

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

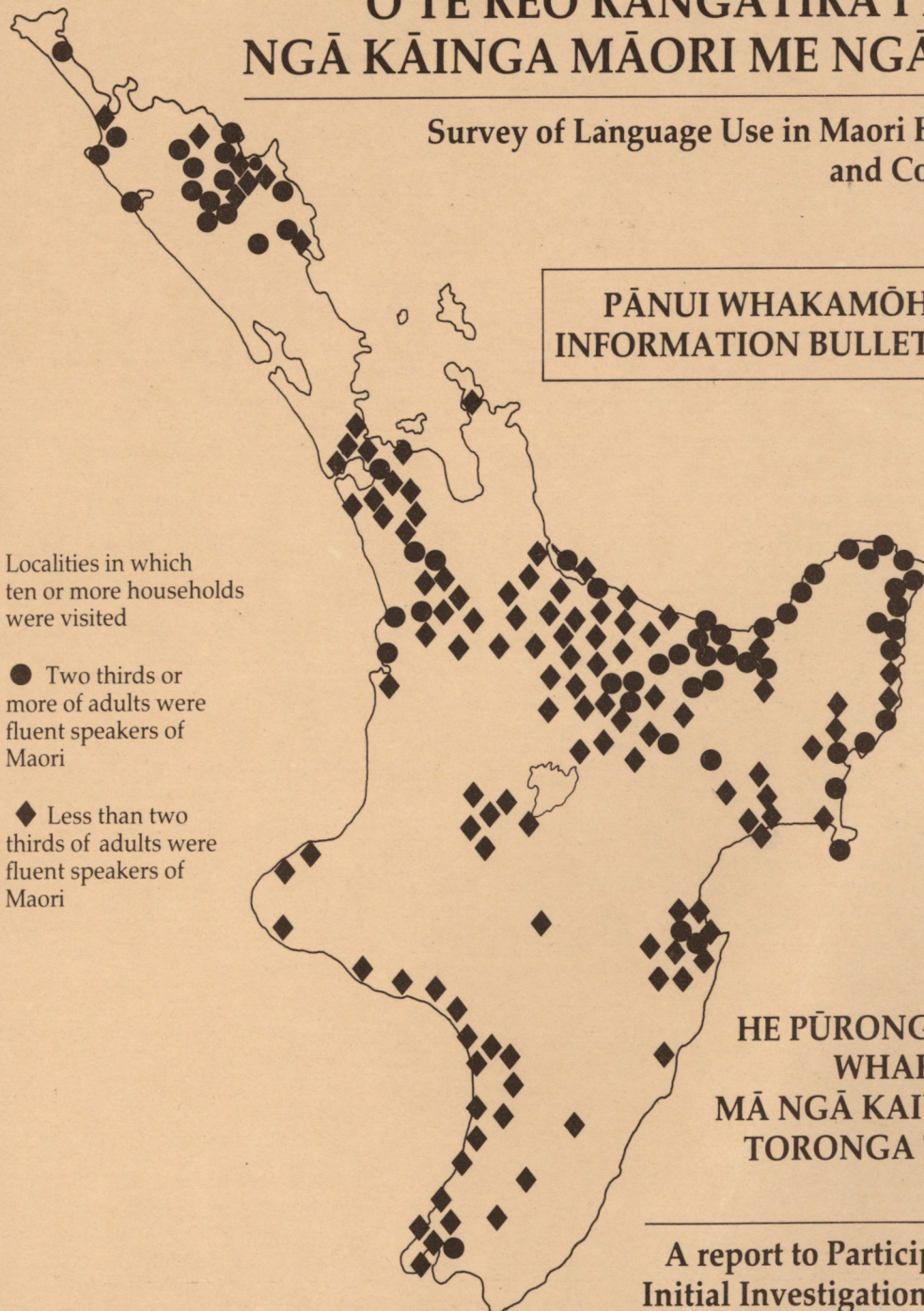
PĀNUI WHAKAMŌHIO
INFORMATION BULLETIN

50

Localities in which
ten or more households
were visited

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

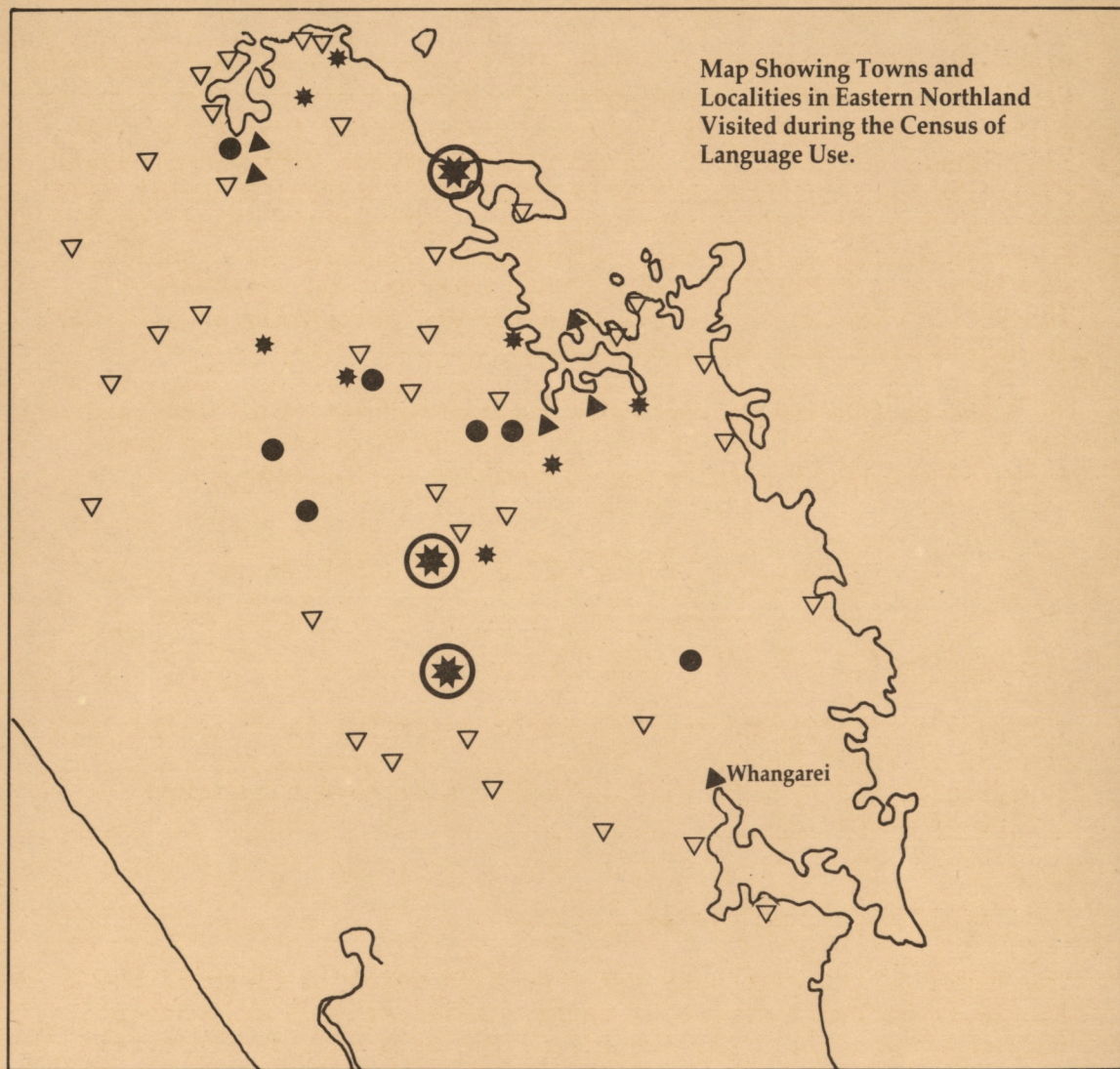
◆ Less than two
thirds of adults were
fluent speakers of
Maori



HE PŪRONGORONGO
WHAKAMŌHIO
MĀ NGĀ KAIURU KI TE
TORONGA TUATAHI,
1973-1978

A report to Participants in the
Initial Investigation, 1973-1978

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

THE MAORI LANGUAGE IN KAWAKAWA

Fieldwork for the census of language use in Maori communities took place in 22 households in Kawakawa in January 1975. The interviewers were Dora Pryor (Tuhoe), Joe Draper (Waikato), Rena Tito (Ngati Whatua), John Miller (Ngapuhi), Sue Rikihana (Tuhoe), Evelyn Te Uira (Waikato), Charis Wells (Te Whanau-a-Apanui), Judy Brown Hawera (Waikato), Helen Gillespie, Tira Pryor (Ngati Awa), Lorraine Williams, John Ranby, Pare Rata (Te Whanau-a-Apanui), W. Gillespie, Rangi Nicholson (Ngati Raukawa) and Joan Walker (Ngapuhi). Seven interviews were carried out partly or entirely in Maori; the rest were in English.

The households surveyed had a total population of 134, and 132 of these people were of Maori descent. This was about one-fifth of the Maori population of Kawakawa at the time.

RESULTS OF THE LINGUISTIC SURVEY

Iwi Affiliation

The people interviewed mentioned nine major iwi to which they or members of their households belonged. The largest iwi represented was Ngapuhi with 110 members or more than four-fifths of the total.

Ability To Speak And Understand Maori

The table on the next page tells us that nearly a fifth of the people spoke Maori fluently, while a third of them understood the language well. All the fluent speakers were adults over 25. Although most people under 25 often heard Maori spoken in the home and in the community, the main language used was English. Three-quarters of the school-age children did not understand Maori at all.

KNOWLEDGE OF SPOKEN MAORI IN KAWAKAWA (1975)

Age Group	Fluent Speakers		Understand Easily		Limited Understanding		No Knowledge	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
45 & over	10	71	12	86	2	14	0	
25-44	14	48	20	69	8	28	1	3
15-24	0		4	24	4	24	9	53
2-14	0		5	7	9	13	57	80
Overall	24	19	41	31	23	18	67	51

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

The Use Of Maori Language In The Household

There were 18 households with dependent children visited, and in ten of them people spoke mostly or entirely in English. In five homes more English than Maori was used, while the people in the three other households spoke both languages equally often.

There were four childless households visited. In two of them, people spoke only English amongst themselves and with visitors. Maori was the main language spoken by the people in the remaining two homes.

The Maori Language In The Community

More than half the adults over 25 spoke Maori fluently, while three-quarters of them understood the language well. This age group was, therefore, most likely to use Maori in the community with neighbours, friends and workmates. (Two of the people we

interviewed were nurses who spoke Maori with elderly patients in hospital).

Most people, however, could not speak Maori, and the fluent speakers had to use English more and more, especially with young people.

Although most people used Maori less and less as the everyday language in the community, the language still had a part to play in important ceremonies and ordinary gatherings, both on the marae and in the home. Maori was used also in certain religious services. Private prayer and grace were said also in Maori in many homes that we visited.

If any two members of the Maori community in Kawakawa met unexpectedly, the chances would be 1 in 10 that they could understand each other in Maori. If both people were adults over 25 the chances would be about 2 in 5, but it was unlikely that school-age children would be able to speak in Maori with each other.

Attitudes Towards The Language

Although English was being used more and more in Kawakawa, the Maori language was still important in the lives of the people. Many of them were worried that the language would die out. Some said they were sorry they couldn't speak Maori better so that they could teach it to their children. A lot of people were strongly for the teaching of Maori in schools, especially at the primary level. However there were some who thought that the form of Maori taught should be the Ngapuhi dialect and not that of another tribe. One person said that the Maori language and culture could not be learned in school; for that, children had to live with and listen to the kaumatua and kuia.

Some of the fluent speakers said that they usually greeted a person in Maori and then carried on speaking English. This was done so that young people wouldn't feel embarrassed for not being able to speak or understand Maori.

Nearly half the people in the survey - usually the head of the household - said they had been beaten for speaking Maori at school. Many of these people did not teach their own children the language, but they still spoke Maori with other Maori-speakers in the community.

CONCLUSION

At the time of the survey, all the fluent speakers of Maori in the homes we visited in Kawakawa were adults over 25. While a third of the total number understood the language well, most of them belonged to this older age group. Nearly three-quarters of the people under 25 could not understand Maori at all at that time.

English was the main language for everyday use in most households. Maori was still widely spoken amongst kaumatua in the community, but more and more people were using English with friends, neighbours and workmates.

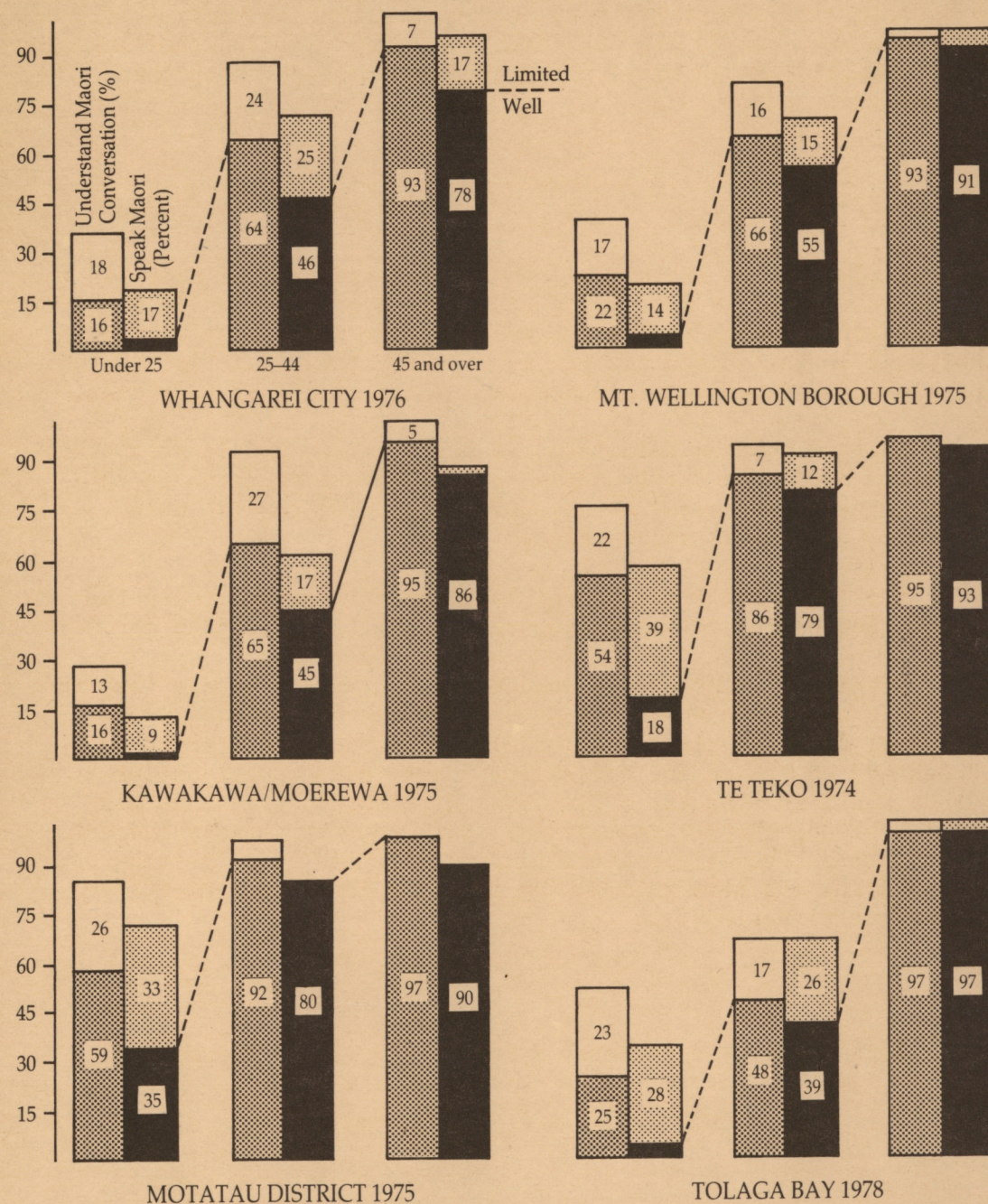
Maori was still the proper language for ceremonies on the marae, and played an important part in certain religious services.

Fewer and fewer people used Maori as their everyday language, and this was a big worry for many of the people we visited. However, language classes for adults have now been started in homes and on the marae, and children have more opportunities to study Maori in schools. The Maori Affairs Department is also giving strong support to teaching Maori to very young children through the Kohanga reo (language nests) which it is setting up. These steps may help to stop the language in the district from dying out altogether.

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.