

# **Step-By-Step Procedure For Translating The First Sentence of *Anna Kerenina* Into Ithkuil**

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NOTE: I am using the English translation of the sentence instead of the Russian original as my translation source:

*All happy families resemble one another, each unhappy family is unhappy in its own way.*

## **STEP ONE: Semantic Analysis of Source Sentence**

Before beginning translation, it is important to carefully analyze the actual meaning of the sentence from a cognitive standpoint, i.e., what is the cognitive intent of the sentence as opposed to how it reads stylistically? This is important because Ithkuil must convey the underlying cognitive intent of the sentence. In this sentence, one might initially interpret the sentence to suggest that there are two different kinds of families, one happy, the other unhappy, and that happy ones can't ever be unhappy or vice-versa. But in fact, all families are capable of being happy or unhappy. Therefore, the Ithkuil translation will reword the sentence to convey that when families are happy, they resemble one another, whereas when they are unhappy they don't resemble one another. Secondly, we must analyze what is meant by the word 'resemble'. In English, 'resemble' refers to similarity in visual appearance or observed behavior. However, the intent of the sentence is that the similarity of behavior is intrinsic and occurs whether or not there is anyone available to visually observe it. Therefore, the Ithkuil translation must avoid use of any concept such as 'resemble' to imply visual observation of behavior. The behavior simply *is* similar or dissimilar, regardless of whether there is any visual comparison made. The Ithkuil translation will therefore simply distinguish between similarity in the manifestation/behavior of happiness in families versus dissimilarity in the manifestation/behavior of unhappiness in families. Finally, in the original sentence, the second clause is syntactically disguised as a co-equal main clause, however, cognitively it is a dependent clause in a contingent relationship to the first half of the sentence. The "missing" conjunction should be 'whereas' or 'as opposed to' or 'while on the other hand' since it is being contrastively compared to the first clause. Ithkuil provides a case-frame (the COMPARATIVE) for exactly these kinds of contrastive comparisons. Therefore the Ithkuil sentence will employ such a case-frame when translating the second half of the sentence. So at this point, what we will be translating into Ithkuil reads something like "*All families manifest happiness similarly, whereas they manifest unhappiness dissimilarly.*"

## **STEP TWO: Separating the Lexical from the Morphological**

At this point, the original sentence must be analyzed to determine what Ithkuil lexical roots/stems will be necessary, as opposed to those words/concepts in the original which can be translated via morphological components instead of lexical roots/stems. We can see we are making a statement about families and are qualifying those families as happy or unhappy. Therefore it is likely we will need Ithkuil lexemes for 'family' and 'happy/happiness.' We have already determined above that we do not need a word for 'resemble' and words like 'all', 'one another', 'each', 'in its own way' carry little intrinsic meaning by themselves until they are used in conjunction with the main participants (nouns and verbs) of the sentence. We know from studying Ithkuil morphology that all of these words will be handled by morphological, not lexical means when translating. Therefore, we only need two main lexemes: 'family' and 'happy/happiness.'

## **STEP THREE: Analysis/Derivation Using Ithkuil Morphological Categories**

Those who have studied the Configuration and Affiliation categories of Ithkuil morphology might recognize at this point that the concept 'family' is a composite sort of concept, indicating an entity composed of sub-components or sub-members, each one of whom is a 'family member.' Ithkuil tends not to lexify as discrete stems those words that are gestalt entities comprised of sub-components. Rather it is the sub-components that are lexified into stems and then morphologically modified via the various Configuration and Affiliation categories. The Ithkuil lexicon contains a word **han** meaning a nuclear family member, derived from the root **H-N** referring to the various sanguine members of a nuclear family (parent, child, mother, father, son, daughter, etc.). A family consists of various such members, each of whom are not identical in their attributes (e.g., gender, age, personality, talents, etc.). A gestalt composite composed of non-identical members who are not physically interconnected, is shown by the AGGREGATE [AGG] configuration in Ithkuil. Likewise, the resulting gestalt entity 'family' is more than the sum of its parts from a cognitive standpoint (i.e., it is capable of participating in events or being described in ways

irrespective of its individual members), therefore it should be placed in the COALESCENT [COA] affiliation. Finally, the particular sentence being translated talks about families in a timeless cultural sense, describing families in an archetypal fashion. Such a sense can best be captured by use of the AMALGAMATE [AMG] context in Ithkuil. So far, the Ithkuil word for ‘family’ we are fashioning has been declined for Configuration, Affiliation, and Context. However, there are six remaining morphological categories for nominal formatives in Ithkuil. We must consider each of these:

**PERSPECTIVE:** The sentence is comparing every family against every other family, thus it is speaking of each family as a single discrete entity, not a collective concept. This is reinforced by the use of the word ‘all’ (which in the Ithkuil translation will appear as the Inclusive suffix [INL] in ninth degree, meaning ‘each/every’). Thus the correct perspective is the default MONADIC perspective.

**EXTENSION:** Each family is being considered as an entire discrete entity within the context of the sentence, therefore the default DELIMITIVE extension is appropriate.

**FOCUS:** The sentence does not have a specific component being conveyed as new information in comparison to already known background information, therefore the formative is UNFOCUSED.

**DESIGNATION:** The stem **han** is in the default INFORMAL designation, as indicated by its default stem vowel.

**ESSENCE:** The sentence refers to all families in the real world, not families in a hypothetical or contrary-to-fact context, therefore the default NORMAL essence is appropriate.

**CASE:** The word ‘family’ will be the “subject” of a verb complex meaning ‘manifests happy behavior’. The appropriate semantic role for the subject of a non-causal descriptive state is as CONTENT, shown by the default OBLIQUE [OBL] case in Ithkuil.

The concept ‘happy/happiness’ is given in Ithkuil by **qid** which literally means ‘degree of happiness/joy’.

This stem is derived from the root **Q-D** ‘DEGREE OF POSITIVE EMOTIONAL SATIETY/FULFILLMENT’. Qualitative concepts such as happiness are usually lexified in Ithkuil as a spectrum or range which then takes the Sufficiency [SUF] or Extent/Degree [EXN] suffix to indicate what particular amount/extent/degree of the quality is manifested, anywhere from none up to an overabundance. In this case, we will use the [EXN<sub>1</sub>/6] suffix indicating ‘an above-normal degree of’. Adjectives such as ‘happy’ don’t exist in Ithkuil; their equivalent is usually shown using a verbal formative declined into either the STATIVE [STA] conflation or the DESCRIPTIVE [DSP] conflation. The choice between using STATIVE or DESCRIPTIVE conflation for this translation is subtle. I have chosen [DSP] because it captures more of the sense of describing the nature of the family itself (which is what I think the author was trying to convey) rather than simply a state they are in. Verbal formatives are complex structures in Ithkuil, inflecting for 22 different morphological categories. So, besides the DSP conflation, the remaining 21 categories must be analyzed, as follows:

**CONFIGURATION:** Conceptually, ‘happiness’ is not a gestalt composite, therefore the default UNIPLEX value is appropriate.

**AFFILIATION:** The UNIPLEX configuration implies a default CONSOLIDATIVE affiliation.

**PERSPECTIVE:** The sentence is asserted as being true at all times, a “law of nature” about families, therefore the appropriate perspective is the NOMIC [N].

**EXTENSION:** The state of happiness being discussed is not described as having specific beginning or ending points, therefore the appropriate extension is PROXIMAL [PRX].

**FOCUS:** The sentence does not have a specific component being conveyed as new information in comparison to already known background information, therefore the formatives are UNFOCUSED.

**CONTEXT:** Happiness as an emotional state exists irrespective of opinions, cultural ideas, social conventions, etc., therefore, the default EXISTENTIAL context is appropriate.

**DESIGNATION:** The stem is **qīq** in the default INFORMAL designation, as indicated by its default stem vowel.

**ESSENCE:** The sentence refers to happiness as a real-world state, not in a hypothetical or contrary-to-fact context, therefore the default NORMAL essence is appropriate.

**ILLOCUTION:** The sentence constitutes a propositional speech act, an utterance which is either true or false and can be either believed or disbelieved. Thus, the default ASSERTIVE illocution is appropriate.

**VALENCE:** The state of happiness is being compared between families, implying PARALLEL valence (i.e., one participant is engaged in or experiencing the same activity or state as the other). However, because the verbal formative will be carrying the [SIM<sub>1</sub>/8] suffix (meaning ‘very similarly’), the valence relationship between one family and another is already implied. This means that overtly showing the PARALLEL valence in this sentence is unnecessary (or at least optional).

**VERSION:** The utterance describes a non-hypothetical end-in-itself and is not goal-oriented, therefore the default PROCESSUAL version is appropriate.

**FORMAT:** The descriptive conflation is a primary conflation, not a derivation (i.e., a secondary conflation), therefore the showing of Format is inapplicable.

**MODALITY:** There is no modal or hypothetical content in this sentence, therefore there is no modality.

**LEVEL:** While one might consider translating this sentence using Ithkuil’s EQUATIVE level, its use would imply that families manifest happiness exactly the same way (as opposed to similarly). This is not the intent behind the word ‘resemble’ and therefore use of the [SIM<sub>1</sub>/8] suffix (meaning ‘very similarly’) is more appropriate. Therefore, the default INDETERMINATE level is appropriate.

**CASE-FRAME:** As previously mentioned, the second clause of this sentence will employ the COMPARATIVE [CMP] case frame to signify a “whereas X” or “as opposed to X” type of relationship.

**VALIDATION:** Since the statement is not an empirically verifiable statement, but is written as being a truthful assertion, the implied source of information behind the statement is as an inference on the part of the author based on his own intuition or feelings. Therefore the appropriate validation is the INFERENTIAL.

**PHASE:** The statement does not refer to any repetitive or iterative situation, therefore the default CONTEXTUAL phase is appropriate.

**SANCTION:** The statement constitutes an ontologically subjective assertion or allegation expressing an opinion or belief, potentially subject to challenge or refutation. Therefore, the appropriate sanction is the ALLEGATIVE [ALG].

**ASPECT:** The sentence contains no additional aspectual information.

**MOOD:** The sentence is an assertion of an alleged fact, therefore the default FACTUAL mood is appropriate.

**BIAS:** The utterance contains no overtly subjective attitude or bias.

### STEP FOUR: Diagram and Assemble the Ithkuil words

At this point, we can create a sequential analytical diagram of the morphological structure of the sentence showing the stems, plus all their associated non-default morphological categories, thus:

Morphological Structure of Each Ithkuil Word	Literal Meaning
i + ḥḥan + ḵu + [high tone] [COA]-‘family member’-[AGG]-[AMG]-[INL <sub>1</sub> /9]	“every family”
(a)ff [INF]-[ALG]	[allegation being made based on inference]
äi + qiq + op + üb + [antepenult. stress] [DSP]-[PRX]-‘degree of happiness’-[SIM <sub>1</sub> /8]-[EXN <sub>1</sub> /6]-[N]	“manifesting an above-normal degree of happiness similarly”
äi + qi’wēnḡ + ep + ib + [antepenult. stress] [DSP]-[PRX]-‘degree of happiness’-[CMP]-[SIM <sub>1</sub> /2]-[EXN <sub>1</sub> /1]-[N]	“in comparison to manifesting a complete absence of happiness dissimilarly”

When putting these elements together to render the final Ithkuil sentence, I take the option to reorder the suffixes and reverse some of them into their Consonant+Vowel forms for the sake of phonetic euphony.

Here then, is the end result, accompanied by the most natural sounding literal translation into English:

ḥḥanḵu<sup>-</sup> aff äiqiqpobü äiqi’wēnḡibep.

Iḥḥanḵu<sup>-</sup> aff äiqiqpobü äiqi’wēnḡibep.

*All families are happy in the same way, while being unhappy in their own way.*