
STILL A PREPOSITION: THE CATEGORY OF *KO*

Diane Massam, Josephine Lee, and Nicholas Rolle: *Dept of Linguistics,
130 St. George Street Room 6076, University of Toronto, Toronto, Ontario,
Canada, M5S 3H1 <diane.massam@utoronto.ca>*

Abstract

This paper examines the particle *ko* in Niuean (Tongic subgroup). Across Polynesian languages, this particle has been variously analysed as a preposition, a copular preposition, a focus or topic complementizer, a pred morpheme, and a tense morpheme. The paper will detail nine uses of this particle in Niuean, and argue that the best categorial analysis is the traditional one, according to which *ko* is a preposition. Following Clark (1976), it is argued that *ko* is a default or expletive preposition, which appears in the left periphery of non-arguments. To account for the use of *ko* phrases as sentential predicates and focused phrases, it is posited that a *ko* phrase can be sister to a null light verb, and further, that *ko* can have an optional focus feature. The paper will conclude with an examination of a tenth *ko*-construction, the double-*ko* construction. This analysis allows for a unification of the ten functions of *ko* in Niuean, which, it is argued that other analyses are unable to achieve.

1. Introduction

In this paper we explore the categorial status of the particle *ko* in Niuean (Tongic subgroup: Pawley 1966, 1967). This multi-functional morpheme has been analysed variously across Polynesian languages as a preposition, a

copular preposition, a focus or topic complementizer, a pred morpheme, and a tense morpheme. We examine its behaviour in Niuean, and present arguments in favour of the traditional prepositional analysis of *ko* for this language, noting however that it is unlike other prepositions in being a highly under-specified, or expletive preposition, which leads to its unusual distributional properties as suggested in Clark 1976. We propose that while *ko* is a preposition, in most of its uses it works in conjunction with a null light verb, thus appearing to display copular characteristics.¹

The paper is organized as follows. In Section 1, we provide some theoretical background to the questions addressed in this paper. In Section 2, we present an overview of the functions of *ko*. In Section 3, we discuss previous analyses of *ko*, and in Section 4, we present our proposal that Niuean *ko* be considered an under-specified or expletive preposition. In Section 5, we present a final *ko*-construction, the double *ko* construction, which raises many interesting questions but for which the correct analysis remains unclear, and in Section 6 we conclude.

2. Niuean as a predicate-initial language

In this section we outline our assumptions regarding basic clause structure in Niuean. Niuean is termed a ‘VSO’ language, for which we assume a base order of SVO (see Massam 2000a for justification) with subsequent predicate fronting. Although termed ‘VSO’, Niuean is more accurately a predicate-initial language as the slot filled by the fronted verb can be filled by various other predicative elements. In (1a) we see an example of a sentence where the predicate is V. Note that the predicate appears after the Tense Aspect Mood particle (TAM), which can be null. The predicate also follows the negative marker if present, as in (1b). The predicate precedes a series of particles and adverbs, such as *foki* in (1a). The position between the TAM+(NEG) and the post-predicate particles and adverbs can be referred to as the predicate slot, as schematized in (2).²

1. a. ne **tutuli** foki he tau tagata a ia.
 Pst chase also ErgC Pl person AbsP 3Sg
 ‘The people also chased him.’ (NAH: 31)

- b. Ne nākai **talia** he Papalagi na *ko* McFarland e kupu he tau
 iki kafili.
 Pst not accept ErgC European this *ko* McFarland AbsC word Gen Pl
 chief judge
 ‘The European McFarland, refused to accept the word of the
 judges.’ (NAH: 41)

2. Niuean Surface Sentence Order [TAM = Tense Aspect Mood]

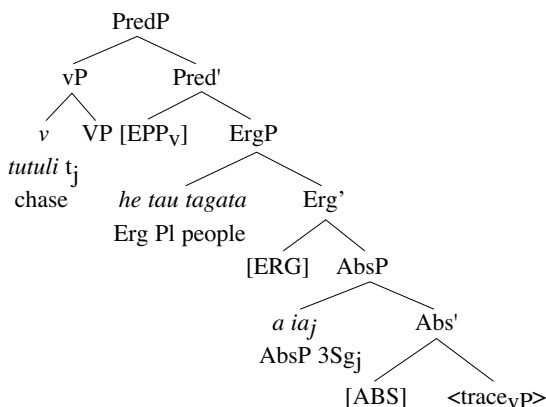
TAM NEG **PRED** PARTICLES S O IO OBLIQUES

As discussed in Massam (2000a, 2001a, 2001b) it is also possible to find Niuean predicates that consist of a VP rather than V, provided the object within VP is a bare NP (i.e. does not contain left-peripheral material such as articles or case markers). This structure is termed pseudo-noun-incorporation (PNI). (3a) shows a simple case, with a bare noun, while (3b) shows a more complex NP which likewise appears in the predicate slot along with the verb.

3. a. [**Takafaga ika**] tūmau nī a ia.
 hunt fish always Emph Abs 3Sg
 ‘He is always fishing.’ (S:69)
- b. ...ke [**kumi mena ke nonofo ai**] a lautolu.
 ...Sbjv seek thing Sbjv settle there AbsP 3Pl
 ‘...they sought a place to settle.’ (NAH: 3)

The question that arises when explaining (1a,b) vs. (3a,b) is: Why is the fronted predicate sometimes a head and sometimes a phrase? One possible answer to this question is that the predicate is in fact always a phrase, but in cases such as (1a,b), the case marked object has escaped the VP prior to the (remnant) movement of this VP. This analysis is pursued in Massam (2000a, 2001a, 2001b) and is schematised below for (1) (without the particle *foki*). We assume, following many (e.g. den Dikken and Sybesma 1998, Harley and Noyer 1998, Marantz, 1997) that all verbal phrases are headed by a light verb (with abstract meanings such as BE, DO, MAKE, etc.), which contributes information about the basic nature of the verb. Since the light verb is null, it is not an empirical issue if it fronts with the VP or not, but we will assume here that it does.³

4. Niuean Transitive Clause ‘The people (also) chased him.’ (=1a)



In (4), arguments appear in specifiers of projections containing case features, here labelled **ErgP** and **AbsP** simply for convenience. This analysis explains the V and the VP predicate examples. In both cases, it is **vP** that fronts, due to the **[EPP_v]**⁴ feature in **PredP** (which is roughly equivalent to **IP**), with the difference being whether the object escapes or does not escape from **VP** prior to predicate fronting, which in turn depends on the categorial status of the nominal (Case Phrase vs. Noun Phrase). Remaining to be analysed are sentences with non-verbal predication. In many descriptions of Polynesian languages, it is stated that the predicate may also be a nominal or prepositional phrase. For example, in the Tongan example below the predicate consists simply of a nominal phrase.⁵

5. Tongan

- a. 'Oku **fu'u** **fo'i** 'ulu **lani** **pulū** e kakaá.
 Pres Cl.big Cl.round head colour blue Art parrot.def
 'The parrot has a big round blue-coloured head.' (Broschart 1997)

In Niuean, however, all nonverbal predicates appear preceded by a particle *ko* or, in the case of locative predicates, *hā* (which has an emphatic form *hāha*:). Examples of common and proper nominal predicates are given in (6), while the examples in (7) demonstrate various locative predicates. (7a,b) are locatives, (7c) is an existential, while (7d) is a possessive construction.

6. Nominal predicates

- a. ***Ko e kāmuta*** a au.
Ko C carpenter AbsP I
 ‘I am a carpenter.’ (S:53)
- b. ***Ko Manua e*** motu ia.
Ko Manua AbsC island that
 ‘The island was Manua.’ (NAH: 9)

7. Prepositional Predicates

- a. ***Hā he fale gagao*** a ia.
Hā in house sick AbsP she
 ‘She is in the hospital.’ (S:54)
- b. ***Hāhā he tau motu he Pasifika e*** tau tala kehekehe ki a
 Maui.
Hāhā in Pl island Gen Pacific AbsC Pl tale various GoalP Pers
 Maui
 ‘Throughout the Pacific islands there are various legends of
 Maui.’ (NAH: 6)
- c. ***Hāhā i ai 10 e vala kafika kua tatai e loloa.***
Haha: LocP there ten Lig piece tree Perf equal AbsC length
 ‘There were ten pieces of kafika of equal length.’ (NAH: 15)
- d. ***Nākai hāhā he taane e*** tonuhia ke puipui haana hoana.
 Not hahā to man AbsC right Sbjv defend 3SgGen wife
 ‘The husband did not have the right to defend his wife.’ (NAH: 12)

In this paper we will focus on the use of *ko*, leaving *hā* and *hāhā* to be analyzed at a later date.⁶ The principal question that we attempt to answer is: What is the particle *ko* and how is it used in Niuean grammar? In order to answer this question, we will examine the behaviour of *ko* across a variety of construction types.

3. Overview of *ko*

Ko appears frequently in many Polynesian languages. In Niuean, we can isolate at least nine descriptively different construction types: focus,

topicalization, predicate nominals, equatives, appositives, titles and isolation contexts, specificational phrases, aspectuals, and fronted Wh-questions. Each of these occurs also in other Polynesian languages. In the next section we discuss and describe each construction. An additional use, ‘double *ko*’, will be discussed in Section 5. At times, data is presented from various other Polynesian languages, in order to demonstrate the robust cross-Polynesian nature of this morpheme, but the focus is on *ko* as it is found in Niuean, and we make no attempt in this paper to provide a systematic exploration of the use of *ko* across Polynesian languages. *Ko* is extremely prevalent in Niuean, as can be seen in (8), a not untypical passage from *Niue: A History of the Island*, in which *ko* appears 11 times.

8. ‘***Ko*** e taha he tau tagata talahaua ue atu he Vaha Fakamua Atu ***ko*** e iki ***ko*** Tihamau. ***Ko*** e tagata-leveki po ke lima-matau haana ***ko*** Matakuhifi. Pehe e falu a talahauaga ki a ia ***ko*** e tagata hau i Fonua-galo, ka e pehe foki he talahau he falu ***ko*** ia ***ko*** e matakainaga ni a Tihamau. ***Ko*** e toko fa e tama a Matakuhifi ***ko*** Leipokofatu, Leipokonifo, Leveimatagi mo Leveifualolo. ***Ko*** e fanau a Matakuhifi ne fakavai e motu nai, ne taute e lautolu e lagatau he fa o mai e tau vaka-toga ke he motu. Ne ta mai e lautolu e tau hihina futi huluhula mo e vali aki e tau nifo mo e fakaiite atu ke he tau tagata he tau vaka-toga ka o mai ke he motu nai.’ (NAH: 103)

‘In the days of Chief Tihamau, his body guard or his right hand man was one by the name of Matakuhifi. Some related that Matakuhifi also came from Fonuagalo (unknown land) and others told that he was Tihamau’s brother – the term brother is difficult to define as it could mean cousin, relation as well as immediate brother. Matakuhifi had four sons Leipokofatu, Leipokonifo, Leveimatagi, and Leveifualolo. The sons of Matakuhifi played a trick for the purpose of frightening away foreign vessels from the island. They made paint from the red colouring of a banana variety (huluhula) and painted their teeth and bared them at the people in the vessels which approached the island.’

In the following sections we outline each of the nine descriptively different uses of *ko*.

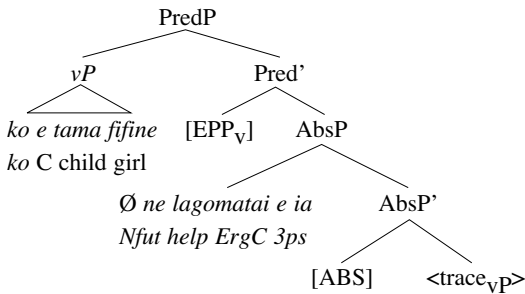
3.1 Focus constructions

Focus constructions in Polynesian languages are typically translated into English cleft constructions.

9. *Ko e tama fifine fulufuluola ne lagomatai e ia.*
Ko C child girl beautiful Nfut help ErgC 3ps
 'It is the beautiful girl that he helped.'
 (MFN)

Ko appears initially, followed by a nominal phrase, then a clause. The phrase 'ko beautiful girl' is both the predicate and the focused element, and it appears in predicate position (but see discussion in Section 4). Note that the element immediately following the focused predicate is a TAM *ne*, which in a declarative clause means Past tense, but when in the context of operator extraction, is used for both Present and Past and is thus glossed here as Nonfuture following Seiter 1980. A common analysis here is bi-clausal, where the *ko*+NP constitutes a predicate, which has a headless relative ('(the one) that he helped') as its subject (Clark 1976, Seiter 1980, Paul 2001).

10. 'It's the girl that he helped.'



The use of *ko* in focus constructions is very widespread across all branches of the Polynesian family, for example it is found in Tuvaluan (Besnier 2000), Māori (Bauer 1991), Tokelauan (Hooper 1988), Pukapukan (Salisbury 2002), and Rapanui (Du Feu 1996). This is the use of *ko* which has received the most attention in the literature.

3.2 Topic constructions

Interestingly, *ko* appears in topic constructions, which indicate old information, as well as in focus constructions, which conversely indicate new information. Topic constructions are also widespread across the Polynesian family, found for example in Niuean, Pukapukan (Salisbury 2002), and Hawai'ian (Cook 1999).

11. *Ko e matua fifine haana, mate tuai.*
Ko C parent female 3SgGen die Perf
 ‘As for his mother, she’s dead.’ (S:116)

The topicalized element in (11) is ‘his mother’. *Ko* appears as the first morpheme in the sentence, as in the focus examples. However, the absence of a tense aspect marker following the DP marks a crucial difference between focus and topicalization constructions. Topicalization structures are monoclausal, and the *ko*+NP is simply at the front of the clause in initial position, whether by movement or base generation (Seiter 1980). A second difference is phonological: clefted DPs receive strong stress in certain languages like Māori, while the topicalized DP receives little stress (Bauer 1997: 666).

3.3 *Predicate nominals*

In Niuean and some other (non Eastern – Clark 1976) Polynesian languages, such as Tongan (Otsuka 2000, 2005), *ko* also appears in predicate nominals corresponding to the predicational use of the English copula. In Tongan (and Samoan (Churchward 1959, Mosel and Hovdhaugen 1993) the use of *ko* is an option for at least some predicate nominal sentences, which may also appear without *ko* (Otsuka 2000), but in Niuean it appears to be the main form available.

12. *Nāakai ko e fifine fulufuluola a ia.*
not ko C lady beautiful AbsP 3Sg
 ‘(She) was not a beautiful lady.’ (NAH:2)

In (12), *e fifine fulufuluola* ‘a beautiful lady’ is the *ko*-fronted predicate nominal, which appears in the usual predicate position after negation.⁷

3.4 *Equatives*

A similar construction type to predicate nominals found in Polynesian languages (e.g. Niuean, Māori (de Lacy 1999), and Niufo’ou (Lynch, Ross, and Crowley 2002)) is the equative construction corresponding to the identificational use of the English copula, which also uses *ko*, as seen in (13). In these examples the subject is not stated to have the property of the predicate, but rather to have the same identity as the predicate.

13. **Ko Makataukakala i Fakaagi i luga i Avatele e** nofoaga
haana.

Ko Makataukakala LocP Fakaagi LocP top LocP Avatele, AbsC place
3SgGen

‘His chosen spot was Makataukakala, Fakaagi in the village of Avatele.’

(NAH: 23)

3.5 Appositives

In all of the data presented thus far, *ko* has appeared in the left periphery of the sentence, preceded only by negation in (12). Appositive constructions, as found for example in Niuean, Tongan (Churchward 1959), and Pukapukan (Salisbury 2002) demonstrate that *ko* is not limited to the left-peripheral domain of a sentence (although see Section 4).

14. a. he ha laua a matua **ko Tihamau.**

LocC GenP they Lig father *ko* Tihamau

‘to their father, Tihamau.’

(NAH: 24)

- b. e motu **ko Niue**

AbsC island *ko* Niue

‘the island Niue.’

(NAH: 24)

In (14a), *ko* precedes the proper name *Tihamau*, which is in apposition to the common noun *matua* ‘father’. In (14b), *ko Niue* is in apposition to *e motu* ‘island’. In (15), we see an example with the apposition order [Proper N – Common N], which has a non-restrictive relative reading.

15. *Ko e* fenoga nai ke tolu aki ne moua ai e Kuki a

Magaia,

Ko C voyage this Sbjv three with Nfut find Resprn ErgP Cook AbsP

Mangaia,

Atiu, Tukutea mo e feleveia atu foki ki Manuae mo e Aelani *ko*

Pamasi ***ko e***

Atiu Takutea and C visit Dir3 again GoalP M. and C Island *ko*

P. *ko* C

**tau motu ia ne ua ne moua ai e ia he fenoga ne
ua aki.**

Pl island those Nfut two Nfut find Resprn ErgP 3Sg LocC voyage Nfut
two with

‘It was on this, his third voyage, that Cook was to discover Mangaia, Atiu, Takutea, and visit again Manuae and Palmerston Island, islands which he had discovered during his second voyage.’ (B&T:4)

3.6 Isolation and Titles

In some Polynesian languages, *ko* is found in titles (of books and stories) as in (16a,b), and in isolation contexts as in (17a,b) or list contexts. (17a) is given as the way to say ‘a pen’, and (17b) is given as a question/answer pair, in a grammar lesson.

16. a. ***Ko e Tupumaiaga he Niu*** (story title)
ko C origin GenC coconut
 ‘The Origin of the Coconut’ (AMNB)
- b. ***Ko e Tala ke he Niu*** (story title)
ko C story Goal LocC coconut
 ‘The Story about the Coconut’ (AMNB)
17. a. ***Ko e pene***
ko C pen
 ‘a pen’ (K&B)
- b. *Ko hai ne pā e gutuhala?*
ko who Nfut shut AbsC door?
 ‘Who shut the door?’
Ko Daisy
 ‘Daisy’ (K&B)

3.7. Specificational statements

Ko is also used in specificational or identificational statements in which *ko* + NP on its own constitutes a sentence such as in Rarotongan (Clark 1976), Tongan (Shumway 1971), and Niuean, among other languages. (17a) for example, can also function as a sentential utterance to mean ‘It’s a pen’ and other examples are given in (18)–(19). There is a clear relation between such examples and the isolation uses discussed in 3.6, but they are presented separately here, because the specificational statements are more sentential in nature.

18. Pehē e tala he tau tupuna, ko e tolu e mena ne ta
 mai e Uea ki Niue.
record AbsC tale GenC Pl ancestor ko C three Lig thing Nfut bring.
Dir1 ErgC Uea GoalP Niue
 ‘Oral tradition also records that Uea brought three things back to Niue.’
Ko e akau, ko e loku⁸, ko e Tala Mitaki mo e
gagao kafukula (maiafi).
Ko AbsC tree ko AbsC papaya, ko AbsC Book Good and AbsC
sickness syphilis
 ‘These were the papaya tree, the gospel, and syphilis.’ (NAH: 34)
19. Nākai **ko e tama tote**, ka **ko e tagata lahi**.
not ko AbsC child small but ko AbsC person big
 ‘This is not a small child but it is a man.’ (MFN)

3.8 Aspectual constructions

Ko also appears pre-verbally, apparently to provide a temporal or aspectual sense. Seiter (1980) analyzes pre-verbal *ko* as indicating ‘actual present’, similar to the progressive when the fronted predicate is a verb.⁹ The word order in (20a), with the *ko*-phrase after negation, demonstrates that the *ko*+V complex is in the predicate slot of the sentence. Note that *ko* is followed by the common article *e*, which is unexpected given that the post-*ko* element appears to be a verb and not a noun. It is not clear why the nominal article appears but one possibility, raised in Clark (1976) and assumed here, is that the verb in the construction is a zero derived nominal participle.¹⁰

20. a. Ai *ko e* onoono a au ke he ha mena.
not pres look AbsP I Goal LocC Nsp thing
 ‘I’m not looking at anything.’ (S: 82)
- b. **Ko e kai e** mautolu e talo.
Pres C eat ErgC 2PIEx AbsC taro
 ‘We are (now) eating taro.’ (S: 6)

In these cases, *ko* appears with a verb (or to be more specific, a verbal predicate as seen in (21) and (23) below) and not a nominal phrase. There are no other TAMs in any of these clauses, so Seiter argues that *ko* is the morpheme providing the TAM for these verbs, specifically indicating actual present.

However, data in (21)–(23), from a variety of contexts, illustrate that when *ko* appears with a verbal predicate a present tense meaning does not always arise. The data in (21) is describing events in the late 1800s. (22) is taken from a transcribed oral interview where the speaker is discussing past events,¹¹ and (23) is a question/answer pair from a grammar lesson with a past context provided by the question.

21. *Ko e fai tagata agaia nī* ne tūmau e tau mahani uka.
Ko C be people still Emph Nfut always AbsC Pl behaviour difficult
 ‘However, there were still people who continued their difficult behaviour.’
 (NAH: 5)

22. ka fakatatai atu pehē ka ha, *ko e hau* au he tau [19XX].
 but similar dir2 like that=is, *ko* C come 1Sg LocC year [19XX].
 ‘say...like..., I came in 19XX here...’
 (LMP)

23. *Ko e eke hā* a mua ne afi?
Ko C do what AbsP 2Du yesterday
 ‘What did you do yesterday?’

Ko e ta kiilikiki a maua
Ko C play cricket AbsP 1DuEx
 ‘We played cricket.’
 (K&B: 42)

As the translations and contexts indicate, the verbs marked with *ko* here all denote past tense events; hence, *ko* cannot be indicative of actual present or present progressive in these cases. Since these constructions have not been studied in any detail, it is difficult to be sure what the exact contribution of *ko* is in its verbal use, and whether it has undergone change since the time of Seiter’s field work. We note here simply that it does appear pre-verbally and it presumably provides some sort of tense or aspectual meaning to the clause, with a possible focus component as well.

Seiter also states that the pre-verbal use of *ko* is a Niuean innovation. This may be the case, but it is worth noting that *ko* is used pre-verbally in other languages as well (see discussion in Clark 1976: 31-32). For example, data from Pileni in (24) provides an example of pre-verbal *ko* which Næss (2001) states as indicating a change in situation.¹²

24. Samoic-Outlier: Pileni (SVO order)

Na lima *ko* *motu*.Gen3Sg hand *ko* cut

'Her hand had been cut off.'

(Næss 2001: 43)

Similarly, *ko* is used preverbally in Rapanui (Du Feu 1996) to indicate an action continuing into the present from the past.¹³

25. Rapanui:

Ko amo 'a te rangi.

Pft clear Res +Spe sky

'It is getting (becoming) light.'

(Du Feu 1996: 156)

26. *Ko* ha'ura 'a te poki.

Pft sleep Res +Spe child

'The children are (still) sleeping.'

(Du Feu 1996: 160)

These three languages each represent a different branch of the Polynesian family tree, being respectively Tongic, Samoic-Outlier, and Eastern Polynesian. Salisbury (2002) also discusses the use of *ko* as a tense marker primarily for absolutive and relative present tense in Pukapukan.

At any rate, it is clear that there is still further work that remains to be done with this tense/aspectual construction before its properties can be fully understood.

3.9 *Wh*-Questions

In interrogative constructions involving fronted *Wh*-words, a focus construction is used in many Polynesian languages. *Ko* fronts along with a nominal phrase, which in this case is a *Wh*-word. The *ko*-fronted DP is immediately followed by a TAM, *ne* in (27), in the same way as focus constructions discussed above. The parallel between questions and focus constructions is well established (for Niuean, see Seiter 1980, Massam 2003), so we consider interrogative *Wh*-constructions to be a sub-case of focus. The construction is included separately here for the sake of descriptive completeness.

27. *Ko* hai ne lalaga e kato ē ?*Ko* who Nfut weave AbsC basket this

'Who wove this basket?' (MFN)

3.10 Summary

This section has outlined the nine descriptively different construction types in which *ko* appears in Niuean: focus, topicalization, predicate nominals, equatives, appositives, isolation and titles, specificational or identificational phrases, aspectuals, and fronted Wh-questions. These divide into two groups: the larger group is where the *ko* phrase is a predicate, that is, when it along with its complement fills the predicate slot and serves as the main predicate of a sentence and the second group is where *ko* is not in this position and does not serve as the main predicate of a sentence, namely topicalization and isolation contexts, and possibly appositives.¹⁴ Clark (1976) also points out that there are two main distinct functions of *ko*, essentially as a (nominal) predicate and as a topic. An additional ingredient in the predicate group is whether or not the *ko*P is focused. Two important questions arise from the data: What is *ko*? Is a unified analysis for the various uses of *ko* possible for Niuean? In this paper we will argue that a unified view is possible, if in Niuean in all its predicational uses *ko* is sister to a light verbal head, and we further separate focused from non-focused readings. This allows us to account also for the non-predicative uses so that in these uses *ko* appears without its governing light verb and hence does not function as a sentential predicate. In the next section, we consider the lexical category of *ko*, discussing previous analyses of this morpheme.

4. Previous Analyses

There are five approaches to Polynesian *ko* in the literature: *ko* is a preposition (traditional analysis), *ko* is a copular preposition (Cook 1999), *ko* is a focus or topic complementizer (Pearce 1999), *ko* is a tense morpheme (Chung and Ladusaw 2004), and *ko* is a Pred (Seiter 1980, Baker 2003). Most of the literature on *ko* has focussed on Polynesian languages other than Niuean. In this paper we will examine these approaches to *ko* and determine how they might fit for the Niuean data presented above. In the following sections we will discuss each of the five approaches to *ko*.

4.1 *Ko as D-Element (preposition or copular preposition)*

The first approach, widely assumed in the Polynesian literature, takes *ko* to be an element in the family of elements at the left periphery of the nominal phrase, such as a preposition or case marker. (Cf. Rizzi 1997 on the sentential

left periphery.) Although there have been few developed arguments put forth for *ko* as a preposition, it would seem that the main motivation for this view is that *ko* patterns like oblique prepositions in certain ways.¹⁵ In (28) we present the paradigm of pre-nominal markers in Niuean and it can be seen that Niuean *ko* patterns with the oblique benefactive and comitative prepositions *ma* and *mo* in its selectional properties, taking a common complement with no case marker but with the common article *e*, and a proper complement with no overt case marker or article. In other words, *ko*, like *ma* and *mo*, selects an ArticleP complement (or KP_{ABS}, if ABS is seen as present but null), with either a common (*e*) or proper (null) article.¹⁶

28. The morphology of the Niuean nominal left periphery (Massam 2000b, 2006)

Common

	Prep	Case	Art _{pr/c}	Quant	#	PIClsfr
Abs			<i>e</i>	<i>taha</i> one	<i>tau</i> Pl	<i>kau</i> people
Erg		<i>h</i>	<i>e</i>	<i>falu a</i> some		<i>atu</i> row of
Gen	Ø	<i>h</i>	<i>e</i>	<i>loga</i> many		<i>lafu</i> kin Pl
Loc	Ø	<i>h</i>	<i>e</i>	<i>gahoa</i> few		etc
Goal	<i>ke</i>	<i>h</i>	<i>e</i>	<i>ha</i> Nspcfc		
Source	<i>mai</i>	<i>h</i>	<i>e</i>	Num'l		
Ben	<i>ma</i>		<i>e</i>	Poss'r		
Comit	<i>mo</i>		<i>e</i>			
Instr	<i>aki</i>		<i>e</i>			
?	<i>ko</i>		<i>e</i>			

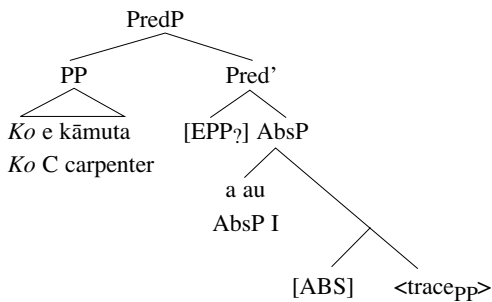
Proper

	Prep	Case	Art _{pr/c}	Quant	#	Clsfr
Abs		<i>a</i>				
Erg		<i>e</i>				
Gen	Ø	<i>h</i>				<i>a</i> (H?)
Loc	Ø	<i>i</i>				<i>a</i> (H)
Goal	<i>ki</i>					<i>a</i> (H)
Source	<i>mai</i>					<i>a</i> (H)
Ben	<i>ma</i>					
Comit	<i>mo</i>					
Instr	<i>aki</i>					<i>a</i> (H)
?	<i>ko</i>					

In this, it can be seen that Niuean *ko* is like other oblique prepositions in its phonology (*ma/mo/ko*), as well as in its complement-taking properties. Furthermore, in some languages, *ko* clearly does function as a preposition in some of its uses (see footnote 15).

In the prepositional view, when a *ko*P is a predicate, *ko* appears in a constituent with a nominal complement phrase, and the entire *ko*+NP phrase undergoes predicate fronting.¹⁷ This is schematised in (29) for a predicate nominal sentence ‘I am a carpenter’.

29. Hypothetical tree for PP analysis ‘I am a carpenter.’ (=6a)



Many linguists consider Polynesian *ko* to be a nominal left peripheral item such as a preposition, including for example, Biggs (1969), Bauer (1997), Besnier (2000), Clark (1976), Cook (1999), de Lacy (1999), Otsuka (2000), and Salisbury (2002).

4.2 Problems with *ko* as a preposition

Although *ko* patterns like an oblique preposition in appearing before ArtPs, Chung and Ladusaw, discussing Māori, consider that ‘the evidence for treating identificational *ko* as a preposition is slight.’ (Chung and Ladusaw: 62).¹⁸ Certainly, in many languages it exhibits properties that are unlike those of prepositions, in having a copular function, and in Niuean, in never appearing in the sentence-final position, which is characteristic of other prepositional phrases in the Niuean sentence as schematized in (2). In addition, Niuean *ko* is in complementary distribution with the standard clause-initial TAMs, further complicating the view of *ko* as preposition. An additional possible way in which *ko* is unlike a preposition is that it can appear with a (de-) verbal complement in some languages, as seen above in Niuean, Rapanui, Pukapukan and perhaps Pileni (see footnote 12).

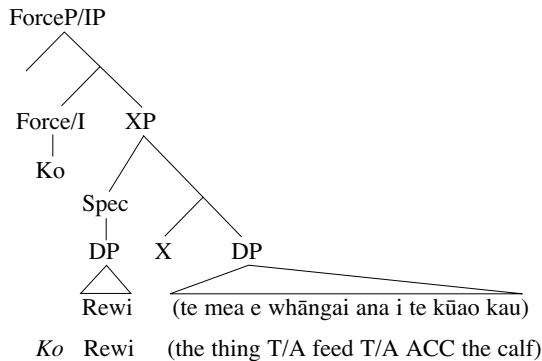
To resolve the conundrum that *ko* is a preposition which does not behave like a preposition, and to capture the predicative function of *ko*, Cook (1999) argues that Hawaiian *ko* is a ‘copular preposition’.¹⁹ This can account for the fact that *ko* is used in copular functions in most cases. It might also account for why *ko* phrases are not distributed like other PPs in the clause. However, if we opt for this analysis for Niuean, it is hard to reconcile the non-copular uses of *ko*, in particular topicalization and isolation contexts, and possibly the appositive uses.

It seems that the best advantage that this analysis offers us is that it accounts for the fact that Niuean *ko* looks like a preposition and seems to have a selectional relationship with its sister phrase, in that this phrase appears with the common article but never with a case marker which is also true for oblique prepositions.

4.3 *Ko as Force Element*

The second more recent analysis has been proposed by Pearce (1999), derived from work on Māori topicalization and focus constructions. She analyzes *ko* as a force head in the left periphery, taking a clause with the DP in specifier position. An example of a structure for a predicative or focus *ko*-constructions is shown below, taken from Pearce (1999).

30. Māori ‘It is Rewi who is feeding the calf.’ (Pearce 1999)



To account for the copular and focus properties of *ko* in such examples, Pearce sees *ko* as ‘a combination of C head and I head features’ (Pearce 1999: 256). This idea is rooted in Rizzi’s (1997) expansion of the CP domain, which includes force phrase, topic phrase, and focus phrase. For Topicalization uses

of *ko*, Pearce suggests a similar analysis, but one in which the Force head lacks the inflectional feature (since *ko* is not predicative), and where XP in (30) would be replaced by TopP. In her analysis Pearce attempts to capture the fact that *ko* can be a predicational or focus marker, or a non-predicational topic marker.

4.4 Problems with *ko* as a Force particle

An argument against this analysis of *ko* as a force head for Niuean is that *ko* is arguably in a constituent with the following DP, having a selectional relationship with it as discussed above. This would not be captured by adopting Pearce's analysis (30) for Niuean, since in this analysis the nominal phrase is not a sister to *ko* (but see footnote 18).

Moreover, Pearce (1999) models her analysis on treatments of African languages such as Gungbe (Aboh 1996 cited in Pearce). As she points out, the relevant particle in Gungbe is a topic or focus marker, which appears in a head position, taking a topicalized or focused DP in its specifier position, therefore the focus head follows the focused phrase. It is not clear then why *ko*, if it is a force particle, would be present if and only if the following constituent is a topicalized or focused phrase with a nominal phrase in its specifier position.

An additional problem with this view for Niuean is that it does not allow for a unified analysis of Niuean *ko* since in many functions *ko* does not receive a topic or focus reading. A final point is that *ko* is not always found in the left periphery, since, as Pearce notes, in some languages a *ko*-DP may remain optionally in situ, possibly with a focused interpretation.²⁰

31. Samoic Outlier: Pileni (SVO order)

Hat-no kei-na na ***ko te kaikai e korahi loa***.
 1Pl.Incl-1pfv eat-Trans Dem *ko* Art food Genr one Emph
 'We have been eating only one kind of food.' (Næss 2001: 19)

32. Central Eastern: Māori

Māramarama rawa ake, kua whakaeke-a ***ko te pā i Te Teko***.
 Lightish Intens up TAM attack-PASS *ko* the fort at Te Teko
 'At daylight he attacked the fort at Te Teko.' (Pearce 1999, from Bauer p.c.)

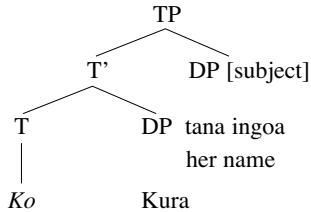
The advantage that this analysis has is that it accounts well for the cross-Polynesian use of *ko* as a predicate focus or non-predicate topic marker, and for the complementary distribution of *ko* with TAM particles, and it allows

for a universal view of focus and topic as involving left-peripheral heads, as in Rizzi (1997, 2003).

4.5 *Ko as tense marker*

The third analysis, proposed recently by Chung and Ladusaw (2004) for Māori, describes *ko* as a tense marker occupying a T head. They state that ‘*ko* is followed by the predicate, which is transparently DP and then by the subject’ (Chung and Ladusaw 2004: 62). Here, *ko* is a spell-out of tense, capturing the predication or copular nature of *ko* very well. We can see in the diagram that *ko* is sister to the DP in a clause which takes a subject as its specifier.

33. Māori ‘Her name is Kura’ (Chung and Ladusaw 2004:61-62)



4.6 *Problems with ko as a Tense marker*

Several questions arise in adapting Chung and Ladusaw’s proposal for Niuean. First, when *ko* appears with verbs, it is not clear what structure would be proposed, since verbs with *ko* can be transitive, as in (20b). If we assume a head-fronting analysis of V initial order, where V is adjoined to T, allowing the two argument positions in (33) to be filled with the subject and object of the verb, it might be unexpected for *ko* in T to appear preceding the verb, since head movement is often assumed to involve left-adjunction. The expected order would be [V *ko*]. More importantly, *ko* is not in the same position as other tense particles in Niuean: the negative particle appears before *ko* as in (34)-(36), whereas with all other TAMs, the negative particle appears after it (37)-(39). This is difficult to explain if *ko*, as well as other tense markers, is held to be in T.²¹

34. Na:kai ***ko*** e **Atua** a au nai.
 not *ko* C god AbsP I Emph
 ‘I am not a god.’

(NAH: 34)

35. Ai **ko e onoono** a au ke he ha mena.
not *ko* look Abs I to Nsp thing
‘I’m not looking at anything.’ (Seiter 1980: 82)

36. Ai **ko e faiaoga** a Pule.
not *ko* Abs teacher Abs Pule
‘Pule’s not the teacher.’ (S: 54)

37. **Ne** nākai fano kehe a ia.
Pst not go away AbsP 3Sg
‘He won’t go away.’ (MFN)

38. **To** nākai fanogonogo a Pule ki a koe.
Fut not listen AbsP Pule to Pers you
‘Pule won’t listen to you.’ (S: 196)

39. *Ko* e mena a ia **ne** ai lahi ai e vagahau Niue
haana.
Ko C reason AbsP that Nfut not strong Respron AbsC language Niue
3SgGen
‘That is the reason that his Niuean is not very strong.’ (LMP)

One possibility for Chung and Ladusaw’s analysis extended to Niuean would be to assume right adjunction of the verb to T, and then that all TAMs except *ko* raise to C, whereas *ko* and its adjoined phrase remain in T. However, this augmented analysis does not work for us because of our assumption that the verb (i.e. the predicate) is a maximal projection in the specifier position of TP (or PredP) and not adjoined to a head, thus yielding the wrong word order [Pred *ko*], if *ko* is a T. *Ko* cannot be claimed to move to C, because Neg appears to the left of *ko*. In fact, there are sufficient differences between the Chung and Ladusaw analysis of word order and the one assumed in this paper to make the analysis of *ko* as a T element untenable for us.

An additional problem for the analysis of *ko* as a tense marker is the use of *ko* in topicalization and in isolation nominals and titles, where it does not seem to be associated at all with T.

The analysis of *ko* as T does however have the advantage that it can account very neatly for complementary distribution with other TAM particles and it also captures the predicational nature of *ko*.

4.7 *Ko as Pred*

A fourth analysis is that of Baker (2003) for Samoan and Niuean, in which he considers *ko* to be a predicate element. ‘Pred’ is the gloss that Seiter (1980) gives for *ko*, although he does not discuss in any detail what sort of part of speech it might be. Baker argues that universally, in case of non-verbal predication, a Pred head is necessary, and that Samoan and Niuean are examples of languages where Pred is morpho-phonologically realized (as *ko*).²² A problem for Baker’s view arises when we consider the non-predicate uses of *ko*. His general insight though that Polynesian *ko* is a crucial step in the process of nominal predicate formation seems correct, as we will elaborate below, although we posit a rather different reason for its obligatory presence.

5. Proposed Analysis of *ko* as an expletive preposition

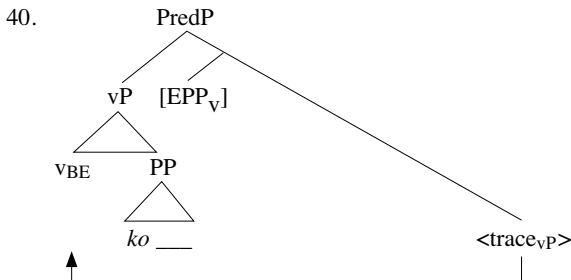
Given the problems discussed above for adopting the five main previous analyses of *ko*, it is worth re-considering the category of this morpheme. Our current proposal is that Niuean *ko* by itself is indeed a preposition, but that it is not inherently associated with pred or copular features, hence *ko* does not by itself make the noun phrase into a predicate. Rather, it is a first step in that its presence indicates that the nominal is not an argument (as in Clark 1976). This will allow for a unified analysis of *ko*, including both cases where it is, and is not, part of a predicate.

If *ko* is a preposition, why are *ko*Ps not distributed like other PPs, that is, at the end of the sentence? The answer is tied to *ko*’s default or expletive nature.²³ Observe from the chart in (28) that all nominals are either KP arguments (S or O) of the verb, or they are PPs.²⁴ As Clark (1976) notes, maximal functional realization of nominal phrases seems to be a general requirement, so that *ko* can be understood as an obligatory default preposition that appears when a nominal has no thematic role in the sentence (in the larger sense of thematic role, including oblique roles such as benefactive, instrument, comitative, etc.).

This analysis is rooted in constraints on nominal licensing, such as case theory, and it would necessitate that each non-argument nominal phrase must contain a preposition for case reasons. This works well to explain the atypical distribution of *ko*-PPs. If *ko* is an expletive preposition, then *ko*-nominals will never appear as indirect objects or obliques, because, unlike other prepositions

such as comitative *mo* or benefactive *ma*, *ko* does not provide a thematic identity to its complement noun phrase. Furthermore, unlike *mo* and *ma*, it does not contain the semantic instructions necessary to allow it to combine with and modify a state or event as other indirect or oblique PPs do. As a result, *ko* phrases will never appear in argument or adjunct positions, and will be found only in predicate position, or in non-thematic positions such as topic and focus. In sum, *ko* is the only possible left edge item for a Niuean nominal phrase without a thematic role, and such nominal phrases are the only ones it can appear with.

A crucial difference between our analysis and many others is that it is not *ko* which imbues the nominal with its predicate function. Rather, in its predicate use, *ko* is sister to a light copular verb, v_{BE} . With this view, in all cases of predicate fronting, it is systematically vP which is attracted to predicate position, along with its complement. Due to standard constraints on preposition stranding, *ko* will in turn take its complement with it, so that a complex predicate results.²⁵ We can see from the diagram in (40) that the light verb phrase moves out of the rest of the sentence into a specifier predication position.



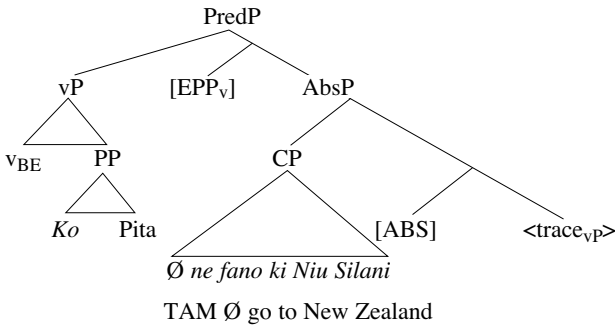
The advantages of such an analysis are numerous. First, it can account for the selectional and word order relation between *ko* and what follows it, since the following $ArtP$ is sister to *ko*. Also captured is the predicational nature of *ko*, since first it edges a non-argument noun phrase and second, it is selected by the light verb v_{BE} . The analysis can also account for the fact that *ko* is found in the fronted predicate position, through ordinary v fronting mechanisms. This analysis might also account for the complementary distribution between *ko* and other TAM markers, given the interconnected relationship across the extended projections of the sentential level, such as Comp, Tense, and the

light verbs. The relevant constraint is that v_{BE} is incompatible with the overt TAMs.

Our analysis works very well for focus and Wh-constructions, predicate nominals, equatives, specificational constructions, and the pre-verbal uses of *ko*, as demonstrated below.

In focus constructions, including Wh-focus constructions, the light verb moves with its sister *ko*P, up to Spec of the predication phrase. The rest of the phrase, namely the headless relative subject, stays in place.

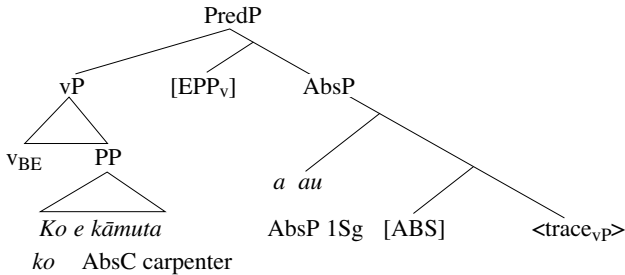
41. Focus 'It was Peter who went to New Zealand'. (S:99)



We can account for the focus reading as follows, keeping in mind that we are assuming that focus constructions are clefts. A focused predicate contains a focus feature [F], and after moving to Specifier of PredP, it is attracted up to the Specifier of FocP, which is above PredP but below NegP. This allows us to derive correct word order (as in (20a)), and to maintain the view of Rizzi (1997, 2003) regarding the structure of the left periphery across languages, as he posits FocP between Interrogative and Tense, which, as argued in Massam (2002) correspond to Neg and Pred in Niuean. Massam (2002) argues that the Niuean left periphery is restricted to predicates. If so, we can also explain why only predicative phrases can be focused in Niuean. Other *ko*-predicates such as predicate nominals do not contain an [F] feature, and do not undergo the extra focus movement in their derivation.²⁶

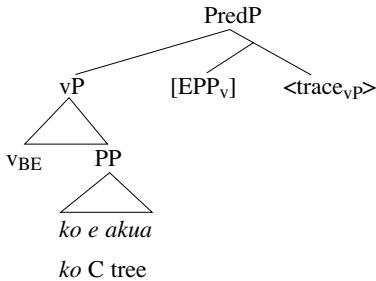
The predicate nominal construction relates two nominals, one being the subject and the other the predicate. Here too the light verb phrase fronts by normal predicate fronting mechanisms, leaving the subject behind. Here, the subject is a simple KP_{ABS} .

42. Predicate Nominal and Equatives ‘I am a carpenter.’ (=6a)



Specificational sentences are also straightforward. We know that in Niuean, the mandatory material in a clause is not the subject as in English, but rather a predicate. Thus a clause such as *ko e akau* is possible, which means simply ‘was a tree’ or ‘it was a tree’. No expletive is required, and the *vP* phrase simply moves to the **PredP**.

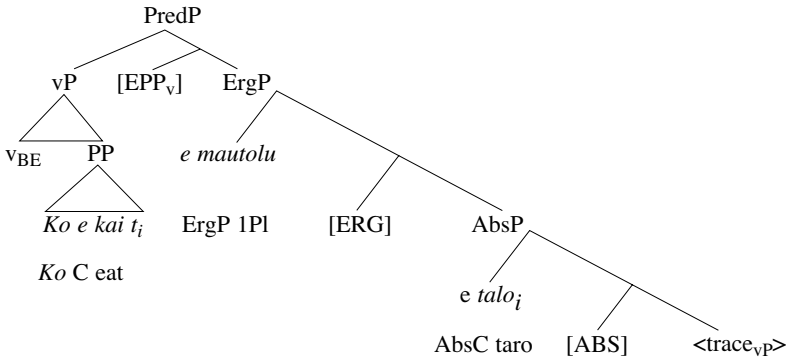
43. Specificational: ‘It was a tree.’ (See 18)



The aspectual use of *ko* can also be accounted for in our analysis. Although, as noted above, there are many open questions regarding this use of *ko*, its basic structural analysis is straightforward, as shown in (44).

44. Aspectual Uses ‘We are now eating taro.’

(=20b)

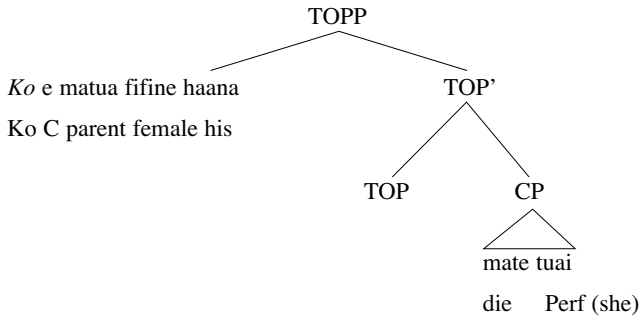


We have seen that the light verb + *koP* analysis can account for six of the nine descriptively different uses of *ko* in Niuean, namely those where the *koP* serves as sentential predicate, whether or not it is also focused. Remaining are the uses of *ko* in topicalization, titles, and appositive constructions, in which the *ko*-phrase is not acting as the predicate of the sentence.

Seiter (1980) argues convincingly that topicalized *ko*-phrases are simply generated to the left of the clause without creating a second predicate. This is easy to incorporate into our analysis. Because the topicalized noun phrase is not an argument, *ko* appears in the left periphery of the noun phrase. And because the *koP* is in the specifier of a Topic phrase, it receives its reading of topicalization.

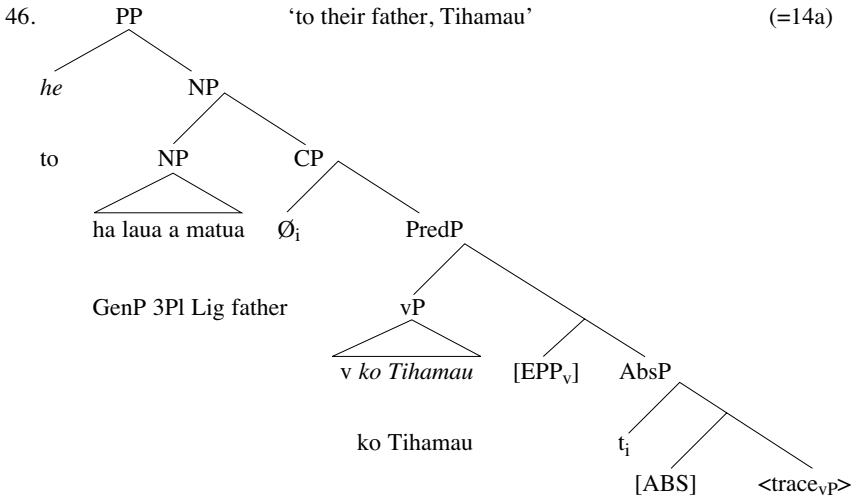
45. Topicalization ‘As for his mother, she is dead.’

(See (11).)



Titles and isolated nominals are also straightforward. Given that all non-argument nominal phrases need a preposition, and since these isolated nominal phrases play no thematic role, *ko* is the only possible preposition that can appear.

Appositives remain. There are two possibilities here, and we are uncertain which is correct. First, we might consider them to be reduced non-restrictive relative modifiers rather than simple appositives. In this view, the correct translation for an apposition like *ha laua a matua ko Tihamau* in (14) above would be ‘their father, who is Tihamau’ rather than the simple appositive ‘their father, Tihamau’. If this is correct, the structure would be as in (46), and the *ko* phrase would constitute a sentential predicate, and be classed with the predicative uses of *ko*.²⁷

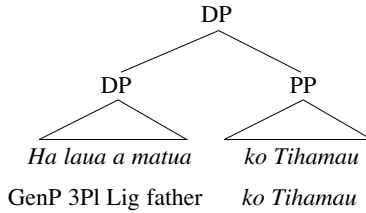


Another possibility is simple apposition, where the *ko*P is adjoined to a nominal phrase to give an apposition reading. (We have left out the preposition in (47).)

47. Apposition

‘their father, Tihamau’

(See (14a).)



Since *ko* is the only possible left peripheral possibility for a noun phrase which is not an argument or oblique modifier of an event, it will be used in (47). In this view, *ko*P is not a predicate, as it does not appear as complement to v_{BE} , but is effectively an isolated nominal phrase. Which of these two analyses for appositives is correct remains to be determined, but the latter seems to best reflect the translations given for such structures.

We have now accounted for all nine uses of *ko*, which proved difficult for previous analyses adapted for Niuean. Analyses in which *ko* phrases are inherent predicates fall short, since clearly being a *ko* phrase does not in itself make a phrase a predicate in Niuean. This shortcoming holds for the view of *ko* as a copular preposition, as T, and as a Pred. Similarly, the use of *ko* phrases in predicate nominals and equatives creates problems for the view of *ko* as a Topic or Focus head in Niuean. For those considering *ko* to be simply a preposition, the problem is how to account for its anomalous behaviour, when compared to other prepositional phrases. In the view proposed here, that *ko* is an expletive preposition, which can be selected by v_{BE} , all uses of *ko*, predicative and non-predicative, focus and non-focus, can be unified and its aberrant PP behaviour can be explained. We now turn to a final *ko*-construction, the double-*ko* construction.

6. Double *Ko* Constructions

The double *ko*-construction is an equative-like construction in which *ko* appears twice, on either side of the equation, as illustrated in (48)–(52).

48. *Ko* ia foki *ko* e tama ne ua aki mai he toko fitu he haana
a lafu.

Ko 3Sg also *ko* C child Nfut two with Src LocC H seven GenC 3SgGen
Art family

‘He was the second eldest of a family of seven children.’

(B&T: 5)

49. *Ko* Hetalaga mo Fakanaiki *ko* e tau leoleo ha Tehamau
Ko Hetalaga with Fakanaiki *ko* C Pl bodyguards of Tehamau.
‘Hetalaga and Fakanaiki were body guards at the time of Tehamau.’
(NAH: 14)

50. *Ko* e tagata-leveki po ke lima-matua haana *ko* Matakuhifi.
Ko C bodyguard or right-hand man 3SgGen *ko* Matakuhifi
‘His bodyguard, or right-hand man, was Matakuhifi.’ (NAH: 23)

51. *Ko* ia *ko* e matakainaga nī a Tihamau.
Ko 3Sg *ko* C brother Emph GenP Tihamau
‘He was Tihamau’s brother.’ (NAH: 23)

In at least some contexts, either the single or double *ko* constructions can be used. For example, the question in (52a) can be answered by either (52b) or (52c) (Kaulima and Beaumont 2002).

52. a. Ko hai e higoa haau?
Ko what AbsC name Gen3Sg
‘What is your name?’ (K&B)
- b. Ko Peni au.
Ko Ben 1Sg
‘I am Peni (Ben).’ (K&B)
- c. Ko au ko Peni.
Ko 1Sg ko Ben
‘I am Ben.’ (K&B)

Our first assumption for these structures was that the first *ko*-NP is a topicalized ‘subject’ and the second is the specificational predicate (cf. Salisbury 2002 for similar constructions in Pukapukan), but this cannot be the case in Niuean. As Seiter (1980) demonstrates, Topic position is very high, to the left even of TAM. But it is clear that the first *ko*-phrase in the double *ko* construction is low, since it can appear to the right of a sententially scoping negation marker, as in (53).

53. Na:kai *ko* laua *ko* e tau Patuiki, ti nākai fai talahauaga
lahi nī a laua.

Not *ko* they *ko* C Pl king, thus not be story
lots Emph of them

‘They were not kings and nothing much was said about them.’

(NAH: 14)

As we have seen, focused phrases appear lower than negation, but it seems clear from the contexts here that the first *ko*-phrase in these examples is not focused, but plays more of a topic role. One possibility is that there are two topic positions (cf. Rizzi 1997, 2003), one very high, and one lower, under TAM and Neg. Another possibility, open to us given the analysis of *ko* in this paper, is that the first *ko*P is sister to a v_{BE} , functioning as the sentential predicate, in the normal predicate position under negation, and the second *ko*P is a PP merged directly in subject position. It is hard to understand though how the second *ko*P consistently manages not to check absolutive case in the specifier of AbsP, which we have been assuming is necessary, since usually only absolutive-marked phrases can be intransitive subjects.

A third possibility here is that these are main clause small clauses, with the two *ko*Ps in an apposition relation with each other. This solution inherits problems inherent to all small clause analyses, but in this view, the use of *ko* on both sides of the equation is easy to understand. Since there is no verb, there are no thematic roles, and the two noun phrases are essentially isolates in an equal relation of apposition to each other.

In summary, then, while the Niuean double *ko* constructions need further study, there are clear lines for further exploration of this construction within the expletive preposition analysis proposed in this paper.

7. Conclusion

In this paper we have examined ten uses of the Niuean morpheme *ko*. We outlined and critiqued previous approaches to this Polynesian morpheme as applied to Niuean, and for Niuean, we have promoted the traditional analysis of *ko* as a preposition, in particular the view that *ko* is an expletive or default preposition which introduces non-argument nominals (Clark 1976). When *ko* is sister to a light verb it serves as the predicate of the sentence, and might also be focused, but when it appears in other positions, it is interpreted positionally

as a topic, a noun phrase in isolation, or an appositive. As well as providing an account of *ko* in Niuean, this paper has also identified three interesting areas for further study, in particular, the use of *ko* with verbal complements in Niuean and across Polynesian languages; the exact conditions under which predicates can be focused (and why only predicates can be), and the correct analysis and function of double-*ko* constructions.

Notes

- 1 The term light verb is used to mean a functional head with core semantic properties such as BE, DO, CAUSE etc. (Harley 1995, 2002, Folli and Harley 2005), which selects the lexical predicate phrase. It is not assumed here to be the same functional head that selects the external argument. (See also Larson 1988, Hale & Kaiser 1993, 2001, Chomsky 1995: 315.)
- 2 Data sources are indicated after examples, abbreviated as follows: AMNB: Asekona, Manamana, Noue, and Beaumont; B&T: Blanc and Togakilo; K&B: Kaulima and Beaumont; LMP: Languages of Manukau Project (see footnote 11); MFN: Massam Field Notes; NAH: *Niue: a History of the Island*; S: Seiter. Published sources are listed in the References. Glosses have been made uniform. Translations are usually those provided by the source. Abbreviations used in glossing are as follows: Abs: Absolutive, C: Common, Clsfr: Classifier, Dir: Directional marker, Du: Dual, Emph: Emphatic, Erg: Ergative, Ex: Exclusive, Fut: Future, Gen: Genitive, H: Human, Lig: Ligature item, Loc: Locative, Nfut: Nonfuture, Nsp: Nonspecific, Quant: Quantifier, P: Proper, Perf: Perfect, Pers: Personal article, Pl: Plural, Pst: Past, Resprn: Resumptive locative pronoun, Sbjv: subjunctive, Sg: Singular, Src: Source, TAM: Tense Aspect Mood, 1: First person, 3: Third person.
- 3 The reasons for this are fourfold: it is the norm for functional heads to move with their complements; this analysis allows for uniform feature attraction for predicate fronting (it is always *v* which is attracted); it allows for verbs to be the simultaneous spell-out both *v* and *V*; and it leaves open the possibility that the PNI verb *fai* (have, be) is a light verb, as well as possibly so-called auxiliaries such as *fia* 'want'.
- 4 EPP here stands for the Extended Projection Principle. In theory, EPP stipulates that all clauses must contain a subject. (Chomsky 1981, 1995). We assume in Niuean the EPP feature has a light verbal value, hence attracting vPs.
- 5 Because of the ability of the noun phrase to act as a predicate in Tongan, Broschart (1997), following others, argues that there is no noun/verb distinction in Polynesian. Massam (2005) discusses this issue in Niuean.
- 6 Interestingly, in some Polynesian language, such as Pukapukan, *ko* is used for locative existentials, where Niuean uses *hā* as in (7c) above (Salisbury 2002).
- 7 *Ko* + NP is in complementary distribution with TAM elements, as will be further

- discussed later, hence TAM markers cannot be used to demonstrate that the *ko* + NP is in predicate position.
- 8 *Ko e loku* is not in bold type because the phrase is in apposition to *ko e akau* and thus is not an example of a specificational use of *ko*.
 - 9 Clark (1976) considers this construction rare in Niuean, but it seems reasonably common in spoken Niuean at least, judging by the LMP interviews, cited below.
 - 10 To support this idea, we note that verbs can be zero-derived to nouns easily in Niuean (Seiter 1980, Massam 2005), and in addition, that a verbal complement of a light verb vBE is often participial rather than fully verbal. (cf. 'be eating'). It is also possible, though, that *e* should be analysed as a Ligature item, (which does not appear with proper nouns, for some reason) rather than as a common article.
 - 11 This data is taken from interviews conducted by the Pasifika Languages of Manukau project, a Marsden project funded by the Royal Society of New Zealand to investigate the health of the four major Pasifika languages in New Zealand (see Bell et al. 2000 for details). We would like to thank Donna Starks for providing this data.
 - 12 An anonymous reviewer noted that *ko* in Pileni is from **kua* and thus not cognate.
 - 13 The abbreviations in the Rapanui data are Pft: perfect, Res: resultative and +Spe: plus specific.
 - 14 We recognize that in some sense a topic or apposition nominal can be seen as being in a predication relation with its partner, but it is clear that there is an important difference between this sort of predication and that of being the main predicate of a sentence. We refer only to the latter function as predicational in this paper.
 - 15 In some languages *ko* is argued to have one clear prepositional use, such as Pukapukan, where it can indicate an achieved goal 'as far as', as discussed in Salisbury (2002).
 - 16 We assume null prepositions for Genitive and Locative since these nominals pattern with PPs and not with DPs in extraction, quantifier float, raising, and other operations, as discussed in Seiter (1980). Note that there are some tentative issues in the paradigm. For example, it is not clear if the final *i* in the Proper Goal and Source might be Loc Case. The so-called 'personal article' *a* for proper nouns, shows up only if the object of the preposition is human, so we consider it a classifier. It is not clear if Genitive *a* is present only in case of a [human] noun object, since we have not found a non-human genitive. We gloss *ko* with '?' because its function is unclear, since its meaning is the topic of inquiry of this paper.
 - 17 Of course, not all authors adopting a prepositional analysis for *ko* assume a movement analysis to derive the predicate initial word order.
 - 18 Chung and Ladusaw (2004) discount the selectional argument that *ko* is a preposition, and consider that the lack of the article in proper nouns can be accounted for phonologically in Māori (*a* is not pronounced after vowels other

than i), but it is not clear without further phonological study, if this could be the case in Niuean.

- 19 In Hawai'ian, *ko* is realized as 'o.
- 20 Examples like these, are not found in Niuean as far as we know, though see Section 5 for other possible *in situ* cases of *ko*. Pearce (1999) notes the exact function of *ko* in such examples is not clear.
- 21 Note that the morpheme 'not' has two variants: *nākai* and *ai*.
- 22 This line of thinking was also suggested to me by Rose-Marie Déchaine (p.c.). See also Déchaine (1993).
- 23 Of note also, is Mathieu (2005, to appear), who posits expletive prepositions in French.
- 24 Recall that in footnote 15, we pointed out that on distributional and behavioural grounds, locative and genitive nominals contain null prepositions. An exception to the PP requirement for nominals is pseudo-noun-incorporation nominals (as Clark 1976 notes), which alone can appear as bare NPs (Massam 2001).
- 25 We must consider the constraint against preposition stranding to be responsible for the pied-piping of the complement in *ko*-predicate fronting, and not attribute it to general islandhood of the *ko*P, because in cases where *ko* appears with a (de-)verbal complement, the object of the verb can 'escape' from the *ko* phrase by regular object shift, as in (20b). Note also that a PP will never undergo object shift to specifier of AbsP, as this movement is restricted to nominal phrases with absolutive case.
- 26 Remaining is to understand why *ko* predicates with headless relative subject clauses are always [+F], whereas those with nominal subjects are not (assuming this to be the case).
- 27 Of course many questions arise as to the correct structure for relative clauses, but here we adopt a common view in which the relative clause is adjoined to the nominal phrase that it modifies. Details are not important for idea explored here.

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