KIRIBATESE: AN OUTLINE DESCRIPTION

by

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION  
1.1 Kiribati and its people  
1.2 The Kiribatese language in the Austronesian family of languages  
1.3 Dialects  
1.4 Foreign influences  

2. PHONOLOGY AND ORTHOGRAPHY  
2.1 Long and short sounds  
2.2 Approximate pronunciation of the Phonemes  
2.3 Permitted and prohibited combinations  
2.4 Terminal nasals  
2.5 The syllable  
2.6 Stress, rhythm and intonation  
2.7 Orthography  

3. MORPHEMES  
3.1 Forms of the roots  
3.2 Affixes  
3.3 Adaptation of foreign words  

4. FUNCTION CLASSES (Parts of speech)  
4.1 Articles  
4.2 Noun classifiers and numerals  
4.3 Agent Prefixes  
4.4 Nouns  
4.5 Pronouns  
4.6 Prepositions  
4.7 Adjectives  
4.8 Verbs  
4.9 Adverbs  
4.10 Conjunction  
4.11 Reduplication
5. SYNTAX OF SIMPLE SENTENCES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5.1 Equational sentences</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2 Descriptive sentences</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3 Intransitive sentences</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.4 Singly transitive sentences</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.5 Doubly transitive sentences</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.6 Conditional sentences</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.7 Imperative sentences</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.8 Exclamatory sentences</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

APPENDIX A1: Paradigm of transitive verbs 114
APPENDIX A2: Kiribatese - English word list 120
APPENDIX A3: English - Kiribatese word list 140
BIBLIOGRAPHY 154
To

Professor Walter Munk

without whom this work would not have been written
INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

The present work resulted from the activities of one of us (TRG) as 'informant' on projects at the University of Hawaii involving the Kiribatese language. It became evident that some preliminary thought and organisation would make the informant sessions more fruitful. As there was still lacking a satisfactory description of the Kiribatese language, we decided to present our thoughts in the present work. Except for RJ we are not expert linguists, and this work doubtlessly has many shortcomings. Nevertheless, we believe that we have succeeded in finding and describing many of the features of the language that will interest linguists and cause difficulties for students of the language. This work is therefore intended as an aid to descriptive and comparative linguists and to beginning and advanced students of the language.

As we progressed in the preparation of this work it became apparent that there was no convenient stopping place. Practically every section has ramifications that would take months or years to clean up. We thus abandoned the idea of postponing publication until a 'complete' work could be presented in order that students and linguists might benefit from the amount of materials which we have at hand at this point. A rough version of this work was circulated in mimeograph form a few years ago. Since then a few corrections were made and a little more information has been added. We are confident that we or others will improve this work, enlarge it, and present a more comprehensive description of the language at a later date. With this in mind, we shall greatly appreciate all suggestions and criticisms.

One of us (TRG) is responsible for the factual information presented. Another (GWG) did most of the writing, and the third (RJ) provided the organisational framework for presentation.

Our many Kiribatese friends have provided invaluable assistance, and it would be difficult to list all their names. We would like to thank Dr. Alolae Cati, Bwere Eritaia, Jeff Marck, H.E. Maude, Kaitara Meetai, Malcolm Mitz, Father Raimon, Stephen Trussel, members of the Vernacular Committee of the Kiribati Government, and participants in the Kiribatese (then called 'Gilbertese') study group at the University of Hawaii, for their help. We are grateful to Carol Misko and Gregory Hayward for their help with PEACESAT communications. Much of this work was written while one of us (GWG) was visiting Professor of Geophysics at University Sains Malaysia.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Kiribatese language is used today by about 60,000 people, including the inhabitants of Kiribati, which became an independent republic in 1979. This new nation contains the Gilbert Islands, B'aanaba (Ocean Island), the Phoenix Islands, and the Northern and Southern Line Islands. Before European contact,
migrations or military campaigns had already carried the language to Mili in the Marshall Islands and to Nui in Tuvalu. In recent times Kiribatese emigrants have taken the language throughout the territory of Kiribati, and to Nauru, Fiji, the Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu. Some inhabitants of these places have become proficient in the language through contact with Kiribatese immigrants or migrant workers. In addition, many Tuvaluans are proficient in the language through contact with Kiribatese speakers during the time of the Gilbert and Ellice Islands Colony, when the two ethnic groups were included under the same British dominion. The language is quite uniform throughout, so any two speakers will have a mutual intelligibility of near 100%.

The language is one of the Malayo-Polynesian group of the Austronesian family of languages. It resembles many of the Micronesian languages as well as Polynesian. It is nominally classed as one of the Micronesian languages, and it is the most Polynesian-like of any of them. Like these languages, Kiribatese is not a tonal language. Some common roots occur throughout the Malayo-Polynesian area, from Malagasy to Easter Island.

In recent times (since European contact) words from other languages such as Tuvaluan, English, etc., have been introduced. The language may now be diverging in outlying areas due to the incorporation of words from the various local languages. The American missionary, Hiram Bingham, introduced some Greek words into his Kiribatese version of the Bible (Bingham, undated), and a few of these have survived as an integral part of the language. Since Britain established the protectorate over the Gilbert Islands in 1892 English has become the predominant foreign influence and provider of loan words. But until very recently Kiribatese was not really a dynamic language in the sense of rapid change through incorporation of new speech patterns, new vocabulary, etc. Among the majority of Kiribatese there is a strong tendency to stick to the traditional speech patterns. But on South Tarawa, seat of the Kiribati Government headquarters and containing about one third of the nation's population, Anglicisms are becoming more and more popular.

Kiribatese has a very loose or flexible structure which enables roots or bases to be used in many different functions (as nouns, verbs, etc.). The ordinary Kiribatese speaker, in fact, is seldom aware of the different functions his words perform. An exception to this overgeneralisation is the class of transitive verbs, whose rigid inflectional scheme unmistakeably marks them as such. The description given here makes use of the traditional English terminology in describing function classes (nouns, verbs, etc.) and other features of the grammar (clauses, etc.) but this is done more for the purpose of aiding understanding for the speaker of European languages accustomed to such classification than for linguistic logic.

The written language dates from Bingham's Bible (undated), parts of which must have been in use by the early 1860s, and from his Gilbertese-English Dictionary (Bingham 1908), based on his transcription of the language into the Roman alphabet using 13 letters plus the apostrophe. The Bible is universally read by nearly all Kiribatese and is a strong stabilising influence on the language. Although the amount of written materials prepared in Kiribatese is small, the orthography is still not uniform. In the early 1960s as much as 98% of the adult Kiribatese population was literate in the language, but in the following years the emphasis on English and deemphasis of Kiribatese in the schools has led to a considerable reduction in this literacy rate (apparently without a corresponding increase of English proficiency). But educational policy has now changed, as elsewhere in the Pacific, and the local languages including
Kiribatese are now emphasised more in the schools. Thus, Kiribatese, important now in the region, may become more important in the near future.

The following description of the Kiribatese language is tentative. It is hoped that the inaccuracies found in this work will be corrected in subsequent works, and that the questions raised will stimulate further study and discussion.

1.1 Kiribati and its people

The large majority of the population inhabits the Gilbert Islands, which is a chain of low coral atolls and reef islets stretching in the NW-SE direction across the equator near the longitude of the international date line. The maximum elevation of any of them is only about three or four metres. There are about ten atolls, the largest being about 70 km in length, which consist of a thin ring of discontinuous land around a central lagoon. The amount of usable land is quite small. At low tide, when the wide lagoon mudflats are above water, the area of exposed land may be almost double that at high tide. B'aanaba (Ocean Island), which lies to the West of the Gilbert Island chain, is different. It is a small limestone island having maximum elevation of about 80 metres. The land on all these islands consists of coralline (calcium carbonate) gravel and sand, with a very small amount of true soil.

The small and dependable rainfall is quickly absorbed into the coarse ground and forms a semi-fresh water lens that diffuses outward into ocean and lagoon. Only a few species of flora can grow in this environment. The main edible plants are the coconut, pandanus, and a taro-like root (te b'ab'ai).

The inhabitants have traditionally been subsistence farmers and fishermen, and even today only a small number of Kiribatese live by buying food from wages earned in other employment.

1.2 The Kiribatese language in the Austronesian family of languages

Shutler and Marck (1975) have studied correlations of vocabulary, phonetics and grammar of the various Austronesian languages, and tentatively conclude that they are related to each other according to the evolutionary tree given on page 4.

1.3 Dialects

There are two major dialects of Kiribatese. The Northern Dialect is used on Abemaama, Arunuka and Kuria and all of the Gilbert Islands northward therefrom, whereas the Southern Dialect is used on Nonouti, Beruu and all of the Gilbert Islands southward therefrom. The Northern Dialect is used on Mili Atoll in the Marshalls. The Southern Dialect is predominant in the Line Islands and the Solomon Islands, since these places are inhabited mostly by emigrants from the Southern Gilberts. In Vanuatu and other outlying areas inhabited by Kiribatese both dialects are used.

There are smaller island to island variations that might be considered as dialects. These variations consist mostly of differences in vocabulary and idioms rather than in pronunciation, and will not be considered here.
The Kiribatese language in the Austronesian family of languages

Austronesian

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Extra-Formosan</th>
<th>Formosan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Moluccan</td>
<td>Minahasa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Eastern</td>
<td>Oceanic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austronesian)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>West</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Indonesian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Philippine</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The many divergent subgroups of
New Britain, New Ireland, North and Central Solomons, NE and SE
New Guinea and the Southern New Hebrides

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>South-east Solomonic</th>
<th>North Hebridean/Central Pacific</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eastern Oceanic</td>
<td>New Caledonia/Loyalties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N New Hebrides/Banks</th>
<th>Central New Hebrides</th>
<th>Nuclear Micronesian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trukic</th>
<th>Extra-Trukic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sonsorolese  Woleaian  Trukese  Kiribatese  Ponapean  Kosraean  Marshallese

All descriptions given here conform to the Southern Dialect. The few consistent differences between the two major dialects are described below.

The main phonetic difference is that the combination tu is pronounced /tu/ in the Southern Dialect, /su/ in the Northern Dialect, as in the following examples:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>word</th>
<th>Southern pron.</th>
<th>Northern pron.</th>
<th>meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>tua</td>
<td>/tua/</td>
<td>/sua/</td>
<td>law; rule</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>matuu</td>
<td>/matuu/</td>
<td>/masuu/</td>
<td>sleep</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tuanga</td>
<td>/tuanga/</td>
<td>/suanga/</td>
<td>to tell  etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The only other important phonetic difference is that many words containing iu in the Southern Dialect omit the i in the Northern Dialect. This difference can be reflected also in the orthography, as in the following examples:
This variation often seems to arise because of differing treatment of the incompatibility of a terminal nasal with the initial vowel of a following word or affix. The diagram in section 2.4 shows several cases where alternative linking sounds are used. The tendency for the Southern Dialect is to insert i after a terminal n or ng followed by u. The examples noted above all involve suffixed words.

In addition to the differences noted above, there are isolated cases where some common words are slightly different in the two dialects, as in the following examples:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Southern</th>
<th>Northern</th>
<th>meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>teniuua</td>
<td>tenuua</td>
<td>three</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i bukiu</td>
<td>i bukuu</td>
<td>for me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kuniu</td>
<td>kunuu</td>
<td>my skin</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A very few common words are entirely different:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Southern</th>
<th>Northern</th>
<th>meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ngae</td>
<td>buu</td>
<td>satiated; satisfied</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.4 Foreign influences

The language is continually being supplemented and modified by contact with other languages. Sometimes new constructions and words are introduced artificially, such as the many biblical terms introduced by missionaries. Usually the process occurs spontaneously. The ways in which foreign words are adapted into Kiribatese are outlined in section 3.3.

2. PHONOLOGY AND ORTHOGRAPHY

A complete description of Kiribatese phonology is beyond the scope of this work. The following brief remarks are intended only to lay the groundwork for describing the spelling system. It might be possible to propose other phonetic descriptions that would be just as satisfactory, and perhaps more satisfactory from the standpoint of phonological logic. The scheme proposed here is believed to be adequate and simple.

At the present time it cannot be said that there exists a standard spelling system. The current written materials consisting of mimeographed newspapers, government notices, personal letters, primary educational materials, etc., use an orthography that is not uniform, but this does not cause much inconvenience. These current spelling systems will be called 'the standard orthography' here. The variations encountered in the standard orthography are much narrower than those encountered in older published materials. This standard orthography is close to being a phonetic system; that is, there is almost a one-to-one correspondence between written words and their pronunciations, and the pronunciation of any given word is almost predictable from phonetic rules alone. But there are many cases where some knowledge of the language is required to find the correct pronunciation of a word written in 'standard orthography'.
The very small changes needed to make the spelling system truly phonetic are a small price to pay for the additional convenience. Without a truly phonetic system, dictionaries, etc. (i.e., Sabatier 1954) are forced to indicate the pronunciation of each word, as are English dictionaries. The spelling used in this work, which will be established below, has the advantage of being phonetic as well as close to the standard orthography. For convenience, we refer to it as 'the phonetic orthography'.

The basic sounds in Kiribatese are as shown in the following diagram:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>labial</th>
<th>dental</th>
<th>velar</th>
<th>class</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>stop</td>
<td>/b/</td>
<td>/t/</td>
<td>/k/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>spirant</td>
<td>/v/</td>
<td>/s/</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>trill</td>
<td>/m/</td>
<td>/n/</td>
<td>/ng/</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

front   central    back    class

| semivowel | /i/ | /u/ | S     |
| vowels    |     |     | V     |
| high      |     |     |
| medium    | /e/ | /o/ |
| low       | /æ/ | /α/ |

The classes C (consonant), N (nasal), S (semivowel) and V (vowel) are defined as indicated above.

2.1 Long and short sounds

Each of the N and V sounds has a short and a long counterpart which cause a semantic distinction. In written Kiribatese this distinction has sometimes been made by using an overbar on the letter to indicate lengthening, or by using a doubled letter. The latter is more easily adapted to typescript, and is used here. Some text tends to not make this distinction at all. The economy gained by using single letters always, instead of double letters when indicated, seems very small when compared to the troublesome ambiguities that can arise as a result, as in the following:

e tamaaroa am ie  your sail is beautiful
etamaaroa am iee your lovemaking is beautiful
ereke ana taari he got some salt
ereke ana tar i he had an orgasm

Long and short sounds are used to distinguish singular and plural of some nouns (see also section 4.4.1).

| ika | fish (singular) |
iika | fishes         |
tina | mother         |
tiina | mothers        |
mata | eye            |
maata | eyes           |

The same sort of distinction is used to differentiate singular and plural of some adjectives, but here the longer sound is usually associated with the singular (see also section 4.7.1).
ab'aab'aki big (singular)
ab'ab'aki big (plural)
anaanau long (singular)
ananau long (plural) etc.

The third person singular (referring to the direct object) of certain verbs has a lengthened nasal when the object is not expressed (see also section 4.8.6):

nima to drink (something)
nimma to drink it
tuanga to tell (someone)
tuangnga to tell him
kana to eat (something)
kanna to eat it

The imperative form of some verbs has a lengthened vowel as contrasted with the corresponding indicative mood (see section 4.8.3):

tei to stand
teei stand (a command)
wene to lie down
weene lie down (a command)
nako to go
naako go (a command) etc.

The second degree of distance of the singular form of certain demonstrative pronouns has a long n in contrast to the corresponding relative pronoun (see also sections 4.5.5 and 4.5.6):

ane that (relative)
anne that (demonstrative)
teuaane who
teuaanne he
baene which (relative)
baenne that thing etc.

In the third person object of some verbs, singular and plural are distinguished:

ataia to know him
ataiia to know them
noorii a to see him
nooriiia to see them
weteia to call him
weteiia to call them

Degree of length distinguishes some words from others:

man animal; letter; from
maan a long time
mama mouth-to-mouth feeding
maama moonlight
mmamma breast
maamaa shame
kan to want
kaan near; almost
m'am'a ring; kind of crab
m'aam'a rings; crabs
mm'am'ma to flake off
M'aam'aa girl's name
kora sinnet
koora gold
newe tongue
nnewe lobster etc.

(In such examples a comma is used here for separate alternative expressions for the same meaning, while a semicolon separates expressions having different meanings.)

Some proper names and place names have lengthened sounds that would be impossible to predict, even by a native speaker, if not familiar with the particular name in question. Radio announcers on B'anaan Kiribati continually misread names that are not written phonetically. Consider the names Tetaake, Beetio, Abemaama, Tiooti, etc. There are some words with lengthened sounds even though they do not contrast with corresponding words with short sounds:

takaakaro to play
ngngai I
kiika octopus

When a short vowel or nasal comes into juxtaposition with an identical sound through syntactic combination, the result is pronounced long, as in the following examples:

e nang ngongoia he is about to scratch himself
e rin n te auti he entered the house
kam maaku you are afraid
e na anaia he will take it
ti ëri we went along
të katam'a arei that cat
te eitei a frigate bird

Sabatier (1954) proposed that there are three degrees of length in vowels, which he called long, intermediate and short. He used the circumflex to indicate the long vowel, no diacritical mark for the intermediate, and the trema (umlaut) for the short. As an example supporting this three-degree hypothesis, he put forth the three words tâke grasshopper, takê to protrude, and tâkê duck. He avoided the question of whether his three degrees of length represented distinct phonemes or merely allophonic variation. After discussing this point with various speakers, we conclude that there are only two degrees of length. In support of this we note that there have never been put forth any minimal triplets (distinguished only by the three supposed degrees of length). The foregoing example presents distinguishing features other than the degree of length of one vowel. If one considers the work taake, it can be rendered equally well by ducks (plural – see section 4.4.1) or by grasshopper. There is no difference in pronunciation and this, we believe, refutes the three-degree hypothesis. Thus, in the orthography used here, the three words are rendered as taake grasshopper, takee to protrude, and take duck. This is apparently a completely satisfactory scheme.
The juxtaposition of three identical N or V sounds, or of a long and a short, produces merely the simple long sound. Examples:

- n na tang nangai
- e tii iri
- am mm’akuri
- ara aama
- an nniea
- n na kawariingkamii i nanon
- te bong

I'm going to cry
he just went along
your work
our hammer
go ahead and put it away
I'll meet you within 3 days

The following is an example with contrast in meaning but no contrast in pronunciation:

- a anaia they took it
- a a anaia they are taking it

2.2 APPROXIMATE PRONUNCIATION OF THE PHONEMES

The labial stop /b/ is unaspirated and almost unvoiced. To native English speakers the sound may approximate the b more than the p, but to speakers of languages without aspirated stops the sound is closer to p than to b. The representation of this sound in writing has been done with both b and p, with the majority favouring b in recent text. The b is used herein, and has been recommended by the KLB.

The dental stop /t/ is always unvoiced and unaspirated. It has always been represented in text by the letter t, which is also used to represent the sound /s/ because the two sounds are apparently allophones of the same phoneme (see below). The t is used herein, and is recommended by the KLB.

The velar stop /k/ is always unvoiced and unaspirated. It has always been represented by the letter k, which is used herein and recommended by the KLB.

The labial spirant /v/ is voiced, and is actually articulated with the upper teeth and lower lip, in about the same way as English v, except that the /v/ is softer and pronounced with less friction and freer, less intense flow than English v. It has always been represented by the letter w, although the latter is also used to represent /w/. The sound /v/ evidently occurs only in certain restricted phonetic environments, perhaps only when followed by /a/ or /e/. The combination wi occurs often in Kiribatese text, but this may be mistakenly written for /ui/. (Whether or not that is the case is still being debated, and the KLB is still considering how to recommend writing words that customarily have been written with wi.) The combination /vo/ apparently is used only in a few words of foreign origin (as in wooreba for wolf), while the combination /wu/ perhaps does not occur at all. Although the justification for representing both /v/ and /w/ by w is not clear, probably no confusion results because the two sounds apparently always occur in different phonetic environments.

(Examples, /vaa/ and /bwee/ are rendered by waa and bwee, respectively, by the KLB and in the orthography used herein.)

The dental spirant /s/ is an allophone of the phoneme having the sound /t/ in other phonetic environments. This is borne out by the complete lack of contrasting pairs, and also by inflection patterns such as

- kam’aitii /kam’aisii/ to increase them
- kam’aitha /kam’aitha/ to increase (something)
The /t/ sound results when the following vowel is /a/, /e/ or /o/, whereas the /s/ sound results when the following vowel is /i/. When the following vowel is /u/ the Northern dialect uses /s/ while the Southern dialect uses /t/, and this fact also substantiates the fact that only one phoneme is involved. Also, the difference in sound between them is not quite as marked as one would expect from the above oversimplified diagram. The /s/ exhibits fairly wide variation in pronunciation by different individuals and in different phonetic environments. It is sometimes pronounced with a slight stop before the air flow is released, but it is still fairly well approximated by the English sound /s/. The letter t is used to represent both sounds, in accordance with the system introduced by Bingham, and is recommended by the KLB and is used herein.

The dental trill /r/ is produced by a single hard flip of the tongue. In the initial position it sounds almost as hard as the English d. It has always been represented by the letter r, which is recommended by the KLB and is used herein.

The nasals /m/, /n/ and /ng/ are nearly the same as their English counterparts, except that /n/ at end of a word is usually formed with the tongue between the teeth. It should be remembered that /ng/ represents the sound in singer, not in finger. The /m/ and /n/ have always been represented by the respective letters m and n, which are used herein also, but the /ng/ has been variously represented by Ɐ, g and ng. The last is far more popular in modern text, and what is recommended by KLB and used herein.

The /'i/ occurs only in restricted phonetic environments. It is always followed by /a/, and always preceded by /b/ or /m/. The resulting sounds /b'a/ and /m'a/ differ from the corresponding /ba/ and /ma/ in a manner that can be described in various ways. None of the above combinations sounds much like a diphthong, but the vowel component of /ba/ and /ma/ glides somewhat more than in the counterparts with /'. The glide is from a tongue position slightly front of central, toward the central position. The beginning of this glide is almost as far forward as /æ/. Among the possible alternative representations that might be used is that of introducing an additional vowel phoneme (for distinguishing /a/ from /'a/) or of introducing an additional consonant phonemes (to distinguish /b/ and /m/ from /b'/ and /m'/). There may be more linguistic justification for the latter alternative, even though it is less economical than the former. In any case there is still uncertainty regarding this point. A similar phenomenon occurs in other Pacific languages, and the origin and proper representation of the phenomenon should probably be determined by considering all languages in which it occurs. For now, the reader is asked simply to accept the phonetic rendering presented here with the realisation that it is a simplified, rather than a logical system. In written Kiribatse the /'/ has sometimes been indicated by the letter w (rarely), and sometimes by the apostrophe, and is often omitted entirely. The apostrophe is used here, although without complete satisfaction or conviction. The KLB also uses the apostrophe. If deleted it can lead to troublesome or embarrassing ambiguities such as

ko maan ikekei? were you there a long time?
ko m'aan ikekei? did you make love there?

The following additional contrasting pairs illustrate the semantic effect of this sound:

bati many
b'ati bus
maaka to fear
m'aaka power, ability
mama  mouth-to-mouth feeding (as to feed infants)
m'am'a  ring; kind of crab
baa  leaf; thunder
b'aa  oil; rock

There is a reluctance to form words that contain both (/ba/ or /ma/) and (/b'a/ or /m'a/). The rare cases where this does occur are probably restricted to combination of stable, universally-used roots (e.g., nimam'angko five cups).

The /w/ is also used in extremely limited phonetic environments, always preceded by /b/ or /m/, and always followed by /e/ or /i/. The four resulting pairs,

/bue/ /bwe/
/bui/ /bwi/
/mue/ /mwe/
/mui/ /mwi/

have definitely distinct pronunciations, but apparently only the first pair has any semantic difference. The other three pairs can apparently be freely interchanged without any change of meaning, but the usual pronunciation corresponds more often to the member with /w/ than to the one with /u/. Thus there are only five semantically distinct combinations in use, namely, /bue/, /bwe/, /bwi/, /mwe/, and /mwi/. The semantic effect of /u/ and /w/ in the first pair can be seen from the following example:

be  conceived, flirtatious, overfamiliar
bwe  paddle, oar
bue  hot

Other examples are rare.

It may be logical to consider the /'/ and the /w/ as allophones of the same phoneme. This might be justified by the following facts:

(a) there can be no contrasting pairs, as they occur in mutually-exclusive phonetic environments,
(b) the sounds represented by them are somewhat similar,
(c) in grammatical variations, such as the conjugation of some verbs (see group 11 in Appendix A1), an analogous semantic effect is produced by both sounds,
(d) in the phonetic modifications required between the terminal /m/ and ' following vowels (see section 2.4) both sounds play an analogous role.

It therefore seems to us that there is good reason to drop the apostrophe in favour of the w, because of convenience in typescript, telegraphy, etc., as in the following examples:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>skeletal spelling</th>
<th>phonetic spelling</th>
<th>proposed spelling</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>makuri</td>
<td>mm'akuri</td>
<td>mmwakuri</td>
<td>work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ba</td>
<td>b'a</td>
<td>bwa</td>
<td>that (conj.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mama</td>
<td>m'am'a</td>
<td>mwamwa</td>
<td>ring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mama</td>
<td>mm'am'm'a</td>
<td>mmwammwa</td>
<td>to crumble</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>baka</td>
<td>b'aka</td>
<td>bwaka</td>
<td>to fall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>batika</td>
<td>b'atika</td>
<td>bwaatika</td>
<td>bicycle</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This proposal would meet considerable opposition, and it will not be mentioned further. The skeletal and phonetic orthographies are discussed further in section 2.7.
The /e/, /i/, /o/ and /u/ do not present serious difficulty, and have always been represented by the corresponding letters in written text. The /a/ is somewhat more frontal than the English sound bomb, but not as far as /æ/, as in mat. For that reason, the diagram in section 2.0 shows the sound somewhat displaced from the central column. In addition, there is a slight diphthong-isation with the beginning somewhat more frontal than the end of the sound. It has always been represented by the letter a, which is used herein and recommended by the KLB.

The /æ/ and /ɔ/ do not contrast semantically with /a/ and /o/, respectively, and are not represented by distinct letters. These sounds occur only in diphthongs and will be discussed in the following section.

2.2.1 Diphthongs

Vowels are usually given full value regardless of phonetic environment. But when two or more vowels occur together there is frequently a glide between them. In many diphthongs this glide is frequently shorter than would be expected. This is particularly true in case of the combinations ao and ae. Although the initial sound /a/ is indicated in both cases, it is closer to /ɔ/ and /æ/, respectively. The glide then stops somewhat short of the indicated terminal sounds /o/ and /e/. The glide is so short that the resulting sounds /ɔ/ or /æ/ may sound almost pure. That is why these sounds are included in the table of section 2.0, although it is not suggested that they represent phonemes. Bingham evidently did not consider these sounds as phonemes, since he did not suggest indicating them with special symbols. (All other sounds indicated in the table represent phonemes, with /t/ and /s/, and perhaps also the /'/ and /w/, representing single phonemes.)

The sounds of diphthongs have a peculiar quality. Bingham used the word 'mellifluous' to describe the effect, and others have noted the peculiar Kiribatese 'vowel shading'. The diphthongs ae and ai are distinctly different from each other, as are ao and au.

In the following examples the indicated pronunciations are only approximate, and where two alternatives are given the actual pronunciation lies somewhere in between:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sound</th>
<th>Pronunciation</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ao</td>
<td>/aʊ/ or /ɑʊ/</td>
<td>and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tao</td>
<td>/taʊ/ or /tɑʊ/</td>
<td>maybe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>taoo</td>
<td>/taʊʔ/ or /tɑʊʔ/</td>
<td>saw</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kao</td>
<td>/kaʊ/ or /kɑʊ/</td>
<td>ox</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a oki</td>
<td>/aʊki/ or /ɑʊki/</td>
<td>they returned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ae</td>
<td>/æe/</td>
<td>that (relative pronoun)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tae</td>
<td>/tæe/</td>
<td>to face</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ngae</td>
<td>/ŋæe/ or /ŋæe/</td>
<td>satiated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a ewe</td>
<td>/æe/ or /æe/</td>
<td>they jumped</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>maeao</td>
<td>/mæe/</td>
<td>west</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.3 Permitted and prohibited combinations

Vowels can be juxtaposed without restriction, which can result in 'vowel clusters' of considerable and perhaps unlimited length. For example:
Vowels can occur next to any other sound (except the S sounds, as indicated in section 2.0). Consonants cannot end a word, and cannot be followed by a nasal. These prohibited combinations can be indicated by CC, CN and CO (where O represents the empty set). Some selected examples of these prohibited combinations are rk, rt, tr, tn, bm, kng, -k, -t, -r, etc. (where the '-' stands for any sound).

The combinations NN are permitted or not according to the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>second element</th>
<th>m</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>ng</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>first element</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ng</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Or, stated differently, m can be followed by any nasal, while any other nasal can be followed only by itself (forming the lengthened sound). Other combinations of nasal with nasal are prohibited. The prohibited combinations are nm, nng, ngn, ngm. When such forbidden combinations are formed through syntactic combination an i is inserted between them as in the following examples:

- tan + mai = tan immai (turn + here = turn toward me)
- an + ngangoi = ani ngangoi (please + scratch me = please scratch me)
- ang + maeao = angi maeao (wind + west = wind from the west)
- nang + nako = nangi nako (be about to + go = be about to go)

There is no uniformity on how the phonetic addition of i has been handled in written text. It has sometimes been omitted entirely, sometimes joined to the first member, sometimes joined between them. The following examples illustrate the permitted juxtapositions of nasals:

- am maa = your fishtrap
- kam maa = you slept
- taam ne = picture
- kam nooria = you saw it
- kam ngongo = you itched
- am ngake = your underwear
- an nako = go ahead and go
- tan nako = turn away from me
- ngngai = I
- eng ngaia = yes, that's it

The combinations NC are permitted or not according to the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>second element</th>
<th>b</th>
<th>k</th>
<th>r</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>w</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>first element</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ng</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As before, m can be followed by any of the consonants. The others follow a seemingly unpredictable pattern. Point of articulation is obviously important but is apparently not the only determining factor in view of the fact that mk is permitted. The prohibited combinations are nb, nk, nw, ngb, ngr, ngt, ngw. If such forbidden pairs are formed by contact through syntactic combination an i must be inserted between them, as was done between two incompatible nasals, as is illustrated in the following examples:

- **taian + boki** = taiani boki
- **taan + koikoi** = taani koikoi
- **taian + waa** = taiani waa
- **nang + b'aka** = nangi b'aka
- **nang + roo** = nangi roo
- **tang + tang** = tangitang
- **nang + tekateka** = nangi tekateka
- **nang + tiku** = nangi tiku
- **nang + wene** = nangi wene

Some examples illustrate the permitted combinations:

- **mb'a** = kiss
- **am ben** = your coconut
- **mka** = rotten
- **kam kinaa** = you recognised
- **am ran** = your water
- **kam rauu** = you were jealous
- **am taara** = your towel
- **kam tiku** = you stayed
- **am wanawana** = your intelligence
- **kam wene** = you lay (reclined)
- **M'anra** = a place name
- **taan roko** = the people arriving
- **anti** = ghost
- **e kan taraia** = he wanted to look at it
- **ngkoe** = you
- **nang kiro** = to be about to faint

To summarise, let V' represent the class of extended vowels consisting of all sounds in class V plus the permitted combinations of S + V. Thus, V' contains /a/, /e/, /i/, /o/, /u/, /'a/, /'e/, /'i/, /'o/, /'u/, /'we/, /'wi/, and their lengthened counterparts. The permitted and prohibited juxtaposed pairs can then be represented as follows:

```
  second element
    C   N   V'  O

  first element \{  C   -   -   +   -
               N   ?   ?   +   +
               V'  +   +   +   +
               O   +   +   +   +
```

The '?' means to refer to the preceding tables. The empty set O when initial indicates those elements which can initiate an utterance, and when final, indicates those elements which can terminate an utterance. Of course, all the restrictions enumerated in section 2.2 apply when '+' is indicated.
2.4 Terminal nasals

A curious phenomenon occurs when a word with a terminal nasal is followed by a vowel. Sometimes this produces a lengthening of the nasal, sometimes a lengthening of the vowel, sometimes the insertion of the sound i. These modifications are seldom indicated in the written text, but sometimes may be.

The orthography used herein does not indicate these additional sounds where they occur between words which are written separately from each other. Thus, the reader should always be wary in all cases where a word beginning with a vowel follows a terminal nasal. Where such combinations occur within a word, by syntactical combination or suffixing, etc., these extra sounds will be indicated. The spelling systems used in the past, including recent times, are not consistent in this respect. For example:

kööm      comb (n.)
köömwiia  to comb (v.t.)

The usual suffix is ia in this case, but since the root ends in m an additional w is inserted (see below). This is usually indicated. But in cases where the additional sounds result merely in a lengthened sound, the modification is not usually indicated. Another common example is

ten       base for three
wan       base for eight
ua        quantifier for general objects
teníaua   three
waníaua   eight

(see section 4.2). But the last two words have customarily been written tenúa and wanúa respectively. The phenomenon exhibits considerable variation, depending on dialect and phonological environment. The conclusions described here are strictly tentative.

The following table indicates the sounds added upon juxtaposition of the indicated elements:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First element</th>
<th>a</th>
<th>e</th>
<th>i</th>
<th>o</th>
<th>u</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>m</td>
<td>m'a</td>
<td>mw</td>
<td>(wi)</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>u</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>(i)</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>(i)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ng</td>
<td>ng</td>
<td>ng</td>
<td>(ngi)</td>
<td>ng</td>
<td>(i)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The hyphen means that no element is added. Of course, the w in all cases represents /w/, not /v/. Where two alternatives are given, the choice sometimes depends on dialect (Northern or Southern), and sometimes on phonological environment. In the following examples the sounds within parenthesis are pronounced but not customarily written:

köäm (m'a) aera?  what are you doing?
tirotam (m'a) ae'  this mirror
köäm (m'a) anái  you took it
am (m'a) anene  your song

The effect of the added sounds in the above examples is to replace the short m by the lengthened version, to lengthen the a (if short), and to insert the
semivowel '. In the following examples (-) means no additional sounds are inserted:

kam (mw) ewe  you jumped
am (mw) ewe  your jump
kam (mw) ewaria  you stabbed it
kam (wi) in  you are constipated
kam (wi) iri  you came along
tirotamaam (w) i aon ...  mirror on ...
kam (w) ieie  you sailed
kam (m) oki  you returned
am (m) on  your turtle
am (m) oototo  your composition
am (m) oonimoa  your chicken pen
kam (u) un  you were angry
am (u) uuto  your young coconut trees
am (u) uto  your young coconut tree

(Note that the last two examples do not differ in pronunciation.)

an (n) anaia  go ahead and take it
taan (n) anene  singers
ran (n) aei  this water
kan (n) anaia  to want to take it
an (n) ewe  go ahead and jump
kan (n) ewe  to want to jump
kan (n) ewaria  to want to stab it
an (i) iri  come on along
kan (i) iri  to want to come along
ran (-) i aon ...  water on ...
kan (-) ieie  to want to sail
an (n) oki  go on back
kan (n) onimakinai  to want to trust me
ana ran (n) Otauea  Otauea’s water
an (u) un  go ahead and get angry
an (i) un  go ahead and get angry
kan (u) ura  to be ready to burn
kan (i) ura  to be ready to burn
kan (u) uee  to be ready to blossom
kan (i) uee  to be ready to blossom
te nang (ng) arei  that cloud
nang (ng) anaia  to be about to take it
nang (ng) anene  to be about to sing
naang (ng) akekei  those clouds
nang (ng) ewe  to be about to jump
e tang (ng) Ewii  Ewii cried
nang (ng) ewaria  to be about to stab it
nang (i) iri  to be about to go along
nang (i) ieie  to be about to sail
a kang (i) ika  they ate fish
e tang (ngi) Itaia  Itaia cried
nang (ng) oki to be about to return
a kang (ng) on they ate turtle
nang (ng) otooto to be about to compose something
e tang (ng) Otauoa Otauoa cried
e tang (u) Uriam Uriam cried
e tang (i) Uriam Uriam cried
nang (u) ure to be about to open
nang (i) ure to be about to open
nang (u) un to be about to get angry
nang (i) un to be about to get angry

2.5 The syllable

A short sequence of phonemes (one or more) uttered as a more or less single pulse of sound is called a syllable. Kiribatese speech then consists of a sequence of syllables.

When vowels do not occur together there is an obvious and simple grouping of phonemes to form syllables. This is true also in the case of lengthened vowels, but at first let us exclude diphthongs and longer sequences of vowels from consideration. Then each syllable will contain one (long or short) vowel of class V' (as defined in section 2.3). It will include the following phoneme only if it is a nasal and only if this following nasal is not followed by another vowel. It will include the preceding phoneme if it does not belong to the previous syllable. Somewhat rarely, a nasal preceding the first consonant in a syllable is included also if it does not belong to the preceding syllable. Thus all syllables will belong to one of the following types: V', V'N, NV', NV'N, CV', NCV', NCV'N. The following are examples of monosyllabic words:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>V'</td>
<td>e</td>
<td>he; she; it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>aa</td>
<td>yawn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V'N</td>
<td>aan</td>
<td>the under part of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>in</td>
<td>closed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>eng</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NV'</td>
<td>ma</td>
<td>but</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nnee</td>
<td>girl's name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>nii</td>
<td>coconut trees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NV'N</td>
<td>mim</td>
<td>urine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>naan</td>
<td>group, several</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>nnen</td>
<td>the place of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>mim</td>
<td>your dream</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CV'</td>
<td>te</td>
<td>singular article</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>kaa</td>
<td>car</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b'aa</td>
<td>oil; rock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ko</td>
<td>you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CV'N</td>
<td>kang</td>
<td>to eat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>been</td>
<td>coconuts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>tim</td>
<td>drop</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
type NCV'    mka    rotten
mb'a       kiss
ngke       when (past)

The foregoing scheme is subject to verification.

With diphthongs or longer strings of vowels the situation is not as yet clear. The vowel sentences of section 2.3 are not understandable (see following section) if pronounced without some additional stress cues or perhaps syllabification, and further study is needed.

2.6 Stress, rhythm and intonation

These matters are outside the scope of the present work, but represent interesting possibilities for future linguistic research. To a first approximation, the stress is much more even than in, say, English, where primary and secondary stressed syllables occur in words. But stress is very important semantically in Kiribatese. For example, the long all-vowel sentences in section 2.3, if pronounced evenly and without variation in stress or intonation,

\[ \text{iaiaiaiaiaiaiaiaiaia} \]
\[ \text{iaiuuaiaiaueaoaiaiaie} \]
\[ \text{aoiaiaueeiaoia} \]

are intelligible, or at best, barely intelligible upon careful listening and analysis. However, when the same utterances are pronounced with stress as indicated by

\[ \text{iaiaiaiaiaiaiaiaia} \]
\[ \text{iaiuuaiaiaueaoaiaiaie} \]
\[ \text{aoiaiaueeiaoia} \]

they become intelligible. Each Kiribatese word probably has stressed and unstressed components which are practically unchanged in different phonological environments. If this is true, Kiribatese dictionaries should indicate the stress pattern of each word. Stress here may involve higher intensity (loudness) as well as alternations in pitch and rhythm, and is another fruitful area for study.

2.7 Orthography

The phonetic spelling system used herein has been described in the foregoing paragraphs. There is no other standard orthography in existence, that we know of, and the various spellings that have been used in the past and at the present time represent a wide range from the most streamlined up to a system, not very different from our phonetic system, which was devised by the Vernacular Board of the Kiribati Ministry of Education, Training and Culture around the time of independence. The major difference between the VB (Vernacular Board) orthography and the phonetic one is that the combination ui used herein is usually written wi according to VB. The various degrees of 'streamlining' that have been used merely involve the dropping of some apostrophes and the conversion of some doubled letters to single letters. (It should be noted that much older literature published by the Catholic Missions used p in place of b and some other minor differences.)
The VB spelling system has been in use during the early 1980s, but was dropped in 1982 by the Kiribati Broadcasting and Publication Authority because it had not yet been approved by the Kiribati Parliament. At the time of this writing (1984) there is an 'official' orthography which can be obtained from the phonetic orthography by some simple transformations:

1. Reduce all doubled vowels to their single counterparts.
2. Change ngngai to ngai.
3. Initial ui (in any syllable) becomes wi.

To obtain an even more streamlined, or skeletal spelling, the apostrophes are dropped. The following examples illustrate the three systems:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phonetic</th>
<th>Official</th>
<th>Skeletal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>mm'akuri</td>
<td>m'akuri</td>
<td>makuri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ui</td>
<td>wi</td>
<td>wi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m'aan</td>
<td>m'an</td>
<td>man</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>uia</td>
<td>wia</td>
<td>wia</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Only rarely have doubled nasals been converted to single except in the word ngngai.

To summarise, a fourteen-phoneme description of the language has been suggested in the previous sections, and the writing system used here represents each phoneme by a letter, with the following exceptions. The sound /ng/ is represented by ng, and the single phoneme represented by the sounds /'/ and /w/ is also represented by the symbols ' and w, respectively, in order to more closely follow the traditional spelling system. (If we were free to cut loose from the past and suggest an efficient system, we would represent the /'/ and /w/ sounds by the single character w, the /v/ by v, and the /ng/ by g.) The system is surprisingly close to that introduced by Bingham, and we marvel at his depth of linguistic good sense at a time when such good sense was rare. If only he had not encumbered future generations by the apostrophe!

The relation between sounds, phonemes and the symbols of the phonetic system used here are summarised as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sound</th>
<th>Phoneme</th>
<th>Written symbol</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/a/</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/e/</td>
<td>e</td>
<td>e</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/i/</td>
<td>i</td>
<td>i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/o/</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/u/</td>
<td>u</td>
<td>u</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/m/</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/n/</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/ng/</td>
<td>ng</td>
<td>ng</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/b/</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/k/</td>
<td>k</td>
<td>k</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/r/</td>
<td>r</td>
<td>r</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/t/</td>
<td>t</td>
<td>t</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/s/</td>
<td>s</td>
<td>s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/v/</td>
<td>v</td>
<td>w</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/'/</td>
<td>'</td>
<td>'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/w/</td>
<td>w</td>
<td>w</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/æ/</td>
<td>(occurs in diphthongs)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/ɔ/</td>
<td>(occurs in diphthongs)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The foregoing description of orthographies pays no attention, of course, to the matter of word division, although this attracted some of the most heated debate in the meetings of the Vernacular Board. Whether or not words are to be written without separation, linked together, or separated, seems more a matter of convenience or tradition than a basic consideration. According to the VB's recommendation, we have separated phrases such as i bukiu, i rarikin, mai nano, etc., instead of ibukiu, irarikin, and mainano.

There is one matter which apparently no one treats in a standard way, and that is the phonetic insertion of i between incompatible words. Because a combination such as taan mm'akuri would be actually pronounced as taanimm'akuri, it is sometimes written taani mm'akuri. Even more troublesome are combinations involving the possessive indicator n, such as in B'anaan Kiribati, which would be pronounced as b'anaanikiribati. Other accepted spellings are B'anaan ni Kiribati, or B'anaani Kiribati, and possibly even B'anaa n Kiribati. These will hopefully eventually be sorted out and a standard orthography recommended, but the reader need not be too concerned with this problem, which does not involve the fundamentals of the language (as long as he pays attention to the pronunciation rules).

3. MORPFHEMS

The smallest units of sound that convey meaning are called morphemes, which consist of a small string of phonemes (including the possibility of a single phoneme). Roots and affixes are composed of one or more morphemes. The difference between roots and affixes is that affixes can never stand alone, can be used with various roots, and always stand in the same relationship with their root.

3.1 Forms of the roots

Apparently most all possible permitted combinations of sounds, as outlined in section 2.3, are used to form roots. This contrasts with some of the Malayo-Polynesian languages, which may form roots according to a few restricted patterns. The following examples are grouped according to their phonetic structure, beginning with the simplest.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Morpheme</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>e</td>
<td>he; she; it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a</td>
<td>they; four; progressive indicator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>i</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>oo</td>
<td>wall; enclosure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CV'</td>
<td>baa</td>
<td>leaf; thunder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b'aa</td>
<td>oil; rock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>roo</td>
<td>darkness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>kee</td>
<td>to withdraw</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ka</td>
<td>causative prefix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NV</td>
<td>maa</td>
<td>fishtrap</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ngaa</td>
<td>thousand; fathom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>na</td>
<td>future indicator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type</td>
<td>IE</td>
<td>AO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VV</td>
<td>ie</td>
<td>ao</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VN</td>
<td>ang</td>
<td>on</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NVV</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NVN</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NVVN</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCV'</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NNV</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VNV</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NNVN</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VNN</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VNV</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VNV'</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VCV</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CVV</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CV'N</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

and so forth. The following are examples of rather long roots:

nam'akaina   moon
\(\text{takaakaro}\) to play
\(\text{ntakaareau}\) kind of spider

One might expect that such long examples were formed by a combination of morphemes which have since been lost.
3.2 Affixes

Affixes include prefixes and suffixes, as there are apparently no true infixes in Kiribatese. There are both attached and detached forms (particles), where the difference between them is often a matter of mere orthography rather than of basic structure. The number of Kiribatese affixes is too small to enable one to make general statements concerning their structure.

Many Kiribatese affixes are morphemes which can be inserted in various positions relative to a word. Thus, classification as prefixes or suffixes may indicate only the predominant usage. The following is a list of some of the most common affixes:

prefixes

- i mutually, reciprocally
- ka causative
- kau abundant in
- bu smelling like
- boi smelling like
- kii having the nature of
- tan to turn
- uii to talk
- tiri cruel
- nano having attitude of
- kee to move
- boo in contact; corresponding
- taka very
- i indicates origin (nationality)
- bura having characteristic of

suffixes

- ra bad
- buaka bad
- raoi good
- mai toward speaker
- wati toward you
- rake upward; eastward
- ria downward; westward
- uaaï into two parts
- nako away
- rikaaki backward
- maaï in different directions, scattered
- akina transitiviser
- na transitiviser
- m'aka proficient at
- mweere slow
- tata fast
- remwe late

In addition there are the possessive suffixes (section 4.5.4), the transitive verb suffixes (section 4.8.6), and a group of special emphatic suffixes listed below:

- tautau
- nonginong
- tongitong
- kaei
- bwerebwere
- etc.
In presenting the above list the intention is to include those which are used with many different roots and to exclude those used with only one root. We are by no means convinced that this goal has been achieved. A small number of such morphemes occur in the interior of words, and perhaps these should be discussed as infixes.

The prefix i — gives the idea of mutuality of reciprocity to the word. It is often associated with a reduplication of part of the word:

- **tangira**  
  love (n.); to love (v.t.)
- **itatangiri**  
  mutual love (n.); to love each other (v.i.)
- **buoka**  
  help (n.); to help (v.t.)
- **ibuobuoki**  
  cooperation (n.); to help each other (v.i.)
- **rao**  
  friend (n.)
- **iraorao**  
  friendship (n.); to be friends with each other (v.i.)
- **tara**  
  to look at (v.t.)
- **itaratara**  
  to mutually look at (v.t.)
- **a itarataaraia**  
  they looked at each other
- **kam itarataraingkamii**  
  you looked at yourselves
- **ribaa**  
  hatred (n.); to hate (v.t.)
- **iriribai**  
  mutual hatred (n.); to hate each other (v.i.)
- **rib'a**  
  to crowd, be too close (v.i.)
- **irib'arib'a**  
  to be too close to each other (v.i.)

The prefix ka — converts many different types of root words into transitive verbs (see section 4.8.7.1).

The prefix kau — converts nouns, sometimes with reduplication, into adjectives (or other nouns) meaning 'abundant in' the given noun:

- **buki**  
  buttock (n.)
- **kaubukibuki**  
  having large buttocks (adj.)
- **mmamma**  
  breast (n.)
- **kaummmamma**  
  having large breasts (adj.)
- **m'ane**  
  money (n.)
- **kaum'ane**  
  rich, having lots of money (adj.)
- **bee**  
  hip (n.)
- **kaubeebee**  
  having large hips (adj.)
- **aba**  
  land (n.)
- **kauaba**  
  having much land (adj.) etc.

The prefix bu — converts nouns, sometimes with reduplication, into adjectives (or other nouns) meaning smelling like:

- **ika**  
  fish (n.)
- **buikaika**  
  fishy smelling (adj.); the smell of fish (n.)
- **man**  
  animal (n.)
- **bumaniman**  
  smelling like an animal (usually referring to a strong odor of sweat) (adj.)
ai fire (n.)
buaiai smoky smelling (adj.)
ang air (n.)
buangang stale smelling (adj.); a stale smell (n.)

The same morpheme occurs in other words, whose derivation is not so obvious:
buraraku smelling of urine (adj.)
nanabutoko smelling of bad feminine hygiene (adj.)

The prefix boi — performs the same function as bu:

ika fish (n.)
boiika smelling of fish (adj.)
boiarara pleasant smelling (adj.)
boiraa foul smelling (adj.)

There is the word bingaongao smelling of excrement, which apparently uses a modification of the prefix bu or boi.

The prefix kii — is used with adjectives, etc., often with reduplication, to give the idea of customarily that way, and usually in a derogatory sense:

noku envious of someone's food or possessions (adj.)
kiinokunoku customarily envious (adj.)
biu afraid (adj.); to run away to avoid a fight (v.i.)
kiibibiubiu cowardly (adj.)
mim to urinate (v.i.)
kiimmimmim prone to wetting his pants (adj.)
maaku to fear (v.i.)
kiemamaaku customarily afraid (adj.); 'fraidy cat' (n.) etc.

The prefix tan — may more logically be classed as a root which takes various suffixes. Its meaning is to turn:

nako away
tannako to turn away (v.i.)
mai toward me
tanimai to turn toward me (v.i.)

The prefix uii — forms several words having the meaning of various kinds of conversation or talk:

uiirikiriki to whisper (v.i.)
anti ghost (n.)
uiinnantiia to gossip about (v.t.)

(This prefix has customarily been spelled wi, and whether or not to retain this customary spelling has not yet been decided.)

The prefix tiri — gives the meaning of cruelty or the killing of the root part:

aomata person (n.)
tiriaomata murder, manslaughter (n.)
man insect, animal (n.)
tiriman to kill insects (v.i.)
b'ai n tiriman insecticide (n.)
The prefix **nano** -- is attached to adjectives, sometimes occurring in modified form, to give the idea of attitude or personality as described by the adjective:

- **rietata** high (adj.)
- **nanorieta** hauty, conceited, arrogant (adj.)
- **uoua** two
- **nanououa** doubtful, undecided (adj.)
- **rinano** low (adj.)
- **nanorinano** humble (adj.) etc.

The prefix **kee** — forms intransitive verbs which indicate movement in the direction indicated by the rest of the word, which is usually a suffix:

- **rikaaki** backward
- **keerikaaki** to move backward (v.i.)
- **wati** toward you
- **keewati** to move away from speaker (v.i.)
- **mai** toward speaker
- **keemai** to move toward speaker (v.i.) etc.

The prefix **boo** — has a wide range of meanings, including corresponding to, contact with, even with, a blow, etc., and is used with various roots in various ways:

- **buaakaka** bad (adj.)
- **boobuaka** dear, expensive, disadvantageously priced (adj.)
- **raoiroi** good (adj.)
- **booraol** cheap, inexpensive, advantageously priced (adj.)

In addition, the following words contain the morpheme **boo**:

- **bootaki** to meet, confer (v.i.)
- **kaboooa** to mix (v.t.)
- **boota** to bring together (v.t.)

The prefix **taka** — intensifies adjectives:

- **mainaina** white (adj.)
- **takomainaina** very white (adj.)

The prefix **i** — means originating from or having the nationality of, etc.:

- **i Amerika** American
- **i Tuvalu** Tuvaluan
- **i Tiaina** Chinese
- **i Aranuuka** a person from Aranuuka

The prefix **bura** — means having characteristic of, or like, seems to be, etc.:

- **baba** crazy (adj.)
- **burababa** having a crazy nature (somewhat weaker in connotation than the above) (adj.)
- **rang** worthless, poor, destitute (adj.); such a person (n.)
- **burarang** badly dressed, ill kept, poor, etc.; gullible, easily deceived, stupid (adj.)
raoioi  
buraraioi  
kamoamoa  
burakamo 

The suffix ra — forms a small number of adjectives meaning disagreeable or bad, and often has the form raa:
boi  odor, smell (n.)
boiraa  foul smelling (adj.)

In addition, there are words containing the morpheme ra:
kam'araa  bad (adj.)
kammaira  bad looking (adj.)

The suffix buaka — forms words meaning bad:
tiki  tight, stretched (adj.)
tikibuaka  homely, ugly (adj.)
ang  air, wind (n.)
angibuaka  a strong or bad wind (n.)
taetae  to speak (v.i.); language, speech (n.)
taetaebuaka  to speak badly (v.i.); foul or bad language (n.)
etc.

The suffix raoi — forms words meaning good or advantageous:
tiki  tight, stretched (adj.)
tikiraoi  pretty, beautiful (adj.)
buti  to travel, proceed (v.i.)
butiraoi  to travel or proceed freely without difficulty (v.i.)
takaakaro  to play (v.i.)
takaakaroraoi  to play well (v.i.)

The suffixes mai and wati — form words, mostly verbs, with meaning toward the speaker and toward you, respectively. Roots either take neither or either of these suffixes:
nako  to go (v.i.)
nakomai  to go toward speaker (v.i.)
nakoati or nakowati  to go toward you (v.i.)
kare  to throw (v.i.)
karemai  to throw toward speaker (v.i.)
karewati  to throw toward you (v.i.)
karea  to throw (v.t.)
karemaia  to throw toward speaker (v.t.)
karewatia  to throw toward you (v.t.)
biri  to run (v.i.)
birimai  to run toward speaker (v.i.)
biriwati  to run toward you (v.i.)
kanakoa  to send (v.t.)
kanakomaia  to send to speaker (v.t.)
kanakowatia or kanakoaati  to send to you (v.t.)
The suffixes rake and rio — form words, mostly verbs, with roots which can take either of the two suffixes. rake means eastward or upward or shoreward, while rio means westward or, downward or seaward. These ambiguities cause frequent misunderstanding among Kiribatese speakers, and it is difficult to understand how and why they have persisted for so long. Examples:

- wae: foot (n.)
- waerake: to go eastward or toward the land (v.i.)
- wairio (not waerio): to go westward or toward the sea (v.i.)
- biri: to run (v.i.)
- birirake: to run upwards or eastwards (v.i.)
- biririo: to run downwards or westwards (v.i.)

The suffix uai — forms words, usually verbs, with the meaning of into two pieces:

- koro: to cut (v.i.)
- korouaia: to cut into two (v.t.)
- bwenaa: to slice (v.t.)
- bwenaaia: to slice into two (v.t.)
- biria or biriia: to braid (v.t.)
- biriuaia: to braid into two strands (v.t.)

This procedure is sometimes generalised by the suffixes tennai three, aai four, etc., but these are far less commonly used than uai. Examples:

- korotennaiia: to cut into three (v.t.)
- bwenaaia: to slice into four parts (v.t.)
- biritennaiia: to braid into three strands (v.t.)

The suffix nako — forms words, usually verbs, with the meaning of away from speaker:

- biri: to run (v.i.)
- birinako: to run away (v.i.)
- tewea: to throw (v.t.)
- tewenakoa: to throw away (v.t.)
- maae: dispersed (adj.)
- maaenako: to disperse away (v.i.)
- tae: faded (adj.)
- taenako: to fade away (v.i.) etc.

The suffix rikaaki — forms words, usually verbs, with the meaning of backwards:

- buti: to travel, proceed (v.i.)
- butirikaaki: to travel backward (v.i.)
- kee: to move (v.i.)
- keerikaaki: to move backward (v.i.) etc.

The suffixes akina and na — are used in the formation of transitive verbs and are discussed in sections 4.8.7.2 and 4.8.7.4.

The suffix m'aaka — is used to form words, usually adjectives, with the meaning of proficient at:

- buti: to travel, proceed (v.i.)
- butim'aaka: fast (adj.)
oota to shine (v.i.)
ootam'aaka bright (adj.)
tenaa to bite (v.t.)
tenam'aaka capable of biting hard (adj.)
uti to awaken (v.i.)
utim'aaka capable of easily awakening (adj.) etc.

The suffix mweere — is used to form words, usually adjectives, with the meaning of slow:
buti to travel, proceed (v.i.)
butimweere slow (adj.)
uti to awaken (v.i.)
utimweere slow to awaken (adj.)
kiba to fly (v.i.)
kibamweere slow at flying (adj.) etc.

The suffix tata — is used to form words, usually adjectives, with the meaning of fast:
uii mouth (n.)
uiitata fast at talking (adj.)
bai hand (n.)
baitata fast at working with the hands (adj.)
waefoot (n.)
waetatafast in general (adj.) etc.

The suffix remwe — forms words, usually adjectives, with the meaning of late or slow:
wae foot (n.)
wae remwe slow (adj.)
uuii mouth (n.)
uuiiremwe slow at talking (adj.)

In addition there is the word iremwe meaning late (in arriving, etc.).

The possessive suffixes — are described in section 4.5.4.

The transitive verb suffixes — are described in section 4.8.6.

The morpheme maae — gives the idea of dispersal or of going in different directions:
nako to go (v.i.)
maaenako to disperse, disappear in different directions (v.i.)
uamaae general, wide in application or meaning (adj.)

3.3 Adaptation of foreign words

Under discussion here is the recent acquisition of words from other languages rather than prehistorical evolution. Words are accepted from other languages through direct speaker-listener contact. Foreign written materials have practically no effect as so few Kiribatese read foreign languages. Thus, the foreign words accepted are rendered into Kiribatese according to their
pronunciation. The representation of many different foreign sounds into the 14 or so Kiribatese phonemes often requires considerable changes in the word, so that the original word is often hardly recognisable by a speaker of the source language.

3.3.1 Words derived from English

English provides by far the largest number of foreign source words. The English vowels /a/, /e/, /i/, /o/ and /u/ are so similar to their Kiribatese counterparts that they are accepted directly. The English combinations /ba/ and /ma/ usually become b'a and m'a:

- b'aatoro (bottle)
- m'abu (mop)

The English sound /æ/ usually becomes ae or a:

- maatieti (n.), maatiai (matches; match)
- Tiæki, Tiæke (Jack)
- baætere (n.), baetere (battery)
- bääki (n.), baekî (bag)
- kaeran (n.), kaaran (gallon)

The English sound /ar/ is usually rendered by aa or by a:

- m'aakete (n.) (market)
- b'aa (n.) (bar)
- tioka (n.) (sugar)

The English sound /i/ usually becomes i:

- bititon (n.) (piston)
- tiin (n.) (tin)

The English sound /œ/ usually becomes ao:

- taoo (n.) (saw)
- tao (n.) (salt)

The English sound /oo/ usually becomes o:

- boki (n.) (book)

The English sound /a/ usually becomes a:

- katitam (n.) (customs (office))
- turaaïwa (n.) (driver)
- Tiamaan (n.) (German)
- tibana (spanner)
- b'ati (n.) (bus)

The English sound /ɛ/ usually becomes ee or ei:

- reerioo (n.) (radio)
- kurelita (grader (earth-moving machine))

The English consonants /b/, /k/, /m/, /n/, /r/ and /t/ are usually similar enough to the corresponding Kiribatese sounds to be accepted directly. Examples:

- b'ati (n.) (bus)
The English sounds /f/, /v/ and /p/ usually become b:

- Buranti (n.) France
- taibora (n.) table etc.

The English sound /g/ usually becomes k:

- koora (n.) gold
- kaeti (n.) gas
- kooti (n.) goat
- kiriiti (n.) grease

The English sound /l/ usually becomes r. The sound /d/ when followed by /i/ or /I/ also usually becomes r. Examples:

- reerioo (n.) radio
- burako (n.) block
- roka (n.) lock

When /d/ is followed by a vowel other than /i/ or /I/ it usually becomes t:

- take (n.) duck
- taokita (n.) doctor

The English sound /h/ is usually omitted entirely:

- ab'akaati (n.) halfcaste
- auti (n.) house

The English sounds /j/, /ch/, /s/, /sh/ and /z/ usually become ti:

- Tiooti George
- Tiabaan Japan
- Tiaina China
- Tinti (n.) inch
- aoti (n.) horse
- tioka (n.) sugar
- tiein (n.) chain
- bintini (n.) business

English consonant clusters are rendered in many different ways, and there is no standard method. For example, the fr combination has been rendered both by bur and by bir as in the following examples:

- Buranti (n.) France
- birako (n.) frog

Many other inconsistencies exist.

English words have stressed or accented syllables and these are frequently interpreted by Kiribatese to be longer than unstressed syllables. Consequently long vowels are commonly used in the stressed syllables:

- aama hammer
- teektinari dictionary
- ribooti report

The above rules are not adhered to strongly. The way in which any given English word will be rendered depends on many variables. Such words are brought by people of varied accents (Australian, English, American, Japanese, etc.), and
are heard by people who are not used to hearing such sounds. Most Kiribatese hear such words from other Kiribatese rather than from the original speaker.

Some words are taken without any change of meaning:

- taibora: table
- bentira: pencil
- b'aatika: bicycle
- tiein: chain
- aaboro: apple

Some words have been given a wider meaning. The first English equivalent indicated in the following list is the source word:

- timenti, timanti: cement; concrete; foundation
- kaab'a: copper; galvanised iron
- kiraati: glass (material); glass for drinking; mirror
- kiriiiti: grease; oil
- boki: book; magazine; pamphlet
- kaa: car; cart; truck
- beneka: vinegar; chili

This practice seems to create many ambiguities and confusion.

Some words have been taken from brand names to indicate the product and possibly some related things as well.

- buraaim'ati (from Primus) cooking stove
- rutoo (from Ludo) game of snakes and ladders

### 3.3.2 Words derived from Greek

A very small number of words, mostly religious terms and place names, were derived from the Greek. This adaptation was done chiefly by non-native speakers (especially Bingham) and so may not shed much light on how such adaptation takes place naturally. However, the pronunciation pattern reflected in use of lengthened vowels is a product of the native speakers' inclinations, and not imposed by outsiders. In any case, the following words are now firmly part of the Kiribatese language:

- ebikebo, ebikobo: Bishop
- ekaareetia: church; congregation
- erene: Greece; Greek
- miterio: mystery
- euangkerio: gospel
- tutia: mass
- eukari: body of Christ; thanksgiving

The above are derived from the following Greek words:

- επίσκοπος: overseer
- εκκλησία: gather
- Ηέλλειν: Greece
- μυστικός: mystery
- ευαγγέλιος: good message
- θύτων: victim
- ευχαριστία: good grace

(Note that euangkerio is customarily spelled evangkerio.)
3.3.3 Words derived from Fijian

A very small number of words were introduced, mainly by leprosy patients sent from the Gilbert Islands to the leper colony at Makoqai in the 1930s and 1940s. Most of these words do not seem to have achieved widespread acceptance. The following two examples,

- b'akarau \(\rightarrow\) dress, pattern
- m'aatai \(\rightarrow\) clever

were derived from the Fijian words

- vakarau \(\rightarrow\) ready, prepared
- matai \(\rightarrow\) clever, skilled

3.3.4 Words derived from Tuvaluan and Samoan

Kiribatese obviously has many words which entered during prehistoric times, but very few from recent times, such as the following example:

- baroum \(\rightarrow\) kitchen

which was derived from the Tuvaluan

- fale umu \(\rightarrow\) bakehouse

4. FUNCTION CLASSES (PARTS OF SPEECH)

In this section words are considered according to their function as nouns, verbs, etc. These labels are useful for categorising words in English, less useful for Kiribatese, but we continue to use them for convenience.

4.1 Articles

The Kiribatese words te \(\rightarrow\) singular, and taian \(\rightarrow\) plural have functions similar to articles in other languages. They indicate number (singular and plural) but not definiteness or indefiniteness, and so are not completely analogous to a and the.

4.1.1 te

This word always precedes a noun, and stands separate from its noun in the writing system recommended by the KLB and in most all existing text. The meaning is either a, the, an, or sometimes it has no counterpart in English at all other than to indicate singular. Examples:

- te boki \(\rightarrow\) book; a book; the book
- te atiibu \(\rightarrow\) stone; a stone; the stone
- te nang \(\rightarrow\) cloud; a cloud; the cloud
- te maraki \(\rightarrow\) pain; a pain; the pain
- te rua \(\rightarrow\) pit; a pit; the pit
- te mata \(\rightarrow\) eye; an eye; the eye
- te tama \(\rightarrow\) father; a father; the father
If it stands before a collective noun, or name of a substance, etc., it can mean *some*. Examples:

- **te ran**  
  - water; some water; the water
- **te taari**  
  - salt; some salt; the salt
- **te takataka**  
  - copra; some copra; the copra
- **te tano**  
  - sand; some sand; the sand
- **te kunnikai**  
  - cloth; some cloth; the cloth
- **te ang**  
  - wind; some wind; the wind
- **te raraa**  
  - blood; some blood; the blood

Because such constructions can be translated in different ways in English, future examples will give one form only, with the understanding that other translations are possible in accordance with the above examples.

A very small number of nouns customarily never take the prefix or article *te*. They mostly mean something of which only one is considered to exist:

- **taai**  
  - the sun
- **nam'akaina**  
  - the moon
- **karawa**  
  - sky; heaven
- **aonnaaba**  
  - the earth
- **taari**  
  - the sea
- **marawa**  
  - the sea

(but note the exception, Te Atua God). When used with words which customarily function as adjectives or intransitive verbs, the effect is to nominalise them:

- **uraura**  
  - red
- **te uraura**  
  - redness
- **nanokaawaki**  
  - to be sorry; sad
- **te nanokaawaki**  
  - sorrow
- **m'ananga**  
  - to travel
- **te m'ananga**  
  - journey

(see section 4.4.6 for details regarding this nominalisation process).

The article *te* is also used, somewhat informally, to indicate a class of objects. Thus, **te ika** can mean *fish* (as a class), *some fish*, as well as *a fish* or *the fish*. Examples:

- **e bati te ika**  
  - there are lots of fish
- **e roko te maninnara**  
  - mosquitoes came.

### 4.1.2 taian

This word has roughly the same function and use as *te*, above, except that it indicates the plural of nouns. Thus, **taian** is used only with nouns indicating countable objects, or which can have plurals. It is not used with collective nouns or with substance names, nor to nominalise other words or expressions. With bimorphous nouns (having a distinct plural form see section 4.4.1) the singular form is used with taian. When used before nouns beginning with an incompatible consonant or nasal (see section 2.3) it becomes **taiani**:

- **taiani boki**  
  - some books; books; the books
- **taian atiibu**  
  - some stones; stones; the stones
- **taian nang**  
  - some clouds; clouds; the clouds
taiani maraki  some pains; pains; the pains
taian rua    some pits; pits; the pits
taiani mata  some eyes; eyes; the eyes
taian tama   some fathers; fathers; the fathers

When the noun is obviously plural from other features of its environment, apparently the taian may be used or omitted without any difference of meaning:

naang akekei  those clouds
taian nang akekei those clouds
booki akanne   those books
taii boki akanne those books
uuto aikai      these young coconut trees
taii uto aikai  these young coconut trees

It is always to be kept in mind that many of the examples used are subject to pronunciation changes as described in section 2.4. The last example, for instance, can also be pronounced taii uto aikai which may confuse one to believe that the plural form of uuto is being used.

4.2 Noun classifiers and numerals

The ordinary counting numbers are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>teuana</td>
<td>one</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>uoua</td>
<td>two</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>teniua</td>
<td>three</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aua</td>
<td>four</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nimaua</td>
<td>five</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>onoua</td>
<td>six</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>itiuia</td>
<td>seven</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>waniua</td>
<td>eight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rualua</td>
<td>nine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tebuina</td>
<td>ten</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tebui ma teuana</td>
<td>eleven</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tebui ma uoua</td>
<td>twelve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tebui ma teniuua</td>
<td>thirteen etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>uabui</td>
<td>twenty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>uabui ma teuana</td>
<td>twenty one</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>uabui ma uoua</td>
<td>twenty two etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tenibui</td>
<td>thirty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tenibui ma teuana</td>
<td>thirty one</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tenibui ma uoua</td>
<td>thirty two etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>abui</td>
<td>forty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nimabui</td>
<td>fifty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>onobui</td>
<td>sixty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>itibui</td>
<td>seventy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wanibui</td>
<td>eighty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ruabui</td>
<td>ninety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tebubua</td>
<td>one hundred</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The morpheme bui meaning ten has customarily been written as bwi in all cases. There is still controversy on how it should be spelled. Note that teniua and waniua, while pronounced (in Southern Dialect) as indicated above, are customarily written tenua and wanua. This seems to be related to the fact that the addition of the suffix -ua to the root in each case requires the extra sounds because of the terminal nasal of the root (see section 2.4).

The word ma and; with is used to form numbers from eleven through ninety nine, but not used after words for 'hundred' or larger.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>tebubua</td>
<td>hundred</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tengaa</td>
<td>thousand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>terebu</td>
<td>ten thousand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tekuri</td>
<td>hundred thousand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>teea</td>
<td>million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tetano</td>
<td>ten million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tetoki</td>
<td>hundred million</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In recent times mirion million as derived from English is replacing teea, and the words terebu and higher numbers are not frequently used because they are being replaced by other combinations (see below).

Different numbers are used for counting different things. The numbers presented in the previous paragraphs are those used for counting general objects. There is only one element of the numbers which changes according to the nature of the things counted, and this is the classifier. To the classifier are added the following affixes to indicate the number:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Affix</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>te-</td>
<td>one</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ua- or uo-</td>
<td>two</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ten-</td>
<td>three</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a-</td>
<td>four</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nima-</td>
<td>five</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ono- or one-</td>
<td>six</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iti-</td>
<td>seven</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wan</td>
<td>eight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rua-</td>
<td>nine</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The most common classifiers being used are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classifier</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ua</td>
<td>fruit; classifier for general objects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>man</td>
<td>animal; classifier for persons and animals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kai</td>
<td>tree; stick; classifier for plants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>baa</td>
<td>leaf; classifier for sheets or flat objects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ai</td>
<td>classifier for sticks or long objects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kuo</td>
<td>classifier for liquid measure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>waa</td>
<td>canoe; classifier for boats, ships, airplanes, canoes, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kora</td>
<td>suit; classifier for baskets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ung</td>
<td>classifier for pandanus fruit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ngaa</td>
<td>fathom; thousand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m'aang</td>
<td>special classifier for humans only (see below)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>roro</td>
<td>generation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m'angko</td>
<td>cup; classifier for cupfuls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bong</td>
<td>day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ato</td>
<td>classifier for coconut thatch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>inaki</td>
<td>classifier for rows of thatch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ritoro</td>
<td>classifier for bundles of thatch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>abuta</td>
<td>classifier for handfuls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rinan</td>
<td>row</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The prefix ua- two is combined irregularly with -ua and -man to produce uoua and uoman. Ono- becomes one- when combined with -ai to produce oneai. Rua- plus -ua produces ruaiua nine.

The numbers representing integral powers of ten are used in same way as classifiers:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classifier</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>bui</td>
<td>ten; used only in numbers in which the classifier ua is appropriate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ngaun</td>
<td>ten; used in numbers in which the classifier ua is not appropriate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bubua</td>
<td>hundred etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The suffix -na for one is used with the classifiers which specify the nature of the objects counted, and with bui, but not with the others:
temanna  one (animal)
teuana  one (general)
tekaina  one (plant)
tebaana  one (sheet)
teina  one (stick)
tekuona  one (cup, glass, etc.)

but

tebubua  one hundred
tengaa  one thousand etc.

and

tebuina  ten (general)
tengaun  ten (for any other specific class of thing)

The root ira- is used to form interrogatives:

iraua?  how many (general)?
irakai?  how many (plants)?
iraman?  how many (people)?

The root tabe- is used to form words denoting an unspecified quantity:

tabeua  several (general)
tabebaa  several (leaves)
tabeai  several (bottles)

Its reduplicated form is used to give the idea of each or every:

taani moti n tatabeman  each judge
auti n tatabeua nako  every house
ataei n tatabemaniia  each child

The suffix -m'aang is used only in certain special constructions:

tabem'aang  some (people)
tem'aangina  the others (people)

The idea of other, when indefinite, is achieved by putting a numeral after the noun:

te boki teuana  another book
aiine tabeman  other women
ta bakoa teaina  another shark

When more definiteness is called for the relative pronouns (usually third person) are used:

te ataei are temanna  the other child
iika ake tabeman  the other fishes
te nii are tekaina  the other coconut tree

There is a peculiar counting system in children's chants and games:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>teeeu</td>
<td>one</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>uuou</td>
<td>two</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>teeniu</td>
<td>three</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aau</td>
<td>four</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>niimau</td>
<td>five</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>oonou</td>
<td>six</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iitiu</td>
<td>seven</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>waaniu</td>
<td>eight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ruuai</td>
<td>nine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>teebui</td>
<td>ten</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This kind of counting apparently stops at 'ten'. The suffix -u used erratically in the above may be the remnant of an ancient classifier. The distinctive pattern of lengthened vowels is unexplained. Also in children's chants and games there occurs a distinctive counting by twos:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>teratera</th>
<th>two</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>uuaa</td>
<td>four</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tenten</td>
<td>six</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nangananga</td>
<td>eight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nimanima</td>
<td>ten</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

also not used above 'ten'.

4.2.1 Cardinal numbers

The following examples show the formation of the larger cardinal numbers for general objects:

- 1 354  tengaa tenibubua nimabui ma auua
- 5 903  nimangaa ruabubua teniuua
- 35 812 tenrebu nimangaa wanibubua tebui ma uoua
- 652 748 onokuri nimarebu uangaa itibubua abui ma waniua
- 9 108 352 ruaea tekuri wanigaa tenibubua nimabui ma uoua etc.

In recent times the last three would more likely be rendered as follows:

- 35 812  tenibuu ma nimaua te ngaa wanibubua tebui ma uoua
- 652 748  onobubua nimabui ma uoua te ngaa itibubua abui ma waniua
- 9 108 352  ruaiua te mirion tebubua waniua te ngaa tenibubua
- nimabui ma uoua

In dropping the traditional Kiribatese words for ten to the fourth and higher powers, ngaa thousand is also becoming used independently, instead of as an attached quantifier, as in the above examples. The same numbers, for counting sheets of paper, for example, would become:

- 1 354  tengaa tenibubua nimangaa ma abaa
- 5 903  nimangaa ruabubua tenibaa
- 35 812 tenrebu nimangaa wanibubua tengaun ma uabaa
- 652 748 onokuri nimarebu uangaa itibubua angau n ma waniua
- 9 108 352 ruaiua te mirion tebubua waniua te ngaa tenibubua
- nimabui ma uabaa

For expressing numbers of things the cardinal number is usually placed before the plural form of the noun:

- tengaun ma uoman ataei 12 children
- tenibubua uangau ma 325 sheets of paper
- nimabaa beeba 95 glasses of water
- ruangaa ma nimaku 27 tall coconut trees
- m'angko n ran my 13 pigs; 13 of my pigs;
- uangaa ma itikai nii aiaka I have 13 pigs.
- a ririeta my 13 pigs; 13 of my pigs;
- tengaun ma teniman au beeki you have two teachers; two of your
- uoman amii taan reirei teachers; you have two teachers.
But the singular form of the noun is also often used:

- tengaun ma uoman te ataei
  12 children
- teniuia te boki
  three books
- tennai te bentira
  three pencils
- tenikai te nii
  three coconut trees etc.

4.2.2 Ordinal numbers

These are formed by prefixing ka- to the cardinal numbers, except for the first. The ordinal is linked with the noun by n:

- te kauoman n tia reirei
  the second teacher
- te kairaua ni kawai?
  which street? (expecting the reply will be an ordinal number)
- te kateniuia ni boki
  the third book
- te karuaman
  the ninth (person)
- te moa ni kaibuke
  the first ship
- te katebubuanimakai
  the 105th (tree)

When placed after the noun the ordinal is linked using a relative pronoun:

- te auti ae te kaaua
  the fourth house
- te mai are te katenikai
  the third breadfruit tree
- te b'aene are te kanimakora
  the fifth basket
- te baa ni mao ae te kauabaa
  the second saltbush leaf

The ordinals can be used verbally as transitive verbs, but are defective in that only third person objects are permitted. The verb does not take the inflectional endings described in section 4.8.6:

- I kateniuia rokou
  I came three times (lit. my coming happened three times)
- Kam kauoua matuuumii n te ngaina aei?
  did you sleep twice earlier today? (lit. did your sleep happen twice earlier today?)

Distributive numerals are formed by reduplicating the prefix ka-:

- a na anganaki kakanimaua
  they'll be given five dollars each
- te taaraa
- a maekanaki auti akekei ni
  those houses are each occupied by
- kakaoua te utuu
  two families.
- a na nako ni kakateniman i
  three (persons) each will go on
- aoni waaiia
  their canoes.

Fractions, except itera half are expressed by the affixes ka- -m'akoro

- uoua te katenim'akoro
  two thirds
- iteran te m'ane
  half of the money
- itiuia te katebubuanim'akoro
  seven hundredths
- nimaua te katebui ma onoua ni
  five sixteenths
- m'akoro
- teniuia te kanimam'akoro
  three fifths of your coconuts
- n am ben
4.3 Agent prefixes

These are used before a verb to indicate its agent, which is customarily a person. Thus, they are not as productive or flexible as the English suffix '-er' (which can designate inanimate agents such as 'can opener', 'bull dozer', etc.). There has been a recent tendency to extend their use to include non-personal agents. For example, the following constructions have been proposed (but not generally accepted):

- **kotokoto (v.i.)** to point, indicate
- **tia koto** preposition (in grammar)
- **rimoan** to precede (something)
- **ara** name; noun
- **tia rimoan ara** article (in grammar)

Such constructions are more readily accepted by educated Kiribate. They nominalise verbs or verbal expressions. Thus, the singular form (with tia) must always be preceded by te or a possessive pronoun.

4.3.1 tia

The following examples illustrate use with intransitive verbs:

- **te tia anene** a singer
- **te tia nakonako** a walker
- **te tia kakam'arua** a crook
- **te tia nanokaawaki** a sad person
- **te tia aakoi** a kind person

In Kiribate, adjectives are functionally identical with intransitive verbs. However, tia can apparently be used freely with the more 'verblike' words, and only with a limited set of the more 'adjective-like' words. There are apparently no counterparts with such words as uraura red, ab'aab'aki big, m'aitoro cold, etc. The word tia can be used with transitive verbs, but usually only when the object is indicated. When the object is not indicated the constructions are colloquial and perhaps not correct. Examples:

- **te tia tiringnga** the person who killed him, his killer
- **te tia karaoia** the person who made it, its maker
- **te tia karaoia** the person who made them, their maker
- **te tia karaoa te auti** the person who made the house
- **te tia kabuta te kaa** the driver of the car

The word tia can also be used with compound verbs, such as in the following constructions:

- **te tia kan am'arake** a person wanting to eat
- **te tia kani maeka i** a person wanting to live on Tarawa
  
  *Tarawa*
- **te tia aki roko** a person not coming (an absent person)

But use with other auxiliary verbs, such as tuai, tia (the indicator of the perfect tense), etc., is rare.
4.3.2 taan

The word taan has the same function as tia except that it indicates the plural. Thus, it is not preceded by te. When taan is followed by a word beginning with an incompatible sound, as described in section 2.3, it becomes taani. Examples:

- taan anene: singers
- taan nakonako: walkers
- taani kakam'arua: crooks
- taan nanokaawaki: sad persons
- taan aakoi: kind persons

and

- taan tiringnga: his killers
- taan karaoiia: its makers
- taani karaoiia: their makers
- taan karaoa te auti: the house's makers
- taani kan ma'arake: persons wanting to eat
- taani kani maeka i Tarawa: persons wanting to live on Tarawa
- taan aki am'arake: persons not eating

The combination taan tia can be substituted for taan in all such constructions without change of meaning. But this is a recent construction which is considered incorrect by some speakers.

4.4 Nouns

No particular form typifies nouns. Apparently, any permitted combination of sounds can serve as a noun. In Kiribatese, the same word can have many functions. If the noun is singular, its function is usually indicated by presence of the article te. There are a small number of singular nouns which do not take a prefix:

1. place names, such as
   - Amerika
   - Kiribati
   - Tarawa

2. names of persons

3. intimate parts of things which are used in the formation of prepositions (see section 4.6), such as
   - aa: the space under
   - ao: the top part
   - nano: the inside
   - rariki: the side
   - eta: the space above

4. names of the cardinal directions
   - meaang: north
   - mainiku: east
   - maiaki: south
   - maeao: west
some nouns which indicate things of which only one is considered to exist:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Noun</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>taai</td>
<td>sun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nam'akaina</td>
<td>moon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>marawa</td>
<td>ocean etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When nouns are possessed, as when accompanied by possessive pronouns or suffixes, their number is ambiguous because the singular form of bimorphous nouns (section 4.4.1) is always used:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Possessed Noun</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ana kao</td>
<td>his ox; his oxen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>au ben</td>
<td>my coconut; my coconuts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>matam</td>
<td>your eye; your eyes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aia kirii</td>
<td>their dog; their dogs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rarikin te kaibuke</td>
<td>the side of the ship; the sides of the ship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bukin te kangaanga</td>
<td>the reason for the difficulty; the reasons for the difficulty</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.4.1 Bimorphous nouns

Most nouns have an invariable form and are used for both the singular and the plural. We shall call such nouns 'monomorphous'. Some nouns have different forms for the singular and the plural, and are called 'bimorphous' herein. The plural form of bimorphous nouns is always characterised by the presence of a long vowel, where the corresponding short vowel occurs in the singular form. This lengthened vowel is usually the first vowel occurring in the word.

Examples:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Noun</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>tina</td>
<td>mother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tiina</td>
<td>mothers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kao</td>
<td>ox</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kaoa</td>
<td>oxen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ben</td>
<td>coconut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>been</td>
<td>coconuts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mata</td>
<td>eye</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>maata</td>
<td>eyes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Strange as it may seem, the bimorphous nature of these nouns never is an essential indicator of the number of a noun. In all cases where a separate plural form is used, there are other indications of plurality in the utterance. Conversely, where there are no other indications of plurality, the distinct plural form of bimorphous nouns is not used. The origin of such a system may thus present an enigma. In any case, number does not seem to be considered very important in Kiribatese. There are so many bimorphous nouns that it would be impractical to present an exhaustive list.

When bimorphous plural nouns are modified by taian, or by any possessive pronoun or suffix, the singular form is used:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Noun</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>tari</td>
<td>brother; sister</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>taari</td>
<td>brothers; sisters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tariu</td>
<td>my brother; my brothers etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>taian tari</td>
<td>brothers, etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
uto young coconut tree
uuto young coconut trees
taian uto young coconut trees
aia uto their young coconut tree;
their young coconut trees etc.

(beware of pronunciation of taian uto according to section 2.4.)

Whether or not a given noun is monomorphous or bimorphous apparently depends on its length and complexity, with the shorter, simpler nouns being bimorphous. New acquisitions into the language readily fall into this pattern, as attested by the large number of bimorphous loan words:

boki book
booki books
take duck
taake ducks
roka lock
rooka locks
reta letter
reeta letters
kao ox
kaao oxen etc.

Let D (for diphthong) stand for any string of vowels of the class V', not including a long sound, and X stand for the combined class of C and N sounds (consonants and nasals). Most bimorphous nouns seem to have the structure VXV, DN, XD, XVX, or XVXV, with most others being monomorphous. Examples of the type VXV:

ika fish
iika fishes
uki fingernail
uuki fingernails
um'a house
uum'a houses
aro way, manner; religion
aar o ways, manners; religions
ira hair
iira hairs
ino maggot
iino maggots
ina scale (of a fish)
iina scales etc.

The following are examples of the type XD:

kao ox
kaao oxen
kai tree; stick
kaa i trees; sticks
bai  hand
baai  hands
b'ai  thing
b'aaai  things
wae  foot
waae  feet
kie  mat
kiie  mats
moa  chicken
mooa  chickens
mao  saltbush tree
maao  saltbush trees
ria  lip
riia  lips  etc.

The following are examples of the type DN:
on  turtle
oon  turtles
ang  wind; air
aang  winds  etc.

The following are examples of the type XDN:
ben  coconut
been  coconuts
kun  skin
kuun  skins
man  letter; animal
maan  letters; animals
bong  day
boong  days
nang  cloud
naang  clouds  etc.

An exception is raian lion, which is monomorphous. The following are examples of the type XVXV:
mata  eye
maata  eyes
tina  mother
tiina  mothers
tama  father
taama  fathers
tati  scissors (singular)
taati  scissors (plural)
biti  knife
biiti  knives
reta letter
reeta letters
kewe lie
keewe lies etc.

The following monomorphous nouns represent classes of more complex structure than the above:

b'airi nose; noses
manga mountain; mountains
tara towel; towels
kaboa boil; boilers
burae hair; hairs
kimoa rat; rats
kawai road; roads
roroa neck; necks
itoi star; stars
ataei child; children
auti house; houses
aotu horse; horses
aono land; lands

All words containing any long sound appear to be monomorphous even though their structures may be simple:

booti boat; boats
ruura ruler; rulers
neera nail; nails
kika octopus; octopi
nuuka middle; middles
tara towel; towels
kaa car; cars
biia beer; beers
buua throat; throats
mmamma breast; breasts
kirii dog; dogs
katii gun; guns
tao saw; saws
baa leaf; leaves
biin bean; beans
been pen; pens
buun spoon; spoons
kiing key; keys
atuu head; heads
akuu back; backs
ooti hose; hoses
uue flower; flowers
uaa fruit; fruits
uii tooth; teeth
aaai coconut crab; coconut crabs
oo enclosure; enclosures
uu eel trap; eel traps

Many of such words are of recent foreign origin.
Words consisting purely of vowels are bimorphous if they consist of two or less vowels, monomorphous otherwise. Some bimorphous examples:

*ie*  
*sail*

*iiie*  
*sails*

*ao*  
*fishline*

*aao*  
*fishlines*

*ia*  
*grey hair*

*iiia*  
*grey hairs*

*io*  
*noddy*

*iio*  
*noddies*

The following are some monomorphous examples:

*uea*  
*king; kings*

*alaa*  
*firewood*

*alaa*  
*enemy; enemies*

*aoa*  
*hour; hours*

The word *aine* woman is bimorphous (*aine women*) in contradiction to the above rules, and appears to be the bimorphous noun of highest complexity in existence.

4.4.2 Juxtaposition of nouns

Gender of singular nouns is indicated by direct juxtaposition with *mm'aane* male or *aine* female:

*te moa mm'aane*  
*male chicken, rooster*

*te kimoa aine*  
*female rat*

*te kirii aine*  
*female dog, bitch*

*te kao mm'aane*  
*male ox, bull*

*te kao aine*  
*female ox, cow*

*te mwemweara aine*  
*female papaya tree* etc.

The second element is apparently a true noun because it can stand alone as a noun, and because modification of nouns by adjectives usually follows a completely different pattern (see section 4.7). Note that in the above singular examples both nouns are in their singular form. In the plural case both nouns take their plural form (here *aine* is bimorphous, *mm'aane* is monomorphous):

*moa mm'aane*  
*roosters*

*kimoa aine*  
*female rats*

*kirii aine*  
*bitches*

*kaao mm'aane*  
*bulls*

*kaao aine*  
*cows*

*mwemweara aine*  
*female papaya trees*

When these plural constructions are used with *taian* the first noun is used in the singular form, the second in the plural:

*taiani moa mm'aane*  
*roosters*

*taiani kimoa aine*  
*female rats*

*taiani kirii aine*  
*bitches*

*taiani kao mm'aane*  
*bulls*

*taiani kao aine*  
*cows* etc.
(Note that Kiribatese refer to the gender of plants which produce flowers as aine and to the gender which produces fruit as mm'aine. One could say that aine means *male* and mm'aine means *female* in these cases, but a more reasonable interpretation may simply be botanical ignorance.)

Juxtaposition of nouns is used for indicating the material of which an object consists. For the singular case te is always used before the substance name:

- m'angko te kiraati: glass (drinking) glass
- riri te baanni: coconut leaf skirt
- taaea te rab'a: rubber tyre
- m'am'a te koora: gold ring

The same construction can be used to indicate type or species:

- kai te ren: Messerschmidia tree
- aoraki te miitira: measles (the measles sickness)
- kai te kaina: pandanus tree
- man te eitei: frigate bird
- taura te iti: electric lamp

When possession is to be indicated by a possessive suffix (see section 4.5.4) the first noun is suffixed without further modification:

- ririu te baanni: my coconut leaf skirt
- nima te ran: my drink of water
- karara te ika: our meal of fish
- aorakim te reebera: your leprosy

The plural cases of these constructions is formed by putting both nouns in the plural and omitting the intervening te:

- m'angko kiraati: glass (drinking) glasses
- riri baanni: coconut leaf skirts
- taaea raab'a: rubber tyres
- m'am'a koora: gold rings
- kaai reen: Messerschmidia trees
- kaai kaina: pandanus trees
- maan eitei: frigate birds
- taura iti: electric lamps
- ririu baanni: my coconut leaf skirts
- karara iika: our meals of fish

but

- nima te ran: my drinks of water

(In the last case one might think that te is retained because ran is a substance name, but note also the case taaea raab'a!)

Other cases of such juxtaposition are so rare as to lead one to suspect that it generally does not occur, and the observed cases are really just words formed by combination of morphemes, with which Kiribatese abounds anyway. Examples:

- te b'aitari: jellyfish
- te bukimanga: forked tail
- te newemanga: forked tongue

Such combinations are now written as one word. The plurals appear to have unpredictable structure:
4.4.3 The possessive indicator 'n'

By far the commonest way of indicating the relation of one noun to another is by means of the possessive indicator n. When the last sound of the previous noun is incompatible with n, an i is added to the former. When the n is incompatible with the beginning sound of the second noun, n becomes ni. There is considerable variation in writing this type of construction. For example, aine ni kirabu is sometimes written aineni kirabu, etc. Examples:

- baban takataka: copra board
- kaautiran abam'akoro: island council
- ruanimate: grave (pit of the dead)
- natiniuea: prince (not king's son)
- iran atuu: hair of the head
- buraenimoa: chicken feather
- tabo ni mm'akuri: place of work
- m'anen Aotiteria: Australian money
- kaibukeni Tiaabaaa: Japanese ship
- maraki ni biroto: pain in the abdomen
- toobu ni uuati: washing soap
- waan taromauri: mission ship
- raanti ni meeri: mail launch
- tangin ataei: cry of a child
- aineni kirabu: queen of clubs
- bongi ni kukurei: day of happiness
- nuukanibong: midnight (middle of the night)
- baa n ni (or baanni): coconut frond
- um'anikuuka: cooking house
- bokin anene: songbook
- itera n aoa: half an hour
- ainenium'a: housewife
- aro ni Kaatorika: Catholic religion
- kaain Amerika: American (person)
- otintaai: sunrise

The above singular constructions are pluralised by simply pluralising the first component:

- baaban takataka: coconut boards
- kaautiran abam'akoro: island councils
- ruanimate: graves
- natiniuea: princes etc.

The use of n in the above expressions does not strictly speaking indicate possession. For possessive constructions the singular case is indicated in a different way.

In this matter as well as in the case of possessive suffixes and transitive verb suffixes, nouns are considered as belonging to one of two classes, which we shall call animate and inanimate, where the second class includes anything which is not an animal. Persons (i.e., humans) belong to the animate class.
Non-human animals are usually considered as animate, but on occasions may be treated as inanimate. These matters are discussed further in sections 4.5.4 and 4.8.6.4.

If the possessor is inanimate and singular the pattern is

\[(\text{noun}) + (n) + (\text{te or possessive pronoun}) + (\text{noun})\]

as in the following examples:

- taubukin te auti - roof of the house
- kaain te ekareetia - member of the congregation
- taberan te ni - top of the coconut tree
- m'anen te kirabu - the club's money
- kaibuk en te kamb'ana - the company's ship
- raantin te tautaeka - the government's launch
- tangin te kita - sound of a guitar
- nuukan te karaanga - middle of the river
- bongin te nam'akaina - day of the month
- baan te ni - leaf of the coconut tree
- bokin te reirei - the school's book
- iteran te m'ane - half of the money
- ootan te taura - light of the lamp

If the possess or is inanimate but plural the pattern is

\[(\text{noun}) + (n) + (\text{plural noun})\]

as in the following examples:

- m'aneni kirabu - clubs' money
- kaibuk eni kamb'ana - companies' ship
- tangini kita - sound of guitars
- ootan taura - light of lamps

The thing possessed in the above examples is supposed to be singular. There is no definiteness or indefiniteness implied. The first of the above examples could mean the clubs' money, some money of the clubs, the money of some clubs, etc.

If the possessor is animate then possessive pronouns are used and the pattern becomes

\[(\text{possessive pronoun}) + (\text{noun}) + (\text{te}) + (\text{noun})\]

for a singular possessor, where the te is used or not used depending on rules laid out in section 4.1.1. The pattern for a plural possessor is

\[(\text{possessive pronoun}) + (\text{noun}) + (\text{plural noun})\]

Consider the following examples:

- ana kaa Itaia - Itaia's car
- aia kaa taama - the fathers' car, car of the fathers
- ana baaire te Koowana - the Governor's decision
- aia tabo katam'a - the cats' place

As before, the foregoing constructions can be pluralised by simply pluralising the first component, but in the above examples no phonetic change would occur as the possessed nouns are all monomorphous. Thus, the translations could just as well have been Itaia's cars, the fathers' cars, the Governor's decisions, the cats' places.
4.4.4 Inalienable nouns

Just as the existence or lack of a distinct plural form of a noun marks it as belonging either to the bimorphous or the monomorphous nouns, nouns also can be divided into two other classes depending on whether they can take or cannot take possessive suffixes. The nouns taking possessive suffixes have definite characteristics that distinguish them from other nouns. The following are types of nouns which take the possessive suffixes and which are called inalienable nouns here:

(1) Parts of the body

atuu  head
atuum  your head
kun    skin
kunia  their skin etc.

There are a few exceptions:
ari    eyebrow
au ari  my eyebrow

(2) Intimate personal belongings, both abstract and concrete

waa    canoe
waaau  my canoe
mweenga house, habitation
mweengara our house
aba     land
abamii  your (plural) land
mai     life
maiuiia their life
mate    death
matena  his death
boi     smell
boim    your (singular) smell
ngare   laugh, laughter
ngareu  my laughter
matuu   sleep
matuura our sleep

But note also the following exceptions:
auti    house
ara auti our house
am'arake food
am am'arake your food
kaa     car
aia kaa their car

(3) Family relationships

tibu    grandfather; grandson
tibuu   my grandfather; my grandson
nati  son; daughter
natia  their son; their daughter
tama  father
tamana  his father

But note also the following exception:
karo  parent
au karo  my parent

(4) Parts of an object or in relation to an object
aa  the position under
aara  the position under us
rariki  the position beside; side
rarikim  the position beside you; your side
meaang  north
meaangia  the position north of them

The suffixed expressions above are not usually used by themselves, but in prepositional expressions (see section 4.6).

(5) States of mind or feeling
nanokaawaki  sadness
nanokaawakira  our sadness
kukurei  happiness
kukureimii  your happiness
ingainga  enthusiasm
ingaingau  my enthusiasm
unga  excitement
ungaiia  their excitement
kim'aareirei  joy
kim'aareireina  his joy

It is noted that newly formed or accepted words never belong to the above class of inalienable nouns. Inalienable nouns hardly ever take the possessive pronouns (e.g. au tama is not correct, and in fact is never heard).

Some inalienable nouns are rarely if ever used without suffixes:
kanana  his food
karara  our food
kana, kara  (not used as nouns)
nimaia  their drink
nima  (not used as a noun)

Nouns of this type are obligatorily possessed and are discussed in section 4.4.5.

Some nouns have both an inalienable and an alienable form which differ somewhat in meaning:
b'ai  thing
am b'ai  your thing
b'aim  your dress
Sometimes the distinction is between whether the possessed thing is intimately connected or not with the possessor, as is the case in the above examples. But note the following exception:

riim your bones
riim (not am rii) bones of fish, etc., that you are eating.

4.4.5 Obligatorily possessed nouns

We have seen in the last section how inalienable nouns are able to take possessive suffixes, and further, how some of these are able also to take possessive pronouns which usually give them a different meaning. There is a large subclass of these inalienable nouns, which we shall call obligatorily-possessed nouns (OPN), which must always take possessive suffixes, and thus never occur 'unpossessed'. Cases in which the same noun seems to be used with te or a possessive pronoun have such entirely different meanings that one may not be justified in considering it the same noun. There are several types of OPN:

(1) Nouns which form prepositions by affixation with i in front and -n at the end. The prepositional use of these will be discussed more fully in section 4.6. Examples:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Noun</th>
<th>Prepositional Use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ao</td>
<td>surface (never used alone)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aon</td>
<td>the surface of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aa</td>
<td>underside (never used alone)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aan</td>
<td>the underside of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tinaniku</td>
<td>outside (never used alone)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tinanikun</td>
<td>the outside of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>eta</td>
<td>the position above (never used alone)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>etan</td>
<td>the position above it etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The other possessive suffixes can also be used:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Noun</th>
<th>Prepositional Use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>etara</td>
<td>the position above us</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>etam</td>
<td>the position above you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>etaia</td>
<td>the position above it</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When not possessed it is impossible to achieve the same meaning:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Noun</th>
<th>Possesed Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>te ao</td>
<td>fishline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>te aa</td>
<td>a yawn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>te tinaniku</td>
<td>an envelope</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>te eta</td>
<td>(meaningless)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

or

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Noun</th>
<th>Possesed Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>au ao</td>
<td>my fishline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>amii aa</td>
<td>your yawn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aia tinaniku</td>
<td>their envelope etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(2) Past participles of verbs. As described in section 4.8.6.5 these are used as nouns as well as to form the passive voice, but as nouns they are obligatorily possessed:

- tangirira \textit{to love}
- tangirikai (not used alone as a noun)
- tangirakira \textit{the loving of us}
- oreka \textit{to strike}
- orekai (not used alone as a noun)
- orekaiu \textit{the striking of me}
- kana \textit{to eat}
- kanaki (not used alone as a noun)
- kanakina \textit{the eating of it; its flavour}

Such words are used syntactically as follows:

- e kateniua orekai \textit{he was hit three times (lit. the hitting of him happened three times)}
- e toki tangirakim irou \textit{I don't love you anymore (lit. the loving of you by me stopped) etc.}

(3) The infinitive form of transitive verbs, which is also the object-expressed form (see section 4.8.6.2), is used as a noun but is always obligatorily possessed. The meaning, when used nominally, is apparently indistinguishable from that of the past participle. Examples:

- tangiram \textit{the loving of you}
- oreaiia \textit{the striking of them}
- kanana (does not exist in this form)

They can be freely substituted into the previous constructions:

- e kateniua oreaiia \textit{they were hit three times}
- e toki tangiram irou \textit{I don't love you anymore.}

(4) Some miscellaneous examples:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>noun</th>
<th>meaning with possessive suffix</th>
<th>meaning without possessive suffix</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>nne</td>
<td>place, location</td>
<td>(not used)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aro</td>
<td>character, manner, way</td>
<td>religion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nano</td>
<td>meaning; inside; intention</td>
<td>soul</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tabo</td>
<td>extreme, end</td>
<td>place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tabera</td>
<td>top</td>
<td>(not used)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nuuka</td>
<td>middle</td>
<td>(not used)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Examples of use in utterances:

- kaaki ni nnena \textit{put it in its place}
- e buaakaka arome \textit{you have bad manners}
- nanona b'a e na roko \textit{it means that he will come}
- nuukanibong \textit{midnight}
- tabonibai \textit{finger}
- taberan te nii \textit{top of a coconut tree}
4.4.6 Nominalisation

Non-nominal expressions can be nominalised by te (section 4.1.1), tia or taan (section 4.3), by possessive pronouns (section 4.5.3) or by possessive suffixes (section 4.5.4). Adjectives and verbs, both transitive and intransitive, along with their modifiers, are the types of expressions that can be nominalised in this way.

Most verbal expressions can be nominalised with te provided that it is not too cumbersome:

- wanawana (adj.) smart, intelligent
  te wanawana intelligence
- wanawana n te nuumera smart at mathematics
  te wanawana n te nuumera intelligence in mathematics
- rangi ni wanawana very smart, very intelligent
  te rangi ni wanawana (not customarily used)
- oroia (v.t.) to hit it
  te oroia the act of hitting it
- orea te ataei to hit a child
  te orea te ataei the act of hitting a child
- oroia n te kai to hit him with a stick
  te oroia n te kai the act of hitting him with a stick
- kan oroingkamii to want to hit you
  te kan oroingkamii the wanting to hit you, the desire
  to hit you
- kaakan oroila to (habitually) want to hit them
  te kaakan oroila the habitual desire to hit them

Nominalisations of verb phrases with a tia n and na (section 4.8.2) do not usually occur.

Nominalisation with tia and taan have been discussed in section 4.3.

Nominalisation of transitive verb forms with possessive pronouns or suffixes does not usually occur. Thus, expressions such as ana oroia, au nooringkamii etc., are not usually used.

Nominalisation of adjectives and intransitivites is carried out with either the possessive pronouns or suffixes, but usually not with both. There does not seem to be a predictable pattern for selecting one or the other. Examples:

- wanawana (adj.) smart, intelligent
  au wanawana my intelligence
  wanawanau (not used)
- nakonoko (v.i.) to walk
  aia nakonako (not usually used)
  nakonokoia their walking
- tebotebo (v.i.) to bathe
  amii tebotebo (not usually used)
  tebotebomii your bathing
Nominalisation of adjectives involves two complications. One is that adjectives usually contain a reduplicated element (section 4.7), and the second is that a small number of adjectives have distinct singular and plural forms (section 4.7.1).

A small number of adjectives are nominalised without the reduplicated element, but a predictable pattern for deciding whether or not to retain the reduplicated element seems to be lacking:

- **ab'aab'aki (adj.)** big
- **ab'akina** its size
- **maririri (adj.)** cold
- **maririna** its coldness
- **buaakaka (adj.)** bad
- **buaakakaia** their badness
- **anaanau (adj.)** long
- **anauna** its length
- **kabuebue (adj.)** hot
- **kabuebuena** its heat, its hotness
- **wanawana (adj.)** smart, intelligent
- **wanawana** your intelligence
- **matoatoa (adj.)** hard
- **matoana** its hardness
- **kii'araruua (adj.)** jealous
- **kii'araruuaia** their jealousy

Most of the foregoing examples of nominalisations form singular nouns, but sometimes plural nouns can be formed. Nominalisation of bimorphous adjectives tends to use the plural form to make a plural noun, singular form to make a singular noun:
rietaata (adj.)      high (singular)
te riet  height
te rie taa height
ririeta (adj.)      high (plural)
ririeta (n.)      heights
rietana       its height
rietaatana      its height
ririetana       its heights
ab'aab'aki (adj.)      big (singular)
te ab'aki largeness, size
ab'akiia (adj.)      their size
ab'ab'aki (adj.)      big (plural)
ab'ab'aki sizes
ab'ab'akiia      their sizes

The conjunction b'a that is used to nominalise entire sentences:

I taku I think
e na roko he will come
I taku b'a e na roko. I think that he will come

It is curious that such nominalisations cannot be used as direct objects of transitive verbs. In the above example, taku to say, to believe is intransitive. The following are other examples in which this nominalisation serves as a 'de facto' object of intransitives:

ongo to hear
E a tia n ongo b'a ko aoraki. He has heard that you are sick.

wareware to read
Ti wareware b'a e a tia ni koro te kaibuke ae e boou. We read that the new ship has run aground.

kab'arab'ara to explain
E kab'arab'ara te koowana b'a e na kakeerikaaki angab'ain te tioka. The governor explained that the sugar tax would be reduced.

The same sort of construction is used with adjectives:

mimii amazed, surprised
Ti mimii b'a ko tuai ni marurung. We're surprised that you're not well yet.

tamaaroa good, beautiful, pretty, appropriate
E tamaaroa b'a ko na taetae moa ma ngaia. It would be good for you to talk with him first.

kananokaawaki discouraging, depressing
E kkananokaawaki b'a a tuai n nakomai taan reirei akanne. It is discouraging that those teachers have not yet come.

nanokaawaki sad
Ko nanokaawaki b'a tuai ni kab'araa au taarau? Are you sad that I haven't yet settled my debt?

kukurei happy
Ti kukurei b'a iai am beku ae e raoiroi. We're happy that you have a good position.
The same construction is also used with passive forms of certain transitive verbs:

*kaongoraaea (v.t.) to inform (someone)*

Ti kaongoraaeaki b'a e a tia ni mate amii tia reirei.
*We were informed that your teacher had died.***

*kanamakina (v.t.) to suspect*

E kanamakinaki b'a boni ngaia te tia niniia te auti.
*It was suspected that he was the one who broke into the house.***

*uringa (v.t.) to remember*

E a tib'a uringaki b'a akea te tioka n te titooa.
*It has just been remembered that there is no sugar in the store.***

*ata (v.t.) to know*

E na ataaki b'a boni ngaira aika ti karooia.
*It will be known that it was we who did it.***

*katanoata (v.t.) to announce; to advertise*

E a tia ni katanoataaki b'a e na kabooaki nako ara kaa.
*It has been announced that our car will be sold.***

When a b'a clause is to serve as the object of a transitive verb, the regular third-person singular suffix, and not the object-expressed suffix, is used, contrary to what might be expected. Examples:

I ataia b'a akea ana m'ane.
*I know that he has no money.***

I tangiriko b'a ko na nakomai
*I want you to come here.***

Kam a tia n nooria b'a tiaki ngmgai ae I rabakau n te b'aii anee.
*You have seen that I am not the one who is proficient in that matter.***

Ti riai n uringnga b'a tii ngaia are e kakaonimaki i buakoia kaain te reirei.
*We should remember that he is the only one who is trustworthy among the students.***

When the sentence which is nominalised contains an interrogative, the word b'a is still used, contrary to what might be expected:

*m'aninga (v.i.) to forget*

I m'aninga b'a e na roko n te aoa iraum.
*I forgot what time he is coming. (lit. I forgot that he will come at what time.)***

*titirakina (v.t.) to ask (someone)*

A titirakiniira b'a e nga te boki anee.
*They asked us where the book is. (lit. They asked us that where is that book.)***

*ata (v.t.) to know*

I aki ataia b'a e nakea.
*I don't know where he went. (lit. I don't know that he went where.)***

*kaota (v.t.) to point out, to indicate*

Ko riai ni kaotia b'a antai are e niniia am auti.
*You should point out who broke into your house.***
4.5 Pronouns

4.5.1 The emphatic pronouns

ngngai  I
ngkoe  you (singular)
ngaia  he, she, it
ngaira  we
ngkamii  you (plural)
ngaiia  they

These are not used as subjects of sentences. They are used for emphasis and for one-word responses, such as: "Who did it?" "Ngaia." He did.

4.5.2 The subject pronouns

I, N  I
ko  you (singular)
e  he, she, it
ti  we
kam  you (plural)
a  they

These are used as the subjects of sentences. They are always used in most types of sentences, even when the subject is explicitly stated (see section 5.). The first person singular subject pronoun is N if followed by the words na or nang, and is I in all other circumstances:

I nako Tarawa  I went to Tarawa
I aoraki  I was sick
N nangi nako  I am about to go
I maakua  I was afraid of it
N na aera?  What shall I do?

4.5.3 The possessive pronouns

au  my
am  your (singular)
ana  his, her, its
ara  our
amii  your (plural)
aia  their

They always precede their nouns, and are customarily written as separate words. They also serve as nominalisers of various non-nominal expressions, in much the same way as te does (sections 4.1.1 and 4.4.6):

aakoi  kind
aia aakoi  their kindness
kaairua  to err, make a mistake
au kaairua  my erring; my mistake
kekeiaki ni karaoa am auti  to be active in building your house
ara kekeiaki ni karaoa am auti  our activity in building your house

(see section 4.4.6 for further details).
In cases where the possessor is animate, possessive pronouns are always used with alienable nouns, even in cases where the possessor is explicitly expressed. Examples:

- ana boki te tia reirei the teacher's book
- au ka kiti my gun
- aia takakaro ataei the children's game
- ana aakoi Itaia Itaia's kindness

Nouns in the plural adopt the singular form when preceded by a possessive pronoun:

- kaao oxen
- aia kao their oxen; their ox
- been coconuts
- au ben my coconuts; my coconut

This practice appears to waste an otherwise productive feature of the language and thereby to create unnecessary ambiguities. It is an indication that the distinction between singular and plural is not considered to be important in Kiribatese.

4.5.4 The possessive suffixes

- u my
- m your (singular)
- n, na his, her, its
- ra our
- mii your (plural)
- ia their

These suffixes are customarily written as joined to their nouns, and are used with inalienable nouns only. Nouns ending in a nasal are spelled according to the modified pronunciation described in sections 2.3 and 2.4, when used with these suffixes. Examples:

- tang cry; sound
- tangim your cry
- tangiu my cry
- tangii their cry
- kun skin
- kuniu my skin
- kunim your skin
- kunra our skin
- tim a drop
- timwiia their drops (from them)

Choice of the two alternatives for the third person singular depends on whether the possessor is explicitly expressed. If it is, the suffix n is used, and if not, na is used:

- atuu head
- atuuna his head
- atuun Itaia Itaia's head
These suffixes serve as nominalisers of various non-nominal expressions, in much the same way as te does (section 4.1.1):

- urura (adj.) red
- urura (adj.) your redness
- taka (adj. or n.) thirsty; thirst
- takara (adj.) our thirst
- nanokaawaki (adj.) sad
- nanokaawakim (adj.) your sadness

(see section 4.4.6 for further details).

When an inalienable noun is used with possessive pronouns a completely different meaning is obtained, as though two different nouns were involved:

- manim your bugs (parasites)
- am man your animal, animals; your pet, pets
- irau my hair
- au ira my pandanus-leaf strips

The third person plural suffix, indicated in the above table, is used when the possessor is animate or is not indicated. Where indicated and inanimate, the third person singular suffix is used for the plural case. Examples:

- kanaia their food
- kanaia kaao the oxen's food
- kanan aroka plants' food (fertilizer)
- rarikiia their sides
- rarikiia lika the fishes' sides
- rarikiin auti the houses' sides

(Beware of the unexpected pronunciation of the last example in each of the above groups (/kanannaroka/ and /rarikinnauti/), in accordance with section 2.4)

- kunia their skin
- kunia mooa the chickens' skin
- kunini kaai skin of plants; bark of trees
- tangia their sound
- tangia ataei childrens' cry
- tangini kita sound of guitars

The third person plural seems to exhibit a slight tendency toward differentiating the suffixes depending on whether or not the possessor is indicated, similar to the third person singular. But this phenomenon is rare, and is perhaps most conveniently treated by considering those cases where it does occur as irregularities. Two common examples are irou and nako, which take the possessive suffixes as follows:

- nako iou to me
- nako iom to you (singular)
- nako n to (singular object expressed)
- nako ina to him
4.5.5 Demonstrative pronouns

There are three degrees of distance, as typified by the following locative adverbs:

- ikai: here (near the speaker)
- ikanne: there (near you)
- ikekei: there (far from us)

The distinction between the last two is not very definite, but ikekei usually means further away than ikanne, and it implies some distance from both the speaker and the person spoken to. These three degrees correspond closely to similar distinctions among the demonstratives, which will be discussed shortly. Strangely, these same three degrees apparently correspond to the three 'persons' of grammar. That is, ikai here actually means near the first person and, ikanne there means near the second person, and ikekei there means near the third person, and where there is no third person under discussion it just means at some distance from both the first and the second persons. The demonstrative pronouns,

- aei: this
- anne: that (near you)
- arei: that (far from us)
- aikai: these
- akanne: those (near you)
- akekei: those (far from us)

are seen to follow this pattern. They are used after nouns, as in the following examples:

- te kao aei: this ox
- te kao anne: that ox
- te kao arei: that ox
- kao aikai: those oxen
- kao akanne: those oxen
- kao akekei: those oxen
The demonstrative pronouns can imply a temporal as well as a spatial relationship:

- te bong aei: today (this day)
- te bong arei: that day (in past or future)

The forms corresponding to second person (anne, akanne) often give the idea of what has just been referred to, and hence serve to definitise a noun in a similar way that the definite article 'the' does in English:

- te kao: an ox
- te kao anne: the ox
- kaao: oxen
- kaao akanne: the oxen

Which of the possible interpretations is best will depend on context.

### 4.5.6 Relative pronouns

The relative pronouns follow the same pattern as the demonstrative pronouns described in the previous section:

- ae: first person singular
- ane: second person singular
- are: third person singular
- aika: first person plural
- akana: second person plural
- ake: third person plural

The same forms are used for both animate and inanimate nouns, and so all six forms given above can be rendered by that, which, or who. As the same forms are also used regardless of case, whether as subject or object of verb or preposition, the six forms could also be rendered by whom. These relative pronouns (called 'relative ligatives' by Cowell, 1951) function in almost the same way as Malay yang does to link adjectives to nouns. The subject pronouns are always used after the relatives, as in the following examples:

- te auti ae e ab'aab'aki: a big house (near me)
- te waa ane e keang: a green canoe (near you)
- tinana are e kara: his old mother (far from us)
- atiibu aika a uangiingi: tiny stones (near me)
- arokan akana a mate: your dead plants (near you)
- aomata ake a aoraki: sick people (far from us)

As in the case of the demonstratives, a temporal rather than a spatial relationship may be indicated:

- te kukurei ae e kakamaiu: the merry party (presently going on)
- te kukurei are e kakamaiu: the merry party (some time ago) etc.

Also as in the case of the demonstratives, the second person forms may indicate definiteness rather than proximity to the listener:

- te raanti ae e birim'aaka: a fast launch
- te raanti ake e birim'aaka: the fast launch
As a further exception, the first person relatives are used in a general sense when no definiteness, indefiniteness, spatial nor temporal relationships are intended:

- *te uee ae e tikiraoi*  
  *a pretty flower; the pretty flower*

Choice of interpretation is usually determined by context.

When demonstratives are used in addition to adjectives the order is either

- (noun) + (relative) + (subject pronoun) + (adjective) + (demonstrative)
- or
- (noun) + (demonstrative) + (relative) + (object pronoun) + (adjective)

where (noun) may include *te* or a possessive pronoun:

- *te kirii ae e kakamaaku aei*  
  *this fearsome dog*
- *abana are e raroa arei*  
  *his distant land, that distant land of his*
- *ana taeka anne ane e karaurau*  
  *his slow speech, that slow speech of his*

Note that there must be agreement in number and person between the relative and the demonstrative in these cases.

The above examples show that adjectives are used as though they were clauses containing a verb. In Kiribatese there is really no distinction between adjective clauses and just plain adjectives anyway, and thus the examples also show how to construct adjective clauses:

- *te booti ae e beibeti*  
  *a boat that is floating, a floating boat*
- *aoti ake a am'arake*  
  *horses that ate*
- *tamau ae e na nako Tarawa*  
  *my father, who will go to Tarawa*
- *aia m'ane ae e a tia ni bua*  
  *their money which was lost*

There is no distinction between restrictive and non-restrictive adjective clauses. Thus,

- *te kaibuke ae e koro*  
  *the ship which ran aground; the ship, which ran aground*

Of course, the first rendering specifies which ship we are talking about, while the second rendering merely adds information. There is no reason why written Kiribatese could not use the comma to make the same distinction, if desired.

### 4.5.6.1 Apposition

Relatives also can link noun to noun in order to indicate a sort of apposition:

- *natina ae te tia reirei*  
  *his son, the teacher*
- *Itaia ae te koowana*  
  *Itaia, the Governor*
- *te kaibuke ae te Naareau*  
  *the ship, Naareau*
- *ara kai ae te nii*  
  *our tree, a coconut tree*  
  *etc.*
4.5.7 Person demonstratives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>masculine</strong></td>
<td>teuaaei</td>
<td>uaakanne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>teuaane</td>
<td>uaakanne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>teuarei</td>
<td>uaakekei</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>feminine</strong></td>
<td>neiei</td>
<td>uaakanne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>neienne</td>
<td>uaakanne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>neierei</td>
<td>uaakekei</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>general</strong></td>
<td>naakai</td>
<td>uaakanne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>naakanne</td>
<td>uaakanne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>naakekei</td>
<td>uaakekei</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>masculine</strong></td>
<td>uaakanne</td>
<td>uaakanne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>uaakekei</td>
<td>uaakekei</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Use of these words roughly follows the pattern of the demonstratives. They are used in the same way as nouns, and only for persons. The general plural forms can indicate a group of men, or of women, or of mixed men and women. Thus, naakai can indicate a group of men, but in this case uaakai, being more explicit, is considered preferable.

When these are used in expressions where they would be expected to be followed by relative pronouns, the following contracted forms are used:

- teuaaei ae    = teuaaei
- teuaanne ane  = teuaanne
- teuarei are   = teuarei
- neiei ae      = neiei
- neienne ane   = neienne
- neierei are   = neierei
- naaka aika    = naakai
- naakana akana = naakanne
- naake akekei ake = naake
- uaaka aika    = uaakai
- uaakana akana = uaakanne
- uaake aakekei ake = uaake

Their use presents no unexpected patterns:

- naake a aoraki = these sick people
- teuare e nakonako = that man who is walking
- naake a na nako Tarawa = those people who will go to Tarawa
- neiene e iowaawa = that mean woman

A different interpretation is possible regarding the structure of the relative pronouns and person demonstratives. In the descriptions given above they are always followed by the corresponding subject pronouns to form sentences. In each case the subject pronouns are written apart from them as separate words. One could alternatively say that the subject pronouns are not required in such constructions, in which case the forms given above for the relatives and person demonstrative contractions would have to be provided with suffixes to replace the subject pronouns, resulting in:
and similarly for the person demonstrative contractions. This would obviate
the need of stacking pronouns after pronouns, but it is now accepted practice
to require that the subject pronouns be written separately. There was lack of
uniformity in this regard in materials written prior to the late 1970s.

4.5.7.1 Neuter demonstratives

These are handled in the same way as the person demonstratives in the previous
section:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>baiei</td>
<td>this, this thing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>baenne</td>
<td>that, that thing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>baerei</td>
<td>that, that thing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>baikai</td>
<td>these, these things</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>baikanne</td>
<td>those, those things</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>baikekei</td>
<td>those, those things</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above forms are used colloquially only, and in formal writing the
corresponding forms

- b'ai aei
- b'ai anne
- b'ai arei

are used. The neuter demonstratives can be thought of as contractions of the
above set. They are used with te, taian or possessive pronouns in the same
way as nouns:

- te baei this thing
- aia baerei that thing of theirs
- ara baikekei those things of ours
- au baikanne those things of mine

This set, in formal writing, would be written te b'ai aei, aia b'ai arei, ara
b'ai akekei, and au b'ai akanne.

4.5.8 Interrogative pronouns

The only ones are

- teraa? what?
- antai? who?; whom?
- antena? whose?

Their use presents no unexpected features:

- Teraa ae ko nooria? What did you see?
- Ko noora teraa? What did you see?
- Antai ae e roko? Who came?
- E roko antai? Who came?
- Antai ae ko nooria? Whom did you see?
- Antena bentira aei? Whose pencil is this?
There are other interrogative words, but they function in a syntactically different way (like verbs, etc.). There is also the interrogative root *ira-* which is combined with noun classifiers as described in section 4.2:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IRG</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>iraua?</td>
<td>how many (general things)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iraman?</td>
<td>how many (people, etc.)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>irawa?</td>
<td>how many (boats, canoes)?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.6 Prepositions

Kiribatese has a very small number of true prepositions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IRG</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>i</td>
<td>at; in; on</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mai, man</td>
<td>from; since</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nako, nakon</td>
<td>to; toward; towards; at</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The forms which do not end in *n* are used only with place names:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IRG</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>i Tarawa</td>
<td>at Tarawa; on Tarawa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mai Aotiteeria</td>
<td>from Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nako Tiabaan</td>
<td>to Japan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n te auti</td>
<td>at home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>man te kaibuke</td>
<td>from the ship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nakon titooa</td>
<td>to the stores</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n tawanou</td>
<td>at noon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mang ngke e tairiki</td>
<td>since last night</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nakon tanimaeantaai</td>
<td>toward afternoon</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note that *man* becomes *mang* if following word begins with *ng*. The preposition *nako* is used with possessive suffixes of section 4.5.4 by changing its base to *nakoi* (or by inserting an *i*):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IRG</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>nakoitau</td>
<td>to me; toward me; at me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nakoino</td>
<td>to you; toward you; at you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nakoita</td>
<td>to him; to her; to it, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nakoira</td>
<td>to us, etc.,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nakoimii</td>
<td>to you (plural), etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nakoia</td>
<td>to them, etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This word is irregular in that there is also the form *nakoia* or *nakoia* meaning to followed by an explicit third person plural object (see section 4.8.6.4), as in the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IRG</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>nakoia taan reirei</td>
<td>to the teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nakoia mooa</td>
<td>to the chickens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nakoia naakekei</td>
<td>to those people</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

But when the object is inanimate *nakon* is used:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IRG</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>nakon taabo akekei</td>
<td>to those places</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nakon taian nii</td>
<td>to the coconut trees</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

following the same pattern as the transitive verb endings of section 4.8.6.4.

Other locative and time expressions such as for *on, under, before*, etc., are formed in Kiribatese by combining the preposition *i* with certain suffixed nouns. Examples:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Compounds</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>aa</td>
<td>the space under (rarely used alone)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aana</td>
<td>the space under it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aan te tabora</td>
<td>the space under the table</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i aan te tabora</td>
<td>under the table</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i aau</td>
<td>under me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ao</td>
<td>the top surface (rarely used alone)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aona</td>
<td>its top surface</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aoni marawa</td>
<td>the sea surface</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i aoni marawa</td>
<td>on the sea, on the sea surface</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i aora</td>
<td>on us</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>eta</td>
<td>the position above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>etan te auti</td>
<td>the position above the house</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i etan te auti</td>
<td>above the house</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i etamii</td>
<td>above you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>meaang</td>
<td>north</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>meaangira</td>
<td>position north of us</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i meaangira</td>
<td>north of us</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rou</td>
<td>self (not used alone)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>irouna</td>
<td>by him (expressing agent of some action)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>irouu</td>
<td>by me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iroun Tioon</td>
<td>by Tioon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m’aai</td>
<td>the position ahead; the position in front</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m’aaina</td>
<td>the position in front of it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m’aain te titooa</td>
<td>the position in front of the store</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i m’aain te titooa</td>
<td>in front of the store</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note that the compounds of rou are written as one word, while in the other cases the i is written in front as a separate word. This is now the present writing convention, and the reason is that while rou can never stand by itself the others can. In written text before the late 1970s, however, this rule was often not observed.

The use of such compound constructions provides the following list of phrases that are used as prepositions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prepositions</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>i aon</td>
<td>on; per; more than, over</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i aan</td>
<td>under, below; less than</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i bukin</td>
<td>for, on behalf of; because of; behind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i etan</td>
<td>above, over</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i meaangin</td>
<td>north of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i mainikun</td>
<td>east of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i maiakin</td>
<td>south of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i maeaon</td>
<td>west of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i mwiin</td>
<td>behind; after</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i m’aain</td>
<td>in front of, ahead of; before</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i marenan</td>
<td>between</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i buakon</td>
<td>among</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i nuukan</td>
<td>in the middle of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i nanon</td>
<td>in, inside of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i tinanikun</td>
<td>outside of; beyond</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i rarikin</td>
<td>beside, at the side of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i tokin</td>
<td>at the end of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i roun</td>
<td>by (expressing agent of some action)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It was noted that when the object of the preposition is expressed by a pronoun, the possessive suffixes are used. When the object is explicit, then the possessive indicator n is used. Use of the possessive suffixes is independent of whether the object (if plural) is animate or inanimate, in contrast to verb objects and objects of the root nako discussed above. Examples:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>phrase</th>
<th>meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>i aon te taibora</td>
<td>on the table</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i aona</td>
<td>on it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i aoia</td>
<td>on them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>teuana te taaraa i aon temanna</td>
<td>one dollar per person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i aon te m'aiti anne</td>
<td>in addition to that quantity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i aan te taibora</td>
<td>under the table</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i aara</td>
<td>under us</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>karako i aan nimaua</td>
<td>less than five</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i bukin Itaia</td>
<td>for Itaia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i bukimii</td>
<td>for you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i bukin te karau</td>
<td>because of the rain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i bukin te kaibuke</td>
<td>behind the ship; for the ship;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>because of the ship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i m'aain te titooa</td>
<td>in front of the store</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i m'aain rokona</td>
<td>before his arrival</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i m'aiu</td>
<td>in front of me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i marenan te kai ma te auti</td>
<td>between the tree and the house</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i marenara ma te nii</td>
<td>between us and the coconut tree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.7 Adjectives

Adjectives might have been appropriately discussed in the section on verbs, because in Kiribatese adjectives are structurally and functionally similar to intransitive verbs. In fact, Cowell (1951) calls them 'verbal adjectives'. However, adjectives have a characteristic which distinguishes them from verbs. Kiribatese adjectives can be modified by certain expressions, such as rangin *very* that are not generally used with intransitive verbs. This will be the criterion used here as the distinguishing characteristic. Adjectives have another typical characteristic, namely, most of them seem to contain a reduplicated element. The reduplicated element may be a morpheme or a syllable, or perhaps a combination of morphemes or syllables. The following list contains adjectives which always have a reduplicated element. The reduplicated element indicated is deduced on the assumption that no additional element has been inserted between the reduplicated elements:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>adjective</th>
<th>meaning</th>
<th>reduplicated element</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>mainaina</td>
<td>white</td>
<td>ina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kimototo</td>
<td>short</td>
<td>to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>anaanau</td>
<td>long</td>
<td>ana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ab'aab'aki</td>
<td>big</td>
<td>ab'a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mimitong</td>
<td>glorious</td>
<td>mi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mariri</td>
<td>cold</td>
<td>ri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ingainga</td>
<td>enthusiastic</td>
<td>inga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>uarereke</td>
<td>small</td>
<td>re</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kim'aareirei</td>
<td>joyful</td>
<td>rei</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kakannato</td>
<td>important</td>
<td>ka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>marurung</td>
<td>healthy</td>
<td>ru</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
There are also some adjectives in which the reduplication occurs with the insertion of extraneous elements, or is inexact, such as in the following list:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>adjective</th>
<th>meaning</th>
<th>reduplicated element</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>kangkang</td>
<td>delicious</td>
<td>kang</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tokonoonoo</td>
<td>rambunctious</td>
<td>noo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>buaakaka</td>
<td>bad</td>
<td>ka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>takanana</td>
<td>slimy</td>
<td>na</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adjectives which have no trace of a reduplicated element are rare; the following are examples:

- **m'aitoro** - cold
- **kaunga** - exciting
- **bati** - many
- **karako** - few
- **tamaarao** - fine, good
- **tikiraio** - beautiful
- **tikibuaka** - ugly

There is also a group of adjectives which have two forms, one of which has a reduplicated or almost reduplicated element and a slightly different meaning from the other. The semantic effect of the reduplication here is an intensification of degree:

- **kabuee** - kabuebue - hot
- **m'aitoro** - m'aitorotoro - cold
- **mmaten** - mmatenten - thick
- **m'aawa** - m'aawaawa - loose
- **maawa** - mawaawa - blue
- **matoa** - matoatoa - hard, firm
- **marau** - maraurau - soft
- **makana** - akanamakana - soft
- **binaaine** - binaainaine - effeminate
- **warebwe** - warebwerebwe - wide

There are also adjectives with reduplication and imperfect reduplication for which the two forms have widely different meanings:

- **maran** - smooth, slick
- **maranran** - slippery
- **rawata** - numerous
- **rawaawata** - heavy

It is difficult to reconcile the above examples within a comprehensive scheme. Perhaps reduplication of a morpheme was first used to intensify the meaning, whereupon subsequent modification sometimes obscured its origin with the original unreduplicated form being lost. In other cases, perhaps only the form with the reduplicated element remained popular. More will be said on the general matter of reduplication in section 4.11.
4.7.1 Bimorphous adjectives

A very small number of adjectives are bimorphous, in that they have distinct singular and plural forms, similar to bimorphous nouns (see section 4.4.1). Examples:

- **ab'ab'aki** big (singular)
- **rietaata** tall (singular)
- **anaanau** long (singular)
- **raoiroi** good (singular)
- **buaakaka** bad (singular)

Here the tendency seems to be to construct the plural form by shortening a long vowel of the singular form, opposite to the way the plurals of nouns are formed. Use of the plural forms of adjectives presents no unexpected patterns. Consider the following examples:

- te kao aei ab'ab'aki
- kaa aika a ab'ab'aki
- te tama aei raoiroi
- taama aika a raraoi

4.7.2 Comparison of adjectives

Comparison is effected by adding the word riki more; additional after the adjective:

- **raoiroi** good
- **raoiroi riki** better
- **rietaata** high
- **rietaata riki** higher
- **riria** high (plural)
- **riria riki** higher (plural)

Comparative sentences are constructed with the use of nakon than:

- E raoiroi riki te kaa aei nakon arei.
  This car is better than that one.

- E rietaata riki te nii nakon te kaina,
  The coconut tree is taller than the pandanus tree.

- A ririeta riki nii nakoia aomata.
  Coconut trees are taller than people.
A commonly used type of comparison is achieved by using the adjectives as nouns and using possessive pronouns or the possessive suffixes. To express equality words such as tii te boo the same or bootau ma to be equal to can be used:

Tii te boo raioiroi am mm'akuri ma ana mm'akuri teuaarei.
Your work is just as good as his.

The literal meaning is something like The goodness of your work is the same as that of his work.

E aki bootau am aakoi tarim.
You are not as kind as your brother.

Here the literal meaning is something like Your kindness is not equal to that of your brother.

To express inequality words like korakora riki stronger, etc., can be used:

E korakora riki urauran taian tob'ato nakon taian ooranti.
Tomatoes are redder than oranges.

The literal meaning would be something like The redness of tomatoes is stronger than that of oranges.

4.7.2.1 Superlatives

The superlative form is constructed by adding moan te before the adjective:

raioiroi good
moan te rairoioi best
ab'aab'aki big
moan te ab'aab'aki biggest

Sometimes these forms are used colloquially to indicate very instead of the actual superlative.

4.7.3 Adjective clauses

Simple adjectives are always used as though they were clauses, in that a relative pronoun is always present in even the simplest cases of adjectives modifying nouns. Examples:

tinebu heavy
te b'aab'aa ae e tinebu a heavy coconut-leaf purse
roroo black
atiibu ake a roroo black stones; those black stones

Various types of adjective clauses are formed simply by substituting a sentence type structure for the adjective. The following are examples in which the noun modified is the subject of the clause:

are e a tib'a roko mai Tarawa
who just arrived from Tarawa
ae iaia waana ae e uraura
who has a red canoe
aika a rooroko ni katoa nam'akaina
which come every month
akana a ataa te riai
who are courteous (lit. who know what is correct)
are e koowana ngkoa
who used to be the governor
naake iai aia booti
those who have boats
akana akea aia m'ane
who do not have money
ae akea ana kanrin
who does not have the admission price
neiere iai ana b'akaereti ae e mawaawa
that woman who has a blue dress
are iai taningana ake a uarereke
who has small ears

Where the noun modified is the subject of a clause indicating location, the
relative pronoun and verb are often omitted:

- te auti are e mena n te kaawa the house which is in the town
- te auti are e mena n te kaawa the house in the town
- te auti n te kaawa the house in the town

This last abbreviated construction can be ambiguous, as the n could have either
a locative or a genitive function.

- te atiibu ake e mena i nanoni baim the stone which is in your hand
- te atiibu ake e mena i nanoni baim the stone in your hand
- te atiibu i nanoni baim the stone in your hand
- te karanga are e mena i tinanikun te maunga the river which is beyond the mountain
- te karanga are i tinanikun te maunga the river beyond the mountain
- te karanga i tinanikun te maunga the river beyond the mountain

The following are examples in which the noun modified is the object of the
clause:

- are ko nooria ngkoananoa that you saw yesterday
- aika a nang tiringia aomata that the people are about to kill
- ake N na noori ikekei that I will see there
- ake N na noorliia ikekei whom I will see there
- ane kam a tib'a kawaria whom you just met

Note that in all of these cases the verb form corresponding to the 'object not
expressed' form is used, contrary to what might be expected. The noun can also
be the subject of a passive in the clause:
aika a tiringaki irouia tautia
who were killed by soldiers
are e oreaki iroun te tia reirei
who was hit by the teacher
ane e kab'akaaki
which was dropped
ake a na kab'akaaki
which will be dropped

If the noun modified is the object of a preposition the word iai meaning something like thereto, hereto, or maiai meaning therefrom, thereto can sometimes be used, if the noun phrase is inanimate. If it is animate an irou-form or an independent pronoun follows the preposition. If a preposition is used instead of iai or maiai it must contain the object-not-expressed suffix (see section 4.6), contrary to what might be expected. Examples:

are ti nako iai
  to which we went
are ti nakoina
  to whom we went

(te b'angab'anga) are e tiinako maiai te ran
(a hole) from which water was pouring

(The word maiai is a contraction of mai iai).

teuare ko na rimoanna
  the man whom you will go in front of
are ko tekteka i aona
  that you sat on
ake a mena i buakoia
  whom they are among
aika a reke i bukiia te m'anee
  for whom the money was obtained

teuare a kamateaki kirii akanne irouna
  the man by whom those dogs were killed

The word iai is used in various adjective clauses with the meaning concerning which, about which or because of which, which in English would be rendered with the noun modified being the object of such a preposition. Examples:

ae kam un iai
  which you are angry over (about)
are e nako Tarawa iai
  concerning which he went to Tarawa
teraa ae ko ngare iai?
  what did you laugh about?
akana ti na kekeaki iai
  which we shall be concerned with
are a tabetabe iai
  which they were working with

This simple and concise construction is very productive and is very commonly used.
4.8 Verbs

4.8.1 Intransitive verbs

These have similar structure and function to adjectives. Some common intransitive verbs are listed below:

- nako: to go
- nakonako: to walk
- tekateka: to sit (down)
- tei: to stand
- kawakawa: to crawl
- ngare: to laugh
- tang: to cry
- matuu: to sleep
- am'arake: to eat
- tebotebo: to bathe
- mm'akuri: to work
- takaakaro: to play; to dance
- taetae: to talk
- timtim: to drip
- rin: to enter

As can be seen from the above examples, intransitive verbs can have any ending that is phonetically possible. Their form does not change, by taking suffixes or otherwise.

4.8.1.1 Intransitive verbs with implied objects

These words convey the idea of action upon a generic object, but function grammatically as intransitive verbs. They all consist of two elements. The first element specifies the action, and the second element specifies the object. It seems justifiable to write such compounds as one word because they are invariable. Consider the following examples:

- orea (v.t.): to hit
- ben: mature coconut
- oroben: to split open coconuts
- kinika (v.t.): to pinch
- uee: flower
- kinikauue: to gather flowers
- korea (v.t.): to cut
- karewe: toddy
- korokarewe: to cut toddy
- kai: wood
- korokai: to cut wood
- boki: book
- koroboki: to write
- rawea (v.t.): to catch
- taamnei: picture
- rawetaamnei: to take pictures
urakina (v.t.)  to carry
tano      sand, soil
urakitano to carry sand
aia      firewood
urakiaia  to carry firewood
atama    gravel
urakitama to carry gravel
ran      water
urakiran to carry water
kabooa (v.t.) to bring together
birim'aaka fast
kaboobirim'aaka to have a race
rabakau skilled; talented
kaboorabakau to have a contest
rikoa (v.t.) to gather
maange trash
rikomaange to gather up trash

Some words seem to have the same structure and function, but the meaning of one of the elements is not clear, or perhaps has been lost. Examples:

iti (meaning not clear)
ran       water
itiran    to take water (from a well, etc).
newe      tongue; (another meaning?)
aba       land
neweaba   to sightsee, go sightseeing

4.8.1.2 Intransitives used as transitives

Some intransitive verbs, such as those in the following list.

am'arake to eat
mooi      to drink
mataku    to watch
takaakaro to play
ongo      to hear

can be used in a transitive sense, with their (pseudo) object following after an interposed n. These constructions are far different from the usual transitive constructions (see section 4.8.6). Examples:

Ko am'arake n te ben?
Did you eat coconut?

A na mooi n te karewe.
They are going to drink toddy.

Ti na mataku n te taamnei.
We're going to watch the movie.

I a takaakaro n te butibooro.
I'm playing football.
A tuai n ongo te rongorongo anne.
They haven't heard that news yet.

Note that ongo seems to be irregular in that it does not take n.

4.8.2 Tenses and aspects
Tense of a verb is indicated by particles or by context, and not by inflected forms. Tense formation is the same for transitives and intransitives, and so the latter will be used here to illustrate the various methods of tense formation. Transitive verbs follow the same pattern of tense formation.

4.8.2.1 Simple past and present
The same form is used for both the present and the past, which consists of just the root form of the verb without any particles:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Ongonui</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I taetae</td>
<td>I talked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ko nakō</td>
<td>you went</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ti ngare</td>
<td>we laughed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a matuū</td>
<td>they slept</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above were all translated into the past tense. The same structure is used for the simple present tense also, but context almost always distinguishes the two cases where such a distinction is important. If contrary evidence is lacking, one will usually be safe in interpreting this construction as past tense. Sometimes this same structure is used colloquially for the present progressive, but not in formal speech or writing.

4.8.2.2 Present and past progressive
This indicates an action currently in progress or in progress at some past time. The tense is formed by inserting the particle a before the verb:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Ongonui</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I a taetae</td>
<td>I am talking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ko a nakō</td>
<td>you are going</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ti a ngare</td>
<td>we are laughing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a a matuū</td>
<td>they are sleeping</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For emphasis, tabe n or kume n are substituted for a:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Ongonui</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I tabe n taetae</td>
<td>I am talking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ko tabe n nakō</td>
<td>you are going</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ti kume ni ngare</td>
<td>we are laughing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a kume ni matuū</td>
<td>they are sleeping</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above examples were all translated into the present progressive, but they could represent progressive action in the past. Context will usually allow one to distinguish in cases where distinction is important. If contrary evidence is lacking one will usually be safe in interpreting this construction as present progressive.
4.8.2.3 Future tense

The future tense is formed by putting the particle na before the verb, as in the following examples:

| ti na matuu       | we will sleep, we are going to sleep |
| e na taetae       | he will speak, he is going to speak  |

4.8.2.4 Perfect tenses

The expression a tia n preceding a verb indicates action completed. In the absence of contrary indications from context this construction corresponds to present perfect:

| I a tia n taetae | I have spoken                  |
| kam a tia n tebotebo | you have bathed               |

But it can also indicate past perfect where context requires:

| Ti a tia n am'arake ngke e roko. | We had already eaten when he came. |
| I a tia n roko ngke ko taetae. | I had already arrived when you spoke. |

Future perfect is indicated in a similar way, by the expression na tia n preceding the verb:

| Ngkana kam roko ao ti na tia n nako. | When you come we shall already have left. |
| E na tia ni mate ngkana e roko te taokita. | He will have died by the time the doctor arrives. |

4.8.2.5 Aspects

Besides the tense markers described in foregoing sections, verbs have a simple and a continuous aspect. The continuous aspect is usually formed by reduplicating part of the simple aspect form (see section 4.11.1). The simple aspect is used for an action performed or to be performed once, and the continuous aspect is used for actions which are repeatedly, continuously, habitually or intermittently carried out. Syntactically the two aspects are the same, and can be used alternatively in any tense situation.

The following examples illustrate the contexts in which each of these aspects is used:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>simple aspect</th>
<th>continuous aspect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E nako Abemaama.</td>
<td>E a tia n nako.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He went to Abemaama.</td>
<td>He has left.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E na kana te raiti.</td>
<td>E tangira te m'ane.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He will eat rice (once).</td>
<td>He wants money.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
continuous aspect
E naanako Abemaama.
*He (habitually or repeatedly) goes to Abemaama.*
E a tia ni kaakana te raiti.
*He used to (habitually) eat rice.*
E taatangira te m'ane.
*He likes money.*
E taatangira te ika ngke e mamaeka i Kiribati.
*He liked fish when he lived in Kiribati.*

When used negatively, the continuous aspect sometimes conveys the idea that something is not being done over a somewhat long interval of time, whereas the simple aspect refers to a particular event which does not happen:

simple aspect
E aki roko.
*He didn’t come (at that particular time).*
Ti aki wene.
*We didn’t lie down (at that particular time).*

continuous aspect
E aki rooroko.
*He hasn’t come (as if expected at any time).*
Ti aki weewene n te ruu aei.
*We don’t (habitually) lie down in this room.*

4.8.2.6 Summary of tense and aspect use
The following examples illustrate the various combinations of tense and aspect commonly used:

simple past present
E nako Tarawa.
*He went to Tarawa.*
E kana te ika.
*He ate fish.*

simple future
E na nako Tarawa.
*He’ll go to Tarawa.*
E na kana te ika.
*He’ll eat fish.*

simple perfect
E a tia n nako Tarawa
*He has gone to Tarawa.*
E a tia ni kana te ika.
*He has eaten the fish.*
simple future perfect

E na tia n nako Tarawa ngkana ti roko.
He’ll have gone to Tarawa by the time we come.

E na tia ni kana te ika ngkana e reke te ben.
He’ll have eaten the fish by the time the coconut is ready.

simple progressive

E a nako Tarawa ngkai.
He’s now on his way to Tarawa.

E a kana te ika.
He’s eating the fish.

continuous past present

E naanako Tarawa ni katoa ririki.
He goes to Tarawa every year.

E kaakana te ika.
He eats fish.

continuous future

E na naanako Tarawa ngkana e toki aorakina.
He’ll start going to Tarawa when he’s recovered.

E na kaakana te ika ngkana e reke rabakauna n akawa.
He’ll eat fish when he gets good at fishing.

continuous perfect

E a tia n naanako Tarawa.
He has (repeatedly) gone to Tarawa (but now doesn’t go any more).

E a tia ni kaakana te ika.
He has (repeatedly) eaten fish (but now he doesn’t eat fish any more).

continuous future perfect

E na tia n naanako Tarawa ngkana a bane n nako mai a ana koraki.
He’ll be finished going to Tarawa when his family has all left.

E na toki ni kaakana te ika ngkana e kabooaki nako waana.
He’ll be finished eating fish when his canoe is sold.

(Note that in the two above categories of continuous perfect the emphasis in on stopping the action, and toki is sometimes more appropriate than tia.)

continuous progressive

E a naanako Tarawa.
He is presently going (repeatedly) to Tarawa.

E a kaakana te ika.
He presently eats fish.

Kiribatese verbs are not usually thought of as having such tenses. The foregoing outline may thus seem a little contrived, and is included mainly for the convenience of those wishing to find equivalents of the tenses in English.
4.8.3 The imperative

The imperative mood is usually indicated by just the root form of the verb:

matuu! *sleep!*
taetae! *talk!*

The imperative form for transitive verbs includes the appropriate object suffix:

kanna! *eat it!*
oroia! *hit him!*
tuangiira! *tell us!*
kabooa te ika! *buy fish!*

(see section 4.8.6.) The remainder of this section is limited to a discussion of intransitive verbs as the transitives present no complications in the formation of the imperative.

There is a small group of intransitive verbs which have distinct imperative forms, which will be called *bimorphous* verbs here. Apparently no transitive verbs have this feature. The imperative forms of these verbs are usually derived from the root form by lengthening a vowel:

nako  *to go*
aakoi  *go!*
tei  *to stand*
tee!i  *stand!*
ruo  *to descend, go down, come down*
ruuo!  *come down!*
wene  *to lie down*
weene!  *lie down!*
biri  *to run*
biiri!  *run!*

An imperative mood for first person plural is formed in exactly the same way as simple future sentences. Thus, these forms are always ambiguous unless context or circumstance clarifies the meaning:

Ti na nako.  *We're going to go.*
Ti na nako!  *Let's go!*
Ti na taetae.  *We're going to talk.*
Ti na taetae!  *Let's talk! etc.*

Note that the non-imperative form of bimorphous verbs is used.

There is also a sort of colloquial imperative formed in same way as the ordinary future indicative using the second person:

Ko na wene.  *You're going to lie down.*
Ko na wene!  *Lie down!*
Kam na kurei.  *You're going to be happy.*
Kam na kurei!  *Be happy!*

again using the non-imperative forms of bimorphous verbs.
The negative imperative is formed by the particle t'ai before the verb:

- T'ai teke teke!  Don't sit down!
- T'ai ngare!  Don't laugh!
- T'ai taetae!  Don't talk!

When t'ai is used with a bimorphous verb, the root form is used:

- Naak o!  Go!
- T'ai nako!  Don't go!
- Weene!  Lie down!
- T'ai wene!  Don't lie down!

The negative imperative can also be formed by the same construction as used in the negative future tense — by inserting na a ki in all persons (with the possible exception of first person singular):

- Ko na a ki nako!  Don't go!
- Kam na a ki matuu!  Don't sleep!
- Ti na a ki un!  Let's not be angry!
- E na a ki takaakaro!  He shouldn't play! (Would that he not play!)
- A na a ki tang!  They shouldn't cry! (Would that they not cry!)
- Ti na a ki kabooa!  Let's not buy it!

Again, these sentences are ambiguous in that they can also be interpreted as indicative mood. The words a ki and a ki i can be used interchangeably. In any case where one of these words is used, the other can be substituted. From here on only the simpler a ki will be used in the examples.

A sort of imperative mood is constructed using the words ke or bia and used in a somewhat different context. The word ke is used just before the subject pronoun, while bia is used just following it. The ke constructions are used in the third person only and not with the auxiliaries tia and na, and it takes the imperative form of bimorphous verbs:

- Ke e naak o!  Let him go! (It's alright if he goes.)
- Ke a am'arake!  Let them eat! (It's alright if they eat.)

The bia expressions can be used with tia but not with na. It seems characteristic of Kiribatese to limit the productiveness of many constructions such as this. The bia forms often give the idea of hoping:

- E bia nako!  I hope he goes! (Would that he go.)
- E bia tia n nako!  I hope he has gone!
- I bia tokani kai!  I hope I win!
- Kam bia roko!  I hope you come!
- A bia tia n roko rai o!  I hope they have arrived safely!
- A bia tia n reke baike kai!  I hope those things have been obtained!

Note that the non-imperative form of bimorphous verbs is used with bia.

4.8.4 Negation

For the simple past and present tenses negation is achieved by placing a ki (or a ki i) not, before the verb:

- I a ki taetae.  I didn't talk.
- Ko a ki nako.  You didn't go.
- Ti a ki ngare.  We didn't laugh.
- A a ki matuu.  They didn't sleep.
with the same forms serving for present tense if context requires. In the progressive tenses the aki follows the a:

I a aki taetae. I'm not talking.
Ko a aki nako. You're not going.
Ti a aki ngare. We're not laughing.
A a aki matuu. They're not sleeping.

with the same forms serving for the past progressive tense if context requires. When the forms with tabe or kume are negated the aki precedes them:

I aki tabe n taetae. I'm not talking.
Ko aki tabe n nako. You're not going.
Ti aki kume ni ngare. We're not laughing.
A aki kume ni matuu. They're not sleeping.

As before the same forms serve the past progressive tense provided context requires. In the future tense the aki follows the na:

Ti na aki matuu. We're not going to sleep.
E na aki taetae. He's not going to talk.

The possible interpretation of these utterances with an imperative meaning has been discussed in section 4.8.3.

In the perfect tenses the negation of a tia n is tuai n, or the more emphatic tuai men:

I tuai n taetae. I haven't talked yet.
I tuai men taetae. I haven't talked yet.
Kam tuai n tebotebo. You haven't bathed yet.
Kam tuai men tebotebo. You haven't bathed yet.

Double negatives are understood, but rarely used:

Ko konaa n roko. You can come.
Ko aki konaa n roko. You can't come.
Ko konaa n aki roko. You can stay away. (Lit. You can desist from coming.)
Ko aki konaa n aki roko. You must come. (Lit. You cannot desist from coming.)

The meanings of some negative utterances are unpredictable by logic, and this may raise the question of whether it is more fruitful to describe how Kiribatese is actually used or how Kiribatese should be used. (Of course, we are here attempting the former.) The word riai must, should is not considered to be negated by aki according to most Kiribatese speakers. Consider the following examples:

Ko riai n nako. You should go.
Ko riai n aki nako. You shouldn't go.
Ko aki riai n nako. You shouldn't go.

The phenomenon may be similar to the distinction between English 'can't' and 'shouldn't'. The 'not' in 'should not' negates not 'should' but the following word, while the 'not' in 'cannot' negates the 'can'. Thus, 'you can't go' is the negative of 'you can go', but 'you shouldn't go' is not the negative of 'you should go'. The negative of 'you should go' is actually something like 'you don't have to go'. The negative of Ko riai n nako can be similar circumlocution, such as Ko aoriko n aki nako (literally It's alright if you don't go).
4.8.5 Interrogative verbs

A very small number of verbs, including both transitives and intransitives, are interrogative. All verbs can be used in interrogative sentences provided intonation or an interrogative word indicates a question, but the interrogative verbs being discussed here can never be used except to ask questions and to construct certain utterances (see below). The following are apparently the only such interrogative verbs:

- *iraana* (v.t.)  
  *to do what to it; to do what with it*
- *ngaa* (v.i.)  
  *to be where*
- *rikea* (v.i.)  
  *to pass through where*
- *kangaa* (v.i.)  
  *to be like what; to say what; how*
- *uara* (v.i.)  
  *to be how*
- *aera* (v.i.)  
  *to do what*
- *nakea* (v.i.)  
  *to go where*

It is noted that three of the above seem to be constructed with the interrogative particle *ra*, while two of the above contain the particle *ke* and two contain *ngaa*, suggesting that these latter two particles may once have had an interrogative function. Examples of usage:

- **E ngaa?**  
  *Where is it?*
- **Ko na rikea?**  
  *Which route will you take?*
- **Ti na iraanna?**  
  *What are we going to do with it?*
- **E na iraanai?**  
  *What is he going to do to me?*
- **Ko kangaa?**  
  *What did you say?*
- **Ti na kangaa?**  
  *What shall we say?; What shall we do?*
- **A kangaa waa akekei?**  
  *What are those canoes like?*
- **Ko uara?**  
  *How are you?*
- **A uara kaamta aikai?**  
  *How are these carpenters? (referring to health or in general)*
- **Kam aera?**  
  *What are you doing?*
- **A aera naakekei?**  
  *What are those people doing?*
- **E nakea?**  
  *Where did he go?*
- **Ti na nakea?**  
  *Where shall we go?*

The verb *ngaa* is seldom used with persons other than the third:
A ngaa booki akanne?
Where are the books?

Ti mena iia?
Where are we?

Kam mena iia?
Where are you?

The use of kangaa, as the above examples suggest, is very idiomatic, and the correct interpretation of phrases using it is difficult to reduce to a simple set of rules.

These interrogative verbs are also used to form utterances such as the following:

I aki atai a b'a e na aera.
I don't know what he's going to do.

Ti tua i n tuangak i b'a ti ria i n rikea.
We haven't yet been told which way we should go.

Ko aki uri ngngaa b'a e kangaa.
You don't remember what he said.

A aki tuangiiira b'a e ngaa.
They didn't tell us where it is.

Kam tua i ni kaotia b'a ti na iraanna.
You haven't indicated what we should do with it.

Ti a m'an inga b'a ko uara.
We've forgotten how you are.

A titirakiniira b'a e nakea.
They asked us where he went.

or, as in the following:

Tuangai b'a e ngaa!
Tell me where it is!

Kaotia b'a a rikea!
Indicate which way they went!

Titirak inna b'a e na iraanna!
Ask him what he is going to do with it!

Tuangai b'a N na kangaa!
Tell me what to say!

I a t ai a b'a e ngaa.
I know where it is.

A tuangiira b'a e rujea.
They told us which way he went.

Kam a t ai a b'a ti na iraanna.
You know what we're going to do with it.

I uri ngngaa b'a e kangaa.
I remember what he said.
In all the above examples, note the somewhat unexpected use of the word b'a that (conjunction), and use of the object-not-indicated forms of verbs meaning to know, to remember, to tell, to ask, etc. These phenomena have been discussed in section 4.4.6.

4.8.6 Transitive verbs

The formation of tenses, negation, formation of imperatives, etc., is exactly the same as for intransitive verbs as discussed in foregoing sections. Transitives exhibit the only true inflection in Kiribatese, and the various transitive suffixes depend on the verb's object, rather than subject, in contrast to many European languages. The various inflected forms are summarised in the table of transitive verb conjugations of Appendix A1. The transitives are divided into eleven groups depending on the way their inflected forms are constructed. Most transitive verbs can be classed as belonging to one of these eleven groups or conjugations.

Some of the groups differ from one another only in one form, or only in a slight way such as lengthening of a vowel. The classification scheme of Table I is to aid one in finding the proper form of transitive verbs, and is not in any way intended as a logical or linguistic classification. It is probable that a little study of how the various forms are constructed might allow one to present the same information more concisely, in terms of a few simple rules or concepts.

It is impossible to claim that every speaker of Kiribatese follows the rules of Table I. It is, however, believed that the table reflects the predominant current usage. The similar table of Sabatier (1952) was a considerable help in constructing this table, which has been simplified and modified in a minor way to reflect what we believe is current usage and to reject some very uncommon forms. Further study will undoubtedly reveal how this table can be condensed or simplified by pointing out certain transformation rules.

4.8.6.1 The base form

In Appendix A1 the form listed under 'base' occurs integrally in each of the verb's forms, and an attempt has been made to select each base in order to minimize the number of groups (conjunctions) needed. The base so defined is not used by itself, and may have no linguistic significance. In each of the forms given the first entry is the suffix that must be added to the base in order to obtain the required form. When tripled vowels occur they are always reduced to doubled vowels, as there are only two degrees of vowel length.

4.8.6.2 The infinitive (third person singular object expressed)

The form listed under 'object expressed' is called the infinitive here for convenience. It is the form that would be listed in dictionaries, for example. It is not implied that this form would be translated as an English infinitive in all cases.
Examples:

- kab'akaa te kai  to drop a stick
- uaatia te kunnikai to wash clothing
- noora te kaibuke to see a ship etc.

(The form uaatia can be used interchangeably with uaatia.) As all of the forms (except possibly the passive) can be used to express the imperative, the above examples could have been rendered

Kab'akaa te kai!  Drop the stick!
Uaatia te kunnikai! Wash the clothing!
Noora te kaibuke!  See the ship!

as well as in the ordinary indicative mood, provided subject pronouns are used. Here, the tense structure is observed as with the intransitives previously discussed:

Ti kab'akaa te kai.  We dropped the stick.
Ko uaatia te kunnikai.  You washed the clothing.
A noora te kaibuke.  They saw a ship.

Or, if context suggests, the above could be rendered into the present tense. This object-expressed form requires that an object be stated explicitly. It is as though the suffix contains no object pronoun. This form always ends in a.

This object-expressed form can be nominalised as an inalienable noun, as can the passive form, by adding the possessive suffixes or with the possessive indicator n to indicate that which happens to someone or something:

- kab'akaan te kai  dropping of the stick
- uaatian te kunnikai washing of the clothing
- nooran te kaibuke seeing of a ship
- kab'akaau  the knocking down of me
- kab'akaakiu  the knocking down of me
- uaatiana  the washing of it
- uaatiaakina  the washing of it
- kamateara  the killing of us
- kamateakira  the killing of us
- katangan te kita  the playing of a guitar
- katangkin te kita  the playing of a guitar

There is a small number of verbs for which the object-expressed form has a slightly different meaning when used nominally:

- noora te auti  to see a house
- noorau  a souvenir of me (something to remember me by)
- noorakiu  the seeing of me
- taraa te aoti  to look at a horse
- taraana  its appearance
- taraani moana  the appearance of his face
- taraan taamnei  the watching of movies; appearance of movies

(The two meanings of the last example need context or circumstance to resolve.)
4.8.6.3 The personal object pronoun suffixes

The verb endings shown in columns from 'first person singular' through 'second person plural' in the table of Appendix AI are used when the object is not explicitly expressed. It is as though the indicated suffixes contain object pronouns. Examples:

E noorai.          He saw me.
A na kab'akaingkami. They will knock you down.
Ko riribaiira.      You hate us.
Karinna!            Put it in!
karinna            to put it in

The same endings also serve to denote the reflexive:

N na tebokaia       I'm going to bathe (myself).
Ta i oriko!         Don't hit yourself!
Ti na kataaaraoaira. We're going to adorn ourselves.

In the reflexive case the subject pronoun agrees with the verb suffix. When there is such agreement, there is sometimes ambiguity as to whether or not the subject and object both refer to the same person:

A na tiringiaia      They're going to kill them; They're going to kill themselves.
E na koroia.        He's going to cut it; He's going to cut himself.
E a tia n nooria.   He's seen it; He's seen himself.

The expressions i bon iroua, i bon irouia, can make such expressions unambiguously reflexive:

E nooria i bon iroua. He saw himself.
A na tiringiaia i bon irouia. They'll kill themselves.

4.8.6.4 The third person plural object suffixes

Here the situation is not as simple as implied by the table in Appendix AI, or by the grammars of Bingham (1861) and Cowell (1951). Although it has been said that the third person plural suffixes depend only on whether the object is animate or inanimate, the actual situation is less definite. It seems as though nouns are really considered divided into three classes, as follows:

class H — human
class N — non-human, animate
} class A — animate
class I — inanimate

where the classes H and N are disjoint subclasses of A. In this scheme plants are members of class I. There is also an indication that there may be a distinction depending on whether or not the object is explicitly expressed. In addition, it is difficult to get native speakers to agree on either the proper or the actual usage.
The third person plural suffixes appear to be self established only for class H objects. For the others there is considerable variation and uncertainty. Furthermore, the situation appears to depend on the particular verb under consideration. The same uncertainty appears to involve the possessive suffixes as well.

The following table summarises the various suffixes that may be considered acceptable. The possessive noun and preposition suffixes are included with examples for completeness:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Object</th>
<th>noora</th>
<th>orea</th>
<th>nako</th>
<th>i bukin</th>
<th>mata</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>class H expressed</td>
<td>nooriia</td>
<td>oroia</td>
<td>nakoia</td>
<td>i bukiia</td>
<td>mataia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>class H implicit</td>
<td>nooriia</td>
<td>oroia</td>
<td>nakoia</td>
<td>i bukiia</td>
<td>mataia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>class N expressed</td>
<td>noori</td>
<td>oro</td>
<td>nako</td>
<td>i bukin</td>
<td>matan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>class N implicit</td>
<td>noori</td>
<td>oro</td>
<td>nako</td>
<td>i bukiia</td>
<td>mataia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>class I expressed</td>
<td>noori</td>
<td>oro</td>
<td>nako</td>
<td>i bukin</td>
<td>matan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>class I implicit</td>
<td>noori</td>
<td>oro</td>
<td>nako</td>
<td>i bukiia</td>
<td>mataia</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(The interchangeability of noori with noorii, and in some cases of nakoia with nakolia does not appear to be part of this problem, but is related to the special nature of the particular roots used in this example.) The above table is tentative. This matter needs to be investigated further.

4.8.6.5 Rules for transitive verb suffixation

The verb suffix in active sentences depends on the object. When several objects are involved, the verb suffix depends on the number and person of the first object mentioned, as in the following examples:

A kabooa te biti ma taiani buun.
They bought a knife and some spoons.

E kabooi taiani buun ma te biti.
He bought some spoons and a knife.

Ti nooriko ma teuaarei.
We saw you and that man.

Ti noora teuaarei ma ngkoe.
We saw that man and you.
Ko tiringiia kimoa ma aroka.
*You killed rats and plants.*

Ko tiringii aroka'ma kimoa.
*You killed plants and rats.*

(The form tiring could replace tiringii in the last example.)

4.8.6.6 The passive

The passive form is used in a direct and simple way, and follows the same tense pattern as the active forms:

Ti nooraki.
*We were seen; We are seen.*

Ti na nooraki.
*We'll be seen.*

Ti a nooraki.
*We're being seen; We were being seen.*

Ti a tia n nooraki.
*We've been seen; We were seen.*

Ti na tia n nooraki.
*We'll have been seen.*

Ti na aki nooraki.
*We won't be seen.*

The use of agent expressions will be deferred until section 5.4.1.

4.8.7 Formation of transitive verbs

This section considers the ways in which transitive verbs can be made out of other kinds of words.

4.8.7.1 Transitivisation with ka-

The prefix ka-, which is perhaps the most productive in the Kiribatese language, can convert intransitive verbs into transitives. These will then typically have a causative meaning. The suffix a is generally added, as it is the universal marker for transitive verbs. Examples:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verb</th>
<th>Transitive Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>nako</td>
<td>to go (v.i.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kanakoa</td>
<td>to make go, to send away (v.t.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wene</td>
<td>to lie down (v.i.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kawenea</td>
<td>to lay down (v.t.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>am'arake</td>
<td>to eat (v.i.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kaam'arakea</td>
<td>to feed (v.t.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tei</td>
<td>to stand (v.i.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>katea</td>
<td>to stand up; to build (v.t.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
kiba to fly (v.i.)
kakibaa to make fly, to launch (v.t.)
buti to progress; to travel; to go (v.i.)
kabuta to propel, to drive (v.t.)
rikirake to grow, to develop (v.i.)
karikirakea to develop (v.t.)

This process is quite universal and can be used to transitivise almost any intransitive verb in an analogous way. In this and other cases where it is used, the prefix ka- can be translated loosely as make.

Adjectives are converted into transitive verbs in the same way. The resulting verb has the meaning of 'to make (something) have the quality of the corresponding adjective'. Examples:

uraur aura red (adj.)
kaurauraa to make red (v.t.)
kukurei happy (adj.)
kakukureia to make happy (v.t.)
buubura big (adj.)
kabuuburaa to enlarge (v.t.)
anaaana long (adj.)
kaanaanaua to lengthen (v.t.)
um angry (adj.)
kauna to anger (v.t.)
beebete light in weight (adj.)
kabeeebetea to lighten (v.t.)
in closed (adj.)
kaina to close (v.t.)
on full (adj.)
kaona to fill (v.t.)
nanokaawaki sad (adj.)
kananokaawaka to sadden (v.t.)
bati many; much; a lot (adj.)
kabatiaa, kabata to increase; to make a lot of; to get a lot of (v.t.)
ab'aab'aki big (adj.)
kaab'aab'aka to enlarge (v.t.)
uti awake (adj.)
kauta to awaken (v.t.)
uki open (adj.)
kauka to open (v.t.)
toki finished, ended (adj.)
katoka to stop (v.t.)

Almost any adjective can be converted into a transitive verb in this way. Note the somewhat irregular formation of the last six examples.
4.8.7.2 Transitivisation with -akina

This suffix can be added to an intransitive verb to make a transitive verb with the meaning of performing the indicated action 'toward', 'at', or 'to' its object. Examples:

- ngare (v.i.) to laugh
- ngareakina (v.t.) to laugh at
- uiiirikiriki (v.i.) to whisper; to gossip
- uiiirikirikiakina (v.t.) to whisper about (someone); to gossip about (someone)
- anene (v.i.) to sing
- aneneakina (v.t.) to sing
- kakaaraabakau (v.i.) to talk, chatter, have a discussion
- kakaaraabakauakina (v.t.) to discuss
- takaaraua (v.i.) to shout, scream, yell
- takaarauaakina (v.t.) to shout (something)
- kaangai (v.i.) to do like this
- kaangaiakina (v.t.) to do like this to
- kaanganne (v.i.) to do like that
- kaanganneakina (v.t.) to do like that to

The same suffix converts adjectives into transitive verbs with the meaning of 'to have the indicated characteristic toward, at, or for something'. Examples:

- botu (adj.) bored
- botuakina (v.t.) to be bored with
- ngae (adj.) satiated, satisfied
- ngaeakina (v.t.) to be satiated with
- rauu (adj.) jealous
- rauuakina (v.t.) to be jealous of; to be jealous toward
- mataai (adj.) envious, interested, desirous
- mataaiakina (v.t.) to envy (something)
- raoi (adj.) peaceful, calm
- raoiakina (v.t.) to calm down (someone)

(This last example seems to impart a different meaning than usual.)

- nanououa (adj.) doubtful
- nanououaakina (v.t.) to doubt (something)
- tabe, tabetabe (adj.) busy
- tabeakina, tabetabeakina (v.t.) to be busy with (something)
- tokabeti (adj.) proud
- tokabetiakina (v.t.) to be proud of
- nanoanga (adj.) pitious, sympathetic
- nanoangaaakina (v.t.) to pity, have sympathy for (someone)
- nib’araa (adj.) wakeful, restless
- nib’araaakina (v.t.) to miss (someone)

It is noted that some of the above examples have an extra e, inserted probably for phonetic reasons. All these -akina verbs are conjugated according to group 7 of the table in Appendix A1.
4.8.7.3 Transitivisation with -ra

This suffix is used with some intransitive verbs indicating motion, or some action which results in motion, to form transitive verbs indicating collision with an object. The resulting transitives are conjugated according to group 5 of the table in Appendix A1.

- b'aka (v.i.) to fall
- b'akara (v.t.) to fall onto
- E b'akaria te nii. A coconut tree fell on it.
- timtim (v.i.) to drip
- timtimra (v.t.) to drip onto
- E a timtimriira te karau. Rain is dripping on us.
- mm'amm'a (v.i.) to crumble, flake away
- mm'amm'ara (v.t.) to crumble onto
- toka (v.i.) to climb up
- tokara (v.t.) to board
- oki (v.i.) to return
- okira (v.t.) to return to
- kiba (v.i.) to fly
- kibara (v.t.) to fly into
- E kibariko te keeketi. A dragonfly flew into you.
- tebetebe (v.i.) to splash
- tebera (v.t.) to splash
- E teberaite te ran. The water splashed on me.

(This last example illustrates that sometimes the reduplicated form may remain more popular for the intransitive form, the non-reduplicated form for the transitive.)

- beka (v.i.) to defecate
- bekara (v.t.) to defecate upon
- E bekara kieu te beru. A lizard defecated on my mat.

4.8.7.4 Transitivisation with -na

This suffix converts nouns into transitive verbs with various meanings.

When the noun denotes a family relationship, the corresponding transitive verb means something like 'to treat (someone) as having that relationship with speaker'. Examples:

- nati (n.) son; daughter
- natina (v.t.) to treat as a son or daughter; to adopt
  Ti kan natiniko. We want you as our child;
  We want to adopt you

- tina (n.) mother
- tinana (v.t.) to treat as one's mother
  I a bon tinana Meere. I accept Meere as my mother.

When the object is not formally of the indicated relationship to the speaker, the idea is to sort of adopt the person into that relationship. When the object does formally have the indicated relationship, the idea is to be happy to have
him in that relationship. Thus, if a man hates his brother he might tell him

I aki kan tariniko.
I don't want you as my brother.

This suffixation scheme can be used with all such nouns indicating family relationships:

- **buu (n.)** spouse
- **buuna (v.t.)** to treat as a spouse
- **m'aane (n.)** sister; brother
- **m'aanena (v.t.)** to treat as one's sister (brother)
- **eiriki (n.)** sister-in-law; brother-in-law
- **eirikina (v.t.)** to treat as one's sister-in-law (brother-in-law)
- **tama (n.)** father
- **tamana (v.t.)** to treat as one's father
- **tibu (n.)** grandparent; grandchild
- **tibuna (v.t.)** to treat as one's grandparent (grandchild)
- **karo (n.)** parent
- **karona (v.t.)** to treat as one's parent
- **rao (n.)** friend; companion
- **raona (v.t.)** to be friends with; to have as a companion
- **koraki (n.)** family group; relative
- **korakina (v.t.)** to treat as one's relative
- **butika (n.)** brother-in-law; sister-in-law
- **butikana (v.t.)** to treat as one's brother-in-law (sister-in-law)

The suffix -na can be used with substance names to impart a meaning of to add the substance to something. Examples:

- **miriki (n.)** milk
  - **mirikina (v.t.)** to add milk to
  - I a tia ni mirikina am koobe.
  - I've added milk to your coffee.
- **b'aa (n.)** oil; gasoline; fuel
  - **b'aana (v.t.)** to oil; to fuel
  - E tuai ni b'aanaki au kaa.
  - My car has not yet been fueled.
- **tioka (n.)** sugar
  - **tiokana (v.t.)** to add sugar to
  - E riai n aki tiokanaki te ika anne.
  - That fish should not be sugared.
- **taari (n.)** salt
  - **taarina (v.t.)** to add salt to
  - Ti na taarinnna.
  - Let's salt it.

This same suffix is used with various other nouns to impart meanings denoting various actions related to the corresponding nouns:
maeka, mamaeka (n.) to live
maekana (v.t.) to live in (something)
E aki maekanaki te auti arei.
That house is unoccupied.
aba (n.) land
abana (v.t.) to use or hold as one's own land
E na aki manga abana ana tabo Itaia.
He will no longer use Itaia's place as his own land.
b'ai (n.) thing
b'aina (v.t.) to have, keep as one's own
Ko na b'aina au aama?
Are you going to keep my hammer?
karaki (n.) story
karakina (v.t.) to tell
Kam tuai ni karakina amii rongorongo nikabane.
You have not yet told your complete story.
moa (n.) beginning
moana (v.t.) to begin
E na moanaki te mm'akuri n ngaabong.
The work will be begun tomorrow.
onimaki (n.) trust
onimakina (v.t.) to trust
A riai n aki onimakiniko.
They shouldn't trust you.
taek (n.) word; statement
taekina (v.t.) to tell about (something)
E aki tootoki n tataekiniko.
He talks about you all the time.

(Note the irregularity in the formation of the last example.) All the -na transitive verbs are conjugated according to group 7 of the table in Appendix A1.

4.8.7.5 Some processes involved in transitiveisation

When the original root form ends in i, as in the following,

bati (adj.)
nakoati (v.i.)
toki (n.)
baki (adj.)
toobibi (n.)
bureeti (v.i.)

many, much
to go toward you
dead, finish
hungry

the addition of a suffix a can cause a slight difficulty, probably because the suffix -ia is usually reserved for the third person singular form with object implicit. The problem seems to be resolved in one of three ways.

(1) The i is dropped as in the following examples:
toki (n.) end, finish
katoka (v.t.) to end, to finish
ngeri (n.)  curly
kangera (v.t.)  to curl
bati (adj.)  much, many
kabata (v.t.)  to increase; to load on a lot

(2) The i is retained but then there is no distinction between the third person object expressed an object implicit forms, as in the following examples:

nakoati (v.i.)  to go toward you
kanakoatia (v.t.)  to send (something) to you
kanakoatia (v.t.)  to send it to you
toobibi (n.)  circuit, circumference
katoobibia (v.t.)  to go around (something)
katoobibia (v.t.)  to go around it
bureeti (v.i.)  to publish
bureetia (v.t.)  to publish (something)
bureetia (v.t.)  to publish it

(The first transliterations of the English to publish (v.i.) were booreti, used by the Protestant printery, and bwereetiti, used by the Catholic printery. This inconsistency was resolved by the KLB, which adopted the compromise as indicated.)

(3) A defective verb results, which has no object expressed form, as in the following examples:

baki (adj.)  hungry
kabakia (v.t.)  to make him hungry
karewati (v.i.)  to throw toward you
karewatia (v.t.)  to throw it toward you

In cases where such defective transitive verbs would otherwise be used, circumlocutions are necessary. For example, to say *It made Itaia hungry.,* one might use *E baki iai Itaia was hungry thereby.* To say *He threw a coconut to you,* one might use *E kareiko n te ben* *He threw a coconut to you* (instead of using a verb based on the root karewati).

4.9 Adverbs

The simple adverbs have the three degrees of proximity (or time) that are analogous to the three persons of grammar. The first degree means 'now' or 'near the speaker'; the second degree means 'later' or 'near you'; and the third degree means 'in the past' or 'far from both of us'. The following table summarises this pattern:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relative (Time)</th>
<th>Demonstrative (Time)</th>
<th>Demonstrative (Place)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. ngkai, ngkae</td>
<td>ngkai</td>
<td>ikai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. ngkana</td>
<td>ngkanne</td>
<td>ikanne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. ngke</td>
<td>ngkekei</td>
<td>ikekei</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

where the corresponding meanings are approximately:
Relative (Time)          Demonstrative (Time) (Place)
1. now that          now            here
2. when (future); if then (later) there (near you)
3. when (past); if then (past) there (far from us)

There is another relative locative adverb, ike, which does not seem to fit into the above scheme. Cowell (1951) makes the interesting suggestion that ike may have once been the third degree counterpart of such a scheme, from which the corresponding first and second degree forms (possibly ikae and ika) have been dropped. For the first degree relative time adverb, apparently ngkai and ngkae can be used interchangeably. Its second and third degrees, ngkana and ngke, which both can mean if, differ in the following respect. If the truth of the 'if' clause is not known, ngkana is used, if the 'if' clause is known to be contrary to fact, ngke is used:

ngkana e roko       if he comes
ngke ti kaum'ane    if we were rich

The following examples illustrate the use of these adverbs:

I mena ika'i.       I am here.
E na nako ikekei.   He will go there.
A tekatéka ikanne.  They sat there (near you).
Ti na nako ngkai   Let's go now.
ao ngkanne kam na irai. and then you will go with me.
A kukurei ngkekei.  They were happy then.
ngkai e roko        now that he has come
ngkae e roko        now that he has come
ngkana kam nooria   when you see it; if you see it
ngke ti nako Tarawa when we went to Tarawa: If we had gone
                    to Tarawa
ngke ko wanawana    if you were smart
te tabo ike ko mena iai the place where you are
.te auti ike a matuu iai the house where they slept

The modern tendency is to replace ike by the corresponding relative pronoun appropriate for the given case:

te tabo ane ko mena iai the place where you are
.te auti are a matuu iai the house where they slept

4.9.1 Time adverbs

These will be divided into three groups. The first group consists of those used syntactically as adverbs, with similar function as in English. The following are commonly used members of this group:

ngkai          now
ngkanne        then (later)
ngkekei        then (some time ago)
ngkoanaaoa     yesterday
ningngabong, ningngaabong tomorrow
ngkoa          some time ago
ngkoangkoa     a long time ago
rimoa formerly
rimwii later, afterwards
i mwiina afterwards
ngkerimoa formerly
ngkainaba immediately, at once, right now
ngkannenaba at the very time mentioned
ngkekeinaba at that very time

They are usually placed just after the explicit subject, where present, but can also be placed otherwise. If placed at the beginning of the sentence it is often followed by the word ao. Examples:

N na roko rimwii.
I'll come later.

A a tia n nako ngkai.
They have now gone.

E kana te ika teuaei ngkoananoa.
This man ate fish yesterday.

I mwiina ao ti na am'arake.
We'll eat afterwards.

Ti rangi ni kainnano ngkekei.
We were very poor then.

Ngkaa te m'ane ngkainaba.
Give me the money right now.

The second group function syntactically as auxiliary verbs. The following is a list of common examples:

a tib'a (tia n) just
nangi tib'a (tia n) just
kaman a long time ago
kaan, kan almost (present or future)
kuri almost (past)
manga again

(The expressions in parenthesis in the left column are optional.) Examples of use:

A a tib'a roko taan akawa.
The fishermen have just come.

I a kaman am'arake.
I ate a long time ago.

Kam na manga okira Tarawa?
Are you going to return again to Tarawa?

E kuri ni b'aka Itaia.
Itaia almost fell.

E kaani b'aka.
It's almost falling; It's about to fall

Ti a kani kiitanaki n te b'ati.
We're almost missing the bus.

The third group function syntactically as verbs, and there are very few such examples:
maan (v.i.)  to be (somewhere) a long time
waekoa (v.i.)  to do (something) fast
kiriaria (v.i.)  to take a long time

Examples of use:

Ko maan i Amerika?
Were you in America a long time?

N na waekoa.
I'll be fast (about it).

E kiriaria rokon te tia reirei.
The teacher won't be here for a long time.
(lit. The arrival of the teacher will take a long time.)

The distinction between the last two groups is not sharp, as on occasion some of either group can be used with or without a main verb:

E kaman.
(That happened) a long time ago.

Ti riai ni waekoa ni mm'akuri.
We should work fast.

E kiriaria n roko te tia reirei.
The teacher won't be here for a long time.
(lit. The teacher will take a long time to come.)

There are many adverbial expressions of time. Many of these are introduced by n, and have the same position in the sentence as simple adverbs. One is free to construct a great variety of such adverbial expressions, of which the following examples are typical:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expression</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>n taai aika a bati</td>
<td>often (lit. at many times)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n taai aika a karako</td>
<td>seldom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n taai nako</td>
<td>always</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n aki toki</td>
<td>always</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n te tai ae e riai</td>
<td>at the appropriate time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n tabetai</td>
<td>sometimes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n taai tabetai</td>
<td>sometimes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ni waekoa</td>
<td>soon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ni burenib'ai</td>
<td>seldom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n tain te buaka</td>
<td>during wartime</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i mwiin te rongo</td>
<td>after the drought</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i m'aain tokin te ririki</td>
<td>before the end of the year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ni katoatai</td>
<td>always</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following examples illustrate usage:

E roko n tain te buaka ao e tiku ikai ni karaokea tokin te nam'akaina are Beberurai.
He came during the war and he stayed here until the end of February.

Iai te tioka n te titooa n tabetai, ma burenib'ai n iai te bilia.
There is sometimes sugar in the store, but there is beer only seldom.

E na taataningaroti n aki toki ara tia mm'akuri.
Our worker will always be lazy.

E kamateaki n te tai naba anne.
He was killed at that very time.
4.9.2 Locative and other adverbs

The following are some of the more common single-word adverbs:

- ikai: here
- ikanne: there (near you)
- ikekei: there (far away)
- ti'i: only
- kai, kaka'i: easily
- ni kaineti: directly

Their syntactic properties are different. The words ti'i, kai and kaka'i are used somewhat like auxiliary verbs:

- E kakai reke te ika ikai.
  *Fish are easily caught here.*
- N na ti'i am'arake.
  *I'm just going to eat; I'm only going to eat.*

A few adverbial expressions are constructed with n plus an adjective:

- E roko n atai.
  *She was a virgin. (lit. she came (to me) as a child.)*
- E m'are ni kara ma Itai'a.
  *She wasn't a virgin when she married Itai'a. (lit. she married Itai'a as an old woman.)*

Adverbial expressions can be formed with n te aro ae + (adjective). Examples:

- E tamaaroa b'a ko na am'arake n te aro ae e rai.
  *It would be nice if you would eat courteously.*
- Kam rai ni te aro ae e eti.
  *You should speak correctly.*

A very productive method of forming adverbial expressions of manner is with n te aro ae in ... a manner. The usual pattern is

n te aro ae + (sentence) + iai

Examples:

- Tai katabetabea teuaarei n te aro ae e na akea ana tai ni motirawa.  
  *Don't make this man so busy that he won't have any time to rest.*
- Tekateka n te aro ae ti na aki rib'a iroum.  
  *Sit so that we won't be crowded by you.*
- E koonaki roroana n te aro ae e aki konaa n ikeike iai.  
  *His neck was squeezed in such a manner that he couldn't breathe.*

4.9.3 Interrogative adverbs

ningai?   when?
ia'ai, iaai? where?
ia'ara?   where?

The spelling ningai is preferred, although some may consider the correct pronunciation to be nningai. This may be because ningai is preceded by n.
Examples:

E na roko n ningai?  When will he come?
E roko n ningai?  When did he come?
N ningai ae e na roko?  When will he come?
N ningai ae e roko?  When did he come?
E mena ia?  Where is it?
E mena iaara?  Where is it?

4.10 Conjunctions

A series of nouns can be joined with ao and, or with ma and; with. Sometimes the particle ai is used as an indicator of the last element in the series for emphasis. Examples:

A na roko Itaia ao Uriam ao Meere.
Itaia, Uriam and Meere are going to come.
Ti na karekea te tioka ao te raiti ao te buraawa.
Let's get sugar, rice and flour.

Verbs and adjectives are usually joined with man.

E tikiraioi man rietaata au auti.
My house is beautiful and high.
Ti na uaua man akawa
Let's go swimming and fish.
A oroia mani kab'akaa.
They hit him and knocked him down.

All elements can be linked by ke or:

Ko na matuu ke ko na aki?
Are you going to sleep, or aren't you?
lai te buraawa ke te raiti?
Is there any flour or rice?

4.10.1 Subordinating conjunctions

These are phrases which can connect two sentences in such a way that one becomes subordinate to the other. The usual pattern is

(main sentence) + (subordinating conjunction) + (subordinate sentence).

The following is a list of some of the common subordinating conjunction phrases in Kiribatese:

b'a  that
e (boni) ngae ngke  although, even though
e (boni) ngae ngkana  although, even though
Examples:

Tuanga Meere b'a e na roko.
Tell Meere to come.

(See section 4.4.6 for more examples using b'a.)

E ngae ngke akea kantokana ao e bon tokara naba te raanti.
He boarded the launch even though he didn't have the fare.

Tai nako ma tii ngkana ko weteaki.
Don't go unless you're called.

E boni ngae ngkana e aki kukurei iai tinau ao ti na bon nako naba.
We're going to go even though my mother isn't happy about it.

Ti katikua iroun tinana b'a bukina ngke e aki marurung n nakonako.
We left him with his mother because he wasn't well enough to walk.

(The expressions b'a bukina ngke and bukina b'a can be used interchangeably.)

Kam tangoa te m'ane kioina b'a e aki tau amii m'ane n tantanii?
Did you borrow the money because your savings were inadequate?

(The expressions kioina b'a and b'a kioina ngke can be used interchangeably also.)

Ti nooria ngke e otinako.
We saw him when he came out.

Ti konaa n rooroko iroumii ngkai iai ara rebwerebwe.
We can come visit you often now that we have a motorbike.

A na maiu arokara ngkana e b'aab'aka te karau.
Our plants will grow well if (when) it starts raining.

Ti na kawenea te waa n te aro ae e na tani man te riringa.
Let's lay the canoe down so that it will be sheltered from the sun.

A itangitangiiria ni karokoa a mate.
They loved each other until they died.

A na kabooa te kaa tii ngkana e reke te m'ane mairoun tamaia.
They'll buy the car only if they get money from their father.

A na aki kabooa te kaa ma tii ngkana e reke te m'ane mairoun tamaia.
They won't buy the car unless they get money from their father.
Ko na bon oreaki b'a ko aonga n uringa au taeka.
You're going to get hit so that you'll remember my words.

Kiribatese uses such subordinate clause constructions sparingly. Prepositional phrases, such as the following, are commonly used instead:

Ti na kabooa te kaa i mwiin reken te m'ane iroura.
We'll buy the car after we get the money.
(Lit. We'll buy the car after the acquisition of the money by us.)

E tamaaroa b'a ti na kaitiaka te auti i m'aain rokoia.
We'd better clean up the house before they come.
(Lit. We'd better clean up the house before their arrival.)

4.11 Reduplication

This phenomenon is common in Kiribatese and many other Malayo-Polynesian languages, and it refers to the repetition of an entire word or part of a word to impart a modification of meaning.

Certain nouns can be reduplicated in entirety to form adjectives with the meaning of 'abounding in the things denoted by the corresponding noun'.

Examples:

- ino (n.)          maggot
- inoino (adj.)     infested with maggots
- man (n.)          animal; insect
- maniman (adj.)    infested with animals (bugs)
- ran (n.)          water
- ranran (adj.)     watery, dilute
- ika (n.)          fish
- ikaika (adj.)     abounding in fish
E ikaika te nama. The lagoon has many fish

- b'aa (n.)        oil
- b'aab'aa (adj.)  oily
E b'aab'aa kunim. Your skin is oily.

- ina (n.)         scale (of fish, etc.)
- inaina (adj.)    scaly
- nii (n.)         coconut tree
- nini (adj.)      abounding in coconut trees

For certain longer nouns the same effect is achieved by reduplicating part of the noun:

- maunga (n.)      mountain
- maungaunga (adj.) mountainous
- burae (n.)       hair
- buraerae (adj.)  hairy
- tano (n.)        sand; soil
- tantano, tanotano (adj.) sandy
A tantano waem. Your feet are full of sand.
Some nouns consist of reduplicated elements which are rarely if at all used alone. It is possible that the original meaning of such reduplicated elements has been lost, modified, or fallen from popularity. Examples:

- bokaboka  
  - **mud**
- uteute  
  - **grass**
- bwebwe  
  - **butterfly**
- riburibu  
  - **mud**

Some words are reduplicated to form a kind of baby talk, used with talking to small children:

- kii  
  - **anus; crotch**
- kikii  
  - **anus (baby talk)**
- bero  
  - **penis**
- berbero  
  - **penis (baby talk)**

### 4.11.1 Formation of continuous aspect

Verbs have a continuous aspect (see section 4.8.2.5) which denotes action continuously, habitually, customarily or intermittently carried out. This aspect is formed by the reduplication of part of the word used for the corresponding simple aspect. When the intransitive or root form of the simple aspect begins with a consonant or nasal, has two syllables or less and contains no long sounds or diphthongs the continuous aspect is formed by reduplicating the first syllable and lengthening its vowel the first time. Examples:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Simple Aspect</th>
<th>Continuous Aspect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>wene (v.i.)</td>
<td>weewene</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ngare (v.i.)</td>
<td>ngaangare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tang (v.i.)</td>
<td>taatang</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mim (v.i.)</td>
<td>miimim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>beka (v.i.)</td>
<td>beebeka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>roko (v.i.)</td>
<td>rooroko</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ngongo (v.i.)</td>
<td>ngoongongo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kare (v.i.)</td>
<td>kaakare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>biri (v.i.)</td>
<td>biibiri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kiba (v.i.)</td>
<td>kiikiba</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kiro (v.i.)</td>
<td>kiikiro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nima (v.t.)</td>
<td>niinima</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kana (v.t.)</td>
<td>kaakana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rinea (v.t.)</td>
<td>riirinea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nako (v.i.)</td>
<td>naaanka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>toro (v.i.)</td>
<td>tootoro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tiku (v.i.)</td>
<td>tiitiku</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some verbs not belonging to this class nevertheless form their continuous aspects in the same way:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Simple Aspect</th>
<th>Continuous Aspect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>m'aninga (v.i.)</td>
<td>m'aam'aninga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tangira (v.t.)</td>
<td>taatangira</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Simple Aspect</th>
<th>Continuous Aspect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| keewati (v.i.)  | keekeewati                      | to withdraw
Simple Aspect | Continuous Aspect
--- | ---
keerikaaki (v.i.) | keekeerikaaki | to move back
waerake (v.i.) | waawaerake | to go back
tam'araake (v.i.) | taataam'araake | to climb east
kamaatea (v.t.) | kaakamaatea | to kill
karineea (v.t.) | kaakarineea | to honour
tauti (v.i.) | taatauti | to be stingy
buee (v.i.) | buubuee | to be hot
wairio (v.i.) | waawairio | to go west

Verbs not belonging to this class form their continuous aspects in various other ways:

Simple Aspect | Continuous Aspect
--- | ---
b'aatika (v.i.) | b'ab'aatika | to ride a bicycle
raaun (v.i.) | raraaun | to ride around
boiraa (adj.) | boboiraa | to smell bad
boiarara (adj.) | boboiarara | to smell good
orea (v.t.) | orooorea | to hit
moamoaa (adj.) | momoamoaa | to be generous
kiitatauti (adj.) | kikiitatauti | to be stingy
m'aiitoro (adj.) | m'am'aiitoro | to be cold
utu (v.i.) | utuutu | to awaken
ongo (v.i.) | ongoongo | to hear
tebotebo (v.i.) | teebotebo or teebotebo | to bathe
takaakaro (v.i.) | tatakaakaro or tatakaakaro | to play
iaango (v.i.) | iiaango | to think
iaangoa (v.t.) | iiaangoa | to think about
uringa (v.t.) | uruuringa | to remember
anene (v.i.) | aneenene | to sing
takaaraua (v.i.) | tatakaaraua | to shout
koroboki (v.i.) | kookoroboki or kokoroboki | to write
am'araake (v.i.) | am'aam'araake | to eat
mooi (v.i.) | momooi | to drink
tekateka (v.i.) | tetekateka | to sit
matuu (v.i.) | mamatuu or mamatuu | to sleep
kiree (v.i.) | kikikiree or kikikiree | to flirt

It is recalled that most adjective-like intransitive verbs have a reduplicated element, and thus usually correspond to the continuous aspect. There is often no corresponding simple aspect.
5. SYNTAX OF SIMPLE SENTENCES

Just as in other languages, Kiribatese has utterances which express a more-or-less complete thought, and these are begun with a capital letter and ended with a period in written text.

5.1 Equational sentences

The basic form of equational sentences is

\[(\text{nominal expression}) + (\text{nominal expression})\]

There is almost complete symmetry between the two elements. Examples:

- Te beritenti ngaia. \textit{He is the president.}
- Ngaia te beritenti. \textit{He is the president.}
- Te tia tebo ngkoe. \textit{You are a diver.}
- Ngkoe te tia tebo. \textit{You are a diver.}
- Ara tia mm'akuri teuaarei. \textit{That man is our worker.}
- Teuaarei ara tia mm'akuri. \textit{That man is our worker.}
- Kaamta roronga akekei. \textit{Those young men are carpenters.}
- Roronga akekei kaamta. \textit{Those young men are carpenters.}

The particle \textit{bon} can be used to give more emphasis to the nominal expression following it, as well as to make otherwise cumbersome sentences more understandable. The following replies would be used to answer the question "Who is the president?":

- Te beritenti boni ngaia. \textit{He is the president.}
- Boni ngaia te beritenti. \textit{He is the president.}

whereas the following would answer the question "What is he?":

- Ngaia bon te beritenti. \textit{He is the president.}
- Bon te beritenti ngaia. \textit{He is the president.}

An utterance consisting of a single nominal expression could be interpreted as an equational sentence:

- Te nii. \textit{A coconut tree; It's a coconut tree.}
- Ngaia. \textit{He; It is he.}
- Am kao. \textit{Your ox; It was your ox.}

Or, with \textit{bon}:

- Bon arokara. \textit{They are our plants.}
- Bon aia bure. \textit{It was their fault.}
- Bon te waa. \textit{It was a canoe.}

Sometimes this construction is used to form sentences which in English would have a completely different structure:

- Au kaanteninga b'a ko na waekoa n roko.
- \textit{I hope that you will come soon.}
- (lit. \textit{It is my hope that you will come soon.})

- Aia baaire taani moti b'a e na kaborakei teuaarei inonon teniuua te ririki.
- \textit{The judges decided that he would be sentenced to three years.}
- (lit. \textit{It was the judges decision that he would be sentenced to three years.})
Am taeka ngkoa b'a ko na anganai te m'ane ngkai.
You said that you would give me the money now.
(lit. It was your word that you would give me the money now.)

Au kaantaninga b'a ko na kawaria.
I hope that you will go see him.
(lit. It is my hope that you will go see him.)

Aia baaire naakekei b'a e na kateaki ara auti ikai.
Those people decided that our house would be built here.
(lit. It was the decision of those people that our house would be built here.)

Am taeka ngkoa b'a ko na roko i m'ain te aoa teuana.
You said that you would come before one o'clock.
(lit. It was your word that you would come before one o'clock.)

5.1.1 Negative equational sentences
To negativise an equational sentence, tiaki is placed before the element negated. Thus, tiaki sort of replaces bon, giving it a negative sense:

Ngaia tiaki te beretitenti. He is not the president.
Tiaki te beretitenti ngaia. He is not the president.
Tiaki ngaia te beretitenti. The president is not he.
Te beretitenti tiaki ngaia. The president is not he.

Or, with added emphasis:

Ngaia bon tiaki te beretitenti. He is not the president.
Bon tiaki te beretitenti ngaia. He is not the president.
Bon tiaki ngaia te beretitenti. The president is not he.
Te beretitenti bon tiaki ngaia. The president is not he.

Also, with just one nominal expression:

Tiaki au bure. It wasn't my fault.
Bon tiaki au bure. It was definitely not my fault.
Tiaki ngkoe. It wasn't you.
Tiaki taamneira. It's not a picture of us.

5.1.2 Tense indication in equational sentences
The foregoing description of equational sentences illustrates the direct manner of formation, which indicates either present or past. As in other types of sentences, Kiribatese does not emphasise the difference between present and past, which can usually be inferred from context. Other indicators are purposefully inserted to emphasise present or past when necessary:

Boni ngaia te beretitenti rimoa. He was the president (before).
Boni ngaia te beretitenti ngkai. He is the president (now).

To form the future tense there are two common types of utterance that are used. One makes use of the flexibility of function of words and essentially considers the noun as a verb. Names of occupations, for example, when used as verbs mean 'to act in such an occupation'. Examples:
beretitenti (n.)  president
beretitenti (v.i.)  to serve as president
kaamta (n.)  carpenter
kaamta (v.i.)  to work as a carpenter
tia reirei (n.)  teacher
tia reirei (v.i.)  to act as a teacher

Thus, the future can be constructed as in any intransitive sentence (see section 5.3.):

E na beretitenti Terurungaa.  Terurungaa will be the president.
A na taan tia reirei naakai.  These people will be teachers.
N na tia moti.  I shall be the judge.

The other common way uses the circumlocution riki b'a to become:

E na riki Terurungaa b'a te beretitenti.  Terurungaa will be the president.
A na riki b'a taan tia reirei naakai.  These people will be teachers.
N na riki b'a te tia moti.  I shall be the judge.
E na riki Kiribati b'a te aba ae e inaaomata.  Kiribati will become an independent country.
A na riki auti aikai b'a mweengaia.  These houses will be their home.

These same two methods can be used to form all the other tenses:

I tuai ni kaamta.
I've never been a carpenter.
E a tia n riki Itaia b'a temanna ae e moan te kakannato i aoni Kiribati.  Itaia has become one of the most important persons in Kiribati.

5.2 Descriptive sentences

The simplest descriptive sentences consist of

(subject pronoun) + (adjective)

as in the following examples:

E tikiraoi.  She (he, it) is pretty.
Ti b'atab'ata.  We are dark (skinned).
Kam baba.  You are stupid.

The negative is formed by inserting aki (or akii) before the adjective:

E aki tikiraoi.  She is not pretty.
Ti aki b'atab'ata.  We are not dark.
Kam aki baba.  You are not stupid.
The addition of the particle a indicates a transitory state or a condition that might be different in past or future times:

- E a kabuebue. It is hot (at the moment).
- Ti a baki. We are hungry.
- Ko a aoraki. You are sick.
- E a kara. He is old.
- A a mate. They are dead.

Some negative examples:

- Ko a aki nanokaawaki. You are not sad.
- I a aki wanawana. I am not intelligent (this time).
- A a aki raraoi. They are not good.

The future tense is formed regularly, and indicates a transitory state:

- E na tikiraoi. She will be pretty.
- Ti na baki. We'll be hungry.
- E na aki kabuebue. It won't be hot.
- E na aki mate. He won't be dead.
- Kam na aki baba. You won't be stupid.

(With different intonation this last example could mean Don't be stupid!)

If the subject is to be expressed (not just by a subject pronoun) the pattern is

(subject pronoun) + (adjective) + (subject)

as in the following examples:

- E tikiraoi Nei Teiti. Nei Teiti is pretty.
- Ti b'atb'ata ngaira. We are dark.
- Kam baba ngkamii taan akawa. You fishermen are stupid.
- E aki tikiraoi teuaarei. That man is not handsome.
- A aki b'atb'ata kaain Tiom'ane. Germans are not dark.
- E a kabuebue te ran. The water is hot.
- Ti a baki ngaira ataei. We children are hungry.
- E a kara te koowana. The governor is old.
- A mate oon akekei. Those turtles are dead.
- E na tikiraoi Meeria. Meeria will be pretty.
- A na baki taani mm'akuri. The workers will be hungry.
- E na aki kabuebue te raiti. The rice won't be hot.

The other tenses are formed regularly:

- Ti tuai meni baki. We are not hungry yet.
- E tuai ni marurung Tiion. Tiion is not well yet.

But the perfect form (with a tia n) is usually not used with adjectives.

5.3 Intransitive sentences

We here consider sentences in which there is no direct object of the action. The pattern is identical to that of descriptive sentences as discussed above, except that the adjective is replaced by the intransitive verb. Examples:

- I nakonako. I walked.
- A taratara. They were awake.
- Ti ngare. We laughed.
Kam tekateka. You sat down.
Ko mm'akuri. You worked.
A b'aka. They fell.
A a tia n roko naakekei. Those people have come.
Ti a tia n am'arake. We've eaten.
E na matuu. He's going to sleep.
A na b'aka been. The coconuts will fall.
E tuai ni waerake. He hasn't gone east yet.
A na aki roko taan anene. The singers are not going to come.
E aki kiba te moa. The chicken didn't fly.
E a matakua Itaia. Itaia's watching.

5.4 Singly transitive sentences

We are now considering sentences in which there is one direct object and no indirect object. The basic pattern is

(subject pronoun) + (transitive verb) + (direct object) + (subject)

Either or both the direct object and the subject need not be expressed, but the form of the verb depends on whether or not the direct object is explicitly expressed (see section 4.8.6).

E oroia.
He hit it.

E tenaa Itaia te kirii.
The dog bit Itaia.

A noora te kaibuke naakekei.
Those people saw the ship.

A noora te kaibuke
They saw the ship.

A nooria naakekei.
Those people saw it.

A nooria.
They saw it.

E a tia n anaa te reerio te tia reirei.
The teacher has taken the radio.

E a tia n anaa te reerio.
He has taken the radio.

E a tia n anaia te tia reirei.
The teacher has taken it.

E a tia n anaia.
He has taken it.

E na weteiia taani mm'akuri aia mataniuii.
Their boss will call the workmen.

E na weteiia taani mm'akuri.
He will call the workmen.
E na we te l la aia ma ta niu i i.
Their boss will call them.
E na we te i i a.
He will call them.

The verb forms are consistent with the rules described in sections 4.8.2 and 4.8.6.

5.4.1 Passive sentences

Here the usual pattern is

(subject pronoun) + (passive verb) + (subject) + (agent)

where either or both of the last two elements may be omitted. The agent is expressed with iroun by or appropriate forms of that word as described in section 4.6).

irouu
by me
iroum
by you
iroun te berenteni
by the president

The following are typical examples of passive sentences:

E nooraki te kiri i anne irouia uaakekei.
That dog was seen by those men.
E nooraki te kiri i anne irouia.
That dog was seen by them
E nooraki te kiri i anne.
That dog was seen.
E nooraki irouia.
It was seen by them
E nooraki irouia uaakekei.
It was seen by those men.
E nooraki.
It was seen.
E na oreaki natim iroun te tia reirei.
Your child will be hit by the teacher.
E na oreaki natim irouna.
Your child will be hit by him.
E na oreaki natim.
Your child will be hit.
E na oreaki iroun te tia reirei.
He will be hit by the teacher.
E na oreaki irouna.
He will be hit by him.
E na oreaki.
He will be hit.

The form of the verb is consistent with the rules given in sections 4.8.2 and 4.8.6.5.
5.5 Doubly transitive sentences

Only two verbs in Kiribatese are doubly transitive: *angan* to *give* and *tuanga* to *tell*. There is uncertainty as to the proper structure of *angan* as it seems different from other verbs. It is conjugated irregularly as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>angan</em></td>
<td>object expressed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>angana</em></td>
<td>first person singular</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>anganiko</em></td>
<td>second person singular</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>anganna</em></td>
<td>third person singular</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>anganiira</em></td>
<td>first person plural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>anganingkamii</em></td>
<td>second person plural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>anganiia</em></td>
<td>third person plural animate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>angan</em></td>
<td>third person plural non-animate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>anganaki</em></td>
<td>passive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The verb *tuanga* is conjugated according to group 8 of table in Appendix A1.

When both objects are explicit the first corresponds to what in English would be called the indirect object, and the second the direct object. When objective suffixes are used they correspond to the indirect object. Examples:

E *anganai* te boki  
*He gave me the book.*

I *angan* teuarei te *m'an*e.  
*I gave that man the money.*

Ti na *tuangiia* te rongorongo.  
*We'll tell them the news.*

Ti *tuangiia* taan reirei taekan te kaibuke  
*We told the teachers about the ship.*

When both objects and the subject are all explicit the resulting stacking of nouns becomes somewhat cumbersome, but still understandable:

A *angan* tinaia te am*arake* ataei akekei.  
*Those children gave food to their mother.*

(but *A anga* te am*arake* ataei akekei nakon *tinaia* is more commonly used.) In the passive voice the indirect object becomes subject, subject becomes agent and direct object just sort of remains, as in following examples:

E *anganaki* te ben iroon te ataei.  
*He was given a coconut by a child.*

Ti *tuangaki* te rongorongo iroon te tia uaereti.  
*We were told the news by the wireless operator.*

A *anganaki* taan reirei te *m'an*e irooni mataniuia.  
*The teachers were given money by their boss.*

Other double transitive constructions must be expressed in other ways. The most common is by use of prepositions, particularly nakon and its derivatives, to indicate the indirect object:

E *kanakoa* te reta nakoiu.  
*He sent me a letter.*

Ti na *uota* te atama nakoomii.  
*We'll bring you the gravel.*
In some other constructions involving two objects b'a as, like is used:

Ti iangoa te tia reirei arei b'a te rangirang.
We considered that teacher a crazy man.

E rineaki teuanaei b'a te tia moti.
This man was elected judge.

A rinea teuanaei b'a te tia moti.
They elected this man judge.

Some transitive verbs take objects which in English would be thought of as indirect objects:

Tai karea te ataei.
Don't throw (things) at the child.

E kaotaa i n te rongrongo.
He explained the news to me.

Kabatai!
Give me more (cards, for example, as in cardgame slang).

Note that in these cases what in English would be considered the direct object is preceded by n.

5.5.1 Indirect objects

In the preceding section it was seen that only the verbs angan and tuanga take indirect objects. For other verbs prepositional phrases are used to fill the need:

E kanakoa te m'ane nakoiu.
He sent me the money.

N na wareka te boki anne nakoim.
I'll read you that book.

N na korea te reta alo nakoim.
I'll write you this letter.

Ko kakioa te kirii nakoina.
You chased the dog to him.

Kam kanakomaia te ika nakoira.
You sent us the fish.

5.6 Conditional sentences

These basically have two elements — an if clause and a consequence. The if clause can express some condition that either is unknown or is known to be contrary to fact by the speaker. The following are examples of the 'unknown' type:

Ngkana ko nooria ao tuangnga b'a N na nakoina.
If you see him, tell him that I'll go meet him.

Ngkana e a tia n roko ao e na bon tia n noora ana reta.
If he has arrived then he has certainly seen the letter.
Ngkana e b'aka te karau ao a na maiu raoi arokara.  
If it rains our plants will do well.

The following are examples of the 'contrary-to-fact' type:

Ngke iai au m'ane ao N na kabooa te kaa.  
*If I had the money I'd buy a car.*

Ngke arona b'a e na kekeiaki n reirei ao e na bon reke anaanga n reirei i tinaniku.  
*If he would study well, he would get an opportunity to study abroad.*

Ngke arona b'a ko wanawana ao ko na bon aki okiria.  
*If you were smart you wouldn't go back to him.*

By no means would all native speakers agree with the above interpretations.  
Note that ngkana was used in the 'unknown' type and ngke in the 'contrary-to-fact' type.  
This agrees with some, but not all individuals' speech.  
In any case if it were required to distinguish between the two types, this might be the easiest way to do it, and it is consistent with the speech of many individuals.  
The general pattern is then as follows:

Ngkana or Ngke + (if clause) + ao + (consequence)  

or  
(consequence) + ngkana or ngke + (if clause)

Note that in the inverted order the ao is not used:

Ko na bon aki okiria ngke arona b'a ko wanawana.  
*You wouldn't go back to him if you were smart.*

The words ngkana and ngke are used in non-conditional sentences also, and mean *when* (conjunction), with ngkana used for the future, and ngke for the past.  
Thus, there is a possible confusion of this context with conditional sentences.  
For example, the first of the above examples could be rendered also by

Ngkana ko nooria ao tuangnga b'a N na nakoina.  
*When you see him, tell him that I'll go meet him.*

and the third example could be rendered by

Ngkana e b'aka te karau ao a na maiu raoi arokara.  
*When it rains our plants will do well.*

To avoid confusion the conditionality of the situation is sometimes emphasised by using ngkana tao or ngkana arona b'a or even ngkana tao arona b'a in place of ngkana, as follows:

Ngkana tao ko nooria ao tuangnga b'a N na nakoina.  
*If you see him, tell him that I'll go meet him.*

Ngkana arona b'a ko nooria ao tuangnga b'a N na nakoina.  
*If you see him, tell him that I'll go meet him.*

Ngkana tao arona b'a ko nooria ao tuangnga b'a N na nakoina.  
*If you see him, tell him that I'll go meet him.*

In this way the ambiguity can be overcome, but it still leaves the sentence with ngkana alone a little ambiguous.  
Careful speakers may tend to avoid the use of ngkana alone in conditional sentences.  
It can be said, however, that when ngkana alone is used in past contexts, it must always indicate the conditional and never just 'when'.
In the examples with ngke in which the conclusion is in the future, there is no doubt that it is conditional. When the conclusion is also in the past there may be no satisfactory way to determine whether or not the sentence is conditional. Examples:

Ngke iai ana m'ane ao e kabooa te kaa.
When he had the money he bought a car. or If he had the money he bought a car.

Ngke arona b'a iai ana m'ane ao e kabooa te kaa.
If he had the money he bought a car. or If he had had the money he would have bought a car.

Both of these examples are subject to ambiguous interpretation, in different ways. In the first example it is not known whether the sentence is conditional or not. In the second the sentence is obviously conditional but it is uncertain whether the type is unknown or contrary-to-fact.

The problem apparently arises from the fact that the grammatical rules are not preserved in writing anywhere, and that the majority of speakers are not interested in precise expression.

5.7 Imperative sentences

The formation of positive and negative imperative forms of verbs has been discussed in section 4.8.3. These forms usually initiate the imperative sentence:

Anaa am raurau
Take your plate.

Tai matuu moa.
Don't go to sleep yet.

A more polite form of imperative is achieved by using tai aoka please:

Tai aoka te ran.
Please let me have some water.

Tai aoka ni kaitiaka te auti.
Please clean up the house.

Ko na tai aoka n aki nako.
Please don't go.

5.8 Exclamatory sentences

Adjectives are exclamatised by ai ... ra. Examples:

Ai tamaaroa ra te tabo aei!
How beautiful this place is!

Ai uareereke ra amii auti!
What a small house you have!
APPENDIX A1: Paradigm of transitive verbs

Kiribatese verbs seem to be quite regular. The existence of different forms or manners of taking suffixes may be explainable in terms of phonetics, but no such explanation is attempted here. The different verb forms under discussion as object pronouns. Thus, the appropriate verb forms depend on the nature (person and number) of the object. Neither the tense, nor the nature of the subject, determines the choice of verb form.

The similar table of Sabatier (1954) was a big help in the construction of this table. It was felt possible to simplify Sabatier's table by reducing the number of conjugations or groups from approximately seventeen to the present eleven. The authors believe that no important commonly-used form in present existence has been excluded thereby. Not all Kiribatese speakers will agree with this table, but the majority of speakers stick basically to this pattern. Some of the included forms have alternatives which are also commonly used, and in such cases the form retained in the table was felt to be more common.

The base form in the first column has no significance other than to provide something to stick the indicated suffixes onto. (In some cases this base form is not pronounceable by itself.) The infinitive form given in the second column is considered the basic form of the verb, and is the form that the main entry in a dictionary will have. This same infinitive form serves in cases where the direct object is singular and explicitly expressed. Thus, it is as though the suffix contains no object pronoun. The remaining forms are straightforward except when the object is third person plural. The reader is referred to section 4.8.6.4 for a discussion of this case, and to section 4.8.6 in general.

The forms shown on the same horizontal line as the group number are the suffixes to be added to the base form to get the desired resulting form. Following this first horizontal line are a number of example verbs which are typical of the corresponding group.

The following should be noted. An asterisk indicates that the indicated form is not used. There are alternative forms for the second person plural and the third person plural inanimate for the verbs of group eight. In group six it is seen that every suffix begins with the letter e. This e could have been considered part of the base instead of in the suffixes, but even if the table had been constructed accordingly no economy in the number of groups would have been achieved thereby. There are some verbs, such as uiibuakaa or uiibuakaaea, which can be conjugated in more than one acceptable way.
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APPENDIX A2: Kiribatese - English

A

aaba lands
aama n. hammer
aan under
Aaro religions
aba n. land
abaia their land; land of
ab'aab'aki big, large
ab'akin size of
Abaiang p.n. island in the
Gilberts between Tarawa and
Marakei
abam your land; your country
abam'akoro island
abam'akoron islands of
abamii your pl. islands; your pl.
countries
abau my island, my country
abea n. bait
abeana its/his/her bait; to use
as bait
Abemaama p.n. island in the
Gilberts, east of Kuria and
Aranuuka.
Aberika p.n. Afrika
abong four days
aei this
akea sort; kind
akekan sort of, kind of
akekia take from (as food from fire)
aera what ... doing?
a n. fire
aia their; n. firewood
aioo this
aika who; which
aikai these
ai m'aaneu cousin of opposite sex
ai natiu nephew or niece
aine n. female
aitariu cousin
akanne those
akawa v. to fish; n. fishing
akawam your fishing
ake which were; that are
akea none
akekei those (far)
aki not
am'arake v. to eat; n. a food
Amerika p.n. America
amii your pl.
amori n. kind of fish
ana his/her/its
anaa v. take; n. fish
ana Ekaareetia te Atua p.n.
Church of God
aneang n. mast
anene v. to sing; n. a singing
or song
anenei to sing them
ani/an let
anian n. onion
anina n. bailer for bailing out
water from the canoe
aanane that
ano n. ball
antai who?
ang n. the wind
anga v. to give; n. a shoulder
angatai n. right hand
angataiui my right hand side
anganai give me
angaraa n. long axe
ang i ia the majority of them
angin wind of; the majority of
ao and; n. line (as for fishing)
aoa n. hour
aobiti m. office
aobiti ni bureitiman n. police office
aobiti n reta n. post office
Aokati n. August
aomata n. people
aon on
aonga in order that
aoni/aon on (surface of)
aonnaba n. on land
aonnaaba world
aono n. group (especially for islands)
aono ni Kiribati n. Gilbert Group
aontano n. earth, ground
aontaari n. surface of sea
aoraki n. sick, sick person, illness
aoranti n. orange
Aotiteeria p.n. Australia
ara our; the name
araia their names
aram your sing. name
aramii your pl. names
aran the name of
aranai his/her/its name
aranaki named, called
araniiia name or call them
Aranuuka p.n. island in the Gilberts almost between Kuria and Abemaama
arara our names
arau my name
are who, which; that (yonder)
arei yonder
ari n. spathe (coconut); eyebrow
aro way, manner
Aro religion
aroia their way, their manner
aroaka v. to smell; n. plant
aron way/manner of; like
aroni way/manner of
Aro ni Moomon n. Mormon Church
Arorae p.n. the last island in the south of the Gilberts
aroro four generations
arou my way/manner of
ata n. rope tied from mast to outrigger (canoe); adj. wide or broad
ataa v. know
ataei n. children
ataein children of
ataeinimm'aane n. boy
atai know (pl. form)
ataia know him/her/it
atama n. gravel (small stones)
atibu n. stone
atim'akoro n. islet
atuu n. head
Atua p.n. God
Atuaia their God
atuun head of
atuun te tautaeka n. Government Headquarter
au my; calk
aua four
auuee exclamation of intensive feeling
auti n. house
auti ni iruaa n. house for guest; guest-house, hotel
b'aab'aiaa n. pawpaw
b'aa n. things
b'aa ni mm'akuri n. things for working, tools
b'aa n taetae n. things for talking, telephone, speaker
b'aire n. measurement; arrangement
b'airea n. to measure; to make arrangement
baakee n. tobacco
baakeena its tobacco
baan leaf of (see baa)
baana its leaf (see baa)
b'aanaki filled with (oil, kerosene, benzine, etc.)
baanikaina n. pandanus leaf
baannii n. coconut leaf
baareka dirty
baaboofoo yellow
b'aene n. basket
bai n. hand
b'ai n. thing
b'ai n aoraki n. thing for sickness, medicine
b'ai ni kab'ara tikuruu n. thing for unscrewing, screwdriver
b'ai ni katena n. thing for holding tight, pliers
b'ai n tangira n. thing for love, gift, present
B'aib'ara n. bible
b'aibi n. pipe
baiia their hands
baika these things
baikara what things?
baim your hand

b'aim your dress (clothing)
b'ain thing of clothing
b'aina to wear (sing. form)
b'aini to wear (pl. form)
b'ainaki worn, used
b'airi n. nose
B'airiki n. Capital town on Tarawa where Government Headquarters are
b'aichi n. smoking pipe
b'aiu my dress
baiu my hand
b'aka v. fall
b'akantaai v. afternoon
bakatibu v. ancestor
b'anaam your voice
b'anaan voice of
b'anaanaa banana
b'anaaia their voice
B'aanaaba n. name of an island (Ocean Island)
bane finished
b'anga v. to hide in a hole; mosquito net
b'ange n. chin
b'angke n. bank
b'aqua bend
b'ara v. undone; n. hat
b'aranako see b'ara v.
b'arakarabe paragraph
bareka see baareka; dirty, filthy
b'ata black, blue
bati many
b'ati n. bus
b'aatika n. bicycle
b'aukin n. pumpkin
Beberuare n. February
beeba n. paper
beebete easy, light
beeki n. pig
beem your lavala lava
been coconuts; lavala of; pen
beero bell
beetin basin
bekobeko v., n. cough
ben n. coconut
bentira n. pencil
beretitenti n. president
Beruu n. island west of Nikunau
Betebake n. Pacific
Beetio n. port town on Tarawa
bia denoting a wish; n. fish ovaries
biia n. beer
biibii n. throat
biiau/biwa fever
bike n. beach
Bikenibeu n. town on Tarawa where Central Hospital is located.
bikoukou pregnant
bina n. last born child; come last
bino n. v. sitting dancing; to do sitting dance
bira v. plait
biri v. run
biriari n. full stop
birim'aaka run fast
biri mweere run slowly
biroto n. stomach
birotou my stomach
bitaki changed
biti n. knife
Biitii n. Fiji
Boobooti n. Cooperative
boobootaki use to gather together
boitin poison
boki n. book
boki n anene n. song book, hymn book
boki n tataro n. prayer book
bon truly
bong n. day; night
boongana useful
boonganan use of
boonganana his/her/its use
bongin day of
boni truly
bonota v. close, shut
bonotaki closed, shut
boo up (especially for time); n. hit, cost
boob'ai n. v. shopping
boobete cheap
booria strike it; ring it (the bell)
booki n. books
boona price, cost of
boora n. bowl
booro n. ball
bootaki v. n. assemble
boou new/my salary
borau v. sail
boti n. marked places in the m'aneaba, etc.
botu weariness, fatigue
botura our weariness
bouan post of
bua lost
buaakaka bad
buaka rough, not calm
Buuariki n. a name of a village on Tarawa
bubu v. n. smoke (as from fire, etc.)
bubuaka bad; use to battle
bubua ni bai n. elbow
bubua ni wae n. knee
bubuia to rub it
buubura big, large
buki back
bukin for; back of
bukina because
bun n. shell fish
bungiaki born
bungintaaiai n. sunset
buoka v. help
buokai help me
buokaki helped (passive)
buoki help (in pl. form)
buokiko help you
burae hair; feather
burae ni man n. feather
Buranti n. France
burakibooti n. blackboard
burati v. n. brush
buraaun brown
buraawa n. flour
bure n. wrong; a mistake; a sin
bureen n. plane
bureitiman n. policeman
buriki n. brick
Buritan n. Britain
buro boiling
buroburo bubble
buroo hearts
Butaritari n. second island in north of Gilberts
buteeta n. potato
buti run, as for vehicles and boats
butibooro v. n. football
butiko request you

butim'aai welcome
butu n. foot (measurement); v. to push
buu n. wife or husband
buun wife of or husband of
buuta to call out (as to fight); to withdraw
bwe v. n. a paddle; a rudder
bweennarina driven by means of paddle or rudder
bweennarina n. a paddle; v. to paddle
bwenauaki divided, cut into
bwereeti v. n. press

E
Eberi n. April
eea air
Eita p.n. village on Tarawa
Ekaretia n. Church
ekuetoa n. equator
emb'aea n. empire
eng yes
engaa where
Engiran p.n. England
Ereti p.n. Ellice
eta up
eti right, correct, straight
ewanin n. coconut husk

I
ia blood vessel; tide/hair
iaa where
iaati n. yard
iabuti n. high tide
iai thereby, there is, there are
iangoa n. think of
ianimaama n. moonlit
iaon on/over
iaona on/over it
ibu n. shell of coconut
ibukiia for them
ibukin for
ibukina for him/her/it, because; at the back of him/her/it
ibun shell
ibuna its shell
ibuobuoki helpful; n. helping
ie n. sail
iein v. marry; n. marriage
ieka v. to flood; n. flood
iena its sail
iika n. fishes
ika n. fish
ikai here
ikan fish of
ikanne right there
ikaraaba n. v. hide and seek
ikarii n. bony fish
ikawai n. grown-up
ikawaiina his/her/its age; growing up
ikekei over there
I Kiribati n. Kiribatese
ikoaki injured
ikoaki n. wounded person
ikotaki v. add to; included
ikotaki n. gathering
im'aaim before you
im'aain before
im'aaiu before me
imanaki scaled
I Matang n. white people; Europeans
imwiim after you
imwiin after
imwiina after him/her/it
in close, shut
inaai n. mat (coconut leaf)
iaaomata n. independence;
inti n. inch
ingaabong n. morning
iraaanki how (a thing, etc.) is done
irakea v. to hoist
iraman how many (for animals)
iran how to do (things); braiding strands of
iranna how to do (a thing)
iraorao friendly
irarikin beside
iraaua how many?
ireuii n. tooth brushing; v. to brush teeth
iri v. go with, follow, attend
iriko go with you; n. meat
irikona its flesh
irouia by them
iroum by you
iroun by, of
irouna by him/her
iroura by us
iruaa n. guest
itauu n. boxing
itera n. half
itera n. half of
iterana half of it
iterante kawai n. side of the road
iti n. lightning
itibong n. half moon
126

itibui seventy
itiia scoop it up
itiua seven
itoi n. star

K
kaa n. car
kaab'a n. corrugated iron, copper
Kaabong n. Thursday
kaai n. pl. timber; woods; stick; trees
kaaia their timber, woods, sticks
kaaibibi to exchange
kaain people of; owner of; occupier of
kaaina its people; owner; occupier
kaainnabau my wife or husband
kaainnabana his wife/her husband
kaaitiboo meet
kaaitara face to face
kaaitaraan opposite of
kaakang keen to eat
kaaki take away, to put
kaan almost, close to
kaanga seem
kaangaanga difficult hard
kaantaninga to hope for; expect; n. hope; expectation
kaati n. playing card
kaawa n. village; poor
kabae n. knot; bandage
kabaeaki tied, bandaged
kabaeannatuu hair scarf
kabaei pl. kabaea
kab'akaa to drop
kabanei to finish them all
kabane all, together
kabanea to finish
kab'angab'angaa to make a hole; to bore a hole
kab'araa undo, untie
kab'araaki undone, untied
kab'arab'ara to preach
kab'arab'arai to describe
kab'aroa pour out (water)
kab'aroi pour out (pl. form)
kaabentaa carpenter
kabeta put on water to float
kabetan floater of
kabooaki bought; to get to meet at the ends, points
kabi keel
kaboonganaa to use
kaboonganaaki used
kaboonganaan use of
kaboonganai use (pl. form)
kaboo farewell; to complete
kabooa buy
kabooanako sell
kabooi buy (pl. form)
kabouii to have a conference; a conference
kabuanib'ai accident
kabubu blunt; a powdered food made from pandanus fruit
kabuabuta to run several times
kabuebue hot
kaburoaki boiled
kabururu wash one's face
kabuta to drive; to cause to move something
kabutikai a kind of game played with playing cards
kaea go for; to chase
kaei chase; go for (pl. form)
kaeta v. straighten; correct
kaetai correct me; straighten me
kaetia correct him/her/it; straighten him/her/it
kaetiko correct you; put you right
kai n. stick
kaibuke n. ship
kaiia their sticks; stick for them; points lost in game
kaika v. bail water out of
kaikan bailing of
kaimatoa stiff action, kind of Kiribatese dancing movement
kaimoa n. crews of the ship
kain sick of; wood of
kaina its stick, its wood
kainikawaawaa n. gutter
kainiwene n. bed
kainnakotinaniku n. latrine
kaintekateka n. chair
kairabong what day?
kairai lead me; guide me; direct
kairiko lead you; guide you; direct you
kaairua mistaken
kaitarai give opposites
kaitiakan cleaning of
kaitiakia clean it
Kaitibong n. Seventh day
kakaaea v. look for; find out
kakaaei look for; find out (pl. form)
kakaaki botu v. pass time
kaakanaki edible
kakang sharp
kakangia v. sharpen
kakanoa having something inside
kakibaa to cause to fly, jump, leap
kakoaua believe; to say something or someone is true; to prove
kakooa to fastern tightly
kakua tiresome
kakukurei pleasant, pleasing
kam you (pl.)
kam'aa cook
kamaamana its window
kamaanaki kept longer
kam'aim'ai molasses (cooked toddy)
kam'aitoro cold
kamaiu life giving, supper/pleasant
kamaiuaki saved, rescued, healed
kam'anea v. to trick; betray
kamani previously, before
kam'anuu to fold (pl. form)
kamariri chilly
kamateb'ai study
kamatoai make them strong
kamatuu Protestant Church
kan want, wish
kana v. eat
kanaia their food;
kanaki eaten
kanakoaki sent away
kanakoi take away; sent away (pl. form)
kanana his/her/its food
kang eat (pl. form)
kangaa how
kaangai thus
kangkang delicious
kangkangin deliciousness of
kani want; wish
kaaniia to go closer
kaniiman fifth; come fifth
kanikina n. the mark or sign;
kanikinaaea v. to mark or sign
Kanimabong n. Friday
kanoaaki filled
kanoaia fill it
kanoan content of
kanoana its content
kaantaninga to hope for, expect
 n. the hope, expectation
kantoka the fare or freight
kaoaki orders; invited
kaoi pl. v. order (things)
kaokoro different or difference
kaona fill up
kaongoraaeai inform me
Kaonobong Saturday
kaotii show them (things)
karaaure farewell
karab'arab'a to say thankful words
karaki to tell a story; to talk
karaanga n. river; n. to flatter;
 stick dancing, Kiribatese kind
 of dancing
karaoa do, make
karaoaki made
karaoan the doing or making of
karaoi do; make them (things)
karaonia do it or make it
karatin n. kerosene
karau n. rain
karaun n. fishing net
karau tanginako n. shower of rain
karawa n. sky, heaven
kare v. blow; throw
karekea get; catch
karekeaki caught
karekean catching of
kareke nano love making
karewe n. a toddy; sweet
kariki n. bread; descendant; 
 adj. to become pregnant
karikirake n. business; promotion
karimoa n. first born child
karimwiina second child to him/her
karin put them on; divide; put
 them in
karina put it on; divide; put it
 in
karinaki p.p. put on; divided;
 put in
karinrin admitting
karoo n. father
karokoa to wait until the coming
 of; the time of
karongoaa to make noise; n. noise
karuoa to put down; to get some-
 thing/somebody down
kataaki p.p. tried; tempted
katabea to make someone busy
katabetabe to be bothering
kataia try
katairiki n. meal taken in the
 evening
katake kind of Kiribatese song
 mostly sung in a talking manner; 
 chant
katam'a n. cat
katangitang play music on any
 musical instrument; n. instrument
katararaakea to put someone or
 something face up
katarinaki being extracted from
 coconut (kernel)
katati knife for cutting toddy
kataua v. to try on as dress etc., permit
katauraoi preparation
katautau misuse; an approximate calculation
katawanou n. meal taken at noon
katea v. to build; to establish
kateaki p.p. built, established
katebe v. spear fishing
katei n. custom
kateitei v. n. construction
katenaa make it crowded; tied; joined
Katenibong n. Wednesday
katerea v. to show
katoaa v. to make a pair
katoka v. to stop, halt; cure
katokaa v. put something on something or somebody
katoki pl. v. stop; cure
katoomimia v. surround
katoomimiaki p.p. surrounded
Kaatorika n. Catholic Church
katorobubua to kneel
kau pair of shoes
kauaaki n. trawl fishing; v. to trawl a fishing line
Kauabong n. Tuesday
kaurinang secondary; n. second line/class
kaunai make me angry
kauniko make you angry
kauniwae n. shoe
kaunrab'ata v. n. wrestling
kautuua v. to grate (as coconut)
kawainaai make me feel light, comfortable after eating too much
kawaekoa v. to hurry; n. haste
kawaerake n. pant
kawai n. path, lane, road, street
kaawakiniia keep them, look after them
kawara v. to visit
kauiiiremweko to eat/drink; talk slowly
kauiiitatako to eat/drink; talk fast
ke or
kena v. dig
kewe v. tell a lie; n. lie
kiaro n. outrigger of a canoe
kiba v. jump, fly
kibee v. n. torch fishing
kibu n. verse of a song or poetry
kibuntaeka n. sentence
kie n. mat made of pandanus leaves
kiie n. plural of kie
kiika n. octopus
kiitani to leave; to abandon; to go from
kinaai v. recognise them (plural verb form of kinaa)
kinaa v. recognise
kinaka n. sore
kimoa v. to steal; n. a rat
kimototo short; not long
kiriaria later on
Kiribati n. Kiribatese
kiriin green
kirikiti v. n. cricket (game)
kiromiita n. kilometer
koaua n. truth; adj. true, real
koikoi kind of shellfish; to grate using shell
kokookoo used to be jealous
konaa can, to be able to
konana his/her/its catch
koo tight
kooti coat (animal or dressing)
koobe coffee
kootiueei causeway
koowana governor
kora string, cord
koraki class (in school); relative
korakora strong; big
koran string of; colon
korea cut
koreaki p.p. been cut
koreia cut it
koroia cut it
koro cut; husking stick
koroboki v. write
koroi v. cut them; write them
(pl. verb form of korea)
korokarewe v. n. cut toddy
korone n. colony
koronen colony of
koum'ara n. small shell fish
kua tired; n. a whale
kuata quarter
kukurei happy glad
kun n. skin
kunan song of
kunnikai cloth
kunnikaim your cloth
kunnikaiu my cloth
kuota to skin
kuotaki p.p. skinned
kuoti pl. verb form of kuota
kuri almost; to get something hastily or greedily
Kuria n. island in the central Gilberts
kuuka n. a cook; a cooker
M
maa n. fish trap
m'aaain before
m'aaka fast; powerful; n. power
maan long; pl. of man (animal)
m'aanem your sister/brother (opp. sex sibling)
m'aaneu my sister/brother (opp. sex sibling)
m'aangan branch of
maanra how long?
Maati n. March
maatiati matches
maatimtim dripping
m'ae lace
maeaoia west of them
maeaoon west of
maeka live, stay; n. the home
maekia to cut it tenderly
m'aenroroa n. necklace
mai from
maiaki n. south
maiakin south of
maiakina south of it
M'aina p.n. island south of Tarawa
maibiibi broken into tiny pieces; n. tiny pieces
m'aiee n. Kiribatese dancing
maii pale white
m'aim'ai wet
mainaina white
maingim your left-hand side
mainiku n. east
mainikun east of
maire n. mile
m'aiti many
m'aitiia their number
m'aitoro cold
mai u n. life; alive
mai uia their life
mai um your life
m'aka n. scar; decay; sore
m'akeiia their thorns (on a pandanus leaf)
M'akin n. the very last island in the north of the Gilberts
m'akoro n. part
m'akoron part of
m'akorona its part
mamaara weak, feeble
m'am'ananga v. traveling (used to); n. the traveling
mamaraki keep aching (used to)
man animal; from
m'anai n. crab (land)
m'ananga v. travel
mane n. old
m'ane n. money
m'aneaba n. a big assembly building
m'aneka n. footstep
manena useful; use of it
manga again
manging sour; drunk
 n. intoxicating drink
m'angko n. mug, cup
mani/man from
m'anib'a n. well
manin animal/birds of
maninnara n. mosquito
m'aninga forget
mannikiba n. bird
mao bitter; healed; n. a bush
m'aoto break (as stick, pencil, etc.); n. fracture
mara soft (after soaking); wet; bald
marae n. field
marai n. the kernel of a green coconut
m'arairai long (esp. when something is hanging down)
Marakei n. island between Abaiaang and Butaritari
maraki n. pain, ache
maraki n atuu n. headache
maraki ni biroto n. stomach-ache
maraki ni uii n. toothache
marau somewhat soft
maraurau quite soft
marawa n. ocean
m'are v.n. to wed, to marry
marenaia between them
marenan between
marenaua n. countryside
marooroo n. v. engage in conversation
marurung healthy
mata n. eye
mataia their eyes
matan the eyes of
matana his/her/its eyes
mataniuii n. v. boss, director chief; border; edge
mataniuina its border
matau n. my eyes
matauninga not courteous
mate n. die
matenten thick
matoa stuff; hard, strong
matuu n. v. sleep
m'au, m'auu dry
maungatabu n. v. general assembly
mauri good health
maawaawa blue
meaang n. north
meaangin north of
Meei n. May
meerii n. mail; ferry
mena stay, to be at a certain place
miita n. meter
minita n. minister
miniti n. minutes
mino v. go round, spin; n. file
miriki n. milk
mitinare n. missionary, pastor
mm'aane n. man
mm'akuri v. n. work
mm'aanako v. fall away, fall out
mmani thin
moa first; front; n. chicken
moaa v. call at
moan very; front part of; first
moana call at
moanaki called at; started; hit by
moani first
Moanibong n. Monday
moaningaamong n. early morning
moanriran n. first class/line/row; primary
moantaai early (also n.)
moantairiki n. evening
moimoto n. green coconut
moko v. n. smoke (pipe, cigar, etc.)
mokon smoke of
moko te rauara n. smoke made of chipped tobacco and pandanus leaf
Moomon n. Mormon religion, church
mooi v. drink
moone n. hell
morikoi n. name of a fish
motirawa v. to leave, rest; n. a holiday
mumuta v. n. vomit
mweere slow, late
mweengau my home
mwiin after, result of

N

na will
naa n. group of stones on the reef; collection of
naaibi knife
naaka word for calling the attention of more than one person
naakai these people
naakanne those people
naakekei those people there
naano down
naango flies (insect) (pl.)
naaao waves
naba too, also; again
nakea where to
nako to go to
nakoia to them
nakoim to you
nakoina to him/her/its
nakomai come here
nakon to
nakona his/her/its departure
nakonako walk
Nam person article for males
nama n. lagoon
nam'akaina n. moon
Nan person; article for males (N. Gilb.)
Nang person; article for males
nang well
nango n. fly
nano deep; heart or mind
nanoa their minds/heart/thought
nanokaawaki sad, unhappy
nanon mind of; depth of; meaning of
nanou my mind
nanona his/her mind; its meaning
nanona to mean something
Nao word to call a man's or boy's attention; n.
nao n. wave
naon waves of
nati n. a child
natiia their child
natina his/her child
natira our child
natiu my child
Nauru n. name of a country (island)
neera nail
neeti n. nurse
Nei person article for females
Neiko word used to call a female's attention
neie this woman/girl (usually followed by name)
neiei this woman/girl
neienne that woman/girl
neierei that woman/girl there
neinei having water inside; swampy
newe n. tongue; lodged up in a tree, etc.
ngaa where?; thousand
ngae enough
ngngai me
ngaia him/her/its
ngaina daylight
ngkai now
ngkam I don't know
ngkamii you (pl.)
ngkana when, if
ngkanne then
ngke when
ngkoa long ago
ngkoananoa yesterday
ngkoe you (sing.)
ngongo itching
nii coconut tree; bitter
niiman five persons/animals/small fish, etc.
niiri to roll them up
niiraki rolled up
niirakina its rolling
niirana its rolling cord (coconut spathe rolling string)
niiri v. plural form of niiria
niiria to roll it up
nikira n. remainder; v. deliver
Nikunau n. third island from the south
nim v. pl. to drink; adj. stuck
nimaia their drink
nimaki v. drunk
nimaua five (general)
ningngaabong tomorrow
ningai when?
Nobemb'a n. November
Nonouti n. islands in the Gilberts between Tabiteuea and Abemaama
noora n. see
nooraki seen
noori see (pl. form of noora)
nooria see him/her/it
nooriko see you
nuukaia middle of them
nuuka n. middle; center; back
nuukan back/center/middle of
nuukanibong n. midnight
nuutibeeba n. newspaper

0
oi n. torch light made by rolling
dry coconut leaves
oi ni kibee n. torch for torch-
fishing (on reef)
oi n tatae n. torch for torch-
fishing (for flying fish)
oki v. come back; n. return
okira return to; come back to
Okitoob'a n. October
okiu my return
okoro n. difference
okoro different
on full up; turtle
onauiti flying fish
onean replacement of
ongo v. hear
ongoraa listen to
onobui sixty
Onootoa p.n. island in the
Gilberts between Tabiteuea and
Tamana
onoua six
oo n. wall
oon wall of
onnaoraki hospital
oota bright, clear; n. light
ora n. low tide

orean beat of
oreano n. ball bat (kind of game
where one group bats the ball
and the other group tries to
catch)
otab'aniniaki surrounded
oti v. rise; show; appear
otintaai n. sunrise

R
raama outrigger side of a canoe
raamii n. playing card game
raanti n. launch
rab'a n. thanks; car or motor-
bike tire
rababa wide, broad
rabakau clever, skillful
rabakauu my skill, my knowledge
rab'ata n. body; to hold to one's
body
rab'atau my body
rabono eel
raeuiaia tear it; break it (as a
glass)
rai withered; layers of canoe
planks
rairaki turn
rairan translation of
raiti n. rice
rake lucky; up, upward
rama n. canoe float (outrigger)
ram'a n. forehead; gable of house
ran n. water
ranga n. capsize, overturn
rangii very
ranna its water
ranniben n. coconut cream
rannimoimoto n. green coconut water
raoi exactly, properly; calm (as calm sea); fine, peaceful; peace
raoiro good, nice
raonna be friends with; to accompany
raoraona be friends with
raou my friend
raraa bleeding; blood
raranga v. weave; n. weaving
rarangaaki p.p. woven
rarangaan the weaving of
rarikin beside, near, side of
raroa far, distant
raroaia their distances
raroara how far?
raurana cigarette paper made pandanus leaf
raurana its rauara (see rauara)
rauria their thatches (house)
rauna its thatch
raurau plate; record (for record player)
raurau ni wae top part of the foot
raure v. separate
raure nako separate, apart
rawa refuse, dislike
rawaawata heavy;
re bwerebwew motorbike; successive crashing around sounding like thunder
reerio radio
reirei school
reirei i bukini mm'akuri technical institute
reirei ni kaimoa marine training school
reirei n neeti school of nursing
reirei n tia reirei teachers' college
reireiti join together (as short pieces of string)
rereaki mixed (drink/food)
reta n. letter
ria appear
riai proper, better
ribana cultivate
rik happen, become; else; start to grow (as a plant)
rikitemanna only child
rimoa past; go before or go ahead of
rimwii late; come late, come after
rin get in, enter
rinan n. row
rineaki chosen, elected
rinerine election
riniia their entrance, their admittance
ririki n. year
rurungaa rumbling
Riitemb'a n. December
roaroa rodfishing
roka a lock; a game played with playing cards
roki blind (as window blind)
roko come, arrive, present
rokoaia their arrival, their presence
rokona his/her presence or arrival
rongorongo news
rongorongoni news of
roo anchor; rope; dark, darkness
roobu rope
rookii plural of roki
rooro ages (pl. of age)
rooroo at anchor
download visit at regular times
rootongitong very dark
roroa neck
roroo black
ruabui ninety
ruaiua nine
ruu room
ruoia Kiribatese dancing

tabetai sometimes
tabeua some (things)
Tabiteuea the biggest island in
the Gilberts
tabo place; point or end
taboia their ends or points
tabon end of; point of
tabona its end, point
tabonibai finger
tabu holy; forbidden; sacred
taeka word;
taekan word of; news of
taekana words or news about him/
hers/it
taekina v. speak about (pl. of
taekina)
taekinna speak about it
taetae speak
taetae ni kawai old language;
conversation; to speak
tai don't; time; clock or watch
taiian those (things, people, etc.)
taihani those (things, people, etc.)
taioka please
taibora table
tain time of; season
tairiki evening
tairikin evening of
taka thirsty
takaakaro to play; n. the game
takaakarioia their play
takataka copra
taakinaki spread out as with mat,
etc.
taku say
tama father	
tam'akan climbing of
Tamana the second island from the south of the Gilberts
tam'arakea climb up, ascend
tamaui my father
taanmei picture
taanmein picture of
tanai axe (small)
tanginako faint sound
tangira want; like; love
tangirai want me; like me; love me
tangiria like him/her/it; love him/her/it
tangiriko like you; love you
tangim your cry
tanimaentaaiai afternoon
taninainiku eastern side
tania wait; ear
taniaia wait for him/her/it; their ears
tanoni soil of; sand of; earth of
tanrake ocean side or eastern side
tanraken ocean side of, eastern side of
tanrion lagoon side of; western side of
tao about; perhaps
taobongiia every other day
taokita doctor
taonna press down; stand or sit on; postpone
taoo v. n. saw (tool)
taatona pressing down; to be patient
taraan the look of something/someone
Tarawa capital island of Kiribati
tarin your sibling of same sex
taririm his/her/its sibling of same sex
tariu my sibling of same sex
taro taro (vegetable)
taromauri pray
tatae torch fishing for flying fish
tataneiai used to, accustomed
tatanainga wait; keep waiting
tataro to pray or a prayer
tau enough; fit
taua hold
tauaki p.p. held
tauakin hold of
tau manin taninga singing with hand covering the ear
taumate funnel
tau on turtle chase
taura lamp; something that gives out light at night
tauraoi ready
tautaeka n. government; v. rule, govern
tauu hold, plural verb form of taua
tawanou noon
teina one stick
Teaorareke village on Tarawa
Tebetemb'a n. September
teboo same
tebotebo n. bath; v. bathe
tebubua one hundred
tebui ten followed by unit
tebui ma aua fourteen
tebui ma itiuia seventeen
tebui ma nimaua fifteen
tebuina ten
tei baby, child, kid; keep standing
tei stand
teinain girl
teirake to stand up
teitei standing
tekateka sit
teke pricked beaten, (as in a competition)
tekena to beat (as in a competition)
temanna one person/animal/small fish/insect
tena bite
tenaitiko bite you
tenamoko smoke, e.g. from tobacco
tengaun ten people, animals etc.
tenibui ma nimaua thirty five
teniman three persons/animals, etc.
teniuia three (articles)
teraa what?
teuuae this man who (followed by name or description)
teuuaane that man
teuuaare that man who (followed by name or description)
teuuaarei that man there
teuuaei this man
teuana one (article)
teutana some
tewaana one canoe/ship/boat
tia have/has/had
tiaabora shovel
tiaki not
tiandiki something like food, etc. prepared for a journey
tianti cent (money)
Tiannai n. January
tiaoka chalk (blackboard pencil)
tib'a just
tib'aake lighter
tibepanna spell it
tibu swell; grandpa or grandma
tibu te mm'aane grandfather
tientemiita centimeter
tii shoot out, gust out
tiib'aati teapot
tiibuta mini dress for women, like blouse
tiireeree Kiribatese kind of dancing using short skirts
tikareti cigarette
 tikiraoi beautiful, pretty, nice looking
tiku stay, stay away
tikuruu screws
tinan mother of
tinaniku outside
tinanikun outside of
tinau my mother
tiriwae panty
titaokin stockings
titeboo same
titiraki to ask, to question; n. a question
 titirakinai to ask me, to question me
 titirakinna to ask him/her, to question him/her
 titooa a store
 toa n. a giant; church feast; even
 toabuak a odd, not even
 toaraoi equal in number
toka v. ride
toki stop, halt, pause
tomai join
tonotonon te bai  soft part of palm of hand
toobu n.  soap
toobu ni ireuili  toothpaste
Tooromon  n.  Solomon
totooa very big in size
toua hit with a foot; step on
tuae n. pandanus dried pulp
tuai not yet
tuangai tell me
Tuurai  n.  July
Tuuta ni kawai  junction
Tuutia n.  Mass
Tuun n.  June
Tuvalu n. group of islands  formerly named Ellice Islands

U
uaa n. fruit; v.  bearing fruit
uaaia  their fruits
uaakai  these men
uaakanne those men
uaakekei  those men there
uaana  its fruit
uaanikai  fruit
uaati  wash
uabaa  two leaves
uabui twenty
uaia both; n. racing
uara how it is?
uaereereke  small, tiny
uatai two times; twice
uii n. tooth; mouth
uiib'ara n. wheel barrow
uiiki  n. week
uiikin  week of

uiin mouth of; peak of; blade (razor, knife, axe, etc.)
ukeuke  v. examine, to test;
  n.  examination
uki ni bai  fingernail
uki ni baim  your fingernail
um'a  n.  house
um'an reirei  n.  house of schooling, classroom
um'an tabu  n. house of holiness; church
um'an tebotobo  n.  house of bath, bathroom
umunaki  baked
unika  v. n.  plant
unikaki  planted
uniki  v.  plant (pl. form of unika)
unimm'aane  n.  old man
unuunikii  n.  agriculture; v.  to plant
uoman  two people/animals or birds
uoti  v. plural of uota: to carry
uoua two (general)
uraura  red
uringa v.  remember
uringnga v.  remember it
uruaki broken
uto n.  young coconut tree
utuu  n.  family, relative
uu n.  eel trap

W
waa  n.  canoe
waaia  their canoe
waaki gone on; progress
waan  canoe of
waanikiba  n.  airplane
waanib'anga n. Kiribatese dance (for men)
wae n. leg, foot
waebua n. thumb
waekoa walk fast; fast
waeremwe walk slowly; slow
waetata fast
wanibui eighty
waniman eight (men, women, etc.) (animate)

waniua eight (stone, books, etc.) (inanimate)
wareka v. read; count
warekia read it; count it
warem'ane v. n. counting money
wareware reading
wene lie down
wetea v. call

APPENDIX A3: English - Kiribatese

A

a (an) te
able konaa
about tao
above ietan
accept v. butim'aaea
across riaon
add v. iko.ta
after imwiin
afternoon tanimaeaontaai
afraid maaku
again riki; manga
against kaaitaraa; eekaanako
age te roro; te ririki
ago nako; te tai ae e nako
agree v. nanoteuana
air te eea
airplane te waanikiba
all ni kabane
all right (OK) e raioi
almost kuri
alone tii ngngai; ngkoe

along ira anauna
already n tia
also naba
although e ngae
always n taai nako; n aki toki
among ibuakon
and ao, ma
animal te man
another teuana riki
answer kaeka
anything te b'ai teuana
arm bai
army te taanga ni buaka
around ni katabanina
arrive v. roko
art te korotaamnei
as n ai aron
ask v. titiraki
aspirin te b'atin
at n, i
anyway e aoria
baby te teei
back akuu
bad buaakaka
bag te buua; te baeki
baggage te batia
ball te booro
bank te bangke
barber te tia koroirar
basket te b'aene
bathing suit b'ail tebotebo
bathroom te roki n tebotebo
bathtub te taabu n tebotebo
battery te baete re
beach te bike
beat v. batibooa, oro
beautiful tikiraoi
become v. riki
because i bukina b'a
bed kainiwene
bedroom ruu ni matuu
beer te biiia
before im'aain
begin v. waaki; moana
behind akuun
believe v. kakoauaa; omimakina
below aan
beside i rarikin
best rangi n tamaroa
better tamaroa riki
between i marenan
beyond tinanikun; maikoan
big buubura
bill (account) biira
bird te mannikiba
birthday bonginibung
black roroo
blackboard burakibooti
blade (razor) te uii ni m'ariro
blanket burangketi
blood te raraa
blue mawaawa
boat te booti
body te rab'ata
book te boki
bone te rii
born bungiaki
borrow v. tangoa
both uaia; kaka uoman
box te b'aoki
boy te roronga; te teinimm'aane
bread te kariki (ni buraawa)
break urua, otea, ibea
breakfast te am'arake n te ingaabong
bridge te buriiti
bring v. uota
brother tari; mm'aane
brown buraaun
brush te burati
build v. karaoa, katea
building te auti; kateitei
burn v. kabuoka v. t.
bus te b'ati
business te mm'akuri ni karikirake
busy tabetabe
but ma
button (te bato), te b'atin
buy v. kabooa
by iroun, irarikin
C

cab (taxi) te taakitii

cable (telegram) te uaeri

cake te kiekee

call v. wetea

can (able) konaa

can (tin) te kaen; tiin

can opener te kai ni kaukuuki

car (auto) te kaa

care karaua, m'annanoa

careful karaurau; m'annanoa

carry v. uota

cash te m'ane

catch v. rawea

cause v. karika

centre nuuka

certain eti; koaua

chain te tiein

chair te kaintekateka

chalk te tiaoka

change v. bita

change kaaiibibiti, nikira (te m'ane)

cheese te tiiti

chief mataniuui, atuu

child te teei

choose v. rinea

church te um'antabu

cigarette te tikareti

circle te mronron

city te kaawa ae e buubura

class te koraki, te rinan

classroom te ruu reirei; um'anreirei

clean itiaki

clear oota

climb v. tam'arake

clock te taa

close kaan; kaina (v.t.)

clothes kunnikai

cloud te nang

crant te kooti

coffee te koobe

coin te maibiibi (m'ane)

cold m'ai tloro

college te reirei ae rietaata

color te mata

comb te koom

come v. roko

comfortable kamweengaraoi

common kabuta

company (business) te kamb'ana

complete kiaata, tia, bobonga

condition te aro

continue waaki

cook kuuka

cool m'ai tloro

copy katootoonga, kaewea

corner te ningining, maninganinaa

cost te boo (boon te b'ai)
could konaa

count v. wareka

country te aba; te marenaa

course te kooti

court te kabouuii

cousin ai tari; ai mm'aane

cover rabuna

cross kaibangaki

crowd te koraki n aomata

cry v. tang

cup m'angko

cut v. korea
D

dance b'aaterare

dark roo

date bongin nam'akaina
daughter te nati te aline
day te bong
dead mate
decide v. motika te iango; baaire
deep nano
dentist te tia karao uii
desk te teetike
diarrhea te bekanako
die v. mate
different kaokoro
difficult kaangaanga
dining room ruu n am'arake
dinner te am'arake n te tairiki
dirty baareka
discover v. kunea
dish te am'arake (food);
te raurau (plate)
distance te raroa
do v. karaoa
doctor te taokita
dog te kirii, te kamea
dollar te taaraa
door te mataroa
doubt nanokokoraki, nanououa
down naano
draw v. koro taamnei
dry m'auu
dream mii
dress karuo
drink mooi
drive v. kabuta
drop v. kab'akaa

during n tain
dust te bubu

E

each tatabeua
ear te taninga
easy moantaai
earth aonnaaba
east mainiku
easy beebeete
eat v. kana
egg te bunnimoa
eight waniua
either teuana mai buakon
electric te iti
ext else riki
doubt nanokorau

during n tain
dust te bubu
F

face te mata, te moamoa
fact te koaaua
fair booraoi
faith te onimaki
fall v. b'aka
family te utuu
famous ataaki raoi
far raroa
fast waetata
fat marika
father te karo, te tama
favorite taatangiraki riki
fear maaku
feel v. namakina
feet wae
fence te oo
fever bliua, mariri
few tabeua
fifty nimabui
fight un
fill v. kanooa
film te birim
finally kabaneana, motikana
find v. kunea
fine (well) raoi
finger tabonibai
finish bane
fire te ai
first moan
fish te ika
five nimaua
floor te buia, buia
flower te uee
fly v. kiba
follow v. ira, katotoonga

food te am'arake
foot te buuti; butu (measure);
wae (body)
for i bukin
foreign iruwaa
forget v. m'aninga
fork te waiteke
forward nako mooa
four auu
free inaaomata
fresh menaai, boou
friend te rao
from man
front im'aain
fruit te uaanikai
fun te kangare
funny kakangare
full on
future te tai ae e na roko

G
game te takaakaro
gasoline b'aan te intin
garden te nnenaroka; oonnaroka
gate te matoroa n te oo
gather v. boota
general ae e kabuta
get v. karekea
ghost te anti
gift te b'aintangira
girl te teinnaiine
give v. anga
glad kukurei
glass te kraati
glass (drinking) m'angko te kraati
glasses (eye) te mata te kiraati
head atuu

go v. nako
headache marakin atuu

god te atua
health te mauri, marurun g

gold te koora
hear v. ongo

good rairoi
heart te buoro

government te tautaeka
heat kabuebue

grand-daughter te tibu ae te nati te aiine
government

grandfather te tibu te mm'aane
government

grandmother te tibu te aiine
government

grandson te tibu ae te nati te mm'aane
government

grass te uteute
government

great korakora, kakannato
government

green kirii

grey maawa ni mai

grocery te tabo ni kaboo uaanikai
government

ground aontano
government

group te b'ariko
government

grow v. riki
government

guard v. tantanii
government

guess keeti, katautau
government

guide kaira
government

gun katii
government

H

hair te ira

haircut koroira

half iter, m'anang

hand bai

hang v. tine; katinea

happen v. riki

happy kukurei

hard matoatoa; kaangaanga

hat te b'ara

have v. iai irouu
ill aoraki
important kakaawaki, kakannato
in i nanon
insect te man ae e uareereke
instead n oneamwiin
instruction reirei, kaetieti
interest kakannoo, kakaongoraa
into nako nanon
iron te biti
island te abam'akoro

J
job te mm'akuri
join v. raona, tomaa
doke kangare; manikangare
joy te kim'aareirei
juice ranin uaan te kai

K
keep v. kawakina
day te kiing
kill v. tiringa, kamatea
kind te aeka; aakoi
ing te kiing; uea
kiss kabooria; kiiti, mb'aa
kitchen te um'anikuuka ruu ni
kuuka
knee bubua ni wae
knife biti
know v. ataa
language te taetae
large buubura
last kabane
late rimwi
laugh ngare
laundry te tabo ni uaa
law te tua
lay v. bungia; kawenea
lead v. kaira
learn v. kekeiaki
least te kabane
leave v. kiitana
left angamaing
leg te wae
length te anaanau
less karako
lesson te reirei
let v. kaira
letter te reta
lie v. wene; kewe
life te maiu
lift v. tabeka
light beebete; oota (ke te oota)
like tangira; tiiteboo
line te ao; te rain
lip te ria
listen v. ongoraa
little uareereke
live v. maeka
long anaanau
look v. taraa
loose m'aawa, matana
love v. tangira
lover te tia tangira
low rinano
lower rinano riki

L
labor mm'akuri
lake te nei ae e ab'aab'aki
land te aba
machine te mitiin
magazine te nuutibeeba
make v. karaoa
man te mm'aane
many bati
map te m'abe
market te m'aakete
marry v. m'are, iein
material te kunnikai
matter te b'ai ae e riki
may konaa
me ngngai
mean iowaawa
measure v. baairea
meat te iriko
medicine te b'ai n aoraki
meet v. kaaitiboo
meeting te bootaki
member kaain te bootaki
men mm'aane
middle nuuka
mile te maire
milk te miriki
million te mirion
mind te nano
mine au b'ai
minute te miniti
Miss Nei
Mr (Mister) Ten, Teng, Te, Tem
Mrs Ms. (Mistress) Nei
modern booou
moment te tai
money te m'ane
month te nam'akaina
moon nam'akaina

more riki
morning te ingaabong
mosquito te maninnara
most rangi (angiin)
mother te tina
mountain te maunga
mouth te uii
move v. buti
movie te kaotitaamnei
much m'aiti
music te katangitang
must riai

name te ara
nation te bootannaomata
natural ae bon arona
nature aron te b'ai; aomata; etc.

near kaan; i rarikin
nearly ni kaan; kuri
necessary riai
neck te roroa
need v. kainnanoa
neighbour te itabon; itabon
neither tiaki teuana mai buakon
nephew ai te nati te mm'aane
never tuai men
new boou
news rongorongo
newspaper te nuutibeeba
next imwiina
nice raoiroi, tamaaroa
niece ai te nati te aiine (nati)
night te tairiki, bong
nine ruaiua
no tiaki, akeaa
none ake a
north meaang
nose te b'a iri
not aki, tiaki
nothing ake a
notice kaeti eti
now ngk a i
number te namb'a te ware

pack v. batii
pack batia
page iteranibaa
pain te maraki
paint te been
pair kaka uoua
pants kawaerake
paper te b eeba
part m'akoro
party te bootaki te b'aatii
pass katibanakoa
past ngkoa
pay v. kab'aka boona
peace te raoi
pen te kaini koroboki
pencil te bentira
period te tai
people aomata
perhaps tao
person te aomata
pick v. rine a
pick up v. tabekia
picture te taamne i
piece te m'akoro
pillow te uninga
place te tabo
plan te baaire
plant te aroka
plate te raurau
play v. takaarao
pleasant kakukurei
pleased kukurei
pleasure te kakukurei
point koto tabon
poor kaawa kainnano
position te tabo
possible konaaki
post office te aobiti n reta
practice te kataneiai
prepare v. katauraooa
present ngkai; b'aaintangira
president beretitenti
pretty tikiraoi
price te boo
priest te tama
probably konaa
problem te kaangaanga
promise berita
prove v. kakoaua
provide v. karekea
public te bootannaomata
pull v. katika
purpose bukin
put v. katuka, kaaki
put down v. katuka

razor te m'ariro
reach v. roota
read v. wareka
ready tauraoi
real koaua
realise v. ataa
really ni koaua
reason oin rikin bukin te b'ai
receive v. reke; butim'aaea
red uraura
refuse v. rawa
religion te aro
remain v. tiku
remember v. uringa
rent boon te maeka
reply v. kaeka
report tua taekina
rest v. motirawa
result mwiina; mwiin
resume v. moanna
return v. oki, kaoka
rich kaub'ai
ride toka
right (correct) eti
right (direction) atai
river te karaanga
road te kawai
rock te b'aa
room te ruu
rope te roobu
round mronron
rub v. bubua
run v. biri
rush kawaetata
S

safe mano; m'aneaua raoi
sail te ie; borau
salt te taari, taoro
same tiiteboo
sand te tano
save v. ni kamaiu
say v. taku, atonga
schedule babaairean te tai
school te reirei
sea taari
season taai i nanon te ririki,
  e.g. kamariri, kabuebue,
seat te kaintekateka
second kauoaua, kauoman
see v. noora
seem kaanga e taraa
sell v. kabooa nako
send v. kanakoa
serve v. mm'akuri i bukin temanna
service te mm'akuri; te taramauri
seven itiua
several tabeua
share tib'aa
sharp kakang
shave v. inaima (korobuai)
sheet te kabu; rabunan te kainiwene
ship te kaibuke
shirt te kabaraaki
shoe te taam'aka; kau ni wae
shop te titooa (titooa ni b'ai)
shore mataniuin te aba
short kororo, kimototo
should riai
shoulder te anga
show v. kaota
shower tiaawa

sick aoraki
side rarikin
sign v. tiaaina
silver tirewa
simple beebete
since man te tai
sing v. anene
single tii temanna; temanna
sister mm'aane; tari
six onoua
size ab'aab'akina, buuburana
skin te kun
skirt te kamumun
sky karawa
slacks kawaerake
sleep v. matuu
slip v. marannako
slow waeremwe, karaurau
slowly te aro ni karaurau
small uareereke
smell v. aroka; boi
smile v. matangare
smoke moko
so ma ngaia are
soap te toobu
sock nangoan te wae man te kau;
titaoking
soft maraurau
soil te tano
soldier te tautia
some teutana; tabeua
something te b'ai teuana
sometimes tabetai
son te nati te mm'aane
song te anene
soon te tai ae aki maan
sort kaokoro, rinea; te aeka
soul te taamnei
sound te b'anaa
south maiaki
space te aakea; te marena
speak v. taetae
special ae e kaokoro
spend v. kabanea
spirit te taamnei
spoon te buun
spot te tabo
spring te koburake n ran; tiburing
square te tikuea
stamp te titamb'a
stand v. teei; tei
star te itoi
start v. moanna
state te aba
station te tabo
stay v. tiku
step v. m'aneka
step te uta
stick te kai
still tabe
stomach-ache maraki ni biroto
stone te atiibu
stop tooki; tokii
store te titooa
storm te buaka, te ang, te karau,
etc.
story te karaki
straight eti
strange kamiimii
stream te karaanga
street te kawai ae e raababa
strength te korakora
strong korakora
study v. kekeiaki; kamateb'ai
sudden ae e kakuba; karina
sugar te tioka
suit tau
suitcase te b'aulti; tuuiteeti
summer tain te kabuebue
sun taai
supper te am'arake n te tairiki
suppose v. tuku, iango
sure koaau
surprise v. kamiimii; kakuba
sweet karewerewe; tikiraoi

T

table te taibora
take v. anaa
talk v. taetae
tall anaanau, rietaata
tape recorder te b'ai n rawe
b'anaa
taste katoomam; noora te kangkang
teach v. reirei
tea te ii
tear v. raeuaa
telegram te uaereti
telephone te tareboon
tell v. taekina, tua, atonga
ten tebuiina
than nakon
thank kaaitau
thank you ko rab'a
the te
then ngkanne
there ikekei
therefore mangaiaare
thin kairariki, mmanii
thing te b'ai
think v. iango
third te kateniua, kateniman, etc.
thirsty taka
thirty tenibui
though ngae n aron aanne
thought n te iango
thousand te ngaa
three teniua
through rinanon
thus n aron aei
ticket tiiketi
tie v. kabaea
time te tai
tire te rab'a
tired ae e kua
to nakon
together ni bane
tooth te uii
toothache te maraki ni uii
toothbrush te burati ni ireuui
toothpaste te toobu ni ireuui
tobacco te baakee
today te bong aei
toe te taboniwae
toilet te kainnako taari
toilet paper te tiraa
tomorrow ningngaabong
too naba
top te taubuki; eeta
touch v. riinga
toward ni kaeta
towel te kaoa, te taara
town te kaawa
toy te b'ai n takaakaro
trade iookinib'ai
translate v. raira nanon
teach v. m'ananga
tree te kai
trip te m'ananga
trouble v. karawaawata
trouble te kaangaanga
truck te turaki
true koaua
trust v. onimakina
truth te koaua
try v. kataa
turn v. raira
twelve tebui ma uoua
twenty uabui
two uoua
typewriter taib'araita

U
uncle ai te karo
under iaan
underpants te aani kawaerake
understand v. oota; ataa ongo nanon
until ni karokoa
up eeta
upon i aon
use v. kaboonganaa
usually tataneiiai

V
value boonganan te b'ai teuana
very rangi
view taraan; nooran
village te kaawa
visit v. kawara
voice te b'anaa
wagon te kaa
wait v. tataninga
wake up v. uti
walk v. nakonako
wall te oo
wallet te b'utini ni m'ane
want v. tangira
war te buka
warm bu eee
wash v. uaati
watch v. tarataara
watch (wrist) te tainibai
water te ran
wave v. katioa
wave te nao
way te kawai
wear v. kamanenaa; b'aina
weather angin te bong
week te wiiki
weight te rawawata
well marurung
well (water) te manib'a
west maeao
wet m'aim'ai
whether b'a tao
while ngke
white mainaina
whole ae b'anin
wide raababa
wife te buu te aiine
will na
wind te ang
window te kamaama
wine te wain
winter tain te m'aitoro
wish bia; tangira
with ma
without nakea
woman te aiine
wonder miimi
wonderful kamiimii
woods te buakonikai
word te taeka
work mm'akuri
world te aonnaaba
worse buaakaka riki
worth manenan; boonganan
wrong bure
year te ririki
yellow baabooboo
yes eeng
yet ngkai naba
young ataei

Note: The following Kiribatese/English and English/Kiribatese lexicons have been adapted from Trussel (1979).
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