Noun Phrase Structure and the Case Marking System in

Niuean

Hilário de Sousa

0. Introduction

Niuean is a Polynesian language of the Tongic branch. In this language, there is no

clear-cut noun/verb distinction at the word level, in a sense that the same word form
can often function as a verb or a noun. The part of speech of a lexical item can only
be determined at the syntax level: the nominal status of a word is established by the

prefixing of a case marker. The syntactic structure of noun phrases will be discussed

in the first section of this article, and the morphosyntactic properties of the case

markers will be discussed in the second section.

This article is prepared after approximately forty-six hours of elicitation (over
twelve weeks) with our language consultant, Ms. Ofania Ikiua, who is a native

speaker of the southern variety of the Niuean language. I would like to express my
deepest appreciation to Ms. Ikiua, my fellow students and our convenor Dr. Frank

Lichtenberk — Fakaaua lahi ki a mutolu osi¹.

¹ There are some aspects of the transcription used in this article which do not agree with the Niuean
orthography. [s] is an allophone of /l/. In situations where it is pronounced as [s] (i.e., in front of /l/ or
/el/), it is represented as <=i> in this article, rather than <=i> as in the Niuean orthography. /h/ is
represented as <=n>= in this article, and <=g> in the Niuean orthography. Vowel length is not indicated in
the Niuean orthography; long vowels are represented as vowels with a macron (e.g. á) in this article.
See also footnote 4 for the representational differences between the orthography and the transcription
used in this article concerning the case markers.
1. Noun phrase structure

The vast majority of noun phrase consist solely of the head noun, which can be a proper name (e.g. sione ‘Sione (John)’, tonja ‘Tonga’), a pronoun (e.g. au ‘I’), a locational noun (e.g. luŋa ‘inside’), a numeral (e.g. lima ‘five’), or a common noun (e.g. kulī ‘dog’). There are no articles in this language. Number is grammaticised in this language: singular-plural for common nouns (section 1.1.), and singular-dual-plural for personal pronouns (section 1.2.). Various noun modifiers will be introduced in section 1.3.

1.1. The Plural marker tau

Common nouns have a two-way number distinction: singular and plural. Tau is preposed to a head noun to signify plurality, e.g. tau seliŋa ‘ears’/ seliŋa ‘ear’, tau mōkōpuna ‘grand children’/ mōkōpuna ‘grand child’. Some nouns are inherently plural, e.g. māmatua ‘parents’, but they still take the plural prefix: τau māmatua. Tau is not used when the noun has a generic interpretation.

The plural prefix τau is not always used. Some nouns cannot take the plural prefix τau when a numeral is used predicatively:

(1) valu e (*tau) apala
     eight ABS:C PL apple
     ‘Eight apples’

However, for other nouns, its occurrence is optional in this situation (there is no general rule as to whether the use of the plural prefix τau is optional or ungrammatical):
(2) ono e  (tau) taŋa
    six ABS:C PL  bag
    ‘Six bags’

(3) toko-valu e  (tau) fānau
    PERS-eight ABS:C PL  child
    ‘Eight children’

(When human beings are counted, the prefix toko- is prefixed to the
numeral)

No case markers or other noun modifiers are marked for number, except for
adjectives (see 1.3.2. for plural adjectives). For personal pronouns, there is a three-
way number distinction: singular, dual and plural (see 1.2.).

1.2. Personal pronouns

All personal pronouns in Niu-ean are free morphemes, and they can only refer to
human beings. Verbs are not indexed for person (but they are marked for number, see
1.3.2.):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>first person; exclusive</th>
<th>first person; inclusive</th>
<th>second person</th>
<th>third person</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>singular</td>
<td>au</td>
<td>koe</td>
<td></td>
<td>ia</td>
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<td>tautolu</td>
<td>mua</td>
<td>laua</td>
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<tr>
<td>plural</td>
<td>maoutolu</td>
<td></td>
<td>mutolu</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

1.3. Types of noun modifiers

Except for possessive pronouns, which can precede or follow the head noun (see
1.3.3.), and quantifiers/ adverbs which can occur at various positions (see 1.3.6. and
1.4.), all other noun modifiers follow the head noun if they are not used predicatively.
1.3.1 Relative clauses

All relative clauses include a verb, and it is always marked with an overt tense or aspect marker. If the position relativised is a subject or direct object, the position relativised is left empty:

(4) tanata [ne fusi e ika ē]
    person T/A catch ABS:C fish this
    "The person who caught this fish"

(5) fale [ka tā e au]
    house T/A build ERG:P 1:SG
    "The house which I shall build"

Indirect objects are also relativisable. In that case, the resumptive pronoun *ai* is used, together with the PI-allative case *ki* (see 2.1. for noun and case marker classes, and 2.5. for allative case):

(6) fifine [ne ane e moka e simala ki ai]
    woman T/A give ERG:P M ABS:C sweet:potato ALL:PI R-PRO
    "The woman whom Moka gave the sweet potato to"

For the relativisation of oblique objects, the resumptive pronoun *ai* is placed after the verb of the relative clause, without any case markers intervening the verb and *ai*:

(7) kiva e mataonone [ne pelē ai e tama-tāne]
    dirty ABS:C beach T/A play R-PRO ABS:C child-male
    "The beach where the boy was playing is dirty."
(8) koe matakavi [ne hau ai a i]  
TOP:C place T/A come R-PRO ABS:P 3:SG  
loŋa e tau mauŋa  
many ABS:C PL mountain  
‘The place where he/ she came from has a lot of mountains.’

Multiple instances of relative clauses are tolerated, and the order of the  
relative clauses is interchangeable. In the following sentence, the order of the two  
relative clauses can be reversed, with no semantic differences:

(9) koe tama ōne [ne lołoŋo] [ne ŋaŋao]  
FOC:C child male T/A sing T/A sick  
‘The boy who sang is sick’ or ‘The boy who is sick sang.’  
(lit. ‘The boy who sang who is sick.’)

1.3.2. Adjectives

Syntactically, the adjectives are a class of verb in Niuean (for simplicity sake, they  
will be called ‘adjectives’ rather than ‘descriptive verbs’ in this article). Adjectives  
can be used predicatively, where it occupies the sentence initial position in this VSO  
language (e.g. (7)), or attributively, where it is postposed to the head noun:

(10) akau ʻloa  
      tree  tall  
‘Tall tree’

(11) tāpulu ʻkiva  
      dress  dirty  
‘Dirty dress’
Adjectives, like other verbs, mark for plurality. This is usually done by reduplicating the first mora of the adjective/verb:

(12) tau akau loloa
    PL tree tall:PL
    'Tall trees'

(13) tau ika ua lalahi
    PL fish two big:PL
    'Two big fish'

Niuean does not tolerate the same noun to be modified by two or more adjectives. In that case, at least one of the adjectives needs to be transformed into a relative clause:

(14) fisi kula [ne lahi]
    flower red T/A big
    'Big red flower' (lit. 'Red flower which is big')

A separate comparative form of adjectives does not exist. An adjective can also have a comparative interpretation (see also (110)):

(15) fialoto Ø au kehe hiapo ne tose
    want ABS:P I:SG ALL:C bark:cloth T/A small
    'I want the small/smaller bark cloth.'

Superlative meaning for adjectives is achieved by putting the adjective into the subject slot of the relative clause \( ne \ mua-atu \ e \) (the verb \( mua-atu \) literally means 'win-away'):

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2 Some verbs have suppletive plural form, e.g. \( hau \) (sg.)/\( omai \) (pl.) 'come', \( fano \) (sg.)/\( o \) (pl.) 'go'.
(16) fialoto Ō au kehe fua-niu ne mua-atu e lahi want ABS:P 1:SG ALL:C fruit-coconut T/A win-away ABS:C size (lit. ‘I want the largest coconut.’)
(lit. ‘I want the coconut which the size is most.’)

The ‘equivalent’ construction (i.e. ‘as ___ as’) involves the conjunction tuŋanī ‘like’:

(17) fuluola e hiapo tose tuŋanī e hiapo lahi beautiful ABS:C bark:cloth small like ABS:C bark:cloth big ‘The small bark cloth is as beautiful as the large bark cloth.’
(lit. ‘The small bark cloth like the large bark cloth is beautiful.’)

For the comparison construction (e.g. ‘X is clever than Y.’), see 2.6.

1.3.3. Possessive modifiers

A possessive modifier acts as the possessor to the possessum head noun. A possessive modifier is placed after the head noun (although possessive pronouns can also occur in front of the head noun; see below). There is no alienability/inalienability distinction for possession in Niuean. The possessor noun phrase is preceded by the genitive case marker of ha or he (see 2.3. for the distribution of the two genitive case markers and more examples of genitive noun phrases):

(18) laupepa ha felenē paper GEN:P F ‘Felenē’s paper’

(19) matua fifine ha Sione parent female GEN:P S ‘Sione’s mother’
(20) kai he pusi
food GEN:C cat
'The cat's food'

For the dual and plural personal pronouns, their respective possessive pronouns are constructed by preposing the personal pronouns with ha:

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<th>first person,</th>
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<th>second person</th>
<th>third person</th>
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<tr>
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<td>exclusive</td>
<td>inclusive</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dual</td>
<td>ha-maua</td>
<td>ha-taua</td>
<td>ha-maua</td>
<td>ha-laua</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>plural</td>
<td>ha-mautolu</td>
<td>ha-tautolu</td>
<td>ha-mutolu</td>
<td>ha-lauolu</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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(21) tama ha taua
child GEN:P 1:DU:IN
'Our (dual, inclusive) child'

The singular possessive pronouns are suppletive:

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>first person</th>
<th>second person</th>
<th>third person</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>singular</td>
<td>haaku</td>
<td>haau</td>
<td>haana</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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(22) pene haana
pen GEN:P:3:SG
'Her/his pen'

The possessive pronoun can also exist in a pre-noun position. When a possessive pronoun is used before the head noun, the case marker (of the whole noun phrase) is usually omitted. A ligature is usually used to separate the pre-noun possessive pronoun with the head noun. The following pairs of sentences have the same meaning:
(23) lanomatai e ia [e tau mamatua haana]
‘He/she helps his/her parents.’

(24) lanomatai e ia [haana a tau mamatua]
‘He/she helps his/her parents.’

The ligature is not compulsory, and the case marker can optionally appear:

(25) ko fe (e) haaku (a) tāpulu
TOP:P where ABS:C GEN:P:1:SG LIG dress
‘Where is my dress?’

(26) nājao (a) haaku (a) sione he aho nei
sick ABS:P GEN:P:1:SG LIG S LOC:C day this
‘My Sione is sick today.’

1.3.4. Demonstratives

There are two sets of demonstratives: ē/nei ‘this (near speaker)’, ia/nā ‘that (near addressee)’, kō/rā ‘that (far from both speaker and addressee)’. They are not marked for number, and the two sets of demonstratives are basically interchangeable:

(27) mena ē/nei
thing this
‘This thing’

(28) sisipi ia/nā
knife that
‘That knife (near you)’
(29) akau loa kō/ rā
tree tall that
‘That tall tree (over there)’

For temporal nouns, the use of the nei set of demonstratives signifies absolute, instantaneous temporal location:

(30) totou pepa Ø au moŋo nei
read book ABS:P 1:SG time this
‘I am reading a book at the moment.’

While the use of the ō set of demonstratives with temporal nouns signifies a longer period of time: moŋo ō ‘these days.’

Ia can be used as an anaphor to refer back to an entity in the discourse previously:

(31) fano Ø au ineafi kehe faletapu lamosā
go ABS:P 1:SG yesterday ALL:C church Presbyterian
‘I went to the Presbyterian church yesterday.’

(31a) puke e (faletapu) ia
crowed ABS:C church that
‘that (church) was crowded.’

(31b) ko fē e (faletapu) ia
TOP:P where ABS:C church that
‘Where is that church?’
1.3.5. Numerals

The cardinal numerals, from zero to ten, are: nākai, taha, ua, tolu, fā, lima, ono, fitu, valu, hiva, honofulu. Twenty is uafulu, and the tens from thirty to ninety are tolunofulu = hivanofulu. ‘Hundred’ is seau, and ‘thousand’ is afe.

Larger value digits precede smaller value digits. The digits are placed next to each other, except:

- From the hundreds, the first digit and the second digit are separated by the absolutive case marker e, in effect making the first digit a verb, and rest of the numeral the ‘subject’: 160 = taha e seau ononofulu; 1290 = taha e afe ua seau hivanofulu. The vowel before the case marker e is usually deleted in casual pronunciation, e.g. 1000 = taheafe instead of taha e afe
- Ma is used to separate the units and tens: 43 = fānofolu ma toluc. But in casual speech, the two digits can be presented as a juxtaposition of two unit digits: 43 = fā toluc.

Tokoh is suffixed to the numeral if humans are counted (e.g. (3) and (33)).

Numerals usually function as verbs, and occupy the clause initial verbal position:

(32) honofulu = kuli

ten ABS:C dog

‘Ten dogs’ (lit. ‘The dogs are ten.’)
The sentence initial verb position is the most preferable position for numerals. If the sentence initial position is not available, it will either force the whole noun phrase to become a subordinate clause, therefore making the initial verb position of the subordinate clause available for the numeral (the case marker within the subordinate clause is optional):

(33) kisia e au [toko-lima(e) tanata loloa]
    saw ERG:P 1:SG PERS-five ABS:C people tall:PL
    ‘I saw five tall people.’

(34) ka tohi e au [taha(e) pepa] to kū
    if write ERG:P 1:SG one ABS:C book T/A short
    ‘If I write a (one) book, it will be short.’

Or it will make the numeral part of a relative clause (especially in cases where a lot of other noun modifiers are present, e.g. (50)).

The numerals can also be used attributively (if few other noun modifiers are present):

(35) tau ika ua lalahi ē
    PL fish two big:PL this
    ‘These two big fish’

Ordinal numerals are constructed by suffixing -aki to the cardinals for numerals from two to ninety-nine. ‘First’ is fakamua (faka- is the causative marker, and mua signifies ‘win’ or ‘go-ahead’). With larger numerals (from hundred upwards), the ordinal suffix is not used. When an ordinal numeral is used to modify a noun, the ordinal numeral is presented as a complement clause:
(36) fale [ke tolu-aki] maihe kainai
    house COMP three-ORD ABL:C here
    'The third house from here.'

1.3.6. Non-numeric quantifiers and adverbials: very, all, some, only, any, none.

Lahi, other than being a verb/adjective meaning 'big', can also act as an intensifier
('very'). The intensifier is placed after the verb/adjective:

(37) lahi lahi e fisi kō
    big INTS ABS:C flower that
    'That flower is very big.'

Osi 'all' can exist in various positions, depending on the scope relation. Osi
can also act as a verb meaning 'all' or 'finish'.

(38) fiafia osi e tau pusi ka fanjai
    happy all ABS:C PL cat if feed
    'The cats are all happy if they are fed.'

(39) faka-aloa atu kia mutolu osi
    CAUS-love away ALL:PA 2:PL all
    'Greetings to all of you.'

(40) osi e tau kuli
    all ABS:C PL dog
    'All the dogs'

Falu conveys the meaning of 'some'. If it is not used as a verb (as in (43)), it
is placed in front of the head noun, with the ligature a separating falu and the head
noun:
(41) maama falu a kupu
understand some LIG word
‘To understand some words.’

(42) falu a tau tangata
some LIG PL people
‘Some people’

nō conveys the meaning of ‘only’. It can be placed after the noun, or after the
noun (in a position amongst the other noun modifiers, depending on the scope
interpretation):

(43) falu nī ia lautolu nei nonofo i ausetālia
some only LOC:PA 3:PL T/A live:PL LOC:PI A
‘Only some of them live in Australia.’

(44) koe tau puaka tolu lalahi nī ne tāmase
FOC:C PL pig three big:PL only T/A kill
‘Only the three big pigs were killed.’

The difference in the placement of nī signifies a difference in scope
interpretation:

(45) koe tau kosi nī ha maka ne tāmase
FOC:C PL goat only GEN:P M T/A kill
‘Only Maka’s goats were killed.’ (He still has other animals)

(46) koe tau kosi ha maka nī ne tāmase
FOC:C PL goat GEN:P M only T/A kill
‘Only Maka’s goats were killed.’
(Other people’s goats are not killed, or he still has other animals)
Ha is placed in front of the head noun to signify ‘any’:

(47) ha kī nī ka maeke ke hafanji-aki e loka
    any key only T/A able COMP unlock-APPL ABS:C lock
    ‘Any keys can unlock that lock.’

(48) ha tau kato nī he tau kato
    any PL bag only GEN:C PL bag
    ‘Any bags.’ (lit. ‘Any bags of the bags.’)

‘None’ is conveyed by the negative form of the verb plus ha ‘any’ preposing the nominal.

(49) ai fiamanako ha tama-tāne ke faka-vaiña
    NEG like any child-male COMP CAUS-tease
    ‘No boys like to be teased.’ (lit. ‘Any boys do not like to be teased.’)

1.4. Order of head and the various types of modifier

The usual order of the ‘non-phrasal’ (excluding possessive phrase) modifiers around the noun head is:

-2  halu a ‘some’/ha ‘any’
-1  tau plural
0   head noun
1   numeral
2   adjective
3   intensifier
4   demonstrative
5   possessive phrase
All other clausal or phrasal modifiers follow the modifiers mentioned above. Numerals tend not to be used attributively (e.g. in (50), it has become part of a relative clause after the possessive phrase, see also 1.3.5.). Quantifiers like osi ‘all’ or ni‘any’ can occur in various position, depending on the scope interpretation (they can also occupy a post-verbal position).

In (50), the numeral lima ‘five’ is part of the relative clause ne lima. Other phrasal modifiers include i niuē ‘in Niue’ and ne mai e sione ‘which I have inherited from Sione’ (lit. ‘which Sione gave (me)’):

(50) fiamanako Ø au ke sela e [tau koloa ikiiki osi ia want ABS:P 1:SG COMP sell ABS:C PL store small all that haaku ne lima i niuē ne mai e sione] GEN:P:1:SG T/A five LOC:PI N T/A give ERG:P S ‘I want to sell all those five small shops of mine in Niue which I have inherited from Sione.’

2. Case markers

All noun phrases in Niuean are preceded by a case marker to signify their grammatical relation. The case markers are free morphemes, and can be one or more morae in length (in contrast, lexical words must be at least two morae long). All case markers have two or three allomorphs, and they are grammatically conditioned by the class of the nominal they precede.

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3 The absolutive/nominative case marker for au ‘I’ is zero. The noun component of a noun-incorporated verb does not have a case marker:

(i) kai-lausi Ø au eat-rice ABS:P 1:SG ‘I am eating rice’ (lit. ‘I am rice-eating.’)
2.1. P and C-class nouns/ case makers

As mentioned above, the allomorphs of the case markers are grammatically conditioned by the nominal they precede. The nominals can be divided into two classes: P-class and C-class. P-class nouns include proper names, pronouns and locational nouns (e.g. fafo ‘outside’). C-class nouns include all other common nouns (including temporal nouns like ‘yesterday’, ‘Sunday’ or ‘three o’clock’). Case markers which co-occur with P-nouns are called P-case markers, and case makers which co-occur with C-nouns are called C-case makers.

Three case markers (locative, allative and ablative) have two separate P-allomorphs: PA-class includes proper names of animate objects, e.g. names of human and pets (e.g. luka ‘Luka (Luke)’); PI-class includes proper names of inanimate objects, e.g. place names (e.g. Fiji ‘Fiji’), and locational nouns (e.g. loto ‘inside’, lalo ‘downward/ bottom’, luga ‘above’).

2.2. Split ergativity: ergative/ absolutive cases and nominative/ accusative cases

The default ‘core’ case marking system is the ergative-absolutive system, for sentences of all tenses. For example, the following sentence can either have a past or present interpretation:

(51) kisia au aia
    see   ERG:P 1:SG ABS:P 3:SG
    ‘I see him/her.’ or ‘I saw him/her.’
The following sentence, also in the ergative-absolutive case marking system, has a future interpretation:

(52) to kisia e au a ia
   T/A see ERG:P 1:SG ABS:P 3:SG
   ‘I will see him/her.’

For the subject of an intransitive verb, the absolutive case marker a is used for P-nouns and e is used for C-nouns. Note that the absolutive case marker for au ‘I’ is zero:

(53) lolojo Ø au
    sing ABS:P 1:SG
    ‘I sang/sing.’

(54) ne taŋi a moka
    T/A cry ABS:P M
    ‘Moka is crying/cried.’

(55) lahi e fisi ə
    big ABS:C flower this
    ‘This flower is big.’

(56) fano e povi
    walk ABS:C cow
    ‘The cow walked/walks.’

For transitive verbs, the subject is marked with the ergative case (e for P-nouns, he for C-nouns), and the object is marked with the absolutive case (a for P-nouns, e for C-nouns). When no overt tense or aspect markers are present, a nominative-accusative case marking system can be optionally employed to specify a
non-past interpretation. For non-past transitive verbs, the subject can be marked with the nominative case \((a\) for \(P\)-nouns, \(e\) for \(C\)-nouns, i.e. the same form as the absolutive case markers\), and the object can be marked with the accusative case \((e\) for \(P\)-nouns, \(he\) for \(C\)-nouns, i.e. the same form as the ergative markers\):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ERGATIVE/ ACCUSATIVE</th>
<th>P-class</th>
<th>C-class</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABSOLUTIVE/ NOMINATIVE</td>
<td>(a)</td>
<td>(e)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(\emptyset) for (au) 'I'</td>
<td>(he)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Compare the following pairs of sentences. Both of the following sentences have no overt tense or aspect markers. While (57) can be interpreted as either present or past, (58) can only have a present interpretation because it has a nominative-accusative case marking system:

(57) tunu he matua fifine e simala   
     cook ERG:C parent female ABS:C sweet:potato  
     'The mother cooked/ cooks the sweet potato.'

(58) tunu e matua fifine he simala   
     cook NOM:C parent female ACC:C sweet:potato  
     'The mother is cooking the sweet potato.'

The following are a few more examples in the default ergative-absolutive case marking system:

(59) ne faka-koukou e sifa a mele   
     T/A CAUS-bath ERG:P S ABS:P M  
     'Sifa bathed Mele.'
(60) tunu e ia e kai
cook ERG:P 3:SG ABS:C food
‘She/he cooked the food.’ or ‘She/he is cooking the food.’

(61) kua kai he pusi e simala
T/A eat ERG:C cat ABS:C sweet:potato
‘The cat ate the sweet potato.’

The following are a few more examples of non-past sentences in the nominative-accusative case marking system:

(62) tunu a ia he talo
cook NOM:P 3:SG ACC:C taro
‘She/he is cooking the taro.’

(63) selo e punua-pusi e ia
lick NOM:C young-cat ACC:P 3:SG
‘The kitten is licking him/her.’

2.3. Genitive case

The genitive marker is used to indicate that the noun phrase it precedes is a possessor.

There are two allomorphs of the genitive case marker:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GENITIVE</th>
<th>P-class</th>
<th>C-class</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ha</td>
<td>he</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The possessor noun phrase is usually placed after the possessum noun phrase (see also 1.3.3. for further examples):
(64) matua tāne ha lautolu
parent male GEN:P 3:PL
‘Their father’

(65) posi ha maua
boat GEN:P 1:DU:EX
‘Our (dual, exclusive) boat’

(66) nofoa ha sione
chair GEN:P S
‘Sione’s chair’

(67) patuiki fifine ha tona
king female GEN:P T
‘Queen of Tonga’

(68) tau kupu he loloŋo
PL word GEN:C song
‘The words of the song’

2.4. Focus/ Topic marker

The focus/ topic markers are ko for P-nouns and koe for C-nouns:

<table>
<thead>
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<th>FOCUS/ TOPIC</th>
<th>P-class</th>
<th>C-class</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
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<td>ko</td>
<td></td>
<td>koe</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

They are used to mark a topicalised noun phrase or a focused question word. They are
also used to mark the noun phrase(s) of an equative sentence.

---

4 The C-focus/ topic marker is written as <ko e> in Niuean orthography, to distinguish it from <koe>
‘you (sg)’. Other case markers which fit in this situations include <i> PA-locative case <ko>
‘he/she/there’, <ke he> C-allative case <kehe> ‘different’. The homophonous words will be
represented in this article by the word form which lacks a space (koe, ia, kehe, etc.) In the orthography,
all the case markers with two or more syllables are written as separate words (one word for each
syllable), except the aki constituent for the instrumental case and the mai constituent for the ablative
case.
2.4.1. Topicalised noun phrases

Niuean is a verb-initial language, but noun phrases can exist pre-verbally if it is topicalised. The topicalised noun phrase is marked by a topic marker kol koe.

Compare the following pair of sentence. (70) is a topicalised version of (69):

(69) to tohi e au e pepa
T/A write ERG:P 1:SG ABS:C book
'I will write a book.'

(70) koe pepa to tohi e au
TOP:C book T/A write ERG:P 1:SG
'The book, I will write.'

2.4.2. Focused question words

In a question word interrogative sentence, the question word is placed at the beginning of a sentence, and marked by a focus marker (ko or koe). Question words which take the P-focus marker include hai ‘who/ whom’, fe ‘where’, hino ‘what’. Question words which take the C-topic marker include ha-hai ‘whose’ (i.e. ‘certain things belong to who’), hinoa ‘what of something’ (i.e. ‘what thing belonging to certain people’):

(71) ko fe a tule
FOC:P where ABS:P T
'Where is Tule?'

(72) ko hai ne faka-malipi e kalase
FOC:P who T/A CAUS-brake ABS:C glass
'Who broke the glass?'
(73) ko hai ne ane e moka e talo ki ai
FOC:P who T/A give ERG:P M ABS:C taro ALL:P1 R-PRO
‘Whom did Moka gave the taro to?’

(74) ko hiño he tama ne kai
FOC:P what ERG:C child T/A eat
‘What did the child eat?’

(75) koe ha hai e kuli kō
FOC:C GEN:P who ABS:C dog that
‘Whose is that dog?’

(76) koe hiñoa haau ka tause
FOC:C what GEN:P:2:SG T/A do
‘What will you do?’ (lit. ‘It is what of yours which you will do.’)

2.4.3. Focus/topic markers in equative sentences

Niuean does not have an overt copula. Equative sentences in Niuean are constructed by juxtaposing the two equating noun phrases. If the equative sentence has a focus-topic constituent order, the focus noun phrase is marked by a focus marker koi koe, and the topic noun phrase is marked by an absolutive case marker af e:

(77) [koe leoleo] [a vaka]
FOC:C policeman ABS:P V
‘Vaka is a policeman.’
(i.e. a possible answer to ‘What does Vaka do?’. Vaka’s occupation is a policeman, not a teacher or minister.)

(78) [koe tanjata fā kaihā] [a ia]
FOC:C person T/A steel ABS:P:3:SG
‘She/he is a person who steals.’
(i.e. a possible answer to ‘What does she/ he do?’)
(79) [ko mele] [a ia]
FOC:P M ABS:P there
‘Mele is there.’
(i.e. a possible answer to ‘Who is that person there?’). It is Mele, not Vaka or Tule, who is there.)

If the equative sentence has a topic-focus constituent order, the topic noun phrase is marked by a topic marker kol koe, and the focus noun phrase is marked by a focus case marker kol koe:

(80) [ko ia] [ko mele]
TOP:P 3:SG FOC:P M
‘She is Mele.’
(i.e. She is Mele, not Tule or the cat.)

(81) [ko ia] [koe matua fifine ha vaka]
TOP:P 3:SG FOC:C parent female GEN:P V
‘She is Vaka’s mother.’

A single noun phrase can also be preceded by a focus marker. In such case, it can either be interpreted as an ‘existential’ sentence (somewhat similar to English copular sentences where the subject is expletive, e.g. ‘it is me’), or an equative sentence where one of the equative noun phrase is a genitive or some other oblique noun phrase:

(82) koe tau-tama haana
FOC:C PL-child GEN:P:1:SG
‘It is her children.’ or ‘The child is hers.’
(83) ko ia i honolulu
FOC:P 3:SG LOC:PA H
'It is s/he who is in Honolulu,' or 'S/he is in Honolulu.'

2.5. Allative case and ablative case

The allative case has a number of functions:

- Marking the recipient noun phrase of a 'giving' verb (e.g. 'I gave the key to you');
- Marking the stimulus in a sentence containing an experiential verb (e.g. 'I love you');
- Signifying 'motion towards' of an action or state, physically or metaphorically (both spatially and temporally speaking).

The ablative case marker signifies 'motion from', similar to the English preposition 'from'.

Both allative and ablative case markers have three allomorphs:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ALLATIVE</th>
<th>PA-class</th>
<th>PI-class</th>
<th>C-class</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ki-a</td>
<td>ki</td>
<td>ke-he</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABLATIVE</td>
<td>mai-i-a</td>
<td>mai-i</td>
<td>mai-he</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(84) anje e moka e talo kia ia
give ERG:P M ABS:C taro ALL:PA 3:SG
'Moka gave the taro to him/her.' (Recipient ALL:PA)

(85) anje e kai kehe kulii
give ABS:C food ALL:C dog
'The food was given to the dog.' (Recipient ALL:C)
(86) faka-alofa Ő au kia koe
CAUS-love ABS:P 1:SG ALL:PA 2:SG
'I love you.' (lit. 'I am in love to you.') (Stimulus ALL:PA)

(87) fiafia a moka kehe pelē-lakāpī
happy ABS:P M ALL:C game-rugby
'Moka likes rugby.' (lit. 'Moka is happy towards rugby-playing.') (Stimulus ALL:C)

(88) mataono e punua-pusi kia au
stare ABS:C young-cat ALL:PA 1:SG
'The kitten stared at me.' (Spatial ALL:PA)

(89) ne poi e pusi maihe falevao kehe peito
T/A run ABS:C cat ABL:C toilet ALL:C kitchen
'The cat ran from the toilet to the kitchen.' (Spatial ABL/ALL:C)

(90) maihe hola tolu kehe hola lima
ABL:C hour three ALL:C hour five
'From three o'clock to five o'clock.' (Temporal ABL/ALL:C)

(91) lele e vakalele maii toŋa ki niuē
fly ABS:C aeroplane ABL:PI T ALL:PI N
'The aeroplane flies from Tonga to Niue.' (Spatial ABL/ALL:PI)

(92) loŋona e au e tala ia maiia luka
hear ERG:P 1:SG ABS:C story that ABL:PA L
'I heard that story from Luka.' (Spatial ABS:PA)

The ke constituent of the allative case marker ke-he is sometimes optional if
the noun phrase is unlikely to have a locative thematic role (the C-locative case
marker has the form of he):
(93) kua fano tuai a moka (kehe) aonga
T/A go T/A ABS:P M ALL:C school
‘Moka has already gone to school.’

Locational nouns take PI-case makers:

(94) nofo ki lalo
sit ALL:PI down
‘Sit down.’

For the C-nouns of fale ‘house’ and kaina ‘home’ only (and not even compounds which include them, e.g. fale tapu ‘church’ (lit. ‘house-sacred’)), they cake take both the C- and PI- directional case markers of kehe/ maihe and ki/maii. The use of the PI-markers signifies ‘internal’ meanings of ‘into’ (ki ‘illative case’) and ‘from inside’ (mai-i ‘elative case’), contrasting with the ‘external’ meanings of ‘towards’ (ke-he ‘allative case’) and ‘from’ (mai-he ‘ablative case’) meaning conveyed by the C-markers:

(95) poi faka-mafisi [kehe/ maihe] fale
run CAUS-fast ALL:C ABL:C house
‘Run quickly [towards/ from] the house.’

(96) poi faka-mafisi [ki/ maii] fale
run CAUS-fast ILL:PI ELL:PI house
‘Run quickly [into/ out from] the house.’
2.6. Locative case

Locative case marks the location, either spatial or temporal, of an action, an occasion, or an existence. It can also signify means of transport. The locative case marker has three allomorphs:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LOCATIVE</th>
<th>PA-class</th>
<th>PI-class</th>
<th>C-class</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>i-a</td>
<td>i</td>
<td>he</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(97) fai-hoana a koe he aho-tapu
make-wife ABS:P 2:SG LOC:C day-sacred
‘You got married (got a wife) on Sunday.’ (Temporal location)

(98) ko ia he aonga
FOC:P 3:SG LOC:C school
‘She/ he is at school.’ (Spatial location)

(99) ɲahua lahi a moka he kātene
work hard ABS:P M LOC:C garden
‘Moka works hard in the garden.’ (Spatial location)

(100) ɲahua a ia i honolulu
work ABS:P 3:SG LOC:Pt H
‘She/ he works in Honolulu.’ (Spatial location)

(101) toka e mele e tau pepa ia au
‘Mele left the books with me.’ (Spatial location)
(i.e. the book is ‘located at me’)
(102) to fano a mele apoŋi he posi kehe aoŋa
T/A go ABS:P M tomorrow LOC:C boat ALL:C school
‘Tomorrow Mele will go to school by (western-style) boat.’
(Means of transport, i.e. Mele is going to school ‘on a boat’)

Similar to the use of PI-directional case markers with faile ‘house’ and kaina
‘home’, the use of PI-locative case marker signifies ‘interior location’ (i ‘inessive
case’), and the use of C-locative case marker signifies ‘exterior location’ (he ‘adessive
case’, e.g. on top of, immediately next to):

(103) ne loloŋo Ø au i kaina
T/A sing ABS:P 1:SG INN:PI home
‘I sang at home.’ (i.e., inside my home)

(104) ne tuku he tanata Ńahua e setalata he fale
T/A put ERG:C people work ABS:C satellite:dis ADD:C house
‘The workers put the satellite dish on the house’
(i.e., on top of or immediately next to the house).

The locative case is also used to mark the object of comparison in a
comparative sentence (in this case all P nouns use ia):

(105) kū a tule ia moka
short ABS:P T LOC:P M
‘Tule is shorter than Moka.’

(106) lahi a niuē ia lałoŋa
large ABS:P N LOC:P L
‘Niue is larger than Rarotonga.’
(107) tose e manō he tafuā  
small ABS:C shark LOC:C whale  
‘Sharks are smaller than whales.’

2.7. Comitative case

Comitative case can be translated into English as ‘and’ or ‘with’. This case marker can be used to conjoin two noun phrases, or to show that the two participants are involved with the same action or state together:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COMITATIVE</th>
<th>P-class</th>
<th>C-class</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>mo</td>
<td>mo-e</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(108) kua ō tuai a moka mo tule  
t/A go:PL t/A ABS:P M COM:P T  
‘Moka and Tule has already left.’ or ‘Moka has left with Tule.’

(109) tamai e patuō moe kākau  
bring ABS:C stone COM:C stick  
‘Bring a stone and a stick.’

2.8. ‘Disjunctive case’

The ‘disjunctive case’ is used for disjunction of noun phrases (‘or’):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DISJUNCTIVE</th>
<th>P-class</th>
<th>C-class</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>po-ko</td>
<td>po-ke</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(110) ko hai ne mata mitaki sione pokō luka  
TOP:P who T/A face good S DISJ:P L  
‘Who is (more) handsome? Sione or Luka?’
(111) simala poke laisi
    sweet:potato DISJ:C rice
    ‘Sweet potato or rice?’

2.9. Benefactive case

Benefactive can be translated into English as ‘for’. It marks the noun phrase as having a beneficiary thematic role.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>P-class</th>
<th>C-class</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BENEFACTIVE</td>
<td>ma/ma-ha</td>
<td>ma-e</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(112) koe fale [ma/maha] moka
    FOC:C house BEN:P M
    ‘The house is for Moka.’

(113) ne lilig i e au e hu hu mae puisi
    T/A pour ERG:P I:SG ABS:C milk BEN:C cat
    ‘I poured milk for the cat.’

2.10. Instrumental case

The instrumental case is used to mark a non-argument noun phrase as having instrumental thematic role:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>P-class</th>
<th>C-class</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INSTRUMENTAL</td>
<td>aki-a</td>
<td>aki-e</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(114) hele e toua akie sisipi (or hele akie sisipi e toua)
    cut ABS:C rope INSTR:C knife INSTR:C ABS:C
    ‘Cut the rope with a knife.’
(115) ne fufū e au e maihi he kaupū akīa moka
T/A hide ERG:P 1:SG ABS:C crack LOC:C wall INSTR:P M
'I hid the crack on the wall with Moka.' (e.g. M. is a child or pet)

Another way of indicating the presence of an instrumental noun phrase is to
make akī the applicative suffix to the verb. This applicative construction signifies that
the direct object noun phrase of the sentence has an instrumental thematic role. In this
case, the instrumental noun phrase is marked with an absolutive case marker al e:

(116) ne keli-aki e ia e kākau e kurī
T/A hit-APPL ERG:P 3:SG ABS:C stick ABS:C dog
'She/he hit the dog with a stick.'
(lit. 'She hit-using the stick the dog.')

The -aki applicative suffix can also mark a gap in the complement clause as
having an instrumental thematic role:

(117) ne faka-oŋa e au e hiapo [ke
T/A CAUS-be:used ERG:P 1:SG ABS:C bark:cloth COMP
fufū-aki ______ e maihi he kaupā]
hide-APPL ABS:C crack LOC:C wall
'I used the bark cloth to hide the crack on the wall.'

The resumptive pronoun ai is not used if a subject or direct object is
relativised. In an applicative sentence, the resumptive pronoun is not used if the
instrumental noun phrase is relativised. This shows that the instrumental noun phrase
is not an oblique object:
(118) kiva e hiapo ne fufū-aki e au e maihi
dirty ABS:C bark:cloth T/A cover-APPL ERG:P 1:SG ABS:C crack

'The bark cloth which I cover the crack with is dirty.'

The fact that an applicative sentence would not be (as) grammatical if the
supposedly instrumental noun phrase is placed at an oblique noun phrase position (in
(119) and (120), the outer absolutive noun phrase) further supports that -aki can only
take an argument noun phrase as having an instrumental thematic role:

(119) ?? ne keli-aki e ia e kurī e kākau
T/A hit-APPL ERG:P 3:SG ABS:C dog ABS:C stick

(120)* hele-aki e toua e sisipi
cut-APL ABS:C rope ABS:C knife

3. Conclusion

In the first section of this paper, the noun phrase structure of Niuean was discussed,
and in this language:

- There are no articles;
- The possessive construction has no alienability/inalienability distinction; and
- Plurality for common nouns is marked by the plural prefix tau.

These traits are rather atypical of Polynesian languages. Polynesian languages usually
have some sort of alienability distinction for their possessive construction(s). Many
also indicate number difference for noun phrases by the use of different number-
marking articles.
The case marking system in Niuean is discussed in the second section. There are at least two allomorphs for every case marker in Niuean. The P-case markers are used for pronouns, proper names and locational nouns. The C-case markers are used for common nouns. Three cases, ablative, allative and locative, make a further distinction within the P-class: PA-case markers are used for proper names of animate objects, e.g. human, pets; PI-case markers are used for proper names of inanimate objects, e.g. place names, and locational nouns. Here is a summary of the case markers:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case Type</th>
<th>P-class</th>
<th>C-class</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>ERGATIVE/ACCUSATIVE</strong></td>
<td>e.</td>
<td>he</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ABSOLUTIVE/NOMINATIVE</strong></td>
<td>a</td>
<td>e</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>GENITIVE</strong></td>
<td>ha</td>
<td>he</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FOCUS/TOPIC</strong></td>
<td>ko</td>
<td>ko-e</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>COMITATIVE</strong></td>
<td>mo</td>
<td>mo-e</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>DISJUNCTIVE</strong></td>
<td>po-ke</td>
<td>po-ke</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>BENEFACTIVE</strong></td>
<td>ma/ma-ha</td>
<td>ma-e</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>INSTRUMENTAL</strong></td>
<td>aki-a</td>
<td>aki-e</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case Type</th>
<th>PA-class</th>
<th>PI-class</th>
<th>C-class</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>ALLATIVE</strong></td>
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<td>ki</td>
<td>ke-he</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ABLATIVE</strong></td>
<td>mai-i-a</td>
<td>mai-i</td>
<td>mai-he</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LOCATIVE</strong></td>
<td>i-a</td>
<td>i</td>
<td>he</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

(For the C-nouns of *fale* ‘house’ and *kaina* ‘home’, the three PI-markers above are used as the ‘internal’ local cases of illative (‘into’), elative (‘from inside’) and inessive (‘inside’). The three C-markers above are used as the ‘external’ local cases of allative (‘towards’), ablative (‘from the exterior’) and adessive (‘on top of/next to’).
Notes

The following abbreviations have been used in this paper:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABL</td>
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<tr>
<td>ABS</td>
<td>absolutive case</td>
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<td>APPL</td>
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<td>singular number</td>
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<td>tense or aspect marker</td>
</tr>
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<td>topic marker</td>
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<td>first person</td>
</tr>
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<td>second person</td>
</tr>
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<td>3</td>
<td>third person</td>
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</table>

Excellent Some content to detail necesario.

65/70 A+