

Grammar for the Marček text, chapters 9 - 10

Comparison

In English we often express “degrees” of a quality with “-er” (comparative), and “-est” (superlative):

quality	comparative	superlative
tall	taller	tallest

For some words, we make the comparative and superlative with “more” and “most”:

quality	comparative	superlative
beautiful	more beautiful	most beautiful

And a few words have very irregular forms:

quality	comparative	superlative
good	better	best

In Esperanto, we always express these degrees with **pli** and **plej**:

quality	comparative	superlative
alta	pli alta	plej alta
bela	pli bela	plej bela
bona	pli bona	plej bona

Mi havas **pli** bonan ideon.

I have a better idea.

Everest estas la **plej** alta monto en la mondo.

Everest is the tallest mountain in the world.

Ĝi estas la **plej** bela floro.

It is the most beautiful flower.

Li estas mia **plej** bona amiko.

He is my best friend.

We use **ol** with **pli** to translate “than”:

Li estas **pli** alta **ol** vi.

He is taller than you.

Tiu libro estas **pli** bona **ol** ĉi tiu.

That book is better than this one.

Tiu floro estas **pli** bela **ol** rozo.

That flower is more beautiful than a rose.

And we use **el** with **plej** to translate “of” in the sense “out of a group”:

Li estas la **plej** alta **el** la fratoj.
He is the tallest of the brothers.

Jen la **plej** bona **el** miaj libroj.
Here is the best (one) of my books.

Adverbs are compared in the same way as adjectives:

alte	pli alte	plej alte
<i>highly</i>	<i>more highly</i>	<i>most highly</i>

bele	pli bele	plej bele
<i>beautifully</i>	<i>more beautifully</i>	<i>most beautifully</i>

bone	pli bone	plej bone
<i>well</i>	<i>better</i>	<i>best</i>

Ŝi kantas plej bele.
She sings most beautifully.

Li faris ĝin pli bone ol vi.
He did it better than you.

Kiam and **tiam**

More “correlative” words. **kiam** = *when*; **tiam** = *then, at that time*.

Kiam vi venos al Roĉestro?
When will you come to Rochester?

Tiam ni iros al la plej bona restoracio en la urbo.
Then (at that time) we'll go to the best restaurant in the city.

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. Adverbs are more widely used in Esperanto than in English, and they can 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 saĝe.	<i>He speaks wisely (with wisdom).</i>
Mi dormas nokte.	<i>I sleep at (during the) night.</i>
Li laboras tage.	<i>He works by (during the) day.</i>
matene	<i>in the morning</i>
vespere	<i>in the evening</i>
fakte	<i>in fact; as a matter of fact</i>
ekzemple	<i>for example</i>

Days, months, etc.

La tagoj de la semajno (*the days of the week*). Usually they are not written with a capital letter.

lundo <i>Monday</i>	mardo <i>Tuesday</i>	merkredo <i>Wednesday</i>
ĵaŭdo <i>Thursday</i>	vendredo <i>Friday</i>	sabato <i>Saturday</i>
dimanĉo <i>Sunday</i>		

La monatoj de la jaro (*the months of the year*)

Januaro <i>January</i>	Februaro <i>February</i>	Marto <i>March</i>
Aprilo <i>April</i>	Majo <i>May</i>	Junio <i>June</i>
Julio <i>July</i>	Aŭgusto <i>August</i>	Septembro <i>September</i>
Oktobro <i>October</i>	Novembro <i>November</i>	Decembro <i>December</i>

Kioma

A few weeks ago we encountered the correlative word **kiom** (“how much / what amount?”):

Kiom estas tri kaj kvar? *How much is three and four?*

The answer to a **kiom** question is a number. Sometimes, however, we want to ask for an adjective describing the order of something in a series. Instead of answers like *unu*, *du*, or *tri*, we want answers like *unua* (“first”), *dua* (“second”) or *tria* (“third”). For these questions, we ask **kioma**:

Sur kioma paĝo estas la hejmtasko? —Sur la kvara paĝo.
On which page is the homework? —On the fifth page.

Kioma horo estas? —Estas la dua horo.
What time is it? —It's two o'clock (“the second hour”)

Antaŭ and post for expressing time

Antaŭ before an expression of time is often translated by *ago*:

Mi vidis lin antaŭ du jaroj.
I saw him two years ago.

Antaŭ tri horoj mi estis en la butikoj.
Three hours ago I was in the shop.

Similarly, **post** is often translated by *in*:

Li estos libera post du jaroj.
He will be free in two years.

Post du horoj ni estos en Novjorko.
In two hours we will be in New York.

The preposition **je**

Prepositions show relationships, such as **kun** (*with*), **en** (*in*), **sub** (*beneath*) etc., One of the most useful is **je**, whose meaning is indefinite. It is used where the relationship is obscure or cannot be clearly expressed by other prepositions:

Li vetas **je** ĉevaloj. *He bets on horses.*
Ŝi kredas **je** vi. *She believes in you.*

It is often used with dates and times:

Mi ne laboris **je** tiu tago. *I did not work on that day.*
Li venos **je** la tria horo. *He will come at three o'clock. (literally, "at the third hour")*
Ni festos **je** la kvara de julio. *We'll celebrate on the fourth of July.*

The preposition **ĝis**

We've encountered **ĝis** before in the expression "**Ĝis la revido!**", literally ("until the re-seeing!" — or more colloquially, "See you later!") **Ĝis** means "until" or "(up) to" in space or time:

La kanalo Erie etendas de Albany **ĝis** Buffalo.
The Erie canal extends from Albany (all the way) to Buffalo.

Morgaŭ mi laboros de la oka horo matene **ĝis** la sepa horo vespere.
Tomorrow I'll work from eight o'clock in the morning until seven o'clock in the evening.

Mi loĝis en Novjorko **ĝis** 1991, kiam mi venis al Roĉestro.
I lived in New York until 1991, when I came to Rochester.

The suffix **-ar**

The suffix **-ar** is used to denote a collection of persons or objects indicated by the root:

homo	<i>a human</i>	hom ar	<i>humankind</i>
vagono	<i>a train car</i>	vagon ar	<i>a train</i>
monto	<i>mountain</i>	mont ar	<i>a mountain range</i>
arbo	<i>tree</i>	arb ar	<i>a wood, forest</i>
ŝafo	<i>a sheep</i>	ŝaf ar	<i>a flock of sheep</i>

The reflexive pronoun **si**

Most transitive verbs show someone or something (the subject) performing an action on a *different* someone or something (the object):

subject	verb	object
Knabo	trinkas	akvon.
<i>A boy</i>	<i>drinks</i>	<i>water.</i>

With some verbs, it's possible to apply the action to *oneself*: in these cases we translate "myself" as "me" (**min**), "yourself/yourself" as "you" (**vin**) and "ourselves" as "us" (**nin**):

Mi lavas **min**.
I wash myself.

Vi flatas **vin**.
You flatter yourself.

Ni amuzis **nin**.
We amused ourselves.

With **mi**, **vi**, and **ni** there's no doubt about who the object is. But there is a doubt when talking about **li**, **ŝi**, **ĝi** and **ili**. For example, with **li vidas lin** = "he sees him", we don't know who "him" refers to; is it the **li** of the subject, or is it some different **li**?

This problem is solved by the special reflexive pronoun **si**. The words "himself", "herself", "itself" and "themselves" are all translated by **si**:

Li vidis **sin**.
He saw himself.

Ŝi admiris **sin**.
She admired herself.

Ili amuzis **sin**.
They amused themselves.

La viro parolis al **si**.
The man talked to himself.

La hundo rigardis al **si**.
The dog looked at itself.

La infanoj legis al **si**.
The children read to themselves.

Note: **si** itself can never be the subject of a sentence; it only refers back to a subject.

The possessive **sia**

With pronouns like "me", "you", "us", we've seen that **-a** can be added to make the possessive adjectives "my", "your", "our", etc. It can also be added to **si** to show that the object belongs to the subject. So **sia** is translated by "his", "her", "its" or "their" depending on the subject.

In a sentence, each **sia(n)** refers back to the subject of its own individual clause.

Subject 1 Subject 2
Li trinkis **sian** bieron kaj **ŝi** trinkis **sian** teon.
He drank **his** beer and **she** drank **her** tea.

The first **sian** = *his*, because it refers to the subject **li**; and the second **sian** = *her*, because it refers to the subject **ŝi**.

Johano trinkis **sian** bieron kaj Georgo trinkis **sian** kafon.
Johano drank his (Johano's) beer and Georgo drank his (Georgo's) coffee.

Now watch carefully:

Johano ne estis kontenta ĉar Georgo trinkis **lian** bieron.
*Johano was not pleased because Georgo drank **his** (Johano's!) beer.*

Here are more examples of sentences with multiple subjects:

Subject 1 Subject 2
Li diras, ke **lia hundo** lavas sian vizaĝon.
He says that **his dog** is washing its face.

Here **sian** = *its*, because it refers to the subject of its clause, **lia hundo**.

Subject 1 Subject 2
Li vidis, ke **ili** finis sian laboron.
He saw that **they** had finished their work.

Here **sian** = *their*, because it refers to the subject **ili**.

Like other adjectives, **sia** must take the same **-j** and **-n** endings as its noun:

Ili legis siajn librojn.
They were reading their books.

Note: As with **si**, **sia** may not be a subject itself; it may only refer back to a subject. For example it would be incorrect to say **Li diras, ke sia hundo...** because **hundo** is the subject of its own clause.