

# 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

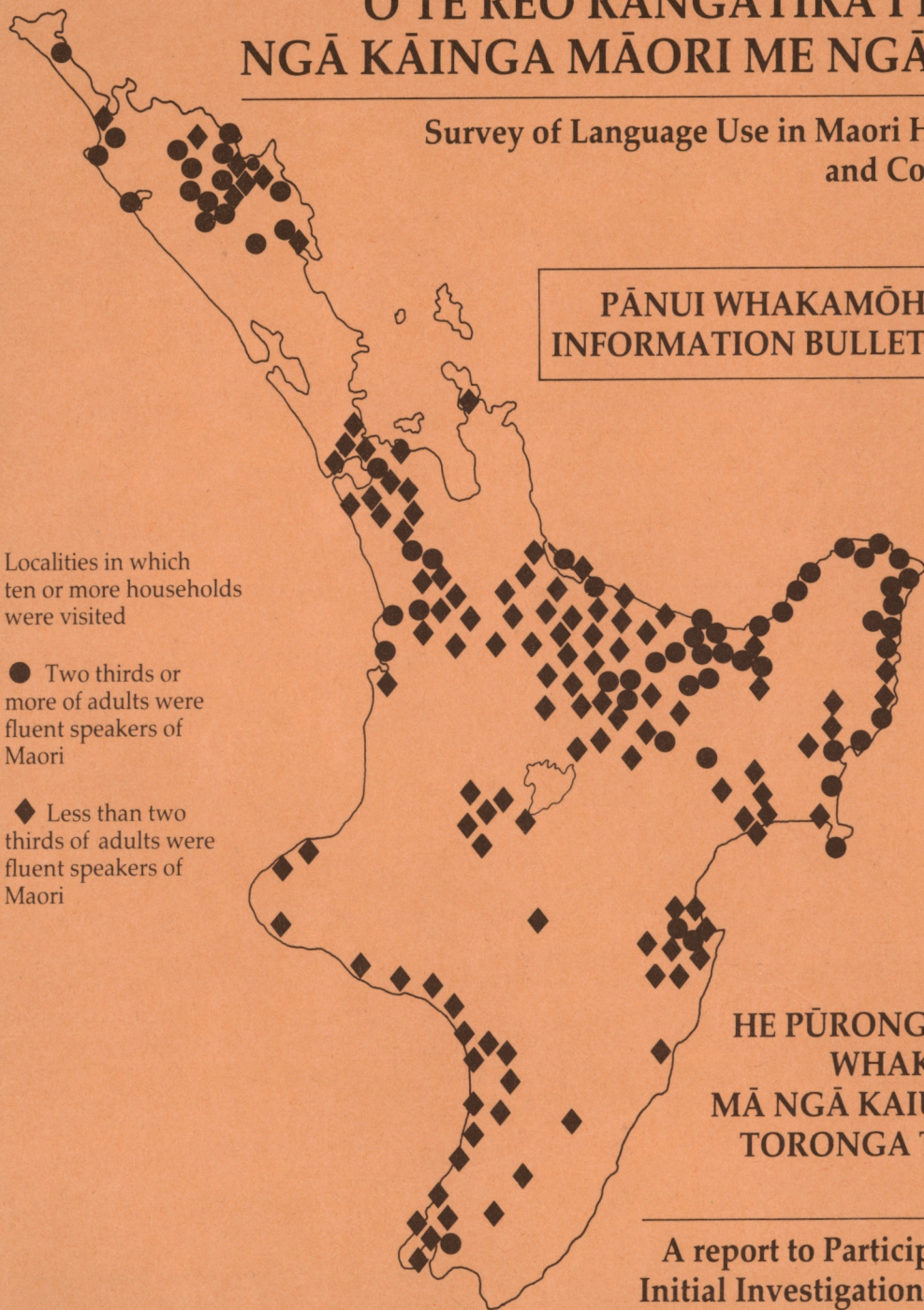
PĀNUI WHAKAMŌHIO  
INFORMATION BULLETIN

13

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



Map showing Towns and Localities of the Waikato Region of the North Island visited during the Census of Language use

Percentage of Fluent Speakers of Maori Among Persons Aged 25 and over in Households visited

- ★ 70% or more
- ◆ 55% to 69%
- 40% to 54%
- ▼ Less than 40%
- Fewer than 10 households visited

## THE MAORI LANGUAGE IN KAWHIA AND AOTEA

Fieldwork for the census of language use in Maori communities took place in 25 households in Kawhia and Aotea in December 1975. The interviewers were Evelyn Te Uira, Alyson Te Uira, Candy Scrimshaw and Sue Rikihana. Twenty-two interviews were carried out in English, the rest were partly or entirely in Maori.

The households surveyed had a combined population of 117, of whom 113 were of Maori descent. The survey thus covered almost the whole Maori population of the two districts.

## RESULTS OF THE LINGUISTIC SURVEY

### *Iwi Affiliation*

The people interviewed mentioned 4 major iwi to which they or members of their household belonged. Most of them, 81 members, or 69 percent of the total, belonged to Waikato. The next largest iwi belonged to Maniapoto, with 19 members, or 16 percent of the total.

### *Ability To Speak And Understand Maori*

The information in the table at the top of page 2 tells us that more than three-quarters of the fluent speakers of Maori were adults over the age of 25.

While only 5 percent of the school-age children spoke Maori well, about a third of them understood the language with ease, a third knew a little Maori, and a further third knew no Maori at all.

KNOWLEDGE OF MAORI IN KAWHIA AND AOTEA (1975)

Age Group	Fluent Speakers		Understand Easily		Limited Understanding		No Knowledge	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
45 & over	26	87	27	90	1	3	2	7
25-44	12	67	12	67	5	28	1	5
15-24	4	36	6	55	5	46	0	
2-14	3	5	19	33	19	33	20	34
Overall	45	39	64	55	30	26	23	20

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

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*Use of Maori Language In The Household*

Eighteen households with dependent children were visited. People spoke entirely or mostly in Maori in one, and in 5 households both Maori and English were spoken equally. Although Maori was used sometimes by members of 9 other households, English was the main language used. In the rest, only English was spoken.

In 4 of the 7 childless households, people spoke only or mostly Maori amongst themselves, while English was mainly spoken in the others.

*The Maori Language In The Community*

We have already seen that more than three-quarters of the adults over 25 could speak Maori well. This meant that friends, work-

mates and neighbours in the community often spoke Maori amongst themselves. However, whether fluent Maori speakers spoke Maori or English depended on the ages of the people they spoke to and their ability to speak Maori. Maori and English were, therefore, spoken equally in the community.

The Maori language played an important part in ceremonies at many hui on the local marae, and in certain religious services in public and private settings.

If any two members of the community met unexpectedly the chances were 1 in 5 that they would be able to speak with each other in Maori. If both persons were adults over 25, the chances were much greater, about 3 in 5.

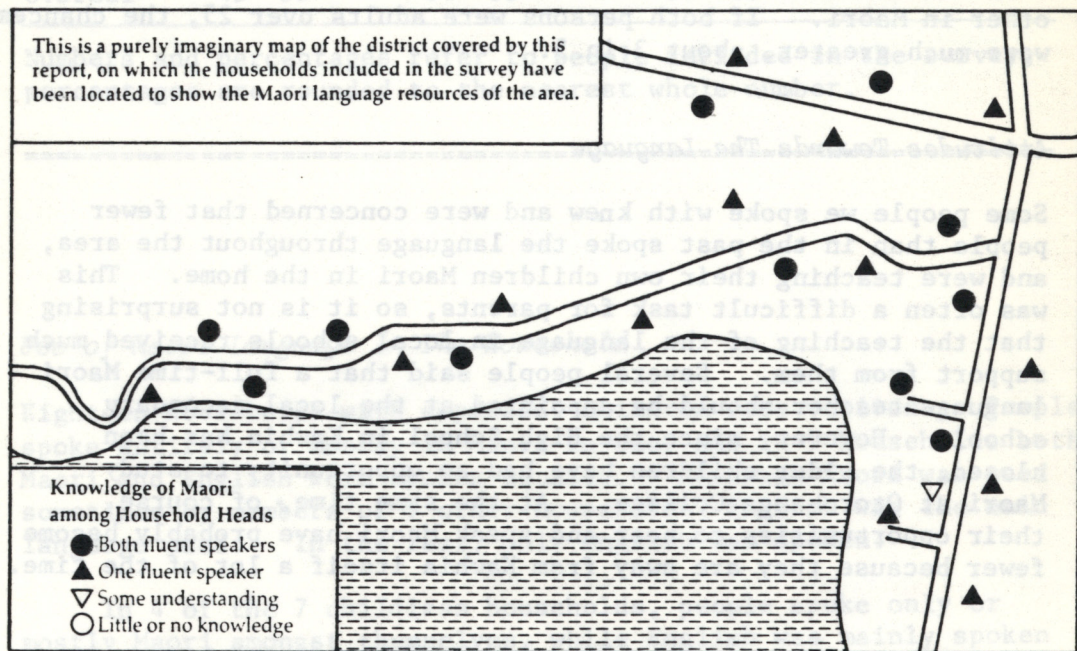
*Attitudes Towards The Language*

Some people we spoke with knew and were concerned that fewer people than in the past spoke the language throughout the area, and were teaching their own children Maori in the home. This was often a difficult task for parents, so it is not surprising that the teaching of the language in local schools received much support from them. Several people said that a full-time Maori language teacher should be appointed at the local secondary school. However, since the High School in Kawhia has been closed, the older children have had an opportunity to study Maori at Otorohanga College. At the same time, of course, their opportunities to hear and speak Maori have probably become fewer because they are away from Kawhia itself a lot of the time.

CONCLUSION

The survey has shown that more than a third of the people interviewed in the Kawhia area were fluent speakers of Maori, and over half of them were able to understand the language with ease.

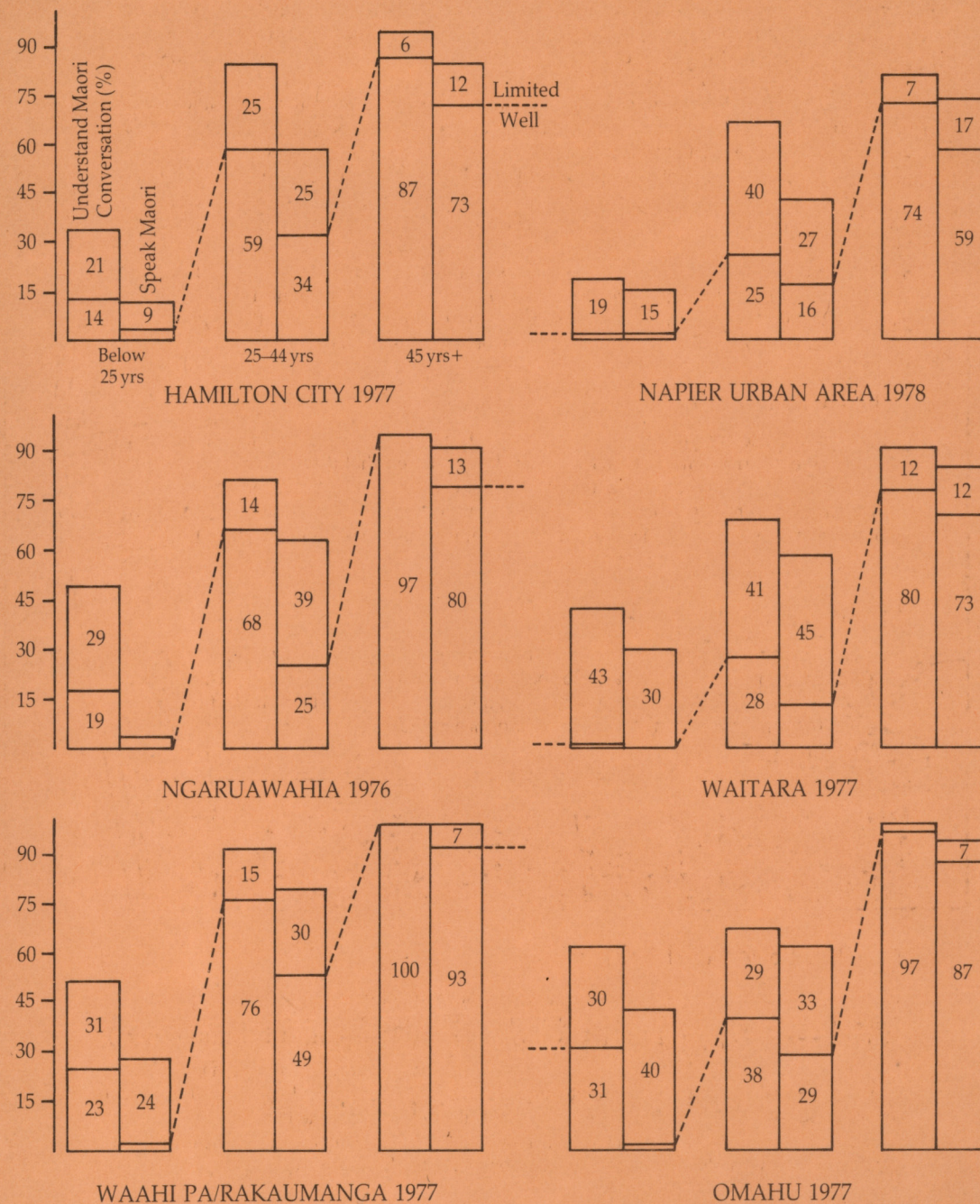
The language continued to be spoken a great deal in the household and community, especially by adults (most of whom were born and brought up in the area). Adults often spoke Maori with the children, especially in the home, and this is why a third of the school children could understand the language, although a lot fewer could speak Maori well. This caused so much concern that several families in 1975 were already trying to make sure that they passed their own knowledge of Maori on to their children. This is an encouraging sign and shows that the language has a good chance of surviving in this important region of the Waikato-Maniapoto people.



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.