

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

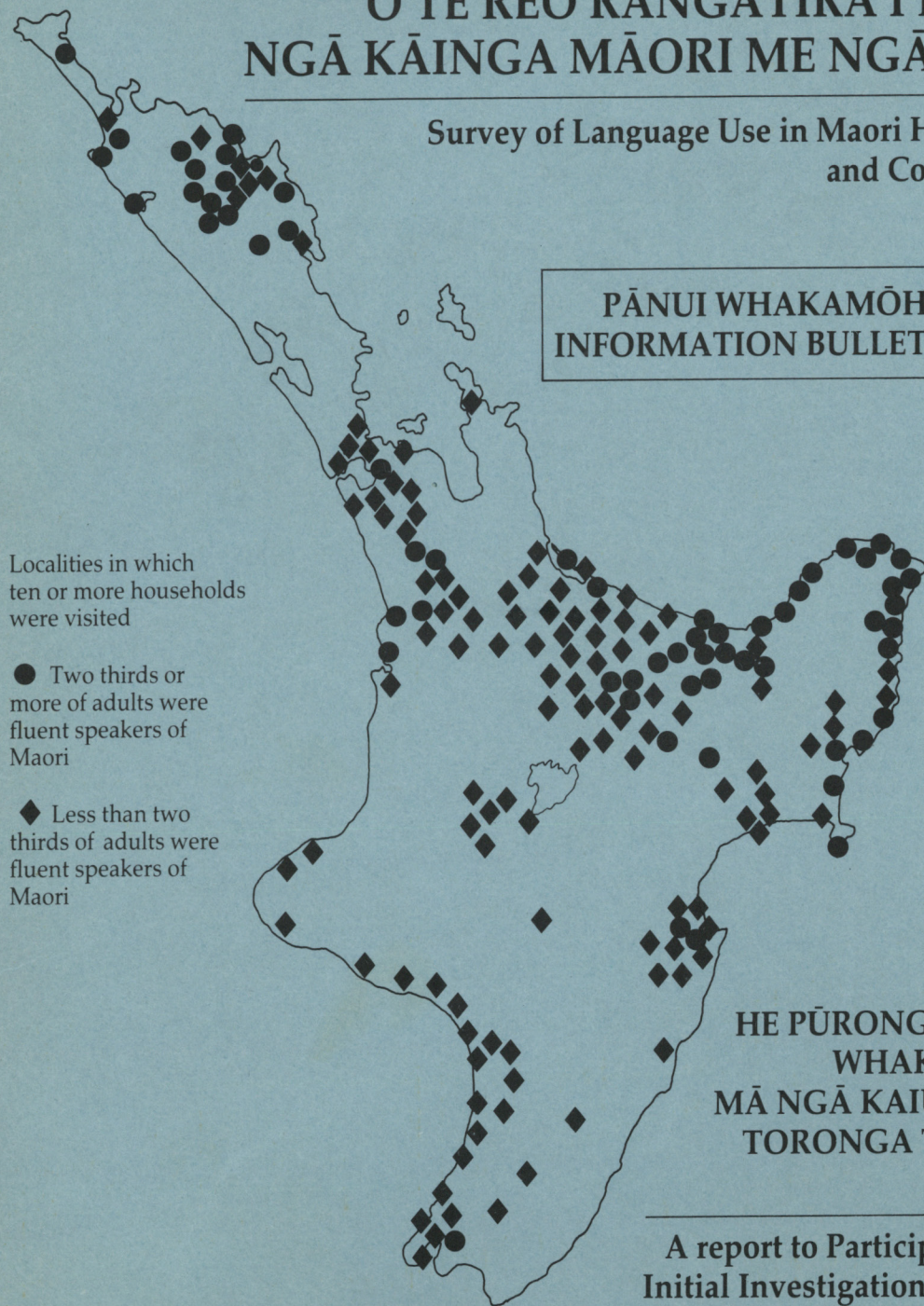
PĀNUI WHAKAMŌHIO
INFORMATION BULLETIN

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Localities in which
ten or more households
were visited

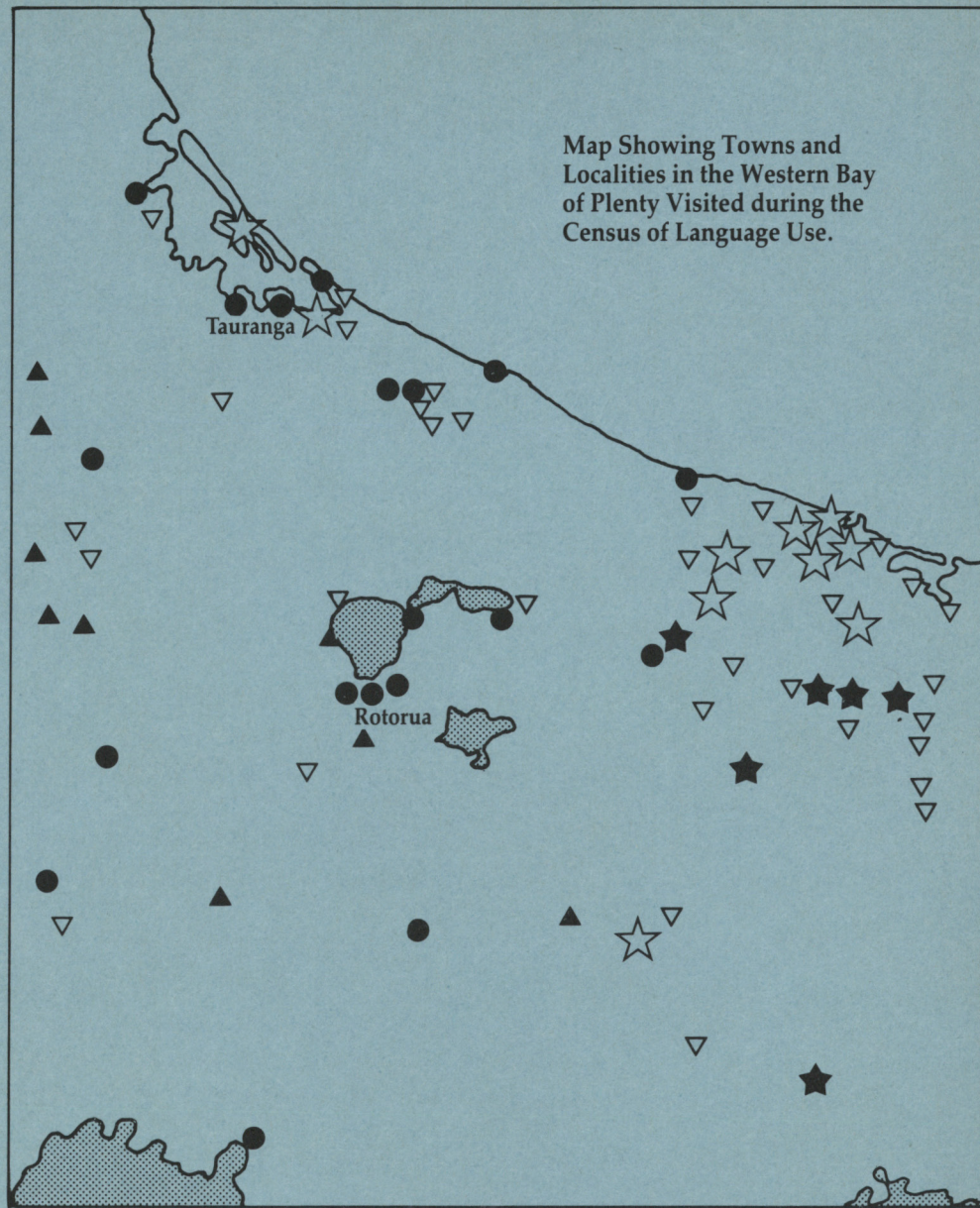
● Two thirds or
more of adults were
fluent speakers of
Maori

◆ Less than two
thirds of adults were
fluent speakers of
Maori

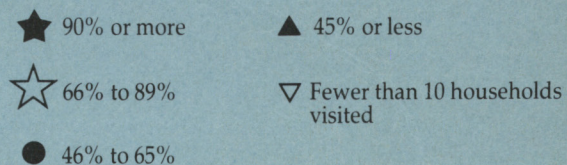


HE PŪRONGORONGO
WHAKAMŌHIO
MĀ NGĀ KAIURU KI TE
TORONGA TUATAHI,
1973-1978

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.



THE MAORI LANGUAGE ON MATAKANA ISLAND

Fieldwork for the census of language use in Maori communities took place in 19 households on Matakana Island in August 1976. The interviewers were Tawini Rangihau (Tuhoe), Joe Harawira (Ngati Awa/Ngai Te Rangi), Tony Magner (Maniapoto), Kahu Waititi (Te Whanau-a-Apanui/Ngapuhi), Phillip Hawera (Tuhoe/Ngai Te Rangi) and Judith Brown Hawera (Waikato). Sixteen interviews were carried out in English; the remainder were partly or entirely in Maori.

The households surveyed had a total population of 105, and 98 of these people were of Maori descent. This was about half the total Maori population of Matakana Island at the time.

RESULTS OF THE LINGUISTIC SURVEY

Iwi Affiliation

The people interviewed mentioned four major iwi to which they or members of their households belonged. The largest iwi was Ngai Te Rangi with 88 members or more than four-fifths of the total.

Ability To Speak And Understand Maori

The table on the next page shows that nearly one-third of the people surveyed spoke Maori fluently, while about two-fifths of them understood it well. Most of these fluent speakers were adults over 25. Over half the people under 25 knew hardly any Maori at the time. This worried many of the people we spoke with, and some of the reasons for the sudden loss of interest in the language are examined in the following pages.

KNOWLEDGE OF SPOKEN MAORI ON MATAKANA ISLAND (1976)

| Age Group | Fluent Speakers | | Understand Easily | | Limited Understanding | | No Knowledge | |
|-----------|-----------------|-----|-------------------|-----|-----------------------|----|--------------|----|
| | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % |
| 45 & over | 17 | 100 | 17 | 100 | 0 | | 0 | |
| 25-44 | 11 | 50 | 16 | 73 | 4 | 18 | 2 | 9 |
| 15-24 | 2 | 20 | 4 | 40 | 3 | 30 | 3 | 30 |
| 2-14 | 0 | | 5 | 10 | 14 | 28 | 31 | 62 |
| Overall | 30 | 30 | 42 | 42 | 21 | 21 | 36 | 36 |

(Numbers and percentages refer to those people included in the survey; percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole number).

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The Use of Maori Language In The Household

English was the main language for everyday use in most households visited. There were 16 homes with dependent children, and in 15 of them people spoke mostly or entirely in English. In the remaining home more English than Maori was used.

In two of the three childless households visited, English was the main language spoken. In the other home both Maori and English were used equally.

The Maori Language In The Community

English was also the main language spoken by most people in the community. Although nearly three-quarters of the adults over

25 spoke Maori well, most of the people they spoke with understood only English. It is not surprising that English was used more often than Maori. The people most likely to use Maori with neighbours and friends who spoke the language were the kaumatua age group.

The Maori language was still an important part of ceremonies on the marae and in certain religious services. Many people also used Maori in prayer and grace at home.

One person said that Maori was important to him for two main reasons - it meant he could talk with kaumatua in their mother tongue, and it was the best language for praying in. But as a language for everyday use, English was thought easier and quicker to express thoughts and ideas in.

If any two members of the community were to meet unexpectedly, the chances were about one in nine that they could understand each other in Maori. If both people were adults over the age of 25, the chances were as high as three in five, but it was unlikely that school-age children could speak in Maori with each other.

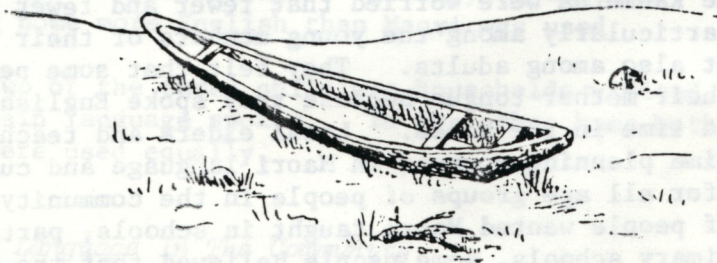
Attitudes Towards The Language

Most of the people interviewed were very interested in the survey and how the results could help to keep Maori alive on Matakana Island. Some kaumatua were worried that fewer and fewer people knew Maori, particularly among the young members of their community, but also among adults. They felt that some people were losing their mother tongue because they spoke English nearly all the time in the homes. Local elders and teachers were at the time planning courses in Maori language and culture on the marae for all age groups of people in the community. While a lot of people wanted Maori taught in schools, particularly in primary schools, some people believed that the best place to learn the language was in the home or in a Maori community. In certain households with small children, parents wanted everyone to speak Maori, starting with simple phrases and

commands, especially at meal times. At the time we visited Matakana, these people and some of the kaumatua were working with the Principal of the local school to find a way of teaching Maori where the home and the school could help each other.

CONCLUSION

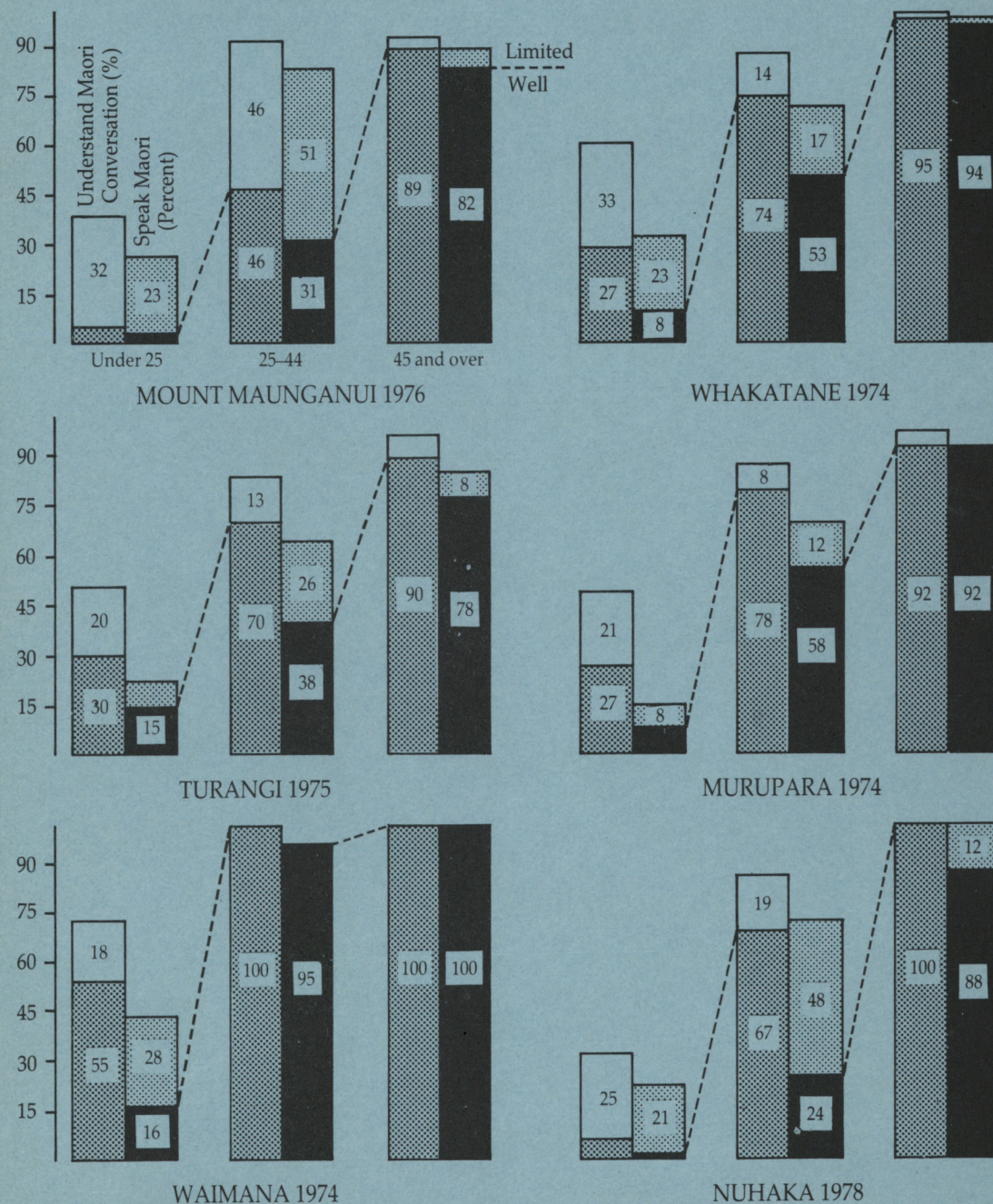
At the time of the linguistic survey nearly three-quarters of the adults over 25 living on Matakana Island spoke and understood Maori well, while more than half the people under 25 did not know the language at all. English was the main language spoken in the home. As English was also the main language of radio, TV and newspapers, some people thought that Maori could easily die out. However, now that concerned groups on the island have decided to do something about this situation themselves, it is almost certain that people will have greater opportunities to learn Maori in the community, school and home, and get to know the language better. The people we spoke to were keen and willing not only to do what they could to stop the decline of the language, but also to bring back Maori as a language for everyday use in the area. However, if these efforts are to succeed they must be backed by the local school and by more support from people in the Bay of Plenty region generally.



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.