

Ka mārō te aho tapu, ka tau te korowai:

Te reo Māori findings from Te Kupenga 2013



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1 Purpose and key points

Nau mai, haere mai ki *Ka mārō te aho tapu, ka tau te korowai: Te reo Māori findings from Te Kupenga 2013*.

The title of this report likens te reo to the first thread of a korowai (cloak). If the primary thread is strong the entire korowai, and the interwoven strands, will endure.

Ko te reo te mauri o te mana Māori.

The language is the life essence to Māori as a people and to people as Māori.

Purpose

Ka mārō te aho, ka tau te korowai: Te reo Māori findings from Te Kupenga 2013 explores the drivers related to Māori language proficiency and usage inside and outside the home in New Zealand. In particular, it looks at whether there is a strong relationship between areas that have been at the forefront of investment in te reo Māori revitalisation – such as use in the home, Māori-medium education, and whānau.

Te reo Māori (the Māori language) is recognised as a taonga or treasure. During the last 30 years, it has increasingly been recognised as being in need of support. Successive governments have actively invested in educational, community, and whānau initiatives to help revive this taonga.

Te Kupenga data provides the first opportunity to relate information on te reo Māori proficiency with use, education, and other aspects of Māori culture.

The report adds value to current discussions about the future strategy for the revitalisation of the Māori language. It provides data to support beliefs. But it also signals the potential of Te Kupenga to support a more evidence-based approach towards Māori development.

Key points

Higher ability in te reo Māori is associated with greater use of the language.

- Around 85 percent of Māori able to speak te reo Māori either very well, well, or fairly well spoke at least some te reo at home, compared with 58 percent of those able to speak only basic te reo (those able to speak not very well).
- Māori who were able to speak te reo Māori very well, well, or fairly well were more likely to use the language outside the home than inside.

There is a strong relationship between te reo Māori and other aspects of culture.

- Of the 38,000 Māori with te reo Māori as their first language, 52 percent spoke the language very well or well. In comparison, 7 percent of Māori adults with English as their first language could speak te reo Māori very well or well.
- 62 percent of Māori who knew all aspects of their pepeha (Māori tribal identity) used at least some te reo Māori in the home, while only 16 percent of those who knew fewer aspects of their pepeha did so.
- Half of the 124,000 Māori who felt it was very important to be involved in Māori culture spoke te reo Māori very well, well, or fairly well.

Educational factors impact on te reo Māori ability.

- Half of the 16,500 Māori who had been enrolled in both kōhanga reo and kura kaupapa could speak te reo Māori very well or well. Overall, 92 percent could speak more than a few words or phrases in the language.

- 19 percent of Māori with a bachelor's degree or higher were able to speak te reo Māori very well or well.

There is a strong relationship between use of te reo Māori in the home and whānau.

- 46 percent of Māori with children in their household spoke some te reo Māori inside the home compared with 23 percent of those without children in the home.
- 78 percent of those whose children had been enrolled in kura kaupapa spoke at least some te reo Māori at home, including 35 percent who spoke it equally with another language or more often.



2 Background to te reo Māori

"The language conveys the soul, the spirit, the culture of the people..."
Dr Kathy Dewes (2012)

Language is integral to the notion of culture and an important aspect of cultural identity. Language embodies the beliefs and knowledge systems of the culture, it reflects the cultural world view, and it transmits values and customs from one generation to the next.

Te reo Māori is the indigenous language of Aotearoa New Zealand. It is the ancestral language of the tangata whenua (te iwi Māori) and is a taonga (treasure) that is guaranteed protection under the Treaty of Waitangi. It is an integral component of Māori culture and plays a significant role in cultural participation and identity (Ministry of Social Development, 2010).

Revitalising te reo Māori

Since the arrival of Europeans to Aotearoa New Zealand, te reo Māori has undergone many changes. Where once it was the common language for all, its use underwent a decline so that many feared it would die completely. Concern for the survival of the language has resulted in many initiatives and programmes to revitalise and ensure te reo Māori remains a living language.

Early revitalisation initiatives came out of Māori community-led action. These initiatives included the introduction of Māori language day (now Māori language week) in 1975, and Māori-language recovery programmes in the early 1980s, such as Te Ataarangi (a language learning system), Te Kōhanga Reo (Māori language pre-schools), and Kura Kaupapa Māori (Māori-medium schools).

The 1985 Te Reo Māori Claim Wai 11 lodged with The Waitangi Tribunal asked for the protection and recognition of te reo Māori. The tribunal found that te reo Māori is a taonga that is protected under the Treaty of Waitangi and that the government was obliged to protect and support the language.

The Māori Language Act 1987 declared Māori to be an official language of New Zealand. It also established the Māori Language Commission Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori to promote its growth. In the same year, Māori-language radio stations began broadcasting. Māori Television was established in 2004.

The government has had an official Māori language strategy since 1997, which aims to strengthen the proficiency in, use, and recognition of te reo Māori. In May 2014 a revised strategy shifted the emphasis of revitalisation from government to tangata whenua and to focus on increasing the use of the language in whānau and communities (Te Puni Kōkiri 2014).



3 High-level te reo Māori results

This chapter summarises the high-level results on te reo Māori from the Te Kupenga 2013 information release published in May 2014 (Statistics NZ, 2014). The release included information about first language, speaking proficiency, and the use of te reo Māori inside and outside the home by age, sex, and region.

[Read Te Kupenga 2013](#) for more details.

Speaking ability

In 2013, an estimated 257,500 (55 percent) Māori adults reported they could speak more than a few words or phrases in te reo Māori. Overall, 50,000 (11 percent) could speak te reo very well or well, 12 percent could speak fairly well, and 32 percent could talk about simple/basic things in te reo. The remaining 45 percent could speak no more than a few words or phrases.

Use inside the home

In 2013, of those able to speak more than a few words or phrases in te reo Māori, 64 percent said they spoke some te reo Māori at home. As in 2001, te reo Māori was often spoken at home to children, particularly pre-school and primary school-aged children. Over 80 percent of Māori adults living with pre-school children spoke some te reo Māori to them, including 18 percent who spoke te reo equally with another language or more often to them.

Use outside the home

Of those able to speak more than a few words or phrases in te reo Māori, 67 percent said they spoke some outside the home. Speaking te reo outside the home was most common when attending a club or interest group, while helping at school, and when attending meetings or hui. However, the proportion of Māori speaking all or mostly te reo decreased across all outside-the-home activities between 2001 and 2013.

Te reo Māori as first language

Te reo Māori was the first language (that is, the language that was first learnt as a child and still understood) for 38,000 or 8 percent of Māori adults.

Other core language skills

Along with speaking ability, Te Kupenga also collected information on listening, reading, and writing in te reo Māori. The pattern of ability across the four skills was relatively consistent.

Listening was the most common of the four skills – 62 percent of Māori adults said they could understand more than a few words or phrases of spoken Māori. As with speaking ability it was the older age group who had higher proficiency levels – 26 percent of those aged 55+ understood spoken Māori well or very well. Across the other age groups this ranged from 12 to 17 percent. Women were also more likely to understand spoken Māori well or very well – 19 percent could do so compared with 13 percent of men.

While writing in te reo was the least reported language skill, the proportion of Māori who said they could write in the language increased between 2001 and 2013. The increase mainly consisted of those who were able to write 'not very well'. Of Māori who could write te reo well or very well, those aged 55+ were the most likely to do so (17 percent), down

from 28 percent in 2001. The ability to write te reo well or very well rose among 25–44-year-olds. The increase was mainly among those aged 25–34, up from 5 percent in 2001 to 11 percent in 2013.

Table 1
Te reo Māori proficiency
 By language skill
 2001 and 2013

Proficiency	Language skill					
	Listening	Reading	Writing	Listening	Reading	Writing
	2001			2013		
	Percent					
Very well	8.9	6.8	6.0	8.1	7.4	5.8
Well	6.4	5.8	5.0	8.0	7.6	5.9
Fairly well	18.4	15.9	12.7	17.0	15.9	11.8
Not very well	25.4	24.5	20.4	29.2	26.8	27.2
No more than a few words or phrases	40.9	47.0	55.9	37.7	42.3	49.4



4 The relationships between te reo Māori ability and use

This chapter looks at the relationship between proficiency in speaking te reo Māori and how often te reo is used at home and in a range of settings outside the home.

Te Kupenga provides new information that links te reo Māori proficiency to its use. The use of any language in a range of settings is important for retaining proficiency in that language.

All the statistics in this report are based on the total population of New Zealanders who identified with Māori ethnicity and are aged 15 years and over. The statistics about the use of te reo Māori in and outside the home include the 213,000 Māori who could only speak a few words or phrases in te reo Māori, who are classified as using no te reo.

Higher speaking ability related to greater use of te reo

Māori who could speak te reo Māori very well, well, or fairly well (106,500 people), were more likely to use the language at home than those who spoke it not very well (151,000 people). Around 85 percent of Māori in each of the three highest proficiency groups spoke at least some te reo Māori at home, compared with 58 percent of those able to speak only basic te reo (those able to speak not very well).

The amount of te reo Māori spoken in the home increases along with proficiency. Those able to speak the language very well use it more. Of those who spoke te reo very well, 45 percent used it equally with another language or more often (equally or more) to someone in their household, including 27 percent who spoke it all or mostly.

Of Māori who spoke te reo Māori well (26,500 people), 35 percent spoke it equally or more, including 8 percent who spoke all or mostly te reo.

Regardless of proficiency however, 'some' te reo was the most commonly spoken amount in the home.

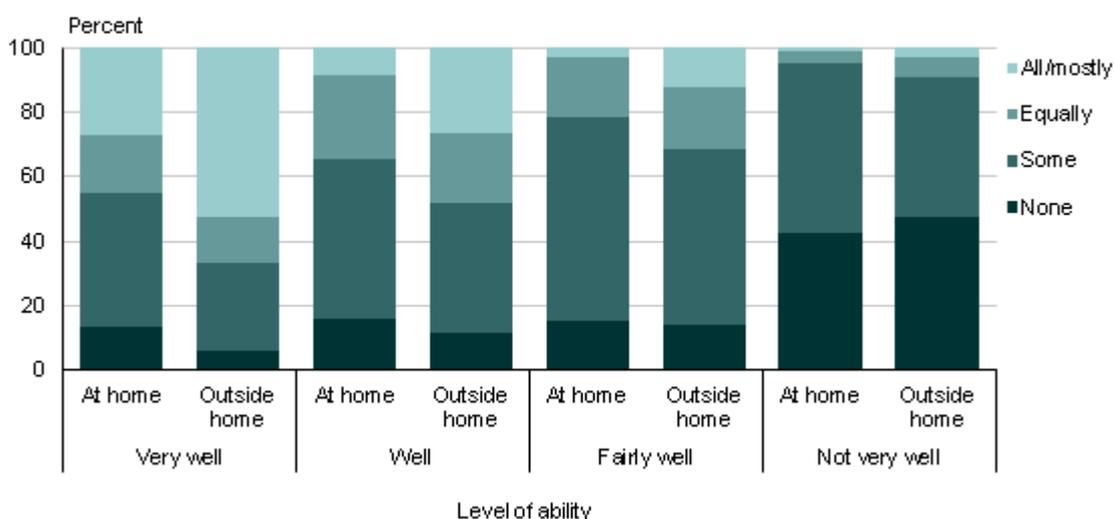
Outside the home, Māori able to speak the language very well are also most likely to use te reo Māori more often. The majority (52 percent) of this group had spoken all or mostly te reo Māori in some setting outside the home. This differs from those able to speak well or fairly well, where most had spoken just some te reo Māori.

Māori who were able to speak te reo Māori very well, well, or fairly well all had slightly higher rates of te reo use outside the home than inside it. However, for those who spoke only basic te reo Māori this was reversed – 53 percent used some te reo Māori outside the home and 58 percent did so at home.

Figure 1

Amount of te reo Māori spoken in and outside the home

By level of ability
June–August 2013



Source: Statistics New Zealand

The amount of te reo Māori spoken at home varies with ability

How much te reo Māori is used at home varies according to proficiency levels and the presence of children. Of all the relationships in the home, Māori, regardless of proficiency, are most likely to speak te reo to their pre-school children.

Table 2

Amount of te reo Māori spoken at home

By person spoken to and proficiency level
June–August 2013

Proficiency level of spoken te reo Māori	Amount of te reo Māori spoken at home	Person spoken to				
		Pre-school child	Primary school child	Secondary school child	Parent	Partner
		Percent				
Very well/well	All/mostly/equally ⁽¹⁾	48.1	40.9	38.2	31.9*	26.5
	Some	45.1	49.2	51.2	45.6	51.5
	None	6.8**	10.0**	S	22.5*	22.0*
Fairly well	All/mostly/equally ⁽¹⁾	23.1*	24.2	13.5**	16.1*	15.4*
	Some	68.8	66.9	70.8	57.1	56.9
	None	8.1**	8.9**	15.7**	26.8	27.7
Not very well	All/mostly/equally ⁽¹⁾	26.6	4.8*	5.0**	4.6*	2.7*
	Some	67.9	64.7	56.2	32.5	40.3
	None	5.6*	30.5	38.8	63.0	57.0

1. Māori equally with English (or another language).

Symbols:

S suppressed

* sampling error is 30 percent or more but less than 50 percent

** sampling error is 50 percent or more, but less than 100 percent

Māori who are able to speak te reo Māori very well or well are more likely to speak the language equally or more to any of the people they live with than those of lower proficiencies.

Māori who are able to speak only basic te reo Māori speak the language equally or more in significant numbers only to their pre-school children, and speak considerably lower amounts to all other members of their household.

Those with higher proficiency speak more te reo Māori outside the home

Greater use of te reo Māori outside the home is associated with Māori cultural settings and proficiency.

There are four main settings outside the home where te reo Māori is most commonly spoken: at club or interest group activities such as kapahaka, helping at school, attending hui, and at religious activities. These settings are more likely to have a cultural focus.

As with use inside the home, the amount of te reo Māori spoken outside increases with proficiency. Those able to speak te reo very well are the most likely to speak the language equally or more, while those who spoke only basic te reo Māori are the least likely.

Table 3
Amount of te reo Māori spoken outside the home
 By context spoken in and proficiency level
 June–August 2013

Proficiency level of spoken te reo Māori	Amount of te reo Māori spoken outside the home	Context outside home						
		Club or interest group	Helping at school	Hui/meeting	Religious activity	Visit relatives / friends	Work	Sport
		Percent						
Very well/well	All/mostly	34.9	34.2	27.1	28.5	10.7	18.4	6.0**
	Equally ⁽¹⁾	18.4	19.3	25.2	14.9	18.1	12.5	10.8*
	Some	30.5	34.3	40.6	37.5	51.3	36.3	34.4
	None	16.3*	12.2*	7.1*	19.0*	19.9	32.8	48.8
Fairly well	All/mostly	11.5*	9.5*	7.0*	11.2*	1.0**	3.0**	S
	Equally ⁽¹⁾	21.4*	14.6	15.7	11.9*	12.4	11.8	10.8*
	Some	44.5	51.3	59.7	47.1	57.2	39.4	30.6
	None	22.6	24.6	17.6	29.8	29.5	45.8	57.5
Not very well	All/mostly	3.9**	1.7**	2.7**	5.3**	S	S	S
	Equally ⁽¹⁾	6.8*	6.5*	6.2*	6.9**	3.4	2.7*	2.1**
	Some	37.2	41.9	48.6	30.2	34.1	27.0	15.0
	None	52.0	49.9	42.4	57.6	62.3	70.1	82.8

1. Māori equally with English (or another language).
Symbols:
 S data has been suppressed
 * sampling error is 30 percent or more but less than 50 percent
 ** sampling error is 50 percent or more, but less than 100 percent



5 Other factors related to te reo Māori ability and use

This chapter looks at the relationship between te reo Māori proficiency and use and other aspects of life for Māori adults.

Te Kupenga provides new information that links te reo Māori proficiency and use, including the relationship between areas that have been at the forefront of investment in te reo Māori revitalisation – such as cultural identity, education, and whānau.

Three key drivers of te reo Māori ability and use

The analysis in this chapter is based on a framework that theorises that some key areas of life are associated with te reo Māori ability and use.

See appendix 1: Methodology for more on this framework.

Testing the framework through simple correlation and regression analysis showed a strong relationship between te reo Māori ability and use, and Māori culture. Cultural measures strongly related to te reo include:

- first language learnt as a child and still understood
- importance of involvement in Māori culture
- knowledge of Māori tribal identity
- participation in modern cultural practices
- sole Māori or multiple ethnicities.

Throughout this report we show the relationships between te reo ability and use and these measures using descriptive statistics.

The strength of these relationships shows that all these elements are interrelated in Māori culture. For most Māori, te reo Māori is part of their culture, as with knowing their ancestry, being connected to their marae, and engaging in modern cultural activities. The relationships emphasise the role of te reo Māori as an integral component of Māori culture.

Weaker, yet still significant relationships also exist between te reo ability and use, and other measures. In particular, a strong relationship exists between te reo ability and education measures, such as enrolment in Māori-medium education and highest qualification attained. The use of te reo Māori at home is also associated with whānau measures such as:

- children living in the home
- children enrolled in Māori-medium education
- whānau size.

Social and socio-economic measures, however, are not strongly related to the ability and use of te reo Māori. This means, for example, that Māori with low income are equally likely to speak te reo as those with high incomes. Similarly, those with poor health have the same likelihood of speaking any level of te reo as those with good health.

A strong relationship does exist between te reo Māori ability and use and age. In particular, older Māori (55+) are more likely to speak te reo very well or well than younger Māori.

[See Te Kupenga 2013](#) for a more detailed discussion of this relationship.

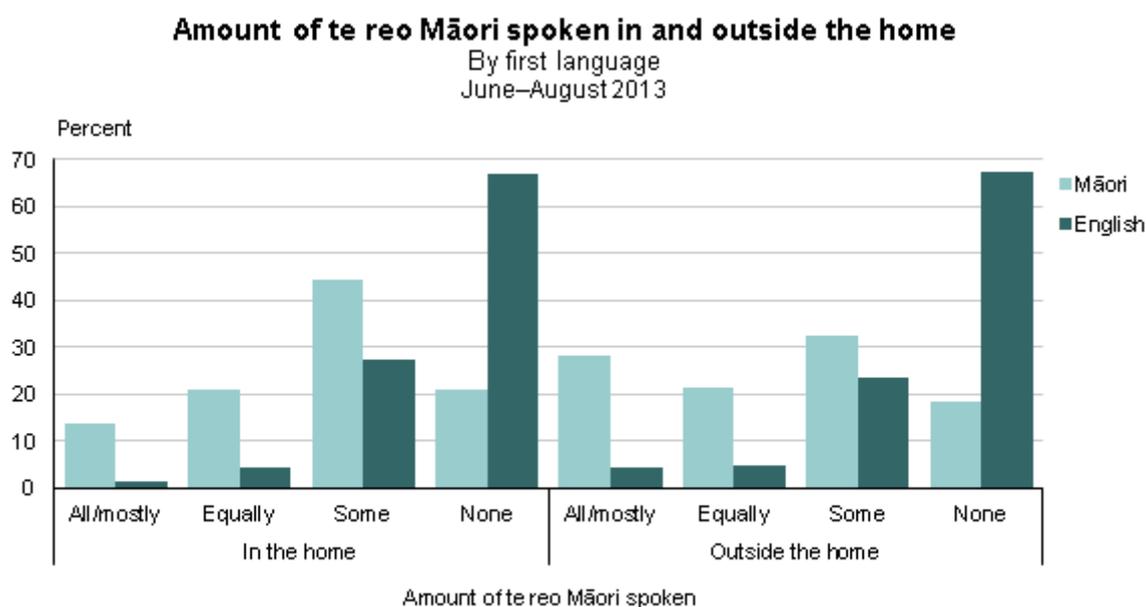
Te reo Māori strongly related to culture and identity

Greater ability among those with te reo Māori as first language

Among Māori with te reo Māori as their first language (38,000 people), a third (32 percent) could speak the language very well and over half (52 percent) spoke it very well or well. Less than 10 percent could speak no more than a few words or phrases. In comparison, 7 percent of Māori adults with English as their first language could speak te reo Māori very well or well, and four-fifths could speak not very well or only a few words and phrases.

Te reo Māori as the first language is also associated with greater use of it. Of those with te reo as their first language, 79 percent spoke at least some at home, and 82 percent spoke at least some outside the home. For those with English as a first language, the proportion was 33 percent in each.

Figure 2



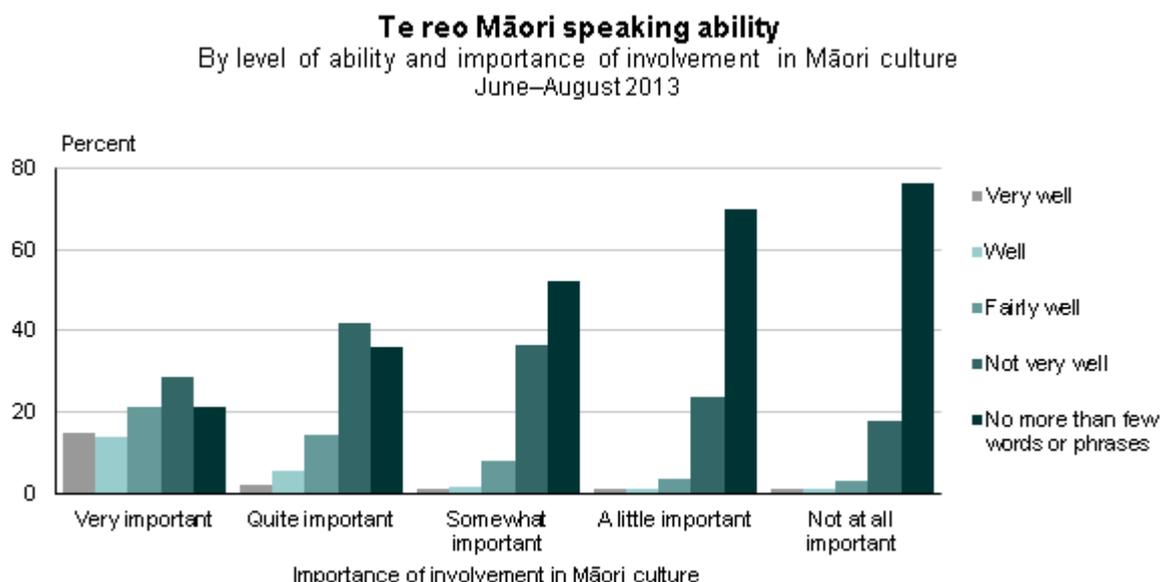
Source: Statistics New Zealand

The more important Māori culture is to a person, the more likely they are to speak te reo Māori

Māori who feel it is very important to be involved in Māori culture are more likely to speak te reo Māori very well, well, or fairly well, than those who feel culture is less important. Half of the 124,000 Māori who said they felt it was very important to be involved in Māori culture spoke te reo very well, well, or fairly well, compared with 22 percent of those who felt it was quite important and 11 percent who felt it was somewhat important.

Only a small proportion of the 37,500 Māori who felt that being involved in Māori culture was not at all important could speak te reo Māori. Nearly all those who felt Māori culture was not at all important could speak no more than a few words or phrases (76 percent) or only about simple/basic things (18 percent).

Figure 3



Source: Statistics New Zealand

The more important Māori culture is to a person, the more likely they are to speak te reo Māori inside or outside the home.

Of those who felt involvement in Māori culture was very important, 64 percent spoke at least some te reo in the home. This compares with 27 percent of those who felt Māori culture was somewhat important and 8 percent of those who felt it was not at all important.

Of Māori who felt it was very important to be involved in Māori culture, 66 percent spoke at least some te reo outside the home. This compares with 44 percent of those who felt Māori culture was quite important and 10 percent of those who felt it was a little important.

Knowledge of pepeha strongly associated with te reo Māori

Knowing aspects of pepeha (traditional tribal identity) is strongly related with te reo Māori ability and use.

Māori who know all seven aspects of their pepeha (tribe, sub-tribe, mountain, river, ancestor, canoe, and ancestral marae) are more likely than those who know fewer aspects to speak te reo Māori very well, well, or fairly well. Of those who knew all aspects of their pepeha, 44 percent spoke te reo very well, well, or fairly well, compared with only 7 percent of those who knew six or fewer aspects of their pepeha.

Māori who knew none of their pepeha were made up almost exclusively of those who spoke te reo not very well (14 percent) and those who spoke only a few words and phrases in the language (80 percent).

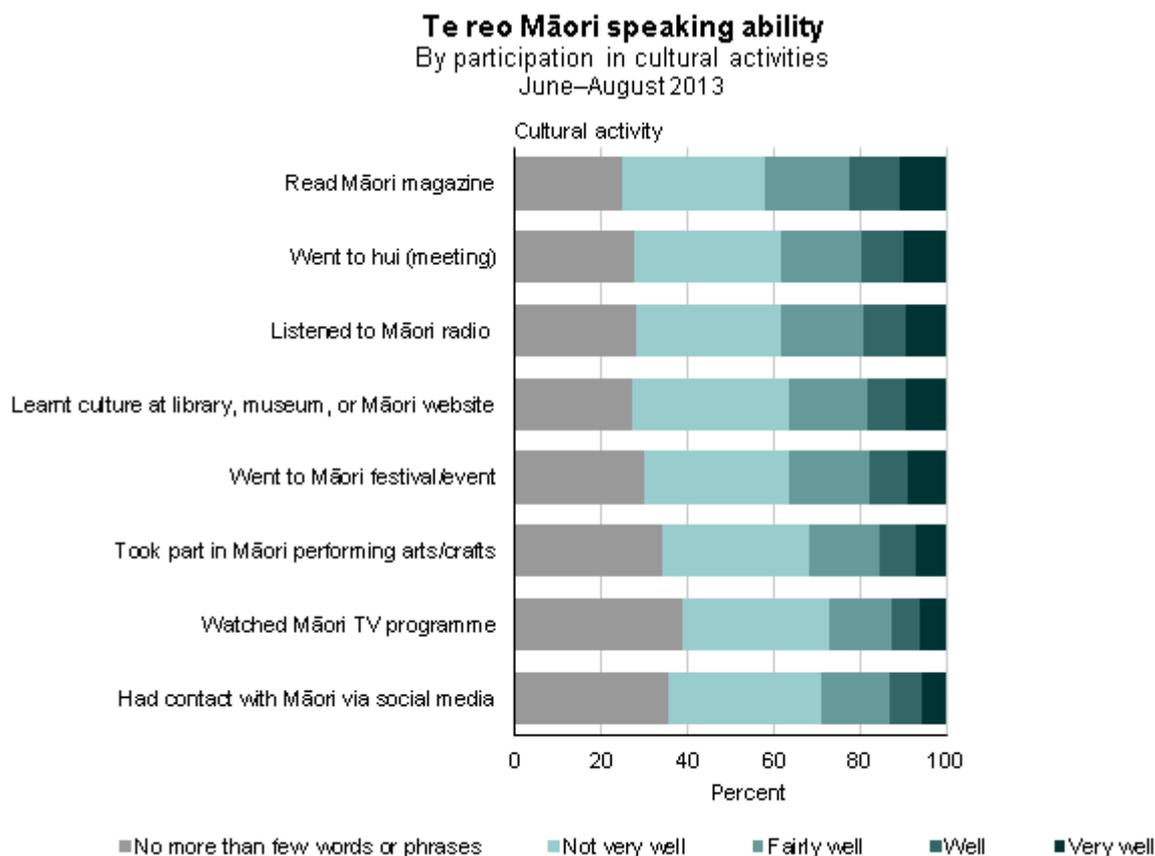
Māori who know all aspects of their pepeha are also more likely than those who don't to speak te reo Māori inside and outside the home. Of those who knew all of their pepeha, 62 percent used at least some te reo in the home and 64 percent at least some outside the home. This compared with 16 percent of those who knew fewer aspects of their pepeha – for both in and outside the home.

Those who participate in modern cultural activities more likely to be proficient in te reo Māori

Māori who participate in modern cultural activities are more likely than those who do not to speak te reo Māori very well, well, or fairly well.

Reading a Māori magazine, listening to a Māori radio station, and going to a hui were the activities that had the highest proportions of proficient te reo speakers.

Figure 4



Source: Statistics New Zealand

However, it does appear that not being able to speak te reo Māori well is not a barrier to participating in many cultural activities. For example, three-quarters (73 percent) of Māori who watched a Māori television programme were those who could speak no more than simple/basic te reo.

Sole Māori ethnicity strongly related with te reo Māori

Of Māori who identified only with Māori ethnicity, 135,500 (68 percent) were able to speak more than a few words or phrases in te reo Māori. This figure was made up of 17 percent who could speak te reo well or very well, 17 percent who spoke fairly well, and a further 34 percent who spoke not very well.

Of those who identified with more than one ethnicity, 45 percent spoke more than a few words or phrases in te reo Māori, including 6 percent who were able to speak te reo very well or well.

Those with sole Māori ethnicity are also more likely than those of multiple ethnicities to speak te reo inside and outside the home. Half of those with sole Māori ethnicity spoke some te reo to someone in their household. This proportion included 13 percent who

spoke it equally with another language or more to someone. Of those with multiple ethnicities, 27 percent spoke some te reo Māori at home, including 4 percent who spoke te reo Māori equally or more.

Those of sole Māori ethnicity are also more likely than those of multiple ethnicities to use te reo Māori outside the home. The survey showed 50 percent used at least some te reo, including 20 percent who used it equally or more. For people with multiple ethnicities these proportions were 27 percent and 7 percent, respectively.

Ability to speak te reo Māori related to education

Enrolment in Māori-medium education impacts on proficiency

In the context of Te Kupenga, Māori-medium education included kōhanga reo, kura kaupapa/wharekura, and wānanga. Overall, 134,000 (28 percent) Māori adults had been enrolled in some form of Māori-medium education:

- 60,500 (13 percent) in kōhanga reo
- 29,000 (6 percent) in kura kaupapa
- 16,500 (4 percent) in both kōhanga reo and kura kaupapa
- 79,500 (18 percent) in wānanga.

Māori that had been enrolled in all three types of Māori-medium education numbered 7,000.

Enrolment in any type of Māori-medium education – at both kōhanga reo and kura kaupapa in particular – is associated with greater ability to speak te reo Māori. Half of those who had been enrolled in both kōhanga reo and kura kaupapa could speak te reo very well or well, with 92 percent able to speak more than a few words or phrases.

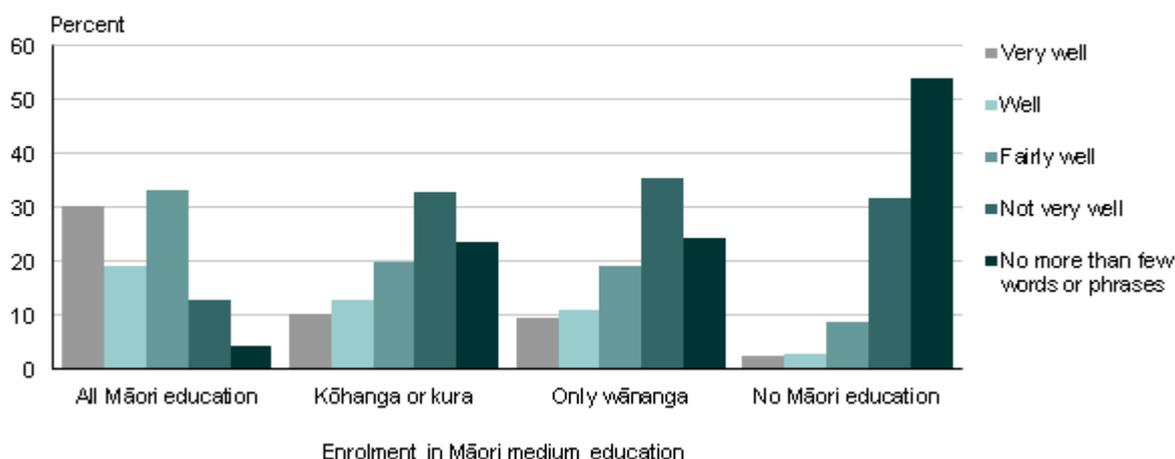
For Māori that had been enrolled in either only kōhanga reo or kura kaupapa, 19 percent could speak the language very well or well, and 74 percent could speak more than a few words or phrases.

Of Māori that had not been enrolled in any Māori-medium education, 6 percent spoke te reo very well or well, and less than half (46 percent) spoke more than a few words or phrases in the language.

Māori who had been enrolled in Māori-medium education are also more likely than those who hadn't to speak te reo to someone they live with. Of those who had been enrolled in any type of Māori-medium education, 60 percent spoke at least some te reo within the home. This compared with 27 percent of those who had not been enrolled in any Māori-medium education.

Figure 5

Te reo Māori speaking ability
By level of ability and enrolment in Māori medium education
June–August 2013



Source: Statistics New Zealand

Higher qualifications associated with greater speaking ability

Māori with higher levels of educational qualifications, such as a level 5 or 6 diploma or a bachelor’s degree and above are more likely than those with lower-level qualifications to speak te reo Māori very well, well, or fairly well.

Of Māori with a bachelor’s degree or higher, 19 percent were able to speak te reo well or very well. This compared with 16 percent of those with a level 5 or 6 diploma, 8 percent of those with a level 1–4 certificate, and 10 percent of those with no qualification. However, the overall proportions of those who could speak some te reo Māori (more than a few words or phrases) were fairly similar regardless of qualification level.

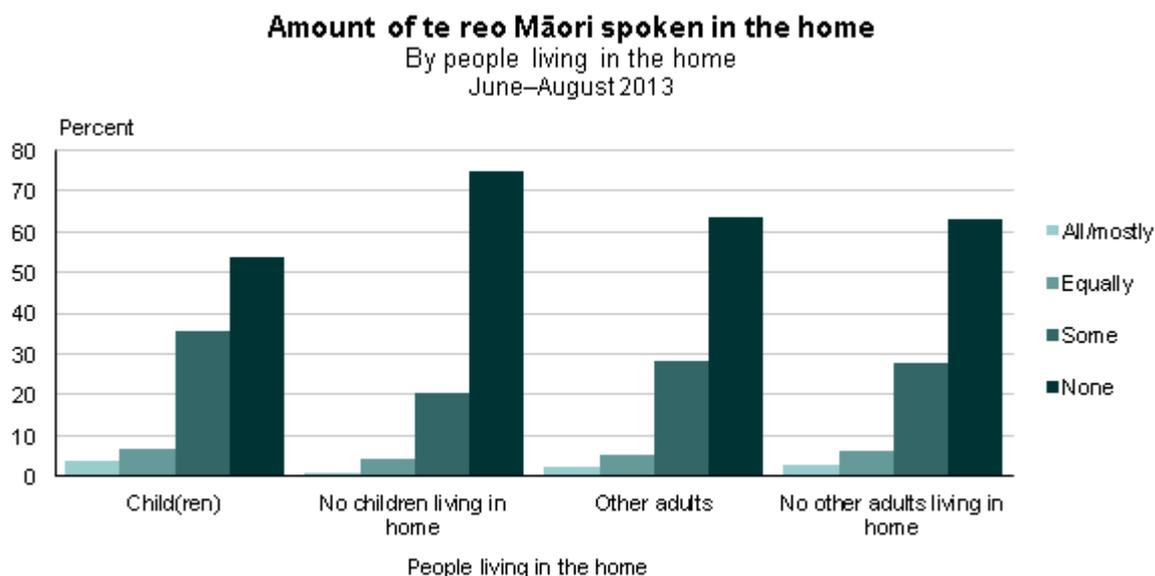
Use of te reo Māori at home related to whānau characteristics

Greater use of te reo Māori when there are children in the home

Having children at home is associated with slightly higher overall levels of speaking proficiency. Of Māori with any children at home, 58 percent had some ability to speak te reo Māori (more than a few words or phrases), compared with 53 percent of those without children in the household.

Not surprisingly, there is a strong correlation between having children at home and greater use of te reo there. Of Māori with children in their household, 46 percent spoke some te reo at home, including 11 percent who spoke the language equally or more. For those without children at home the proportions were 25 percent and 5 percent, respectively.

Figure 6



Source: Statistics New Zealand

Those with children enrolled in Māori-medium education speak te reo Māori more

Those with children who had been enrolled in Māori-medium education have higher rates of using the language at home. This was particularly evident for those with children who had been enrolled in kōhanga reo or kura kaupapa, compared with those whose children had not been enrolled in Māori-medium education.

Of those who had children who had been enrolled in kura kaupapa, 78 percent spoke at least some te reo in the home, including 35 percent who spoke the language equally or more. The proportions were similar for those with children enrolled in kōhanga reo: 70 percent spoke at least some te reo at home, including 25 percent who spoke it equally or more.

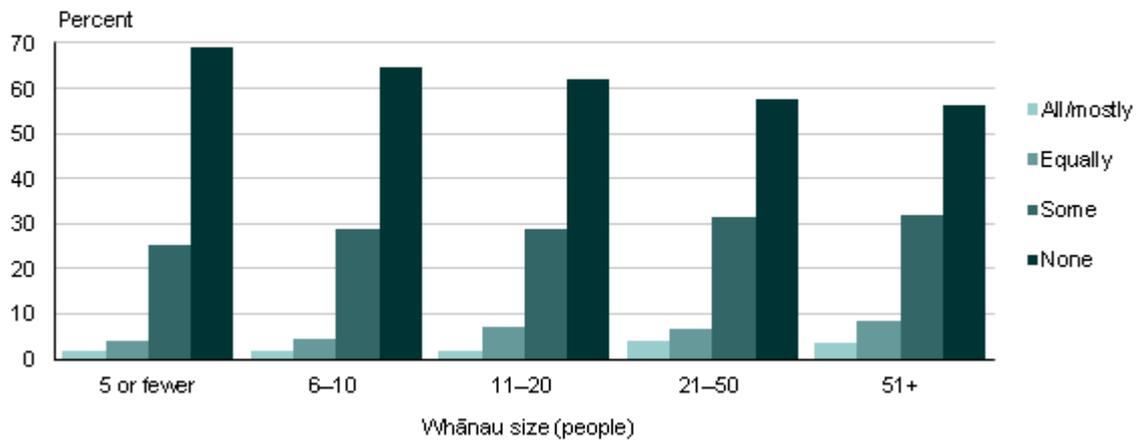
The majority (62 percent) of Māori whose children had not been enrolled in any Māori-medium education spoke no te reo at home, while 33 percent spoke some and 5 percent spoke it equally or more.

Larger whānau size related to greater use of te reo Māori

The larger the size of a person's whānau, the more likely they are to use te reo Māori at home. Of those with 51 or more people in their whānau, 44 percent spoke at least some te reo at home, compared with 31 percent of Māori with a whānau of five or fewer people.

Figure 7

Amount of te reo Māori spoken in the home
By whānau size
June–August 2013



Source: Statistics New Zealand

6 Te Kupenga te reo Māori findings in a wider context

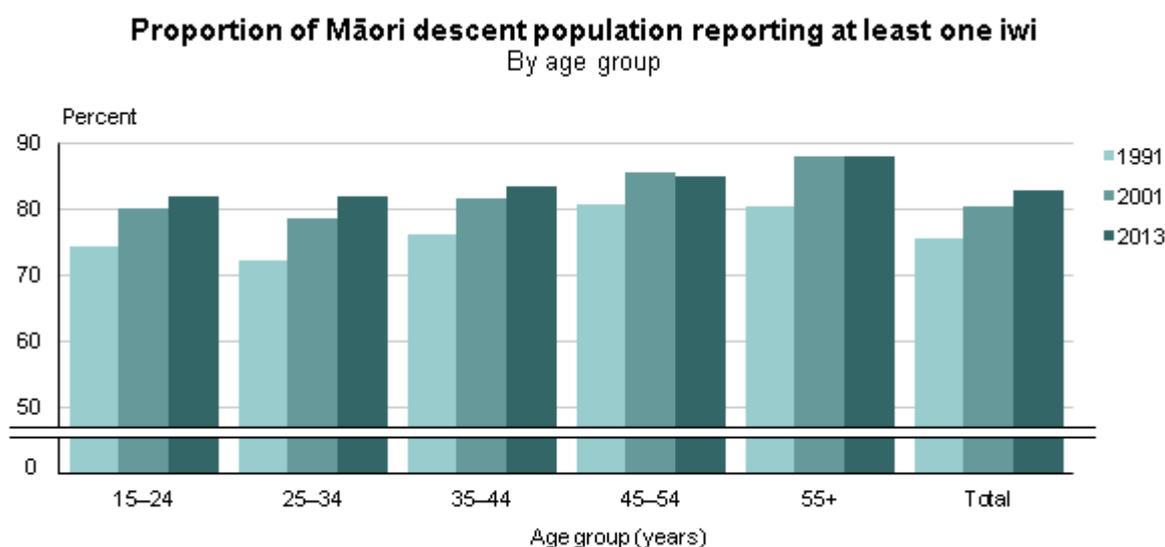
This chapter discusses how the findings from this report relate to the overall patterns and trends on the ability to speak te reo Māori. Specifically, we look at an increase in the number of Māori who could talk about simple/basic things in te reo, which was largely driven by Māori aged 15–44 years.

Increased propensity to identify with Māori culture

No comparable data exists to show changes over time for the Māori culture measures in Te Kupenga. However, other (limited) data suggests an increase in the engagement in and identification with Māori culture since 2004. Census data shows that the proportion of Māori who identified with at least one iwi has increased from 75.5 percent in 1991 to 82.9 percent in 2013. Kukutai and Rarere (2013) suggest this increase may partly reflect a higher propensity to identify with Māori culture.

In particular, the proportion of younger Māori who identified with at least one iwi has increased since 2001, more so than older Māori. Given the relationship between proficiency in te reo and engagement in Māori culture, any increase in the number of Māori who could talk about simple/basic things in te reo could be part of a larger shift for Māori to become more engaged in their culture.

Figure 8



Source: Statistics New Zealand

Participation in Māori-medium education

The first kōhanga reo opened in 1982. Growth in the number of children that attended continued throughout the 1980s, and peaked in 1993 with over 14,000 enrolments. At this time kōhanga reo were responsible for close to half of all Māori enrolments in early childhood services. By 2001, enrolment numbers had declined to around 9,500, where they remained until 2012. However, with over 60,000 Māori having attended kōhanga reo since its inception, these institutions continue to play a crucial role in reviving te reo Māori.

In 2009, 6,267 students were enrolled in kura kaupapa Māori, up 9.3 percent since 2002 when 5,428 were enrolled. This rise compared with a 9.5 percent increase in the total Māori student population over the same period.

Since 2004, wānanga have led the provision of te reo Māori classes at the tertiary level, focusing on immersion classes and using the Māori language in a range of situations. Between 2001 and 2005, an unprecedented level of te reo Māori students went through tertiary education (Earle, 2007). This peaked in 2003 with over 60,000 enrolled that year in te reo Māori courses. Most of these learners were enrolled in level 4 certificates at wānanga.

A marked decline occurred in tertiary-level te reo Māori learners from 2003 to 2006, largely because fewer courses were offered through two of the wānanga. This was a result of funding reviews of lower-level qualifications, organisational change, and reduced demand (Ministry of Education, 2013). In 2012, around 10,000 learners were enrolled in te reo courses at tertiary providers.

Earle (2007) suggests that the main contribution of te reo Māori learning through tertiary education has been to increase substantially the number of people with a basic understanding of the language. This is supported by Te Kupenga findings (Statistics NZ 2014), which showed large increases in the number of Māori with lower-level speaking ability.

Tertiary education courses are not sufficient on their own to build conversational proficiency in te reo Māori. Students also need to be able to access a range of environments inside and outside the home where the language is used and supported.

All this should not set aside the importance of first language speakers in revitalising te reo. We found a strong relationship between te reo Māori being the first language and the ability to speak it very well or well. A relatively unchanged rate of first language speakers (8 percent) over the last decade is mirrored by those who are able to speak te reo very well or well.



7 Conclusion

From the middle of last century, the use of te reo Māori declined so that many feared the language would die completely. Today, a range of strategies and policies are in place that aim to protect and revitalise the language.

Te Kupenga gave us the chance to explore te reo Māori proficiency and use in depth. It enabled us to look at te reo information with a range of other social, cultural, and economic measures to give a picture of the factors associated with te reo ability and use.

Results from the survey showed a relationship between the ability to speak te reo Māori and its use inside and outside the home. Those who are able to speak te reo fairly well or better are more likely to use it. However, the ability to speak te reo well does not account for all the variation in the use of the language.

Significant relationships exist between the ability to speak te reo Māori and education measures, particularly enrolment in Māori-medium education. Whānau measures, such as having children in the household, are strongly associated with greater use of the language in the home.

This analysis also showed a strong relationship between the ability in and use of te reo Māori and other aspects of Māori culture including:

- the first language learnt as a child and still understood
- knowledge of pepeha (Māori tribal identity)
- participation in modern cultural practices.

The strength of these relationships is further evidence of te reo being an integral component of Māori culture and identity.



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Appendix 1: Methodology

Data from Te Kupenga

The data for this report comes from Te Kupenga 2013. Te Kupenga is a survey of Māori well-being. It includes measures based on the Māori perspective of cultural well-being, including wairuatanga (spirituality), tikanga (Māori customs and practices), whanaungatanga (social connectedness), and te reo Māori. The survey also contains general social and economic well-being measures, such as paid and unpaid work, civil participation, and self-assessed health status. These measures give an overall picture of the social, cultural, and economic well-being of Māori in New Zealand in 2013.

[Te Kupenga 2013 \(Data quality section\)](#) has more information.

Te Kupenga used a self-rated question to assess a respondent's ability to speak in te reo Māori. Respondents were asked to place themselves in one of five categories as follows:

1. very well (I can talk about almost anything in Māori)
2. well (I can talk about many things in Māori)
3. fairly well (I can talk about some things in Māori)
4. not very well (I can only talk about simple/basic things in Māori)
5. no more than a few words or phrases.

Respondents who rated their ability to speak te reo Māori between 1 and 4 were asked more detailed questions about the environments in which they used te reo Māori. Those who rated their ability as 'no more than a few words or phrases' were not asked these detailed questions.

Respondents were asked about their te reo Māori usage both inside and outside the home. Respondents could choose from:

- no Māori
- some Māori
- Māori equally with English (or another language)
- mostly Māori
- all Māori.

Logistic regression used to inform analysis

We used logistic regression in this analysis to establish what measures had strong independent relationships with ability in and the use of te reo Māori. This logistic regression was used only to decide which measures would be included in the report and these measures were presented using descriptive statistics. Results from the regression analysis form no part of the main report. But the results are presented here for your information.

As the five possible response options for respondents to all of the te reo Māori questions have a logical order, we used a cumulative multinomial logistic regression. The advantage of using regression analysis is that it holds other factors constant, while looking at the association between the likelihood of speaking or using te reo Māori and the factor of interest.

A cumulative multinomial logistic regression describes the relationship between the lowest against all higher categories of the te reo Māori variables and the relationship between the next-lowest category and all higher categories. Because the relationship between all pairs of groups is the same, there is only one set of coefficients. Therefore, results from the model refer to the likelihood of having a higher ability to speak te reo Māori and using more te reo Māori inside or outside the home.

Model of te reo Māori

While the ability in and use of te reo Māori for Māori is no doubt a complex process, Te Kupenga contains many measures that would allow us to look at what is involved in this process. To restrict the number of these measures that we put into the model, we began with a simple framework that might help explain how a high ability or use in te reo Māori is achieved. This framework has the following themes:

- culture and identity
- education
- whānau
- socio-economic
- social
- demographic.

We selected a number of measures from Te Kupenga to represent each of these themes in the logistic regression model.

Interpreting odds ratios

We present the results of the logistic regression analysis in appendix 2 in the form of odds ratios. An odds ratio is the odds of an event happening divided by the odds of the opposite event happening. For example, suppose that 400 females spoke te reo Māori and 200 did not. The odds of a female speaking te reo Māori are $400/200 = 2$, or 2 to 1. This means the chances of a female speaking te reo Māori are reasonably good. To give another example, suppose that 500 males spoke te reo Māori and 1,000 did not. The odds of a male speaking te reo Māori would be $500/1,000 = 0.5$ or 1 to 2. The chances of their speaking te reo Māori are therefore significantly lower than for females.

For continuous explanatory variables (for example age), an odds ratio of greater than 1 indicates a higher likelihood of speaking te reo Māori as the value of the explanatory variable increases and an odds ratio less than 1 indicates a lower likelihood.

For categorical explanatory variables, the odds ratio compares the likelihood of speaking te reo Māori compared with the reference category. An odds ratio greater than 1 indicates a higher likelihood of speaking te reo Māori compared with the reference group, while an odds ratio of less than 1 indicates a lower likelihood.

Appendix 2: Logistic regression results

The results of our logistic regressions are presented in appendix table 1. The factors associated with the chance of being able to speak te reo Māori and the use of te reo Māori inside and outside the home for adult Māori are analysed.

Appendix table 1
Likelihood of using or being able to use te reo Māori

Characteristic	Category (where applicable)	Proficiency	Use in the home	Use outside the home
		Odds ratios		
First language	English	0.193*	0.306*	0.336*
	Māori	Reference category		
Importance of culture	Very/quite	2.836*	3.861*	5.583*
	Somewhat	2.021*	2.556*	3.585*
	A little	1.245	1.885	2.349*
	Not at all	Reference category		
Know all aspects of mihi	Yes	4.024*	1.626*	1.904*
	No	Reference category		
Participated in performing arts		1.760*	2.049*	2.931*
Listened to Māori radio		1.528*	1.356*	1.499*
Read a Māori magazine		1.340*	1.567*	1.577*
Ethnicity	Māori only	Reference category		
	Māori and other	0.718*	0.792	0.842
Māori-medium education	Attended all	3.051*	1.153	2.243*
	Attended kohanga or kura	1.773*	1.191	1.200
	Attended wānanga only	1.404*	1.276	1.400
	Attended none	Reference category		
Educational qualification	No qualification	Reference category		
	Level 1-4 certificate	1.101	1.134	1.248
	Level 5-6 diploma	1.500*	1.280	1.430
	Level 7 bachelor's and above	1.639*	1.283	1.335
Child enrolled in Māori-medium education	Yes	1.254	2.171*	1.685*
	No	Reference category		
Whānau size		1.000	1.000*	1.000*
Children in the home	Yes	Reference category		
	No	1.140	0.403*	0.988
Age		0.986*	0.990*	1.006
Household income	\$30,000 or less	1.443*	1.113	1.389
	\$30,001-\$70,000	1.147	1.175	1.158
	\$70,001-\$100,000	1.127	1.057	1.400
	\$100,001 or more	Reference category		
Self-rated health	Excellent	0.896	0.819	0.865
	Very good	1.084	1.056	0.909
	Good	0.911	1.008	1.105
	Fair/poor	Reference category		

Symbol: * represents significant at the 5 percent level of significance.