

Lesson 47

Embedded Relative Clauses

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–háa

Suffix (embedded clause): Relative Clause Embedding marker

Adjectival phrases like “green grass” are actually shorthand for what are known as “relative clauses.” In the case of “green grass,” that relative clause is “grass that is green” with “that is green” modifying the noun “grass.” Such a relative clause is known as a “dependent clause” because it cannot grammatically stand alone. However, the noun it modifies could stand without the modifier; the result would be a less-precise statement. Without the “that is green” our example would simply be “grass.”

A clause in Láadan is defined as: (Auxiliary) + Verb + (Negative) + (Possessive) Noun Phrase(s)—just like a simple sentence, except without the Type-of-Sentence and Evidence Words. By this nature of the clause in Láadan, when we embed a clause—whether declarative, interrogative or relative—the first word in the embedded clause will be either a verb or an auxiliary.

To embed a sentence as a relative clause, add the ending “–háa” to the last word of the embedded sentence.

When Suzette Haden Elgin first created Láadan, she designated “–ha” as the Place Case suffix and “–háa” as the Relative Embedding suffix. However, problems arose when these two occurred consecutively—especially if they were appended to a place-name that ended in “ha,” in which situation you’d end up with the sequence “hahaháa.” To avoid that, Dr. Elgin offered alternates for both suffixes: “–sha” for the Place and “–sháa” for the Relative Embedder. The second generation to develop Láadan decided that it would be much more straightforward to change the Place suffix to *always* be “–sha” and avoid both the potential of “haháa” (or even “hahaháa”) and the bother of alternate suffixes. We will not be using any alternate suffixes in these lessons, but you might want to be able to recognize them, should you happen upon them in older texts.

Relativizer vs Embedded Relative Clause

It is no coincidence that the names of these two grammatical features of Láadan bear a striking resemblance. The first is a short-cut for the functional work of the second. Just as was the case in discussing the Relativizer, there are, in essence, two sentences being combined into one.

The first, or outer, sentence is that “less-detailed” sentence alluded to above. The second sentence (the one being embedded) gives context or detail about a noun in the outer sentence. Where the inner (or “embedded”) clause contains only a single verb and its single Subject, it will be simpler to use the Relativizer, “wo–”, than to perform the full embedding.

Bíi nání i tháa hesh wa.

The grass is growing and thriving.

Bíi lilihil hesh wa.

The grass is moist.

Bíi nání i tháa wolilihil wohesh wa.

The moist grass (grass that is moist) is growing and thriving.

However, the embedded clause may contain multiple verbs or multiple Case Phrases (Object, Manner, Goal, Source, Place, Time, Beneficiary, etc., in addition to the Subject) or an Auxiliary different from the outer sentence. In that situation, since the Relativizer can only act on one verb and one noun, the full embedding is the only way to keep from losing any of that information.

In Láadan, unlike in English, the noun phrase to be modified is moved *into* the embedded relative clause. That noun phrase, of necessity, fulfills some case role in the outer sentence; therefore, the embedded relative clause fulfills *that same* case role. As a consequence, case suffixes applied to the embedded clause as a whole become much more crucial—and much less likely to be optional.

Examples

In the examples to follow, we'll present the embedded relative clause in [brackets] as we have been. We'll also asterisk-mark the *noun phrase* in the embedded relative clause that could stand alone to give a less-detailed sentence and mark with braces the {case ending} that moves from the unmodified noun phrase to the embedded relative clause.

Bíi bithim Máthu *with*e{th} wa.

Matthew meets a woman.

Bíi lalom *with* huhideda wa.

The woman sings for the king.

Bíi bithim Máthu [lalom *with* huhideda]háa{th} wa.

Matthew meets a woman who sings for the king.

In this example, the same woman is being referred to, whether she's referred to as “a woman” or as “a woman who sings for the king,”—that is, without or with the relative clause. In the outer sentence “with” (woman) is the Object of “bithim” (to meet). In the embedded clause “with” is the Subject of “lalom” (to sing). When we perform the embedding, the embedded clause contains the noun that is common to both sentences, and the entire embedded clause fulfills the case-role that that noun used to fulfill in the outer sentence—in this example, in the resultant sentence-with-embedding, “Bíi bithim Máthu lalom with huhidedaháath wa,” the embedded clause, “lalom with huhidedaháa” (a woman who sings for the king), is the new Object of “bithim” (that is, the embedded clause fulfills the case-role of “with” in the outer sentence), and “with” is the Subject of “lalom” (consistent with the second sentence).

Another way to look at the process is that it's somewhat similar to how we form Possessives. In Possessives we insert the possessor and the ending indicating the type of possession between the thing possessed and its case ending. Here we're inserting the entire embedded clause between the noun and its case ending—the difference is we then delete the original noun since it's duplicated in the embedded clause.

Bíi láad déelahá [menáwí dala]hé(th) oyinan wa.

The gardener sees (perceives using eyes) that the plants are growing.

Bíi láad déelahá [menáwí dala]hée(th) oyinan wa.

The gardener sees if/whether the plants are growing.

Bíi láad déelahá [menáwí *dala*]háa{th} oyinan wa.

The gardener sees the plants that are growing.

The example set above illustrates how the three types of embedding in Láadan change the meanings of otherwise identical sentences. In this very simple third example, it is true that the same meaning could have been conveyed using the relativizer instead of embedding a relative clause, giving “Bíi láad déelahá mewonáwí womdalath oyinan wa,” (The gardener sees the growing plants). On the other hand, using the embedded relative clause structure allows us to also use the relativizer, as illustrated next:

Báa eril láad ne *wodo wowith*e{th} oyunan?

Did you hear (perceive using ears) the strong woman?

Báa eril láad ne [hal *wodo wowith*]ehé(th) oyunan?

Did you hear that the strong woman worked?

Báa eril láad ne [hal *wodo wowith*]ehée(th) oyunan?

Did you hear whether the strong woman worked?

Báa eril láad ne [hal *wodo wowith*]eháa{th} oyunan?

Did you hear the strong woman who worked?

You'll notice, in the two middle examples above, that the Object suffixes, “-th” are optional. The entire embedded clauses here are the Objects of “láad” (to perceive). There can be no confusion as to Subject versus Object.

The embedded clause, since it takes the place of a noun phrase in the larger sentence, likely will also require a Case ending that refers to the entire embedded clause. This Case suffix will be the same one that was on the noun phrase that is being replaced by the embedded clause. This clause-level Case ending will follow the embedding marker.

Bíi di [hal *with*]eháa{Ø} ledim wa.

The woman who works speaks to me.

Bíi le [hal *with*]eháa{m} wa.

I am the woman who works.

Bíi di le [hal *with*]eháa{nal} wa.

I speak like (in the manner of) the woman who works.

Bíi di le [hal *with*]eháa{dim} wa.

I speak to the woman who works.

Bíi di le [hal *with*]eháa{da} wa.

I speak for (on behalf of) the woman who works.

The embedded relative clause may, of course, have one or more case phrase(s), each with its Case ending, within it; a Case ending on the final noun internal to the embedded clause will occur before the embedding marker. One more, slightly more adventurous, example will illustrate:

Bíi íthi [eril sháad with bodim]eháa{Ø} wa.

Since “eril sháad with bodim,” the embedded clause, is the Subject of the larger sentence, no apparent Case ending would be appropriate to follow the “-háa.” But there are two noun phrases within the embedded clause, the Subject, “with,” and the Goal, “bo.” So would the sentence as a whole mean “The woman who went to the mountain is tall” or “The mountain the woman went to is tall?” In usual writing or conversation, this ambiguity would not be an issue. We’d already be talking about tall people or tall mountains. In the event that the ambiguity is, or is likely to be, troublesome, we can disambiguate using the Focus Marker, as follows:

Bíi íthi [eril sháad *with*ehóo bodim]eháa{Ø} wa.

The WOMAN who went to the mountain is tall.

Bíi íthi [eril sháad with *bo*hóodim]eháa{Ø} wa.

The MOUNTAIN that the woman went to is tall.

As may not need stating, the outer sentence can be declarative, interrogative or any of the other forms available in Láadan, as in the next set of examples.

Bíi sháad ne [habelid *withid* melasha ib]eháa{den} wa.

You go with the man who dwells by the sea.

Báa sháad ne [habelid *withid* melasha ib]eháa{den}?

Are you going with the man who dwells by the sea?

Bóo sháad ne [habelid *withid* melasha ib]eháa{den}.

Prithee go with the man who dwells by the sea.

Bó sháad ne [habelid *withid* melasha ib]eháa{den}.

Go with the man who dwells by the sea!

Bé sháad ne [habelid *withid* melasha ib]eháa{den} wa.

I swear you are going with the man who dwells by the sea.

Bée sháad ne [habelid *withid* melasha ib]eháa{den} wa.

[WARN] You are going with the man who dwells by the sea.

And one more example, slightly more complex again because it has two internal case phrases and the entire embedded clause is a Goal Case element:

Bíi aril sháad le [habelid lan letho *hibo*hóosha]háa{dim} wa.

I shall go to the hill where my friend dwells.

Bíi aril sháad le [habelid *lan*ehóo *letho* hibosha]háa{dim} wa.

I shall go to my friend who dwells on the hill.

Under Dr. Elgin’s original scheme, the second-to-last word of the two examples in the set immediately above would have had to end in “...hasháadim” because the Relative Embedding suffix following the Place Case suffix required the alternate Embedder. It’s much simpler to have them be invariable and engineered not to conflict.

Vocabulary

doyu

apple [do (strong) + yu (fruit)]

é-

Prefix (any): potential

héeda

to be sacred; to be holy

hozhazh

airport [hoth (place) + zhazh (airplane)]

mo

furniture

mud

mushroom

o-

Prefix (n): study of; study the teachings of {AB}

óo-

Prefix (n): devotion to; devotion to the principles of [o- (study of)] {AB}

rasha

discord (not discord in the home) [ra- (NON) + sha (harmony)]

rashon

quarrel; argument (not used of an "argument" in a theory or an equation or proposition) [ra- (NON) + shon (peace)]

Note the prefix "é-" (potential). It is a tremendously useful little prefix. One example of how useful it is occurs in the word "édáan" (lexical gap) [é- (potential) + dáan (word)]. As the development of Láadan continues, we are continuously finding édáan for which we must find forms. Other words using "é-" include: "éban" (to offer) [é- (POTENTIAL) + ban (to give)] and "éholob" (threat) [é- (POTENTIAL) + olob (blow; trauma)].

The other two prefixes introduced here are key to discussions of religion, distinct from the discussion of science using the prefix "e-." These prefixes are used with the name of the religious leader or a notable feature of the religion.

obuda

study of the teachings of the Buddha [o- (STUDYof) + Buda (loanword: Buddha)]

obudahá

óobuda

Buddhism [óo- (DEVOTIONto) + Buda (loanword: Buddha)]

óobudahá

omuhamad

study of the teachings of Muhammad [o- (STUDYof) + Muhamad (loanword: Muhammad)]

omuhamadá

óomuhamad

Islam [óo- (DEVOTIONto) + Muhamad (loanword: Muhammad)]

óomuhamadá

othóra

study of Torah [o- (STUDYof) + Thóra (loanword: Torah)]

othórahá

óothóra

Judaism [óo- (DEVOTIONto) + Thóra (loanword: Torah)]

óothórahá

ozheshu

study of the teachings of Jesus of Nazareth [o- (STUDYof) + Zhesu (Jesus of Nazareth)]

ozheshuhá

óozheshu

Christianity [óo- (DEVOTIONto) + Zhesu (Jesus of Nazareth)]

óozheshuhá

Of course, any of these religion words can be modified with the suffix "-á" (DOER) to indicate a scholar of or devotee of the religion, as seen in the third in each set above. In addition, the words "ohá" (scholar) and "óohá" (devotee; worshiper) follow the pattern of "ehá" (scientist). You'll also note several religion-specific loanwords used to form the above: buda (buddha; capitalized when referring to "the Buddha"); Muhamad (Muhammad); Thóra (Torah); Zhesu (Jesus of Nazareth).

Exercises

Translate the following into English.

1 Bóo humesh ra ne merahíya i melula dalaháath.

E: _____

2 Báa liyen ham bad yedeshaháa?

E: _____

3 Bí eril noshumáad babí naya withizh shamidetheháadim wa.

E: _____

4 Bí áhesh omá mewéedan bedihá áabeth menedebéháath wáa.

E: _____

5 Báadu lali aril dutha damaháam?

E: _____

6 Bí nime edethi ril edeláad onida Lahila Batheháa wa.

E: _____

In #1, did you have any difficulty with “humesh” (to cut) [hum (knife) + mesh (across)]?

Notice, in #2, that the embedded clause is the Subject of the sentence.

Also in #2, the verb “ham” (be present; there is/are) cannot be optional—even in the most informal settings. This is because any embedding begins with an auxiliary, if present, or a verb.

In #4, we see the embedded clause “mewéedan bedihá áabeth menedebe” (students read many books) as the Object of the verb “áhesh” (to be responsible). It should be noted in the definition of “áhesh”: that, if it takes an Object, the thing or person over or for which/whom the Subject is responsible is that Object.

In #6, we see the pronoun used to carry case suffixes for Lahila (the Holy One) is traditionally “Ba” (XLove1); it is also capitalized, as befits a deity.

Change the embedded sentence/question into a relative clause; translate into English before and after.

7 Báa dom hu marithu eril shóod wohéeda wowithidehéth?

E: _____

L: _____

E: _____

8 Bí héeya onin rilrili delishe diháhéeth wáa.

E: _____

L: _____

E: _____

9 Bí eril láad halá them ehá denethehéth oyinan wa.

E: _____

L: _____

E: _____

10 Bí ril lothel ehená mebú nedeloth beyenehé wa.

E: _____

L: _____

E: _____

11 Báa lhitharil Elízabeth rilrili menasháad meworabalin woheshá nedebe miwithedehéth?

E: _____

L: _____

E: _____

12 Bí ulanin imá meynom wethehé wáa.

E: _____

L: _____

E: _____

Embed the second sentence within the first sentence; translate into English before and after.

The asterisk-marked *noun/noun phrase* is the same in both sentences. Example: “Bíi néde eb Átheni *yu*th wehede wa” (Anthony wants to buy fruit from the store) and “Melaya i memeénan *yu*” (The fruit are red and sweet) give “Bíi néde eb Átheni melaya i memeénan yuháath wehede wa,” (Anthony wants to buy the fruit that are red and sweet from the store).

13 Bíi ul dithed Wílem *woháya woduthahá*dim wáa.

Lalom i amedara *duthahá* wa.

E: _____

L: _____

E: _____

14 Bíi eril wod *rul* urahusha ihé wa.

Bíi rilrili nahóoha *rul* rahadihad wo.

E: _____

L: _____

E: _____

15 Báa láadom Méri *lom*eth *hi*?

Bíi eril el hoshem Máyel betha *lom*eth *hi* wa.

E: _____

L: _____

E: _____

16 Bíi aril elash Ána *amedarahá*dan buzheya obée wáa.

Bíi ril nosháad *amedarahá* eba bethoden wáa.

E: _____

L: _____

E: _____

17 Bóo duheb ne laleth *woyide woháwith*eda.

Bíi thi ra *áwith* ditheth waá.

E: _____

L: _____

E: _____

18 Bíi aril ban edin letha anath ledim *bin*enan *bim* wa.

Bíi ril methóhel thul letha *bin*eth *bim* boshenan wa.

E: _____

L: _____

E: _____

In #15, did you note the English idiom “to write a song?” In Láadan, the idiom would be “to make a song.” The verb would be “el” rather than “thod.” The same would hold true for a story or a book.

Translate the following into Láadan.

19 The child stroked the yellow dog that dwelt beneath the old bridge.

L: _____

20 I promise I’ll agree to music with the farmer who traveled from a far country.

L: _____

21 Someone who stays at home may be a housekeeper.

L: _____

22 My friend knows these-many worshipers who intended to go to the park.

L: _____

23 I shall bring a meal of fish and vegetable to several who bought ugly furniture.

L: _____

24 Botanists working with roses in the forest are cooperating with zoologists gathered in the plain for the purposes of understanding.

L: _____

#24 may be a bit unfair; there are two separate embedded clauses standing in for simpler case phrases.

Answers

- 1 Prithee do not cut the plants that are large and purple.
- 2 Is the mineral that is in the valley green? OR Is the valley that the mineral is in green?
- 3 The bird arrived by air at (finished flying to) the person who was caring for the domestic animal. OR The bird arrived by air at (finished flying to) the domestic animal that the woman was caring for.
- 4 The teacher is responsible for students who read many books. OR The teacher is responsible for the many books that the students read.
- 5 (POESY) Is rain the touch that will heal (asked poetically)?
- 6 The family that believes in the Holy One is willing to share. OR The Holy One the family believes in is willing to share.
- 7 Does the ruler of the island remember that the holy man was busy?
Báa dom hu marithu shóod wohéeda wowithideháath?
Does the ruler of the island remember the holy man who was busy?
- 8 The nurse fears lest the speaker may cry.
Bíi héeya onin rilrili delishe diháháath wáa.
The nurse fears the speaker who may be crying.
- 9 The worker saw that the scientist needed help.
Bíi eril láad halá them ehá denetheháath oyinan wa.
The worker saw the scientist who needed help. OR The worker saw the help that the scientist needed.
- 10 The philosopher knows that some (many) facts are hard to understand.
Bíi ril lothel ehená mebú nedeloth beyeneháath wa.
The philosopher knows some (many) facts that are hard to understand.
- 11 Does Elizabeth worry that several young sailors may depart from the city?
Báa lthitharil Elízhabeth rilrili menasháad meworabalin woheshá nedebe miwithedeháath?
Does Elizabeth worry about the several young sailors who may depart from the city?
- 12 The traveler studies whether the roads are safe.
Bíi ulanin imá meyom wethéháath wáa.
The traveler studies the roads that are safe.
- 13 William hopes to call the beautiful healer. The healer sings and dances.
Bíi ul dithed Wílem lalom i amedara woháya woduthaháadim wáa.
William hopes to call the beautiful healer who sings and dances.
- 14 The cat sat in front of the gate. The cat may never tire.
Bíi eril wod rilrili nahóoha rul rahadihadeháa urahusha ihé wa.
The cat who may never tire sat in front of the gate.
- 15 Does Mary recognize this song? Michael's grandchild wrote this song.
Báa láadom Méri eril el hoshem Máyel betha lomehóotheháath?
Does Mary recognize this song that Michael's grandchild wrote?
- 16 Anna will play with (pleasurably) the dancer during the convention. The dancer is arriving now with her spouse.
Bíi aril elash Ána ril nosháad amedaraháhóo eba bethodeneháadan buzheya obée wáa.
Anna will play with (pleasurably) the dancer—who is arriving, now, with her spouse—during the convention.
- 17 Prithee try to buy milk for the hungry baby. The baby has, so I've heard but I don't believe it, no voice.
Bóo duheb ne laleth thi ra woyide woháwith dithetheháada.
Prithee try to buy milk for the hungry baby who has no voice.
- 18 My cousin will give me food using four bowls. My parents have, just now, made the four bowls out of wood.
Bíi aril ban edin letha anath ledim ril methóhel thul letha binethehóoth bim boshenaneháanan wa.
My cousin will give me food using the four bowls my parents have just now made out of wood.
- 19 Bíi eril lámála háawith habelid woléli wolanemid worabun wohoódóosha yileháath wáa.
- 20 Bé aril dihem alehale le eril im ábedá wothed woshishidebethedeháaden.
- 21 Bíi rilrili benem beye betheshaháa elodám wa.
- 22 Bíi ril an lan letho eril menédeshub mesháad óohá hinehóo heshehothedimeháath wáa.
- 23 Bíi aril bel le meheb womodi womo beyezheháadim anadaeth thilithu i medathu wa.
- 24 Bíi mezheshub mehal edalahá shahinanan olineshaháa i melolin emidá raboshaháa enewan wáa.