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**Introduction**

The theme of my course paper sounds as following: «English Nouns and Their Grammatical Categories». Before beginning of investigation in our theme, I would like to say some words dealt with the theme of my course paper.

The noun is a word expressing substance in the widest sense of the word. In the concept of substance we include not only names of living beings (e.g. boy, girl, bird) and lifeless things (e.g. table, chair, book), but also names of abstract notions, i.e. qualities, slates, actions (kindness, strength, sleep, fear, conversation, fight), abstracted from their bearers. In speech these types of nouns are treated in different ways, so one, who does not know ways of treatment, can make mistakes in his speech.

Standing on such ground, I would like to point out tasks and aims of my work

1. The first task of my work is to give definition to term «Noun».

2. Second task is to describe main features of English nouns.

3. And the last task is to describe grammatical categories that nouns possesses.

In our opinion the practical significance of our work is hard to be overvalued. This work reflects modern trends in linguistics and we hope it would serve as a good manual for those who wants to master modern English language.

The present work might find a good way of implying in the following spheres:

1. In High Schools and scientific circles of linguistic kind it can be successfully used by teachers and philologists as modern material for writing research works dealing with English nouns.

2. It can be used by teachers of schools, lyceums and colleges by teachers of English as a practical manual for teaching English grammar.

3. It can be useful for everyone who wants to enlarge his/her knowledge in English.

The present course paper consists of four parts: introduction, the main part, conclusion and bibliography. Within the introduction part, which includes two items we gave the brief description of our qualification work (the first item) and gave general notion of the word «noun». The main part of our qualification work includes several items. There we discussed such problems as definition of nouns, main features of English nouns, their grammatical categories. In the conclusion to our qualification work we tried to draw some results from the scientific investigations made within the main part of our qualification work. In bibliography part we mentioned more than 20 sources of which were used while compiling the present work. It includes linguistic books and articles dealing with the theme, a number of used dictionaries and encyclopedias and also some internet sources.

**1. What is Noun?**

The word «noun» comes from the Latin nomen meaning «name». Word classes like nouns were first described by Sanskrit grammarian Panini and ancient Greeks like Dionysius Thorax, and defined in terms of their morphological properties. For example, in Ancient Greece, nouns can be inflected for grammatical case, such as dative or accusative. Verbs, on the other hand, can be inflected for tenses, such as past, present or future, while nouns cannot. Aristotle also had a notion of onomata (nouns) and rhemata (verbs) which, however, does not exactly correspond our notions of verbs and nouns. In her dissertation, Vinokurova has a more detailed discussion of the historical origin of the notion of a noun.

## Expressions of natural language will have properties at different levels. They have formal properties, like what kinds of morphological prefixes or suffixes they can take, and what kinds of other expressions they can combine with. but they also have semantic properties, i.e. properties pertaining to their meaning. The definition of nouns on the top of this page is thus a formal definition. That definition is uncontroversial, and has the advantage that it allows us to effectively distinguish nouns from non-nouns. However, it has the disadvandage that it does not apply to nouns in all languages. For example in Russian, there are no definite articles, so one cannot define nouns by means of those. There are also several attempts of defining nouns in terms of their semantic properties. Many of these are controversial, but some are discussed below.

In traditional school grammars, one often encounters the definition of nouns that they are all and only those expressions that refer to a person, place, thing, event, substance, quality, or idea, etc. This is a semantic definition. It has been criticized by contemporary linguists as being quite uninformative. Part of the problem is that the definition makes use of relatively general nouns («thing», «phenomenon», «event») to define what nouns are. The existence of such general nouns shows us that nouns are organized in taxonomic hierarchies. But other kinds of expressions are also organized in hierarchies. For example all of the verbs «stroll», «saunter,» «stride,» and «tread» are more specific words than the more general «walk.» The latter is more specific than the verb «move»/ But it is unlikely that such hierarchies can be used to define nouns and verbs. Furthermore, an influential theory has it that verbs like «kill» or «die» refer to events, and so they fall under the definition. Similarly, adjectives like «yellow» or «difficult» might be thought to refer to qualities, and adverbs like «outside» or «upstairs» seem to refer to places. Worse still, a trip into the woods can be referred to by the verbs «stroll» or «walk»/ But verbs, adjectives and adverbs are not nouns, and nouns aren't verbs. So the definition is not particularly helpful in distinguishing nouns from other parts of speech.

Another semantic definition of nouns is that they are prototypically referential. That definition is also not very helpful in distinguishing actual nouns from verbs. But it may still correctly identify a core property of nounhood. For example, we will tend to use nouns like «fool» and «car» when we wish to refer to fools and cars, respectively. The notion that this is prototypical reflects the fact that such nouns can be used, even though nothing with the corresponding property is referred to:

John is no fool.

If I had a car, I'd go to Marrakech.

The first sentence above doesn't refer to any fools, nor does the second one refer to any particular car.

In most cases in treating English nouns we shall keep to the conception of scientists that we refer to post-structural tendency It's because they combine the ideas of traditional and structural grammarians. The noun is classified into a separate word – group because:

1. they all have the same lexical – grammatical meaning:

substance / thing

2. according to their form – they've two grammatical categories:

number and case

3. they all have typical stem-building elements:

– er, – ist, – ship, – ment, – hood….

4. typical combinability with other words:

most often left-hand combinability.

5. function – the most characteristic feature of nouns is – they can be observed in all syntactic functions but predicate.

From the grammatical point of view most important is the division of nouns into countable and un-countable with regard to the category of number and into declinable and indeclinable with regard to the category of case[[1]](#footnote-1).

**2. Semantical Characteristics of English Nouns**

Nouns fall under two classes: (A) proper nouns; (B) common nouns[[2]](#footnote-2).

a) Proper nouns are individual, names given to separate persons or things. As regards their meaning proper nouns may be personal names (Mary, Peter, Shakespeare), geographical names (Moscow, London, the Caucasus), the names of the months and of the days of the week (February, Monday), names of ships, hotels, clubs, etc.

A large number of nouns now proper were originally common nouns (Brown, Smith, Mason).

Proper nouns may change their meaning and become common nouns:

«George went over to the table and took a sandwich and a glass of champagne. (Aldington)

b) Common nouns are names that can be applied to any individual of ad ass of persons or things (e.g. man, dog, book), collections of similar individuals or things regarded as a single unit (e. g. peasantry, family), materials (e. g. snow, iron, cotton) or abstract notions (e.g. kindness, development).

Thus there are different groups of common nouns: class nouns, collective nouns, nouns of material and abstract nouns.

1. Class nouns denote persons or things belonging to a class. They are countable and have two. numbers: singular and plural. They are generally used with an article.

«Well, sir», said Mrs. Parker, «I wasn't in the shop above a great deal.» (Mansfield)

He goes to the part of the town where the shops are. (Lessing)

2. Collective nouns denote a number or collection of similar individuals or things as a single unit.

Collective nouns fall under the following groups:

(a) nouns used only in the singular and denoting-a number of things collected together and regarded as a single object: foliage, machinery.

It was not restful, that green foliage. (London)

Machinery new to the industry in Australia was introduced for preparing land. (Agricultural Gazette)

(b) nouns which are singular in form though plural in meaning:

police, poultry, cattle, people, gentry They are usually called nouns of multitude. When the subject of the sentence is a noun of multitude the verb used as predicate is in the plural:

I had no idea the police were so devilishly prudent. (Shaw)

Unless cattle are in good condition in calving, milk production will never reach a high level. (Agricultural Gazette)

The weather was warm and the people were sitting at their doors. (Dickens)

(c) nouns that may be both singular and plural: family, crowd, fleet, nation. We can think of a number of crowds, fleets or different nations as well as of a single crowd, fleet, etc.

A small crowd is lined up to see the guests arrive. (Shaw)

Accordingly they were soon afoot, and walking in the direction of the scene of action, towards which crowds of people were already pouring from a variety of quarters. (Dickens)

3. Nouns of material denote material: iron, gold, paper, tea, water. They are uncountable and are generally used without any article.

There was a scent of honey from the lime-trees in flower. (Galsworthy)

There was coffee still in the urn. (Wells)

Nouns of material are used in the plural to denote different sorts of a given material.

… that his senior counted upon him in this enterprise, and had consigned a quantity of select wines to him… (Thackeray)

Nouns of material may turn into class nouns (thus becoming countable) when they come to express an individual object of definite shape.

Compare:

– To the left were clean panes of glass. (Ch. Bronte)

«He came in here,» said the waiter looking at the light through the tumbler, «ordered a glass of this ale.» (Dickens)

But the person in the glass made a face at her, and Miss Moss went out. (Mansfield).

4. Abstract nouns denote some quality, state, action or idea: kindness, sadness, fight. They are usually uncountable, though some of them may be countable.

Therefore when the youngsters saw that mother looked neither frightened nor offended, they gathered new courage. (Dodge)

Accustomed to John Reed's abuse – I never had an idea of plying it. (Ch. Bronte)

It's these people with fixed ideas. (Galsworthy)

Abstract nouns may change their meaning and become class nouns. This change is marked by the use of the article and of the plural number:

beauty a beauty beauties

sight a sight sights

He was responsive to beauty and here was cause to respond. (London)

She was a beauty. (Dickens)

… but she isn't one of those horrid regular beauties. (Aldington)

**3. The Category of Case**

The category of case of nouns is the system of opposites (such as girl–girl's in English, дом – дома – дому – дом – домом – (о) доме in Russian) showing the relations of the noun to other words in speech. Case relations reflect the relations of the substances the nouns name to other substances, actions, states, etc. in the world of reality [[3]](#footnote-3). In the sentence ‘I took John's hat by mistake’ the case of the noun ‘John's’ shows its relation to the noun hat, which is some reflection of the relations between John and his hat in reality.

Case is one of those categories which show the close connection:

(a) between language and speech,

(b) between morphology and syntax.

(a) A case opposite is, like any other opposite, a unit of the language system, but the essential difference between the members of a case opposite is in their combinability in speech. This is particularly clear in a language like Russian with a developed case system. Compare, for instance, the combinability of the nominative case and that of the oblique cases. See also the difference in the combinability of each oblique case: одобрять поступок, не одобрять поступка, удивляться поступку, восхищаться поступком, etc.

We can see here that the difference between the cases is not so much a matter of meaning as a matter of combinability. It can be said that поступок – поступка – поступку, etc. are united paradigmatically in the Russian language on the basis of their syntagmatic differences in speech. Similarly, the members of the case opposite John – John's are united paradigmatically on the basis of their syntagmatic differences.

Naturally, both members of an English noun case opposite have the features of English nouns, including their combinability. Thus, they may be preceded by an article, an adjective, a numeral, a pronoun, etc.

a student…. a student's…

the student…, the student's…

a good student…, a good student's…

his brother…, his brother's…

the two brothers…, the two brothers'…

Yet, the common case grammemes are used in a variety of combinations where the possessive case grammemes do not, as a rule, occur. In the following examples, for instance, John's or boys' can hardly be substituted for John or boys: John saw the boys, The boys were seen by John, It was owing to the boys that…, The boys and he…, etc.

(b) Though case is a morphological category it has a distinct syntactical significance. The common case grammemes fulfil a number of syntactical functions not typical of possessive case grammemes, among them the functions of subject and object. The possessive case noun is for the most part employed as an attribute.

All case opposites are identical in content: they contain two particular meanings, of 'common' case and 'possessive' case, united by the general meaning of the category, that of 'case'. There is not much variety in the form of case opposites either, which distinguishes English from Russian.

An English noun lexeme may contain two case opposites at most (man – man's, men – men's). Some lexemes have but one opposite (England – England's, cattle – cattle's). Many lexemes have no case opposites at all (book, news, foliage),

In the opposite dog – dog's, men – men's, the 'common' case is not marked, i.e. dog and men have zero morphemes of 'common case'. The 'possessive' case is marked by the suffix -'s /-s, – z, – iz/. In the opposite dogs – dogs.' the difference between the opposites is marked only in writing. Otherwise the two opposites do not differ in form. So with regard to each other they are-not marked.

Thus, -'s is the only positive case morpheme of English nouns. It would be no exaggeration to say that the whole category' depends on this morpheme.

As already mentioned, with regard to the category of case English nouns fall under two lexicon-grammatical subclasses: declinable, having case opposites, and indeclinable, having no case opposites.

The subclass of declinable is comparatively limited, including mostly nouns denoting living beings, also time and distance [[4]](#footnote-4).

Indeclinable like book, iron, care have, as a norm, only the potential (or oblique, or lexicon-grammatical) meaning of the common case. But it is sometimes actualized when a case opposite of these words is formed in speech, as in ‘The book's philosophy is old-fashioned’. (The Tribune, Canada).

As usual, variants of one lexeme may belong to different subclasses. Youth meaning 'the state of being young' belongs to the indeclinable. Its variant youth meaning 'a young man' has a case opposite (The youth's candid smile disarmed her. Black and belongs to the declinable.

Since both cases and prepositions show 'relations of substances', some linguists speak of analytical cases in Modern English. To the student is said to be an analytical dative case (equivalent, for instance, to the Russian студенту), of the student is understood as an analytical genitive case (equivalent to студента), by the student as an analytical instrumental case (cf. студентом), etc.

The theory of analytical cases seems to be unconvincing for a number of reasons.

1. In order to treat the combinations of the student, to the student, by the student as analytical words (like shall come or has come) we must regard of, to, with as grammatical word-morphemes [[5]](#footnote-5). But then they are to be devoid of lexical meaning, which they are not. Like most words a preposition is usually polysynaptic and each meaning is singled out in speech, in a sentence or a word-combination. Cf. to speak of the student, the speech of the student, news of the student, it was kind of the student, what became of the student, etc.

In each case of shows one of its lexical meanings. Therefore it cannot be regarded as a grammatical word-morpheme and the combination of the student cannot be treated as an analytical word.

2. A grammatical category, as known, is represented in opposites comprising a definite number of members. Combinations with different prepositions are too numerous to be interpreted as opposites representing the category of case[[6]](#footnote-6).

The number of cases in English becomes practically unlimited.

3. Analytical words usually form opposites with synthetic ones[[7]](#footnote-7) (comes – came – will come). With prepositional constructions it is different. They are often synonymous with synthetic words.

E. g. the son of my friend = my friend's son; the wall of the garden = the. garden wall.

On the other hand, prepositional constructions can be used side by side with synthetic cases, as in that doll of Mary's, a friend of John's. If we accepted the theory of analytical cases, we should see in of John's a double-case word[[8]](#footnote-8), which would be some rarity in English, there being •'no double-tense words nor double-aspect words and the like [[9]](#footnote-9).

4. There is much subjectivity in the choice of prepositions supposed to form analytical cases[[10]](#footnote-10). Grammarians usually point out those prepositions whose meanings approximate to the meanings of some cases in other languages or in Old English. But the analogy with other languages or with an older stage of the same language does not prove the existence of a given category in a modern language.

Therefore we think it unjustified to speak of units like to the student, of the student, etc. as of analytical cases. They are combinations of nouns in the common case with prepositions.

The morpheme -'s, on which the category of case of English nouns depends (§ 83), differs in some respects from other grammatical morphemes of the English language and from the case morphemes of other languages.

As emphasized by B.A. Ilyish [[11]](#footnote-11), -'s is no longer a case inflexion in the classical sense of the word. Unlike such classical inflexions, -'s may be attached

a) to adverbs (of substantial origin), as in yesterday's events,

b) to word-groups, as in Mary and John's apartment, our professor of literature's unexpected departure,

c) even to whole clauses, as in the well-worn example the man I saw yesterday's son.

В. A. Ilyish comes to-the conclusion that the -'s morpheme gradually develops into a «form-word»[[12]](#footnote-12), a kind of particle serving to convey the meaning of belonging, possession[[13]](#footnote-13).

G.N. Vorontsova does not recognize –‘s as a case morpheme at all[[14]](#footnote-14). The reasons she puts forward to substantiate her point of view are as follows:

1) The use of -'s is optional (her brother's, of her brother).

2) It is used with a limited group of nouns outside which it occurs very seldom.

3) -'s is used both in the singular and in the plural (child's, children's), which is not incident – to case morphemes (cf. мальчик‑а, мальчик-ов).

4) It occurs in very few plurals, only those with the irregular formation of the plural member (oxen's but cows').

5) -'s does not make an inseparable part of the structure of the word. It may be placed at some distance from the head-noun of an attributive group.

«Been reading that fellow what's his name's attacks in the 'Sunday Times'?» (Bennett).

Proceeding from these facts G.N. Vorontsova treats -'s as a 'postposition', a 'purely syntactical form-word resembling a preposition', used as a sign of syntactical dependence[[15]](#footnote-15).

In keeping with this interpretation of the -'s morpheme the author denies the existence of cases in Modern English.

At present, however, this extreme point of view can hardly be accepted[[16]](#footnote-16). The following arguments tend to show that -'s does function as a case morpheme.

1. The -'s morpheme is mostly attached to individual nouns e, not noun groups. According to our statistics this is observed in 96 per cent of examples with this morpheme. Instances like The man I saw yesterday's son are very rare and may be interpreted in more ways than one. As already mentioned, the demarcation line between words and combinations of words is very vague in English. A word-combination can easily be made to function as one word.

Cf. a hats-cleaned-by-electricity-while-you-wait establishment (O. Henry), the eighty-year-olds (D.W.).

In the last example the plural morpheme – s is in fact attached to an adjective word-combination, turning it into a noun. It can be maintained that the same morpheme –‘s likewise substantives the group of words to which it is attached, and we get something like the man‑1‑saw-yesterday's son.

2. Its general meaning – «the relation of a noun to an other word» – is a typical case meaning.

3. The fact that -'s occurs, as a rule, with a more or less limited group of words bears testimony to its not being a «preposition-like form word». The use of the preposition is determined, chiefly, by the meaning of the preposition itself and not by the meaning of the noun it introduces (Cf. оn the table, in the table, under the table, over the table etc.)

4. The fact that the possessive case is expressed in oxen – oxen's by -'s and in cows – cows' by zero cannot serve as an argument against the existence of cases in English nouns because -'s and zero are here forms of the same morpheme

a) Their meanings are identical.

b) Their distribution is complementary.

5. As a minor argument against the view that -'s is «a preposition-like word», it is pointed out[[17]](#footnote-17) that -'s differs phonetically from all English prepositions in not having a vowel, a circumstance limiting its independence.

Yet, it cannot be denied that the peculiarities of the -'s morpheme are such as to admit no doubt of its being essentially different from the case morphemes of other languages. It is evident that the case system of Modern English is undergoing serious changes.

**4. The Category of Number of English Nouns**

The category of number of English nouns is the system of opposites (such as girl – girls, foot – feet, etc.) showing whether the noun stands for one object or more than one, in other words, whether its grammatical meaning is 'oneness' or 'more-than-oneness' of objects.

The connection of the category with the world of material reality, though indirect, is quite transparent. Its meanings reflect the existence of individual objects and groups of objects in the material world.

All number opposites are identical in content: they contain two particular meanings of 'singular' and 'plural' united by the general meaning of the category, that of 'number'. But there is a considerable variety of form in number opposites, though it is not so great as in the Russian language.

An English noun lexeme can contain two number opposites at most (toy – boys, boy's – boys'). Many lexemes have but one oppose me (table – tables) and many others have no opposites at all (ink, news).

In the opposite boy – boys 'singularity' is expressed by a zero morpheme and 'plurality' is marked by the positive morpheme /-z/, in spelling – .s. In other words, the 'singular' member of the opposite is not marked, and the 'plural' member is marked.

In the opposite boy's – boys' both members have positive morphemes –‘s, – s’, but these morphemes can be distinguished only in writing. In the spoken language their forms do not differ, so with regard to each other they are unmarked. They can be distinguished only by their combinability (cf. a boy's head, boys' heads).

In a few noun lexemes of foreign origin both members of a number opposite are marked, e.g. symposium – symposia, genus – genera, phenomenon–phenomena, etc. But in the process of assimilation this peculiarity of foreign nouns gets gradually lost, and instead of medium – media a new opposite develops, medium – mediums; instead of formula – formulae, the usual form now is formula – formulas. In this process, as we see, the foreign grammatical morphemes are neglected as such. The ‘plural’ morpheme is dropped altogether. The 'singular' morpheme becomes part of the stem. Finally, the regular – s ending is added to form the 'plural' opposite. As a result the 'singular' becomes unmarked, as typical of English, and the 'plural' gets its usual mark, the suffix – s.

Since the 'singular' member of a number opposite is not marked, the form of the opposite is, as a rule, determined by the form of the 'plural' morpheme, which, in its turn, depends upon the stem of the lexeme.

In the overwhelming majority of cases the form of the 'plural' morpheme is /-s/, /-z/, or /-z/, in spelling – (e) s, e. g, books, boys, matches.

With the stem ox – the form of the 'plural' morpheme is – en /-n/.

In the opposite man–men the form of the 'plural' morpheme is the vowel change /æ > e/. In woman – women ii is /u > i/, in foot – feet it is /u – i:/, etc.

In child – children the form of the 'plural' morpheme is complicated. It consists of the vowel change /ai > i/ and the suffix – ren.

In sheep – sheep the 'plural' is not marked, thus coinciding in form with the 'singular'. They can be distinguished only by their combinability: ‘one sheep’, ‘five sheep’, ‘a sheep was…’, ‘sheep were…’, ‘this sheep’, ‘these sheep’. The 'plural' coincides in form with the 'singular' also in ‘deer, fish, carp, perch, trout, cod, salmon’, etc.[[18]](#footnote-18)

All the 'plural' forms enumerated here are forms of the same morpheme. This can be proved, as we know, by the identity of the 'plural' meaning, and the complementary distribution of these forms, i.e. the fact that different forms are used with different stems.

As already mentioned [[19]](#footnote-19), with regard to the category of number English nouns fall into two subclasses: countable and uncountable. The former have number opposites, the latter have not. Uncountable nouns are again subdivided into those having no plural opposites and those having no singular opposites.

Nouns like milk, geometry, self-possession having no plural opposites are usually called by a Latin name – singularia tantum. Nouns like outskirts, clothes, goods having no singular opposites are known as pluralia tantum.

As a matter of fact, those nouns which have no number opposites are outside the grammatical category of number. But on the analogy of the bulk of English nouns they acquire oblique (or lexicon-grammatical) meanings of number. Therefore singularia tantum are often treated as singulars and pluralia tantum as plurals.

This is justified both by their forms and by their combinability.

Cf. This (table, book, milk, love) is…

These (tables, books, clothes, goods) are…

When combinability and form contradict each other, combinability is decisive, which accounts for the fact that ‘police’ or ‘cattle’ are regarded as plurals, and ‘measles’, ‘mathematics as singulars.

The lexicon-grammatical meaning of a class (or of a subclass) of words is, as we know, an abstraction from the lexical meanings of the words of the class, and depends to a certain extent on those lexical meanings. Therefore singularia tantum usually include nouns of certain lexical meanings. They are mostly material, abstract and collective nouns, such as sugar, gold, butter, brilliance, constancy, selfishness, humanity, soldiery, peasantry.

Yet it is not every material, abstract or collective noun that belongs to the group of singularia tantum (e. g. a plastic, a feeling, a crowd) and, what is more important, not in all of its meanings does a noun belong to this group.

As we have already seen[[20]](#footnote-20), variants of the same lexeme may belong to different subclasses of a part of speech. In most of their meanings the words joy and sorrow as abstract nouns are singularia tantum.

E.g. He has been a good friend both in joy and in sоrгоw. (Horney).

But when concrete manifestations are meant, these nouns are countable and have plural opposites, e. g. the joys and sorrows of life.

Likewise, the words copper, tin, hair as material nouns are usually singularia tantum, but when they denote concrete objects, they become countable and get plural opposites: a copper – coppers, a tin – tins, a hair – hairs.

Similarly, when the nouns wine, steel, salt denote some sort or variety of the substance, they become countable.

E.g. an expensive wine – expensive wines.

All such cases are not a peculiarity of the English language alone. They are found in other languages as well. Cf. дерево – деревья and дерево.is a material noun, платье – платья and платье as a collective noun.

‘Joy’ and ‘a joy’, ‘beauty’ and ‘a beauty’, ‘copper’ and ‘a copper’, ‘hair’ and ‘a hair’ and many other pairs of this kind are not homonyms, as suggested by some grammarians[[21]](#footnote-21), but variants of lexemes related by internal conversion.

If all such cases were regarded as homonyms, the number of homonyms in the English language would be practically limitless. If only some of them were treated as homonyms, that would give rise to uncontrolled subjectivity.

The group of pluralia tantum is mostly composed of nouns denoting objects consisting of two or more parts, complex phenomena or ceremonies, e. g. tongs, pincers, trousers, nuptials, obsequies. Here also belong some nouns with a distinct collective or material meaning, e.g. clothes, eaves, sweets.

Since in these words the – s suffix does not function as a grammatical morpheme, it gets lexicalized and develops into an inseparable part of the stem [[22]](#footnote-22). This, probably, underlies the fact that such nouns as mathematics, optics, linguistics, mumps, measles are treated as singularia tantum.

Nouns like police, militia, cattle, poultry are pluralia tantum, judging by their combinability, though not by form [[23]](#footnote-23).

People in the meaning of «народ» is a countable noun. In the meaning of «люди» it belongs to the pluralia tantum. Family in the sense of «a group of people who are related» is a countable noun. In the meaning of «individual members of this group» it belongs to the pluralia tantum. Thus, the lexeme family has two variants:

Sg. PL

1) family families

2) – family

E. g. Almost every family in the village has sent a man to the army. (Horney).

Those were the oldest families in Jorkshire. (Black).

Her family were of a delicate constitution. (Bronte).

Similar variants are observed in the lexemes committee, government, board, crew, etc.

Colour in the meaning «red, green, blue, etc». is a countable noun. In the meaning «appearance of reality or truth» (e. g. His torn clothes gave colour to his story that lie had been attacked by robbers. A. Horney.) it has no plural opposite and belongs to the singularia tantum. Colours in the sense of «materials used by painters and artists» has no singular opposite and belongs to the pluralia tantum.

Thus, the lexeme has three variants:

Sg. Pl.

1) colour colours

2) colour –

3) – colours.

When grammarians write that the lexical meanings of some plurals differ from those of their singular opposites [[24]](#footnote-24), they simply compare different variants of a lexeme.

Sometimes variants of a lexeme may belong to the same lexico-grammatical subclass and yet have different forms of number opposemes.

Cf. brother (son of same parents) – brothers

brother (fellow member) – brethren

fish – fish (e.g. I caught five fish yesterday.)

fish – fishes ('different species', e. g. ocean fishes).

A collective noun is a word that designates a group of objects or beings regarded as a whole, such as «flock», «team», or «corporation». Although many languages treat collective nouns as singular, in others they may be interpreted as plural. In British English, phrases such as the committee are meeting are common (the so-called agreement in sensu «in meaning», that is, with the meaning of a noun, rather than with its form). The use of this type of construction varies with dialect and level of formality.

All languages are able to specify the quantity of referents. They may do so by lexical means with words such as English a few, some, one, two, five hundred. However, not every language has a grammatical category of number. Grammatical number is expressed by morphological and/or syntactic means. That is, it is indicated by certain grammatical elements, such as through affixes or number words. Grammatical number may be thought of as the indication of semantic number through grammar.

Languages that express quantity only by lexical means lack a grammatical category of number. For instance, in Khmer, neither nouns nor verbs carry any grammatical information concerning number: such information can only be conveyed by lexical items such as khlah 'some', pii-bey 'a few', and so on.

Most languages of the world have formal means to express differences of number. The most widespread distinction, as found in English and many other languages, involves a simple two-way number contrast between singular and plural (car / cars; child / children, etc.). Other more elaborate systems of number are described below.

**Conclusion**

In the conclusion of my work, I would like to say some words according the done investigation.

The main part of my work consists of following items:

* **«What is Noun»?,** as it is seen from the title in this part I gave the definition to the term noun.
* **«Semantical Characteristics of Nouns»** In this chapter I characterized English nouns from due their semantical meaning.
* **«Category of Case»** in this paragraph I described the category of case of English nouns
* **«Category of Number».** In this part I gave the definition to the category of number of English nouns, described different types of numbers of nouns in English

Standing on such ground I will add that investigation in the questions dealt with English adjectives is not finished yet, so we will continue it while writing our qualification work.

I hope that my course paper will arise the sincere interest of students and teachers to the problem of adjectives in contemporary English.

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2. The word proper is from Lat. proprius 'one's own'. Hence a proper name means one's own individual name, as distinct from a common name, that can be given to a class of individuals. The name common is from Lat. communes and means that winch is shared by several things or individuals possessing some common characteristic [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. See В. В. Виноградов, op. cit., p. 167. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. See M. Ganshina and N. Vasilevskaya. English Grammar. M., 1953, p. 31—32. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. B.S. Khaimovich, B.I. Rogovskaya. A Course in English Grammar. 1966 p. 14 [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. See Г. Н. Воронцова. Очерки по грамматике английского языка. М., 1960, р. 180. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. B.S. Khaimovich, B.I. Rogovskaya. A Course in English Grammar. 1966 p. 49 [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. "Double-genitive", in the terminology of Kruisinga. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. See А. И. Смирницкий, op. cit, p. 9. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. This among other reasons, accounts for the divergence of views concerning the number of cases in English. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Б. Л. Ильиш, op. cit., p. 99—100 [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. What we call a semi-notional word [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Б. А. Ильиш, op. cit., p. 100. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
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15. We find a similar interpretation of -'s in Л. С. Бархударов, Д. Д. Штелинг, op. cit., p. 42. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. А. И. Смирницкий, op. cit., § 60 [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
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22. Л. С. Бархударов, Д. А. Штелинг, ор. cit., р. 36. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. О. Jespersen. Essentials of English Grammar. Lnd., 1943, p. 208. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. B. Н. Жигадло, И. П. Иванова, Л. Л. Иофик, ор. cit., р. 30. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)