

# *Pluralia tantum* nouns in the Slavonic languages\*

Greville G. Corbett

Surrey Morphology Group, University of Surrey UK

Note: this paper has been prepared for the International Congress of Slavists (Belgrade 2018). It relies on a much longer paper which contains a full typology (Corbett ms.). The current paper complements the longer one in focussing on the Slavonic languages, and their potential contribution for a better understanding of *pluralia tantum*, including a new Slavonic case study.

## Abstract

Imenice *pluralia tantum* su fascinantna pojava, za koju se slavisti interesuju još od Braunove teze (1930), pa i ranije. Za to postoji nekoliko razloga. Prvo, mnoge od ovih imenica su defektne jer, iako su brojive, nemaju jedninu. Drugo, dok defektne imenice obično uključuju sporadične praznine u promeni (kao što je to, po jezičkom osećanju mnogih govornika, slučaj sa genitivom množine ruske imenice \**mečt*), klase imenica *pluralia tantum* često su – bar delimično – semantički predvidljive (tj. ove imenice su podložne „uopštavanjima srednje veličine”, Koenig 1999). Međutim, ova predvidljivost je ograničena: up. u ruskom imenicu *binokl* ‘dvogled’, koja ima standardnu promenu, sa imenicom *sani* ‘sanke’, koja je imenica *plurale tantum*. Treće, da bi se mogle upotrebiti kao brojive, imenice *pluralia tantum* često zahtevaju neko dodatno sredstvo, npr. zbirne brojeve. I u opštoj lingvistici postoji stalno interesovanje za ove imenice (npr. Visnievski 2009). Zato je glavni cilj ovog referata da pokaže poseban značaj podataka iz slovenskih jezika za opštelingvističko ispitivanje imenica *pluralia tantum*. Taj značaj je dvostruk. Prvo, kod nekih klasa ovih imenica se uočavaju zanimljivije razlike u različitim slovenskim jezicima. I drugo, treba preispitati tvrdnju da je, iz semantičkih razloga, prirodno da se predmeti koji se javljaju u paru označavaju imenicama *pluralia tantum*, s obzirom da se ovakvi predmeti označavaju imenicama *pluralia tantum* i u jezicima koji imaju dual (kao u slovenačkom i gornjem i donjem lužičkom). Uz to, u ovim jezicima se imenice *pluralia tantum* mogu koristiti za jedan, dva ili više od dva referenta (kao u donjem lužičkom, Janaš 1976/1984). Dakle, ove imenice zaslužuju našu stalnu pažnju bilo da je reč o razumevanju broja u slovenskim jezicima ili o opštelingvističkim aspektima imenica *pluralia tantum*.

*Pluralia tantum* nouns are indeed fascinating, and Slavists’ interest in them goes back to Braun’s thesis (1930) and earlier. There are several reasons for this. First, many of these nouns are defective, since they are countable yet they lack a singular. Second, while defectives typically involve sporadic gaps (as with Russian genitive plural \**mečt* for many speakers), sets of *pluralia tantum* nouns are often semantically predictable, at least in part (they are subject to ‘middle-size generalizations’, Koenig 1999). This predictability is limited, however: compare

---

\*The support of the AHRC (grant: AH/N006887/1: Lexical splits: a novel perspective on the structure of words) is gratefully acknowledged. For sharing their expertise in key languages I thank Bernard Comrie and Maria Polinsky (Tsez), Ora Matushansky (Russian), Ljubomir Popović (Serbo-Croat) and Gerald Stone (Upper Sorbian). I am grateful to Penny Everson and Lisa Mack for their help in preparing the typescript. I follow the Leipzig Glossing Rules: <https://www.eva.mpg.de/lingua/resources/glossing-rules.php>.

Russian *binokl* ‘binoculars’ (which is a normal noun) with *sani* ‘sleigh’ a plurale tantum noun. Third they often require some sort of repair (such as the use of collective numerals) so that they can be treated as count nouns. Pluralia tantum nouns are of continued interest in the general linguistic literature (see, for instance, Wisniewski 2009), hence it is timely to consider the particular interest and contribution of the Slavonic data, the focus of this paper. Two aspects stand out. First the Slavonic languages provide semantic classes of these nouns, which vary across the family in interesting ways. And second, the claim for the semantic naturalness of paired objects being pluralia tantum needs reassessing, given that these nouns are pluralia tantum even when the dual is available (as in Slovene and Upper and Lower Sorbian. Moreover, in these languages pluralia tantum nouns can be used for one, two, or more than two referents (as in Lower Sorbian, Janaš 1976/1984). Thus these nouns deserve our continued attention, both for Slavonic internal and for general linguistic reasons.

## 1 Introduction

“Pluralia tantum” is a term for nouns which have only a plural when this is not expected, in some sense. For example, Serbo-Croat *vile* ‘pitchfork’ is a plurale tantum noun, and yet we might expect it to be a normal count noun.<sup>1</sup> It matches a straightforward definition:

“**pluralia tantum.** Latin ‘plurals only’: i.e. nouns, like *oats* or *trousers*, which appear only in a plural form.” (Matthews 1997: 284)

Slavists have been interested in pluralia tantum nouns at least since Braun (1930), and a major step forward is Zaliznjak’s insightful discussion of pluralia tantum (1967/2002: 57-61, 75-80). Key issues are whether the inventory of nouns which are pluralia tantum is motivated or not, and whether the nouns (those that would be expected to be normal count nouns) are defective or not. I will provide a typology (§2), which I believe sheds interesting light on what we find in Slavonic languages, and will suggest the areas in which the Slavonic data are particularly important for the understanding of pluralia tantum nouns more generally. This will include the issue of whether the definition offered above is adequate. I discuss what is needed to extend the typology (§3). Then I look at the count-mass distinction (§4), and the issue of larger number systems (§5). I consider briefly the repercussions of pluralia tantum nouns (§6), then go on to consider pluralia tantum constructions (§7), before concluding in §8.

## 2 A typology of pluralia tantum nouns

To identify key types of pluralia tantum nouns, let us look at the basic relations between their semantics, syntax and morphology. We might expect that a noun’s semantics, syntax and morphology would line up. Thus Serbo-Croat *knjige* ‘books’ denotes more than one entity, it is syntactically plural in that it takes plural agreement, and it is morphologically plural in having plural inflection. With pluralia tantum nouns the three components typically do not line up neatly, which is the source of their interest. Such mismatches between semantics, syntax and morphology mean that we must take care over our use of terms, and specifically, what we mean when we say a noun is ‘plural’.

---

<sup>1</sup> See Corbett & Browne (2018) for a sketch grammar of this pluricentric language.

## 2.1 SC *vile* ‘pitchfork’: semantics vs (syntax and morphology)

Consider this example:

Serbo-Croat (Piper, Antičić, Ružić, Tanasić, Popović & Tošović 2005: 906)

- (1) Odne-o je jedn-e vil-e  
Took.away-PST[SG.M] AUX.3SG one-PL.F pitchfork(F)-PL.ACC  
‘He took away one pitchfork.’

The noun *vile* ‘pitchfork’ is what most think of as a plurale tantum noun. It is plural in form. It also takes plural agreement. Hence its morphology and syntax line up. However, in examples like (1) it denotes a single entity, so that its semantics is out of step with its syntax and morphology. Besides denoting one item, it can denote more than one; the latter is clear in instances like (2):

- (2) Odne-o je sv-e vil-e  
Took.away-PST[SG.M] AUX.3SG all-PL.F pitchfork(F)-PL.ACC  
‘He took away all the pitchforks.’

In both (1) and (2), syntax and morphology are aligned. In the instances where one item is denoted (as in (1)), the semantics is out of step with the syntax and morphology. Not surprisingly SC *vile* ‘pitchfork’ fits Matthews’ definition given above. However, while SC *vile* ‘pitchfork’ is the most familiar type of example, there are other possibilities, which are more challenging for the definition, as we shall see. These come from outside and inside Slavonic.

## 2.2 Tsez *xex-bi* ‘child(ren)’: (semantics and syntax) vs morphology

The noun *xex-bi* ‘child(ren)’, in the Dagestanian language Tsez, contrasts with nouns like SC *vile* ‘pitchfork’, as seen in Comrie (2001). Consider first a regular Tsez count noun:

- (3) Regular Tsez noun *besuro* ‘fish’ (Comrie, Polinsky & Rajabov 1998: 6-7)

	SINGULAR	PLURAL
ABSOLUTIVE	besuro	besuro-bi
ERGATIVE	besur-ā	besuro-z-ā
GENITIVE 1	besuro-s	besuro-za-s
DATIVE	besuro-r	besuro-za-r
.	.	.
.	.	.
.	.	.

These are just some of the case values from the substantial inventory in Tsez; see Comrie & Polinsky (1998); the many further case values are indicated by the dots in (3) and (4). Now consider *xexbi* ‘child(ren)’ (from Comrie 2001: 381-383).

(4) Paradigm of Tsez *xexbi* ‘child(ren)’

	SINGULAR	PLURAL
ABSOLUTIVE	xex-bi	xex-bi
ERGATIVE	xex-z-ā	xex-z-ā
GENITIVE 1	xex-za-s	xex-za-s
DATIVE	xex-za-r	xex-za-r
.	.	.
.	.	.
.	.	.

Comparing with *besuro* ‘fish’ in (3) above, we see that *xexbi* ‘child(ren)’ is plural in form (*-bi* and *-za-* are clear markers of plural); it has a full plural paradigm of case forms. The way that the paradigm is presented in (4) suggests that *xexbi* ‘child(ren)’ is both singular and plural. The evidence for this comes both from semantics: *xexbi* ‘child(ren)’ may denote one or more children, and from syntax: this noun takes the appropriate agreements, singular for one and plural for more than one. To confirm this, we need to look at the agreement system of Tsez: agreement involves four gender values as well as two number values. We will consider just the demonstrative, which distinguishes singular and plural:

(5) The Tsez demonstrative *howdu* ‘this’ (Comrie 2001: 380)

GENDER	SINGULAR	PLURAL
I (male humans)	howda	howziri
II-IV all others	howdu	

The first example is as expected:

- (6) howziri xex-bi b-ik’i-s.  
 this.PL.ABS child-PL.ABS I.PL-go-PST.WIT  
 ‘These children went.’

Here more than one child is referred to and the agreements are plural. Now consider what happens for one child. Traditional usage is as follows:

- (7) traditional usage (III in the singular)  
 howdu xex-bi b-ik’i-s.  
 this.II/III/IV.SG.ABS child-PL.ABS III.SG-go-PST.WIT  
 ‘This child went.’

The agreements are singular or plural as appropriate, but the forms of the noun stay the same (the noun takes the appropriate case value, with plural inflectional forms, irrespective of the number value). Predicate agreement is more complex (see Comrie 2001 for details).

*Xexbi* ‘child(ren)’ has an appropriate inventory of case forms, but with just one number form for each of them. It does not distinguish singular from plural, and the inflectional forms it has are recognizably plural. This is important: the absolutive has the unmistakable plural marker *-bi*, and all the oblique forms have the plural augment *-za-*. However, unlike nouns like SC *vile* ‘pitchfork’, it takes singular and plural agreements according to meaning. The Tsez data are of interest not just for their relevance for number, but also because they are hard to

classify in terms of their morphological behaviour. In Corbett (2007: 31-38) it is argued that *xexbi* ‘child(ren)’ falls mid-way between canonical syncretism and canonical deponency, and hence there is no established term for such examples. The Tsez examples fit Matthews’ definition well, in that they have only plural forms, in the morphological sense. Yet this is only half the story, since the forms which interest us (those denoting a single item), fail to control plural agreement. We return in §2.4 to the way in which the paradigms are presented.

### 2.3 Russian *galife* ‘riding breeches’: semantics vs syntax vs morphology

Russian nouns distinguish six indisputable case values, which are found in both singular and plural. (The remaining, very interesting values are discussed in detail in Corbett 2012: 200-222.) Russian also offers a more interesting type of plurale tantum. Consider these two nouns:

#### (8) Uninflecting nouns in Russian

	<i>pal'to</i> ‘coat’		<i>galife</i> ‘riding breeches’	
	SINGULAR	PLURAL	SINGULAR	PLURAL
NOMINATIVE	pal'to	pal'to	---	galife
ACCUSATIVE	pal'to	pal'to	---	galife
GENITIVE	pal'to	pal'to	---	galife
DATIVE	pal'to	pal'to	---	galife
INSTRUMENTAL	pal'to	pal'to	---	galife
LOCATIVE	pal'to	pal'to	---	galife

These are rather unusual paradigms. The first noun *pal'to* ‘coat’, like many other similar nouns, shows no sign of inflection. Yet it is not defective. It can stand in all syntactic environments appropriate for nouns. Furthermore, in contexts where agreement is required, the agreement targets all agree appropriately. Agreeing modifiers are not needed for the use of *pal'to* ‘coat’, however, since such nouns can occur in syntactic positions where there is no overt indication of their number and case. We may treat them as a separate inflection class, the solution adopted in Corbett & Fraser (2000: 308), or we may treat them as different from inflecting nouns. The essential point is that their inflectional behaviour is a morphology-internal issue. It has no repercussions in syntax.

We can now see the significance of *galife* ‘riding breeches’ for the typology of pluralia tantum. Like *pal'to* ‘coat’, *galife* ‘riding breeches’ can appear in syntactic environments requiring each of the case values. However, it is also a plurale tantum noun, in the sense that it takes only plural agreements (Isačenko 1962: 77). Here is an instance:

#### (9) Russian

v ser-yx galife  
in grey-PL.LOC riding.breeches  
‘in grey riding breeches’

(From Ju. Trifonov, *Dom na naberežnoj*)

This noun is to some extent like SC *vile* ‘pitchfork’ or Russian *sani* ‘sledge’, in that the agreement is always plural, irrespective of meaning. It fits into a pattern, in that several other nouns in Russian, denoting bipartites, are pluralia tantum nouns of the *sani* type. The effect of the pattern can be seen in the treatment of the borrowings like *džins-y* ‘jeans’, where Russian

plural morphology is added to the original plural form (-y is the nominative/accusative plural, and there is a full plural paradigm), making it a pluralia tantum noun. Ora Matushansky points out (personal communication, 27 March 2018) another comparable instance: slang *lavè* ‘money, dough’ is also an uninflecting noun which can take plural agreements (following the pattern of the basic noun *den’gi* ‘money’ which is an inflecting pluralia tantum); there are also some instances of *lavè* ‘money, dough’ taking singular agreement, however.

The key point is that *galife* ‘riding breeches’ indeed has the plural only, but this relates to its agreement requirement and not to morphological form. This restricted application of the definition is reasonable, since we typically understand that definitions apply to the extent that is possible. Given that *galife* ‘riding breeches’ does not inflect, it is a pluralia tantum noun to the extent that this is possible (that is, in terms of agreement). In Russian it is exceptional to be uninflecting; but there are languages where nouns are typically uninflecting, but where there are still pluralia tantum nouns (in terms of agreement). One example is Walman, a Torricelli language of Papua New Guinea (Dryer & Brown 2015), discussed in detail in Corbett (ms).

## 2.4 Types of feature: morphosemantic and morphosyntactic

Let us take stock. We have already encountered three types of pluralia tantum nouns, summarized in Table 1.

Table 1: Summary of the types of pluralia tantum nouns in §2

example	section	mapping
Serbo-Croat <i>vile</i> ‘pitchfork’	2.1	semantics ≠ syntax = morphology
Tsez <i>xexbi</i> ‘child(ren)’	2.2	semantics = syntax ≠ morphology
Russian <i>galife</i> ‘riding breeches’	2.3	semantics ≠ syntax ≠ morphology

These examples have presented us with difficulties of definition. While it seemed straightforward to say that pluralia tantum nouns have only the plural form, with that raising issues for expected count nouns like SC *vile* ‘pitchfork’, less so for non-count nouns like Russian *šči* ‘cabbage soup’, it is not self-evident how to demonstrate that SC *vile* ‘pitchfork’ or the famous Russian example *sani* ‘sledge’ is indeed the plural. We may point to the agreements required, though this does not relate directly to the form of the noun, as in the definition. And then, in some of the data presented above, the layout of the paradigms was surprising. It is time to confront these issues.

The Russian *sani* ‘sledge’ has only forms which are recognizably plural in their morphology. It is important to stress that for nouns that would be expected to be count nouns, the fact of being pluralia tantum does not prevent their ranging over all number values in terms of reference. For Russian this is of course singular and plural reference:

Russian (Miloslavskij 1999: 477)

- (10) Pod"exa-l-i        san-i  
 draw.up-PST-PL    sledge-PL  
 ‘A sledge drew up’ / ‘Sledges drew up’

Moreover, in languages with a dual, pluralia tantum nouns can be used for reference to two items, as well as to one or several (see Janaš (1976/1984: 72) on Lower Sorbian). What does

this imply for our representation of the paradigms? There are two ways we might represent Russian *sani* ‘sledge’:

(11) Representations of Russian *sani* ‘sledge’

	morphosemantic		morphosyntactic	
	SINGULAR	PLURAL	SINGULAR	PLURAL
NOMINATIVE	san-i	san-i	---	san-i
ACCUSATIVE	san-i	san-i	---	san-i
GENITIVE	san-ej	san-ej	---	san-ej
DATIVE	sanj-am	sanj-am	---	sanj-am
INSTRUMENTAL	sanj-ami	sanj-ami	---	sanj-ami
LOCATIVE	sanj-ax	sanj-ax	---	sanj-ax

If we ask how this noun realizes the grammatical meanings singular and plural, that is, how the semantics and morphology are linked, the answer is the morphosemantic representation on the left of (11). Each possibility can be realized, but the outcome is the same for singular and plural. So long as we consider only the “internal” picture, this is an appropriate representation. The phonological shape of the inflections, by comparison with regular nouns, makes it clear that the forms are what would elsewhere be used only for the plural. If we turn to the external requirements of *sani* ‘sledge’, then the morphosemantic representation is insufficient. Even when denoting a single object, this noun requires plural agreement. It is not a problem to refer to a single sledge, as with the phrase *odn-i san-i* one-PL sledge-PL ‘one sledge’ (note that the numeral stands in the plural). For the external or morphosyntactic nature of Russian *sani*, the representation on the right is appropriate.

Such examples have wider theoretical significance, because we too readily assume that the morphosemantic and morphosyntactic feature values associated with any paradigm cell are the same. In the canonical world they are. In many actual instances they are too, but there are also numerous cases where they are not. This possible discrepancy is what leads to some of the confusion and difficulties with pluralia tantum nouns. For previous discussion of morphosemantic versus morphosyntactic features, see Corbett (2012: 49-50) and Spencer (2013: 219-232). In the earlier examples, I gave morphosyntactic representations. These are striking both in the case of Tsez *xexbi* ‘child(ren)’, since they show clearly the difference compared with Russian *sani* ‘sledge’ in (10), and in the case of Russian *galife* ‘riding breeches’ (9), where an uninflecting noun has specific morphosyntactic limitations.

### 3 Prerequisites for a fuller typology

The examples we have already seen demonstrate that the typology of pluralia tantum nouns is more extensive than most researchers have allowed for. Here I preview what will be required for the fuller account below.

#### 3.1 The issue of lexical entries

In brief, we need to lay out the criteria which allow us to calibrate the examples we have already discussed, and see whether these allow for further types. To keep the issues manageable, I will concentrate on instances which are clear in terms of the lexical entries involved. There are monographs waiting to be written on the lexicographical problems of related lexical entries,

where an arguable instance of a plurale tantum noun may be related to a noun with a full paradigm. For instance, in Russian we find *vybory* ‘election’ (Soboleva 1984: 67), which has only the plural in this sense. It is related to the noun *vybor* ‘choice’, which has a full paradigm. And there are many others, some harder to recognize, and the choices are not clear-cut. The issue was recognized by Wackernagel (1920: 86-88), and numerous following researchers; thus Payne & Huddleston (2002: 334-338) include relevant examples from English where polysemy is the appropriate analysis. Where such an analysis is implausible, my approach would be to say that in a default inheritance lexicon there can be two entries, *vybor1* and *vybory2* in the case above. These inherit some of the same information (including the stem and the inflectional type) but they have different lexical indices.<sup>2</sup> In this paper, I concentrate on setting out the extremes, particularly the clear plurale tantum, and so will not go further on this point here.

### 3.2 The typology of number

There has been considerable progress on the typology of number, relevant to the different aspects of plurale tantum. For a general survey of number see Corbett (2000), which also has an extensive bibliography. For a helpful annotated bibliography see Acquaviva (2014), and for a fine survey of number see Acquaviva (2017). There are two key components of the typology. First there is the featural part, the values of number. Here it is important to remember that there are more number values than just singular and plural, and that these other values (notably the dual in Slavonic languages) can help illuminate what is going on with plurale tantum. And second, we must be clear about the part of the noun inventory involved in any generalization. There is typically a distinction between nouns for which the number system is clearly relevant, the count nouns, and those which do not make number distinctions, the non-count or mass nouns. Cross-linguistically, they are distributed according to the Animacy Hierarchy, which we examine in §4. Nouns of both types can be plurale tantum, count nouns like Russian *sani* ‘sledge’ and non-count like *šči* ‘cabbage soup’.

### 3.3 “Canonical number”, “canonical gender” and “canonical noun”

We need a typology of features and of nouns (both individual nouns and groups of nouns), and even beyond nouns (§7). It will be helpful to have baselines from which to calibrate the variation, so we take a canonical approach (as in Corbett 2015). In the canonical world, nouns have all possible number values and just one gender value (Corbett 2013: 52, 58, Corbett & Fedden 2016: 503-504). And in this instance this idealization is in harmony with the accepted terminology. There is no special term for a noun with a single gender value, but there is ‘common gender’ to indicate nouns with more than one gender available. Equally, plurale tantum is an indication of nouns with one number value when they “should” have more than one. It is a common observation that plurale tantum nouns need to be specified as plural in the lexicon. Sometimes a false connection is made, from plurale tantum nouns being lexically specified, and therefore similar to gender, to them therefore being a gender value. Treating

---

<sup>2</sup> Canonically a noun has a single sense. Less canonical is to have more than one. In which case, it is more canonical if the relations between the senses are principled (e.g. animal and meat of animal, Apresjan 1974: 23) and if the rest of the lexical entry is the same for all senses (most relevant for us is that the same number values are available for all senses, realized by the same inflectional morphology).



pluralia tantum nouns as a gender is particularly common in Cushitic studies; this position has been argued against in detail (Corbett 2012: 224-234).

We should be clear that pluralia tantum nouns are neither a gender value nor a separate inflection class. This can be seen from these data:

Serbo-Croat (Leko 2009: 25)

(12) Jedn-i                    svat-ov-i                    su                    stig-l-i.  
 one-PL.M.NOM    wedding.procession(M)-PL-PL.NOM    AUX.3PL    arrive-PST-PL.M  
 ‘One wedding procession arrived.’

(13) Jedn-e                    naočal-e                    su                    puk-l-e  
 one- PL.F.NOM    spectacles(F)-PL.NOM    AUX.3PL    broke-PST-PL.FEM  
 ‘One pair of spectacles broke.’

(14) Jedn-a                    kol-a                    su                    stig-l-a.  
 one-PL.N.NOM    carriage(N)-PL.NOM    AUX.3PL    arrived-PST-PL.N  
 ‘One carriage arrived.’

Serbo-Croat has three gender values, with distinct agreements in the singular and the plural. Examples (12)-(14) show a plurale tantum noun of each of the three genders, with the appropriate gender agreement in the plural (including on the numeral *jedan* ‘one’, compare §2.1). Thus for a noun to be a plurale tantum cross-cuts gender. Furthermore, each of the nouns illustrated inflects as other nouns (which have singular and plural); there is nothing inflectionally different about them, except their lack of morphologically singular forms.

There is, however, a sophisticated argument made by Zaliznjak (1967/2002: 75-80) specifically for Russian, which deserves careful discussion (see Corbett 2012: 236-238). He shows that pluralia tantum nouns like *sani* ‘sledge(s)’ have a unique set of agreements (since when semantically singular they take plural agreement). As such they could be treated within the gender system, as a fourth (‘paired’) gender value of Russian. This analysis rests on a particular fact about Russian, which means that the solution does not generalize. Zaliznjak is quite explicit about it (1967/2002: 79); it can be made to work, because Russian has the same agreements for all three gender values in the plural, unlike Serbo-Croat, described in the text above. More generally, however, the special behaviour which creates the extra agreement class is indeed number and not gender.

For Serbo-Croat there is unusual and interesting data on pluralia tantum nouns, in Kostić (1987: 74-77). From a corpus of newspaper texts and poetry (almost two million words of running text), Kostić gives frequencies for noun occurrences by gender, number and case, with separate data on pluralia tantum nouns (of all three genders). The general picture, with few exceptions, is that the instances of nouns in the singular are most frequent. Then come ‘ordinary’ plurals, and finally instances of pluralia tantum nouns.

## 4 Count–mass, defectivity and the issue of motivation

A key issue for discussing whether pluralia tantum nouns are motivated or not is the expected distribution of number marking in a given language. There is considerable cross-linguistic

variation in the balance between count and non-count nouns.<sup>3</sup> This variation is constrained by the Animacy Hierarchy (Smith-Stark 1974, following earlier proposals). The modified version here is from Corbett (2000: 54-88) where there is a good deal of relevant data, considerably extended in Daniel (2005) and Haspelmath (2005); and for values apart from the plural, notably the dual as in Slovenian, see Corbett (2000: 89-132).

(15) The Animacy Hierarchy

speaker	>	addressee	>	3rd person	>	kin	>	human	>	animate	>	inanimate
(1st person pronouns)		(2nd person pronouns)										

Smith-Stark proposed that plurality can be ‘a significant opposition for certain categories but irrelevant for others’ (1974: 657). Where this occurs, it will affect some top segment of the hierarchy. He adduced two types of evidence: marking of the noun phrase for number (on the noun itself) and agreement in number. For pluralia tantum nouns, the issue of the two types of evidence is particularly relevant. For nouns like SC *vile* ‘pitchfork’, the two point in the same direction. On the other hand, Tsez *xexbi* ‘children’ is as we would expect in terms of agreement - it is only the morphological form which does not conform with the hierarchy. It is significant, I believe, that it involves humans. Indeed pluralia tantum denoting animates are rare. However, see Zaliznjak (1967/2002: 59-60, 99-100) for examples from Russian. And while the Animacy Hierarchy constrains the possibility of number differentiability, there are also differences in frequency of number marking according to the hierarchy (Brown, Corbett, Fedden, Hippisley & Marriott 2013, and see p. 238 for discussion of pluralia tantum nouns).

For nouns which are below the threshold for number-differentiability on the Animacy Hierarchy there are different possibilities (we should not assume that they will be singular). Some languages do make them singular; others have them all as plural; and yet others have some singular and some plural, as is the case in Slavonic. Given that there is a potential choice, there is the question of the motivation of singular vs plural, within the non-count nouns. This has been the subject of lively discussion, starting from the opposition of *oats* and *wheat*, and including Slavonic data (Wierzbicka 1988: 499-560, and 1991a, b; Palmer 1990: 226-229, Moravcsik 1991: 136-139), taken up again in Ljaševskaja (2004: 147-150), Goddard (2009) and Wisniewski (2009: 181-184).

From mass nouns, let us return to those pluralia tantum which would be expected to be count nouns. The question of motivation here, that is, the issue of which expected count nouns are pluralia tantum, is truly fascinating. For a given language, we expect countability to depend on the Animacy Hierarchy, as just discussed, and the threshold for number-differentiability varies from language to language. Once that threshold is established, the existence of pluralia tantum nouns may be surprising. To be specific, take English *trousers*. We might expect it to be a normal count noun, like *shirt*, *sock* or *shoe*. Or indeed like French *pantalon* ‘trousers’. Yet *trousers* is not a random exception. Williams (1994: 13) points out that there is a general restriction that items of clothing ‘worn on the legs in such and such a way’. This is a fine example of what Koenig (1999: 1-2) calls a ‘medium size generalization’. This generalization is specific to English and yet, of course, equivalents of *trousers* recur cross-linguistically in lists of pluralia tantum nouns, including in Slavonic. Moreover, these groups of nouns attract

<sup>3</sup> There is a substantial semantics literature on the count–mass distinction, including Mel’čuk (1979); Bale & Barner (2011) is a helpful bibliography.

semantically similar nouns as pluralia tantum borrowings, as documented by Shalyan (2015) for Russian, and as noted earlier for Russian *džinsy* ‘jeans’. See also Degtjarev (1982) on the development of pluralia tantum nouns.

We now turn to the place of Slavonic languages within a broader, areal context (§4.1) and then to a within-Slavonic case study, illustrating the potential contribution of Slavonic languages to the wider typological issues.

## 4.1 The areal context

We should note that related languages may be very different. It has been suggested that the prevalence of pluralia tantum nouns is an areal phenomenon, and that Circum-Baltic languages, which include of course some Slavonic languages, have substantial inventories (Vraciu 1976, Koptjevskaja-Tamm & Wälchli 2001: 629-637). That research on Circum-Baltic languages produced a useful table of the “usual suspects”. The method was first to draw up two lists of 30 items which were pluralia tantum in Baltic languages or in Russian; consolidating those lists gave a list of 56 items. These were translated into 41 languages of Europe. A fraction indicates the proportion of pluralia tantum when the dictionary consulted gave more than one translation. In addition the data are represented as a neighbour net in Wälchli (2011: 327). Sadly the raw data are no longer available, so that further analysis is not possible. However, there is new work on the topic with the same areal perspective (Tommola 2017).

Table 2: Frequency count of pluralia tantum in 41 languages of Europe  
(Koptjevskaja-Tamm & Wälchli 2001: 631)

Meaning	Languages with plurale tantum equivalent
'glasses'	24
'trousers'	22.5
'tongs'	20
'scissors'	19.5
'firewood'	14.5
'measles', 'Christmas'	14
'horse-race'	13.5
'money', 'slops'	13
'chicken-pox'	11.5
'gate', (major) place names	11
'christening'	10.5
'wedding', 'hide-and-seek'	10
'bran', 'sleigh', 'brain', 'door'	9.5
'organ'	9
'yeast', 'troubles'	8.5
'car(t)', 'sorcery'	8
'balance/scales', 'funeral', 'rake', 'childbirth'	7.5
'debate', 'jungle'	6.5
'mane,' 'thickets'	6
'ashes', 'straw'	5.5
'flour', 'oat(s)'	5
'twilight', 'clock/watch'	4.5
'salad', 'twenty-four hours', 'ceiling'	4
'lunch'	3.5
'smoke', 'foam', 'wheat', 'ink'	3
'rye', 'saliva' 'cream'	2.5
'dung/manure', 'fat', 'shirt', 'south', 'laughter'	2
'anger/wrath'	1.5
'year'	1

Table 2 shows clearly that there are items which are frequently pluralia tantum; at the same time, seeing them as naturally pluralia tantum is unwarranted, because they are often not in this category. It is helpful to think of such phenomena in terms of two dimensions (cf. Bye 2015: 107): first they can be predictable/rule governed vs unpredictable; and second, they can be functionally motivated/natural vs arbitrary.

Consider first the opposition predictable or rule governed versus unpredictable. There are instances where there appears to be an exceptionless or almost exceptionless generalization, the famous example being Williams (1994: 13), that items of clothing 'worn on the legs in such and such a way' will be pluralia tantum in English. There are many areas, however, where predictability is less clear, and the degree of predictability is rather in the eye of the linguist. This leads to the issue of whether pluralia tantum nouns are defective. Let us start from Matthews' (1997: 89) definition of a defective lexical item as one 'whose paradigm is incomplete in comparison with others of the major class that it belongs to.' Baerman & Corbett (2010: 2) start from this definition, and point out that '... the more idiosyncratic and lexically restricted the gap, the more canonically defective it is, and the more canonically defective the

gap is, the greater the analytical challenge.’ Thus the less predictable a plurale tantum noun is, the closer it comes to being defective. In the canonical instances of defectivity there is a resulting gap (as with the lack of the first singular of the verb *pobedit* ‘conquer’ in Russian). However, pluralia tantum nouns tend to be less than canonically defective, since there may well be a standard ‘patch’ for what would otherwise be missing. For instance, there are different possibilities for combining pluralia tantum nouns with numerals to obviate constructions that would otherwise be impossible (§§6.1-6.2).

Turning now to the opposition between functionally motivated or natural versus arbitrary, the first observation is that pluralia tantum nouns often seem not to fit the Animacy Hierarchy, which is another possible motivation for people looking for semantic explanations. Table 2 suggests possible arguments for motivation. There can be greater or smaller sub-regularities: so for instance, various languages of the Baltic region have large numbers of pluralia tantum, falling into semantic groups like names of meetings and festivals, and paired cutting tools. There are various lists of semantic groupings including Braun (1930: 1-15), Koptjevskaja-Tamm & Wälchli (2001: 630), Ljaševskaja (2004: 92-108) and Acquaviva (2008: 19-21). The difficulty is that one can point to the ‘usual suspects’ that appear in several different languages, and equally one can stress the differences.

#### 4.1 A Slavonic case study

As an interesting case study, consider the nouns for ‘violin’ in the Slavonic language. We shall be concerned with two items: (i) the traditional *gusle*, the instrument typically with one string found particularly in the Balkans (not the psaltery-like instrument referred to as *gusli* in East Slavonic, see Šerech-Shevelov (1952)); and (ii) the classic violin with four strings. To help keep them apart, the following quote will prove helpful:

- (16) *Andrić Na Drini Čuprija*  
 Vežba-ju drug-i deo Šubert-ov-e  
 Practise-3PL second-SG.M.ACC part(M)[SG.ACC] Schubert-POSS-SG.F.GEN  
 sonatin-e za klavir i violin-u.  
 sonatina(F)-SG.GEN for piano(M)[SG.ACC] and violin(F)-SG.ACC  
 ‘(They) practise the second part of Schubert’s sonatina for piano and violin.’

The fact that it is a Schubert piece makes it clear that the classic violin is intended, and it is also evident that there is a single violin in question. We can see the translations of this passage using the ParaSol corpus (von Waldenfels & Meyer 2006-). The essential data are in Table 3.

Table 3: ‘(Classic) violin’ in different Slavonic languages

Regular noun	Plurale tantum
Russian <i>skripka</i>	
Belarusian <i>skrypka</i>	
Ukrainian <i>skripka</i>	Polish <i>skrzypce</i>
	Czech <i>housle</i>
	Slovak <i>husle</i>
Serbo-Croat <i>violina</i>	
Slovenian <i>violina</i>	
Macedonian <i>violina</i>	
Bulgarian <i>cigulka</i>	

The general picture is clear: most languages in our sample have *violina* or *skripka*, as a normal count noun.<sup>4</sup> Bulgarian exceptionally has the normal count noun *cigulka* (for which see Rusek 2013, a generally helpful source). The West Slavonic languages are particularly interesting. Polish uses the same root as the East Slavonic languages, but makes it a plurale tantum noun *skrzypce*. Czech *housle* and Slovak *husle* are both pluralia tantum nouns. Their likely source will be obvious shortly, but it should be recalled that for certain both are used here of the classic violin.

Andrić makes more references to the traditional *gusle* ‘gusle’ in *Na Drini Ćuprija*, and using ParaSol we can find the correspondences in Table 4.

Table 4: ‘Gusle’ in different Slavonic languages

Regular noun	Plurale tantum
	Russian <i>gusli</i>
	Belarusian <i>gusli</i>
	Ukrainian <i>gusli</i>
	Polish <i>gęśle</i>
	Czech <i>gusle</i>
	Slovak <i>gusle</i>
	Serbo-Croat <i>gusle</i>
	Slovenian <i>gusle</i>
Macedonian <i>gusle</i>	
Bulgarian <i>gusla</i>	

We see that in most Slavonic languages, *gusle* is a plurale tantum noun. Recall that this is the single-stringed instrument, found particularly in the Balkans; for some language the form is a translation of a non-local folk instrument. We now see the interest of Czech and Slovak in Table 3: these have taken over the name of the folk instrument for the classic violin, retaining it as a plurale tantum noun.

It turns out that languages not included above are particularly interesting, as dictionary data demonstrate. Upper Sorbian, according to Stone (2002) has three terms for ‘violin’: *wiolina* (a regular noun) and two pluralia tantum: *husle* and *fidle*. Similarly in Lower Sorbian, following

<sup>4</sup> Though not in the sample, West Polesian also had *skrypka* (thanks to Kristian Roncero).

Starosta, Hannusch & Bartels (2018) we find *violina* as a regular noun, and *fiddle* as a plurale tantum noun, with *gusle*, also a plurale tantum, specified for the area of Schleife. Note that the traditional Sorbian violin has three strings. Before leaving the possible terms available, we should also record the use of *kemane* ‘fiddle’ in Macedonian.

We see a complex picture: the same referents are treated intriguingly differently across the Slavonic family. This makes it rather challenging to justify a case for motivation of plurale tantum nouns. Those who argue that pluralia tantum are motivated when denoting items with symmetrical parts, should take pause from the contrast of the single-stringed *gusle* and the four-stringed *violina*. Note that this is just to lay out the linguistic point – there is much more to be said from a musicological and folkloristic viewpoint. Continuing with the theme of motivation of the distribution of pluralia tantum nouns, there is frequent reference to bipartites, like Russian *nožnicy* ‘scissors’. We should therefore ask how these fare in larger systems, including those with a dedicated number value for two referents – the dual. We now turn to these larger systems.

## 5 Reduced expression of number in larger systems

It is now time to look at larger number systems, to see how the reduction of possibilities for particular nouns plays out here. The immediate link is that bipartites are often cited as being motivated pluralia tantum. This would lead to expectations about how they will behave in systems with a dual. And more generally, larger systems help clarify the issues discussed earlier. The definition given in §1 takes the perspective that the items of interest have only the plural. And this is what *pluralia tantum* means – having only the plural. But what if really they lack the singular? In languages like Russian and Serbo-Croat the point is moot. However, in languages with more than two values for number there is a difference. Given a larger system, one value or more might be lacking. The issues we have discussed can now be applied to values other than singular and plural.

Bipartites like Russian *nožnicy* ‘scissors’ are often cited as being motivated pluralia tantum. If ‘two-ness’ is the motivating factor, we might expect such nouns to occur as dualia tantum. Yet what we often find (in the relatively few instances where there are data) is that the usual suspects turn up, as pluralia tantum. Thus in Slovene, which has a singular-dual-plural system, nouns like *hlače* ‘trousers’ are pluralia tantum and not dualia tantum. Priestly (2006) investigates the issue specifically and states that there are no dualia tantum nouns in Slovene. In the other contemporary Slavonic languages with a dual, Upper and Lower Sorbian, there are numerous pluralia tantum nouns, including bipartites. Thus for Lower Sorbian, Janaš (1976/1984: 72) gives examples of different types of pluralia tantum, pointing out that they can be used for one, two, or more than two referents. For Upper Sorbian, which also has numerous pluralia tantum, Faßke (1981: 417) suggests two dualia tantum, *staršej* ‘parents’ and *dwójnikaj* ‘twins’. However, the dictionary by Völkel (1981: 87, 405) has the first as a duale tantum, but gives *dwójnik* (singular) ‘twin’. Gerald Stone (personal communication, 16 April 2018) states that the plural *starši* ‘parents’ is in regular use, but that this noun has no singular (like German *Eltern* ‘parents’), while *dwójnik* ‘twin’ has a full number paradigm. And, examining the oldest Slavonic texts, Moszyński (1985) concludes that there were no dualia tantum nouns in Old Church Slavonic.

Now Slovene and Sorbian have ‘weak’ duals (compare Belić 1932). What of languages with robust duals? These are more interesting, in different ways (see Corbett ms).

## 6 Repercussions of pluralia tantum

The existence of pluralia tantum nouns, of different types, has various repercussions. The most striking arise when a noun which is semantically a count noun, gives syntactic problems when it is to be counted. This may involve special numerals or forms of numerals (§6.1) or it may require a classifier-like construction (§6.2).

### 6.1 Numerals

Pluralia tantum nouns, when they would be expected to be count nouns, can create problems for numeral constructions, notably in instances where a singular would be expected. Let us start with the numeral ‘one’. In the Slavonic languages we find that this numeral agrees in number with its head, and hence is plural (as noted in §2.4 above):

Russian

- (17)   odn-i                san-i  
           one-PL.NOM   sledge.PL.NOM  
           ‘one sledge’

There is a trickier problem, however. As a result of the loss of the dual in most of the Slavonic languages, some very specific forms are found in numeral phrases. In particular, forms are used which, for the vast majority of nouns, are synchronically equivalent to a singular form. In Russian, for instance, we find the noun in the genitive singular, with the numerals *dva/dve* ‘two’, *tri* ‘three’, *četyre* ‘four’ (and with some other items including *oba/obe* ‘both’). Besides the restriction to these numerals, the phrase must be in the nominative (or the accusative syncretic with the nominative); see Corbett (2012: 209-210) for details and sources. The problem is that in particular instances numerals may require a form (genitive singular) that a pluralia tantum noun cannot supply; specifically, there is no grammatical combination of *dva/dve* ‘two’ and *sani* ‘sledge’ for a phrase in the nominative. However, there is another set of numerals, the collective numerals. The conditions on the use of the collective numerals where they are in competition with the ordinary numerals (that is, with ordinary nouns) are complex and interesting; see Suprun (1959: 80-83, 1969: 105-110), Mel’čuk (1985: 384-388), Nikunlassi (2000), Janko (2002: 172-180), Timberlake (2004: 195-196), Dobrušina & Panteleeva (2008) and Rjabuškina (2015).

The collective numerals have distinct morphology and take the genitive plural; hence they can be used with pluralia tantum nouns:

- (18)   dvo-e                san-ej  
           two(COLL)-NOM   sledge.PL.GEN  
           ‘two sledges’

This usage is largely restricted to the situation where it is needed (the lower numerals in the direct case); elsewhere the normal numerals are much the more frequent. This has been confirmed with corpus and questionnaire research by Nikunlassi (2000: 235-239). This usage developed during the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Suprun 1959: 81, 1969: 105, Nikunlassi 2000: 243n22); earlier there were plural collective numerals used with pluralia tantum nouns. This situation is



retained in part elsewhere in Slavonic, for instance in Serbo-Croat (Stevanović 1975: 315; Lučić 2015: 5), though being replaced by the classifier construction (Popović 1979: 18), and in Czech (Short 1993: 521); see Comrie (1992: 807-811) for Balto-Slavonic more generally, and Koptjevskaja-Tamm & Wälchli (2001: 635) for the prevalence of such numerals in the Baltic area. Russian *oba* ‘both’ has no collective equivalent, and hence there is no version of it to indicate, say, ‘both sledges’ in the nominative/accusative (Zaliznjak 1977: 67). However, the old plural form is retained in dialects (Suprun 1959: 46); in Solženicy’n’s *Matrenin dvor* we find *oboï sani* ‘both sledges’.

There are further complications, which I will mention briefly (see also Pesetsky 2013: 55-56 for discussion). First, not all plurale tantum nouns behave alike. Mel’čuk (1985: 379) and Nikunlassi (2006) shows that for bipartites, like *brjuki* ‘trousers’, the classifier construction (§6.2) is preferred to the collective numeral. A part of the reason for this distinction may date from the time when collective numerals were used with paired objects, like boots, to enumerate the pairs, a usage which has now largely disappeared (Mel’čuk 1985: 385). And second, in complex numeral phrases, it is the last element of the complex numeral which determines the featural specification of the noun. Thus *dvadcat’ odin* ‘twenty-one’ takes the nominative singular, and *dvadcat’ dva/dve* ‘twenty-two’ the genitive singular. But collective numerals cannot appear in complex numerals. As Mel’čuk (1985: 378) points out, this means there are written forms which cannot be pronounced (also discussed in Pesetsky 2013: 141n5). The classifier construction again saves the day, because the classifier can appear in the singular, and then take the plurale tantum noun in the plural.

The Slavonic data can be of particular value in coming to understand the nature of ‘competition’. On the one hand, *dva* and *dvoe* are different lexemes. On the other, they are not in a free-choice relationship. Rather they compete, and there are some situations in which only one is possible (as in Russian *dvoe sanej* ‘two sledges’). A second, equally interesting instance is the competition between the genitive singular of nouns and the derived possessive adjective, which varies interestingly across the Slavonic family.

## 6.2 The ‘classifier’ solution

The problem of combining a plurale tantum noun with a numeral is solved in many languages by the use of a classifier, as in this example:

- (19) Russian  
 dv-e            par-y            nožnic  
 two-F.NOM    pair-SG.GEN    scissor[PL.GEN]  
 ‘two pairs of scissors’

Recall that the lower numerals of Russian require a form that is for almost all nouns identical to the genitive singular, and so the construction with the classifier element *para* ‘pair’ (here in the singular) solves the incompatibility of the numeral with a plurale tantum noun. However, as the English translation shows, a classifier may be used where there is no obvious syntactic problem. In general, not just in English, there may be restrictions on how readily the classifier construction is accepted, according to how much lexical meaning is retained by the classifier and hence how compatible this is with the particular noun.

## 7 Pluralia tantum constructions

The criteria that prove useful for defining pluralia tantum nouns have interesting extensions beyond the simple word. There are phrases which appear only in the plural, even though the head noun is not a plurale tantum; instances include Russian *Soedinennye Štaty* (while *štat* ‘state’ is a regular count noun), and *Olimpijskie Igry* ‘Olympic Games’ (while *igra* ‘game’ is a normal noun). Moving to pluralia tantum compounds, Russian has *figli-migli* ‘tricks’, in which both parts inflect, but only in the plural (Zaliznjak 1977: 283); there are several examples in the Russian National Corpus, with plural attributive modifiers. We now consider a surprising plurale tantum construction in Russian (§7.1), and some general uses which are restricted to the plural (affective uses §7.2).

### 7.1 The Russian ‘including’ construction *idti v letčiki*

Russian has a construction which is interesting for several reasons, including the fact that the nominal element must be plural, even when this is hard to motivate. The expression *idti v letčiki* means ‘become a pilot’ (literally ‘go into the pilots’). There are various verbs which can be the first element, and even some nouns. The last slot can be occupied by any animate noun, but normally it is one denoting profession or social grouping. What is constant is the preposition *v* ‘into’ and the fact that the final noun is plural. Consider this example:

- (20) Russian ‘including’ construction  
 kandidat v prezident-y  
 candidate into president-PL  
 ‘candidate for the presidency’

The point is that the election is for one president, the noun *prezident* ‘president’ has a perfectly good, frequent singular, but in this construction the plural is required (its case form is problematic, see discussion in Corbett 2012: 210-213 and references there). Thus we have a productive, common construction, which involves a plurale tantum slot. (The noun *gosti* ‘guests’ has developed from its use in this construction into an event-denoting plurale tantum; this interesting development is documented by Anna Zaliznjak 2009.)

### 7.2 Affective uses

Number is used in ways beyond its basic function. It is commonly used for honorific purposes, and here all values may be involved, showing different degrees of respect (Corbett 2000: 220-228). More interesting for us are various affective uses, such as the exaggerative and the intensificative (see Corbett 2000: 234-239 for examples from a range of languages). Here is one from Russian:

- (21) Russian exaggerative (Krasil’nikova 1990: 85)  
 Vy tam piš-ete na nemeck-ix jazyk-ax  
 2PL there write-2PL on German-PL.LOC language-PL.LOC  
 ‘You’re there writing in German.’

Here the affective use is clear, since there is no straightforward interpretation of the plural prepositional phrase. Here is an intensificative use from Slovene:

(22) Slovene intensificative (Janez Orešnik, personal communication)

Kdo krad-e denarnic-e?  
 Who steal-PRS.3SG purse-PL.ACC  
 ‘Who’s been nicking my purse?’

Recall that Slovene has a dual, so it is reasonable to ask whether the dual is possible here (perhaps to indicate less intensity than the plural). In fact *denarici* ‘(two) purses’ can only have the literal meaning.

We can therefore see the same patterning for these uses of number values as we saw for nouns in larger systems in §5. For honorific use, all values may in principle be available. While for affective use, on the evidence to date, only the plural can be used.

## 8 Conclusion

The increased interest in pluralia tantum nouns is welcome. We have seen the need to broaden the analysis: Serbo-Croat *vile* ‘pitchfork’, Tsez *xexbi* ‘child(ren)’, and Russian *galife* ‘riding breeches’ are all pluralia tantum, but they are rather different. We have analysed their differences, and have related them to restrictions within larger systems (even going beyond nouns). We have seen that confusion over definitions has arisen in part because of the tacit assumption that a noun’s paradigm cells are consistent, in the sense that their “internal” morphosemantic specification and their “external” morphosyntactic specification are identical. While this identity holds in the default case, and indeed in the canonical world, there are important instances where it does not. The concern to be fully explicit about the different types of pluralia tantum nouns has led us to this theoretical advance. Thus careful typology leads to theoretical advance, and equally theory makes explicit the ramifications of our typology. And from a specifically Slavonic perspective, we have seen, once again, that detailed description of Slavonic languages provides valuable material for typology, and typology illuminates our analyses of Slavonic languages.

## REFERENCES

- Acquaviva, Paolo. 2008. *Lexical Plurals*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Acquaviva, Paolo. 2014. Number. In Mark Aronoff (ed.) *Oxford Bibliographies in Linguistics*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Acquaviva, Paolo. 2017. Number in Language. *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Linguistics*. <http://linguistics.oxfordre.com/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780199384655.001.0001/acrefore-9780199384655-e-61>.
- Apresjan, Jurij D. 1974. Regular polysemy. *Linguistics* 12.142, 5–32.
- Baerman, Matthew, Dunstan Brown & Greville G. Corbett. 2017. *Morphological Complexity* (Cambridge Studies in Linguistics 153). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Baerman, Matthew & Greville G. Corbett. 2010. Introduction: defectiveness: typology and diachrony. In: Matthew Baerman, Greville G. Corbett and Dunstan Brown *Defective paradigms: missing forms and what they tell us* (Proceedings of the British Academy, 163), 1–18. Oxford: British Academy and Oxford University Press.
- Bale, Alan & David Barber. 2011. Mass-count distinction. In: Mark Aronoff (ed.) *Oxford Bibliographies Online*, 1–26. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Belić, Aleksandar. 1932. *O dvojini u slovenskim jezicima*. Belgrade: Srpska kraljevska Akademija.

- Braun, Maximilian. 1930. *Das Kollektivum und das Plurale tantum im Russischen: ein bedeutungsgeschichtlicher Versuch*. Inaugural-Dissertation. Leipzig: Frommhold & Wendler.
- Brown, Dunstan, Greville G. Corbett, Sebastian Fedden, Andrew Hippisley & Paul Marriott. 2013. Grammatical typology and frequency analysis: Number availability and number use. *Journal of Language Modelling* 1.227-241.
- Bye, Patrik. 2015. The nature of allomorphy and exceptionality: Evidence from Burushaski plurals. In: Eulàlia Bonet, Maria-Rosa Lloret & Joan Mascaró (eds) *Understanding Allomorphy: Perspectives from Optimality Theory*, 107-176. London: Equinox.
- Comrie, Bernard. 1992. Balto-Slavonic. In: Jadranka Gvozdanović (ed.) *Indo-European Numerals* (Trends in Linguistics: Studies and Monographs 57), 717-833. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Comrie, Bernard. 2001. How independent is Tsezic morphology? In: Mary Andronis, Christopher Ball, Heidi Elston & Sylvain Neuvel (eds) *CLS 37: The Panels: 2001: Proceedings from the Parasessions of the 37th Meeting of the Chicago Linguistic Society* Vol. 37-2, 367-383. Chicago: Chicago Linguistic Society.
- Comrie, Bernard & Maria Polinsky. 1998. The great Daghestanian case hoax. In: Anna Siewierska & Jae Jung Song (eds) *Case, typology and grammar: in honor of Barry J. Blake*, 95-114. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Comrie, Bernard, Maria Polinsky & Ramazan Rajabov. 1998. Tsezian Languages. Unpublished manuscript. Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology, Leipzig.
- Corbett, Greville G. 2000. *Number*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Corbett, Greville G. 2007. Deponency, syncretism and what lies between. In: Matthew Baerman, Greville G. Corbett, Dunstan Brown & Andrew Hippisley (eds) *Deponency and Morphological Mismatches* (Proceedings of the British Academy, 145), 21-43. Oxford: British Academy and Oxford University Press.
- Corbett, Greville G. 2012. *Features*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Corbett, Greville G. 2013. Canonical morphosyntactic features. In: Dunstan Brown, Marina Chumakina & Greville G. Corbett (eds) *Canonical morphology and syntax*, 48-65. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Corbett, Greville G. 2015. Morphosyntactic complexity: a typology of lexical splits. *Language* 91.145-193. DOI: 10.1353/lan.2015.0003
- Corbett, Greville G. ms. Pluralia tantum nouns and the theory of features: a typology of nouns with non-canonical number properties. Under review.
- Corbett, Greville G. & Wayles Browne. 2018. Serbo-Croat: Bosnian, Croatian, Montenegrin, Serbian. In: Bernard Comrie (ed.) *The World's Major Languages*, 339-356. London: Routledge. [third edition]
- Corbett, Greville G. & Sebastian Fedden. 2016. Canonical gender. *Journal of Linguistics* 52.495-531.
- Corbett, Greville G. & Norman M. Fraser. 2000. Default genders. In: Barbara Unterbeck, Matti Rissanen, Terttu Nevalainen & Mirja Saari (eds) *Gender in Grammar and Cognition* (Trends in Linguistics: Studies and Monographs 124), 55-97. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Daniel, Michael. 2005. Plurality in independent personal pronouns. In: Martin Haspelmath, Matthew S. Dryer, David Gil & Bernard Comrie (eds) *The World Atlas of Language Structures*, 146-149. Oxford: Oxford University Press. [Online edition, edited by Matthew S. Dryer & Martin Haspelmath, at: <http://wals.info>.]
- Degtjarev, Vladimir I. 1982. Proisxoždenie imen pluralia tantum v slavjanskix jazykax (K opredeleniju semantičeskix mexanizmov leksikalizacii form mn. č.), *Voprosy jazykoznanija* no. 1, 65-77.

- Dobrušina, N. R. & S. A. Panteleeva. 2008. Sobiratel'nye čislitel'nye: kolektiv kak individualizacija množestvennosti. In: A. Mustajoki, M. V. Kopotev, L. A. Birjulin & E. Ju. Protasova (eds) *Instrumentarij rusistiki: korpusnye podxody* (Slavica Helsingiensia 34), 107-124. Helsinki: University of Helsinki.
- Dryer, Matthew S. & Lea Brown. 2015. Gender in Walman. Paper at the workshop "Grammatical Gender and Linguistic Complexity", Stockholm University, 20-21 November 2015.
- Faßke, Helmut. 1981. *Grammatik der obersorbischen Schriftsprache der Gegenwart: Morphologie*. Bautzen: VEB Domowina Verlag.
- Goddard, Cliff. 2009. A piece of cheese, a grain of sand: the semantics of mass nouns and unitizers. In: Francis Jeffry Pelletier (ed.) *Kinds, Things, and Stuff: Mass Terms and Generics*, 132-165. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Haspelmath, Martin. 2005. Occurrence of nominal plurality. In: Martin Haspelmath, Matthew S. Dryer, David Gil & Bernard Comrie (eds) *The World Atlas of Language Structures*, 142-145. Oxford: Oxford University Press. [Online edition, edited by Matthew S. Dryer & Martin Haspelmath, at: <http://wals.info>.]
- Išačenko, A. V. 1962. *Die russische Sprache der Gegenwart: I: Formenlehre*. Halle: Max Niemeyer.
- Janaš, Pětr. 1976/1984. *Niedersorbische Grammatik*. Bautzen: Domowina. [Page references to the revised 1984 edition.]
- Janko, T. E. 2002. Russkie čislitel'nye kak klassifikatory čislitel'nyx. *Russkij jazyk v naučnom osveščanii* 1(3).168-181.
- Koenig, Jean-Pierre. 1999. *Lexical Relations* (Stanford Monographs in Linguistics). Stanford: CSLI.
- Koptjevskaja-Tamm, Maria & Bernhard Wälchli. 2001. The Circum-Baltic languages: An areal-typological approach. In: Östen Dahl & Maria Koptjevskaja-Tamm (eds) *Circum-Baltic Languages: II: Grammar and Typology*, 615-761. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Kostić, Đorđe 1987. *Operativna gramatika srpskohrvatskog jezika*. Beograd: Prosveta.
- Krasil'nikova, Elena V. 1990. *Imja suščestvitel'noe v russkoj razgovornoj reči: Funkcional'nyj aspekt*. Moscow: Nauka.
- Leko, Nedžad. 2009. *The syntax of numerals in Bosnian* (Lincom Studies in Slavic Linguistics 33). Munich: Lincom Europa.
- Ljaševskaja, Ol'ga N. 2004. *Semantika russkogo čisla*. Moscow: Jazyki Slavjanskoj Kul'tury.
- Lučić, Radovan. 2015. Observations on collective numerals in Standard Croatian. *Journal of Slavic Linguistics* 23.3-31.
- Matthews, P. H. 1997. *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Linguistics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Mel'čuk, I. A. 1979. "Countability" vs "Non-countability" and lexicographic description of nouns in Russian. In: Paul R. Clyne, William F. Hanks & Carol L. Hofbauer (eds) *CLS 15: Papers from the Fifteenth Regional Meeting Chicago Linguistic Society*, 220-227. Chicago: Chicago Linguistic Society.
- Mel'čuk, Igor' A. 1985. *Poverxnostnyj sintaksis russkix čislovyx vyraženij* (Wiener Slawistischer Almanach: Sonderband 16). Vienna: Institut für Slawistik der Universität Wien.
- Miloslavskij, I. G. 1999. Morfologija. In: V. A. Belošapkova (ed.) *Sovremennyj russkij jazyk*. Moscow: Azbukovnik, 442-605. (3rd edition, first edition 1981.)
- Moravcsik, Edith A. 1991. Review article on Anna Wierzbicka 'The semantics of grammar'. *Studies in Language* 15.129-148.
- Moszyński, Leszek. 1985. Czy w języku staro-cerkiewno-słowiańskim była kategoria *duale tantum*. *Slavica Hierosolymitana: Slavic Studies of the Hebrew University* 7.107-118.



- Nikunlassi, Ahti O. 2000. The use of collective numerals in contemporary Russian: an empirical approach. *Wiener slavistischer Almanach* 45.209–246. [http://periodika.digitale-sammlungen.de/wsa/Blatt\\_bsb00000513.00209.html](http://periodika.digitale-sammlungen.de/wsa/Blatt_bsb00000513.00209.html)
- Nikunlassi, Ahti O. 2006. On the use of collective numerals with inanimate nouns in Russian (norm and usage). *Scando-Slavica* 52.5-17. DOI: 10.1080/00806760600883735.
- Palmer, F. R. 1990. The semantics of grammar. Review article on Anna Wierzbicka 'The semantics of grammar'. *Journal of Linguistics* 26.223-233.
- Payne, John & Rodney Huddleston. 2002. Nouns and noun phrases. In: Rodney Huddleston & Geoffrey K. Pullum (eds) *The Cambridge Grammar of the English Language*, 323-523. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Pesetsky, David. 2013. *Russian Case Morphology and the Syntactic Categories* (Linguistic Inquiry Monograph 66). Cambridge, MA.: MIT Press.
- Piper, Predrag, Ivana Antonić, Vladislava Ružić, Sreto Tanasić, Ljudmila Popović & Branko Tošović. 2005. *Sintaksa savremenoga srpskog jezika: Prosta rečenica* (ed. by Milka Ivić). Belgrade: Institut za srpski jezik SANU.
- Popović, Ljubomir. 1979. Upotreba kardinalnih brojeva u srpskohrvatskom jeziku. *Jugoslovenski seminar za strane slaviste* 30.3-25. Belgrade: Filološki fakultet u Beogradu: Međunarodni slavistički centar.
- Priestly, T. M. S. 1993. Slovene. In: Bernard Comrie & Greville G. Corbett (eds) *The Slavonic Languages*, 388-451. London: Routledge.
- Priestly, Tom. 2006. Gender change, local markedness, and speculations on the dual. In Grace Wiebe, Gary Libben, Tom Priestly, Ron Smyth & Sam Wang (eds) *Phonology, Morphology and the Empirical Imperative: Papers in Honour of Bruce L. Derwing*, 409-423. Taipei City, Taipei: The Crane Publishing Co.
- Rjabuškina, S. V. 2015. Russkie sobiratel'nye čislitel'nye kak markery oduševlennosti. *Vestnik Nižgorodskogo universiteta im. N. I. Lobačevskogo* 2 (2).527–531.
- Rusek, Zbigniew. 2013. *Цигулка, зьдудка...* i inne nazwy 'skrzypiec' w języku bułgarskim (w porównaniu z pozostałymi językami słowiańskimi). *Studia z Filologii Polskiej i Słowiańskiej* 48.181-205. DOI: 10.11649/sfps.2013.011.
- Šerech-Shevelov, Yury. 1952. The problem of Ukrainian-Polish linguistic relations from the tenth to the fourteenth century. *Word* 8.329-349. DOI: 10.1080/00437956.1952.11659444.
- Shalyan, Hamid. 2015. Pluralia tantum nouns and nouns, mostly used in the plural form, in modern Russian. *Al-Ustath* Vol 0 issue 215.159-176. ([http://en.alustath.uobaghdad.edu.iq/uploads/215/215-E-%20\(10\).pdf](http://en.alustath.uobaghdad.edu.iq/uploads/215/215-E-%20(10).pdf))
- Short, David. 1993. Czech. In: Bernard Comrie & Greville G. Corbett (eds), *The Slavonic Languages*, 455-532. London: Routledge.
- Smith-Stark, T. Cedric. 1974. The plurality split. In: Michael W. La Galy, Robert A. Fox & Anthony Bruck (eds) *Papers from the Tenth Regional Meeting, Chicago Linguistic Society, April 19-21, 1974*, 657-671. Chicago: Chicago Linguistic Society.
- Soboleva, P. A. 1984. Číslo suščestvitel'nyx kak grammatiko-slovoobrazovatel'naja kategorija. In: N. Ju. Švedova (ed.) *Russkij jazyk: funkcionirovanie grammatičeskix kategorij: tekst i kontekst: Vinogradovskie čtenija XII-XIII*, 66-75. Moscow: Nauka.
- Spencer, Andrew. 2013. *Lexical Relatedness: a paradigm-based model*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Starosta, Manfred, Erwin Hannusch, Hauke Bartels. 2018. *Deutsch-Niedersorbisches Wörterbuch (DNW)*. Nicht-endredigierte Vorab-Veröffentlichung im Internet: <http://www.niedersorbisch.de>
- Stevanović, Mihailo. 1975. *Savremeni srpskohrvatski jezik (gramatički sistemi i književnojezička norma): I: Uvod, fonetika, morfologija*. Belgrade: Naučna knjiga. [third edition]

- Stone, Gerald. 2002. *Hornjoserbsko-jendźelski słownik: Upper Sorbian-English Dictionary*. Bautzen: Domowina.
- Suprun, A. E. 1959. *O russkix čislitel'nyx*. Frunze: Kirghiz State University.
- Suprun, A. E. 1969. *Slavjanske čislitel'nye (stanovlenie čislitel'nyx kak osoboju časti reči)*. Minsk: Belorussian State University.
- Terrill, Angela. 2003. *A Grammar of Lavukaleve* (Mouton Grammar Library 30). Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Timberlake, Alan. 2004. *A Reference Grammar of Russian*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Tommola, Hannu. 2017. Lexical plurals in Circum-Baltic languages. Paper at ASEES, Chicago, 11 November 2017.
- Visniewski *see* Wisniewski
- Völkel, Pawoł. 1981. *Hornjoserbsko-němski słownik: Obersorbisch-deutsches Wörterbuch: prawopisny słownik hornjoserbskeje řeče*. Bautzen: Ludowe nakładnistwo Domowina. [4<sup>th</sup> edition]
- von Waldenfels, Ruprecht & Roland Meyer. 2006- *ParaSol, a Corpus of Slavic and Other Languages*. Available at parasol.unibe.ch. Bern, Regensburg.
- Vraciu, Ariton. 1976. Considérations sur l'emploi des noms pluralia tantum dans les langues baltiques, slaves et finno-ougriennes. *Acta Baltico-Slavica* 9.27-37.
- Wackernagel, Jacob. 1920. *Vorlesungen über Syntax: mit besonderer Berücksichtigung von Griechisch, Lateinisch und Deutsch*. Basel: Emil Birkhäuser.
- Wälchli, Bernhard. 2011. The Circum-Baltic languages. In: Bernd Kortmann & Johan van der Auwera (eds) *The Languages and Linguistics of Europe: A Comprehensive Guide*, 325-340. Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton.
- Wierzbicka, Anna. 1988. *The Semantics of Grammar* (Studies in Language Companion Series 18). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Wierzbicka, Anna. 1991a. The semantics of grammar: a reply to Professor Palmer. *Journal of Linguistics* 27.495-498.
- Wierzbicka, Anna. 1991b. Semantic rules know no exceptions. *Studies in Language* 15.371-398.
- Williams, Edwin. 1994. Remarks on lexical knowledge. *Lingua* 92.7-34.
- Wisniewski, Edward J. 2009. On using count nouns, mass nouns, and pluralia tantum: what counts? In: Francis Jeffrey Pelletier (ed.) *Kinds, Things, and Stuff: Mass Terms and Generics*, 166-190. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Zaliznjak, Andrej A. 1967/2002. *Russkoe imennoe slovoizmenenie* Moscow: Nauka. [Reprinted in: Andrej A. Zaliznjak. 2002. *Russkoe imennoe slovoizmenenie: s priloženiem izbrannyx rabot po sovremennomu russkomu jazyku i obščemu jazykoznaniju*, 1-370. Moscow: Jazyki slavjanskoj kul'tury.] [Page references to 2002 edition.]
- Zaliznjak, Andrej A. 1977. *Grammatičeskij slovar' russkogo jazyka: slovoizmenenie*. Moscow: Russkij jazyk.
- Zaliznjak, Anna A. 2009. *Gosti pluralia tantum v sovremennom russkom jazyke*. In: Tilman Berger, Markus Giger, Sibylle Kurt & Imke Mendoza (eds) *Von grammatischen Kategorien und sprachlichen Weltbildern – Die Slavia von der Sprachgeschichte bis zur Politsprache: Festschrift für Daniel Weiss zum 60. Geburtstag* (Wiener Slawistischer Almanach Sonderband 73), 633-642. Munich: Otto Sagner.