

# 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

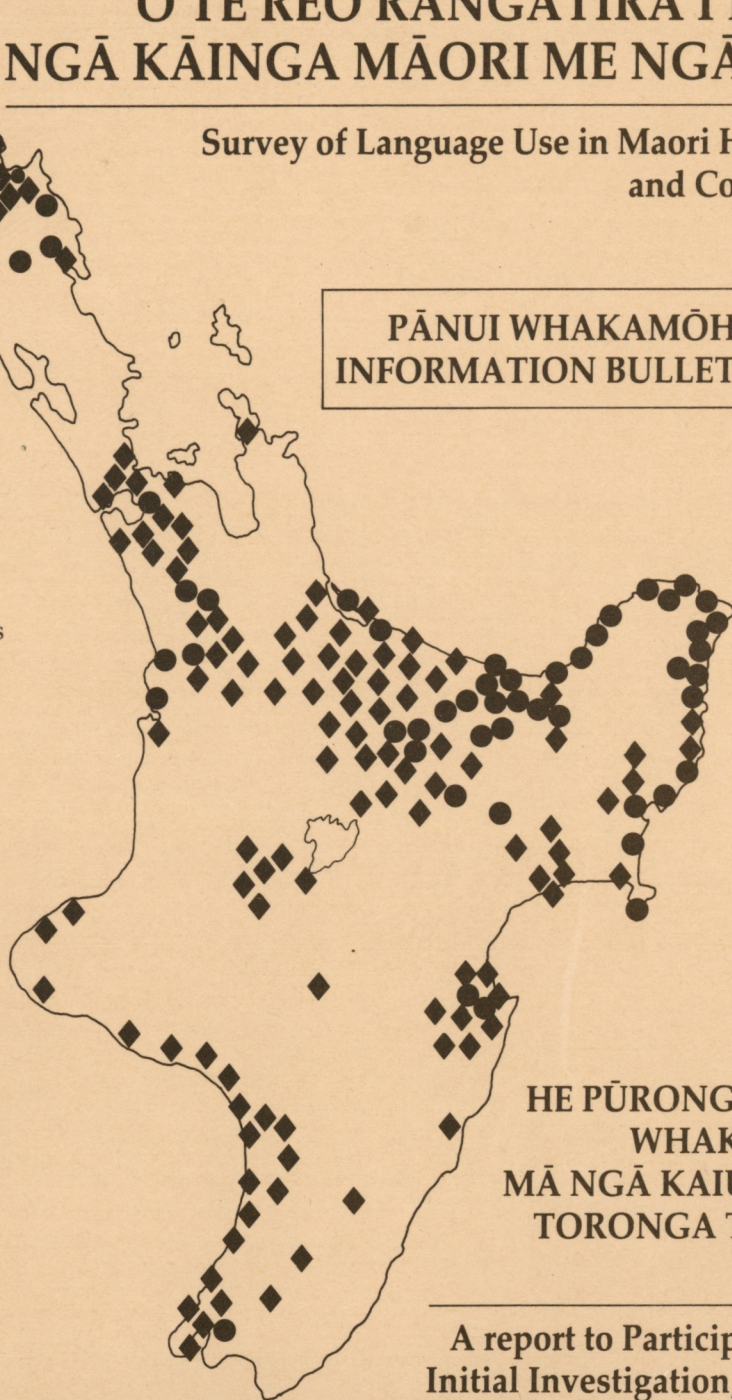
PĀNUI WHAKAMŌHIO  
INFORMATION BULLETIN

68

Localities in which  
ten or more households  
were visited

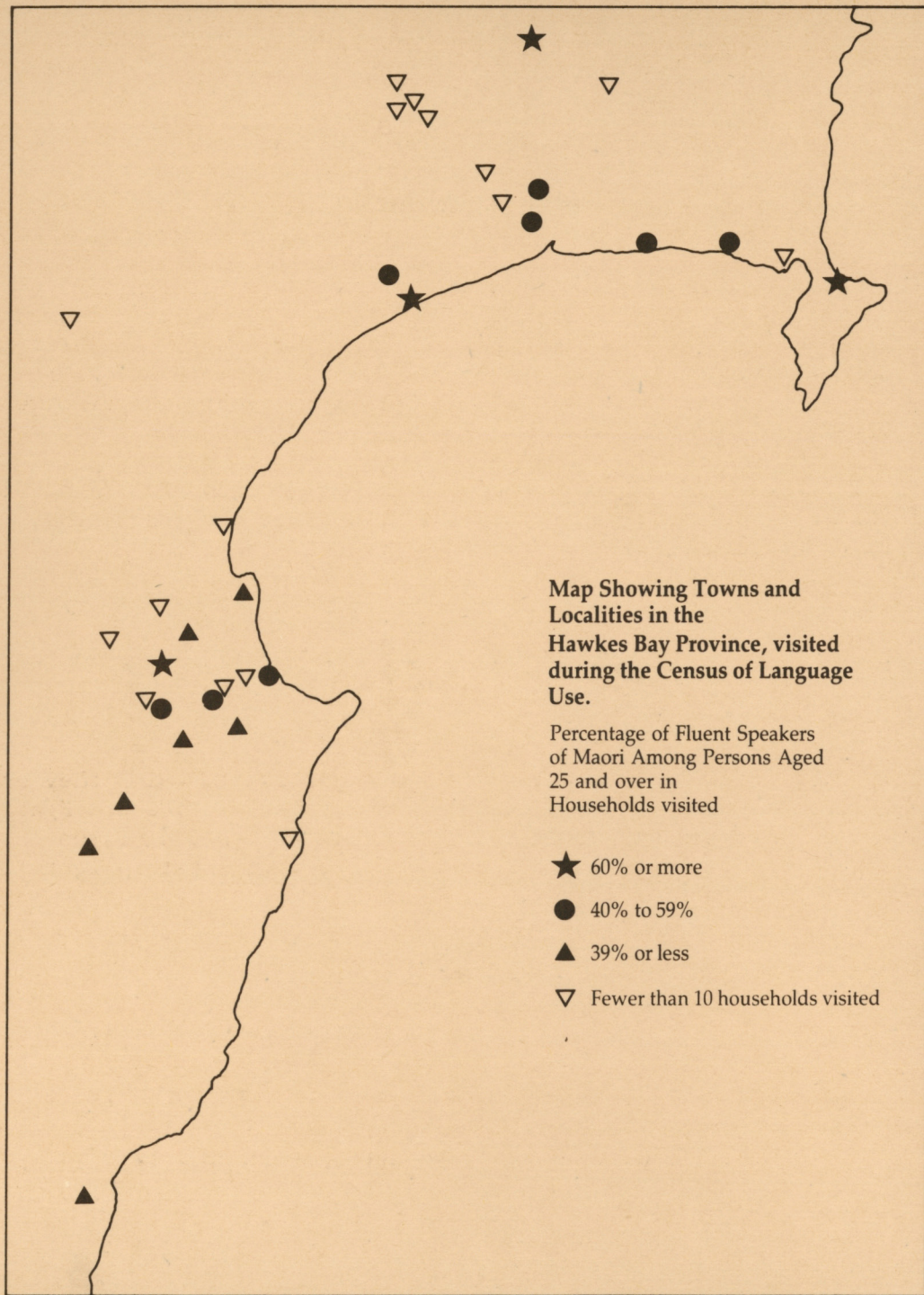
● Two thirds or  
more of adults were  
fluent speakers of  
Maori

◆ 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 KOHUPATIKI AND WAIPATU

Fieldwork for the census of language use in Maori communities took place in nine households in Kohupatiki and in five households in Waipatu in January 1978. The interviewers were Numia Ponika (Tuhoe), Taari Nicholas (Ngati Ranginui) and Allan Hawea (Ngati Awa). Ten interviews were carried out in English; the rest were partly or only in Maori.

The households surveyed had a total population of 73, and 72 of them were of Maori descent. This was about a third of the Maori population of Kohupatiki and Waipatu at the time.

### RESULTS OF THE LINGUISTIC SURVEY

#### *Iwi Affiliation*

The people interviewed mentioned seven major iwi to which they or members of their households belonged. The largest iwi was Ngati Kahungunu, tangata whenua of the area, with 47 members or two-thirds of the total. Tuhoe and Ngapuhi were the next largest tribal groups in this survey.

#### *Ability to Speak and Understand Maori*

The table on the next page shows that a fifth of the people surveyed spoke Maori well while a quarter of them understood the language well. There were no good speakers of Maori under 25, and, no one from this age group could understand Maori well. More than three-quarters of their younger people knew hardly any Maori at the time. This sudden drop in the number of people who knew Maori in these areas worried many of the people we spoke with, especially the kaumatua. Some of the reasons for this are examined in the following pages.

KNOWLEDGE OF SPOKEN MAORI IN KOHUPATI KI AND WAIPATU (1978)

Age Group	Fluent Speakers		Understand Easily		Limited Understanding		No Knowledge	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
45 & over	12	75	14	88	0		2	12
25-44	3	21	5	36	3	21	6	43
15-24	0		0		6	35	11	65
2-14	0		0		1	4	25	96
Overall	15	21	19	26	10	14	44	60

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

*The Use of Maori Language in the Household*

English was the main language for everyday use in most households visited. There were eight homes with dependent children and in five of them people spoke mostly or only in English. In the rest, English was also the main language used, although Maori was often spoken by adults in the household.

There were six childless households visited. English was the main language spoken in two homes, Maori was the main language used in two homes, while in the other two, both Maori and English were used equally often.

*The Maori Language in the Community*

English was also the main language spoken by most people in the community. While half of the adults over 25 spoke Maori well, most of the people they talked with not only spoke English, but were forced to speak it more and more. The very elderly were

the people most likely to speak Maori regularly with neighbours and friends. People under 25 nearly always talked in English among themselves or with other people. Although some grandparents tried to speak Maori to their mokopuna, they were answered always in English.

The Maori language still remained important for ceremonies on the marae, although people went on to talk in English when these were over. Certain religious services as well as family prayer and grace were usually in Maori.

If any two members of the Kohupatiki and Waipatu Maori communities met unexpectedly, the chances were one in ten that they could understand each other in Maori. If both people were adults over 25 the chances were about one in three - two-thirds of this age group understood Maori well. However, it was very unlikely that people under 25 could speak in Maori with each other.

*Attitudes towards the Language*

Although English had taken over from Maori as the everyday language in the household and community, the Maori language was still important in the culture and lives of most of the people we spoke to. Many of the parents were sorry they could not speak the language better in order to teach their own children in the home. Some of them had gone to Maori classes in the area, but they felt that English was a quicker and easier language to talk in. Many people wanted Maori taught in schools, particularly at the primary level. Some people said that the Maori language was hardly ever used in programmes on TV and radio or in newspapers and magazines, and this was bad because it would cause the language in the area to die out all the more quickly. Others felt that, today, Maori belonged on the marae and best suited ceremonies that were held there.

**CONCLUSION**

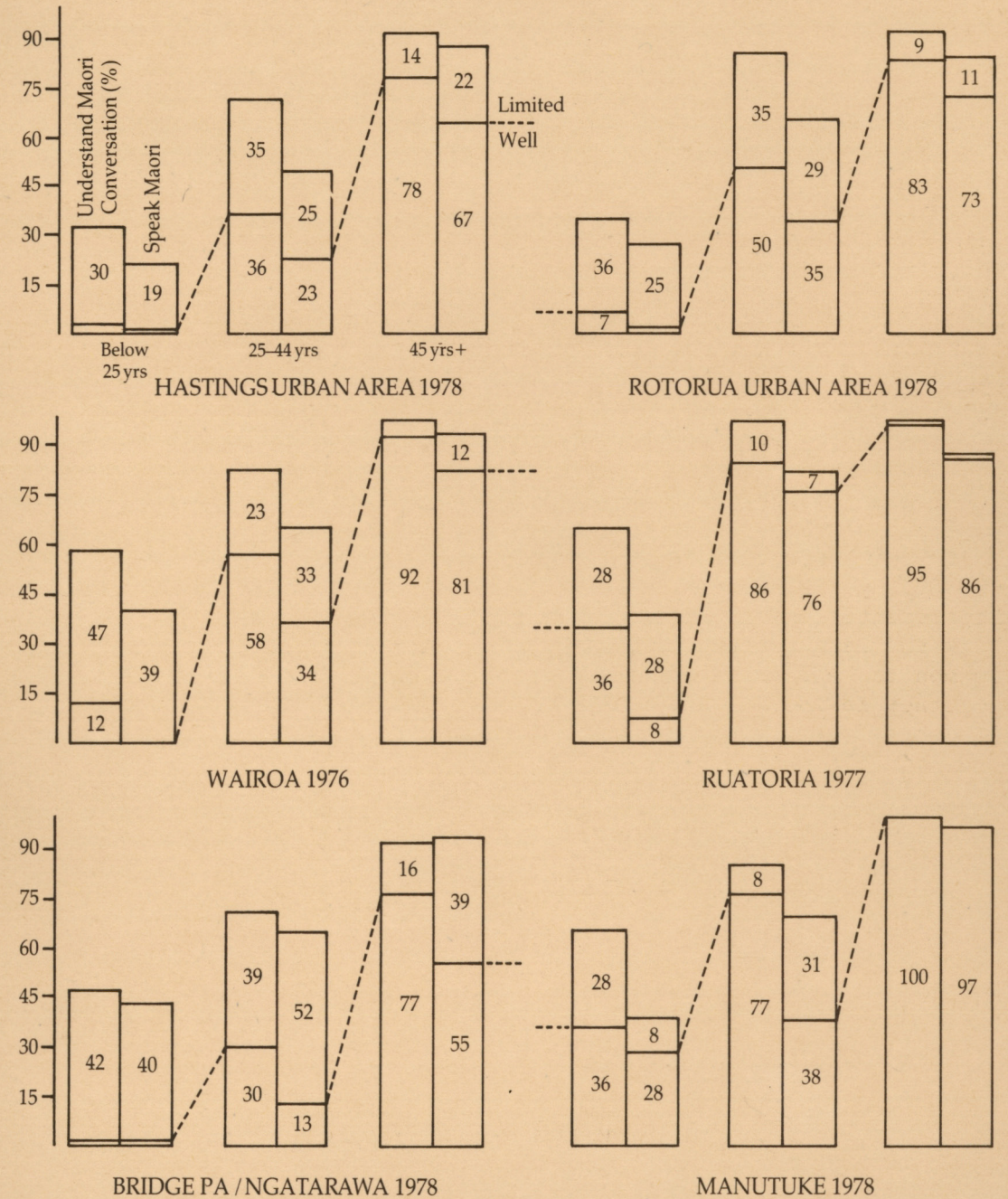
At the time of the survey, all good speakers of Maori and those who understood the language well in Kohupatiki and Waipatu were adults over the age of 25. However, a quarter of this age group did not understand Maori at all. Maori had probably stopped being the language for everyday use in the home and community one, or even two, generations ago. The people who spoke Maori all the time were usually the kaumatua. They liked to use their mother tongue with friends and neighbours who spoke Maori - particularly at a hui on the marae. The concern shown by local elders for the drop in the number of people who know or use Maori in many Hawkes Bay towns and communities has led to many people once more taking an interest in the language, oral traditions, and Maori arts and crafts, in recent years. Courses using the Te Ataarangi Method have been very popular in the community, particularly among people under 30, and there is probably more Maori being spoken in the household and community now than there was five years ago. The Takitimu Maori Language Board and the Department of Maori Affairs have done more than anybody to bring back the language in the Takitimu region, and it is now fairly common to hear young adults and parents under 30 chatting together in Maori. If this is kept up, the use of Maori as a language for everyday use could become a reality rather than a dream in the future.



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.