LINGUISTICS 183

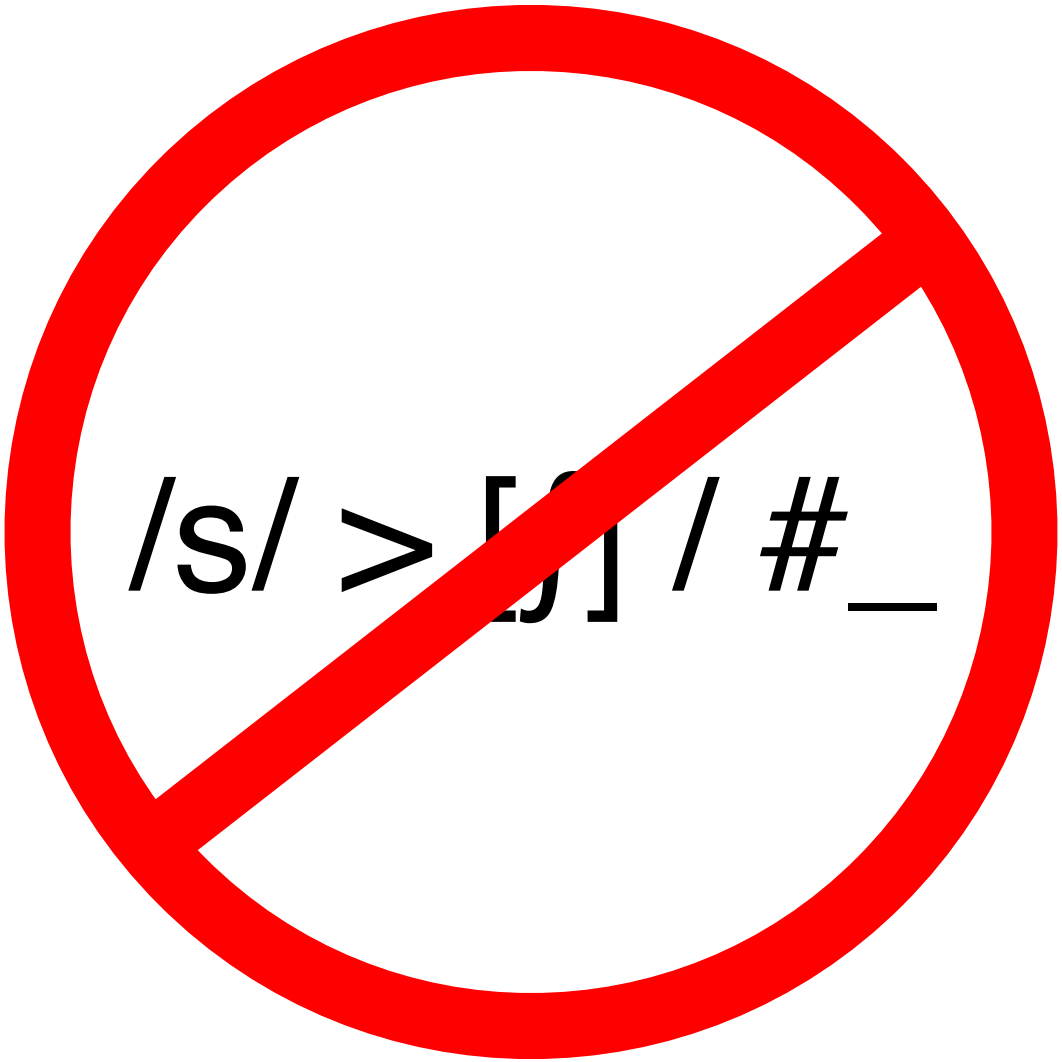
WEEK 6

Valdyan/Ilaini by Irina Rempt

Hanleni halsen varyenan laynat
Daysinen verein idanla le listat
Havien hinla laziena forat
Culea rachleni arlea a chalat?

“The song of the starlings speaks of heroic deeds
In the morning rain the heron does its laundry
In the night the lark worships the stars
Who sees the true nature of birds?”

/s/ > [ʃ] / #_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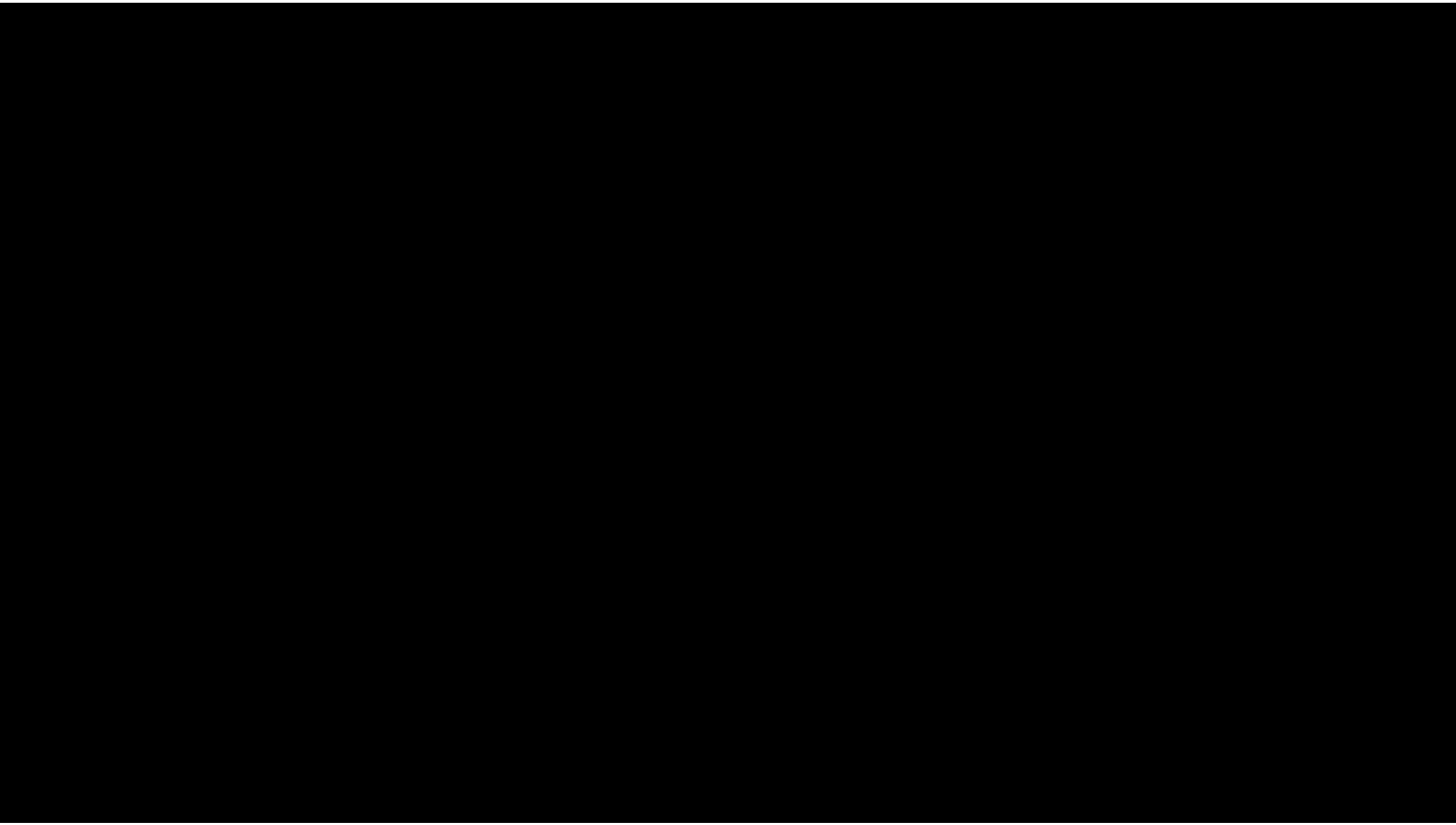

TRANSLATION

Translation ≠ Writing

Generally, one can translate from one language to another, even if one has to use more words or non-standard words.

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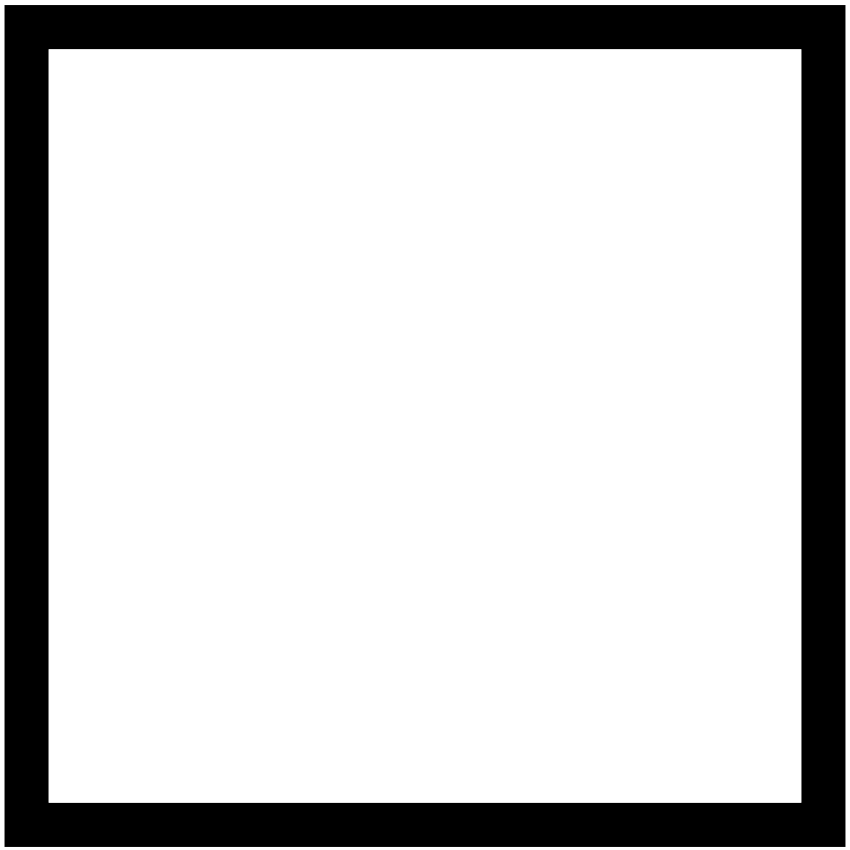
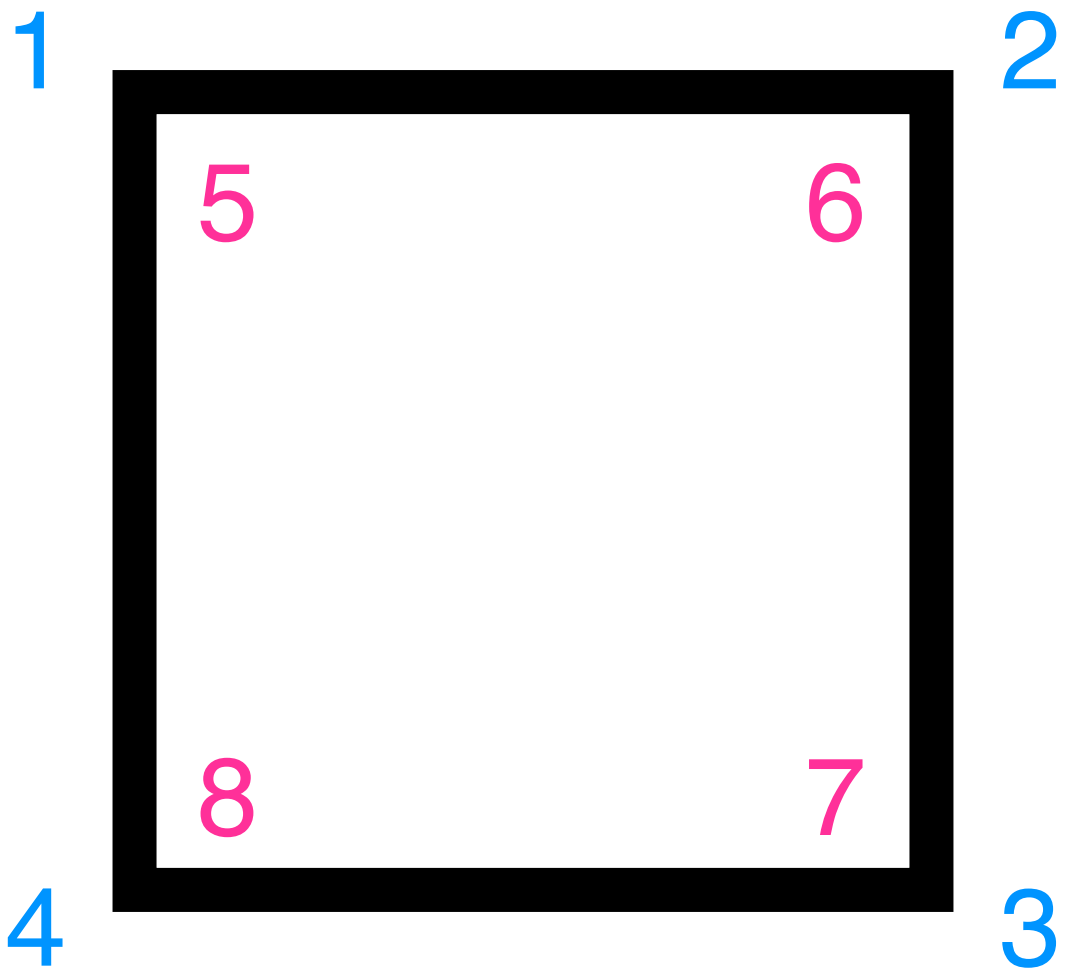


Este cuarto tiene cuatro rincones y cuatro esquinas.

This room has four corners and four corners.


1
2
5
6
8
7
4
3

This room has four inside corners and four outside corners.

Frequency

rincón	4/1,000
esquina	4/1,000
inside corner	0.0004/1,000
outside corner	0.0004/1,000

He banged his hip on the corner of the desk.

wonderful
marvelous
awesome
incredible
fantastic
terrific

That’s a wonderful book.
That’s a marvelous book.
That’s an awesome book.
That’s an incredible book.
That’s a fantastic book.
That’s a terrific book.

That’s a wonderful book.

That’s a marvelous book.

That’s an awesome book.

That’s an incredible book.

That’s a fantastic book.

That’s a terrific book.

Dude, that’s a marvelous laptop!

Dude, that’s a sick laptop!

Dude, that’s an awesome laptop!

maravilloso
increíble
fantástico

marvelous ≠ maravilloso

The Problem

If you write in English and go to translate the English, you're going to be translating *English* sentences/word choices.

The Problem

Dude, that’s an awesome laptop!

The Problem

Dude, that's an awesome laptop!

The Problem

awesome (adj.) delvek, asanek, misek

The Problem

marvelous (adj.) asanek, delvek, kilek

The Problem

Delvek (#1 definition of “awesome”) used in mainly religious contexts; not as common.

The Problem

Asanek (#1 definition of “marvelous”) used more commonly amongst all people.

The Problem

Kilek (#3 definition of “marvelous”) used more often by young people; uncommon elsewhere.

The Problem

By choosing “delvek”, the translator has mapped English frequency onto the new language.

Consequence 1

Dothraki
athirarido (n.) dream
thirat atthiraride (v.) to dream

Consequence 1
Dothraki
Atthirarido m’anhoon she jalan.
/dream with-me in night/
“I had a dream last night.”

Consequence 1

Dothraki
Thir atthiraride she jalan.
/lived dream at night/
“I dreamt last night.”

Consequence 1

English

I had a dream last night.✅

I dreamt last night.

Consequence 1

Dothraki
I had a dream last night.
I dreamt last night.✅

Consequence 1

Both Dothraki strategies are perfectly grammatical.

Consequence 1
The English translation biases the translator, with the result being that the Dothraki is more anglophone.

Consequence 2

Dothraki
nhazhof (n.) a situation/ problem that's more trouble than it's worth

Consequence 2
Dothraki
lanlekhi (n.) when you eat one of something, and then you immediately want to eat more for a while

Consequence 2

Dothraki
azhkemokan (n.) gift given specifically to a bride on her wedding day

Consequence 2

Out of sight, out of mind.

Consequence 2
Translating from English, you end up using the conlang vocab most readily and easily translated to English.

Consequence 2

Composing in English you get the same problem.

Consequence 2

A native speaker has the words in mind and can use them at will. A non-native speaker doesn’t.

Common Conlang Problem

Conlangers often forget the cool words they create that don’t easily translate to English.

Solution

Better tagging!

Solution

prūmia (n.) heart

Solution

prūmia [ˈpruːˑ.mia] (n.) heart

Solution

prūmia [ˈpruːˑ.mia] (n.I) heart

Solution

prūm·ia, -ī, -ȳn, -iar
[ˈpruːmia] (n.l) heart

Solution

prūm·ia, -ī, -ȳn, -iar (prumia, prūmia) [ˈpruːˑ.mia] (n.l) heart

Solution

prūm·ia, -ī, -ȳn, -iar (prumia, prūmia) [ˈpruːˑ.mia] (n.I) {00}
heart

Solution

{00} = basic

{10} = technical/artsy

{01} = potentially insulting

{11} = uncommon insult

Solution

{00} = hero

{10} = nonpareil

{01} = jerk

{11} = Philistine

Solution

More complexity possible:
You just have to remember your system.

Solution

daoriot jem·agon (vp.) {00}* to not matter (to s/o, use the [com.])

Your Translation

Let us discuss!

Your Translation

Create/write some connected narrative.

Your Translation

- Creation myth.
- Origin of writing.
- Origin of plant/animal/ place.

Your Translation

- Battle with other nation.
- Great deed by great leader.
- Founding of the nation.
- Hero story.

Your Translation

- Ghost/taboo story.
- Marriage/birth/death rite.
- Disaster tale.

Tonight!

1. PA 24: Post what kind of story you're doing in the #asoiaf channel.