

# 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

94

Localities in which  
ten or more households  
were visited

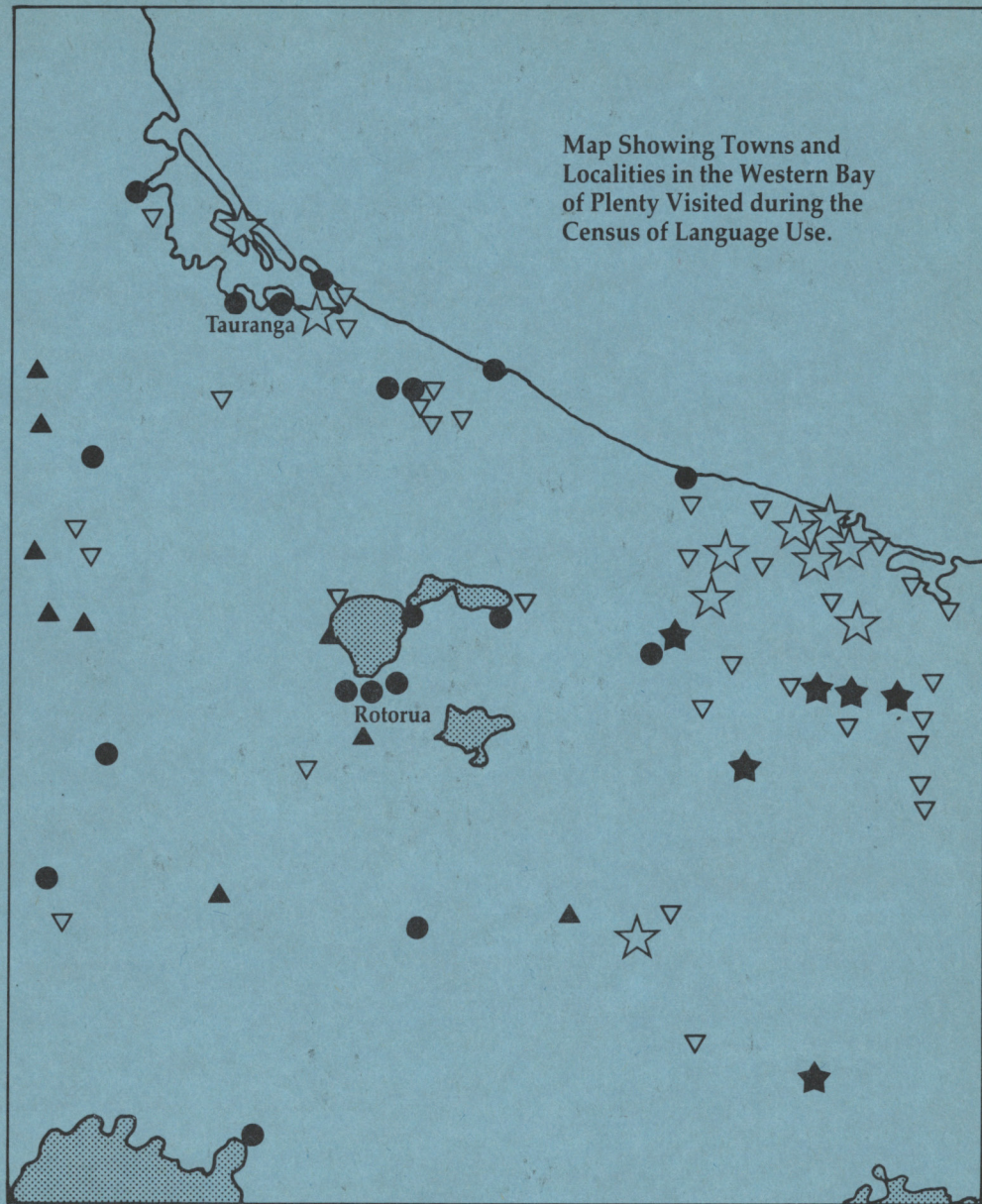
● Two thirds or  
more of adults were  
fluent speakers of  
Maori

◆ 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

## THE MAORI LANGUAGE IN MATATA AWAKAPONGA AND PIKOWAI

Fieldwork for the survey of language use in Maori communities took place in 14 households in Matata and in a total of 9 households in Awakaponga and Pikowai in January 1974.

The interviewers were Meremaihi Williams Koopu (Ngati Awa), Ripeka Koopu Martin (Te Whanau-a-Apanui), Merepeka Wharepapa (Te Whanau-a-Apanui), Yvonne Siggleko (Ngaiterangi), Charee Ogle (Ngapuhi), Jennifer Watson, Wally Koopu, Sheena Purdie, Lynda West and Michael Ranby.

The households surveyed in Matata had a total population of 82, 79 of whom were of Maori descent. This was about 22 percent of the Maori population of Matata at the time. In Awakaponga and Pikowai 34 of the 36 people included in the survey were of Maori descent - about 59 percent of the district's total Maori population.

All the interviews were carried out in English except one in Matata which was carried out in Maori and English.



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 Knowledge of Spoken Maori in Matata, Awakaponga  
 and Pikowai (1974)  
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Age Group	Fluent Speakers	Understand Easily	Limited Understanding	No Knowledge
45 years & over	12 (67%)	15 (83%)	3 (17%)	0 (0%)
25-44 yrs	10 (40%)	13 (54%)	6 (25%)	5 (21%)
15-24 yrs	2 (17%)	3 (25%)	3 (25%)	6 (50%)
2-14 yrs	- (0%)	2 (3%)	13 (22%)	45 (75%)
Overall	24 (21%)	33 (29%)	25 (22%)	56 (49%)

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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 Matata, the people interviewed mentioned 4 major iwi to which they or the members of their household belonged. The main iwi by far, was Arawa with 72 members (or 88% of the total). In Awakaponga and Pikowai of the 3 major iwi mentioned, Arawa was the largest again with 19 members (53%) while Tuwharetoa had 7 members and Ngapuhi 4.

### Ability to Speak and Understand Maori

The information in the table on page 2 shows us that by far the majority of those included in the survey who could speak and understand Maori well were over the age of 25. No one under the age of 15 could be classed as a fluent speaker and only two children out of a total of 59 had a good understanding of Maori. While nearly half the people included in the survey had absolutely no knowledge of Maori, over 90 percent of these were under 25, although people under 25 made up only about 60 percent of the population. Half of those who could speak Maori with ease were over the age of 45 (this age group made up only about a sixth of the total).

#### Use of Maori Language in the Household

English was the main language used in the households. One household with no dependent children reported using Maori when visitors were present, while all other households used entirely English except for two homes where Maori was also used once in a while.

#### The Maori Language in the Community

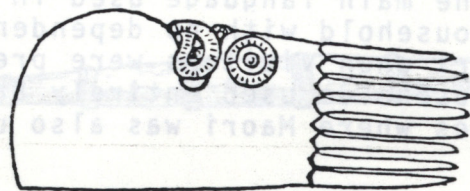
English seemed to be the main language used when talking with children, neighbours and visitors. Some people used Maori or both Maori and English when talking to children but more often than not the replies would be in English.



Most religious ceremonies were carried out in English, although Maori and English were used together fairly frequently on such occasions.

Most people we interviewed reported that their kaumatua used only Maori when giving a whaikorero on the marae or chatting informally. However, of the 13 people who reported giving whaikorero themselves, only 3 said they had delivered it entirely in Maori.

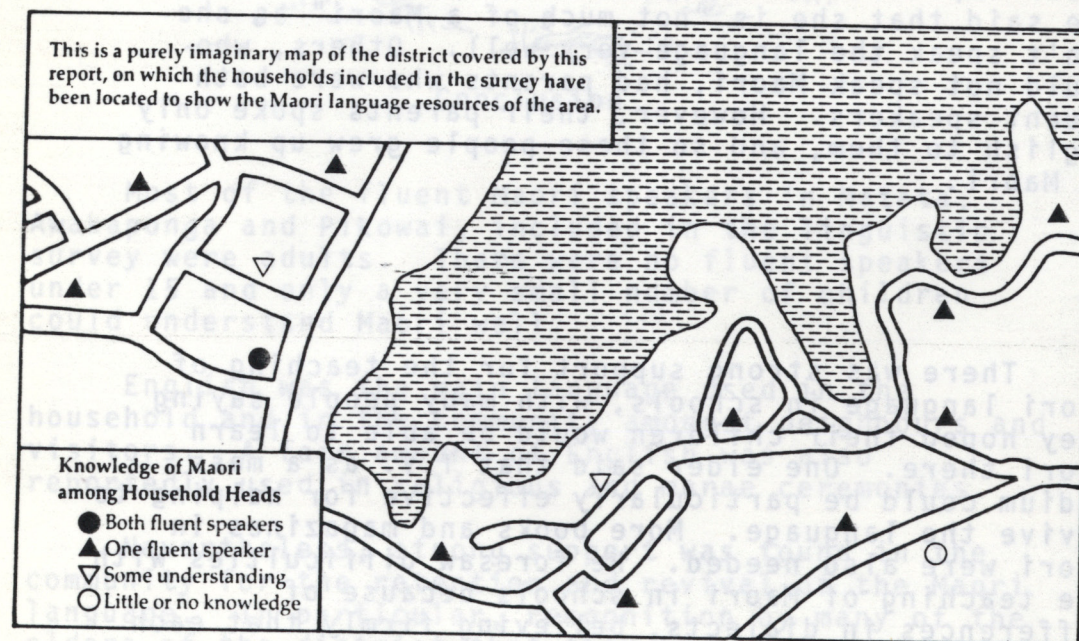
If two people included in our Matata survey were to meet unexpectedly and they were both adults, the chances that they would have been able to have a conversation in Maori would have been about 3 in 10. In Awakaponga and Pikowai, the chances would have been slightly more - about 4 in 10. However, if they were both children, the chances of a conversation in Maori would be practically nil, in any of the three districts, as we were told that no one under the age of 15 could speak Maori well at that time.



### Attitudes Towards the Maori Language

Maori, or both Maori and English, was the language preferred by 10 out of 25 people we asked as the language for everyday conversations, with a further 5 saying that Maori would be their preference if they were fluent in it.

The range of attitudes towards the Maori language was wide. Many people expressed concern at the decline of use of Maori language, particularly by young people. One kaumatua said that in order for the language to survive, elders must take an active role by passing on their knowledge to young people. Two other elders went as far as to say that it was partly because the elders didn't encourage the young people to speak Maori before now that the language is in such a state of decline. They felt that the elders had a responsibility to help remedy the situation.



MATATA

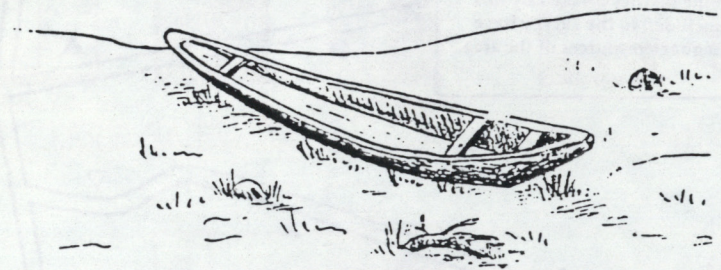


Maori was the first language spoken by about half the people interviewed. However, several people commented that because of the punishment they received at school for speaking Maori, they lost their knowledge of it. Most of the people who had this experience were sorry they had lost their Maori language and one of them spoke about how keen she was for her son to go to a Maori boy's college so he could learn to speak Maori.

Other parents, too, expressed regret at not being able to speak Maori. One person felt this had clear implications for her identity as a Maori, when she said that she is "not much of a Maori" as she can't speak the language very well. Others, who could not speak Maori, had parents who were both fluent speakers. However, their parents spoke only English to them, and so these people grew up knowing no Maori.

There was strong support for the teaching of Maori language in schools, with many people saying they hoped their children would be able to learn Maori there. One elder said that T.V. as a mass medium could be particularly effective for helping to revive the language. More books and magazines in Maori were also needed. He foresaw difficulties with the teaching of Maori in schools because of differences in dialects, believing firmly that each person should stick to their own canoe. Rather than beginning in schools, he thought that the learning of Maoritanga should begin on the marae.

Other people had slightly different attitudes about the language. One kuia with a vast knowledge of Maoritanga said she felt very angry towards a Maori who could not speak the language. However, at the same time she said that although she had been strapped at school for speaking Maori, she felt it was necessary for only English to be spoken because "if you wanted to learn, you had to be able to speak Pakeha".



### Conclusion

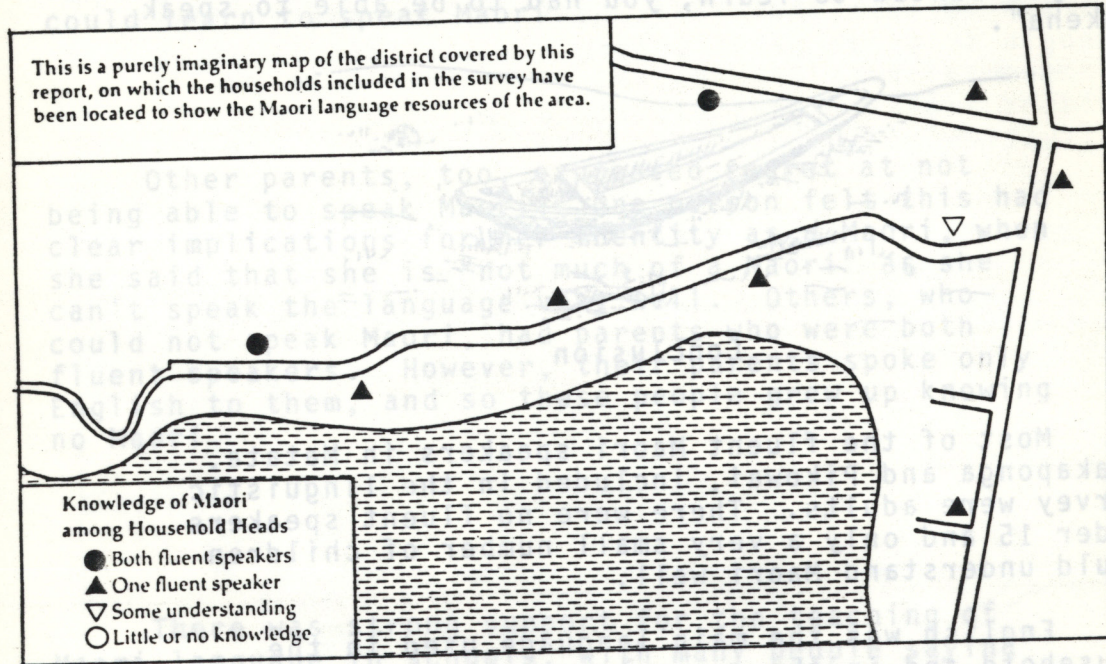
Most of the fluent Maori speakers in Matata, Awakaponga and Pikowai, included in the linguistic survey were adults. There were no fluent speakers under 15 and only a very small number of children could understand Maori well.

English was the main language used in the household and in the community amongst neighbours and visitors. A fair amount of English was also reportedly used in religious and marae ceremonies.

Nevertheless, strong support was found in the community for the retention and revival of the Maori language. In particular, recognition by many of the elders of the district that they had an important role to play in this process should see that many young people will be able to learn and appreciate the Maori language where they may not otherwise have had such an opportunity.



Such people would now be able to influence young children and their parents through the kohanga reo. Recent developments in bilingual education could also help those people who would like the Maori language to regain the ground it has lost in this part of the Bay of Plenty.

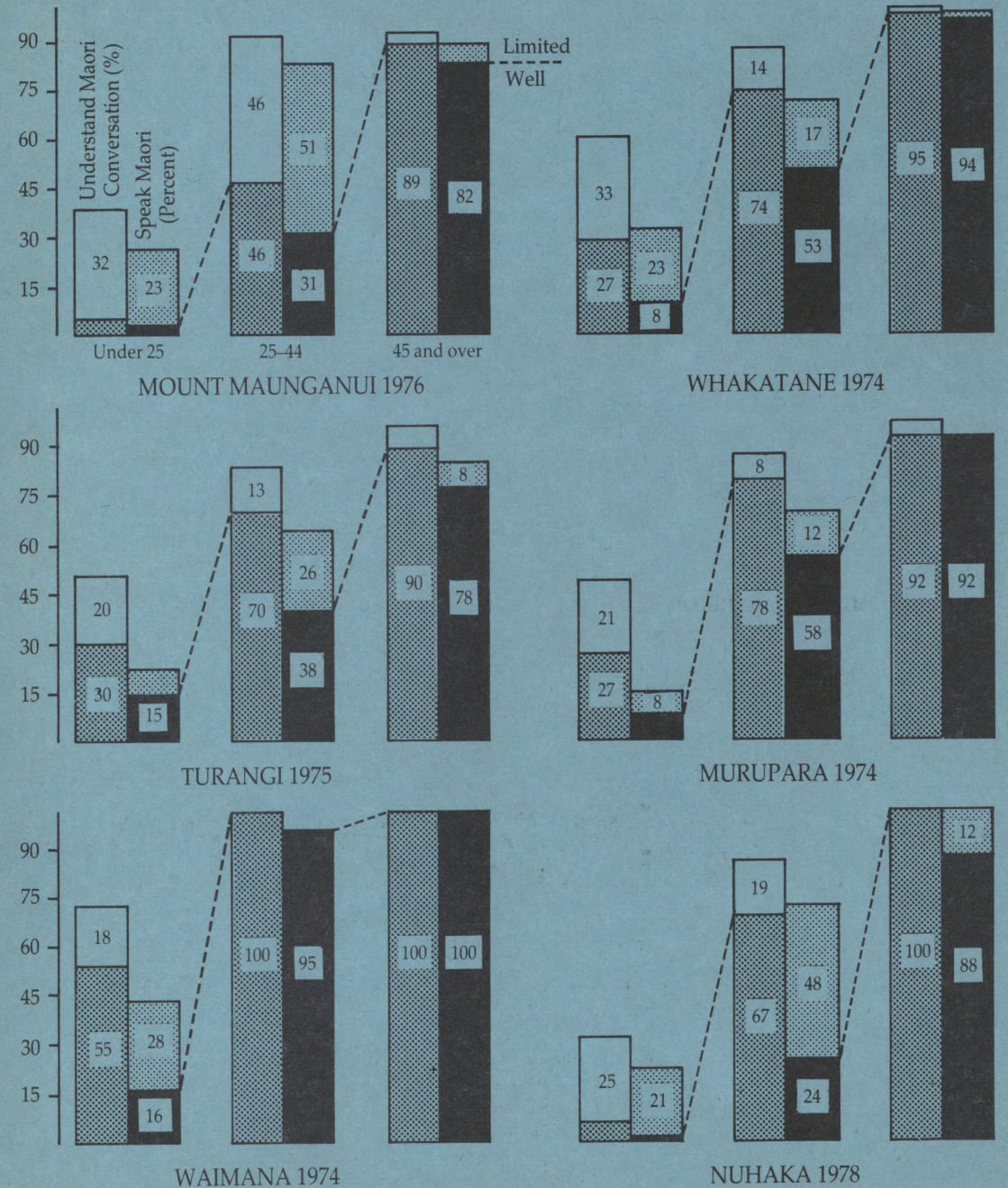


PIKOWAI AND AWAKAPONGA

This report was prepared by Paula Martin  
(Ngai Tahu/Rangitane)

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May 1986 (94)

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.