

Declension of Nouns and Adjectives in Hittite

Hittite, like other Anatolian languages, has two grammatical genders: common and neuter (no distinction between masculine and feminine!).

Animate nouns (gods, people, animals) are normally common, while most of the inanimate nouns are neuter. In addition, some suffixes, carrying a specific semantic nuance, define the gender of a noun – e.g., the suffix *-a-* forms common gender nouns expressing action or result thereof (*maniyahḫ-* = “to rule, administer,” *maniyahḫa-* = “rule, administration”; *karš-* = “to cut”, *karša-* = “cut of meat, sector of territory”), and the suffix *-an-* forms neuter gender nouns of the same semantic category (*nahḫ-* = “to fear,” *nahḫan-* = “fear”; *mudai-* = “to remove,” *mudan-* = “garbage”). However, when beginning the study of Hittite, it is best to learn each noun’s gender by heart or look it up in a dictionary.

Hittite nouns can be singular or plural and have 9 grammatical cases (expressing the syntactic function of the noun in a clause). The case endings in are the following:

Case	Common		Neuter	
	singular	plural	singular	plural
Nominative	-š [rarely -Ø]	-eš [later also -uš, -aš]	-Ø, -n	-Ø, -a
Accusative	-n -an [cons. stems]	-uš [later also -aš, -eš]	-Ø, -n	-Ø, -a
Ergative			-anza	-anteš
Genitive	-aš	-an [early] -aš	-aš	-an [early] -aš
Dative-locative	-i -ya (<i>i</i> -stems) -Ø [cons. stems]	-aš	-i -ya (<i>i</i> -stems) -Ø [cons. stems]	-aš
Directive (allative)	-a [early]		-a [early]	
Ablative	-az(a), -za	-az(a), -za	-az(a), -za	-az(a), -za
Instrumental	-it, -ta	-it, -ta	-it, -ta	-it, -ta
Vocative	-e, -Ø		-e, -Ø	

Notes to the table:

1. Noun stem is everything that comes before the case ending.
Consonant stems are those ending in a consonant; *a*-stems – those ending in *-a*;
u-stems – those ending in *-u*; *i*-stems – those ending in *-i*.
2. In the neuter gender there is no distinction between nominative and accusative; it is justified to speak of the “nominative-accusative” case in neuter. Neuter nouns appear in this case when they are the subject of an intransitive verb (e.g., “to stand”) or the object of a transitive verb (e.g., “to write”).
3. However, when a neuter noun is the subject of a transitive verb, it appears in the so-called ergative case. Since neuter nouns are only rarely used as subjects of transitive verbs, the use of ergative case is scarcely attested; nevertheless, during the preparatory grammar lessons, we will practice this case along with the others.
4. In all other cases there is no difference between common and neuter nouns.
5. The directive case is attested only in Old Hittite (ca. 1650-1450 B.C.E.); in Middle Hittite (ca. 1450-1350 B.C.E.) and Late Hittite (ca. 1350-1200 B.C.E.) its function was taken over by dative-locative.
6. In some Late Hittite texts, the ablative case fulfills the function of the instrumental.

Adjectives are characterized by their into stems in the same way as nouns. The gender, number and case of an adjective agree with those of the noun which it modifies. An adjective will normally appear *before* the noun which it modifies; only some exceptional adjectives appear after the noun which they modify (most importantly, *ḫumant-* = “all, every”).

The adjective *ḫumant-* belongs to a special class of nominal stems: stems ending in *-ant-*.

This class exemplifies a peculiar trait of Hittite orthography: the grapheme *š* expresses the consonant [s], and the grapheme *z* expresses the consonant cluster [ts].

a) When nouns and adjectives belonging to the *-ant-* stem appear before the ending [-s] normally spelled as *-š*, the result is the ending *-anza* [-ants^a]; the last *-a* is merely a graphic prop required by the syllabic orthography.

b) When nouns and adjectives belonging to the *-ant-* stem appear in forms which have no case ending, the result is the ending *-an*; the final [-t] is not spelled.

c) When nouns and adjectives belonging to the *-ant-* stem appear before a vocalic ending, their orthography reflects the consonant cluster *-nt-*, because the vowel ending allows it.

Examples of the declension of nouns and adjectives:

antuḥša- (c.) = “man, human being”; *peda-* (n.) = “place”; *arahzena-* = “foreign”

	sg.	pl.	sg.	pl.
Nom.	<i>arahzenaš antuḥšaš</i>	<i>arahzeneš antuḥšeš</i>		
Acc.	<i>arahzenan antuḥšan</i>	<i>arahzenuš antuḥšuš</i>		
Nom.-acc.			<i>arahzenan pedan</i>	<i>arahzena peda</i>
Erg.			<i>arahzenanza pedanza</i>	<i>arahzenanteš pedanteš</i>
Gen.	<i>arahzenaš antuḥšaš</i>	<i>arahzenan antuḥšan</i> <i>arahzenaš antuḥšaš</i>	<i>arahzenaš pedadž</i>	<i>arahzenan pedan</i> <i>arahzenaš pedadž</i>
Dat.-loc.	<i>arahzeni antuḥši</i>	<i>arahzenaš antuḥšaš</i>	<i>arahzeni pedi</i>	<i>arahzenaš pedadž</i>
Dir.	<i>arahzena antuḥša</i>		<i>arahzena peda</i>	
Abl.	<i>arahzenaz(a)</i> <i>antuḥšaz(a)</i>	<i>arahzenaz(a)</i> <i>antuḥšaz(a)</i>	<i>arahzenaz(a) pedadž(a)</i>	<i>arahzenaz(a) pedadž(a)</i>
Instr.	<i>arahzenit antuḥšit</i>	<i>arahzenit antuḥšit</i>	<i>arahzenit pedit</i>	<i>arahzenit pedit</i>
Voc.	<i>arahzene antuḥše</i>		<i>arahzene pede</i>	

Note the disappearance of *-a* before the endings beginning in *-i*

tuzzi- (c.) = “army”; *ḥuwāši-* (n.) = “stele”; *šalli-* = “large, great”

	sg.	pl.	sg.	pl.
Nom.	<i>šalliš tuzziš</i>	<i>šallaeš tuzzieš</i>		
Acc.	<i>šallin tuzzin</i>	<i>šallauš tuzziuš</i>		
Nom.-acc.			<i>šalli ḥuwāši</i>	<i>šallaya ḥuwāši</i>
Erg.			<i>šallayanza ḥuwāšiyanza</i>	<i>šallayanteš ḥuwāšiyanteš</i>
Gen.	<i>šallayaš tuzziyaš</i>	<i>šallayan tuzziyan</i> <i>šallayaš tuzziyaš</i>	<i>šallayaš ḥuwāšiyaš</i>	<i>šallayan ḥuwāšiyān</i> <i>šallayaš ḥuwāšiyaš</i>
Dat.-loc.	<i>šallaya tuzziya</i>	<i>šallayaš tuzziyaš</i>	<i>šallaya ḥuwāšiya</i>	<i>šallayaš ḥuwāšiyaš</i>
Dir.	<i>šallaya tuzziya</i>		<i>šallaya ḥuwāšiya</i>	
Abl.	<i>šallayaz(a)</i> <i>tuzziyaz(a)</i>	<i>šallayaz(a)</i> <i>tuzziyaz(a)</i>	<i>šallayaz(a) ḥuwāšiyaz(a)</i>	<i>šallayaz(a) ḥuwāšiyaz(a)</i>
Instr.	<i>šallit tuzzit</i>	<i>šallit tuzzit</i>	<i>šallit ḥuwāšit</i>	<i>šallit ḥuwāšit</i>
Voc.	<i>šallae tuzzie</i>		<i>šallae ḥuwāšie</i>	

Note that before vocalic endings, *šalli-* changes into *šallay-*, but *tuzzi-* does not change.

haššu- (c.) = “king”; *tāru-* (n.) = “tree, wood”; *aššu-* = “good”

	sg.	pl.	sg.	pl.
Nom.	<i>aššuš haššuš</i>	<i>aššaweš haššueš</i>		
Acc.	<i>aššun haššun</i>	<i>aššamuš haššamuš</i>		
Nom.-acc.			<i>aššu tāru</i>	<i>aššawa tāruwa</i>
Erg.			<i>aššawanza tāruwanza</i>	<i>aššawanteš tāruwanteš</i>
Gen.	<i>aššawaš haššuwaš</i>	<i>aššawan haššuwan</i> <i>aššawaš haššuwaš</i>	<i>aššawaš tāruwaš</i>	<i>aššawan tāruwan</i> <i>aššawaš tāruwaš</i>
Dat.-loc.	<i>aššawi haššui</i>	<i>aššawaš haššuwaš</i>	<i>aššawi tāru</i>	<i>aššawaš tāruwaš</i>
Dir.	<i>aššawa haššuwa</i>		<i>aššawa tāruwa</i>	
Abl.	<i>aššawaz(a)</i> <i>haššuwaz(a)</i>	<i>aššawaz(a)</i> <i>haššuwaz(a)</i>	<i>aššawaz(a) tāruwaz(a)</i>	<i>aššawaz(a) tāruwaz(a)</i>
Instr.	<i>aššawit haššuit</i>	<i>aššawit haššuit</i>	<i>aššawit tāruit</i>	<i>aššawit tāruit</i>
Voc.	<i>aššawe haššue</i>		<i>aššawe tāru</i>	

Note that: a) the stem-final *-u* in *aššu-* (but not in *haššu-* or *tāru-*) changes into *-a* before vocalic endings; b) between the stem-final *-u* (or *-a*) and a vocalic ending there comes a glide, which is normally *-w-* but sometimes (here in common acc.) is *-m-*; and c) *u*-stem nouns and adjectives receive the ending *-a* in neuter plural nom.-acc.

šiwatt- (c.) = “day”; *waštul-* (n.) = “sin”; *humant-* = “all, every” (appears after the noun)

	sg.	pl.	sg.	pl.
Nom.	<i>šiwaz humanza</i>	<i>šiwateš humanteš</i>		
Acc.	<i>šiwattan humantan</i>	<i>šiwatuš humantuš</i>		
Nom.-acc.			<i>waštul human</i>	<i>waštul human</i>
Erg.			<i>waštulanza</i> <i>humantanza</i>	<i>waštulanteš</i> <i>humantanteš</i>
Gen.	<i>šiwattaš humantaš</i>	<i>šiwatan humantan</i> <i>šiwattaš humantaš</i>	<i>waštulaš humantaš</i>	<i>waštulan humantan</i> <i>waštulaš humantaš</i>
Dat.-loc.	<i>šiwatti humanti</i>	<i>šiwataš humantaš</i>	<i>waštuli humanti</i>	<i>waštulaš humantaš</i>
Dir.	<i>šiwatta humanta</i>		<i>waštula humanta</i>	
Abl.	<i>šiwattaz(a)</i> <i>humantaz(a)</i>	<i>šiwattaz(a)</i> <i>humantaz(a)</i>	<i>waštulaz(a)</i> <i>humantaz(a)</i>	<i>waštulaz(a)</i> <i>humantaz(a)</i>
Instr.	<i>šiwattit humantit</i>	<i>šiwattit humantit</i>	<i>waštulit humantit</i>	<i>waštulit humantit</i>
Voc.	<i>šiwatte humante</i>		<i>waštule humante</i>	

Another special class of nouns and adjectives is the **r/n stem**.

This stem includes neuter nouns (no adjectives!), which end in *-r* in nom.-acc., but that *-r* turns into *-n(a)* in all other cases.

Examples:

	uttar- (n.) = “word, thing”		wātar- (n.) = “water”	
	sg.	pl.	sg.	pl.
Nom.-acc.	<i>uttar</i>	<i>uttār</i>	<i>wātar</i>	<i>widār</i>
Erg.	<i>uttananza</i>	<i>uttananteš</i>	<i>wetenanza</i>	<i>wetenanteš</i>
Gen.	<i>uttanaš</i>	<i>uttanan</i> <i>uttanaš</i>	<i>wetenaš</i>	<i>wetenan</i> <i>wetenaš</i>
Dat.-loc.	<i>uttani</i>	<i>uttanaš</i>	<i>weteni</i>	<i>wetenaš</i>
Dir.	<i>uttana</i>		<i>wetena</i>	
Abl.	<i>uttanaz(a)</i>	<i>uttanaz(a)</i>	<i>wetenaz(a)</i>	<i>wetenaz(a)</i>
Instr.	<i>uttanit</i>	<i>uttanit</i>	<i>witanta, wetenit</i>	<i>witanta, wetenit</i>
Voc.	<i>uttane</i>		<i>wetene</i>	

Note that the noun *wātar-* is declined with the stem *weten-* in all the cases except nom.acc., and has exceptional forms *widār* in pl. nom.-acc. and *witanta* (beside the expected *weteni*) in instr.

Finally, there are two nouns with exceptional declension:

	<i>pēr</i> (n.) = “house”		<i>kēr</i> (n.) = “heart”
	sg.	pl.	sg.
Nom.-acc.	<i>pēr</i>	<i>pēr</i>	<i>kēr</i>
Erg.	<i>parnanza</i>		
Gen.	<i>parnaš, periyaš</i>	<i>parnaš</i>	<i>kardiyaš</i>
Dat.-loc.	<i>parni, pēri, pēr</i>	<i>parnaš</i>	<i>kardi, kēr</i>
Dir.	<i>parna</i>		<i>karda</i>
Abl.	<i>parnaz(a), pērza</i>	<i>parnaz(a), pērza</i>	<i>kardaz</i>
Instr.			<i>kardit</i>
Voc.			

kēr = “heart” is not attested in pl., except the logographic spelling ŠĀ.ḪI.A in pl. nom.-acc.