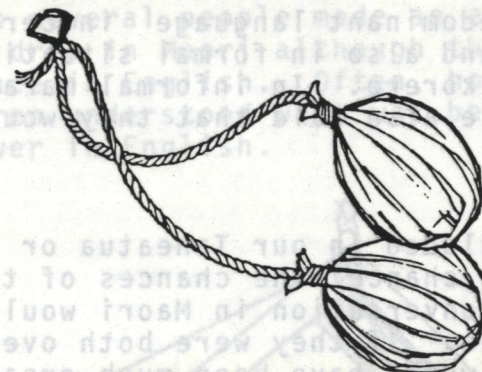
**Results of the Linguistic Survey**

**Iwi Affiliation**

In Taneatua, the people interviewed mentioned 6 major iwi to which they or the members of their household belonged. Tuhoe, with 32 members (or 42% of the total) was the largest iwi mentioned. Ngati Awa with 11 members (14%) was the second largest while 9 people (12%) were from Ngati Kahungunu. In Peketahi 29 (79%) of the people included in the survey were of Ngati Awa descent.

**Ability to Speak and Understand Maori**

The information in the table tells us the majority of those who spoke or understood Maori with ease were in the over-25 age group. Only two adults out of a total of 38 had absolutely no knowledge of Maori. Although less than two in five of those under 25 could be classed as fluent speakers, nearly one half of them could understand Maori well and several more had at least some knowledge of Maori. In Peketahi it was found that no one under the age of 14 (out of a total of 13) could speak Maori well and less than two fifths of the 15-24 year olds were fluent.



**Use of Maori Language in the Household**

Most of the households surveyed used both Maori and English. Of the 13 households with dependent children only 2 reported using only English. In the 5 households without children visited only 1 used English most of the time. The remaining 4 used entirely or mostly Maori.



## The Maori Language in the Community

English was the main language preferred for reading and writing by most adults while Maori was the language most preferred for conversation.

In the community, the majority of informants used both English and Maori for everyday communication with neighbours and visitors and a considerable number of people used Maori when speaking to their children. However, it was more likely that a child would reply in English than Maori.

Maori was the predominant language in certain religious ceremonies and also in formal situations on the marae such as whaikorero. In informal marae situations, most people also said that they would speak mainly Maori.

If two people included in our Taneatua or Peketahi survey met by chance, the chances of their being able to have a conversation in Maori would have been about one in three. If they were both over the age of 25 the chances would have been much greater, about seven in ten, as there was a much higher proportion of adults and kaumatua who were fluent speakers than younger people.

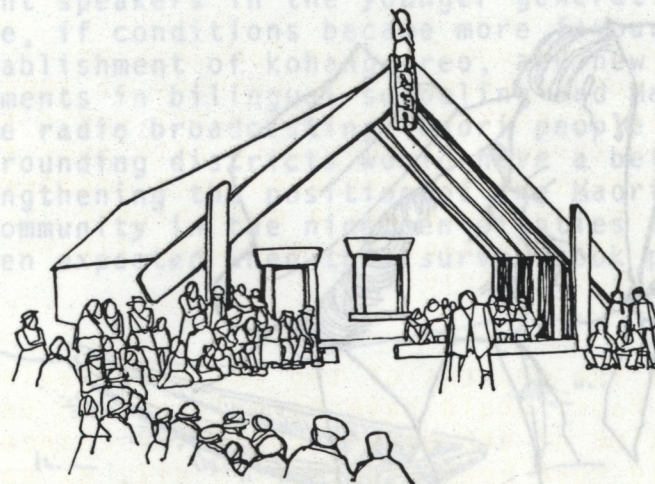
In Taneatua the chances of two children having a conversation in Maori would have been less than one in five at the time of the survey while the chances in Peketahi would have been practically nil, as no one under the age of 14 included in the survey could speak Maori with ease.

## Attitudes Towards the Language

Maori was the language preferred by most informants for conversation although English was generally preferred for reading and writing.

Several of the people interviewed expressed support for the linguistic survey and the revival of the Maori language. "Proud" was how one woman described her feelings towards her Maoritanga while another expressed concern for the general decline of the Maori language and culture.

Our interviewers noticed that during the interviews several people made an effort to talk to their children in Maori although the interviews were taking place in English. Often, however, although the children understood what was being said, they would answer in English.





Although over two thirds of the parents we spoke to had been physically punished at school for speaking Maori none mentioned that they had decided not to teach their children Maori because of this. One man who had been punished at school expressed the hope that his children will learn the language.

It seemed, however, that there was difficulty for some fluent speakers in finding enough other people to talk to in Maori.

One man said that he generally tried out a bit of Maori on visitors and people he met for the first time, and if they seemed to understand he would carry on in Maori, otherwise he would revert to English. He said that it was necessary to do this with young people rather than older, as there was more chance of the younger ones not being able to speak Maori.

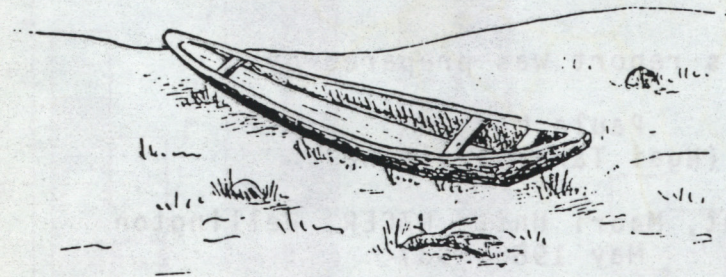


## Conclusion

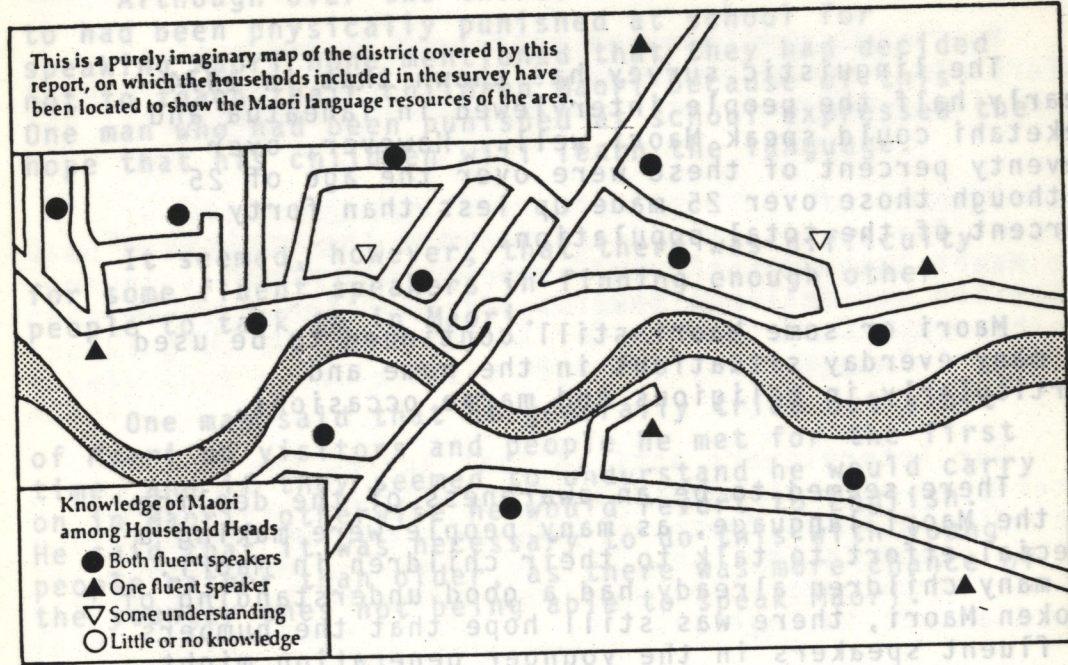
The linguistic survey has shown that in 1974 nearly half the people interviewed in Taneatua and Peketahi could speak Maori well. However, over seventy percent of these were over the age of 25 although those over 25 made up less than forty percent of the total population.

Maori or some Maori still continued to be used in many everyday situations in the home and particularly in religious and marae occasions.

There seemed to be an awareness of the decline of the Maori language, as many people were making a special effort to talk to their children in Maori. As many children already had a good understanding of spoken Maori, there was still hope that the numbers of fluent speakers in the younger generation might increase, if conditions became more favourable. With the establishment of kohanga reo, and new developments in bilingual schooling and Maori language radio broadcasting, Maori people in Taneatua and surrounding districts would have a better chance of strengthening the position of the Maori language in their community in the nineteen-eighties than might have been expected when this survey took place.







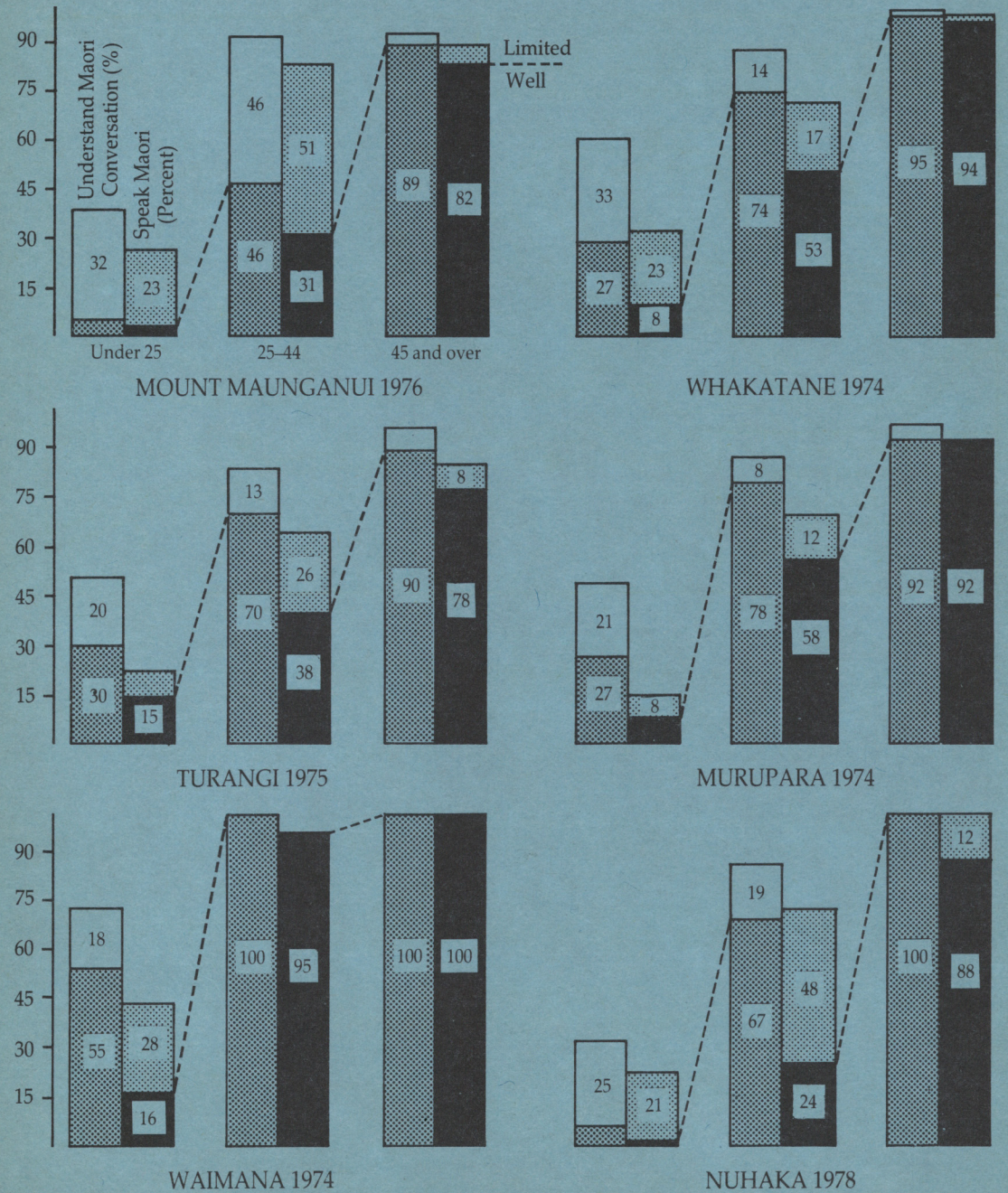
TANEATUA AND PEKETAHI

This report was prepared by

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May 1986 (93)

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.