5 *Spatial deixis in Pileni*

ÅSHILD NÆSS

1 Introduction

One of the most prominent features of the Polynesian Outlier language Pileni is the extent to which various spatial-deictic forms are used in discourse. The two chief means of marking spatial deixis in Pileni are demonstratives and directional particles, and both types of forms are used to an extent which appears quite extraordinary for a language of this family, perhaps for any language — a fact which suggests that spatial deixis plays an important role in the organisation of Pileni grammar.

Perhaps most striking in Pileni is the use of the demonstrative particles, which occur extremely frequently in both nominal and verbal phrases with deictic or anaphoric reference, as well as serving a number of discourse-structuring functions. But Pileni also has a very high number of the so-called directional particles: postverbal particles, common in Polynesian languages, which indicate the direction, physical or social/metaphorical, of the action denoted by the verb. While most Polynesian languages have between four and six of these particles, Pileni has seven; I am not aware of any other Polynesian languages with more than six directional particles.

This paper will deal chiefly with the uses of the demonstrative and directional particles, giving a brief account towards the end of other forms with possible spatial-deictic functions.

Until recently, available linguistic material on Pileni has been practically non-existent, and the description and study of the language is still at an early stage. The material on which this study is based was collected during two brief field trips to Pileni island in 1997 and 1998, and consists mainly of tape-recorded narratives (most of which are published as Hovdhaugen et al. 2002) as well as some elicited material. In addition, some previously published sources, mainly Elbert and Kirtley (1966), have been consulted.

The limitations imposed by the nature of the available materials should be obvious. Since no fieldwork has yet focused specifically on deixis and the use of spatial terms, very little information is available regarding, for example, how the different spatial terms relate to geographical descriptions and compass points, or how pointing and gestures are employed in descriptions of spatial relations. These are clearly important concerns in an account of spatial deixis, and it is to be hoped that future fieldwork will be able to remedy

these shortcomings; in the present paper, the main focus will of necessity be on the use of spatial-deictic forms in narrative texts. All examples are from my own tape-recorded material (see Hovdhaugen et al. 2002) unless labelled otherwise.

2 The Pileni language

Pileni is a Polynesian Outlier language spoken by roughly a thousand people[1] in Temotu Province, the easternmost province of the Solomon Islands. The language is spoken on the islands of Pileni, Nifiloli, Matema, Nukapu and Nupani in the Reef Islands group, as well as in a couple of settlements on the rather larger island of Santa Cruz, some 80 km to the south. The language of the nearby Duff Islands, though treated as distinct from Pileni in the 1999 census (Beimers 2002), is described by speakers as 'the same language' and should probably be considered a dialect of Pileni; it has roughly five hundred speakers. On the basis of vocabulary samples, Pileni has been classified as belonging to the Samoic-Outlier subgroup of Polynesian.

Temotu Province is a rather remote and isolated region of the Pacific, and the Pileni-speaking community together with the nearby Reefs and Santa Cruz islands has traditionally formed an internally more or less self-sufficient community with little contact with the outside world. Trade connections between the islands within the region, however, go hundreds of years back, and the Pileni speakers thus have a long tradition of contact with the speakers of the so-called Reefs–Santa Cruz languages, of which very little is known and whose genetic affiliation is disputed; they have been claimed to be both Austronesian heavily influenced by Papuan languages and Papuan with a significant amount of Austronesian features (Lincoln 1978; Wurm 1978). What is certain is that these languages are structurally and lexically very different from Pileni with its basically Polynesian lexicon and morphosyntactic structure.

The extensive linguistic contact caused by the trade and intermarriage between these different speech communities has led to a great deal of passive multilingualism on the islands as well as considerable mutual influence on the structure and vocabulary of, one must assume, all the languages in the area. In the case of Pileni this means that, while identifying the language as Polynesian is a straightforward matter, there are prominent features on all levels of its structure that appear distinctly non-Polynesian. With the exception of the older people, most Pileni speakers today are bilingual between Pileni and the heavily English-based Solomon Islands Pidgin (SIP), which is in frequent use on the islands.

Pileni morphosyntax is basically accusative in structure, though certain constructions follow an essentially ergative patterning and may derive from an earlier ergative structure; however, there is little synchronic evidence for analysing Pileni clause structure as wholly or partly ergative (Næss 2002). The language has little or no morphological case-marking and marks grammatical relations chiefly by means of word order; basic word order is SVO, although it is fairly flexible according to certain rules.

The physical environment in which Pileni is spoken deserves a moment's attention. All five Pileni-speaking islands are extremely small; Pileni itself covers an area of about half a square kilometre, Nukapu and Nupani are roughly the same size, Nifiloli is maybe twice as big, while Matema is even smaller than Pileni. The islands are in effect little more than sandbanks which have grown big enough for patches of forest to take root on them. There

---

[1]   In the 1999 census, 1142 people reported having Pileni as their first language (Beimers 2002).

are no significant differences in height and no distinguishing geographical features such as hills or rivers on the islands as such.

From Pileni you can see across to neighbouring Nifiloli and the somewhat larger island of Fenualoa where the Ayiwo language (called 'Reefs' in Wurm 1978) is spoken; you can see the tiny, uninhabited islet of Makaluma, the volcano Tenekula, and, in clear weather, Matema and Nukapu can be glimpsed on the horizon. Nukapu and Nupani islands are situated quite far from the rest of the group, and as far as I know, except for the occasional glimpse of Pileni that one may get from Nukapu on a very clear day, they are out of view of any other inhabited land. This means that the language is spoken on an extremely restricted area of land with very few distinguishing physical features beyond the distinction between land and sea. In other words, the physical space that the speakers live in is small and lacks naturally defined reference points, which may mean that the necessary reference points for the subdivision and structuring of physical and social space are primarily taken from social relations and the immediate speech situation, to which many of the most common spatial-deictic forms refer.

3 Demonstratives

3.1 The basic system

At the basis of all demonstrative forms in Pileni is a three-term system of demonstrative particles, which may occur both as independent forms and in combination with various other elements, in a wide range of contexts. The system, closely similar to cognate systems in related languages, appears to be a speaker/addressee-based one referring to the participants of the immediate speech situation: *ne* or *nei* denotes something in the immediate vicinity of the speaker, *na* refers to something close to the addressee, while *la* denotes something situated away from both speaker and hearer.

This, at least, is how speakers explain the system when questioned directly, and cognate systems in related languages show essentially the same patterning. However, in actual use it is sometimes difficult to point to a clear semantic motivation for the choice betwen *na* and *la* in terms of reference to speech-act participants, particularly when these particles are used for discourse-structuring purposes (§3.5) and so are somewhat removed from their basic spatial meaning. In such cases informants are often unable to indicate any difference between the two, claiming them to be equivalent in meaning.

In actual use, *na* appears to be the most neutral term of the set. Although no systematic statistical examination has been made, superficial assessments of token frequency suggest that *na* is considerably more frequent in discourse than the other two forms. *Na* is also commonly used with a general demonstrative meaning 'that one, over there' without necessarily relating the entity in question directly to the addressee in the speech-situation; and it occurs in certain contexts where the other demonstratives are not generally found, such as the fixed expression *(te)na ko ia* 'that's it, just like that'. A corresponding form **la ko ia* is not attested; the material has one or two examples of *tne ko ia,* though with a clearly deictic function 'this here' rather than the more generalised 'that's it' found with *na* (cf. examples (6)–(7)).

These facts, together with certain aspects of the discourse uses of the demonstratives to be discussed below, suggest that the Pileni demonstrative system may in fact have shifted, or be in the process of shifting, from speaker-based to distance-based: although speakers

still associate the demonstrative forms with aspects of the speech-situation, the originally addressee-referring form *na* appears to be acquiring a status as the medial term in a distance-based system, with *ne* referring to entities closer in distance and *la* to entities farther away.

In addition to purely deictic uses, the demonstrative particles are also employed as anaphora in discourse; this use of the demonstratives will be discussed in §3.5.1.

3.2 Demonstratives in noun phrases

The demonstrative particles are frequently found in all types of noun phrases, including with pronouns, proper nouns and place names. The demonstrative particle occurs as the last element of the noun phrase, following the nucleus it modifies and any other postnominal modifiers.[2]

The system of articles in Pileni is complex, and the precise relationship between the use of various articles and demonstrative particles is not clear. Næss (2000) lists eight different forms under the heading of 'determiners', and further research is required to establish the precise semantic parameters that govern their distribution. It is clear, however, that the demonstrative particles typically occur in noun phrases containing one of the specific articles *te* 'singular', *a* 'plural, collective' and *gha* 'plural, individual', or the personal article *a*. However, they are not obligatory in such noun phrases; it is also possible to have noun phrases with a specific article but no demonstrative.

The demonstrative particles situate the objects denoted by the noun phrase in physical or social space, giving them a spatial anchoring which seems to be highly desirable if not exactly obligatory in Pileni. While no statistical study has been made, the available material suggests that the use of a demonstrative is the rule rather than the exception in Pileni noun phrases. Personal pronouns frequently combine with the appropriate demonstrative particle: *aiau ne* 'me (here)', *akoe na* 'you (there)', *aia na* or *aia la* 'him/her (there)' etc. Interestingly, however, there are contexts where a personal pronoun occurs with a demonstrative different from that which would be expected in a purely speaker/ addressee-based system; for example, a second person pronoun may in an appropriate context take a demonstrative other than the presumably addressee-referring *na*:[3]

(1)   *A-koe   la   e   mda-tagara   pe-hea?*
      ART-2SG DEM ART kind.of-man   like-what
      'What kind of man are you?'

In other words, there is not a strict correlation between demonstrative use and speaker/ addressee reference. Rather, such demonstrative uses as in (1) are most likely examples of the function of *la* as a marker of contrast in discourse; see §3.5.1.

---

2   Postnominal modifiers are rare in the material, but do occasionally occur; most common is *katoa* 'all', which not only precedes any demonstrative particle but seems to require the presence of one: *a taveli katoa la* 'ART banana all DEM' = 'all the bananas'.

3   Note on transcription: *g* represents the voiced velar nasal. *ph, th, kh, mh, nh, gh* and *lh* represent aspirated versions of the consonant in question. Long vowels are marked with a macron. Abbreviations used in glosses: ART - article, ANAPH - anaphoric particle, BEN - benefactive preposition, CAUS - causative prefix, COMP - complementiser, CONJ - conjunction, DEM - demonstrative, DIR - directional particle, DU - dual, EMPH - emphatic particle, INCL - inclusive, INT - interjection, LOC - locative, MOD - modal marker, NEG - negation, PART - particle (precise meaning unknown), PL - plural, POSS - possessive, PP - predicative possessive marker, RED - reduplication, SG - singular, TA - tense-aspect marker, TOP - topicalising particle, TR - transitive suffix.

Placenames also tend to take a demonstrative particle: *i Pleni ne* 'here in Pileni', *i Kola la* 'there in Kola'. Elicitation tended to produce phrases with demonstratives even when corresponding spatial-deictic forms were carefully avoided in the English sentences given for translation:

(2) *Te buka ne ni aku.*
     ART book DEM PP 1SG.POSS
     'The book is mine.'

(3) *Te buka na ni au.*
     ART book DEM PP 2SG.POSS
     'The book is yours.'

I did not test the corresponding sentences without demonstratives for acceptability, but the version with demonstratives is clearly preferred.

The demonstrative particles may combine with the singular specific article to form the nucleus of a noun phrase, typically found in nominal-predicate constructions such as (4):

(4) *Ko te-na e ika efa.*
     TOP ART-DEM ART fish big
     'That is a big fish.' (Elbert & Kirtley 1966:352)

This is a common construction in Polynesian languages. More unusual for Pileni is the possibility of using the bare demonstrative particle in this construction:

(5) *Na e kio.*
     DEM ART chicken
     'That is a chicken.'

This use is most likely the result of a phonological process in Pileni whereby a syllable with an unvoiced consonant may in certain cases be deleted, leaving aspiration on the initial consonant of the following syllable (Næss 2000:5); the aspirated form *nha* is attested in similar contexts. Deletion of aspiration is a common process in Pileni, and the form may thus be realised as *na*.

The demonstrative particle *na* also forms part of the very commonly used expression *(te)na ko ia* which in isolation means 'that's it' and is frequently used e.g. to conclude narratives (7); it may also function as a nominal predicate with the meaning 'this, just like this' (6):

(6) *Na ko ia loa aga o lārou.*
     DEM TOP 3SG EMPH behaviour POSS 3PL.POSS
     'This was the way they behaved.'

(7) *Na ko ia, mui k-ohi ai t-na, ē, te lalakhai.*
     DEM TOP 3SG place TA-end ANAPH ART-DEM eh ART story
     'That's it, that's where it ends, eh, the story.'

A few nominal lexemes in Pileni appear to be unable to occur without a demonstrative attached, and are further characterised by not taking a preceding article.[4] Attested forms are

---

4   More precisely, they do not take the specific article *te*, which their semantic counterparts which do not require a demonstrative normally take; however the personal article *a* seems to be possible with these forms.

mhe- 'man' (*mhe-na, mhe-la*), *han-* 'woman' (*han-ne, han-na, han-la*) and *mua-* 'place' (*mua-ne, mua-na, mua-la*). To my knowledge corresponding forms are not attested in other Polynesian languages, although a similar phenomenon may exist in the Austronesian language Kwaio spoken on Malaita in the central Solomon Islands (Keesing 1997:130, fn. 7). Pileni also has other lexemes with apparently the same meaning as these forms, but which do not require a demonstrative particle (*tagata* 'man', *hahine* 'woman', *mui* 'place'). At present it is not known what governs the choice between the two forms, although it is possible that *mhe-* and *han-* are shortened forms with a 'semi-pronominal' function, used anaphorically for repeated reference to participants originally introduced with *tagata* or *hahine*.

3.3 Demonstratives in verb phrases

Just as in noun phrases, the demonstrative particles may be used in verb phrases with a spatial-deictic meaning, specifying the location of the event denoted by the verb relative to the speech-act participants, and thus corresponding roughly to the English locative adverbs 'here', 'there':

(8) *A   hat-e   iloa   po   a   kio   no tahao   ne   i   ghauta.*
     CONJ 1PL.INCL-TA know COMP ART chicken TA wander DEM LOC shore
     'We know that the chickens wander about here, on land (as opposed to the sea).'

In a number of other cases, however, the function of demonstratives in verb phrases is less clear. They appear to be obligatory in verb phrases functioning as temporal adverbials:

(9) *Hoko-mua-mai na,   a   pleni   e   ōge   karoa.*
     CAUS-front-DIR DEM ART Pileni TA starve all
     'A long time ago everyone on Pileni was starving.'

The same holds for other types of phrases functioning as temporal adverbials: *tai pō na* 'one night', *atiao na* 'tomorrow'. Most likely, this use of the demonstrative particles should be considered as an aspect of their general discourse-structuring function, to be discussed below.

Furthermore, demonstrative particles are highly frequent in phrases with stative verbs describing qualities attributed to an entity:

(10) *Io-ko   te gata e   thuambe   na   ko le-mai.*
      CONJ-TOP ART snake TA big   DEM TA go-DIR
      'And a big snake came.'

This use of the demonstratives might be motivated by the same concern as that proposed below for relative clauses, namely indicating that the verb phrase should be considered as a modifier to the preceding noun rather than as an independent clause; see also §3.5.2.

3.4 Demonstratives in relative clauses

There is no distinct relative marker in Pileni, and the simplest case of relative constructions consists just of an NP head modified by a VP (see Næss 2000 for a discussion of the justification for classifying such clauses as relative clauses rather than simplex main clauses):

(11)   *Te   tai   no   kaiā   ko   kake.*
       ART   man   TA   steal   TA   climb
       'The man who stole (i.e. 'the thief') climbed.'   (Craven et al. 1979:18)

However, most relative clauses in the material include one of the demonstrative particles *na* or *la*. Example (11) showed a relativised intransitive subject with no demonstrative present, but there are also examples of relative clauses formed from intransitive clauses which do include a demonstrative particle:

(12)   *Ko lek-age   loa   na   tuohine, na   tuohine ko mate la.*
       TA go-DIR   EMPH   3SG.POSS sister   3SG.POSS sister   TA die   DEM
       'His sister went along, his sister who was dead.'

There are few available examples of clauses with relativised transitive subjects, but those found all include a demonstrative particle:

(13)   *Na   tugane   ne-i   tetuā a-ia   la   ko logo ai.*
       3SG.POSS brother TA-3SG chase ART-3SG DEM TA hear ANAPH
       'Her brother who had chased her away heard about it.'

Relativised direct objects seem systematically to yield clauses marked by one of the demonstrative particles *na* or *la*:

(14)   *Te   ifi   aku   te-na   ko   ia   koutou ne faki-a   na.*
       ART chestnut 1SG.POSS ART-DEM TOP 3SG 2PL   TA pluck-TR DEM
       'That is my chestnut you have plucked.'   (Craven et al. 1979:18)

(15)   *Ne il-age   na   te   puke ne-i   tuhi-a na   e   tū   oki*
       TA look-DIR DEM ART puke TA-3SG fell-TR DEM TA stand again

       i   na   tafito.
       LOC 3SG.POSS trunk
       'He looked, and the puke-tree which he had felled was standing on its
       trunk again.'   (Craven et al. 1979:10)

It is not unknown for demonstrative forms to be identical to relative markers; the English form *that* (*the man that I saw* ...) is a case in point (see also Anderson and Keenan 1985). The question is whether the available data justifies ascribing the demonstrative particles the status of relative markers in examples like (12)–(15) above.

A situation somewhat similar to that in Pileni is found in the related language Maori, where an anaphoric or demonstrative particle is obligatory in certain types of relative clauses (Bauer 1993). In Maori, as in Pileni, the precise status of these particles is unclear; Bauer (1993:53) states that 'it is possible that they function as pro-forms for relative elements', but elsewhere the same author suggests that this analysis is problematic (Bauer 1982). One suggestion advanced by Bauer (1982) is that the particles might serve as a marker of subordination, in the sense that they indicate to the hearer that the clause just uttered should be analysed as belonging to the preceding noun phrase rather than an independent clause.   Such an analysis would seem to fit well with the suggested 'demarcative' function of demonstratives discussed in §3.5.2 below.

Nevertheless, a number of problems remain to be explained. Why, for instance, is there no demonstrative particle in the intransitive relative in example (11), while there is one in

(12)? And what governs the choice between *na* and *la* in those relative constructions which do contain a demonstrative particle?

An alternative hypothesis might be that the frequent occurrence of demonstratives in relative phrases is simply a function of their other uses. The use of *la* in (12) and (13), for example, might be related to the notion of anaphoric distance discussed in §3.5.1. below; both these relative clauses are used in their respective texts to reintroduce into the discourse participants which have not been mentioned for some time. Clearly, more research into the obligatoriness or otherwise of demonstrative particles in relative clauses, the possibility of choosing between *na* and *la* in different types of relatives, and the more general functions of demonstratives in discourse, is necessary in order to obtain a clear picture of the functions of demonstrative particles in relative clauses.

3.5 The discourse functions of demonstrative particles

3.5.1 Anaphoric distance and topic-switch

In addition to the primarily deictic uses described in §3.1–§3.3, the demonstrative particles also have anaphoric uses, referring back to previously mentioned entities:[5]

(16) | *Lha-ko* | *laka* | *i* | *te* | *motu* | *lha-ko* | *u-ake* | *I* | *te* | *vai.* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3DU-TA | pass | LOC | ART | island | 3DU-TA | paddle-DIR | LOC | ART | water |

Na	*te*	*vai*	*na*	*na*	*igoa*	*po*	*te*	*Vainata.*
DEM	ART	water	DEM	3SG.POSS	name	COMP	ART	Vainata

'They passed an island and paddled up a stream. That stream is called Vainata.'

It appears that the choice between *na* and *la* in anaphoric contexts are to a certain extent governed by anaphoric distance (*ne* is used almost exclusively with deictic function in the available material). That is, *la* is preferred when the antecedent is found relatively far away in the preceding discourse, with much intervening material, while *na* is commonly used when the antecedent is recently mentioned. This would mean that the notion of relative distance encoded by the demonstratives with respect to the spatial domain is transferred to the discourse domain, a fairly well-attested correlation (see e.g. Givón 2001).

As a consequence of this encoding of anaphoric distance, there is a fairly strong tendency for *la* to be used to mark switches in subject or topic; that is, *la* frequently occurs when a previously mentioned entity which has not been the subject/topic of the previous clause(s) is the subject/topic of a new clause. The correlation is not strong enough to consider *la* a grammaticalised switch-reference marker, as it is possible for switches in subject/topic not to be marked by *la,* but the use of *la* in such cases is nevertheless very common:

(17) | *Io-ko* | *lua* | *meme-ana* | ***la*** | *e* | *lavaki* | *ngina* | *ko-i* | *kina.* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| CONJ-TOP | two | child-3SG.POSS | DEM | TA | disappear | because | TA-3SG | eat |

Io-ko	*thau*	*tugane*	***la***	*ko*	*fulo.*	*La-ko*	*fūfulo*	*na,*	*Ko*	*te*
CONJ-TOP	pair	brother	DEM	TA	run	3DU-TA	RED.run	DEM	TOP	ART

---

5   The function of the prenominal demonstrative in the sequence *na te vai na* is not clear.

pakola la ne ila...
giant DEM TA look
'And his two children were gone, because he had eaten them. And the brother
and sister ran. They ran and ran, and the giant looked ...'

Another indication that *la* in such instances is used to mark a change in subject/topic is
its use in combination with the quantifier *hai* 'one' to mean 'another'; the meaning of
'another' is essentially 'one different from that previously mentioned':

(18) *Hai-la lek-age e-i   kutea o   lāvoi ko le-mai, hai-la   lek-age*
one-DEM go-DIR TA-3SG see   CONJ good TA go-DIR one-DEM go-DIR

e-i   kutea o   lāvoi ko le-mai, hāhano k-osi.
TA-3SG see   CONJ good TA go-DIR RED.go TA-finish
'One of them went off and looked and came back, then another one went off and
looked and came back, they all went (one after the other).'

La is the only demonstrative particle used with this meaning, which is what one would
expect if the appropriate semantic extension is indeed from physical distance to anaphoric
distance to topic switch.

This latter use of *la* is only a step away from another apparent function of this
demonstrative, which is as a marker of *contrast* — 'entity x as opposed to another/any
other' (rather than 'entity x as opposed to the previously mentioned entity). The
assumption that *la* may function as a contrast marker accounts for the appearance of this
demonstrative in examples like (19):

(19) *Ne mda-hahine   pe-hea   ne-i   toa na? Ke-i   toa*
DEM kind.of-woman like-what TA-3SG take DEM MOD-3SG take

harou   la, matea ka-i   oin-age a-ia   i   mouku.
1PL.INCL DEM maybe TA-3SG help-DIR ART-3SG LOC bush
'What kind of woman is this he has married? If he had married one of us
(instead of her), we might have helped him (with his work) in the bush.'

In this example, the presumably third-person-referring demonstrative *la* appears on the
first-person pronoun *harou* 'we-inclusive'. Clearly, this demonstrative does not function as
a marker of spatial location; rather, it serves to contrast the virtuous and hard-working local
women, referred to by *harou,* with the stranger one of the local men has taken as his wife,
who refuses to do her share of the work. Similarly, the appearance of *la* on the second-
person pronoun *akoe* in example (1) can be explained by reference to the contrasting
function of this particle: the person referred to is being singled out as exceptional ('what
kind of man are *you*?') and therefore marked by *la* rather than the expected 'addressee'
demonstrative *na.*

3.5.2 Demonstratives as demarcative devices

The above account, assuming the demonstrative particles to have deictic, anaphoric, and
topic switch–marking functions, still leaves a substantial amount of the demonstrative
tokens found in narrative unaccounted for. One example is the demonstrative *na* following
the temporal adverbial *hoko-mua mai* in example (9); this example is taken from the very

beginning of a narrative, meaning that the demonstrative cannot be an anaphor as there is no possible antecedent; but nor does *na* here seem to serve any obvious deictic function.

Such puzzling occurrences of demonstratives are in fact extremely common in Pileni narrative. The following is the beginning of a story told by one of the most respected storytellers in Pileni, and is highly representative of Pileni narrative style:

(20)   *Lui   thau   avaga   la-ko   nohonoho **na**,   a   nohine-ana   ko*
     DU   pair   marry   3DU-TA   RED.live   DEM   ART   wife-3SG.POSS   TA

     hei   tama.
     make   child.
     'There was a couple who lived together, and the wife got pregnant.

     *Ko   hei   tama   **na**,   io-ko   lha-ko   nōnoho   **na**,*
     TA   make child DEM   CONJ-TOP 3DU-TA   RED.live DEM
     She got pregnant, they lived for a while,

     *ko   hanau-ia   **na**   e   tagata.*
     TA   birth-TR   DEM   ART   man
     and she gave birth to a boy.

     *Ko   hale-gia   hale-gia   **na**   ko   metua.*
     TA   care-TR   care-TR   DEM   TA   grow.up
     [The child] was taken care of and grew up.

     ***Na**   ne   metua   te   memea   tagar-ana   **la**   **na**,*
     DEM   TA   grow.up ART   child   man-3SG.POSS   DEM   DEM
     When this boy-child had grown up,

     io-ko   hina-na   ko   hei   tama   oki.
     CONJ-TOP   mother-3SG.POSS   TA   make child again
     his mother got pregnant again.

     *Hei   tama   **na**,   io-ko   mha-na,   ē,*
     make   child DEM   CONJ-TOP   father-3SG.POSS   eh
     She got pregnant, and his father, eh,

     a   te   matu-ana   ko   mate.
     CONJ ART   husband-3SG.POSS   TA   die
     her husband died.'

This systematic repetition of phrases, with a demonstrative attached to the second occurrence, appears to be an integral part of the structure of Pileni narratives. The demonstratives are prominent in discourse not just on account of their frequency but also their intonational properties: phrase-final demonstratives are heavily stressed with a corresponding high pitch.

Despite this high prominence of demonstratives in discourse, their exact function is not entirely clear at present. It has been suggested to me that the demonstratives might mark old or given information and be used for the backgrounding of entities or events, which would agree quite well with the example above. A related suggestion would be that the demonstratives serve as a kind of temporal subjunctions, and the appropriate translation of e.g. *hei tama na* above would be 'when she got pregnant' or 'after she got pregnant'. In working through this and similar texts with a native consultant we have frequently agreed on such translations as appropriate for clauses of this type.

The notion of backgrounding, however, does not agree very well with the proposed *contrasting* function of at least one demonstrative particle, discussed in §3.5.1 above: a marker of contrast serves rather to emphasise and *foreground* a participant in relation to the surrounding discourse. A more appropriate suggestion that would relate the use of demonstratives in example (20) to those described in §3.5.1 is that the demonstratives are used to mark *topical* information, in the standard sense of 'what is currently being talked about': this would tie in well with the use of the distal demonstrative *la* as a marker of new or reactivated topics.

The salience of the demonstrative particles in discourse suggest that they play a central role in structuring the narrative. A very similar phenomenon is found in the Polynesian language East Futuna of the French overseas territory Wallis and Futuna, where a particle *la* is described by Moyse-Faurie (1997) as a 'demarcative particle (particule démarcative)': '[C]ette particule a dans la phrase une fonction de délimitation des différents groupes nominaux ou verbaux. Dans les récits, les discours, et dans la conversation courante, elle peut se postposer à chaque "partie du discours" de la phrase, comme une sorte de ponctuation à rôle contrastif'6 (Moyse-Faurie 1997:195). Something similar is apparently the case for the particle *na* in the related language Fagauvea (Claire Moyse-Faurie, pers. comm.).

The notion of demonstratives as 'phrase demarcators' is probably not incompatible with the suggestion that the demonstrative particles serve to mark topical information. The demonstratives might be considered to structure the progress of the narrative by marking off, one at a time, the topic currently being elaborated, before moving on to the next topic which is similarly marked by another demonstrative. In this way, the topic-marking and 'phrase-delimiting' functions of demonstratives may be considered essentially two aspects of the same phenomenon: the use of demonstratives to indicate 'what is currently being talked about'.

The clearly most frequent demonstrative form found with this discourse-structuring function is *na* (cf. example (20)). As mentioned above, *ne* appears to be used almost exclusively with deictic function, whereas *la* most typically appears under the circumstances described above, as anaphoric for elements some distance away in the discourse or as markers of subject/topic-switch or of contrast. This is another indication that, as suggested in §3.1, *na* functions as the neutral term of the Pileni demonstrative system, with *ne* having a specific denotation of (spatial) closeness and *la* one of (spatial or discourse) distance.

4 Directionals

Directional particles are postverbal particles which describe the direction of the action described by the verb they modify. This 'direction' may be purely physical, if the act in question has a physical direction towards a particular participant or point in space; but the directionals may also refer to 'social' or 'metaphorical' direction, describing an act as 'directed' towards a participant in the sense of being performed on someone's behalf or to someone's benefit or detriment. Pileni has seven directional particles; the first three relate

---

6   'This particle has a function in the clause of delimiting different nominal or verbal phrases. In narratives, discourse, and in running conversation it can be postposed to each "part of discourse" of the clause, as a kind of punctuation with a contrastive role.' (my translation)

to the participants in the speech situation, the next three describe vertical direction while the last denotes movement away from a point of reference.

The directionals referring to speech-act participants are *mai, atu*, and *age*. The distinction between them is essentially the same as that described in §3.1 for the demonstrative particles: they describe direction towards the speaker, towards the addressee, and away from both speaker and addressee, respectively. Thus *mai* indicates that an action is being performed 'in the direction of' the speaker, either literally or in the sense that the act is done for or on behalf of the speaker:

(21)   *Le-mai!*
        go-DIR
        'Come here!'

(22)   *Lu-aha-gia   mai te   thoka ne!*
        2DU-open-TR DIR ART door DEM
        'Open the door for me!'

Atu similarly indicates direction, literal or metaphorical, away from the speaker, and typically towards the addressee, though it also has a more general meaning 'out, away'; the latter may be considered to be in a sense parallel to the use of the corresponding term of the demonstrative system, *na,* with a general meaning 'over there' independently of any reference to the speech-act participants:

(23)   *U-ka   av-atu   nei e potopoto.*
        1SG-TA   give-DIR DEM TA short
        'I'll give you this short one.' (Craven et al. 1979:12)

(24)   *Na   lhatu-e u-atu.*
        DEM 3PL-TA paddle-DIR
        'Then they paddled away.'

Age typically indicates direction away from the speaker and towards a third person, but also has a more general meaning of 'away, along':

(25)   *Ko-i   tuku-age nohine-ana   ki-a   te   matu-ana   po ...*
        TA-3SG say-DIR   wife-3SG.POSS to-ART ART husband-3SG.POSS COMP
        'The wife said to her husband ...'

(26)   *Ko lek-age loa   na   tuohine.*
        TA go-DIR EMPH 3SG.POSS sister
        'His sister came along.'

The directional particles *ake, ifo,* and *ofo* all refer to the vertical dimension. *Ake* refers to actions performed in an upward direction:

(27)   *Ko nh-ake ko kake-ake   i   hai lakau.*
        TA go-DIR TA climb-DIR LOC ART tree
        '(She) went up and climbed up into a tree.'

Ifo is similarly used for direction downwards:

(28)   *Ko-i   toa   te   au   niu   ko kave-iho.*
        TA-3SG take ART tree coconut TA bring-DIR
        '(He) took a coconut tree and brought it down.' (Craven et al. 1979:16)

The exact function of the third 'vertical' directional, *ofo*, is not clear. From the attested examples it appears that the particle may refer to vertical movement in either direction, up or down, though one cannot exclude the possibility that this rather unusual interpretation is due to some flaw in our translations:

(29) *Io-ko   ia   ko   tu-oho.*
       CONJ-TOP 3SG TA stand-DIR
       'And she stood up.'

(30) *Ko-i   telei-oho loa   ki   haupé.*
       TA-3SG   push-DIR EMPH to   sea
       '(He) pushed (him) into the sea.'

Nor is it clear precisely what the relationship is between *ofo* on the one hand and *ake* and *ifo* on the other. *Ofo* is not a mere phonetic variant of *ifo* as they are both attested in the exact same environment, with the same verb.[7] The examples of *ofo* with the apparent meaning 'up' are few, while it is considerably more frequently used than *ifo* to denote 'down'; it is possible that *ofo* is in the process of replacing *ifo* as the directional meaning 'down'.

The final directional particle is *kē*, meaning 'away'. This brings the total number of demonstrative particles in Pileni up to seven, which as mentioned in the introduction is more than in any other Polynesian language I am aware of.

(31) *Latou ko tetuā te   memea na   po   ke   fano kē.*
       3PL   TA chase ART child   DEM COMP MOD go   DIR
       'They drove the child away.' (Elbert & Kirtley 1966:354)

The directionals, particularly those referring to speech-act participants, are highly frequent and found with a great variety of verbs. In general, for any verb which may be conceived of as having a 'direction',[8] the use of a directional particle is clearly the rule rather than the exception. When another marker of direction is present, e.g. a prepositional phrase with the directional preposition *ki* 'to, towards', omission of the directional particle seems to be somewhat more common (32), although directional particles and directional PPs may certainly co-occur (33):

(32) *Ghi e   ō   ki tua, ko toa ni   fatu.*
       some TA go.PL to back TA take ART stone
       'Those who are going to the back (of the island), take some stones.'

(33) *Lhat-ko ua-mai   ki Pleni.*
       3PL-TA   paddle-DIR to Pileni
       'They paddled back here to Pileni.'

It seems that any description of an event in Pileni should be anchored in physical or social space, typically the space defined by the speech-act participants, wherever possible. The use of a verb without a marker of direction is clearly the marked case and in some, perhaps most, cases has a clearly defined semantic-pragmatic significance. For example,

---

7   *Kave ifo/kave ofo* 'bring down'.

8   That is, not the the so-called stative verbs denoting qualities and corresponding roughly to adjectives in English, e.g. *thuambe* 'big', *likiliki* 'small', *kila* 'black' etc. These on the other hand show a tendency to be followed by a demonstrative; cf. §3.3.

the transitive verb *tukua* 'say' normally requires a following directional particle: *tuku-mai* 'say to me/us', *tuku-atu* 'say to you', *tuku-age* 'say to him/her/them'. When this verb is used without a directional particle it does not simply mean 'say (in some direction or other)' but specifically 'say to oneself', as illustrated by example (34), taken from a story telling of an old man seeing a young girl come walking down to the beach:

(34) *Ko-i   tuku-a po   kē,   te   meitaine ne   mo   tuku   ataliki age.*
       TA-3SG say-TR COMP INT   ART girl   DEM BEN 1SG.POSS son   DIR
       'He said to himself: "Oh! (I'd like) this girl for my son (to marry)".'

The verb *hano* 'go' normally takes a directional particle when used to refer to an actual instance of the act of walking or otherwise proceeding from one location to another. It is also commonly used in narratives to represent a period of time and of life in which nothing in particular happens, life goes on as normal; in such cases the verb takes no directional particle and could be translated as 'he/she/they went on' or even 'time went on':

(35) *Nōnoho   na,   hano hāhano na,   hai   lagi na ...*
       RED.live DEM   go   RED.go DEM ART day   DEM
       'They lived there, (time) went by, and then one day ...'

5 Other spatial-deictic forms

Pileni does not have many spatial-deictic forms beyond the demonstratives and the directional particles. It appears that the extensive use and broad range of functions of these two types of forms all but exhaust the potential for spatial deixis in the language. As will be clear from the above account, the demonstrative particles can be used to cover the functions expressed in e.g. English by locative adverbs ('here', 'there', cf. example (8)), demonstrative adjectives ('this thing', cf. example (2)–(3)), and demonstrative pronouns ('this', 'that'). With the dimension of direction covered by the directional particles, there seems to be little need for additional forms with spatial-deictic function.

There are, however, a few forms which may be described as having a possible deictic function. One such form is *akinai*, which is basically an anaphoric form for prepositional phrases with *ki* 'to, towards':

(36) *Mua-ne   hiai loa   e   tai   no   thae   mai akinai.*
       place-DEM NEG EMPH ART man TA   reach DIR ANAPH
       'No man has ever reached this place.'

In (36), *akinai* refers back to *mua-ne* 'this place' and adds a directional meaning, i.e. it replaces the full prepositional phrase *ki mua-ne* 'to this place'. However, there are instances of *akinai* in reported direct speech where no antecedent is present; instead, *akinai* appears to refer to direction in the immediate spatial setting of the reported speech[9] — that is, it has a deictic meaning 'over there' (glossed 'down there' in the example due to the presence of the directional particle *oho* 'down'):

(37) *Iau ka lele-oho   loa   akinai.*
       1SG TA jump-DIR EMPH ANAPH
       'I will jump down there.'

---

[9] Presumably this form is equally applicable in direct, non-reported speech, but as the corpus consists mainly of narratives all the available examples are of reported speech.

Another set of forms referring to spatial properties, usually referred to in Polynesian languages as 'local nouns' (Mosel & Hovdhaugen 1992) or 'locatives' (Hooper 1996) are also common in Pileni. These describe spatial dimensions of objects or spatial relations between objects, and are usually preceded by one of the prepositions *i* 'in, at, on' or *ki* 'to, towards'. Some of the more common local nouns in Pileni are: *luga* 'top, up', *lalo* 'bottom, down', *taha* 'side, beside', *tua* 'back, behind', *ghauta* 'shore, place on shore where the village is situated, inland', *thaupē* 'sea, seawards'. *Lalo* 'bottom, down' and *luga* 'top, up' are also used for 'west' and 'east', respectively. The complex forms *hai tōilo* (*hai* 'side') and *hai tōvalo* are used for 'left-hand side' and 'right-hand side' respectively; these are presumably derived from the verbs *iloa* 'know' and *valea* 'not know, be ignorant of'.

Finally, while it is possible for the demonstrative particles to be used on their own with a 'locative adverb' function, i.e. as referring to the place where an event takes place (example (8)), it is rather more common to employ a complex form for this purpose, namely *mua-* 'place' + demonstrative (*mua-ne* 'here', lit. 'this place'; *mua-na/mua-la* 'there', lit. 'that place'; cf. §3.2.):

(38) *Ta-pale-ake   mua   i   mua-ne.*
      1DU.INCL-arrive-DIR PART LOC place-DEM
      'Let us go ashore here.'

(39) *Te   akau na e   ohi loa   na   i   mua-na.*
      ART reef DEM TA end EMPH DEM LOC place-DEM
      'The reef ends there.'

6 Conclusion

Spatial deixis is central to Pileni grammar not only in the sense that descriptions of events and entities carry an overt marker of spatial location or orientation whenever assigning them such an orientation is feasible, but also in the sense that it serves as the source domain for the structuring of discourse: the notions of relative 'closeness' and 'distance' expressed by the spatial-deictic forms *na* and *la* are extended into the discourse domain to indicate such properties as topicality, anaphoric distance and contrast.

The semantic basis of the Pileni system of spatial deixis is the speech situation; both the demonstrative and the directional particle sets distinguish between 'near-speaker', 'near-hearer' and 'away from speaker-hearer' (or 'near third person') forms. It has been suggested (Denny 1978) that languages spoken in so-called 'natural environments' may have more need of deictic forms to relate space to human activity than those spoken in man-made environments, because the latter are to a great extent formed by just such activities and so make available non-deictic forms as 'down the road', 'through the door', 'around the corner' (Denny 1978:80); such forms are less applicable in 'natural environment'. As mentioned at the start of this paper Pileni speakers inhabit an extremely restricted physical space with little in the way of topographical distinctions beyond that between sea and land; the amount of human-made features in the landscape are also very limited. This may go some way towards accounting for the extreme frequency of spatial-deictic forms in Pileni: faced with the lack of distinct physical features to structure and divide physical space and relate it to everyday human activity, the speakers may have chosen to base their conceptualisation of space mainly on social relations and the structure

of the speech-situation, and so any reference to an event or entity should ideally position the event/entity relative to the speech-act participants.

However, if one examines the entire range of uses of the demonstrative particles, the association between these forms and the speech-act participants appears to be weakening somewhat; for example it is possible in the right context to mark a speech-act participant with a different demonstrative particle from that which would be expected in a strictly speaker/addressee-based deictic system. Instead, particularly when the demonstratives are used for discourse-structuring purposes, they show properties characteristic of a *distance-based* system: the originally addressee-referring demonstrative *na* is used with a general meaning of 'some distance away, neither very near nor very far' and functions as the neutral term in a system where it is opposed to *ne* 'close by' and *la* 'far away'. *Ne* is almost exclusively found with a proper deictic function, meaning 'right here, close by'; *la* has a number of uses which can all be related to the notion of *distance*, either physical or anaphoric. In all other cases one typically finds *na,* which can therefore no longer be described as a purely 'addressee-referring' form; rather, it functions as the medial term in a system whose members still retain a basic association with the participants in the speech situation, but which have been extended, or are in the process of being extended, to referring to more general notions of relative distance.

References

Anderson, Stephen R. and Edward L. Keenan, 1985, Deixis. In Timothy Shopen, ed. *Language typology and syntactic description*, vol. 3: *Grammatical categories and the lexicon*, 259–308. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bauer, Winifred, 1982, Relativization in Maori. *Studies in Language* 6:305–342.

—— 1993, *Maori.* London: Routledge.

Beimers, Gerry, 2002, Who's counting in Solomon Islands? Handout presented at the Fifth International Conference of Oceanic Languages, The Australian National University, Canberra, January 2002.

Craven, Anna, Salome Samou and John Tealiklava, 1979, *Custom stories of the Solomon Islands,* vol. 5: *From the Eastern Islands.* Honiara: Cultural Association of the Solomon Islands.

Denny, J. Peter, 1978, Locating the universals in lexical systems for spatial deixis. In *Papers from the Parasession on the Lexicon, Chicago Linguistic Society* (14–15 April, 1978), 71–84. Chicago: CLS.

Elbert, Samuel H. and Bacil F. Kirtley, 1966, Seven Pileni tales. *Journal of the Polynesian Society* 75:348–372.

Givón, T., 2001, *Syntax: an introduction*, vol. 1. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

Hooper, Robin, 1996, *Tokelauan.* Languages of the World/Materials 58. München/Newcastle: Lincom Europa.

Hovdhaugen, Even, Åshild Næss and Ingjerd Hoëm, 2002, *Pileni texts with a Pileni–English vocabulary and an English–Pileni finderlist.* The Kon-Tiki Museum Occasional Papers 7. Oslo: The Kon-Tiki Museum.

Keesing, Roger, 1997, Constructing space in Kwaio. In Gunter Senft, ed. *Referring to Space: studies in Austronesian and Papuan Languages*, 127–141. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Lincoln, P., 1978, Reefs–Santa Cruz as Austronesian. In Wurm and Carrington, eds, 1978:929–967.

Mosel, Ulrike and Even Hovdhaugen, 1992, *Samoan reference grammar.* Oslo: Scandinavian University Press.

Moyse-Faurie, Claire, 1997, *Grammaire du futunien.* Nouméa: CDP Nouvelle-Calédonie.

Næss, Åshild, 2000, *Pileni.* Languages of the World/Materials 325. München – Newcastle: Lincom Europa.

—— 2002, Transitivity and accusativity in Pileni. *Rongorongo Studies* 12(2):66–76.

Wurm, Stephen, 1978, Reefs–Santa Cruz: Austronesian, but ...! In Wurm and Carrington, eds 1978:969–1010.

Wurm, Stephen and Lois Carrington, eds, 1978, *Second International Conference on Austronesian Linguistics: proceedings.* Canberra: Pacific Linguistics.