

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

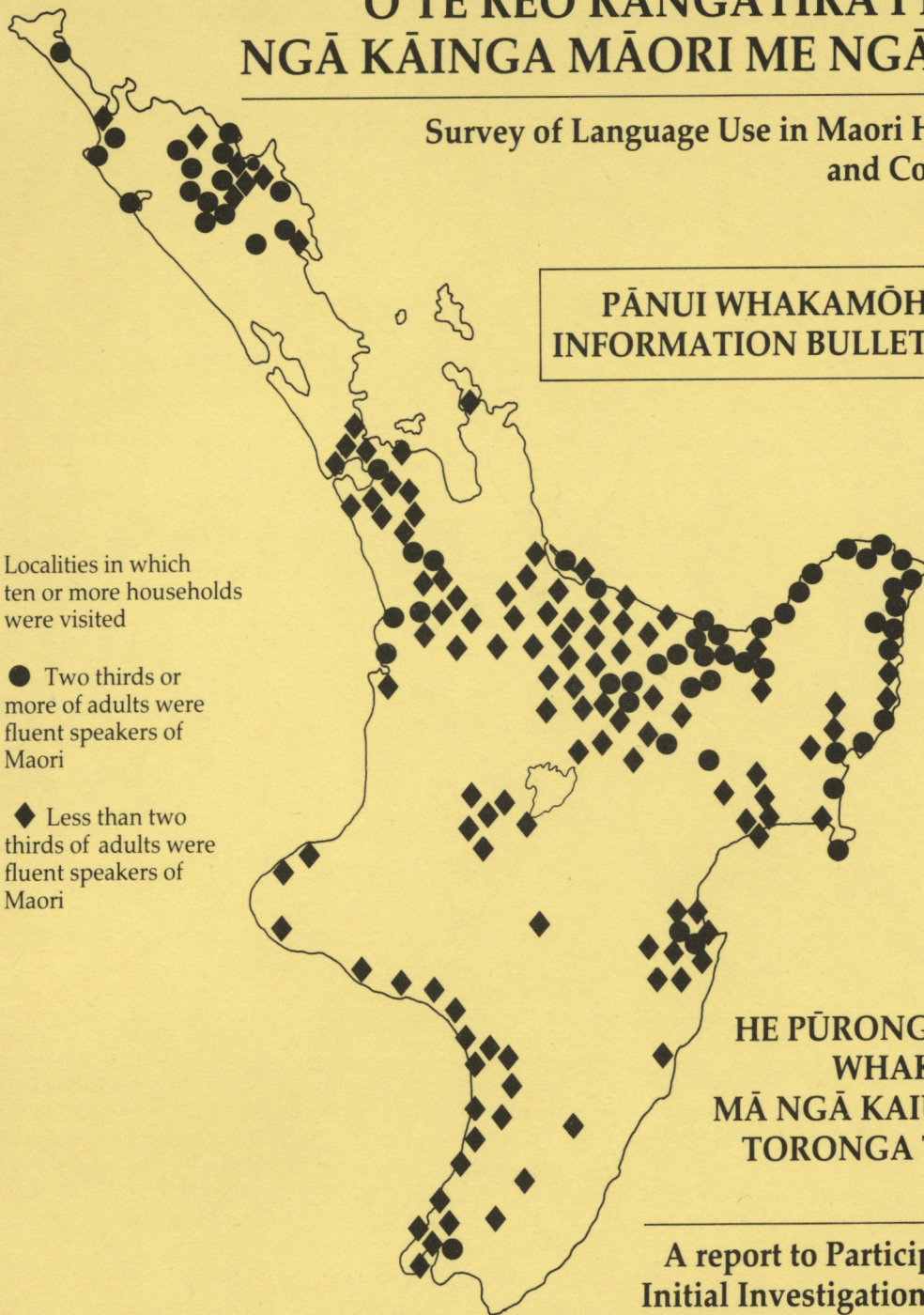
PĀNUI WHAKAMŌHIO
INFORMATION BULLETIN

25

Localities in which
ten or more households
were visited

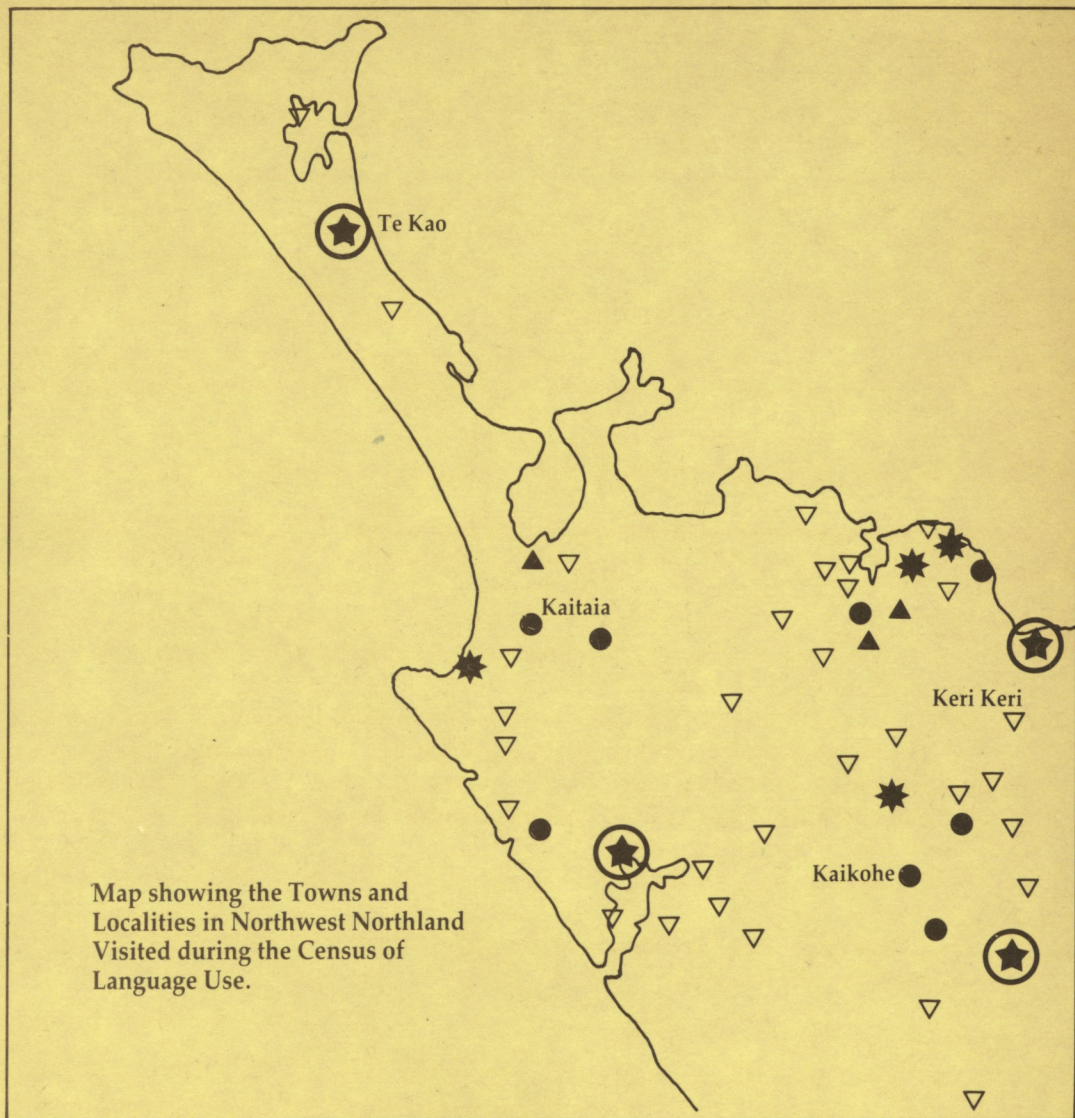
● Two thirds or
more of adults were
fluent speakers of
Maori

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

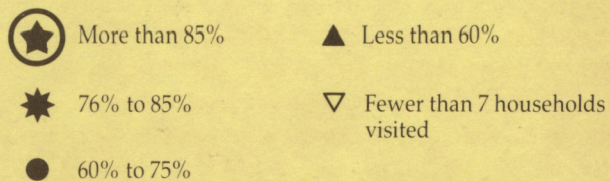


HE PŪRONGORONGO
WHAKAMŌHIO
MĀ NGĀ KAIURU KI TE
TORONGA TUATAHI,
1973–1978

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



Percentage of fluent speakers of Maori among persons aged 25 and over in the households visited.



THE MAORI LANGUAGE IN TE HAPUA, TE KAO AND NGATAKI

Fieldwork for the census of language use in Maori communities took place in 5 households in Te Hapua, 22 in Te Kao and 5 in Ngataki in January 1976. Thirteen interviews were carried out partly or entirely in Maori; the remainder (19) were in English. The interviewers were Tawini Rangihau (Tuhoe), Kahu Waititi (Te Whanau-a-Apanui/Ngapuhi), Candy Scrimshaw (Ngati-Kahungunu), Raiha Smith (Ngati-Kahungunu), Maku Potae (Ngati Porou), Kathleen Grace Potae (Tuwharetoa), Iriaka and Peter Wensor (Ngapuhi) and John Ranby.

The households surveyed had a total population of 160, of whom 159 were of Maori descent. This was a little less than half of the total Maori population of the three districts at the time.

RESULTS OF THE LINGUISTIC SURVEY

Iwi Affiliation

The people interviewed mentioned 34 major iwi to which they or members of their households belonged. Te Aupouri, the tangata whenua of the region, with 120 members (three-quarters of the total) was the largest tribal group in the survey. Ngapuhi with 18 members (11 percent) was the next largest iwi.

Ability To Speak And Understand Maori

As can be seen from the table on page 2, nearly half the people in the survey spoke Maori fluently, and almost two-thirds of them understood the language with ease. Adults over the age of 25 made up more than three-quarters of the fluent speakers; few school children spoke Maori well, but nearly one-third of them had a good understanding of the language.

KNOWLEDGE OF SPOKEN MAORI IN TE KAO AND DISTRICT (1976)

Age Group	Fluent Speakers		Understand Easily		Limited Understanding		No Knowledge	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
45 & over	37	100	37	100	0		0	
25-44	22	73	23	77	4	13	3	10
15-24	10	36	19	68	7	25	2	7
2-14	4	7	19	31	19	31	24	39
Overall	73	47	98	62	30	19	29	19

(Numbers and percentages refer to those interviewed in January 1976; percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number).

Use Of Maori Language In The Household

There were 21 households with dependent children visited, and in seven of them people talked about everyday things entirely or mostly in Maori. In one home, Maori and English were used about equally, while in one other household only English was spoken. In the other twelve, English was the main language spoken. In six of the eleven childless households, Maori was spoken most of the time. In two of these homes Maori and English were used equally, and in one, more English than Maori was spoken. The people living in the other two childless households spoke Maori to visitors.

The Maori Language In The Community

Most kaumatua preferred to speak Maori with their neighbours and friends in the community. However, the language that most of the people in the survey chose to speak usually depended on the age, race and knowledge of Maori of the person spoken to. Most of the

adult speakers of Maori were also people who spoke English well, and would use English if the person spoken to preferred it. Maori was regarded as the proper language for the different hui held in the local marae, and it still had an important part to play in religious services.

If any two members of the community were to meet unexpectedly, the chances they would be able to talk with each other in Maori would be 1 in 3. If both people were adults the chances would be about 4 in 5, because of the high proportion of people in this age group who spoke Maori well. However, if any two children met unexpectedly, the chances they would talk in Maori would be poor.

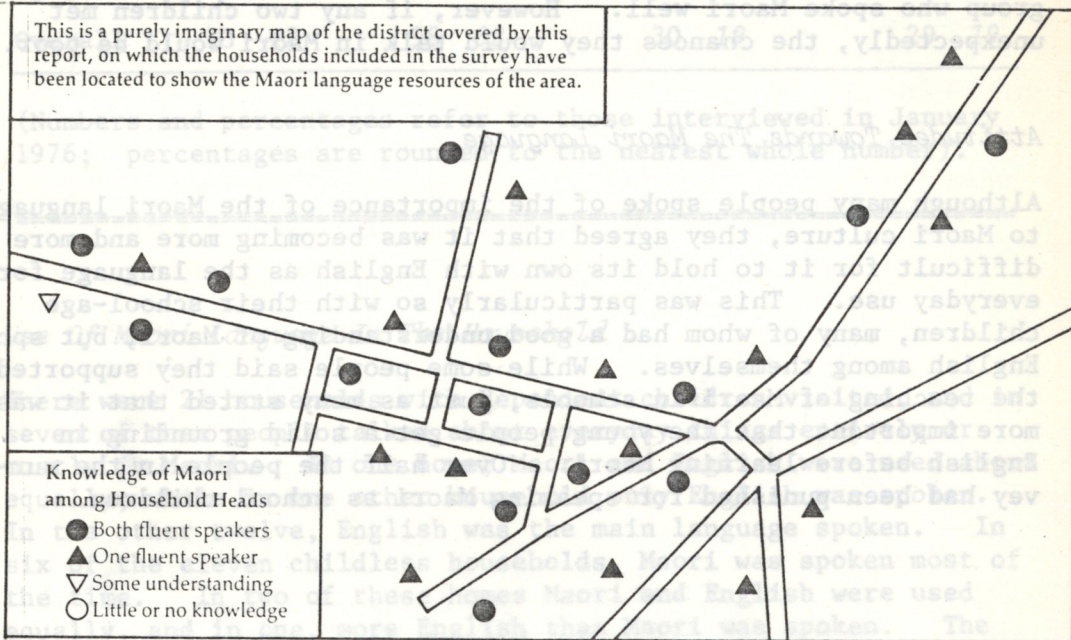
Attitudes Towards The Maori Language

Although many people spoke of the importance of the Maori language to Maori culture, they agreed that it was becoming more and more difficult for it to hold its own with English as the language for everyday use. This was particularly so with their school-age children, many of whom had a good understanding of Maori, but spoke English among themselves. While some people said they supported the teaching of Maori in schools, just as many stated that it was more important that the young people get a solid grounding in English before learning Maori. Over half the people in the survey had been punished for speaking Maori as school children.

CONCLUSION

The main problem facing the people of Te Hapua, Te Kao and Ngataki was to keep up the ability to talk with each other in Maori. Although the language was still widely used in these communities, especially among the kaumatua age group, and in marae ceremonies and religious services, many people were worried for the future of Maori among the younger members of the community. Less than 10 percent of the school children spoke Maori fluently, and, although

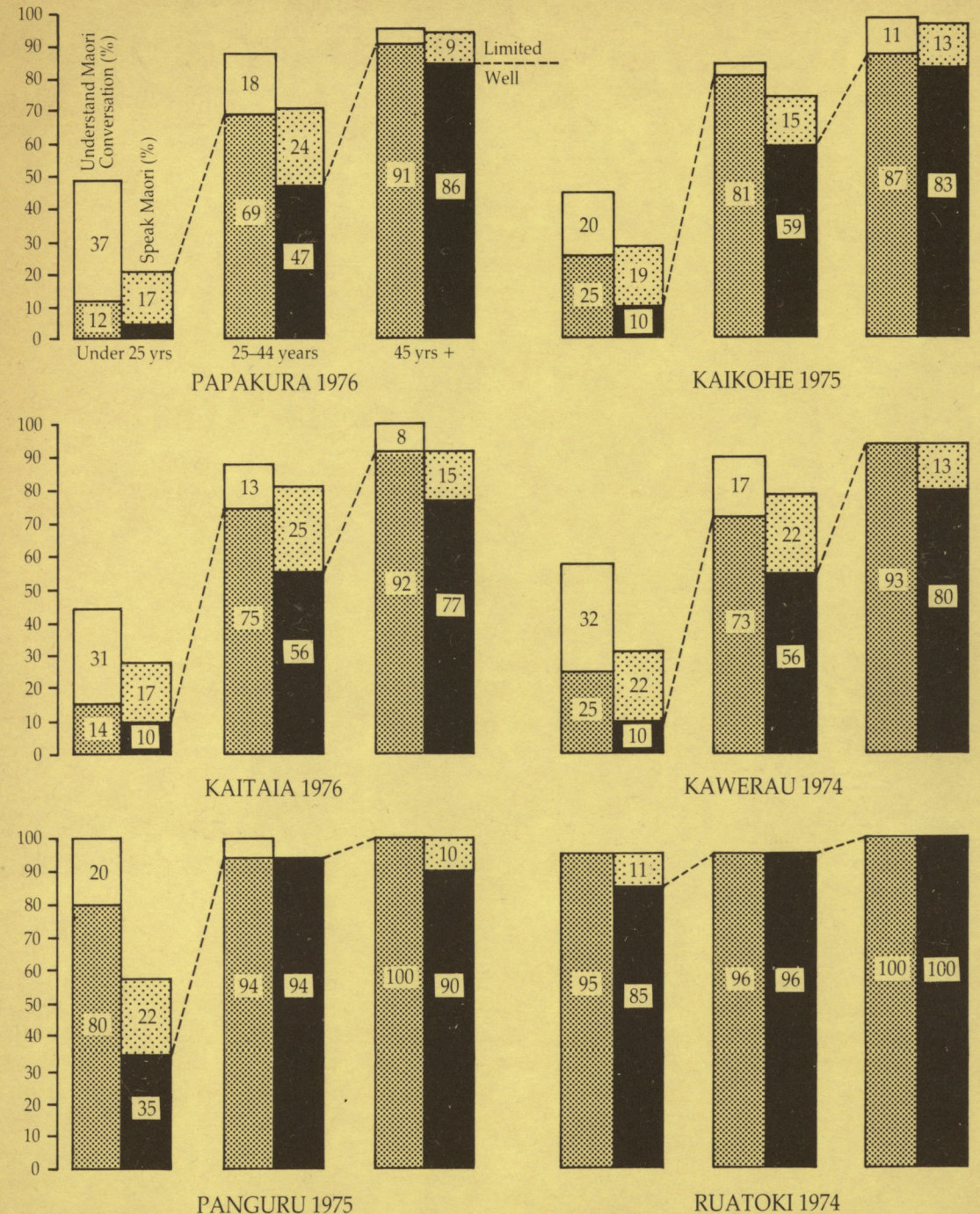
a third of them could understand the language well, another third did not know Maori at all. This is why the kaumatua and kuia have to teach Maori to their mokopuna in the home, on the marae and in the proposed Kohanga Reo. This would be of real help to the community in keeping a firm hold on the language. So would a bilingual school, where English and Maori were used equally in the children's education, if the community wanted this.



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.