

# 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

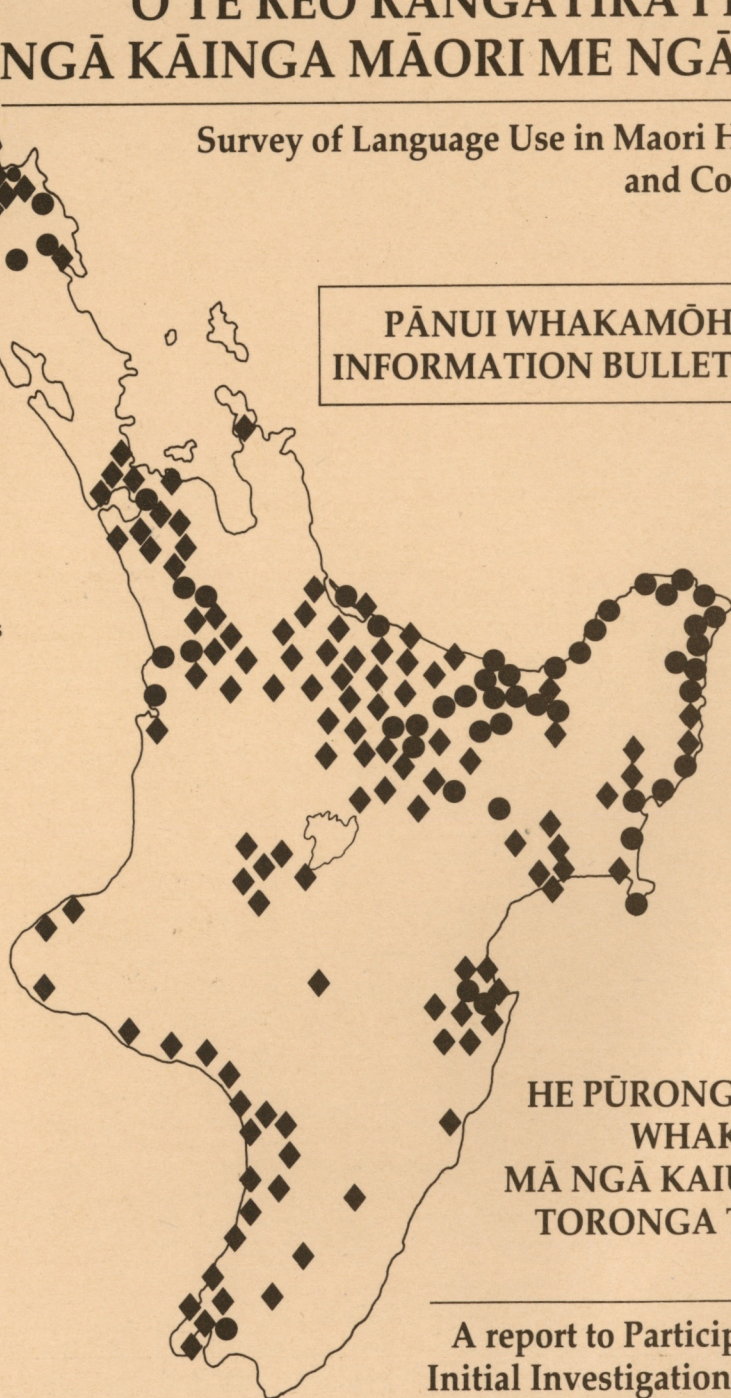
PĀNUI WHAKAMŌHIO  
INFORMATION BULLETIN

57

Localities in which  
ten or more households  
were visited

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

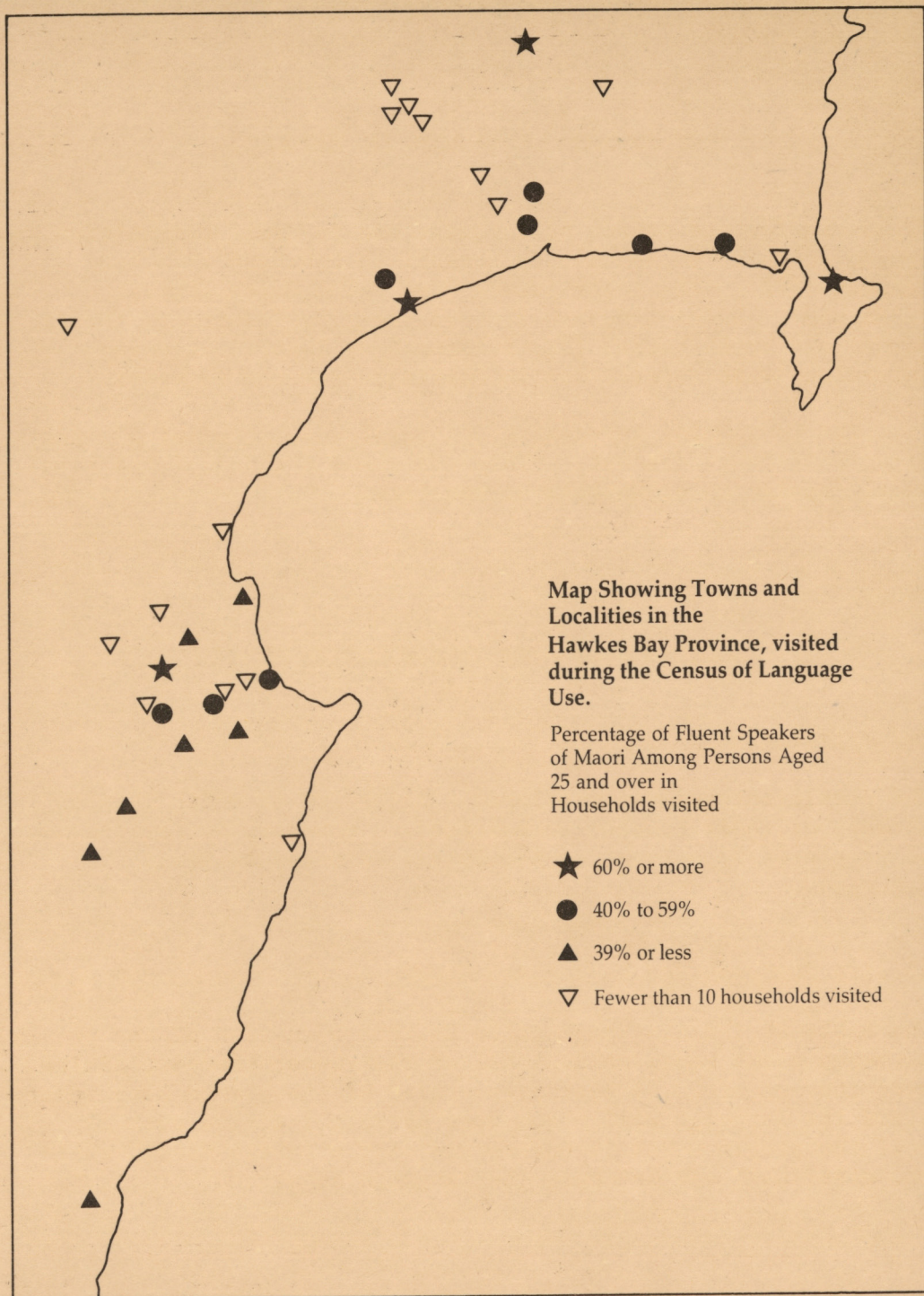
◆ Less than two  
thirds of adults were  
fluent speakers of  
Maori



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 WHAKAKI

Fieldwork for the census of language use in Maori communities was conducted in 12 households in Whakaki in February 1976 and January 1978. The interviewers were Raiha Smith (Ngati Kahungunu), Tawini Rangihau (Tuhoe), Keri Tawhiwhirangi (Ngati Porou) and Trysh Parata (Ngati Porou/Ngai Tahu). Eleven interviews were carried out in English; one was in Maori.

The households surveyed had a total population of 53, and 51 were of Maori descent. This was about a third of the total Maori population of Whakaki at the time.

### RESULTS OF THE LINGUISTIC SURVEY

#### *Iwi Affiliation*

The people interviewed mentioned 4 major iwi to which they or members of their households belonged. However, by far the most, 48 people or 91 percent of the total, belonged to Ngati Kahungunu.

#### *Ability To Speak And Understand Maori*

The table on the next page tells us that a quarter of the people surveyed spoke Maori well. All of them were, however, adults over the age of 25. Nearly one-third of the people also understood the language well - and were again all adults over 25. Half the people under 25 understood only a little Maori, while the other half did not know the language at all.



KNOWLEDGE OF SPOKEN MAORI IN WHAKAKI (1978)

Age Group	Fluent Speakers		Understand Easily		Limited Understanding		No Knowledge	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
45 & over	10	67	12	80	3	20	0	
25-44	3	33	4	44	4	44	1	11
15-24	0		0		5	42	7	58
2-14	0		0		9	56	7	44
Overall	13	25	16	31	21	40	15	29

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

Use Of Maori Language In The Household

There were 8 households with dependent children visited, and in 4 of them the everyday language was English. While some Maori was used, particularly by adults, English was still the language spoken in the remaining households.

In the 4 childless households, Maori was the main language spoken by the members of two households, and in the other two English was used most of the time.

Many of the kaumatua had been punished for speaking Maori as school children and, as they did not want their own children treated in the same way, some of them did not want them to know the Maori language.

This may well be one of the main reasons why two-thirds of the 25-44 year group could not speak Maori fluently.

The Maori Language In The Community

English was also the main language spoken in the community by most people surveyed. For people under the age of 40, most conversations with neighbours, workmates and friends could be carried out only in English. However, whenever fluent speakers of Maori met, a mixture of Maori and English was used a lot of the time, although Maori was the language that kaumatua really wanted to speak. Instead, they had to use more English than they wanted to, since nobody under the age of 25 could either speak Maori fluently or understood it well enough to carry out an ordinary conversation.

The Maori language continued to play an important part in ceremonies on the marae and in certain religious services. Will Maori end up as a language used mainly on special occasions on the marae? That is up to the people of Whakaki themselves.

If any two adults from our survey met unexpectedly, the chances that they could understand each other in Maori would be 1 in 3. If both people were children, or one adult and one child under 14, the chances would be almost nil.

Attitudes Towards The Language

Most of the older people in the survey were worried that fewer and fewer people knew or spoke Maori in Whakaki. They knew that the young had to learn English if they wanted to get on in the modern world, but they had never expected that Maori would be the loser. A lot of people wanted Maori taught in primary school, and one person even asked that bilingual (English/Maori) teaching be brought into their local school as an extra aid to children learning Maori.

A number of parents said that the Maori language was dead already and had no further use in today's society. They say



this because they think that knowing Maori won't help their children to get a job, but they forget that Maori culture is nothing without the language, and that it cannot survive without Maori-speakers.

**CONCLUSION**

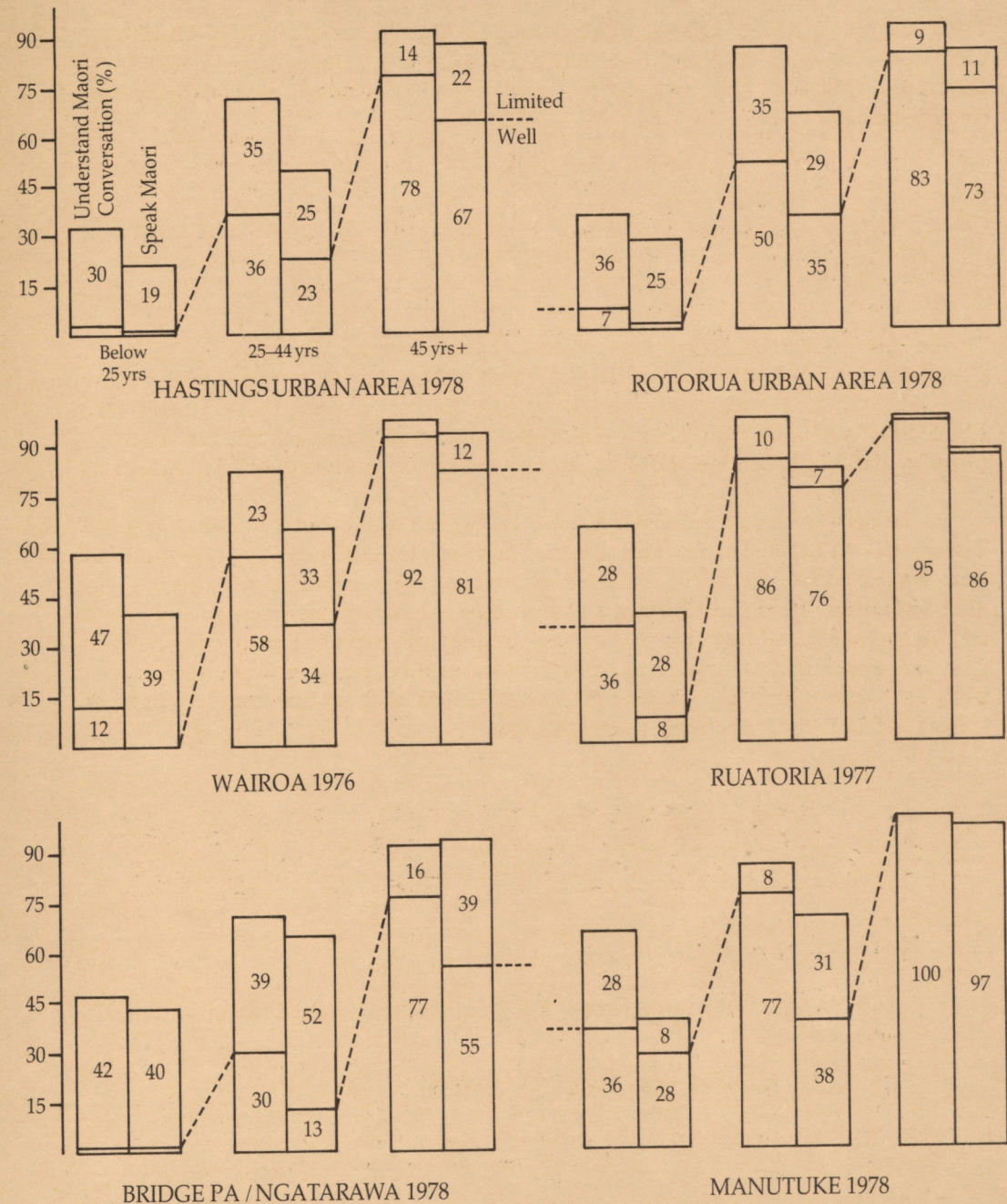
There is no doubt that the Maori language in Whakaki will be completely lost if something is not done soon. In 1978, only the adults and kaumatua could speak Maori fluently. Many of them had to speak English in the home and community, as most people in Whakaki could not carry on a conversation in Maori.

To bring back the mana of the language, Maori learning should first of all begin in the home, and be supported by the school and marae committees. Maori-speaking pre-school groups (Te Kohanga Reo), and Maori language classes in homes and on the marae have been set up in other areas of Ngati Kahungunu, with a lot of community support, and are already very successful. If people want more information, they should get in touch with the Maori Affairs Department in Wairoa.

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.