

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

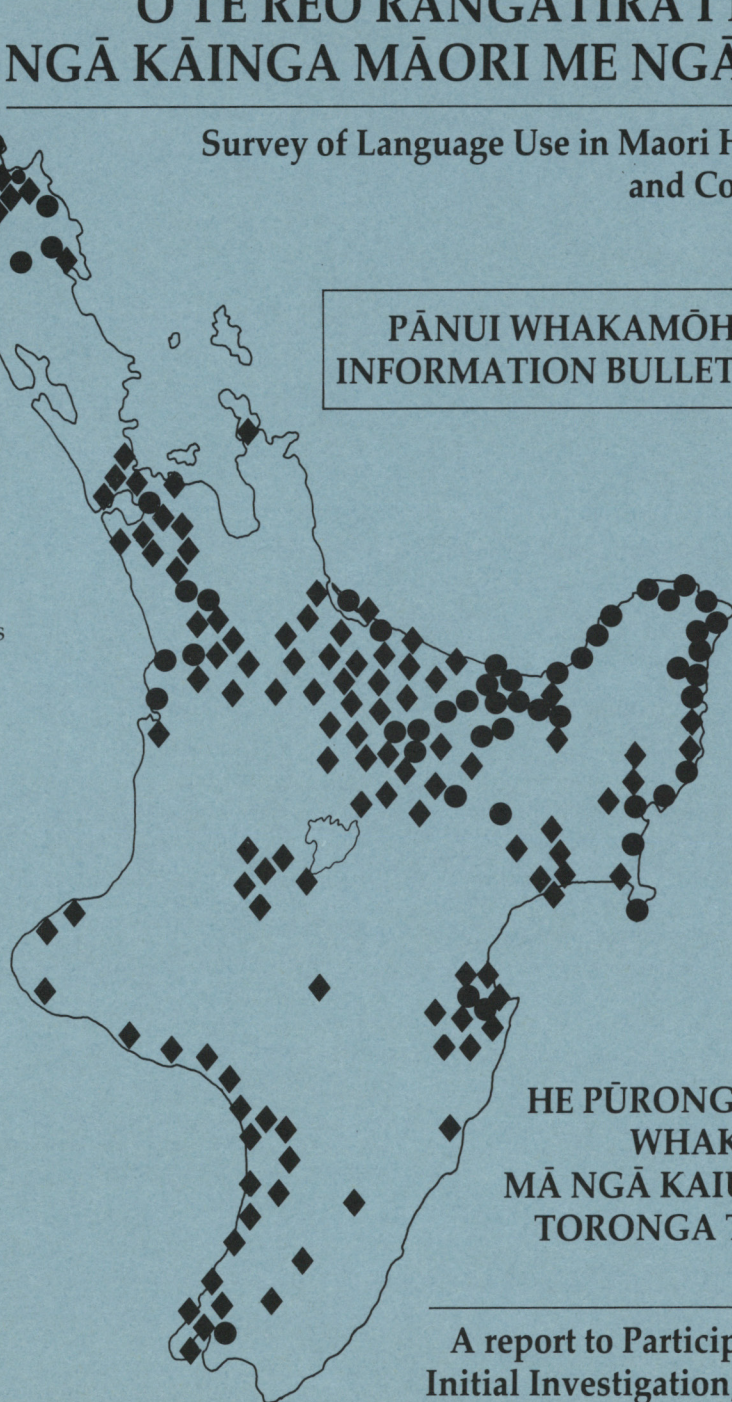
PĀNUI WHAKAMŌHIO
INFORMATION BULLETIN

43

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 PIRIPAI

Fieldwork for the census of language use in Maori communities took place in 16 households in Piripai in January 1974. The interviewers were Broncho Te Kiri (Tuhoe), Helen O'Donoghue, Clare Slatter, Meremaihi Williams Koopu (Ngati Awa), Willie Martin (Ngati Manawa/Te Aupouri) and Lynda West. Thirteen interviews were carried out entirely in English; the rest were partly in Maori and partly in English.

The households surveyed had a total population of 92, and 90 of these people were of Maori descent. This was more than two-thirds of the Maori population of Piripai at the time.

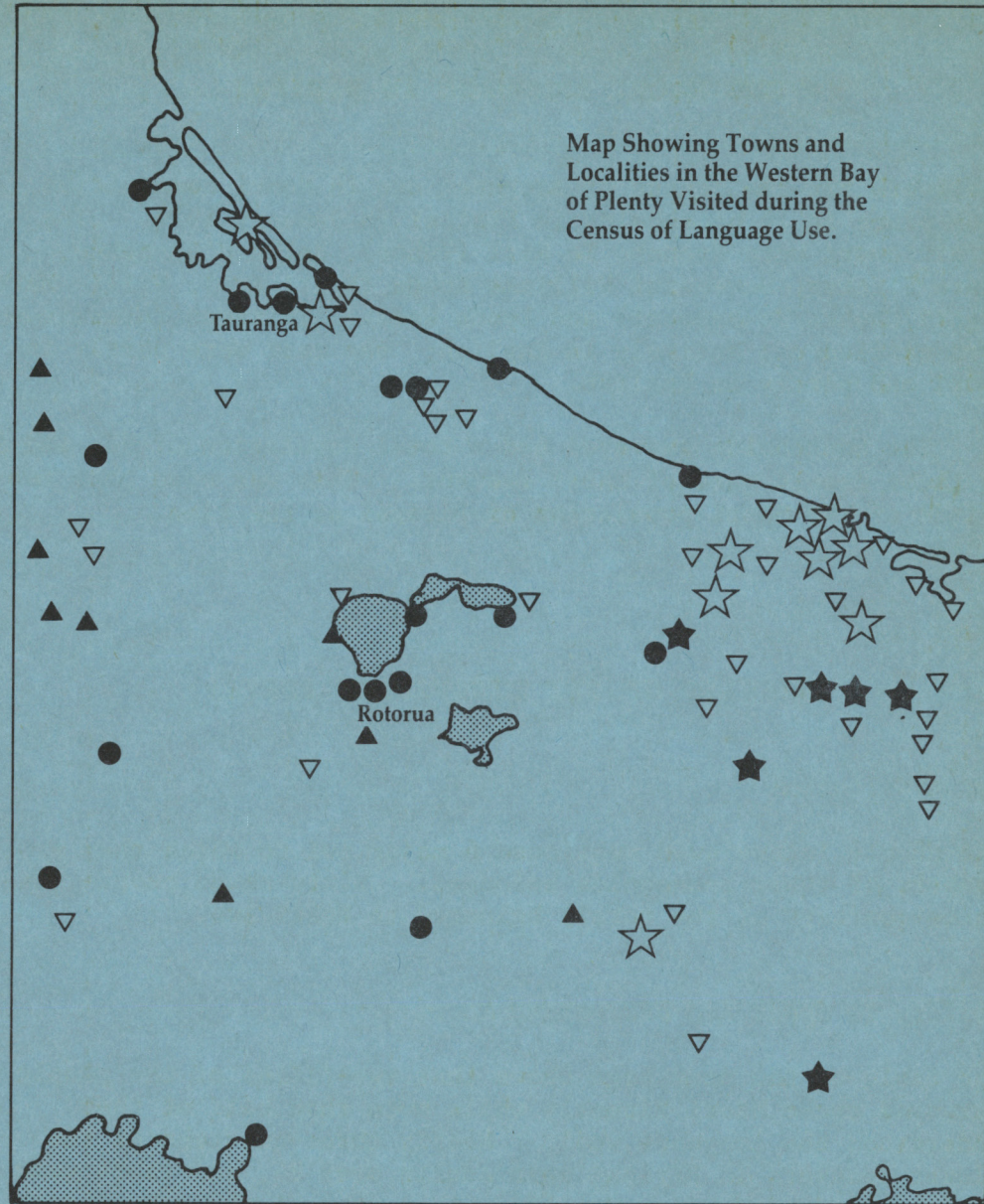
RESULTS OF THE LINGUISTIC SURVEY

Iwi Affiliation

The people interviewed mentioned 6 major iwi to which they or members of their households belonged. Sixty-seven people (nearly three-quarters of the total) belonged to Ngati Awa.

Ability To Speak And Understand Maori

The table on the next page shows that two-fifths of the people surveyed spoke Maori fluently while more than half of them understood the language well. Nearly three-quarters of the fluent speakers in Piripai were adults over 25, and there were few speakers of Maori under 15. A quarter of the school-age children, however, understood the language with ease, although it was said that half the people under 25 knew no Maori at the time.



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 IN PIRIPAI (1974)

Age Group	Fluent Speakers		Understand Easily		Limited Understanding		No Knowledge	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
45 & over	15	94	15	94	0		1	6
25-44	10	67	12	80	2	13	1	7
15-24	7	33	11	52	2	10	8	38
2-14	3	9	9	25	5	14	22	61
Overall	35	41	47	53	9	10	32	37

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

=====

The Use Of Maori Language In The Household

English was the main language spoken in most households visited. There were 11 homes with dependent children, and in eight of them people spoke mostly or only in English. In two homes, more English than Maori was spoken, while the people in the remaining household spoke mostly in Maori.

There were five childless households visited. In all of these, the people spoke mostly Maori with each other and with visitors.

The Maori Language In The Community

Maori was widely spoken in the community, especially by adults and kaumatua, with neighbours, friends and workmates of the same age. When with younger people, however, they usually spoke

English, as only about a third of the people under 25 could understand Maori well.

About half the people interviewed said that they would rather speak English in the community, as it was quicker and easier to say what they were thinking in that language.

Maori still remained important, however, in ceremonies on the marae and in certain religious services. Many people also used Maori in private and family prayer and grace.

If any two members of the community were to meet unexpectedly, the chances were 1 in 5 that they could understand each other in Maori, but if both people were adults over 25, the chances were about 7 in 10. If they were school-age children, they would probably not be able to speak in Maori with each other.

Attitudes Towards The Language

People were worried that more and more people in the area, especially among the young, could not speak Maori. One person blamed the parents that few of the children could speak the language. Others blamed living and working in town where they met lots of people who spoke only English. Some, who used to speak Maori well, now said they could express their thoughts better in English.

Half of the people had been strapped at school for speaking Maori. Many of them were unwilling to teach their own children the language in case they were also punished in some way.

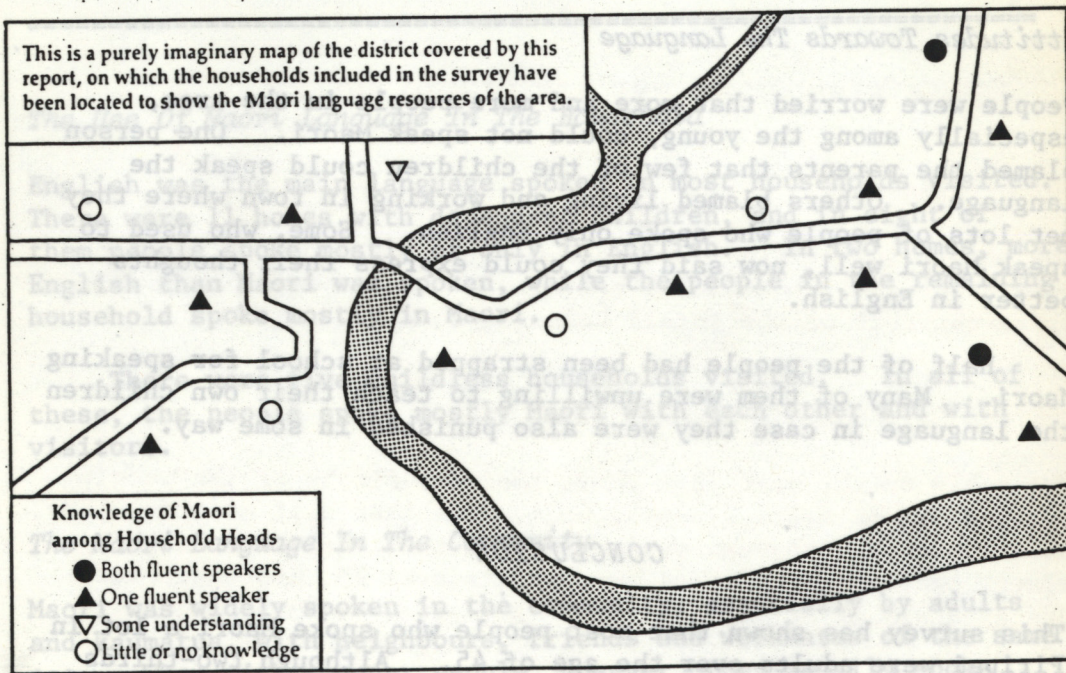
CONCLUSION

This survey has shown that most people who spoke Maori a lot in Piripai were adults over the age of 45. Although two-thirds

of the people between 25-44 could speak the language well, they did so only with people of their own age or kaumatua. They usually spoke English with children and young adults.

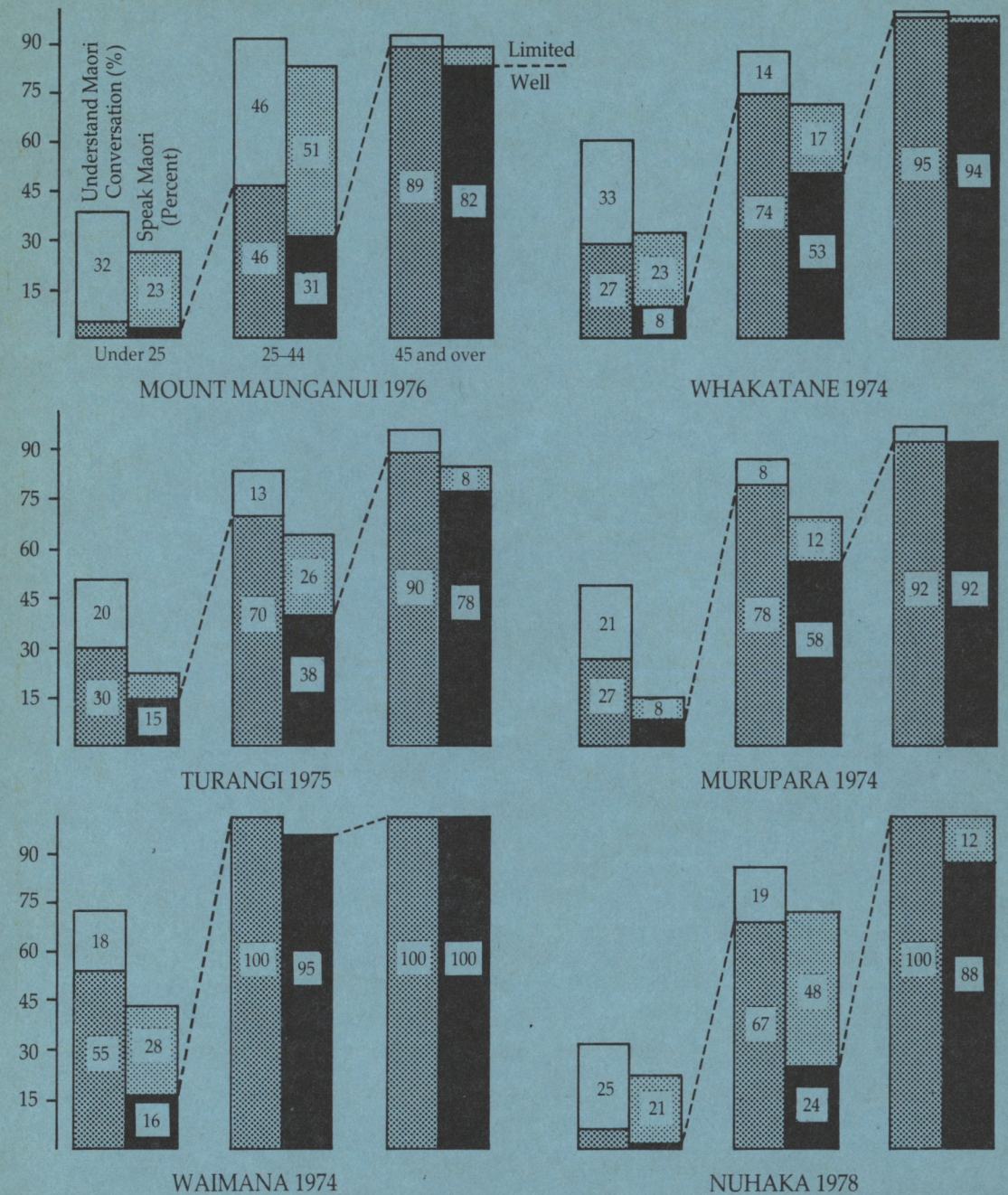
English was also the main language spoken in most households surveyed, although many grandparents tried to get their mokopuna to learn and speak Maori. Since almost two-thirds of the school-age children knew no Maori at the time, leaders in the community have in more recent years been organising classes to help them learn the language.

For most people, Maori had a place in ceremonies on the marae, but, as more and more of them are taking part in a whole lot of language and cultural classes in the home and on local marae, Maori may once again become a language for everyday use.



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.