Unit 2   Basic Bahtssal Grammar

Introduction: Speaking Bahtssal

Now that you know how to read Bahtssal and say the words, you are ready to speak.

   To speak Bahtssal you will have to put words together. The way words go together is what grammar is all about. You will see that to say things in Bahtssal you sometimes have to learn to put words together in new ways.

Lesson 1   making words/sentences

In Bahtssal, sometimes a single word has the meaning of a phrase or even a whole sentence.
For example,

   Bahtssal: d<u>o</u>a'lakiba.

   English: let's pound acorns

This is typical of the way meaning is made in Bahtssal. Small pieces of words are combined to make one word which has the same meaning as an English sentence.

   This Bahtssal word is made of four parts. They are:
   do-   this means *to pound acorns with a pestle*
   -l-   this means the action is continuous, not short. It means they will pound the acorns for a while.
   -aki-   this means the plural, it also means that the people will take part in actively pounding.
   -ba.   this means that the speaker is asking people to join in on the activity. It is the *let's* part of the phrase.

Another example,

   wamehha means ***my father***.

       wa- = my
       mehha. = father

   This is because in Bahtssal, you can add meaning to a word by adding to it.
   This happens in English too. For example when we say **chairs** we add the **-s** to **chair** to add meaning. The meaning is that there is more than one chair.

We also do this with **-er**. If we add **-er** to **fast** we get **faster**. The meaning is that there is more of something.
What we add to the end of words is called a *suffix*.
-s and **-er** are suffixes.
In Bahtssal, we can add meaning to words in the same way. There are many meanings we can add, as we will see.

Lesson 2   making sentences

word order
You will notice right away that the words in a Bahtssal sentence are in a different order than the words in an English sentence.

verbs
The verb is usually at the end of the sentence.
For example,

Bahtssal:	miith` k`uus qaawiya
	she baby give birth
English:	she is having a baby

Bahtssal:	buudu dokakime
	acorns pound
English:	pound the accorns!

adjectives
The adjective usually comes after the noun.
For example,

Bahtssal:	baekh ga shiiwae qaawimkhmaa
	they house new build
English:	they are building a new house

Bahtssal:	miip` gaawkh nis eh
	he man bad is
English:	he is a bad man

prepositions
Bahtssal does not have prepositions. Instead suffixes are added to nouns to describe location.
In this example, the suffix **-xaam** is used to mean **in**.

Bahtssal:	waal hyuulxaam shuutaehe
	we snow in got stuck

English: we got stuck in the snow

making negative sentences
There is a word used to make a sentence negative. That word is **kh<u>uy</u>-**. Verb endings then get added to this word instead of onto the verb.
For example:

      Bahtssal: kaachil b<u>uu</u>raqal shaak`a
                     Kachil   bear   killed
      English: Kachil killed a bear

            becomes

      Bahtssal: kaachil kh<u>u</u>ya b<u>uu</u>raqal shaak`
                     Kachil did not   bear   kill
       English: Kachil did not kill a bear

*Note that the **-a** ending on the verb **shaak`** is on the **kh<u>uy</u>-** in the negative sentence. Notice that this is similar to the English; the past tense **-ed** on **kill** tranfers to **did** in the negative sentence.*

telling people what to do
when you want to tell someone to do something, you add an ending to the verb.
You add **-im** to the end of the verb if you are talking to just one person. You add **-em** to talk to more than one person.
For example,

      gup'gim   Stand (jump)up! (singular)
      b<u>uu</u>d<u>u</u> d<u>o</u>kakime   Pound acorns! (all of you)