

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

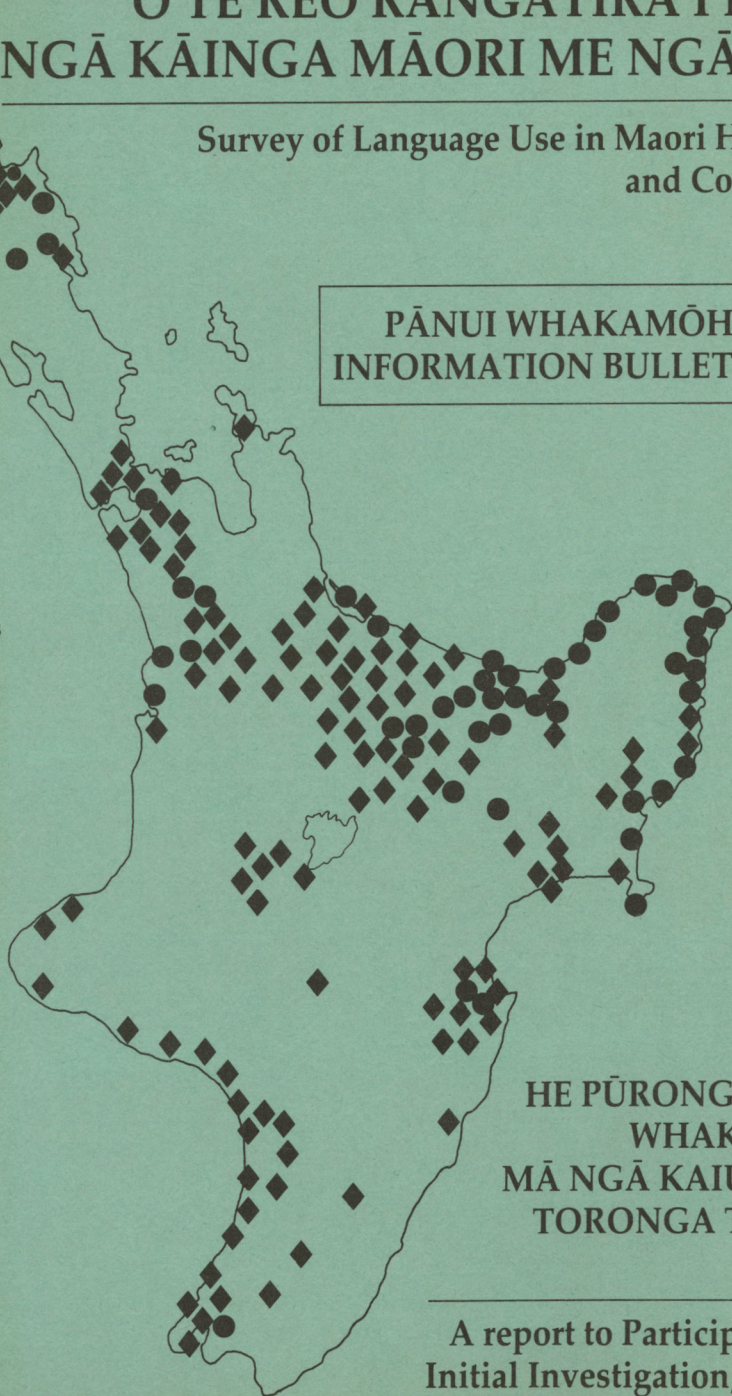
PĀNUI WHAKAMŌHIO
INFORMATION BULLETIN

97

Localities in which
ten or more households
were visited

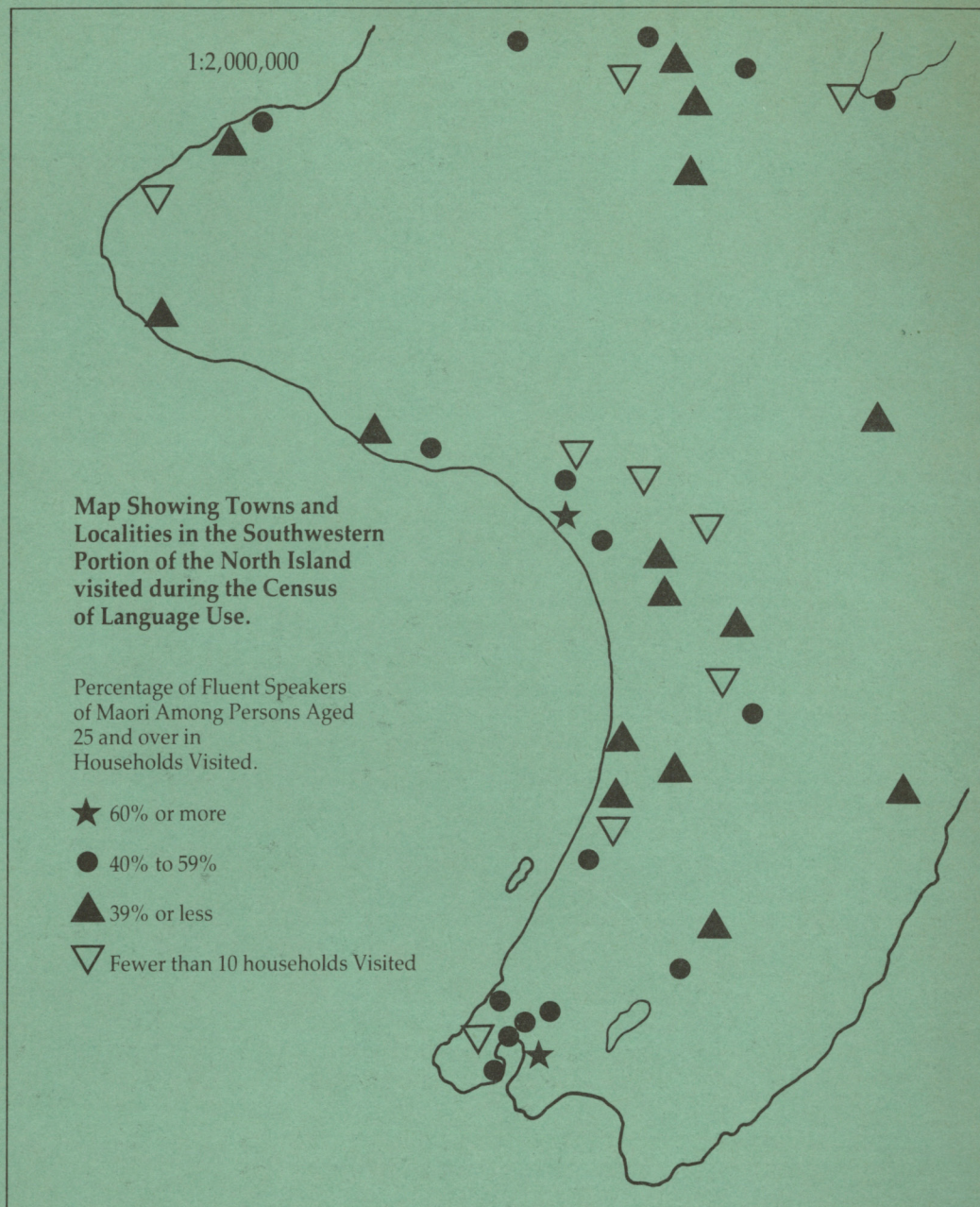
● Two thirds or
more of adults were
fluent speakers of
Maori

◆ 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 WELLINGTON AND THE HUTT VALLEY

This report covers four cities and boroughs in the Wellington Area: Wellington, Upper Hutt, Petone and Lower Hutt, where fieldwork for the Maori language survey took place in May 1974, and May and September 1975. (Separate reports are available for Porirua City and Wainuiomata, which were also visited during this period).

The interviewers were Hiria Tumoana (Tuhoe), Maku Potae (Ngati Porou), Rita Tapine (Ngati Kahungunu), Lorna Dyall (Maniapoto), Shannon Wetere (Waikato), Candice Scrimshaw (Ngati Kahungunu), Peter Wensor (Ngapuhi), Iriaka Wensor (Ngapuhi), Kathleen Grace Potae (Tuwharetoa), Peri Leef (Ngapuhi/Te Rarawa), Ameria Ponika (Tuhoe), Joe Rua (Te Whanau-a-Apanui), Nehu Gage (Whakatohea), Ruka Kakahi (Tuwharetoa), Dora Pryor (Tuhoe), Rose Ruru (Ngati Porou), Charee Ogle (Ngapuhi), Trevor Diamond (Ngapuhi), Rowena Kingi (Ngati Awa), Rangi Nicholson (Ngati Raukawa), Mei Dewes, Michael Ranby, Robin Wilcox (Ngapuhi/Ngati Porou), Rena Tito (Ngati Whatua), Sharon Moerkerk (Maniapoto), Ripeka Koopu Martin (Te Whanau-a-Apanui), William Martin (Ngati Manawa/Te Aupouri) and Susan Rikihana (Tuhoe).

21 interviews were carried out in Maori, 17 in Maori and English and the rest in English.

Altogether 227 households were visited in the four districts: 110 in Wellington, with a total of 438 people (384 of Maori descent, about 4 percent of the Maori population of the area at the time); 67 in Lower Hutt with 366 people (348 of Maori descent, about 7 percent of the Maori population); 27 in Upper Hutt with 122 people (112 of Maori descent, about 5 percent of the Maori population); and 23 in Petone with 105 people (100 of Maori descent, about 7 percent of the district's Maori population at the time).

Results of the Linguistic Survey

Iwi Affiliation

All the major iwi of New Zealand, and many of the smaller ones, were represented among the people we interviewed and their families. Overall, Ngati Porou was the most widespread, with 152 people (about 15 percent of those included in the survey). The tangata whenua of the area, Te Ati Awa, formed the largest group in the Waiwhetu suburb of Lower Hutt, while another Tangata Whenua iwi, Ngati Kahungunu, was the largest group represented in Upper Hutt City. Iwi forming 10 percent or more of the people we visited in various districts were: Ngati Porou (all), Ngapuhi (Wellington Central and Wellington North), Ngati Kahungunu (Petone, Upper Hutt, Wellington North and Wellington East), Te Arawa (Wellington East), Tuwharetoa (Wellington North), Tuhoe (Petone), and Te Ati Awa (Waiwhetu, Lower Hutt).

KNOWLEDGE OF SPOKEN MAORI IN WELLINGTON AND THE HUTT VALLEY

	Wellington		Lower Hutt		Upper Hutt		Petone	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
<i>Fluent Speakers</i>								
45 yrs & over	26	55	21	57	2	67	9	90
25 to 44 yrs	53	38	41	45	13	38	9	31
15 to 24 yrs	13	17	9	18	5	17	18	69
2 to 14 yrs	1	1	6	4	0	0	2	5
Overall	93	22	79	23	20	18	39	38

Understand Easily

45 yrs & over	34	72	25	68	2	67	9	90
25 to 44 yrs	74	52	50	55	16	47	15	52
15 to 24 yrs	25	32	10	20	11	37	21	81
2 to 14 yrs	4	3	6	3	4	8	2	5
Overall	137	32	91	26	33	28	47	46

Limited Understanding

45 yrs & over	7	15	3	8	0	0	1	10
25 to 44 yrs	37	26	13	14	8	24	7	24
15 to 24 yrs	34	42	9	18	9	30	1	4
2 to 14 yrs	54	34	32	18	8	15	4	11
Overall	132	31	57	16	25	21	13	31

No Knowledge

45 yrs & over	6	13	9	24	1	33	0	0
25 to 44 yrs	30	21	28	31	10	29	7	24
15 to 24 yrs	21	26	32	63	10	33	4	15
2 to 14 yrs	101	64	138	78	40	77	31	84
Overall	158	37	207	58	61	51	42	41

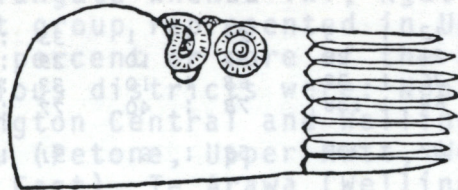
(Numbers and percentages refer to members of households visited; percentages have been rounded to nearest whole number).

Ability to Speak and Understand Maori

The information in the table shows us that in all 4 districts, children and young adults included in the survey were much less likely to have a good understanding of Maori, or be able to speak Maori well, than were people over the age of 25. Over half of the people over 45 could be classed as fluent speakers of Maori, and in Petone this figure was 90 percent.

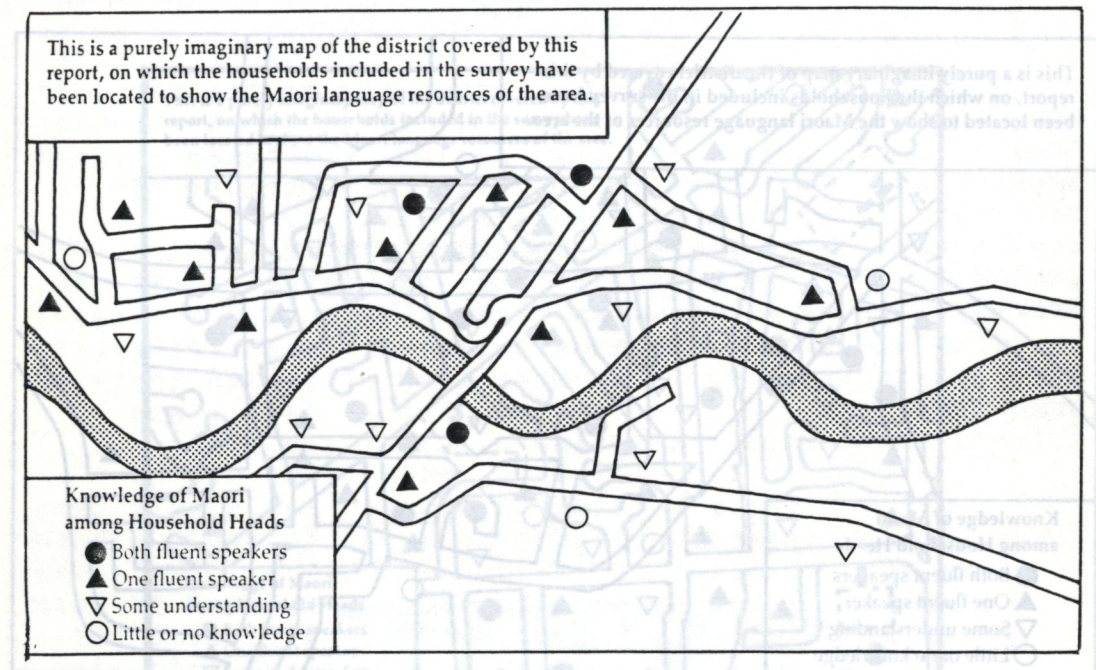
An interesting exception to this, however, was the figures for young adults in Petone which show that nearly seven out of ten 15-24 year olds included in the survey could speak Maori well and about 8 out of 10 could understand Maori well. This was because of a large migration of young fluent Maori speakers from the East Coast working in the meat works and other factories in the area.

In all 4 districts the number of fluent speakers under 15 years old was very small, the highest being about 5 percent in Petone. Proportionately, adults made up the bulk of the people who were fluent or had a good understanding of Maori, while about three quarters of the under 15 year olds had absolutely no knowledge of Maori at the time of the survey.



Use of Maori Language in the Household

English was the main language used in the households in all 4 districts. This was especially the case in households with dependent children. Out of 162 households with dependent children only 1 used Maori most of the time and 1 used an equal amount of Maori and English - both of these were in the Lower Hutt area. Of the 64 households without children, 9 reported using mostly Maori - 5 of these were in Petone and 2 in Southern Wellington. 14 households without children reported using Maori to visitors.



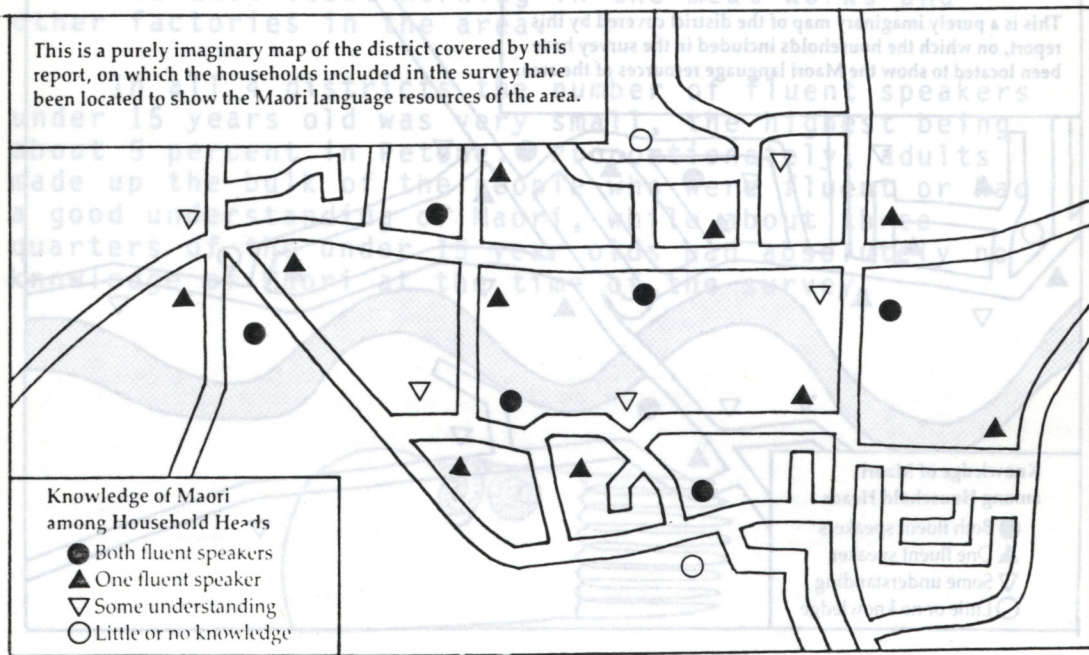
UPPER HUTT

LOWER HUTT

Maori Language in the Community

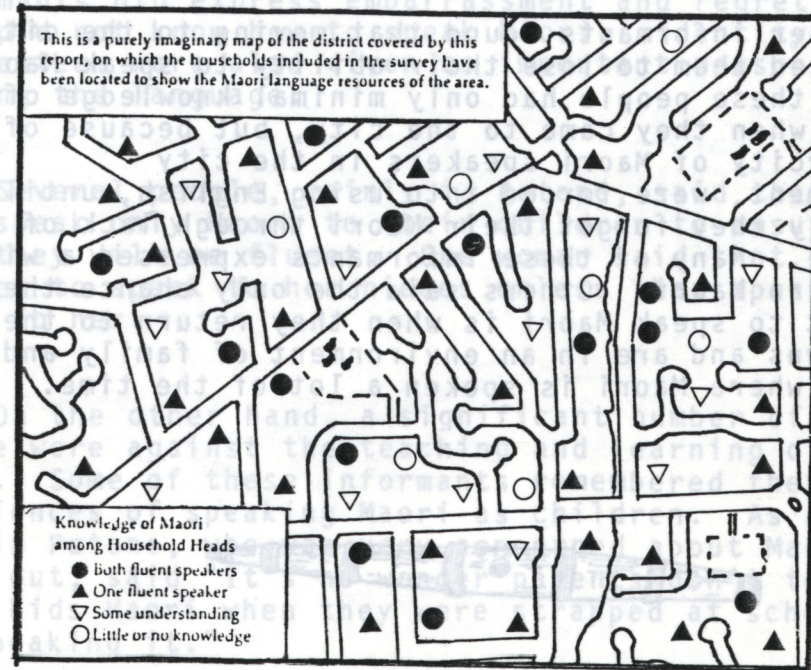
The majority of people we interviewed said that English was the main language they used when talking to neighbours, visitors and children. A significant number, however, (up to half in some places) reported using both Maori and English with visitors, but few people used Maori exclusively.

Maori, on the other hand, was the language used most often in religious ceremonies and on the marae in formal situations such as whaikorero. Maori was also used on the marae for informal chatting by the informants more often than they would in situations elsewhere.



PETONE

If any two people from the Wellington area included in our survey were to meet unexpectedly, the chances that they would be able to have a conversation in Maori would be about 1 in 20 except in Petone where the chances would be much higher - about 1 in 6. This was because of the large number of young people there who could speak Maori well. However, if both people were adults, the chances would be higher still, ranging from about 1 in 5 in Upper Hutt, to about 1 in 3 in Petone and Lower Hutt. If both people were children, the chances would be practically nil in all areas because of the lower numbers of under 15 year olds who could understand or speak Maori well.



LOWER HUTT

Attitudes to the Maori Language

When asked about language preferences, over half our informants said they preferred to use English and Maori, or just Maori, for conversations. Most people preferred English for reading and writing. Overall Maori was the first language understood by about two fifths of our informants - in Petone this figure was over half - but many people said their knowledge of Maori had deteriorated over the years, for various reasons.

Some people had been discouraged at an early age from speaking Maori by their parents, who felt that in order to get a good education and job, a good command of English was necessary. These parents felt that a knowledge of Maori would only hinder this.

Other informants found that moving to the city had caused them to lose their ability to speak Maori. Some of these people had only minimal knowledge of English when they came to the city, but because of the scarcity of Maori speakers in the city environment, were forced into using English, until gradually they forgot their Maori through lack of practice. Many of these informants expressed a wish to relearn Maori. Others said the only chance they ever get to speak Maori is when they return to their home towns and are in an environment of family and friends where Maori is spoken a lot of the time.



Conclusion

Although nearly two fifths of the parents interviewed had been punished at school for speaking Maori many were very supportive of the introduction of Maori into schools as a way of reviving the language. One informant supported this because she had found it so difficult teaching her own children to speak Maori in a city environment where virtually only English is spoken. Others said that Maori in schools would lead to greater understanding of cultural differences between Maori and Pakeha.

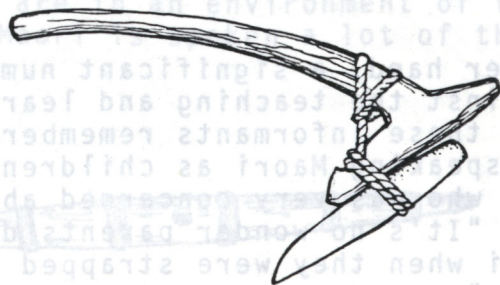
One woman said she encouraged her children to learn Maori and join Maori culture clubs so that they would not feel embarrassed later on in life for not being able to speak Maori. Indeed, many of our informants did express embarrassment and regret that they did not know how to speak Maori. Identity and self-esteem were also given as important reasons for knowing the language.

Several people, mainly in Petone, said that they speak only Maori to their children to ensure that they will be fluent. One woman said that she refuses to speak to her nieces unless they speak Maori to her.

On the other hand, a significant number of people were against the teaching and learning of Maori. Some of these informants remembered their own experiences of speaking Maori as children. As one man, in Petone, who was very concerned about Maori dying out, said "It's no wonder parents don't teach their kids Maori when they were strapped at school for speaking it."

Others believed, as did members of their parent generation, that Maori language was of no use and wanted their children to concentrate on English. A common attitude among this group was that Maori would be of no help in finding jobs or travelling overseas. Some parents felt that a sound knowledge of Maori would mean their ability to communicate in English would suffer. One man said that continuing to speak Maori had meant that Maori people have "fallen behind Pakeha standards." However, another man told us that he had in the past believed that the Pakeha way was best, and brought his children up to know nothing of their taha Maori, thinking that this would ensure they received a good education and found good jobs. Now, though, he regrets this, saying that his children have missed out on so much and are caught in between cultures, not being able to really identify as either Maori or Pakeha.

One woman who is married to a Pakeha, said that her husband forbids Maori to be spoken in the house. The woman, however, feels that it is "showing respect for society by being able to speak Pakeha." She did not seem to think that her husband's attitude was unreasonable.



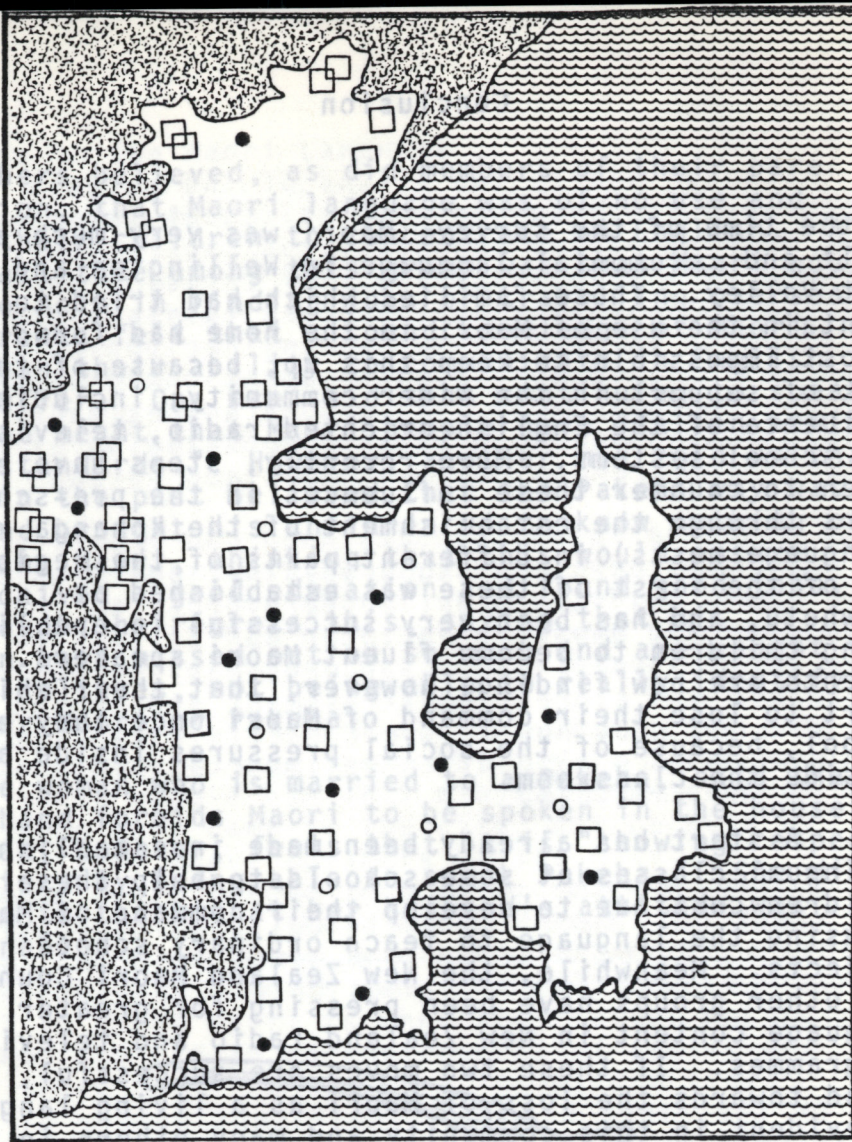
Conclusion

At the time of the survey, Maori was very much an adult and ceremonial language in Wellington and the Hutt Valley. Those families which had tried to maintain the use of Maori in the home had found it almost impossible to keep this up, because of the lack of support in the wider community, including the influence of the English-oriented radio, television, and school systems. More recently, steps have been taken to counter these influences in the pre-school years through the establishment of the kohanga reo (language nests) in different parts of the region. One of the first of these was established at Waiwhetu, and has been very successful in enabling young children to become fluent Maori speakers. Parents are now finding, however, that their children start to lose their command of Maori once they enter school, because of the social pressures inside and outside the classroom.

A start has already been made in establishing bilingual classes at some schools to help these children continue to develop their command of Maori by using the language to teach ordinary school subjects. Meanwhile, the New Zealand Maori Council and other groups have been pressing for greater Maori language content in New Zealand radio and television programmes. If these two moves are successful, the trend towards the loss of Maori as a living language, so evident in this community and many others in the 1970's may yet be reversed.

* * * * *

This report was prepared by Paula Martin
(Ngai Tahu/Rangitane)
and edited, with some additions, by Richard Benton.



DISTRIBUTION OF ADULT MAORI SPEAKERS IN WELLINGTON CITY, 1975

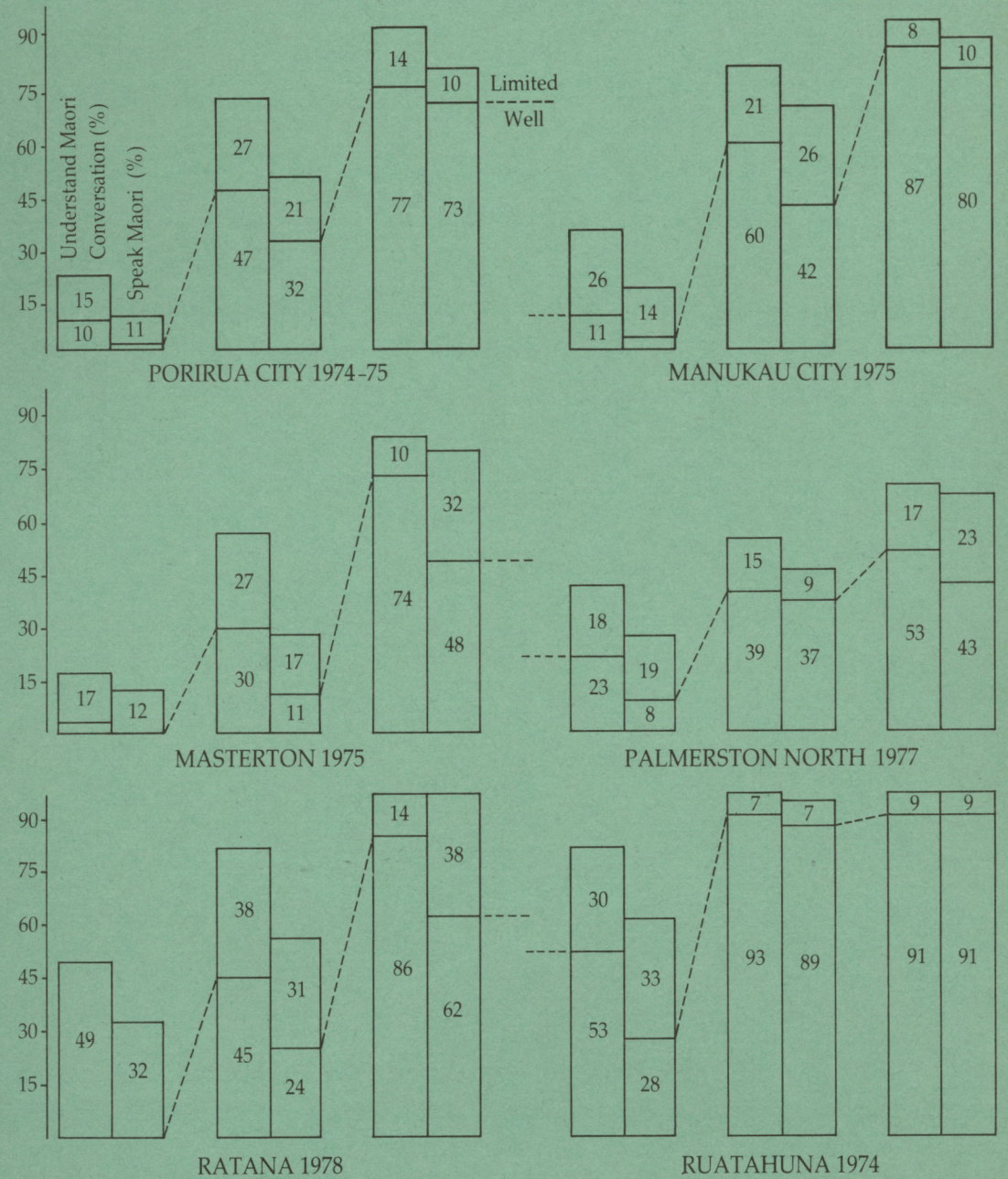
● 100 fluent Maori speakers 25 years of age and over

Other (mostly non Maori-speaking) adults:

○ 100 people of Maori descent □ 1,000 other people

(c) Copyright, NZCER, Wellington, May 1986 [97]

Knowledge of Maori Language by Age Groups on 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.