

# The Syntax of the Tahitian Actor Emphatic Construction

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This paper presents the actor emphatic construction (AE) in Tahitian and offers an initial investigation of its basic syntactic structure. The AE is a construction found across the Eastern Polynesian languages; it is typically used to focus the agent (subject) of a transitive verb. In Tahitian, the AE appears in three different variants. In all of them, the focused agent occurs clause-initially in a prepositional phrase headed by *nā*. The three variants differ in their realization of the theme. In the first two, the theme, with or without the accusative case marker, appears after the transitive verb, which follows the agent phrase. In a third variant, the theme is preverbal, immediately following the focused agent. Our investigation shows the following: (1) the Tahitian AE is a biclausal structure; (2) the initial *nā*-phrase serves as the matrix predicate and the focused agent is part of that predicate; (3) the verb following it is part of a dependent clause; and (4) the theme is a direct object when it is postverbal, but it is the matrix subject when it is preverbal. We offer some preliminary considerations concerning the interpretation of the AE in Tahitian and its fine syntactic structure and compare our analysis to analyses of the better-studied Māori AE.

**1. INTRODUCTION.** The actor emphatic construction (AE) is an unusual construction found across the Eastern Polynesian languages (Clark 1976, Harlow 1986, Bauer 2004), typically used to focus the subject of a transitive verb. An example from Tahitian, an Eastern Polynesian language spoken in French Polynesia, is given in (1):<sup>1</sup> (1a) is the baseline declarative illustrating Tahitian's basic VSO word order; (1b–d) illustrate three variants of the AE. In all cases, the actor/agent (bolded) occurs initially in a

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In addition to the standard abbreviations of the Leipzig Glossing Rules, the following are also used: ACTGEN, actor genitive; ASP, aspect; DEIC, deictic; DIR, directional; DO, direct object; *expl*, expletive; GENA, genitive series A; GENO, genitive series O; INC, incomplete aspect; PRED, predicate marker; PREP, preposition; RP, resumptive pronoun; SUB, subordinate; T/A, tense aspect; TAM, tense/aspect/mood marker. The symbol % is used to indicate sentences that were subject to dialectal variation.

We refer to several grammars, including Lazard and Peltzer 2000 (L&P) and Académie tahitienne 1986 (AT). Examples come from our own notes unless otherwise indicated. For examples from other sources, we use the orthography and glossing from the original, and thus these examples may differ in minor ways from our own data, particularly with respect to the presence or absence of the glottal stop, written as '.

prepositional phrase. The three variants differ in their realization of the theme, which is italicized. In (1b), the agent is followed by a transitive verb phrase with the theme in the direct object position. In the second variant, (1c), found widely in Eastern Polynesian, the theme maintains its postverbal position but lacks the accusative case marker. In a third variant, (1d), the theme is preverbal, immediately following the actor/agent. We will call these three variants AE1, AE2, and AE3, respectively.

- (1) a. 'Ua hōhoni te ma'o 'i te tāvana.  
 PFV bite DET shark ACC DET chief  
 'The shark bit the chief.'
- b. **Nā te ma'o** i hōhoni 'i te tāvana. AE1  
 PREP DET shark PFV bite ACC DET chief  
 'It's the shark that bit the chief.'
- c. **Nā te ma'o** i hōhoni te tāvana. AE2  
 PREP DET shark PFV bite DET chief  
 'It's the shark that bit the chief.'
- d. **Nā te ma'o** te tāvana i hōhoni. AE3  
 PREP DET shark DET chief PFV bite  
 'It's the shark that bit the chief.'

The AE is found across Eastern Polynesian languages (glosses from the original):

- (2) a. MĀORI  
 N-ā te kaiako ia i whaka-oho.  
 ACTUAL-APOSS DEF.SG teacher 3SG PAST CAUSE-wake  
 'The teacher woke him/her up.' (Bauer 2004:25 [11a])
- b. HAWAIIAN  
 Na wai ka mahina i kau malaila?  
 by who the moon PFV place at.there  
 'Who placed the moon there?' (Elbert and Pukui 1979:148)
- c. MARQUESAN  
 ... na te tau hoa e ka'oha pu atu ia ia.  
 TOP ART PL friend TAM pity only DIR DO 3SG  
 '...it were (sic) only the friends who pitied him.'  
 (Cablitz 2006:65 [3.16b])

The syntax of the AE has been investigated for Proto-Eastern Polynesian (Clark 1976) and for Māori (see Waite 1990, Bauer 2004 and references therein), but not for other Polynesian languages. We take a first step in rectifying this deficiency by providing an initial analysis of the AE in Tahitian. Our goal in this work is to determine the major syntactic constituents and their grammatical relations in the AE. We leave it for future work to embed these findings in a more fine-grained structural analysis. We will, therefore, by and large avoid explicit constituent structures, which would require that we commit to details, such as the derivation of verb-initial word order, which are not directly relevant at this stage.

Our initial syntactic questions regarding the AE are in (3).

- (3) a. What is the grammatical status of the actor/agent?  
 b. Is the construction monoclausal or biclausal?  
 c. What is the grammatical status of the theme/patient?

With regard to the first question, we provide evidence that the actor/agent is a prepositional phrase that serves as the main predicate of the clause. For the second question, we show that the Tahitian AE is a biclausal structure, specifically a kind of cleft. The *nā*-phrase serves as the matrix predicate and the verb is part of a dependent clause. Finally, with regard to the third question, we argue that the theme is a direct object when it is post-verbal in AE1 or AE2, but it is the matrix subject when it is preverbal in AE3.

Our syntactic conclusions regarding the Tahitian AE are schematized in (4).

- (4) a. [*nā* X]<sub>predicate</sub> [dependent clause] AE1/AE2  
 b. [*nā* X]<sub>predicate</sub> NP<sub>subject</sub> [dependent clause] AE3

The presentation to follow begins with a basic overview of relevant aspects of Tahitian grammar in section 2. Section 3 introduces the AE construction in Tahitian. Section 4 investigates the number of clauses in the AE, and demonstrates that the construction is clearly biclausal. The section also addresses the status of the actor/agent phrase and shows that it is the matrix clause predicate. Section 5 argues that the matrix subject is either the nonaccusative-marked theme, as in the case of AE3, or that there is no overt, contentful subject, as in the case of AE1 and AE2. Section 6 introduces the AE construction and existing analyses for the related Polynesian language Māori. Section 7 concludes with a presentation of some of the remaining challenges.

**2. BASIC TAHITIAN SYNTAX.** Basic word order in Tahitian verbal clauses is VSO, as in (5); VOS is generally not possible, as in (6).

- (5) a. 'Ua hōhoni te ma'o 'i te tāvana.  
 PFV bite DET shark ACC DET chief  
 'The shark bit the chief.'  
 b. Tē 'amu nei te mīmī 'i te i'a.  
 IPFV eat DEIC DET cat ACC DET fish  
 'The cat is eating the fish.'
- (6) a. \*'Ua hōhoni 'i te tāvana te ma'o.  
 PFV bite ACC DET chief DET shark  
 Intended: 'The shark bit the chief.'  
 b. \*Tē 'amu nei 'i te i'a te mīmī  
 IPFV eat DEIC ACC DET fish DET cat  
 Intended: 'The cat is eating the fish.'

Verbal predicates are preceded by a tense-aspect-mood (TAM) marker and optionally followed by temporal/spatial deixis (DEIC) and/or directional (DIR) particles. Nonverbal predication is widespread, with the predicate occurring in the clause-initial position:<sup>2</sup>

2. We will describe Tahitian as predicate-initial in what follows by exceptionally considering the verb alone to be the predicate in verbal clauses. We understand that this is a nonstandard use of the term predicate since, strictly speaking, it is only the verbal head and not the entire verbal predicate (which would include the verb's complements) that precedes the subject in VSO clauses.

- (7) a. 'E mea marō te ha'ari.  
 PRED thing dry DET coconut  
 'The coconuts are dry.' (Tryon 1970:53)
- b. E fa'ehau terā ta'ata.  
 PRED soldier DEM man  
 'That man is a soldier.' (L&P 2000:36)
- c. E maha t-ō rātou va'a.  
 PRED four DET-GENO 3PL outrigger.canoe  
 'They have four outrigger canoes.' (lit., 'Their outrigger canoes are four.') (L&P 2000:40)
- (8) a. 'Ei Pape'ete 'oia 'ananahi.  
 ASP.PREP Papeete 3SG tomorrow  
 'He will be in Papeete tomorrow.' (Tryon 1970:61)
- b. Mai te fare mai au.  
 PREP DET house DIR 1SG  
 'I am coming from the house.' (L&P 2000:42)

When a nonverbal predicate is sufficiently "complex," only the lexical head of the predicate, possibly with prehead modifiers, precedes the subject. The remaining material follows the subject, which is bolded below:

- (9) a. E tāviri **tenā** nō te aha?  
 PRED key DEM PREP.GENO DET what  
 'That is a key to what?' (AT 1986:175)
- b. E tamaiti **'oia** n-ā Rui.  
 PRED son 3SG.NOM PREP-GENA Rui  
 'He is a son of Louis's.' (AT 1986:34)
- c. 'A pae matahiti **au** i Tahiti nei.  
 INC five year 1SG.NOM PREP Tahiti DEIC  
 'I have been in Tahiti five years.' (L&P 2000:41)

This word order is not obligatory, however, and for most speakers examples with the full predicate preceding the subject are acceptable, as in (10), although there was some indication that these examples were more typical of older speakers. Clark (1976:119) indicates that this word order alternation, in which the nonhead portion of a nonverbal predicate can be extraposed, is available in all Polynesian languages.

- (10) a. E tāviri nō te aha **tenā**?  
 PRED key PREP.GENO DET what DEM  
 'That is a key to what?'
- b. E tamaiti n-ā Rui **'oia**.  
 PRED son PREP-GENA Rui 3SG.NOM  
 'He is a son of Louis's.'

Possessive statements can be formed in several ways. One makes use of a preposition *nā-/nō-* followed by a genitive noun phrase indicating the possessor. The possessum is the subject of the clause and follows the genitive noun phrase:

- (11) a. Nō        te pōti'i tēra 'ahu.  
 PREP.GENO DET girl    DEM dress  
 'That dress is the girl's.' (Tryon 1970:29)
- b. Nā        Teri'i teie tāupo'o.  
 PREP.GENA Terii    DEM hat  
 'This hat is Terii's.'
- c. Nā'u        teie mau puta.  
 PREP.GENA.1SG DEM PL book  
 'These books are mine.'

Tahitian has two possessive series, *a* 'GENA' and *o* 'GENO'. At first approximation, they correspond to alienable and inalienable possession, respectively, as suggested by the following contrast (see Tryon 1970:26–29, AT 1986:107–20, and L&P 2000:176–77 for a more complete discussion):

- (12) a. te 'ahu a Tama  
 DET shirt GENA Tama  
 'Tama's shirt (that he's holding, buying, selling, etc.)'  
 (L&P 2000:176)
- b. te 'ahu o Tama  
 DET shirt GENO Tama  
 'Tama's shirt (that he's wearing)' (L&P 2000:176)

This preposition is arguably the same one that appears in the AE.<sup>3</sup>

Tahitian recognizes at least three kinds of nouns: common nouns, proper names, and pronouns. Each has unique morphosyntactic behavior depending upon its grammatical role, as in (13). In subject position, common noun phrases and pronouns are unmarked, while proper names and the wh-word *vai* 'who' bear a nominative determiner 'o 'DET.NOM'. The accusative marker is 'i for common noun phrases but 'ia for names and pronouns. 1SG and 3SG pronouns have suppletive accusative forms, given in (14). Finally, in oblique position, all three classes are unmarked except for the preposition governing them.

(13)	COMMON NOUN	PROPER NAME	PRONOUN
SUBJECT	te ma'o 'the shark'	'o Tama 'Tama'	rātou '3PL'
DIRECT OBJECT	'i te ma'o 'ACC the shark'	'ia Tama 'ACC Tama'	'ia rātou 'ACC 3PL'
OBLIQUE/PP	e te ma'o 'by the shark'	e Tama 'by Tama'	e rātou 'by them'

3. *Nā* has other uses that may relate to its role in the AE (L&P 2000:189–90). In addition to marking possession, it indicates beneficiaries, as in (i), experiencers, means (as in *by foot/boat*), and sometimes passive agents, as in (ii). This latter use needs to be explored further.

- (i) 'Ua hōro'a 'o Māmā i te moni nā Moana.  
 PFV give DET Mama ACC DET money PREP Moana  
 'Mama gave the money for Moana.' (L&P 2000:189)
- (ii) 'Ua hōhoni hia te tāvana nā/e te ma'o.  
 PFV bite PASS DET chief by/by DET shark  
 'The chief was bitten by the shark.'

(14)		1SG		3SG
	SUBJECT	(v)au <sup>4</sup>		'oia/'ona
	DIRECT OBJECT	'ia'u (*'ia vau)		'iāna (*'ia 'oia, *'ia 'ona)

**3. THE ACTOR EMPHATIC CONSTRUCTION.** The three variants of the Tahitian AE construction are repeated in (15), with (15a) representing the non-AE baseline for comparison.

- (15) a. 'Ua hōhoni te ma'o 'i te tāvana.  
 PFV bite DET shark ACC DET chief  
 'The shark bit the chief.'
- b. Nā te ma'o i hōhoni 'i te tāvana. AE1  
 PREP DET shark PFV bite ACC DET chief  
 'It's the shark that bit the chief.'
- c. Nā te ma'o i hōhoni te tāvana. AE2  
 PREP DET shark PFV bite DET chief  
 'It's the shark that bit the chief.'
- d. Nā te ma'o te tāvana i hōhoni. AE3  
 PREP DET shark DET chief PFV bite  
 'It's the shark that bit the chief.'

The question immediately arises as to whether there are three distinct structures here.<sup>5</sup> We believe that they are not all distinct in Tahitian and, in particular, that AE2 is structurally equivalent to AE1. With regard to the alternation between AE1 and AE2, Tryon (1970:38) indicates that the accusative marker 'i is "often omitted in the past tense with this construction" and Lemaître (1973:62) also indicates that 'i is often dropped before direct objects. Tryon's example is in (16).

- (16) Nā te tavana 'i taparahi ha'apohe te ma'o.  
 PREP DET chief PFV hit kill DET shark  
 'The shark was killed by the chief.' (Tryon 1970:38)

This suggests that, in Tahitian, AE2 is basically AE1 with an unpronounced accusative marker, a suggestion that we will adopt. It seems that the accusative marker can often be dropped independently of this construction. When asked, speakers indicated that it could always be left out in the AE construction and sometimes in basic VSO clauses:

- (17) a. 'Ua hōhoni te ma'o % ('i) te tāvana.  
 PFV bite DET shark ACC DET chief  
 'The shark bit the chief.'
- b. Tē 'amu nei te mīmī \*( 'i) te i'a.  
 IMPV eat DEIC DET cat ACC DET fish  
 'The cat is eating the fish.'

What is important for our purposes is that AE2 is not a distinct structure from AE1, but only a phonological variant.

4. The 1st person singular pronoun is pronounced *au* after front vowels /i/ and /e/, *vau* elsewhere.  
 5. Not all Eastern Polynesian languages allow the three variants. Māori, for example, allows only AE2 and AE3 (Clark 1976, Bauer 2004), although Bauer 1997 (§33.5) mentions the occurrence of AE1 under some circumstances in some dialects of Māori.

An alternative approach would posit that AE2 is a word order variant of AE3 with postposing of the unmarked preverbal noun phrase. Evidence against this hypothesis and for AE2 being related to AE1 comes from cases in which the accusative marker is not *'i*. With pronouns and proper names, the accusative marker is *'ia* and it shows up in AE1, as shown in (18). AE2 is not possible with these noun phrases, as in (19). This follows because only the accusative marker *'i*, and not *'ia*, can be dropped.

- (18) Nā vai e tāniuniu 'ia Teri'i/mātou? AE1  
 PREP who ASP call ACC Terii /1PL.EXCL  
 'Who will call Terii/us?
- (19) a. \*Nā vai e tāniuniu ( 'o) Teri'i? AE2  
 PREP who ASP call DET.NOM Terii  
 Intended: 'Who will call Terii?'
- b. \*Nā vai e tāniuniu mātou? AE2  
 PREP who ASP call 1PL.EXCL  
 Intended: 'Who will call us?'

AE3 is possible with these noun phrases, but the accusative marker *'ia* is absent and, in the case of proper names, the nominative determiner *'o* must be present, as in (20).

- (20) a. Nā vai 'o Teri'i e tāniuniu? AE3  
 PREP who DET.NOM Terii ASP call  
 'Who will call Terii?'
- b. Nā vai mātou e tāniuniu? AE3  
 PREP who 1PL.EXCL ASP call  
 'Who will call us?'

This suggests that AE2, which is ungrammatical with pronouns and proper names, is not related to AE3, which is grammatical with these noun phrases.

We leave it for future work to determine the full analysis of the optionality of the accusative marker *'i*, but we assume that it is not syntactically relevant.<sup>6</sup> In the remainder of the paper, we consider the structures of AE1/AE2 and AE3, which have the following characteristics.

- (21) a. The actor/agent appears in initial position, introduced by *nā-* (section 3.1).  
 b. The verb shows various restrictions (section 3.2).  
 c. The theme shows variable positioning (section 3.3).

**3.1 THE GENITIVE PHRASE.** As indicated above, an obligatory characteristic of the AE is that the actor/agent appears initially in a phrase introduced by *nā*. This phrase is morphologically identical to the *nā* phrase seen in the possessive statements in (11). In fact, the AE also uses the suppletive first singular form *nā'u* 'PREP.GENA.1SG' seen in (11c) instead of the morphologically transparent form *\*nā vau* 'PREP.GENA 1SG':

6. Tahitian has a distinct marker *'i* that functions as a preposition marking indirect objects, and a wide range of other complements and adjuncts (L&P 2000:186–88). The preposition *'i* serving these functions cannot be dropped:

(iii) Nā'u i hōro'a atu ('i) te tao'a \*( 'i) te tamari'i.  
 PREP.GENA.1SG ASP give DIR ACC DET present PREP DET child  
 'It's me who gave the present to the child.'

- (22) a. *Nā'u i ha'amana'o 'i te pahonora'a.* AE1  
 PREP.GENA.1SG PFV remember ACC DET answer  
 'It's me who remembered the answer.'
- b. *Nā'u te pahonora'a i ha'amana'o.* AE3  
 PREP.GENA.1SG DET answer PFV remember  
 'It's me who remembered the answer.'

At the same time, the AE is not possible with the *o* possessive series (L&P 2000:189):

- (23) a. *\*Nō'u i ha'amana'o 'i te pahonora'a.*  
 PREP.GENO.1SG PFV remember ACC DET answer  
 Intended: 'It's me who remembered the answer.'
- b. *\*Nō'u te pahonora'a i ha'amana'o.*  
 PREP.GENO.1SG DET answer PFV remember  
 Intended: 'It's me who remembered the answer.'

We will assume that the initial phrase consists of the preposition *nā-* containing the *a* possessive form of a nominal, just as in possessive statements. Data below will confirm that this phrase is, in fact, a constituent.

The initial phrase seems to have a focus interpretation. Consultants typically supply a pseudocleft or *it*-cleft translation. The AE is natural with subject questions:

- (24) a. *Nā vai i rave 'i tā'u penitara?* AE1  
 PREP who PFV take ACC DET.GENA.1SG pen  
 'Who took my ballpoint pen?'
- b. *Nā vai tā'u penitara i rave?* AE3  
 PREP who DET.GENA.1SG pen PFV take  
 'Who took my ballpoint pen?'
- (25) a. *Nā tehia pīahi i ha'amana'o 'i te pahonora'a?* AE1  
 PREP which student ASP remember ACC DET answer  
 'Which student remembered the answer?'
- b. *Nā tehia pīahi te pahonora'a i ha'amana'o?* AE3  
 PREP which student DET answer ASP remember  
 'Which student remembered the answer?'

The AE is also common and natural with focused subjects:

- (26) *Nā'u iho i rave 'i te 'ohipa.*  
 PREP.GENA.1SG self ASP do ACC DET work  
 'I myself did the work.'

**3.2 THE VERB.** The AE in other Polynesian languages is largely restricted to transitive verbs. In Tahitian, almost all transitive verbs that we tested allow the AE. This, not surprisingly, includes verbs high on the transitivity scale such as 'hit', 'build', 'take', 'bite', 'eat', 'cut down', 'kill', 'wash', and 'steal'. It also includes some less agentive experiencer verbs like *'ite* 'see, find' and *hina'aro* 'want'; see (27).

7. One of our consultants rejected this sentence.



- (27) Nā 'oe i 'ite 'i terā vahine.<sup>8</sup>  
 PREP 2SG ASP see ACC DEM woman  
 'It's you who saw that woman.'

The actor/agent phase may also serve as a causer instead of a strict agent:<sup>9</sup>

- (28) a. Nā te mahana i ha'a-marō 'i te 'ahu AE1  
 PREP DET sun ASP CAUSE-dry ACC DET clothes  
 'It's the sun that dried the clothes.'
- b. Nā te mahana te 'ahu i ha'a-marō AE3  
 PREP DET sun DET clothes ASP CAUS-dry  
 'It's the sun that dried the clothes.'

So far we have found three transitive verbs that do not allow the AE: *mātau* 'know', illustrated in (29), *hemo* 'fall behind someone (as in a race)', and *'ana'anatae* 'like, *aimer bien*'. All are nonagentive.<sup>10</sup>

- (29) a. \*Nā'u i mātau 'ia Hiro.  
 PREP.GEN.A.1SG ASP know ACC Hiro  
 Intended: 'It's me that knows Hiro.'
- b. \*Nā'u 'o Hiro i mātau.  
 PREP.GEN.A.1SG DET Hiro ASP know  
 Intended: 'It's me that knows Hiro.'

Speakers also allow a range of intransitive verbs to appear in the AE (see Bauer 1997:505–7 for similar patterns in Māori). This includes motion verbs and apparent unergatives. In most cases, the external argument of the verb has some degree of volitionality/agentivity, although this is not clear with *māuiui* 'suffer, hurt, *être douloureux*'.

- (30) a. Nā te ra'atira e parau.  
 PREP DET chief ASP speak  
 'It's the chief who will speak.'
- b. Nāna e māuiui.  
 PREP.GEN.A.3SG ASP suffer  
 'It's him/her who suffers/hurts.' (AT 1986:303)
- c. Nā Petero i haere i te fare.  
 PREP Petero ASP go PREP DET house  
 'It's Peter who went to the house.' (L&P 2000:64)
- d. Nā vai i 'ata iho nei?  
 PREP who ASP laugh self DIR  
 'Who just laughed?'
- e. Nā t-ā'u tamāhine i hīmene ināpō.  
 PREP DET-GENA.1SG daughter ASP sing last.night  
 'It's my daughter who sang last night.'

In clearly nonagentive/volitional contexts, such as with stative and unaccusative intransitives, the AE is rejected:

8. 'Ite means both 'find' and 'see' in this example and more generally.

9. Two of six speakers found this pair of sentences questionable.

10. These verbs are transitive in the sense that they take an object complement which can be passivized.

- (31) a. \*Nā te fare moni i 'ore i matara.  
 PREP DET house money ASP NEG ASP be.open  
 Intended: 'It's the bank that isn't open.'
- b. \*Nā te mā'a i nava'i.  
 PREP DET food ASP be.sufficient  
 Intended: 'It's the food that there is enough of.'
- c. \*Nā'u e ve'ave'a ra.  
 PREP.GENA.1SG ASP be.hot DIR  
 Intended: 'It's me who is hot.'
- d. \*Nā vai i fiu?<sup>11</sup>  
 PREP who ASP be.bored  
 Intended: 'Who is bored?'
- e. \*Nā te tāvana i pohe.  
 PREP DET chief ASP die  
 Intended: 'It's the chief who died.'
- f. \*Nā Teri'i i mo'e.  
 PREP Teri'i ASP disappear  
 Intended: 'It's Terii who disappeared.'
- g. \*Nā vai i 'ana'anatae 'i terā hoho'a?  
 PREP who ASP be.pleased.by ACC DEM picture  
 Intended: 'Who likes that picture?'

We hypothesize, along with L&P (2000:65), that the AE is dependent upon the level of agentivity of the external argument. The more agentlike properties the external argument has, the more acceptable it is in the AE. We leave the details of this investigation for future work, but suggest that it could be spelled out in terms of Dowty's (1991) protoagent properties.

**3.3 THE THEME.** The theme in the AE, if there is one, can appear in two positions: postverbal in AE1/AE2 and preverbal in AE3. In the former case, it is a direct object, optionally marked with the accusative marker 'i. If it occurs preverbally, it must not have 'i but, instead, is marked as a subject (we return to this observation in section 5).

It is worth noting that this preverbal noun phrase in AE3 may not be just any complement; it must be a direct object. This can be seen with complements that are marked by the preposition 'i (see footnote 6). L&P (2000:186–88) document a wide range of uses for the preposition 'i, including indirect objects, locatives, directionals, time adverbials, instruments, causes, benefactives, comparatives, and stance adverbials. In such uses, AE3 is not possible. In (32), the complement marked by 'i is an indirect object; in (33), it is a goal. Although AE1 is possible, the object of 'i may not front to form AE3.

- (32) a. E parau vau 'i te rū'au.  
 IPFV speak 1SG PREP DET old.person  
 'I will speak to the old person.'

11. L&P (2000:63) show (iv) as acceptable. However, all our speakers rejected this sentence.

(iv) Nā 'oe i fiu.  
 PREP.GENA 2SG ASP tired  
 'It's you who has had enough.' (French: 'C'est toi qui en as assez.')

- b. Nā'u e parau 'i te rū'au. AE1  
 PREP.GENA.ISG ASP speak PREP DET old.person  
 'It's me who will speak to the old person.'
- c. \*Nā'u te rū'au e parau. AE3  
 PREP.GENA.ISG DET old.person ASP speak
- (33) a. 'Ua haere 'o Petero i te fare.  
 PFV go DET Petero PREP DET house  
 'Peter went to the house.' (L&P 2000:64)
- b. Nā Petero i haere 'i te fare. AE1  
 PREP Petero ASP go PREP DET house  
 'It's Vatea who went to the house.'
- c. \*Nā Petero te fare i haere. AE3  
 PREP Petero DET house ASP go

Fronting of the theme serves to make it discourse salient in some unclear way, perhaps by making it topical. Since we will claim below that AE3 makes the theme a subject, we hypothesize that the discourse restrictions on the theme in AE3 are simply those that apply to subjects. With this description of the pieces of the construction, we turn to its syntax.

**4. BICLAUSAL CONSTRUCTION.** This first syntax section addresses the number of clauses in the AE. We argue that the AE is a biclausal construction. Morpho-syntactic evidence from TAM markers, negation, topicalization, and question particle placement indicates that the verb is not the main predicate of the clause, but is in a dependent clause. This means that there is a nonverbal main clause predicate somewhere. The evidence simultaneously indicates that the *nā*-phrase is the matrix predicate.

**4.1 TAM MARKERS.** Tahitian has a wide range of TAM markers (Tryon 1970:32–37, Markey 1976, AT 1986:201–56, L&P 2000:124–42). We have already seen two marking aspectual distinctions: *'ua* 'PFV' and *tē* 'IPFV'. What is noteworthy is that neither of these occurs in certain subordinate clauses (termed "*subordination stricte*" in L&P 2000:47). Instead, they are replaced by the aspectual markers *i* 'PFV' and *e* 'IPFV', respectively. It is clear from the above examples of the AE and those repeated in (34) and (35) that the TAM markers preceding the verb in the AE belong to the subordinate set. Those found in matrix clauses are excluded.<sup>12</sup>

- (34) a. 'Ua /\*i hōhoni te ma'o 'i te tāvana.  
 PFV.MAIN / PFV.SUB bite DET shark ACC DET chief  
 'The shark bit the chief.'
- b. Nā te ma'o i /\*'ua hōhoni 'i te tāvana. AE1  
 PREP DET shark PFV.SUB / PFV.MAIN bite ACC DET chief  
 'It's the shark that bit the chief.'

12. *I* and *e* do have matrix clause uses as a past tense marker and an imperfective marker, respectively. Thus, their appearance in the AE does not immediately indicate that we are dealing with subordinate clauses. The fact that *'ua* and *tē* are simultaneously excluded and replaced by *i* and *e*, however, is only compatible with the verb being a predicate in a dependent clause.

- c. Nā te ma'ō te tāvana i /\*'ua hōhoni. AE3  
 PREP DET shark DET chief PFV.SUB/ PFV.MAIN bite  
 'It's the shark that bit the chief.'
- (35) a. Tē 'amu nei te mīmī 'i te i'a.  
 IPFV eat DEIC DET cat ACC DET fish  
 'The cat is eating the fish.'
- b. Nā te mīmī e /\*tē 'amu 'i te i'a. AE1  
 PREP DET cat IPFV.SUB/ IPFV.MAIN eat ACC DET fish  
 'It's the cat that is eating the fish.'
- c. Nā te mīmī te i'a e /\*tē 'amu. AE3  
 PREP DET cat DET fish IPFV.SUB/ IPFV.MAIN eat  
 'It's the cat that is eating the fish.'

Other matrix TAM markers are also excluded, for example, the imperative marker 'a.

- (36) a. 'A inu ('oe) 'i te rā'au.  
 IMP drink 2SG ACC DET medicine  
 'Take the medicine!'
- b. \*Nā 'oe 'a inu 'i te rā'au. AE1  
 PREP 2SG IMP drink ACC DET medicine  
 Intended: 'It's you who should take the medicine.'

The observation that the verb in the AE must be preceded by the set of subordinate clause TAM markers and cannot be preceded by matrix TAM markers strongly indicates that it is part of an embedded clause. Consequently, the verb is not the matrix clause predicate, which must be something else.

**4.2 NEGATION.** Tahitian negation facts are quite complex (Lemaître 1973:17, AT 1986:328–34, L&P 2000:49–59, Peltzer 1996, Tryon 1970:46–48). Nevertheless, distinctions between matrix and embedded negation and between verbal and nonverbal predicate negation can be profitably used to diagnose the structure of the AE.

'Aita, e'ita, 'aore, and e'ore are used to negate verbal predicates and occur in clause-initial position. They are themselves raising predicates; they are followed by a subordinate clause introduced by the TAM markers *i/e*, and the subject of the clause being negated raises from immediately following the verb to immediately following the negative element.<sup>13</sup>

- (37) a. 'Ua tai'o 'oe 'i terā puta.  
 PFV read 2SG ACC DEM book  
 'You read that book.'
- b. 'Aita 'oe i tai'o 'i terā puta.  
 NEG 2SG ASP read ACC DEM book  
 'You didn't read that book.'
- c. \*'Aita i tai'o 'oe 'i terā puta.  
 NEG ASP read 2SG ACC DEM book

At first approximation, *e'ita* is used in the imperfective and is followed by the dependent TAM marker *e*, and *'aita* is used in perfective contexts followed by *i*. These forms

13. See Hohepa (1969) for a raising analysis of Māori negation that is quite similar.

are described as sentential or “total” negation, denying the full clause that they are attached to.<sup>14</sup> *’Ore* is the negative form used for constituent negation and in certain embedded (Peltzer’s “*subordination stricte*”) verbal clauses:

- (38) Tē hina’aro nei t-ō’u tuahine ’ia ’ore ’oe ’ia fifi.  
 IPFV want DIR DET-GENO.1SG sister COMP NEG 2SG PREP difficulty  
 ‘My sister wants that you not have any difficulties.’ (AT 1986:332)

*E’ere* is the negative form used for nonverbal predicates, and it also seems to be a raising predicate. In the examples below, from Peltzer (1996), the subject follows the predicate in the affirmative but follows *e’ere* in the negative.

- (39) a. ’O Teva tō mātou matahiapo.  
 DET Teva DET-GENO 1PL.EXCL oldest  
 ‘Our oldest is Teva.’ (Peltzer 1996:238)
- b. E’ere tō mātou matahiapo ’o Teva.  
 NEG DET-GENO 1PL.EXCL oldest DET Teva  
 ‘Teva is not our oldest.’ (Peltzer 1996:238)
- (40) a. Mai te fare mai au.  
 from DET house DIR 1SG  
 ‘I am coming from the house.’ (Peltzer 1996:239)
- b. E’ere au mai te fare mai.  
 NEG 1SG from DET house DIR  
 ‘I am not coming from the house.’ (Peltzer 1996:239)

Possessive statements are negated with *e’ere*:

- (41) a. Nā Ioane teie tāupo’o.  
 PREP John this hat  
 ‘This hat is John’s.’
- b. E’ere teie tāupo’o nā Ioane.  
 NEG this hat PREP John  
 ‘This hat is not John’s.’

Turning to the AE, two kinds of negation are possible. To negate the main clause, *e’ere*, not *’aita*, is used:

- (42) a. Nāna i ’eiā ’i tō’u pere’o’o.  
 PREP.GENA.3SG ASP steal ACC DET.GENO.1SG car  
 ‘It’s him who stole my car.’
- b. E’ere/\*’Aita nāna i ’eiā ’i tō’u pere’o’o.  
 NEG PREP.GENA.3SG ASP steal ACC DET.GENO.1SG car  
 ‘It’s not him who stole my car.’

Such data show that the main predicate of the clause is nonverbal, as the verbal negation marker *’aita* is impossible. We take the main predicate to be the agentive *nā*-phrase. This is not surprising, given that Tahitian is a predicate-initial language and this phrase is clause-initial.

The verb can also be negated but, here too, *’aita* is not used. Instead, the embedded negative form *’ore* is used:

14. *’Aore* and *e’ore* are more emphatic and will not be discussed here.

- (43) a. Nāna i rave 'i te 'ohipa.  
 PREP.GEN.A.3SG ASP do ACC DET work  
 'It's him who did the work.'
- b. Nāna i 'ore/\*'aita i rave 'i te 'ohipa.  
 PREP.GEN.A.3SG ASP NEG ASP do ACC DET work  
 'It's him who didn't do the work.'

This paradigm confirms that the verb is not the main predicate of the clause but is a distinct, embedded predicate. The possibility of two forms of negation indicates that the construction is biclausal, with the agentive phrase being the matrix predicate. In fact, both negations can be present:

- (44) E'ere nā 'oe i 'ore i hōro'a atu i terā puta ia Tihoni rā.  
 NEG PREP.GEN 2SG ASP NEG ASP give DIR ACC DEM book PREP Tihoni DIR  
 'It's not you who didn't give the book to Tihoni.' (AT 1986:304)

**4.3 TOPICALIZATION.** A further piece of evidence in favor of a biclausal structure comes from topicalization (L&P 2000:59–60, AT 1986:299–301). Tahitian topicalization fronts a constituent, making it a sentence topic. Subjects and objects may be resumed by a resumptive pronoun *ia* 'RP' or by a full pronoun; alternatively, their original position in the clause may be left unmarked. The resumptive pronoun immediately follows the predicate even if this is not the base position of the fronted element. Example (45) illustrates subject topicalization.

- (45) a. 'Ua hāmani te tāmuta i tō mātou fare.  
 PFV build DET carpenter ACC DET.GEN.O IPL.EXCL house  
 'The carpenter built our house.' (L&P 2000:59)
- b. Te tāmuta, 'ua hāmani ø/ia/'oia i tō mātou fare.  
 DET carpenter PFV build ø/RP/3SG ACC DET.GEN.O IPL.EXCL house  
 'The carpenter, he built our house.' (L&P 2000:60)

Example (46) illustrates object topicalization. A resumptive pronoun can optionally be left behind. As shown, it must appear immediately after the verbal predicate, and it may not appear in the base position of the object, which is after the subject.

- (46) Tō mātou fare, ua hāmani (ia) te tāmuta (\*ia).  
 DET.GEN.O IPL.EXCL house PFV build RP DET carpenter RP  
 'Our house, the carpenter built it.' (after L&P 2000:60)

Turning to the AE, the theme may be topicalized and resumed with *ia*, as in (47). We will return to such data below in our discussion of the grammatical status of the theme; what is relevant at this point is that the optional resumptive pronoun immediately follows the agentive *nā*-phrase and may not follow the lower predicate. This indicates that the *nā*-phrase is a predicate and, consequently, the construction is biclausal, since the verb constitutes a second predicate.

- (47) Tō mātou fare, nā te tāmuta (ia) i hāmani (\*ia).  
 DET.GEN.O IPL.EXCL house PREP DET carpenter RP PFV build RP  
 'Our house, it's the carpenter who built it.' (L&P 2000:65)

**4.4 QUESTION PARTICLE PLACEMENT.** The final argument in favor of a biclausal structure comes from the placement of the question particle *ānei* (L&P 2000:111, AT 1986:503–4), which marks the right edge of the predicate. In verbal clauses, it is placed immediately after the verb, as in (48). With nonverbal predicates, it follows the predicate, as shown in (49).

- (48) 'Ua taio (ānei) 'oe (\*ānei) 'i terā puta?  
 PFV read Q 2SG Q ACC DEM book  
 'Did you read that book?'

- (49) a. E manu ānei terā?  
 PRED bird Q DEM  
 'Is that a bird?' (L&P 2000:111)
- b. 'O 'oe ānei te taote?  
 PRED 2SG Q DET doctor  
 'Are you the doctor?'

Possessive statements are similarly questioned by placing *ānei* immediately after the *nā*-phrase predicate, as in (50).

- (50) Nā 'outou (ānei) te mīmī (\*ānei)?  
 PREP 2PL Q DET cat Q  
 'Is the cat yours?'

If the subject is fronted via topicalization, *ānei* still follows the predicate, not the fronted subject:

- (51) a. Te mīmī, (\*ānei) nā 'outou (ānei)?  
 DET cat Q PREP 2PL Q  
 'This cat, is it yours?'
- b. Terā ma'o (\*ānei) 'ua hōhoni (ānei) 'oia 'i te tāvana?  
 DEM shark Q PFV bite Q 3SG ACC DET chief  
 'That shark, did it bite the chief?'

The placement of *ānei* in the AE shows that the *nā*-phrase is the main predicate. The particle immediately follows this phrase and not the verbal predicate, as shown in (52).

- (52) a. Nā 'oe (ānei) i 'ite (\*ānei) 'i terā vahine? AE1  
 PREP 2SG Q ASP find Q ACC DEM woman  
 'Is it you who found that woman?'
- b. Nā 'oe (ānei) te vahine (\*ānei) i 'ite? AE3  
 PREP 2SG Q DET woman Q ASP find  
 'Is it you who found the woman?'

To summarize so far, evidence shows that the AE is biclausal: the *nā*-phrase is the matrix predicate and the verb constitutes an embedded clause. Schematically, the structures of AE1 and AE3 are as in (53). We turn now to the second piece of the puzzle, the NP between these two predicates in AE3. We show that it is the matrix subject and not part of the embedded clause, as indicated in (53b).

- (53) a. [nā X]<sub>predicate</sub> [dependent clause] AE1  
 b. [nā X]<sub>predicate</sub> NP<sub>subject</sub> [dependent clause] AE3

**5. THE GRAMMATICAL FUNCTION OF THE PREVERBAL NOUN PHRASE.** This section explores the grammatical status of the preverbal noun phrase that shows up in AE3. We will call it the bare noun phrase. We argue that the bare noun phrase is the subject of the matrix clause.

- (54) a. Nā te ma'o i hōhoni 'i te tāvana. AE1  
 PREP DET shark PFV bite ACC DET chief  
 'It's the shark that bit the chief.'
- b. Nā te ma'o te tāvana i hōhoni. AE3  
 PREP DET shark DET chief PFV bite  
 'It's the shark that bit the chief.'

**5.1 FORM OF THE BARE NOUN PHRASE.** The most straightforward piece of evidence for the subject status of the bare noun phrase is its form. It appears in the morphological form of subjects, as described in (13). Remember that, as subjects, common noun phrases and pronouns are unmarked, while names have a special determiner 'o. In AE3, names have the determiner 'o and not the accusative marker 'ia, as in (55). Pronouns and common noun phrases are unmarked, as shown in (56).

- (55) a. Nā vai 'o Teri'i e tāniuniu?  
 PREP who DET.NOM Terii ASP call  
 'Who will call Terii?'
- b. \*Nā vai 'ia Teri'i e tāniuniu?  
 PREP who ACC Terii ASP call
- (56) a. Nā vai mātou e tāniuniu?  
 PREP who IPL.EXCL ASP call  
 'Who will call us?'
- b. \*Nā vai 'ia mātou e tāniuniu?  
 PREP who ACC IPL.EXCL ASP call

We also saw in (14) that first and third person singular pronouns have suppletive accusative forms. For example, the first person pronominal forms are (*v*)au '1SG.NOM' and 'ia'u '1SG.ACC'. When the bare noun phrase is a first person pronoun, the subject form is used:

- (57) Nā vai au /\*'ia'u e tāniuniu?  
 PREP who 1SG.NOM/ 1SG.ACC ASP call  
 'Who will call me?'

Additional data below will support the subject status of the bare noun phrase. What remains to be determined is which clause it is the subject of: the matrix clause or the dependent clause. Initial observation suggests that it is the matrix subject because it appears in the canonical position after the matrix predicate. Nevertheless, preverbal subjects are possible in some kinds of dependent clauses, so this does not rule out the possibility that the bare noun phrase is in fact the subject of the embedded clause. We show that it is not.

**5.2 TOPICALIZATION.** The topicalization data above provide evidence that the bare noun phrase comes from the matrix clause. When it is topicalized, the resumptive pronoun follows the matrix predicate, not the embedded verb, as in (58). On the assump-



tion that the resumptive pronoun occurs in the clause that the displaced element originates in, the bare noun phrase is in the matrix clause.

- (58) Te tāvana, nā te ma'o (ia) i hōhoni (\*ia).  
 DET chief PREP DET shark RP ASP bite RP  
 'The chief, it's the shark that bit him.'

**5.3 NEGATION.** Section 4.2 showed that the nonverbal negative marker *e'ere* is a raising predicate used with nonverbal predicates:

- (59) a. 'O Teva tō mātou matahiapo.  
 DET Teva DET-GENO 1PL.EXC oldest  
 'Our oldest is Teva.'  
 b. E'ere tō mātou matahiapo 'o Teva.  
 NEG DET-GENO 1PL.EXC oldest DET Teva  
 'Teva is not our oldest.' (Peltzer 1996:238)
- (60) a. Mai te fare mai au.  
 from DET house DIR 1SG  
 'I am coming from the house.' (Peltzer 1996:239)  
 b. E'ere au mai te fare mai.  
 NEG 1SG from DET house DIR  
 'I am not coming from the house.' (Peltzer 1996:239)

In fact, the pattern seems to be more complex than the literature indicates. Our speakers showed that the raising is optional with a possessive predicate. The subject can raise to follow *e'ere*, as in (61b), or can remain in its base position following the possessive predicate being negated, as in (61c).

- (61) a. Nā Ioane teie tāupo'o.  
 PREP John this hat  
 'This hat is John's.'  
 b. E'ere teie tāupo'o nā Ioane.  
 NEG this hat PREP John  
 'This hat is not John's.'  
 c. E'ere nā Ioane teie tāupo'o.  
 NEG PREP John this hat  
 'This hat is not John's.'

The noun phrase in the AE behaves the same as the above subjects. It may, of course, stay inside the dependent clause in AE1, where it is not a subject at all, as in (62a). It may appear as a subject following the *nā*-phrase, as in (62b). It may also appear immediately following the negative marker, as in (62c). As the matrix subject, the optionality of raising with *e'ere* is expected, as we saw in (61).

- (62) a. E'ere nāna e rave 'i terā 'ohipa.  
 NEG PREP.GEN.3SG ASP do ACC DEM work  
 'It isn't him who did that work.'

- b. E'ere nāna                    **terā 'ohipa** e rave.  
 NEG    PREP.GENA.3SG    DEM    work    ASP    do  
 'It isn't him who did that work.'
- c. E'ere **terā 'ohipa** nāna                    e rave.<sup>15</sup>  
 NEG    DEM    work    PREP.GENA.3SG    ASP    do  
 'It isn't him who did that work.'

**5.4 DISTRIBUTIVE QUANTIFIER.** An additional piece of evidence for the main clause subject status of the bare noun phrase comes from the distribution of the distributed quantifier *pauoa* 'all (together)'. For some speakers, *pauoa* is a predicate modifier that must be bound by the subject.<sup>16</sup> For these speakers, in ordinary VSO clauses, *pauoa* follows the verb and can only be associated with the subject:

- (63) a. 'Ua ha'amana'o pauoa te mau pīahi 'i te pahonora'a.  
 PFV    remember    all    DET    PL    student    ACC    DET    answer  
 'All the students remembered the answer.'
- b. \*'Ua ha'amana'o pauoa vau 'i te pahonora'a.  
 PFV    remember    all    1SG    ACC    DET    answer  
 Intended: 'I remembered all the answers.'
- c. 'Ua ha'amana'o pauoa hia te mau pahonora'a e au.  
 PFV    remember    all    PASS    DET    PL    answer    by    1SG  
 'All the answers were remembered by me.'

In the AE, *pauoa* follows the *nā*-phrase, which is expected, given that it is the main predicate. Further, it quantifies over the following noun phrase, which is also expected if that is the subject, as illustrated in (64a). It cannot quantify over the agent, (64b), or the embedded object, (64c), because they are not subjects.

- (64) a. Nā'u                    pauoa te mau pahonora'a i ha'amana'o.  
 PREP.GENA.1SG    all    DET    PL    answer    ASP    remember  
 'It's me who remembered all the answers.'
- b. \*Nā te mau pīahi pauoa i ha'amana'o 'i terā pahonora'a.  
 PREP    DET    PL    student    all    ASP    remember    ACC    DET    answer  
 Intended: 'It was all the students who remembered the answer.'
- c. \*Nā'u                    pauoa i ha'amana'o 'i te mau pahonora'a.  
 PREP.GENA.1SG    all    ASP    remember    ACC    DET    PL    answer  
 Intended: 'It was me who remembered all the answers.'

This restricted distribution for *pauoa* (as observed with a subset of speakers) supports the clausal organization for the AE proposed here.

**5.5 WH-IN-SITU.** Restrictions on wh-in-situ also indicate that the bare noun phrase is a subject. Tahitian allows wh-in-situ for nonsubjects, (65), but subject in-situ is impossible, as shown by (66).

15. Four speakers accepted this pattern without question, two found it acceptable but "complex," and two thought it was quite marginal.

16. For others there seemed to be little restriction on its association with nonsubjects, and we exclude those speakers here.

- (65) a. 'Ua 'ite 'oe 'i te aha?  
 PFV see 2SG ACC DET what  
 'What did you see?'  
 b. E haere 'oe i hea?  
 IPFV go 2SG PREP where  
 'Where are you going?' (L&P 2000:114)  
 c. E hōro'a 'oe i terā mea ia vai ra?  
 IPFV give 2SG ACC DEM thing PREP who DIR  
 'You will give this thing to who?' (AT 1986:173)  
 d. 'Ua rave 'oe i te 'ahu o vai?  
 PFV do 2SG ACC DET clothes GENO who  
 'You took whose clothing?' (AT 1986:173)
- (66) a. \*E 'orometua 'o vai?<sup>17</sup>  
 IPFV shepherd DET.NOM who  
 'Who is a shepherd?'  
 b. \*'Ua ta'oto 'o vai?  
 PFV sleep DET.NOM who  
 'Who is sleeping?'

Wh-in-situ is impossible for the bare noun phrase in the AE, which is expected if it is a subject:

- (67) \*Nā te ma'o 'o vai i 'amu? AE3  
 PREP DET shark DET.NOM who ASP eat  
 Intended: 'It's the shark that ate who?'

As an anonymous reviewer points out to us, the ungrammaticality of (67) could be accounted for because the sentence contains two foci, the agent and the wh-phrase. Such double focalization seems to be largely ruled out cross-linguistically (see Lambrecht 1994:279–93). Indeed, most speakers also rejected similar examples with wh-in-situ in the AE for a nonsubject, as with (68). However, one speaker who accepted these examples of wh-in-situ with the AE still rejected (67). We take this as an indicator that the examples in (68) have a different status from (67), which can be accounted for with the uniform, language-specific ban on subject wh-in-situ.

- (68) a. %Nā te ma'o i 'amu 'ia vai? AE1  
 PREP DET shark ASP eat ACC who  
 'It's the shark that ate who?'  
 b. %Nā te ma'o te tāvana i 'amu 'i hea? AE3  
 PREP DET shark DET chief ASP eat PREP where  
 'It's the shark that bit the chief where?'

To summarize, we have argued for the clausal organization in (69) for the Tahitan AE.

- (69) a. [nā X]<sub>predicate</sub> [dependent clause] AE1/AE2  
 b. [nā X]<sub>predicate</sub> NP<sub>subject</sub> [dependent clause] AE3

17. These examples are marked grammatical in L&P (2000:112), possibly as echo questions. Our speakers did not accept them.

Beginning with AE3, the matrix clause encodes a subject-predicate relationship between a theme and a prepositional phrase containing an actor/agent. The relationship between the agent and theme is expressed by a verb in a dependent clause. The exact relationship of this clause to the arguments that are external to it is as yet unclear. AE1/AE2, in contrast to AE3, seems to lack a subject. There is nothing corresponding to the preverbal theme. Either there is no contentful subject—in which case the Extended Projection Principle forces us to posit a null expletive in the subject position—or the dependent clause is itself the subject. We adopt the former position but without evidence. We do not currently know of any subject diagnostics that could answer this question. The basic clausal organization for the Tahitian AE is thus as follows:

- (70) a. [nā X]<sub>predicate</sub> *expletive* [dependent clause] AE1/AE2  
 b. [nā X]<sub>predicate</sub> NP<sub>subject</sub> [dependent clause] AE3

With this basic picture in place, we turn to a comparison with existing analyses for the Māori AE before discussing the remaining syntactic and semantic questions that need to be answered in a more complete analysis.

**6. MĀORI ACTOR EMPHATIC.** The AE has been widely discussed and analyzed in Māori (Clark 1976; Chung 1978; Harlow 1986, 2007; Waite 1990; Bauer 1997, 2004; Pearce 1999). This section compares the situation in that language to Tahitian, based largely on the above references as well as the particularly clear description in Bauer (2004).

Māori allows AE2 and AE3:

- (71) a. I tīhore a Pita i te hipi.  
 TAM skin DET Peter ACC the sheep  
 ‘Peter skinned the sheep.’  
 b. Nā Pita i tīhore te hipi. AE2  
 PREP Peter ASP skin DET sheep  
 ‘It was Peter who skinned the sheep.’  
 c. Nā Pita te hipi i tīhore. AE3  
 PREP Peter DET sheep ASP skin  
 ‘It was Peter who skinned the sheep.’ (Clark 1976:111)

In contrast to Tahitian, AE1 does not seem possible (Clark 1976, Chung 1978, Bauer 2004):

- (72) \*Nā Hōne i patu i te poaka. AE1  
 PREP John ASP kill ACC DET pig  
 Intended: ‘John killed the pig.’ (Chung 1978:180)

A number of researchers (Clark 1976, Chung 1978, Bauer 2004) point out that the Māori AE is more common with transitive verbs but that various intransitives are also possible. The exact generalizations are unclear, but the picture seems similar to Tahitian.

We take Chung (1978) and Bauer (2004) as our starting point, as their conclusions about Māori are similar to, though not the same as, ours. Chung (1978) and Bauer (2004) demonstrate that the initial agentive phrase in Māori is the matrix predicate. Evidence comes from negation, relativization, emphatic stress placement, and fronted adverbials.

For example, as in Tahitian, the Māori AE is negated using the nonverbal predicate negator *ēhara* (Hohepa 1969):

- (73) *Ēhara nā Mere i whaka-pai te tēpu.*  
 NEG ACTUAL-A.POSS Mere PAST CAUSE-good DEF.SG table  
 ‘It wasn’t Mere who set the table.’ (Bauer 2004:31)

The AE TAM marker is restricted, as in Tahitian, in this case to *i* ‘PAST’ and *e* ‘FUT’. Waite (1990) and Bauer (2004) indicate that both *i* and *e* do occur in matrix clauses, making their appearance in the AE a weak argument for biclausality. Chung, however, takes the restriction to *i/e* as evidence for biclausality, because *e* in particular does not occur in matrix clauses with nonstative predicates, but may do so in embedded clauses and in the AE. Further, biclausality accounts for the impossibility of other matrix TAM markers beyond *i/e*, which the monoclausal analysis does not easily explain.

More interestingly, Chung (1978) and Bauer (2004) show that in Māori the theme in both AE2 and AE3 is a subject. This differs from Tahitian in that the theme in AE3 is a subject but the theme in AE2 is still a direct object. The evidence for the subject status of the theme comes from case marking, relativization, topicalization, clefting, and the non-specific article *he*.<sup>18</sup> We will not repeat all of the data here, only the argument from *he*, since it is unique to Māori.

Chung (1978); Chung, Mason, and Milroy (1995); Polinsky (1992); Bauer (1993, 2004); Chung and Ladusaw (2003); and others show that the nonspecific article *he* is restricted in its distribution. At first approximation, it only occurs in intransitive subjects. *He* noun phrases are possible as the theme in AE2 and AE3, indicating that the theme is a subject in both cases.

- (74) a. *Nā Hōne i hanga he whare.* AE2  
 PREP John ASP build DET house  
 ‘John built a house.’ (Chung 1978:179)
- b. *N-ā Rewi he pukapuka i hari.* AE3  
 ACTUAL-A.POSS Rewi INDF books PAST carry  
 ‘Rewi carried a book.’ (Bauer 2004:28)

Chung and Bauer thus arrive at the same structural picture as we do for AE3: a biclausal structure in which the agent is the matrix predicate and the theme is the matrix subject. For AE2, in contrast, we claimed that the theme is still an embedded object, while they argue that it is a subject. Relatedly, Tahitian permits AE1 while Māori does not.

One way to make sense of this variation between Tahitian and Māori is in the context of Chung’s (1978) transformational analysis. She proposes that there are two rules affecting the direct object, called Promotion and Raising. Promotion moves the theme from direct object position to the embedded subject position, and thus is similar to, though distinct from, passive. Raising then moves the embedded subject to the matrix subject position. In Māori, Promotion is obligatory. This excludes AE1 in Māori, as the theme cannot surface as a direct object. Promotion is optional in Tahitian and, when it does not apply,

18. The evidence for the subject status of the theme is silent on which clause the theme is the subject of. In AE3 it is clearly the subject of the matrix clause. For AE2, however, the data are unrevealing, and the above analyses differ, with at least Chung (1978) claiming that it is the subject of the embedded clause.

one gets AE1/AE2. In contrast, Raising is optional in Māori but obligatory in Tahitian. The optionality of Raising in Māori yields the AE2/AE3 alternation, but in both cases the theme is a subject. In Tahitian, Raising is obligatory. If Promotion applies to create the syntactic environment for Raising, then it applies, yielding AE3.

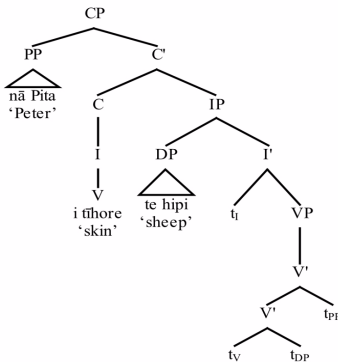
Waite (1990) proposes a very different analysis for the Māori AE (see also Pearce [1999] for a similar analysis), which we review here because it also provides a way to understand the differences between Māori and Tahitian. Waite’s analysis is couched within a Government and Binding framework, but even on a higher level, it departs in several ways from Chung’s and Bauer’s conclusions. In Waite’s analysis, the AE is monoclausal. The clause-initial agent phrase is not a predicate but a fronted, focus phrase—similar to a preposed adverbial. In agreement with Chung and Bauer, however, the theme is always the subject of this clause regardless of its relative position with respect to the verb. Word order variation in the AE results from optional displacement of the verb.

Waite encodes these claims structurally in the following way. The AE predicate is underlyingly unaccusative, with two arguments: the direct theme and an oblique agent phrase. There is no external argument. The surface form is derived by three movements: the agent phrase undergoes A'-movement to a clause-initial focus position; the direct object raises to subject position; and the verb raises to a high inflectional head. This yields the structure in figure 1a for the AE2 word order agent–verb–theme in (75a). AE3 word order, agent–theme–verb, is achieved by not raising the verb past the subject, as shown in figure 1b for (75b).

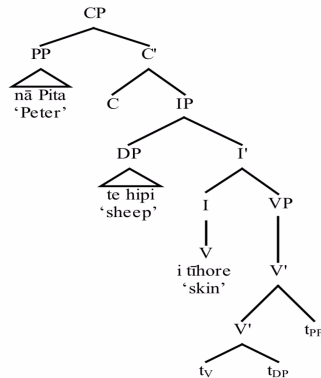
- (75) a. Nā Pita i tīhore te hipi. AE2  
 PREP Peter ASP skin DET sheep  
 ‘It was Peter who skinned the sheep.’
- b. Nā Pita te hipi i tīhore. AE3  
 PREP Peter DET sheep ASP skin  
 ‘It was Peter who skinned the sheep.’ (Clark 1976:111)

FIGURE 1.

1a.



1b.



The analysis has a number of advantages. It accounts for the subject status of the theme, that is, the obligatoriness of Promotion in Māori, in Chung's (1978) terms. This is achieved if we assume Burzio's Generalization, which states that a predicate assigns accusative Case if and only if it assigns an external theta role. We implement this by assuming that both the external theta role and accusative Case originate in the head of a light verb projection vP that is between IP and VP. This head is absent in the above structures.<sup>19</sup> The direct object cannot then be assigned accusative Case, by Burzio's Generalization, because the predicate is unaccusative and vP is absent. Therefore, the direct object must move to have its Case assigned. It moves to the canonical subject position, spec,IP, where nominative Case is assigned. This captures the unavailability of AE1 and the evidence that the theme is a subject in both AE2 and AE3.

In addition, the AE2/AE3 word order alternation follows from the optionality of verb raising. The verb raises all the way to C' for Waite, as in figure 1a and in ordinary verb-initial VSO clauses. Just in case spec,CP is filled, however, the verb need not move all the way to C (Waite 1990:401); it may stay in Infl where it follows the subject, as in figure 1b. Waite's analysis thus differs from Chung's in how it derives the AE2/AE3 alternation. In Waite's analysis, this alternation arises from variable positioning of the verb in C or Infl. Chung attributes the alternation to variable positioning of the theme as an embedded clause subject or a matrix clause subject.

Waite's analysis faces several difficulties, largely due to evidence in favor of a biclausal structure. First, it does not easily account for the restrictions on the tense marker to *i/e*. The structure for Waite is monoclausal, and it is unclear why only certain TAM markers should be allowed and why they have their embedded clause interpretations rather than the full range of matrix clause interpretations. Second, Waite points out that the negation data in (73) are problematic because the structure is a tensed verbal clause and we thus do not expect the negation that is used with nonverbal predicates.

Additionally, the analysis of the fronted agent phrase as an instance of A'-movement is problematic. Ideally, one would like empirical evidence that the *nā*-phrase is high in the clause, but binding facts argue against this. Condition C of Binding Theory requires that R-expressions be free. When an A'-moved element crosses over a c-commanding pronoun with which it is coindexed, a Strong Crossover violation results, as in (76). Such examples are robustly ungrammatical on the intended, coindexed interpretation, and this is attributed to a violation of Condition C. The pronoun c-commands the copy of the R-expression *who*.<sup>20</sup>

- (76) \*Who<sub>i</sub> does he<sub>j</sub> think Mary likes ~~who<sub>i</sub>~~?  
 Intended: "Who<sub>i</sub> thinks that Mary likes him<sub>i</sub>?"

Returning to Māori, examples in which the agent and theme are coindexed, like (77), are relevant.<sup>21</sup> The fronted agent *nā Hone* 'John' is coindexed with the subject *ia* '3SG'.

19. Waite (1990) actually has the theme stopping in the external argument position before moving to spec,IP, but this seems unnecessary and unmotivated. The theme is never an external argument, and there is no external theta role to be assigned. We simply assume that vP, where the external theta role is assigned, is absent, and consequently the theme can move directly to the surface subject position, spec,IP.

20. We use copies instead of traces here and below to more transparently show the binding relationships in the syntactic representations.

Under Waite's analysis, the *A'*-moved agent leaves behind an R-expression copy that is bound by the *c*-commanding pronominal theme *ia* '3SG', as shown in the syntactic representation in (77c). This should result in a Strong Crossover violation as in (76), and (77a,b) should be ungrammatical, contrary to fact.

- (77) a. *Nā Hone i pupuhi ia anō.*  
 ACTGEN John T/A shoot 3SG again  
 'John shot himself.' (Bauer 1993:177)
- b. *Nā Hone ia anō i pupuhi.*  
 ACTGEN John 3SG again T/A shoot  
 'John shot himself.' (Winifred Bauer, pers. comm.)
- c. *nā<sub>i</sub> Hone i pupuhi ia<sub>i</sub> anō nā-Hone.*  
 ACTGEN John T/A shoot 3SG again John  
 'John shot himself.'

Similarly, the *A'* movement analysis leads to the expectation that the theme will be able to bind the representation of the agent in its base position, but this is not possible, as shown by the example in (78a) and its corresponding syntactic representation in (78b).

- (78) a. \**Nāna (anō) a Hone i pupuhi.*  
 PREP.3SG again DET John ASP shoot  
 Intended: 'John shot himself.' (Winifred Bauer, pers. comm.)
- b. *nāna<sub>i</sub> a Hone<sub>i</sub> i pupuhi nāna.*  
 PREP.3SG DET John ASP shoot PREP.3SG  
 Intended: 'John shot himself.'

Under a non-*A'*-movement analysis, the example can be ruled out as a Condition C violation, since the R-expression *a Hone* 'John' is not free.<sup>22</sup> Thus, Waite's analysis faces empirical challenges, notably the rejection of the biclausal structure and the claim that the agent phrase undergoes *A'* movement to its initial position.

Ignoring these difficulties, Waite's (1990) analysis of Māori can be modified to account for Tahitian. Remember that the theme in Tahitian AE2 is a direct object, while it is a subject in Māori. The following changes to his analysis would be required for Tahitian: (i) accusative Case is optionally assigned in the embedded clause, and (ii) the verb never moves to C and always remains in Infl. Accusative Case needs to be available in the embedded clause to allow for AE1/AE2. When accusative Case can be assigned, the direct object can remain in situ, yielding AE1/AE2. This is shown in figure 2a for the Tahitian AE1/AE2 examples repeated in (79a) and (79b).<sup>23</sup> If accusative Case is not available, as in Māori, then the theme must move to the subject position, where it is assigned nominative Case, yielding the Tahitian AE3 example in (79c) with the structure in figure 2b.

- (79) a. *Nā te ma'o i hōhoni 'i te tāvana.* AE1  
 PREP DET shark PFV bite ACC DET chief  
 'It's the shark that bit the chief.'

21. We are grateful to Winifred Bauer for help with these examples.

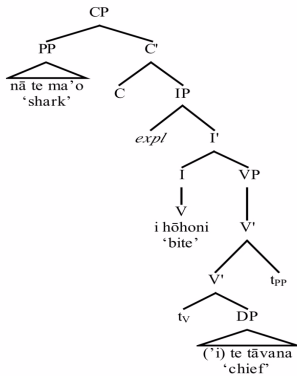
22. One needs to ignore the fact that the pronoun is actually embedded inside a prepositional phrase.  
 23. Because the Extended Projection Principle in Government and Binding Theory requires that the specifier of IP be filled, we show a null expletive in this position.



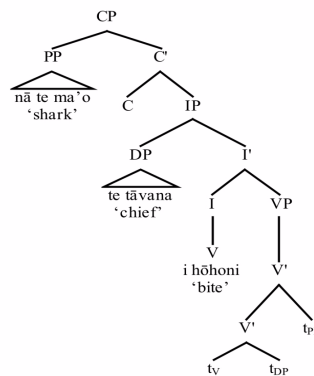
- b. **Nā te ma'o** i hōhoni te tāvana. AE2  
 PREP DET shark PFV bite DET chief  
 'It's the shark that bit the chief.'
- c. **Nā te ma'o te tāvana** i hōhoni. AE3  
 PREP DET shark DET chief PFV bite  
 'It's the shark that bit the chief.'

FIGURE 2.

2a.



2b.



In order to rule out a representation for AE2 as in (76) for Tahitian, it must be the case that the verb stops in Infl and never moves to C. Thus, when the theme is postverbal, it cannot be in spec,IP.

The extension of Waite's analysis to Tahitian is viable in that it uses reasonable and principled parametric variation to account for the differences. At the same time, it faces the same difficulties introduced above for Māori. In addition, the analysis raises the question of how VSO word order would be derived in Tahitian, since the verb cannot raise above the subject position, at least not in this construction. Last, one would have to give up on Burzio's Generalization.<sup>24</sup>

**7. CONCLUSIONS AND OUTSTANDING ISSUES.** In this paper, we hope to have made some headway toward understanding the recalcitrant AE construction in Tahitian, especially with respect to its better-studied Māori counterpart. The AE in the two languages shows interesting similarities and differences. On the one hand, both show evidence of being biclausal, with the agent phrase serving as the matrix predicate. In one variant, AE3, the theme of the embedded clause serves as the subject of this predicate. The two languages differ in the structure of a second variant, where the theme occurs after the verb. In Tahitian, the theme is still a direct object and may optionally be marked with the accusative marker *i*. In Māori, the postverbal theme is a subject.

24. See Goodall (1993), Woolford (2003), and the papers in Reuland (2000) for discussion of and evidence against Burzio's Generalization as originally formulated.

We hope to have laid the groundwork in the preceding sections for a more fine-grained analysis of the Tahitian AE. A number of syntactic and semantic issues clearly remain, for which we can only introduce the questions and provide some initial considerations.

The first is the exact status and contribution of *nā*. Clark (1976) discusses the diachronic source of the AE *nā* preposition and argues that it originated in Proto-Polynesian as a predicate consisting of the combination of a tense marker \**na'a/ne* 'PAST' (citing Pawley 1970:347) plus the possessive 'a. This is clearly not the synchronic picture, as Tahitian has no tense marker beginning with *n-*, and the preposition *nā* is compatible with any tense interpretation. Rather, we suggest that *nā* has been reanalyzed as the preposition that is used elsewhere nonpredicatively to introduce benefactives, possessors, means, and agents (L&P 2000:189–90; Tryon 1970:26, 60, 66–67, 71). It remains to be determined what the exact semantic contribution of this preposition is. Does it have a unified semantics that captures its various uses? How is the AE predicate related to the nonpredicational uses? And how does the AE predicate relate to the use of the predicate in the possessive?

Section 3.1 showed that the *nā*-phrase receives a focus interpretation and is particularly common with subject questions. We suggest that there are two possible sources of the focus aspect. First, the agent is the predicate, and predicates constitute assertion, which may make them inherently focused. Alternatively, there may be something inherent in the cleft structure that contributes the focused interpretation.

A distinct question that we touched on in section 3.2 has to do with the restrictions on the embedded predicate. Most transitive verbs were acceptable in the AE, and some intransitive verbs were also allowed. Two possible contributions to this variation are the transitivity of the verb (Hopper and Thompson 1980) and the agentivity of the external argument (Dowty 1991).

If the *nā*-phrase needs to be highly agentive, or the predicate needs to be high on a scale of transitivity, it is not surprising that passive verbs are categorically disallowed in the AE:

- (80) a. 'Ua hōhoni hia terā tamari'i e te tahi ma'o.  
 PFV bite PASS DEM child by DET one shark  
 'That child was bitten by a shark.'
- b. \*Nā terā tamari'i i hōhoni hia e te tahi ma'o.  
 PREP DEM child ASP bite PASS by DET one shark  
 Intended: 'It's that child who was bitten by a shark.'

At the same time, passive predicates did not show the speaker variation that other intransitive verbs did, suggesting that there may be a deeper source for their ungrammaticality.

A further remaining issue is the conditions on the alternation between AE1/AE2 vs. AE3. AE1/AE2 was uniformly accepted by our speakers but occasionally AE3 was less preferred. These conditions need further exploration.

The primary syntactic issue remaining is the relationship between the overt noun phrases in the matrix clause—the actor/agent and the theme—and the argument positions inside the dependent clause. Despite not appearing in the same clause as the verb, the agent and theme are interpreted as arguments of the verb. Standard Principles and Parameters assumptions about argument realization require that the bracketed dependent clause have empty categories (*ec*) corresponding to these arguments:

- (81) a. [*nā* NP<sub>agt</sub>] *expletive* [*i/e* V ec<sub>agt</sub> ('*i*) NP<sub>theme</sub>] AE1/AE2  
 b. [*nā* NP<sub>agt</sub>] NP<sub>theme</sub> [*i/e* V ec<sub>agt</sub> ec<sub>theme</sub>] AE3

The theory-internal question is what the relationship is between the overt NPs and the related empty categories. Two broad options are movement or a base-generated anaphoric relationship. We leave these questions for further research.

Finally, an anonymous reviewer reminds us that superficially similar constructions in which the fronted element is an oblique or adjunct may be relevant for answering these questions (see the discussion in Bauer [1997:507–13] for Māori). In the following examples, an oblique or adjunct is fronted, with a focus interpretation. The fronted element is followed by a dependent clause, as indicated by the dependent aspect markers *i* 'PFV' and *e* 'IPFV'. As in AE3, an argument of the dependent clause can appear immediately following the fronted element; however, in these cases, it corresponds to the subject of the dependent clause, not the object.

- (82) a. I te fare 'oe e taoto ai.  
 PREP DET house 2SG ASP sleep RP  
 'It's at the house that you will sleep.' (L&P 2000:47)
- b. Nō te mata'i te 'ama'a vī i fati ai.  
 PREP DET wind DET branch mango ASP break RP  
 'It's because of the wind that the mango tree branch broke.'  
 (after L&P 2000:47)

The unresolved issues associated with the Tahitian AE are summarized in (83).

- (83) a. choice of *nā* in the matrix predicate  
 b. focus interpretation on the agent  
 c. restrictions on the embedded predicate's transitivity/agentivity  
 d. relationships between the matrix noun phrases and their embedded argument positions.

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