

# 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

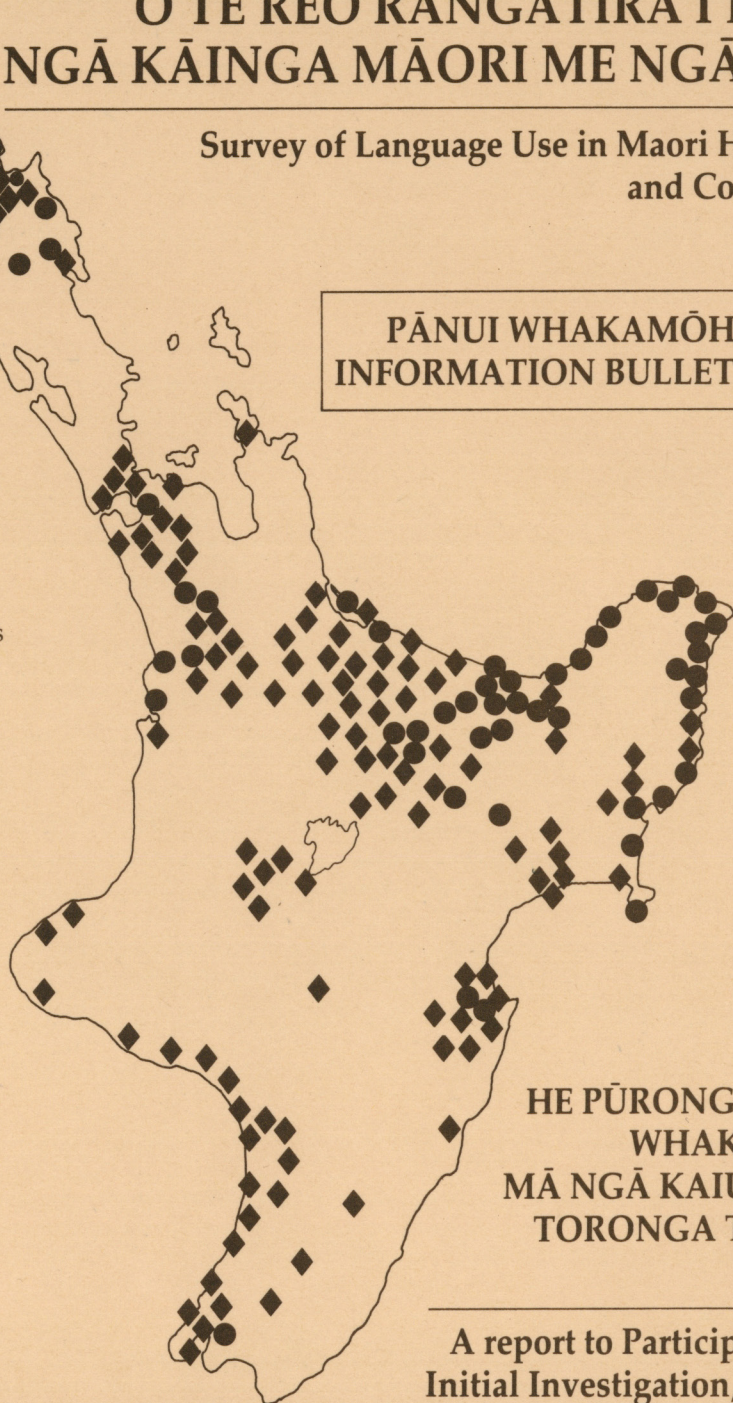
PĀNUI WHAKAMŌHIO  
INFORMATION BULLETIN

11

Localities in which  
ten or more households  
were visited

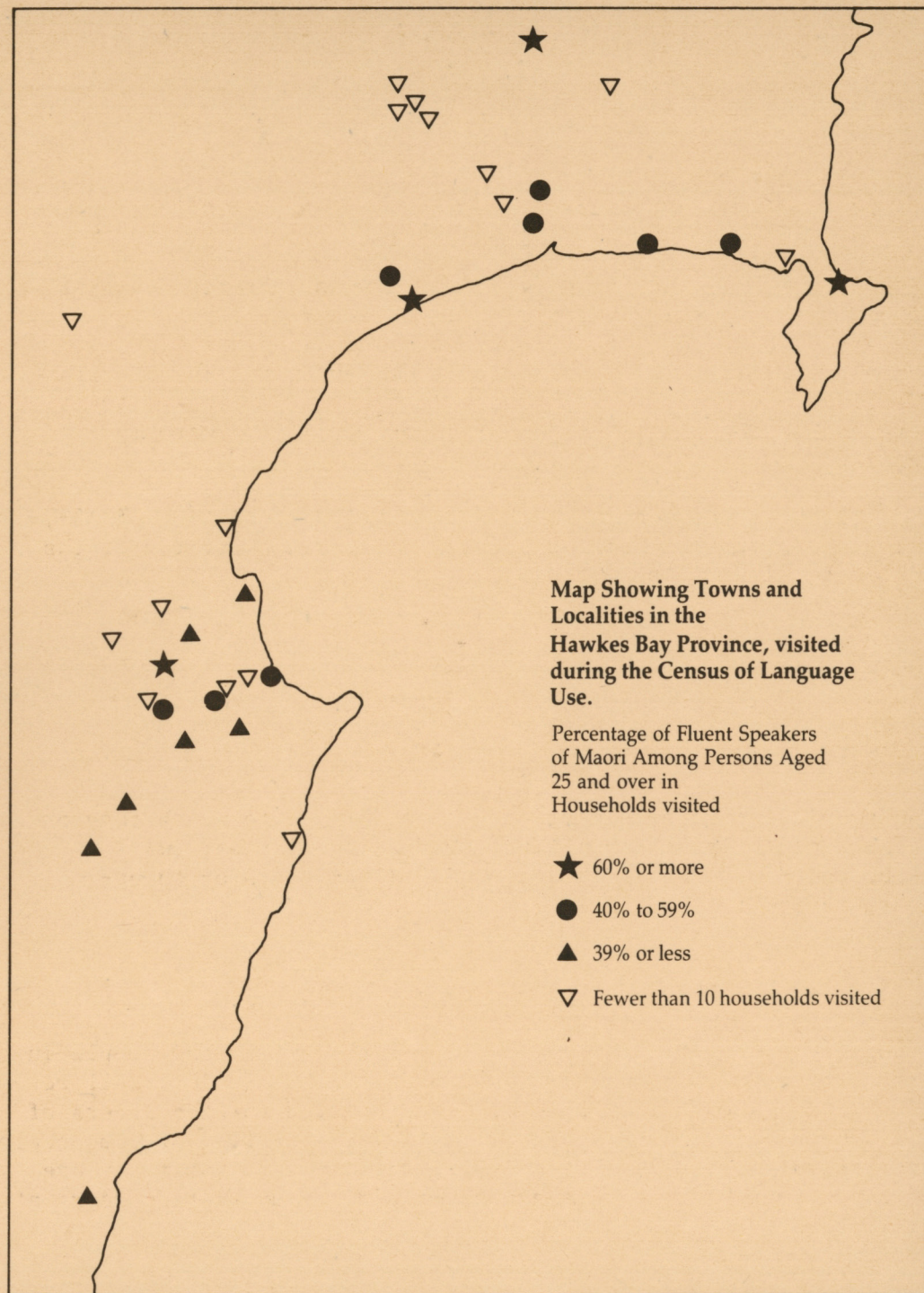
● Two thirds or  
more of adults were  
fluent speakers of  
Maori

◆ 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 BRIDGE PA AND NGATARAWA

Fieldwork for the census of language use in Maori communities took place in 34 households in Bridge Pa and Ngatarawa in January 1978. The interviewers were Tamati Kruger (Tuhoe), Numia Ponika (Tuhoe), Alan Hawea (Ngati Awa), Patricia Parata (Ngati Porou), and Phillip Hawera (Tuhoe). Six interviews were carried out partly or entirely in Maori; 28 were in English.

The households surveyed had a combined population of 159, all of whom were of Maori descent. This was about two-fifths of the total Maori population at the time.

### RESULTS OF THE LINGUISTIC SURVEY

#### Iwi Affiliation

The people interviewed mentioned 10 major iwi to which they or members of their households belonged. The largest iwi represented was Ngati Kahungunu with 118 members or three-quarters the total.

#### Ability to Speak and Understand Maori

The information in the table on page 2 shows that the people in Bridge Pa and Ngatarawa who spoke and understood Maori well were mainly kaumatua. This age group represented three-quarters of the community's fluent speakers. Nearly a quarter of the people understood Maori well, but only two of them were under the age of 24. Over half of this age group did not understand Maori at all.

### Ability to Speak and Understand Maori

Age Group	Fluent Speakers		Understand Easily		Limited Understanding		No Knowledge	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
45 & over	17	55	24	77	5	16	2	7
25-44	3	13	7	30	9	39	7	22
15-24	2	5	2	5	15	39	22	56
2-14	0	0	0	0	28	44	36	56
Overall	22	14	33	21	57	36	67	43

Numbers and percentages refer to people in the survey in January 1978; percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

=====

#### The Use of Maori Language In The Household

English was the main language used in most of the households surveyed. There were 25 households with dependent children and in 9 of them English only was used. While Maori was sometimes used in the rest of the households (mostly between adults), English again was the main language spoken.

In the 9 childless households surveyed, people spoke only in English in one, and English was also the language usually spoken in the rest.

#### The Maori Language In The Community

English was the main language spoken in the community. Competent Maori speakers, especially the kaumatua, wanted to use Maori most of the time, but were not given the chance, because most people

in the community spoke only English. Neighbours, friends and workmates spoke with each other mainly in English. Maori was used mostly at hui on the marae and for certain religious services.

If any two adults in the community met unexpectedly, the chances that they would understand each other in Maori were about 1 in 5; if one was a child or if both were children, the chances were practically nil.

#### Attitudes Towards The Language

Many of the people we interviewed were really concerned about the drop in the number of people in these communities, who spoke or knew Maori. The kaumatua were especially concerned, because to speak the language was to them a most important part of being Maori. There were a lot of fluent speakers of the language who spoke mainly English in the home and the community, partly because few people in the district as a whole could understand them if they spoke Maori, and partly because most of the younger people in the local community could understand only English well. Some people were sorry they could not speak Maori better, and were attending courses in order to learn more not only of the language, but also of marae etiquette, waiata and local history. Many parents had not taught their own children Maori but they realised the importance of the language today, and were now trying to teach their mokopuna. Many people wanted the Maori language taught in local schools as a help to what parents were trying to do in the homes to prevent the total loss of the language in these communities. One person we spoke to said that things were already so bad that Maori should be made a compulsory subject in all schools.

#### CONCLUSION

The linguistic survey has showed a dramatic drop-off in the numbers of fluent speakers of Maori in these communities. Over

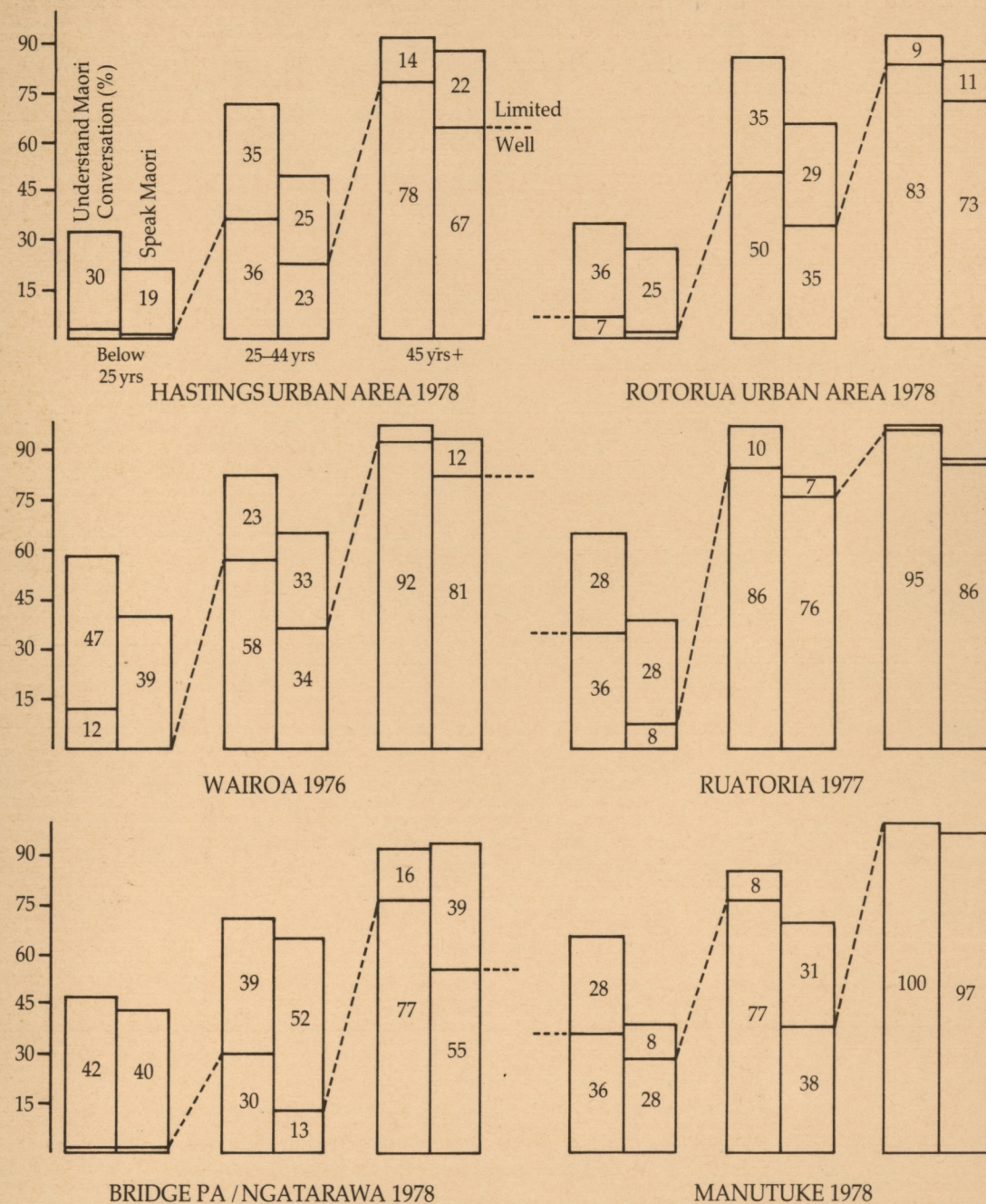
a third of the kaumatua and adults surveyed spoke the language well, compared with only 2 out of 104 people under the age of 24. While nearly a quarter of the community understood Maori well, over half the school-age children did not understand the language at all at the time of the survey.

Many of the people we spoke to were trying to teach and speak Maori in their homes, but felt that they were getting nowhere because their children and mokopuna were not interested in learning the language. There are many people in New Zealand who believe that you don't need to know the language well in order to understand Maori culture. Many Maori families in Hawkes Bay were also convinced that this is true. However, more and more people now realize that we are lucky to have two cultures in this country, and this has helped to start up a new interest in the teaching and learning of Maori. In Hawkes Bay a bilingual English-Maori programme has been set up at Omaha Primary School, and there are now also "Rakau Method" language courses under the direction of the Takitimu Language Board, many wananga on local marae and, more recently, Maori-speaking child crèches (Te Kohanga Reo). If you are interested in starting a similar Maori language scheme in your own area, write to the Department of Maori Affairs for more information.

This report was prepared by Lee Smith (Ngati Kahungunu)

© NZCER, Wellington, September 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.