
Tongan

Harry Feldman

Please examine the following data from Tongan, a Western Polynesian language spoken by about 100,000 people on the islands of the Tongan archipelago in the southwestern Pacific Ocean.

Note: These examples are presented in the Tongan orthography: /ʔ/ represents a glottal stop; /ŋ/ represents a velar nasal; and a vowel with a macron (e.g. /ō/) represents a long vowel.

1. Na'e 'alu ki kolo 'ae tamasi'i. 'A boy went to town.'
2. 'Oku 'alu ki kolo 'ae tamasi'i. 'A boy is going to town.'
3. 'E ha'u mei kolo 'ae tamasi'i. 'A boy will come from town.'
4. Na'e 'alu ki kolo 'ae ta'ahine. 'A girl went to town.'
5. Na'e 'alu ki 'api 'ae tamasi'i. 'A boy went home.'
6. 'Oku ou 'alu ki 'api. 'I am going home.'
7. 'Oku ne 'alu ki 'api. 'He (or she) is going home.'
8. 'Oku na ō ki 'api. 'They two are going home.'
9. 'Oku nau ō ki 'api. 'They (3 or more) are going home.'
10. 'Oku mau ō mei ngāue. 'We (3 or more) are coming from work.'
11. 'Oku mo ō ki kolo. 'You two are going to town.'
12. 'Oku ke 'alu ki ngāue 'i kolo. 'You are going to work in town.'
13. 'Oku ngāue 'i kolo 'ae siane. 'A man works in town.'
14. Na'e ngāue 'i 'api 'ae finemotu'a. 'A woman worked at home.'
15. 'Oku nau ngāue 'i 'kolo. 'They (3 or more) work in town.'
16. 'Oku ha'u 'ae ta'ahine mei 'api ki kolo 'A girl is coming from home to town.'
17. Na'e ha'u ki ngāue 'ae siane. 'A man came to work.'

A. Give an English gloss for each of the following Tongan words:

na'e	ou
'oku	ke
'e	ne
'alu	na

ō	nau
ki	mau
‘ae	mo
kolo	‘api
tamasi’i	ta’ahine
mei	ha’u
ngāue	‘i
siane	finemotu’a

B. Fill in the table of the pronoun forms. There should be two empty cells, as these are not provided in the data. Try to guess what these forms should be.

	Singular	?	?
1 st person			
2 nd person			
3 rd person			

C. Describe the distribution of ‘alu, ha’u and ō.

D. Give the probable English translations for the following Tongan expressions:

- ‘Oku ke ngāue ‘i ‘kolo. _____
- ’E ‘alu ‘ae tamasi’i ki ngāue ‘i kolo. _____
- Na’e ngāue ‘i ‘api ‘ae siane. _____

E. Try to translate the following into Tongan (Careful! These may be tricky.):

- ‘We two are coming from work in town.’ _____
- ‘You (3 or more) are working at home.’ _____
- ‘A man went to work.’ _____
- ‘A woman will go to work in town.’ _____

F. In terms of morphological typology, how would you classify Tongan?