

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

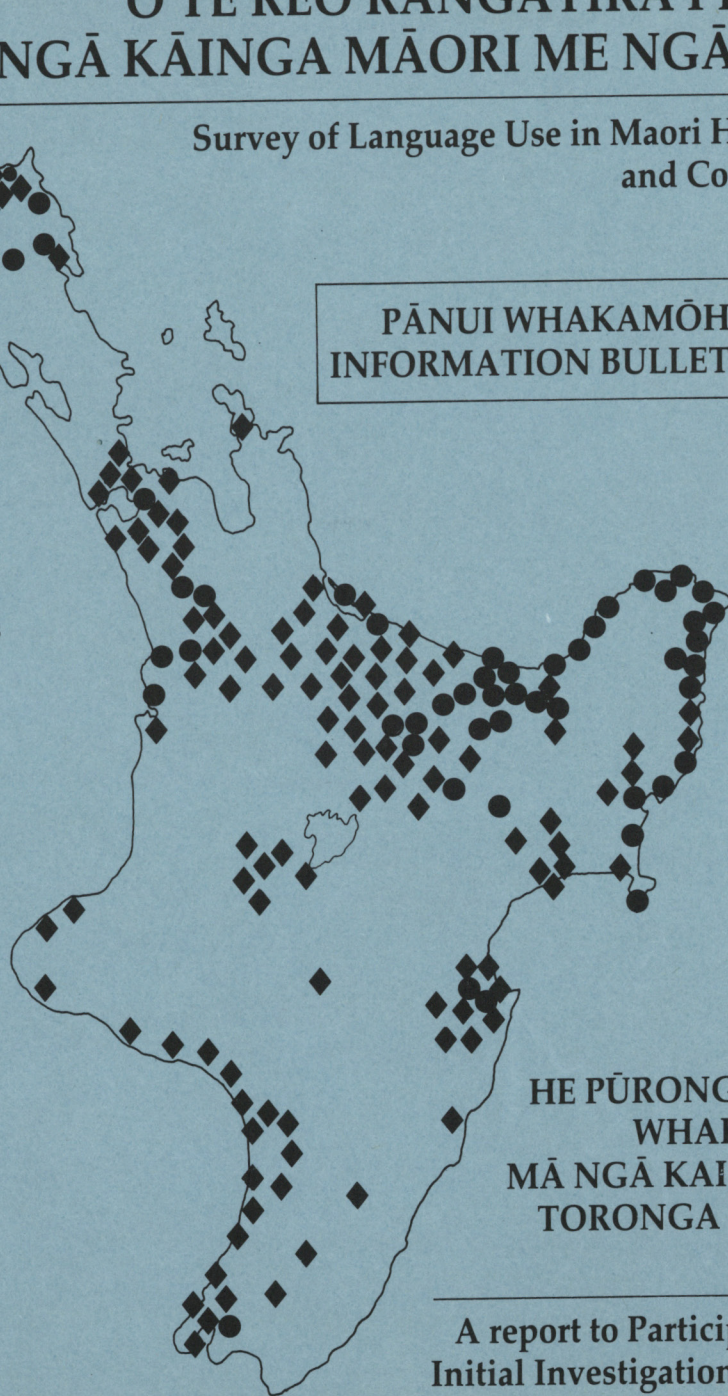
PĀNUI WHAKAMŌHIO
INFORMATION BULLETIN

77

Localities in which
ten or more households
were visited

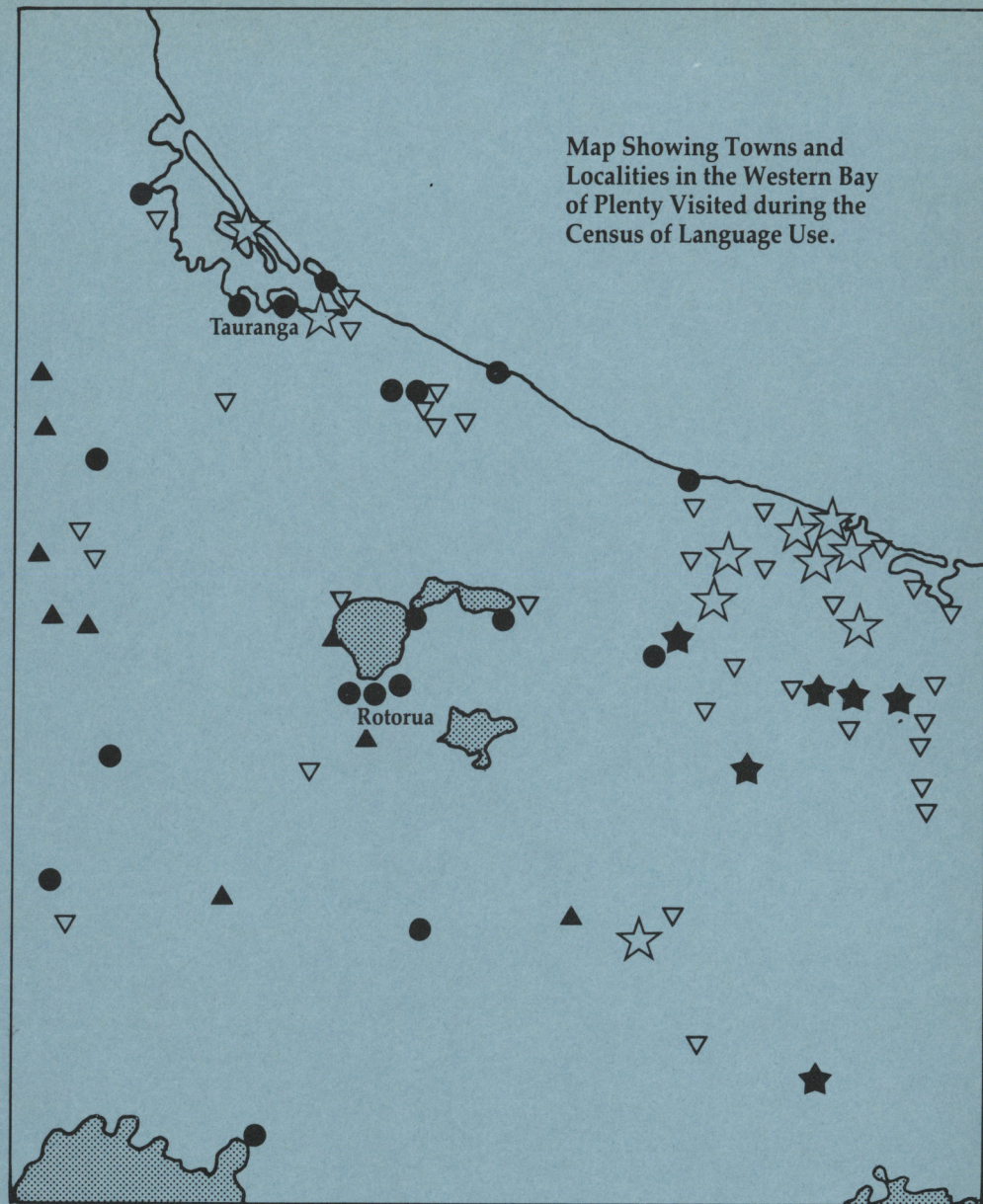
● Two thirds or
more of adults were
fluent speakers of
Maori

◆ 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 NGAPUNA

Fieldwork for the census of language use in Maori communities took place in 22 households in Ngapuna in December 1977 and February 1978. The interviewers were Hiria Tumoana (Tuhoe), Allan Hawea (Ngati Awa), Sharon Moerkerk (Maniapoto), Aroha Yates (Te Arawa/Rongowhakaata) and Awhina Ngatai (Ngai Terangi). Fifteen interviews were carried out in English; the rest were partly or entirely in Maori.

The households surveyed had a total population of 115, and 113 of them were of Maori descent. This was almost half the Maori population of Ngapuna at the time.

RESULTS OF THE LINGUISTIC SURVEY

Iwi Affiliation

The people interviewed named ten main iwi to which they or members of their households belonged. By far the most of them, however, 98 people, or more than four-fifths of the total, belonged to Te Arawa — tangata whenua of the area.

Ability to Speak and Understand Maori

The table on page two shows that a quarter of the people surveyed spoke Maori well while a third of them understood the language well. All these good speakers, however, were adults over 25, but very few people under this age understood Maori well. Three-quarters of the school-age children and more than half the people between 15-24 knew hardly any Maori at the time. Quite a number of adults also could understand only a little spoken Maori.

KNOWLEDGE OF SPOKEN MAORI IN NGAPUNA (1978)

Age Group	Fluent Speakers		Understand Easily		Limited Understanding		No Knowledge	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
45 & over	23	82	25	89	3	11	0	
25-44	5	31	8	50	3	19	5	31
15-24	0		2	7	10	35	17	59
2-14	0		2	6	7	20	26	74
Overall	28	26	37	34	23	21	48	45

(Numbers and percentages refer to members of the households 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 18 homes with dependent children and in 15 of them people always spoke in English. While Maori was often spoken between adults in the rest of the homes, English was the main language used.

English was also the main language in three of the four childless homes visited. The person in the other home usually spoke Maori with friends and visitors who could speak Maori.

The Maori Language in the Community

Although nearly two-thirds of the adults over 25 spoke Maori well, people had few chances to chat in Maori in Ngapuna, as most of the community spoke only English. The people most likely to speak Maori regularly were kaumatua, and most of them would rather speak

it with friends and neighbours, usually of the same age, who knew the language. People under 25 talked with each other, usually in English.

The Maori language still remained important, however, in ceremonies on the marae and in certain religious services. For many people, especially the kaumatua, private or silent prayer was also in Maori.

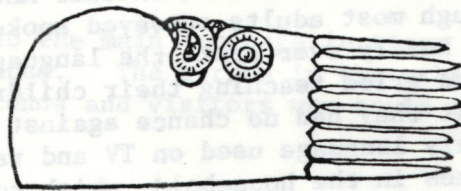
If any two members of the community were to meet unexpectedly, the chances were about one in twelve that they could understand each other in Maori. If both people were adults over 25, the chances were much greater — one in two — while it was unlikely that people under 25 would be able to speak in Maori with each other.

Attitudes towards the Language

While some people in Ngapuna, especially kaumatua, were worried that fewer and fewer people knew and used Maori in the home and in the community, others couldn't decide whether Maori had any future or not. Although most adults surveyed spoke or understood Maori well, they hardly ever spoke the language with their own children. Some had tried teaching their children and mokopuna Maori, but felt they had no chance against English, which was almost the only language used on TV and radio, as well as in books and magazines in the household, which young people read. Several people said that as most New Zealanders were not interested in Maori, it was not surprising that hardly anyone thought it was a good idea to use the language in everyday situations. However, many people still wanted Maori taught in schools, especially at the primary level. But some people said it was already 30 years too late to teach Maori in schools. Maori had to be learned in the home, and should not be just another subject taught in the classroom.

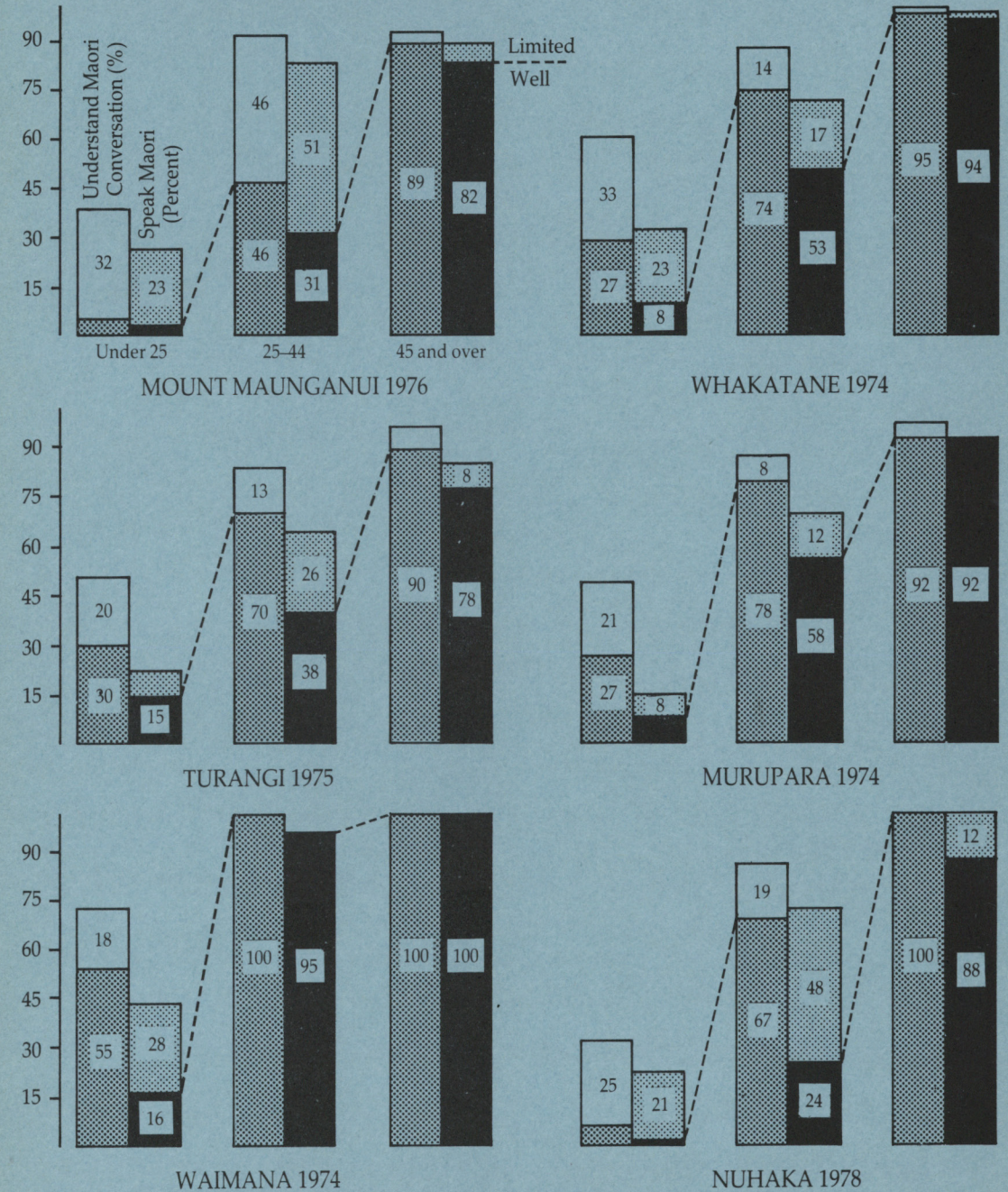
CONCLUSION

English took over from Maori as the main language for everyday use in most households visited in Ngapuna, and also in the community, perhaps one or two generations ago. The people most likely to speak Maori regularly were kaumatua over the age of 45, although they had few chances to do so, as most people in Ngapuna spoke only English. The Maori language was still used for important services, but English was the main language that people used when talking among themselves in the community. Many people were worried that fewer and fewer people spoke Maori. While they wanted the language taught in schools, others thought that English was used so widely it must cause Maori to die out altogether. More recently, pre-schools where Maori is spoken (Te Kohanga Reo) have been set up throughout the country, to make sure that there will be people speaking Maori in the future. People interested in starting a school of this kind in the area and other Maori language courses based in the community should contact the Department of Maori Affairs in Rotorua.



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.