

# TE TIROHANGA I TE KŌRERŌTANGA O TE REO RANGATIRA I ROTO I NGĀ KĀINGA MĀORI ME NGĀ ROHE

Survey of Language Use in Maori Households  
and Communities

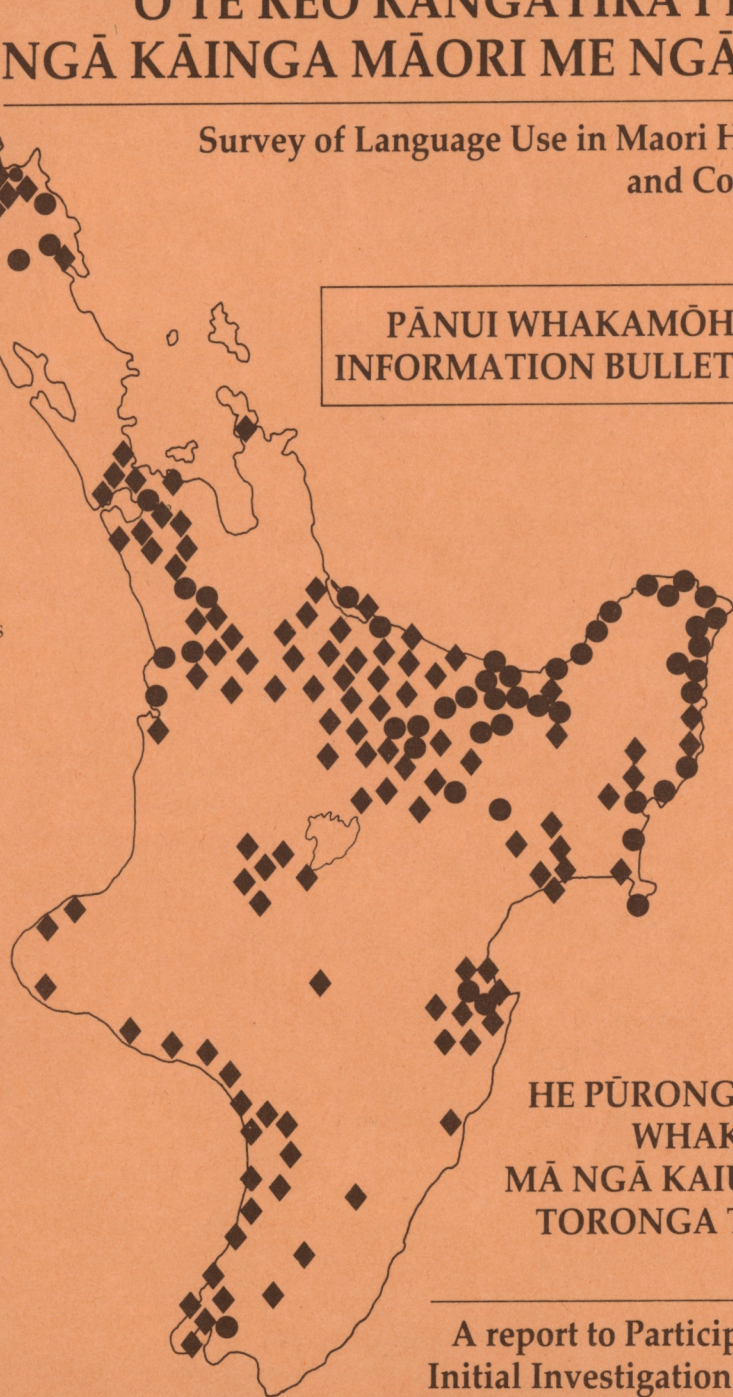
PĀNUI WHAKAMŌHIO  
INFORMATION BULLETIN

71

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 TE KAUPHATA

Fieldwork for the census of language use in Maori communities took place in 13 households in Te Kauphata in April 1978. The interviewers were Tawini Rangihau (Tuhoe), Sharon Moerkerk (Maniapoto), Hiri Tumoana (Tuhoe) and Tawhiro Maxwell (Ngai Tai). Ten interviews were carried out in English; the rest were partly or entirely in Maori.

The households surveyed had a total population of 78, and 77 of them were of Maori descent. This was about half the Maori population of Te Kauphata 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. By far the most of them (51 people or nearly two-thirds of the total) belonged to Waikato. Ngapuhi was the next largest iwi with 24 members (31 percent of the total).

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

The table on the next page shows that all good speakers of Maori, and those who understood the language well, were adults over the age of 25. A third of the people surveyed hardly knew any Maori at the time - most of these were school-age children. Some of the reasons for the drop in the number of people who knew the language are examined in the following pages.



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



KNOWLEDGE OF SPOKEN MAORI IN TE KAUWHATA (1978)

Age Group	Fluent Speakers		Understand Easily		Limited Understanding		No Knowledge	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
45 & over	5	83	5	83	1	17	0	
25-44	6	32	9	47	6	32	4	21
15-24	0		0		6	67	3	33
2-14	0		0		19	54	16	46
Overall	11	16	14	20	32	47	23	33

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 all households visited. There were 12 homes with dependent children, and in all of them the people spoke only in English. The person in the one childless home always spoke English with visitors.

*The Maori Language in the Community*

English was also the main language spoken by most people in the community. Maori was most likely to be spoken by kaumatua with neighbours and friends of their age, who spoke the language. However, as most people in Te Kauwhata spoke only English, hardly anyone at all was heard speaking Maori in the township.

However, the Maori language was still important in ceremonies on the marae, but afterwards people usually talked in English. Certain religious services were in Maori, and some of the kaumatua spoke Maori when they said their prayers.

If any two members of the Maori community met unexpectedly, the chances were about one in thirty-three that they could understand each other in Maori. If both people, however, were adults over 25, the chances were much greater, about one in four; but there was hardly any chance that people under 25 could speak in Maori with each other.

*Attitudes towards the Language*

Although English had taken over from Maori as the language for everyday use in the home and in the community, Maori was still important in the culture and lives of most of the people we interviewed. A few of the kaumatua were sad that fewer and fewer people knew or used Maori in the area. Other people said they had spoken the language well as children and young adults, but were losing their ability to speak Maori because they had hardly any chance to use it in Te Kauwhata. Young parents were especially worried about not being able to speak Maori, because it meant they could not pass the language on to their children. This is why a lot of people wanted Maori taught in schools, especially at the primary level. Some adults were going to classes to learn Maori so that they could take part in ceremonies and hui on the marae. However, they felt that they had a long way to go before they could talk well in Maori about everyday things in the community.



### CONCLUSION

At the time of the survey, many people were worried that Maori would soon die out as a language for everyday use in Te Kawhata. Already English was the only language spoken in all the homes visited, and the people most likely to use Maori a lot in the community were elders speaking with others of their own age. However, at that time, it was not very likely that they could talk in Maori with a person under 25. Only a third of the people between the ages of 25 and 44 spoke Maori well and half of them understood the language well, but a lot of people hoped that their children would have more chances to learn the language than they had.

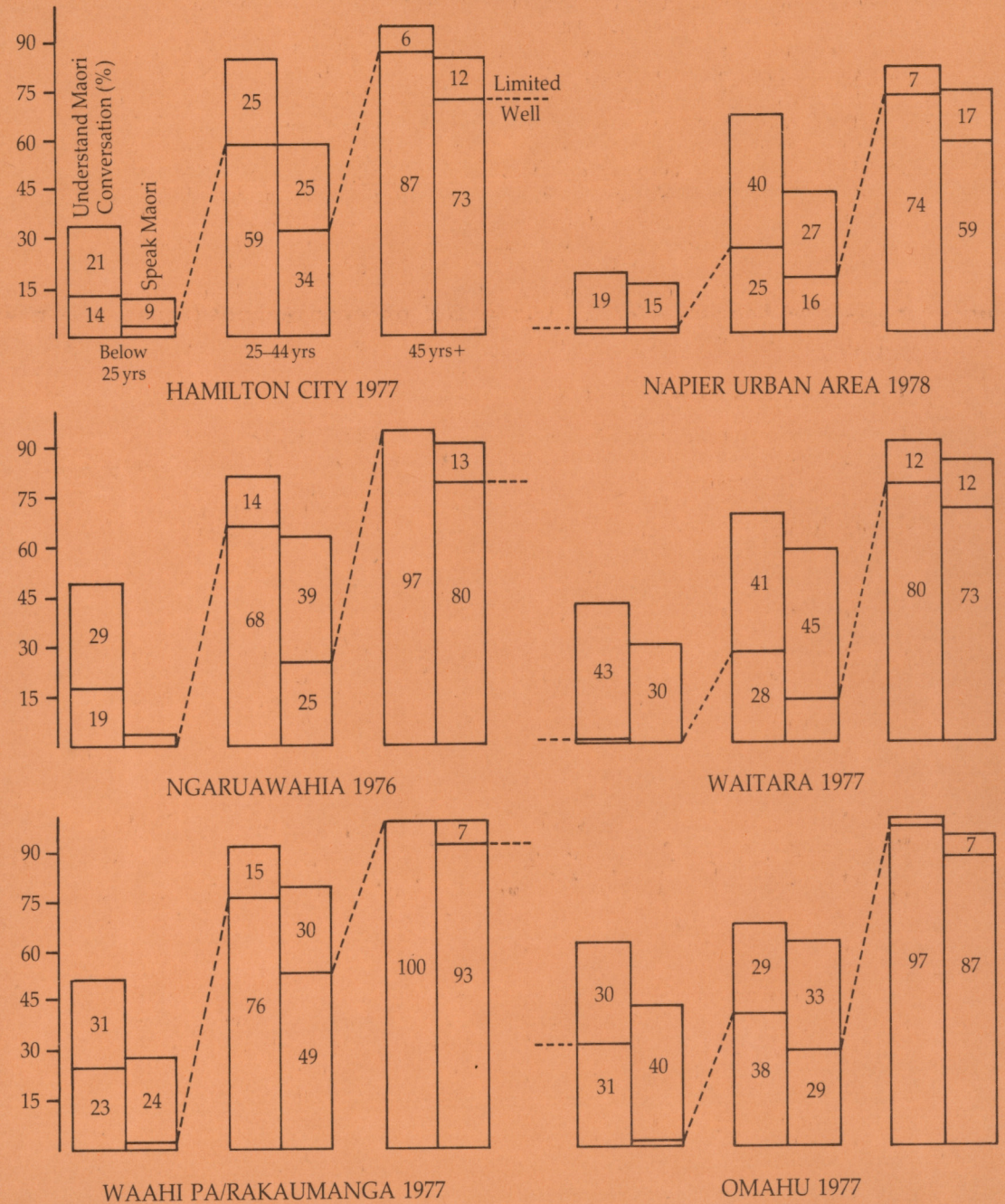
More and more people of all ages were finding out the important part that Maori played in their culture and lives as Maori people. This is what made Maori language and culture classes in local schools, private homes and local marae so popular. People should get in touch with the Department of Maori Affairs if they are interested in finding out more about the Kohanga Reo (Maori speaking pre-schools) and their Maori language programmes based in the community.



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.