

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

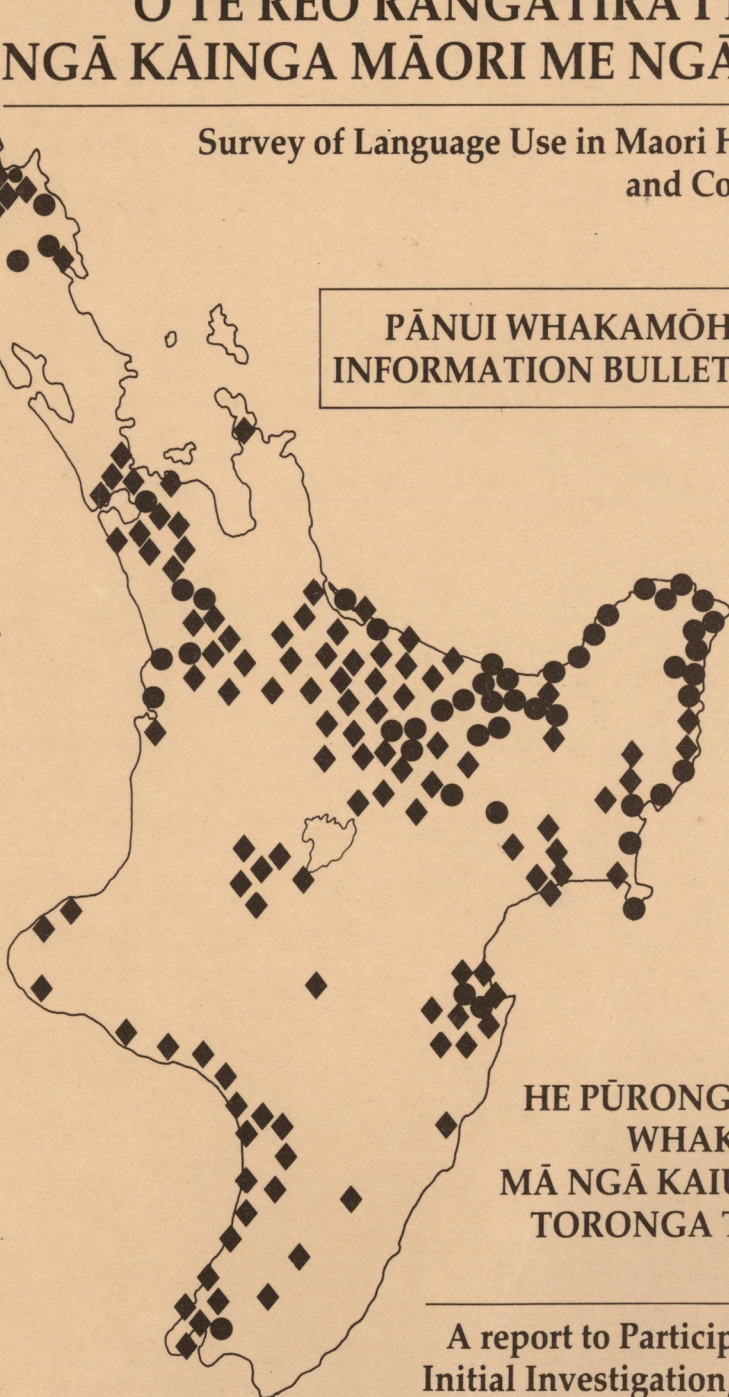
PĀNUI WHAKAMŌHIO
INFORMATION BULLETIN

40

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 MOEREWA AND DISTRICT

Fieldwork for the census of language use in Maori communities took place in 30 households in Moerewa, Whangae and Taumatamakuku in January 1975. Sixteen interviews were carried out partly or entirely in Maori; the remainder (14) were in English.

The interviewers were: Lorraine Williams, Tira Pryor (Ngati Awa), Ani Allen (Ngati Awa), Charis Rata Wells (Te Whanau-a-Apanui), Carol Hindmarsh Ngawati (Ngati Porou), John Ranby, Iriaka and Peter Wensor (Ngapuhi), Rangi Nicholson (Ngati Raukawa), Sue Rikihana (Tuhoe), Dora Pryor (Tuhoe), John Walker (Ngapuhi), Lorna O'Sullivan (Ngati Porou), Awa Hudson (Ngati Whatua/Te Rarawa/Te Aupouri), Helen Gillespie, Ameria Ponika (Tuhoe), Joe Rua (Te Whanau-a-Apanui) and Mahia Wallace (Te Arawa).

The households surveyed had a total population of 182, and these people were all of Maori descent. This was almost one-fifth of the Maori population of the Moerewa district at the time.

RESULTS OF THE LINGUISTIC SURVEY

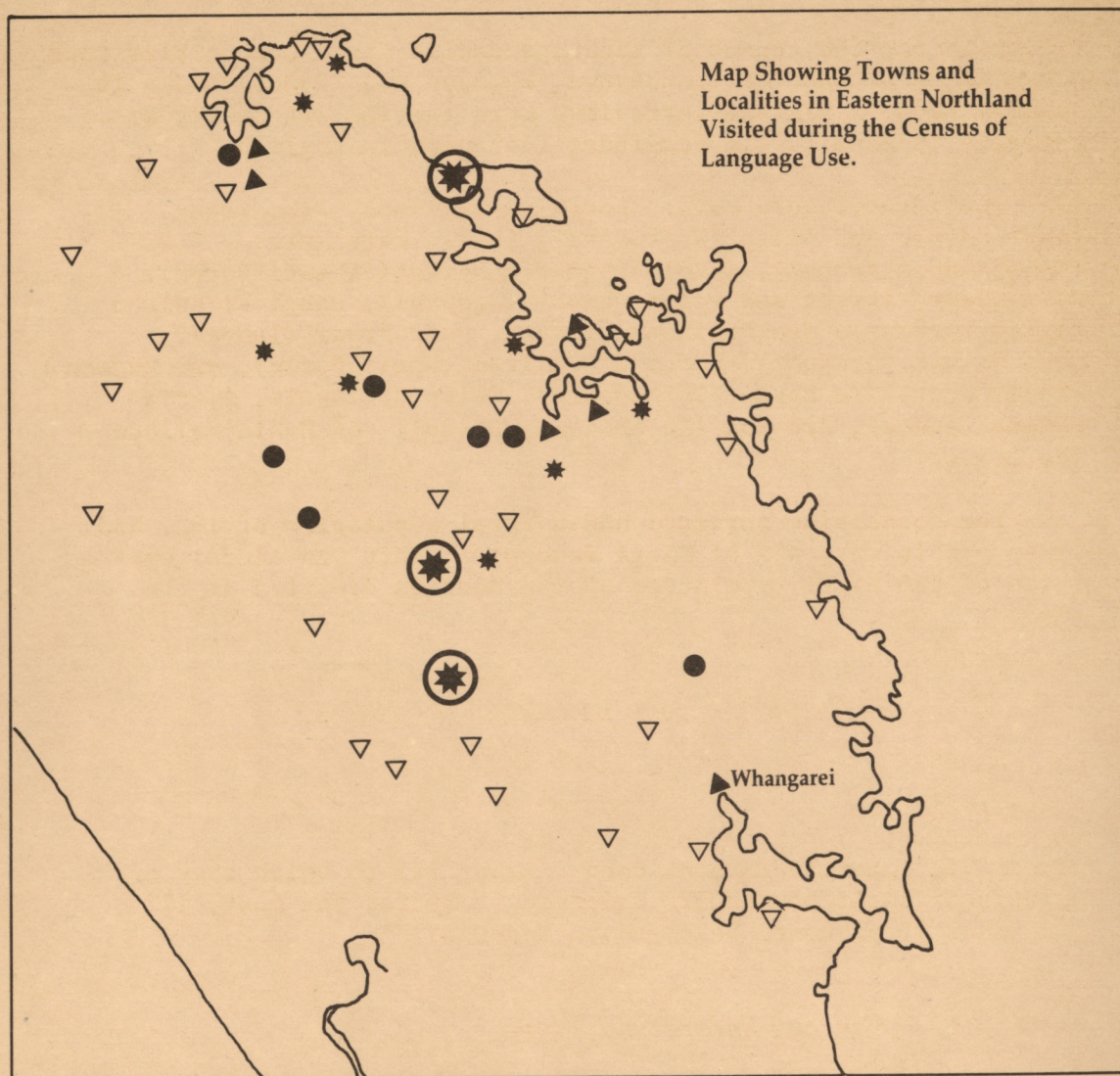
Iwi Affiliation

The people interviewed mentioned 4 major iwi to which they or members of their households belonged. By far the most, 177 people or 97 percent, belonged to Ngapuhi.

Ability To Speak And Understand Maori

The table on the next page shows that about a quarter of the people in the survey could speak Maori well - nearly all of them were adults and kaumatua. Two-fifths of the people

Map Showing Towns and Localities in Eastern Northland Visited during the Census of Language Use.



Percentage of Fluent Speakers of Maori among Persons Aged 25 and Over in Households Visited.

⊛ 90% or more

☆ 75% to 89%

● 60% to 74%

▲ 50% to 59%

▽ Fewer than 8 households visited

KNOWLEDGE OF SPOKEN MAORI IN MOEREW A AND DISTRICT (1975)

Age Group	Fluent Speakers		Understand Easily		Limited Understanding		No Knowledge	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
45 & over	28	93	30	100	0		0	
25-44	14	42	20	61	9	27	4	12
15-24	3	9	10	31	8	25	14	44
2-14	1	1	14	17	6	7	63	76
Overall	46	26	74	42	23	13	81	45

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

understood the language well, and most of them were also over the age of 25. About a fifth of the people under 25 understood Maori easily, but two-thirds of them knew no Maori at the time.

The Use Of Maori Language In The Household

English was the main language for everyday use in most households visited. There were 25 homes with dependent children, and in 14 of them people spoke mostly or entirely in English. In two homes Maori was the main language spoken, while in the other households both Maori and English were used equally.

In each of the 5 childless households Maori was spoken more often than English.

The Maori Language In The Community

English was also the main language spoken by most people in the

Moerewa district. Two-thirds of the adults in the survey could speak Maori well, but they had to use English with workmates, neighbours and friends who could not speak Maori. Most of the talk with people under 25 was also in English.

Maori still remained important, however, in ceremonies on the marae and in certain religious services.

If any two members of the Maori community in Moerewa were to meet unexpectedly, the chances were 1 in 10 that they could understand each other in Maori. If both people were adults over the age of 25 the chances were about 1 in 2; three-quarters of this age group understood Maori with ease.

Attitudes Towards The Language

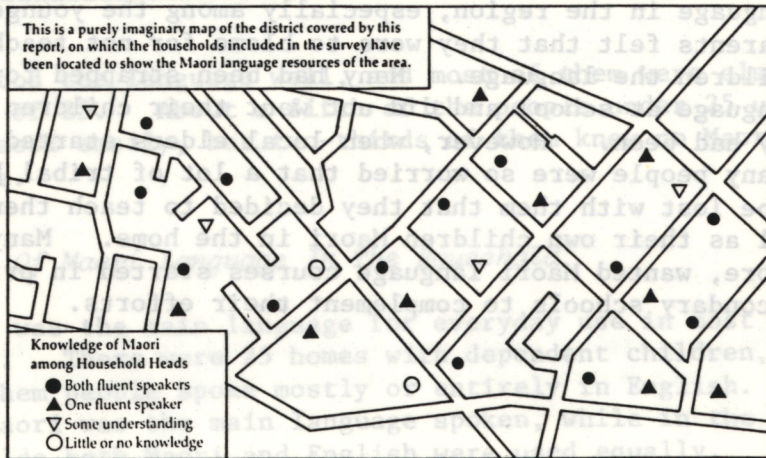
Many of the people we spoke to were worried about the loss of the language in the region, especially among the younger people. Some parents felt that they were to blame for not teaching their own children the language. Many had been strapped for speaking the language at school and did not want their children punished as they had been. However, when local elders started dying off, many people were so worried that a lot of tribal history would be lost with them that they decided to teach themselves as well as their own children Maori in the home. Many people, therefore, wanted Maori language courses started in primary and secondary schools to complement their efforts.

CONCLUSION

This survey has shown that the people in the Moerewa district who spoke Maori the most were kaumatua over the age of 45. While fewer and fewer people under this age knew or used the language, three-quarters of the school children had no knowledge of Maori. Many of them will now be parents themselves.

Maori was, however, still an important part of everyday life in nearly half the households visited, and was widely spoken by adults in the community. Many of these people had to use English more often on meeting Pakeha members of the community and younger Maoris.

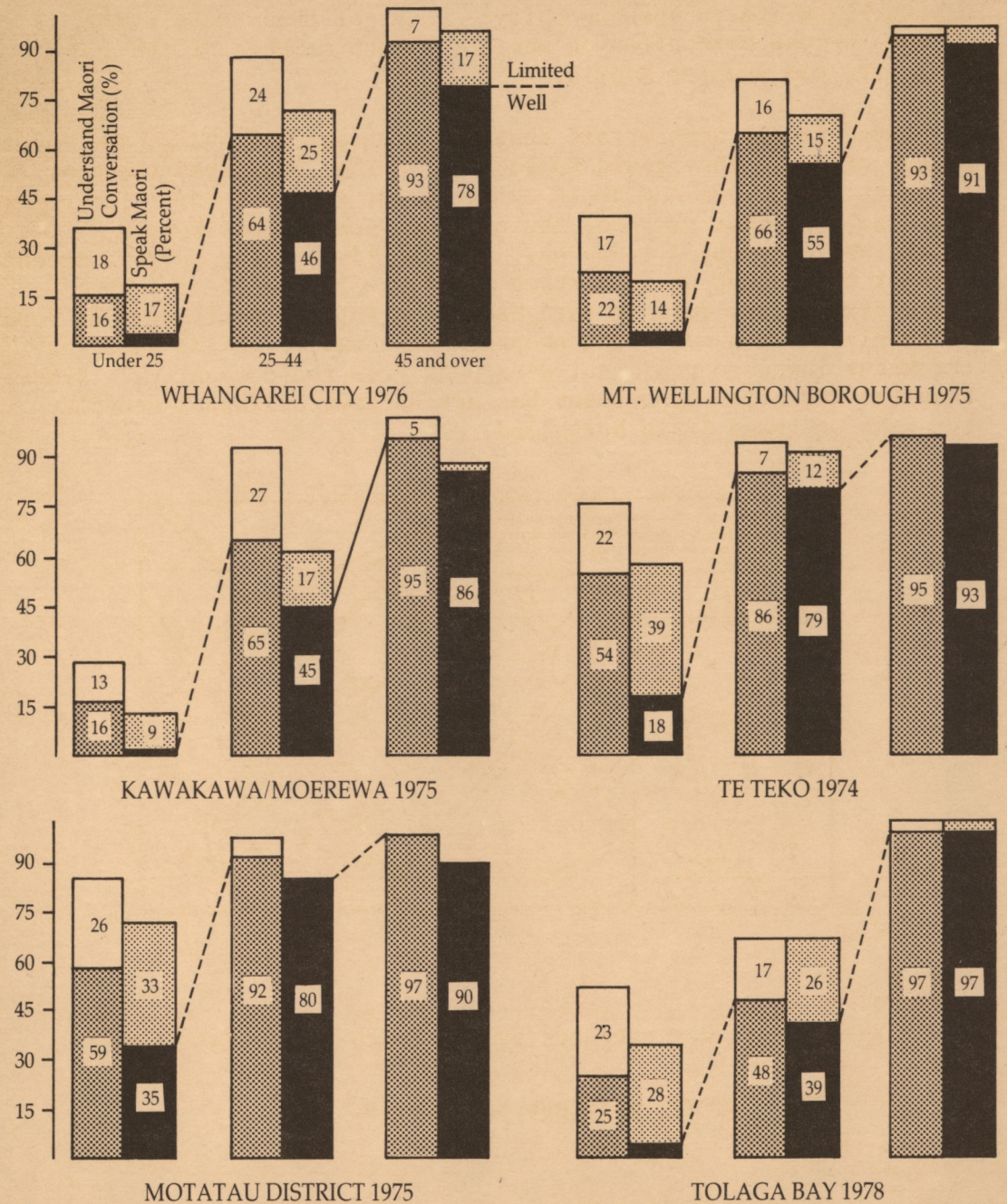
Many people were afraid that the language was dying, and local elders did what they could to save it. They organized classes to teach themselves and their children not only the Maori language, but also important parts of the culture, such as whaikorero, waiata and ceremonial language. At the time of the survey, no one thought of setting up in Moerewa a bilingual school - a school where teaching is done in both Maori and English - although in some other places this was being proposed as a way of making sure that the Maori language would not disappear from the community. Since then the Education Department has set up four bilingual schools, but none of these is in Northland.



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.