Saĭtehi

Saĭtehi is the language spoken by the lohaĭne of the nation of Seteĭheju on the planet Leheĭneju. (The lohaĭne, as a species, are tall and graceful, with sleek, almost metallic fur. Their tails are large and flat, somewhat like a beaver's but forked; and they have pure white bills and horns like a unicorn's.)

Phonology

Consonant	Bilabial	Dental	Palatal	Vowel	Front	Central	Back
Nasal	m	n	ɲ <ñ>	Close	i	ɨ <u>	
Plosive	p b	t d	c <k> ɟ <g>	Close-mid	e eɹ̝ <eĭ>		o
Fricative	ɸ <f> β <v>	θ <s> ð <z>	ç <h> ʝ <x>	Open	a aɹ̝ <aĭ>		
Approximant	ʋ <w>	l	j				

In Saĭtehi, the stress is always on the first syllable, but is weak, and words can seem evenly stressed to nonnative speakers; songs are even more fluid as to stressed syllables. Saĭtehi phonotactics are strictly CV; according to most Saĭtehi-speaking linguists of the modern day, all syllables must have onsets and none may have codae. Therefore, eĭ and aĭ are not sequences of separate vowels, nor are they vowels followed by j. They are diphthongs.

The vowel u comes from a sequence of *io that could not occur in the sequences of vowels used to fill roots because i was higher than o and thus could not directly precede it. This is why u only occurs in affixes and forms of the copula, where it was *iĥo (where ĥ is /h/), before the /h/ was dropped in the affixes and forms of the copula. Elsewhere, *ĥ became h /ç/.

Pronouns

Pronouns	Singular	Dual	Plural
1st inclusive	bi	ma	maĭ
1st exclusive		me	meĭ
2nd person	di	ne	neĭ
3rd person	go	ka	kaĭ

How consonantal roots interact with vowels

Saïtehi makes use of patterns of consonantal roots. Each root is a pattern of two or three consonants. Once a single root is filled with vowels, over a dozen separate more specific meanings can be established for each root.

Saïtehi verbs lack temporal tense markings, person, and number; though they do mark whether the speaker witnesses firsthand, hears from someone else, or speculates that the verb is happening. Adjectives have similar markings, though they don't distinguish between witnessing and hearsay; only between evidence and speculation.

Vowel sequence	Meaning	Example
1a2a(3a)	Verb, firsthand knowledge	sataha "flows, as I see"
1a2e(3a)	Verb, secondhand knowledge	sateha "flows, as I'm told"
1a2i(3a)	Verb, speculation (always used in questions)	satiha "flows, I believe"
1a2aï(3a)	Verb, optative	sataïha "I want X to flow"
1o2o(3o)	Verb, imperative	sotoho "flow!"
1e2aï(3e)	Noun, inanimate, that which does or is for	setaïhe "a fluid"
1e2eï(3e)	Noun, a place where	seteïhe "a river, or place with rivers"
1o2aï(3e)	Noun, animate, dwelling in or on	sotaïhe "an aquatic lifeform"
1o2eï(3e)	Noun, animate, originating from	Soteïhe "someone from Seteïheju"
1aï2a(3i)	Noun, abstract, act of	saïtahi "the act of flowing"
1aï2e(3i)	Noun, inanimate/abstract, created by	Saïtehi "the language of Seteïheju"
1i2aï(3o)	Adjective, that which does (knowledge or literal)	sitaïho "liquid"
1i2eï(3o)	Adjective, that which seems to be (speculation, metaphor, or in a question)	siteïho "graceful"
1i2o(3o)	Adjective, that which becomes or has become	sitoho "liquefied"
1i2i(3o)	Adjective, that which seems to become or have become	sitiho "seemingly liquefied"

Suffixes used on roots

Saïtehi does not use prefixes on roots, because prefixes would possibly alter the interpretation of a root due to there being another consonant and vowel before it. However, there are a variety of suffixes used on the roots, each of which creates a new layer of meaning.

Suffix	Meaning	Example
-ju	Augmentative	Seteĭheju "big place with rivers; Land of Rivers"
-jaĭ	Diminutive	nenaĭnejaĭ "small hearing thing; hidden mic"
-jeĭ	Possibility	sitohojeĭ "liquefiable" feňaiňejeĭ "what seems to be a lock"
-vu	Negation (targets whatever root or affix is directly before it)	fiňoňojeĭvu "unable to be locked" fiňoňovujeĭ "able to be unlocked"
-ja	Adverb, locative	lehaĭneja "at the stone"
-ňa	Proximal; becomes allative/illative (toward/into) when used after -ja	lehaĭneňa "this stone" lehaĭnejaňa "toward the stone"
-ma	Distal; becomes ablative/elative (away from/out of) when used after -ja	lehaĭnema "that stone" lehaĭnejama "away from the stone"
-je	Noun, animate, one who does (suffixed on the aĭ-a form); or one who is (suffixed on an adjectival form)	paĭlatije "author" fiňoňoje "one who is 'locked', i.e. forbidden"
-jo	Adjective, having, possessing (on a noun)	sotaĭhejo "with/owning a fish"
-wa	Adverb, benefactive	Seteĭhejuwa "for the benefit of Seteĭheju"
-lu	Adverb, malefactive	paĭlatijelu "for the detriment of an/the author or authors"
-mu	Adverb, done in a manner	siteĭhomu "gracefully"
-li	Possessive	Soteĭheli "of the people of Seteĭheju"
-pi	"And" suffix, used like Latin *-que*	kaĭnali baĭfemipi "truth and ideals"
-deĭ	"Or" suffix	xedaĭlevu gepaĭvedeĭvu "no food or drink"

The copula and its forms

In Saïtehi, the copula (the particle that links the subject to the predicate and creates a sentence) is sentence-initial and takes on different forms depending on the sentence's relation to the previous subject matter. Therefore, it serves the function of a variety of discourse markers.

A sentence without a copula or an imperative is interpreted as incomplete, as a mere phrase rather than as a sentence: <u>polaĭte kanala</u> "the nerd, who *is/was/will be* right (as I *am witnessing/have witnessed* firsthand)" vs. <u>Haĭ polaĭte kanala.</u> "The nerd *is/was/will be* right (as I *am witnessing/have witnessed* firsthand)."

Form	Meaning	Possible English interpretation
<u>haĭ</u>	Default form, no change in subject	"i.e."
<u>hu</u>	Giving an example; always used when the subject has the suffix <u>-ña</u> or <u>-ma</u>	"e.g."
<u>naĭ</u>	Traveling to a subject caused by the matter directly preceding	"therefore"
<u>nu</u>	Traveling to a subject that caused the matter directly preceding	"because"
<u>xaĭ</u>	Contrasting	"however"
<u>xu</u>	Returning after a contrast	"nonetheless"
<u>zaĭ</u>	Digressing completely or establishing a new subject	"incidentally"
<u>zu</u>	Returning after a digression	"anyway"
<u>laĭ</u>	Creating a bullet point showing a detail of the matter at hand	"first" / "next" / "then"
<u>lu</u>	Summarizing after creating several bullet points	"in summary"
<u>vaĭ</u>	Introducing new information	"just so you know"
<u>vu</u>	Citing old information	"as you may know"
<u>ña-</u>	Interrogative prefix, used on the copula (in Saïtehi, there is no such thing as a question mark)	"is this…?"

Word order

In Saĭtehi, as has been mentioned, the copula (or the imperative verb) always goes first. This is then followed by:

- ❖ The noun that is the subject of the sentence
- ❖ Any adverbs; starting with temporal markers, which use a locative suffix (-ja for "at", -jaña for "until", -jama for "starting from")
- ❖ Any adjectives that modify this noun
- ❖ Any verbs that modify this noun
  - ➢ Any objects of said verbs, always directly following their own verbs
    - ■ Any modifiers of said objects, in the same order as for the subject
- ❖ The main verbs or adjectives that apply to the noun (unless an imperative is used)
  - ➢ The objects of the main verbs, always directly following their own verbs
    - ■ Any modifiers of said objects, in the same order as for the subject

The aforementioned -pi and -deĭ suffixes are used to group the adjectives and verbs that modify the subject as well as the main adjectives and verbs in the predicate, to aid in the separation; though a comma may also be used.

Syntax tests

36. You have come too soon. = *Zaĭ di kilaĭmo maĭlu samaha maĭjaña.*
```
Zaĭ         di kilaĭmo          maĭ-   lu   samaha      maĭ-     jaña.
COP.DIGRESS 2SG morning/ADJ.DOES 1PL.INCL-MALEF travel/VB.SEEN 1PL.INCL-ALL
```
"By the way, you, early, to our detriment, travel (as I have seen myself) towards us."

101. Are these shoes too big for you? = *Ñahu dilu zehaĭña zeleĭwa kineĭbo.*
```
Ña-    hu        di- lu   zehaĭ-       ña zeleĭ-  wa   kineĭbo.
INTERR-COP.EXAMPLE 2SG-MALEF cover/INAN.FOR-PROX dirt/PLACE-BENEF expand/ADJ.SEEMS
```
"Are, to your detriment, these objects intended to cover, for the path, expanded (as it may seem)?"

105. Keep this secret until tomorrow. = *Jomolo kaĭlemijaña bino kaĭnaliña fiñoño.*
```
Jomolo    kaĭlemi-        jaña bino          kaĭnali- ña fiñoño.
guard/IMP morning/INAN.FROM-ALL  follow/ADJ.DONE know/ACT-PROX lock/ADJ.DONE
```
"Guard, toward the morning that is made to follow, this knowledge, which is locked (for which there is evidence)."

116. Does the sky look blue or gray? = *Ñahaĭ keneĭbe xijeĭxo bileĭgo riseĭdeĭ.*
```
Ña-    haĭ         keneĭbe     xijeĭxo        bileĭgo      riseĭ-      deĭ.
INTERR-COP.DEFAULT expand/PLACE color/ADJ.SEEMS sea/ADJ.SEEMS storm/ADJ.SEEMS-or
```
"Does the expanding place seem to be colored as the sea or as a storm?"

178. They wore red caps, the symbol of liberty. = *Haĭ kaĭ nazeta zehaĭ kenaĭlewa xijaĭxo dimaĭxo, xaĭjexi jaĭneli.*
```
Haĭ         kaĭ nazeta      zehaĭ       kenaĭle-    wa   xijaĭxo
COP.DEFAULT 3PL bear/VB.HEARD cover/INAN.FOR know/INAM.FOR-BENEF color/ADJ.DOES
dimaĭxo,       xaĭjexi      jaĭne-      li.
fruit/ADJ.DOES, color/INAN.FROM fly/INAN.FROM-POSS
```
"They bore (as I have heard from someone else) objects intended to cover, for the head, colored (for which there is evidence) as fruit; a visual representation of free flight."

The script used for Saĭtehi

The script was likely not needed to become exempt from any of the requirements (shown in highlighted text), but I made a script anyway.

This image shows the abugida known as paĭlati Saĭtehili. The smaller vowel is written to the bottom right of the larger consonant. The table is arranged in the same way as the IPA table under "Phonology": with nasals at the top followed by plosives, fricatives, and then approximants; and with bilabials first before dentals and palatals, and with the vowels ordered front-central-back.
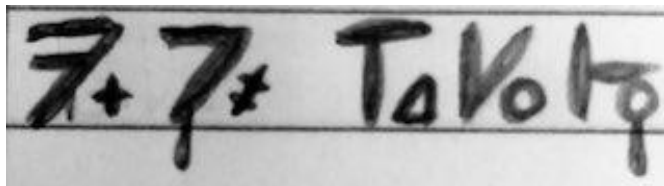
This is a sample of stylized text that reads gekaĭ sitoho ("liquid gold"), meant to illustrate how the vowels fit together with the consonants. The o vowel is usually square, but it is written circular here to better fit the aesthetic.

Paĭlati Saĭtehili was originally written on tablets made from wax of the hives of a species of insect called ponaĭme, so named because they have large green wings, somewhat like those of Tellurian butterflies. Their hives are made of a sort of wax similar in consistency to beeswax; but rather than yellow, this wax is a light shade of purple. A tool with a straight edge was pressed into the wax to create the writing, hence its angular, cuneiform-like appearance.

These tablets are also why the insects called poleĭte "living things born from writing" are called that. The larvae would eat the wax, somewhat like the various book-boring insects of Tellus which Tellurians refer to as "bookworms".

The appearance of paĭlati Saĭtehili was once far more complex, due to the former presence of other phonemes such as velars and possibly even uvulars. Even as the pronunciation evolved, the script stayed the same for a long time; something similar could be seen in the pre-reform scripts of some Tellurian languages such as Russian and Japanese.

The reform that gave rise to today's paĭlati Saĭtehili took place in Year 7275 of the Laĭjaxi Seveĭweli ("Reading of the Sun"; the traditional calendar of multiple nations on Leheĭneju). This was around the former part of Year 1918 of the Gregorian calendar used on Tellus — over 500 Tellurian years ago.

Saïtehi numbers

Saïtehi uses a base-8 number system, hence this document being labeled <u>daïzasi tikaïmo 13ja</u> (*speak/ACT run/ADJ.DOES 13-LOC*; "13th speedlang") rather than <u>11ja</u>. This means that rather than a number is meant to be interpreted as having ones, eights, sixty-fours, 512s, etc. Ordinal numbers take the locative suffix <u>-ja</u>, which comes from the semantic interpretation that, for instance, the current Speedlang is "at" eleven; as if the order of things were a physical counter with numbers on it, and each number were a place.

1 (one)	2 (two)	3 (three)	4 (four)	5 (five)	6 (six)
<u>hama</u>	<u>go</u>	<u>naïli</u>	<u>hive</u>	<u>fineï</u>	<u>bo</u>

7 (seven)	10 (eight)	20 (16)	30 (24)	40 (32)	50 (40)
<u>wila</u>	<u>ne</u>	<u>gene</u>	<u>naïlene</u>	<u>hivine</u>	<u>finene</u>

60 (48)	70 (56)	100 (64)	1000 (512)	10000 (4096)	10^{10} (8^8)
<u>bene</u>	<u>wilene</u>	<u>saïmi</u>	<u>viba</u>	<u>kanase</u>	<u>mihaï</u>

10^{14} (8^{12})	10^{20} (8^{16})	10^{24} (8^{20})	10^{30} (8^{24})	10^{34} (8^{28})	10^{40} (8^{32})
<u>gihaï</u>	<u>lihaï</u>	<u>vihaï</u>	<u>nihaï</u>	<u>bihaï</u>	<u>wihaï</u>

Numbers below 64 are formed much like in the Tellurian language of Danish, where English "seventeen" becomes <u>hama-genepi</u> (lit. "one-and-sixteen") akin to *enogtyve* ("one-and-twenty").

This means that $2 * 8^{27} + 62 * 8^{24}$ becomes <u>vibanihaï bo-wilenepi nihaï</u> "512-8^{24} six-and-56 8^{24}". Notice how digits are grouped in fours, rather than in threes.

An approximation of Saïtehi numerals with Unicode characters

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
▪	⎮	↓	↑	⥿	⥾	↕	⇕

The decimal number 1,000,000,000 becomes the octal 73-4654-5000, which is written ⇕↑ ⥿↕⥾ ↑▪▪▪. Numbers are written left to right, much like in English.

Roots established so far

This list may expand over time as I flesh Saïtehi out more after the submission date; but these are the roots I have so far as of the due date.

- ❖ √b-f-m "aspire; ideal"
- ❖ √b-l-g "dive; sea; blue"
- ❖ √b-n "follow; afternoon; late"
- ❖ √d-m-x "grow (a plant); fruit; red"
- ❖ √d-z-s "speak; language"
- ❖ √f-ñ-ñ "lock, bar, block; forbid"
- ❖ √g-k "shine, sparkle, reflect; gold; orange"
- ❖ √g-p-v "drink"
- ❖ √j-m-l "protect, guard"
- ❖ √j-n "fly; freedom"
- ❖ √k-l-m "wake up; lead; morning; early"
- ❖ √k-n-b "expand; large; sky; purple" (the sky on Leheĭneju, unlike the Tellurian sky, is usually purple)
- ❖ √k-n-l "know; true, truth; head"
- ❖ √k-z "taste; flavor"
- ❖ √l-h-n "stand, be solid; stone, land"
- ❖ √l-m-n "see; eye; camera"
- ❖ √l-j-x "read; interpret, understand"
- ❖ √m-b-ñ "build; create; construct"
- ❖ √m-w-v "touch; texture"
- ❖ √n-n-n "hear; ear; microphone"
- ❖ √n-z-t "carry, bear; wear; container"
- ❖ √p-l-t "write"
- ❖ √p-n-m "glitter, refract; gem, crystal; green"
- ❖ √r-s "endure; storm; gray"
- ❖ √s-m-h "travel; vehicle"
- ❖ √s-n-x "smell; nose; perfume; flower"
- ❖ √s-t-h "flow; liquid, fluid; river"
- ❖ √s-v-w "glow, radiate; star, sun; yellow"
- ❖ √t-k-m "run; speed"
- ❖ √x-d-l "eat; food"
- ❖ √x-j-x "paint, draw; represent; symbol; color, hue"
- ❖ √z-h "cover; clothing; mystery, unknown, inexplicable"
- ❖ √z-l "dirt, soil, path"

A short dialogue in Saĭtehi, with a translation

HAĬLISI: Haĭ kalama.
ALICE: It leads. (*A greeting; the closest I have found in a Tellurian language to this type of greeting is the game of "Marco Polo".*)

BOBA: Haĭ bana. Ñazai bi kanila daĭzasi dizoso dija.
BOB: It follows. Incidentally, do I know the languages spoken by you? (*Saĭtehi does not have "wh-words" in the traditional sense established in Tellurian linguistics; ña... bi kanila "do I know..." is the usual construction for such questions as "What languages do you speak?" etc.*)

HAĬLISI: Haĭ bi dazasa Heĭñeli, golu Saĭtehipi. Xaĭ bi gowa dazasa Tihesitina.
ALICE: I speak English; and Saĭtehi, but badly. However, I speak Czech well. (*If you speak a language well, you are described as speaking the language to its benefit; if you speak it badly, you speak it to its detriment.*)

BOBA: Haĭ bi dazasavu Tihesitina.
BOB: I don't speak Czech.

HAĬLISI: Ñanu bi kanila zeleĭ... daĭzesivu Tihesitina, simoho dija.
ALICE: Do I know (*on the subject of what caused that*) the path taken by you to the... state of not speaking Czech? (*i.e. "Why do you... not speak Czech?"*)

BOBA: Haĭ bi kelaĭneja nazatavu. Laĭ bi dazasa Saĭtehi; laĭ bi dazasa Heĭñeli, Hepañopi; laĭ bi dazasa Kiñaholo. Xaĭ bi dazasavu Losiki.
BOB: I didn't carry (it) in my head. (*i.e. "I never thought about it."*) First point, I speak Saĭtehi; second point, I speak English, and Spanish; third point, I speak Klingon. But I don't speak Russian.

HAĬLISI: ...Kiñaholo. Haĭ bi lajaxavu.
ALICE: ...Klingon? I don't understand.

BOBA: Haĭ Kiñaholo daĭzasi miboño, Saĭmahili Sevaĭweli.
BOB: Klingon is a conlang, from Star Trek.

HAĬLISI: Dozoso tikaĭmovumu.
ALICE: Speak slowly.

BOBA: Zu di golu dazasa Saĭtehi.
BOB: Wait, you don't speak Saĭtehi well. (*The copula form zu is used to return after a digression, or to flash back to something earlier in the conversation; here Bob remembering that Alice does not speak Saĭtehi well.*)