

Chapter 9

Antipassive and Middle Constructions

In addition to the transitive and intransitive, ergative languages of the Polynesian group commonly have another type of construction, which is called middle. The middle construction stands somewhere in between the transitive and the intransitive. It involves two arguments, but crucially is syntactically intransitive. The subject appears in ABS, not ERG. The logical object appears in some oblique case (henceforth, OBL). This pattern of case marking strikingly resembles that of the so-called antipassive. Namely, the subject appears in ABS and the object, in OBL. However, it has never been proposed that the Polynesian middle is an instance of the antipassive.¹ The antipassive, on the other hand, is commonly found among ergative languages. In many cases, the antipassive is an indispensable part of the syntax of languages that show syntactic ergativity. It essentially changes the underlying A into a derived S, whereby enabling the argument in question to undergo syntactic operations that apply exclusively to ABS-arguments (i.e., S and O) such as relativisation and coordination. As discussed in Chapter 5, Tongan exhibits syntactic ergativity. Thus, we have a reason to speculate that an antipassive construction might also exist in Tongan. One hypothesis will then be that what has been called middle is actually equivalent to what is called antipassive in other languages. The fact that a middle verb sometimes has a corresponding transitive verb seems to support this hypothesis.

In this chapter, we will consider this possibility: is the Tongan middle really an antipassive construction? In §9.1, we will outline the characteristics of the middle construction in Tongan. In §9.2, we will review various analyses of the antipassive, and then put forth a definition of antipassive. Our definition crucially concerns the case marking on the arguments and the antipassive morphology on the verb. We will then discuss in §9.3 a) whether the Tongan middle satisfies these criteria and b) whether the Tongan middle is an instance of the antipassive. We will argue that the Tongan middle is not an instance of the antipassive for the following reasons. First, morphologically, it is the transitive verb that is more complex, affixed by the transitive suffix *-i*. Thus, it is less likely that a middle verb is derived from an underlying transitive. Syntactically, restrictions imposed by the syntactic ergativity are overcome in Tongan by means of the resumptive pronoun strategy. Pragmatically, the Tongan middle differs from the antipassive in two respects. First, it is unmarked compared with the corresponding transitive in terms of text frequency. This suggests that the corresponding transitive rather than the middle is a derived construction, for a derived construction tends to be more marked in terms of text frequency. Second, while the antipassive is often related to an object with the new information focus, the middle object is not different from the transitive object in that respect. Finally, with regard to semantics, there is a significant difference between the middle and the transitive in that the action described by the latter is understood to be more intense or complete. Generally, such a semantic difference is not found between the antipassive and the underlying transitive.

¹ In fact, Chung (1978) argues against the possibility of the middle being antipassive.

Note that we will use the terms “subject” and “object” instead of S, A, and O to refer to the arguments of the middle construction. If we use the latter set of terminology, the middle subject is referred to as S. However, this label fails to distinguish the subject of a middle construction from that of an intransitive construction. Although these two arguments bear the same case (ABS), they are essentially different in that the former is not the sole argument of the verb. On the other hand, the object of a middle verb is an argument of the verb, yet it differs from O because it is not an internal argument of the verb, and thereby appears in OBL, not ABS. For this reason, we will refer to the ABS-marked argument of a middle construction as the middle subject, and the OBL-marked argument as the middle object. Note also that we cannot use terms such as “underlying A” and “underlying O” to refer to the arguments of a middle construction until we are sure that the middle is actually derived from the transitive. Meanwhile, we will continue to use S, A and O to refer to the intransitive subject, the transitive subject and the transitive object, respectively.

9.1 Middle verbs

9.1.1 Case marking

Tongan verbs are classified into three subgroups: transitive, intransitive and middle. A transitive verb takes two arguments: an external argument that is marked as ERG and an internal argument marked as ABS. An intransitive verb takes only one argument, which appears in ABS. A middle verb is associated with two arguments, but it assigns

only one theta-role.² The logical subject (i.e., agent/experiencer) appears in ABS and the logical object (i.e., patient/goal) appears in OBL. In this respect, the middle construction is intransitive. Compare three sentences in (9.1) below. (9.1a) is an example of the transitive construction. (9.1b) is that of the intransitive and (9.1c), the middle. The middle object appears as a PP headed by either *i* (“in”) or *ki* (“to”).

- (9.1) a. Na’e kai ‘e Sione ‘a e ika.
 Pst eat ERG Sione ABS def fish
 “Sione ate the fish.”
- b. Na’e ‘alu ‘a Sione.
 Pst sleep ABS Sione
 “Sione went.”
- 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.”

9.1.2 Syntactic characteristics

While the middle is similar to the intransitive in terms of case marking, it crucially involves two arguments. In addition, the form of the middle construction bears a striking resemblance to the accusative (i.e., transitive) construction of the Polynesian languages with accusative case marking such as Maori. For this reason, Lynch (1972) argues that the middle construction is the transitive construction in Tongan, and that (9.1a) represents the passive construction. However, this proposal is disputable for various reasons discussed in Chapter 8. We therefore consider that the ergative construction is transitive, while the middle is intransitive. The middle object differs

² The reader should be reminded that “theta-role” here refers specifically to the external/internal theta-role in the sense of Williams (1980), and not a particular thematic (semantic) role such as Agent, Patient, etc. A middle verb assigns a theta-role to the oblique argument in the latter sense, but not in the former sense.

from O (i.e., the ABS-marked NP of the ergative construction) although they both represent the logical object of the verb. For example, they behave differently with regard to relativisation: a resumptive pronoun is obligatory in the position vacated by the middle object whereas it is disallowed in the position from which O has moved out. See (9.2) below.

- (9.2) a. Ko fee ‘a e tamasi’_i [na’e taa’i ‘e he faiako *t_i*]
 Pred where ABS def boy Pst hit ERG def teacher
 “Where is the boy (whom) the teacher hit?”
- b. *Ko fee ‘a e tamasi’_i [na’e tokoni ‘e he faiako *t_i*]
 Pred where ABS def boy Pst help ERG def teacher
 “Where is the boy (whom) the teacher helped?”
- c. Ko fee ‘a e tamasi’_i [na’e tokoni ‘e he faiako ki ai_i]
 Pred where ABS def boy Pst help ERG def teacher to there
 Lit. “Where is the boy (whom) the teacher helped to him?”

Note also that the resumptive pronoun in (9.2c) is not a personal pronoun: *ai* is a demonstrative pronoun, translated in English as “there”. It is only used with a preposition, *ki* (“to”), *i* (“in”), or *mei* (“from”)³, and therefore, it cannot occur as O, as illustrated by (9.3) below.

- (9.3) Na’e ‘ave ia/*ai ‘e Sione.
 Pst take 3.s./there ERG Sione
 “Sione took him.”

(9.3) shows that a pronominal O must be realised as a personal pronoun, and not as the demonstrative *ai*.

It should be noted that in an independent clause, a personal pronoun may occur as a

³ As for the locative pronouns, there are four lexical items in Tongan: *heni* “here (close to the speaker)”, *hena* “there (close to the hearer)”, and *hee* “over there (away from both the speaker and the hearer)”. These three are *deictic*, while *ai* is not. *Ai* is used referentially: it refers to a place/location that has been mentioned in the discourse. Accordingly, *ai* can refer to not only a place but also a person while the other three can only refer to a place.

middle object. See (9.4) below.

- (9.4) ‘E tokoni ‘a Sione kiate koe.
 Fut help ABS Sione to-person 2.s.
 “Sione will help you.”

However, here again the middle object behaves differently from O: unlike O, the pronominal middle object cannot occur immediately after the verb. Compare the two sentences in (9.5) below.

- (9.5) a. ‘E ‘ave koe ‘e Sione.
 Fut take 2.s. ERG Sione
 “Sione will take you.”
- b. *‘E tokoni koe ‘a Sione.
 Fut help 2.s. ABS Sione
 “Sione will help you.”

Given the fact that the middle object is subject to some syntactic rules that are different from those which govern O, we may conclude that the former bears a grammatical relation distinct from that of the latter. Specifically, the middle object does not count as O. Consequently, the middle verb is intransitive, assigning only one theta-role, which we assume to be the external theta-role.⁴

9.1.3 Semantic characteristics

Middle verbs are often verbs of perception, emotion, etc.: e.g, *sio* (“to see”), *fanongo* (“to hear, listen”), *sai’ia* (“to like”), *’ofa* (“to love”), *fehia* (“to hate”), and *tokanga*

⁴ It should be noted that Chung (1978) proposes that the Tongan middle construction is transitive rather than intransitive, arguing that the middle subject has some syntactic properties similar to those of the transitive subject. Chung claims that while relativisation of the intransitive subject must leave a trace, both A and the middle subject may be relativised by either deletion (trace) or by pronominalisation (a resumptive pronoun). However, as Seiter (1980) points out, and Chung (1978) herself admits, this claim is rather dubious because the deletion strategy is by far more frequently used for the middle subject, while the pronominalisation strategy is much more frequently used for A. As far as my own research is concerned, the deletion strategy is never used for A, as shown in Chapter 5. Thus, we reject Chung’s view that the Tongan middle is transitive.

(“to pay attention”). An intriguing fact is that the middle verbs sometimes have a corresponding transitive verb. See (9.6) below. Note that the corresponding transitive verb necessarily contains the transitive suffix -*i*.

(9.6) a. Na’e tokoni ‘a Sione ki he faiako.
Pst help ABS Sione to def teacher
“Sione helped the teacher.”

b. Na’e tokoni’i ‘e Sione ‘a e faiako.
Pst help ERG Sione ABS def teacher
“Sione helped the teacher.”

Some other examples are *tokanga* (“to pay attention”) vs. *tokanga’i*, *’ofa* (“to love”) vs. *’ofa’i*, and *sio* (“to see”) vs. *sio’i*. In addition to case marking, there is a significant semantic difference between the middle and the corresponding transitive. The action described by the latter is interpreted as more intense in various ways. See the following examples.

(9.7) a. Na’e sio ‘a Sione ki he ta’ahine.
Pst see ABS Sione to def girl
“Sione saw the girl.”

b. Na’e sio’i ‘e Sione ‘a e ta’ahine.
Pst see-trans ERG Sione ABS def girl
“Sione stared at the girl.”

(9.8) a. ‘Oku ‘ofa ‘a Sione ‘ia Mele.
Pst love ABS Sione in-person Mele
“Sione loves Mele.”

b. ‘Oku ‘ofa’i ‘e Sione ‘a Mele.
Pst love-trans ERG Sione ABS Mele
“Sione loves Mele.”

Sio’i means not simply looking but staring. *’ofa’i* is only used to refer to a relationship between lovers, and not the one between a mother and a child. In other cases, transitive verbs often imply the consequence or achievement of the act. For example, *tokoni’i* (“to help”) implies that the act of helping actually proved to be beneficial to

the one being helped; *fana'i* (“to shoot”) implies that the bullet hits the target whereas the corresponding middle *fana* only means that the agent shoots at something but the bullet does not necessarily hit it. Thus, one may say that the difference between the middle construction and the transitive construction is that the latter implies that the action is more intense or complete.⁵

9.1.4 Similarity between the middle and the antipassive

Some of the characteristics mentioned above are similar to those of the antipassive. First, the case marking pattern is exactly what we find with the antipassive: the subject in ABS and the object in OBL. Secondly, just like an antipassive verb can be paired with a corresponding (or rather, underlying) transitive, some middle verbs have transitive counterparts. However, it is not clear at this point whether the middle is derived from the corresponding transitive. It should be noted also that crucially, not all middle verbs have a matching transitive verb, nor do all transitive verbs have a corresponding middle verb. These are the facts that suggest that the Tongan middle could be related to the antipassive. In the following section, we will consider the characteristics of the antipassive from various aspects.

⁵ As noted by Chung (1978) and Seiter (1978), in some cases, the object of a transitive verb is affected while that of a middle verb is not: e.g., *fana* (“to shoot at”) vs. *fana'i* (to shoot). In this view, the difference can be attributed to the transitive suffix *-i*. As discussed in Chapter 8, *-Cia* suffix in Tongan is associated with the feature [+affected]. If we regard the transitive suffix *-i* as a variant of *-Cia*, this kind of semantic difference between the middle and the transitive can be explained.

9.2 Antipassive

9.2.1 Syntactic property

It is generally assumed that an antipassive construction is derived from an underlying transitive construction.⁶ In terms of morphology, the antipassive construction differs from the corresponding transitive in the following respects: a) the verb is affixed by the antipassive morpheme, b) the underlying A appears in ABS, and c) the underlying O appears as an oblique argument. In the Relational Grammar, antipassive is regarded as demotion of the direct object (cf. Dixon 1994). It contrasts with passive, which involves demotion of the subject and promotion of the direct object. Thus, syntactically, a major function of antipassive is to change the underlying A into a surface S.

Ignoring the semantic aspect, a major role of antipassive is to overcome the restrictions imposed by syntactic ergativity. Recall that in syntactically ergative languages, some syntactic operations such as relativisation and coordination apply exclusively to ABS-arguments. For example, in Dyirbal, A cannot form a part of a coordinate construction. See (9.9) below.

⁶ Kalmár (1979), however, proposes that the antipassive is not a derived construction but another type of transitive construction, which is independent of the ergative transitive. In this view, the antipassive is regarded as an accusative construction with O bearing a special case.

(9.9) Dyirbal (Dixon 1994:162-163)

- a. $\text{Duma}_i \text{ yabu}_j\text{-}\eta\text{gu bura-n } e_{i/j}^* \text{ banaga-nyu.}$
 father mother-ERG see-NFut return-NFut
 “Mother saw father and (he) returned.”
- b. $\text{Duma}_i \text{ banaga-nyu } e_i \text{ bural-}\eta\text{a-nyu yabu-gu}$
 father return-NFut see-APASS-NFut mother-DAT
 “Father returned and (he) saw mother.”

As illustrated by (9.9a), only O can be coreferential with the gap. In order for A to be coreferential with S, a transitive clause has to be antipassivised first so that the underlying A appears as a surface S. Thus, in (9.9b), the underlying transitive construction *yabu* (*$\eta\text{uma-}\eta\text{gu}$*) *bura-n* “father saw mother” has been antipassivised so that the subject appears in ABS and the object in OBL. Here, the antipassive is a necessary feeding operation for coordination. In other words, antipassive is purely a syntactic device, causing no effect on semantics. In fact, Blake (1979) proposes that in Australian languages the antipassive construction is used primarily for this syntactic reason. Therefore, antipassive is not found in those languages that do not show syntactic ergativity such as Warlpiri (Hale 1968). The lack of antipassive in these languages seems to suggest that there is some relation between the antipassive and the syntactic ergativity.

9.2.2 Pragmatic property

Meanwhile, it is often argued that antipassive causes some special pragmatic effect as well. Specifically, the antipassive is used when the object is less topical (Kalmár 1979, Givón 1984, Dixon 1972 among others). “Topic” here means old information, which is either previously mentioned or assumed in the discourse. In Inuit, the antipassive construction is used when the direct object represents new information, while the

(ergative) transitive is used when the direct object represents old information (Kalmár 1979). Dixon (1972) argues that in Dyirbal the antipassive functions as de-topicalisation of the object. In Nez Perce, the direct object of the antipassive is indefinite, non-referential, or plural (Rude 1982), and less topical compared with the subject (Rude 1988). Cooreman (1982, 1983) observes similar facts about Chamorro: the antipassive object is less continuous and less important in discourse. Furthermore, the antipassive construction is obligatorily used with indefinite or generic objects (Cooreman 1988). Also in Mam, the antipassive is used when the direct object is not known or generic (England 1988).⁷

In short, it has been shown in the literature that the antipassive is used when the direct object is less topical in discourse. With regard to Australian languages, Blake (1979) also observes that the antipassive has a pragmatic function of indicating high topicality of A when it is used in independent clauses. It should be noted that Blake argues against the view that the antipassive is a device for facilitating the topicalisation of A rather than O. What is worth noting is Blake's observation that the antipassive is used for a syntactic reason in dependent clauses, but for a pragmatic reason in independent clauses.

9.2.3 Semantic property

With regard to semantics, Bittner and Hale (1996a) note that the antipassive causes some semantic effects as follows. In Inuit, the antipassive introduces the atelic aspect: the antipassive is interpreted as present or present progressive while the transitive is

⁷ In other words, this type of antipassive is essentially unergative.

interpreted as past. The antipassive also freezes the scope of the object. In Pitta-Pitta, the antipassive introduces the irrealis mood.⁸ Cooreman (1988) argues that the antipassive object is less directly affected by the event described by the verb.

On a different note, in Inuit, the antipassive morpheme may also attach to the so-called unaccusative verbs (Bittner and Hale 1996a). When antipassivised, an unaccusative verb is interpreted as inchoative. See (9.10) below.

(9.10) Inuit (Bittner and Hale 1996a:37)

- a. Miiqqat piqqip -p -u -t.
children healthy-IND-[-transitive]-3.pl.
“The children are healthy.”
- b. Miiqqat piqqis -si -pp -u -t.
children healthy-APASS-IND-[-transitive]-3.pl.
“The children are getting well.”

Here the antipassive is derived for a semantic reason rather than a syntactic one. Besides, the fact that an intransitive verb can be antipassivised raises a question to the analysis that regards antipassive as a syntactic operation that changes a transitive verb into an intransitive one. Antipassivisation of unaccusative verbs does not affect case marking: the internal argument appears in ABS regardless.⁹ Thus, an intransitive verb is antipassivised for a semantic reason.

9.2.4 Definition

To generalise, the antipassive is used under two circumstances. In one case, the

⁸ It should be noted, however, that Pitta-Pitta is an accusative language. Pitta-Pitta is an example of languages in which the antipassive coexists with an accusative case marking.

⁹ Bittner and Hale (1996a) argue that the antipassive morpheme may attach to verbs that have an internal argument, whether transitive or intransitive. Note also that in Inuit unaccusative verbs can also be passivised.

antipassive is used for a syntactic reason to overcome the restrictions of syntactic ergativity. In the other case, it is used for a pragmatic reason: it indicates that object is less topical, i.e., the object is new information. As Blake (1979) proposes, the antipassive is used for a syntactic reason in dependent clauses and for a semantic reason in independent clauses. Kalmár (1979: 124) notes with regard to the Eskimo languages that the transitive occurs more frequently than the antipassive, and that the antipassive is used mostly in the elicited translation of English sentences in which the direct object is indefinite. The former supports the view that the antipassive is a derived construction. The latter indicates that the antipassive is used with indefinite object. According to Kalmár's (1979) data, in Eskimo, an article does not accompany an argument. Therefore, subjects are understood as either definite or indefinite depending on the context. On the other hand, definiteness of the object can be specified by the type of the construction. In the unmarked construction, i.e., the ergative transitive, the direct object is interpreted as definite. In contrast, it is interpreted as indefinite in the antipassive construction. Kalmár's observation also suggests that the antipassive is rarely used in independent clauses. Thus, we shall consider that the major function of antipassive is syntactic: to change the underlying A into a surface S.

In summary, we consider that antipassive is essentially a syntactic concept and characterised by the following three structural features.

(9.11) Antipassive

- a) the antipassive morphology on the verb;
- b) the underlying A appears in ABS;
- c) the underlying O appears in OBL.

Analogous to the agent argument of the passive, the oblique argument is often optional in the antipassive (Dixon 1994). As noted above, this optional nature of the antipassive object is reflected in many languages as low topicality of the object. In other words, it is possible that pragmatic characteristics of the antipassive mentioned above result from this optional nature of the oblique argument. Thus, we propose that pragmatics is not a crucial factor that gives rise to antipassive. Rather, it is a consequence of the syntactic change induced by the process of antipassivisation. In the following section, we will consider the Tongan middle construction in terms of the definition (9.11).

9.3 Analysis of the Tongan middle

Bearing the definition (9.11) in mind, let us take a closer look at the Tongan middle. Our view is that the major function of antipassive is to satisfy some syntactic necessity. This assumption predicts that antipassive is mostly used in a dependent clause. On the other hand, we also recognise that when used in an independent clause, antipassive is associated with an object that represents the new information. Below, we will consider the Tongan middle with regard to these two aspects.

9.3.1 Principal criteria

9.3.1.1 Morphology

As defined in (9.11) above, an antipassive construction contains the following three morphological indicators: a) the antipassive morpheme, b) ABS-case marking on the

subject, and c) OBL-case marking on the object. The Tongan middle satisfies the latter two. The agent argument is marked by the ABS-case marker, 'a and the patient argument is preceded by a preposition. As for the antipassive morpheme, there is no particular morpheme that commonly appears on middle verbs in Tongan. Thus, if there is an antipassive morpheme, it has to be a zero morpheme, -Ø. This hypothesis, however, faces a challenge as follows. Comparing a middle verb and its corresponding transitive, it is always the corresponding transitive that is affixed by a particular morpheme. As illustrated in (9.12), transitive verbs corresponding to middle verbs commonly contain a suffix, -'i, which we regard as the transitive morpheme.

(9.12)	Middle	Transitive
	sio	sio 'i
	tokoni	tokoni 'i
	'ofa	'ofa 'i
	fanogo	fanogo 'i

The contrast between the two indicates that middle verbs are not the derived ones. Rather, it seems that these transitive verbs are derived from the corresponding middle verbs. Even if we assumed that a middle verb is derived from a stem (by affixing the antipassive morpheme -Ø), from which the corresponding transitive verb is also derived (by affixing the passive morpheme -'i), the argument that a middle verb is derived from a transitive verb does not hold.¹⁰ This fact strongly argues against the

¹⁰ There is another possible analysis. Namely, the antipassive is derived by removing the transitive morphology from the transitive construction. This is the case of Nez Perce (Rude 1988). Compare the transitive (i) with the (derived) antipassive (ii). Note that Nez Perce has a three-way case marking: S in NOM, A in ERG

(i) háama-nm péé'wiye wewúkiye-ne.
man-ERG 3ERG-shot elk -DO
"The man shot an elk."

(ii) háama hi'wiye wewúkiye.
man 3NOM-shot elk
"The man shot an elk."

However, there is a crucial difference between Nez Perce and Tongan. In Nez Perce, the morpheme that

hypothesis that the middle construction is antipassive.

9.3.1.2 Grammatical relations

The second condition of antipassive is demotion of the direct object to an oblique argument. Consequently, the middle object is expected to be unable to undergo those syntactic rules that apply exclusively to O. In Tongan, such rules include the resumptive pronoun rule and *pea* coordination. If these rules cannot apply to the middle object, it confirms that the argument in question bears a grammatical relation different from that of O.

First, consider the resumptive pronoun rule. As shown in Chapter 5, the resumptive pronoun rule requires a resumptive pronoun in a position from which A has been moved out by *wh*-movement. Thus, a resumptive pronoun cannot occur in a position from which O has moved by *wh*-movement. See (9.13) below.

(9.13) a. Ko e tamasi'i_i [na'e 'ave 'e Mele t_i ki he fale mahaki].
 Pred def boy Pst take ERG Mele to def house sick
 "This is the boy (whom) Mele took to the hospital."

b. *Ko e tamasi'i_i [na'e 'ave ia_i 'e Mele ki he fale mahaki].
 Pred def boy Pst take 3.s. ERG Mele to def house sick
 "This is the boy (whom) Mele took him to the hospital."

In contrast, a resumptive pronoun *ai* is obligatory in the position from which an oblique argument has been moved out by *wh*-movement. See (9.14) below.

marks transitivity of the verb is a subject clitic cross-referenced on the verb. Thus, in the antipassive (ii), the transitive marker (i.e., an ERG subject clitic) on the verb is not simply removed but replaced by a NOM subject clitic. The morphological difference is a consequence of de-transitivisation of the verb, rather than the cause. On the other hand, -'i in Tongan is a morpheme that derives a [+transitive] verb from a [-transitive] verb. Thus, the situation is different. Therefore, the hypothesis that the middle is derived by removing the transitive morphology from the transitive cannot hold.

- (9.14) a. *Ko e [teepile eni]_i [na'e hili 'e Sione 'a e tohi ('i) t_i].
 Pred def table this Pst put ERG Sione ABS def book in
 "This is the table (which) Sione put the book."
 b. Ko e [teepile eni]_i [na'e hili 'e Sione 'a e tohi ('i) ai_i].
 Pred def table this Pst put ERG Sione ABS def book in there
 "This is the table (which) Sione put the book in there."

Note that the resumptive pronoun occurring in this position is *ai*, and not the personal pronoun *ia*. In other words, oblique arguments are subject to a resumptive pronoun rule that is different from the one that governs O. The middle object is treated on a par with oblique arguments in terms of relativisation: the position from which the middle object has been moved out by *wh*-movement is required to have a resumptive pronoun *ai*, as illustrated by (9.15) below.

- (9.15) a. *Ko e tamasi'i_i [na'e tokoni 'e Mele (ki) t_i].
 Pred def boy Pst help ERG Mele to
 "This is the boy (whom) Mele helped."
 b. Ko e tamasi'i_i [na'e tokoni 'e Mele ki ai_i].
 Pred def boy Pst help ERG Mele to there

The contrast between (9.15) and (9.13) and the analogy between (9.15) and (9.14) demonstrate that relativisation of the middle object abides by the same rule that governs oblique arguments. Thus, as far as relativisation is concerned, the middle object is treated differently from O.

Another rule that applies to O but not to oblique arguments is *pea*-coordination. *Pea* allows coreference between S and O arguments, as illustrated by (9.16) below.

(9.16) a. Na'e 'alu 'a Hina_i pea taa'i 'e Mele *e_i*.
 Pst go ABS Hina and hit ERG Mele
 "Hina went and Mele hit (her)."

b. *Na'e taa'i 'e Mele_i 'a Hina_j pea 'alu *e_i*/_j*.
 Pst hit ERG Mele ABS Hina and go
 "Mele hit Hina and (Hina/*Mele) went."

In contrast, an oblique argument cannot occur either as a gap or an antecedent.

(9.17) a. *Na'e fiefia 'a Hina_i pea 'ave 'e Mele 'a e tohi ki *e_i*.
 Pst happy ABS Hina and take ERG Mele ABS def letter to
 "Hina was happy and Mele brought the letter to (her)."

b. *Na'e 'ave 'e Mele_i 'a e tohi kia Hina_j pea fiefia *e_i/_j*.
 Pst take ERG Mele ABS def letter to-person Hina and happy
 "Mele brought the letter to Hina and (*Hina/*Mele) was happy."

The middle object patterns with oblique arguments rather than O: it cannot participate in *pea*-coordination. See (9.18) below.

(9.18) a. *Na'e tangi 'a Mele pea tokoni 'a Hina *t_i*.
 Pst cry ABS Mele and help ABS
 "Mele cried and Hina helped (her)."

b. Na'e tokoni 'a Mele_i kia Hina_j pea tangi *t_i*/_j*.
 Pst help ABS Mele to-person Hina and cry
 "Mele helped Hina and (Mele/*Hina) cried."

(9.18a) shows that the middle object cannot occur as a gap that is coreferential with S of the preceding clause. (9.18b) shows that coreference is not allowed between the null argument in the second clause and the middle object of the first clause. In short, *pea*-coordination treats the middle object as distinct from O.

On the other hand, Chung (1978) proposes that middle object in Tongan bear the same grammatical relation as O, arguing that the rule of Quantifier Float (QF) applies to the former as well as the latter. QF in Tongan concerns the quantifier *kotoa* ("all"). *Kotoa* usually appears in the position immediately following the head noun it modifies, as

illustrated by (9.19) below.

- (9.19) Na'e manavahee 'a e kakai tangata kotoa.
Pst fear¹¹ ABS def people man all
"All the men were afraid."
(Chung 1978:189)

The QF rule moves *kotoa* to the position immediately following the predicate, deriving (9.20) below from (9.19).

- (9.20) Na'e manavahee kotoa 'a e kakai tangata.
Pst fear all ABS def people man
"The men were all afraid."
(Chung 1978:189)

QF also applies to O as illustrated by (9.21) below.

- (9.21) a. Na'a mau takai'i 'a e 'otu motu kotoa 'o e Pasifiki.
Pst 1.excl.pl. tour ABS def pl. island all of def Pacific
"We toured all the islands of the Pacific."
b. Na'a mau takai'i kotoa 'a e 'otu motu 'o e Pasifiki.
Pst 1.excl.pl. tour all ABS def pl. island of def Pacific
(Chung 1978:192)

Chung's data show that QF also applies to middle objects.

- (9.22) a. Na'a ku 'a'ahi kotoa ki he fanga tamaiki 'i falemahaki.
Pst 1.s. visit all to def pl. children in hospital
"I visited all the children in the hospital."
b. Na'a ku 'a'ahi ki he fanga tamaiki kotoa 'i falemahaki.
Pst 1.s. visit to def pl. children all in hospital
(Chung 1978: 192)

However, QF cannot apply to oblique arguments such as an indirect object. See (9.23) below.

- (9.23) a. ‘Oku mahino ki he tamaiki kotoa ‘a e lea faka-Siapani.
 Prs clear to def children all ABS def language Japanese
 “All the children understand Japanese.”
- b. *‘Oku mahino kotoa ki he tamaiki ‘a e lea faka-Siapani.
 Prs clear all to def children ABS def language Japanese
 “The children all understand Japanese.”
 (Chung 1978: 193-4)

(9.23b), in which *kotoa* appears immediately after the predicate, is considered ungrammatical. Based on these data, Chung proposes that the middle object should be regarded as equivalent to O rather than oblique arguments.

However, Chung’s argument is not as valid as is claimed, for QF is also permissible with the locative NP’s. See (9.24) below.

- (9.24) a. Na’a ku tangutu kotoa ‘i he sea ‘i he loki.
 Pst 1.s. sit all in def chair in def room
 “I sat on all the chair in the room.”
- b. Na’a ku tangutu ‘i he sea kotoa ‘i he loki.
 Pst 1.s. sit in def chair all in def room
 (Chung 1978:193)

In (9.24a), QF has applied to an oblique argument, *he sea*. Here QF does not differentiate O from oblique NP’s. Thus, sentences like (9.22a) do not necessarily argue for Chung’s proposal that in terms of grammatical relations, middle objects are equivalent to O and different from oblique arguments. On the contrary, with regard to QF, middle objects and oblique arguments behave similarly. Consider (9.25) below. in (9.25) both the subject and the object are plural. Thus, theoretically, *kotoa* could modify either the subject or the object. However, *kotoa* occurring immediately after the predicate is necessarily taken as modifying the subject.

¹¹ In Chung’s original data it is glossed as “leave”. This appears to be a mistake.

- (9.25) a. Na'e tokoni kotoa 'a e tamaiki ako ki he kau faiako.
 Pst help all ABS def children school to def pl. teacher
 "The students all helped the teachers."
 *"The students helped all the teachers."
- b. Na'e tokoni 'a e tamaiki ako ki he kau faiako kotoa.
 Pst help ABS def children school to def pl. teacher all
 *"The students all helped the teachers."
 "The students helped all the teachers."

The same effect is obtained with oblique NP's such as locative. See (9.26) below.

- (9.26) a. Na'e tangutu kotoa 'a e tamaiki 'i he sea 'i he loki.
 Pst sit all ABS def children in def chair in def room
 "The children all sat on the chair in the room."
 *"The children sat on all the chair in the room."
- b. Na'e tangutu 'a e tamaiki 'i he sea kotoa 'i he loki.
 Pst sit ABS def children in def chair all in def room
 "The children sat on all the chair in the room."
 *"The children all sat on the chair in the room."

In contrast, in a transitive construction, the floating quantifier *kotoa* may modify either the subject (A) or the direct object (O). Hence (9.27a) is ambiguous, while (9.27b) is unambiguous.

- (9.27) a. Na'e kai kotoa 'e he tamaiki 'a e fanga ika.
 Pst eat all ERG def children ABS def pl. fish
 "The children all ate the fish."
 "The children ate all the fish."
- b. Na'e kai 'e he tamaiki 'a e fanga ika kotoa.
 Pst eat ERG def children ABS def pl. fish all
 *"The children all ate the fish."
 "The children ate all the fish."

These examples demonstrate that QF may apply to middle objects as well as oblique arguments if the subject is singular in number, while it can freely apply to O without such a restriction. In other words, contrary to Chung's claim, middle objects are treated in a way similar to how oblique NP's are treated. To summarise, the above data suggest that the middle object bears a grammatical relation that is distinct from

that of O.

The third condition to be taken into consideration is that antipassivisation changes A into S. The middle subject is S, while the subject of a transitive verb is A. This difference can be illustrated by the following three diagnostics: relativisation, *pea*-coordination, and *lava*-construction. In Tongan, these syntactic operations distinguish S from A. The middle subject behaves in a manner similar to S, and not A, with regard to all of the above syntactic rules. For example, take the resumptive pronoun rule. As shown by (9.28) below, a resumptive pronoun cannot occur in a position from which the middle subject has moved out, indicating that the middle subject is S.¹²

- (9.28) a. Ko e tamasi'i_i [na'e tokoni t_i ki he faiako].
 Pred def boy Pst help to def teacher
 "This is the boy (who) helped the teacher."
 b. *Ko e tamasi'i_i [na'a ne_i tokoni ki he faiako].
 Pred def boy Pst 3.s. help to def teacher
 "This is the boy (who) he helped the teacher."

Another diagnostic is *pea*-coordination. As mentioned earlier, only ABS-argument (i.e., S and O) can participate in *pea*-coordination. Thus,

- (9.29) * Na'e ha'u 'a Mele_i pea taa'i e_i 'a Hina.
 Pst come ABS Mele and hit ABS Hina
 "Mele came and hit Hina."

The middle subject, on the other hand, can be part of *pea*-coordination, as illustrated by (9.30) below.

¹²It should be mentioned, however, Chung (1978: 225) argues that the middle subject is equivalent to A rather than to S because both the middle subject and A may be relativised either by pronominalisation or by deletion. According to Chung, (9.28b) is as grammatical as (9.28a). However, as Seiter (1980) points out and Chung herself admits, relativisation of A most of the time requires a resumptive pronoun, while that of the middle subject hardly does. In fact, according to my informants, a resumptive pronoun is obligatory for A. My informants do not allow a relative clause that contains a trace as A. Relative clauses containing a resumptive pronoun as the middle subject are also ruled out.

- (9.30) Na'e ha'u 'a Mele_i pea tokoni e_i ki he faiako.
 Pst come ABS Mele and help to def teacher
 "Mele came and helped the teacher."

The contrast between (9.29) and (9.30) demonstrates that the middle subject is similar to S. Finally, with regard to *lava*-construction, the middle subject is treated in the same fashion as S rather than A. The verb *lava* ("to be able") exhibits a peculiar property: when used with a conjunction 'o, the case of the subject of *lava* is determined by the transitivity of the verb following 'o. See (9.31) below. If the second verb is intransitive, the subject of *lava* is marked by the ABS-case marker. In contrast, it is marked by the ERG-case marker if the second verb is transitive.

- (9.31) a. 'Oku lava 'a/*'e Sione 'o ha'u.
 Prs be-able ABS/ERG Sione and come
 "Sione can come."
 b. 'Oku lava *'a/'e Sione 'o langa 'a e fale.
 Prs be-able ABS/ERG Sione and build ABS def house
 "Sione can build a house."

When the second verb is a middle verb, it is the ABS-case marker that precedes the subject of *lava*. Sentences like (9.32) below suggest that the middle subject is equivalent to S, and not A.

- (9.32) 'Oku lava 'a/*'e Sione 'o tokoni ki he faiako.
 Prs be-able ABS/ERG Sione and help to def teacher
 "Sione can help the teacher."

The above tests have shown a) that the middle subject is S and b) that the middle object is an oblique argument. If we assume that a middle construction is derived from a transitive construction, these facts can be understood to demonstrate the changes resulting from antipassivisation: A into S, and O into an oblique arguments. If that is the case, the Tongan middle satisfies two of the criteria of antipassive as given in

(9.11). However, it would be premature to conclude from these results that the Tongan middle is analogous to what is called antipassive in other languages. For one thing, as mentioned earlier in this chapter, morphological evidence argues against the antipassive analysis: it is not likely that a middle verb is derived from a transitive verb. Rather, it seems that the transitive verb is derived from a middle verb by affixing *-i*. This morphological fact argues against the antipassive analysis of the Tongan middle. Secondly, granted that the middle is an instance of the antipassive (with a zero morpheme attached), we are yet to clarify whether the Tongan middle has the characteristics that are usually associated with antipassive. As mentioned above, we assume that antipassive arises when there is some syntactic necessity: specifically, when ERG-arguments cannot undergo certain syntactic operation such as relativisation and coordination due to syntactic ergativity. In such cases, it is necessary for A to be changed into S in order to undergo a relevant syntactic operation. As discussed in Chapter 5, Tongan also shows syntactic ergativity. In the following two subsections, we will discuss whether the middle construction plays a crucial role in dealing with the constraints of syntactic ergativity. We will also consider whether the Tongan middle is associated with a particular pragmatic effect that is characteristic of the antipassive: to introduce indefinite or generic objects.

9.3.2 Syntactic motivation

Antipassive usually exists in languages that show syntactic ergativity. Take Australian languages: antipassive constructions are found in syntactically ergative languages such as Dyirbal and Yidin^y, but not in Warlpiri, which does not show syntactic ergativity. In Mam, antipassive is obligatory in focus, negative, interrogative and relative clauses

(England 1988). In these cases, the antipassive has a significant syntactic function. Tongan also shows syntactic ergativity with regard to relativisation and coordination. However, the solution is not antipassive. ERG-arguments (A) may undergo relativisation as well as coordination without the structure being antipassivised. For example, consider (9.33) below.

(9.33) a. *Ko e siana_i [na'e langa t_i 'a e fale].
 Pred def man Pst build ABS def house
 "This is the man (who) build the house."

b. Ko e siana_i [na'a ne_i langa 'a e fale].
 Pred def man Pst 3.s. build ABS def house
 "This is the man (who) he build the house."

Relativisation of A in the ordinary manner results in ungrammaticality, as illustrated by (9.33a). However, Tongan has a resumptive pronoun rule that applies to relativisation of A. As long as the relative clause contains a resumptive pronoun, the construction is grammatical, as illustrated by (9.33b). Moreover, as mentioned above, not all transitive verbs have a corresponding middle verb: for example, *langa* ("to build") does not have an equivalent middle verb. Consequently, the resumptive pronoun strategy is used as a solution for the restriction imposed by syntactic ergativity.

How about the verbs that do have a corresponding middle verb? Consider (9.34) below.

(9.34) a. Na'e tokoni'i 'e he siana 'a Sione.
 Pst help-trans ERG def man ABS Sione
 "The man helped Sione."

(9.34) b. Ko e siana_i [na'e tokoni t_i kia Sione].
 Pred def man Pst help to-person Sione
 "It is the man (who) helped Sione."

c. Ko e siana_i [na'a ne_i tokoni'i 'a Sione].
 Pred def man Pst 3.s. help-trans ABS Sione
 "It is the man (who) he helped Sione."

(9.34a) is a transitive construction. Hypothetically, there are two ways of relativising A of this construction. One is to use the antipassive construction, changing A into S. The derived S may undergo the standard process of relativisation, yielding (9.34b). The other way is to use the resumptive pronoun strategy. This will derive (9.34c). Both (9.34b) and (9.34c) are grammatical as an independent clause. However, it is only (9.34c) that is considered to be derived from (9.34a). It is important to note that (9.34b) and (9.34c) carry different meanings. The latter implies an additional meaning: the man not only acted with an intention to help *Sione*, but his action proved to be helpful to *Sione*. In contrast, (9.34b) only means that the man acted with an intention to help *Sione*, but does not imply the consequence of his act. Thus, it is incorrect to assume that (9.34b) is derived from (9.34a). Rather, (9.34b) is derived from a middle construction by relativising S. The fact that application of antipassivisation before relativisation results in some semantic change argues against the antipassive analysis of the middle.¹³ For the purpose of overcoming the restrictions of syntactic ergativity, Tongan relies on the resumptive pronoun strategy. Furthermore, it should be noted that the middle is used much more frequently in an independent clause than in a dependent clause. This fact also denies the hypothesis that the major function of the middle construction is to overcome the restrictions imposed by the syntactic ergativity.

9.3.3 Pragmatic consideration

In many languages antipassive is associated with a certain pragmatic effect. Givón (1984) generalises that antipassive is used when the degree of referentiality, topicality, or discourse importance of the object is low. For example, in Inuktitut, the antipassive object is interpreted as indefinite while that of a transitive construction is interpreted as definite (Kalmár 1980). In Nez Perce, the antipassive object is typically indefinite, non-referential or plural (Rude 1982). Similarly, in Chamorro, the antipassive is obligatory when the object is indefinite or generic (Cooreman 1988). In summary, antipassive is used to introduce the object that is the new information, often indefinite or generic.

However, as Blake (1979) points out, this property of antipassive is more prominent when antipassive is used in independent clauses. In dependent clauses, antipassive is used primarily for the syntactic reason described above. Kalmár (1979) makes a similar observation regarding Eskimo. He notes that the antipassive construction is principally used in elicited translation of English sentences, but that the ergative transitive construction is by far more frequently used in discourse. Kalmár (1979) thus proposes that what is called antipassive in Eskimo is another type of transitive construction: it is used when the direct object is new information, and it is not derived from the transitive construction. This proposal, however, is dubious because antipassive verbs agree only with the subject, showing the intransitive pattern. It is more sensible to regard the construction as intransitive rather than transitive. Eskimo does not have any morphological device such as articles to mark arguments for

¹³ Chung (1978) rejects the antipassive analysis based on a similar observation.

definiteness; thus, subject NP's, whether S or A, can be interpreted as either definite or indefinite. It is probable that the difference in definiteness between the transitive object and the antipassive object is marginal. However, when asked to distinguish a pair of sentences, one with a definite object and the other with an indefinite object, Eskimo speakers make much of this slight difference.¹⁴ Kalmár's observation that the antipassive is rarely used in discourse suggests that under the normal circumstance definiteness of arguments is a trivial issue. Nevertheless, in a rare occasion where one is required to specify that the object is indefinite, the antipassive is used.

Does the Tongan middle have a similar pragmatic effect? Empirical evidence suggests that what determines whether the middle or the transitive is used in a certain context is lexical semantics rather than pragmatics. As discussed above (§9.1.3), a middle verb differs from the corresponding transitive in that the latter implies intensity or consequence of the event described. However, with regard to the topicality and referentiality of the object, the middle does not differ from the transitive. Take definiteness of the object, for example. Tongan is similar to Eskimo in that definiteness of arguments is not marked in morphology. Although Tongan has both definite and indefinite articles, the definite articles do not necessarily indicate that the argument is [+definite]. In Tongan, the definite article is the unmarked option and can be interpreted as either definite or indefinite. Definiteness is indicated by the

¹⁴ Eskimo languages (e.g., Inuit and Inuktitut) also have passive constructions. As passive is said to be used when the old information is the patient argument rather than the agent argument, it would be interesting to see whether the passive-transitive difference is used to specify definiteness of the subject in a similar manner. However, we will leave this question open to future research.

definitive accent, which is placed on the final syllable of the NP.¹⁵ Thus, in (9.35a) the object can be understood as either definite or indefinite without the definitive accent. When it is necessary to indicate that an argument is indefinite, the indefinite article *ha* is used. However, it should be noted that the indefinite article is used to mean “some, any” rather than the existential “a”, and that its usage is limited to interrogative and negative constructions. Thus, (9.35b) is considered odd.

(9.35) 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 (9.36) below.

(9.36) 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.”

In any case, the middle plays no role in marking definiteness of an argument. As for emphasis, when the emphasis is on the direct object, VOS construction is used instead of the regular VSO (cf. Chapter 8).

¹⁵ To be accurate, the accent is on the final syllable of the final constituent that modifies the argument. Thus, if it is a NP, the accent is on the final syllable of the noun. If the noun is followed by an AP, then the accent will be on the final syllable of the adjective. If a relative clause follows the noun, the accent is on the final syllable of the final constituent of the relative clause. See below.

- (i) e ta'ahine talavou
 def girl pretty
 “the pretty girl”
 (ii) e ta'ahine na'e 'alu ki Fisi
 def girl Pst go to Fiji
 “the girl who went to Fiji”

- (9.37) a. Na'e 'ave 'e Sione 'a Mele ki he falemahaki.
Pst take ERG Sione ABS Mele to def hospital
“Sione took Mele to the hospital.”
- b. Na'e 'ave 'a Mele 'e Sione ki he falemahaki.
Pst take ABS Mele ERG Sione to def hospital
“Mele was taken to the hospital.”

There is also *ko*-cleft, which is used to put an emphasis on an argument, whether it is a subject, an object or an oblique argument. See (9.38) below.

- (9.38) a. Ko Sione_i na'e tokoni *t*_i ki he faiako.
Pred Sione Pst help to def teacher
“It is Sione who helped the teacher.”
- b. Ko e faiako_i na'e tokoni 'a Sione ki ai_i.
Pred def teacher Pst help ABS Sione to there
“It is the teacher whom Sione helped.”

To conclude, the use of the middle in Tongan is not related to any pragmatic factors.

9.4 Summary

In this chapter, we discussed the question of whether the antipassive exists in Tongan. We started by confirming the three facts: a) Tongan is a syntactically ergative language; b) the antipassive often exists in syntactically ergative languages; and c) Tongan has a construction called middle, whose structure resembles that of the antipassive. First we put forth a definition of the antipassive as follows. In an antipassive construction, a) an antipassive morpheme is affixed to the verb, b) the underlying A appears as S marked in ABS, and c) the underlying O appears as an oblique argument. The Tongan middle satisfies the latter two. As for the antipassive morpheme, middle verbs in Tongan do not have any morpheme in common that can be

regarded as the antipassive morpheme. Although one may argue that the antipassive morpheme in Tongan is a zero morpheme, we rejected this hypothesis because the corresponding transitive verb is morphologically more complex than the middle, suggesting that the transitive is the derived one, not the middle.

In addition, we also noted some problems that argue against the antipassive analysis of the Tongan middle. First, and most importantly, not all transitive verbs have a corresponding middle verb. In other words, the process deriving a middle construction from a transitive construction is not productive. Secondly, we have observed that the Tongan middle does not have the characteristics that are generally associated with antipassive. Generally, the antipassive is used in a language that exhibits syntactic ergativity to enable ERG-arguments to undergo certain syntactic operations such as relativisation and coordination. In such cases, the antipassive does not differ in any sense from the transitive in meaning. The relation is similar to the one between the passive and the transitive. If any, the difference is pragmatic: the antipassive object is often said to represent the new information.

Our conclusion is that the middle construction shows neither of these effects. With regard to syntactic ergativity, Tongan uses the resumptive pronoun strategy to overcome the restriction. Therefore, it is not necessary to change the transitive into the middle in order for A to undergo relativisation or coordination. On the contrary, changing the construction type will yield a sentence of a different meaning. A transitive verb corresponding to a middle verb often carries some additional meaning: the action described is understood to be more intense or complete. Our data show that

the middle differs from the transitive not only syntactically, but also semantically. This fact also argues against the view which regards the Tongan middle as an antipassive. With regard to the pragmatic aspect, the middle is not different from the transitive in terms of topicality of the (direct) object. The middle object is not necessarily the new information, indefinite or generic. In brief, the difference between the middle and the transitive is neither syntactic nor pragmatic, but purely semantic. This argues against the hypothesis that the middle is on a par with the antipassive.

To conclude, we have shown that the Tongan middle is not an instance of antipassive for the reasons mentioned above. In many cases a middle verb does not have a corresponding transitive. This makes it unlikely that the middle is derived from the transitive. Even if we assumed that it were, the process is far from productive. Therefore, we conclude that the Tongan middle cannot be regarded as equivalent to the antipassive. Our observation reveals that neither passive nor antipassive exists in Tongan. We have shown that syntactic ergativity and antipassive do not necessarily coexist. This suggests that antipassive is not the only solution that ergative languages take in order to overcome the restrictions imposed by syntactic ergativity.