



GAHUA  
FAKALATAHA

Vagahau  
Niue

TEACHER SUPPORT MATERIAL

# UNPACKING THE BOOKS



Supporting Pasifika learners  
through dual language texts

New Zealand Government

Many of these dual language books are available online as PDFs and audio files (MP3s) at <http://literacyonline.tki.org.nz/Pasifika-dual-language-books>

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### Fakaaue lahi

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# Contents

<b>Unpacking the dual language books</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Some aspects of Niue culture (aga fakamotu Niue)</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>The Niue language (vagahau Niue)</b>	<b>23</b>
Dialects (tau vahega vagahau)	23
Formal and informal language	23
The vagahau Niue alphabet (tau matatohi he vagahau Niue)	23
Macrons and double vowels	25
Using what you already know about New Zealand Māori	25
Avoiding confusion	26
Saying Niue names	26
<b>Family letter</b>	<b>27</b>
English version copymaster	27
Vagahau Niue copymaster	28
<b>More resources</b>	<b>29</b>
Some useful expressions in vagahau Niue	29
Classroom vocabulary	29
Reading prompts	30
Resources about aga fakamotu Niue	31
Niue songs	31
Resources about vagahau Niue	31
Alphabet, number, and colour resources	32
A vagahau Niue dictionary	32



# Unpacking the dual language books

More information about aga fakamotu Niue (the Niue culture) and vagahau Niue (the Niue language) can be found in later sections of this resource.

The following books can be used for reading to students who are reading at the **magenta** Ready to Read level:



## *I Can Write / Maeke Au ke Tohi*

*Fiona Lovatt Davis*

### Ko e aga fakamotu

It is common for Niue families in New Zealand to involve even young children in writing letters and emails as families keep in touch with their relatives overseas.

### Ko e vagahau Niue

“Maeke au ke ...” (“I can ...”) is a useful sentence starter. For example, a student might say:

- ▶ Maeke au ke totou ... – I can read ...



## *Let's Go / Hau ke Ō*

*Feana Tu'akoi*

### Ko e aga fakamotu

In this story about a boy getting ready to go to school, both Mum and Dad are involved. This is typical of Niue families in New Zealand.

Though a mum and a dad are shown in this story, in the Niue community, extended family members, such as grandparents, older sisters, brothers, cousins, aunts, uncles, and other members of the household who are not necessarily blood relatives help to get the children ready for school.

### Ko e vagahau Niue

Notice the way both vagahau Niue and English often specify the type of bag, box, book, and hat involved, for example a “kato aoga” – a “school bag”.



## ***My Cat / Ko e Pusi Haaku***

*Sarona Aiono-Iosefa*

### **Ko e aga fakamotu**

The mother in this story is Pālagi. You can't assume that both parents of a Niue child will be Niue – or that the non-Niue parent won't understand some vagahau Niue. Many Niue students in New Zealand are not only of Niue ancestry.

In both Niue and New Zealand, many families have pets. But in Niue, dogs are not usually thought of as being pets, in the way that they often are in New Zealand. In Niue, dogs have jobs to do, such as guarding properties.

### **Ko e vagahau Niue**

Vahahau Niue is more predictable in its sentence patterns, spelling, and pronunciation than English. Niue students will bring this expectation to the English text they encounter in your classroom. You'll need to manage this. This story is told using the sentence pattern:

“... e pusi haaku.” – “My cat is ....”

Other words you could use in relation to pets, but which are not mentioned in the book, include:

- ▶ ika – fish
- ▶ kulī – dog
- ▶ manulele – bird
- ▶ manu – a term for *any* creature.



The following books can be used for reading to students who are reading at the **red** Ready to Read level:



### ***Ako's Hugs / Tau Kukukuku ha Ako***

*Lisa Fuemana*

#### **Ko e aga fakamotu**

While Ako has a stuffed toy fruit bat, fruit bats are not kept as pets in Niue. In fact, there is a brief hunting season for them each year. As a traditional food, they are considered to be a delicacy. The sharing of affection in the family, as when family members read together, is the key to unlocking the aga fakamotu in this story.

#### **Ko e vagahau Niue**

In English, the concept of “the” is expressed with one word. Polynesian languages, such as vagahau Niue and New Zealand Māori, make a distinction between singular and plural, for example:

	<b>VAGAHAU NIUE</b>	<b>NEW ZEALAND MĀORI</b>	<b>ENGLISH</b>
singular	he	te	the
plural	tau	ngā	the

“Tau” is a plural marker. (This word has other meanings too, for example, “year” and “the leaves covering of an earth oven”.)

Notice the informal and colloquial terms for “grandma (“Nena”) and “grandpa” (“Papā”) on page 11.



## ***Lavalava / Lavalava***

*Lino Nelisi*

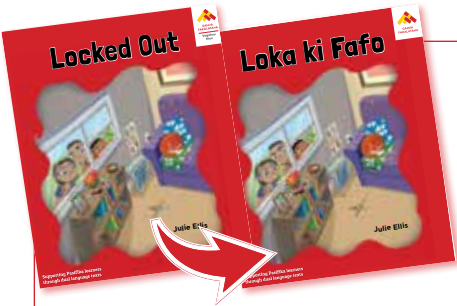
### **Ko e aga fakamotu**

Lino Nelisi’s father, Ugamea Levi, was born in Avatele, in Niue – and her mother, Peko, in the village of Vaipuna, in Sāmoa. She embraces both of her Pasifika cultures, languages, and identities. Mixed Pasifika ancestry is not uncommon in New Zealand, so be a little cautious about assuming that a student’s identity is *only* Niue. Some students may have three home languages and may have had early language and literacy experiences in all three.

In Niue, lavalava are usually only worn around the home, as part of a dancing or sports team costume, or when fishing. You probably already know that the Pālagi game of cricket and the Pasifika game of kilikiki aren’t quite the same. Some of your students will know about the differences.

### **Ko e vagahau Niue**

In vagahau Niue, another word for a lavalava is “pāleu”.



## ***Locked Out / Loka ki Fafu***

*Julie Ellis*

### **Ko e aga fakamotu**

Notice the way the youngest person shows fakalifitu (respect) by waiting for the older people to try to solve the problem first. Culturally, this story is not only about respect, but also about working together as a family to solve a problem.

### **Ko e vagahau Niue**

“Let me have a go” is a colloquial expression in English. In vagahau Niue, you can say “Toka ke lali au.”



## ***The Race / Ko e Poitufi***

*Liz Tui Morris*

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### **Ko e aga fakamotu**

People in Niue and in the Niue community in New Zealand love competitions. Competitive sports are a popular feature of community life, and include:

- ▶ kilikiki – cricket
- ▶ lakapī – rugby
- ▶ netepolo – netball.

Athletes work hard to prepare for competitions and, in this story, so does Alesana for his race.

### **Ko e vagahau Niue**

In this book, there are two examples of formulaic expressions you could use with your class, if you wish:

- ▶ “Omai ke he laini, mau amanaki, kamata!” is an equivalent expression to, if not an exact translation of, “On your marks, get set, go!”
- ▶ “Mua!” is a way to say “First!” (place) at the end of a race.





The following books can be used for reading to students who are reading at the **yellow** Ready to Read level:



## ***Finding Mum / Kumi i a Mami***

*Don Long*

### **Ko e aga fakamotu**

The Niue community in New Zealand is made up not only of people of Niue ancestry but also of family members with other cultural backgrounds, such as Pālagi. Notice that the boy's mum in this story is Pālagi. Then notice the food choices on her shopping list, which reflect two cultures.

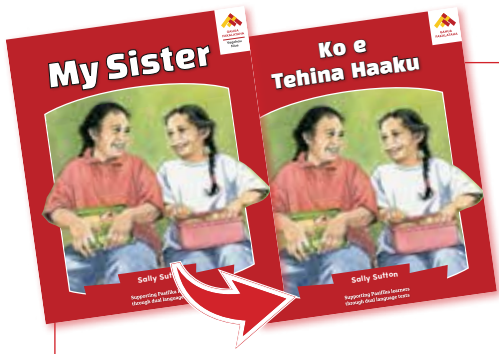
### **Ko e vagahau Niue**

There are some useful terms in *Finding Mum / Kumi i a Mami* for food items that your students may bring to school and enjoy at home, including:

- ▶ fua futi – banana
- ▶ fua tosisī – sausage
- ▶ tau nūtolo – noodles
- ▶ ota ika – marinated raw fish (ceviche).

It would be fun to explore the Niue words for other food items your students bring to school, such as words for other kinds of fruit, like:

- ▶ fua apala – apple
- ▶ fua moli – orange.



## ***My Sister / Ko e Tehina Haaku***

*Sally Sutton*

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### **Ko e aga fakamotu**

The bond between Niue siblings (and cousins) is considered to be quite significant. In this story, it is the bond between older and younger siblings that is important.

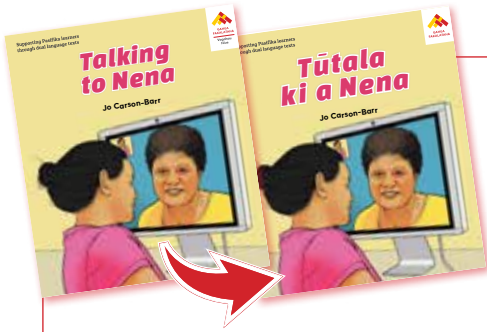
### **Ko e vagahau Niue**

Just as New Zealand Māori does, vagahau Niue uses different words for “brother” and “sister”, depending on the gender and age relationship:

- ▶ tehina – younger sister of a female or younger brother of a male
- ▶ mahakitaga – sister of a male
- ▶ taokete – older sister of a female or older brother of a male
- ▶ tugaane – brother of a female.

These terms are used for cousins, too.

For more about family relationships in the Niue community, a useful source of information is unit 9 in *Learning Niuean* by Aiao Kaulima and Clive Beaumont.



## **Talking to Nena / Tūtala ki a Nena**

Jo Carson-Barr

### **Ko e aga fakamotu**

This story touches on the relationship between a grandmother and granddaughter – a relationship that can be particularly close if the girl is named after the grandmother.

Lots of Niue families in New Zealand keep in touch with relatives in Niue. In the recent past, family members wrote letters to each other – but nowadays, many families use more modern technology to keep in touch, like the family in this story, who use Skype.

The early childhood centre and primary school on Niue recently combined on a new site. As the primary school's principal, Itzy Tukuitoga, explained in the *New Zealand Education Gazette* (*Tukutuku Kōrero* 7 March 2016), “We’re all wired now. All [our] classrooms are connected, so in the future we will be able to put laptops in classes ... All the networks are in place ... The problem we had before was that we didn’t have a lot of computers or good internet reception. But our teachers have lots of contacts at schools in New Zealand, so now that the situation is improving, we are able to arrange lots of interactions online.”

### **Ko e vagahau Niue**

*Talking to Nena / Tūtala ki a Nena* contains some useful formulaic expressions that you could use in your classroom:

- ▶ Fakaalofa lahi atu. – Hello.
- ▶ Fano ā. – Goodbye. (to someone going)
- ▶ Nākai. – No.
- ▶ Nofo ā. – Goodbye. (to someone staying)

“Nena” and “Mami” are contemporary and colloquial terms that people in the Niue community use for “Grandma” and “Mum”.



## ***Tono's Talo Garden / Ko e Maala Talo ha Tono***

*Tiva Toeono*

### **Ko e aga fakamotu**

People in Niue grow talo to sell at local markets, for export, and for home consumption. There are a number of different varieties. According to a traditional story, it was the Hakupu leader Lefutogia, who first grew talo in Niue.

In New Zealand, Niue families grow talo plants (*Colocasia esculenta*) for the lū (young leaves), which they use in such dishes as cooked talo leaves with coconut cream. It is usually too cold in New Zealand to successfully grow the corm.

### **Ko e vagahau Niue**

“Talo” and “taro” are different ways to spell and say the same word in Polynesian languages. In New Zealand Māori you say “taro”. In vagahau Niue, you say “talo”.

The following books can be used for reading to students who are reading at the **blue** Ready to Read level:



## ***Kulani Mitaki / Kulani Mitaki***

*Maureen Goodwin*

### **Ko e aga fakamotu**

*Kulani Mitaki* explores some of the many ways in which Niue family members – in this case, grandmothers – contribute to early childhood centre and primary school classroom programmes. With the children, the grandmothers in this story make quilts and fofou (floral head dresses), plant gardens, tell stories, sing and dance, teach children how to play the ukulele, and offer opportunities to talk in vagahau Niue. Though they provide extra pairs of hands, more importantly, they share hugs and smiles and love.

It is impossible to over-emphasise the respect in which the Niue community holds elders. *Kulani Mitaki* begins to explain why. For the children in the early childhood centre that feature in this story, the visiting grandmothers offer direct experiences of important aspects of the culture, such as traditional stories and songs. They ensure that the children have contact with fluent speakers of the language, too.

### **Ko e vagahau Niu**

One way to bring moments of vagahau Niue into your classroom would be to occasionally say “Ready to go?” and “goodbye” in vagahau Niue the way these expressions are modelled in this story:

- ▶ Mau nakai ke ō? – Ready to go?
- ▶ Nofo ā koe. – Goodbye. (to one person – who is staying)

You and your students can listen to how to say these things in the audio recording of the book.



## ***Shadow Sleeps / Mohe e Ata***

*Ma'ara Taia Scheel*

### **Ko e aga fakamotu**

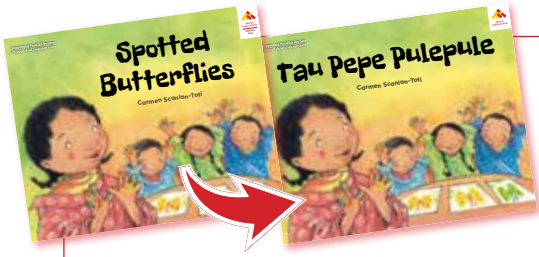
This book is filled with glimpses into the life of a child living in the tropical Pacific: gathering seafood with family members, buying bread at the local shop, playing marbles, feeding animals before going to school, and sleeping under a mosquito net with only a sheet (because it is often too warm in the tropics for anything else). Here is an opportunity for your students to compare their lives with the life of someone living in the tropical Pacific.

### **Ko e vagahau Niue**

This story introduces some vagahue Niue words for the different times of the day. Terms of this type include:

- ▶ aho – day
- ▶ pō – night
- ▶ pogipogi – morning
- ▶ pōuli – night (when it is quite dark).

Notice that the word for “shadow”, “ata”, is the same in both vagahau Niue and New Zealand Māori.



## **Spotted Butterflies / Tau Pepe Pulepule**

*Carmen Scanlan-Toti*

### **Ko e aga fakamotu**

Like *The Song / Ko e Lologo*, *Spotted Butterflies / Tau Pepe Pulepule* was originally published in the Participation series with an early childhood setting in mind. But once again, the discoveries in the story could equally well be made by students in a new entrant class, and the illustrations could be set in either setting, with family members occasionally visiting and lending a hand. Use these books as an opportunity to ensure that members of the families of your Niue students feel that they are welcome in your classroom as you partner with them to build on the early reading skills and experiences that Niue students bring to school in two languages.

Some Niue butterflies that members of the Niue community may tell you about are:

- ▶ pepe kai moota – a small brown butterfly
- ▶ pepe lanu moana – a blue butterfly
- ▶ pepe mahina lanu moana – the blue moon butterfly.

### **Ko e vagahau Niue**

*Spotted Butterflies / Tau Pepe Pulepule* offers an opportunity to share and talk about some vagahau Niue words for colours, for example:

ENGLISH	VAGAHAU NIUE
purple	lanu fāpogi
orange	lanu fuamoli
brown	lanu kakī
red	lanu kula
green	lanu laufuti
blue	lanu moana
white	lanu tea
black	lanu uli

Notice how vagahau Niue includes the word for “colour” (“lanu”) in terms for colours.



## ***The Song / Ko e Lologo***

*Tusiata Avia*

### **Ko e aga fakamotu**

Though *The Song / Ko e Lologo* was originally published in the Participation series with an early childhood setting in mind, everything in the story is also typical of a new entrant class, and the scenes in the illustrations could be in either setting. The story shows some ways you could involve a Niue grandparent in your classroom programme. Niue people often say or sing a grace before food.

### **Ko e vagahau Niue**

Notice the casual way in which the characters in the story say goodbye (“koe kia”) and hello (“fakaalofa atu”) to one another.



## ***Walking Home in the Rain / Ō ki Kaina he Uha***

*Feau'í Amosa Burgess and Mere Tapaeru Tereora*

### **Ko e aga fakamotu**

You probably have students in your class whose parents both work – and so a grandparent looks after them after school, as in this story. In the Niue community, older sisters, brothers, and cousins sometimes take on this responsibility too, providing support and help to their grandparents in caring for younger siblings and cousins.

### **Ko e vagahau Niue**

There are some words in this story that you might find useful on a wet day:

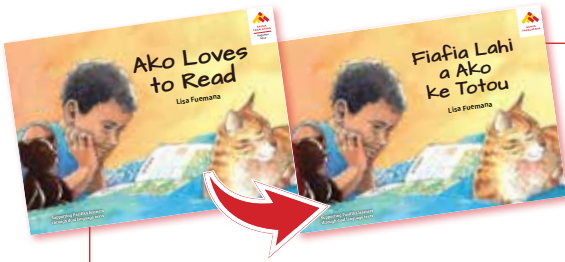
- ▶ matagi – wind
- ▶ mena tui pala – wet clothes
- ▶ pāuha – raincoat
- ▶ pelapela – mud
- ▶ tēvae-momi – gumboots (but note that many shoes are also made of rubber)
- ▶ uha – rain.

Notice how, in the phrase “wet clothes” (in English), the adjective goes before the noun – whereas the adjective “wet” – “pala” – comes after the noun in vagahau Niue. Five-year-old children who speak both vagahau Niue and English may still be sorting this out.





The following books can be used for reading to students who are reading at the **green** Ready to Read level:



## ***Ako Loves to Read / Fiafia Lahi a Ako ke Totou***

*Lisa Fuemana*

### **Ko e aga fakamotu**

While parents are their children's first teachers, in the Niue community knowledge is also passed down by grandparents, older siblings, and extended family members. A lot of this learning begins in the home and is extended when children go to Sunday school and are enrolled in a vagahau Niue language nest, and take part in family and community functions. For some of your young Niue students, early reading experiences will also involve family reading of the Bible in vagahau Niue at home.

Peka (fruit bats) are fairly widespread in the Pacific, including in Niue. Ako has a stuffed toy fruit bat, Kuku. Other children in the story have toy lions and teddy bears.

*Ako Loves to Read / Fiafia Lahi a Ako ke Totou* models some Niue home literacy practices:

- ▶ reading picture books in bed
- ▶ reading to a pet or stuffed toy
- ▶ parents reading books with children
- ▶ listening to a story read at school in English that a parent has read to the child at home in vagahau Niue
- ▶ reading with older brothers, sisters, and cousins
- ▶ children having a bedtime story read to them.

Notice the way the students sit quietly at school when their teacher shares a book with them. You may notice that Niue students are often quite good at this and may have more patience than some of your other students. They have probably been exposed to situations at church and in a language nest where young people are expected to sit quietly and listen respectfully. One of the values of aga fakamotu is to listen carefully and show fakalilifu (respect) to elders and other important people, such as ministers, principals, teachers, and community leaders.

### **Ko e vagahau Niue**

Page 7 introduces one way to refer to the English language in vagahau Niue – “vaghau Pālagi”. Another term for “English language” is “vaghau Pelitānia” (which can also be spelled and pronounced as “vaghau Peritānia”).



## ***A Quiet Night / Ko e Pō Milino***

*Johnny Frisbie*

### **Ko e aga fakamotu**

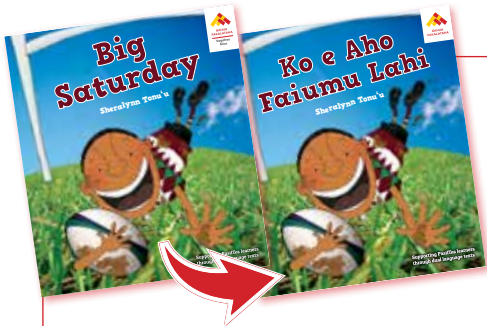
While Johnny Frisbie was still a teenager, she wrote her first book – writing it in three languages – leo Pukapuka, gagana Sāmoa, and English. *A Quiet Night / Ko e Pō Milino*, is a moment from her second book, *The Frisbies of the South Seas*, which was published by Doubleday in New York in 1959. Like *Shadow Sleeps / Mohe a Ata*, this book offers students a glimpse of life in the tropical Pacific. They may not have a tropical lagoon close to where they sleep, but what if they were to look out the window late at night? What would they see?

### **Ko e vagahau Niue**

In this story, there are night-time expressions you could explore together, such as:

- ▶ ko e magaaho ka momohe ai – at bedtime
- ▶ ko e matafatafa aho – at dawn
- ▶ ko e taha pō – one night
- ▶ ne nakai maeke au ke mohe – I couldn't get to sleep

All of these can be used as story-starters.



## ***Big Saturday / Ko e Aho Faiumu Lahi***

*Sheralynn Tonu'u*

### **Ko e aga fakamotu**

As you explore this story with your students, share the exciting news that the author's husband was an All Black (Ofisa Junior Tonu'u). Lakapī (rugby) is a popular sport in Niue.

### **Ko e vagahau Niue**

While the vagahau Niue word for “big” is certainly “lahi”, notice that this is also a word you can use to convey the idea that something is important and therefore out-of-the ordinary, as in the title of this story.

And notice the use of colloquial expressions, such as:

- ▶ Ē. – Yes.
- ▶ Kua oti tuai. – Finished.
- ▶ Mafola. – OK.
- ▶ Mooli lahi. – That's right.
- ▶ Nākai. – No.



## ***Flying Fish Soup / Ko e Supo Hahave***

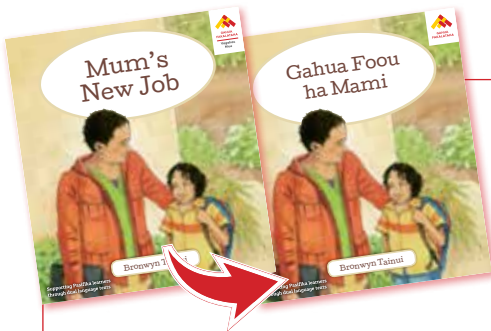
*Aue Sabina Fakanaiiki*

### **Ko e aga fakamotu**

As this book shows, hahave (flying fish – *Exocoetidae*) are caught in the Pacific at night with lights and nets. Though they occur in New Zealand waters – from about the Bay of Plenty northwards – they are not commonly eaten here as they are in Niue. So as Aue Sabina Fakanaiiki explains in her story, if you want to make flying fish soup here, you are probably going to need to make “pretend” flying fish soup using a substitute such as mullet or mackerel.

### **Ko e vagahau Niue**

*Flying Fish Soup / Ko e Supo Hahave* is filled with the language of explanation and instruction: how to catch flying fish and how to make a “fakataitai” flying fish soup.



## ***Mum's New Job / Gahua Foou ha Mami***

*Bronwyn Tainui*

### **Ko e aga fakamotu**

Consider how the child in the story is learning how to show ofania (love). Notice, too, that the aunt is Pālagi.

Everyone in a Niue magafaoa (family) has a role to play – and this includes children helping their mothers when their mothers need some help, as in this story.

### **Ko e vagahau Niue**

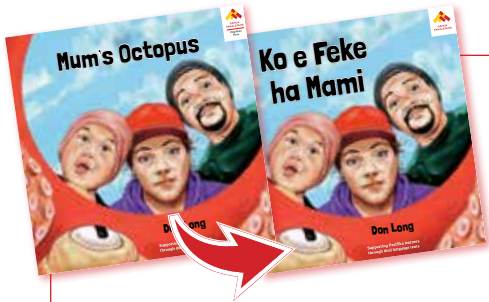
There is a very useful formulaic expression in *Mum's New Job / Gahua Foou ha Mami*:

- ▶ Fakaau lahi, ma Sieke. – Thank you, Sieke.

“Fakaau lahi!” – an expression of emphatic thanks – is an expression in vagahau Niue that you might like to use in your classroom.



The following books can be used for reading to students who are reading at the **orange** Ready to Read level:



## ***Mum's Octopus / Ko e Feke ha Mami***

*Don Long*

### **Ko e aga fakamotu**

*Mum's Octopus / Ko e Feke ha Mami* is a story about what happens when a boy's dad – who may be originally from Niue – wants to do one thing with an octopus and his mum – who may not be from Niue – wishes to do something else.

Catching feke (octopus) is something that is quite common in Niue. Feke have many uses, including food, bait, and as something to sell at the market in Alofi.

### **Ko e vagahau Niue**

If you take your class to a rocky shore, there are some terms in this story that are associated with the shoreline that you might like to use with your Niue students:

- ▶ feke – octopus
- ▶ fua māsolo – mussel
- ▶ limumaka – seaweed
- ▶ loloto maka – rock pool
- ▶ mataafaga – beach
- ▶ muhumaka – full of rocks
- ▶ pakete – bucket
- ▶ tahi – sea, tide, salt water (though for the seawater in the deep ocean, use “moana”).

On page 11, “Mitaki” is an idiomatic way of saying “It's okay” that suits the situation in this story.



## ***That's the Way! / Kia Eketaha!***

*Lino Nelisi*

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### **Ko e aga fakamotu**

As explained earlier on, Lino Nelisi's father, Ugamea Levi, was born in Avatele, in Niue – and her mother, Peko, in the village of Vaipuna, in Sāmoa. She embraces both of her Pasifika cultures, languages, and identities, as in this story.

In Niue, pāleu are usually only worn around the home, as part of a dancing or sports team costume, or when fishing. You probably already know that the Pālagi game of cricket and the Pasifika game of kilikiki aren't quite the same. Some of your students will know about the differences.

### **Ko e vagahau Niue**

In vagahau Niue, another word for a pāleu is “lavalava”.

In the context of this story, “fakaave” and “mafiti mai” both essentially mean “hurry up”.



# Some aspects of Niue culture (aga fakamotu Niue)

The Niue community is the fourth largest Pasifika community in New Zealand. Significantly, about 75 per cent of the world's total Niue population is New Zealand-born.

Language and culture are profoundly linked. The values of aga fakamotu are passed down from one generation to the next and modify over time. The extent to which cultural practices feature in the lives of young Niue children in New Zealand varies from family to family. None-the-less, central to aga fakamotu Niue are the core values of:

- ▶ *loto fakaalofa* – having a compassionate heart
- ▶ *loto fakamokoi* – having a generous nature
- ▶ *loto totonu* – showing empathy
- ▶ *loto fakatokolalo* – being humble
- ▶ *loto fakalilifu* – showing respect.

*Tau mahani mitaki* – good behaviour – such as *omaoma ke he tau mamatua* (obedience to parents and elders) and *fanogonogo fakamitaki* (listening carefully) – are encouraged. *Tau mahani kelea* – bad behaviours – such as using inappropriate language – are discouraged.



**Ask the families of the Niue students in your class to tell you more about the values of aga fakamotu Niue. How do the following, for example, feature in the lives of your students?**

- ▶ *magafaoa laulahi* (extended family)
- ▶ *ofania* (love)
- ▶ *fakalilifu* (showing respect)
- ▶ *tau mahani faka-Niue* (Niue customs)
- ▶ *tau tala tuai* (traditional stories)
- ▶ *vagahau Niue* (the Niue language)
- ▶ *tau aga mahuiga fakakerisiano* (Christian values)
- ▶ *tau lologo Niue* (Niue songs and chants).

Here is some cultural knowledge that will help you in your partnership with Niue families and the Niue community:

- ▶ Respect Sunday – on Sunday, Niue families are typically involved in church activities. Sunday is respected as a holy day.
- ▶ When you invite members of the Niue community to your school, show cultural understanding by offering some refreshments.
- ▶ Show *fakalilifu* (respect) to elders and community leaders, such as grandparents and church ministers and their spouses. These are community leaders who will help you if they can.
- ▶ If you can't avoid walking across in front of a person who is speaking, show *fakalilifu* by bending your head down a little and saying "*Tulou!*" as you pass in front of them.



# The Niue language (vagahau Niue)

Vagahau Niue is a Polynesian language which is related to the languages of Tonga and Sāmoa. Vagahau Niue shares many of the features of these languages – but is most closely related to lea faka-Tonga.

## Dialects (tau vahega vagahau)

The Niue language has two dialects: the Motu dialect in the north of the island and the Tafiti dialect in the south. According to tradition, lea faka-Tonga had a greater influence in the Tafiti dialect and gagana Sāmoa on the Motu dialect.

There are few differences in the structures of the two dialects. Most of the difference is in vocabulary. For example, note the different Motu and Tafiti forms of the following words. Both forms, of course, are correct.

MOTU	TAFITI	ENGLISH
likiliki	ikiiki	small
haloka	aloka	being noisy
afule	hafule	peel
maona	malona	damaged
nei	nai	now

## Formal and informal language

Formal vagahau Niue is used at *fono* (meetings), in church sermons, at ceremonial gatherings such as funerals, and at cultural gatherings such as performing-arts festivals.

Informal vagahau Niue is used in casual conversation, such as when families are talking together at home or when friends are chatting in the playground.

Some of the language that people use when they are speaking formally is not considered to be appropriate in the written form of the language and some expressions that are considered to be fine in a face-to-face conversation are not considered to be appropriate in written text.

## The vagahau Niue alphabet (tau matatohi he vagahau Niue)

There are sixteen letters in the vagahau Niue alphabet.

There are five vowels:

**A E I O U**

which can be short (a, e, i, o, u) or long (ā, ē, ī, ō, ū).

The eleven consonants are:

**F G H K L M N P S T V**

The letter “g” is sounded as “ng”, as in the word “vagahau”.



The consonants “r” (which is not in the above list) and “s” were introduced by the London Missionary Society in transliterated names in the Bible. Neither the “s” nor the “r” sounds were traditionally part of vagahau Niue. However, the “s” has made its way firmly into printed books (and the alphabet) and “r” appears to be following.

Two ways to say the alphabet in vagahau Niue are:

Ā Ē Ī Ō Ū

Fā Gā Hā Kā Lā Mō

Nū Pī Tī Vī Rō Sā

and

Ā Ē Ī Ō Ū

Fā Gā Hā Kā Lā Mā

Nā Pā Tā Vā Rā Sā

The second way is recommended in *Tohi Vagahau Niue – Niue Language Dictionary: Niuean-English, with English-Niuean Finder List*. You can listen to an audio track (MP3) of the vagahau Niue alphabet at <http://literacyonline.tki.org.nz/Pasifika-dual-language-books>

The following table compares the English alphabet to the vahahau Niue one:

ENGLISH	VAGAHAU NIUE
a	a, ā
b	
c	
d	
e	e, ē
f	f
g	g
h	h
i	i, ī
j	
k	k
l	l
m	m

ENGLISH	VAGAHAU NIUE
n	n
o	o, ō
p	p
q	
r	(r)
s	s
t	t
u	u, ū
v	v
w	
x	
y	
z	

Be aware that “t” followed by an “i” or an “e” is usually pronounced as an “s” and “g” is always pronounced as “ng”. When “r” appears in print, it is often pronounced as “l”, as in the word “Faraile” (“Friday”).





## Macrons and double vowels

In the written form of the language, some Niue words may include one or more macrons (for example, *māmā*, meaning “pale in colour” or “light in weight”) or be spelled with a double vowel (for example, *maama*, meaning “light” or “knowledge”). Macrons and double vowels indicate different ways to say the word, each with a different meaning. For example, the first syllable of *māmā* (pale in colour) does not sound the same as the first syllable in *maama*.

As in English and many other languages, vagahau Niue words often have more than one meaning – even when they are spelled the same way. For example, *kupu* can mean both “word” and “piece of”. In this case, the context is the best guide to the intended meaning.

## Using what you already know about New Zealand Māori

All Polynesian languages share a common grammar and the two most distantly related ones still share about half their vocabulary, so vagahau Niue and New Zealand Māori, which are both Polynesian languages, are related languages with much in common.

Like New Zealand Māori, vagahau Niue uses the macron in its written form. In both languages, the presence of a macron changes both the pronunciation *and* the meaning of a word.

Here is an indication of just how much the two languages share in common.

NEW ZEALAND MĀORI	VAGAHAU NIUE	ENGLISH
tahi	taha	one
rua	ua	two
toru	tolu	three
whā	fā	four
rima	lima	five
ono	ono	six
whitu	fitu	seven
waru	valu	eight
iwa	hiva	nine
tekau	hogofulu	ten

As the table largely indicates:

- ▶ where New Zealand Māori uses an “r”, vagahau Niue often uses an “l”
- ▶ where New Zealand Māori uses an “wh”, vagahau Niue uses an “f”
- ▶ where New Zealand Māori uses an “w”, vagahau Niue uses a “v”
- ▶ where New Zealand Māori uses an “ng”, vagahau Niue uses a “g”.

If you already know some New Zealand Māori, see how much vagahau Niue you already know!



## Avoiding confusion

Of course, there are differences between English and vagahau Niue, so here are some potential sources of confusion when Niue students are learning how to read in English:

- ▶ When students who speak vagahau Niue are first learning English, they sometimes confuse the sounds of p/b.
- ▶ When you say a word in vagahau Niue that has more than one syllable, you tend to emphasise the second-to-last syllable, unless the word ends with a long vowel.
- ▶ In vagahau Niue, adjectives go after nouns (“aho lahi”). In English, it is other way around (“big day”).

## Saying Niue names

If you haven’t had Niue students in your class before, some Niue names can seem challenging at first, but make the effort to say them properly. Don’t anglicise or shorten them. To pronounce someone’s name correctly is to respect his or her identity. It’s how we would all like to be treated.



If you are not sure how to say a name, such as “Ikinepule” or “Maihetoe”, ask someone who speaks vagahau Niue to show you.

# Family letter

## *Fakaalofa lahi atu*

Our school supports bilingual students who speak vagahau Niue and English. These students bring early language and literacy skills and experiences in two languages to school – which we can build on when your child is reading at school in English. So some of the books your child will bring home may be in both vagahau Niue and English. Read them to your child in your strongest language.

We will be using these books to build connections between what your child knows about vagahau Niue and English to help them to read in English. Many of the skills of reading in vagahau Niue can be transferred to reading in English. Dual language books give us a chance to build on all the language and reading experiences and skills that your child brings to school.

The following information would help me, but it is up to you whether you wish to share it.

## *Fakaaue lahi*



Student's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Please return to: \_\_\_\_\_



Which languages are spoken in your home?

- Vagahau Niue
- English
- Other languages: \_\_\_\_\_



What languages do other family members usually speak at home?

- Vagahau Niue
- English
- Other languages: \_\_\_\_\_



What language does Dad usually speak at home?

- Vagahau Niue
- English
- Other languages: \_\_\_\_\_



Has your child attended a vagahau Niue language nest in New Zealand or the pre-school in Niue?

- Yes
- No



What language does Mum usually speak at home?

- Vagahau Niue
- English
- Other languages: \_\_\_\_\_



Does your child attend a Sunday school where vagahau Niue is spoken?

- Yes
- No

*Fakaaue lahi*

# Tohi magafaoa

## Fakaalofa lahi atu

Leveki mo e lagomatai he aoga ha mautolu e tau fānau aoga takiua e vagahau ko e vagahau Niue mo e vagahau Pālagi. Ko e tau fānau nei, tamai e lautolu e tau makaukau mo e lotomatala he ua e vagahau ke he aoga – ti maeke i a mautolu ke fakatolomaki atu ki mua ka totou tohi Pālagi e tama haau he aoga. Ti ko e falu he tau tohi ka taatu he tama haau ki kaina, to hahā i ai ke he ua e vagahau, ko e vagahau Niue mo e vagahau Pālagi. Totou e koe ke he tama haau ke he vagahau kua malolō lahi a koe ki ai.

To fakaaoga e mautolu e tau tohi nai ke atihake aki e tau matutakiaga ke he tau mena ne iloa he tama haau ke he vagahau Niue ke lagomatai aki a lautolu ke totou tohi he vagahau Pālagi. Loga e tau makaukau totou tohi he vagahau Niue kua maeke ke fakaaoga foki ke totou tohi he vagahau Pālagi. Ko e tau tohi he ua e vagahau ne moua ai e tautolu e tau pūhala ke fakatolomaki atu ki mua e tau makaukau mo e lotomatala he totou tohi he tama haau ne hau mo ia ke he aoga.

To lagomatai he tau fakailoaaga nai au, ka ko e fifiliaga haau a ia, kaeke kua manako a koe ke fetufatufaaki.

## Fakaaue lahi



Higoa he tama: \_\_\_\_\_

Fakamolemole liuaki mai ke he: \_\_\_\_\_



Ko e tau vagahau hā ne fakaaoga he kaina haau?

- Vagahau Niue
- Vagahau Pālagi
- Falu a vagahau foki: \_\_\_\_\_



Ko e tau vagahau hā he falu tagata he magafaoa ne fā fakaaoga he kaina?

- Vagahau Niue
- Vagahau Pālagi
- Falu a vagahau foki: \_\_\_\_\_



Ko e vagahau hā ha Tete ne fā fakaaoga he kaina?

- Vagahau Niue
- Vagahau Pālagi
- Falu a vagahau foki: \_\_\_\_\_



Fano nakai e tama haau he hā vahega vagahau Niue i Niu Silani po ke hā aoga kamata i Niue?

- Ē
- Nākai



Ko e vagahau hā ha Mami ne fā fakaaoga he kaina?

- Vagahau Niue
- Vagahau Pālagi
- Falu a vagahau foki: \_\_\_\_\_



Fano nakai e tama haau he hā aoga Aho Tapu ne fakaaoga e vagahau Niue?

- Ē
- Nākai

**Fakaaue lahi**



## More resources

### Some useful expressions in vagahau Niue

- ▶ Ai lā hoko ia. – Not yet.
- ▶ Ai iloa e au e tali. – I don't know the answer.
- ▶ Ai maama e au. – I don't understand.
- ▶ Ai maama e au e hūhū. – I don't understand the question.
- ▶ Ē. – Yes.
- ▶ Ē, ko e hako a ia. – Yes, that's right.
- ▶ Ē, maama mitaki. – Yes, it's clear. (Yes, I understand.)
- ▶ Fakaalofa atu, ma fānau. – Hello, children.
- ▶ Fakaalofa lahi atu ki a koe, ma faiaoga. – Hello [to you], teacher.
- ▶ Fakamolemole, gahua he tau matakau. – Please work in groups.
- ▶ Fakamolemole, gahua takitokoua. – Please work in pairs.
- ▶ Fakamolemole, kamata. – Please start.
- ▶ Fakamolemole, vagahau fakatekiteki. – Please speak slowly.
- ▶ Fanogonogo fakamitaki mai. – Listen very carefully.
- ▶ Fanogonogo mai, fakamolemole. – Listen, please.
- ▶ Gahua mitaki. – Good work.
- ▶ Haia! – Awesome! That's it! That's right!
- ▶ Koe kia, ma faiaoga. – Goodbye, teacher.
- ▶ Kua nimo tuai e au. – I've forgotten.
- ▶ Kua oti nakai? – Have you finished?
- ▶ Lali fakalahi. – Try hard. (Do your best.)
- ▶ Maama nakai? – Do you understand?
- ▶ Mau nakai? – Are you ready?
- ▶ Mitaki. – Good.
- ▶ Mutolu kia, ma fānau. – Goodbye, students. (when they are going or you are going)
- ▶ Nāikai. – No.
- ▶ Nāikai, ai maama. – No, it's not clear.
- ▶ Nāikai iloa e au. – I don't know.
- ▶ Nāikai, nāikai hako a ia. – No, that's not right.
- ▶ Nofo ki lalo, fakamolemole. – Sit down, please. (to one person)
- ▶ Nonofo ki lalo, fakamolemole. – Sit down, please. (to two or more people)
- ▶ Talahau foki lā. – Say it again.
- ▶ Tohi, fakamolemole. – Write, please.
- ▶ Totou, fakamolemole. – Read, please.
- ▶ Tū ki luga. – Stand up. (to one person)
- ▶ Tuku hake e tau lima. – Hands up.
- ▶ Tutū ki luga. – Stand up. (to two or more people)
- ▶ Ua fālea, fakamolemole. – Quiet, please.

### Classroom vocabulary

- ▶ faiaoga – teacher
- ▶ faiaoga lagomatai – teacher aide
- ▶ fānau – children, students
- ▶ komopiuta – computer
- ▶ lapatohi tea – whiteboard
- ▶ lapatohi uli – blackboard
- ▶ laulau – table
- ▶ laulau gahua – desk
- ▶ laupepa – paper
- ▶ lopa – rubber
- ▶ lula – ruler
- ▶ nofoa – chair
- ▶ pene – pen
- ▶ penetala – pencil
- ▶ poko aoga – classroom
- ▶ tohi – book



## Reading prompts

Here are some prompts for when you are looking at a book with a student who speaks vagahau Niue. Use these if you wish. It is up to you how much vagahau Niue you use.

- ▶ Ko fē e tohi haau? – Where’s your book?
- ▶ Totou ā e koe e tohi he magaaho nai. – You can read the book now.
- ▶ Fakatumau ke lali, ma Aiao. – Keep trying, Aiao.
- ▶ Fakakite mai ki a au e kamataaga ke totou. – Show me where to start reading.
- ▶ Talamai ki a au ko e fakatino ke he heigoa a nai. – Tell me about this picture.
- ▶ Onono ke he tau kupu. Ko e heigoa ne liga fai kakano? – Look at the words. What would make sense?
- ▶ Ko e heigoa e kupu he ...? – What’s the word for ...?



Here are some further resources that you may find useful. In the information that follows, item numbers are provided where a resource was published for the Ministry of Education.

## Resources about aga fakamotu Niue

- ▶ Charles Cooper (2000). *Niue*. Auckland: Reed.
- ▶ Margaret Pointer (2015). *Niue 1774–1974: 200 Years of Contact and Change*. Dunedin: University of Otago Press.
- ▶ Hafe Vilitama and Terry Chapman et al. (1982). *Niue: A History of the Island*. Alofi: Government of Niue (with the Institute of Pacific Studies at University of the South Pacific).

## Niue songs

- ▶ Ministry of Education (2005). *Tau Lologo Niue ma e Tau Aoga i Niu Silani: Niuean Songs*. Wellington: Learning Media. (item 30836)

## Resources about vagahau Niue

- ▶ Aiao Kaulima and Clive Beaumont (2002). *Learning Niuean: Tohi Ako Vagahau Niue*. Auckland: Clive and Daisy Beaumont and Aiao Kaulima. (combines earlier editions of book 1 and book 2)
- ▶ *Learn the Niue Language* at <http://learnniue.co.nz/learnniueanlanguage/>
- ▶ Ministry of Education (2010). *Haia! An Introduction to Vagahau Niue*. Wellington: Learning Media. (item 118306)
- ▶ Ministry of Education (2012). *Tau Hatakiaga ma e Vagahau Niue: The Niue Language Guidelines*. Wellington: Learning Media. (item 34155)
- ▶ *Niuean Phrasebook* at [https://en.wikivoyage.org/wiki/Niuean\\_phrasebook](https://en.wikivoyage.org/wiki/Niuean_phrasebook)
- ▶ William J. Seitter (1980). *Studies in Niuean Syntax*. New York: Garland Publishing.
- ▶ Graeme Whittaker (1982). *The Niuean Language: An Elementary Grammar with Basic Vocabulary*. Alofi: University of the South Pacific Niue Centre.



## Alphabet, number, and colour resources

- ▶ Department of Education (1988). *Tau Matatohi he Vagahau Niue*. Alofi: Department of Education.
- ▶ EthnicWord Publications (2007). *Totou Nūmela: Counting Numbers in Niue and English*. Auckland: EthnicWord Publications. (wall chart)
- ▶ EthnicWord Publications (2007). *Tau Lanu Kehekehe: Colours in Niue and English*. Auckland: EthnicWord Publications. (wall chart)
- ▶ Bettina Ikenasio-Thorpe, with Sam Ikenasio (2005). *Tau Matatohi Faka-Niue: Niue Alphabet with English Translation*. Auckland: EthnicWord Publications.
- ▶ Bettina Ikenasio-Thorpe, with Sam Ikenasio (2005). *Tau Nūmela: Counting Numbers in Niue and English*. Auckland: EthnicWord Publications.
- ▶ Pacific Islands Educational Resource Centre (1989). *Tau Mata Tohi he Vagahau Niue*. Auckland: Pacific Islands Educational Resource Centre.
- ▶ Pacific Islands Educational Resource Centre (1989). *Vagahau Niue ma e Tau Fānau Ikiiki*. Auckland: Pacific Islands Educational Resource Centre.
- ▶ Granby Siakimotu, with Bettina Ikenasio-Thorpe and Larry Killip (2005). *Learn the Alphabet, Numbers, and Colours in Niue*. Auckland: EthnicWord Publications. [CD]
- ▶ Vagahau Niue Trust (2012). *Tau Lanu Kehekehe: Colours*. Wellington: Vai Creative Publishing.
- ▶ Vagahau Niue Trust (2012). *Tau Nūmela: Numbers*. Wellington: Vai Creative Publishing.

## A vagahau Niue dictionary

- ▶ Wolfgang B. Sperlich, editor (1997). *Tohi Vagahau Niue – Niue Language Dictionary: Niuean–English, with English–Niuean Finder List*. Alofi: Government of Niue (with the University of Hawai‘i Press).