

# TONGAN PERSONAL PRONOUNS\*

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## 1. Background: Tongan Grammar

Tongan is an ergative, VSO, mostly isolating language. The template of a clause is given in (1); an illustrative example, in (2):

(1) Tense-Aspect-Mood Particle (TAM), Predicate, Arguments, PPs

(2) Oku kai 'e Sione 'a e ika 'i he potu ki tahi  
Pres eat Erg Sione Abs Det fish Loc Det area Loc sea  
"Sione eats the fish in the area of the sea."

[Tchekhoff, 1981:15]

### 1.1. Tongan Pronouns

Tongan has two series of personal pronouns. Those in the first series act like DPs: They can function as arguments, following the predicate and preceded by a case marker, as in (3a), or they can be the objects of prepositions as in (3b).

- (3) a. Na'e taki 'e ia 'a kinautolu  
past lead erg 3sg abs 3pl  
"He led them."  
b. Na'e hulohula 'e Sione mo kimaua  
Past dance erg Sione with 1exc.du  
"Sione danced with us."

These pronouns meet Cardinaletti & Starke's (1994) (henceforth, C&S) tests for "strong" pronouns. They can be co-ordinated; they are assigned  $\theta$ -roles; and they are distributed like DPs. They can be new in discourse, defined by pointing, or bear contrastive stress. The paradigm of strong pronouns is presented in (4).

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## (4) Paradigm of strong pronouns

1 <sup>st</sup> Exclusive	Singular	<i>au</i>
	Dual	<i>kimaua</i>
	Plural	<i>kimautolu</i>
1 <sup>st</sup> Inclusive	Singular	<i>kita</i>
	Dual	<i>kitaua</i>
	Plural	<i>kitautolu</i>
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Singular	<i>koe</i>
	Dual	<i>kimoua</i>
	Plural	<i>kimoutolu</i>
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Singular	<i>ia</i>
	Dual	<i>kinaua</i>
	Plural	<i>kinautolu</i>

In addition to the strong personal pronouns, there is a set of monosyllabic “deficient” personal pronouns in Tongan. These occur in the left periphery of a clause, realizing the  $\phi$ -features of their referent, and most consist of a phonological reduction (what I will call the “pronominal root”) of their strong counterparts.

These pronouns pass C&S’s tests for deficient pronouns. They cannot be conjoined, occur in a very restricted set of environments, are morphologically reduced relative to their strong counterparts, and must have a discourse antecedent.

Not all deficient pronouns in Tongan are phonological clitics, however. A minimal word in Tongan has a (C)VV structure. And while most of these deficient pronouns consist only of CV, and are thus enclitic on whatever precedes, the plural forms and one allomorph of the first exclusive singular have the form CVV and thus are not phonological clitics. They are not true second-position clitics. They follow the TAM if one is present (5). When there is no complementizer, this appears to be second position, but when the TAM is preceded by a complementizer, it is third position. If there is a complementizer and no TAM, they immediately follow the complementizer (6) – again, apparently second position. If there is neither a TAM nor a complementizer, some of the deficient pronouns can occur sentence-initially (7). The paradigm of these deficient pronouns is presented in (8).

- (5) *Ka ne nau fakato’oto’a*, [ *kuo nau ma’u ia* ]  
 if PAST 3pl brave PERF 3pl catch 3sg  
 “If they had acted courageously, they would have got it.”

[Churchward 1953:41]

- (6) ...*ka ne me'a hake toko taha pē ki he mo'ungá*  
 and-instead 3SG go up person one only DIR DET mountain  
 “[Jesus left the people ...] and (he) went up alone into the desert”  
 [Churchward 1953:49]

- (7) *Kau tutu mu'a 'eku paipá*  
 1SG light please my pipe  
 “I will (or, Let me) light my pipe.”  
 [Churchward 1953:127]

(8) Paradigm of deficient personal pronouns:

1 <sup>st</sup> Exclusive	Singular	<i>u</i>
	Dual	<i>ma</i>
	Plural	<i>mau</i>
1 <sup>st</sup> Inclusive	Singular	<i>te</i>
	Dual	<i>ta</i>
	Plural	<i>tau</i>
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Singular	<i>ke</i>
	Dual	<i>mo</i>
	Plural	<i>mou</i>
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Singular	<i>ne</i>
	Dual	<i>na</i>
	Plural	<i>nau</i>

### 1.1. Tongan Deficient Pronouns are Clitics

Phonological enclisis occurs with those deficient pronouns that consist of a light syllable. These pronouns form a single phonological word with whatever precedes them, causing the main stress on the preceding element to be shifted rightward. Thus *oku ne*, underlyingly /ʔo.ku/ + /ne/ is realized as [ʔo.'ku.ne] (written ‘okú ne). Deficient pronouns consisting of a heavy syllable are minimal words in Tongan and thus phonologically independent. Nonetheless, they are (a type of) clitics: Their distribution and syntactic status are identical to that of the light-syllable forms (with the exception that they can be sentence-initial).

C&S distinguish between weak pronouns and clitics in the following ways: Weak pronouns are XPs and thus occur in (a restricted set of) places available to maximal projections; clitics are X<sup>0</sup>s. In Tongan, the relevant diagnostic is doubling.

C&S claim that doubling must involve at least one clitic; no combination of weak and strong pronouns is possible. Tongan robustly allows doubling of deficient pronouns, as in (9). In (9b,c), this doubling occurs with phonologically independent clitic pronouns.

- (9) a. Na`u            lavea    au.  
 Past+1sg-exc get-hurt 1sg-exc  
 “I got hurt.”
- b. Na`a mau        `alu kimaautolu.  
 Past 1pl-exc go 1-pl-exc  
 “We are going.”
- c. Na`a nau `aka `e kinautolu `ae        pulu  
 Past 3pl kick erg 3pl                abs+det ball  
 “They kicked the ball.”

There is also morpho-phonological evidence that these pronouns are clitics. Dukes (1996) and Kikusawa (2002) claim that the allomorphy that exists between TAMs and deficient pronouns is evidence of tight constituency, *i.e.* that they are adjoined heads. The first-person exclusive singular pronoun *u* has allomorphs *ou*, and *ku*, respectively, after the TAMs *oku* (“present”), and *na`a* (“past”). The TAMs *na`e* (“past”) and *e* (“future”) have allomorphs *na`a* and *te*, respectively, before any deficient pronoun, even if the latter is phonologically independent.

The fact that these pronouns meet the morpho-syntactic, but not the phonological, requirements of clitic-hood seems to be contra Sportiche’s (1995:4n) observation that syntactic clitics are “necessarily phonological clitics” because no syntactic operation can separate them from their host. On the basis of their distribution, including doubling and allomorphy, I henceforth refer to all of the deficient personal pronouns in Tongan as clitics.

## 1.2. Tongan Phrase Structure

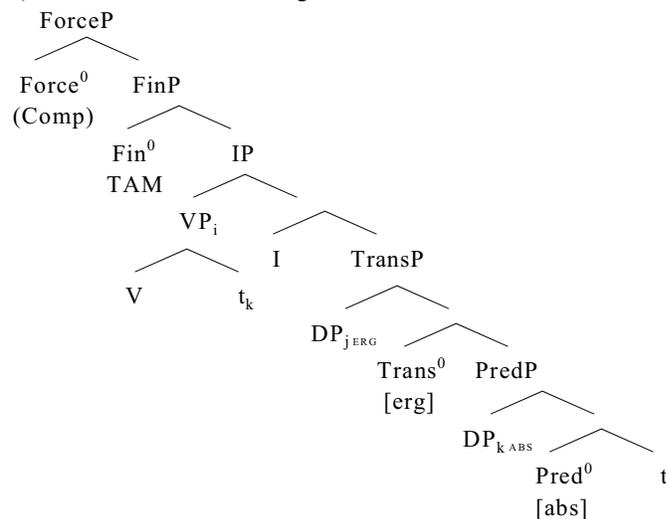
I assume a VP-fronting analysis of VSO in Tongan, following Massam (2001, et. al. for Niuean). In this analysis, arguments check case in [Spec, vP]. VP-remnant moves to [Spec, TP]. TAM is in CP. I adapt her formulation slightly, adopting Bowers’ (2000) split-vP and Rizzi’s (1997) split-CP.

Bowers (2002) proposes that vP be subdivided into TransitiveP (TransP) and PredicateP (PredP). Working with nominative-accusative languages, he proposes that accusative Case is checked in [Spec, TransP] and nominative Case, in [Spec, PredP]; PredP dominates TransP. I propose that in (at least some) ergative languages, ergative Case is checked in [Spec, TransP] and absolutive Case, in [Spec, PredP]; TransP dominates PredP.

Rizzi (1997) proposes that the CP system consists minimally of ForceP-(FocusP\*)-(TopicP\*)-(FocusP\*)-FiniteP. . Force<sup>0</sup> indicates the type of clause and allows it to be selected by a higher X<sup>0</sup>. Finite<sup>0</sup> (Fin<sup>0</sup>) reflects qualities of the IP – mood, subject agreement, tense. I propose that in Tongan, TAMs are in Finite<sup>0</sup> and express basic tense and aspect. Finer aspectual (but not tense) information is expressed through verbal morphology. Complementizers are in Force<sup>0</sup>.

I thus propose the phrase structure in (10) for Tongan sentences. The clitic pronoun (if present) is in Fin<sup>0</sup>, where it is adjoined to the TAM, if a TAM is present. If no TAM is present, the clitic is alone in Fin<sup>0</sup>. Van Craenenbroeck & van Koppen (2002), propose the same locus for Dutch subject clitics. At PF, a phonologically weak clitic leans on the closest phonologically overt element to its left, whether it is a TAM in Fin<sup>0</sup> or a complementizer in Fin<sup>0</sup>.

(10) Phrase structure for Tongan :



## 2. Typology and Morphology of Tongan Pronouns

Following Dechaine & Wiltschko (2000), I propose that “pronouns” are not a unified syntactic category but a number of different pro-forms including at least Pro-DPs, pro- $\Phi$ Ps, and Pro-NPs. I propose a slightly altered typology for Tongan.

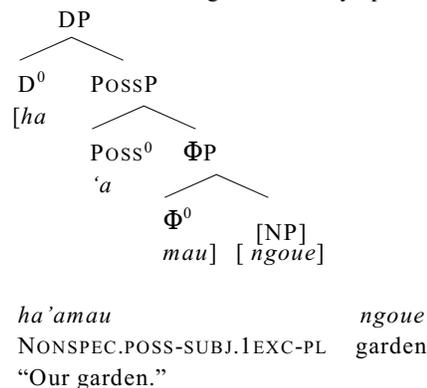
### 2.1. Possessive Pronouns

The transparency of the possessive pronouns in Tongan allows a view into their internal syntax. In turn, they provide clues about the syntax of personal pronouns. Each possessive pronoun consists, minimally, of a pronominal root realizing the  $\Phi$ -

features of the possessor as well as a possessive Case marker. In addition, each of the three syntactic types of possessive pronouns contains an array of functional projections which determine its syntactic type.

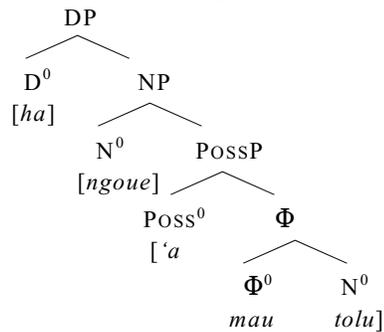
“Ordinary” possessive pronouns are Pro-Ds. They take an NP (the possessum) as their complement; together they form a DP. The internal syntactic structure of these pronouns (11) is as follows: The complement of  $D^0$  is a PossessiveP (PossP); the complement of  $Poss^0$  is  $\Phi^0$ . Morphologically, these pro-forms contain a determiner (realizing  $D^0$ ) encoding specificity and emotional import; a genitive Case markers (realizing  $Poss^0$ ), encoding the relationship between possessor and possessum; and a pronominal root encoding the  $\phi$ -features of the possessor (realizing  $\Phi^0$ ). This pronominal root is formally like a clitic personal pronoun

(11) Internal syntax/structure of Tongan “ordinary” possessive pronouns



“Adjectival” possessive pronouns are Pro-PossPs. They modify an NP possessum which is the complement to a (separate) determiner. Like adjectives they can be predicative or attributive. The internal syntactic structure of these PossPs (12), consists of a  $Poss^0$  whose complement is  $\Phi P$ ;  $\Phi^0$  in turn takes an  $N^0$  as its complement. Morphologically, they consist of a possessive case marker (realizing  $Poss^0$ ) and a strong personal pronoun, minus *ki-*. The latter realizes both  $\Phi^0$  and  $N^0$ .  $\Phi^0$  encodes the  $\phi$ -features of the possessor, and  $N^0$  stands for the possessor itself; it is null when the possessor is singular, *ua* (“two”) when it is dual, and *tolu* (“three”) when it is plural

## (12) Internal syntax/structure of Tongan “adjectival” possessive pronouns



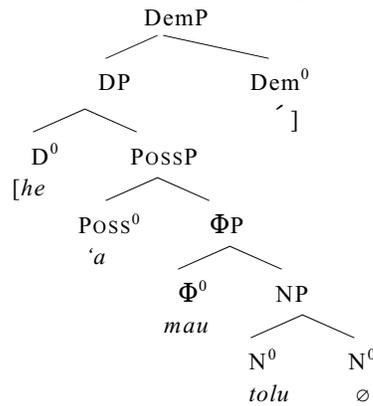
*ha ngoue 'amautolu*  
 INDEF garden POSS-SUBJ.1PL-EXCL  
 “Our garden.”

“Emphatic” possessive pronouns are Pro-DemonstrativePs (Pro-DemPs). Always definite and specific, they can stand alone as arguments without an NP complement. Their internal syntax (13) is as follows<sup>1</sup>: Dem<sup>0</sup> takes a complement DP; D<sup>0</sup> takes POSSP; POSS<sup>0</sup> takes ΦP; and Φ<sup>0</sup> takes N<sup>0</sup>. This N<sup>0</sup> takes another N<sup>0</sup>. Morphologically, Dem<sup>0</sup> is realized by the definite accent at the right edge (it normally occurs at the right edge of a DP), D<sup>0</sup>, by the specific determiner *he*, and POSS<sup>0</sup>, by a genitive Case marker. A strong personal pronoun, minus *ki-*, realizes Φ<sup>0</sup> and the first N<sup>0</sup> (null, *ua* or *tolu*); the second N<sup>0</sup> is null and stands for the possessor.

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<sup>1</sup> In this structure, DemP appears to be right-headed while other XPs are left-headed. This structure was chosen because it reflects the fact that the demonstrative element appears at the right edge of DP. However, it is plausible that DemP is, in fact, left-headed, and that a later syntactic or PF operation reorders Dem<sup>0</sup> and its complement DP. The details of such an analysis have yet to be worked out.

## (13) Internal syntax/structure of Tongan “emphatic” possessive pronouns

*he'emautolú*

EMPH.SPEC.POSS-SUBJ.1EXC-PL

“ours” (*i.e.* “the one belonging to us.”)

Thus, the  $\Phi^0$  pronominal root of “ordinary” possessive pronouns is isomorphic with clitic personal pronouns and the  $\Phi P$  ( $\Phi^0$  plus  $N^0$ ) pronominal root of “adjectival” and “emphatic” possessive pronouns is isomorphic with strong personal pronouns, minus *ki-*.

## 2.2. Personal Pronouns

The personal pronouns in Tongan thus form the bases of the possessive pronouns above. They encode person (1st Inclusive, 1st Exclusive, 2nd, 3rd) and number (singular, dual, plural). Strong personal pronouns are pro-DPs. Internally, they consist of a  $D^0$  which takes  $\Phi P$  as its complement;  $\Phi^0$  takes  $N^0$ . Morphologically, the determiner is null (or possibly the *ki-* found in non-singular forms);  $\Phi^0$  consists of the pronominal root, and  $N^0$  is null, *ua* (“two”), or *tolu* (“three”). Formally,  $\Phi P$  here is identical to the proposed  $\Phi P$  in “adjectival” and “emphatic” possessive pronouns. Clitic personal pronouns are  $\Phi^0$ s. They contain no internal syntax and no morphological structure. Formally, these  $\Phi^0$ s are identical to the proposed  $\Phi^0$  in the “ordinary” possessive pronouns and similar to the  $\Phi^0$  in the strong personal pronouns.

## 3. More About the Distribution of Clitics

Clitics realize A (agent/subject of transitive) and S (subject of intransitive) but not O (object of transitive) arguments – *i.e.*, a “nominative” distribution. However, authors disagree about when a clitic is obligatory, when it is optional, and when it

is prohibited. My own work with a Tongan speaker yields yet another set of results, and his grammaticality judgements of isolated sentences vary, suggesting that larger context may play a role<sup>1</sup>. Although they disagree on the specifics, authors generally agree that clitics are “more obligatory” in other persons and numbers than in the 3rd-person singular, and that they are “more obligatory” for A than for S arguments. For my consultant, first-person A and S arguments are obligatorily realized with a clitic pronoun.

The table in (14) shows the distribution of clitics as described by the various authors and by my own consultant. In (15), I present the same information in the form of a hierarchy of acceptability or obligatoriness of cliticization with different persons and numbers and argument types.

(14) Grammaticality of cliticization by argument type, person, number

	1 <sup>st</sup> A, S	2 <sup>nd</sup> A, S; 3 <sup>rd</sup> non-sg A, S	3 <sup>rd</sup> Sg A	3 <sup>rd</sup> Sg S
<b>Tchekhoff</b>	mandatory			optional
<b>Chung</b>	mandatory		optional	
<b>Field Notes</b>	mandatory	optional		marginal
<b>Churchward</b>	optional			marginal
<b>Dukes</b>	optional			marginal
<b>Otsuka</b>	optional			marginal

(15) 1st A, S > 2nd A, S ~ 3rd non-singular A, S > 3rd singular A > 3rd singular S

Various factors affect the acceptability of a clitic pronoun realizing a 3rd-person singular S argument. My consultant’s judgement of the grammaticality of certain sentences (without context) varies, suggesting that acceptability of a clitic may be affected by context or discourse. The addition of a PP or adverbial modifier to the clause improves the acceptability of clitics (compare 16b,d). In complex

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<sup>1</sup> As described above, a clitic is sometimes “doubled” by its strong counterpart in argument position. In general, authors agree that this construction is used for contrastive emphasis.

sentences, the relationship between two clauses and the way an argument is encoded in the first clause affect the way it can be encoded in the second (see 17-19, below).

- (16) a. Na'a lavea ia  
past get-hurt 3sg  
"He got hurt"
- b. \*Na'a ne lavea  
past 3sg get-hurt
- c. Na'a lavea ia 'i he hele  
past get-hurt 3sg loc det knife  
"He was hurt by the knife."
- d. Na'a ne lavea 'i he hele  
past 3sg get-hurt loc det knife  
"He was hurt by the knife."

The presence or absence of contrastive focus on the second of two conjoined clauses affects cliticization. In (14), when the 3<sup>rd</sup>-person S argument of the second clause has a "surprising" referent (14a), it is realized as a strong pronoun. When it has the "expected" referent (14b), it is realized as a clitic.

- (17) a. Na'e taa'i e Sione 'a Pita, pea tangi ia.  
Past hit-trans Erg Sione Abs Pita, then cry 3sg  
"Sionei hit Pitaj, then hei/\*j cried."
- b. Na'e taa'i 'e Sione 'a Pita, pea ne tangi.  
past hit-trans erg Sione abs Pita, and 3sg cry  
"Sionei hit Pitaj, and hej/\*i cried."

So far, I have only tested cliticization in relative clauses with third-person singular A arguments. If A is realized in the matrix clause as a pronominal clitic, it may optionally be realized in the relative clause as a clitic (with or without "doubling") (18a,b). If it is realized in the matrix clause as a strong pronoun, it is obligatorily realized as a clitic pronoun in the relative clause (18c,d).

- (18) a. Na'a ne fakaha ange kia Seini 'a hono taa  
past 3sg show loc Seini abs poss photo  
na'a ne fai taa'i ('e ia)  
past 3sg take erg 3sg  
"He<sub>i</sub> showed Seini<sup>j</sup> the photo of her<sub>j</sub> that he<sub>i</sub> had taken."

- b. Na'a ne fakaha ange kia Seini 'a hono taa  
 past 3sg show loc Seini abs poss photo  
 na'e fai taa'i 'e ia  
 past take erg 3sg  
 "He<sub>i</sub> showed Seini<sub>j</sub> the photo of her<sub>j</sub> that he<sub>i</sub> had taken."
- c. Na'a fakaha ange 'e ia kia Seini 'a hono taa  
 past show erg 3sg loc Seini abs poss photo  
 na'e ne fai taa'i ('e ia)  
 past 3sg take erg 3sg  
 "He<sub>i</sub> showed Seini<sub>j</sub> the photo of her<sub>j</sub> that he<sub>i</sub> had taken."
- d. \*Na'a fakaha ange 'e ia kia Seini 'a hono taa  
 past show erg 3sg loc Seini abs poss photo  
 na'e fai taa'i 'e ia  
 past take erg 3sg  
 "He<sub>i</sub> showed Seini<sub>j</sub> the photo of her<sub>j</sub> that he<sub>i</sub> had taken."

If third-person S is a clitic in the first of two disjoined clauses, it is optionally realized as a clitic in the second (19a,b). If it is a strong pronoun in the first, it cannot be realized as a clitic in the second; it must be a full pronoun (19c,d).

- (19) a. 'Oku ne lea lelei pē, ka 'oku ikai  
 pres 3sg speak good but pres not  
 ke ne mahino ki ha taha.  
 that 3sg be-clear loc det one  
 "He speaks clearly, but no-one understands him."  
 (Lit: He speaks well, but he is not clear to anyone)
- b. 'Oku ne lea lelei pē, ka 'oku ikai  
 pres 3sg speak good but pres not  
 ke mahino ia ki ha taha.  
 that be-clear 3sg loc det one  
 "He speaks clearly, but no-one understands him."  
 (Lit: He speaks well, but he is not clear to anyone)
- c. \*'Oku lea lelei pē ia, ka 'oku ikai  
 pres speak good 3sg, but pres not  
 that 3sg clear loc det one  
 ke ne mahino ki ha taha.

- d. ‘Oku lea lelei pē ia , ka ‘oku ikai  
 pres speak good 3sg, but pres not  
 ke mahino ia ki ha taha.  
 comp be-clear 3sg loc det one  
 “He speaks clearly, but no-one understands him.”  
 (Lit: He speaks well, but he is not clear to anyone)

#### 4. Clitic Placement

##### 4.1. Previous accounts of cliticization in Tongan

Authors have proposed a variety of mechanisms for cliticization in Tongan. Chung (1978) claims that it occurs via a copy-and-deletion rule targeting pronominal “subjects”. A copy of a pronominal subject is placed to the immediate right of the TAM, and the original subject pronoun is deleted under co-reference unless contrastive or emphatic. Tchekhoff (1981) argues that clitics are “agent” pronouns with an inherent agentive  $\Theta$ -role, whereas the  $\Theta$ -role of strong pronouns is determined by case markers and the verb. Dukes (2001) claims that Tongan clitics are nominative pronouns licensed by a lexical syntactic-valency alternation. Every predicate has a nominative-taking counterpart; their semantic valency is the same, and the status and reference of the nominative pronoun is thus shared with the highest post-verbal pronoun (which may be null). Otsuka (2000) argues that cliticization occurs via head-adjunction to  $T^0$ . A language-specific rule dictates that clitics must have external theta-role (for her, this includes S, since she claims that only aspectual verbs are unaccusative in Tongan). Clitics are generated and assigned a  $\Theta$ -role in [Spec, VP], then adjoin to  $T^0$ . Kikusawa (2002) argues that Tongan clitics are not pronouns but subject-agreement particles on the TAM; a null “third person general” agreement morpheme is present for non-pronominal DPs and optionally used instead of *ne* with third-person singular pronominal arguments

##### 4.2. Note on a similar phenomenon in Samoan:

Cook (1994) argues that Samoan clitics are “antifocused” pronouns. He notes that the clitic position is one of “low focus.” 1<sup>st</sup>- and 2<sup>nd</sup>- person pronouns are naturally “in focus” due to being at deictic centre of speech act and thus require an “agent defocusing” suffix on verb if they appear in clitic position

##### 4.3. Proposal: Clitics merged in Fin0 to encode $\phi$ -features of viewpoint

I propose that the Tongan  $\Phi^0$  (clitic pronoun) is merged directly into Fin<sup>0</sup> and is head-adjoined to the TAM particle there. This clitic is not merged in with fully-specified  $\phi$ -features; rather, it gets them from a pronominal argument with which it is co-indexed. A clitic in Fin0 expresses “point of view” or “speaker empathy.”

Note that the hierarchy of likelihood of cliticization ((15), repeated here as (20a)) is consistent with Kuno's (1976) "speech act participant empathy hierarchy"(10b) and Cook's (1994) empathy hierarchy (20c)<sup>2</sup>. Fin<sup>0</sup>, in addition to being the locus of coarse-grained tense and aspect information, has also been proposed as the locus of "point-of-view" (Rizzi 1997; Grohmann 2000).

- (17) a. 1st A, S > 2nd A, S ~ 3rd non-sg A, S > 3rd sg A > 3rd sg S
- b. speaker ≤ hearer ≤ 3rd person
- c. speech-act participants < 3rd person pronouns < humans < animates < natural forces < inanimates

Tongan clitic pronouns which do not instantiate speech act participants require a discourse antecedent. When a referent is third person singular, cliticization seems to be associated with continuous reference (as in a narrative sequence) or a subject that is backgrounded or "expected." In Kuno's (1976) "topic empathy hierarchy," discourse-anaphoric referents outrank discourse-nonanaphoric referents.

Tongan clitic pronouns are nominative in distribution. Rizzi (1997) notes that Fin<sup>0</sup> is associated with nominative subjects. Grohmann (2000) notes that nominative case is specifically associated with viewpoint. In Kuno's (1976) "surface structure empathy hierarchy," nominative subjects outrank other arguments.

Cliticization in Tongan is not derived by movement, evidenced by the allowability of clitic doubling. A- arguments remain in situ (in Case position) and may be overt or null<sup>3</sup>. Clitic doubling results when the argument co-indexed with a clitic pronoun is pronounced. A clitic pronoun gets its  $\phi$ -features and referential index from the highest pronominal argument (the highest argument is the closest to Fin<sup>0</sup>). Thus it is locality – not  $\theta$ -role, nominative Case, or "subjecthood" that prevents cliticization of O arguments. The valuation of the clitic by a local argument is reminiscent of Agree. It is also similar to Chung's (1978) copying analysis, but without reference to a "subject".

Although the valuation of a clitic's  $\phi$  features by a pronominal argument is reminiscent of an Agree relationship, Tongan clitics are not agreement morphemes. Although syntactically merged into Fin<sup>0</sup>, the locus of the TAM particle, these clitics can surface on a complementizer if no TAM is present, and a subset of them can

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<sup>2</sup>In Tongan, strong pronouns other than the third-person singular (*ia*), as well as all clitic pronouns, can only stand for human referents.

<sup>3</sup> Null-pronominalization in Tongan is not like Romance *pro*-drop which is licensed by verbal agreement; it is more like Chinese or Japanese in which arguments are phonologically null if easily identified due to discourse.

surface as free morphemes when there is no phonological material to their left. Moreover, these morphemes do not occur with non-pronominal DPs, and their occurrence with some pronouns is “optional.”

Since Tongan clitics are not arguments, they are not directly assigned a  $\Theta$ -role. Instead, they inherit one from their co-indexed pronominal argument (overt pronoun or  $\emptyset$ ). Jaeggli (1996) makes a similar claim for Germanic clitics.

As noted, the limitation of clitic pronouns to A and S arguments results from locality: The clitic is valued by the closest pronominal DP. I propose that it cannot be co-indexed with a non-pronominal DP because these have no  $\phi$ -features. This leaves open the problem of why a clitic cannot be co-indexed with an O argument if A is non-pronominal, if pronominal O has scrambled to the post-verbal focus position (yielding VOS word order), or if A has scrambled to the post-verbal focus position (out of its argument position), so that O is the closest pronoun in an argument position. Possibly the search area of the probe is limited to the closest argument position, and if this position does not contain a pronoun, the probe fails.

## 6. Conclusions

Tongan personal pronouns come in two series. Strong pronouns have the structure and internal syntax of DPs; clitics are  $\Phi$ 0s. The former can occur in any argument position (and anywhere else a DP is permitted), but the latter are restricted to the left periphery and are associated with intransitive and transitive “subjects” (A and S). Although the precise details of their distribution vary among writers (and, presumably, their Tongan consultants), clitics seem to be most obligatory/acceptable for first person A and S arguments, least so for the third-person singular S arguments, and intermediately so for other A and S arguments. Further refinements depend on pragmatic factors such as discourse anaphora, conjunction vs. disjunction of clauses, and “expectedness.” Each is in some way associated with (a rather imprecise notion of) viewpoint or speaker empathy.

I propose that Tongan clitics are merged in Fin0. This is the head associated with the viewpoint, of a clause. It is also associated with tense, aspect, and mood – sentential features encoded in the TAM particles, which are tightly bound with the clitic pronouns. I further propose that a clitic pronoun is merged into Fin0 unspecified for its  $\phi$ -features, which are valued by a local pronominal argument (this will be S or A, but never O). The clitic also receives its referential index and inherits its  $\Theta$ -role from this argument. It is thus locality, and not  $\Theta$ -role, nominative Case, or “subjecthood” that limits these clitic pronouns to A and S arguments.

This analysis is very preliminary. There are many details to be worked out. The theory needs to be refined, and the proposals need to be tested empirically. Although speakers do not report a difference in meaning between a clitic alone, a doubled clitic, or a strong pronoun, and grammaticality judgements are difficult sentences in isolation, they have clear and consistent preferences for production and interpretation in larger contexts; these need to be explored.

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