

(M) Quests and Requests in Nivkh (1/2)

M1.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
G	Q	T	K	B	M	P	A	R	N	I	W	D	F	V	S	E	U	H	O	L	C	J

M2.

ñi ćipikamuxeliđ	I need your big boat
ñi həzyəfk'eliđ	I need that bear
ñi təfləngxeliđ	I need this big ash
ñi p'eṭusk'eliđ	I need my own meat
ñi ahaqxekid	I need that cap over there

M3.

I need your big track.	ñi ćpilaṭifk'ekid / xekid
I need my knife.	ñi ñzaqoxekid
I need that cap over there.	ñi ahaqxekid
I need your hare.	ñi təjkxekid
I need my nail.	ñi ñzrovsk'ekid/ xekid

How to solve:

Easy step 1

See that ñi = I

See that xekid = need (x → k' after f and s)

alternate analysis zyəfk' and liysk' end in k' (x → Ø/after k')

These analyses might not pop out at first, but they are seeable.

Easy step 2

Count the nouns in the English translations.

See that fish shows up 3 times.

See that cap shows up 5 times.

See that hut shows up 1 time.

See that all other nouns show up twice.

Step 3a

Look for correspondences in the Nivkh data (looking for fish, cap, and hut)

Step 3b

Notice 'pila' (could initially mean 'big' or 'over there' by factoring out all of the nouns – cap is tricky, but the others are easy)

Notice ḥo 3 times (after segmentation of pila), ḥo = fish

Notice ñivra = my hut, so ivra = hut, ñ means my, which is nice because it goes with ñi=I

Notice (h)aq = hut (5 times) – the h will be tricky



(M) Quests and Requests in Nivkh (2/2)

Step 4

figure out if pila is 'big' or 'over there'

compare ḥpilazyafk' and təpilaṭo = ??(that or this)- pila -fish

Notice that the two words containing pila have different prefixes (t vs. ḥ)

Look at the other sentences that contain 'big' or 'over there' in their translations.

zyəfk' = either boat or bear

Compare I need that boat over there vs I need that fish over there

Notice that the prefixes don't match

Compare I need this big fish with I need your big bear

Notice they have different prefixes, so tə = this, ḥ=your

Now you can match up 13 with D, 19 with H, 7 with P and 8 with A, ...

Step 5

You still have ḥo and a-ḥo – one means a fish and the other means that fish over there

Notice a-mu and ñ-mu. ñmu is my _____. Of the nouns that appear twice, boat, branch, and picture have 'my' in their translation. Only 'boat' also goes with 'that over there', none have 'a' translations. So mu = boat, ñ = my, and a='that over there.'

So 1=G, 16=S, 14=F and 20=O

Step 6 : Cap

aq shows up 5 times (it is haq, and x→∅/after a prefix)

2: ñi hə-haq-xekiq

5: ñi ñ-aq-xekiq

12: ñi ḥ-aq-xekiq

17: ñi ñ-it'ulv-haq-xekiq

21 : ñi haq-xekiq

Meanings :

B : 'I need my cap'

E: 'I need my winter cap'

L; 'I need a cap'

Q: 'I need that cap'

W: 'I need your cap'

evident that 12=W, 5=B, 17=E (so it'ulv(h) = winter, but the 'h' shows up in 21 too, so it'ulv)

a cap vs that cap, we know 'a' = no prefix on fish, and haqxekiq is obviously less prefixed than həhaqxekiq , so haq = cap (h deletes after a C, or after 'my' and 'your') hə = that

21=L, 2=Q

Step 7

hə-zaqo and ḥ-zaqo = that X and your X , so zaqo = knife and 9=R and 18=U

liysk' and ḥ-liysk' = a X and your X, so liysk' = wolf and 10=N and 23=J

ḥ-eflanj and ñ-eflanj = your X and my X, so 22=C and 4=K

p'-eznjai and ḥ-eznjai = my own X (we haven't seen p' before, but we know ḥ is 'your') and your X, so 6=M and 15=V

i-təfk' and tafk' = his/her X (by elimination) and a X, so 3=T and 11=I

The only thing left was the vowels of the prefixes of a few forms. I took the offenders out. I modified the answers so that there are 2 right answers for 2 of the Eng à Nivkh translations.

