

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

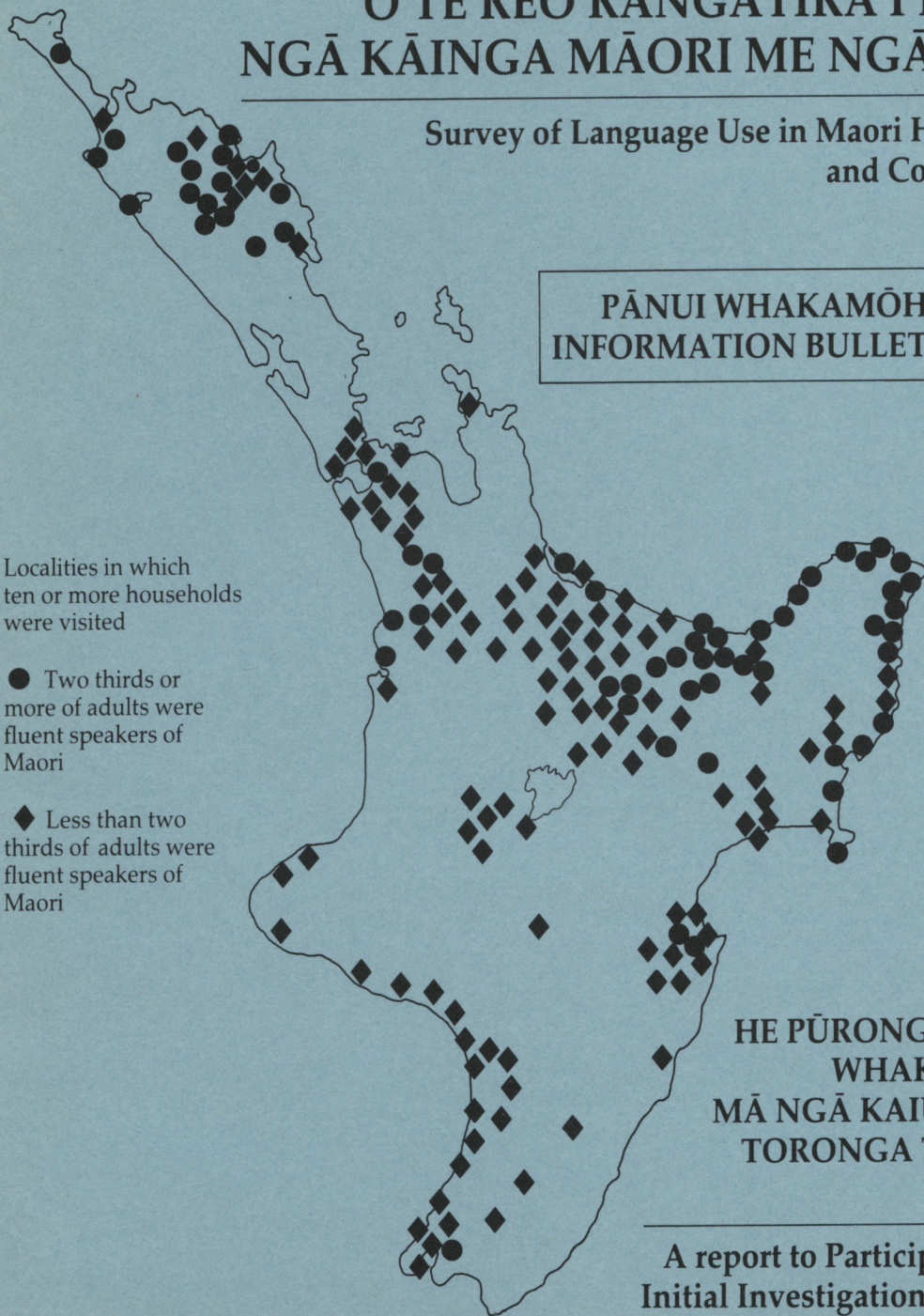
PĀNUI WHAKAMŌHIO
INFORMATION BULLETIN

18

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

THE MAORI LANGUAGE IN RUATAHUNA

Fieldwork for the census of language use in Maori communities took place in 28 households in Ruatahuna in January 1974. The interviewers were Broncho Te Kiri (Tuhoe), Carol Hindmarsh Ngawati (Ngati Porou), Ripeka Koopu Martin (Te Whanau-a-Apanui), Meremaihi Williams Koopu (Ngati Awa), Joe Rua (Te Whanau-a-Apanui), Lynda West, Francis Riley (Ngapuhi), Willy Martin (Ngati Manawa/Te Aupouri), Charee Ogle (Ngapuhi), Yvonne Sigglesko (Ngaiterangi), and Merepeka Wharepapa (Te Whanau-a-Apanui). Nineteen interviews were carried out entirely or partly in Maori, the rest were in English.

The households surveyed had a total population of 140, all of whom were of Maori descent. This was about two-thirds of the Maori population of Ruatahuna at the time.

RESULTS OF THE LINGUISTIC SURVEY

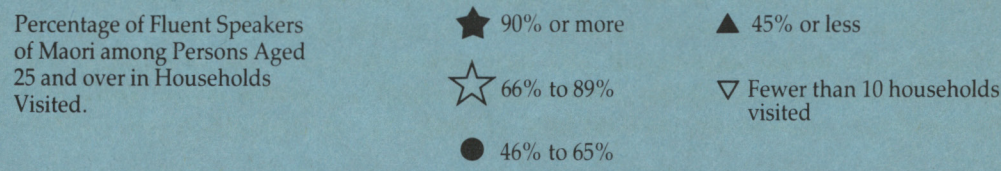
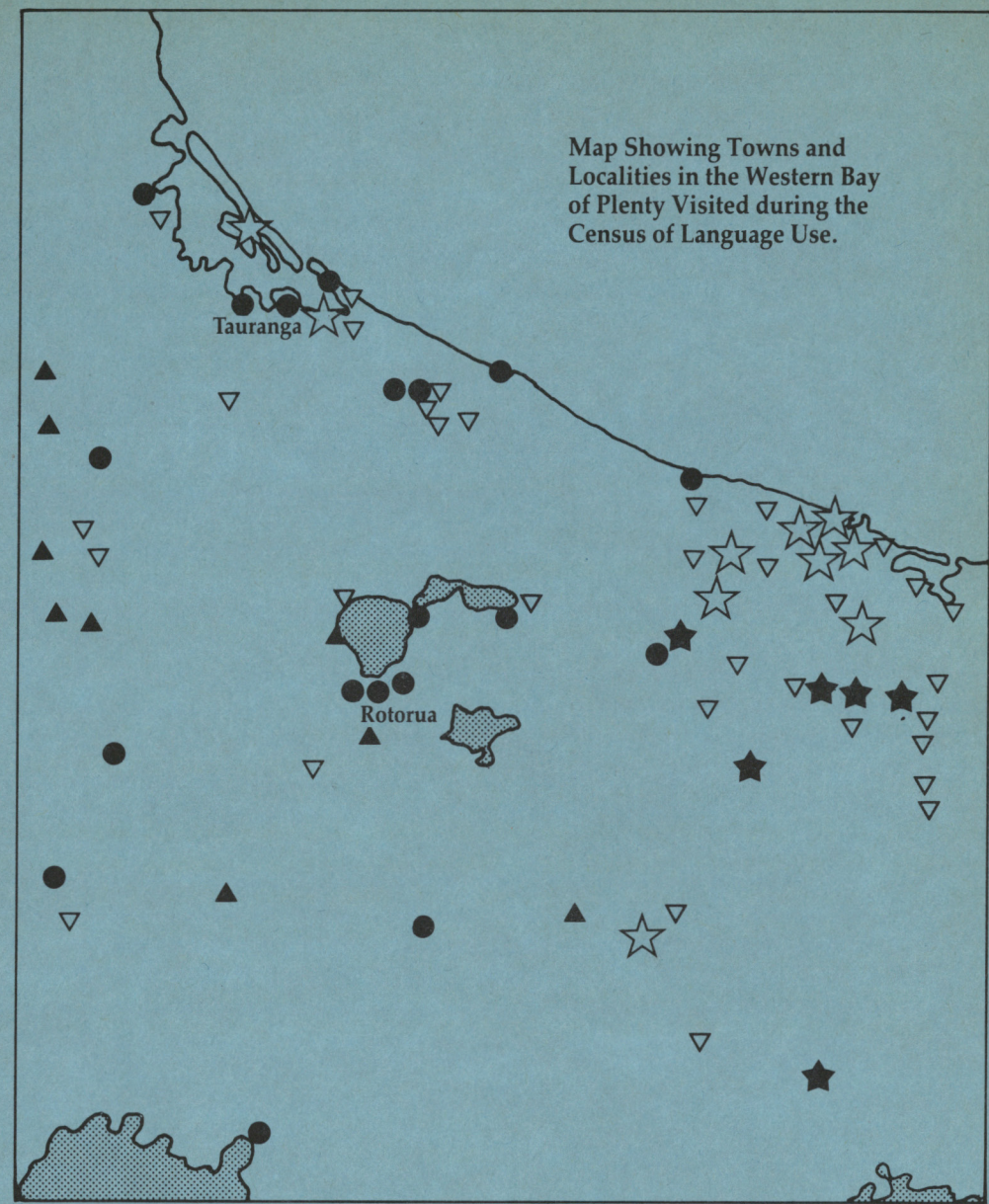
Iwi Affiliation

The people interviewed mentioned 5 major iwi to which they or members of their households belonged. However easily the most (125 or 90 percent) belonged to the Tuhoe tribe.

Ability To Speak And Understand Maori

The information in the table on page 2 shows us that while almost all adults and kaumatua in Ruatahuna were fluent speakers of Maori, there was a growing number of young people who were unable to speak the language. Just over half the school-age children knew Maori well, and only 15 of the 114 children and young people in the survey knew no Maori at that time.

Map Showing Towns and Localities in the Western Bay of Plenty Visited during the Census of Language Use.



KNOWLEDGE OF SPOKEN MAORI IN RUATAHUNA (1974)

Age Group	Fluent Speakers		Understand Easily		Limited Understanding		No Knowledge	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
45 & over	20	91	20	91	2	8	0	
25-44	24	89	25	93	2	7	0	
15-24	3	25	5	42	3	25	4	33
2-14	22	29	42	55	24	31	11	14
Overall	69	50	92	67	31	23	15	11

(Numbers and percentages refer to members of households visited; percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number).

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Use Of Maori Language In The Household

There were 22 households with children surveyed, and in 4 of them the people spoke entirely or mostly in Maori, while in 3 others, Maori and English were used for an equal amount of time. In the rest, (15 households), more English than Maori was spoken. In the 6 childless households, Maori was spoken entirely or mostly in 4 of them, while members of the other 2 households spoke either Maori with Maori-speaking visitors or English with English-speaking ones.

The Maori Language In The Community

While most of the people interviewed said that they preferred to speak Maori rather than English, the language that they would choose depended on the occasion and the language spoken by the person they were with. Therefore, Maori neighbours, friends and workmates were spoken to in Maori, while Pakeha teachers, bosses

or friends would be spoken to nearly always in English. Maori was the proper language to use on the marae and for certain religious services, especially in the Ringatu church. If any two people met unexpectedly, the chances that they would be able to talk in Maori would be better than 4 to 1 if both persons were adults, and 1 in 2 if one of them was a child. The chances that children would be able to talk Maori to each other would be about 1 in 5. This meant that children would be much more likely to speak English with each other, while adults would most often use Maori, except when speaking to young children.

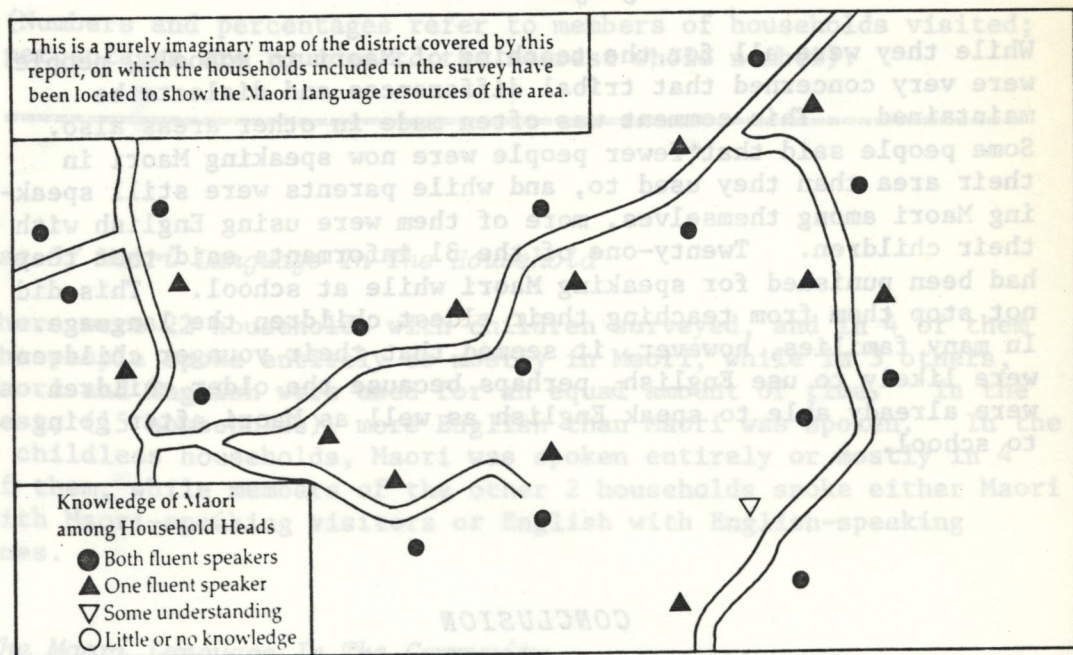
Attitudes Towards The Language

While they were all for the teaching of Maori in schools, people were very concerned that tribal differences and dialects be maintained. This comment was often made in other areas also. Some people said that fewer people were now speaking Maori in their area than they used to, and while parents were still speaking Maori among themselves, more of them were using English with their children. Twenty-one of the 31 informants said that they had been punished for speaking Maori while at school. This did not stop them from teaching their eldest children the language. In many families, however, it seemed that their younger children were likely to use English, perhaps because the older children were already able to speak English as well as Maori after going to school.

CONCLUSION

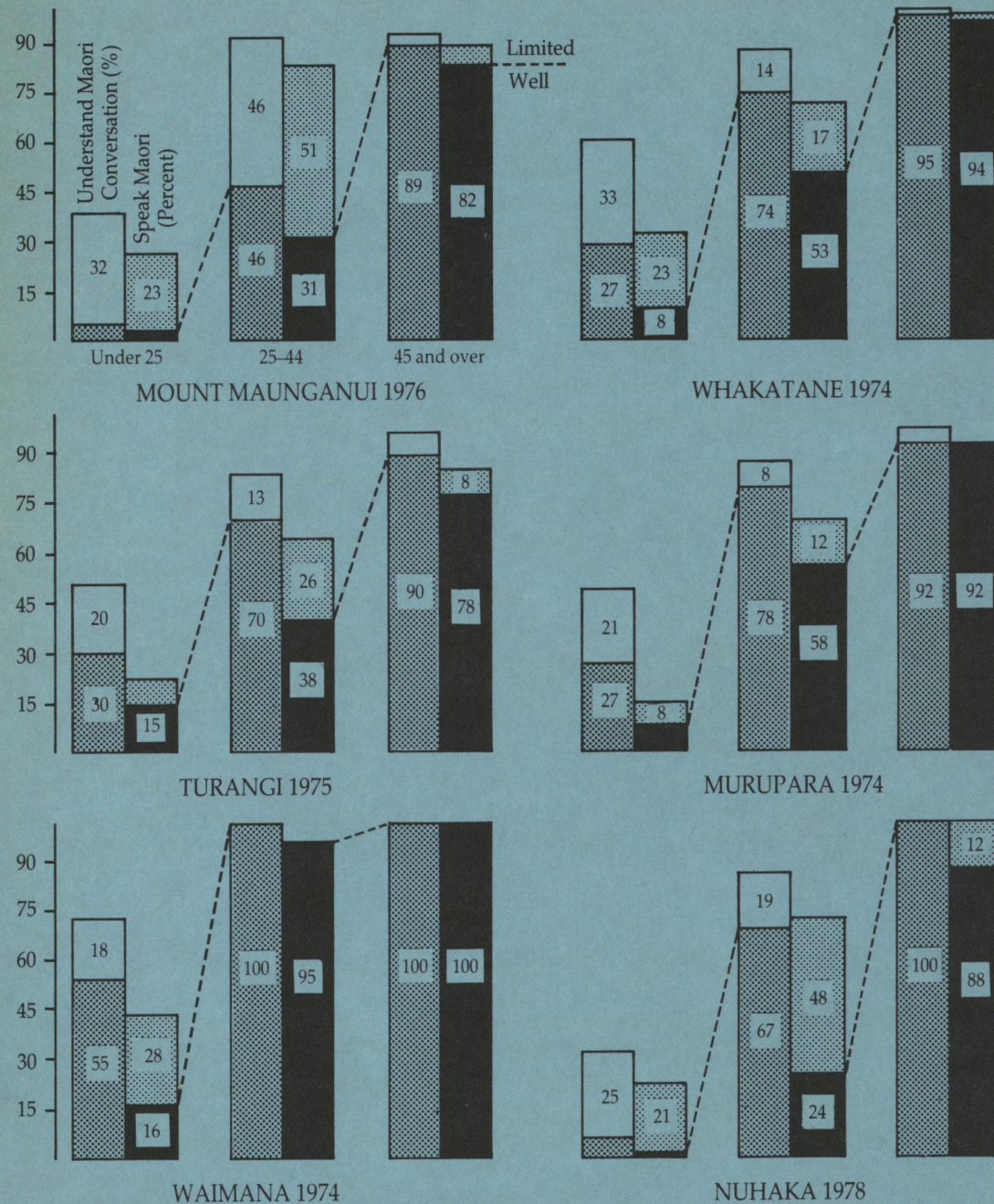
At the time of the survey the use and knowledge of Maori in Ruatahuna was very high among adults and kaumatua, who spoke the language in many different social situations. They preferred to speak Maori with friends, neighbours and with Maori-speaking workmates. However, there was a drop in the number of young

people who could speak the language - only a quarter of the children and young adults were able to do so. (We visited Ruatahuna again in 1982, and found that this trend had continued). This has been blamed on the number of mainly English-speaking children who have come from areas outside of Ruatahuna. Many of them understood Maori well, but were poor at speaking it. This has forced many of their school friends to talk in English. On the other hand, the presence of so many adults in the community who speak Maori well, and the proposal to teach in Maori and English in the local primary school could lead to a revival of the language among the youth of Ruatahuna.



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.