

Grammar for the Marček text, chapters 4-5

- The prefix **mal-**

(This should have been in the section for chapter 3, but I forgot to include it... Better late than never?)

The prefix **mal-** is one of the most useful affixes in Esperanto — it makes an *opposite*:

<i>bela</i>	<i>beautiful</i>	malbela	<i>ugly</i>
<i>juna</i>	<i>young</i>	maljuna	<i>old (not young)</i>
<i>nova</i>	<i>new</i>	malnova	<i>old (not new)</i>

Note: The English word “old” can be the opposite of both “young” and “new”. An “old friend” could be a new friend who happens to be elderly, or it could be a longtime friend who is relatively young. By contrast, a **malnova amiko** may not be a **maljuna amiko** (or vice versa!)

Some more examples of **mal-** words:

<i>antaŭ</i>	<i>before, in front of</i>	malantaŭ	<i>behind</i>
<i>granda</i>	<i>big, large</i>	malgranda	<i>small, little</i>
<i>larĝa</i>	<i>wide</i>	mallarĝa	<i>narrow</i>
<i>pura</i>	<i>clean</i>	malpura	<i>dirty</i>

- Plurals: **-j**

To make a noun plural, simply add **-j**:

hundoj	<i>dogs</i>	pomoj	<i>apples</i>
lampoj	<i>lamps</i>	tabloj	<i>tables</i>
bestoj	<i>animals</i>	domoj	<i>houses</i>

(Remember, **oj** rhymes with *boy*.)

Adjectives must “agree” with the nouns they describe: if a noun is plural (i.e., if it ends in **-j**) then its adjective also takes the **-j** ending:

malbonaj	hundoj	<i>bad dogs</i>	belaj	domoj	<i>beautiful houses</i>
grandaj	ĝardenoj	<i>big gardens</i>	nigraj	tabuloj	<i>black boards</i>

- The suffix **-in** and prefix **vir-**

The suffix **-in** makes a word female:

patro	father	patrino	mother
frato	brother	fratino	sister
filo	son	filino	daughter
viro	man	virino	woman
knabo	boy	knabino	girl
sinjoro	gentleman, Mr.	sinjorino	lady, Mrs., Ms.
reĝo	king	reĝino	queen

With a handful of nouns denoting people (especially for familial relations like *patr-*, *knab-* etc.) the form without the **-in** suffix is male by default: *patro*, for example, always means “father”. *Filo* is always “son”. But for all other “people-words”, the default can signify persons of either gender. For example, *kelnero* can mean “waiter” or “waitress”. *Aktoro* can mean “actor” or “actress”.

In these cases, if you need to specify gender explicitly, you can add **-in** for females or **vir-** for males. *Instruisto* = “teacher”. *Instruistino* = “female teacher”. *Virinstruisto* = “male teacher”.

- **kiu** (*who / which one*) and **tiu** (*that person / that one*)

Last time we met the word **kiu**, which can mean “who”. In lesson 5 we learn that **kiu** actually means both *who* and *which (one)*. It may help to remember that also English uses “one” to indicate both things *and* people. (Think of phrases like “one might think...” or words like “someone” and “everyone”).

In lesson 5 we also meet the corresponding word **tiu** (pronounced *TEE-oo*) which is used to indicate persons and things known by name:

Kiu estas la patro?	<i>Who is the father?</i>
Tiu estas la patro.	<i>That person is the father.</i>
Kiu sidas?	<i>Who is sitting?</i>
Tiu sidas.	<i>That person is sitting.</i>
Kiu besto estas hundo?	<i>Which animal is a dog?</i>
Tiu besto estas hundo.	<i>That animal is a dog.</i>

- **kie** (*where / in what place*) and **tie** (*there / in that place*)

Previously we met **kie**. Like **kiu** and **kio**, it has a corresponding **ti-** form, **tie**:

Kie vi loĝas?	<i>Where do you live?</i>	Mi loĝas tie .	<i>I live there.</i>
Kie li estas?	<i>Where is he?</i>	Li estas tie .	<i>He is there.</i>

- The “correlatives”

You’ve probably noticed a pattern with these **ki-** and **ti-** words. They form a set of related terms known as the “correlatives”. English also has a set of words like this:

where	there	somewhere	nowhere	everywhere
who	that one	someone	no one	everyone
when	then	sometime	never	always
how	that way	somehow	no way	every way
why	that reason	some reason	no reason	every reason

As you can see, the English words follow a semi-regular pattern. For example, most of the question words in the first column begin with **wh-**. The pattern in Esperanto is similar, but completely regular. For example, the words in the first column *always* start with **ki-**, the words in the second column *always* start with **ti-**, and so on. We’ll meet more of these correlative words in the coming chapters.

- Possessive adjectives

The personal pronouns (“me”, “you”, “he”, etc.) can be made into possessives by adding the adjective ending **-a**:

mia *my, mine* **nia** *our, ours* **lia** *his*
via *your, yours* **ŝia** *her, hers* **ilia** *their, theirs*
ĝia *its*

Mia patrino parolis al **via** patrino.
My mother spoke to your mother.

Lia libro estas dika, kaj **ŝia** estas maldika.
His book is thick and hers is thin.

Nia hundo estas bela, kaj **ilia** hundo estas malbela.
Our dog is beautiful, and their dog is ugly.

- Subject and direct object

So far we’ve seen only sentences without direct objects. These sentences express what a subject *does* or what it is. For example:

La patro sidas en la seĝo. *The father sits in the chair.* (**patro** is the subject)
 Maria estas bela. *Maria is beautiful.* (**Maria** is the subject)

But often we’re concerned with what the subject *does to something (or someone)*. When we *read*, for example, we must read *something*; when we *love*, we must love *something*; when we *eat* or *drink*, we must eat or drink... *something*. This “something” is called the *direct object*.

In Esperanto, we add **-n** to the direct object to distinguish it from the subject:

Subject	Verb	Direct object
la kato	vidas	la hundon
<i>the cat</i>	<i>sees</i>	<i>the dog</i>

Looking at this sentence, we know what does the seeing (**la kato**), and we know what is seen (**la hundon**, because it has the **-n**). We can even re-arrange the word order without changing the meaning:

La hundon vidas la kato. *The cat sees the dog.*
La kato vidas la hundon. *The cat sees the dog.*

Because it has the **-n**, the word **hundon** remains the object, no matter where it appears in the sentence.

The direct object can be a pronoun instead of a noun:

La kato vidas ĝin. *The cat sees it.*

or it can be plural:

La kato vidas la hundojn. *The cat sees the dogs.*
Ĝi vidas ilin. *It sees them.*

Now, remember how adjectives “agree” with their nouns by taking the plural ending **-j**? In the same way, they also take the same **-n** ending as their nouns:

Maria amas la malgrandajn katojn.
Maria loves the little cats.

Li havas tri novajn librojn.
He has three new books.