



Comparative forms and superlatives

In the previous lesson 9B, we saw how to form the comparative. There is another way to express comparison in the **Tsimihety** dialect, by using duplication of the predicate.

A – The Duplicative

In Malagasy, some word groups ending in **-KA**, **-TRA**, or **-NA** follow special grammatical rules (exceptions).

Examples: *satroKA*, *lobaKA*, *varavaraNA*

⌚ General rule: the **root** of the word is repeated. The above words **do not** follow this.

Regular examples:

tsara (good) → **tsaratsara** (better)



ratsy (bad) → **ratsiratsy** (less bad)

mafana (hot) → **mafananafana** (less hot)

manintsy^{tsm} (cold) → **manintsinintsy** (colder)

Irregular examples:

mangatsiaka → mangatsia(ka) + tsiaka → **mangatsiatsiaka**

mavesatra → mavesa(tra) + vesatra → **mavesabesatra**

maina → mai(na) + maina → **maimaina**

Sometimes the **first letter changes** in the duplicated form:

I → d

v → b

s → ts

r → dr

(e.g. *maVesatra* → *mavesaBesatra*)

⌚ Duplication can **change the meaning** of a word, either positively or negatively.

If the word has a negative meaning, it becomes more positive when duplicated, and vice versa.

Examples:

ratsy (bad) → **ratsiratsy** (less bad)



mafana (hot) → **mafananafana** (less hot)

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ratsy
Manintsy

ratsiratsy
manintsinintsy

tsara
mafana

However, **comparatives in the Tsimihety dialect** don't always follow the same change in meaning as the duplication would suggest.



B – The Comparative (Tsimihety dialect)

Structure:

Subject + Duplicative Predicate + tsitoko (more than) + Comparative noun

Example:



| Subject | Predicate | Comparator | Comparison Term |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| <i>Ny fontsy</i> (bananas) | <i>mamimamy</i> (sweeter) | <i>tsitoko</i> (more than) | <i>ny paoma</i> (apples) |

Examples:

Manintsy^{tsm} / cold

→ **I Kanada manintsinintsy tsitoko I Suisse**
(Canada is colder than Switzerland)

matsiro / delicious

→ **Ny hena omby matsirotsiro tsitoko ny akoho**
(Beef is more delicious than chicken)

miasa / to work

→ **Ny infirmiera miasaasa tsitoko ny dokotera**
(Nurses work more than doctors)

mazava / bright

→ **Ny masôva mazavazava tsitoko ny davôlagna**
(The sun is brighter than the moon)

D – The Superlative

1. *Indrindra* = “most”



manintsy *indrindra* i Rosia → Russia is the *coldest*

matsiro *indrindra* ny hena omby → beef is the *most delicious*

antitra *indrindra* izy → he is the *oldest*

miasa *indrindra* ny vitsika → ants work the *most*

2. *Indrindra amin'ny ... rehetra*

= “the most ... of all”



manintsy *indrindra amin'ny firenena rehetra* i Rosia

→ Russia is the coldest *of all* countries

matsiro *indrindra amin'ny hena rehetra ny hena omby*

→ Beef is the most delicious *of all* meats

Miasa mafy *indrindra amin'ny bibikely rehetra ny vitsika*

→ Ants are the hardest-working *of all* insects

**3. Faran'ny ... = “The most extreme of ...”****Faran'ny sarotra ny malagasy**

→ Malagasy is the most difficult language

Faran'ny miasa ny vitsika

→ Ants are the hardest working

Faran'ny manintsy i Rosia

→ Russia is the coldest

Faran'ny matsiro ny hena omby

→ Beef is the most delicious

Translate to your language, then back into Malagasy:**a. Beef – Chicken – Pork → matsiro (delicious)**

Samby^{tsm} matsiro ny hena omby ndreky ny hena kisoa ndreky ny akoho.

Matsiro kokoa ny akoho noho ny hena kisoa.

Matsiro indrindra ny hena omby.

b. Malagasy – French – English → sarotra (difficult)

Samy^{of f} sarotra ny malagasy sy ny frantsay sy ny anglisy.

Sarotra kokoa ny anglisy noho ny malagasy.

Sarotra indrindra ny anglisy.

c. Candy – Sugar – Honey → mamy (sweet)

Samby^{tsm} mamy ny vatomamy ndreky ny siramamy ndreky ny tantly.

Ny siramamy mamimamy tsitoko ny tantly (ny fandrama).

Faran' ny mamy ny vatomamy.