

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

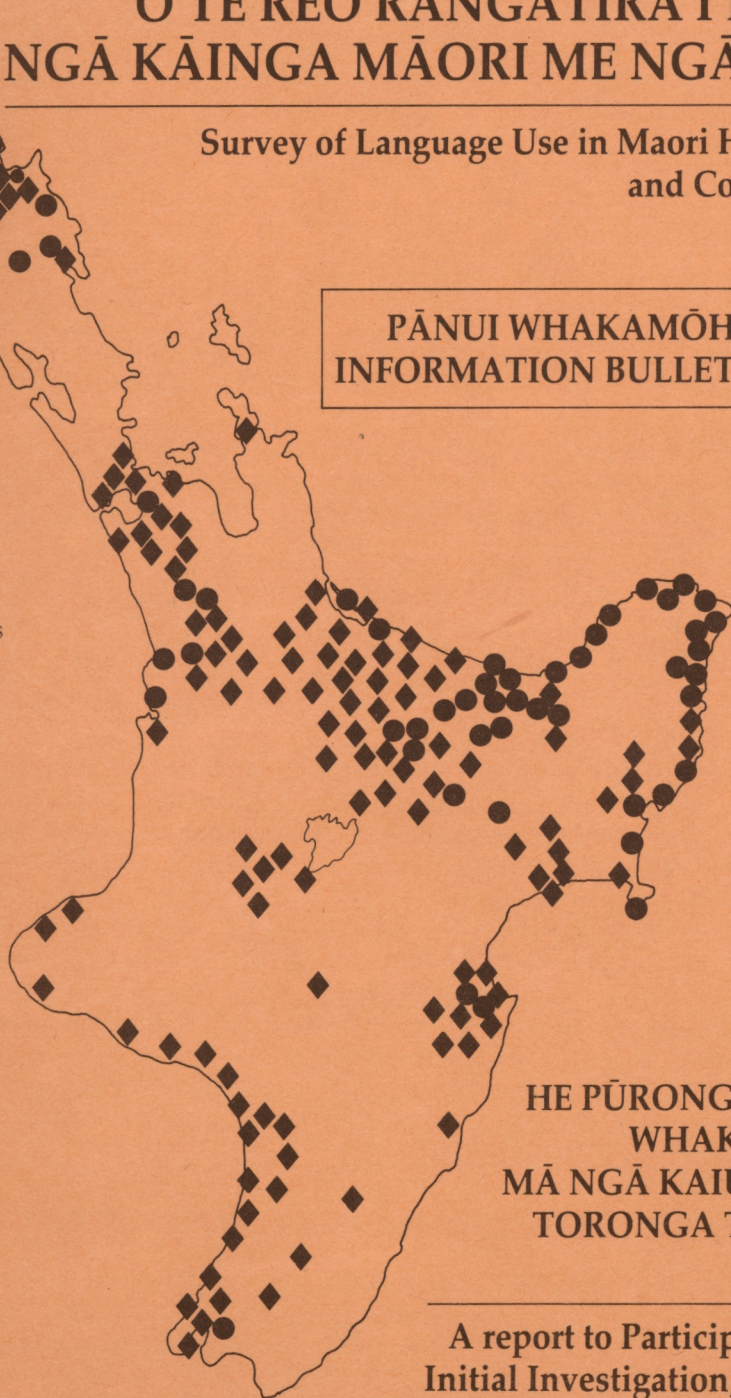
PĀNUI WHAKAMŌHIO
INFORMATION BULLETIN

81

Localities in which
ten or more households
were visited

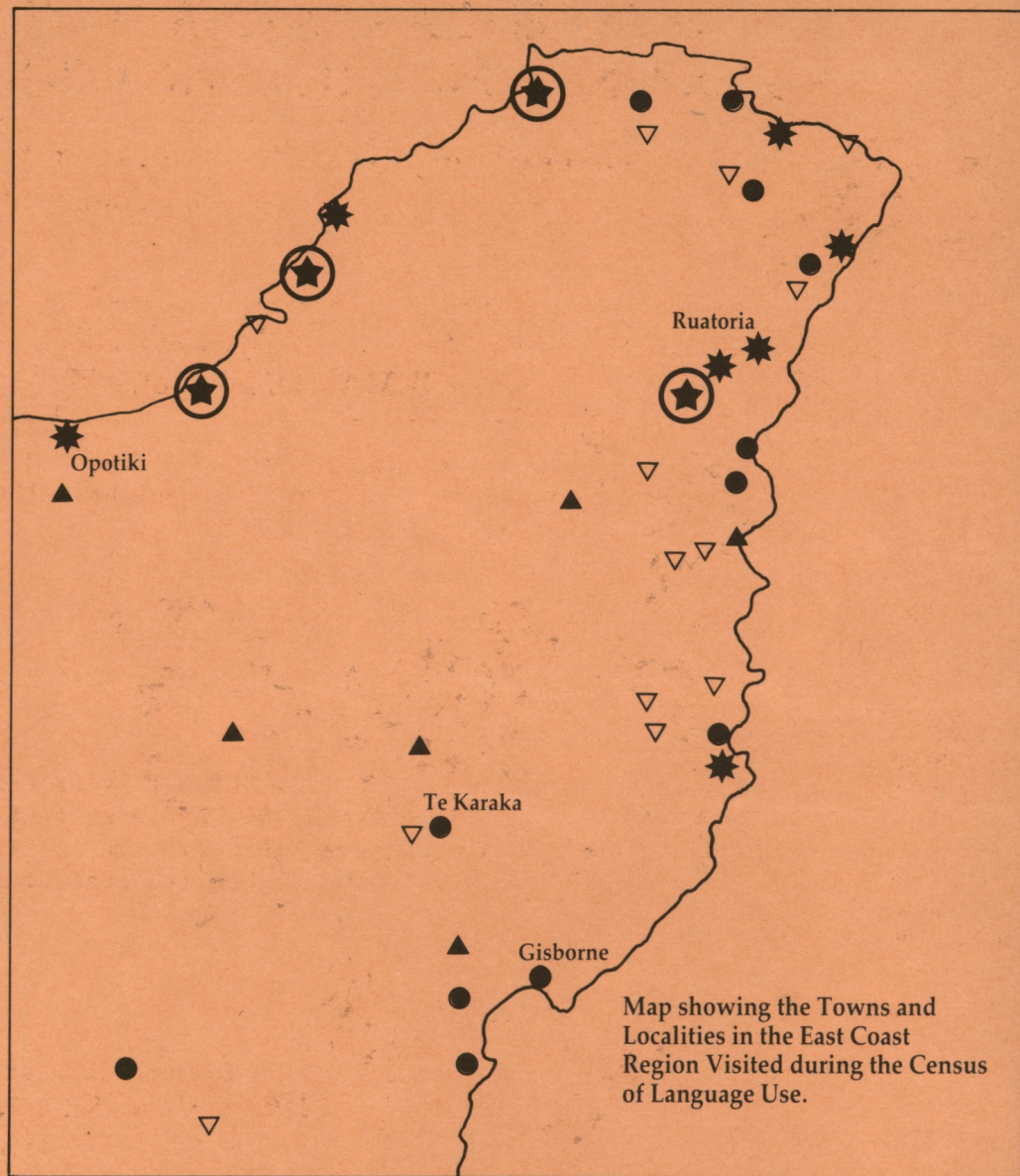
● Two thirds or
more of adults were
fluent speakers of
Maori

◆ 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



Percentage of fluent speakers of Maori among persons aged 25 and over in the households visited.

- | | | | |
|---|---------------|---|---------------------------------|
| ★ | More than 85% | ▲ | Less than 60% |
| ☆ | 76 to 85% | ▽ | Fewer than 8 households visited |
| ● | 60% to 75% | | |

THE MAORI LANGUAGE IN TE KAHA

Fieldwork for the census of language use in Maori communities took place in 19 households in Te Kaha in January 1978. The interviewers were Kahu Waititi (Te Whanau-a-Apanui/Ngapuhi), Awhina Ngatai (Ngai Terangi), Kay Waapu (Ngati Kahungunu) and Himiona Henry (Waikato/Maniapoto). Eighteen interviews were carried out in English, and one was in Maori.

The households surveyed had a total population of 79, and 78 of these people were of Maori descent. This was about half the total Maori population of Te Kaha at the time.

RESULTS OF THE LINGUISTIC SURVEY

Iwi Affiliation

The people interviewed mentioned 5 main iwi to which they or members of their households belonged. Most of them (64 people or four-fifths of the total) belonged to Te Whanau-a-Apanui. The next largest iwi was Ngati Porou with eight members, or ten percent of the total.

Ability to Speak and Understand Maori

The table on the next page shows that over half the people surveyed spoke Maori fluently, and more than two-thirds of them understood it well.

Although more than three-quarters of the adults over 25 spoke Maori well, less than a third of the people under this age spoke the language well. However, nearly half of the school-age children understood the language easily, and only a small number of them understood no Maori at the time.

KNOWLEDGE OF SPOKEN MAORI IN TE KAHA (1978)

Age Group	Fluent Speakers		Understand Easily		Limited Understanding		No Knowledge	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
45 & over	25	89	25	89	2	7	1	4
25-44	7	70	7	70	3	30	0	
15-24	8	57	10	71	4	29	0	
2-14	3	13	11	48	9	39	3	13
Overall	43	57	53	71	18	24	4	5

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

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The Use of Maori Language in the Household

There were nine homes with dependent children visited, and in seven of them people spoke about everyday matters mostly or entirely in English. One family used more English than Maori in the home, while the people in the remaining household used Maori and English equally often.

There were ten childless households visited and the people in eight of them always spoke in Maori with each other or with visitors who spoke Maori. In the other two, the people spoke mostly in English.

The Maori Language in the Community

Although three-quarters of the people over the age of 15 spoke Maori well, adults over 45 were the ones most likely to use the language when they talked about ordinary things with

friends, neighbours and workmates. Elderly kaumatua usually spoke Maori with others of the same age group, and with their own children living in the area. However, most of the talk in the community with, or between school children or young adults, seemed to be carried out in English.

The Maori language still plays an important part in ceremonies on the marae and in certain religious services. Many people also used Maori for family prayer and grace.

If any two members of the community were to meet unexpectedly, the chances were about two in five that they could understand each other in Maori. If both people were adults over 25 the chances were much greater, about four in five. But it was unlikely that school-age children would be able to speak in Maori with each other.

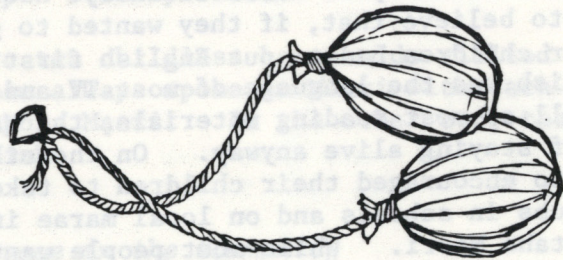
Attitudes towards the Language

Many of the people we interviewed told us they were worried that Maori may not last much longer as a language for everyday use in Te Kaha. English had already completely taken the place of Maori in many homes with small children, although both parents and elder brothers and sisters often spoke Maori fluently. Quite a few parents had come to believe that, if they wanted to get ahead in the Pakeha world their children had to put English first. Some people felt that as English was the language of most TV and radio programmes, as well as most reading materials, the Maori language had few chances of staying alive anyway. On the other hand, many parents we spoke to encouraged their children to take part in Maori cultural clubs in schools and on local marae in order to hold on to their taha Maori. While most people wanted the Maori language taught in schools, starting at primary school, some people said the language had to be learned and spoken in the homes first or in Maori surroundings. One person wanted a course on the Maori language to be based in the marae. It was

to last six weeks and during that time only Maori was to be spoken by students. This way of learning Maori, particularly spoken Maori needed for everyday use in the home and community, was seen as better than holding classes now and then, as is done in most schools in the area.

CONCLUSION

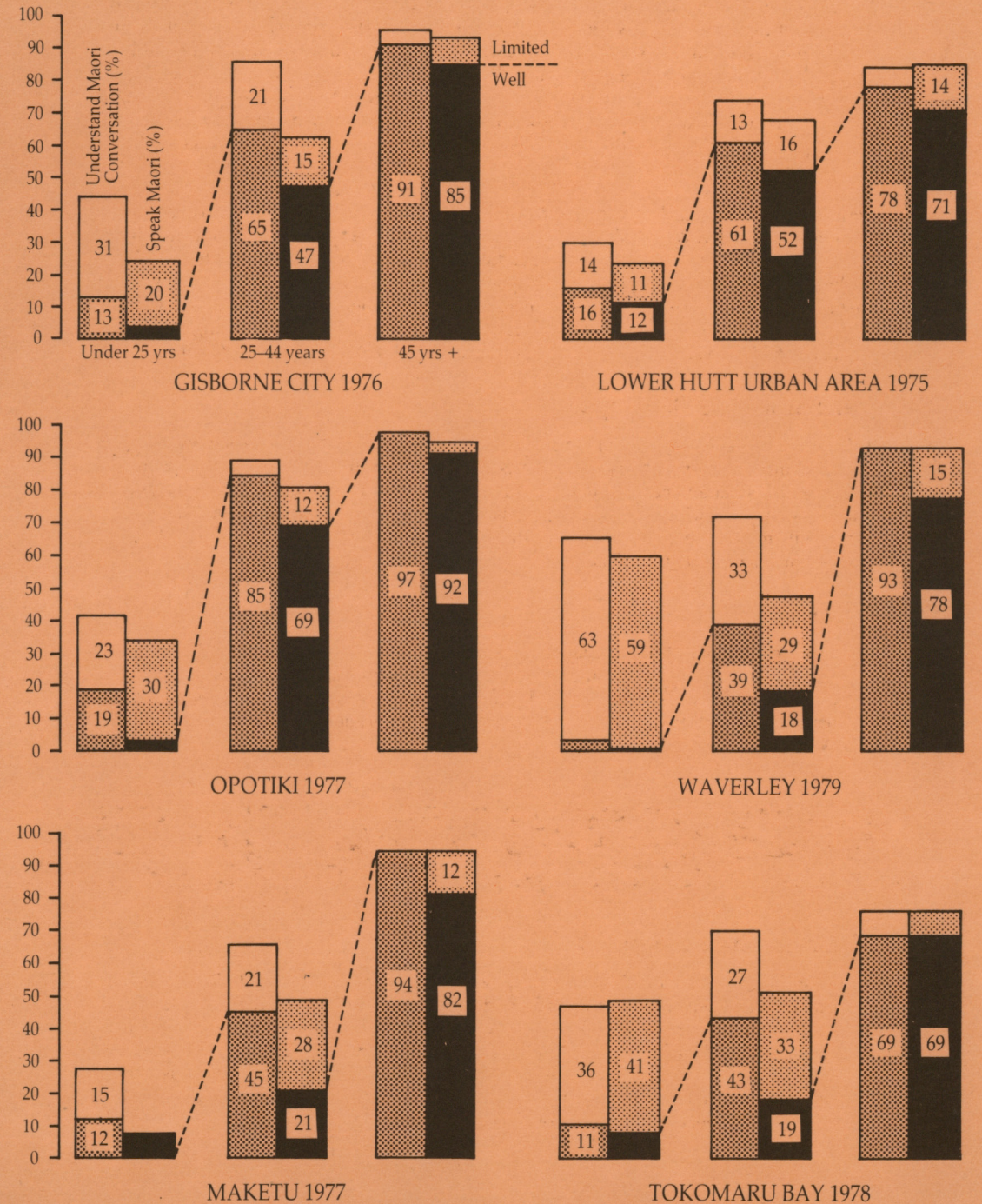
At the time of the survey, over half of the people in Te Kaha spoke Maori fluently, and more than two-thirds of them understood the language well. Some people were worried, however, that more and more people, especially the younger ones, used English rather than Maori when they talked about everyday things. This was mainly because English was almost the only language used on television and radio, and because more English is being spoken in households with young children. Some people were trying harder to speak Maori to their children and mokopuna; nearly half of the school-age children surveyed understood Maori well, even if few of them spoke the language fluently.



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.