

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

32

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 TE PUNA

Fieldwork for the census of language use in Maori communities was conducted in 15 households in Te Puna in January 1977. The interviewers were Kahu Waititi (Te Whanau-a-Apanui/Ngapuhi), and Joe Rua (Te Whanau-a-Apanui). Three interviews were carried out partly or entirely in Maori, the rest were in English.

The households surveyed had a total population of 69, and 68 of these were of Maori descent. This was about one-fifth of the total Maori population of the district at the time.

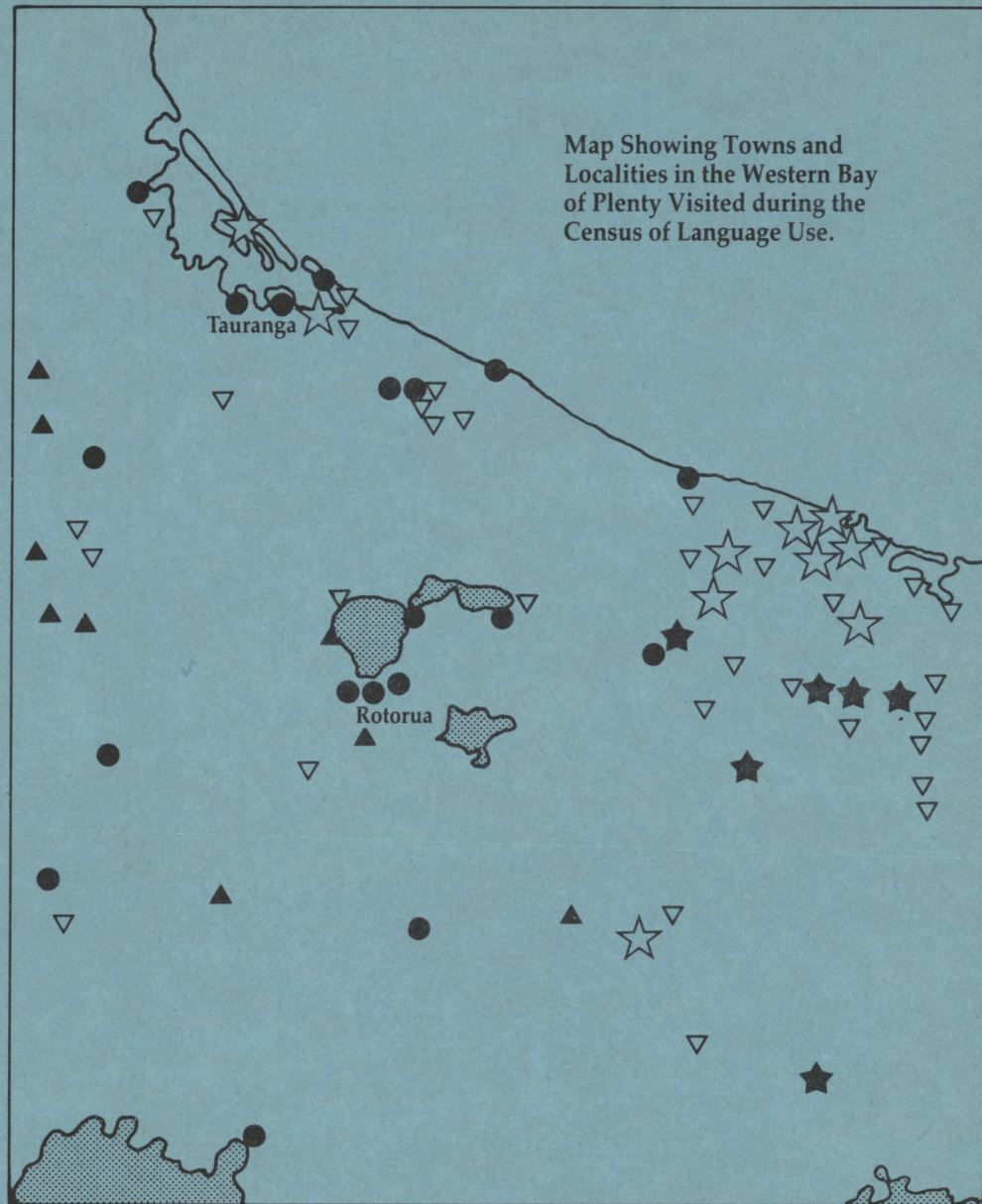
RESULTS OF THE LINGUISTIC SURVEY

Iwi Affiliation

The people interviewed mentioned 7 major iwi to which they or members of their households belonged. The largest iwi in the survey was Ngai Te Rangi with 54 members or a little over three-quarters of the total. Ngati Ranginui, with 8 members (or 12 percent) was the next largest iwi.

Ability To Speak And Understand Maori

The information presented in the table on the next page tells us that nearly a third of the people surveyed spoke Maori fluently, and most of them were over the age of 45. No children under 14 spoke or understood the language well, although most of them knew a few basic words and phrases. Less than one-tenth of the people knew no Maori at all.



Percentage of Fluent Speakers of Maori among Persons Aged 25 and over in Households Visited.

★ 90% or more

▲ 45% or less

☆ 66% to 89%

▽ Fewer than 10 households visited

● 46% to 65%

KNOWLEDGE OF SPOKEN MAORI IN TE PUNA (1977)

Age Group	Fluent Speakers		Understand Easily		Limited Understanding		No Knowledge	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
45 & over	15	79	18	95	1	5	0	
25-44	4	36	7	64	3	27	1	9
15-24	2	15	4	31	7	54	2	15
2-14	0		0		23	89	3	11
Overall	21	30	29	42	34	49	6	9

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

=====

Use Of Maori Language In The Household

There was 12 households with dependent children visited, and in 11 of them people talked about everyday things mostly or entirely in English. In the remaining home, both Maori and English were spoken equally.

In the 3 childless households visited, English was also the main language spoken.

The Maori Language In The Community

Nearly two-thirds of the adults over 25 spoke Maori fluently, and much of the talk between people in this age group was in that language. Most of the other adults spoke English with friends, neighbours and workmates, although nearly everyone knew the Maori words used in greetings.

However, Maori still had an important part to play in formalities on the local marae, and in certain religious services in the area.

If any two members of the Maori community in Te Puna were to meet unexpectedly, the chances would be 1 in 8 that they would be able to talk to each other in Maori. If both people were adults over 25, the chances were 1 in 2, but it would be highly unlikely that any two schoolchildren would be able to chat together in Maori.

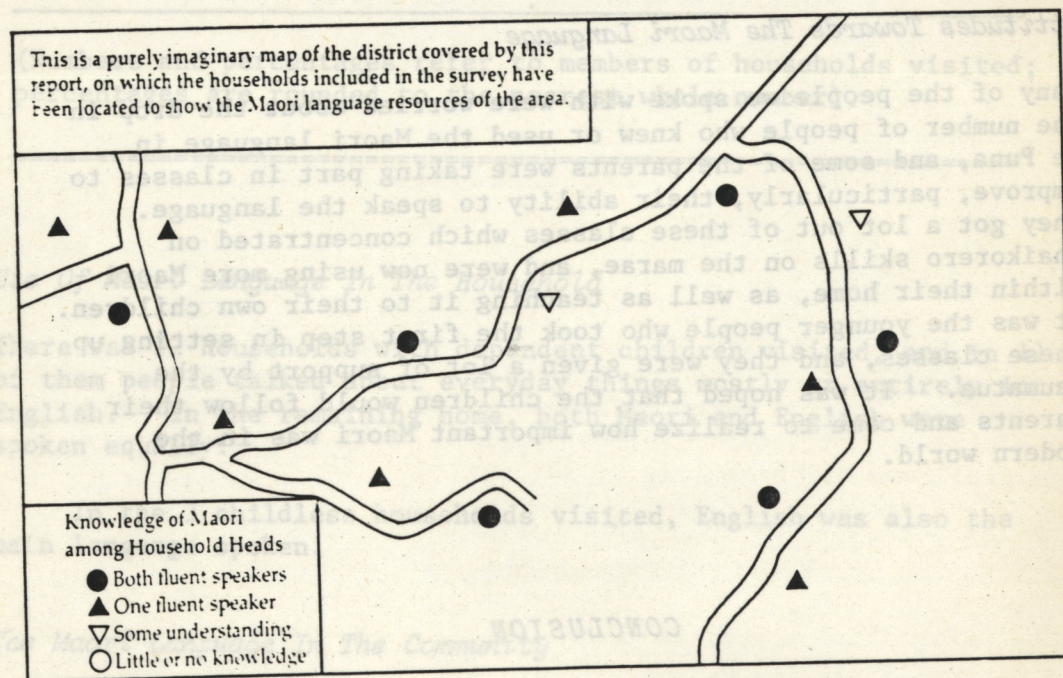
Attitudes Towards The Maori Language

Many of the people we spoke with were worried about the drop in the number of people who knew or used the Maori language in Te Puna, and some of the parents were taking part in classes to improve, particularly, their ability to speak the language. They got a lot out of these classes which concentrated on whaikorero skills on the marae, and were now using more Maori within their home, as well as teaching it to their own children. It was the younger people who took the first step in setting up these classes, and they were given a lot of support by the kaumatua. It was hoped that the children would follow their parents and come to realize how important Maori was in the modern world.

CONCLUSION

At the time of the survey, those who spoke and understood Maori well in Te Puna were all over the age of 15, and most were adults over 45. There was a lot of concern about the growing numbers, particularly among the younger generations, who did not know the language and many parents were, therefore, improving their own

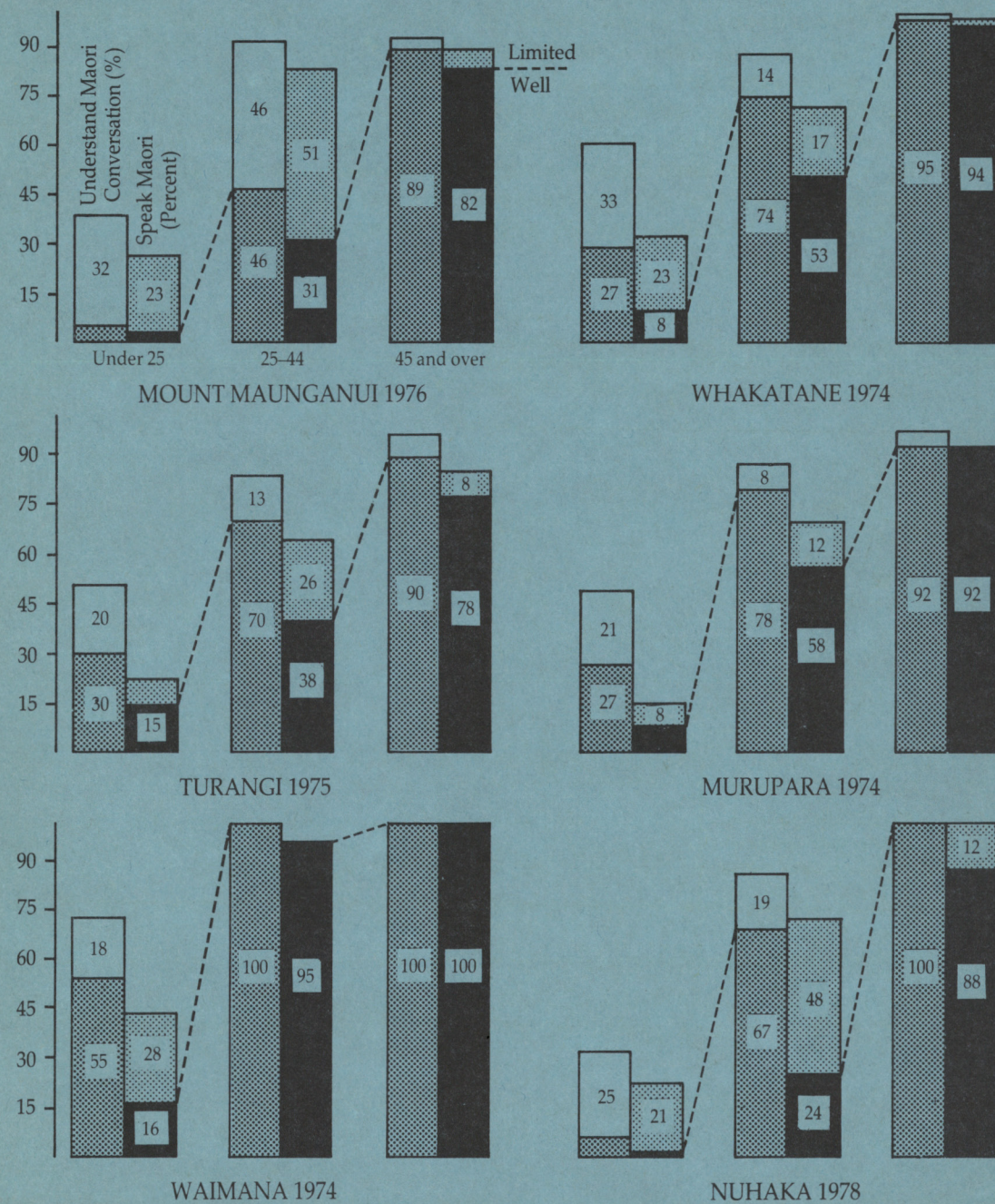
knowledge of Maori and teaching it to their children. Although no children under 14 could speak or understand the language well, by far the most of them knew at least a little Maori. However, it is a good sign for the future that the community is now right behind the teaching of Maori in primary and secondary education and in classes on the marae. There seems to be a lot of support in the region for more Maori language courses, particularly those for parents, and for the Maori-speaking centres (Te Kohanga Reo) for pre-school children which are now being set up.



This report was prepared by Lee Smith (Ngati Kahungunu).

© NZCER, Wellington, March 1983.

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.