Dìehugukuólshi Gimáuginguzigu

Hée, ushuguváhirotori akéoshin hoshutháshin Gimáuginguzigu hé. Náa hé anáihalishashìe kusekolshshikáhakùora, háa andulshishásuòvi. Rhrúk lutàomnishgukúshohalùishashte, "Andihanishièkithávi, hiìéla Aìána thithákithineszhe. Náa, dìehinoshthivìithóvìi gifkàikótokùihaì, eùnìikóshovùishte hií?"

Háa hìehulshishálaù lulshikúshotùuloshte, "Uá gingáuzi, dìehunoshthivùuthóvuù gifkìikuótovùuhaì tií? Róu sùukuìé! Kutáomnishkukáura, náa lùukúushivùishte láidièhùishte."

Rhrúk lugukúshohalùishashte, "Náa shíi, mneráiki errinvátivisk, déi làikuìédièhùishte hií?"

Hìehuthosholnshishálaù lulshikúshotùuloshte, "Shíi uá, errunvátukusk tií? Róu úng lùunrruìétushte! Háa kutàomnishkukáura, rhrúk làurhruótuvùushte."

Ué kutàomnishgukára Gimáuginguzigu hé, lugukúshohalùishashte, "Náa shíi, làikótikùishte eùnisàokikóshovùishte hií?"

Rhrúk lulshikúshotùuloshte, "Déi eùnàurhrúshokùushte lóanonshte hé." Náa vethulshikáre, ulkulshirúgugefkoheret. Úk náa sulshishúgulomiske, róu lugukúshohalùishashte, "Eùnisàokikóshovùishte hií?"

Lulshikúshotùuloshte "Shíi molaàrùuvá!"

Náa úk tulshikúgumishloshkulkùo úk lugukúshohalùishashte "Eùnisàokikóshovùishte hií?"

Róu úk tulshikúguhakoguòlkùo úk lugukúshohalùishashte "Eùnisàokikóshovùishte hií?"

Róu úk tulshikúgugorhrokalkùo úk lugukúshohalùishashte "Eùnisàokikóshovùishte hií?"

Róu úk tulshikúguserroguòlkùo úk lugukúshohalùishashte "Eùnisàokikóshovùishte hií?"

Ué lulshikúshotùuloshte, "Núk náa, róu molaàrùuvá Gimáugu!" Róu haktulshikúguzhehosk halulshikúgoshùinra.

Núk shteshtelugukúshohalùishashte, "Eùnisàokikóshovùishte hií?" kushinsháguhokùonara!

Old Hare Wants to Marry

He was hiding beside the source of a raging river, that Hare. And there came a woman along the path to the spring, aye, and she started to dance (because she knew she would catch him). Then he said to her from his hiding place, "You beautiful dancer, your eyes are like the Moon. Oh, if I asked you to marry me, what would you say?"

Then she laughed and she said to him, "Oh, you old one, you wish to ask me to marry you? Very well! Come out from your hiding place, and speak the vow.

Then he said to her, "Oh, but I don't know your name. How can I say the vow?"

She laughed again, and she said to him, "Oh my, you don't know it? You must say it! Well then, come out from your hiding place, and I will tell you."

Ah! So that Hare came out from his hiding place, and he said to her, "Ah, but, if I ask you to marry me, how will you answer?"

And then she said to him, "Well, I will answer like this." And with that she turned into a wolf and bit into his throat (killing him). But then as she was skinning him, ah! He said to her, "How will you answer?"

She said to him, "Oh, you are noisy!"

But when she pierced him through the heart, he said "How will you answer?"

Even when she pierced him through the lung, he said "How will you answer?"

Even when she pierced him through the stomach, he said "How will you answer?"

Even when she pierced him through the liver, he said "How will you answer?"

Finally, she said "Oh, you are certainly noisy, Hare!" And then she cut off his head and threw it into the river.

Ah! But it kept on saying and saying, "How will you answer?" even as it was carried downstream!

Notes on the Text

I opted to translate this text as a retelling—that is, if a feayr storyteller heard the previous text, this is one way she might adapt it to tell over the fire to her packmates. I had to add a few details in order to make it fit the conventions of the oral tradition.

This story falls into the *myth* genre of Feayran storytelling—the characters involved are typically mythic hero figures referred to by species (Gimáugu hé, That Hare), although some feayr are often involved too (in this case, the woman). The story is not set in a specific locale, and its purpose is usually to entertain. Crucial events in myths always come in sets of five (in this text, the woman attempts to silence Hare by piercing four organs before finally removing his head).

While the text I received was haunting and solidly creepy, to a feayr pack this story would actually be quite hilarious. "A trick is pulled on an old man" is a very common archetype for a joke-story, as is "an old man does something foolish," both of which occur in this text. The first instance of humor occurs at the end of the second sentence:

háa andulshishásuòvi
háa   and<u-lsh;i-sh-á-s<uò>>vi
HAA   dance<LEAD-FEM;FOLLOW.S-IMPF-INTR-AUX<LAT.INAN>>
Aha, she began dancing for some purpose.

The incorporated auxiliary as a lative argument (*-suò-*) marks the verb as occurring to accomplish something else. One interesting aspect of Feayran humor is that being funny does not rely on a "punchline" or surprise twist—everyone in the pack knows just about all the stories that are told, and so no one is surprised by the developments. Rather, cues like the above phrase function as cues for laughter, because everyone (already knowing how this story turns out) knows *why* the woman is dancing—she is trying to trick Hare out of his hiding place so she can have a meal—and trickery is one of the most common cues for humor. (The interjection *háa* increases this effect—it indicates speaker knowledge regarding something, the knowledge here being "we all understand what she was dancing for.")

The humor of the trick is enhanced by Hare's own behavior. He plays the societally clumsy Fool which is the butt of many a Feayran joke-story.

Delivery of the mateship vow is not taken lightly—there are unfortunate consequences for males who deliver the vow and are then rejected by their intended mates. However, it is considered rather shameful to try and cheat by confirming the female's response before actually committing oneself. Hare displays further foolishness by being so infatuated with the woman that he would give the vow to her before even learning her name.

The crowning jewel, however, is Hare's refusal to admit (or perhaps notice) that he has been rejected. Here we see the five-point repetition that occurs in all Feayran myths: Hare continues to pursue the woman even as she is skinning him, then piercing his heart, lung, stomach, and liver. Finally the woman's only recourse for dealing with the noisy meal that can't take a hint is to hurl his head into the river, but even then Hare keeps trying to secure his promise of mateship.

Grammar Notes

Feayran is a verb-heavy polysynthetic language. Verbal morphology is templatic, usually with the following structure (items in parentheses are not obligatory for all verbs):

pre-stem + STANCE + (INC1) + (AGENT) + (NEG) + ASPECT + VOICE.MOOD + (PATIENT) + (INC2) + (post-stem)

However, verbs with a first or second-person AGENT and nothing in the (INC1) position (in the text, these occur only in dialogue) follow this form:

pre-stem + STANCE.PERSON.NUMBER + (NEG) + ASPECT + VOICE.MOOD + (PATIENT) + (INC2) + (post-stem)

Nouns adhere to the following template:

pre-stem + (STANCE) + (INC1) + STANCE.CASE.NUMBER + (INC2) + post-stem

Pre-stem and post-stem refer to the two parts of any semantically-heavy root. One of these parts may be null for a particular root. In the word list, the division between the two is indicated by an asterisk.

(INC1) and (INC2) indicate the two sites within the verb or noun where noun roots may be incorporated. Verbs can only incorporate one root into each site--the first site may contain either an **ablative** argument or a **viative** argument, while the second site may contain either a **locative** argument or a **lative** argument.

Other relevant points about morphology are discussed in the specific grammar points below.

The person who followed me in a previous relay reported some trouble with dissecting some of the honkin' big verb constructs, so this time I thought I'd provide some tips:

– In this passage, every monosyllabic word is either an interjection, particle, or conjunction.

– Everything else is either a noun or a verb.

–   Every word contains exactly one vowel marked with an acute accent. In verbs, this vowel (or the vowel cluster containing it) is always the VOICE.MOOD inflection. In nouns, this vowel/vowel cluster is always the STANCE.CASE.NUMBER inflection.

–   Once you identify a verb's VOICE.MOOD inflection, finding the ASPECT and NEGative inflections is simple. (However, note that at least once in the text, an incorporated root in the INC1 position places an *-n-* immediately before the verb's ASPECT, so at first glance the verb looks negated, when actually it is not.)

–   Identifying AGENT/PATIENT markers and incorporated roots can be a little trickier, since sometimes parts of incorporated roots can look like AGENT/PATIENT markers that aren't actually present. The word list should help with this.

–   Gemination, written with doubled consonants, can only occur at the boundaries of incorporated roots. Note that <rr> is a digraph, not a geminate.

–   Whenever incorporating a root causes two vowel clusters to fall adjacent to each other, an epenthetic <h> is inserted between them.

–   Whenever incorporating a root causes a vowel sequence of C-liquid-C, the first two consonants metathesize, forming liquid-C-C. This can form some discontinuous morphemes, so it's a little weird. This occurs (if my count is correct) twice in the text.

Useful grammar points

"**Stance**" is a form of speech register whose finer nuances do not come into play much in this particular passage. For the purposes of this translation you can think of stance as animacy marking that also indicates societal dominance—individuals mark *leading* stance toward referents/listeners they are dominant over, and *following* stance toward referents/listeners they are submissive to.

Syntax is not used to mark grammatical functions in Feayran. Instead, words are arranged in decreasing order of newsworthiness. Words that occur earlier are more likely to signal topic shifts, focal points of information, surprising developments, etc.

In a rough sense, **interjections** divide the sentence into phrases, but these are more pragmatic than syntactic in nature. There is no theoretical limit to the number of verbs that can be strung together in a phrase, nor do they have to share arguments or abide by any overt subordination rules.

Managing relationships between entities is handled primarily by Feayran's **noun class system**. Class membership is flexible, and the entities within a conversational space are usually all tagged with different stance+class markers. This means that once a particular stance+class marker has been used to refer to a particular person or thing, you can assume that any future occurrences of the same marker refer to the same person/thing until the marker is explicitly reassigned (with the exception of the *-sho-* marker, which in dialogues usually indicates the thing which has just been said or is just about to be said).

Noun class markers each have two forms: an affix form, which is used for AGENT and PATIENT marking within verbs, and a pronominal form, which may be a freestanding or incorporated noun. However, whether the classifier is an affix or a pronoun, it is still considered the same marker for the purposes of the previous point.

Every freestanding noun must correspond to (or "be **anchored** by") a marking on a verb or other noun, whether an AGENT/PATIENT affix or an incorporated root, and must agree with this marking in stance. Additionally, nouns anchored by incorporated roots must agree in case, and nouns anchored by AGENT/PATIENT affixes must agree in number. Usually incorporated anchors are classifier pronouns agreeing with the freestanding noun's class, but appositive structures (where two unrelated roots, one incorporated and the other free, both refer to the same entity) can also fulfill the anchoring requirement for freestanding nouns. (This connection between noun roots can also occur between two incorporated roots rather than one incorporated and one free root; this is a common strategy for tying verbs together in phrases.) A typical appositive structure looks like the following:

Numnulkuváholsh inéosh

numn\<u-lk;u-v-á-\<o>l>sh   in\<éo>sh

sleep\<LEAD-MASC;LEAD.S-STAT-INTR-inside\<LOC.INAN>>   den\<LOC.INAN>

He is sleeping in the den.

Here, the freestanding noun *inéosh* is anchored by the incorporated noun *-ol-*. Both refer to the same thing, and they agree in stance and case.

Between noun class agreement, stance agreement, case agreement (in incorporated roots) and number agreement (in AGENT/PATIENT markers), it is usually clear which noun corresponds to each component of a given verb.

There is one instance of an **equative-case** noun in the text. Equative nouns are a little quirky compared to other nouns in that they do *not* agree with incorporated anchors in case. Equative nouns indicate that their anchor is "a thing which has the form of something else but is not that something else."

There is also one instance of a **proper noun** in the text. Proper nouns do not inflect at all, and so any necessary inflections are handled by juxtaposing the proper noun with a classifier pronoun which carries they noun's inflection. The whole appositive structure must still be anchored by a verbal marking or incorporated noun as usual.

The **definite article**, hé, is a little tricky to analyze--I haven't totally uncovered its behavior yet. As far as I can tell, it tags the preceding element as a point of conversational common ground, something the audience should be familiar with, or occasionally as a kind of intensifier. Note that it may refer to a subelement of the constituent it follows, such as the agent marked within the verb rather than the verb itself.

The interrogative particles *tií* and *hií* request confirmation or further information (respectively) about the immediately preceding word (or subelement of that word, if a noun or verb). The precise question being asked by *hií* (who, what, how, why, etc.) is determined by context.

Reciprocal voice is simply indicated by using the same marker for both AGENT and PATIENT on a verb.

The **auxiliary verb** *s** occurs in this text in two capacities: as a dummy verb used anaphorically to refer to a recently described action or state, and as an incorporated noun root. When *s** is incorporated as an ablative argument, it indicates that the verb is the result of something else or follows from something else. "In that case..." But when incorporated as a lative argument, it indicates that the verb is performed with some other purpose in mind, to bring about some other state of affairs.

The **subjunctive mood** is the generic irrealis mood, used for if-then statements or complements to requests.

Double negatives are used to mark necessity or obligation in Feayran. This is done by negating the verb internally with the *-n-* infix, and also externally with the *úng* particle.

Úng kùunkuìéra.

Úng   k<ùu-n-k-uìé>ra

not   go<2.LEAD.S-NEG-PERF-TR.PERM>

not   it is permissible that you not arrive

You are obligated to go

A note on **verbs involving body parts**: When something is being done to a particular part of a person/animal's body, or the part is being described, the typical structure is for the owner of the body part to be marked on the verb as PATIENT, and the body part in question incorporated in the locative case in the INC2 position. E.g.,

Ashuthálshisilomne

ash<u-th-á-lsh;i-sil<o>m>ne

white<LEAD-ESS-INTR-FEM;FOLLOW.S-hair<LOC.INAN>>

She has white hair.

Haktulshikúvusilom

hakt<u-lsh;i-k-ú-v;u-sil<o>m>

cut<LEAD-FEM;FOLLOW.S-PERF-TR-hair<LOC.INAN>>

She cut my hair.

There is one instance of **reduplication** in the text. Reduplication on verbs is one mechanism for indicating pluractionality, that an action was performed over and over and over again. Most typically, reduplication involves doubling the verb's pre-stem. However, in some cases reduplicated verbs duplicate the *post*-stem and place it in front of the pre-stem.

Cultural note: *láidièhùishte* refers to a ceremonial vow recited by males to propose marriage.

I've included two versions of the word-list: one is in approximate order of word appearance, the other is sorted alphabetically. Feel free to use whichever you prefer.

Freestanding Roots (order of appearance)

dièh* - mark, to marry (marker is AGENT, thing marked is PATIENT, material used to make mark at INC1 in viative case)

gim*gu - hare

ush*ri - hidden, hiding (hider is AGENT, thing hidden is PATIENT, place hidden at INC2 in locative case)

ak* - start, source

hosh*n - a strong flow of water, a powerful current

hé - see grammar notes

náa hé - introducing a point of agreement or familiarity

an*shiè - beauty, someone beautiful (may incorporate an additional identifying noun at INC2 in locative case)

k*ra – go (route at INC1 in viative case, destination at INC2 in lative case)

rhrúk - and then, next

l*shte - word, say (speaker is AGENT, thing spoken is PATIENT, addressee at INC2 in lative case; if speaker and addressee are in different locations, speaker's location may be incorporated as INC1 in ablative case)

and*vi – dance

h*la - classifier pronoun for things without a smell

Aìána - the moon (proper noun)

th*zhe - seen, visible (thing seen is PATIENT; see grammar notes about body parts)

náa - transitional interjection, "So..."

gifk*haì - request

tií - interrogative pronoun for yes/no questions, see grammar notes

róu - intensifier pronoun

s* - auxiliary verb; see grammar notes

náa shíi - interjection marking societal/circumstantial/nonphysical discomfort

mner* - name

err*sk - knowledge of a fact

déi - explanatory interjection

hií - interrogative pronoun for open questions, see grammar notes

hìeh*laù - laugh, laughter

shíi uá - interjection marking shock, concerned surprise

úng - negative particle, see grammar notes

háa - interjection indicating superior knowledge or understanding

ué - interjection calling attention to something important

eùn*shte - reply, answer to a message, question, or request (see vocab notes for *l*shte*)

veth*re - wolf, to turn into a wolf

ulk*ret - tooth, to bite (see grammar notes on body parts)

úk - contrastive particle, occurs before each contrasting/conflicting element in a list

s*ske - to peel, to remove the surface of (see grammar notes on body parts)

shíi - interjection marking pain, discomfort, concern, or annoyance

molaàr* - loud

t*lkùo - to stab, to pierce (see grammar notes on body parts)

hakt* - to cut, to sever (see grammar notes on body parts)

hal*ra - to throw

Incorporated Roots (order of appearance)

ging*zi - an old, senile person

ir*to - the space beside something

sh*n - a river

al*sha - classifier pronoun for a woman, or something smelling feminine

sek*sh - a trail

s* - auxiliary, see grammar notes

ak* - source, start

t*mnish - hiding place

an*shiè - beauty

th*nes - eye

n*shthi - a henna-like herb used for applying tattoos to a mated couple during the marriage

ceremony

k* - second person pronoun

v* - first person pronoun

t*lo - classifier pronoun for a small prey animal or something edible

dièh* - a marking, a sign; metaphorically, marriage

thosh*n - a recurrence

n*n - deictic demonstrative for something heard

gefk*he - neck, throat

l*mi - skin

mishl*shku - heart (the organ)

hak*guò - lung

gorhr*ka - stomach

serr*guò - liver

zheh*sk - head

ok*na - downstream, downriver, low tide

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t*mnish - hiding place

th*nes - eye

thosh*n - a recurrence

v* - first person pronoun

zheh*sk - head

STANCE morphemes:

u - speaker is in leading stance over listener

i - speaker is in following stance under listener

STANCE.PERSON.NUMBER morphemes:

ài, aì - first person, following stance toward listener

àu, aù - first person, leading stance toward listener

ìi, iì - second person, following stance toward listener

ùu, uù - second person, leading stance toward listener

AGENT/PATIENT onsets:

g- used for small prey animals, meat, or things smelling edible

sh- used for rivers, words, wind, birds, and other sources of information

lsh- used for females or things smelling feminine

k - second person

v - first person

t - used for traces, signs, and pieces of information

AGENT/PATIENT codas:

u - speaker in leading stance toward referent, singular number

i - speaker in following stance toward referent, singular number

ùu, ù - leading stance, plural number

ìi, ìi - leading stance, plural number

o - referent is inanimate, singular

NEGATIVE morpheme

n - see grammar notes

ASPECT morphemes

th - used for inherent traits of an object's identity

v - used for non-inherent or temporary traits

sh - imperfective, used for actions that are progressing toward a goal, just beginning, or happening repeatedly

k - perfective, signals a change of state, achievement of a goal, completion of a process

rr - less of an aspect and more of a modality, indicates strong certainty

rhr - less of an aspect and more of a modality, indicates conjecture, uncertainty, or volition

r - indicates a highly salient change or event

VOICE.MOOD morphemes

uó - transitive voice, desiderative mood, indicating a desire of the agent or patient

á - intransitive voice, indicative mood

ú - transitive voice, indicative mood

ó - transitive voice, subjunctive mood (see grammar notes)

uìé - transitive voice, permissive mood

áu - intransitive voice, imperative mood

úu - transitive voice, imperative mood

CASE.STANCE.NUMBER morphemes

áu - direct case, speaker in leading stance toward referent

ái - direct case, speaker in following stance toward referent

óa - direct case, referent is inanimate

éo - locative case, referent is inanimate

iìé - equative case, speaker is in following stance toward referent

CASE.STANCE morphemes for incorporated nouns

u - speaker in leading stance toward referent; viative case when incorporated root is in first position, locative when incorporated root is in second position

o - inanimate referent, viative in first position, locative in second position

i - speaker in following stance toward referent; viative in first position, locative in second position

ùo, uò - inanimate referent, lative case

ào, aò - inanimate referent, ablative case

ùi, uì - speaker in following stance, lative case

ùu, uù - speaker in leading stance, lative case