

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

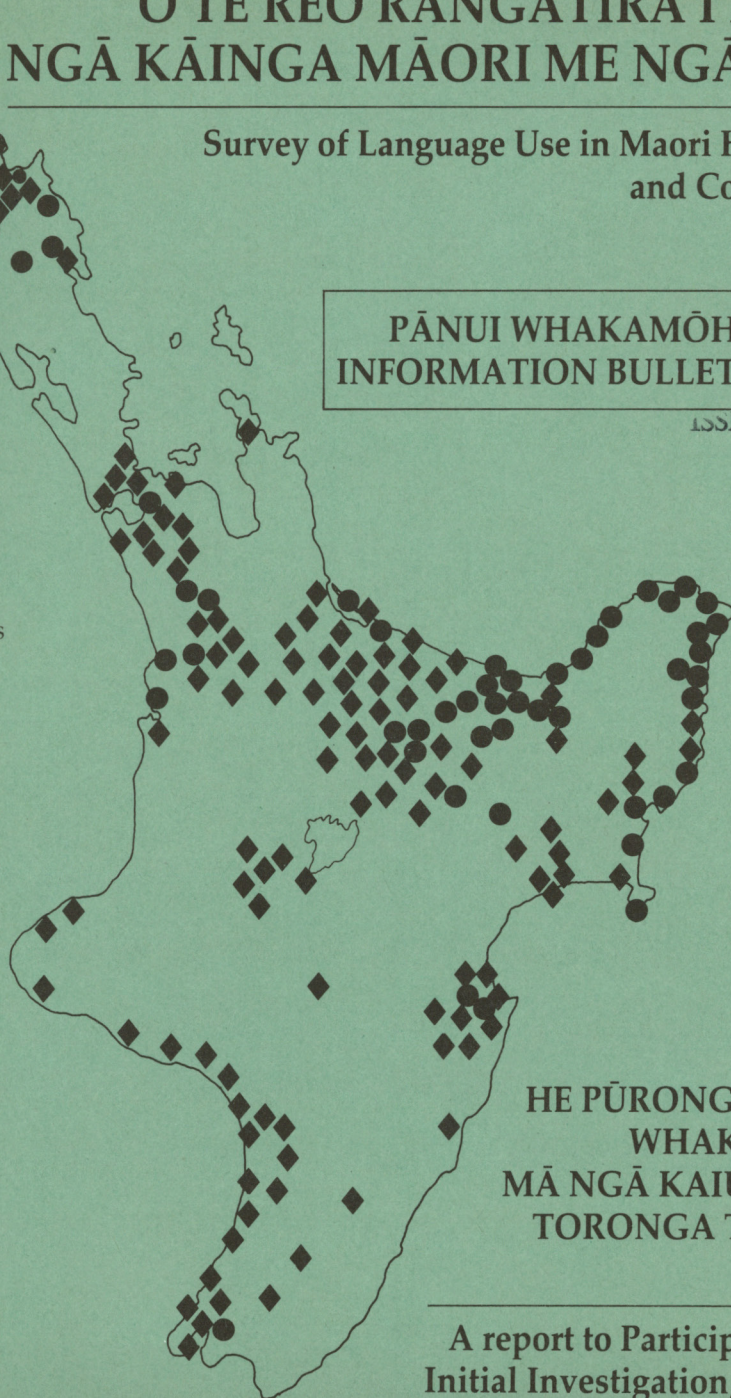
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Localities in which
ten or more households
were visited

● 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

1:2,000,000

Map Showing Towns and Localities in the Southwestern Portion of the North Island visited during the Census of Language Use.

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

- ★ 60% or more
- 40% to 59%
- ▲ 39% or less
- ▽ Fewer than 10 households Visited



Ability to Speak and Understand Maori

The information in this section is based on the results of the 1977 census of the people included in the survey. It was only among those in the over 25 age group that in each town a significant number could speak and understand Maori. The people interviewed were of Maori descent and spoke Maori as their first language. In some cases, a household was visited where the interviewer did not speak Maori.

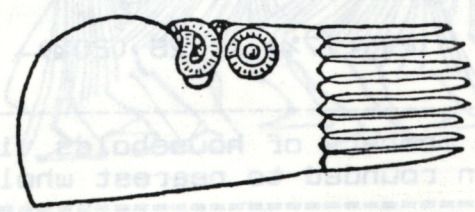
THE MAORI LANGUAGE IN FEILDING

Fieldwork for the survey of language use in Maori communities was carried out in Feilding in November and December 1977. The interviewers were Hiria Tumoana (Tuhoe) and Sharon Moerkerk (Maniapoto). Twenty five households were visited as part of the survey. These had a total population of 147, 141 of whom were of Maori descent. This represented about 14 percent of Feilding's Maori population at that time.

Four of the interviews were conducted in both Maori and English and the remaining 21 were entirely in English.

Age Group	Fluent Speakers	Understanding Knowledge
15 years and over	1 (2%)	1 (2%)
12-14 yrs	3 (8%)	3 (8%)
5-11 yrs	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Overall	4 (10%)	4 (10%)

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



Results of the Linguistic Survey

Iwi Affiliation

The people interviewed mentioned a total of nine major iwi to which they or the members of their household belonged. Most of these iwi had only a few members each but the iwi to which the largest number of people included in our survey belonged was Ngati Raukawa. Forty-three people (or 29 percent) claimed affiliation with this iwi.

Knowledge of Spoken Maori in Feilding

(1977)

Age Group	Fluent Speakers	Understand Easily	Limited Understanding	No Knowledge
45 years & over	12 (55%)	16 (73%)	5 (23%)	1 (5%)
25-44 yrs	1 (5%)	5 (24%)	6 (29%)	10 (48%)
15-24 yrs	3 (8%)	3 (8%)	9 (24%)	25 (68%)
2-14 yrs	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	8 (14%)	51 (86%)
Overall	16 (12%)	24 (17%)	28 (20%)	87 (63%)

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

Ability to Speak and Understand Maori

The information in the table shows us that in 1977, of the people included in the survey, it was only amongst those in the over 45 age group that there was a significant number who could speak and understand Maori well. While over half that age group could speak Maori well, virtually no one else had more than a limited ability to speak Maori although about one quarter of the adults aged 25 to 44 could understand spoken Maori with ease. The majority of people under 15 and about two thirds of those age 15 to 24 had absolutely no knowledge of Maori. Overall, fewer than one fifth of the people included in the survey were able to understand Maori well and over 60 percent had no knowledge of the language at all.



Use of the Maori Language in the Household

In all of the households visited, English was the main language used between family members and in all but four it was the only language ever used. In these four homes, three with children and one without, Maori was sometimes spoken but on the whole, English was the predominant language.

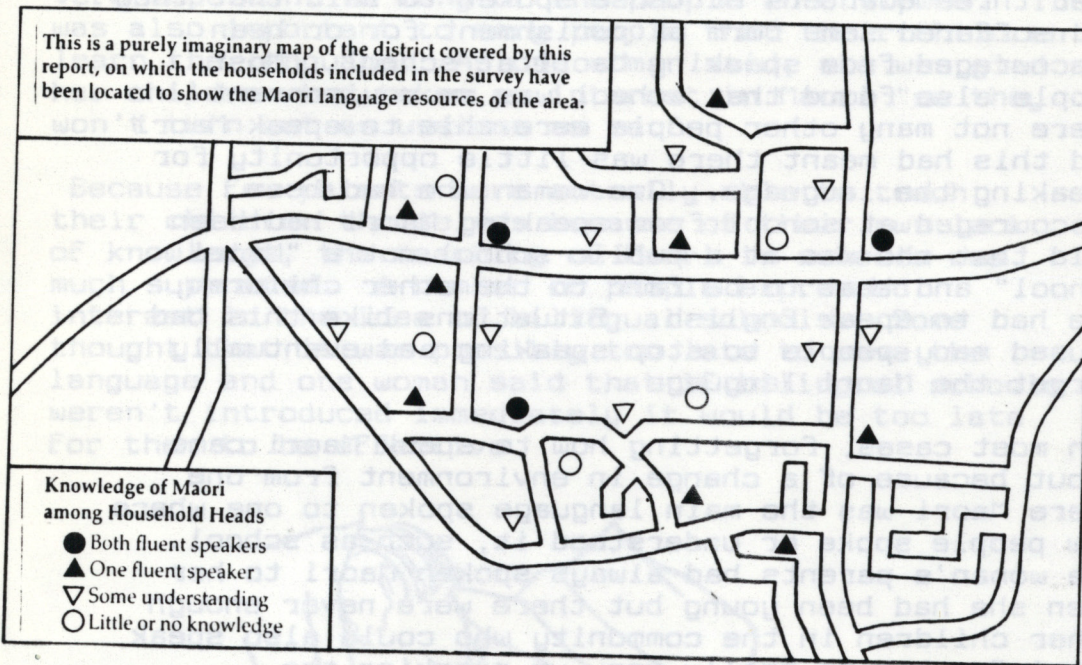


Maori Language in the Community

English was also the main language used in everyday conversations by the people we spoke to, in the community, with neighbours, visitors and children. Four people reported using some Maori with their visitors but only one person ever used anything other than English with neighbours.

Less than half, however, said that English was the only language used in certain religious ceremonies and about a third said that Maori was generally the only language used in these situations. This was also the case on the marae where whaikorero were carried out entirely in Maori and where more people said they were likely to use Maori for informal chatting than they would elsewhere.

If any two people included in our Feilding survey were to have met unexpectedly, the chances that they would have been able to have a conversation in Maori would have been about one in fifty. If both people had been adults, however, the chances would have been much higher - about one in seven.



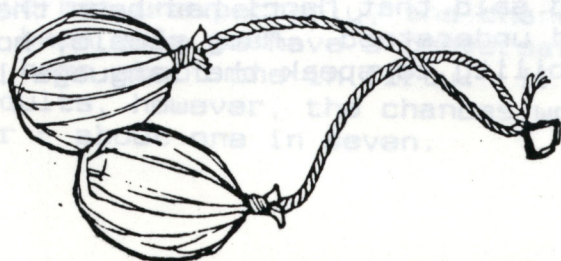
Attitudes Towards the Maori Language

Despite the low number of people we came across able to speak or understand Maori well, forty percent of those interviewed said that Maori had been the first language they had understood. Many people, however, had lost their ability to speak the language later on in life.

For a number of people, this had occurred at school. Over three quarters of those spoken to said that they had suffered some form of punishment for or been discouraged from speaking Maori at school. Most people also found that school was an environment where not many other people were able to speak Maori and this had meant there was little opportunity for speaking the language. One woman who had been discouraged at school from speaking Maori had been told that she was at a public school not a "Maori school" and that to be fair to the other children, she had to speak English. Situations like this had caused many people to stop speaking and eventually forget the Maori language.

In most cases, forgetting how to speak Maori came about because of a change in environment from one where Maori was the main language spoken to one where few people spoke or understood it, such as school. One woman's parents had always spoken Maori to her when she had been young but there were never enough other children in the community who could also speak Maori for her to really grow up speaking the language. She soon forgot what little she knew.

Another woman told us that she had been brought up in Kaikohe "at the time when everyone could speak Maori". When her family moved to Feilding, however, they all stopped speaking Maori as the main language there was English.



In spite of this, learning or relearning Maori was very important to many of the people interviewed. It was also important to many people that their children learn the language. As one woman said, she was glad her children had taken an interest in Maori "so they won't turn out as useless as me."

Because few parents were actually able to teach their children themselves because of their own lack of knowledge, the teaching of Maori in schools was much supported. A number of people expressed interest in the idea of bilingual schools. Some thought that it was possibly too late to save the language and one woman said that if bilingual schools weren't introduced immediately it would be too late for them to be effective.



Conclusion

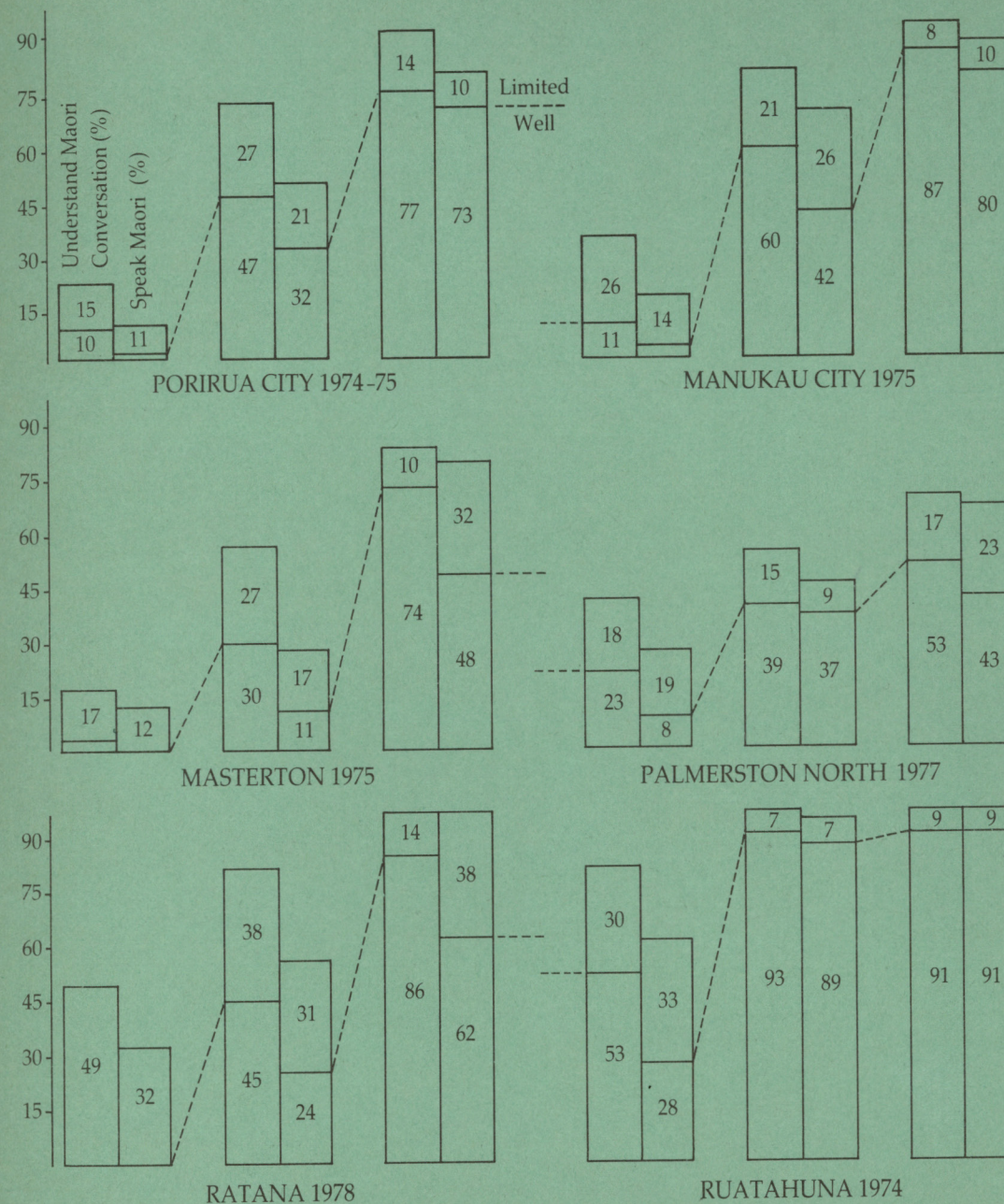
It is clear from this survey that there were only a few people in Feilding who could speak or understand Maori and the majority of these were over the age of 45. There were even fewer opportunities for those who were able to speak Maori fluently to actually do so. This sort of isolation was one of the main reasons why so many of those interviewed had forgotten how to speak the language. At the time of the survey, Maori still seemed to be a living language in the church and on the marae but in few other places in the community. It was, however, still a very important part of many people's lives. While there were few who could speak the language, there were also few who were completely indifferent about it. Many of those interviewed felt embarrassed or shy about their lack of knowledge of Maori and were particularly concerned that their children not turn out like them in this respect. Some grandparents were already trying to teach their mokopuna to speak the language and one person said their whole family was now trying to learn from their koroua. Hopefully, these attitudes can be sustained and nurtured so that by the time a bilingual school is introduced in this area it won't be too late to save the language.

This report was prepared by:
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Designed by Hone Whaanga (Ngati Kahungunu)

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Knowledge of Maori Language by Age Groups on 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.