

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

14

Localities in which
ten or more households
were visited

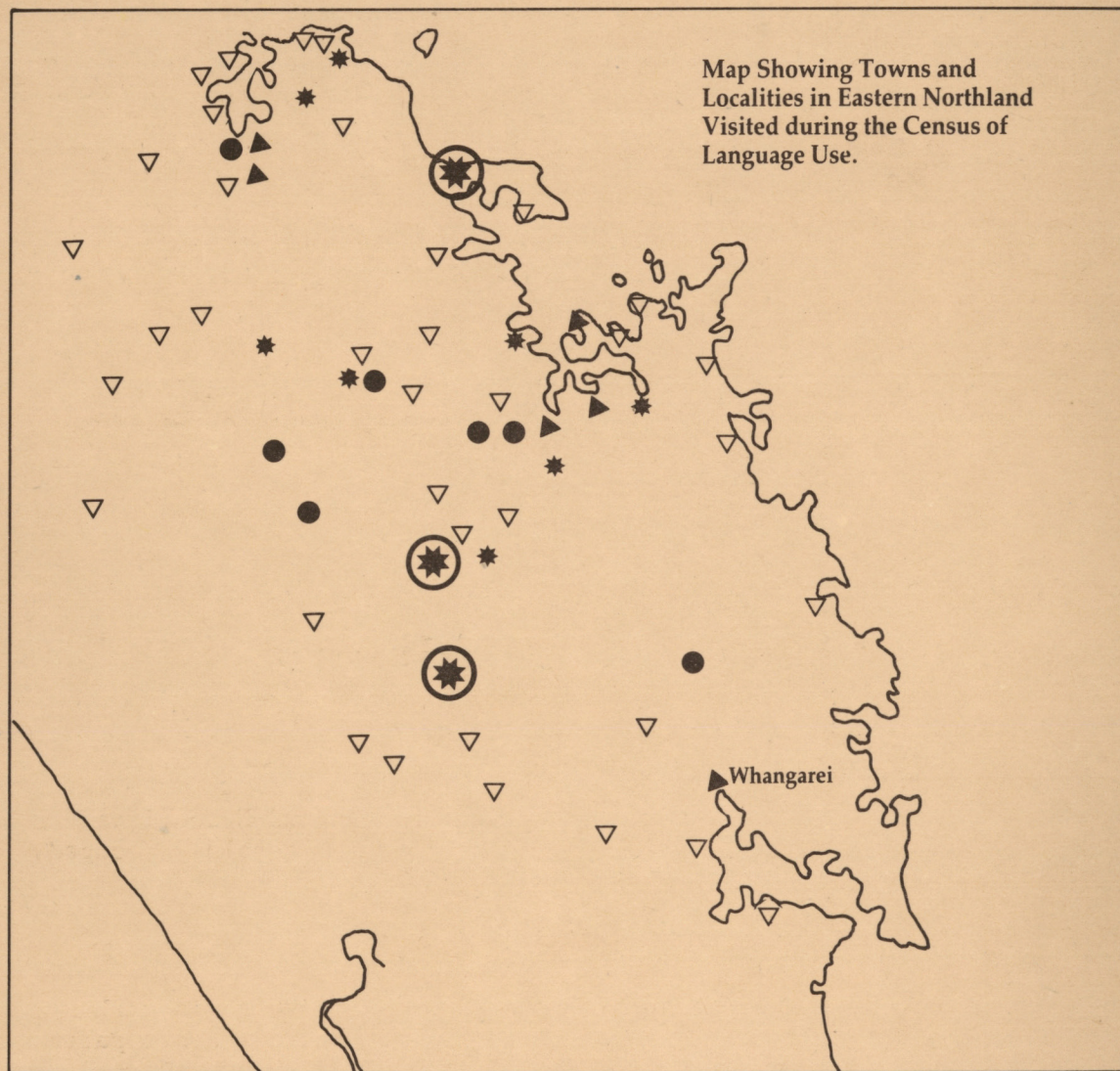
● Two thirds or
more of adults were
fluent speakers of
Maori

◆ 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 MATAWAIA

Fieldwork for the census of language use in Maori communities took place in 14 households in Matawaia in January 1975. The interviewers were Joan Walker (Ngapuhi), Ameria Ponika (Tuhoe), Ripeka Koopu (Te Whanau-a-Apanui), Ani Allen (Ngati Awa), Joe Rua (Te Whanau-a-Apanui), John Miller (Ngapuhi), Willie Martin (Ngati Manawa/Te Aupouri), and Kahu Waititi (Te Whanau-a-Apanui/Ngapuhi). Thirteen interviews were carried out partly or entirely in Maori; only one interview was in English.

The households surveyed had a total population of 57, and 56 of these people were of Maori descent. This was about four-fifths of the total Maori population at the time.

RESULTS OF THE LINGUISTIC SURVEY

Iwi Affiliation

Fifty-six of the participants (or 98 percent), named Ngapuhi as the main iwi to which they or members of their households belonged.

Ability To Speak And Understand Maori

The table on page 2 shows that more people in Matawaia, in each age group, can speak and understand Maori than in most other parts of New Zealand. Almost 70 percent of the children were fluent speakers - a good sign for the future of the language in this area.

KNOWLEDGE OF SPOKEN MAORI IN MATAWAIA

Age Group	Fluent Speakers		Understand Easily		Limited Understanding		No Knowledge	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
45 & over	15	100	15	100	0		0	
25-44	6	86	6	86	1	4	0	
15-24	7	100	7	100	0		0	
2-14	19	68	19	68	8	29	1	4
Overall	47	83	47	83	9	16	1	2

(Numbers and percentages refer to those interviewed in January 1975; percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number).

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Use Of Maori Language In The Household

Maori was the main language used in most of the 14 homes visited. Ten of the households had dependent children, and people spoke entirely or mostly in Maori in 8 of them. Two households used Maori and English for an equal amount of time.

In the four childless homes, Maori was used entirely in one, while members of the remaining households used Maori when speaking with Maori visitors.

The Maori Language In The Community

Matawaia is very much a Maori-speaking community. The people interviewed spoke Maori mostly outside of the home, with their neighbours, at work, for church services and, of course, in formal

marae hui. If any two members of the community met unexpectedly, the chances that they would talk in Maori were very high, as 28 out of 29 people over the age of 15 were fluent speakers. If any two children between 2 and 14 were to meet, there was an even chance they could use Maori with each other. This means that there are quite a few younger children who do not speak Maori very well. If the number of these children continues to grow, the future of Maori in Matawaia will be less bright. At the time of the survey though, Matawaia was the leading Maori-speaking district in Northland.

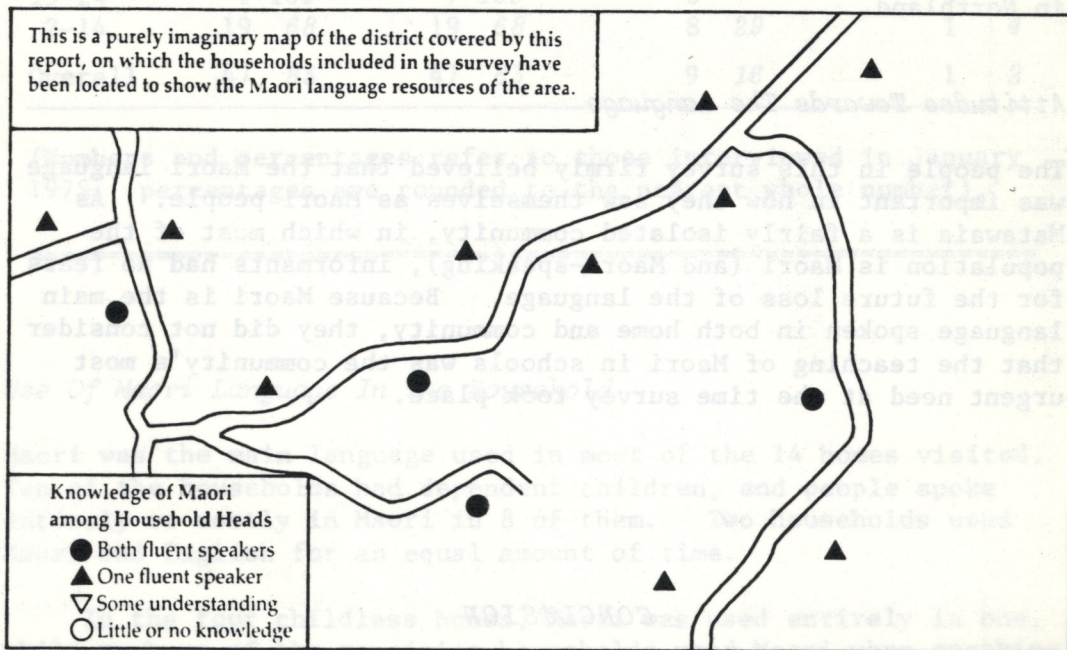
Attitudes Towards The Language

The people in this survey firmly believed that the Maori language was important in how they saw themselves as Maori people. As Matawaia is a fairly isolated community, in which most of the population is Maori (and Maori-speaking), informants had no fears for the future loss of the language. Because Maori is the main language spoken in both home and community, they did not consider that the teaching of Maori in schools was the community's most urgent need at the time survey took place.

CONCLUSION

This linguistic survey has shown that Matawaia is one of the few places in New Zealand where almost everyone can speak Maori well. In many other places, even in the Bay of Islands, only kaumatua can speak the language fluently, but here people of all ages can and do speak it. Matawaia's geographical isolation, the abundance of people who can speak Maori, and the wide use of the language in both house and community are all hopeful signs that this area will remain a Maori-speaking one in the future.

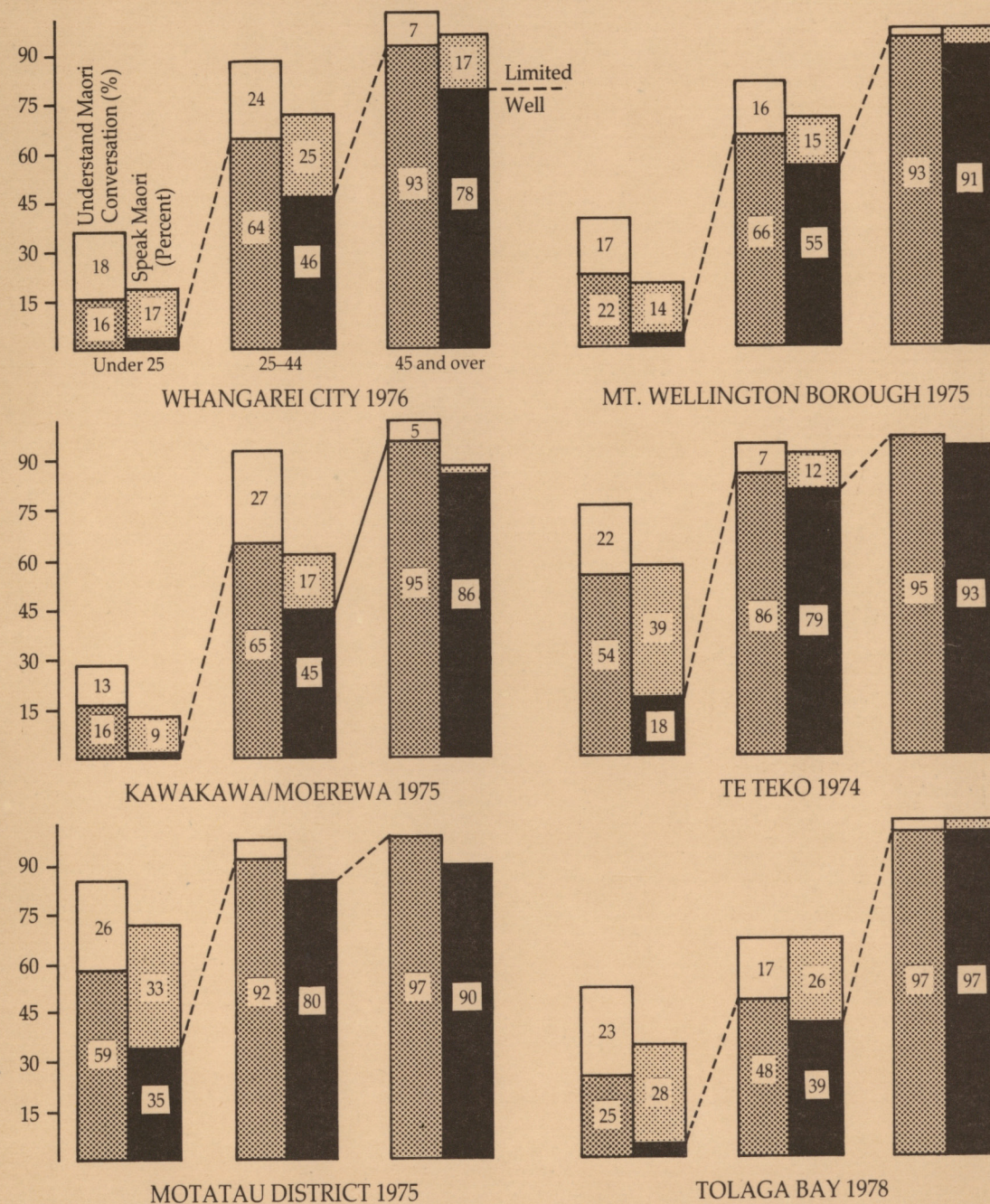
Although at the time of the survey parents were not very concerned about the use of Maori in the school, a bilingual school in Matawaia, where both Maori and English were used equally, could be a good thing. It would probably help the community to remain Maori-speaking when the children begin to feel the influence of English from outside (for example, from radio, TV, movies, and meeting children who do not speak Maori).



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.