

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

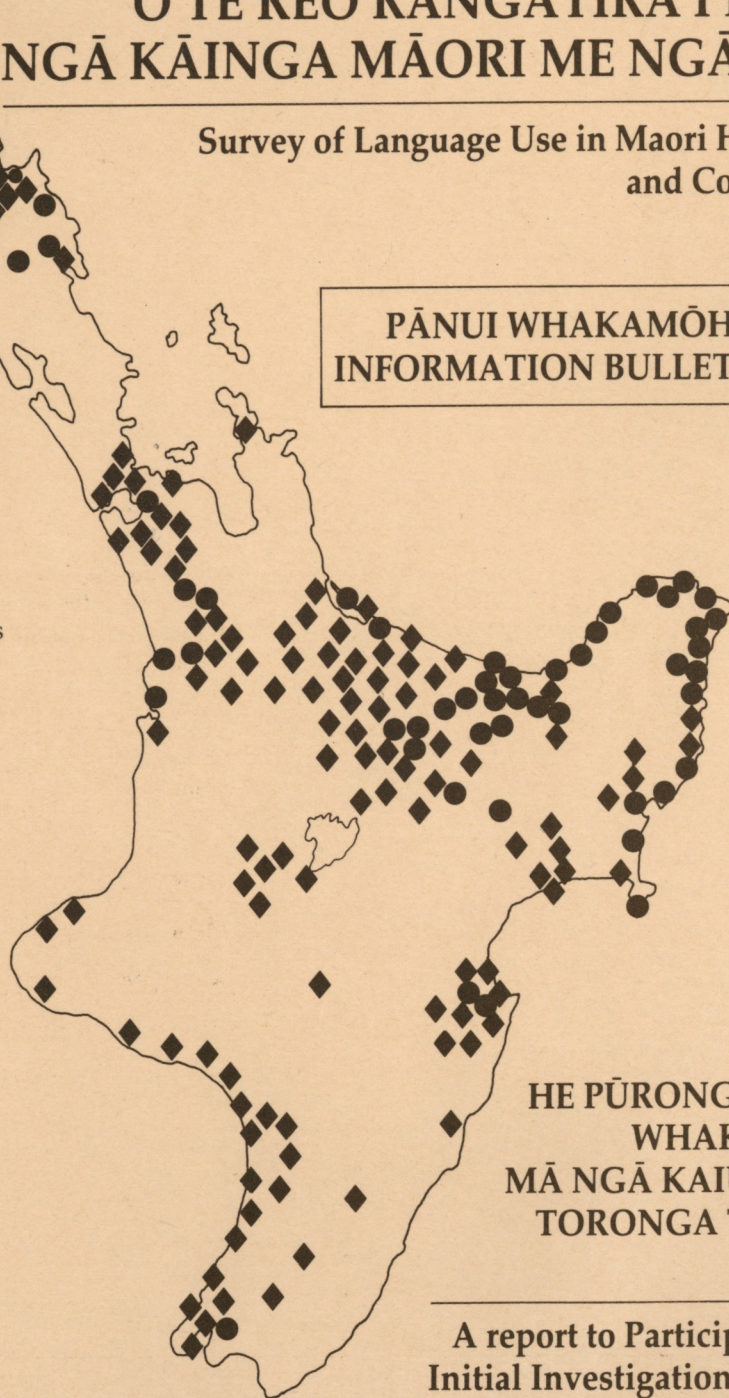
PĀNUI WHAKAMŌHIO
INFORMATION BULLETIN

59

Localities in which
ten or more households
were visited

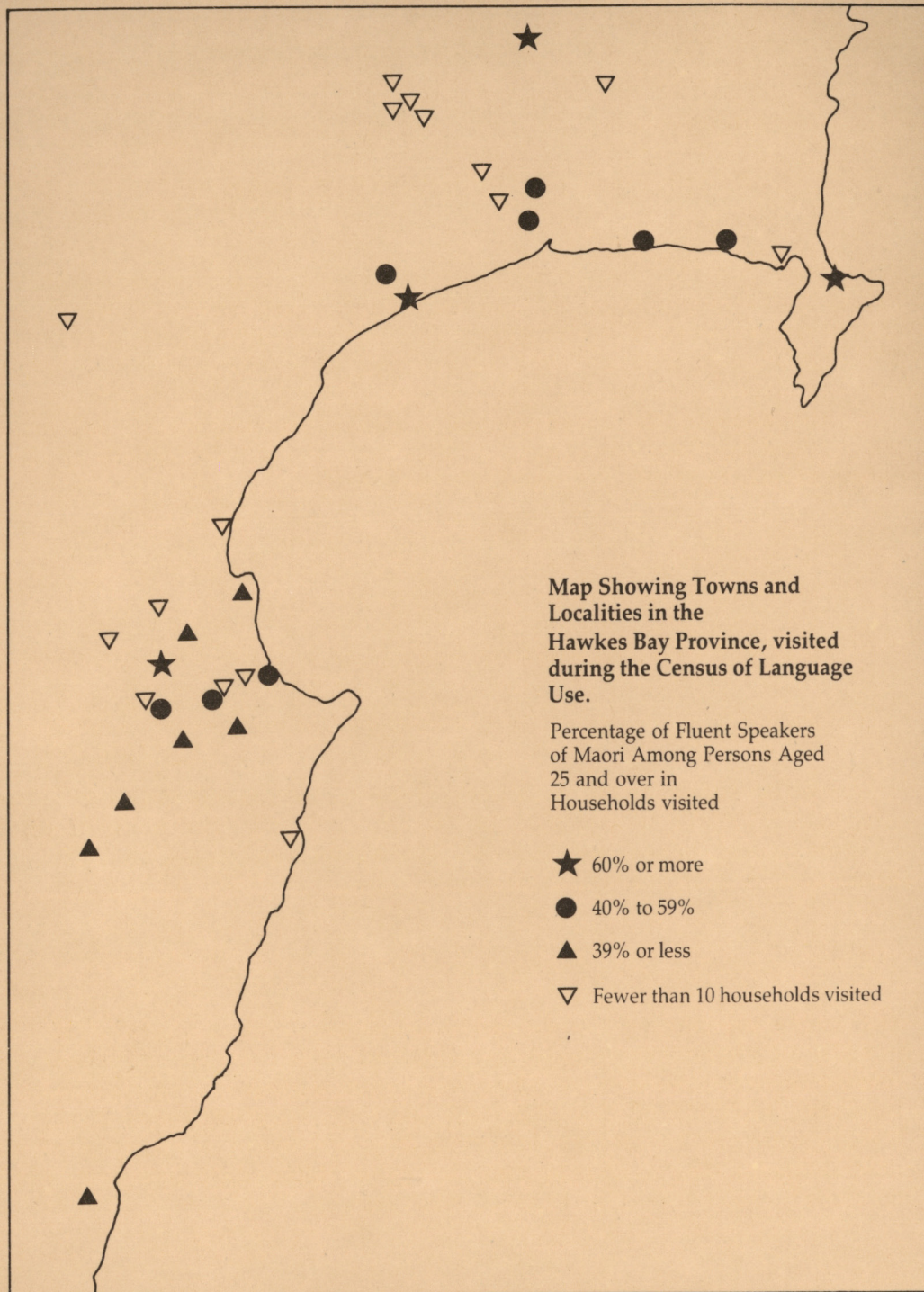
● Two thirds or
more of adults were
fluent speakers of
Maori

◆ 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 RAUPUNGA

Fieldwork for the census of language use in Maori communities took place in 17 households in Raupunga in January 1978. The interviewers were Himiona Henry (Waikato), and Kahu Waititi (Te Whanau-a-Apanui). All interviews were carried out in English.

The households surveyed had a total population of 98, and 94 there were of Maori descent. This was about two-thirds of the Maori population of Raupunga at the time.

RESULTS OF THE LINGUISTIC SURVEY

Iwi Affiliation

The people interviewed mentioned five main iwi to which they or members of their households belonged. By far the most of them, 75 people, or three-quarters of the total, belonged to Ngati Kahungunu - tangata whenua of the area.

Ability to Speak and Understand

The table on the next page tells us that about a quarter of the people in the survey could speak Maori well. Most of them were kaumatua over the age of 45. A larger number of the people, however, understood the language well. They included almost three-quarters of the adults over 25, and about a quarter of the people under 25. Nearly two-thirds of this last age group knew no Maori at all at the time of the survey.

KNOWLEDGE OF SPOKEN MAORI IN RAUPUNGA (1978)

Age Group	Fluent Speakers		Understand Easily		Limited Understanding		No Knowledge	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
45 & over	13	62	15	71	2	10	4	19
25-44	7	54	8	62	2	15	3	23
15-24	2	9	9	39	4	17	10	44
2-14	0		4	10	6	15	29	75
Overall	22	23	36	38	14	15	46	48

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

Use of Maori Language in the Household

English was the main language spoken in most households visited. There were 14 households with dependent children, and in nine of them the people spoke mostly or entirely in English. In four households, where more English than Maori was used, Maori was spoken by the adults only. The people in the remaining household used both Maori and English for an equal amount of time.

There were three childless households where the people spoke mainly English amongst themselves and with visitors.

The Maori Language in the Community

English was also the main language spoken in the community.

People who spoke Maori well, however, would use Maori especially when talking with elderly people. People spoke nearly always in English with younger members of the community, as only a fifth of the people under 25 could understand Maori well.

The Maori language, however, continued to have an important place in ceremonies on the marae and also in certain religious services. Even then, it was not certain that the language would survive, as most people spoke in English when the speeches were over. One person summed it up by saying there were two languages on the marae - Maori to listen to and English to talk with.

If any two people were to meet unexpectedly, there was one chance in ten that they could understand each other in Maori. If both people were adults there was one chance in two that they could speak Maori with each other.

It was very unlikely that any two school children could talk with each other in Maori, as only ten percent of this age group could understand the language well.

Attitudes towards the Language

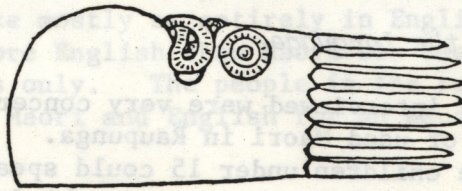
Most of the people interviewed were very concerned that fewer and fewer people knew or used Maori in Raupunga. At the time of the survey none of the children under 15 could speak Maori well. While some people wanted the language taught in local schools, many felt that Maori had to be learned and spoken in the home. This was becoming more and more difficult for most parents, as English was the main language spoken in the community, on television, radio and in newspapers. However tribal wananga were seen by some people as one way to stir up interest in the language.

CONCLUSION

About a quarter of the people involved in the survey spoke Maori fluently, while a third of them had a good understanding of the language. Most of these people were kaumatua over the age of 45, and the future of the language looked dim as nearly two thirds of the under 25 age group had no knowledge of Maori at all.

Some parents were trying to teach their children Maori in the home and were providing a good example for other members of the Raupunga community who were concerned about the loss of the Maori language. Several young adults were learning to whaikorero in order to carry out the important ceremonial procedures on the marae, when their elders passed on.

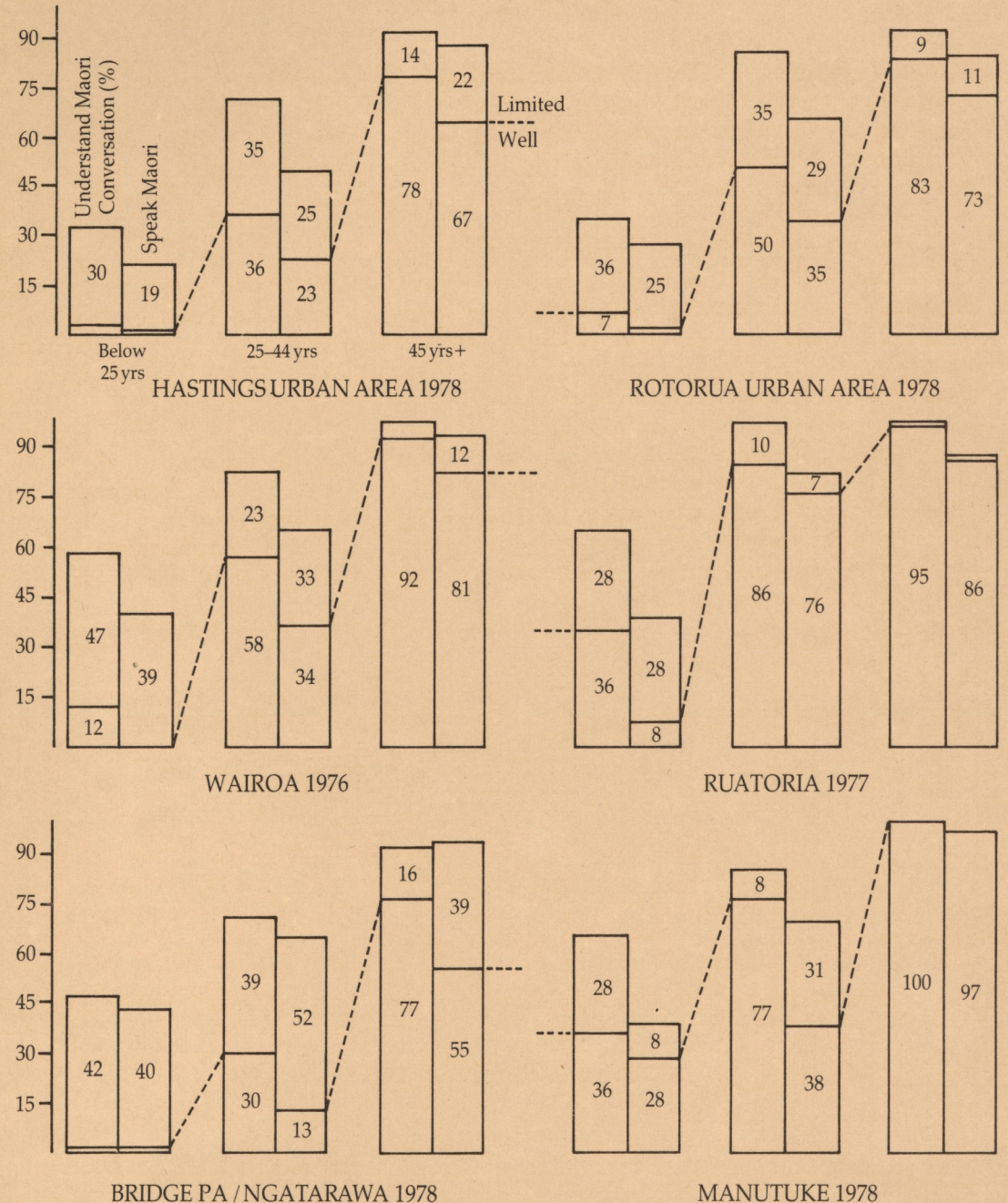
Much interest in learning Maori has been shown, although the use of English for everyday communication seems likely to continue. The Takitimu Maori Language Board has been active in establishing courses for people who want to learn Maori in the Wairoa area, and these should be helpful to people in Raupunga who want to promote the use of the language.



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.