

TE WHAKATIKA HAPA REO

Kupu Whakataki

This resource is intended as a quick guide for teachers of te reo Māori on some of the common errors that appear in learners' language.

While making mistakes is part of learning, it is important that teachers do not allow misunderstandings to become entrenched as errors in a learner's language. What may seem like a simple mistake that is not problematic at one level may become more difficult to address later.

There are several ways to address language errors—some ways of correcting errors are more effective than others depending on the type of error, how long it has been part of the student's language, and your learners' preferences. A few ways to try are:

Modelling—model the correct way of saying or writing something so that they hear and read the correct form, rather than telling the student directly that they have made an error.

Seeking clarification—encourage the student to rephrase what they said by saying “`Tēnā, kōrero mai anō” or “Kāore au i te mārama”.

Explicit correction—point out the error to the student and then teach the correct form.

Self correction—asking the student to rethink what they have said by encouraging them to identify their own error “E tika ana tēnā kōrero”?

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1. āhea / kia

Māori language has several words that mean ‘when’:

āhea/āwhea... is a future ‘when will’ question, e.g., **Āhea** koe hoki mai ai (**when will** you return)?

nōnahea/inahea... is a past ‘when did’ question, e.g., **Nōnahea** a Rāwiri rāua ko Hēni i mārena ai (**when did** Rāwiri and Hēni get married)?

Kia...ka... is a future ‘when’ statement indicating that when something happens something else will follow. e.g., **Kia** tae au ki Te Hāwera, ka kōrero au ki a ia (**when** I get to Hāwera I will talk to her).

Ka... can be used as a ‘when’ statement in the past tense, e.g., *Ka rongo au i te kōrero a te tauheke rā, ka tata mate au i te katakata* (when I heard what that old man saying, I nearly died laughing).

Ka... ana is used in a general ‘when’ e.g., **Ka tae ana** te manuhiri ki te marae, ka karangahia rātou e te kuia (**when** the manuhiri arrive at the marae, they will be called by the old lady).

Hei taurira: *When they return, we will eat.*

	incorrect		correct
	Āhea ka hoki mai rātou, ka kai tātou.		Kia hoki mai rātou, ka kai tātou.

2. anō hoki / me te mea anō

... anō hoki is sometimes used as ‘and another thing is’. However, *...anō hoki* is only used for ‘also’ e.g., *‘I waiaatahia anō hoki te waiata, Taku Rākau* (The song, *Taku Rākau*, was sung also), and does not appear at the start of a sentence. *Me te mea anō hoki* is a more correct way to say ‘and another thing is’ and can be used at the start of a sentence.

Hei taurira: *...and another thing is, we should talk to his boss.*

	incorrect		correct
	Anō hoki, me kōrero tāua ki tōna rangatira.		Me te mea anō, me kōrero tāua ki tōna rangatira.

3. *he...koe / he...(t)āu*

Learners can often be heard saying *He pene koe?* for ‘Do you have a pen?’ This actually means ‘Are you a pen?’ Correctly, ‘Do you have a pen?’ or ‘Do you have any pens?’ is *He pene tāu?* or *He pene āu?*

Āe, *he pene au* for ‘Yes, I have a pen’ is equally wrong. This means ‘I am a pen’. The correct phrase is *He pene tāku*.

Hei taaira: *Do you have a book?*

	incorrect		correct
	He pukapuka koe?		He pukapuka tāu?

Hei taaira: *I have a book*

	incorrect		correct
	He pukapuka au.		He pukapuka tāku.

4. *he aha / ko wai*

‘What’ questions sometimes present an issue when we are learning as there are many ways to say ‘what’ in Māori. This is probably the most common mistake.

Hei taaira: *What is your name?*

	incorrect		correct
	He aha tō ingoa?		Ko wai tō ingoa?

5. *he aha tēnei mō?* / *hei aha tēnei?*

He aha tēnei mō? is a common mistake for ‘What is this for?’ If you would like to ask someone what something is for you would use the *Hei aha...* structure. e.g., *Hei aha te ngongo wai nā* (what is that hose for)? *Hei whakamākūkū i te māra* (it’s for watering the garden).

Hei tauira: *What is this for?*

	incorrect		correct
	He aha tēnei mō?		Hei aha tēnei?

6. *homai* / *māku*

In English, it is acceptable to say ‘Give me a look’ or ‘Give me a go’. In Māori, the term for give is *Homai*, but can only be used for things that are physically given, or passed on. In ‘Give me a look’ the ‘look’ is not a thing and therefore cannot be passed. What it actually means is ‘Show me,’ which in Māori, is *Whakaaturia mai*.

Hei tauira: *Give me a turn now.*

	incorrect		correct
	Homai he huri ināiane.		Māku pea ināiane.


7. *hopu / hī*

The word 'catch' also has different alternatives in Māori depending on intended meaning. **Hopu** is the word for catch, as in catch a ball e.g., *Hopukina te pōro* (catch the ball). **Hao/rau** are the words for catch with a net e.g., *He kaha a Wīremu ki te hao inanga* (Wīremu is good at catching whitebait).

Hī is to catch with a line — *Kua haere a Pāpā ki te hī ika* (Dad has gone fishing).

Eke is the word for *get on* or *ride*. When used in the context of catching a bus or a train we use *eke* for catch. *Kei te eke au i te pahi* (I am going to catch the bus).

Hei taurira: *I caught the train*

	incorrect		correct
	I hopu au i te tereina.		I eke au i te tereina.

8. *ka kite / ka kite i a*

Sometimes people will say *Ka kite* for 'see you later'. Although not strictly correct, it has become common usage. Quite often a learner will also say *Ka kite koe* which actually means, 'You will see'.

Hei taurira: *See you later*

	incorrect		correct
	Ka kite koe Ka kite anō koe		Ka kite i a koe Ka kite anō i a koe

9. *kāore anō...kua / kāore anō...kia*

We quite often hear *Kāore anō* with *kua* in a sentence. e.g., *Kāore anō au kua mutu. Kāore anō* can only be used with *kia* or *i* in a sentence e.g., *Kāore anō au kia/i kai* (I've not yet eaten).

Hei taurira: *They've not yet arrived*

	incorrect		correct
	Kāore anō rātou kua tae mai.		Kāore anō rātou kia tae mai.

10. *kāore au he... / kāore āku*

Learners may say *Kāore au he pene* (I am not a pen) intending to mean *I don't have a pen*.

The correct way to say this is *Kāore aku/āku pene*.



Hei taurira: *I haven't any books/I don't have a book.*

	incorrect		correct
	Kāore au he pukapuka.		Kāore aku pukapuka.

11. *kāore kei te... / kāore i*

Negation can sometimes be a bit of a problem for learners. Quite often you will see or hear *Kāore kei te haere au* to mean 'I am not going'. However, the correct negation of *kei te* is *Kāore ... i te ...* e.g., *Kāore au i te waiata. (I am not singing.)*

Hei taurira: *I am not working*

	incorrect		correct
	Kāore kei te mahi au. Kāore au kei te mahi.		Kāore au i te mahi.

12. *kei ahau... / he ... tāku*

Learners will sometimes use the structure 'Kei a au he...' to say "I have a meeting, appointment, date, etc." However, *Kei ahau/kei a au* means 'I have (physically in my possession)', e.g., *Kei a wai taku pene* (who has my pen)? *Kei a au tō pene* (I have your pen). The equivalent of 'I have' for things such as an appointment, or a sister, the correct phrase in Māori is *He ... tāku* e.g., *He hui tāku ā te rima karaka* (I have a meeting at five o'clock), or *He tuahine tāku* (I have a sister).

Hei taura: *I've got a meeting.*

	incorrect		correct
	Kei ahau he hui.		He hui tāku.

13. *kei hea...e haere ana / kei te haere...*

If following English structures, a learner would say, *Kei hea koe e haere ana?* However, this phrase doesn't follow an acceptable Māori sentence pattern. In Māori, the 'where' goes at the end of the sentence e.g., *E haere ana koe ki hea* (where are you going)?

Hei taura: *Where are they going?*

	incorrect		correct
	Kei hea rātou e haere ana?		Kei te haere rātou ki hea?

14. *me...*

When using the word *me* to mean ‘should’, ‘could’ or ‘ought to’, the general rule is that you the verb which follows should not be in passive form.

Hei taurira: *The book should be returned.*

	incorrect		correct
	Me whakahokia te pukapuka.		Me whakahoki te pukapuka.

15. *mō koe / māu, mōu, māhau, mōhou*

Many learners of the reo will directly follow the English construction and use *mō* and *koe* to mean ‘for you’. In fact the correct way to say ‘for you’ is *māu* or *mōu* depending on the possessive category of the item you are referring to. *He āporo tāku māu*, which means, ‘I have an apple for you’. *I hokona e tō māmā he motokā mōu*, which means, ‘Your mother bought a car for you’.

mō ia and *mō au* are also incorrect. ‘For him/her’ is *mōna* or *māna* and ‘for me’ is *mōku* or *māku*.

Some iwi use the words *mōhou* and *māhau*.

Hei taurira: *Here is a cup of tea for you.*

	incorrect		correct
	Anei he kapu tī mō koe .		Anei he kapu tī māu .

16. mutu...

Quite often a learner will want to have a direct equivalent for 'I have finished' and many use the phrase *Kua mutu au*. This actually translates as 'I am no longer/I am dead'. If you have finished your work you could say *Kua mutu taku mahi* or *Kua mutu i a au taku mahi*. Quite a common question is *Kua mutu koe?* The correct phrase is *Kua mutu tō kai?* or *Kua mutu i a koe ō kai?*

Hei taurira: *I have completed my work.*

	incorrect		correct
	Kua mutu/oti au i taku mahi.		Kua mutu/oti i a au taku mahi.

17. puru / rau / panga / kuhu...

The word 'put' in English can be used for 'put on, put in, put your hat on' etc. Learners sometimes use the Māori word *puru* to mean all types of 'put'. However, in Māori there are several different words depending on the specific meaning. Here are the different types of 'put' in Māori.

puru — *plug up or put into* e.g., *Purua te kōwhao ki te wūru kātene* (Plug the hole with cotton wool).

rau(a) — *to put into, gather into, place into* e.g., *Raua atu te heihei ki roto i te umu* (Put the chicken into the oven).

panga(a) atu, waiho(tia) — *Put on / place on* e.g., *Pangā atu te parāoa ki runga i te tēpu* (Put the bread on the table).

Waihotia te kapu ki runga i te tēpu (Put/place/leave the cup on the table).

whakamau(a), kākahu(ngia), kuhu(na), komo(hia) — *put on* (clothes) e.g., *Whakamaua tō koti me tō kāmeta* (Put on your coat and your scarf).

Hei taurira: *Put your plate on the bench.*

	incorrect		correct
	Purua tō pereti ki runga i te raumanga.		Pangā atu tō pereti ki runga i te raumanga.

18. *rāua / māua*

Students are quite often taught that *rāua ko* is ‘and’ used when joining two names together. *Rāua ko* does not include the speaker or the person to whom the speaker is talking. These are the variations:

Hēmi **rāua ko** Taimānia — Hēmi and Taimānia

Hēmi **rātou ko** Taimānia, ko Haukura — Hēmi, Taimānia and Haukura

māua ko Hoera — Hoera and I

mātou ko Hoera, **ko** Pene, **ko** Tohe — Hoera, Pene, Tohe and I

Hei taurira: *Hemi and I are going to Matakana*

	incorrect		correct
	Kei te haere au rāua ko Hēmi ki Matakana.		Kei te haere māua ko Hēmi ki Matakana.

19. *pea*

The word *pea* (maybe/perhaps) usually appears in a different part of a Māori sentence than an English sentence. In Māori, *pea* is not used at the start of a sentence e.g., *Pea, ka tae mai āpōpō* (Maybe [they] will arrive tomorrow). It should be ‘Hei āpōpō pea tae mai ai.

Hei taurira: *Maybe we will go to the movie theatre.*

	incorrect		correct
	Pea, ka haere tāua ki te whare pikitia.		Ka haere pea tāua ki te whare pikitia.

20. *pīrangī koe... / māu, māhau*

Occasionally learners will follow an English structure for *Do you want a ... ?* and say *Kei te pīrangī koe he ... ?* The correct way to ask in Māori if someone wants something is to say *He ... māu/māhau/mōu mōhou* (Do/Would you want a/some ...) ?

Hei taurira: *Would you like a cup of tea?*

	incorrect		correct
	Kei te pīrangī koe he kapu tī?		He kapu tī māu/māhau?

21. *taea...*

Many learners use *taea* for 'can'. However, *taea* is only suitable for '(cap)able to do something'. e.g., *Ka taea e au te taraiwa* (*I can [am able to] drive*). Here are some other types of 'can' in Māori:

He rare māku? Can I have a lolly?



E pai ana kia haere mai a Hēmi ki tōku whare? Can Hēmi come to my house—is it ok if Hēmi comes to my house?

Ka haere au ki te wharepaku? Can I go to the toilet?

Homai te kī? Can I have the key? (Pass me the key).

E whakaaetia ana te mau hū ki roto nei? Can you wear shoes inside? (Is wearing shoes permitted inside?)

Hei taurira: *Can I go outside?*

	incorrect		correct
	Ka taea e au te puta ki waho.		Ka puta au ki waho? E pai ana kia puta au ki waho?

Hei taurira: *Can I have some chocolate?*

	incorrect		correct
	Ka taea e au he tiakarete?		He tiakarete māku?

22. taea ki te...

When we say I can (am able to) do something, we use *ka taea*. For example, *Ka taea e au te taki i te karakia* (I am able to recite the karakia). The mistake some people make is adding a *ki* where it's not needed e.g., *Ka taea e au ki te taki i te karakia*.


Hei taurira: *I can drive the tractor.*

	incorrect		correct
	Ka taea e au ki te taraiwa i te tarakihana.		Ka taea e au te taraiwa i te tarakihana.

23. tawhito

The word *tawhito* is used to describe something that is old. It is not used to describe people. If a woman has aged, one might say, *Kua kua haere ia* (She has aged). If you've have attended a school and want to say that you were an old (ex-) student of a school you might say, *He ākongā o mua ahau nō te kura o Tawa* (I am a past/old student of Tawa College).

Hei taurira: *He is old.*

	incorrect		correct
	He tawhito ia		He koroua ia


Hei taurira: *I am an old (ex-) worker at the swimming pool.*

	incorrect		correct
	He kaimahi tawhito au ki te puna kaukau		He kaimahi o mua au i te puna kaukau

24. tere

Learners will sometimes say *Ka oma tere au* for 'I can run fast'. More correct is *Ka tere taku oma* or *Ka tere oma au*.



Hei taurira: *I quickly walked to school.*

	incorrect		correct
	Ka hīkoi tere au ki te kura.		Ka tere taku hīkoi ki te kura. Ka tere hīkoi au ki te kura.

25. tō huri

When students are playing they will often say, '*Tō huri*' to mean '*Your turn*'. Students have transferred their thinking from English to Māori by saying '*tō*' (your) '*huri*' (turn). The turn that they are referring to is a verb, not a noun and means 'to turn'.

Hei taurira: *It's your turn.*

	incorrect		correct
	Tō huri ināianeī.		Māu ināianeī. Kei a koe ināianeī. Hei a koe ināianeī.

26. *tohutō*

Learning a word includes learning how to write it correctly and the correct placement of macrons (or double vowels). To use macrons incorrectly equates to misspelling the word. Check these common errors.

Error	Correction
ae	āe
akonga	ākonga
ēhara	ehara
ēngari	engari
hapu	hapū
hēoi	heoi
Huitānguru	Huitanguru
īngoa	ingoa
kao	kāo
kātoa	katoa
kōnei	konei
kōtahi	kotahi
kuri	kurī
māhana	mahana
mē	me
nānā, nōnā	nāna, nōna
rāngona	rangona
tāhūhū	tāhuhu
tāonga	taonga
tāringa	taringa
tēna	tēnā
tēra	tērā
tīkanga	tikanga
ūpoko	upoko
waimārie	waimarie
whetu	whetū
āo	ao
angitū	angitu
pangarau	pāngarau
mārautanga	marautanga
whakangāhau	whakangahau
tāwhiti	tawhiti
ngāhere	ngahere
nga	ngā
paraoa	parāoa
inaiane	ināiane
Maori	Māori
Pakeha	Pākehā
roopu	rōpū
hāngarau	hangarau

27. Quick Reference

		Incorrect		Correct
āhea		Āhea ka hoki mai rātou, ka kai tātou.		Kia hoki mai rātou, ka kai tātou.
anō hoki		Anō hoki, me kōrero tāua ki tōna rangatira.		Me te mea anō, me kōrero tāua ki tōna rangatira.
he		He pukapuka koe?		He pukapuka tāu?
he		He pukapuka au.		He pukapuka tāku.
he aha		He aha tō ingoa?		Ko wai tō ingoa?
he aha		He aha tēnei mō?		Hei aha tēnei?
homai		Homai he whakarongo		Ka whakarongo pea au?
hopu		I hopu au i te tereina.		I eke au i te tereina.
ka kite		Ka kite koe Ka kite anō koe		Ka kite i a koe Ka kite anō i a koe
kāore ...		Kāore au he pukapuka.		Kāore aku pukapuka.
kāore anō		Kāore anō rātou kua tae mai.		Kāore anō rātou kia tae mai.
kāore kei		Kāore kei te mahi au. Kāore au kei te mahi.		Kāore au i te mahi.
kei		Kei ahau he hui.		He hui tāku.
kei hea ... e ... ana		Kei hea rātou e haere ana?		Kei te haere rātou ki hea?
me		Me whakahokia te pukapuka.		Me whakahoki te pukapuka.
mō koe		Anei he kapu tī mō koe.		Anei he kapu tī māu.
mutu		Kua mutu/oti au i taku mahi.		Kua mutu/oti i a au taku mahi.
pea		Pea, ka haere tāua ki te whare pikitia.		Ka haere pea tāua ki te whare pikitia.
pīrangi		Kei te pīrangi koe he kapu tī?		He kapu tī māu/māhau?
purua		Purua tō pereti ki runga i te raumanga.		Pangā atu tō pereti ki runga i te raumanga.
rāua ko		Kei te haere au rāua ko Hēmi ki Manaia		Kei te haere māua ko Hēmi ki Manaia
taea		Ka taea e au ki te taraiwa i te tarakihana.		Ka taea e au te taraiwa i te tarakihana.
taea		Ka taea e au te puta ki waho.		Ka puta au ki waho? E pai ana kia puta au ki waho?
taea		Ka taea e au he tiakarete?		He tiakarete māku?

tawhito		He kaimahi tawhito au ki te puna kaukau		He kaimahi o mua au i te puna kaukau
tawhito		He tawhito ia		He koroua ia
tere		Ka hīkoi tere au ki te kura.		Ka tere taku hīkoi ki te kura. Ka tere hīkoi au ki te kura.
tō huri		Tō huri ināiane		Māu ināiane Kei a koe ināiane Hei a koe ināiane