Understanding Dothraki

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Just to Be Sure…

• I’m David Peterson. Hi!

• Dothraki language creator for HBO’s *Game of Thrones*.

• Based on George R. R. Martin’s *A Song of Ice and Fire*.

• A popular book series.
Timeline

JULY 2009
D&D contact LCS

OCT. 1, 2009
Finalists are announced

NOV. 9, 2009
First e-mail for Dothraki lines

SEPTEMBER 2009
Application process begins

OCT. 30, 2009
D&D select my proposal

MARCH 24, 2011
Finish post-production Dothraki for season 1
First Steps

Anha jerak jin maan haji hazoon.

I trade this to him for that.

I is nominative

this = accusative (all ablative form)
to him = allative

for that = ? haji x-nb.

Anha jerak jin maan haji hazoon.
But...

mahrazh    qazer
How I Proceeded

George R.R. Martin

in the womanly arts of love." He smiled thinly. "She's very good, Illyrio and I can both swear to that."

Ser Jorah Mormont apologized for his gift. "It is a small thing, my princess, but all a poor exile could afford," he said as he laid a small stack of old books before her. They were histories and songs of the Seven Kingdoms, she saw, written in the Common Tongue. She thanked him with all her heart.

Magister Illyrio murmured a command, and four burly slaves hurried forward, bearing between them a great cedar chest bound in bronze. When she opened it, she found piles of the finest velvets and damasks the Free Cities could produce... and resting on top, nestled in the soft cloth, three huge eggs. Dany gasped. They were the most beautiful things she had ever seen, each different than the others, patterned in such rich colors that at first she thought they were crusted with jewels, and so large it took both of her hands to hold one. She lifted them delicately, expecting that it would be made of some fine porcelain or delicate enamel, or even blown glass, but it was much heavier than that, as if it were all of solid stone. The surface of the shell was covered with tiny scales, and as she turned the egg between her fingers, they shimmered like polished metal in the light of the setting sun. One egg was a deep green, with burnished bronze flecks that came and went depending on how Dany turned it. Another was pale cream streaked with gold. The last was black, as black as a midnight sea, yet alight with scarlet ripples and swirls. "What are they?" she asked, her voice hushed and full of wonder.

"Dragon's eggs, from the Shadow Lands beyond Aashai," said Magister Illyrio. "The cons have tasted them to stone, yet still they burn bright with beauty."

"I shall treasure them always," Dany had heard tales of such eggs, but she had never seen one, nor thought to see one. It was a truly magnificent gift, though she knew that Illyrio could afford to be lavish. He had collected a fortune in horses and slaves for his part in selling her to Khal Drogo.

Drogo stepped forward and put his hands on her waist. He lifted her up as easily as if she were a child and set her on the thin Dothraki saddle, so much smaller than the ones she was used to. Dany sat there uncertain for a moment. No one had told her about this part. "What should I do?" she asked Illyrio.
Expansion Process

1. CONCEPT
   - CULTURALLY APPROPRIATE?
     - YES
       - NATIVE TERM?
         - YES
           - BASIC TERM?
             - YES
               - CREATE ROOT
             - NO
               - DERIVE FROM EXISTING STEM
           - NO
             - NEW LEXEME
         - NO
       - REJECT
     - NO
   - NO

Root Creation

• Sounds Good, Looks Good: Done.
  ❖ vorsa “fire”, mahrazh “man”, chaf “wind”

• Pattern Matching
  ❖ chiori “woman”, gaezo “brother”, yamori “youth”

• Eat Your Peas
  ❖ nhare “head”, qeshah “sand”, mredi “garlic”

• Just For Fun…
  ❖ erin “kind”, choo “pika”, kolver “eagle”
Derivation

- Metaphorical Extension
  - *nroj* “thick” > “complex, difficult”

- Simple Derivation
  - *jolinat* “to cook” > *jolino* “cooking pot”

- Compounding
  - *firikh* “ring”, *nhare* “head” > *firikhnhare* “crown”

- Phrasal Constructions
  - *gango awazat* “to feel anxious/excited”
Getting to Work

• Dothraki lines-- (10:07 a.m. 11/15/09)
• Game of Thrones - additional Dothraki dialogue (3:08 p.m. 1/18/10)
• dothraki phrase - Episode III (5:44 a.m. 7/12/10)
• EMERGENCY dothraki!!! (12:10 a.m. 8/5/10)
• new recording? (3:42 p.m. 8/19/10)
• some new Dothraki! (9:59 a.m. 10/22/10)
• last minute Dothraki! (5:42 a.m. 10/24/10)
• new Dothraki lines!!! (9:35 a.m. 11/19/10)
• hi and line...? (3:16 p.m. 1/21/11)
Translation

Episode 6, Scene 24

Drogo tells Viserys where he can sit during the feast.

*Névakh věkha ha maán: Rékke, m’āresakea nórethi fitte.* (d10.mp3)

[ne.va.xi 've.xa ha ma.'an 'rek.ke 'ma.re.sa.ke.a 'no.re.0i 'fit.te]

/seat-GEN exist-3SG.PRES for 3SG.ALL there-ACC with-coward-ALL.PL hair-GEN short/

"There is a place for him: There, with the short haired cowards."

Note: This is Drogo speaking to Irri to relay to Viserys. If you want him to speak to Viserys directly, replace *ha maán* with *ha yeraán.*
Astolat Lekhes Dothraki

- M’athchomaroon!  Hello! (With respect!)
- Athchomar chomakaan! Hello! (Respect to the respectful!)
- Hash yer dothrae chek? How are you? (Do you ride well?)
- Sek, k’athjilari. Yes, definitely. (Yes, by rightness.)
- Vos. Vosecchi! No. No way!
- Me nem nesa. It is known.
- Shekh ma shieraki anni. My sun and stars.
- Fonas chek! Goodbye! (Hunt well!)
Vasterikhi

M’athchomaroon, zhey lajak! Athchomar chomakaan!

Hash yer dothrae chek? Vosecchi!

Kifindirgi? Fonas chek.

(Why?)

Dech esittesakoon fati qoy qoyi ma sikhte sajoes mae. Me et jin hatif ei khalasari! Majin anha efesa jahakes moon ma varragger mae memas. Me nem nesa!

Me nem nesa! Yer tawaki. Hajas!

(It is known! You’re metal! Goodbye!)
Overall

- Scripts + Post = 8/10 episodes.
- 177 pages of translation (+ transcription, etc.).
- 640 .mp3 recordings.
- 3,034 words.
...and
San Athchomari
Yerea!

* (“Much respect to you”; about as close as you get to “thank you” in Dothraki.)