

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

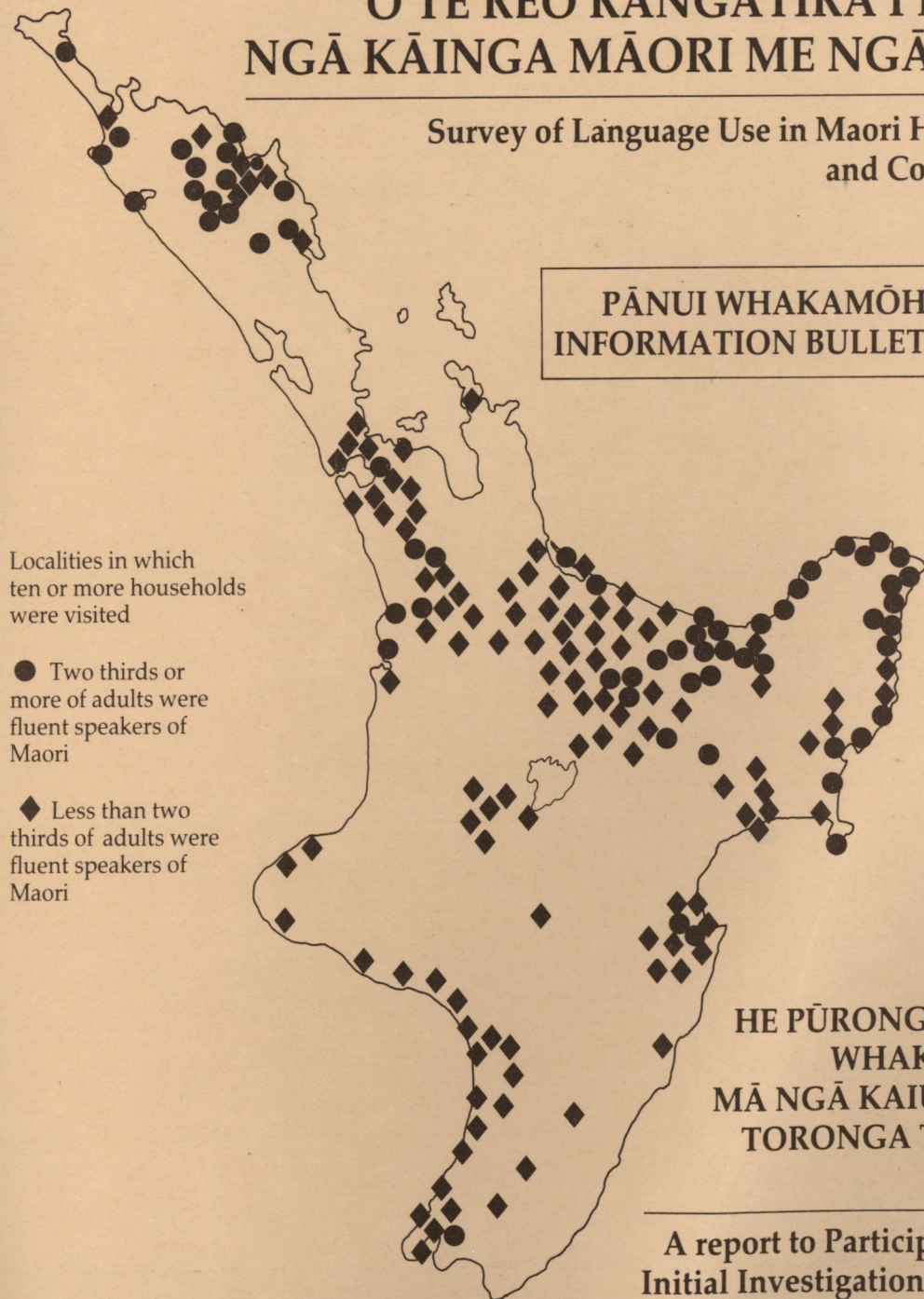
PĀNUI WHAKAMŌHIO
INFORMATION BULLETIN

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Localities in which
ten or more households
were visited

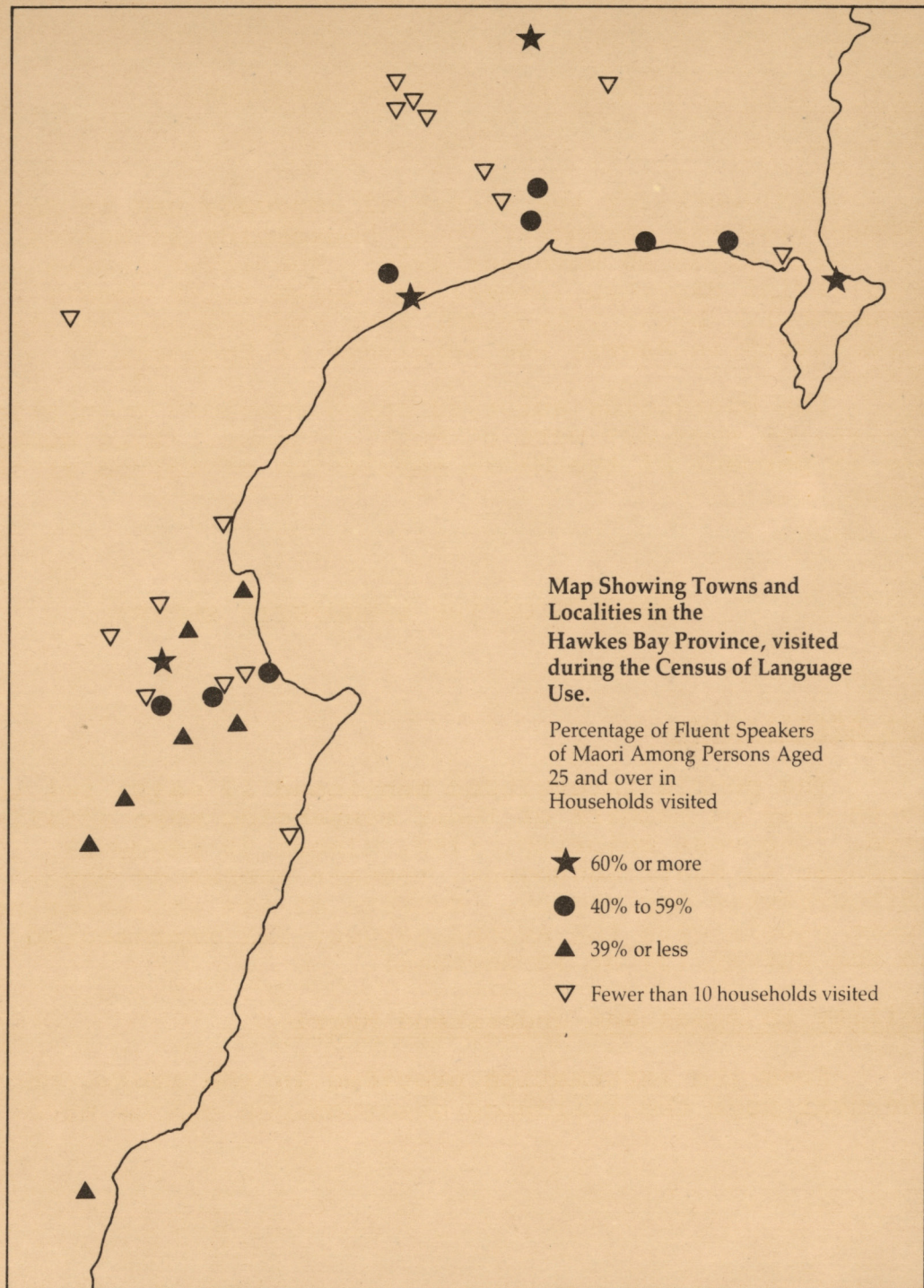
● Two thirds or
more of adults were
fluent speakers of
Maori

◆ 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 WAIROA

Fieldwork for the census of language use in Maori communities was conducted in 51 households in Wairoa and North Clyde in November 1976. The interviewers were Tawini Rangihau (Tuhoe) and Raiha Smith (Ngati Kahungunu). Eight interviews were carried out partly or entirely in Maori, the remainder in English.

The households surveyed had a combined population of 286, of whom 279 were of Maori descent. This number was 15 percent of the Maori population of Wairoa at the time.

RESULTS OF THE LINGUISTIC SURVEY

Iwi Affiliation

The people interviewed mentioned 12 major iwi to which they or members of their households were affiliated. The vast majority, (198, almost 70 percent) belonged to Ngati Kahungunu, tangata whenua of the Wairoa-Hawkes Bay region. Members of the neighbouring Tuhoe people were the second largest iwi represented in the survey (37 or 12 percent).

Ability to speak and understand Maori

From the information provided in the table, on the next page the following observations can be made:

ABILITY TO SPEAK AND UNDERSTAND MAORI

<u>Age Group</u>	<u>Fluent Speakers</u>	<u>Understand Easily</u>	<u>Limited Understanding</u>	<u>No Knowledge</u>
45 & Over	42(81%)	48(92%)	3(6%)	1(2%)
25-44	16(33%)	28(58%)	11(23%)	9(19%)
15-24	0	5(9%)	24(45%)	24(45%)
2-14	0	16(13%)	61(48%)	51(40%)
Overall	58(21%)	97(34%)	99(35%)	85(30%)

(Numbers and percentages refer to those interviewed in November 1976; percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number).

1. The Maori language is understood by more than two-thirds of the people surveyed.
2. Fluent speakers of Maori were found only in the over 25 year age group.
3. Well over half the children aged between 2 and 14 had some understanding of the language.
4. The 15-24 year age group revealed slightly lower levels of knowledge of Maori than the school age children (perhaps because more of the younger children had been given the opportunity to study Maori at school).

Use of Maori language in the household

English was the main language of communication in most of the 51 households visited. Forty-six of the households had dependent children, and communication was entirely in English in 16 of them. The remainder used the Maori language for some regular

daily activities (such as meal times, for prayers and informal Maori language lessons carried out at home).

In the childless households, English was the only language used in three, Maori and English were used for an equal amount of time in one, while in the remaining households Maori was the language used with Maori-speaking visitors.

The Maori language in the community

Although Maori was not the main language used in the homes visited, most informants placed a strong cultural value on the Maori language. Many informants or members of their families were learning Maori at night classes in schools or on local marae. The chances of two members of the Maori community being able to converse successfully with each other in Maori, were about one in two if both persons were adults, and about one in fifteen if one person was under 25. Conversation in Maori between two children, on a random encounter, was a remote possibility.

Attitudes towards the Maori language

Most people interviewed expressed support for the teaching of Maori in schools, and, while stressing the importance of teaching dialectal variants, were pleased with its development in the Wairoa area. Eight informants were themselves involved as language teachers either in schools, on marae or at evening classes. Other fluent speakers recalled having been 'thrashed or strapped' as children for speaking Maori at school. Memories of these punishments and an awareness of the inferior status accorded the language in the larger community, had made them reluctant to teach their own

ABILITY TO SPEAK AND UNDERSTAND MAORI

children. Many felt that society's negative attitude to the Maori language and culture, had rubbed off onto their children, who resisted their teaching even in the home and English had become the main language for communication.

These attitudes are changing and the parental support shown for the teaching of Maori is encouraging. One informant even proposed that Maori be compulsory at primary school level.

CONCLUSION

The Maori language was spoken and understood by over two-thirds of the people interviewed in Wairoa. Although all fluent speakers were adults, informants were pleased that their children and mokopuna were now receiving more opportunities for learning the language. The importance of learning and speaking Maori in the home was stressed by many people. The willingness of parents (and grandparents) to learn and to teach, plus the recent success of 'Rakau Method' courses in the area, (organized by the Takitimu Language Board) are encouraging signs for the future.

This report was prepared by Lee Smith

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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.