

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

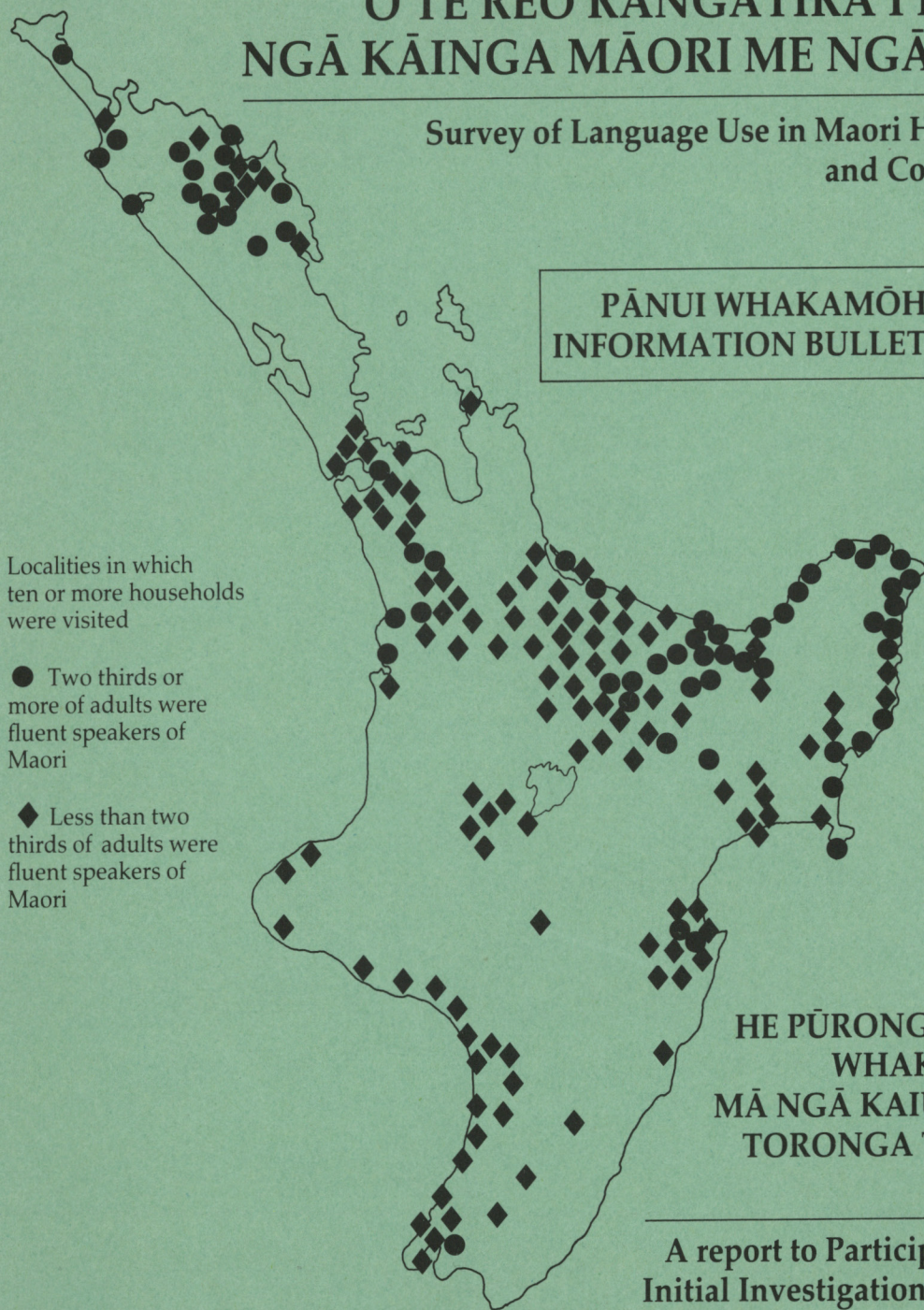
PĀNUI WHAKAMŌHIO
INFORMATION BULLETIN

2

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 OTAKI, MANAKAU, KUKU, AND POROUTAWHAO

Fieldwork for the census of language use in Maori communities was conducted in 26 households in Otaki township in May 1975, and in 24 households in the neighbouring communities of Manakau, Kuku, and Poroutawhao in July 1978. Ten interviews (all in Otaki township) were conducted partly or entirely in Maori, the remainder were conducted in English.

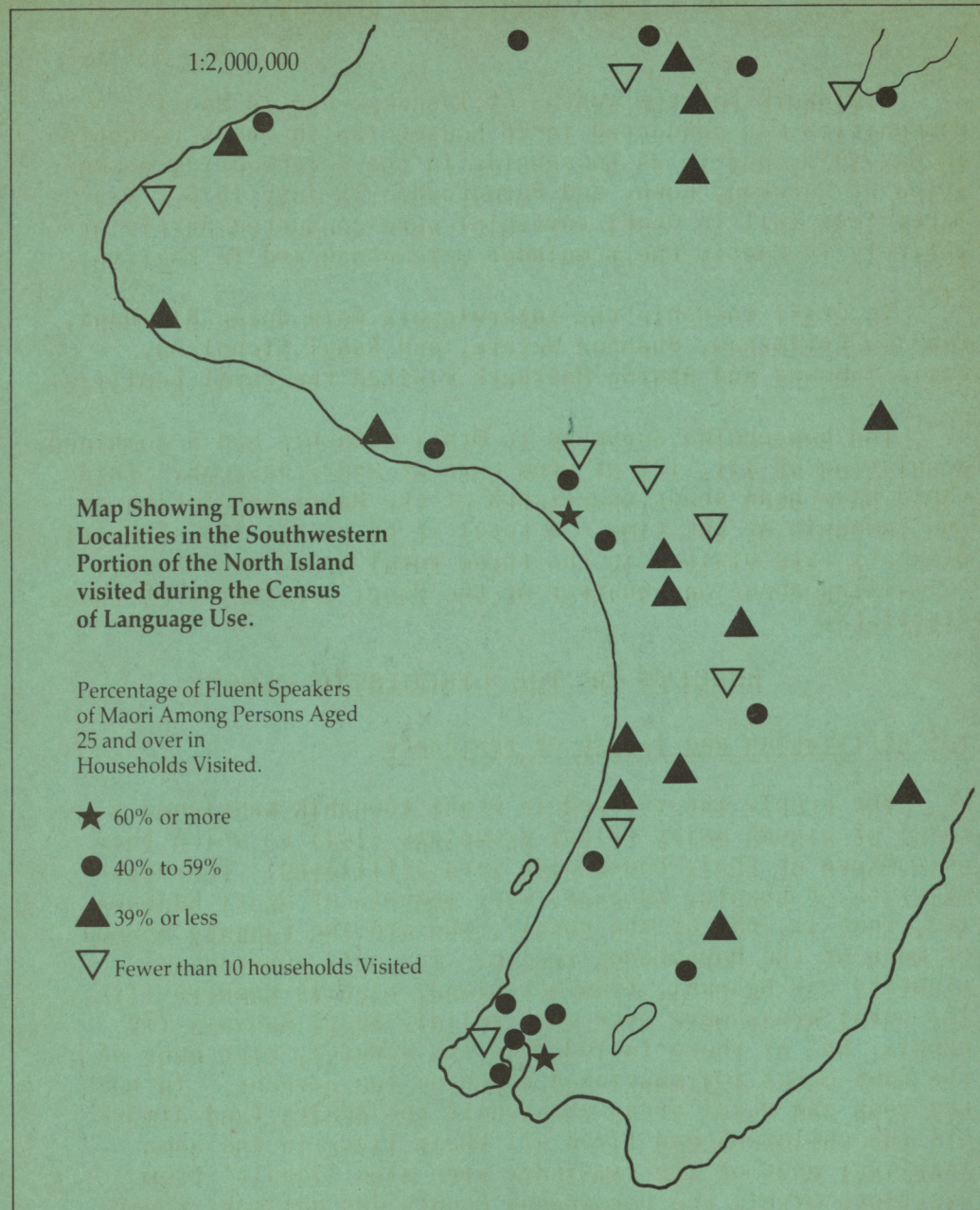
In Otaki township the interviewers were Susan Rikihana, Candice Scrimshaw, Shannon Wetere, and Rangi Nicholson. Hiria Tumoana and Sharon Moerkerk visited the rural families.

The households surveyed in Otaki township had a combined population of 131, 125 of whom were of Maori descent. This would have been about one-eighth of the Maori population of the township at the time. A total of 88 people (84 of Maori descent) were visited in the three rural areas mentioned, comprising about one-quarter of the Maori population of those districts.

RESULTS OF THE LINGUISTIC CENSUS

Iwi affiliation and length of residence

The people interviewed in Otaki township mentioned a total of eleven major tribal groupings (*iwi*) to which they or members of their households were affiliated. The vast majority of people, however, were members of Ngati Raukawa (89, that is, 68% of the total), who are the *tangata whenua* of much of the Horowhenua region. The only substantial minority was Ngapuhi, from Northland, with 14 members (11%). The rural areas were even more solidly Ngati Raukawa (72 people, 86% of those included in the survey), with none of the four other *iwi* mentioned reaching ten percent. In both the town and rural areas about half the adults (and almost all the children) had lived all their lives in the same locality; most of the remainder were also 'locals' from districts within the Horowhenua County and adjacent towns.



KNOWLEDGE OF SPOKEN MAORI IN OTAKI TOWNSHIP (1975)

<u>Age Group</u>	<u>Fluent Speakers</u>	<u>Understand Easily</u>	<u>Limited Understanding</u>	<u>No Knowledge</u>
45 and over	15(60%)	17(68%)	5(20%)	3(12%)
25 to 44	7(27%)	10(39%)	5(19%)	11(42%)
Under 25	4(5%)	15(19%)	27(34%)	38(48%)
Overall	26(20%)	43(32%)	37(28%)	52(40%)

(Numbers and percentages refer to those interviewed during the linguistic survey. Percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number).

KNOWLEDGE OF SPOKEN MAORI IN RURAL AREAS NEAR OTAKI (1978)

<u>Age Group</u>	<u>Fluent Speakers</u>	<u>Understand Easily</u>	<u>Limited Understanding</u>	<u>No Knowledge</u>
45 and over	7(29%)	14(58%)	8(33%)	2(8%)
25 to 44	2(15%)	3(23%)	3(23%)	7(54%)
Under 25	0	1(2%)	10(21%)	37(77%)
Overall	9(11%)	18(21%)	21(25%)	46(54%)

Ability to speak and understand Maori

As can be seen from the information presented in the tables at the top of these two pages, a substantial proportion of the Maori population in the Otaki area has some knowledge of the Maori language, although it is only among the older age-group in the township itself (those people who would now be over fifty years of age) where fluent speakers of Maori are likely to be in a majority.

Use of Maori language within the household

English was the main language for communication in most of the households surveyed. The general language of the family was mostly or entirely English in all the rural households, and in 15 (79%) of the 19 households in Otaki township in which there were dependent children. However, most families had some contact with Maori-speaking people and the Maori language, and several families mentioned attempts by their members to gain a knowledge of the language through language classes in marae or school settings. In one 'childless' rural household Maori was used with Maori-speaking visitors, and the language was used regularly by some members of 8 Otaki households, that is, in four of the seven where there were no dependent children, and also four of those where children were also present.

The Maori language in the community

Even though few people spoke Maori at home, the language retained important symbolic and ceremonial functions for most families in a number of public and private contexts -- on the

marae, in prayers for special occasions, and in church services. Its usefulness as a general means of communication was limited by the small proportion of competent speakers in the community. In the town, the chances of two members of the Maori community being able to converse successfully in Maori with each other in a random encounter were about one in four if both persons were adults, or one in fifteen if one was an adult and the other a child. In the rural areas, about one chance adult encounter in eight could have led to successful communication in Maori, but the language could not have been used conversationally with much hope of success with or between children.

Attitudes towards the Maori language

Quite a number of families, both in the town and in the country districts, told our interviewers that they regretted the loss of the language, and were trying to do something about this by encouraging their children to take an interest in Maori; some parents were themselves studying Maori at night classes. There seemed to be a strong general support for moves to promote the use of the Maori language in the schools and in the community generally (one informant in the 1978 survey specifically mentioned bilingual education in this regard). A few families thought that such moves were too late -- the Maori people were now living in a Pakeha world, and the Maori language belonged to a dead past. This was certainly a minority view, and a much larger number of

The three sets of graphs for each locality on the page opposite represent the under 25, 25 to 44, and over 45-years-old age groups, respectively.

parents said they would like to know much more about the Maori language themselves.

Those who did have a command of Maori, however, had often found difficulty in passing their knowledge on to their children -- there was a widespread feeling that the outside world was indifferent or even hostile to the maintenance of the Maori language. The children, sensing this characteristic of the environment, tended to reject the Maori language -- it could not compete with English, even in the home. Although one informant took the view that Maori should not be taught in schools -- this task belonged to the marae -- a large number obviously looked to the schools as allies in creating a more favourable environment for maintaining or reviving the language.

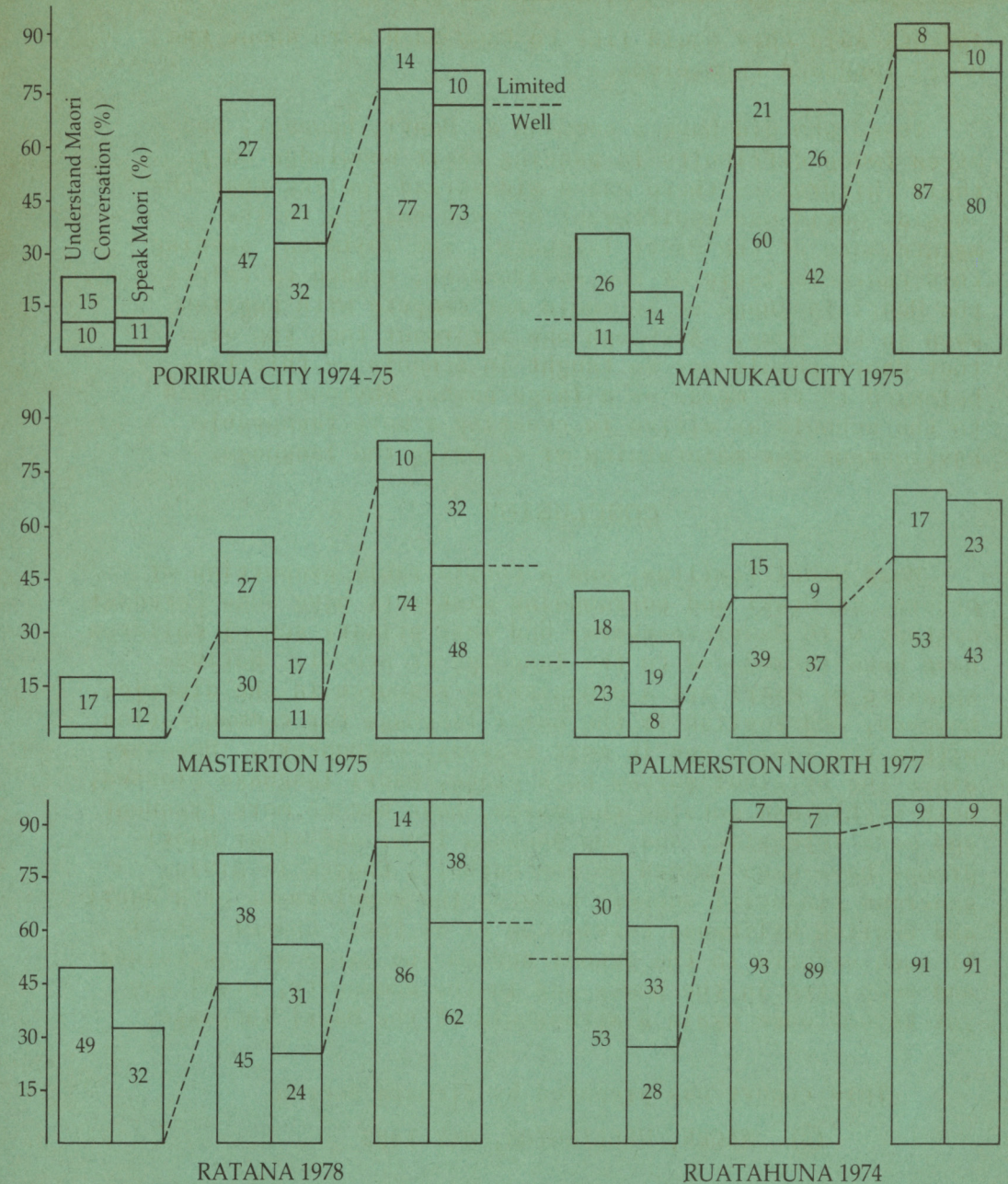
CONCLUSION

Most Maori families, and a considerable proportion of others, in Otaki and surrounding districts have some personal contact with Maori-speakers, and most primary school children have been introduced to the language at school. Native-speakers of Maori are a diminishing resource in the district, however, and English is the major language for communication within the family and in most everyday encounters. However, since the original survey took place, Maori language classes, both within and outside the marae, have become more frequent and more intensive, and the Raukawa Trust and other Maori groups have been joined by the Catholic Church in giving generous financial support towards the development of a Maori and English bilingual curriculum at St Peter Chanel School. If such efforts in the school and on the marae are sustained and supported in the homes and in the community, Otaki may yet become once again a stronghold of the Maori language.

This report was prepared by Richard Benton

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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.