

PREVLI

3.3. COMPARATIVES AND SUPERLATIVES. Comparatives are formed with prefixes *tab-* 'more' and *das-* 'less' (< /tabu/ and /dasi/ resp.); only /tabuk/ *tavok tafko* 'better' is irregular. Superlatives are formed with prefixes *nus-* 'most' and *zil-* 'least' (< /nusu/ and /zili/ resp.); only *numuk* 'best' and *nuzala* 'worst' are irregular.

3.3.1. In comparative sentences, the item being compared is called the “target of comparison” (and will be the subject of the sentence), while the item it is being compared to is called the “standard of comparison”. Thus in *taftate lüsi man enka* 'Lüsi is more beautiful than Enka', *Lüsi* is the target, *Enka* the standard; linking the two is the particle *man*, translated as “than” (< /manad/ 'exceed, surpass'). When the target/subject is a pronoun, the full form must be used: *tavlopku kan man garo* 'I am older than Garo'; when the standard is a pronoun, the oblique form must be used: *tavlopku garo man agná* 'Garo is older than me'. If the standard is already present in context, it may be omitted: *taftate lüsi* 'Lüsi is prettier', *tavlopku kan* 'I am older'. Similarly, if the target is already known from context, it may be omitted-- *onda tavu man nôm* 'there were probably more than ten [whatever]'.

If the standard is a clause or sentence, then *manu* (*man+u* 'subordinate clause intro.part.') is used:

tavlopku garo manu semiz 'Garo is older than he says (he is)' (following older usage, the verb in the standard may be in the passive...*tavlopku garo manu še.mi nešké*)

el tavnu šústut manu kiridak 'there are more problems than I thought' (~ ...*manu k,irid nagná*)

tusi el dašnu yana manu elda dolo mitsä 'it is less sunny now than it was this morning'

In a few cases, a passive verb is required, or at least preferable:

tavneab kan diek peag manu ok nakp,ärne niblí 'my knife is sharper than the one you are using' (passive is required here, lit. ...*manu* that(one) PROG-PASS-use by-you)

donor hen tavu (~tavno) kagnát manu l,e:rod (nagnát) 'he gave (us) more (~more of it) than was needed (by us)' (~'...more than we needed')

Included here are those cases where the sentence in the standard can be omitted because it is understood from context:

menjö o tafko manu dolo 'it looks better than before (~than it did)'

tavu zize zek manu kan 'he eats more than me (~than I do)' (on this “adverbial” use of *tavu* etc., see below §3.3.3)

Particle *man(u)* is also used with the verb /suyan/ *sün,â* 'different, other'--

sün,â zek diez nnagat manu zek diez šemit 'his actions are different than (~differ from) his words', or, rather formal, *sün,â ka nagaz manu ka semiz* 'what he does differs from what he says'. **SHOULD BE PASSIVE////???**

3.3.2. Superlatives. Superlative expressions may stand alone-- *nuštate lüsi* 'Lüsi is the most beautiful' (~colloq. *el lüsi o nuštate* '...is the most beautiful one'); they may include a standard, of sorts, such as "Lüsi is the most beautiful of all" *nuštate lüsi man olta* (lit., ...than all-pl), or *el zek nušloro gile manu t,örmo nagná* 'he is the stupidest person I know' (passive required here, '...*manu* is-known by-me'). Or it may be a prepositional phrase, like "...in the world" etc.-- *el lüsi nuštate sipe ivo piglä* 'Lüsi is the most beautiful woman in the village', ...*o nuzala gile ivo pinen* 'the worst person in the (our) world' (an older usage has *bak* 'from' instead of *ive*).

3.3.3. Colloquially, any comparison (comparative or superlative) may be phrased with introductory /el, on/-- *el taftate lüsi (man enka)* 'Lüsi is prettier (than Enka)'; *on tavlopku kan (man garo)* 'I am probably older (than Garo)'; *el nušloro zek* 'he is stupidest', etc. Any comparison may also be nominalized with the definite article (and /el,on/): *el ok o tafko* 'that's the better one', *el lüsi o taftate/~o nuštate* 'Lüsi is the prettier/the prettiest one', *on kan o nušlopku* 'I'm (probably) the oldest'. **MUST USE ON FOR IRREAL., PFXIED ADJ. DON'T > IRREL.**

The various terms of comparison (*tavu, dasi, nusu, zili*) can also function as adjectives, usually along with partitive *-nu* (or contracted *-no* 'of it, of the...')--

lero eskänto tavnu dij 'we need more meat'

lero eskänto tavno 'we need more (of something already mentioned)'

zizer hen nušno lils 'he ate most of the lils'

zizer hen nušno 'he ate most of it (already mentioned)'

They may also be nominalized, with the def.article *o ~ot* (*nusu/zili* more often than *tavu/dasi*):

zizer hen o nušno lils 'he ate the most lils' (contrast *zizer hen nušno lils* above)

zizer hen o nušno/o zilno 'he ate the most/the least'

nerki zetent yagnat o nusno lopot 'the Yagans (clan) own the most lopas'

When *tavu/dasi* (or their derived comparatives) are used in generic sense (i.e. with unknown or indefinite referent) they may function as adverbials:

tavu pato ko manu min 'I like it more than you (do)'

taftašpo korväd zek manu tvnür kan 'he ran faster than I could (run)'

dasi zize kan manu dolo 'I eat less than I used to (eat)' (contrast *zize ko dašnu dij manu dolo* 'I eat less meat than I used to')

Finally, there are a few idiomatic uses and related forms:

dasi-tavu 'more or less...'

tafte-tavu 'more and more'; *dašte-dasi* 'leas and less'

tavu/dasi....tavu/dasi.... 'the more/the less....the more/the less...'

/zizil/ zizli 'at least...'

/nunun/ nutsu 'mostly, by and large, most of all' etc.