

Plurality

Plurality in nouns is marked with one of two suffixes: *-kun* for consonant final words and *-uŋ* for vowel final words.

Table 1 – Plural Markers

singular		plural	
kufu	<i>apple</i>	kufu-ŋ	<i>apples</i>
mendoq	<i>flower</i>	mendoq- kun	<i>flowers</i>

The suffix *-uŋ*, used with vowel-final words, usually appears only as /-ŋ/. This happens because the vowel /u/ in the suffix causes the vowel on the word's root to become a back vowel and is then subsequently deleted, resulting in only the back vowel showing up on the words surface form. In /i/ final words, the final vowel becomes a semivowel /j/ and the /u/ belonging to the suffix is preserved, as in (1e).

- (1)
- a. laqpa laqapo-ŋ 'arm'
 - b. kore koro-ŋ 'bowl'
 - c. zdo zdo-ŋ 'branch'
 - d. kufu kufu-ŋ 'apple'
 - e. ts^haŋki ts^haŋkj-uŋ 'mosquito'

In addition to plurality, these suffixes also indicate definiteness. Plurality can also be indicated through other words such as quantifiers and numerals or it can be inferred from the meaning of a sentence. The use of *-kun* in (2c) changes the meaning of the sentence and restricts its sense to a specific set of flowers.

- (2)
- a. mendoq k^ha:ik staŋzi k^ha ʃeret
flower some tree.GEN on bloom.PRS
'Some flowers grow on trees.'
 - b. ba:ʃiŋ mendoq jod
garden.LOC flower COP
'There are flowers in the garden.'
 - c. ba:ʃiŋ mendoq-kun jod
garden.LOC flower-PL COP
'There are flowers in the garden.'

When speaking generally or making a statement that is universally true, a speaker can use the copula /duged/ instead of /jod/, as in (3a). Here /mendoq/ 'flower' is a reference to flowers in general, though it is grammatically singular. The same general sense of a singular noun can be used in verbal sentences, as in (3b) where /balbɪs/ 'child' is not marked for the plural but the sense conveyed by the statement is that all children like to play, not just one child.

(3)

a. mendoq rgefə duged
flower beautiful COP
'Flowers are beautiful.'

b. balbɪs ɪsteno bja tadet
child game do like.PST
'Children like to play.'