

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 /l̪̥/, written ⟨ly⟩ (which in an inter-syllabic position represents the consonant cluster cluster /l̪̥j/).

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 ū̄⟩. Medium-length vowels are denoted with an acute accent: ⟨â é í ó ú ŷ⟩. Note that marking the diaeresis of ⟨y⟩ 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

No consonant clusters are allowed at word-initial positions.

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