

# 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

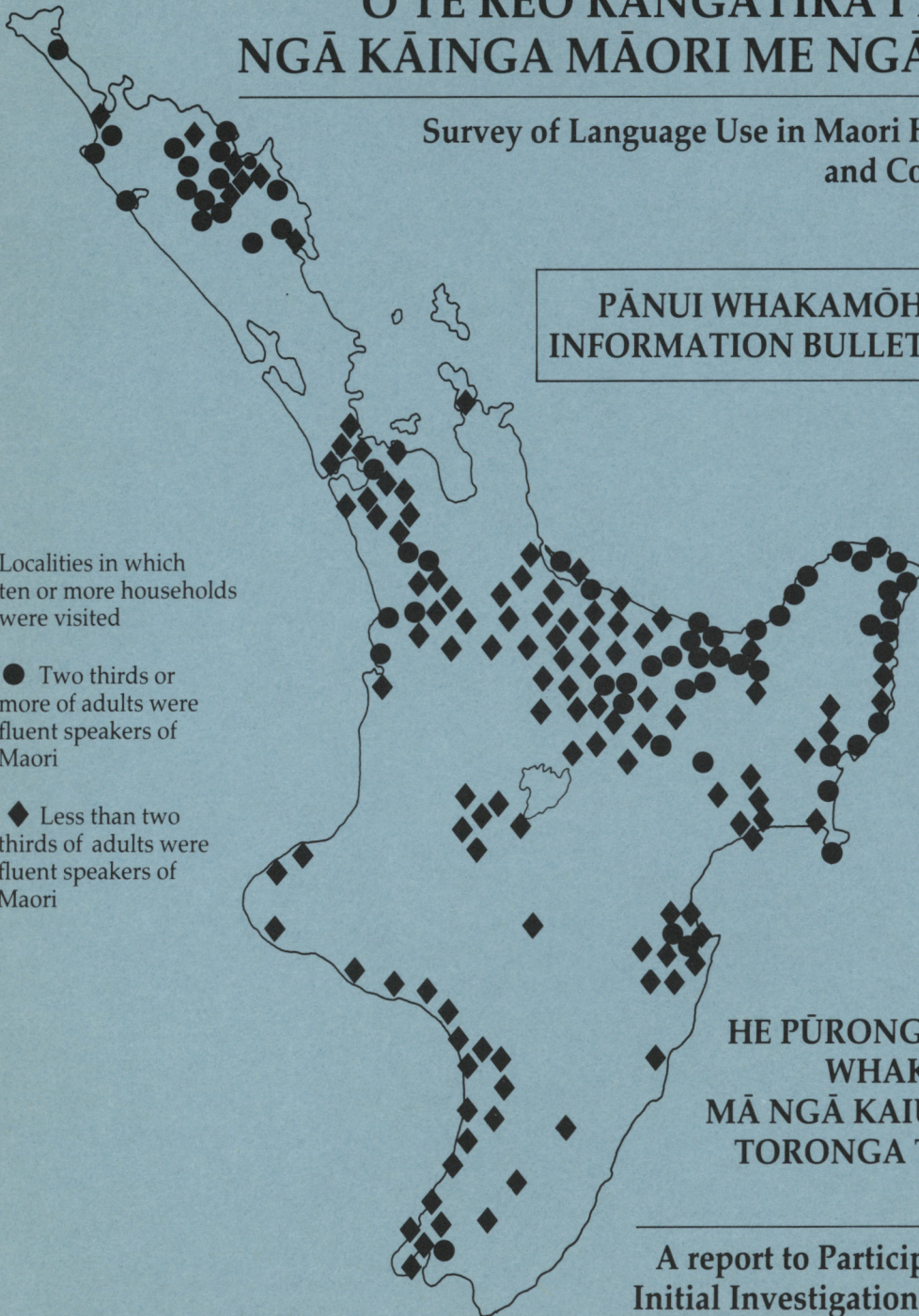
PĀNUI WHAKAMŌHIO  
INFORMATION BULLETIN

22

Localities in which  
ten or more households  
were visited

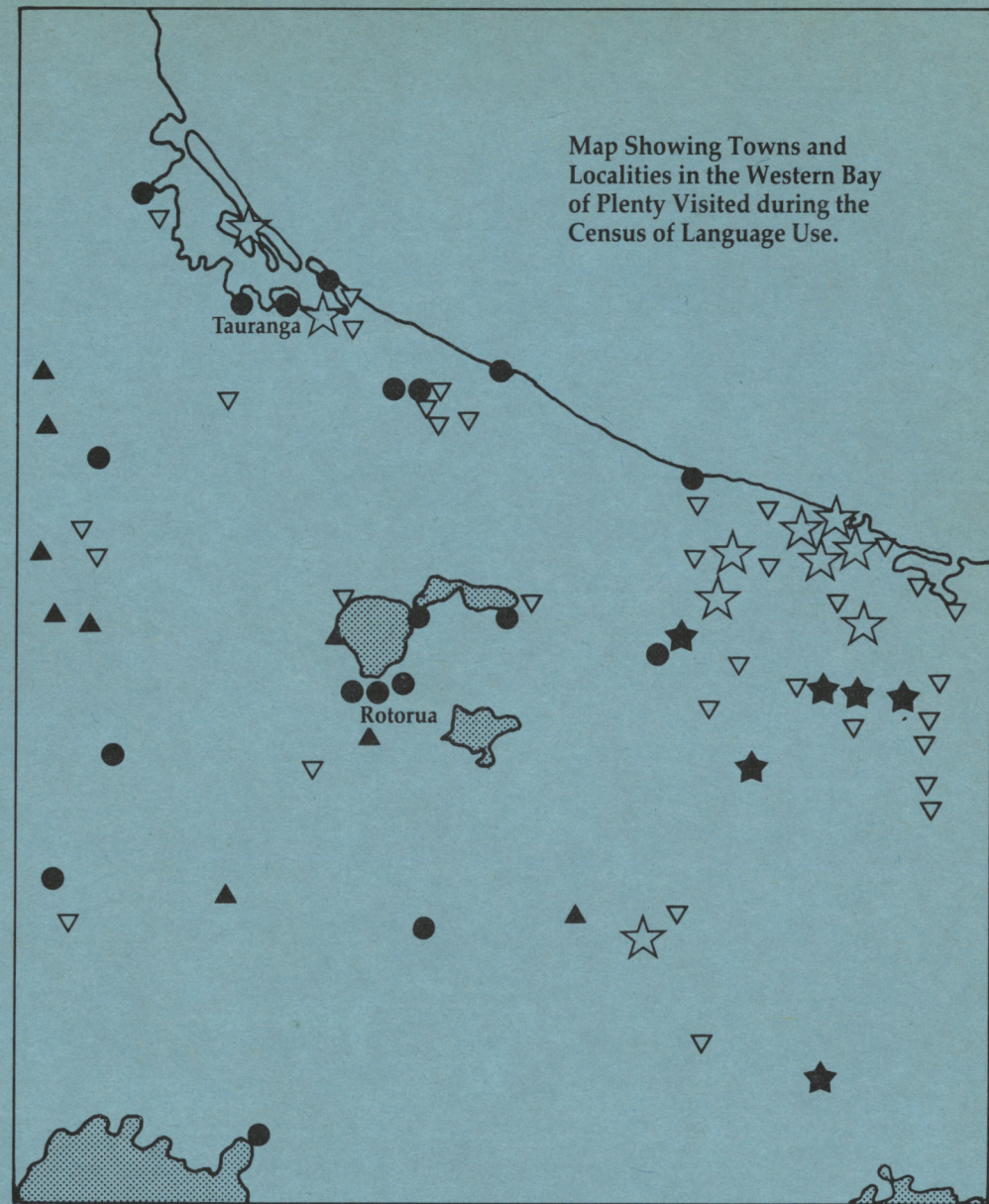
● Two thirds or  
more of adults were  
fluent speakers of  
Maori

◆ 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 the Western Bay of Plenty 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
- ☆ 66% to 89%
- 46% to 65%
- ▲ 45% or less
- ▽ Fewer than 10 households visited

## THE MAORI LANGUAGE IN TE TEKŌ

Fieldwork for the census of language use in Maori communities took place in 44 households in Te Teko in January 1974. Eighteen interviews were carried out entirely or partly in Maori; the rest were in English.

The interviewers were: Joe Rua (Te Whanau-a-Apanui), Merepeka Wharepapa (Te Whanau-a-Apanui), Charee Ogle (Ngapuhi), Iriaka and Peter Wensor (Ngapuhi), Willie Martin (Ngati Manawa/Te Aupouri), Shena Purdie, Yvonne Siggleko (Ngaiterangi) and Meremaihi Williams Koopu (Ngati Awa).

The households surveyed had a total population of 244, of whom 241 were of Maori descent. This was about 50 percent of the Maori population of the district at the time.

### RESULTS OF THE LINGUISTIC SURVEY

#### *Iwi Affiliation*

The people interviewed mentioned 11 major iwi to which they or members of their households belonged. By far the most, 180 people or 74 percent, were members of Ngati Awa.

#### *Ability to Speak and Understand Maori*

The information in the table on the next page shows that slightly less than half the people surveyed were fluent speakers of Maori, and more than two-thirds of them had a good understanding of the language. Adults over the age of 25 represented nearly three-quarters of the community's fluent speakers. There were 102 children surveyed, and while only 12 spoke Maori fluently, nearly half of them understood the language well.

KNOWLEDGE OF SPOKEN MAORI IN TE TEKO (1974)

Age Group	Fluent Speakers		Understand Easily		Limited Understanding		No Knowledge	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
45 & over	38	93	39	95	0		2	5
25-44	34	79	39	91	3	7	1	2
15-24	14	31	33	73	11	24	1	2
2-14	12	12	48	46	22	21	35	33
Overall	98	42	159	68	36	15	39	17

(Numbers and percentages refer to people included in the survey; percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole number).

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*The Use Of Maori Language In The Household*

There were 36 households with dependent children visited. In 4 of them Maori was spoken most of the time, while in 10 others English was the only language used. The members of 4 households spoke Maori and English equally and in the rest (half the total) English was the main language used.

Eight childless households were visited and English was the main language in only one of them, compared with five where Maori was spoken most of the time, while both Maori and English were used equally in two others.

*The Maori Language In The Community*

Most informants were easy in their choice of language spoken in the community. For most adults (two-thirds of the total), Maori was

regarded as the proper language for ceremonies on the marae and also in casual conversations. Many people belonged to either the Ringatu or Ratana religions, and the Maori language played an important role in their services. The language spoken to friends, neighbours and workmates depended usually on the age and race of the person spoken to. Therefore, speakers of Maori would speak English to all Pakeha and Maori to most adult Maori, although they were inclined to speak mainly English to younger Maori.

If any two members of the community were to meet by chance the odds were about 1 in 3 that they would be able to talk to each other in Maori. If both people were adults the chances were high - about 4 in 5, but with children the chances that they would talk Maori were much lower - about 1 in 16.

*Attitudes Towards The Language*

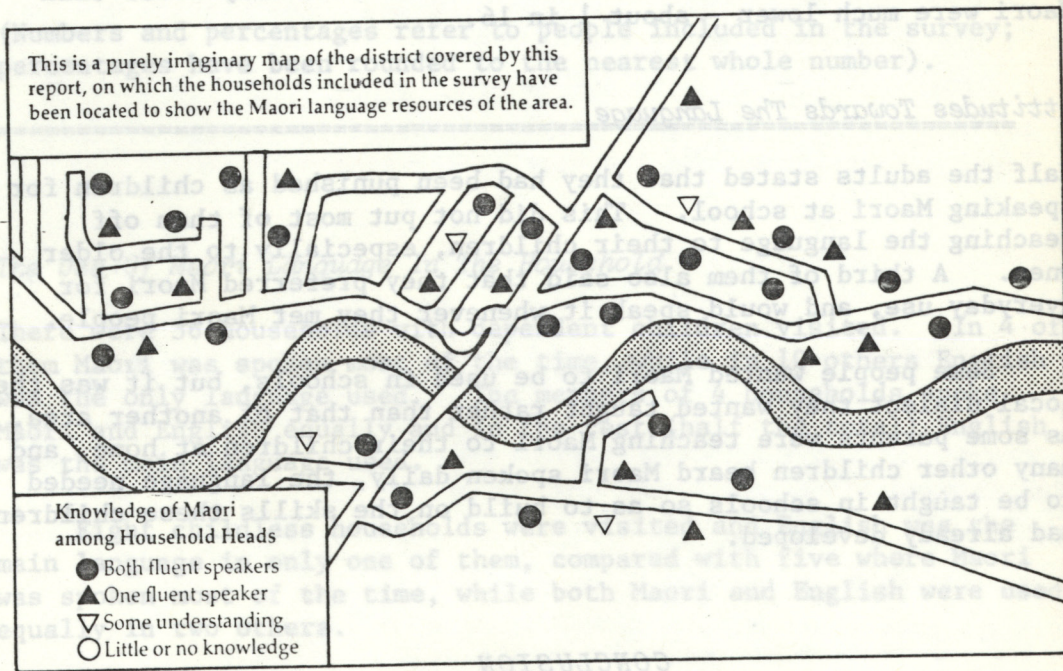
Half the adults stated that they had been punished as children for speaking Maori at school. This did not put most of them off teaching the language to their children, especially to the older ones. A third of them also said that they preferred Maori for everyday use, and would speak it whenever they met Maori people.

Some people wanted Maori to be used in schools, but it was the local dialect they wanted taught rather than that of another area. As some parents were teaching Maori to their children at home, and many other children heard Maori spoken daily, the language needed to be taught in schools so as to build on the skills these children had already developed.

CONCLUSION

Nearly half the people involved in the survey spoke Maori fluently, but only 26 out of 176 people under the age of 25 were able to do so. It was found that more English than Maori was used in

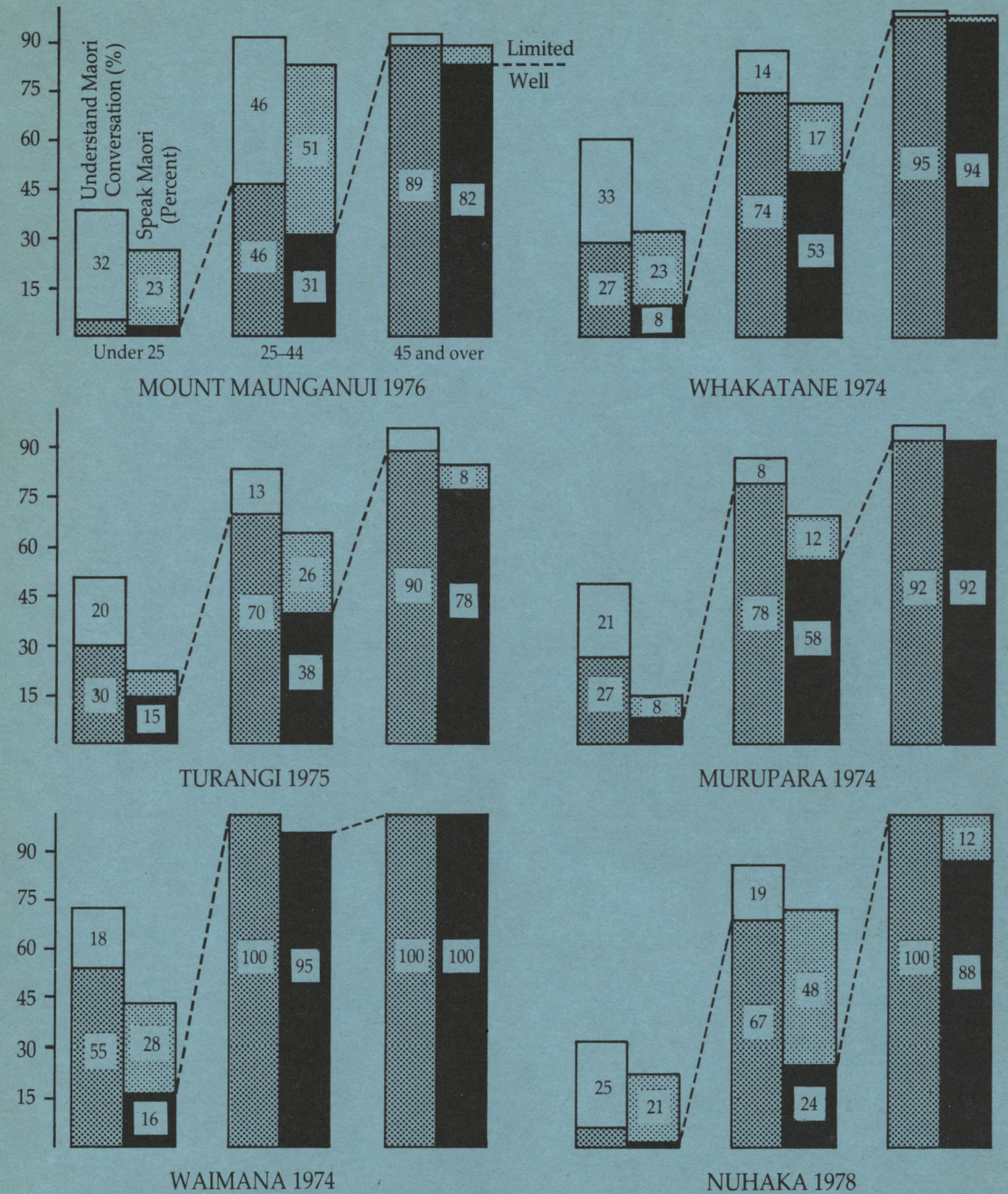
households with young children. Television, which is mainly in English, has also had a bad effect on the use of Maori in the homes and community. Many parents and elders were concerned, because more and more people in the area were unable to speak Maori, and they believed that this would happen more slowly if the language were taught in the homes and schools (as well as on local marae). Today's children are tomorrow's parents, and so it is important that they learn to speak the language well. They will undoubtedly be helped by the Kohanga Reo (Language Nests), which are being set up by local mothers and the Maori Affairs Department.



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.