

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

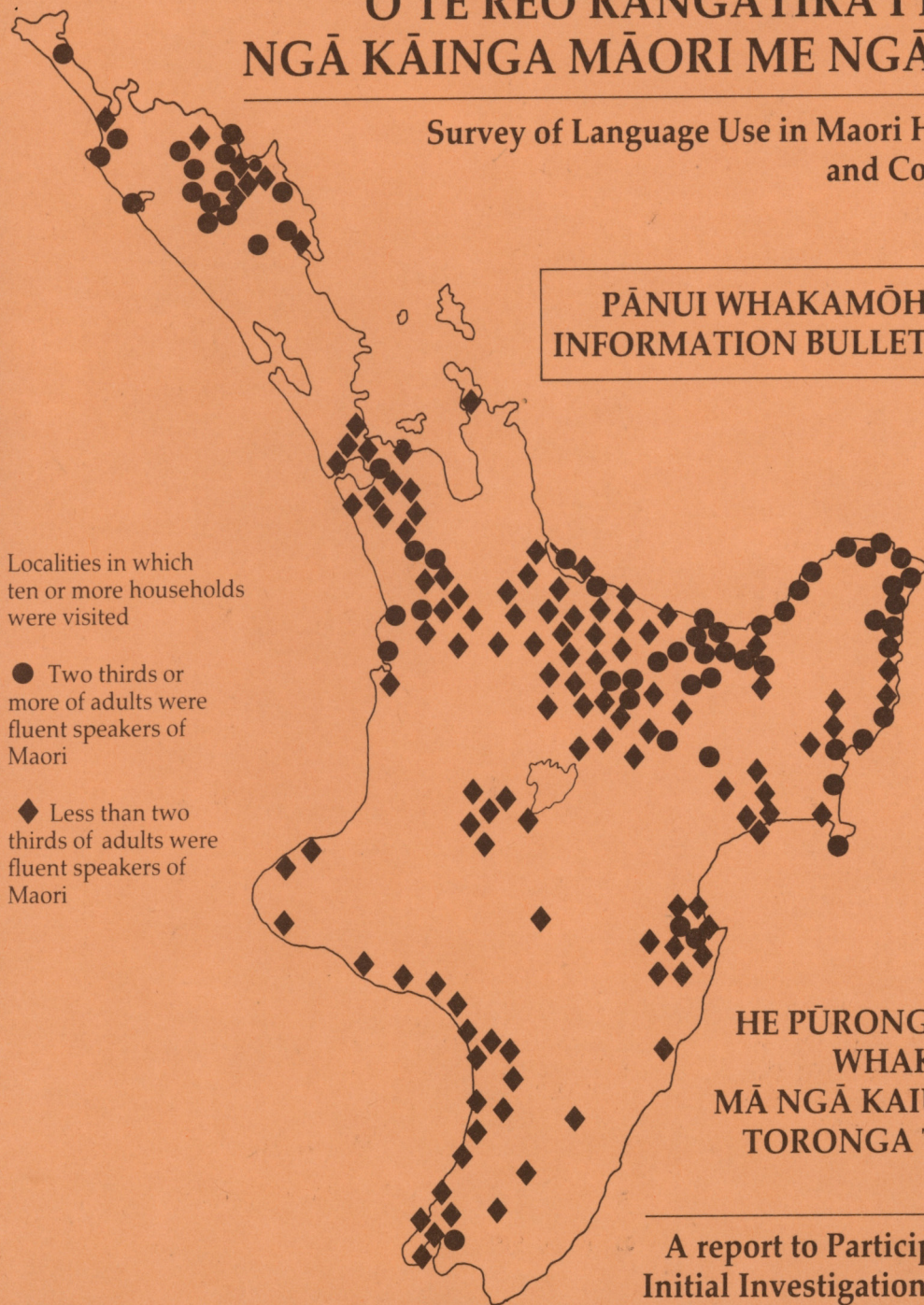
PĀNUI WHAKAMŌHIO
INFORMATION BULLETIN

96

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

Ability to Speak and Understand Maori
 Knowledge of Spoken Maori in Hamilton (1972)
 The survey shows that the ability to speak and understand Maori is limited. Under 5% of the population aged 5 and over can speak Maori. Under 10% can understand Maori. The survey also shows that the ability to speak and understand Maori is limited. Under 5% of the population aged 5 and over can speak Maori. Under 10% can understand Maori.

The Maori Language in Hamilton City

Fieldwork for the census of language use in Maori communities took place in 146 households in Hamilton city in November and December 1975 and in January 1976.

The interviewers were Ameria Ponika (Tuhoe), Joe Rua (Te Whanau-a-Apanui), William Martin (Ngati Manawa/Te Aupouri), Ripeka Koopu Martin (Te Whanau-a-Apanui), Dora Pryor (Tuhoe), Kathleen Grace Potae (Tuwharetoa), Maku Potae (Ngati Porou) and Meremaihi Williams Koopu (Ngati Awa).

The household surveyed in Hamilton had a total population of 705, 689 of whom were of Maori descent. This was about six percent of the total Maori population of the area at that time.

Thirty interviews were carried out entirely in Maori, 11 in both Maori and English and the rest in English.

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Knowledge of Spoken Maori in Hamilton (1975)

Age Group	Fluent Speakers	Understand Easily	Limited Understanding	No Knowledge
45 years & over	70 (73%)	83 (86%)	6 (6%)	7 (7%)
25-44 yrs	52 (34%)	91 (59%)	39 (25%)	24 (16%)
15-24 yrs	11 (8%)	37 (27%)	38 (28%)	63 (46%)
2-14 yrs	4 (1%)	27 (9%)	54 (19%)	210 (72%)
Overall	137 (21%)	238 (35%)	137 (20%)	304 (45%)

(Figures refer to members of households visited; percentages have been rounded to nearest whole number)

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Results of the Linguistic Survey

Iwi Affiliation

In Hamilton, the people interviewed mentioned a total of 23 major iwi to which they or the members of their household belonged. Maniapoto with 183 members (or 26 percent of the total) was the largest iwi mentioned. Waikato with 130 members (or 18 percent) was the second largest and 82 people (or 12 percent) were from Ngapuhi.

Ability to Speak and Understand Maori

The information in the table shows us that among the people included in the survey over half those who could speak Maori well were over the age of 45, although this age group made up only 14 percent of total population. People under 25 made up only about seven percent of the fluent speakers while they represented over 60 percent of the total population.

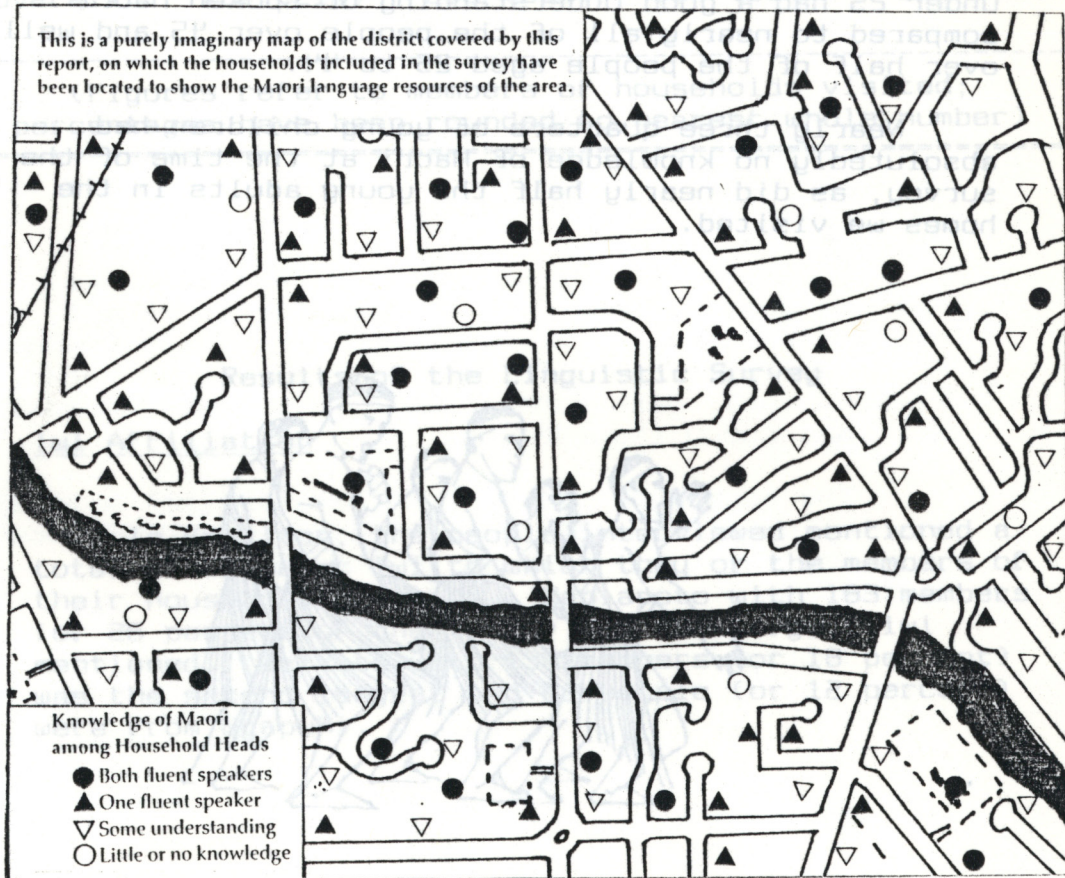
There was also far fewer people under the age of 25 who could understand Maori easily compared to those older than that - just over one in 10 of those under 25 had a good understanding of spoken Maori compared to nearly all of the people over 45 and well over half of the people aged 25 to 44.

Nearly three quarters of young children had absolutely no knowledge of Maori at the time of the survey, as did nearly half the young adults in the homes we visited.



Use of Maori Language in the Household

English was the main language spoken in the homes, of the 112 households with dependent children visited, mostly Maori was used in only one home (less than 1 percent) while 98 (88 percent) used entirely English. A higher proportion of households without dependent children used Maori most of the time - six out of 34 - and fewer of these households used only English than those with children.



The Maori Language in the Community

English was also the language most commonly used in the community for talking with neighbours, visitors and children. Maori or both Maori and English were reported by over two thirds of the people we visited as being most commonly used in religious ceremonies, and Maori was clearly the language used by most people on the marae in both formal situations such as whaikorero and in less formal situations such as just chatting with other people.

If two people included in our Hamilton survey met by chance at that time, and they were both adults, the chances of their being able to have a conversation in Maori would have been about one in three. If one of them was a child or young adult, the chances would have been considerably less about one in ten - and practically nil if they were both children.



Attitudes Towards the Language

Many of the people interviewed in our Hamilton survey showed a great deal of interest in the revival of the Maori language and many more expressed interest in learning Maori themselves or having their children learn. Maori (or both Maori and English) was stated as being the language most preferred for conversation by over half our informants and nearly one fifth said they would prefer to use Maori if they could speak it.

A large number of people regretted not having learnt to speak Maori when they were younger. Some said that they had not been interested when their parents had tried to speak Maori to them so they had eventually given up.

Maori was the first language understood by about half the people interviewed. However, many people said they forgot how to speak Maori once they started school because no one else there spoke Maori or because they were forbidden by the teachers to do so. A large number of people who were brought up by their grandparents lost the ability to speak Maori when the grandparents died as they had to move to an environment, perhaps with their parents in town, where English was the main language spoken.

Others found, or were also finding, that they lost the language later in life with a move to the city. Many people commented on feelings of isolation because there were very few people around them who could understand Maori. Some said this was one of the main reasons why it was so difficult to teach their own children Maori. One woman who spoke only a little English when she came to the city was now finding it difficult to maintain her Maori because she had been forced into speaking English almost all the time in order to get by. Some people, however, did think they would pick it up again fairly easily if they moved back to a place where a lot of people spoke Maori in everyday life.

Many people said that their own parents didn't teach them Maori because they believed that English was necessary in order to get a good education and job. Some people whom we interviewed who now have children of their own said that while they have no objections to their children learning Maori, "Pakeha comes first."

However, nearly half the people we talked to said that they were in favour of Maori language being taught in schools. There was a range of opinions about how much should be taught and who should be taught. Some said it should be compulsory for everyone, others said it should be compulsory for Maori children only and others said it should be optional for everyone. One woman said that she was not in favour of Maori being taught in schools because concepts such as "aroha" and "koha" are not taught as well. On the language in schools would mean that children would then understand the meaning of the action songs and haka that they learn.

Conclusion

The effects of coming from communities in the country to the city on the maintenance and use of Maori language are clearly shown in the Hamilton linguistic survey. Many people had forgotten or were finding it difficult to keep up their knowledge of the language and a large number were finding it difficult to teach Maori to their children as so few other people in the community used it on an everyday basis. Consequently, a very large proportion of people under 25 had little or no knowledge of Maori, while most of the fluent speakers were concentrated in the over 45 age group.

However, as one informant commented, there seemed to be a real "upsurge of positive interest" in Maori language at the time of the survey and the large members of people interviewed who favoured Maori in schools and were trying to learn Maori themselves, was evidence of this. The kohanga reo movement and the establishment of bilingual units in some schools in the Hamilton area offer new hope to people who would like the Maori language to be given a chance to have a much more important place in the Waikato region than seemed possible in the 1970s.

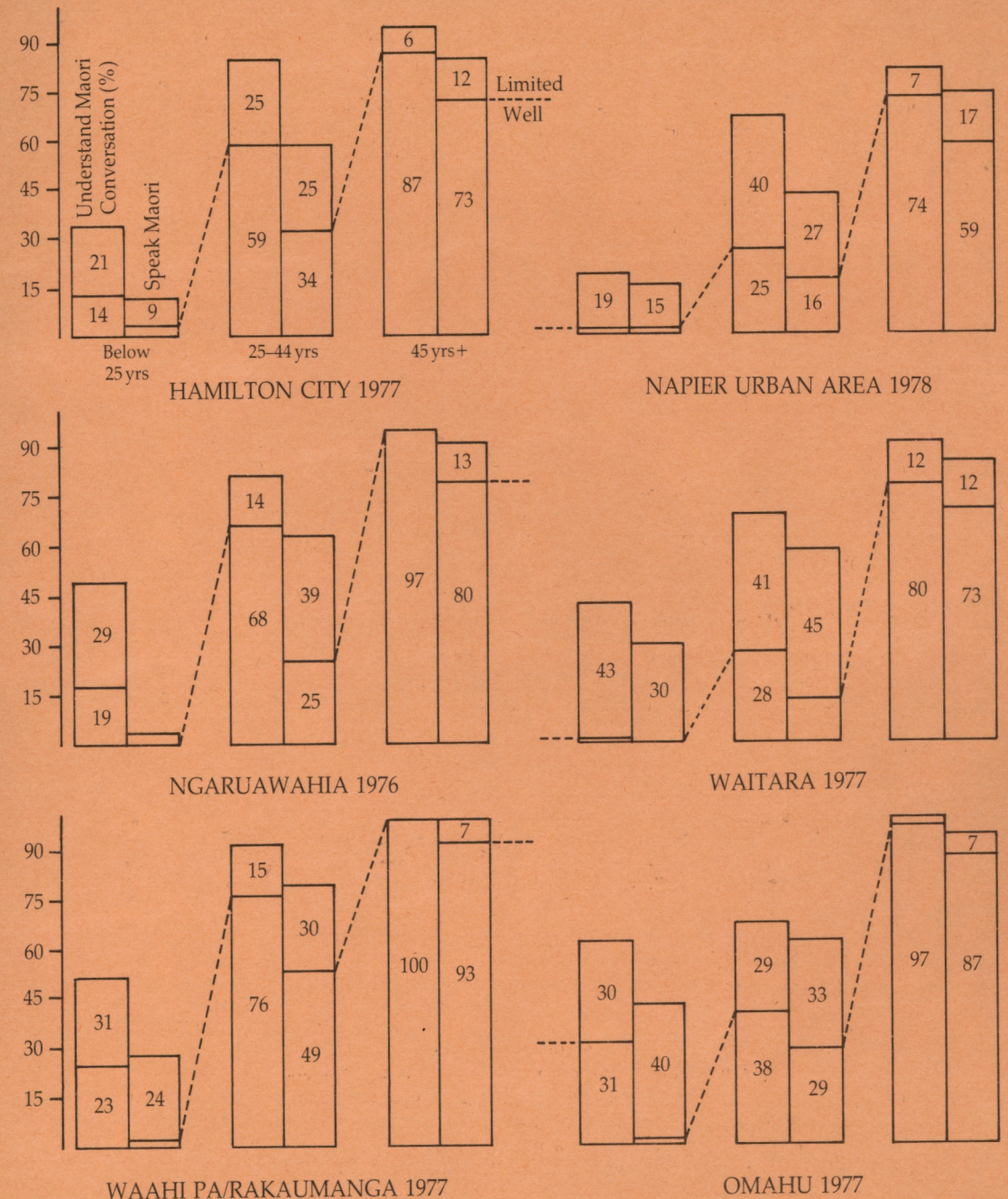


This report was prepared by:

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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.