

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

82

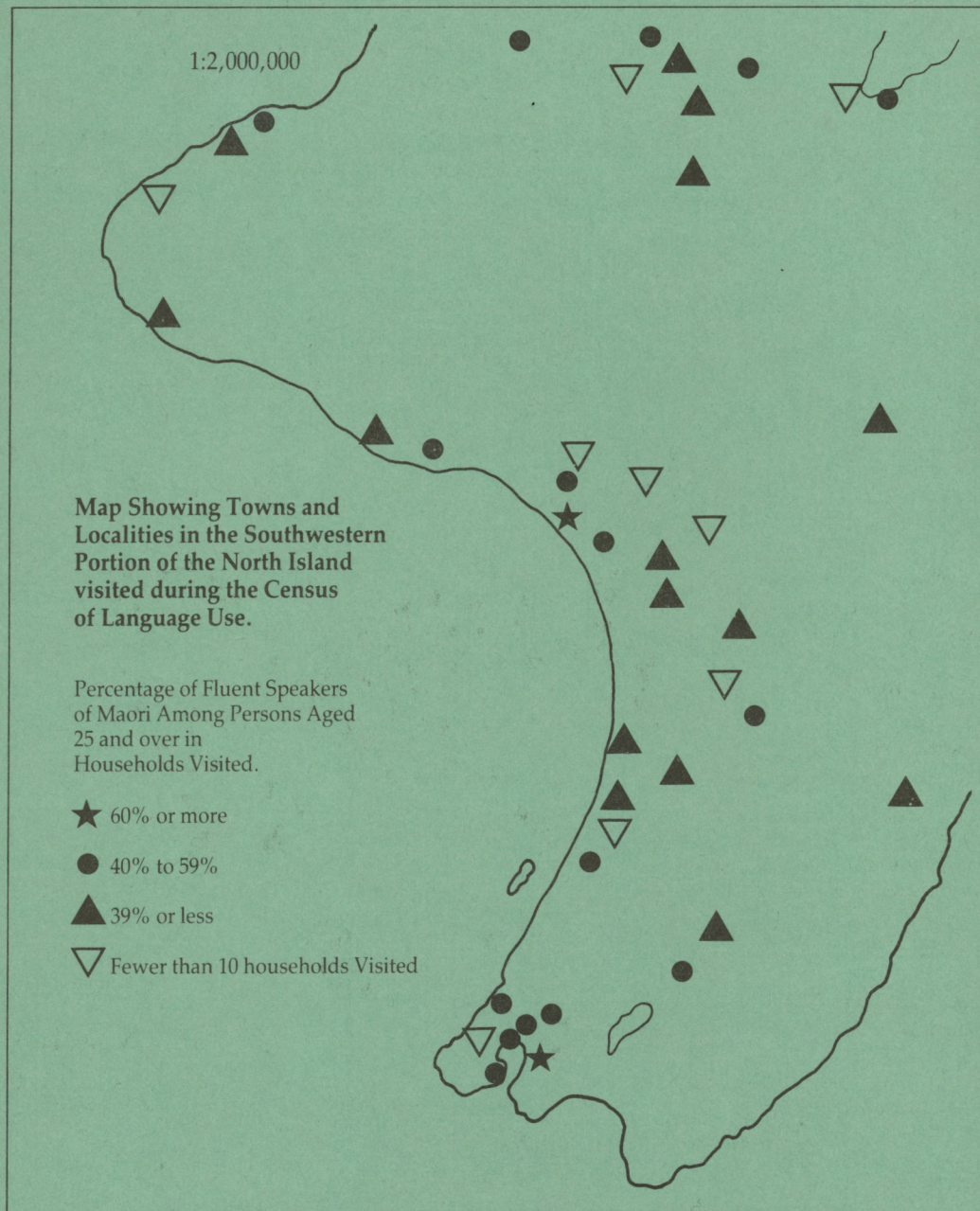
Localities in which
ten or more households
were visited

● 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 PATEA

Fieldwork for the census of language use in Maori communities took place in 22 households in Patea in November 1977. The interviewers were Hiria Tumoana (Tuhoe), Sharon Moerkerk (Maniapoto), Tom Rangihuna (Ngati Porou), Allan Hawea (Ngati Awa), Tawini Rangihau (Tuhoe) and Himiona Henry (Waikato/Maniapoto). Nineteen interviews were carried out in English; the rest were partly or entirely in Maori.

The households surveyed had a total population of 129 of whom 127 were of Maori descent. This was about one-tenth of the total Maori population of Patea at the time.

RESULTS OF THE LINGUISTIC SURVEY

Iwi Affiliation

The people interviewed mentioned 18 major iwi to which they or members of their households belonged. The largest iwi was Nga Rauru with 44 people, or a third of the total. Ngati Ruanui was the next largest iwi, with 24 people or a fifth of the total.

Ability to Speak and Understand Maori

The table on the next page shows that most people who spoke and understood Maori well were kaumatua over 45. Less than ten percent of the people under this age understood the language well, and three-quarters of the people under 25 knew no Maori at the time of the survey.

KNOWLEDGE OF SPOKEN MAORI IN PATEA (1977)

Age Group	Fluent Speakers		Understand Easily		Limited Understanding		No Knowledge	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
45 & over	10	77	11	85	2	15	0	
25-44	4	14	7	25	13	46	2	29
15-24	2	10	2	10	7	33	12	57
2-14	1	2	1	2	10	17	47	81
Overall	17	14	21	18	32	27	67	56

Numbers and percentages refer to members of the 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 spoken in most households visited in Patea. There were 21 homes with dependent children, and in 17 of them people spoke about everyday matters mostly or only in that language. In the others, although Maori was often used by parents, English was still the language spoken most of the time.

There was only one childless household visited, and the couple living there spoke both English and Maori equally often.

The Maori Language in the Community

Most talk in the community, at work, and between neighbours and friends was in English. Although kaumatua liked to speak in their mother tongue with friends and relatives who spoke Maori, most of the people they spoke with in Patea understood only

English. It was, therefore, very unusual to hear the Maori language being spoken by people other than the elders.

The language continued to be important, however, in ceremonies on the marae and in certain religious services in the area. It was also an important part of many elderly people's lives to say their prayers and grace in Maori.

If any two members of the Maori community in Patea were to meet unexpectedly the chances were one in 40 that they could understand each other in Maori. If both people were adults over 25 the chances were much greater, about one in six. But it was very unlikely that people under this age would be able to speak in Maori with each other.

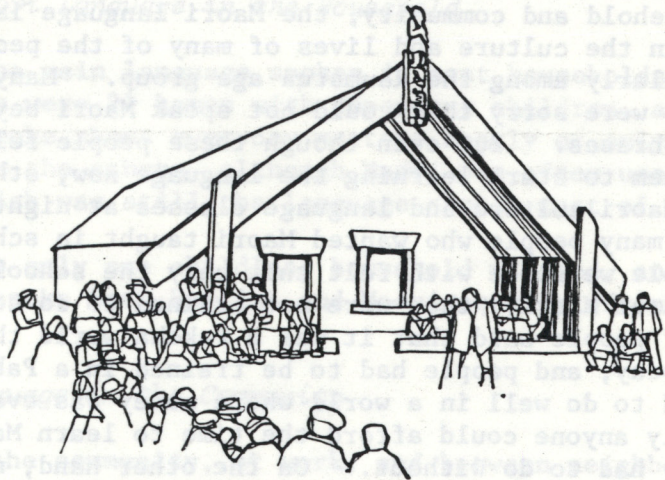
Attitudes towards the Language

Although English has taken over from Maori as the everyday language in the household and community, the Maori language is still important in the culture and lives of many of the people we spoke to, particularly among the kaumatua age group. Many young adults and parents were sorry they could not speak Maori beyond simple words and phrases. But even though these people felt it was too late for them to start learning the language now, others were attending Maori culture and language classes at night school, and there were many people who wanted Maori taught in schools. Some of the people we spoke with felt that only the school could teach their children Maori; they were not trained to do so themselves. A number of people said that it was a Pakeha world that we all lived in today, and people had to be trained in a Pakeha way if they wanted to do well in a world where money was everything. Since hardly anyone could afford the time to learn Maori, it was a luxury they had to do without. On the other hand, many people we met belonged to Maori cultural groups where action songs, haka and local oral traditions were learned and performed with much pride.

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. →

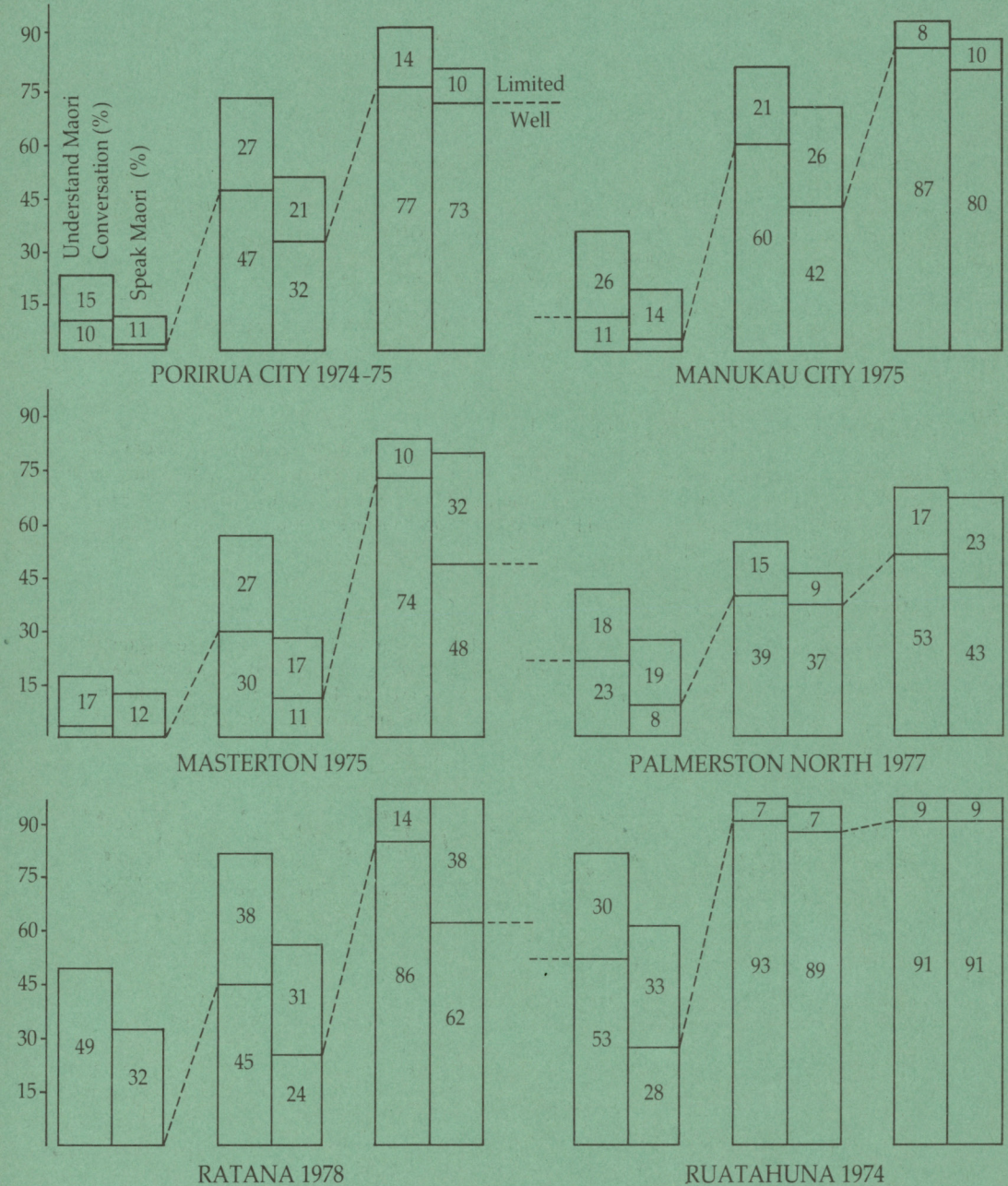
CONCLUSION

The results of the survey in Patea have shown that by far the most of those who spoke and understood Maori well were kaumatua over the age of 45. While many adults had an understanding of the language that ranged from poor to good, three-quarters of the people under 25 knew hardly any Maori at all. In most homes with children, the main language used for talk on everyday things was English. Many of the people we spoke with were worried that Maori in the area might die out altogether, but since the time of the survey a lot has been done to stop this happening. Night classes in schools and informal lessons in private homes have been well attended by adults - both Maori and Pakeha, while the Kohanga Reo scheme (pre-schools where Maori is spoken) is likely to give the community's pre-school children a good start in learning to use the language as easily as they now use English.



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

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.