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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

SINGULARIA TANTUM NOUNS IN RUSSIAN AND ENGLISH

by

(C) PAUL CATHERALL

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

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FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, for acceptance, a thesis entitled Singularia tantum nouns in Russian and English, submitted by Paul Catherall in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Slavic Linguistics.

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ABSTRACT

In both Russian and English, the anomalous situation created by singularia tantum nouns results from the failure of such nouns to conform to the regular number correlation between singular and plural which is based upon a notional distinction between what counts as 'one' and what counts as 'more than one.' This thesis examines, in the form of a contrastive study, the particular anomalies within the respective languages and strives to establish any cross-linguistic parallels and divergences which may exist.

Following an introductory chapter which considers some of the grammatical and semantic complexities associated with the category of number in various languages, chapter two focuses on how number is manifested in the nouns of Russian and English. A general framework of reference is established based upon standard, definitive grammars of English by Jespersen (1929, 1954, 1957), Kruisinga (1925), Schibsbye (1965), and Zandvoort (1972). The regular and anomalous features of the category of number in Russian are then related to the English situation on the basis of material drawn from the Academy of Sciences Grammar edited by Švedova.

Against this background, the third chapter highlights the specific anomalies presented by singularia tantum nouns in Russian and English and provides a definition for these nouns. The data to illustrate the cross-linguistic parallels and divergences are presented in tabular form, and on the basis of these data chapter four provides a semantic taxonomy of such nouns.

In the concluding chapter, various hypotheses are made to account for the contextually dependent variability of singularia tantum nouns and their semantic interpretation.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. General

While the term singularia tantum is frequently encountered in Russian works dealing with the grammatical category of number, it is rarely, if ever, cited in English grammars. Of Latin origin, its literal translation into English would be 'only single things,' but we shall use it to refer to those nouns in English and Russian which appear primarily in the singular form only. This does not mean to say that these nouns are used exclusively in the singular, for they can on occasion be pluralised with systematic semantic connotations. Nevertheless, these nouns do not display the regular number correlation between singular and plural which is associated with the notional distinction between what counts as 'one' and what counts as 'more than one.' Consequently they appear as anomalies within the respective languages and if the anomalies are different within each language we would expect Russian singularia tantum nouns to present problems for the English speaking student and vice-versa. It is the aim of this thesis to examine some of these problems and, moreover, to establish any parallels and divergences which may exist among singularia tantum nouns in Russian and English.

The specific stimulus for this topic stems from the peculiar way in which Russian allows certain nouns, especially the names of many fruits and vegetables, to appear only in a singular form in instances when English demands a pluralised noun. This presents a

major problem in a language learning situation whereby a Russian singularia tantum noun corresponds to a regular count noun in English. It is unnatural for a native English speaker to refer to 'strawberry' when he is fully aware that he means 'more than one strawberry,' yet this is precisely what he is confronted with as a learner of Russian. It will therefore be useful for purposes of recognition if we can pinpoint any morphological markers or productive semantic categories for this class of nouns in Russian. Furthermore, it will be interesting to speculate why these nouns appear to be so anomalous.

In order to achieve our aim, it is necessary to examine, first of all, how number is regularly manifested in Russian and English nouns, for this will give us a valuable insight into the workings of the grammatical category of number in the respective languages. By doing so, we will be able to consider singularia tantum nouns against a general background of regularities and we will be able to see how these nouns fit into the pattern of other irregularities. This naturally presupposes that the analysis of singularia tantum nouns in both English and Russian belongs to that branch of grammar which is usually treated, by traditional grammarians at least, under the heading of the category of number. While this may indeed be true of the situation in traditional grammars of English (see Jespersen, Kruisinga, Zandvoort), the Russian grammarian A.A. Reformatskij (1960: 391) sees things in a different light.

Особенности слов pluralia u singularia tantum
заключаются в том, что они стоят вне грамматической категории числа

Reformatskij's stand on this issue will be evaluated when we come to discuss singularia tantum nouns in more detail, but until such time we shall defer to the English viewpoint and introduce these nouns as a specific of the category of number. Accordingly, we can either examine number formally, and take a look at the morphological inflections and syntactic agreements involved, or we can consider number in terms of some notional categories.

1.2. Formal and Notional Number

A formal analysis of the category of number in English will usually involve the establishment of the inflectional suffixes which signify plurality. The English noun-plural morpheme can appear in several forms, although with the overwhelming majority of nouns there are three particular allomorphs which are the most common and can be represented phonemically as /-s/ as in *books*, /-z/ as in *dogs* and /-ɪz/ as in *faces*. When we examine the Russian equivalent of the English noun *books*, we notice that the inflectional suffix in the noun *книги* expresses not only plurality (or more than one-ness) but also case (nominative or accusative) and (normally) gender (masculine or feminine). Russian then does not have an independent morpheme of number for nouns, as is the case in English. Insofar as our formal analysis of number must take into consideration certain syntactic criteria, we need only make brief reference, at this stage, to the use of determiners and the syntactic process of agreement. Thus, the general notion of number is expressed by these various morphological and syntactic means.

In order to clarify the role of plurality in the two languages it is also necessary to examine the semantic implications of the category. The relationship between the physical world and how it is mirrored in cognitive or linguistic terms within the human mind is, to say the least, complex. Even from the limited sphere of the grammatical category of number we observe that the lexical categorisation of reality varies from language to language. For example the Russian equivalent for the English noun *grape* is виноград. In a given context where someone has gone out to buy this commodity we notice the following distinction.

English - She went out to buy some grapes.

Russian - Она вышла купить виноград.

The English noun is used in a plural form whereas its Russian counterpart is not. This is not because the Russian noun виноград has an unchanged plural form, nor because it is a Russian custom to buy grapes one at a time; rather it is because the English noun can be pluralised (*grape - grapes*) but the Russian one, in this context, can not. We shall be dealing with the grammatical aspects of this problem in some detail later in the study, but the example serves to illustrate the kind of difficulty we can encounter when dealing with the linguistic representation in different languages of phenomena in the physical world. Russians view *grapes* as singular under different circumstances than English speakers do. This suggests that as far as languages are concerned, there exist syntactic and morphological categories which are associated in different ways with certain 'notional' categories which, in turn, relate to 'universal' facts of

the world. From a logical point of view then the notional category of number involves a distinction between what counts as one object and what counts as more than one, but the details may differ from language to language. The distinction is expressed through the syntactic or, more precisely, morphosyntactic media of singular and plural, although these by no means represent a universal notional distinction since several languages maintain further distinctions.

Так, например, наряду с формами ед. и мн. числа имеют форму дв. числа существительных такие языки, как корянский, эскимосский, ненецкий, тибетский, семитские, некоторые папуасские, и целый ряд других. (Panfilov 1976:18)

Leonard Bloomfield (1951:257) makes reference to the Samoan language which distinguishes between dual and plural numbers in personal pronouns, and also to the Melanesian language of Annatom Island which makes the further distinction between dual, trial and plural. Here, we might also refer to the extinct Old Church Slavonic language which maintained a dual number and to Slovene, which still has a dual today. Languages such as these and those cited above by Panfilov must consider it necessary to make a further distinction than the more normal singular/plural differentiation although, as Panfilov indicates, languages having a dual number are relatively rare, and those having a trial even rarer.

Как уже отмечалось, весьма редкое явление представляет собой тройственное число

существительных. Оно есть в некоторых папуасских (ава, гадсуп и др.) и меланезийских языках.

Citing Greenberg's observation, Panfilov goes on to note an interesting universal tendency amongst such languages by stating that there is no language that has a trial that does not also have a dual; and, further, that every language that has a dual also has a plural number. Linguistic universals related to the category of number are, however, few and far between and we are reminded of this by Panfilov (1976:19) who informs us: "Существует ряд языков, в которых грамматическая категория числа существительных отсутствует."

Such languages are of little concern to us here, but it is worth heeding Panfilov's cautionary note that the singular/plural distinction between nouns is by no means a universal linguistic phenomenon. Although the major number distinction in modern English and Russian is between singular and plural, in point of fact there are several remnants of a dual number which are preserved in Russian.

These include

1. The nominative plural ending of masculine nouns with a meaning of 'belonging to a pair' (парность). E.g. бокá, берегá, рунавá, рогá, глазá.
2. The nominative plural ending of neuter nouns with the same meaning. E.g: колени, плечи, уши, вени.
3. In the numeral двести (Old Church Slavonic ДЪВѢ СЪТИ)
4. In the so-called 'genitive singular' ending after the numerals two, three and four, which really stems from the historical dual number. E.g. два стола, два дома

According to Otto Jespersen, the only remainder of a dual number in English is to be found in 'both', and he considers the loss of the dual number in languages as a progressive development. Thus, even in English and Russian, the singular/plural distinction has not always been the sole distinction within the grammatical category of number.

It seems reasonable enough to assume that man's ability to think and communicate in numerical terms stemmed from practical needs. The enumeration of objects and measuring of distances etc., were surely as fundamental to the early civilised societies as they are to us today. Over the years, however, the linguistic treatment of number has adopted a kind of abstractness and it is this abstract nature that has in all likelihood contributed to its sometimes vague representation in languages today.

Если практический опыт человека сталкивал его с разнообразными частными случаями множественности (множество камней, множество птиц, множество звезд, множество людей и т.д.), то по мере того как человек приобретал способность абстрагироваться от отдельных случаев частной множественности, у него все в большей степени созревала идея отвлеченной множественности, которая должна сформироваться и в языке (в грамматике). (Budagov 1953:158)

By vague representation, I am of course referring to anything that does not seem to fit into the logical scheme suggested by the distinction between one and more than one. At this point, however, it would seem fair to point out that what may seem quite illogical to a

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native speaker of English could be quite natural, for example, to a speaker of Hungarian. For example, in spite of the fact that all healthy human beings of the same sex have essentially the same body parts, one might expect this universal trend to be carried over into the linguistic representation of the human anatomy. We learn however, that the Magyars see things differently and they refer to those parts of the body that occur in pairs as one whole unit. Hence, a Hungarian will refer to his eyes, hands, ears etc. in the singular.

A szemem (singular) gyenge = My eyes (plural) are weak.

When the occasion arises to make reference to one eye, the word for half is used. Consequently 'fel szemmel' for a Hungarian, quite naturally means 'with one eye', whereas its literal translation into English would be 'with half eye'. This example serves to illustrate the fact that there are some discrepancies as far as what can be counted as one and what can be counted as more than one. This is further substantiated when we consider what things can be counted together.

A pear and an apple are two fruits; a brick and a castle can barely be called two things; a brick and a musical sound are not two, a man and a truth and the taste of an apple do not make three, and so on. (Jespersen 1929:189)

We can add that if it is true that the lexical categorisation of objects is complex, then it is equally true of the meaning of grammatical categories. "The correspondence between external and grammatical categories is never complete and we find the most curious and unexpected overlappings and intersections everywhere." (Jespersen

1929:54). Indeed, the grammatical category of number is riddled with such "unexpected overlappings." For example how do we apply the notions of 'one-ness' and 'more than one-ness' to those nouns which do not call to mind the idea of some definite object which can be counted, namely abstract nouns? Bloomfield (1951:271) reminds us of further anomalies.

Number, as it appears in our singulars and plurals, seems to be close to some universal trait of human response; yet cases like oats versus wheat, or Epsom salts versus table salt, seem to have little non-linguistic justification.

The initial tendency to consider the category of number as one presenting few difficulties is therefore discouraged from the outset in many works. Hence Jespersen (1929:88) begins his chapter on Number in The Philosophy of Grammar with the following:

Number might appear to be one of the simplest natural categories, as simple as 'two and two are four'. Yet on closer inspection it presents a great many difficulties both logical and linguistic.

A.V. Isačenko (1965:74) in the morphology section of his comparative study of the Russian and Slovak grammatical systems consolidates this viewpoint by indicating how confusion may occur.

На первый взгляд общее значение категории грамматического числа кажется самоочевидным. «Ясно, что здесь имеется связь с числом: один предмет, ... несколько предметов». Однако такой интуитивный подход к грамматическому значению игнорирует сложность языковых фактов. Дело в том, что «единственное число» вовсе не обязательно

обозначает реальную «единичность», а «множественно число» - далеко не всегда реальную множественность.

In general then, if one is to take into account the multifarious anomalies connected with the category of number in the different languages of the world, it becomes clear why Jespersen and Isačenko seem so apprehensive.

An unsuspecting layman might have difficulty imagining how the lexical categorisation of the world could possibly vary from language to language. To him, the linguistic representation in his own language of phenomena in both the real world and the abstract world seem perfectly natural and logical; and admittedly the classification is so natural that it does find identical expression in the majority of languages. However, in a foreign language learning situation, when our subject encounters such bizarre necessities as referring to his two eyes in the singular, or literally asking for 'grape' when he knows full well that he requires more than one, it must seem exceedingly unnatural. Why is it that he can refer to both male and female cousins with the same word in English, yet is forced to make a gender distinction and learn two words in German or Danish? Then he finds out that he can use a single word in German (Geschwister) to correspond to both brothers and sisters in English. Such problems can often be discouraging to anyone involved in foreign language acquisition because there is always a tendency for the learner to try and relate everything in the foreign language to his own native tongue. It is precisely such unpredictable structural features of languages as

these, therefore that need to be analysed and described in contrastive studies. This is because a contrastive approach can at least make an attempt to pinpoint the divergences and parallels, either semantic or morphological, between the native language and the language under investigation. After all, the mastery of all such unpredictable and seemingly illogical features of a language must surely be the ultimate dream of the serious foreign language student.

Having thus acclaimed the worthwhile nature of linguistic contrastive studies, we can now move on to set the scene for a contrastive analysis of singularia tantum nouns in English and Russian. In both languages, singularia tantum nouns could be considered to belong to the same series of "anomalies" cited earlier from Bloomfield (1951:271) "...oats versus wheat, or Epsom salts versus table salt...", but it is worthwhile analysing them in greater detail to see if any underlying semantic regularities may have gone undetected until now. Barring this, it would be of interest to see if the "anomalies" are much the same in the two languages, and if not, to speculate why not.

It would be unwise to jump in at the deep end and attempt to analyse such nouns without first of all making reference to how number is regularly expressed in the nouns of English and Russian; for only by considering such regularities can we hope to fully appreciate the irregularities. Leading on from this we can determine in what way the singularia tantum as manifested in English nouns deviates from the situation with Russian nouns, and then we can draw parallels and divergences between the two languages on the basis of a contrastive study.

CHAPTER II

ENGLISH AND RUSSIAN NUMBER

2. Number in English

2.1. Introduction

In the introduction we witnessed the apparent complexities associated with the grammatical category of number in various languages. Against this general background we can now focus our attention on the treatment of number in the two languages under investigation. We shall first of all consider how number is expressed in English nouns and this will provide us with a general framework in which to work and to which we can relate the situation as it appears in Russian.

Specific reference will be made to those grammars of English which provide a particularly exhaustive account of how number is applied to nouns in English. Otto Jespersen's treatment of this subject, as presented in his three studies, The Philosophy of Grammar (1929), Essentials of English Grammar (1957) and A Modern English Grammar (1954), is sufficiently thorough and I should like to present an overall picture by using material from these works. Whenever the need arises I shall supplement Jespersen's treatment of number with material from other traditional grammars of English, notably Krusinga's Handbook of Present-Day English (1925), Zandvoort's Handbook of English Grammar (1972) and Schibsbye's Modern English Grammar (1965). These standard works of reference should provide us with a fair outline of how English nouns reflect the notions of singular and plural.

2.2. Morphology of Number in English

In the English language, grammatical expression of number occurs primarily in nouns and to a lesser degree in pronouns and verbs, while it is not expressed in adjectival or adverbial forms. Of course, number is intrinsically relevant to the cardinal and ordinal numerals in English but this is of little interest to us since we are concerned with the basic distinction within the category of number that applies to nouns.

As we mentioned in the previous chapter, the English noun-plural morpheme is recognised in several different forms. Most grammars dealing with the category of number usually commence with a phonological analysis of these forms since it is vital from the outset to be able to master the phonetic aspects of noun-plural formation.

The vast majority of English noun plurals are formed by the addition of a sibilant suffix, either /-s/, /-z/ or /-ɪz/, to the stem. Although the phonemic shape of this suffix is phonologically predictable, there are several classes of anomalies, mainly involving stem-changes, which are usually listed in most grammars of English. However, there exists one more plural suffix in English, namely /-ən/, which should be contrasted to the other methods of plural formation. Three nouns are characterised by this plural suffix namely *ox - oxen*, *child - children*, and *brother - brethren*. The latter example is only used in a specialised, usually Biblical sense, for the common kinship term has a regular plural *brothers*. All other noun plurals are either the result of vowel replacement (*goose - geese*, *foot - feet*, *louse - lice* etc.), have forms identical to the singular (*sheep - sheep*,

deer - deer, offspring - offspring etc.), or are loan words which retain in English the plural form found in the original language (*criterion - criteria, radius - radii, antenna - antennae* etc.). The fact remains that the actual number of nouns belonging to these irregular categories is comparatively small and we need not concern ourselves here with their detailed phonological analysis. What is pertinent to our study is to establish what the possible markers of plurality are, in order to subsequently identify and analyse those English nouns which are not marked, either morphologically or syntactically, for this distinction.

2.3. Count vs. Uncountable in English

In English, the logical or notional distinction between what counts as one object and what counts as more than one finds syntactic expression in singular and plural. The majority of English nouns occur in parallel sets of two whereby the plural noun is derived from the singular in the manner described above. This parallelism is not always perfect, as we shall soon see, but it seems that in most cases the plural form of a noun, e.g., *carrots*, has the meaning of more than one *carrot*. This plural form can refer to either two *carrots*, or twenty-two *carrots* or even one million and twenty-two *carrots*. In all cases its basic meaning is more than one, which can be represented as *carrots = (one) carrot + (a second) carrot + (a third) carrot* and so on. With a noun like this, which we can relate to a definite object, it is easy to visualise those precise limits and dimensions which constitute the shape of any common or garden carrot, provided of course we know what a carrot is and have seen one before. To such

nouns we assign the term COUNT, as Jespersen did, not surprisingly because objects belonging to this set can be counted. Singular and plural naturally apply to all such nouns, which can be further characterised as either material or immaterial. Material count nouns can be animate or inanimate since it is equally simple to count *dogs, cats, boys, girls, carrots, lemons* etc. Immaterial count nouns can be of various orders as for example *hour, mile, day, pound, word, mistake, idea, event* etc., all of which can be delimited along some dimension and share the capacity of being used in the plural with a plural meaning of several 'things' (and I use this term loosely) belonging to the same kind.

In contrast to the countables, there exists in English a number of nouns which are not characterised by either definite shape or precise limits and must therefore be considered as a separate class. Such nouns are called UNCOUNTABLES, and as the name suggests, by the very nature of their indefiniteness they can not be counted. They can however, be classified according to their material or immaterial properties. Hence, material uncountable nouns are those which are independent of form and usually refer to qualities, substances, materials, commodities and the like, while immaterial uncountables refer to more abstract phenomena. Compare the following examples of material/immaterial countables and material/immaterial uncountables.

<u>COUNTABLE</u>		<u>UNCOUNTABLE</u>	
<u>MATERIAL</u>	<u>IMMATERIAL</u>	<u>MATERIAL</u>	<u>IMMATERIAL</u>
House	Day	Silver	Music
Horse	Hour	Water	Traffic
Girl	Mile	Butter	Leisure
Flower	Pound	Tea	Knowledge
Book	Word	Milk	Satisfaction
Table	Event	Ink	Admiration
Pen	Sonata	Gold	Fame
Lamp	Crime	Wood	Grandeur
Boy	Mistake	Rice	Safety
Brick	Idea	Corn	Idleness

2.3.1. Classificational Criteria - Logical

There are several methods of determining whether or not a noun belongs to the set of count or uncountable nouns. Unfortunately there is also a large overspill of anomalies which need to be considered. First of all though, let us take a look at some of the more regular features associated with count and non-count nouns, or MASS-WORDS as the latter are more commonly called. The first thing to realise is that count nouns as mentioned above, have both singular and plural forms and the distinction is largely based upon a logical reference to one individual thing or several things of the same kind. As a contrast to this Jespersen (1957:208) informs us that;

From a purely logical point of view we may say that as mass-words denote what cannot be counted, the ideas of singular and plural are not applicable to them; strictly speaking therefore, they should not have the form of either of these numbers. But as a matter of fact, most languages are bound to choose between the two numbers, and

mass-words therefore may be divided into the two classes of singular mass-words and plural mass-words.

It seems then that the semantic notions of singular and plural do not apply to mass-words and the expression for number within them is nothing more than a formal necessity since, outside of singular/plural, no third alternative is provided. We therefore encounter those mass-nouns which are formally singular like *ink, wine, cheese* etc., and those which are formally plural like *oats, dregs, rickets* etc. It is precisely these singular mass-nouns that constitute the singularia tantum in English, while their plural counterparts form the pluralia tantum. Without going into detail, it should be pointed out that singularia tantum nouns refer to those nouns in English which are used mainly in a singular form. I emphasise here the word mainly because we shall see that singular mass-nouns can on occasion be pluralised, often with systematic semantic differences.

2.3.2. Classificational Criteria - Syntactic

A second way of establishing whether a noun is countable or not is centred around the syntactic use of determiners. Arthur Norman (1964:163) informs us that countable nouns can be used in the singular with the following determiners - *a/an, another, each, either, every, neither, one, whatever, which* and *whichever*; and in the plural with - *all, both, certain, enough, few, many, more, most, other, several, some, such, these, those, which*, and by *zero* and numerical determiners from two onwards. If we apply our previous example of a countable noun (*carrot - carrots*) to these, we see that the appropriate

singular or plural forms can be preceded by the corresponding determiners listed above. Mass-nouns on the other hand can only be preceded by the determiners - *all, enough, less, little, more, most, much, other, some, such* and *zero*. This of course does not account for all of the determiners in English because there is a certain number (*any, her, his, its, John's, my, no, our, that, the, their, this, what* and *your*) that normally occur with all nouns except personal names and place names. Norman's labels for two of his sub-classes of English nouns which correspond to our classes of countables and mass-words are 'pluralizers' and 'non-pluralizers' respectively.

2.4. Anomalies - Hybrid Types

The same author goes on to establish a third nominal sub-class in English "which exhibits all the formal properties of the pluralizing and non-pluralizing nominals" (159). He calls this group 'unrestricted' nominals on the basis of their ability to pattern freely with all determiners. We know that some mass-words such as *ink, wine, cheese* etc., can also function as countables and it appears that these are the nouns that fall into Norman's third nominal sub-class. In the following examples then, those nouns which are normally considered singular mass are in fact behaving like regular count nouns.

The artist used different coloured *inks* to achieve the right effect.

The list included a large selection of French and German *wines*.

It was my job to see that the various *cheeses* were stored in the correct manner.

It is a grammatical fact, pointed out as long ago as 1868 in Harvey's Practical Grammar of the English Language that material uncountable nouns may have a plural form "when different kinds of the same substance are referred to" (Logan 1941:171). Norman (1964:160) considers this feature to be structurally predictable.

The pluralizers and nonpluralizers, as shown, are quite limited in the gradations of meaning which each can produce (using only zero and the definite article with singular and plural forms), even though these shades of meaning range from the most general in the case of the nonpluralizing to the most specific in the case of the pluralizing nominal. Since the unrestricted nominal offers these gradations in a structurally predictable hierarchy, they can be considered alloemes of a single sememe. For example, the unrestricted nominal *cabbage*, like the nonpluralizer *rice*, can pattern, *Cabbage is good* or *The cabbage is good*, the latter suggesting an indefinite amount. Like the pluralizer *potato*, it can pattern *Cabbages are good*, *The cabbages are good*, or *The cabbage is good*, the final construction suggesting one of a kind and involving the unrestricted nominal in potential, if minor ambiguity. Thus indirectly the subclasses of the English nominal offer a way to explore meaning through structure.

A similar view is expounded by Arne Juul who is concerned with problems of number caused by inconsistencies in determining the grammatical number of certain nouns. He would consider a noun like *ethics* as a syncretism of singular and plural, and postulates certain structural, syntactic rules for resolving the enigma caused by this syncretism. A typical example is reproduced below.

If an N3 sign is the ultimate centre of a nominal phrase containing at least one A1 (A2) sign, and no A2 (A1) sign, then it is in the singular (plural). (Juul 1972:8)

Examples to illustrate this rule are provided by Juul, as in the following sentence where the noun (N3) *ethics* is in the singular on the basis of its compatability with the singular determiner (A1) a.

If one develops in detail the morality of Augustinianism, one is expounding theology which appeals to revelation rather than a philosophical *ethics*. (1972:8 ff.)

The same noun however, is considered plural in the following context.

But enough of all *these ethics*, some voices will cry. What about the drama. (1972:9).

On the basis of Norman's and Juul's articles it seems fair to assume that there are structural criteria which may be applied, in determining when certain 'hybrid' English nouns are used as count or mass types. These are correlated with semantic features which must also be taken into consideration.

We have already mentioned that some material uncountables can be pluralised to refer to different sorts, varieties etc. of a substance. Thus for example we have *Rhine wines*, *Rhone wines*, *French wines*, *German wines* etc. Material uncountables can also behave as count nouns in order to refer to a portion or specific amount of the substance in question. It is therefore not uncommon to hear a request in a restaurant for *three beers*, *three Vermouths*, *three coffees* or *three teas*. The mass-nouns are being used in this context as count-nouns. This may be due to the fact that definite quantities of the substances are being specified, i.e., *three glasses of beer (Vermouth)*.

or *three cups of tea (coffee)*. The mass noun is no longer characterised by lack of shape or precise limits and is therefore regarded as a count noun because it has both size and shape.

Sometimes pluralised material mass-nouns, as mentioned by Zandvoort (1972:98) can be used to express great quantity or extent;

The *sands* of the desert.

The *waters* of the lake.

Zandvoort also refers to certain plural forms of abstract nouns expressing great intensity, or lack of specificity, as in the sentence *I'll see you in my dreams*. Other examples of this usage are:

Against his *express wishes*.

Tossed between *hopes* and *fears*.

I have my *doubts*. (98)

Another position is taken by Conrad T. Logan (1941), who cites fifty two examples of confusion in the use of pluralised immaterial uncountables. Among his list of examples we find mention of such prolific writers as H.G. Wells, Katherine Mansfield and Charles Dickens, all of whom are accused of using a plural form of an uncountable noun which "adds nothing to the clarity of the statement, though the authors probably thought they were making a valuable distinction" (Logan 1941:171). The majority of examples are taken from journalistic sources;

1. The destruction of Rebel air raids of Guernica, historic Basque city, with the consequent *deaths* of 800 unarmed civilians.... (172)
2. With keen intellectual curiosity they awaited the *births* of their two children. (173)
3. Let's get together and renew our *youths*. (173)
4. Reilly gave no hint of the *identities* of the four persons he said were guilty. (174)
5. When the life guard ran for his boat, I began hasty *searches* for hot water bottles and first aid kits. (173)

Logan sees no reason for pluralising the abstract uncountable nouns in the above examples, nor indeed in the other forty-seven examples which he lists. In his view, *death* can be pluralised when referring to two separate events as, for example, in Thomas Hardy's The Return of the Native:

The story of the *deaths* of Eustacia and Wildeve was told throughout Egdon. (171)

Such a distinction, however, is not evident, according to Logan, in the earlier cases.

Therefore in the same sense that material mass nouns can be pluralised to refer to definite substances, some abstract nouns can be pluralised to refer to distinct manifestations or actions. Apart from this, Logan believes that there are no grounds for wanton pluralisation of uncountables, as this only leads to confusion. Unfortunately, Logan's examples are taken out of context and it becomes difficult to ascertain whether the pluralisation of the immaterial uncountables serves any purpose or not. In the first example the use of the plural form *deaths* suggests to me, at least, that the victims

did not all die simultaneously. The use of 'consequent' further suggests that some *deaths* may have occurred some time after the air-raid. In the second example *births* refers, in my estimation, to two distinct events. Since two children are expected to be born, each child has to go through the birth-process individually. *Youths* in the third example and *identities* in the fourth can once again be considered distinct manifestations. We do not know whether or not the speaker in the third example was referring to people with whom he had shared his youth, or whether the four people in the fourth example had a similar identity, i.e., they were all football-players. In the fifth example, *searches* suggests that the subject made several attempts to look for the objects and that each attempt constituted a *search*, maybe in a different place each time.

While it may seem pedantic to consider all of the stylistic nuances associated with the use of these plural forms, the fact nevertheless remains that various interpretations are acceptable. Considering such examples out of context it is unfair to categorically state, as Logan does, that "the plural adds nothing to the clarity of the statement," (171). As far as we are concerned, immaterial mass-nouns can have plural forms which seem to suggest various nuances like those mentioned above.

Gleason (1965:136) makes the further semantic observation that countable nouns can theoretically be used as mass-nouns to refer to "the substance of which the object is made. If you eat an egg you may get egg on your tie" (136-7). He goes on to suppose that given

the right context, however bizarre, every noun can be used as either count or mass. For example,

Water as a mass noun is common and widespread; as a count noun is nearly restricted to waiters. Even if the restaurant usage had not been observed, the pattern would remain and this use might arise at any time. Perhaps some of the other words would also show both uses if sufficiently unusual situations were conceived. This seems to be the case. For example, *book* and *shelf* are both fairly typical count nouns. With the present vogue of speaking - animal stories, we can imagine one featuring a mother termite concerned over her child: *Johnny is very choosy about his food. He will eat book but he won't touch shelf.* This is far fetched, of course.

Gleason's suggestion shows that there are contrasts between mass nouns and countable nouns which need to be thoroughly covered in the system of English grammar. Let us now turn to some other anomalies within the category of number in English.

2.4.1. Formal Plurals

We know that countable nouns have singular and plural forms, the choice of which is usually based upon a logical distinction between 'one-ness' and 'more than one-ness'. There are several countable nouns however which orthographically and phonetically look like normal plural forms but which often represent something entirely different. Jespersen (1957:85) refers to such nouns as "differentiated plurals," and states: "In many cases the plural has a meaning which is more or less different from that of 'the same word' in the singular." I tend to feel however that such forms are best considered homonyms, since the meaning is so far removed from that of the 'apparent' singular form. Consider the following:

<i>draught</i>	-	<i>draughts</i>	(game)
<i>custom</i>	-	<i>customs</i>	(duties)
<i>letter</i>	-	<i>letters</i>	(literature)
<i>quarter</i>	-	<i>quarters</i>	(lodgings)
<i>spirit</i>	-	<i>spirits</i>	(alcohol)

In the above examples, those listed on the right-hand side must be considered as separate entities having formal plurals (like *trousers*, *scissors* etc.) which happen to coincide with the plural of those countable nouns listed on the left-hand side. They are in fact pluralia tantum nouns since they are used only in the plural number and have no corresponding singular forms. The imperfect parallelism displayed by such nouns must be considered anomalous by anyone learning English as a foreign language.

Another group of English nouns which are formal plurals generally have no homophonous singulars, yet can be classified according to a variety of semantic properties. Jespersen (1954:90) lists these nouns under the general heading of "Composite Objects, etc." and proposes such semantic groupings as the following:

1. Articles of dress; e.g. *trousers, breeches, braces, suspenders, pantaloons, drawers, unmentionables* etc.
2. Instruments or tools; e.g. *scissors, shears, tongs, tweezers, forceps, bellows, scales* etc.
3. Places, buildings, institutions; e.g. *archives, barracks, outskirts, lodgings, headquarters* etc.
4. Parts of the body; e.g. *bowels, entrails, intestines, genitals, buttocks, whiskers*.
5. Doings, occupations, games; e.g. *nuptials, matins, vespers, antics, billiards, skittles, checkers*.

It is interesting to note that while such forms may be widely accepted as formal plurals, many of them are often treated as

singulars. This seems to be especially true of instruments, tools, etc., where it would not seem totally unacceptable, at least in my dialect of English (Northern British) to hear references to a *scissors*, a *tongs*, a *bellows*, a *pliers* in such expressions as *Where's the scissors?* or *Do you have a scissors I could borrow?*, instead of the more usual *a pair of scissors*. Now this may in fact be a dialectal feature, caused by the comparative ease of expression in fast speech of *Where's* as opposed to *Where are*; and of *a scissors* as opposed to *a pair of scissors*. The context also seems to be important since the replies to such questions would probably be something like: *The scissors are on the table*, and *Yes, take these* respectively, both of which reflect the plural nature of *scissors*. The same might also be said of certain formal plurals indicating buildings, places etc., for in the following example reference to a singular form would not seem inappropriate for many native speakers: *The town has an archives, a golf-links, a barracks and an iron-works.*

Here we might also refer to those mass-nouns which indicate the names of various diseases and those ending in *-ics*. These nouns display great inconsistency in usage and yet are poorly dealt with in most English grammars. Jespersen (1954:124) refers to the names of diseases as "plural immaterial mass words." Examples of such nouns are *measles*, *mumps*, *hysterics*, *shingles*, *shivers*, *ricketts*, *chills*, *throes* and *vives*. To this list Jespersen adds "names of moods, more or less approaching states of illness: *blues*, *creeps*, *dumps*, *jumps*, *sulks*, *sullens*" (124). These nouns are very rarely used as the subject of a sentence, nevertheless instances do occur when it is necessary for a verb to agree with a noun like *measles*. Schibsbye

(1965:42-3) believes that on questions of concord "*Measles* takes the singular: *it was not the measles that was attacking her, but a very different malady; mumps, rickets* generally take the singular, but can still take the plural." Unfortunately no examples of these nouns occurring with plural verbs are provided. Following an informal survey amongst a small sample of native English speakers at the University of Alberta it appears that there is vacillation when determining whether or not nouns such as *measles, mumps, rickets* and *shingles* should take a singular or plural verb. When subjects were asked to provide the correct form of the verb to be in the following test frame, a variety of responses were given:

- | | |
|----------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. <i>Measles</i>) | |
| 2. <i>Mumps</i>) | |
| 3. <i>Rickets</i>) | <i>is/are contagious</i> |
| 4. <i>Shingles</i>) | |

Responses from Americans were fairly consistent in that the plural form of the verb was given for each noun. One member of the British contingency was steadfast in his decision to choose singular verbs for each noun while other responses from Britons and Canadians were varied. Thorough testing is required before any conclusive observations can be made, but most subjects agreed that neither *measles is contagious* nor *measles are contagious* would be totally unacceptable. It seems then that nouns such as these provide yet another anomaly within the category of number in English. Unfortunately further investigation into the nature of the anomaly goes far beyond the scope of this thesis.

Juul believes that the *-ics* nouns display the syncretism mentioned earlier, and in order to determine whether they are to be

located grammatically as singular or plural, should be subjected to his rules (p. 19). They do receive fairly concise treatment in Fowler's Modern English Usage, where it is stated that the grammatical number of such nouns

is not so simple a matter as it ~~is~~ sometimes thought. The natural tendency is to start with a fallacy: We say Mathematics is (and not are) a science; therefore mathematics is singular. But there the number of the verb, whether legitimately or not, is at least influenced, if not determined, by that of a science. The testing should be done with sentences in which there is not a noun complement to confuse the issue. (260)

Fowler goes on to cite such testing frames as:

- | | | |
|------|-----|--------------------------------|
| -ics | is | 1) now taking a back seat. |
| | are | 2) easier than I expected. |
| | | 3) most fascinating. |
| | | 4) rampant in the big schools. |

and then further states the emerging tendencies. For example with words such as *classics, mathematics, politics, heroics, athletics, tactics, economics, ethics, linguistics, phonetics, physics, acoustics, etc.*, a singular form is predominant when the name of the science is denoted per se, e.g.,

Acoustics deals with sound.

Under other circumstances, i.e., when not referring to the discipline, then a plural form seems more fitting, e.g.

The acoustics of the hall are faulty.

Thirdly, for those nouns which refer to behaviour, a plural form is used, e.g.,

Hysterics *leave me cold.*

Heroics *are out of place.*

Fowler goes on to emphasise that the presence of a singular noun complement will often result in a singular usage of the verb, as is the case in the example cited in the quotation above.

It should be pointed out however that words ending in *-ics* and the names of diseases discussed earlier are semantic uncountables which have formal plurals, whereas words like *trousers, bellows, scissors, etc.*, are naturally countables, since they are objects in the real world with definite dimensions and can therefore be counted. The two classes of nouns seem to overlap since they are all, for the main part, formal plurals.

2.4.2. Generic Number

Now that we have considered both regular and irregular features associated with count-nouns and mass-nouns, it is worth mentioning another aspect of English number which applies to most nouns. When the need arises to make reference to a whole species or class of objects in English, there are many ways in which this can be achieved. The determiners *every, any, or all* can be used, the latter one of course with the noun in the plural, as in the following examples:

Every carrot is red.

Any carrot is red.

All carrots are red.

Jespersen (1957:212-3) informs us that

very often, however, the generic character is not thus expressly indicated, but implied, and curiously enough language for that purpose uses now the singular, now the plural, now a definite and now an indefinite form.

Thus, the generic number, as it is called, can be 'implied' in English by the following structural properties of the noun phrase:

- 1) The singular form of a noun without an article. This method is used with both material and immaterial mass-nouns.

E.g., *Coffee is more expensive than tea.*
Music enriches the soul.

Two count nouns, *man* and *woman* can also be used generically in the same way.

E.g., *Man is the head, but woman turns it* (Jespersen 1957:213)
God made the country and man made the town (213).

It will be noted in the second example that *man* refers to mankind and as such includes both gender distinctions.

- 2) The noun in the singular with the indefinite article.
E.g., *A dog makes a good companion.*
- 3) The noun in the singular with the definite article.
E.g., *The cow is highly respected in some societies.*
- 4) The plural form of the noun without an article.
E.g., *Dogs make good companions.*
Cows are highly respected in some societies.
- 5) The plural form of the noun with the definite article. This method is used mainly with adjectives.
E.g., *The Welsh are excellent rugby-players.*

What is important to note about the generic number is the fact that number per se is actually neutralised. The basic

distinction between one and more than one is inapplicable to sentences like *Dogs make good companions* and *A dog makes a good companion*, since in the first instance reference is being made to the entire class of dogs, and in the second, a *dog* is being used as an exemplar of that class of animals known as dogs. English therefore makes use of both the singular and plural to make generic significations in nouns.

Chafe (1970:189) proposes that the generic nature of nouns "is not something that is established by a choice within the noun at all; it is something that is automatically determined for the noun by the verb to which the noun is attached." Accordingly he makes the contrast between the nouns in the following examples on the basis of the generic and non-generic nature of the verbs involved.

An elephant likes peanuts. (187)

An elephant stepped on my car. (187)

Non-generic verbs refer to transitory states or events, while generic verbs denote "a timeless state or propensity for the event to occur" (186). Chafe believes that in the first sentence both nouns must be considered generic and therefore postulates that the feature 'generic' radiates from the verb as opposed to being intrinsic to one of the nouns and then spreading to the verb and to the other noun.

Chafe's interpretation of the three major methods of denoting generic number, as illustrated in the following examples, is interesting:

1. An elephant eats peanuts.
2. Elephants eat peanuts.
3. The elephant eats peanuts.

The first thing to establish is the fact that the use of both singular and plural forms of the noun elephant has nothing to do with the normal singular/plural distinction which would be based upon one (elephant) and more than one (elephants). By the generic nature of the sentences, reference to the entire class of elephants is expressed. Each sentence can, however, be interpreted in a slightly different manner. Consequently:

An elephant in the generic sense means that we are considering one elephant at a time, but that no matter which one we consider, it will fit the rest of the sentence equally well. An elephant likes peanuts means that any elephant whatsoever that we may select from the entire class will turn out to like peanuts. The other case, Elephants like peanuts, means that all the individual elephants taken together - not one at a time - like peanuts. The third possibility for a generic noun - The elephant likes peanuts, as discussed in the last paragraph - means that the class is not viewed as consisting of individuals at all, but rather as an undifferentiated whole. (192-193)

This whole concept is reminiscent of the supposition put forward in the previous chapter as to why English, in a certain context, will use the plural form grapes while Russian in exactly the same context uses a singular form. It was suggested that English looks upon grapes in multiple terms whereas Russians view them as a singular entity. We shall postpone further speculation on this matter until we have considered Russian singularia tantum nouns more closely in the next chapter.

To examine all of the anomalies associated with count and mass nouns in English is not the main purpose of this study; hence we were able to merely skim the surface of a veritable ocean of irregularities and inconsistencies that face a non-native speaker in an English language learning situation. We witnessed such anomalous situations whereby a 'hybrid' noun like *lamb* can be pluralised when referring to the live animal in the field, but can not be pluralised when it appears on the dinner plate. We also saw that from a semantic point of view the world of countables may seem straightforward enough until such formal plurals as *bellows* or *gallows* are encountered syntactically. Finally, the apparent neutralisation of number in generic sentences was noted.

Let us now attempt to pinpoint those regular and anomalous features associated with the category of number in Russian which seem to parallel the situation in English. In this way we will be able to relate the category of number in Russian to that in English, in roughly the same terms.

2.5. Number in Russian

Due to the inflected nature of the Russian language, the traditional approach to the treatment of number usually involves a description of the usage of various inflectional suffixes. We need not concern ourselves with a detailed coverage of these inflectional suffixes since any standard grammar of Russian will provide this information. Nevertheless, we shall take a brief look at how noun-inflections operate. To this end, and indeed as far as the expression of number in Russian nouns is concerned, we will be referring to the

Academy of Sciences Grammar edited by Svedova, because of its conciseness and completeness.

2.6. Morphology of Number in Russian

The majority of nouns in Russian are said to decline, and a noun declension refers to the six case endings which express the various functions of the noun in relation to other words in the sentence or word-group. The changes occur in the inflectional suffix, reflecting the cases labelled nominative, accusative, genitive, dative, instrumental and locative. A complete set of all the noun forms will constitute a full paradigm, but within this full paradigm will appear two sub-divisions, namely those of singular and plural number. In total then we expect six inflected forms in the singular and six inflected forms in the plural to make up a full noun paradigm. This does not mean to say though that every single form within a set has to be different, because more often they are not; nor does it mean that every noun in Russian is inflected, because there are a considerable number of indeclinables.

Two basic types of noun declension may be differentiated, substantive and adjectival. There is also a third type which is merely a mixed declension of substantive and adjectival forms. The majority of nouns, although not all of them, belong to the substantive declension which itself is divided into two types, namely, first and second. The first substantive declension distinguishes three varieties with distinct inflectional case - form systems, and which can be related to the three genders of masculine, feminine and neuter. The

second substantive declension includes fewer nouns than the first, but also differentiates according to gender. The inflectional forms here however display general features which can be applied to nouns of all three genders.

As well as belonging to a declensional class, the Russian noun can be further classified according to its semantic properties. Apart from the regular distinction between common and proper nouns, which is uniform in both English and Russian, Russian nouns can be divided with reference to their abstract, concrete, animate and inanimate nature. We shall note that even further sub-classification is evident within the category of number and its application to the Russian noun.

По отношению к категории числа существительные делятся на слова с выраженным противопоставлением по числу и с невыраженным противопоставлением по числу или существительные *singularia tantum* (только ед. ч.) и *pluralia tantum* (только мн. ч.). (Švedova 1970:305)

Overall then Russian nouns seem to belong to far more distinct classes than their English counterparts. Firstly they belong to a declensional class within which there are three gender distinctions. Next, they can be either animate, inanimate, concrete or abstract; and finally they can be further classified according to their ability to express number contrast or else their tendency to appear in a single number form only. It is these final classificational criteria that interest us.

2.7. Count vs. Uncountable in Russian

By omitting from this chapter those anomalies which characterise singularia tantum nouns the expression of number in Russian nouns will seem straightforward in comparison to the situation in English. For example the basic sub-classification concerning number is connected to the noun's ability to be expressed in both the singular and plural. Those nouns which do not display such a contrast form a separate class. From a semantic point of view the notions of singular and plural are related to 'one-ness' and 'more than one-ness', just as they are in English.

Во всех существительных, обозначающих конкретные предметы и явления, различие между формами единственного и множественного числа можно выразить формулой «один - не один». Это значит, что грамматическое различие между соотносительными формами числа имеет ясное предметно - смысловое содержание
(Nikitevič 1963:55)

From Nikitevič's comment we note that the notions of 'one-ness' and 'more than one-ness' apply to concrete objects and phenomena; and this parallels the situation in English where such notions are applied to count nouns. The Svedova Grammar (323) further demonstrates the similarities between Russian and English count nouns.

Наиболее последовательно отношения единичности - множественности представлены у существительных - названий конкретных предметов (а также названий событий, явлений, фактов), подлежащих счету.

It does not necessarily follow however that what can be classed as a count noun in English will correspond directly with a Russian countable; indeed we have already cited the example of how the English noun *grape* differs in usage from its Russian counterpart. We noted however that English nouns are classified as either count or mass and further saw how certain nouns can be count in one context (*Two beers*) and mass in another (*Beer is good for you*). The classification of Russian nouns, as far as number is concerned, is similar.

Кроме имен, имеющих противопоставленные формы, значительное место в категории числа занимают имена, не составляющие числовых корреляций. (Sumkina 1964:222)

Belonging to this class are the Russian uncountable nouns, which are divided according to their semantic properties into the following: material nouns (Вещественные Существительные), collective nouns (Собирательные Существительные) and abstract nouns (Отвлеченные Существительные). These nouns are not termed uncountable in the Russian grammars but rather "Перечисленные группы слов называются существительные *singularia tantum* (только ед. ч.)" (Švedova, 1960:323). Hence the Russian uncountable is quite definitely considered *singularia tantum*. Just as in English, these nouns can be pluralised in certain contexts, but the nature of the semantic features associated with the 'pluralised uncountable', and indeed the whole description of Russian uncountables seems to belong to that section dealing with the *singularia tantum*. We shall therefore postpone our discussion of Russian uncountables until the next chapter and shall here concern

ourselves instead with other irregularities which occur in the category of number as it applies to the Russian noun.

2.8. Anomalies



There are several Russian nouns which have two forms in the nominative plural, each with a different meaning. As an example we can cite the masculine noun хлеб which not only means 'bread' in the sense of a loaf of bread but also refers to 'grain' or more precisely 'corn'. Although only one word exists in these two senses in the singular, there are two forms in the nominative plural corresponding to the different meanings. Hence we have хлебы in the sense of 'loaves of bread', e.g.,

"вынуть из печи горячие хлебы"

and хлебá in the sense of corn crops, e.g.,

"на колхозных полях золотят хлеба"

The above examples are taken from Isačenko (1965:78). Other examples include the following;

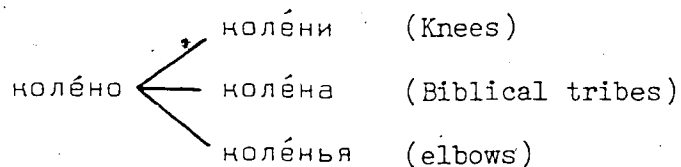
МЕХ	-	fur, bellows (sg.)		МЕХА	-	furs
				МЕХ	-	bellows
ОБРАЗ	-	form (shape), icon.		ОБРАЗЫ	-	forms
				ОБРАЗА	-	icons

ЛИСТ	-	leaf, sheet (of paper)	ЛИСТЬЯ	-	leaves
			ЛИСТЫ	-	sheets
ЦВЕТ	-	flower, colour	ЦВЕТЫ	-	flowers
			ЦВЕТА	-	colours

These examples are somewhat similar to the English differentiated plurals, to use Jespersen's term, where we had the following;

Custom	-	habit	customs (habits)
			customs (duties)
Quarter	-	fourth part	quarters (fourth-part)
			quarters (lodgings)

As we mentioned earlier though, the English forms have no corresponding singular forms, whereas the Russian examples do; and furthermore we indicated that the English plurals *customs* meaning 'habits', and *customs* meaning 'duties' should be considered as homonyms. The Russian forms can not be considered homophonous in the plural, not only because of the different vocallic endings in the nominative plural but also because there is quite often an accompanying stress shift. However the singular forms, ЛИСТ meaning leaf and ЛИСТ meaning sheet of paper, are homophonous lexical items which are semantically distinct. Isačenko goes on to cite one example where there are three plural forms corresponding to the same singular noun, КОЛѢНО, each one having a different meaning. Thus we have,



From the standpoint of the language learner, the situation in Russian seems far less anomolous than that in English, as long as it is remembered that a noun like лист has two different meanings, each one having a different form in the nominative plural like *customs* (duties).

Sg.	Pl.		Sg.	Pl.	
лист	→	листья (leaf/leaves)	Custom	→	Customs (habit/habits)
лист	→	листы (sheet/sheets)		←	Customs (duties)

There is however a large group of Russian nouns which displays an anomalous situation similar to that caused by the English "composite objects etc." mentioned by Jespersen (1954:93). These are the so called pluralia tantum nouns.

2.8.1. Formal Plurals

Although we referred to those mass-nouns in English which have formal plurals (e.g. *oats, dregs, rickets etc.*) as pluralia tantum, all but one of the standard grammars (Zandvoort 1972:95) used for reference purposes in this study preferred not to include this term in their discussions of number in English. The situation in Russian is the reverse, with both singularia tantum and pluralia tantum receiving some coverage in most works dealing with the category of number in Russian. When one takes into consideration the fact that the major division regarding number amongst nouns in English is the count/mass

semantic distinction, it is not difficult to see why English grammarians prefer not to class nouns under the common heading pluralia tantum.

Nouns which do have formal plurals can be either countable objects (*trousers, spectacles, bellows*) or mass nouns (*oats, spirits, Epsom salts*). By making the initial distinction between count and mass it can be perplexing to re-group certain count nouns and mass-nouns under one heading.

As far as number in Russian is concerned there is a more regular correspondence between a noun's formal ability to express number contrast and its semantic adherence to the count or mass categories. What is important to remember however is the fact that pluralia tantum nouns in both English and Russian are those which appear only in a plural number and therefore have no corresponding singular forms. Nouns belonging to this class in either language can refer to countable objects, or phenomena, substances etc. which are not characterised by precise limits or dimensions. Bearing this in mind we can now move on to discuss pluralia tantum nouns in Russian and try to determine more precisely how they correspond to the same class of nouns in English, namely Jespersen's 'differentiated plurals', 'composite objects' and 'plural immaterial mass-words'.

The number of semantic groups which can be established within the class of pluralia tantum nouns in Russian varies considerably from the Švedova Grammar which lists five categories, to Isačenko (1965) who cites ten. The groups are nevertheless practically identical, Isačenko's listings being more specific. On the basis of these two taxonomies and those categories presented by Vasil'eva (1974) we can collocate the following semantic groups.

- 1) Articles of dress; e.g. брюки (trousers), штаны (breeches), подтяжки (suspenders), помочи (braces), панталоны (drawers), кальсоны (pants) etc.
- 2) Instruments or tools; e.g. ножницы (scissors), щипцы (tongs), клещи (pincers), весы (scales), грабли (rake), вилы (pitchfork) etc.
- 3) Games; e.g. шахматы (chess), городки (gorodki), горелки (catch), шашки (checkers), прятки (hide and seek), жмурки (blind-man's buff) etc.
- 4) Festivals & Ceremonies; e.g. похороны (funeral), именины (name-day), крестины (christening), святки (yule-tide), смотрины (bride-show) etc.
- 5) Periods of Time; e.g. будни (week-day(s)), сумерки (twilight), сутки (24 hours), каникулы (holidays) etc.
- 6) Substances, materials & foodstuffs; e.g. белила (whiting), дрова (firewood), дрожжи (yeast), чернила (ink), щи (cabbage soup), сливки (cream) etc.
- 7) Left-overs or remains; e.g. стружки (shavings), опилки (sawdust), отруби (bran), отбросы (garbage), помой (slops) etc.
- 8) Actions, processes, states; e.g. бредни (ravings), выборы (elections), хлопоты (trouble), переговоры (talks), роды (childbirth), проводы (seeing-off), поиски (search) etc.
- 9) Borrowings; e.g. финансы (finances), джунгли (jungle), алименты (alimony), ресурсы (resources), мемуары (memoirs) etc.

If we compare the semantic groups in Russian with those in English (p. 25), we notice that some overlapping does occur between pluralia tantum nouns in both languages. There are many nouns that are classed pluralia tantum in Russian however which correspond to regular or singularia tantum nouns in English. Many of these nouns even belong to those semantic groups where parallelism seems most evident between the two languages. Consider the following Russian pluralia tantum nouns and their English equivalents.

RUSSIAN	ENGLISH		
Pluralia tantum	Pluralia tantum	Singularia tantum	Singular and Plural
штаны трусики ножницы очки весы дрова белила шахматы деньги дрожжи грабли часы ворота вилы сани	Trousers Shorts Scissors Spectacles Scales	Firewood Whiting Chess Money Yeast	Rake/Rakes Watch/Watches Gate/Gates Pitchfork/Pitchforks Sledge/Sledges

As might be expected, there are nouns which are classed pluralia tantum in English which do not correspond to the same class of nouns in Russian

ENGLISH	RUSSIAN	
Pluralia tantum	Singularia tantum	Singular and Plural
Outskirts Riches Bowels News Rags Goods & Chattels Entrails Odds & Ends Backwoods	ветошь скарб требуха барахло глушь	окраина/окраины богатство/богатства кишечник/кишечники новость/новости

The above observations indicate that while there are certain semantic parallels between pluralia tantum nouns in English and Russian (*trousers* - штаны, *scissors* - ножницы), there are at the same time many divergences which require systematic analysis in the form of a contrastive study.

2.8.2. Government by Cardinal Numerals

Another anomalous situation concerning the inflections of Russian nouns for number, arises when a noun is used with a numeral. The case government after numerals in Russian is quite complex and since it is thoroughly treated in most standard grammars need not be exhaustively covered here. Some of the irregularities ought to be highlighted however in order to complete the picture of how number is expressed in Russian nouns.

Irregular case usage after numerals occurs with два, три, четыре and composite numerals whose last component is any of these, e.g., двадцать два, сорок три etc. inanimate nouns following these numerals in a nominative or accusative (which is identical to the nominative) capacity will appear in the genitive singular. With the exception of один and compounds ending in один which govern the nominative/accusative singular, all other cardinal numerals used in the same nominative/accusative sense will be followed by nouns in the genitive plural. The following examples will illustrate the case usage of nouns after numerals.

один (одно, одна) стол (слово, книга) Nominative Singular

два (две)	стола, слова (книги)	Genitive Singular
три	стола, слова, книги	Genitive Singular
четыре	" " "	"
пять	столов, слов, книг	Genitive Plural
шесть	" " "	"

The anomaly lies in the fact that after два, три, четыре and composites thereof, the noun is in a singular form. The fact that any adjective used to qualify the noun after these numerals appears in the genitive plural (or nominative plural for feminine nouns) does not make the situation any clearer. In addition to this, the complexity is intensified when we consider numbers ending in один. Thus the phrases двадцать один стол and сорок два стола refer to twenty-one table (singular) and forty-two table (singular). Since table is a regular count noun in both English and Russian, the notions of singular and plural should naturally apply. It therefore seems unnatural to use this noun in a singular form when more than one table is being referred to, but this is simply an instance of the grammatical government of case and number which has nothing to do with cognitive categories.

There remains one more aspect of the Russian numeral which needs to be mentioned in connection with those pluralia tantum nouns which on occasion need to be enumerated. In English it is customary to use the word 'pair' under such circumstances, e.g., two pairs of trousers, a pair of scissors, etc. However we did mention that a scissofs would not

be totally unacceptable in some dialects of English. Russian also makes use of the word 'пара' in the same fashion e.g. две пары штанов, одна пара ножниц - especially to refer to those objects which are composed of two equal parts. But there also exists in Russian a plural form of один which is frequently used to single out such objects, e.g., одни ножницы, одни клещи and also to refer to those countable objects which appear in the pluralia tantum, e.g., одни часы, одни грабли etc. This seems equated to the English usage of a *scissors*, a *bellows*, a *tweezers*. Furthermore there is a series of collective numerals (двое, трое, четверо, пятеро etc.) which can, in Russian, replace the use of 'пара'. The Švedova Grammar (325) cites the following examples, "двое ножниц, трое саней, четверо шаровар". The first example is tantamount to saying in English *two scissors*, which to me seems totally unacceptable in spite of the fact that I frequently make reference to a *scissors*. It remains to be tested whether or not native Russians prefer to use двое ножниц or две пары ножниц, but for English speakers learning Russian I would expect a propensity in usage towards the latter, by analogy to the English rendering *two pairs of scissors*.

So far we have tried to establish the various manifestations of number in Russian nouns according to those parameters which we identified within the category of number in English. In order to maintain the parallelism, we should now consider how number is expressed generically in Russian. Since we hinted earlier that there may be some aspect of 'genericism' connected with the Russian usage of singular only, (e.g.,

виноград) where English prefers plural *grapes*, it would seem more appropriate to consider the singularia tantum before we cover generic number in Russian. We shall therefore postpone such coverage until we have taken a look at how the singularia tantum works in both languages and this in fact will form the contents of the next chapter.

CHAPTER THREE
SINGULARIA TANTUM NOUNS IN
RUSSIAN AND ENGLISH

3.1. General

In spite of persistent efforts to avoid detailed comment upon the singularia tantum, on reflection it seems that our discussion on how number is manifested in the nouns of English and Russian compelled us to reveal many of its fundamental characteristics. We know that the term singularia tantum is rarely, if ever, employed in any grammar of English while it is constantly mentioned in Russian, referring to those nouns which are used mainly in the singular number. What seems to constitute the singularia tantum in English is that group of nouns known as 'singular mass-nouns' (e.g. *wine, ink, cheese*). The fundamental property of these nouns is that they do not display the regular correlative number distinction between singular/plural, which is based upon what counts as 'one' and what counts as 'more than one'; instead a pluralised singularia tantum noun will have definite semantic connotations (e.g. *French wines, coloured inks, low-fat cheeses*).

3.2. A definition for singularia tantum nouns.

Thus far, the category of number in English has been used as a reference framework to which we have related the same in Russian. Since the singularia tantum is so well recognised in Russian, it would seem wise at this point to reverse the situation and take the singularia tantum in Russian as our precedent. By doing so we can

adopt a definition from our Russian sources and hopefully apply it to English singularia tantum nouns instead of proposing our own definition for English and then attempting to apply it to the already established singularia tantum nouns in Russian.

In many works dealing with the category of number in Russian, singularia tantum nouns are usually defined in one of two ways. One definition will usually include terms like "...существительные, имеющие формы только единственного числа..." (Nikitevič 1963:60), or "...употребляющихся только в единственном числе..." (Isačenko 1965:82). Another, broader definition does not emphasise the exclusive usage of singular forms for such nouns, instead it includes such characteristics as

....нет числового противопоставления двух форм. Если есть дрова, сливки, штаны, щи, то нет им противопоставленных грамматически *дрово, сливка, штаны, щи, категории числа как несинтаксической категории нет.

То же, говоря по шахматному, с „переменной цвета“ и у слов singularia tantum-типа солома, грязь, вода, спирт, медь, серебро... (Reformatskij 1960:392)

It will be noted that Reformatskij's claim is based solely on the lack of morphological opposition for such nouns. In spite of the above however, Sumkina's view is that, "Отсутствие одной из форм числа не может, на наш взгляд, свидетельствовать об отсутствии категории числа вообще." (1964:223). In sentences like Большие часы стоят на столе and интересные книги лежат на полке, the nouns часы (pluralia tantum) and книги (regular count) both possess the normal morphological

markers of plurality and show syntactic agreement with the verb and adjective in the plural number. Sumkina believes that these factors outweigh the lack of opposition and therefore, nouns such as часы which do not display the regular number correlation nevertheless represent the category of number. This is the standpoint we shall adopt in our consideration of singularia tantum nouns. This latter class is inflected for singularity with verbs and adjectives.

Furthermore we have already seen that singularia tantum nouns in both English and Russian can, perhaps all, be pluralised when the need arises. On this basis, the definition proposed by the Švedova grammar (323) appears most accurate. (The emphasis is mine).

Однако в тех относительно редких ситуациях, когда возникает необходимость выразить количественные соотношения, от ряда слов singularia tantum могут быть образованы формы множественного числа. Таким образом СУЩЕСТВИТЕЛЬНЫЕ SINGULARIA TANTUM СЛЕДУЕТ ОПРЕДЕЛЯТЬ КАК СЛОВА С ПОТЕНЦИАЛЬНЫМИ ФОРМАМИ МНОЖЕСТВЕННОГО ЧИСЛА, НО ОБЫЧНО ПРЕДСТАВЛЕННЫЕ ЛИШЬ ФОРМАМИ ЕДИНСТВЕННОГО ЧИСЛА.

In translation the essential part of this statement is: singularia tantum nouns have the potential to appear in plural forms but are usually represented in the singular number only.

3.3. Plural Usage of English singularia tantum Nouns

If we apply this definition to the situation in English, we note that many English singular mass-nouns do have the potential to appear in a plural number. We have already mentioned that mass-nouns denoting substances or materials can be pluralised to refer to different varieties, sorts, brands etc., (*German beers*); or to a specific serving of the substance, (*three beers*). Other semantic connotations suggested by the plural form of a singularia tantum noun in English include 'quasi-concreteness' of abstract phenomena (*hopes and ideas*), and 'great quantity or extent' (*the sands of the desert*). Out of context this last example can be ambiguous. In one sense it might be used to denote geological varieties of sand, (*The sands of the Sahara are coarser than those of the Ghobi*); in another it can refer to the vastness of the desert (*Before us, the sands of the Kalahari lay in awesome splendour*). Context then is important to avoid such ambiguity, and this takes us back to Gleason's emphasis on context when he suggested that any noun could conceivably appear as either count or mass in the right circumstances. If this is true, then just as the regular count nouns *book* and *shelf* were exemplified by Gleason as mass-nouns, perhaps all singularia tantum nouns, in English at least can be used as count-nouns, given the right context. The examples of 'plural uncountables' cited from Logan's article (p. 22) suggest many immaterial mass-nouns can be pluralised, and the different semantic renderings of material mass-nouns in a plural form listed above give further credence to Gleason's suggestion.

3.4. Plural Usage of Russian singularia tantum Nouns

From the Švedova grammar (323-324), we note definite parallelism between the plural usage of singularia tantum nouns in English and in Russian.

Количественные соотношения, выражаемые формами единственного и множественного числа слов singularia tantum, выявляются в двух видах.

- 1) Отношение «единичность-множественность» выражено формами единственного и множественного числа, но при этом имеет место расхождение лексического значения форм единственного и множественного числа...
- 2) Отношение «единичность-множественность» отражает не числовое противопоставление, а соотношение величин, сравниваемых по массе, объему ... или по силе, интенсивности проявления

With reference to the nature of the lexical discrepancy mentioned above in point one, examples are listed to show how material singularia tantum nouns in Russian can be pluralised to refer to different varieties, brands etc., столовые вина, десертные вина, растительные масла, животные масла, технические масла, минеральные воды. Immaterial singularia tantum nouns in Russian can be pluralised to refer to distinct concrete manifestations of different qualities, properties, and emotional states. The abstract nature of such nouns

is weakened by use of the plural number: e.g., глубина refers to 'depth' in general, whereas глубины will refer to specific depths (e.g. of lakes); скорость refers to the abstract phenomenon of 'speed', while скорости denotes specific speeds (e.g. of winds). Plural forms of immaterial nouns can also be used to signify phenomena, either abstract or material, which possess the named quality of the immaterial noun: e.g., вредность in its abstract sense means harmfulness but вредности refers to harmful substances or toxins.

We note from the above examples that the potential for forming plurals from singularia tantum nouns in English and Russian is identical on at least two counts. When different varieties of a material substance are involved, a plural form is used in both languages; as is indeed the case when distinct manifestations of abstract qualities, properties, etc., are in question. The parallelism is also evident when we consider point two in the above quote from the Svedova grammar. Just as English singularia tantum nouns can be used in a plural form to render great quantity or extent (*the sands of the desert*), so too can their Russian equivalents (пески, воды, снега). In addition to this, a plural form of a noun like боль (боли), meaning 'pain' will not usually refer to more than one pain, but instead will indicate a degree of intensity as it does in English e.g., *I have pains in my stomach*.

3.5. The Data

It should be clear then that the instances of plural usage of singularia tantum nouns in English and Russian are practically identical. We now have to establish to what extent singularia tantum

nouns in Russian correspond to singularia tantum nouns in English. In order to present the cross-linguistic parallels and divergences for these nouns, data have been compiled and tabulated from several sources. The majority of nouns have been taken from the Русско-Английский Словарь (ed. by Axmanova et al.), but also incorporated in the tables are singularia tantum nouns which appear in the grammars by Kostomarov (1977), Pulkina (1968) and Švedova (1970). It will be noted from the tables, that several nouns are followed by a question mark (?). These are English nouns which are often pluralised, but have been assigned to the singularia tantum column on the basis of my dialect of English (N. British), since no statistical evidence as to a propensity towards either singular or plural usage is available.

On the basis of these data, we can attempt to establish any productive semantic classes or morphological markers for singularia tantum nouns in Russian, and can then proceed to analyse any emerging parallels and divergences between these nouns in Russian and English, in the form of a contrastive study.

Table 1. Russian Singularia Tantum Nouns Corresponding to English Singularia Tantum Nouns

RUSSIAN SINGULARIA TANTUM NOUNS	ENGLISH SINGULARIA TANTUM NOUNS
азот	nitrogen
амброзия	ambrosia
аммиак	ammonia
аппаратура	apparatus
аристократия	aristocracy
арнаутка	arnautka wheat
аспирин	aspirin
асфальт	asphalt
атмосфера	atmosphere
багаж	luggage
бадминтон	badminton
банальность	banality
баранина	mutton
бдительность	vigilance
беготня	running about
бездарь	lack of talent
белиберда	nonsense
белизна	whiteness
белладонна	bella-donna
бельё	linen
березник	birch wood
берёзняк	" "
берёста	birch-bark
бетон	concrete
биомцин	biomycin
благо	blessing (?)
благовест	ringing of Church bells
блажь	whim (?)

RUSSIAN
SINGULARIA TANTUM
NOUNS

ENGLISH
SINGULARIA TANTUM
NOUNS

блеск	lustre
болезнь	illness (?)
борьба	struggle (?)
братва	brotherhood
братия	fraternity
бумага	paper
буржуазия	bourgeoisie
бут	rubble
быт	mode of life (?)
бытьё	life (?)
варево	soup
век	lifetime
вермишель	vermicelli
верность	loyalty
вздор	nonsense
взятие	taking, seizure
вино	wine
виноградство	viticulture
винт	vint (card-game)
внимание	attention
вода	water
водка	Vodka
водород	hydrogen
военщина	soldiery
возвышенность	loftiness (of thought)
возникновение	origin, beginning (?)
возня	fuss, bustle
волянка	dawdling
ворожба	fortune telling
ворс	pile (of carpet)
восток	east

 RUSSIAN
 SINGULARIA TANTUM
 NOUNS

 ENGLISH
 SINGULARIA TANTUM
 NOUNS

восхищение	admiration
вражда	enmity
газообмен	interchange of gases
галантерея	haberdashery
галдёж	din, row
галиматья	nonsense
гам	din, racket
гвалт	uproar, row
география	geography
героизм	heroism
гибель	death, destruction
гипс	gypsum
глаголица	glagolitic
глина	clay
глубь	depth
глупость	foolishness
глянец	lustre
гнёт	press, weight (?)
гниль	rot
гной	pus, matter
говор	talking
говядина	beef
гоголь-моголь	Gogol' - Mogol'
головня	Smut (plant disease)
голод	hunger
гололедица	ice-covered ground
гомон	hubbub
гонка	haste
гордость	pride
гордыня	pride, arrogance
господь	God, The Lord

 RUSSIAN
 SINGULARIA TANTUM
 NOUNS

 ENGLISH
 SINGULARIA TANTUM
 NOUNS

град	hail
грамота	reading and writing
гранит	granite
гречиха	buckwheat
гrog	grog
грохот	crash, din
груз	weight, burden (?)
грусть	melancholy
грушовка	pear liqueur
грядущее	the future
грязь	filth
гуашь	gouache
гуща	sediment
давка	crush
дворянство	nobility
детство	childhood
дёрн	turf
диво	wonder, marvel (?)
дисциплина	discipline
дичь	fowl, game
длина	length
дно	bottom
добро	good
доля	fate, lot
достоинство	dignity
дохлятина	carrion
дрожь	trembling
духовенство	clergy
еда	food
ерунда	nonsense
жар	heat

 RUSSIAN
SINGULARIA TANTUM
NOUNS

 ENGLISH
SINGULARIA TANTUM
NOUNS

жара	heat
железо	iron
жир	fat
заваль	old rubbish
запад	west
запрос	overcharging
защита	defence (?)
звон	ringing
зелень	verdure.
землячество	Association of Countrymen
золото	gold
зябь	Autumn Plough Land
иван-да-марья	cow-wheat
известь	lime
изморозь	hoar - frost
изморось	sleet, drizzle
икра	spawn, caviar
ил	silt
иней	hoar- frost
иноходь	amble
инструктаж	instructing
ирис	toffee
испуг	fright
йод	Iodine
казёнщина	red-tape
калий	Potassium
калым	bride-money
канва	canvas
напельна	a bit
карболка	Carbolic Acid
насторка	Castor Oil

 RUSSIAN
 SINGULARIA TANTUM
 NOUNS

 ENGLISH
 SINGULARIA TANTUM
 NOUNS

научун	rubber
керосин	kerosine
кислород	oxygen
клад	load (?)
клей	glue
клиентура	clientele
кожа	rind, peel
кожура	"
коллективизация	collectivisation
колотье	stitch (pains)
комизм	the comic
комсомол	komsomol
конопля	hemp
коньяк	cognac
корысть	profit (?)
косьба	mowing
кофе	coffee
краса	beauty, charm
крестьянство	the peasantry
кров	shelter
кровь	blood
кройка	cutting-out
кубатура	cubic-capacity
кукуруза	maize
лай	barking
ласка	kindness
латунь	brass
лень	laziness
лес	timber
лён	flax
лимонад	lemonade

RUSSIAN
SINGULARIA TANTUM
NOUNS

ENGLISH
SINGULARIA TANTUM
NOUNS

листва	foliage
литьё	casting, moulding
лихва	interest (money)
лихо	evil
ловля	hunting
лом	scrap
любовь	love
лязь	clang
магистратура	magistracy
малахит	malachite
мамалыга	hominy
марля	cheese-cloth, gauze
мартен	open-hearth steel
масло	butter, oil
мат	mat
материя	matter
мебель	furniture
медь	copper
мел	chalk
мелочь	small-change
мелюзга	small-fry
мерзлота	frozen ground
место	space, room
местожительство	residence
местопребывание	abode
месть	vengeance
мешанина	medley
мир	peace
мило	chrism
миропомазание	anointing
молодёжь	youth
молодость	youth

 RUSSIAN
SINGULARIA TANTUM
NOUNS

 ENGLISH
SINGULARIA TANTUM
NOUNS

молодняк	undergrowth
молодчина	good-land
молозиво	colostrum
молоко	milk
молочай	spurge
мощь	power
мужество	courage
муна	flour
мурава	glaze
мусор	debris
мыло	lather, foam
мытьё	washing
мякиш	bread
мясо	meat
набат	alarm
навоз	manure
накал	incandescence
наличие	presence
наплыв	influx
напраслина	nonsense
народность	national character
натрий	sodium
начальство	command
небосвод	firmament
небосклон	sky
невезение	bad-luck
невесомость	weightlessness
невидадь	wonder
неистовство	rage, fury
ненастье	bad weather
непогода	bad weather

 RUSSIAN
SINGULARIA TANTUM
NOUNS

 ENGLISH
SINGULARIA TANTUM
NOUNS

неприятность	unpleasantness
несогласие	difference of opinion
нефть	oil
нечистота	dirtyness
неизменность	meanness
нужда	want, need (?)
нутро	interior
обвинение	the prosecution
обзор	field of vision
обломовщина	oblomovščina
оборона	defence
образование	education
обстановка	furniture
обувь	footwear
обуза	burden
общечитие	community
общность	common character
огонь	fire (?)
одежда	clothing
околёсица	stuff and nonsense
окрестность	environment
олеография	oleography
оптимизм	optimism
осетрина	flesh of sturgeon
острота	sharpness
отдых	rest
отретьбе	rabble
отстой	sediment
отчётность	book-keeping
офицерство	the officer corps
офицеръё	"

 RUSSIAN
SINGULARIA TANTUM
NOUNS

 ENGLISH
SINGULARIA TANTUM
NOUNS

падаль	carrion
память	memory (?)
паника	panic
парамидон	paramidon
паркет	parquetry
пат	paste
пепел	ash
перга	bee-bread
переписывание	typing
перец	pepper
персонал	staff
песок	sand
пиво	beer
пища	food
плен	captivity
поведение	behaviour (?)
повидло	jam
поголовье	livestock
подкуп	bribery
подполье	underground activity
позём	manure
позор	shame
полотно	linen
помол	grinding
помпа	pomp
понимание	understanding
популярность	popularity
порох	powder
пороша	first snow
поступление	entering
посуда	tableware

 RUSSIAN
SINGULARIA TANTUM
NOUNS

 ENGLISH
SINGULARIA TANTUM
NOUNS

пошиб	manner
поэзия	poetry
поэтичность	poeticness
практика	practice
прибытие	arrival
приварка	welding
приводна	registration
прикосновение	concern
природа	nature
приход	advent
прогресс	progress
продукция	production
производство	production
проза	prose
прок	use, benefit
приказа	leprosy
пролетариат	proletariat
пропуск	admission
просо	millet
простокваша	sour clotted milk
простор	scope, elbow-room
профессура	professorate
прохлада	coolness
пряжа	yarn, thread
пурга	snow-storm
пух	down
пшеница	wheat
пшенично	millet
пыль	dust
рвань	rabble
резьба	carving

 RUSSIAN
 SINGULARIA TANTUM
 NOUNS

 ENGLISH
 SINGULARIA TANTUM
 NOUNS

рис	rice
риск	risk
рожь	rye
рост	growth
ртуть	mercury
сатана	Satan
сахар	sugar
сброд	rabble
сбыт	sale
свинина	pork
сволочь	rabble
связь	communication (?)
сено	hay
сера	sulphur
серебро	silver
середина	middle
синева	dark-blue
сирень	lilac
скачка	galloping
скот	cattle
скука	boredom
слава	glory
следствие	investigation
слепота	blindness
словарь	vocabulary
слог	style
сложение	addition
слюна	saliva
смак	relish, savour
сметана	sour-cream
смех	laughter

 RUSSIAN
SINGULARIA TANTUM
NOUNS

 ENGLISH
SINGULARIA TANTUM
NOUNS

снег	snow
снeдь	food
снежок	light-snow
солнце	sun
солома	straw
соль	salt
сопротивление	resistance
соседство	neighbourhood
сталь	steel
старьё	junk
стрептомицин	streptomycin
стужа	hard frost
сукно	cloth
суп	soup
суть	essence
сухостой	deadwood
суша	dry-land
существо	essence
сыр	cheese
табак	tobacco
тайга	Taiga
тара	packaging
тарарам	hullabaloo
телосложение	build (figure)
телятина	veal
темнота	darkness
терпение	patience
тeсьма	braid
течка	heat (animals)
техника	technique (?)
тина	slime

 RUSSIAN
SINGULARIA TANTUM
NOUNS

 ENGLISH
SINGULARIA TANTUM
NOUNS

тишина	silence
тишь	silence
топливо	fuel
торговля	trade
торжество	triumph (?)
тосна	melancholy
точность	precision
треск	noise (?)
тресна	cod
труд	labour
труха	dust
туманность	fog, mist
тьма	darkness
тяга	draught
убой	slaughter
уважение	respect
угар	carbon monoxide
углерод	carbon
удивление	astonishment
удобство	comfort (?)
удовольствие	pleasure (?)
ужас	terror
уксус	vinegar
умирание	dying
умолот	decline
управа	justice
успеваемость	progress
уступка	abatement
усушка	shrinkage
утечка	leakage
утильсырьё	scrap
уток	woof (textile)

 RUSSIAN
 SINGULARIA TANTUM
 NOUNS

 ENGLISH
 SINGULARIA TANTUM
 NOUNS

утрусна	spillage
уха	fish-soup
участие	participation
фавор	favour
фальшь	falsity
фарфор	china-ware
фатум	fate
фаянс	pottery
фольклор	folklore
фортуна	fortune
фрактурa	German type-script
фураж	fodder
халтура	hack-work
ханжество	hypocrisy, bigotry
хлам	trash
хлеб	bread
хлопок	cotton
хлор	chlorine
ход	motion (?)
хозяйство	economy
хоккей	hockey
холод	cold
холстина	unbleached linen
хранение	custody
хрусталь	cut glass-ware
хрящ	gravel
худо	evil (?)
цедра	dried fruit peel
цемент	cement
ценность	value
цикории	chicory

RUSSIAN SINGULARIA TANTUM NOUNS	ENGLISH SINGULARIA TANTUM NOUNS
чад	smoke
чай	tea
человечество	mankind
чепуха	nonsense
черепаха	tortoise-shell (material)
чернь	rabble
честь	honour
чтение	reading
чугун	rubber
чума	plague
чушь	nonsense
шантрапа	rabble
шваль	rabble
шерсть	wool
шёлк	silk
ширина	width
ширь	width
шпана	rabble
шпонка	darning
шуга	sludge
шум	noise (?)
эгоизм	egoism
экзотика	exotic character
эксплуатация	exploitation
электричество	electricity
энергия	energy
юмор	humour
юность	youth
явь	reality
яйва	Crimean mountain - pasture land
янтарь	amber
ячмень	barley

Table 2. Russian Singularia Tantum Nouns Corresponding to English Pluralia Tantum Nouns

RUSSIAN SINGULARIA TANTUM NOUNS	ENGLISH PLURALIA TANTUM NOUNS
амуниция	accoutrements
бабье	womenfolk
барахло	goods and chattels
беднота	the poor
будра	slops
ветошь	rags, tatters
гвоздина	cloves
геркулес	rolled oats
гимнастика	gymnastics
глауберова соль	Glauben's Salts
глиптика	glyptics
глушь	backwoods
горькая	bitters
гофрировка	goffers
движимость	moveables
залежь	stale goods
зелень	greens (vegetables)
зола	ashes
нал	faeces
костоеда	caries
крупа	groats
лёгкое	lights
люди	people
меблировка	furnishings
милостыня	alms (?)
муть	dregs
овёс	oats
оружие	arms
отыгрыш	retrieved losses

RUSSIAN
SINGULARIA TANTUM
NOUNS

ENGLISH
PLURALIA TANTUM
NOUNS

очёс	combings
поднебесье	the skies
приварок	victuals
провиант	provisions
провизия	"
рвань	rags, tatters
рубище	rags, tatters
скарб	goods and chattels
старина	olden times
творог	curds
требуха	entrails
тряпьё	rags, tatters
урон	losses
фора	odds (game)
хандра	the blues
хмель	hops
чешуя	scales
экономика	economics

Table 3. Russian Singularia Tantum Nouns Corresponding to English Count Nouns

RUSSIAN SINGULARIA TANTUM NOUNS	ENGLISH COUNT NOUNS
агентура	agents (coll.)
айва	quince
альча	Alycha, damson
анис	Anise, apple
антоновка	Antonovka apple
апорт	Oporto apple
арматура	steel framework
барбарис	barberry
барщина	corvee
бахрома	fringe
башка	noddle
безобразие	deformity
бестолочь	blockhead
бисер	glass beads (coll.)
блокада	blockade
ботва	beet-tops (coll.)
брусника	red billberry
буза	row, argument
бузина	elder thicket
бутафория	prop. (theatre)
валежник	windfallen twigs & branches (coll.)
ввоз	import
визига	visiga (fish's dried spinal cord)
виноград	grape
войнство	army
вольница	freemen (coll.)
воронье	carrion crows (coll.)
вотум	vote
галёрна	gallery

 RUSSIAN
SINGULARIA TANTUM
NOUNS

 ENGLISH
COUNT NOUNS

галоп	gallop
гальна	pebbles (coll.)
гардероб	wardrobe (clothes)
гвардия	the guards (coll.)
генералитет	the generals (coll.)
герань	geranium
гоготанье	cackle
головизна	fish head
гонт	shingles (roofing) (coll.)
горох	pea
гурьба	crowd
даль	distance
дворня	domestics (coll.)
десятина	tithe
детвора	kiddies (coll.)
довольствие	allowance
достояние	property
дратва	wax-end
душон	musty smell
ежевика	blackberry
ельник	spruce grove
живопись	paintings (coll.)
завод	winding mechanism
зверье	wild beasts (coll.)
земляника	strawberry
иван-чай	willow-herb
ивняк	osier bead
игро	yoke
изделие	make, brand
изюм	raisin
икота	hiccup
казачество	The Cossacks (coll.)

 RUSSIAN
SINGULARIA TANTUM
NOUNS

 ENGLISH
COUNT NOUNS

назна	Exchequer, treasury
напля	a drop
картофель	potato
кизилъ	Cornelian cherry
кирпич	brick
клубника	strawberry
клюква	cranberry
новеркот	covertcoat
нонѣк	hobby, fad
коринка	currant
ностра	boon
крап	specks (coll.)
крапива	nettle
крыжовник	gooseberry
кулачество	The Kulaks
кулачье	"
курево	something to smoke
кустарник	bushes (coll.)
лозняк	willow thicket
ломота	rheumatic pain
лоно	bosom
лук	onion
луна	moon
майорат	right of primogeniture
мак	poppy seed
манулатура	mackle (paper)
малина	raspberry
мануфактура	textile
мездра	flesh side of hide
мзда	bribe
миндаль	almond

 RUSSIAN
SINGULARIA TANTUM
NOUNS

 ENGLISH
COUNT NOUNS

мирабель	Mirabelle plum
мировая	peaceful settlement
миссионерство	missionaries (coll.)
можжевельник	juniper
молва	rumour
морковь	carrot
морошка	cloudberry
мошара	swarm of midges
мошня	pouch, purse
мразь	nasty wretches (coll.)
мускулатура	muscles (coll.)
мушмула	medlar (plant)
муштра	drill
население	population
недостаток	shortage
обиход	custom
оплата	payment
ординар	ordinary level
орешник	hazel-nut grove
пан	ice-pack
перевес	preponderance
перекати-поле	tumbleweed
перспектива	view
пехота	infantry
плата	pay, fee
плеск	splash
плитняк	flagstone
плотва	roach
пляс	dance
поживо	gain, profit
полемика	controversy

RUSSIAN
SINGULARIA TANTUM
NOUNS

ENGLISH
COUNT NOUNS

поправка	recovery
право	law
права	license
противник	the enemy (coll.)
пузо	belly
пушина	furs, pelts (coll.)
разновес	set of weights
распродажа	sale
рассада	seedling
рассрочка	installment
редис	radish
рябина	rowanberry
рябь	ripple
саранча	locust
свёкла	beetroot
смородина	currant
сосняк	pine-forest
соя	soya bean
спрос	demand
средоточие	focus
старостат	village eldels (coll.)
строй	system
студенчество	the students (coll.)
сырьё	raw-material
творчество	creation
текстиль	textile fabrics (coll.)
тематика	themes (coll.)
ткань	substance
торец	wooden pavement
тяга	draught
убыль	decrease

RUSSIAN
SINGULARIA TANTUM
NOUNS

ENGLISH
COUNT NOUNS

уголовщина	criminal act
уйма	heap
упадок	decline
уплата	payment
упряжь	harness
урюк	dried apricot
учёт	calculation
учительство	teachers (coll.)
фасоль	haricot bean
хвоя	conifer needles (coll.)
чело	brow
челядь	menials (coll.)
черешня	cherry
черника	billberry
чернослив	prune
чертополох	thistle
чечевица	lentil
шелуна	husk
шептала	dried peaches & apricots (coll.)
щепа	chips (coll.)
щетина	bristle
экспорт	export
эффент	effect

CHAPTER FOUR

CONTRASTIVE ANALYSIS OF SINGULARIA TANTUM

NOUNS IN RUSSIAN AND ENGLISH

4.1. Introduction

In many grammars of Russian the pattern for describing singularia tantum nouns remains surprisingly superficial. A limited semantic classification which rarely establishes more than three productive categories, and a few indications of morphological markers seems to comprise the normal procedure. A supplementary note is usually included to the effect that these nouns are encountered primarily in their singular forms, but do have the potential to appear in the plural number. In the standard language-manuals for students of Russian the treatment of these nouns is even more cursory, with little or no attempt to analyse or categorise a list of examples which is invariably incomplete. This is hardly satisfactory but it does provide the stimulus for a more thorough taxonomy of such nouns. Consequently, it is our aim in this chapter to first of all consider the semantic and morphological make-up of singularia tantum nouns in Russian, and then to examine some aspects of their syntactic usage. A semantic classification will help us to establish what kind of noun is used primarily in a singular-only form in Russian, and then we can determine if there is any degree of semantic parallelism between these Russian nouns and their English counterparts. Furthermore, if we can pinpoint any morphological markers for Russian singularia

tantum nouns, this will be useful for future reference purposes, not only in this study but also in a language learning situation. The more properties of these nouns we can reveal, the easier they should be to recognise and to remember.

4.2. Semantic Classification

We noted in Chapter Three that Russian singularia tantum nouns are most frequently categorised under three headings, namely, 'material', 'collective' and 'abstract'. Apart from Isačenko, few writers on Russian grammar go beyond this broad semantic classification and this is unfortunate because it creates the impression that all nouns in these categories are singularia tantum nouns. This is certainly untrue for we encounter pluralia tantum nouns in two of the three categories, as in the following examples.

<u>MATERIAL</u>		<u>ABSTRACT</u>	
дрова	(firewood)	враки	(nonsense)
сливки	(cream)	горести	(sorrows)
дрожжи	(yeast)	дрязги	(petty unpleasantness)
чернила	(ink)	задатки	(inclination)

By and large though, the majority of abstract, collective and material nouns will be used only in a singular form. As long as we bear in mind the fact that these three categories are by no means limited to singularia tantum nouns, we can follow the trend and take these headings as our fundamental semantic classes.

Within each class however, we will try to establish several subclasses so as to present a narrower semantic taxonomy, and at the same time, any productive morphological markers within the semantic

sub-groups will be mentioned. Let us first of all consider abstract nouns.

4.2.1. Abstract Nouns

By the very nature of their immaterialness, most abstract nouns in both English and Russian are bound to appear as singularia tantum nouns. Accordingly, Isačenko informs us that

Отвлеченные существительные от имен прилагательных или отвлеченные существительных, образованные от глаголов, в силу своего значения не могут образовать форм множественного числа. (82)

Of course, we have already seen that abstract nouns can be used in plural forms and Isačenko goes on to further qualify the above statement by stipulating "...поиспользу эти существительные употребляются в отвлеченном значении." (82) This of course is in keeping with our definition of singularia tantum nouns as those normally occurring in the singular only. To facilitate our analysis we can refer to Townsend's Russian Word-Formation and cite some of the more productive features of Russian abstract nouns.

According to Townsend (1975:152). "The most important abstract nouns are the deverbatives: nouns of action and/or (by hypostasis) result or production of action". Among the more frequently encountered suffixes for these "deverbatives" are, -тие, -ение/-ание and -ьё.

There are, of course, many other nominal suffixes which are added to verbal roots in order to form abstract nouns but we need not consider all of them. Apart from the 'deverbatives', Townsend also makes reference to 'deadjectivals' which are formed from adjectives by the

addition of -ость, -изм, -ство and -щина. Abstract nouns ending in these suffixes usually refer to qualities, states or conditions and correspond to the English suffixes *-ness*, *-ism*, and *ity*.

If we now focus our attention on the data, we note that the above mentioned semantic and morphological features are well attested. We can therefore establish two major semantic classes for singularia tantum nouns of an abstract nature.

1) Abstract nouns of action/result formed from verbs:

удивление (astonishment), чтение (reading), телосложение (build), восхищение (admiration), население (population), образование (education), понимание (understanding), местопребывание (abode), переписывание (typing), умирание (dying), прибытие (arrival), взятие (seizure), общепитие (community), участие (participation), бытие (life), мытьё (washing), литьё (moulding), etc.

2) Abstract nouns denoting qualities, states, conditions, formed from adjectives:

возвышенность (loftiness), верность (loyalty), неприятность (unpleasantness), успеваемость (progress), комизм (the comic), эгоизм (egoism), героизм (heroism), оптимизм (optimism), обломовщина (Oblovovscina), красная лента (red tape), уголовщина (criminal act), удобство (comfort), торжество (triumph), достоинство (dignity), etc.

While several productive suffixes are evident in the above examples there are many abstract nouns which cannot be classified according to morphological properties. These are therefore less discernable but can be grouped together solely on the basis of meaning.

3) Abstract nouns denoting 'noise', 'din', etc:

буча (row), галдёж (din), гам (racket), гул (uproar), говор (talking), грохот (crash), тарарам (hullabaloo), благовест (ringing), икота (hiccup).

4. Abstract nouns denoting 'nonsense':

белиберда (nonsense), галиматъя (nonsense), ерунда (nonsense),
напраслина (nonsense), околёсица (stuff and nonsense), чепуха
(nonsense), чушь (nonsense).

5. Abstract nouns referring to 'weather phenomena':

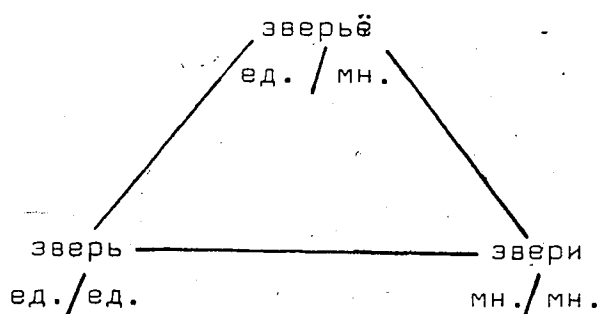
гололедица (ice-covered ground), изморозь (sleet), иней (hoar-
frost), мёрзлота (frozen ground), ненастье (bad weather),
непогода (bad weather), пороша (first snow), пурга (snow storm),
стужа (hard frost), суша (dry-land).

The Russian situation is closely paralleled by that in English. In an abstract sense, those English nouns ending in *-ing*, *-ity*, *-ness* and *-ism* and having the same semantic connotations as the Russian nouns in groups one and two above, will invariably be used in the singular only, e.g. *understanding*, *dignity*, *loftiness*, *optimism*. Furthermore, nouns such as *din*, *row*, *racket*, *hubbub*, *hullaballo*, *uproar*, etc., and *nonsense*, *balderdash*, *rubbish*, *boloney*, etc., which semantically correspond to the Russian nouns in groups three and four, are all singularia tantum nouns in English. Many of the English nouns used to refer to weather phenomena are also used only in the singular number, e.g. *hoar-frost*, *first-snow*, *drizzle*, *sleet*, *permafrost*, etc. Overall then, there is a good correspondence between the use of abstract nouns in Russian and in English. Let us now determine whether or not the correspondence is maintained in the use of collective nouns.

4.2.2. Collective Nouns

Collective nouns seem to cause problems in both English and Russian probably because, as Jespersen informs us, "they are

at the same time singular and plural" (1933:210). Reformat'skiĭ (1960: 394) demonstrates diagrammatically how a collective noun can have a singular form but a plural meaning:



For the moment however we shall ignore the enigmatic nature of these nouns and shall concentrate on some of the major semantic and morphological features which characterise them. We are fortunate in that Isačenko (1965: 83-84) illustrates some of the semantic categories to which these nouns belong, while Townsend (1975: 194-195) cites some of the more productive suffixes which will help us to identify nouns with a collective meaning. The major semantic classes are the following:

1) Social and Professional Groups:

студенчество (student-body), профессура (professorate), крестьянство (the peasantry), агентура (the agents), учительство (teacher), магистратура (magistracy), офицерство (officer corps), клиентура (clientele), etc.

2) Nouns with a pejorative connotation referring to different popular groups:

бабьё (womenfolk), офицерьё (officers corps), сволочь (rabble, riff-raff), отребьё (rabble), рвань (rabble), сброд (rabble), шантрапа (rabble), шваль (rabble), шпана (rabble).

3) Nouns referring to animals:

скот (cattle), дичь (fowl), зверьё (beast), вороньё (carrion crow), мошкара (swarm of midges).

4. Nouns referring to greenery, shrubs, trees, groves, etc.:

листва (foliage), валежник (windfallen twigs), зелень (greenery), ивняк (willow-herb), лозняк (willow thicket), бузина (elder thicket), березняк (birchwood), etc.

We can see from the above that the most productive suffixes amongst collective nouns are -ство, -ура, -ьё, -ник/-няк and -ь; most of which are included in Townsend's list of the most important suffixes having a collective meaning.

One interesting fact immediately comes to light concerning the nouns in group one above. In many instances when the group of people associated with a profession are referred to, English will use a plural form of the noun as opposed to Russian, which will use a collective. Thus крестьянство is more likely to appear in English as *the peasants* and not *the peasantry* and студенчество will normally be translated as *the students* as opposed to something like *the student body*. It seems that English would only use a collective in a few specific cases: e.g. *the clergy* as opposed to *the clergymen* and *the police* as opposed to *the policemen*. The formation of collectives by the addition of certain suffixes to refer to professional and social groups therefore seems to be a far more productive process in Russian than it does in English.

This does not mean to say, however, that these collective nouns are widely used in standard Russian, as Panov informs us:

Сушественные, выражающие собрательность (студенчество, учительство, казачество, офицерство; старичье, кулачье, бутылка, рвань; профессура; матросня, ребятня и др.), принадлежат в современном русском языке к числу малоупотребительных, непродуктивных (1968:172)

As far as the other semantic groups are concerned, English nouns corresponding to those listed in group two are also singularia tantum nouns, e.g. *rabble*, *riff-raff*, *scum*, although English does not seem to have as many pejorative terms as Russian. Animals are referred to in a collective sense in English just about as often as they are in Russian, however, and corresponding to those nouns listed in group three, English not only has *game*, *cattle*, *fowl*, *swine* and *livestock*, but also uses forms like *duck*, *elephant*, *antelope*, *buffalo*, *partridge*, *pheasant* in the following manner:

To shoot *duck*, *partridge*, *pheasant*.

To hunt *elephant*, *buffalo*, *antelope*.

Similarly, English refers to certain plant names and especially tree names in a collective sense, as in *heather*, *bracken*, *lilac*, *ivy*, *gorse*, *oak*, *ash*, *beech*, *willow* etc. Apart from the exceptions noted above then, there seems to be a good deal of overlapping between singularia tantum nouns with a collective meaning in Russian and in English. There is, however, one more semantic category among

collective nouns in Russian which corresponds, for the main part, to collective nouns having both singularia tantum and pluralia tantum forms in English.

5) Nouns referring to 'odds and ends', 'waste-products', 'left-overs', etc.:

ветошь (tatters), залежь (moveables), мелюзга (small-fry), барахло (goods and chattels), лом (scrap), очёс (combing), мелочь (small change), старьё (junk), утильсырьё (scrap), хлам (trash), скарб (rags, tatters), рубище (rags, tatters), муть (dregs), будра (slops), нал (faeces), навоз (manure), падаль (carrion), etc.

From the table of nouns in the previous chapter we note that many of these nouns correspond to English pluralia tantum nouns such as, *goods and chattels, slops, dregs, rags, leftovers*, etc., and these will undoubtedly cause confusion in a language learning situation. Most other collective nouns in English and Russian seem to match up very well and present few semantic difficulties.

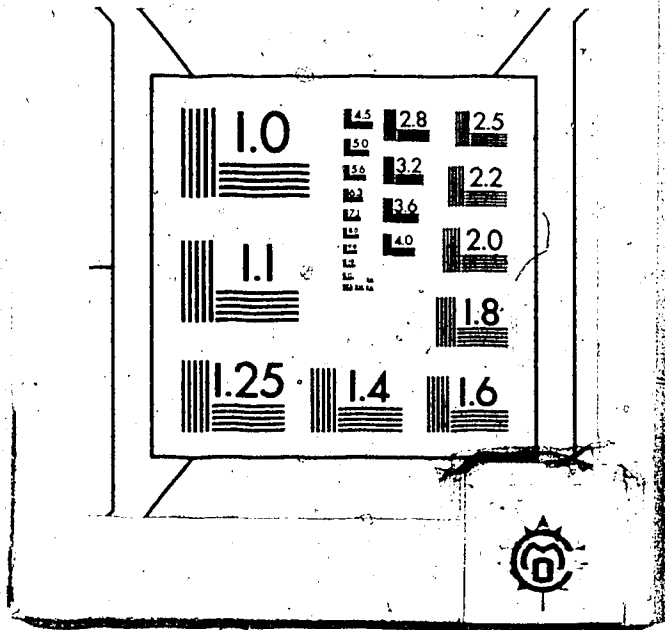
4.2.3. Material Nouns

It should not surprise us to learn that the singularia tantum nouns receiving the most thorough semantic analysis are those which Isačenko terms "singularia tantum с вещественным значением" (1965: 87). It is not difficult to establish semantic categories for nouns which refer to something tangible because we can relate these semantic categories to objects or materials in the physical world. Consequently, Isačenko proposes eleven semantic classes for singularia tantum nouns of a material nature. It will be noted that there is a good deal of overlapping between these classes.

2

OF/DE

2



- 1) Names of liquids:
вода (water), молоко (milk), вино (wine), пиво (beer), etc.
- 2) Names of metals:
железо (iron), серебро (silver), медь (copper), etc.
- 3) Names of chemical elements, compounds, minerals, medicines:
кислород (oxygen), водород (hydrogen), азот (nitrogen),
аспирин (aspirin), etc.
- 4) Names of textiles:
шёлк (silk), полотно (linen), сукно (cloth), etc.
- 5) Names of grains, cereals, cultivated crops:
рожь (rye), пшеница (wheat), овёс (oats), лён (flax),
табак (tobacco).
- 6) Names of 'sets' of objects:
мебель (furniture), посуда (tableware), багаж (luggage), etc.
- 7) Names of foodstuffs:
мука (flour), сахар (sugar), рис (rice), соль (salt), мясо (meat),
баранина (beef), etc.
- 8) Name of different materials:
ножа (peel), шерсть (wool), лес (timber), цемент (cement), etc.
- 9) Names of dry substances:
горох (peas), чечевица (lentils), порошок (powder), песок (sand),
пыль (dust), etc.
- 10) Names of plants:
сирень (lilac), герань (geranium), бузина (elder thicket),
крапива (nettle), etc.
- 11) Names of berries and vegetables:
малина (raspberry), земляника (strawberry), черника (blueberry),
морковь (carrot), капуста (cabbage), картофель (potatoe), etc.

Here we find one productive suffix for berry-names, i.e. -ина. The common denominator of the majority of nouns listed above is that they are characterised by lack of precise dimensions or shape: they are measurable but not countable. The same is true for nearly all of the English nouns which belong to these semantic categories, although there is one outstanding exception. This concerns the nouns listed in the last semantic category which in English appear not as singularia tantum nouns but as regular count nouns. It appears that berries and vegetables are used in a collective sense in Russian since

русские существительные типа малина, картофель обозначают не один плод (нлубень), взятый в отдельности, а совокупность плодов (нлубней) (Isačenko 1965:89).

We shall be taking a closer look at these particular nouns in the next chapter.

4.3. Summary and Discussion

Overall, the semantic parallelism between singularia tantum nouns in Russian and in English forces us to conclude that in most instances, nouns appearing in the singular number only in Russian will also be encountered primarily in a singular form in English. It was noted, however, that exceptions whereby a singularia tantum noun in Russian will correspond to either a regular count noun or a pluralia tantum noun in English. The general pattern of correspondence is summarized in the following table.

RUSSIAN		ENGLISH		
Grammatical Semantic	Singularia Tantum	Singularia Tantum	Pluralia Tantum	Count
Abstract	банальность белиберда галдёж гибель дисциплина оптимизм	Banality Nonsense Din, Racket Death, Des- truction Discipline Optimism		
Collective	клиентура дичь рвань ветошь барахло муть студенчество офицерство	Clientele Fowl Rabble (Student body) (Officer's corps)	Tatters Odds & Ends Dregs The Students (coll.) The Officers (coll.)	
Material	молоко серебро азот сукно овёс сахар цемент пыль сирень малина морковь земляника картофель	Milk Silver Nitrogen Cloth Sugar Cement Dust Lilac	Oats	Raspberry Carrot Strawberry Potato

From a pedagogical standpoint, Russian singularia tantum nouns which correspond to English singularia tantum nouns should present few difficulties in a language learning situation. For those Russian nouns listed above which correspond to pluralia tantum nouns in English, we may expect a tendency for a native English speaker to pluralise such nouns as овёс, му́ть and perhaps even студенчество by analogy to the English forms *oats, dregs, the students*. Finally, those material nouns denoting berries and vegetables which are singularia tantum in Russian, but count (normally used in the plural) in English are likely to cause the greatest confusion in a language learning situation. The English speaker will err in wanting to pluralise the names of Russian fruits and vegetables, while the Russian speaker will try to use the singular form of the English word, thus creating the impression of a single berry, fruit or vegetable. The concluding chapter will explore further the intricacies of this confusion. ◻

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS

We have sought in this thesis to contrastively examine the category of singularia tantum nouns in Russian and English. This necessitated examination of those nouns in each of the languages which are purported to belong to this category and their position within the grammatical category of number in each system. The purpose of this pursuit was threefold: 1) to isolate possible areas of confusion or difficulty in a language learning situation, 2) to uncover some of the semantic bases for inclusion of nouns in the singularia tantum class and 3) to clarify the meaning of the term singularia tantum, so that it can be used consistently in linguistic description.

It was found that there are, generally speaking, three broad semantic classes of nouns which fall into the singularia tantum category in both Russian and English: abstract, collective and material nouns. Of these three, the best correlation between Russian and English occurs in the abstract category, where there is almost an exact correspondence. From an intuitive point of view, this is to be expected since nouns such as *nonsense*, *optimism*, *dignity*, etc., or their Russian equivalents are not really countable objects which could be subjected to the grammatical binary opposition of singular versus plural. It was noted, however, that under special contextual circumstances abstract nouns could be 'concretised' to name specific, countable events, in which case they almost seem to switch semantic categories and become material countable nouns (e.g. *complexities* (сложности), *difficulties* (трудности))

speeds (скорости), etc.).

Collective nouns are also grammatically anomalous in not manifesting the normal singular/plural opposition for number. Again this can be explained by appealing to the semantic character of these nouns, which view the collection of countable objects as a whole. This time however, unlike abstract nouns which are mainly singular only, there seems to be a choice between the two number forms. English in many instances uses an unopposed plural (pluralia tantum), as in *goods and chattels, tatters, odds and ends*, where Russian uses singular only (singularia tantum).

Finally, the material nouns provide not only the poorest correlation in grammatical number between Russian and English, but also the least semantic justification for being classed as either singularia tantum, pluralia tantum or count. Almost every noun in this latter class in both Russian and English can be looked upon as expressing both the abstract or collective properties of the root, or the individual manifestations of it in the real world. It was no doubt this contextually dependent flexibility which led Gleason and others (pp. 19-24) to conclude that virtually all nouns of this class could be used in either the generic or non-generic senses. It was also this flexibility which led to great difficulties in classifying such nouns in our tables (cf. p. 54), and to our adopting the following definition for singularia tantum nouns:

singularia tantum nouns have the potential to appear in the plural forms but are usually represented in the singular number only.

When viewed in this light, the vascillations in grammatical categorization in Russian and English of certain material nouns as

singularia tantum, pluralia tantum, or count, reduces to a simple reflection of their contextually dependent semantic variability. In the paragraphs which follow, I would like to briefly speculate on some of the details of this interplay between context and the generic (abstract, collective) versus non-generic (material) interpretation of nouns, particularly as it relates to the correlation between singularia tantum nouns in Russian and English.

Earlier, we saw the various manifestations of generic number in English and Chafe's insistence that it is the inherent nature of the verb that determines the genericness of the nouns which accompany it. If the verb involves a transitory state or event it is, according to Chafe, nongeneric and "...is accompanied by a noun which indicates only some particular object or objects" (170). An example of a non-generic sentence would be *The elephant is eating strawberries*. In the following sentences, however, all of the nouns are being used in the generic sense, since the use of singular and plural forms does not, as such, reflect a numerical correlation based upon what counts as one or what counts as more than one.

1. a) *An elephant eats peanuts.*
 b) *Elephants eat peanuts.*
 c) *The elephant eats peanuts.*
2. a) *An elephant eats bark.*
 b) *Elephants eat bark.*
 c) *The elephant eats bark.*

It will be noted that while the subject in the above sentences can vary in number and take different definite or indefinite articles, the same is not true of the direct object. For generic meaning, *peanuts* is always plural while *bark* is singular, and neither can be used with an article in this sense. The generalization here is that mass nouns

must be singular and count nouns plural for such an interpretation.

Chafe suggested that the choice between *an elephant*, *elephants* and *the elephant* rests on how we consider the class of elephants. If we consider each individual member of the class, we choose *an elephant*; if we consider all elephants together we choose the plural form as in 1 b) above, and if we consider the class as an undifferentiated whole then *the elephant* is more appropriate. Furthermore, all verb forms in their generic function are simple in aspect.

In Russian, generic number can also be expressed by using the noun in the singular form or the plural form, but a totally different situation is observed for the forms of the verb and the use of articles. First of all Russian has no articles, therefore sentences of the type,

- 3 a) слон ест орехи
b) слоны едят орехи

which correspond to 1 a), b), and c) are ambiguous - they can be interpreted generically or as specific single actions. This confusion is furthered by the imperfective verb form which is ambiguously either 'progressive' or 'generic', unlike the simple English form which is generic only. It is therefore clear in Russian that 'genericness' does not come from the lexical nature of the verb root, otherwise 3 a) and b) would be unambiguous as in English. Instead, it is the particular way in which the subject and object nouns, and the verb aspect are interpreted in context which leads to the generic or non-generic reading.

This observation suggests that in English too, contrary to Chafe's claim, it is specific use of verb aspect in conjunction with

various determiners which predisposes the sentence to a generic meaning, and not some inherent feature of the verb. The use of these grammatical formatives is itself determined by context, just as in Russian. Elsewhere (Smith, 1978), this process of making nouns or events definite or generic has been referred to as 'anchoring'. Basically, it works in the following way. English can anchor definiteness in the noun by use of the definite article. Alternatively, the noun can be assumed to be definite from context, by previous mention. The following examples will illustrate this:

The elephant (before you) eats strawberries.
The elephant (mentioned above) eats strawberries.

With many verbs in the present tense English can eliminate the ambiguous generic or non-generic interpretations by using the progressive form of the verb or by contextually fixing a temporal referential point, as in the following:

The elephant is eating strawberries.
The elephant eats (now) strawberries.

In the past tense the role of context is even more transparent. In a sentence like:

The pterodactyl ate strawberries

either the temporal specificity or the definiteness, or both, have to come from the context. If we anchor the verb to some reference point in time and state:

The pterodactyl ate (at some fixed time) strawberries,

we do not interpret the sentence as being generic. The same result is achieved if we make the nouns definite:

The (definite) pterodactyl ate the (definite) strawberries.

In summary, it is context and not, as Chafe claims, the inherent generic nature of the verb which determines the generic nature of the sentence and consequently the nouns in the sentence. In English this is reflected consistently by the morphological inflection of the verb, and to a lesser extent by the number and definiteness of the subject and object nouns. In Russian, the generic or non-generic interpretation of a simple sentence with an imperfective verb and no time adverbials is totally dependent on context. This claim has direct relevance for the observations made in this thesis concerning the use and definitions of singularia tantum nouns in Russian and English.

It was noted, first of all, that there is a strong semantic-grammatical correlation between abstract and collective nouns and their use in the singularia tantum (i.e., their exclusion from the grammatical opposition of singular-plural). Such nouns are normally found in generic-type contexts. When they are found in non-generic-type contexts, their semantic connotation changes, they become compatible with the singular-plural opposition (e.g., *death-deaths*), and they can no longer be classified as singularia tantum. Similarly, material nouns can switch their semantic allegiance from a collective or abstract interpretation (generic), reflected grammatically in the singularia tantum, to the more concrete interpretation manifested grammatically in their categorisation as count nouns (e.g., *the elephant (before you) vs. the elephant (in general)*), depending on the context in which they are found.

One expected consequence of the above proposal on the relationship between context and the category of singularia tantum would be the rather unstable nature of this category in the languages in question. In fact this is the case in Russian where, according to Panov (1968: 172),

the collective forms like студенчество, учительство, назначенство, офицерство, профессура and others, is dying out.

Это, с одной стороны, яркое свидетельство непродуктивности в современном русском языке собирательных имен существительных. С другой же стороны, это - показатель живого и развивающегося характера употребления форм ед. ч. в обобщенно-собирательном значении, продуктивности этих форм. (173)

Furthermore, it is evident that not all nouns in the 'names of berries and vegetables' semantic category appear as singularia tantum nouns in Russian. In particular there are many vegetable names which behave as regular count nouns and some which appear as 'partial' pluralia tantum nouns. This term appears in a doctoral dissertation entitled Flux in Contemporary Russian Nominal Flexion (McGill University, 1979) by Serge Hervouet-Zeiber and it is used to refer to certain masculine names of fruits and vegetables which occur predominantly in the plural number. The author provides evidence from various sources to substantiate his claim that at least ten nouns belonging to this semantic class show a propensity towards the plural number. The nouns involved are абрикос (apricot), апельсин (orange), артишок (artichoke), баклажан (aubergene), гранат (pomegranate), корнишон (cucumber), мандарин (mandarin), патиссон (squash), помидор (tomato), шампиньон (mushroom).

The restricted use of the singular number for the ten nouns listed above provides an interesting anomaly within a limited semantic

semantic class. On the one hand certain fruits and vegetables will appear only in a singular form (singularia tantum) and on the other certain ones will be encountered primarily in the plural number ('partial' pluralia tantum). The difficulty for the learner of Russian will now be the inability to generalize to the singular form on the basis of the semantic category 'fruits and vegetables'; instead he will have to cope with both number forms for different representatives of the same set, as in the following examples:

Я очень люблю землянику (ягоду, крыжовник).
 Я очень люблю горох (морковь, лук).
 Я очень люблю абрикосы (мандарины, апельсины).
 Я очень люблю артишоки (баклажаны, помидоры).

Furthermore, since English consistently uses either the singular direct object or plural direct object without determiners for generic contexts, depending on the lexical item employed (singular for mass nouns, plural for count), the above sentences pose special problems. When Russian uses a singularia tantum nouns such as клубника, as the direct object in a sentence like,

слон ест клубнику

this sentence is immediately interpreted generically by an English speaker since the equivalent of клубника is, in English, a count noun, and the use of the singular number for the direct object in English is associated, as mentioned earlier, with generic contexts and a corresponding shift of the noun from the count to mass categories.

In our consideration of Russian and English singularia tantum nouns, we have tried to provide some insight into the more predictable semantic and morphological features associated with this category. We noted a good deal of semantic parallelism between singularia tantum nouns in both languages but also discovered that there are non-overlapping areas which could present specific problems for the learner of Russian.

In general terms singularia tantum nouns in both languages are most frequently those of a semantically abstract or collective nature, for which the notions of 'one' or 'more than one' (i.e., singular versus plural) do not apply. The least semantic justification for inclusion in the singularia tantum category occurs with material nouns, and it was precisely within this latter class that the least correspondence between Russian and English was found, and the greatest difficulty in categorisation was encountered. Throughout the thesis our analysis was plagued by the problem of the semantic and grammatical vascillation of forms which we were trying to pigeon-hole as abstract, collective, or material (from the semantic point of view), or singularia tantum, pluralia tantum, or count (from the grammatical point of view). This flexibility was obviously contextually conditioned and we have attempted to describe some aspects of the anchoring mechanism which changes the semantic interpretation of sentences from generic to non-generic. This, in turn, provided us with some explanation for the corresponding vascillation between singularia tantum versus count classifications of the same noun within such sentences. In adopting the notion of the relative contextually-dependent nature of the category singularia tantum and its underlying semantic dimensions of abstract and collective, we are forced into agreement with Gleason's remark that "...every noun, given the right context, can occur in either type of usage, count or mass" (1965:137).

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