Chapter 3
Issues in Tongan Syntax

In studying various phenomena of ergativity, we mentioned that Tongan shows both morphological and syntactic ergativity. In terms of case marking, Tongan shows an ergative pattern of case marking on full NP's, while showing an accusative pattern on pronouns. As for syntax, certain syntactic rules such as *pea*-coordination and relativisation apply exclusively to S and O. With regard to coordination, a split pattern is found: unlike *pea*-coordination, *mo*-coordination applies to S and A. In this chapter, we will introduce basics of the Tongan syntax, emphasising how ergativity is interrelated with other syntactic phenomena.

Tongan is a Polynesian language spoken by approximately 100,000 people living in the Tongan archipelago in the South Pacific. It is a VSO language with ergative case marking. The most substantial work on the Tongan grammar is that of Churchward (1953). While impressively extensive, Churchward's (1953) work is purely descriptive. Other works concerning Tongan include Morton (1962), Lynch (1972), Tchekhoff (1973a,b, 1978, 1979, 1981), and Chung (1978).[1] One of the most frequently discussed issues regarding Tongan is its case system in relation to a question concerning the reconstruction of the Proto-Polynesian: specifically, whether

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[1] As a textbook for non-native speakers, Shumway (1971) should also be mentioned. However, it has not much to offer as far as linguistic theory is concerned.
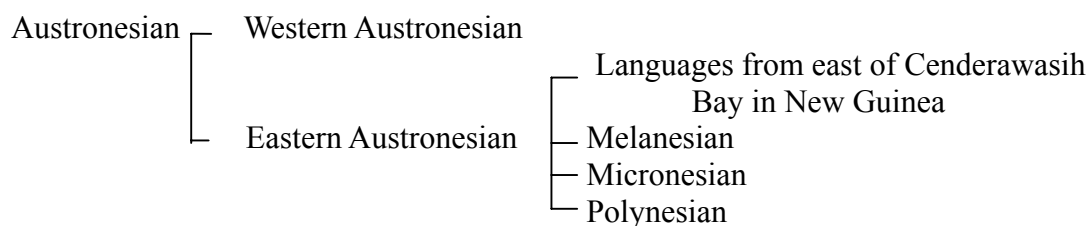
the Proto-Polynesian had an ergative system or an accusative system. The striking similarity between the ergative construction of the ergative languages and the passive construction of the accusative languages in the Polynesian subgroup induced a debate concerning the diachronic change within the Polynesian languages. Some argued that the Proto-Polynesian had an ergative system and that the Proto-Polynesian ergative construction was later reanalysed as passive in those languages that now have an accusative system (Clark 1973, 1976, Gibson and Starosta 1990). Some others hypothesised that the Proto-Polynesian had an accusative system and that the Proto-Polynesian passives later underwent re-analysis as ergative in those languages such as Tongan, which now show an ergative pattern (Chung 1977, 1978, Hohepa 1969, Hale 1970 among others). Overall, Tongan is not a well-known language in the literature of transformational grammar and therefore, there remains much more to investigate.

3.1 Classification and morphological characteristics

Tongan is classified as one of the Polynesian languages, which form the Eastern Austronesian language subgroup, also known as Oceanic languages (Phillips 1994). See Figure 3.1 below.

Figure 3.1 Classification of Austronesian languages

Austronesian ⌐ Western Austronesian

                                            ⌐ Languages from east of Cenderawasih
                                                         Bay in New Guinea
              ⌐ Eastern Austronesian ├ Melanesian
                                       ├ Micronesian
                                         └ Polynesian

According to Pawley's (1966) classification, Polynesian languages are divided into

two classes, Tongic and Nuclear-Polynesian. The Tongic subgroup includes only two languages, i.e., Tongan and Niuean. The Nuclear-Polynesian consists of two subgroups: Samoic-Outlier including Samoan, Futuan, etc., and Eastern Polynesian, including Maori, Hawaiian, etc. See Figure 3.2 below.

Figure 3.2 Classification of Polynesian languages
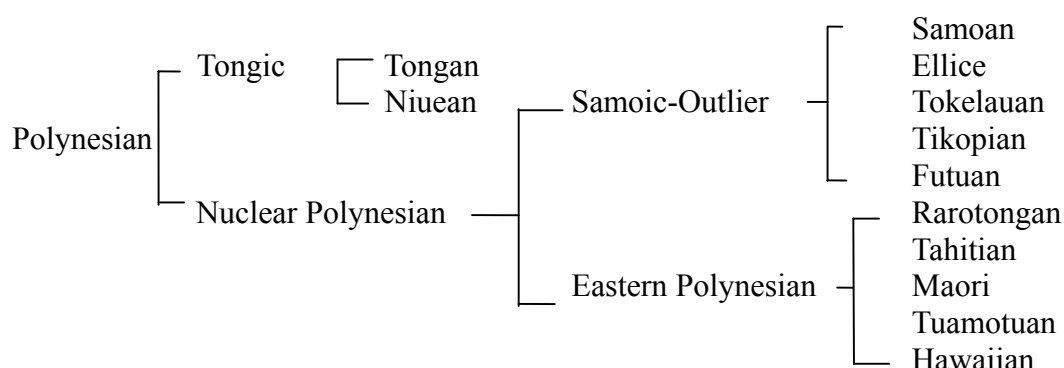
Like in other Polynesian languages, productive morphology is very limited in Tongan. In terms of derivational morphology, some of the most typical affixes are *faka-*, which indicates causation, *fe-...-'aki,* which marks reciprocity, and *-'i,* which indicates transitivity.[2] See (3.1) below.[3]

(3.1)   *hela* (adj) "tired" ⟶ *fakahela* (v.i.) "to make someone tired"

    'ita (adj) "angry" ⟶ *fe'ita'aki* (v.i.) "to get angry with each other"

    tokoni (v.i.) "to help" ⟶ *tokoni'i* (v.t.) "to help someone"

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[2] This suffix *-'i* is called transitive suffix by Churchward (1953) and has been accepted as such in the literature (Tchekhoff 1978, 1979, Shumway 1971). However, Lynch (1972) argues that *–'i* functions as a passive suffix. We will return to this issue in Chapter 8.

[3] The Tongan orthography adopted in this thesis is the one used by the native Tongan speakers, except for the long vowels. In this thesis, long vowels are represented by the duplication of the vowel, e.g., *aa*. The apostrophe stands for a glottal stop. Glottal stop is a full-fledged phoneme in Tongan, as illustrated by the following minimal pair: *anga* ("habit") and *'anga* ("shark"). Note also that definiteness of a NP is indicated by the stress on the final syllable of the final element of the noun phrase. This is called "definitive accent" and is an essential part of the Tongan orthography: e.g., *'a e tamasi'i* (the boy), *'a e tamasi'i potó* (the smart boy). Admitting that the definitive accent is an indispensable part of Tongan grammar, in our Tongan examples we will omit the accent mark. Unless otherwise indicated, wherever a definite article appears the definitive accent is implied and thus it is translated as *the*.

Inflectional morphology is virtually nonexistent. Tense and aspect are indicated by independent lexical items, which immediately precede the verb.[4] Tongan has three tense markers and one aspect marker as shown in (3.2) below.

(3.2)   Tense/aspect markers in Tongan

Present tense marker	*'oku*
Future tense marker	*'e/te*[5]
Past tense marker	*na'e/na'a*
Perfect aspect marker	*kuo*

Tongan does not show any agreement in number, person or gender except for a few intransitive verbs that agree with the subject in number, e.g., *'alu/oo* ("go") and *ha'u/oo-mai* ("come").

As for noun phrases, a noun is preceded by an article, either definite (*e/he*)[6] or indefinite (*ha*). Although Tongan has both definite and indefinite articles, the definite articles do not necessarily indicate that the argument is definite. In Tongan, definite article is the unmarked option and can be interpreted as either definite or indefinite. Definiteness is indicated by the definitive accent, which is placed on the final syllable of the NP. Thus, in (3.3a) the object can be understood as either definite or indefinite

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[4] We assume that these tense markers are independent lexical items rather than inflection on the verb, based on the following phonological evidence. Tongan has a penultimate accent in an unmarked environment: e.g., *tamasí'i*, *faka'ofo'ófa*, and so on. When two (or more) elements are combined to form a constituent, the penultimate accent shifts to the penultimate syllable of the newly formed compound. Hence, *'óku* becomes *'okú* when followed by a monosyllabic clitic pronoun such as *ke*: *'okú-ke* . This accent shift, however, does not extend over to the verb: *'okú-ke 'álu* but ** 'oku-ke-álu* ("You go"), and *'óku 'álu* but ** 'oku-'álu*. This suggests that tense markers are not part of a verbal compound, but independent lexical items. (However, see footnote 5 below).

[5] The future and past tense markers have two forms that alternate depending on what follows them. When followed by a verb, *'e* and *na'e* are used. When followed by a pronoun, *te* and *na'a* are used. Lawrence Reid (p.c.) points out that *'e* and *na'e* are used only with third person subjects (i.e., non-pronominal arguments), and suggests that these morphemes are actually subject-agreement. However, this observation is not entirely correct, as the usage of *te* and *na'a* may also occur with a third person subject as long as it is pronominal.

[6] The difference between the two definite articles is merely phonological: *he* is used when immediately following the ergative case marker *'e*, or the prepositions *'i*, *ki*, or *mei* and *e*, otherwise.

without the definitive accent. On the other hand, the indefinite article is used to mean "some, any" rather than existential "a". In addition, its usage is generally limited to interrogative and negative constructions. Thus, (3.3b) is considered odd.

(3.3) a. Na'e sio 'a Sione ki he ta'ahine.
　　　 Pst see ABS Sione to def girl
　　　 "Sione saw a/the girl."

　　 b. *Na'e sio 'a Sione ki ha ta'ahine.
　　　 Pst see ABS Sione to indef girl
　　　 "Sione saw a girl."

The usage of the indefinite article is exemplified by (3.4) below.

(3.4) a. 'Oku 'i ai ha maa?
　　　 Prs in there indef bread
　　　 "Is there some bread?"

　　 b. Na'e 'ikai ke sio 'a Sione ki ha taha.
　　　 Pst neg that see ABS Sione to indef one
　　　 "Sione didn't see anyone."

Finally, Tongan shows an ergative pattern of case marking. Case is marked by prepositional particles: absolutive case (ABS) is marked by *'a* and ergative case (ERG) by *'e*, as illustrated by (3.5) below.

(3.5) a. Na'e 'alu 'a Sione.
　　　 Pst　go ABS John
　　　 "John went."

　　 b. Na'e kai 'e　Sione 'a e mango.
　　　 Pst　eat ERG John ABS def mango
　　　 "John ate the mango."

It should be noted that pronominal arguments do not abide by the rules mentioned above. First, pronominal subjects never co-occur with a case marker. Besides, they show an accusative pattern. Pronouns divide into two subclasses and one is used specifically for subjects. We will return to this point shortly.

3.2 Construction types

Tongan is a VSO language. We assume that the order VSO arises because verbs undergo obligatory V-to-I-to-C movement. This VSO order is fairly rigid as long as all the arguments involved are full NP's.[7] As it will be shown shortly, however, the order VSO is not retained with pronominal arguments.

3.2.1 Verbal Constructions

Verbal constructions in Tongan divide into three types: intransitive, transitive, and middle, represented by (3.6a), (3.6b), and (3.6c), respectively.

(3.6)   a. Na'e 'alu 'a Sione ki Tonga.
            Pst go ABS Sione to Tonga
            "Sione went to Tonga."

         b. Na'e kai 'e Sione 'a e ika.
            Pst eat ERG Sione ABS def fish
            "Sione ate the fish."

         c. Na'e tokoni 'a Sione ki he faiako.
            Pst help ABS Sione to def teacher
            "Sione helped the teacher."
          Lit. "Sione helped to the teacher."

Middle constructions are so called because of their ambiguous nature: they are syntactically intransitive, but semantically transitive involving two arguments. For example, in (3.6c) the ABS case marker precedes the subject, indicating that the sentence is intransitive. The logical object, on the other hand, appears in oblique case.

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[7] It should be noted that the VOS alternative is also found in Tongan. VOS constructions typically have a passive interpretation (Churchward 1953, Tchekhoff 1973b, 1981 among others). We will consider the derivation of VOS construction and examine whether it is possible to analyse VOS constructions as passive, in Chapter 8. In this chapter, however, we leave the VOS order aside, assuming that VOS is a peripheral construction, possibly due to scrambling.

Middle verbs like *tokoni* cannot occur in a transitive construction, as illustrated by (3.7) below.

(3.7) *Na'e tokoni 'e Sione 'a e faiako.
       Pst help ERG def boy ABS def teacher
       "Sione helped the teacher."

In order to appear in a transitive construction, the verb must be transitivised by adding a suffix – '*i*. Compare (3.8) below with ungrammatical (3.7).

(3.8) Na'e tokoni'i 'e Sione 'a e faiako.
       Pst help-trans ERG Sione ABS def teacher
       "Sione helped the teacher."

Note that the contrast between the middle and the - '*i* transitive resembles the relation between the ergative transitive and the so-called antipassive in the following respects: a) the transitive A corresponds to the antipassive (or middle) S, and b) the transitive O corresponds to the antipassive (or middle) object appearing in oblique case. This resemblance seems to suggest that the middle could be analysed as antipassive. We will consider this question in Chapter 9.

3.2.2 Non-verbal constructions

Tongan does not have a copula verb. Adjectival and nominal predicates appear in a position immediately following a tense marker. The subject is marked by the ABS case marker. In other words, sentences with an adjectival or nominal predicate are of an identical form as the intransitive verbal construction. See (3.9) below.

(3.9) a. 'E 'ita 'a Sione.
          Fut angry ABS Sione
          "Sione will be angry."

       b. 'Oku faiako 'a e fefine.
          Prs teacher ABS def woman
          "The woman is a teacher."

There are two points that call for some explanation regarding constructions with an adjectival/nominal predicate. First, note that the predicate precedes the subject in linear order in these sentences. In fact, the adjectival/nominal predicate cannot follow the subject, as illustrated by (3.10) below. This suggests that adjectival/nominal predicates raise to C just like verbs.

(3.10) a. *'E 'a Sione 'ita.
    Fut ABS Sione angry
    "Sione will be angry."

   b. *'Oku 'a e fefine faiako.
    Prs ABS def woman teacher
    "The woman is a teacher."

Second, note that in (3.9b) no case marker precedes the noun *faiako*. This suggests that the noun *faiako* in this case is not an argument but a predicate. Otherwise, the sentence would be ruled out by the Case Filter, which requires an argument have case. Given these two facts, we may assume that there is an abstract verb *v* in these sentences. A noun/adjective is incorporated into *v*, in the sense of Baker (1988), to form a predicate, acquiring the characteristics similar to those of a verb.[8]

Note also that prepositional phrases may act as predicates in a similar fashion. As illustrated by (3.11) below, a PP predicate must appear in the position immediately following the tense marker and preceding the subject.

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[8] ABS case marking on the subject can also be accounted for if we assume that a predicate nominal/adjective counts as a verb because it is assumed that ABS is assigned by virtue of case-feature checking by the verb. For details, see discussion in Chapter 4.

(3.11) a. 'Oku 'i he funga teepile 'a e tohi.
　　　　Prs in def surface table ABS def book
　　　　"The book is on the table."

　　b. *'Oku 'a e tohi 'i he funga teepile.
　　　　Prs ABS def book in def surface table

Applying the above hypothesis, we may assume that the PP *'i he funga teepile* as a whole has been incorporated into the abstract verb v and then has undergone raising to C.

3.2.3 *Ko*-construction

There is another construction specifically used for nominal predicates. This construction is introduced by a predicate marker, *ko*. As shown in (3.12) below, *ko*-constructions lack a tense marker[9] and are typically interpreted as present tense.

(3.12) a. Ko e faiako 'a Sione.
　　　　Pred def teacher ABS Sione
　　　　"Sione is a teacher."

　　b. Ko e fonua faka'ofa'ofa 'a Tonga.
　　　　Pred def country beautiful ABS Tonga
　　　　"Tonga is a beautiful country."

It should be noted that not all of the *ko*-sentences can be replaced by a nominal predicate construction described in §3.2.2. For example, compare (3.13) below with (3.12b).

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[9] The following evidence suggests that *ko*-constructions lack not only tense morphology but also the T node itself. As we will see shortly, pronominal subjects are usually realised as a clitic. However, as illustrated by (i) below, a pronominal subject cannot appear in its clitic form in *ko*-constructions.
(i) a. Ko Mele au.
　　　Pred Mele 1.s.
　　　"I am Mele."
　　b.*U ko Mele.
　　　CL.1.s. Pred Mele
As will be argued in Chapter 6, we assume that clitic pronouns attach to T. Thus, the fact that clitic pronouns are excluded in *ko*-constructions suggests that T does not exist *ko*-constructions.

(3.13) *'Oku fonua faka'ofa'ofa 'a Tonga.
   Prs country beautiful ABS Tonga
   "Tonga is a beautiful country."

Note also that the NP following *ko* is not accompanied by a case marker, but it is accompanied by a definite article *e*. In contrast, in the nominal predicate constructions, a predicate nominal stands alone. In other words, a nominal following *ko* is different from a nominal in the nominal predicate construction in that the former is a DP. Here we face a problem: if the nominal is not a predicate, then what is the predicate in *ko*-constructions?

The usage of *ko* is not limited to *ko*-constructions. Consider the following example.

(3.14) Na'a ku fetaulaki mo e ta'ahine ko Mele.
   Pst 1.s. meet with def girl Pred Mele
   "I met the girl (called) Mele"

In (3.14), *ko* is used to introduce a NP in apposition with the preceding NP.[10] Given examples like (3.14), *ko* is best described as an appositional preposition. Assuming that *ko* is a preposition, then we may apply the hypothesis we used above regarding the PP predicate construction. That is, a PP headed by *ko* is incorporated into the abstract *v*.

It should be noted also that the interrogative and the cleft are also introduced by *ko*, as illustrated by (3.15) below.

(3.15) a. Ko hai$_i$ [OP$_i$ [na'e 'alu t_i ki Tonga]?
      Pred who   past go to Tonga
      "Who went to Tonga?"
      Lit. "Who is it that went to Tonga?"

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[10] As Gillian Ramchand (p.c.) suggests, we may assume that in this construction *ko* forms a kind of small clause of the following structure: [$_{sc}$ e ta'ahine [$_{pred}$ ko Mele]].

(3.15) b.   Ko Sione$_i$ [OP$_i$ [na'e 'ita lahi 'aupito t_i].
          Pred Sione   past angry much very
          "Sione was very angry."
          Lit. "It is Sione that was very angry."

3.3 Pronouns

As mentioned above, the regular VSO order is not retained if a construction contains pronominal arguments. This is because pronouns are required to appear in a particular position: either immediately preceding the verb or immediately following the verb. Pronouns in Tongan are classified into two subclasses according to the position in which they appear. See (3.16) below. Pronouns of Set A appear immediately preceding the verb, while those of Set B appear following the verb.

(3.16) Tongan Pronouns

	Set A	Set B
1st Excl[11]. s.	te	kita
1st Excl. d.[12]	ma	kimaua
1st Excl. pl.	mau	kimautolu
1st Incl. s.	ou/ku/u[13]	au
1st Incl. d.	ta	kitaua
1st Incl. pl	tau	kitautolu
2nd s.	ke	koe
2nd d.	mo	kimoua
2nd pl.	mou	kimoutolu
3rd s.	ne	ia
3rd d.	na	kinaua
3rd pl.	nau	kinautolu

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[11] Tongan distinguishes the first person exclusive from inclusive. Exclusive first person pronouns exclude the speaker. Referent of the first person exclusive singular pronoun, *te* is an arbitrary/general "one" rather than referring specifically to the speaker. When referring to the speaker, it is used in the language of politeness or humility (Churchward 1953).
[12] Note also that Tongan distinguishes dual (two persons) from plural (more than two).
[13] The difference between the three first person singular pronouns is morpho-phonological. *Ou* is used after *'oku* (present tense marker), *u* after *te* (future tense marker) and *ke* (infinitival complimentiser), and *ku* after *na'a* (past tense marker).

Note that the Set A pronouns cannot appear following the verb, nor can the Set B pronouns precede the verb. See (3.17) below.

(3.17) a. Te u ʻalu ki Tonga.
        Fut 1.s. go to Tonga
        "I will go to Tonga."

      b. *Te ʻalu u ki Tonga
         Fut go 1.s. to Tonga

      c. ʻE ʻave au ʻe Sione.
         Fut take 1.s. ERG Sione
         "Sione will take me."

      d. *Te au ʻave ʻe Sione.
         Fut 1.s. take ERG Sione
         "Sione will take me."

Another substantial difference is that Set A pronouns always occur as a subject, while those belonging to Set B occur as a direct object. Thus, sentences in (3.18) are ungrammatical.

(3.18) a. *Te ʻalu au ki Tonga.
        Fut go 1.s. to Tonga
        "I will go to Tonga"

      b. *Te u ʻave ʻe Sione.
         Fut 1.s. take ERG Sione
         "Sione will take me"

(3.18a) is ruled out because the sentence lacks a subject. Being a Set B pronoun, *au* cannot count as a subject. On the other hand, (3.18b) is barred because it has two subjects, a Set A pronoun *u* and the ERG-marked argument *Sione*.

Furthermore, a careful observation reveals two more significant facts. First, the Set A pronouns never co-occur with a case marker, while the Set B pronouns are sometimes accompanied by a case marker. See (3.19) below.

(3.19) a. *Te 'alu 'a ke ki Tonga.
          Fut go ABS 2.s. to Tonga
         "You will go to Tonga"

   b. *'E 'ave 'e ke 'a Sione.
      Fut take ERG 2.s. ABS Sione
      "You will take Sione"

   c. 'E 'ave 'e Sione 'a koe.
      Fut take ERG Sione ABS 2.s.
      "Sione will take you"

As illustrated by (3.19a) and (3.19b), a Set A pronoun *ke* cannot co-occur either the

ABS case marker or the ERG case marker. In contrast, (3.19c) is grammatical with a

set B pronoun *koe* preceded by the ABS case marker. Second, while the Set A

pronouns are never allowed to occur as a direct object, the Set B pronouns may occur

as a subject if they accompany a case marker. Consider the following examples.

(3.20) a. Na'e tangi lahi 'a kinautolu.
          Pst cry much ABS 3.pl.
         "They cried a lot"

   b. *Na'e 'ave 'e Sione 'a nau.
       Pst take ERG Sione ABS 3.pl.
      "Sione took them"

In summary, Set A pronouns are used specifically for subjects and are required to

occur in the position immediately preceding the verb.[14] They can never co-occur with

a case marker. Set B is used in other environments. Set B pronouns are generally used

as direct objects, but can also be used as subjects. When occurring as a direct object, a

pronoun of this class may stand without a case marker, but the presence of a case

marker is obligatory when it occurs as a subject. In other words, Set B pronouns are

not different from full NP's except that they may stand sans case marker under a

certain condition.[15] In contrast, distribution of Set A pronouns is highly restricted. This observation leads to a hypothesis that the difference between the two sets of pronouns is that one is clitic and the other is independent.[16, 17] A clitic needs a host to which it attaches. Consequently, it must appear adjacent to the host: either immediately preceding the host or immediately following the host. This description of clitic fits the above mentioned behaviour of Set A pronouns. Thus, in the following discussion, we will refer to Set A pronouns as clitics and Set B pronouns as (independent) pronouns. What is notable is that the occurrence of clitics is strictly limited to subjects, i.e., S and A. This restriction shows an accusative pattern, which is rather unexpected given that case marking on full NP's as well as independent pronouns is ergative. We will discuss why and how this accusative pattern arises in Chapter 6.

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[14] More accurately, it is the position between the tense marker and the verb.

[15] However, it should be noted that the omission of the ABS case marker also applies to full NP's. In particular, the omission of a case marker is obligatory with indefinite arguments. Thus, to be accurate, the difference is that the omission of a case marker necessarily affects the word order with pronouns while it does not with full NP's.

[16] Interestingly, this observation fits the following description of Proto-Polynesian personal pronouns. According to Besnier (1992), Proto-Polynesian personal pronouns have a clitic form and an independent form. The former is used when the pronoun is a transitive subject, and placed between the tense/aspect marker and the verb. The latter is used in all other contexts.

[17] Churchward (1953) is inclined to analyse both Set A ("preposed") and Set B ("postposed") as clitics, and argues that there is another set of pronouns that behave as independent pronouns, which he calls "emphatic". Emphatic pronouns are of identical forms to Set B pronouns, but they are required to occur with a case marker. However, our analysis is preferable to Churchward's proposal for the following reasons. First, it is not economical for a language to be equipped with two sets of pronouns consisting of identical constituents. It is preferable to account for the distinction between Set B pronouns and emphatic pronouns in terms of some syntactic rules. Second, most of the Set B pronouns are morphologically too complex to be a clitic. (I am grateful to Gillian Ramchand for bringing this point to my attention). We will return to this issue in Chapter 6.

3.4 *Pro*-drop

3.4.1 Subjectless sentences

In Tongan, a pronominal argument can be omitted if its referent is identifiable by virtue of context. Thus, we frequently encounter subjectless sentences such as those in (3.21) below.

(3.21) a.   Na'e 'ave 'a Sione ki he ako.
         Pst take ABS Sione to def school
         "(someone) took Sione to school."

   b.   Na'e tamate'i 'a e siana.
        Pst kill ABS def man
        "(someone) killed the man."

Both *'ave* ("to take") and *tamate'i* ("to kill") are transitive verbs. Therefore, the argument marked by the ABS case marker, *'a* is the object, not the subject.[18] In other words, these are transitive sentences lacking A. (3.21a) and (3.21b) may be uttered, for example, in a context given below.

(3.22) a. i.   'Oku 'i fee 'a Mele?
          Prs in where ABS Mele
          "Where is Mele?"

   ii.   Na'e 'ave 'a Sione ki he ako.
         Pst take ABS Sione to def school
         "(She) took Sione to school."

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[18] Tchekhoff (1979) observes that the ABS marked argument in constructions derived by the subject deletion is interpreted differently depending on the verb types; a) verb like *'ave* ("take") requires it to be interpreted as Patient; b) verbs like *tamate* ("kill") requires it to be interpreted as Agent and c) with verbs like *kai* ("eat"), it can be interpreted as either, depending on the context. However, in everyday use, verbs of type (b) are usually transitivised by *– 'i* affixation and as a result, the ABS-marked argument is interpreted as Patient.

    b. i.   Ko e haa e me'a na'e fai 'e Pita?
          Pred def what def thing Pst do ERG Pita
          "What did Pita do?"

      ii.   Na'e tamate'i 'a Sione.
          Pst kill ABS Sione
          "(He) killed Sione."

We assume that the phonologically absent subject in sentences like (3.21a, b) is syntactically present, because otherwise such sentences would be ruled out due to the Extended Projection Principle, which requires that a sentence have a subject (Chomsky 1981). A phonetically null subject occurs also in intransitive constructions as well as in middle constructions, as illustrated by (3.23) below.

(3.23) a. Kuo 'osi 'alu.
      Perf already go
      "(She) has already gone."

    b. 'Oku sai'ia 'ia Mele.
      Prs like in Mele
      "(He) likes Mele"

3.4.2 *Pro* and licensing conditions

Note that similar subjectless sentences exist in languages such as Italian and Spanish. Italian and Spanish are so-called *pro*-drop languages, permitting a phonetically null pronoun called *pro* in the subject position. Thus, both (3.24a) with an overt subject and (3.24b) without one are equally grammatical in Spanish.[19]

(3.24) a. Yo hablo espanol.
      1.s. speak-1.s. Spanish
      "I speak Spanish"

    b. *pro* hablo espanol.
      speak-1.s. Spanish

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[19] However, it should be noted that sentences with a null subject are strongly preferred. (3.23a), for example, is considered odd in an unmarked context.

Pro in (3.24b) is a phonetically null pronoun and is assumed to bear the features identical to those of the first person singular pronoun, *yo*. In a *pro*-drop language, this covert element does count as a legitimate subject and therefore, the apparent absence of the subject does not lead to ungrammaticality. Adopting this analysis, let us assume that subjectless sentences in Tongan also contain *pro*. To support this hypothesis, the empty subject in these sentences may be replaced by a clitic pronoun without affecting the meaning.

Assuming that the empty subject in Tongan sentences such as (3.21a,b) is *pro*, we need to explain how *pro* is licensed in these constructions. In Spanish, for example, *pro* is licensed because features of *pro* are identifiable by virtue of inflection on the verb. In contrast, *pro* cannot be licensed in English because verbal inflection is not rich enough. In Tongan, verbal inflection is even more limited. Consequently, it is impossible to identify the referent of a subject by the form of the verb. Rather, it seems that it is a pragmatic factor that licenses *pro* in Tongan: *pro* may occur as a subject provided an appropriate context in which its referent is identifiable. Therefore, a subjectless sentence is considered grammatical only as part of speech, but not as an independent utterance. Thus, (3.25b) is considered odd without some preceding utterance such as (3.25a).

(3.25) a. Na'e 'alu 'a Sione ki fee?
　　　 Pst go ABS Sione to where
　　　 "Where did Sione go?"

　　 b. Na'e 'alu *pro* ki Tonga.
　　　 Pst go　　　 to Tonga
　　　 "(He) went to Tonga."

Put differently, *pro* in (3.25b) cannot refer to a random third person singular entity.

Considering the virtual lack of inflection, the existence of *pro* in Tongan seems to contradict the prevalent conviction that *pro* is licensed by virtue of rich inflection. However, as Jaeggli and Safir (1989) point out, the argument that there is a strong relation between *pro* and rich inflection is rather flimsy. For example, *pro* is not permitted in German despite its rich inflection. Thus, Jaeggli and Safir posit the following Null Subject Parameter to account for various instances of *pro*-drop.

(3.26)   The Null Subject Parameter (Jaeggli and Safir 1989:29)

> Null subjects are permitted in all and only languages with morphologically uniform inflectional paradigms.

An inflectional paradigm is morphologically uniform if and only if verbs either show no agreement at all or appear only in derived inflectional forms. English is not morphologically uniform, because verbs appear in the inflected form with a third person singular subject but in the root form otherwise. In *pro*-drop languages such as Italian, verbs consistently appear in their inflected forms. On the other hand, some languages are morphologically uniform in that verbs never agree in person and number. Japanese, for example, freely omits the subject when the context allows both the speaker and hearer to identify its referent.[20] See (3.27) below.

(3.27) a. *pro* kinou ki-masita-ka?
     yesterday come-Pst-question
    "Did (you) come yesterday?"

  b. Hai, *pro* ki-masita.
    Yes, come-Pst.
    "Yes, (I) did"

Tongan is also morphologically uniform except for a few verbs such as *'alu* and *ha'u*

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[20] Cf. Huang 1984, 1989 for Chinese data.

that show the number agreement. However, it should be noted that these verbs sometimes appear in the uninflected form with plural subjects without affecting the grammaticality. Considering that agreement is virtually none in Tongan save these exceptions and that even in these cases agreement is not obligatory, Tongan could be regarded as morphologically uniform, and thus *pro* should be permissible.

It should be noted, however, that the usage of *pro* in Tongan is significantly limited compared with Japanese. As illustrated by (3.28) below, first/second pronominal arguments may never be *pro*. (3.28b) is considered ungrammatical as an answer to the question (3.28a) although the context clearly indicates who the subject refers to.

(3.28) a. Na'a ke ha'u 'aneafi?
　　　　　 Pst 2.s. come yesterday
　　　　　 "Did you come yesterday?"

　　　 b. *'Io, na'e *pro* ha'u.
　　　　　 Yes Pst come
　　　　　 Intended meaning: "Yes, (I) did."

　　　 c. 'Io, na'a ku ha'u.
　　　　　 Yes Pst 1.s. come
　　　　　 "Yes, I did."

In short, in Tongan *pro*-drop applies exclusively to the third person singular pronoun.

Finally, on a different note, it is said that the subjectless transitive construction in Tongan typically has a passive interpretation (Churchward 1953, Tchekhoff 1973a,b among others). Thus, one may hypothesise that such a subjectless construction is derived by passivisation. However, considering that intransitive constructions may also be subjectless, this passive hypothesis seems infeasible. It is more plausible that

the subjectless transitive arises because of *pro*-drop rather than passivisation.[21]

3.5 Expletive

The EPP requires that a sentence have a subject. Generally, the term subject refers to an argument to which the verb assigns an external theta-role in the sense of Williams (1980, 1981): S of an intransitive verb and A of a transitive verb. Some intransitive verbs, however, do not assign an external theta-role. These include verbs of weather and unaccusative verbs . The former simply does not assign any theta-role. The latter only assigns an internal theta-role (Perlmutter 1978, Burzio 1986). When there is no argument that fits the above definition of subject, a language takes one of the following strategies in order to satisfy the EPP: a) to insert an expletive element in the subject position or b) to move an argument, if there is one available, to the subject position. Take English for example. Weather constructions contain an expletive *it* in the subject position, as illustrated by (3.29a). Similarly, in (3.29b), an unaccusative verb *seem* takes an expletive subject. In (3.29c), the subject of the embedded clause has been moved to the matrix subject position.[22]

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[21] As a related topic, there is VOS construction, which is also said to have a passive interpretation. See (i) below. Here the subject (A) follows the object in linear order, apparently violating the regular VSO order. Lynch (1972) suggests that VOS constructions are derived by passivisation: the ABS marked argument is the surface subject and *'e* is an agent marker. This and other issues concerning the passive in Tongan will be discussed in Chapter 8.

(i) Na'e tamate'i 'a siana 'e Pita.
Pst kill ABS def man Agt Pita
"The man was killed by Pita."

[22] To be accurate, this movement requires another condition: namely, the Case Filter cannot be met if the argument in question remains in the embedded clause.

(3.29) a. It rained yesterday.
　　　 b. It seems that John likes Mary.
　　　 c. John$_i$ seems to t_i like Mary.

In this section, we will consider how Tongan deals with such cases.

3.5.1 Weather verbs

Weather verbs in Tongan include *'uha* ("to rain"), *sinou* ("to snow"), *la'a* ("to be sunny"), and *havili* ("to be windy"). As illustrated by (3.30), weather constructions do not contain an overt subject, not even an overt expletive.

(3.30) a. Na'e 'uha lahi 'anepoo.
　　　　　Pst rain much last night
　　　　　"It rained a lot last night"

　　　 b. 'Oku pupuha 'i he 'aho ni.
　　　　　Prs humid in def day this
　　　　　"It is humid today."

These sentences apparently have the structure (3.31) below.

(3.31) Tense V-weather

The structure (3.31), however, should be ruled out by the EPP since it lacks a NP that counts as a subject. Thus, we assume that there is a null subject *pro* in sentences (3.30a,b).

The preceding discussion has shown that Tongan is a *pro*-drop language with some idiosyncratic restrictions. First, *pro* is permitted only when its referent is identifiable by virtue of context. Second, *pro* is typically third person singular in its feature specification. Returning to the weather constructions, we assume the following structure.

(3.32)　Tense V-weather *pro*

Pro in (3.32), however, cannot be replaced with the third person singular pronoun, *ne*.

See (3.33) below.

(3.33) a. Na'e *pro* 'uha lahi.
      Pst   rain much
      "It rained a lot."

    b. *Na'a ne 'uha lahi.
       Pst 3.s. rain much
       "It rained a lot."

The fact that (3.33b) is ruled out suggests that *pro* in (3.33a) is different from the one

discussed earlier.

Let us maintain the hypothesis that *pro* in Tongan bears the features [3.s.].

Considering that an expletive is generally a third person singular pronoun, e.g., *it* in

English and *il* in French, it is plausible that expletive elements are universally [3.s.].

The difference would then be the feature [±human]. In English, for example, an

expletive *it* is distinguished from the [3.s.] personal pronoun *he*. As for French *il*, we

may assume that there are two *il*'s: one is [+human] and the other is [−human].

Similarly, we may assume that Tongan has two *pro*'s: both have the features [3.s.], but

crucially, one is personal and the other is impersonal. In fact, a similar situation is

found in Spanish. See (3.34) below.

(3.34)   *pro*/*el/*eso esta lloviendo.
        3.s   be-3.s. rain-progressive
      "It is raining."

As illustrated by (3.34), replacing *pro* with an overt pronoun results in

ungrammaticality. Neither the personal [3.s.] pronoun nor the impersonal [3.s.]

demonstrative is allowed in the subject position. In other words, the expletive *pro* is an

element, distinct from both the personal pronoun *el* and the demonstrative *eso*.

Thus, we conclude that weather constructions in Tongan contain a phonetically null expletive *pro* with the features [3.s., –human] in the subject position.

3.5.2 Unaccusative verbs

Tongan has several one-place predicates that subcategorise for a sentential subject. These include *pau* ("to be determined"), *totonu* ("to be advisable") and a negative verb *'ikai*. See (3.35) below.[23]

(3.35) a. Kuo pau [ke 'alu 'a Sione].
      Perf determined that go ABS Sione
      "Sione must go."
      Lit. "(It) has been determined that Sione go."

  b. Na'e 'ikai [ke 'alu 'a Sione].
     Pst not that go ABS Sione
     "Sione did not go."
     Lit. "(It) was not that Sione go."

  c. 'Oku totonu [ke 'alu 'a Sione].
     Prs advisable that go ABS Sione
     "Sione had better go."
     Lit. "(It) is advisable that Sione go."

As illustrated by (3.36) below, these verbs cannot take a thematic subject.

(3.36) a. *Kuo pau 'a Sione.
      Perf determined ABS Sione
      Intended meaning: Sione is determined.

  b. *Na'e 'ikai 'a Sione.
     Pst not ABS Sione
     Intended meaning: Sione didn't/wasn't.

  c. *'Oku totonu 'a Sione.
     Prs advisable ABS Sione
     Intended meaning: Sione should.

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[23] Whether *ke*-clauses are finite or infinitive is one of the most controversial issues in Tongan syntax. As we will see shortly, *ke*-clauses are like finite clauses in that they are case assigning. At the same time, they are similar to infinitive clauses in that PRO may occur. Note that *ke* is glossed as *that* in (3.35) simply for the sake of convenience. It does not imply that *ke*-clauses are finite.

In this respect, these one-place predicates are similar to *seem*, a special instance of the unaccusative. Let us assume that the expletive *pro* is present in the subject position of the sentences in (3.35) above. Thus,

(3.37) a. Kuo pau *pro* [ke 'alu 'a Sione].
      Perf determined that go ABS Sione
      "Sione must go."

    b. Na'e 'ikai *pro* [ke 'alu 'a Sione].
      Pst not that go ABS Sione
      "Sione did not go."

    c. 'Oku totonu *pro* [ke 'alu 'a Sione].
      Prs advisable that go ABS Sione
      "Sione had better go."

However, unlike *seem*, the movement strategy is not available in Tongan. An embedded argument cannot move to the matrix subject position, as illustrated by (3.38) below.

(3.38) a. *Kuo pau 'a Sione$_i$ [ke 'alu t_i].
      Perf decided ABS Sione ke go
      "Sione has been decided to go."

    b. *Na'e 'ikai 'a Sione$_i$ [ke 'alu t_i].
      Prs not ABS Sione ke go
      "Sione did not go."

An exception is *totonu*, which allows the following structure.

(3.39) 'Oku totonu 'a Sione$_i$ [ke 'alu t_i].
     Prs advisable ABS Sione ke go
     "Sione had better go."
     Lit. "Sione is advisable that go."

Sentences like (3.39) raise a problem because derivation of (3.39) apparently involves movement from a case position.[24] Such movement should be barred due to the Chain

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[24] Sentences like (3.39) is problematic in another sense. As illustrated by (i) below, the raised argument appears in ABS whether it is S or A. In other words, case is assigned in the target position and the verb *totonu* is responsible for this case assignment.

Condition (Chomsky 1981). Therefore, it would be preferable to assume that a) the movement strategy is not available in Tongan and that b) sentences like (3.39) are derived not by raising but by some other syntactic rules. We will consider this issue in Chapter 7.

3.6 Subordinate clauses

There are two types of subordinate clauses in Tongan: those introduced by a tense marker and those introduced by an element *ke*. The former is without a doubt finite, similar to *that*-clauses in English. On the other hand, whether *ke*-clauses are finite or infinitive is not an easy question to answer. They are like infinitives in that they do not contain a regular tense marker. Yet, they are similar to finite clauses with regard to case assignment. Generally, it is assumed that Infl of infinitives checks only the Null case feature, which is associated with an empty element PRO, and no other case features (Chomsky and Lasnik 1993). Thus, in English *to*-infinitives cannot have a NOM-marked subject. However, in *ke*-clauses ERG-marked arguments as well as ABS-marked arguments freely occur. This suggests that case features, both ERG and ABS, can be checked inside *ke*-clauses. More problematically, *ke*-clauses may contain an empty subject that could be analysed as PRO. In short, *ke*-clauses must be able to check off all of the three case features, ABS, ERG and Null, which is an impossible

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(i) 'Oku totonu 'a Sione [ke 'ave *t*i 'a Mele].
    Prs advisable ABS Sione that take ABS Mele
    "Sione had better take Mele."
This fact is contradictory to our assumption that *totonu* is unaccusative: unaccusative verbs do not have case feature (Burzio 1986). Unaccusatives in ergative languages will be discussed in Chapter 4.

situation according to the assumptions of the standard theory.

3.6.1 Finite clauses

Finite subordinate clauses are not different in any way from independent clauses. They are introduced by a tense marker. Word order is VSO and case marking is ergative. Verbs like *pehee* ("to think"), *'ilo* ("to know"), and *tui* ("believe") take a finite clause as a complement. See (3.40) below.

(3.40) a. 'Oku 'ilo 'e Sione [na'e 'alu Mele ki ai]
      Prs know ERG Sione Pst go ABS Mele to there
      "Sione knows that Mele went there."

    b. 'Oku ou pehee [na'e kai 'e Sione 'a e ika]
      Prs. 1.s. think Pst eat ERG Sione ABS def fish
      "I think that Sione ate the fish."

Note that no other element precedes the tense marker within the subordinate clause. In other words, there is no complementiser equivalent to English *that*. This can be explained by our assumption that the V-to-C movement is obligatory in Tongan. If this rule also applies to subordinate clauses, C will be occupied by the V+T cluster and as a result. Consequently, the position C is not available for a complementiser.

3.6.2 *Ke*-clauses

The standard theory distinguishes two types of clauses in terms of tense. Finite clauses contain a tense element that is specified for a certain tense such as present and past. Infinitival clauses lack specified tense but instead have a kind of tense anaphora: they are dependent on the main clause for their temporal interpretation. Generally, the tense of the infinitive is interpreted either as simultaneous or as future in relation to the matrix tense (Stowell 1982). Another important observation is that only finite clauses

have an overt subject. Infinitival clauses may contain only an empty subject i.e., PRO.[25] Complementary distribution of PRO and overt NP's is considered to arise due to some case-related reasons. Specifically, Chomsky and Lasnik (1993) propose that Infl of infinitives is specified for Null case and thus can check only Null case, which is associated with PRO. Given these assumptions, we consider that a) tenseless clauses are infinitival and b) infinitival clauses allow only PRO in the subject position.

According to the definition sketched above, *ke*-clauses could be both finite and infinitival. There are three points to note: a) *ke*-clauses lack a regular tense marker; b) *ke*-clauses may contain an empty subject that is neither *pro* nor a trace; and c) *ke*-clauses may contain both ERG-marked and ABS-marked arguments. Assuming that the empty subject is PRO, the first two facts suggest that *ke*-clauses are infinitival. However, the fact that both ABS and ERG can be assigned inside *ke*-clauses cannot be explained if we assume that *ke*-clauses are infinitival. In short, we are facing a perplexing situation.[26]

As illustrated by (3.41b) below, *ke* cannot co-occur with a regular tense marker.

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[25] Strictly speaking, another empty category, trace may also appear in the subject position of an infinitival clause. This option is available in the so-called Exceptional Case Marking (ECM) constructions. In ECM constructions, the overt subject of the infinitive raises to the matrix object position in order to satisfy the Case Filter, thereby leaving a trace in the infinitival clause (Chomsky 1993).

[26] Thus, Churchward (1953) concludes that Tongan has only one type of subordinate clauses while English distinguishes infinitival clauses from finite ones. He calls *ke* "prospective" conjunction, noting that *ke*-clauses refer to a future event in relation to the event described by the main clause.

(3.41) a. Na'e ha'u 'a Sione [ke fetaulaki mo Mele].
      Pst come ABS Sione ke meet with Mele
     "Sione came to see Mele."

    b. *Na'e ha'u 'a Sione [ke te fetaulaki mo Mele].
      Pst come ABS Sione ke Fut meet with Mele
      Intended meaning: "Sione came so that he should see Mele."

Ke-clauses may appear not only as adverbial clauses, but also as adjectival clauses,

subjects, and complements of a verb. See (3.42) below.

(3.42) a. 'Oku 'i fee 'a e fale [ke tau holoki]?
      Prs in where ABS def house ke 1.incl.pl. demolish
      "Where is the house (for us) to demolish?"
      (Churchward 1953: 53)

    b. 'Oku lelei ke tau fai leva 'a e ngaaue.
      Prs good ke 1.incl.pl. do immediately ABS def work
      "It is good that we do the work immediately."
      (Churchward 1953: 52)

    c. Na'e manatu'i 'e Sione [ke tamate'i 'a e maama].
      Pst remember ERG Sione ke kill ABS def light
      "Sione remembered to turn off the light."

Note that *ke*-clauses in (3.42c) lack an overt subject, while in (3.42a) and (3.42b) the

subject is overtly present.

We assume that the empty subject in *ke*-clauses is PRO for the following reasons. Take

a verb *loto* ("want"). Consider (3.43) below. The italicised *e* stands for an empty

category.

(3.43) a. 'Oku loto 'a Sione$_i$ [ke 'alu *e*$_i$].
      Prs want ABS Sione ke go
     "Sione wants to go."

    b. 'Oku loto 'a Sione$_i$ [ke kai *e*$_i$ 'a e ika].
      Prs want ABS Sione ke eat ABS def fish
      "Sione wants to eat the fish."

The empty element in these examples cannot be a trace of *Sione* because the pre-raising

construction (3.44) is ungrammatical. *Pro* in (3.44) is an empty expletive. As
mentioned in §3.5.2, one-place predicates such as *totonu* ("to be advisable") allow this
type of construction.

(3.44) *'Oku loto *pro* [ke 'alu 'a Sione].
       Prs want   ke go ABS Sione
       "Sione wants to go."
       Lit. "It wants that Sione go."

Could the empty element be a personal *pro*? This hypothesis is also untenable for the
following reasons. First, if it were *pro*, then it would be replaceable with an overt
pronoun. However, replacing the empty element with an overt pronoun yields
ungrammaticality, as illustrated by (3.45) below. [27]

(3.45) *'Oku loto 'a Sione$_i$ [ke ne$_i$ 'alu].
        Prs want ABS Sione ke 3.s. go
        "Sione wants to go."

Second, sentences like (3.46) are grammatical.

(3.46) 'Oku mau$_i$ loto [ke kai *e*$_i$ 'a e ika].
        Prs 1.excl.pl. want ke eat ABS def fish
        "We want to eat the fish."

As discussed earlier, *pro* in Tongan must be third person singular. Thus, if the empty
element in (3.46) is *pro*, it would not be coreferential with *mau*, a first person plural
pronominal argument. The fact that coreference is permissible suggests that this empty
element is not *pro*. Since it is neither *pro* nor a trace, we may assume that the empty
subject of *ke*-clauses is PRO.

We have observed that *ke*-clauses are tenseless and contain PRO subjects. However,

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[27] More accurately, what is prohibited is coreference between the pronoun and the matrix subject. The
sequence itself is grammatical as long as coreference is not intended. Note also that coreference is
obligatory with the empty subject. We will return to this issue in Chapter 10.

here is the puzzling fact: *ke*-clauses also allow an overt subject. See (3.47) below.

(3.47) a. 'Oku loto 'a Sione [ke 'alu 'a Mele]
          Prs want ABS Sione ke go ABS Mele
          "Sione wants Mele to go"

     b. Oku loto 'a Sione [ke lea 'e Mele 'a e mo'oni]
          Prs want ABS Sione ke tell ERG Mele ABS def truth
          "Sione wants Mele to tell the truth"

Sentences in (3.47) demonstrate that both ABS and ERG can be assigned inside *ke*-clauses. This puzzling fact raises three questions. Are *ke*-clauses finite? If they are finite, how can PRO be licensed in *ke*-clauses? If they are infinitival, then, how can both ABS and ERG be assigned in *ke*-clauses? We will consider these questions in Chapter 10.

On a different note, *ke*-clause complements of negative verbs *'ikai* ("not") and *te'eki* ("not yet") differ from other instances of *ke*-clauses. Negative verbs in Tongan are unaccusative: they take a sentential complement and an empty expletive *pro* in the subject position. See (3.48) below.

(3.48) a. Na'e 'ikai *pro* [ke 'alu 'a Sione].
          Pst not ke go ABS Sione
          "Sione did not go."
          Lit. "It was not that Sione go."

     b. Na'e 'ikai *pro* [ke kai 'e Sione 'a e ika].
          Pst not ke eat ERG Sione ABS def fish
          "Sione did not eat the fish."
          Lit. "It was not that Sione eat fish."

As illustrated by (3.49) below, *ke*-clause complements of the negative constructions cannot contain an empty subject.

(3.49) *Na'e 'ikai 'a Sione$_i$ [ke 'alu e_i]
          Prs not ABS Sione ke go
          "Sione did not go"

In other words, PRO cannot appear in *ke*-clauses if the matrix verb is a negative verb.

In addition, *ke* in the negative constructions shows some peculiar property. First, *ke*

can be omitted in these constructions, as illustrated by (3.50) below.

(3.50) Na'e 'ikai ['ave 'e Sione 'a Mele].
   Pst not take ERG Sione ABS Mele
   "Sione did not take Mele."

Second, *ke* alternates with *te* when the embedded subject is a pronominal argument.

See (3.51) below.

(3.51) a. Na'e 'ikai [te ne 'alu].
    Pst not te cl.3.s. go
    "He didn't go."

   b. Na'e 'ikai [te mau kai 'a e ika].
    Pst not te 1.excl.pl eat ABS def fish
    "We did not eat the fish."

These properties are restricted to *ke*-clause complements of negative verbs. These

facts seem to suggest that *ke* that occurs with *'ikai* and *te'eki* is somehow different

from *ke* of other *ke*-clauses. A possible account may be as follows: Tongan is going

through a process of reanalysing *'ikai/te'eki* as a functional head rather than a verb.

When the speaker considers *'ikai/te'eki* as a verb, *ke/te* appears. This element *ke/te*

can be dropped if the speaker treats *'ikai/te'eki* as a functional head of, say, NegP.

However, this is merely a speculation. We will leave this issue open to future research.

3.7 Summary

To summarise, the above overview of the Tongan syntax has presented the following

three issues of significance: a) case marking, b) clitic pronouns, and c) *ke*-clauses. First, Tongan shows ergative case marking. As discussed in Chapter 2, ergative case marking is a problem for the standard theory. In order to account for ergative case marking, some modification is necessary. In Chapter 4, we will review various proposals and set forth an alternative analysis. This raises two other relevant issues: passive and antipassive. As mentioned above, the subjectless transitive and VOS constructions are said to have a passive interpretation. However, a passive construction is generally derived from an accusative construction. In addition, how passive is defined in an ergative language is not clear. In Chapter 8, we will propose a definition of passive that is applicable to both accusative and ergative languages and examine whether the subjectless transitive and VOS constructions in Tongan qualify as passive. As for the antipassive, the structure of the Tongan middle strikingly resembles that of the antipassive: the underlying A appears as a surface S and the underlying O as an oblique argument. We will look into this possibility in Chapter 9.

The second issue also concerns ergativity: specifically, the behaviour of clitic pronouns. Tongan has two sets of pronouns, clitic and independent. The distribution of clitic pronouns shows an accusative pattern: they may occur as S or A, but never as O. This accusative pattern is unexpected because in Tongan arguments are distinguished on an ergative basis otherwise. In Chapter 6, we will discuss why this accusative pattern arises. Note also that Tongan shows syntactic ergativity and that split exists at the syntactic level as well. Syntactic ergativity in Tongan will be discussed in Chapter 5.

Third, there is a problem of *ke*-clauses. *Ke*-clauses exhibit the following property: a) they lack a tense marker; b) they may have a PRO subject; and c) they may have a case-marked subject. The first two are characteristics of infinitival clauses, whereas infinitival clauses generally do not show the third property. We need to determine whether *ke*-clauses are finite or infinitival. If they are finite, then the following question arises. Why can PRO occur in *ke*-clauses? The standard theory predicts that PRO cannot appear in finite clauses because it cannot check off its Null case feature. On the other hand, if *ke*-clauses are infinitival, we will face another difficulty. We need to explain how case, both ABS and ERG, can be assigned in *ke*-clauses. We will discuss this issue in Chapter 10. There is yet another puzzle concerning *ke*-clauses. Some of the unaccusative verbs such as *totonu* ("to be advisable") seem to allow raising of an argument out of the *ke*-clause complement. Derivation of such a structure is problematic because it necessarily involves movement from a case-marked position. Movement from a case-marked position should be barred due to the Chain Condition (Chomsky 1981). This problem will be discussed in Chapter 7.