Josephs, Lewis S. 1997. *Handbook of Palauan grammar,* vol. 1, and *Teacher's manual.* Republic of Palau: Bureau of Curriculum and Instruction, Ministry of Education.

The *Handbook of Palauan grammar* (HPG) and accompanying *Teacher's manual*, whose content is based largely on Lewis Josephs's 1975 *Palauan reference grammar* (PRG), can be seen as part of a long-term effort by various individuals and institutions to assist Palauan speakers in preserving and developing their language as a viable tool of formal education and commerce. This effort dates from the late 1960s, when the University of Hawai'i and the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands Department of Education designed a project to train Micronesian linguists and develop dictionaries and reference grammars for the major languages of Micronesia. In a 1961 report, Charles Hockett pointed out the need to deal with problems of competing orthographies, as well as the dearth of material written in the vernaculars of Guam and Micronesia. His early recommendations helped to set the direction for subsequent efforts, which included the training of curriculum developers and writers of educational materials, and finally, the development of instructional materials in the mother tongues of Micronesia. For accounts of these projects, see Ramarui (1976), Topping (1975, 1981), and Gibson (1980, 1981).

Volume 1 is intended for ninth- and tenth-grade students in Palau, while volume 2 is to be aimed at eleventh- and twelfth-grade students. The HPG is intended to "provide high school students in Palau with a textbook that would enable them to study and appreciate the internal structure of their native language, much in the

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same way that students in Japan study their mother tongue (*kokugo*) over a period of years." The original PRG, on which this text is based, has been used in Palau for nearly 25 years, but was intended more as a general reference tool for the interested linguist than as a pedagogical tool for use by Palauan students.

In this new volume, written with Palauan high school students in mind, much of the linguistic terminology and theoretical discussion have been replaced by a less abstract and more practical approach. In addition, Josephs has added some new material that reflects more recent work, particularly Lemaréchal's 1991 *Problèmes de sémantique et de syntaxe en Palau* (see review article by Josephs in *Oceanic Linguistics* 33:231–256). By incorporating Lemaréchal's insights into the HPG, Josephs intends to "present the language in a more natural light [than the PRG]—i.e., on its own structural terms as a member of the Austronesian language family." Most of that material, it is assumed, will be seen in the second volume, where more complex sentence structure will be covered. The accompanying teachers manual provides information, examples, and exercises that extend those found in the main text.

While the PRG was written as a reference grammar, available to anyone capable of reading the language in which it was written, the HRG was written specifically for Palauan high school students. However, it is obvious that the HRG was based rather closely on the PRG. Thus the organization of the material in the HPG (and much of the text itself) is very close to that of the PRG. While many sections were extensively revised in order to simplify the reading level, and others were expanded, much of the text appears to be nearly identical. Thus, in the lesson concerning Palauan verbs, the PRG (112) reads, "Whereas nouns make reference to human beings, concrete things, abstract ideas, and the like . . .", while in the HPG (185), the related sentence begins, "While nouns refer to human beings, concrete things, abstract ideas. . . ." Much of the text evidences this sort of similarity. Presumably, modifications such as these are meant to simplify the reading level of the text.

As promised in the preface, the language is described in nontechnical terms. The organization of topics follows the original PRG closely. Volume 1 includes sections on each of the following: spelling; nouns; noun possession; verbs; verb markers and related verb forms; state verbs; complex nouns; causative verbs; reciprocal verbs; reduplication; and additional types of verb affixes in Palauan. As in the PRG, there are numerous examples of each phenomenon, as well as large numbers of sentence frames in which the forms are to be found. This characteristic of the volume makes it a rich database for anyone interested in the language and its complex morphology.

Each lesson (chapter) of the text is followed by a summary of its main points and by a number of exercises and study questions intended to help students think critically about the information in the lesson and find further examples in their own experience of the material covered. The following four study questions, selected from a lesson on Palauan pronouns (178–179), are typical of the study questions that follow each chapter:

1. Define all of the single terms and pairs of contrasting terms listed in 4.12 above. Each of your definitions should be clear and accurate, with an illustration or example if possible. Be sure that each definition you write shows how the term (or pair of contrasting terms) applies to Palauan pronouns.

5. What are the differences in distribution between the emphatic and non-emphatic pronouns?

8. How do we express contrastive emphasis in Palauan sentences? How is this done in English?

12. Describe the formation of yes-no questions in Palauan.

The exercises in this lesson are also typical. One requires students to complete Palauan sentences with the appropriate pronoun forms, following an English translation. Another asks students to read Palauan sentences and tell (in English) what new information the speaker is requesting. A third exercise directs students to find all the bound pronouns, tell what kind they are, and identify the pronoun by person and number. The next exercise asks students to translate into English a series of idiomatic expressions. The fifth exercise is a transformation exercise in which sentences are to be turned into their negative counterparts. The next two exercises require students to provide the appropriate perfective forms for a series of verbs. The last exercise asks students to provide five forms with the prefix pronouns (in the present tense). Other lessons are followed by similar questions and exercises. All, it seems, require a fairly advanced knowledge of English.

Because of an ongoing controversy centering on how Palauan should be spelled, the HPG has a much-expanded chapter on how to spell Palauan, and the sound system to which it is related. The author points out that there are competing ways of spelling the language, often originating in competing church traditions. Because of the various suggestions for spelling reform and standardization, this section describes the segmental units of the language. The book describes much of the phonetic and phonemic detail in Palauan with reference to the English sound system. This includes many of the exercises following the chapter. Thus, question 2 (22) asks, "How are the consonant systems of Palauan and English different from each other?" Although the answer to this specific question is contained in the text, knowledge of the English sound system appears to be assumed rather than presented. Because frequent references are made to the English sound system, a brief description of English would be appropriate. The fact that the Palauan spelling controversy continues unabated almost 25 years after the publication of the PRG would suggest that the author is justified in devoting this additional coverage to this topic. Certain problems of word division appear to be among the more heated disagreements. Here is just one example: *Ak <u>mo er a</u> hospitar.* vs. *Ak <u>mora</u> hospitar.* 'I'm going to the hospital.'

Does the present volume fill the need for a textbook to be used by Palauan students at the ninth and tenth grade levels in Palau? The answer to this question is a qualified yes. First of all, the strength of the book is the wealth of examples and

nontechnical explanations for complex linguistic forms. There is more than enough material to challenge students for two years of language study. The material is clearly organized, with each succeeding section building on information covered in the one preceding. There are many references to related forms in English, a language that all students study from the first grade through high school. As a reference handbook around which a course of study can be built, the present volume should be quite useful.

The ideal textbook for such a language course would be one written in the Palauan language, with all explanations in Palauan, and with a glossary of terms in Palauan. It is unfortunate that in order for students to study their own language it must still be done in English. To the extent that students are proficient in English, and have a good grasp of English grammar, this text will be useful. To the extent that their English proficiency is not high, the book will seem opaque at places. While there are large numbers of examples in Palauan, all explanations, study questions, and exercises are in English. In the spelling lesson, students are assumed to have knowledge of the English sound system. Individual Palauan sounds are often described in relation to English sounds. "Word-initially and word-finally, the pronunciation of Palauan K is very much like English 'k'" (6). The large number of examples of Palauan words that follow and exemplify this sound (and each of the others) help make the reference to English less problematic.

Of course, in order to measure the effectiveness of this work, it needs to undergo classroom trials. Only in this way will we know whether the level of the English used and the nature of the study questions and exercises are all appropriate. I suspect that some useful revisions will come from such trials.

Whether or not the text meets the expectations as a textbook for Palauan high school students, it remains an important reference tool for anyone interested in studying this wonderfully complex language. The author's explanations are clear and complete. There are a wealth of examples of the various complex forms in the language, making comparisons with other languages more fruitful. This volume ought to be available to anyone interested in the Austronesian family of languages. My hope is that its publication locally in Palau will not make it inaccessible or overly difficult to obtain for those living elsewhere.

Robert E. Gibson
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

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