

Lesson 33

Place Case

Place Case

[VP CP–S CP–O CP–Mann
CP–Instr CP–Assoc
CP–Goal CP–Src CP–Place]

–sha

Suffix (noun phrase): Place Case

The Place Case Phrase locates an event or state as being at a specific location in space. To mark a Case Phrase as Place, add the suffix “–sha.”

When Suzette Haden Elgin first created Láadan, she designated “–ha” as the Place Case suffix. However, that ran into a problem when it interacted with nouns ending in “...ha” and with other suffixes that also closely resembled “–ha.” You might end up with a sequence like “...haha” or even “...hahaháa.” So Dr. Elgin offered an alternate suffix, “–sha,” for use on nouns ending in “...ha.” And then she had to offer an alternate for the other suffix (whose native form is “–háa”): “–sháa” in case it followed the “–ha” Place Case or a noun’s final “...ha.” The second generation decided that it would be far simpler to instead use “–sha” for the Place Case all the time and not have to use alternates at all. We will be using only the invariant forms in these lessons, but you might want to be able to recognize the archaic forms, should you happen upon them in older texts.

Along with the Place Case comes the conjunction “úshahú” (where). Not a question-word, “úshahú” introduces a clause that fulfills the Place case-role, as in the English sentence, “I know where the birds are singing.”

Historically, Suzette Haden Elgin coined a short series of conjunctions like “úshahú;” in fact, one—“widahoth” from “wida” (carry) + “hoth” (place)—filled the same lexical space as “úshahú.” Unfortunately, she only coined four of them. After her death, the second generation deemed it useful to have a set that included a conjunction for each of Láadan’s cases. So “widahoth” has been retired, and “úshahú” has taken its place; nevertheless, you should recognize “widahoth” if you happen upon it.

Examples

Bíi meham babí menedebe thoshesha wa.

There are many birds in the sky.

Bíi meham rosh i óol thoshesha wa.

The sun and moon are (present) in the sky.

Láadan doesn’t have—or need—the sort of verb called a “copula” (in English, “to be”). The use of “ham” in the two examples above is very formal, and stands in for such a verb. Less-formal Láadan simply does away with the verb altogether. In place of the examples above, “Bíi babí menedebe thoshesha wa,” and “Bíi rosh i óol thoshesha wa,” are both perfectly reasonable Láadan sentences. These less formal sentences do lack the sense of “there is/are” or “be present,” so the first would be translated as “Many birds are in the sky.”

Báa ham esh bebaáasha?

Where is there a boat?

Where is the boat (present)?

Bíi ham esh ilisha wa.

There is a boat in the water.

The boat is (present) in the water.

Note the two different translations possible for each of the sentences above. Since “ham” can mean either “be present” or “there is/are,” these are acceptable translations for the Láadan sentences. The choice of which English version to use will be contextual: was a boat being talked about already? If not, the “there is/are” translation will suit better; if so, the “be present” version will be more appropriate.

Less formally, “Báa esh bebaáasha?” (or, even less formally, “Esh bebaáasha?”) and “Bíi esh ilisha wa,” are both perfectly reasonable Láadan sentences. These less formal sentences do lack the sense of “there is/are” or “be present,” so they would be translatable only as “Where is the boat?” and “The boat is in the water,” respectively.

Bíi rúu áwith wa.

The baby lies.

Báa rúu áwith bebaáasha?

Where does the baby lie?

Bíi rúu áwith áayosha wa.

The baby lies at/on a skirt.

Bíi rúu áwith Méri besha wa.

The baby lies at/on Mary.

Bíi rúu áwith áayo Méri bethosha wa.

The baby lies at/on Mary's skirt.

By this time it should be routine to note that personal names do not take suffixes, as in the fourth and fifth examples above, and that the Case ending will move to the end of the Possessive case phrase, as in the fifth.

Bíi medibíi bezh úshahú thib behid wa.

They (few) declare where he stands.

Bíi methib bezh nusha wa.

They (few) stand here.

Bíi methib bezh núusha wa.

They stand there.

Bíi methib bezh hisha wa.

They (few) stand in/at this/that (place).

Bíi methib bezh zhesha wa.

They stand in/at the same (place).

Bíi methib bezh beyesha wa.

They stand somewhere.

Bíi methib bezh rasha wa.

They stand nowhere.

Bíi methib bezh déela rasha wa.

They stand anywhere but in/at a garden.

Bíi methib bezh hizh hizhesha wa.

They stand in/at/on each other.

Notice the pair of examples using “rasha” [ra- (NON) + -sha (PLC)]. The first of these is a straightforward statement that there is nothing to which the Place Case applies. 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 Place Case function.

Postpositions

English has a wide variety of prepositions which are used [...] to make [locatory] information more precise; thus, something will be said to be not just “at” a particular location but “inside, between, underneath” and so on. In English these prepositions are used as the first element in the phrase and could be said to be used instead of a more general case-marking preposition. In Láadan the general marker is always used, but there is a set of more narrow forms that can be added to the phrase to make its meaning more precise. We can say that “-sha” means “at” some place; if more precise information is required, the speaker puts an additional locational word at the end of the Case Phrase. [...] The set of [these words] (called postpositions) never change their form in any way; they take no affixes at all.

Formally, English uses “between” to refer to a location intermediate to two objects and “among” if the location is intermediate to three or more objects. In the same way, Láadan uses different words to refer to a location intermediate to two, three-to-five, or more-than-five objects. They are “shinenil,” “nedebeñil,” and “menedebeñil,” respectively.

Postpositions & Examples

We can make locatory Case Phrases more specific by adding the right postpositions.

Bíi yime le belidesha/wethesha/bosha wa.

I run at the house/on the road/at the mountain.

In this base example, we offer a few choices of noun because not all postpositions are going to make sense with all nouns.

heb

Postposition: down

Bíi yime le bosha heb wa.

I run down the mountain.

ib

Postposition: against; up against; beside; next to

Bíi yime le belidesha ib wa.

I run next to the house.

ihé

Postposition: before (place); in front of

Bíi yime le belidesha ihé wa.

I run in front of the house.

ihée

Postposition: after (place); behind, beyond

Bíi yime le belidesha ihée wa.

I run behind the house.

menedebenil

Postposition: among more than five [menedebe (#>5) + nil (inside)]

Bíi yime le belidesha menedebenil wa.

I run among more than five houses.

mesh

Postposition: across

Bíi yime le wethesha mesh wa.

I run across the road.

nedebenil

Postposition: among three to five [nedebe (#2-5) + nil (inside)]

Bíi yime le belidesha nedebenil wa.

I run among three to five houses.

nil

Postposition: inside; within

Bíi yime le belidesha nil wa.

I run inside the house.

o

Postposition: around

Bíi yime le belidesha o wa.

I run around the house.

ob

Postposition: by way of

Bíi yime le belidesha ob wa.

I run by way of the house.

obe

Postposition: through

Bíi yime le belidesha obe wa.

I run through the house.

óobe

Postposition: along

Bíi yime le wethesha óobe wa.

I run along the road.

raheb

Postposition: up

Bíi yime le bosha raheb wa.

I run up the mountain.

ranil

Postposition: outside

Bíi yime le belidesha ranil wa.

I run outside the house.

shinenil

Postposition: between [shin (two) + nil (inside)]

Bíi yime le belidesha shinenil wa.

I run between two houses.

The English translations of some few of Láadan's postpositions are not particularly clear. A different base example may be helpful:

nol

Postposition: atop; on top of; upon (touching)

Bíi rúu le renesha nol wa.

I lie atop the carpet.

(touching the top of it)

ranol

Postposition: under; beneath; underneath; being sat upon by (touching)

Bíi rúu le renesha ranol wa.

I lie under the carpet.

(it's resting atop me)

yil

Postposition: below; under (not touching)

Bíi rúu le renesha yil wa.

I lie below the carpet.

(not touching it; it's in the air above me)

rayil

Postposition: above (not touching)

Bíi rúu le renesha rayil wa.

I lie above the carpet.

(not touching it; in the air above it)

In the event that we need to use both a number or quantifier and a locatory postposition in the same Case Phrase, the number/quantifier would precede the locatory postposition. The number affects the noun itself; the postposition affects only the case; the noun always precedes the case.

Bíi yime le belidesha shin o wa.

I run around two houses.

Bíi rúu le renesha boó nol wa.

I lie atop three carpets.

Vocabulary

buzh
conference; convention, “con”
lolin
to gather (of people); to assemble (of people)
mari
island
math
building
rodoni
wilderness [ro (weather) + doni (land)] {AB}

róo
harvest
rúu
lie down
than
be underground
thoma
be near [thed (be far) + oma (hand)]
wod
sit

In the above list, we see “math” (building) and “róo” (harvest). We have actually seen these two words before in “róomath” (barn), whose etymology we can now give: [róo (harvest) + math (building)].

Exercises

Translate the following into English.

1 Báa ham wolawida wohomid bebáasha? OR Báa wolawida wohomid bebáasha?
OR Ham wolawida wohomid bebáasha? OR Wolawida wohomid bebáasha?

E: _____

2 Bí aril yod imá anadalesh úshahú ban beye anath bedim wáa.

E: _____

3 Bé ril yom onida natha beth ehotháthosha nusha thed wa.

E: _____

4 Báa eril ranilesháad ábedá ábedunede lanemid bethoden ihé urahusha ob?

E: _____

5 Bée aril thod wothá uzheh thodinan thibá déelathusha wáa.

E: _____

6 Bóo aril meyime nen mewoyide wowehehá hishesha obe.

E: _____

In #2, how did you interpret “anadal” (meal) [ana (food) + dal (thing)]?

In #3, did you have any trouble with “ehothá” (geographer) [e- (SCIOF) + hoth (place) = ehoth (geography) + -á (DOER)]?

Also in #3, we see “thed” (be far) used postpositionally to modify a Place case phrase, meaning “far from” the referenced place. This is perfectly acceptable Láadan. “Thoma” (be near) can also be used in this way, meaning “near to.”

In #4, did you understand “ranilesháad” (to exit; to come/go out) [ranil (outside) + sháad (come/go)]? Of course, “ranilesháad” also presupposes “nilesháad” (to enter; to come/go in) [nil (inside) + sháad (come/go)].

Also in #4, we see for the first time a postposition used with a case other than the Place case (...lanemid...den ihé...); it is perfectly acceptable Láadan to incorporate postpositional information in any case phrase when needed.

In #5, it would be perfectly understandable if you assumed the sage was going to write on a person who was standing. However, idiomatically, “thibá” means “wall” even though it is transparently derived from [thib (to stand) + -á (DOER)].

Incorporate the second noun phrase as a Place; translate into English before and after.

7 Búi eril medibithim lan netho wowoth wohoshemizh lethath wáa.
mari

E: _____
L: _____
E: _____

8 Báa aril bedi ni ehasheth e ehotheth?
wohíthi wohibo

E: _____
L: _____
E: _____

9 Bé eril mehina háawith thul bezhethadan wa.
both

E: _____
L: _____
E: _____

10 Bée meham mewolirihul wohesh menedebe wa.
réele

E: _____
L: _____
E: _____

11 Búi eril mehim ehá miwithedim honede id hunedim wáa.
abo

E: _____
L: _____
E: _____

12 Bóo melolin nen habelidá yedethu.
hatham rodonithu

E: _____
L: _____
E: _____

In #7, how did you interpret “dibithim” (greet) [di (speak) + bithim (meet)]?

In #12, did you have any trouble interpreting “habelidá” (dweller; inhabitant) [habelid (dwell) + -á (DOER)]?

Incorporate the postposition into the Place case phrase; translate into English before and after.

13 Bí eril wóoban rul áruleth shan belidesha wa.
yil

E: _____
L: _____
E: _____

14 Báa rilrili thib héena edanátho wethesha?
ihée

E: _____
L: _____
E: _____

15 Bé aril ilisháad le wilidunesha wa.
e mesh e óobe

E: _____
L: _____
E: _____

16 Bóo medoth nazh háasherídan letha shamideth heshehothesha.
o

E: _____
L: _____
E: _____

17 Bée eril ri berídanizh letha shub meworahil wozháawithethuth áabesha wáa.
nil

E: _____
L: _____
E: _____

18 Báa dush un Elízhabeth haláth shinethab hanedim mathede shenisha hi?
thoma

E: _____
L: _____
E: _____

In #15, did you get the sense of “wilidun” (lake) [wili (river) + dun (field)]?

In #17, did you note the use of “shub” (to do) as a noun meaning “deed(s)?” And “rahil” [ra- (NON) + il (pay attention)] meaning “to ignore?”

Translate the following into Láadan.

19 Clearly someone is sitting or lying atop the tall tower.

L: _____

20 Where (many places) will the conventions be?

L: _____

21 Prithee fly (you many beloved) above the desert to the eastern mountains.

L: _____

22 (WARN) One of his followers next to the entrance of the church is asking honored-William whom he called using his telephone.

L: _____

23 I swear Steven's cousins are playing among the (many) trees at the edge of the forest.

L: _____

24 I dream the student, the carpenter and all their children know where they are underground.

L: _____

In #19, how did you do forming the word for “tower?” Consider a tower is a building that reaches up into the air. We use “shumath” (tower) [shum (air) + math (building)].

In #22, could you form “dothá” (follower) [doth (to follow) + -á (DOER)]?

And in #22, did you have any trouble forming a word for “entrance?” Consider that an “entrance” is a “way in;” how about “nileweth” (entrance; way in) [nil (inside) + weth (way; path; road)]? And “nileweth” (entrance) also suggests “ranileweth” (exit; way out) [ranil (outside) + weth (way; path; road)].

Also in #22, how did it go forming a word for “to call?” We use “dithed” (to call) [di (speak) + thed (far)]. Of course, as a communication verb, “dithed” takes the person called as its Goal.

And in #22, were you able to form a word for “telephone?” We use “widadith” (telephone) [wida (carry) + dith (voice)].

In #23, the concept of “edge” is interesting. There is a word “nodal” translated “edge, nonsharp;” however, that very construction gives rise to the observation that the edge of something can be discussed as the “ending” of that thing—the place where thing becomes not-thing. Therefore, in this sentence we could use “noholin” to mean “edge of the forest” without having to define a new word; it’s simply the meaning that the prefix “no-” (FINISH) would bring when applied to a noun.

Also in #23, the English seems to present two successive Place case phrases. The Láadan has that as one option; another would be to use the Partitive (False Possessive). We will present both in our answers.

Answers

- 1 Where is the pregnant horse?
- 2 I understand the traveler will eat a meal where someone gives her/him food.
- 3 I swear beloved-your family is safe at the geographer's home far from here.
- 4 Did the farmer exit the farm-yard with her/his dog ahead (of her/him) by way of the gate?
- 5 (WARN) I understand the sage will write a symbol with a writing-implement on the garden-wall.
- 6 Prithee, you-many hungry shopkeepers run in the future through the snow.
- 7 Your friends greeted my wise granddaughter, I understand.
Bíi eril medibithim lan netho wowoth wohoshemizh lethath marisha wáa.
Your friends greeted my wise granddaughter on the island, I understand.
- 8 Will honored-you learn astronomy or geography?
Báa aril bedi ni ehasheth e ehotheth wohíthi wohibosha?
Will honored-you learn astronomy or geography at the high hill?
- 9 I swear the children slept with (pleasurably) their parent.
Bé eril mehina háawith thul bezhethadan bothesha wa.
I swear the children slept with (pleasurably) their parent at the hotel.
- 10 (WARN) There are many extremely colorful boats.
Bée meham mewolirihul wohesh menedebe réelesha wa.
There are many extremely colorful boats at the harbor.
- 11 I understand the scientists traveled from the west to the city and then to the north.
Bíi eril mehim ehá miwithedim honede id hunedim rabosha wáa.
I understand the scientists traveled from the west to the city and then to the north in the plain.
- 12 Prithee, you-many residents of the valley, congregate.
Bóo melolin nen habelidá yedethu hatham rodonithusha.
Prithee, you-many residents of the valley, congregate in the center of the wilderness.
- 13 The cat gave birth to five kittens at the house.
Bíi eril wóoban rul áruleth shan belidesha yil wa.
The cat gave birth to five kittens below the house.
- 14 Might the linguist's heart-sibling be standing at the road?
Báa rilrili thib héena edanátho wethesha ihée?
Might the linguist's heart-sibling be standing beyond the road?
- 15 I promise I shall swim in the lake.
Bé aril ilisháad le wilidunesha e mesh e óobe wa.
I promise I shall swim either across or along the lake.
- 16 Prithee, my beloved several young nieces/nephews, follow the domestic animal in the park.
Bóo medoth nazh háasherídan lethashamideth heshehothesha o.
Prithee, my beloved several young nieces/ nephews, follow the domestic animal around the park.
- 17 (WARN) I understand my aunt recorded the deeds of ignored seniors in a book.
Bée eril ri berídadizh lethashub meworahil wozháawithethuth áabesha nil wáa.
(WARN) I understand my aunt recorded the deeds of ignored seniors inside a book.
- 18 Must Elizabeth lead 12 workers southward from a building at this intersection?
Báa dush un Elízabeth haláth shinethab hanedim mathede shenisha hi thoma?
Must Elizabeth lead 12 workers southward from a building near this intersection?
- 19 Bíi ril wod e rúu beye shumathesha nol wi.
- 20 Aril buzhd bebaanesha?
- 21 Bóo meshumáad nan mewohene wobodim shéesha rayil.
- 22 Bée ril dibáa dothá bitho nede Wílem bidim nileweth áathamethusha ib údimú dithed bi widadith bithonan wáa.
- 23 Bé ril mehelash edin Thíben betha yáaninesha menedebe nil noholinesha wa. OR Bé ril mehelash edin Thíben betha yáanin noholinethusha menedebe nil wa.
- 24 Bíi melothel bedihá, belidá, i shem bezhetha woho úshahú methan ben we.