

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

46

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 of the Waikato Region of the North Island visited during the Census of Language use

Percentage of Fluent Speakers of Maori Among Persons Aged 25 and over in Households visited

- ★ 70% or more
- ◆ 55% to 69%
- 40% to 54%
- ▼ Less than 40%
- Fewer than 10 households visited

THE MAORI LANGUAGE IN WAIUKU

Fieldwork for the census of language use in Maori communities took place in 13 households in Waiuku in January 1976. The interviewers were Audrey Cooper (Waikato) and Evelyn Te Uira (Waikato). All interviews were carried out in English.

The households surveyed had a total population of 78; 73 of these people were of Maori descent. This was about a fifth of the Maori population of Waiuku at the time.

RESULTS OF THE LINGUISTIC SURVEY

Iwi Affiliation

The people interviewed mentioned six major iwi to which they or members of their households belonged. The largest iwi in the survey was Waikato with 41 members or 53 percent of the total.

Ability To Speak And Understand Maori

The table on the next page shows that less than a fifth of the people surveyed could speak Maori well, and that all of these were adults over the age of 25. About a third of the people understood the language well. There were few school children who knew as much as this; in fact, two-thirds of the people under 25 could hardly understand Maori at that time.

KNOWLEDGE OF SPOKEN MAORI IN WAIUKU (1976)

Age Group	Fluent Speakers		Understand Easily		Limited Understanding		No Knowledge	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
45 & over	5	83	5	83	1	17	0	
25-44	7	47	9	60	3	20	3	20
15-24	0		4	27	4	27	7	47
2-14	0		3	8	6	17	27	75
Overall	12	17	21	29	14	19	37	52

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

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Use Of Maori Language In The Household

There were 12 households with dependent children visited, and in nine of them the people spoke only in English. In the other three, while some Maori was used, particularly between adults, English was still the main language spoken.

There was one childless household visited in which the people spoke mostly in English.

The Maori Language In The Community

Over half the adults over 25 were good speakers of Maori, while two-thirds of them understood the language well. However, people in the town had few chances to speak Maori as most people could speak only English. This is why most workmates, neighbours and friends usually spoke English among themselves, although many

kaumatua talked in Maori with friends or relations who could speak the language. People under 25 were always spoken to in English.

The Maori language, however, still had an important part to play in ceremonies on the marae, in speeches at different kinds of gatherings, such as weddings, birthdays, tribal hui, and in certain religious services. However, as soon as these gatherings were over, people usually went back to speaking English. If any two people from the families we visited were to meet unexpectedly, there was 1 chance in 20 that they could understand each other in Maori. If both people were adults over 25 there was at least a 50 percent chance that they could talk with each other in Maori.

Attitudes Towards The Language

Most people interviewed were worried that Maori was dying out not only in their region but also throughout the country. Many people, therefore, wanted the language taught in schools, while some of them actually took part in running Maori language and Maoritanga courses, particularly for young adults and parents. Some people said how difficult it was to hold on to their Maori language, and teaching their own children, in a community where nearly everyone spoke English. So, it became simpler to follow the others and use English themselves.

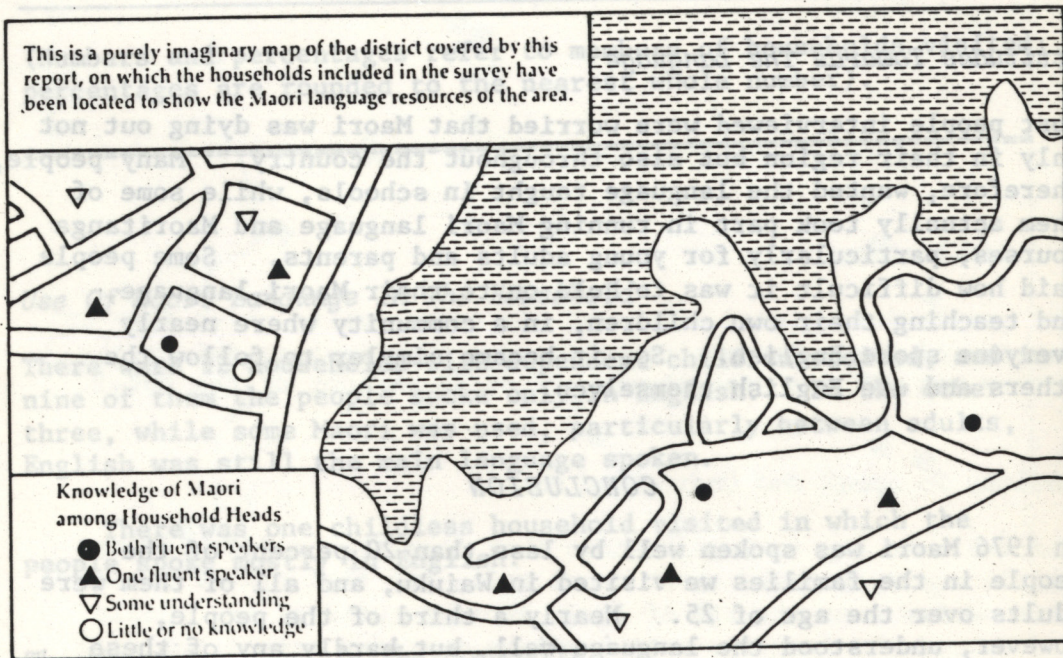
CONCLUSION

In 1976 Maori was spoken well by less than 20 percent of the people in the families we visited in Waiuku, and all of them were adults over the age of 25. Nearly a third of the people, however, understood the language well, but hardly any of these were children of primary school age or younger.

English was the main language spoken in most households visited. Although many kaumatua spoke Maori with others of their age, English was also the language used most often in the community.

A lot of people were worried that the Maori language was dying out in Waiuku, and parents and local leaders in the community were starting courses for learners of all ages. But many people found it difficult to believe that Maori can be brought back, when so many people in New Zealand do not care whether the language lives or dies.

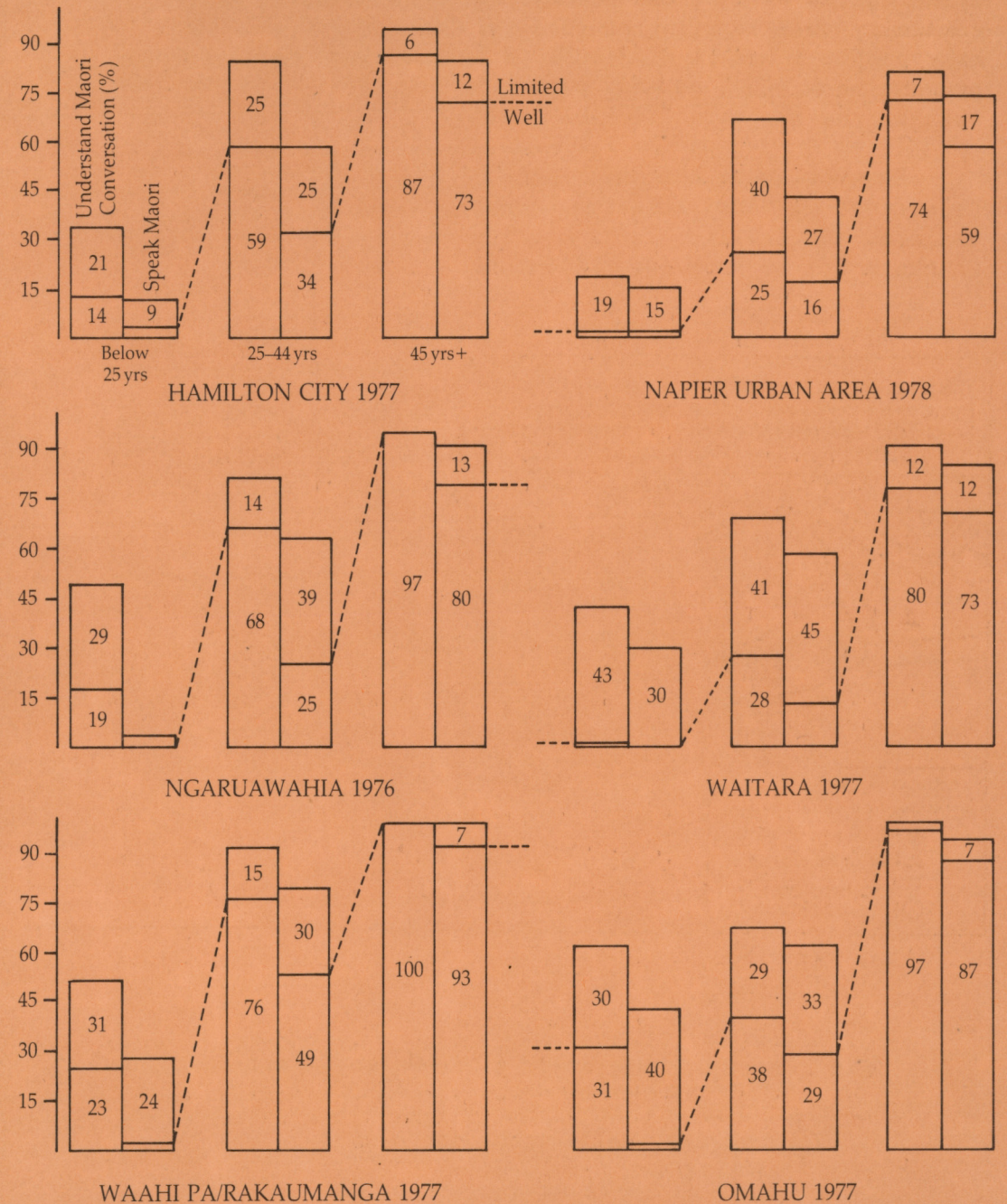
However, what the Department of Education and the Department of Maori Affairs have been doing recently to help children and families learn Maori must give Maori parents in Waiuku a lot of hope for the future.



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.