Günter Senft, <u>Kilivila, the Language of the Trobriand Islanders</u>, Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 1986. Pp. viii & 599. Aust. $117.25.

Review article by David Lithgow, Summer Institute of Linguistics, Papua New Guinea.

Günter Senft's "Kilivila, the Language of the Trobriand Islanders" is a large hard-cover 600 page volume. It contains some good maps, an introductory description of the phonology and grammar of Kilivila, three sample texts, an extensive bibliography, a Kilivila to English dictionary (4,500 entries), ten pictorial illustrations of cultural items, and an English-Kilivila dictionary (3,000 entries).

Some researchers of relatively "untouched" languages delay publication of their findings through a desire to present a complete and accurate description of the language, so that many years or decades are lost before others can benefit from their findings. In the other extreme, Günter Senft has published the results of 15 months of field research, with the positive result that there is now published material on this important Austronesian language. The author makes no strong claims of accuracy or comprehensiveness, which is appropriate for this introductory work, for it is not strong in either of these areas.

Dictionaries are of practical use to many people, from the Trobriand Islands school-child, to the Government employee from another region who works in Kilivila and wants to learn something of the language, and also academic scholars. It is unfortunate that this dictionary is part of a very large and expensive book, which makes it difficult for the Kilivila people and their friends to own or use it.

On the whole the material presented in this book is clear, and provides a helpful basis for the understanding of the Kilivila language. Parts of it, especially in the phonology section, are almost identical with the unpublished work of Ralph Lawton, which seems to have been drawn on very heavily. It would have been good if specific acknowledgement had been made of such help. The book unfortunately contains many technical errors, and points of detail which are either not supported by evidence from within the book, or by other evidence. Some of the more significant of these items (in the order in which they occur in the book) are:

p.11: The big query in Senft's phonology section, and the only place in which he departs from Lawton's analysis, is the glottal-stop. I have never heard a glottal-stop in

normal Kilivila speech, and know of no other linguist who has suspected its presence in this language.

p.16: Here Senft explains his use of the apostrophe mark, which is the orthographic sign he uses for the glottal stop (and also for stress - see pp 25-27): "To distinguish between a sequence of vowels on the one hand and dipthongs on the other hand, an apostrophe is used, as in Kaile'una. The apostrophe is also used to indicate the deletion of a sound within a word which is only realised in highly formal style."

With a Kaileuna speaker I have checked the words in which Senft uses the apostrophe sign. There are phonetic difficulties in these words, and I would disagree with his spelling of some of them. Where there was a difficulty, my Kaileuna speaking helper would sound out the phonemes separately, with a break between them, thus creating an artificial glottal-stop. The same words sounded at speaking speed have no trace of glottal-stop.

If the writer is using the term "dipthong" in the sense of a vowel glide which fills a single vowel slot in a syllable, and "vowel sequence" as separate vowels which are part of two syllables, then the problem is understandable. To solve it Senft seems to have reverted to the orthographic device used by Malinowski. I believe there are undetected consonants in some of these words. All of the 80 examples listed in his dictionary have *i* or *u* following the ' mark, except three which have e following the ' mark.

For Senft's *buya'i* "blood" I heard *buyavi*, and for *gana'uga* "orange colour" I heard *ganaguva*.

Vowel sequences are common in Kilivila and rare in Muyuw (with which I am most familiar), so there are dangers in making comparisons. However I believe the problem of providing orthographic contrast between single syllable dipthongs and two syllable vowel sequences could be solved better by following the pattern of Muyuw than by inserting a glottal mark.

e.g. "base/reason" in Muyuw is *wawun*, which could be represented as *wuwula* in Kilivila, instead of the awkward *uula* or *u'ula*. Similarly "dog" in Muyuw is *kawukw*, so *kawukwa* (3 syllables) in Kilivila could provide contrast with *kaukwa* (2 syllables) "morning", without having to use the ' mark.

Senft's use of ' for elision of a phoneme in rapid speech is not done consistently throughout his book, and seems to be an unnecessary orthographic complication. An

explanation saying that "where two consonants appear together, an unstressed vowel has been lost" should suffice. Syllabic *m* probably has the same origin.

p.21: Syllable pattern 3 should add /i/ and /o/ to /a,u,ai/ as vowels which can occur before /m/ in this pattern. Examples found in the book are *imdidi* "little finger" and *omrimuri* "taro type".

p.26: Stress Rule 3 has minimal pairs. This is evidence that stress is phonemic, and therefore not always predictable. In Muyuw, change of stress can be the only difference between singular and plural of some intimately possessed nouns, and between some transitive and intransitive verbs. A Kilivila man once told me that this is true of some intimately possessed nouns in his language. Examples are *'i.na.la* "his mother" and *i.'na.la* "his mothers"; *'tu.wa.la* "his elder brother" and *tu.'wa.la* "his elder brothers". I believe these examples can be explained by the loss of a pluralising final vowel. The stress remains on what was the antepenultimate syllable.

p.29 The morphology of the verb stem is very brief. There is no mention of the classificatory or causative prefixes to the verb-stem, like *katu-* which occurs in 130 entries of the dictionary.

Reduplication in the verb stem is well described as indicating "progress, or plurality, or repetitiveness", but in the rest of the book it is usually glossed as EMPHASIS.

p.34 The object suffixes of transitive verbs are charted by reference to possessive forms, without listing these forms. Such a listing would have made it easier to understand the examples which follow.

p.51: It seems inconsistent to make some possessive pronouns affixes, and the rest separate words, e.g.:

> *da kumila*
> *dakumilasi*
> *ada kumila*
> *adakumilasi*

On page 94 Senft does in fact join as an affix *si* "their" which is first described as a separate word.

p.52: Under possessive pronouns IV the plurals should be listed as well as the singular forms. Examples, without explanation occur later in the book

e.g. p.101:	*inagu*	"my mother"
	inagwe (? *inagwa*)	"(my) mothers"
p.152:	*latu-g-wa*	"child-my-PLURAL"

p.54: The six different forms of emphatic pronouns make one suspect semantic distinctions which need to be described. For instance in Muyuw *agumwanet*, which is the cognate form of *agumwaleta* (p.55 IIb) means "I alone", and it is in fact translated in this way on p.58.

In this grammar a great number of different morphemes are glossed as EMPHASIS, and could probably be defined more specifically. For instance the Muyuw cognate forms of *ga*, glossed on p.116-117 as "indeed" and "himself" are "but/however", which would be appropriate in both these adversative sentences. It possibly has the same meaning as *taga* glossed as "but" on p.99. Incidentally *kena* is changed to *taga* in the first example on p.107, for no apparent reason.

p.80-81: *amiteyu* is glossed as "we two", and three entries later as "you two". It seems the former one should be *amateyu*.

p.82-83: The data on ordinal numeral forms are confusing. The list on p.83 would seem to be correct (*te-yuve-la*, *te-tolu- la*, *te-vasi-la*, *te-lima-la*) because they incorporate a classifier, a numeral suffix, and the final suffix *-la*, which could be "its" or "that one". The list on p.82 seems to be specific words for positions of children in a family. *Kasusu* means "last-born", rather than "first-born".

p.88: The "Adverbs" section gives a long list of locative compounds with person affixation. It would have been good to decline one of them fully, e.g. *o-lumale-gu* "at-inside-my (inside me)" with all of the person suffixes, singular and plural, and then list the others with one suffix only.

p.94: It would be good to mention that *so-la* ("companion-his") is not a simple connective, but is an intimately possessed noun, indicating what person is with the other, and whether singular or plural, thus influencing the person and number of the verbal subject prefix when this group performs an action.

p.107-112: Senft's claims about word order are not all supported by the text material which he supplies at the end of his grammar.

He claims a prime word-order of VS, but I found only one example of this in his three texts, and 30 examples of SV.

His claim of prime word order for VO is supported by 30 examples in his texts.

His claim of prime word order for VOS is not supported by any examples in the three texts, but there are eleven examples of SVO. This upholds the prior findings of Capell and Lawton that the prime order is SVO, which is also similar to Muyuw.

I checked my Kiriwina texts, and they have word order in clauses in the following proportion:

VO	68
SV	57
SVO	23
VS	10
OVS	1
VSO	2

I found no example of VOS. I have no doubt that VOS clauses occur, and that Senft's examples are genuine, but I find no basis for rating this order as anything other than a rare or unusual one.

The description of indirect objects is confusing. On p.33 where object suffixes of transitive verbs are introduced Senft says, "the object is incorporated directly into the verbal expression." One presumes he refers to the direct object, and if that object is further stated as a pronoun or a noun, its number and person will agree with the object suffix.

On p.114 the form *e-sake-gu mona* "he-gave-me yams and taro-pudding" occurs. Thus "me" is the direct object, and the food is the oblique or indirect object. The verb *seki/sake* in Kilivila means "give to (a person)", as it does in Muyuw. The thing given is more remote to the action, and is the indirect object. Thus in the first example on p.110 the descriptions of "his sister" and "fish" should be reversed, "his sister" being the direct object, and "fish" being the indirect object. I suspect that the same applies to the other examples, and *livala* means "speak to", *katotila* "promise to", *kwanebu* "tell a folk-tale to".

p.113: The five examples of statements include a wide range of sentence and clause types, including transitive and intransitive clauses. They seem to call for more detailed and specific analysis.

p.116: The second example of an imperative clause has the form of a rhetorical question - *bogwa kugisesi*? "Have you already seen this?"

The fourth example is not imperative, but is an exclamation -*O, esasopa*. "Oh, he is lying/joking!" The morphemes of the verb-stem should be divided, *sa-sopa*

"CONTINUOUS-lies". Failure to indicate separate morphemes is common is this grammar.

p.118: The first example of temporal clauses is a sequence of two simple clauses. It has the form of a sequence of two past actions, and future sense can be gained only from the social context. The relationship of the two clauses is conditional as well as temporal.

The third example is a sequence of two simple sentences about simultaneous actions. I can see nothing in the structure of the Kilivila to justify calling them temporal clauses.

There is such a structural feature in the final example *-avetuta* "when".

p.120: *tommwaya* means "old men", and is glossed wrongly as "adolescents".

p.122: In the first example of subject clauses I would consider that the second clause ("she didn't come") gives the reason for the first clause ("I am sad"), and this is not a subject clause.

The same applies to the second example.

The third example I consider to contain a conditional clause. The irrealis prefix *b-* on the verb *bagisi* gives the sense of "if/when I see". So the sentence means "I am pleased when/if I see a beautiful girl."

p.123: The second example is not glossed accurately or explained. The glossing should read, "He ask us(inclusive) we(exclusive) will go-PL to island I will-fish-PL." As "I" cannot be plural, I suspect this should read *baka-bani-si* "We(exclusive) will-fish-PL". Also the switch from "us(inclusive)" to "we (exclusive)" though theoretically possible, seems unlikely in real speech.

I wonder if the three texts given at the end of the grammar section would be accepted by Kiriwina speakers as *Biga Bwena* ("Good Language"). In real life situations you can communicate your meaning with the key words of a sentence, letting the hearer fill in the grammatical gaps. I suspect that those who know their language well would want to edit or expand these texts before presentation in a book. We would not present fragmentary, disjointed utterances as examples of our language.

I trust that this list of criticisms does not obscure the fact that most of this book is very useful to a person who wishes to begin understanding the Kilivila language. The pity is that a more accurate Kiriwina grammar had not appeared much earlier.