

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

45

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 POROPORO

Fieldwork for the census of language use in Maori communities took place in 30 households in Poroporo in January 1974. The interviewers were Yvonne Siggleko (Ngai Te Rangī), Maku Potae (Ngati Porou), Joe Rua (Te Whanau-a-Apanui), Merepeka Wharepapa (Te Whanau-a-Apanui), Willy Martin (Ngati Manawa), Lynda West, Broncho Te Kiri (Tuhoe), Helen O'Donoghue, Meremaihi Williams Koopu (Ngati Awa) and Clare Slatter. Two interviews were carried out partly or entirely in Maori; the rest were in English.

The households surveyed had a total population of 173 of whom 170 were of Maori descent. This was about two-thirds of the Maori population of Poroporo at the time.

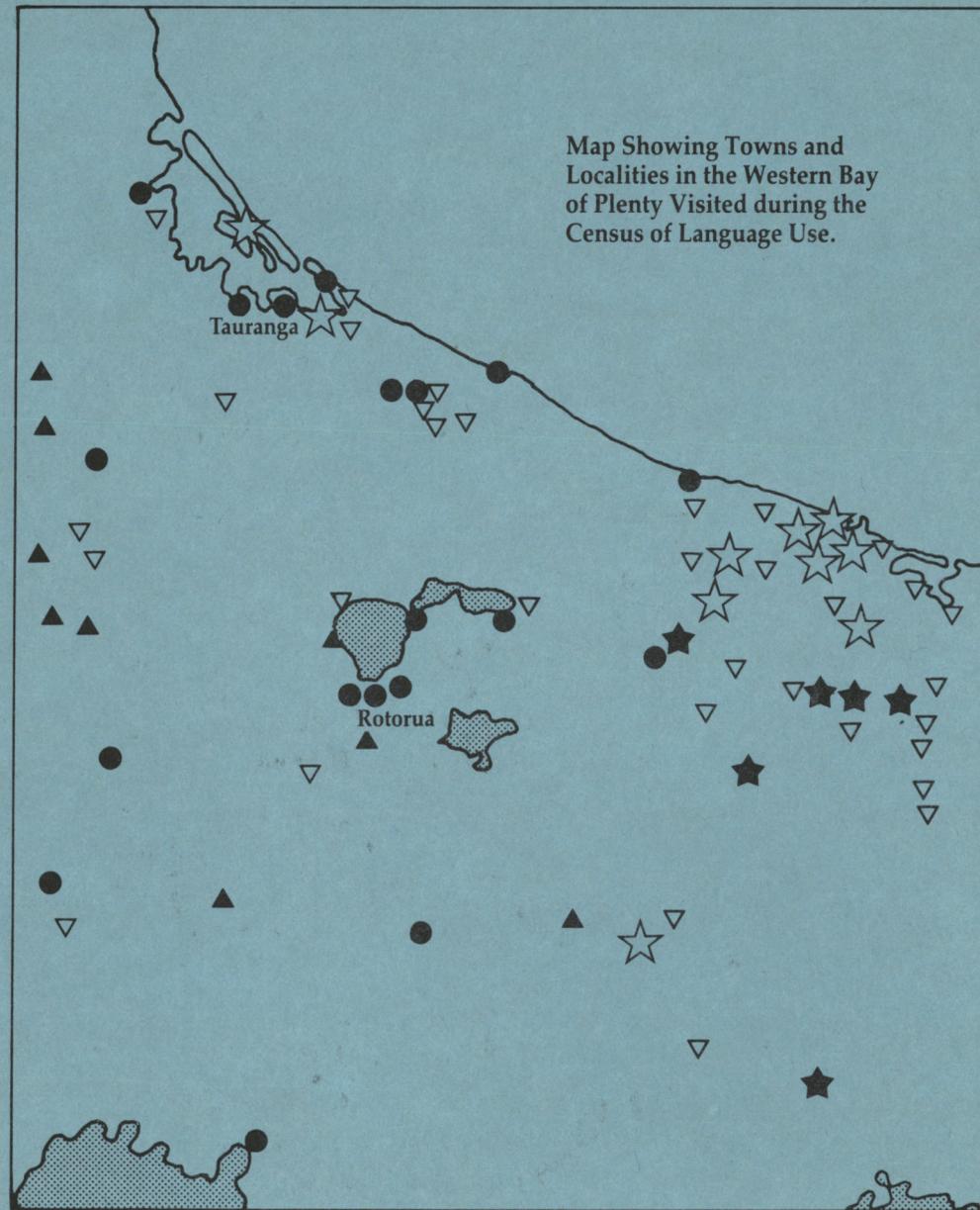
RESULTS OF THE LINGUISTIC SURVEY

Iwi Affiliation

The people interviewed mentioned 12 major iwi to which they or members of their households belonged. Ngati Awa with 64 members or 37 percent of the total was the largest iwi in the group. The next largest was Ngati Pukeko with 54 members or 31 percent of the total.

Ability To Speak And Understand Maori

The table on the next page shows that a third of the people surveyed spoke Maori fluently, while more than half of them understood the language well. Most of these fluent speakers were adults over 25. Kaumatua over the age of 45 (a fifth of the total group) made up over half the community's speakers of Maori.



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

Although there were only a few fluent speakers under 25, a third of these younger people understood the language well. Two-thirds of the children under 15 did not understand Maori at all.

KNOWLEDGE OF SPOKEN MAORI IN POROPORO (1974)

| Age Group | Fluent Speakers | | Understand Easily | | Limited Understanding | | No Knowledge | |
|-----------|-----------------|----|-------------------|----|-----------------------|----|--------------|----|
| | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % |
| 45 & over | 29 | 85 | 33 | 97 | 0 | | 1 | 3 |
| 25-44 | 17 | 61 | 22 | 79 | 3 | 11 | 3 | 11 |
| 15-24 | 2 | 7 | 14 | 52 | 3 | 11 | 10 | 37 |
| 2-14 | 5 | 7 | 21 | 27 | 4 | 5 | 54 | 68 |
| Overall | 53 | 33 | 90 | 54 | 10 | 6 | 68 | 41 |

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

The Use Of Maori Language In The Household

English was the main language for everyday use in most households visited. There were 20 homes with dependent children, and in 16 of them people spoke entirely or mostly in English. In two other homes more English than Maori was used, and in 1 home the people spoke both languages equally often. In the remaining household, the language for everyday use was Maori.

There were 10 childless households visited, and, in five of them, Maori was the main language that the people spoke with each

other or with visitors who spoke Maori. In four homes the people spoke entirely or mostly in English. More English than Maori was also used in the one remaining household.

The Maori Language In The Community

Most of the people we interviewed spoke Maori regularly with Maori-speaking friends and neighbours in the community. However, since most of the people they talked with in Poroporo, particularly those under 25, spoke only English, these fluent Maori-speakers were forced to use English more often than they wanted to.

The Maori language was regarded as the proper language for ceremonies on the marae and was an important part in certain religious services.

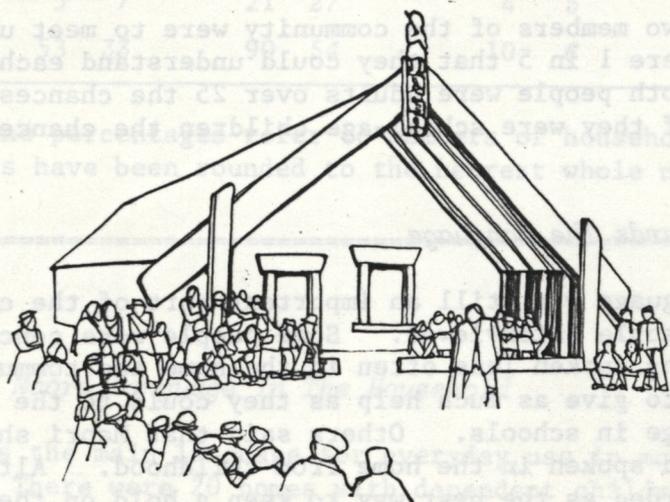
If any two members of the community were to meet unexpectedly, the chances were 1 in 5 that they could understand each other in Maori. If both people were adults over 25 the chances were about 2 in 3, but if they were school-age children the chances were nil.

Attitudes Towards The Language

The Maori language was still an important part of the culture of many of the people interviewed. Some people were concerned that Maori was being spoken less often in the home and community, and so were keen to give as much help as they could to the teaching of the language in schools. Others said that Maori should first be learned and spoken in the home from childhood. Although this was regarded as the best way to keep a hold on the language, many parents found that their children were more interested in watching television or listening to the radio than in talking Maori with them. As most school-age children spoke only English, local elders had to organize Maori language classes on marae to keep the language from dying out altogether in the area. Several people felt that this was how their kaumatua should lead in the fight to hold on to the language.

CONCLUSION

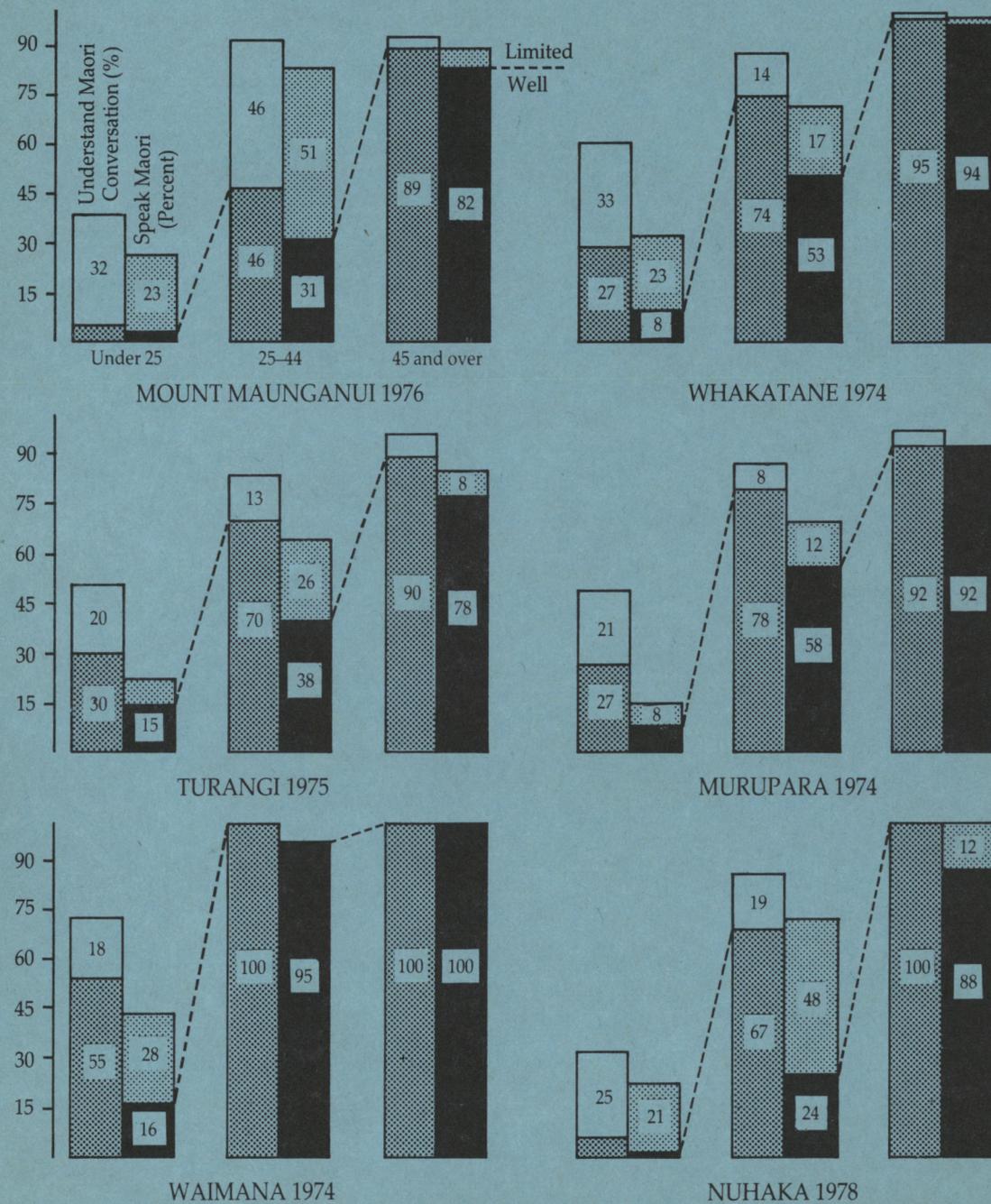
At the time of the survey, three-quarters of the adults over 25 in Poroporo could speak Maori fluently. There were few speakers of Maori under 25, but a third of that age group understood Maori well. Two-thirds of the school-age children knew no Maori at all, and this was a big worry to many parents we interviewed. It was difficult to teach Maori to children in the home when most of the things that gave them pleasure - television, radio, comics - were in English. English was also the main language spoken in most households with children, although a lot of people in the community, especially adults, spoke Maori. However, more and more Maori language and cultural courses are starting up in schools, in the community and on local marae, and they are giving people a lot of hope that the language will not be lost.



This report was written 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.