

# 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

70

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 HUNTLY

Fieldwork for the census of language use in Maori communities took place in 31 households in Huntly Borough in March 1978. The interviewers were Hiria Tumoana (Tuhoe), Tawhiro Maxwell (Ngai Tai), Sharon Moerkerk (Ngati Maniapoto) and Tawini Rangihau (Tuhoe). Twenty-four interviews were carried out in English; the remainder were partly or entirely in Maori.

The households surveyed had a total population of 150, and 145 of them were of Maori descent. This was about an eighth of the Maori population of Huntly at the time.

### RESULTS OF THE LINGUISTIC SURVEY

#### *Iwi Affiliation*

The people interviewed mentioned 16 major iwi to which they or members of their households belonged. The largest iwi in the survey was Waikato with 57 members or two-fifths of the total. The next largest iwi was Ngati Whawhaki with 15 members or a tenth of the total.

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

The information in the table on the next page shows that only adults over 25 spoke and understood the Maori language well. Over half of this age group were good speakers, while two-thirds of them understood Maori easily. About a quarter of the people under 25 knew only a little spoken Maori, while by far the most knew hardly any Maori at all, at the time.

KNOWLEDGE OF SPOKEN MAORI IN HUNTLY BOROUGH (1978)

Age Group	Fluent Speakers		Understand Easily		Limited Understanding		No Knowledge	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
45 & over	16	67	18	75	3	13	3	13
25-44	14	42	20	61	9	27	4	12
15-24	0		0		7	35	13	65
2-14	0		0		26	40	39	60
Overall	30	21	38	27	45	32	59	42

Numbers and percentages refer to those people included in the survey; 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 25 homes with dependent children and in all of them the people spoke only or mostly English.

There were six childless homes visited and in four of them people spoke in English among themselves and with visitors. In the others, the people usually spoke Maori with friends who could speak Maori.

*The Maori Language in the Community*

English was also the main language spoken in the community. The people most likely to use Maori often were kaumatua over the age of 45. They preferred to speak in their mother tongue with friends and family who spoke Maori. Most of the people in Huntly,

however, spoke only English, and when they talked about everyday things with their neighbours workmates and friends it was nearly always in that language. People under 25 also spoke English among themselves, as most of them knew no Maori at all.

People still thought that Maori was the proper language for ceremonies on the marae, in certain religious services and other types of special meetings. Many people also used Maori for silent prayer and grace.

If any two members of the Huntly Maori community 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 much greater, about one in three. It was very unlikely that people under 25 would be able to speak in Maori with each other.

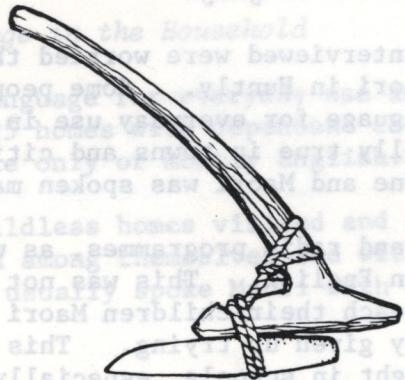
*Attitudes towards the Language*

Many people we interviewed were worried that fewer and fewer people knew and used Maori in Huntly. Some people said that Maori must die out as a language for everyday use in the home and community. This was especially true in towns and cities where English was spoken by nearly everyone and Maori was spoken mainly by elderly people.

Television and radio programmes, as well as all reading material, were in English. This was not helping those parents who were trying to teach their children Maori in the home, and many people had simply given up trying. This is why many people wanted the language taught in schools, especially at the primary school level. Some people said that schools should be teaching the local Waikato dialect and not that of any other tribe. Half of the people interviewed said that they had been beaten as children for speaking Maori at school. Many of these people did not teach their own children Maori, partly because they did not want them beaten as they had been.

CONCLUSION

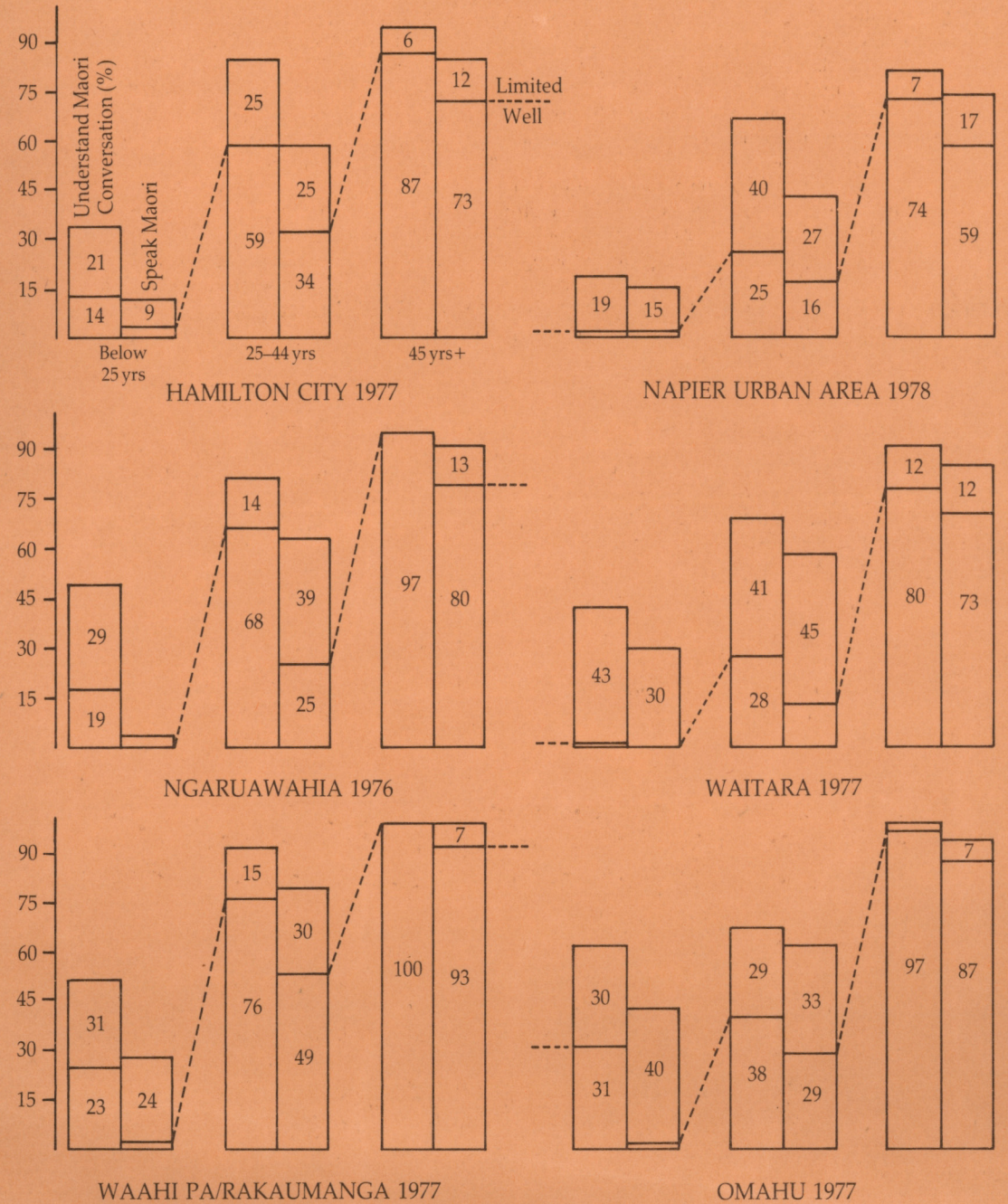
At the time of the survey, a fifth of the people spoke Maori well, while a quarter of them understood the language well. All these people were adults over 25. English was the main language spoken in nearly all households visited, and it was the only language that nearly two-thirds of the children under 15 knew. In the community, it was fairly common for kaumatua to talk in Maori among themselves, while people under 30 almost always spoke in English with their friends, neighbours and workmates. Some people thought that Maori still had an important part to play in ceremonies on the marae and in certain religious services, and left it at that. But many others took part as students and teachers in Maori language courses in the area. As well as this, local mothers and the Department of Maori Affairs were working towards setting up a Maori-speaking pre-school (Te Kohanga Reo). All these people had a strong wish to bring back Maori as a language for everyday use in the household and community. People who are interested in taking part in these schemes should get in touch with their local office of the Maori Affairs Department, or their own Maori Committee.



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.