

# TE TIROHANGA I TE KÖREROTANGA 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

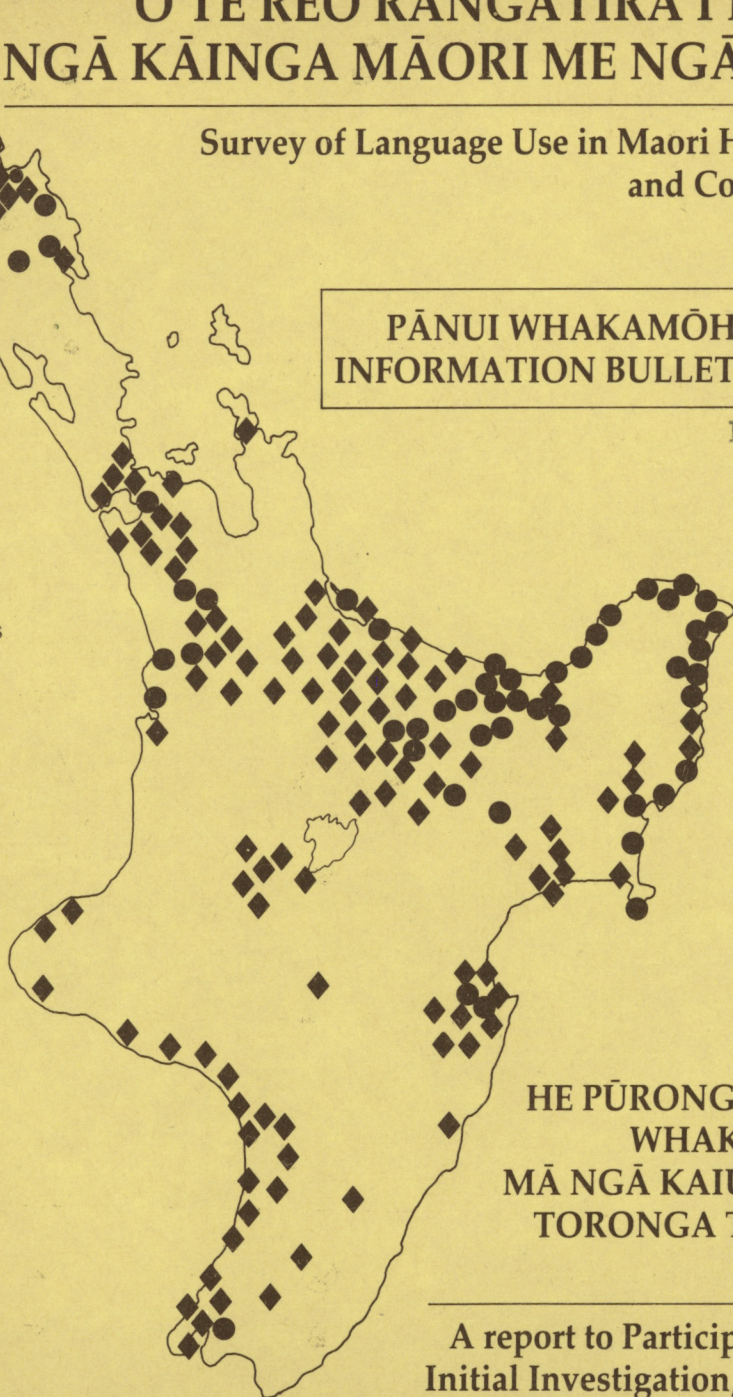
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Localities in which  
ten or more households  
were visited

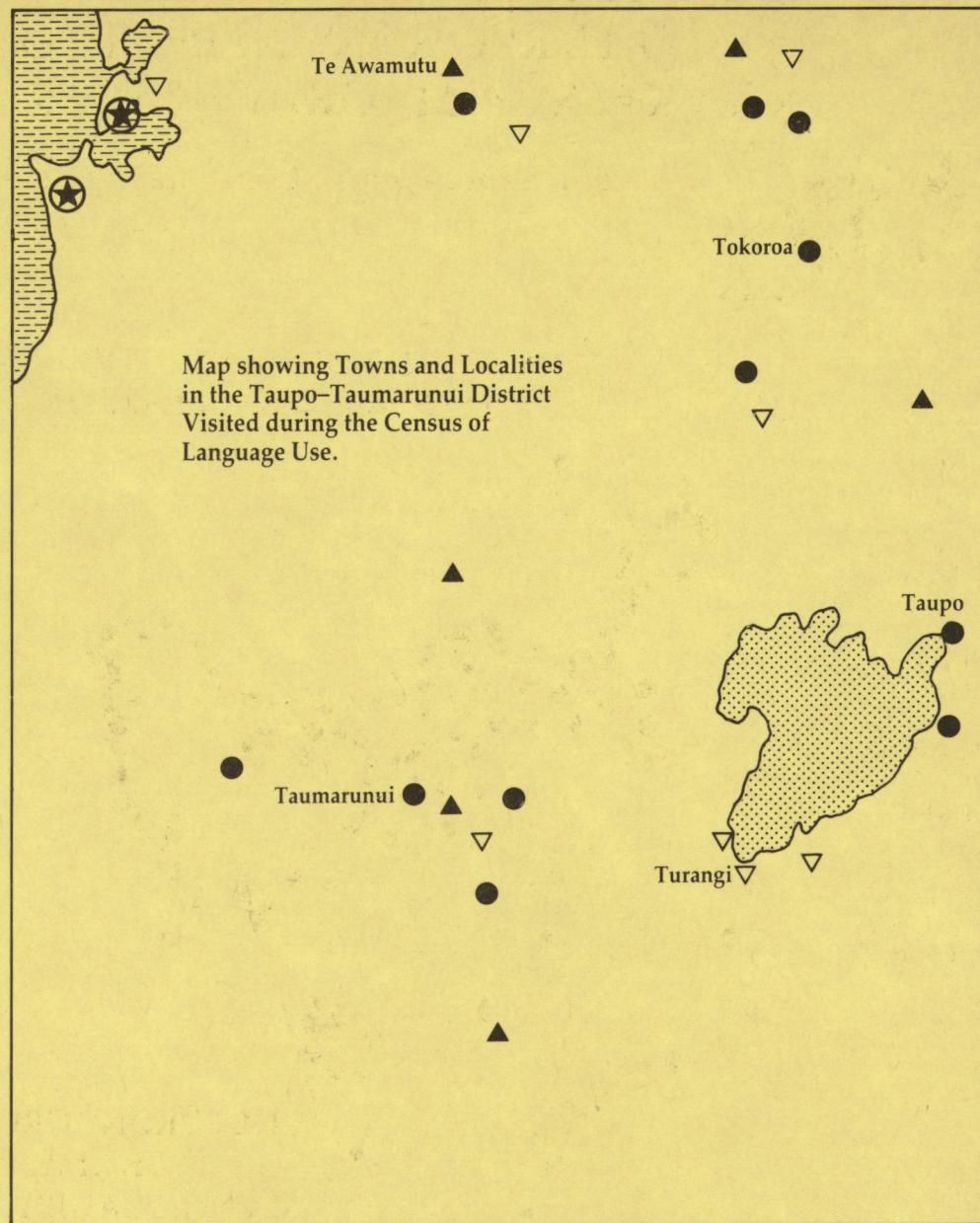
● Two thirds or  
more of adults were  
fluent speakers of  
Maori

◆ 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

### THE MAORI LANGUAGE IN MANGAKINO, WHAKAMARU AND ATIAMURI

In May 1978, 28 families in Mangakino, Whakamaru and Atiamuri were visited in the course of the NZCER Maori language survey of North Island Maori communities. The 16 families in Mangakino (with 98 people, 95 of Maori descent) and two in Whakamaru (13 people, all Maori) represented about one-eighth of the Maori population of those districts at the time. Ten families with 60 people (53 of Maori ancestry, about half the Maori population of the area) were visited in Atiamuri.

A dozen different iwi were mentioned as their main iwi by the people we visited in Mangakino and Whakamaru; the largest were Waikato (with 39 members, about a third of the people we visited), and Ngati Porou (with 16). Only two of the 33 household heads had been brought up in these districts. In Atiamuri, eight different iwi were mentioned; the ones with most members were Ngapuhi (10), Tuwharetoa (7), Ngati Porou (7), and Ngati Raukawa (6). None of the household heads were originally from that part of the country.

The interviewers were Evelyn Te Uira (Waikato), Phillip Hawera (Tuhoe, Ngaiterangi & Ngati Awa), and Shannon Wetere (Waikato). Two interviews were in Maori (both in Mangakino); the rest were in English.

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*Knowledge of Spoken Maori in Mangakino & Whakamaru (1978)*

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Age Group	Fluent Speakers	Understand Easily	Limited Understanding	No Knowledge
45 years & over	7 (88%)	8 (100%)	0 (...)	0 (...)
25-44 yrs	11 (46%)	14 (58%)	5 (17%)	5 (15%)
15-24 yrs	1 (6%)	3 (17%)	10 (56%)	5 (28%)
2-14 yrs	0 (...)	2 (3%)	32 (55%)	24 (41%)
Overall	19 (18%)	27 (25%)	47 (44%)	34 (31%)

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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**

*Ability to Speak and Understand Maori*

As you can see from the tables on these two pages, only a few of the people in the homes we visited in these districts could speak Maori fluently, and these were all adults. Eight of the 19 household heads we interviewed in Atiamuri were native-speakers of Maori; three of the 11 in Atiamuri also had Maori as the first language they understood as children. However, only one of these native-speakers of Maori had first learned to read and write in Maori. (This person lived in Mangakino.)

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*Knowledge of Spoken Maori in Atiamuri (1978)*

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Age Group	Fluent Speakers	Understand Easily	Limited Understanding	No Knowledge
45 years & over	0 (...)	0 (...)	1 (100%)	0 (...)
25-44 yrs	4 (26%)	7 (41%)	8 (47%)	2 (12%)
15-24 yrs	1 (14%)	2 (29%)	3 (43%)	2 (29%)
2-14 yrs	0 (...)	1 (3%)	11 (34%)	20 (63%)
Overall	5 (9%)	10 (18%)	23 (40%)	24 (42%)

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

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*Use of the Maori Language in the Household*

English was the main language of most of the households we visited in these districts, although four families in Mangakino who still had dependent children said they used a little Maori once in a while when all the family were together, and one (in Atiamuri) used Maori about as much as English within the family (as did one Mangakino family with no young children). Maori-language resources were rather thinly spread out among the families we visited; the chart on page 5 shows that overall only half the families we visited in these areas had at least one senior member who was fluent in Maori: eight of the 13 families in Mangakino, both Whakamaru families, and three of the ten families in Atiamuri.

Not surprisingly, therefore, English was the main language used between parents and children in most families, although about half the parents we

interviewed in Mangakino, and one in Atiamuri, said they spoke Maori to their children occasionally; however even these said that their children spoke to them only in English. Four Mangakino household heads said that they often spoke Maori with visitors, and two Atiamuri families also used Maori with visitors occasionally; for the other families, however, English was the only language they would expect to speak with their visitors.

### Maori Language in the Community

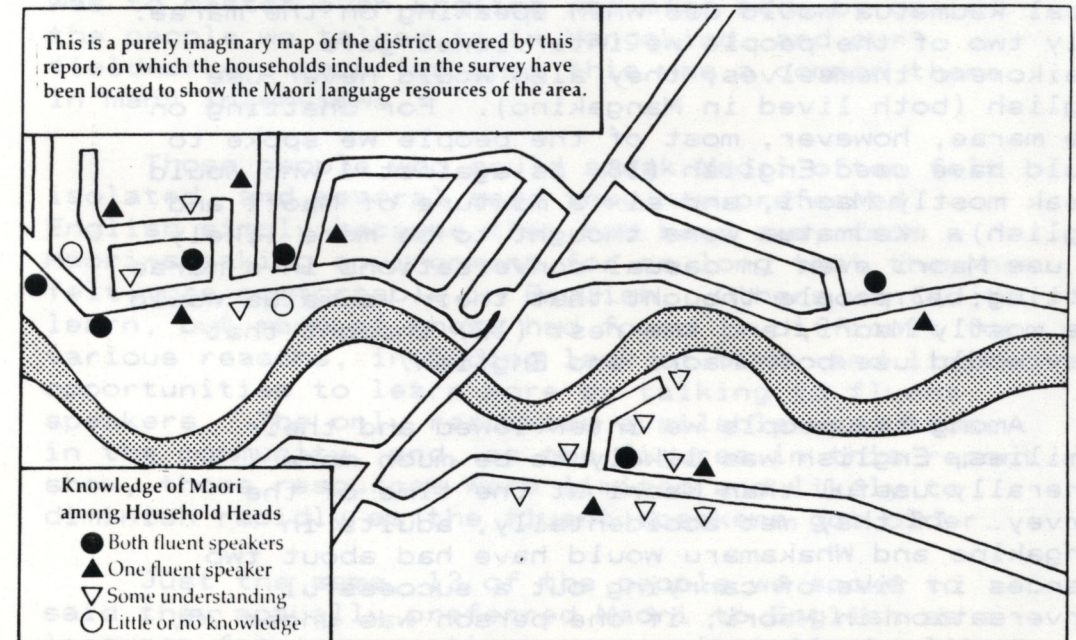
One person in Atiamuri told us that there was not much Maori spoken in the district; he could speak Maori, but seldom had any reason to do so. This seems to have been true in the other districts as well. Even people who were learning Maori said that they found it difficult because there was "no-one to practise on". However, one or two others had better experiences; one in Atiamuri said she had become interested in the language because her husband spoke Maori "to his mates", and another said he appreciated the patience of the Maori-speakers he knew who went out of their way to speak Maori to him: "I'll be one of the fortunate ones to be bilingual", he commented.

Many of the people we interviewed had very pleasant memories of their school days, as far as speaking Maori at school was concerned, although four of the native speakers of Maori had been punished for using the language in the school grounds. However, nine others said that they had been encouraged to use or learn Maori at school. This was quite a pleasant contrast to the experience of people we interviewed in some other places. (The school experiences of Maori-speakers in various parts of the North Island are set out and discussed in a paper, "The Kahawai and the Shark", by Nena

Benton, available from Te Wahanga Maori, NZCER.)

Several people mentioned that their children were learning Maori at school, and most of them said that they were pleased about this. One mother in Mangakino said that it was o.k. for the children, but she herself didn't care much one way or the other; however the majority probably would have agreed with the Mangakino man who told us "the children are bloody lucky -- in my day we got the cane", even if they hadn't suffered his fate.

For adults, as for children, Maori seemed to have become a language for special occasions in all these communities. Four people we spoke to in Mangakino said they regularly spoke Maori to their neighbours, but all the rest, there and elsewhere, used only English. Maori was encountered more often



in church services; 17 of the household heads reported that Maori was used at least part of the time in religious services they attended, as against eight who normally attended services conducted only in English. For saying grace, and also in prayers for the sick, nine people said they would use Maori some or most of the time, against 19 who would use only English. A few more would use Maori for prayers at the opening or closing of meetings: seven said they would always use Maori, and five would use Maori sometimes, while 16 said they would use only English.

Maori was much more secure on the marae, at least as far as the formal parts of marae ceremonies were concerned. One member of a marae committee told us that English should be used even there: "it's rude to speak Maori when people don't understand". However, *everyone*, even this person, agreed that Maori was the *only* language that the local kaumatua would use when speaking on the marae. Only two of the people we interviewed gave whaikorero themselves; they also would never use English (both lived in Mangakino). For chatting on the marae, however, most of the people we spoke to would have used English (18, as against 4 who would speak mostly Maori, and six a mixture of Maori and English). Kaumatua were thought to be more likely to use Maori even in casual conversations in a marae setting; 17 people thought that their kaumatua would use mostly Maori, and the rest (12) thought that they would use both Maori and English.

Among the people we interviewed and their families, English was likely to be much more generally useful than Maori at the time of the survey. If they met accidentally, adults in Mangakino and Whakamaru would have had about two chances in five of carrying out a successful conversation in Maori; if one person was under 25, the chances were about one in twenty. In Atiamuri,

they would have been much lower; about one in ten for people 25 or older, and no more than one in 50 if one of the pair was younger than that. In all these communities, English was the only language children were likely to have been able to use for chatting with each other.

#### *Attitudes Towards the Maori Language*

While we had the impression that the majority of the people we spoke to were happy with recent developments, like the teaching of some Maori to their children at school, many were unsure as to how valuable the language really was. One person from Whakamaru remarked that they didn't know much Maori, but the language "was dying out anyway -- it's difficult enough to cope with English, let alone Maori as well". A similar comment about how hard it was to master even English was also made by one of the people we talked to in Mangakino, and our fieldworkers reported that this was a common theme in many interviews.

Those people who could speak Maori often felt isolated, and several said they now preferred English simply because they had been away from a Maori-speaking environment for so long that they now felt more comfortable in English. Others wanted to learn, but many of these had found it difficult for various reasons, including lack of time, and limited opportunities to learn more by talking to fluent speakers. The only resources available were those in the community, and, as the figures in this report show, those resources were limited and likely to diminish rapidly as the fluent speakers got older.

Just the same, 13 of the people we spoke to said they actually preferred Maori to English as a language for conversations, as against 11 who liked English best, two who wished they were able to speak

Maori fluently enough, and four who liked both languages equally. For reading and writing, though, 18 preferred English, seven Maori, three didn't mind which language they used, and again two said they would have liked to have been able to use mainly Maori, but were not fluent enough to do so.

### Conclusion

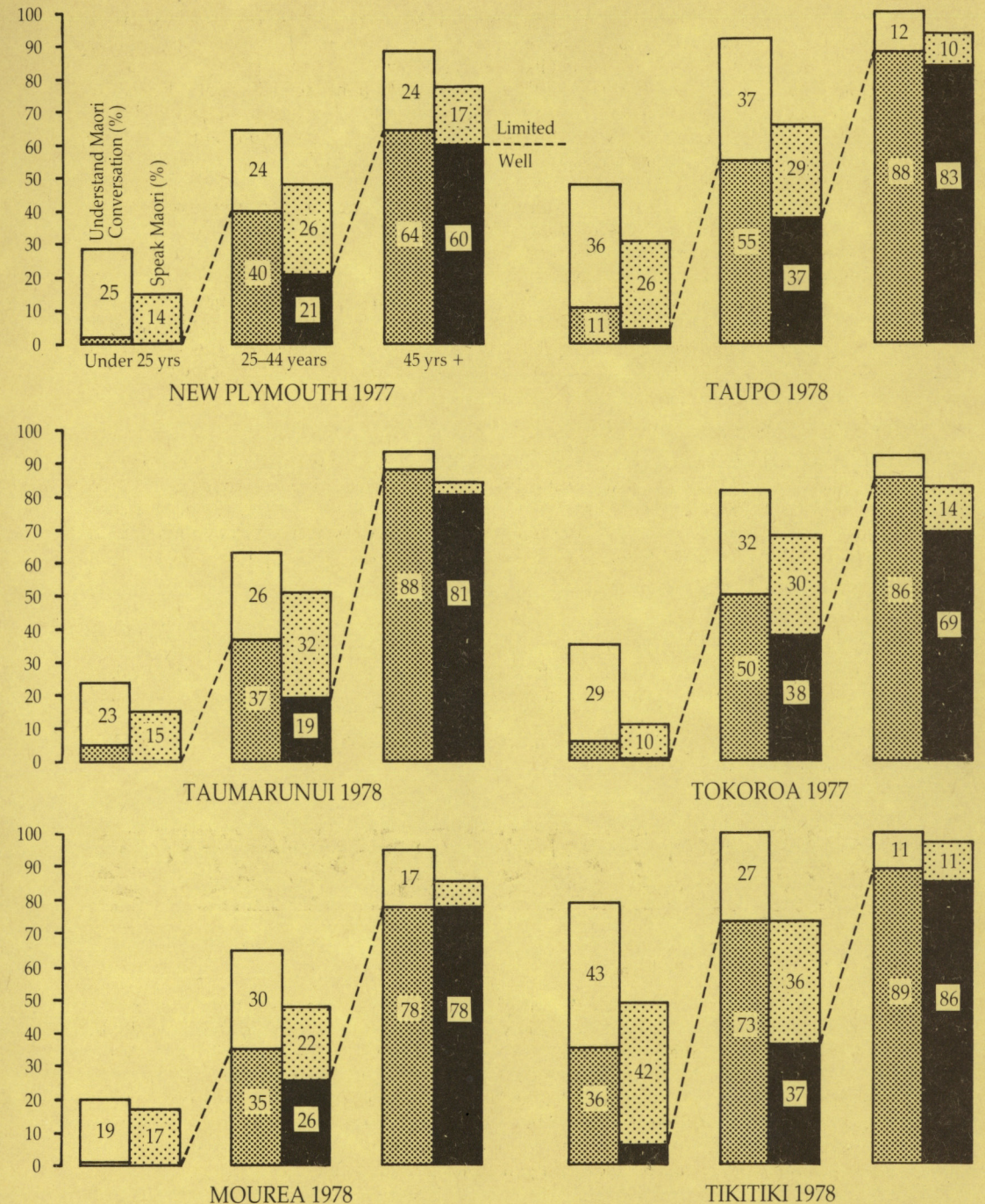
The Maori people in these communities were suffering the effects of their isolation from any large Maori-speaking centre. Most of their neighbours and local friends could only speak English, and they themselves were mostly immigrants to the district from other areas. By the time of the survey, the schools at least were teaching a little Maori, but this was hardly enough to bring the language back to life. Almost all the other linguistic influences, even in homes where parents could speak Maori, were English: radio and especially television would have been quite destructive to attempts to interest children in becoming really proficient speakers of Maori. It is for communities such as these that the Commission for the Maori Language, established in 1987, will have to fight hardest for a fair share of broadcasting time to be devoted to programmes in Maori for adults and children, fluent speakers and learners.

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 This report was prepared by Richard Benton

Field Records abstracted by Paula Martin (Ngai Tahu)  
 Design & Production: Hone Whaanga (Ngati Kahungunu)

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 February 1988 [140]

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.