



# ***The Pacific Languages Framework***

**October 2012**

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# Foreword



## ***The Pacific Languages Framework is one element in the Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs’ commitment to promoting and maintaining Pacific languages and cultures.***

The *Pacific Languages Framework* (the Framework) sets out and illustrates the linkages between the vision, guiding principles and approach for language revitalisation, and summarises the critical interventions which experts have identified as necessary to achieve this.

Intended for use by Pacific communities in New Zealand it provides the context for a suite of Community Action Plans which have been or are being developed by communities taking ownership of their heritage languages.

Evidence<sup>1</sup> suggests that such community ownership is critical to seeing heritage languages flourish – the vision of this framework.

We are also preparing an online directory of Government resources which can help promote and maintain Pacific languages.

This will include information about, for example, translation services and Pacific language publications developed by Government agencies.

Many community organisations and individuals shared their thoughts and feelings about Pacific languages at a series of fono in 2011, and helped inform our work. We thank you for your input and commitment.

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<sup>1</sup> Hornberger N. H. (1998) Language policy, language education, language rights: Indigenous, immigrant, and international perspectives. In: *Language in Society* 27: 439-458

# The Pacific Languages Framework



## Introduction

For some years now, Census data and Pacific communities have been telling the same story: the number of fluent Pacific language speakers is declining. While data records the decline, communities have brought the story to life, sharing their concerns about what the loss of heritage languages means, and their desire to arrest this.

In the past few years the Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs has responded in a variety of ways. Initially we helped those communities whose languages were most at risk by setting up Mind Your Language websites and resources. We then worked with them so they could take ownership of these resources and develop more within the framework of Community Action Plans.

We have also worked with central government and its agencies to provide a framework to capture both communities' and government's work to preserve and revitalise languages. This is the Pacific Languages Framework.

## Vision and Principles

### **The vision of the Pacific Languages Framework is 'Pacific Languages Are Flourishing'.**

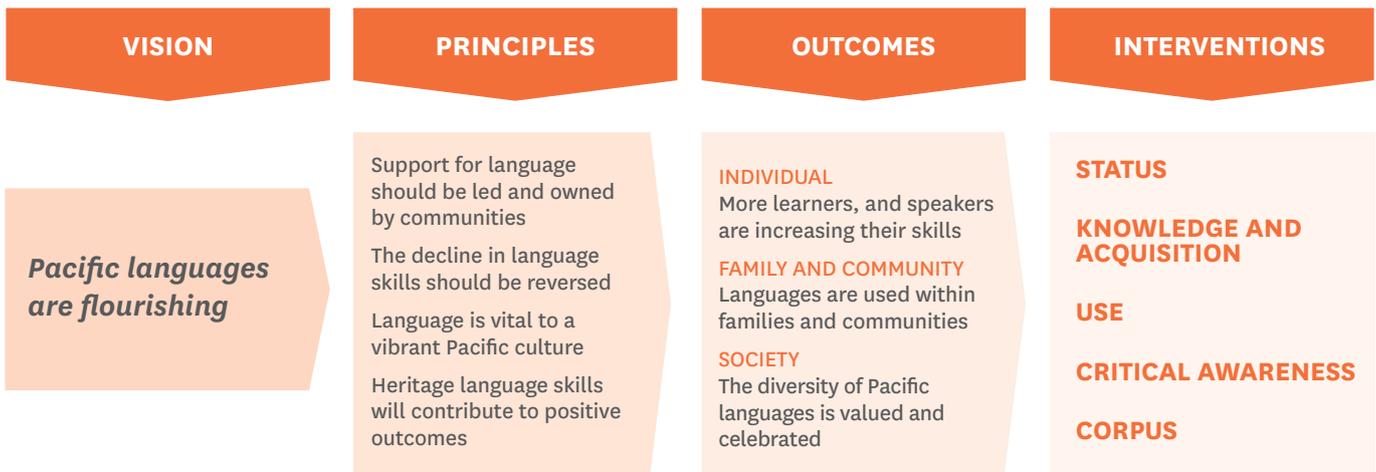
This vision will be realised by evidence of more people using Pacific languages with skill and fluency in everyday situations, particularly children and young people. Those Pacific languages now at risk will be revitalised, and their future assured. Pacific peoples' sense of personal and cultural belonging in New Zealand will be enhanced by the support given to Pacific languages. New Zealanders will appreciate and value Pacific languages as a source of pride in New Zealand's rich cultural diversity. The Government and Pacific communities will be working in partnership to maintain and promote Pacific languages.

### **The Pacific Languages Framework is guided by the following Principles:**

1. **Support for language should be led and owned by communities:** Leadership and ownership of the protection and promotion of Pacific languages lies with Pacific communities. The role of Government agencies is primarily to support Pacific communities to achieve their language aspirations.
2. **The decline in language skills should be reversed:** The decline of Pacific languages must first be slowed, stopped and then reversed to achieve revitalisation.
3. **Language is vital to vibrant Pacific cultures:** Pacific languages are an integral part of Pacific culture, are vital for the expression of Pacific identity, and an important part of New Zealand's culturally diverse identity.
4. **Heritage language skills will contribute to positive outcomes:** Vibrant Pacific languages are a necessary part of efforts to improve social and economic wellbeing, and to strengthen Pacific families and communities.



## An overview of the Pacific Languages Framework



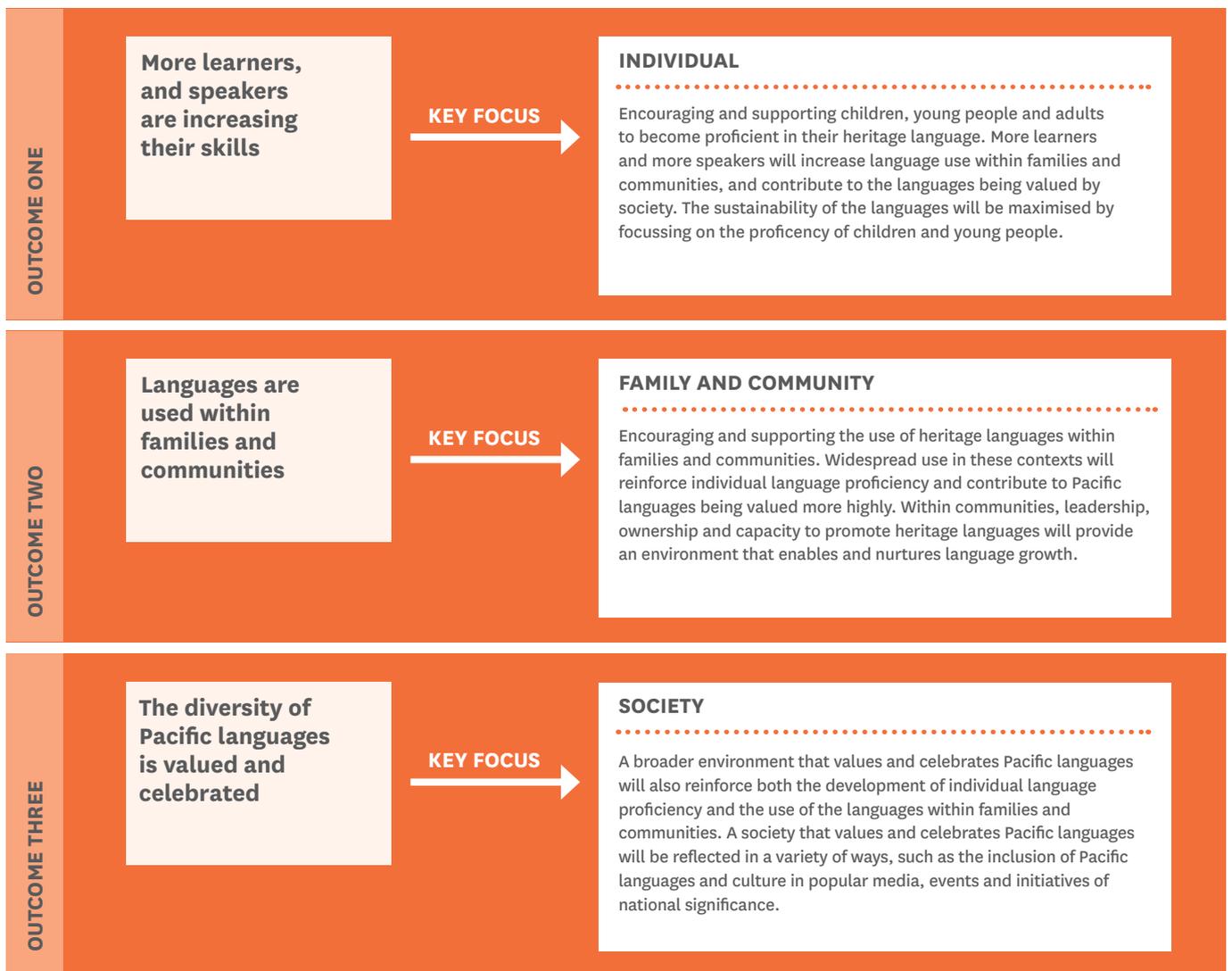
### Approach

The Pacific Languages Framework is designed to support Pacific communities to achieve their aspirations for language revitalisation. There are three mutually reinforcing outcomes. The Pacific Languages Framework identifies intermediate steps to achieve these outcomes. It will be supported by a programme of research and evaluation.



## Outcomes

The Pacific Languages Framework has three inter-related outcomes:



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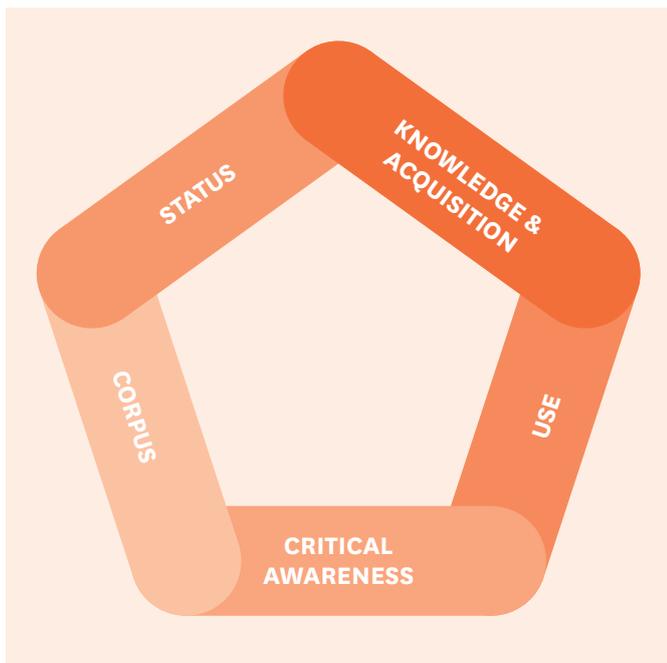
## Intervention Areas

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The outcomes will be achieved by applying five inter-related areas of intervention in language revitalisation: status, knowledge and acquisition, use, critical awareness and corpus.

### Five inter-related areas of Intervention in language revitalisation

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These intervention areas have been consistently identified by linguists and language planners as critical to the health of a language.<sup>2</sup> Language maintenance and promotion depend on achieving positive changes in all of these areas, for each of the three outcomes.

1. **Status:** relates to the position of a language in society. The status of a language has an impact on how it is viewed and used. Status interventions relate to developing a positive environment in which the language can flourish.
2. **Knowledge and acquisition:** relates to the proficiency skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing. These skills are needed to sustain the language.
3. **Use:** relates to the use of a language to communicate, which is essential for language revitalisation.
4. **Critical awareness:** relates to levels of awareness and consciousness about the value of language and the implications of language choices for sustaining a language.
5. **Corpus:** relates to the linguistic character of the language, its structure and functions. Corpus development involves the written, visual and oral resources of a language.

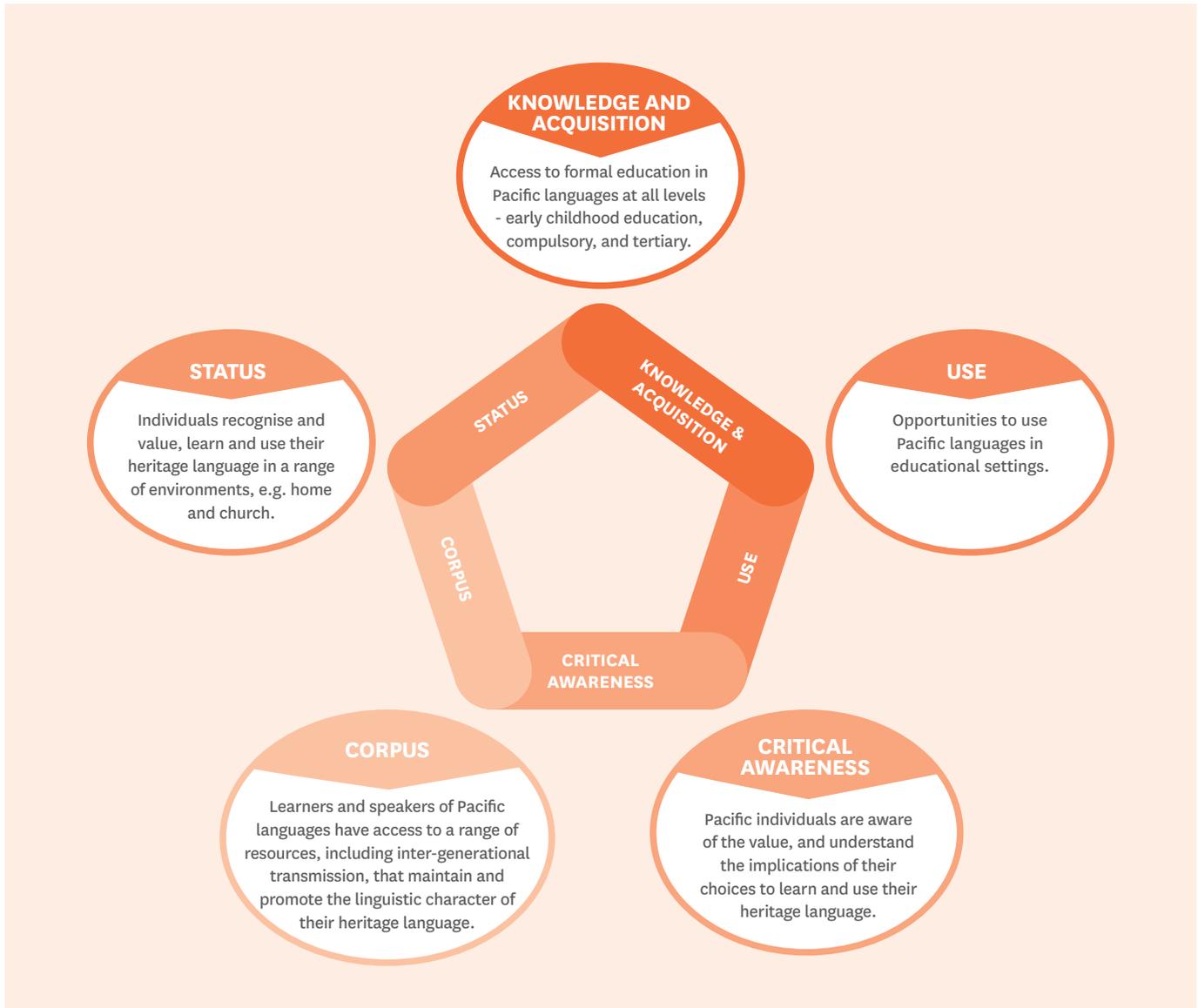
The following diagrams outline key intermediate outcomes or steps towards achieving each outcome for each of the five intervention areas.

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<sup>2</sup> See p.7 Te Puni Kōkiri (2008) *Te Oranga o te Reo Māori 2006 the Health of the Māori Language in 2006* Wellington, Te Puni Kōkiri. See also R. Kaplan and R. Baldauf (1997) *Language Planning from Practice to Theory* Multilingual Matters, Clevedon; J. Fishman, (1991) *Reversing Language Shift* Multilingual Matters, Clevedon.



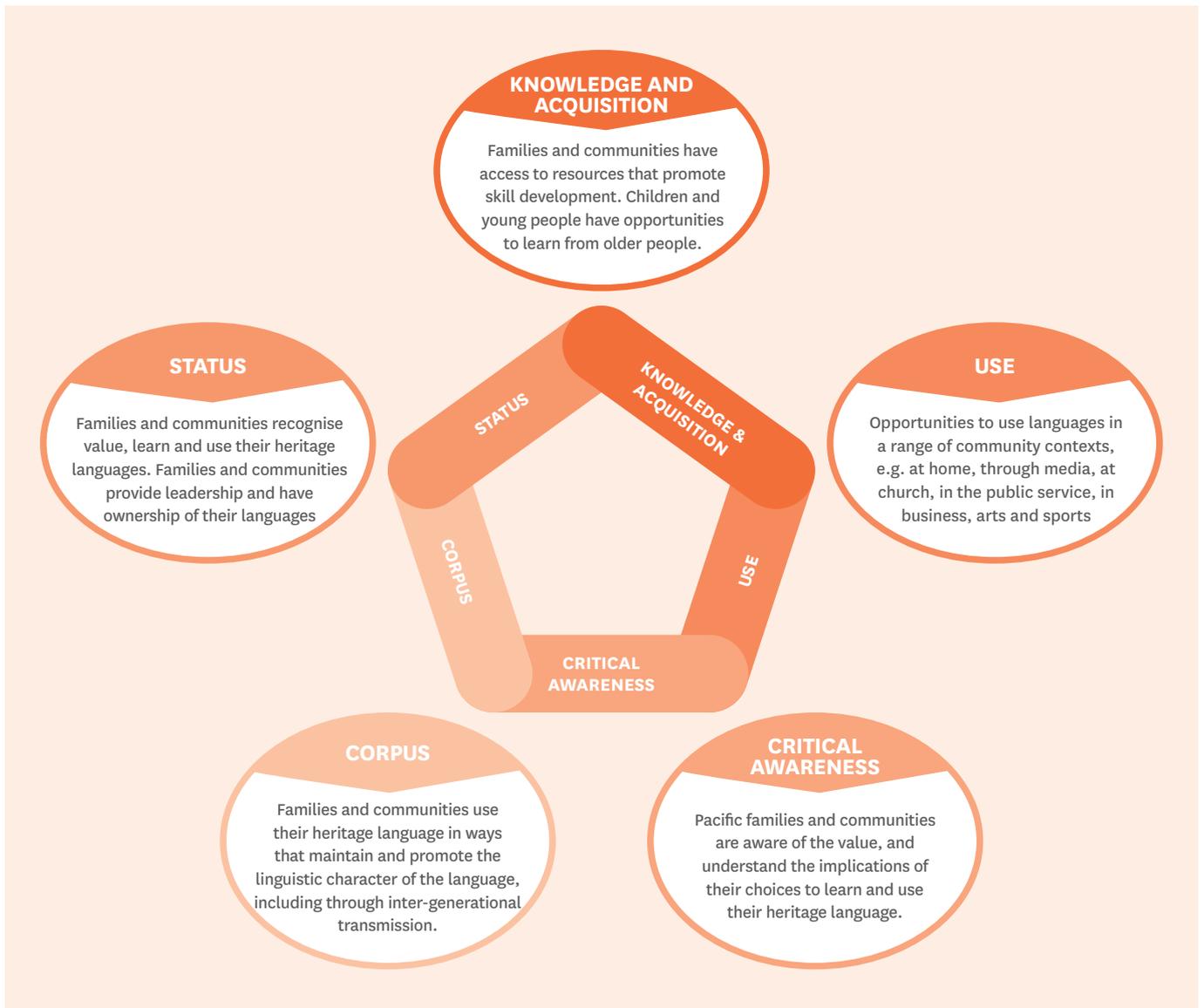
# 1. Interventions for Individuals



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## 2. Interventions for Families and Communities

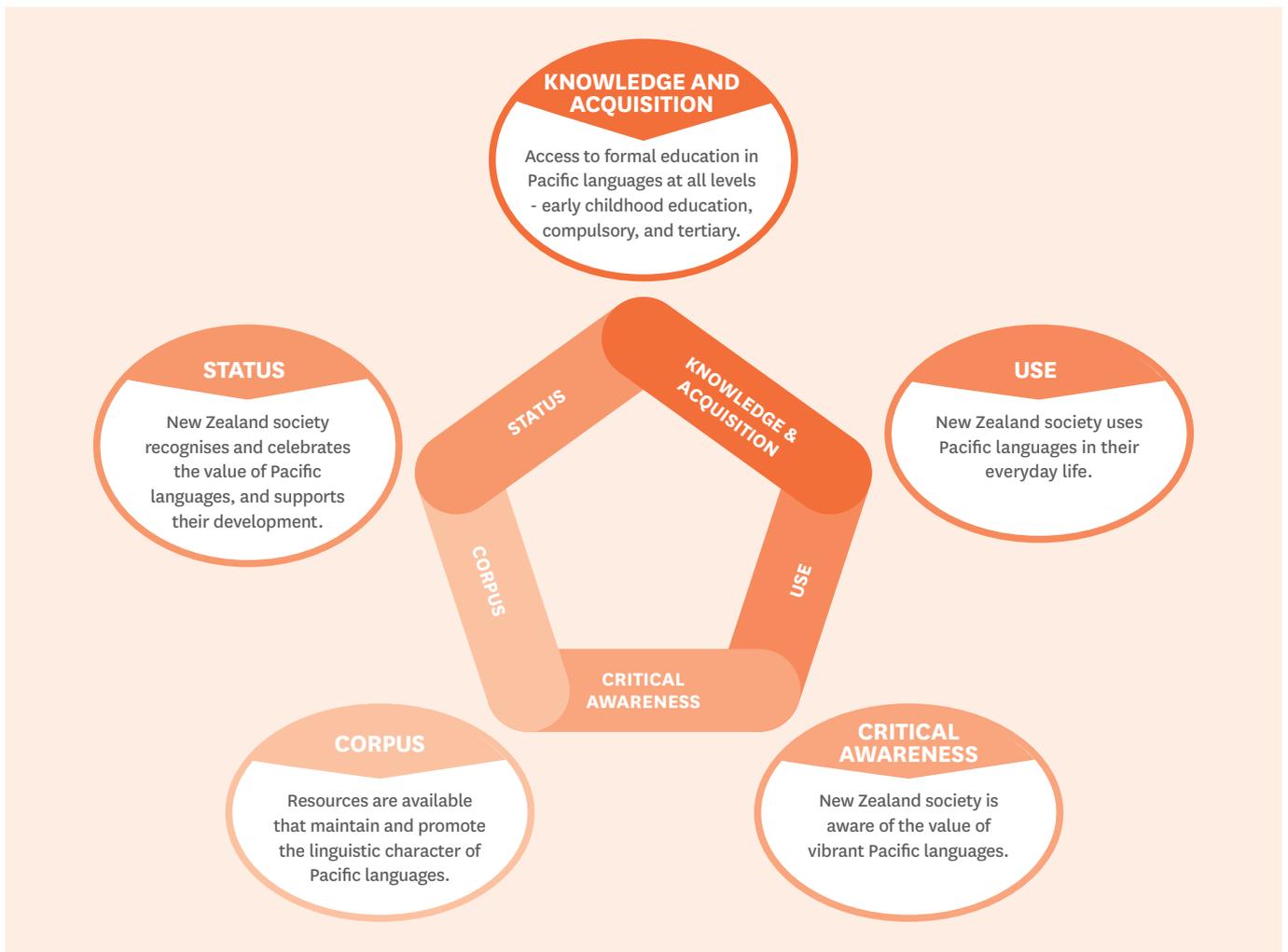
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### 3. Interventions for Society

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#### Implementation

Implementation of the Pacific Languages Framework will be developed and led by Pacific communities. The Ministry will support Pacific communities to further develop and implement their Community Action Plans (CAPs).

The CAPs align to the principles of the Pacific Language Framework and aim to help Pacific communities achieve their aspirations for language revitalisation.

A Monitoring and Evaluation plan will be developed to ensure that progress with implementing the Framework is measured, and that changes or improvements are evidence-based, timely and appropriate.

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