

Lesson 44

Embedded Sentences

Vocabulary

dithem	to beg [di (speak) + them (need)] {AB}
-hé	Suffix (embedded clause): Sentence Embedding marker
olowod	group [wod (sit)]
ruhob	to be deep
ume	to be full; to be abundant
zhazh	airplane
zhedi	agree in word [zhe (same) + di (speak)] {AB}
zheláad	consense; agree in perception [zhe (same) + láad (perceive)] {AB}
zhelith	agree in thought [zhe (same) + lith (think)] {AB}
zheshub	cooperate; agree in deed [zhe (same) + shub (do)] {AB}

Embedded Declarative Sentences

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 sentence puts the verb (or auxiliary) as the first element in its clause. When we’re hearing or reading a 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 the 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 (Anna have a pearl) that is the Subject of “oth.” Of course, the Subject suffix (“-Ø”) is already present on the “-hé.”

Note:

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]jehé 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]jehé 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:

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.

Bíi lothel le úwanú zho babí wa.

Bíi lothel le [zho babí]héwan wa.

Bíi lothel le úwáanú zho babí wa.

Bíi lothel le [zho babí]héwáan wa.

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Exercises

Translate the following into English.

- 1 Bii ril lith le lamith lan netho zhazh bethothehé wa.
- 2 Bii eril dam ra Máthu rahowa anahé wáa.
- 3 Baa en bebáa merahéthe mudahé?
- 4 Bii eril láad ezha oyinan théshumáad babíhé wa.
- 5 Bii eril shóo shebasheb yáanin wemaneyahé wa.
- 6 Bii lothel wohim woduthahá mebalin obeth nethohé wáa.
- 7 Bii ril néde háawith aril naham rohoro bishibenalehé wa.
- 8 Bii lishid owehá eril lámála withid rulethehé wáa.
- 9 Bóo dom di ne omá nethodim aril methad mesháad ra lezh sheshihothedim wumaneyahé.
- 10 Bii eríli thod wothá meyime romid úshahú menime mehóomasháad ra shamidehé wáa.

I'm sure you had no trouble with “**rahéthe**” in #3. From “**ra-**” (NON) + “**éthe**” (be clean), “**rahéthe**” means “**be dirty**”.

Also 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).

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.

In #8, did the word “**owehá**” give you any trouble? Remember, “**owe**” means “**garment**.” A “**doer**” or “**maker**” of a garment would be a “**seamstress**” or a “**tailor**.” “**owehá**.”

1 En:

2 En:

3 En:

4 En:

5 En:

6 En:

7 En:

8 En:

9 En:

10 En:

Note

Translate the following into Láadan.

- 11 The gardener warned us that the berries were bitter.
- 12 The farmer promised that the baby kittens would stay warm.
- 13 Did the story teach us that the fledgelings were not afraid?
- 14 The mendicant asked for money as her dog has ticks.
- 15 The scientist believes that the flowers are fragrant.
- 16 The nurse is worried that Margaret’s mother may not be well.
- 17 Is it important that the philosopher is singing a song now?
- 18 The songwriter begged all her children to study hospitality in order to have full lives.
- 19 The group agree that the roots of the plant are deep in the earth.
- 20 Aren’t you anticipating the horse giving birth to two foals?

In #14, did you have any trouble with “mendicant?” “Mendicant” is a high-register word for “beggar:” “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).

Did you have trouble with “hospitality” in #18? Consider: “hospitality” is the science of making guests welcome; try “ethóo.” Along with that comes “ethóohá” (host(ess)).

In #20, did you successfully form a word for “foal?” Think “infant horse:” “áhomid.”

- 11 La: _____
- 12 La: _____
- 13 La: _____
- 14 La: _____
- 15 La: _____
- 16 La: _____
- 17 La: _____
- 18 La: _____
- 19 La: _____
- 20 La: _____

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 Pray 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 Bii eril dibée délahá lezhedim mersusho dalathamehé wa. 12 Bii eril dibé ábedá mendahowa áruléhé(th) wa. 13 Báa eril om dedide lezhedim mehéya ra yáababihé(th)? 14 Bii dibóo dithemá losheth thi lanemid betho uhudemidethehéwán wa. 15 Bii edeláad ehá mehábá mahinahé(th) wá. 16 Bii lhitharil onin rilrili tháa ra thul Mázhareth betahé(th) wá. 17 Báa oth ril lalom ehena lomethéhé? 18 Bii eril dithem lomá mehulanin shem betha woho ethóthehé(th) mewohume wowiwan wá. 19 Bii zhelith olowod meruhob dol dalatha donisha wi. 20 Báa lhitharil ra ne aril wóoban omid áhomideth shinehé(th)?