

# 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

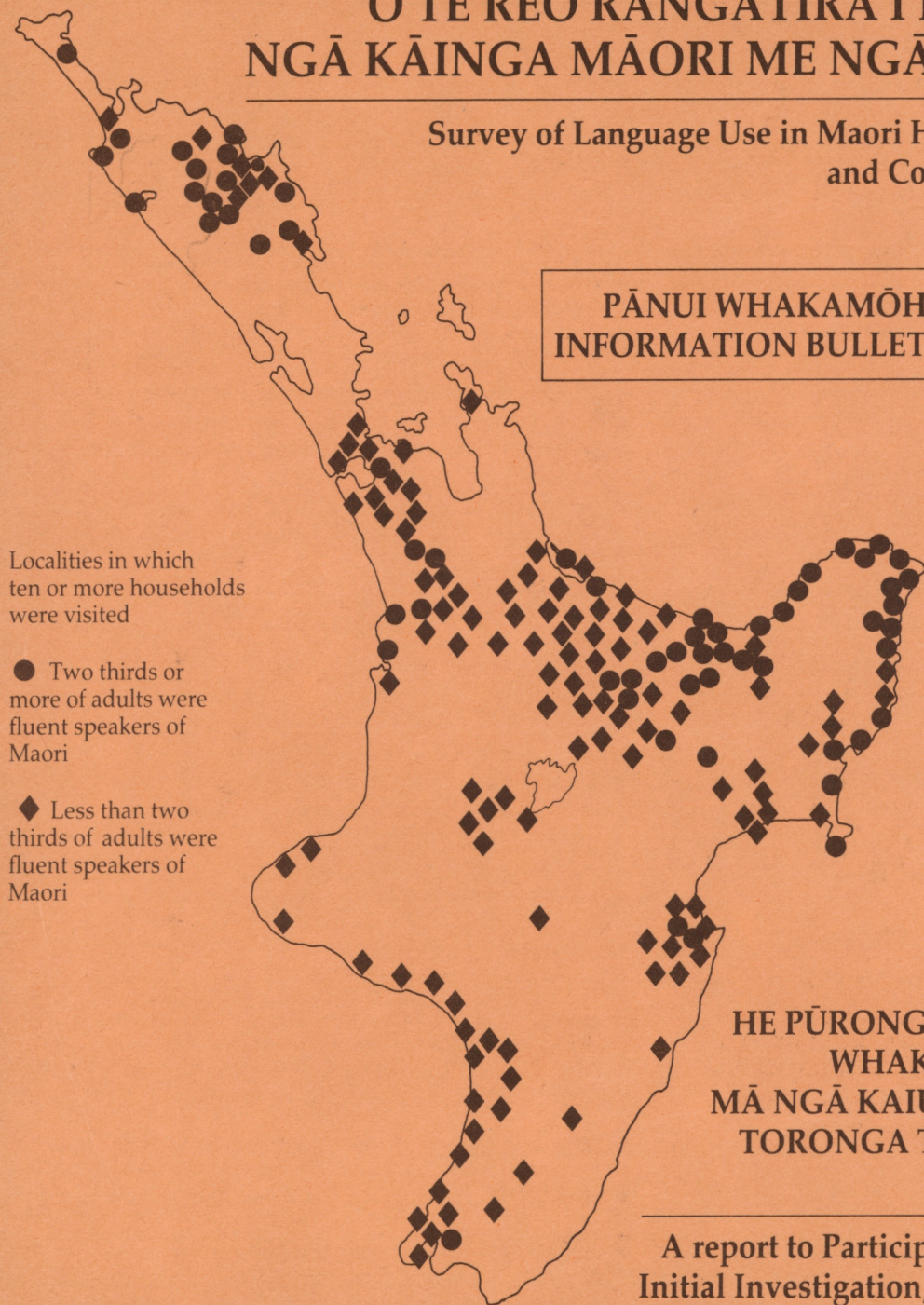
PĀNUI WHAKAMŌHIO  
INFORMATION BULLETIN

47

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 of the Waikato Region of the North Island visited during the Census of Language use

Percentage of Fluent Speakers of Maori Among Persons Aged 25 and over in Households visited

- ★ 70% or more
- ◆ 55% to 69%
- 40% to 54%
- ▼ Less than 40%
- Fewer than 10 households visited

## THE MAORI LANGUAGE IN TUAKAU

Fieldwork for the census of language use in Maori communities took place in 13 households in Tuakau in January 1976. The interviewers were Evelyn Te Uira (Waikato) and Audrey Cooper (Waikato). All interviews were carried out in English.

The households surveyed had a total population of 66, all of whom were of Maori descent. This was about an eighth of the Maori population of Tuakau at the time.

### RESULTS OF THE LINGUISTIC SURVEY

#### *Iwi Affiliation*

The people interviewed mentioned three main iwi to which they or members of their households belonged. By far the most of them (63 people or 96 percent) belonged to Waikato.

#### *Ability To Speak And Understand Maori*

The table on the next page shows that nearly a half of the people surveyed spoke Maori well, but most of them were kaumatua over the age of 45. More than half the people, however, understood the language well. This number included all adults over 25, and a fifth of those under 25. Half the under-25 group understood no Maori at all at that time.

KNOWLEDGE OF SPOKEN MAORI IN TUAKAU (1976)

Age Group	Fluent Speakers		Understand Easily		Limited Understanding		No Knowledge	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
45 & over	15	100	15	100	0		0	
25-44	9	75	12	100	0		0	
15-24	2	13	4	27	2	13	9	60
2-14	0		2	10	10	48	9	43
Overall	26	41	33	52	12	19	18	29

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

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*Use Of Maori Language In The Household*

There were 12 homes with dependent children visited and in three of them people spoke mostly or entirely in English. In eight homes, there was much Maori spoken, particularly between adult residents or visitors, but English was still the main language. In the remaining household Maori and English were spoken for an equal amount of time.

There was one childless household visited in which the people spoke mostly English.

*The Maori Language In The Community*

English was the main language spoken in the community. Nearly all the adults over the age of 25 spoke and understood Maori well, but they could not use the language much, because most

people in Tuakau spoke only English. When they talked with workmates, neighbours and friends, they nearly always used English, although kaumatua liked to speak Maori with other speakers of Maori, wherever they were. Children were nearly always spoken to in English.

If any two Maori people were to meet unexpectedly in Tuakau, there was one chance in five that they could understand each other in Maori. If both people were adults over 25, it was likely that nine times out of ten they could talk with each other in Maori.

While English was the main language spoken in the community, Maori still had an important part to play in ceremonies on the marae and in certain religious services. However, after these meetings, people would usually speak in English.

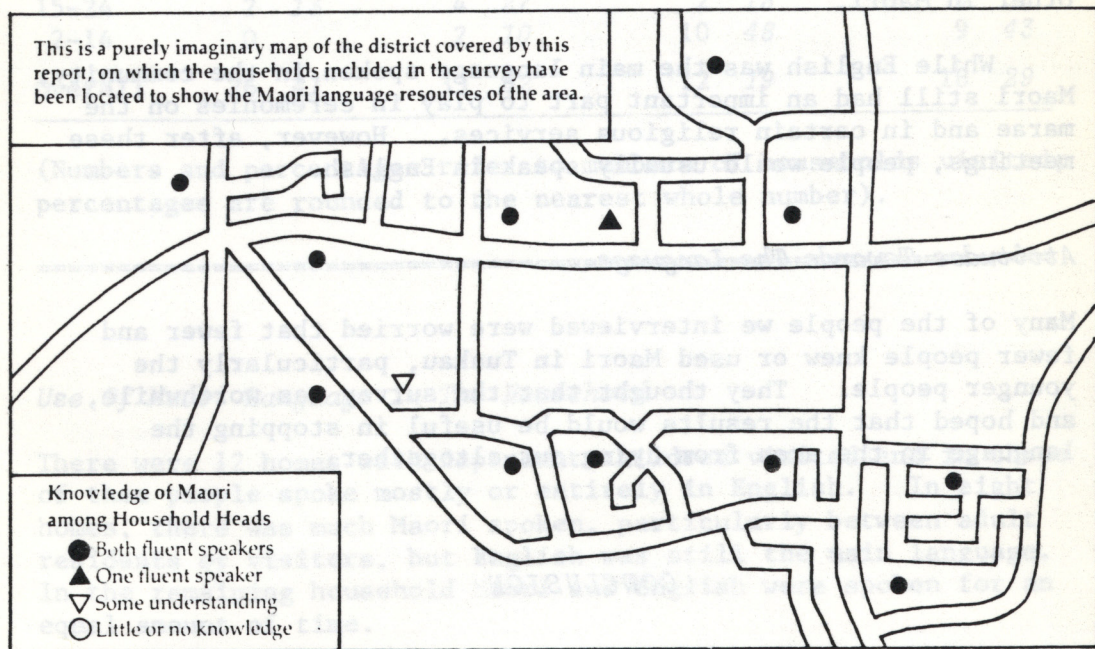
*Attitudes Towards The Language*

Many of the people we interviewed were worried that fewer and fewer people knew or used Maori in Tuakau, particularly the younger people. They thought that the survey was worthwhile, and hoped that the results would be useful in stopping the language in the area from dying out altogether.

CONCLUSION

At the time of the survey, nearly 90 percent of the adults over the age of 25 in the families we visited in Tuakau could speak Maori well. Many of them had been beaten for speaking Maori as school children. They did not want their own children to be punished as they were, so they did not pass on to them the Maori language. This is one of the reasons why English became the main language spoken in most households in the survey, and why fewer than a fifth of the people under 25 understood Maori well.

Maori was spoken mainly among the kaumatua age group and especially on the marae. In recent years, many people have been worried that Maori as the language for everyday use might die out, and so courses in Maori and in Maoritanga have been set up in the community, on the local marae and in schools. The people of the area look forward to the time when everybody can speak both Maori and English. There is a chance that this could come about with the help of the Maori Affairs Department and the schools.



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.