

LangTime Chat, Episode 45

Translation as a Language-Expanding Exercise

SPOILER ALERT!

This document contains my final translations, which I am in the process of creating and brainstorming in the podcast. You are welcome to look at this first, but if you want to hear my thought processes before seeing the outcome, then make sure you listen to the episode before looking through this document. The translations are ordered to match the discussion in the podcast.

The romanization strategy I use for Zhwadi follows what you'd probably expect from our LangTime endeavors, but you will see a couple diacritics throughout:

- ♥ Macrons indicate long vowels: *ā*, *ī*, *ū*. Long vowels only occur in stressed syllables.
- ♥ Stress typically falls on the penultimate syllable. When it doesn't, stress is marked. If the stressed vowel is long, it is marked with the macron as stated above. If a short vowel carries the stress in a syllable other than the penultimate one, it is marked with an acute accent. So *neshkó* and *merizī* have final stress, and *vídamas* has initial stress (or antepenultimate stress, if you count from the other side).

Back-up Plan B

“We create joy together. I love you always and forever.”

Anzhwám neshkó lodavida. Zuzhwám lez mezīdi le vīdamas le ughezón.

Joy as-one we-create. Love to-you always and forever and I-will-give.

NOTES:

- ♥ I decided to go with a different strategy for “together.” Way back in Season 1, David showed an example from a language where a negator is used to mean “like” or “as.” The sentence he used to explain it was something like “The rabbit—not a cannonball—broke through the stump.” It’s like saying the stump blew apart as though a cannonball did it, but it was actually a rabbit. So the rabbit broke through the stump like a cannonball. I really liked that and decided to incorporate it when comparing one noun to another. To create that form, I used these pieces:
 - ♥ I created *nesh* “one” to go with the idea of using “one” as the root.
 - ♥ I created the verb *kwola* “to want,” which is then extended to mean “to lack” and then grammaticalized as a negator for nouns (e.g. “not a rabbit”).
 - ♥ “Together” is *neshkó* or “as one, like one.”
- ♥ I had already created a comitative postposition (*le*, which ultimately comes from the verb “to hug”), so I decided to use that as a coordinator—when it is a coordinating conjunction, it is repeated after each phrase being joined.
- ♥ I went with the already-created form *merīs* for path and created the reduced adverb “always” from the fuller phrase *merizīm di* “beyond paths.”
- ♥ The word for “forever” comes from the fuller phrase *avidam mas* “throughout a lifetime.”

Back-up Plan A

“My love is deeper than the holler
And longer than the song of a whippoorwill.”

Wo zuzhwá zasró, chanedīm zhukí
ajú pirka zuzhá, jema avwíl luwílam zhukí.

1sg love it-drops, holler more-than
and long it-is, night songbird song more-than

NOTES:

- ♥ I created the verb *asró* “to sink, to lower, to drop” as the verb to use in lieu of “is deeper” in the first line.
- ♥ I created the noun *nyetu* “baby” as the source for the diminutive prefix *ne(t)-*, which appears in the noun *chanedīm* “holler” (lit. “baby valley”).
- ♥ I went with the applicative strategy and then reduced the full “over-shine” verb to the comparative *zhukí* “more than.”
- ♥ The coordinating conjunction is a reduction of the phrase “it sews” (*chajún*).
- ♥ If something is long temporally, then it is referred to as being tall. So *pirka* is both tall and long.
- ♥ Nominal modifiers and possessors (in inalienable constructions) appear before the noun they modify and are not marked for case. You can see that in the phrase *jema avwíl luwílam*, where only *luwílam* “song” occurs with the accusative *-m*.
- ♥ I specifically chose to place the comparative phrase at the end of the clause to postpose it and draw attention to it, making it match the feeling of the original text. Otherwise, the verb would typically appear at the end (i.e. *Wo zuzhwá chanedīm zhukí zasró*).

Ultimate Goal

“My love is deeper than the holler
Stronger than the river
Higher than the pine trees growing tall upon the hill
My love is purer than the snowflakes
That fall in late December
And honest as a robin on a springtime window sill
And longer than the song of a whippoorwill.”

Wo zuzhwá zasró, chanedīm zhukí
Zughīz, sherīsam zhukí
Kratika swokūm zhu zuzhá, kori pirka bevolam mas akyuni
Wo zuzhwá duna zukī, meghlafóm zhukí
Kori evbó, ihraya dimidam mas
Ajú duna zworī, akeza ra, chedam mas dineshulez
Ajú pirka zuzhá, jema avwíl luwilam zhukí.

1sg love it-drops, holler more-than
it-flows, river more-than
needle trees over is, that tall hill on they-grow
1sg love pure it-shines, snowflakes more-than
that they-fall, morning winter during
and pure it-sings, robin until, spring during window-locative
and long it-is, night songbird song more-than

NOTES:

- ♥ I made it!!! Throughout, you can see some lexical decisions I made, so here I am just going to focus on a few points.
- ♥ I went with the equative construction being based on the postposition *ra* “until, up to,” which you can see in *akeza ra*. In that phrase, I actually just used the word for “bird” (*aké*)—since robins are so typical in the area, it makes sense that the generic word *aké* would be used to refer to them. Another option would have been to use the form *avwilez* “songbird.” Since it is used in the next line, though, I chose to stick with *akeza*.
- ♥ I turned the participial phrase into a full relative clause because it worked better for the structure.
- ♥ One of my favorite phrases is *ihraya dimida*, which literally translates as “morning winter” and is used to mean “early winter.”