

Lesson 6

Translation 1

In the sixth of each seven-lesson set, we'll take a moment out to try some free translation. We will usually add some vocabulary, but only what is necessary for the text at hand.

After the workspace for your translation—as part of my English translation—I'll give a morpheme-by-morpheme analysis. If grammar-geekiness intimidates you, feel free to skip this part; however, those willing to set that intimidation aside will find that it sheds considerable light on how Láadan words and sentences are put together.

Vocabulary

bol	to be fleecy-clouded (of the sky)	izh	but
-de	Suffix (Type-of-Sentence Word): said in narrative; said as a story	lith	to think
hathal	good (of a time)	sháal	day
háya	beautiful (of a time)	tháa	to thrive; to be well
hothal	good (of a place)	thosh	sky
hóya	beautiful (of a place)	wo	Evidence Word: imagined or invented by speaker; hypothetical

Láadan Text

Hathal Sháal

Bíide hóya Halishóni wo. Míi Méri i di, "Bíi háya sháal wi."

Bíide medathim Méri i Ána wo. Laya bud, izh melaya ra thom; melula thom.

Bíide di Méri wo, "Bíi óoha le wa," izh óoha ra Ána. Ina Méri.

Bíide u áath wo. Tháa i liyen hesh. Leyi i bol thosh. Mehéeya ra mid; di Ána, "Bíi meháya nezh wa."

Bíide yod Ána wo. Methal bal i rana, izh thal ra thilhi.

Bíide lith Ána wo, "Bíi hothal Halishóni wa."

Your Translation into English

Hathal Sháal

E:

Bíide hóya Halishóni wo.

E:

Míi Méri i di, "Bíi háya sháal wi."

E:

Bíide medathim Méri i Ána wo.

E:

Laya bud, izh melaya ra thom; melula thom.

E:

Bíide di Méri wo, "Bíi óoha le wa," izh óoha ra Ána.

E:

Ina Méri.

E:

Bíide u áath wo.

E:

Tháa i liyen hesh.

E:

Leyi i bol thosh.

E:

Mehéeya ra mid; di Ána, "Bíi meháya nezh wa."

E:

Bíide yod Ána wo.

E:

Methal bal i rana, izh thal ra thilhi.

E:

Bíide lith Ána wo, "Bíi hothal Halishóni wa."

E:

My English Translation with Morpheme-by-Morpheme Analysis

Láadan uses words and word-parts to build more complex words—like toy blocks. To avoid any confusion in the following analysis, words that have their own meanings will begin with a capital letter (WORD); words that are built of two or more “pieces” will be presented with each “piece” beginning with a capital (WORD + WORD). Words that are there to give context but don’t have their own translatable meaning will be presented in all-capital letters (WRD). Prefixes and suffixes will also be presented in all-capital letters (PFX + WORD + WORD + SFX); notice that the context words, prefixes and suffixes may be abbreviated.

Hathal Sháal

Hathal

BEGOODTIME

Sháal

DAY

Day Being-Good-Time

Bíide hóya Halishóni wo. Míi Méri i di, "Bíi háya sháal wi."

Bíide

DECL + NARR

wo.

MADEUP

i

AND

"Bíi

DECL

sháal

DAY

hóya

BEBEAUTIFULPLACE

Míi

BEAMAZED

di,

SAY

háya

BEBEAUTIFULTIME

wi."

SELFEVID

Halishóni

CALIFORNIA

Méri

MARY

California was beautiful. Mary was amazed and said, "The day is beautiful."

Bíide medathim Méri i Ána wo. Laya bud, izh melaya ra thom; melula thom.

Bíide	i	Laya	melaya	melula
DECL + NARR	AND	BERED	PL + BERED	PL + BEPURPLE
medathim	Ána	bud,	ra	thom.
PL + NEEDLEWORK	ANNA	CLOTHING	NEG	PILLOW
Méri	wo.	izh	thom;	
MARY	MADEUP	BUT	PILLOW	

Mary and Anna were needleworking. The clothing was red, but the pillows were not red; the pillows were purple.

Bíide di Méri wo, "Bíi óoha le wa," izh óoha ra Ána. Ina Méri.

Bíide	wo,	le	óoha	Ina
DECL + NARR	MADEUP	I	BEWEARY	SLEEP
di	"Bíi	wa,"	ra	Méri.
SAY	DECL	MYPERC	NEG	MARY
Méri	óoha	izh	Ána.	
MARY	BEWEARY	BUT	ANNA	

Mary said, "I'm weary," but Anna wasn't tired. Mary slept.

Bíide u áath wo. Tháa i liyen hesh. Leyi i bol thosh. Mehéeya ra mid; di Ána, "Bíi meháya nezh wa."

Bíide	Tháa	Leyi	Mehéeya	Ána,
DECL + NARR	THRIVE	BEBLUE	PL + BEAFRAID	ANNA
u	i	i	ra	"Bíi
BEOPEN	AND	AND	NEG	DECL
áath	liyen	bol	mid;	meháya
DOOR	BEGREEN	BEFLEECYCLOUDED	CREATURE	PL + BEBEAUTIFUL
wo.	hesh.	thosh.	di	nezh
MADEUP	GRASS	SKY	SAY	YOU2-5
				wa."
				MYPERC

The door was open. The grass was thriving and green. The sky was blue and fleecy-clouded. The animals were not afraid; Anna said, "You are beautiful."

Bíide yod Ána wo. Methal bal i rana, izh thal ra thilhi.

Bíide	wo.	i	izh	ra
DECL + NARR	MADEUP	AND	BUT	NEG
yod	Methal	rana,	thal	thilhi.
EAT	PL + BEGOOD	BEVERAGE	BEGOOD	FISH + PEJ
Ána	bal			
ANNA	BREAD			

Anna ate. The bread and beverage were good, but the fish that had gone off was not good.

Bíide lith Ána wo, "Bíi hothal Halishóni wa."

Bíide	Ána	"Bíi	Halishóni	wa."
DECL + NARR	ANNA	DECL	CALIFORNIA	MYPERC
lith	wo,	hothal		
THINK	MADEUP	BEGOODPLACE		

Anna thought, "California is good."

My English Text

Day Being-Good-Time

California was beautiful. Mary was amazed and said, "The day is beautiful."

Mary and Anna were needleworking. The clothing was red, but the pillows were not red; the pillows were purple.

Mary said, "I am weary," but Anna was not tired. Mary slept.

The door was open. The grass was thriving and green. The sky was blue and fleecy-clouded. The animals were not afraid; Anna said, "You are beautiful."

Anna ate. The bread and the beverage were good, but the fish that had gone off was not good.

Anna thought, "California is good."

Comments

This story is rather cartoonish, but what more can be expected with a limited vocabulary and only a few grammatical features with which to work?

Note that the Láadan title of the story lacks the Type-of-Sentence Word and the Evidence Word. The concepts are there, but there's no "framework" to "hang" them on. Without the form provided by the Type-of-Sentence and Evidence Words, it's impossible to translate them into an English sentence.

Note that the Type-of-Sentence Words need not be repeated in connected speech. Of course, the content of a new paragraph is not connected to that of the previous paragraph, so the Type-of-Sentence Word would be required again. Also, the text within a quotation is not connected to that outside the quotation: the speaker would include a Type-of-Sentence Word, so when she's quoted, the Type-of-Sentence word would be included in the quotation.

Similarly, the Evidence Word need not be repeated within connected speech once it is established. The constraints regarding quotations and paragraph boundaries would also apply.

In this story we are introduced to the first of the Mood Suffixes. These will all modify the Type-of-Sentence Word; the sentence will still be a statement, question, and so on, but the purpose or emotional state behind the sentence is made specific. In this case "-de" signifies that what is being related is a story. And, in conjunction with the new Evidence Word "wo," it is clearly a made-up story.

The Mood Suffixes can also be attached to any communication verb: "dide" would mean "speaks, in narrative form," and "dibiide" would mean "states or declares, in telling a story."

Did you note the word "thilhi" in the second-to-last paragraph? We know the word "thili" (fish). Láadan makes it easy to adapt a word to incorporate a "pejorative" (negative) meaning on-the-fly. The sound "lh" is used in Láadan for nothing else, and can be added to the beginning, middle or end of any word to lend a temporary deprecatory meaning—so long as the addition doesn't violate Láadan's requirement that vowel sounds and consonant sounds within a word occur in strict alternation. In addition, if the original word contains the sound "l," that sound can be changed to "lh" (as was done to "thili" here). In either case, the change would not be included in any dictionary; it's strictly temporary and carries the sense of distaste or disapproval of a particular occurrence of the thing—of the fish, in this case.

A somewhat different case involving "lh" is words whose meanings are inherently negative. These words will often include the sound "lh" as a core part of their makeup. This is not temporary, and such words would be found in a dictionary.