

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

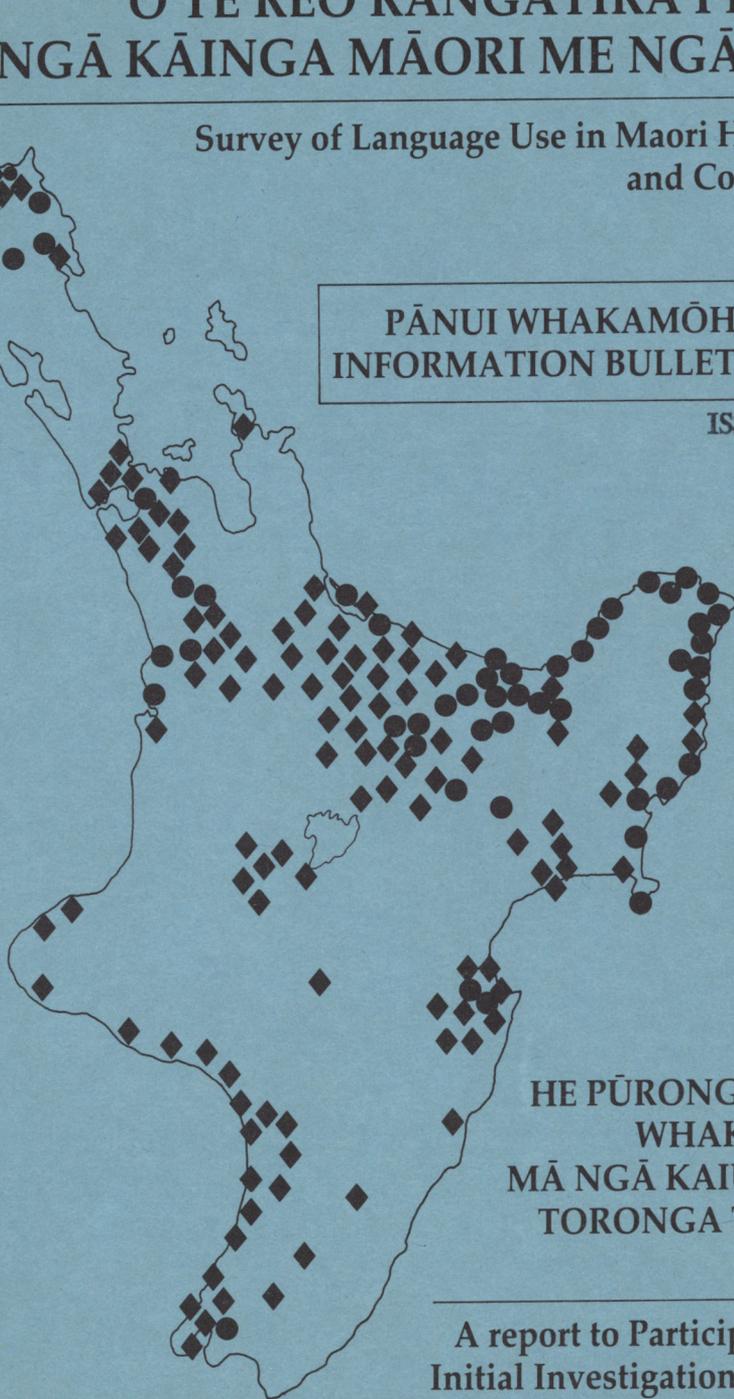
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Localities in which
ten or more households
were visited

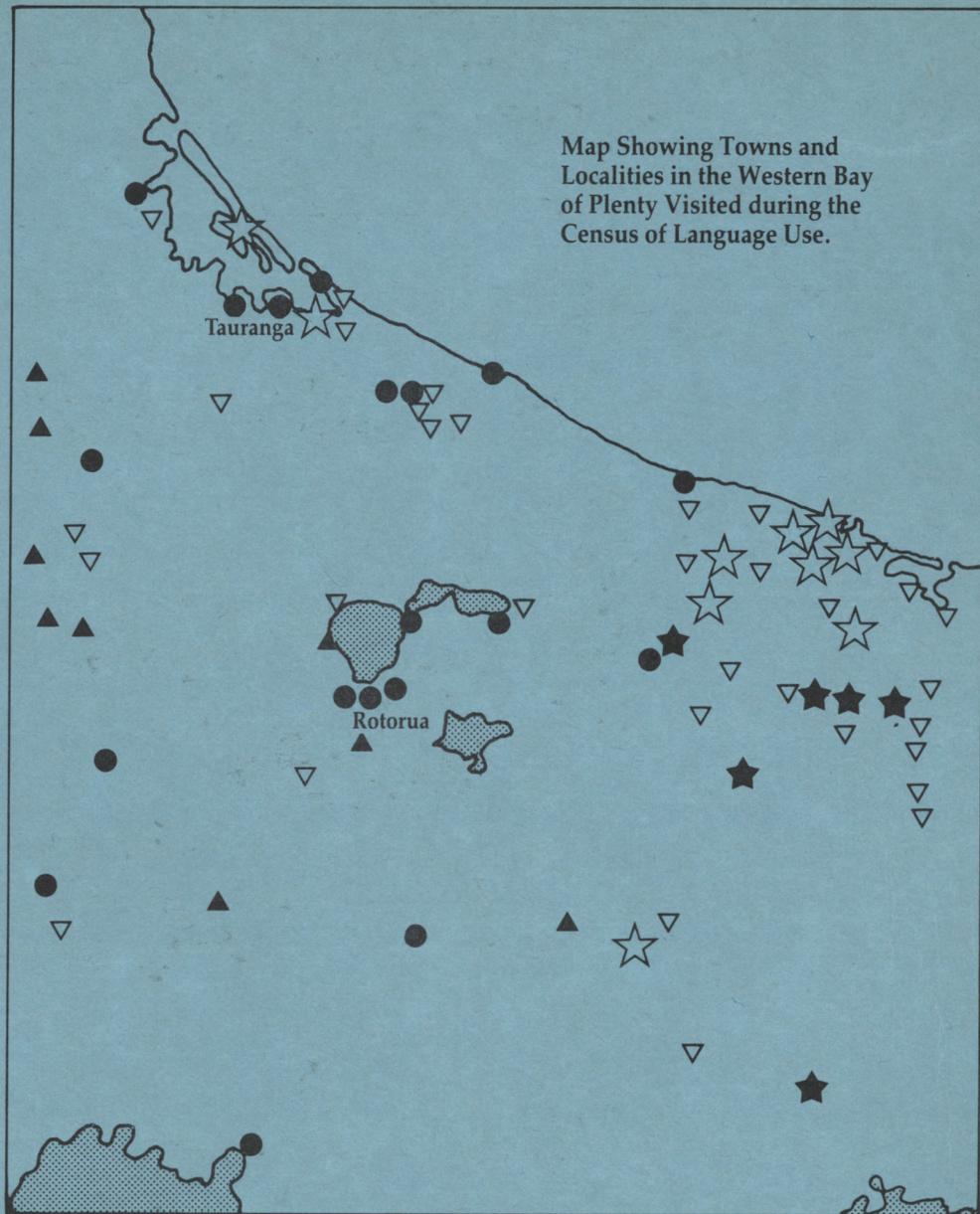
● Two thirds or
more of adults were
fluent speakers of
Maori

◆ 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

Knowledge of Spoken Maori

The information...
 Age...
 Group...
 Overall...



THE MAORI LANGUAGE IN REPOROA

Fieldwork for the survey of language use in Maori communities was carried out in Reporoa in February 1978. The interviewers were Hiria Tumoana (Tuhoë) and Taari Nicholas (Ngati Ranginui/Ngaiterangi/Ngapuhi).

18 households with a total population of 96 were visited as part of the survey. Of these 96, 90 people were of Maori descent. This represented nearly 70 percent of Reporoa's total Maori population at that time.

All but one of the interviews were carried out in English.

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Knowledge of Spoken Maori in Reporoa (1978)

Age Group	Fluent Speakers	Understand Easily	Limited Understanding	No Knowledge
45 years & over	11 (65%)	14 (82%)	1 (6%)	2 (12%)
25-44 yrs	4 (29%)	5 (36%)	3 (21%)	6 (43%)
15-24 yrs	0 (0%)	1 (5%)	6 (32%)	12 (63%)
2-14 yrs	0 (0%)	1 (3%)	12 (31%)	26 (67%)
Overall	15 (17%)	21 (24%)	22 (25%)	46 (52%)

(Figures refer to members of households visited; percentages have been rounded to nearest whole number)

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Results of the Linguistic Survey

Iwi Affiliation

The people we spoke to mentioned a total of nine major iwi to which they or the members of their households belonged. Of these, the iwi to which most people in the survey were affiliated was Arawa with 40 members (or 42 percent of the total). 33 people (35 percent) belonged to Iuharetoa and Ngapuhi had 11 members (12 percent).

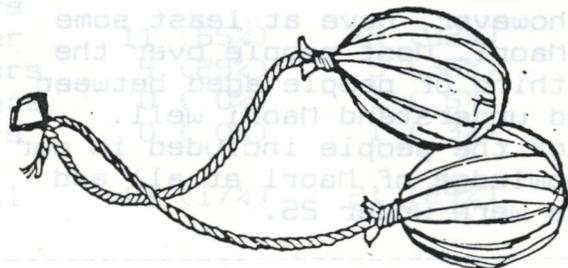
Ability to Speak and Understand Maori

The information in the table tells us that none of the 58 people under the age of 25 that were included in the survey could speak Maori fluently and only two of them could understand Maori well. About a third of the same age group did, however, have at least some understanding of spoken Maori. Most people over the age of 45 and about one third of people aged between 25 and 44 could speak and understand Maori well. Overall, about one half of the people included in our Reporoa survey had no knowledge of Maori at all and over four fifths of these were under 25.



Use of the Maori Language in the Household

All of the households we visited had dependent children. English and Maori were used equally in one home and English alone was used in the remaining 17 homes when all the family were together.



Maori Language in the Community

About two thirds of the people we spoke to said that English was the most common language they used when talking with neighbours, visitors and children. The other third said that they generally used some Maori in these situations. Maori was, however, more likely to be used in certain religious ceremonies and on the marae in formal situations such as whaikorero. Maori was also more likely to be used in informal chatting on the marae than elsewhere.

If any two people included in our Reporoa survey were to have met unexpectedly and they had both been adults, the chances that they would have been able to have a conversation in Maori would have been about one in three. If one or both of the people had been children, however, the chances would have been practically nil because of the low numbers of children we came across who could speak or understand Maori well.

Attitudes Towards the Maori Language

Maori had been the first language understood by about half of the adults we spoke to. Although about the same number said that it was the language they preferred to use most for conversation it seemed that few of them got a chance to do so very often. This was generally attributed to the scarcity of people in the community who could speak Maori fluently.

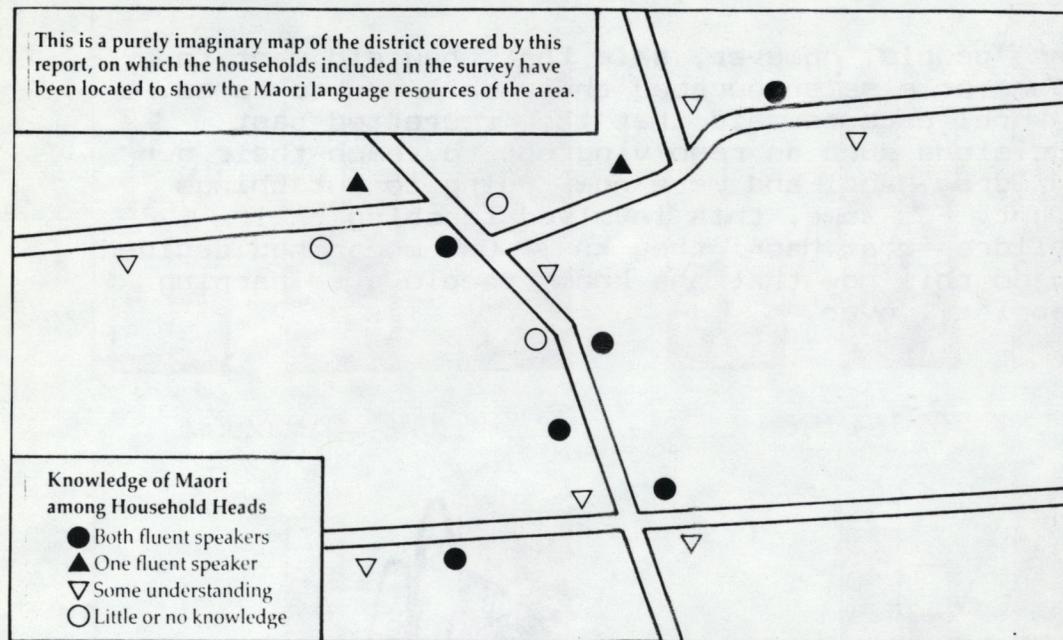
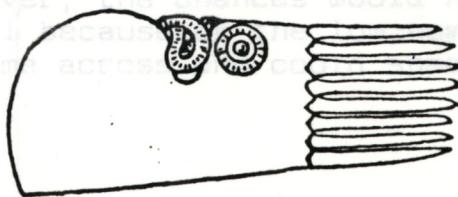
One man said that he preferred to use Maori when speaking but preferred English for reading and writing because "it is simpler and faster to use." Another woman who also commented on the limited usage of Maori in the area said that at church she finds hymns and services in English "boring." Some people said that because of the fact that Maori is not spoken much their own ability to speak and understand Maori was being lost.

Most of these people, as well as those who had never known how to speak Maori, expressed a desire to learn or relearn the language. One woman told us that she had been able to speak Maori as a child but had lost it when she went to school. Later on in life she moved to an area where Maori was the predominant language spoken and was, therefore, forced to relearn the Maori she had forgotten when she was younger. However, she then moved back to an English-speaking area and once again lost the ability to speak Maori. She told us she would dearly love to learn to speak Maori properly again. She had begun to teach her children "bits and pieces" of the language.

In fact, many people told us that they were trying to teach their children Maori or else encourage them to take an interest in learning it at school. There was much support for the teaching of Maori language in schools. One person commented that ideally Maori should be taught in the home but realised that this is not always practicable or possible and so Maori in schools was the next best thing. Some said that Maori in schools was good because it is important for children to know their own culture, and for many, school is the only place they will get a chance to learn it. Another woman, while supportive of Maori in schools, stressed that it is important to know both languages i.e. she did not want her children to miss out on learning English.

Of those who were teaching their own children, several mentioned that the children were just not interested. Some children laughed or thought the whole idea was a waste of time. One woman, however, who had experienced this with her children said that although they laughed at the idea of learning Maori when they were young, now that they were at college age they were beginning to take more of an interest in learning.

Some people had chosen not to teach their children Maori and now regretted it. As one woman said, "It was an advantage if you didn't want them to know what you were talking about." Another woman who had made the same decision said that Maori is of little advantage for "earning your bread and butter," but just the same she would rather her children learnt Maori than French or some other language.



Conclusion

Nearly all of the people included in our survey in Reporoa who could speak and understand Maori well were over the age of 45. Only two people under 25 could understand spoken Maori with ease and over two thirds had no knowledge at all. Maori language in the community was generally restricted to religious ceremonies and on the marae.

Those amongst the people we spoke to who could speak Maori or who wanted to learn spoke of the difficulties of finding other fluent speakers to talk with in Maori and some said that this lack of practice had resulted in a loss of ability in speaking the language.

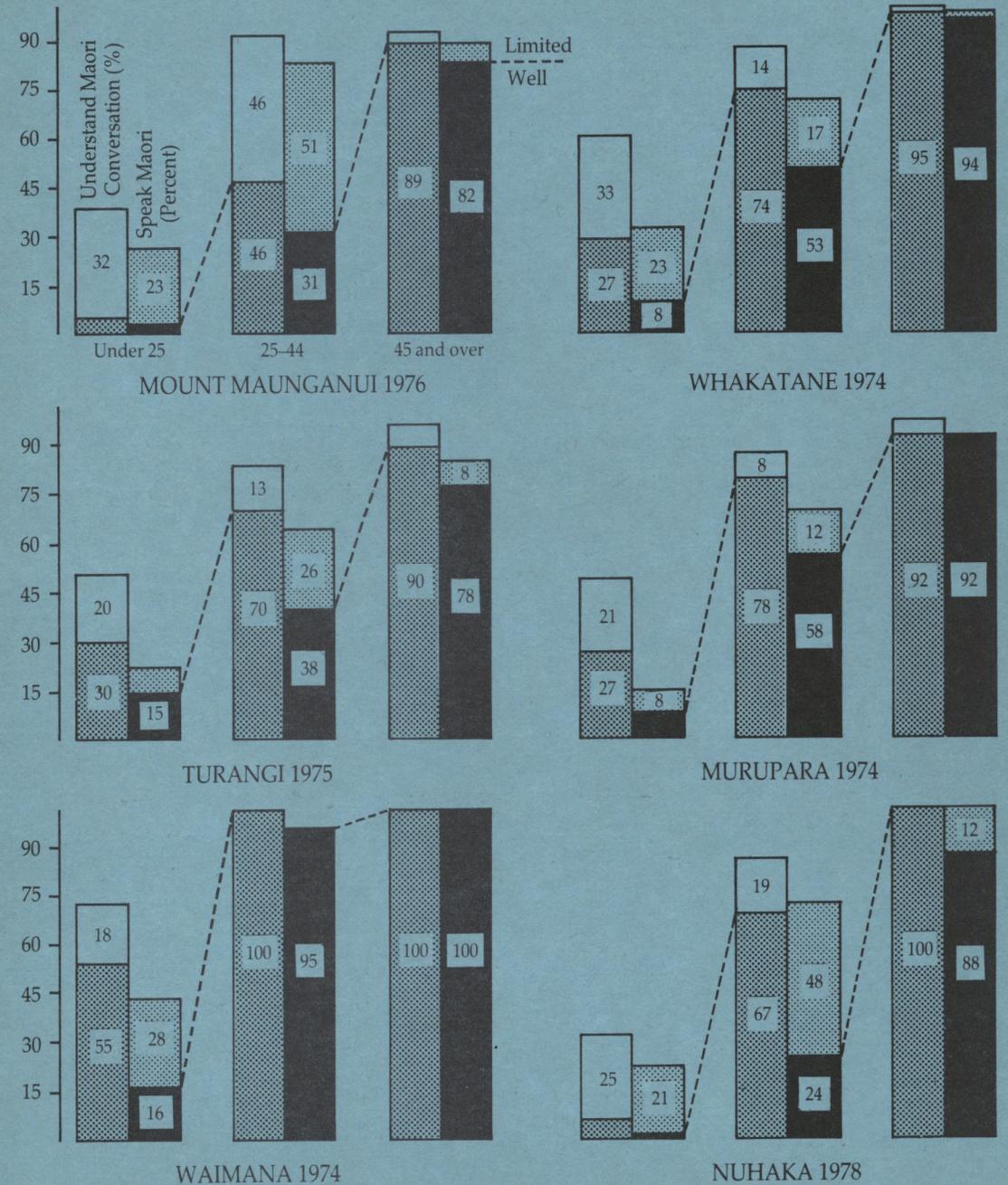
Many people, however, said that they did want to learn or else encouraged their children to do so. Several parents said that they regretted past decisions such as resolving not to teach their own children Maori and were now trying to put things right. For some, this involved teaching their children what Maori they knew. One woman had decided to do this now that she knew "people are learning Maori all over."



This report was prepared by:
Paula Martin (Ngai Tahu/Rangitane).

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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.