Kebei

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Contents

1 Task Description

1.1 Culture

The language is spoken in a futuristic society among the passengers of a generation ship (`https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Generation_ship`) or the first generation to set foot on the destination planet.

1.2 General

Make an a priori naturalistic language (the setting is too far into the future for there to be any similarity to current human languages).

1.3 Phonology

The language must employ lexical or grammatical tone in some way. Pitch accents are allowed. The language must have at least four major places of articulation, and no major PoAs further back than velar. A major PoA is here defined as contrasting at least three manners of articulation.

1.4 Grammar

- The language must deviate in some way from plain accusative alignment.

- The language must not make use of Particle Comparatives (`http://wals.info/chapter/121`).

- The langauge must make use of non-concatenative morphology, and must have some irregularities.

- Number distinction different from singular vs plural

1.5 Challenges

The first is mandatory; the rest is optional stuff for if you get bored, but I encourage you to at least do the second one as well.

1. Showcase your language. In particular, show how you dealt with each of the constraints given.

2. Translate 5 random sentences from the syntax test list. You can get these by typing the command =syntaxtest in our discord server. The translations should contain /phonemic/ and [phonetic] transcriptions, a gloss (`https://www.eva.mpg.de/lingua/resources/glossing-rules.php`) and commentary on interesting structures if there are any.

3. Devise a kinship system for the language.

4. Devise a system for measuring time, both on the short scales (hours...) and the large scales (centuries...)

5. Design a writing system for your language. Assuming your setting is purely sci-fi, justify why they aren't using the latin (or some other modern day earth) script.

6. If you're still bored, come up with a challenge to add to this list so other people don't get bored.

2 Culture

The generation ship set off from earth following the result of some planet wide catastrophe.

The ship was designed for a long distance voyage to a planet selected to likely have become habitable by the time the ship reached it.

The ship set off with 200 passengers, 100 male, 100 female, each passenger was placed into one of 5 categories based on a aggregate genetic score calculated by a physical and gene sequencing scan. This was done to enforce rules allowing for eugenic processes limiting the population and causing positive genetic drift (in terms of ability to survive).

The ship was designed to sustain 500 passengers.

People are forbidden from having children such that the sum of their value (1 being most genetically fit, 5 being least) is greater than 6.

At birth, a child's genetic information is sequenced and a computer gives it's genetic aggregate score. It is then placed based on position in percentage of the population into one of the 5 numbers. If a child is born with lower genetic aggregate score than everyone currently on the ship it is marked for sterilisation and given a number "7" which bans it from procreation. If a child is born with a higher genetic aggregate score than the rest of the population it is numbered "1".

3 Phonology

3.1 Consonant

	Labial	Alveolar	Palatal	Velar	Glottal
Nasal	/m/ <m>	/n/ <n>	/ɲ/ <ṇ>	/ŋ/ <q>	
Plosive	/p/ <b>	/t/ <d>	/c/ <ḍ>	/k/ <g>	/ʔ/ <'>
Ejective	/p'/ <p>	/t'/ <t>	/c'/ <ṭ>	/k'/ <k>	
Fricative	/f/ <f>	/s/ <s>	/ç/ <ṣ>	/x/ <x>	/h/ <h>

Table 3.1: Consonant Chart

3.2 Vowel

/i/ <i> ——————— /u/ <u>
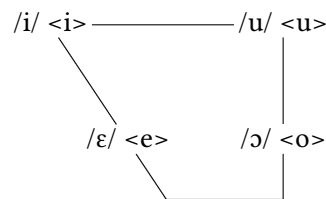
/ɛ/ <e>   /ɔ/ <o>

Table 3.2: Vowel Chart

All four vowels also distinguish phonemically rhotacisation, and there are 4 diphthongs: /ɛi/, /ɛu/, /ɔi/, /ɔu/.

Diphthongs are written by placing the two vowels adjacent to each other, rhotacisation is written by having the second vowel be an <e>.

This gives a total of 12 distinct vowels.

Vowels also can have two tones, high or low, where high is marked with diaeresis, in diphthongs a single overdot over each of the vowels, i.e. <ë>, <u̇ė>, <ȯu̇>

3.2.1 Phonotactics

CVF where C is consonant, V is vowel, and F is fricative consonant.

4 Grammar

There are 3 grammatical categories in Kebei. These are Nouns, Verbs, and Adwords (properties that can be held by a verb or a noun).

4.1 Nouns

4.1.1 Plural / Dual

Plurality and Duality are marked by rhotacisation of vowels. If a word is singular it takes no rhotacisation on it's vowels, if it is dual then the final vowel on the word stem is rhotacised. If it is plural then the first vowel on the word stem is rhotacised. One syllable words show only singular/plural distinction, if a vowel is a diphthong no distinction is made there.

> \< şe\> /çɛ/ "Adult Man of Caste 4"

> \<şee\> /çɛ˞/ "Adult Men of Caste 4"

> \<dux'usu\> /duxʔusu/ "One Flatbread"

> \<dux'usue\> /duxʔusu˞/ "Two Flatbreads"

> \<duex'usu\> /du˞xʔusu/ "Many Flatbreads"

4.1.2 Semantic Roles

Verbs use tones to make for valency, the valency of the sentence determines the tone patterns available to mark for varying semantic roles.

Topicalisation is done by backing the topic of a sentence.

Intransitive / Monovalent

Words do not explicitly use tone in monovalent sentences. The subject is marked only by neutral (default) tone.

Transitive / Divalent

Divalent clauses take a agent and a patient. The agent is marked with high tone and the patient with neutral tone, this tone is applied to only the first syllable of multi-syllable words.

Ditransitive / Trivalent

Trivalent clauses have an agent who acts in the sentence, a patient that is acted upon, and a target that is acted towards.

The agent is marked with a high tone on the final syllable, a patient is marked with a high tone on the first syllable, and the target is unmarked. In the event that there are not enough syllables on a word to provide adequate distinction, a marker appended to the word based on the role. For agent it is <'ux> /ʔux/, for patient it is <su> /su/.

E.g.

(1) nėisonëx=ṭoi   qogü   düx'usu   keneu
     3V\give=SUPC>INFC SUB\SG\3.LLC AGN\SG\flatbread TAR\SG\3.LIC
     'They (Lesser Legal Caste) gave some flatbread to them (Lesser Illegal Caste)'

4.1.3 Pronouns

Pronouns are determined by caste. They fall into 8 main groups. A special pronoun that is used to refer to caste 0 individuals, a special pronoun that is used to refer to caste 7 individuals and non human entities, and 6 pronouns that are determined by relative caste, seperated by lesser, equal, greater, and by the legality of any childreny ou could have.

Table 4.1: Pronoun Table

	Caste 0	Greater		Equal		Lesser		Caste 7 / Non Human
		Legal	Illegal	Legal	Illegal	Legal	Illegal	
1	kofku	xi	xe	poudo	'e	ņoifṣef	hehmei	beis
2	houqeu	beḍeif	sou	ti	'uhou	'e'euf	'ehfeu	gi
3	boipi	'i	ṭeu	ṭeuni	ḍe	qogu	keneu	neu

4.1.4 Noun Phrase Construction

Noun phrases are right branching appending information to nouns. There are a number of words that can be used as a part of this. Largely involves some form of dependency where one noun depends upon another noun with a relationship. The most trivial of these is possession "i.e. my flatbread" can be analysed as "flatbread of mine". This is done with the word <qe>. i.e.

(2) nėisonex=ṭoi   pòùdo   dux'usu   qe 'ehfeu
     2V\have=SUPC>INFC AGN\SG\1.ELC PAT\SG\flatbread of SG\2.LIC
     I (Equal Legal Caste) have your (Lesser Illegal Caste) flatbread

Another word used in noun phrase construction is <tu> "and". Marking both the noun phrase to it's left and the noun phrase to it's right as filling an equal role in the sentence. Both should be marked tonally as the same semantic role.

4.2 Verbs

4.2.1 Valency

Verbs use tone to mark valency. The following rules are used for the number of the valency

0. No tone marking

1. Final syllable high tone, append <go> if not enough syllables

2. First syllable high tone, append <he> if not enough syllables

3. First and Last syllable high tone, append <me> if not enough syllables

4.2.2 Polypersonal Agreement

Verbs mark polypersonal agreement. This is done through agglutination of the following parts.

	Superior	Inferior	Non Human
Superior	ḍo	ṭoi	xous
Inferior	hoif	tei	peu
Non Human	toi	'uh	te

Table 4.2: Polypersonal Agreement, Source on Left, Target on Top

Derivational Morphology

The <go> prefix denotes the undoing of an action. i.e. <kenėüḍo> "I go" vs <gokenėüḍo> "I return".

4.3 Temporal Constructions

Temporal constructions are placed before the verb in a sentence. The default unmarked temporal construction is the present imperfective. There are no specific words for tense, however a time or date or relative construction (last week) can be given followed by an aspect marker (imperfective, perfective, prospective, retrospective, completive, inceptive, progressive, punctual).

imperfective — ∅

perfective — xeu

prospective — kuxqoi

retrospective — ḍpei

completive — soi

inceptive — ṭoi

progressive — moṣpeudo

punction — doideinoi

5 Lexicon

5.1 D

dux'usu (*n*) : Flatbread

5.2 K

keneu (*n*) : A lower caste citizen than the speaker far enough such that they are illegal to pro-create with
kihqeh (*v*) : 1=Go 2=Go-To
kufou (*n*) : Friend

5.3 M

miqei (*n*) : Here

5.4 N

neisonex (*v*) : 1=Exist 2=Have 3=Give-To

5.5 Q

qogu (*n*) : A lower caste citizen than the speaker that is still legal to procreate with

5.6 Ṣ

ṣe (*n*) : Adult Man of Caste 4

6 Challenges

6.1 Language Showcase

The entirety of this document serves as an answer to challenge 1.

6.2 Syntax Tests

For the purposes of these syntax tests, it will be assumed that the speaker, and any people references, are a caste 3 citizen.

Bring your friends with you.

(3) kïhqeh=xous   tï   miqei   moṣpeudo neisonëx=ḍo
    2V\go=SUPC>NONH AGN\SG\2.ELC PAT\SG\here PROG   1V\exist=SUPC>SUPC

    ti   tu   kuefou   qe ti
    SUB\SG\2.ELC and SUB\PL\friend of SG\2.ELC