

Lesson 44

Embedded Sentences

Embedded Declarative Sentences

-hé

Suffix (embedded clause): Embedding marker

This is a lesson about embedding one sentence inside another sentence. In the examples, the embedded sentence will be enclosed in brackets to help make the process clear.

Unlike Verb Complexes, where the subject of the embedded sentence is identical to the subject of the main sentence (and can therefore be deleted as redundant), here the Subject of the embedded sentence need not be the same as that of the main sentence.

To embed a declarative sentence, add the ending “-hé” to the last word in the [embedded] sentence.

[In] the embedded sentences the verb will be first in the sentence, or the auxiliary will if one is present. (This is the reverse of what appears in the English translations.)

The usual word order in a Láadan clause puts the verb (or auxiliary) as the first element in its clause. When we’re hearing or reading a Láadan sentence, if a verb/auxiliary *follows* a noun or pronoun, we can reasonably expect that that verb/auxiliary is the beginning of an embedded clause.

Examples

Bíi lith le [áya withizh]ehé wa.

I think [the woman is beautiful].

I think that the woman is beautiful.

I think the woman is beautiful.

Bíi lith ra le [áya withizh]ehé wa.

I don’t think [the woman is beautiful].

I don’t think that the woman is beautiful.

I don’t think the woman is beautiful.

As a general rule, if we use the English word “that” to lead into the embedded clause, it will help to ease the translation into English—as in the second line of the English in both of the examples above. These are trivial examples, but the mechanism will prove useful as we go along.

Bíi ul le [naham lali]hé wa.

I hope [it’s starting to rain].

I hope that it’s starting to rain.

I hope it’s starting to rain.

Bíi ul le [noham lali]hé wa.

I hope [it’s finished raining].

I hope that it’s finished raining.

I hope it’s finished raining.

Bíi ul le [ham ra lali]hé wa.

I hope [it’s not raining].

I hope that it’s not raining.

I hope it’s not raining.

In all of the examples above, the embedded clauses are all Objects of “lith” (to think) or “ul” (to hope). Since sentences neither think nor hope, there is no confusion, and we can omit the Object suffix. Nevertheless, the Object suffix is grammatically correct and could be included at the speaker/writer’s option. The first example above, “Bíi lith le áya withizhehé wa” (I think that the woman is beautiful) could, equally grammatically, be “Bíi lith le áya withizhehéth wa.” The Object suffix indicating that the embedded clause is the Object of “lith” will follow “-hé” (the embedded clause suffix). This will be important if you should ever have a sentence in which the case role of the embedded clause could be mistaken or is not optional.

Bíi néde le [thi Ána nemeth]ehé wa.
I want [Anna have a pearl].
I want that Anna have a pearl.
I want Anna to have a pearl.

Notice here that the embedding suffix follows the Object Case suffix that is internal to the embedded sentence. “Nem” (pearl) is the Object of “thi” (have), the verb in the embedded clause. Of course the embedded clause is the Object of “néde” (want), the verb in the outer sentence, so another Object Case suffix can follow “-hé”—or not, at the speaker/writer’s discretion. With the embedding-level Object suffix, this sentence would read, “Bíi néde le thi Ána nemethehéth wa.”

Bíi hal be [aril thad yod onida betha]héwan wa.
She works so (in order that) [her family will be able to eat].

Bíi eril eb le nemeth [ril thad ban le beth eba lethodim]ehéwan wa.
I bought a pearl so (in order) that [I am able to give it to my spouse].
I bought a pearl so I would be able, now, to give it to my spouse.

Here we see a non-optional embedding-level case suffix. The Purpose Case suffix indicates that the embedded clause is the reason for her to work and the reason for me to buy the pearl.

Bíi oth [thi Ána nemeth]ehé wa.
Be important [Anna have a pearl].
That Anna have a pearl is important.
It’s important that Anna have a pearl.
It’s important for Anna to have a pearl.

The two verbs together in this example might confuse you into thinking this is a simple Verb Complex, but it’s not. To form a Verb Complex, both verbs must have the same Subject, and “Ána” is not the Subject of “oth” (to be important). In fact, in this sentence, it’s the embedded clause “thi Ána nemeth” (Anna have a pearl) that is the Subject of “oth.” Of course, the Subject suffix (“-Ø”) is already present on the “-hé.”

An ambiguity that occurs in English is readily resolved in Láadan. In an English sentence such as “You understand that the work pleases me when the sun is shining,” it is impossible to tell whether the dependent adverbial clause “when the sun is shining” refers to “you understand” or to “the work pleases me.” We can make it clear by reordering the clauses, but the Láadan is much clearer even without that mechanism to fall back upon:

Bíi ril en ne [shi hal leth úyahú ham rosh]ehé wa.
You understand [the work pleases me when the sun shines].
You understand that, when it’s sunny, the work pleases me.
Bíi ril en ne [shi hal leth]ehé úyahú ham rosh wa.
You understand [the work pleases me] when it’s sunny.
You understand, when it’s sunny, that the work pleases me.

Since the subject of “**úyahú**” has come up, there is one more point to make about this word and its kin relative to embedding. We’ve been using this form and its fellows—all subordinating conjunctions, not question words—for some time to introduce adverbial dependent clauses. We can now cover the same semantic “territory” using embedding, as follows:

I know when the bird sings.

Bíi lothel le úyahú zho babí wa.

Bíi lothel le [zho babí]héya wa.

Do you perceive that embedding the clause “**zho babí**” (the bird sings) and treating the embedded structure as a Time Case element brings the sense of “**the time at which the bird sings**” or “**when the bird sings**.” We can also use the same mechanism for the other “**úXú**” forms; just a few examples:

I know where the bird sings.

Bíi lothel le úshahú zho babí wa.

Bíi lothel le [zho babí]hésa wa.

I know how the bird sings.

Bíi lothel le únalú zho babí wa.

Bíi lothel le [zho babí]hénal wa.

I know why the bird sings.

Purpose Case:

Bíi lothel le úwanú zho babí wa.

Bíi lothel le [zho babí]héwan wa.

Cause Case:

Bíi lothel le úwáanú zho babí wa.

Bíi lothel le [zho babí]héwáan wa.

Vocabulary

dithem

to beg [di (speak) + them (need)] {AB}

don

comb (for hair)

idon

hairbrush

olowod

group [wod (sit)]

ruhob

to be deep

thun

muscle

ume

to be full; to be abundant

yob

coffee

yun

orange (the fruit)

zhazh

airplane

Exercises

Translate the following into English.

1 Bí ril lith le lamith lan netho zhazh bethothéhé wa.

E: _____

2 Bí eril dam ra Máthu rahowa anahé wáa.

E: _____

3 Báa en bebáa merahéthe mudahé?

E: _____

4 Bí eril láad ezha oyinan théshumáad babíhé wa.

E: _____

5 Bí eril shóo shebasheb yáanin wemaneyahé wa.

E: _____

6 Bí lothel wohim woduthahá mebalin obeth nethohé wáa.

E: _____

7 Bí ril néde háawith aril naham rohoró bishibenalehé wa.

E: _____

8 Bí lishid owehá eril lámála withid rulethéhé wáa.

E: _____

9 Bóo dom di ne omá nethodim aril merathad mesháad lezh sheshihothedim wumaneyahé.

E: _____

10 Bí eríli thod wothá meyime romid úshahú menime mehóomasháad ra shamidehé wáa.

E: _____

In #3, note that, although the form of the main (or outer) sentence is a question, there is no question as to whether the pigs are dirty. Embedded questions like that are a topic for another lesson. The only question here is who understands *that* they're dirty.

Note, in #5, that there is no apparent Subject for the outer sentence. In English, we would say “*it' came to pass...*,” but Láadan doesn't use an “*it*” in this case. In fact, the embedded sentence (about the tree dying in winter) is the Subject of “*shóo*” (*to happen; to occur; to come to pass*).

In #8, did the word “*owehá*” (*seamstress; tailor*) [*owe* (*garment*) + *-á* (*DOER*)] give you any trouble? Remember, “*-á*” means “*maker*” as well as “*doer*.”

Did you note, in #9, that we've just crossed paths with our very first indirect quote in Láadan? An indirect quote conveys the content of what someone said without quoting their exact words— and avoids the grammatical complexities involved in using quotation marks.

Translate the following into Láadan.

11 The gardener warned us that the coffee was bitter and the oranges were still sour.

L: _____

12 The farmer promised that the baby elephants would be safe.

L: _____

13 Did the story teach us that the fledgelings were not afraid?

L: _____

14 The mendicant asked for money as her dog has ticks.

L: _____

15 The scientist believes that the flowers are fragrant.

L: _____

16 The nurse is watching Margaret's mother using a comb and brush on her hair; that the muscles in her hands may once again be strong pleases her.

L: _____

17 Is it important that the philosopher is singing a song now?

L: _____

18 The songwriter begged all her children to study hospitality in order to have full lives.

L: _____

19 The group agrees that the roots of the plant are deep in the earth.

L: _____

20 Aren't you anticipating the horse giving birth to two foals?

L: _____

In #14, did you have any trouble with "mendicant?" "Mendicant" is a high-register word for "beggar:" "dithemá" (beggar; mendicant) [dithem (beg) + -á (DOER)].

#17 is similar to #5 above in that the embedded sentence (about the philosopher singing a song) is the Subject of "oth" (to be important).

In #20, did you successfully form a word for "foal?" Think "infant horse:" "áhomid." This is an on-the-fly formation that would not be found in a dictionary.

Answers

- 1 I think your friend is counting her airplanes.
- 2 Matthew showed no sign that the food was cold.
- 3 Who understands that the pigs are dirty?
- 4 The snake saw that the bird was about-to-fly-at-any-moment.
- 5 It came to pass that the tree died in winter.
- 6 The traveling healer knows your neighbors are old.
- 7 The child wants it to begin to storm suddenly.
- 8 The seamstress is signing that the man caressed the cat.
- 9 Prithee remember to tell your teacher that we will be unable to go to the beach in the summer.
- 10 Long ago a sage wrote that wild animals run where domesticated animals are unwilling to walk.
- 11 Bíi eril dibée déelahá lezhedim rúsho yob i menáyem yunehé wa.
- 12 Bíi eril dibé ábedá meymom ádomidehé(th) wa.
- 13 Báa eril om dedide lezhedim mehéeya ra yáababíhé(th)?
- 14 Bíi dibóo dithemá losheth thi lanemid betho uhudemidethehéwáan wa.
- 15 Bíi edeláad ehá mehaba mahinahé(th) wáa.
- 16 Bíi ril il onin duth thul Mázhareth betha doneth i idoneth delith bethashahé(th) oyinan; shi rilrili menedo thun omathu bethahé beth wáa.
- 17 Báa oth ril lalom ehená lomethehé?
- 18 Bíi eril dithem lomá mehulanin shem betha woho ethóothehé(th) mewohume wowíwan wáa.
- 19 Bíi zhelith olowod meruhob dol dalatha donisha wi.
- 20 Báa litharil ra ne aril wóoban omid áhomideth shinehé(th)?