

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

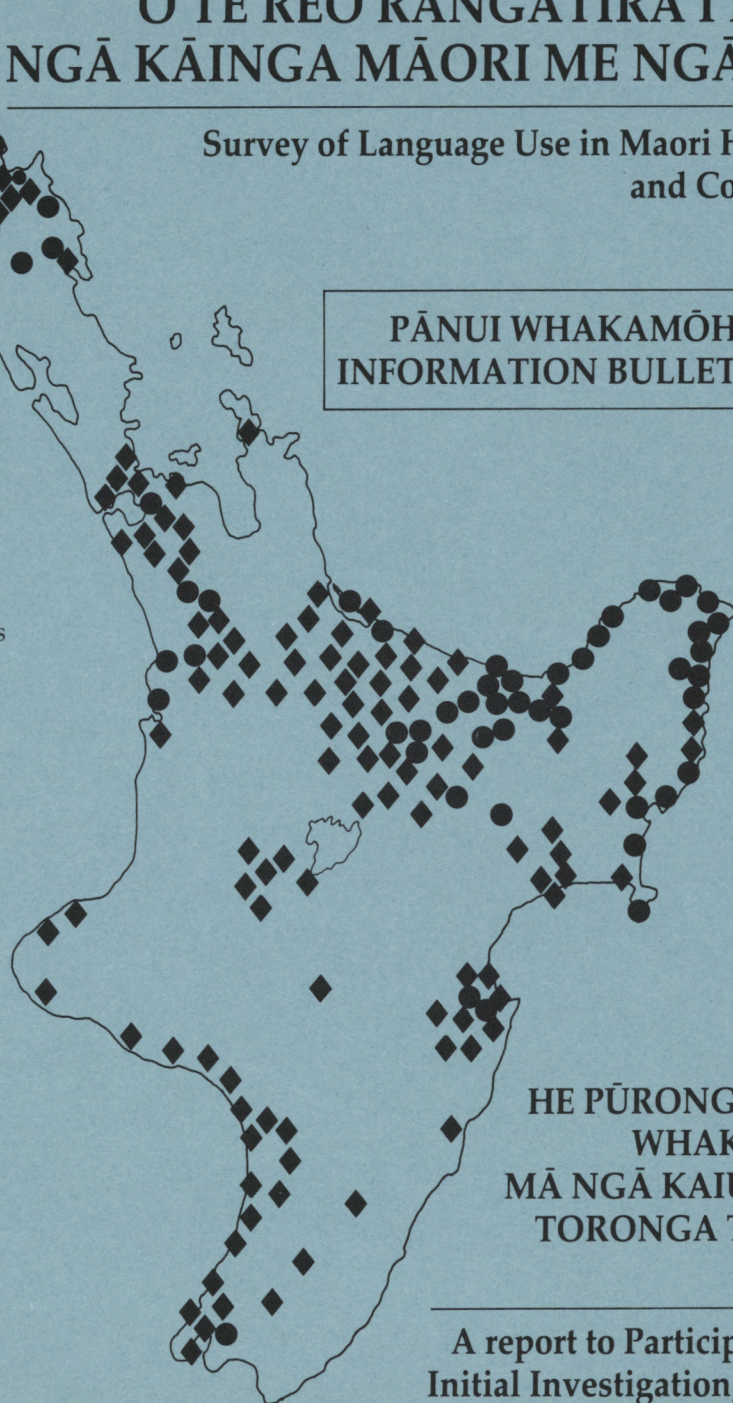
PĀNUI WHAKAMŌHIO
INFORMATION BULLETIN

44

Localities in which
ten or more households
were visited

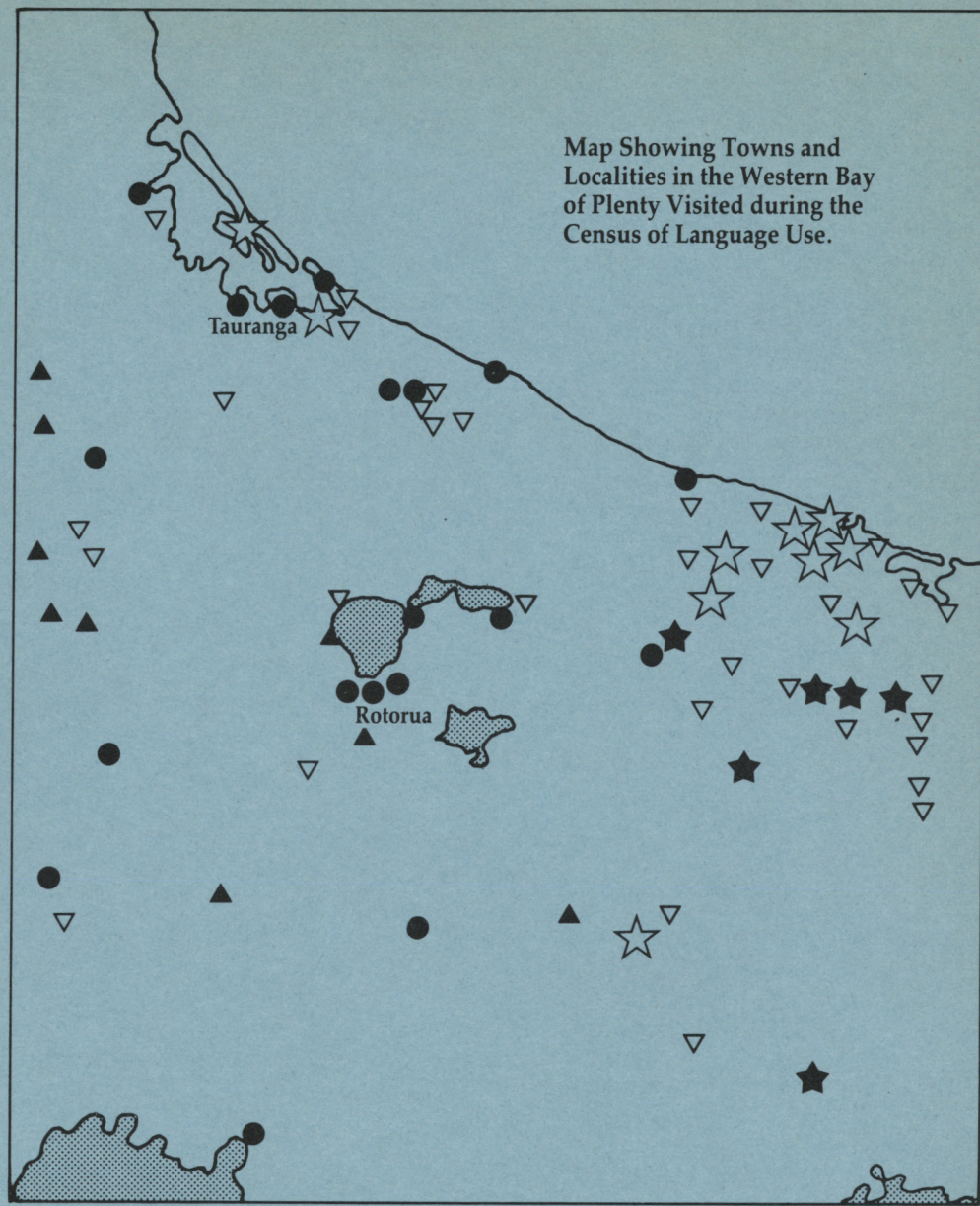
● Two thirds or
more of adults were
fluent speakers of
Maori

◆ 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



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

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 KAWERAU

Fieldwork for the census of language use in Maori communities took place in 42 households in Kawerau in January 1974. The interviewers were Joe Rua (Te Whanau-a-Apanui), Carol Hindmarsh Ngawati (Ngati Porou), Meremaihi Williams Koopu (Ngati Awa), Peter Wensor (Ngapuhi), Helen Gillespie, Merepeka Wharepapa (Te Whanau-a-Apanui), Lynda West, Charee Ogle (Ngapuhi), Joan Walker (Ngapuhi), Shena Purdie, Clare Slatter, Maku Potae (Ngati Porou), Iriaka Wensor (Ngapuhi), Yvonne Siggleko (Ngai Terangi) and Jenny Watson. Thirty-seven interviews were carried out in English; the rest were partly or entirely in Maori.

The households surveyed had a total population of 224, and 220 of these people were of Maori descent. This was about a tenth of the Maori population of Kawerau at the time.

RESULTS OF THE LINGUISTIC SURVEY

Iwi Affiliation

The people interviewed mentioned 17 major iwi to which they or members of their households belonged. The largest iwi was Tuhoë with 61 members or 27 percent, which was more than a quarter of the total. Ngati Awa was the next largest iwi with 22 members or ten percent of the total, a few more than Ngati Porou.

More than two-thirds of the male and female household heads were not born locally, but had moved to Kawerau to work at the Paper Mill.

Ability To Speak And Understand Maori

The information in the table on the next page shows that about a third of the people surveyed spoke Maori well and nearly half

KNOWLEDGE OF SPOKEN MAORI IN KAWERAU (1974)

Age Group	Fluent Speakers		Understand Easily		Limited Understanding		No Knowledge	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
45 & over	12	80	14	93	0		1	7
25-44	35	56	46	73	11	18	6	10
15-24	12	34	21	60	7	20	7	20
2-14	1	1	31	13	36	36	52	52
Overall	60	29	94	44	54	25	66	31

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

of them understood the language well. More than three-quarters of these fluent speakers were adults over 25, and only ten percent of the people under 25 spoke Maori well. A quarter of this age group, however, understood the language with ease, although half of the school-age children knew no Maori at the time.

The Use Of Maori Language In The Household

English was the main language for everyday use in most households visited. There were 37 homes with dependent children, and in 31 of them people spoke only or mostly English. In one household, both Maori and English were used equally often, and in one other the people spoke mostly in Maori. In the rest more English than Maori was used.

There were five childless households visited, and in two of them people spoke mostly Maori amongst themselves and with visitors. In two other homes, people spoke mostly English, but in the remaining household both Maori and English were used about the same amount each.

The Maori Language In The Community

Although English was the main language spoken in most of the households we visited, Maori was still widely used in the community. Nearly two-thirds of the people over 25 spoke the language well and more than three-quarters of them understood it well. They were, therefore, the people most likely to use Maori with neighbours, friends and workmates.

However, the language spoken by these speakers of fluent Maori depended upon the race, age and knowledge of Maori of the person they were talking to. Pakeha members of the community were normally spoken to in English, and most talk with Maori school-age children was also in that language.

The Maori language played an important part in ceremonies on the marae and in certain religious services. Many people used Maori also for private and family prayer and grace.

If any two members of the Maori community in Kawerau met unexpectedly the chances were 1 in 9 that they could understand each other in Maori. If both people were adults over the age of 25 the chances were as high as 1 in 2, but children under 15 would probably not be able to speak in Maori with each other.

Attitudes Towards The Language

The future of the Maori language in Kawerau (and in New Zealand) worried many of the people interviewed. Most people felt that knowing the language was an important part of being Maori. Those who could speak both Maori and English said this was a real help to them in their lives, while others were sorry that they didn't have the chance to learn Maori earlier. (Some of these people were attending language and culture classes at night school, in local homes or on the marae.)

Many people were for the teaching of Maori in the school, especially at the primary level, although some said that the particular form of Maori (or dialect) taught should be the local one and not that of another tribal area.

Two people were against their children learning Maori as

they believed the world was soon going to 'blow up', and there would no longer be any use for the language. Another parent didn't get on to her children to learn Maori. She said that knowing English was more important today; Maori 'could be picked up later in life'.

However, only a few people felt like this. Most people said they would rather speak or listen to Maori. Some said that English was too stiff and abrupt, while Maori was more personal and an easier language to be humorous in.

As many of the people surveyed worked at the Kawerau Mill, the Maori language often helped to unite them, while keeping outsiders out. If they were angry with supervisors, they could get it off their chest often by talking in Maori.

While people had many different opinions about the Maori language, there was no getting away from the fact that English was the main language spoken and heard in the home and in the community.

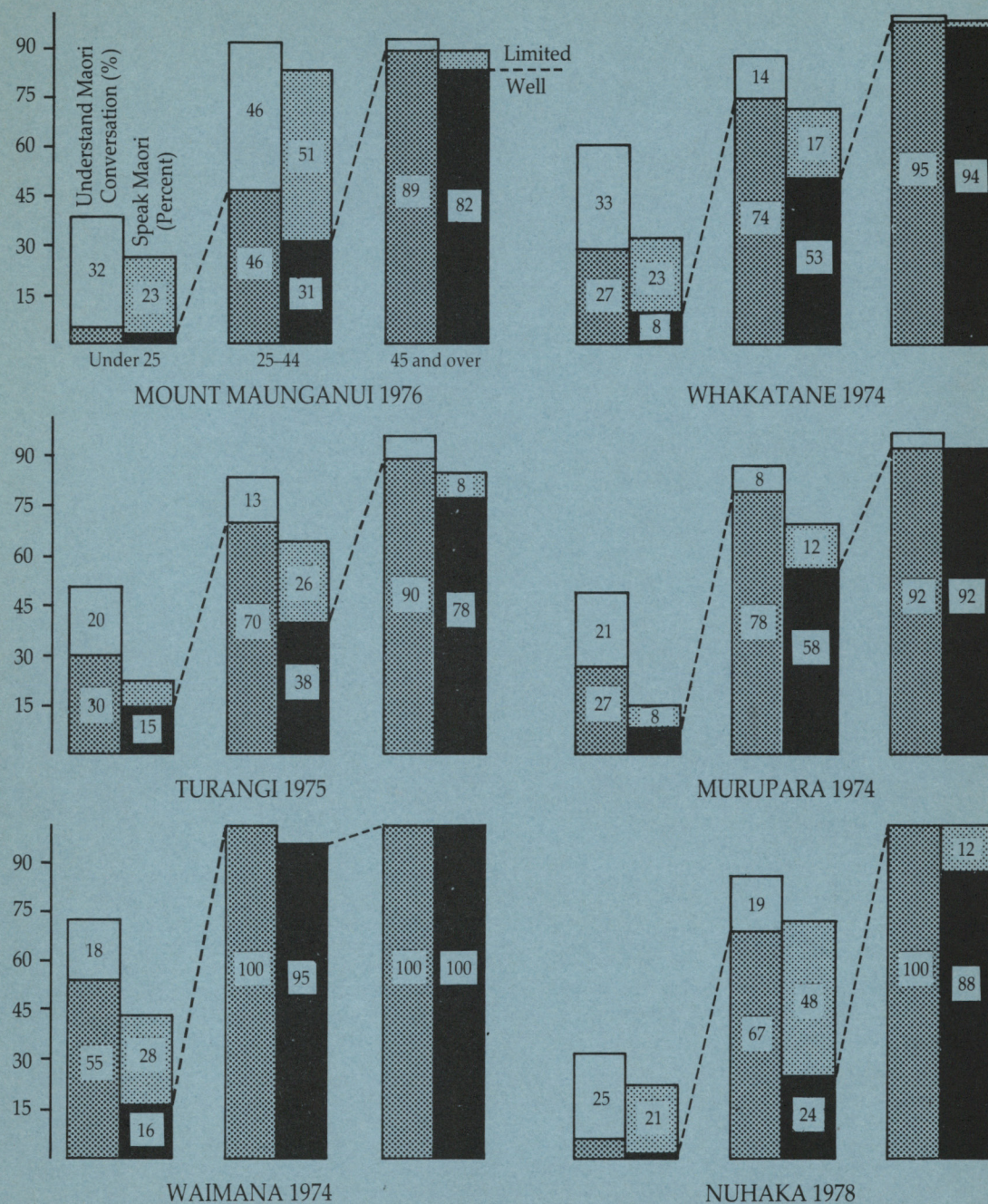
CONCLUSION

At the time of the survey, most Maori people in Kawerau over 25 spoke and understood Maori well, while there was a definite drop in the number of people under 25 who did not know the language. English was being spoken more and more in households with children, and the people most likely to use Maori often in the community were adults over 45. The language still remained important, however, on the marae and in certain religious services.

Many parents were worried about the future of the language in Kawerau, and a lot of them were right behind the teaching of Maori in schools. Although English was the first language learned by most children, Maori had an important place in making people know more about their culture and the place they have in it. Many parents and adults have also taken part in language and cultural courses for them on the marae and in the home.

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.