

3. NOUNS

The noun in Sonsorol is not accompanied by an article; if definition is necessary, one of the demonstratives (p. 29) is used after the noun. Nouns may be treated under the following heads:

- A. Derivation
- B. Number
- C. Gender
- D. Case Relationships

A. Derivation

Sonsorol nouns may be simple or derived, and each may belong to one of two classes - those which take suffixed pronouns (p. 23) and those that do not take them. Nouns do not change their form for number, gender or case. Each of these relations is indicated by qualifying words of various kinds, placed before or after the noun.

Simple nouns are those which are the names of objects, such as fidi (S), fis (T), a star, or guruguru, a lemon; fävije, firewood. In many instances noun and verb are the same in form, e.g. vau, to pole a canoe, or the pole with which this is done; xaur^{ur}, to swing, or the swing; fiteki ki, to work, or the work; faul^e, to do, make, or the action or making, as in xo bwe xamatantaña ri faul^e, be quick in the doing, do it quickly; fatir, to steer, or the rudder; contrast, i t^oti fatir, I have never steered before, with e tai wola jai fatir, I have no rudder. Sometimes adjective and noun are identical, as tipa'ñaki, good, well-behaved, and tipafakir, his good character. Or some definite word may be called in: muromur, to make fire by friction, gives di ni muromur, "mother of fire rubbing".

for the flat stick used, and rau ri muromur, "Child of fire rubbing" for the upright stick. Even a negative phrase may serve as a sort of compound noun: i tøkura, I don't know, and tøkura, ignorance.

Affixes are, however, common in the formation of certain types of nouns, such as abstracts or instruments.

1. ya- (sometimes xa-), for abstract nouns: tød^u, true, believe > yatød, faith, as in yatød^u ri Kristiano, the faith of a Christian; i kk^ja tød^u, I believe, lit. I hold true; tautaye, ascend > yatautau, a ladder (instrument, with reduplication); irama, to suffer > yairama, suffering. The same prefix ya- is also used to indicate the inhabitants of a place: limaru yaToyovei, five people of Tob; demaru yaDonosaru, a person of Sonsorol.
2. tani-, forms abstract nouns referring to positions or times of life: riweis, a child > taniriweis, childhood; ta'mor, a chief > tanita'mor, chieftainship. This type is not very common.
3. lei, a particle placed before the noun, shows the agent or actor, as in teiføu, thirsty > lei teiføu, a thirsty person; weirein, above > lei weirein, a heavenly being. So lei fada ma lei mad^e, the living and the dead; lei jåpites, a foreigner; lei rannaro, enemy. Also in compounds: lei tei Kristiano, non-Christians; lei tøkura ri faulumir, those who are ignorant of the village; lei tai wola uva:ⁱl, those who have not clothes; lei tai wol' imwer, the homeless; i mwasa'ri: lei fiteki ri manau, I want a maker of food, i.e. a cook.

(Elbert in his notes on Ulithi Grammar issued by the American Navy Department gave lei as a plural sign; this is not so at any rate in Sonsorol; its appearance in plurals is merely incidental).

An outstanding feature of the language is its ability to use phrases, often of some length, as nouns, governed by prepositions, as, e mori worou madirop ri jai mire i'ya, 'have become six the years of my stay(ing) here', i.e. I have been here for six years; xo bwe xamataŋataŋa ri faul^e, be quick about the making; e tau dewwa jai ra mata ri im, e da rutojit, is far very my going home and then lunch, i.e. it is too far for me to go home for lunch; i kura xama:ta ri wet, I know the cooking of taro; 'e mmayo dewwa jamu xayojoyoja, your reckon(ing) is very good; xo bwe tepanijei ifiri lolo ri mere, help me in the lifting of this, help me lift this; e mori bweni jamu γapøuyø ri pepa? is finished your reading of the paper (book)? i.e. have you finished reading the book? ia me xo lawe ri ra iran? where that you wish of going to it, i.e. where do you want to go? keinapa e γauje riweisⁱ fäivirⁱ faruvaru, elder brother teaches sister drawing; ifiri jal^e faul^e Misa, in their celebrating Mass.

B. Number

The number of a noun not being indicated by any formal change, two methods of determination are available, (i) context, and (ii) the pronouns. Hence the prior importance of pronouns. Sometimes a demonstrative may be put in to help indicate number.

(i) In many instances the context of situation will tell whether a singular or plural is intended: bwal^o ri pleit (S), bogo ri pleit (T.), a box for plates, hardly 'for a plate'; but i γada pepa me iolom, may be either 'I take a book from you' or 'I take books from you'. Unless

there is a context of situation, as would normally be the case, there can be no clarity.

(ii) In many instances some form of pronoun is used supporting or added to a noun, which defines its number. Of course, even with suffixed pronouns, the mere fact of adding a suffixed pronoun will not determine number: papamemi is both 'our father' and 'our fathers'. But there are other cases:

(a) a verbal pronoun between a subject noun and its verb will determine number, provided the noun refers to a living person: rai e madil, my child is asleep, and rai le madil, my children are asleep.

(b) Objective pronouns added to the verb anticipate a noun object and give the number through the form of the suffix: i mori welie riweis, I have seen the child, and, i mori weliel riweis, I have seen the children. This, again, is limited as in (a) - the object is personal; in other cases a third person singular suffix is used irrespective of the number intended, and context alone can decide: xale e wola sayai? could be either 'Is there an egg?' or 'are there any eggs?'.
Frequently no ambiguity results: e mire waor¹

xpusama, 'they are on the rafters' was the answer to a question, "where are the sail and the mast?"; e is to be understood as a neuter plural, and more than one rafter would naturally be referred to.

Sometimes the pronoun is suffixed to a prepositional root: ifi-l^e lei rannaromami, 'from our enemies' is a definite plural (-l^e).

The use of a demonstrative word to indicate number has already been shown on p. 30.

C. GENDER

There is no indication of gender in the form of Sonsorol words, even in the third person pronoun. Two methods of showing it exist: (i) different words may be used for living creatures of either sex; (ii) words for male and female may be added as adjectives after the noun. As far as possible, decision is left to the context of the statement. When differentiation is needed, the methods mentioned are employed.

- (i) Different words for each sex of living creatures are used:

maru, man, male	fäivi, woman, female
mar(u)ennapa, old man	urøurap, old woman
keinapa, man's elder brother	miangäi, man's sister
papa-i, my father	neira-i, my mother

- (ii) male = maru, mar^e, after the noun, and female = fäivi (^x)

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- (^x) the Hamburg Expedition gives dialect forms ending in -t, such as weiniet, but the author has not come across these, so they are omitted here.
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Examples:

xapal, baby > xapal mar^u, xapal fäivi
 riweis, child riweisⁱ mar^e, riweisⁱ fäivi

This is the commonest usage, cf. piris, dog; xaian, fowl, and many other words which are similarly treated.

D. CASE RELATIONSHIPS

There are no changes of ending to indicate case relationships in Sonsorol. A preposition is used, as in English; for these see the section on Prepositions.

The expression of the possession, however, stands in a different position, as several prepositions are used in place of the English 'of', and the uses of them must be distinguished.

1. Two nouns are placed side by side with no connecting link: sirigit, tree > un sirigit, leaf or leaves of a tree; u'wa sirigit, fruit or flower of a tree. This juxtaposition is limited to words expressing generic parts of a whole, as in the above examples. The second noun in such a combination may sometimes have an adjectival force, as in xatam palaŋ, door (of) iron, iron door.

2. More generally the possessive preposition before the second noun is ri: kampana ri mata ri imwe ri sukuru, the bell of the front of the house of school, the bell in front of the school. There is some doubt about the legitimate way of spelling in such cases: the Mission has preferred to join the ri to the preceding noun. This is suggested by the treatment of nouns which take suffixed pronouns. In these the -r(a) of the 3rd. person singular suffix become ri: rai, my child > raur^a, his child > rau ri jälimat^a ra, child of that person; and wari dabar, a duck's beak; pauri dabar, a duck's wing (arm); and probably this spelling should be used for such nouns, and the separation be kept for those which do not take suffixes. Words that to the European mind

are not nouns at all but are so to the native mind may also take this construction, as, xo jälimat^a r' i:a? you are man of where? Where do you belong? Where do you come from? It will be seen that the possessive form of suffixing nouns agrees with that of the 3rd. person singular, even when this is irregular: im, house > imwer^a, his house > imweri, house of.

3. After a final -r the preposition is ni: lan ni Ta'mor, the Lord's Day; parujen ni i:γ, the price of fish; non ni jälimat, the heart of the man; siven ni papa, a nail for the wall. This again is a harmonising spelling; the Mission usually writes noni, etc., with a suffixed i, apparently not realising under what conditions the form is usable.

The last example shows that in Sonsorol no distinction is made between the possession of an object by a person (grammatically called a subjective genitive) and the intending of an object for a person or thing (grammatically called an objective genitive). Sometimes a group of related words can be traced through, as xo da duweriñari deau, replace it by another, and, ba duwen ni mere, in place or instead of this (lit. as replacement of this), where the same root serves as both verb and noun, with different suffixes.

Ri may be used to express purpose, when the verb-root following really functions for the time being as a noun: xo bwe xamatañataña ri faul^e, be quick in the doing of it. This is exactly similar to e tei mora mañau ri u'war, is not possible the eat(ing) of its fruit, its fruit is inedible. Ni, however, is also used in a similar sense: xo