

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

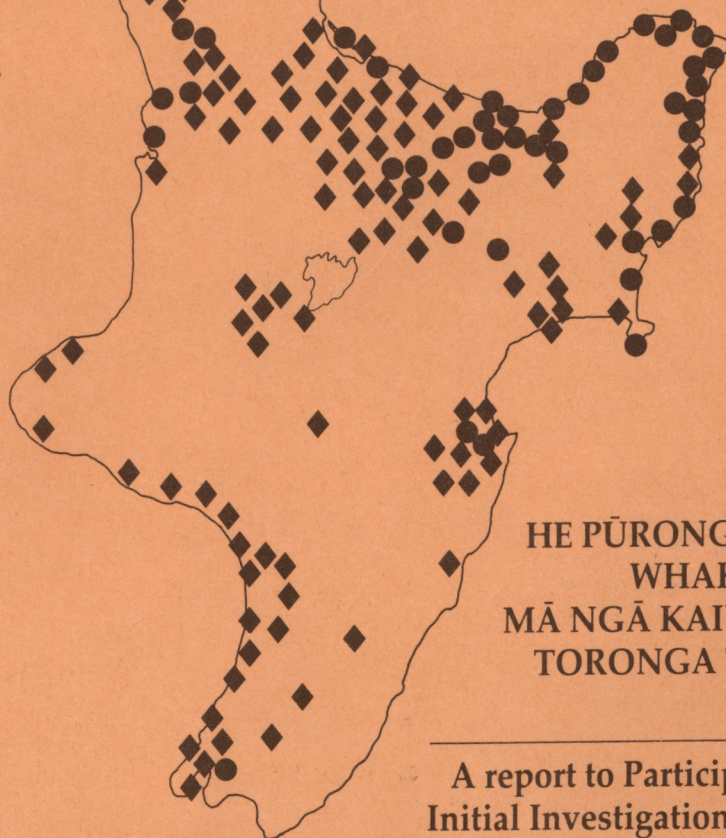
PĀNUI WHAKAMŌHIO
INFORMATION BULLETIN

21

Localities in which
ten or more households
were visited

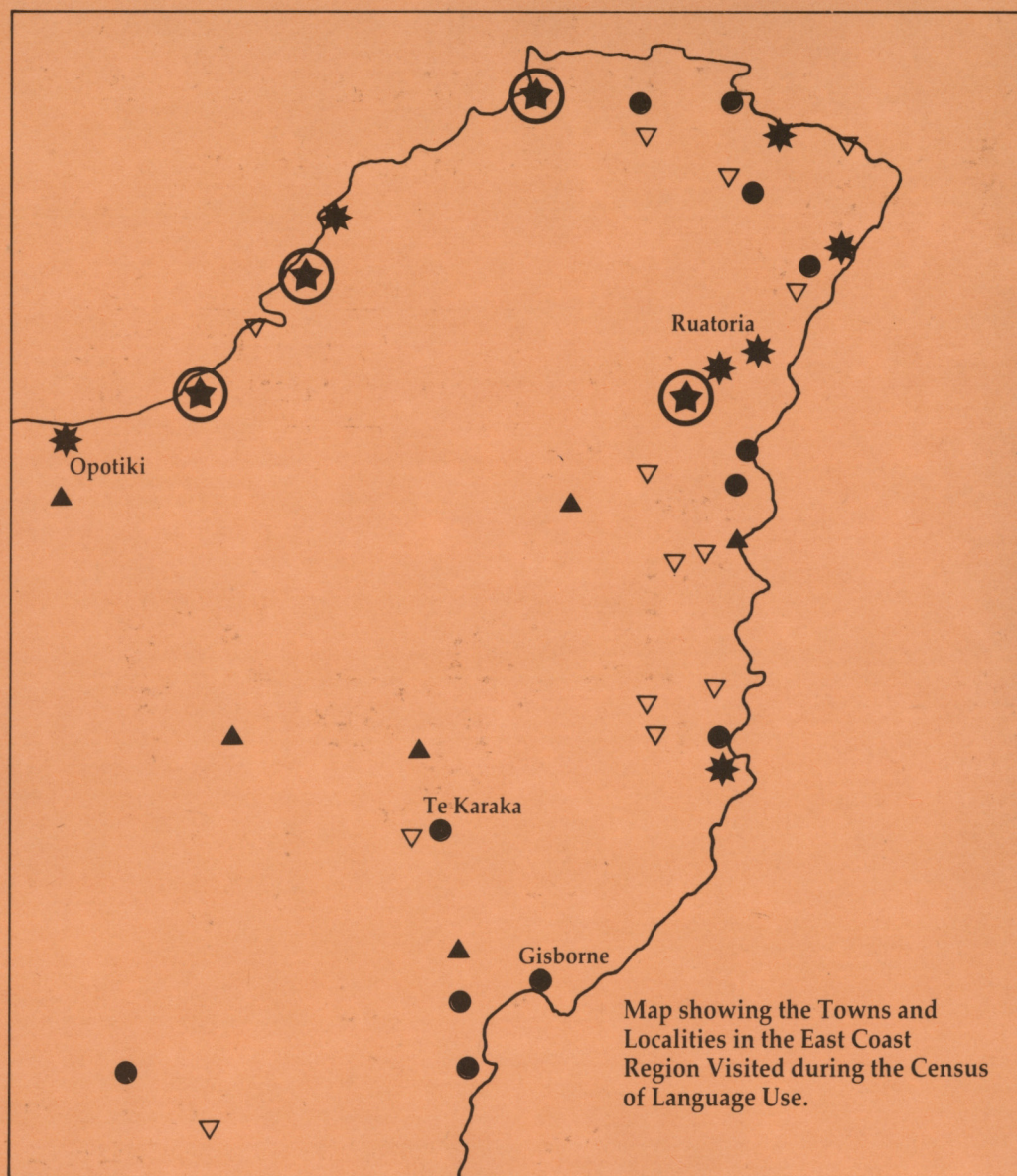
● Two thirds or
more of adults were
fluent speakers of
Maori

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

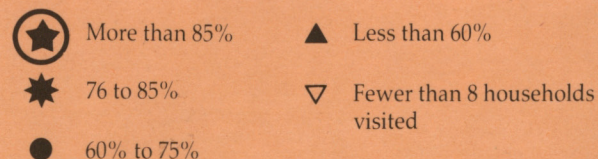


HE PŪRONGORONGO
WHAKAMŌHIO
MĀ NGĀ KAIURU KI TE
TORONGA TUATAHI,
1973-1978

A report to Participants in the
Initial Investigation, 1973-1978



Percentage of fluent speakers of Maori among persons aged 25 and over in the households visited.



THE MAORI LANGUAGE IN RANGITUKIA

Fieldwork for the census of language use in Maori communities took place in 20 households in Rangitukia in May 1978. The interviewers were Hera Henare (Ngati Porou/Ngapuhi) and Sharon Moerkerk (Maniapoto). Two interviews were carried out partly in Maori and partly in English; the rest (18) were in English.

The households surveyed had a combined population of 101, of whom 100 were of Maori descent. This was about two-thirds of the total Maori population of the district at the time.

RESULTS OF THE LINGUISTIC SURVEY

Iwi Affiliation

The people interviewed mentioned 5 major iwi to which they or members of their households belonged. However, the vast majority, 97 people or 96 percent, belonged to Ngati Porou.

Ability to Speak and Understand Maori

The information in the table on page two shows how more and more people have no knowledge of Maori, with three-quarters of the fluent speakers over the age of 25. (More than half of the community's speakers of Maori were kaumatua, over 45.) A quarter of the school leaver/young adult group could speak Maori with ease (and almost two-thirds of them understood the language well). However, only one school-age child in the families interviewed spoke Maori well, although more than a quarter of these children had a good understanding of the language.

Some of the reasons for this situation are examined below.

KNOWLEDGE OF SPOKEN MAORI IN RANGITUKIA (1978)

Age Group	Fluent Speakers		Understand Easily		Limited Understanding		No Knowledge	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
45 & over	22	100	22	100	0		0	
25-44	13	68	15	79	2	11	2	11
15-24	5	26	12	63	7	37	0	
2-14	1	3	11	29	21	55	6	16
Overall	41	42	60	61	30	31	8	3

(Numbers and percentages refer to those people included in the survey; percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number).

=====

The Use of Maori Language In The Household

There were 15 households with dependent children visited, and in everyday conversation as much English was spoken as Maori. In three households the main language was Maori, while in 8, Maori and English were spoken equally. In the others, English was spoken most of the time. In 3 of the 5 childless households, Maori was the main language spoken, and the residents of 1 household used both Maori and English equally. While some Maori was spoken in the remaining childless household, English was used more often.

The Maori Language In The Community

While more than three-quarters of the adults over 25 were fluent speakers of Maori, the language they used in speaking to other members of the community depended on a number of things, especially the age of the person spoken to, who that person was, and where the conversation took place. For example, most adults spoke to Maori neighbours, friends and workmates mainly in Maori (or in both Maori and English), while English was spoken nearly all the time with Pakeha members of the community and younger Maori. The Maori language played an important part in certain religious services, and half the informants regarded Maori as the proper language for both the services on marae as well as for discussions which followed.

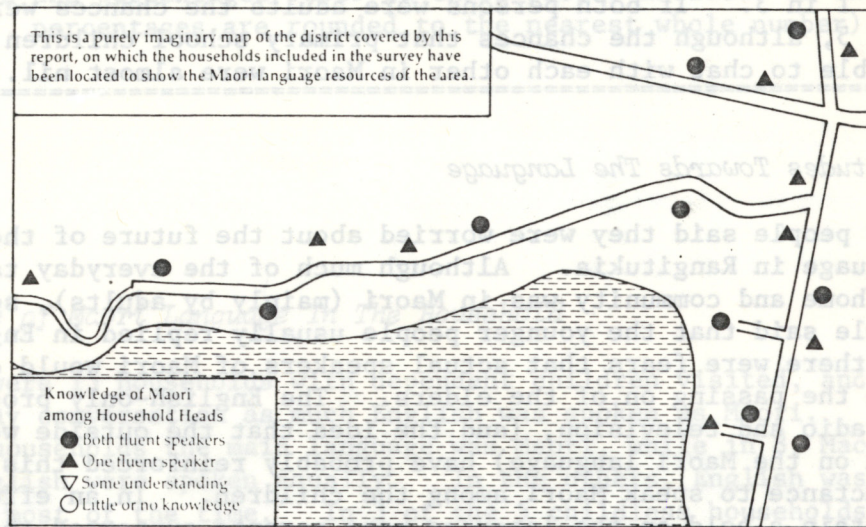
If any two members of the community were to meet by chance, the odds that they would be able to talk to each other in Maori were 1 in 3. If both persons were adults the chances were about 4 in 5, although the chances that primary school children would be able to chat with each other in Maori were almost nil.

Attitudes Towards The Language

Many people said they were worried about the future of the Maori language in Rangitukia. Although much of the everyday talk in the home and community was in Maori (mainly by adults), some people said that the younger people usually replied in English, and there were fears that actual speakers of Maori would disappear with the passing on of the elders. The English-only programmes on radio and television, (and the idea that the outside world looks down on the Maori language) have probably reinforced this reluctance to speak Maori among the children. In an effort to maintain a hold on the language many parents supported the teaching of Maori in the schools. Some people felt that the Maori language being taught should emphasise everyday conversation rather than reading and writing skills.

CONCLUSION

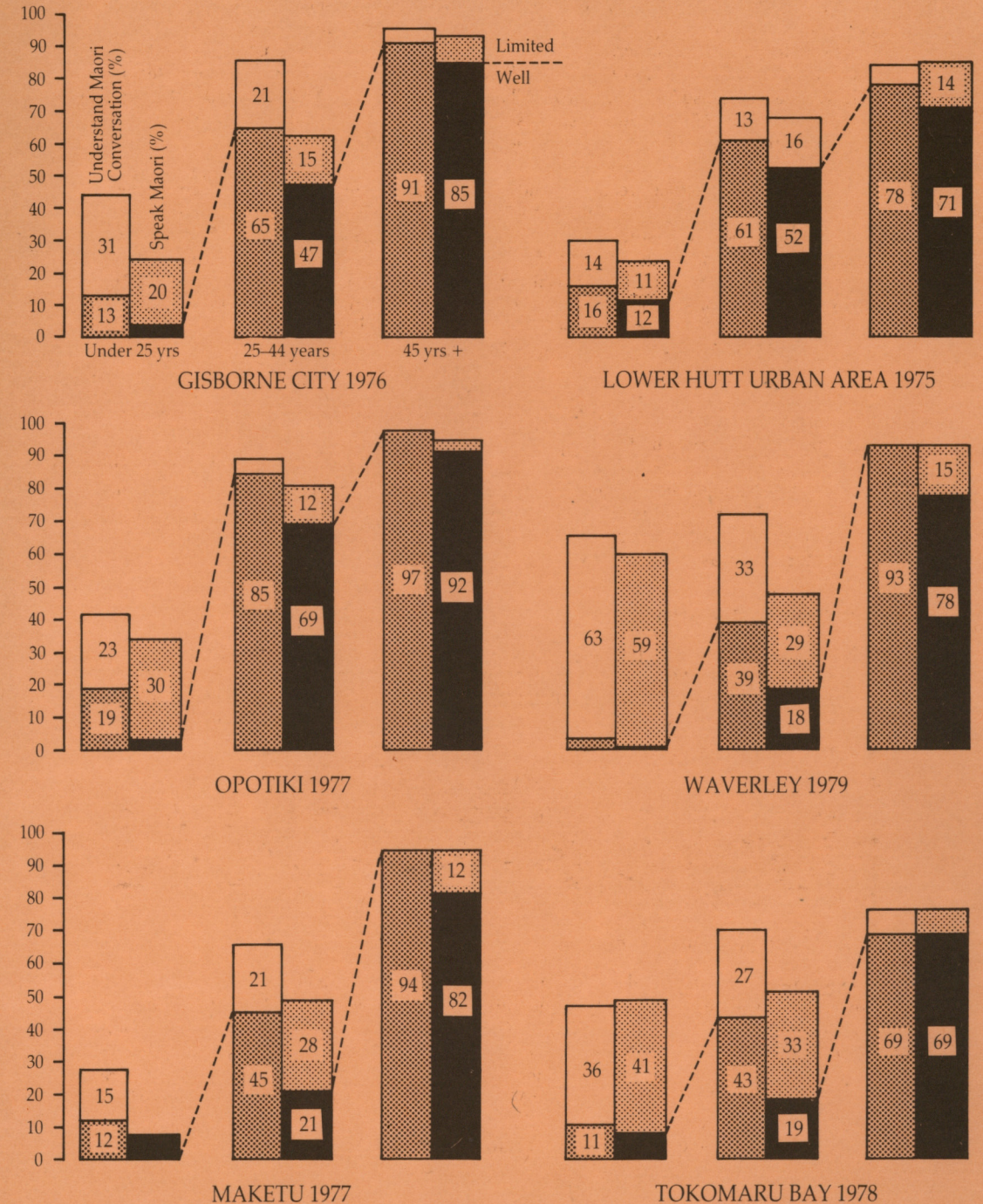
A little less than half the people in the survey spoke Maori fluently, and nearly two-thirds of them understood the language with ease. Maori was spoken and heard in many social occasions in the community, at work, on local marae and in the home. However, as English was used in the classroom, on school visits to larger towns, on radio and television, and in newspapers and magazines, people were afraid that English would replace Maori as the everyday language of the community. (Over a quarter of the school-age children understood Maori with ease, although only one child in the homes we visited could speak it well.) The survival of the language in Rangitukia probably depends very much on the success of grandparents teaching Maori to their mokopuna.



This report was prepared by Lee Smith (Ngati Kahungunu).

© NZCER, Wellington, December 1982.

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.