

T'éoyú'sài

A Speedlang 26 Submission

by
tealpaper

Preface

About this Document

This document only showcases a brief exposition of T'éoyú'sàì. It excludes a lot of material, including the proto language and the language evolution, which are still a mess and need to be tidied up. Also, due to the nature of this language's morphology, I have yet to categorize all the morphological classes, which means this document will only include a tiny subset of all the paradigm. (I'm still not even sure how many inflectional classes are there in this language.)

I have made outlines for this document, so if you're viewing this electronically, you may be able to jump to specific sections using those outlines.

Any language description included in this document is subject to change.

The Background of the Conlang and Its Speakers

T'éoyú'sàì is a (hypothetical) language spoken by the Mɪɪbʊ' people in the region stretching roughly east to west on the eastern corner of ____.¹ The Central dialect (the main language) is located on the base of the hills, on the very eastern edge of the ____ savanna. The Western dialect is fully located in the savanna,² while the Eastern dialect is situated on the hills at the westernmost edge of the ____ Highlands.

The Mɪɪbʊ' people are thought to have inhabited the region since at least a few centuries BCE. We know that it must have contacted the ____ peoples for a prolonged period of time due to the amount of linguistic features shared with their languages. It also came into contact with the ____ peoples and, more recently, the ____ people (aside from European colonizers) as the country modernizes. Today, there are only about 8,000 native speakers of T'éoyú'sàì out of the 35,000 ethnic Mɪɪbʊ'; most of them speak the more popular or prestigious neighboring languages ____ or ____, or, especially in the western area, one of the ____ languages.

¹ T'éoyú'sàì is inspired by certain natlangs located in a certain region of our real world, and it is a hypothetical language isolate located (tentatively) in that region. Try to guess which region that is!

² A few villages are even located on the neighboring country of ____ to the west.

1. Phonology and Morphophonology

The phonology of T'éoyú'sài is relatively complex, though not too unusual for the area. It has ejective and implosive consonants, three phonemic vowel lengths, three phonemic vowel phonations, partially productive tongue root vowel harmony, and several tonemes.

1.1. Consonants

T'éoyú'sài has 33-35 consonant phonemes depending on the dialect. Each phonemes are romanized with the same graphemes, except for /ɟ, ʔ, ʙ, d̪, ɟ̪, θ, ð, ɲ, j/ which are respectively romanized as <j, ' , b', d', j', g', th, dh, ñ, y>.

The consonants in parentheses are not phonemic in all dialects. The phone [j] is always an allophone of /ɟ/ before front vowels; /v, ɣ/ are phonemic in the Central and Eastern dialect, and allophonic in the Western dialect; [ɰ] is allophonic in the Eastern dialect and otherwise phonetically absent (thus romanized as <w>). The phoneme /r/ is realized as [r] intervocally and otherwise variable [r~ɾ], while the phoneme /ç/ is realized as [ʃ] in the Eastern dialect and is otherwise realized as [ç]. Consonant gemination might occur but usually on morpheme boundaries.

		Consonant phonemes					
		Labial	Dental	Alveolar	Palatal	Velar	Glottal
Plosives	Plain	p b		t d	c ɟ	k g	ʔ
	Glottalized	p' ɓ		t' d'	c' ɟ'	k' g'	
Fricatives		f (v)	θ ð	s z	ç (j)	x (ɣ)	h
Nasals		m		n	ɲ	ŋ	
Flap				r			
Approximant		(ɰ) w		l	j		

1.2. Vowels and Diphthongs

T'éoyú'sài has a large number of vowel phonemes. There are 12 phonemic vowel qualities, 6 for each of the tongue root positions. The vowels qualities /y, ɣ/ are relatively rare and especially unique as front rounded vowels are almost non-existent in the rest of the continent. They are phonemic in the Central and Eastern dialect, but often merge with /i, ɪ/ in the Western dialect. The phoneme /ə/ is often heightened to [ə̃] especially when lengthened. Each vowel quality is romanized with the same graphemes, except for /y, ɣ/, which are respectively romanized as <ü, u>, and /ə/ which are capitalized as <Ə>.

There are three phonemic vowel lengths: short, long, and overlong, the latter two are respectively romanized as doubling and tripling the vowel grapheme. There are also three phonations: modal (plain), breathy, and creaky. Breathy vowels are romanized as <V̤>, like in the neighboring language ____, while creaky vowels

are romanized as <V>. Phonations are largely independent of tones. This phonemic three-way distinction of vowel lengths and phonemic breathy vowels are found in a few languages nearby, like the previously mentioned ____ and also ____, while phonemic creaky vowels are uncommon in the area.

Combining all vowel qualities with vowel lengths and phonations, there are up to 108 vowel phonemes in T'əoyú'sàì.

Phonemic vowel qualities						
	+ATR			-ATR		
	Front	Central	Back	Front	Central	Back
High	i y		u	ɪ ʏ		ʊ
Mid	e	ə	o	ɛ		ɔ
Low					a	

Diphthongs are not truly phonemic, consisting of a vowel gliding into another vowel of a different vowel quality, though they can be phonemically short or long. No diphthongs end with /y/, and diphthongs ending with /a/ phonetically end with [ɐ]. Long diphthongs are romanized by doubling the non-initial element, e.g. short diphthong *ie* /i̯e/ and long diphthong *iee* /i̯e:/. Whether a diphthong is falling or rising is rather unpredictable, influenced by the phonetic environments, speed of speech, and dialects. The most important point regarding diphthongs is that they must consist of vowels with the same tongue root position, e.g. *ie* and *ie* are allowed, but **ie* and **ie* are not.

1.3. Tones

There are a total of 5 tonemes, possessed by every syllable in T'əoyú'sàì. There are three level tones: low <v̂>, mid <v>, and high <v̇>, and two contour tones: rising <v̂v̇> and falling <v̇v̂>. Non-short monophthongs and all diphthongs may have either of the five tones, with the tone diacritic placed on the first element, e.g. *ηáuu*, while short monophthongs can only have a level tone.

Tones are not only lexical but also grammatical. Many inflections and some derivations—including but not limited to nominal case, nominal number, and verbal conjugations—involve a tone change.

1.4. Phonotactics

The syllable structure in T'əoyú'sàì is (C)V(C). All but one consonant phonemes can be found in the onset position, but some cannot be found in the coda position. The following is the summary of the phonotactics, which includes the main points and excludes the minute details.

- /h/ can only be word-initial.
- /j/ cannot be found in the coda, but it can geminate over a morpheme boundary.
- Ejective and implosive consonants are de-glottalized in the coda, but certain words called “glottalizing words” can cancel the de-glottalization, and word-final glottalized consonants can become the onset of a following glottalizing word.

- d. Voiced fricative phonemes are devoiced in the coda, but always voiced when preceding a voiced non-glide consonant.
- e. The glottal stop /ʔ/ cannot be in the onset, but it can be phonetically realized in the onset if a word-final non-short vowel precedes a glottalizing word.
- f. A cluster cannot consist of two consonants with the same POA (place of articulation) and MOA (manner of articulation), except for morpheme boundary geminates.

1.5. Prosody

The word-level primary stress is fixed on the penultimate syllable, while secondary stresses are assigned from the front of the word to the back with trochaic rhythm. Stress is not phonemic and phonetically not very contrastive, only slightly increasing the loudness and pitch range of stressed syllables. Because of that, it is not typically indicated in IPA transcriptions in this document.

1.6. Morphophonology

The morphophonology of T'éoyú'sèi includes sandhi, vowel harmony, and alternations.

1.6.1. Sandhi

Affixes and clitics in T'éoyú'sèi often have an element that are only realized when attaching to certain sounds, akin to the *-e-* in the English suffix *-(e)s*. These elements are indicated by parentheses, e.g. *mù(d)-* and *-(r)a*. Note that these affixes and clitics might undergo all sorts of alternations, which are preliminarily described in the alternations section below, and individually explained in the grammar section.

Unlike affixes and clitics, there are only a handful of ways to resolve illegal hiatuses and clusters on the boundary between stems in compound words and between independent words.

- a. If a word-final consonant precedes a word-initial vowel, the consonant becomes the onset of the vowel, and if the consonant is glottalized, it is de-glottalized, unless the second word is a glottalizing word explained below.
- b. If a word-final glottalized plosive precedes a glottalizing word (which may be indicated in this document by a superscript letter *g* in front of the word), it is realized as glottalized, e.g. *ŋáb^g 'uçəm* [ŋáb̚ ũçəm].
- c. If a word-final consonant precedes a word-initial *h*, the *h* is elided and the last vowel of the first word is lengthened.
- d. If a word-final voiceless obstruent precedes a word-initial voiced obstruent, the two obstruents become voiced.
- e. If a word-final coronal fricative (including the palatal fricative) precedes another coronal fricative of a different POA, the POA and voicing is assimilated right-to-left. In careful speech, though, the cluster *ç_s* and *ʂ_s* may be pronounced unassimilated.
- f. Otherwise, an epenthetic /ə/ or /i/ might be inserted to break up the cluster.
- g. If a word-final vowel precedes a glottalizing word, then the vowel might become creaky. If it is short, it might be elided and the consonant preceding it becomes glottalized.

- h. Otherwise, if a word-final vowel precedes a word-initial vowel of the same vowel quality, an epenthetic glottal stop might be inserted in careful speech. Otherwise, the first vowel will flow directly to the second vowel.

There are other aspects regarding sandhi, for example tone sandhi, but the above are the ones that are applied most regularly and predictably.

1.6.2. Vowel Harmony

Tongue root vowel harmony is partially productive in T'éoyú'sài, and it is applied left-to-right. Most native roots are harmonized, along with many suffixes, whose harmonizing property may be indicated in this document by a superscript letter h in front of the suffix, e.g. -^hó'. On the other hand, some other suffixes and all prefixes are non-harmonizing. Most compound roots and recent loanwords are not harmonized, though their last syllable still triggers vowel harmony on the harmonizing suffixes.

1.6.3. Alternations

The most complex aspect of T'éoyú'sài is undoubtedly the morphological alternations. Besides affixes, inflections may also be overtly applied through consonant mutations, vowel mutations, vowel length changes, vowel phonation changes, tone changes, some of the above, or all of the above. To a non-native learner of the language, it might seem that every word has its own unique paradigm. However, this is not an unusual feature of the area. One of the linguist researching the nearby language ____ used the term “paradigmatic chaos” to describe the seemingly unregulated forms and distributions of exponents.³ Throughout the grammar, there are examples showcasing the inflectional forms of different words to demonstrate the diverse and outwardly chaotic alternations in T'éoyú'sài.

³ This is a real quote from a real linguistic paper, by the way.

2. Grammar

T'éoyú'sài is a moderately synthetic language, employing suffixes much more than prefixes. It is a fusional language, involving a wide range of alternations briefly discussed earlier. It also makes productive use of reduplication and compounding. Word order is somewhat flexible at the clause level, but it is rather rigid at the nominal phrase level.

2.1. Summary of Syntax

T'éoyú'sài is overall a head-final language, employing SV and APV (SOV) word order and having possessors preceding the possessums. However, although most adpositions are postpositional, some are prepositional, especially due to language contact. (Many nearby languages each have both prepositions and postpositions.) Demonstratives are postnominal, while definite articles are suffixal—there is no indefinite article in T'éoyú'sài. Relative clauses are postnominal, while oblique phrases can be preverbal or postverbal. Negation in declarative clauses are indicated by a preverbal particle and/or a verbal suffix, but negative imperative or prohibitive clauses have a unique negative verbal construction.

While the word order at the noun phrase level is rigid, word order at the clause level is somewhat flexible, allowing the fronting of focused or emphasized non-subjects while the verb still follows the subject and direct object. However, in the Western dialect, when the predicate is focused, the finite verb may occasionally precede the direct object, producing the word order AVP (SVO) and AAuxPV (SAuxOV) (with Aux being an auxiliary verb), due to language contact.

2.2. Nominal Grammar

Nouns inflect for case, number, and gender. There are four inflectional cases in T'éoyú'sài: Nominative, Accusative, Genitive, and Dative; two grammatical numbers: Singular and Plural; and three grammatical genders: Masculine, Feminine, and Neuter. Below are several examples displaying the Nominative and Accusative inflections in T'éoyú'sài.

Examples of nominal inflections					
Gender	NOM SG	NOM PL	ACC SG	ACC PL	
N	<i>làad</i>	<i>làada</i>	<i>lét</i>	<i>lǎŋth</i>	“river”
	<i>mûuŋ</i>	<i>mûuŋá'</i>	<i>mûu</i>	<i>mũũ'</i>	“cat”
	<i>cəpú'</i>	<i>c'íp</i>	<i>c'íib'</i>	<i>c'ĩib</i>	“village”
F	<i>nĩĩ</i>	<i>nǣǣ</i>	<i>nĩi'</i>	<i>nĩəəb</i>	“sister”
	<i>ŋáuu</i>	<i>ŋáuu'</i>	<i>ŋâa</i>	<i>ŋaa'</i>	“eye”
	<i>çóon</i>	<i>çôôŋ</i>	<i>çòn</i>	<i>çôôŋ</i>	“ball”
M	<i>mák</i>	<i>mǣǣx</i>	<i>mók</i>	<i>mókók'</i>	“mother's brother”
	<i>bǣǣl</i>	<i>bóaar</i>	<i>bǣal</i>	<i>bóóor</i>	“arrow”
	<i>téuuf</i>	<i>téup</i>	<i>tóof</i>	<i>tóop</i>	“hand”

Some affixal elements can be identified, for example the glottal stop suffixes (which might be preceded by a high-tone vowel) in the plurals of three of the examples and the singulars of other two. Vowel lengthening and breathy phonation also commonly mark the plurals more often than vowel shortening and modal phonation does. The tone also tends to be high when the vowel is short. Otherwise, there seems to be no immediately identifiable pattern.

One common feature that unites the nouns is that the initial consonant never mutates. However, a closed set of a minority of nouns do have mutations of the first consonant in the form of glottalization, exemplified by the word for “village” in the table above.

Nouns may also receive the definite suffix, emphatic suffix, diminutive prefix, and collective reduplication among others.

2.2.1. Assignment of Grammatical Gender

For human nouns, the grammatical gender is largely semantic, with males being assigned as masculine, females as feminine, and the “default” gender being either masculine or neuter. Some human plurals might be assigned a different gender compared to their singulars, e.g., *naabàv* “girl” GEN.SG.F > *naabǎrw* “girls” GEN.PL.M. Highly animate animal nouns may receive a gender prefix to specify their biological gender, agreeing with the adjectives and verbs according to the given gender prefix, but they still decline according to their inherent gender. Otherwise, non-human nouns have virtually unpredictable gender assignment, at least semantically.

2.2.2. Case and Nominal Morphosyntactic Alignment

Nouns normally decline for case according to the nominative-accusative alignment, with the S (intransitive “sole” argument) and the A (transitive subject; “agent”) having the Nominative case, while the P (transitive direct object; “patient”) having the Accusative case. The Accusative case also marks the complements of some adpositions.

(1) *Mîinà saonì.*

<i>mîin-à</i>	<i>saov-nì</i>
SUN.NOM.SG.N-DEF.N	shine.PTCP[3SG.N.S]-CONT

“The sun is shining.” (from Conlang Syntax Test Cases)

(2) *Yémûuηà ηuukó’ dǎmǎ.*

<i>yé-mûuη-à</i>	<i>ηuukó’</i>	<i>dǎ-mǎ</i>
DIM-cat.NOM.SG.N-DEF.N	fish.ACC.PL.M	eat.PST[3SG.N.S]-3PL.M.O

“The kitten ate (some) fish.”

(3) *lád’ε ηuukó’-ǎ*

<i>lád’ε</i>	<i>ηuukó’-ǎ</i>
INST	fish.ACC.PL.M-DEF.M

“with the fish.”

However, in some TAMs, the S and A have the Accusative case, while the P have the Genitive case. Moreover, in the “non-agentive” perfective past clauses of the Eastern dialect, the S and P have the Accusative case, while the A have the Nominative case. These are some of the relicts of split ergativity that existed in earlier forms of the language but has since almost gone.

(4) *Yémúurà ḡǽ’ dǿǿma.*

<i>yé-múu-rà</i>	<i>ḡǽ’</i>	<i>dǿǿ-ma</i>
DIM-cat.ACC.SG.N-DEF.N	fish.GEN.PL.M	eat.NPST.HAB[3SG.N.S]-3PL.M.O

“The kitten (habitually) eats fish.”

(5) *Mìnà sai.* (Eastern dialect)

<i>mìn-à</i>	<i>sai</i>
SUN.ACC.SG.N-DEF.N	shine.PST[3SG.N.S]

“The sun shone.” (from Conlang Syntax Test Cases)

The Genitive case, aside from marking direct objects in some cases mentioned above, marks the possessor in adnominal possessive phrases, with the possessor preceding the possessum. It also marks the complements of some adpositions, especially locative adpositions.

(6) *yémúurà ḡóok*

<i>yé-múu-rà</i>	<i>ḡóok</i>
DIM-cat.GEN.SG.N-DEF.N	fish.NOM.SG.M

“The kitten’s fish.”

The Dative case marks indirect objects. It also marks the complement of adpositions, like the Accusative and Genitive case.

(7) *Mìinà kǿǿt’ó sùii p’iutteni.*

<i>mìin-à</i>	<i>kǿǿt’ó</i>	<i>sùii</i>	<i>p’iut-te-nì</i>
SUN.NOM.SG.N-DEF.N	person.DAT.PL.N	warmth.ACC.SG.N	give.PTCP[3SG.N.S]-3SG.N.O-CONT

“The sun gives people warmth.”

(8) *B’àaará sa wóoçà mub nǎǎd.*

<i>b’àa-rá</i>	<i>sa</i>	<i>wóoç-à</i>	<i>mub</i>	<i>nǎǎd</i>
floor.DAT.SG.M-DEF.M	ALL	basket.GEN.SG.N-DEF.N	cover.NOM.SG.F	fall.PST-3SG.F.S

“The cover of the basket fell to the floor.” (from Conlang Syntax Test Cases)

2.2.3. Personal Pronouns

Personal pronouns in T’éoyú’sàì distinguish three persons, two numbers, and four cases. Clusivity is distinguished in the first person plural, while grammatical gender is distinguished in the third person. Personal pronouns that agree with the verb are usually overt only for emphasis and are otherwise dropped. They have the same morphosyntactic alignment as full nouns do.

Independent personal pronouns

	NOM SG	NOM PL	ACC SG	ACC PL	GEN SG	GEN PL	DAT SG	DAT PL
1IN		<i>nin</i>		<i>nĩok</i>		<i>tĩot</i>		<i>tĩon</i>
1EX	<i>p'ə</i>	<i>lɔɔt</i>	<i>çík</i>	<i>lib</i>	<i>pǎis</i>	<i>tǎɔl</i>	<i>dás</i>	<i>láo'</i>
2	<i>nii</i>	<i>ráa</i>	<i>yík</i>	<i>rǎɔk</i>	<i>sís</i>	<i>rǎɔ'</i>	<i>sás</i>	<i>rǎɔ</i>
3N	<i>yɔ</i>	<i>yĩɔ</i>	<i>t'é</i>	<i>yiu</i>	<i>çaa</i>	<i>çant</i>	<i>t'èx</i>	<i>yìŋ</i>
3M	<i>huu</i>	<i>kaw</i>	<i>sí</i>	<i>sũɔ</i>	<i>haf</i>	<i>kǎɔt</i>	<i>ràx</i>	<i>ròɔx</i>
3F	<i>huu</i>	<i>yìt</i>	<i>çío</i>	<i>çĩɔ</i>	<i>laf</i>	<i>yĩt</i>	<i>k'àx</i>	<i>kòɔx</i>

The suffix ^{-h}(*t*)*âa* can be attached to pronouns to create emphatic pronouns. (It can also attach to full nouns for the same function.) This suffix cognates with the verbal Slot 3 middle suffix ^{-h}(*t*)*âa*, which originally had a reflexive function. Meanwhile, the Genitive pronouns are suffixed with *-nán* to create a possessive phrase without an overt possessum, which then take nominal inflections according to the case, number, and gender of the possessum.

(9) *Dásâa kítàabò p'ítəŋí.*

dás-âa *kítàab-ò* *p'ít-əŋ-í*
 1SG.DAT-EMP book.ACC.SG.F-DEF.F give.PST-2SG.S-3SG.M.O
 “It’s me who you gave the book to.”

2.2.4. Demonstrative Pronouns and Articles

Demonstratives in T'éoyú'sàì distinguish two distances: proximal “this” and distal “that”, with the former having the initial element *r-* and the latter *y-*. There are also two distinct sets of demonstratives: pronominal and adnominal demonstratives.

Pronominal demonstratives

	NOM SG	NOM PL	ACC SG	ACC PL	GEN SG	GEN PL	DAT SG	DAT PL
PRX.N	<i>ràŋ</i>	<i>ràŋé</i>	<i>râa</i>	<i>ré</i>	<i>raa</i>	<i>rǎa</i>	<i>raa</i>	<i>rǎa</i>
PRX.M	<i>rák</i>	<i>ràŋá</i>	<i>rók</i>	<i>rá</i>	<i>raa</i>	<i>rǎu</i>	<i>ró</i>	<i>rǎu</i>
PRX.F	<i>râa</i>	<i>rǎɔk</i>	<i>rók</i>	<i>rǎɔ</i>	<i>ràɔ</i>	<i>rǎɔɔ</i>	<i>ras</i>	<i>rǎɔl</i>
DIST.N	<i>yàŋ</i>	<i>yàŋé</i>	<i>yâa</i>	<i>yé</i>	<i>yaa</i>	<i>yǎa</i>	<i>yaa</i>	<i>yǎa</i>
DIST.M	<i>yák</i>	<i>yàŋá</i>	<i>yók</i>	<i>yá</i>	<i>yaa</i>	<i>yǎu</i>	<i>yó</i>	<i>yǎu</i>
DIST.F	<i>yâa</i>	<i>yǎɔk</i>	<i>yók</i>	<i>yǎɔ</i>	<i>yàɔ</i>	<i>yǎɔɔ</i>	<i>yas</i>	<i>yǎɔl</i>

Pronominal demonstratives appear in the referent’s stead, agreeing in case, number, and gender. They may also sometimes function as anaphors. Their frequency of usage have decreased somewhat, and new pronominal demonstratives have been formed from postposing the adnominal demonstratives to interrogative pronouns.

On the other hand, adnominal demonstratives accompany an overt noun, agreeing in gender and number, but only in the Accusative form, i.e. no case agreement. They may juxtapose with the definite article, usually

indicating referents previously mentioned in the discourse or ones that the speaker considers to be “general information”. In fact, the definite articles developed from these postnominal demonstratives; they agree with the noun only in gender.

- (10) *Yíonò rók wùusdì rátə.*
yíon-ò rók wùus-dì rátə
 mist.NOM.SG.F-DEF.F PRX.SG.F clear.INCH.FUT-3SG.F.S probably
 “This mist will probably clear away.” (from Conlang Syntax Test Cases)

2.2.5. Interrogative Pronouns

Interrogative pronouns in T'éoyú'sèi are divided into three types according to the word-initial consonant: *s-*, *η-*, and *g/b-*, the latter of which developed from an earlier labial-velar consonant **gb-*. They precede the verb when used in an interrogative clause. They are also the stems of some of the indefinite pronouns. They normally precede the verb.

Interrogative pronouns							
<i>s-</i>		<i>η-</i>		<i>g/b-</i>			
<i>sál</i>	“who”	<i>ηálú</i>	“where”	<i>g'ál</i>	“what”	<i>g'úul</i>	“when”
<i>sáəl</i>	“whose”	<i>ηáəl</i>	“whence”	<i>g'áəl</i>	“how”	<i>g'úlə</i>	“until when”
<i>sàəl</i>	“whom” ACC	<i>ηála</i>	“whither”	<i>bólú</i>	“what” ACC/DAT	<i>g'àmə</i>	“since when”
<i>sàla</i>	“whom” DAT			<i>gélé</i>	“which”	<i>b'oume</i>	“which” ACC/DAT

Other interrogative phrases are composed of the above interrogative words plus some other words, e.g. *g'ál si* “why” (lit. “what be”), *g'ál mid* “how many” (lit. “what many”), etc.

- (11) *Làadà g'ál yəb sí?*
làad-à g'ál yəb sí
 river.NOM.SG.N-DEF.N what wide.SG.N COP.NPST.3SG.N.S.Q
 “How wide is the river?” (from Conlang Syntax Test Cases)

2.3. Verbal Grammar

Verbs in T'éoyú'sèi have multiple stems that alternate based on tense, aspect, and voice. There are also suffixes indicating the future tense, some aspects, subject and object agreement, negation, and voice, but there are no non-reduplicative prefixes. Some moods are indicated through auxiliary verbs, while a reduplication is also productive on verbs, though with a wide range of meanings. A verb has up to seven affixal slots, counted from the front to the back of the verb, with Slot -1 containing the reduplication, Slot 0 containing the verbal stem, and Slot 6 containing the Continuous suffix.

2.3.1. Verbal stems

Verbal stems in T'éoyú'sèi alternate for the past tense, anterior aspect, cessative aspect, future/habitual tense/aspect, applicative voice (which may also be used causatively in the Eastern dialect), participle form,

gerund form, and the “accidental” mode, which denotes actions that are accidental. The table below provides some examples of these verbal stems. Like with nouns, there are many variations of verbal stem paradigm between verbs, but the initial consonant never mutates except for a closed set of a minority of verbs, exemplified by the verb meaning “to give” in the table.

Examples of verbal stems			
	“to eat”	“to give”	“to fall”
PST	<i>dḡ</i>	<i>p’ít</i>	<i>nǎṵṵ</i>
ANT	<i>dḡə</i>	<i>p’ìit</i>	<i>nḡṵṵ</i>
CESS	<i>dḡis</i>	<i>pítis</i>	<i>nǎṵṵm</i>
HAB/FUT	<i>dḡa</i>	<i>p’íet</i>	<i>nǎṵṵ</i>
APPL	<i>dḡe</i>	<i>p’íat</i>	<i>nǎṵṵ</i>
PTCP	<i>dḡlḡ</i>	<i>p’iut</i>	<i>nḡṵṵ</i>
GER	<i>dḡa</i>	<i>pítei</i>	<i>nǎṵṵna</i>
ACCID	<i>dḡog</i>	<i>pítog</i>	<i>nǎṵṵsḡg</i>

2.3.2. Verbal Reduplication

The verbal reduplication partially reduplicates the first consonant and (shortened) vowel of the stem. Its current function is to indicate the reflexive, reciprocal, and/or causative voice, though many verbs usually take only one of the three functions. The reduplication was a former pluractional-reciprocal conjugation that over time expanded its function to also be reflexive and causative. In the Western dialect and occasionally the Central dialect, the reciprocal pronoun *tḡṵ* (erosion of *tḡṵṵ* “friends”) may be used in the direct object position to clarify a reciprocal reading, while in the Eastern dialect, the suffix ^{-h}(*t*)*áa* (the middle suffix formerly indicating reflexivity) may be used to clarify a reflexive, not reciprocal, reading—it has no causative meaning in the Eastern dialect.

- (12) *Laf nḡḡ bḡalá nanǎṵṵdí.*
laf nḡḡ bḡal-á na~nǎṵṵ-d-i
 3SG.F.GEN sister.NOM.SG.F arrow.ACC.SG.M-DEF.M CAUS~fall.PST-3SG.F.S-3SG.M.O
 “Her sister dropped the arrow.”

- (13) *Nḡnḡḡḡḡáa.* (Eastern dialect)
nḡ~nḡḡḡ-ḡ-áa
 REFL~hurt.PST-1SG.S-REFL
 “I hurt myself.” (from Conlang Syntax Test Cases)

2.3.3. Verbal Slot 1: Aspect and Mood Suffixes

The suffixes in the verbal Slot 1 originated from suffixed auxiliary verbs and copula. These include the inceptive suffix ^{-h}*ḡu(w)*, the presumptive *-rəm* (doesn’t harmonize with the previous elements), and

obligative suffix ^h*si*, the latter of which developed from a copula but has regular subject agreement suffixes unlike the actual copula.

- (14) *Làadà yôibràm.*
làad-à *yôib-ràm*
 river.NOM.SG.N-DEF.N wide.VBLZ-PSUP[3SG.N.S]
 “The river must be wide.”

2.3.4. Verbal Slot 2 and 5: Agreement and Imperative Suffixes

The verbal Slot 2 contains the subject agreement suffixes, while the verbal Slot 5 contains the direct object agreement suffixes, and they are all harmonizing with the preceding elements. They agree with the nouns in person and number, and also gender in the third person. Suffixes of Slot 2 and 5 always agree with the subject and direct object respectively regardless of the cases, except in the “non-agentive” perfective past clauses of the Eastern dialect mentioned earlier. In those clauses, the Slot 2 suffix agrees with the Accusative argument, while the Slot 5 suffix agrees with the Nominative argument.

Verbal agreement suffixes				
	SG S	PL S	SG O	PL O
1IN		<i>-dù</i>		<i>-nú</i>
1EX	<i>-ç(i)</i>	<i>-(l)áp</i>	<i>-(è)η</i>	<i>-(l)ak</i>
2	<i>-(a)η</i>	<i>-(à)b</i>	<i>-(i)k</i>	<i>-(r)ók</i>
3F	<i>-d(i)</i>	<i>-(à)s</i>	<i>-ç(i)</i>	<i>-n(i)</i>
3N	<i>-Ø</i>	<i>-(á)k</i>	<i>-t(e)</i>	<i>-(y)ù</i>
3M	<i>-t(e)</i>	<i>-ya</i>	<i>-(s)í</i>	<i>-(m)à(y)</i>

The imperative and hortative clauses have their own subject agreement suffixes in Slot 2 and puts the main verb in the past stem, while the negative imperative or prohibitive employs a specialized prohibitive auxiliary verb and puts the main verb in the gerund stem.

- (15) *Nèbɔ lo b'əvbçi.*
nèb-ɔ *lo* *b'əvb-çi*
 play.PST-IMP.2SG.S and sing.FUT-1SG.S
 “Play and I will sing.” (from Conlang Syntax Test Cases)

- (16) *Nàb'a hɔ.*
nàb'a *h-ɔ*
 play.GER PROH-IMP.2SG.S
 “Don’t play.”

2.3.5. Verbal Slot 3: Middle Suffix

The middle suffix ^{-h(t)âa} indicates the passive or anticausative voice, and it originally had a reflexive function. As mentioned before, it cognates with the emphatic (pro-)nominal suffix ^{-h(t)âa}, and it may be used reflexively along with the verbal reduplication in the Eastern dialect.

- (17) *Bǝǝlâ nânăǝtâa.*
bǝǝl-â *nâ~năǝt-âa*
 arrow.NOM.SG.M-DEF.M CAUS~fall.PST-3SG.M.S-MID
 “The arrow was dropped.”

2.3.6. Verbal Slot 4: Negative Suffix

Negation of non-imperative clauses is different in each of the three dialects. The Eastern dialect uses the negative suffix ^{-h*k(i)*} in verbal Slot 4, while the Western dialect uses the preverbal negative particle *mú*. The Central dialect uses both, i.e. it has an obligatory double negation consisting of a preverbal negative particle and a negative suffix.

- (18) *Laf nǝǝ bǝalâ mú nanăǝdkí.* (Central dialect)
laf *nǝǝ* *bǝal-â* *mú*
 3SG.F.GEN sister.NOM.SG.F arrow.ACC.SG.M-DEF.M NEG
na~năǝd-k-í
 CAUS~fall.PST-3SG.F.S-NEG-3SG.M.O
 “Her sister did not drop the arrow.”

2.3.7. Verbal Slot 6: Continuous Suffix

The continuous suffix *-nì* denotes the stative or progressive aspect, and it doesn’t harmonize with the previous elements. It originates from and still co-exists with the inessive postposition *nì* “in”, and it puts the verb in the gerund stem. A stative usage of this suffix is exemplified in example (1), and below is an example of a progressive usage.

- (19) *Wîrǝ t’üüs yémûuǝ nâb’ânì.*
wîr-ǝ *t’üüs* *yé-mûuǝ-ǝ* *nâb’a-nì*
 rain.NOM.SG.F-DEF.F under DIM-cat.NOM.SG.N-DEF.N play.GER[3SG.N.S]-CONT
 “The kitten is playing in the rain.” (from Conlang Syntax Test Cases)

Speedlang Constraints and Tasks

Phonological Constraints

Contrastive tone and/or phonation at the word level or lower

T'éoyú'sài has five tonemes at the syllable level: low, mid, high, rising, and falling. It also has three phonemic vowel phonations: modal (plain), breathy, and creaky. Examples have been given throughout this document, but here are some of them:

- a. *çoon* /çó:n/ “ball” (nominative singular), *çôon* /çô:n/ “balls” (nominative plural)
- b. *sáəl* /sá:l/ “whose”, *sàəl* /sà:l/ “whom”
- c. *ràv* /ràv/ “this” (genitive singular feminine), *ràv* /ràv/ “these” (accusative plural feminine)

Asymmetries between the set of onset consonants and coda consonants

There are consonants that may appear in the onset but not in the coda: /h/, non-geminate /j/, and glottalized consonants. On the other hand, the glottal stop /ʔ/ may appear in the coda but not in the onset.

Two or more strategies of clusters or hiatus resolution

These strategies are summarized in the sandhi section.

Grammatical Constraints

A closed or near-closed set of words with more and/or unique inflection

Most nouns and verbs do not morphologically mutate their root's initial consonant, but a closed set of a minority of nouns and verbs do. Examples have been given throughout this document, but here are some of them:

- a. *cəpú'* /cəpúʔ/ “village” (Nominative singular), *c'íp* /c'íp/ “village” (Nominative plural)
- b. *p'ít* /p'ít/ “gave”, *pítís* /pítís/ “stop giving”

More than one completely homophonous morphemes appearing in different contexts

The verbal middle suffix ^{-h(t)}*âa* is completely homophonous with the (pro-)nominal emphatic suffix. Also, the continuous suffix *-ni* is homophonous with the inessive postposition *ni* “in”, though the former may be subject to word-level tone sandhi.

Sociolinguistic Constraints

Two or more dialects, each differing from the main language in at least three features, while still intelligible.

In this document, the “main language” is the Central dialect, while the additional two dialects are the Eastern and Western dialects. Some of the endemic features of the two dialects have been mentioned throughout this document, but below are three of them for each dialect.

Three of the features endemic to the Eastern dialect:

- a. The phoneme /ç/ being realized as [ʃ]
- b. Relict of split ergativity in the “non-agentive” perfective past clauses

- c. The use of the verbal suffix *-k(i)* as the sole indicator of non-imperative verbal negation

Three of the features endemic to the Western dialect:

- a. The vowel qualities /y, ʏ/ often merging with /i, ɪ/
- b. The occasional usage of SVO and SAuxOV word order in certain contexts instead of the usual SOV and SOVAux word order
- c. The use of the preverbal particle *mú* as the sole indicator of non-imperative verbal negation

Tasks

Translate 5x 5MOYD or Conlang Syntax Test Cases sentences

Example (1), (5), (8), (10), (11), (13), (15), and (19) in this document provide translations of Conlang Syntax Test Cases⁴ sentences.

⁴ <https://cofl.github.io/conlang/resources/mirror/conlang-syntax-test-cases.html>