

**Handout 2. Nouns**

You know you are looking at a noun (or a nominal form of a verb) if one or more of the following conditions applies:

- a) it can be modified by the demonstratives *ere* ("this") or *tere* ("that") or by a quantifying adjective such as *geren* or *gemu*
- b) it has a plural form (see below)
- c) it can be modified by a case marker:
  - a. nominative (blank, *be*)
  - b. genitive (*i, ni*)
  - c. accusative (*be*)
  - d. locative (*de*)
  - e. dative (*de*)
  - f. instrumental (*de, i*)
  - g. ablative (*c*)

On plural forms

Most Manchu nouns can be pluralized by adding an adjective such as *geren* ("many"), *eiten* ("all"); by adding an adverb such as *gemu* ("all"); or by directly indicating number (*juwe, ilan, minggan, tumen*, and so forth). Plural can also be shown by a postposition such as *gubci* ("entire, all"), *tome* ("each"), and *jergi* ("etc."). Reduplication of nouns (as in Chinese and Japanese) is another way of marking the plural, e.g., *hacin hacin* ("all sorts of," lit. "sort-sort"), but usually not by the substantive itself.

In addition, many Manchu nouns – mostly personal nouns (i.e., names for people, esp. family relationships; the best known exception is the plural form of *morin* "horse," which is *morisa*) – have distinctive plural form endings. These are: *-ri, -si, -ta/-te, -sa/-se/-so*. Final *-n* is usually dropped before adding the plural suffix.

Only two words end in *-ri*:

<i>mafa</i> "grandfather"	<i>mafari</i>
<i>mama</i> "grandmother"	<i>mamari</i>

A few end in *-si*:

<i>aha</i> "slave, servant"	<i>ahasi</i>
<i>haha</i> "man"	<i>hahasi</i>
<i>hehe</i> "woman"	<i>hehesi</i>
<i>omolo</i> "grandchild"	<i>omosi</i>
<i>hojihon</i> "son-in-law"	<i>hojihosi</i>

Others end in *-ta/-te*:

(back vocalic)		(front vocalic)	
<i>ahûn</i> "elder brother"	<i>ahûta</i>	<i>deo</i> "younger brother"	<i>deote</i>
<i>sargan</i> "wife"	<i>sargata</i>	<i>eigen</i> "husband"	<i>eigete</i>
<i>ama</i> "father"	<i>amata</i>	<i>eme</i> "mother"	<i>emete</i>
		<i>ejen</i> "lord"	<i>ejete</i>

But the most common plural ending (accounting for about 85% of all nouns) is *-sa/-se/-so*:

(back vocalic)		(front vocalic)	
<i>amban</i> "official"	<i>ambasa</i>	<i>jui</i> "child"	<i>juse</i>
<i>faksi</i> "craftsman"	<i>faksisa</i>	<i>gucu</i> "friend"	<i>gucuse</i>
<i>hafan</i> "official"	<i>hafasa</i>	<i>beile</i> "prince"	<i>beise</i>

Note the effects of vowel harmony:  
*monggo* "Mongol"      *monggoso*  
*solho* "Korean"      *solhoso*

Sometimes pluralizing –*sa* or –*se* gets used independently (that is, it is not attached as a suffix to the noun it modifies), as in *wang* "prince," pl. *wang sa*. This usage is also seen in the use of *se* (never *sa*) in the beginning of a memorial as a pluralizing form after an individual's name (e.g., *Fuk'anggan se*) to indicate that more than one person is submitting the memorial (the full list of memorialists can usually be found at the end of the document).