

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

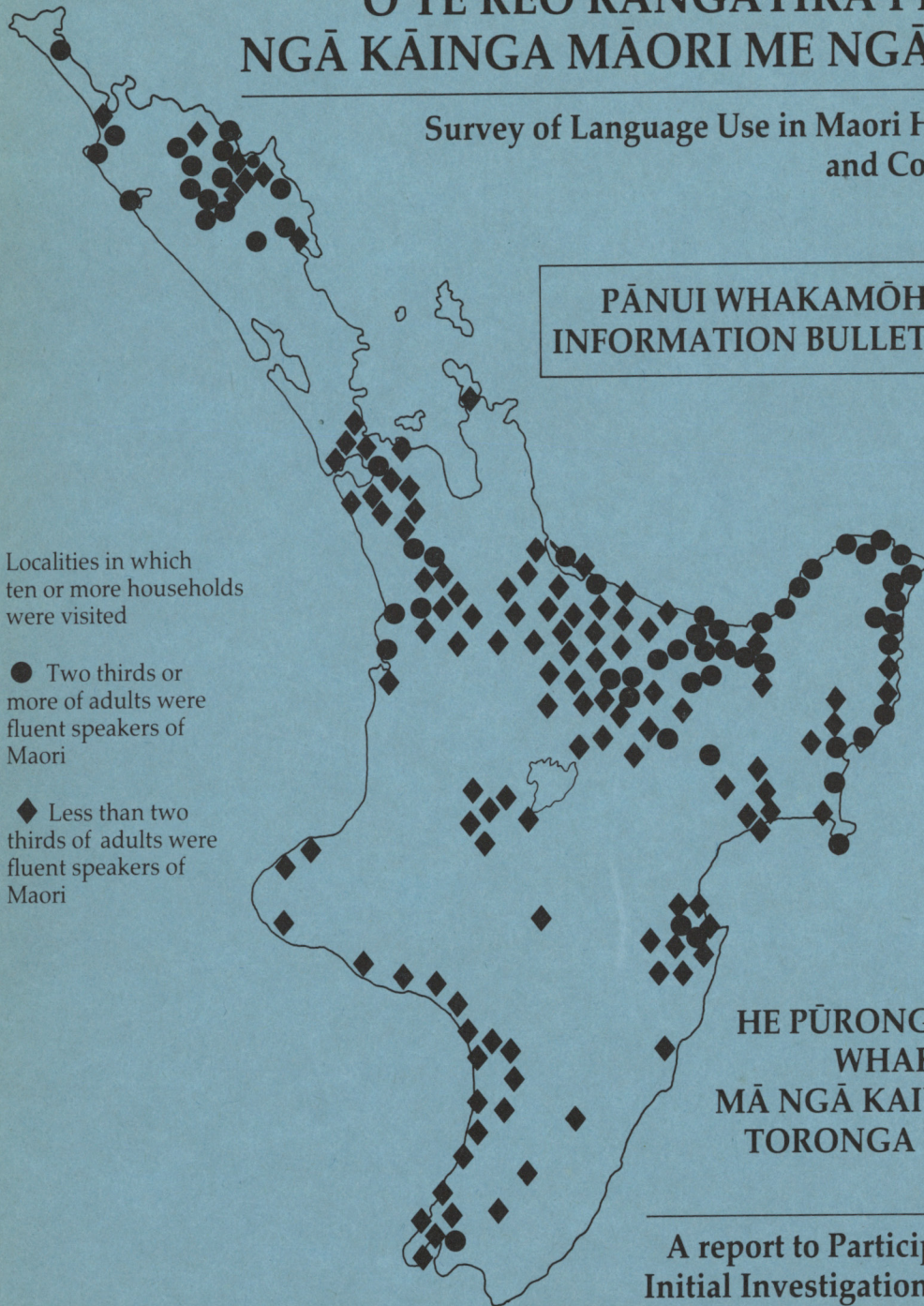
PĀNUI WHAKAMŌHIO
INFORMATION BULLETIN

83

Localities in which
ten or more households
were visited

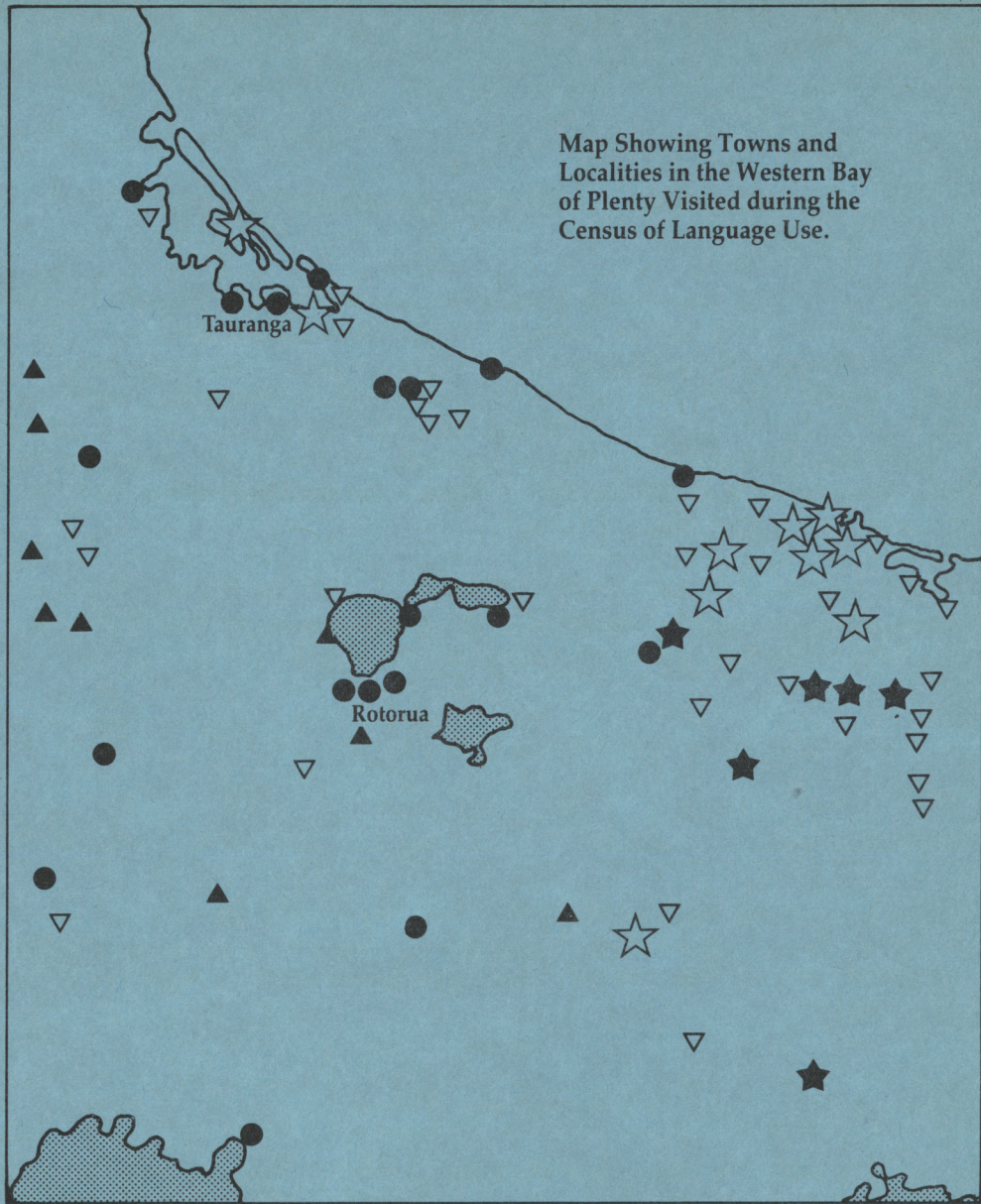
● Two thirds or
more of adults were
fluent speakers of
Maori

◆ 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 ROTOITI

Fieldwork for the census of language use in Maori communities took place in 21 households in Rotoiti and Hinehopu in February 1978. The interviewers were Allan Hawea (Ngati Awa), Tom Rangihuna (Ngati Porou), Patricia Parata (Ngati Porou), Himiona Henry (Waikato/Maniapoto), Judith Brown Hawera (Waikato), Aroha Yates (Te Arawa/Rongowhakaata), Hiria Tumoana (Tuhoe) and Taari Nicholas (Ngati Ranginui/Ngai Terangi). Three interviews were carried out in Maori; the rest were in English.

The households surveyed had a total population of 91, and 89 of them were of Maori descent. This was about a third of the total Maori population of Rotoiti at the time.

RESULTS OF THE LINGUISTIC SURVEY

Iwi Affiliation

The people interviewed mentioned nine major iwi to which they or members of their households belonged. However, 70 people (over three-quarters of the total) belonged to Te Arawa, tangata whenua of the region.

Ability to Speak and Understand Maori

The information in the table on page 2 shows that about one-fifth of the people surveyed spoke Maori fluently, while about two-fifths of them understood the language well. Nearly three-quarters of these good speakers were over the age of 45, and there were few speakers of Maori under 25. Two-thirds of this age group had hardly any understanding of the language at the time.

KNOWLEDGE OF SPOKEN MAORI IN ROTOITI (1978)

Age Group	Fluent Speakers		Understand Easily		Limited Understanding		No Knowledge	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
45 & over	13	77	17	100	0		0	
25-44	3	20	9	60	3	20	3	20
15-24	2	8	2	8	7	29	15	63
2-14	0		3	11	6	21	19	68
Overall	18	21	31	37	16	19	37	44

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

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Use of Maori Language in the Household

English was the main language for everyday use in most households visited. There were 12 homes with dependent children in the survey, and in 11 of them people spoke entirely in English. The family in the remaining household used both Maori and English equally often.

There were nine childless households visited and in six of them the people spoke with each other and with visitors entirely in English. In the remaining homes, Maori was the everyday language.

The Maori Language in the Community

English was also the main language spoken by most people when talking with neighbours, friends and workmates in the community. Although kaumatua would rather speak in Maori with their friends

and relatives, they had to use English more and more as that was the only language most people in the region understood.

The Maori language was most likely to be heard on the marae in the carrying out of ceremonies by local elders. Discussions which followed, however, were usually in English. Maori was also used in certain religious services in many homes visited, and in family prayer and grace.

If any two members of the community were to meet unexpectedly the chances were about one in 12 that they could understand each other in Maori. If both people were adults over 25 the chances were much greater, about two in five, but it was very unlikely that school-age children would be able to speak in Maori with each other.

Attitudes towards the Language

Although many people mentioned that fewer and fewer people knew or used Maori as their everyday language in the home and community, Maori was still important in the culture and lives of many people we spoke with, especially the kaumatua.

Many young adults and parents were sorry they could not speak or understand the language better, although their parents spoke Maori well. Some felt that an important part of how they saw themselves as Maori was therefore missing, as they were now unable to teach their own children the language. Grandparents often carried out this important task, although some children had shown they were not interested in Maori lessons in the home. English was almost the only language used on television and radio, in schools and in the community, and this seems to have made people believe that it was a Pakeha world and that Maori was of little use outside of the marae.

On the other hand, many people wanted Maori taught in schools, particularly in primary schools. Some parents felt that this may well be the only chance their children would ever have of learning the language.

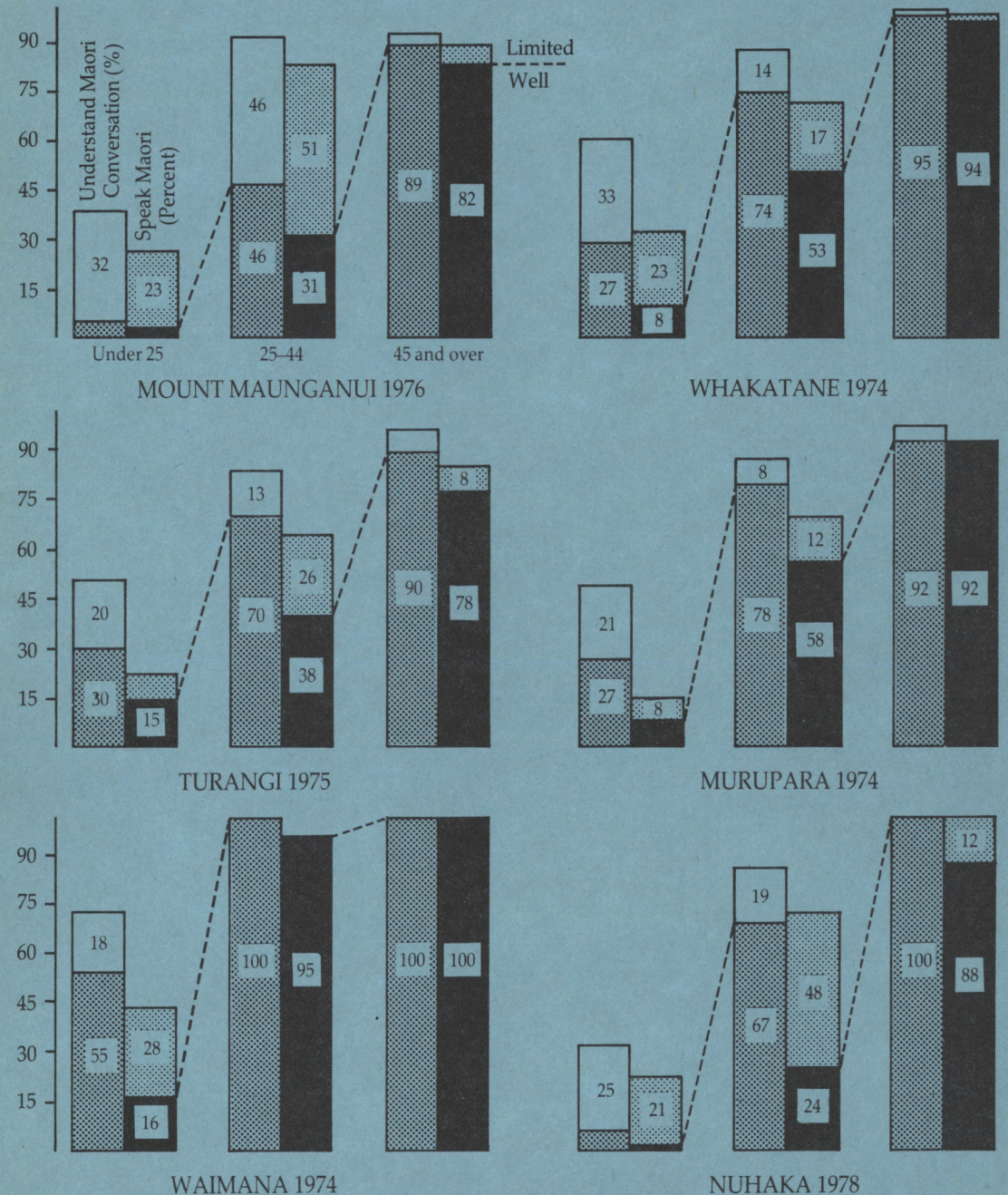
CONCLUSION

At the time of the survey, three-quarters of the kaumatua over 45 spoke Maori fluently, while all of them understood the language well. There was a sudden drop in the number of young people who knew Maori, as two-thirds of the people under 25 hardly understood the language at all. English was found to be the main language spoken in most households and in the community, and many people were afraid that Maori would be completely lost in the future. Some people were beginning to organize language classes in private homes and on local marae as a way to stop this happening. The Maori Affairs Department has recently made moves to set up Maori-speaking pre-schools (Te Kohanga Reo) throughout the country. These may make all the difference in helping people to keep the language alive. Interested people should get in touch with the Rotorua offices of the Department.



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.