1 The two indefinite articles: *he* and *tētahi*

Maori has two articles, *he* and *tētahi* (plural *ētahi*), that are widely recognized to be indefinite in some sense. These articles contrast, but not truth-conditionally, in sentences like the following […] (p. 21):

1. a. Kua tae mai he manuhiri ki taku kāinga.
   ‘Some visitors came to my home.’ (Orbell 1992, 49)
   b. Ka tae mai tētahi taraka tino nui.
   ‘A huge truck came.’ (Waititi 1974, 43)

2. a. Homai he wai mo-ku.
   ‘Give me some water.’ (H. W. Williams 1971[1844], 43)
   b. Kawe-a atu tētahi wai mo-ku.
   ‘Fetch me some water.’ (H. W. Williams 1971[1844], 111)

2 Syntax

- Maori has a ‘Pred S O’ word order.
- Maori is head-initial.
- Historically, *tētahi* consists of the definite article *te* plus ‘one’, though CL argue that, synchronically, *tētahi* is not definite (p. 28-29).
- Both *he* and *tētahi* realize the D category, the head of the nominal (DP) projection in Maori. The language has very few lexical Ds, though (p. 25), the other candidates being the definite *te* and *ia* (‘each’).
- *tētahi* indefinites can be prepositional objects whereas *he* indefinites cannot. As a result, *he* is limited to subject position, since all other argument roles are generally signaled by Ps in Maori (p. 28). However, in the rare circumstances in which direct objects can appear without Ps, *he* is fine (p. 29), and *he* is okay with the preposition meaning ‘like, as’ (p. 30).
- *he* is restricted even as a subject: it is blocked from active transitive clauses, unergative intransitive clauses, and clauses headed by most adjectives and predicative NPs. Basically, *he* is limited to existentials and the internal arguments of unaccusative predicates (p. 58-60).
3 Wide scope in episodic sentences

Both *he* and *tetahi* can take wide scope in episodic sentences.

(15) a. Ka hopu-kia e ia [he poaka], ka whiu-a ki runga ki te T catch-Pass by him a pig T throw-Pass to top to the ahi.
fire
‘Then he caught a pig and threw it onto the fire.’ (Orbell 1992, 20)
b. Ka whakapā-ngia atu e Rewi [tetahi rākau] ki te waewae T make.touch-Pass away by Rewi a branch to the leg o Tamahae.
of Tamahae
‘Rewi touched a branch to Tamahae’s leg.’ (Waititi 1974, 6)

T come.out a earthquake big at Wellington
‘A severe earthquake occurred in Wellington.’ (A. T. Ngata 1926, 60)
b. Ka puta mai [tetehi tangata rangatira].
T come.out to.here a person chiefly
‘A man of high rank appeared.’ (Orbell 1992, 67)

(17) a. I takatū mātau [he hākari] mo to rātau hokinga mai.
T prepare we a feast T.of their coming to.here
‘We prepared a feast for their *homecoming*.’ (H. M. Ngata 1994, 207)
b. I moe ia i [tetahi Pākehā nō Ingarangi].
T marry she DO a Pakeha T.of England
‘She married a Pakeha (European) from England.’ (Waititi 1974, 40)
4 Discourse referents

Both *he* and *tētahi* can set up discourse referents.

"the choice of *tētahi* versus *he* is not transparently correlated with whether the indefinite has a referential or a quantificational interpretation. In Maori, both *he* an *tētahi* can introduce a quantificational indefinite — an indefinite that has narrow scope with respect to an(other) operator" (p. 45).

(18) a. Tērā [he tangata], ko Rua-rangi te ingoa, ko over.there a person Ident Rua-rangi the name Ident Tawhaitū te ingoa o tana hoa. Tawhaitū the name of his friend 'Once there was a man called Rua-rangi; Tawhaitū was the name of his wife.' (Orbell 1992, 20)

b. Na, tērā [tētehi wahine puhī], ko Pare te ingoa, he now over.there a woman virgin Ident Pare the name Pred.a tino rangatira taua wahine. very chiefly the..topic woman 'Now once there was a woman, called Pare, who was a puhī (virgin). This woman was of very high birth.' (Orbell 1992, 67)

In keeping with their indefinite morphology, both kinds must be new:

(19) a. Ka moe [ētehi], ka ara ko [ētehi] ki ta rātou mahi. T sleep a.pl T awake Ident a.pl to their work 'While some slept, others stayed awake to keep up the work.' (Jones and Biggs 1995, 191 [26.4])

b. Ko ngā rangatira i [tētahi pito], ko ngā tūtūa [he Ident the.pl chief at a end Ident the.pl commoner a pito kē] anō. end different again 'The chiefs were at one end, the common people at another end.' (Orbell 1992, 162)

c. Ta rāua mahi he whakaputa ake i [tēnā wāhi o te pā], ka their.du work Pred.a appear up at that place of the fort T rere, ā, ka whakaputa ake [he wāhi] anō. rush and T appear up a place again 'They appeared at [that] part of the fort, then rushed to another part.' (Jones and Biggs 1995, 191 [26.4])
The discourse referents that *he* introduces

“cannot be used to introduce characters that are in the spotlight — central focuses of narration. Rather, these indefinites can only be used to introduce characters that are in the background-relatively minor figures” (p. 65).

“In contrast, *tētahi* indefinites can be used to introduce characters whether they are in the spotlight or in the background” (p. 66)

A suggestive patterns in the labels used on display cases in museums:

When an object is exhibited alone in a display case or is the only object of its type on display, then it is typically labeled by an indefinite headed by *he*, not *tētahi* (e.g., *He Mere* ‘Short Club Weapon’, *He Tīki* ‘Greenstone Pendant’). On the other hand, when several objects of the same type are exhibited together in a display case, the entire display, or each object in it, is typically labeled by an indefinite headed by *tētahi* not *he* (e.g., *Etahi Tīki* ‘Greenstone Pendants’, *Tetahi Tīki* ‘A Greenstone Pendant (in a display of several such pendants)’) (p. 68).
5 Narrow scope

Both he and tētahi can take narrow scope with respect to operators (quantifiers, negation, conditionals, modals, questions).

(20) a. Ki te tae mai [he ope] ki tō kāinga, ā, kāore if arrive to.here a visiting.party at your house and T.not i te nui ō kai, hei aha atu. T abundant your.pl food T.for what? away ‘If a visitor arrives at your house, and you don’t have much food, don’t let it worry you.’ (Karetu 1974, 59)

b. Ka tata [he tangata] ka neke haere aua rākau ki T approach a person T move go the.aforem.pl tree to tawhiti. distance ‘If anyone approached, [those trees] receded to a distance.’ (Jones and Biggs 1995, 223 [32.4])

c. Ki te mahi te tangata i [tētahi hara], ka hopu-kina e te if do the person DO a crime T arrest-Pass by the ture. law ‘A person who commits a crime will be arrested (lit. If the person commits a crime, he is arrested by the law).’ (H. M. Ngata 1994, 19)

d. Ka kite-a [he tohora] e [tētahi kaititiro], ka whakatū-ria te T see-Pass a whale by a lookout T raise-Pass the haki o tōna kāinga. flag of his house ‘If a lookout spotted a whale, he would raise the flag of his house.’ (Waititi 1974, 132)

e. Ki te whakawhitī [he Māori] ki tāwāhi ki te kimi i [tētahi if cross.over a Maori to overseas Infin seek DO a mātauranga] mō-na,... ko Hoani tonu te mea tuatahi educaton T.of-him Ident Hoani still the person first ki te whakatū komiti. Infin set.up committee ‘If a Maori went abroad to seek an education for himself, Hoani was always the first person to set up a committee.’ (Karetu 1974, 94)

CL also provide examples showing that both can scope under universal quantifiers, negation, and generic operators (p. 35-36).
6 Scoping over other operators

Only tētahi can have wide scope with respect to operators.

(27) a. Kāore tētahi tangata i waiata mai.
   T.not a person T sing to.here
   ‘A (particular) person didn’t sing (= There was a person who didn’t sing).’

b. Kaore ētahi momo rākau e tipu i konei.
   not a.pl kind tree T grow at here
   ‘Certain trees will not grow here.’ (H. M. Ngata 1994, 52)

c. Kāore ia i kite i tētahi hō e takoto ana i roto i ngā
   not he T see DO a hoe T lie at inside at the.pl
   grass
   ‘He didn’t see a hoe (= there was a hoe that he didn’t see) lying in the grass.’ (Waititi 1974, 59)

(28) a. Kāore he tangata i waiata mai.
   T.not a person T sing to.here
   ‘No one at all sang.’ (But: ‘*A (particular) person didn’t sing.’)

b. Kāhore he tāngata i te mahi.
   T.not a people T work
   ‘Nobody is at work.’ (But: ‘*Some men are not at work.’)
   (Polinsky 1992, 237)
7 Existentials

Only he can appear as the pivot of an existential construction, whether of the there be, negative, or posessive-have variety.

(29) a. Āe, he taniwha.
   yes a taniwha
   ‘Yes, there are taniwhas.’ (Bauer 1993, 78)

b. He aituā i runga i te huarahi i te ata nei.
   a accident at top at the road in the morning this
   ‘There was an accident on the road this morning.’ (H. M. Ngata 1994, 3)

c. He tuna no roto i nga awa, ā, he manu no runga
   a eel T.of inside DO the.pl river and a bird T.of top
   i nga maunga.
   DO the.pl mountain
   ‘There were eels in the rivers and birds in the ranges.’ (Jones and
   Biggs 1995, 195 [27.3])

8 Analysis

CL’s analysis is given in §2.5. Before we look at it, let’s construct our own . . .

References