

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

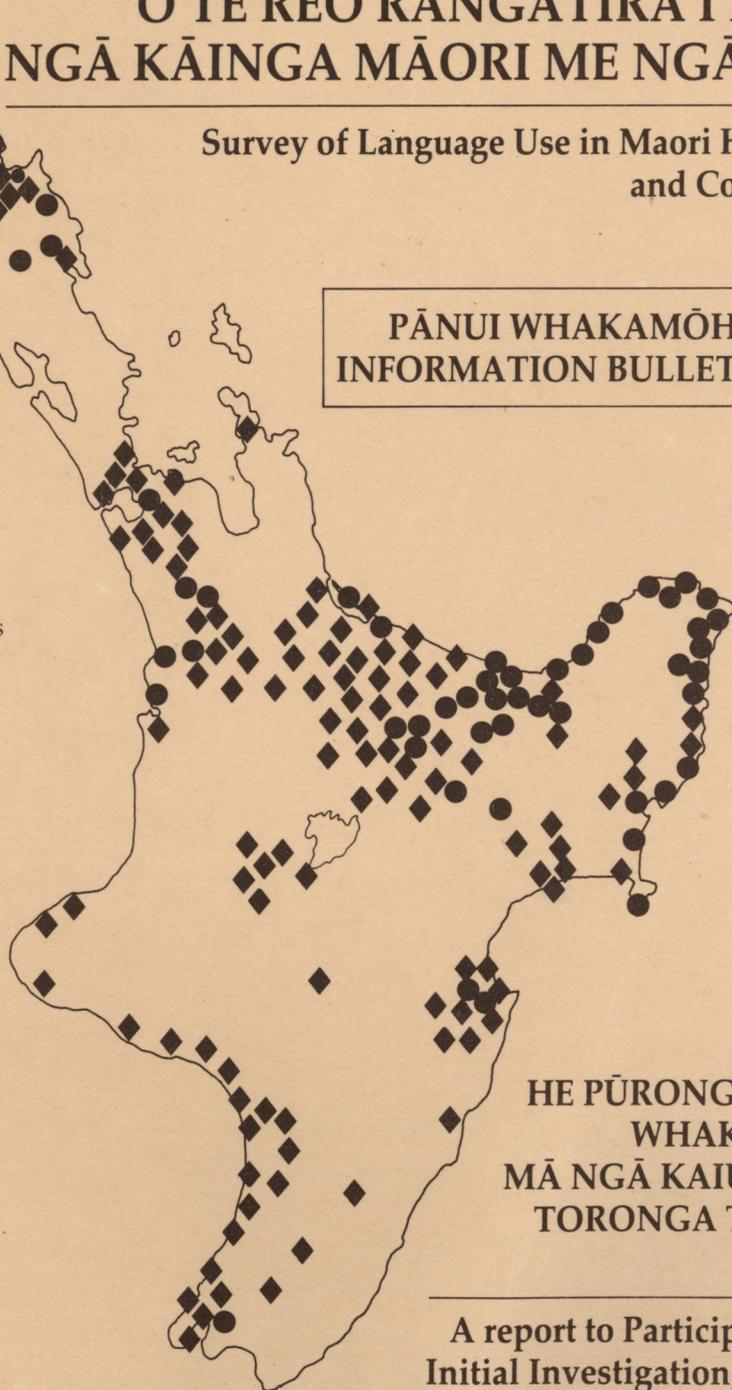
PĀNUI WHAKAMŌHIO
INFORMATION BULLETIN

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Localities in which
ten or more households
were visited

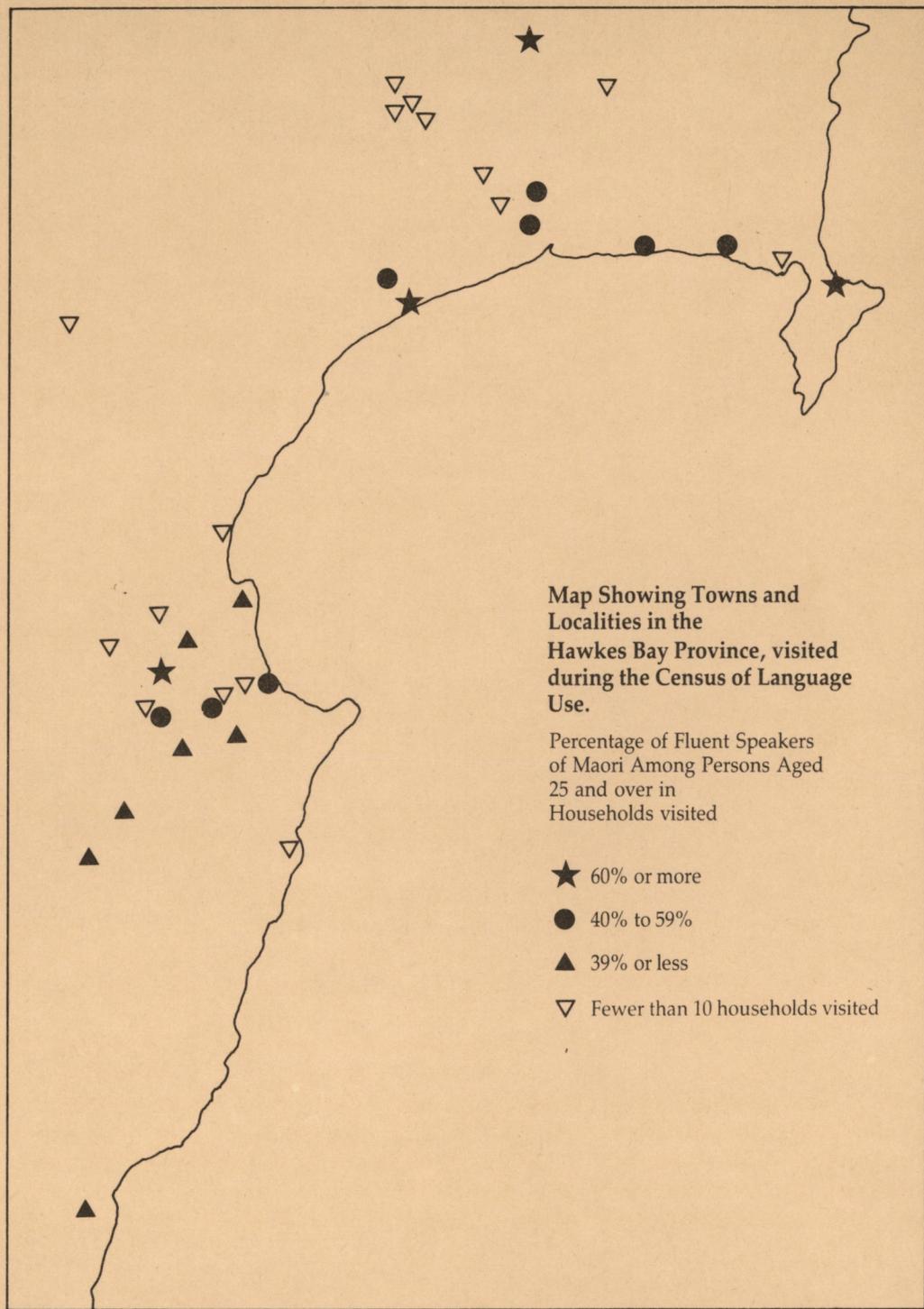
● Two thirds or
more of adults were
fluent speakers of
Maori

◆ 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 OMAHU

Fieldwork for the census of language use in Maori communities took place in 28 households in Omaha from July to December 1977. The interviewers were Tawini Rangihau (Tuhoe), Candy Scrimshaw (Ngati Kahungunu), Kay Waapu (Ngati Kahungunu), Ian Maxwell (Ngai Tai) and Tom Rangihuna (Ngati Porou). Fifteen interviews were carried out partly or entirely in Maori; the rest (14) were in English.

The households surveyed had a total population of 129, and 128 of them were of Maori descent. This was about a third of the total Maori population at the time.

RESULTS OF THE LINGUISTIC SURVEY

Iwi Affiliation

The people interviewed mentioned 15 major iwi to which they or members of their households belonged. The largest iwi in the group was Ngati Kahungunu with 84 members, about two-thirds of the total. Ngati Tuwharetoa with 25 members (or one-fifth) was the second largest tribal group mentioned.

Ability To Speak And Understand Maori

The information presented in the table on page 2 reveals that:

- (1) A little more than a quarter of the people surveyed were fluent speakers of Maori.
- (2) A little less than a half of the people had a good understanding of the language.
- (3) Although none of the school children were fluent speakers, one-third of them understood Maori easily.
- (4) A little more than a quarter of the people had no understanding of Maori at that time.

KNOWLEDGE OF SPOKEN MAORI IN OMAHU

Age Group	Fluent Speakers		Understand Easily		Limited Understanding		No Knowledge	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
45 & over	27	87	30	97	1	3	0	
25-44	6	29	8	38	6	29	7	33
15-24	1	3	8	27	10	33	12	40
2-14	0		15	34	12	27	17	39
Overall	34	27	61	48	29	23	36	29

→ (Numbers and percentages refer to people in the households surveyed; percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number).

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The Use Of Maori Language In The Household

English was the main language spoken in most of the homes visited. There were 25 households with dependent children, and in one Maori was the main language used, while in three others Maori and English were spoken for an equal amount of time. In the rest, 21 homes, English was spoken more than Maori.

There were 3 childless households visited. In two of them, people spoke mostly or entirely in Maori, while the two members of the other household spoke Maori with Maori-speaking visitors.

The Maori Language In The Community

English was also the main language spoken in the community. Most of the kaumatua preferred to, and did, speak Maori with Maori-speaking neighbours, friends and family. However, most younger members of the community could speak only English well. For these reasons, more English was spoken in the community than Maori.

The Maori language was used in ceremonies on the marae and in certain religious services. At such times the language was used for ceremonial purposes rather than for the exchange of ideas. When the formalities were over, people usually went on talking in English. All this was found in many other places where most people did not speak Maori well. There were, however, quite a few people in Omaha who did not use the language as well as, or as often, as they could. If two people met unexpectedly, the chances that they would be able to talk to each other in Maori would be about 1 in 8, but if they were both adults the chances would be 1 in 2.

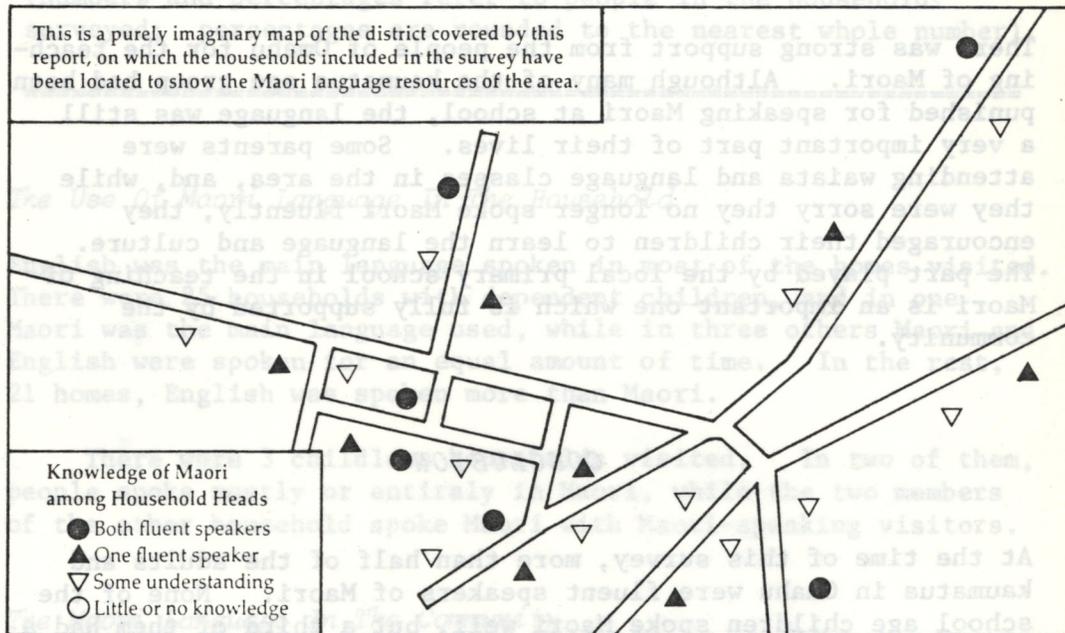
Attitudes Towards The Language

There was strong support from the people of Omaha for the teaching of Maori. Although many of the kaumatua age group had been punished for speaking Maori at school, the language was still a very important part of their lives. Some parents were attending waiata and language classes in the area, and, while they were sorry they no longer spoke Maori fluently, they encouraged their children to learn the language and culture. The part played by the local primary school in the teaching of Maori is an important one which is fully supported by the community.

CONCLUSION

At the time of this survey, more than half of the adults and kaumatua in Omaha were fluent speakers of Maori. None of the school age children spoke Maori well, but a third of them had a good understanding of the language. Teaching in both English and Maori in the local primary school was allowed to go ahead after NZCER, in 1978, reported to the Hawkes Bay Education Board preliminary results of this survey and of the follow-up on how parents felt about teaching in the two languages. The work going on in the school is supporting the efforts of the parents

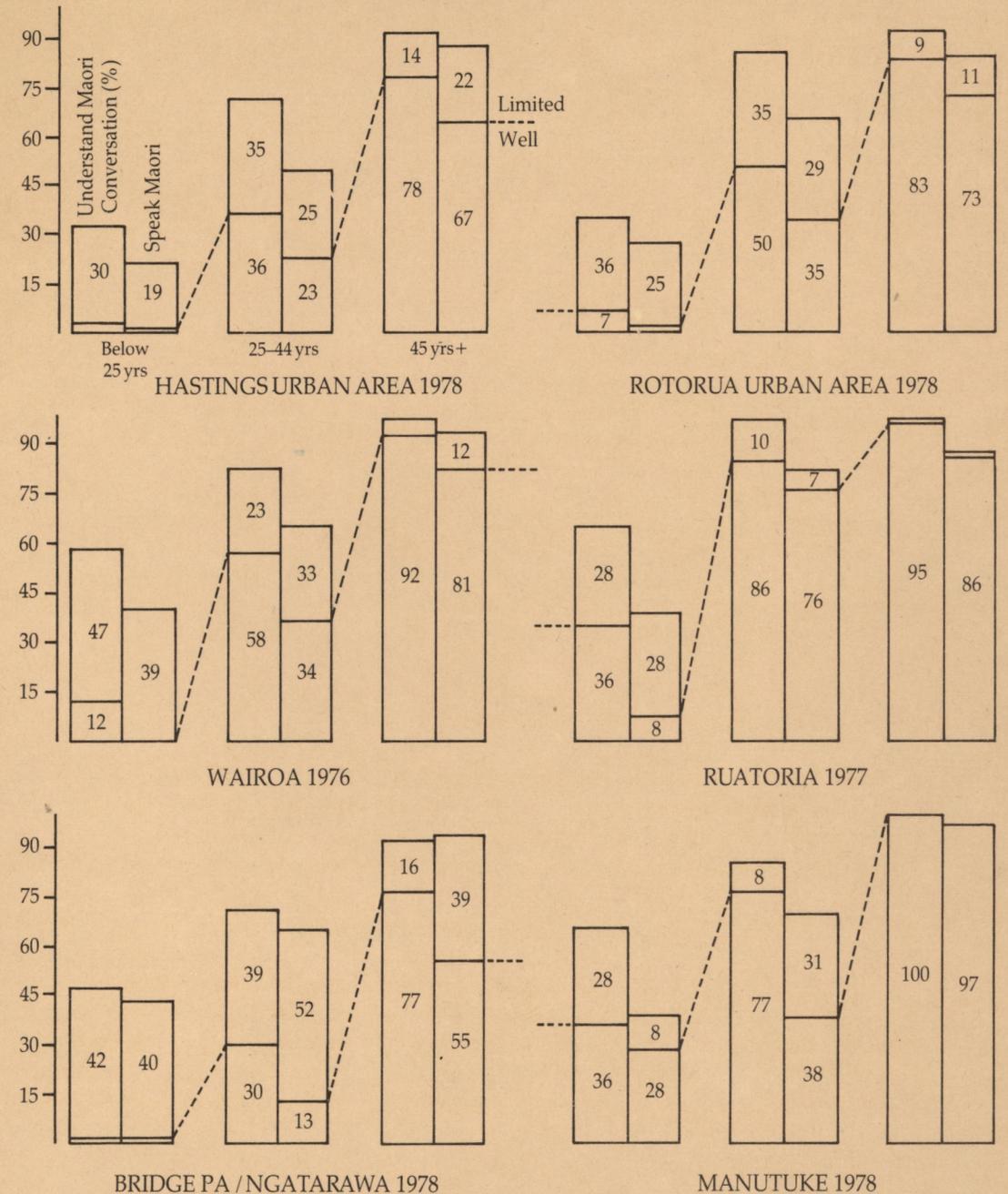
to revive Maori in the home. It is the school leaver - young adult age group which is most likely to lose the language, as only one fluent speaker from this age group was found in the survey. These people are becoming parents themselves, with little knowledge of Maori to pass on to their own children. Language courses, such as the Rakau method ones now sponsored by the Takitimu Language Board in the homes or on the marae, could be extremely helpful to this age-group, just as the bilingual school, a bilingual pre-school, and the *kohanga reo* could help the children to know and use Maori well.



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.