CHAPTER 4
BENGALI AND TAMIL NUMBERS & GENDER

NUMBER

The Noun in Tamil could be either singular like PaiyaN - boy or plural like paiyaNhal - boys.

The plural is formed by adding the plural marker to the singular noun.

E.g. 'boy' PaiyaN + kal = paiyaNhal 'boys'

There are four markers of plurality, namely (gaL) (kaL) and (haL) all written as kal and (kkal) as kkal. There are added to nouns depending on their sound patterns.

1. (gaL) - Kal is added of nouns ending in n, m and N e.g. 'male' an + kaL = angaL - males.
   'female' pen + kaL = penyaL - women.
   'eye' kan + kaL = kangaL - eyes.
   'tree' maram - maran + kaL = marangaL - tree.
   'fruit' pazham - pazhan + kal = pazhangal - fruit.
   'week' varam - varan + kaL = varangal - weeks.

   Note that the 'm' ending changes into n in the above.

   'son' mahaN + kaL = mahaNgaL (sons)
   'boy' paiyaN + kaL = paiyaNgaL (boys)
   'fish' miN + kaL = miNgaL (fish)

   One may find a number of N ending Nouns with a different formation shown in a later section of this chapter.

2. Kkal is added to nouns ending in

   1) Any long vowel 2) or [u] if the word is of two syllables. E.g. paSu - pasukkaL - cows.
   Long vowel ending 'dove' puRā + kkaL = puRākkāL - doves.
   'flower' pū + kkaL = pūkkāL - flowers.
   'fly' tī + kkaL = tīkkāL - flies.
   'radio' rēriyo + kkaL = rēriyōkkāL = radios.
   'cinema' ŠīNamā + kkal = ŠīNīmakkaL = cinemas.
   'elder sister' akkā + kkal/mār - kakākkaL/akkāmār = elder sister.
'maternal uncle' māmā +kkal/mar – māmākkal/mamāmar = uncle.

For terms of relationships 'mar' as the plural marker is also used.
e.g. tambi – tambimār annaN – annaNmar

3. Kal is added when the nouns end in l or L.

1) 1 changes to R while taking the plural marker as in the following cases:—


But most l ending nouns generally do not change and they take (haL) for the plural.

- Leg kāl + kaL = KālkaL – legs.
- Norm pahal + kaL = pahakal – norms.

2) Some L ending nouns may changes to t while taking plural.

- Sword PaL + kaL – vatkaL (vatkaL) Sword.
- Day riaL + kaL – natkal (riatkaL) days.
- Person *aL + kaL – atkaL (atkaL) many persons.

3) But generally they do not change. They take (hal) as the plural marker.

- Shoulder tōL + kaL – (tōLhaL) shoulders.
- Scorpion reL + kaL – (reLhaL) Scorpions.

4) (hal) – is added to all the other nouns.

- Rat eli + kaL – elihaL – rats.

5) Also (ar) is used after human nouns ending in (i) or (y) in a more literary style.

- Girl student māṇavi – māṇavihaL or + ar – māṇaviyar.
- Father tandai – tandaihaL or + ar + ar – tandaiyar.

6) [r] as plural suffix replaces the (Masculine singular) N of human nouns with or without (hal).

- Male teacher āsiriyA – āsirayar/āsiriyarhaL.
- Young boy SiRuvaN – siruvar/siruvarhaL.
- Blind man kururaN – kururar/kururarhal.

Ungalukku ettani (how many) kuzhandaihaL?
How many children have you?
I have two boys; three girls (daughters).

How many persons are there in this house in total?

My parents, my two elder brothers, three younger sisters, myself, in total eight persons.

Similarly pronouns also have singular and plural for mation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>nam</td>
<td>we (inclusive plural, i.e. speaker including the person)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>naN 'I'</td>
<td>addressed nanhal—we (Exclusive plural, speaker not including the person addressed).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* en my</td>
<td>* nam (inclusive plural)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* engal (exclusive plural)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Incl. nam vittukkup pohalam—let us go home
Excl. nangaL uNNoru varamuriyadu—We cannot come with you
Incl. nam vittukku ivarKal varattum—let these (person) come to our house
Excl. engal vittukku ningaL varungal—you come to our house.

* Possessive as well as oblique form—used before other case forms.

**Number and Person**

All the pronouns given above not only indicate the two Numbers, but also another category i.e. person, all these belong to First person i.e. the speaker referring to himself/herself, though the gender of the speaker is not indicated.

Similarly in the II person (i.e. the person in front and being addressed by the speaker, the pronouns are given below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>II person</th>
<th>(informal) singular</th>
<th>Formal sg/pl</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ni</td>
<td>you (informal, equal or Intimate address)</td>
<td>nǐngal (formal, Polite singular or plural)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>uN (obl.)</td>
<td></td>
<td>unǐgal(obl.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nǐ (obl.)</td>
<td>you (slightly more formal than ni but less polite than nǐngal)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>um (obl.)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(obl.)tāṅgal.sg/pl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>extremely formal and polite tāṅgal(obl.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Person, Number and Gender**

In the third person, however, the human pronouns in Tamil indicate not only person and Number but also Gender.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>III person</th>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>avaN: that male – masculine non honorific.</td>
<td>α-avarhal.</td>
<td>These persons common plural.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aval: that female – feminine non honorific.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avar: that person – honorific common for Male &amp; female.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>īvaN: this male – masculine non honorific.</td>
<td>iivarhal.</td>
<td>These persons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ĪvaL: this female – feminine non honorific.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Īvar: this person – honorific common for male &amp; female.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>evan: which male? – non honorific.</td>
<td>ellar, All (inclusive)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>evaL: which female? – non honorific.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evar: which person? – honorific Common for male &amp; female.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Neuter: Referring to humans only when sex is not specified, e.g. kuzhandai – child, paittiyam – a mad being etc. Otherwise it includes all others animate, unanimated abstract etc. etc.

| α-du that, that thing – avai those things. | | |
| Īdu it, this thing – ivai these things. |
| Eedu which, which thing? – evai which things? |
| tāN (oneself, itself) the reflexive pronoun – |
| tām (pl) | tam obl. (themselves) |
| taN – obl | |
refers to oneself and can substitute any noun human or otherwise.
e.g. tāṇē vandaN – he came himself.
             Kāyssal tāṇē pōhum – the fever would go by itself.

Some example

ivaN eN tambi – this (male) is my younger brother
adu uN kuzhandaiyā? – Is that your child?
Adu yaruraiya kurai – whose umbrella is that?
Ivarhal eN manvibaL – these are my students (female).
Avaival uN putthagangaLā? – are they your books?
 tārīgaL eN tiurmanttiRku varavendu m – you (very polite address) must come to my marriage.

PERSONAL SUFFIXES

In a Finite or completed sentence like nīngaL. Pār(u)gal – the verb contains pār the verb
+ ungaL the personal suffix. This personal suffix reflects the same information as contained by nīngaL – the pronoun or subject of the sentence.

(Pronoun)

\[ \begin{array}{c|c|c}
\text{II person} & \text{honoriﬁc} & \text{Singular} \\
\text{Par(verb)} + (u)gal & & \\
\end{array} \]

Singular person

So just the word ‘pār(u)gal’ by itself conveys the person and number of the subject even if it is not explicitly mentioned.
Thus vārūngaL – (you) come, KēLuṅgaL – (you) hear.

Thus personal suffixes are those markers which present in the verb – faithfully repeating the person number and gender of the noun or pronoun which from their subjects.

Personal suffixes which represent all the three (Person, Number and Gender – PNG) categories are discussed in the following section.

These are necessary to synchronize the verb to its Subject. See the following sentences. Particularly the last part – the personal suffixes.
Note: [pp] – future tense marker

1. (nāN) PaṟippēN – I will read.
2. (nām) Paṟippēm – We will read.
3. (nī) Paṟippāy – You (sg) will read.
4. (nīngal) Paṟippārhāl – You (pl) read.
5. (avaN) Paṟippān – He will read.
6. (avaL) Paṟippāl – She will read.
7. (avar) Paṟippār – He/she will read.
8. (avarhal) Paṟippārhāl – They will read.

In all these examples only the last part i.e., the personal suffixes differentiate the sentences. Thus (en) gives the verb its I person singular form corresponding to ‘nāN’ ‘I’. In (4) (irhal) represents II person hon sg. And in 6 (aL) is the Feminine Singular Suffix (ārhāl) in 8 stands for III person common plural (mase/Fem. Or combined). It can be further demonstrated by the following:

nāN paṟippēN – I will read. (future marker).

nāN paṟikkiReN – I read (present tense) (present marker)

nāN paṟitten – I read (past tense) (past marker)

It can be seen here that the tense markers change, but the personal suffixes remain the same, giving the information of I person singular.

By substituting the personal marker the verbal form can be changed accordingly.

nāN paṟitteN –

nī Paṟittay –

Here (ēN) is substituted by (āy) to change I person to II person.

The following section gives full particulars about the personal suffixes.

Pronouns/Nouns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I person</th>
<th>Singular</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>nāN</td>
<td>ēN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e.g. vandēN</td>
<td>I came</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VaruhiReN</td>
<td>I come</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VaruvēN</td>
<td>I will come</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I person plural (inclusive and exclusive both) (ōm)
  Incl. nām pāṛttōm — we saw.
  Excl. nāṅgal-pāṛttōm —

II person — singular — non honorific has two markers ē and āy as personal suffixes.

(1) In Negative Imperatives — m — ē

  (nī) varāde — (you) don’t come.
  (nī) Pāṛkkādē — (you) don’t read.

(2) In affirmatives — āy

  (nī) pāṛittāy — you read (past).
  (nī) pāṛkkīRāy — you read (present).
  (nī) pāṛippāy — you will read.

II person singular — Formal
  Āhir
  Āhir vandir — you came.
  Āhir varūhīRīr — you come.
  Āhir varuvir — you will come.

II person plural (ūrhāl)

  vāṅgalvarūdirhaL — you (pl) came.
  nāṅgal varuvirhaL — you will come.

III person singular Masculine (ān).

  avaN pāṛttāN
  ivaN PāṛttāN
  eveN pāṛttāL?

III person singular Feminine.

  avaL pāṛttāL
  ivaL pāṛttāL
  eveL pāṛttāL?
Ill person common (Hon) singular (ār)

avar parikkīrār
ivar parikkīrār
evar parikkīrār

III person common plural (1) [ar] (2) [ārhal]

māpearance parittanar
māpearance parikkīnrañar
māpearance rañarhaL parikkīrārhaL.

1) · [ar] is preceded by (aN) for the past present tenses.
2) (ārhal) – when the noun or pronoun has the plural suffix (haL/kaL/gaLor kkaL) the personal suffix would be (ārhaL)

Neuter

The Neuter Singular markers are [TRU], (adu), (du) and (u).

1) [TRU]—is added to verbs taking (i) as the past tense marker. (verbs of group iv).
   e.g. punai oriTRUU – the cat ran.
   Kuzhandai tuṅgi TRU – the child slept.

2) [adu] occurs after all the past and present tense markers.

   PūNAI oriTRUU / oriya du – past.
   PūNAI orihiRadu. – the cat runs.
   Kuzhandai tuṅgiTR. u/tuṅgiyadu.
   Kuzhandai tuṅguhiRadu – the child sleeps.

3) [u] is the neuter marker in negative(finite) constructions

   bas varadu – the bas won’t come.
   Kuzhandai azhadu — the child won’t cry.
   mazhi niRKādu — the rain won’t stop.
   nāLai pariṣai naṭkkādi – Examinations won’t take place tomorrow.
4) (du) in (peridu) – big one. (nalladu) – good thing.

Neuter plural

[m] no marker (zero), and (a) are the Neuter plural markers.

1. (m) – Only a few verbs (irregular – group vil) like põ, ca and s take [m]. And this usage is of a more literary type.

2. No marker (zero)

   * In Negative constructions (finite) like the following there is no formal marker for neuter plural.
     The infinitive of the verb + Negative marker (a) gives the sentence.

   ḍyḷāvāra — diseases won’t come.
   Seṭṭhal valārā — the plants won’t grow.

3. [a] the Neuter plural marker is always preceded by (a) – a stylistic marker. (a) occurs in past and present tenses.

   KuzhandaihaL SiNīma pārttaNa — Children saw the film.
   avai vilaiyārukiNDRaNa — they are playing.
   kosukkaLiravellām karittaNa — on switch were billing whole night.
   PaRaVaihaL PaRakkiNRaNa — The birds are flying.

The following 4 neuter suffixes are common to singular as well as plural. There is no tense marker preceding them, though they indicate Future tense or a Habitual Sense.

Formula: verb + Neuter Suffix

1) [um] This Suffix occurs after verbs like sey, pey, vīḍhu, kal, ṭru, tūngu, vā etc (verbs of groups I, II, IV and some of VII).

   e.g. Tāḷaiikkku mazhai peyyum — It will rain tomorrow.
   Įnda vēlaiyaik kuzhandaihaL epparrās sryyum? — how can children of do this work?
   Eṇ nāy mējaikkariyil tūngum — my dog would sleep under the table.
   Įṅgē kāṭRRUnaNRāha varum — It will be quit airy here.
2) (kkum) This neuter Suffix occurs after verbs like kari, siri, udai, tiRa, nara, iru kirai etc. (verbs of groups III and V)

nāLai kūttam naṛakkuma? – Will the meeting take place tomorrow?
Indap pazham pulikkum – This fruit will be soaring.
Îṅgē nalla arisi kiraikkum – Good (quality) rice is available here.
iNRU kāyilil mihavum kūṭtamāha irukkum – It will be very crowded in the today.
dutta vāram PallikkūṟangāL tiRakkum – Schools will (re) open next week.
Îṅgē kōsu kāṭikkum – (Lit) Mosquitoes will b.te here. (There is mosquito problem here)

3) (kum) is the neuter Suffix taken by verbs like nil, kēL, kal, kāl etc (verbs of group VI and VII)

îṅgē pas niRKuma? – Would the bus stop here?
ungaL tātavukkuk kadu kēkkuma? – Can yo’r grandfather hear alright?
Tērtalil uṅgaL kāṭiSīnāN tōRkum – Only your party will lose the elections.
Idu naNRāha virkum – This will sell well.

4) (hum) is added after few irregular verbs like pō, sā, vē etc (of group VII)

UN kuzhandai eppōdu vāLLikkūram pōhum? – When will your child go to school?
Inda marundāl kirimihāL sāhum – Germs will die (be killed by this medicine).
UNNāltāN inda vēlai āhum – This jab is possible only for you.
Indap paruppu naNaRāha vēhum – This (dal) cereal cooks nicely.

Number – Singular and plural
Bengali

Plural suffixes in Bengali are (-ra), (era) and (gulo)

1) (-ra) is added to nouns ending in vowels, denoting animates and personal pronouns.
   (see page 13, 14 – ami – amra)
   cholera – boys
   mera – girls

2) (era) – added to nouns ending in consonants.
   bon-era – sisters
3) (gulo) – added to all nouns except personal pronouns.

- Phul – flower, Phulgulo – flowers
- Chele – son, chelegulo – sons.

Na and era are added to refer to groups also.

E.g. sitāra – sita and others. No plural suffix is needed when an adjective is there or the noun has a plural suffix.

- ṣamar ḍnek kaj – I have lots of work.
  (era) ṣamar bāndhu — These are my friends.
- 9opālra amaderi lok – Gopal and his company are people only.
  Or duti bon – He/She has two sisters.

Some more examples

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Bengali</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Letters</td>
<td>diṭigulo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweets</td>
<td>mįṣṭigulo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clothes</td>
<td>kāpāṛgulo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vehicles</td>
<td>garigulo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vegetable</td>
<td>śibjigulo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Money (currency)</td>
<td>ṭakagulo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(6new pāris)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Personal Suffixes

In Bengali the personal suffixes indicate only the person (I,II or III) and in II person whether honorific or non honorific. So Number (sg.pl) or Gender (masc/ Fem) is not specified.

And there are different sets of personal suffixes for the three tense. For simple present tense (habitual – routine)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PERSON</th>
<th>PERSONAL SUFFIX</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(i) I. (ami) sg (i)/(amra)pl, we (for both)</td>
<td>I. (s) for verbs ending in vowels.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e.g. (ami)/amra) bhat khaki</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. (tui) (you) sg/(tora) (you) pl (for both)</td>
<td>II. (is) For consonant ending verbs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e.g. (tui)/tora ki okhane jas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e.g. (tui) /tora kothay thakis (for both)</td>
<td>Do you (sg/pl) go there?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tumi/tomara</td>
<td>Where do you stay?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e.g. (tumi/tomra roj khalo) (for both)</td>
<td>you (sg/pl) play everyday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[apni/apnāra]</td>
<td>[n] after vowel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(for both)</td>
<td>(en) after consonants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e.g. (apni/apnāra jan)</td>
<td>You go.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(apni apnara ekhane bosen)</td>
<td>You (sg/pl) sit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III se/ora/era etc (non honorific)</td>
<td>[Y]—after verb.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[se koleje p̐ore] He studies in the collage.</td>
<td>(e) after consonant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[ora p̐isa daey-na] They don’t give money.</td>
<td>(n) — after vowels.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[tini/ta(N)ra etc (honorific)</td>
<td>(en) after consonant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e.g. (tini amake poran) – He teaches me.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[ta(N)ra kichu bolen na – They do not say anything.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Some examples

I Pers. (ami/amra hindi jan-i) – I/We know hindi.

II Pers (tui/tora ki koris)? – What do you do?
   Tumi/tomra ki khāo? – what do you eat?
   Apni/apnara kaemān achen? – How are you? (sg/pl) How do you do?

III Pers se/ora bhalo khale – He/She/they play/plays well.
   Tini/tā(n)ra amake bhalo bāsen. – He/she/they (hon) like me.

Nouns – ajkal khub bīsti hāy – It rains heavily these days.

āba tomake dekhte chan – Father wants to see you.

 idi ekata dākane kaj kare – Elder sister works in a shop.

Pronouns (sg/pl) Past tense marker Personal endings

I ami/amra I um or am
   e.g. ami/amra phel kin-tām
        kin-tum
   I/we bought fruits(kin—buy)

II tui/tora I What did you (sg/pl)
   e.g. tui/tora ki kīnli?
   Tumi/tomra buy?

   e.g. tumi/tomra eta kaēno kīnle?
   Apni/apnara I en
   e.g. apni/apnara kī dāmer šāri
       kīnlen?
   What price did you buy the sari?

III Se/ora I o
   e.g. se/ora phul kin lo.
   He/she/they bought
   flower
tini/tā(n)ra
e.g. tini/tā(N)ra ñekek dami űri kinlen.

He/she/they bought many costly saris.

Simple Future tense sign

Pronouns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pronoun</th>
<th>Personal endings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ṛami/amra</td>
<td>(o) I/we will eat now.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e.g. ami/amra aekhun kha-b-o</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tui/tora</td>
<td>(i) What will you eat.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e.g. tui/tora ki khabi</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ṛumi/tomra</td>
<td>(e) Would you eat rice?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ṛumi/tomra bhat khabe ki?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>apni/apnara</td>
<td>(en) You would eat with me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e.g. apni/apnara amar sōnge khāben</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ṝe/tara</td>
<td>(e) He/she/they will eat later.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e.g. ṝe/tara pōre khābe</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ṛni/uni/o(N)ra</td>
<td>He/she/they(hon) will eat egg.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e.g. tini/o(N)ra dim khaben</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some more examples

Tomra kālīk kāthay chile?
(ach)be – takes the form (chi) in past tense.
Where were you yesterday?

omra sinema dekhte gaelam. –
We went to see a film.
(ja) changes to (gae) in past.
অপনি কলকে আমার বাস্তুতে জাবেন কি?—
Would you come to our house tomorrow?

অপনারা আমার জন্ম দিন (েলেন) প্যাস ফোম অফ (েসেন) এলেন নি?
You people did not come on my birth day (why, may I know?)

সে কার সঙ্গে জাবে বা থাকবে
With whom would he/she go or (for the matter) stay?

অপনি আমার কথা শুনবেন তো?
You would hear what I have to say (wouldn’t you)?

তুই/তোরা গেলি কথায়?
Where did you go? May I know?

সে আর অশ্বে না – তে/শে ওন্টা কমনে কমন কমন.
He/she won’t come any more.

অখানে কঠা কাঠা চিলো – কোন এল তারে?

আমার বাস্তুতে কে কে কামাচে? – কোন এল তারে ইন যুর হাউস?

চুমি আমাকে কিছু বলবে না.

চীনি এরকম কথা বলেন কানে? – Why does he talk like this?

আগুলো আমার বালো লাগে না – আমি কমনে যামন.

আমি তমকে বালো বাগি – I like/love you.

বিমালা এক্ষানে রোজ আসে – Bimala comes here every day.

ওই হবে – তাহ হাভেন (তার অবিশ্বাসী হবে)
Number

There are two sets of forms in Bengali – the singular and plural. The singular has either no special marker at all, or is marked by the definitive affixes -ta/-ta/-ti- khana, khani and others. The affixes of the plural are -ra(era), -digi(-digo)/-d-gulo(-gulo)-guli.

The grammatical meaning of these affixes contains information about the category of definiteness – indefiniteness, of animateness—animate ness, of person – non-person and of the honorific. This fact determines the functioning of affixes and their distribution among nouns.

Nouns with -ta, -ti, -guli, -gulo denote a definite object, one that had been mentioned previously or is concretely visualized. The absence of the affixes -ta, -ti, indicates indefiniteness and shows that the given noun is used to designate the generic concept. Cf. amar ghori nei ‘I have not got a watch’ and amar gorito nei ‘I have not got my watch’;

bôt gach uchu gach ‘A banyan is a high tree’ and bôt gachto khub uchu ‘This banyan is very high’;

amar boigulo kothay, enecheni? ‘Where are my books(i.e. those you have taken from me)? Have you brought them?’

In some cases however, this rule may not be kept. Cf. the following sentences: juto jutor dôkane bikri hôy ‘Footwear is sold in a shoe shop’; jutota khulun ‘Take off your shoes!’; jutota khulbo?, Na, juto

Kholbar dôkær nei ‘Shell I take off my shoes?’ ‘No, you needn’t take off your shoes’.

The affix -ja is optional in the sentence juto(ta) khulun and cannot be used in the sentence juto khulbar dôkær nei (although a concrete object is mean in both cases) due to the existence of the category of the honorific, which is most strictly expressed in the system of pronouns and finite verb forms: in a polite address one does not use the affix -ja.

There are some other reasons determining the restrictions in using the definitive affix, especially in the singular(e.g. the presence of pronominal attributes, such as ei ‘this’, of ‘that’, amar ‘my’; the presence of the indirect case form, etc.). The relationship between different nominal categories has not yet been investigated well enough to draw conclusion. For the time being, we believe that it is expedient to concentrate on the extremely involved relationship between the grammatical categories of the noun, for it is this that accounts for the presence or absence of the definitive affixes serving to indicate both the number and the definiteness of the object.

For forms ending in the affix -ra, -era, the category of definiteness indefiniteness is of no importance; cf., for example, bonnera bone sandoor sisura matrikore (proverb), lit. ‘Forest dwellers are good in the forest, children – in their mother’s arms’. Which implies a general statement. This form can also be used as part of a noun with a concrete meaning (ei) meyara gan gaiche ‘(These) women are singing’.
The categories of animate ness – inanimateness, of person – non-person are reflected only in affixes of the plural (not the singular; we mean here only the forms of number; there are other means to express these categories, but we shall speak of them further, when describing case forms). The affixes -ra, -dig and their variants are usually associated with nouns denoting living beings, with personal nouns (meyera nom. pl., meyeder, meyediger gen. and obj. pl. of the noun meye 'women'; ponditara, ponditder, pondittdiger – the same forms of the noun pondit 'scholar'). The affix –guli and its variants can be associated with inanimate, non-personal nouns (phulguli 'flowers', prottayguli 'suffixes', banorguli 'monkeys'). But there such forms as cheleguli 'children' and even meyeguli 'women'; here we come across another way of qualifying the noun.

The affixes giving the noun the grammatically accomplished form and qualifying it in a different way can be applied to one and the same noun. This is attributable to the fact that the category of person – non-person, which plays the decisive role in the use of the formants of number, may contradict and interact with the category of the honorific. In the class of nouns the category of the honorific manifests itself in the division of the personal nouns into two subclasses – nouns of high and low rank. The former coincides in principle with the subclass of personal nouns, denoting an intelligent living being of the rank of Homo sapiens. The letter covers the names of animals (unintelligent living beings), as well as inanimate objects and abstract notions. But the boundaries of these subclasses (nouns of high and low rank) are mobile. Nouns of low rank denoting unintelligent living beings may undergo personification, i.e. pass into the subclass of nouns of high rank. Grammatically this process is reflected in marking such nouns with the affixes -ra, -dig, etc.: Instead of the forms banorguli 'monkeys', pakhiguli 'birds' there appear the forms banorera, pakihira. On the contrary, personal names may undergo a process opposite to personification, i.e. pass into the subclass of nouns of lower rank. Grammatically it is reflected in marking the noun with the affixes -guli, -gulo, etc. The forms cheleguli and meyeguli are a case in point. Yet not only such nouns may acquire the affixes -guli, -gulo, etc. under the influence of the category of the honorific (not infrequently, a child and a woman are qualified as unintelligent beings not deserving a polite attitude). Any personal noun may be downgraded. For lack of a respectful attitude or because of irritation, such forms as brammonera 'Brahmans' or debotara 'gods' may be replaced by the forms bamongula 'Brahmans' or debotara 'gods' may be replaced b the forms bamongula 'Brahmans' (in this case even the lexical variant is different – not tatsama, but tadbhava), debotagula 'gods'.

Thus, the forms of number in Bengali (and respectively the affixes of number) carry several categorical meanings; they are polysemantic. In these forms, as well is in the forms of case, which will be treated below, the meanings of five grammatical categories are reflected: number definiteness, animate ness, person and the honorific. This feature of the forms of number is due to the fact that the above-listed categories are closely linked with
lexical semantic. The rules for the choice of a certain form are largely determined by the system of the noun’s semantic subclasses.

The close links between the grammatical categories reflected in the forms of number and lexical semantics account for that peculiarity in the functioning of the forms of number which has already been noted for several languages structurally similar to Bengali: “The grammatical number appears in the context when the necessity of quantitative actualization arises. But in this case an obtrusive repetition of the form of number is avoidable. If the context excludes ambiguity, the form of number may be omitted. It is the fact that the quantitative feature of any object, its definiteness or indefiniteness. Its concrete or generalized character, is evident from the situation or context which accounts for the possible ambiguity of the sentence *amar boi oi ghore*; in one situation the word *boi* can refer to many books, in another — to one book only. The same fact underlies the tendency to express number by means of word combinations. If there are words with the meaning of plurality, the noun is not marked with the plural affix: *onek boi* ‘many books’, *dujon chattro* ‘two students’, though deviations from this rule are possible: *barir somostio jinisguli guchiya rakho* ‘collect all the things’.

One of the main features of the category of number is its limited application, which is the immediate result of the close links between the category of number and that of definiteness — indefiniteness. Only the nouns which designate single objects and form discrete multitudes may have singular and plural forms. In other words. It is possible to reduce the grammatical meanings of the forms of number to those of singleness and concreteness(sing.) and that of a countable multitude of concrete objects(pl). Abstract nouns denoting quality or action (*Soundorjo* ‘beauty’, *roktima* ‘redness’, *mocon* ‘liberation’, *sompador* ‘fulfillment’, ‘completion’), nouns naming with objects (*cokh* ‘eye’ and ‘eyes’, *hat* ‘hand’, ‘arm and hands’, ‘arms’) or substances (*jol* ‘water’, *makhon* ‘butter’, etc), as a rule, have no plural forms; they add an affix of number only in cases of concretization; *kriyaguli* ‘actions’. In rare cases, when affixes of the plural are used with nouns denoting substance, the plural form actually signifies a large quantity of the given substance, and not a multitude of concrete objects. For example: *somuder tire baliguli kāṭray bhora* ‘In the sand on the seashore there are many crabs’ (lit, The sands on the seashore are full of crab’).

Thus, the main function of the category of number in Bengali is that of quantitative actualisation. It is appropriate to note, however, that the function of quantitative actualisation does not reflect directly the regular subdivision of nouns into two classes, that of countable and that of uncountable, contrary to many other languages. This occurs primarily because for the grammatical system of Bengali it is important that all nouns (or, rather, all the substantive meanings, cf. *kagoj* with the meaning ‘paper’ and *kagojita*, *kagojkhana* ‘sheet of paper’) may be classified not only as countable and uncountable, but also that the given object may be presented in the utterance either discretely or indiscretely.
Countable nouns do not need a marker of the plural when they signify objects taken as a multitude, understood by the conversational partners as something taken as a whole and not as a sum total of separate concrete objects of the given kind: *amar boi oi ghore* ‘my books (possibly, those from my own library) are in that room’ (cf. the above example, *amar boigulo kothay*)

In the final count the fact that Bengali nouns and pronouns have no forms of coordination in number (*tara ke? ‘Who are they?’, tara chattro ‘They are students.’*) that there is no category of number in verb forms, is accounted for by the character of the category of number in the noun.

It is due to specific features of the grammatical category of number in Bengali discussed above that this language has acquired other means than the plural forms in order to express plurality and to reflect the concepts of plurality, which outgrow the semantic limits of forms signifying number.

These means include:


3. Lexical repetitions made up by means of full and on-full reduplication.

Lexical repetitions with full reduplication of nouns (*ghore ghore bili kora ‘assigning to houses’, ‘billeting’, rafi rafi taka ‘loads of money’), adjectives (*bora bora bari ‘very big houses’*) and pronouns (*ki ki jimis ‘which things’* mainly express distributive plurality.

Lexical repetitions with non-full reduplication are combinations of nouns and echo words, the second component being not a word but an echo – a slightly changed shadow of the first component, e.g., *cakor-bakor ‘servants’ (cakor ‘servant’), chele-pile ‘children’ (chele ‘child’, ‘son’), kapor-copor ‘clothes’ (kapor ‘cloth’), ghora-tora ‘horse, harness and the rest’ (ghora ‘horse’), saktak ‘sundry vegetables’ (sak ‘vegetable’). All these rep-
etitions are used in Bengali to express the collective or total plurality of similar or functionally connected objects.

The specific features of the category of number in nouns can be observed in other spheres of the language structure, too. They account for the appearance not only of a productive and well-developed system of various reduplications, but also of a great number of adjectives signifying a multitude, used both attributively and as auxiliary words. The specific features of the category of number are closely linked with the existence in Bengali of two promotional words; one (kby, kd ‘How many’) shows the quantitative feature of objects as the sum of unit, and the other (k_do ‘How many’, ‘How much’) — the multitude of objects as a total or as an indiscrinate mass. Cf. kọta pensil ‘how many pencils’, kojon chattro ‘how many students’, and kọta makhon ‘how much butter’, kọta sāmay ‘what time is it’. It is also due to the specific features of the category of number that the pronouns ka (koy) and kọto combine with the same word; cf. koo in ‘how many days’ and kotodin ‘how many days’ = ‘how much time’.

Gender

In old Bengali there existed traces of grammatical gender, but New Bengali knows no such category. In present day language there are only the means of distinguishing nouns according to the category of sex, lexical (ma ‘mother’ — bap ‘father’, bhai ‘brother’, bon ‘sister’, chele ‘son’ — meye ‘daughter’) syntactic, with the help of such words as ‘woman’, ‘man’, ‘he’, ‘she’, (dorji ‘tailor’ — meye dorji ‘dress maker’, lit ‘woman tailor’; manu; ‘man’, ‘person’ — puruf — manu) ‘man’, lit ‘man person’; word derivational; in the latter case the opposition between nouns denoting male and female and is expressed by means of the following suffixes:—

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
Suffixes indicating sex in nouns denoting persons (or living beings in general) have been actively adopted into Bengali from Sanskrit (naturally, as components of Sanskrit words).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) -o /-a /: bdo$ho 'member of an organization'</td>
<td>1) -a' /-a': ddi$a 'woman member of an organisation'.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) -ok /— aka/: lekhok 'writer'</td>
<td>2) — ika /— ika/: iekhika 'women writer'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) —i/—i/: bide ]'foreigner'</td>
<td>3) — ini/—in/: bide$in/ 'women foreigner'.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) — ta/— tā&lt;—tri/: neta 'leader'</td>
<td>4) — tri, —ttri/—tri/nettri 'woman leader'.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is noteworthy that the grammatical norms in the category of gender know in Sanskrit have been retained in the Sanskrit vocabulary of literary Bengali – though not fully. In the Sanskrit vocabulary, Bengali distinguishes between two gender only, feminine and masculine (to be precise non-feminine). Words which are historically neuter (gram 'village', / 'water', etc are opposed to others only as words naming inanimate objects. Traces of the category of gender are best of all observed in the words of feminine gender; they have certain endings and agreement takes place only in case of attributes of the feminine gender e.g. bonkimer nobina protibha 'the young talent of Bonkim' (in combination with nouns of the masculine gender the adjective ‘young’, ‘new’ would have the form nobin).

Thus, the noun forms reflect the existence of the following main subclasses of noun in Bengali:
1) animate nouns, comprising the groups of personal nouns (i.e. nouns of unintelligent beings, nouns of law rank).

2) inanimate nouns, comprising the groups of material nouns and nouns denoting twin objects and

3) abstract nouns.

Animate nouns have case and number forms; they also have distinctions as regards the category of sex. The plural forms of the nouns denoting unintelligent beings tend to be the same as of those denoting inanimate nouns.

Inanimate nouns have case and number forms, whereas material nouns and nouns denoting twin objects have no number forms.

Abstract nouns have case forms, but no number forms, unless they are concretized.

Certain noun forms are known to encompass different meanings. For example, the form the objective case with the affix—ke shows the relationship between the given noun...
and the governing verb, and also the definiteness and concreteness of the object named by this noun. At the same time, the form with the affix - ke and the form without it can bring out the opposition between animate and inanimate nouns. The polysemy of certain forms, which leads to the intersection of different grammatical categories in one form (in our case, the categories of animateness—inanimateness and of definiteness—indefiniteness), is one of the essential features of Bengali. The same feature can be obscene in the functions of definitive affixes; of their function of concerting the object and of indicating its grammatical number.

Reference: Dr. Ranganayaki Mahapatra
Tamil Self-Taught (P. 120–134)
S. K. Haldar, Bengali Language (P. 51–56)