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Nadshedu: Constructing a Fictional Language

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The Grammar of Nadshedu

By Anna Steinhilber

History

The creatures that live in the forest called Nadsheki (lit. Place that gives life) are isolated from others of their kind. Over thousands of years, they have developed their own language called Nadshedu, a common language that merged from species-specific languages within the borders of Nadsheki.

True Nadshedu is near impossible for humans to speak due to the non-human speech anatomy of its primary speakers, so the language analyzed here is an approximation as used by the few humans who have learned it and can nevertheless be understood by the animal inhabitants. Nadshedu will be discussed here with this human perspective.

Phonology

The sounds of speech and how they pattern together are the foundation of language. As humans, natural variation in phonology exists between languages. Even within languages variation emerges as dialects. Due to the differences in the speech anatomy of its speakers, Nadshedu exhibits great variation in sounds between species dialects. Still, the majority of sounds are found in common. Keep in mind that these sounds are human approximations of the true speech sounds in Nadshedu.

Consonants

Consonants are the speech sounds that have some degree of obstruction in airflow through the speech articulators, compared to vowels which are unobstructed. Depending on the species speaking, Nadshedu uses several sets of consonants. The table below plots the place and manner of articulation of the speech sounds found in the language. Romanized representations of IPA symbols are included in (parentheses).

	Bilabial	Dental	Alveolar	Palato-alveolar	Velar	Glottal
Nasals	m		n		ŋ (ng)	
Stops	p b		t d		k g	ʔ (')
Affricates			ʈ (ts) s z	tʃ (ch) dʒ (j) ʃ (sh) ʒ (zh)		
Fricatives		θ (th)			x (xh)	h
Liquids			l ɹ (r)			

There are 22 consonants altogether, compared to the 24 in English. Nadshedu does not use the phonemes /f/, /v/, /ð/ (pronounced like the 'th' in 'them'), /w/, and /j/ (pronounced like the 'y' in 'yes') found in the English consonant inventory, but adds /ʈ/, /x/ (pronounced like the 'ch' in Scottish 'loch'), and /ʔ/ (pronounced like the pause in 'uh-oh').

Not all species in Nadsheki use the same consonant sets. For example, birds, turtles, and rodent (and lagomorphs) such as rabbits, mice, beavers, and squirrels, cannot produce the phonemes /p/ and /b/. Instead, these species produce [t] and [d] resulting in a word like /pas/, the underlying representation or

the speakers' abstract concept of the sounds, surfacing as [tas], the surface representation or how the sounds are pronounced in reality.

Snakes, frogs, and lizards are unable to produce /t/, /d/, and /tʃ/ and these phonemes surface as [k], [g], and [tʃ] (pronounced as the 'ch' in 'cheese'), respectively.

Birds, turtles, lizards, and frogs (but not snakes) are also incapable of the sound /θ/ (pronounced as the 'th' in 'thought'), so birds and turtles use [t] while lizards and frogs use [s].

Crows, specifically, are capable of producing all sounds that other birds cannot, due to their incredible mimicry abilities.

Rodents cannot produce /m/, and use [n] in its place.

All other species can produce all sounds.

Nadshedu used to use a more logographic system of writing, which has developed into an alphabet. Influences of these logographs are found within the alphabetic glyphs. The Nadshedu alphabet is purely consonantal, no vowels are represented. The consonants are seen here:

	Bilabial	Dental	Alveolar	Palato-alveolar	Velar	Glottal
Nasals	∩		∨		ϕ	
Stops	◊		≡ >		Υ ∟	◇
Affricates			†	◊		
Fricatives		λ	— γ	=	N	l
Liquids			∠ ††			

Vowels

Like the consonant sets, vowel sets in Nadshedu also have some variation.

	Front	Back
High	i	u
Low-mid	ε	ɔ
Low	a	

Birds, reptiles, and amphibians are unable to produce the rounded vowels /u/ (pronounced like in 'food') and /ɔ/ (pronounced like in 'caught' in some English dialects). Birds replace them with [i] (pronounced like in 'feet') and [ε] (pronounced like in 'head'), while reptiles and amphibians replace them with the unrounded versions [u] and [λ], which are found in their original languages.

Note that alternations in phones also occur among all speakers of the language. In certain environments, sounds change to fit with the sounds around them. An example of this in English is that /t/ and /d/ turn to the alveolar flap [ɾ] between vowels when the second vowel is unstressed.

'ladder' /lædər/ -> [læɾər/

A similar process occurs in Nadshedu, where between vowels, all unvoiced sounds (/p, t, s, etc./) become voiced in their surface representation.

/bukun/ (hill) → [bugun]

Syllables

Words in a language are formed of syllables, units of speech sounds that are patterned by consonants and vowels. This position of a sound within a syllable can affect its pronunciation. For example, in English, /l/ becomes velarized in a syllable final, called coda, position.

Nadshedu uses a CV(C) syllabic structure. The velar fricative [x], glottal fricative [h], and glottal stop [ʔ] are all found intervocalically, with the exception of word-initial [x]. Fricatives and/or affricates are not allowed to reside in sequence, for affixes that begin with a fricative or affricate, an [ɛ] is epenthesized between it and the word-final fricative. This epenthesis carries across word boundaries.

be'azh shusinchi (the frog jumped) /bɛ.ʔaʒ ju.sin.tʃi/ → [bɛ.ʔa.ʒɛ ju.zin.tʃi]

Certain syllables become emphasized within an utterance. This is called stress. Stressed syllables are often louder and longer than unstressed ones, and this can change the way a word sounds. In Nadshedu, stress is found on the second-to-last syllable, and vowels in stressed syllables are long. Single syllable words are unstressed. Thus, Nadshedu is a stress-timed language, the rhythm of an utterance relies on stressed syllables falling at regular intervals. This is compared to a syllabic-timed language such as French or Spanish, where syllables are not shortened or lengthened depending on the location of stress.

Morphology

The structure of a word may change to create new meaning or add information. This inflection most often comes in the form of affixes and/or sound changes.

Nadshedu is mostly what is called an agglutinative language. An agglutinative language takes morphemes, which are defined as the smallest unit of a word that contains meaning and joins them together to create longer words with different meaning. This is unlike an analytic language such as Mandarin, which only has one morpheme for each word. A fusional language is similar to an agglutinative language in that it joins morphemes, but these morphemes have more than one piece of information, like with Spanish, where a single morpheme on a verb might contain both tense and person, instead of having separate morphemes for each.

In Nadshedu, both nouns and verbs are inflected; nouns for case and plurality, and verbs for tense, aspect, and plural agreement.

Nouns

Nadshedu is a case language, meaning it uses inflectional markers to assign the placement of nouns in a sentence. The language makes use of five cases: the nominative, accusative, dative, genitive, and locative. The following examples show each of the case markers applied to the word **te'e**, meaning river.

The nominative case has zero marking and indicates a noun as the subject of a sentence. This subject is the person or thing that is the actor of a verb. In English, the subject is identified by the word order of a sentence, rather than with case.

te'e kubo
river-NOM move-PRES
The river flows.

The accusative case marks the direct object, being the person or thing that is the recipient of the action, in a transitive sentence. Nadshedu uses the suffix **-em (/ɛm/)**, or **-m** when there is a word-final vowel, to indicate the accusative case.

puchaku **te'em** jengichi
bear-NOM **river-ACC** find-PST
The bear found the river.

The dative case marks the indirect object, that is, the object that receives the direct object, in a ditransitive sentence. The suffix **-ek (/ɛk/)** or **-k** is used to assign the dative case.

ta nadem **te'ek** shelnez
3s.an-NOM place-ACC **river-DAT** dig-PRES
They dig the river a place.

The genitive case marks the modification of one noun by another noun, although it is usually used to express possession by a person or thing of either the subject or object of a sentence. It uses the suffix **-ith (/iθ/)** or **-th**.

te'eth deduno
river-GEN end-NOM
The river's end.

The locative case marks that the subject is either in or on the object. In Nadshedu, it can also be used metaphorically with respect to time. It takes the suffix **-esh (/ɛʃ/)** or **-sh**.

tenazhna **te'esh** xhine kim
fish-NOM **river-LOC** HAB life-V-PRES
The fish lives in the river.

These cases also apply to proper names.

tash **shitsutsoth** sitam xhing
that.inan-NOM **NAME-GEN** feather-ACC be-PRES
That is Shitsutso's feather.

Note that **tash** is the inanimate form of 'that'. The animate-inanimate distinction will be explained below in *Pronouns*. Nouns are categorized as either animate, semi-animate, or inanimate, which determines the pronouns they associate with.

While in English, plurality is marked with the suffix **-s**, in Nadshedu, plurality of nouns can be inflected with three separate prefixes:

Thi- (/θi/) is used for dual forms, when there are two of the {thing} being discussed.

Ja- (/dʒa/) is used for plural forms of count nouns, such as *baki* (plant) and *tsutso* (star).

No- (/nɔ/) is used for plural forms of mass nouns, such as *te* (water) and *zhagsa* (grass).

Verbs

Verbs are words used to describe what a noun is doing, and they have multiple means of inflection. The two most common are tense and aspect. Tense gives information on when an action has or will occur while aspect expresses whether that action is complete, ongoing, or repetitive. Verbs can also agree with either the subject or object nouns, meaning they express the same person, number, or gender. Nadshedu inflects tense, aspect, and plurality.

Tense

Nadshedu uses four tenses: the distant past, recent past, present, and future.

The distant past is reserved for historical events or story-telling. A speaker would not use the distant past for any event that happened in their lifetime. It uses the suffix **-ne (/nɛ/)**.

The recent past tense uses the suffix **-chi (/tʃi/)** or **-echi** when there is a word-final fricative/affricate.

The present tense has zero marking.

The future tense uses the suffix **-lu**.

Aspect

The citation form (the form of the word found in a dictionary) of the verb is the present imperfective:

Ji (/dʒi/) – (they) ask

Shusin (/ʃu.sin/) – (I) jump

Pasum (/ʃpa.sum/) – (you) see

The imperfective form of a verb indicates that the action is ongoing, while the perfective form indicates actions that are completed. The perfective in Nadshedu is formed by the addition of the past participle **kecha (/ʃkɛ.tʃa/)** in front of the verb.

ni gezhram kecha pasumlu

1s lizard-ACC PST see-FUT

I will have seen the lizard.

While future tense primarily uses the suffix inflection, there is a future particle **tsilu (/tsilu/)** that can be used with the past and future tenses to mark actions that are going to occur before or after a point in the future. For example, the future-in-future tense would use the future particle with the future tense.

ni zam jin tsilu ngashalu

1s 2s-ACC FUT go-FUT

I am going to go with you.

Nadshedu also uses the continuous and habitual aspects.

The continuous aspect expresses an action that was taking place and will continue to take place over a duration. It uses the suffix **-ik (/ik/)** or **-k** which is affixed after any tense marker.

tsettsin kesechik
hawk fly-PST-CONT
The hawk flew (and will continue to fly).

The habitual aspect also indicates that the action was and will continue to take place, but it is different from the continuous aspect in that this action is repeated and often predictable. It uses the particle **xhine (/xine/)** placed in front of the verb.

titikla xhine titichi
songbird HAB sing-PST
The songbird would sing.

Plural agreement

Verbs agree in plurality with the subject of a sentence and take the suffix **-ja (/dʒa/)** or **-eja** in front of the tense suffix.

kazh shusinjane
3pl(an.) jump-PL-DPST
They jumped.

Conjugation table

	ask		jump	
dp sim	jine	I asked	shusine	I jumped
pst sim	jichi	I asked	shusinchi	I jumped
pres sim	ji	I ask	shusin	I jump
fut sim	jilu	I will ask	shusinlu	I will jump
dp perf	kecha jine	I had asked	kecha shusine	I had jumped
pst perf	kecha jichi	I had asked	kecha shusinchi	I had jumped
pres perf	kecha ji	I have asked	kecha shusin	I have jumped
fut perf	kecha jilu	I will have asked	kecha shusinlu	I will have jumped
dp cont	jinek	I was asking	shusinek	I was jumping
pst cont	jichik	I was asking	shusinchik	I was jumping
pres cont	jik	I am asking	shusinik	I am jumping
fut cont	jiluk	I will be asking	shusinluk	I will be jumping
fut dp	tsilu jine	I was going to ask	tsilu shusine	I was going to jump
fut pst	tsilu jichi	I was going to ask	tsilu shusinchi	I was going to jump
fut fut	tsilu jilu	I am going to ask	tsilu shusinlu	I am going to jump
dp perf cont	kecha jinek	I had been asking	kecha shusinek	I had been jumping
pst perf cont	kecha jichik	I had been asking	kecha shusinchik	I had been jumping
pres perf cont	kecha jik	I have been asking	kecha shusinik	I have been jumping
fut perf cont	kecha jiluk	I will have been asking	kecha shusinluk	I will have been jumping

Derivational Morphology

Nadshedu also has a collection of productive derivational morphemes. Derivational morphemes are different from inflectional ones like tense, aspect, and case, because they change the syntactic category of a word. A verb can be derived from a noun, or adjective, and vice versa. These affixes are placed closer to the root than inflectional affixes.

-um (-m) transforms a noun into a related verb.

ki (life) → kim (live)

-ga transforms an adjective into a verb meaning to make something the adjective.

tehan (wet) → tehan-ga (make wet)

-ra is an agent nominalizer, meaning it transforms a verb into one who does the verb.

nalsha (hunt) → nalshara (hunter)

-han (-ehan) transforms a noun into an adjective meaning having the quality of the noun.

dunon (silence) → dunonehan (silent)

-nu transforms an adjective into a noun meaning the quality of being the adjective.

bazh (strong) → bazhnu (strength)

gi- transforms a verb to a noun meaning the act of the verb.

jitha (answer) → gjitha (answer)

sa- transforms a verb to an adjective meaning the result of the verb.

ngasha (go) → sangasha (gone)

-shi (-eshi) is a specifier, meaning it performs the function of the determiners 'this' or 'that' to indicate a specific noun of many.

zelath (night) → zelathashi (that night)

-es (-s) is a diminutive, meaning it signifies a noun, adjective, or verb as being smaller.

dit (stick) → dites (twig)

ke- is an augmentative, meaning it signifies a noun, adjective, or verb as being bigger or part of a collective.

zhagsa (grass) → kezhagsa (field)

Lexicon

Words generally (but not always) originate from the species that tends to use it the most. Some words have multiple influences as languages merged. Deer, rabbit, and bear have the greatest influence and

the highest proportions of words. While some species of fish are sentient, they use a separate language that has not merged with Nadshedu.

Pronouns

	Singular	Dual	Plural
1st (inclusive)	Ni	Di	Nen
1st (exclusive)	--	Nget	Nget
2 nd	Za	So	Teb
3rd (animate)	Ta	Kazh	Kazh
3rd (inanimate)	Kashu	Kashu	Kashu

The inclusive-exclusive distinction (English equivalent 'we') distinguishes between the 'we' that includes the speaker and listener – both first and second person – and the 'we' that includes only the speaker and another member – the first and third person. English does not have this distinction, which leads to ambiguity in a sentence like:

“We are going to the movies”

'We' can either mean 'you and me' (inclusive) or 'me and them' (exclusive).

The animate-inanimate distinction is similar to that of the English he/she/they versus it, although the animate category in Nadshedu is much broader, including not just the speakers of the language, but fish, insects, and trees. The semi-animate (fire, rivers, earth, sky, wind, sun, moon, and stars), can use either animate or inanimate pronouns.

Demonstrative pronouns have three aspects, the first categorizes singular, dual, and plural. The second aspect is a near-far distinction, similar to 'this' and 'that' in English. The near set are the same as the relative pronouns discussed earlier (see 'Relative clauses'). Like with personal pronouns, there is also an animate-inanimate distinction. To achieve the far set, suffix -i onto the near demonstratives.

NEAR	Singular	Dual	Plural
Inan.	Tash	Tas	Jatas
An.	Jem	Jek	Jajek
FAR	--	--	--
Inan.	Tashi	Tasi	Jatasi
An.	Jemi	Jeki	Jajeki

Numerals

Nadshedu uses a base-12 numbering system, derived from the twelve months in a standard year. This duodecimal system is different from the decimal system used in English, in which 10 is considered a round number and the 'base' of counting. Instead, in a base-12 system, there are 12 unique digits instead of 10, and higher numbers pattern according to 12.

Human languages that use base-12 counting are uncommon, the majority of them, such as Janji and Gbiri-Niragu, are found in Nigeria, although the Chepang language of Nepal also uses the duodecimal

system. Some languages use other number systems, such as Huli of Papua New Guinea that uses base-15, or Tzotzil of Mexico that uses base-20.

Duodecimal	Decimal	Word	Pronunciation	Glyph
0	0	got	/gɔt/	∧
1	1	xhen	/xɛn/	∧
2	2	thi	/θi/	∧
3	3	nebja	/nɛbɔʒa/	∧
4	4	thezu	/θɛzu/	∧
5	5	ngusat	/ŋusat/	∧
6	6	tseng	/tɛŋ/	∧
7	7	kethek	/kɛθɛk/	∧
8	8	sehad	/sɛhad/	∧
9	9	kasti	/kasti/	∧
a	10	song	/sɔŋ/	∧
b	11	tilem	/tilem/	∧
10	12	san	/san/	∧
11	13	saxhen	/saxɛn/	∧
12	14	sathi	/saθi/	∧
13	15	saja	/sɑdʒa/	∧
14	16	sazo	/sazu/	∧
15	17	sasat	/sasat/	∧
16	18	satseng	/sɑtɛŋ/	∧
17	19	sathek	/saθɛk/	∧
18	20	sahad	/sahad/	∧
19	21	sati	/sati/	∧
1a	22	sasong	/sasɔŋ/	∧
1b	23	salem	/salem/	∧
20	24	thisan	/θisan/	∧
30	36	nebsan	/nɛbsan/	∧
40	48	thesan	/θɛsan/	∧
50	60	ngusan	/ŋusan/	∧
100	144	sasan	/sasan/	∧
1000	1728	non	/nɔn/	∧

Higher numbers are formed by the addition of either the first or last syllable of the numbers below twelve around the base number **san**. The first syllable affixed to the front of the base indicates multiplication (thisan = 2 x 12), while the last syllable affixed to the back of the base indicates addition

(sahad = 12 + 8). The 'n' is typically deleted in the latter case. To form a number such as thirty-one (twenty-seven in duodecimal), take the twelves digit (thisan) and add the last syllable of the single digit (-thek) to create thisathek (2 x 12 + 7).

Adpositions

In English, words that create relationships between nouns or phrases show up before nouns. For example:

The dog **with the bone** wagged his tail.

Because of their location, these words are called prepositions, but in Nadshedu, these words occur after the noun or phrase and are therefore called postpositions.

thish	of
ga	for
jin	with
nen	during/while
ngi	around/near
naxhi	under/below
zhin	over/above
sokan	in front of/before
set	behind
sha	from
zes	to

The majority of the postpositional words are locative, indicating where two nouns are in physical relation to each other. While Nadshedu has the locative case, it is rather limited in its scope, only containing the more general meaning 'in' or 'on', leaving locative postpositions to clarify location or direction.

Syntax

The way that words are put together to form a sentence adheres to a set of rules unique to a language. English creates meaning by the order of words, the sentence "the on slept cat rug a," does not follow the syntactic rules of English and is therefore relatively meaningless and would sound wrong to any native speaker. Nadshedu also has these syntactic rules that constrain the patterning of the order of words and the structure of relative clauses, negation, and questions, though they are somewhat different from the ones in English.

Word Order

The basic word order of Nadshedu is Subject-Object-Verb, although this order is freer than it is in English due to the existence of case-marking.

shoju zhagsam ngenti
deer grass-ACC eat
The deer eats the grass.

The typical order of objects goes accusative-dative-locative, and the genitive remains with its constituent. However, constituents may be moved to the front of a sentence to mark focus. The accusative object, dative object, locative object, and postpositional phrases can all be fronted.

zhagsam shoju ngenti
deer grass-ACC eat
It is the grass the deer eats.

midzegi nen shoju zhagsam ngenti
day during deer grass-ACC eat
During the day, the deer eats the grass.

As it has both postpositions and SOV word order, Nadshedu is a head-final language, meaning that the syntactic head of a phrase (the word that determines the syntactic category), comes in a phrase-final position. English is also primarily a head-final language. For example:

The four loud, green frogs.

'Frogs' is the head of the noun phrase, and is preceded by the determiner, numeral, and adjectives, making it the final word. The order of a noun phrase in Nadshedu differs slightly from English. The noun is preceded by the genitive, numeral, demonstrative, possessor, and adjective (in that order), and followed by the postposition and the relative clause.

Genitive Numeral Demonstrative Possessor Adjective **Noun** Postposition Relative clause

So, in Nadshedu, this is grammatical:

nebja nith zegihan jasita
three 1s-GEN white-ADJ PL-feather
My three white feathers.

Whereas this is not:

*jatasi ngusat kodi jakisi bukun ngi
PL-that.far.inan five green PL-tree hill near
Those five green trees near the hill.

Because the demonstrative is located before the numeral.

It should be noted that **neng (/nɛŋ/)**, the conjunction meaning 'and', is not used to coordinate semantically similar noun or verb phrases, and is only found between dissimilar noun phrases, subordinate clauses, and full sentences. For example, 'and' is not required in the following sentence:

jatsettsin janetsi jagezhra xhine kesja
PL-hawk PL-owl PL-crow HAB fly-PL
Hawks, owls, and crows fly.

Relative clauses

A relative clause is a dependent clause that provides additional information about a noun.

The person **that we met yesterday** is a musician.

Relativizing pronouns are required to introduce relative clauses.

	Singular	Dual	Plural
Inanimate	Tash	Tas	Jatas
Animate	Jem	Jek	Jajek

Word order is altered in relative clauses, the object and verb switch places, resulting in SVO word order instead of the usual SOV.

tshesh **gezhra gesgichi tashem** nibkisim sokan
rock **lizard lay.down-PST that.inan-ACC** bush-~~ACC~~ **LOC?** in.front.of
The rock **that the lizard lay on** was in front of the bush.

thinetsi **ni pasumchi jekem** keng kisim set kesejachi
DL-owl **1s see-PST that.an.DL-ACC** big tree-ACC behind fly-PL-PST
The owls **that I saw** flew behind the big tree.

Negation

To express the meaning of a sentence or phrase as opposite or false, English uses the negative particle 'not'. This particle usually comes after the first verb in a sentence, as in "I am **not** there." Negation in Nadshedu is similar and is formed with the negative particle **got (/gɔt/)**.

puchaku te'esh kezhe **got**
bear river-LOC stand-PRES **NEG**
The bear does not stand in the river.

The particle can be placed either after the entire sentence or after a particular noun phrase, in the latter case, the negation would shift the focus to that specific noun phrase.

sedthe zashilash **got** gozungik
squirrel pine.tree-LOC **NEG** hide-CONT
It is not the pine tree the squirrel is hiding in.

Questions

Rising intonation at the end of the sentence marks questions of all kinds. Yes-No questions are additionally formed with the question particle **bi** placed at the end of the sentence.

bakishi guzkam xhing **bi**
plant-SPEC poisonous.plant-ACC be-PRES **Q**
Is that plant a poisonous plant?

An additional question particle can be inserted after a noun phrase to focus the question, like with negation.

nongzhi shojushim **bi** pasumchi **bi**
fox deer-SPEC-ACC Q see-PST Q
Is it that deer the fox saw?

Interrogative questions are those that seek noun phrases as answers, commonly known as wh-questions because in English they use wh-words such as who, what, when, where, and why. In English, these interrogative pronouns are fronted to form the question.

He is eating **the apple** → **What** is he eating?

However, in Nadshedu, these pronouns move to the end of the sentence.

nezhet ngashak **gishem**
rabbit go-CONT **where-ACC**
Where is the rabbit going?

There are five interrogative pronouns:

what (an.)	xhe
what (inan.)	tazh
where	gish
when	zho'u
why	thun

Like with the relative and personal pronouns, the interrogative pronouns meaning 'what' are distinguished by animacy. Note that the inanimate form is the default and is used when the animacy of the thing is unknown and cannot be inferred by the verb.

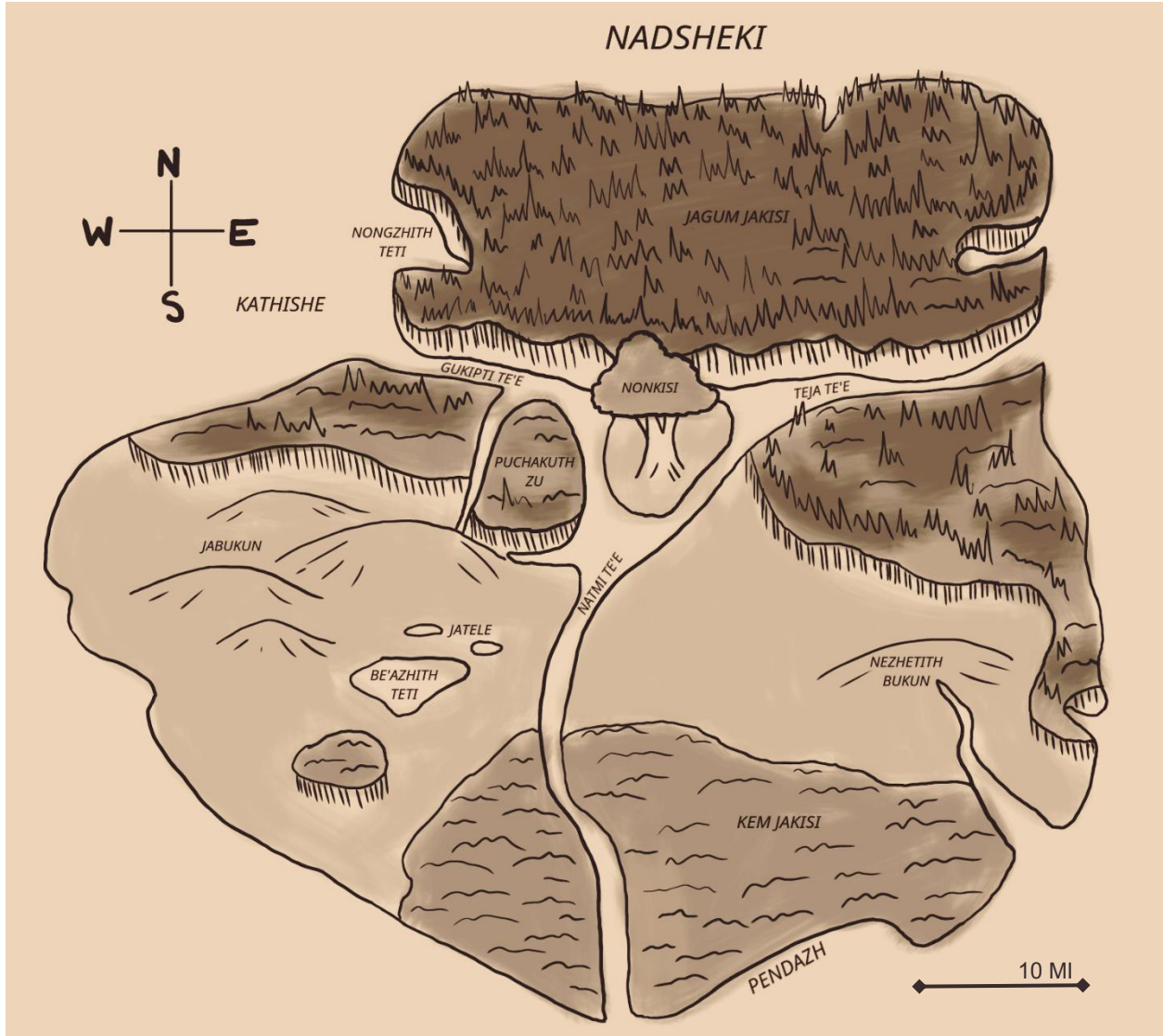
nongzhim nalshachi xhe
fox-ACC chase-PST what.an
What chased the fox?

'How' is formed somewhat differently than the interrogative pronouns. It combines the word for 'direction', **gihi**, with the question particle **bi**.

nitsneng ngashachi kisish gihi bi
turtle go-PST tree-LOC direction Q
How did the turtle get in the tree?

APPENDIX I

Map of Nadsheki



APPENDIX II

A translation of “Kishera and the fire”

1. ጸገገ ሃብተ ጸጋብ ጸጋገ
mizha kisheram midash xhingne
there NAME-ACC beginning-LOC be-DPST
In the beginning, there was Kishera.
2. ሰላሳ ሰጠ ጸጋ ጸጋ ጸጋ ጸጋ ጸጋ
sakishe semlom tem kezakem thish
ADJ-give.life earth-ACC water-ACC wind-ACC of
Born of the earth, water, and wind,
3. ጸጋገ ጸጋ ጸጋ ጸጋ ጸጋ ጸጋ ጸጋ ጸጋ
dunonehan jazuk jith kishera nadshekim kubone
quiet-ADJ PL-paw-DAT with NAME forest-ACC walk-DPST
With quiet paws, Kishera walked the forest.
4. ጸጋ ጸጋ ጸጋ ጸጋ ጸጋ ጸጋ ጸጋ ጸጋ
nadesh ta ngashane ki xhine ngasene
place-LOC 3s.an go-DPST life HAB follow-DPST
Where they went, life would follow.
5. ጸጋ ጸጋ ጸጋ ጸጋ ጸጋ ጸጋ ጸጋ ጸጋ
pa mizha xhing kagam nadesh mizha kim xhing
but there be-PRES death-ACC place-LOC there life-ACC be-PRES
But there is death where there is life,
6. ጸጋ ጸጋ ጸጋ ጸጋ ጸጋ ጸጋ ጸጋ ጸጋ
zegith zelith chomthi midihi neng nazegi shani xhine tingone
light-GEN dark-GEN eternal cycle and sun moon HAB turn-PRES
The eternal cycle of light and dark and the turn of the sun and moon.
7. ጸጋ ጸጋ ጸጋ ጸጋ ጸጋ ጸጋ ጸጋ ጸጋ
narazhem mizha xhing
fire-ACC there be-PRES
There is the fire.
8. ጸጋ ጸጋ ጸጋ ጸጋ ጸጋ ጸጋ ጸጋ ጸጋ
narazh tam nalshane
fire 3s.an-ACC hunt-DPST
The fire hunted them.
9. ጸጋ ጸጋ ጸጋ ጸጋ ጸጋ ጸጋ ጸጋ ጸጋ
ketihan kashu kashu nonuk xhine ngentine
hunger-ADJ 3s.inan 3s.inan everything-ACC HAB eat-DPST
It was hungry, it ate everything.
10. ጸጋ ጸጋ ጸጋ ጸጋ ጸጋ ጸጋ ጸጋ ጸጋ
kashu tsakanan nosemlom guzka’enehan notem zelhan nokezem tingone
3s.inan ash-ADJ PL-earth-ACC poison-ADJ PL-water-ACC black-ADJ PL-sky-ACC turn-DPST
It turned the soils ashy, the waters poisoned, and the skies black.

11. ሃቲተ ብጉሥ ለእንደሆነ ሃቲ ገብረ ለጉሥ
 kishera pasumne nadshekim kashu set namne
 NAME see-DPST forest-ACC 3s.inan behind burn-DPST
 Kishera saw as it burned the forest behind them.
12. ሃጉ ገብረ ለእንደሆነ ሃቲ ሃገራዊ ለቆ ገብረ ለእንደሆነ
 kim ta kecha sheshne kashu kaga'angne neng ta shukubone
 life-ACC 3s.an PST bring-DPST 3s.inan destroy-DPST and 3s.an run-DPST
 The life they had brought, it destroyed, and they ran.
13. ሃቲ ቆ ለቆ
 kashu ngi xhingne
 3s.inan near be-DPST
 It was near.
14. ሃቲ ገብረ ሃገራዊ ለቆ ገብረ ገብረ ለእንደሆነ
 kashu tath jazum ngene neng tath zezhim namne
 3s.inan 3s.an-GEN PL-paw-ACC bite-DPST and 3s.an-GEN tail-ACC burn-DPST
 It bit their paws and burned their tail.
15. ሃገራዊ ሃቲ ሃገራዊ
 jagijitham kishera jengine
 PL-NMLZ-answer-ACC NAME seek-DPST
 Kishera sought answers.
16. ገብረ ገብረ ለእንደሆነ ገብረ ለእንደሆነ
 ta kagam tath nadshekim thish shishinumik
 3s.an death-ACC 3s.an-GEN forest-ACC of grieve-PRES-CONT
 They were grieving the death of their forest.
17. ገብረ ገብረ ለእንደሆነ ገብረ ገብረ ለእንደሆነ
 semlom ta jine ni nadshekim bulizhu gihi bi
 earth-ACC 3s.an ask-DPST 1s forest-ACC protect-PRES direction Q
 The earth, they asked, "How do I protect my forest?"
18. ገብረ ገብረ ለእንደሆነ ገብረ ገብረ ለእንደሆነ
 bazh za semlo jithane zath bazhnum tak she
 strong 2s earth answer-DPST 2s-GEN strong-NMLZ-ACC 3s.an-DAT give-PRES
 "You are strong," the earth answered. "Give it your strength."
19. ቆ ሃቲ ገብረ ለእንደሆነ ገብረ ለእንደሆነ
 pa kishera setechene got
 but NAME know-DPST NEG
 But Kishera did not know how.
20. ገብረ ገብረ ለእንደሆነ ገብረ ገብረ ለእንደሆነ
 te'em ta jine ni nith bazhnum nadshekik she gihi bi
 river-ACC 3s.an ask-DPST 1s 1s-GEN strong-NMLZ-ACC forest-DAT give-PRES direction Q
 The river, they asked "How do I give the forest my strength?"

21. 一三 丫 三◇ ◇ΛΛ 丫Λ 一三Λπ 三丫 三
 seti za te'e jithane zath setinum tak she
 wise 2s river answer-DPST 2s-GEN wise-NMLZ-ACC 3s.an-DAT give-PRES
 "You are wise," the river answered. "Give it your wisdom."
22. ◇ 丫三† 一三||Λ Λ三
 pa kishera setechene got
 but NAME know-DPST NEG
 But Kishera did not know how.
23. 丫丫π 三 ◇Λ Λ ΛΛ 一三Λπ Λ>=丫丫 三 N|Λ
 kezem ta jine ni nith setinum nadshekik she gihi bi
 sky-ACC 3s.an ask-DPST 1s 1s-GEN wise-NMLZ-ACC forest-DAT give-PRES direction Q
 The sky, they asked, "How do I give the forest my wisdom?"
24. 丫Λ 丫 丫丫 ◇ΛΛ 丫Λ 丫π 三丫 三
 kihan za kez jithane zath kim tak she
 life-ADJ 2s sky answer-DPST 2s-GEN life-ACC 3s.an-DAT give-PRES
 "You are alive," the sky answered. "Give it your life."
25. Λφ 丫三† 一三||Λ
 neng kishera setechene
 and NAME know-DPST
 And Kishera knew how.
26. 丫Λλ= 丫=Λ 丫丫= 丫三† =丫ΛΛ =丫ΛΛ Λ三
 zelatheshi kashani kezesh kishera shukubone shukubone got
 night-SPEC new.moon sky-LOC NAME run-DPST run-DPST NEG
 That night, the new moon was in the sky. Kishera stopped running.
27. Λ†||| ◇φΛ 三π
 narazh jengine tam
 fire find-DPST 3s.an-ACC
 The fire found them.
28. 丫= 三π 丫◇Λ ||λ=
 kashu tam kapune zhuthish
 3s.inan 3s.an-ACC trap-DPST ring-LOC
 It trapped them in a ring
29. 丫ΛΛ ΛΛ ΛΛ†||| λ= ◇††π φλ◇Λ
 zegihan nahan nonarazh thish jatsutsom ngithejane
 light-ADJ heat-ADJ PL-flame of PL-star-ACC touch-PL-DPST
 Of bright, hot flames that touched the stars.
30. ◇ 丫= 三π φλ Λ三
 pa kashu tam ngith got
 but 3s.inan 3s.an-ACC touch-PRES NEG
 But it did not touch them

31. VIII Y=H VM@ @EOT TMT+Y= YIIM
 nizha kishera nebja jate'em mubrizesh kezhene
 because NAME three PL-river-ACC center-LOC stand-DPST
 Because Kishera stood in the center of three rivers.
32. ET @ V+III VTV
 tam ngi narazh namne
 3s.an-ACC around fire burn-DPST
 Around them, the fire burned.
33. Y=H T-TV V@ ET MIIIVT -TZY
 kishera gesgine neng tath bazhnum semlok
 NAME lay.down-DPST and 3s.an-GEN strong-NMLZ-ACC earth-DAT
 Kishera laid down and gave their strength to the earth,
34. ET -EVAT EY ET YT YYY =V
 tath setinum tek tath kim kezakek shene
 3s.an-GEN wise-NMLZ-ACC water-DAT 3s.an-GEN life-ACC wind-DAT give-DPST
 Their wisdom to the water, and their life to the wind.
35. EN YT = =Z=V V@ VV+III E=@@V
 tegiz kezem sha shalushne neng nonarazh teshingoJane
 rain sky-ACC from come-DPST and PL-flame drown-PL-DPST
 Rain came from the sky and the flames drowned.
36. Y=Hk Y V@ EN -TZT ETV
 kisherath ki neng tegiz semlom temne
 NAME-GEN life and rain earth-ACC water-V-DPST
 Kishera's life and rain wet the earth.
37. T>V Y YNV @+YT = Y=VY
 miden ki kagahan jatsakam sha kishenek
 new life death-ADJ PL-ash-ACC from give.life-DPST-CONT
 New life was born from the dead ashes.
38. VIII- @Y- @MY Y> V>=Y= @+@V
 nozhagsa jakisi jabaki kodi nadshekish petsijane
 PL-grass PL-tree PL-place green forest-LOC grow-PL-DPST
 Grasses, trees, and plants grew into a green forest.
39. Y=H YII T-TV V>=
 kishera kecha gesgine nadesh
 NAME PST lay.down-DPST place-LOC
 In the place Kishera had laid
40. MIII Y- @IT -TZ= =ZVV
 bazh kisi jatthem semlosh shelnezne
 strong tree PL-root-ACC earth-LOC dig-DPST
 A strong tree dug roots into the earth.

41. ህተዘዘ ለ፤ ህጎ፣ሃጽ ቀረጽ ሃ፣ተላ ሃ— ህህ ሃጽ
narazh got nadshekim ngithlu kisherath kisi nen kim
fire NEG forest-ACC touch-FUT NAME-GEN tree during life-V-PRES
No fire will touch the forest while Kishera's tree lives.

APPENDIX III**Nadshedu-English Dictionary**

Word	Pronunciation	Part of Speech	Definition #1	Definition #2	Origin
Baki	/'ba.ki/	n	plant		deer
Bazh	/baʒ/	adj	strong		bear
Be'azh	/'bɛ.ʔaʒ/	n	frog		frog
Bukun	/'bu.kun/	n	hill		bear
Bulizhu	/bu.'li.ʒu/	v	protect		bear
Chak	/tʃak/	n	path		fox
Chendo	/tʃɛn.dɔ/	phr	(expletive)		
Chetsilik	/tʃɛ.'tsi.li.k/	n	beaver		beaver
Chishka	/'tʃiʃ.ka/	n	sparrow		bird
Chomthi	/'tʃɔm.θi/	adj	eternal		bear
Da'atri	/da.'ʔat.ri/	n	full moon		owl
Dedunu	/dɛ.'du.nu/	n	end		snake
Dinuth	/'di.nuθ/	adj	happy		
Dit	/dit/	n	stick		bird
Dites	/'di.tɛs/	n	twig		
Domli	/'dɔm.li/	phr, n	thank you	gratitude	bear
Doshi	/'dɔ.ʃi/	n	stream		raccoon
Doxhe	/'dɔ.xɛ/	adj	long		
Du	/du/	n	sound		deer
Duma	/duma/	n	mouth		deer
Dumam	/'du.mam/	v	talk		
Dunon	/'du.nɔn/	n	silence		deer
Dunonehan	/du.nɔ.'nɛ.han/	adj	quiet	silent	
Ga	/ga/	pp	for		
Gejti	/'gɛdʒ.ti/	n	tooth		coyote
Geme	/'gɛ.mɛ/	n	story		snake
Genish	/'gɛ.niʃ/	phr, n	sorry	apology	rabbit
Gesgi	/'gɛs.gi/	v	lay down		bear
Gezhra	/'gɛʒ.ʒa/	n	lizard		lizard
Gihi	/'gi.hi/	n	direction		crow
Gijitha	/gi.'dʒi.θa/	n	answer		
Gikish	/'gi.kiʃ/	v	guide		crow
Gikishra	/gi.'kiʃ.ʒa/	n	*Guide		
*Someone who ventures beyond the Border					
Got	/gɔt/	det, n	no	zero	coyote
Gozung	/'gɔ.zuŋ/	v	hide		mouse
Guz	/guz/	adj	bad		rabbit
Guzka	/'guz.ka/	n	poisonous plant		rabbit
Guzka'en	/guz.'ka.ʔɛn/	n	poison		rabbit
Jad	/dʒad/	n	seed		mouse

Word	Pronunciation	Part of Speech	Definition #1	Definition #2	Origin
Jagum	/'dʒa.gum/	n	winter	autumn	deer
Jatha	/'dʒa.θa/	v	have		rabbit
Jengi	/'dʒɛ.ŋi/	v	seek	find	rabbit
Ji	/dʒi/	v	ask		squirrel
Jin	/dʒin/	pp	with		deer
Jitha	/'dʒi.θa/	v	answer		squirrel
Kaga	/'ka.ga/	n	death		rabbit
Kaga'ang	/ka.'ga.ʔaŋ/	v	kill	destroy	rabbit
Kapu	/'ka.pu/	v	trap	catch	rabbit
Kashani	/ka.'ʃa.ni/	n	new moon		owl
Kath	/kaθ/	adj	out	beyond	deer
Kathinad	/ka.'θi.nad/	n	*The Outlands		deer
*The world beyond Nadsheki					
Kem	/kɛm/	n	summer	spring	deer
Kemu	/'kɛ.mu/	n	bobcat		bobcat
Keng	/kɛŋ/	adj	big		deer
Ke'ozh	/'kɛ.ʔɔʒ/	n	oak tree		squirrel
Kes	/kɛs/	v	fly		hawk
Keti	/'kɛ.ti/	n	hunger		rabbit
Kez	/kɛz/	n	sky	air	crow
Kezak	/'kɛz.ak/	n	wind		crow
Kezhagsa	/kɛ.'ʒag.sa/	n	field		
Kezhe	/'kɛ.ʒɛ/	v	stand		lizard
Ki	/ki/	n	magic	life	deer
Kig	/kig/	n	crow		crow
Kiketh	/'ki.kɛθ/	n	*The Council		deer
*The chosen leaders of Nadsheki					
Kishe	/'ki.ʃɛ/	v	give life	birth	deer
Kisi	/'ki.si/	n	tree		deer
Kizeng	/'ki.zɛŋ/	n	season		deer
Kizh	/kiʒ/	phr	yes		crow
Kodi	/'kɔ.di/	adj	*green		fox
*Most animals have blue/yellow color vision, but not red					
Kubo	/'ku.bɔ/	v	walk	move	bear
Kuhache	/ku.'ha.tʃɛ/	phr	*hello	goodbye	squirrel
*Used with people you don't know, or in formal settings					
Mehas	/'mɛ.has/	n	insect		frog
Meng	/'mɛŋ/	adj	more		deer
Meshna	/'mɛʃ.na/	n	skunk		skunk
Mi	/mi/	adj	up		
Mida	/'mi.da/	n	beginning		crow

Word	Pronunciation	Part of Speech	Definition #1	Definition #2	Origin
Miden	/mi.'dɛn/	adj	new		crow
Midihi	/mi.'di.hi/	n	cycle		crow
Midshani	/mid.'ʃa.ni/	n	*month		
	*Begins on the new moon				
Midzegi	/mid.'zɛ.gi/	n	*day		
	*Begins at sunrise				
Midzeng	/'mid.zɛŋ/	n	*year		
	*Season cycle, begins on the first new moon after winter solstice				
Miri	/mi.ri/	adj	blue		snake
Mizha	/'mi.ʒa/	n	there		snake
Mubriz	/'mub.ɹiz/	n	center	middle	deer
Mura	/'mu.ɹa/	n	nose		coyote
Muram	/'mu.ɹam/	v	smell		
Na	/na/	n	heat		owl
Nad	/nad/	n	place		deer
Nadshedu	/nad.'ʃɛ.du/	n	language		deer
Nadsheki	/nad.'ʃɛ.ki/	n	*forest	The Forest	deer
	*Uses animate pronouns				
Nak	/nak/	n	ember		owl
Nalsha	/'nal.ʃa/	v	chase	hunt	fox
Nalshara	/nal.'ʃa.ɹa/	n	hunter		
Nam	/nam/	v	burn		owl
Narazh	/'na.ɹaʒ/	n	fire	flame	owl
Naxhi	/'na.xi/	pp	under		
Nazegi	/na.'zɛ.gi/	n	sun		owl
Nen	/nɛn/	pp, conj	during	while	rabbit
Neng	/nɛŋ/	conj	and		
Nenge	/'nɛ.ŋɛ/	n	edible plant		rabbit
Netsi	/'nɛ.tsi/	n	owl		owl
Nezhet	/'nɛ.ʒɛt/	n	rabbit		rabbit
Ngachli	/'ŋaʃ.li/	n	child		
Ngala	/'ŋa.la/	n	leaf		squirrel
Ngasha	/'ŋa.ʃa/	v	go		fox
Ngazhi	/'ŋa.ʒi/	v	follow		fox
Ngen	/ŋɛn/	v	bite		rabbit
Ngenti	/'ŋɛn.ti/	v	eat		rabbit
Ngi	/ŋi/	pp	around	near	rabbit
Ngith	/ŋiθ/	v	touch		rabbit
Ngochi	/'ŋɔ.ʃi/	n	waxing moon		raccoon
Ngohin	/'ŋɔ.hin/	n	waning moon		raccoon
Nib	/nib/	adj	small		deer

Word	Pronunciation	Part of Speech	Definition #1	Definition #2	Origin
Nibkisi	/nib.'ki.si/	n	bush		deer
Nik	/nik/	v	fight		rabbit
Nimin	/'ni.min/	n	bat		bat
Nithlu	/'niθ.lu/	n	dusk		bat
Nitsneng	/'nits.nɛŋ/	n	turtle		turtle
Nizha	/'ni.ʒa/	conj	because		
Non	/nɔn/	det, n	many	thousand	deer
Nongzhi	/'nɔŋ.ʒi/	n	fox		fox
Nonkisi	/nɔn.'ki.si/	n	*The Thousand Years Tree		deer
*The oldest tree in Nadsheki, aka Kishera's Tree					
Nonu	/'nɔ.nu/	n	everything		deer
Nuzh	/nuʒ/	n	hoof		deer
Pa	/pa/	conj	but		fox
Pas	/pas/	n	eye		fox
Pash	/paʃ/	adj	down		deer
Pasum	/'pas.um/	v	see		
Pendazh	/'pɛn.dəʒ/	n	The Border		bear
Petsi	/'pɛ.tsi/	v	grow		raccoon
Puchaku	/pu.'tʃa.ku/	n	bear		bear
Sath	/saθ/	n	here		mouse
Sedthe	/'sɛd.θɛ/	n	squirrel		squirrel
Semlo	/'sɛm.lɔ/	n	earth	soil	bear
Set	/sɛt/	pp	behind		
Seteche	/sɛ.'tɛ.tʃɛ/	v	know		mouse
Seti	/'sɛ.ti/	adj	wise		mouse
Sha	/ʃa/	pp	from		fox
Shalush	/'ʃa.luʃ/	v	come		fox
Shani	/'ʃa.ni/	n	moon		owl
She	/ʃɛ/	v	give		deer
Sheke	/'ʃɛ.kɛ/	n	branch		bird
Shelnez	/'ʃɛl.nɛz/	v	dig		squirrel
Shesh	/ʃɛʃ/	v	bring		deer
Shezh	/ʃɛʒ/	adj	cold		lizard
Shi	/ʃi/	adj	sad		bird
Shishinu	/ʃi.'ʃi.nu/	n	grief		bird
Shisibo	/ʃi.'si.bɔ/	n	raccoon		raccoon
Shoju	/'ʃɔ.ʒu/	n	deer		deer
Shu	/ʃu/	adj	fast		bear
Shukubo	/ʃu.'ku.bɔ/	v	run		bear
Shusin	/'ʃu.sin/	v	jump		bear

Word	Pronunciation	Part of Speech	Definition #1	Definition #2	Origin
Silgi	/ˈsil.gi/	n	fur		fox
Sita	/ˈsi.ta/	n	feather		bird
Soka	/ˈsɔ.kɑ/	n	head	brain	squirrel
Sokan	/ˈsɔ.kɑn/	pp	in front of	before (in time)	squirrel
Sun	/sun/	adj	safe		rabbit
Takche	/ˈtak.tʃɛ/	adj	good		squirrel
Tatanit	/ta.ˈta.nit/	n	woodpecker		bird
Te	/tɛ/	n	water		turtle
Tebith	/ˈtɛ.biθ/	n	sunrise		bat
Te'e	/ˈtɛ.ʔɛ/	n	river		turtle
Tegiz	/ˈtɛ.giz/	n	rain		turtle
Tehan	/ˈtɛ.hɑn/	adj	wet		turtle
Tele	/ˈtɛ.lɛ/	n	little pond		turtle
Tenazhna	/tɛ.ˈnɑʒ.nɑ/	n	fish		turtle
Tes	/tɛs/	n	puddle		
Teshingan	/tɛ.ˈʃi.ŋɑn/	v	drown		turtle
Teti	/ˈtɛ.ti/	n	big pond	lake	turtle
Tez	/tɛz/	n	ear		rabbit
Tezru	/ˈtɛz.ru/	v	hear	listen	rabbit
Thaltiha	/θɑl.ˈti.hɑ/	n	mouse		mouse
Thehe	/ˈθɛ.hɛ/	n	root		squirrel
Thetran	/ˈθɛt.rɑn/	v	bury		squirrel
Thish	/θiʃ/	pp	of		
Thuratna	/θu.ˈʃɑt.nɑ/	n	human		
Tingo	/ˈti.ŋɔ/	v	turn	make	mouse
Tiruzh	/ˈti.ruʒ/	n	body		fox
Titi	/ˈti.ti/	v	sing	talk	bird
Titikla	/ti.ˈtik.lɑ/	n	songbird		bird
Tsadi	/ˈtsɑ.di/	n	chickadee		bird
Tsaka	/ˈtsɑ.kɑ/	n	ash	corpse	rabbit
Tsaz	/tsɑz/	phr	*hello	goodbye	crow

*Used with people you know

Tse	/tsɜ/	conj	or		bird
Tsesh	/tsɛʃ/	n	rock		crow
Tseshes	/ˈtsɛ.ʃɛs/	n	pebble		
Tsettsin	/ˈtsɛt.tsin/	n	hawk		hawk
Tsiren	/ˈtsi.rɛn/	phr	please		rabbit
Tsutso	/ˈtsu.tɔ/	n	star		crow
Xhenki	/ˈxɛn.ki/	n	person		deer
Xhim	/xim/	adj	warm		lizard
Xhing	/xiŋ/	v	be		fox

Word	Pronunciation	Part of Speech	Definition #1	Definition #2	Origin
Xhisashi	/xi.'sa.fi/	n	snake		snake
Zashila	/za.'ji.la/	n	pine tree		bird
Ze'adu	/zε.'ʔa.du/	v	talk		deer
Zebo	/'zε.bɔ/	n	horn		deer
Zegi	/'zε.gi/	n	light	white	owl
Zel	/zεl/	n	dark	black	coyote
Zelath	/'zε.laθ/	n	night		coyote
Zeledε	/zε.'lε.dε/	n	sunset		coyote
Zelgot	/'zεl.gɔt/	n	morning		
Zes	/zεs/	pp	to		
Zezi	/'zε.zi/	n	tail		fox
Zhagsa	/'ʒag.sa/	n	grass		snake
Zhi	/ʒi/	n	back		fox
Zhin	/ʒin/	pp	over		fox
Zhothan	/'ʒɔ.θan/	n	coyote		coyote
Zhuthi	/'ʒu.θi/	n	ring	circle	bear
Zira	/'zi.ɹa/	n	robin		bird
Zithku	/'ziθ.ku/	v	write		
Zu	/zu/	n	paw		bear
Zuli	/'zu.li/	n	claw		bear
Ni zam setecheluk tazhek			What is your name? (lit. What will I know you as?)		
Kazh nim NAME-ek xhine setechek			My name is ____ (lit. They know me as ____)		