

A note on the realisation of /r/ in the word *Māori*.

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Introduction

Māori language and culture are emblematic of New Zealand identity (see, e.g., Macalister, 2000) but the word *Māori* itself can be difficult to pronounce for speakers of English. In the experience of the authors, many Americans give it three syllables, /ma'ori/ with the stress on the /ɔ/, unless they have heard New Zealanders pronounce the word. Within New Zealand, *Māori* is sometimes pronounced with a long /a/ vowel, and sometimes with a diphthong that approximates the Māori /ao/ vowel. It is rarely pronounced with the long diphthong /a:ɔ/ which is the original Māori pronunciation. The /r/ may be an English approximant [ɹ] or a Māori flap [ɾ]. In this note we comment on the pronunciation of the word *Māori* as part of a brief analysis of the pronunciation of /r/ in the speech of Raureti Te Huia (RTH), a Māori born in the late nineteenth century.

RTH was one of the very few Māori recorded by the Mobile Broadcasting Unit of the New Zealand Broadcasting Service (see Gordon et al, 2004 for a description of the Mobile Recording Unit). He was born in 1885 in Te Awamutu of Ngāti Maniapoto and Tūwharetoa descent and recorded in 1947. We have already discussed his pronunciation of <wh> (see MacLagan and King, 2002). RTH's first language is Māori and he has non-native features in his English grammar and some non-English pronunciations (such as [t] and [d] for /θ/ and /ð/). In the recordings he speaks in Māori and then translates into English. This enables us to compare the way in which he pronounces the same words and phonemes in the two languages.

Difficulties with the pronunciation of the word *Māori* are likely to arise in part because Māori and English typically have different realisations of the /r/ phoneme. Māori normally uses a flap [ɾ] (see Bauer, 1993: 533), whereas the most common allophone of /r/ for New Zealand English, as for English English (Gimson, 1970: 206), is the approximant [ɹ] (Gordon et al, 2004: 177). As we listened to RTH, we realised that most of the time he used the appropriate allophone of /r/ for the language in which he was speaking. But we realised that he did not always use the Māori allophone of /r/ when he included Māori words or *whakapapa* in his English text, perhaps indicating that English was affecting his pronunciation of Māori. In this paper we specifically highlight RTH's pronunciation of the word *Māori* as part of a general description of his pronunciation of /r/.

Method

In order to perform a general analysis of all tokens of RTH's /r/, we carried out an auditory analysis with each author analysing the sounds separately and then comparing analyses. Agreement was over 90%. When we disagreed, we listened again and came to a decision. Tokens of /r/ were analysed as flaps, [ɾ], approximants, [ɹ], or as laterals, [l]. We analysed 48 minutes of English which included 125 tokens of /r/ for English and 435 tokens of /r/ in

Māori words. We listened to 90 minutes of Māori, but stopped analysing /r/ tokens when we had reached 227, because all the tokens were realised with the same allophone.

Results

Table 1: The realisations of /r/ in all words in RTH's speech.

	Māori	Māori words in English	English
Number of tokens	227	435	125
[ɾ]	100%	88%	14%
[ɹ]		12%	84%
[l]			2%

Table 1 presents the results of the /r/ analysis for all words for RTH. It can be seen that he usually uses the traditional pronunciation of /r/ for each language. When he is talking in Māori, he always uses a flap for /r/. When he uses Māori words while talking in English, the percentage of flaps decreases to 88%. When he is talking in English, RTH still uses flaps 14% of the time, and approximants 84% of the time. He also uses three lateral realisations of /r/ when he is speaking English, but no such realisations when he is speaking Māori or using Māori words in the English sections of his recording.

RTH used the word *Māori* 15 times while he was speaking in English. In order to assess the consistency of his pronunciation for this word, we examined the way he pronounced all words that were repeated ten or more times in the course of the English recordings. Since all the tokens of /r/ analysed while RTH was talking in Māori were realised as flaps, it was not necessary to look at repeated words in the Māori recordings. Table 2 lists the realisations of /r/ for all words that were repeated ten or more times. Only two English words, *from* and *married* were repeated ten or more times. *From* was realised with [ɹ] all the time, and *married* was realised with [ɹ] 96% of the time with one token realised as [l]. The Māori words that occurred frequently while RTH was speaking in English were always realised with flaps some of the time. However the percentage of flaps used ranged from 100% for *te kore* ('the void') to only 33% for the word *Māori*.

Table 2: Realisations of /r/ in words that are repeated ten or more times when RTH is speaking English.

	<i>kore</i>	<i>Rangi</i> *	<i>Rauparaha</i> **	<i>Rewi</i>	<i>Māori</i>	<i>married</i>	<i>from</i>
Number	29	31	28	11	15	25	11
[r]	100%	94%	93%	55%	33%		
[ɹ]		6%	7%	45%	67%	96%	100%
[ɻ]						4%	

* 20 tokens are *Rangi*, 11 tokens are *Rangi* as the start of a longer name such as *Ranginui*.

** Both /r/ tokens were analysed in the name *Rauparaha*. The 28 tokens represent 14 repeated words. The two non-flap tokens are both for the initial /r/.

The context in which the word occurred did not seem to affect the choice of realisation of /r/ with the non-flapped tokens occurring equally frequently in stressed and unstressed words, intervocalically and following final consonants in preceding words. In order to check the distribution of the non-flapped realisations of /r/, we looked at the context for the /r/ phonemes in the repeated words. The /r/ was always intervocalic in *te kore*, where the /r/ was always flapped, and also in *Māori*, where the /r/ was frequently not flapped. In *Rauparaha*, which had two non-flapped initial tokens, the initial /r/ was similarly always intervocalic because it was preceded by *te* or once by *the*. Just over half the realisations of *Rauparaha* were stressed. One of the non-flapped tokens was in a stressed word and one was not. The /r/ in *Rangi* was usually intervocalic. The two non-flapped tokens occurred in the name *Rangikōaea* which occurred three times. When it was initial in the utterance, the /r/ was flapped. One of the non-flapped tokens occurred after a consonant, and one after a vowel. *Rewi* was the word with the second largest number of non-flapped /r/ realisations. The /r/ was intervocalic in four tokens, two of which were flapped and two were not. It followed a consonant six times. Three were flapped and three were not. The single utterance initial occurrence of *Rewi* was realised with a flap. Finally we considered the degree of stress on the word *Māori*. Nine occurrences were stressed and six were unstressed. For both the stressed and unstressed tokens, there were twice as many approximants as flaps. The appearance of a non-flapped realisation of /r/ thus does not seem to be dependent on stress or phonetic context, but seems to be relatively randomly distributed.

Discussion and conclusion

It is clear that RTH usually pronounces /r/ differently in the two languages he speaks. In his Māori /r/ is always pronounced with a flap, [ɹ], and in his English /r/ is usually pronounced with an approximant, [ɻ]. English thus does not influence RTH's pronunciation of /r/ when he is talking solely in Māori. However the word *Māori* is inconsistent in RTH's pronunciation. When he uses Māori words, such as *Māori*, while speaking English, he sometimes uses a flap and sometimes an approximant. The extent to which RTH uses an approximant for Māori words when he is talking English is one indication of the extent of the influence of English on his Māori pronunciation. The word *Māori*, with two thirds of the occurrences pronounced with an approximant, shows the greatest influence from English. This influence from English also extends to the vowel sounds in the word

Māori. Fourteen out of 16 tokens analysed in the Māori sections contained diphthongs (87.5%) while only 3 out of 14 tokens analysed in the English sections were diphthongised with the majority (78.5%) being monophthongs with long /a:/.

It is not surprising that the word *Māori* should receive the most anglicised pronunciation of all the Māori words used by RTH as it is one of the Māori words that Māori speakers would most often hear being spoken by speakers of English. Its very frequency would make its pronunciation likely to be influenced by the English of the settlers. We know that RTH interacted a great deal with Pākehā. He was one of the informants for the historian James Cowan, whose books and articles were printed from the turn of the 20th century onwards, and RTH was also one of the founding members of the Te Awamutu Historical Society, formed in February 1935. It is highly likely that *Māori* is a word he would have used frequently in interactions with Pākehā. It is similarly likely that he would have often used the name *Rewi* (the word with the second highest proportion of approximant realisations for /r/) when talking to Pākehā, because his father, Te Huia Raureti, fought alongside Rewi Maniapoto at the battle of Orakau during the Waikato land wars in the 1860s.

Analysis of non-Māori New Zealanders recorded by the Mobile Unit and born during the second half of the nineteenth century indicates that RTH would have heard numerous examples of [ɹ]. Although many of these speakers sometimes used flapped realisations of /r/ that were similar to the usual Māori version, most English speakers, especially those in northern settlements, used [ɹ] as their most common realisation of /r/ (see Gordon et al, 2004:177). Speakers who used flaps most of the time were typically of Scottish origin and were concentrated in settlements further south. The speakers analysed from the Waikato area for the Origins of New Zealand English Project (Gordon et al, 2004) used approximants as their most common form of /r/. There would therefore have been English speakers in the Waikato area using non-flapped [ɹ] versions of /r/ who could have influenced the pronunciation of Māori speakers like RTH.

We started by noting that the word *Māori* receives varying pronunciations today. An analysis of the pronunciation of /r/ in the speech of RTH demonstrates that this variation has been happening for well over fifty years among speakers of Māori and is indicative of other variations which seem to show influence from New Zealand English in the pronunciation of the Māori language.

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