

Lesson 19

Object Case

Object Case

[VP CP–S CP–Obj]

In the above, the new abbreviation VP means “Verb Phrase;” it stands for the optional Auxiliary + the Verb, the Verb Complex, or the Ø-Verb (in the Identifier structure) + the optional Negative. We’ll be using this new abbreviation henceforward.

–th

Suffix (noun phrase): Object Case

To mark a Case Phrase as an Object, add “–th;” if the word ends in a consonant and we added “–th,” that would result in a forbidden consonant cluster (two or more consonants in a row together, which is forbidden in Láadan). In that case, we insert “e” between the final consonant of the noun phrase and the “–th.”

Examples

Bíi om with shoneth wáa.

The person teaches peace (I’m told).

Báa om with shoneth?

Does the person teach peace?

Báa om bebáa shoneth?

Who teaches peace?

Báa om with bebáath?

What does the person teach?

Note that the Object occurs after the Subject.

Note the “e” added between “shon” and “–th” to separate the consonants; also note that it’s unnecessary between “bebáa” and “–th”—or between “ede” and “–th” or “le” and “–th” below because “bebáa,” “ede,” and “le” all end in vowels.

Note the translation of “bebáath” above. It must be “what” rather than “whom” because verbs involving communication take as their Object the thing communicated. The person to whom the Object is communicated involves the Goal Case, which will be presented in a future lesson.

Bíi néde ra rul edeth wo.

The cat doesn’t want the grain (I suppose).

Báa néde ra rul edeth?

Doesn’t the cat want the grain?

Báa néde ra bebáa edeth?

Who/what doesn’t want the grain?

Báa néde ra rul bebáath?

What doesn’t the cat want?

Bíi meden hoshem Méri betha leth wa.

Mary’s grandchildren help me.

Báa meden hoshem Méri betha leth?

Do Mary’s grandchildren help me?

Báa meden bebáazh leth?

Who (few/several) help me?

Báa meden hoshem bebáatha leth?

Whose grandchildren help me?

Báa meden hoshem Méri betha bebáath?

Whom do Mary’s grandchildren help?

Bíi míi le wa.

I am amazed.

Bíi dómíi with leth wa.

The person causes me to be amazed.

The person amazes me.

Bíi medómíi with leth wa.

The people amaze me.

Báa den Mázhareth bebáath?

Whom does Margaret help?

Bíi den Mázhareth leth wa.

Margaret helps me.

Báa den bebáa Mázhareth beth?

Who helps Margaret?

Bíi den le Mázhareth beth wa.

I help Margaret.

Bíi den le beth wa.

I help her/him.

Note that personal names do not receive Case endings. When the name of a person or animal fulfills the role of a Case that would take a suffix, the name is followed by the pronoun “be” which accepts the Case ending in the name’s place. This rule applies to the names of living and once-living persons and creatures but not to the names of places or times.

Sometimes surface similarities can occur in any language. Notice that “beth” in the examples above is “be” (third person singular pronoun) + “–th” (object case ending), not “beth” (home).

Objective Conjunction

Along with the Object Case, we introduce the conjunction “úthú” (**what**). Though, in English, it resembles a question-word, this conjunction introduces a clause (in Láadan, a “clause” is defined as a Verb Phrase with its Case Phrase(s)—like a sentence but with neither Type-of-Sentence Word nor Evidence Word) that fills the role of an Object in the sentence. It translates as the “**what**” in the English sentence, “**I know what you did last summer.**”

In the English sentence, “**I know what you did last summer,**” the word “**what**” does quite a bit of heavy lifting. The sentence says “**You did a thing last summer, and I know the nature of that thing.**” But, rather than stringing it out as a compound sentence, it embeds the clause “**you did [a thing] last summer**” inside the sentence, “**I know**” The “**what**” stands as the Object of the embedded sentence, and the embedded sentence is the Object of the outer sentence. In Láadan, “úthú” does this heavy lifting:

Bíi eril radom ne úthú di Mázhareth wa.

You forgot what Margaret said.

Bíi ril bedi le úthú néde Ana wa.

I learn what Anna wants.

Báa aril di behizh úthú ril them ebalá wáa.

She will tell what the baker needs.

Bíi eril them le budeth wa.

I needed clothing.

Bíi eril them le budeth hi wa.

I needed this clothing.

Bíi eril them le budeth beye wa.

I needed some clothing.

Bíi eril them le bud amedarahátheth wa.

I needed the dancer's (chance) clothing.

Bíi eril them le bud edinethe amedaraháthath wa.

I needed the dancer's (birth) cousin's (chance) clothing.

A multiply-possessive structure, such as that above, is still a single unit, and so the Object suffix belongs at the end of the Possessive structure.

In contrast to the Possessive structure, when using a Demonstrative pronoun (**hi**-form) or an Indefinite pronoun (**beye**-form) as a modifying postposition, the case suffix remains on the noun being modified—as seen in the second and third examples above.

Possessive Objects

Báa néde babí yuth?

Does the bird want fruit?

Báa néde babí netho yuth?

Does your bird want fruit?

Báa néde babí yu lethoth?

Does the bird want my fruit?

Báa néde babí netho yu lethoth?

Does your bird want my fruit?

The Possessive becomes part of the Case Phrase. Since we're treating the Possessive Noun Phrase as a single unit (and so nothing can be inserted between its parts), the Case Suffix must be added to the end—on the Possessor, not the thing possessed. In the first example above, “**yu**” (**fruit**) is the Object: “**yuth.**” When we change the Object to “**my fruit**” (**yu letho**), the Object suffix is attached to the end of the phrase: “**yu lethoth.**” Perhaps it'll be a little clearer if presented in morphemic analysis of the first and fourth examples above:

Báa

Q

néde

WANT

babí

BIRD + SUBJ

yuth?

FRUIT + OBJ

Báa

Q

néde

WANT

babí

netho

BIRD

You1 + POSS + SUBJ

yu

lethoth?

FRUIT

I + POSS + OBJ

Bíi menéde bezh hith wa.
 They (few) want this/that.
 Bíi menéde bezh edeth hi wa.
 They (few) want this grain.
 Bíi menéde bezh zheth wa.
 They want the same thing.
 Bíi menéde bezh beyeth wa.
 They want something.
 Bíi menéde bezh edeth beye wa.
 They want some grain.
 Bíi menéde bezh rath wa.
 Bíi menéde bezh radaeth wa.
 They want nothing.
 Bíi menéde bezh ede rath wa.
 They want anything but grain.
 Bíi menéde bezh hizh hizheth wa.
 They want each other.

Notice the pair of examples using “rath” [ra- (NON) + -th (OBJ)]. The first of these is a straightforward statement that the Object Case does not apply. The second, on the other hand, states that the case does apply, but that the noun it would be applied to absolutely does not. In effect, this example *excludes* this noun from the Object Case function.

Vocabulary

an
 to know (of people); to be acquainted with (of a place or a topic)
 bel
 to take; to bring
 dó-
 Prefix (verb): to cause to VERB
 il
 to pay attention
 láad
 to perceive
 lothel
 to know (of information)
 naya
 to care for
 nin
 to cause; to be causal
 thel
 to get; to obtain
 thi
 to have

It seems odd to the English ear, but the verb “bel” means both “to take” and “to bring.” English uses a pair of unrelated verbs (“bring” and “take”) in what linguists call a “*deictic pair*,” not all languages do this to the same extent that English does. An example may be helpful in reducing the oddness: when we say “Anna brought a casserole to the pot-luck,” or “Anna took a casserole to the pot-luck,” the same person transported the same dish to the same event; only the point of view of the speaker (linguist-speak: *the deixis*) has changed—either the speaker was at the party or she was elsewhere, respectively. Which English verb should be used in translating “bel” can (but need not necessarily) be made clear (linguist-speak: *the deixis can be disambiguated*) by the context in which it occurs.

The prefix “dó-” (cause to VERB) added to a “stative verb” (a verb that discusses a state of being—one that, in English, would be an adjective), turns that verb into an “active verb” (one that discusses an action—that, in English, would be a verb). For example, “míi” means “to be amazed;” “dómíi” means “to cause to be amazed” or, in more colloquial English, “to amaze.” The other effect of this transformation is that the Subject of “míi” (the one who is amazed) becomes the Object of “dómíi” (the one whom someone or something else causes to be amazed) and the one doing the amazing is the new Subject.

The verbs “láad” and “il” are essentially Láadan. “Láad” means “to perceive by means of the senses.” “Il” means “to pay attention by means of the senses.” An English example might clarify the distinction between perception and attention. Using the visual sensory modality, in English we “see” a picture (perception) or we “look at” it (attention). Using the auditory sensory modality, we might “hear” music (perception) or “listen to” it (attention). How to specify the particular sense modality will be made clear in the lesson on the Instrument Case. In the meantime, it is perfectly proper Láadan to use “láad” and “il” without a sensory modality, in which case they would be translated as simply “to perceive” and “to pay attention,” respectively.

“Láad” (to perceive) is, of course, the other half of the name of this language: “Láadan” [láad (perceive) + dan (language)].

Exercises

Translate the following into English.

1 Bíi aril rathi worabalin wowithid woth wi.

E: _____

2 Báa eril thel shem Elízhabeth betha woloyo wohéezheth?

E: _____

3 Báa nime doth berídan ábedátha háamudath?

E: _____

4 Mehan háawith sherídanizh bebáathath?

E: _____

5 Bíi yod ra wodo wohomid Máyel betho wolaya wohedeth wo.

E: _____

6 Bíi eril dibáa omá úthú them hothul Therísha betha wáa.

E: _____

Note the word “**rathi**” in #1. As a straightforward opposite of “**thi**” (**to have**), “**rathi**” means “**to lack**” [**ra-** (**NON**) + **thi** (**to have**)].

Note that there is no Object suffix on “**woth**” in #1 above. This is because there can be no ambiguity. Because “**wisdom**” cannot “**want**” anything, in Láadan its Object suffix is optional; you may use the suffix or not, at your discretion—so long as the meaning is not ambiguous.

The same applies to #8 below: Láadan cannot “speak the parents,” so no Object suffix is required. And to #13 below. And also to #5 above and #15 and #17 below, although in these examples we have chosen to use the Object suffix; it remains grammatically correct even when it is not required.

Note that there is no Type-of-Sentence Word in #4. Because the sentence contains a form of the Interrogatory Pronoun, “**bebáa**,” there can be no confusion that this is a question. “**Báa**” at the beginning of the sentence would not be wrong, but it isn’t required in a less-formal setting.

Incorporate the second noun as an Object; translate into English before and after.

7 Bii eril naya Bétheni wa.
zháamid

E: _____

L: _____

E: _____

8 Bii aríli medi thul halátha wáa.
Láadan

E: _____

L: _____

E: _____

9 Báa mehéeya yáababí?
melothel ra bezh

E: _____

L: _____

E: _____

10 Bii mehom ud wa.
wam

E: _____

L: _____

E: _____

11 Báa aril il Másha?
delith lanetha betho

E: _____

L: _____

E: _____

12 Báa eríli meláad néehá?
onida bebáatha

E: _____

L: _____

E: _____

In #7 & #9, remember that we can specify the life-stage of any life form using the set of life-stage prefixes: in #7 “zháa-” (senior); and in #9 “yáa-” (adolescent), which in birds would be roughly equivalent to “fledgling.”

In #9, in order to incorporate the clause (rather than the usual noun phrase) as the Object of the sentence, we’ll need to use “úthú” (CONJobj). There are other ways of embedding a clause inside a sentence; we’ll learn those in future lessons.

Translate the following into Láadan.

13 We (several) close the door.

L: _____

14 Did the storm cause you-few to now have to clean?

L: _____

15 The beautiful dancers brought the extremely hot drink.

L: _____

16 Suzette will cause Matthew's sister to laugh (obviously).

L: _____

17 Does age cause the needleworker to be weary?

L: _____

18 The high mountain does not remember the dancing clouds.

L: _____

The verb “close” in #13 might pose a bit of a challenge. We know the verb “**rahu**” (to be closed); “to close” can also be termed “to cause to be closed.” “**Dórahu**” [dó- (CAUSEto) + **rahu** (be closed)] means just that.

The verb “**rahu**” (to be closed) is a stative verb (a verb that, in English, would be an adjective). Formally, it takes only a Subject. Less formally, the assignment of an Object to a Stative Verb implies a conversion to a Transitive Active Verb (one that would, in English, be a Verb that accepts an Object). No confusion will ensue, promise! So, a less-formal usage would find “**rahu**” to be an acceptable form to mean “to close.”

An approach similar to “**dórahu**” in #13 should be taken in #16, and #17, but here it is more straightforward because the syntax “cause to VERB” is clearly present in the English. Don't be confused by the English tendency to put the Object between “cause” and “to VERB;” Láadan uses the prefix “**dó-**” (cause to VERB) with the verb, then the Subject (the one doing the causing), then the Object (the one being caused to VERB).

The verb “clean” in #14 might be challenging; like “close” the formal word for “to clean” is “**dóhéthe**” [dó- (CAUSEto) + **éthe** (be clean)]; *when used with an Object*, informally, “**éthe**” will communicate the meaning without confusion. In #14, however, there is no Object in the second clause, so using “**éthe**” (without the “**dó-**”) would lead to ambiguity between “you-few” “cleaning” or “being clean.” In this situation, the formal “**dóhéthe**” is required.

Note the word “**dóhada**” (cause to laugh) as seen in #16. It has another meaning: “to be comical” or “to be funny.” When used in this way, it is a stative verb (that, in English, would be an adjective) and will take no Object—that is, the Subject is generally “comical” or “funny;” there is no specific person being “caused to laugh.” This is another example of the porosity (sometimes, unlike here, only informally) of the boundary between stative and active verbs (those that would, in English, be adjectives and verbs, respectively).

Did the word “age” in #17 present a challenge? Any verb can be used as a noun, so long as the result is not nonsense. For “stative verbs,” the translation of the nominal form is perhaps most easily formed by adding “-ness” to the English adjective. In #17, “age” could be termed “oldness;” that sounds like the nominal form of “**balin**” (to be old).

Answers

- 1 The young man will lack wisdom, of course.
- 2 Did Elizabeth's offspring get a black goat?
- 3 Is the farmer's aunt willing to follow the juvenile pig?
- 4 Whose niece do the children know?
- 5 Michael's strong horse doesn't eat red grain (I guess).
- 6 The teacher asked what Teresa's grandmother needed.
- 7 Bethany gave care.
Bíi eril naya Bétheni zháamideth wa.
Bethany cared for the senior-animal.
- 8 A worker's parents will, in some far time, speak.
Bíi aríli medi thul halátha Láadan wáa.
In some far-off future, a worker's parents will speak Láadan.
- 9 Do the fledglings fear (are the fledglings afraid)?
Báa mehéeya yáababí úthú melothel ra bezh?
Do the fledglings fear (are the fledglings afraid of) what they don't know?
- 10 Stones teach.
Bíi mehom ud wameth wa.
Stones teach stillness.
- 11 Will Marsha pay attention?
Báa aril il Másha delith lanetha bethoth?
Will Marsha pay attention to her friend's hair?
- 12 Did the aliens perceive, long ago?
Báa eríli meláad néehá onida bebáathath?
Whose family did the aliens perceive, long ago?
- 13 Bíi medórahu lezh áath wa.
- 14 Báa nin rohoró úthú ril medush medóhéthe nezh?
- 15 Bíi eril mebel mewoháya wohamedarahá wohowahul worana wa.
- 16 Bíi dóhada Shuzhéth hena Máthu bethath wi.
- 17 Báa dóhóoha balin dathimáth?
- 18 Bíi dom ra wohíthi wobo mewohamedara woboshumeth wi.