

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

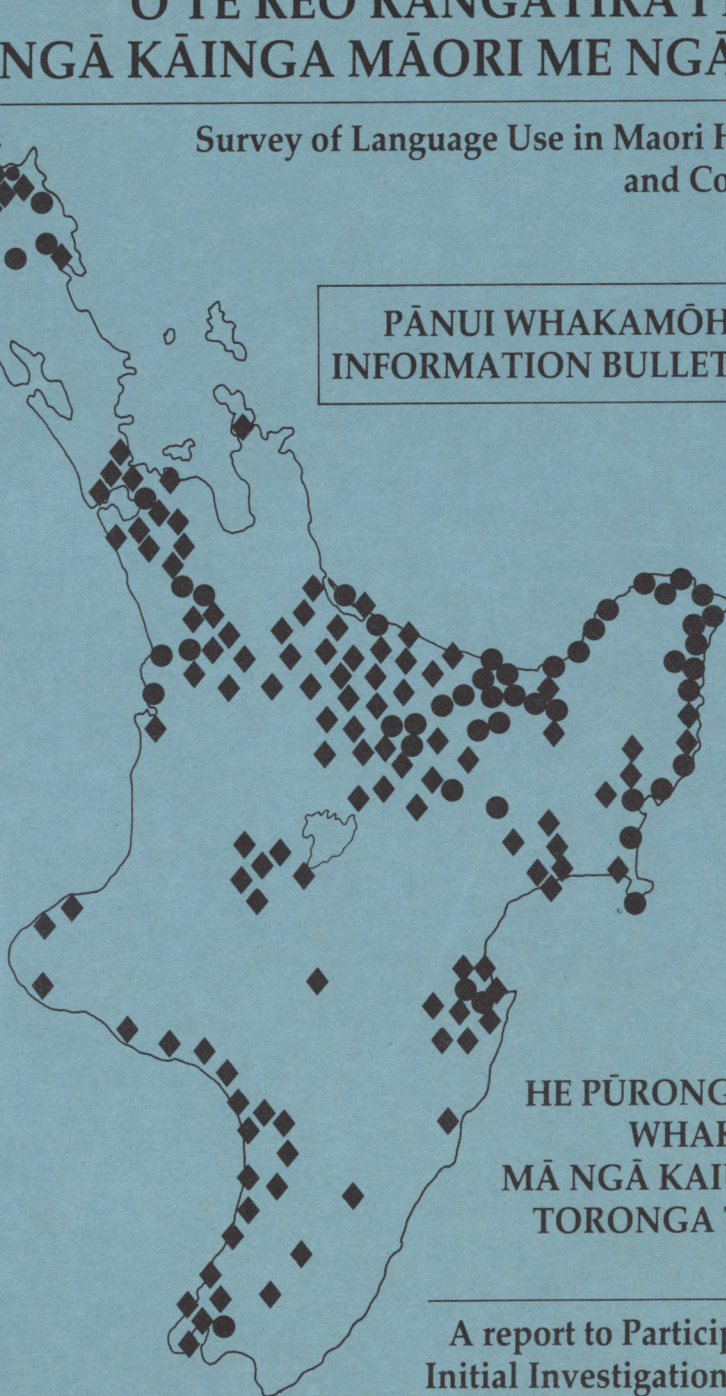
PĀNUI WHAKAMŌHIO
INFORMATION BULLETIN

60

Localities in which
ten or more households
were visited

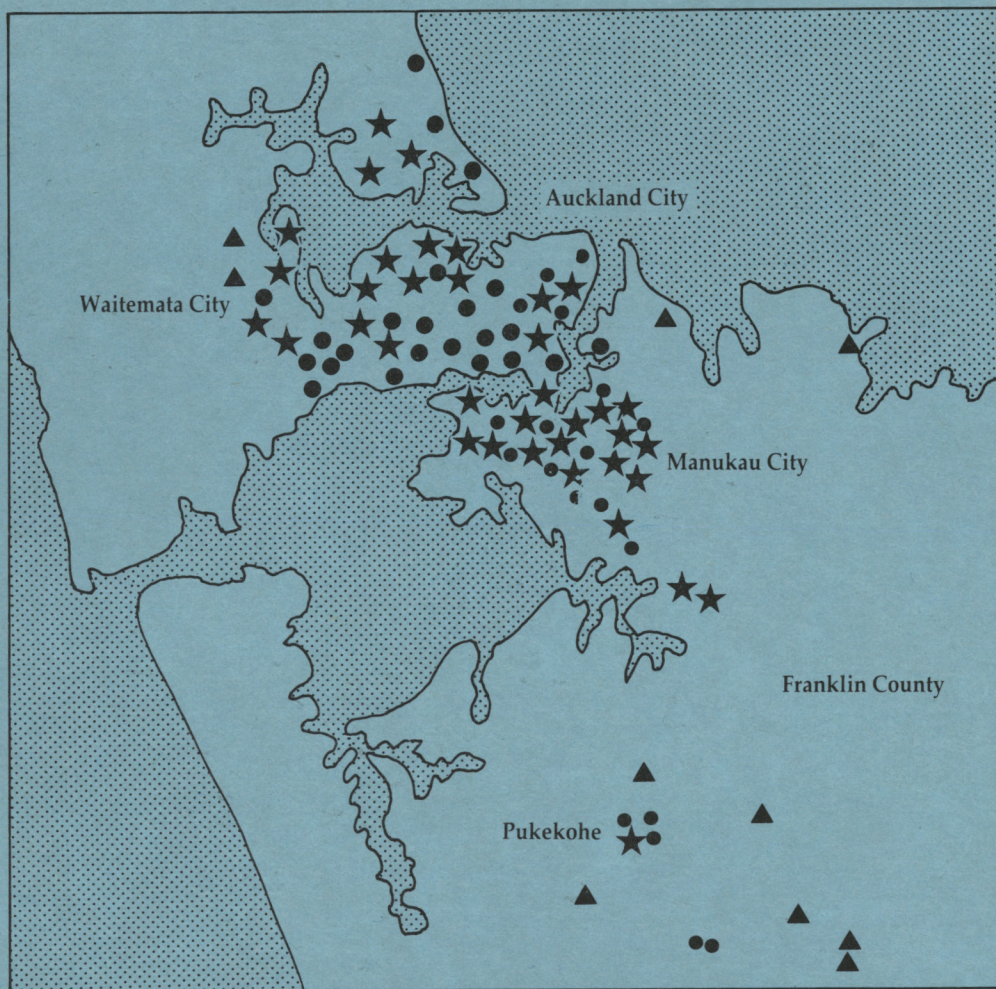
● Two thirds or
more of adults were
fluent speakers of
Maori

◆ 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



Maori Speakers in the Greater Auckland Area

This map shows the approximate number of people able to understand Maori with ease in the Greater Auckland Area, based on the results of the Socio-Linguistic Survey (1974-76). Each star ★ represents 500 people, and each dot ● a further 100 people. Small towns and rural localities visited in the survey with less than 100 speakers are represented by a triangle ▲.

THE MAORI LANGUAGE IN PAPA KURA

Fieldwork for the census of language use in Maori communities took place in 47 households in Papakura in January 1976. The interviewers were Audrey Cooper (Waikato), Evelyn Te Uira (Waikato), Raiha Smith (Ngati Kahungunu), Candy Scrimshaw (Ngati Kahungunu), May Adlam (Ngapuhi) and Alicia White (Tuhoe). Forty-four interviews were carried out in English; the rest were partly in Maori and partly in English.

The households surveyed had a total population of 297, and 296 of these people were of Maori descent. This was about 10 percent of the Maori population of Papakura at the time.

RESULTS OF THE LINGUISTIC SURVEY

Iwi Affiliation

The people interviewed mentioned 15 main iwi to which they or members of their households belonged. Waikato with 112 members or 38 percent of the total was the largest iwi in the survey. Ngapuhi with 105 members or 35 percent of the total was the next largest.

Ability To Speak And Understand Maori

The table on the next page shows that a fifth of the people surveyed spoke Maori fluently while a third of them understood the language well. More than three-quarters of these good speakers were adults over 25, and there were very few speakers of Maori under 25. About one-eighth of the under 25 age group understood the language well, but most of the rest knew very little Maori at the time of the survey.

KNOWLEDGE OF SPOKEN MAORI IN PAKAPURA (1976)

Age Group	Fluent Speakers		Understand Easily		Limited Understanding		No Knowledge	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
45 & over	19	86	20	91	1	5	1	5
25-44	32	47	47	69	12	18	9	13
15-24	1	3	8	20	19	48	13	33
2-14	6	4	15	10	51	35	78	55
Overall	58	21	90	33	83	30	101	37

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

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The Use Of Maori Language In The Household

English was the main language for everyday use in most households visited. There were 43 homes with dependent children, and in 31 of them people spoke mostly or only English. In ten homes more English than Maori was spoken, while in the rest both languages were used equally often.

It was the same in the four childless households visited. English was the main language spoken in three homes, while the people in the other home spoke Maori and English equally often.

The Maori Language In The Community

English was also the main language spoken in the community. The very old were the people most likely to speak Maori regularly, but like all fluent Maori-speakers in Papakura they had to use

English more often as by far the most people that they talked with spoke only English. Maori people under 30 talked among themselves nearly always in English. Although quite a few of this age group understood Maori well, they thought that English was easier and quicker to talk in.

As nearly all shopkeepers, neighbours, teachers, doctors, and workmates were Pakeha, all dealings with these people were carried out in English also.

The Maori language, however, was still important in ceremonies on the marae and in other Maori meetings. Many of the people belonged to the Ngati Papakura Marae Committee and looked forward to having their own marae in the area. There, they could speak as much Maori as they liked, without having to worry about all those people in the community who had no time for the language.

If any two members of the Maori community in Papakura met unexpectedly, there was one chance in ten that they could understand each other in Maori. If both people were adults over 25, the chances were two in five while it was very unlikely that people under 25 could speak in Maori with each other.

Attitudes Towards The Language

Although English had replaced Maori as the everyday language in the household and community, the Maori language was still important in the lives of most people we interviewed. Many of them were sorry they knew so little Maori, because, as they grew older, they realized the importance of the language to their culture. Some parents were so keen to teach their children Maori that they were attending classes at night school, on marae and in private homes to get to know the language better. Since the children had little chance to learn Maori, many people wanted it taught in schools. One person said that Maori should be a compulsory subject for all children at the primary school level.

The people in the survey agreed that everyone had to know English if they wanted to do well in the town or city, but they would also have been pleased with the Maori Language and Cultural Courses that the Department of Maori Affairs had recently started in the area.

Young adults and parents under 35, most of whom had little knowledge of Maori at the time of the survey, were especially interested in finding ways of learning how to use the language well.

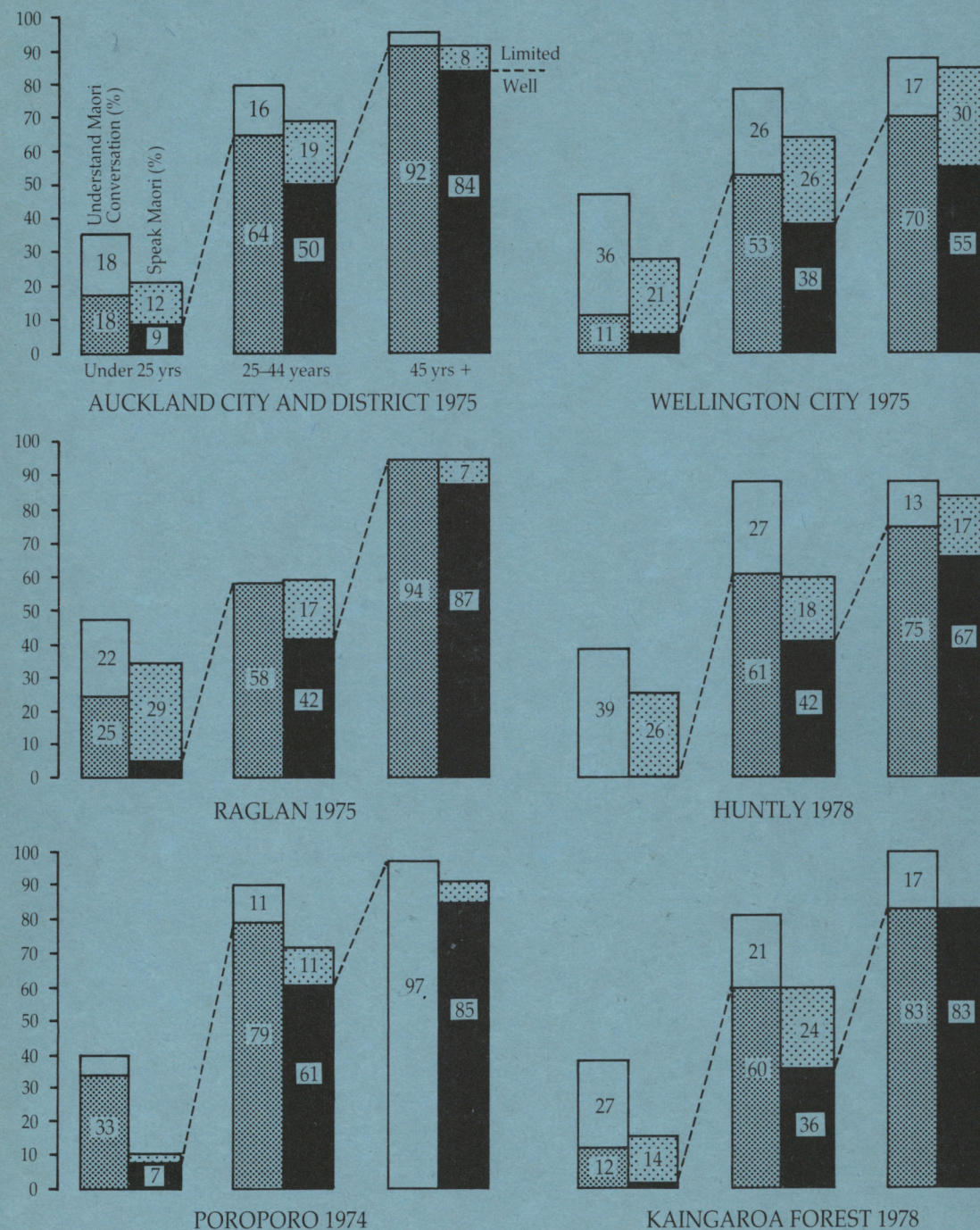
CONCLUSION

At the time of the survey, the people in Papakura knew about the same amount of Maori as did people in other cities and towns throughout the country. Those who spoke Maori and understood the language well were mainly adults over 25, while many people between 25-40 knew only a little Maori. Many of them were worried that the language might die out. Although Maori had an important part to play in ceremonies on the marae, it could not catch up on English as the everyday language, without help. Some people said that help would come from more Maori language programmes on the radio and TV as well as from articles in Maori in newspapers and magazines. Not only would these help people who were learning the language, but it would also show their children that the Maori language has an important part to play in their lives. Since this time a lot more Maori language courses have been set up in schools, on marae and in the community. These are helping to prevent Maori from dying out in the area.

This report was prepared by Lee Smith (Ngati Kahungunu).

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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.