

# TE TIROHANGA I TE KŌREROŪTANGA 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

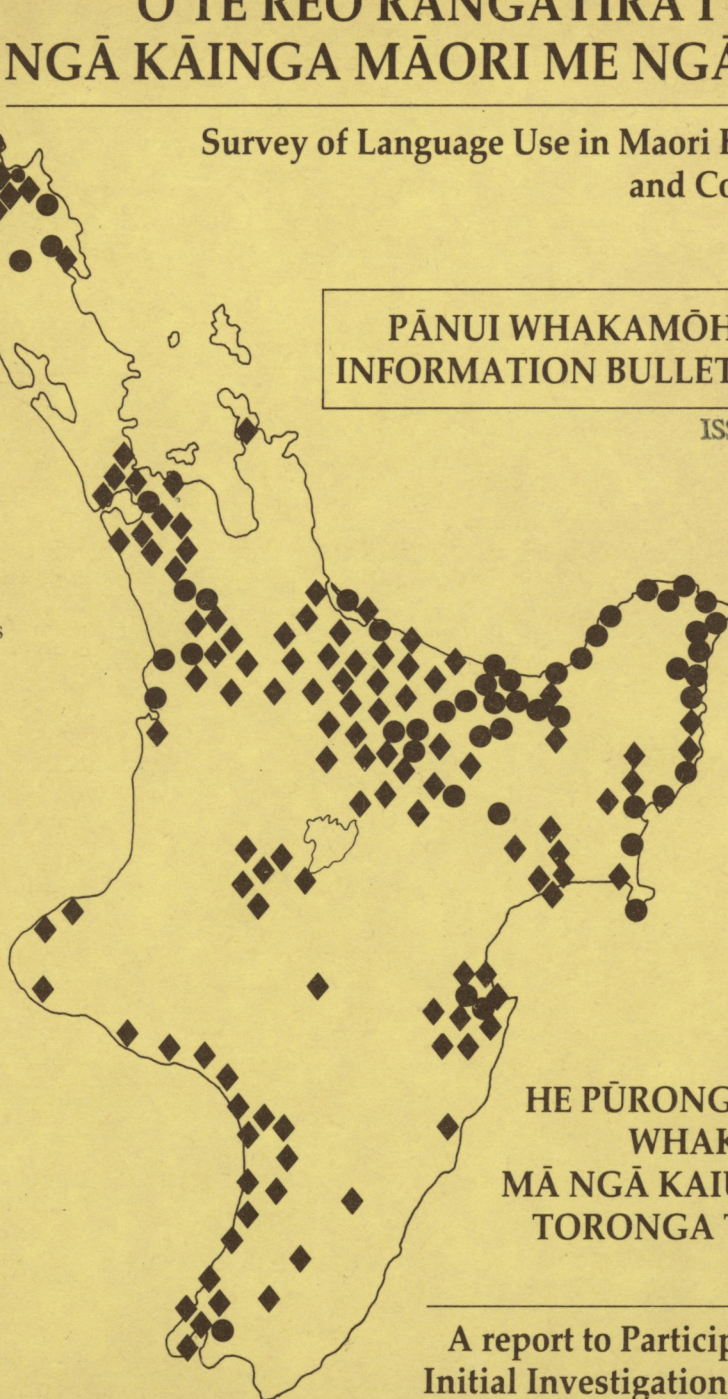
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Localities in which  
ten or more households  
were visited

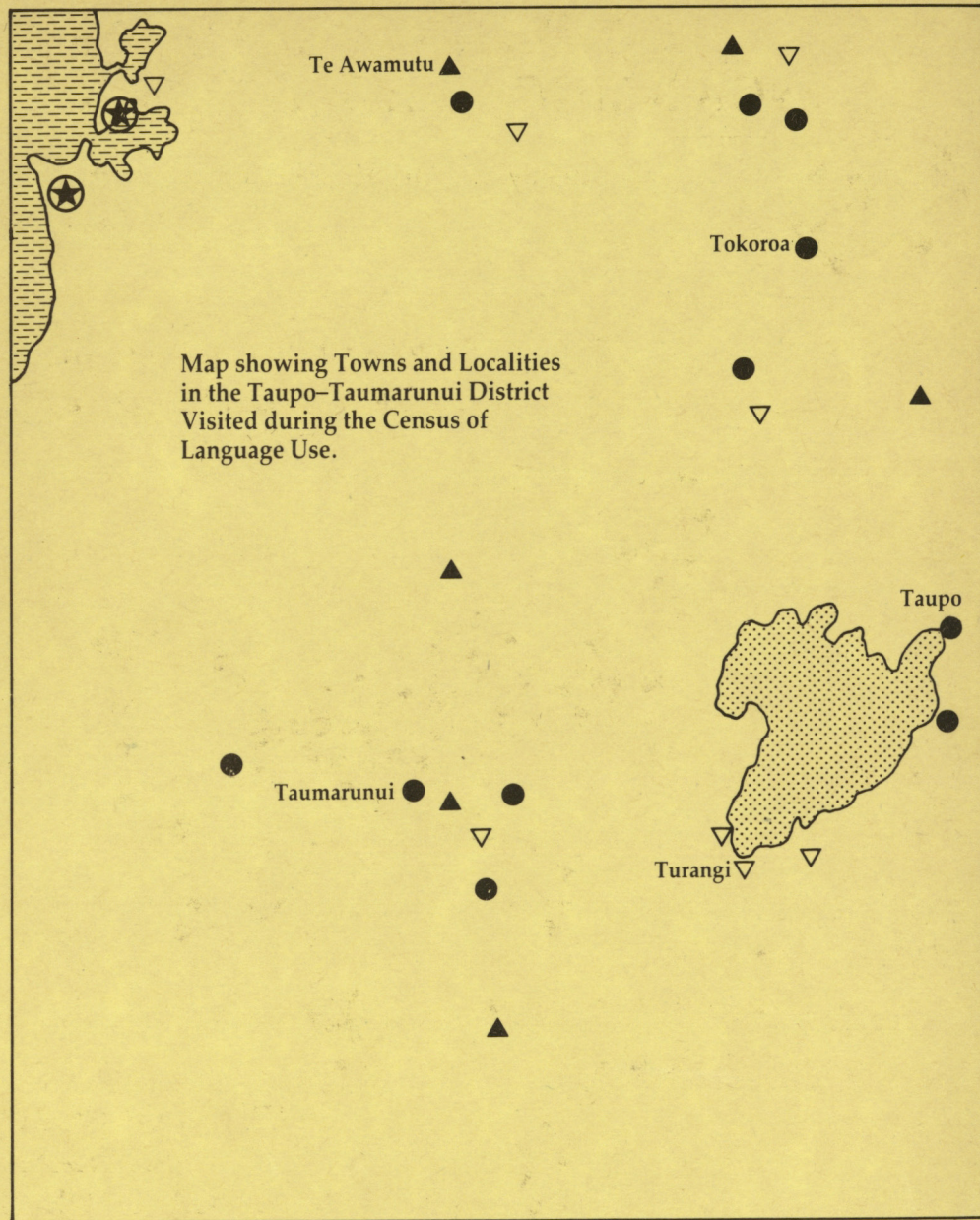
● Two thirds or  
more of adults were  
fluent speakers of  
Maori

◆ 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



Percentage of fluent speakers of Maori among persons aged 25 and over in the households visited.

★ More than 60%

● 40% to 60%

▲ Less than 40%

▽ Fewer than 8 households visited

## KNOWLEDGE OF SPOKEN MAORI IN TAUMARUNUI AND DISTRICT (1978)

### THE MAORI LANGUAGE IN TAUMARUNUI AND DISTRICT

Fieldwork for the survey of language use in Maori communities was carried out in the Taumarunui district in January, February and May 1978. The interviewers were Tom Rangihuna (Ngati Porou), Sharon Moerkerk (Maniapoto), Himiona Henry (Waikato/Maniapoto), Numia Ponika (Tuhoe), Evelyn Te Uira (Waikato) and Taari Nicholas (Ngati Ranginui/Ngaiterangi/Ngapuhi).

Our interviewers visited thirty nine households in Taumarunui as part of the survey. These households had a total population of 154, 142 of whom were of Maori descent. (This was about seven percent of Taumarunui's total Maori population at that time.) Twenty households with 81 people were included in the survey in Manunui. Seventy two of these were of Maori descent (36 percent of the total Maori population). In Ohura another ten homes were visited. Of the 47 people living in these households, 46 were of Maori descent - most of the area's Maori population at that time. Eight households with 31 people were also visited in Waimiha. All of these people were of Maori ancestry and represented about three-fifths of the Maori population.

Eight of the interviews were carried out in Maori, eight in both Maori and English and the remaining 64 were all in English.

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

## Results of the Linguistic Survey

### Iwi Affiliation

The people who were interviewed mentioned a total of 17 major iwi to which they or the members of their households belonged. The iwi to which the largest number overall of the people in the survey were affiliated was Tuwharetoa. A total of 99 people (or 32 percent) belonged to this iwi. The iwi with the next largest number of members was Maniapoto with 92 people (or 29 percent of the total) and 42 people (13 percent) belonged to Ngapuhi. Tuwharetoa was the largest iwi in Manunui, and Maniapoto was the largest in Waimiha and Taumarunui, but in all these communities the largest iwi was still a minority of the total Maori population of the homes we visited.



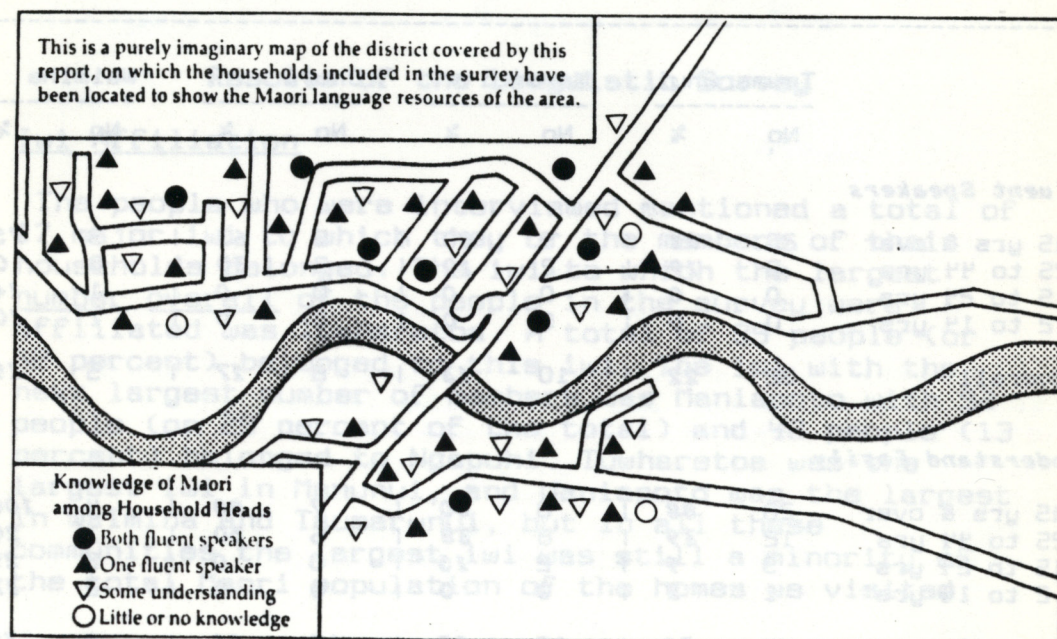
### Ability to Speak and Understand Maori

We can see from the information in the table that, of the people included in the survey, only two people under the age of 25 (both in Waimiha) could speak Maori fluently. The rest of the fluent speakers were all over 25 and the vast majority was older than 45. Nearly two fifths of the adults aged between 25 and 44 were able to understand spoken Maori with ease. Although few people under 25 could speak or understand Maori well, just over one quarter had at least some knowledge of the language. Overall, nearly everyone over 45 could speak or at least understand Maori well, but nearly half of the total number included in the survey had absolutely no knowledge of Maori, with the highest proportion of these being under 25.

## KNOWLEDGE OF SPOKEN MAORI IN TAUMARUNUI AND DISTRICT (1978)

	Taumarunui		Manunui		Ohura		Waimiha	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
<b>Fluent Speakers</b>								
45 yrs & over	26	81	8	80	5	63	3	75
25 to 44 yrs	6	19	2	10	3	30	0	0
15 to 24 yrs	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	14
2 to 14 yrs	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	10
Overall	32	22	10	13	8	17	5	19
<b>Understand Easily</b>								
45 yrs & over	28	88	8	80	7	88	4	100
25 to 44 yrs	12	39	8	38	5	50	1	20
15 to 24 yrs	3	9	2	15	0	0	2	29
2 to 14 yrs	1	2	0	0	0	0	2	17
Overall	44	31	18	23	12	26	9	32
<b>Limited Understanding</b>								
45 yrs & over	2	6	0	0	1	12	0	0
25 to 44 yrs	8	26	4	19	2	20	2	40
15 to 24 yrs	8	24	4	31	4	50	3	43
2 to 14 yrs	10	21	11	31	4	19	2	17
Overall	28	20	19	24	11	23	7	25
<b>No Knowledge</b>								
45 yrs & over	2	6	2	20	0	0	0	0
25 to 44 yrs	11	34	9	43	3	30	2	40
15 to 24 yrs	22	67	7	54	4	50	2	29
2 to 14 yrs	36	77	24	69	17	81	8	67
Overall	71	50	42	53	24	51	12	43

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



TAUMARUNUI and MANUNUI.

Use of the Maori Language in the Household

English was the main language used in most of the households we visited. In none of the homes with dependent children, was Maori the main language used between family members, although Maori and English were used equally in one. Maori was reported as being the main language used in only one childless home. In those homes with sole occupants, Maori was used with visitors in seven. In the remaining 56 households with children and the 12 childless households English was the only language used, except for a few families who used small amounts of Maori now and again.

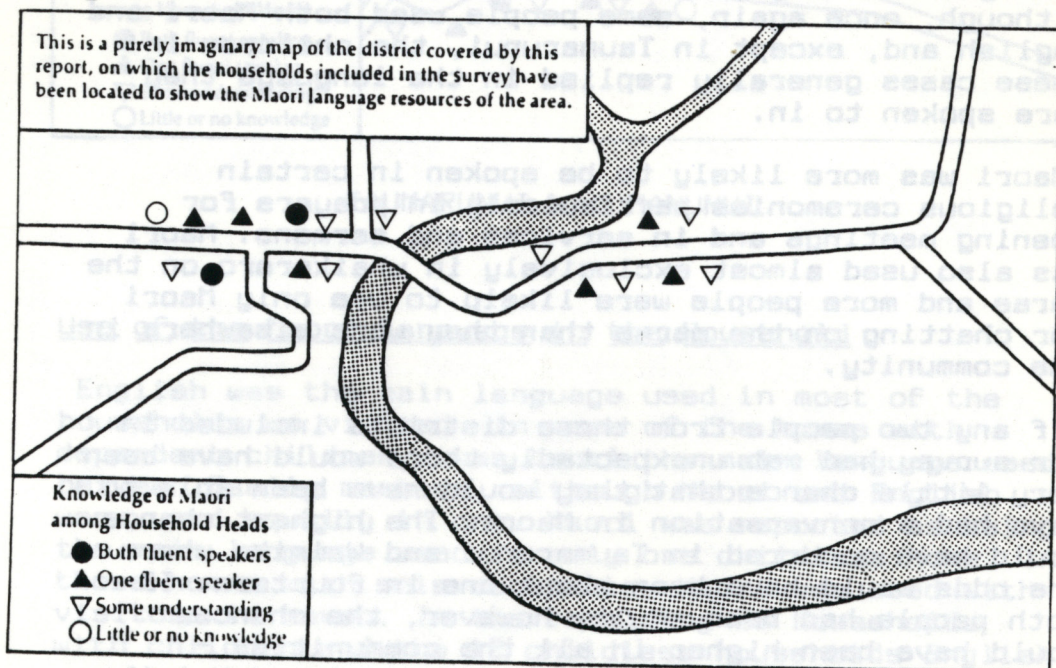
Maori Language in the Community

Most of the household heads we interviewed said that English was the main language they used for everyday conversations in the community. However, in each area there were some people who used both Maori and English when talking with neighbours and visitors. In Taumarunui about two fifths of the people interviewed used both Maori and English with their visitors and a few used only Maori. Most people were even more likely to use English with children in the community although, once again, some people used both Maori and English and, except in Taumarunui, the children in these cases generally replied in the language they were spoken to in.

Maori was more likely to be spoken in certain religious ceremonies particularly in prayers for opening meetings and in services and sermons. Maori was also used almost exclusively in whaikorero on the marae and more people were likely to use only Maori for chatting on the marae than they were elsewhere in the community.

If any two people from these districts included in our survey had met unexpectedly there would have been very little chance that they would have been able to have had a conversation in Maori. The highest chance would have occurred in Taumarunui and Waimiha where the odds would have been about one in fourteen. If both people had been adult, however, the chances would have been higher in all the communities - ranging from about one in six in Manunui and Waimiha up to about one in three in Taumarunui and Ohura.

A few people in Taumarunui mentioned that although they preferred to speak Maori they found this was impossible as so few other people in the area could speak Maori well. Two women commented that the only time they ever speak Maori continually is on the marae. One of these women also said, however, that with the "call for the revival of the language" she finds herself speaking Maori more and more - something she does not regret. The other woman, on the other hand, said that when speaking Maori she preferred to speak it all the time and not break into English. Because this was so difficult due to the lack of other fluent speakers, she felt she "may as well be consistent and use one language", that is, English.



OHURA and WAIMIHA.

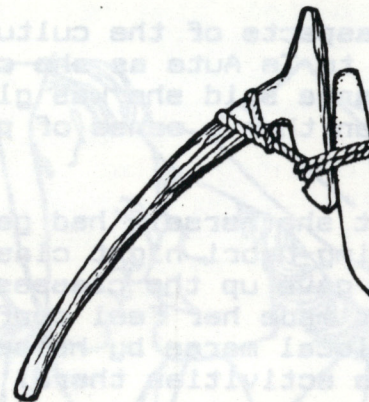


#### Attitudes Towards the Maori Language

Although the ability to speak and understand Maori was generally confined to the over 45 age group, the Maori language was nevertheless very important to many of the household heads we spoke to. In Waimiha and Manunui about half said Maori was the language they preferred to use most for everyday conversations and about a third in Taumarunui and Ohura preferred Maori.

Many of those adults who could not speak Maori fluently regretted this, especially those whose parents had tried to teach them when they were young. Some people's parents had refused to ever speak Maori to them, encouraging them, instead, to concentrate on grasping the English language, believing that this was the key to a good education. Some informants were very bitter about this because they now have no knowledge of Maori at all.

Many speakers of Maori, and also those who were only just learning the basics, felt that it was important to try to teach their children or grandchildren to speak the language, and were making efforts to do so. One man who had virtually no knowledge of Maori was trying to at least teach his children correct pronunciation of Maori words and place names. Most children, however, were just not interested and either laughed when their parents or grandparents spoke Maori to them or just ignored them entirely. Some parents had decided it was just not worth the bother of trying to teach someone who didn't want to learn while others persevered. One koroua, whose philosophy was that all Maori people should know Maori, was confident that given time his mokopuna would be willing to learn.

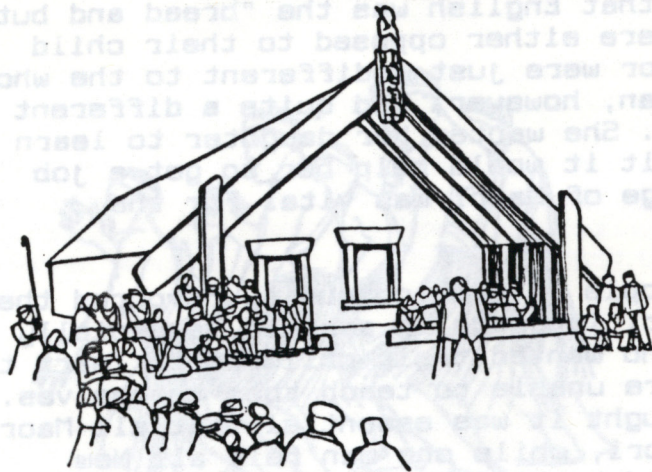


Not everyone we spoke to was so keen on their children learning Maori. There were still some people who considered that English was the "bread and butter language" and were either opposed to their child learning Maori or were just indifferent to the whole affair. One woman, however, had quite a different opinion to this. She wanted her daughter to learn Maori as she felt it would help her to get a job where a knowledge of Maori was vital for the position.

A number of people in each community favoured the teaching of Maori language in schools, especially those parents who wanted their children to learn the language but were unable to teach them themselves. Some people thought it was essential that all Maori children know Maori, while one man felt all New Zealanders should be bilingual. Some parents had sent their children to Maori colleges such as Te Aute and St Stephen's to ensure their children would learn

the language and other aspects of the culture. One woman who sent her sons to Te Aute as she could not teach them their Maoritanga said she was glad she had done this as it had given them a sense of pride in being Maori.

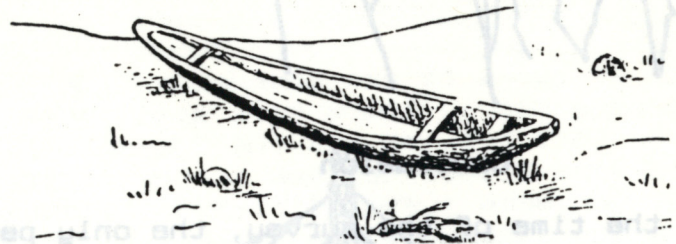
Another woman said that she herself had gained more confidence after attending Maori night classes. Although she eventually gave up the classes, the language that she learnt made her feel confident about going out to the local marae by herself and becoming involved in the activities there.



### Conclusion

Although at the time of the survey, the only people we came across in the Taumarunui district who were able to speak Maori fluently were over the age of 25 - except in Waimiha - and there were only a few of these, it was clear from comments made that for many people the Maori language was a very important part of their life and identity. Some of those who could speak Maori found only limited opportunities to use their language. For some people this was because few others in the community could speak Maori, others had a partner who spoke only English. Some had just gradually decided that English was more convenient to use on an everyday basis and only spoke Maori with elders or close relatives. Generally, though, the fact that there were so few young people in the area who could speak or even understand Maori well was recognised as a problem by the people we spoke to.

One woman who was "disgusted" that her children won't speak Maori commented that "it is only the old people who speak Maori". Most of those parents who had tried to teach their children Maori seemed to have been greeted with disinterest but it is to be hoped that if more children also begin learning Maori in school, their parents' efforts will not be in vain. Also, recent development like kohanga reo may encourage children to take a much more positive view of the Maori language, and offer new hope for the future.

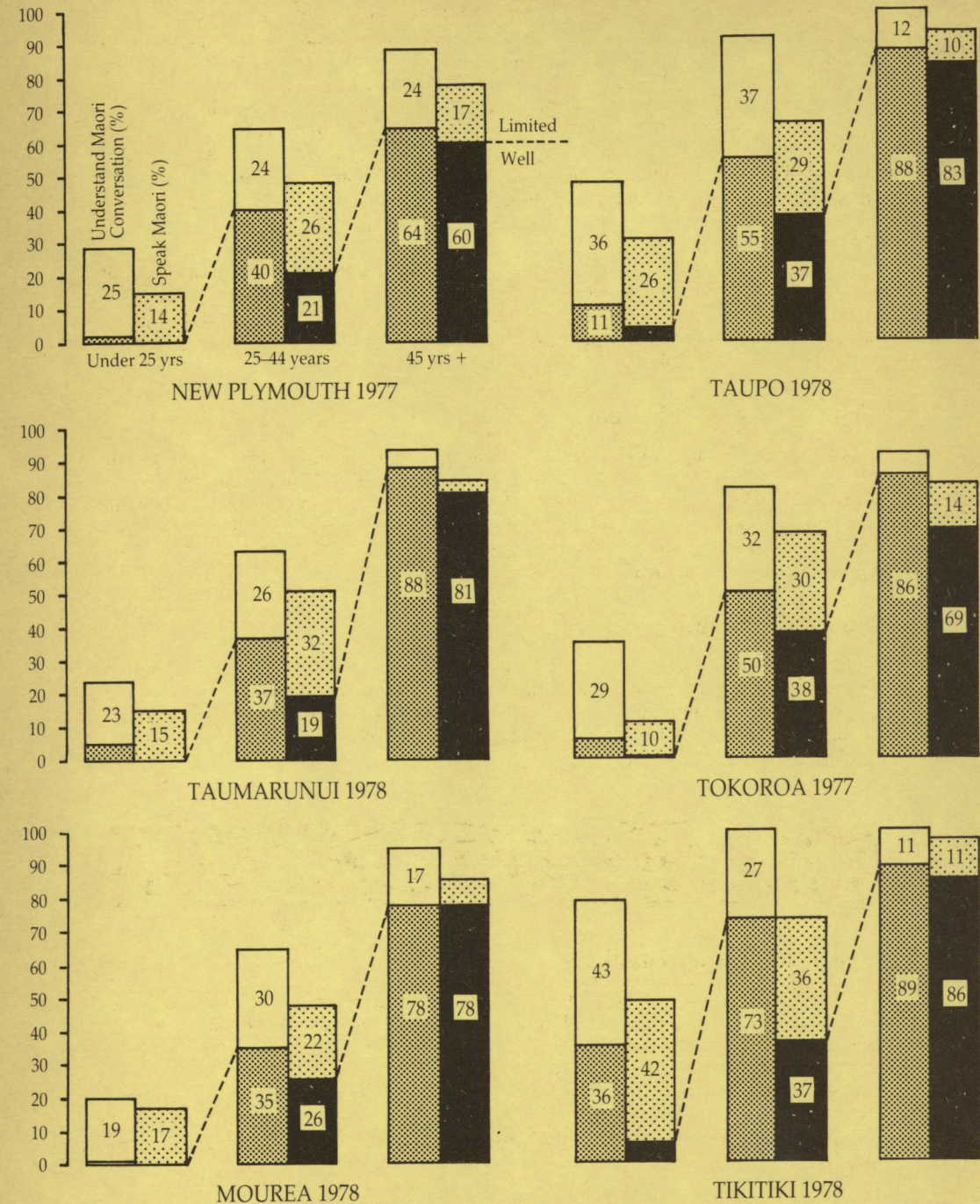


This report was prepared by:

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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.