

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

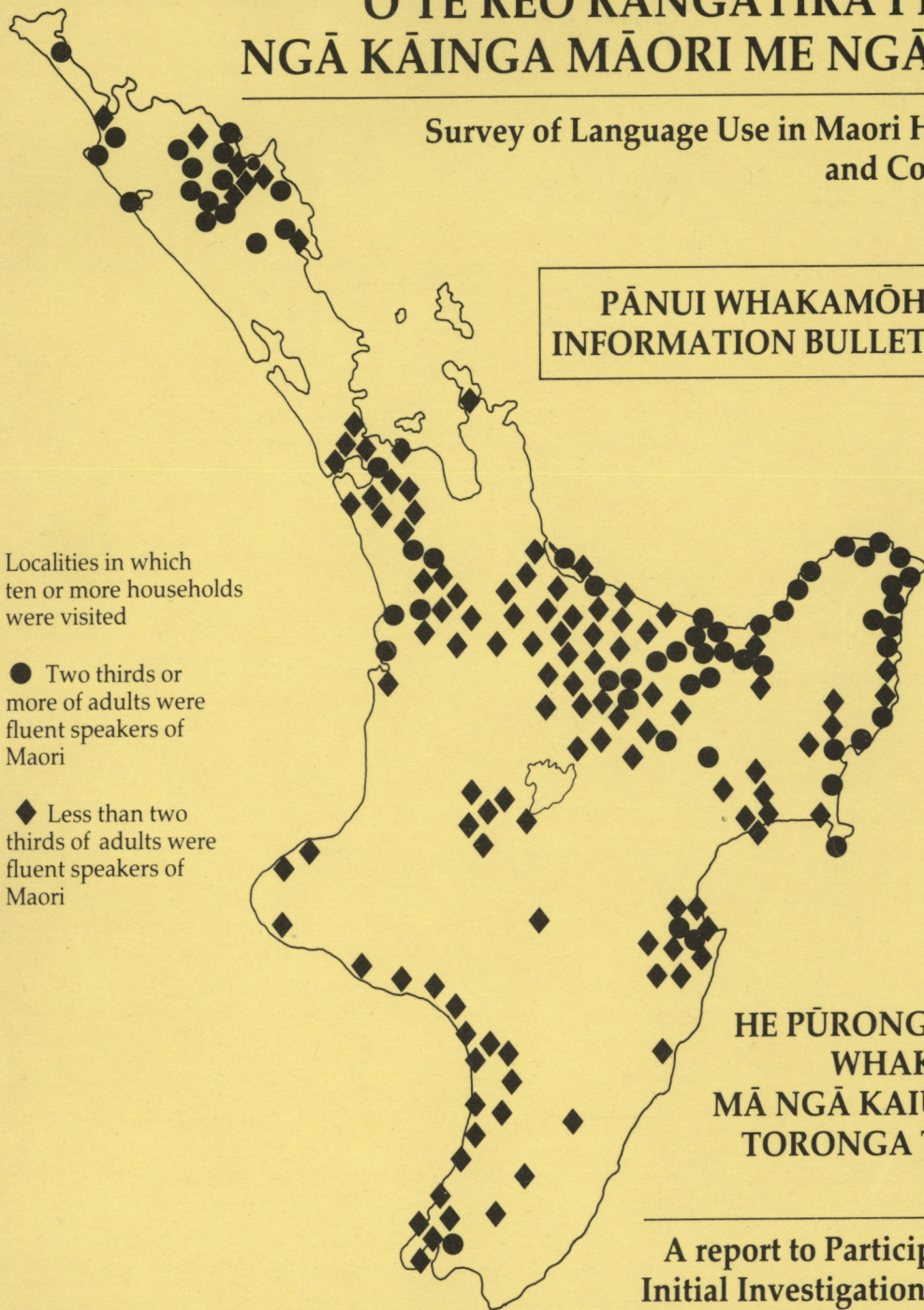
PĀNUI WHAKAMŌHIO
INFORMATION BULLETIN

69

Localities in which
ten or more households
were visited

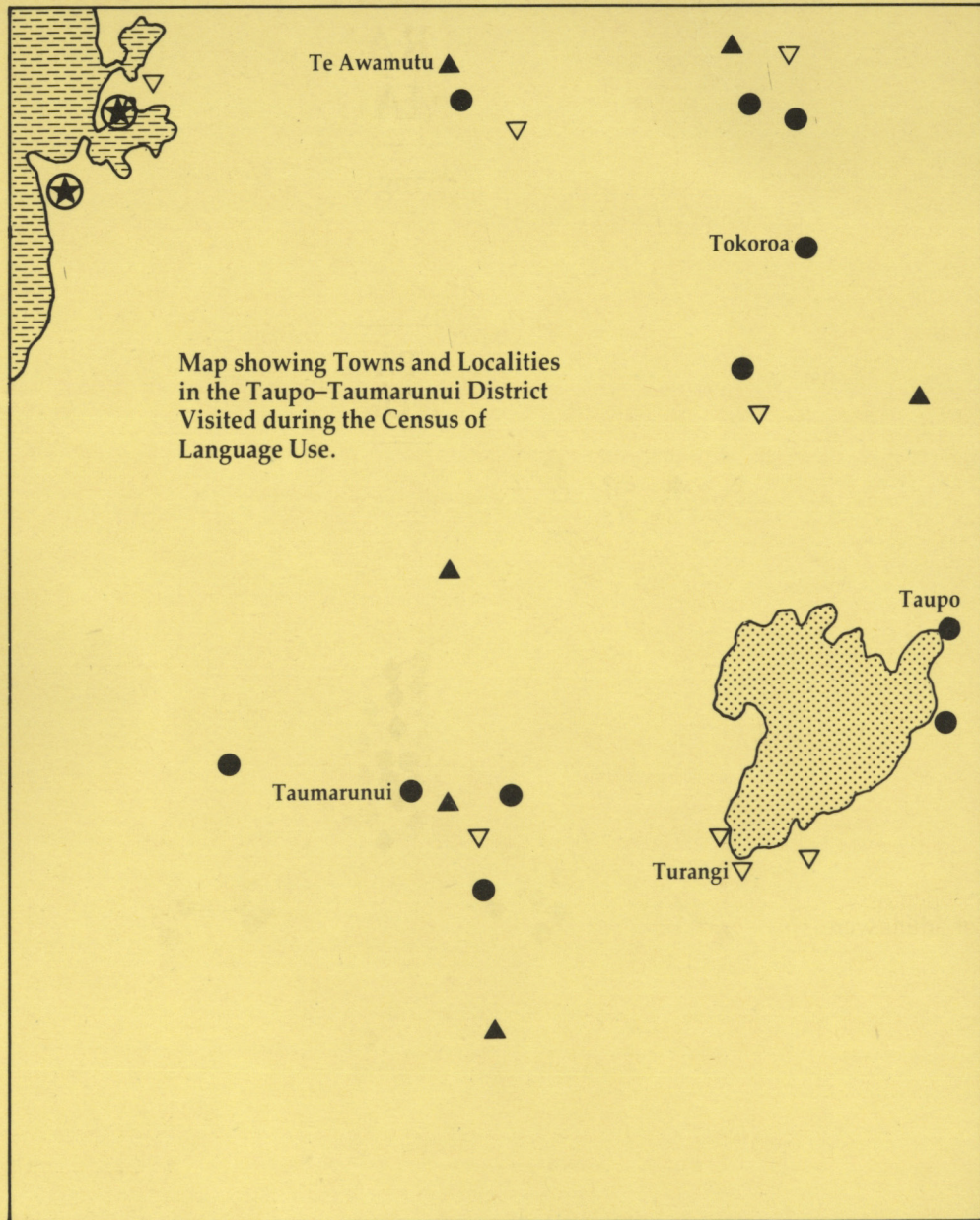
● Two thirds or
more of adults were
fluent speakers of
Maori

◆ 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.

- ★ More than 60%
- 40% to 60%
- ▲ Less than 40%
- ▽ Fewer than 8 households visited

THE MAORI LANGUAGE IN NGAPUKE

Fieldwork for the census of language use in Maori communities took place in 15 households in Ngapuke in February 1978. The interviewers were Tom Rangihuna (Ngati Porou) and Himiona Henry (Waikato/Maniapoto). Thirteen interviews were carried out in English; the rest were in Maori.

The households surveyed had a total population of 72, and 68 of them were of Maori descent. This was about two-thirds of the total Maori population of Ngapuke at the time.

RESULTS OF THE LINGUISTIC SURVEY

Iwi Affiliation

The people interviewed mentioned eight major iwi to which they or members of their households belonged. By far the most of them, 56 people or more than three-quarters of the total, belonged to Ngati Tuwharetoa.

Ability to Speak and Understand Maori

The table on the next page shows that about a quarter of the people surveyed spoke Maori well, while a third of them understood the language with ease. Most of these good speakers, however, were kaumatua over the age of 45. Few people under 25 spoke or understood Maori well. More than three-quarters of this younger age group hardly knew the language at the time. Among them were nearly all the school-age children in the survey.

KNOWLEDGE OF SPOKEN MAORI IN NGAPUKE (1978)

Age Group	Fluent Speakers		Understand Easily		Limited Understanding		No Knowledge	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
45 & over	14	74	17	90	1	5	1	5
25-44	2	25	5	63	1	13	2	25
15-24	0		0		3	15	17	85
2-14	1	4	1	4	1	4	23	92
Overall	17	24	23	32	6	8	43	60

Numbers and percentages refer to those people included in the survey; 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 twelve homes with dependent children, and in nine of them people spoke mostly or only in English. In one home more English than Maori was used, while one family spoke both Maori and English equally often. In the remaining household, a mokopuna and kuia spoke only Maori with each other.

There were three childless homes visited and the people in two of them spoke mostly or only English. The couple in the other household always spoke Maori with each other.

The Maori Language in the Community

English was also the main language spoken in the community, although kaumatua who spoke Maori well preferred to use their mother tongue with friends and neighbours who spoke the language. However, they

could speak it only with people of their own age group, as most people under 45 spoke only English. Most of the talk with people under 25 was nearly always in English as most young people knew no Maori at the time.

The Maori language was still important in ceremonies on the marae, and in certain religious services in the area. Many people said their prayers and grace at home in Maori.

If two people met unexpectedly, there was one chance in ten that they could understand each other in Maori. If both people were adults over 25, the chances were much greater, one in two. But if they were both under 25, there was almost no chance at all that they could understand each other in Maori.

Attitudes towards the Language

Some people said that knowing no Maori did not spoil the way they lived, but others were sorry that they could not speak or understand the language. A number of people in the survey said it was a Pakeha world we live in now, and understanding English well was more important than understanding Maori. Maori should be kept for marae ceremonies. However, many people wanted the language taught in schools, particularly at the primary level, and some people were trying to teach their own children Maori in their homes. This was often difficult for parents. Most of them understood Maori well, but could not speak it fluently. One kaumatua, who was against 'modern Maori' being taught in schools, believed that the language could be learned only in the home or on the marae, in a Maori setting.

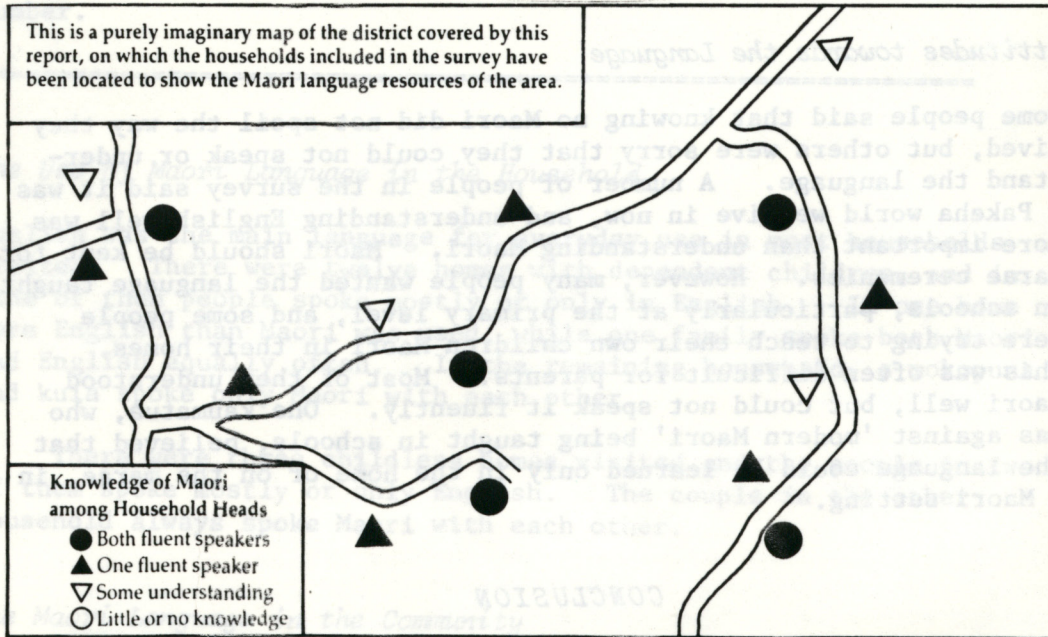
CONCLUSION

More than half the people surveyed in Ngapuke understood no Maori at the time of the linguistic survey. Kaumatua were worried that fewer and fewer people knew or used Maori in the area, especially

among the younger people. Now that English was the main language spoken in most households and in the community, they were afraid that Maori would soon die out.

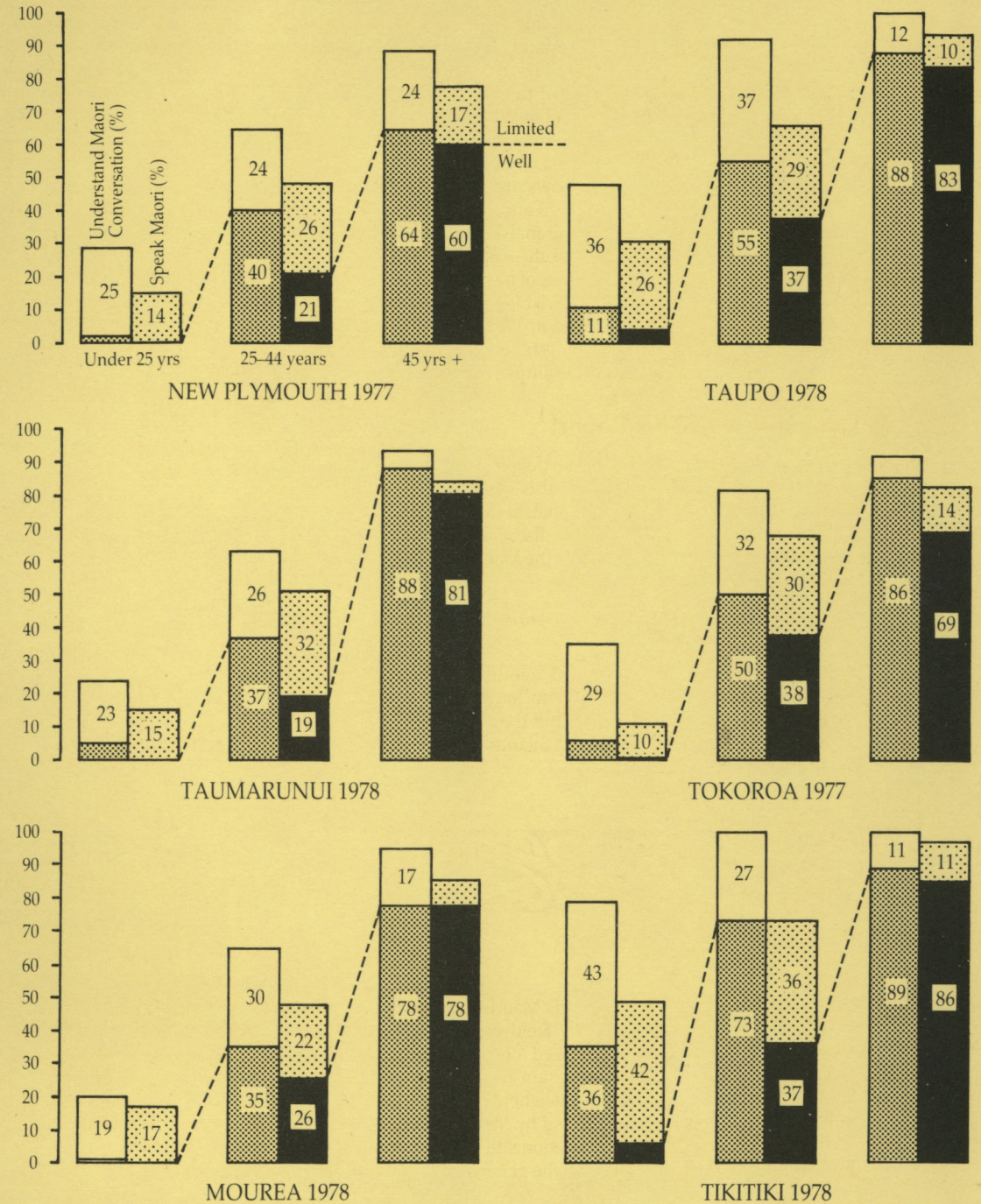
Some people tried to blame this on their parents or grandparents, or on attempts to wipe out the language in the past. Half of them said they were punished for speaking Maori as school children. However, other people were doing their best to learn the language from elders in the community.

The Department of Maori Affairs is doing what it can to help Maori speaking pre-schools (Te Kohanga Reo) throughout the country. People concerned about the future of the language in Ngapuke should get in touch with their local Maori Affairs office in Taumarunui for more 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.