

## AN OUTLINE OF TOKELAU GRAMMAR

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## NOTE

The aim of this outline grammar is to provide a clear, non-technical description of Tokelauan which will be useful to a wide range of readers. Because it is impossible to avoid all technical terms when dealing with a subject as complex as language, the general reader may find some parts of the description difficult. On the other hand, readers with linguistic training will often find the treatment oversimplified. However, it is hoped that the resulting compromise will be a useful source of information about Tokelauan until the time when more detailed studies of the language are written.

## 1. PRONUNCIATION

### 1.1 THE SOUNDS OF TOKELAUAN

There are fifteen **phonemes**, or distinctive sounds, in Tokelauan, ten consonants and five vowels. Each phoneme is represented in the orthography by a different letter of the alphabet. The vowels can be either long or short. Long vowels are indicated by a macron over the letter symbol, as in *pā*, *pakū* or *mālō*. This difference in vowel length is distinctive, that is, it makes a difference to meaning, for example *hihi* 'hoist', *hīhī* 'fish with a line'.

In addition to vowels which are always long, as in the words noted above, some normally

short vowels can be lengthened owing to speech rhythms or for expressive reasons. For example, the possessive prepositions *o* and *a* tend to be lengthened in some environments. This sort of non-distinctive variation in length is not indicated in the Dictionary.

The Tokelauan alphabet is given below in the order in which it is written:

a e i o u f g k l m n p h t v

Three of the consonant symbols — *g*, *f* and *h* — represent sounds which are pronounced differently from the sounds represented by those letters in English.

/g/ — This letter represents a velar nasal, the /ŋ/ sound of English, as in English *sing*, *sang*, *ringing*. (The sound of English /g/, as in the initial and final sounds of the word *gag*, does not occur in Tokelauan.)

/f/ — Tokelauan /f/ is a voiceless labio-glottal fricative. It is pronounced with the lips in the position employed for /w/ in English. The /f/ sound produced in this way is accompanied by an h-quality caused by simultaneous narrowing of the vocal cords. This h-quality is more noticeable in front of the back vowels /a/, /o/ and /u/.

/h/ — Tokelauan /h/ is a glottal fricative, and before the vowels /i/ and /e/ it sounds the same as English /h/. Before the back vowels /a/, /o/ and /u/ it is palatalised, caused by the raising of the tongue towards the hard palate, giving a sound which can be represented as *h<sup>y</sup>*. The Tokelauan word written *huke* should be pronounced *h<sup>y</sup>uke*.

## 1.2 WORD STRESS

The majority of Tokelauan words consist of one, two or three syllables. Most words of more than three syllables are compounds or reduplicated forms.

Stress is a complicated matter, and has not been systematically studied as yet. The following rules will give the right stress for most Tokelauan words.

- (i) If there is a long vowel, it receives the main stress: *pā*, *pakū*, *māhina*, *fānau*.
- (ii) Otherwise, the penultimate vowel is stressed: *mānu*, *manātu*, *tiute*, *tioa*, *huiga*, *fofou*, *tekau*, *fekēi*, *fifio*.
- (iii) In compound words and cases of full reduplication (see 2.4 and 2.5) both parts of the compound keep their normal stress. It is thus necessary to understand the composition of a compound word in order to stress it correctly: *kiatotāma*, *kiātomatua*, *pekapeka*, *fākamanātu*.

## 2. WORDS

### 2.1 LEXICAL WORDS AND GRAMMATICAL WORDS

Like the words of all other languages, Tokelauan words can be divided into two main groups. The first of these is composed of **lexical** or content words, words which have “real” meanings like ‘house’, ‘fish’, ‘run’ or ‘clean’. Words in this group are divided into classes which are described as **open classes**; that is, new words can be added to them when the language requires it.

The second main group is composed of **grammatical** words or particles, which are used to combine lexical words into phrases and sentences, but which are not used on their own. Grammatical words are divided into **closed classes**; it is very unusual for new elements of this sort to be added to a language. They include articles (*te*, *he*), prepositions (*ki*, *i*), conjunctions (*oi*, *kae*),

tense-aspect particles (*na*, *nae*) and a number of other types of particles that modify nouns and verbs. Most of this *Outline of Tokelau Grammar* is devoted to explaining the use of grammatical words. In this section, however, we are concerned with lexical words.

## 2.2 CLASSES OF LEXICAL WORDS

Five classes of lexical words (also sometimes called lexemes or bases) are defined according to their ability to combine with certain grammatical words to form phrases, as follows:

- (i) A word that occurs directly after an article or possessive pronoun to form a noun phrase is a **noun**. Some words are only used in this way: *he loi* 'an ant', *tona vaka* 'his canoe', *te malau* 'the soldierfish'.
- (ii) When a word occurs directly after a verbal particle expressing tense or aspect, such as *kā* 'future' or *koi* 'present continuous', it is a **verb**: *kā fano* 'will go', *koi ola* 'is still alive', *kua tauale* 'has become ill'. A few Tokelauan words are rarely used any way except verbally, for example *galo* 'be lost, disappear'.
- (iii) Many words can occur in both positions (i) and (ii); that is, they can function both as nouns and verbs. In some grammars of Polynesian languages these words are called **universals**. They form the most numerous class of words.
- (iv) A word which occurs directly following the prepositions *i*, *ki* or *mai*, without an intervening article, is a **locative noun**. These words constitute an important class, and include place names and words indicating position in relation to some other thing: *luga* 'above', *lalo* 'beneath', *loto* 'inside'; or geographical position: *uta* 'islets on far side of lagoon', *haute* 'south'.
- (v) Finally, there is a small class of **adverbial** words, mainly temporal adverbs, which are not preceded by any of the particles mentioned above: *ananafi* 'yesterday', *āpō* 'tonight', *ātaeao* 'tomorrow morning'.

Note that many ideas that are expressed by adverbs in English are expressed by verbs in Tokelauan, such as *ui* 'although' and *manū* 'nearly'. Other words are more difficult to classify. *Kamea* and *namea* 'almost, nearly' and *ailoga* 'doubtful' always occur sentence initially, like verbs, but are never preceded by a verbal particle, and consequently have been classified as adverbs.

In the Dictionary, the entries for **universals** contain separate glosses and examples under the headings n(oun) and v(erb), showing how the word is used as a member of these classes. Because of their meanings, some universals are intuitively felt to be basically nouns, with a secondary verbal use (*māhaga* 'twins', *papa* 'rock'), whereas others are felt to be basically verbs (*miha* 'quarrel', *manava* 'breathe').

Universals and nouns can also be used as **qualifying** or attributive words, directly following a noun or verb. Any noun or verb may be qualified (that is, its meaning may be further defined) by another noun or verb immediately following it: *he tino lelei* 'a good man', *kai lelei* 'eat well', *tane vai* 'water tank'. Many Dictionary entries contain separate examples under the heading qual(ifier), either because the word has a slightly specialised meaning when used in this way, or because the expressions involving qualifiers are important or frequently used ones in the language, for example *fale koloa* (literally building-goods) 'shop', *tala kave* (literally story-carried) 'rumour'.

Numerals are a sub-class of verbs and usually occur after the verbal particle *e*: *e tolu aku ika* 'I have three fish'. They are not used as qualifiers. One can say *na maua nā ika e tolu* 'fish were caught which were three, they caught three fish', but not \**na maua nā ika tolu*. However, in certain constructions numerals can be used nominally: *kua lava te lima* 'five are enough', *kua teka*



*te fā* 'it is past four o'clock', *valu te limagafua popo* 'grate five coconuts'.

### 2.3 PHRASES

The sentences of spoken or written Tokelauan are analysed as sequences of **phrases**. A phrase is a natural speech unit after which speakers may pause, whereas it is unnatural for speakers to pause within a phrase. Phrases are of two kinds, **nominal** or **noun phrases** (e.g., *i te vaka lahi* 'in the big canoe') and **verbal** or **verb phrases** (e.g., *kā fano nei* 'will go now').

Every noun phrase or verb phrase in Tokelauan must contain a lexical word, or combination of lexical words, which is known as the **nucleus** of the phrase. This is preceded and/or followed by one or more grammatical words. It should be clear from the definitions of word classes given above that noun phrases and verb phrases are distinguished by the kinds of grammatical words that can occur in them. A noun phrase contains an article or possessive pronoun, and may contain a preposition. A verb phrase contains a tense-aspect particle and/or various post-verbal particles. Under certain circumstances a verb can occur alone, without any grammatical words, for example if it is a command (see 5.4).

It is worth pointing out at this stage that the independent personal pronouns (see 4.1) occupy an intermediate position between lexical and grammatical words. They are a closed class, but like nouns they can function as the nucleus of a noun phrase.

### 2.4 WORD FORMATION

New complex words can be formed from lexical base words in two main ways. One is by means of **affixes**. These are grammatical particles which attach themselves to bases as **prefixes** (such as *faka-*, *fe-*) or **suffixes** (such as *-ga*, *-tia*) to form words with different but related meanings, and sometimes different grammatical uses. The common process called **reduplication** can also be considered a type of affix.

The other main means of word formation is by **compounding**, that is, putting two lexical words together to form a new word: *kofu* 'garment' + *vae* 'leg' = *kofuvae* 'trousers'. Compounding is very common, and includes the use of certain words which form a great many compounds and which have a slightly different form when used in this way: from *mata* 'eye' we get *matā-*, which forms compounds meaning 'base or point of s.th.'; from *vā* 'space between two things' we get *vāi-*, which forms compounds referring to particular kinds of space, for example *vāifale* 'space between two houses'.

#### 2.4.1. Productivity

Word formation processes differ according to whether they are **productive** or **non-productive**. A productive process is one which is used freely by speakers to produce new words. Compounding is in this category, and so is the use of the causative prefix *faka-*. A non-productive process is limited to a few words of the class to which this applies, and one can only know these items by learning them. Such words are listed in the Dictionary.

With regard to productive word-formation processes, the following policy has been followed in the Dictionary:

Compounds: Many compound words are included in the Dictionary especially if they are in common use and denote things, activities or concepts that are important in Tokelau life: *logotonu* 'refreshing', *āmiovalea* 'foolishness', *lomituhi* 'typewriter'.

*faka-*: This prefix can be attached to virtually any intransitive verb (see below, 5.8.1). In many cases its meaning is absolutely predictable, for example *kukula* 'red' gives *fakakukula* 'cause to become red'. Such words are not listed in the Dictionary. However in some cases, the

word prefixed with *faka-* has a specialised meaning which cannot be predicted from our knowledge of the meaning of the base word and the meaning of the prefix: *fiti* 'bounce, jump', *fakafiti* 'deny'. Such words are included in the Dictionary. When a word has both a predictable and an unpredictable meaning, the Dictionary entry gives first the predictable meaning and then the unpredictable one, see for example, *fakamāfanafana*.

The verbal prefixes *faka-*, *ma-* or *mā*, *fe-* and *ta-*, and the suffixes *-aki* and *-fia*, *-lia*, *-tia* etc., are discussed in the section on the verb phrase. The noun-forming suffix *-ga* is discussed in the section on Nominalisation. In the remainder of this section we discuss the very productive process of reduplication.

## 2.5 REDUPLICATION

In partial reduplication, the second to last syllable of the base word is repeated: *nofo*, *nonofo*; *galue*, *gālulue*.

In full reduplication, two syllables of the base are repeated: *ilo*, *iloilo*; *kata*, *katakata*.

When a word has more than two syllables, it is usually the case that historically the extra syllable or syllables were an affix. This part of the word is not reduplicated: *havili*, *hāvilivili*; *poloaki*, *polopoloaki*.

Vowel lengthening in the first syllable of a word is often associated with reduplication, as in *hāvilivili* and *gālulue* above.

A number of different meanings are associated with both kinds of reduplication. Partial reduplication forms the plurals of intransitive verbs: *nofo* (sing.) *nonofo* (plural) 'sit'; *tele* (sing.) *tetele* (plural) 'sail'; *kai* (sing.) *kakai* (plural) 'eat'. Sometimes, however, with transitive verbs, it is the singular form which is reduplicated: *kokoto* 'bite (one thing)', *koto* or *takoto* 'bite (several things)'; *hehele* 'cut (one thing)', *hele* or *tahele* 'cut (several things)' (see 5.8.3).

Other meanings commonly associated with reduplication are frequent or repeated action, continuous prolonged action, more forceful and intense, or less forceful and intense action. When complete reduplication applies to nouns, the reduplicated form will usually refer to something smaller: *holo* 'towel', *holoholo* 'handkerchief'.

Some characteristic examples of reduplication are given below.

<i>fiti</i> 'jump'	<i>fifiti</i> 'be active'
<i>tili</i> 'do s.th. urgent'	<i>titili</i> 'spend all one's time on s.th. urgent'
<i>halu</i> 'sweep'	<i>hahalu</i> 'sweep forcefully, in one movement'
	<i>haluhalu</i> 'sweep slowly and gently'
<i>lotu</i> 'bloom'	<i>fofotu</i> 'bloom in abundance'
<i>alo</i> 'paddle'	<i>aloalo</i> 'paddle continuously'
<i>kalapu</i> 'gleam'	<i>kalapulapu</i> 'glitter, twinkle'
<i>logo</i> 'tell, inform'	<i>logologo</i> 'tell everyone, one by one'
<i>tafu</i> 'build a fire'	<i>tafutafu</i> 'add fuel a little at a time'
<i>gako</i> 'animal fat'	<i>gagako</i> 'be fatty'

## 2.6 HOMONYMY AND POLYSEMY

Two words which have the same form (that is, the same sound and written spelling) but different and unrelated meanings are known as **homonyms**. An example of **homonymy** is provided by the two distinct words *kafa*. One denotes a species of fish, the Diamond-scaled mullet, and the other denotes sennit, the plaited cord made from the fibre of coconut husks. All Polynesian languages contain a great many homonyms. In this Dictionary it has been the practice to list homonyms as separate entries (for example, *kafa*<sup>1</sup> and *kafa*<sup>2</sup>).

A word which has a number of different meanings which are all felt by speakers to be related to some basic central meaning, is said to be **polysemous**. Different senses of a polysemous word are numbered and listed under the one entry.

However, it must be emphasised that it is often very difficult to decide in particular cases whether one is dealing with **homonymy** or **polysemy**. Sometimes words which historically were different senses of one polysemous word have diverged so far in meaning that speakers no longer feel them to be related. In other cases different speakers make different judgments. We are aware that there are many cases in the Dictionary where some readers will feel that the wrong decision has been made. Sometimes a decision to list separate entries was made for purely practical reasons, to make the Dictionary easier to consult, or because it was too difficult to decide which senses belong together. An example of this is the six entries for *tali*.

### 3. GRAMMATICAL WORDS WHICH OCCUR IN THE NOUN PHRASE

The kinds of words which occur in a noun phrase are listed below in the order in which they occur. Optional items are enclosed in brackets:

(preposition)  
article  
(possessive pronoun or *-tahi*)  
(premodifier)  
nucleus  
(postmodifier)  
(demonstrative)

The nucleus of a noun phrase consists of a single lexical word, such as *fale* 'house', or of a head lexical word and one or more other lexical words used as qualifiers: *fale kukula* 'red house', *fale fono* 'meeting house'.

#### 3.1 ARTICLES

**Articles** are used before nouns, and indicate whether the noun is singular or plural, and whether it is definite or indefinite.

	Singular	Plural
Definite	<i>te</i>	<i>nā, o</i>
Indefinite	<i>he</i>	<i>ni</i>

It is important to understand that Tokelauan uses the definite article whenever a particular individual or object is referred to. This is in contrast to English usage, in which *the* is used only when the item has already been referred to, or when the person spoken to can be expected to know about it. Consequently, Tokelauan *te* will often be the appropriate translation for the English indefinite article *a*. The Tokelauan indefinite article has the meaning 'any such item', and occurs most frequently in questions and negative statements:

*Kua hau te tino*

'A man has arrived' or 'The man has arrived'

*Vili ake oi kaumai he toki*

'Do run and bring me an axe'

*E i ei ni tuhi?*

‘Are there any books?’

Definite plural nouns are sometimes distinguished by the absence of any article. This is the meaning of the symbol 0 (zero) used above. This zero article is common in phrases like ‘every day’ or ‘every year’. It may also occur when a class of things, or a very great number, is being referred to. In most cases, it is equally idiomatic to use *nā*:

*E hau te vaka i tauhaga uma*

‘The ship comes every year’

*Ko atu k̄a tau tuku-fano*

‘The skipjack are about to disappear [out to sea]’

*te amioga a tētahi itūkaiga o tautai*

‘the behaviour of a certain kind of fishermen’

Generic statements about a whole class of things use the singular definite article with the noun that refers to the class:

*Ko te pala he ika e takina*

‘The wahoo is a fish that is easily frightened’

*Ko te povi e kai mutia*

‘Cows eat grass’

The word *tahi* ‘other’ can combine with the articles, as follows:

*tētahi* ‘the other, another’

*hetahi* ‘another, any other’

*iētahi* ‘some’

*niētahi* ‘some others, any others’

Note that in the form *iētahi*, *tahi* combines with the demonstrative *iē* ‘these’, not with the plural article *nā*:

*Ko iētahi tino e fiafia lele ki nā hiva*

‘Some people love dances’

*Kaumi hetahi nofoa*

‘Bring me another chair’

### 3.1.1 *ia*, *a*, *a te* and *ia te*

The particle *ia* is a kind of article used before personal names, pronouns, the names of the months and nouns referring to people acting collectively, when these words are not preceded by one of the prepositions *e*, *o*, *a* or *ko*. Its use with pronouns is optional, occurring mainly when the pronoun does not immediately follow the verb:

*Kua fano ia Mele*

‘Mele has gone’

*Kua hau koe auā ia au e tauale*

‘You have come because I am sick’

Related to *ia* are *a* (or *ā*), *a te* and *ia te*, which are used as follows:

- (i) after the prepositions *i* and *ki*, use *a* or *ā* before personal names, and names of months, and *a te* before pronouns:

*Kave te ika ki a Mele*

‘Take the fish to Mele’ (cf. *ki te fale* ‘to the house’)

*E hau te vaka i a Māti*

‘The boat will come in March’ (cf. *i te afiafi* ‘in the evening’)

*Kave te ika ki a te ki lātou*

‘Take the fish to them’

- (ii) after the preposition *mai*, use *ia te* before pronouns:

*Na maua te tuhi mai ia te koe*

‘The letter from you arrived’

*Ia* has a number of other special uses, for example before locatives and place names when they are the subject of the sentence. These other uses are described in the Dictionary entry for *ia*<sup>3</sup>.

### 3.2 PREMODIFIERS

There are three common modifying words which can occur before the noun in a noun phrase. These are *mātuā* ‘very big, huge’, *tamā* (variants *tamakī* and *tamakikī*) ‘very small, tiny’ and *toe* ‘final, last, leftover’:

*he mātuā ika lele*

‘an absolutely huge fish’

*ko nā hiama ni tamakī mea ola*

‘germs are tiny living things’

*te toe malaga o te tauhaga*

‘the last trip of the year’

*te toe kaiga*

‘leftover food’

### 3.3 POSTMODIFIERS

Three common modifying words can occur after the noun in a noun phrase. These are *lele*, *lava*, and *noa* or *tauānoa*.

*Lele* ‘very’ is used only if there is a gradable qualifier in the noun phrase, including *mātuā* and *tamā*. (Note: a **gradable** qualifier is one which allows of comparison. Words like *fuaefa* ‘big, fat’ and *gali* ‘beautiful’ are gradable, whereas *himā* ‘made of cement’ is not.)

*he mātuā ika lele*

‘an absolutely huge fish’

*he tino lelei lele*

‘a very good man’

*Lava* intensifies the meaning of the word it follows. It may modify the head word plus any qualifiers, or it may intensify a qualifying word:

*Ko he ā te mea tēnā? Ko he fale lava!*

‘What is that thing? It is a house!’

*Ko he ā te fale tēnā? Ko te fale fono lava.*

‘What is that building? It is the meeting house.’

*te kofu kukula lava*

‘the red shirt’ (not the other one)

*Lava* is also used to form reflexives:

*Kua kofu te tauale e ia lava*

'The patient has dressed himself'

*Na lavea ia i a te ia lava*

'He hurt himself'

*Noa* and *tauānoa* 'just, mere, of no importance', are used mainly, although not exclusively, in nominal sentences (see 7.4):

*he mea tauānoa*

'an unimportant matter'

*ni kupu noa*

'just mere words'

*Fai he kie tauānoa*

'Wear any old thing'

### 3.4 DEMONSTRATIVES

Two **demonstrative** particles, *tē* 'this, that' and *iē* 'these, those', are frequently combined with the following particles, which indicate position in relation to the participants in a conversation:

-*nei* (near the speaker)

-*nā* (near the person spoken to)

-*ia* (away from both speaker and hearer)

*Tē* and *iē* are used without the position particles when there is no possibility of misunderstanding, as when the precise meaning can be conveyed by a gesture or glance. In addition, *nei* occurs on its own with the same meaning as *tēnei* and *iēnei*. The demonstratives are the last item to occur in a noun phrase.

The full paradigm is given below:

	Singular	Plural
near speaker	<i>tēnei, nei</i>	<i>iēnei, nei</i>
near person spoken to	<i>tēnā</i>	<i>iēnā</i>
away from both	<i>tēia</i>	<i>iēia</i>

*Ko ai te tino tē?*

'Who is that man?'

*nā puha nei*

'these boxes'

*te vaka kukula tēia*

'that red boat over there'

*Kaumai nā tuhi iēnā*

'Bring me those books'

The demonstratives are also used to refer back to something that has been mentioned earlier, especially in story-telling:

*Nonofo, nonofo te ulugālī, fai ta lā tama, he tama teine. Ko te tama ulumatua tēnā o to lā nonofoga.*

'Living and living together the couple produced their child, a female child. That was the eldest child of their union.'

### 3.5 PREPOSITIONS

**Prepositions** are words which can introduce a noun phrase, and which indicate the relationship of that noun phrase to the rest of the sentence. A noun phrase beginning with a preposition may be referred to as a **prepositional phrase**.

#### 3.5.1 *e*

This preposition marks the **agent** of a transitive verb (see below, 5.1):

*Na kaumai te polo e te tamaiti*

'The child brought the ball'

*E hē iloa e au*

'I don't know'

#### 3.5.2 *i*

This preposition has a number of meanings, including in, at, with, because of, from. Its basic meaning is to indicate location in a place:

*Nae nofo te toeaina i te nofoa*

'The old man was sitting in the chair'

*Vaelua te lākau i te toki*

'Split the wood with the axe'

#### 3.5.3 *ki*

The preposition indicates direction towards a goal. It may refer to physical movement, or to the direction of one's thoughts or emotions:

*Kave te hua ki te lōmatua*

'Take the drinking nut to the old lady'

*Tago ki te ika*

'Grab the fish'

*Alofa ki tau fānau*

'Love your children'

#### 3.5.4 *mai*

The meaning 'from' is usually expressed by *mai*, although *i* can also be used with this meaning:

*Na hau te vaka mai Atafu*

'The boat came from Atafu'

*koloa mai fafo*

'goods from overseas, imported goods'

#### 3.5.5 *o* and *a*

These possessive prepositions are used to indicate a relationship between two noun phrases. The difference between them is discussed in the section on Possession (see 4.4 below). Briefly, *a* is used when the possessor has control over the thing possessed and the relationship is more or less temporary, whereas *o* is used when the relationship is intimate, unlikely to be terminated and not under the control of the possessor. However, there are exceptions to these generalisations.

*te meakai a te fafine*

'the woman's food'

*te lima o te tamaiti*  
'the child's hand'

### 3.5.6 *mō* and *mā*

Similar semantic considerations dictate the choice between these two propositions, which mean 'for, about, concerning'. However *mō* is the more commonly used of the two:

*Kave te ika mā koe*  
'Take the fish for yourself'

*E hēai he moega mō ia*  
'There is no bed for him'

### 3.5.7 *ma*

There are two prepositions of this form, listed in the Dictionary as *ma*<sup>2</sup> and *ma*<sup>3</sup>.

*Ma*<sup>2</sup> indicates prospective career, role or function:

*Na kavea ia ma fōmai*  
'He became a doctor'

*Hau koe ma oku hoa*  
'You come as my partner'

*Ma*<sup>3</sup> means 'far from' or 'distant from' and is used in association with a few verbs like *mamao* 'be distant' or *fano kehe* 'go away':

*Fano kehe ma te fale*  
'Go right away from the house'

### 3.5.8 *talū*

This word has the same two meanings as the English word 'since', either since a certain time, or because of a certain factor:

*talū tona fānau mai*  
'ever since his birth'

*talū tana āmiovalea*  
'because of his silly behaviour'

### 3.5.9 *ko*

This word cannot be given an English translation. It has several important grammatical functions, of which two are very common. One is to mark a noun phrase which is placed at the beginning of a sentence for emphasis. The other is to mark the predicate of a nominal sentence. These two uses are discussed below in 7.4 and 7.5.

*Ko* is also used before a noun which is in apposition to another noun:

*Kave te hua ki te lōmatua ko Mele Sione*  
'Take the fish to the old lady, Mele Sione'

and before a noun which follows *pe* 'or' or *ka* 'but':

*Kave te ulu pe ko te talo*  
'Take the breadfruit or the taro'

*E hēki hau te faifeau, ka ko te tiākono*  
'The pastor didn't come but the deacon did'

and as part of the compound preposition *ona ko* 'because':



*ona ko toku fiailoa*  
 'because of my curiosity'

### 3.6 LOCATIVE NOUN PHRASES

**Locative noun phrases** differ in structure from other noun phrases. When a locative noun is preceded by a preposition, it does not take an article. If it is the **unmarked noun** of a sentence (5.1), it is preceded by the particle *ia*. Other grammatical words which may occur in a locative noun phrase are postmodifiers like *lele*, *lava* and the directional particles (5.11), or a premodifying possessive pronoun minus its article component (4.3.2):

*Fano ki gāuta lele*  
 'Go right inland'

*Nofo i ona tua*  
 'Sit behind him'

*E takalo te tamaiti i lalo ifo o te laulau*  
 'The child is playing under the table'

*E gali ia Fenualoa*  
 'Fenualoa is pretty'

## 4. PRONOUNS AND POSSESSION

Participants in a conversation use **pronouns** as a substitute for nouns when it is quite clear who is being referred to. First person pronouns refer to the speaker, or if plural to the speaker and other people with whom he groups himself. Second person pronouns refer to those spoken to, and third person pronouns to people who are spoken about. In written language, third person pronouns are used to refer to people who have been mentioned just previously.

In its pronoun system, Tokelauan distinguishes singular, dual and plural number, and four persons: 1st person inclusive, 1st person exclusive, 2nd person and 3rd person. The inclusive forms include the person spoken to, whereas the exclusive forms do not:

*ki tātou* 'we all' (including the people spoken to)

*ki mātou* 'we', 'I and some others' (not including the person spoken to)

### 4.1 THE INDEPENDENT PERSONAL PRONOUNS

The independent pronouns form a closed class, but like nouns they can function as the nucleus of a noun phrase, and thus have something in common with lexical words. They are set out below.

**Table 1**

	Singular	Dual	Plural
1st person inclusive		<i>ki tāua, ki tā</i> we two, you and I	<i>ki tātou</i> we all, including you
1st person exclusive	<i>au, kita</i> I, me	<i>ki māua, ki mā</i> we two, but not you	<i>ki mātou</i> we all, but not you

2nd person	<i>koe</i>	<i>koulua</i>	<i>koutou</i>
	you	you two	you all
3rd person	<i>ia</i>	<i>ki lāua, ki lā</i>	<i>ki lātou</i>
	he, she	they two	they, them
	him, her	them	

The first person singular form *kita* is quite common in the spoken language, and is used when the speaker wishes to arouse the hearer's sympathy or fellow-feeling, for example when he is telling a story about some predicament he was in.

When a pronoun occurs after the prepositions *i* and *ki*, it is preceded by the *a te* form of the personal article. When it comes after the preposition *mai*, it is preceded by *ia te* (sometimes shortened to *te* in rapid speech).

*E kikila atu au ki a te koe*  
'I am looking at you'

*Na kai e ki māua te ika*  
'We two ate the fish'

*Kua maua te tuhi mai ia te koe*  
'The letter from you has arrived'

*Kā olo koulua?*  
'Are you two going now?'

*Na fakatali pea ia kita*  
'I just waited'

## 4.2 SHORT FORM OF AGENT PRONOUNS

In addition, there is a set of pronoun forms which are used whenever an agentive pronoun is placed immediately before the verb. (For details of this construction, see 5.9.1.) In some cases, these **clitic** pronouns, as they are called, are different from the independent pronoun forms.

**Table 2**

	Singular	Dual	Plural
1st person inclusive		<i>ki tā</i>	<i>ki tātou</i>
1st person exclusive	<i>kō</i>	<i>ki mā</i>	<i>ki mātou</i>
2nd person	<i>kē</i>	<i>koulua</i>	<i>koutou</i>
3rd person	<i>ia</i>	<i>ki lā</i>	<i>ki lātou</i>

When a clitic agentive pronoun is used, a suffix of the form *-a* or *-agia* is attached to the verb (see 5.9.1):

*Kua kō kavea te ika*  
'I have taken the fish' (cf. *Kua kave e au te ika*)

*Na ki lā faia te fale*  
'The two of them built the house' (cf. *Na fai te fale e ki lāua*)

*Na kē kiteagia te vaka?*  
'Did you see the canoe?' (cf. *Na kitea e koe te vaka?*)

The 2nd person singular clitic pronoun is also used in negative commands, requests and suggestions:

*Nahe kē popole*

'Don't worry'

### 4.3 POSSESSIVE PRONOUNS

Possessive pronouns can occur as modifiers in a noun phrase or as the nucleus of a possessive predicate (see 7.3). There are two different sets of possessive pronouns.

#### 4.3.1 Predicative possessive pronouns

The pronouns of the first set, which we can call the predicative possessive pronouns, occur after the possessive prepositions *o* and *a* in two different environments:

- (i) In the nucleus of a possessive predicate:

*E a aku nā meakai* 'The food is mine'

- (ii) Following the possessed noun in a possessive noun phrase:

*na meakai a aku* 'my food'

**Table 3**

	Singular	Dual	Plural
1st person inclusive		<i>o tāua, o iā</i> <i>a tāua, a iā</i>	<i>o tātou</i> <i>a tātou</i>
1st person exclusive	<i>o oku, o kita</i> <i>a aku, a kita</i>	<i>o māua, o mā</i> <i>a māua, a mā</i>	<i>o mātou</i> <i>a mātou</i>
2nd person	<i>o ōu/o koe</i> <i>a āu/a koe</i>	<i>o koulua</i> <i>a koulua</i>	<i>o koutou</i> <i>a koutou</i>
3rd person	<i>o ona</i> <i>a ana</i>	<i>o lāua, o lā</i> <i>a lāua, a lā</i>	<i>o lātou</i> <i>a lātou</i>

Notes on Table 3: The short and long forms of the dual pronouns are used interchangeably, although in these constructions the long forms are more common. In the short forms, the initial vowel is sometimes lengthened: *ō iā*. With the singular pronouns, there is a strong tendency for the possessive preposition to be pronounced together with the initial vowel of the pronoun, giving a single long vowel: *he fale ōku*. In slow speech the two vowels are quite distinct.

#### 4.3.2 Premodifying possessive pronouns

The pronouns of the second set occur as premodifiers in the noun phrase. They are a combination of an article, a possessive preposition (*o* or *a*), and a pronoun (in some cases a shortened form of the pronoun), for example:

*t- o -ku = toku* 'my'

article preposition 1st sing. pron.

Each of these premodifying possessive pronouns gives us a great deal of information:

- The article component tells us whether the **thing possessed** is singular or plural, definite or indefinite.
- The preposition component tells us whether the **type of possession** is class-O or class-A (see 4.4).

- (iii) The pronoun component tells us whether the **possessor** is singular, dual or plural, and whether it is 1st person inclusive, 1st person exclusive, 2nd person or 3rd person.

Note that the plural definite article *nā* is not used in these compound forms. When the thing possessed is definite and plural, this is indicated by the fact that nothing precedes the possessive preposition. (Linguists refer to this as a zero [0] form of the article.)

The terms **singular reference** and **plural reference** are used to indicate whether a pronominal adjective refers to a singular or plural possession. So in the phrase *ni oku kofutino* ‘some of my shirts’ *ni oku* is a singular indefinite 1st person pronoun with plural reference. In the phrase *toutou fale* ‘your house’ *toutou* is a plural definite 2nd person pronoun with singular reference.

Table 4

Possessor	Definite		
	Singular reference	Plural reference	
1st p. sing.	<i>toku, taku, tota, tata</i>	<i>oku, aku, ota, ata</i>	‘my’
2nd p. sing.	<i>tō, tau</i>	<i>ō, au</i>	‘your’
3rd p. sing.	<i>tona, tana</i>	<i>ona, ana</i>	‘his, her’
1st p. dual inclusive	<i>to tā, to tāua</i> <i>ta tā, ta tāua</i>	<i>o tā, o tāua</i> <i>a tā, a tāua</i>	‘our’
1st p. dual exclusive	<i>to mā, to māua</i> <i>ta mā, ta māua</i>	<i>o mā, o māua</i> <i>a mā, a māua</i>	‘our’
2nd p. dual	<i>toulua, taulua</i>	<i>oulua, aulua</i>	‘your’
3rd p. dual	<i>to lā, to lāua</i> <i>ta lā, ta lāua</i>	<i>o lā, o lāua</i> <i>a lā, a lāua</i>	‘their’
1st p. pl. inclusive	<i>to tātou</i> <i>ta tātou</i>	<i>o tātou</i> <i>a tātou</i>	‘our’
1st p. pl. exclusive	<i>to mātou</i> <i>ta mātou</i>	<i>o mātou</i> <i>a mātou</i>	‘our’
2nd p. pl.	<i>toutou, tautau</i>	<i>outou, autou</i>	‘your’
3rd p. pl.	<i>to lātou, ta lātou</i>	<i>o lātou, a lātou</i>	‘their’
<b>Indefinite</b>			
1st p. sing.	<i>hoku, hota</i> <i>haku, hata</i>	<i>ni oku, ni ota</i> <i>ni aku, ni ata</i>	
2nd p. sing.	<i>hō, hau</i>	<i>ni ō, ni au</i>	
3rd p. sing.	<i>hona, hana</i>	<i>ni ona, ni ana</i>	
1st p. dual	<i>ho tā, ho tāua</i> <i>ha tā, ha tāua</i>	<i>ni o tā, ni o tāua</i> <i>ni a tā, ni a tāua</i>	
1st p. dual exclusive	<i>ho mā, ho māua</i> <i>ha mā, ha māua</i>	<i>ni o mā, ni o māua</i> <i>ni a mā, ni a māua</i>	
2nd p. dual	<i>houlua, haulua</i>	<i>ni oulua, ni aulua</i>	

etc., on same pattern as for Definite forms.

#### 4.4 POSSESSION

Polynesian languages are well known for the distinction they make between possession

signified by the preposition *a* and that signified by the preposition *o*. Throughout the Dictionary, these are referred to as class-A and class-O possession.

The relationships commonly called "possessive" are actually of many different kinds, including parts of a whole, parts of the body, qualities and characteristics of people and things, behaviour and actions of people, inherited lands, and kinship relationships, as well as actual ownership of objects.

The choice of *a* or *o* depends upon the precise relationship between the possessor and the "thing" possessed.

The terms **dominant** and **alienable** have often been used to define class-A possession. In general, it is used when the possessor has control over his possession or dominates it, when the relationship is initiated by the possessor or is of such a kind that it can be terminated. So, items of property which can be bought and sold, or carried around, take class-A possession, as do food and domestic animals. Personal relationships into which one enters voluntarily, such as with friends and spouse, also take class-A.

The terms **subordinate** and **inalienable** have been applied to class-O possession. It is used when the possessor has no control over the initiation or the continuance of the relationship, as with land, house or canoe he has inherited, his grandparents, parents, and brothers and sisters, parts of the body and other parts of wholes, qualities of mind and character, and physical qualities.

Some cases are not easy to account for. The children of a woman take class-A possession: *te tama a te fafine* 'the woman's son', whereas those of a man take class-O: *te ataliki o te faifeau* 'the pastor's son'. Two words which mean 'spouse' take different possessive forms: *tana āvaga* but *tona tokalua*. Clothing takes class-O possession, possibly because items of clothing are so intimately associated with a person.

Although it is possible to some extent to classify nouns according to the way in which they are possessed, there are many nouns which can enter into both class-A and class-O constructions. It is the precise nature of the relationship which is important, as the following examples show:

<i>toku kofutino</i>	'my shirt (which I own)'
<i>taku kofutino</i>	'my shirt (which I made for someone)'
<i>toku pehe</i>	'my song (which so.o. composed about me)'
<i>taku pehe</i>	'my song (which I wrote)'
<i>taku pehe</i>	'my singing'
<i>toku vae</i>	'my leg (of my body)'
<i>taku vae</i>	'my leg (to eat, e.g. chicken leg)'
<i>oku lākau</i>	'my trees (on my land)'
<i>aku lākau</i>	'my pieces of timber'
<i>tona fānau</i>	'his birth'
<i>tana fānau</i>	'his children'
<i>tana tamaiti</i>	'her child'
<i>tona tamaiti</i>	'her childhood'
<i>tau tūhaga</i>	'your share (which you have to contribute)'
<i>tō tūhaga</i>	'your share (which you receive)'

## 5. GRAMMATICAL WORDS WHICH OCCUR IN THE VERB PHRASE

The nucleus of a verb phrase consists of a single lexical word, or of a head word and another

lexical word used as qualifier or incorporated object (see 7.7): *fano hako* 'go directly', *tagi kaukau* 'weep while swimming', *hāvalivali mālie* 'walk slowly', *kai lelei* 'eat well', *talai vaka* 'construct canoes'.

The different kinds of grammatical words which can occur in the verb phrase are discussed in this section, and are treated in the order in which they usually occur. First, however, it is necessary to say something about transitive and intransitive sentences.

## 5.1 TRANSITIVE AND INTRANSITIVE

In order to understand Tokelauan grammar, and in particular the grammar of the verb phrase, we must divide verbs into two major groups, according to the kinds of noun phrases that are used with them.

Every verbal sentence in Tokelauan contains one noun phrase without a preposition. We will refer to this as the **unmarked noun phrase**. (An apparent exception to this rule, which need not concern us here, is the sentence which begins with a *ko*-phrase — see 7.5.)

If the person who performs the action of a verb, that is the agent, can be expressed by a noun phrase beginning with the preposition *e*, and the person or thing to which that agent does something is expressed by the unmarked noun phrase, then that verb is transitive. All other verbs are intransitive. A sentence containing a verb being used transitively is a transitive sentence, and a sentence containing a verb being used intransitively is an intransitive sentence. It is important to realise that the same verb can be used transitively and intransitively, usually with a slight difference in meaning — see examples using *kai* and *kikila* under the two headings below.

Examples of transitive sentences:

*Na fau e ia tona fale*

'He built his house'

*Na kai te ika e Mele*

'Mele ate the fish'

*Kikila e koe te gāluega*

'You supervise the work'

Examples of intransitive sentences:

*E takalo te tamaiti i te fātoaga*

'The child is playing in the garden'

*E kekē te puaka*

'The pig is squealing'

*Ka vili au ki kō*

'I will run over there'

*E kakai nā fāfine i tau kuka*

'The women are eating (some of) your cooking'

*E kikila nā tamaiti ki te māhina*

'The children are looking at the moon'

### 5.1.1 Translation of Tokelauan transitive sentences

English transitive verbs can be used in two different constructions, **active** and **passive**:

Active: John killed the pig

Passive: The pig was killed by John

For the corresponding Tokelauan sentence *Na tāmāte te puaka e Sione*, either translation is ap-

appropriate, although it would be more usual to give the active one: 'John killed the pig'. However, if the Tokelauan sentence contains only the verb and the unmarked noun phrase, but no agent phrase, then an English passive translation must be used:

*Na tāmāte te puaka*  
'The pig was killed'

In the Dictionary examples, it will be noticed that transitive verbs sometimes receive active translations and sometimes passive ones, depending on which English version is the most idiomatic. A good example is the entry for *huke*.

### 5.1.2 The subject of the sentence

The unmarked noun phrase which accompanies an intransitive verb will sometimes be referred to as the **subject** of the sentence. Similarly, the unmarked noun phrase in a locative, possessive or nominal sentence (see 7.2–4) is the subject of that sentence. In the case of transitive verbs, it is often difficult to decide whether the unmarked noun phrase or the agent phrase should be considered the subject. Consequently the term will not be used when talking about transitive verbs in this grammar.

## 5.2 TENSE-ASPECT PARTICLES

Verb phrases usually begin with a verbal particle called a **tense-aspect** particle. These words tell us something about the type of situation expressed by the verb, and they may also give us some information about the time of the situation in relation to the moment of speech.

The following particles give information about the time of a situation, that is about **tense**.

### 5.2.1 *na* and *nae*

These two particles indicate a situation that occurred before the time of speaking. In stories they are mostly used to refer to situations that are anterior to the point in time which the narrative has reached. The difference between them is one of **aspect**. *Nae* indicates that an activity or state persisted over a certain length of time; *na* refers to single events, or to situations that are thought of as single events (even though they may have actually taken some time):

*Ko tēnā te fale nae nonofo ai oku mātua*  
'That's the house where my parents used to live'

*Na teka te vaka i te vāiaho taluai*  
'The boat departed last week'

### 5.2.2 *kā*

This particle indicates a situation that is going to take place in the future, subsequent to the time of speaking. Usually it refers to the immediate future:

*Kā fano te vaka*  
'The boat is about to leave'

### 5.2.3 *koi*

This particle indicates that a situation is still going on at the present time, although it may be expected to stop at some future time:

*Koi ola ō mātua?*  
'Are your parents still living?'

Note that one does not say \**Koi i te Vaha Pahefika ia Atafu* 'Atafu is still in the Pacific Ocean', because there is no possibility of this ceasing to be the case.

The other verbal particles discussed below can be used to refer to past, present or future time. It is usually clear from the context which is intended.

### 5.2.4 *kua*

This particle has a number of rather subtle uses, all of which imply change or development. Two uses are particularly common. It can indicate an event that has taken place recently and is felt by the speaker to have created a new situation:

*Kua hau tō tamana*

‘Your father has arrived’

or it can refer to a changed state:

*Kua tauale tō tamana*

‘Your father is ill’ or ‘Your father has become ill’

Either way, *kua* always means that a change has come about, or will come about at some future time:

*Olo oi tāfafao oi kua ōmai ai*

‘Go and amuse yourselves, and then you will come back’

### 5.2.5 *e*

The non-past marker *e* has the widest and vaguest meaning of the tense-aspect particles. It may indicate a permanent truth, or something that will happen in the future, or a situation that exists at the time of speaking or that is concurrent with some other situation in the past or the future. *E* is in fact used quite often to refer to things that happened in the past, provided this is clear from the context of the narrative.

*E vevela te lā*

‘The sun is hot’

*E fano au ki Niu Hila i te tauhaga fou*

‘I’m going to New Zealand next year’

*E nofo ia Hina i luga o te vaka kae oho ifo ia Tokalalaga ki lalo*

‘While Hina sat on the canoe, Tokalalaga dived down below’

### 5.2.6 Unmarked verbs

Finally, it must be mentioned that in most narratives, whether they are traditional tales (*kakai*), stories of personal experience or brief anecdotes in conversation, the verbs which indicate the events of the story are not usually preceded by any tense-aspect particle. A sequence of verbs without tense-aspect particles represents a sequence of events that occur in the same order:

*Fanatu loa lava te tamaloa oi tatala te taga. Hau loa lava ia Tone ki fafo kae ulu te tamaloa ki loto i te taga. Tago atu loa ia Tone oi toe nonoa te gutu o te taga.*

‘The man went straight over and opened the sack. Tone came out immediately and the man went into the sack. Tone took hold of the mouth of the sack and tied it up again.’

## 5.3 THE CONJUNCTIONS *OI* AND *KAE*

There are two very common verbal particles or **conjunctions**, which join two sentences together and say something about the relationship between the two situations.

### 5.3.1 *oi* ‘and, and then’

This word indicates that one action follows another in sequence. It is used a great deal in nar-



ratives:

*Fano ia Tokalaga ki lalo oi laga ake te faga*

'Tokalaga went down below and brought up the fish-trap'

*Oi* can also be used at the beginning of a new sentence or paragraph, but it always indicates that "this is what happened next":

*Oi kua malie foki ki ei ia Hina*

'And Hina agreed to that'

*Oi* is usually followed directly by the verb. The only tense-aspect particle that can follow *oi* is *kua*, as in the above example.

### 5.3.2 *kae* 'and, when, while, but'

This conjunction is used when two situations take place at the same time, or when something happens during some other, continuous situation. Sometimes there is a slight sense of contrast between the two situations:

*E moe koe, kae hau au*

'You were sleeping when I came'

*Na olo ki lātou uma, kae nofo au i kinei*

'They all went, but I stayed here'

See also the third example under *e* above.

*Kae* can directly precede the verb, or it can be followed by a tense-aspect particle. In this case it sometimes has the short form *ka*:

*Na fanatu au, ka kua fano koe*

'I went there, but you had left'

## 5.4 IMPERATIVES

In **imperative** utterances there is normally no tense-aspect particle and the subject is omitted:

*Hau!*

'Come here!'

It is usual for one or more post-verbal particles expressing politeness to be used to soften the effect of imperatives:

*Hau ake mua!*

'Do please come!'

*Fano lā*

'Go then'

If a command is addressed to a group of people including oneself, the first person inclusive pronouns can be used in preverbal position:

*Tātou olo oi ahi te tauale*

'Let us go and visit the patient'

*Hau lā, tā olo!*

'Come then, let's go (the two of us)'

The particle *ke* which is frequently used to introduce subordinate clauses (see 8.4 and 8.6) is sometimes used in these inclusive commands, or in utterances which express a wish of the speaker:

*Ke ki tātou manatuagia te mea tēnei!*

‘Let us keep this matter in mind!’

*Ke toe tautala atu au i te matākupu tēnei*

‘Let me speak again on this matter’

Two less common particles express the speaker’s attitude to the situation of the verb. *Keinā* expresses a mild wish, and can be translated ‘should’ or ‘had better’:

*Keinā olo mua koutou*

‘You had better go’

*Einā* ‘perhaps’ usually conveys a note of anxiety as to the outcome of the situation referred to by the verb:

*Einā fuli te vaka!*

‘The canoe might overturn’ (i.e., ‘watch out!’)

## 5.5 NEGATIVES

### 5.5.1 *hē* and *hēki*

There are two preverbal **negative particles**, *hē* and *hēki*. *Hē* is mostly used to negate states of affairs, whereas *hēki* negates events, things that happen:

*E hē lelei te aho*

‘The weather isn’t good’

*Nae hē i te fale au ananafi*

‘I wasn’t at home yesterday’

*E hē a aku nā mea iēnā*

‘Those things are not mine’

*E hē fano te vaka*

‘The boat won’t leave’ or ‘The boat isn’t going’

*E hēki fano te vaka*

‘The boat didn’t go’

*Ko hēki fano te vaka*

‘The boat hasn’t gone yet’

*Lea ki ei kā ko hēki fano te vaka*

‘Speak to him before the boat leaves’

Note that *hēki* is used only when a definite event is in question, rather than a more general state of affairs.

When *hē* is used after *kua*, the meaning is ‘no longer, not any more’:

*Kua hē mafai te toaina oi havali*

‘The old man can no longer walk’

### 5.5.2 *hēai*

This word is a verb meaning ‘to not exist, to not be present’, and it is always followed by an indefinite noun phrase:

*E hēai haku tupe*

‘I have no money’

*Nae hēai haku tupe*

‘I didn’t have any money’

*Kua hēai haku tupe*

'I have no more money'

*E hēai he tino i kinā*

'There is no-one there'

Compare *hē i ei*, which may be followed by definite or indefinite nouns:

*E hē i ei he tino*

'There is no-one there'

*E hē i ei te tino*

'The man isn't there'

*Hēai* can be used independently in answer to a question:

*E fano koe? Hēai.*

'Are you going? No'

## 5.6 NEGATIVE IMPERATIVES

The negative imperative particle is *nahe*. It is convenient to consider transitive and intransitive imperatives separately, since they are slightly different. In both cases, two word order patterns are possible.

### Intransitive

Pattern I: Singular *nahe kē fano*  
Plural *nahe koutou olo*

Pattern II: Singular *koe nahe fano*  
Plural *koutou nahe olo* 'Don't go'

Note that in Pattern I, the short form of the 2nd person singular pronoun is used, whereas in Pattern II, the long form is used.

### Transitive

Pattern I: Singular *nahe (kē) kaia te ika*  
Plural *nahe (koutou) kaia te ika*

Pattern II: Singular *(koe) nahe kaia te ika*  
Plural *(koutou) nahe kaia te ika* 'Don't eat the fish'

As with intransitives, the short form of the 2nd person singular pronoun is used in Pattern I. However, as the brackets indicate, the pronouns are often omitted in these transitive forms.

Note that the *-a(gia)* suffix is attached to the verb, as it is in all transitive negative verb phrases (see 5.9.1).

An alternative form of the negative imperative particle, *nā*, is sometimes substituted for *nahe*. This is very common in Pattern II with intransitives: *koe nā fano*.

A speaker who wishes to be very emphatic may combine Patterns I and II as in the following example from a recorded speech:

*Ia koe lava nā kē faiagia te mea tēnā.*

'As for you, don't you do that thing'.

## 5.7 PREMODIFIERS

There are a number of modifying words which can occur before the verb in a verb phrase:

<i>ata</i>	'can, be able'
<i>fakatau</i>	'all, every one'
<i>fakatagā</i>	'pretend to'
<i>fātoā</i>	'just, only just now' (of time only)
<i>fia</i>	'wish to, want to'
<i>matuā</i>	'completely, absolutely, very'
<i>hāga</i>	'keep on, persist'
<i>hala</i>	'preferable, better'
<i>tai</i> (variant <i>tali</i> )	'approximately, nearly' (before numerals only)
<i>tāi</i>	'nearly, almost, soon'
<i>tau</i>	'begin to'
<i>tamā</i> (variants <i>tamākī</i> , <i>tamākikī</i> )	'slightly'
<i>toe</i>	'again, still'
<i>vave</i>	'quickly, soon'

More than one of these modifiers can be used in a single verb phrase, and the order in which they are used depends on the precise emphasis required:

*E fia toe fano au*

'I want to go again'

*E toe fia maua ni tino*

'People are still (or again) needed'

*Kua fātoā toe hau te tino*

'The man has just returned'

See Dictionary for further examples.

## 5.8 VERB PREFIXES

There are a few prefixes which change the meanings of the verbs to which they are attached. The most common ones are discussed below.

### 5.8.1 *faka-*

This very common prefix can be attached to most intransitive verbs and to many nouns. It has three main uses:

- (i) When it is prefixed to numerals it derives words meaning 'a certain number of times': *lua* 'two', *fakalua* 'twice', *fai fakalua* 'do it twice'.
- (ii) When prefixed to nouns and some verbs, it forms intransitive verbs meaning 'to act in a certain way or have a certain quality': *tamaiti* 'child', *fakatamaiti* 'childish'; *puaka* 'pig', *fakapuaka* 'behave like a pig'; *kefukefu* 'grey', *fakakefukefu* 'greyish'.
- (iii) In its most common and productive use, *faka-* is prefixed to an intransitive verb to form **causative** transitive verbs: *lelei* 'good', *fakalelei* 'make good, do well'; *afe* 'call at a place', *fakaafe* 'invite someone to call in'; *pūlou* 'hat', *fakapūlou* 'turn upside down'; *māfolafola* 'flat', *fakamāfolafola* 'make flat, flatten'.

Numerous other examples can be found in the Dictionary.

### 5.8.2 *fe-*

This prefix is used with a few intransitive verbs to form plurals:

*E kake ia*  
'He climbs'

*E fekakei ki lātou*  
'They climb'

*E inu ia*  
'She is drinking'

*E feinu ki lāua*  
'The two of them are drinking'

In a more productive use, it combines with the suffix *-aki* to form reciprocal plurals (see below 5.9).

### 5.8.3 *ta-*

Some transitive verbs have plurals formed with the prefix *ta-*. These are quite different from the plurals of intransitive verbs. They do not refer to a plurality of people who perform the action, but to a plurality of objects, and hence of actions. Some examples will make this clear:

<i>kati</i>	'bite'
<i>takati</i>	'bite each one separately'
<i>kokoma</i>	'squeeze s.th. between the hands'
<i>takoma</i>	'squeeze several things'
<i>hahae</i>	'tear or rip'
<i>tahae</i>	'tear a number of things' (cloth, paper, etc.)
<i>ihi</i>	'split'
<i>taihi uma nā lākau</i>	'split all the logs'

### 5.8.4 *ma-*

This prefix derives verbs of two types.

- (i) Some verbs prefixed by *ma-* have the meaning 'be able to do s.th.' The commonest example is *mafai* 'be able'. Others are *tuki* 'pound, hit, hammer', *matuki* (of nails) 'able to be hammered in'; *nofo* 'sit', *manofo* 'able to sit still' (usually used negatively).
- (ii) In most cases, verbs with the *ma-* prefix denote actions which come about spontaneously or by accident, without a purposeful agent: *ligi* 'pour', *maligi* 'spill over, be spilt'; *numi* 'wind up', *manumi* 'be or become tangled'; *lue* 'shake s.th.', *māluelue* 'be unsteady or unstable'.

## 5.9 VERB SUFFIXES

### 5.9.1 *-a(gia)*

The most important verbal suffix has three forms: *-a*, *-gia* and *-agia*. It is referred to as the *-a(gia)* suffix. The short form *-a* is the most common.

This suffix is used only with **transitive** verbs. It occurs in two kinds of sentence.

- (i) When a transitive verb has a pronoun agent, two constructions are possible. The pronoun, preceded by *e*, can come after the verb, or it can come before the verb, without *e*. In this case, the *-a(gia)* suffix must be added to the verb, and in the singular, special short forms of the pronouns are used (see above, 4.2):

*Na ia veloa te ika* (cf. *Na velo e ia te ika*)  
'He speared the fish'

*Na kē fauagia te fale?*

'Did you build the house'

*E kō iloa*

'I know'

*Na ia tamaua na faitotoka*

'She locked the doors'

*Na ki lā kavea nā puha*

'The two of them took the boxes'

- (ii) When a transitive verb is **negative**, whether or not a pronoun precedes the verb, the suffix must be used:

*E hē kō iloagia*

'I don't know'

*E hēki kē kitea te vaka?*

'Didn't you see the ship?'

*Nahe faia te mea tēnā*

'Don't do that'

*Ko hēki ia tamatea te puaka*

'He hasn't killed the pig yet'

The very common verbs *iloa* 'know' and *kitea* 'see', which end in *-a*, are often used without an additional suffix.

Sometimes when one of the directional particles is used in the verb phrase, the suffix is attached to the particle rather than directly to the verb:

*Ko te ika nahe poapoa maia ki te tafāvaka*

'Don't lure the fish up to the side of the canoe'.

### 5.9.2 *-aki*

This suffix is used in combination with the prefix *fe-* to indicate reciprocal action, or occasionally repeated action: *fakaali* 'tell, show', *fefakaaliaki* 'tell one another'; *fīnau* 'argue', *fefīnauaki* 'quarrel with one another'; *mao* 'make a mistake', *femaomaoaki* 'fail to meet one another because of a misunderstanding'; *hui* 'change', *fehuihuiaki* 'change repeatedly, fluctuate'. Occasionally a consonant appears between the verb and the suffix: *logo* 'tell, inform', *felogonaki* 'inform one another'.

### 5.9.3 *-a, -fia, -gia, -kia, -lia, -mia, -tia*

These forms are added to certain verbs to form other verbs with related meanings. The form *-a* is added to verbs ending in *-i*; otherwise there is no way of knowing which form of the suffix a verb takes. This is a non-productive suffix; it is only attached to certain verbs and these are listed in the Dictionary: *kati* 'bite', *katia* 'eroded'; *ita* 'be angry', *itagia* 'be hated'; *malu* 'shelter, shade', *maluhia* 'be shaded', *malutia* 'be sheltered'.

An interesting fact about verbs with this suffix is that, although many of them can be used with agent phrases, they cannot be used in the imperative, unlike other verbs which have agent phrases:

*E itagia ia e ki lātou uma*

'He is hated by them all'

### 5.9.4 *-a*

This is a very productive suffix which is added to nouns to form verbs which mean having an

abundant supply of that noun: *namu* 'mosquito', *namua* 'full of mosquitoes; ika 'fish', *ikā* 'abounding in fish'.

## 5.10 POSTMODIFIERS

Several classes of modifying particles can follow the verb. Two very common modifying words, *lele* 'very, exceedingly, absolutely' and *noa* 'just, only', come directly after the verb and any other lexical words used as qualifiers (i.e., directly after the nucleus). As we have seen, these two words can also modify nouns.

## 5.11 DIRECTIONAL PARTICLES

These four very common particles indicate the direction in which the action of the verb is performed. The basic idea of direction is extended metaphorically in a number of ways.

### 5.11.1 *mai*

Motion towards the speaker; words, emotions or behaviour directed towards the speaker; processes in which the speaker has an interest or by which he may be affected: *lafo mai* 'send to me', *lea mai* 'speak to me', *alofa mai* 'love me', *fakatali mai* 'wait for me', *uhu mai he pehe* 'sing us a song', *e hē gaholo koe e poto*, *kae gaholo mai e valea* 'you're not getting any cleverer, you're getting more stupid'.

### 5.11.2 *atu*

Motion away from speaker; words, emotions or behaviour directed towards others; the greater element in a comparison; any outward-looking experience: *vili atu ki kō* 'run over there', *na lea atu au* 'I said', *na fakatali atu au* 'I waited for you', *e lahi atu tona fale* 'his house is bigger'.

### 5.11.3 *ifo*

Motion downwards or towards the sea; condescension from a person of high status to someone of lower status, etc.: *tukutuku ifo te maea* 'lower the rope', *e hē mafai e koe ke tukutuku ifo tō loto* 'you are incapable of acting with humility'.

### 5.11.4 *ake*

Motion upwards or in an inland direction; also used in direct address to soften commands or requests: *hau ake lā!* 'Come on then!'.

### 5.11.5 Compound forms

The direction particles combine with the verbs *fano* 'go' and *kave* 'carry' to give the following compound forms:

*fanatu*/pl. *ōatu* 'go away, leave' etc.

*fanaifo*/pl. *ōifo* 'come down, come towards sea'

*fanake*/pl. *ōake* 'come up, come inland, come away with the speaker or in the direction of the speaker'

*omai* 'come (pl.)', cf. *hau* 'come (sing.)'

*kaumai* 'bring'

*kavatu* 'take'

*kaveifo* 'bring down'

*kavake* 'bring up'

## 5.12 THE PRONOUN FORMS *AI* AND *EI*

The common word *ai* is a pronoun. It is used to replace or represent a noun phrase intro-

duced by the preposition *i* in cases where that noun phrase occurs before the verb:

*Nae nofo toku mātua i te fale tēnā*

‘My mother lived in that house’

*Ko te fale tēnā nae nofo ai toku mātua*

‘That is the house in which my mother lived’

*E kō manatua te aho na teka atu ai toku uho*

‘I remember the day on which my sister left’

*Ko te mūgālā na mamate ai nā lakau*

‘It was because of the drought that the plants died’

Note that *ai* has a fixed position in the verb phrase. It follows the directional particle if one is present, otherwise it comes directly after the verb.

Related to *ai* is *ei*, which has two uses. It follows the preposition *ki* in sentences of the same type as above:

*Ko te Āhagaloa na olo nā vaka ki ei*

‘It was to the Āhagaloa that the canoes went’

*Ko tēia te gāluega e fīafia au ki ei*

‘That’s the work that I like’

Unlike *ai*, the phrase *ki ei* does not become part of the verb phrase, and can take the same position in the sentence as the noun phrase it replaces.

The particle *ei* also occurs in the phrase *i ei*, which is used after the tense-aspect markers to mean ‘exist’ or ‘be in a place’:

*E i ei te puā i te fātoaga*

‘There is a pig in the garden’

*Nae i ei te tautai, ko te Uga tona igoa*

‘There was a fisherman, Crab was his name’

*Ko te fale tēnā nae i ei te malaga*

‘That’s the house where the guests were’

The kinds of sentence discussed on here are treated in more detail in 7.2 and 7.5.

### 5.13 MANNER PARTICLES

These words convey information about the nature of the action expressed by the verb.

*pea* ‘nevertheless, still, continuously’

*hō* ‘often, frequently’

*loa* ‘immediately, then’

*nei* ‘now’

### 5.14 EMPHATIC PARTICLES

*mua* Another politeness particle which occurs in requests and commands.

*foki* ‘also, too, as well’

*lava* } Emphatic particles, with many possible translations;  
*lā* } *lā* occurs mainly, and *kō* only in direct address.  
*kō* }



## 5.15 ORDER OF POST-VERBAL PARTICLES

As a general rule, the classes of particles occur in the order Direction — Manner — Emphatic. Naturally, some combinations never occur because of meaning restrictions, whereas other combinations are very idiomatic and occur frequently. It is rare, however, to find more than three post-verbal particles in any one verb phrase. The following Table shows how the particles are arranged in relation to one another:

Table 5

(Nucleus)	Direction	<i>ai</i>	Manner		Emphatic	
	<i>mai</i>	<i>ai</i>	<i>pea</i>	<i>mua</i>	<i>foki</i>	<i>kō</i>
	<i>atu</i>		<i>hō</i>		<i>lava</i>	<i>lā</i>
	<i>ifo</i>		<i>loa</i>	<i>nei</i>		
	<i>ake</i>					

Notes: *ake* can follow one of the other directional particles when it is being used to express politeness, as in the third example below; *nei* can occur in the same verb phrase as *loa*, in which case the order is *loa nei*; *mua* tends to occur directly before *nei* but after the other Manner particles; *lava* and *foki* are often used together, and the orders *lava foki* and *foki lava* are both quite common; *kō* and *lā* always come last in the verb phrase.

*Kaumai mua nei te toki*  
'Please bring me the axe at once'

*Fano mua foki kō!*  
'Please, you go too!'

*Kaumai ake lā te uka*  
'Please bring me the fishing line'

*Fai pea mua kō*  
'Please do continue'

*E tatau lava foki*  
'It's very necessary also'

*Ko te Aho Gafua e kamata mai ai lava te gāluega*  
'It is on Monday that the work begins'

*Hau loa nei, tā olo pea!*  
'Come now, at once, let's go just the same!'

## 6. NOMINALISATIONS

## 6.1 THE STRUCTURE OF NOMINALISATIONS

Any verb, verb phrase, or whole sentence, can be converted into a **nominal** structure by replacing the tense-aspect particle with an article. The verb keeps any prefixes, suffixes, directional particles or other modifiers that were part of the original verb phrase. Any prepositional phrases that were part of the original sentence also become part of the resulting **nominalisation**. The unmarked noun or pronoun, that is, the one without a preposition (see 5.1), becomes a possessive noun phrase taking the preposition *o* or *a*.

*E fiamoe te tamaiti*

'The child is sleepy'

*Kā mātāmata ia ki te hiva*

'He will watch the dance'

*te fiamoe o te tamaiti*

'the sleepiness of the child'

*tona mātāmata ki te hiva*

'his watching the dance'

The nominalisation can then be part of a larger sentence, just like any other noun:

*Ko te fiamoe o te tamaiti nae nofo ai ia i te fale*

'Because of the child's sleepiness, he stayed at home'

*E ita te lōmatua i tona mātāmata ki te hiva*

'The old lady is angry at his watching the dance'

*Ka fakamatala e au ta mātou gālulue i luga o te vaka*

'I will describe our work on the ship'

*Nae ofo au i toku alofagia e te kāiga tēnā.*

'I was amazed at my being treated so well by the family'

In some nominalisations, the nominalising suffix *-ga* is attached to the verb. It is not always easy to tell the difference in meaning between suffixed and unsuffixed nominalisations, but there are two types in which the suffixed form is normally used:

- (i) When the nominalisation denotes a concrete object or a type of happening: *kāvega* 'load' (*kave* 'carry'), *inuga* 'drinking party' (*inu* 'drink'), *tīpiga* 'surgical operation' (*tipi* 'cut'). In such cases the first vowel of the base word is sometimes lengthened.
- (ii) When a sentence nominalisation refers to a particular event that has taken place, the suffixed form is used:

*Ko tō hauga ki te fono ananafi na fiafia lele ki ei ia toeaina*

'Your coming to the meeting yesterday pleased the elders very much'.

Compare:

*Ko tō hau tāeao ki te fono kâ fiafia lele ki ei ia toeaina*

'Your coming to the meeting tomorrow will please the elders very much'.

After verbs of beginning or finishing, either suffixed or unsuffixed forms are possible:

*Kua uma te tunu/tunuga o nā meakai*

'The cooking of the food has finished'.

Note that verbs denoting states are never suffixed:

*te lelei o te tino tēnā*

'that man's goodness'

*te kino o te afi*

'the engine's being out of order'

## 6.2 POSSESSOR MARKING IN NOMINALISATIONS

The rules for the use of *o* or *a* in the possessive noun phrase accompanying a nominalised sentence are very complex, but some guidelines can be given. In general, O-class possession is used, but there are a number of exceptions to this, which are discussed below.

- (i) Unsuffixed nominalisations referring to a person's ability at an activity take A-class possessives:

*E lelei tana kaukau*

'His swimming is good', 'He is a good swimmer'

*Kua feoloolo tana tautala*

‘His speaking is improving’ (of a person recovering from a stroke)

*E lelei te kave tāvale a te lōmatua*

‘The lady’s driving is excellent’

However, if the same verbs are used to refer to experience generally, or to a career, they take O-class possessives:

*Kua uma tona kave tāvale*

‘He has given up driving’

Note too that inner states and qualities of character take O-class: *tona lelei* ‘his goodness’, *toku alofa ki taku fānau* ‘my affection for my children’.

- (ii) A few intransitive verbs seem to allow either A-class or O-class:

*E mataloa te talanoaga o/a nā fafine*

‘The women’s talking went on a long time’

*Nae mātāmata au ki te takekelega o/a nā tamaiti ananafi*

‘I watched the swimming of the children yesterday’

*Galue* ‘work’ always seems to prefer A-class possessives.

- (iii) In nominalisations of transitive sentences, the unmarked noun phrase always takes O-class possession. The agent noun phrase keeps its preposition *e*:

*Na kave e Tui nā ika*

‘Tui took the fish’

*te kavega o nā ika e Tui*

‘the taking of the fish by Tui’

However, if the agent phrase is a pronoun, it can become an A-class possessive pronoun and precede the nominalised verb:

*tana kavega o nā ika*

‘his taking the fish’

Note that the nominalisation *te kavega o nā ika a Tui* is perfectly good Tokelauan; it means ‘the taking of Tui’s fish’, but it does not necessarily follow that Tui himself took them. Hence its meaning is quite different from that of the other examples.

## 7. TYPES OF SENTENCE

All sentences contain a **predicate**. Different types of sentence are distinguished by the different types of predicate they contain.

### 7.1 VERBAL SENTENCES

The predicate of a **verbal sentence** is the verb phrase, and most of the examples given so far have been of this type. The simplest verbal sentence consists of the predicate and an unmarked noun phrase:

*Kua kamata*

(predicate)

has begun

‘The church service has begun’

*te lotu*

(subject)

the church service

If there are other noun phrases, they must be introduced by prepositions:

<i>Na fano</i>	<i>toku tamana</i>	<i>ki te motu</i>	<i>i te vaka fuaefa</i>
(predicate)	(subject)	(prep. phrase)	(prep. phrase)
'My father went to the islet in the big canoe'			

Some verbal sentences contain only a predicate:

<i>E ua</i>
'It is raining'
<i>Kua lelei</i>
'It is good', 'That's good'

## 7.2 LOCATIVE SENTENCES

The predicate of a **locative sentence** consists of a tense-aspect particle followed by a nucleus consisting of the preposition *i* and a noun phrase indicating location:

<i>E i te falehā</i>	<i>te faifeau</i>
(predicate)	(subject)
'The pastor is in the church'	
<i>Nae i Niu Hila</i>	<i>toku uho</i>
(predicate)	(subject)
'My brother was in New Zealand'	
<i>E hēki i ei</i>	<i>nā tino</i>
(predicate)	(subject)
'The people are not there yet'	

## 7.3 POSSESSIVE SENTENCES

These are similar in structure to locative sentences, except that the predicate nucleus consists of a **possessive phrase**:

<i>E o ia</i>	<i>te fale</i>
(predicate)	(subject)
'The house belongs to him'	
<i>E a te leoleo</i>	<i>te tāvale tēnā</i>
(predicate)	(subject)
'That car belongs to the policeman'	

## 7.4 NOMINAL SENTENCES

**Nominal sentences** assert the identity of two noun phrases. They differ from all other kinds of sentence in that they do not contain a tense-aspect particle. The predicate is a noun phrase introduced by the particle *ko*. Like other types of sentence, they also contain an unmarked noun phrase, the subject.

<i>Ko tana gāluega</i>	<i>tēnā</i>
(predicate)	(subject)
'That is his work'	
<i>Ko he ika tāua</i>	<i>te atu</i>
(predicate)	(subject)
'The bonito is a prized fish'	

When a nominal predicate is indefinite, as in the second example, it always signifies membership in a certain class. Indefinite nominal predicates do not have to be preceded by *ko*, so that the following is an acceptable alternative:

*He ika tāua te atu*

‘The bonito is a prized fish’

Nominal sentences are negated with *e hē*:

*E hē ko tana gāluega tēnā*

‘That is not his work’

## 7.5 SENTENCES IN WHICH A *KO*-PHRASE PRECEDES THE PREDICATE

So far we have talked about sentences in which the predicate comes first, followed by one or more noun phrases. It is also possible to have sentences in which one of the noun phrases comes at the beginning, before the predicate, in which case it is preceded by *ko*. The examples below show pairs of verbal sentences which are related in this way:

*Kua fano te tino ki te motu*

*Ko te tino kua fano ki te motu*

‘The man has gone to the islet’

*E lelei lele te gāluega*

*Ko te gāluega e lelei lele*

‘The work is excellent’

In both of these examples it is the unmarked noun phrase which has been moved to the front of the sentence and marked with *ko*. No other changes have taken place in the original sentence.

If a noun in a prepositional phrase is fronted, a pronoun takes its place after the verb. The following pairs of examples show the pattern for different types of prepositional phrase:

*Na tāmata te puā e Toma*

*Ko Toma na ia tāmatea te puā*

‘Tom killed the pig’

*Nae nofo toku mātua i te fale tēnā*

*Ko te fale tēnā nae nofo ai toku mātua*

‘My mother used to live in that house’

*Kua fano te tino ki Motuakea*

*Ko Motuakea kua fano te tino ki ei*

‘The man has gone to Motuakea’

*E hau te toaina mai te fale fono*

*Ko te fale fono e hau ai te toaina*

‘The old man is coming from the meeting house’

Locative, possessive and nominal sentences can also have *ko*-fronted noun phrases:

*Ko te faifeau e i te falehā*

‘The pastor is in the church’

*Ko te tāvale tēnā e a te leoleo*

‘That car belongs to the policeman’

*Ko te atu (ko) he ika tāua*

‘The bonito is a prized fish’

Note that a definite nominal sentence with a *ko* fronted subject contains two noun phrases preceded by *ko*. In such cases, it helps to remember that the first phrase is the subject, and the second one the predicate:

<i>Ko ona lava hoavaka</i>	<i>nā tino iēnā</i>
(predicate)	(subject)
<i>Ko nā tino iēnā</i>	<i>ko ona lava hoavaka</i>
(subject)	(predicate)

'Those men are his very own crew members'

#### 7.5.1 Note on the function of *ko*-phrases

A *ko*-phrase is placed at the beginning of a sentence for a number of different kinds of emphasis, which can be loosely grouped under the two headings of *topicalisation* and *focusing*. This is a complex area of Tokelau language use, which cannot be fully treated in this short study.

### 7.6 QUESTIONS

#### 7.6.1 Yes-No questions

Questions to which the expected answer is 'Yes' or 'No' have no special grammatical form in Tokelauan. They are spoken with rising intonation:

*E fāinu tī koe?*  
 'Would you like a cup of tea?'  
 'Either-or' questions use the particle *pe*:  
*E hau koe pe hēai?*  
 'Are you coming or not?'  
*He tama pe he teine te tamaiti?*  
 'Is the baby a boy or a girl?'

Questions which cannot be answered by 'Yes' or 'No' and which require new information in their answers, make use of a number of question words.

#### 7.6.2 *ai*

Personal pronoun, 'who, whom':

*Na tāmāte e ai te puā?*  
 'Who killed the pig?'  
*Ko ai te kua fano?*  
 'Who has gone?'  
*Na foki ki a te ai te ika?*  
 'To whom was the fish given?'

#### 7.6.3 *hei*

Clitic agent pronoun, 'who' (see 4.2):

*Na hei tāmātea te puā?*  
 'Who killed the pig?'

#### 7.6.4 *ā*

Pronoun, verb or qualifier, 'what':

*Ko koe e fai ā?* (pronoun)  
 'What are you doing?'

*He ā tēnā?* (pronoun)

‘What is that?’

*E ā mai koe?* (verb)

‘How are you?’

*He puha ā tēnā?* (qualifier)

‘What sort of box is that?’

#### 7.6.5 *āfea*

Temporal adverb, referring to future time, ‘when’:

*E hau āfea te kovana?*

‘When is the Governor coming?’

#### 7.6.6 *anafea*

Temporal adverb, referring to past time, ‘when’:

*Na hau anafea te vaka?*

‘When did the ship arrive?’

#### 7.6.7 *fea*

(i) Locative pronoun, ‘where’:

*E fano koe ki fea?*

‘Where are you going?’

*Na hau te vaka mai fea?*

‘Where did the ship come from?’

(ii) Noun qualifier, ‘which’

*E fofou koe ki te kofu fea?*

‘Which shirt do you want?’

#### 7.6.8 *tēfea*, pl. *iēfea*

Pronoun, ‘which one(s), where (of things)’:

*Tēfea taku ika? Iēfea aku ika?*

‘Where is my fish?’ ‘Which are my fish?’

#### 7.6.9 *he ā . . . ai, aiheā . . . ai*

‘Why’:

*He ā na fano ai ia ki Hāmoa?*

‘Why did he go to Samoa?’

When a question consists of the single word ‘Why?’, *aiheā* is used:

*Ko au e fiafano nei. Aiheā?*

‘I want to go now.’ ‘Why?’

#### 7.6.10 *vehea*

Verb and qualifier, ‘how’:

*E vehea mai te tauale?*

‘How is the patient?’

*E fai vehea?*

‘How shall (we) do it?’

7.6.11 *fia*

Interrogative numeral, 'how many':

*E fia ia ika?*

'How many fish are there?'

*E toka fia nā tino?*

'How many people?'

7.7 OBJECT INCORPORATION

In this construction, the object of a transitive verb becomes part of the verb phrase, resulting in an intransitive verb referring to a type of activity. The object cannot have any articles or modifiers attached to it, and acts more like a qualifier of the verb:

*E tau tiale pea lava te fafine*

'The woman just keeps on flower-picking'

Compare:

*E tau pea lava e te fafine nā tiale iēnā*

'The woman just keeps on picking those flowers'

*Na kave e ai te tāvale?*

'Who drove the car?'

*Ko ai te na kave tāvale?*

'Who drove?'

Other examples: *fau fale* 'house building', *tau ulu* 'breadfruit picking', *talai vaka* 'canoe building', *inu pia* 'beer drinking'.

## 8. SUBORDINATE CLAUSES AND COMPLEX SENTENCES

A **subordinate clause** is a sentence which forms part of another sentence. Sentences which contain such clauses are known as **complex sentences**. Most subordinate clauses give some extra information about the situation described in the main clause. The following example of a **temporal** or 'when' clause should make these remarks clear:

*E kāmata te fono      kāfai e goto te lā*

(main clause)                      (subordinate clause)

'The meeting will begin when the sun sets'

Subordinate clauses are often grammatically equivalent to prepositional phrases or temporal adverbs; compare the above example with the following:

*E kāmata te fono āpō*

'The meeting will begin tonight'

*E kamata te fono i te afiafi -pō*

'The meeting will begin this evening'

The most important kinds of subordinate clause, and the conjunctions which introduce them, are discussed below.



### 8.1 TEMPORAL CLAUSES

When a temporal clause refers to the future, as in the above example, or to a habitual situation, it begins with *kāfai* 'when':

*E ino e te tautai te taumanu kāfai e fātoā lalaga*  
 'The master fisherman enters the shoal when it first rises'

However, if a 'when' clause refers to something that happened on a particular occasion in the past, a nominalisation is used instead of a *kāfai* clause:

*Na maua te uka i toku fanoga ki te fale koloa*  
 'I got the fishing line when I went to the store'

### 8.2 CONDITIONAL CLAUSES

**Conditional** or 'if' clauses are of two types. If the condition is possible of fulfilment, *kāfai* is used. Such clauses are very similar to 'when' clauses, and it is sometimes difficult to decide which way to translate them into English.

*Kāfai e hau koe, e vave uma te gāluega*  
 (subordinate clause) (main clause)  
 'If you come, the work will be finished quickly'

*Kāfai e moni, e talitonu au ki ei.*  
 'If (the things I am told) are genuine, I believe them'

If the condition cannot be fulfilled, the conjunction *kana* is used:

*Kana hau koe, na fakauma te gāluega*  
 'If you had come, the work would have been finished'

*Kana i kinei te faiāoga, e fehili au ki ei*  
 'If the teacher were here, I would ask him'

### 8.3 REASON CLAUSES

These are introduced by *auā* 'because' or by *ona*:

*Fai e koe te tonu, auā e matua koe i a te au*  
 (main clause) (subordinate clause)  
 'You decide, because you are older than I am'

*E hēki nofo au, ona kua fano koe ki uta*  
 'I did not stay, because you had gone to the islets'

### 8.4 PURPOSE CLAUSES AND CAUTION CLAUSES

Clauses which express intention or purpose are introduced by *ke*, a conjunction which has a number of uses (see 5.4):

*Lea lahi, ke lagona e ki mātou uma*  
 'Speak loudly, so that we can all hear'

Almost opposite in meaning to *ke* is *nā* 'lest, for fear that, in case':

*Koe nahe kake ki te niu, nā pakū koe*  
 'Don't climb the coconut tree, lest you fall'

*Na kave e ki mātou te lā, nā te aʻfi e mate*  
 'We took the sail, in case the engine broke down'

### 8.5 RELATIVE CLAUSES

A relative clause is a sentence which is part of a noun phrase, and which acts as a qualifier of the nucleus of the noun phrase. Relative clauses are somewhat similar to sentences with fronted noun phrases, and the same rules apply to the use of personal pronouns, and of *ai* and *ki ei* in them.

In the following examples, the relative clause is enclosed in brackets (note that it directly follows the noun that it qualifies):

*E kō iloa te tino (na fano ki Niu Hila)*  
 'I know the man (who went to New Zealand)'

*E kō iloa te tino (na ia tāmatea te puā)*  
 'I know the man (who killed the pig)'

*Fano ki te fale (nae nofo ai toku mātua)*  
 'Go to the house (in which my mother used to live)'

*E mamao te motu (na fano te tino ki ei)*  
 'The island (which the man went to) is far away'

*Lea ki te tino (e o ia te fale)*  
 'Speak to the man (who owns the house)'

### 8.6 COMPLEMENT CLAUSES

All the subordinate clauses we have looked at so far are an optional part of the sentence. If they were removed, the main clauses would still seem complete in themselves.

There are a number of verbs in Tokelauan which can be followed by a complete sentence instead of an unmarked noun phrase. This kind of subordinate clause is necessary in order to complete the idea of the main verb. Such clauses are called **complement clauses**.

There are many verbs which take complement clauses, but the commonest are *mafai* 'be possible, be able, can', *tatau* 'be necessary, be right', *faigatā* 'be difficult' and *faigofie* 'be easy'. In traditional Tokelauan, these clauses were introduced by *oi* or *ke*. Nowadays, it is common to use the conjunction *ona*, which was originally a Samoan word. In the examples below, *oi* and *ke* are used, but in all cases, *ona* can be substituted for them:

*E mafai ke maua nā tamā magō i te namo*  
 'It is possible to catch small sharks in the lagoon'

*E hē mafai oi havali te toaina*  
 'The old man cannot walk'

*E tatau ke inu koe ki nā vai*  
 'You must take the medicine'

*E faigatā oi fai te gālua tēnā*  
 'It is difficult to do that work'

It is quite common for a noun phrase from the complement clause to be placed before the conjunction, and behave as though it belonged with the main verb:

*E hē mafai e te toaina oi havali*  
 'The old man cannot walk'

*E tatau koe ke inu ki nā vai*

‘You must take the medicine’

Complement clauses can also occur with verbs of knowing, understanding and saying etc. These verbs take a noun phrase referring to the person who knows, or says, something, and a complement clause describing what it is that he knows or says. Complement clauses of this kind do not have a conjunction, but they often begin with a fronted noun phrase:

*E iloa e ki tātou, e fano te fonu ki gāuta oi fānau ai*

‘We know that the turtle goes inland to lay her eggs there’

*Lea ki te tino ko ia kā fano tāeao*

‘Tell the man that he is to go tomorrow’

Complement clauses are an extremely complex part of Tokelauan grammar, involving a great many different kinds of verbs. In this section we have had space to touch on only the more commonly used kinds of complements.

## ABBREVIATIONS

Bb.	Biblical
cf.	compare
conj.	conjunction
e.g.	for example
Eng.	English
Ger.	German
i.e.	that is
ij.	interjection
lit.	literally, literal meaning
met., metaph.	metaphorical
n.	noun
n.b.	note, take note that
num.	numeral
pl.	plural
qual.	qualifier
Sam.	Samoan
sing., sg.	singular
s.o.	someone
sp., Sp.	species
s.th.	something
trad.	traditional
v.	verb
*	incorrect form

## ARRANGEMENT OF ENTRIES IN THE DICTIONARY

The words are listed in the Dictionary in alphabetical order, following the Tokelauan alphabet as set out in 1.1 of the Grammar. Note that short vowels precede long vowels, giving the following orders: *afi*, *afī*; *alo*, *ālo*; *mama*, *mamā*, *māmā*.

Words which are formed from other base words by means of prefixes and suffixes are listed separately. For example, *manatu*, *mānatunatu*, *fakamanatu* and *fakamanatuga* are all separate entries.

Each head word is accompanied by the following information:

1. One or more class designations, such as noun, verb, conjunction etc. The different word classes are explained and discussed in the Grammar (Section 2.2).
2. The gloss, or meaning of the word, in English.
3. One or more examples of the word used in Tokelauan phrases or sentences, with English translations. In a small minority of entries, usually nouns with very uncomplicated meanings, such as *elefane* 'elephant', no examples are given as they would serve no useful purpose.

Head words which belong to more than one word class receive separate glosses and examples after each word class designation.

Other types of information which may be given in an entry, usually enclosed in brackets, include the following:

4. Plural forms.
5. Biological type (fish, plant) if the word is a species name.
6. Scientific names of species where these have been identified.
7. Limiting contexts in which the word may be used, for example (of animals only).
8. Information relating to Tokelau custom which the reader needs to know in order to interpret and use the word correctly.
9. If the word is borrowed from another language, this information is given in square brackets, for example **Eheta** n. [Eng. Easter.].

The following kinds of cross-reference are made to other entries:

(cf. \_\_\_\_\_) refers the reader to entries that are semantically related but which differ in some significant respect.

(Also \_\_\_\_\_) and (See also \_\_\_\_\_) refer the reader to words which are synonymous, or nearly so.

(See \_\_\_\_\_) directly after the head word refers the reader to the entry under which this form is to be found. Most such cases involve plural forms.

Additional comments on the organisation of entries are made where appropriate in the Grammar. Users of the Dictionary are particularly advised to read Section 2, WORDS.

