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Tenata: A Constructed Language

Lila Sadkin

Introduction

Tenata (stress on the first syllable) is spoken in Southern Korapan. Korapan is one of the countries on the continent Atiensen. Tenata is a minority language on the continent, whose name transliterates to Tinisen in Tenata, although the Tenata people are not very involved in continental affairs, so the word is rarely used. The Tenata people as a whole keep to themselves in their region, although the network of villages is very dynamic, and a person will usually have lived in several villages over her lifetime.

Geographically, the area is mostly flatland, though there are smaller mountains and forested areas in the east, and the climate is temperate, with a fair amount of rain, lending itself beautifully to agriculture. The region is dotted with variously-sized villages, each predominantly self-sufficient, though they do trade with each other, mostly for art and other specialties. Some of the very small villages in an area will function as one extended village. There is no central power in a village or any collection of villages.

The main unit is a "collective" of people rather like a family, but the word family is misleading here, because it does not refer to relation by blood or marriage. The biological/marital family does exist, but it isn't the primary unit of identification for an individual. A collective isn't a fixed, permanent unit, but rather changes from season to season. Each aspect of life's tasks, such as agriculture, production of household goods, and so forth,

are taken care of by a collective, which consists of the people whose talents, knowledge, and ability equip them for the task at hand. For example, during planting season a group will form around each crop (in bigger villages) or a group of crops (in smaller), and they will all live in the "collective house" until the planting is completed. Planting is a community-wide affair and other activities, aside from collective-internal recreation, effectively cease. After all the planting for the season is done, villages have a celebration which is also the dissolution of the current collectives and the forming of new ones. Harvest season works the same way. During the rest of the year, when there are not community-wide tasks to do, most people live in the smaller family-houses, rather than the collective-houses, though there are still collectives that do various things such as taking care of the animals, weaving, pottery, smaller gardening, academic activities, and taking care of other aspects of life.

Young children generally stay with one of their parents in the parent's chosen collectives. Older children are free to choose their own collective to participate in, and they are encouraged to try out as much as they can to figure out what they have a passion for.

The role of the elders is primarily education. They usually "retire" when they feel ready, though retirement is not ceasing work--it is a change from active participation in a collective (though they certainly still can if they wish) to supervising and instructing the children in the group as well as directing the progress of the collective in general.

The impermanent nature of the collective is reflected in the Tenata language, whose words are semantically flexible. The speaker is free to use semantic suffixes and compounding to coax a variety of shades of meaning from a single root. The language also doesn't make much distinction between nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs, choosing instead to pay more attention to the difference between lexical (semantic) and grammatical categories.

Two important postulates in Tenata are validity and responsibility. Validity appears predominantly as sentence-level discourse particles. They indicate belief in the utterance and who is doing the [non]believing. Responsibility appears in some of the aspect morphemes in Tenata's verbal inflection.

In Tenata, most parts of speech are bound. Compounding is frequent and so words tend to be quite long. Sentences, on the other hand, tend to be short. They have a minimum of three words (occasionally two, within context that permits the dropping of validity statements), and they rarely have more than fifteen, although this is because of compounding.

Phonology

Tenata phonology is fairly simple. There are five phonemic vowels and twenty-two phonemic consonants.

Vowels: /i/ /e/ /a/ /o/ /u/

These have their traditional phonemic values.

Consonants: /p/ /t/ /k/ /q/

 /f/ /s/ /c/ /x/

 /pf/ /ps/ /ts/ /tc/ /ks/ /kx/

/m/ /n/ /ny/ /ng/

/w/ /r/ /l/ /j/

Consonants are as in English except for the following:

/q/: uvular stop

/f/: bilabial fricative

/c/: palatal fricative

/x/: velar fricative

/ny/: palatal nasal

/j/: palatal glide

Stops are aspirated in stressed syllables, unaspirated elsewhere.

Syllable Structure

A syllable has these possible forms:

CV(C)

[fricative][stop | glide]V(C)

[stop][glide]V(C)

Exceptions: /q/ and /x/ do not combine with any other consonants.

A syllable can only end in a consonant if it's the final syllable in the morpheme: morpheme-internal syllable division always occurs after a vowel, not after a consonant.

At morpheme boundaries, an additional unstressed vowel is often inserted between morpheme-final and morpheme-initial consonants, to break up clusters. This will always happen to prevent the combination of two consonants with the same manner of articulation, and often in other conditions as well, though sometimes the two consonants remain adjacent. The inserted vowel

will always harmonize to the place of the preceding vowel. In the breakdowns for the examples, this vowel is indicated with .V.

Stress

The location of stress in a Tenata word depends on the category of the word. Because Tenata's parts of speech do not correspond to English parts of speech, stress will be explained in the section below.

The Categories of Tenata Summarized

Every Tenata sentence (with the exception of minimal answers and other sentences within larger discourse structures) contains at least three "words", or /-can-/. These three words must contain the five parts of speech--/lume/, /teja/, /kowu/, /ngona/, and /ruma/. Note: the previous words should actually be written with hyphens, indicating that they are not free forms: /-lume-/, etc, but for ease of reading they are written without the hyphens when they are being used descriptively in the text.

In English, a complete sentence minimally consists of a noun and a verb. Tenata does not make the same noun/verb distinction, so a minimal sentence consists of a /-lumecan/, 'semantic word', a /-ngonacan/, 'verbal inflection word', and /-rumacan/, 'validity word'.

What follows is an introduction to each category, and each will be treated with more detail later.

/-lume-/ means 'semantic root' and so encompasses nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs. The same /lume/ can be used in any of these categories, within semantic boundaries.

EXAMPLE: /-witena-/

noun: death

verb: to die

adjective: dead

adverb: deadly

EXAMPLE: /-kinya-/

noun: water

verb: to water

adjective: watery

adverb: in a water-like way, waterily, waterly

A /lume/ must always take /kowu/, function (case) prefixes, and /teja/, categorical suffixes, to form a complete word that can be used in a sentence.

/teja/ are categorical suffixes that always attach to /lume/. They add further semantic information to the word and are never optional. A particular /lume/ can take different /teja/ to indicate different meanings, again within semantic boundaries.

EXAMPLE: /-kinya-/ 'water'

/kinya.men/ 'water.food' "drinking water"

/kinya.mi/ 'water.living' "water" (not anthropomorphized, often used when talking about a moving body of water such as a river or stream)

/kinya.ci/ 'water.human' "water-demigod" (the person in control of water)

/kinya.kim/ 'water.building' (used when speaking of aquatic creatures' living places)

There are also /teja/ that mean 'art', 'tool', 'event', and

others. More than one can also appear on a single /lume/ to make further semantic distinctions.

/lume/ always have stress on their first syllable. In compounds, the head of the compound, which is usually the final /lume/, will have the primary stress.

/kowu/ are prefixes on /lume/ that mark functional roles in a sentence, like case marking but with a few important distinctions. These differences will be explained further in their own section. There are nine /kowu/ and each /lume/ in a sentence must take one: action, actor, recipient, beneficiary, purpose, direction, location, instrument, auxiliary. Their functions will be explained more thoroughly later. There is never stress on /kowu/.

/ngona/ are verbal inflection. They assemble to form a separate word in a sentence. They collectively consist of mood and three groups of contrasting aspects. The moods are indicative, negative, interrogative, and hortative. The aspects are {for ones' own benefit | for other's benefit}, {intentional | accidental}, and {perfective | imperfective | habitual}. They are strung together in this order, though the benefit and intention aspects can be omitted, and the benefit aspect can be replaced with a pronoun, indicating the beneficiary (or maleficiary, with a reversal suffix) directly. Stress in /ngonacan/ (the whole verbal inflection word) is on the mood morpheme, word-initial.

/ruma/ are validity statements or discourse particles, and indicate validity according to someone. They consist of two parts, person and validity judgment. Person can be the speaker, subject, a marked referent /lume/, common knowledge, a pronoun, or a fully-

inflected /lume/. Validity is true, unknown, or false, with unknown being an end to itself, not a question left dangling, such as the English "maybe." /ruma/ is the last word in a sentence and usually in conversation carries across sentences until it's changed. /ruma/ can also be suffixed onto /lume/, after /teja/, particularly if the rest of the sentence is carrying a different /ruma/. The stress in /rumacan/ is on the person, again word-initial.

In addition to these five major categories, there are also /feni/, conjunctions, and /jeso/, pronouns. /feni/ are the only category in Tenata that can stand alone:

EXAMPLE: /-kajimekim **tin** -mosilimen/ "houses and fields"
Here the /feni/, /tin/, stands alone, without suffixes. They can also be attached to /lume/. More examples are in the /feni/ section below.

/feni/ hold a special place in writing, and are often used in writing where they aren't used in speech, because the tokens for them are repeated in writing where they aren't in speech, and so form aesthetically pleasing designs. /jeso/ can act in most positions in a sentence, in place of /lume/ or in the /ngona/, verbal inflection, or /ruma/, validity statement. /jeso/ are further explained in their own section below.

There is also one morpheme, /x/, which is a reversal suffix. It can attach to /lume/, /teja/, /ngona/, and /ruma/ and reverse their meaning. It is most frequently used with /teja/ and /ngona/.

EXAMPLES:

/lume/: /-coref-/ 'light' /-coref.e.x-/ 'dark,

extinguish'

/teja/: /-mi/ 'living' /-mi.x/ 'not living'

/ngona/: /-xo/ 'for one's own benefit' /-xo.x/ 'for one's own detriment'

/ruma/: /-tus/ 'true' /-tus.u.x/ 'not true' This is semantically different than /-tom/ 'false'. /-tusux/ is more uncertain and indicates an impermanent state: "Well, it's not true now, but maybe later it will be."

Writing System

Tenata has a two-part writing system that reflects the distinction between lexical or semantic and grammatical categories. /lume/ are written with a phonemic alphabet, while the rest of the language, /teja/, /kowu/, /ngona/ and /ruma/, as well as /feni/ and /jeso/, are written with unique, unanalyzable tokens. The language is not written in single lines but rather in blocks that correspond to sentences. Tenata writing does not always correspond directly to speech. /feni/ are very frequently repeated in writing, while they do not repeat in speech (except in very stylized recitations), and the /kowu/ and /teja/ are often repeated when a /feni/ is bound to a /lume/. A token can also repeat to fill space when the writing is serving in an artistic position. The Tenata people treat writing as art, and they take the time to make even the most mundane writings beautiful. The blocks are usually written in columns from left to right, but this can be changed to fit circumstances, such as over doorways, which is a common place to see writing. Note: the writing system is

detailed at the end of this paper.

/teja/ Categorical Suffixes

/teja/ bring subtlety to the language. They can act like gender by linking words together in a phrase, but they are different from grammatical gender in that a word, or more precisely a /lume/, does not belong to a particular /teja/. Also, unlike grammatical gender, they carry their own semantic meaning that modifies the /lume/ rather than being assigned according to the meaning of the root. The most commonly-made distinctions that are made are human, living, humanmade, food, nature, and building/living space.

/-mi/ living

/-ci/ human

/-men/ food

/-lang/ humanmade

/-lu/ nature

/-kim/ living space

Other frequent /teja/ are /-xin/, art; /-tcje/, tool; and /-ping/, event. The /teja/ class is a partially open one. /lume/ can become /teja/ when they are frequently used as the final /lume/ in a compound.

EXAMPLE: The /lume/ /-menin-/ 'food' at some point became the /teja/ /-men/ 'food'. Interestingly, the /lume/ was not lost, so this results in the word /-menin.i.men/.

There is also a /teja/ that is used in possessive phrases. Possession is formed by compounding, which is explained later, and

also requires the /teja/ /-kwa/ which indicates being possessed. /-kwa/ is also the /teja/ that is used as a citation form for /lume/. Being possessed is a natural state in Tenata thought, and possessives are very common where in English possessives are highly marked. Certain /lume/ almost always appear with this /teja/.

EXAMPLES:

/-fisan-/ 'help' /-fisan.**kwa**/ 'help.**poss.**'

/so.tju ru.fisan.**kwa** fi.sel/

"She helps me." A more literal translation: "She gives her help to me."

More than one /teja/ can be used on a /lume/.

EXAMPLE: /-nitil-/ 'berry'

/-nitili.**mi.men**/ 'berry.**living.food**' This would be berries still on the bush, but that will be eaten. It contrasts with /nitilimi/ which are berries on the bush but that won't be used as food, or /nitilimen/ which are berries for eating that have already been picked.

EXAMPLE: /-numela-/ 'forest'

/-numela.**mi.kim**/ 'forest.**living.building**'

/kowu/ Function Prefixes

/kowu/ mark the functional role of each /lume/ in a sentence. Any /lume/ (within semantic restrictions) can fill any role in a sentence, and each role is marked with a prefix. A /lume/ can only take one /kowu/. There are eight basic roles in Tenata, as well as an auxiliary role.

actor	/so-/
action	/ti-/
recipient	/ru-/
beneficiary	/fi-/
purpose	/pe-/
location	/lo-/
direction	/ka-/
instrument	/ne-/
auxiliary	/mu-/

These labels work better for Tenata than the traditional labels used to describe, for example, the Latin case system: nominative, accusative, genitive, and so forth, because the uses of these are not identical. The biggest difference is that action is not marked any differently than any other function, and /ti-/, action, isn't required in a sentence. Another important point is that they are always referring to the action of the clause, rather than modifying other /lume/. Modification is done with compounding rather than with /kowu/, and will be discussed later. Note: The following examples are not full sentences, as they lack /ngona/, verbal inflection, and /ruma/, validity.

/so-/, actor

The /lume/ marked /so-/ carries out the action in a sentence, whether or not /ti-/ is present. Most sentences have this /kowu/ on one of its /lume/, but there are exceptions: the actor can be omitted if it is the same over multiple sentences. This is very commonly done in storytelling. This /kowu/ is essentially equivalent to the subject case. The actor tends to appear near the

beginning of the sentence.

/ti-/, action

The action in a sentence looks just like any other /lume/, taking the /ti/ prefix and a suitable categorical suffix. More abstract actions will often take /-kwa/, the possessed suffix, or /-ping/, the event suffix. A sentence does not have to have a /lume/ marked /ti-/--the action in a sentence can be indicated by the other elements in the sentence, through the "natural states" in Tenata, explained below. The /lume/ marked with /ti-/ is usually the last /lume/ in the sentence.

/ru-/, recipient

Recipient in Tenata is the recipient of the action in a sentence.

EXAMPLE: /so.limati.mi **ru**.kelmi.mi ti.pseta.mi/

'actor.squirrel.living **recipient**.tree.living
action.climb.living'

"The squirrel climbed the tree."

The climbing happened to the tree, it was done to the tree by the squirrel. Tenata actions always act upon something: a /lume/ marked /ti-/ cannot act as an intransitive verb. While /ti-/ isn't required in a sentence, /ru-/ always is. It is the inflection that will appear on a sentence containing one /lume/:

EXAMPLE: /**ru**.ksuwi.lu/

'**recipient**.rain.nature'

"It rains" or "There is rain" or "Rain was given."

EXAMPLE: /so.pinuce.mi **ru**.kewan.men/

'actor.wheat.living **recipient**.nourishment.food'

"The wheat gives/has nourishment" or "The wheat is nourishing."

"A is B" sentences are formed with the /ru-/ prefix.

EXAMPLE: /so.sel **ru**.menya.ci/

'actor.I **recipient**.person.human'

"I am a person."

/ru-/ is not equivalent to direct object or accusative case, because there are circumstances in which a /lume/ marked with /ru-/ acts as the "verb" in the sentence as well as its direct object. This is the Tenata "natural state." A /-lumetejacan/ (compound of /lume/ and /teja/ with a categorical suffix /-can/, meaning 'language' or 'word,' which translates roughly to 'word' itself) can act as a noun and a verb simultaneously, where the verb is the natural state, or the expected action of the noun. Rivers flow, food is eaten, plants grow. When there isn't an identifiable "verb" in a sentence it is usually the natural state of the recipient, marked /ru-/, such as in the following sentences. There is no word that means "give" or "have" in Tenata. This is another aspect of natural states, relating to the state of possession that /lume/ rest in. In a sentence without a /lume/ marked /ti-/, the action is often "give" or "have."

EXAMPLE: /so.menya.ci **ru**.kinya.men/

'actor.person.human **recipient**.water.food'

"The person drinks water."

EXAMPLE: /so.menya.ci **ru**.ningi.mi.men/

'actor.person.human **recipient**.garden.living.food'

"The people grow a garden" or "The people have a garden"

or "The people garden."

/fi-/, beneficiary

The beneficiary in a Tenata sentence is whom the action affected or was directed toward. This includes the English indirect object:

EXAMPLE: /so.menya.ci ru.ninigi.mi.men **fi**.tsofi.mi/

'actor.person.human recipient.garden.living.food

beneficiary.birds.living'

"The people grow a garden for the birds."

/fi-/ also works differently within the Tenata framework, where it acts more like the English direct object:

EXAMPLE: /so.menya.ci ru.kinya.men **fi**.kelmi.mi/

'actor.person.human recipient.water.food

beneficiary.trees.living'

"The person waters the trees."

In the English sentence, "person" is the subject, "waters" is the verb and "trees" is the direct object. In the Tenata sentence, "person" is the subject, "water" is the object, and "trees" is the beneficiary of the hidden action, "give." A better translation would be "The person gives water to the trees." This differs from the following sentence:

EXAMPLE: /so.ksuwi.men **ti**.kinya.men **ru**.pinuce.mi/

'actor.rain.food **action**.water.food

recipient.wheat.living'

"The rain waters the wheat."

In this sentence, "rain" is the subject, "waters" is the action,

and "wheat" is the recipient of the action. The rain is performing the action of watering, rather than giving, while the person in the previous example was giving. /so.menya.ci/ /ru.pinuce.mi/ /ti.kinya.men/ 'actor.person.human' 'recipient.wheat.living' 'action.water.food' "The person waters the wheat" is also grammatical, but the /ti-/ /ru-/ construction is less common than the /ru-/ /fi-/ construction for sentences in which the subject is providing something for something else's benefit.

/pe-/ purpose

/pe-/ indicates the purpose of the action. A sentence with a word marked with /ti-/ is more likely to have an accompanying /pe-/ word, while sentences utilizing natural states, those with only /ru-/, are less likely to include /pe-/, purpose. /lume/ that take /pe-/ often also take the /teja/ /-ping/, event.

EXAMPLE: /so.tju ru.xame.men.lang **pe**.tcesala.ping/

'actor.she recip.bread.food.created **purpose**.party.event'

"She made bread for the party."

Aside from the /pe- -ping/ construction, there is also another interesting aspect to this sentence. "bread" is marked with /-men/, food, and /-lang/, created. This determines that the natural verb in the sentence is "make" because the /-lang/ is included. Bread is of course a humanmade thing, and so in other contexts /-lang/ is usually not specified, but in this case, the making is the reason for the sentence, so /-lang/ is used. The sentence /sotju ruxamemen petcesalaping/ would mean "She brought bread to the party."

/lo-/ location

/lo-/ indicates the location of an action. It is only used for static locations, such as "in the field" or "between the houses" or "under the table." It cannot be used for such locations as "toward the river" or "around the tree" or "into the room," which include movement and are indicated with the direction /kowu/, /ka-/.

EXAMPLE: /so.tju ru.limo.mi ti.situ.mi **lo**.ningi.lang/

'actor.she recip.vegetables.living action.plant.living

location.garden.created'

"She planted vegetables in the garden."

/lo-/ is also used to mark time in a sentence. The time /lume/ will be marked with /lo-/.

EXAMPLE: /so.tcela.ci ru.pinuce.men ti.nyufim.ping

lo.lefim.i.fuceli.lu/

'actor.village.human recip.wheat.food

action.harvest.event **location**.this.V.week.nature'

"The village harvests the wheat this week."

/ka-/ direction

/ka-/ indicates the direction of the action. The presence of /ka-/ indicates some sort of movement, and often marks the /lume/ where the action ended up, rather than the static place where the action started and finished, as marked by /lo-/.

EXAMPLES:

/so.sel ru.lesune.ping **ka**.tsipe.mi/

'actor.I recip.walk.event **direction**.stream.living'

"I walked to the stream."

/so.tsofi.mi ru.xulin.ping **ke**.tipa.lu/

'actor.bird.living recip.fly.event **direct**.up.nature'

"The bird flies upwards."

/ne-/, instrument

/ne-/ marks the instrument with which the action is performed. It is also used to mark the attitude of the actor toward the action or the quality of the action.

EXAMPLES:

/so.menya.ci ru.cu.mi **ne**.nyexom.tcu ti.situ.mi/

'actor.person.human recip.seed.living **instr**.stick.tool
action.plant.living'

"The person planted seeds with a stick."

/so.tsofi.mi ti.finge.lang ru.perami.kim **ne**.kxenyeny.mi.x/

'actor.bird.living action.build.created
recip.nest.building **instr**.straw.living.reversal'

"The bird built a nest with straw."

/ne.sunyu.si so.masafi.ci ru.tju.fipemu.kwa.lang
ti.nestasa.lang/

'**instr**.difficulty.feeling actor.child.human
recip.they.clothing.poss.created action.clean.created'

"With difficulty, the children washed their clothes."

This example shows the flexibility of word order in Tenata. Any /kowu/ at the beginning of the sentence except /so-/ and /ru-/ are marked.

/mu-/, auxiliary

The auxiliary marks secondary actions in a sentence, such as "want", "must", "like", "think", and other similar constructions. When it is used, more attention is called to the word than if it were compounded with the main action in the sentence, which is the other way to form these kinds of sentences. /mu-/ often matches with the /teja/ /-kwa/.

EXAMPLE: /so.masafi.ci **mu**.cumen.**kwa** ru.nipem.ci/
'actor.child.human **aux**.need.**poss** recip.sleep.human'
"The children need to sleep."

/mu-/ can also be used on other /lume/, where it indicates a marginal association to the action. It is kind of like an afterthought, "and besides" or "oh, and by the way," and in this case it usually appears before /ngonarumacan/, verbal inflection and validity, at the end of the sentence.

EXAMPLE: /ru.tiqami.men ti.nyufimi.men fi.sel
mu.si.lestiku.men/
'recip.herbs.food action.harvest.food benef.I
aux.one.tomato.food'
"Pick some herbs for me. Oh, and a tomato."

Compounding

Compounding is very frequent and serves two important purposes in Tenata. One is modification. /lume/ are not specifically nouns or adjectives, verbs or adverbs. They can be used as modifiers by compounding. The modifiers precede the head /lume/. The stress for a compound goes on the head /lume/, though the other /lume/ may keep secondary stress on their first syllable. Secondary stress is more likely to be significant in longer compounds or less frequently occurring compounds, to help distinguish the individual /lume/.

EXAMPLE: /-tcela-/ 'village' /-nalic-/ 'south'

/-nalicitcela-/ "southern village" or "village to the south of here"

EXAMPLE: /-fipemu-/ 'clothing' /-nestasa-/ 'clean'

/-litiwa-/ 'dry'

/-nestasalitiwafipemu-/ "clean, dry clothing"

EXAMPLE: /-nestasa-/ 'clean' /-kotse-/ 'busy'

/-kotsenestasa-/ "busily cleaning"

EXAMPLE: /-kotse-/ 'busy' /-soxang-/ 'use' /-x-/

reversal /-soxangax-/ 'useless'

/-soxangaxakotse-/ "uselessly busy" or "unnecessary busywork"

Compounding is also used for possessives. The possessor precedes the possessed, and the whole compound takes the /teja/ /-kwa/ to indicate possession.

EXAMPLE: /-kelmi-/ 'tree' /-feja-/ 'leaf'

/-kelmifeja-/ "tree leaves"

/-kelmifejakwa/ "tree's leaves"

EXAMPLE: /-menya-/ 'person' /-kajime-/ 'house'
/-menyakajime-/ "person house"
/-menyakajimekwa/ "person's house"

A compound word, whether it's a possessive or a modified phrase, still takes /kowu/ and /teja/, just like a single /lume/. They function just like a single /lume/ in a sentence, filling any role available semantically.

EXAMPLES:

/so.nec ru.nestasa.litiwa.fipemu.lang/
'actor.you' 'recip.clean.dry.clothing.created'
"You have clean dry clothing."

/so.nira.limati.mi ru.foning.lupi.men ne.pipem.sunyu.si
ke.folo.weta.kwa.kim ti.jasan.pesali.men/
'actor.small.squirrel.living recip.fruit.food
instr.large.difficulty.feeling direct.it.home.poss.building
action.slow.carry.food'

"The small squirrel slowly carried the sweet fruit to its home with much difficulty."

/jeso/

/jeso/ are pronouns and demonstratives. Tenata has three categories of pronouns and demonstratives: human, nonhuman, and nonliving. The first two categories are divided into four persons, while the third has only one person.

Human

/sel/ 'I, we exclusive'

/mese/ 'we inclusive'

/nec/ 'you'

/tju/ 'she/he'

/kata/ 'this'

/timi/ 'that'

Nonhuman

/pina/ 'I, we exc.'

/sem/ 'we inc.'

/nafi/ 'you'

/fol/ 'she/he/it'

/lefim/ 'this'

/tsilis/ 'that'

Nonliving

/len/ 'it'

/lati/ 'this'

/seta/ 'that'

/jeso/, when replacing /lume/ in a sentence, must take /kowu/ just like the /lume/. However, they do not need to take /teja/, as the basic categories of human, nonhuman, and nonliving, are already marked. However, the nonhuman and nonliving demonstratives often do take /teja/, especially if they are used to replace /lume/ marked /-men/ or /-lang/, as these are frequently used categories, and especially when they take the /kowu/ /ru-/, because the meaning of the sentence can change depending on the /teja/.

EXAMPLES:

/so.**sel** ru.**len**.men/

'actor.**I** recip.**it**.food'

"I ate it."

/so.**mese** ru.**len**.lang/

'actor.**we** recip.**it**.created'

"We made it."

Tenata has a strong storytelling culture, and this is where the 'I', 'we', and 'you' nonhuman pronouns are used extensively. Most stories are told in first person, from the perspectives of the characters in the story, rather than in third person, about the characters, although storytellers will often interject their own thoughts into the story during the telling, and make comments on them with /ruma/.

EXAMPLES:

/so.**pina** lo.mosili.lang ti.sutekit.imi/

'actor.**I (nonhuman)** location.field.created

action.grow.living'

"I grew in the field."

/so.**nec** ru.pina.men ti.nyufimi.men/

'actor.**you (human)** recip.me.food action.harvest.food'

"You harvested me."

/so.**pina** ru.weta.kim lo.kelmi.mi ti.finge.lang/

'actor.**I** recip.home.building location.tree.living

action.build.created'

"I built a home in the tree."

/ngona/ Verbal Inflection

/ngona/ are verbal inflection, and they form a separate word in a sentence. /ngona/ includes aspect and mood, but, notably, not tense. Time is indicated with time /lume/ and not marked with verbal inflection at all. In discourse it's often mentioned once and not again until it changes. Sometimes, if it's semantically significant, it will be mentioned more often, and it's more commonly used in stories, which often have a more structured, formal tone. /ngona/ can be omitted in speech if they are identical in a series of sentences, in which case the last one would include the /ngona/. They will rarely be omitted in writing. Note: The following examples, unlike the previous ones, are complete, fully-inflected sentences.

Mood

Tenata has four moods:

/wa-/ indicative

/nge-/ interrogative

/xim-/ hortative

/qa-/ negative

One of these is always the first morpheme in the /-ngonacan/, or verbal word. They can occasionally be the only /ngona/ present in a sentence, but it's more rare and usually only in storytelling. They otherwise will always have aspect morphemes suffixed to them.

/wa-/ indicative

/wa-/ is naturally by far the most frequent mood. It is used

for statements of fact, opinion, and speculation alike, although the /ruma/ used with each of these will differ.

/nge-/ interrogative

/nge-/ is used for questions in which the action of the sentence is being questioned. /rume/ is used for other kinds of questions, where it is not the /lume/ marked /ti-/ or /ru-/ that is being questioned.

/xim-/ hortative

/xim-/ is used for asking someone to do something. It replaces an imperative mood, because Tenata culture does not give orders. It can be translated as an imperative, but it's definitely not ordering but encouraging. The Tenata people will confirm that they cannot force anyone to do anything, so /xim-/ is a hortative mood.

/qa-/ negative

/qa-/ is used to form a negative sentence, negating the action in a sentence. Individual words can be negated with the reversal suffix, /x/, but whole sentences are negated by using the negative mood.

EXAMPLES:

Sotsofimi ruxamemen waxotitse slatus.

so.tsofi.mi ru.xame.men

actor.bird.living recipient.bread.food

wa.xo.ti.tse sla.tus

ind.own-benefit.intent.habitual speaker.true

"The bird eats bread."

Sonec rukewanmen fimasafaci ngetjutife nectus.

so.nec ru.kewan.men

actor.you recip.nourish.food

fi.masaf.a.ci

benef.child.V.human

nge.tju.ti.fe nec.tus

inter.they.intent.perf you.true

"Did you feed the children?"

Somasafici tipesalikwa ruxamemen kakajimekim ximinectife
nectus.

so.masaf.a.ci ti.pesali.kwa ru.xame.men

actor.child.V.human action.carry.poss recip.bread.food

ka.kajime.kim **xim**.i.nec.ti.fe nec.tus

direct.house.build **hort**.V.you.intent.perf you.true

"Child, please bring the bread to the house."

Ruksuwilu qapwe mesetus.

ru.ksuwi.lu **qa**.pwe mese.tus

recip.rain.nature **neg**.imperf we.true

"There hasn't been rain."

Aspect

Tenata has three categories of aspect. The members of a category cannot appear together in one /ngonacan/, so at most one from each category can be used.

Benefactive

/-xo-/ for one's own benefit (refers to the actor in the sentence)

/-ste-/ for other's benefit

A pronoun can be used here in place of one of these to directly indicate the benefactor.

Intention

/-ti-/ intentional

/-mos-/ accidental, incidental

Completion

/-fe-/ perfective

/-pwe-/ imperfective

/-tse-/ habitual

/-nic-/ unrealized (action has not actually occurred, used as hypothetical or desired)

Aspect is applied in this order, although they may all not be present. The most commonly omitted is benefactive, followed by intention. Completion is rarely omitted.

EXAMPLES:

Sosel rupsomlang titifamlang waxoxomosfe slatus.

so.sel ru.psom.lang ti.tifam.lang

actor.I recip.book.created action.lost.created

wa.**xo.x.o.mos.fe** sla.tus

ind.**owb.reverse.V.accidental.perf** speaker.true

"I lost the book (accidentally, to my own detriment)."

Soqasefelang kakwaxilang ruwaksiping wamosfe slatus.

so.qasefe.lang ka.kwaxi.lang

actor.glass.created direct.floor.created
ru.waksi.ping wa.**mos.fe** sla.tus
recip.fall.event ind.**incident.perf** speaker.true
"The glass fell on the floor."

Sotju rupanecemen wamecetipwe slatus.

so.tju ru.panece.men
actor.she recip.cook.food
wa.**mece.ti.pwe** sla.tus
ind.**we.intent.imperf** speaker.true
"She's cooking for us."

/ruma/ Validity Statement

The validity statement in Tentata indicates what the speaker knows about the truth of her words. There are two parts in any /rumacan/, person and validity.

Person: /lu-/ common knowledge

/sla-/ speaker

/jis-/ subject (the actor in the sentence)

Pronouns can also be used to directly indicate who is providing the validity statement.

Validity: /-tus/ true

/-ces/ unknown (an end in itself, not an unanswered question, as with English "maybe")

/-tom/ false

The /rumacan/ usually appears at the end of the sentence or clause. If it is moved to the beginning of the sentence, it's a

marked construction and indicates that the /ruma/ is different than would have been expected.

EXAMPLES:

Sotju rukinyamen fiqetimi wastetife slatus.

so.tju ru.kinya.men fi.qeti.mi

actor.she recip.water.food benef.flower.living

wa.fe **sla.tus**

ind.perfective **speaker.true**

"She watered the flowers (I saw her do it)."

Slatom sotju rukinyamen fiqetimi wastetife.

sla.tom so.tju ru.kinya.men

speaker.false actor.she recip.water.food

fi.qeti.mi wa.fe

benef.flower.living ind.perfective

"I think she didn't water the flowers (like she was supposed to)."

This example in English uses an auxiliary verb, 'think,' while the Tenata expresses this through /ruma/. The /rumacan/ is at the beginning of the sentence, which makes the doubt of the statement stronger.

Sotju rukinyamen fiqetimi wastetife jistus slatom.

so.tju ru.kinya.men fi.qeti.mi

actor.she recip.water.food benef.flower.living

wa.fe **jis.tus** **sla.tom**

ind.perfective **subject.true** **speaker.false**

"She says she watered the flowers (I don't believe her)."

Like the previous example, the auxiliary verb 'says' is represented by /ruma/, in this case /jistus/. In English, an intonation pattern would be used to indicate disbelief: "She SAYS she watered the flowers."

sotju rukinyamen fiqetimi wastetife slaces

so.tju ru.kinya.men fi.qeti.mi

actor.she recip.water.food benef.flower.living

wa.fe **sla.ces**

ind.perfective **speaker.unknown**

"She watered the flowers (but I can't confirm that she did)."

/ruma/ can also be used within a word, when there is a separate /rumacan/ referring to the whole sentence, but a particular part of it is different. /-tus/, /-ces/, and /-tom/ can be suffixed to a /lume/, after /teja/, to indicate the belief about that part of the sentence. This is how questions that are not questioning the action but one of the other /lume/ in the sentence are formed. The thing in question is marked with the questioner's belief about it, and indicates what answer is expected.

EXAMPLES:

Sonececes tipanecmen petcesalaping wastetife nectus.

so.nece.ces ti.panec.men

actor.you.unknown action.cook.food

pe.tcesala.ping

purpose.party.event

wa.ste.ti.fe

nec.tus

ind.other-benefit.intent.perf

you.true

"Did you cook for the party?" (Someone cooked, was it you?)

Sonec tipanecmen petcesalapingtom wastetife nectus.

so.nec ti.panec.men

actor.you action.cook.food

pe.tcesala.ping.tom

purpose.party.event.false

wa.ste.ti.fe

nec.tus

ind.other-benefit.intent.perf

you.true

"Did you cook for the party?" (Why did you cook? I don't think it was for the party.)

/ruma/ can also be used along with the interrogative mood. In this case it appears on the action /lume/ and it indicates the expected answer.

EXAMPLE:

Sonec tinstasalangtus runecefipemukimlang ngexotife nectus.

so.nec ti.nestasa.lang.tus

actor.you action.clean.created.true

ru.nece.fipemu.kwa.lang

recip.you.clothing.poss.created

nge.xo.ti.fe

nec.tus

inter.own-benefit.intent.perf

you.true

"Did you wash your clothes? (I think you did.)"

/feni/ Conjunctions

/feni/ are conjunctions. They can act in two ways, linking two or more /lume/ together, in which case they are bound in between the linked /lume/. These two lume must have the same /teja/. They can also link phrases containing more than one /lume/, or complete sentences, including /ngona/ and /ruma/, and in this case the /feni/ stands alone between the two phrases or sentences.

EXAMPLE: /-qeti-/ 'flower' /-limo-/ 'vegetable' /tin/
'and'

/-qetitinilimomi/ "flowers and vegetables"

In this example, note that the compound takes the /teja/ /-mi/, 'living'. Though /-limo-/ might be able to take the /teja/ /-men/, 'food', in the case of direct linking, the two /lume/ must take the same /teja/. If two words do not share the same /teja/, they must be linked with independent /teja/.

EXAMPLE: /-qeti.mi **tin** -limo.men/

'flower.living **and** vegetable.food'

"flowers and vegetables"

In this example, the conjunction stands alone. In writing, there would be at least two /tin/ written, and even three. They would surround the linked words, and often would be written larger than the /lume/. There is a lot of flexibility in how they are written,

adding interest to the already artistic script.

EXAMPLE: /ru.kinya.men fi.kelmi.mi **tin** ru.lestiku.men
ti.nyufimi.men/

'recip.water.food benef.tree.living **and**
recip.tomato.food' action.plant.food'

"water the trees and plant the tomatoes"

In this example two phrases are linked without their /ngona/ or
/ruma/, so they must take the same ones:

sonec mufisanaci rukinyamen fikelmimi tin rulestikumimen
tinyufimping ximimesetife nectus

so.nec	mu.fisana.ci	ru.kinya.men
actor.you	aux.help.human	recip.water.food
fi.kelmi.mi	tin	ru.lestiku.mi.men
benef.tree.living	and	recip.tomato.living.food
ti.nyufim.ping	ximi.mese.ti.fe	nec.tus
action.plant.event	hort.we.intent.perf	you.true

"Will you help water the trees and plant the flowers?"

There are four different /feni/ that translate as 'but':

/jen/ 'but (neutral), but not (this but not that)'

EXAMPLE: /-tsofi.**jen**.cesiton.mi/

'bird.**but**.fish.living'

"birds but not fish"

EXAMPLE: /ru.fipemu.lang ti.nestasa.lang **jen**

ru.limo.mi ti.kinya.men/

'recip.clothing.created action.clean.created **but**

recip.vegetables.living action.water.food'

"wash clothes but not water the vegetables"

/ksim/ 'but (positive)'

EXAMPLE:

Ruksuwilu qapwe ksim sotsetalang rukinyamen wapwe
lutus.

ru.ksuwi.lu	qa.pwe	ksim
recip.rain.nature	neg.imperf	but
so.tseta.lang	ru.kinya.men	wa.pwe
actor.well.created	recip.water.food	ind.imperf

lu.tus

common-knowledge.true

"It hasn't rained, but the wells have water."

/ston/ 'but (negative)'

EXAMPLE:

Sosel rumolilisi wapwe ston rumeninimen qapwe
slatus.

so.sel	ru.molili.si	wa.pwe
actor.I	recip.hunger.feeling	ind.imperf
ston	ru.menini.men	qa.pwe
but	recip.food.food	neg.imperf

sla.tus

speaker.true

"I'm hungry but don't have food."

Text with Translation/Analysis

Here is a line-by-line translation of a Tenata narrative.

This is in a casual speech style, which can be identified by /ngonarumacan/ being occasionally dropped where they are the same as in previous sentences. First is the Tenata with morphemes marked, the English morpheme-by-morpheme, and an English gloss. This is followed by the entire Tenata, and finally the entire English.

so.sel ka.sel.kawasa.kwa.ci tja lo.nalici.tcela.kim
actor.I to.my.friend.poss.human who in.south.village.building

ti.weta.ci wa.ti.pwe ti.tsili.ci
action.home.human ind.int.imperf action.visit.human

lo.lani.ngixe.lu wa.xo.ti.fe sla.tus
in.before.day.nature ind.owb.int.perf speaker.true

"Yesterday I visited my friend who lives in a small village south of here."

so.tju.tin.cemo.kwa.ci ru.geti.mi
actor.she.and.family.poss.human recip.flowers.living

fi.xaja.tcela.ci ti.sutekiti.mi
benef.whole.village.human action.grow.living

wa.tju.ti.pwe
ind.they.intent.imperf

"She and her family grow flowers for the whole village."

ru.finyu.wen.lu wa.pwe niwa ru.tju
recip.summer.mid.nature ind.imperf so recip.she

so.pipem.kotse.mi wa.xo.ti.pwe sla.tus
actor.much.busy.living ind.owb.int.imperf speaker.true

"It is midsummer, so she is very busy." (much business has her)

so.geti.mi ru.linpa.si
actor.flowers.living recip.readiness.feeling

pe.nyufim.ping lo.tenyami.finyu.ngixi.lu tin.lemin
for.harvest.event in.every.summer.day.nature and.also

ru.ksulim.geti.mi pe.nyufim.ping
recip.night.flowers.living for.harvest.event

wa.ste.ti.pwe tju.tus
ind.otb.int.imperf she.true

"Flowers were ready to be picked and there were also night-blooming flowers to pick."

so.sel ru.fisan.ci fi.tju
actor.I recip.help.human benef.her

ne.xaja.sel.nyafa.kwa wa.ste.ti.pwe sla.tus
instr.all.my.ability.poss ind.otb.int.imperf speaker.true

"I helped her as best as I could."

so.sel ru.witele.kwa pe.geti.nyufim.ping
actor.I recip.permission.poss for.flower.harvest.event

qa.pwe ksim ru.witele.kwa
neg.imperf but recip.permission.poss

pe.kijana.tin.menin.pesali.lang wa.pwe sla.tus
for.basket.and.food.carry.made ind.imperf speaker.true

"I'm not allowed to pick flowers but I can carry baskets and food."

so.kise.ping ru.xasasin.ping tsun ne.sel.fisan.ping
actor.work.event recip.fast.event because inst.I.help.event

tju.tus
she.true

"She said the work went faster because I helped."

so.tju mu.cumen.ci ru.nyufim.ngeste.mi.x
actor.she aux.need.human recip.harvest.part.live.reverse

ti.lunong.ping pe.litiwa.ping niwa
action.set-aside.event for.dry.event so

so.sel ru.ksulim.sengen.men ti.panec.men kelil
actor.I recip.night.meal.food action.cook.food while

so.tju ru.kise.ping wa.ste.ti.fe sla.tus
actor.she recip.work.event ind.otb.int.perf speaker.true

"She had to set aside part of the harvest to dry, so I cooked dinner while she worked."

so.sel.tin.tju ru.pilifi.ci
actor.I.and.she recip.talk.human

"We talked."

so.tsili.ping ru.nucija.ping wa.sel.mos.fe
actor.visit.event recip.wonderful.event ind.I.unint.perf

sla.tus
speaker.true

"The visit was wonderful for me."

Sosel kaselkawasakwaci tja lonalicitcelakim tiwetaci watipwe
titsilici lolaningixelu waxotife slatus. Sotjutincemokwaci
ruqetimi fixajatcelaci tisutekitimi watjutipwe. Rufinyuwenlu wapwe
niwa rutju sopipemkotsemi waxotipwe slatus. Soqetimi rulinpasi
penyufimping lotenyamifinyungixilu tinlemin ruksulimqetimi
penyufimping wastetipwe tjutus. Sosel rufisanici fitju
nexajaselnyafakwa wastetipwe slatus. Sosel ruwitelekwa
peqetinyufimping qapwe ksim ruwitelekwa
pekijanatinimeninipesalilang wapwe slatus. sokiseping
ruxasasing ping tsun neselfisanping tjutus. Sotju mucumenci
runyufimngestemix tilunongping pelitiwaping niwa sosel
ruksulimsengenmen tipanecmen kelil sotju rukiseping wastetife
slatus. Soseltintju rupilifici. Sotsiliping runucijaping
waselmosfe slatus.

Yesterday I visited my friend who lives in a small village south
of here. She and her family grow flowers for the whole village. It
is midsummer, so she is very busy. Flowers were ready to be picked

and there were also night-blooming flowers to pick. I helped her as best as I could. I'm not allowed to pick flowers but I can carry baskets and food. She said the work went faster because I helped. She had to set aside part of the harvest to dry, so I cooked dinner while she worked. We talked. The visit was wonderful for me.

Endnote: On Conlangs

Constructed languages, or conlangs, are an interesting way to explore linguistics. Linguistics approaches languages from the top down, beginning with an existing human language and analyzing it, breaking it down into its component parts. Furthermore, the different areas of linguistics often work separately from one another, so that we have studies of phonology, morphology, and syntax that exist as separate entities rather than working together to form a holistic view of a language. Sociolinguistics seems even farther removed from these other areas, so that in traditional theoretical linguistics, a language is pulled out from its cultural context and loses its connection to its speakers.

Conlanging takes a different approach to language. Rather than breaking down a language, it creates one from the bottom up, starting with the basic components of language and using them to create a unique system. The goal of conlanging is often to create a fully-functioning language, but it can also be used more limitedly, to explore a linguistic concept in a simple way, because natural languages are very complex, so it is often difficult to isolate one particular feature. A conlang can solve

this problem by being more simple than a natural human language so that the feature in question is made clear.

A conlang is also often part of a con-world or a con-culture, reinforcing the tie between language and culture. A conlang can also explore linguistic ideas that do not exist in human languages, and so expand linguistic boundaries, as in Amy Thomson's The Color of Distance, where shapes and patterns replace sound and color is emotional intonation in an alien language. Conlanging can complement linguistics by providing a different perspective from which to explore language.

My purpose in creating this conlang, Tenata, was to explore a language structure that was different from English and the other familiar Indo-European languages. I began by identifying English linguistic postulates that I did not want to have in Tenata. The main ones that I wanted to try to eliminate were number, sex-based gender, the absoluteness of 'to be,' and ranking/hierarchy. But a language can't be merely the absence of something, so the next step, which actually occurred simultaneously, was creating a set of linguistic principles to work from. One of the first things that I wanted to do was to dissolve the lines between the parts of speech that we too often take for granted. I initially wanted to have a non-sex-based gender system. This evolved into /teja/, which is not gender, but instead is a flexible categorizing system. I found that this fits well with the flexibility of the /lume/ system, and led me to another pervasive aspect of Tenata: liquidity, or the way the language in my mind flows into sentences rather than being blocks that are lined up just so. As I

continued, my writing system reflects this by being non-linear and having its own rules that are related to but also in ways different from the spoken language. Finally, I wanted to explore the language from its own point of view, rather than imposing English categories on a language that doesn't have the same categorical distinctions. This is how I settled on using Tenata words to describe the language.

The whole conlanging process is a non-linear one. I found myself going back to things I had thought were finished and needing to change them because of a change I had made in a different part of the grammar. The process emphasizes how language is a complete system that needs to have all its parts working together simultaneously in order to work. In conlanging, I can't decide that I want to work on my verbs first, and then I'll do the nouns, because in order to test my verbal paradigm I need complements. The language needs to be imagined as a whole system before the system can be built, and this requires a detour from a linear way of thinking. This project has certainly influenced the way I approach language and linguistics, and I believe that my understanding of the way languages work has been enriched by this process.

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WRITING SYSTEM OF TENATA

THE ALPHABET

p	↓	f	x	pf	↓	ks	ε
t	ε	s	l	ps	↓	kx	ε
k	<	c	ε	ts	ε		
q	⊥	x	λ	tc	ε		

m	⊥	w	g
n	ε	r	ε
ny	ε	l	y
ng	ε	j	ε

The alphabet is used to write /ume/.

They are written from a horizontal line, descending.

i	.	'water' /kinya/	ε.ε
e	\	'bread' /xame/	ε.ε
a	-	'grow' /sutekit/	ε.ε.ε
o		'garden' /ningi/	ε.ε.
u	/	'large village' /pipemtcela/	ε.ε.ε.ε.ε
		'study' /lotcen/	ε.ε.ε

WRITING SYSTEM OF TENATA

THE TOKENS

teja

✠	ci	human
✡	mi	living
✢	lang	created
✣	men	food
✤	kim	building
✥	ping	event
✦	si	feeling
✧	tce	tool
✨	xim	art
⬆	lu	natural
⋮	kwa	possessive

kowu

+	so	actor
N	ti	action
	ru	recipient
#	fi	beneficiary
×	pe	purpose
≡	lo	location
Z	ka	direction
T	ne	instrument
K	mu	auxiliary

ruma

⌘	sla	speaker
≡	jis	subject
⌘	lu	common knowledge
∇	tus	true
∇	ces	unknown
⊠	tom	false

⊙	xo	own benefit
✱	ste	others benefit

ngona

⌘	wa	indicative
⊕	nge	interrogative
✱	xim	hortative
≡	qa	negative

⊕	ti	intentional
⌘	mos	accidental
✱	fe	perfective
⊕	pwe	imperfective
⌘	tse	habitual

⊙
X
reversal

WRITING SYSTEM OF TENATA

THE LUMECAN (lume with teja and kowu)

teja and kowu are written above the lume.

$\frac{+ \text{米}}{\text{人}} \quad \frac{\text{人}}{\text{人}} \text{ menya} + \text{so} \quad \text{米} \text{ ci}$
 'person' + actor human

somenyaci actor. person. human

$\frac{\text{|| ♀}}{\text{人}} \quad \frac{\text{人}}{\text{人}} \text{ lupi} \quad \text{|| ru} \quad \text{♀} \text{ men}$
 'fruit' || recipient food

rulupimen recipient. fruit. food

$\frac{\text{# ♀}}{\text{人}} \quad \frac{\text{人}}{\text{人}} \text{ limati} \quad \text{# fi} \quad \text{♀} \text{ mi}$
 'squirrel' # beneficiary living

filimatimi beneficiary. squirrel. living

THE KOWUCAN AND RUMACAN

kowu are written below the lumecan. ruma are written at the end of the sentence.

$\frac{\text{###}}{\text{♀}} \text{ wa} \text{ indicative} \quad \text{米} \text{ ste others benefit}$
 $\frac{\text{♀}}{\text{♀}} \text{ ti} \text{ intentional} \quad \text{♀} \text{ pe perfective}$

wastetitse

$\frac{\text{♀}}{\text{♀}}$ sla speaker

$\frac{\text{▽}}{\text{▽}}$ tus true

$\frac{+ \text{米}}{\text{人}} \quad \frac{\text{|| ♀}}{\text{人}} \quad \frac{\text{# ♀}}{\text{人}} \quad \frac{\text{♀}}{\text{♀}}$
 $\frac{\text{###}}{\text{♀}} \text{米} \quad \frac{\text{▽}}{\text{▽}}$

somenyaci rulupimen filimatimi wastetife status

The person gave fruit to the squirrels.

WRITING SYSTEM OF TENATA

THE FENI AND JESO TOKENS

jeso

HUMAN

✱ sel 'I, we (exc.)'

☉ mese 'we (inc.)'

✱ nec 'you'

≡ tju 'she, he'

⊗ kata 'this'

⊗ timi 'that'

NONHUMAN

✱ pira 'I, we (exc.)'

✱ sem 'we (exc.)'

✱ nafi 'you'

✱ fol 'she, he, it'

⊗ lefim 'this'

⊗ tsilis 'that'

NONLIVING

⊗ len 'it'

✱ lati 'this'

⊗ seta 'that'

feni

✱ jen 'but (neutral)'

✱ ksim 'but (positive)'

✱ ston 'but (negative)'

⊗ tin 'and'

✱ qati 'or'

✱ kelil 'while'

⊗ lemin 'also'

✱ fti 'and/or'

⊗ tsun 'because'

⊗ kxema 'in order to'

⊗ niwa 'so'

⊗ simu 'if'

⊗ xulo 'unless'

⊗ liju 'even though'

WRITING SYSTEM OF TENATA

PARAGRAPHS

Sentences are written from top to bottom, left to right.

soselt celakwamosilikwami

soselt celakwamosilikwami

ruwitenami wamospwe

tsun rukitaksuwilumi

lolefimfisalu qapwe slatus.

tsun rukitaksuwilumi

lolefimfisalu qapwe slatus

sosel mucumenci tikinyamen

filimoningimimen waxotitse

ston rukitakingamen

fipinucemix qapwe slatus.

sosel mucumenci tikinyamen

soselt celakwaci mucumenci

tipfinyinci rupwangpinuce-

qatinalicicera waxotife

kxema rukewan kalitikimaclu

waxotipwe slatus.

sosel mucumenci tikinyamen

tipfinyinci rupwangpinuce-
 qatinalicicera waxotife

kxema rukewan kalitikimaclu
 waxotipwe slatus

Our village's fields are dying because there wasn't enough rain this year. We have to water the vegetable garden but there isn't enough water for the wheat. Our village will have to buy northern wheat or southern rice in order to eat through the winter.