

Māori Waiata: Discourse structuring, sub-genres and aesthetics

Raukura Roa

Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato

The University of Waikato

[raukura@waikato.ac.nz]

Abstract

With particular reference to a discourse-based analysis of five *waiata tangi* from Ngāti Hauā, it is argued here that different types of Māori *waiata* (songs and chants) may be characterised by different types of overall discourse structuring. It is also suggested that discourse structuring may be a significant aspect of the aesthetics of Māori *waiata*.

Introduction

The word 'waiata' is used with reference to Māori songs and chants, both traditional and modern, the term 'waiata mōteatea' being reserved for the former. Using a range of criteria including theme, function and imagery, analysts such as Ngata (1959), McLean and Orbell (1975) and McLean (1996) have classified *waiata mōteatea* into types, including, for example, *waiata oriori* (lullabies); *waiata tangi* (laments); *waiata aroha* (love songs) and *waiata kaioraora* (abusive songs). August (2001) has argued that, in addition to other characteristic features, *waiata oriori* may be generally characterised by a particular type of rhetorical structure.

The analysis of the rhetorical structure of five *waiata tangi* (following) leads to my hypothesis that they, too, may have a prototypical rhetorical structure. All five of the *waiata tangi* analysed here belong to Ngāti Hauā (of the Tainui confederation of tribes). Further analyses of *waiata tangi* and other categories of *waiata* from Ngāti Hauā and other communities will be required before any definite claims can be made about the real significance of the rhetorical patterning identified.

The five waiata: A discourse-based perspective

The analytical framework: Rhetorical functions and interactive speech acts

Each of the five *waiata* included here is analysed in relation to three aspects of its discourse structure - rhetorical function (e.g. hortatory), interactive speech acts (e.g. informative) and semantic relationships (e.g. Reason-Result).

The *hortatory* rhetorical function is characterised by the occurrence of exhortation and the vocative form of address (direct address) (see, for example, August (2001)). Typically, it is associated with the speech acts *elicitation* and *directive*. Wherever the hortatory rhetorical function is in evidence, the discourse will also be vocative. However, vocative sections need not necessarily be hortatory. In other words, exhorting someone (or, metaphorically, something) to do something (hortatory) involves addressing it/them (vocative), whereas addressing someone/something directly (vocative) does not necessarily involve exhortation (hortatory).

The interactive speech acts, *informative* (providing information), *directive* (requesting/ requiring some sort of action) and *elicitation* (seeking a verbal response to questioning) are often expressed by the following moods: *declarative* (informative), *imperative* (directive) and *interrogative* (elicitation). However, these speech acts

(informative, elicitation, directive) do not necessarily occur with the moods with which they are most commonly associated (declarative, interrogative, imperative). For example, elicitation will not necessarily be expressed in interrogative mood. For discussion and application of interactive speech acts, see, for example, Sinclair and Coulthard (1975); Crombie (1985); August (2001).

Semantic relationships have been discussed by a number of linguists, including Beekman and Callow (1974), Houia (2001), Kehler (2002), Longacre (1968; 1972), and Winter (1977). Crombie (1987, pp.102-110) classifies semantic relationships into three main types in terms of the cognitive processes involved:

- associative (involving some aspect of contrast or comparison);
- logico-deductive (involving some aspect of cause and effect);
- tempero-contigual (involving relationships defined by temporal and spatial association).

Each of the three types of cognitive process has a number of semantic relationships associated with it. Those relations that are associated with the logico-deductive process are outlined in *Table 1* below. Note that Grounds-Conclusion differs from Reason-Result in that the second part of the relation is presented as a deduction rather than as a fact. The members of each relation may occur in the order indicated in the table (e.g., Reason-Result) or in reverse order (e.g. Result-Reason). Definitions and examples of semantic relations, including those associated with the associative and tempero-contigual processes, are provided in Roa (2003).

Table 1: The logico-deductive process and associated semantic relations with examples

Logico-deductive semantic relations with examples from English	
Condition-Consequence	If he had told me to be careful, I would have avoided the swamp.
Means-Purpose	He composed in order to honour the departed.
Reason-Result	He was dishonoured because he had been defeated in battle.
Means-Result	He honoured them by composing a waiata.
Grounds-Conclusion	He is wearing the cloak so he must be the leader.

The five *waiata tangi* that are discussed below are: *Ka Mahuta, Tērā te marama, Tērā te marama ka kowhiti, E rere e te ao*, and *Tākiri ko te ata*. Translations of these waiata (along with a numbering system to help readers to relate the original and translated versions) are provided for readers who are not fluent in Māori. For a discussion of these translations, see Roa (2003). The analyses that follow are, however, based directly on the Māori.

Ka Mahuta

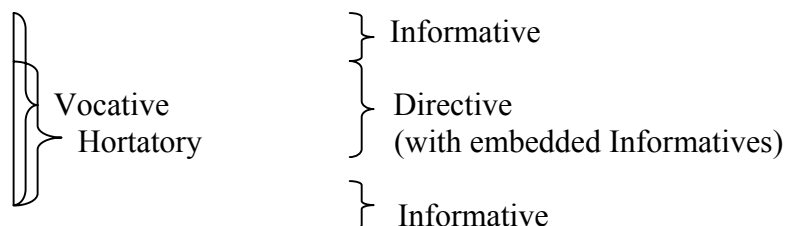
Source text	Translation	Discourse segments	Interactive speech acts	Logico-deductive semantic relations
1. Tērā te marama ka mahuta i te pae o Tahu e tama e	1. Beyond Tahu's horizon the moon rises, oh son	Vocative	Informative	Means-Purpose
2. E tū ai koe te kura tātai puni te kawau mārō e i	2. Where you stand, the beloved one whose genealogy is borne within the swoop of the cormorant.			
3. Haere rā koutou i te apuhau, i te apu a Pawa, i te tira wairua e i	3. I bid you farewell as you take your journey with the gathering winds and the questing souls to join the spirit people			
4. Takahia e koe ngā toka taniwharau, ka tere, rua mano e	4. Tread Ngā Toka Taniwharau, take wing amongst two thousand	Hortatory	Informative	Means-Purpose
5. Ka pāea kei uta kei te whakahekea iho ko te Wairua Tapu e	5. Cast ashore, the holy spirit descends upon you			
6. Hei ara mōhou e uia mai koe māu e kī atu nō Wharekura toetoe ngā nunui e	6. To guide you. If you should be asked, say that you are from Wharekura, from the remnants of the multitudes		Directive	Condition-Consequence
7. Tēnei anō rā ngā whakataukī i waiho ake ai e hahu (hau) e tonga e i, he taonga kākaho e...	7. These are the ancient sayings handed down for you to use, a precious lattice work...		Informative	Means-Purpose

In *Ka Mahuta*, the entire waiata is vocative – directly addressed to the deceased (*e tama*) - and the entire second section, with the exception of the final sentence, is hortatory, an exhortation to the deceased to depart on the journey to the spirit world armed with knowledge of the ancient sayings and the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

The initial section (Lines 1-3 “Tērā te marama . . . i te tira wairua e i”) is Informative. This is followed by a Directive (“Takahia e koe ngā toka taniwharau . . . he taonga kākaho e...”) which includes two embedded Informatives, one in the middle section (“Ka paea kei uta kei te whakahekea iho ko te wairua tapu e”), and one at the end (“Tēnei anō rā ngā whakataukī i waiho ake ai e hahu (hau) e tonga e i, he taonga kākaho e...”).

In terms of semantic relations, what is immediately apparent is the centrality of the logico-deductive relation of Means-Purpose which appears just before the hortatory section, where it refers to the purpose of the journey (“haere ra koutou i te apu hau i te apu a Pawa i te tira wairua e”), and twice in the hortatory section where it refers to the purpose for which the Holy Spirit descends and the purpose of the ancient sayings (“Hei ara mōhou māu e ki atu...”).

The overall discourse structure (excluding semantic relations) is represented below:



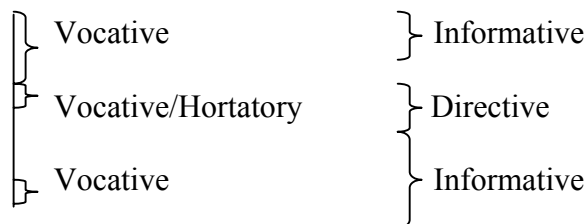
Tērā te marama

Source text	Translation	Discourse segments	Interactive speech acts	Logico-deductive semantic relations
1. Tērā te marama hohoro te kake mai kia mihi atu au	1. Behold the moon swiftly rising so that as I greet it	Vocative	Informative	Reason-Result
2. Kia tangi atu au kātahi te aroha	2. I mourn and express my love			
3. Ka āta rangona iho me te ngau Atua	3. My senses bemused, feeling the wrath of God -			
4. Te pānga ki ahau he kino koutou ki te noho mai	4. Upon me. You were wrong to stay behind.	Hortatory/ Vocative	Directive	Means-Purpose
5. Ka motu koe ki tawhiti ka nui taku aroha	5. You are cut off, far away, great is my sorrow			
6. E rere e te ao haria he kōrero kia whakarongo mai aku hoa i te mate	6. Soar onward oh clouds. Take these words so they may be heard by my friends who have passed away.	Informative	Informative	Result-Reason
7. Tēnei hoki au kei te karangi noa he nui nō te aroha ki te iwi kua ngaro	7. Here am I restless, unsettled. Great is my sorrow for those departed.			
8. Ārohirohi ana taku nei titiro ngā rae ka wero	8. My vision is blurred, then the headlands pierced			
9. A ko tāku i waho, pā tata rawa mai Te puia i Whakaari mei ata kite atu	9. And my view beyond is of White Island, it seems so close, if I could only clearly see	Vocative	Informative	
10. I maro tiri ra ia ki te wā i huri atu ki te tini o te hunga e kore ra e hoki mai	10. He was at Marotiri when he joined the myriad who will never return			
11. Kua oti atu koutou whakangaro i te ao na	11. You the deceased are lost to us in the underworld			

In *Tērā te marama*, the initial two sections and the final section are vocative. The first and last of the vocative sections are addressed to the deceased. The remaining vocative section, a section which is also hortatory and directive, is addressed to the clouds. The remainder of the waiata is informative.

The final section of the initial vocative contains an implicit Reason-Result relation, the first section of the informative section contains a further implicit Reason-Result relation (inverted) and the hortatory section contains a Means-Purpose relation.

The overall discourse structure (excluding semantic relations) is represented below:



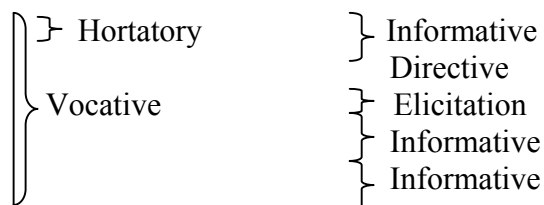
Tērā te marama ka kowhiti

Source text	Translation	Discourse segments	Interactive speech acts	Logico-deductive semantic relations
1. Tērā te marama ka kowhiti kei runga	1. Behold the new moon appears	Hortatory	Informative	Result-Reason
2. E ngia e te ihu tēnei ka ora mai	2. Bringing the breath of life			
3. Hoki mai e hoa ki a tirohia iho	3. Return friend and let us gaze upon		Directive	
4. Tō kiri rauwhero, tō mata rauiti	4. Your dusky skin and fine features			
5. Tama tā iho ki te wai mātao, ka heru ka pai ka puta ki waho ra	5. A son cleansed in the cold waters, groomed then emerged			
6. Ko wai ra te Atua i whiua ai koe?	6. What God would forsake you?	Vocative	Elicitation	Result-Reason
7. I herea mai koe, te here taurarua	7. You were bound with the double stranded ties			
8. Nei kua unuhia i waenga i te hono	8. Now severed in the midst of the joining			
9. Karekare kau ana ngā hau o te rangi	9. The winds in the sky howl			
10. Aumihi kau ana ngā wai o te awa	10. The waters of the river embrace		Informative	Result-Reason
11. Kāore ia nei ko te tohu o te mate	11. Behold 'tis a sign of death			
12. Ka whati ra e te kāwai rangi ora	12. Vital genealogical links destroyed			
13. Kua ngaro ra e taku piki kōtuku	13. Lost is my piki kōtuku			
14. Taku whakamarumarū ki te nōhanga nei	14. My beloved protector in this life			
15. Ehara e hoa (e) waiho ana koe	15. Behold friend you leave behind		Informative	Conclusion-Grounds
16. I te whana ka tatangi kei o teina	16. The melodic sounds of the whana with your younger cousins			
17. Mā tō tupuna ra māna e kōrero	17. Your ancestor should speak			
18. He moenga rangatira ki runga o Hikurangi	18. A noble marriage atop Hikurangi Mountain			
19. Ehara koe (i) te tangata he kuru tonga rerewa	19. You are not a mere person, you are a kuru tonga rerewa			
20. He Toroa whakakoko ki runga (i) te taumata nei	20. You are as the Albatross weeping as it soars above			

In *Tērā te marama ka kowhiti*, the entire discourse is addressed to the deceased (vocative). The waiata begins with a hortatory section in which the deceased is exhorted to behold the rising of the moon and return. The remainder of the waiata is largely informative although there is one elicitation. The elicitation (“Ko wai ra te Atua i whiua ai koe?”) may be intended to function as a rhetorical question. If so, the implication is that God would not forsake the deceased. Whether or not the question is a rhetorical one, the following line appears to be a reason (either for the question

itself or, if it is rhetorical, for the implication carried by the question). The first informative section contains a Reason-Result relation (inverted) and the second informative section contains a Grounds-Conclusion relation (inverted).

The overall discourse structure (excluding semantic relations) is represented below:

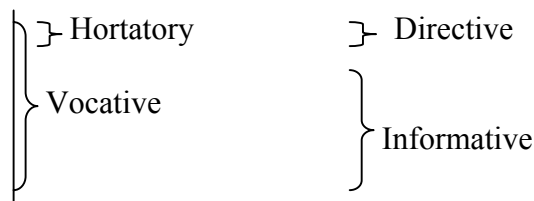


E rere e te ao

Source text	Translation	Discourse segments	Interactive speech acts	Logico-deductive semantic relations	
1. E rere e te ao, ahu tonu mai uta ee	1. Take flight, oh cloud, from inland	Hortatory/ Vocative	Directive		
2. Rere tika mai runga, tika tonu ki raro ra ee	2. Soar high above and descend				
3. Ki te ao pouri, te rerenga wairua ee	3. Into the depths of darkness, the dwelling of the spirits,				
4. Ko te ara tēnā, i haere atu ai ee	4. 'Tis the pathway travelled				
5. Aku kurupounamu, aku ipo kahurangi ee	5. My precious ornaments, my beloved treasures	Vocative	Informative		
6. Nāku i tuku atu, i te kaha o te mate ee	6. I let you go, the pain is too great				Reason-Result
7. Kā ti ko te aroha, e kai nei i a hau nā	7. And now my love gnaws at me				Reason- Result
8. Homai kia mihia ngā mate tuatahi ee	8. Causing me to mourn, the first deaths...				
9. Ngā mate tuarua, tēnei mātou ee	9. And mourn too the second deaths. Here are we				
10. Te hari aroha mai ka hua te ngākau ee	10. Bringing our love, our hearts frustrated				
11. Te noho wairangi nei kua hoki rawa ki te kore ee	11. Without hope, eventually returning to nothing				
12. Te riri a te Atua, kāore ia nei ee	12. The wrath of God, no blame can be laid there –				
13. He tīkaro manawa, tokomaha i te matenga ee	13. A wrenching of our hearts, so many of you having died				Result-Reason
14. I te tau kotahi tēnā koutou ee	14. In one year, and we acknowledge you all				
15. E arohatia nei, te waihotanga ake ee	15. Such is the love of those left behind				Result-Reason
16. A ngā kaumātua a te iwi kua ngaro nā ii	16. Of the elders, for those who are lost to us...				

In *E rere e te ao*, almost the entire discourse is addressed to the deceased (vocative/informative). The first section is, however, not only vocative but also hortatory. It is addressed to the cloud (symbolising the journey of the deceased to their resting place), exhorting it to take flight, to soar and descend, travelling the pathway to the dwelling place of the spirits. There are several Reason-Result relations, all of which co-occur with informative. The final Reason-Result relationship is particularly interesting in that it appears to relate not only to the content of the waiata, but also to the reason for its composition (“E arohatia nei, te waihotanga ake ee/ A ngā kaumātua a te iwi kua ngaro nā ii”).

The overall discourse structure (excluding semantic relations) is represented below:

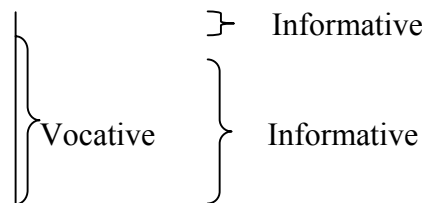


Tākiri ko te ata

Source text	Translation	Discourse segments	Interactive speech acts	Logico-deductive semantic relations
1. Tākiri ko te ata	1. With the quivering of the dawn's light	Vocative	Informative	Reason-Result
2. I haere ai te makau haere ra e hoa	2. My dear one departed, farewell beloved one			
3. I te ata hāpara e kāre kau atu nei	3. As the dawn breaks, I am lost, alone on this morning			
4. Te tau o taku ate, kihai i whītikia	4. Severed is the bond we once shared my love -			
5. Te tau o Kaitangata	5. Treasured of the Consumer-of-passions		Informative	Means-Purpose
6. Hei ata mōhoku, hei ata ki te mate	6. As a shadow for me, a shadow of death			
7. Māku e mihi noa	7. All I can do is acknowledge you			
8. Ki o haerenga nei māku e tangi noa	8. Weep for the places we visited			
9. Ki o nohanga nei tangi tīkapa ai	9. Lament inconsolably the places we dwelt			
10. Ko te puni wahine e waiho ana koe	10. You leave behind a group of woman			
11. Hei ranga i te iwi, i te nui o –‘Ti-Hau’	11. To unite the people, to bind the masses of ‘Ti-Hau’			
12. I te rahi (o) Waikato	12. To bring together the multitudes of Waikato.			
13. Ka whati ra ia te tara o te marama	13. Displaced is the horn of the moon			
14. Taku pākai hau, ehara i te tangata, he herenga tōtara	14. My protector - not merely a person, but a sheltering totara			
15. Ka turaki ki te mate	15. Cut down in death			

In *Tākiri ko te ata*, all except the initial section (which is informative) is vocative and informative. There are two logico-deductive semantic relations. The second of these – Means-Purpose – may be intended to signal that there is some consolation for the women left behind in that they have a task to perform (“Hei ranga i te iwi, i te nui o – ‘Ti-Hau’/ I te rahi (o) Waikato”).

The overall discourse structure (excluding semantic relations) is represented below:



Discussion

All five of the waiata tangi analysed above include vocative sections (sections involving direct address) and four of the five also include *hortatory* sections (sections involving exhortation/encouragement). In two cases – *Ka Mahuta* and *Tērā te marama ka kowhiti* – the deceased is encouraged on the journey. There is, however, a major difference. Whereas in *Ka Mahuta* – a *waiata tangi* relating to a warrior killed in battle – the deceased is encouraged on his journey to the spirit world, in *Tērā te marama ka kowhiti* – a *waiata tangi* relating to the death of a husband – the deceased is encouraged to return to the world of the living. In *Tērā te marama* the moon is exhorted to action; in *E rere e te ao*, the clouds are exhorted to action. In the first case – *Tērā te marama* – the moon is explicitly exhorted to carry the words of the living to the spirit world. In the second case – *E rere e te ao* – the clouds are exhorted to soar and then descend into the place of the spirits. Although there is here no explicit reference to the fact that the clouds are to carry the words of the living with them, this is an inference that, on the basis of comparison with *Tērā te marama*, we may suppose listeners would have made.

In *Tākiri ko te ata*, there is no hortatory section. However, there is in this waiata, as in all of the others, a vocative section.

In four of the five waiata, the deceased is directly addressed. In one case however, – *Tērā te marama* – it appears that the composer is addressing distant whanau rather than the deceased. Even so, on the basis of this analysis of these five *waiata tangi*, it appears that invocation (vocative) and/or exhortation (hortatory) are characteristic features. In none of the five waiata is there the clear bi-partite structure (vocative/ hortatory involving elicitation and directive followed by informative involving logico-deducative relations) that August (2001) proposed as being typical of *waiata oriori*. Instead, the most characteristic feature appears to be the occurrence vocative or a combination of vocative and hortatory throughout.

Of the five waiata, one stands apart from the others. This is *Ka Mahuta*, a waiata that is clearly concerned with death in battle (as indicated in a number of ways, including the possible reference to a cormorant-like battle formation). Whereas the other four waiata include reference to the personal sense of loss of the composer, there is no such reference in *Ka Mahuta*. Furthermore, there is a unity of vision in *Ka Mahuta*

that is not present in the others. This waiata is hortatory and vocative throughout. It is addressed exclusively to the deceased, urging him on his way to the spirit world and making reference to genealogy and to the ancient sayings that are to be his support. The omens are good for a safe journey. The warrior died a noble death. This is a waiata of acceptance of the rightness of things.

If hortatory and vocative focus are characteristic of waiata tangi, then perhaps the ability to maintain that focus throughout, to provide a context for the journey towards the spirit world that is related, through appropriate cultural symbols, to the continuity of all things, is a signal of true artistry. Within this context, the measured tones of the language itself are highlighted. This could provide a starting point for a detailed examination of the artistry of waiata tangi, an examination that would necessarily involve careful attention to the metrical and musical qualities of the composition and more detailed attention to linguistic selection.

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