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Ergativity in East Futunan Oral Narratives

By

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DISSERTATION

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ABSTRACT

East Futunan is an understudied Polynesian language spoken on the islands of Futuna and Alofi in the French Territory Wallis and Futuna. East Futunan has ergative/absolutive case alignment, a feature that occurs in many of the world's languages, yet continues to intrigue linguists. East Futunan mostly exhibits ergative/absolutive case alignment morphologically, where the subject of an intransitive sentence and the object of a transitive sentence are marked with an absolutive particle *a*, and the subject of a transitive sentence is marked with an ergative particle *e*, but with some indications for syntactic ergativity in changes in word order and in certain agreement situations.

This dissertation examines ergative/absolutive alignment in oral narratives found in archival data from the COCOON (Collections de Corpus Oraux Numériques) corpus and addresses three main topics. First, a variety of sentence structures are examined to see how speakers of East Futunan use ergative and absolutive arguments and case particles in different sentence structures in oral narratives. Next, this dissertation aims to address if East Futunan oral narratives have any sentences where an ergative or absolutive particle may be expected to be found, but does not occur, and possible reasons causing these omissions. Last, it is discussed if the ergative/absolutive case alignment system in East Futunan oral narratives is consistent with alignment systems in other Polynesian languages, Samoan and Tongan in particular. The findings indicate that there could be a syntactic, pragmatic, and discourse reasons why there is variation in the usage of ergative and absolutive particles. Features such as ergative avoidance and the context of previously mentioned arguments and their syntactic roles are examined in determining the motivation behind omitting an ergative or absolutive case particle.

Additionally, this dissertation aims to use oral narratives to show East Futunan's place in the larger Polynesian language family and how it is typologically similar to other Polynesian languages. It is shown that the syntax used in oral narratives has structural features that make East Futunan characteristically Polynesian, including a rich particle system, verb-initial word order, and structures such as reduplication and dual marking on pronouns. The oral narratives also show that East Futunan displays a case alignment system that is similar to other ergative/absolutive Polynesian languages in the form of its sentence structure and the function of its case marking. There is also evidence that other Polynesian languages omit case particles and that this ergative avoidance is done for a similar pragmatic reason in East Futunan.

Finally, this dissertation adds to the body of work of this understudied language. East Futunan has a low number of speakers which continues to decrease, and adding to the documentation and analysis of this language will help preserve existing knowledge of this language, as well help future researchers of Polynesian languages add to their understanding of features and their usage. The analysis of an understudied language also adds to broader typological knowledge and the general understanding of the capabilities of human language.

ACKNOWLEGEMENTS

This dissertation is the culmination of many years of work, and I had the help and support of many people throughout the entire process. It would not have been possible without all the scholars of Austronesian linguistics, Oceanic linguistics, and East Futunan who came before me, whose work was so integral to this project.

My advisor, Raúl Aranovich, and I have a shared interest in morphology and syntax, and his work on Fijian helped introduce me to the world of Austronesian linguistics. He advised me on all my milestone projects during my time at UC Davis, and we had many discussions over the years that introduced me to new ideas and challenged the way I thought about language structure. When I was working to find example sentences to include in this dissertation, I always looked forward to showing him any interesting syntactic structures that I had found and the engaging discussion that would inevitably follow.

I would also like to thank my other dissertation committee members: Jack Hawkins and Vai Ramanathan. Jack has always taken an interest in my work and has been an absolute wealth of information in linguistic typology. He is so enthusiastic and willing to discuss any aspect of my projects. I met Vai on my first day of graduate school and I have always found that she is kind and supportive, a great listener, and very helpful in giving constructive advice, not just within the field of linguistics, but in life as well.

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GLOSSING CONVENTIONS

1	1st person
2	2nd person
3	3rd person
A	subject argument of a transitive verb
ABS	absolutive
ACC	accusative
ACP	accomplished aspect
AGR	agreement
ANAPH	anaphoric pronoun
ART	article
AUX	auxiliary
CAUS	causative
CLF	classifier
COLL	collective article
DEICT	deictic
DEF	definite
DEM	demonstrative
DIR	directional
DU	dual
EXCL	exclusive
ERG	ergative

IPFV	imperfective aspect
INACP	unaccomplished aspect
INCL	inclusive
INDIC	indicative
INTR	intransitive
LOC	locative
NEG	negative
NOM	nominative
NONFUT	non-future
O	object argument of a transitive verb
OBL	oblique
OBJ	object
PAST	past tense
PL	plural
POSS	possessive
PRF	perfective aspect
PRED	presentative predicate
PREP	preposition
PROG	progressive
Q	question particle
REC	reciprocal
REL	relativizing marker
S	subject argument of an intransitive verb

SG   singular

SUB   subordinating conjunction

SUCC   successive aspect

TR   transitive

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction to the Research Questions

Ergative/absolutive case alignment systems, their origins, and their usage in language are features of language that continually interest linguists. East Futunan[1] is characterized as a language with an ergative/absolutive case alignment system, but to date, there has not been any extensive work whose sole focus is to discuss this language's usage of ergativity within oral narratives. This dissertation will provide a discussion of the usage of East Futunan's ergative/absolutive case alignment system in oral narratives, drawing examples from ergativity usage in other Polynesian languages, such as Samoan and Tongan. The features and usage of ergativity in this language will show its similarities and differences to other Polynesian languages, therefore expanding our knowledge and understanding of Polynesian, Oceanic, and Austronesian languages, as well as further our fundamental understanding of the capabilities of human language. This project aims to address these main questions:

(1) How are ergative and absolutive case markings used in a variety of sentence

constructions in East Futunan oral narratives?

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[1]First, a clarifying note differentiating any ambiguity about the name of this language: Different sources refer to this language spoken in Wallis and Futuna as either Futunan or East Futunan. However, referring to this language as Futunan creates some ambiguity, as there is also a language spoken in Vanuatu called Futunan, also sometimes referred to as Futuna-Aniwa. In order to be explicitly clear and to differentiate between the language spoken in Wallis and Futuna and the language spoken in Vanuatu, as well as to be consistent with some other academic works, I will always refer to the topic language of this dissertation as East Futunan. When speaking in or about this language, speakers refer to their language as Futuna or Fakafutuna. It should also be noted that in any works discussing this language that are published in French, this language is referred to as Futunien.

(2) Are there any data of oral narratives in which an ergative or absolutive case marker

would be expected, but not used? What is the functional motivation and mechanism

in situations where ergative and absolutive markers are omitted?

(3) In what ways is the ergative/absolutive case alignment system in East Futunan similar

or different to other Polynesian languages?

1.2 The Data Source

The majority of the data for this project comes from a corpus of archival data of East

Futunan. The data from this COCOON (Collections de Corpus Oraux Numériques) corpus,

which can be accessed here https://cocoon.huma-num.fr/exist/crdo, was recorded and then

transcribed in French by Claire Moyse-Faurie in the early 1990s. There are eight speakers of East

Futunan and eleven oral narratives, which each have East Futunan audio, East Futunan

orthography, and a French translation[2]. The oral narratives from this corpus tell stories, legends,

and myths about Futuna, mostly about the origin and history of Futuna, different locations in

Futuna, myths of how certain plants and animals came to be in Futuna, and current and previous

kings and leaders of Futuna. As East Futunan does not have a long history of being a written

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[2] In examples drawn from data from the COCOON corpus, the original East Futunan
orthography and French translation are presented in this dissertation as they were in the corpus.
Any written language used is transcribed exactly on an oral account of an East Futunan speaker.
Any orthography of East Futunan is generally unchanged from the original source. Glottal stops
are written '. Long vowels are indicated with a macron. The corpus did not contain any glossed
data, but some of the short stories had glossing in French provided to me by Claire Moyse-
Faurie. Any glossing that was provided to me in Moyse-Faurie's notes was translated into
English in this dissertation. The grammatical meanings of the glosses were kept as true and
accurate to the original as possible with the exception of the *la* particle whose meaning I define
briefly later in Chapter 2. In this dissertation, I gloss *la* as a DEM (demonstrative) instead of EMPH
(emphatic) or DÉMARC (demarcating particle). Most short stories did not have glossing provided
to me; the glossing for these stories was done by me. All English translations of the oral
narratives from the COCOON corpus were translated by me.

language, the data that will be used in this analysis will mostly be based on oral accounts. The data from the COCOON corpus is supplemented with examples from an East Futunan Grammar written by Moyse-Faurie (1997), East Futunan to French dictionaries written by Moyse-Faurie (1993) and Grézel (1878), and a book of Futunan texts by Frimigacci et al. (1995). This book contains 118 very short stories, referred to as oral literature, written in East Futunan orthography with a French gloss and French translation[3]. This book contains texts of historically true events, natural phenomenon, as well as stories and myths about Futuna (Frimigacci et al. 1995).

The data that is used in the field of linguistics for the study of typology varies. There are many linguists who rely on data from either elicited sources (lexical items, phrases, sentences, permutations of sentences, description of a situation, etc.), text data (dialogue, monologue, written material from grammars, etc.), or a combination of both. Every method of obtaining data has advantages and disadvantages, but the goal of most functional/typological linguistic work is to have data that is representative of natural speech, but free of performance errors (Rice 2018). The data in this dissertation for both the analysis and examples uses text data – specifically oral narratives, materials from a grammar, and materials from dictionaries.

1.3 Speaker Information

Eight speakers of East Futunan, six male and two female, were recorded by Moyse-Faurie speaking oral narratives in East Futunan. The recordings all took place on the island of

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[3] In examples drawn from the book *Ko le fonu tu'a limulimua (La tortue au dos moussu): Textes de tradition orale de Futuna*, all East Futunan orthography, and French translations are presented in this dissertation as they were in the book. Glosses given in French in this book were translated by me into English glosses. All accompanying English translations of examples from this book were translated by me.

Futuna. The genders and names of the speakers are given in the COCOON Corpus, but there is

not any other demographic information provided about these speakers.

Although there isn't any explicit information provided about other languages that these

speakers speak, in some recordings, before the speaker starts telling the story, the speaker is

heard speaking French to other people in the background. Given that Wallis and Futuna is a

French territory and French is the primary language for government and education, this is a

highly bilingual society, and it is likely that these speakers do also speak French.

1.4 Importance

This work on East Futunan serves a number of important purposes both within the field

of linguistics and in the broader context of the world beyond linguistics.

East Futunan is an underdocumented language with a low number of speakers.

Languages with these characteristics are perpetually endangered and risk becoming extinct. In

the recent COVID-19 pandemic, multiple endangered languages have seen their remaining and

aging populations of native speakers threatened (Abbi 2020). This means that there is a practical

and moral imperative to add to the documentation and body of work on these languages now,

while that work can still be verified with living speakers, rather than hope that this language will

be one of the few to reverse its trend and grow again in community use. This dissertation

contributes to the documentation of threatened and underdocumented languages in two ways.

First and most obvious is that East Futunan itself receives careful attention and analysis beyond

the efforts of the linguist Claire Moyse-Faurie, who is one of the few to have done fieldwork

there. Second, East Futunan is part of the Polynesian family of languages, which tend to share

features. This does not mean that studying a single language is sufficient for an understanding of

the family, but it does mean that detailed analysis on one language, like mine contained herein, can serve as a useful tool for researchers and field worker trying to work on other endangered languages within the family. A good example of this is my prior work on the *la* particle[4] in East Futunan which has parallel but distinct manifestations in other Polynesian languages. A researcher on a previously undocumented Polynesian language can take that analysis and use it as an initial hypothesis to validate, reject, or adapt according to what they document in the new language. This means that future research and documentation within the Polynesian family can be supported and improved by my work on this one language.

As mentioned above, East Futunan is a threatened language with a low population of speakers. Wallis and Futuna is a farming and fishing community and does not have a global economic presence. Under these circumstances, languages tend to become extinct as other globally dominant languages associated with outside opportunity or administration become more widely spoken and are seen as more beneficial for new generations. Work on these endangered languages serves to reaffirm the value of the culture, history, and traditions of the community while those traditions are still extant, and can be used by the community to revitalize the use of

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[4] In my Ph.D. Qualifying Paper, also discussed in Chapter 2, I argue that the category of the particle *la* is a demonstrative, meaning 'over there' or 'in a different time', as part of a 3-way demonstrative system, consistent with the 3-way demonstrative system that is found in most Polynesian languages. In previous literature, *la* is non-specifically defined, and is usually generally referred to as an emphatic particle, demarcating particle, or punctuation in the speaker's discourse. However, I argue that *la* is best defined as a demonstrative based on its functional and grammatical similarities to other demonstratives in East Futunan. *La* has a similar usage, position, and distribution as other demonstratives in the language, namely in its consistent positioning in the syntax in relation to the noun. Additionally, I discussed how in story-telling contexts, *la* is a unique demonstrative and has an additional function in the discourse as a topic marker. *La* functionally marks that a particular noun is a topic, or theme, of a sentence, and speakers use *la* when referring to something in story-telling contexts that is not necessarily tangibly present, or even occurring at this time. In glossing provided to me by Moyse-Faurie, I changed the gloss of this particle from an emphatic marker to a demonstrative in order to better represent my analysis and discussion from that paper.

the language. In cases such as Maori, Hawaiian, and Welsh, a reaffirmation of the value of the language has resulted in increased use and adoption of these languages and in increased daily use by people in the area, whether they come from the original ethnic community or not.

Lastly, this work on East Futunan is important for the development of linguistic theory. Typologists and theoreticians constantly face a problem when sampling languages – they are restricted by the existing body of work on documented languages, and most work in the field of linguistics focuses on Indo-European languages. This poses methodological problems in that there is a bias towards languages and features that are found in Indo-European. Each language for which robust documentation and analysis does not exist and for which we have data is a desirable new addition to the options available for cross-linguistic analysis. This work on East Futunan can be used by historical linguists to further develop and validate our understanding of the development of Polynesian languages, by typologists to better understand and describe the nature of human language as a whole, and by cognitive scientists to validate what forms of language constructions are supported by the structures and abilities of the brain.

1.5 My Approach and Analysis of the Data

1.5.1 Early Stages

My area of interest in linguistics, and ultimately my desired area of study, was always to work with understudied languages and hopefully to add information to the knowledge base of that language. I liked the idea that understudied languages would be a challenge because of the lack of data, but that any work would ultimately provide a significant academic contribution to that language. I became interested in the Austronesian language family when I learned that it is the largest language family in geographical area and number of languages, yet many of the

languages are threatened, endangered, and critically endangered, and most are understudied. In addition to wanting to work with an understudied language, I was also interested in languages with an ergative/absolutive case alignment system. I learned about this feature when I was an undergraduate and I had a linguistics professor whose main area of study was an ergative/absolutive language in Nepal. Her intrigue in studying the topic as well as her clear explanations and examples always made me curious to study this feature more. I like the fact that this case system challenged me to critically think about syntactic structure and the different ways in which arguments can be presented. When choosing a language to study, I also took into account my own language background. Before starting this project, I had previously studied French for eight years in high school and college. I lived in Bordeaux, France for six months, and during that time I was taking full-immersion classes with other French students. I was using French as my primary language in school and at home. Although French is my second language and I started learning it later in life, the time that I spent using French daily made me confident that I could speak and understand the language well. If I chose an underdocumented language that had French as its contact language, such as the languages in French Polynesia, I knew that I would be able to use and understand primary sources that were written in French.

With a general location of French Polynesia in mind, and knowing that I was interested in studying an ergative/absolutive Austronesian language, and with the help of my advisor, I learned of East Futunan, an understudied Polynesian language that is geographically and linguistically close to Samoa and Tonga.

Ergative/absolutive case alignment is a feature that continues to intrigue linguists, although the history of when it was discovered is unclear. Upon looking into this further, there isn't a clear record of when or in which language this feature was first observed or documented.

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The theory of ergativity had likely already started to be developed by European linguists in the late 1800s (Fought 1982), but it was Hugo Schuchardt, a German linguist, who observed the pattern in the late 1800s while researching Georgian and other Caucasian languages, and later Basque (Fought 1982, Delancey 2004). There has been criticism of Schuchardt's (1895) work on ergativity (Fought 1982), as he believed that ergative sentences were obligatorily passive clauses, an idea which is now considered incorrect. Fought (1982) describes Schuchardt's theoretical ideas about language structure and ergativity as "the weakest element in his work as a whole" and a "disappointing lack of insight into ergativity". Although ergativity had already been observed as a feature, it was Robert M.W. Dixon's and Bernard Comrie's work in the 1970s that brought more typological insight and awareness to this pattern. Dixon's description of Dyirbal (1972) was the first published functional and typological work on ergativity and was followed by the survey works of Comrie (1978) and Dixon (1979), which made ergativity a main area of research and theory (Delancey 2004). Delancey (2004) describes the beginning of linguists' interest in ergativity as "…its status as a major construct in typology and linguistic theory dates back only to the 1970's, when the phenomenon was brought to general attention by Dixon, Silverstein, Comrie and others. But from the outset of the ergativity explosion, it was evident that what had been brought to the public eye was not a phenomenon, but a cluster of phenomena which needed to be defined." Different types of ergativity exist across different languages (notably, split-ergative systems, morphological ergativity, syntactic ergativity), and there needed to be further research to define these different types and how they function in different languages.

1.5.2 Finding the Data

      With a language of study in mind, my first task was to find data to analyze. As with many understudied languages, a simple search online will not yield many (or any) desired results. I could not find much information on this language, especially with the aforementioned name confusion and inconsistencies. Once I figured out how to search for the correct language, my first approach was to acquire every book and article that mentioned East Futunan or Futunien. Luckily, East Futunan does have a grammar written in French and a few East Futunan to French dictionaries. As Wallis and Futuna is a French territory where the official language is French, French is East Futunan's language of contact, and therefore most reference materials about this language are written in French. I was advised to search for any archival data that may exist, anywhere from when the Dutch first arrived in Futuna to current times. In the COCOON (Collections de Corpus Oraux Numériques) corpus, I found archival data in the form of oral narratives that Claire Moyse-Faurie collected and transcribed while doing fieldwork in the late 1980s and early 1990s and later uploaded. I consider this to be my first breakthrough in this project, and it felt like a huge success finding this data. I now had data, but the analysis was going to be difficult, as most of the collection was raw, unanalyzed data, with only an audio file, East Futunan orthography, and a French translation.

      My next breakthrough came when I contacted Claire Moyse-Faurie directly. As she is currently the only linguist who has direct experience working with this language, I thought that any information or advice she could give would be beneficial to my project. I was unsure of what kind of response to expect, or if I would even receive a reply. But I did receive a quick response back from her, and she wanted to know what publications of hers I had read about this language, and if I was planning on doing any fieldwork in Wallis and Futuna. Additionally, she wanted to

confirm that I could speak, read, and write French, as knowledge of French is crucial for studying East Futunan. As our correspondence continued, she shared a list of her publications concerning East Futunan and ergativity, and was able to provide me with some of her publications that I hadn't been able to access, including some of her glosses of a few of the oral narratives that were not available on the COCOON corpus. My impression was that she was supportive of another linguist who wanted to study East Futunan, and was willing to share any resources that she had that could be helpful. During this time I was, and still am currently, very appreciative of her response and everything that she was willing to share. I likely would not have had nearly as many academic sources or oral narratives if she were not so openly willing to send them to me. Once I had this additional information, I felt like I had enough sources available to me to start analyzing the data. I was able to use the dictionary of East Futunan and the grammar of East Futunan simultaneously to begin to gloss the oral narratives and review the few already-existing glosses of oral narratives that I had acquired. The goal that I had in mind at this point was to start observing how ergativity was marked in the morphology and syntax of the language, looking for patterns of distribution, and any lack of patterns.

1.5.3 Approaching the Analysis of the Data

When approaching an understudied language, there are certain challenges that are expected. There is simply not the breadth or depth of information available that one needs. That being said, it is not an impossible task, and there are strategies to adopt that can produce results. Acquiring data in these types of languages is a success in itself, but the analysis of the data poses its own challenges. You cannot easily look up a word or information about a grammatical feature, and, in my case, nothing was "googleable".

I was overwhelmed with data that I didn't know how to approach, and became frustrated when I couldn't just look at the data and see patterns emerging. I had to accept that it was not possible for me to know everything about the syntactic structure of this language, and that it was better to start by studying just one grammatical feature. I already knew that this language uses ergative and absolutive markers in some sentences, so this became my starting point. I looked for sentences that contained either the ergative *e* or the absolutive *a* particle, and used the dictionary to gloss the sentence. This was a long and difficult process, but the more I worked with the data, the more I became familiar with the syntactic structures in this language. By allowing time to simply look at and read the data that contained these two particles, I had inadvertently learned about other features. It was also during this time that I realized how critically necessary it was to be able to speak the primary contact language when working with an understudied language. It is important to be able to read any literature or primary sources in order to avoid misanalysis or loss of original meaning.

A challenge that I encountered, especially early on, was the question of whether to take a semantic approach and use meaning to guide analysis. When I was just beginning the analysis process, I felt like I did need to rely on meaning. I was using a dictionary to look up every single word in East Futunan, and I had to let the translation guide me into seeing what the grammatical structures were. During this time, if I found a word that seemingly had a grammatical meaning, I then consulted the grammar to see if there was any further information. Fittingly, there usually was a more detailed grammatical explanation in the grammar than in the dictionary, and I began to gloss the grammatical items more consistently with the description in the grammar, rather than initially just assigning a lexical word to it. For example, the prefix *faka-* and the suffix *-'aki* in east Futunan are both prevalent throughout the data. The dictionary of East Futunan defines

every word with an *faka-* prefix or *-'aki* suffix as a separate lexical entry, with only a brief explanation of the affix itself. *Faka-* is described as a causative prefix, and *-'aki* is described as a reciprocal suffix, or a suffix that can indicate that an action is done by many (Moyse-Faurie 1993). However, the grammar of East Futunan describes each of these affixes in more detail. *Faka-* is described as a multi-functional prefix that changes the valency of a verb, such as in causative constructions, as in (1a) and (1b). It can be used on certain nouns to derive verbs, as in (2a) and (2b) (Moyse-Faurie 1997). *-'aki* is described as a productive suffix that can transitivize a verb that it attaches to. This verb has phonological variation, depending on the verb stem, as in (3a) and (3b) (Moyse-Faurie 1997).

(1a)   vilo   'fall'

(1b)   fakavilo   'make fall, bring down, knock over'

(2a)   taga   'bag'

(2b)   fakataga   'put in a bag'

(3a)   ifo   'go down (INTR)'

(3b)   ifo'aki   'go down with (TR)'

When I was glossing data, sometimes I found that it was more accurate to gloss certain verbs as a lexical item, such as *fela'aki* 'to be so', and sometimes it was more accurate to gloss as an affix plus a lexical item.

I also noticed that the more I worked with the data, the more critical of the French translations I became. The translations were sometimes more of a "best fit" solution, rather than an actual representation of the structures in the original language.

An important point that I had to remember though, was that the same meaning can be expressed in different ways in different languages. I had at this point learned enough about the language that I could just use the English and/or French translation as a rough guide, and instead take the syntactic approach of basing the analysis on patterns of distribution and co-occurrence. I quickly learned that a sentence that would be translated as transitive in English or French did not necessarily mean that it was a transitive sentence in East Futunan. For example, the verb *natu* 'find, come' in East Futunan only ever has one argument in the data, and doesn't appear as a transitive verb. I was confused by this initially, because I assumed that a verb like 'find' must be transitive, as it only made sense to me that this verb needed to have an agent and a theme. This verb is used with a sole absolutive argument, as in (4)[5], indicating that it is intransitive, and the theme appears in an oblique phrase with a locative particle.

(4)   *natu*   *a*   *ia*   *ki*   *le*   *fā'ulu*

    find/come   ABS   3.SG   LOC   the   head (of a pig)

    He finds the pig's head.

    Il trouve la tête du cochon.

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[5] Unless otherwise noted, all examples come from one of the oral narratives found in the archival data of the COCOON Corpus.

As can be seen in the example above, I used sentences that had explicitly marked ergative and absolutive particles to assess whether the verb in a particular sentence was transitive or intransitive, then searched for other instances of that verb to see if it required the same arguments, explicitly marked or not.

This process became easier over time as I learned more and more about the language, and I found that I could also use sentences that did not have explicitly marked ergative and absolutive arguments. By searching for the verb(s) in the sentence first, and by knowing where to locate their arguments, I could determine if the sentence followed the same patterns of ergativity, or if there was something else happening in the sentence.

One other approach that helped me during this analysis was using information about syntactic structures in closely related languages. Of course, this strategy is not always possible when analyzing an understudied language, but in my case, there are a few Polynesian languages that have been well-studied and documented. I was able to draw upon information published on Samoan and Tongan, which both have ergative/absolutive case alignment. I found that East Futunan looks quite similar in its case alignment system, and also has many of the same grammatical features that occur in these languages. It was integrally beneficial for me to be able to make an analysis of the East Futunan data, and then see that those structures have been analyzed the same way in Samoan or Tongan. For example, the verb *muli* 'follow' is an intransitive verb of experience in East Futunan, with the object occurring as an oblique. This is another verb that I initially thought must be transitive, but in the data it only occurs with an absolutive argument and an oblique. The verb *muli* 'follow' in Samoan is described by Chung (1978) in a similar way that I had given for my analysis of *muli* in East Futunan. Chung (1978) says that direct objects for this and similar verbs of experience are marked with a preposition,

indicating that the direct object functions as an oblique. It was reassuring to see a difficult analysis that I had made independently confirmed with a very similar verb, in both form and meaning, in Samoan, and reading a very similar analysis in Chung's book made me feel hopeful about my progress in this analysis in East Futunan.

Additionally, my dissertation advisor, Raúl Aranovich, has studied Fijian extensively. Although Fijian is not nearly as closely related to East Futunan as Samoan or Tongan (technically, Fijian isn't considered a Polynesian language, rather Micronesian, but both Fijian and East Futunan fall into the larger Oceanic subfamily), we actually discovered that there are many similarities – lexical and grammatical – between the two. There were many times I remember when he read my examples and said something along the lines of "this looks just like Fijian". One such similarity is how the verbs *tio* 'see (INTR)' and *tio'i* 'see (TR)' have a similar grammatical meaning to verbs in Fijian. Fijian *rai* 'observe' is intransitive (Aranovich 2015), similar to the East Futunan *tio*. Fijian *raica* 'see' is transitive (Aranovich 2015), similar to the East Futuna *tio'i*.

1.5.4 Take-Away Lessons

As a student of linguistics studying a curated data set, I wanted to notice every pattern and be able to explain every process occurring in that data set in order to account for all of the data. Approaching real-life data, raw and unedited, was quite different, however. I had to accept that there is no way to verify without doubt that the analysis is completely accurate and representative of the whole language, but instead had to be content with being able to back up the analysis with solid reasoning and examples. Starting with looking at just one syntactic structure is how I worked to make a larger analysis come together.

Ultimately the most difficult challenge was having to rely on minimal information to support an analysis. There is no way to fully verify or check an analysis with limited supporting data and limited previous research. But through this process I learned a lot about the process of how to analyze an understudied language, and I hope to implement similar strategies when I have the opportunity again to study an understudied language.

CHAPTER 2

FEATURES OF EAST FUTUNAN

2.1 Language Information

East Futunan is language in the Polynesian branch of the Oceanic group of the larger Austronesian family. It is spoken on the islands of Futuna and Alofi in the French territory of Wallis and Futuna. In 1997, East Futunan was spoken by approximately 4,000 speakers in Futuna and a few thousand speakers in New Caledonia (Moyse-Faurie 1997). The number of speakers of this language is overall decreasing (Ethnologue 2018), which is likely due to the prominent presence of French as the primary language for government and education. However, currently all generations of people have speakers of this language, which classifies East Futunan as a threatened language according to Ethnologue (2018). Figure 1 below (UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs 2006) shows the geographical location of Wallis and Futuna in relation to Fiji, Samoa, and Tonga.
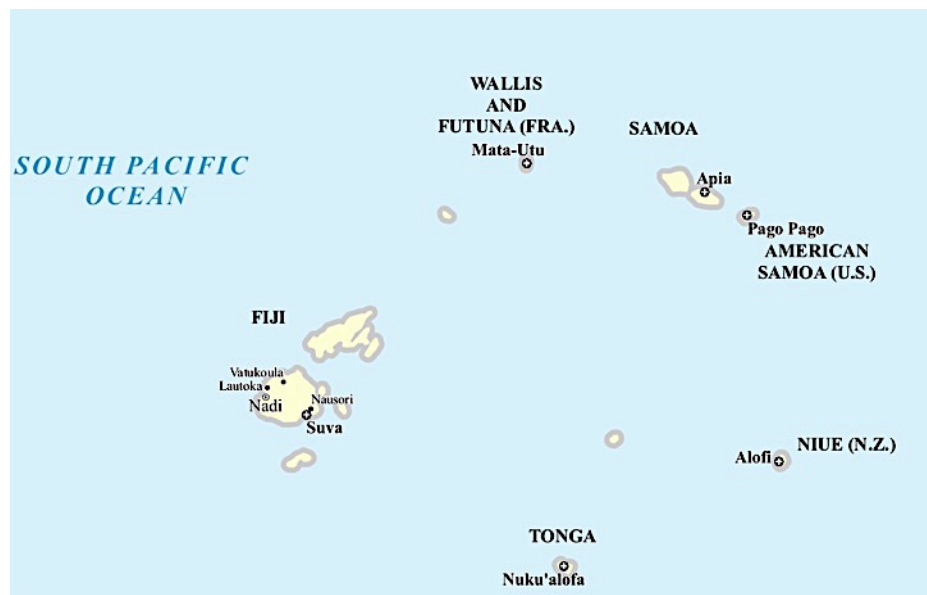
Figure 1 – Map of Polynesia

Frimigacci et al. (1995) state that there is archaeological evidence of humans living in present-day Wallis and Futuna dating back to 700b.c., likely because of migration from Tonga or Samoa (Moyse-Faurie 1997). Futuna was discovered in the modern era and put on the map of the world in 1616, when Dutch explorers van Schouten and le Maire discovered the island and made contact with its inhabitants (Rensch 1986). Missionaries, explorers, and merchants from France arrived in Futuna in 1837 (Moyse-Faurie 1997). This is when Roman Catholicism became a presence in Futuna (van der Grijp 2005) and when East Futunan started to become a written language (Moyse-Faurie 2007). The islands of Wallis and Futuna became a French protectorate in 1887 (van der Grijp 2005), and a French territory in 1961 (van der Grijp 2005), which is what it remains currently.

2.2 Previous Work on East Futunan

East Futunan is linguistically under-researched and has very little published scholarly work. As mentioned earlier, most of the scholarly work is published in French, as French is the official language of Wallis and Futuna. The oldest published source of linguistic information about East Futunan was written by Père Isidore Grézel, a French missionary, and published in 1878. Although this dictionary and the grammatical information within it is lacking in contemporary linguistic description, this work is still cited in most papers on East Futunan. Much of Grézel's dictionary was reedited by Rensch (1986). Rensch (1986) describes the grammar of the language in a way that is more consistent with current descriptions of Polynesian languages, instead of trying to equate every structure in East Futunan to a structure that can be found in Indo-European languages. Moyse-Faurie (1993) was the first comprehensive and phonologically accurate East Futunan Dictionary (Tryon 1999), and Moyse-Faurie (1997) was the first

comprehensive description of the grammar of East Futunan, other than the few pages of grammatical information in Grézel's (1878) dictionary (Tryon 1999).

2.3 Grammatical Sketch and Review of East Futunan Grammatical Features

The larger topic of this dissertation focuses on the ergative/absolutive case alignment syntactic structure in East Futunan, but as East Futunan is an understudied and underdocumented language, it is important to include information about other grammatical structures in this language in order provide a more holistic view of the language structure. Additionally, the alignment system is not the only feature that situates this language within the greater Polynesian family. Including a description of certain grammatical features in East Futunan shows that this language exhibits a number of morphological and syntactic features that are consistently found throughout Polynesian and Oceanic languages.

As a language in the Samoic subdivision of the Nuclear Polynesian branch of the family, East Futunan shares many of the same characteristics with other languages in this group, including but not limited to the basic word order, an isolating word structure with very little morphology, ergative/absolutive case marking, and the way in which many lexical items can function as both nouns and verbs. There is also a large overlap across lexical items in these languages (Moyse-Faurie 2007). This is consistent with Clark (1976), who stated that from a linguistic standpoint, East Futunan is very closely related to the other western Polynesian languages (East Uvean, Tongan, Samoan, Tokelau, Niuafo'ou, etc.). These languages have in common a sizable proportion of their lexicon and numerous morphosyntactic features. In this chapter, a few of the prevalent grammatical features of East Futunan are discussed in order to exhibit how this language is grammatically Polynesian.

2.3.1 Word Order and Argument Structure

Moyse-Faurie (1992) discusses the verb classification system of this language, including the main case markers: absolutive case, ergative case, and oblique case. The basic word order of East Futunan is VAO, or VS, where A refers to the ergative argument of a transitive verb, S refers to the absolutive argument of an intransitive verb, and O refers to the absolutive argument of a transitive verb. This language marks case with ergative and absolutive case markers within the noun phrase. Although this is the most common word order in East Futunan, there are situations in which the word order can be VOA, or even AVO, which will be shown later in Chapter 3.

Like most Polynesian languages, East Futunan has verb-initial sentence structure. A typical sentence begins with pre-verbal information, such as a tense or aspect particle, and is followed immediately by the main verb. If the entire sentence is a negative, the negative particle *se* is placed after the pre-verbal information and before the main verb. Any directionals or verbal modifiers are placed directly after the main verb. Examples (5, 6, 7) below demonstrate the verb-initial word order of East Futunan as well as the word order of different verbal elements that can occur within a verb phrase.

(5)	*E*	*sola*	*fa'i*	*a*	*Veka*	*aia.*
	INACP	flee	only,just	ABS	Water Rale	DEICT

‘Le râle prend la fuite.’

‘The Water Rale takes flight.’

20

(6) *Fafagai*   *e*   *ia*   *a*   *le*   *tuna*

    feed   ERG   3.SG   ABS   the   eel

    'Elle la nourrit si bien'

    'She fed the eel.'

(7) *E*   *se*   *lalama*   *a*   *ia.*

    INACP NEG   torch fish at night   ABS   3.SG

    'Elle ne pêche pas à la torche.'

    'She doesn't torch fish at night.'

As a verb-initial VO language, phrases are head initial (Greenberg 1963). In (8) and (9) below (Moyse-Faurie 1997), it can be seen that in verb phrases and prepositional phrases that the heads of the phrase are followed by their arguments.

(8) *ave*   *le*   *kete*   *ki*   *fafo*

    take   ART   basket PREP   outside

    'emporte le panier dehors'

    'take the basket outside'

(9) *ki*   *le*   *aisi*

    PREP   ART   refrigerator

    'dans le frigidaire'

    'in the refrigerator'

2.3.2 Language Classification

Based on the data within the oral narratives, East Futunan is best classified as an isolating language. There is overall very little inflectional and derivational morphology and a low morpheme per word ratio; most words are made up of just one morpheme with one meaning. Most grammatical information in East Futunan is expressed through the use of a particle rather than through the use of inflectional morphology. Although most words are minimally morphologically complex, there are some productive derivational affixes which will be discussed in sections 2.3.3. and 2.3.4. Examples (10) and (11) from Moyse-Faurie (1993) below show the isolating nature of most sentences in East Futunan.

(10) *Na*   *tufa*   *e*   *le*   *fafine*   *a*   *lole* *ki* *toe*

PAST distribute   ERG   ART   woman   ABS   candy OBL child

'The woman handed out candies to the children'

(11) E   kilakila   le   toe   ki   lona   tamana

INACP glance   the   child OBL   3.SG.POSS   father

'The child glances at his father'

'L'enfant jette des coups d'oeil à son père'

2.3.3 Valency Changing Affixes

In East Futunan, there is overall very little morphology. The little morphology that does exist is mostly derivational through the use of prefixes and suffixes, and fairly productive (Moyse-Faurie 2007).

2.3.3.1. Transitivizing Suffix -'aki

The suffix -'aki in East Futunan, which has allomorphs -(C)aki, and -i, is a fairly productive verbal suffix that performs a valency-changing operation, usually transitivizing or indicating a reciprocal action. Ross (2004) discusses transitivizing morphology, specifically how the suffix -i is common across all Oceanic languages. Moyse-Faurie (1993) explains that in East Futunan, -'aki as a suffix indicating that the action is done repeatedly, and a verbal suffix indicating that the action is done by several people, or in the company of something. However, when affixed to a verb, there is a transitivizing feature that can also occur. Moyse-Faurie (2007) states that the suffix -(C)aki makes the verbs to which it applies transitive and allows them to take an ergative argument, resulting in a comitative, causative, or applicative form. Lynch et al. (2002) state that it is a characteristic of many Oceanic languages that whenever the transitive suffix -'aki is used, it is expected that there will be an object. In Fijian, active verbs are derived from stative verbs by the use of a transitivizing suffix. To be used as an active verb, *rai* 'see' occurs with a transitive suffix -a and has two arguments – an agent and a goal (Aranovich 2015).

Nichols et al. (2004) have a study which analyzes a set of eighteen verbs and the causative derivation of each verb, such 'fear' and its semantic causative counterpart 'scare', with the purpose of finding how languages form intransitive and transitive verbs. They ask if languages treat intransitive verbs as basic and transitive verbs as derived, or if transitive verbs are basic and intransitive verbs are derived and determine that there is a typology as to whether languages prefer to transitivize or detransitivize verbs. Nichols et al. (2004) are able to classify languages into dominant derivation type. Major derivation types in this study include causativization, decausativization, suppletion, and ambitransitive. The study focuses on western Indo-European branches such as Italic, Germanic, and Slavic, and the observation is made that

language families and branches within families are fairly consistent with their dominant type (Nichols et al. 2004). Grünthal & Nichols (2016) use the information found in this study and build upon it to demonstrate that transitivizing-detransitivizing typology can be used to show language family history.

(12) shows the suffix -'*aki* affixing to the verb *ifo*. Typically, *ifo* is an intransitive verb meaning 'descend' or 'lower', but in combination with the suffix -'*aki*, the verb 'descend' in this sentence has a more transitive nature and it is implied that something is being lowered for someone for a specific purpose. This is in contrast with the verb *ifo* in (13), which does not have any affixes attached. The verb *ifo* functions here typically as an intransitive verb with a sole argument indicating that something has come down.

(12)

Tā	*le*	*kupega*	*o*	*Sigave*	*tā*	*le*	*kupega*	*o*
Make	the	net	POSS	Sigave	make	the	net	POSS

Alo	*ke*	*ifo'aki*	*o*	*faāgota*
Alo	in order to	descend	for	fish

'Make a net for Sigave, make a net for Alo, and lower (them, the nets) to go fishing'

'On fabriquera un filet pour Sigave, un autre pour Alo, et on les descendera pour aller pêcher'

(13)

Kaku	*atu*	*a*	*ia*	*ki*	*ai*	*kua*	*ifo*	*le*	*kau*
arrive	DIR	ABS	3.SG	OBL	ANAPH	ACP	descend	the	CLF

futi	*mei*	*ai*
bananas	OBL	ANAPH

'He arrives, a bunch of bananas has come down [from the tree]'

'En arrivant, il voit qu'un régime de bananes descend de l'arbre'

The suffix -*'aki* is prevalent throughout the oral narratives and often occurs as suffixed to *fena* "*fena'aki*" and *fela* "*fela'aki*", and means "to be so". It also combines with the causative prefix *faka-* "*fakafela'aki*" and means "make it be so", as in (14).

(14)	*E*	*fakafela'aki*	*le*	*ano'aga*	*o*	*le*	*fakatokatoka*	*o*	*le*
	INACP	make it be so	the	result	for	the	deal	for	the

lā	*kaufafine*	*la*
3.DU	friendship	DEM

'This is the contents of their friendship pact'

'Tel est le contenu de leur pacte d'amitié'

2.3.3.2. Reciprocal Prefix *fe-*

The prefix *fe-* is a valency changing morpheme. Moyse-Faurie (1993) describes *fe-* as giving an indication that the action is reciprocal between two or more people, that it takes place repeatedly, or that it is carried out by several people. (15) from Moyse-Faurie (2007) shows the verb *tuli* being used as a typical transitive verb. (16) from Moyse-Faurie (2007) shows how the prefix *fe-* can affix to the verb *tuli* to make the action reciprocal. These examples show how the prefix f*e-* is a valency decreasing affix, since *tuli* as a bare stem in (15) is transitive with an ergative argument and an absolutive argument, but *tuli* as a reciprocal in (16) just has a sole absolutive argument.

(15) *E   tuli   e   Petelo   lona   gā   taina*

      IPFV   chase   ERG   Petolo   his   CLF   brother

      'Petelo is chasing his little brother.'

(16) *E   fetuli   a   lāua*

      IPFV   REC.chase   ABS   3.DU

      'They are both chasing each other.'

2.3.3.3. Combination of *fe-* and *-'aki*

    There are also instances where the the suffix *-'aki* used in combination with the suffix *fe-* can change the meaning to any of the following depending on the verb they are affixed to: an action that is performed jointly over time, an action performed consecutively, an action performed repeatedly by one or more participants, an action performed habitually, or two actions occurring at different places at the same time. Example (17) from Moyse-Faurie (2007) shows the prefix *fe-* and the suffix *-'aki* affixing to a verb to show how the action is being performed repeatedly.

(17) *ligi*   'to pour'

     feligi'aki   'to pour several times from one container into another'

2.3.4 Causative Prefix *faka-*

    In East Futunan, the causative prefix *faka-*, and its allomorph *aka-*, is a highly productive, valency-increasing affix that derives transitive verbs from intransitive verbs (Moyse-Faurie

2007). The prefix *faka-* causes the addition of an argument; verbs with a single argument will acquire a second argument which will be marked as ergative (Moyse-Faurie 2007), as in (18) below.

(18) *E   moso   le   ne'akai*

INACP be cooked   the   food

'The food is cooked'

(19) *E   fakamoso   a   ika   e   le   fafine*

INACP CAUSE-be cooked   ABS   fish   ERG   the   woman

'The woman cooks the fish'

The prefix *faka-* is not limited to affixing to verbs or performing a causative function; it can also be a lexical category-changing derivational affix when it attaches to a noun. As mentioned in Chapter 1, speakers of East Futunan refer to their language as *Futuna* or *Fakafutuna*, where the prefix *faka-* is attached to Futuna, as in (20). The prefix *faka-* affixing to the noun Futuna and changes the word to function more as an adjective-like descriptor of the noun phrase.

(20) *Ko   le   igoa   fakafutuna   la,   ko   vasua*

PRED the   name   Futuna   DEM,   PRED   shellfish

'In the Futunan language, this is how you say "shellfish"'

'En futunien, c'est "vasua"'

2.3.5 Reduplication

The morphological word-formation process of reduplication exists extensively in East Futunan. Reduplication in East Futunan has both full and partial reduplication, although partial is more prevalent throughout the data. Reduplication can be grammatical (inflectional) or semantic (derivational).

2.3.5.1 Grammatical Reduplication

Grammatical reduplication can be used to show pluractionality. Pluractionality indicates the presence of multiple events (Mattiola 2020). Verbs can partially reduplicate to show that there are two simultaneous events, or that two or more people are carrying out the same event at the same time, as in examples (21a) and (21b) (Moyse-Faurie (1997). Examples (22a) and (22b) (Moyse-Faurie 1993) do not have an agent, but show pluractionality in that the events of the verb are affecting two or more things.

(21a) *E   kau   ma'uli*

INACP 1.SG   live

'I am living'

(21b) *Ko   Safoka   mo   Falema'a   koi   ma'u'uli*

PRED   Safoka   and   Falema'a   then   live.PL

'Safoka and Falema'a are still living'

(22a) *E*   *moto*   *le*   *fã*   *mago*

INACP green/unripe the   CLF   mango

'The mango is green'

'La mangue est verte'

(22b) *E*   *momoto*   *a*   *mago*

INACP green/unripe   ABS   mango

'The mangos are green'

'Les mangues sont vertes'

2.3.5.2 Semantic Reduplication

Certain transitive verbs in East Futunan can be totally reduplicated to form their intransitive, reflexive counterparts (Moyse-Faurie 1997), as in (23a) and (23b). Reduplication can be used to mark the diminutive, to indicate that an action took place slowly, to mark a repetitive action, and to mark intensity, as in (24-27). Semantic reduplication for intensification is expressed by full reduplication.

(23a) *selu*   'comb' (v.)

(23b) *seluselu*   'comb' (v., reflexive)

(24a) *'api*   'numerous'

(24b) *'api'api*   'a few'

(25a) *ano*   'go'

(25b) *anoano*   'go slowly'

(26a) *meo*   'to be dissatisfied'

(26b) *meomeo*   'to be dissatisfied often'

(27a) *'amo*   'to be busy'

(27b) *'amo'amo*   'to be really busy'

2.3.6 Dual Marking on Pronouns

East Futunan has a three-way person distinction for singular, dual, and plural for personal pronouns, shown in (28) and (29), and for possessive determiners, shown in (30) (Moyse-Faurie 1997). Possessive pronouns only have a two-way singular and plural distinction (Moyse-Faurie 1997). Nouns are not marked for person morphologically, but their preceding article is marked for singular, dual, or plural. Dual marking on pronouns exists in many Polynesian languages including Samoan, Tongan, Māori, Tahitian, Hawaiian, and Fijian, and is a feature that has been reconstructed for Proto-Nuclear Polynesian (Pawley 1966).

(28) *Ti*   *momoe*   *lāua*

      Then   sleep.PL   3.DU

      'Then they both sleep'

      'Puis elles vont dormir'

(29)   *Ti*   *ifo*   *loa*   *lāua* *o*   *lalama*

       Then   descend   long   3.DU   for   torch fish at night

       'Then they both go down to torch fish'

       'Puis elles descendent toutes deux pêcher à la torche'

(30)   *lokulu*   *tinana*

       2.DU.POSS   mother

       'your (two) mother'

2.3.7 Ergativity

East Futunan exhibits a morphological ergative/absolutive case alignment system. The subject of an intransitive sentence and the object of a transitive sentence are both marked with an absolutive *a* particle. The subject of a transitive sentence is marked with an ergative *e* particle. Absolutive arguments tend to be the more affected argument, while ergative arguments tend to be the more agentive argument.

The order of the arguments in a sentence is typically ergative then absolutive. There is some variation in this word order. Articles are typically placed after the ergative or absolutive marker, in sentences in which there is an overtly expressed ergative and absolutive marker, and before the noun which they modify. Moyse-Faurie (1992) discusses how this language marks case with ergative and absolutive case markers in the noun phrase, seen in (31) (Moyse-Faurie 1992) and (32) (Moyse-Faurie 1997) below.

(31) *Na*   *'eva'eva*   *a*   *Soana*

PAST   walk   ABS   Soana

'Soana se promenait'

'Soana walked'

(32) *E*   *kāpui*   *e*   *fafine*   *a*   *ika*

UNACC encircle   ERG   woman   ABS   fish

'Les femmes encerclent les poissons'

'The women encircle the fish'

More information and examples about ergativity and its structure in East Futunan will be discussed in Chapter 3.

2.3.8 Ergative Avoidance

Moyse-Faurie (2000) discusses ergative case avoidance in East Futunan. There is a description of this type of ergative/absolutive usage that is found in other Polynesian languages, notably Samoan, that is thought to be used as a communication strategy in social situations such as story-telling. Instead of using the ergative case maker, speakers will choose instead to omit the ergative argument completely, or find another way to indicate the agent. If there is ergative avoidance, the speaker must find a new way to indicate their perception and semantic meaning of the agent.

More information and examples about ergative avoidance in East Futunan will be discussed in Chapter 3.

2.3.9 Question Particle

In question sentences in East Futunan, there are a few different ways to express the interrogative. In a question that can be answered with a yes or no, rising intonation is used, as can be seen in (33) (Moyse-Faurie 1997).

The particle *ā* functions as an interrogative as in (34). It can occur in a few different places in a sentence depending on which type of question is being asked, and is always accompanied by ascending intonation. (Moyse-Faurie 1997). East Futunan has only very few different particles for different types of question words (corresponding to e.g. 'where' and 'how' in English), so typically the context of the sentence plays a large part in determining the type of question semantics that the particle *ā* is expressing. Additionally, there are instances where derivational morphology can be affixed to the particle *ā* in order to express a specific type of question.

Fea is an interrogative particle that can also have different meanings (Moyse-Faurie 2007) corresponding roughly to 'where' or 'which' in English. (35) has a question particle at the end of a sentence, asking 'why' or 'for which reason' in this sentence.

(33) *Na   'ua   i   nānafi?*

PAST rain (v.)   OBL   yesterday

'Did it rain yesterday?'

'Est-ce qu'il a plu hier?'

(34) | *Pati* | *atu* | *a* | *Veka* | *aia :* | *« kae* | | | *ā ? »* |
|------|------|-----|--------|---------|---------|--|--|--------|
| Say | DIR | ABS | Water Rale | DEICT | so that/in order to | | | Q |

'The Water Rale asked "but why"?'

'Râle lui demande : « Mais pourquoi ? »'

(35) | *Ti* | *fakafela'aki* | *loa* | *lona* | *tupuna* | *la :* | *"Ei Sina!* | *ko* |
|------|---------------|------|--------|----------|--------|------------|-----|
| So | make it be so | SUCC | 3.SG.POSS | grandma | DEM | "eh, Sina! | PRED |

le	*manu*	*lenā*	*e*	*fa'ī*	*e*	*koe*	*la*	*ke*		*ave*	*ki*
the	animal	DEIC	INACP	capture	ERG	2.SG	DEM	in order to		carry	OBL

fea?"

Q

'His grandmother said, "Sina! This animal, why did you capture it?

'Sa grand-mère lui dit ainsi : "Eh ! Sina ! cette bête-là, tu l'as capturée pour en faire quoi?"'

Derivational morphology can be added to the particle *ā* to create a question verb, as in (36). *Vaiā* is used to express 'for which reason' or 'about what', and *fakaā* uses the causative prefix *faka-* affixed to a question word root to express 'when'. In other words, these different types of wh-words are not just disambiguated by context, but also by the use of derivational morphology.

(36) *E   vaiā   lau   mu'amu'a?*

inacp   for which reason   2.sg.poss   move slowly

'Why are you moving slowly?'

'Pourquoi n'avances-tu pas?'

2.3.10 Lacks Certain Distinct Lexical Classes

Moyse-Faurie (2005) discusses a problem that arises when trying to categorize lexical

items in Polynesian languages, especially in East Futunan. Words (lexemes) in East Futunan can

be combined in different ways to get different meanings, so it is impossible without context to

classify most words in this language as belonging to one particular lexical category or part of

speech based on distributional or functional criteria. To explain this, Moyse-Faurie does not

assume conversion or zero-derivation. Rather, to account for these semantic changes related to

context or usage, she believes that it is more effective to assume that the primary meaning of

lexemes is related to their prototypical function, and to consider the other possible functions as a

marked usage. There must be new functional criteria determined for these languages that takes

into account their multifunctionality. For example, Moyse-Faurie discusses nouns and their

prototypical function, but also how nouns can have other usages in East Futunan and Wallisian.

A noun is a lexeme that prototypically refers to an entity, or thing, whose prototypical function is

not a predicate. But, without derivational morphology, it can be a predicate if it occurs with a

temporal aspectual marker. The lexeme which is typically a noun now has a meaning that is

marked when it is used as a predicate.

Hengeveld (2013) and Hengeveld & Van Lier (2010) discuss flexible and rigid parts of

speech systems and how languages with a high degree of lexical flexibility show a high degree of

morphosyntactic rigidity, while languages with a high degree of lexical rigidity may or may not show a high degree of morphosyntactic flexibility. Flexible parts of speech systems display classes of lexemes that can be used in more than one function without requiring lexical or syntactic derivation, while rigid systems display classes of lexemes that are tied to a single function and require lexical or syntactic derivation in order to be used in other functions. Hengeveld (2013) classifies Samoan as a flexible language, where there is a flexible class of lexical items that may be used for several functions. This is different from English, which has a separate class of lexemes for each function (Hengeveld 2013). Tongan is also best classified as a flexible language, and does not have a distinct adjective class, as seen in examples (37-40) (Tchekhoff 1981). The particle *si'i* can have the roles of predicate, noun, modifier of a nominal head, and modifier of a verbal head.

(37) *Na'e si'i 'ae akó*

PAST small ABS school.DEF

'The school was small'

(38) *'in 'ene si'í*

in 3.SG.POSS childhood.DEF

'in his/her childhood.'

(39) *Na'e ako 'ae tamasi'i si'i iate au*

PAST study ABS child little LOC 1.SG

'The little child studied at my house.'

(40) *Na'e   ako   si'i   'ae   tamasi'i*
      PAST   study   little   ABS   child.DEF

      'The child studied little.'

East Futunan exhibits features of a flexible part of speech system, like both Samoan and Tongan, and it lacks a distinct lexical class for adjectives, also like Tongan. A modifier that would be classified as an adjective in English could be used in East Futunan functionally as a verb or as a noun. Examples (41a-c) (Moyse-Faurie 1993) show how noun modifiers are used syntactically as predicates, occurring in the sentence directly after the tense/aspect information. Example (42) (Moyse-Faurie 2005) demonstrates how the word for 'red' shown in example (41c) as a predicate can function syntactically as a noun. While East Futunan does not have a specific lexical category of adjectives, possessive adjectives are used in this language and occur in the syntax before a noun, the same position where a typical demonstrative or article would occur.

(41a) *E   'u'usi   oku   taumata*
       INACP   blue   1.SG.POSS   sunglasses

       'My sunglasses are blue'
       'Mes lunettes sont bleues'

(41b) *E   lasi   le   toe*

INACP big   the   child

'The child is big'

'L'enfant est grand'

(41c) *E   kula   le   ama*

INACP red   the   turmeric powder

'Turmeric powder is red'

'La poudre de curcuma est rouge'

(42)   *E   kau   tio   atu   ki   le   kula   mai   o   lona   kie*

INACP 1.SG   see   DIR   OBL   the   red   DIR   POSS   3.SG.POSS   fabric

'I see the red of his/her fabric [which shines in my direction]'

'Je vois le rouge de son manou [qui brille dans ma direction]'

2.4 The Structure of the Noun Phrase

This section will examine the structure of the noun phrase in East Futunan, specifically the function, meaning, syntactic category, and syntactic place of particles that can occur within the noun phrase. Although many of these particles are mentioned in Moyse-Faurie (1997) and (1993), here has not been a complete work specifically analyzing and defining the functional grammatical particles that are prevalent throughout East Futunan. To date, there has been no specific work published solely on the general structure of the noun phrase in East Futunan or the

meaning and function of the different particles, including case markers, articles, classifiers, possessive determiners, and demonstratives, that exist there.

2.4.1 Case Markers

The grammar of East Futunan (Moyse-Faurie 1997) defines the absolutive *a* and the ergative *e* as prepositions that introduce a required complement of the predicate. The entire complement includes the noun and an article (if necessary) that occurs before the noun. Moyse-Faurie (1997) says that the absolutive marker *a* is required when the argument is a definite plural common noun, a proper noun, or a 3rd person singular pronoun. The marker is not required when the argument is a definite singular common noun, an indefinite singular or plural common noun, or a pronoun other than 3rd person singular. Moyse-Faurie (1997) says that the ergative marker e introduces the agent complement of transitive verbs. It is required regardless of the category of the complement, whether that be a pronoun, a common noun, or a proper noun. Moyse-Faurie's (1997) explanation of the required or optional usage of case markers holds true in many instances observed in the oral narratives, but does not account for all instances. In Chapter 3, the presence or absence of case markers and possible explanations for non-explicitly marked arguments will be discussed further.

Although these case markers are often referred to as particles in Rensch (1986) and prepositions or markers in Moyse-Faurie (1993, 1997), the term particle may be a more appropriate syntactic category. Moyse-Faurie (1997) describes prepositions in East Futunan as having a complement of location, cause, or purpose. Prepositions in East Futunan such as *ko* and *i* introduce an oblique argument and are frequently glossed as an oblique or a locative in other literature describing East Futunan. The function of *a* and *e* is to introduce main arguments; their

purpose is not do not introduce a locative or causative oblique argument. They should therefore not be categorized as other prepositions, but rather as particles whose grammatical purpose is to introduce core arguments.

Furthermore, the case markers *a* and *e* should not be analyzed as affixes, because there are many other particles which can occur between the case marker and the noun itself. The sole function of *a* and *e* is to introduce an absolutive or ergative argument, respectively, and should therefore be referred to as case particles because they have a grammatical function and cannot be better classified into any other part of speech.

Alternatively, Zwicky (1985) believes that there is no such thing as a particle. The basis for the argument is that the term 'particle' has a wide usage, and therefore it is too broad a term to refer to anything specific or meaningful. Items that are referred to as particles are typically acategorical, assigned no syntactic category, rather than being more specifically classified as a clitic, independent word, or inflectional affix. Essentially it is a term for items that do not fit well into syntactic generalizations about the language or for lexical items that are not placed into another major word class (Bloomfield 1917). Crystal (1980) defines a particle as an invariable item with a grammatical function, especially one which does not readily fit into a standard description of parts of speech. Zwicky (1985) believes that items that are classified into particle classes do not share any syntactic or semantic properties, and that particles are the leftovers after all other lexical and grammatical items have been assigned to a part of speech category.

In most other Polynesian literature, specific grammatical items are frequently referred to as particles. In Chung's (1978) book *Case Marking and Grammatical Relations in Polynesia*, while discussing Polynesian syntax, she says that noun phrases can be either unmarked for case or preceded by a case particle that indicates the syntactic function of the noun phrase. Chung

states that she uses the term case particle or case marker when referring to the grammatical item that marks subjects or direct objects, and uses the term preposition for specific particles that indicate that the following noun phrase has an oblique function such as a locative, time expression, source, goal, and indirect object.

2.4.2 Articles

Articles in East Futunan have a singular/plural distinction and a specific/non-specific (definite/indefinite) distinction (Moyse-Faurie 1997). The definite articles are *le* (SG) and Ø (PL). The indefinite articles are *se* (SG) and *ni* (PL) The most common article in the oral narratives is *le*, the definite singular article. Within the syntax, articles occur before the noun they are modifying and after a case marking particle, if there is one.

2.4.3 Possessive Determiners

Moyse-Faurie (1997) refers to this particular class of words as possessive adjectives. However, East Futunan does not have other lexical adjectives that occur in a noun phrase before the noun, but rather uses a verb or a noun to modify and express descriptive qualities as seen in examples (41a-c, 42). I will refer this class of words as possessive determiners rather than possessive adjectives to show that lexical modifiers do not precede nouns in East Futunan and because they occupy the same slot in the syntax as other determiners, directly before the noun in which they modify. Possessive determiners are in complementary distribution with other determiners such as articles and both cannot be used at the same time. (43) and (44) shows the same noun *futi* being used with different determiners. Both instances also have a classifier that occurs before the noun to indicate that it is a group of something. In (43), an article and a

classifier are used before the noun, and in (44), the same noun is preceded by a classifier and a possessive determiner and does not have an article. When a possessive determiner is used, articles cannot be used.

(43) *le kau futi*

ART CLF banana

'a bunch of bananas'

'un régime de bananes'

(44) *lona kau futi*

3.SG.POSS CLF banana

'his bunch of bananas'

'son régime de bananes'

Possessive determiners are a relatively large class of words in East Futunan, in comparison to other classes of determiners. They have a singular and plural distinction, and a definite and indefinite distinction for when the noun they are modifying is singular or plural, or definite or indefinite. The possessive determiners themselves have a three-way person distinction (1st, 2nd, and 3rd), and a three-way number distinction (singular, dual, and plural), as well as a clusivity distinction (inclusive or exclusive) for 1.DU and 1.PL. This gives a total of 48 possessive determiners in East Futunan, each of which also occurs in free variation with one other allomorph (Moyse-Faurie 1997). For example, the 1.DU.EXCL possessive determiner modifying a singular indefinite noun is *somāua ~ samāua*.

2.4.4 Classifiers

There are a few classifiers that exist in East Futunan, whose purpose is to qualify nouns based on certain semantic criteria. Moyse-Faurie (1997) describes classifiers as a type of determiner which never appears alone and must be followed by the noun in which they describe. They can occur with a case particle and an article, and must occur after the case particle and article, between the article and the noun. Not every noun in East Futunan has a classifier; the most common classifiers are defined here. The classifier *fã* is used for fruits, small animals, and whole or round objects (Moyse-Faurie 1997). The classifier *gā* is used as a diminutive or partitive, and can be used to indicate a small quantity, a piece of something, or the smallness of something (Moyse-Faurie 1997). *Soa ~ sā* is used for a couple of people, animals, or pairs of objects, and *tau* is used more specifically for married couples or two people with a family relationship (sisters, brothers, parent/child).

There is a large class of collective classifiers in East Futunan. Moyse-Faurie (1997) defines these specific types of classes as a way of categorizing groups of people, animals, plants, or objects based on having the same function, being from same species, performing the same action, or, for humans, being part of a common group.

2.4.5 Demonstratives

In describing demonstratives, I will focus on one in particular: the particle *la*. I argue that the particle *la* in East Futunan has not been analyzed fully and that this particle is functionally a demonstrative and consistent with other demonstratives in East Futunan and other analyses of demonstratives in Polynesian languages. Some of these analyses are included here.

2.4.5.1 Current Analysis of *la*

La is a particle used pervasively throughout oral narratives. Grézel (1878) defines *la* as a particle without a precise meaning. The closest translation that is given in his dictionary is the French word *là*, meaning 'there'. Grézel also gives the description that the particle *la* is often found at the end of some words or some phrases. This description remains unchanged in Rensch's (1986) edition of this dictionary. In Moyse-Faurie (1997), *la* is described as a particle and an emphatic element that is used in story-telling contexts. It is used frequently in the discourse of the language as a way to mark the end of a phrase or the end of a statement. In Moyse-Faurie (1997), *la* is always glossed as *démarc*, with the description that it is a demarcating particle. This indicates that this particle is showing some kind of boundary in the syntax and in the discourse. In Moyse-Faurie (1993), *la* is described as a mark of the end of a sentence or an expression, often utilized as punctuation in the discourse. All of these reference materials are similar to each other in their observations, descriptions, and glossing of this particle, but there is no explanation as to whether this particle has a more precise meaning or function.

In the oral narratives of East Futunan speakers, the particle *la* is prevalent throughout each of the eleven stories, and is used by all eight of the speakers. This observation is not unexpected, and it is consistent with Moyse-Faurie (1993), Moyse-Faurie (1997), and Grézel (1878), in which it is stated that this particle is used frequently as punctuation in the discourse. However, this particle has consistencies and patterns that show that while it is a particle that is used frequently in the discourse, its function is more than just an emphatic marker. It has a more specific function and purpose in the language.

La can be justified as a demonstrative based on its similarities to other demonstratives in East Futunan and other Polynesian languages, most notably its placement in the syntax in relation to the noun. If the analysis of *la* as a determiner is correct, this presents the problem that there can be both a determiner and a demonstrative within the same determiner phrase. However, determiners and demonstratives to not necessarily have to belong to the same syntactic category, and allowing both a determiner and a demonstrative is not a rare or unheard of structure. Dryer (2009) shows that a demonstrative occurring after a noun is a pattern that can be seen cross-linguistically. There are languages, such as Spanish, that allow a similar determiner phrase structures in regards to the placement of the determiner and the demonstrative relative to the noun. Defining *la* as a demarcating or emphatic particle is missing information about its meaning and function because this definition cannot explain why it only comes after noun phrases.

2.4.5.2 Demonstratives in Polynesian Languages

Proto-Polynesian had a three-place demonstrative system (Clark 1974), and many current Polynesian languages have this same three-way series of demonstratives, roughly meaning 'here', 'there', and 'over there'. The demonstratives in Proto-Nuclear-Polynesian, the reconstructed proto-language from which languages such as East Futunan and Samoan descend, have been reconstructed in a three-way series *ni*, *na*, and *la* (Clark 1974).

In the information published on East Futunan, it appears that there is a large set of demonstratives, which can be seen in Table 1, which is consistent with other Polynesian languages (Mosel 2004). However, the third type of demonstrative – the one that would mean 'way over there, or 'very far away from the speaker' – is not accounted for. Based on the distribution and meaning of *la* in East Futunan, it is possible that this particle is the third type of

demonstrative and that the demonstratives in East Futunan should be reanalyzed to include this particle as a demonstrative, as in Table 2.

The following demonstratives[6] in Table 1 are described in Moyse-Faurie (1997). East Futunan makes a distinction between singular and plural demonstratives. There is also a distinction in the first type of demonstrative – the 'here' demonstrative – of whether the 'here' is close to the speaker or close to the listener/addressee. As the demonstratives for 'close to the speaker' and 'close to the listener' correspond to the same type of distance, they can both belong to the 'here' demonstrative category.

Table 1 – Current Demonstratives in East Futunan

	Singular Demonstrative	Plural Demonstrative
Close to speaker	*leinei*	*anei*
Close to listener/addressee	*lenā*	*anā*
Far/away from	*leia*	*alā*

Example (45) shows the demonstrative *leia*, meaning 'away from the speaker and addressee'.

(45) *le*   *futi*   *leia*

     ART   banana tree   DEM

     'That banana tree'

---

[6] In East Futunan, most demonstratives follow the noun which they modify. However, in noun phrases which have a possessive determiner, the demonstrative can follow the possessive determiner, therefore occurring between the possessive determiner and the noun.

However, the table of demonstratives should include the demonstrative for 'very far away', shown in Table 2, in order to be consistent with other Polynesian languages and with the posited reconstructed *la*, 'very far away', in Proto-Nuclear-Polynesian, which even has the same form as the demonstrative in East Futunan. Based on the data used, the demonstrative *la* does not have a singular/plural distinction.

Table 2 – Proposed Reanalysis of Demonstratives in East Futunan

	Singular Demonstrative	Plural Demonstrative
Close to speaker	*leinei*	*anei*
Close to listener/addressee	*lenā*	*anā*
Far/away from	*leia*	*alā*
Very Far	*la*	

The demonstrative *la* can be seen in (46). As can be seen from the examples with the other demonstratives in East Futunan, this demonstrative occurs in the same location – directly after the noun which it is referring to.

(46)	*o*	*kaku*	*atu*	*a*	*ia*	*ki*	*le*	*mala'e*	*Filisia*	*e*
	and	arrive	DIR	ABS	3.SG	PREP	ART	place	Filisia	INACP
	nofo	*le*	*Ma'uifa*	**la**						
	stay	ART	Mauifa	DEM						

'This man reached Filisia, the place where Mauifa resides'

'Cet homme parvient sur la place coutumière Filisia, là où réside le Mauifa.'

Mosel (2004) explains the meanings of the demonstratives in Samoan, which is summarized in Table 3. These demonstratives in terms of their special relation to the speaker and addressee are very similar in form and meaning to the proposed demonstratives for East Futunan in Table 2.

Table 3 – Demonstratives in Samoan

	Demonstrative
Close to speaker, within reach	*lele*
Close to listener/addressee, within reach	*nale*
Not too close, but not too far away from speaker and addressee	*lale*
Far away from both speaker and addressee	*lelā*

Mosel (2004) makes the observation about the 'very far away' particle *lelā* that it usually occurs with a gesture of the hand or the head, and that it indicated remoteness from both the speaker and the addressee.

2.4.5.3 Reanalyzing *la*

East Futunan's demonstrative *la*, based on the data of oral narratives is a particle that has a specific meaning in a specific usage. *La* is only used in narrative story-telling contexts, and when it is used, it is referring to something that the speaker of the narrative and the addressee know of. The demonstrative does have a meaning 'over there', but the 'over there' that it is referring to is not necessarily something tangible or something that will be within potential reach

or sight of the speaker. It has a meaning that can be thought of as 'over there, in a different time', or 'over there, that I already talked about previously in this discourse'.

Because the particle *la* only seems to appear at the end of phrases, this is likely why this particle has been analyzed as an emphatic particle in discourse – in order to mark the end of a statement or a speaker pause. This analysis is not incorrect; however, based on its similarities to the other demonstratives in East Futunan and consistent with the demonstratives in other Polynesian languages, this particle should be considered a demonstrative with the meaning 'over there, occurring in a different time from now'.

2.4.6 Position of Particles within a Noun Phrase

This section is meant to give the possible elements and order of elements within a typical noun phrase in East Futunan. However, not all of these different parts can occur at the same time within one noun phrase. Possessive determiners and case particles occupy the same slot in the syntax; both occur before a noun. They occur in complementary distribution. If there is a possessive determiner in the noun phrase, a case particle does not occur. Additionally, if a possessive determiner occurs in a noun phrase, it does not only take the place of a case particle, but also the article that occurs after the case particle and before the noun. A possessive determiner takes the place of a case particle and an article.

Prototypical demonstratives that occur before the noun and are similar to possessive determiners in that they occur in complementary distribution with case particles and the article preceding a case particle, if present. The non-prototypical demonstratives which occur after the noun can occur with all other particles and is not in complementary distribution with anything, as it occupies a completely different slot in the syntax as everything else.

I therefore suggest that there are three general templates of the East Futunan noun phrase. Every particle described here has situations in which its presence is optional or mandatory, and they are marked in Table 4 in parentheses. The noun referenced in Table 4 can refer to a prototypical, or common, noun, a proper noun, or a pronoun.

Table 4 – East Futunan Noun Phrase Templates

(ERG/ABS)	(ART)	(CLF)	noun	(DEM)
(POSS)		(CLF)	noun	(DEM)
(POSS)		(DEM)	noun	
(DEM)		(CLF)	noun	(DEM)

CHAPTER 3

ERGATIVITY IN EAST FUTUNAN

3.1 A General Overview of Ergativity

Alignment refers to the distribution of morphological markers or syntactic characteristics (Harris & Campbell 1995) and is a way of referring to distributional patterns of nominative/accusative case marking and ergative/absolutive case marking. Ergativity is an alignment pattern in languages that treats the subject of an intransitive sentence (S) and the object of a transitive sentence (O) in the same way and the subject of a transitive sentence (A) differently (Comrie 1978, Dixon 1979, 1994, Harris & Campbell 1995, Anderson 1977, Wouk 1996, Polinsky 2016, Coon 2013, among others). This is distinct from accusative languages, where the subject of an intransitive sentence (S) and the subject of a transitive sentence (A) are marked the same way, and the object of a transitive sentence (O) is marked differently. These alignments can be expressed through case marking and/or by agreement, known as morphological ergativity (Polinsky 2016).

Although ergative/absolutive case alignment is not typologically uncommon, there are fewer instances of ergative/absolutive case alignment than of nominative/accusative case alignment. In the World Atlas of Language Structure Online (WALS), Comrie (2013) shows the ways which in which core argument noun phrases and pronouns can be marked to indicate which type of core argument (S, A, or O) they are. Comrie (2013) looks at the case marking of full noun phrases in a sample of 190 languages and finds that 98 languages are neutral (arguments are unmarked), 52 languages are nominative/accusative, and 32 languages are ergative/absolutive in their full noun phrases. Comrie (2013) also shows the case marking of pronouns in a sample of

172 languages and finds that 79 languages are neutral, 64 languages are nominative/accusative, and 20 languages are ergative/absolutive. While these samples do not account for all languages, they do show the general trend of how languages tend to mark full noun phrases and pronouns. Siewierska (2013) shows the alignment of verbal person marking in a sample of 380 languages and finds that 84 languages are neutral (absence of verbal person marking), 212 have accusative alignment, and 19 have ergative alignment, again showing that accusative alignment is more common than ergative.

In ergative languages, the S and O arguments are marked with the absolutive case, and the A argument is marked with the ergative case, demonstrated in Figure 1a. In accusative languages, the S and A arguments are marked with the nominative case, and the O argument is marked with the accusative case, demonstrated in Figure 1b (Dixon 1979).

Figure 2a – ergative/absolutive case alignment

S (ABS)

A (ERG)   O (ABS)
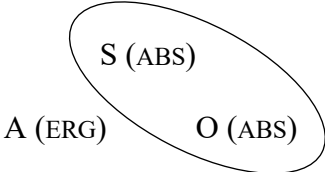
Figure 2b – nominative/accusative case alignment

S (NOM)

A (NOM)   O (ACC)
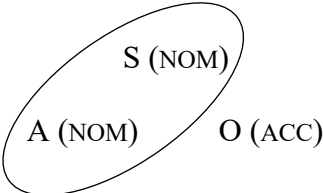
Dyirbal, a Pama-Nyungan language spoken in Northeastern Australia, has ergative/absolutive case alignment, marked morphologically. In (47), the subject of the transitive sentence is marked with a suffix, *-ŋgu*, and the object of the transitive sentence and the subject of the intransitive sentence are unmarked. In (48), the subject of the intransitive sentence is unmarked (Dixon 1994).

(47)   *yabu*   *ŋuma*   *-ŋgu*   *bura*   *-n*

        mother .ABS   father   ERG   see   NONFUT

        'Father saw mother'

(48)   *ŋuma*   *banaga*   *-nʸu*

        father.ABS   return   NONFUT

        'Father returned'

Dixon (1994) discusses what it means for a language to be ergative. He first points out that when ergative constructions were observed by European linguists, the languages with these constructions were considered rare, and speakers of these languages were considered inferior or having a different mindset or mentality from speakers who use the more familiar at the time accusative languages. Likely fueled by the idea of inferiority and because known ergative languages at the time were mostly spoken by smaller, less-known communities outside of Europe, there were ideas suggested that these cultures and their speakers were primitive, and that speakers of ergative languages feel that most events are not caused by their own volition, but rather by unexplainable hidden forces (Seely 1977). Dixon (1994) then explains why these ideas

are derogatory and incorrect. Apart from ergativity not being rare cross-linguistically, it is not correct to say that speakers of ergative languages do not understand when actions are caused by the agent's volition, or that people see themselves only as having things happen to them rather than doing the action themselves. Additionally, this would suggest that ergative languages lack a voice system and solely use passive voice, which is untrue. Dixon defines what it means for a language to be ergative simply as treating S and O the same, and A differently in some part of the grammar. The variation we see in the ergative parts of a language's grammar comes from each individual languages developing a grammar to account for semantic and pragmatic pressures and demands. Discourse style and the way the language is used within a society can motivate certain grammatical features such as case alignment. Dixon cites Duranti's (1990) finding that in Samoan, the A argument is marked by the ergative particle when the referent of the argument is being held accountable for doing something, and that the frequency of use of the ergative particle indicates the societal importance of the speaker, in that more powerful members of the community use the ergative particle more than any other speaker. Dixon concludes by saying that pragmatics can have a significant effect on the development and usage of grammatical alignment.

Coon (2013) thinks that rather than classifying an entire language as ergative, it is better to describe a language as having an ergative/absolutive pattern in one portion of the grammar. The reason for this split ergativity is because of a reduction in transitivity, where subjects do not receive ergative marking because they are no longer transitive subjects. This reduction in transitivity is present in all languages, but because transitive and intransitive subjects pattern the same in nominative/accusative languages, subjects are not marked any differently. Split ergative systems show a combination of ergative/absolutive patterns and nominative/accusative patterns.

There are two main types of split ergative systems: aspect splits and noun phrase animacy splits. In aspect splits, the perfective aspect has an ergative/absolutive pattern, while the progressive aspect has a nominative/accusative pattern. In noun phrase splits, inanimate nominals that occur low on Silverstein's (1976) animacy hierarchy have ergative/absolutive alignment, and pronouns and animate nouns that occur high on the animacy hierarchy have nominative/accusative alignment. Silverstein's hierarchy can be seen in Figure 3 below. In many languages, an explicit ergative marking is used to mark the lower-salient noun (Dixon 1979, DeLancey 1981, Silverstein 1981).

Languages can also exhibit split ergativity patterns in their pronoun system. For example, Dyirbal is ergative/absolutive in marking nouns and third person pronouns, but nominative/accusative in marking first and second person pronouns (Moravscik 1978). Biri, another Australian Aboriginal language, is ergative/absolutive in marking nouns, but nominative/accusative in marking all pronouns (Moravscik 1978).

Fauconnier (2011) summarizes animacy-related differential agent marking in split ergative systems. The lower an agent is on Silverstein's (1976) hierarchy, the less natural it is, and the more likely it is to be overtly marked. Objects are the opposite, where the higher the object is on the hierarchy, the less natural it is, and the more likely it is to be overtly marked. Ergative patterning (where the A argument is ergative, and the S and O arguments are a zero marked absolutive) is associated with lower referents, and accusative patterning (where the A and S argumenta are a zero marked nominative, and the O argument is accusative) is associated with higher referents. Split ergative languages can have their cut-off point for the split anywhere along this hierarchy. Figure 3 below represents the Silverstein (1976) hierarchy in Dixon (1994) and Fauconnier (2011).

Figure 3 – The Silverstein Nominal Hierarchy (from Silverstein 1976, Dixon 1994, and

Fauconnier 2011)

pronoun			noun			
1st	2nd	3rd	proper noun	human	animate	inanimate

⟵――――――――――――――――――――――――――――――――――⟶

more natural as A   less natural as A

less natural as O   more natural as O
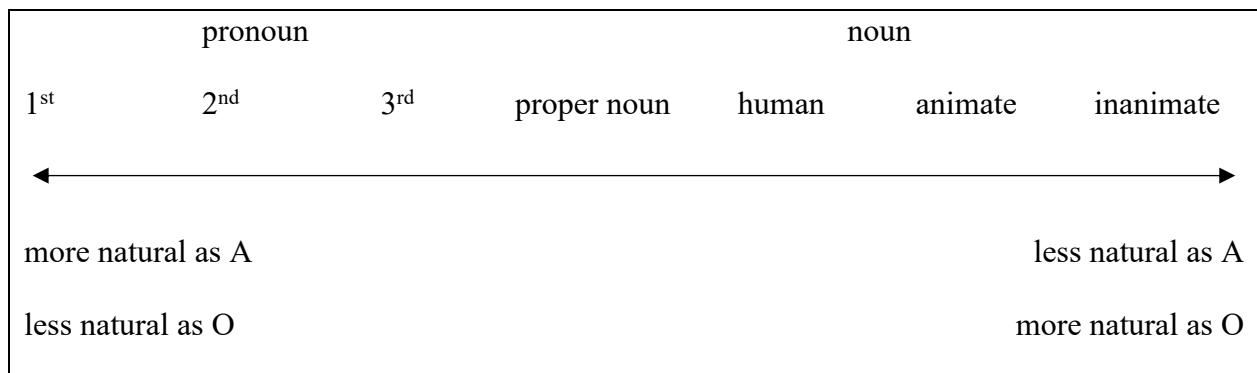
In a generative approach to ergative/absolutive case alignment, Legate (2008a) finds that agreement relations such as case are established underlyingly in the syntax and realized on the surface in the language's morphology. Although absolutive case and nominative case are typically equated, Legate finds that absolutive case is a morphological default case for syntactically-assigned nominative case for an intransitive subject (the S argument), and a syntactically-assigned accusative case for a transitive object (the O argument). Legate treats the ergative case marker on the transitive subject (the A argument) as a case that is assigned by the functional head that assigned the external theta role. The ergative case may not be realized in the surface level morphology, which can create a system that looks nominative/accusative within an ergative absolutive system. This analysis forms the basis for her explanation of the complex patterns found in split ergative languages. Legate (2014) then goes on to says that split ergativity is morphological. She mentions Silverstein's (1976) idea that in animacy-based nominal split ergative systems, 1st and 2nd person pronouns (which are higher on the animacy hierarchy) are more likely to be marked with accusative case and inanimates (which are lower on the animacy hierarchy) are more likely to be marked with ergative case. Legate (2014) however, believes that

some nominals in split ergative systems are not assigned ergative case because the ergative form is nondistinct and shows morphological syncretism with the nominative.

Legate (2012) argues that ergative case is an inherent case, assigned to a DP in its theta-position, or the case that is inherently associated with certain theta positions (Woolford 2006). It is often claimed that the ergative case cannot be an inherent case because it is not associated enough to the agent theta role. This is because of the transitivity restriction on ergative case, where only transitive subjects can be assigned ergative case. Woolford (1997) shows that the notion of transitivity restriction is true in other types of cases such as dative. Legate (2012) believes that intransitive agents can be marked as an ergative. Her argument is that in a split-S language, an inherent case will be assigned to a subject argument regardless of the transitivity and the theta role of the subject.

Hopper & Thompson (1980) point out that the concept of transitivity is identified as a grammatical feature in many of the world's languages. Hopper & Thompson (1980) start by defining transitivity in the most general sense, saying that transitivity is a concept that is generally applied to an entire clause, and that there is an activity that involves two participants that has some type of transference or carry over with varying effectiveness or intensity from an agent to a patient. The individual components of the action and the participants involved can cause clauses to be higher or lower in transitivity; clauses that have an explicit action that is telic, punctual, and volitional, where the A argument shows high agency and the O argument is highly affected by the action are the most transitive in nature. Hopper & Thompson consider transitivity to be a scale, where even clauses with a single S argument can show transitivity, although it is inherently very low on the transitivity scale for lacking a second argument. Sentences which lack an O argument are referred to by Hopper & Thompson as having reduced transitivity. These

types of sentences are commonly referred to as intransitive. The semantics of the clause and its participants highly affect the overall transitivity of the clause. Specifically, if there is a patient in a clause, the clause as a whole will be higher in transitivity than a clause without a patient because the presence of a patient indicates that there is a recipient of an action that has been affected by the action.

Hopper & Thompson (1980) believe that transitivity is not just a morphosyntactic or semantic characteristic, as the discourse motivation of the speaker and the pragmatics of the situation must also be considered. Utterances that are higher in transitivity are correlated with foregrounding, where the speaker uses more transitive sentences in situations where they believe that the information is more relevant and contributes to their communicative goal. Utterances that are lower in transitivity are correlated with backgrounding, which is the part of the discourse that assists or comments on the speaker's communicative goal. The discourse importance of foregrounding and backgrounding can be seen in the way in which languages tend to grammaticize transitive characteristics such as perfective aspect and agentive subject in their morphosyntax. Within the study of transitivity, Hopper & Thompson believe that discourse information and analyzing how speakers choose to present their information gives insight into the communicative decisions that speakers make and how they are assessing the needs of the hearer.

Dowty (1991) questions current notions of thematic roles and examines how there can be different types of agents and patients. He points out that definitions of certain thematic roles have unclear boundaries which can make them difficult to identify and distinguish from other arguments. Defining the role of agent can be particularly difficult. Other works have tried to divide the agent thematic into subcategories. Jackendoff (1983) proposes agent and actor, Cruse

(1973) proposes volitive, effective, initiative, and agentive, and Lackoff (1977) proposed

fourteen different subcategorizations of agent, including different relationships between agent

and patient. Dowty (1991) believes that there may be too many criteria for identifying thematic

roles, especially considering the enormous variety of semantic distinctions that correlate

syntactic and lexical patterns. He says that thematic roles should have event-dependent

definitions rather than relying on discourse-dependent definitions because discourse-dependent

definitions are too closely related to the idea of subject and non-subject. Dowty proposes instead

that thematic roles are language specific and best defined by looking to the predicate to

determine which argument can be expressed by which role. Predicates specifically require a

certain number of arguments and for each argument to be a specific type of role, and these roles

are the same for any semantically equivalent sentence (active, passive, topicalized, etc.). He

refers to this as the argument selection principle which is based syntactically on the idea of

valence and semantically that any semantic distinctions must be relevant to argument selection.

Dowty proposes a list of entailments to define the thematic roles of agent and patient similar to

Keenan (1976, 1984), which he refers to as Proto-Agent and Proto-Patient. The Proto-Agent is

associated with volitional involvement in the state or event, movement, or causing an event or

change of state, while the Proto-Patient is associated with undergoing a change of state, being

affected by another participant, or remaining stationary in an event relative to another

participant. The difference though that Dowty points out is that the agent exists independently of

the event named by the verb and the patient does not exist independently of the events of the

verb.

3.2 A Review of East Futunan Ergativity

East Futunan exhibits morphological ergativity by marking the subject of an intransitive verb and the object of a transitive verb with an absolutive case marker *a*, and by marking the subject of a transitive verb with an ergative case marker *e* (Moyse-Faurie 1997, 1993, Grézel 1878), as in (49) (Moyse-Faurie 1997), (50) (Moyse-Faurie 1997), and (51) (Moyse-Faurie 1992). Ergative and absolutive case markers occur prenominally. The basic word order of East Futunan is usually V Erg Abs. Although the order of the ergative and absolutive can sometimes vary as seen in (50), the verb is always initial. This could perhaps indicate syntactic ergativity, which would be consistent with Moyse-Faurie's (2003) assertion that East Futunan does demonstrate some ergative tendencies within its syntax. Syntactic ergativity operates on a continuum in which there is a degree to which a language can be syntactically ergative, where certain features of the syntax of a language may pattern ergatively and others pattern accusatively. Syntactic operations are sensitive to the ergative/absolutive distinction, and the degree to which a language is syntactically ergative depends on the number of operations that treat the subject, the agentive argument, like the object, the patient argument. Syntactic ergativity can occur notably in word order, where the absolutive argument occurs before the ergative argument, and in which arguments are eligible for relativization (Dixon 1979, 1994). More information about the morphological and syntactic ergative/absolutive case alignment system in East Futunan will be discussed in Chapter 4.

(49)   *na*   *'eva'eva*   *a*   *Soana*   *i*   *asofuli*

          PAST   walk   ABS   Soana   OBL   every day

          "Soana se promenait tous les jours"

          "Soana walked every day"

(50)   *kua*   *tamate a*   *Soane e*   *Petelo*

          ACC   hit   ABS   Soane   ERG   Petelo

          "Petelo a frappé Soane"

          "Petelo hit Soane"

(51)   *na*   *ake*   *a*   *ika*   *e*   *le*   *fafine*

          PAST   be cleaned   ABS   fish   ERG   ART   woman

          "The woman cleaned the fish"

Moyse-Faurie (1992) says that a sole argument is marked for the absolutive case, which can be *a* or Ø. A null marked absolutive is shown in (52).

(52)   *kua*   *foa*   *le*   *tili*

          PERF   be pierced   ART   net

          "The net has a hole (in it)"

3.3. Ergativity in East Futunan Oral Narratives

Other works have discussed the feature of ergative/absolutive case alignment in East Futunan (Moyse-Faurie 1997, 2000, 2003), but this dissertation specifically aims to focus on East Futunan oral narratives.

3.3.1 Transitive Sentences

Transitive sentences have an ergative argument that functions as the subject and an absolutive argument that functions as the object. In East Futunan, these arguments can either be explicitly marked with the prenominal particles *e* (ergative) and *a* (absolutive), or unmarked with no prenominal particle. In general, the ergative argument usually occurs before the absolutive argument, although there are instances where the absolutive can occur before the ergative argument. The reasons motivating this variation between VAO and VOA word order remain unclear, as within the East Futunan oral narratives there is no obvious correlation between a particular word order and the degree of animacy in the arguments, whether the arguments are pronouns or nouns, or the degree of transitivity or semantic meaning of the verb. As expected, VAO word order is more common throughout the oral narratives, but arguments that are high animacy or low animacy, pronouns or nouns, or preceded by a possessive determiner or not, may also occur in VOA word order. Additionally, the semantics of the verb does not seem to directly affect the word order, as it is possible for sentences with high transitivity/high agency verbs such as 'bite' or 'hit', and sentences with lower transitivity verbs such as 'take' to show word order variation. There can be weight effects on the order of arguments within a sentence, however, which are discussed below.

In identifying whether a sentence is transitive in East Futunan, there are syntactic and morphological cues. Morphologically, the suffixes -*'aki* and -*'i* are transitivizing suffixes. If a verb is marked with one of these suffixes, the sentence is transitive and will have an ergative and an absolutive argument. Syntactically, it is best practice to avoid using meaning to guide analysis. It is not enough to rely on a verb that is transitive in English being transitive in East Futunan, as discussed in Chapter 1. Relying on how the arguments are presented in the sentence is the best way to determine if a sentence is transitive.

3.3.1.1 Overtly Expressed Ergative and Absolutive Arguments in Transitive Sentences

The following examples show sentences that have an overtly expressed ergative and absolutive argument, marked with the particles *e* and *a*, respectively. (53) shows how the subject, or more agentive argument, of the transitive sentence *fale fafine* is preceded by an article and the ergative particle *e*. The object, or more affected argument, of the transitive sentence, *ia* is preceded by the absolutive particle *a*.

Although typically the ergative argument precedes the absolutive argument, as in (54, 55), there is variance, as in (53). Perhaps the reason for variation in word order in this instance, where the absolutive argument precedes the ergative argument in (53) is for grammatical complexity and weight. Grammatical complexity, or heaviness, of an NP can affect a speaker's usage of arguments in a sentence in that heavier constituents tend to come later in the sentence than lighter ones (Arnold et al. 2000). The syntactic weight, or complexity of a constituent causes this heavy NP shift (Hawkins 1994). In a heavy NP shifted sentence, the arguments are placed in a different order than they typically would be and are rearranged in order to make the production of the utterance easier for the speaker in that it allows for extra processing time to

form the heavy NP (Arnold et al. 2000). The absolutive argument in (53) is a single pronoun, a light constituent, and the ergative argument, a heavier, more complex constituent, has been placed after the absolutive argument in V Abs Erg (VOA) word order, when typically it is more common in East Futunan to place the ergative argument before the absolutive argument.

(53) *Ti*   *fakāfe loa*   *a*   *ia*   *e*   *le*   *fale fafine*   *lenā*   *o*

Then   invite SUCC   ABS   3.SG   ERG   the   woman's house   DEICT   POSS

le   *nofolaga*   *la*

the   camp   DEM

'The women of this camp invite him'

'Asoa est invité par les femmes de ce campement'[7]

Examples (54) and (55) demonstrate a typical sentence with overtly marked ergative and absolutive arguments in East Futunan; there is clear V Erg Abs (VAO) word order, the ergative argument *ia* in both sentences is preceded by the particle *e*, and the absolutive argument is preceded by an article and the particle *a*.

(54) *Ave*   *loa*   *e*   *ia*   *a*   *le*   *gā*   *tuna*

take   SUCC   ERG   3.SG   ABS   the   CLF   eel

'She (the little one) takes the eel'

'La petite emporte l'anguille'

---

[7] (53) is translated in French as a passive, however, based on the structure of the arguments in this sentence, it is not a passive sentence in East Futunan. The English translation given here is meant to best reflect the meaning in East Futunan.

(55) *Fafagai*   *e*   *ia*   *a*   *le*   *tuna*

feed   ERG   3.SG   ABS   the   eel

'She fed the eel'

'Elle la nourrit si bien'

3.3.1.2 Arguments Marked by Possessive Determiners in Transitive Sentences

There were many instances in the data where transitive sentences contain a possessive

determiner, such as *liku* 1.SG.POSS, *kotou* 2.SG.POSS, or *lona* 3.SG.POSS. (56) (Moyse-Faurie 1997)

and (57-59) below are sentences that have overtly expressed arguments and an argument marked

by a possessive determiner for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd person. As observed in the oral narratives, ergative

and absolutive arguments are not marked with a particle in East Futunan when the argument is

preceded by a possessive determiner. Ergative and absolutive particles *e* and *a*, and possessive

determiners occupy the same slot in the syntax and occur in complementary distribution; in all

instances, if a possessive determiner is used, the argument will not be marked with an ergative or

absolutive particle. In (56-59), the ergative argument is marked with the particle *e*, and the

absolutive argument is marked with a possessive determiner.

(56) *Na*   *'u'uti*   *e*   *le*   *kulī*   *liku*   *va'e*

PAST   bite   ERG   the   dog   1.SG.POSS   leg

'The dog bit my leg'

'Le chien m'a mordu la jambe'

(57) *Fena'aki*   *lona*   *faka'ilo'ilo*   *e*   *le*   *puaka* *la*   *ki*

To be so   3.SG.POSS   instructions   ERG   the   pig DEM   OBL

'The pig gave his/her instructions'

'Telles furent les consignes données par le cochon'

(58) *Ti*   *toso* *ai*   *e*   *kotou* *la*   *kotou*   *ma'ea*

Then   pull ANAPH ERG   2.SG DEM   2.SG.POSS   ropes

'Then you pull your ropes'

'Puis vous tirez sur la corde'

(59) *Tofe*   *e*   *ia*   *lona*   *vaka* *la*

Put in the water   ERG   3.SG 3.SG.POSS   boat DEM

'He (the man) put his boat in the water'

'L'homme met son bateau à l'eau'

3.3.1.3 Transitive Sentences with an Oblique Argument

Throughout the oral narratives, there were instances of sentences that semantically had three argument roles, but syntactically had just two arguments. Syntactically, these types of sentences should not be classified as ditransitive, but rather as transitive sentences that additionally contain an oblique argument. One of the arguments is marked as ergative, one is marked as absolutive, and the third marked with an oblique particle. Moyse-Faurie (2007) classifies these verbs as three-place transitive or ditransitive verbs, which have an additional recipient argument marked as an oblique case. In (60), the agent *lātou* (3.PL) is preceded by the

ergative particle *e*, the patient *le tuna* is preceded by the absolutive particle *a*, and the recipient *lātou* (referring to a different person than the agent) is preceded by a preposition and occurs in the sentence after the agent and patient arguments, in the slot in the syntax where an oblique would typically be placed. Additionally, within the context of this narrative, the oblique pronoun *lātou*, is not marked with a case particle in this sentence, but was previously mentioned in the discourse of this narrative and was marked with an ergative particle when it was functioning as the subject and agent of that sentence.

(60)

	Kae	*tafa*	*e*	*lātou*	*a*	*le*	*tuna*	*ke*		*kai*	*ma*	*lātou*
	So	cut	ERG	3.PL	ABS	the	eel	so that		eat	for	3.PL

'They cut the eel for them to eat'

'Alors ils découpent l'anguille pour la manger'

In a similar way to example (60), (61) is a sentence that seems semantically ditransitive, yet is syntactically a transitive sentence with oblique recipient. Semantically, the verb *soli* 'give' has 3 arguments, but the recipient *le Tu'i Sa'avaka* is preceded by an oblique particle *ki*, and occurs within a relative clause marked by the relative particle *o*. The agent *Niuliki* is marked here in ergative case, and the patient *le sau* 'the royalty' is marked here in absolutive case.

(61)

Na	soli	loa	e	Niuliki	a	le	sau	la	o[8]
Na	*soli*	*loa*	*e*	*Niuliki*	*a*	*le*	*sau*	*la*	*o*
PAST	give	SUCC	ERG	Niuliki	ABS	the	royalty	la	SUB

fene'eki	lana	pati	ki	le	Tu'i Sa'avaka	la
fene'eki	*lana*	*pati*	*ki*	*le*	*Tu'i Sa'avaka*	*la*
to be so	3.SG.POSS	word	OBL	the	Tu'i Sa'avaka	DEM

'Niuliki gave the royalty to Tu'i Sa'avaka by saying…'

'Niuliki donna la royauté au Tu'i Sa'avaka en disant…'

In example (62) below, this sentence is not ditransitive because there is no recipient. While the verb *velo* 'put' often semantically requires three arguments, there is no overtly expressed recipient argument in this sentence. The 3.SG argument *ia* in this sentence is marked with an ergative particle and refers to 'the woman' previously mentioned in this narrative. With this particular usage of the verb *velo*, it is an implied argument within the context of the oral narrative, and it is not obligatorily specified in the syntax that the agent is handing the object to someone else.

(62)

Velo	ake	e	ia	a	le	fui lama	la
Velo	*ake*	*e*	*ia*	*a*	*le*	*fui lama*	*la*
Put (in hand)	DIR	ERG	3.SG	ABS	the	dried coconut leaf torch	DEM

'La femme lui tend la torche.'

'The woman hands him the torch.'

---

[8] The particle *o* is glossed here as a subordinating conjunction – a particle that introduces a subordinate clause. However, this particle has many functions and meanings in East Futunan. In this context, this subordinating particle indicates that an infinitive follows it.

3.3.2 Intransitive Sentences

Intransitive sentences in East Futunan have an absolutive argument, marked by the particle *a*, which functions as the subject of the sentence. The absolutive argument follows the main verb of the sentence. The semantic role of this argument can vary as intransitive verbs can describe a wide variety of events and states, as seen in (63), where the absolutive argument *ia* is an agent, and in (64), where the absolutive argument *niu* is a patient or theme. Although both absolutive, the S argument in intransitive sentences and the O Argument in transitive sentences are not necessarily the same semantic role. Keenan (2013) says that absolutive S and O arguments can be similar if semantically their existence state is understood to be affected by the action expressed by the predicate, particularly if the argument goes in or out of existence or moves to or from a particular direction. This allows the possibility for an S argument and an O argument to have the same semantic role, but crucially does not require that they do. (63) and (64) show basic intransitive sentences in East Futunan.

(63) *ti   fano   a   ia*

     Then   leave   ABS   3.SG

     'Then he left'

     'Puis il repart'

(64) *Ti   toe   sosomo   ake   a   niu   la   aia*

     Then   again   germinate   DIR   ABS   coconut   DEM   DEICT

     'Then the coconuts germinated again'

     'Et les cocos germent à nouveau'

(65) is a more complex sentence showing a sequential action. The first verb *'au* is followed by a sole absolutive argument *ia*. This is followed by two verbs *kua* and *lasi*, and their absolutive argument *le ne'a* which in this instance is not marked with an absolutive particle because it is a definite singular common noun.

(65) *'Au*   *a*   *ia*   *kua*   *lasi*   *le*   *ne'a* *la*   *aia*

      arrive/come ABS   3.SG   accomplish big   the   thing   DEM   DEICT

      'He arrives, and the thing (germ previously mentioned) had already grown'

      'Il arrive, le germe est déjà grand'

Also similar to transitive sentences, any oblique arguments occur near the end of the sentence after the absolutive argument, and are marked in the syntax with an oblique particle such as *i* or *ki* (Moyse-Faurie 2007) in (66).

(66) *Ano*   *a*   *ia*   *ki*   *Asoa*

      return ABS   3.SG   OBL   Aso

      He returned to Asoa

      Il retourne à Asoa

3.3.3 Passive Constructions

Dixon (1994) describes several criteria for a passive. A passive applies to an underlyingly transitive clause and forms a derived intransitive; the underlying O NP becomes S of the passive; the underlying A goes into a peripheral function, being marked by a non-core case, preposition,

etc.; there is some explicit formal marking of a passive construction (Dixon 1994). In East Futunan, most of Dixon's criteria are met. A passive construction in East Futunan contains a predicate, an absolutive argument, and an oblique. It is formed by demoting the subject, the ergative argument, of a transitive sentence to an oblique, and promoting the object, the absolutive argument, of a transitive sentence to a subject. The original ergative argument is no longer marked with an ergative particle, and is marked in East Futunan by an oblique particle. The original absolutive argument would still be marked by its absolutive particle *a*, as it still an absolutive argument when promoted to the subject of an intransitive sentence. There is no explicit marking of a passive construction in East Futunan apart from these changes in case assignment.

Although passive sentences are not prevalent within East Futunan oral narratives, (67) shows a possible passive construction. In this example, Alo, Olu, Sigave, and Tavai are places or kingdoms in Futuna. Alo and Sigave are in a possessive construction in this example following their respective absolutive arguments *a fatu* 'stone', indicating that these places have possession or ownership of the stones. Olu and Tavai are placed after an oblique locative particle in this example, indicating that these are the places where the stones are being taken.

(67)	*O*	*to'o*	*a*	*fatu*	*a*	*Alo*	*mei*		*Olu*	*ti*	*to'o*	*a*
	And	take	ABS	stone	POSS	Alo	OBL LOC		Olu	then	take	ABS
	fatu	*a*	*Sigave*		*mei*		*Tavai*					
	stone	POSS	Sigave		OBL LOC		Tavai					

'The stones from Alo are taken to Olu, the stones from Sigave are taken to Tavai'

'Les pierres d'Alo sont prises à Olu, les pierres de Sigave sont prises à Tavai'

The sentence in (67) is a possible passive construction because there is no overt agent given in this sentence, or in the context of any of the surrounding sentences. The agent, or the one who is taking the stones to the different locations, is altogether unmentioned. It is possible that the ergative subjects, the places Olu and Tavai, have been demoted to obliques, and the absolutive objects, the stones of Alo and Tavai, have been promoted to absolutive subject of an intransitive sentence.

3.3.4 Antipassive Constructions

Dixon (1994) describes several criteria by which a syntactic derivation should be recognized as antipassive. An antipassive applies to an underlying transitive clause and forms a derived intransitive; the underlying A NP becomes S of the antipassive; the underlying O NP goes into a peripheral function, being marked by a non-core case, preposition, etc.; there is some explicit formal marking of an antipassive construction (Dixon 1994). The example below shows an antipassive construction in the Iglulik dialect of Inuktitut (Kalmár 1977), an Eskaleut language spoken in Eastern Canada. Kalmár (1977) says that both of these sentences express the meaning 'person sees dog', but the case marking is different in each. (68a) follows an ergative construction with the formula ergative, absolutive, transitive verb. (68b) follows an antipassive construction with the formula absolutive, oblique, intransitive verb.

(68a) *inu -up   qimmiq-Ø   taku -v   -a   -a*

     person ERG   dog   ABS   see   INDIC   TR   he/it

     'person sees dog'

(68b) *inuk -Ø   qimmir-mik taku -v   -uq*

       person ABS   dog   OBL   see   INDIC INTR

       'person sees dog'

      An antipassive construction in an ergative/absolutive language contains a predicate, an absolutive argument, and an oblique, just as a passive sentence would. However, an antipassive construction is formed by demoting the object, the absolutive argument, of a transitive sentence to an oblique. The original absolutive argument is no longer marked with an absolutive particle, but instead is marked by an oblique particle. The original ergative argument is still the subject, but as the sentence is now intransitive, the original ergative argument has become an absolutive argument and is marked with an absolutive particle. There is no explicit morphological marking to indicate an antipassive construction in East Futunan. Based on the data from these oral narratives, it remains unclear whether antipassive constructions exist in East Futunan, although there are several examples from the data that are consistent with Dixon's (1994) criteria and that could indicate an antipassive construction.

      In the relevant examples, the verb has an agent argument and a patient/theme, but the patient/theme argument is an oblique construction. There is no ergative argument; the syntactic subject (semantic agent) of the sentence is marked with an absolutive particle. (69) has an absolutive argument *ia*, marked with the particle *a*, and an oblique argument *le fā'ulu*, marked with the locative *ki*. It is possible in (70) that the ergative argument of a transitive sentence *ia* has been promoted to the absolutive argument of an intransitive sentence, and that the absolutive argument of a transitive sentence *le fāulu* has been demoted to an oblique argument, creating an antipassive construction.

(69) *natu*   *a*   *ia*   *ki*   *le*   *fā'ulu*

  come/find   ABS   3.SG   LOC   the   head

  'He finds the pig's head'[9]

  'Il trouve la tête du cochon'

In (70), the thing that is being approached (in this case, it is clear from the context of the narratives that the thing that is being approached is the location where a pig is lying on the ground), is not overtly mentioned in the sentence. There is a locative particle *ki* and an anaphoric particle *ai*, yet no overt argument. A locative particle likely would not be grammatical in this context without contextual information about the location that is being referred to. It is possible in (70) that the ergative argument of a transitive sentence *ia* has been promoted to the absolutive argument of an intransitive sentence, and that the absolutive argument of a transitive sentence (the location of the pig) has been demoted to an implied oblique argument, creating an antipassive construction.

(70) *ano*   *loa*   *a*   *ia*   *ki*   *ai*

  approach   now   ABS   3.SG   LOC   ANAPH

  'He approaches it'

  'Il s'en approche'

---

[9] In examples (69) and (70), the English translations given are meant to represent the meaning in the best possible grammatical structure in English. They do not show the same structure in East Futunan, as it would be ungrammatical in English.

Based on the data, it is unclear if these sentences (69) and (70) show an antipassive construction, perhaps being used as an ergative avoidance technique, or if these verbs in East Futunan are simply syntactically intransitive and require an absolutive argument and an oblique argument. There were no instances of the verbs *natu* 'come/find' or *ano* 'approach' in sentences with an ergative argument. Additionally, there were no instances where sentences with these verbs did not also contain an oblique argument. More information about this topic will be discussed in section 3.3.7.

3.3.5 Ergative Avoidance

Moyse-Faurie (2000) describes a feature of East Futunan ergativity: ergative avoidance. This feature has also been found in Samoan (Duranti & Ochs 1990). Ergative avoidance is a communication strategy that avoids using an ergative argument and puts the agent in the background. The speaker may do this in one of two ways – either omit the ergative agent or mark the agent as a possessor. In the first way, the speaker deletes the ergative argument, which is possible because most verbs in East Futunan can be grammatical when used intransitively, requiring only an absolutive argument. The absolutive argument could then either refer to an agent or a patient. Moyse-Faurie states that the verb and the semantic roles of the arguments should be observed, however, because the omitted ergative argument is not always an agent, and the remaining absolutive argument is not necessarily a patient. Depending on the semantic meaning of the verb, the omitted ergative argument can be a patient, such as in the verb *maf ai* 'to be able to'.

In example (71), the ergative argument is avoided by making a possessive construction to avoid mentioning agency. It is ambiguous as to whether the possessor *Kalae* shows volition in

this action. There are many instances of this type of construction in the East Futunan oral narratives. In example (71), the absolutive argument *le maikao* 'the finger' is unmarked here, but is first mentioned in the previous utterance functioning as an object, and is marked with an absolutive particle there.

(71) *velo* *atu*   *fa'i* *le*   *maikao*   *o*   *Kalae*
      put   in front of   do   the   finger   poss Kalae

      'Kalae's finger was put there/Kalae put her finger there'

      'Poule sultane met son doigt'

In East Futunan, genitive constructions can be used to show possession, but they can also be used to express agentivity. Speakers can avoid the ergative argument by marking the agent as the possessor in a genitive noun phrase. The concept of agent is included in the possessor, but it expresses a low degree of agentivity. This is similar to passive constructions, where the ergative argument is demoted to an oblique. (72) and (73) have the same meaning, but the structure of the sentence is different. The structure in (72) uses an ergative marker to show the agent as the subject of a transitive verb, but the structure in (73) puts the agent into a genitive construction and the absolutive is then marked on the subject on an intransitive verb. The construction shown in (73) allows the speaker to avoid using an ergative argument.

(72) *e*   *feave'aki*   *e*   *Atelea*   *ana*   *fakapaku*   *i*   *lamatu'a*
      INACP   peddle   ERG   Atelea   his   doughnut   PREP   road

      'Atelea peddles his doughnuts along the road'

(73) *e   feave'aki   a   fakapaku   a   Atelea   i   lamatu'a*

INACP peddle   ABS   doughnut   POSS Atelea   PREP road

'Atelea peddles his doughnuts along the road'

Moyse-Faurie (2003) proposes a social and pragmatic reason for why speakers of East Futunan avoid using ergative arguments. Perhaps the reason for ergative avoidance is because ergative constructions include an overt agent. The agent or responsible entity of an action is not important socially in Polynesian societies. Ergative arguments show that the agent is highly responsible for the action, which can be perceived by the listener as the agent bragging or showing an excessive amount of arrogance or pride. Instead, avoiding the mention of an agent is often preferred. Within the oral narratives of East Futunan, the ergative argument is still used in many situations, and there are some verbs which necessarily require an ergative and absolutive argument, but this social insight explains why there are sentences that do not contain an ergative argument, even when one might be expected.

3.3.6 Sentences with no Overtly Marked Arguments

There are many instances in East Futunan sentences where the nominal arguments are not overtly marked with an ergative or absolutive particle. This phenomenon is not only grammatically acceptable, but common. It is acceptable to have an unmarked absolutive argument when the nominal argument is a definite singular common noun or an indefinite singular or plural common noun (Moyse-Faurie 1997). (74) and (75) below (Moyse-Faurie 1997) show that it is grammatically acceptable in East Futunan to have sentences with an absolutive

argument that is not preceded by an absolutive particle because the absolutive arguments in these sentences are both definite singular common nouns.

(74)   *na*   *'epo*   *le*   *pā*   *e*   *le*   *kulī*

       PAST   lick   ART   plate   ERG   ART   dog

       "Le chien avait léché l'assiette"

       "The dog licked the plate"

(75)   *e*   *tā'i*   *e*   *ia*   *le*   *fā*   *tolo*

       INACP cut   ERG   3.SG   ART   CLF   sugar cane

       "Il coupe la canne à sucre"

       "He cuts the sugar cane"

The same sentence structure can be observed throughout East Futunan oral narratives. These are sentences in which it may have been expected that an ergative or absolutive particle would be needed, but it is not used. Table 5 below shows where explicit ergative and absolutive particles are required and not required in East Futunan oral narratives. The particles occur in the syntax before the following features. The observations made here in the oral narratives are consistent with Moyse-Faurie (1997).

Table 5 – Usage of Ergative and Absolutive Particles

	Required	Not required[10]
Ergative particle	pronouns proper nouns common nouns	
Absolutive particle	3.SG pronouns proper nouns definite plural common nouns	1.SG and 2.SG pronouns[11] definite singular common nouns indefinite singular common nouns indefinite plural common nouns

(76) is an intransitive sentence with an absolutive argument *ai le kupega o koutou* 'your net/the net of yours', yet there is no absolutive particle preceding this argument because it is a definite singular common noun. Examples (77) and (78) show a similar construction. There is an absolutive argument following an intransitive verb that does not have an absolutive particle because the absolutive argument in (77) is definite and singular. In (78), it may be expected that an absolutive particle would occur because the argument is plural, however, the absolutive argument *le tagi* 'the tears' here is likely indefinite, and no absolutive particle is required.

[10] Although arguments are not grammatically required in these instances, they may still optionally be used here.
[11] 1.SG and 2.SG pronouns are less common in East Futunan oral narratives than 3.SG pronouns. They require an ergative particle and do not require an absolutive particle.

(76)　*Na*　　*ifo'aki*　　*ai*　　*le*　　*kupega*　　*o*　　*koutou*

　　　　PAST　descend　　ANAPH the　　net　　　　POSS　2.PL

　　　'your net lowered', 'the net of yours lowered'

　　　'votre filet est descendu là'

(77)　*O*　　*tolo*　　　*le*　　*puaka la*　　*o*　　*fakame'ā*　　*ti*　　*fakavāvā*

　　　And　scrape skin　the　　pig　DEM　and　wash　　　　　then　gut

　　　'The skin of the pig is scraped off, then he is washed and gutted'

　　　'La peau du cochon est grattée, puis il est lavé et vidé'

(78)　*Ko*　*le*　　*tagi*　*aia*　*a*　　*le*　　*tuna*　*la*

　　　PRED　the　　tears　DEICT　POSS　the　　eel　　DEM

　　　'So the eel cries', or 'there were the eel's tears'

　　　'Ainsi pleure l'anguille'

Although it is briefly mentioned in Moyse-Faurie (1997) about certain contexts where ergative and absolutive particles are obligatory or not, there is no proposed explanation as to why these conditions exist. In particular, there are instances within the oral narratives of the absolutive particle not being used, but no conditions given for when the absolutive particle is not obligatory. One possible explanation for this within oral narratives, is that if the argument has previously been mentioned in the discourse, it may not need to be obligatorily case marked anymore. In examples (76-78), while the absolutive arguments meet the conditions listed in Table 5 of not being obligatory, they additionally have all been previously mentioned in the

discourse. In these instances, it could be assumed that the listener already knows the roles of the arguments to which the speaker is referring and the arguments do not have to be overtly marked for case because of a mutually understood preexisting context – these utterances contain given information, not new information.

Based on the data observed in East Futunan oral narratives, there are verbs which can function as transitives or intransitives. Transitive verbs can be derived from intransitive verbs with a transitivizing suffix -*'i,* allomorph of -*'aki* discussed in Chapter 2. *Manatu* 'think' is used in (79) as an intransitive verb in a complex sentence where the verb *manatu* does not have any overt arguments; rather, its sole argument *Tu'i Asoa* is referenced previously in the sentence as an argument of another verb. In (80), *manatu'i* used here as a transitive verb and, similarly to (79) does not have any overt arguments, even though typically ergative arguments would be explicitly marked with a case particle.

(79) *Ti   nofonofo   loa   le   Tu'i Asoa   la   ti   **manatu***

Then   stay a long time   SUCC   the   Tu'i Asoa   la   then   **think**

mu'a   ke   ano   ki   Lokā   o   'asi'asi   ki   le

first   in order to   go   OBL   Lokā   REL   visit   OBL   the

Ma'uifa

Mauifa

'One day, Tui Asoa thought to go to Loka to visit Mauifa'

'Un jour, le Tui Asoa eut l'idée d'aller à Loka rendre visite au Mauifa'

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(80)

O	kaku	atu	loa	ki	Mamalu'a	e	iai	le
for	arrive	DIR	SUCC	OBL	Mamalua	INACP	be there	the

nofolaga	i	ai	a	leia	e	kotou	'aga	o	**manatu'i**
camp	OBL	ANAPH	PRED	DEICT	INACP	2	put	REL	**remember**

na	'au	le	kau	Toga	o	tamate	i	ai	la
PAST	come	the	COLL	Tonga	REL	kill	OBL	ANAPH	DEM

'Arriving in Mamaluia, there is a camp there, remember, where the Tongans were killed'

'En arrivant à Mamalua, il y a un campement, celui, souvenez-vous, où les Tongiens se sont fait tuer'

3.3.6.1 No Overtly Marked Pronouns

Typically, absolutive particles are not used before arguments that have a definite singular particle (i.e. *le* 'the'). As observed in this data, ergative and absolutive particles are not used before nominal arguments that have a possessive determiner (e.g. *lona* 'his', *liku* 'my', *kotou* 'your PL'), because possessive determiners occupy the same slot in the syntax as case particles; they occur in complementary distribution and cannot be used at the same time. A postposed pronoun in East Futunan occurs after the verbal information and usually is explicitly marked with an ergative or absolutive particle. However, there is another class of personal pronouns, anteposed pronouns, which occur after the tense/aspect information, but before the verb, and do not have an explicitly marked ergative or absolutive argument. The two types of pronouns, postposed and anteposed, are semantically equivalent to each other, but there is a choice in East Futunan of which one to use to represent the semantic roles of the verb. Anteposed pronouns are used in everyday conversation, in direct speech, in interrogative sentences, and in subordinates.

They refer to topics already mentioned. Postposed pronouns are more emphatic, and often refer to new information (Moyse-Faurie 1997). Table 6 below shows the two types of pronouns – anteposed and postposed.

Table 6 – Anteposed and Postposed Pronouns

	Anteposed Pronoun	Postposed Pronoun
1.SG	*kau*	*au*
1.SG.INCL	*kita*	*kita*
2.SG	*ke*	*koe*
3.SG	Ø (or *ina*)	*ia*
1.DU.INCL	*tā*	*tāua*
1.DU.EXCL	*mā*	*māua*
2.DU	*kulu*	*koulua*
3.DU	*lā*	*lāua*
1.PL.INCL	*tou*	*tatou*
1.PL.EXCL	*motou*	*mātou*
2.PL	*kotou*	*koutou*
3.PL	*lotou*	*lātou*

The following examples (81a, 82a, 83a) (Moyse-Faurie 2003) of transitive and intransitive sentences contain an anteposed pronoun, and in a semantically equivalent sentence with a postposed pronoun (81b, 82b, 83b) (Moyse-Faurie 2003). The sentences with anteposed pronouns have, in effect, an AVO word order, although in these sentences the tense/aspect

particles still come first in the sentence. In the East Futunan oral narratives, no other productive

patterns of this AVO word order were observed.

(81a) *e*   *lotou*   *ifo*   *ki*   *tai*

INACP 3.PL   descend   OBL   sea

'They went down to the sea'

(81b) *e*   *ifo*   *a*   *lātou*   *ki*   *tai*

INACP descend   ABS   3.PL   OBL   sea

'They went down to the sea'

(82a) *e*   *kau*   *fõ*   *le*   *kofu*

INACP 1.SG   wash   the   dress

'I washed the dress'

(82b) *e*   *fõ*   *e*   *au*   *le*   *kofu*

INACP wash   ERG   1.SG   the   dress

'I washed the dress'

(83a) *e*   *kau*   *tamate*   *a*   *koe*

INACP 1.SG   hit   ABS   2.SG

"I hit you"

(83b) *e*　　　*tamate*　　　*a*　　*koe*　　*e*　　*au*

　　　INACP hit　　　　　ABS　2.SG　ERG　1.SG

　　　"I hit you"

3.3.6.2 Ergative Arguments

One observation of importance in the East Futunan oral narratives is that there is a lower frequency of subjects used because of the nature of how stories are told. As the speaker recounts the story, the events of the tale often focus around a person or an event, and the story of that person or event proceeds without the speaker mentioning them for every line of the narratives. The speaker uses language to the effect of "and then this happened, and then this happened", which in East Futunan appears to not require the use of a subject. The subject, or who or what the story is centered around, has already been established. The context here is that the people of the kingdom of Alo and the people of the kingdom of Sigave have had a long-standing dispute over territory, and they decide to settle their dispute by having a competition of who can catch the best fish from the disputed territory. Many lines of each story simply follow the narrative, and there is no overt subject expressed. Examples (84, 85, and 86) below show this progressive style of narrative.

(84)　*ti*　　*tā*　　*le*　　*kupega*　　　*o*　　*Sigave*

　　　then　make　the　net　　　　poss　Sigave

　　　'then we make the net from Sigave'

　　　'On fabrique donc le filet de Sigave'

(85) *ti   fakatotonu*

and   make it well-made

'we made it well'

'et on décide de l'emporter'

(86) *ke   ave   o   ifo'aki   i   Fu'itoto*

in order to   take   sub   descend   obl   Fu'itoto

'to bring it to Fu'itoto'

'et de le descendre à Fuitoto'

There is no overt subject in these sentences in east Futunan, but the story is understood, and it is apparent that the unspecified subject throughout this section of the story is the people of Sigave. This subject is never overtly stated even at the beginning of the narrative, and therefore was never marked with an ergative particle. However, the context of the story tells the tale of how these two groups of people settled a disagreement, and the subject is implied throughout the narrative. This feature of storytelling is present throughout each of the oral narratives. In these types of sentences, I do not believe that this is ergative avoidance, but rather just a feature of storytelling.

As mentioned earlier, an ergative particle would be expected to mark pronouns, proper nouns, and common nouns. The ergative particles are used where they are expected in the oral narratives, but there is overall a lower frequency of ergative particles compared to absolutive particles, and a lower frequency of ergative arguments compared to absolutive arguments. The ergative is only used as the subject of a transitive sentence, while the absolutive is used as the

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subject of an intransitive sentence and the object of a transitive sentence, but there are other

factors that could account for these differences. Discourse strategies that speakers implement

such as ergative avoidance also account for the lower frequency of ergative arguments. Example

(87) below shows this, where the context is implying that the Diospyros tree has fruits on it, but

the sentence construction in East Futunan does not have an ergative argument and instead places

the subject in a possessive construction, which is a strategy used frequently to avoid the use of

the ergative.

(87) *E   se   ko[12]   le   leleu   loa   leia   o   le   mapa   la*

     INACP go/come   the   fruits   of   here   POSS the   Diospyros   DEM

     'Here are the Diospyros (Fiji persimmon) fruits'

     'Le Diospyros a même des fruits mûrs'

In addition, many implied subject arguments are present either because they are

previously mentioned in the discourse, or because the context gives enough information for the

speaker to understand the subject.

3.3.7 Functionally Intransitive Verbs

Within the context of oral narratives in East Futunan, it seems apparent that the feature of

ergative avoidance is being used. The motivation, though, for ergative avoidance is unclear. As

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[12] In (87), the particle *ko* in this position in a sentence (after a predicate, and before a noun) does not have a precise meaning or function. Its function depends on the sentence itself. The particle *ko* is defined quite vaguely in Rensch (1986) as having many uses in this language, but placed before a noun or pronoun signals the beginning of a phrase.

these oral narratives are telling a story, they are not told from the speaker's own perspective, but rather the speaker is recounting events in the story. It is unclear then if the speakers will be recounting the story in a way in which ergative arguments and markers are avoided. There are many verbs which we might expect to be transitive, but are not functioning as transitive verbs in East Futunan oral narratives. The question remains, whenever an ergative argument is expected but not used in a clause, is the speaker using ergative avoidance strategies, or is the verb in the sentence functioning as an intransitive?

The verbs *natu* and *ano* in East Futunan are prevalent throughout the oral narratives. *Natu* has meanings such as 'come, arrive', and *ano* has meanings such as 'go, march, leave, approach'. Most verbs of motion are used in transitive constructions in East Futunan such as in (58-59) and (61-62). I draw attention to *natu* and *ano* because they are verbs of motion, but functionally they are not transitive. They do not occur in these oral narratives as transitive verbs with an ergative argument. I believe that there are two possible analyses for verbs such as *natu* and *ano*. The first is that these verbs are intransitive verbs of motion in East Futunan. They roughly correspond to transitive sentences in English, but as they have no ergative argument, are functionally intransitive verbs in East Futunan. Examples (88-89) below show *natu* being used in an intransitive construction and examples (90-91) show *ano* being used in an intransitive construction. The second analysis assumes that these verbs are underlyingly transitive and are being used by speakers in these oral narratives as intransitive verbs in an antipassive construction.

(88)

Ti	**natu**	a	ia	o	tiotio,		koi	tio	la	a	ia
Then	**arrive**	ABS	3.SG	for	observe,		then	see	DEM	ABS	3.SG

ki	le	la'akau	fela'aki	i	Futuna	nei
OBL	the	tree	to be so	OBL	Futuna	DEICT

'He approaches to observe this tree that he has never seen in Futuna'

'Il s'approche pour mieux observer cet arbre qu'il n'a jamais vu à Futuna'

(89)

Lenā	lalāua	la	sosola	ti	solo'i	mai	e	le	tuna	la
There	3.DU	DEM	flee	and	destroy	DIR	ERG	the	eel	DEM

aia	a	le	ā	la,	kae	'au	a	ia	o	**natu**
DEICT	ABS	the	enclosure	DEM	and	come	ABS	3.SG	for	**arrive**

i	olā	muli
OBL	3.DU/PL.POSS	behind

'They flee, and the eel destroys the enclosure, and pursues them'

'Alors qu'elles fuient, l'anguille dévaste l'enclos, et se lance à leur poursuite'

(90)

Ano	a	ia	ki	Asoa
go	ABS	3.SG	OBL	Asoa

'He returned to Asoa'

'Il retourne à Asoa'

(91) | *Ti* | ***ano*** | *loa* | *a* | *ia* | *mo* | *lana* | *tagata* | *pe* |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Then | **go** | SUCC | ABS | 3.SG | with | 3.SG.POSS | man | REL |

sana	*matātagata*	*tagata*	*o*	*le*	*fāmili*	*o*	*'on*
3.SG.POSS	sentry	man	POSS	the	family	POSS	3.SG

'He left with his man, his sentry, one of his family'

'Il part avec un homme, une de ses sentinelles, quelqu'un de sa famille'

The verbs in *natu* and *ano* in East Futunan have a similar function to a feature described in Chung's (1978) book, "Case Marking and Grammatical Relations in Polynesian". She discusses case assignment in middle clauses and shows examples of verbs for 'see' and 'follow' in Tongan, and 'give up' and 'thank' in Samoan, and two possible analyses for the case markings that these verbs are assigned. She defines these verbs as middle verbs in a middle clause, meaning that the verb is describing an event that does not affect the direct object immediately. Middle clauses in Polynesian languages are underlyingly transitive, but have the case marking of intransitive clauses containing an oblique NP (Chung 1978). She discusses the two possible analyses for these verbs as either underlyingly transitive but having the case marking of an absolutive argument of an intransitive verb containing an oblique NP, or else that they have been detransitivized by an antipassive rule. Her conclusion is that middle verbs in Samoan and Tongan have not been detransitivized and are not antipassives, but rather that when there are two case marked NPs in a clause containing a middle verb, the direct object is marked with an oblique particle *i* or *ki*. Chung (1978) believes that there is no evidence for an antipassive rule, given that in other syntactic constructions, middle verbs in Samoan and Tongan are treated as syntactically transitive, and the only evidence for an antipassive is the absolutive and oblique

case marking. These verbs are underlyingly transitive in Tongan and Samoan, therefore, but used functionally here as intransitive verbs with a sole absolutive argument and an oblique. Examples (92) and (93) below are from Tongan. Examples (94) and (95) below are from Samoan.

(92)   *'oku   sio   ki   tahi   'a   e   sianá   na*

             PROG   see   to   ocean ABS   the   man   that

             'That man was looking at the ocean'

(93)   *Na'e   muimui   'a   'ālani 'i-ate au   'aneafi*

             PAST   follow   ABS   Alan at-pro me   yesterday

             'Alan followed me yesterday'

(94)   *'ua   fa'ama'amulu Beni   ma   Liu   i   le   galuega*

             PRF   give up   Ben   and   Lui   at   the   work

             'Ben and Lui gave up the work'

(95)   *Sā   fa'afetai   le   teine 'i   lona   tinā*

             PAST   thank   the   girl   to   her   mother

             'The girl thanked her mother'

To draw a comparison to the oral narratives of East Futunan, there were no instances of the verbs 'thank', or 'give up', but there were instances of 'follow' and 'see'. The verb *mulimuli* 'follow just behind', reduplicated from *muli* 'follow', is only used as an intransitive verb in East

Futunan oral narratives, and there were no instances of this verb being used in an antipassive construction. (96) is from the oral narratives, where *mulimuli* 'follow' is placed as a subordinate clause with no overt arguments.

(96)

Ti	*fela'aki*		*loa*	*le*	*pati*	*a*	*Ma'uifa*		*aia :*	*"Tu'i Asoa*
and	to be so		SUCC	the	speech	POSS	Ma'uifa		DEICT	Tu'i Asoa

e	*manatu*	*au*	*ke*		*'au*	*la*	*koe*	*o*[13]	***mulimuli***
INACP	think	1.SG	in order to		come	DEM	2.SG	SUB	**follow**

i	*lau*	*puaka*	*la.*
OBL	2.SG.POSS	pig	DEM

'Ma'uifa said, "Tui Asoa, I think that you should follow right behind your pig'

'Le Mauifa dit comme cela, "Tui Asoa, je pense que tu devrais courir après ton cochon"'

There are no instances in the oral narratives of the unreduplicated form *muli*, but Moyse-Faurie (1993) shows that this verb exists as an intransitive, as in (97).

(97)

E	***muli***	*le*	*tagata*	*i*	*lona*	*āvaga*
INACP	**follow**	the	man	OBL	his	spouse

'The man followed his wife' or 'the man obeyed his wife'

'L'homme suit sa femme (il lui obéit)'

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[13] In (96), the particle *o* is glossed here as a subordinating conjunction – a particle that introduces a subordinate clause. However, this particle has many functions and meanings in East Futunan. In this context, this subordinating particle indicates that an infinitive follows it.

(98) is a transitive example given in Moyse-Faurie's(1993) dictionary, where *muli* is affixed with a transitivizing suffix -'*i*.

(98) *e*   *mulu'i*   *e*   *le*   *toe*   *a*   *le*   *kulī*

    INACP follow   ERG   the   child ABS   the   dog

    'The child followed the dog'

    'L'enfant suit le chien'

The verb *tio* 'see' in East Futunan can have different morphology based on the intended meaning and the semantic roles of the arguments in the sentence. *Tio* 'see' is always intransitive, and *tiotio* 'observe/look at (durative)' is also always intransitive. *Tio* and *tiotio* only occur with absolutive arguments, as in (99), and the object that is being seen or observed is marked with an oblique particle.

(99) *Ti*   *natu* *a*   *ia*   *o*   **tiotio**,   *koi*   **tio**   *la*   *a*   *ia*

    Then   arrive ABS   3.SG   for   **observe**,   then   **see**   DEM   ABS   3.SG

    ki   *le*   *la'akau*   *fela'aki*   *i*   *Futuna*   *nei.*

    OBL   the   tree   to be so   OBL   Futuna   DEICT

    'He approaches to observe/look at this tree that he has never seen in Futuna'

    'Il s'approche pour mieux observer cet arbre qu'il n'a jamais vu à Futuna'

The verb *tio'i* 'see', marked with a transitivizing suffix -'*i*, is always transitive. This verb may be more semantically equivalent to English 'look at' because the verb has an ergative

argument that is the agent, as in (100) (Moyse-Faurie 1993). There are no instances of *tio'i* in the East Futunan oral narratives.

(100) *Na   motou   **tio'i**   le   vaka   i   nāpō*

        PAST   1.PL.EXCL   **see**   the   boat   OBL   last night

        'We saw the boat last night'

        'La nuit dernière nous avons vu le bateau'

Based on the findings in these oral narratives of East Futunan, it seems that Chung's (1978) analysis of verbs for 'see', 'thank', 'give up' and 'follow' in Tongan and Samoan is consistent with the verbs *natu* and *ano* in East Futunan, while the different iterations of the verbs 'follow' and 'see' can be used transitively or intransitively in East Futunan depending on the intended meaning. Based on my observations in the East Futunan oral narratives, I concur with Chung's (1978) analysis of intransitive verbs in Samoan and Tongan, that the verbs *natu*, and *ano* in East Futunan, and likely other verbs of motion are not being used in an antipassive construction or other ergative avoidance strategies by the speaker, but rather are just verbs that are functioning intransitively. As there are no instances in the oral narratives of the verbs *natu* and *ano* being used as transitive verbs with an ergative argument, it is likely that they are not transitive verbs being used in an antipassive construction. Moyse-Faurie (2007) describes a semantic class of verbs for feeling, perception, or communication as two-place intransitives. These are middle verbs with an absolutive argument, usually an experiencer, and a second argument in an oblique case, usually a patient (Moyse-Faurie 2007). Chung (1978) analyzes

verbs such as these as in Samoan and Tongan as syntactically or underlyingly transitive, however there is not enough data from the East Futunan oral narratives to determine if *natu* and *ano* are underlyingly transitive, given that there are no instances of them being used transitively.

3.4 Conclusion

Referring back to the questions asked in Chapter 1, one main goal of this dissertation has been to explore how ergative and absolutive case marking are used in different types of sentences that are prevalent in East Futunan oral narratives. In transitive sentences, ergative and absolutive arguments can be overtly expressed with the case particles *e* and *a*, respectively, or can be unmarked. Usually ergative arguments precede absolutive arguments in transitive sentences (VAO word order), but it is also possible for absolutive arguments to precede ergative arguments (VOA word order). Ergative particles are required before pronouns, proper nouns, and common nouns, and absolutive particles are required before 3.sg pronouns, proper nouns, and definite plural common nouns. Possessive determiners are in complementary distribution with case particles and articles; if a noun phrase contains a possessive determiner, it cannot also contain an article or a case particle. In intransitive sentences, the absolutive case particle *a* is used where grammatically required and may also be optionally used in other instances (namely, before 1.SG and 2.SG pronouns, definite singular common nouns, indefinite singular common nouns, and indefinite plural common nouns. I have also found that the structure of sentences and arguments expressed could show that passive and antipassive constructions may be possible in East Futunan oral narratives.

Another main question which this dissertation has set out to examine is the instances of when an ergative or absolutive case marker would be expected, but not used in oral narratives,

and the functional motivation and mechanism in situations where ergative and absolutive

markers are omitted. There are three main reasons why an argument will not be marked. First,

syntactically, animacy of the arguments can affect the way in which arguments are marked.

Typically a subject or agent is higher on the animacy scale and an object or patient is lower on

the animacy scale. As this type of construction is typical, the more likely it is that these types of

arguments are not explicitly marked. In sentence constructions that do not have these typical

types of animacy in their arguments, the more likely it is that they will be marked. The lower the

subject is on the animacy scale, the more likely it is that it will be marked. The higher the object

is the on the animacy scale, the more likely it is that it will be marked (Fauconnier 2011). In East

Futunan, it is expected that object arguments are more likely to be marked with a case particle

when the object is high in animacy, such as when the object is an animal. Second, there are

pragmatic influences. Throughout the oral narratives there are instances of ergative avoidance.

To avoid the ergative argument, speakers can reduce the transitivity of the sentence by omitting

the ergative argument and only using the absolutive argument. Another way to avoid the ergative

argument is to move it into a possessive construction The reason for ergative avoidance is due to

the agent not being a necessary part of Polynesian semantics, as well as the perceived

impoliteness of using an overt agent that shows volition in Polynesian society. Third, the history

of topics within the discourse can affect when arguments are explicitly marked. Given versus

new information plays a role in whether a speaker chooses to omit a case particle. If the noun

phrase in question contains given information, it may be unmarked, but if a particular noun

phrase contains new information, then it will be marked when grammatically required (as

indicated in Table 5). It seems that there is a simultaneous combination of syntactic, pragmatic,

and discourse criteria for the usage of the ergative and the absolutive. This is consistent with

findings from Hymes (1967) and Ochs (1982) that ergativity has both a morphosyntactic scope and a sociological scope. Sociological issues in ergativity include the extent to which speakers are aware of distinguish ergative from absolutive and the extent to which case marking is affected by variations in social context (Hymes 1967, Ochs 1982). Case marking can also be sensitive to the social status between speakers and the sex of the speakers, which will be discussed in Chapter 4.

CHAPTER 4

ERGATIVITY IN THE POLYNESIAN LANGUAGE FAMILY

This chapter will discuss some issues in Polynesian case alignment scholarship and provide a comparison of the usage of ergative/absolutive case alignment in East Futunan with other Polynesian languages and assess whether the structures found in East Futunan have similar patterns and are consistent with Polynesian alignment patters.

The grammatical sketch of East Futunan in Chapter 2 (which discussed features including verb-initial word order, 1:1 morpheme per word, dual marking, reduplication, and transitivizing suffixes) showed that this language does indeed exhibit typical morphological and syntactic features of Polynesian languages. It is therefore important to additionally show how East Futunan fits into the Polynesian family with regards to its case marking and case alignment system.

4.1 The Polynesian Language Family

The basic Polynesian language family tree in Figure 4 shows East Futunan's place within the larger Polynesian language family. A larger version of the family tree is shown in Figure 5. In drawing comparisons between structures found in some of these languages to East Futunan, the assumption is that the more closely related the languages are, the more features they will share and the more similarities they will have. East Futunan falls into the Samoic-Outlier group in the Nuclear Polynesian family, along with languages such as Samoan and East Uvean (also referred to as Wallisian). As seen throughout this dissertation, most comparisons will be drawn to Samoan and Tongan due to availability of information. Fijian is a well-documented Oceanic

language, but fits into the family tree slightly outside of the Polynesian group of languages. Although East Uvean is the closest related language typologically and geographically to East Futunan, it is understudied, and similarly to East Futunan there is only a small amount of linguistic information available on this language.

Figure 4 –Polynesian Languages, simplified (from Pawley 1966, 1967, Blust 2013, Chung 1978)

I. Tongic

    A. Tongan, Niuean

II. Nuclear Polynesian

    A. Samoic-Outlier (Samoan, East Uvean, East Futunan)

    B. Eastern Polynesian
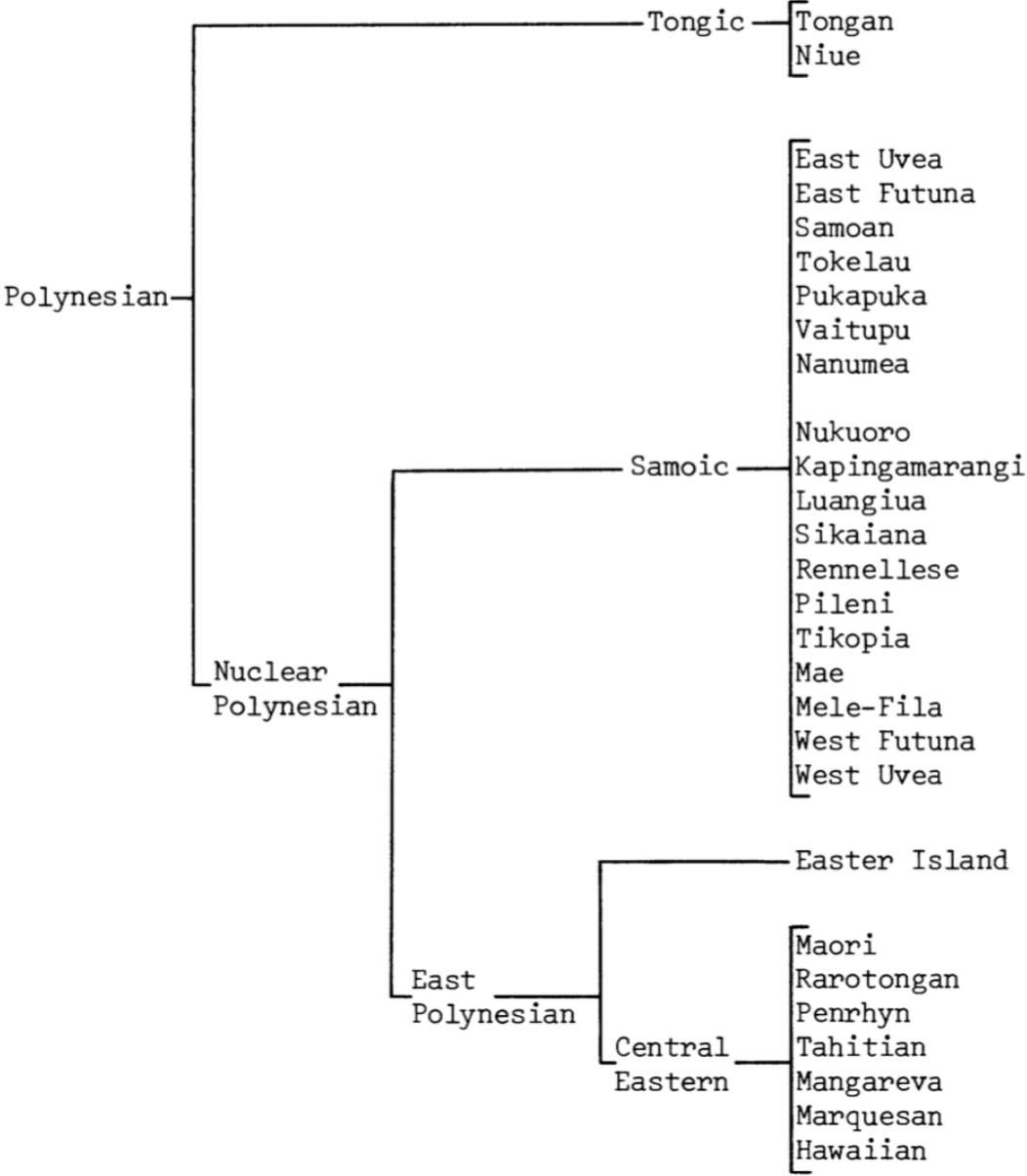
        1. Rapanui

        2. Central-Eastern

            a. Marquesic (Hawaiian, Marquesan, Mangarevan)

            b. Tahitic (Tahitian, Tuamotuan, Rarotongan, Maori)

Figure 5 – Polynesian Languages (from Pawley 1966, 1967, Clark 1973, Moyse-Faurie 1997)

4.2 A Review of Ergativity in the Polynesian Language Family

Scholarship on ergativity in Polynesia has mostly been focused on the origin of ergativity within the family. Although ergative patterns can be found in many Polynesian languages (Ross 2004), they do not all show patterns of ergativity, and accusative systems are highly prevalent too. The main work on this field focuses on the question of where these systems of ergativity came from. Scholars are divided as whether proto-Polynesian can be reconstructed as ergative or accusative (Dixon 1994). In the Polynesian family, only some of these languages which have a presumed common ancestor show ergative patters, while others show accusative patterns (Anderson 1977), implying that languages can change to display more or less ergativity over time. With reference to Tables 7 and 8 above, the languages which have documented ergative/absolutive case marking and alignment patterns are Tongan (Chung 1987, Tchekhoff 1981), Niuean (Massam 2020), Samoan (Chung 1987, Mosel & Hovdhaugen 1992), East Uvean (Moyse-Faurie 2003), and East Futunan (Moyse-Faurie 1997).

Chung (1978) argues instead that Proto-Polynesian was accusative and that the ergativity that can be seen in modern Polynesian languages came from a productive passive rule. Sentences with case marked oblique phrases (similar to 'by' prepositional phrases in English) containing the agent later became the ergative case. Chung (1978) says that in certain modern ergative Polynesian languages, the productive passive rule has largely disappeared, but the morphology indicating the original passive is still there, now interpreted as an ergative. Anderson (1977) says that the passivization theory for ergativity does provide an explanation, but it is not fully accepted because it would then become obligatory for these languages to always passivize and the distinction between active and passive voice would then be lost. Harris & Campbell (1995) seem to agree with Chung (1978) that one of the major ways in which an alignment change can

occur is through the reanalysis of passives into the ergative. The debate over the origin of ergative/absolutive case alignment is not unique to languages of Polynesia; a similar debate also exists in Indo-Iranian languages over whether ergativity came about by obligatory passivization (Klaiman 1987).

Moyse-Faurie (2003) acknowledges the debate over the origin of ergative/absolutive case alignment in Polynesia. There is agreement that Polynesian languages show a genetic relationship phonologically and lexically, but morphologically and syntactically, especially regarding case alignment, there is no such agreement. Scholars do not agree on the direction of change between ergative, passive, and accusative structures, and whether Proto-Polynesian was originally accusative, and some of its daughter languages became ergative, or whether Proto-Polynesian was originally ergative, and certain descendants became accusative. She also points out that examining the case alignment structure proposed in the higher-branching Proto-Austronesian is important too, as many other Austronesian languages outside of the Polynesian family also have ergative/absolutive case alignment.

More recently, Ball (2007) discusses the controversy in alignment systems in Polynesian historical linguistics. He takes the stance that Proto-Polynesian and Proto-Central-Pacific were accusative, because if we assume the ergative to accusative hypothesis, we also must assume that Proto-Polynesian had a rare system of ergative pronominals to accusative pronominals, which contradicts the animacy hierarchy. He ultimately agrees with Chung (1978) that Proto-Polynesian was likely accusative, and that any ergative patterns found in Polynesian languages are more recent developments within the family.

In The World Atlas of Language Structures Online (WALS), Comrie (2013) shows in the Alignment of Case Marking of Full Noun Phrases and the Alignment of Case Marking of

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Pronouns that much of the information needed for Polynesia is missing. Maori is marked as having nominative/accusative case marking on pronouns and full noun phrases and Rapanui is marked as neutral. No information is given for other Polynesian languages.

4.3 Case Alignment System in East Futunan

It has been shown that East Futunan has an ergative/absolutive case alignment system. In this section, I will discuss whether this language is morphologically or syntactically ergative and how those features are displayed, so as to compare it to the case alignment systems in other Polynesian languages.

4.3.1 Morphological Ergativity in East Futunan

Dixon (1994) defines morphological ergativity, or intra-clausal ergativity, as the marking of core syntactic relations (the S, A, and O arguments) within the morphology of a language. In a morphologically ergative language, the S and O arguments are absolutive and the A argument is ergative. The arguments are usually marked by case inflections or verbal affixes, or by the use of particles or adpositions. Dixon says that only a small number of languages use particles or adpositons for marking core syntactic functions. Based on the evidence found in the oral narratives of East Futunan, this language is one in which particles can mark core syntactic relations.

East Futunan exhibits morphological ergativity by introducing the S, A, or O argument with an ergative or absolutive particle preceding the argument. Examples (101) and (102) below, previously shown in Chapter 2, demonstrate how East Futunan uses particles to mark core syntactic relations.

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(101) *E*   *sola*   *fa'i*   **[a**   **Veka]s**   *aia.*

INACP flee   only,just   **ABS**   **Water Rale**   DEICT

'Le râle prend la fuite.'

'The Water Rale takes flight.'

(102) *Fafagai*   **[e**   **ia]A**   **[a**   **le**   **tuna]O**   *la*   *ku*   *se*

feed   **ERG**   **3.SG**   **ABS**   **the**   **eel**   DEM   deteriorate   go

ō   *foki*   *a*   *ia*   *i*   *le*   *kumete*   *la*

then   return   ABS   3.SG   OBL   the   trough   DEM

'Elle la nourrit si bien qu'à nouveau, l'anguille ne tient plus dans le récipient'

'She fed the eel so well that it no longer fits in the trough'

Sometimes in East Futunan, the core arguments are unmarked, which Dixon (1994)

describes as not uncommon for ergative languages generally. In usage in texts, languages differ

with respect to which arguments are marked with an inflectional case marker or a particle.

Inflectional case marking or a particle is used when the identity of an argument cannot be

inferred from any other grammatical or semantic information in usage in texts. There are

examples of this in East Futunan, previously discussed in Chapter 3, where arguments are not

preceded by a case particle, likely because the argument can be inferred from semantic

information mentioned previously in the oral narrative. (103) is a sentence in which no

arguments are marked with an ergative or absolutive particle. It is typical that a common singular

noun would not be marked with an absolutive particle (Moyse-Faurie 1997), likely because the

son of the king is referred to previously in the narrative, and it can be inferred here that he is the subject of this sentence, even though there is no overtly stated particle.

(103) *ko*   *le*   *vosa*   *o*   *le*   *sau*

      PRED   the   son   POSS   the   king

      'Ce jeune homme, Tinilau, c'est le fils aîné du roi'

      'This is/here is the son of the king'

4.3.2 Syntactic Ergativity in East Futunan

Dixon (1994) discusses syntactic, or inter-clausal ergativity, and what happens when two clauses are linked together. In order for a language to be syntactically ergative, there must be syntactic constraints on how clauses can combine, or constraints on the requirements for the presence or omission of coreferential constituents in clause combinations. If these constraints treat the S and O arguments the same way, and the A argument differently, then the language displays syntactic ergativity. Any language that is syntactically ergative will also have morphological ergativity, but a language that has morphological ergativity does not necessarily also have syntactic ergativity. As it remains unclear whether East Futunan has a productively used antipassive construction, the presence of this feature only provides limited evidence for syntactic ergativity.

Moyse-Faurie (2003) indicates that East Futunan has some ergative tendencies within its syntax. As discussed in section 3.2, the basic word order of East Futunan is usually V Erg Abs (VAO), although it is possible for the order of the ergative and absolutive arguments to vary. If there is variance in the word order between VAO and VOA, this could be evidence for syntactic

ergativity. In the East Futunan oral narratives, if there is V Abs Erg (VOA) word order, at least one of the arguments is marked with a case particle. There are also instances in which certain verbs can show number agreement with the argument that follows it. Most of these verbs are intransitive, and the verb agrees with the argument that follows it, the S absolutive argument. However, in instances with a transitive verb, the absolutive argument can be placed directly after the verb so that the verb can show agreement with the O absolutive argument instead of the A ergative argument. If an absolutive argument precedes an ergative argument in East Futunan, and the verb is one which can show number agreement, it agrees with the absolutive argument, not the ergative argument. Although there are no instances of plural agreement within the oral narratives of East Futunan, Moyse-Faurie (2003) demonstrates this phenomenon.

(104a) *kua*   *masa*   *le*   *kulo*

    PRF   empty (SG)   DEF   cooking pot

    'The cooking pot is empty'

(104b) *kua*   *māmasa*   *a*   *kulo*

    PRF   empty (PL)   ABS   cooking pot

    'The cooking pots are empty'

(105a) *e*   *fakamāva'a*   *a*   *le*   *matapā*   *e*   *toe*

    INACP   open (SG)   ABS   DEF   door   ERG   child

    'Children are opening the door.'

(105b) *e* *fakamāva'ava'a* *a* *matapā* *e* *le* *toe*

INACP open (PL) ABS door ERG DEF child

'The child is opening the doors'

Examples (104b) and (105b) show grammatical reduplication – the verbs partially reduplicate to show that there are simultaneous events and agree with the absolutive argument. Plural definite articles, such as in examples (104b), (105a), and (105b) are a zero morpheme in East Futunan. The absence of another article indicates that *kulo* 'cooking pot', *toe* 'child', and *matapā*, 'door' are definite plural nouns in this context.

Based on these examples, East Futunan does show syntactic ergativity in instances where verbal agreement occurs in transitive sentences. The variance that can occur in word order, where the absolutive argument preceded the ergative argument, could also be evidence for syntactic ergativity.

4.4 Case Alignment Systems in Polynesia

This section examines different types of case alignment system and particular features that exist in Polynesian languages, showing examples from Samoan, Tongan, Māori, Hawaiian, and Fijian.

4.4.1 Morphological Ergativity

This section discusses the morphological ergativity which exists in Samoan and Tongan, and how these types of patterns are similar to the morphological ergativity found in East Futunan.

4.4.1.1 Ergative and Absolutive Particles

Samoan is a morphologically ergative/absolutive language but is considered to be syntactically nominative/accusative even though there can be variation in the ordering of its arguments VAO and VOA (Ochs 1982). In Samoan, the absolutive argument is unmarked, and the ergative argument is marked with the particle *e*. Examples (106) and (107) (Mosel & Hovdhaugen 1992) demonstrate this case marking in Samoan. In (106), the subject of the intransitive sentence, the S argument *le lā'au*, is absolutive, which is unmarked in Samoan. In (107), the subject of the transitive sentence *le ali'i*, the A argument, is ergative and indicated with the preceding particle *e*. The absolutive argument is not an agent, but rather the more affected entity. The object of the transitive sentence *le i'a*, the O argument is absolutive and therefore unmarked. The ergative argument is an agent, and the absolutive argument expresses the thing that is affected by the action.

(106) *na*   *pa'ū*   *[le*   *lā'au]*_S

      PAST   fall   ART   tree

      'The tree fell down'

(107) *sā*   *'ai*   *[e*   *le*   *ali'i]*_A   *[le*   *i'a]*_O

      PAST   eat   ERG   ART   high chief   ART   fish

      'The high chief ate the fish'

Tongan exhibits morphological ergativity in the same way as East Futunan. Dixon (1994) gives the following examples. In (108a) and (108b), The S argument *Tolu*, the subject of an

intransitive sentence, is introduced with the absolutive particle *'a*. In (109a), the A argument

Tolu the subject of a transitive sentence, and the O argument *e talavou* 'the young man', the

object of a transitive sentence, are marked with the preceding ergative *'e* and absolutive particles

'a, respectively. In (109b), the A argument *he talavou* 'the young man', the subject of a transitive

sentence, and the O argument *Tolu*, the object of a transitive sentence, are marked with the

preceding ergative *'e* and absolutive particles *'a*, respectively. Dixon also indicates that the A

and O arguments can occur in either order following the predicate because their functions are

specified by the particles *'a* and *'e*.

(108a) *na'e*   *lea*   **['a**   **Tolu**]s

    'Tolu spoke'

(108b) *na'e*   *lea*   **['a**   *e*   **talavou**]s

    'The young man spoke'

(109a) *na'e*   *tāmate'i*   **['a**   *e*   **talavou**]o   **['e**   **Tolu**]A

    'Tolu killed the youth'

(109b) *na'e*   *tāmate'i*   **['a**   **Tolu**]o   **['e**   *he*   **talavou**]A

    'The youth killed Tolu'

In Samoan and Tongan, it is not only the function of the ergative and absolutive particles that is similar to East Futunan, but also their form. Table 7 shows the similarities in form and demonstrates the genetic relationship between these three languages.

Table 7 – Ergative and Absolutive particles in Samoan, Tongan, and East Futunan

	Ergative Particle	Absolutive Particle
Samoan	*e*	Ø
Tongan	*'e*	*'a*
East Futunan	*e*	*a*

4.4.1.2 Middle Verbs

As mentioned in Chapter 3, middle clauses contain a middle verb, which is a verb that describes an event that does not affect the direct object (Chung 1978). They are considered transitive, but have the case marking of intransitive clauses containing an oblique NP. In Tongan, subjects of thee clauses occur in the absolutive and their direct objects are marked with one of the oblique prepositions *'i* 'at' or *ki* 'to', as in (110). In Samoan, the subjects of these clauses are unmarked and their direct objects are marked with one of the prepositions *i* 'at' or *'i* 'to', as in (111) (Chung 1978).

(110) *'oku sio ki tahi 'a e sianá na*

      PROG   see   to   ocean ABS   the   man   that

      'That man was looking at the ocean'

(111) *sā*   *fa'afetai*   *le*   *teine* *'i*   *lona* *tinā*

       PAST   thank   the   girl   to   her   mother

       'The girl thanked her mother'

Middle verbs in Tongan and Samoan behave the same as they do in East Futunan. In (112) (Moyse-Faurie 2003), the subject is marked with the absolutive particle *a*, and the object is marked with an oblique *ki*. Middle verbs are typically verbs of perception, feeling, or speech, and are semantically transitive containing two arguments: the absolutive argument which functions as the experiencer, and the oblique argument which functions as the patient, goal, recipient, or benefactive. The absolutive argument in a middle verb construction cannot function as an agent (Moyse-Faurie 2000).

(112) *na*   *tio*   *a*   *le*   *fenua* *ki*   *le*   *vaka*

       PAST see   ABS   DEF   people OBL   DEF   boat

       'Some people have seen the boat'

4.4.2 Ergative Avoidance

As discussed in chapter 3, East Futunan has a feature called ergative avoidance, in which an argument that would normally be marked as an ergative is not marked as such, and instead, the speaker uses certain techniques to avoid using that argument. Overtly marked ergative arguments show the responsibility of an agent, and this can be avoided by omitting the ergative marker or by omission of the whole ergative argument, as long as the context and role of the arguments in the sentence still remain clear. East Futunan also uses a genitive construction,

where instead of being marked as an ergative argument, the agent is expressed as a possessor (Moyse-Faurie 2003).

This ergative avoidance feature also exists in Samoan. As an explanation for why ergative avoidance exists in Samoan, Duranti & Ochs (1990) speculate that there is a preference in Samoan to emphasize descriptions and assessments that focus on the results or consequences of an event, rather than on the human agent. Events are described from the perspective of the patient and the agent is demoted to an oblique case. Duranti & Ochs (1990) give the example (113) below, with two possible English translations: one in which the literal translation is from the perspective of the patient/object, contrary to the preferred expression in English, and one in which the agent would be expressed as the subject, thus framing the event from the agent's perspective.

(113)　*'ua alu*　　　*ma*　*V*　　*ma*　*F*　　*la'u*　*'ipu*

　　　　go　　　　　with　V　　and　F　　my　　dish

　　　'My dish has gone with V and F', or 'V and F took my dish'

Ergative avoidance is also used in such cases where the speaker seeks to avoid blame or manipulate the utterance to avoid mentioning the agent, rather similar to how the passive could be used in English to avoid mentioning or blaming an agent. For example, if the speaker kills a chicken, it is presented as the death of the chicken. In Samoan, negative politeness is favored in order to reduce the risk of a potential face-threatening-act, and the speaker or hearer is not overtly expressed as the agent of the verb (Duranti & Ochs 1990).

Ochs (1982) talks more about the sociological aspect of the usage of ergative/absolutive case alignment in Samoan morphosyntax, particularly about how the social context can define how these case particles are used. Ochs (1982) presents a study of adult Samoan speech and found that the ergative nominal case marker *e* is used differently in different contexts. The study specifically finds that the degree of formality in a social situation as well as the gender of the speaker both determine the extent to which an ergative case marker is used. The study examines five different social situations and three different factors: formality (informal or formal settings), gender of the speaker (female or male speakers), and addressees (female adults, male adults, children, family members, and non-family members). Ochs (1982) finds that in informal situations, when women are speaking to other female adults, children, or family members and are using both standard transitive sentences and yes-no questions, ergative case markers are used only 4% of the time, and in utterances where a postverbal agent is expressed in a standard transitive sentence, an ergative case marker is used in this social situation 20% of the time. In formal situations where titled men are using both standard transitive sentences and yes-no questions to discuss issues in village council meetings, ergative case markers are used 28.6% of the time, the highest percentage of any situation presented in Ochs (1982). In this same social situation, in utterances where a postverbal agent is expressed in a standard transitive sentence, an ergative case marker is used 72.3% of the time. The findings show that especially in more formal settings, men are more likely to use ergative case markers than women. Ergative case markers are used more by both men and women in formal settings rather than in informal settings. When the addressees are men or non-family members, the usage of ergative case makers is higher than when the addressees are women or family members. The greater the difference in social status between the speaker and the addressee, the more likely it is that the speaker will use an ergative

marker. Ochs (1982) describes Samoan as a socially variable language with respect to how ergative arguments are expressed. The extent to which ergative arguments are overtly marked in conversation by the speaker depends on social contexts such as the setting, the speaker, and the hearer.

This assessment in Duranti & Ochs (1990) and Ochs (1982) of why Samoan speakers avoid using an ergative argument is similar to Moyse-Faurie (2003)'s rationale for East Futunan speakers. It seems to be socially important to speakers that an agent is not mentioned because directly stating an agent's actions may be seen as impolite. However, in Samoan, the frequency of usage of the ergative marker depends on the speaker, the addressees, and the formality of the situation. These factors all seem to contribute to determining when it is socially appropriate to use the ergative.

4.4.3 Passive Voice

As discussed in Chapter 3, there are possible instances of passive constructions in East Futunan oral narratives. Biggs (1974) discusses the fact that there is no agreement in the field as to whether Polynesian languages, particularly Samoan and Tongan, have an active/passive voice contrast. Biggs (1974) discusses passive voice in East Futunan and notes that Grézel (1878) would call a sentence such as (114) a passive sentence. Grézel (1878) calls the *e* particle an agentive marker, and says that *le toe* 'the child' is the subject of the sentence and is a goal semantic role, while *lona tinana* 'his/her mother' is the agent.

(114) na *ti'akina*   *le*   *toe* *e*   *lona*   *tinana*

       PAST reject   the   child ERG 3.SG.POSS   mother

'The mother rejected the child' or 'The child was rejected by his/her mother'

Grézel's analysis, however, describes the particle *e* as an agentive marker, a term which is not used in more current analysis of East Futunan grammar. A more current analysis of this sentence would be that it does not show a passive construction. The translation would be 'the mother rejected the child', and the analysis of the sentence in East Futunan is that the word order is VOA, *e* is the ergative particle preceding the A argument of the sentence *lona tinana*, and the O argument is *le toe*.

Biggs (1974) in his assessment of East Futunan believes that it is unlikely that East Futunan has a passive voice because it does not meet enough criteria for certain sentences such as (114) to be considered passive. Biggs (1974) also states that similar verbs to the one shown in (114) have been analyzed as a passive in Eastern Polynesian languages. The distinction could possibly be that Eastern Polynesian languages, such as Māori, have a passive voice, and Western Polynesian languages, such as East Futunan, do not have a distinction between active and passive voice (Biggs 1974). However, Clark (1973) believes that Central Eastern Polynesian languages have an active/passive voice distinction. He questions whether Māori has an active/passive voice distinction and believes that Western Polynesian languages such as Samoan and Tongan do not have a distinction between active and passive voice.

4.4.4 Languages Which Have Nominative/Accusative Case Alignment

The previous sections have addressed languages which have ergative/absolutive case alignment. However, there is not one case alignment system that is characteristic of all Polynesian languages within the family. There is much variation in alignment system even within smaller subgroups of Polynesian languages. Māori and Hawaiian have nominative/accusative alignment, yet mark their arguments with a particle in a similar way to languages such as East Futunan, Samoan, and Tongan.

A typical transitive sentence in Māori is shown in (115) (Clark 1973) and (116) (Bauer 1993). The basic word order is VAO. In the sentence (115), the nominative argument *te wahine* 'the woman' is unmarked. The accusative argument *te ika* 'the fish' is marked with a preceding accusative particle *i* (Bauer 1997). In (116), the nominative argument *he tāngata* 'some people' is nominative and unmarked.

(115) *i   tanu   te   wahine   i   te   ika*

      PAST   bury   DEF.SG   woman   ACC   DEF.SG fish

      'the woman buried the fish'

(116) *kua   tae   mai   he   tāngata*

      PAST.PRF   arrive hither a/some people

      'some people have arrived'

Hawaiian typically has VSO (VAO) word order and is considered to have nominative/accusative alignment (Elbert & Pukui 2001). (117) shows an intransitive sentence in

Hawaiian with an unmarked nominative argument and an oblique locative argument. (118) is a transitive sentence where the subject is nominative and unmarked, and the object is marked by the particle *i*. In Hawaiian, the particle *i* can have different functions: to mark a definite locative, or to mark a direct object (Elbert & Pukui 2001).

(117) *ua*   *hele*   *ke*   *kanaka*   *i*   *Maui*

      PERF   go   the   man   to   Maui

      'the man has gone to Maui'

(118) *ua*   *'ai*   *ke*   *kanaka*   *i*   *ka*   *poi*

      PERF   eat   the   man   OBJ   the   poi

      'the man has eaten the poi'

Genetically, Fijian falls slightly outside of the Polynesian family, but is still in the Oceanic family. Fijian is considered to have nominative/accusative alignment. (119) shows a transitive sentence in Fijian (Clark 1973). A typical sentence in Fijian s VOS, or VOA, word order (Schütz 1985). The agreement particle *e* agrees with the subject of this sentence *na gone* 'the child'. Neither the subject nor the object argument is marked with a nominative or accusative particle.

(119) *e*   *rai*   *-ci*   *na*   *turaga* *na*   *gone*

      AGR   see   TR   ART   chief   ART   child

      'the child sees the chief'

4.5 East Futunan's Place in the Polynesian Language Family

As discussed in Chapter 2, there are many morphological and syntactic features of East Futunan that are also found throughout other Polynesian languages. With regards to case alignment, East Futunan has an ergative/absolutive case alignment system that is similar to other Western Polynesian languages, namely Samoan and Tongan. There is the same basic word order and similarities in the way in which arguments are presented. These languages use a particle preceding a nominal argument to indicate if the argument is ergative or absolutive. The function as well as the form of the particle are the same or very similar in East Futunan, Samoan, and Tongan. The presence of middle verbs and their associated arguments and structure are similar in East Futunan, Samoan, and Tongan. It is still debated among scholars of Polynesian languages if there is a distinction between active and passive voice. There is no agreement if or which languages have passive voice. There is a possible example of a passive voice in the East Futunan oral narratives, but it still remains unclear to me and to the field if such a structure exists. Lastly, a unique feature of ergative/absolutive languages, ergative avoidance, seems to have a similar social motivation in East Futunan and Samoan. The social situation and people involved in the conversation can determine the extent to which an ergative marker is used. The reason for avoidance is often for politeness and aversion to mentioning an agent.

Morphologically and syntactically, East Futunan is very similar to other ergative/absolutive languages within the Polynesian family, and still shares morphological and syntactic similarities to all other languages within the Polynesian family, including word order and marking of arguments and obliques. Lexically, many words are the same or very similar throughout all languages discussed here. Although not discussed in this dissertation, there are also obvious phonological similarities throughout all the Polynesian languages.

4.6 Conclusion

To refer back to the third question asked in Chapter 1, a question which this dissertation set out to answer was how the ergative/absolutive case alignment system in East Futunan is similar or different to other Polynesian languages. There are many similarities that East Futunan oral narratives have to the ergative/absolutive case alignment in other Polynesian languages in form, function, and usage.

East Futunan displays morphological ergativity through the use of case particles. The S and O arguments are marked absolutive and the A argument is marked ergative. There is perhaps evidence for syntactic ergativity in the variation of word order between VAO and VOA. Additionally, although agreement is not very prevalent throughout East Futunan, in the few verbs that do show agreement, it is possible for the O absolutive argument to agree with the verb instead of the A ergative argument, also indicating evidence for syntactic ergativity. Ergative/absolutive case alignment has also been demonstrated in Samoan and Tongan. Like East Futunan, Samoan is morphologically ergative in the way in which it uses case particles to mark arguments. Samoan is considered to be syntactically nominative/accusative, but similarly to East Futunan also has variation in word order between VAO and VOA. Just like East Futunan and Samoan, Tongan uses case particles to mark its ergative and absolutive arguments. The form of the case particles is also very similar across these three languages. Middle verbs are expressed similarly semantically in East Futunan, Samoan, and Tongan, and occur in transitive sentences with an absolutive experiencer.

Ergative avoidance is a pragmatic feature of language which East Futunan and Samoan share. Given the lack of overtly marked and overtly expressed ergative arguments, ergative avoidance and leaving previously mentioned arguments unmarked are both features of oral

narratives in East Futunan. These characteristics could be a feature of oral narratives themselves, or they could be from the social status of the speaker or the social context in which the story is being told. As observed in Samoan, overtly expressed arguments are used less by women than by men, and are used less in informal social situations than in formal social situations. As ergative avoidance is a feature that occurs in both East Futunan and Samoan, this can give insight as to what is important and valued in social situations in Polynesian societies – an overly expressed agent is not important, and can be seen as impolite to use.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

5.1 Discussion

The main goal of this dissertation has been to examine the usage of ergative/absolutive case alignment in East Futunan oral narratives. The structure and usage of the ergative and absolutive were examined and described in a variety of different sentence types in oral narratives. Notable situations where an ergative or absolutive case marker would be expected, but not used, were assessed from a morphosyntactic and sociological standpoint. Lastly, it was observed that East Futunan does have similar ergative/absolutive case structure and usage, as well as similar functional motivation (syntactic, pragmatic, and discourse-based) to other Polynesian languages, specifically those to which it has already been determined that East Futunan is most closely related. The case alignments observed in the East Futunan oral narratives discussed here have consistencies with the structure and usage shown in other published works showing that East Futunan has ergative/absolutive case alignment.

In addition to answering the main questions about the ergative/absolutive case alignment in oral narratives, this dissertation also aimed to describe certain morphological and syntactic structures found in East Futunan that can also be found in other languages of Polynesia. This shows that there is a basis for assuming that East Futunan's case alignment will be similar to other Polynesian languages if it already has structural similarities to those languages. There are certain features that Polynesia is known for, including being an isolating language with heavy particle usage, having verb-initial word order, using extensive reduplication, and marking dual

number, and speakers of East Futunan oral narratives use every one of these well-known features.

After I had spent so much time studying East Futunan and learning about its structure, when it was time to compare its case alignment to that of other Polynesian languages, the similaries that all of these languages have to each other was immediately apparent. Although Samoan and Tongan are not my main areas of research, in searching for certain morphological and syntactic structures in these languages, I realized that I could easily understand the sentence structure and many grammatical particles and lexical items in most sentences because they were so similar to what I had observed in East Futunan.

5.2 Implications

The number of languages in this linguistic area that have an endangered or threatened language status or that are experiencing language loss means that further research in this area is time-sensitive. So far, there is thorough language documentation on only a few languages in Polynesia and Oceania. Most languages are lacking in deep linguistic research and there are many that have little published linguistic research. In his memoir, *Searching for Aboriginal Languages*, Dixon (2011) documents his experiences while doing language documentation fieldwork in Queensland, Australia. Dixon talks about experiencing the mysterious qualities of certain languages, beyond the language itself, in which the language seemed to belong to the land from which it came. Each language, and the people who speak these languages, can give us a unique perspective on the world. In some of the analysis of his transcriptions, Dixon came across words which could be pieced apart into meaningful units, but were untranslatable as a whole word. Through his fieldwork experience, he experienced the realization that there is a

certain understanding that speakers have about certain concepts that gives a semantic meaning that simply cannot be explained in the words of another language. In addition to learning about the knowledge that each language holds, there are other reasons why it is necessary to study all languages. Empirically, it is important to study all languages from a linguistic standpoint in order to learn about different language features and how these features expand or change our knowledge of universal and typological features of language as well as the linguistic cognitive ability of humans.

In section 1.4, I discussed the reasons why my work on this language and other work on all understudied languages is important, citing reasons such as providing information for future research in this linguistic area, adding information to the body of work that contributes more diversity of languages to cross-linguistic analysis, and providing lasting documentation to the speakers of this language community. As a threatened language (Ethnologue 2018), where every generation has fewer speakers than the last, it is important to consider this project's impact in documenting the speakers' usage of East Futunan for the benefit of descendants of current speakers and for those seeking to understand the possibilities of language and the human mind (Mithun 2001). Currently, with the loss of linguistic diversity in the world (Mithun 2001), now is the time to try to fill in the known gaps of our knowledge while it is still possible to do so. A concern for those who study endangered language is the potential for the loss of linguistic diversity that will come from languages no longer being spoken. As time goes on and these languages are transmitted less and less, the responsibility is on linguists to document the world's languages both for the intellectual value that they provide along with the value of the language from the speakers' perspective (Rice 2018).

5.3 Limitations of this Project

The limitations of this project are related to the data; specifically, the amount of data that is available on an understudied language. A major limitation was the number of tokens of overtly or non-overtly marked ergative and absolutive arguments. Questions arose about whether certain sentences were functioning transitively or intransitively and could not be confirmed because of the low number of tokens of each verb. Additionally, knowing that ergative avoidance is being used is difficult to confirm definitively. I relied on looking to additional sources on genetically related languages to confirm as best I could that this feature occurs throughout East Futunan oral narratives. Another limitation was to the amount of published sources to reference. Specifically, there were sentences in the oral narratives that were hard to analyze because of the lack of information available on certain particles. Many of the glosses I had to use are vague, simply because of a limitation in grammatical particles that have been studied. A larger study with more diversity of speakers in their age, gender, and number of years spent using the language could confirm that the observations made here in these oral narratives are consistent with the usage of a variety of speakers.

Additionally, for this project I did not collect any data from speakers as the data that was available to me was enough to complete this project. However, being able to elicit data from speakers and to be able to ask a native speaker about their judgments of grammaticality would add more data and contribute meaningfully to a project like this.

5.4 Future Directions

For the topics that I mentioned in this dissertation regarding ergative/absolutive case alignment, there is still uncertainty regarding the possibility of passive and antipassive

constructions, as well as the reasons, both morphosyntactic and sociological, behind ergative avoidance. The structures and their usage discussed in this dissertation are just one possible analysis based on the data that I observed, but I am sure that there are other plausible analyses for these structures.

The more I studied and learned about East Futunan, the more I realized how complicated and intricate this language is, and every aspect of this language needs more research. As an understudied language, any of the topics, however minor, discussed in this dissertation could be potential areas for further research. As mentioned previously, with the number of grammatical particles that exist in East Futunan, available dictionaries are sometimes able to provide only very vague descriptions. Any additional analysis of any of these particles would provide a more clear meaning or function, and take away a lot of potential guess-work in figuring out their purpose in a given context.

As seen in East Futunan oral narratives, there is variation that can occur in word order, namely between VAO and VOA. Although VAO is more common, VOA structure does not seem to be an anomaly, as it is seen in sentences with different types of noun phrases and in sentences with verbs of varying degrees of transitivity. A larger collection of data could perhaps provide insight into what motivates a change in word order, and grammaticality judgements with a speaker could also show whether both word orders would be acceptable to use in a given sentence, or whether one would be ungrammatical.

A quantitative corpus study is another area for future research. Such a study could provide information on how often ergative avoidance is used, and how often ergative and absolutive particles are not used compared to how often they are overtly used. We have seen that ergative particles are required before pronouns, proper nouns, and common nouns, and

absolutive particles are required before 3.SG pronouns, proper nouns, and definite plural common nouns, and not required before definite singular common noun, and indefinite common singular and plural nouns. It is also acceptable to use unmarked arguments in situations where the argument has already been mentioned or in ergative avoidance constructions. A difficulty with this kind of study would be gauging how implied arguments and non-overtly stated subjects would be counted. As mentioned in Chapter 3, the storytelling nature of these narratives means that it is possible for subjects to be unstated given that it is already understood about who or what the events of the narrative are being told. This line of research would be valuable to the total understanding of the structure of East Futunan, but would pose methodological challenges outside the scope of the work presented here.

5.5 Conclusion

The subject of ergativity and ergative/absolutive case alignment systems is something that continues to interest linguists although this type of alignment is not linguistically rare (Polinsky 2016). Wouk (1996) believes that this is because most linguists are native speakers of morphologically accusative languages, and studying this category in the grammar of some languages provides intrigue because of the differentness from one's native language. With ergative/absolutive case alignment systems, there is an interesting question about why subjects receive different case markers depending on the transitivity of the verb. Why is it necessary to mark the subjects differently when one is the subject of an intransitive verb and one is the subject of a transitive verb?

As an understudied language, the literature that has been published on East Futunan is understandably lacking. The published information does provide valuable information about

certain aspects of the vocabulary and the structure of this language, but this is only the beginning of the potential of future study that exists for East Futunan, and there are still many aspects of this language that have not been explained in depth. The ergative/absolutive case alignment in East Futunan is discussed in works by Moyse-Faurie, but there have not been any studies that show the exact nature of ergativity in spoken oral narratives of this language. The ultimate goal of this dissertation was to provide an explanation of the ergative/absolutive case alignment system in East Futunan oral narratives based on the data observed in those narratives. In addition, apart from solely discussing East Futunan as an isolated case, this project discussed whether the ergative/absolutive usage in East Futunan is consistent with other Polynesian languages in order to provide a broader, typologically accurate sense of the functional motivations and mechanisms of ergative/absolutive languages. This is important, as the goals of linguistic typology are to explain the patterns and limits of variation across languages with a focus on being able to make cross-linguistic generalizations and explain the exceptions to those generalizations (Rice 2018).

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