

Grammar for the Marček text, chapter 12–13

Impersonal verbs

In English we have sentences like “It is old”, or “It is beautiful”, where the word “it” stands for some specific thing (a house, a book, etc.)

But sometimes the “it” doesn’t stand for anything in particular. For example: “It is raining.” The “it” in this sentence is just a grammatical placeholder—sort of an artificial subject. In Esperanto we simply omit it:

It is raining = Pluvas.

Simple, no?

When verbs are used without a subject, we call them *impersonal verbs*:

Pluvas.	<i>It is raining.</i>	Neĝas.	<i>It is snowing.</i>
Pluvis.	<i>It was raining.</i>	Neĝis.	<i>It was snowing.</i>
Pluvos.	<i>It is going to rain.</i>	Neĝos.	<i>It is going to snow.</i>
Frostras.	<i>It is freezing.</i>	Hajlas.	<i>It is hailing.</i>
Frostis.	<i>It was freezing.</i>	Hajlis.	<i>It was hailing.</i>
Frostos.	<i>It will be freezing.</i>	Hajlos.	<i>It’s going to hail.</i>

You can make these sentences into negatives or questions by placing **ne** or **ĉu** in front of them:

Ne neĝis. *It wasn’t snowing.* Ĉu pluvos? *Is it going to rain?*

In the same way, we can say:

Estas varme.	<i>It is warm.</i>	Estas malvarme.	<i>It is cold.</i>
Estas sune.	<i>It’s sunny.</i>	Estas bele.	<i>It’s beautiful.</i>

But note: because there’s no subject, **estas** is followed not by an adjective, but by an adverb, with **-e**. Compare: in a sentence with a subject, we use an *adjective* to describe the *subject*:

Fajro estas varma.

But in a sentence without a subject, we use an *adverb* to describe the *verb*:

Estas varme.

The diminutive suffix **-et**

The suffix **-et** is used to denote a small size or degree:

domo	<i>house</i>	dometo	<i>cottage</i>
varma	<i>warm</i>	varmeta	<i>lukewarm</i>
malvarma	<i>cold</i>	malvarmeta	<i>cool</i>
dormas	<i>sleeps</i>	dormetas	<i>dozes</i>
ridas	<i>laughs</i>	ridetas	<i>smiles</i>

The augmentative suffix **-eg**

The suffix **-eg** is the opposite of **-et** and shows a great size or degree:

dome**ego** mansion
var**mega** hot
dorm**egas** sleeps heavily
rid**egas** guffaws

-il

The suffix **-il** is used to denote an instrument by which an action is carried out:

tranĉi to cut	tranĉ ilo knife
ŝlosi to lock	ŝlos ilo key
kombi to comb	komb ilo a comb
boligi to boil (something)	bolig ilo boiler, kettle
kuiiri to cook	kuir ilo cooking utensil
flugi to fly	flug ilo wing
aviado aviation	aviad ilo aircraft, plane

ek-

The prefix **ek-** is used to denote the beginning of an action, or a momentary action:

vidi to see	ek vidi to catch sight of
iri to go	ek iri to set off, start
dormi to sleep	ek dormi to fall asleep
bruli to be burning	ek bruli to catch fire
posedi to possess	ek posedi to take possession of
flugi to fly	ek flugi to take flight
brili to shine	ek brili to flash
rigardi to look (at)	ek rigardi to glance (at)
scii to know	ek scii to find out

Correlatives with **-es**

The **-es** words show possession: **kies** – whose (what person's); **ties** – that one's (of that person); **ies** – someone's; **ĉies** – everyone's; **nenies** – no one's.

Kies libro estas tiu?
Whose book is that?

Jen **ies** biciklo.
There's **someone's** bike.

Li estas **nenies** malamiko.
He is **no one's** enemy.

Kies may also serve as a relative pronoun: “whose”. **Kies** never changes; only the noun which follows it may change:

La virino, kies sako estis sur la tablo. *The woman whose bag was on the table.*
La virino, kies sakon li ŝtelis. *The woman whose bag he stole.*

The indefinite pronoun **oni**

When we're not referring to any person in particular, we use the indefinite pronoun **oni**, which is similar to the English “one”:

Oni ripetas, kion **oni** legas. *One repeats what one reads.*

In English we also use “they,” “it” or even “you” to convey the same idea, depending on the sentence:

Oni diras, ke vi estas malfeliĉa.
They say that you are unhappy.

Oni diras, ke vi estas riĉa.
It is said that you are rich.

Kiam **oni** estas riĉa, **oni** baldaŭ trovas amikojn.
When **you** are rich, **you** soon find friends.

Li estas tiel malgranda, ke **oni** ne rimarkas lin.
He is so small that **you** don't notice him.

More about adverbs

Esperanto is rich in adverbs; any root can be made into an adverb with the **-e** ending, provided the result makes sense. As a result, adverbs are more widely used in Esperanto than in English, and we can often use Esperanto's adverbs to express ideas that require two or three words in English!

Generally speaking, we can use an adverb in Esperanto where we'd use a *preposition and noun* in English:

Li parolas saĝ**e**. *He speaks wisely (with wisdom).*
Mi dormas nok**te**. *I sleep at night (during the night).*
Li laboras tag**e**. *He works by day (during the day).*
maten**e** *in the morning*
vesper**e** *in the evening*
fakt**e** *in fact; as a matter of fact*
ceter**e** *as for the rest; moreover*
ekzempl**e** *for example*

Time

So far we've used **-n** to mark a direct object in a sentence. But it has other uses: for example, it can be used in place of a preposition. We often see this in expressions of time, where **-n** is added to replace a missing **je** or **dum**:

Mi iros lundon.	=	Mi iros je lundo.
<i>I will go Monday.</i>		<i>I will go on Monday.</i>
Mi atendos semajnon.	=	Mi atendos dum semajno.
<i>I will wait a week.</i>		<i>I will wait for a week.</i>

Note that **lundon** means *on Monday*—a single day. If we wish to indicate repetition, we need to use the adverb form: **lunde** = *on Mondays*.

Mi iris lundon, kvankam kutime mi iras mardes.
I went on Monday, although I usually go on Tuesdays.

In accordance with this use of **-n**, when writing the date (at the top of a letter, for instance), we write:

Dimanĉon, la duan (2-an) de Marto

or simply:

La 2-an de Marto

Weights and Measures

Here again we can use **-n** to replace a preposition, making the sentence more concise:

La monto estas mil metrojn alta. (La monto estas alta **je** mil metroj.)
The mountain is a thousand meters high.

La pakaĵo pezas du kilogramojn. (La pakaĵo pezas **je/ĝis** du kilogramoj)
The package weighs two kilograms.

If **-n** is already used to show the object, however, it might be ambiguous to have two **-ns** together. In that case, put the expression of time or measure first, or just use a preposition. Instead of *Mi atendis lin du semajnoj*, it might be better to say *Du semajnoj mi atendis lin*, or *Mi atendis lin dum du semajnoj*.