**THE NOUN**

**1.General characteristics.**

The noun is the central lexical unit of language. A noun is a part of speech that denotes a person, animal, place, thing, or idea. The word comes from the Latin “nomen”, meaning “name.” Word classes like nouns were first described by the Sanskrit grammarian Pāṇini and ancient Greeks like Dionysios Thrax, and were defined in terms of their morphological properties. For example, in Ancient Greek, nouns inflect for grammatical case (відмінок), such as dative or accusative (знахідний). Every language has words that are nouns. As you read the following explanations, think about some words that might fit into each category.

* Person – A term for a person, whether proper name, gender, title, or class, is a noun.
* Animal – A term for an animal, whether proper name, species, gender, or class is a noun.
* Place – A term for a place, whether proper name, physical location, or general locale is a noun.
* Thing – A term for a thing, whether it exists now, will exist, or existed in the past is a noun.
* Idea – A term for an idea, be it a real, workable idea or a fantasy that might never come to fruition is a noun.

It is the main nominative unit of speech. As any other part of speech, the noun can be characterised by three criteria: semantic (the meaning), morphological (the form and grammatical catrgories) and syntactical (functions, distribution).

Semantic features of the noun. The noun possesses the grammatical meaning of thingness (предметність), substantiality (істотність). According to different principles of classification nouns fall into several subclasses:

1. According to the type of nomination they may be proper (власні) and common (загальні). A common noun is any nonspecific person, place or thing. A proper noun is any specific person, place, living being, or thing. A proper noun can be a name, places, companies, and trademarks. In the English language, all proper nouns are capitalized, which makes them easy to recognize.
2. According to the form of existence they may be animate (істоти) and inanimate (неістоти). Animate nouns in their turn fall into human and non-human.
3. According to their quantitative structure nouns can be countable and uncountable. It's important to distinguish between countable and uncountable nouns in English because their usage is different in regards to both determiners and verbs. Countable nouns are for things we can count using numbers. They have a singular and a plural form. The singular form can use the determiner “a” or “an”. If you want to ask about the quantity of a countable noun, you ask "How many?" combined with the plural countable noun. Uncountable nouns are for the things that we cannot count with numbers. They may be the names for abstract ideas or qualities or for physical objects that are too small or too amorphous to be counted (liquids, powders, gases, etc.). Some examples of uncountable nouns are:

Ideas and experiences: *advice, information, progress, news, luck, fun, work*

Materials and substances: *water, rice, cement, gold, milk*

Weather words: *weather, thunder, lightning, rain, snow*

Names for groups or collections of things: *furniture, equipment, rubbish, luggage*

Other common uncountable nouns include: *accommodation, baggage, homework, knowledge, money, permission, research, traffic, travel*.

Uncountable nouns are used with a singular verb. They usually do not have a plural form. We cannot use a/an with these nouns. To express a quantity of an uncountable noun, use a word or expression like some, a lot of, much, a bit of, a great deal of, or else use an exact measurement like a cup of, a bag of, 1kg of, 1L of, a handful of, a pinch of, an hour of, a day of. If you want to ask about the quantity of an uncountable noun, you ask “How much?”

| uncountable | countable |
| --- | --- |
| accommodation | a house, a flat, a place to live, a place to stay |
| baggage/luggage | a suitcase, a bag, a rucksack |
| bread | a loaf (of bread), a (bread) roll |
| lightning | a flash of lightning |
| luck | a stroke of luck |
| money | a note, a coin, a sum of money, a euro, a dollar |
| poetry | a poem |
| rain | a shower, a downpour, a storm |
| travel | a journey, a trip |
| work | a job, a task |

Some nouns are countable in other languages but uncountable in English. They must follow the rules for uncountable nouns. The most common ones are: accommodation, advice, baggage, behavior, bread, furniture, information, luggage, news, progress, traffic, travel, trouble, weather, work. Be careful with the noun hair which is normally uncountable in English, so it is not used in the plural. It can be countable only when referring to individual hairs.

This set of subclasses cannot be put together into one table because of the different principles of classification.

Morphological features of the noun. In accordance with the morphological structure of the stems all nouns can be classified into: simple, derived – похідні (stem + affix, affix + stem – *thingness*); compound – складені ( stem+ stem – *armchair* ) and composite ( the Hague ). The noun has morphological categories of number and case (числа і відмінку). Some scholars admit the existence of the category of gender.

Syntactic features of the noun. The noun can be used іn the sentence in all syntactic functions but predicate (крім присудка). Speaking about noun combinability, we can say that it can go into right-hand and left-hand connections with practically all parts of speech. That is why practically all parts of speech but the verb can act as noun determiners. However, the most common noun determiners (визначники) are considered to be articles, pronouns, numerals, adjectives and nouns themselves in the common and genitive case.

1. **The category of number**

The grammatical category of number is the linguistic representation of the objective category of quantity. The number category is realized through the opposition of two form-classes: the plural form - the singular form. The category of number in English is restricted in its realization because of the dependent implicit grammatical meaning of countableness/uncountableness. The number category is realized only within subclass of countable nouns.

The grammatical meaning of number may not coincide with the notional quantity: the noun in the singular does not necessarily denote one object while the plural form may be used to denote one object consisting of several parts. The singular form may denote:

1. oneness (individual separate object – *a cat*);
2. generalization (the meaning of the whole class – *The cat is a domestic animal*);
3. indiscreteness (or uncountableness - *money, milk*).

The plural form may denote:

1. the existence of several objects (*cats*);
2. the inner discreteness (pluralia tantum, *jeans*).

To sum it up, all nouns may be subdivided into three groups:

1. The nouns in which the opposition of explicit discreteness/indiscreteness (протиставлення однини і множини) is expressed :*cat::cats*;
2. The nouns in which this opposition is not expressed explicitly but is revealed by syntactical and lexical correlation in the context. There are two groups here:
3. Singularia tantum. It covers different groups of nouns: proper names, abstract nouns, material nouns, collective nouns;
4. Pluralia tantum. It covers the names of objects consisting of several parts (jeans), names of sciences (mathematics), names of diseases, games, etc.
5. The nouns with homogenous (однорідні, однакові форми) number forms. The number opposition here is not expressed formally but is revealed only lexically and syntactically in the context: e.g. *Look! A sheep is eating grass. Look! The sheep are eating grass*.

**3. The category of case.**

Case expresses the relation of a word to another word in the word-group or sentence (my sister’s coat). The category of case correlates with the objective category of possession. The case category in English is realized through the opposition: The Common Case :: The Possessive Case (sister :: sister’s). However, in modern linguistics the term “genitive case” is used instead of the “possessive case” because the meanings rendered by the “`s” sign are not only those of possession. The scope of meanings rendered by the Genitive Case is the following :

1. Possessive Genitive : Mary’s father – Mary has a father,
2. Subjective Genitive: The doctor’s arrival – The doctor has arrived,
3. Objective Genitive : The man’s release – The man was released,
4. Adverbial Genitive : Two hour’s work – X worked for two hours,
5. Equation Genitive : a mile’s distance – the distance is a mile,
6. Genitive of destination: children’s books – books for children,
7. Mixed Group: yesterday’s paper

To avoid confusion with the plural, the marker of the genitive case is represented in written form with an apostrophe. This fact makes possible disengagement of –`s form fr om the noun to which it properly belongs. E.g.: *The man I saw yesterday’s son*, where -`s is appended to the whole group (the so-called group genitive). It may even follow a word which normally does not possess such a formant, as in *somebody else’s book*.

There is no universal point of view as to the case system in English. Different scholars stick to a different number of cases.

1. There are two cases. The Common one and The Genitive;
2. There are no cases at all, the form `s is optional because the same relations may be expressed by the ‘of-phrase’: *the doctor’s arrival – the arrival of the doctor*;
3. There are three cases: the Nominative, the Genitive, the Objective due to the existence of objective pronouns *me, him, whom*;
4. Case Grammar. Ch.Fillmore introduced syntactic-semantic classification of cases. They show relations in the so-called deep structure of the sentence. According to him, verbs may stand to different relations to nouns. There are 6 cases:
5. Agentive Case (A) John opened the door;
6. Instrumental case (I) The key opened the door; John used the key to open the door;
7. Dative Case (D) John believed that he would win (the case of the animate being affected by the state of action identified by the verb);
8. Factitive Case (F) The key was damaged ( the result of the action or state identified by the verb);
9. Locative Case (L) Chicago is windy;
10. Objective case (O) John stole the book.

**4. The Problem of Gender in English**

Gender plays a relatively minor part in the grammar of English by comparison with its role in many other languages. There is no gender concord, and the reference of the pronouns *he, she, it*is very largely determined by what is sometimes referred to as ‘rnatual’ gender for English, it depends upon the classification of persons and objects as male, female or inanimate. Thus, the recognition of gender as a grammatical category is logically independent of any particular semantic association.

According to some language analysts (B.Ilyish, F.Palmer, and E.Morokhovska), nouns have no category of gender in Modern English. Prof. Ilyish states that not a single word in Modern English shows any peculiarities in its morphology due to its denoting male or female being. Thus, the words *husband* and *wife* do not show any difference in their forms due to peculiarities of their lexical meaning. The difference between such nouns as *actor* and *actress* is a purely lexical one. In other words, the category of gender should not be confused with the category of sex, because sex is an objective biological category. It correlates with gender only when sex differences of living beings are manifested in the language grammatically (e.g. *tiger – tigress*). Still, other scholars (M.Blokh, John Lyons) admit the existence of the category of gender. Prof.Blokh states that the existence of the category of gender in Modern English can be proved by the correlation of nouns with personal pronouns of the third person (*he, she, it*). Accordingly, there are three genders in English: the neuter (non-person) gender, the masculine gender, the feminine gender.

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