

Culture, class and community

The application of heliaki (imagery) in Tongan songs and the roles of journalists and censorial punake in their censorship between the 1960s and the early 2000s.

Kalino Latu

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School of Communication Studies

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‘Epitaleki / Abstract

The censorship of hiva kakala (kakala songs) was a prominent feature of broadcasting practice at the Tonga Broadcasting Commission (TBC), formerly Radio ZCO and later A3Z, from the 1960s until the early 2000s. Despite its significance within Tongan cultural life, little scholarly attention has been given to understanding why composers were required to compose according to heliaki (imagery) and submit their songs for scrutiny before public broadcast. This study investigates the cultural, literary, and journalistic factors underlying the censorship of hiva kakala songs and examines the role of heliaki in shaping the composition, regulation, and interpretation of the genre.

Guided by the indigenous theoretical frameworks of Tupunga Ola and Veitalatala, the research employed a qualitative methodology based on interviews, documentary analysis, and critical examination of historical and contemporary literature. The study explored the perspectives of composers (punake), journalists (faiongoongo), and individuals involved in the censorship and promotion of hiva kakala. The findings indicate that these Tongan cultural and professional roles remain insufficiently standardised in relation to comparable roles recognised internationally, particularly in countries such as New Zealand and Australia, where Tonga has frequently sought professional guidance and institutional support, especially in the field of journalism. In response, the study proposes standardised conceptualisations and definitions of these roles within their Tongan cultural context.

The findings reveal that kakala song censorship functioned primarily as a form of cultural moderation rather than suppression. It also found that censorship occasionally generated tensions and accusations of inconsistency. However, the participants generally viewed the control as contributing to the preservation, enhancement, and artistic quality of kakala songs. Censorship was used to uphold the values embedded within the nofo ‘a kāinga system and fatungamotu‘a e fonua structure, moderate the effects of Westernisation and foreign cultural influences, and monitor the appropriate use of heliaki, one of Tonga’s foremost literary and linguistic registers. The study further demonstrates that Queen Sālote Tupou III and her Traditions Committee played a pivotal role in shaping both the development and regulation of the genre.

A major contribution of this research is the reconceptualisation of hiva kakala as songs of heliaki. The study further argues that hiva kakala songs emerged as a distinct genre through the adaptation of Methodist hymnody and Catholic sacred music within a Tongan cultural context following the arrival of Western missionaries and the spread of Christianity in the nineteenth century. This suggests that hiva kakala introduced a number of significant structural innovations not previously evident in traditional Tongan chants and poetic forms (Helu, 2012). These innovations included

the alignment of heliaki with the English figurative language system, the adoption of verse–chorus song structures, and the incorporation of Western musical principles such as key-based composition, scale-governed harmonic systems, and musical notation. At the same time, these developments contributed to the decline of certain traditional Tongan musical features, including indigenous vocables and vocal ornamentation, among others.

By revising prevailing definitions of heliaki, the study develops a continuum that clarifies the relationship between literal and figurative language. It proposes a reconceptualised definition of heliaki as a system of figurative expression that generates vivid, evocative, and memorable imagery. Within this framework, heliaki is further understood as a literary and communicative mechanism through which the principles of tapu and mana are safeguarded, social hierarchies are articulated and reinforced, and the expressive and affective qualities of mālie and māfana are enhanced.

Drawing on the newly developed Toafesiamā model (see Introduction chapter, Section 1.10) and the reconceptualisation of heliaki through the semantic–heliaki continuum (see Introduction chapter, Section 1.1) this study posits that lea heliaki (figurative language) and liliu lea (translation) are fundamental mechanisms that enable the preservation, adaptation, and sustainability of the Tongan language in changing cultural and linguistic contexts. The findings of this study indicate that liliu lea has become a widely utilised practice among Tongans in everyday communication. This development is attributable not only to the widespread use of English as a second language, but also to the demographic shift whereby the majority of Tongans now reside in diaspora communities, particularly in Australia, New Zealand, and the United States. Furthermore, translation has become an important mechanism in hiva kakala composition, generating neologisms that operate as forms of heliaki and contribute to the mālie of the songs.

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This thesis stands as a tribute to my parents. I dedicate this work to the memory of my father, Paulo Lātū Pālusa, whose dream and investment in my future inspired this journey following his passing in 2020. His belief in the power of education took root in me long before he left for the US when I was in high school. While our communication was lost for about three decades, the seed he planted continued to grow. It is to this early, steadfast lesson that I owe a deep debt of gratitude. My profound gratitude extends to my late mother, ‘Elisiva Tu‘ivailala Lātū, who succumbed to cancer in 1999, and whose years of tireless labour, including selling faikakai at the Nuku‘alofa market to pay for my schooling, embodied a sacrifice that forms the very foundation of my academic pursuit. Her resilience is the unseen architecture of this thesis. May you two rest in peace. For my younger siblings—Malia Maka, Fine, Niulini, and Paulo Jr.—this accomplishment is as much yours as it is mine. Our shared history, in all its forms, was a fundamental part of reaching this goal.

I extend my deepest gratitude to my family for their unwavering support: my wife, Patelesia Lātū; our children—Malia (Lela), Alpha, Pētoni (Tony), Nicholas (Nicco), Angelica (Siva Leka), and Sisi Latu—and my makapuna, Israel, Katinia, Reign, and Leora. Although we were apart during the course of my thesis, your presence in my thoughts was a constant source of strength and motivation, providing the indispensable encouragement that enabled me to bring this work to completion. This thesis is the second to be submitted to AUT by our family, following my eldest daughter Malia's graduation in 2019. It is my sincere hope that our academic journey serves as an inspiration to others who have yet to complete their degrees, encouraging them to return to their studies and contribute their own research to the academic community. As I always said, we moved from Tonga to Aotearoa for two main reasons: to pursue better living conditions and to access better education. Finally, this thesis is dedicated to my beloved first and late mokopuna Nalani ‘Elisiva Lesina Latu. You will always be in my heart.

Tēpile ‘o e Koniteni

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Attestation of Authorship

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.

Signature:

Date: 21.11.2025

*This research was approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee
(ref: AUTECH 23/172)*

Vahe 1: ‘Ilotakisoni (Introduction)

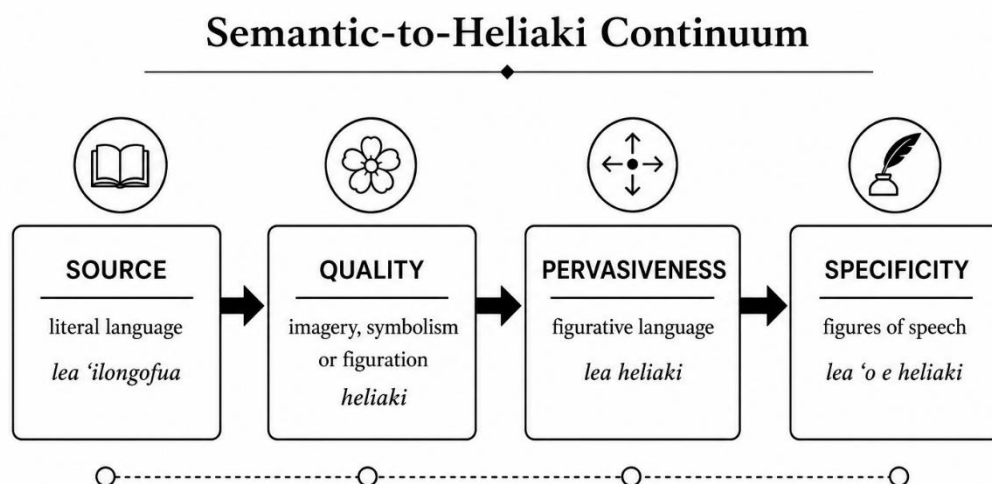
1.1 Kakala: From botanical meaning to heliaki

Literally denoting plant parts, kakala has attracted increasing scholarly attention in recent decades as a dynamic cultural framework through which identity, expressive forms, and social relations are symbolically articulated and sustained. A body of scholarship (Havili, 2022; Wolfgramm, 2024; Wood-Ellem, 2004/2019) indicates that kakala encompasses flowers, plant parts, floral garlands, and ornamental girdles. Building on this conceptualisation of kakala as a botanical category, these scholars further distinguish between two principal types based on sensory qualities, particularly scent. Botanical elements possessing sweet-smelling qualities are collectively categorised as kakala ‘eiki (superior or chiefly kakala), whereas those characterised by unpleasant odours or lacking fragrance are classified as kakala vale or kakala tu‘a (inferior or common kakala), (see Finding chapter, Section 4.3.2). Helu (2012) contends that the classification of kakala was based on a hierarchy of smell, ranging from the most sweet-smelling to the least fragrant, which distinguished kakala ‘eiki (the most esteemed) from kakala tu‘a (the least valued). These contrasting attributes have enabled kakala to function as a powerful source of imagery within broader cultural, social, and literary discourses. Together, these perspectives demonstrate how sensory distinctions, particularly smell, underpin the classification of kakala and enable its broader symbolic and figurative use within cultural discourse.

While literature offers diverse interpretations of kakala, it consistently highlights its valued qualities as central to shaping its transformation into figurative meaning. Building on its valued qualities, Kailahi (2016) extends the semantic range of kakala towards expressive referents by characterising it as a literary term denoting a “hingoa (honorific name) bestowed upon a matāpule (talking chief)” (p. 3). Meanwhile, Churchward (1959) defines it as a figurative expression for a “girl” or “maiden” (p. 249). Furthermore, renowned punake Dr Huluholo Mo‘ungaloa and Moeaki Tākai among others, conceptualise kakala as embodying the fundamental binary structure of Tongan social identity, wherein each individual simultaneously inherits both ‘eiki status through the maternal lineage and tu‘a status through the paternal lineage (see the ‘Ekitu‘a model, Section 1.4.1; see also the song lyrics of Mo‘ungaloa and Tākai, as critically analysed in Discussion chapter, Section 5.3.2 2 and Appendix I). Contrastingly, numerous scholars contend that kakala ‘eiki (superior kakala) and kakala vale (inferior kakala) are a means of symbolising the now-challenged social hierarchy comprising kakai (commoners), hou‘eiki (chiefs or nobles), and tu‘i (sovereign) (Veikoso, 2023; Talakai, 2015), also see (Chapter 3: Methodology, Section 3.4.5). Overall, these examples suggest that kakala’s figurative meanings derive from its sensory

qualities, though the literature offers little theoretical explanation of the mechanisms through which these qualities are transformed into figurative meaning (see Section 1.6.1; 1.6.2).

To account for the diverse expressions and transformations associated with literal language and its figurative forms, this thesis proposes a continuum extending from etymological origins to figurative manifestations. It traces the interconnected stages of literal language (lea ‘ilongofua), figuration (heliaki), figurative language (lea heliaki), and figures of speech (lea ‘o e heliaki). The resulting framework illustrates how the semantic and cultural qualities associated with lea faka-Tonga facilitate the progression of literal words into increasingly sophisticated modes of figurative expression. Taken together, this continuum is intended to be understood as a progressive semantic trajectory, moving from source (literal language), through quality (inherent attributes such as fragrance), to pervasiveness (the expansion of figurative usage), and culminating in specificity (the emergence of distinct figures of speech). It serves as one of the study's principal organising frameworks, establishing a common reference point that guides and integrates the analyses developed throughout the thesis. For further elaboration and clarification of this continuum, see Section 1.6.1.



The Semantic-to-Heliaki Continuum comprises four dimensions: source, quality, pervasiveness, and specificity. For example, *kakala* originates as a literal term (source), derives its figurative potential from fragrance (quality), acquires widespread symbolic and figurative usage across diverse contexts (pervasiveness), and is ultimately expressed through specific figures of speech and related forms of *heliaki* (specificity).

Diagram One

1.2 Aim, Objectives and Research Questions

The aim of this study is to critically investigate the cultural, regulatory, and literary and journalistic mechanisms that control the *kakala* song genre in order to understand its moderation grounds.

To achieve this aim, the following objectives have been formulated:

1.2.1 Objectives.

1. To critically analyse the guidelines used to censor kakala songs during the research period.
2. To examine the role of heliaki (figuration, imagery, or symbolism) in kakala songs.
3. To investigate the roles of faiongoongo (journalists) and punake in the kakala song censorship process.
4. To analyse the influence of Queen Sālote on the censorship process, particularly in relation to her role as a pioneering composer of kakala songs.

1.2.2 Research Questions.

These objectives directly inform the following research questions:

RQ: Why did kakala songs, or hiva kakala, have to be composed in accordance with lea heliaki and moderated by journalists and censorial punake before they could be broadcast on the Tonga Broadcasting Commission (TBC) radio station from the 1960s until the early 2000s?

1.2.3 Sub-Research Questions (SRQs):

1. To what extent did the involvement of the late Queen Sālote Tupou III, as reformer of Tongan kakala song genre, influence the Tongan mindset about the composition and regulation of songs?
2. Were the censorship guidelines established to enhance the quality of kakala songs, or were they used as a political tool to reinforce the power of the royals and chiefs over commoners?
3. Did the involvement of censorial punake and journalists undermine the authenticity of the traditional song genre, or did it contribute to their preservation and enhancement?

1.3 CARS Framework

Owing to the complex and multi-layered nature of the research problem, Swales' (1990) Create a Research Space (CARS) model was adopted to structure the introduction. This model serves as a unifying thread, ensuring the study's overall coherence by providing a common reference point for subsequent chapters. Its utility lies in its ability to delineate the essential elements of the research clearly and systematically from the outset. Its three fundamental moves in formulating a research project are as follows: establishing a territory, establishing a niche, and occupying the niche. The first move is structured in three key steps: it enables the researcher

to establish the significance, relevance, and interest of the topic under investigation. In the second move, the researcher identifies a significant gap, limitation, or weakness in prior research that undermines the prevailing consensus. Finally, the third move demonstrates how the new research will meaningfully extend existing knowledge, thereby clarifying the problem and justifying the study's unique contribution. The contributions proposed in Move 3 and their supporting sections are systematically developed and justified in the Discussion chapter, while relevant theoretical and empirical foundations are established and, where necessary, revisited in the Literature Review chapter.

To illustrate the application of the CARS model, the chapter consolidates its three moves under unified headings. Each section contains three distinct paragraphs that sequentially address Move 1 (Establishing a Territory), Move 2 (Establishing a Niche), and Move 3 (Occupying the Niche). Each of these core paragraphs is labelled with its corresponding Move, while non-designated paragraphs provide background information relevant to the specific niches. This integrated structure fosters coherent and self-contained arguments within each subsection, thereby avoiding the discursive fragmentation of a more dispersed approach.

1.4 Censorship

Move 1: Establishing a territory. A critical interrogation of censorship underpins this study. Within contemporary scholarship, censorship is commonly understood as the regulation, suppression, or removal of expressive content by state or institutional authorities, often justified on political, moral, or security grounds (Sudatti & Seligmann-Silva, 2018; Gould, 2018). A significant body of work argue that censorship cannot be understood through a single universal definition because what constitutes censorship depends on legal traditions, cultural norms, political structures, institutional settings, and societal values (Mika Hietanen and Johan Eddebo (2022–2023), Cherian George (2024). In the Tongan context, the censorship of kakala songs is particularly significant. It represents a point in history where traditional forms of social control were formalised and elevated into institutional practice, with monitoring carried out by designated censorial punake (composers) and kau faiongoongo (journalists) (Attorney-General's Office, Tonga, 1916). The prevailing view in the literature is that censorship of kakala songs functioned primarily to suppress public dissent against the government and to moderate content considered harmful or offensive to listeners (Pond, 1990; Kaniva Tonga News, 29 May 2023).

Move 2: Establishing a niche. Despite offering valuable insights into the concept of censorship, these works pay insufficient attention to its foundations which rooted in its Tongan counterparts—tapui (derived from taboo to mean banned), fakatonutonu (social control), and

tāngata (disciplining)—which are orally practised in formal cultural events particularly in the practice of fakapangai (see Appendix A). Studying the Tongan forms of traditional censorship are relevant because they reflect a significant cultural phenomenon – the sacred cultural identity based on taboos and mana emanated from ‘eiki (superior) statuses inherently acquired by the tuofefine (sister), mehekitanga (matriarch or father’s sister), tamai (father), ‘ulumotu‘a (patriarch or head of extended family) and kau lalahi (elders) and so on. The following examples are presented for illustrations purposes: (i). Tāngata‘i as used in conversation like – Toki ‘osi ‘eni ‘eku tāngata‘i ‘a ‘Isi ke ‘oua na‘a toe ‘alu ‘o faikava he ‘api ‘o Niá he ‘okú na faka‘apa‘apa. In English, this translate as – I disciplined ‘Isi by preventing him from participating in the kava session at Nia’s house because he and Nia are bound by faka‘apa‘apa, a culturally prescribed relationship of respect and avoidance that makes it inappropriate for opposite-sex cousins or siblings to participate together in a kava session.

Move 3: Occupying the niche. To address this gap and provide a culturally grounded framework for analysis, this study employs the ‘Ēkitu‘a Binary Cultural Identity (EBCI) model (see Appendices B & B1). The term ‘Ēkitu‘a is coined by the researcher from two words, ‘eiki (superiority or chiefly) and tu‘a (inferiority or commoner). This socio-cultural paradigm posits that every Tongan individual inherently embodies a binary, culturally complementary identity, wherein ‘eiki status is maternally inherited and tu‘a (inferior) status is paternally derived (see Appendices B & B1). This newly developed system is significant to this study as it acts as a coherent model to elucidate the complexity of the ‘eiki and tu‘a statuses that culturally identify Tongan individuals which of course becomes one of the bases of the kakala song censorship. Building upon this foundation, the next section explores the ‘Ēkitu‘a’s core mechanism of fetauhi‘aki.

1.4.1 ‘Ēkitu‘a – Fetauhi‘aki cultural mechanism. As the pivotal mechanism of the ‘Ēkitu‘a Binary Cultural Identity model, the practice of fetauhi‘aki (reciprocity) finds expression in the customs of fefaka‘apa‘apa‘aki (taboo-based mutual respect) and fefuatongia‘aki (taboo-based mutual obligations). The root word in fetauhi‘aki is the word tauhi meaning to keep or “(preserve) tauhi; (observe) tauhi” (Churchward 1959, p.690) while fe denotes mutuality. Grounded in the intrinsic dignity (ngeia) of the person, the cultural mechanism of fetauhi‘aki unfolds as a moral continuum in which dignity gives rise to faka‘apa‘apa (respect), and respect in turn generates fatongia (obligations), forming a dynamic and reciprocal system that sustains relational harmony within the nofo ‘a kāinga. As noted in Section 1.4.2, any breach of fetauhi‘aki, or its failure to be maintained, may result in motu (relational rupture or disconnection), which can escalate into femotumotuhi—a state of fragmented relationships—

whereby affected parties may respond through reciprocal negativities, further undermining social cohesion.

1.4.1.1 Fefaka‘apa‘apa‘aki. It denotes the reciprocal aspect of the root word faka‘apa‘apa. Faka‘apa‘apa is widely defined in the literature as respect (Mafile‘o, 2016; Fua, 2007). Churchward (1959) defined it as “to do homage or obeisance... to show deference or respect or courtesy, to be deferential or courtesy adj showing deference or respect, courteous” (p.128). Faka‘apa‘apa can be deconstructed into faka, a prefix “denoting likeness, causation, (causing or allowing to) supplying, having etc (Churchward, 1959, p.24) while ‘apa‘apa refers to “two men sitting next to the sovereign (on each side) at a ceremonial kava-drinking ceremony and acting as joint masters of ceremonies” (Churchward, 1959, p. 550).

1.4.1.2 Faka‘apa‘apa – veitapui. The above-mentioned arguments strongly lean towards respect as English counterpart of faka‘apa‘apa. However, it disregards its more profound and culturally specific meaning, the one that denotes a respect that is compelled by the observance of certain taboos. Thus, the faka‘apa‘apa practice falls into two main forms: veitapui and veitokai. The prefix vei- is equivalent to the Tongan reciprocal denoting prefix “fe-” (Churchward, 1959, p. 537) indicating communal action. Meanwhile, tapui in veitapui means imposed taboo. Veitapui is defined by Churchward (1959) as “to keep away from each other, especially as cousins” and siblings of opposite sex are supposed to do (p.537). The taboo rules prohibit impolite language and enforce stringent codes of conduct; for instance, male adolescents and adults are forbidden from being shirtless in the presence of sisters and female cousins.

1.4.1.3 Faka‘apa‘apa – veitokai. Distinguished from veitapui by its own specific taboos, veitokai represents a broader manifestation of faka‘apa‘apa. It is characterised by its reciprocal nature, practiced mutually among all members of the nofo ‘a kāinga, or extended family structure, including all siblings and cousins. The research contends that veitokai represents the predominant form of fefaka‘apa‘apa‘aki. It not only encompasses all members of the community but also functions as a social covenant whose reciprocal nature compels every member of the nofo ‘a kāinga to actively uphold and maintain it. For instance, the children and their father observe veitokai or feveitokai‘aki (reciprocal veitokai) in relation to food. Traditionally, children are not permitted to eat leftover food from their father’s meal; it must be reserved for him to consume after resting from a long day working in the plantation, for instance. This practice ensures that he still has food available when he recovers from fatigue. In return, it is the father’s responsibility to provide food for his children. The following section examines the concept of mana that emanates from taboos.

1.4.2 Tapu (taboos) and mana. The taboos associated with faka‘apa‘apa observances

are also intrinsically linked to mana (spiritual power). For instance, a mehekitanga (paternal aunt) can activate his mana to curse her inferiors if she is displeased, particularly if her fatongia are dishonoured (Douaire-Marsaudon, 1996). Douaire-Marsaudon also said: “A child must respect his father and his father's brother who are in many ways tapu to him; but to his father's sister (mehikitanga), he must pay even greater respect. It is she who is really supreme in the family. Her person, food, clothes and bed are tapu; she often controls the matrimonial destinies of her brother's children” (p.139). She continues to say that the mehekitanga holds the power to enact supernatural harm such as inducing miscarriage in her brother's wife through a curse.

1.4.3 Fatongia. The current literature on Tongan cultures depicts fatongia variably. Churchward (1959) defines fatongia as “duty; obligation” (p.143). Likewise, Tofua‘ipangai (2016) defines fatongia by dividing it into two components: fa and tongia. He asserts that fa refers to pandanus and tongia denotes the “fragrance” emanating from a “ripe pandanus fruit” (p. 61). From an analytical perspective, however, Tofua‘ipangai (2016) has mistaken fa for fā, the correct spelling of the Tongan word for pandanus, which includes a macron over the vowel. While there is a significant difference in meaning between fa and fā, there is no Tongan word as fa, without the macron, except, often pronounce as such in the musical scale as counterpart of ray in do,re,mi,fa,sol,la,ti (Churchward, 1959). Furthermore, the corresponding of fatongia to the English term obligation in existing literature represents a critical oversight. It trivialises the diverse cultural dimensions of this imperative cultural concept, leading to a loss of its full significance. To address this gap, the present study proposes two new analytical concepts to capture this critical contrast in the following sections.

1.4.3.1 Fatongia – Veingatapu. This research introduces the concept of the veingatapu cultural model. It is intended to specify the fatongia (obligations) grounded in the faka‘apa‘apa veitapui inherent in the relationship between tuofefine (sisters or female cousins) and tuonga‘ane (brothers or male cousins). The references here to the tuofefine also infers the mehekitanga, the father’s sister or the children’s paternal aunt (see Appendices A, B & B1) since it is the tuofefine that becomes the mehekitanga. The term veingatapu can be deconstructed into vei- (a reciprocal prefix), -nga- (derived from fatongia), and tapu (taboo).

1.4.3.2 Veingatapu - Exclusive Kinship Privileges. The table below illustrates cultural practices associated with veingatapu, which include both tangible offerings (e.g., polopolo ‘o e fuatapu) and intangible actions (e.g., lea ho lea‘anga), all grounded in the principle of veitapui. Brothers and maternal uncles traditionally reserve these tabooed fatongia obligations for their tuofefine (sisters) and mehekitanga (maternal aunts) only.

Cultural Taboo Practices	Descriptions
Polopolo ‘o e fuatapu	The ceremonial presentation of the first fruits, which are designated as sacred or taboo.
‘Inasi mu’a	The first and typically largest portion of any item to be shared among family members, such as food.
Toli e ‘akau tu‘u matafale	harvesting parts of plants growing directly in front of a house
Hu‘i pale	The act of detaching a monetary prize or reward offered to an individual during a cultural performance or entertainment, typically by sticking the money onto their body as a gesture of appreciation or honour
Kai ‘o e kongā ‘eiki	The act of eating the portion of food considered superior or chiefly, such as the head of a fish or the back of a pig.
Lea ho lea‘anga / fa‘iteliha ‘anga	The act of speaking freely, including in a derogatory manner, about one’s maternal uncle.
Tā ho tā‘anga	The act of physically striking an individual whom one is culturally permitted to beat, most commonly the maternal uncle and members of his household.
Pā mata	The culturally sanctioned practice in which an individual is permitted to slap another person’s face.
Nofo mu’a	The front seat or position in an event

The tuofefine and mehekitanga reciprocate the privilege of engaging in these fatongia through profound love and heartfelt devotion toward their brothers and their households. This is most evident in the practice of mehekitanga avoiding fakafahufahu practice—often refrain from explicitly asserting superiority over their inferior. Instead, they demonstrate humility in their own volition through actions such as cooking for them or reserving valuable possessions, such as fine clothing, for their brothers’ children.

1.4.3.3 Fatongia – veingatae. The second type of fatongia, here conceptualised as a newly developed category, veingatae. It represents the other obligation carried out within the framework of faka‘apa‘apa veitokai (respects other than veitapui). The component tae is derived from vaha‘angatae, a term denoting an assigned duty or task (Churchward, 1959). Veingatae refers to all other fatongia that are not obligatorily linked to tapu, ‘eiki, or other high-status practices encompassed by veingatapu. These obligations must still be fulfilled; however, the level of commitment is more flexible and less stringent. For example, in a funeral, friends and distant relatives may only commit to their fatongia by observing the practice of ‘asi or ‘asi ki ai—the duty to be physically present as a gesture of support. This obligation does not require the presentation of significant items, as is customary in veingatapu. This clarification is crucial because it delineates the full spectrum of fatongia, which is of paramount importance to kakala song compositions and their censorship—an aspect that has never been addressed in existing literature.

1.4.4 Operationalising the ‘Ekitu’a Framework. The preceding analysis has detailed the interrelated functioning of the ‘Ekitu’a system’s cultural identity components. To ground this theoretical framework in practice, the following example demonstrates its operationalisation from the beginning. When a child is born, they inherit the cultural identity of ‘eiki (superior) maternally and tu’a (inferior) paternally. This framework activates the principles of fetauhi‘aki, the initial stage exemplified through the strategic communication to inform the paternal and maternal parties about the birth, known as tala fatongia (communicating the fatongia). The response to tala fatongia triggered the practice of tali fatongia (response to fatongia). Thus, two primary obligations follow: the mother’s brother provides the veifua, “the first cooked food presented to a woman after confinement”(Churchward,1959,p.537) while the mehekitanga (father’s sister) bestows the child’s name in the practice known as fakahingoa. One of the most significant demonstrations of faka‘apa‘apa and fatongia in this context is the ceremonial division of the veifua pig. This ritual traditionally epitomizes the relational principles, as the ‘eiki cuts—specifically the rib and sirloin, referred to as tu’a (back, not to be confused with inferior or subordinate status)—are reserved for the tuofefine or mehekitanga. In contrast, the fuefue—the tail, ham, and hock, constituting the designated tu’a (lower ceremonial ranking) portion of the pig—is allocated to the tuonga‘ane (brothers and male cousins), fa‘ētangata (maternal uncles), and the wider maternal kin.

1.5 Kakala songs (hiva kakala)

Move 1: Establishing a territory. Understanding the background of kakala songs is significant and relevant to this study. Previous scholars variously define the genre as love songs, sweet songs, songs of flowers, topical songs and dance songs (Moyle, 1976; Kappler, 1989; McLean, 1978; Helu, 2012; Kava, 2015). Moreover, several researchers argued that kakala songs were a by-product of laukakala (songs about kakala), laumātanga (about historical or beauty spots), laukaveinga (songs about the celestial body), and laufungavaka (songs about tiers presumably referring to the culture of social hierarchies), (Churchward, 1959; Helu, 2012).

Move 2: Establishing a niche. While previous scholarship offers valuable insights, the presence of conflicting definitions of kakala song or hiva kakala indicates a significant gap that warrants further investigation. This lack of consensus is not merely a semantic issue but has deeper epistemological implications. Several scholars have argued that naming is not merely descriptive but constitutive of meaning. As Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o (1986) and Bourdieu (1991) suggest, the fragmentation or proliferation of terms used to describe a single cultural form risks diluting its symbolic coherence and cultural authority. In this sense, the identification and preservation of a singular, culturally grounded term is essential to maintaining the epistemological integrity of the concept.

Move 3: Occupying a niche. This study addresses this gap by examining the transition of

literal words (lea mahinongofua) to imagery (heliaki). It illustrates the integration of literary elements with a continuum within lea faka-Tonga (Tongan language) (see Section 1.1). Drawing on the transformation of kakala from a literal lexical form into a vehicle of imagery and symbolism (heliaki), this continuum illustrates how Tongan figurative expression generates vivid, emotionally resonant, and culturally meaningful representations of individuals, relationships, and social realities.

1.5.1 Why kakala songs are songs of heliaki. Two compositions by Queen Sālote Tupou III—widely regarded as Tonga’s greatest punake (Helu, 2012)—are presented to demonstrate how kakala songs have been employed extensively beyond their conventional association with botanical elements. The first example is a verse from the Queen’s composition about her half-sister Princess ‘Elisiva Fusipala Tauki‘onetuku. A close reading of the composition suggests that the Queen was sending a mākoni (Marconi) message (see Appendix A) to her sister, possibly during the period when the Princess was studying in Melbourne, Australia. In the lyrical text, as illustrated below, the Queen employs six calques as heliaki (symbolic expressions), which are particularly noteworthy for their effectiveness as instances of transcreation. These are not botanical references or plant parts despite the song being conventionally classified as kakala song (Wood-Ellem, 2004/2019). They are primarily neologised communicative, technological and conceptual terms. Notably, neologism is a type of figures of speech). In the song, the neologisms include misiteli (mystery), pasinoti (passionate), leniteti (to lighten), mākoni (Marconi), levasimoni (receiver of the Marconi), and piliote‘anga (the period). The English equivalent for levasimoni provided in this work is an interpretive adaptation by the researcher. These Tongan neologisms demonstrate a process of direct linguistic assimilation that demonstrates the role of kakala as heliaki and symbolism, figuration or symbolism. The verse is copied verbatim below for illustration purposes:

Tala ‘e he kukuvalu ‘i he tohi	The kukuvalu would tell in the letter
Kei misiteli pe te‘eki ‘ilo‘i	It was a mystery yet to be known
Ka fakapapau leva ‘o pasinoti	If confirmed and passionate
Leniteti ‘o e ‘uhila ‘i he Mākoni	Lighten in electric driven marconi
Ke mea‘i tonu ‘e he levasimoni	So the levasimoni truly knows
Kuo ‘ai ‘a e ‘ofa ni ‘i he mo‘oni	This love is truthful
Si‘i ‘ainga ‘o e ‘ofa kuo ‘ikai ke ‘osi	The source of love never end Ko e
piliote‘anga ‘o si‘ete holi	A period of my desire

The next example shows that what previous studies deemed as lau song genre (laumātanga, laukakala, laukaveinga and so on) are integral component of the kakala songs

manifested as heliaki (symbolism), lea heliaki (figurative language) and lea ‘o e heliaki (figures of speech). Remarkably, despite kakala songs dominantly depicting mātanga or kaveinga (see Appendix A) in the form of lau (rapping or singing), such songs still classified as kakala songs not mātanga or kaveinga songs, for example. This is evident in the Hiva Afā ‘a Vaea, in which the Queen began by composing about (lau) the wind (laumatangi) including, He sika ‘a hema fakahihifo, a proverb meaning, the wind was unusually blown from the west of Tonga. The second line, Louloua‘a e matangitō, meaning, the wind made threatening landfall. The rest of the composition is a mixture of lau techniques including laumātanga such as historical spots in Ha‘afeva known as Kolongatata and Faka‘osikato and laulaumanu (singing about the laumanu or flock of birds) such as taungapeka (flying foxes camp), manusiu (flying bird) and talatā (pirate seagull). The only kakala in the form of a garland depicted in this kakala song is salusalu in line sixth of the second verse. These examples indicate that kakala songs are not specifically love songs or songs of fragrant flowers long portrayed confusingly in the literature but merely songs of heliaki and its subsequent forms of expression along a continuum of increasing specificity—namely, figurative language and figures of speech (heliaki) (see Appendices E & F).

(i). Hiva afā ‘o Vaea

He sika ‘a hema fakahihifo	The wind shifted, a western gale
Louloua‘a e matangitō	And promised ruin on its trail
Kolongatata ne fakauō	Kolongatata gathered, swift and low
‘O falala ‘i Faka‘osikato	For shelter in Faka‘osikato.

1.6 Heliaki - Imagery.

Move 1: Establishing a territory. A critical review of heliaki constitutes a central component of the conceptual foundation of this study. Existing scholarship presents significant divergence, with some researchers positioning heliaki as a distinctly Tongan construct difficult to define (Veikoso, 2023). Additionally, several scholars interpret it as comparable to, or aligned with, the English system of figures of speech (Latukeyu, 1980), (Wood-Ellem, 2004/2019). Several scholars argue that heliaki means “indirectness; to say one thing but mean another” that needs expert to unravel (Kaeppler, 1990, p.231). In contrast, heliaki is controversially corresponded in the existing literature to metaphor in English (Kakala, 2022; Veikoso, 2023) and vice-versa. However, these interpretations of metaphor appear to reflect a lexical reduction, as represented in dictionary definitions, rather than its broader literary function, which, although also documented in dictionaries, is often overlooked.

The Oxford English Dictionary (n.d.) defines ‘metaphor’ as:

- (i). a figure of speech in which a word or phrase is applied to an object or action to which it is not literally applicable.
- (ii). a thing regarded as representative or symbolic of something else.

The findings highlight a key principle of lexicography: that dictionaries such as the OED aim to describe common usage across a general audience rather than to prescribe specialised, technical applications such as in songcraft or kakala songs. This terminological innovation is necessitated by the demands of increasing linguistic precision and specificity in direct Tongan translation, a phenomenon addressed by the Toafesiama model (see Section 1.10).

Move 2: Establishing a niche. While the foregoing arguments offer valuable insights, they fail to discuss the rules that define metaphor. The rules are outlined as follows:

(a). Grammatical rule: Halliday’s (1994) framework emphasises that metaphorical meaning can also be encoded in grammatical structures, not just in individual words. One of the most common grammatical forms used to represent a metaphor is the copula construction, particularly involving auxiliary verbs such as “is”. This verb functions as a linking mechanism that equates two entities, often from different semantic domains, thereby facilitating metaphorical interpretation. For example, in the sentence “The snow is a white blanket,” the subject “snow” is metaphorically reclassified as “a white blanket.” The helping verb “is” serves as an indicator that the next word or phrase is literally a metaphor.

(b). Tenor-Vehicle Theory: The tenor-vehicle theory (Richards, 1936) can also be used to identify the metaphor in the same example above - The snow is a white blanket. Richards' (1936) argues that metaphor can be deconstructed into its core components: Tenor: Snow (the literal subject being described).

Vehicle: White blanket (the figurative image used to reframe the snow’s qualities). As a result, the “white blanket” is a metaphor.

It is also evident that much of the interpretation of heliaki is grounded in the metaphor’s lexical, dictionary-based form, which often lacks sufficient contextual depth for academic disciplines such as linguistics and literature.

Move 3: Occupying a niche. To address this gap, this study advances the concept of heliaki along a continuum—literal word → figuration, symbolism, or imagery (heliaki) → figurative language (lea heliaki) → figures of speech (lea ‘o e heliaki). This framework situates Tongan imagery within a broader model that explains the progression of meaning from literal expression to increasingly complex figurative forms (see Section 1.1). Additionally, the study standardises lea ‘o e heliaki and presents 30 types aligned with the English system of figures of speech, each accompanied by its governing principles. Last but not least, this study revises

conceptualisation of heliaki that moves beyond prevailing interpretations which centre primarily on metaphor, indirectness, layering, and hidden meaning. Such interpretations are commonly traced to Kaeppler (1990), whose work has been extensively reproduced in subsequent scholarship with limited critical interrogation. This dominant perspective tends to privilege metaphorical complexity as the defining feature of heliaki, while paying insufficient attention to its broader cultural, social, and expressive functions within Tongan discourse. These issues are examined in detail in Chapter 5 (Discussion).

1.7 Royal Initiative (Mā'imoa)

Move 1: Establishing a Territory. Understanding the Tonga Broadcasting Commission (TBC) radio station role and ownership is essential to this study. The station was established under the premiership of Prince Taufa'āhau who later ascended to the throne as King Taufa'āhau Tupou IV. His mother, Queen Sālote Tupou III, was the then monarch. The broadcaster was established at a time the government operated under the absolute authority of the monarchy until 2010, when Tonga transitioned to a democratic system. The radio station operates under the Tonga Broadcasting Commission Act 2016, which stipulates its status as a state-owned entity. It has long been subject to criticism for its pro-monarchical news coverage and practices of self-censorship (Public Media Alliance, n.d.), (Lewis, 2011).

Move 2: Establishing a niche. While this offers valuable insight into our understanding, a significant gap remains in the existing body of research concerning the politically pro-monarchical orientation of the TBC radio station. Traditionally, any projects, initiatives, or works instituted by the monarch or members of the royal family are deemed mā'imoa—a regal term denoting such undertakings. Consequently, such initiatives are not to be treated in ways that might compromise the sanctity of the mā'imoa. Therefore, further research is essential to advance our understanding on this.

Move 3: Occupying a niche. The present study contributes to the scholarship on mā'imoa by offering the first systematic theorization of the fakama'unga (mainstay) cultural phenomenon, thereby addressing a critical gap in the literature. Churchward (1959) defines fakama'unga as “that which, or one who, gives stability or binds together (fig.), mainstay.” (p.78). Churchward continues to describe the sovereign as the “fakama'aunga” of the land and compared it to fatungamotu'a (contemporary traditions). A more detailed discussion of this point is presented in the Discussion section.

1.8 Punake (Composer)

Move 1: Establishing a territory. Understanding the characteristics of the punake is essential for framing the focus of this study. Traditionally, the punake has been defined as a

person who writes lyrics, sets them to music, and choreographs for dance (Wood-Elem, 2004/2019). According to Dawson (2016), punake are “a special class of orators and poets” (p. 3) who engage in the practice of music and lyrical composition. There are also different types of punake, including the punake hua hiva, who initiates the singing of a song.

Move 2: Establishing a niche. While these perspectives provide valuable insights, insufficient scholarly attention has been paid to the punake's exceptional dedication and sacrifice, through which sustained, disciplined, and often under-recognised labour enables the production of high-profile artistic works (Brook, O'Brien, & Taylor, 2020; Mackenzie & McKinlay, 2020). Such achievements are not solely products of creativity or talent but are also the outcome of prolonged commitment, persistence, and endurance over time (Bilton, Eikhof, & Gilmore, 2020; Luckman & Taylor, 2024).

Move 3: Occupying a niche. This study addresses these gaps by making two principal contributions. First, it investigates poetic licence as a creative mechanism through which punake depart from factual realities and conventional linguistic rules to produce distinctive artistic, rhetorical, and aesthetic effects. In doing so, it builds on contemporary literary theory that recognises poetic language as deliberately non-literal and performative (Culler, 2015), as well as recent work that conceptualises poetic licence as an enabling feature of lyric expression that legitimises imaginative deviation and expressive intensification (Molde, 2020). Second, it proposes a systematic framework for understanding the compositional methodology of punake and examines the dedication, discipline, and personal sacrifices underpinning the production of high-calibre musical works.

1.9 Faiongoongo (Journalist).

Move 1: Establishing a territory. Exploring the concept of faiongoongo is essential to understand more about their involvement in the song censorship. Churchward (1959) defines faiongoongo as “reporter or newspaper correspondence” (p.22). The word faiongoongo can be deconstructed into fai and ongoongo. Churchward also translated ongoongo into English as “news or report or reputation” (p.395). In current Tongan usage, faiongoongo conventionally denotes journalists, whereas ongoongo refers to news. Contemporary scholarship views journalists not merely as producers of news but as professionals whose identity is formed through specialised training, occupational norms, and ethical commitments that distinguish journalism from other forms of communication (Hanitzsch et al., 2019).

Move 2: Establishing a niche. While the preceding argument provides useful insights into faiongoongo and its relationship to journalism, it does not sufficiently emphasise that the two are fundamentally distinct in several key respects. Most notably, the practice of

faiongoongo has yet to undergo formal standardisation, and therefore lacks the institutional frameworks, ethical codes, and professional benchmarks that define contemporary journalism. As a result, it cannot be readily equated with the role or function of a journalist in its modern sense. A similar limitation applies to the concept of “news,” which, within the context of faiongoongo, does not conform to the same structured conventions, verification processes, or normative expectations that govern news production in established journalistic practice.

Move 3: Occupying a niche. This study addresses the limitations of prior research by synthesizing English journalistic conventions—including its models, styles, techniques, professional guidelines, and ethical frameworks—with Tongan practices of ongoongo and faiongoongo.

1.10 Tongan Westernisation.

Move 1: Establishing a territory. This study argues that understanding the negotiation of cultural borrowings is essential, as it has significantly influenced both kakala songs and their censorship. A key focus is the process of Westernisation through which Tonga adopts western cultural and civilizational traits since first Westerners arrived in the 19th century. Fonua (2020) defines Westernisation as the process by which Western cultural values and ideologies are adopted, often influencing or even replacing local beliefs, practices, and ways of knowing. In Tonga, Westernisation has transformed social, political, and ideological structures through Christianity, education, and new forms of governance (Vuki, 1995). However, rather than replacing indigenous culture, this process has resulted in ongoing negotiation and adaptation, where Tongan cultural values continue to be sustained and reinterpreted across generations (Kalavite, 2024).

Move 2: Establishing a niche. While the preceding arguments provide valuable insights, they lack a coherent academic framework specifically designed to standardise and filter the diverse external influences that Tonga has absorbed—a process in which Westernisation has been a predominant force. The absence of such a framework has limited systematic analysis of Tongan Westernisation, leaving subsequent scholarly discussions conceptually fragmented and at times ambiguous. Thus, further study is required on these concepts to ensure a comprehensive understanding of kakala song censorship.

Move 3: Occupying a niche. The study addresses this gap by introducing the Toafesiama Cultural Integration Framework (TCIF) (see Discussion Chapter). Toafesiama is a neologism introduced in this study and transliterated from the expression Tongan foreignism, combining To (Tonga) and fesiamā (from foreignism). The term is used to conceptualise the systematic influence and integration of foreign social and cultural elements within Tongan

society. It highlights the visible incorporation of external features—such as Western norms, language, and practices—into Tongan cultural frameworks. The two sections that follow delve into toafesiama’s two newly developed integral mechanism.

1.10.1 Tokalatani cultural integration. Tokalatani is a neologism transliterated from the term Tongan acculturation, combining To (Tonga) and kalatani (from “acculturation”), as advanced in this study. It refers to the process through which Tongan society adopts and adapts foreign cultural elements while negotiating their integration within indigenous linguistic and cultural frameworks. For example, the Tongan term faka‘apa‘apa is commonly translated into English as “respect.” While this translation captures the primary sense of the concept, it does not fully convey the broader cultural meanings embedded within faka‘apa‘apa. In particular, the English notion of respect does not adequately account for the culturally prescribed taboos associated with its two forms, veitapui and veitokai. (see Appendix A; see also Section 1.4.1.1.2). This illustrates how foreign concepts may be accommodated within existing Tongan cultural frameworks while retaining meanings that are distinctively Tongan.

1.10.2 Tasimalani cultural integration. Tasimalani is a coined term derived from ta (Tonga) and similani (from “assimilation”), referring to the process through which foreign cultural elements are integrated into Tongan society through the adoption and normalisation of foreign-derived linguistic forms. Unlike tokalatani, which incorporates foreign concepts through existing Tongan linguistic resources, tasimalani is characterised by the use of transliterated, borrowed, hybrid, or localised lexical forms that facilitate the incorporation of foreign concepts into Tongan language and culture. For example, the incorporation of English grammatical category known as parts of speech—such as ‘ātikolo (article), veape (verb), ‘etiveape or hoa veape (adverb), nauna (noun), ‘etisekitivi or hoa nauna (adjective), konisangisini (conjunction), and peleposīsini or taki nauna (preposition)—into the standardisation of the Tongan grammar has been deemed appropriate and continues to be used today. There are also tokalatani-processed terms in Tongan grammar, such as hoāveape for adverb. However, hoā, meaning “pair” or “partner,” conceptualises the adverb as a companion to the verb. This differs from the English definition of an adverb as a word that modifies a verb, an adjective, or another adverb. This illustrates the significance of toafesiama, which is designed to critically analyse such translations and evaluate their conceptual validity within Tongan linguistic and cultural frameworks

1.10.3 Toafesiama through musical & lyrical transculturation. Afuha‘amango's Pōngia ‘a e Loto song illustrates toafesiama as a process that combines both tasimalani and tokalatani in a transculturation process. The song acculturates foreign musical and linguistic elements while simultaneously assimilating them through transliteration, thereby transforming

an English composition into a culturally appropriate Tongan work. Afuha'amango transculturated in a form of assimilation an old English song known in 1913 as *The Sunshine of Your Smile* (see Appendix G). It is a British popular song with music by Lilian Ray and lyrics by Leonard Cooke. In this instance, the assimilation is processed through musical rearrangement and lyrical transculturation (see Appendix H). Afuha'amango successfully created a culturally fitting Tongan version of the song. Though employing distinct Tongan heliaki (figurative language), he managed to preserve the semantic intent of the English original. This is evident in the chorus when he translated the first two lines, "Give me a smile, the love-light in your eyes; Life could not hold a sweeter paradise" into "Ko ho'o ngaahi malimali mai, Ko hoku palataisi 'uluaki". It is a concisely befitting Tongan contextual translation rather than a word for word translation that could end up like "'Omi ange ha fo'i malimali, 'a e maama 'o e 'ofa 'oku huhulu mei ho fofonga; Na'a mo e mo'ui ni 'e 'ikai pe te na ma'u ha toe palataisi ke ne fakatataua". The later may appear closer to what the English version is in words, but it has two main problems: one is that it is too wordy and long to be set to the notated rhythm of the line. The other is that it is too verbose and lacks poetic quality. This leaves the former as the best contextual translated version by Afuha'amango. This instance serves as a prime example of cultural assimilation, demonstrating the punake's judicious and selective approach to adapting elements for Tongan contextualization.

Chorus

Ko ho'o ngaahi malimali mai

Give me a smile, the love-light in your eyes

Ko hoku palataisi 'uluaki

Life could not hold a sweeter paradise

Ko e hila tu'o taha 'a ho fofonga

Give me the right to love you all the while

Ko ia pe 'a e lolo hoku vaifakanonga

My world for ever, the sunshine of your smile.

In his musical rearrangement, Afuha'amango expertly eliminated modulations present in the original English harmony. This resulted in a simpler, more direct progression using relative keys and chords, which parallels the traditional Tongan practice of one-chord progression (see Appendix G). The first verse and the chorus accompanied with their Tongan translation is copied verbatim below for illustration purposes.

Pōngia 'a e Loto

Sunshine of your smile

‘Oku faka‘au ke pōngia ‘a e loto

Dear face that holds so sweet a smile for me

‘I he ‘amanaki kuo tuai ‘a ‘ene hoko

Were you not mine, how dark this world would be

Faka‘amu pe si‘o le‘o ke u fanongo

I know no light above that could replace

Neongo ‘a e laku maka ki he loloto

Love's radiant sunshine in your lovely face.

1.11 Fa‘u (Composition) quality.

Move 1: Establishing a territory. Exploring song quality is essential to this study. Previous scholars briefly discussed musical qualities in terms of Tongan ancient instruments, lyrical texts as well as dancing. Shumway (1981) describes how lakalaka group performance’s song lyrics appeal to the audience as “a profound expression of Tongan sensibilities” (p.469). Meanwhile, Kaeppler (1967) describes the quality of dance with body movements as having to be “graceful and intricate, deriving their distinctive character” (p.160). Moyle (1993) defines the fakahēhē style of singing as “ornamentation” (p. 399) while Churchward (1959) interprets it as “to sing with improvised variations or flourishes with instead of following the score” (p. 42). Two widely discussed notions which describe qualities of songs and performing arts are māfana (emotional māfana) and mālie (appreciative response). Manu‘atu (2000) argues these notions “are inseparable” (p. 77).

Move 2: Establishing a niche. Although these perspectives contribute to our understanding of Tongan songs, music and performance, they overlooked elements encompassing kakala song composition. This includes the central role of string instruments—notably the guitar, banjo, and ukulele, which typically accompany kakala songs and the related skills of vocality and lyrical construction.

Move 3: Occupying a niche. In response to these gaps, the study makes a major contribution by demonstrating the concept of hook of the songs as well as certain musical motifs and theories that could maintain qualities of kakala songs in terms of lyrics, vocality, instrumentations and music. The sections that follow will delve into more details of the notion of mālie.

1.11.1 Mālie-values. Churchward (1959) translates mālie as “good, pleasing, pleasant, such as one likes or enjoys; interesting; advantageous, fortunate, helpful; fine, splendid; commendable, admirable, very satisfactory” (p. 324). While Churchward’s English definitions offer the closest approximations, they also highlight the absence of a single English term that

fully captures the cultural depth and nuance of this cultural trend.

1.11.1.1 News values vs mālie-values. Drawing on the researcher's background in journalism and familiarity with the concepts of newsworthiness and news values (Cable, 2018), this study interprets mālie as a culturally equivalent concept that can be appropriately integrated to help standardise the Tongan phenomenon within the broader media frameworks. Harcup & O'Neill, (2017); Hermida, (2014) argue that news values constitute the criteria that journalists employ to assess the newsworthiness of a story, including factors like promptness, impact, proximity, prominence, conflict, human interest, and novelty. The level of worthiness of a story is therefore predicated on a satisfactory combination of these values.

The values by which news is judged, is reformulated as a normative standard for determining mālie. These criteria are as follows:

1. Is it new?
2. Is it unusual?
3. Is it interesting or significant?
4. Is it about people?

The responses to these questions should provide conceptual measurements of how great an element of mālie is. For example, stating that a student failed an exam is not unusual, interesting, or significant. However, finding out that a teacher failed the exam would be unusual and interesting, therefore may warrant a mālie attention. Typically, some react to the situation and say: Mālie tama ko e tō 'a e faiakó. This translates as: "It is mālie that the teacher failed" implying they, of all students, should know better.

1.11.1.2 Neologism – Palatiniume 'o Ha'a Ma'afu. Applying the proposed criteria to kakala songs, we can use a simple lyrical line from Queen Sālote's Takafalu lakalaka song about her son Taufa'āhau who was king from Ha'a Ma'afu (Ma'afu Lineage) with accumulated honours. For clarity, following King George Tupou I's overthrowing of the Tu'i Tonga royal dynasty and the establishment of the new and current royal line known as the Kanokupolu monarchical line, his successors sought to reconcile with the previous regime's members. Despite the abolition of the Tu'i Tonga title, the Kanokupolu line pursued a strategy of dynastic realignment through strategic marriages between them and the remaining immediate families of the Tu'i Tonga line. This initiative culminated in King Taufa'āhau Tupou IV, the eldest son of Queen Sālote, being the first monarch to inherit a direct blend of blood from both royal lines. This consolidated lineage is considered to have endowed him with an exceptionally high and significant status, unparalleled in its symbolic and genealogical authority.

1.11.1.3 Devising the mālie-worthiness. For the Queen, to compose a lyrical line

saying that Taufā‘āhau was from Ha‘a Ma‘afu is nothing new, unusual, or significant about this factual statement. However, when she translated that sentence into heliaki in the song, saying “Palatiniume ‘O Ha‘a Ma‘afu” (The Platinum of Ha‘a Ma‘afu) instead of King Taufā‘āhau was from Ha‘a Ma‘afu (Wood-Ellem 2019, p.260), that is new, unusual, interesting, significant and about people. The neologism palatiniume (platinum) stands among the Queen’s most significant artistic achievements, constituting a strategic and resonant act of transculturation. She appropriated the Western scientific concept of platinum—a metal historically used in the construction of standard measurement artefacts within the early metric system—and recontextualised it to symbolise her son's unique and exalted status (Britanica, 2026).

The text of the Takafalu Lakalaka song is published verbatim below for illustrations:

Hoto ‘ofa he ‘aho fakamanatu	My heart is full on this day of remembrance
He palatiniume ‘o Ha‘a Ma‘afu	of the platinum of Ha‘a Ma‘afu
Fāhina ‘o e Loto Neiafu	white pandanus of Central Neiafu
‘Oku fotu ‘i he Langi Tu‘oteau	looming in the Langi Tu‘oteau

1.12 Tongan Society

Contemporary Tongan society constitutes an evolving hybrid of European and indigenous cultures, governed by a process this study newly conceptualises as Toafesiamā Cultural Integration Framework (TCIF) (see Appendix C). This concept is derived from, and reframes, the broader historical phenomenon of Tongan Westernization. The amalgamated structure has two different settings in the modern world. One is the culture practised in the kingdom of Tonga. The other is the culture exercised by Tongans who emigrated and have lived in New Zealand, Australia, the United States and other countries since the 1950s (The Kingdom of Tonga National Voluntary GCM Review, 2022). Although both cultural structures are recognized as Tongan, evidence indicates they are fundamentally distinct (Hala‘ufia, 2016). This divergence stems from the influence of Western host cultures, such as those in New Zealand, Australia, and the United States. Within these diasporic contexts, the fatungamotu'a (existing traditions) and nofo 'a kāinga (extended family) structures have evolved significantly. In this evolution, core values are now actively—and at times, more consciously—preserved through practices like fakafaingofua, which involves a relaxation of the strictest traditional protocols.

About 200,000 more Tongan people are living overseas than in Tonga. There are 33,000 Tongans living in Australia (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trades, n.d.), 97,824 living in New Zealand (Statistics New Zealand, 2023), and 67,221 living in the USA (The United States-

Tonga Relationship, n.d.). Only 100,179 people are living in Tonga (Tonga Statistics, 2021). In other words, a significantly larger proportion of Tongans reside in the diaspora than in Tonga. The first arrival of Europeans and the introduction of Western civilisation in the mid-1800s, notably Christianity and formal education in the Pacific including Tonga, precipitated significant sweeping transformations across almost all levels of the recipient societies (Asad, 1993; Thomas, 1991; Jolly, 1992). This contact precipitated two major transformations in Tongan society: the forced conversion of the populace from ancestral faiths to Christianity and the advent of democratic reforms, which saw Tonga adopting the Westminster political system. The religious transformation culminated in the baptism of King George Tupou I, who is recognised as the architect of modern Tonga (Latu, 2011), into Methodist church. The political reforms led to formal education introduction that established compulsory schooling for all children—a pivotal epoch in Tongan history.

The notion of formal censorship, as applied to publications and broadcasting, is a Western concept introduced to Tonga during the early period of European contact. The study presents compelling arguments that the concept of censorship was part of Tonga's cultural moderation even though this was not meant for publication. However, the study's literature review not only traces the historical evolution of Western censorship but also demonstrates that various countries—particularly those influenced by Westernisation, including Tonga—developed their own forms of censorship, which later incorporated elements of Western control. As a society deeply rooted in the concepts of *tapu* (taboo) and *mana*, Tonga provided a cultural foundation upon which Western censorship could align with existing practices such as *tāngata*, *tapui*, and *fakatonutonu* (see Appendix A).

1.13 Personal and professional genesis

This thesis was inspired by my professional experiences as a teacher for over 12 years in Tongan government schools before relocating with my family to New Zealand and becoming a journalist for about 20 years. These roles, combined with my background as a composer and musician, provide the foundation for this research. The primary aim was twofold: to contribute my practical insights as a journalist and composer to the academic discourse, and to deepen my understanding by interrogating the nature of professionalism within these fields. A key focus of this investigation is the impact of censorship, a significant challenge common to these two professions. However, it was only through this research that I recognised a profound convergence between my careers in journalism and songcraft and my previously distinct role as an educator. To illustrate the connection, the concept of a *hook* is chosen. It exemplifies a key commonality across newswriting, songcraft, and teaching. This mechanism plays a fundamental

role by capturing attention, facilitating a connection between the deliverer and receiver, and imprinting a memorable message (Lemov, 2010; Moore, 2001). The concept of attention is fundamental in these fields; without prioritising it, news reporting, song releases, and teaching become ineffective (NCES, 2024; Hohagen & Immerz, 2024). Although the study focuses specifically on censorship of kakala songs under the moderations of censorial punake and journalists, its findings, methodologies, and identified gaps have been set to establish a precedent for future research into professional teachership.

1.14 Researcher positionality

As a composer of hiva kakala songs and lea (formal speeches), I have long engaged with Tongan language forms and their figurative deployments. This sustained involvement has afforded an insider understanding of the creative and cultural processes through which literal expressions develop figurative meanings and are employed with artistic and rhetorical excellence. At the same time, awareness of my dual role as composer and researcher prompted continuous reflexivity throughout the study to minimise personal assumptions and ensure that interpretations remained firmly grounded in the linguistic, textual, and cultural evidence.

1.15 Scope and sequences.

Given the absence of prior focused analysis on this topic, the study undertakes substantial foundational work, including the redefinition, standardisation, contextualisation, and conceptualisation of key terms and frameworks. Central to this approach is the study's new categorisation of kakala as a literal term that is extensively employed within a broader figurative system (see Section 1.1). This reconceptualisation provides a foundational basis for interpreting the criteria and underlying principles that informed the censorship of kakala songs during the period under investigation.

It also expands the professional roles of the faiongoongo (journalist) and punake (composer), as well as elucidating the distinct skills of songcraft and musical composition involved in this tradition. It also discusses the involvement of Queen Sālote in the censorship process and her influence in the genre. Chapter 1 introduces the kakala phenomenon, Chapter 2 reviews relevant literature, Chapter 3 outlines the methodology, Chapter 4 reports the findings, Chapter 5 analyses the findings and Chapter 6 concludes the investigation.

1.16 Defining the research boundaries

For the purpose of this study, censorship is defined as a mechanism of cultural control, exercised through the structures of fatungamotu'a (existing traditions) and nofo 'a kāinga (see Appendix A), to monitor and regulate language decency. Whereas censorship in the Western

context has primarily entailed the prohibition of publication, this study re-contextualizes the concept within the realm of traditional Tongan orality, where it is intrinsically linked to notions of taboo and mana‘i (bewitchment) (see Appendix A). This study conceptualises TBC Radio—the institution responsible for censoring kakala songs—as a mā‘imoa (see Appendix A; also see Section 1.7), a cultural construct that shapes its management’s enduring pro-monarchical orientation. One limitation of this study is its reliance on the traditional structure of the newly developed ‘Ekitu‘a model (see Appendices B & B1). This framework may not fully reflect the practice of fakafaingofua – the relaxation of protocols that once emphasized tapu (taboos) and mana, which are no longer strictly observed in certain areas of the contemporary Tongan society—particularly within urban and diasporic communities.

1.17 Thesis overview

In order to guide the reader through the progression of the research, a brief overview of the thesis structure is presented as follows.

Chapter 2: Literature Review. The literature on kakala song censorship is situated within broader scholarly discussions of political and public reaction in Tonga. Early scholarship, exemplified by the work of Wendy Pond, documented the control of kakala songs by institutions such as the Tonga Broadcasting Commission (TBC) radio station. It framed this censorship primarily as a response to punake who protested against government authorities. Similarly, songs were pulled off the air after their broadcast offended listeners. Notably, a significant gap remains including censorship used to protect the fatungamotu‘a (existing traditions) and nofo ‘a kāinga (see Appendix A) (see ‘Ekitu‘a system, Appendices B & B1) as well as the influence of the Westernisation (see also Toafesiamia processor, Appendix C).

Chapter 3: Methodology. This study employs a qualitative and interpretive research design to investigate the mechanisms and rationales behind kakala song censorship. The methodology is primarily based on two forms of data collection using Veitalatala theoretical approach: (1) semi-structured interviews with punake (composers), former members of the Tonga Broadcasting Commission, and cultural experts; and Tupunga Ola framework (2) critical document analysis of songbooks, broadcast logs, and public archives. The subsequent analysis applies a thematic coding framework to the interview data, which is then triangulated with the findings from the document analysis to ensure validity.

Chapter 4: Findings. This chapter introduces the research questions with related themes and subthemes developed based on the relevant analysis. Each theme is defined by specific results that have emerged from the data. The analysis uncovered critical data about the censorship of kakala songs, including its justifications, consequences, and the specific

evaluation framework used to assess songs. This chapter also includes unexpected findings that the researcher encountered during the investigation process. Those extra findings either retrieved from other sources or from the researcher's experience as an educator, journalist and composer.

Chapter 5: Discussion. This chapter analyses and interpret the findings based on the data collected from participants. The analysis highlights groundbreaking findings that reshape long-neglected facts about the kakala song genre and their media governance. The discussion applied critical theories to deepened and expand the findings. This including those that contest modern mischaracterisations of kakala songs and the roles of journalists and censorial punake in control process.

Chapter 6: Conclusions. This chapter presents the study's conclusions, discussion, and literature review, all contextualised within the framework of the research question and problem. It highlights both the study's significant empirical contributions and its proposed framework for advancing future research standards in this field. The chapter recommends a thoughtful approach to assessing censorship guidelines, recognising that a nuanced understanding is essential for grasping its complexities and reasons.

Vahe 2: Litelaviu (Literature Review)

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this literature review is to critically examine prior research on the censorship of kakala songs (hiva kakala). It aims to establish the scholarly context for the current study, identifies the specific gap in the literature that this research seeks to address, and provides the theoretical framework that situates the inquiry within the broader academic discourse. Kakala songs constitute more than mere lyrics and music; they function as a platform for a significant cultural phenomenon situated at the intersection of the ‘Ekitu’ a identity system (see Introduction chapter, Section 1.4.1) and the Toafesiama translation model (see Introduction chapter, Section 1.10.1). It is relevant to mention this because, without its consideration in this review, the analysis would repeat the very oversight this study seeks to correct. Accordingly, the following research questions guide this investigation:

Research Questions (RQ):

RQ: Why did kakala songs, or hiva kakala, have to be composed in accordance with lea heliaki and moderated by journalists and censorial punake before they could be broadcast on the Tonga Broadcasting Commission (TBC) radio station from the 1960s until the early 2000s?

2.1.1 Sub-Research Questions (SRQs):

1. To what extent did the involvement of the late Queen Sālote Tupou III, as reformer of the kakala song genre, influence the Tongan mindset about the composition and regulation of songs?
2. Were the censorship guidelines established to enhance the quality of kakala songs, or were they used as a political tool to reinforce the power of the royals and chiefs over commoners?
3. Did the involvement of censorial punake and journalists undermine the authenticity of the kakala song genre, or did it contribute to their preservation and enhancement?

Literature reviews can be classified into four types, according to Cooper (2010). The first is the integrative review, which assembles and synthesises research findings. The second is the critical review, which evaluates the strengths, weaknesses, and methodologies of existing studies. The third is the bridging review, which connects

related studies across different domains. The fourth is the thematic review, which highlights and examines key issues or recurring themes. Given the limited literature directly related to the focus of this study, emphasis will be placed on identifying key issues and bridging related topics. The remaining two types will be employed where appropriate.

The first chapter introduced the study stating the aim, to explore the censorship of kakala songs between the 1960s and the early 2000s. The existing literature is here reviewed under seven sections. First, it reviews how censorship plays out as traditional and contextualised practice. Second, it reviews the literature related to kakala songs. The third section reviews roles of punake (composers) both in composing songs and censoring the genre. The fourth reviews literature about faiongoongo in parallel to its English counterpart. Section five examines the literature related to TBC radio station. Section six examines lea heliaki and its figures of speech counterpart. The final section examines the literature related to censorship.

2.2. Censorship

To understand the rationale for the strict pre-airplay scrutiny of kakala songs, a thorough analysis of the relevant literature on censorship is necessary. Al-Jarqi (2015), Grenier (2023) and Knox (2023) all argue censorship refers to restriction or suppression of information, ideas, and artistic expression by governments, institutions, or other powerful groups. George (2024) further conceptualises censorship as the regulation of speech and expression through efforts to control content deemed objectionable, harmful, politically threatening, or contrary to prevailing social and moral norms. Additionally, censorship dates to ancient Rome, with its etymology evolving from the officer who conducted the country's census and regulated the morals of the citizens to contemporary definitions of suppression and restriction (Anastaplo, 2020). Besides, Molz (1990), as cited in Steele (2018, p. 230)), argues the term censorship derives from "its Latin root *censere*, which means to "estimate or assess" (Curry, 1997,9, as cited in Molz, 1990). In the same vein, Chiari (2019) argues that negative and positive impacts of censorship rely heavily on how people of various cultures see it. Moreover, Chiari (2019) says that in the realm of religions "what was criticised and expurgated in Catholic countries was often praised and foregrounded in Protestant lands" (p. 1). She asserts that "censorship" is the opposite of free speech (p. 4). Meanwhile, Simons & Strovsky (2006) argues that "journalistic censorship" refers to when the roles of the journalists are "affected by certain cultural traditions" (p. 190).

While the aforementioned arguments illuminate various censorship practices, Knox's assertion that censorship is contingent upon a nation's worldview reveals a significant trend relevant to this study. It underscores a gap in the literature concerning Tongan traditional censorship, which encompasses concepts such as *tāngata* (to censure), *tapui* (to ban), and

fakatonutonu (to discipline or correct). Addressing this gap is crucial because it highlights the need to strengthen existing scholarship and ensure that debates on kakala censorship remain culturally grounded and conceptually consistent. A research question was therefore established to investigate why kakala songs were censored between the 1960s and the early 2000s. Thereby, this study advances the comprehension of kakala censorship and the evolution of its regulatory framework.

2.2.1 Censorship and cultural protocol. The government censorship in the years under study was not limited to kakala songs. Pond (1990) describes TBC journalists censoring punake Kitone Mamata's songs protesting against the Government as being "not chosen to be broadcast" (p. 212). In the same manner, Koloamatangi (2015) asserted that the song Aotearoa by Pita Vī "was allowed airplay for a brief period before it was taken off the station's repertoire" because it "caused a lot of pain to too many people" (Kaniva Tonga News, 2015, May 23). The TBC reinstated the song a few decades later, presumably because those who were affected by it no longer felt the same way. In contrast, a journalist at the government newspaper The Tonga Chronicle was summoned to the royal palace because King Tupou IV was upset the journalist had reported details of his planned royal flight, fearing it could make him a target for terrorists (Te Waha Nui, 2022, June 9). Moala (1994) asserts that Queen Sālote interceded with the heralds of Ha'a Ngata (Ngata clan) during an event in Vava'u in 1932 through the traditional fakatonutonu (correcting) censorship. The heralds reprimanded herald Fevanga for allegedly violating the kava circle seating protocol. However, Queen Sālote intervened, granting him permanent authority to sit anywhere in the circle as a reward for his ancestors' role as the original architects of the kava ceremonial structure (Turner, 1986). Similarly, punake Malukava Kavamoefiafi, also a courtier, failed a song composed by the well-known punake Sir Sōfele Kakala during a singing competition. Malukava rejected the song because of two lyrical lines he claimed offensively portrayed a tala tau (figuratively, declaration of war) while criticising the traditions of the land (Richard Moyle, 2022). The lines in Sir Sōfele's lyrics which Malukava deemed as a transgression were:

Ko e tala e fonua kuo tuku atu

The traditions of the land are being handed over

Malukava maintained the song’s lyrics violated cultural protocols by conveying the impression that chief attendants Fakahāfua and Ma‘ufualu were in charge of the tala-e-fonua (history of the land). He warned that the tala-e-fonua was solely the responsibility of the King’s two immediate matāpule, Lauaki and Motu‘apuaka.

While Pond and Koloamatangi highlight the role of journalists in censoring hiva kakala songs, the assertions of Moala (1994), Tu‘itahi (2022), and Moyle (2022) reveal a more significant trend: the monarch’s direct and personal role in censorship. This demonstrates that monarchs often enacted censorship themselves, alongside their cultural heralds, a dynamic which confirms the finality of their judgments and reveals a critical, unstudied gap. The lacuna is significant because it overlooks the nexus between journalistic censorship and royal control of media and songs in Tonga. This gap will be addressed in the Discussion chapter, where the study answers the sub-research question: To what extent did the involvement of the late Queen Sālote Tupou III, as a reformer of kakala songs, influence the Tongan mindset regarding the composition and regulation of songs? In doing so, the study contributes to a deeper understanding of the role of monarchs and cultural heralds in censoring kakala songs.

2.3 Journalism

This section will examine the role of faiongoongo and its English counterpart, the journalist. This review is significant because it provides insight into why journalists were assigned the responsibility of censoring kakala songs at the TBC radio station. Such analysis is important as it may reveal whether this censorship contributed to enhancing the quality of kakala songs or, conversely, resulted in their deterioration.

2.3.1 The role of journalists vs censorship. Etymology reveals that many Western concepts and terminologies, including the journalistic role, have roots in other countries. According to the online Oxford Learner’s Dictionary (n.d.), the word journalist derived from Latin origin word “diurnalis”, meaning “daily,” through “Old French as jornal and journal.” It also asserts the word journalist is “a person whose job is to collect and write news stories for newspapers, magazines, radio, television or online news sites.” Additionally, Black (2020) defines the role of a journalist as one “guided” by ethics.

Fusimalohi (1982) asserts that Tongan journalists’ duties included having to deliver the king, chiefs and government decisions to their people. By the time Western journalism principles were emerging, there was a common “notion that Tonga’s media was tightly

controlled, censored and occasionally directly gagged by the Government” (Lewis, 2011, p. 58). On the other hand, a New Zealand Herald article in 2003 based on a Tonga Government statement, accused the Taimi ‘O Tonga newspaper of a lack of honesty in its reports. “This unprofessionalism has long robbed the people of Tonga of their right to correct, unbiased, and balanced information about the work of their Parliament” (New Zealand Herald, 2003, June, 5). In 2007, the first certificate in formal training on media and journalism studies was offered in Tonga (RNZ 2007) but the media is still critiqued for a reliance on opinion over facts when it reports news (Kaniva Tonga, 2020).

2.3.2 The role of faiongoongo. Although existing scholarship clarifies the dynamics of journalism and censorship, the assertions from the New Zealand Herald and Kaniva Tonga highlight a more fundamental issue: the persistent unprofessionalism endemic to the Tongan journalistic context, which is central to this study. This analysis exposes a gap in the literature concerning the traditional role of the faiongoongo, the figure analogous to the modern journalist. This deficiency warrants scholarly attention, as it excludes the different traditional journalistic skills and mindset embodied in faiongoongo, which must be addressed prior to an effective teaching of Western journalism. Addressing this gap is critical because it elucidates the specific function of journalists at TBC Radio in the censorship of kakala songs. The study asks: Did the journalism (broadcasting) involvement undermine the authenticity of traditional song genre, or did it contribute to their preservation and enhancement? The aim is to yield novel insights into the interplay between kakala song censorship and media control in the broader Tongan socio-cultural landscape. The section that follows delves into Tongan traditional communication.

2.3.3 Modern journalism’s influence. The relationship between Tonga's traditional oral communication and contemporary journalism provides a critical framework for investigating kakala song censorship. The Tonga Broadcasting Act 2016 that formalised broadcast journalism established a professional framework for news production in Tonga; yet the practice continues today to be shaped by the foundations of traditional communication. Kaeppler (1992) illustrates traditional Tongan communication through the use of heliaki or lea ‘o e heliaki (figures of speech) in a historical exchange between King Momo and cultural architect Lo‘au. The king’s messenger conveyed Momo’s proposal to marry Lo‘au’s daughter, Nua, by requesting “a seed yam” (p. 164). Lo‘au responded that he had only “sprouted seed yam”, implying through heliaki that his daughter was no longer a virgin—a significant cultural concern, as noted by Condevaux (2011). The king replied that even “sprouted” (p. 164), Nua was still desirable, giving rise to the proverb: “Fena pē ka ko Nua,” (p. 164) meaning something used but still valued. Likewise, Philips (1991) argues that Tongan language is “allusive, indirect, metaphorical”. (p. 380), while Grace, as cited in Taumoeofolau

(2012), asserts that “ways of talking reflect the culture” (p. 330). In contrast, Harrington (2003) and Waugh (2009) argue that journalists use direct and more focused on the exact meaning of the words.

While Harrington and Waugh’s argument—that journalists must adhere to direct and literal language—makes a valid point, the alignment of Kaeppler, Philips, and Grace’s assertions with the conventions of *heliaki* or *lea ‘o e heliaki* (figures of speech) reveals a unique trend. Critically, this study is the first to emphasise that *heliaki* is not merely a rhetorical style but the foremost register of the Tongan language, a fact that itself provides justification for this inquiry. The trend is significant because it reveals lack of scholarly attention to the established *heliaki* language that plays an important role in the incorporation of Western journalism process. The study addresses this issue through its two research questions that ask: First, did the journalism (broadcasting) involvement undermine the authenticity of traditional song genre, or did it contribute to their preservation and enhancement? Second, were the *heliaki* guidelines established to enhance the quality of *kakala* songs, or were they used as a political tool to reinforce the power of the royals and chiefs over commoners? Consequently, this study reframes the understanding of *kakala* song censorship and journalism by establishing the centrality of *heliaki* as a legitimate and structured language of public communication.

2.4 Tonga Broadcasting Commission.

To understand the rationale for the strict pre-airplay controls on *kakala* songs, a thorough analysis of the TBC radio station is important. The radio was established on 4 July 1961 as a government project under the premiership of Prince Taufa’āhau (later King Tupou IV) and officially launched by his mother, Queen Sālote Tupou III (Fusimālohi, 1982). The government-controlled broadcaster has a board which comprises the Prime Minister and mostly Cabinet Ministers. The purpose of the station was to “inform, educate and entertain” the public on current affairs and news (Tonga Broadcasting Commission Act, 2016). The law stipulates that the Cabinet has the power to ban any material broadcast by the station.

While the existing literature provides insights into the TBC, no studies have illuminated the fact that such project initiated by the monarchy and the royal family, is culturally and traditionally deemed a *mā’imoa*. For clarity purposes, the term signifies the sacred status of the monarchy and its family, rendering any public initiative they undertake as inherently royal. Individuals who serve within the *mā’imoa* are entrusted with a primary responsibility to safeguard the interests of the royal family. Consequently, and in accordance with convention, laws and policies governing the *mā’imoa* may, at times, be set aside during periods of crisis that adversely affect it, as failure to do so could be perceived as an act of betrayal against the royal family. This is a gap that left unattended to for a long time. The issue is relevant because it failed to address the

inherent conflict between public expectations for an independent TBC radio station (RNZ, 2017, May 3). This study addresses this gap by asking: Did the journalism (broadcasting) involvement undermine the authenticity of traditional song genre, or did it contribute to their preservation and enhancement? In doing so, this analysis provides a more nuanced framework for understanding the complex realities of kakala song censorship and broader media governance.

2.5 Punake

Punake are traditionally recognized as composers of songs, yet the term encompasses a more complex range of meanings. A critical analysis of scholarly debates regarding the punake is essential, particularly concerning their dual roles in the censorship of kakala songs. They not only composed these works but were also employed to censor them. This duality placed the censorship process in a contentious position, especially when composing punake contested the alterations made by those serving in censorial roles.

2.5.1 The role of punake. An examination of the role of the punake (composer) is essential to this study. Kailahi (2017) described punake as “composers” who guarded their compositional techniques closely, employing *lea ‘o e heliaki* (figures of speech) to imbue their lyrics with vividness and emotional depth, thereby expressing what was “no‘o (tied) in their heart” (p.1). Similarly, Churchward, (1959) and Shumway (1981) describe punake as a person who writes poems, lyrics and music, and choreographs songs. Additionally, punake Malukava Kavaefiafi described the composer’s commitment to their role as involving the renunciation of all distractions: “no bathing, no sleep, no food, no socialisation”— a state of total dedication encapsulated by “all the noes” (Moyle, 2022).

Moving beyond these definitions, this analysis focuses on the fact that punake serving in a censorial role were mostly formally appointed from the royalty, nobility or cultural experts. This includes those royalist composers who produced laudatory kakala songs for the monarchy (Dee, 2019). For instance, punake functioning as censors such as Kavaefiafi served as a punake for Queen Sālote (Moyle, 2022), while Tu‘ivakanō Polutele, a chiefly punake, held the same role for Prince Tungī Mailefihi, the Queen’s husband (Dee, 2019). Punake Ve‘ehala, who was also a noble of the realm, frequently chaired the TBC censorship committee (Fusimālohi, 1982). This trend is significant as it highlights a scholarly oversight—specifically, the failure to account for the pro-royalty stances of the appointed censors. Two of my research questions are aimed at resolving this issue. First, to what extent did the involvement of the late, Queen Sālote Tupou III, as reformer of kakala songs, influence the Tongan mindset about the composition and regulation of songs? Second, were the heliaki guidelines established to enhance the quality of hiva kakala, or were they used as a political tool to reinforce the power of the royals and chiefs over

commoners? In doing so, the study deepens our understand of why kakala songs were censored.

2.6 The kakala song genre

Existing scholarship defines hiva kakala or kakala songs with differing names and purposes. Churchward (1959) defines hiva as “song” and kakala as “sweet-smelling trees or plants bearing fragrant flowers of any kind” (p. 246). He equates hiva kakala with “love song” (p. 225) and compares it to sipi, a “love poem” or “sentimental poem” (p. 432). Helu (2012) similarly classifies hiva kakala texts as “love lyrics” (p. 49), arguing they emerged from three earlier poetic traditions including fakatangi (lamentation) and laumātanga (verbalising beautiful and historical spots). Additionally, Kaeppler (1967) contends that kakala songs are “sweet songs” and were latterly composed for dancing (p. 287). Other scholars, however, broaden these definitions. Moyle (1993) labels kakala songs as “topical songs” (p. 401). Renowned punake Queen Sālote’s kakala compositions span love songs, lullabies (‘ūpē), hiva māvae (farewell songs), dance songs (hiva tau‘olunga, hiva lakalaka), and laments (tangi laulau) (Wood-Ellem, 2004/2019).

Although the work of these scholars illuminates the meaning and purposes of kakala songs, it also reveals a fundamental lack of consensus, including the absence of an agreed-upon name for the genre. This inconsistency undermines the critical significance of this cultural phenomenon. This study addresses this gap through its research question that aim at investigating the reasons why the kakala songs were censored. By doing so, the study sheds new light on the clarity and perception of the song control.

2.7 Lea ‘o e heliaki — Figures of speech

Previous studies on kakala songs emphasise the importance of heliaki or lea ‘o e heliaki (figures of speech) as crucial literary tools for composing high-quality songs and oratory. Churchward (1959) defines heliaki as devices for speaking “ironically or to say one thing and mean another” (p. 219). Similarly, Kaeppler (2007), Mahina (2010) and Taumoe folau (2019) argue to use heliaki is to say one thing in terms of something else. Conversely, recent research tends to treat heliaki as an elusive phenomenon, difficult to define. Veikoso (2023) argues that lea heliaki are some “of the most widely confused concepts among the academic community” (p. 8). Latukefu (1980) discusses figures of speech like metaphor and simile as components of Tongan culture and their poetic use (p. 68). However, he stops short of explicitly linking them to the concept of heliaki. This omission is notable, given that he draws such connections between other Tongan and English cultural practices within the same work.

While Taumoe folau, Kaeppler, and Mahina conceptualise heliaki as a system of indirect language, Veikoso and Latukefu have struggled to delineate its complexities, thereby underscoring a significant gap: the lack of standardisation in this formal and foremost register of

the Tongan language. Directly addressing this gap, this study established the following research question: Were the heliaki guidelines established to enhance the quality of kakala songs, or were they used as a political tool to reinforce the power of the royals and chiefs over commoners? By doing so, it advances the comprehension of the song genre and the development of its regulatory structure.

2.7.2 The challenge of systematising heliaki. Several scholars unsuccessfully attempt to systemise the concept of heliaki. Mahina (2010) argues that there are two types of heliaki which are qualitative, epiphoric heliaki and associative, metaphoric heliaki. Mahina illustrates the first type, qualitative, epiphoric heliaki, with examples such as la‘ā (sun) representing tu‘i (the monarch), and la‘ātō (sunset) symbolising mate (death). For the second type, associative, metaphoric heliaki, he provides examples like Tuku mo Failā (City of Sails) for Auckland and ‘Otumotu Anga‘ofa (Friendly Islands) for Tonga. In contrast, Taumoefolau (2019) proposes her own categorisation of heliaki, identifying two types: “culture-specific heliaki and universal heliaki” (p. 107). Universal heliaki, according to Taumoefolau, refers to figures of speech that can be understood across cultures, regardless of specific cultural knowledge. To illustrate this, Taumoefolau draws on an example from Queen Sālote’s love songs, which demonstrates how certain expressions carry meaning that transcends cultural boundaries.

‘Amusia pe ‘a e matangi na	The wind is envied
‘Oku ne angi fa‘iteliha	For its freedom to roam
Kae hopoate pe kita	While I remain a prisoner
He ‘ofa ‘oku loka siliva	With love bound by a silver lock

Conversely, Kaeppler (2004/2019) and Wood-Ellem (2004/2019) propose several English counterparts to heliaki, such as the figures of speech “allusion” (p. 43) and “metaphor” (p. 53). Their argument aligns with a strong trend in the literature suggesting that figures of speech, of which there are more than 30 types in English literature, correspond with heliaki or lea ‘o e heliaki.

Ultimately, while Māhina and Taumoefolau offer foundational analyses of the social systems that articulate heliaki, the limited and inconsistent in number of typologies they propose—three and two types respectively—are insufficient to capture the full range of this powerful cultural phenomenon. This represents a vital gap, as it has left heliaki studies dormant for years, contributing to misconceptions and overlooking of the preeminent language register of Tonga. This study therefore addresses this critical gap by examining whether the heliaki guidelines were established to enhance the aesthetic quality of kakala song or were employed as a political tool to

reinforce the power of royals and chiefs over commoners. In doing so, this research contributes to the existing literature by correcting a foundational error within it.

2.7.3 The misinterpretation of heliaki as metaphor. The current literature presents the term metaphor with conflicting interpretations, particularly its Tonganisation as heliaki. Most of these translations come from English dictionaries. The Oxford Dictionary defines metaphor in two meanings. Firstly, it defines it as “a word or phrase ... applied to an object or action to which it is not literally applicable”. Secondly, as “a thing regarded as representative or symbolic of something else”. Similarly, Mahina (2006/2010), Kaeppler (2007), Mafile‘o (2006) and Veikoso (2023) all agree that metaphor is English for heliaki and vice-versa. In contrast, a metaphor is widely classified as a figure of speech (Kuzu 2023; Martinich 2009), a literary device that departs from literal meaning (Regmi 2014). While these arguments explore the contrasting interpretations of heliaki and metaphor, none have addressed the rules governing the use of this literary device. The following section will delve into these rules in greater detail.

2.7.3.1 Vehicle – tenor and grammatical rules. Zahid (2024) introduced the conceptual framework of “vehicle” and “tenor” to aid in the identification of metaphors (p. 45). The interaction between these two elements must produce what is termed the ground—the shared attributes that justify the metaphorical link. When this agreement is established, the vehicle term can be identified as a metaphor (Richards, 1939). For example: applying the tenor and vehicle rule in the sentence, *Ko māmani ko ha siteisi* or *The world is a stage*, rendered the word *stage* a metaphor (see Appendix D). Similarly, another rule is based on the roles verb-to-be play (e.g., *is, are*), which also serves as an indicator of metaphorical figure of speech (Gupta & Reinhardt, 2023). For clarity – *Ko e ‘ofa ko e moana loloto* or *Love is deep ocean*. *Deep ocean* according to the indicator *is, is* a metaphor

Drawing upon the Tupunga Ola theoretical framework, this analysis established that while scholars such as Mahina, Kaeppler, Mafile‘o, and Veikoso argue that metaphor is the English equivalent of heliaki (and vice-versa), Kuzu and Martinich (2009) pivot the debate in a more productive direction. They shift the focus towards established rules of figures of speech (see Discussion section 5.5; see also Appendix D), which challenge these prior equivalency arguments. This gap is significant because it has blurred the debate surrounding heliaki and metaphor translation for years, thereby trivialising their cultural and linguistic significance. This study addresses the issue through its central research question: Were the heliaki guidelines established to enhance the quality of kakala songs, or were they used as a political tool to reinforce the power of the royals and chiefs over commoners? As a result, this research recalibrates the existing scholarly understanding.

2.7.4 Misunderstanding of lea hualela. The current body of literature largely argues that lea heliaki or heliaki are the opposite of lea hangatonu (direct) and hualela (offensive joking). Pond (2010), Kaeppler (2007), Manu‘atu (2000) and Mahina (2010) argue that being plain and direct is disrespectful in formal Tongan contexts. In the same vein, Veikoso (2023) argues that hualela is “the most straight forward way of talk among Tongans” (p. 62) and is often “the opposite of heliaki” (p. 65). Meanwhile, Churchward (1959) posits that hualela is “to make offensive jokes, to be humorous in an offensive or vulgar way” (p. 233). In contrast, and by drawing on the Toafesiama model (see Appendix C), several English figures of speech (heliaki) are presented as equivalents to hualela, including dysphemism, double entendre, and innuendo. Prokhorova et al. (2019) interpret dysphemism as the act of making “speech straightforward, harsh, or even offensive” (p.504), while the Oxford English Dictionary (n.d.) defines double entendre as “a word or phrase open to two interpretations, one of which is usually risqué or indecent.” While these scholars highlight the conventional rejection of hualela in the existing literature, Churchward’s argument regarding its humorous dimension, as well as its interpretation through the lens of the Toafesiama model, is noteworthy for the purposes of this study. This trend reveals a fundamental misunderstanding of the figurative language by previous scholars, which has consequently skewed their analytical conclusions. This study addresses this gap through its research questions that ask: Were the heliaki guidelines established to enhance the quality of kakala songs, or were they used as a political tool to reinforce the power of the royals and chiefs over commoners? By doing so, the study resolves a persistent ambiguity in the comparative analysis of the lea ‘o e hualela, lea ‘o e heliaki systems and English figures of speech. To substantiate this finding of an analytical gap, the following section presents a relevant case study.

2.7.5 Tradition challenges hualela scholarship. Esteemed hiva kakala lyrics by renowned and pioneering punake demonstrate that lea hualela are an acceptable literary device. Queen Sālote’s Matangi Ka Tonga Pea Tokelau love song revealed the skilful utilisation of lea hangatonu in association with lea heliaki. For instance, in the last line, she directly writes the following lines – Ko hoku lotó ni tapu ke u loi (see below for English translation), Ko e fua ‘eku ‘ofa mo‘oni. Also, in the last line she said: He ‘ofā ni kuo paea tokotaha. This case study highlights the pivotal role of lea hualela when skilfully employed in alignment with heliaki such as metonymies Tufunua and Halakakala. The song was composed for Prince Tungi Mailefihi, shortly after he died in 1941. The Queen was quoted as writing to a friend about this song, saying: “I missed Tungi more than ever these days. His knowledge and reliable strength were always a stand-by” (Wood-Ellem, 2004/2019, p.172).

Verse three

‘Ofa hoto loto tangi ke feohi

Vai-ko-Latai ko ‘eku mo‘oni

English translations

My poor heart cries out for your company

Vai-ko-Latai I am honest

Ko hoku loto ni tapu ke u loi	This heart of mine cannot lie
Ko e fua si‘ete ‘ofa mo‘oni	Because this is what my true love is
Tufunua pea mo Hala Kakala	Tufunua and Hala Kakala
Tōfā ko si‘oto lata‘anga	Where sleeping is my only source of comfort
He ‘ofā ni kuo paea tokotaha	My love now is neglected and all alone
He ‘ofā ni kuo paea tokotaha	My love now is neglected and all alone

2.8 Nofo ‘a Kāinga System

Investigating the nofo ‘a kāinga cultural sphere is vital, as it provides the necessary context for the conclusions of this investigation. Vokel (2016) describe nofo ‘a kāinga as an “overarching hierarchy” consisting of commoners, chiefs and king (p. 110). Vokel also contends that “there is a relative hierarchy within the extended family (kāinga)” (p. 110). She characterises this hierarchy with the two categories of ‘eiki and tu‘a. For clarity purposes, ‘eiki in Tongan has two meanings. One refers to chief, nobility and king and the other refers to superior individuals within the kāinga or commoner echelon (see Appendix D). Tu‘a also has two meaning in terms of social hierarchies; one refers to commoners and the other to inferior statuses in the ‘Ekitu‘a Binary Cultural Identity framework. Additionally, Kaeppler (2004/2019) identifies three key principles associated with the nofo ‘a kāinga which are: (i) the sister is superior to her brother; (ii) the paternal side is higher than the maternal side; (iii) older siblings are superior to their younger counterparts. Similarly, Kalāvite (2010) argues that the structure of social hierarchy determines the organisation of kāinga (relatives) based on their respective “position” and their relationships (p. 26).

While Kaeppler and Kalavite illuminate social hierarchical norms within commoner, chiefly and royal contexts, Volkel’s argument of more complex social stratifications beyond this structural triad is compelling. Volkel’s assertion is critical because it identifies a gap in the literature that overlooks how territoriality—such as that found in Tongan diasporic communities and villages beyond direct monarchical and noble control—operates under non-royal and chiefly-led social hierarchies, primarily structured around the ‘Ekitu‘a system (see Appendices B & B1). This research gap will be addressed alongside the ‘Ekitu‘a’s component of fetauhi‘aki, which will be examined in the sections that follow.

2.8.1 Fetauhi‘aki (mutual relationship). This investigation into kakala song censorship must be preceded by a critical review of the practice of fetauhi‘aki. Churchward (1959) define fetauhi‘aki as “To look after each other” (p.176). Similarly, Biersack (1982),

Völkel (2024), and Kaeppler (2024), define fetauhi‘aki (reciprocity) is a foundational practice in which Tongans mutually provide one another with valued goods and services. Although these arguments contribute to the understanding of fetauhi‘aki, they fail to emphasise its operational reliance on two cultural frameworks of fefaka‘apa‘apa‘aki (taboo-mandated respect) and fefuafatongia‘aki (mutual obligation).

2.8.2 Faka‘apa‘apa. The etymology of faka‘apa‘apa has been depicted variously in the current literature. The term can be deconstructed into the causative prefix faka- and the root ‘apa‘apa, which denotes the two masters of ceremonies seated before the monarch during the fakapangai ceremony (see Appendix A). Likewise, Churchward (1959) defines faka‘apa‘apa as “showing deference or respect, courteous” (p.128). Scholars such as Mafile‘o (2016), Thaman (1987), and Fua (2007) further contend that faka‘apa‘apa encompasses specific taboo dimensions which serve to delineate familial and relational boundaries. Gucake (2020), however, argues that the cultural connotations of faka‘apa‘apa are not coextensive with the English term respect. While these scholars provide insight into faka‘apa‘apa, they neglect its two crucial forms: veitapui and veitokai. This omission hinders a clear understanding of the culturally rich rationale behind kakala song censorship. As noted previously, the research gaps identified in these subsections will be synthesized into a consolidated conclusion in the final subsection of this whole section. The subsection that follows present the veitapui and veitokai systems.

2.8.3 Case study: Faka‘apa‘apa – veitapui and veitokai. The following three case studies of kakala songs are presented to illustrate how censorship navigates the principles of veitapui and veitokai. It moves these concepts from theoretical ideals to observable social practices, thereby clarifying their operational dynamics within the censorship process. Renowned punake Sēmisi ‘Iongi (‘Iongi, 1972, as cited in Māhina, 1993) crafted the lyrical hook of a love song with a metonymic figure, “a rainbow in a golden vessel” (p.228). The lyrical phrase is a metonymic heliaki figure of speech symbolising the vagina. Mahina continues to say, ‘Iongi told him the song was written about his close friendship with the Queen. After the song “first played on radio, Queen Sālote was so overwhelmed by its theme and structure that, according to Semisi ‘Iongi, a truck-load full of food and fine mats was surprisingly sent as gifts to his house” (p. 19).

The second verse of the songs is copied verbatim for illustration:

Moto‘i ‘umata ‘i he vesili koula	Bud of a rainbow sets in a golden vessel
‘Akisesi ‘a e ‘ofa ni kei talamuka	The axis of this love is still blooming
‘amusia ia ‘oku fahu ‘i natula	Blessed is who is fahu in nature
he koe mataika fai ki he pupu‘a	While I am hankering for fish in a blowhole

Similarly, in his song ‘Utufōmesi Siliva (see Appendix I), the renowned punake, Rev. Dr. Huluholo Mo‘ungaloa, employs heliaki to express his reflections following a beauty pageant in which two first cousins competed (Cullen, personal communication, July 24, 2024). Tupou ‘Ahome’e Tuita won the title, while Kalapenia Tupoumoheofo Tupou Taumoepeau was named first runner-up. The song was composed to express dissatisfaction with Taumoepeau’s placement as second runner-up. According to Dr Mo‘ungaloa, as conveyed through the composition, the results were perceived as unjust, and Taumoepeau was regarded as the rightful winner. The blood relationship between Taumoepeau and Tuita is significant in assessing this composition from a censorship perspective. Tuita holds a superior (‘eiki) rank relative to Taumoepeau, as Tuita’s mother is the sister of Taumoepeau’s father. This genealogical hierarchy raises several important considerations for the composition. Notably, the song may be interpreted as culturally inappropriate at the outset, given Taumoepeau’s inferior (tu‘a) status in relation to Tuita (see ‘Ēkitu‘a model, Introduction chapter, Section 1.4.1). However, its skilful deployment of heliaki appears to have justified its acceptance.

While the composition skilfully uses figurative language to redirect immediate detection of its critical intent, the directness of certain lyrics ultimately reveals its purpose. This genealogical relationship means the song constitutes a significant contravention of *veitokai* (see Appendix A). Although Mo‘ungaloa’s work artistically models the use of heliaki to mitigate criticism within kin groups, this rhetorical strategy has not been analysed in the existing scholarly discourse.

The first version of the song is copied verbatim below followed by the chorus:

Ne mana fatulisi ‘a Tonga kotoa	All of Tonga is shaken with awe
polotikaasi mei he minaleti koula	after broadcast from golden minaret
ko e ‘evalusio e ‘ātomī kuonga	that’s how atomic era evolved
‘o tunameni he siavelini he oma	like a javelin contest tournament

Chorus

Fungamahofā te u mate vale lau	Fungamahufā, I will complain without end
ho‘o uini kae pōini ‘a Pouvalu	You claimed the prize, though Pouvalu scored the most
‘isa kuo ake ‘eku manatu	Oh I just recall
ko e huli pe ‘o e vaotamanu	All because she was a tender shoot of Tamanu bushes
si‘omau liku ko Valefanau	Our cliff-bound coast known as Valefanau

In contrast, a kakala song composed by the punake Tongotongo Liava'a (see Appendix J) to lament his son Joshua Tu'iono Liava'a's wedding to Princess Mele Siu'ilikutapu was temporarily banned, apparently because it was perceived as a protest against the king and the royal family. This stands in opposition to the approval of 'Iongi and Mo'ungaloa's composition. The second verse is copied verbatim below for illustration:

Peheange mai ko ha levaianani	I wish I was a leviathan
Ke ma fe'ao moe nofo 'amanaki	So I could face the consequences
Lulu e toafa mo e pelikani	The owl and pelican of the desert
Pō mo e 'aho he inu mamahi	Endure suffering day and night
He'ikai te u lava tu'uaki	I cannot withstand it
Si'eku 'ofani kuo manava'aki	As I now utter my broken love
Tuku pe ke u tangi na'a lelu ai	Let me cry to ease the pain

Ultimately, 'Iongi's Vēsili Koula (Moto 'i 'Umata he Vēsili Koula) and Mo'ungaloa's 'Utufōmesi Siliva illustrate the pivotal role of heliaki in structuring their compositions to navigate veitokai taboos. Through this strategy, they successfully circumvented censorship and secured airplay on TBC Radio. Contrarily, Liava'a's composition was banned outright, despite also being composed using heliaki (imagery and figurative language). This case reveals a significant gap in the scholarly literature, challenging the efficacy of heliaki as a rhetorical shield, raising a critical question: was censorship determined by the heliaki itself, or by the identity and intent of the punake (composer)? This gap is noteworthy because it obscures the true purpose of kakala song censorship, which encouraged the use of heliaki as an acceptable literary tool, yet did so under ambiguous and uncertain terms. This study addresses the issue by pursuing research questions that include investigating why hiva kakala songs must be composed according to heliaki and were the use of heliaki intended to enhance the quality of the songs or to boost royal status.

2.8.4 Fefuafatongia'aki – Reciprocal obligations. The preceding analysis has established the practice of fetauhi'aki (mutual reciprocity) and its two systematic mechanisms: fefaka'apa'apa'aki and fefuafatongi'aki (see 'Ekitu'a Binary Cultural Identity System, Appendices B & B1). Having examined the mechanism of fefaka'apa'apa'aki, this discussion now turns to the second mechanism: fefuafatongi'aki. Etymologically, the term combines the root fatongia (obligation), the prefixes fe and fua-(denoting mutuality), and the suffix -'aki (which indicates emphasis of action), (Churchward, 1959). Churchward (1959) defines fatongia as “duty, obligation” (p.143). Likewise, Latukefu (1980) asserts that fatongia means “obligation” and that

it contributes to upholding the existing traditions and cultures (p.65). Moreover, Lafitani (2011) posits that the term fatongia is derived from two components: fa and tongia. He explains that fa refers to the "pandanus plant, *Pandanus odoratissimus*" (p. 4), a species widely found across the Moanan islands. He further defines tongia as “the immediately permeating fragrance of a round bunch of ripe pandanus fruits, fua’i fa momoho, released immediately after plucking (paki’i) or cutting (tu’usi),” where momoho denotes ‘ripe’ and fua’i means ‘fruit-like’” (p.4).

While both Latukefu and Churchward underscore the roles and cultural significance of fatongia, Latukefu uniquely characterises it as an inherently hierarchical practice. My particular interest, however, lies in Lafitani’s interpretation, which traces the term’s origin to fa. This definition is linguistically inaccurate, as it erroneously substitutes fa for fā, the correct term for pandanus, which is orthographically marked by a macron (Churchward, 1959). There is no Tongan word fa, except occasionally in musical notation derived from the solfège system, where syllables represent notes—the fourth note being fa in the sequence Do-Re-Mi-Fa-So-La-Ti-Do (Churchward, 1959). These debates are generally characterised by a lack of consensus on fatongia, underscoring two critical gaps: the absence of a standardisation of fatongia and its tenuous linkage to its core ‘Ēikitu’a Binary Cultural Identity system (see Appendices B & B1). Consequently, this study undertakes to resolve this gap through its research question, which seeks to understand why the kakala songs were censored.

2.9 Cultural taxonomy

Drawing on Gary R. Weaver's (1998) framework of core cultural patterns, this section analyses key domains of Tongan culture. The following sections within this literature review will build upon this foundation to explore specific manifestations, including the kakala system, language classification, and the vocalisation and instrumentation of kakala songs.

2.9.1 Kakala. A synthesis of existing scholarship on kakala is vital for understanding the censorship of kakala songs. Scholars such as Churchward (1959), Helu (2012), and Thaman (1993) uniformly define kakala as sweet-smelling flowers, trees, or plant parts. Churchward (1959) also asserts that kakala poetically means “girl” or “maiden” (p.246). Similarly, Kailahi (2017) argues that kakala refers to heraldic name bestowed upon cultural heralds (matāpule). While these arguments highlight different meanings of kakala, its transition from literal meaning and elaborated into diverse figurative language remains underexplored. My research question—“Why did traditional kakala songs have to be composed according to kakala and heliaki (figures of speech), monitored by journalists and cultural censors, if punake wanted these songs to be broadcast on public radio from the 1960s until the early 2000s?”—aims to fill

this gap by investigating how censorship of the song genre influence kakala song structure. By doing

so, the study contributes to a deeper understanding of how traditional knowledge systems were preserved, negotiated, or compromised through the employment of kakala devices.

2.9.1.2 *Classification of kakala.* A consolidation of existing scholarship on kakala categorisation is vital for understanding the kakala song censorship. The literature classifies kakala into two primary categories: kakala ‘eiki (chiefly kakala), symbolising chiefs and monarchs, and kakala vale (ignorant kakala), representing commoners (Helu, 2012; Taumoeofalau, 2019; Veikoso, 2023). Helu (2012) further posits that kakala holds cultural significance because its use mirrors societal hierarchy, “the members of the society” (p. 46). He contends that when kakala are strung into a garland (kahoa) or ornamental girdle (sisi), they acquire special value that reflects their ranked importance. Helu also asserts that foreign flowers, such as “rose and lily”, are not kakala (2012, p. 46). However, he predicts the passage of time will determine when foreign plants will be considered kakala in the long run. While these arguments establish the general principles of kakala two categorisation, they offer limited insight into chiefly kakala being traditionally applied to commoners (see ‘Ekitu‘a Binary Cultural Identity, Appendices B & B1). To move from these abstract principles to a concrete analysis, this research employs a case study of the song ‘Eni, composed by the renowned punake Māsila, known by his legal name Moeaki Tākai. This composition serves as a critical case: it is a bounded, real-world instance where the use of kakala ‘eiki (superior characterised with taboo) is applied to commoners. The analysis of this case in the following section will illuminate the precise operational dynamics that the broader literature has yet to fully capture.

2.9.1.3 *Kakala ‘eiki for commoners.* Māsila composed a song for Anne-Marie ‘Ake (see Appendix I). In the first verse, he employed chiefly kakala known as nukonuka (Kaho, 2018) and mapa lei (Helu, 2012) as metonymies for the places in ‘Eua Island where Anne’s father, Dr Malakai ‘Ake, worked. The first verse is copied verbatim below for illustration.

Efiafi ka ke mohe ā 'Eni	It is evening you better sleep now, Annie
Kata langa ‘eva kei hengihengi	So that we can start hiking early in the morning
Tolia he nukonuka keke tu‘u sei	Plucking some nukonuka flowers for you to sei
Mo tufi ‘i Valu hao mapa lei	And pick up some mapa lei fruits in Valu

This has obscured the fundamental role of the ‘eiki (superior) and tu‘a (inferior) commoners within the nofo ‘a kāinga (extended family structure) (see Appendix A),

which formed the foundational social hierarchy of Tongan society. My research question: Were the heliaki guidelines established to enhance the quality of kakala, or were they used as a political tool to reinforce the power of the royals and chiefs over commoners? – helps explore how kakala song censorship influenced the application of kakala and lea ‘o e heliaki (figures of speech). It can be concluded that existing literature often assumes that kakala ‘eiki are applied exclusively to chiefs and monarchs, a view this study seeks to interrogate.

2.10 The hiva kakala quality

Due to word limit constraints, this and subsequent sections concentrate on the core concept of mālie and on song elements most significant for demonstrating its operation within kakala compositions. Consequently, they provide a focused overview that highlights key gaps in the literature, while more nuanced discussions are deferred to future research.

2.10.1 The notion of mālie. The concept of mālie is exceptionally valued within Tongan cultural contexts, particularly in relation to art and song. Churchward (1959) defines mālie broadly as “good, pleasing, interesting, advantageous, fortunate, helpful, fine, admirable, and commendable” (p. 324), capturing its semantic versatility in Tongan language. Turning to another aspect, Manu‘atu and Kepa (2002) emphasise its relational vitality, characterising mālie as the “life force in Tongan relationships” (p. 15), thus anchoring it to communal interconnectedness and social harmony. In contrast, Kaeppler’s (1971) sharpens this understanding by distinguishing mālie from Western conceptions of beauty. She posits that mālie emerges through skilful execution (“well done”) and profound cultural resonance, generating māfana – an emotional warmth and exhilaration shared between performers and audiences (p. 177).

While these scholarly contributions have established the significance of mālie through Tongan cultural lenses, notable gaps remain. First, existing literature fails to acknowledge that mālie has no true English equivalent. Drawing on the Tupunga Ola (cause-and-effect) framework, suggested approximations such as “bravo” or “interesting” are inadequate because mālie inherently produces an impact—an impact that may be mālie (pleasing) or not mālie (unpleasing). This dichotomy underscores the need for a standardized approach to conceptualise this phenomenon, as no research to date has provided a consistent definition or measurable criteria for estimating its cultural value. This study seeks to examine whether censorship has been employed to enhance the quality of kakala songs or used as a political tool to reinforce the power of royals and

chiefs over commoners. In doing so, the study contributes to a deeper understanding of the role of mālie as a vital qualitative component in song censorship and in Tongan culture more broadly.

2.11 Vocalisation. A review of the vocal techniques is essential to the investigation of censorship in kakala song. The song genre is highly influenced by Western hymns and popular music. Mahina (2010) explains kakala song structure as sung-poetry shaped by Christian missionary traditions through hymn-like forms featuring verses and a chorus. Furthermore, Leech-Wilkinson (2012) argues that in traditional English music, songwriters compose music in scores to guide performers' learning and execution. For Davidson (2024), the musical score functions as an authoritative blueprint, integrating all parts on aligned staves to provide performers with complete instructions—from notes to interpretation. Likewise, scholars like Young (1993) and Leaver (2017) note their use of major keys to evoke communal joy, aligning with Methodist traditions.

These scholars' arguments exhibit a developing structure in which Tongan musical vocalisation not only tilt towards but is controlled by Western techniques and styles. This leaves a gap where researchers need to explore the Tongan practice of improvised singing notably, the singing techniques of “fakahēhē” (Churchward, 1959, p.42) and nikoniko‘i (“sing with improvised variations or flourishes without following the score” (Churchward, 1959, p.42). The significance of this gap lies in its role in perpetuating a protracted and inconsistent debate over censorship in kakala songs. To address this gap, this study proposes the following research question: Were the censorship guidelines established to enhance the quality of kakala songs, or were they used as a political tool to reinforce the power of the royals and chiefs over commoners? In doing so, this research expands our understanding of how vocalisation functions as both a guideline for kakala song censorship and a pivotal technique for its enhancement.

2.12 Instrumentalisation. A synthesis of the literature on Tongan musical instrumentation is essential for investigating censorship within the kakala song tradition. Kammerer (2008) characterises hiva kakala songs as “sentimental”, blending Western harmonies with string-band instrumentation (p. 3). Similarly, Hebert (2008) describes kakala songs as “improvised harmonies”, songs with “guitar accompaniment” (p. 169). The genre can be sung a cappella or with any sort of instrument (Wood-Ellem, 2004/2019). A key trend in Kammerer and Hebert's analysis of kakala song instrumentation is their focus on the adoption of Western musical styles and techniques. This perspective is crucial for the present review, as it reveals a significant gap in the

scholarship: namely, the lack of research into performative techniques like guitar riffs, licks, runs, and fill-ins, which have become integral to the performance of kakala songs. This gap is significant because it leaves unaddressed important practices that are vital for enriching Tongan discourse and scholarship on kakala song censorship. This research will address this gap by

pursuing its research question, which is designed to investigate whether the censorship of kakala was intended to promote the quality of the songs or not. By doing so, the study advances the comprehension of musical instrumentation's critical function in the aesthetic enhancement of kakala songs and the development of its regulatory frameworks.

2.13 Conclusion

The reviewed literature suggests that censorship of kakala songs was implemented to safeguard the nofo 'a kāinga system by monitoring lyrics to ensure they did not violate the feuluulufi 'o e nofo (see Appendix A)—a close communal living structure characterised by the 'Ekitu'a model, which demands strict decency. The review identifies critical gaps in addressing the censorship of kakala song debates within the existing literature. These gaps include the lack of discussion on how heliaki (figures of speech) and kakala function within the nofo 'a kāinga (see Appendix A), which contributed to the demand for censorship of the kakala song genre.

The principal gap identified in this review is the absence of a standardised framework—including robust definitions, models, and systematic analysis—for the cultural phenomena underpinning longstanding debates on kakala songs and their censorship. The impact of this shortfall extends to key areas: the censorship and creation of kakala songs, the tradition of heliaki, and the functions of punake (composers) and kau faiongoongo (journalists). This deficiency has shaped debates that lack rigorous scholarly grounding, allowing a persistent and influential misconception to dominate the literature over time.

It is evident that these critical gaps must be addressed through research dedicated to standardisation in several domains: heliaki, kakala song composition, the nofo 'a kāinga structure, and the professional practices of punake and faiongoongo. In pursuing this goal, the research builds upon the legacy of seminal punake, most notably Queen Sālote, whose strategic incorporation of English literature profoundly shaped the development of the kakala genre. The need for a comprehensive restructuring of censorship guidelines and policies is evident. In particular, there is a need to re-examine the regulatory framework governing song content. This is underscored by instances where certain kakala songs rich in heliaki, which contained content potentially compromising to royals, were publicly broadcast, while others of a similar nature faced censorship. This inconsistency raises significant questions as to whether factors such as the composer's identity unduly influenced these decisions. Furthermore, the review process revealed substantial criticism from both the public and the punake community regarding the judging and approval criteria applied to the kakala genre.

A key discovery from revising of previous research was the dominant influence of the Westernisation process in the kakala songs. It represents a dynamic process of intercultural

exchange, culminating in the emergence of a continually evolving cultural form or the full acceptance of a new phenomenon. This influence is exemplified by the creative use of neologisms and the expression of lea heliaki within the compositions, demonstrating how these literary features align effectively with the English system of figures of speech. The review also concluded that although censorship originated as a Western system, it was compatible with pre-existing Tongan guidelines designed to maintain the toputapu (sacredness) and mana central to the fatungamotu'a.

Vahe 3: Metotolosia (Methodology)

3.1. Introduction

This chapter outlines the methodological framework for investigating the censorship of kakala songs. The term kakala is semantically complex, encompassing meanings that range from botanical elements to representations of women and figurative naming practices. However, this study identifies that previous research has failed to establish an agreed-upon definition of this significant cultural phenomenon—a gap that has sustained a debate marked by conceptual ambiguity and limited analytical rigor. The literature extensively posits that kakala elements hierarchically represent core values, power, and statuses analogous to the social hierarchy of kakai (commoners), hou'eiki (chiefs), and tu'i (monarch). Nonetheless, this research proposes an alternative framework—conceptualized as Tonga's mainstream social hierarchy—comprising kāinga (extended family), 'ulumotu'a (the patriarchal paternal uncle and his household), and mehikitanga (the matriarchal paternal aunt and her household), (see Appendix D) to which the stratifications of kakala correspond. This study, through its methodological framework, introduces new insights into the concept of kakala—aspects that have received little or no attention in prior research. These include the finding that kakala aligns with English literary devices (see Appendix E). Identifying these gaps is critical, as it underscores the necessity of a deliberately constructed methodological framework, which is subsequently discussed in this chapter. It ensures the study functions as a coherent whole, logically integrating the identified research gaps, empirical findings, proposed solutions, and concluding arguments to produce a meaningful contribution to the literature.

3.1.1 The 'Ekitu'a cultural system: The indigenous logic of censorship. The control of the traditional song genre holds cultural value, as it is not merely a political suppression of the arts but a means of curating the nofo 'a kāinga (extended family system). This control is grounded in the structure of inherent identities of 'eiki (superior) and tu'a (inferior) (see Appendices B & B1). But the absence of a standardised framework to describe this cultural phenomenon led to the development of the 'Ekitu'a Binary Cultural Identity model (see Appendices B & B1), which this research introduces to conceptualize this cultural fabric. This further underscore the critical role of a well-defined methodological framework in ensuring the rigor and validity of the study. The 'Ekitu'a identity system is intricately situated within the nofo 'a kāinga structure, whose

coherence is maintained through culturally sanctioned taboos and the attribution of mana. This interdependence suggests that the Ekitu‘a construct is susceptible to cultural transgressions, particularly linguistic practices that deviate from normative expectations—such as the use of language perceived as offensive or lacking heliaki, Tonga’s principal figurative register. The censorship was thus administered by the Tonga Broadcasting Commission (TBC), a state-owned broadcaster, as a measure to protect cultural safety. This initiative was originally established by Queen Sālote Tupou III, who was regarded as the finest punake Tonga has ever produced (Helu, 2012). The censorship responsibility was later delegated to punake (composers), cultural experts and kau faiongoongo (journalists) working at the station.

3.1.2 Toafesiama - A framework for analysing foreign influence. A primary objective of the song censorship was to filter foreign cultural diffusion and changes, “whether through innovation from within the culture or through outside influence” (Latukeyu, 1980, p. 61). Although Tongan Foreignism constitutes a broad and extensively debated discourse, it remains insufficiently standardised, thereby limiting the capacity of academic inquiry to achieve consistency, methodological efficiency, and analytical rigor. Consequently, this study introduces the Toafesiama Cultural Integration Framework (TCIF) (see Appendix C). It functions as a theoretical construct within this study to articulate the processes through which external influences are filtered and negotiated within Tongan cultural systems. The framework is theoretically grounded in the observation that fatungamotu‘a (traditional practices) and nofo ‘a kāinga (extended family structure) have undergone continuous reconfiguration under external influences—a dynamic largely driven by Westernisation. Within this process, kakala compositions emerge as one of the most profoundly affected cultural forms, as reflected in the music, instrumentation, and lyrics of both traditional and contemporary works (Wood-Ellem, 2004/2019).

3.2 Aim, Objectives and Research Questions

The aim of this study is to critically investigate the cultural, regulatory, and literary mechanisms that control the kakala song genre in order to understand its moderation grounds.

To achieve this aim, the following objectives have been formulated:

3.2.1 Objectives.

1. To critically analyse the guidelines used to censor kakala songs during the research period.
2. To examine the role of heliaki (figuration, imagery, or symbolism) in kakala songs.
3. To investigate the roles of faiongoongo (journalists) and punake in the kakala song censorship process.

4. To analyse the influence of Queen Sālote on the censorship process, particularly in relation to her role as a pioneering composer of kakala songs.

3.2.2 Research Questions. These objectives directly inform the following research questions:

RQ: Why did traditional hiva kakala or kakala songs have to be composed according to heliaki moderated by journalists and cultural censors if punake wanted these songs to be broadcast on public radio from 1960s until the early 2000s?

3.2.1 Sub-Research Questions (SRQs):

1. To what extent did the involvement of the late Queen Sālote Tupou III, as reformer of hiva kakala music, influence the Tongan mindset about the composition and regulation of songs?
2. Were the censorship guidelines established to enhance the quality of kakala songs, or were they used as a political tool to reinforce the power of the royals and chiefs over commoners?
3. Did the involvement of censorial punake and journalists undermine the authenticity of the kakala song genre, or did it contribute to their preservation and enhancement?

3.3. Innovations in Methodology

The research process revealed limitations in the initial theoretical frameworks intended for this research, prompting the development of two new models to better address the study's context. The following sections will first outline the original frameworks before introducing these subsequent developments.

3.3.1 Research paradigm and design. This study is founded on a qualitative, interpretivist paradigm, privileging depth, context, and meaning (Bryman, 2012). However, following what has become a norm of investigating a Tongan reality with a purely Western methodological toolkit would be incongruous, because it would replicate

the very patterns of epistemic alienation that this study seeks to rectify. Therefore, this chapter outlines a purpose-designed, culturally congruent methodological framework grounded in the Tongan worldview. This demonstrates the researcher has thoughtfully evaluated the research problem and chosen the most appropriate tools to address it. Additionally, Teddlie & Tashakkori (2009) and Silverman, (2020) argue that a clear justification allows other researchers to understand and replicate the study, which is essential for verifying results and advancing knowledge in the field. This phenomenological research, approved by the AUT Ethics Committee number 23/172, operationalised Talanoa (Halapua, 2022) as its primary method, augmented by Ilau's (2018) refractive-research approach to centre Tongan epistemologies. The following sections detail the methodological evolution that led to this framework, beginning with an assessment of established approaches.

3.3.2 Talanoa framework approach. The principle at the heart of a Talanoa approach is that it emphasises informality in meetings or interviews to foster a more genuine and relaxed environment (Halapua, 2022; Vaioleti, 2015; Latu, 2019). An informal environment helps participants feel at ease, encouraging open and honest dialogue. Dr Sitiveni Halapua (2022), who first introduced these indigenous approaches to academic research, argues that as a researcher, one's duty is "always to try to understand where and when" issues lie "within diverse cultures of living in various language communities" (p. 120). He emphasises talking "without concealment", asserting that "tala" means "telling of a story" while "noa ... means without concealment" (p. 25). Accordingly, open dialogue constitutes a central component of the methodological approach adopted in this study.

3.3.2.1 Limitations of the talanoa approach. However, given the specific objectives of this research, which involve understanding Tongan cultural practices such as *fufū me'a* (the practice of concealing skills or knowledge to prevent others from learning or plagiarising) (Kailahi, 2010) and *me'a fakafāмили* (matters considered belonging only to members of the family), it became evident this approach alone was insufficient. The voluntary nature of participation in a Talanoa approach provides interviewees greater room to hesitate in disclosing information, even if it is crucial to the research. The study's focus on sensitive topics—including Queen Sālote Tupou III, royal families, and objectionable material in *kakala* songs—makes this especially significant. This context naturally discourages open public discourse and predisposes participants to be reticent unless pressed for details. Moreover, during the course of this research, this

researcher began to grapple with the notion that Talanoa, in its essence, carries a negative connotation rooted in the word noa, which Churchward (1959) defines as “of no value or importance, worthless, unimportant, causeless, meaningless, aimless, and futile” (p. 379). While this connotation is significant and may have sufficed in previous studies, the present research required a methodological approach that embedded purposefulness and direction at its core.

3.3.3 Refractive framework approach. The refractive-research approach was developed by Tongan scholar Dr Siaosi ‘Ilaiū (2018). He employed the Refractive Approach in his exploration of paradigm shifts within ancient Tongan kingship traditions. This innovative approach, inspired by the scientific concept of light refraction, serves as a lens through which to elucidate and trace the origins of cultural connections to Tongan principles and customs (‘Ilaiū, 2018). The aim was to analyse cultural phenomena in detail, determining whether they were of Tongan origin or introduced from outside. This process enabled the researcher to draw grounded conclusions for the study. Abawi (2012) argues that “Refractive phenomenology builds on hermeneutic phenomenological foundations through the use of interpretive filters taking individual depictions of lived experience and viewing, reflecting, redirecting and channelling these through a series of filters and reductive lenses until the ‘Essence of the phenomenon has been brought into view” (p.141).

3.3.3.1 Limitations of refractive framework. Although the Refractive Approach offers a robust theoretical foundation for analysing cultural and historical shifts—and may hold value for this research—it ultimately remains insufficient for addressing its core complexities. This limitation stems from the fact that the term refractive has not yet been meaningfully contextualized or theoretically reconfigured within the Tongan conceptual framework (see Toafesiama Cultural Integration Framework (TCIF), Appendix C). The challenges of Tonganising the concept, combined with the scholarly merit of developing an original theoretical framework, have led this research to establish a new academic approach. This will be illustrated in the following section.

3.3.4 A Tongan-centred paradigm: Tupunga ola and veitalatala. The new theoretical frameworks introduced are Tupunga Ola and Veitalatala. Tupunga Ola is derived from the cause-and-effect approach and is grounded in the foundational Tongan concepts of tupu or tupunga (to grow, to cause) and ola (results, impacts, influences, or effects) (Churchward, 1959). The cause-and-effect analytical tool denotes a relationship in which one event or condition (the cause) leads to a specific outcome (the effect) (King,

Keohane, & Verba, 1994; Rubin, 1974). Tupunga Ola provides the overarching philosophical structure for the study. In addition, Veitalatala is conceptualized as the poetic form of Talanoa (Churchward, 1959). While Talanoa may not necessarily ensure reciprocal engagement, Veitalatala explicitly facilitates two-way communication, emphasizing dialogic exchange and mutual understanding.

3.3.5 Tupunga ola theoretical approach. Etymologically, Tupunga denotes “origin, source, or cause” (Churchward, 1959, p. 153). Churchward (1959) defines ola variably as “to succeed or be successful” (p. 153, def. 1), “to show signs of recovery” (def. 2), a regal synonym for ulo (to give light) (def. 3) and the “product” of a sum calculation. It also refers to effect, result, or outcome. Tupunga is a combination of the words tupu and nga. Tupu, in this context, means cause, and when the suffix -nga is added, the fusion forms the noun tupunga. The suffix -nga is a modificatory particle that, when attached to root words like tupu, alters their grammatical function—converting verbs into nouns—while retaining their core meaning and modifying only their grammatical role. For illustration purposes, consider a sentence such as punake Nau Saimone’s lyrical line:

- ‘Oku tupu pe ‘a si‘eta fa‘a hē ko e fehokaki he siakalé. This translates as – The cause (tupu) of our regular misunderstanding is the effect (ola) of overstepping boundaries.

There are variants of tupu that can be equally used instead of tupunga, such as fakatupu and tupu‘anga. For instance - ‘Oku tupunga (cause) ‘eku ‘itá (effect) ko ‘ene loí (cause). This translates as - My anger (the effect, ola) is caused by his lying (the cause, tupunga). In the Holy Bible, one of the first important words of Genesis (Chapter one, versus one) is fakatupu – “Na‘e fakatupu ‘e he ‘Otuá ‘i he kamata‘angá ‘a e langi mo māmani”. In English: “In the beginning God created (fakatupu) the heavens and the earth.” The above-mentioned etymology provides sufficient evidence that the Tupunga Ola is in fact a causal-effect approach which represents the most appropriate methodological framework for this study. It serves as an effective analytical instrument for examining, evaluating, and ultimately determining the underlying reasons for the censorship of the kakala song genre within Tonga’s predominantly Westernised cultural context. Drawing on this framework, the study examines how and why kakala songs require the proper application of heliaki and kakala to align with the censorship standards monitored by journalists and censorial punake at TBC Radio.

3.3.6 Tupunga Ola and why it is so useful. Through Tupunga ola the researcher brings previously hidden impacts and results into consciousness. Informed by the causal frameworks of Bunge (1997) and Pawson & Tilley (1997)—which emphasise uncovering

the underlying mechanisms that link cause to effect—the Tupunga Ola framework enables a deeper, more nuanced understanding of the phenomenon than a simple statistical association can provide. The causal framework is essential for this study, as it can uncover hidden phenomena and unexamined nuances within the complex process of kakala song censorship—aspects that have been significantly overlooked in the existing literature, thereby weakening the scholarly understanding of its imperative cultural value. Tupunga Ola’s principal strength is that it grounds the research in a Tongan context of tupunga and ola, thereby lending it greater purpose and methodological confidence. The theoretical framework serves as an analytical tool enabling the researcher to evaluate responses to the research questions. For example, the primary question guiding this study is: Why were traditional hiva kakala songs required to be composed in accordance with lea heliaki, as moderated by journalists and cultural censors, for punake to have these songs broadcast on public radio from the 1960s until the early 2000s? This question reflects a complex cultural phenomenon that the researcher must interpret to provide accurate answers. This involves clarifying key concepts such as: What is kakala? What is heliaki? Who is a journalist? Beyond defining these cultural constructs, the question itself reveals interconnections among multiple frameworks—relationships that the causal dimension of Tupunga Ola can effectively disentangle and articulate in detail. Applying this framework involves formulating causal questions derived from the primary research inquiry, such as those probing antecedent conditions (“What preconditions necessitate the existence of the kakala song?”) and consequent dimensions (“Which actors are most affected by the censorship, and how?”).

3.3.7 Veitalatala approach. A morphological analysis of the Veitalatala term results in three words: vei, tala and tala. According to Churchward, (1959) vei is a “reciprocal” prefix denoting two people or things interacting (p. 537). Tala is to tell, but talatala means to “tell tales on or about” (Churchward, 1959, p.448). Talatala also refers to a consultation with “doctor” (Churchward 1959, p. 448). The Oxford Dictionary defines telling tales as “gossip about or reveal another person’s secrets or wrongdoings”.

The important aspects of this etymology for this research are consultation and reciprocity. Consultation entails a two-way process of seeking and discussing views, and reciprocity embodies the principle of a mutual give-and-take, which together structure the interview as a collaborative exchange. They foster an essential dynamic of interaction, which is critical to ensure that the information gathered is thoroughly processed and

understood by both parties, in this case – the participants and the researcher - involved in the interview process.

By situating these aspects within the causal analysis component of the Tupunga Ola framework, and a qualitative approach, it becomes evident that a newly designed Veitalatala Framework Approach is better suited for this research, which demands an in-depth and nuanced exploration. This is supported by Patton (2015), who emphasises that culturally grounded research frameworks, like Veitalatala, enable researchers to deeply understand and interpret complex social phenomena by aligning with the values, traditions, and worldviews of the community being studied.

This approach facilitates deep, conversational interviews with knowledge-holders – kau punake (composers) and kau faiongoongo (journalists) – ensuring that the knowledge generated is co-created in a space that honours Tongan protocols of social interaction and narrative. By centering Tongan epistemologies at the level of methodology, this research aims to ensure that its findings and subsequent recommendations are not only academically robust but also culturally legitimate, authentic, and empowering for the Tongan communities they are designed to serve.

Drawing on the works of Machi and McEvoy (2016), Ridley (2012), and Levy and Ellis (2006), this process not only establishes the significance of the research question but also ensures the study makes a meaningful contribution to the field by addressing unexplored or understudied areas that only come to light through such an approach. As such, the methodologies chosen and newly developed aim to effectively analyse, evaluate, and present a holistic response to concerns surrounding kakala song censorship, the use of lea heliaki, and their interplay.

3.4 Research Philosophy

A clearly defined research philosophy is fundamental to scholarly inquiry, as it establishes the core assumptions guiding the research design. Crotty (1998) argues that it systematically shapes the formulation of the research question, the selection of the methodological approach, the strategies for data collection, analysis, and the interpretation of findings. It focuses on key elements of ontology, epistemology and axiology. A clearly articulated philosophy is therefore essential for methodological coherence and rigor, ensuring that the resulting knowledge claims are built upon examined, rather than implicit, biases (Englander, 2020).

3.4.1. Ontology. This study adopts a constructivist ontological stance, which posits that reality—including that of censorship—is socially constructed through shared meanings, cultural traditions, and institutional practices (Gergen, 1999; Latour, 2005). In the Tongan context, the censorship of the kakala songs by journalists and censorial punake was developed to ensure appropriate employments of heliaki (figures of speech, Tonganised as fikalapasi) and kakala (literary devices, Tonganised as litevasi) aimed at upholding the nofo ‘a kāinga structure. Reflecting on the Tupunga Ola approach, this study argues that censorship of kakala compositions is not just an unnecessary political control, but a cultural moderation rooted in the ‘Ekitu‘a Binary Cultural Identity system (EBCI) (see Appendices B & B1). This complimentary concept establishes the rules and guidelines for nofo ‘a kāinga—the way individuals connected by blood and cultural ties live as a closed-knit community. Within this structure, members are required to observe practices of fetauhi‘aki (mutual reciprocity), encompassing fefaka‘apa‘apa‘aki (mutual respect) and fefuafatongia‘aki (mutual obligation), all organised within a hierarchical system predicated on statuses of superiority and inferiority. For instance, when a Tongan man marries, the preparations for the celebration are traditionally divided into two distinct structures: one managed by his paternal side, to which he holds an inferior status (tu‘a), and the other by his maternal side, to which he holds a superior status (‘eiki). The fa‘ē huki—the individual upon whose lap the bridegroom sits—is provided by the maternal side, whereas the person occupying the front seat at the dining table is designated from the paternal side. This social structure is consistently reflected in the heliaki (figures of speech) that Queen Sālote employed in the lullabies for her makapuna (grandchildren). This is evident, for example, in the kakala song composed for her second son, Prince Tuku‘aho. In this lullaby, the Queen uses the “sun” as the highest celestial heliaki—a metaphor culturally reserved for monarchy only, and in this case, it was her as the prince’s mother. Conversely, she uses a “comet” as a second-class heliaki to refer to her husband (Wood-Ellem, 2004/2019, p. 206). The song's remaining heliaki predominantly allude to beauty and historical spots in the ancestral locations of both the maternal and paternal families. Through this technique, the Queen symbolically acknowledged their roles of fetauhi‘aki in relation to the Prince. The related verse is copied verbatim below.

‘Ofa he tavake tā mafua	How I love this sustenance-seeking tropic bird
Na‘e fakahifo ‘e he la‘ā	That was born by the sun
‘O tamai ki he fetu‘ufuka	And fathered by the comet

Kaloafu Tonga pe 'i ke puna	Oh fly Kaloafu Tonga
'O 'omi e mahu 'o e fonua	Bring the affluence of the land
'O tu'ula 'i he Futu ko Vuna	Then perch at the Futu ko Vuna
Pea mo e huni ko Vaiola	And the Huni called Vaiola

From a constructivist ontological perspective, the display of the 'Ekitu'a system (see Appendices B & B1) and the analysis of Queen Sālote's lullaby illustrate a uniquely Tongan understanding of kakala song censorship—deeply rooted in language, Tongan worldview, and cultural perception. The presentation shifts the research philosophy away from merely providing a foundational framework of beliefs that guides and justifies the study's design, toward an engagement with a specific cultural reality (ontology) and the processes through which knowledge of that reality is constituted (epistemology). It confirms the researcher's ontological awareness. The chosen methods and theoretical framework are not merely procedural but are a direct consequence of the understanding that [e.g., the 'Ekitu'a system] constitutes a distinct social reality that this research aims to access and interpret

3.4.2 Ontology of the Toafesiama integration approach. A constructivist ontology is advantageous as it accommodates the concept of Toafesiama model (see Appendix C). This framework affirms the coexistence of multiple realities, situating Western-dominant foreign influences as one component within a complex, culturally embedded process of adaptation that is particularly relevant to the censorship of kakala songs. This ontological stance frames censorship as a cultural phenomenon that must be understood in both the Tongan and English contexts. Thus, qualitative analysis of participant interviews is employed to explore how censors who were familiar with the kakala song censorship, roles of punake (composers) and kau faiongoongo (journalists), heliaki, define, resist, or enforce censorship in media. Following Foucault (1977), censorship is also considered as a mechanism of power that sustains the hierarchical identities central to the Ekitu'a system. As a Tongan scholar, I recognise my embeddedness in these dual cultural frameworks surrounding the censorship of the kakala songs, a process in which Western concepts of censorship, songcraft and journalism interplay with Tongan traditions.

3.4.3 Epistemology. This study adopts an interpretivist epistemological stance, which posits that knowledge is co-created through interactions with participants and their lived experiences (Hiller, 2016; Alharahsheh, 2020). This approach is particularly suited

to exploring the nuanced and context-specific nature of censorship of Tongan songs, as well as the application of *heliaki* (figures of speech) within this cultural and artistic domain. The interpretivist framework is predicated on the understanding that censorship is a socially constructed concept with divergent meanings across different groups. These can range from a lawyer's focus on legal suppression to an indigenous elder's concern for cultural harmony and a journalist's perception of a publishing ban. Consequently, this research engages directly with participants involved in the *kakala* song tradition and control to capture this spectrum of interpretations, thereby achieving a more comprehensive and authentic account of what *kakala* song censorship entails.

Using the *Tupunga Ola* approach to trace origins via the *Toafesiama* model and *'Ekitu'a* identity system, is one of the important epistemological tools for this task, ensuring its validity and legitimacy. This supports this study's aim to examine censorship's purpose and the role of *lea heliaki* in subverting these restrictions. Through this epistemological lens, the research emphasises the importance of subjective interpretations and the co-construction of knowledge, ensuring a deep and culturally sensitive exploration of the topic.

3.4.4 Axiology. This research is grounded in a specific axiological position—the study of *mahu'inga* (values) and value judgments (*fakamaaau e ngaahi mahu'inga*) that shape social structures and censorship practices. Within this framework, axiology addresses the researcher's values, ethical considerations, and the inherently value-laden nature of the inquiry itself. Following Lincoln and Guba's (1985) axiological framework, this study explicitly acknowledges that the researcher's values play a key role in how it studies and interprets the research topic, question and problem. As a Tongan *kakala* song composer, educator, and journalist, my work is driven by a tripartite purpose that shapes my multifaceted talents and desire: to educate, empower, and entertain. These values are central to the purpose of this research; however, measures have been taken to ensure that they do not introduce bias or allow personal interests to compromise the integrity of the investigation.

My axiological stance is grounded in a truth-seeking principle, a commitment cultivated through my background in journalism, education, and songcraft. This foundation prioritises the values of enlightenment, knowledge-sharing, and the rigorous dissemination of valuable information. This ethos drives my intention to ensure this research serves as a meaningful resource for the people of Tonga and a wider interested audience. Through the lens of the *Tupunga Ola* (cause and effect) framework, censorship

of kakala songs is guided by an axiological commitment to the fundamental aspect of cultural identity. It sits at the apex of the 'Ekitu'a model (see Appendices B & B1), the cornerstone of the nofo 'a kāinga structure (extended family). Axiologically these values and ethics entailed in the Ekitu'a system led the research to depart from earlier scholarly interpretations, which are now considered problematic as they appear to have been unduly influenced by prevailing political and monarchist campaigns. For instance, this study challenges the prevailing consensus in current literature that the social structure comprising kakai (commoners), hou'eiki (nobles), and tu'i (sovereign) represents Tonga's 'overarching social hierarchy' (Vökel, 2015, p. 110), (also see Appendices B, B1 & D).

3.4.5 Mainstream social hierarchy – an axiological view. From an axiological perspective, Tonga's hierarchical structures operationalise core cultural values such as faka'apa'apa (taboo-guided respect), fatongia (obligation) and fetauhi'aki (reciprocity), which are central to the censorship practices targeting kakala songs. This study argues that Tonga's mainstream social hierarchy is structured around the echelons of the kāinga (extended family), the 'ulumotu'a (patriarchal paternal uncle and his household), and the mehekitanga (matriarchal maternal aunt and her household), (see Appendix D). This cultural system is the most widely practised structure and governs daily life and social events—particularly among the more than 200,000 Tongans living in the diaspora, where nobility and monarchy are not physically present as leaders. This also applies to villages and towns in Tonga that are not hereditarily owned by the nobility or the monarch. All celebrations and cultural events occurring in these communities are planned and organised according to the kāinga, 'ulumotu'a and mehekitanga social hierarchy. For example, the protocol for a birthday celebration dictates that the honoured positions at the tēpile mu'a (the front table for traditional cuisine) are normally occupied by the birthday celebrant in the centre, the mehekitanga to their right, while members of the maternal side are responsible for preparing and serving the food.

3.4.5.1 Reconsidering Tonga's mainstream social structure. A social hierarchy becomes mainstream when it achieves widespread societal normalisation (Bourdieu, 2002; Williams, 1988). In Tonga, the kāinga – 'ulumotu'a – mehekitanga hierarchy is mainstream due to its inherent application to all Tongans. The kakai (commoners) – hou'eiki (chiefs and nobles) – tu'i (sovereign) class system, however, represents a minority stratification, as it does not inherently organise every individual. For clarity, while representing a non-universal hierarchy each echelon within the strata of kakai, hou'eiki, and tu'i maintains its own distinct social hierarchy structured around the stratum

of kāinga, ‘ulumotu‘a, and mehekitanga. For instance, when the current Crown Prince Tupouto‘a ascends the throne, the hierarchical structure of his royal family will reflect an inherent continuum defined by the stratified roles of kāinga, ‘ulumotu‘a, and mehekitanga. The role of ‘ulumotu‘a and his own household would be filled by the current Prince Tungī Mailefihi, as his father, the late Noble Mā‘atu, was an older brother of the current king, His Majesty King Tupou VI, the father of Crown Prince Tupouto‘a. The mehekitanga echelon would be occupied by Princess Pilolevu Tuita, the only sister of King Tupou VI, and her inner family circle. Consequently, this positions the kakai, hou‘eiki, and tu‘i system as a structural subset nested within the broader, mainstream social framework defined by kāinga, ‘ulumotu‘a, and mehekitanga (see Appendix D).

3.4.6 Axiological conflict. The values and ethics artistically interwoven within the kakala (literary devices) and heliaki (figures of speech), forms the philosophical basis of the kakala song censorship. They enable the composing and censorial punake as well as kau faiongoongo (journalists) to make judgements this research sought to understand. This reflects another Tongan context where the kau faiongoongo (journalists) operate with a different set of values related to censorship, contrasting sharply with the Western journalistic pursuit of freedom of expressions. This distinction mirrors core axiological debates concerning which value systems determine acceptable expression in kakala song lyrics.

By engaging with this debate and axiological analysis of hierarchical structures, as well as understanding their complexities, my research is inherently positioned at the intersection of these conflicting values and issues. Acknowledging this positionality is crucial, as my own value judgments will inevitably influence the interpretation of the data. The arguments presented above underscore the research's foundational axiological stance. This position prioritizes intellectual rigor and evidence-based analysis, deliberately distancing the work from any predetermined political agenda.

3.5 Methodological approach

This research addresses a significant gap in the safeguarding of traditional songs by employing a qualitative approach uniquely suited to the topic's complexity. The study explores the fihinga me‘a (complex phenomena) inherent in cultural preservation, effectively moving beyond describing outcomes to elucidate the totoka (underlying mechanisms) and fetakainga fakasōsiale (tacit social processes) of cultural preservation. It investigates how censorship of kakala songs is understood, conducted, and operated by

examining the lived experiences of knowledge holders and the cultural norms that govern these traditions.

Furthermore, the research aims to interpret underlying social processes—the interactions, language, and cultural norms—that determine how social order is created and maintained around these traditional controls. By developing rich, detailed descriptions of these dynamics, the study provides a nuanced understanding often absent from broader policy discussions. Ultimately, this inquiry is positioned to generate new, grounded theories and concepts for safeguarding traditional scrutiny, offering a robust, evidence-based framework that can inform more effective and culturally legitimate preservation strategies.

This methodological choice ensures the study captures the voices and experiences of Tongan artists, audiences, and cultural gatekeepers, primarily through the method of *veitalatala* (culturally-contextualised interviews), offering nuanced insights into the interplay between tradition, creativity, and censorship.

3.5.1 Interpretivist qualitative framework. Interpretivism is a research paradigm that posits reality is subjective and socially constructed, asserting that our understanding of the world is derived from the meanings and interpretations created by individuals and groups. Through an interpretivist lens, this research interrogates the nuanced relationship between *kakala* songs, *heliaki*, the involvements of *kau faiongoongo* (journalists) and *punake* (composers) in the censorship process, as well as their intersection with the *nofo* ‘a *kāinga* structure and its cultural operative, the ‘*Ekitu*‘a system (see Appendices B & B1). By privileging the perspectives of participants, this research endeavours to understand the subjective meanings and experiences of the participants and their views on *kakala* song censorship. To achieve this, a qualitative approach is required.

This study adopts a qualitative research approach suitable for exploring the journalistic and cultural censorship of *kakala* songs and *punakes*’ employment of *heliaki* (*fikalapasi* or figures of speech). Qualitative research allows for an in-depth understanding of cultural, social, and historical contexts, which are central to this study. The study employed a qualitative data collection method centred on semi-structured interviews, operationalised through the *Veitalatala* framework explained above. This method was chosen to gather detailed narratives and personal experiences in the participants’ own words. The resulting non-numerical data comprised interview

transcripts, field notes, and song lyrics. These were analysed using thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns, such as “cultural preservation,” “composers' frustration with censorship guidelines,” and the “strategic use of heliaki to subvert censorship.”

Drawing on Patton (2015); Braun & Clarke (2006); Riessman, (2008), the research argues that a qualitative approach focuses on understanding and interpreting complex phenomena, experiences, and behaviours through in-depth methods like interviews, observations, and focus groups, rather than relying solely on numerical data. In the meantime, Creswell & Poth (2018) provide a comprehensive overview of qualitative research and its suitability for exploring complex, context-dependent phenomena like censorship and literary analysis. They emphasise how qualitative methods allow researchers to delve into the meanings, experiences, and cultural contexts that shape such topics. Meanwhile, Silverman (2020) discusses the strengths of qualitative research in exploring artistic and cultural phenomena, such as music and literature. He highlights how qualitative methods are ideal for analysing the nuances of language, symbolisms, and cultural practices, making them well-suited for studying the lea heliaki system and censorship.

This study's interpretivist qualitative approach is structured by the Tupunga Ola (cause and effect) framework, which systematically embodies core qualitative principles in its design and application. The theoretical approach consists of a causality mechanism that thoroughly investigates data according to the research questions while asking causal questions about the processes and factors that contributed to its existence. By systematically analysing the relationships between variables, this method not only seeks to understand the data itself but also aims to reveal the underlying dynamics and influences that shape it. Bearing in mind that kakala songs are not merely musical compositions but a complex cultural phenomenon operating at the nexus of two original theoretical frameworks articulated and developed in this study: the ‘Ekitu’a cultural system (see Appendices B & B1) and the Toafesiama reconfiguration process (see Appendix C), the interpretivist approach is therefore paramount, as it specifically aligns with the study's focus on understanding the subjective, culturally embedded perspectives that illuminate how censorship is perceived and experienced within these structures.

3.5.2. Researcher reflexivity. Reflexivity is used in this research to acknowledge how researcher biases—particularly selective perception—could influence interpretation. As someone with strong prior beliefs about misconceptions surrounding kakala song compositions and the contextual differences between faiongoongo and journalistic

copyright, I consciously worked to prevent these assumptions from dominating the analysis. To address potential bias, I maintained a reflexivity journal to document interpretive shifts, validated findings through Veitalatala with Tongan cultural experts, and actively sought disconfirming evidence, such as cases where copyright aligned with community norms. This reflexive approach was especially critical when examining sensitive themes like lea heliaki's artistic depictions of sexuality and the unequal social distribution of power and resources, enhancing both positionality and research credibility.

3.5.3 Data collection process. Data were collected through online archival research and semi-structured interviews. Archival materials, including songs and media texts related to publication and copyright, were accessed from the Tongan public domain. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with purposively selected elite participants—two punake (Tongan poets/composers) and three journalists with deep knowledge of the topic. Participants were contacted via email, social media, and phone, and were provided with an information sheet and consent form in accordance with AUT's ethics guidelines. Interviews were conducted in Tongan, recorded via voice or video call, and later transcribed for analysis. One participant, who was hospitalised, consented to the use of a previous interview for this research.

3.5.3.1 Participants. The participants included three experienced Tongan journalists and two renowned kakala song punake. Two of the journalists had worked at the Tonga Broadcasting Commission radio station during the 1970s and 1980s and were directly involved in the copyright of songs. In accordance with ethical research protocols and upon the advice of my supervisors, all participants were de-identified and are assigned the pseudonyms Tupunga-1 through Tupunga-5. The researcher has been familiar with these research ideas for many years and knows people involved in those cultural areas who are expert holders of knowledge. The researcher knew the participants well and interviewed them face-to-face, via email, or through social media messaging and phone calls. The introductory email sent to each participants explained the thesis and research topic as well as the value of their participation in it. It invited them to read the participant information form and signed consent forms as part of AUT's ethics requirements. The participants were clearly informed about the interview with them and all information they will provide will be recorded either by video calling or voice recording to be later transcribed and used for analysis for the thesis.

3.5.3.2 Procedure. This section outlines the exact steps taken to conduct the study, ensuring that the research process is transparent and systematic. Participants were told

the interview took an hour to cover their personal experiences in the kakala songs genre and their censorship. They were told that the study was designed to investigate and record their experiences with the research questions. Three journalists and two punake were interviewed each for about an hour. The researcher explained the topic is: Culture Class and Community: The application of heliaki (figures of speech) in Tongan songs and the roles of journalists and censorial punake in their censorship between the 1960s and the early 2000s. The research question was then put forward and explained – Why did traditional hiva kakala songs have to be composed according to lea heliaki moderated by journalists and censorial punake if composing punake (composers) wanted these songs to be broadcast on public radio from 1960s until the early 2000s? I explained to each interviewee in their respective interview period that they could be asked about 10 questions all together. All interviews were either voice or zoom recorded so the data could later be coded. All participants were told the interview would be conducted in Tongan in which they all agreed. Some of them wanted to see indicative questions before the main interview.

3.5.4 Data sources. The archival and textual data for this research were collected from a combination of online academic databases and authoritative published works, selected for their cultural reliability and relevance to kakala songs and Tongan communicative traditions. Primary sources included digitised Tongan newspapers, oral history transcripts, and song collections accessed through AUT Library, Google Scholar, and targeted searches. Key published works such as *The Art of Talanoa* (Halapua, 2022), *On Tongan Poetry* (Helu, 2012), and *Songs and Poems of Queen Sālote* (2019), provided foundational examples of lea heliaki and its role in kakala songs, while historical texts like *Tonga Islands* (1991) and *Ko e Tohi Himi ‘a e Siasi Uēsiliana* (1996) contextualised the religious and political influences on song censorship. These sources were prioritized based on the expertise of their authors—such as Tongan scholars like Professor Futa Helu and linguistic expert Dr. Melenaite Taumoe folau—and their alignment with Indigenous epistemologies, thereby ensuring that the study reflects Tongan voices and minimizes the risk of Western misinterpretation.

To prepare the dataset for analysis, the recorded audio files were played on a mobile device equipped with playback and navigation features, including play, stop, and a slider for precise forward and backward movement. These functionalities facilitated repeated listening during the transcription process. Upon completion, the transcriptions were transmitted via email to ensure convenient mobile access, while the researcher

conducted systematic analysis on a laptop, cataloguing the lyrics according to thematic categories, historical periods, and censorship status. Collaborative translation, informed by archived studies from Tongan linguists, safeguarded the cultural integrity of neologisms—such as the allegorical term Tonganised as *alekōlia*—by preserving phonetic authenticity and accommodating contested interpretations. This methodological approach aligns with the Tupunga Ola theoretical framework, which conceptualises lyrics and neologisms as dynamic cultural heirlooms rather than static textual artefacts.

3.5.5 Thematic data analysis. Thematic analysis was used to identify, analyse, and report on recurring patterns (themes) within the qualitative data. Transcripts from Veitalatala sessions were analysed through a hybrid thematic approach first identifying broad patterns such as *tapu*, *senisasipi*, *heliaki*, *faka‘apa‘apa*, *kakala ‘eiki* and *kakala vale*, *fatungamotu’a* and so on. It follows with applying Tupunga Ola’s causal approach to analyse and understand connections among data collected. Thematic analysis identified recurring patterns, while subsequent analysis contextualised these themes within Tongan cultural and relational dynamics.

3.6 Ensuring Rigour

Methodological rigor is fundamental to research, ensuring the quality, credibility, and trustworthiness of its findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). It enhances the study's validity and reliability, meaning results are consistent and accurately reflect the studied phenomena. Rigor increases credibility and minimizes bias through strict protocols and techniques like triangulation, leading to more objective conclusions. This creates dependable results that support generalisability to broader contexts. Furthermore, rigorous research provides a solid foundation for future studies and informs effective real-world decisions in fields like policy and communication studies. Finally, it promotes transparency via detailed documentation, allowing others to scrutinise and confidently build upon the work.

3.6.1 Reliability. To ensure reliability this study maintained methodological consistency by grounding the research process in the Tupunga Ola’s causal dimension, while meticulously tracking data through Veitalatala, culturally anchored dialogue, with participants. These steps, including standardised interview protocols, minimised subjective biases and affirmed that findings emerged systematically from shared narratives, not isolated interpretations. This approach fostered the dependability necessary to complete the thesis according to the schedules agreed upon with AUT. The

researcher-maintained transparency by sharing corrected interview data and was prepared to provide clarifications as requested by the supervisors. Furthermore, supervisory feedback was incorporated in a timely manner, ensuring all research plans and deadlines were met. Additionally, a key aim of this research is to ensure its transferability, thereby enhancing the potential for future studies to yield meaningful outcomes. In qualitative research, transferability allows readers to assess the potential for findings and emergent theories to be resonant or applicable in other contexts. By providing thick description of the research process, participants, and setting, this study enables others to evaluate the applicability of its findings to their own environments.

3.6.2 Credibility. Credibility in qualitative research denotes the degree to which the findings authentically reflect participants lived experiences and perspectives. It addresses the fundamental question: Do the interpretations represent reality as perceived by the participants? This is evidenced by the iterative cycle of debunking initial assumptions, correcting methodological approaches, and developing new theories throughout the study. This process ensured that the components of the research were systematically integrated, forming a coherent and logically consistent response to the research questions. While member checking—the process of returning interpreted data to participants for validation—is a valued technique for enhancing credibility, it was not feasible in this study. Participant availability was severely constrained following the initial interviews: two resided in the United States, one of whom was bedridden; one participant passed away in 2023; one was located in Tonga; and one was in Auckland but had overwhelming work commitments. To ensure the trustworthiness of the findings despite this limitation, two key compensatory strategies were employed, following the principles of Lincoln and Guba (1985) for establishing credibility in qualitative research.

First, a policy of thick description (Geertz, 1973) was adopted. The findings chapter provides detailed narratives of the context and extensive verbatim quotes from participants. This approach allows readers to immerse themselves in the data and independently evaluate the logical connection between the evidence presented and the conclusions drawn, thereby compensating for the lack of direct participant confirmation. Second, data triangulation was implemented to cross-verify the emerging themes. Insights from the interviews were compared and contrasted with content from previous interviews with the participants broadcast on TBC radio station, which are archived on YouTube. The convergence of findings across these different sources served to strengthen the credibility and confirmability of the interpreted themes.

3.6.3 Confirmability. Confirmability in research focuses on objectivity and neutrality. It asks: “Are the findings shaped by the participants and not by researcher bias or predispositions? Confirmability refers to the extent to which the findings are shaped by participants and the research context rather than by the researcher’s biases, motivations, or subjective perspectives. It emphasizes establishing that both the data and the interpretations are traceable, transparent, and firmly grounded in the evidence collected.

As noted earlier, the traditional technique of member checking—where participants review and validate transcripts or preliminary findings—was not feasible due to their unavailability following the initial interviews. To address this limitation and uphold confirmability, a multi-faceted strategy was implemented, emphasizing rigorous documentation and external scrutiny of the research process.

The following measures were adopted:

Comprehensive Audit Trail: A detailed audit trail was maintained throughout the study, comprising:

Raw Data: Anonymised and securely stored interview transcripts and field notes.

Data Reduction Records: Documentation of all steps taken to condense data, including initial summaries and highlighted significant statements.

Data Analysis and Coding: Complete records of the coding process, including initial codebooks, notes on code evolution, and examples illustrating how codes were derived from the data.

Thematic Development: Analytical memos tracing the progression from initial codes to broader categories and final themes, demonstrating logical connections.

Reflexive Journaling: To actively identify and bracket researcher bias, a reflexive journal was maintained from the inception of the study. Entries documented:

Critical Reflections: Ongoing reflections on how these assumptions might influence interpretation and strategies employed to mitigate such influence.

3.7 Ethics

The Ethics section serves as a foundational element of the research methodology, crucial for establishing the project's integrity, credibility, and moral responsibility. The study received formal ethical approval from the Auckland University of Technology

Ethics Committee (Reference: 23/172). In accordance with this approval, the section outlines the specific procedures implemented to conduct the research in a morally defensible manner, with a principal focus on protecting participant rights, dignity, and welfare. The safeguarding of individuals was therefore a paramount concern throughout the research process

3.7.1 Informed consent and confidentiality. This research adhered to strict ethical protocol approved by AUT. All participants voluntarily agreed to take part in the study and, importantly, formally consented to being identified in the thesis along with the information they provided. The participants were contacted by telephone calls, emails or messages through social media. Introductory emails sent to them explained the thesis and research topic as well as the value of their participation in it. It invited them to read the participant information sheet included with the email and to invited them to sign a consent form as part of AUT's ethics requirements. The participants were clearly informed the interview with them and all information they provide would be recorded either by video calling or voice recording to be later transcribed and used for analysis for the thesis. They were also reassured they could withdraw from the research at any time, though if data analysis had begun when they did, it may not be possible to remove their data from the study. After they signed the consent forms the interview processes began.

3.7.2 Transparency and limitations. In a spirit of transparency, this study acknowledges several limitations. A primary concern is social desirability bias, where participants may provide responses, they believe are expected or acceptable, rather than their true perspectives. This is particularly relevant in the context of Tongan culture, where respect for authority and communal harmony may influence participants to withhold critical or controversial opinions. Given the sensitive nature of censorship and the cultural importance of maintaining harmony and respect in Tongan society, participants may feel pressured to conform to perceived societal expectations. This could result in responses that align with dominant cultural or political narratives, rather than reflecting their genuine views.

To address the issue of subjectivity, reflexivity will be practiced throughout the research process. The researcher will maintain a reflective journal to document personal biases and assumptions, ensuring transparency in the interpretation of data. To mitigate concerns about generalizability, the study will provide rich, detailed descriptions of the context and participants, allowing readers to assess the transferability of findings to other settings. To manage the time and resource constraints, a clear and focused research plan

has been developed, prioritizing key research questions and methods. Finally, to reduce participant bias, the researcher will build trust and rapport with participants, ensuring a safe and open environment for sharing honest perspectives.

While social desirability bias poses a potential challenge, the strategies outlined above aim to mitigate its impact and ensure the authenticity and reliability of the data. By fostering trust, ensuring confidentiality, and employing rigorous methods, this study seeks to capture the genuine perspectives of participants, providing meaningful insights into the cultural and journalistic guidelines surrounding the censorship of Tongan songs.

3.7.3 Resource constraints. This study encountered several practical limitations that influenced its scope and methodology. Archival access proved challenging, as some historical kakala songs records important to this research remained inaccessible due to geographical locations and the lack of accessibility online. Furthermore, Western documentation, which is by far the largest source of information recording the kakala songs often misapplied Tongan concepts like heliaki as well the purpose of censorship. This includes mistaken to Western metaphor with heliaki while misconceiving lea hualela as inappropriate without addressing the distinct linguistic rules governing it as a heliaki (figures of speech). Financial constraints further influenced the study—budget limitations restricted extended fieldwork in Tonga and USA where two participants live leading to some remote interviews that affected rapport-building. To mitigate these challenges, the study prioritised online interviews with the participants to ensure balanced perspectives. These measures ensured that the research maintained both academic rigor and cultural accountability, aligning with Tupunga Ola frameworks.

Vahe 4: Fanitangi (Findings)

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the study's findings, structured around the research problem, primary research question and its three subsidiary questions (SRQs). The research was designed to investigate the censorship of kakala songs in Tonga between the 1960s and the early 2000s and to analyse the reasons behind this control. The study's primary finding indicates that song censorship served three distinct purposes: first, to ensure lyrics did not violate the cultural values and taboos inherent to Tongan cultural identity (see 'Ekitu'a model, Introduction chapter, Section 1.4.1); second, to monitor cultural changes, particularly the cultural infiltration dominated by Western influences into the fatungamotu'a (contemporary traditions) (see Toafesiamama model, Introduction chapter, Section 1.11.1). Finally, to enhance the qualities of the songs to align with the notion of mālie (see Introduction chapter, Section 1.11). These findings reveal a complex legacy in which the preservation of cultural integrity was accompanied by both benefits and constraints. Although censorship contributed to improving song quality and strengthening compositional practices among punake, it also generated tensions and dissatisfaction, leading to the moderation or exclusion of certain compositions from public broadcasting.

This study was structured around the following research questions:

The primary research question (RQ) asked – Why did traditional hiva kakala songs have to be composed according to lea 'o e heliaki moderated by journalists and censorial punake if composing punake (composers). The subsidiary questions are as follows:

4.1.1 Research Question (RQ): Why did kakala songs, or hiva kakala, have to be composed in accordance with lea heliaki and moderated by journalists and censorial punake before they could be broadcast on the Tonga Broadcasting Commission (TBC) radio station from the 1960s until the early 2000s?

4.1.2 Sub-Research Questions (SRQs):

1. To what extent did the involvement of the late Queen Sālote Tupou III, as reformer of the kakala song genre, influence the Tongan mindset about the composition and regulation of songs?
2. Were the censorship guidelines established to enhance the quality of

kakala songs, or were they used as a political tool to reinforce the power of the royals and chiefs over commoners?

3. Did the involvement of censorial punake and journalists undermine the authenticity of the kakala song genre, or did it contribute to their preservation and enhancement?

The findings further propose standardisation of heliaki which this study did and conceptualised it along a continuum encompassing literal language (lea 'ilongofua), imagery (heliaki), figurative language (lea heliaki), and lea 'o e heliaki (figures of speech) (see Introduction chapter, Sections 1.1, 1.4, and 1.6.1, Discussion chapter, Section 5.4.3). Within this framework, the semantic logic of the heliaki continuum challenges the dominant view of heliaki as merely conveying hidden or layered meanings. Rather, such interpretations are limited because they overlook the broader function of heliaki in producing vivid, evocative, and memorable expressions that enhance mālie while simultaneously safeguarding cultural values and social norms.

The findings indicate that heliaki can be systematically defined through a set of governing principles corresponding to the English figurative system. They further demonstrate that lea 'o e heliaki is broadly equivalent to English figures of speech, a finding that informed the identification and development of 30 types of lea 'o e heliaki presented in the Discussion Chapter (Section 5.4.3). In addition, the findings suggest that the common equivalence drawn between heliaki and metaphor in English is inadequate, as it is often based primarily on the lexical, dictionary-level definition of metaphor. The data further indicate that such an interpretation does not fully account for the broader literary, cultural, and communicative functions attributed to heliaki within the Tongan language. Accordingly, the findings suggest that metaphor is more appropriately understood as a form of lea 'o e heliaki (figure of speech) rather than as heliaki itself.

To present these findings, the chapter is organised into thematic sections and subthemes that outline the major outcomes of the study. Each theme draws on evidence generated through the research and highlights key patterns emerging from the data. Collectively, the findings contribute to the reconceptualisation of kakala songs as a genre of heliaki and provide a foundation for the discussion of their cultural, literary, and journalistic significance in subsequent chapters.

As per research traditions, qualitative analysis used for this study followed a series of abstractions: broad research questions were refined into specific themes and subthemes, thereby creating a clear analytical framework for presenting findings. This chapter will address each research question in turn beginning with the primary question. The data were systematically organised into three overarching themes, each comprising sub-themes that provide a nuanced understanding of the participants' perspectives.

As outlined in Chapter 3, semi-structured interviews were conducted with five participants: two experienced and renowned punake with over 50 years of experience composing kakala songs, two former veteran journalists from TBC Radio who were directly involved with and familiar with the censorship practices, and one veteran journalist known for his expertise in journalism principles, which contributed the kakala song censorship when journalists at TBC were in charge. The five participants in this study were assigned pseudonyms using the word Tupunga, resulting in the identifiers Tupunga-1, Tupunga-2, Tupunga-3, and so forth. Literally, it means the origin, source, or cause, the term Tupunga was selected to reflect the participants' role as the foundational source of the original knowledge, understanding, and lived experience that is central to this research. These pseudonyms serve a dual purpose: firstly, to protect the participants' anonymity in accordance with ethical research standards, and secondly, to honour the intrinsic value of their knowledge, ensuring it is evaluated on its own merit rather than the identity of its source.

4.2 Kakala song censorship

RQ: Why did kakala songs, or hiva kakala, have to be composed in accordance with lea heliaki and moderated by journalists and censorial punake before they could be broadcast on the Tonga Broadcasting Commission (TBC) radio station from the 1960s until the early 2000s?

4.2.1 Theme One: Curating nofo 'a kāinga values. Data analysis indicated Queen Sālote Tupou III and her appointed censorial punake, including Noble Ve'ehala, Mānoa Havea and Taimani Fotu, began vetting the kakala songs for the Tonga Broadcasting Commission (TBC) radio station prior to its official launch in July 1961. Their objective was to prepare a catalogue of approved songs for the station's inaugural broadcast. The findings showed censors specifically evaluated the lyrics particularly the use of heliaki as essential literary devices during the screening process. The purpose was to make sure lyrics are decent and would not transgress the nofo 'a kāinga values (see 'Ekitu'a model, see Appendices B & B1).

4.2.2. Subtheme One: Songs of heliaki (figures of speech). Analysis of the data revealed that kakala songs are a musical genre that necessitates the use of heliaki, or lea ‘o e heliaki and kakala. As participant Tupunga-3, a former TBC broadcaster and journalist said, kakala is “hiva ‘oku heliaki” (songs that are lyrically figurative), further grounding the definition of the genre in lived cultural understanding. However, he also made a crucial observation that “no one has studied and standardised” the heliaki system yet. Tupunga-3 stated:

Hiva kakala is a genre of figurative songs that employs floral imagery (kakala) and other natural motifs, though kakala remains the predominant imageries. These songs are lyrically poetic, designed to represent a specific phenomenon or purpose central to the composer’s intention. It was developed as a distinct genre separate from traditional forms like hiva usu, faiva, lakalaka, ma‘ulu‘ulu, and me‘etu‘upaki, hiva kakala experienced a period of significant popularity. (personal communication, 3 April 2024)

His association of figurative language with kakala songs is supported by Tupunga-1, whose explanation of the song-screening process mandating the use of heliaki reinforces this view. She stated:

Songs must be closely examined. First, the lyrics were inspected. Their context must be honorific and figurative, and they don’t have to use names. They only use symbols and heliaki, like flowers or types of birds for names ... It worked, was well organised and was in order. (personal comm communication, 20 February 2024).

Another participant, Tupunga-2, argued kakala and other group dance songs possess structural and content-based figurations (heliaki) which represent social boundaries by clearly articulating the fatongia (cultural obligation) of the people to the chiefs. She said kakala songs must be written to reflect the cultural identification of knowing one’s social boundary (‘ilo‘i hoto ngata‘anga). She said this Tongan identity is demonstrated through the recognition of societal boarders, which encompasses feveitokai‘aki (a form of mutual respect distinct from feveitapui‘aki; see Appendix A), respect for chiefs, peers, and family, and the observance of specific familial duties such as those owed to the mehekitanga (father’s sister). As she explained:

Our lakalaka group dances and traditional Tongan songs serve as a reinforcement of our social boundaries and hierarchies, reminding us of our duty to honour the chiefs and royalty. I contend that our hiva kakala should continue to be subject to oversight to ensure they consistently reflect these values. The diminishing quality of our songs adversely affects our collective prestige and, by extension, contributes to the erosion of the cultural identities of the fonua (land). (Tupunga-2, personal communication, April 27, 2023).

4.2.3 Subtheme Two: Heliaki upholds fefaka‘apa‘apa‘aki practice. The data analysis indicated that kakala songs were censored to ensure the lyrics aligns with ‘Ekitu‘a cultural

identity model fefaka‘apa‘apa‘aki (mutual respect mandated by specific cultural taboos), mainly the practices of veitapui and veitokai (see Appendix A). As former journalist and censor Tupunga-1 stated:

I recall when I was still working at the TBC radio station, one of the songs performed by the Ha‘ape ‘O Tali‘eva band was prohibited and it was labelled [in the station library] as “banned”. I forgot the name of the song, but it is something like Lupe (Dove). I often listened to it, but it wasn’t allowed to be broadcast. And I can tell there was something objectionable in the content. There are things in that song to which people with veitapui and in nofo ‘a kāinga should not listen. (Tupunga-1, personal communication, February 20, 2024)

Tupunga-3 also emphasised the importance of employing heliaki in kakala songs in ways that ensured the songs abided by taufatungamotu‘a (contemporary traditions) and shielded feuluulufi ‘o e nofo (closeness of presence of people who are bound by respect guided taboos) guidelines.

The way people live is bound by laws, rules and taufatungamotu‘a. So that I do not swear because of the feuluulufi of the way people live, taboo associated with the people of the opposite sex living together, for example. The thing is, songs should not be composed to incite violence in people like what Adolf Hitler of Germany did when he urged musicians to write music to encourage soldiers to become violent and kill people. (Tupunga-3, personal communication, 3 April 2024.

4.2.4. Subtheme three: The roles of gatekeepers. Data from participants revealed most of the censors were well-known composers affiliated with the royal family. Subsequently, the TBC budget allocated for censorship was depleted, and its journalists were trained to assume this responsibility towards the end of 2000. Tupunga-1 was the first journalist to undertake this censorial role at the radio station.

There was a committee for censorship, established by Her Majesty Queen Sālote Tupou III. I learned this from Ve‘ehala Leilua. Auditioning processes were held where composers were required to come to the palace to present exactly three of their songs. These were performed for the secretaries and Her Majesty herself, who would then decide which composers were to be summoned. So, there was her committee, which was called the audition committee. Ve‘ehala then became the person responsible for the songs. And he was the authority on the language at the time, I became involved. His role was to correct everything related to the Tongan language and languages used in the compositions. It was the same for the kakala used in songs for dance, for both traditional Tongan dances and newly composed songs. And later, after the Queen died, the committee became one that had to audition every single new song. (Tupunga-1, personal communication, February 20, 2024)

4.3 Queen Sālote Tupou III – a kakala song punake of genius

SRQ One: To what extent did the involvement of the late Queen Sālote Tupou III, as

reformer of kakala songs, influence the Tongan mindset about the composition and regulation of songs?

4.3.1 Theme two: Royal reformation, the shaping of public interest. Analysis of the data revealed a consensus among participants that Queen Sālote made a considerable contribution to the art of the kakala song genre. She was regarded as a true punake who upheld the integrity of her composer role by prioritising her innate artistic abilities and demonstrating a commitment to treating her colleagues equitably. Findings indicate that she actively sought expert assistance to ensure the art of kakala songs flourished and achieved excellence. The findings suggest that contrary to efforts by her cultural court (matāpule and punake) to utilize the kakala genre for status augmentation, the Queen at times deliberately privileged the song's traditional integrity over personal aggrandizement.

4.3.2 Subtheme One: Queen Sālote advocated for integrity and punake excellence. Findings from the analysis reveal that that Queen Sālote treated kakala songs as a definitive art form to be promoted on its own merits. Tupunga-2 illustrated this dynamic by recounting an incident in which the Queen and a censor were engaged in judging a song. The Queen defended the punake and his work, whereas the censor insisted on enforcing hierarchical application of kakala in favour of the Queen. According to Tupunga-2, during the review process, both the song and its punake (a commoner) were questioned. She said the lyrics of the song included the royally approved flowers heilala and langakali. The censor asked the punake of the song to explain his reason for using the heilala as heliaki. The punake said he deployed it to emblematised his sweetheart. Censor Taimani Fotu immediately lectured the punake and told him heilala was reserved for only the Queen. He told the punake his songs should use commoner-assigned bush flowers such as loumo'osipo (a type of weed classified as *mimosa pudica*). The Queen, however, according to Tupunga-2, intervened, telling Fotu to allow it as it was for his lover. However, Fotu insisted and said if he allowed it, it would set a wrong precedent for the future punake. Fotu reportedly said such misapplication of the kakala tarnished the mālie aspect of the song.

During the interview, Tupunga-2 reinforced a key distinction: the Queen intervened directly to support the punake in his heliaki employment, while the censor's role was to maintain the cultural protocol guidelines related to the hierarchical use of the kakala. Tupunga-2 justified the censor saying punake must compose and structure of kakala in a way that reflects and reinforces nofo 'a kāinga (extended family living as close knit community), ensuring people

understand their *vā* (relationship), *faka‘apa‘apa* (respects mandated taboos) and their *fatongia* (cultural obligation) (see ‘Ekitu‘a identity model, see Appendices B & B1). Tupunga-2 said: “Hiva kakala should be censored to make sure the *vā*, *faka‘apa‘apa* and *fatongia* are nurtured accordingly.” (Tupunga-2, personal communication, April 27, 2023).

The findings also indicated how the Queen solicited experts to assist with her songs, particularly in setting the music to the melodies. As Participant Tupunga-1 explained his interview with the Queen’s lead singer and guitar Lavaka Kefu:

Lavaka, the Queen's lead singer in her *Fuiva ‘O Fangatapu* acoustic band, stated that the Queen played the piano when introducing new songs. For instance, when introducing the song *Leiola*, the Queen instructed him to set the music for the chorus while she composed the music for the verses. Lavaka also told me, the Queen's two sons—King *Tāufa‘āhau* and Prince *Tu‘ipelehake*—along with Prince *Tu‘ipelehake*'s wife, Princess *Melenaite*, were instrumental in assisting the Queen with her compositions. (Tupunga-1, personal communication, February 20, 2024).

4.3.3 Subtheme Three: Queen Sālote’s enduring legacy. The participants noted that Queen Sālote’s compositions are marked by a distinctive literary sophistication and an evocative power that captivates and enthralls listeners. The data analysis reveals a replication of the Queen’s music in both scholarly work and contemporary performance. As Tupunga-5, a veteran publisher, journalist, broadcaster and host of music radio programmes shared, the Queen’s coinage of the term *Loka Siliva* (see Appendix A) in one of her enchanting love songs. Tupunga-5 asserted that such songs composed by Queen Sālote continue to resonate deeply with Tongans in modern society, evoking emotion and connection. He said they were very deep indeed, and showed an original form of Tongan communication. Tupunga-5 said it was a form of communication that was being conveyed, it struck the mind and poked the heart with immense impact. It was a very effective type of communication. Tupunga-5 explained:

I hosted a radio programme every week, and I played Queen Sālote’s *hiva kakala* and often interviewed people on those songs about their meanings. The Queen’s love songs *Loka Siliva* was one of the most popular songs. Its lyrics were figuratively deep and *mālie*. (Tupunga-5, personal communication, December 13, 2024).

The Queen served as a muse for her contemporaries and admiring composers, who frequently composed *kakala* songs to commemorate her legacy. Tupunga-3 (personal communication, April 2, 2024) shared how renowned punake *Peni Tutu‘ila* emulated the Queen’s distinctive style by composing the song *Hā‘ele ki Pilitānia*—a tribute to Queen Sālote during her

visit to England for Queen Elizabeth II's coronation—which reflects this artistic influence. The first verse and the chorus is copied verbatim below for illustration.

Angiangi mai

Let the Funga Siumalaki wind arise

‘a e Funga Siumalaki

To carry my love to the Dove in the Palace

Ke fakaa‘u ‘a e ‘ofa ni

The Dove of Tonga, which soaring over the globe

Ki he lupe he palasi

Arriving at Windsor for the royal celebration

Additionally, according to Tupunga-2 (personal communication, 27 April 2023), Queen Sālote's songcraft demonstrated a recurring thematic focus on love. The participant observed that although the Queen wrote on diverse subjects, her most notable works were those composed for her deceased husband, Prince Tungī Mailefihi, which conveyed her personal love. Tupunga-2 stated that she herself as a punake frequently imitated the Queen's lyrical techniques for expressing love and, consequently, composed numerous love songs dedicated to her own loved ones.

4.4 Enhancer of Kakala Song Qualities

SRQ Two: Were the censorship guidelines established to enhance the quality of kakala songs, or were they used as a political tool to reinforce the power of the royals and chiefs over commoners?

4.4.1 Theme three: Heliaki tension between quality and royal powers. A key tension emerged from the findings: the inconsistent manner in which censors judged the application of heliaki, a device fundamental to the kakala song genre. According to participants, the skilful use of these literary tools served as a measure of a punake's artistic excellence. Despite this, a majority of participants perceived a frequent disconnect between the censors' decisions and the principles those decisions were supposed to uphold. These decisions, which led to the rejection of certain songs, were perceived as being driven by censors' reductive bias or ignorance that disproportionately favoured the upper classes. While most participants broadly agreed heliaki should highlight social and cultural imbalances within the social hierarchies, they argued that punake possess rights to depart from the conventional rules. This was a gap examined in the Introduction Chapter (Section 1.8), (See Section 5.4.2 for discussion on poetic licence).

4.4.2. Subtheme One: Reinforcing royal prestige through heliaki. The findings

suggested heliaki were used in kakala songs to elevate the status of the chiefly and royal classes, aligning with cultural practices such as tekelangī (acts intended to enhance prestige) and laupisi'eiki (performing seemingly trivial or exaggerated gestures to elate chiefs, royals, or superiors). Tupunga-2 shared a direct encounter with Queen Sālote, who encouraged her with what the Queen reportedly perceived as a significant learning breakthrough for the young, aspiring punake. The Queen provided her instruction on the songcraft and heliaki devices, specifically on the technique of making references to historical places. As Tupunga-2 stated:

The Queen advised me to learn how to compose songs that exalt and honour the royal household, and that narrate and recount the Kingdom's beauty spots and lands. Composing is a tedious process. A song is not drafted just once but must be redrafted repeatedly until I am satisfied with it. (Tupunga-2, personal communication, April 27, 2023).

The comment articulates the depth and meaning of heliaki. As Tupunga-3 said, heliaki represents facts and ideas designed to be ingrained deeply and memorably in the heart. He said:

Some people may think that for us to heliaki we are telling lies. We are exaggerating things. But heliaki transform realities and ingrain them in the heart and they are more deeply felt than languages that are direct and frank. So kakala songs symbolised realities or topics somebody is talking about, but he meant something else defined by Tongans. (Tupunga-3, personal communication, 13 December 2023).

4.4.3 Subtheme Two: Heliaki device efforts lead to innovation. Analysis of participants' evaluations of kakala songs submitted for airplay during the study period revealed significant innovations, including the emergence of previously undocumented literary devices and figurative language. Punake Sēmisi 'Iongi made a groundbreaking contribution by devising a new literary technique. The innovative tool was described as a filler, allowing him to use it to overcome creative barriers when he struggled for a while to conceive a suitable lyric for his composition. 'Iongi coined the term "fenukesi" while grappling with the appropriate word for the second line of the second verse of his well-known song and still popular to this day, called Hala Vuna. According to Tupunga-1, a senior broadcaster and censor at TBC radio station, when asked about the meaning of the term, 'Iongi stated that it was nonsensical. He said it was just a neologism devised merely as a filler to resolve the lyrical challenge he encountered while composing the line. Tupunga-1 explained:

"The term fenukesi was an open-ended expression, allowing people to interpret and assign meaning based on their own perspectives. This illustrates the importance of using heliaki, a key criterion outlined in the censorship guidelines." (Tupunga-1, personal communication, February 20, 2024)

The verse is copied verbatim below for illustration (see Appendix I for full verses).

‘Evenui ko Hala Tupou Lahi	Hala Tupou Lahi the Avenue
Fenukesi ki he Vunga Moe Ahi	Fenukesi to the Vunga and Ahi (plants)
Pōngia ‘i he Fasimoeafi	Dazzled at Fasimoeafi
Hengihengi pea matala masani	It perfectly appears early morning

Tupunga-1 also elaborated on why personal names in hiva kakala must be replaced with heliaki. As she explained:

The personal names were prohibited because the way we live is closely interconnected and individuals are widely known to one another. For example, a lyric for a woman such as “Haitelenisia, I love you” was banned for being too direct. According to the guidelines, names must be symbolically represented, rather than explicitly stated. (Tupunga-1, personal communication, February, 20, 2024)

Analysis of the data also showed some songs may have been banned for their use of heliaki had the main censor failed to seek his co-censor’s second opinion. As Tupunga-1 explained:

A censor expressed concern, suggesting that a term, tololosa, should be censored, and sought my opinion. I explained that tololosa was adapted from the Stations of the Cross and was not a personal name—thus not in violation of the censorship guidelines. I further clarified that the term functioned as a form of heliaki, symbolically representing the punake’s life journey through hardship. Upon hearing my explanation, the censor accepted the interpretation, and the heliaki was preserved. But that is the significance of heliaki. (Tupunga-1, personal communication, February 20, 2024)

4.4.4 Subtheme Three: Mālie value and worthiness of kakala songs. The participants’ testimony suggested the censorship guidelines were designed to promote the mālie values (a quality of being interesting or captivating; (see Introduction Chapter) and worthiness of kakala songs, a key attribute that defines the genre’s appealing aspect. Tupunga-2 explained that understanding the meaning of heliaki enhanced the mālie characteristic of the compositions. She further noted that contemporary kakala songs are of substandard quality and lack these essential literary and cultural elements when compared to those broadcast during the period under investigation. As she explained:

It would be interesting to find out the literal meaning behind the heliaki. It is tasty, making our hiva kakala songs interesting. But contemporary hiva kakala are plain-spoken in all respects. Some songs were a bit disrespectful. The young composers were free to choose what language they wanted to use. But in my view, censorship of the hiva kakala should be restored. (Tupunga-2, personal communication, April 27, 2022)

Other participants also described the concept of mālie, using various terms and expressions. Tupunga-3 (personal communication, April 2, 2024) contextualised mālie by highlighting its emotional and psychological impact on listeners, saying they “were designed based on our ongo (feeling) and mahino fakaTonga (Tongan worldview) written by Tongan

people”.

Additionally, Tupunga-1 explained that the banjo is a distinctive instrument that enhances the mālie quality of hiva kakala. It is prominently featured in songs that are well-composed, charming and skilfully performed. As she explained:

The song *Leiola*, by the *Fuiva ‘o Fangatapu*, accompanied by a banjo, was exceptionally mālie. Its instrumentation and performance style deeply moved the public, evoking feelings of *loto māfana* (warm-heartedness) and *fiefia* (excitement). *Petelō* specifically mentioned several acoustic bands, including *Manule‘o Ongo Halavaha‘akolo*, *Ha‘ape ‘o Tali‘eva*, *Peau Ma‘a Funga Faka‘ala*, *Fā‘onelua*, as well a cappella group such as *ZCO o loto Nuku‘alofa*, *Helepeku*, and *Fuekafa*. She stated that the songs performed by these bands and singing groups were uniquely mālie and well-composed. (Tupunga-1, personal communication, February 20, 2024)

4.4.5 Subtheme Four: Inconsistency leads to punake to quit recordings.

While the participants’ responses affirmed the advantages of *heliaki* in promoting the social hierarchies, a dissenting view emerged, contending that the standard of censorship was inconsistent. Tupunga-4, recognised as one of the leading *punake*, expressed confusion over the decision by TBC Radio to ban his songs that mentioned personal names. He noted that while these songs were prohibited from broadcast, they were simultaneously made available for purchase at the station’s music sales outlet. He said he eventually quit from recording with the TBC. He said:

They asked me why I stopped recording my songs with them. I told them that the radio banned my songs which used people's names. As a result, I had to find another place to record my songs because my customers wanted their children's names included in their songs I composed. (Tupunga-4, personal communication, December 11, 2023).

Subtheme Five – Decline in quality of kakala songs. The research reveals a stark comparison: songs screened and then broadcast under the guidance of renowned, censorial *punake* were of high quality, whereas contemporary compositions lacking this legitimate oversight are now markedly inferior. Tupunga-3 said the quality of hiva kakala is “deteriorating” (personal communication, April 2, 2024), while Tupunga-2 argued “that listening to current hiva kakala is disappointing, as the songs are shallow” (personal communication, April 27, 2024). Meanwhile, Tupunga-1 stated that kakala songs recorded during the investigated period were far better in poetic quality (personal communication, February 20, 2024).

The data analysis revealed a consensus indicating a decline in the quality of contemporary kakala songs compared to the period under investigation. As Tupunga-3 explained in Tongan:

Contemporary kakala songs have experienced a marked decline in both lyrical

and musical quality. This decline is partly attributable to the incorporation of Western musical elements and lyrical styles, which have often failed to assimilate into a culturally coherent or contextually appropriate Tongan framework. This is a departure from the traditional kakala techniques, which were characterized by fakamatāpule (complex lyrical structures) and faka‘ei‘eiki (the use of honorific language). Furthermore, the problem is exacerbated by modern production techniques, where songs are frequently overwhelmed by digital instrumentation. Lyrically, there is a notable lack of depth, with many compositions relying on clichés, repetitive phrases, and generic expressions that offer little insight or originality. (Tupunga-3, personal communication, April 2, 2024)

He also expressed concern about the lack of songcraft and musical production skills among contemporary punake, as well as their limited control over the quality of their compositions.

Some of them, particularly those in the diaspora, do not speak or understand Tongan fluently. As a result, they tend to think in English and compose in Tongan within that context, which often leads to grammatical inaccuracies and structurally weak linguistic expressions. (Tupunga-3, personal communication, April 2, 2024)

Tupunga-3 acknowledged with appreciation that New Zealand has incorporated Tongan dance and performing arts into its national curriculum.

It is timely to consider integrating Tongan pop songs into classroom teaching. These songs should be studied, practiced, and performed with professional guidance, grounded in analytical approaches to compositions by renowned punake such as Queen Sālote and Peni Tutu‘ila. This process could potentially lead to the emergence of a new song genre, provided that it evolves within a meaningful and insightful structural framework. (Tupunga-3, personal communication, April 2, 2024)

4.5 Kau Faiongoongo (Journalists) and Punake Conduct Censorship.

SRQ Three: Did the involvement of censorial punake and journalists undermine the authenticity of the kakala song genre, or did it contribute to their preservation and enhancement?

4.5.1 Theme Four: Tension emerged from TBC’s song preservation efforts.

Analysis of the data revealed persistent tensions between the Tonga Broadcasting Commission (TBC) censors and composing punake regarding the criteria for determining which songs were suitable for broadcast. While well-structured songs were generally approved and commended by the censors, some punake expressed resistance to decisions rejecting their compositions. Some dissatisfied punake contended that their own expertise in songcraft was superior, leading them to reject the censors’ feedback entirely. However, although the censors adhered to the official guidelines, they remained willing to engage in discussions when disputes arose.

4.5.2 Subtheme One: Censorial education and Western musicality impacts.

The analysis indicated the censorship guidelines were designed to preserve and enhance *kakala* songs by dictating specific musical aspects, aesthetic norms, and lyrical conventions for compositions. These mandatory measures were celebrated and commended as a necessary intervention to safeguard the genre. As participant Tupunga-3 explained:

It was advantageous since it helped punake composed their songs better in context and music. Establishing such controls for punake is beneficial, as they provide guidance and help maintain compositional standards. (Tupunga-3, personal communication, April 2, 2024)

The findings demonstrate that censors approved *kakala* songs composed using lyrical and musical elements adapted and reconfigured from Western music and literary forms. The findings also suggest that the censors educated and consulted with punake when their songs were deemed non-compliant with the established guidelines. If discussions failed to reach a consensus, those songs were subsequently banned. As Tupunga-1 explained:

A number of songs were permanently banned from broadcasting. This was a common occurrence, applied even to compositions deemed humorous or artistically substandard. The screening process evaluated songs based on their melodic sense, lyrics, and meaning, as well as their relationship to melody and harmony. Ve‘ehala also at one stage ensured that men sang the male vocal harmony while women sang the female vocal harmony. This was an attempt to guarantee that the music was performed naturally, in accordance with the typical ranges of the human voice. (Tupunga-1, personal communication, February 20, 2024).

The participant also revealed a crucial insight during the interview, confirming that the loss of traditional Tongan harmonisation in *hiva kakala* was due to Western music influence. As she explained:

Professor Futa Helu told me during an interview that traditional Tongan music was characterised by a three-part harmonic structure: a lead vocal, sung by what is now known as tenor and then alto, and a bass part. This tradition was subsequently abandoned under the influence of Western [Palangi] hymnody, which introduced the four-part harmonic style prevalent today. The renowned punake Feke Malupō composed the song *Pehe Ange Mai ‘Oku kei Pongipongi*. Its tune was adapted from the Free Wesleyan Church hymn *Monu e ka ko ha Monu*, which is a Tongan translation of *What a Friend We Have in Jesus* hymn. (Tupunga-1, personal communication, February 20, 2024)

Analysis of the data indicated censors approved the use of English-based Tongan neologisms in *kakala*, an advancement in the lyrical aspects of the songs. This is illustrated by Tupunga-1’s account of the censorship process:

The first thing was to examine to ensure the language was honorific and perfectly Tongan. Foreign languages were not encouraged. Punake Semisi ‘Iongi, whom Professor Futa Helu talked about in an interview with me, he was an intelligent punake and was

well-educated. When he realised that the topic he was composing about had insufficient words to choose from, he resorted to history. Like words in his Tau Fakatangane ki he Mafi song, he Tonganised *kolope* for the globe and *‘ekueta* for equator. (Tupunga-1, personal communication, February 20, 2024).

Additionally, Tupunga-1 stated that the guidelines were flexible and that Ve‘ehala (Chair of the Censorship Committee) was open to discussion if any punake had queries about decisions regarding any songs. She mentioned that a song composed by the renowned punake Sēmisi ‘Iongi was edited by Ve‘ehala to make minor grammatical corrections, and it was deemed fine to go on air. She said ‘Iongi had no issues with Ve‘ehala on the edits. The song was titled *Fāfā ki Tahi ‘a e Fohe Lahi ‘o Titilupe Fane Tupou Vava‘ú*. The participant said:

It was an open discussion process, and Ve‘ehala allowed the punake to respond to the Committee’s decisions. At some points, he edited and corrected the *hiva kakala*. One song was *Fāfā ki Tahi ‘a e Fohe Lahi ‘o Titilupe Fane Tupou Vava‘u*. It was composed by Sēmisi ‘Iongi. ‘Iongi used some Fijian languages. Ve‘ehala edited the grammar of the lyrics. It was understood that Iongi had reasons behind the language, but Ve‘ehala wanted to correct something similar to the pronoun *he* in English and changed it to *you*, for instance. It was just minor corrections. (Tupunga-1, personal communication, February 20, 2024)

4.5.3 Subtheme Two: Distrust toward censorship decision-making processes.

Data analysis revealed the involvement of broadcasters and journalists occasionally attracted dilemmas into the censorship process. Some punake perceived the decisions against their songs as lacking a qualified or defensible assessment. Tupunga-3, reflecting on his experience as a former broadcaster at TBC, emphasised the frustration faced by some composers. He said renowned punake Nau Saimone frequently clashed with censors when asked to make changes to his songs. He said Saimone often confronted the censors, arguing he understood compositions better than them. Tupunga-3, who is also a book writer and journalist, supported Saimone and said that from an artistic perspective no one should control the artist’s work. “It is the artist’s work, and that’s how they expressed their own opinions. You do not have to control how they present their opinion” (personal communication, April 2, 2024).

However, Tupunga-3 also acknowledged the opposing perspective, expressing support for the censors by invoking the adage, “beauty is in the eye of the beholder.” He interpreted this to mean that the value of art is dependent not on its creator, but on the perception of its audience. Consequently, he argued the formulation of censorship guidelines should emerge from extensive consultation and discourse to design a framework capable of accommodating diverse aesthetic values.

Losehina ‘O Kahala Song

Moreover, Tupunga-2 said during the interview that she declined to accept Censorship Chairman Noble Ve‘ehala’s demand to change the word ‘afioga, as well as the title of her song Heimataura, so he could approve the song for airplay (see Appendix K for full versions). The song was composed in memory of a tragic moment in Tupunga-2’s life, stemming from her daughter’s marriage to Prince Fatafehi ‘Alaivahamama‘o Tuku‘aho, the son of King Taufa‘āhau Tupou IV and a grandchild of Queen Sālote. Tupunga-2 stated that the song reflected her profound regret after the marriage provoked public backlash against her and her daughter for causing embarrassment to the royal family. The wedding cost the Prince his title, as he was stripped of his royal privileges for breaching the constitutional prohibition against marrying a commoner.

She said she stood firm by her composition and contested the noble’s demand, leading to the song being banned. The participant said Ve‘ehala thought the word she used was ‘afiona, which in Tongan referred to the king, but it was not. She said the word was ‘afioga, a Samoan name of a fale (house)’, located at the residence in Hawai‘i where the Prince and her daughter lived. Tupunga-2 stated that, after some time, she agreed to make a single change at the request of Prince ‘Aho‘eitu—the youngest brother of Prince Fatafehi and now King Tupou VI—so that he could dub a copy of the song. In response, Tupunga-2 changed the title from Heimataura to Losehina ‘o Kahala, although the term afioga remained unchanged. The first verse is reproduced verbatim for illustrative purposes. Translation is by this researcher.

Si‘i Losehina ‘o Kahala	My dearest White Rose of Kahala
Ke ke ‘ilo‘ia mai e faingata‘a	If you could see the burden I now bear Ko hai
ha to‘a ‘e tu‘u tokotaha	A crushing debt no single soul can bear He ‘ofa ni kuo
hoko ko e mala	My love has become a curse

Aotearoa song

Additionally, participant Tupunga-1 revealed during the interview that the song known as Aotearoa was forced off air at a request by a member of the public. It was composed by Pita Vī as a lament following King Tupou IV’s annulment of her niece Princess Mele Siu‘ilikutapu’s wedding to commoner and Tongan Police Detective in New Zealand, Joshua Tu‘iono Liava‘a. Tupunga-1 explained that while the song was lyrically well-composed, the emotional impact it evoked was painful for some due to implication it left in the public about the

circumstances of the annulment. She noted the song was reinstated after some time, once the TBC felt that the poignancy had faded. The first verse is quoted exactly below to serve as illustration (see Appendix J for full versions). For clarity, Fangatapu in the verse is the seafront at the Nuku‘alofa royal palace. Translation into English by this researcher.

Angiangi mai mu‘a si‘i tokelau	Let the north wind drift ashore
Tālolo hono ‘ea ‘i he Fangatapu	And find its rest at Fangatapu’s door
‘A si ‘ete faka ‘ānaua ē ki he kuo ‘alu	My soul still yearns for days now past Ki he
‘ofa lōtolu kuo tō tau	For a love that fell—too pure to last

Moreover, Tupunga-3 observed that the song *Līsita*, which was composed as an apology following a murder, was banned to avoid causing the victim’s family further distress. The song was eventually aired years later. The last verse is duplicated exactly below to provide an example. For clarity, within the stanza, *Līsita* was the victim’s eldest daughter. See (Appendix K) for full verses:

Kāleli e ‘isa kuo fasi e malu
Kāleli, the sun begins to fall

Langa‘i mamahi si‘ete fie ‘aonga atu
And sorrow shades my heart, to serve you so

Fakapō he paea kuo hoko ‘o tatau
I forged these chains that orphaned us both

Si‘ete mo‘ui tongia ‘ou fie ‘aonga atu
I wish to show my apology to you

Lisita ‘ofa ke monū ‘a si‘ete hu taupe atu
Dearest Līsita, may this humble plea
Find grace in your heart and mercy granted be

4.5.4 Subtheme Four: Two groups of punake involved. The data analysis indicated two particular groups of punake emerged as a result of censorship of hiva kakala: the junior and senior composers. The results suggested censors put very strong emphasis on providing feedback to assist young punake (composers) in their songcraft. As participant Tupunga-3 noted, Censorship Chairman Ve‘ehala maintained that the standards were designed to bring out the best in the punake, ensuring the hiva kakala were of the highest quality. As Tupunga-3 explains:

The young punake in particular complained that the Censorship Committee preferred the senior punake over them. But Ve‘ehala argued that composing skills must be upgraded. It was not something that we just collected any type of firewood (a figurative

expression for doing things with lack of care). Don't just collect stalks and midrib of coconut leaves and things like that. That's Ve'ehala's figurative response to the young punake. He said if you collect firewood, collect casuarina wood so the 'umu can be cooked. (Tupunga-3, personal communication, April 2, 2024)

Tupunga-1 also said the Government wanted the radio station to preserve cultural values and virtues in hiva kakala. She recounted a song by the Ha'ape 'o Tali'eva acoustic band, which was banned because it breached the guidelines for veitapui (see Appendix).

I often listened to it, but it wasn't allowed to be broadcast. And I can tell there was something objectionable in the content. There are things in that song to which people should not listen, the veitapui, people living as kāinga and family. (Tupunga-1, personal communication, February 20, 2024)

Furthermore, the participant noted that songs which failed an initial audition were given opportunities to be revised and were permitted to be re-auditioned at a later date.

4.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter has presented the key findings derived from the transcripts of interviews. The data revealed a strong preference among respondents for the censorship of the kakala songs as a means of safeguarding lyrics that may transgress nofo 'a kāinga (see Appendix A) and enhancing the overall quality of the compositions. The thematic analysis, as outlined in Section 4.1.1, suggested that the censorship process constituted a key component of the station's strategy to ensure the cultural and musical appropriateness of hiva kakala songs. The findings further indicated that censors were required to identify the use of heliaki (fikalapasi or figures of speech) as an essential literary device during the screening process.

The results highlighted Queen Sālote's outstanding position within the hiva kakala or kakala song genre, identifying her as the most distinguished composer Tonga has produced. As presented in Section 4.2.1, her compositions were both culturally and academically rigorous. They have been extensively replicated, reinterpreted and reperformed in academic discourse as well as public performances up to the present. The data analysis reflected Queen Sālote's gifted and intuitive talent for songwriting particularly shone in her openness to incorporating expert assistance and support for her contemporaries' artistic creativity. Nevertheless, she acknowledged the significance of the social stratification in which the monarchy and the royal household are the foundational pillars of the fonua, as revealed in her encounter with Tupunga-2. In that encounter, she reminded the participant of the obligation of commoners to uphold the

tradition of fakalāngilangi‘i (honouring) the royalty and emphasised the importance of portraying the beauty of the land as significant heliaki tools in hiva kakala craft.

While censorship has been regarded as a mechanism for maintaining the quality of hiva kakala and protecting fatungamotu‘a (existing traditions) and nofo ‘a kāinga from lyrically objectionable or culturally sensitive content, the data revealed emerging tensions as a result. As highlighted in section 4.3.1, decisions made by censors regarding numerous songs were frequently contested. In some cases, these conflicts led to revisions and eventual approval, while in others, composers refused to comply with the censors’ judgments.

The censorship process, designed to ensure the correct application of heliaki and kakala, succeeded in preserving these songs and enhancing the genre. The TBC Radio station played a pivotal role from the 1960s to the early 2000s in advancing this invaluable Tongan song type, which emerged in the late 19th century and remains popular to this day. As outlined in (Section 4.4.1), despite tensions between the punake and the censors, analysis of the data indicated that many still believed the advantages of the censorship guidelines outweighed the disadvantages.

Vahe 5: Tisikasiona (Discussion)

5.1 Introduction

This chapter interprets the findings presented in Chapter 4 in relation to the research question, sub-questions, and existing scholarship on kakala songs and their censorship. It examines the meanings, patterns, and implications emerging from the data and addresses the research gaps identified in earlier chapters. Guided by the Tupunga Ola framework, the discussion analyses the causal dynamics underlying the censorship of kakala songs. The causal dimension of the Tupunga Ola framework complements the CARS model utilised in the Introduction chapter, thereby strengthening the overall analytical framework through its integration of the research gap, its justification, and the significance of the findings. Despite their cultural significance, kakala song censorship was not without resistance, including direct confrontation, verbal complaints, and rejection of censorial feedback.

5.1.1 Research Question (RQ):

Why did kakala songs, or hiva kakala, have to be composed in accordance with heliaki and moderated by journalists and censorial punake before they could be broadcast on the Tonga Broadcasting Commission (TBC) radio station from the 1960s until the early 2000s?

5.1.2 Sub-Research Questions (SRQs):

1. To what extent did the involvement of the late Queen Sālote Tupou III, as reformer of hiva kakala songs, influence the Tongan mindset about the composition and regulation of songs?
2. Were the censorship guidelines established to enhance the quality of hiva kakala, or were they used as a political tool to reinforce the power of the royals and chiefs over commoners?
3. Did the involvement of journalists and censorial punake undermine the authenticity of traditional song genre, or did it contribute to their preservation and enhancement?

The discussion reveals that the censorship of kakala songs was aimed at monitoring lyrical texts to ensure compliance with the codes of fefaka'apa'apa'aki (reciprocal cultural respect) and fefuafatongia'aki (reciprocal cultural obligations), as well as the moderation of social and cultural change. It also proposes a new definition and standardisation of heliaki, which must be understood along a continuum encompassing literal language (lea 'ilongofua),

imagery (*heliaki*), figurative language (*lea heliaki*), and *lea ‘o e heliaki* (figures of speech) (see Introduction, Sections 1.1, 1.4, and 1.6.1). The logic of this semantic—*heliaki*—continuum suggests that this study’s reconceptualisation of *heliaki* challenges the prevailing understanding of the concept as merely conveying hidden, layered, or obscure meaning. Such interpretations are insufficient, as they fail to account for the more significant function of *heliaki*: to create vivid, evocative expressions that leave a lasting impression on listeners.

The discussion further reveals that *heliaki* can be defined according to a set of governing principles and proposes 30 new types that have not been adequately addressed in the existing literature (see Section 5.4.3). It also demonstrates that the prevailing interpretation of *heliaki* as equivalent to metaphor in English—and vice versa—is inadequate, as it relies primarily on the lexical, dictionary-based definition of metaphor. Such an approach diminishes the significance of *heliaki* as a key literary device within the Tongan language. Consequently, metaphor, in terms of literary devices, should be more appropriately understood as a figure of speech (*lea ‘o e heliaki*), rather than as an imagery (*heliaki*) (see Introduction chapter, Section 1.1).

Accordingly, the discussion is organised into thematic sections and subthemes that address the major findings of the study. Each theme is examined through interpretation of the data, comparison with existing scholarship, and consideration of its theoretical and practical implications. Together, these discussions demonstrate how the findings contribute to the reconceptualisation of *kakala* songs as a genre of *heliaki* and advance new understandings of Tongan cultural, literary, and journalistic practices.

5.2 Theme One: Reconceptualising *hiva kakala* as a *heliaki* song genre

The findings of this study indicate that *hiva kakala*, or the *kakala* song genre, derives its name from the figurative meanings of *kakala*, encompassing forms of *heliaki*. They further suggest that the emergence of these songs as a distinct lyrical and musical genre in the late nineteenth century coincided with the arrival of British and French missionaries. The missionaries’ translation of hymns, religious texts, educational materials, and the Holy Bible formed part of broader processes of Christianisation and Westernisation in Tonga. This cultural encounter is shown to have significantly contributed to the development and expansion of figurative expression in Tongan song composition.

5.2.1 Subtheme One: *Kakala* as a figurative system of meaning

As argued in the Introduction chapter (Section 1.1), the meaning of *kakala* extends well beyond its literal botanical sense. This is further illustrated here through selected associational forms, which reveal how the semantic qualities of a literal term are progressively expanded,

transformed, and elaborated into diverse forms of heliaki. This is evident in the wide range of its nominal variations, including kakala mo‘onia (true kakala), kakala tapu (tabooed kakala), kakala tukuloto‘i (cherished kakala), and kakala fisifisimu‘a (outstanding kakala), among others, which demonstrate its extensive and sustained figurative use.

To further clarify these usages, selected forms of kakala are examined in greater detail. For instance, the phrase kakala tō, as in Ko hoku kakala na‘e tō mei fale lāhi (“It is my bestowal name conferred by the royal palace”), extends kakala to figuratively denote a conferred name. Likewise, the expression kakala fakatalutalu (reminiscent kakala), as in ‘E tapu ke to‘o he ko hoku kakala fakatalutalu (“It is forbidden to be taken, for it is my reminiscent kakala”), introduces a further distinct figurative meaning, in which kakala signifies a reflective remembrance. In a related sense, the expression namu kakala denotes pleasant fragrance in a general sense, as exemplified in Kuo namu kakala e tunú, meaning that the barbecue has an appealing aroma. Cumulatively, these examples demonstrate that the semantic qualities of literal words are crucial in determining how their valued sensory attributes—whether positive or negative—are transformed into increasingly complex forms of heliaki (figuration, imagery, or symbolism).

These findings are significant as they reconceptualise kakala as a structured figurative system of meaning, demonstrating how its literal semantic qualities are systematically extended into diverse forms of heliaki. In doing so, they reveal the central role of associative meaning in Tongan cultural expression and provide critical insight into how the heliaki system is elaborated across diverse contexts, depending on underlying semantic qualities.

5.2.2 Subtheme Two: The origin of kakala song genre. The findings of this study suggest that kakala songs constitute a comparatively novel genre within Tongan musical traditions, emerging in the late nineteenth century (Helu, 2012). A defining characteristic of this genre is its adoption of a verse-and-chorus structure analogous to that of Christian hymns, representing a clear departure from the earlier Tongan musical practice of free-flowing, non-strophic compositions (Swenson & Broomhead, 2013).

This development is significant in that it reflects two pivotal historical transformations that underpin this study’s attempt to trace the origins of kakala songs. First, it coincides with the arrival of European missionaries, whose introduction of Western cultural and musical forms profoundly influenced indigenous artistic expressions. Second, it marks the period associated with the contributions of Queen Sālote Tupou III and her father, King George Tupou II, who played foundational roles in shaping and popularising the hiva kakala song genre. Together, these influences underscore the interplay between external cultural forces and local innovation in the evolution of Tongan music.

5.2.2.1 Christian influence and heliaki in hiva kakala. Contributing to these findings, this study proposes that the English figurative language system evident in Western hymnody was also integrated into Tongan hiva kakala. This argument aligns with Helu (2012), who contends that pre-European Tongan songs were primarily centred on chants about nature and lacked the contextualising techniques found in later compositions. Building on this perspective, the present study suggests that the hymn-based portrayal of Christian values—particularly the theme of love—represented a significant innovation that profoundly influenced local punake. This influence is especially evident in the works of Queen Sālote and her contemporaries, who, as pioneering architects of the hiva kakala genre, composed a distinct secular musical form shaped by religious compositional techniques.

In contrast to earlier Tongan song forms—predominantly chant-based, characterised by simple one-chord progressions, wooden percussions, and vocables in minor harmonic patterns—hiva kakala adopted Western musical structures, incorporating principles such as relative keys and major harmonies. Hiva kakala songs were also accompanied by Western musical instruments, including string instruments, brass, and percussion. This shift was both rapid and transformative, largely displacing traditional musical forms and contributing to the decline of indigenous styles, particularly ornamented vocalisation, as Western musical notation became increasingly dominant.

5.2.3 Subtheme Four: Hybrid translation and indigenised imagery in hymnody. Most notably, the translation of Christian hymns into Tongan often involved a hybrid process in which the original English musical structure was retained, while elements of the Tongan cultural context were incorporated. This integration facilitated the introduction of rich imagery and figurative language, features that were later reflected in hiva kakala compositions. For instance, the Christian hymn *Rock of Ages* employs highly figurative language through symbolism, biblical imagery, and figures of speech. When translated into Tongan as “‘Ava ‘o e Makatu‘u,” these figurative elements were preserved and adapted. The opening line, “Rock of Ages, cleft for me, let me hide myself in Thee,” is not intended to be interpreted literally; rather, the phrase “Rock of Ages” functions as a powerful imagery for Christ, depicting Him as a source of protection, stability, refuge, and salvation.

5.2.4 Subtheme Five: Neologised heliaki and English hymnic imagery. This incorporation of figurative imagery from hymnody is evident in several of Queen Sālote’s compositions, including *Takafalu*, in which she neologised the term *palatiniume*—derived from the English *platinum*—to refer to her eldest son, King Taufa‘āhau Tupou IV. Historically,

platinum was used in early metric artifacts, such as the metre and kilogram standards, due to its superior durability and resistance to corrosion. Drawing on these qualities, Queen Sālote's use of palatiniume as a heliaki for her son evokes the metal's rarity, purity, and enduring value. (see Introduction chapter, Section 1.11.1.3). Much like the Christian hymn *Rock of Ages* employs the image of an immovable rock to symbolise spiritual steadfastness, Queen Sālote employed platinum as a powerful image of dynastic reconciliation and royal distinction. By likening her son to platinum, she represented him as a uniquely precious figure in whom the formerly divided lineages of the Tu'i Tonga and Tu'i Kanokupolu were united, making him an enduring symbol of national harmony and continuity.

5.2.5 Subtheme Six: Hybrid origins of hiva kakala. These findings are significant because they demonstrate that hiva kakala emerged through a process of cultural hybridisation, whereby Western hymn structures and figurative techniques were adapted into a distinctly Tongan secular genre, transforming both musical form and systems of meaning. This suggests that a Tongan heliaki system existed prior to the introduction of English literary forms, but was less systematically developed or applied, particularly in the absence of structured contexts such as hymnody. This is evidenced by the rapid and widespread adoption of figurative expression as hiva kakala evolved through processes of adaptation, translation, and reinterpretation. It further implies that the development of heliaki and other figurative systems is historically contingent, emerging through intercultural exchange rather than solely from indigenous origins. In light of this, it is recommended that future analyses of Tongan musical and poetic forms adopt a historically grounded and culturally integrative framework that recognises both indigenous continuity and external influence in shaping systems of meaning.

5.3 Theme Two: Kakala song censorship and social hierarchies

Analysis of the data established that the censors' roles included ensuring the appropriate application of kakala imagery in songs, in accordance with the conventional social hierarchy of kakai (commoners), hou'eiki (chiefs), and tu'i (sovereign). However, closer analysis of the evidence reveals a more complex reality that challenges the assumed rigidity of this social hierarchy in artistic practice.

5.3.1 Subtheme One: Conceptualisations of 'eiki as superior and as chief. The findings indicate that 'eiki and tu'a identities can be understood in two distinct categories. The first pertains to the inherent status ascribed at birth, whereby individuals are culturally identified as 'eiki through maternal lineage and as tu'a through paternal lineage (see 'Ēkitu'a model, Introduction chapter, Section 1.4). The second relates to a political classification established in which tu'a refers to commoners, while 'eiki encompasses the two higher social strata formally

recognised and appointed under the constitution: the hou'eiki (nobility) and the tu'i (sovereigns). This finding is significant as it exposes a longstanding ambiguity in the understanding of social hierarchy. Traditionally, 'eiki and tu'a system of cultural identity has been predominantly interpreted within the kakai–hou'eiki–tu'i framework. As noted in the Methodology chapter, this categorisation lacks validity, as each level—kakai, hou'eiki, and tu'i—contains its own internal distinctions of 'eiki and tu'a. In other words, within each group, certain households are considered tu'a (inferior), such as those of the fa'e tangata (maternal uncles' households), in relation to the mehekitanga (paternal sisters' households), who are accorded superior ('eiki) status. For example, even within the royal family, His Majesty King Tupou VI's children are culturally subordinate to their mehekitanga, Princess Pilolevu Tuita, and her household. (see Introduction, Section 1.4.4.2; see also Methodology, Section 3.4.5).

5.3.2 Subtheme Two: Inherent 'eiki–tu'a social hierarchy. Consequently, this study posits that Tonga's mainstream social hierarchy is fundamentally structured around the inherent 'eiki–tu'a binary cultural identity, with the conventionally defined kakai–hou'eiki–tu'i stratification constituting only a subset of this broader system. Within this framework, the inherent 'eiki–tu'a system continues to be widely practised through the kāinga–'ulumotu'a–mehekitanga structure, despite its lack of formal recognition within established social classifications. It should be noted that fahu—traditionally defined as “a sister's son or grandson” (Churchward, 1959, p. 19)—may, in contemporary society, be selectively designated and is therefore not emphasised in this discussion. This omission is not intended to diminish its cultural significance but rather reflects its status as a selectively conferred role, in contrast to the inherently ascribed positions of 'ulumotu'a and mehekitanga.

For instance, in a funeral context, the fahu for a male deceased may be designated from either his paternal aunt or his father's paternal aunt. In contrast, mehekitanga represents an inherent relational status and is therefore not subject to selection.

5.3.3 Subtheme Three: 'Eiki–tu'a and heliaki hierarchy. This argument is significant because it demonstrates how the distinction between inherent and appointed statuses shapes social stratification and corresponds with the heliaki system, which is central to the censorship of kakala songs. However, the analysis further indicates that the 'eiki (superior) and tu'a (inferior) identity has been strategically suppressed within dominant royalist and pro-nobility perspectives, as its recognition could challenge established hierarchies between nobles and commoners. This dynamic is illustrated by the censorship incident in which the censor, Taimani Fotu, reprimanded a composer for using culturally significant kakala langakali and heilala to refer to his sweetheart, arguing that these prestigious symbols were reserved

exclusively for royal use (see Findings chapter, Section 4.3.2). Although Queen Sālote, who chaired the panel, intervened and deemed the usage appropriate within its context, Fotu maintained his position and insisted on censorship.

5.3.4 Subtheme Four: Heliaki extends kakala ‘eiki beyond royalty. This study argues that the attribution of kakala ‘eiki exclusively to the nobility and royal family is not substantiated by the evidence. Instead, the findings indicate that, within the inherent ‘eiki–tu‘a binary cultural framework, kakala operates as heliaki (imagery), whereby kakala ‘eiki functions as an unrestricted symbolic form applicable to individuals regardless of social status.

A critical case study presented in the Literature Review demonstrates this divergence: the punake Moeaki Tākai (Māsila) employed two chiefly kakala—nusifaifio (a type of garland) and nukonuka (a fragrant plant)—in a song composed for Annie Marie (‘Eni), a commoner (see Appendix I). Moreover, Māsila’s use of the foreign kakala ‘ōketi (orchid), previously utilised by Queen Sālote in her renowned love song to symbolise her husband Prince Consort Tungī Mailefihi, further blurs these prescribed symbolic boundaries.

5.3.5 Subtheme Five: Veitapui and veitokai. The findings reveal that kakala songs were subject to censorship to ensure that their lyrics aligned with the cultural practices of veitapui and veitokai, or in their reciprocal forms, feveitapui‘aki and feveitokai‘aki. These represent two of the most important forms of Tongan respect, governed by specific taboos, and constitute core criteria within the censorship process. Their observance is essential in ensuring that song lyrics do not transgress culturally defined boundaries. This discovery is significant because it reveals an important cultural and ethical purposes. At the same time, however, the censorship of certain songs suggests inconsistencies in its application, thereby calling into question the validity of the censorship guidelines. Accordingly, two professionally composed songs that underwent the censorship process are presented as case studies—one was approved, while the other was declined—highlighting the inconsistency in its application.

To provide context for these case studies, the three songs examined are: ‘Utufōmesi Siliva by Dr Huluholo Mo‘ungaloa, and ‘Ise‘isa by Tongotongo Liava‘a. The title ‘Utufōmesi Siliva is a neologism coined from “Silver Foam Cliff,” a poetic reference to Kolovai, the village where both the composer and the song’s subject, Kalapenia Tupoumoheofo Tupou Taumoepeau, reside. The song expresses dissatisfaction following Taumoepeau’s placement as second runner-up to her first cousin, Tupou ‘Ahome‘e Tuita. According to Dr Mo‘ungaloa, as conveyed through the composition, the results were perceived to be unjust, and that Taumoepeau was the rightful winner. The blood relationship between Taumoepeau and Tuita is significant in assessing this composition from a censorship perspective. Tuita holds a superior

(‘eiki) rank relative to Taumoepeau, as ‘Ahome‘e’s mother is the sister of Taumoepeau’s father (Cullen, personal communication, July 24, 2024). This relational hierarchy gives rise to a number of noteworthy considerations regarding the composition. First, the song could be considered inappropriate at the outset, given that Taumoepeau occupies an inferior (tu‘a) position relative to Tuita. However, its skilful deployment of heliaki appears to have justified its acceptance.

The other song examined was ‘Ise‘isa, composed by Tongotongo in response to the annulment of his son Tu‘iono Liava‘a’s marriage to Princess Mele Siu‘ilikutapu. The marriage was dissolved by King Taufa‘āhau Tupou IV on the grounds that Tu‘iono’s commoner status rendered the union culturally inappropriate. The opening expression, ‘ise‘isa, introduces a regretful wish, framing the composition as a lament for an alternative reality in which the marriage might have been allowed to endure. The song was initially prohibited from broadcast following the censorship process, prompting several important considerations regarding the composition. From a censorship perspective, it may be regarded as culturally inappropriate, particularly given that its content could be interpreted as challenging the authority of the King’s decision. However, given its skilful deployment of heliaki, this outcome raises questions as to why it was treated differently from ‘Utufōmesi Siliva and Vēsili Koula, both of which were ultimately permitted.

Applying the Tupunga Ola framework alongside the ‘Ēkitu‘a model highlights inconsistencies in the censorship process and raises concerns regarding the equitable treatment of the composer of ‘Ise‘isa. In addressing the research question of whether censorship primarily functions to enhance musical composition or to reinforce royal authority, the ‘Ise‘isa case provides important insight. The evidence suggests that compositional qualities alone did not determine censorship outcomes; rather, the protection of royal interests appears to have played a significant role. Consequently, this case creates a perception of partiality in the application of censorship practices, pointing to the broader influence of power relations in shaping the regulation of kakala music.

The findings indicate that existing kakala song censorship practices draw upon both textual analysis and contextual judgement in evaluating compositions. However, the absence of explicit evaluative criteria governing the weighting of these factors appears to contribute to variability and inconsistency in censorship outcomes. To improve analytical consistency, it is proposed that heliaki be formally recognised as a primary evaluative criterion in the assessment of kakala compositions, while contextual factors such as authorship and relational positioning be treated as secondary interpretive layers rather than primary

determinants. This does not remove the cultural significance of relational ethics within nofo ‘a kāinga, but it clarifies the distinction between poetic legitimacy and social interpretation in regulatory practice.

5.3.6 Subtheme Six: Musicality and performance. The findings reveal that kakala songs were screened to ensure that the music, instrumentation, singing, and performance met high standards prior to broadcast. This process is essential for enhancing the cultural genre and promoting higher quality, thereby reinforcing Tongan identity as a people distinguished by their unique kakala songs. This supports the fact that the participants also agreed the kakala songs recorded in the beginning of the censorship process and while the censorship process took momentum with the moderation of high profile censorial punake were of exceptional high quality in compositional structure, music and instrumentalisation. This analysis is significant because it examines the introduction and integration of Western instruments and performance techniques (see Toafesiamā Cultural Integration Framework, see Appendix C) into Tongan songs, which were traditionally purely a cappella. The censorship process facilitated the development of new musical styles and techniques by bands, a progression that, in turn, enabled the preservation of cultural heritage and fostered a sense of shared identity.

5.3.6.1 Instrumentalisation. Informed by the causal dimension of the Tupunga Ola framework, the research drew upon the researcher’s experience as a kakala song composer and guitar player to analyse specific guitar techniques—such as, chords, fills-in, riffs, licks, and runs—employed during the censorship process, which have not been previously studied. These techniques were particularly prominent in the Fuiva ‘o Fangatapu acoustic band, evidenced by the development and implementation of a new lead guitar tune, Kī ‘a Lavaká, (Lavaka’s key or tune) which was named after the lead guitarist, Lavaka Kefu. Employing a non-standard tuning of F-C-F-A-D-F based on tonic key D or Eb (as opposed to the international standard E-A-D-G-B-E), the guitar part in Queen Sālote’s Lea ‘a e Toa song explicitly utilises riffs, runs, and licks interchangeably throughout the song's structure, notably in its prelude, interlude, and conclusion.

The enduring popularity of Queen Sālote’s kakala songs and their distinctive guitar styles among young, contemporary musicians makes this analysis particularly relevant. Meanwhile, there is a complete lack of documented or online tutorials of those guitar techniques. Therefore, it is recommended that music institutions in Tonga integrate these techniques into their weekly teaching plans, presenting them as a distinctive Tongan guitar style specifically developed to accompany the traditional kakala songs.

5.4 Theme Three: The cultural imperative of heliaki

Heliaki compulsion refers to the systemic requirement that figurative expression governs kakala

composition. Within this framework, heliaki operates as a necessary condition for meeting cultural standards outlined in the ‘Ēikitu‘a model (Introduction, Section 1.4.1). Grounded in literal meanings, figurative expression develops through progressive transformations into imagery and symbolism. The findings underscore heliaki as a dominant linguistic mode in Tongan discourse, serving both to ensure conformity within cultural frameworks, including the Toafesima model, and to enhance artistic quality. However, heliaki remains insufficiently standardised, and its systematic organisation is underdeveloped, prompting this study to propose 30 new lea ‘o e heliaki (Section 5.5).

5.4.1 Subtheme One: Definition of heliaki. Analysis of the data indicates that *lea heliaki* functions as a system analogous to the English figurative system. Building on this finding, the study reconceptualises heliaki as a framework for generating vivid and evocative expression, rather than primarily as a mechanism for concealing meaning or producing obscurity. The finding is critical since it aligns with Tonga’s way of cultural Westernisation (see Toafesima model, Introduction chapter, Section 1.10), and its resulting cultural hybridised system already extensively used by Tongans. For example, the titles of the royal family represent an integration of the English royalty names such as kingi (king), kuini (queen), pilinisi (prince) and pilinisesi (princess). While several English figures of speech—such as simile, metaphor, personification, metonymy and allusion—have been proposed as counterparts to heliaki (Wood-Ellem, 2004/2019), previous scholarship has yet to systematically collate them into a standard framework.

5.4.1.1 Heliaki Beyond Metaphor: A Reassessment of Kaeppler. Before advancing a revised definition of *heliaki*, it is necessary to re-examine the influential interpretation proposed by Adrienne Kaeppler (1990), which has been widely reproduced in subsequent scholarship. Kaeppler defines heliaki primarily in terms of “metaphor and layers of meaning”, arguing that it is characterised by “indirectness” and “hidden meanings” that must be progressively deciphered (p.231). She further maintains that heliaki underpins Tongan verbal and visual arts by embedding social and cultural metaphors that express and elevate prestige, power, and chiefly status. Thus, her interpretation presents heliaki chiefly as a system of symbolic complexity and layered meaning within artistic and cultural expression. However, a significant limitation of this formulation is that neither Kaeppler nor much of the subsequent scholarship that adopts her interpretation provides a sustained linguistic, etymological, or theoretical analysis of heliaki itself to demonstrate the validity of these claims. Consequently, many of the defining characteristics attributed to heliaki within Kaeppler’s framework have been widely accepted and reproduced without substantial critical re-examination.

Kaeppler’s description of heliaki as a system of hidden and layered meanings is therefore reconsidered here as placing undue emphasis on symbolic complexity, while overlooking how meaning is

structured and understood through contextual language cues. Kaeppler’s characterisation also risks trivialising heliaki’s primary function in Tongan expressive practice—namely, the creation of vivid, evocative, and memorable imagery (see Section 5.5). Drawing on Sperber and Wilson (1995), who emphasise that successful communication depends on audiences possessing sufficient contextual cues to infer intended meanings, this study offers an alternative perspective on heliaki. From this view, heliaki need not be understood as inherently obscure or inaccessible; rather, it operates within a shared cultural framework in which contextual knowledge enables audiences to recognise and interpret its imagery. This is particularly evident in many kakala songs intentionally composed with newly neologised heliaki, especially those crafted as lyrical hooks. In such cases, punake often design the surrounding and associated lyrics to provide interpretive cues, guiding audiences toward recognising what the heliaki evokes and how its meaning should be understood.

5.4.1.2 Figures of speech through la‘ā. To illustrate how meaning is structured, made accessible, and not concealed within heliaki, this discussion places the term *la‘ā* (sun) in juxtaposition with *kakala* (see Introduction Chapter, Section 1.1; see also Discussion Chapter, Section 5.2.1). This comparison demonstrates how the inherent qualities of a literal expression can be transformed into contextually grounded figurative forms, thereby generating a range of *lea ‘o e heliaki* (figures of speech). In the fakatapu practice (the formal declaration of taboos at the beginning of speeches and songs) of a song or formal speech, the introductory lyrical line “Tapu mo e la‘ā ‘o Tonga” (‘Taboo to the sun of Tonga’) demonstrates how la‘ā functions as heliaki—that is, as figuration, imagery, or symbolism—for the king. The king is not literally the sun; rather, the expression draws on imagery to convey notions of supreme power, unapproachability, and the dependence of others on that power. When la‘ā is used in this way, its semantic meaning shifts into a figurative expression. Because la‘ā in this context is conventionally understood as referring to the sovereign, its figurative usage becomes further specified as a particular figure of speech—namely, metonymy (see Section 5.5).

Within an alternative analytical framework, *la‘ā* can be realised as a different type of figure of speech (*lea ‘o e heliaki*), namely simile. For example, the lyrical line ‘Oku malama mai ‘a ho fofonga malimalí ‘o hangē ko e la‘aá (‘Your smiling face shines like the sun’) employs la‘ā to symbolise a smiling face. The person’s face does not literally emit sunlight; rather, the expression draws a comparison that links the warmth, brightness, and life-giving qualities of the sun to the features of a smile. This use differs from the earlier example, Tapu mo e la‘ā ‘o Tonga, in which la‘ā operates as a metonymic figure of speech. Despite these differences, the underlying logic remains consistent: a word originates in a literal meaning (*lea ‘ilongofua*), undergoes a shift into figuration, imagery, or symbolism (*heliaki*), is subsequently realised as figurative language (*lea heliaki*), and is ultimately instantiated in a specific figure of speech (*lea*

‘o e heliaki) (see Chapter 5).

La‘ā can also function as personification, another form of lea ‘o e heliaki, or figure of speech. For example, it is common in Tongan to say, Kuo hiki ‘e he la‘aá ‘ene mohé (‘The sun has lifted her sleep’). This expression refers to a person who has been sleeping beneath the shade of a tree, for example, and is awakened when the movement of the sun removes the shade, prompting them to shift to a new shaded position. In this instance, the sun does not literally move the person; rather, its heat and intensity are personified, attributing to the sun a form of agency ordinarily associated with humans.

Beyond simile, metonymy, and personification, the term la‘ā can also participate in a wider range of figurative forms (heliaki), including hyperbole, apostrophe, synecdoche, irony and other figures of speech. These diverse realisations are grounded in the inherent qualities of the literal term—such as heat, brightness, centrality, and life-sustaining force—which provide the semantic basis for its figurative extension. This variability highlights the flexibility of heliaki as a generative system, through which a single lexical item, informed by its intrinsic qualities, can be realised in multiple figures of speech depending on context and communicative intent. More importantly, these examples challenge the prevailing view that heliaki derives its significance primarily from the concealment of meaning or interpretive difficulty. Instead, they demonstrate that figurative meanings can remain transparent and readily interpretable because they are anchored in the recognisable qualities of the literal referent from which they are derived.

5.4.1.3 A Reconceptualised definition of heliaki. Consequently, this study reconceptualises heliaki as a culturally embedded system of figurative expression that generates evocative imagery, reinforces the complementary social structures of Tongan society, and safeguards the cultural principles of tapu and mana (see the ‘Ēkitu‘a model, Introduction, Section 1.4.1). In fulfilling these functions, heliaki operates as the functional equivalent of the English system of figurative language (see Section 5.5), while remaining distinctly grounded in Tongan cultural epistemologies and social organisation. This study further contends that the sophisticated and aesthetically compelling application of heliaki in kakala songs contributed significantly to its prominence within Tongan society. The creativity, memorability, and mālie associated with kakala songs elevated the status of heliaki and encouraged its wider adoption in a range of communicative and ceremonial practices, including lea kamata (introductory speeches), lea talitali (welcoming speeches), malanga (sermons), fakamalanga (ceremonial exchanges), and lea aofangatuku (closing remarks), among others. From this perspective, the prominence of heliaki within contemporary Tongan discourse is attributable not only to its cultural significance but also to its cultivation and popularisation through hiva kakala. Collectively, these practices demonstrate that heliaki functions as a

dominant and highly valued linguistic register within Tongan discourse, shaping social interaction, cultural expression, and the transmission of cultural knowledge.

The significance of these findings lies in their demonstration that heliaki functions as a culturally embedded figurative system comparable in scope to the English figurative tradition. This challenges the prevailing tendency to define heliaki primarily in terms of metaphor, indirectness, or hidden meanings, and instead positions it as a broader framework capable of generating multiple figures of speech. In doing so, the findings provide a stronger theoretical basis for understanding contemporary Tongan expressive practices, which increasingly operate within culturally hybridised linguistic systems, while also supporting efforts to standardise and systematically classify lea ‘o e heliaki. The findings further suggest that educators and curriculum developers should consider incorporating a more systematic treatment of heliaki within Tongan language and literature programmes, while language policymakers and literary scholars may utilise the proposed framework to support the documentation, preservation, and advancement of Tongan literary and cultural knowledge.

5.4.1.4 Hook of songs. Grounded in the causal dimension of the Tupunga Ola framework, this study demonstrates the appropriate placement of heliaki within kakala songs, which can also applies to all forms of formal speeches depending on the structure, to ensure their effectiveness and professional quality. In music, a hook is defined as a short, catchy musical or lyrical phrase—such as a riff or melody—designed to capture the listener's attention and enhance the song's memorability and appeal (Burbs, 1987). In the context of news writing, Yopp, McAdams, and Thornburg (2010) argue that a hook refers to a critical piece of newsworthy information designed to capture the reader's attention. Additionally, a lyrical hook must be strategically designed to either align with the song's most engaging musical segment or function as a repetitive element within the chorus or verse, thereby ensuring its prominence.

This study observes that Queen Sālote often strategically positioned her lyrical hooks in key structural locations, such as the title, the opening verse, or the chorus. For example, in her love song *Katinia*, composed for her husband Prince Tungī Mailefihi, the hook is embodied in the word *Katinia*. It appears both in the title and as the opening word of the first verse, thereby creating a strong and lasting impression on listeners—one that endures even when other elements of the composition are forgotten. The first verse and the title is copied verbatim below for clarification:

Katinia

Katinia si‘oto sei manako
 ‘Alaha kapui ai ‘a si‘ete ‘ofa
 Ha sino mai ho‘o tō‘onga
 Kae vaifā ‘a lo‘ifofonga

Katinia my cherished sei
 The fragrance enfolds this love of mine
 Your ways are etched upon my heart
 While tears stream down my face

‘Oiauē! ‘Oiau! Lau pe ā ‘e au
Lau tokua ‘e au ko ha ‘ātunga lau

Ah me! Ah me! Little did I dream
Little did I know it would come to this

As the first study to introduce the concept of a hook into the Tongan context, it further proposes the integration of this new systematised knowledge into the high school and university teaching plans in Tonga. Returning to the central research gap outlined in the introduction, this analysis has shown using heliaki as hook contributes to kakala song composition skills.

5.4.2 Subtheme Two: Heliaki and lexical creation. The analysis indicates that the censorship of *kakala* songs served as a catalyst for the innovation and advancement of the *heliaki* system, involving significant integration of Western theoretical influences. This finding is significant because it clarifies long-standing uncertainties about how external influences affect indigenous authenticity. It challenges assumptions that engagement with externally derived ideas necessarily weakens indigenous authenticity, a concern that has emerged in some decolonisation and cultural preservation discourses. This finding is significant because it clarifies long-standing uncertainties about how external influences affect indigenous authenticity. It challenges assumptions that engagement with externally derived ideas necessarily weakens indigenous forms. Rather than passive adoption, such engagement can involve selective adaptation and creative transformation. In this sense, Hau‘ofa (1993, 1994, 2008) emphasises that Pacific peoples are active agents who reinterpret and reshape external influences within their own cultural frameworks, sustaining dynamic and evolving indigenous identities. In alignment with my result, the evidence indicates that integration of foreign origins is unavoidable since Tonga has been in an ongoing process of accepting Western ideas, practices and systems since the first arrival of the Westerners (see Toafesima model, Appendix C).

Queen Sālote frequently used foreign kakala, Tonganised neologisms and English words in her songs as heliaki for her children and her husband, a style commonly approved through the kakala song censorship. For example, in her love song Leiola for her deceased husband, Prince Tungī Mailefihi, Queen Sālote uses the phrase “Leiola mine” in the final line of the chorus. The primary source Songs & Poems of Queen Sālote states that Leiola is a creeping plant with thick leaves and yellow flowers that grows along the liku, the land adjoining the cliff-bound coast (Wood-Ellem, 2004/2019). Drawing on this researcher’s experience as a composer, and sharing how this song was composed by Tupunga-1, as she interviewed Lavaka Kefu, the Queen’s lead singer and guitarist, another meaning is proposed here as a hypothetical interpretation for academic inquiry: the term is hypothesised to be a poetic Tonganisation of the English phrase “loyal mine.” Though this is not standard English, the form seems to derive from “my loyal one,” culminating in the combination “Leiola mine,” which

retains the English pronoun *mine*. This interpretation is grounded in the premise that the Queen would be unlikely to employ a creeper plant—considered to hold minimal status within the hierarchical kakala framework—to symbolize her beloved deceased husband. Copied exactly below is the chorus containing the words.

Leiola Mine

Si‘oto sei siale ko si ‘eku pele

My sei of siale, my cherished one

Muka ia mo e moto ‘eku ‘ofa mamae *Sprouting leaf,*

tender bud of my precious love ‘Atamai ni ia kuo

ta‘eme‘ite

This heart of mine remains unconsoled

Leiola mine ‘oku ke ‘i fē?

Leiola mine where can you be

This finding is significant because it contributes to the literature by providing educational materials that support contemporary punake in advancing the heliaki dimensions of kakala song composition, thereby fulfilling the original purpose of the censorship practices. Consequently, it is proposed that secondary and tertiary institutions in Tonga offering courses in Tongan culture and literature integrate creative-purposed instruction on English-influenced Tongan neologisms and innovative literary techniques found in kakala songs into their weekly lesson plans. Given the proliferation of online technologies and digital educational services, it is advisable that they develop instructional content that teaches heliaki and its integration of Anglophone rhetorical devices.

5.4.3 Subtheme Three: Integration of lea ‘o e heliaki as figures of speech. The findings indicate that the heliaki system constitutes a primary register of Tongan language and serves as a key component of kakala song censorship guidelines. Despite its centrality, it has not yet been formalised into a coherent academic framework. In response, this study proposes the first standardised taxonomy of heliaki, as outlined in the following section, through its systematic alignment with the English system of figures of speech.

This alignment does not suggest that *heliaki* was introduced as a novel system. Rather, early missionary engagement with English figurative forms through systematic translation efforts facilitated the recognition of structurally analogous features already inherent in Tongan expressive practice. This process is best understood not as the establishment of a new correspondence, but as part of a recurrent pattern in which externally encountered linguistic

systems catalyse the activation, restructuring, and expansion of indigenous equivalents.

Due to space constraints, the research presents only 30 heliaki of speech. This standardisation is significant because it addresses years of confusion and inconsistency in the literature resulting from previous studies' failure to define and systematise the figurative language. Overall, it is important to emphasise that this proposed heliaki system is grounded in the reconceptualisation advanced in this study (see Section 5.4.1.2).

1. **Simile** (“similī”) is comparing of one thing with another thing of a different kind, used to make a description more emphatic or vivid such as - as brave as a lion. The key words that help spot a simile are “like” or “as”, in Tongan “like” and “as” are hangē and ‘atā. A similī can be found in Queen Sālote’s lamentation known as Tangi a Tu‘ifua ‘ia ‘Alaivahamama‘o (Wood-Ellem, 2004/2019). The lyrics included a simile identified with the rule of using like or hangē as follows:

Te ‘ofa he anga ‘o ‘ete tama	How my heart grieves for my child.
Ne hangē ko ‘Ufia-mo-Lata	Like clouds of ‘Ufia and Lata drifting by

2. **Metaphor** (metafoa) is a word or phrase applied to an object or action to which it is not literally applicable. Metaphors use helping verbs such as is, are, was, were, or will be if they are comparing two nouns. There are also other rules for how to spot metaphor and differentiate it from other part of speech (see Introduction, Section 1.6) for details). Here is an example of metaphor: Sione is a lion. A Tongan metafoa is found in punake Talo Lakepa Fulivai’s work when he uses lion as a metaphor in his Manule‘o Ongo ‘O e Halavaha‘akolo hiva kakala:

Ko e ‘ahó ni te u laione ai	Today I shall be a lion
Te u ‘īkale ‘i he ‘ataá ni	I shall be an eagle in the airspace

Fulivai compares his capability as an accomplished punake to a lion and an eagle who are regarded as two most powerful creatures in the world.

3. **Personification** (pesonifasi) is giving human attributes or feelings to an inanimate object or thing as if it were human. For example: The sun smiles down on us. In Queen Sālote’s Angi Mai Si‘i Matangi song, the wind was personified as having a mouth to whisper (“fafana”) like human being in the following lines:

Malu efiafi he angi iki	The evening winds drifts softly
O fafana he Hala Paini	Whispers along the pine-lined road

4. **Iliteration** (‘alatesoni) is a figure of speech (lea ‘o e heliaki) that involves two or

more words that appear close together and have the same initial stressed consonant syllable. “Good grief” and “red rose” are two examples. This repeat of sound usually involves the same letters in both words. In Tongan, a ‘alatesoni is found in the phrase mate mohe (dead sleep).

5. Assonance (‘asonasi) is a figure of speech (lea ‘o e heliaki) that resemblances sound between syllables of nearby words, arising particularly from the rhyming of two or more stressed vowels, but not consonants. For example: friends till the end or drop-box. In Queen Sālote’s song Lea ‘a e Fuiva, a ‘asonasi is found in the lines tali and matali:

‘Oiauē! Ko e ngalu ‘e fasi	Alas! The wave is about to break
Ta‘ahine tali ke matali	Maiden, brace for the breaking tide

6. Antithesis (‘anetisi) positions opposite ideas parallel to each other. For example: hot and cold. A Tongan ‘anetisi, faingata‘a pe faingofua (hard or easy) is found in Queen Sālote’s Hiva Afā ‘a Vaea song:

Ka faingata‘a pe faingofua	Be it hard or be it easy
Ha‘apai tu‘u ho‘o kāimu‘a	Ha‘apai stand in your fearless way

7. Hyperbole (“haipōlī”) is an exaggerated statement or claims not meant to be taken literally. For example: I’ve told you a million times! A Tongan haipoli is found in Queen Sālote’s lakalaka song known as Maile as follows - Te u puke ‘a e matangi Tongá (“I will hold the south wind down”) as follows:

Te u puke ‘a e matangi Tongá	I will seize the southern wind
Ke ‘oua ‘e folau ha vaká	That no vessel may set sail

8. Oxymoron (‘osimoloni) is a combination of contradictory words with opposing meanings next to each other, like “old news. A Tongan ‘osimōloni can be found in the word fakaongotuli.

9. Irony (‘ailoni) is a figure of speech (lea ‘o e heliaki) in which words are used to convey the opposite of their literal meaning. For example: a lifeguard who can’t swim. In Tongan, ko ha taha fakahaofi mo‘ui ‘oku ‘ikai lava ia ‘o kakau.

10. Metonymy (metonomia) is a word used as substitute for another word that it is closely associated with to liven up the composition. For example, the British monarchy is often metonymised as the Crown. In Tongan, kalauni is metonomia for the king.

11. Synecdoche (sinekitokī) is the use of a part of something to stand for the whole thing. For examples: “Nice wheels!” — uses wheels to designate a whole car. In Tongan synecdoche is found in nima vaivai – weak in the hand – refers to someone who is poor.

12. Euphemism ('ifesimi) is used to replace a stronger and harsher phrase. For example: She has “passed away”, instead of “died.” In Tongan 'ifesimi is found in the word folauhola – absconded in a voyage. Kuo folauhola hoku tokoua. My brother has absconded on a voyage, instead of mate in Tongan, or “died” in English.

13. Hypallage (haipelesia) is an adjective or phrase expressing a quality or attribute regarded as characteristic of the person or thing mentioned. For example: I had a wonderful day. The day is not in itself wonderful. The speaker had a wonderful day. The epithet “wonderful” actually describes the kind of day the speaker experienced. A haipalasia is found in Queen Sālote's poem of lamentation grieving the death of her half-sister Princess 'Elisiva Fusipala Tauki'onetuku as follows – 'O veteki si'oku loto falé (Demolishing the centre of my pitiful house). The centre of the house was not actually destroyed. Instead, the Queen and her family were devastated by the death of the princess.

14. Pleonasm (penosami) uses more words than those necessary to denote mere sense. For example: “I saw it with my own eyes” is a pleonasm because the word saw itself implies that the action was done with one's eyes. It is more concise to say, “I saw it,” or “I saw it happen”. In Tongan penosami - sio 'a e mata (eye sees) can be found in the proverb sio 'a e mata kae hoka e tala. The eye sees while the telling stabs.

15. Tautology (tautolosia) conveys the same thing twice in the same statement. For example: I'm imagining the paintings in my mind. A Tongan tautolosia, Fotu mai hā mai can be found in Queen Sālote's hiva kakala known as Toli Fisi first line of the second verse. Fotu mai literally means be visible and hā mai means, show up.

16. Litotes (litotesi) or antenantiosis ('ateniosi) is a form of irony in which understatement is used to emphasise a point by stating a negative to further affirm a positive, often incorporating double negatives for effect. For example: That wasn't half bad, uses negative phrasing to indicate that something was actually very good. Litotesi is similar to Tongan lea faka'aki'akimui found in the phrase 'ikai ha me'a 'e ma'u, which translates to “there is nothing to give” despite giving the receiver food and meat or any other form of gift.

17. Aposiopesis ('aposipesi) is where a speaker abruptly stops in the middle of a sentence. It can be used to create tension and anticipation. Examples of aposiopesis is - Get out, or else—. In Tongan 'Aposesi is found in Longo ho ngutu na'a ku – .

18. Chiasmus (kasimasi) is the grammatical structure of a phrase or sentence is inverted in the following phrase, creating a crosswise or mirror-like effect, often enhancing meaning or impact. For example: Foul is fair, and fair is foul. A Tongan kasimasi – ko au koe, ko koe au is found in the lyrics of the song Si'oto Losalio by Hala Touliki band.

19. Epanalepsis (‘epenasesi) begins with a clause or sentence that is repeated at the end of that same clause or sentence, with words intervening. The sentence “The king is dead, long live the king!” is an example of epanalepsis. A Tongan ‘Epenasesi is found in Queen Sālote’s song Talisola first line of the chorus - Ngalo a fē nai, ngalo he hā. Notably, epanalepsis and antanaclasis (see below) are both rhetorical devices that use repetition of words, but they differ in the purpose of the repetition and the position of the words within a sentence or clause.

20. Double Entendre (tenitalia) - It is a rhetorical device devised to convey a double meaning. The primary meaning is typically obvious, while the secondary meaning often conveys a socially unacceptable or offensive message that cannot be stated directly. An example is the Tongan phrase kuo lava ho loto. Literally, it signifies that an individual has accomplished their objectives, but its secondary meaning implies this was done at the expense of others.

21. Anagram (‘anakalami) involves rearranging the letters of a word or phrase to create a new word or phrase. For example, listen and silent. A Tongan ‘anakalami is found in the terms fokihi, to turn over or turn round and hikofi, to pick up in no time.

22. Innuendo (‘ineto) - is an indirect remark that hints at something inappropriate, critical, or sexual without explicitly stating it. Examples include saying “That’s an interesting outfit choice” with a suggestive tone or implying someone is being dishonest by saying “He’s very creative with his expenses”. This is equivalent to Tongan ‘ineto - Tō atu tama ho fo‘i kofú.

23. Malapropisms (malapesima) - Malapropism is the mistaken use of a word in place of another similar-sounding word, often employed deliberately in literature and drama for humour or comic effect. For example, the sentence “He is the pineapple of politeness” incorrectly uses pineapple instead of pinnacle. In the Tongan context, the punake Nau Saimone uses a form of malapropism in his song Oupeni Pasifiki in the line “Likuvakatā foki ki he‘ene lua”, which is a deliberate distortion of the well-known proverb “Foki e kulī ki he‘ene lua.” This creative alteration produces a humorous and stylistic effect while still evoking the original proverb.

24. Allusion (‘alasiona) is based on a well-known story, person, object, or event. For instance, the phrase “That was his Waterloo” alludes to Napoleon’s decisive defeat, suggesting a complete failure. In Tongan, numerous examples of ‘alasiona exist. One such example is the word tahi, as used in the sentence, Ko hono tahi ia, which translates literally to: That is his sea. This phrase figuratively refers to an experienced person, akin to a fisher or seafarer who is highly skilled at fishing or navigating the sea.

25. **A dysphemism** (tafesima) replaces a neutral or positive term with a negative, offensive, or blunt one to express strong emotions like anger, disgust, or humour. For example, saying croaked instead of died. In Tongan, using ‘ukaka instead of mate (died) is a tafesima.

26. **Enallage** (‘enalasia) is the intentional use of a grammatically incorrect counterpart to achieve a particular effect. It involves substituting one grammatical form, such as tense, gender, number, or person, for another to create emphasis, convey emotion, or develop a distinct voice. Enallage is frequently employed in Tongan songs to create stylistic effects and preserve phonetic harmony. For example, in Queen Sālote’s song Hiva ‘o Tāone, the last line of the chorus reads: He mausa e kakala hingoa. However, when sung, performers intentionally omit the vowel a in hingoa, pronouncing it as hingo to maintain rhythmic and phonetic balance.

27. **Anthimeria** (‘atenimela) is specifically the substitution of one part of speech for another, such as using a noun as a verb, an adjective as a noun, or a verb as a noun. Book as noun can be used as a verb like – book a flight. In Tongan, Te ma pasi atu pe ke vave (We will bus so that it will be quick.)

28. **Hendiadys** (heniatisi) is a rhetorical device where two words connected by “and” (mo e in Tongan) express a single, more complex idea, such as “nice and warm” meaning “nicely warm”. It’s used to add emphasis and stylistic flair and is common in classical and literary texts. In Tongan, ‘ofa mo e manatu, rather than manatu ‘ofa, functions as an example of heniatisi.

29. **Neologism** (Niolosima) – is regarded in Tongan as a figure of speech because its element of novelty produces a poetic effect and enables the innovative expression of concepts, particularly in lyrical composition and translation. Queen Sālote frequently employs niolosima in her kakala compositions, including the term “laifipelata,” which she adapted from the English word lifebelt (Wood-Ellem, 2004/2019, p. 316).

30. **Aporia** (‘apolia) – is a rhetorical device where the speaker expresses doubt or uncertainty, often to provoke thought or emphasize complexity. In literature or speeches, it can be genuine or strategic, creating engagement by questioning what seems obvious. For example, I do not know where to begin in expressing my gratitude. The Tongan counterpart of – ‘Ikai ke u ‘ilo pe te u tu‘u mei fē ke fai ha fakamālō.

5.5 Theme Four: The censorship process

The censorship of kakala songs was initiated by Queen Sālote Tupou III and her Tongan Traditions Committee (TTC) prior to the station’s 1961 launch to compile a song catalogue for its opening. The analysis indicates that the purpose of censorship was to monitor song lyrics for content that could undermine cultural taboos and *mana* practices, or misappropriate the process

of Westernisation in Tonga. It also sought to manage the *mālie* aspects of the songs (see Introduction chapter, Section 1.11.1). The three parties involved in this control process were the Tonga Broadcasting Commission (TBC) radio station, censorial punake, and the kau faiongoongo (journalists) working at the station.

5.5.1 Subtheme One: Journalists, punake and broadcasters. Journalists, punake (traditional composers), and broadcasters were pivotal actors in enforcing the censorship of kakala songs. Their roles were both significant and influential in shaping the outcomes of this process.

5.5.1.1 Censorial punake. My analysis indicates that renowned and respected punake, along with cultural experts, were engaged by TBC Radio to evaluate and screen the songs. The role of these censorial punake was shaped by a combination of factors, including their personal compositional style and musical interests, as well as the external censorship requirements imposed by TBC radio. The results indicate that the censorial punake contributed significantly to enriching the kakala song genre and the work of punake. Their recommendations were highly valued for fostering improvements in some songs prior to re-auditioning if needed. The finding implies the broadcast songs subjected to censorship at the TBC radio station, particularly at the early stages of the control, represented some of the finest compositions by Tongan punake. The relevance of this analysis rests in the current scarcity of experienced punake, who are essential for mentoring contemporary composers. This knowledge gap is widely considered a primary cause of the decline in compositional quality of today's kakala songs.

However, the conflict inherent in the censorial punake's dual roles—between their assigned duties and their personal investment in songcraft—directly addresses the research gap identified in the literature review. This tension is exemplified by Malukava's critique of a song by Sir Sōfele Kakala, in which Malukava argued that Sir Sōfele's use of Western musical notation undermined the traditionally improvisational nature of Tongan melody and harmony (Moyle, 2022), also known as fakahēhē. This position, however, stands in sharp contrast to the cultural principle of fakama'unga—identified as a gap in the Introduction and revisited in the Literature Review—which designates the sovereign as a role model, thereby granting the Queen's practices considerable authority. The contradiction arises from the fact that Sir Sōfele employed his Western-influenced score style to set music for Queen Sālote's own compositions (Wood-Ellem, 2004/2019, p. 209, also see p. 385). Consequently, Malukava's rejection of a musical approach endorsed by the Queen could be interpreted as an affront to the principle of fakama'unga (mainstay) which nofo 'a kāinga values seeks to uphold.

These findings are significant because they offer practical insights into the internal

mechanisms of kakala song censorship. Therefore, it is recommended that policymakers today establish a formal dispute resolution process to allow dissatisfied parties to appeal decisions. Consequently, individuals involved in the censorship of the kakala genre, or in any matters concerning the sovereign and royal family, must undertake rigorous historical research to identify precedents—such as Sir Sōfele’s involvement with the Queen’s compositions—in order to inform and strengthen policy guidelines. Such diligence is essential for navigating the complex interplay between cultural tradition and regulatory practice.

5.5.1.2 Journalists. This analysis demonstrated that journalists were also tasked with the censorship of kakala songs. This is a landmark finding, as it clarifies the role journalists played as part of cultural control. The result implicated the etymological equivalent of journalists in Tongan known as faiongoongo —derived from fai (to do) and ongoongo (news). This linguistic parallel exists despite systematic and technical differences between journalism and its Tongan interpretation that emphasised faiongoongo. This is important as it necessitates a critical examination of Western journalistic principles, which define newsgathering and verification as primary functions achieved through methods such as interviews, document analysis, data mining, observation, and event coverage. They must adhere to strict ethical guidelines to ensure accuracy and fairness. As a result, this practice carries the risk of significant misjudgement in kakala song censorship, due to the substantial divergence in required expertise, perspectives, and professional skills between journalism and songwriting.

5.5.1.3 Faiongoongo. The data analysis indicated that the involvement of journalists in kakala song censorship reflected more the role of its Tongan counterpart faiongoongo. The responsibility traditionally emphasises the narrative recounting of events, including self-censorship, opinionising facts, and an ethical framework largely influenced by fātungamotu‘a (existing traditions) (Lewis, 2010; Lino, 2015; New Zealand Herald, 2003). This finding is significant because it demonstrates that the Tongan ethical code of conduct is strongly shaped by the mainstream linguistic practice of lea ‘o e heliaki or heliaki (see Appendix A)—a language used to maintain the strict cultural taboos mandated by the ‘Ēkitu‘a model. Crucially, the presence of heliaki was the central criterion used in the censorship of kakala songs. This analysis addresses a long-standing gap in the literature concerning the institutional challenges that prevent local media from often reporting factual information, as highlighted by the Tonga Supreme Court (2012).

5.5.1.4 Tonga Broadcasting Commission. During the period under study, censorship of kakala songs was intended only for those submitted for broadcast on TBC radio, the first and only public radio station at the time. Consequently, songs produced outside the station’s purview were free from such control, allowing their unrestricted performance in venues like

kava clubs. This situation suggested two main scenarios: first these songs often contained provocative content or critiques of societal sectors that were expressly prohibited by the radio's censorship guidelines. Second, it was normal practice for any broadcaster to make sure its content was of good taste and adhered to generally accepted and aesthetic standards.

Additionally, the archival records contain resources that promote kakala songs beyond the censorship process, including interviews with pioneering punake and cultural experts. These interviews serve as an educational function for contemporary communities. For example, an interview in the 1960s with punake Noble Tu'ivakanō Polutele confirms that the music for the well-known Fijian song *Isa Lei* was borrowed from his love song, *Viola Losehina*, composed in 1915 about Queen Sālote (Dee, 2019). The findings indicated strong evidence that the radio station and its journalists' involvement in the kakala song censorship was beneficial. Future research could explore these archives to investigate the comments and notes recorded or written down by the censors, particularly for songs that were banned or heavily edited. Analysing these records could reveal the censors' justifications and the specific societal norms they sought to enforce.

5.6 Theme Five: Influence of Queen Sālote

Queen Sālote played an instrumental role and acted as a key initiator in the censorship of kakala songs for the TBC radio station. This finding is remarkable as it demonstrates how the most distinguished punake Tonga has produced was actively involved in regulating the song genre, ensuring that the censorship guidelines upheld both artistic and cultural integrity. The Queen was undoubtedly a profoundly instrumental figure and a pioneer in the kakala song genre. She significantly advanced and promoted the use of *heliaki* (figures of speech) and *kakala* (literary devices), elevating them to an unprecedented level of sophistication.

5.6.1 Subtheme One: Royal contribution to kakala songs. Analysis of the data reveals that Queen Sālote's approach to composition was twofold: she deliberately enlisted leading musicians and punake, while exercising careful selectivity in her physical and temporal settings to ensure a state of concentrated focus. This finding is significant because it underscores the unique effort and exceptional commitment the Queen invested in her work—an approach that proved instrumental in creating songs that exert an enduring influence and remain popular to this day. This analysis is substantial because the commitment of punake portrayed by the Queen addresses a gap identified in the Literature Review and examined in the Introduction regarding the importance of studying the professional roles of punake (composers). It is therefore recommended that programmes in Tongan Culture, Language, and Communication studies incorporate the examination of the professional roles of punake into their weekly curricula.

5.6.2 Subtheme Two: The poetic licence. The evidence suggests that, by global standards, punake (composers) are afforded the special rights and freedoms conferred by poetic licence. This stylistic freedom grants punake the ability to depart from factual accuracy in order to achieve desired artistic effects in their compositions (Nasser, 2025; Perloff, 1990). This analysis is significant because the concept of artistic rights has not previously been examined within the Tongan context. This analysis suggests that the tension between censors and compositional punake during screening of songs stemmed from a misunderstanding that escalated due to a lack of awareness regarding the rights of punake under the freedoms granted by poetic licence—a gap identified in the Introduction and Literature Review chapters as requiring attention. Its introduction here creates an opportunity for academic discourse to expand and enrich understanding of the roles of punake and the skills involved in composing kakala songs. It is recommended that the Ministry of Education in Tonga incorporate the study of poetic licence into the curriculum for Tongan cultural and language courses, ensuring its inclusion in weekly lesson plans. Furthermore, future research is encouraged to expand and integrate this well-established Western concept in ways that ensure its appropriate application within the Tongan context.

Consequently, it is recommended that the Ministry of Education and Tonga National University develop courses in translation and interpretation between English and Tongan. This study proposes that the Toafesiama model be integrated into the curriculum and syllabus. The model's framework can be theoretically enriched by engaging with established translation theories, notably Venuti's (1995) seminal work on foreignisation and domestication. To ensure efficacy, instruction based on this model should begin with introductory lessons in primary education, advance through secondary schooling, and be offered as specialised courses for students of communication, songcraft, and cultural studies at the tertiary level.

5.7 Chapter Summary

This chapter interpreted the findings through the Tupunga Ola framework, supported by the newly developed 'Ēkitu'a Binary Cultural Identity Model and the Toafesiama Cultural Integration Framework. The discussion demonstrated that kakala song censorship was not merely a mechanism for regulating lyrical content, but a broader cultural process emerged and at some stages culturally used to protect the interrelated systems of tapu, mana, nofo 'a kāinga, and heliaki that underpin Tongan social organisation and artistic expression. The findings revealed that journalists, censorial punake, and the Tonga Broadcasting Commission collectively functioned as cultural gatekeepers, ensuring that songs adhered to accepted standards of poetic quality, social propriety, and cultural legitimacy.

The discussion further showed that censorship practices were influenced by both compositional and socio-political considerations. While censorship often enhanced the quality of songs and contributed to the preservation and development of the kakala tradition, evidence from case studies such as ‘Ise‘isa indicated that contextual factors, including relationships to the royal family, could influence regulatory outcomes. The findings also established heliaki as the central organising principle of kakala composition and proposed its systematic reconceptualisation as a figurative system analogous to English figures of speech. In doing so, the study introduced a standardised taxonomy of lea ‘o e heliaki and demonstrated how Western influences have been selectively integrated into Tongan songcraft without necessarily diminishing indigenous authenticity. Finally, the discussion highlighted Queen Sālote Tupou III’s pivotal role in shaping both the development and regulation of kakala songs, affirming her enduring influence on Tongan literary, musical, and cultural traditions.

Vahe 6: Konikulūsoni (Conclusion)

6.1 Introduction

Scholars such as Thomson & Kamler (2014) and Carter (2020) posit that the concluding chapter is critical because it is where the researcher's original contribution to knowledge is made explicit and its importance is advocated. A key function of the conclusion, they argue, is to address the “so what?” question, situating the thesis's claims within the broader academic field. This thesis has concluded that kakala songs were censored for the following reasons:

1. To uphold cultural values by enforcing lyrical compliance with the values of *fefaka'apa'apa'aki* (reciprocal cultural respect), *fefuatongia'aki* (reciprocal cultural obligation), based on *tu'a* (common or inferior) and *'eiki* (chiefly or superior) cultural systems. This study explains this dynamic through its newly developed *'Ēkitu'a* Binary Cultural Identity model (see Introduction chapter, Section 1.4.1).

2. To moderate cultural shifts by mitigating the influence of the Tongan foreignism and the Westernisation process on both the kakala genre and the underlying *'Ēkitu'a* model. This phenomenon is explained by the new *Toafesiamā* model (see Appendix C), developed within this study.

3. To monitor the use of *heliaki*, one of Tonga's foremost linguistic and literary forms of expression, which is widely employed in everyday discourse and remains essential in formal communication, including kakala lyrical compositions as well as official and cultural speeches.

As a result, this study arrives at several significant conclusions that warrant emphasis at this stage. Foremost among these is the reconceptualisation of kakala and *heliaki*, together with the formulation of an inherent continuum that elucidates their integral relationship, situating their interrelated existence within the dynamic interplay of literal and figurative language. More importantly, this continuum (see Introduction chapter, Section 1.1) is not limited to kakala and its progression from literal meaning to imagery (*heliaki*) but reflects the broader linguistic principle in which any literal expression is transformed into *heliaki* through processes of figurative realisation.

Taken together, these functions establish *heliaki* as a system of descriptive language that operates through sensory engagement to construct mental imagery that operates across three principal cultural domains. First, it functions as a mechanism for generating evocative, vivid, and memorable imagery, inviting audiences to visualise and reflect on meaning. Second, it articulates and reinforces the stratified yet complementary structures of Tongan culture, society and traditions. Third, it contributes to the maintenance and safeguarding of the cultural systems

of *tapu* and *mana* (see *Ēkitu‘a* model, Introduction chapter, Section 1.4.1). Overall, these findings demonstrate that *heliaki* is far more than a literary device; it is a foundational system of Tongan expression through which imagery, social organisation, and cultural values are simultaneously communicated, preserved, and sustained.

6.1 The notions of *mālie* and *māfana*. With this in mind, the capacity of *heliaki* to evoke engagement, memorability, and interpretive response aligns with the Tongan notion of *mālie*. On this basis, the study further conceptualises *mālie*, together with its integral counterpart *māfana*, as key evaluative principles governing the effectiveness and impact of artistic expression such as *heliaki*. In this framework, *mālie* is understood as an appreciative response to qualities such as newness, interesting, significance, impressiveness, and distinctiveness. (see Introduction chapter, Section 1.11.1). This response is not inherently positive; rather, it may assume a negative dimension resulting in *ta‘eoli* (uninteresting) —when these criteria are not sufficiently realised. In such instances, the corresponding emotional response, *māfana* (emotion), is diminished, resulting in a state described as *momoko* (emotional coldness).

Furthermore, this study concludes that defining *heliaki* solely as metaphor on the basis of its lexical, English dictionary equivalent lacks sufficient contextual depth and, therefore, fails to account for the cultural significance of the literary devices involved. Collectively, the 30 newly identified *lea ‘o e heliaki* (figures of speech) outlined in the Discussion chapter (Section 5.4.3), demonstrate that *heliaki* can now be more precisely defined through a set of principles that explain how literal expressions transition into figurative language according to their inherent qualities.

It is important to note that some of the 30 standardised *lea ‘o e heliaki* may appear perplexing to some readers. Such a response may be attributed to prevailing assumptions that Tongan *heliaki* is characterised by hidden and layered meanings that are inherently difficult to interpret—an understanding that fails to account for *heliaki*’s primary function as a system for creating vivid, engaging, evocative, and memorable imagery in the listener’s mind. Such perceptions of perplexity are likely to arise most prominently in relation to the inclusion of newly identified Tongan *heliaki* forms such as alliteration (*‘alatesoni*), assonance (*‘asonasi*), antithesis (*‘anetisi*), oxymoron (*‘osimōloni*), and malapropism (*malapēsima*). (see Discussion chapter, Section 5.4.3). These forms may, from a perspective that associates *heliaki* with concealment, appear to lack a role in generating hidden or layered meaning. However, when considered in light of the present study’s definition of *heliaki* as creating vivid, evocative and

persuasive language, they can be understood as exemplifying lea ‘o e heliaki, contributing to the production of more memorable, expressive, and engaging language.

Accordingly, this study advances a revised definition of kakala songs as songs of heliaki (see Introduction chapter, Section 1.1; see also Section 1.6.1). A key implication of this framework is that a composition cannot be classified as a kakala song in the absence of these defining elements.

This chapter consists of six main sections. The first addresses the key research question, followed by a presentation of the main findings. The second section transforms data into meaningful insights, revealing overarching themes. The third outlines this study’s contribution to the understanding of kakala song censorship within journalistic and cultural contexts. The fourth discusses implications for educational and artistic policymakers. The fifth presents the study’s limitations, and finally, the chapter concludes with a summary and recommendations for future research. Notably, a summary of the findings is provided under each research questions.

6.2 Summary of Key Findings

Research Question (RQ):

Why did hiva kakala or kakala songs have to be composed according to lea heliaki monitored by journalists and cultural censors if punake wanted these songs to be broadcast on public radio from 1960s until the early 2000s?

6.2.1 Findings:

First, analysis of the data revealed that kakala songs are a musical genre that necessitates the use of heliaki comparable to figures of speech in English (see Discussion Section 5.6; also see Appendix D).

Second, the findings indicate that kakala songs were subject to censorship to ensure that the lyrics contained no objectionable or sensitive material that might contravene the nofo ‘a kāinga structure and its associated values.

Third, data from interviews with participants demonstrated that Queen Sālote and members of her Tongan Traditions Committee (TTC) initiated scrutinising the kakala songs for the Tonga Broadcasting Commission (TBC).

Sub-Research Question One: To what extent did the involvement of the late Queen Sālote Tupou III, as reformer of the kakala song, influence the Tongan mindset about the composition

and regulation of songs?

Fourth, the interpretation of the data revealed a strong participant consensus that Queen Sālote's involvement in kakala songs, along with her close association with the country's leading musicians and punake, served as a catalyst that significantly escalated the popularity of the figurative genre.

Fifth, the participants noted that Queen Sālote's compositions are marked by a distinctive literary sophistication and an evocative power that captivates and enthralls listeners.

Sub-Research Question Two:

Were the censorship guidelines established to enhance the quality of kakala songs, or were they used as a political tool to reinforce the power of the royals and chiefs over commoners?

Sixth, the results suggest that the guidelines reinforce the principles underlying social hierarchies, ensuring that the 'Ēkitu'a cultural identity system (see Appendices B & B1) is appropriately reflected.

Seventh, the interview outcomes indicated that the punake of kakala songs reviewed for airplay at the TBC radio station during the research period contributed to the kakala song genre with groundbreaking discoveries of new heliaki expressions.

Eighth, the participants submitted that the censorship guidelines were designed to promote the mālie values (see Introduction Chapter, Section 1.11.1) of kakala songs.

Ninth, while participants' responses affirmed the advantages of heliaki in reinforcing social hierarchies in kakala songs, some noted that the censorship applied of these devices was, at times, inconsistent.

Sub-research questions three: Did the involvement of journalists and censorial punake undermine the authenticity of the traditional song genre, or did it contribute to its preservation and enhancement?

Tenth, the data analysis indicated that the involvement of censorial composers and journalists occasionally introduced dilemmas into the censorship process. Some punake often perceived the decisions they made against their songs as lacking rigorous or defensible justification.

Eleventh, the analysis showed that the censorship guidelines were designed to preserve and enhance kakala songs by dictating specific musical aspects, aesthetic norms, and lyrical conventions for compositions.

Twelfth, the findings revealed that journalists and censorial composers play a significant role in preserving and enhancing the quality of the songs. The data further indicated that censors

placed particular emphasis on providing constructive feedback to support the development of young punake in their songwriting craft. The following sections present a concluding synthesis of the findings and their broader implications.

6.3 Synthesis and Interpretation

The amalgamation of the findings indicates that the goal of kakala songs censorship is more complex than previously theorised, highlighting the role of heliaki as the intervening variable. Informed by the Tupunga Ola theoretical approach's causal nexus, heliaki mediates the relationship between the lyrics of kakala compositions and its target audience that is bound by the 'Ēkitu'a model (Introduction chapter, Section 1.4). This means that heliaki acted as a mediator between the kakala songs, the censors, and the public at large. The application of heliaki required specialised skills, and their influence on song selection inevitably incorporated musical, journalistic, political, and cultural elements—precisely the dimensions pursued by the research questions. The heliaki facilitation process demonstrates that censorship functioned not as a mechanism of suppression, but as a form of cultural moderation entrusted with safeguarding the core values of Tongan society. This is evidenced by the pre-emptive scrutiny of a song catalogue before the launch of the Tonga Broadcasting Commission (TBC) in July 1961, indicating that censorship was a traditional Tongan practice employed long before the arrival of broadcast journalism. Ultimately, this comprehensive synthesis confirms that kakala song censorship was designed to oversee the impact of the lyrical genre on toputapu and mana that emanated from the hierarchical structures, the cultural system pivoting on the pinnacle of the fatungamotu'a (existing traditions).

6.4. Contributions to Knowledge

This section outlines the original contributions of this study to the existing body of knowledge. It highlights the theoretical, conceptual, and empirical advancements derived from the research, demonstrating how these findings address gaps in the literature and offer new perspectives on Tongan cultural dynamics, linguistic frameworks, and censorship of kakala songs.

6.4.1 Theoretical. This study contributes to the field of kakala song censorship by providing empirical evidence which had previously been largely debated and reported without thorough investigation. Importantly, this research advances the core structure of the topic under investigation, encompassing censorship, kakala compositions, the roles of punake and faiongoongo, as well as the reconceptualisation of heliaki and kakala. While the study remains focused on its research questions, it also creates opportunities to open multiple academic pathways for future inquiry in these areas. This led to several significant redefinitions and standardisation

including standardising the heliaki figures of speech for the first time. Furthermore, it formalises the concept of mālie—a significant and contested cultural phenomenon in Tongan scholarship—by aligning it with established journalistic criteria of news value and newsworthiness. This research contribution to the literature is discussed in the following five crossheadings mainly censorship, kakala songs, punake, faiongoongo, and heliaki.

6.4.1.1 *Censorship.* The identification of tapui, tāngata‘i, and fakatonutonu as traditional forms of procedural control within fatungamotu‘a practices and values—and their correspondence to Western models of censorship—constitutes a key contribution of this study to existing knowledge. This is significant because it dispels any doubt that discussions of censorship in this context refer to the type of censorship commonly associated with countries such as Russia (Zerbe, 2022; Kaye, 2022) and China (Bai, Jia & Yang, 2024), where it has been used to unreasonably suppress dissent. The recommendation of this study to integrate Western censorship principles with tāngata‘i control is significant, as the English censorship process is guided by established standards that promote fairness and transparency—principles that Tonga has adopted through its Westernisation and democratisation processes.

6.4.1.2 *Kakala songs.* The proposed redefinition of the kakala song genre—as songs of heliaki (figuration, imagery or symbolism)—offers a meaningful contribution to existing knowledge. It resolves ongoing debates in the literature that have variously classified kakala songs as hiva ‘ofa (love or sweet songs), hiva tau‘olunga (dance songs), topical songs (hiva ki he ngaahi me‘a ‘oku hoko), or songs of flowers (hiva ki he ngaahi matala‘i ‘akau). The new definition proposed here distinguishes kakala songs from other types of songs whose lyrics are direct and literal, referred to in Tongan as pa‘apa‘anga or pāpafua. For example, the love song ‘Ofa Mo‘oni (True Love) by Kāsete Naufahu contains no use of heliaki in its text. In contrast, the love song Huikapeloto by Nau Saimone qualifies as a kakala composition, as huikapeloto metonymically refers to a needle sharp enough to pierce and draw out what lies deep within the heart. This comparison does not imply that a song employing heliaki is superior to a pāpafua song (see Literature Review, Section 2.7.5); both possess their own artistic merit. This analysis is significant because it challenges the conventional assumption that only songs incorporating heliaki are of higher quality, while those without it are inferior works of art. Such a misleading argument stems from a lack of understanding of what heliaki truly means—a gap this study addresses by standardising and accurately defining the concept. This study enhances the understanding of kakala song censorship by demonstrating that the lyrical genre emerged from the linguistic and stylistic influence of the English Holy Bible and Methodist hymns. Specifically, their translation into Tongan introduced neologisms—a key figure of speech analysed in Discussion 5.6—which added poetic quality and mālie (see Appendix A) to the songs. The development of this genre

gained momentum in the early 20th century following the introduction of Western civilisation, coinciding with the reign of Queen Sālote and the emergence of her contemporary *punake*.

6.4.1.3 *Punake*. This study offers a novel contribution to the scholarship on *punake* (composers) by proposing composing models and commitment attitude. Previously unexamined aspects of their practice are detailed. The system includes lyrical, musical, instrumental, and vocal hooks as essential literary devices. It also reflected on pioneering *punake*'s original creative poetic devices (see Finding Chapters). These were a core compositional strategy to ensure their songs were vivid, memorable and attention-grabbing. It also offers the types of commitment *punake* should adhere to, to ensure a high-end quality song. This is a deep-seated, unwavering dedication and sense of responsibility towards their goal. It characterised by sustained effort, a willingness to endure difficulties, and a strong emotional or moral connection to the objective (see Literature Review Discussion Section). Collectively, these provisions provide a framework for shaping accomplished *punake*, promoting the sustained commitment, creative rigour, and artistic integrity required for the production of high-quality and original *kakala* compositions.

6.4.1.4 *Journalists*. This study advances the role of the *faiongoongo*—literally translated as “doer of news or news reporter” used to mean journalist, though not yet formally documented—by proposing a dedicated teaching strategy and curricular content. It suggested that, as cultural censors and overseers, *kau faiongoongo* (journalists) should professionally advance their skills and understanding by formally studying the ‘Ekitu’a Binary Cultural Identity system, (see Appendices B & B1), Toafesiama Translation Integration Framework (TTIF), (see Appendix C) and the new system of *lea ‘o e heliaki* (see Discussion 5.6) as core subjects. The aim is to prepare individual journalists for multifaceted responsibilities that align with the demands of contemporary censorship, which encompasses both traditional and modern dimensions. This is advantageous for two reasons. First, Tonga is a small country with a limited media industry, making it difficult to secure funding. Consequently, compensating censorial *punake* would be costly, as evidenced in the findings. Second, *lea ‘o e heliaki* is Tonga’s highest literary register used in daily conversation and formal communication yet this has been disregarded in curriculum developments for the country’s fragile journalism educational development. The investigation further suggests essential journalistic components to guide the TCIF (see Introduction Chapter) including skills and models for news hooks,

news values and newsworthiness. Given the argument of this study that *kakala* song censorship was a traditional moderation of *fatungamotu’a*, the journalistic code of ethics would be useful to teach in parallel to the EBCI. This is crucial, as there is a growing and persistent trend in which

even social media platforms and their operators—traditionally distinct from news media—are increasingly incorporating journalism concepts as tools to identify and flag insensitive, objectionable, and defamatory content (Dhiman, 2023; Howard, 2024). This conclusion is particularly significant, as it offers a potential solution to long-standing concerns about the quality of news reporting in Tonga (Lewis, 2011; Robie, 2004), as well as doubts over whether faiongo practitioners possess the appropriate skills to engage in kakala song censorship.

6.4.1.5 *Heliaki and kakala.* This study offers a reinterpretation of heliaki through the analytical lens of English figures of speech. This alignment does not imply the introduction of heliaki as a novel system. Rather, the extensive application of English figurative forms across multiple contexts—particularly in hymns and biblical texts—can be understood as facilitating the recognition of structurally analogous features already inherent in Tongan expressive practice. Accordingly, this process is best interpreted not as a new alignment, but as part of a recurrent pattern in which externally encountered linguistic systems act as catalysts for the activation, restructuring, and expansion of indigenous equivalents.

This study enhances the existing knowledge base by introducing standardisation and providing new definition. For the first time in the literature, this research presents 30 hybridised Tongan and English figures of speech, or *lea ‘o e heliaki* or *heliaki*, accompanied by examples. It represents a significant breakthrough by addressing long-standing barriers that have contributed to confusion in the ongoing debate surrounding the literary tools. While the current definition of heliaki extensively emphasises its “indirect” nature (Kaeppeler, 1993) or the idea of “hiding bare feelings” (Māhina, 2010), this study builds on those interpretations and offers a fresh perspective: a figurative expression that moves beyond literal meaning to achieve greater expressive power and evocative detail. (Oxford Dictionary, n.d.).

6.4.1.6 *Translation.* This research provides a novel theoretical perspective on the role of translation and interpretation between Tongan and English, identifying it as a key mechanism in the Tongan foreignism process. This is particularly significant because heliaki and song censorship are directly influenced by Tonga’s extensive integration of the English language. Central to this analysis is the new Toafesiama translation system (see Appendix C), which conceptualises two methods of cultural integration—to‘ofe‘unga (assimilation) and to‘ofua (acculturation)—and codifies a method of strategic phonetic translation from English, a practice masterfully employed by Queen Sālote in her kakala songs. Queen Sālote established sophisticated models of translation, demonstrated through her compositions. Most notably, her translational work—situated at the intersection of Tongan and Western cultural influences—provides a critical framework for understanding cross-cultural communication and literary

adaptation. This is particularly relevant today as we grapple with contemporary threats of Tongan language loss (Otsuka,2007) for which her legacy provides invaluable insights.

6.5 Implications (Practical)

For stakeholders tasked with regulating kakala songs to prevent transgressions of the futungamotu‘a and promote the genre's artistic qualities, these findings indicate that implementing comprehensive educational and training programs could enhance artistic execution and achieve more favourable cultural outcomes. Therefore, secondary and tertiary institutions should develop intensive and standardised curricula, while introductory lessons should also be introduced at the primary and intermediate levels. The curriculum should be designed to cover five interrelated subjects: kakala songs, punake, song censorship, journalism, and lea ‘o e heliaki (see Discussion, Section 5.5). Policymakers, whose responsibilities include defining societal problems and developing potential solutions, should collaborate with government-related agencies and seek the consent of relevant ministers to ensure these issues are appropriately prioritised. Since the emergence of online technologies and the convenience of social media platforms for the immediate and continuous livestreaming of songs—without cultural or professional oversight—the censorship of songs has been viewed as lacking relevance. However, curriculum developers and policymakers should consider implementing it as an awareness-based course. Additionally, various social media platforms—such as Facebook—have begun prioritising journalism skills and knowledge as significant guidelines within their policies for users to follow. This confirms that, despite free access to these platforms, content control remains a central concern across these services.

Making education and training services based on these findings available to the public will help equip talented punake, faiongoongo (journalists), and censors with the professional skills required to perform their roles effectively. These findings have the potential to enrich the Tongan worldview on lea ‘o e heliaki, songcraft, journalism, and censorship, due to the many new and groundbreaking discoveries the study has yielded. The significance of this study lies in its ability to connect the shared skills and concepts common to both news writing and songwriting, despite substantial differences in their content, structural forms, and professional applications. This demonstrates an important interrelationship and interconnection that holds academic merit across the combined subjects of journalism, censorship, kakala songs, and poetic expression. For example, this investigation found that the concept of a hook in news reporting is also present in songwriting, music composition, and instrumentation. It has also been established that the criteria used to determine news values and newsworthiness (see Introduction Chapter) are effectively applicable in explaining the culturally significant notion of mālie. As a result, it can be concluded that the research findings contribute much to the kakala song censorship and how

they are moderated under the guide of censorial punake and journalists.

6.6. Study Limitations

While this study offers significant insights into kakala song censorship and literary frameworks, certain limitations must be acknowledged. These constraints relate to methodological scope, data availability, and contextual factors that may influence the generalizability and interpretation of the findings.

6.6.1 Generalisability. While this study focused on a single genre of Tongan music, its findings—regarding the traditional censorship of *tāngata*, *tapui*, and *fakatonutonu* based on *toputapu* and *mana*—contribute to a broader theoretical model of censorship that is likely applicable in other modern contexts. Furthermore, the study's analysis, supported by discoveries of novel models and explicit criteria for defining kakala songs, the complementary 'Ekitu'a (see Appendices B & B1), *lea 'o e heliaki* (figures of speech) and journalism, significantly enhances its representativeness of the Tongan cultural domain. The study's development of the *Toafesiama* (see Appendix C) contributes a new and replicable framework to the existing literature. This framework addresses a critical gap—the failure of existing decolonising models to adequately account for the ongoing Westernisation process—which has generated confusion in the literature.

Moreover, given the specific cultural, social, and political context of the research topic, the insights gained from this research may not be directly applicable to other settings or populations. However, the primary goal of this qualitative study is not to generalize findings but to provide a rich, in-depth understanding of the cultural and journalistic factors influencing the censorship of the kakala song genre. By focusing on the specific context of Tonga, the study aims to uncover nuanced insights that contribute to a deeper understanding of the phenomenon within its unique setting.

Although the findings are context-specific, they offer transferable insights to other settings with similar cultural, social, or political dynamics, such as the interrelationship between songcraft, *fatungamotu'a* (existing traditions) – which can be included in Tongan Culture courses and journalism. The findings providing thick descriptions of the research context, methodologies and review, leave patterns for readers to assess their relevance to their own artistic and cultural contexts. Furthermore, the context-specific nature of this study is a strength rather than a limitation, as it allows for a detailed exploration of the cultural and journalistic factors at play that in their artistic aspect could in some ways link to any field in art, linguistic and literature. Future research could build on this study by exploring similar phenomena in other cultural or political

setting, allowing for comparative analysis and broader theoretical contributions.

6.6.2 Social desirability bias. The researcher was aware of a potential limitation in this study—namely, the risk of social desirability bias, where participants may provide responses, they believe are expected or socially acceptable, rather than expressing their true perspectives. This is particularly relevant in the context of the TBC radio station and the significant involvement of the royal family in the kakala songs composition and promotion. Their involvement is culturally deemed as a mā‘imoa. Mā‘imoa, in this sense, refer to monarchs’, chiefs’ or royals’ projects, deeming them as taboo. It triggered the faka‘apa‘apa ta‘etofehu‘ia practice or non-questionable respect-mandated taboos because the king is culturally sacred. Anticipating a pro-royal bias among participants who held the monarchy in high esteem, the research design included counterbalancing questions. A key example— “Was the censorship conducted to promote the status quo?”

—was intended to elicit more critical reflections on the censors’ motivations.

6.6.3 Recommendations for future research. This thesis opens several promising avenues for future research. One such direction involves replicating and extending inquiries using the newly developed Tupunga Ola and Veitalatala theoretical frameworks. The causal dimension of the Tupunga Ola framework is applicable across academic disciplines, based on the belief that all phenomena in the universe are governed by cause and effect. In the same vein, Veitalatala represents the formal mode of Talanoa (dialogue), introducing into the research process a level of indigenous formality appropriate for scholarly investigation. The use of these frameworks was essential, enabling this study to uncover root causes of lingering gaps and to standardize phenomena that were previously studied in isolation, thereby reconciling disconnected scholarly debates. These original developed Tongan approaches are particularly well-suited for future research, especially in an era when Western education systems in the Pacific are increasingly acknowledging the significance of indigenisation of teaching and learning contexts (Fua, 2023).

Future research should pursue three critical pathways. First, it is essential to investigate the perspectives of contemporary punake and journalists regarding the historical censorship of kakala songs. Second, studies must examine how modern content moderation technologies—particularly the AI used by social media platforms to control and flag material—are impacting the continuation and evolution of this censorship practice. Finally, further review is warranted in areas related to toputapu and mana that emerged from the ‘Ekitu‘a system, particularly its connection with the Toafesiamā model. The ‘Ekitu‘a and Toafesiamā occupy opposing positions: ‘Ekitu‘a seeks to preserve the fatungamotu‘a, while Toafesiamā mitigate outside influences that alter its structure. Future studies into these areas should also examine the practice of fakafaingofua (doing things in simpler ways), which interpreted as the relaxation of the sacredness and mana embedded within the cultural structure. Studies of this kind could be very

advantageous in re-establishing the frameworks that set the guidelines for kakala songs censorship under the moderations of censorial punake and journalists.

6.7 Final Statement

This concluding journey through the world of kakala has been profoundly illuminating. The research findings, including the redefined concepts and models presented here, suggest a potential to reshape future academic discourse. Yet, the most profound revelation lies in the intricate cultural knowledge and philosophical systems encoded within the kakala songs and their censorial guidelines. This brings to mind Winston Churchill's astute observation that: "The empires of the future are the empires of the mind." In this light, the legacy of Queen Sālote shines with particular brilliance. Her initiative to control kakala compositions for betterment represent a veritable empire of the Tongan mind—an inexhaustible repository of cultural value and creativity, meticulously preserved for generations to come. Consequently, kakala songs constitute the bedrock of Tongan cultural philosophy, with kakala and heliaki serving as the primary languages through which cultural identity is negotiated and preserved. It is the hope of this researcher that these foundational concepts will empower a new generation of scholars to explore the vast and nuanced landscape of Tongan and wider Pacific literatures with renewed rigor and cultural confidence.

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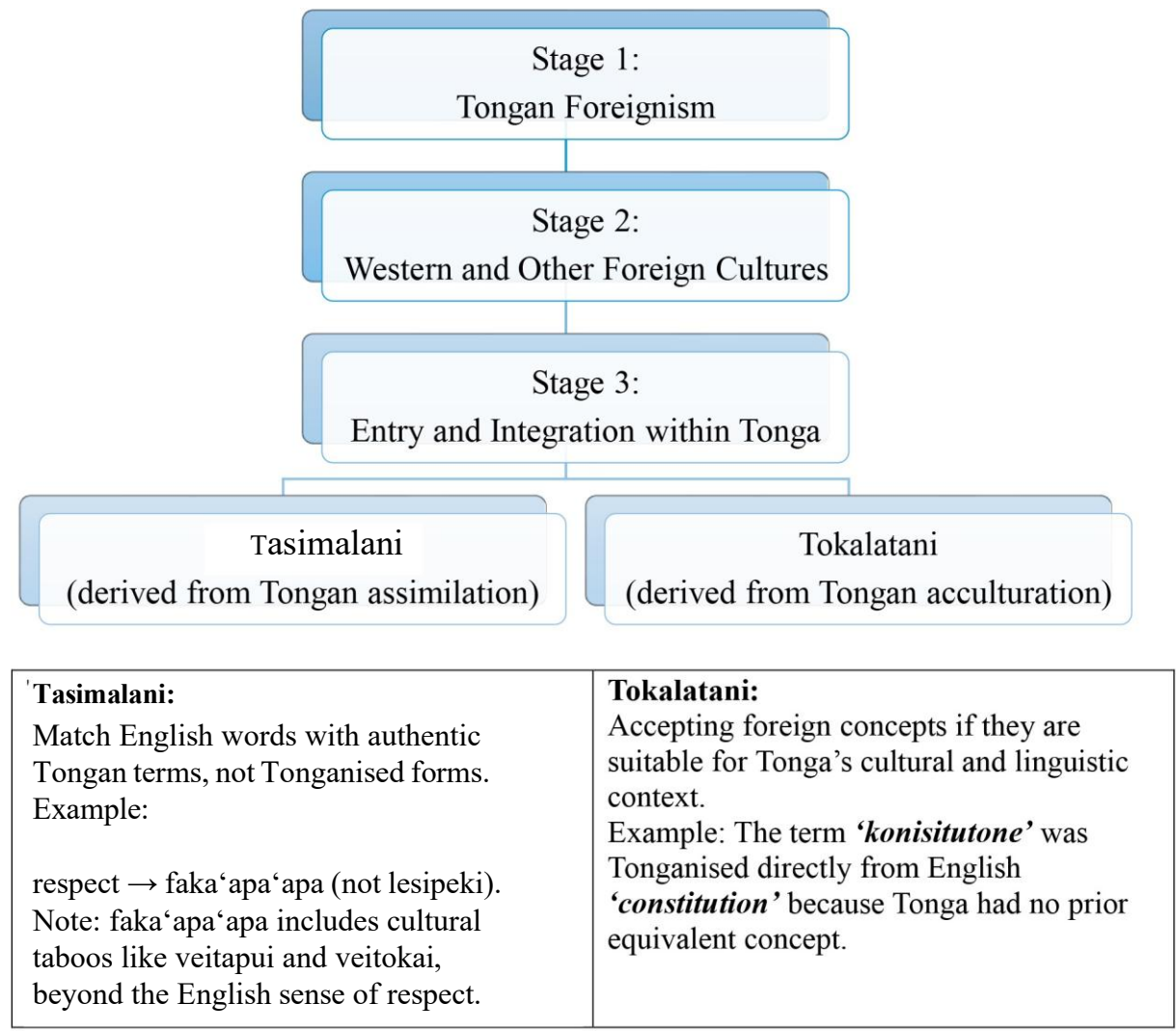
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Appendix C

Toafesiama Translation Integration Model



Toafesiama was coined from ‘*Tongan foreignism*’, *Tasimalani* from ‘*Tongan assimilation*’ and ‘*Tokalatani*’ from Tongan acculturation. Tasamalani emphasizes cultural preservation, while Tokalatani allows suitable foreign concept.

Future researchers are encouraged to further develop and expand upon the concept of Tufasimai

'Eni

By Masila (Moeaki Takai)

Efiafi ka ta mohe a 'Eni
Ka ta langa 'eva kei hengihengi
Tolia he nukonuka ke ke tu'u sei
Motufihivalu hao mapalei

Nusifaifio hono 'oketi
Ne lufilifi'i mo fakalekesi
Ka ta hifo ki fanga 'ufilei
Fanifo'anga fefine taukei
Laka ke ta o ki he heke 'o 'eva
Ke ta selue mo 'ai'ai lea
He ko e fefine 'o e vai ko lelea
Kulukulu tangi e mapu'avaea

'Isa hoto pule'oto 'oloveti
Lipeni 'i tu'a ki falelei
Laukau he ko e fine pele'i
'Ikai ha taha te ne toe 'eke'i

Ha'ele ki Pilitania

By Peni Tutu'ila

Angiangi mai 'a e funga siu malaki
Ke fakaa'u 'a e 'ofa ni ki he lupe he Palasi
Si'i lupe 'o Tonga manoa 'i he kolope
'O 'auto ki Uinisa vavalafa 'anga e tupe

Angi taulua 'a e tonga hihifo
'O falala he tamesi ko e fai'anga e fakauo
Fio ai e kakala ko e tumu'aki 'o Moheofo
Ne ngangatu 'i he Joto 'o tu'ula 'i he
ta'emangalo

He la'a hopo 'o Felenite
Huhulu 'i Polata'ane
He palofisai kuo movete
Fakama'u 'o e talite

'Ofa 'i he teke
Si'i langi 'o Tonga
He 'oku tu'u ko e koma
Ka kuo hoko 'o 'ilola

Ne sikahema ma'ili 'one angiangi
'O ue'ia e kakala he mausa 'o Pakingihami
Kapa ai si'i lupe he naite 'o e 'Otu Felenite
He 'oku taku he fetau langima'a 'o Palataisi

Halavuna

By Semisi 'Tongi

Halavuna 'oku tapa sio'ata
Fetaulaki 'anga ia e folauvaka
Loka nunu ai e pou 'umata
Sia'a hina mo 'ene katokakala

Teki puna si'ete tavakeoma
'o Nakita pea te fakanonoa
Faka'amu 'a e Tokelau Tonga
Ke potatala 'i Joto nuku'alofa

'Evenui ko Hala Tupou Lahi
Fenukesi ki he Vunga Moe Ahi
Pongia 'i he Fasimoeafi
Hengihengi pea matala masani

Tulituli mai mu'a ke ta o
O 'eva 'i he halavaha'akolo
Tu'u si'i ke ta fakafanongo
Fuifui oku kapa 'i moheofo

'Utufomesi Siliva

by Dr Huluholo Mo'ungaloa

Ne mana fatulisi 'a tonga kotoa
polotikaasi mei he minoneti koula
ko e 'evalusio e 'atomi koula
ko e tunameni e siale lini he oma

Piutau e ngaahi kakala 'ilola
holo mo e 'efinanga ki he hingoa
kae falanaki 'a e taungapeka
he vuna e 'utufomesi siliva

Funga mahofa te u mate vale !au
ho'o uini kae poini 'a pouvalu
'isa kuo ake 'eku manatu
ko e huli pe 'o e vatamanu
si'omau liku ko vale fanau

Neu televisone he satelaite
ki fa'onelua mo e tongi'one
'a si'o kofu kapikapi mata'itofe
mo ho tekiteki silave'i tavake

'Isa neu visone he'eku mohe
'o sio he ngoue fataki ki papilone
matala'i'akau 'oku taha pe
ne paki'i mei he fala 'o setane

Vesili Koula

by Semisi 'Iongi

Ne valengapo pea te fanongo
ki he potatala 'ae holi moe ongo
ma'unga kelesi ia 'ae ifo moe vovo
tonu ki he nonga holo 'ete nofo

'Ofa he kakala tu'u 'i he potu lala
oku ne ngangatu ai pe mo 'alaha
fu'u taumama'o ke siu mo 'ala
i he lanu moe lea 'o e lo'imata

Moto'i 'umata 'i he vesili koula
'Akisesi 'a e 'ofa ni kei talamuka
'amusia ia 'oku fahu 'i natula
he koe mataika fai ki he pupu'a

Ka ko hai taha tene fa'a hua 'aki
'a e 'inisenisi ne fotu he langi
hange si'a hua ne felafuaki
pe ha uaine o e feohi fungani

Tau

unaloto ki he palomesi mahuinga
oku tuu ihe palataisi oe fiefia
ne silai pea tapu toe vetekina
toki fakaava 'ehe ki 'uhila

Aotearoa

by Pita VI

Angiangi mai mu'a si'i tokelau
talolo hono 'ea 'i he fangatapu
'a si'ete faka'anaua e kuo 'alu
Si'a 'ofa lotolu kuo to tau

Fiu fifili ka kuo 'ikai pe
he talite feluteni kuo movete
pea mo'oni si'i lau 'a e fepale
ko e tonuhia 'a faiekina pe

Langa e masila mo e tau'a'alo
hungalu opea 'i he vaha mama'o
nofo hopoate 'i he po'uli mo e 'aho
tufakanga 'ape 'o kita ma'ulalo

Aotearoa mo e pupunga taiaamoni
ne te fili loto keu teunga'aki
'a e meesi 'oku fakahevani
ko e 'ekelesia 'o e ta'ehamai

Tora mu'a kuo te si'i he
Si'a maheni kuo lau miniti pe
tuku ke u tauleva 'o tapu vete
ko e fo'ui 'o e tu'a ko e mamahi pe

Ise'isa

By Tongotongo Liava'a

Ise'isa he ta kuo o'o
Feohi mo 'ofa ta koe fakapo
Hahamu si'eku 'ofa moe manako
Teu toki mate pea 'e ngalo
Tangi e loto ni ka kuo te'ia
'Ene mahino kuo vetekina
Si'ete 'ofa ni koe mala ki a kita

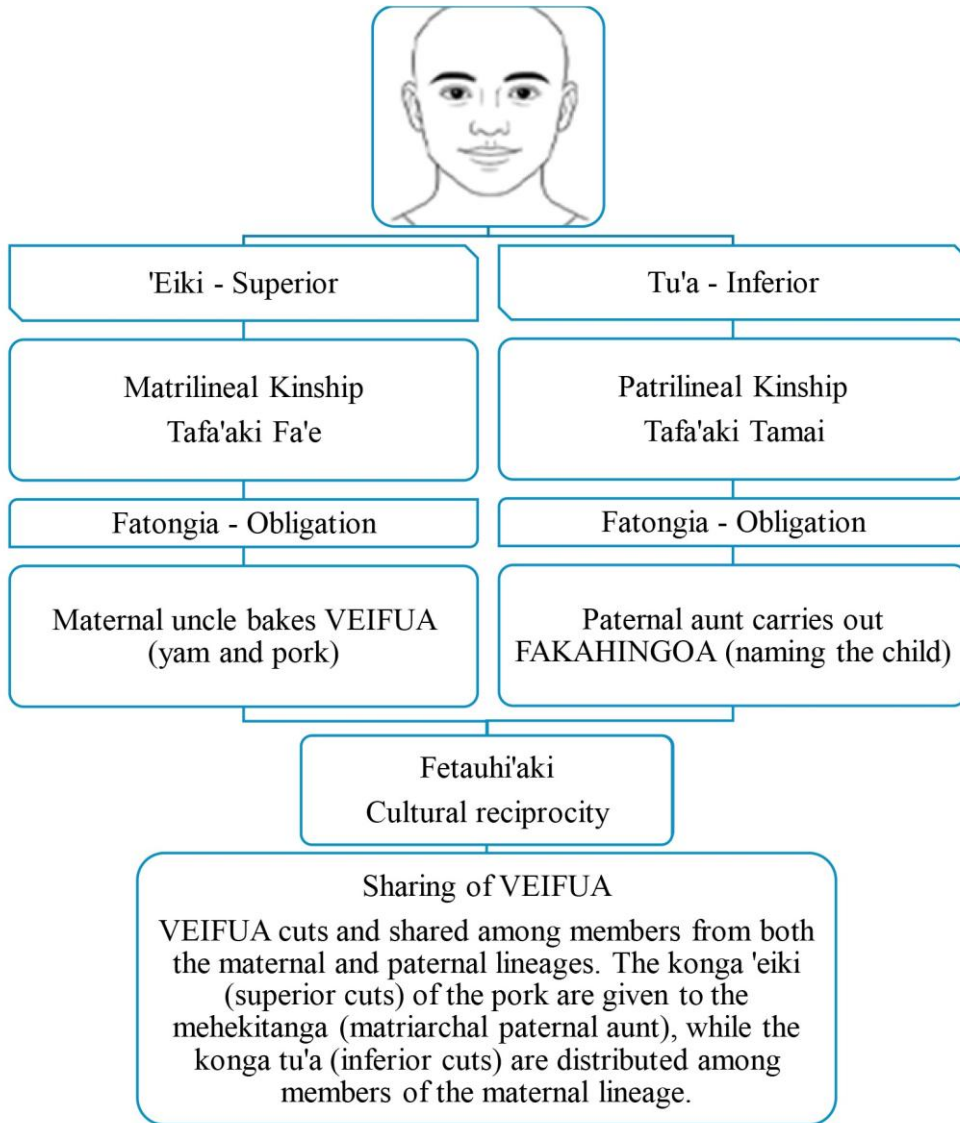
Peheange mai koha levaiaatani
Ke ma fe'ao moe nofo 'amanaki
Lulu e toafa mo e pelikani
Po moe 'aho he inu mamahi
He'ikai te u lava tu'uaki
Si'ete 'ofa ni kou manava'aki
Tuku pe keu tangi na'a lelu ai

'Ete faka'amu koha me'a 'e lava
Ke ma vaeua si'oto tufakanga
Tuku ai a keu fua tokotaha
'Oi seuke 'ete 'osikiavelenga
Ha mo'ui kuo kainikavea
He kumi fonua moe hehenga
Ha mo'ui 'oku nofo 'i lelenga

Ta'e'alo'aloa hoto loto vale
Ko si'oto fa'itoka ka te munoa pe
Ta ko hoto mala kau 'afungi pe
He koe 'inasi ia 'o me'avale
Tofa teine ta fai'aki e
Kau inu e mamahi ifo moe mate
Feluteni e 'ofa kuo hopoate

Appendix B

‘Ekitu’a Binary Cultural Identity Model



Footnote: This model illustrates how the fatongia (obligations) of each member within both the matrilineal and patrilineal branches are fulfilled immediately after a child is born, culminating in the distribution of pork cuts. The lesser fatongia of cooking is assigned to the fa‘ētangata (maternal uncle), while the most significant responsibility—naming the child (fakahingoa)—is entrusted to the mehekitanga (paternal aunt). This process activates the cultural principle of fetauhi‘aki (reciprocity) between the two lines, reinforcing social cohesion and mutual respect within the kinship system.

Lisita

by Toloa Filimoechala

Te u tangi he matangi si'ene tonga
Ke ne fakahoko mu'a si'eku 'ofa
Ki he Makahilitaha moe Houmatetefa
Tulou ka teu lea pe mu'a ke ha
He ko 'eku tangi ni mei he 'api ko ta'e'iloa

'Oi he taufa 'ene to 'o taulofu'u
To 'o po'uli 'o hange ha kakapu
'One va'etu'ua hota maheni fakalotu
Tapu tafoki te u kofesio mou vete atu
Kae liukava 'ae mo'ui ni 'o toe fakafo'ou

'Esi 'o Hina tu'u a 'o fakafolau
Ki he Hala Lulunga 'a si'ete moihi
Peheange e to 'o hange ha hahau
Teu lau 'ae kolosi ko si'oto koeli
He ko 'eku tautapa ki ha'o ngaahi meesi

Kaleli e 'isa kuo fasi e malu
Langa'i mamahi si'ete fie'aonga atu
Fakapo he paea kuo hoko 'o tatau
Si'ete mo'ui tongia 'ou fieha atu
Lisita 'ofa ke monu 'a si'ete hu taupe atu

Lose hina 'o kahala

by Tu'imala Kaho

Si'i lose hina 'o kahala
keke ilo ia mai e faingata'a
kohai ha to'a e tu'u tokotaha
koe ofa ni kuo hoko koe mala

Hoto louilima no'o loto
alaha he vaha mama'o
ka te anau pe mo unaloto
inu loimata aho moe po

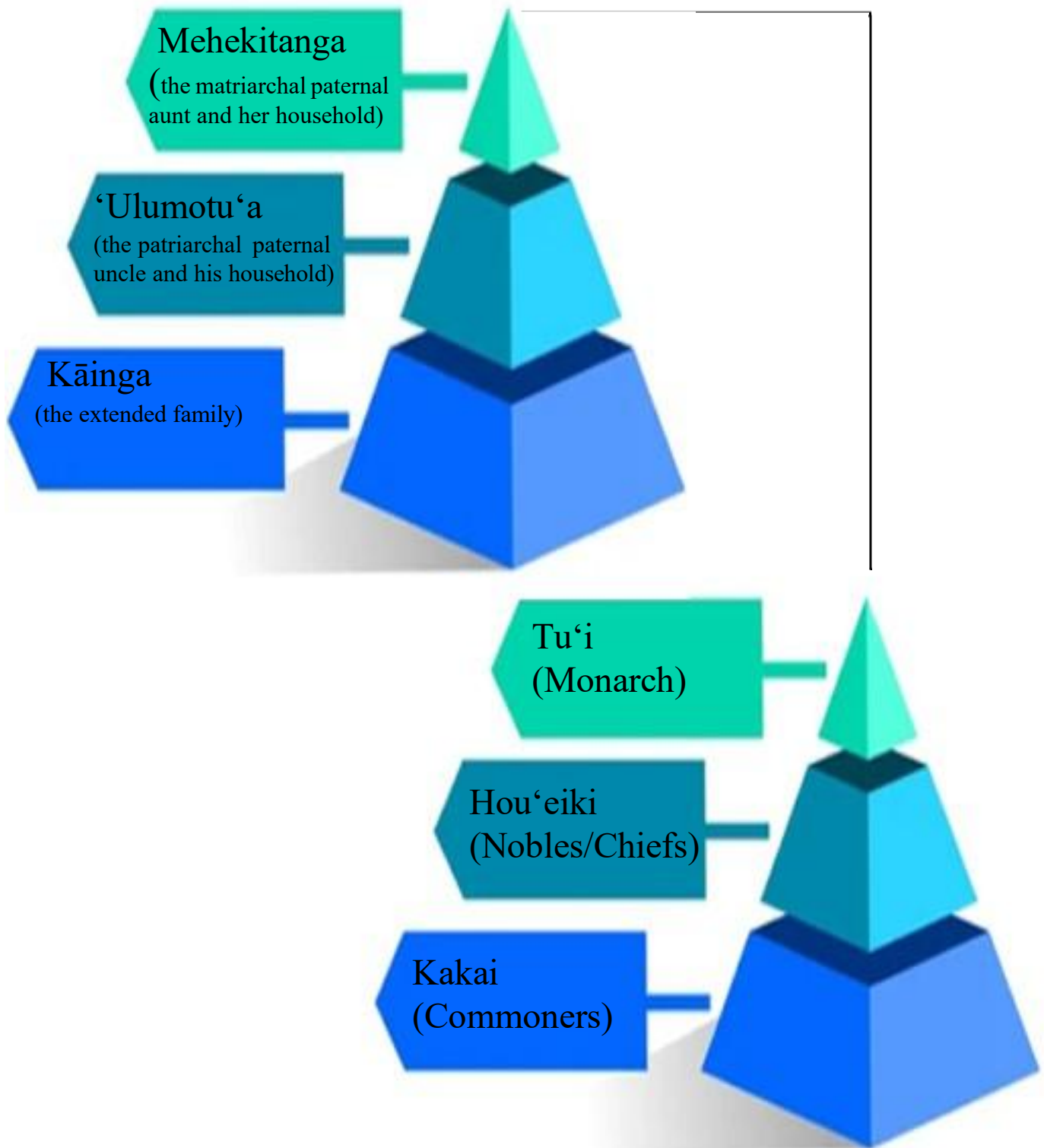
Amusia e manusiu fonua
oku siutaka pe mo tu'ula
ka te nofo pe 'o faka'amua
Isa e 'e Heimata'ula

Koe lolo monoi tiale
hono 'ea oku fakavale
iseisa e ngalo 'a fe
ete fuesia tokotaha pe

Tau:
'Ete matala'i alimoni
koe fisi'i pikake mo'oni
pea ne alaha koe na'atosi
afiona kovi eku loi

Appendix D

Comparative View of Tonga's Social Hierarchies



Footnotes: This study presents the first comparative analysis of Tonga's two main social stratification systems, illustrated as social hierarchy pyramids. The most recognised system is organised around the kāinga (extended family), the ‘ulumotu‘a (patriarchal paternal uncle), and the mehekitanga (matriarchal paternal aunt). It is based on the binary status of ‘eiki (superior, not referring to chief, noble, or monarch) and tu‘a (inferior, not referring to commoner). Every Tongan inherits this status through both maternal and paternal lines, whether in Tonga or the diaspora (see ‘Eki–Tu‘a Binary Cultural Identity Framework, Diagram 1). In contrast, the hierarchy of kakai (commoners), hou‘eiki (nobles), and tu‘i (monarch) applies only within geographic and political domains under the king and nobles, who govern their own constituencies and subjects.

Appendix L

Lisita

by Toloa Filimoehala

Te u tangi he matangi si'ene tonga
Ke ne fakahoko mu'a si'eku 'ofa
Ki he Makahilitaha moe Houmatetefa
Tulou ka teu lea pe mu'a ke ha
He ko 'eku tangi ni mei he 'api ko ta'e'iloa

'Oi he taufa 'ene to 'o taulofu'u
To 'o po'uli 'o hange ha kakapu
'One va'etu'ua hota maheni fakalotu
Tapu tafoki te u kofesio mou vete atu
Kae liukava 'ae mo'ui ni 'o toe fakafou

'Esi 'o Hina tu'u a 'o fakafolau
Ki he Hala Lulunga 'a si'ete mōihu
Peheange e to 'o hange ha hahau
Teu lau 'ae kolosi ko si'oto koeli
He ko 'eku tautapa ki ha'o ngaahi meesi

Kaleli e 'isa kuo fasi e malu
Langa'i mamahi si'ete fie'aonga atu
Fakapo he paea kuo hoko 'o tatau
Si'ete mo'ui tongia 'ou fieha atu
Lisita 'ofa ke monu 'a si'ete hu taupe atu

Lose hina 'o kahala

by Tu'imala Kaho

Si'i lose hina 'o kahala
keke ilo ia mai e faingata'a
kohai ha to'a e tu'u tokotaha
koe ofa ni kuo hoko koe mala

Hoto louilima no'o loto
alaha he vaha mama'o
ka te anau pe mo unaloto
inu loimata aho moe po

Amusia e manusiu fonua
oku siutaka pe mo tu'ula
ka te nofo pe 'o faka'amua
Isa e 'e Heimata'ula

Koe lolo monoi tiale
hono 'ea oku fakavale
iseisa e ngalo 'a fe
ete fuesia tokotaha pe

Tau:
'Ete matala'i alimoni
koe fisi'i pikake mo'oni
pea ne alaha koe na'atosi
afiona kovi eku loi

Faka'apa'apa

Brother / Sister

Nofo 'a Kainga

Veitapui

Veitokai

Not allowed to mix and mingle in public

One say principle
(Lea pe 'e taha)

Fatongia

Brother / Sister

Nofo 'a Kainga

Veingatapu

Veingatae

Appendix H

The Sunshine of Your Smile

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The Sunshine Of Your Smile

Words by Leslie Carter
Music by Lillian Rose

Moderately (♩ = 180)

Dear face that holds an answer a smile for me, dear eyes that shine like stars, look the world would let me have no light if I knew that world to give me.

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Dear face that holds an answer a smile for me, dear eyes that shine like stars, look the world would let me have no light if I knew that world to give me.

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Dear face that holds an answer a smile for me, dear eyes that shine like stars, look the world would let me have no light if I knew that world to give me.

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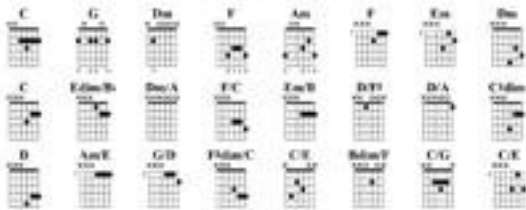
Dear face that holds an answer a smile for me, dear eyes that shine like stars, look the world would let me have no light if I knew that world to give me.

Appexdix I

Pongia Loto

PONGIA 'A E LOTO

AFUHA'AMANGO



Legend: F# = F# (sharp), F = F (flat)

1 = 1st, 2 = 2nd, 3 = 3rd, 4 = 4th

♩ = 86