

# 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

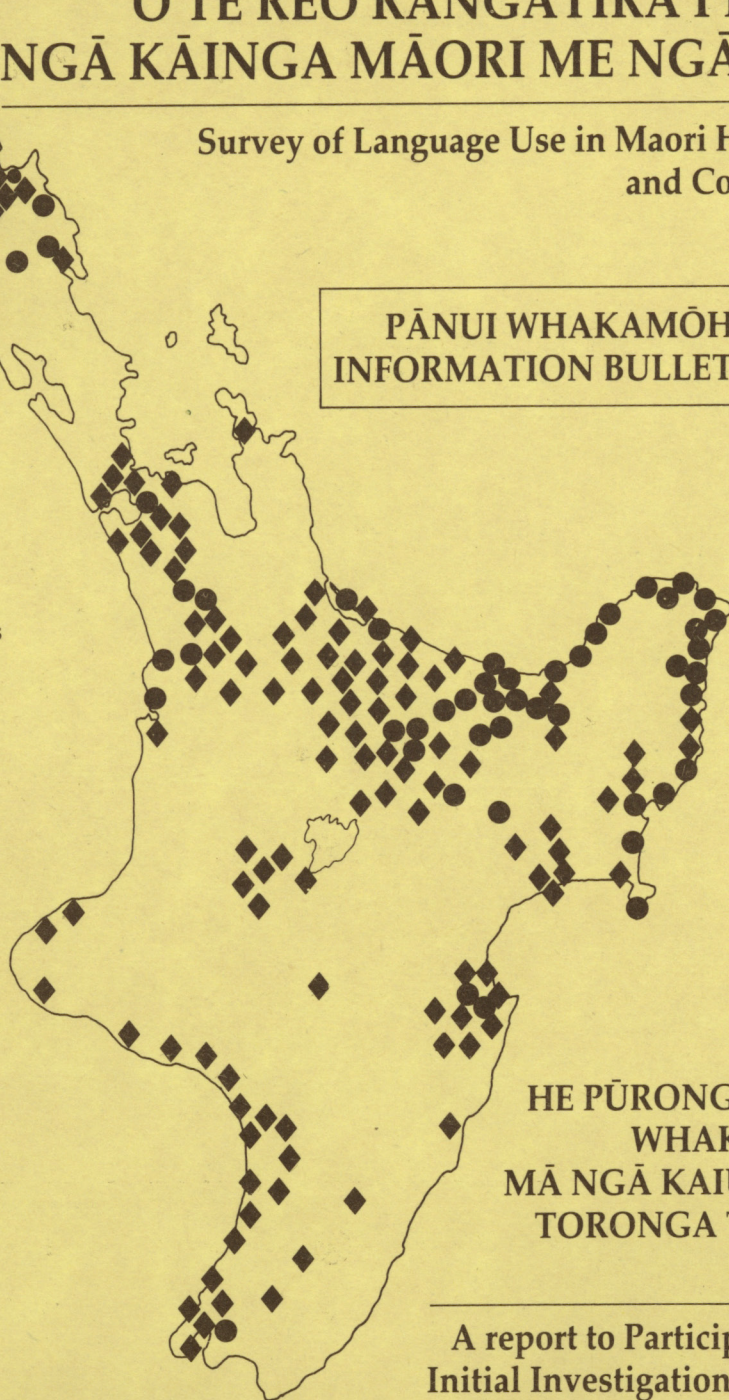
PĀNUI WHAKAMŌHIO  
INFORMATION BULLETIN

76

Localities in which  
ten or more households  
were visited

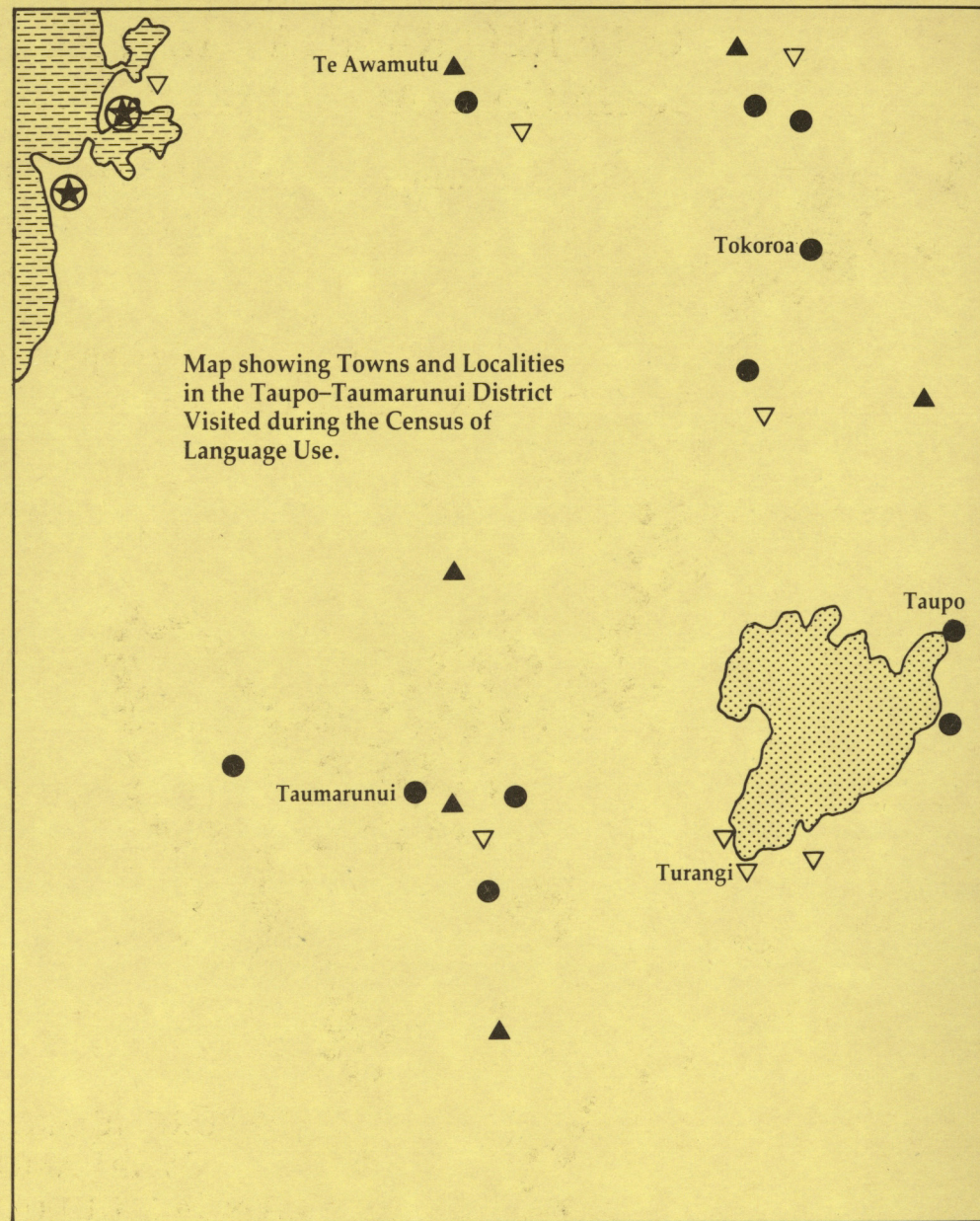
● Two thirds or  
more of adults were  
fluent speakers of  
Maori

◆ 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 Taupo-Taumarunui District Visited during the Census of Language Use.

Percentage of fluent speakers of Maori among persons aged 25 and over in the households visited.

- ★ More than 60%
- 40% to 60%
- ▲ Less than 40%
- ▽ Fewer than 8 households visited

## THE MAORI LANGUAGE IN TAUPO AND WAITAHANUI

Fieldwork for the census of language use in Maori communities took place in sixty-one households in Taupo (December 1977 and January 1978) and in nine households in Waitahanui (May 1978). The interviewers were Ameria Ponika (Tuhoe), Joe Rua (Te Whanau-a-Apanui), Allan Hawea (Ngati Awa), Numia Ponika (Tuhoe), Kay Waapu (Ngati Kahungunu), Awhina Ngatai (Ngai Terangi), Phillip Hawera (Tuhoe/Ngai Terangi), and Evelyn Te Uira (Waikato). Fifty-eight interviews were carried out in English; the remainder were partly or entirely in Maori.

The households surveyed in Taupo had a total population of 380, and 371 of them were of Maori descent. This was about a sixth of the Maori population of Taupo at the time. In Waitahanui the households visited had a total number of 51, and they were all of Maori descent. This was nearly a third of the Maori population there at the time.

### RESULTS OF THE LINGUISTIC SURVEY

#### *Iwi Affiliation*

The people interviewed in Taupo mentioned 16 main iwi to which they or members of their households belonged. Ngati Tuwharetoa, tangata whenua of much of the region, was the largest iwi with 232 members or nearly two-thirds of the total. Tuhoe, with 47 members or an eighth of the total, was the next largest tribal group named.

In Waitahanui, four main iwi were mentioned. However, by far the most, 46 people or 90 percent also belonged to Ngati Tuwharetoa.

*Ability to Speak and Understand Maori*

The table on page two shows that a fifth of the people spoke Maori well, while a third of them understood the language well. Most of these good speakers were adults over 25. A third of the people, most of them school-age children, understood hardly any Maori at the time. Quite a number of people between 15-24 knew very little Maori apart from ordinary greetings and simple phrases. Many of them were young parents.

KNOWLEDGE OF SPOKEN MAORI IN TAUPO AND WAITAHANUI (1978)

Age Group	Fluent Speakers		Understand Easily		Limited Understanding		No Knowledge	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
45 & over	38	83	40	87	6	13	0	
25-44	34	37	52	57	34	37	6	7
15-24	6	7	19	22	38	45	28	33
2-14	3	2	18	10	59	31	112	59
Overall	81	20	129	31	137	33	146	36

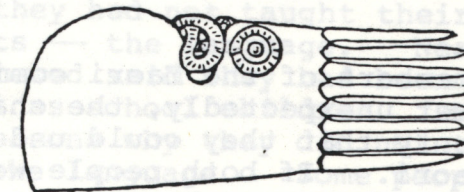
(Numbers and percentages refer to members of the households visited; percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole number).

*The Use of Maori Language in the Household*

English was the main language for everyday use in most households visited. There were 61 homes with dependent children, and in all of them people spoke mostly or only in English. In many of these homes, parents often spoke Maori with each other (or with friends and visitors who spoke Maori), but they always used English with their own children. A fifth of these households had three generations living there, and although the grandparents spoke Maori well, most mokopuna and their parents spoke only English.

There were nine households without children visited, and English was the main language spoken in six of them. The couple in one home used both Maori and English equally often, depending on what they were doing or talking about. In the other two homes, the people usually spoke in Maori with each other or with visitors who spoke Maori.

Although two-thirds of the people living in these childless households spoke Maori well, English was used so much in the outside community (and on TV, radio and in newspapers) that people had fewer and fewer chances of talking in Maori among themselves in the home.

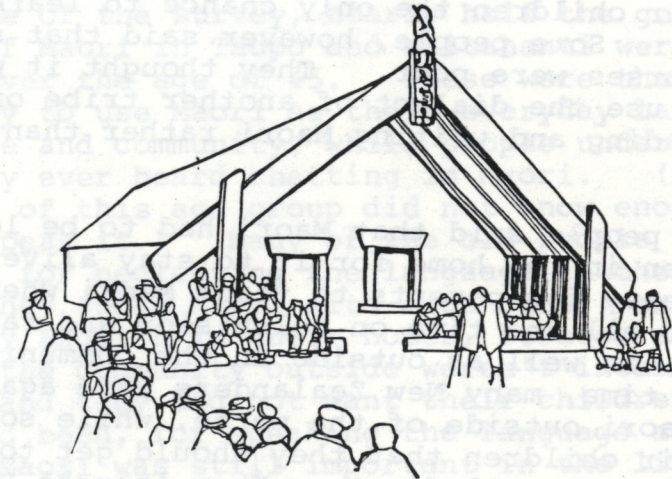


## *The Maori Language in the Community*

English was also the main language spoken in the community among neighbours, friends and workmates. A bit more than half the adults over 25 spoke Maori fluently and two-thirds of them understood the language well. However, the people most likely to use Maori when they talked about ordinary things outside the home were kaumatua over 45. The people they talked with were usually friends and family of their age. But even kaumatua had to use English more and more in the community, as most people they had dealings with (shopkeepers, people at the Post Office, doctors, teachers, and so on) understood only English.

Although most of the people in Taupo and Waitahanui could not speak Maori well, the language was still an important part in their culture. Ceremonies on the marae were in Maori, and certain religious services in the community were often partly or entirely in Maori also. But when they were over, most people spoke English.

If any two members of the Maori community in the Taupo area met unexpectedly, the chances were about one in twenty that they could understand each other in Maori. If both people were adults over 25, the chances were much greater - one in three. But it was unlikely that school-age children could speak in Maori with each other.

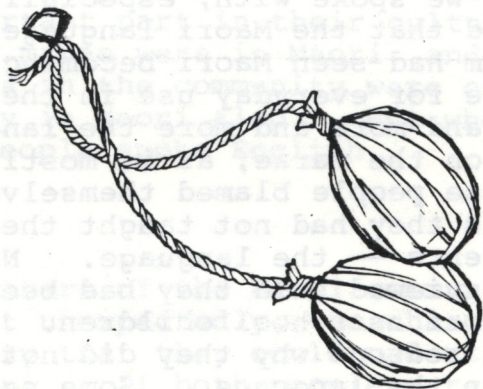


## *Attitudes towards the Language*

Many people we spoke with, especially the kaumatua, were worried that the Maori language would die out. Many of them had seen Maori becoming less and less the language for everyday use in the home and community, and more and more the language for ceremonies on the marae, as it mostly is today. Many of these people blamed themselves for the loss of Maori, as they had not taught their children — today's parents — the language. Nearly half the people interviewed said they had been strapped for speaking Maori as school children. This was one of the main reasons why they did not teach their own children the language. Some people thought that the fuss over Maori in schools now was just an attempt to cover up attempts in the past to wipe out the language.

Many parents still wanted Maori taught, especially in primary schools. Many adults were sorry they couldn't speak Maori; they thought that schools gave their children the only chance to learn the language. Some people, however said that some of these courses were poor. They thought it was wrong to use the dialect of another tribe or to teach reading and writing Maori rather than speaking it.

Some people said that Maori had to be learned and spoken in the home for it to stay alive. It was not easy for parents to teach Maori when English was heard all the time on television and radio in the home, as well as outside in the community. At the same time, many New Zealanders were against the use of Maori outside of the marae, while some parents told their children that they should get to know English really well first. They thought English would be more useful to them in the future than Maori would.



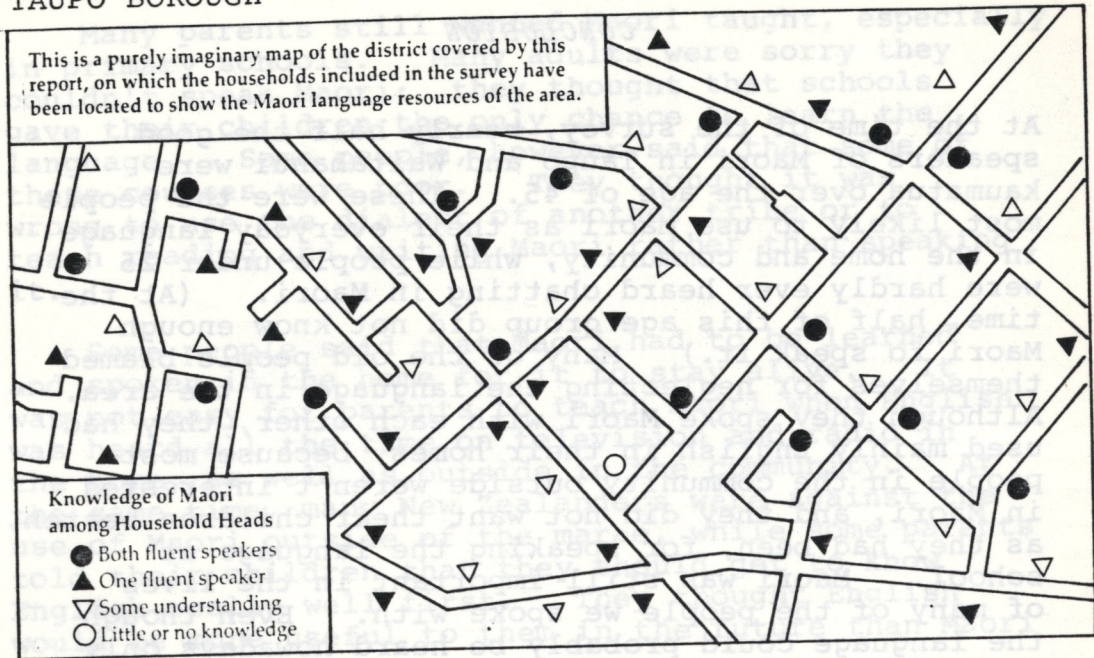
## CONCLUSION

At the time of the survey, nearly half the good speakers of Maori in Taupo and Waitahanui were kaumatua over the age of 45. These were the people most likely to use Maori as their everyday language in the home and community, while people under 25 were hardly ever heard chatting in Maori. (At the time, half of this age group did not know enough Maori to speak it.) Many of the old people blamed themselves for neglecting the language in the area. Although they spoke Maori with each other, they had used mainly English in their homes, because most people in the community outside weren't interested in Maori, and they did not want their children beaten, as they had been, for speaking the language at school. Maori was still important in the lives of many of the people we spoke with. Even though the language could probably be heard nowadays only in ceremonies on the marae, many people still hoped that Maori would once again become a language for everyday use, along with English. Some people said that it was a Pakeha world we live in and it was more important to understand English in order to get ahead in life. However, more and more people in the Taupo region have realized the importance of the language in their lives and have been going on to courses in Maori language and culture based in their community. There is a lot of worry about the present loss of Maori, but people are working hard to bring as much back as they can.

This report was prepared by Lee Smith  
(Ngati Kahungunu).

### TAUPO BOROUGH

This is a purely imaginary map of the district covered by this report, on which the households included in the survey have been located to show the Maori language resources of the area.

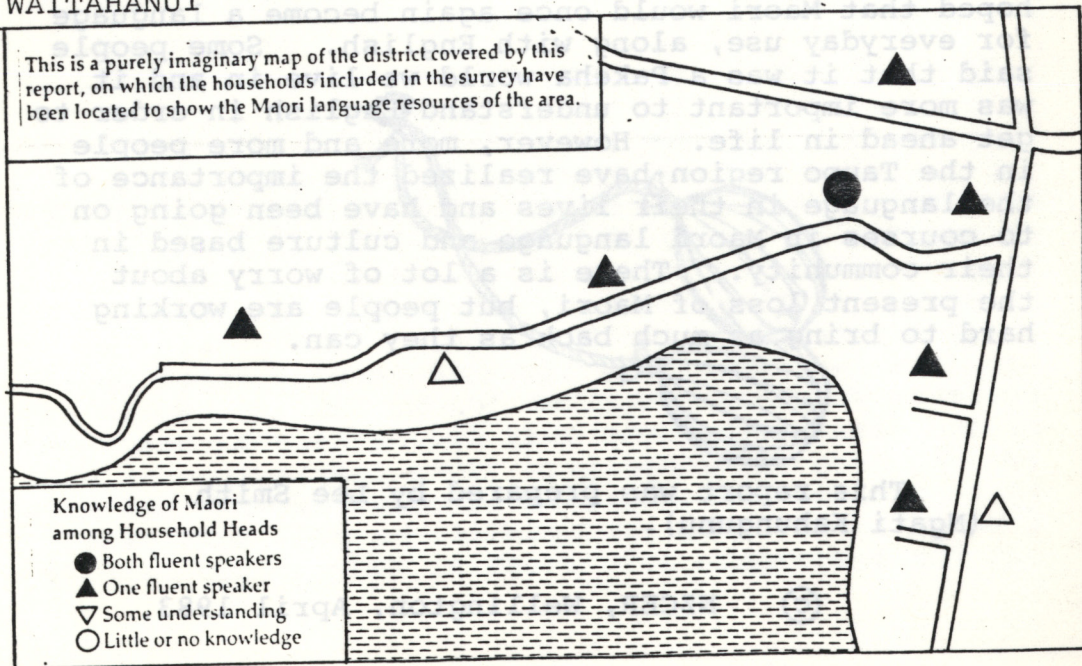


**Knowledge of Maori among Household Heads**

- Both fluent speakers
- ▲ One fluent speaker
- ▽ Some understanding
- Little or no knowledge

### WAITAHANUI

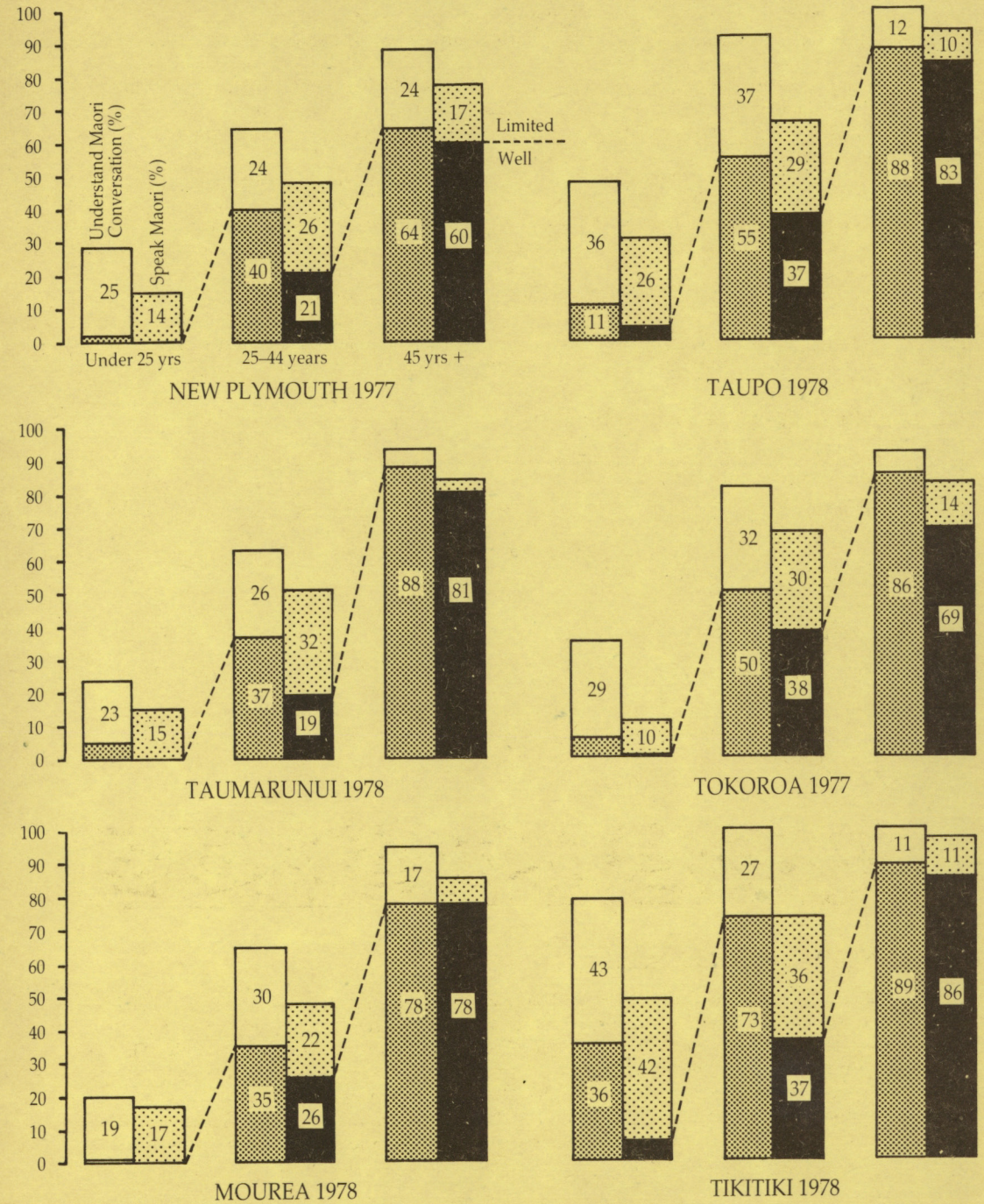
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### Knowledge of Maori Language by Age Groups in Selected Areas at the Time of the Linguistic Census



## 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.