

Contrastive Analysis of the Grammatical Category NUMBER in Nouns in the English and Lithuanian Languages

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Abstract. Grammatical categories are not expected to be similar in two languages, thus, making problems for translators, interpreters, language learners and people on the whole enjoying the riches of foreign literature. This article deals with the grammatical category NUMBER in the English and Lithuanian languages. Number is distinguished in nouns, pronouns and verbs in English but in nouns, pronouns, verbs and adjectives in Lithuanian. The article primarily concerns nouns. It is not difficult to observe that the classification of nouns is not and cannot be similar in the two languages which may be the reason why the grammatical category under consideration is different in English and Lithuanian and may cause various misunderstandings. Therefore, characteristic features of the grammatical category NUMBER in both languages will be pointed out so that the differences are easily distinguishable making the understanding of certain grammatical phenomena a lot easier for the readers.

Since the basic objective is to find out the differences and similarities between the grammatical category NUMBER in two languages the basic research method to be applied is the contrastive one.

A Dictionary of Linguistics defines number as follows:

The grammatical distinction, common to the majority of the principal families or groups of languages, based on a morphological differentiation according as the speaker intends to designate one object, thing, etc., or more than one. The form designating one is called the singular, that designating more than one is the plural. Some languages have also distinct forms to designate two (dual), some even forms to designate three (trial) and even four (quatrial). On the other hand, certain languages attach no importance to number distinction and indicate number by special linguistic devices, only when especially emphasized or absolutely necessary for the proper interpretation of the utterance (1975: 149).

It is clear from the definition that number is a property of linguistic elements, namely parts of speech. Still, the clear characteristics of the grammatical category NUMBER in the English language should be stated so that one can easily distinguish it in an English utterance. The distinctive features of NUMBER are extracted from two basic sources: *A Grammar of Contemporary English* and *Collins Cobuild English Grammar*. On that ground a test is created for the particular analysis to help single out NUMBER from other component parts of words.

1. Number is found in nouns (*book / books*¹), verbs (*is going / are going*) and pronouns (*I / we*).
2. Number has two forms: singular and plural.
3. The singular category is unmarked morphologically. The plural category is sometimes marked by an inflection -s, e.g. *dog – dogs, song – songs*. But sometimes there is no inflection and the word is still plural, e.g. *cattle*. Also, words under consideration may possess singular and plural suppletive forms, e.g. *is / are*.

4. There is number concord between subjects and finite verbs in utterances. Concord is “defined as the relationship between two grammatical elements such that if one of them contains a particular feature (e.g. plurality) then the other also has to have that feature” (Quirk et al., 1972: 59). Number concord means that a singular subject requires a singular verb and a plural subject requires a plural verb, e.g. *the bird is flying / the birds are flying*² (Quirk et al., 1972: 165).

Since the article deals with the comparison of the grammatical category NUMBER in the English and Lithuanian languages, it is quite reasonable to look whether the defining features of this category differ in the two languages. As the two languages are highly different one should not expect that the characteristic features of the grammatical category NUMBER in English conform to the features of the same category in Lithuanian. For this reason, the criterial features of the category NUMBER, extracted from *Lithuanian Grammar, Lietuvių kalbos morfologija* and *Dabartinės lietuvių kalbos gramatika*, are listed below:

1. Number is found in nouns (*paukštis / paukščiai – bird / birds*), adjectives (*puikus / puikūs – splendid*), pronouns (*visas / visi – all*) and the first and second person forms of verbs (*aš kalbu / mes kalbame – I am speaking / we are speaking, tu kalbi / jūs kalbate – you are speaking*).
2. Number has two forms: singular and plural but some dialects of Lithuanian still possess distinct forms to designate duality, e.g. *abu, stalu*, etc. (Paulauskienė, 1994: 140-141).
3. Their plurality is marked morphologically by means of inflections, e.g. *pušis / pušys – pine / pines, didelis / dideli – big, tas / tie – this / these, valgau / valgome – I am eating / we are eating*, etc.
4. There is no number concord between the third person subjects and finite verbs in the Lithuanian language, e.g. *Vaikas auga / vaikai auga – a child is growing /*

¹ The examples with no references following them are created to illustrate the particular point in the text.

² The examples with references following them are taken from the indicated sources.

children are growing. But there is number concord between the first and second person subjects and verbs in Lithuanian, e.g. *aš dainuoju / mes dainuojame – I am singing / we are singing, tu dainuoji / jūs dainuojate – you are singing.* Besides, a singular noun always takes a singular adjective and a plural noun takes a plural adjective in a noun phrase, e.g. *aukštas kalnas / aukšti kalnai – a high mountain / high mountains*, i.e. nouns and adjectives are co-ordinated with respect to number.

It is natural that there are differences between the grammatical category NUMBER in English and Lithuanian. First of all, number is not distinguished in the third person form of finite verbs in the simple tenses in the Lithuanian language (*mergaitė skaito / mergaitės skaito*) although it is in English (*a girl is reading / girls are reading*), but it is distinguished in the first and second person form of a finite verb (*einu / einame – I am going / we are going, eini / einate – you are going*). Moreover, number is found in adjectives in Lithuanian (*šaunus / šaunūs*) but it is absent in adjectives of the English language. Consequently, there is number concord between a noun and an adjective in a noun phrase in the Lithuanian language (*šaunus pokylis / šaunūs pokyliai*) but not in English (*a great banquet / great banquets*). Second, both English and Lithuanian have two forms of number: singular and plural. The linguistic form to designate duality in the Lithuanian language is only used in some dialects and is no longer used in the standard language. Third, in both languages number is marked morphologically with the help of inflections.

A further survey will show that the grammatical category NUMBER in the English language differs from the same category in the Lithuanian language. It is probable that NUMBER in the same part of speech can be different in different languages. However, the focus will be put, exceptionally, on nouns since NUMBER is distinguished in this category both in English and Lithuanian and, perhaps, it is the biggest part of speech with respect to NUMBER.

Number in nouns in English and Lithuanian

It is necessary to look at the classification of nouns in both languages as it can show whether the same kinds of nouns possess the grammatical category NUMBER.

The classification of nouns in English

Noun is “a word which refers to people, things, and abstract ideas such as feelings and qualities”, e.g. *woman, Harry, guilt* (Collins Cobuild English Grammar, 1995: xxi). Different grammars differently introduce the classification of nouns. Since the focus is put on the grammatical category NUMBER, it is important to show how nouns are classified with respect to number. Thus, nouns are distinguished into variable and invariable. They are classified “according to whether they have a plural form, whether they need a determiner in front of them, and whether they occur with a singular or a plural verb when they are the subject of the verb” (Collins Cobuild English Grammar, 1995: 5). Variable nouns are always count

nouns and can change their number, e.g. *book – books*. Nouns invariable for number do not change their number and are either singular, e.g. *gold* or plural, e.g. *cattle* (Quirk et al., 1972: 165). They are often referred to as mass nouns. Invariable nouns are further subdivided into singular and plural invariable nouns. Five subtypes of singular and five subtypes of plural invariable nouns are presented in *A Grammar of Contemporary English* (Quirk et al., 1972: 167-172).

Table 1. Subtypes of invariable nouns in the English language

Singular	Plural
Concrete mass nouns, <i>gold, silver, beer</i>	Summation plurals <i>scissors, pyjamas, tweezers</i>
Abstract mass nouns, <i>music, dirt, homework</i>	Other ‘pluralia tantum’ in –s <i>annals, contents, manners</i>
Proper nouns <i>Henry, the Thames</i>	Some proper nouns <i>the Highlands, the Netherlands</i>
Invariable nouns ending in –s, e.g. a) <i>news</i> : Here is the 10 o’clock news. b) some diseases: <i>measles, mumps</i> c) subject names in –ics: <i>classics, phonetics, mathematics</i> d) some games: <i>billiards, bowls, fives</i> e) some proper nouns: <i>Athens, Brussels, Marseilles</i>	Invariable unmarked plurals <i>cattle, gentry, police</i>
Abstract adjectival heads, <i>the beautiful, the evil, the good</i>	Personal adjectival heads <i>the rich, the poor, the helpless</i>

It is, however, important to remember that a number of nouns are polysemantic and may with one meaning be categorised as count nouns, while with another meaning as uncount nouns. These are called nouns with dual membership. For example, the noun *lamb* may be either count noun or uncount noun depending on the meaning it bears. With the meaning *animal*, it is the count noun, while the meaning *meat* makes it the uncount noun (Quirk et al., 1972: 128-129). Consequently, with the former meaning it is the noun variable for number and with latter it is the noun invariable for number.

Only common nouns can be variable for number. Nouns invariable for number can be either common or proper. Common noun is “a noun used to refer to a person, thing, or substance”, e.g. *sailor, computer, glass* (Collins Cobuild English Grammar, 1995: xviii). Proper noun is “a noun which refers to a particular person, place, or institution”, e.g. *Nigel, Edinburgh, Christmas* (Collins Cobuild English Grammar, 1995: xxiii).

The classification of nouns in Lithuanian

The classification of nouns in the Lithuanian language differs a little from that in English. Nevertheless, nouns are also divided into nouns variable and invariable for number in Lithuanian. Like in English, nouns variable for number “are always count nouns which can occur with either singular or plural number”, e.g. *ąžuolas / ąžuolai – oak /*

oaks (Ambrazas et al., 1997a: 102). The distinctions of number are sometimes neutralised when count nouns are used to refer to the class of things. In this case their singular form is used generically, e.g. *Šiaip jau lūšis tokia pat bailė, kaip ir kiaunė / Normally, the lynx is as timid as the marten* (Ambrazas et al., 1997a: 102).

Among the nouns variable for number there are two groups of nouns that are more often used in the plural than in the singular:

- nouns which refer to things consisting of two equal parts, e.g. *batai* - shoes, *kojinės* - stockings, *šlepetės* - slippers, *pirštinės* - gloves, etc.
- nouns the plural of which denotes an accumulation of things rather than a certain number of discrete things, e.g. *rugiai* - rye, *garbanos* - curls, *pinigai* - money, etc. (Ambrazas et al., 1997a: 102-103).

Nouns invariable for number are either singular or plural and are referred to as *singularia tantum* and *pluralia tantum*, respectively. So far, there were no differences between the classification of nouns in English and Lithuanian. However, there is a little discrepancy between the subtypes of singular and plural invariable nouns in English and Lithuanian. Singularia and pluralia tantum are subdivided furthermore into the following subclasses in the Lithuanian language (Ambrazas et al., 1997a: 102-105).

Table 2. Subtypes of invariable nouns in the Lithuanian language

Singularia tantum	Pluralia tantum
Abstract mass nouns <i>Kantrybė / patience,</i> <i>meilė / love,</i> <i>grožis / the beauty</i>	Concrete nouns which refer to things consisting of two or more parts <i>Akiniai / glasses, kelnės / trousers,</i> <i>vartai / gate</i>
Collective nouns <i>Liaudis / people,</i> <i>jaunimas / youth,</i> <i>varguomenė / the poor</i>	Nouns which refer to an accumulation of certain things <i>Burtai / magic, lėšos / funds,</i> <i>santaupos / savings</i>
Concrete mass nouns <i>Pienas / milk,</i> <i>cukrus / sugar,</i> <i>varškė / curds</i>	Nouns denoting certain substances, dishes, waste or remnants <i>Sakai / resin, pelenai / ashes,</i> <i>pjuvenos / sawdust</i>
Proper nouns <i>Lietuva, Kaunas,</i> <i>Vaižgantas</i>	Nouns referring to actions, processes and states performed by several persons <i>Derybos / talks, riaušės / riot,</i> <i>rinkimai / election</i>
	Nouns denoting a time span, names of festivals, rites and celebrations <i>Atostogos / vacation, metai / year,</i> <i>Velykos / Easter</i>
	Names of some diseases <i>Niežai / scabies, tymai / measles,</i> <i>vėjaraupiai / chicken-pox</i>
	Names of the cardinal points <i>Pietūs / the South, Rytai / the East,</i> <i>Vakarai / the West</i>
	Some proper nouns <i>Kybartai, Šakiai, Šiauliai</i>

Like in the English language, variable nouns can be only common nouns with several exceptions as the investigation will demonstrate below. Invariable nouns can either be common or proper.

An important thing to note is that certain invariable nouns in the Lithuanian language may be variable in other languages and, in this particular case, in English as well. For instance, *rinkimai* is plural, therefore the noun invariable for number in Lithuanian, but in English it is variable for number since it may have both the singular and the plural forms: *election – elections*. The same applies to such nouns as *akėčios* (plural invariable) – harrow / harrows (variable), *vedybos* (plural invariable) – marriage / marriages (variable), *kautynės* (plural invariable) – battle / battles (variable) (Paulauskienė, 1989: 162).

The above illustration of noun subclasses manifests that, basically, the classification of nouns with respect to NUMBER is the same in the two languages under consideration. There is a little difference in the treatment of the subtypes of invariable nouns. There is a group of singular invariable nouns in the English language that end in *-s*. Among the five subtypes of these nouns there are names of some diseases, e.g. *measles, mumps, rickets, shingles*, etc. In the Lithuanian language the names of diseases that end in a plural inflection, e.g. *niežai, raupai, tymai, vėjaraupiai*, etc. are treated as plural and not as singular like in English. Also, some proper nouns that end in *-s* are treated as singular, e.g. *Athens, the United Nations, Flanders, Marseilles*. In Lithuanian they would be treated as plural invariable nouns, e.g. *Atėnai, Jungtinės Tautos*, etc. Besides, in Lithuanian there are no such subtypes of invariable nouns as *abstract adjectival heads* which are treated as singular invariable nouns and *personal adjectival heads* that are treated as plural invariable nouns in the English language. Nouns belonging to these groups in English fall into other subtypes of invariable nouns in the Lithuanian language, e.g. singular abstract adjectival heads like *the beautiful, the evil, the good* are treated as singular abstract mass nouns in Lithuanian and plural personal adjectival heads like *the rich, the poor, the helpless* fall into other subtypes of nouns (*the rich / turtuoliai* is the count noun, *the poor / vargšai* or *varguomenė* is treated as the count noun or the collective noun according to the translation, *the helpless / bejėgiai* is the count noun as well).

In order to see how grammatical category NUMBER is different in English and Lithuanian, several tests should be carried out. At all points, common countable nouns can be regarded as similar in English and Lithuanian with respect to the grammatical category NUMBER since they comply to all the necessary properties of the category mentioned above: they have singular and plural forms in both languages, e.g. *flower / flowers* (in English) and *gėlė / gėlės* (in Lithuanian) and their plurality is marked morphologically with the help of inflections. The only difference is in number concord. In English number concord between the subject and a verb has to be maintained, e.g. *the flower is in the vase / the flowers are in the vase*. In Lithuanian there is no number concord between the third person subject and a verb in an utterance, e.g. *gėlė yra vazoje / gėlės yra vazoje* according to the criterial features of the category in the Lithuanian language presented above. But the noun holds number concord with an adjective in a noun phrase, e.g. *graži gėlė / gražios gėlės – a beautiful flower / beautiful flowers*.

Number in invariable nouns in English

Since NUMBER has two forms in both languages under discussion, it is quite clear that invariable nouns which are either singular or plural do not comply to this condition. Nevertheless, it can be observed that plural invariable nouns possess more characteristic properties of the grammatical category NUMBER than singular invariable nouns do. Thus, the differences in invariable nouns with respect to number in the two languages will be checked according to the criterial features mentioned above.

Singular invariable nouns comply only with the first feature of NUMBER: they are nouns. Other characteristic features are not recognisable in singular invariable nouns, i.e. since the plural category is not formed in singular nouns (*gold* - **golds*, *music* - **musics*, etc.), it is not and cannot be marked morphologically. However, presumably, they always take a singular verb in an utterance.

Regardless of everything, several problems appear when a closer look is paid to each subtype of singular invariable nouns. Some concrete mass nouns may form the plural category and, in this case, they acquire a new meaning, e.g. *butter* is a concrete mass noun with the meaning *a pale yellow edible fatty substance made by churning cream and used as a spread or in cooking* (The Concise Oxford Dictionary, subsequently COD, 1995: 177). Yet, when the noun forms the plural *butters*, it means *kinds of butter*. The same applies to concrete mass nouns like *beer*, *bread*, *coffee*, *paper*, etc. Such nouns are reclassified as count nouns with a semantic shift involved “so as to denote quality: ‘kind of’, ‘type of’” (Quirk et al., 1972: 128). In this case, concrete mass nouns with a change of meaning form the plural, i.e. comply with the second characteristic property of the category NUMBER. Their plurality is marked morphologically by means of ending *-s*, e.g. *What breads have you got today?* (Quirk et al., 1972: 128), *I’d like three beers: Pilsner, Carlsberg and Tuborg*. In a restaurant: *Three coffees, please*, (meaning *three cups of coffee*) (Collins Cobuild English Grammar, 1995: 10) etc. which means that they comply with the third feature of NUMBER. They also bear number concord with verbs when they form the plural category, e.g. *There is a paper in our mail box today – there are two papers in our mail box today: Lietuvos Rytas and Respublika*. Such nouns can be treated as nouns with dual membership.

Another subtype of singular invariable nouns - proper nouns - presents an interesting case as well. Nouns like *Japan*, *London*, *Latin America*, etc. are unique references and, therefore, they never, under any conditions, form the plural category. In this case, they cannot be regarded as possessing the category NUMBER. Yet, there is a group of nouns denoting personal names, e.g. *Mary*, *Elizabeth*, *Andrew*, etc. among proper nouns. They should be unique references and, in this case, they would be invariable. But, in fact, there are lots of Marys, Elizabeths, Andrews and so on in our world. Their plurals do not sound strange in utterances like *I know two Bills. One is the painter and the other works as a butcher in the shop downstairs*. In cases like that names may be reclassified as countable. Thus, they possess all the four properties of the category NUMBER: nouns like these form both number forms by

means of inflections *-s* and bear number concord with verbs in utterances, e.g. *Bill is selfish - the two Bills I know are both selfish*.

Abstract mass nouns, e.g. *relief*, *pleasure*, *experience*, *difficulty*, etc. are similar to concrete mass nouns with respect to the category NUMBER, i.e. they do not form the plural. Nevertheless, like some concrete mass nouns, with a slight shift in meaning abstract mass nouns which are invariable may become count nouns, i.e. variable, e.g. the noun *experience* with the meaning *actual observation of or practical acquaintance with facts or events or knowledge or skill resulting from this* (COD, 1995: 474) is the uncount noun which means that it never forms the plural and never takes the indefinite article. On the other hand, when *experience* means *an event regarded as affecting one* (COD, 1995: 474) it is reclassified as the count noun: *He has had a very unpleasant experience today – He has had unpleasant experiences today* (Quirk et al., 1972: 129). The same applies to the noun *difficulty*: in an utterance like *Will they have much difficulty in their new jobs?* it is the mass noun while in an utterance like *They have had very few difficulties so far* (Quirk et al., 1972: 129) the noun *difficulty* is the count noun.

Invariable nouns ending in *-s* look as if they are plural but “are in fact uncount nouns” (Collins Cobuild English Grammar, 1995: 11). This means that they always take a singular verb, e.g. *Physics is fun. Billiards was gradually replaced by bridge. Measles is in most cases a relatively harmless disease* (Collins Cobuild English Grammar, 1995: 11). Therefore, they present a deceptive case. One can easily make a mistake deciding upon the number of such a noun. Nevertheless, it is indicated in the *Collins Cobuild English Grammar* that some of the nouns referring to subjects of study or activities “are occasionally used as plural nouns, especially when you are talking about a particular person’s work”, e.g. *His politics are clearly right-wing* (1995: 11). It is, thus, possible that nouns ending in *-s* and meaning singular can sometimes, under exceptional conditions, i.e. with a slight meaning change, form the plural category. In this case, the singular and the plural form is the same, i.e. ending in *-s*, which means that they do not comply with the third characteristic feature of NUMBER.

The last subtype of singular invariable nouns presented in *A Grammar of Contemporary English*, abstract adjectival heads, e.g. *the beautiful*, *the evil*, *the good*, etc. (Quirk et al., 1972: 168) is incompatible with the notion of number since they never form the plural category.

A rather different case is observed among plural invariable nouns. Summation plurals represent “tools and articles of two equal parts which are joined” and include nouns like *scissors*, *binoculars*, *pincers*, *knickers*, *tights*, *shorts*, *scales*, *tweezers*, *glasses*, *spectacles*, *trousers*, etc. (Quirk et al., 1972: 168). Basically, they are used only in the plural. However, there is a possibility to use some of these nouns in the singular form, i.e. they “can take the indefinite article, especially with premodification: *a garden shears*, *a curling-tongs*, etc” (Quirk et al., 1972: 168). They can also be made singular by means of *a pair of*, e.g. *a pair of spectacles*. Their plurality is marked morphologically by

means of ending *-s*: *binoculars, knickers, shorts, tights*, etc. When these nouns take the indefinite article, i.e. are used in the singular, in most cases their morphological form does not change, e.g. *a pair of pincers, a Versace flannels, etc.* There is number concord between subjects and verbs in English utterances. These nouns always require a plural verb, e.g. *These knickers are a bit too small for me*, except when they are used with *a pair of sth.*, e.g. *This pair of knickers is a bit too small for me*.

Other 'pluralia tantum' include nouns ending in *-s*. It is the type of nouns that occur only in the plural, nevertheless, "there are forms without *-s*, sometimes with change of meaning and sometimes merely in premodification" (Quirk et al., 1972: 169). This means that this type of plural invariable nouns is particularly full of exceptions. Of course, these nouns will comply only with some of the characteristic features of the grammatical category NUMBER. They are mostly used only in the plural form. However, there is a number of exceptions, e.g. pluralia tantum like *contents, premises, quarters, regards, spirits, tropics*, etc. (Quirk et al., 1972: 169-170) may have the singular form. But, in this case, these nouns change their meaning:

- a) When the plural noun *premises* means *a tract of land including its buildings* (Webster's Encyclopedic Unabridged Dictionary of the English Language, subsequently WEUD, 1996: 1136) it is treated as pluralia tantum and, therefore, is the number invariable noun. When it is used in the singular, and, thus, loses its inflection *-s*, *premise* means in logic *a proposition supporting or helping to support a conclusion* (WEUD, 1996: 1136). In such a case, *premise* is treated as the number variable noun.
- b) The noun *quarters* with the meaning *housing accommodations, as a place of residence, lodgings* (WEUD, 1996: 1176) is plural and does not allow the singular form, except when a semantic shift is involved. *Quarter* which means *a particular district of a city or town, esp. one generally occupied by a particular class or group of people: the Turkish quarter, an artists' quarter* (WEUD, 1996: 1176) is the noun variable for number.

There are plural nouns ending in *-s* which are more often used in the plural than in the singular. When they are used in the singular a semantic shift is very slight.

- c) The plural invariable noun ending in *-s* *contents* means *something that is contained: the contents of a box* (WEUD, 1996: 316). Yet, there is a case illustrated in *A Grammar of Contemporary English* where this particular noun can be used in the singular, but the meaning of which is very close to that of the noun in the plural: *the silver content of a coin* (Quirk et al., 1972: 169). The meaning of *content* in this utterance is *the amount of a constituent contained* (COD, 1995: 288). In both cases the basis of the meaning is the same – that which is contained. Only when the noun is used in the plural the emphasis is put on what is contained and when the noun is used in the singular the emphasis is put on how much of something is contained.

- d) A very interesting and important for the current investigation is the noun *spirits*. It belongs to the subtype of plural nouns ending in *-s* since it can be used in the plural with certain meanings. The noun is a particularly polysemantic word. Webster's Encyclopedic Unabridged Dictionary lists 26 meanings of the noun *spirit*. It is mostly treated as the number variable noun, e.g. when it refers to *a fairy, sprite, or elf* or when it refers to *an attitude or principle that inspires, animates, or pervades thought, feeling or action* (WEUD, 1996: 1371). Two meanings out of the listed 26 are associated with the plural category of the noun:

- *feelings or mood with regard to exaltation or depression: low spirits, good spirits;*
- *a strong distilled alcoholic liquor* (WEUD, 1996: 1371).

Presumably, these instances wouldn't cause any problems, however, it also happens that *spirits* is used in the singular form without digressing from the two meanings pointed above. Such cases are illustrated in *A Grammar of Contemporary English* with the following examples: *He showed a kindly spirit* and *Alcohol is a spirit* (Quirk et al., 1972: 170).

These examples manifest that nouns usually used in the plural may become singular. However, this transformation affects their meaning. However, pluralia tantum nouns end in *-s*, i.e. they are morphologically marked in their form. They are used in the singular with meaning change and, in this case, they drop the ending *-s* which means that their singular form is unmarked morphologically. There is number concord between pluralia tantum ending in *-s* and verbs in utterances, i.e. they always take a plural verb, e.g. *Coffee dregs are good for flowers in pots*. Nevertheless, when these nouns, in rare cases, are used in the singular they take a singular verb, e.g. *Alcohol is a spirit* (Quirk et al., 1972: 170).

Another subtype of plural nouns that is distinguished in *A Grammar of Contemporary English* includes some proper names. They are mostly used in the plural with some exceptions when they become premodifiers. They are used in the plural and do not have the singular form, e.g. *the Midlands* - **the Midland*, *the Netherlands* - **the Netherland* (Quirk et al., 1972: 171). Their plurality is marked by means of inflection *-s*, e.g. *the East Indies, the Highlands* (Quirk et al., 1972: 171). There is number concord between a plural proper noun and a verb in an utterance, e.g. *The Hebrides are islands off the west coast of Scotland* (COD, 1995: 628). Since plural proper nouns are never used in the singular they never take a singular verb.

Among plural nouns there is a group of nouns that are unmarked for number, e.g. *cattle, clergy, gentry, people, police, vermin, youth*, etc. (Quirk et al., 1972: 171). It is clear that unmarked invariable nouns do not possess some of the characteristic properties of the grammatical category NUMBER. They are used in the plural, as a rule, however, there might be several exceptions, e.g. *clergy* meaning *the body of all persons ordained for religious duties in the Christian Churches* (COD, 1995: 245) is usually treated as

the plural noun. On the other hand, it can sometimes be treated as singular, e.g. *The clergy is to blame for the birth control problem* (Quirk et al., 1972: 171). The plural noun *people* presents another extraordinary case. When this noun denotes *persons in general* (COD, 1995: 1013) it is treated as plural and always takes a plural verb, e.g. *People do not like rudeness*. However, when it is used to denote *persons composing a community, tribe, race, nation, etc.*, e.g. *the English people, a warlike people* (COD, 1995: 1013) it may be used in both forms: singular and plural, e.g. *People interest him more than things, but the English speaking peoples interest him the most*. In this case, it is the number variable noun.

These nouns are treated as plurals but their plurality is unmarked, i.e. they are always singular in form, but used with a plural verb (Oxford Student's Dictionary of Current English, 1984: 483). The exceptions include nouns like *people, clergy*, etc. since they may be treated as singulars. *People* may even take the suffix *-s* when used in the plural. However, in this case, their meaning is a little different from that when they are treated as plurals. There is number concord between a subject, an invariable unmarked plural, and a verb in an utterance, e.g. *The cattle are grazing*. Invariable unmarked plurals are an especially interesting case since their basic feature is that they are treated as plurals but do not have a suffix *-s* as an ending which is customary to all plurals. Even if these nouns do not form the singular they look like singulars while are treated like plurals.

Personal adjectival heads, nouns like *the rich, the helpless, the poor*, etc. (Quirk et al., 1972: 172) always take the definite article and a plural verb. Like abstract adjectival heads that are always used with the definite article but take a singular verb, personal adjectival heads never, under any conditions, change their number. Consequently, they do not possess other characteristic properties of the grammatical category NUMBER.

Number in invariable nouns in Lithuanian

Like in English, there is a subtype of abstract mass nouns among singular invariable nouns in the Lithuanian language, e.g. *kantrybė - patience, kūryba - creation, drąsa - courage, meilė - love*, etc. (Ambrazas et al., 1997a: 103). They are mostly used in the singular, but it is indicated in the *Lithuanian Grammar* that these nouns "can sometimes admit a plural form" and it is always connected with meaning change (Ambrazas et al., 1997a: 103-104), e.g. *skausmas - pain* is the abstract mass noun usually used in the singular, but when it is used in the plural it "refers to cases of concrete manifestation of a certain quality or action", e.g. *Ir vėl jai užima skausmai žadą - The pains take her breath again* (Ambrazas et al., 1997a: 104). The singular category of abstract mass nouns is unmarked while when they admit the plural form it is marked morphologically by means of inflection change: *skausmas / skausmai - pain / pains, švelnumas / švelnumai - amiability / amiabilities* (Ambrazas et al., 1997a: 104). There is no number concord between the third person subject and a verb: *skausmas užima žadą / skausmai užima žadą*. However, there is number concord between a noun and an adjective in a noun phrase, e.g. *nepakeliamas skausmas /*

nepakeliami skausmai - unbearable pain / unbearable pains.

Collective singular nouns like *liaudis - people, aukštuomenė - nobility, profesūra - professors, jaunimas - youth, varguomenė - the poor*, etc. (Ambrazas et al., 1997a: 103) offer quite a different picture. They are used in the singular and do not admit the plural form. There is number concord between a noun and an adjective in a noun phrase, e.g. *šiūolaikinis jaunimas - modern youth*, i.e. a collective singular noun will always take a singular adjective. Collective nouns might be considered as incompatible with the notion of NUMBER since they do not admit the plural category. On the other hand, these nouns include quantity in their meaning. In the English language these nouns are treated as invariable unmarked plurals (*people - liaudis, youth - jaunimas*) or as personal adjectival heads (*the poor - varguomenė*) which are considered plural. In Lithuanian quantity is expressed by means of the singular category and not with the help of plurality as in English.

Concrete mass nouns, e.g. *auksas - gold, molis - clay, varškė - curds*, etc. (Ambrazas et al., 1997a: 103) are usually used in the singular, but sometimes, like abstract mass nouns, they can admit the plural category. This particularly applies to the names of substances that in the plural refer "to different kinds of products", e.g. *mineraliniai vandenys - mineral waters, įvairios druskos - various salts, gintarai - amber jewelry*, etc. (Ambrazas et al., 1997a: 104). Sometimes they can be used in the plural "to indicate a great amount or a great intensity of something" e.g. *devyni prakaitai - nine sweats, kraujai - bloods*, etc. (Ambrazas et al., 1997a: 104). Their singular category is unmarked, while when they admit the plural form it is marked morphologically with the help of inflections, e.g. *vanduo - vandenys, druska - druskos, prakaitas - prakaitai*, etc. There is number concord between a concrete mass noun and an adjective in a noun phrase, e.g. *mineralinis vanduo - mineraliniai vandenys, devintas prakaitas - devyni prakaitai*, etc.

The last subtype of singular invariable nouns includes many proper nouns that are used only in the singular, e.g. *Lietuva, Kaunas, Vaižgantas*, etc. (Ambrazas et al., 1997a: 103). They never admit the plural category. Therefore, they always take a singular adjective in a noun phrase, e.g. *graži Lietuva, gimtasis Kaunas*, etc.

Personal names are included in this subtype of singular invariable nouns, however, just like in the English language, names may be countable, i.e. they admit the plural category which is marked morphologically with the help of inflections, e.g. *Marija - Marijos, Jonas - Jonai, Martynas - Martynai*.

Plural invariable nouns in the Lithuanian language are not as interesting as in the English language since they "are incompatible with the meaning of number" (Ambrazas et al., 1997a: 105). Therefore, there is no need to test every subtype of plural nouns with the help of characteristic features of the grammatical category NUMBER. They are used only in the plural and never admit the singular form, e.g. **akėčia, *burtas*, etc. Their plurality is marked by means of inflections, e.g. *akėčios - harrow, burtai - magic, derybos - talks, Kybartai* (Ambrazas et al., 1997a: 104-105).

105). Since they are always used in the plural they take a plural adjective in a noun phrase, e.g. *gražūs marškiniai - nice shirt, didelės išlaidos - big expenses, žali dažai - green paint*, etc.

However, plural nouns may denote countable and uncountable things. Plural nouns like *kelnės - trousers, žirklys - scissors, atostogos - vacation, vestuvės - wedding* denote countable things meanwhile nouns like *klijai - glue, miltai - flour, dujos - gas, dažai - paint* denote uncountable things (Ambrazas et al., 1997a: 105). Pluralia tantum is subdivided into eight subtypes. Five subtypes include plural nouns denoting uncountable things:

- nouns referring to an accumulation or an amassment of certain things: *burtai - magic, lėšos - funds*, etc.
- nouns denoting certain substances, dishes, waste or remnants, e.g. *pelenai - ashes, riebalai - fat*, etc.
- names of some diseases, e.g. *niežai - scabies, tymai - measles, vėjaraupiai - chicken-pox*, etc.
- names of the cardinal points, e.g. *Pietūs - the South, Rytai - the East*, etc.
- some proper nouns, e.g. *Kybartai, Šiauliai*, etc.
- Three other subtypes include plural nouns denoting countable things:
- concrete nouns which refer to things consisting of two or more parts, e.g. *vieneri akiniai / dveji akiniai - a pair of glasses / two pairs of glasses, vieneri vartai / treji vartai - one gate / three gates*, etc.
- nouns referring to actions, processes and states performed or experienced by several persons, e.g. *vieneri rinkimai / treji rinkimai - one election / three elections, vienerios skyrybos / trejos skyrybos - one divorce / three divorces*, etc.
- nouns denoting a time span, names of festivals, rites and celebrations, e.g. *vieneri metai / penkeri metai - a year / five years, vieni priešpiečiai / dveji priešpiečiai - a forenoon / two forenoons*, etc. (Ambrazas et al., 1997a: 104-105).

It is indicated in the *Lithuanian Grammar* that nouns denoting countable things can be used in reference to one thing, e.g. *Paduok man žirkles - Give me the scissors* and

more than one thing, e.g. *Nusipirkau dvejas žirkles - I've bought two pairs of scissors* (Ambrazas et al., 1997a: 105).

It is interesting to notice that number in English and Lithuanian singular invariable nouns do not differ much. Mainly, the differences appear due to different classification of singular nouns in English and Lithuanian.

The conclusion might be drawn that the differences in the classification of nouns also influence differences in number in English and Lithuanian nouns. Nouns are variable and invariable for number in both languages. However, there are nouns that are variable in English but invariable in Lithuanian. Subtypes of invariable nouns also differ, e.g. Lithuanian names of diseases that end in a plural inflection are treated as plurals while in English they are treated as singular invariable nouns. Alternatively, some proper nouns ending in *-s* are treated as singular in English even if their inflection is plural, but as plural in Lithuanian. Furthermore, the Lithuanian grammar does not distinguish such subtypes of nouns as abstract and personal adjectival heads. These nouns fall into other subtypes of nouns in Lithuanian.

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Anglų ir lietuvių kalbų daiktavardžių gramatinės SKAIČIAUS kategorijos kontrastyvinė analizė

Santrauka

Šiame straipsnyje nagrinėjami anglų ir lietuvių kalbų daiktavardžių gramatinės SKAIČIAUS kategorijos skirtumai. Kadangi kalbos skiriasi, skiriasi ir jų gramatinės kategorijos, o tai gali sukelti įvairių nesusipratimų kalbos vartotojams, ypač jos besimokantiejiems. Straipsnyje lyginamos daiktavardžių klasifikacijos bei nurodomi skaičiaus kategorijai būdingi bruožai abiejose kalbose. Nors jie ir nėra labai skirtingi, tačiau atliktas lyginamasis kiekvienos daiktavardžių rūšies, tiek skaičiais kaitomų, tiek nekaitomų, tyrimas, paremtas šiai kategorijai būdingais bruožais, patvirtina, kad skirtumus anglų ir lietuvių kalbų skaičiaus kategorijoje greičiausiai įtakoja ir skirtinga daiktavardžių klasifikacija.

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