

Week 6 Lectures

Features of Tongan Oratory

- Begins with **Fakatapu** – acknowledgement of high-ranking chiefs (people with chiefly blood), nobles (people who have noble titles granted in the Constitution of 1875 and have since then been hereditary), and prominent people present. In the last few decades, the Fakatapu has evolved to begin with acknowledgement of the presence of God in our midst (In reverence for the omnipresence of the Invisible in our midst.) In funerals, the deceased also is acknowledged (In deference for the spirit of the departed.)
- After acknowledgement of the aristocracy (chiefly class), the orator class is acknowledged.
- Next is **fakatapu** for the clergy (the High Priest of His Majesty – the King’s chaplain)
- Then also the widow and children.
- In funerals, the burial ground is also acknowledged, particularly if chiefs are buried there.
- Use of **laumātanga** – references to names of beautiful scenic spots that represent whole villages, districts, islands, and the whole of Tonga. Every village, island etc. in Tonga has a complimentary name or poetic name or oratorical name. These names conjure up strong feelings of identity and pride in and love of place because these names are also associated with the ancestral people of a place, usually chiefly or prominent people that descendants are proud of. Fā-ko-Fieme’a (Pandanus called Wanting-to-be-Something) and Vai-ko-Lēlea (Pond called Always-Speaking) are complimentary names for Neiafu, capital of Vava’u.
- Use of metaphor (proud is this day for Siaosi... to receive the golden dust to enrich the soil of Tongatapu) and personification (The House-of-Valu sends to know... and so does Tu’ungasika and the outlying reefs... where is our son?)
- Use of honorific language (the sacred burial ground – tōfā’anga – king’s resting place) and the language of humility (...while your humble servant begs your indulgence to speak on this day)
- Use of **laukakala** (references to fragrant flowers such as heilala,)
- Use of **laumatangi** (the seven winds blow back and forth...)
- Use of **lau ki he tahi** (references to the sea)
- Use of **lau ki he langi** (references to the sky)
- Use of **lau kaveinga** (references to the guiding stars)
- Use of proverbs and sayings

Features of Tongan poetry

All the above plus

Rhyme – the two last vowels must be the same

Rhythm – regular metres, same length (to suit the music)