

## **The discourse function of focus constructions in Tokelauan**

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The Tokelauan (TOK) focus constructions I am particularly concerned with are ones in which a whole proposition is foregrounded, as opposed to those which focus a single NP. I hope to demonstrate two things, one to do with grammar and the other concerned with discourse structure<sup>1</sup>.

The grammatical point is simple: most of these constructions are based on elaborations of the equational sentence type, and thus bear some resemblance to English cleft and pseudo-cleft sentences. This is not at all surprising, since other languages with focus constructions of this kind also make use of the equational sentence (Foley & Van Valin 1985:361-363).

The study of discourse structure also suggests the existence of a widespread pattern. Here I take as my point of departure Prince's analysis of cleft and pseudo-clefts in English (1978:883-906). Foley and Van Valin (1985:360), commenting on Prince's work, point out that there is no detailed functional study of the uses of such constructions in other languages. This paper is a preliminary step in that direction. Prince distinguishes three functional types of cleft sentence in English. I can show that Tokelauan focus constructions fulfil these same three functions, even though formally they differ from the English types. The phenomena described by Prince, at first sight highly idiosyncratic in nature, are seen to be paralleled in their essentials in a very different language spoken in a very different society.

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<sup>1</sup> Many of the examples in this paper come from a corpus of tape-recorded material on traditional fishing and fishing skills in Tokelau. The speaker is a retired catechist in the Roman Catholic Church in Nukunonu, and thus a practised public speaker in his native language. In these texts one can see him using his old preacher's tricks to get his points across.

In what follows, I first describe the different formal structures which are used to present information in terms of a focus-presupposition articulation (Andrews 1985:77-80). The second part of the paper contains a brief account of Prince's analysis of the function of *it*-clefts and WH-clefts in English, followed by a discussion of the discourse functions of the Tokelauan types.

## Part 1: Syntactic types of focus construction

A few words on TOK simple sentence structure are in order. For verbal sentences, the unmarked word order is verb initial, as follows:

1. E nofo ia Afinemata i Vao  
 T/A dwell ART A. at V.  
 'Afinemata lives at Vao.'

However, it is possible, and in fact extremely common, for an NP to be positioned before the verb phrase. This is effected by means of the preposition *ko*:

2. Ko Afinemata e nofo i Vao.  
 'Afinemata lives at Vao.'

This process, which I shall refer to as *ko*-fronting, fulfils a number of functions: topicalization, left-dislocation, and focussing. Various grammatical cues usually make it clear which is involved, and I will here beg the whole question of distinguishing between them. I will gloss *ko* as TOP when it has a topicalizing function, and as PRED (for reasons which will be apparent later) when it unambiguously marks a focussed NP.

Equational sentences in TOK have a nominal predicate, introduced by *ko*. There is no copular verb. I will take the conventional view that the unmarked order in equational sentences is the one in which the predicate NP precedes the subject NP:

3. Ko      ona    hoāvaka    nā      tino    iēnā  
 PRED   his    crew      the-PL   men    those  
 ┌────────── predicate ─────────┬────────── subject ─────────┐  
 'Those men are his crew members'

Nominal predicates may be indefinite, in which case they are not necessarily introduced by *ko*; these are always of the class membership type and will not figure prominently in this discussion.

The subject of an equational sentence, like a noun phrase in a verbal sentence, can be *ko*-fronted:

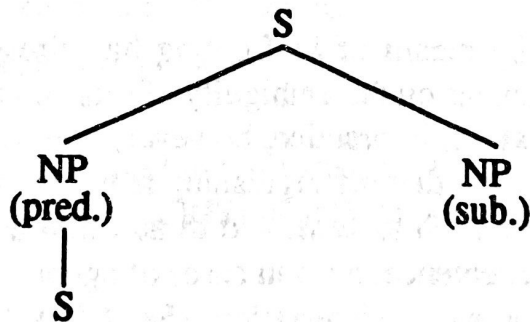
4.	Ko	nā	tino	iēnā	ko	ona	lava	hoāvaka
	TOP	the-PL	men	those	PRED	his	INT	crew members
	predicate				subject			

'Those men are his very own crew members'

Note that this change has the effect of putting the predicate NP into end-focus, an effect that is aided by the use of the intensifying particle *lava*. I do not know of any case in which the fronted subject of an equational sentence could be described as focussed; the predicate seems always to be the most salient element, whatever its position.

Sometimes, the nominal predicate is a sentential complement, resulting in a structure of the following form:

5.



Such sentential predicates are not introduced by *ko* but by a T/A marker.

They always have their subjects *ko*-fronted:

6. Ko te tūlāfono o te kalapu  
 TOP the law of the club  
 subject

e faigāluega te tino i nā aho o te vāiaho.  
 T/A work the man on the-PL day of the week  
 predicate

'The law of the club is that everyone works on weekdays.'

It can be seen that this closely resembles the English translation in structure, except for the absence of the copula and complementizer.

Throughout this paper, I shall follow the usual practice of calling the part of the sentence which is not focussed the *presupposition* - although as we shall see, this notion is not entirely straightforward. Below I discuss in turn the different formal structures which are used for presenting information in terms of a focus and presupposition articulation.

### Type 1: *Ko*-fronting of an NP

Focussing of an NP by means of *ko*-fronting has already been mentioned. Clark (1976:37) comments on the ambiguity of this construction between focussing and topicalization; in practice, however, NPs which are focussed in this way tend to have two other distinguishing features. They are followed by an intensifying particle such as *lava*, and in addition a resumptive pronoun usually appears in the sentence, even in cases of agent fronting, which do not require anaphora in cases of topicalization. (See Clark 1976:37 for a suggestion that this construction derives from a nominal sentence with unexpressed subject, i.e. an abbreviated form of Type 2 below. Under this interpretation, *ko* is in fact the predicate marker. However, in the examples below I leave *ko* un glossed.)

7. Ko te tautai lava e ia tofiagia  
 the fisherman INT T/A he choose-Cia

'It is the master fisherman himself who appoints them.'



Note the use of the intensifying particle *lava* and the pronoun copy *ia*, both indications that the NP *te tautai* is focussed.

8. Nā            kē tukua ki he tino o te fāoa. Ko koe lava te tautai  
NEG.IMPER you put-Cia to a man of the crew you INT the fisherman  
e kē faia.  
T/A you do-Cia  
'Don't you delegate this to a man of your crew. It is you, the captain, who does this.'

## Type 2: Headless relative clauses

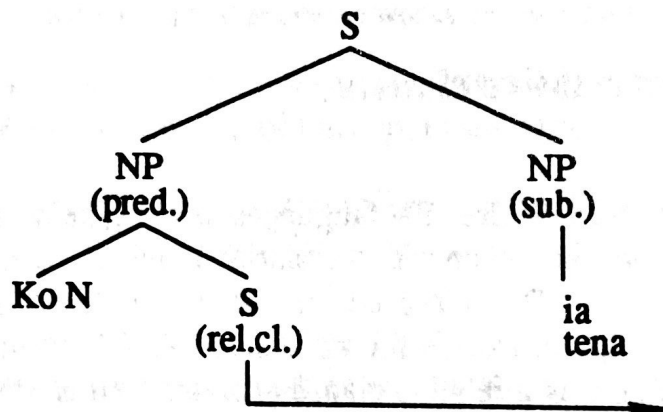
This structure, common in Nuclear PN languages, is the type normally preferred by TOK informants in response to translation requests for English cleft sentences. The focussed NP is the predicate of an equational sentence of which the subject is elipted, except for its article, *te*. The remaining material, the presupposition, is a relative clause attached to this empty subject constituent.

9. Nā ko      nā      tamaiti te na olo  
just PRED. the-PL children the T/A go-PL  
'It was only the children that went'
10. Ko te tino matua lava, ko    ia lava te fano, e    ia inoagia te  
TOP the man senior INT PRED he INT the go    T/A he enter-Cia the  
taumanu  
school  
'The most senior man, it is he who goes, who enters the school of skipjack.'
11. E hē ko    atu    te na fai ai    nā    kaukumete o koutou  
T/A NEG. PRED skipjack the T/A do PRO the-PL k.            of you-PL  
'It is not (just) on account of the skipjack that your *kaukumete* have been performed.' (Note: *kaukumete* = a kind of graduation ceremony for master fishermen.)

### Type 3: Equational sentences with demonstrative pronoun subject

These structures often have a relative clause attached to the predicate NP, and when this is the case they are formally analogous to English *it*-cleft sentences. As in Type 2, the fronted NP is the focussed constituent and the relative clause contains the presupposition. The relative clause is extraposed, and the structure can be diagrammed as follows:

12.



13. Ko te taimi e hī mai ai te atu,  
 TOP the time T/A fish DIR PRO the skipjack

ko	te	taimi	tēnā
PRED	the	time	DEM
predicate			sub

e	fufuti	ai	tau	manava,	oi	taofi
T/A	draw	PRO	your	breath	SEQ	hold
extraposed clause						

'The moment when you pull in the skipjack - It is at this moment that you breathe in, and hold your breath'

Because of the fact that the demonstrative *tena* can be used either attributively or independently (and there is no copular verb in PN to indicate which use is in question), sentences of this kind are structurally ambiguous. We can interpret *tena* as the subject and the *ko NP + relative clause* as the predicate, assuming the structure diagrammed above, or we can regard *ko NP tena* as the focussed (by *ko*-fronting) oblique NP of a simple sentence. Fortunately, this structural ambiguity does not affect our interpretation and we need not dwell on it here.

*Ia* is subject to a number of restrictions which do not affect the other demonstratives. It is always preceded by an NP marked with *ko*, unlike *tenei* etc., which can modify NPs in any syntactic context. Its precise grammatical characterization is somewhat uncertain, and it may be in the process of being reanalysed as an emphatic post-modifier rather than a pronoun. However that may be, its discourse function is clear. *Ia* refers back to an element (frequently a set of circumstances) in the preceding discourse, and asserts the identity or relationship of that element with the *ko*-marked NP. This NP is often one with vague semantic content, such as *mea* 'thing, reason, course of action', or *ala* 'path, way, method'. Translation equivalents are 'It is for this reason...' or 'It is in this way...'

14. Ko te ala lava ia kua holoina ai ia mea uma lele.  
PRED the way INT DEM T/A collapse PRO ART thing all INT

'It is because of this fact that everything has fallen apart'

#### **Type 4: Predicate is a clause**

Formally, these are the same as examples 5 & 6 above, but they differ semantically. The fronted subject is an abstract noun, such as 'reason / cause / meaning / problem' of which the sentential predicate is an expansion or definition. The subject NP embodies the presupposition, and the predicate is in focus. It is almost always possible to translate the subject constituent with an

English WH-clause:

15. Ko te pogai o te mea tēnā,  
TOP the cause of the thing that

subject

kua taia te mālamalama o te pā  
T/A faded the light of the lure

predicate

'What causes this situation is that the brilliance of the lure has faded.'

16. Ko te uiga o te fai mai o te  
TOP the meaning of the do DIR of the

subject

laga tēnā a atu ko te mafua e malepe.  
rise that of skipjack TOP the baitfish T/A disperse

predicate

'What this sort of rise of skipjack means, is that the baitfish are dispersing.'

It must be stressed that the NP introduced by *ko* cannot in any way be regarded as extracted from the clause which constitutes the predicate; it is not possible to construct a semantically coherent sentence in which this NP is an oblique argument: \**kua taia te mālamalama o te pā i te pogai o te mea tēnā*. In other words, because the semantic relationship between the subject and predicate is an equational one, there is no structural ambiguity between this type and Type 1, or a sentence with a *ko*-fronted topic like 2.

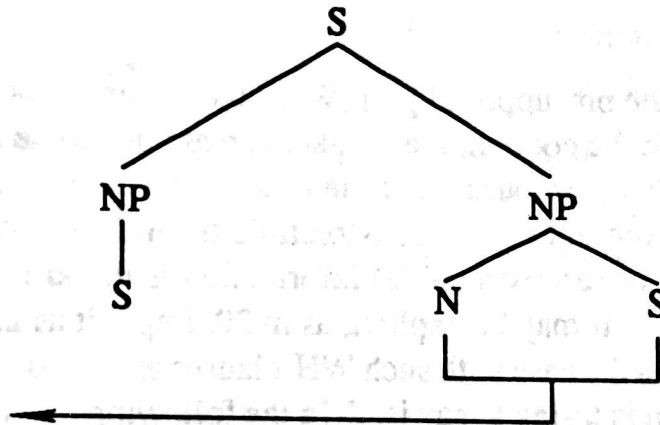
Possibly I should point out here that I am well aware that other English translations of the subject constituents could be equally or more idiomatic, for example 'The cause of this situation is that the polish of the lure is faded'. This version is functionally equivalent to the WH-cleft version. I give translations in the form of *it*-clefts and WH-clefts in order to facilitate the comparison with Prince's findings on the functions of English cleft sentences.

**Type 4a:**

This differs from Type 4 only in the greater grammatical complexity of the subject, which is modified by a relative clause. The head noun of the subject constituent is closely related to the verb of its relative clause, as a sort of cognate object, and the resulting presuppositions have the form 'What they do is..' or 'What happens now is..'

The structure is diagrammed below, followed by examples:

17.



18.	Ko	te	faiga	e	fai	ki	ei	
	TOP	the	do-NOM	T/A	do	to	PRO	
	subject							
	e	muamua	lava	ona	fakanoi	ki	te	tautai
	T/A	first	INT	COMP	ask permission	to	the	fisherman
	predicate							

'What is done in this situation is first to ask permission of the master-fisherman.'

19.	Kae	ko	te	mea	e	nofo	ifo	ai
	but	TOP	the	thing	T/A	stay	DIR	PRO
subject								
	ko	koutou	ke	ōatu				
	TOP	you-PL	COMP	go-PL				
predicate								

'But what he is staying there for, is so that *you* will go away.'

## Part 2: Functional types of focus construction

Prince (1978) bases her classification of cleft sentences in English on an analysis of the discourse function of the *presupposition*. She distinguishes three types:

A. In a WH-cleft, the presupposed part (WH-clause) represents given information 'which the cooperative speaker can assume to be appropriately in the hearer's consciousness at the time of the utterance' (1978:888) and which is present in or reconstructible from the discourse context. This (present or reconstructible) information is the antecedent of the presupposition. It may be explicit, as in 20, implicit as in 21, or metalinguistic, as is the case with such WH-clauses as 'What I meant was...' or 'What John is trying to say is...' In the following examples, the presupposition is in bold-type.

20. 'There is no question what they<sub>1</sub> are after. **What the Committee<sub>1</sub> is after** is somebody at the White House.' (Prince's example 12)

21. 'Precisely how pseudo-clefts are formed need not concern us. **What is relevant** is that in all the cases examined above ... the constituent following *be* is an NP.' (Prince's example 24a)

B. In one variety of *it*-cleft, the presupposed part represents known information which the speaker assumes the hearer knows or can deduce. Although it may be present in the hearer's consciousness, it need not be. I will call these constructions **Stressed-focus it-clefts**.

22. It is the waiter that I'm complaining about, not the cooking.



C. In another variety of *it*-cleft, the presupposed part represents information which the speaker takes to be a known fact, though definitely not known to the hearer. Prince calls this type the *informative-presupposition it*-cleft.

23. 'It was also during these centuries that a vast internal migration (mostly by the Galla) from the south northwards took place, a process no less momentous than the Amhara expansion southwards during the last part of the nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth century.' (Prince's example 41c)

Crucial to Prince's analysis, and mine, is the distinction between *given* and *known* information. *Given* information is part of the discourse context and can be appropriately assumed to be in the speaker's mind at the moment. *Known* information on the other hand is known to the speaker, and may be generally known, but is not necessarily present in the discourse context. The presupposition of a WH-cleft contains given information, whereas that of an *it*-cleft contains known information, in the sense described above.

When I came to re-examine my TOK material with Prince's classification in mind, I found to my considerable surprise that these functional types could be found in TOK and that they could be correlated with the different formal structures.

## A. The WH type

In the TOK data we can find a class of focus constructions which corresponds functionally to English WH-clefts in that the presupposed part of the construction is closely tied to the immediately preceding discourse context. This is my Types 4 and 4a. There are several other points of similarity.

Firstly, in both cases, it is the subject constituent that is presupposed. In English it is a WH-clause, in TOK it is an abstract noun, or abstract noun + relative clause. (Note that in the English construction a paraphrase with an abstract noun subject is usually available: 'What we're looking for is the truth' = 'The object of our search is the truth'.)

Secondly, the focussed constituent is normally longer than the presupposed constituent.

Thirdly, in TOK constructions of this type, the focussed constituent is a clause; the focus of an English WH-cleft is frequently a clause or a VP. By contrast, *it*-clefts, and the analogous constructions in TOK, cannot focus clauses.

Example 15, repeated below, follows a lengthy exposition of the frustrations involved in fishing with a lure which does not seem to be attracting the skipjack. The fronted subject NP, functionally equivalent to the WH-clause of an English WH-cleft, refers explicitly to what has just been discussed and what is uppermost in the hearers' minds; the focussed clause gives the information they have been waiting for.

15. Ko te pogai o te mea tēnā,  
TOP the cause of the thing that

kua taia te mālamalama o te pā  
T/A faded the light of the lure

'What causes this situation is that the brilliance of the lure has faded.'

The next example is preceded in the text by a somewhat dramatic account of the early morning activities of the fishermen of the village, culminating in a situation where all the master fishermen are sitting on the reef in the pre-dawn darkness, waiting for their crews to bring the canoes round:

24. Ni ā ta lātou e fai i te taimi tēnā? Ko ta lātou  
some what their T/A do at the time that TOP their  
gālua e fai, e kilātou talanoagia nā fetū.  
work T/A do T/A they discuss-Cia the-PL star

'What is it that they are doing at that time? What they are doing (The work they are doing) is to conduct discussions about the stars.'

The rhetorical question which precedes the focus construction emphasizes the connection with what has gone before.

I will now examine a longer passage consisting of three paragraphs, using English paraphrases to give the discourse background of 'given' information.

25.

**First paragraph:** This starts with the word *Muamua* 'In the beginning...' or 'Long ago...' and is concerned with the duties of the *tautai* or master fisherman in traditional Tokelauan society.

**Second paragraph:** This starts with the word *Anamua* 'In former times...' and concentrates in more detail on the relationship between the *tautai* and his crew, in particular on its exclusive nature, and the role which the *tautai* adopts of teacher to his own crew.

**Third paragraph:** This is cited below. It is contrastive in nature, and contains two WH-type constructions which tie it closely, in a nested fashion, to what has gone before:

**Kāfai e i ei he tino e fano oi kave he hoāvaka o hetahi**  
**if T/A exist a man T/A go SEQ take a crewman of another**  
**tautai: ko te faiga e fai ki ei, e muamua lava ona**  
**fisherman TOP the do-NOM T/A do to PRO T/A first INT COMP**  
**fakanoi ki te tautai e o ia tēnā hoāvaka. Ko te fakalavelave**  
**request to the fisherman T/A of him that crewman TOP the problem**  
**i nā aho iēnei kua fano te tautai oi hakili hoa ki**  
**in the-PL day these T/A go the fisherman SEQ seek friend to**  
**nā fāoa o iētahi tautai.**  
**the-PL crew of other fisherman**

'Say there is a man who goes to take a crew member from another master fisherman: what he does in this situation, is first of all to ask permission of that other fisherman whose crew member it is. What causes trouble these days is that the master fishermen have started looking for supporters among the crews of other masters.'

The bold-type passages are the presuppositions of two focus constructions, of which the first has its antecedent in the previous sentences. The antecedents of the second are to be found in the topics of paragraphs one and two, in particular in the words *muamua* and *anamua*.

## B. Straightforward or stressed-focus it-cleft type

Not surprisingly, focus constructions of formal Types 1 and 2 are of this semantic variety. The fronted NP is focussed, and the remaining material constitutes the presupposition. Examples 7 and 8, repeated here, are of this type. In both cases, the antecedents of the presupposition are available in the discourse context.

7. Ko te tautai lava e ia tofagia  
the fishermen INT T/A he choose-Cia

'It is the fisherman himself who appoints them.'

8. Nā kē tukua ki he tino o te fāoa. Ko koe lava te tautai  
NEG.IMPER you put-Cia to a man of the crew you INT the fisherman  
e kē faia.  
T/A you do-Cia

'Don't you delegate this to a man of your crew. It is you, the captain, who does this.'

Our structural type 3 can also be of this semantic/functional type. In the following example, the focussed NP represents completely new information, and the presupposed clause contains a mixture of given and known material, the paddling sickness having been introduced in the preceding paragraph:

26. Ko te togafiti tēnei kua kō mautinoa kua hili atu te lelei ke  
PRED the remedy this T/A I certain T/A best DIR the good COMP  
fai ki te kunefoea.  
do to the paddling-sickness

'It is the following remedy which I am certain is the most efficacious for the paddling sickness.'

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More complex in its packaging of information is the following example:

27. Ko te tuafafine e matua, ko ia lava tēnā,  
 PRED the sister T/A senior PRED she INT DEM  
 new topic anaphoric focus
- e ia fakatonutonia te felauga o nā mea  
 T/A she CAUS-right-Cia the share-NOM of the-PL thing  
 presupposition
- o te kāiga  
 of the family

'(The head of the family has no say.) But the older sister, it is she who arranges the distribution of the resources of the family.'

The older sister is mentioned for the first time, and then anaphorically becomes the focus of a cleft construction in which the presupposed clause carries the information which is 'new' in the context, but which can be appropriately regarded as generally known.

Similar comments would apply to the examples below:

28. E tolu ia galu fuaefa i tēnei afā, ko nā galu lava  
 T/A three ART wave big in that hurricane PRED the-PL wave INT  
 ia na fakakino ai nā motu.  
 DEM T/A devastate PRO the-PL island

'There were three big waves in that hurricane. It was these waves which devastated the islands.'

29. E fia lā ia fanauga e tuku fakatahi lava o lātou fenua  
 T/A how-many INT ART sibling-set T/A put together INT their-PL land  
 ona e mumuhu pe kā malepe te kaukāiga. Ko te ala  
 because T/A unwilling COMP T/A fall apart the family PRED the way  
 tēnā nae faigatā ai ona fai ni a lātou āvaga.  
 DEM T/A difficult PRO COMP do ART their-PL marriage

'A great many brothers and sisters leave their lands in one parcel, because they are unwilling for the family group to fall apart. It is for this reason that it is difficult for them to marry.'

The use of an anaphoric expression in the focus constituent is not as paradoxical in these cases as might appear. The actual set of facts that is being focussed is too cumbersome to appear in a *ko* phrase. It is spelt out in full, and the focussed constituent then pulls it all together.

Sentences of this type frequently have a summing up function in the discourse as a whole. There are many examples in which neither constituent is 'new'; the cleft construction is used to 'put the facts in their place' as it were:

30. Ko te kupu tēnā a koe e fakamālohi atu ai te fāoa.  
 PRED the word DEM of you T/A CAUS-strong DIR PRO the crew

'It is with these words that you encourage the crew.'

In this case, the 'words', the 'crew' and the notion of encouragement are all part of the context, and the sentence has a summing-up function. In the case of the following example, I include relevant contextual material in the English translation:

31. Ko te ala ia kua hē toe malaga ai te vaka.  
 PRED the way DEM T/A NEG again travel PRO the ship

'(News came from the Office that the Joyita had been held back, and wouldn't make the trip; she had been restrained by the American administration in Tutuila. There had been some trouble, because Capt. Miller had stolen the Administration's fuel in Canton.) It was for this reason that the ship would not make the trip again.'

The following example is the summing-up of a highly didactic passage. It introduces no new ideas, merely reinforcing what has gone before:



32. Ko te mea ia e lelei ai, ke tuku ke ino e he  
PRED the thing DEM T/A good PRO COMP let COMP enter by a  
tautai kua iloa.  
fisherman T/A know

'It is this course of action which is best - to leave it to an experienced fisherman to enter (the skipjack school).'

### C. Informative-presupposition clefts

Type 3 structures with *ia* as the subject pronoun often present several very curious features. *Ia* is an anaphoric discourse particle which refers back to a previously mentioned entity or set of circumstances. As the focussed constituent of the construction we find a noun of vague semantic content, as mentioned earlier, which is amplified by an extraposed relative clause, the presupposition. These relative clauses are frequently quite long, and the principle of end weight gives them much the same prominence in the sentence as a whole as the focussed predicates of the WH type. Moreover, they contain information which is new to the discourse; I even have examples from narratives in which the presupposed clause advances the progress of the narrative. So, to recapitulate, here we have a 'focus' which is largely anaphoric, and a 'presupposition' consisting of new information.

At this point, it is helpful to return to Prince's comments on English *it*-clefts of the kind she labels informative-presupposition. First, I will repeat her definition of 'known' information:

'Information which the speaker represents as being factual and as already known to certain persons (often not including the hearer)'

In other words, the presentation of certain information as 'known' represents 'a choice on the part of the speaker of a particular validity-level that s/he wishes to ascribe to the utterance' (1978:903). Earlier, she remarks that the fact that *it*-clefts may present information as 'known' without making any claims that the hearer knows it, 'presents the speaker with a strong rhetorical temptation: what is to prevent him/her from putting new information into the *that*-clause?' (1978:898).

The answer of course is, nothing at all. Such a course is all the more natural because of the sentence-final position of the *that*-clause.

These insights are clearly relevant to the curious features of the Tokelauan focus constructions which use the particle *ia*, and which had puzzled me because of the following fact: in spite of their clear resemblance to the straightforward clefts in both structure and intonation, they seem to reverse the usual role of old and new information: the focus contains old information, and the presupposition presents what is new and important.

Now we must examine some examples. Sentence 14 is repeated below. Included with the gloss is an English translation of the preceding sentence:

33. Ko te ala lava ia kua holoina ai ia mea uma lele, nā  
 PRED the way INT DEM T/A collapse PRO ART thing all INT the-PL  
 mea tau ki tautai ma mea tau ki tuākau.  
 thing related to fisherman and thing related to ocean

'(One thing I know, is that we no longer observe our traditional customs in these modern times.) It is because of this fact that everything has fallen apart, things relating to fishermen and things relating to the /observances of/ the ocean.'

The next example follows a passage in which the speaker criticizes at some length careless contemporary practice in assigning paddlers to their positions in the canoe:

34. Ko te ala lā ia e hau ai he tino hē mālamalama i  
 PRED the way INT DEM T/A come PRO a man NEG enlightened to  
 gāluega ma gāoioiga a te tino i te foeliu.  
 work and activities of the man at the bilge-paddle

'It is in this way that a man comes /to the job/ who is ignorant of the work and skills of bilge-paddler.'

Both these examples contain presuppositional clauses which embody assumptions on the part of the speaker which may in fact be highly debatable. Example 34 begs the question of whether everything has indeed 'disintegrated'; 35 begs the question of whether unskilled men do indeed come to the job of bilge-paddler.

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In other cases, the motive for the IP cleft is less suspect, being purely stylistic. The following example is from a narrative and is striking in that the information which is presented for the first time in the presuppositional clause actually advances the narrative in a dramatic way. The narrator is a seaman who has jumped ship and has been hiding out in a remote Samoan village. He sleeps in a deserted cottage and buys necessities at the village store:

35. Fano au i tētahi vāitaimi, fakatau mai taku hikaleti. Ko te taimi  
go I at another time buy DIR my cigarette PRED the time  
lā ia na iloa ai au.  
INT DEM T/A know PRO I

'I went on another occasion and bought myself some cigarettes. It was on that occasion that I was found out.'

The following similar, if somewhat less exciting example is from a History; the 'Clubs' here enter the story for the first time:

36. Ko nā aho foki ia na mapuna ake ai nā Kalapu i  
PRED the-PL day also DEM T/A spring DIR PRO the-PL club on  
luga i Fakafo.  
above on F.

'It was in those days too, that the Clubs first sprang up on Fakafo.'

Of course, matters are not always as clear-cut as my examples might suggest. Frequently it is difficult to analyse precisely the force of a particular cleft sentence. It seems clear, though, that the sentence-final position of the presupposed clauses in *it*-cleft types has the rhetorical effect of enhancing the status of the information presented in that clause. This makes it an attractive alternative to the simple declarative sentence.

## Conclusion

Three different types of focus construction with distinct discourse functions have been described for Tokelauan. The first type, which I have compared to English WH-clefts, has a presupposition consisting of *given* information, which is closely tied to the preceding discourse context. This presupposed

constituent is the subject of an equational sentence, and consists of an abstract noun which may have a relative clause attached to it. The focussed constituent is a clause.

The second type bears a formal as well as a semantic resemblance to English *it*-cleft sentences. The presupposition is expressed in a relative clause on the focussed NP, and contains information which is *known*, but not necessarily retrievable from the discourse context.

The third type, to which I have given Prince's label of informative-presupposition, contains a focussed constituent which is largely anaphoric in its relation to the preceding discourse. The presupposition contains *new* information which is *presented as known*. This construction lends itself to a variety of rhetorical purposes, some of which have been suggested in this paper.

## Abbreviations

The following abbreviations for grammatical terms are used in the morpheme glosses and diagrams:

ART	article
CAUS	causative prefix
-Cia	suffix of the form <i>-(C)ia</i> attached to transitive verbs under certain syntactic conditions
COMP	complementizing conjunction
DEM	demonstrative
DIR	directional particle
INT	intensifying particle
N	noun
NEG	negative particle
NEG IMPER	negative imperative particle
NOM	nominalizing suffix
NP	noun phrase
PL	plural
PRED	predicate marker
pred	predicate of the sentence

## *Focus constructions in Tokelauan*

PRO	anaphoric particle
rel.cl.	relative clause
S	sentence
SEQ	sequential conjunction
sub	subject of the sentence
T/A	tense-aspect particle
TOP	topic marker

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