

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

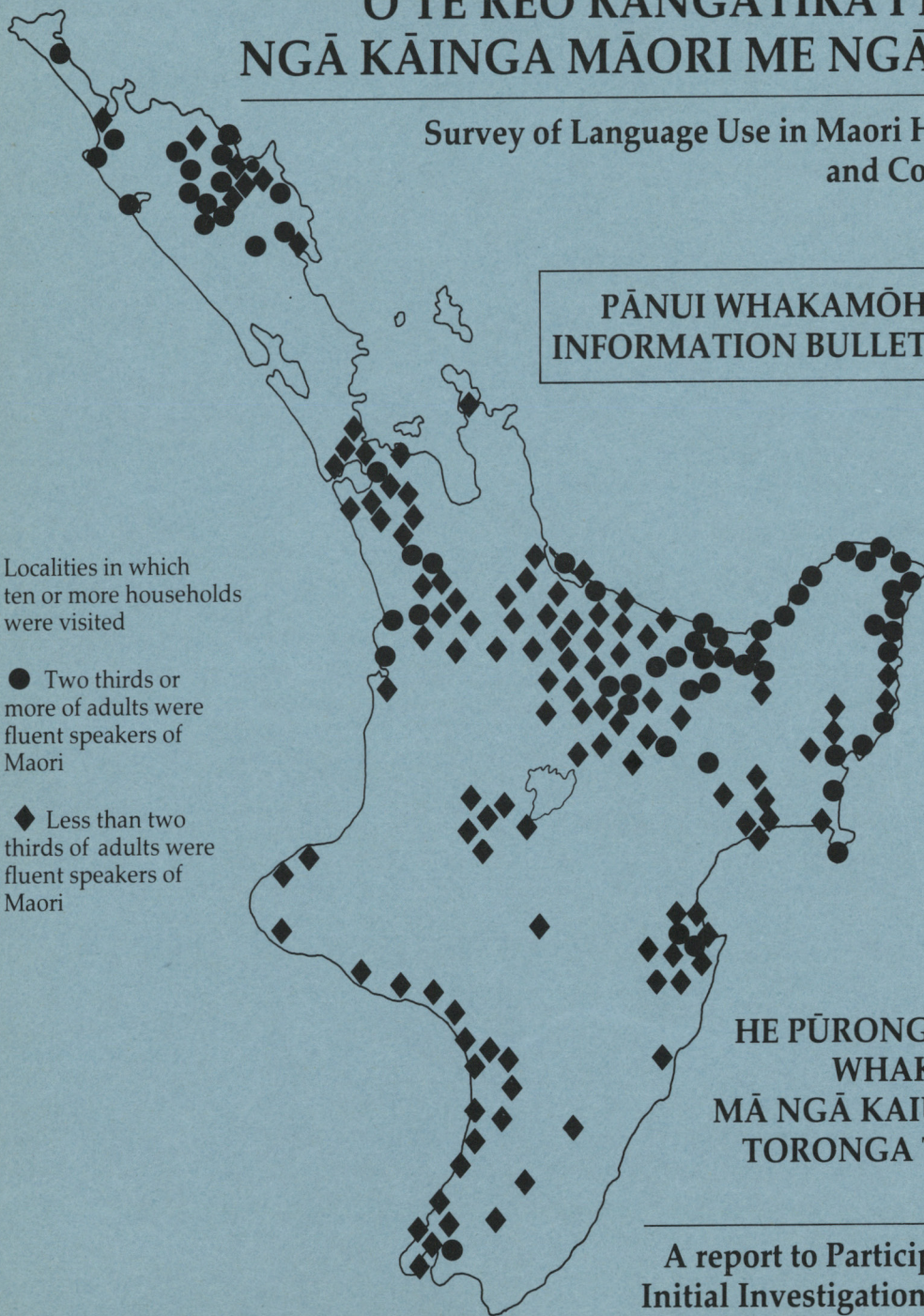
PĀNUI WHAKAMŌHIO
INFORMATION BULLETIN

42

Localities in which
ten or more households
were visited

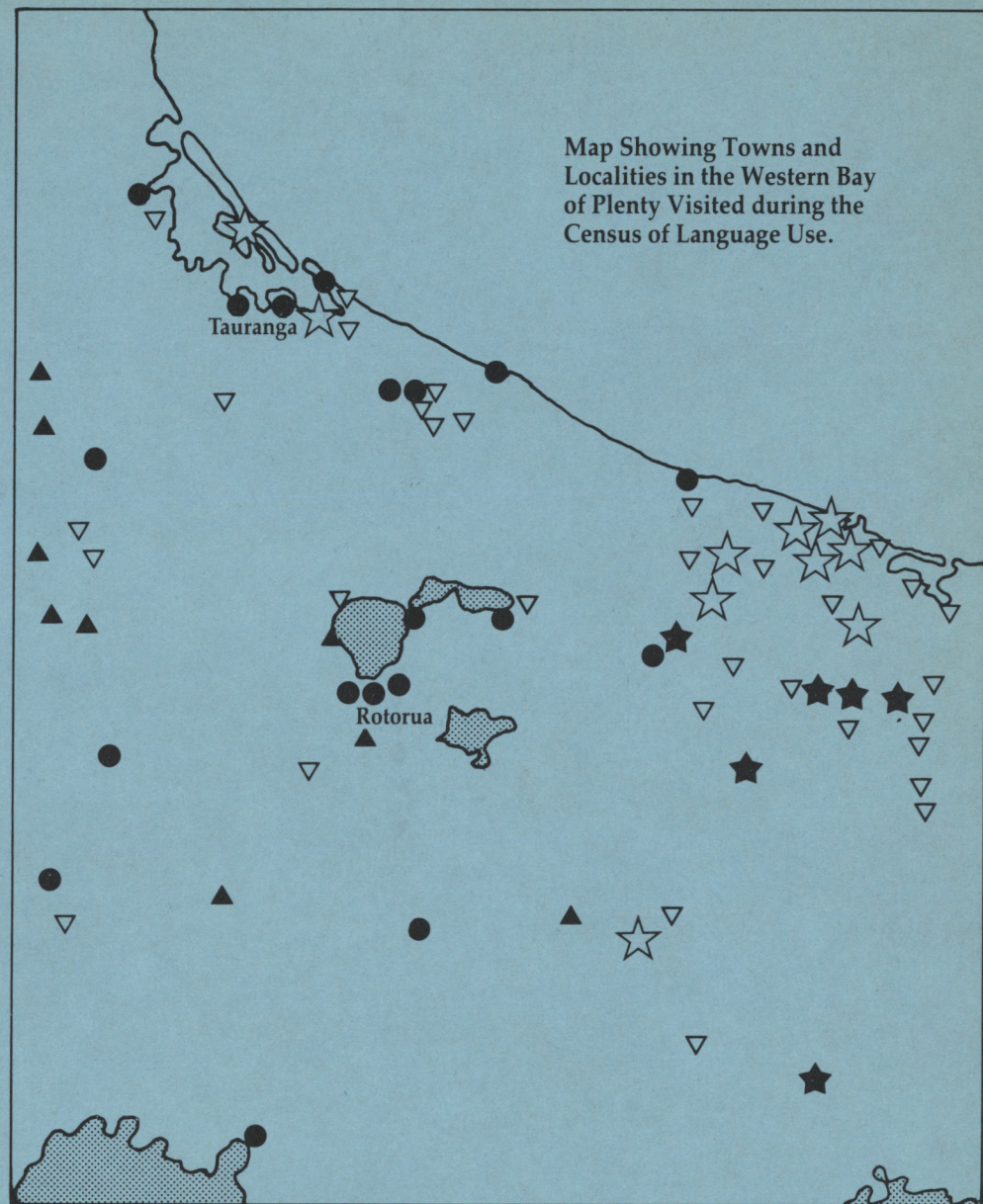
● Two thirds or
more of adults were
fluent speakers of
Maori

◆ 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 PAROA

Fieldwork for the census of language use in Maori communities took place in 15 households in Paroa in January 1974. The interviewers were Meremaihi Williams Koopu (Ngati Awa), Clare Slatter, Peter and Iriaka Wensor (Ngapuhi), Willie Martin (Ngati Manawa/Te Aupouri) and Lynda West. Six interviews were carried out partly or entirely in Maori; the rest were in English.

The households surveyed had a total population of 78, and 76 of these people were of Maori descent. This was about a quarter of the Maori population of Paroa at the time.

RESULTS OF THE LINGUISTIC SURVEY

Iwi Affiliation

The people interviewed mentioned 12 major iwi to which they or members of their households belonged. Ngati Awa with 30 members or 40 percent of the total was the largest iwi there. With 11 members or 15 percent of the total, Ngati Patuwai was the next largest.

Ability To Speak And Understand Maori

The table on the next page tells us that a third of the people surveyed spoke Maori well. Most of them were adults over the age of 25, while one-tenth of the people under 25, at that time, spoke the language well. More than a third, though less than half of the people, understood Maori well. These included most adults and a third of the people between the ages of 15-24. It was said that half the children under 15 did not speak or understand Maori at all at that time.

KNOWLEDGE OF SPOKEN MAORI IN PAROA (1974)

Age Group	Fluent Speakers		Understand Easily		Limited Understanding		No Knowledge	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
45 & over	12	86	14	100	0		0	
25-44	8	62	9	69	3	23	1	8
15-24	4	29	5	36	5	36	4	29
2-14	1	3	4	11	14	39	18	50
Overall	25	34	32	42	22	29	23	30

(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 13 households with dependent children visited, and in eight of them people spoke entirely or mostly in English. In two households people spoke mostly in Maori, or equally in Maori and English. In the rest while some Maori was used, usually by adults, English was still the main language spoken.

In the two childless households the people spoke mostly in Maori, but used English with non-Maori speaking visitors.

The Maori Language In The Community

Three-quarters of the adults over 25 spoke Maori well, and that was the language they used mostly when talking among themselves. However, when talking with younger people, they usually spoke English, as they regarded it as quicker and easier to speak than Maori.

The Maori language still remained important, however, in

ceremonies on the marae and in certain religious services. For many people, private and family prayer and grace were in Maori also.

If any two members of the community were to meet unexpectedly, the chances were 1 in 10 that they could understand each other in Maori. If both people were adults over the age of 25, the chances were about 3 in 5, but if they were school-age children, there would be no chance that they could speak in Maori with each other.

Attitudes Towards The Language

The people in the survey had different feelings about the Maori language. While most of them wanted it taught in schools, some were concerned about the form of Maori being taught - they did not want a person from another tribe teaching his dialect to their children. This was already causing trouble in some households in Paroa.

The kaumatua believed that to know the Maori language was an important part of being Maori - without the language one could not truly be a Maori. On the other hand, some people preferred to speak English. They thought that the Maori language belonged in the past, and that the Maori must change to fit into the modern world, and must learn new skills in order to survive.

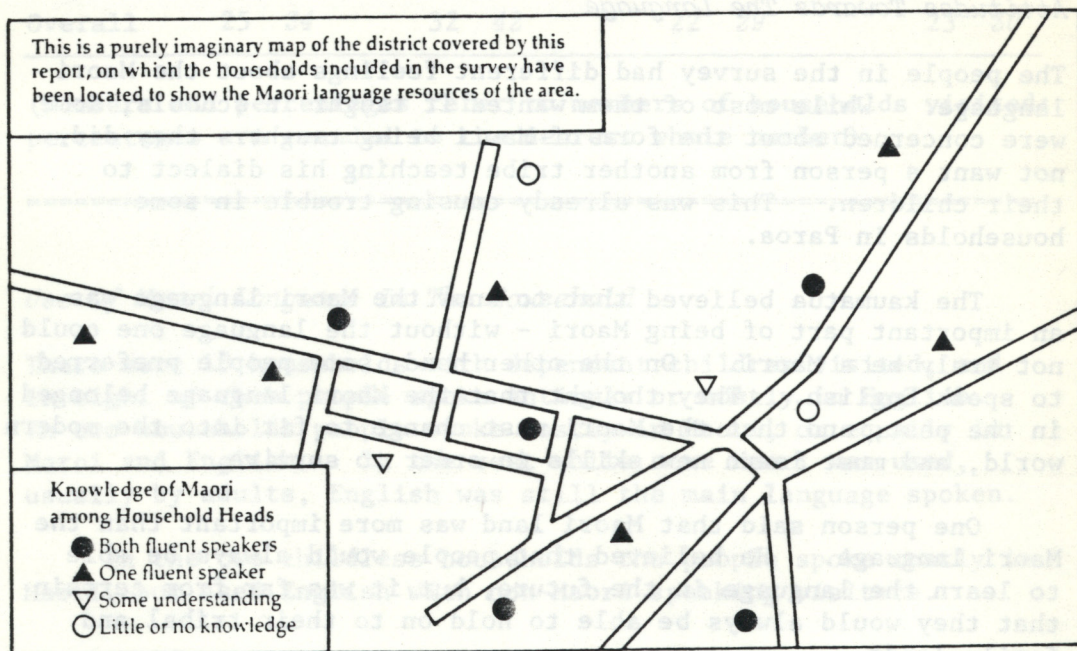
One person said that Maori land was more important than the Maori language. He believed that people would always be able to learn the language in the future, but it was far from certain that they would always be able to hold on to their tribal and family lands.

CONCLUSION

At the time of the survey, Maori was spoken in Paroa mainly by kaumatua and adults over the age of 25. About 10 percent of those under 25 could speak the language well while twice this number could understand Maori with ease.

While English was the main language spoken in most households with dependent children, Maori was widely spoken in the community by adults with neighbours, friends and workmates. Children seldom spoke Maori in the community, and nearly always replied in English when spoken to in Maori.

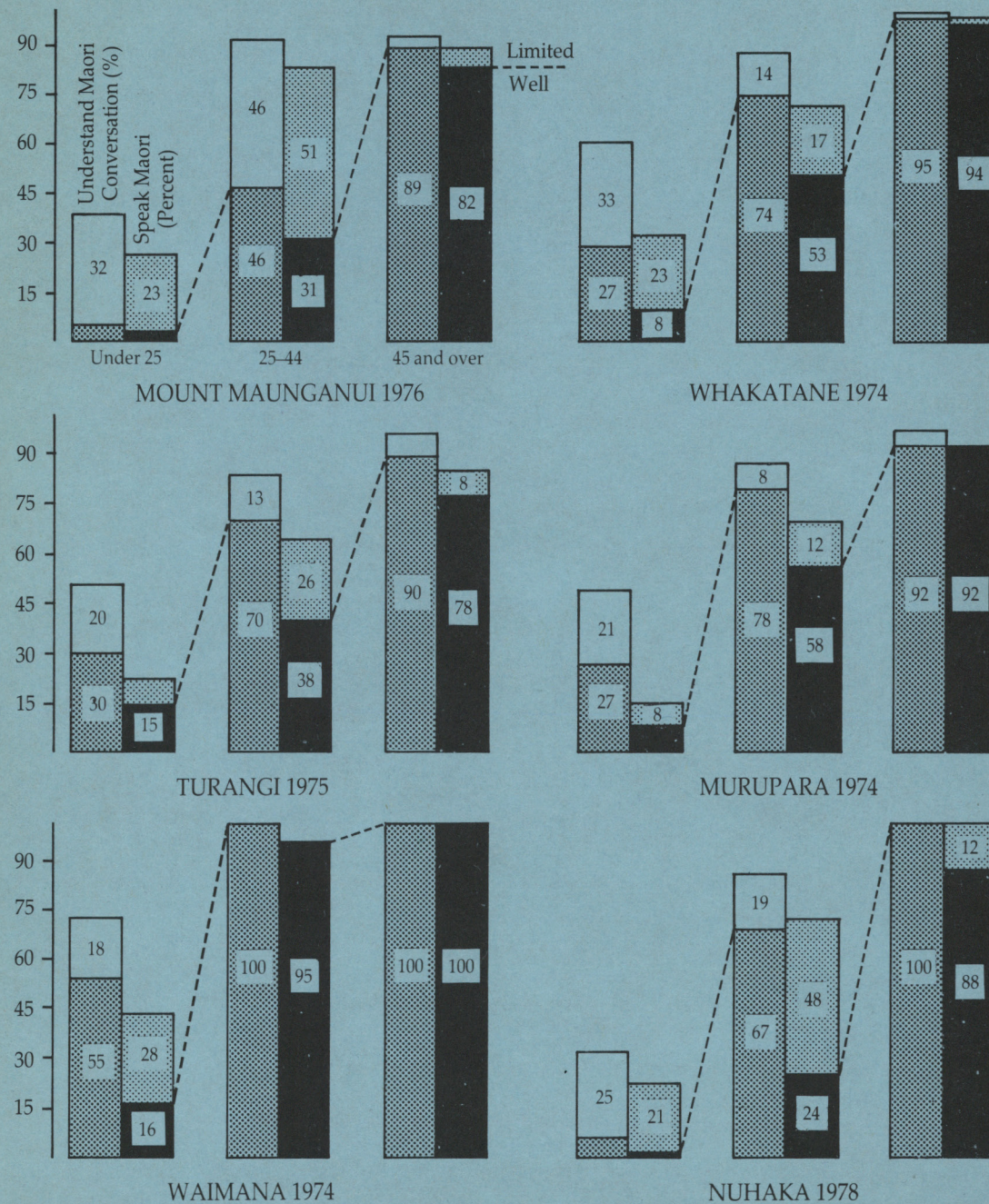
It was on the marae and in important ceremonies and religious services that Maori was still being used. In other places, people were using English more and more for everyday purposes.



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.