

The Se'mat language (natively সূমাত্রা sr̥mapprasa) is a language isolate spoken in northeastern India. It is strongly influenced by the languages of Southeast Asia but does not distinguish phonemic tone. This conlang was made by Formor for a 2021 speedlang challenge but was not finished in time.

### Consonants

	labial	dental	palatal	velar	glottal
nasal	m				
stop	p	t		k	ʔ <ʔ>
fricative		s			h
approximant		l	j <Y y>	[w]	

Syllable structure is (C)V(C). Coda /m p t k l/ assimilate in place of articulation with a following stop; so coda /p t k/ before a stop become a geminated stop and coda /m/ becomes [n] or [ŋ] before /t/ and /k/ respectively.

/l/ stays [l] except before /k/, where it is vocalized to [w]. This [w] is in complementary distribution with [l], appears in a context where /l/ is likely to be vocalized, and alternates grammatically with [l], so it must be an allophone of /l/.

Any segment but /h/ can appear geminated, but only intervocalically, so it is analyzed as the same segment repeated across a syllable boundary.

Stops, including geminated stops, as well as /s/, are voiced intervocalically.

Coda /ʔ/ triggers glottalization harmony, which spreads both ways. It affects vowels and voiced consonants and does not affect, and is blocked, by voiceless ones. (This means it can be argued that [b d g z] are actually phonemes, since they only occur in certain places, but act differently in terms of vowel harmony.)

Stop-fricative clusters do not appear in roots, and when formed by concatenation are resolved as [ʔs ʔh], triggering glottal harmony.

Word-final open syllables have their vowels slightly lengthened to emphasize the difference between them and the “checked” glottalized syllables.

Glottalization surfaces on vowels as creaky voice and low tone. Non-glottalized vowels in the first syllable of a word are mid tone and other vowels are high tone.

### Vowels

	Front	Central	Back
Close	i		u
Mid		ə <R r>	
Open		a	

/ə/ also appears in the tensing diphthongs /ə<sub>1</sub>i/, /ə<sub>1</sub>u/, and /ə<sub>1</sub>a/. In the latter it is pronounced higher up in the mouth, like [i<sub>1</sub>a].

## Morphology

### Nominal

#### Pluralization

Pluralization is marked by the suffix -a<sub>2</sub> or by the suffix -a<sub>2</sub> and moving a vowel back in the word.

#### Definiteness

Like some nearby Indo-Aryan languages, Se'mat only marks indefinite nouns, using an article that also serves as the numeral 1, in Se'mat's case, *mu*<sub>2</sub>. Plural indefinites are marked by the plural form *uma*<sub>2</sub>.

#### Postpositions

Postpositions mark literal or metaphorical location of nouns relative to each other or their role in the sentence, including the subject marker *u*.

#### Demonstrative Pronouns

The demonstrative pronouns are *ha* (proximal, this), *i* (medial, that), and *sa*<sub>2</sub> (distal, yon or that).

#### Personal Pronouns

Se'mat has an open personal pronoun class. Most personal pronouns are either native kinship terms, such as *papa*, used for women two generations older than the speaker, or loanwords from Chinese or Indo-Aryan languages, such as *ayra*, used to address Buddhist monks (c.f. Burmese ဆရာ) and *puk*, a humble, somewhat masculine 1st person pronoun (c.f. Japanese 僕).

#### Verbal

Verbs include actions as well as states (being red etc.) and are conjugated with independent or subordinate terminations. All verb stems end in a vowel, which is followed by -m- when past and null when nonpast, followed by the termination.

### Independent terminations

The indicative, -ku, is used for regular independent indicative clauses, marking declarative sentences.

মি?মাত উ সুলুংকু।

*Mi?mat u sulu-m-ku.*

[mi?m?əd?\_ù sùlúŋkú´]

sun NOM shine-PST-IND

The sun shone. (STEST #3)

The imperative, -yru, is used for direct commands and is considered somewhat rude to use to someone older than you.

উস্নায়রু।

*Usna-yru!*

[ūsnaǰə\_ú´]

attend-IMP

Listen up! (STEST #103)

The subjunctive, -lak, marks an irrealis main clause.

হল উ পাংতাসী ব্রাসিলু সা? কুল উ কাহিলাক।

*Hul u pamta-si lra-si=lu, sa? kul u kahi-lak.*

[húl ū pāntázi´ lə\_āzilú´ sà? kúl ū kāhílák]

wind NOM be.strong-INF become-INF-IRR DIST tree NOM fall-IRR

If the wind were to pick up, then that tree would fall over.

### Subordinate terminations

The infinitive, -si, is also used to form complement clauses. Infinitives and complement clauses can serve as agents of sentences, e.g. of causing feelings like scaring or bothering, forming “A-like clauses.”

The participle, -ti?, is used as a converb, or to form relative clauses, including to attribute “adjective” like verbs. It can take the past -m- to distinguish from plain nonpast.

Secondary terminations are added onto the infinitive:

The conjunctive, -sa, is used to join sentences together with a meaning of “and”, “and then”, and sometimes even “but”

The disjunctive, -nit, is used to mean “or”.

The conditional suffix, -kih, is used as a realis “if”. It is also used as a more polite, mild injunctive than the imperative.

তিতী উ সাহ যা? তিকুসিকিহ।

*Titi u sah ya? tiku-si=kih.*

[tɪdɪˈ ũ sáh yà? tɪgúzígíh]

older.sister NOM tea ACC drink-INF-COND

Why don't you have some tea, young lady? (STEST #109)

The irrealis conditional, -lu, corresponds to the irrealis meaning of the subjunctive. It is also used to express remote or impossible wishes.

The postposition yul can be cliticized onto an infinitive to mean “because”:

পাতাপাতিয়ুল আসা যুল হাহাসী প্যরু।

*Pattapatti-si=yul asa yul haha-si pyryru!*

[pātːábátːízíjúl āzá júl hāházíˈ pjəˈjəˌúˈ]

be.scatterbrained-INF-because.of 1SG because.of laugh-INF be.not-IMP

Don't you laugh at me just because I'm scatterbrained! (STEST #191)

The negative verb *pyrsi* is used to negate clauses ending in the infinitive, as in the previous example.

## Syntax

Se'mat is strongly left-branching, with the verb at the end and with subordinate clauses preceding what they modify.

## Vocabulary

ayra - pron. 2nd or 3rd person pronoun for addressing Buddhist monks

asa - pron. a low-register feminine 1st person pronoun

ha - pron. proximal demonstrative

hahasi - v. to laugh, to ridicule

hul, uhla? - n. wind, gale

i - pron. medial demonstrative pronoun

isi - v. to belong to, be owned by; often seen in the form iti? “of, -'s”

kahisi - v. to fall over, fall down

kakasi - v. to be happy in the moment, joyful, gleeful

kalit, kaltaꝀ - n. "film", in the sense of a thin layer covering a liquid surface; meniscus; scummy layer on top of a pond; layer of fat on top of broth, milk, etc.; cream  
kam, akmaꝀ - n. karma (fate, especially as a reward or punishment; one's actions as they warrant such reward or punishment); the object of a sentences  
krmrk - n. thief, robber; disrespectful 2nd person pronoun  
krꝀtis, krꝀtisaꝀ - n. river valley  
krum, rukmaꝀ - n. raw rice  
kruk, rukkaꝀ - n. river  
kul, ulkaꝀ - n. tree  
kumkrsi - v. to see; to meet, meet up with  
li, ilaꝀ - n. hand, forearm  
lrasi - v. used as an auxiliary for "to become" and adjective; (archaic) to begin  
lrpprꝀ - n. lahpert, pickled tea leaves  
mamkasi - v. to influence, to inspire, to be a role model to  
mat, amtaꝀ - n. eye  
mrisi - v. to love, to like, to enjoy  
mrma, rmmaꝀ - n. mother, mom; pron. used by a mother talking to her child, by a relative referring to their young interlocutor's mother, etc.  
miꝀ, imꝀa - n. day  
miꝀmat, miꝀmataꝀ - n. sun, the sun  
muꝀ, umaꝀ - num. one; indefinite article  
pamtasi - v. to be strong, powerful, (of winds) high, forceful  
papa, appaꝀ - n. grandmother; pron. used for women two generations older than the speaker  
pattapattisi - v. to be scatter-brained, absent-minded  
prasa - n. language (ult. from Skt. bhāṣā)  
puk - pron. humble masculine first person pronoun  
pum, upmaꝀ - n. cooked rice; meal  
pyrsi - vb. to not be  
rkay, rkyaꝀ - n. chicken  
sah, ashaꝀ - n. tea  
sasa - n. uncle; pron. used for men one generation older than the speaker  
saꝀ - pron. distal demonstrative pronoun  
SrꝀmapprasa - n. name of the Se'mat language  
SrꝀmat - n. a person of the ethnic group who speaks the Se'mat language  
sulusi - v. to be bright, luminous, shine with one's own light  
tata, attaꝀ - n. father, dad; pron. used by a father talking to his child, by a relative referring to their young interlocutor's father, etc.  
taꝀkasi - v. to see the truth, see things for how they are; (Buddhism) be enlightened, achieve enlightenment  
tikusi - v. to drink  
titi, ittaꝀ - n. older sister; pron. used for young women  
trasi - v. to hit, strike; (of the hands) to clap  
u - postp. marks subject  
ulrsi - v. to steal

usmasi - v. to listen, pay attention (to a sound, someone speaking)

yasi - v. to go, to leave, to exit; to leave behind, to misplace; to leave alone, go away from and not bother

ya2 - postp. marks direct object

yul - postp. about, concerning; on account of, because of