

Lesson 68

Advanced Degree Markers

The degree-markers we've seen up 'til now are all Neutral Degree Markers. They state a degree—without any judgment; they don't indicate an emotional response to that degree. There are also Degree Markers that convey, along with the degree, an emotional response. There is a set that conveys an approving response (“in favor of”) and another set that conveys a disapproving response (“opposed to”).

Vocabulary

Neutral Degree Markers

We've seen these already. They're presented here for the sake of completeness.

-hel	to a trivial degree; slightly	
-hil	to a minor degree; rather; somewhat	
-∅	no lexicalized information about degree	
-hal	to an unusual degree; quite	
-hul	to an extreme degree	also negative: to a violent degree
-hálish	to an extraordinary degree	

Interrogative Degree Marker

-hába	“to what degree”; “how VERB” {AB}
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Approving Degree Markers

-théle	to a pleasing degree; fine
-thíle	to a more-than-pleasing degree; excellent
-thúul	to an extraordinarily pleasing degree; magnificent
-thúle	to the furthest degree of pleasingness possible; perfect

Disapproving Degree Markers

-shéle	to a troublesome degree	also neutral or positive: much	-hele
-shíle	to a severe degree	also neutral or positive: great	-híle
-shúul	to an intolerable degree		-húle
-shúle	special emergency form: unbearable to a degree that would cause catastrophic events such as suicide; a signal for immediate help		-shúle

Among the Disapproving Degree Markers above, the far-right-hand column presents Suzette Haden Elgin's unpublished versions of these markers. They were clearly a work-in-progress since, with the addition of any suffix, most of them would be indistinguishable from Neutral Degree Markers. The second generation undertook to make the Disapproving Degree Markers more distinctive by modelling them on the Approving markers.

Notes

Another aspect of these unpublished forms is the crossover where some Disapproving Degree Markers can be used in a neutral or Approving sense, and some Neutral markers can be used in a Disapproving sense. While it is possible to interpret an utterance in Láadan as positive or negative based upon Mood Suffixes or First- or Second-Declension emotion words, these are more impressions than clear markers. For this reason, these usages will not be put forward in these lessons.

Examples

Neutral

Bíi íthihel yáanin wa.	The tree is trivially tall.
Bíi íthihil yáanin wa.	The tree is tall to a minor degree.
Bíi íthi yáanin wa.	The tree is tall (to unspecified degree).
Bíi íthihal yáanin wa.	The tree is unusually tall.
Bíi íthihul yáanin wa.	The tree is extremely tall.
Bíi íthihálish yáanin wa.	The tree is extraordinarily tall.

Interrogative

Báa ralóolo memazh?	Is the train fast?
Báa ralóolohába memazh?	How fast is the train?

Note that, with the presence of the interrogative degree marker, the Type-of-Sentence word “**Báa**” becomes redundant. It is still grammatically correct, but is not required.

Approving

Bíi áya math wa.	The building is beautiful (to unspecified degree).
Bíi áyathéle math wa.	The building is beautiful to a pleasing degree.
Bíi áyathíle math wa.	The building is beautiful to an excellent degree.
Bíi áyathúul math wa.	The building is beautiful to a magnificent degree.
Bíi áyathúle math wa.	The building is beautiful to a perfect degree.

Disapproving

Bíi éeya le wa.	I'm sick (to an unspecified degree).
Bíi éeyashéle le wa.	I'm troublesomely sick (<i>sniffles and a low-grade fever, but I'm gonna be okay</i>).
Bíi éeyashíle le wa.	I'm severely sick (<i>muscle aches, fever, and a nasty cough; nevertheless, I expect to recover fully</i>).
Bíi éeyashúul le wa.	I'm intolerably sick (<i>can't get out of bed amid the coughing, sneezing, fever, muscle aches, and exhaustion; I do expect to recover, but it may be a while</i>).
Bíi éeyashúle le wa.	I'm sick unto death (<i>I don't know where I picked up this virus, but my lungs feel like they're full of goo; I just hope the hospital has enough ventilators....</i>).

Note that any Disapproving Degree Marker when applied to a stative verb (in English, an adjective) can be translated into English as being “**too...**” in some degree.

Not

Exercises

Translate the following into English.

- 1 Bii aril shoo shun wodidethile woháasháaleya aril wáa.
- 2 Bii eril shudeshíle onida letha wa; mehabelid lan wohíyashéle woshodesha shin neda.
- 3 Bée loláad eduthahá zharashúleth beróo eril shebasheb áwith radóon bethowáan wáa.
- 4 Báa owahába Anib wohan woHalishónisha? Owathéle e owashúul be?
- 5 Bii eríli dibó i hudi worawoth wohuhid mehel with lhebetho wohóyathúul wodéelath lhebedáahé wáa.
- 6 Bii mezhedi yodá abathúle bal i abathúul thulanahé wa.
- 7 Bii eril búshéle dadem mudathu eshesha nil wa.
- 8 Bíide eril shumáad áalaá íthiháalishenal, id shumáad be heb; medibithim háawith beth úyahú rahíthithélenal be wa.
- 9 Bii rahíyashíle woliyen woháabe wi; báa shoshúul be íi?
- 10 Bii eril redeb ewithá eríli mehel wíitham mewohéedahul wothodehóo menedebe hathóolethameya thobeboó erileháa wáa.

In #3, of course you had no trouble with “radóon” (be incorrect; error) [ra- (NON) + dóon (be correct)].

In #5, did you note “hudi” (decree) [hu (ruler; boss) + di (speak)]? This is also one of the Láadan words that translate the English word “law”. “Hudi” refers to laws put in force by civic rulers; there’s also “thamedi” for laws put in force by religious authority. The third, “nalabesh” [nal (MANN) + abesh (all-that-is)], refers to so-called “laws” such as gravity that are simply features of the physical universe rather than laws imposed by human agency.

In #7, did you note that the Láadan is ambiguous (just as is the English translation) as to whether there’s *a pig in a boat in a picture* or *a pig in a picture in a boat*? Can you craft a Láadan sentence that resolves this ambiguity? Try “Bii eril búshéle dadem ham muda eshesha nileháathu wa,” (The picture of the pig that was in a boat was troublesomely odd) or “Bii eril búshéle ham dadem mudathuhé eshesha nil wa,” (It was troublesomely odd that there was a picture of a pig in the boat).

- 1 E: _____
- 2 E: _____
- 3 E: _____
- 4 E: _____
- 5 E: _____
- 6 E: _____
- 7 E: _____
- 8 E: _____
- 9 E: _____
- 10 E: _____

Translate the following into Láadan.

- 11 This cake is severely (too) sweet; the pie is sweet to an excellent degree.
- 12 Aunt Margaret enjoys needleworking to a fine degree.
- 13 How sour are the berries?
- 14 My pillow is downy to an excellent degree, but it's slightly too (troublesomely) firm.
- 15 The sky yesterday was perfectly blue and fleecy-clouded to a fine degree.
- 16 Mary's beautiful sibling was intolerably tired; she severely needed to sleep.
- 17 Your cat is perfectly well; she jumps magnificently and plays unusually vigorously.
- 18 The dentist hurt me troublesomely, but I wasn't troublesomely afraid.
- 19 The nurse felt shame-beyond-what-she-could-live-with at the death of a baby; the baby's parents and grandparents all showed her compassion (despite), and they think she'll survive.
- 20 This classroom (magnificently) is much more wonderfully clean than my home (excellently).

In #12, you may have noticed we haven't got a verb "to enjoy." In Láadan we convey this meaning by saying, as in this example, "needleworking pleases Aunt Margaret." In the answer, the Object suffix for the name "Mázhareth"—applied to the title "Berídan" (Aunt)—is in parentheses because it's optional; it would be nonsense to say "Aunt Margaret greatly pleases needleworking."

In #18, did you have any difficulty with the verb "to hurt" used in a transitive sense? Beyond "olob" (blow/trauma; to strike/injure)—a connotative difference not found in the English—we don't have one, but we can say "cause to feel pain."

In #19, did you find a way to form the concept of "to survive"? Try "to continue to be alive."

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

Notes Not

