

# 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

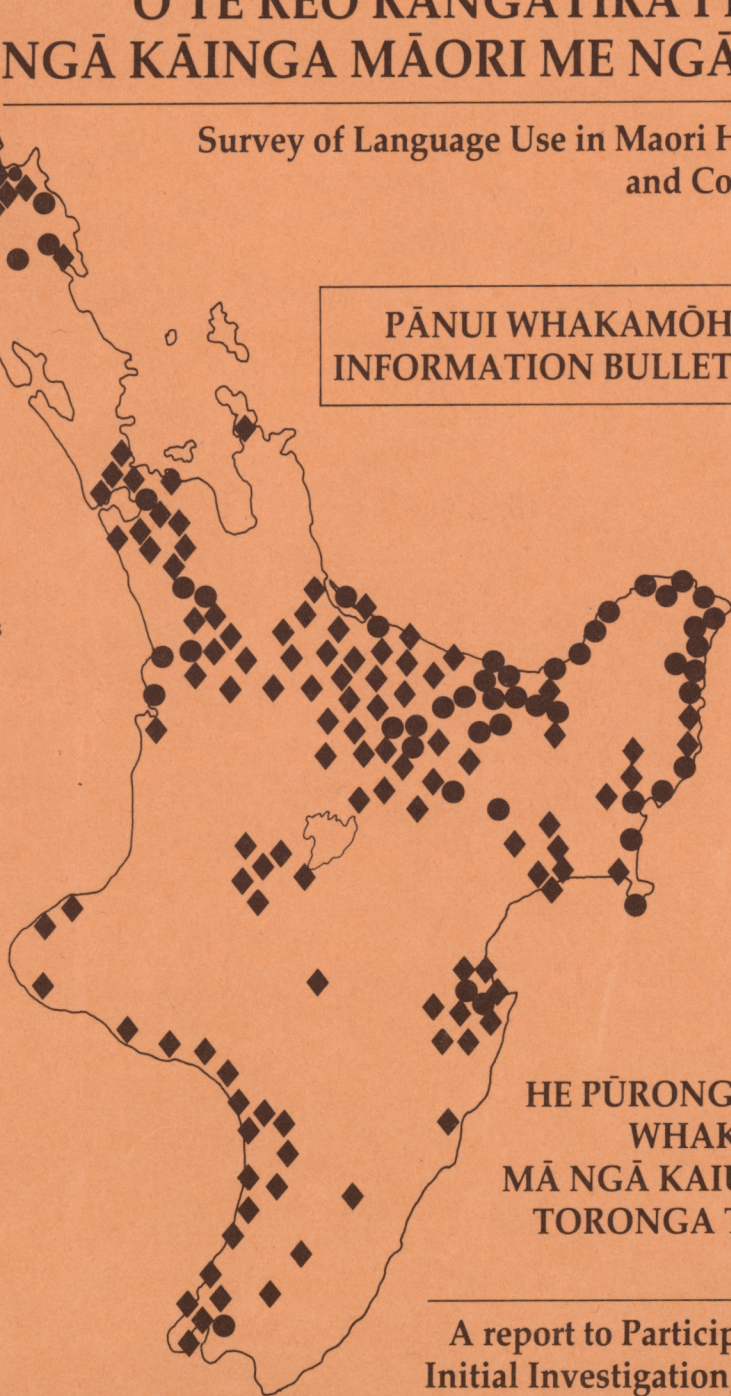
PĀNUI WHAKAMŌHIO  
INFORMATION BULLETIN

87

Localities in which  
ten or more households  
were visited

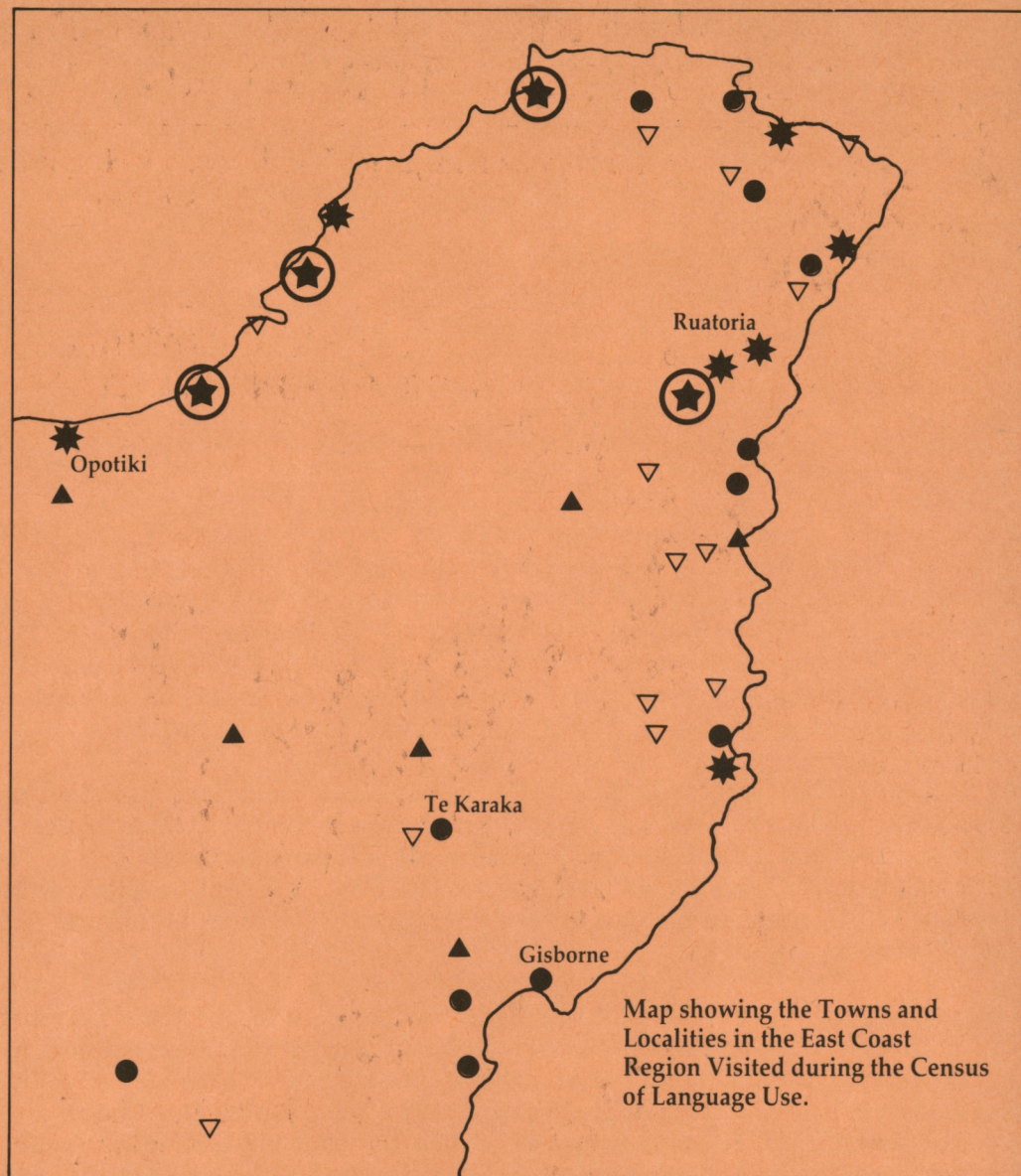
● Two thirds or  
more of adults were  
fluent speakers of  
Maori

◆ 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 85%
- ☆ 76 to 85%
- 60% to 75%
- ▲ Less than 60%
- ▽ Fewer than 8 households visited

### THE MAORI LANGUAGE IN CENTRAL WAIAPU

This report covers five communities in Central Waiapu : Tikitiki, Waiomatatini, Hiruharama, and Makarika, where fieldwork for the Maori language survey took place in April and May 1978, and Ruatoria, where the survey was conducted in December 1977. Another community in Central Waiapu, Rangitukia, was also visited in 1978; the results of the survey in that district have been summarized in a separate report (no.21 in this series).

The interviewers in Ruatoria were Taari Nicholas (Ngaiterangi/ Ngapuhi) and Trysh Parata (Ngati Porou/ Ngai Tahu). The interviewers for the other districts were Hiria Tumoana (Tuhoe), Trysh Parata, Allan Hawea (Ngati Awa), and Hera Henare (Ngati Porou/ Ngapuhi). Twenty-five interviews were carried out in Maori; the rest were in English.

Altogether, 96 households were visited in the five districts : 24 in Tikitiki, with 106 people (105 of Maori descent, about a third of the Maori population of the area at the time); six in Waiomatatini, with 23 people (all Maori, over half the Maori population); 37 in Ruatoria, with 171 people (167 Maori, about a quarter of the Maori population); 20 in Hiruharama, with 70 people (all Maori, about 60 percent of the Maori population), and nine in Makarika (including Aorangi), with 51 people (all Maori, just under half the Maori population of the district at the time of the survey).

Over 90 percent of the people in each district were members of Ngati Porou, the tangata whenua of the region. Most of the people we interviewed had been born and brought up in Waiapu County. Well over half the household heads in Waiomatatini, Hiruharama, and Ruatoria had lived in those districts since they were children. In Tikitiki about 2 out of 5 household heads (in the homes we visited) were from the town itself; in Makarika just under half had grown up in that part of the county.

### RESULTS OF THE LINGUISTIC SURVEY

#### *Ability to Speak and Understand Maori*

As the table on the next page shows, overall the total number of people who could speak Maori well ranged from a third to a half of the population in the homes we visited in the various districts. Although Hiruharama had the highest overall proportion of Maori-speakers (51 percent), and Tikitiki the lowest (32 percent), the differences between the communities were really quite slight.

In each district, almost all the people over the age of 45 could speak Maori well. Most younger adults could understand Maori easily, but they were not quite as likely to be fluent speakers of Maori. In the 15 to 24 years age group only a minority could speak Maori easily, although a third to a half in most districts could understand conversational Maori fairly well. There were hardly any young children at the time of the survey in these places who were used to talking in Maori. Quite a few young children knew very little Maori at all, but most children in the 2-14 age group heard Maori spoken often enough to have picked up at least some of the more common words and phrases.

### KNOWLEDGE OF SPOKEN MAORI IN CENTRAL WAIAPU (1978)

	Tikitiki		Waiomatatini		Ruatoria		Hiruharama		Makarika	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
<i>Fluent Speakers</i>										
45 yrs and over	24	86	9	82	36	86	22	92	9	100
25 to 44 yrs	4	36	-	-	22	76	7	70	6	86
15 to 24 yrs	4	18	0	0	2	7	2	25	0	0
2 to 14 yrs	0	0	0	0	5	8	3	13	2	8
Overall	32	32	9	41	65	40	34	51	17	35
<i>Understand Easily</i>										
45 yrs and over	25	89	10	91	40	95	24	100	9	100
25 to 44 yrs	8	73	-	-	25	86	10	100	6	86
15 to 24 yrs	12	55	0	0	7	25	3	38	3	38
2 to 14 yrs	10	26	0	0	25	40	6	25	11	44
Overall	55	55	10	46	97	60	43	65	29	59
<i>Limited Understanding</i>										
45 yrs and over	3	11	1	9	1	2	0	0	0	0
25 to 44 yrs	3	11	-	-	3	10	0	0	3	38
15 to 24 yrs	8	36	3	100	9	32	1	13	1	13
2 to 14 yrs	18	46	2	25	16	26	15	63	5	20
Overall	32	32	6	36	29	18	16	24	7	14
<i>No Knowledge</i>										
45 yrs and over	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	0
25 to 44 yrs	0	0	-	-	1	3	0	0	0	0
15 to 24 yrs	2	9	0	0	12	43	4	50	4	50
2 to 14 yrs	11	28	6	75	21	34	3	13	9	36
Overall	13	13	6	36	35	22	7	10	13	27

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

About two-thirds of the household heads we interviewed had learned to speak and understand Maori as their first language. About a quarter (mostly those in their twenties and thirties) had learned to speak English first at home, and the rest said they had learned both languages at the same time. On the other hand, most of the people we spoke to had learned to read and write first in English, although a few had learned to read and write in Maori before they went to school.

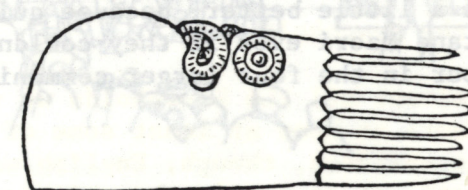
### *The Maori Language in the Household*

Some of the people in almost all the households we visited in the five districts spoke Maori at home at least some of the time. In homes with dependent children, though, English was likely to be used as often as Maori, if it wasn't the main language, except in Hiruharama, where about half the families with children under 18 still spoke Maori most of the time. In households with no young children, Maori was the main language in the three country districts, but quite a bit of English was used in some of these homes in the two towns. (The information about household language is summarized in the table below).

LANGUAGE USED WHEN ALL THE FAMILY WERE TOGETHER

	Tikitiki		Waiomatatini		Ruatoria		Hiruharama		Makarika	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Mostly Maori	5	21	3	50	8	22	12	60	2	22
Half and Half	10	42	1	17	10	27	3	15	1	11
Mostly English	9	37	2	33	17	46	2	10	5	56
Entirely English	0	0	0	0	2	5	3	15	1	11
No. of Households	24	100	6	100	37	100	20	100	9	100

In these districts, like many others we visited, each generation had used Maori less than the one above it. In Ruatoria, for example, 70 percent of the household heads we spoke to said that their parents had spoken to them in Maori, but only 60 percent had used mostly Maori when speaking to their parents; only 20 percent now used Maori often when speaking to their children, and half of these said that even so their children usually talked to them in English.



Quite a number of people in the five districts commented that the Maori language seemed to be dying out. A few were not at all worried about this - a man in one country district said "Blow Maori"

### *The Maori Language in the Community*

In some ways, Maori was used more often in the community as a whole than it was in most homes. This is because most adults could still speak Maori, and it was very important on many social occasions, such as ceremonies on the marae, opening and closing meetings, and in some religious services (especially prayers for the sick). Our fieldworkers also noticed that Maori was very widely spoken in the public bars in the Ruatoria and Tikitiki hotels.

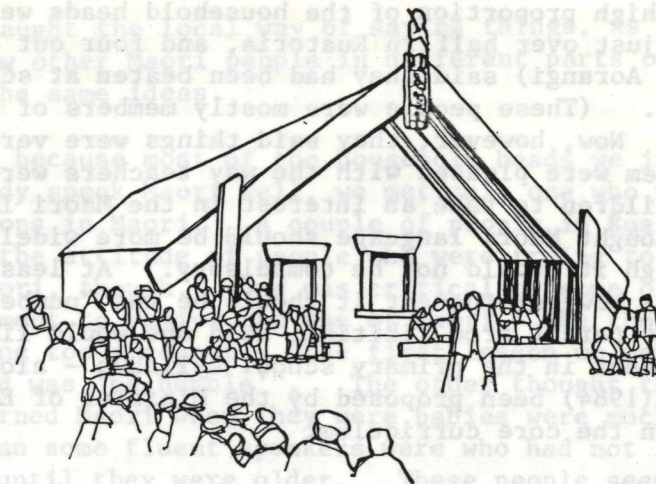
Older people especially were likely to chat with friends and neighbours in Maori when they met them in town or along the road. Even in Ruatoria, about two-fifths of the household heads we interviewed said they would be more likely to use Maori than English when talking to their adult neighbours. With children, however, the same people were inclined to use English.

There were many reasons for this generation gap in the use of Maori. Despite the fact that they could speak Maori themselves, and wanted their children to use it too, many parents found that they could not compete with television, school, and all the other ways in which Maori language is crowded out of modern life. So while the chances that two adults from any of these districts meeting by chance would be able to talk to each other in Maori were better than two to one, it was very unlikely that children would be able to chat to each other except in English. The chances that an adult and a child meeting by accident might be able to use Maori were a little better, because quite a few children could understand Maori even if they couldn't speak it well - about one in four in the four larger communities.



#### *Attitudes towards Maori*

Many of the household heads we spoke to in each district said that they would prefer to speak Maori most of the time. In Hiruharama, Makarika, and Ruatoria, for example, a quarter preferred to talk in English to friends and family members, a fifth liked Maori and English equally well, while just over half favoured Maori alone. A higher proportion, however, found English easier for reading (partly because there was so little to read in Maori). English was also more popular for writing letters, especially among younger people, although in Makarika and Hiruharama opinion about this was fairly evenly divided - of the 29 people there we asked about this, 12 favoured Maori for reading and writing, 11 preferred English, and six liked both languages the same. But in Ruatoria only two out of 42 said they liked Maori best for reading (four liked it for writing), as against 30 who preferred English.



Quite a number of people in the five districts commented that the Maori language seemed to be dying out. A few were not at all worried about this - a man in one country district said "Blow Maori - I prefer English!" But most people we talked to about this seemed to think it was very important to try to keep the Maori language alive. One of the people we spoke to in Ruatoria thought that this depended partly on what happened to the Maori language itself: "Maori speaks from the heart; English does not. But Maori must also adapt to the changing world or it will become useless".

Several people thought that English had already become so much more "useful" than Maori that it was already too late to save Maori from extinction. Two other people in Ruatoria told us how they had been encouraged to speak English as children because their fathers had thought Maori had little future and English was the language which would enable them to earn a decent living. One man said he had brought up his own children the same way, but now he was sorry about this.

A fairly high proportion of the household heads we interviewed (for example, just over half in Ruatoria, and four out of ten in Hiruharama and Aorangi) said they had been beaten at school for speaking Maori. (These people were mostly members of the "older generation"). Now, however, they said things were very different, and most of them were pleased with the way teachers were encouraging children to take an interest in the Maori language. Many people thought Maori language should be more widely taught at school, although it should not be compulsory. At least one person (from Ruatoria) however thought it should be the "number one" language. One parent from Tikitiki said she would like to see more Maori content in the primary school syllabus - along the lines that have now (1984) been proposed by the Minister of Education for "taha Maori" in the core curriculum.

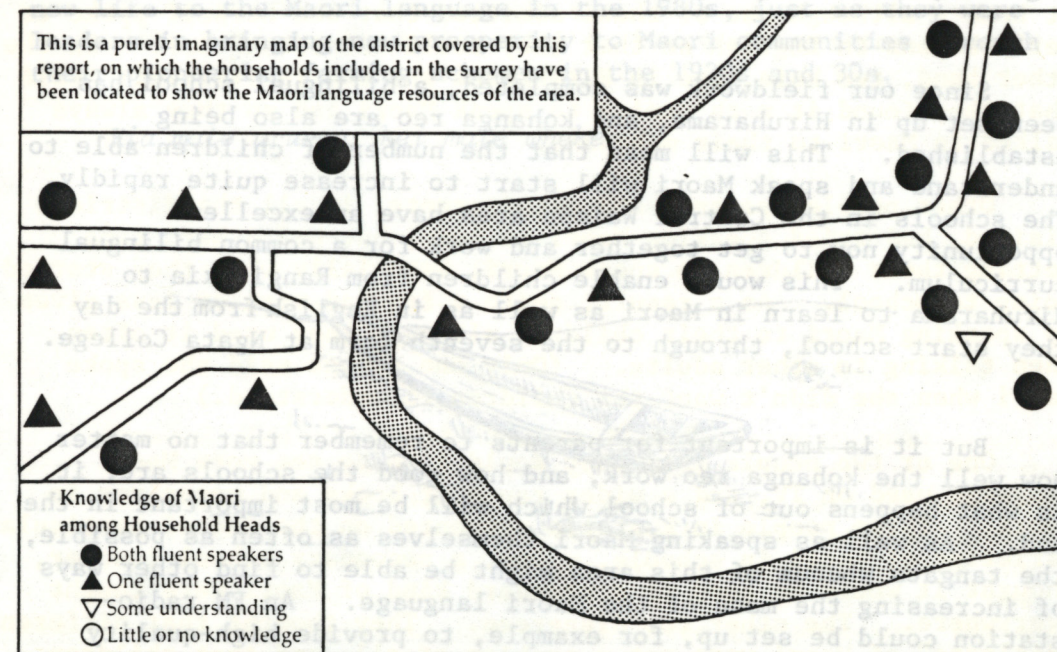
Several people mentioned that when they were children English was banned at home, and Maori was banned at school. People from four different families in Ruatoria thought that today's parents were far too easy-going by allowing their children to speak English at home - although one of these admitted that she herself spoke to her mokopuna in English so that they could understand her. On the other hand, two kuia, one in Hiruharama and one in Tikitiki said that they found it much easier to speak Maori and so they always talked in Maori to their mokopuna.

Other people, parents and grandparents, in all the districts visited, had tried speaking Maori at home, but had a hard time getting their children to speak Maori, especially when they started going to school. As a result, quite a few had more or less given up speaking Maori to their children although they used it often when talking to other adults. (Only one parent said she spoke Maori when she didn't want the children to understand.)

One or two people said they would like to see more Maori language used on TV, and a wider range of books and magazines in Maori. Three people in Ruatoria commented on the use of particular varieties of Maori in schools. One, a secondary school teacher, thought it would be good if a standard kind of Maori were taught everywhere. The other two disagreed. They thought that different "dialects" of Maori were not a problem at all, and that children

should be taught the local way of saying things, as well as learning how other Maori people in different parts of the country expressed the same ideas.

Partly because most of the household heads we interviewed could already speak Maori well, we met only one who was actually taking lessons in Maori. A couple of people in Ruatoria did comment on the attitude of people who were trying to get others to speak Maori, though. One was critical of some of the leaders of the movement to revive the use of Maori - she thought that they were becoming too arrogant: "the first lesson we were taught in childhood was 'be humble'". The other thought that people who had learned Maori when they were babies were much kinder to learners than some fluent speakers were who had not learnt Maori themselves until they were older. These people seemed to forget that they too had made plenty of mistakes when they were learners themselves.



HIRUHARAMA AND MAKARIKA

## CONCLUSION

These five communities - Hiruharama, Makarika, Ruatoria, Waiomatatini, and Tikitiki, together with Rangitukia form one of the most important parts of New Zealand as far as the survival of the Maori language is concerned.

There are not many other parts of New Zealand where so many people can speak Maori so well, and where Maori people have so much control over what happens in their environment. Most of the people in the County are Maori, so the Maori community itself can decide what happens at the local level - through the County Council, school committees, and their involvement in other local, regional, and national organizations.

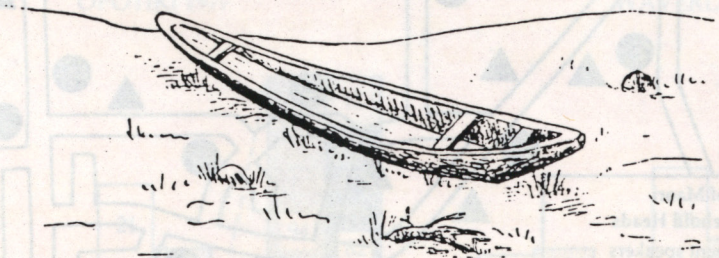
Since our fieldwork was completed, a bilingual school has been set up in Hiruharama, and kohanga reo are also being established. This will mean that the number of children able to understand and speak Maori will start to increase quite rapidly. The schools in the Central Waiapu area have an excellent opportunity now to get together and work for a common bilingual curriculum. This would enable children from Rangitukia to Hiruharama to learn in Maori as well as in English from the day they start school, through to the seventh form at Ngata College.

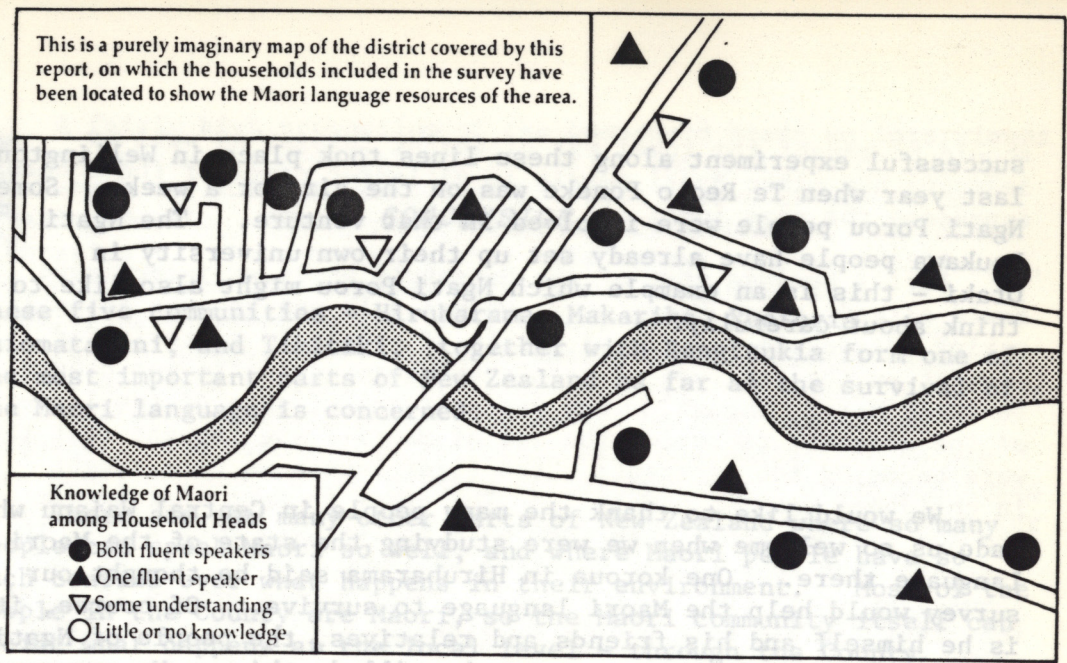
But it is important for parents to remember that no matter how well the kohanga reo work, and how good the schools are, it is what happens out of school which will be most important in the end. As well as speaking Maori themselves as often as possible, the tangata whenua of this area might be able to find other ways of increasing the mana of the Maori language. An FM radio-station could be set up, for example, to provide high-quality Maori-language broadcasting under local Maori control - a

successful experiment along these lines took place in Wellington last year when Te Reo o Poneke was on the air for a week. Some Ngati Porou people were involved in that venture. The Ngati Raukawa people have already set up their own university in Otaki - this is an example which Ngati Porou might also like to think about carefully.

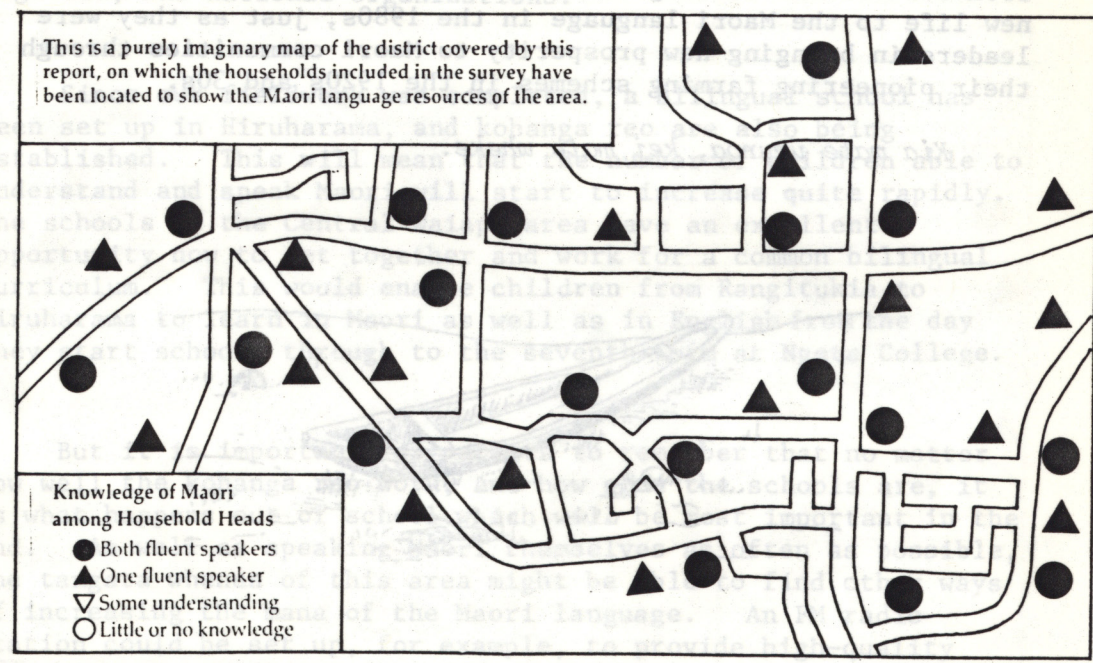
We would like to thank the many people in Central Waiapu who made us so welcome when we were studying the state of the Maori Language there. One koroua in Hiruharama said he thought our survey would help the Maori language to survive. Of course, it is he himself and his friends and relatives, the people of Ngati Porou me nga iwi katoa o te motu who will do this. We are sure from our studies that Ngati Porou can be leaders in bringing new life to the Maori language in the 1980s, just as they were leaders in bringing new prosperity to Maori communities through their pioneering farming schemes in the 1920s and 30s.

*Kia mate ururoa, kei mate wheke.*





TIKITIKI AND WAIOMATATINI



RUATORIA

This report was prepared by Richard Benton.

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.