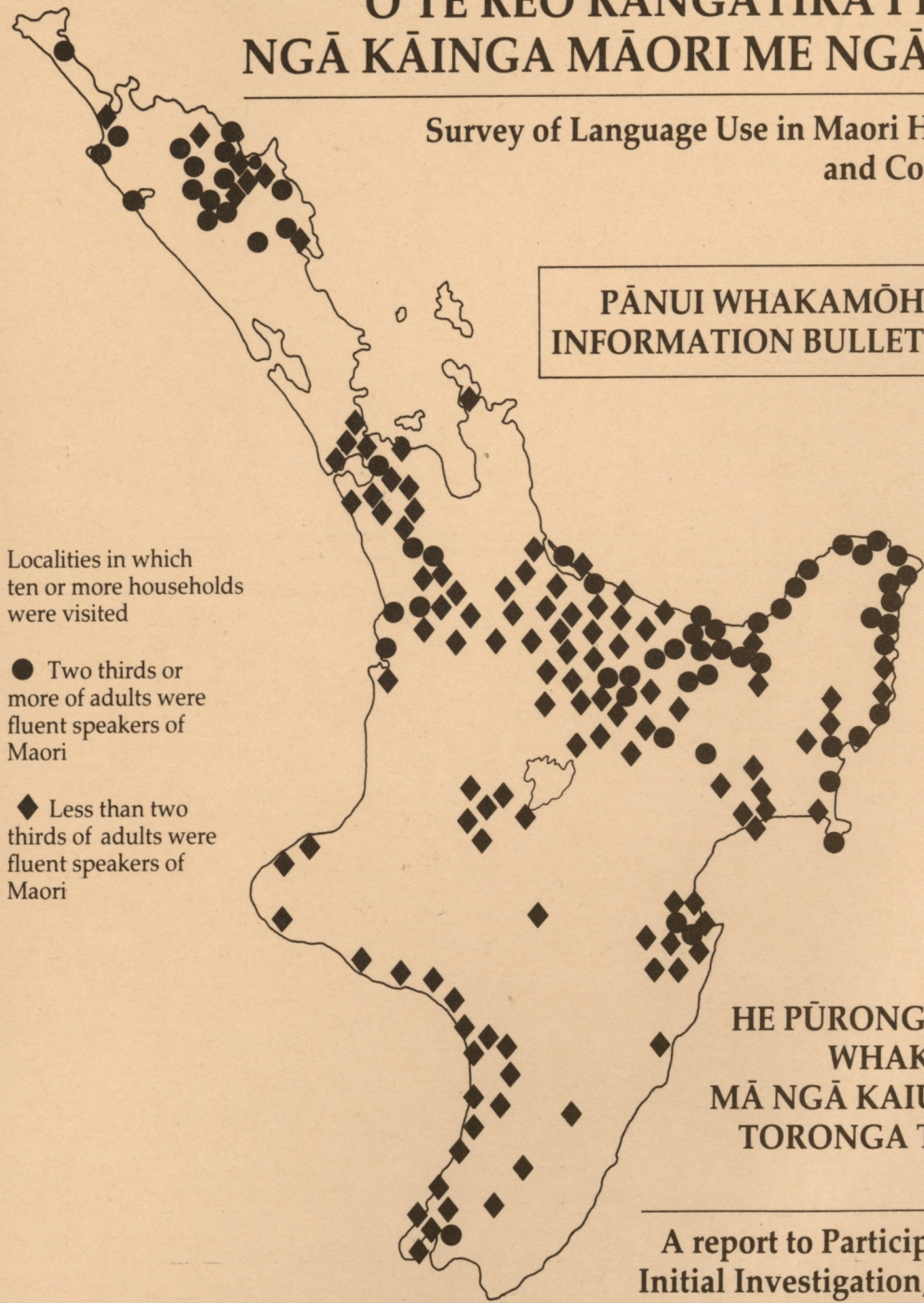


TE TIROHANGA I TE KŌREROTANGA O TE REO RANGATIRA I ROTO I NGĀ KĀINGA MĀORI ME NGĀ ROHE

Survey of Language Use in Maori Households
and Communities

PĀNUI WHAKAMŌHIO
INFORMATION BULLETIN 61



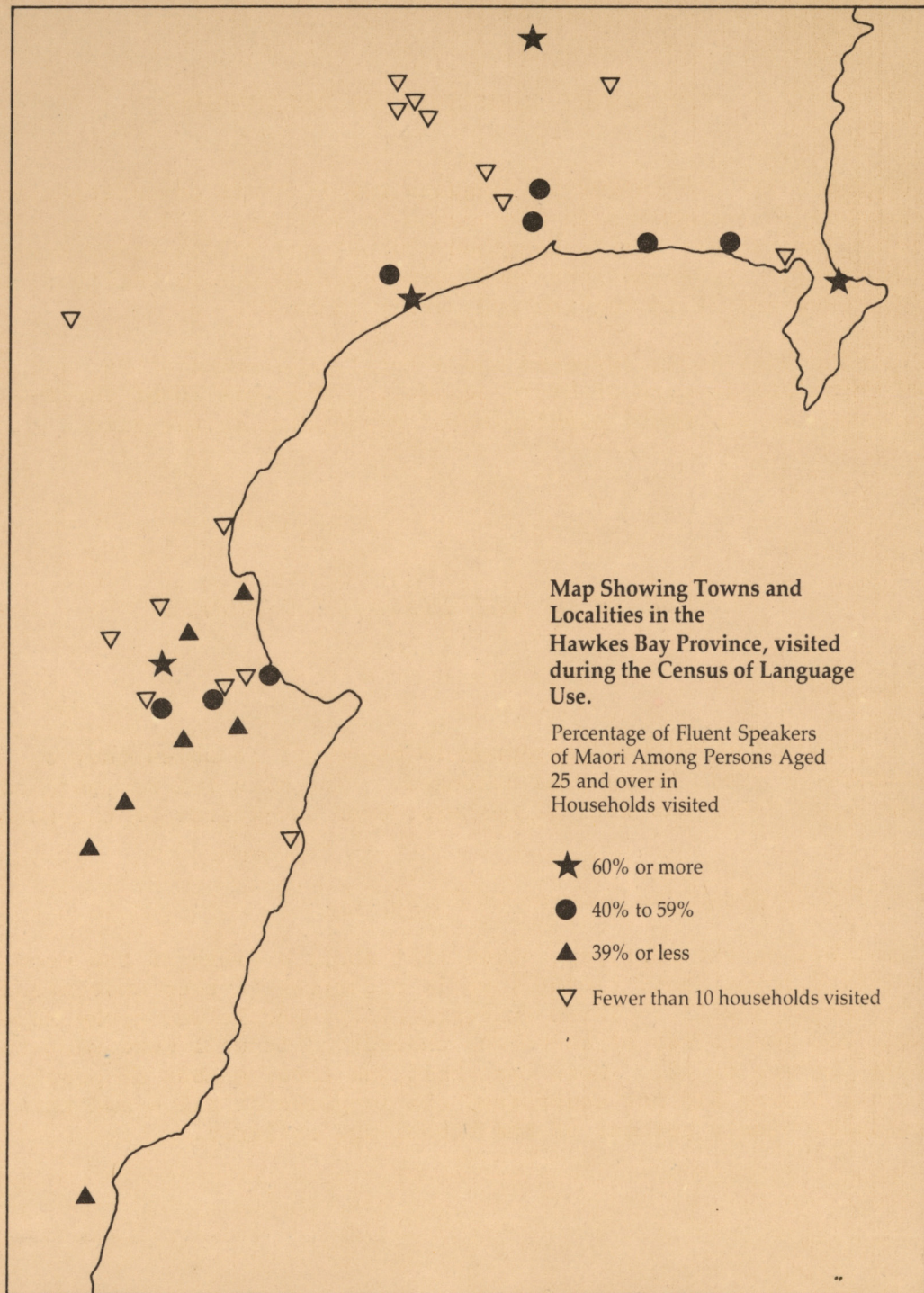
Localities in which
ten or more households
were visited

● 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 PORANGAHAU

Fieldwork for the census of language use in Maori communities took place in 17 households in Porangahau in November 1976. The interviewers were Tawini Rangihau (Tuhoe) and Judith Brown Hawera (Waikato). Fourteen interviews were carried out in English; the rest were partly in English and partly in Maori.

The households surveyed had a total population of 76, and 73 of these people were of Maori descent. This was about three-quarters of the Maori population of Porangahau at the time.

RESULTS OF THE LINGUISTIC SURVEY

Iwi Affiliation

The people interviewed mentioned 10 major iwi to which they or members of their households belonged. The main iwi represented was Ngati Kahungunu with 52 members, over two-thirds of the total.

Ability To Speak And Understand Maori

The table on the next page shows that about a fifth of the people surveyed spoke Maori fluently while a quarter of them understood the language well. Three-quarters of the people who spoke Maori well and two-thirds of those who understood it well were kaumatua over the age of 45. More than half the total number of people in the survey did not understand the language at all - and this includes ninety percent of the school-age children.

KNOWLEDGE OF SPOKEN MAORI IN PORANGAHAU (1976)

Age Group	Fluent Speakers		Understand Easily		Limited Understanding		No Knowledge	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
45 & over	10	56	13	72	3	17	2	11
25-44	2	13	3	20	6	40	6	40
15-24	1	8	2	17	2	17	8	67
2-14	0		1	3	2	7	27	90
Overall	13	17	19	25	13	17	43	58

(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

English was the main language for everyday use in most households visited. There were 15 homes with dependent children; in one of them some Maori was spoken, but in the other 14 people spoke mostly or entirely in English.

There were 2 childless households visited, and in one of them people spoke entirely in English. The people in the other childless home spoke both Maori and English equally often.

The Maori Language In The Community

English was also the main language spoken in the community. Only the very elderly talked in Maori, usually with people their own

age. (At the time of the survey, less than a tenth of the people under 45 spoke Maori well.)

The language still remained important, however, in ceremonies on the marae and in certain religious services. Some people used Maori for private prayer and grace. However, it has been shown recently that many adults are becoming more and more interested in learning whaikorero and marae formalities in order to help kaumatua to welcome guests on to the marae or to other hui in the area.

If any two members of the Maori community in Porangahau at the time of our visit were to meet unexpectedly, the chances were about one in 25 that they could understand each other in Maori. If both people were adults over 25, the chances were about fifty-fifty, but if they were under 25 the chances were almost nil.

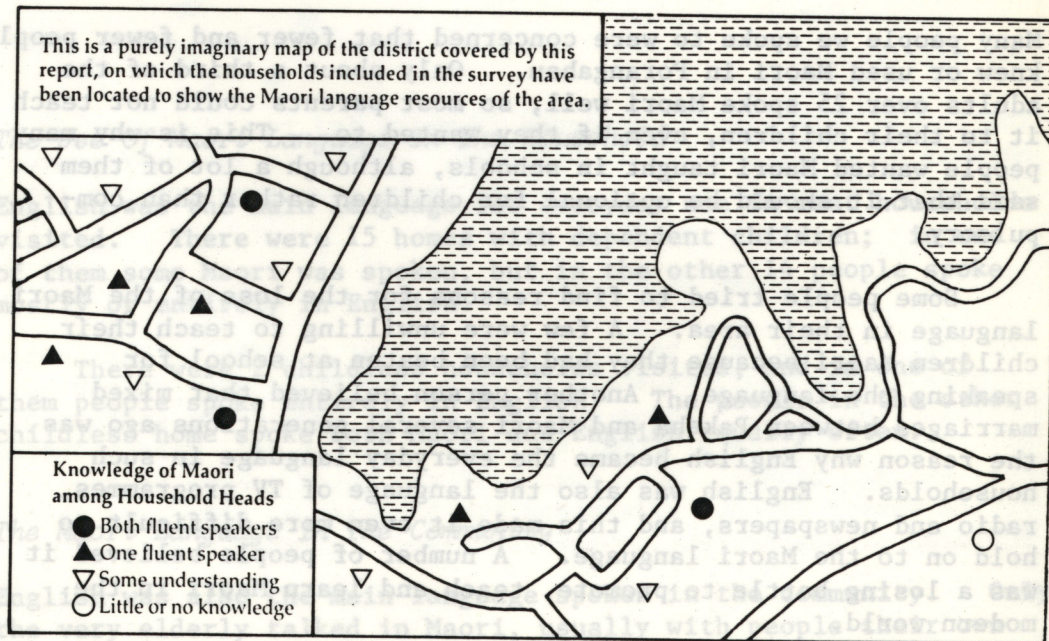
Attitudes Towards The Language

Many people we spoke to were concerned that fewer and fewer people knew or used Maori in Porangahau. Only about a third of the adults over 25 spoke Maori well, so most parents could not teach it to their children, even if they wanted to. This is why many people wanted Maori taught in schools, although a lot of them said that it should be optional for children rather than compulsory.

Some people tried to find reasons for the loss of the Maori language in their area. A few were unwilling to teach their children Maori because they had been beaten at school for speaking the language. Another person believed that mixed marriages between Pakeha and Maori several generations ago was the reason why English became the everyday language in such households. English was also the language of TV programmes, radio and newspapers, and this made it even more difficult to hold on to the Maori language. A number of people believed it was a losing battle to promote, teach and learn Maori in the modern world.

CONCLUSION

In Porangahau in 1976, Maori was spoken only by kaumatua and usually among people of their own age. English had taken over from Maori as the everyday language in the household and community perhaps two generations ago. However, the Maori language still had an important part to play in ceremonies on the marae, in certain religious services and in other Maori gatherings. Some people believed that the total loss of Maori as a spoken language could not be avoided, while others said that interest had risen in the language, as well as in ceremonies on the marae, oral traditions, and arts and crafts in the area. The recent setting up of Te Kohanga Reo (Maori speaking pre-schools), and the Maori language courses held in communities throughout the Takitimu area are helping people to hold on to the language, and could benefit them if they took part in them. The Department of Maori Affairs should be approached for further information.



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.