

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

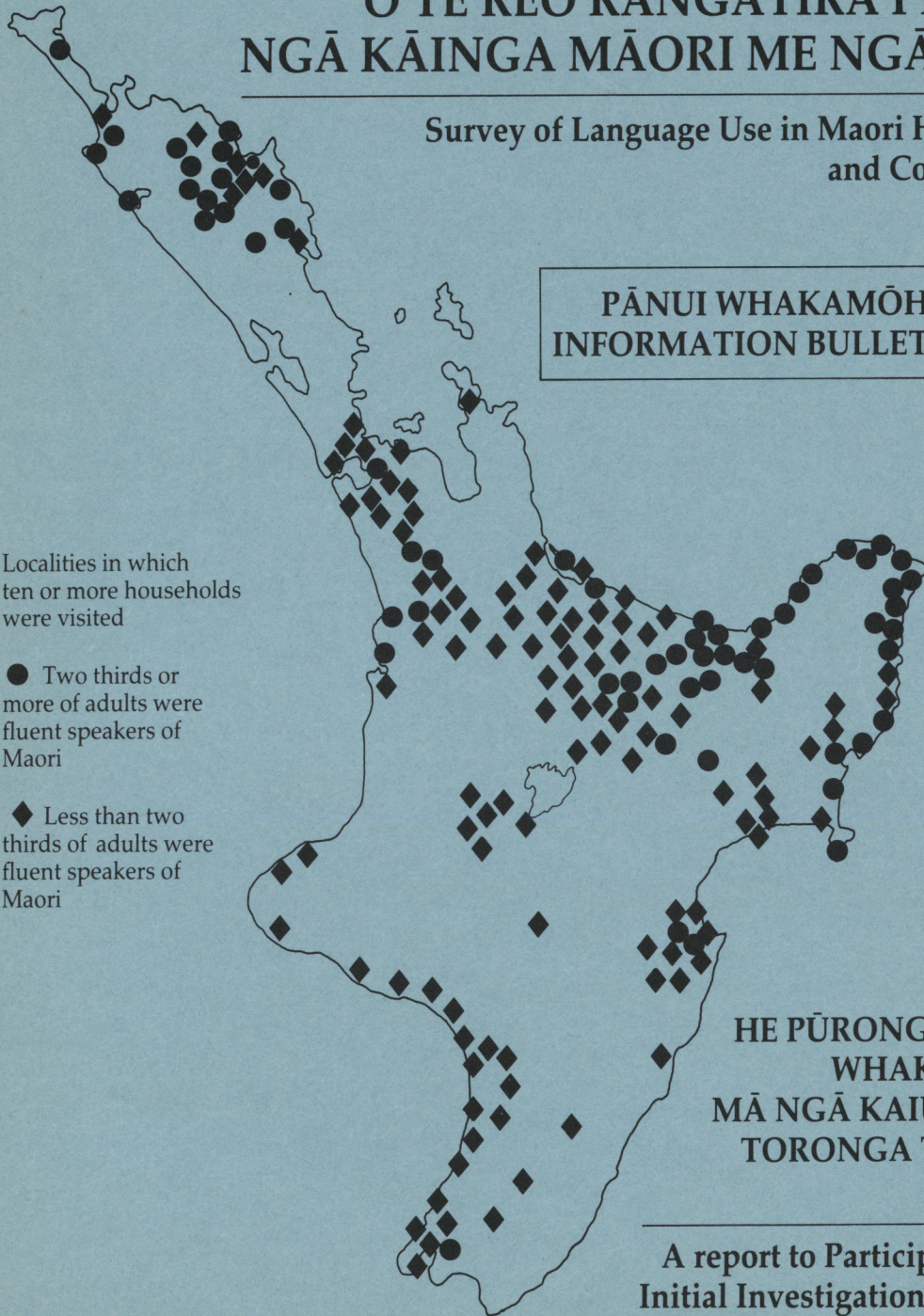
PĀNUI WHAKAMŌHIO
INFORMATION BULLETIN

29

Localities in which
ten or more households
were visited

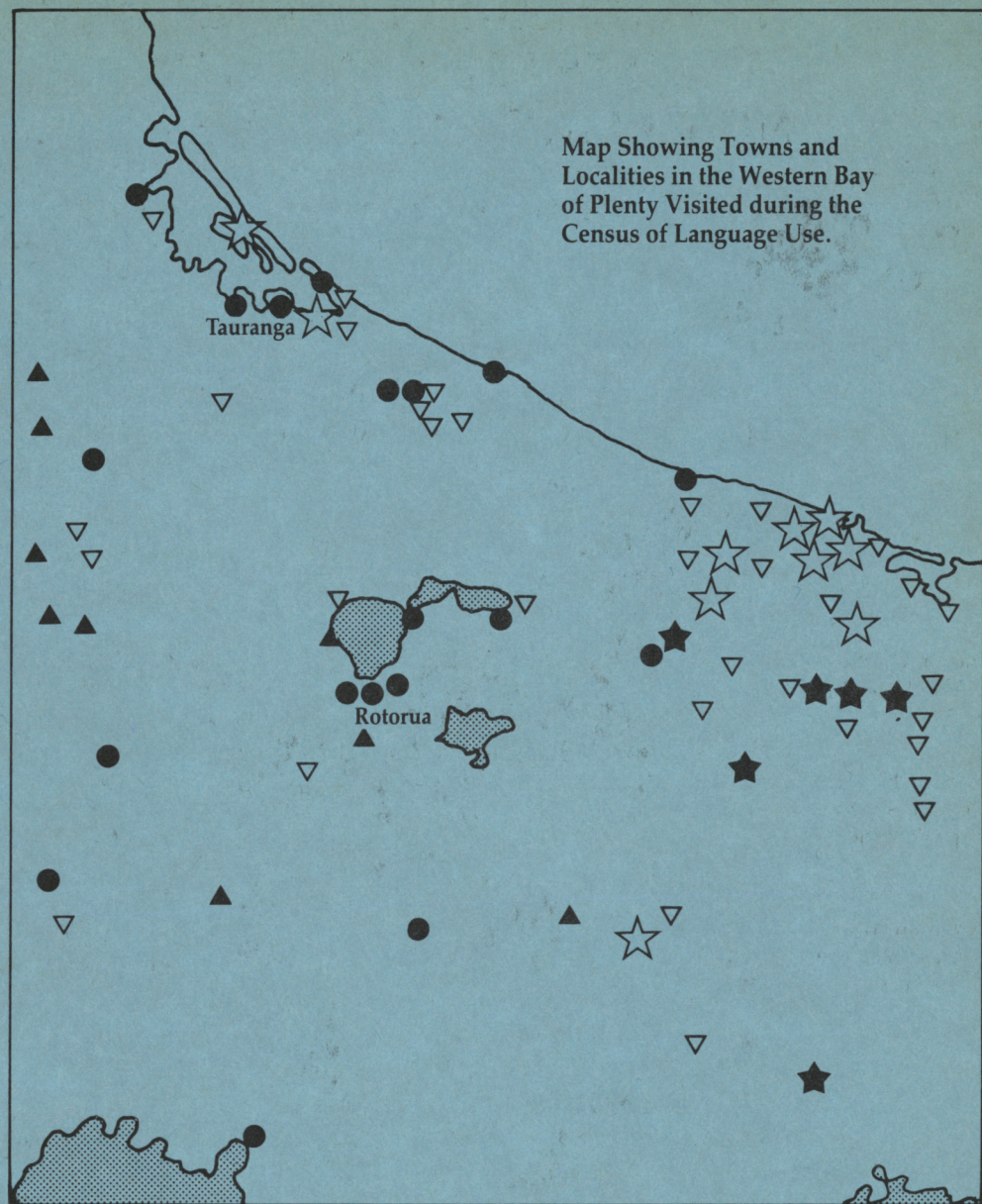
● Two thirds or
more of adults were
fluent speakers of
Maori

◆ 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 Households Visited.

- ★ 90% or more
- ☆ 66% to 89%
- 46% to 65%
- ▲ 45% or less
- ▽ Fewer than 10 households visited

THE MAORI LANGUAGE IN RANGIURU, WAITANGI, TE MATAI AND PAENGAROA

Fieldwork for the census of language use in Maori communities was conducted in a total of 16 households in Rangiuru (9 households), Waitangi (3), Te Matai (3), and Paengaroa (1) in August 1976. Four interviews were carried out partly or entirely in Maori; the rest were in English. The interviewers were Tawini Rangihau (Tuhoe), Judy Brown Hawera (Waikato), Philip Hawera (Tuhoe), Carol O'Callaghan (Ngai Terangi), Denis Hanson (Ngapuhi); Joe Rua (Te Whanau-a-Apanui) and Tony Magner (Maniapoto).

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The households surveyed had a total population of 92; all of these people were of Maori descent. This was about a quarter of the total Maori population of these districts at the time.

RESULTS OF THE LINGUISTIC SURVEY

Iwi Affiliation

The people interviewed mentioned 5 major iwi to which they or members of their households belonged. By far the most of them - 82 people or 89 percent of the total - were members of the Te Arawa Tribe.

Ability To Speak And Understand Maori

As can be seen from the table on page 2, all fluent speakers of Maori were over the age of 25, and nearly three-quarters of these were kaumatua over the age of 45. Almost all of the people who had a good understanding of Maori, were also over 25. Nearly two-thirds of the people under 25 knew hardly any Maori at all.

KNOWLEDGE OF SPOKEN MAORI IN RANGIURU AND DISTRICT (1976)

Age Group	Fluent Speakers		Understand Easily		Limited Understanding		No Knowledge	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
45 & over	19	95	20	100	0		0	
25-44	7	41	15	88	2	12	0	
15-24	0		3	16	9	47	7	37
2-14	0		2	6	6	18	25	76
Overall	26	30	40	45	17	19	32	36

(Numbers and percentages refer to those included in the survey; percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number).

Use Of Maori Language In The Household

English was the main language spoken in most of the households visited. There were 12 households with dependent children, and in 10 of them only English was spoken. While some Maori was used in 2 households, people talked about everyday things mostly in English. Four childless households were visited, and in 1 of them only Maori was spoken. In the rest, English was the main language spoken.

The Maori Language In The Community

English was also the main language usually spoken in the community. Most people spoke English with neighbours, friends and workmates, although many kaumatua preferred to speak Maori with other members of their age group. The younger Maori people usually spoke in English among themselves, although some grandparents continued to speak Maori to their mokopuna, who almost always replied in English. The Maori language, however, played an important part in ceremonies on the local marae and in certain

church services. However, at the end of such ceremonies, people usually went on talking in English.

If any two individuals were to meet unexpectedly, the chances that they would be able to talk together in Maori were 1 in 5; if both persons were over 25 years old, the chances were much better - about 3 in 5. However, it is unlikely that two children meeting in this way would be able to talk in Maori.

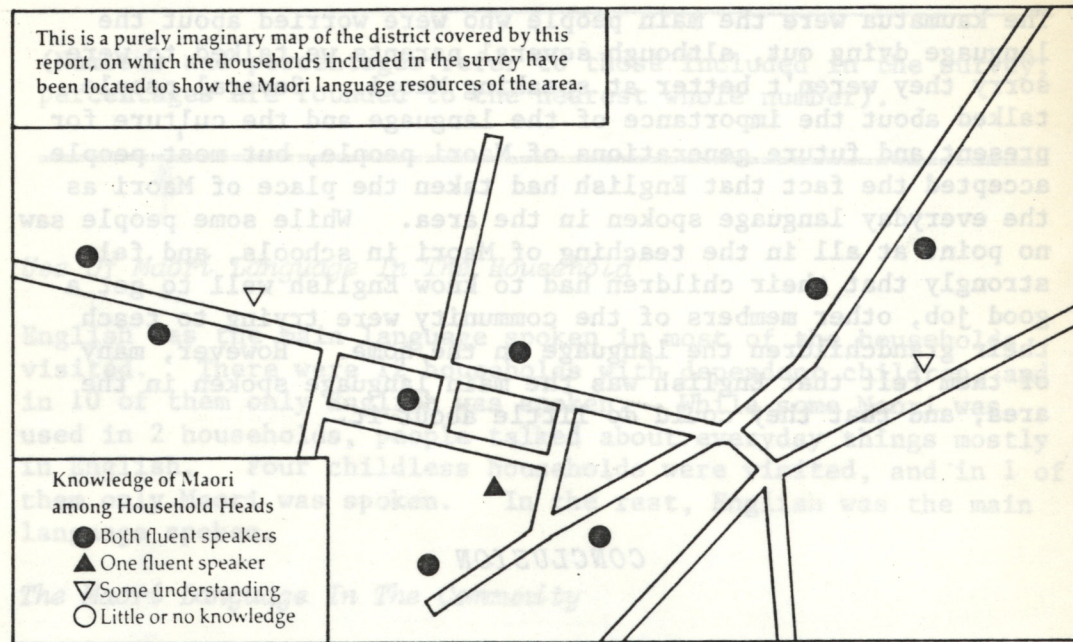
Attitudes Towards The Language

The kaumatua were the main people who were worried about the language dying out, although several parents we talked to were sorry they weren't better at speaking Maori. Several people talked about the importance of the language and the culture for present and future generations of Maori people, but most people accepted the fact that English had taken the place of Maori as the everyday language spoken in the area. While some people saw no point at all in the teaching of Maori in schools, and felt strongly that their children had to know English well to get a good job, other members of the community were trying to teach their grandchildren the language in the home. However, many of them felt that English was the main language spoken in the area, and that they could do little about it.

CONCLUSION

All fluent speakers of Maori in the households visited were adults over the age of 25, and nearly all the people who understood Maori well were also over that age. English was the main language spoken in nearly all the households visited, so there was little chance for children to hear or learn Maori, except when grandparents insisted upon speaking Maori to them. Many of the people in the survey felt that to learn English would be more help in getting a good job than knowing Maori, and, besides, they

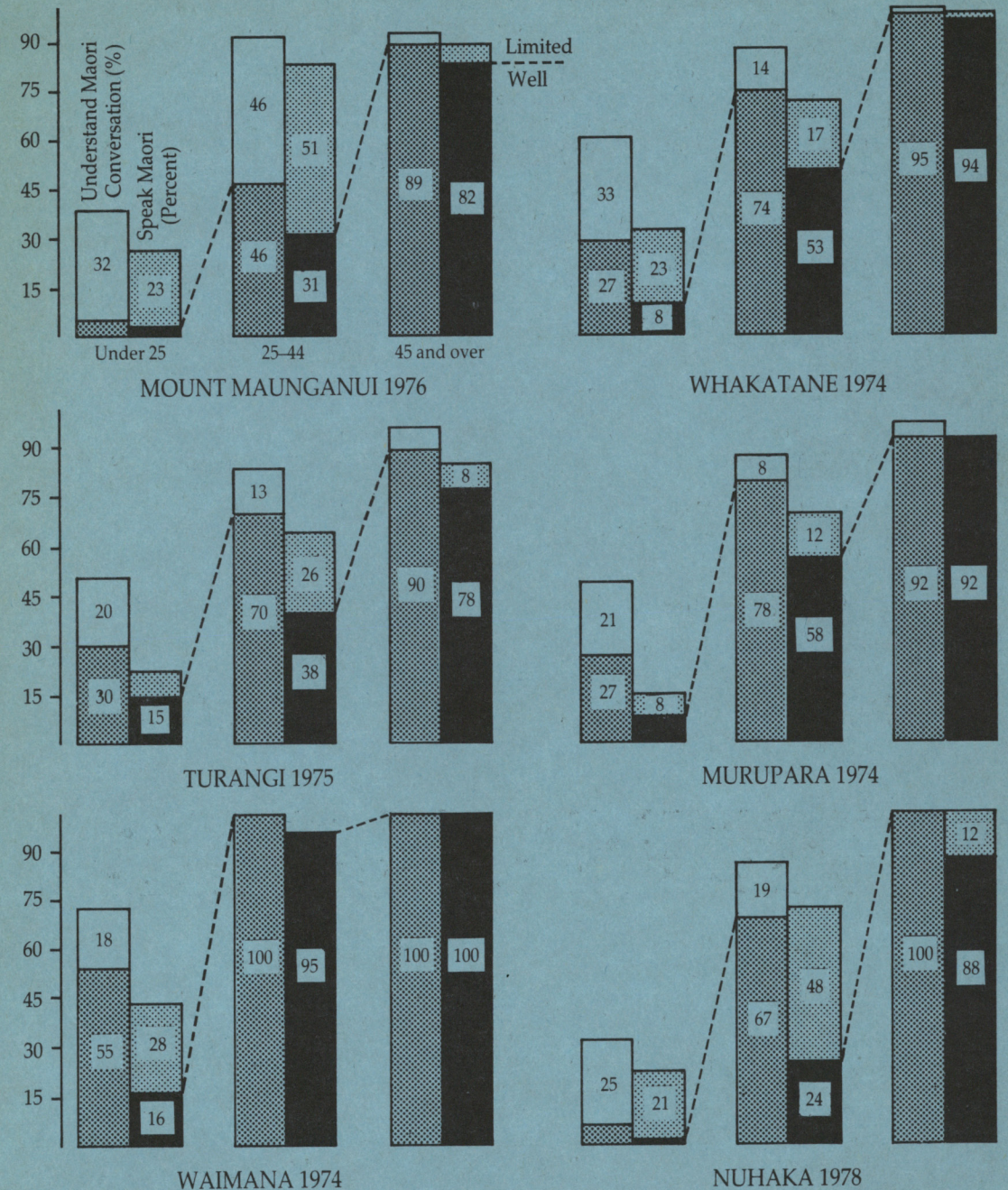
could come back and learn Maori in later years. However, it is unlikely that by then there would be competent teachers of Maori left in the community, as nearly three-quarters of the fluent speakers were already over the age of 45. Several of the people interviewed were looking for ways to teach their children Maori, and Te Kohanga Reo groups starting up throughout the country may be a big help. Further information on such schemes can be obtained from local Maori Affairs offices.



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.