

## Number Categories in Abstract Nouns

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**Abstract.** Abstract nouns are uncountable from the point of view of number. In Lithuanian nouns referring to actions are derived from verbs by means of suffixes and endings in the same way as nouns referring to qualities are derived from adjectives. All nouns referring to actions and qualities are, in principle, uncountable and singular, except a few nouns which possess a plural ending. Yet, there is always the potentiality of every noun to form the plural. Thus, certain abstract nouns referring to actions and qualities may be used in the plural, or in other words, may be treated as countable nouns in Lithuanian. The paper focuses on the possibility of the plural forms of abstract nouns referring to actions and qualities and on the meanings acquired in the plural since often these are different from the meanings in the singular. English equivalents of Lithuanian nouns are also taken into consideration to determine whether abstract nouns may also be treated as both uncountable and countable and whether the meanings acquired in the plural in English are similar to those acquired by the same nouns in Lithuanian.

**Key words:** *number, singular, plural, abstract, concrete.*

### Introduction

Both Lithuanian and English possess nouns with only one form of number. This group of nouns is one of the most complicated since the same noun may be treated as countable with one meaning and as uncountable with another.

Classification of such nouns is not very simple. Sometimes Lithuanian grammars attribute concrete plural nouns (*scissors, glasses, etc.*) to uncountable nouns (Ambrazas 1997: p67, 1999: p581, 2006: p104; Holvoet 2006: p88; etc.) Yet, such nouns actually refer to countable things. They can form the semantic opposition of 'one'/'more than one'. There is only one form for both numbers. Nouns with only one form of number are more complex than that. Next to the forms referring to uncountable things, there is also the possibility of a countable form together with inflection and word composition. Concrete countable nouns may appear next to abstract nouns, e.g. *kalėjimas* (uncountable) – *imprisonment* and *kalėjimai/ kalėjimai* – *prison*, *pūdymas* (uncountable) – *rotting, putrefaction* and *pūdymas/ pūdymai* – *fallow*. On the other hand, it is impossible to make the opposite number form of plural nouns like *žirklys* – *scissors, akiniai* – *glasses, etc.* However, true singular or plural nouns may be used with the other number form which then acquires a slightly different or stylistic meaning. There are a lot greater number of countable nouns forming the centre of the category than uncountable nouns. Therefore, every noun possessing only one form of number verges on either the singular or the plural nouns and does not ruin the dichotomy of the category of number.

Presumably, what depends upon the semantics is common to all languages. Assuming that the category of number is associated with the countability, uncountable things, phenomena and states are then universal for the people speaking English, Lithuanian or any other languages. Only surface forms are different: some languages have more complicated forms of uncountable nouns, others have simpler means of expression. The so-called plural nouns that refer to concrete countable things may not be universal across

languages. For example, a certain object may be denominated by a noun possessing both forms of number in one language, but by a noun possessing only a plural form in another language, e.g. *Lith. durys*, but *Eng. door/ doors*.

The true uncountable nouns are abstract nouns, nouns referring to materials, liquids, chemical elements, collective nouns and individual names. What all these nouns have in common is the impossibility to count the things that are referred to by them. Yet, the opposition of *abstract/ concrete* is also possible among them. Abstract nouns are the most complicated among all the uncountable nouns. Therefore, the aim of the paper is to analyse abstract nouns in Lithuanian paying special attention to the potentialities of their plural forms. Comparison of the grammatical category of number of abstract nouns in Lithuanian and English is also of importance. Dabartinės lietuvių kalbos žodynas (2000), as the only possible dictionary of current Lithuanian, has been used to pick out, classify and count all abstract nouns except those whose composition is regular. 2116 abstract nouns of irregular composition have been found in the dictionary and used for the current analysis. Out of them 716 nouns are of foreign origin. The nouns have been classified according to the most productive suffixes and endings by means of which they are derived from verbs, adjectives and other nouns (see tables in the appendix). Their English equivalents have been searched for in order to determine whether the number forms coincide in the two languages under analysis.

### The general characteristics of abstract nouns

Abstract nouns are formed by secondary means withdrawing the actions from their doers and eliminating the modality (Paulauskienė 1994: p75). A noun formed from a verb designates an action or a state without any grammatical features typical of a verb. Such action which has been abstracted is perceived as an item, an independent phenomenon, possessing its own attributes (e.g. *greitas važiavimas* – *fast movement, prastas mokymas* – *poor teaching, etc.*) (Paulauskienė 1994: p75).

In the same way qualities that belong to a certain item and are not associated with other items are abstracted; however, only those qualities that are signified by qualitative adjectives can be abstracted (Paulauskienė 1994: p85). A quality can also be withdrawn from an item and then interpreted as an item itself and what is independent in the underlying structure becomes dependent during the process, (e.g. *gražus vaikas* (a beautiful child) → *vaiko gražumas, grožis* (the beauty of a child) (Paulauskienė 1994: p75).

Nouns referring to abstracted actions, states and properties are different from the point of view of number. In fact, all such nouns are usually singular, but the plural form may also be constructed when necessary. For example, *eisena* (step, walking), *rašysena* (handwriting), *šukuosena* (hairstyle) refer to a certain manner of an action. The plural of such nouns may demonstrate the countability and show the opposition of *abstract/ concrete*. Of course, underlying words referring to states and properties form the plural less frequently than those referring to actions.

Since the difference of lexical meaning may appear when making the plural from the singular both in the centre and the periphery of the category of number, linguists have long been discussing the nature of the category. Some have suggested to treat number as a compositional category (Дурново 2001; Фортунатов 1956; Кузнецов 1961; Арутюнова 1970). Others have treated number as an intermediary lexical-grammatical category (Булыгина 1970). Yet, there were linguists who claimed it to be a classifiable category. In their opinion, all the nouns have to be divided into two basic groups according to whether they refer to countable or uncountable things. Only then nouns have to be classified further indicating the cases of a certain opposition between the singular and the plural (Милославский 1981).

In grammar, classification, word composition and inflection are inseparable. First, all the words are divided into big complicated grammatical classes called parts of speech that differ from each other according to the meaning, form and function in the sentence. Inside the inflectional parts of speech there are all sorts of categories. For example, the categories of gender, transitivity, voice, aspect are completely classifiable. Verbal forms are inflectional as well as compositional and classifiable. Thus, a complicated phenomenon cannot be called neither exceptionally lexical, nor classifiable, nor inflectional (Кацнельсон 1972: p27).

Among uncountable nouns one may find classificatory, inflectional and compositional features. These nouns are uncountable only according to the first basic meaning. It seems that only the centre of the category does not cause any problems; however, analysis of the periphery of the category becomes more and more complex. In fact, nouns with only one form of number can also be divided into singular and plural, countable and uncountable; yet, what is most important here is the *abstract/ concrete* opposition and how abstract nouns may become concrete and countable.

## 1. Abstract nouns referring to actions

In principle, nouns referring to actions signify abstract things that are uncountable. In this case, such nouns should only possess the singular form. However, this is not so in Lithuanian.

Classification may also be carried out for abstracted nouns referring to actions. Some actions are actually pure abstract nouns with only one possible number form, e.g. *dora* – honour, *gėda* – shame, *ošimas* – sighing, *augimas* – growth, *puvimas* – rot, decay, *tingėjimas* – idleness, *laziness*, *trukmė* – duration, etc. However, certain abstract nouns may form the plural referring to iteration and intensity, e.g. *girgždesys* – *girgždesiai* (squeak, crunch), *skambesys* – *skambesiai* (ring), *sopulys* – *sopuliai* (pain), etc. Yet, the case is even more complicated. It is possible to make an abstract uncountable noun and a homonymous countable noun referring to a concrete thing from the same verb, e.g. *prašyti* (ask) → *prašymas* (the action of asking) and *prašymas* (a document); *skelbti* (announce) → *skelbimas* (the action of announcement) and *skelbimas* (notice), etc. Such are two different nouns: abstracts are uncountable and nouns referring to concrete things are variable in terms of number (*prašymas/ prašymai*, *skelbimas/ skelbimai*, *kalėjimas/ kalėjimai*) since they refer to countable things. This is not necessarily so in English: there are different lexical items to name such things. Yet, sometimes it is possible to trace the connection between two lexical items through word structure. For example, imprisonment and prison share the same stem. However, only in Lithuanian are such nouns homonymous. If the underlying verb refers to an action which is independent from the agent's will, then this action may be repeated and counted. Therefore, nouns made from such verbs are countable (*ėjimas* – *ėjimai* (move – moves), *dūžis* – *dūžiai* (stroke – strokes), *smūgis* – *smūgiai* (kick – kicks), etc.) in the same way as nouns referring to countable things, e.g.

*Būdamas žaidėjas, kokius pirmiausia darytumėte ėjimus?*  
(DLKT)

*Vienam akies mirksny pavirs į akmenį ir tik savo mirtimi atneš jie laimę kitiems* (J. Biliūnas)

Derivatives of all suffixes or endings are specific from the point of view of composition of number forms and inflection. It is best to reveal the occurrence of the plural and its relation to the singular by analysing nouns referring to actions according to the most productive types of composition. Theorists of word composition claim that a certain type of composition is characterised by: 1) the compositional meaning; 2) the lexical grammatical nature of the underlying word; and 3) the compositional formative (Urbutis 1978: p249). In fact, the compositional meaning is this base that may be used to estimate the potentialities of the plural forms next to the singular nouns referring to abstracted actions.

### 1.1. Actions signified by the derivatives of suffixes

Abstract nouns may be composed by means of different suffixes. Lithuanian Grammar lists more than 70 suffixes. (Ulvydas 1965: p289-303). However, they are of different productivity.

**a. Nouns referring to actions of regular composition from the suffixes -imas and -ymas.** These are the most productive. It is possible to make as many abstract nouns as there are verbs in Lithuanian (Ulvydas 1965: p289). Lithuanian grammar does not amply describe the composition of homonymous abstract nouns. It is only indicated that certain derivatives of the suffixes -imas and -ymas tend to become concrete (Ulvydas 1965:

p289). Of course, this is not the same as parallel composition of an abstract and concrete noun from the same underlying verb. Three cases of meaning concretization are listed in Lithuanian grammar:

- the result of an action (rarely – of an object), e.g. *arimas* (plough), *audimas* (texture), *gėrimas* (drink, beverage), *išradimas* (invention), *skynimas* (clearing), *vertimas* (translated text), etc.
- the place of an action, e.g. *išėjimas* (exit), *įvažiavimas* (entrance), *kalėjimas* (prison), *sulenkimas* (fold), etc.
- a certain document, e.g. *įgaliojimas* (letter of attorney), *liudijimas* (certificate), *kvietimas* (invitation card), etc.

It is claimed in the Lithuanian Grammar that concrete derivatives do not interfere with the usage of the true abstract nouns composed by means of the suffix *-imas*, and, if necessary, they can be easily composed of the same verbs (Ulvydas 1965: p289). However, this is not exactly so. The grammar states that abstract nouns become concrete and it then adds that abstract nouns may be also composed from the same verbs. This actually acknowledges parallel composition. However, first abstract nouns are made from verbs through regular composition, and, only if necessary, one can compose concrete number variable nouns referring to countable things, i.e. possessing both the singular and the plural with no change in lexical meaning. The composition of abstract nouns is regular; meanwhile, concrete nouns cannot be made from all verbs. This means that not all abstract nouns have a countable equivalent with a concrete meaning in Lithuanian. For example, *ošimas*, *švietimas*, *buvimas*, *laukimas*, *augimas*, etc. can never acquire concrete meanings and possess plural forms. Yet, sometimes such nouns may become concrete if used metaphorically, e.g. *gyvenimas* (home-stead, grange):

*Dilbaitė pirm vestuvių sakė, jog ne už Tupikio tekanti, bet už jo gyvenimo* (Žemaitė).

The suffix *-ymas* and *-imas* are actually variants of the same suffix because *-ymas* is used when there is the suffixal element *-y* – in the stem of the verbal infinitive, e.g. *raš-y-ti* (write) – *rašymas* (writing), *praš-y-ti* (ask) – *prašymas* (asking), etc. Next to abstract derivatives of this suffix there also may be countable nouns referring to concrete things, e.g.

*prašymas* – *prašymai* (a document), *pūdymas* – *pūdymai* (fallow land), *grendymas* – *grendymai* (threshing-floor), *pasimatymas* – *pasimatymai* (date), etc.

The plural of the nouns referring to actions may also imply iteration and intensity. In such a case, the process already indicates word composition and not inflection, e.g. *dūrimas* – *dūrimai*, *pareiškimas* – *pareiškimai*, *tardymas* – *tardymai*, etc.

Many, if not all, equivalents of Lithuanian nouns derived by means of the suffixes *-imas* and *-ymas* referring to actions can be derived from verbs by means of the suffix *-ing* in English, e.g.

*augimas* – growing, *gėrimas* – drinking, *grėžimas* – boring, *kentėjimas* – suffering, *malimas* – milling, *mušimas* – lashing, *prašymas* – asking, *sukimas* – turning, *vežimas* – shipping, etc.

Some of them have synonyms derived from verbs by means of other endings, e.g. *growing* = *growth*, *shipping* = *shipment*, etc. English equivalents of Lithuanian nouns that may also refer to a more concrete concept than action usually are lexically related to the verb from which nouns referring to actions are derived, e.g.

*arimas* – ploughing (action) and plough (ploughed land), *gėrimas* – drinking (action) and drink (beverage), *įėjimas* – entering (action) and entrance (a door or a gate), *išradimas* – inventing (action) and invention (created thing), etc.

Yet, this is not a regular process in English. In some cases there are separate lexical items in English to refer to an action and a result of an action which are signified by the same word in Lithuanian, e.g. *audimas* – weaving and texture, etc.

**b. Nouns derived from verbs by means of the suffix *-tis*.** 53 true invariable abstract nouns have been found in the dictionary of current Lithuanian. These nouns never make the plural form. They may be both uncountable, e.g. *ateitis*, *atmintis*, *būtis*, *praeitis*, *rimtis*, *slinktis*, *tartis*, *trintis*, etc. and concrete number variable nouns referring to countable things, e.g. *kliūtis*/ *kliūtys*, *stotis*/ *stotys*, *užduotis*/ *užduotys*, etc. There are also cases when the plural differs from the singular by acquiring the meaning of intensity and iteration. On this understanding, their plural is the result of word composition, e.g. *išgąstis*/ *išgąščiai*, *išpažintis*/ *išpažintys*, *pyktis*/ *pykčiai*, *sukaktis*/ *sukaktys*, etc.

Their equivalents in English are mostly singular, too, except *buitis* – mode of life/ modes of life which is countable, and *dobstis* – worn things, which takes the plural form and is translated using a descriptive method. Of course, a number of these equivalents can sometimes form the plural in English, e.g. *memory*/ *memories*, *defence*/ *defences*, *death*/ *deaths*, etc.

*She tried to tell herself no, but throughout the day his smiles and glances, the way he touched her hand, were steadily, stealthily, wearing down her defences.* (BNC)

*I heard there'd been a death in the family.* (LDCE)

Yet, the meaning referring to an uncountable item is usually given as the first one in English dictionaries. In those cases when there is the possibility of a countable noun in English, the noun acquires a more concrete meaning.

**c. Nouns derived by means of the suffix *-esys*.** 92 Lithuanian nouns of this suffix have been analysed. Almost all of them refer to actions or states and are mainly singular nouns, i.e. uncountable, e.g.

*ilgesys*, *klegesys*, *liūdesys*, etc. However, word building may also be observed, e.g. *čiulbesys*/ *čiulbesiai*, *dundesys*/ *dundesiai*, *skambesys*/ *skambesiai*, *šlamesys*/ *šlamesiai*, *virpesys*/ *virpesiai*, etc.

The plural of these nouns is never used together with the numerals since more than half of the derivatives created by means of the suffix *-esys* refer to imitative words. Their plural only refers to initiated and continually repeated sounds or their intensity, e.g.

*Ir medžių šlamėjimas pavasarį kitoks, ir paukščių čiuibesiai, gyvulių riksmas, višelių kudakavimas... (DLKT)*

*Seniai jau kalbos ir murmesiai tokie tarp žmonių klaidžioja, nuo tų Jurginių ar dar anksčiau. (DLKT)*

One or two concrete nouns derived by means of the suffix *-esys* like *-ėdesys* belong to uncountable nouns. The plural of this noun is impossible although it might refer to a variety (compare *valgis* – *valgiai*: *Stalas buvo nukrautas įvairiais valgiais* ir gėrimais).

More than half of the equivalents of such nouns in English are singular, e.g.

*barškesys* – rattle, *bruzdesys, burzdesys* – bustle, hustle, *čiauškesys, čirškesys* – twitter, chatter, *čiužesys* – rustle, *klegesys, kliegesys* – clamour, uproar, *krabždesys, krebždesys* – scratch, *šiugždesys, šlamesys* – rustle, *šnibždesys* – whisper, etc.

Certain English dictionaries mark a few of these nouns that refer to imitative words as countable nouns usually used in the singular, e.g.

*bimbessys* – buzz, *burzgesys* – burr, *dundesys* – boom, *dūzgesys* – whirr, *kargulys, kargždesys* – wheeze, *gaudesys* – hum, *tratesys* – roll, *urzgesys* – snarl, etc.

Other English equivalents of the Lithuanian nouns referring to imitative words are classified as countable, e.g.

*braškesys* – crackle, *cypesys, girgždesys* – squeak, *čerškesys* – screech, *čiuibesys* – chirrup, *dardesys* – rumble, *gagesys* – cackle, *karkesys, kranždesys* – croak, *kaukesys* – howl, *švilpesys* – whistle, *tirtesys* – shake, quiver, *žvengesys* – neigh, etc.

However, the dictionaries usually present examples with the singular form of the noun, e.g.

*We could hear the rumble of distant guns/ thunder. (CALD)*

*She listened to the whistle of the wind through the trees. (CALD)*

English equivalents of other Lithuanian nouns that are derivatives of the suffix *-esys* are all singular, e.g.

*blizgesys* – shine, brilliance, gloss, *domesys* – interest, *džiugesys* – joy, *ilgesys* – longing, *kliedesys* – delirium, *liūdesys* – sorrow, sadness, *svaigesys* – dizziness, giddiness, *tvaskesys* – shimmer, *žavesys* – glamour, etc.

**d. Nouns derived by means of the suffix *-ulys*.** Such Lithuanian nouns usually refer to physiological processes and states, e.g. *drebulys, dusulys, jaudulys, kosulys, niežulys, siautulys, snaudulys, žagsulys, etc.* In principle, these nouns are only singular. Rarely, the plural form of certain nouns may be used to refer to the intensity of the state. Yet, this plural meaning is incompatible with the counting, i.e. with the definiteness of number, e.g. *traukulys/traukuliai, peršulys/peršuliai, sopulys/sopuliai, etc.* Such a process is actually word

building and both the singular and the plural nouns are uncountable.

68 Lithuanian nouns derived by means of the suffix *-ulys* have been analysed. Their English equivalents are mostly singular, e.g.

*alpulys* – faint, *dusulys* – choking, suffocation, *gaižulys* – rancidity, rancidness, *kaitulys* – heat or giddiness, dizziness, *kartulys* – bitterness, *katulys* – tickle, *kimulys* – hoarseness, *laiškulys* – sharpness, *maudulys* – displeasure, *niežulys* – itching, *nykulys* – dullness, *snaudulys, snūdulys* – dormancy, *sprangulys, springulys* – choking, *troškulys* – thirst, *tvaikulys* – giddiness, dizziness, *vaitulys* – moaning, *vėmulys* – vomit, sickness, etc.

A few of these are marked in the dictionary as countable nouns usually used in the singular form, e.g. *dvokulys* – stink, stench, *spjaululys* – spit, *šiurpulys* – shudder. Several more may be treated as countable or uncountable, e.g. *geidulys* – lust, *graudulys* – sorrow, *nirtulys* – rage, *pavydulys* – jealousy, *raivulys* – stretch, *siautulys* – rampage, etc. Usually there is a difference in meaning between their singular and plural form which, like in Lithuanian, suggests word building, not inflection. The acquired shade of meaning usually is more concrete, e.g.

*The sorrows of her earlier years gave way to joy in later life. (CALD)*

*Instead, he pursues his lusts, marries late and then dies in pursuit of that lust, leaving Scotland without an heir. (BNC)*

Only less than 20 percent of the English equivalents of the Lithuanian nouns derived by means of the suffix *-esys* are variable in terms of number, e.g.

*čiaudulys* – sneeze/ sneezes, *jaudulys* – thrill/ thrills, *kosulys* – cough/ coughs, *kušulys* – whisper/ whispers, *raugulys, riaugulys* – belch/ belches, *žiovalys* – yawn/ yawn, etc.

Two of them are usually used in the plural form, e.g. *žagsulys, žagulys* – hiccoughs or hiccups.

**e. Nouns derived by means of the suffix *-smas*.** The dictionary of current Lithuanian lists 37 nouns that refer to actions created by means of this suffix, e.g. *džiaugsmas, geismas, keiksmas, kenksmas, riksmas, skausmas, trenksmas, veiksmas, verksmas, etc.* These nouns usually possess the plural forms; however, this composition is not inflection of number forms. Therefore, both the underlying singular noun and its plural are treated as uncountable. The noun in the plural usually possesses the meaning of intensity or iteration.

*Ak niekingi jūs džiaugsmiai šiltos vasarėlės. (K. Donelaičius)*

*Todėl būrų verksmai bei dejonės nebeturi prasmės ir netgi yra žalingi, nes atitraukia nuo darbų. (DLKT)*

Only one or two such nouns remind of the inflectional process, e.g. *veiksmas* – *veiksmiai*.

*Du neteisėti ir neteisingi veiksmiai neištaiso padėties. (DLKT)*

Out of 37 analysed derivatives created by means of the suffix *-smas* the majority (27 nouns) of their equivalents in English are also singular, e.g.

*bėgsmas* – running, *gausmas* – humming, *kęsmas* – suffering, *kntauksmas* – caterwauling, *tapšmas* – becoming, *verksmas* – weeping, crying, etc.

The ending *-ing* is quite usual since some English equivalents are also derivatives from verbs. However, other endings like *-ness* or *-ment* are possible, too, e.g. *tirpsmas* – numbness, *vyksmas* – movement, etc. Several English equivalents may also be treated as countable under certain conditions, e.g. *siusmas*, *šėlsmas* – rampage, *skausmas* – pain, etc. As it has been mentioned above, they slightly change their meaning, which usually becomes more concrete.

Less than one third of analysed English equivalents (10 nouns) are countable nouns, e.g.

*kauksmas* – howl, *klyksmas* – scream, *kranksmas* – croak, *kryksmas* – cackle, *kriksmas* – scream, *kvyksmas*, *žviegsmas* – squeal, etc.

It has been noticed that those English equivalents that are variable in terms of number are not derivatives.

**f. Nouns derived by means of the suffix *-sena*.** They refer to the way how an action is performed, e.g. *eisenā*, *elgsena*, *galvosena*, *gyvensena*, *kalbėsena*, *laikysena*, *mąstysena*, *rašysena*, *virtosena*, etc. All such nouns are singular in Lithuanian, except, for example, the derivative *šukuosena* which may become concretised and may refer not only to an action, but also to the result (object) of an action which allows it to be variable in terms of number: *šukuosena* – *šukuosenos*, e.g.

*Atrodo, menka detalė, tačiau sukuriama tarsi trys skirtingos šukuosenos.* (DLKT)

35 English equivalents of the Lithuanian nouns derived by means of the suffix *-sena* have been analysed. The majority of them are singular in English, too, e.g.

*eiliuosena* – versification, *valgysena* – eating, *gydysena* – healing, *gyvensena* – lifestyle, *josenā* – riding, *judėsena* – motion, *laikysena* – posture, *rašysena* – handwriting, *statysena* – construction, *šoksena* – dancing, *tarsena* – diction, *vaipysena* – grinning, *vaizduosena* – depiction, etc.

As the nouns under analysis are derivatives of the suffix in Lithuanian, so they are derivatives of certain suffixes like *-ing* or *-ion* in English. A few of these nouns, like *depiction*, *lifestyle*, *motion*, *posture*, etc. may occasionally be treated as countable, thus, acquiring a new, usually more concrete, shade of meaning, e.g.

*We continued to contort our limbs into improbable postures when Vincent was directly overseeing us.* (BNC)

*Regular exercise is part of a healthy lifestyle.* (LDCE)

Only 2 out of 35 analysed English equivalents are variable in terms of number, e.g. *bėgsena* – gait, *veiksena* – course of action. 4 more nouns are marked as countable in English dictionaries; however, they are usually used in the singular form, e.g. *eisena* – step, *galvosena* – mentality, *stovėsena* – stance, etc. One equivalent of the Lithuanian derivative of this ending has been found to possess the plural form in English: *teisena* – proceedings.

**g. Nouns derived by means of the suffix *-tynės*.** These are all plural nouns in Lithuanian (42 listed in the dictionary). They refer to complex fights or other actions carried out by several performers. These processes can be counted and in the cases when exact number is indicated the cardinal plural numeral is used, e.g. *kautynės*, *muštynės*, *skerdynės*, *varžytynės*, *žaidynės*, *žudynės*, etc. The nouns are considered as uncountable. They usually possess the meaning of an unbroken process, yet, under certain circumstances they may acquire the meaning of 'more than one', e.g.

*Šiame lauke vyko dvejų žiaurių kautynės.* (DLKT)

*Tarpukario Lietuvoje buvo nemažai varžytynių.* (DLKT)

In the examples above, the derivatives of the suffix *-tynės* refer to recurrent actions. However, usually nouns of such derivation refer to continuous complex actions and are rarely used together with the words signifying exact number.

Out of 42 analysed equivalents of the Lithuanian nouns derived by means of the suffix *-tynės* only three possess the plural form in English, e.g. *žaidynės* – games, *niautynės* (spoken language), *niovynės* – words, quarrels, names. Other equivalents in English (17 out of 42) are either countable nouns, e.g.

*bėgtynės* – foot race/ foot races, *gaudynės* – manhunt/ manhunts, *grumtynės* – struggle/ struggles, *free fight/ free fights*, *guitynės* – hunt/ hunts, *kraustynės* – move/ moves, *kautynės* – battle/ battles, *plauktynės* – swimming competition/ swimming competitions, *šaudynės* – shooting match/ shooting matches, *tąsynės* – fight/ fights, *scrimmage/ scrimmages*, etc.

or singular uncountable nouns (17 out of 42),

*badynės* – bull-butting, *kirstynės* – hand-to-hand fighting, *pjautynės* – carnage, *pjovynės*, *žudynės* – slaughter, *ristynės*, *vaikštynės* – procession, *veltynės* – wrestling, *slapstynės*, *slėpynės* – hide-and-seek, *siustynės*, *šėltynės* – frolic, *rampage* etc.

A few singular English equivalents can sometimes be treated as variable for number and possess a slightly different shade of meaning. In certain contexts, nouns like *frolic*, *rampage*, *procession*, etc. refer to concrete manifestations of certain actions; therefore, they may be counted.

*... after a bar-room brawl over a woman led vengeance-seeking Zairian troops to fire indiscriminately on two funeral processions ...* (BNC).

*Everyone joined in the Saturday night frolics.* (LDCE)

**h. Nouns derived by means of the suffix *-yba* and *-ybos*.** 68 Lithuanian nouns derived by means of the suffix *-yba* and *-ybos* have been found to be listed in the Lithuanian dictionary. By means of the former the singular derivatives are created and by means of the latter the plural nouns are derived. Yet, they refer to different phenomena.

The derivatives of the suffix *-yba* are the following: *daryba*, *daugyba*, *dalyba*, *drožyba*, *gamyba*, *gynyba*, *lipdyba*, *rašyba*, *tapyba*, *vaidyba*, *vadyba*, *žvejyba*, etc. But again individual derivatives may occasionally be

used in the plural form which possesses a different lexical meaning. For example, the noun *dalyba* (*division*) refers to an arithmetic process and cannot be used in the plural. However, the plural *dalybos* is a different lexical item with a distinct lexical meaning: settlement of possessions. In this case, the nouns *dalyba* and *dalybos* are not inflectional forms. On the other hand, these two words are not completely semantically isolated. There is a compositional relation between them. This means that the structural meaning of the plural noun is composed of the meaning of the underlying word and the meaning of the compositional formative. In English all the equivalents of the Lithuanian nouns derived by means of the suffix *-yba* are uncountable singular nouns. It has again been noticed that a number of them are derivatives of the ending *-ing*, e.g.

*drožyba* – carving, *lipdyba* – modelling, *rašyba* – writing, *tapyba* – painting, *vaidyba* – acting, *žvejyba* – fishing, etc.

The Lithuanian nouns derived by means of the suffix *-ybos* are all plural nouns, e.g. *derybos*, *lažybos*, *mainybos*, *netesybos*, *piršlybos*, *pratybos*, *skyrybos*, *varžybos*, *vedybos*, etc. These nouns are abstract in Lithuanian and are invariable in terms of number. Yet, in certain occasions, actions that are referred to by these nouns may be considered as concrete acts and may be counted, e.g.

*O tokia gaidelė tradiciškai lyg ir būtina: dvejų skyrybos, tėvo netektis, būtinybė ieškoti naujo darbo ... (DLKT)*

*Šiomet spinningautojų laukia dar dvejų varžybos, po kurių bus apdovanoti geriausi sezono žvejai bei komandos. (DLKT)*

It is possible to count such acts, even though they possess only one form of number, either singular or plural. Therefore, such nouns resemble plural nouns that refer to countable things.

The English equivalents of the Lithuanian nouns derived by means of the suffix *-ybos* are usually countable nouns, e.g. *lažybos* – *bet/ bets*, *skyrybos* – *divorce/ divorces*, *varžybos* – *contest/ contest, match/ matches, race/ races, etc.* Only the noun *derybos* has plural equivalents in English: *talks* or *negotiations*.

**i. Nouns of foreign origin.** They completely conform to the rules of Lithuanian. Such nouns are a lot simpler since they have been borrowed or have appeared through other languages with their own suffixes. Foreign derivatives do not fall into many groups like Lithuanian nouns derived by means of suffixes. Several suffixes like *-(i)acija*, *-ija*, *-ažas*, *-ūra* are the most productive (Ulvydas 1965: p302-303). For the most part what can be observed is the lexical coincidence of what is *concrete* and *abstract*, i.e. homonymy, e.g. *demonstracija* → *showing (abstract)* and *massive procession (concrete)*; *kompozicija* → *arrangement of parts (abstract)* and *piece of art (usually music) (concrete)*, etc.

But otherwise derivatives of foreign origin are all singular, e.g.

*agitacija, akumuliacija, dedukcija, degeneracija, deklamacija, dezinfekcija, egzistencija, harmonija, indukcija, tolerancija, etc.*

Out of 250 analysed English equivalents of foreign derivatives in Lithuanian, about 80 can be treated both as uncountable and countable under certain conditions which means that, like in Lithuanian, certain English equivalents also show the difference between *abstract/ concrete*, e.g. *amputation, demarcation, differentiation, disqualification, emigration, gesticulation, imitation, intonation, confiscation, montage, reanimation, etc.*

When the noun is treated as countable it has a more specific meaning than when it is treated as uncountable even though the meanings are actually closely related, e.g.

*Less well run events rely upon the memories of the refereeing panel to screen out those who have won by two disqualifications. (BNC)*

*Here are two examples with typical intonations, where (a) does not start with 'a'; 'wh-word'; and has a rising tone and (b) begins with 'where'; and has a falling tone. (BNC)*

It is possible to analyse all abstract nouns referring to actions one by one. Yet, the given derivatives and the examples allow us to perceive the essence of the periphery of the grammatical category of number. Supposing that every noun referring to an action is analysed, the conclusion can be drawn that verbs are polysemantic and nouns made from the same verb with different meanings will first refer to an abstraction, impervious to counting. Only then can a concrete manifestation of actions allowing variability and word composition of the plural from the singular be considered. Thus, this group of nouns is threefold: one can observe the processes of word building, inflection and individual lexical meanings.

## 1.2. Actions Signified by the Derivatives of Endings and Compounds

There are a lot fewer derivatives of the endings than derivatives of the suffixes in Lithuanian. However, the same phenomena from the point of view of number can be observed both for the derivatives of the suffixes and the derivatives of endings. There are not too many endings by means of which abstract nouns can be derived. They are the following:

*-a*, e.g. *atgaiva, mūša, patikra, etc.*  
*-is*, e.g. *atlyžis, dūkis, skrydis, spjūvis, etc.*  
*-as*, e.g. *juokas, nerimas, skundas, etc.*  
*-ė*, e.g. *grėsmė, ištvėrmė, žaismė, etc.*  
*-ius*, e.g. *stygius, zylius, etc. (Ulvydas 1965: p303-306).*

As it has been shown above, derivatives of the suffixes may produce parallel word building (*skelbimas* – *an action and a document*). There are a few cases of parallel word building of the derivatives of endings, too, e.g. *dėkoti* (*thank*) → *padėka* (*action of thanking*) and *padėka* (*a thanks document*).

Of course, a number of nouns referring to actions can be counted, e.g.

*spjūvis – spjūviai, dūžis – dūžiai, skrydis – skrydžiai, pobūvis – pobūviai, poelgis – poelgiai, sąskrydis – sąskrydžiai, sandėris – sandėriai, etc.*

Therefore, the opposition between the singular and the plural in these cases reminds of the inflection process.

There are also cases of new lexical meaning in the plural, e.g. *juokas – juokai, pagalba – pagalbos, pažiūra – pažiūros, etc.* Such nouns resemble the inflection; however, they are uncountable. Their plural refers to either something new in comparison to the singular, e.g. *juokas (laughter) – juokai (tricks, jokes), pažiūra (opinion) – pažiūros (creed)*, etc. or repetition of the same action, e.g. *mankšta – mankštos, kaita – kaitos, pagalba – pagalbos, padėka – padėkos, etc.* When the singular and the plural are associated through composition, the nouns in the plural refer to concrete manifestations of actions, e.g.

*Ne, nieko man nereikia, jokių pagalbų. (DLKT)*

*Eglė kantriai laukė, kol Karla ištasys po visas apklausas bei paslaptį pokalbius. (DLKT)*

A few derivatives of endings have changed from the point of view number over time. Nouns like *ištuoka – ištuokos, santuoka – santuokos* are countable; yet, this depends upon the extralinguistic factors. If marriage is considered one for the life until death in joys and sorrows, then the nouns should be singular. However, life changes and the law allows people to get married and divorced several times in life. Therefore, the uncountable nouns may become countable.

353 Lithuanian nouns derived by means of endings have been considered for this particular analysis. Their equivalents are all singular, except for one or two that are treated as countable in English. For example, *uodis* refers to an action of smelling and is treated as an uncountable noun in Lithuanian; however, dictionaries provide *sniff* as its English equivalent which is a countable noun. Several more equivalents may be treated as either countable or uncountable in English, e.g., *įniršis – rage, išėlis – fury, kilmė – origin, perstojis – recess, snygis – snowfall, etc.* Like in Lithuanian, when these nouns are treated as countable they refer to a more concrete manifestation of a certain action, e.g.

*I was frightened because I had never seen him in such a rage before. (CALD)*

*Now old and new furies possessed me and I had the man by the neck of his jersey and pushed up against the wall. (BNC)*

Therefore, the plural form of such nouns is not strange.

151 compound nouns derived by means of endings have been found in the dictionary, e.g.

*daugiskaita, kalbotyra, kraujospūdis, labdara, pusiausvyra, savigarba, savigyna, savivalda, skerspūtys, širdgėla, šlapdriba, žemėtvarka, žuvivaisa, etc.*

These are the singular nouns that may show neither inflection nor word building. In other words, abstract compounds never form the opposition between the singular and the plural.

Their English equivalents with rare exceptions are also singular. Only 8 English equivalents have been found to be treated as both uncountable and countable nouns, e.g. *gryn-*

*šala, gruodšala – glazed frost, piknauda – abuse, indulgence, tarpusavis, savitarpis – mutuality, etc.* When they are considered as countable they usually possess a more concrete meaning.

## 2. Abstract Nouns Referring to Qualities

Nouns referring to qualities can be mostly derived from adjectives either by means of suffixes or endings. They are not as abundant as derivatives of verbs referring to actions. There are only 20 suffixes by means of which derivatives referring to qualities can be made; however, only three of them are really productive (Ulvydas 1965: p306). There are even fewer nouns derived by means of endings.

### 2.1. Qualities Signified by the Derivatives of Suffixes

a. **Nouns derived by means of the suffix -umas.** This is one of the most productive suffixes of the derivatives referring to qualities. Abstract nouns derived by means of this suffix can be made from all attributive adjectives that refer to an independent feature unrelated to any external thing or phenomenon (Paulauskienė 1994: p72).

Thus, uncountable nouns derived by means of the suffix *-umas* are quite abundant, e.g.

*ankštumas, atkaklumas, baisumas, drąsumas, gilumas, išdidumas, kantrumas, klampumas, patogumas, storumas, smagumas, žiaurumas, etc.*

From the point of view of the composition of number forms these nouns are a lot simpler than nouns referring to actions. Only a few of them may possess the plural form next to the singular, e.g. *neramumas – neramumai, patogumas – patogumai, etc.*

Earlier abstract nouns used to be derived by means of the suffix *-umas* only from dissyllabic attributive adjectives (Paulauskienė 1994: p72-73). In modern Lithuanian derivatives from more complex adjectives or even participles are possible to be made, e.g.

- derivatives from adjectives of more than two syllables: *audringumas, akivaizdumas, beglobiškumas, dvikalbiškumas, mažavertiškumas, minkštaširdiškumas, etc.*
- derivatives from present passive participles: *būtinumas, keičiamumas, lankomumas, leistinumas, primtinumas, etc.* (Ulvydas 1965: p306-307).

What can be said about the number of such derivatives is that the underlying word possesses the meaning of definiteness. Therefore, it is incompatible with the plural whose one of the attributes is 'indefinite'. Thus, the nouns referring to qualities never form the plural.

Derivatives from the passive participles are neologisms (Ulvydas 1965: p307). Some of these may be substituted by the derivatives of other suffixes, e.g. *būtinumas = būtinybė, lankomumas = lankymas, paveldimumas = paveldėjimas, etc.* They are also singular. Only a few may show opposition between the singular and the plural, e.g. *netikėtumas – netikėtumai*.

Almost all English equivalents of Lithuanian nouns derived by means of the suffix *-umas* are singular.

Only three of them show a different number form. One is treated as a countable noun: *baigtumas* – *finish*. Two equivalents of the Lithuanian derivatives in English take the plural ending, e.g. *pilnateisiškumas*, *visteisiškumas* – *full rights*.

**b. Nouns derived by means of the suffix -uma.** The dictionary of current Lithuanian lists 98 such nouns which may be both abstract and concrete, e.g.

*aukštas* (high) → *aukštuma* (= *aukštumas*/ height) and *aukštuma* (a hill); *gilus* (deep) → *giluma* (= *gilumas*/ depth) and *giluma* (a deeper place), etc.

Nouns referring to concrete places are variable for number, e.g. *dykuma* – *dykumos*, *aukštuma* – *aukštumos*, *lyguma* – *lygumos*, etc. Other nouns derived by means of the suffix -uma are only singular, e.g. *bjauruma*, *gūduma*, *kaitruma*, *nykuma*, *ramuma*, *tyluma*, *vėluma*, *vėsuma*, etc. They may possess synonyms of the same root and are mostly synonymously used with the nouns derived by means of the suffix -umas: *vėsuma*// *vėsumas*// *vėsa*.

The English equivalents of the Lithuanian nouns derived by means of the suffix -uma often take the ending -ness, e.g.

*ankštuma* – tightness, *apvaluma* – roundedness, *artuma* – nearness, closeness, *baltuma* – whiteness, *riebuma* – fatness, *statuma* – steepness, *tankuma*, *tirštuma* – thickness, etc.

All nouns in English that end with -ness are singular. Yet, when these nouns refer to some concrete place they are usually translated into English using the descriptive method, e.g.

*bloguma* – bad side, *klampuma* – marshy place, *plynuma* – plain spot, *skaidruma* – clear part or place, *sliduma* – slipper place, *šviesuma* – bright part or place, etc.

*Therefore their way shall be unto them as slippery places in the darkness ... (Bible)*

*They are found in all kinds of damp, dark places. (BNC)*

The examples prove that such nouns may be used in the plural under certain circumstances in English.

**c. Nouns derived by means of the suffix -ybė.** There are 92 such nouns listed in the dictionary and these are also singular in Lithuanian, e.g. *amžinybė*, *beprotybė*, *blaivybė*, *brangenybė*, *gardybė*, *gerybė*, *mažybė*, *nejudamybė*, *puikybė*, *ramybė*, etc. The plural of these nouns is very rare. It is the result of word building and the noun in the plural acquires a more concrete meaning, e.g.

*Visos jėgos ir negalios, visos grožybės ir bjaurastys šiandien lekia paskui vienodai pypsintį motociklą lyg laumės juosta, kurią nepavargdamas lydi Gerdos akies žirnelis. (DLKT)*

*Anksčiau per prievartą gabenoti į Sibirus, dabar savo noru trenkiasi į tolybes. (DLKT)*

English equivalents of Lithuanian nouns derived by means of the suffix -ybė were found to be singular uncountable nouns. Like in Lithuanian, certain English equivalents may sometimes be treated as countable,

thus, acquiring a new shade of meaning, e.g. *bedievybė* – *infidelity*, *gyvybė* – *life*, *grožybė* – *beauty*, *nelygybė* – *inequality*, *sunkenybė* – *difficulty*, etc. 14 English equivalents have been found to change their meaning in the plural, e.g.

*What conclusions can be drawn from the failure of social services to reduce substantially socio-economic inequalities of access, use and outcome? (BNC)*

*He did not want the amusements of the seaside, or the beauties of the countryside. (BNC)*

The meaning acquired in the plural is usually more concrete than in the usual singular form of number.

**d. Nouns derived by means of the suffix -izmas.** These nouns are usually of foreign origin and they are always singular in Lithuanian, e.g.

*absoliutizmas*, *alkoholizmas*, *chuliganizmas*, *humanizmas*, *internacionalizmas*, *liberalizmas*, *lyrizmas*, *maksimalizmas*, *optimizmas*, *radikalizmas*, *stocizmas*, etc.

Their plural form is impossible. Their English equivalents usually take the ending -ism. Out of 173 English equivalents of Lithuanian nouns derived by means of the suffix -izmas only 16 have other endings, e.g.

*banditizmas* – banditry, *biurokratizmas* – bureaucracy, *dekadentizmas* – decadence, *istorizmas* – historicity, *snobizmas* – snobbery, *universalizmas* – universality, etc.

All English equivalents, like their Lithuanian counterparts, are singular.

There are several more suffixes by means of which nouns referring to qualities can be derived from adjectives in Lithuanian, e.g. -ovė, -ulys, -atvė, -atis, -yba, etc. However, they are not very productive and there are not many nouns with these suffixes.

## 2.2. Qualities Signified by the Derivatives of Endings

A number of abstract nouns referring to qualities are formed by means of endings.

**a. Nouns derived by means of the ending -is.** This is one of the most productive endings. 93 such nouns have been found listed in the dictionary of current Lithuanian. The meaning of the nouns derived by means of this ending is mostly similar to those derived by means of the suffix -umas (Ulvydas 1965: p315). However, the potentialities of the plural are minor. For example, the meaning of the noun *gražumas* (beauty) derived by means of the suffix and the derivative *grožis* (beauty) created by means of an ending are similar, e.g. *Koks tos mergaitės gražumas// grožis*. But the plural is only possible with the derivative of the suffix -umas, e.g.

*Tai margumai genelio, tai gražumai genelio. (folklore)*

Accordingly, all derivatives of the ending -is referring to abstract qualities are only singular, e.g. *bjauris*, *greitis*, *grožis*, *juodis*, *kreivis*, *siauris*, *storis*, *sunkis*, *tamsis*, etc. Perhaps only one or two such nouns may have both meanings: an abstract and a concrete one. For instance, the derivative *plikis* refers to baldness and a bald person with the derogatory meaning. Likewise,



*tankis* refers to thickness and a thickset forest place. Nouns referring to dimensions like *aukštis*, *gylis*, *greitis*, *ilgis*, *plotis*, *storis* may sometimes acquire a more concrete meaning and be used in the plural, e.g.

*Namas ant Milikonių kalno turi net keturis priestatus, todėl grindų, lubų aukščiai daug kur nesutampa. (DLKT)*

*Kai neapaugančiose krūmais vagose tėkmės greičiai nėra maži ir dėl to jos nedumblėja, jų natūralizuoti nėra reikalo. (DLKT)*

English counterparts of Lithuanian derivatives of the ending *-is* have been analysed according to their number form. All of them, except one, are singular, e.g.

*aiškus* – sharpness, clarity, lucidity, legibility, readability, neatness, openness, transparency, *aitris* – sharpness, acerbity, poignancy, bitterness, roughness, *baltis* – whiteness, *bėris* – bay, *brangis* – costliness, expensiveness, *gobis* – greediness, *kaitris* – heat, *kartis* – bitter, bitterness, *niūris* – sulkiness, *nuogis* – nudity, bareness, nakedness, *pygis* – cheapness, *spartis* – speed, quickness, rapidity, *stambis* – stoutness, bigness, *trumpis* – brevity, briefness, *tvirtis* – strength, toughness, etc.

Like in Lithuanian, some English equivalents also show possibilities of the plural form. Of course, this process always affects the meaning. For example, the English equivalents like *baisis* – fear, *blogis* – evil, *gylis* – depth, *greitis* – speed, *ilgis* – length, *plotis* – width, etc. are marked in the English dictionaries as countable or uncountable nouns. The meaning of the countable nouns is always more specific, e.g.

*A winner of her last two races, she was ridden confidently last time at Chester and cantered clear of nearest rival Anchorage to win by 12 lengths. (BNC)*

*Each new leader would blame his predecessor for all the evils of the past. (CALD)*

The only English equivalent which has been found to have the plural ending and to refer to an uncountable concept is *ankstis* – early hours.

**b. Nouns derived by means of the ending *-a*.** Such nouns are all singular in Lithuanian, e.g. *drąsa*, *gausa*, *narsa*, *sparta*, *svarba*, *tyla*, etc. Their meaning is also similar to those nouns that have been derived by means of the suffix *-umas* (Ulvydas 1965: p316). There are 58 such nouns referring to qualities listed in the dictionary. All their English equivalents are singular, too, e.g.

*aitra* – zest, gusto, *branda* – maturity, ripeness, *dora* – honour, *kaitra* – heat, *kantra* – patience, *stropa* – zeal, diligence, assiduity, *švara* – cleanness, *talpa* – capacity, *tampra* – elasticity, resilience, *taura* – nobleness, nobility, *tyka* – calm, *vėsa* – cool, chill, cool-ness, *žvarba* – rawness, etc.

Perhaps only *talpa* may be used in the plural to refer to certain containers in Lithuanian, e.g. *Jos turėjo prisipirkusios ir užpildžiusios talpas brangių mazutu (DLKT)*. Neither in Lithuanian nor in English is the plural of all other such nouns possible.

**c. Nouns derived by means of the endings *-as* and *-ė*.** There are not many Lithuanian nouns derived by means of these endings. 10 nouns derived by means of the ending *-as*, e.g. *apstas*, *godas*, *narsas*, *tvankas* and 8 nouns derived by means of the ending *-ė*, e.g. *kaltė*, *vertė* have been found in the dictionary. On the other hand, in standard Lithuanian derivatives of the ending *-as* tend to be replaced by the derivatives of other suffixes or endings, e.g. *apstas* = *apstumas*, *narsas* = *narsumas* = *narsa*, *tvankas* = *tvankumas* = *tvanka*, etc. Their English equivalents are again only singular, e.g. *godas* – greediness, *gūdas* – the dead of night, *klaikas* – fright, *skurdas* – poverty, *šiurpas* – horror, *ūmas* – quickness, etc.

What concerns the rare derivatives of the ending *-ė*, there is one or two that can be found to be used in the plural, e.g. *Ir atleisk mums mūsų kaltes, kaip ir mes atleidžiame savo kaltininkams* (from "Tėve mūsų"). On the other hand, doubtfully it is possible to use a numeral together with this noun. Theoretically it is possible to count, but practically it is not common.

### 3. Abstract Nouns Derived From Other Parts of Speech

There are a few nouns derived from other parts of speech by means of suffixes. There are not many of them, yet, they are all singular in Lithuanian.

**a. Nouns derived by means of the suffix *-ystė*.** This is one of the most productive suffixes by means of which abstract nouns are usually made from other nouns. Mostly such nouns refer to kinds of business or occupations, e.g.

*arklininkystė*, *batsiuovystė*, *daržininkystė*, *gėlininkystė*, *laivininkystė*, *medvilnininkystė*, *puodininkystė*, *stiklininkystė*, *vaistininkystė*, etc.

There are nouns with other meanings, too. A number of them refer either to a certain state or quality, e.g. *jaunystė*, *neregystė*, *pagonystė*, *stabmeldystė*, *seserystė*, *vaikystė*, *veltėdystė*, etc. or, in rarer cases, to a certain action, e.g. *šeimininkystė*, *vagystė*, etc. For example, the noun *kiaulystė* is derived from the term of abuse *kiaule* rather than from *kiaulė*. A person may be called *kiaulė*, *niekšas*, *vagis*, etc. However, only derivatives from such terms of abuse may have the plural form, e.g.

*Prisidirbo visokių kiaulysčių. (LKŽ)*

It is doubtful whether one needs to count *kiaulystės* and *niekšystės* (*villainy*). On the other hand, police count *vagystės* (*thefts*), e.g.

*Prieš tai šiame name buvo dvi vagystės. (DLKT)*

Nonetheless, countability is not typical of all the nouns belonging to this compositional type since it is determined by extra-linguistic conditions, i.e. social factors.

123 Lithuanian nouns derived by means of the suffix *-ystė* and their English equivalents have been found and analysed. In both Lithuanian and English they are almost all absolutely singular. There are a few nouns that can form the plural with a slight change in

meaning in both languages, e.g. *beširdystė* – *cruelty*, *barbarity*, *bičiulystė*, *draugystė* – *friendship*, *žioplystė* – *stupidity*, etc. They all refer to a quality or a state and in the plural acquire a more specific meaning, e.g.

*Dabar manau, kad iš ilgų draugysčių nieko gero neišeina. (DLKT)*

*Už vaikų žioplystes seni turime vargt. (LKŽ)*

*From friendships of children to agreements among nations life depends on trust. (BNC)*

*But the risk-taking borrowers have compounded their danger by other stupidities. (BNC)*

#### **b. Nouns derived by means of the suffix -umas.**

Such abstract nouns are derived from other nouns that possess the meaning of a certain quality. For example, *invalidas* refers to a person who is seriously ill. The derivative of this noun *invalidumas* is a singular noun referring to a quality. Thus, abstract nouns may be derived by means of the suffix *-umas* not only from adjectives, but also from other parts of speech like nouns (*vištakis* → *vištakumas*), numerals (*pirmas* → *pirmumas*, *vienas* → *vienumas*), adverbs (*virš* → *viršumas*, *daug* → *daugumas*), etc. English equivalents of those few nouns derived by means of the suffix *-umas* from parts of speech other than adjectives are all singular and never form the plural, e.g. *invalidumas* – *invalidity*, *pirmumas* – *priority*, *vienumas* – *unity*, *viršumas* – *superiority*, *supremacy*, etc.

In summary of all abstract uncountable nouns it cannot be denied that nouns referring to actions (derived from verbs) and qualities (derived from adjectives) are in the centre of the category of number. It is logical since in the underlying structures an action or a quality is perceived as a attribute of an item. Abstraction always has the same effect. Therefore, what concerns abstract nouns the plural may be formed next to the singular; yet, in very rare cases this process has to deal with inflection. Usually the plural differs from the singular in its lexical meaning or stylistic shade. Thus, the base form of an abstract noun is always separate from the plural and defective from the point of view of number.

There are not many abstract lexical items made from nouns or other parts of speech although the resulting word always has the meaning of a quality. Such nouns are always singular and their compositional plural form is a rare exception.

#### **Conclusions**

English equivalents of Lithuanian abstract nouns and comparison of Lithuanian and English altogether show:

1. Both Lithuanian and English possess a number of abstract nouns that are defective from the point of view of number. The composition of Lithuanian abstract uncountable nouns is a lot more complicated than in English. There are a number of suffixes and endings by means of which abstract nouns may be derived from verbs, adjectives and other parts of speech.
2. The most productive suffixes in Lithuanian are *-imas* for abstract nouns derived from verbs and *-umas* for abstract nouns derived from qualitative adjectives. The composition of the nouns by means of these

suffixes is regular in Lithuanian. This means that it is possible to make abstract nouns from all verbs by means of the suffix *-imas* and from all qualitative adjectives by means of the suffix *-umas*. The most productive suffix in English is *-ing* for abstract nouns derived from verbs. Other quite productive suffixes are *-ion*, *-ment*, etc.

3. Comparison of Lithuanian abstract nouns of irregular composition, i.e. derived by means of other suffixes and endings, with their English equivalents from the point of view of number shows little discrepancy.
4. Coincidence of number forms of nouns of irregular composition has been observed in 1193 cases (85 percent). 16 English equivalents (1 percent) of Lithuanian nouns are plural from the point of view of number. 56 equivalents are considered as countable nouns in English. 10 percent of equivalents have not been found. Mostly, these are dialectal words, e.g. *paėda*, *pagaudas*, *pagaulė*, *pagautė*, *papūta*, *pasiutjuokis*, *pėra*, *slistis*, *smarsas*, *suniekė*, *tekyba*, *tėvena*, *tursomiegis*, *viekas*, etc., or historical terms, e.g. *knygnešystė*, *padimė*, *pasėdis*, *sidabrinė*, *valdinybė*, *validnystė*, *vaitystė*, *viršaitystė*, etc.
5. Comparison of Lithuanian abstract nouns of foreign origin and their equivalents in English from the point of view of their number forms shows nearly complete coincidence. 1 percent of the Lithuanian equivalents have the plural ending in English.
6. A number of abstract nouns in the two languages under analysis may sometimes be used in the plural. This always affects their lexical meaning. Usually such nouns acquire a more concrete meaning in the plural. Other possible, yet a lot rarer, changes in the shade of meaning result in the intensification of the lexical sense.

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Ramunė Kasperavičienė

### Abstrakčiųjų daiktavardžių skaičiaus kategorija

Santrauka

Abstraktieji daiktavardžiai – tai skaičiuoti negalimus daiktus reiškiantys leksiniai vienetai. Lietuvių kalboje jie daugiausiai vienaskaitiniai. Tačiau, kaip ir dauguma kitų skaičiuoti negalimus daiktus reiškiančių daiktavardžių, jie dažnai gali turėti ir daugiskaitos formą. Straipsnyje analizuojami daugiau nei 2100 abstrakčiųjų veiksmus ir ypatybes reiškiančių lietuviškos kilmės ir tarptautinių lietuvių kalbos daiktavardžių, pateiktų Dabartinės lietuvių kalbos žodyne. Daiktavardžiai klasifikuojami pagal priesagas ir galūnes, su kuriomis jie padaromi iš įvairių kalbos dalių, tačiau daugiausia iš veiksmazodžių ir būdvardžių; analizuojami šių daiktavardžių atitikmenys anglų kalboje ir jų galimybė turėti kitą skaičiaus formą. Tik labai retais atvejais tiek lietuvių, tiek anglų kalboje tokių daiktavardžių daugiskaitos atsiradimą šalia vienaskaitos galima laikyti kaityba. Beveik visada darinys yra naujas žodis, kurio reikšmė daugiau ar mažiau skiriasi nuo pamatinio abstraktaus daiktavardžio reikšmės.

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## APPENDIX

**Table 1.** The most productive suffixes by means of which nouns referring to actions are made from verbs

Suffixes	-imas/ -ymas	-tis	-esys	-ulys	-smas	-sena	-tynes	-ybos/ -yba	foreign
The number of nouns found in the dictionary	*	53	92	68	37	35	42	68	250

**Table 2.** The most productive endings from which nouns referring to actions are made from verbs

Endings	-a	-is	-as	-ė	-ius	compound
The number of nouns found in the dictionary	214	83	22	29	5	151

**Table 3.** The most productive suffixes by means of which nouns referring to qualities are made from adjectives

Suffixes	-umas	-uma	-ybė	-izmas/ foreign
The number of nouns found in the dictionary	**	98	92	173

**Table 4.** The most productive endings by means of which nouns referring to qualities are made from adjectives

Endings	-is	-a	-as	-ė
The number of nouns found in the dictionary	93	58	10	8

**Table 5.** The most productive suffixes by means of which nouns referring to qualities are made from other nouns

Suffixes	-ystė	-umas
The number of nouns found in the dictionary	123	6

\* Abstract nouns with the suffixes *-imas/ -ymas* can be derived from all verbs (presented under the entries of these verbs in the dictionary of current Lithuanian).

\*\* Abstract nouns with the suffix *-umas* can be derived from all qualitative adjectives that are gradable (presented under the entries of these adjectives in the dictionary of current Lithuanian).

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