**Introduction**

Number is the grammatical category of the noun which shows whether we speak of one thing or of more than one. The categoryof number is expressed by the opposition of the plural form of the noun to its singular form.

Accordingly, there are two numbers: the singular and the plural.

The problem of category of number of nouns is very essential nowadays. Russian and English languages have different grammatical, syntactical and phonetic forms of expression. These languages have nouns which are used only in the singular, only in the plural and both in singular and plural. A lot of people in the process of communication make mistakes because they don’t know rules and laws necessary for exact case.

The goal of the present work is to study the category of number of English nouns and compare it with the Russian ones.

Objectives of the present work:

1. To consider the category of number of nouns
2. To study different types of number
3. To analyze the formation and meaning of number
4. To study different cases of usage of category of number of nouns
5. To consider the development of plural forms in connection with a change of meaning of the noun
6. To study Russian category of number of nouns, different cases of usage

Practical significance of this work is that it can be used in educational establishments, at classes on theoretical and practical grammar. This work can be useful for students, studying English language.

The term-paper consists of content, introduction, three main chapters, conclusion, bibliography and appendix.

1. **The Problem of Category of Number in Modern English**
   1. **The Category of Number of Nouns**

The categoryof number is expressed by the opposition of the plural form of the noun to its singular form. The semantic difference of the oppositional members of the categoryof number in many linguistic works is treated traditionally: the meaning of the singular is interpretation as «one» and the meaning of the plural as «many» (more than one).

As the traditional interpretation of the singular and the plural members does not work in many cases, recently the categorical meaning of the plural has been reconsidered and now it is interpreted as the denotation of «the potentially dismembering reflection of the structure of the referent».

The categoricaloppositionof number is subjected to the process of oppositional reduction. Neutralization takes place when countable nouns begin to function as Singularia Tantum nouns, denoting in such cases either abstract ideas or some mass material, e.g. on my birthday we always have *goose;* or when countable nouns are used in the function of the Absolute Plural: the *board* are not unanimous on the question. A stylistically marked transposition is achieved by the use of the descriptive uncountableplural (*the fruits*of the toil are not always visible) and the «repetition plural» (*car* after *car* rushed past me). In Modern English the form of the singular of nouns is a bare stem without any flexion or with zero inflexion. Nouns in plural are characterized by ending «-s (-es)».

The meaning of number expresses by grammatical forms is extremely generalized. Concrete meanings of nouns can be expressed lexically with the help of numerals and grammatically through grammatical meaning of inflexions. A zero inflexion indicates one thing and the grammatical form with an opposite inflexion indicates more than one things.

The presence in language of such ways of expressing a generalized meaning of number must be considered as a result of a process of abstraction formed by the human thought for a long period of time. [1]

Modern English like most other languages distinguishes two numbers: *singular* and *plural.* The meaning of singular and plural seems to be self-explanatory, that is the opposition: one – more than one. The essential meaning of the category (in nouns) is not that of quantity, but of discreteness. Concrete meanings of nouns can be expressed lexically with the help of numerals and grammatically through grammatical meaning of inflexions. A zero inflexion indicates one thing and the grammatical form with an opposite inflexion indicates more than one things.

## 1.2 Types of Number

## a) Singular versus plural. In most languages with grammatical number, nouns, and sometimes other parts of speech, have two forms, the singular, for one instance of a concept, and the plural, for more than one instance. Usually, the singular is the unmarked form of a word, and the plural is obtained by inflecting the singular.

## b) Collective versus singulative. Some languages differentiate between a basic form, the collective, which is indifferent in respect to number, and a more complicated derived form for single entities, the singulative. A rough example in English is «snowflake», which may be considered a singulative form of «snow» (although English has no productive process of forming singulative nouns, and no singulative modifiers).

### c) Dual number. The distinction between a «singular» number (one) and a «plural» number (more than one) found in English is not the only possible classification. Another one is «singular» (one), «dual» (two) and «plural» (more than two). Dual number existed in Proto-Indo-European. Many more modern Indo-European languages show residual traces of the dual, as in the English distinctions both versus all and better versus best.

### d) Trial number. The trial number is a grammatical number referring to 'three items', in contrast to 'singular' (one item), 'dual' (two items), and 'plural' (four or more items). There is a hierarchy between number categories: No language distinguishes a trial unless having a dual, and no language has dual without a plural. English, along with the other Germanic languages and most Romance languages, uses the plural.

### e) Distributive plural. Distributive plural number, for many instances viewed as independent individuals (e.g. in Navajo).

In most languages, the singular is formally unmarked, whereas the plural is marked in some way. Other languages, most notably the Bantu languages, mark both the singular and the plural, for instance Swahili (see example above). The third logical possibility, rarely found in languages, is unmarked plural contrasting with marked singular.

Elements marking number may appear on nouns and pronouns in dependent-marking languages or on verbs and adjectives in head-marking languages.

There are several types of number: singular versus plural, collective versus singulativ, dual number, trial number and distributive plural. But Modern English like most other languages distinguishes only two numbers: *singular* and *plural*

* 1. **Meaning and Formation of Number**

1. In Modern English the singular form of the nouns is a bare stem with a zero-inflexion (нулевая флексия): *book, boy, girl.*

The plural is formed by the inflexion *– (e) s* [z, s, iz]: *boy* – *boys, book* – *books, box – boxes.*

Compare the Russian noun стол (столы) which also has a zero-inflexion in the nominative case of the singular, with the noun река (реки), which has a positive inflexion in the nominative case of the singular as well as of the plural.

The inflexion *– (e) s* is a modification of the Old English plural inflexion *– as.* In Old English there were several ways of forming the plural; the *– as* inflexion which was used only with masculine nouns, later on in its modified form *(-as>-es>-s)* became the general inflexion of the plural of nouns.

The plural inflexion is pronounced [iz] after voiced consonants and vowels: *cabs, raids, tables, pens, factories, tractors;* [s] after voiceless consonants: *books, pilots, pipes;* [iz] after sibilants: *classes, bushes, branches, boxes.*

Note. – Nouns ending in a mute *– e* preceded by a sibilant, in spelling *– se, ce, – ze, – (d) ge,* add the inflexion – s [iz] *horse – horses; price* – *prices; size* – *sizes; bridge* – *bridges: village* – *villages.*

2. With some nouns the final voiceless consonant is changed into a corresponding voiced consonant before the inflexion *– es [z]* is added. To this group belong:

a) Nouns ending in *– fe* or *– f* [f]. The *f* is changed into *v* (consonant interchange), and the inflexion *– es* [z] is added: *knife*–*knives; shelf – shelves; wife* – *wives.*

Note. – Some nouns ending in – *f* or – *ff*, simply add – s [s] in the plural: *roof* – *roofs; chief* – *chiefs; handkerchief* – *handkerchiefs; cliff* – *cliffs; cuff – cuffs; muff* – *muffs.*

The following nouns have double forms: *hoof* – *hoofs, hooves; scarf* – *scarfs, scarves.*

b) Some nouns ending in *– th* [θ], change the θinto [3]: *mouth* [mauθ] – *mouths* [mauθz]; *path* [pa:θ] – *paths* [pa:θz]; *bath* [ba:θ] – *baths* [ba:3z].

c) The noun *house* [haus] – *houses* ['hauziz].

Peculiarities of Spelling. Notice the following:

1. When a noun ends in *– y* preceded by a consonantis replaced by *– i* and the ending – es [iz] is added: *city* – *cities; country* – *countries; penny* – *pennies* (when a sum of money and not separate coins is meant the plural form *pence* is used: *It costs five pence.*But: *Five pennies**were lying on the table).*
2. When a noun ends in *– o* with a preceding consonant, *– es [*z] is usually added: *hero* – *heroes; Negro–Negroes; potato* – *potatoes; tomato* – *tomatoes.* But: *piano* – *pianos; photo* – *photos; zero* – *zeros.*
3. The plural of proper names and other parts of speech, figures, letters, etc. when substantivized, are sometimes written in the ordinary way, sometimes with an *'s* added:

The two *Mary's* or the *two Marys**(y* remains unchanged). Mind your P's and Q's. Cross your t's and dot your i's. Don't use so many *buts.*

Oh, no, no, a thousand *no's.*[17]»… Mr. Copperfield objected to my *threes*and *fives*being too much alike each other, or to my putting curly tails to my sevens and nines**,»** resumed my mother. [10]

3. Some nouns *are* survivals of Old English plural forms; they form the plural:

a) By changing the root-vowel (vowel interchange): *man* – *men, woman – women, foot – feet, tooth – teeth, goose – geese, mouse – mice;*

b) By changing the root-vowel (vowel interchange) and adding the inflexion [en], in spelling *– en: child – children; brother – brethren.1*

4. Plural of Compound Nouns.

1. In compound nouns usually the head-noun takes the plural form: *fellow-worker* – *fellow-workers; school-mate* – *school-mates; air-raid* – *air-raids; editor-in-chief* – *editors-in-chief; brother-in-law* – *brothers-in-law.*
2. Compounds ending in *– man* change *– man* into *– men* in spelling, but in pronunciation there is no difference between the singular and the plural: *postman* ['poustman] – *postmen* ['poustman].

Such nouns as *German, Roman, and Norman* are not compounds. They form their plural in the usual way: *Germans, Romans, Normans.*

1. When the compound does not contain any noun, the plural is formed by adding *– s* to the last word: *forget-me-not* – *forget-me-nots; merry-go-round (*карусель) – *merry-go-rounds; hold-all (*порт плед) – *hold-alls; overall* – *overalls.*
2. Compounds in *– fut* add *– s* to the end: *handful* – *handfuls; spoonful* – *spoonfuls;* but also: *columns-full* (in newspapers).
3. If a proper noun is preceded by a title, the sign of the plural is added either to the title or to the proper noun itself; in colloquial speech it is usual to add the *– s* to the proper noun; in official speech the title is pluralized.

Colloquial: *The two doctor Thompsons.**The Miss Smiths*Official: *Messrs Jones. The Misses**Smith.*

The Miss *Crumptons* or to quote the authorities of the inscription on the garden-gate: The *Misses* Crumpton. [10]

f) An adjectivized noun in attributive function is, as a rule, used in the singular even if the meaning is plural: *a four-storey house, a five-act play, the printed-book section of a museum.*

*It*was a *three-mile*walk along a dry white road, made whiter to-night by the light of the moon. [9]

There is, however, a growing tendency in recent times to use the plural form, especially in long official terms: *a two-thirds**majority; the food products department; the sports**grounds; the United Nations**Organization; parcels**post.*

Two powerful engines were pulling a goodstrain up the sharp incline… [4]

Streams of people were pouring out from the SportsGround… [4]

In many instances where the form in – s is used it may be understood either as the plural form of the common case or as the plural possessive. Accordingly, the use of the apostrophe wavers:

a) No apostrophe:

I enjoyed several hourssleep. There is twenty years difference in their age. I had only two *shillings*pocket money. A bridge of only two *planks* breadth.

b) An apostrophe:

A five years' child. The Seven Years’*War. A*two *months'* baby.

…it was a two-and-a half hours' drive. [21]

5. Plural Identical in Form With the Singular. – Some nouns have one form for both singular and plural (either always or in certain combinations).

Those nouns are partly survivals of the Old English and Latin uninflected plurals, partly forms which came to be used by the analogy of the old unchanged plurals.

The following nouns have one form for both singular and plural:

a) Names of some animals: *sheep, deer, swine:*

*… The* sheep on the Downs lay quiet as stones. [21] 'Oh, Elizabeth, look, look! *The deer!'*'…Oh yes! How funny the little ones are! But how graceful!' [20]

b) The noun *fish* and nouns denoting some sorts of fish, such as *trout,**cod, pike, salmon:*

One day he caught *a* beautiful big *fish…*[11] In the water tiny *fish* swam between the olive growths of seaweed… [8] I know where *trout* are rising and where the *salmon*leap. [24]

To denote kinds of fish the form *fishes* is used:

There were many *fishes*in the net. She has bought a large book on our freshwater fishes. These pools swarm with a great variety of *fishes***.**

c) Names indicating number such as *dozen, pair, couple, and score* (двадцать), when they are preceded by a numeral: *two pair**of gloves; five score**of eggs; three dozen of shirts.*

But the plural is also used:

Hehad… two *pairs* of stockings in his bundle. [10]

Note.– After *many* and *few* both forms*are* found: *so many pair**of wings, a great many pairs**of gloves; a few score(s)**of heads.*

d) We have survivals of the old uninflected plural in *kind, sort,* and *manner.* The usual construction is now to keep kind*, sort,* and *manner* unchanged, but to use the plural these *(those)* if the word following *of* is plural *(these kind**of tools).* But this construction is by many considered grammatically incorrect and therefore in careful literary speech *books of that kind*are preferred to the colloquial *those kind**of books:*

These kindsof pens. Such *kind* of duties. Those *sort o*f speeches.

e) The noun *foot* (measure of length) is feetin the plural. The plural *foot* is used when followed by a number indicating inches:

…I'm five *foot*eleven in my socks. [2] And was she tall enough? Only five *foot* five. [21]

1. The noun *pound* (indicating money) has usually the s-plural except when followed by a numeral indicating shillings: *two pounds****,*** but: *two pound**ten.*
2. The nouns *species* and *series* borrowed from the Latin have also one form for both singular and plural:

A *series*of very, interesting experiments has been made in our laboratory. Two admirable *series*of the masters of Russian literature have been published recently. What a pretty species of roses! Many beautiful *species*of roses are cultivated in our garden.

6. Foreign Plurals. – Some nouns keep the plural form of the language (Latin, French or Greek) from which they have been borrowed:

Memorandum [am] – memoranda [э]; datum [am] – data [3]; phenomenon [an] – phenomena [aj; crisis [iz] – crises **[i:zj;** nucleus [ias] – nuclei [iai]; terminus [as] – termini [ai]; stimulus [as] – stimuli [at]; formula [a] – formulae **[i:J;** index – indices **[i:z].**

Words that are much used often have an English plural: *memorandums, formulas, indexes, terminuses.*

In all countries *the*broadest *strata*of the population have been mobilized in support of this great cause – the preservation of peace.

Then the pied wind-flowers and the tulip tall, and *narcissi,*the fairest among them *all…*[22]… the rest of the house had grown, emerging here and there into small *oases*of modernity. [21] Shelgrim wrote a few *memoranda*on his calendar pad, and signed a couple of letters before turning to Presley. [14]

Traditionally, the plural is formed by the inflexion – (e) s, the singular form of the nouns is a bare stem with a zero-inflexion. According this there are several ways of the pronunciation of the inflexion – (e) s at the end of the word, also there are several peculiarities in spelling. Some nouns are survivals of Old English plural forms; they form the plural. In many instances where the form in – s is used it may be understood either as the plural form of the common case or as the plural possessive. Some nouns have one form for both singular and plural. Some nouns are partly survivals of the Old English and Latin uninflected plurals, partly forms which came to be used by the analogy of the old unchanged plurals. Some nouns keep the plural form of the language (Latin, French or Greek) from which they have been borrowed.

* 1. **Nouns Used in Both Numbers Singular and Plural**

It is quite evident that only those nouns have both numbers (singular and plural) which denote things that can be counted, that is, things possessing a certain shape or having precise limits. Such nouns may be called countable or thing-nouns. To the group of nouns which have both numbers belong:

a) Concrete nouns: *a girl* – *two girls; a book – two books; a flower* – *two flowers.*

He took *the loaf*back to the scullery. [15] Brown, crisp *loaves*stood on the hearth. [15] *Flowers* fell on her face, and she shut her eyes… One *flower* had remained tangled in her hair. [15]

b) Abstract nouns: *a day – two days; an event – two events; a task* – *two**tasks.*

Captain Cuttle liked this *idea* very much. [10] A new generation is growing up in our midst, a generation actuated by new *ideas*and new principles. [11] It was a momentary *thought…*[10] Andrew went back to Christine that evening with his *thoughts*in a maze. [23] I tried to shout but my *voice*was not very loud. [13] *Voices*and *footsteps*were heard in the passage… [19]

Nouns which have both numbers (countable) may be used with the indefinite article (in the singular) and associated with the pronouns *some* (in the singular or plural), *many* and *few* (in the plural):

A *ring*at the bell, repeated several times, roused him at last to go to the door. [21] What *a night*to wander out in! [21] Towards the evening of the following day…*a letter*arrived addressed to herself. [19] A, few early fallen oak-leaves strewed the terrace… [21] He had many*invitations* to dinner some of which he accepted. [7] Passing through a sort of porch made by two yew trees and *some*flowering-current *bushes,*the girl disappeared into the house. [21]

* 1. **Pluralia Tantum and Singularia Tantum**

The most general quantitative characteristics of individual words constitute the lexico-grammatical base for dividing the nounal vocabulary as a whole into countable nouns and uncountable nouns. The constant categorial feature «quantitative structure» is directly connected with the variable feature «number», since uncountable nouns are treated grammatically as either singular or plural. Namely, the singular uncountable nouns are modified by the non-discrete quantifiers *much* or *little,* and they take the finite verb in the singular, while the plural uncountable nouns take the finite verb in the plural.

The two subclasses of uncountable nouns are usually referred to, respectively, as singularia tantum (only singular) and pluralia tantum (only plural). [27] The nouns which have only a plural and no singular are usually termed «pluralia tantum» (which is the Latin for «plural only»), and those which have only a singular and no plural are termed «singularia tantum» (the Latin for «singular only'') [26] In terms of oppositions we may say that in the formation of the two subclasses of uncountable nouns the number opposition is «constantly» (lexically) reduced either to the weak member (singularia tantum) or to the strong member (pluralia tantum).

Since the grammatical form of the uncountable nouns of the singularia tantum subclass is not excluded from the category of number, it stands to reason to speak of it as the «absolute» singular, as different from the «correlative» or «common» singular of the countable nouns. The absolute singular excludes the use of the modifying numeral *one,* as well as the indefinite article. [27]

The most general quantitative characteristics of individual words constitute the lexico-grammatical base for dividing the nounal vocabulary as a whole into countable nouns and uncountable nouns. The nouns which have only a plural and no singular are usually termed «pluralia tantum», and those which have only a singular and no plural are termed «singularia tantum».

* 1. **Nouns Used Only in the Singular or Singularia Tantum**

Nouns denoting things which have neither shape nor precise limits cannot be counted and therefore have no distinction between singular and plural; they are used only in the singular. Such nouns may be called uncountable or mass-nouns. To the group of nouns used only in the singular belong:

a) Concrete nouns:

1. Names of materials: *water, milk, wine, snow, bread, air.*

*On*my breakfast table there is a pot of *honey.*[21]… there was the cool sound of *milk*dropping into pails… [21] We didn't take *beer*or *wine.*[11] Seizing *ink*and *writing-paper,*she began to write… [21]

2. Some collective nouns: *foliage, leafage, shrubbery, brushwood, linen* (белье), *machinery, furniture:*

Birds fluttered softly in the wet *shrubbery…*[21] He had chosen *the furniture*himself. [21]… he took a narrow ride up through a dark bit of mixed *timber*with heavy *undergrowth.*(Galsworthy.)

b) Abstract nouns: *friendship, joy patriotism, love, kindness, weather, courage, information, progress,* etc.: There was *a*great deal of *confusion*and *laughter* and *noise…* [11] It was beautiful *weather***.** (Lawrence.) At parting, my aunt gave me some good *advice…*[10] A sudden tide of *joy*went leaping out of his heart. [11]

Nouns used only in the singular (uncountable) have no article where a noun which expresses both numbers (countable) would be associated with the indefinite article; they may be used with the pronouns *what, some, much* or *little:*

Perfect harvest *weather;**but*oppressively still… [21] Everyone gave him *advice…*[11] Of course-this was good *news.*[7] *«What* delightful *weather* we are having!» [20] *What beauty, what stillness!*[21] He had anticipated *much pleasure*in this afternoon's reading… [9] «But have some *tea.*I've just made it.» [21]

Some collective nouns used only in the plural also belong to the group of uncountable such as: *goods, sweepings, tidings,* etc.

* 1. **Nouns Used Only in the Plural**

1. A number of nouns are used only in the form of the plural. With these nouns the plural does not indicate several objects but denotes a composite whole.
2. To the group of nouns which are used only in the plural form belong:

a) The names of things which consist of two similar halves such as *scissors, trousers, spectacles, scales* (весы), *eye-glasses, tongs* (щипцы):

These **scissors** are sharp. Your spectacles are on the table. Your opera-glasses are very good.

b) Nouns which have collective meaning (concrete or abstract):

1. Concrete: *stairs, goods, eaves, slums, outskirts, tropics, memoirs, victuals* [vitlz] (провизия), *supplies, clothes, sweepings, slops* (помои), preserves (консервы), *parings* (кожура), *sweets, lodgings* (sometimes) *lodging;* but always *board and lodging),* etc.:

The car went smoothly and swiftly through the outer *suburbs…*[4] Beads of water still dripped from the *eaves… [*24] At last they reached the *outskirts*of the forest… [15] «Got any *lodgings* – «No.» [10] «Come, hand in *eatables.»*[10] My *clothes* were my Sunday best. [2] «I say, can you let *a lodging?»*[7]

2. Abstract: *holidays, tidings, goings-on* (поступки), *begin nings* (also *beginning), earnings, wages* (often in the singular, especially in the following combinations: *a living wage, a fixed wage, a minimum wage), contents,* etc.:

She tried to adjust herself to her new *surroundings.*[4] These are indeed happy *tidings.*We get good wages. They spent their *holidays*in the mountains. Bad *beginnings*make good *endings*(первый блин комом). «Well,» said Wardle, «here are pretty goings-on…» [10] He told me of some of his *doings.*[5]

3. In some nouns the final – s loses the meaning of the plural inflexion and the noun is treated as a singular. This is the case with the names of sciences and occupations in *– ics: mathematics, phonetics, optics,* which are usually considered as singular:

*Phonetics*is the science of sounds. *Mathematics*is his strong point. *Optics*is a branch of *physics;*it treats of light.

These nouns are treated as plurals when practical application is meant:

His *phonetics are*excellent. *The acoustics*of this hall *are*good.

*Politics, tactics, gymnastics, athletics* are generally regarded as plurals.

«The only politics*I understand,»* answered Magnus sternly, «are honest *politics.»*[6]

4. With some nouns the usage wavers, and the noun is treated either as a singular or as a plural:

*The gas-works**is (are)*situated on the river. Price's *works*was small. [5] To-day we are going to visit a great *smelting-works…*[6]

It should be noted that with regard to nouns used only in the plural the English and the Russian usage sometimes differ. Thus the noun *opera-glasses* is used in English only in the plural, whereas in Russian бинокль has both numbers. The noun сани is used in Russian only in the plural; in English *sledge* has both numbers. Other nouns are used in one language only in the plural, in the other – only in the singular. Thus in Russian the noun сумерки is used only in the plural, whereas in English the noun *twilight* is used only in the singular.

* 1. **Nouns Used in the Plural in a Special Sense**

In some cases the plural form of the noun does not express were pluralities (as in *tables* = *table* + *table…)* but acquires a special meaning. Very often the plural form, besides this specific meaning, may also retain the exact meaning of the singular thus resulting in two homonymous words:

*colour = tint, colours =* 1) plural of tint, 2) flag:

«I do not mean regimental *colours,*but the *watercolours.»*[17]

*custom* = *habit, customs* = 1) plural of habit, 2) duties:

Many old *customs*are dying out. *Customs*(пошлины) are duties imposed by law on goods imported and exported.

*pain = suffering, pains = I)* plural of suffering, 2) effort:

She enlivened our journey by describing to us… the various pains she had in her back. [11] «I have examined Adele… and find you have taken great *pains*with her… [2]

*quarter =* fourth part, *quarters* = 1) plural of fourth part, 2) lodgings:

I have read three *quarters*of the book. We found him ire his old *quarters.*

*work* = toil, labour; *works* in various senses: the works of a watch (механизм часов), works of art, etc.

* 1. **Double Plural Forms**

Some nouns have double plurals used with some difference of meaning:

f 1) *brothers* (sons of one mother) *brother – y* 2) *brethren* (members of one community)

J 1) *geniuses* (men of genius) *genius* ^ *2) genii* (spirits)

f 1) *pennies* (number of coins) *penny – y* 2) *pence* (amount of pennies in value)

*(*1) *staffs (*military staffs [штаб], *staffs* [штат] of an *staff* institution)

I 2) *staves* (sticks)

II) *cloths* (kinds of cloth) *cloth – clothes* (articles of dress)

J I) *indexes* (tables of contents) *index – indices* (in mathematics)

**2. The Development or Loss of Plural Forms in Connection with a Change or Variation of Meaning of the Noun**

**1.** A number of nouns in English which are used only in the singular (uncountable) may through a change or variation of meaning acquire the forms of both numbers, singular and plural (and thus become countable). This is found in the following instances:

a) Material nouns which are used only in the singular (uncountable) express numbers, singular and plural (countable), when they denote different sorts:

«This is *a*very rare and most delicious *wine.*[10] There are many different *wines*on this list. *The teas (tobaccos)*of this plantation are of a very good quality. We produce high quality *steels.*

Note.– When a material noun serves to denote an object made of that material, it becomes a class-noun and may be used in both numbers:

Give me a glass (two glasses) of water. I have bought a new *iron*(two-new *irons). A copper,* two *coppers*(медная монета, медяк).

b) The noun *hair* is used in the singular (волосы); *a hair is* used only with the meaning of a few separate hairs (волосок, волоски):

…this girl's *hair*was chestnut, almost auburn. [6] She has a few grey *hairs.*She has more *hair*than wit, and more faults than hairs. (Shakespeare.)

c) The noun *fruit* is used in the singular. The plural form *fruits*denotes different kinds of fruit:

*The fruit*is not yet ripe. We have much *fruit* this year.

But: *The fruits*were local, consisting of apples, pears, nuts, and such other products of the summer… [9]

The plural form *fruit is* also used when the meaning is figurative:

*Fruits*of the workers' toil are buried in the strong coffers *of* a few. (The International.) The rich *fruits* of the heroic labour of Soviet people are visible from all corners of the earth, and they are an inspiration to the citizens of other countries advancing along the path of Socialism.

d) Abstract nouns which are used only in the singular (uncountable), taken in a general sense, acquire both numbers (and thus become countable) when they express concrete instances or special aspects of the notion which they denote:

It has been such *a joy*to see you and Holly. [21]… he sympathized with their *joys* and *grieves;*[5]

…now I remembered that the real world was wide, and that a varied field of *hopes* and *fears,*of *sensations*and *excitements,*awaited those who had courage to go forth into its expense to seek real knowledge of life amidst its *perils****.*** [2]… May.night had fallen soft and warm, enwrapping with its grape bloom colour and its scents the billion *caprices, intrigues, passions, longings,* and *regrets*of men and women. [21] Little Sharp, with her secret *griefs,*was the heroine of the day. [1] When sorrows come, they come, not single spies, but in battalions. [1]

Note. – When such nouns as *beauty, youth,* etc. do not denote abstract qualities but people characterized by those qualities, they become class-nouns and are used in both numbers (like countable nouns): *a beauty* (красавица), *a youth* (юноша);

This girl is a real beauty. The youths were marching with red banners-Some abstract nouns are used in English only in the singular (uncountable), whereas in Russian the corresponding nouns are used in both numbers (countable): *information, news, business, advice, work* (работа), *progress* (успех), and others: «What sort of *work*did you do?"[4] «You always give me good *advice…»*[10] «This *news*has shaken me, Eliot.» [20] She is making splendid *progress* in English.

To indicate concrete instances of advice, information, etc., the words *piece* or *item* are used:

You tell them one or two *items of news.*[11] «It is a very strange *piece of**business!» I*added… [2]»… I'd like to give you *a little piece of advice.»* **[**24] She gave me *one piece of intelligence,*which affected me very much… [10]

2. Sometimes material nouns and abstract nouns are used in the plural with emphatic force:

The frozen snows of the Arctic; *the*sands of the Sahara Desert; *the* blue waters of the Mediterranean Sea; *a thousand thanks;**a thousand pities.*

*The thunders*bellowed over the wild waste of waters, and were echoed and prolonged by the mountain waves. [13]

*«Thanks. A thousand and one thanks.*[19] Far off, rising in an immense slope…Etna soars towards *the heavens*, sending from the summit, on which *the snows*still linger, a steady plume of ivory smoke. [13]»… it would be *a thousand pities*to throw away such a chance of fun.» [2] Far below…I heard the «unseen tumbling of *the waters.*[23] *«A thousand pardons?»*[10] At sleepy intervals the surf flung its foam across *the sands*to the grass… [7]

3. A number of nouns which express both singular and plural (countable) may with a change of meaning are used only in the singular (thus becoming uncountable). This is the case:

a) When the name of an animal is used to denote its flesh used as food:

A fat brown goose lay at one end of the table… [11] (a countable noun) – While Gabriel and Miss Daly exchanged plates of goose and plates of ham and spiced beef, Lily went from guest to guest… [11] (an uncountable noun) Two white swans came majestically by… [21] (a countable noun) «I have n-never eaten roast swan b-before,» I stammered… [24] (an uncountable noun)

b) When the names of trees are used to indicate the corresponding kind of wood as material or as live plants:

And among *the oaks*the bluebells stood in pools of azure… [22] (a countable noun) – *«Oak»,*he exclaimed. «All carved *oak,*right up the ceiling…» [11] (an uncountable noun)… beautiful woods of *birch, fir,*and *pine*cast their shadows through the carriage window as we speed along. [19] (an uncountable noun)… a narrow strip of *larch*and *beech…*stretched out towards the valley… [21] (uncountable nouns)… I come into *a*lane, which winds upwards between grassy slopes to… woods of noble beech. [21] (an uncountable noun)

c) When the nouns *tree, bush, twig,* etc. do not indicate separate objects but an indivisible whole (compare with the meaning of such nouns as *leafage, blossom, brushwood,* also with the Russian листва, цвет, кустарник – собирательные существительные):

It (the tree) was covered with young *blossoms,*pink and *t* white…; and on this entire *blossom!*The sunlight glistened. [21] (1. a countable noun; 2. an uncountable noun) – … *the may-flower,*both pink and white, was in full bloom. [21] (a countable noun)… an old orchard of apple-trees just breaking into *flower,*stretched down to a stream and a long wild meadow. [21] (an uncountable noun)… a few gold *leaves*are still hanging… [21] (a countable noun) The apple-tree was *in leaf,*and all but *in flower*– its crimson buds just bursting. [7] (uncountable nouns) In that early spring a few *buds*were showing already. [7] (a countable noun) – He leaned against one of the satin-smooth stems, under the lacery of *twig*and bud**.** [7] (uncountable nouns)

d) When the name of an object is used to denote substance, that is, when it becomes the name of a material:

The summits of these vast mountains were enveloped in *clouds…*[1] (a countable noun)… the sky was lined with a uniform sheet of dripping *cloud…*[9] (an uncountable noun) Gemmy… presently returned with *an egg*beaten up in milk. [22] (a countable noun) – *Egg*is on your coat, (an uncountable noun) A load that lay on Hood's mind like *a rock* suddenly rose like an eagle… [9] (a countable noun) – Grass ceases to grow, and the track is almost lost to view among piles of loose slate *rock.*[20] (an uncountable noun)

The plural forms developed (some of them lose) in connection with a change of meaning of the noun. The cases are following: a number of nouns in English which are used only in the singular may through a change or variation of meaning acquire the forms of both numbers, singular and plural, sometimes material nouns and abstract nouns are used in the plural with emphatic force, a number of nouns which express both singular and plural (countable) may with a change of meaning are used only in the singular.

**3. Modes and means of expression grammatical meaning of number in Russian language**

The categories of number form one opposition – singular and plural. Russian language hasn’t special forms, which express only meaning of number. Six cases forms express each of two meaning of number. Forms of case – it simultaneously forms of gender and nouns.

Compare: sing. – лес, леса, лесу, лес, лесом, о лесе; pl. – леса, лесов, лесам, леса, лесами, о лесах1.

The inflexion of nouns emerges as indicator of number express simultaneously grammatical meaning of gender (singular) and case.

In separate groups of name of nouns opposite singular and plural number express with the help of suffixes – я, – овья, – ec, which is additional grammatical means, because it emerge together with the inflexion: зять – зя[тя], князь – кня[зя], сын – сын-о[вья], небо – неб-ес-а,…

In nouns with compound suffix – ан/ин (-ян/ин), чан/чин, which express meaning together with inflexion, in plural this suffix is absent and meaning of number express only with the help of inflexion: граждан/ин/Ø – граждан/е, северян/ин/Ø – северян/е,…

In names of animals’ baby singular number express with the help of suffix – онок (-енок), which in plural interchange with suffix – ат-а (-ят-а): буйволёнок – буйволята, скворчонок – скворчата, страусёнок – страусята…

Correlations in the names of children meet seldom: казачонок – казачата, батрачонок – батрачата, барчонок – барчата. In the names of mushrooms more seldom: опёнок – опята, маслёнок – маслята.

Interchange consonants and transference of stress used for generated of form of number by way of additional means.

Compare: 1) друг – дру[зья] (г-з'); ухо – уши (х-ш); клин – клинья (н-н'). 2) место-места, местам, местами, о местах.

In such a way, meaning of number express syntactically, that is to say with the help of inner resources of word: inflexions, suffixes, interchange of consonants, stress. Used more analytical means – forms agreement.

Compare: забавный лисёнок – забавные лисята, моё ухо – мои уши, летит гусь – летят гуси.

Just analytically (syntactically) express the category of number – indeclinable nouns, which haven’t their inflexion.

Compare: красивое кашне – красивые кашне, кафе закрыто – все кафе были закрыты. Separate words have suppletive forms of number: человек – люди, ребёнок – дети.

Figurative used forms of the category of nouns.

Used form of singular number meet often in the meaning of plural number. Example: Речь идет о настоятельной необходимости создать для детей новую, советскую, социалистическую популярно-научную и художественно яркую книгу. В поездке мы встретились с широким массовым зрителем наших национальных республик.

Forms of plural number in the meaning of singular used in oral speech (в университетах не учился, институтов не кончал) it is have in view one university and one institute.

* 1. **Nouns Used Only in the Singular**

Nouns which have only singularform and not used in plural belong to a group «Singularia Tantum». They are:

1. Uncountable nouns of material, substance (*oil, butter, milk, sugar, water, petroleum, steel, copper, wood, ice, gold…*) In plural such nouns denote different sorts of material. When denoting a certain object they may have both singular and plural.
2. Collective nouns (*youth, the students, spruce forest*)
3. Abstract nouns (*whiteness, cleanness, laziness, kindness, thinness, enthusiasm, rush, mowing, walking, heat, dampness, thaw…)*
4. Proper names. These words get plural form if they used nominally or denote group of people which have the same surname (**gender of Tolstoy**).

Proper names denoting unique objects (*sun, moon…)*

Some abstract nouns are used in English only in the singular whereas in Russian the corresponding nouns are used in both numbers (information, advice, news, knowledge…) «*This news is pleasant»* To indicate concrete instances of information or advice the words «piece», «item» are used «*It was the most interesting item of information*»

* 1. **Nouns Used Only in the Plural**

Nouns which have only plural form and not used in singular belong to a group «Plularia Tantum». They are:

1. The names of things which consist of two similar halves (*scissors, trousers, spectacles, scales (весы), eye-glasses, tongs (щипцы), gates…)* «*Your spectacles are on the table»*

2. The names of some games (*chees, hide-and-seek, blind man’s buff*…)

3. Denotation of some distance (*holidays, day, workdays, twilight*…)

4. The names of some mass of substance (*pasta, perfume, ink, yeast*…)

5. Proper names which connected with first collective meaning (*Alps, Carpathians…)*

The categories of number form one opposition – singular and plural. Russian language hasn’t special forms, which express only meaning of number. Forms of case – it simultaneously forms of gender and nouns. Meaning of number express syntactically, that is to say with the help of inner resources of word: inflexions, suffixes, interchange of consonants, stress. If we compare the category of number in English and Russian, Russian noun, as well as English nouns, can be subdivided into groups – nouns used only in the singular (uncountable nouns of material, substance; collective nouns; abstract nouns; proper names) and nouns used only in the plural (the names of things which consist of two similar halves; the names of some games; denotation of some distance; the names of some mass of substance; proper names which connected with first collective meaning.

## Conclusion

Modern English like most other languages distinguishes two numbers: *singular* and *plural.* The meaning of singular and plural seems to be self-explanatory, that is the opposition: one – more than one. The essential meaning of the category (in nouns) is not that of quantity, but of discreteness. Concrete meanings of nouns can be expressed lexically with the help of numerals and grammatically through grammatical meaning of inflexions. A zero inflexion indicates one thing and the grammatical form with an opposite inflexion indicates more than one things. There are several types of number: singular versus plural, collective versus singulativ, dual number, trial number and distributive plural. As has already been mentioned Modern English like most other languages distinguishes only two numbers: *singular* and *plural.* A zero inflexion indicates one thing and the grammatical form with an opposite inflexion indicates more than one things. In Modern English the form of the singular of nouns is a bare stem without any flexion or with zero inflexion. Nouns in plural are characterized by ending «-s (-es)». According this there are several ways of the pronunciation of the inflexion – (e) s at the end of the word, also there are several peculiarities in spelling. Some nouns are survivals of Old English plural forms; they form the plural. In many instances where the form in – s is used it may be understood either as the plural form of the common case or as the plural possessive. Some nouns have one form for both singular and plural. Some nouns are partly survivals of the Old English and Latin uninflected plurals, partly forms which came to be used by the analogy of the old unchanged plurals. Some nouns keep the plural form of the language (Latin, French or Greek) from which they have been borrowed. The most general quantitative characteristics of individual words constitute the lexico-grammatical base for dividing the nounal vocabulary as a whole into countable nouns and uncountable nouns. The nouns which have only a plural and no singular are usually termed «pluralia tantum», and those which have only a singular and no plural are termed «singularia tantum». In some cases the plural form of the noun does not express were pluralities but acquire a special meaning, some nouns have double plurals used with some difference of meaning. The plural forms developed (some of them lose) in connection with a change of meaning of the noun. The cases are following: a number of nouns in English which are used only in the singular may through a change or variation of meaning acquire the forms of both numbers, singular and plural, sometimes material nouns and abstract nouns are used in the plural with emphatic force, a number of nouns which express both singular and plural (countable) may with a change of meaning are used only in the singular. As for category of number Russian nouns – Russian language hasn’t special forms, which express only meaning of number. Forms of case – it simultaneously forms of gender and nouns. Meaning of number express syntactically, that is to say with the help of inner resources of word: inflexions, suffixes, interchange of consonants, stress. If we compare the category of number in English and Russian, Russian noun, as well as English nouns, can be subdivided into groups – nouns used only in the singular (uncountable nouns of material, substance; collective nouns; abstract nouns; proper names) and nouns used only in the plural (the names of things which consist of two similar halves; the names of some games; denotation of some distance; the names of some mass of substance; proper names which connected with first collective meaning).

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