

# 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

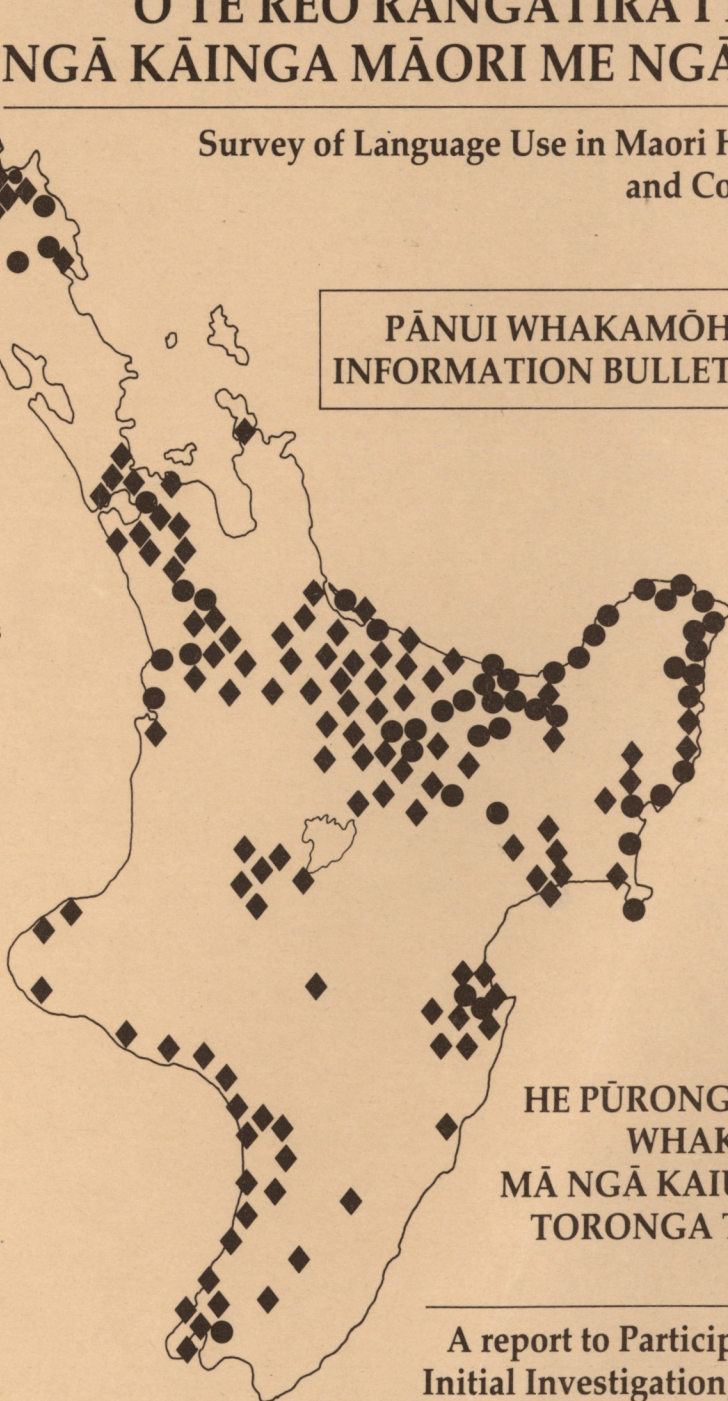
PĀNUI WHAKAMŌHIO  
INFORMATION BULLETIN

114

Localities in which  
ten or more households  
were visited

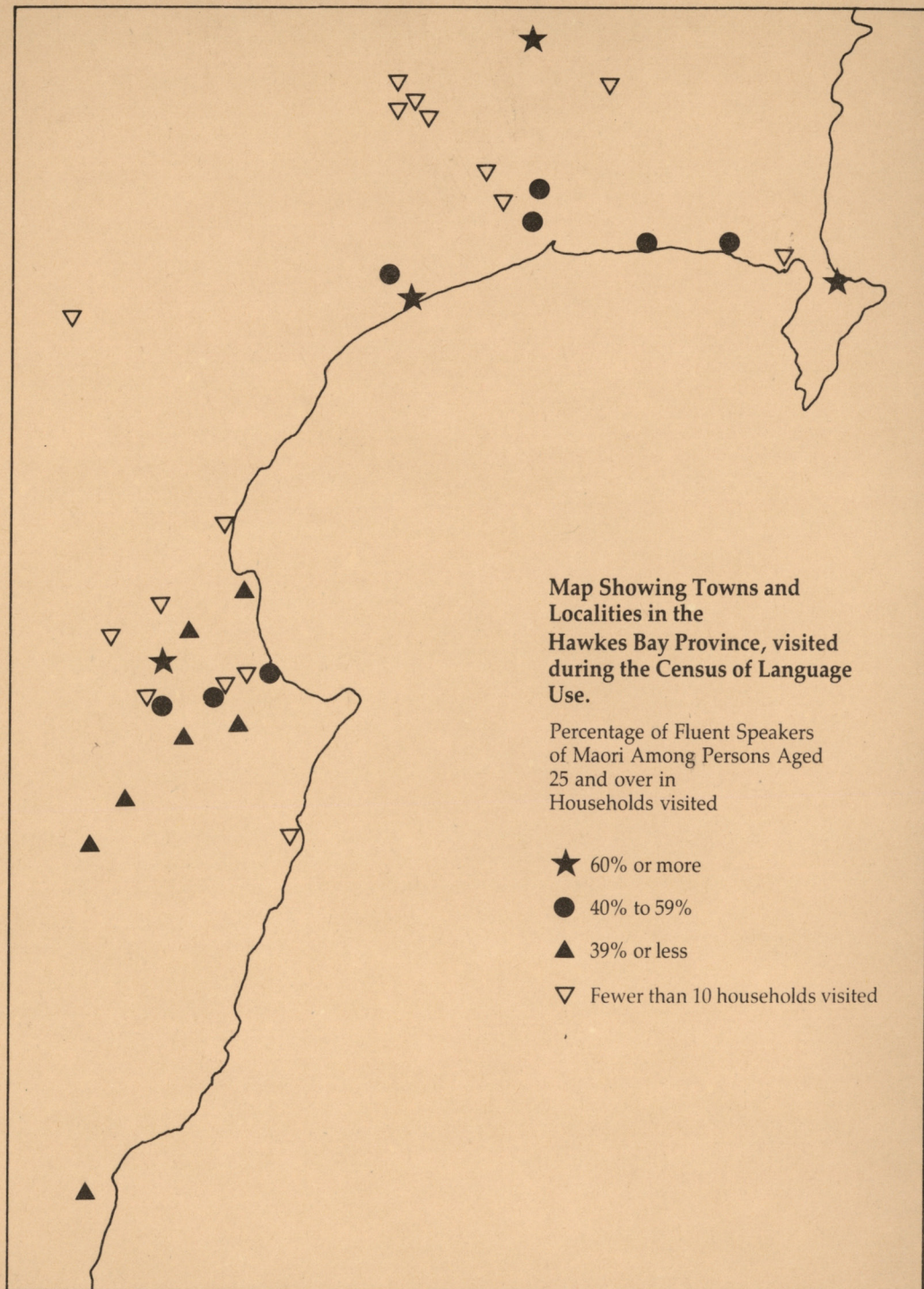
● Two thirds or  
more of adults were  
fluent speakers of  
Maori

◆ 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 INLAND WAIROA

Fieldwork for the survey of language use in Maori communities was carried out in nine communities in Inland Wairoa in December 1976 and January 1978. The interviewers were Joe Rua (Te Whanau a Apanui), Ameria Ponika (Tuhoe), Tawini Rangihau (Tuhoe), Keri Tawhiwhirangi (Ngati Porou), Patricia Parata (Ngati Porou/Ngai Tahu) and Raiha Smith (Ngati Kahungunu).

A total of 54 households were included in the survey- 15 in Frasertown, 15 in Ruakituri and a combined total of 24 in Kuha (3), Waimako (1), Tuai (4), Rangiahua (6), Te Reinga (4), Awamate (5) and Piripaua (1).

The households in Frasertown had a population of 65 - 64 of whom were of Maori descent. This was nearly a third of Frasertown's total Maori population at that time. 64 people were included in the survey in Ruakituri, 61 of Maori descent (about 85 percent of the Maori population) and the remaining 24 households had a total number of 102 people. Of these, 101 were of Maori descent, nearly two fifths of the Maori population of those areas.

Four interviews were carried out entirely in Maori, four in both Maori and English and the remaining 45 entirely in English.

## Results of the Linguistic Survey

### Iwi Affiliation

Our informants mentioned a total of nine major iwi to which they or the members of their household belonged. Most people we spoke to claimed affiliation with Ngati Kahungunu - 95 out of the total number or 41 percent. The iwi with the second largest number of members was Tuhoe with 59 members or 26 percent of the total.



### Ability to Speak and Understand Maori

The information in the table tells us that while nearly everyone over 45 included in the survey of these communities could understand and speak Maori well, we did not come across anyone under the age of 15 who could speak Maori fluently. Only four out of 34 of the 15 to 24 age group could speak Maori well although nearly two thirds of this age group in some areas had a good understanding. Ability to understand spoken Maori varied from area to area. In Ruakituri we came across only one person in the under 15 age group who could understand Maori with ease but in other areas this figure was as high as two fifths. Frasertown had the highest proportion of people with absolutely no knowledge of Maori at all- about two in five while in other places this number was much lower- about one in six. In each case, however, the majority of those with no ability to speak or understand Maori were under the age of 25 and nearly everyone over that age had a good or at least partial knowledge of Maori.

## KNOWLEDGE OF SPOKEN MAORI IN INLAND HAIROA

	Frasertown		Ruakituri		Rangiahua/ Awamate etc	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
<b>Fluent Speakers</b>						
45 yrs & over	10	77	10	77	28	93
25 to 44 yrs	3	19	5	42	11	69
15 to 24 yrs	1	13	1	14	2	11
2 to 14 yrs	0	0	0	0	0	0
Overall	14	22	16	26	41	41
<b>Understand Easily</b>						
45 yrs & over	13	100	11	85	29	97
25 to 44 yrs	9	56	8	67	13	81
15 to 24 yrs	5	63	2	29	12	63
2 to 14 yrs	5	19	1	4	13	37
Overall	32	51	22	87	67	67
<b>Limited Understanding</b>						
45 yrs & over	0	0	1	8	1	3
25 to 44 yrs	3	19	4	33	3	19
15 to 24 yrs	1	13	3	43	1	5
2 to 14 yrs	1	4	10	36	12	34
Overall	5	8	18	30	17	17
<b>No Knowledge</b>						
45 yrs & over	0	0	1	8	0	0
25 to 44 yrs	4	25	0	0	0	0
15 to 24 yrs	2	25	2	29	6	32
2 to 14 yrs	20	77	17	61	10	29
Overall	26	41	20	33	16	16

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



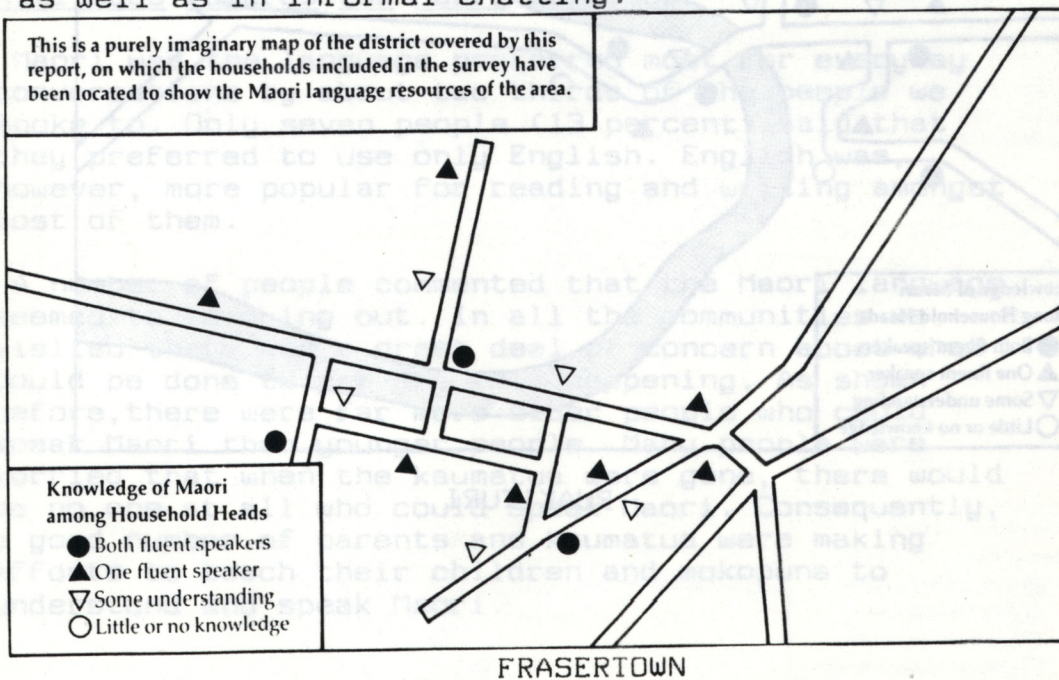
### Use of the Maori Language in the Household

English was the main language used in the households in Frasertown and Ruakituri, especially in the homes with dependent children. All but one of the 25 homes with dependent children used mainly or entirely English for everyday talking while Maori and English were used equally in the other household. Maori was used with visitors in the one childless household in Ruakituri while the members of the three childless households in Frasertown used varying amounts of Maori and English.

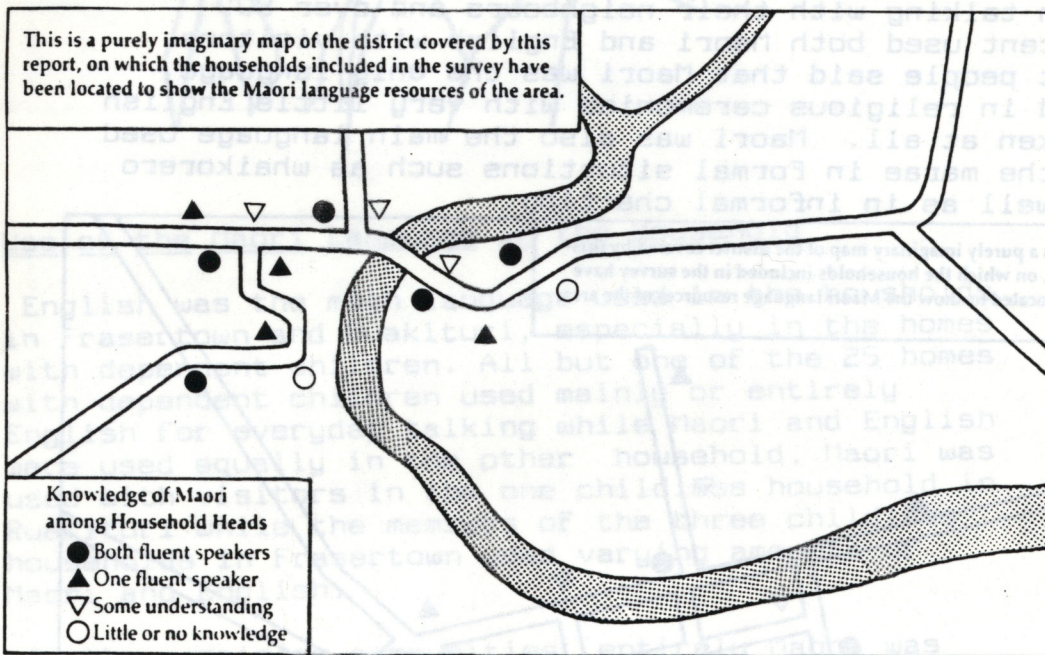
In the remaining communities, entirely Maori was used in five of the eight childless households and in three of the households with dependent children. The members of six households with dependent children used Maori and English equally and entirely or mostly English was used in the other seven homes with children.

### Maori Language in the Community

In most of the communities visited, the majority of people used both Maori and English for everyday communication with neighbours, visitors and children. Maori was used the least in Frasertown where about two thirds of the people used only English. In some of the smaller communities, Maori was used most of the time by about one third of the people we spoke to when talking with their neighbours and over 90 percent used both Maori and English with visitors. Most people said that Maori was the only language used in religious ceremonies with very little English spoken at all. Maori was also the main language used on the marae in formal situations such as whaikorero as well as in informal chatting.



If any two people included in our survey in these districts were to meet unexpectedly, the chances that they would have been able to have a conversation in Maori would have ranged from about one in ten in Ruakituri and Frasertown to about three in ten in the surrounding areas. If, however, both people were adults the chances would be much higher - from about one in three in Frasertown up to more than four in five in the smaller communities.



RUAKITURI



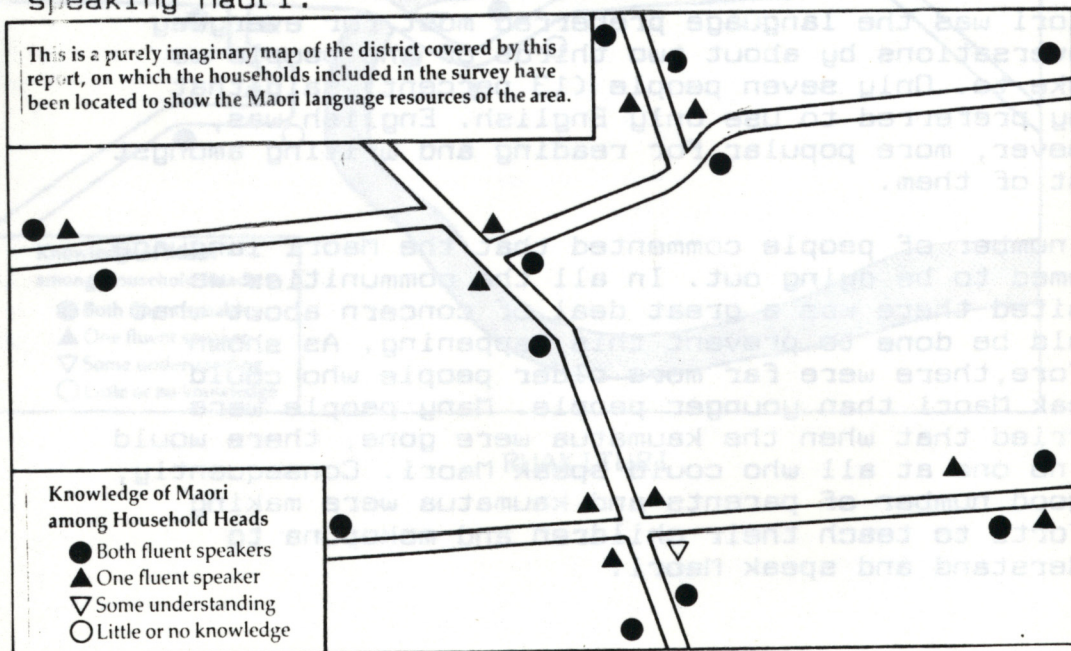
### Attitudes Towards the Maori Language

Maori was the language preferred most for everyday conversations by about two thirds of the people we spoke to. Only seven people (13 percent) said that they preferred to use only English. English was, however, more popular for reading and writing amongst most of them.

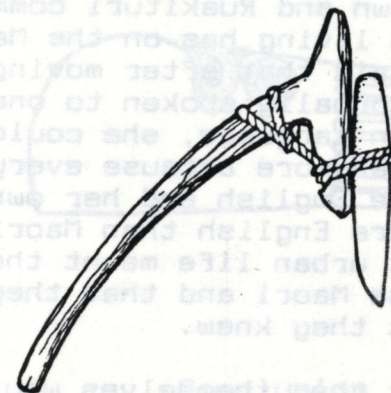
A number of people commented that the Maori language seemed to be dying out. In all the communities we visited there was a great deal of concern about what could be done to prevent this happening. As shown before, there were far more older people who could speak Maori than younger people. Many people were worried that when the kaumatua were gone, there would be no one at all who could speak Maori. Consequently, a good number of parents and kaumatua were making efforts to teach their children and mokopuna to understand and speak Maori.

Others, especially in Frasertown, said that they would like to be able to teach their children Maori but were unable to because they could not speak it themselves. Many of these people supported the teaching of Maori in schools.

Nearly three fifths of the parents and grandparents we interviewed had suffered some sort of punishment in school for speaking Maori but, now that things are different, many people were very keen on the idea of Maori in schools. Some people commented on the irony of this change of attitude. Two who remained very bitter about their school experiences said that the ideal place to learn Maori is in the home and not in the schools. One woman said that she does not blame parents who don't teach their children Maori because they had such a rough time at school themselves for speaking Maori.



KUHA, WAIMAKO, TUAI, RANGIAHUA  
TE REINGA, AWAMATE and PIRIPAUA.



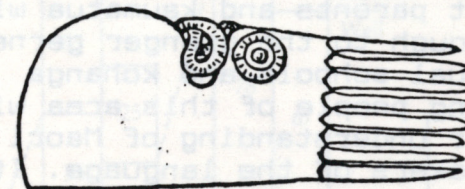
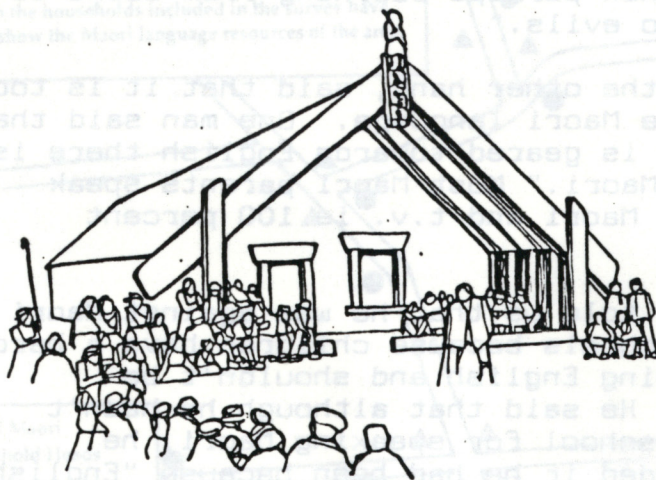
Another person expressed the view that he did not like the idea of Maori language being taught out of books but said that if the alternative is that it die out altogether, then perhaps learning from books is "the lesser of two evils."

Some people, on the other hand, said that it is too late to revive the Maori language. One man said that because the world is geared towards English there is no way to revive Maori." Most Maori parents speak more English than Maori and t.v. is 100 percent English anyway."

Another kaumatua told us that he was against Maori being taught in schools because children have a hard enough time learning English and shouldn't be confused further. He said that although he hadn't been punished in school for speaking Maori, he wouldn't have minded if he had been because "English is much more important than Maori."

Three people in Frasertown and Ruakituri commented on the effects that urban living has on the Maori language. One woman was said that after moving from an area where Maori was normally spoken to one where English was the main language, she couldn't see any point in using Maori anymore because everyone else in the district spoke English and her own children were speaking more English than Maori. Two more women commented that urban life meant there was little or no chance to use Maori and that they were gradually forgetting what they knew.

Several people said that they themselves would like to learn Maori but were finding various difficulties. Some found it hard to find people to teach them; others found it difficult to attend night classes. One woman said that "you can learn a bit of Maori in church but not enough to speak it fluently".

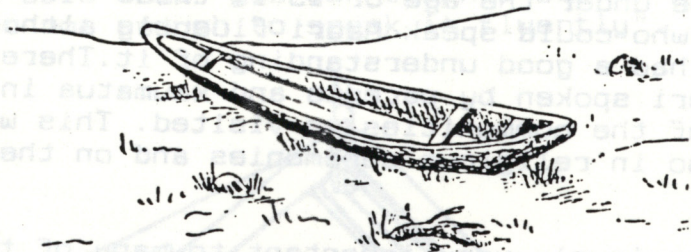


### Conclusion

At the time of the survey, Maori was very much a language of the older generations. We did not come across anyone under the age of 15 in these communities who could speak Maori fluently although quite a few had a good understanding of it. There was a lot of Maori spoken by parents and kaumatua in nearly all of the communities we visited. This was especially so in religious ceremonies and on the marae.

Maori was obviously very important to many of the people in this area, even to those who could neither speak nor understand it. While a few people said that Maori should not be taught in schools, most people we spoke to were very keen on its revival. Several people commented on the Maori language as a way of knowing one's identity such as the woman who wanted to learn Maori so she wouldn't feel so embarrassed at hui and tangi because she didn't know what was going on. This was expressed more forcefully by one kaumatua who said "If you cannot speak Maori you cannot call yourself a Maori."

The mainly positive attitudes towards the Maori language held by most parents and kaumatua will hopefully filter through to the younger generations and with more bilingual schools and kohanga reo, perhaps more young people of this area will be able to develop their understanding of Maori further to become fluent speakers of the language. It is interesting to note that one of these communities, Rangiahua, was among the first in the region to establish a kohanga reo. This is a very good sign for the future of the language in this part of Wairoa County.



This report was prepared by:

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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.