

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

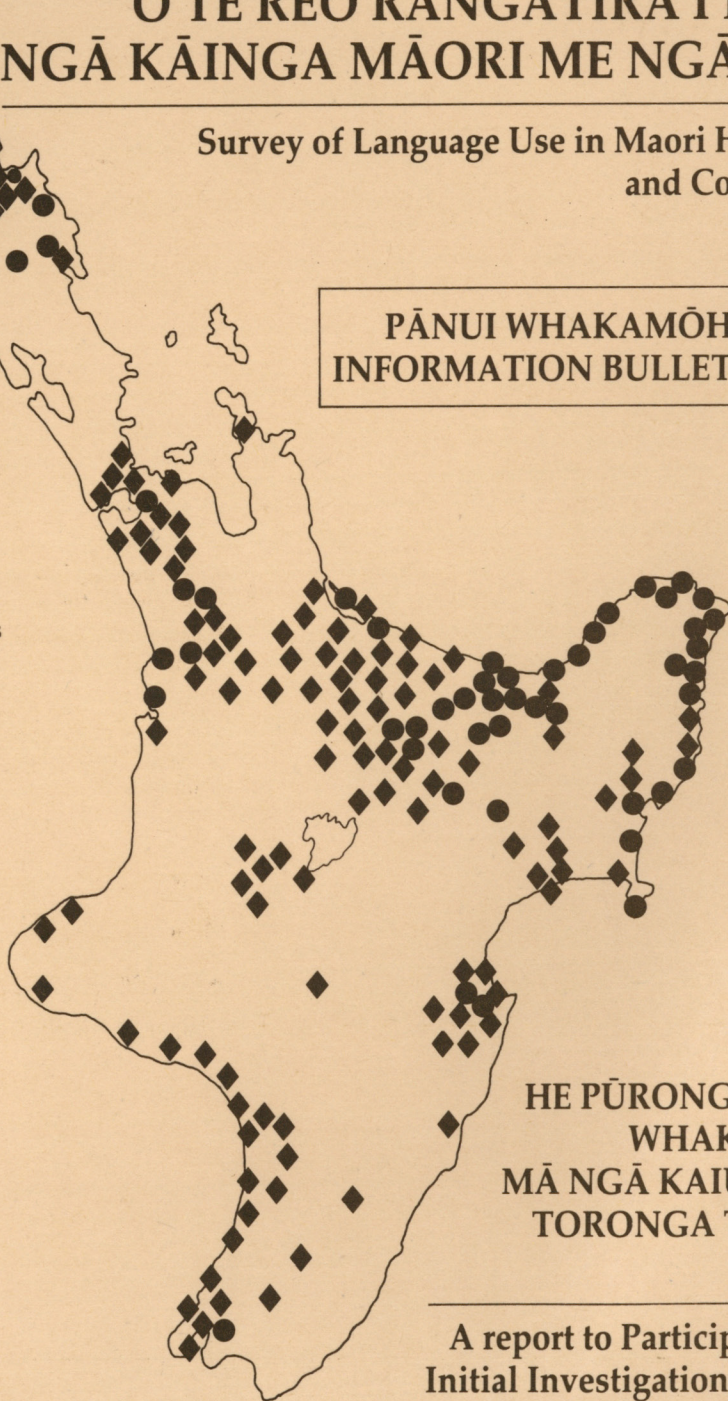
PĀNUI WHAKAMŌHIO
INFORMATION BULLETIN

49

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 KARETU

Fieldwork for the census of language use in Maori communities took place in 11 households in Karetu in January 1975. The interviewers were Sue Rikihana (Tuhoe), Dora Pryor (Tuhoe), Evelyn Te Uira (Waikato) and Judith Brown Hawera (Waikato). Four interviews were carried out partly or entirely in Maori; the rest were in English.

The households surveyed had a total population of 49, and 47 of these people were of Maori descent. This was about half the Maori population of Karetu at the time.

RESULTS OF THE LINGUISTIC SURVEY

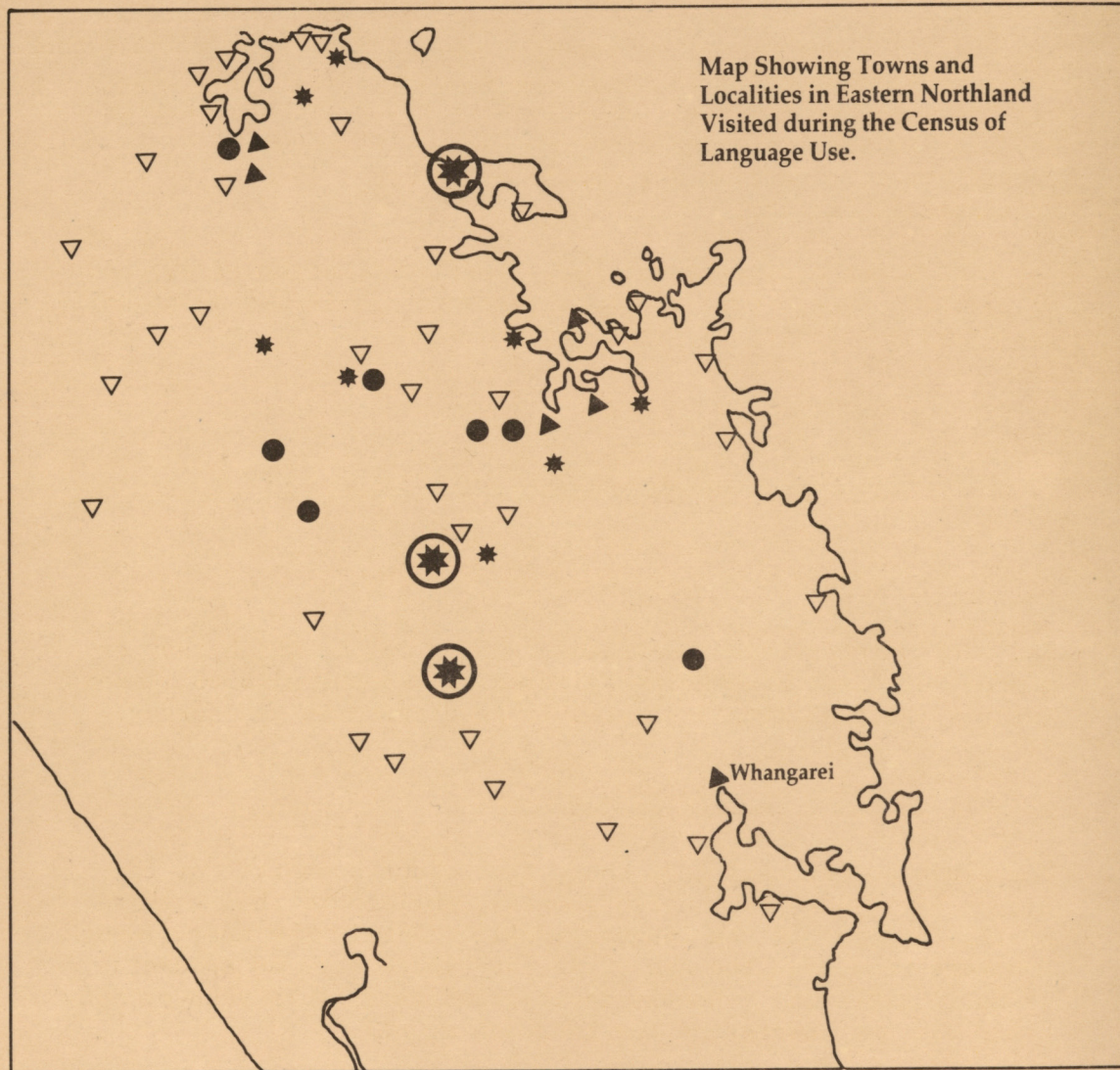
Iwi Affiliation

The people interviewed mentioned 2 major iwi to which they or members of their households belonged. Ngapuhi with 43 members (nearly the full total) was the largest group in the survey.

Ability To Speak And Understand Maori

The table on the next page shows that about a quarter of the people surveyed spoke Maori fluently, while more than a third of them understood the language well. Easily the most fluent speakers were over the age of 45, and there were no speakers of Maori under 25. Nearly three-quarters of this younger age group did not understand the language at all.

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 KARETU (1975)

Age Group	Fluent Speakers		Understand Easily		Limited Understanding		No Knowledge	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
45 & over	11	79	12	86	2	14	0	
25-44	1	10	4	40	4	40	2	20
15-24	0		1	14	2	29	4	57
2-14	0		0		3	19	13	81
Overall	12	26	17	36	11	23	19	41

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

The Maori Language In The Household

English was the main language for everyday use in most households visited. There were nine homes with dependent children, and in eight of them people spoke only or mostly in English. In the rest of the household both Maori and English were used equally often.

In the two childless households people spoke mostly in Maori.

The Maori Language In The Community

English was also the main language spoken in the community. Most people talked in English with neighbours, friends and workmates while those who spoke most Maori were kaumatua over 45. Nearly all of this older age group spoke Maori well, but had to use English more often than Maori, because most people in Karetu spoke only English.

However, the language still had an important place in ceremonies on the marae and in certain religious services. But when these were over, most talk was usually in English.

If any two members of the Karetu Maori community 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 1 in 3; half this age group spoke Maori fluently, while two-thirds of them understood the language well. It was unlikely that school-age children would be able to speak in Maori with each other.

Attitudes Towards The Language

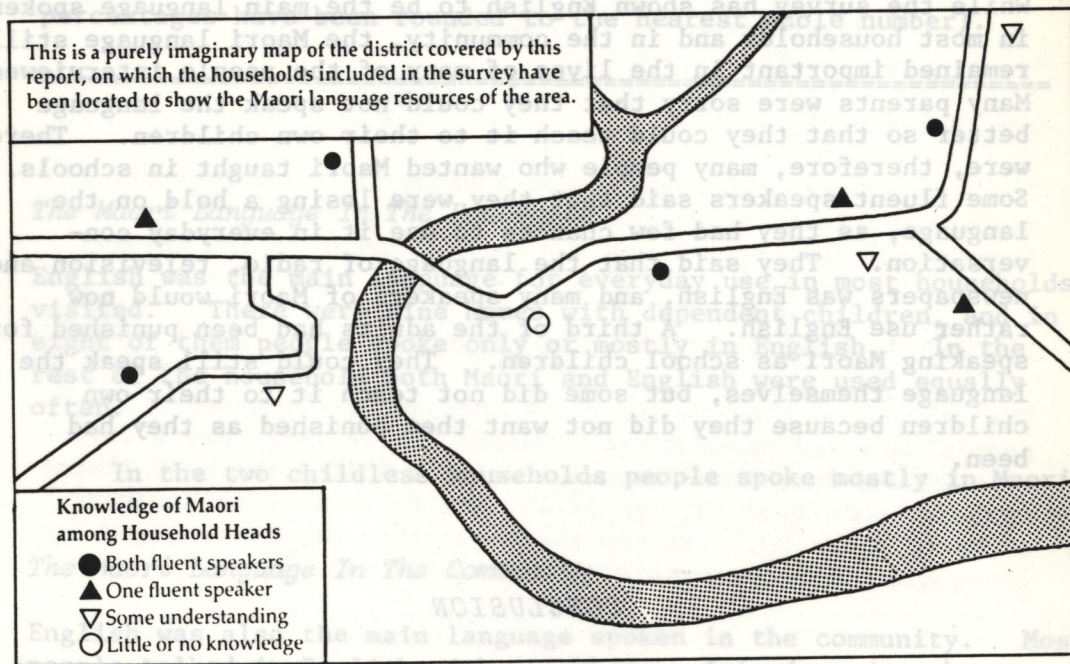
While the survey has shown English to be the main language spoken in most households and in the community, the Maori language still remained important in the lives of many of the people interviewed. Many parents were sorry that they could not speak the language better so that they could teach it to their own children. There were, therefore, many people who wanted Maori taught in schools. Some fluent speakers said that they were losing a hold on the language, as they had few chances to use it in everyday conversation. They said that the language of radio, television and newspapers was English, and many speakers of Maori would now rather use English. A third of the adults had been punished for speaking Maori as school children. They could still speak the language themselves, but some did not teach it to their own children because they did not want them punished as they had been.

CONCLUSION

At the time of the survey, most fluent speakers of Maori in Karetu were kaumatua over the age of 45. A third of the total number understood the language well, but nearly all of them were adults over 25. English was the main language for everyday use in most

households and in the community. Although several parents were trying to teach their children Maori, their task was made more difficult by having television and radio in the home. This is why they wanted schools to help them, although, as one parent said, it may already be too late.

The Maori language was still highly valued in Karetu, especially among the kaumatua age group, although many of them had to use English more often than they wanted to. As in many other small Maori communities in the Bay of Islands and elsewhere, there were people in Karetu who were worried about the future of the Maori language. More and more people were turning to English as the main language for everyday use, and they could do nothing about it. However, they must have been cheered by recent moves by the Departments of Education and Maori Affairs to help young children and their parents to learn Maori.



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

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.