

The Grammar of Ségēna

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Ségēna¹ is a constructed language that mixes fusional, agglutinative, and analytic language features. It is influenced primarily by Ancient Greek, Latin, Japanese, and English.

¹pronounced [se(◌)'ge:na]

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Chapter 1

Phonology

The sounds of Ségēna are similar to those of English, with the following exceptions:

- voiceless palatal fricative [ç]
- voiced alveolar trill [r]
- close front rounded vowel [y]

1.1 Consonants

	Bilabial	Labio-dental	Dental	Alveolar	Palato-alveolar	Palatal	Labio-velar	Velar	Glottal
Nasal	m			n				ŋ	
Stop	p · b			t · d				k · g	
Fricative		f · v	ð	s · z	ʃ · ʒ	ç			h
Affricate					tʃ · dʒ				
Approximant						j	w		
Trill				r					
Lateral appr.				l					

The Latin orthography of Ségēna mostly follows the phonetic alphabet, except for the phonemes in the table below:

Phoneme	Grapheme
ð	⟨dh⟩
ʃ	⟨sh⟩
ʒ	⟨zh⟩
tʃ	⟨ch⟩
dʒ	⟨j⟩
ç	⟨hy⟩
j	⟨y⟩
ŋ	⟨ng⟩

Ségēna also has the aspirated consonants /p^h t^h k^h/ which are written ⟨ph th kh⟩ respectively, as well as the palatalized alveolar lateral approximant /lʲ/, written ⟨ly⟩ (which in an inter-syllabic position represents the consonant cluster /lj/).

1.2 Vowels

	Front		Central, unrounded	Back, rounded
	Unrounded	Rounded		
Close	i ⟨i⟩	y ⟨y⟩		u ⟨u⟩
Close-mid / mid	e/ɛ ⟨e⟩			o/ɔ ⟨o⟩
Open			ä ⟨a⟩	

Long vowels are denoted with a macron: ⟨ā ē ī ō ū ȳ⟩. Medium-length vowels are denoted with an acute accent: ⟨á é í ó ú ý⟩. Note that marking the diaeresis of ⟨ÿ⟩ is redundant when marking vowel length because the consonant ⟨y⟩ cannot receive a macron or acute accent.

1.2.1 Diphthongs

Ségēna has the following diphthongs:

	a-	e-	i-	o-	u-
-a	—	ea	ia	oa	ua
-e	ae	—		oe	
-i	ai	ei	—		
-o	ao	eo		—	
-u	au	eu		ou	—

1.3 Phonotactics

Ségēna's syllable structure is (C)(C)V(C)(C). The only allowed two-consonant codas are ⟨ns⟩ and ⟨rs⟩, and they're only allowed in word-final position. The allowed word-final consonants are ⟨n r s⟩.

The following two-consonant clusters are allowed between adjacent syllables:

	m-	b-	ng-	g-	k-	n-	d-	t-	th-	s-	z-	sh-	zh-	r-	l-
-m	mm		ngm	gm	km	nm	dm	tm	thm	sm	zm	shm	zhm	rm	lm
-b	mb					nb				sb	zb	shb	zhb	rb	lb
-p										sp				rp	lp
-ph										sph				rph	lph
-ng			ng*							sng	zng	shng	zhng	rng	lng
-g			ngg							sg	zg	shg	zhg	rg	lg
-k			nk**		kk			tk	thk	sk	zk	shk	zhk	rk	lk
-kh			nkh**		kkh			tkh	thkh	skh	zkh	shkh	zhkh	rkh	lkh
-n	mn	bn	ngn	gn	kn	nn	dn	tn	thn	sn	zn	shn	zhn	rn	ln
-d	md	bd	ngd	gd	kd	nd				sd	zd	shd	zhd	rd	ld
-t			ngt		kt	nt		tt		st	zt	sht	zht	rt	lt
-th			ngth		kth	nth		tth		sth	zth	shth	zhth	rth	lth
-dh	mdh		ngdh	gdh		ndh								rdh	ldh
-s				gs	ks	ns		ts		ss				rs	ls
-z						nz								rz	lz
-ch			ngch			nch		tch		sch	zch	shch	zhch	rch	lch
-j						nj	dj								
-y		by	ngy	gy		ny	dy	ty	thy					ry	ly
-v				gv	kv	nv	dv			sv	zv	shv	zhv	rv	lv
-w				gw	kw	nw	dw			sw	zw	shw	zhw	rw	lw
-r	mr	br	ngr	gr	kr		dr	tr	thr	sr	zr	shr	zhr		
-l	ml	bl	ngl	gl	kl			tl	thl	sl	zl	shl	zhl	rl	ll
-h		bh		gh		nh								rh	lh

- * /ŋ:/ is written ⟨ng⟩.
- ** /ŋk/ is written ⟨nk⟩.

Chapter 2

Grammar

2.1 Word order

Ségēna has nominative-accusative alignment, but no strict word order. Usually the speaker will mention emphasized content first and secondary content last. However, if the speaker doesn't want to stress any specific parts of the sentence, the order considered most neutral is usually subject-verb-object or verb-subject-object.

For example, to the listener the object usually makes sense only once the verb is known, so the object would naturally come after the verb. If the verb doesn't make sense when the subject is not known, then the subject would be placed before the verb, thus ending up with subject-verb-object.

2.2 Nouns

Modern Ségēna nouns decline in two cases, nominative and accusative. Many nouns have identical nominative and accusative forms. Those that don't, can be recognized by a final 's' in their nominative form. If the noun is regular, its accusative form is equivalent to its nominative form without the trailing 's'.

2.3 Verbs

Ségēna has two main classes of verbs: durative and punctual. Depending on the verb's class, it can be conjugated in four or five aspects (see below). Additionally, all verbs have present, past, and future forms.

2.3.1 Durative verbs

Durative verbs represent actions that have a starting point, a duration, and an ending point; for example "eat" and "think". They are conjugated in four aspects:

- continuous
- habitual
- passive continuous
- infinitive

Example conjugation of a durative verb *enda-*, "eat":

<i>enda-</i>	Present (-a-)	Past (-u-)	Future (-e-y-)
Continuous (-a)	<i>enda</i> , is eating	<i>endua</i> , was eating	<i>endeya</i> , will be eating
Habitual (-s-a)	<i>endasa</i> , eats (habit)	<i>endusa</i> , used to eat	<i>endesha</i> , will be eating (habit)
Pass. cont. (-l-a)	<i>endala</i> , is being eaten	<i>endula</i> , was being eaten	<i>endelya</i> , will be being eaten
Infinitive (-i)	<i>endaɪ</i> , to eat	<i>endui</i> , to have eaten	<i>endeyi</i> , to be about to eat

2.3.2 Punctual verbs

Punctual verbs describe actions that are instantaneous or very short, and thus don't have a clear duration; for example "hit" and "die". They are conjugated in five aspects:

- perfective
- iterative
- habitual
- passive continuous
- infinitive

There's no present perfective form.

Example conjugation of a punctual verb *kata-*, "hit":

<i>kata-</i>	Present (- <i>a-</i>)	Past (- <i>u-</i>)	Future (- <i>y-</i>)
Perfective (- <i>a</i>)	—	<i>katua</i> , hit	<i>katya</i> , will hit
Iterative (- <i>t-a</i>)	<i>katata</i> , is hitting	<i>katatua</i> , was hitting	<i>katatya</i> , will be hitting
Habitual (- <i>s-a</i>)	<i>katasa</i> , hits (habit)	<i>katusa</i> , used to hit	<i>katasha</i> , will be hitting (habit)
Pass. cont. (- <i>l-a</i>)	<i>katala</i> , is being hit	<i>katula</i> , was being hit	<i>katelya</i> , will be being hit
Infinitive (- <i>i</i>)	<i>katai</i> , to hit	<i>katui</i> , to have hit	<i>katyai</i> , to be about to hit

2.4 Adjectives

Adjectives can be used as verbs.

2.5 Pronouns

2.5.1 Personal pronouns

Because Ségēna doesn't distinguish between singular and plural most of the time, personal pronouns only have separate singular/plural forms in the 3rd person, which is a remnant from times when a distinct plural form was used.

Includes the speaker(s)	Includes the addressee(s)	Includes third party/parties	
		Singular	Plural
<i>ya</i> – I, we (exclusive)	<i>za</i> – you (singular or plural)	<i>ea</i> – (last-mentioned); <i>īs</i> – (earlier-mentioned)	<i>sha</i> – they
<i>na</i> – we (inclusive)		—	—

2.5.2 Demonstrative pronouns

Demonstrative pronouns in Ségēna come in three varieties:

- proximal (1st person, near the speaker)
- medial (2nd person, near the addressee)
- distal (3rd person, far from both)

	Proximal	Medial	Distal
Singular	<i>ea?</i>	<i>tos</i>	<i>īs?</i>
Plural	<i>za?</i>	<i>?</i>	<i>sha?</i>

2.6 Prepositions

Ségēna makes extensive use of prepositions.

Preposition	Meaning	Example
<i>a</i>	marks the object of a verb	<i>endai a mar</i> "to eat flesh" (<i>endai</i> "to eat", <i>mar</i> "flesh")
...

2.7 Numerals

Ségēna uses an octal numeral system for counting to 16, and then switches to a hexadecimal system for larger numbers:

	Cardinal	Ordinal
0	<i>uo</i>	
1	<i>ēa</i>	<i>eadis</i>
2	<i>hya</i>	<i>hyadis</i>
3	<i>yáva</i>	<i>yaodis</i>
4	<i>yéla</i>	<i>yéldis</i>
5	<i>sféra</i>	<i>sférdis</i>
6	<i>ista</i>	<i>isdis</i>
7	<i>khár</i>	<i>khárdis</i>
8	<i>sadan</i>	<i>sadandis</i>
9	<i>ēadan</i>	<i>ēadandis</i>
10	<i>hyadan</i>	<i>hyadandis</i>
11	<i>yaodan</i>	<i>yaodandis</i>
12	<i>yeldan</i>	<i>yeldandis</i>
13	<i>sferdan</i>	<i>sferdandis</i>
14	<i>istadan</i>	<i>istadandis</i>
15	<i>khardan</i>	<i>khardandis</i>
16	<i>alda</i>	<i>aldis</i>
17	<i>alda-i-ēa</i>	<i>alda-i-eadis</i>
...
32	<i>hyalda</i>	<i>hyaldis</i>
48	<i>yavalda</i>	<i>yavaldis</i>
64	<i>yelalda</i>	<i>yelaldis</i>
80	<i>sferalda</i>	<i>sferaldis</i>
96	<i>istalda</i>	<i>istaldis</i>
112	<i>kharalda</i>	<i>kharaldis</i>
128	<i>sadanalda</i>	<i>sadanaldis</i>
...
256	<i>gala</i>	<i>galadis</i>
...

Chapter 3

Dictionary

A

a prep. (preposition that marks the direct object of a verb)
áda adj. small
adja n. old person
aethai- v. buy
agna adj. cursed, damned
agyo n. fat
ai- / **ae-** v. go, come, walk, move (intransitive)
ais n. egg
aishina n. murder
aishinai- v. kill, murder
aksidai- / **aksinai-** v. radiate
alga adj. old
alma / **almér** n. forest, jungle
almenda n. story, tale
álta n. deep, basin
alva / **alfa** n. tree
alwa n. flower
amae / **āmae** n. home, homeland
amarenda adj. carnivorous, meat-eating. From *a mar* ‘meat’ + *enda* ‘eating’.
ambēn / **ambiēn** n. animal
amē / **āmē** n. to one’s home (remnant of dative case)
ando n. head
anemai / **enemai-** v.
ānga / **ānda** n. day
angēs n. (stem: angēt-) rock
aogus n. bear
arda n. season
ārei- / **ārii-** v. fit (intransitive)
arkhai- v. shoot (a bow)
ars n. (stem: arkh-) bow
ars n. (stem: arp-) arrow
arwa n. ear

arwai- v. hear
as? conj. but
athis n. (stem: ath-) father
athlai- v. create, produce
au det. every, each, all
aurá pron. everything, everyone
āwa / **ōua** n. air
āwai- / **ōwai-** v. breathe
ayai- v. think
ayēna n. thought
ayénai- v. think, ponder, consider (think about something deeply)
asda- v. forgive
azha n. period of time

B

baēn adj. skew, oblique, slanting, diagonal
batai- v. protect
belzai- v. blame
bēsai- v. ask somebody to do something
bezui- v. wear out, wear down, fatigue (transitive)
beýlla n. (stem: beýll-) gem
bous n. big animal
bus / **dos** n. city, town, village
bura n. frog

C

chae- v. enchant, charm (benevolent)
chaēn n. (stem: chaent-?) enchantment, charm (benevolent)

D

da- ((...)e) v. have, own, possess
dai- v. know
dairi- / **dayari-** v. burn (intransitive)
dámai- / **dámei-** v. break (intransitive)
dān n. chair
dawa n. bed
derya n. beast
dēs n. (stem: des-) earth, ground, soil
deskhei- / **theskhei-** v. get lost
déth? n. game
dévi adj. green
dhēwa / **dēwa** / **dīwa?** n. snow
dós n. port, haven, dock
dura n. root

E

éa / **é** / **ēs** num. one
ea? pron. he/she/it (the latter of aforementioned two items), this
edden / **edhen** n. bark (of a tree)
efai- / **evai-** v. rise
efes n. ship
égai- v. help
egna adj. orange
ei- v. be (copula)
ēia n. (stem: ēg- / ēy-) eye
ēie- v. see

ēieō / **ēiaō** n. (archaic dual form of *ēia*) eyes (a pair of)
eika / **eikha** n. shield
eisda n. statue
ekhe n. sword
eksai- / **(a)deksai-** **(a)** v. attack
eksima n. adventure
eksimena adj. adventurous
elle(y)i- v. flee
elui- v. flow (intransitive)
ēlwa n. stream, river
eluo adv. soon
elyodon n. sea, ocean
elyŷs n. sun
ēn adv. now
ēna / **yēna** n. girl
endai-? / **nemai-** / **eznai-** v. eat
endo n. peace, tranquility
endomagar n. keeping of peace
enei- v. ?
ēnga n. nose
éngai-? v. smell
engāna? n. smell, odor, scent
enhai- v. ?
erai- / **erea-** v. exist
erēna n. existence
eris n. wool
estai- v. mark (transitive), write
estela n. (stem: *estell-*) letter (symbol)
estālia adj. written
estēn adj. tight, constricted
etóna adj. enormous, huge
eufa / **eufas** n. feather
ēuō / **ēvō** / **ewos** n. house, dwelling, home
ēus adj. (stem: *ēu-*) clear
ezmai- / **ezmai-?** / **ekhei-** v. ride (a horse)
ezme n. horse

F

faega n. fingernail
fala / **falae** adj. happy, glad
féa adj. living, alive
féai- v. live, be alive
foa / **fova** / **fora** n. gate, door

G

ga conj. as
gao adj. strong
gás (gat-) / **bós** adj. big, large, huge
gasha n. life
gaspai- v. expect
gei-? v. do
gena n. person
genetei- / **generai-** v. respect
genoi-? v. kill
gēs n. stranger
gīzai- / **orthei-** v. close (transitive)
gón n. bone

H

ha interj. yes
hwanja n. sky, heaven
aga adj. sacred, holy
he interj. yes
héka adj. sick, ill
hēlis n. (stem: *hēl-*) fist
hyá num. two
hyei- v. laugh
hyēna n. laugh

I

i conj. and
icha n. mother
ithis n. (stem: *ithik-*) fish
idhikai- v. fish
igna n. nature
ishna n. end
ista num. six
ithellei- v. strengthen
ithla adj. strong
īvan adj. mad, insane

K

kanja n. road, way
katai- (**takai-?**) v. hit
khae- v. change, transform
khān adj. grey
khans n. snake

khaya n. bay
kheos n. building
khāa n. time, clock
khoe n. wood
khora n. skin

L

lálai- v. sing
lás n. paper, parchment
lāvai- v. heal, cure
láwe, feli n. leaf
leos adj. (stem: *leo(k)-*) light (pale)
ligas n. lizard
lithi adj. blue (light)
lua n. year
lúkhas n. picture
lúmi adj. white
lyō n. water
lyūga / **yūga** n. tongue (anatomy)

M

magai- v. keep, preserve, conserve, retain, maintain, store
malai- v. be destroyed, fall into ruin, perish
mandha- / **manda-** v. fear
már n. meat, flesh
mára / **ebra** n. east
mās n. arm
mega- v. live
mellai- v. ? (intransitive)
melo n. cat
merai- v. wish
méza adj. wide, broad
monai- v. win
mor adj. evil

N

na pron. we (inclusive)
náda n. [old: *anya* / *anna*] west
náda n. tooth
nanotha n. metal
nāra n. neck
nārai- v. swallow

názai- v. drink
nēn n. month
neoga n. wind storm
nessai- / **dessai-** v. receive
nēvai- v. sleep
neznai n. vision, apparition, hallucination, mirage (something imaginary one thinks one sees)
nigna n. dream
nignai- v. dream

O

omne- v. shine, sparkle
ónda / **hónnda** n. north
or(o)s n. mountain
orda n. torso, trunk (of a tree)
orkha n. orc
ōroi- v. open
oron n. mountains, mountain range
ōs (od-) n. bird

P

paras n. onion
pēs n. (stem: pēn-) knee

R

rā n. being, thing, object (physical) — anything that exists
radis n. (stem: radik-) a piece of jewelry
rāma n. crime
rāmai- v. commit a crime
rás n. (stem: rán-?) child (daughter or son)
rāwa n. dog
reai- v. begin, start (intransitive)
rear n. beginning
rēgī adj. black
rēzai- v. annoy

S

s(i)ēve / **z(i)ēve** n. grain
sā n. (stem: sākh-) blood

sādha / **sāna** / **sāra** / **sāda** n. sand
saila n. hero
sai- v. give
saina n. grass (one grass)
sākhia adj. bloody
sālai- v. fall over
sarda n. seed
savái v. blow (produce an air current)
sayon n. lawn, grass (a field of grass)
sēda n. lie
sēdai- v. lie (tell a lie)
ségei- v. speak, say, talk
ségēna n. the act of speaking, saying, or talking
séges n. speech
seikha n. lamp
sēlai- v. swim
sēthei- v. slash, cut
sēthér n. ghost
sha / **zha** pron. they, these, those
shāla n. wolf
shao n. guard
sardin n. cook
sī / **īs?** pron. he/she/it (the former of aforementioned two items), that
silkei- v. explain
sīnai- / **sīnei-** v. fall
suēvi adj. violet, purple
sýnei- v. bring

T

theleka n. weapon
teles n. (stem: telek-) word
tera / **terás** adj. heavy
tēs n. leg
thāne- v. bind
thēma n. horn
thenas n. battle, fight
thēna n. skill (attained by study, practice, or observation)
thenta- v. fight
thessei- / **thessai-** v. split (in half)
theus n. (stem: theuk-) book
thira n. diamond
thús n. (stem: thúr-) region, area
toro n. troll

tsēn adj. deep (physically)
túli, auli adj. yellow

U

ū n. night
uchi / **oksi** adj. brown
ue interj. no
uwan n. cloud
uwanya adj. cloudy
ulti adj. blue (dark)
uo num. zero

V

vē(ī)- v. become, change (intransitive)
vērai- v. die
vēs n. hay
via n. gate
vola / **wola** n. fire

W

wa part. (interrogative particle)
wai- / **way(a)i-** v. cry
wanwai- v. rain
wárai- / **hwárai-** v. build
wóka n. box, crate

Y

ŷ conj. or (inclusive)
ya pron. I, we (exclusive)
yaha- v. grow
yalo(s), fora? n. plant
yāna / **yánda** n. south
yáva num. three
yē pron. (archaic dative form) me, us (exclusive)
yéha adj. good
yēn n. a single hair, a strand of hair (on head)
yōn / **yēon** / **yēnon** n. hair (on head)
yúnai- v. happen

Z

zā pron. you (singular or plural)
zaran n. star

zei- / **sei-** v. be, exist
zeleth n. world, universe
zén adj. dark

zhi / **ji** n. heart