



S'í:WES' 1

Alétse tel Lháts'tel?

Where is my Knife?

Sqwá:l

| | |
|------------------|---|
| á:'a | <i>yes</i> |
| alétse | <i>where (is/are)...? (also spelled: elétse, alétsa)</i> |
| el stl'í | <i>I want/I need...</i> |
| éy | <i>good</i> |
| kw'e | <i>the, a, some [use for remote objects and non-specific items]</i> |
| lepót | <i>cup [pl. lelepót]</i> |
| letám | <i>table [no special plural form]</i> |
| lháts'tel | <i>knife [also spelled lhá:ts'tel; pl. lhá:lets'tel]</i> |
| lhq'él:exw | <i>to know (it) [also spelled lhq'élexw, lheq'élexw]</i> |
| lí | <i>in, at, on (also spelled li, with no accent)¹</i> |
| lís alétse te... | <i>where the ... is</i> |
| ló:thel | <i>plate [pl. leló:thel]</i> |
| qas | <i>and [use for joining nouns, e.g. 'the knife and the fork']</i> |
| qe | <i>and [use for joining actions or sentences, but not nouns]</i> |
| síq | <i>under [use when the things are not touching]</i> |
| slhq'él:exw | <i>knowledge, knowing (it)</i> |
| stl'epólwelh | <i>under, underneath [use when the things are touching]</i> |
| sts'ets'á | <i>on, on top of ²</i> |
| sts'ó:qw'els | <i>fork [pl. sts'ó:leqw'els]</i> |
| ta' | <i>your [some speakers pronounce this word ta]</i> |
| te | <i>the, a</i> |
| tel | <i>my</i> |
| ye | <i>the [use only with plural nouns]</i> |

¹ Lí also has other, different, uses. Among other things, it is used in making yes/no questions, and it can also mean *yes*.

² The word *slhe'áx* also means *on* (e.g. *slhe'áx te ló:thel, on the plate*). However, *slhe'áx* is used primarily when talking about food which has been served onto a plate.

Sqwéltel

1. Ewetál tel slhq'él:exw.³
I don't know.
2. Li te letám te lháts'tel.
The knife is on the table.
3. Sts'ets'á te letám te lháts'tel.
The knife is on the table.
4. Sts'ets'á lí te letám tel lháts'tel.
My knife is on the table.
5. Sts'ets'á te letám ta' lháts'tel.
Your knife is on the table.
6. Síq lí te letám tel lháts'tel.
My knife is under the table.
7. Sts'ets'á lí te letám ta' lháts'tel.
Your fork is on the table.
8. Sts'ets'á lí ta' letám tel lepót.
My cup is on your table.
9. Stl'epólwelh lí te ló:thel te lepót.
*The cup is under the plate.*⁴

Qwú:lqwelqweltel 1A

- A. El stl'í tel lháts'tel. Alétse?
I need my knife. Where is it?
- B. Stl'epólwelh lí ta' ló:thel ta' lháts'tel.
Your knife is underneath your plate.
- A. Éy. Qe líchexw lhq'él:exw lís alétse tel lepót?
Good. And do you know where my cup is?
- B. Sts'ets'á te letám ta' lepót.
Your cup is on the table.

³ This phrase contains the word ewéte, which means *nothing*, and breaks down in the following way:
Ewéte+el slhq'él:exw (...which blends into: Ewétal slhq'él:exw.)
nothing+my knowledge (of it)
="I don't know (it)"

El is a shortened form of tel (*my*). When ewéte and el combine, this blends into ewétal.

⁴ Since stl'epólwelh is used here, it means that the things are touching.

Qwú:lqwelqwel 1B

- A. El stl'í kw'e ló:thel.⁵ Alétse ye leló:thel?⁶
I need a plate. Where are the plates?
- B. Síg te letám ye leló:thel.
The plates are under the table.
- A. Éy. Qe alétse thel lháts'tel qas tel sts'ó:qw'els?⁷
Good. And where are my knife and my fork?
- B. Síg te letám ta' sts'ó:qw'els, qe sts'ets'á te letám ta' lháts'tel.⁸
Your fork is under the table and your knife is on the table.

Language Relations and History

The Halq'eméylem language is the traditional language of the Stó:lō people, and it has been spoken continuously in the traditional Stó:lō territory, extending up the Fraser valley region of British Columbia, for thousands of years.

Like all languages, the Halq'eméylem language comes in many different varieties. The three main varieties of Halq'eméylem are as follows:

- Upriver: Stó:lō Halq'eméylem (including Chilliwack, Chehalis, Sumas, Seabird, Tait, and other areas)
- Downriver: Hun'q'umin'um' (including Musqueam, Tsawwassen, Kwantlen, Katzie, Burrard, and other areas)
- Island: Hul'q'umin'um' (including Nanaimo, Chemainus, Cowichan, Malahat, Nanoose, and other areas)

Speakers of these three varieties can understand each other's speech, but there are major differences between the varieties. The most striking feature distinguishing Upriver Halq'eméylem from the other varieties is that Upriver Halq'eméylem does not have the sound 'n', a sound which occurs in many words in both Downriver and Island; all occurrences of 'n' in Downriver and Island words have been replaced by the sound 'l', in Upriver.⁹

⁵ The word kw'e is used here because it refers to some plate or other, not a specific plate. Kw'e is used with remote and non-specific things.

⁶ The word ye is used here for *the* because the noun is plural. Ye is used with plurals.

⁷ The word qas is used here for *and* because it is two nouns that are being joined (*knife* and *fork*). Qas is used when joining nouns.

⁸ The word qe is used here for *and* because it is two phrases (*your fork is under the table, your knife is on the table*) that are being joined. Qe is used when joining verbs or phrases.

⁹ The two other major features distinguishing the Upriver variety are: (i) Upriver does not have glottalized m or l (a combination of m or l with the glottal stop or catch in the throat) and (ii) Upriver has very

White linguists have adopted the term '*Halkomelem*' to describe all the varieties of the language, though this term is being used less and less.

Vocabulary Patterns

My and Your in Halq'eméylem

My in Halq'eméylem is *tel*. *Your* is *ta'*. For example: ¹⁰

| | | | |
|---------------|-----------------|---------------|-------------------|
| tel lepót | <i>my cup</i> | ta' lepót | <i>your cup</i> |
| tel letám | <i>my table</i> | ta' letám | <i>your table</i> |
| tel lháts'tel | <i>my knife</i> | ta' lháts'tel | <i>your knife</i> |

Spatial Expressions

The most general way to describe where something is in Halq'eméylem is to use the word *lí*, which means *in*, *at*, or *on*. The word-order to use is as in the following example.

Lí te letám te lháts'tel.
At/in/on the table the knife
 =*The knife is on the table.*

Whether you mean *in*, *at*, or *on* will be understood from the nature of the things being talked about. As the vocabulary list for this lesson indicates, there are also more specific words for describing where objects are located, including *sts'ets'á* (*on*, *on top of*) *síq* (*under*) and various others. With these more specific words for spatial locations you use a word-order as in this example:

Sts'ets'á te letám te lháts'tel
On the table the knife
 =*"The knife is on the table."*

Sentences for expressing spatial locations are usually constructed along similar lines, substituting the various other words for locations (*stl'epólwelh*, *síq*, etc.).¹¹

noticeable pitch differences, with some words containing a special pitch pattern. Upriver also has a large number of vocabulary items which are different from the Downriver and Island varieties.

¹⁰ In certain positions *tel* will shorten down to just *el* (see the note above re *ewetál shq'él:exw*, for one example of where this happens). The shortened forms for *my* (and similar shortened forms for *your*) will be discussed in more detail in later lessons.

¹¹ Elders sometimes use the word *lí* together with the more specific words, like this:

Síq lí te letám te lhá:tstel.
Under at/in/on the table the knife
 =*The knife is under the table.*

However, there appears to be some dialectal variation here, and judgements on this point are not always consistent. You can also change the order around a bit, putting the location last, like this:

Síq te lhá:tstel lí te letám.
Under the knife at/on the table
 =*The knife is under the table."*