Part - II

6. Nouns: Number

In grammar, names are given to different parts of a sentence. Using these names, different sentence structures are explored. The important parts of a sentence are: noun, pronoun, adjective, verb, adverb, preposition, conjunction and interjection. There are no English equivalents for concepts like *sandhi*, *vibhakthi* without which it is almost impossible to master Telugu.

Nouns in Telugu, with a few exceptions, come with a number and gender. There are two numbers: singular and plural. A majority of the plurals in Telugu end in the plural suffix   (lu) or   ¼Lu).

1. Types of Nouns

A noun is a word used to name a person, place, thing or an idea. Nouns can be divided into categories and there is no universal rule for doing this categorization. In Telugu, as in English, a proper noun is defined as the name of a particular person, place or thing.

Masculine

        rA-mu-Du   name of a person (derived from Sanskrit)

        gO-pA-lu-Du name of a person (derived from Sanskrit)

        nI-cu-Du   base fellow/scoundrel (derived from Sanskrit)

E   ¶ e-ra-ka-yya   name of a person (NOT derived from Sanskrit)

Non-Masculine

      sI-ta   name of a girl   þ š ku-kka dog

      gaM-ga name of a person/river   » pi-lli   cat

   » pi-lla   girl   I» i-llu   house

A µa-mma mother   A   a-Da-vi forest

Common nouns are names of categories. A common noun is NOT the name of a particular person, place or thing.

Singular		*Plural*	
gO-Da	wall	gO-Da-lu	walls
cE-pa	fish	cE-pa-lu	fish/fishes
na-di	river	na-du-lu	rivers
§ ce-TTu	tree	» ce-Tlu	trees

In English proper nouns are capitalized and common nouns are not capitalized. In Telugu there are no capital (upper case) letters; common nouns are identified by their meaning.

Common nouns can be further divided into several sub categories.

(a) *Concrete nouns* describe names of things that can be perceived by the senses.

> vE-Di heat
>
> ca-li   chilliness
>
> » ba-lla table/board

(b) *Collective nouns* describe names of a group.

> § ja-TTu   team
>
> guM-pu crowd
>
> maM-da mob

© *Countable nouns* are names of things that can be counted and can be distinguished for singular and plural. The plurals of countable names generally end in –s in English and with –   (lu) in Telugu. For example, some countable nouns and their plurals are:

Singular		*Plural*	
þ ¢ ku-rcI chair		þ ¢ ku-rcI-lu chairs	
beM-cI bench		beM-cI-lu chairs	
sI-sA bottle		sI-sA-lu bottles	

(d) *Non-countable nouns* (mass nouns) are names of objects that are treated as indivisible and they generally are either singular or plural. Examples of non-countable nouns that are always singular are:

U	u-ppu	salt
I	i-nu-mu	iton
ü	ki-ra-sa-nA-yi-lu	kerosine

Examples of non-countable nouns that are always plural are:

> » va-Dlu   paddy
>
> kaM-du-lu red gram (a type of pulses)
>
> pA-lu   milk

(e) Another category of non-countable nouns are *abstract nouns* that describe names of properties. These nouns do not have plurals and they are used with a singular verb.

A   aM-daM beauty   **ì**   prE-ma love

       ba-laM   strength   **ì**   ni-dra   sleep

       te-lu-pu white/whiteness **E¬** e-ttu   height/tallness

       na-lu-pu black/blackness   lO-tu   depth/deepness

(f) Another category of abstract nouns are derived from the names of properties by appending with the suffix   (ta-naM), which translates into "-ness" in English or   (ri-kaM), which translates into "-ness/ -ity" in English.

         maM-ci-ta-naM goodness

©   ce-DDa-ta-naM badness

®   pe-dda-ri-kaM adultness/seniority

         bI-da-ri-kaM   poorness/poverty

Note 1. Some of the non-countable nouns that are treated as singular in English are considered plural in Telugu and vice versa.

2. Verbal Nouns

Verbal nouns are names of actions. Some examples are shown below. There does not seem to be a rule that is formed during their formation.

…Verb…	…RTS……	…..Meaning…	…Verbal… noun	…RTS…..	…..Meaning…
vaM-Du	to cook		vaM-Ta	(1)cuisine (2)cooking	
na-Du-cu	to walk		na-Da-ka	gait	
kO-yu	to cut		kO-ta	(1)incision (2)harvest	
kO-ru	to wish		kO-ri-ka	wish	
cU-Du	to see		cU-pu	(1) glance (2) visit	
A µ a-mmu	to sell		**A µ** a-mma-kaM	sale	

3. Rules of Plural Formation

A large number of the plural names in Telugu end in the plural suffix - (-lu). There are also a large

number that do not follow this simple pattern and end in or -   (Lu). In most cases, when a plural ends in

-    (-lu), the plural suffix is simply appended to the singular, very similar to the way an 's' is appended to 'car' to make 'cars'. In some cases, the *sandhi* operation forces the -   (-lu) to appear in its secondary form. The *sandhi* operation also has the property of replacing   (-lu) with   ¼LLu). As long as you

remember that   (-lu) and -   ¼LLu) are somewhat equivalent to the English 's' in plural formation,

you would cover a majority of cases. The difficulty comes in understanding the conditions under which these endings are to be used. Some simple rules should help explain the subtleties in plural formation. As there are exceptions to these rules, a useful way to learn the plurals is by practice and memorization.

3.1 The usual way to create a plural common noun is to append the plural suffix   (lu) to the nominative singular (also known as the basic stem).

Singular		*Plural*	
	A-vu	A-vu-lu	cows
þ ¢	ku-rcI	þ ¢ ku-rcI-lu	chairs
°	Ta-nnu	° Ta-nnu-lu	tons
°	pa-nnu	° pa-nnu-lu	taxes

3.2 If a Telugu singular noun, derived from Sanskrit, ends in   (Du), then the plural suffix   (lu) replaces the singular suffix   (Du).

Singular		*Plural*	
	paM-Di-tu-Du	paM-Di-tu-lu	scholars
°	snE-hi-tu-Du	° snE-hi-tu-lu	friends

3.3 In the process of creating the plural form, one may be forced to perform a *sandhi* operation as shown below. In this case, the plural suffix generally appears in its secondary form.

Singular		*Plural*	
	pE-ru	» pE-rlu	names
û	kA-ru	û» kA-rlu	cars

3.4 When a singular noun itself ends in   (lu), then its plural form ends in   ¼LLu).

Singular		*Plural*	
û	kA-lu	û ¼ kA-LLu	legs
À	pe-nsi-lu	À ¼pe-nsi-LLu	pencils

3.5 If the basic stem ends in **U** (u), in conjunction with the consonant **á** (T^), that is if the basic stem

ends in   (Tu), then the   is replaced by the plural suffix -» (Tlu), by eliminating the vowel **U** (u).

+   cO-Tu + lu   » cO-Tlu places

+   bO-Tu + lu   » bO-Tlu boats

3.6 If the basic stem ends in   (Di),   (Du),   (lu) or   (ru), then these syllables are replaced by the plural suffix   (Lu), and the normal suffix   (lu) morphs into the secondary form   (Lu).

+   ╮
ba-Di + lu   ba-LLu
     +   ¼
pe-ra-Du + lu pe-ra-LLu
û +   **û** ¼
kA-lu + lu   kA-LLu
     +   ╮
U-ru + lu   U-LLu

3.7 If the basic stem ends in ©(DDi), © (DDu), §(TTi) or § (TTu), then these syllables are replaced respectively by the plural suffixes » (Dlu) and » (Tlu).

© +   »
rO-DDu + lu rO-Dlu
§ +   »
ce-TTu + lu ce-Tlu

One possible way to interpret this is to theorize that Telugu plurals do not accept geminate word-endings unless one of the two end-syllables is either a   (lu) or   (Lu). To enforce this all other consonant sounds in the terminal geminate are eliminated in a *sandhi* operation.

3.8 If the basic stem ends in » (llu), or   ° (nnu), then these sounds are sometimes replaced by the plural suffix   ¼(LLu). There are, however, some exceptions to this rule.

∎» +   ∎ ¼i-llu + lu   i-LLu
    ° +   ¼ka-nnu + lu ka-LLu

3.9 Examples of exceptions to Rule 3.8 are shown below. Notice the exception, when taken, could lead to a different meaning.

° +   =   ╮

pa-nnu + lu = pa-LLu, teeth (when Rule 3.6 is applied)

° +   =   °

pa-nnu + lu = pa-nnu-lu, taxes (when exception to Rule 3.6 is taken)

° +   =   °

ve-nnu + lu = ve-nnu-lu, ear of corn (exception to Rule 3.6 is mandatory here)

° +   =   °

ka-nnu + lu = ka-nnu-lu, eyes (exception to Rule 3.6 is optionally taken)

Note 3. As stated earlier, the simplest way of converting a singular noun to a plural form is by appending the letter   (lu). However, if the singular itself ends in a   (m) then, in colloquial usage, the   (mu)

sound is not pronounced and it is replaced by the elongated   (A) sound, as shown by the second word in the examples below.

--   --

dO-sha-mu -- dO-sha-mu-lu -- dO-shA-lu

fault (error, mistake) -- faults (errors, mistakes)

Þ   -- Þ   -- Þ

ku-TuM-ba-mu -- ku-TuM-ba-mu-lu -- ku-TuM-bA-lu

family -- families

4. Vocabulary

1. Read the following words aloud.

A ³	a-bbA-yi	boy	A ³	a-bbA-yi-lu	palm boys
A μ	a-mmA-yi	girl	A μ	a-mmA-yi-lu	girls
§	pi-Tta	bird	§	pi-TTa-lu	birds
	ceM-cA	spoon		ceM-cA-lu	spoons
	pA-Ta	song		pA-Ta-lu	songs
¼	pa-LLeM	plate	¼	pa-LLE-lu	plates
û	kA-gi-taM	paper	û	kA-gi-tA-lu	papers
	ka-laM	pen		ka-lA-lu	pens
	pu-sta-kAM	book		pu-sta-kA-lu	books

┐   ┐û

▮»   i-llu   house   ▮ ¼   i-LLu   houses

      baM-Di   vehicle   ꞁ   ba-LLu   vehicles

û   kAlu   leg   û ¼   kA-LLu   legs

Exercises 1. read the following aloud

	rE-pu	tomorrow	**A ¶**	a-yya	father
°	ve-nna	butter	**A µ**	a-mma	mother
A ¶	a-yyA!	sir! (vocative)	**A µ**	a-mmA!	madam! (vocative)
E»	e-lluM-Di	the day after tomorrow	I	rO-ju	today
A	a-vu-nu	yes	**û**	kA-du	no/ not
▮	i-di	this	**A**	a-di	that
▮ š	i-kka-Da	here	**A š**	a-kka-Da	there
?	E-di?	which one?	**E š** ?	e-kka-Da?	where?
þ	ku-Di	right	**E**	e-Da-ma	left
	pA-lu	milk	**¤**	ma-jji-ga	buttermilk

2. Read the following sentences aloud.

š , ┐	na-ma-skA-ra-maM-DI, mU-rti-gA-rU	Hello, Murthy, sir
E U ° ?	e-lA u-nnA-rU?	How are you, sir/madam?
A ¶ E U ° ?	a-yyA! mI-ru e-lA u-nnA-rU?	Sir, how are you, sir?
A µ E U ° ?	a-mmA! mI-ru e-lA u-nnA-rU?	Madam, how are you, madam?
A ³ E U ° ?	mI a-bbA-yi e-lA u-nnA-rU?	How is your son?
E U ° ?	mI vA-ru e-lA u-nnA-rU?	How is your husband?
E U ° ?	mI A-vi-Da e-lA u-nnA-rU?	How is your wife?
A ° ?	aM-tA bA-gu-nnA-rA?	Is everyone doing well?
¶ !	da-ya-ce-yyaM-Di!	(idiom) Please come! (welcome!)
¶ !	da-ya-ce-yyaM-Di!	(idiom, sneering) Please go! (get lost!)
ÿ ₵ !	da-ya-cE-si kU-rcoM-Di.	Please sit down.

| ¼⌐ ! | ve-LLi va-stA-nu | See you again. (lit. I will go and come back). |
| ¼ -® ! | ma-LLA ka-lu-ddAM | We shall meet again! |

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