THE NOUN

1. THE NOUN: GENERAL

- 1. The noun as a part of speech has the <u>categorial meaning of "substance"</u> (*предмет*).

- It is the <u>main nominative part of speech</u>, representing nomination of the fullest value within the framework of the notional division of the lexicon.

- The noun has the power, by way of nomination, to isolate different properties of substances and present them as corresponding self-dependent (*самостоятельный, независимый*) substances. *E.g.:*

Her words were unexpectedly *bitter.* - We were struck by the unexpected *bitterness* of her words.

THE NOUN: GENERAL

- The categorial functional properties of the noun are determined by its semantic properties.

- The most characteristic substantive function of the noun is that of the subject in the sentence. The function of the object in the sentence is also typical of the noun as the substance word. Other syntactic functions, i.e. attributive, adverbial, and even predicative, although performed by the noun with equal ease, are not immediately characteristic of its substantive quality as such.

THE NOUN: GENERAL

☐ It should be noted that, while performing these non-substantive functions, the noun essentially differs from the other parts of speech used in similar sentence positions. This may be clearly shown by transformations shifting the noun from various non-subject syntactic positions into subject syntactic positions of the same general semantic value, which is impossible with other parts of speech. *E.g.:*

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- Mary is a *flower-girl. - The flower-girl* (you are speaking of) is Mary. He lives in *Glasgow. - Glasgow* is his place of residence. This happened *three years* ago. - *Three years* have elapsed /ɪˈlæps/ (*проходить, пролетать*) since it happened.

THE NOUN: GENERAL

- Apart from the cited sentence-part functions, the noun is characterized by some special types of combinability.

- In particular, typical of the noun is the prepositional combinability with another noun, a verb, an adjective, an adverb. *E.g.:* an entrance to the house; to turn round the corner; red in the face; far from its destination.

THE NOUN: GENERAL

- The possessive combinability characterizes the noun alongside its prepositional combinability with another noun. *E.g.:* the speech of the President - the President's speech; the cover of the book - the book's cover.

- English nouns can also easily combine with one another by sheer contact. *E.g.:* a cannon ball; a log cabin; a sports event; film festivals.

THE NOUN: GENERAL

- As a part of speech, the noun is also characterized by a <u>set of formal features determining its specific status in the lexical paradigm of nomination</u>.

- It has its word-building distinctions, including typical suffixes, compound stem models, conversion patterns.

- It discriminates (*выражает*) the grammatical categories **of gender, number, case, article determination.**

THE NOUN: GENERAL

☐ The cited formal features taken together are relevant for the division of nouns into several subclasses, which are identified by means of explicit (*точный*) classificational criteria. The most general and rigorously deˈlimited (*определять границы; разграничивать*) subclasses of nouns are grouped into four oppositional pairs.

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☐ The first nounal subclass opposition differentiates *proper* (*собственные*) and *common* (*нарицательные*) nouns.

☐ The second subclass opposition differentiates *animate* /ˈænɪmət/ (одушевлённый) and *inanimate* **nouns.**

☐ The third subclass opposition differentiates *human* and *non-human* nouns on the basis of "personal quality".

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- The fourth subclass opposition differentiates *countable* and *uncountable* nouns on the basis of "quantitative structure".

- Somewhat less ex˙plicitly *(детально)* and rigorously *(строго)* distinguished is the division of English nouns into *concrete* and *abstract*.

- The given set of eight subclasses cannot be structured hierarchically /ˌhaɪəˈrɑːkɪk(ə)lɪ/ in any linguistically relevant sense (some sort of hierarchical relations can be observed only between *animate - inanimate* and *human - non-human groupings*).

THE NOUN: GENERAL

The subclass differentiation of nouns constitutes a foundation for their selectional *(сочетаемостная)* syntagmatic combinability *(совместимость)* both among themselves and with other parts of speech. In the selectional aspect of combinability, the subclass features form the corresponding selectional bases.

THE NOUN: GENERAL

- In particular, the base of combinability can be pointed out between the noun subject and the verb predicate in the following sentences:

- The sandstone (*песчаник*) was crumbling (*сыпаться, осыпаться*). (not: *The horse was crumbling.)

- The horse was laming. (not: *The tree was laming.)

- John was laughing (not: *The cat was laughing).

2. The Category of Number

☐ The category of number in English is expressed by the opposition of the plural form of the noun (*the strong member*) to its singular form (*the weak member*). The productive formal mark of the plural form is the suffix **-(e)s**. This mark correlates /ˈkɒrɪleɪt/ (*соотносится*) with the absence of the number suffix in the singular.

THE CATEGORY OF NUMBER

☐ The other, non-productive ways of expressing the number opposition are:

   a) the change of vowels (***tooth-teeth***),

   b) the archaic suffix -(e)n (***ox-oxen***),

   c) the correlation of individual singular and plural suffixes in some borrowed nouns (***phenomenon - phenomena; cactus - cacti*** /ˈkæktaɪ/, ***formula – formulae*** /ˈfɔːmjuːliː/).

☐ In some cases <u>the plural form is homonymous with the singular form</u> (***sheep***).

Mouse

Mice

THE CATEGORY OF NUMBER

- In the plural linguists distinguish the following **semantic variants**:

    1) **plural of separate objects** (one book - two books; one potato - two potatoes);

    2) **plural of material** (potato > one object - potatoes > food);

    3) **plural of measure** (one mile - two miles);

    4) **plural of a definite set of objects** (wheels of the car, eyes/lips of the face, etc.);

    5) **plural of various types of the referent** (French wines, Indian teas);

    6) **emotional usage** (sands, waters, snows: the waters of the Pacific Ocean), etc.

THE CATEGORY OF NUMBER

☐ The category of number is one of the regular variable /ˈvɛərɪəbl/ categories in the grammatical system of English.

☐ All nouns are divided into two groups: **'countables and uncountables**. The first group of nouns has number opposites /ˈɒpəzɪts/, the second has not.

☐ Uncountable nouns are subdivided into those <u>having no plural forms</u> and those <u>having no singular forms</u>.

THE CATEGORY OF NUMBER

☐ Nouns like "*milk*", "*geometry*", "*friendliness*" having no plural opposites are called by a Latin name, **SINGULARIA TANTUM** (only singular). Nouns like "*clothes*", "*goods*" having no singular opposites are known as **PLURALIA TANTUM** (only plural).

The Category of Number

☐ In the two subclasses of uncountable nouns the number opposition is reduced either to the weak member or to the strong one. It is possible to speak of the *absolute singular* (*milk, geometry*), as different from the common singular of the countable nouns, and of the *absolute plural* (*clothes, trousers, scissors; police*), as different from the common plural of the countable nouns.

The Category of Number

☐ Some of the <u>absolute singular words</u> can be used <u>in the form of the common singular</u> with the common plural counterpart (*аналог*). In this case they come to mean

a) different sorts of materials (**teas, steels**),

b) separate 'concrete manifestations of the qualities denoted by abstract nouns (**kindnesses - услуги; the joys of life**);

c) concrete objects exhibiting the respective qualities (**copper - медь, coppers - медяки**).

THE CATEGORY OF NUMBER

- Common number with some uncountable singular nouns can also be expressed by combining them with such words as **"*bit*"**, **"*piece*"**, **"*item*"**, **"*sort*"**: *advice* - absolute sg, *a piece of advice* - common sg., *two pieces of advice* - common pl. This kind of expressing the grammatical meaning of common number is regarded as **special suppletivity** in the category of number.

THE CATEGORY OF NUMBER

- The necessity of expressing definite numbers in cases of **uncountable pluralia tantum** nouns has brought about different combinations, e.g. *trousers* – absolute pl., *a pair of trousers* – common sg., two pairs of trousers – common pl., *police* – absolute pl., *two groups (teams) of police* – common pl.

- This kind of expressing the grammatical meaning of common number is also regarded as **suppletivity.**

The Category of Number

- **Singularia tantum** forms are treated as singulars, and **pluralia tantum** as plurals. But when <u>combinability</u> (*совместимость, сочетаемость*) and form contradict each other, combinability is decisive /dɪˈsaɪsɪv/ (*имеющий решающее значение*), so "*police*", "*cattle*" are regarded as plurals, and "*measles*", "*linguistics*" as singulars.

3. THE CATEGORY OF GENDER

□ The problem of gender is not a simple one. Many grammarians define the category of gender in English as **purely lexical or "semantic".**

□ The most complete description of this phenomenon is given in **'A Course in Theoretical English Grammar'** by **M.Y Blokh**. He believes that <u>the category of gender is expressed in English by the obligatory correlation of nouns with the personal pronouns of the third person, singular. These serve as specific gender classifiers of nouns.</u>

THE CATEGORY OF GENDER

☐ The category of gender is strictly oppositional. It is formed <u>by **two** oppositions</u>. **1)** One opposition functions <u>in the whole set of nouns</u>, dividing them into person (*human*) nouns and non-person (*non-human*) nouns. **2)** The other opposition functions <u>in the subset of person nouns only</u>, dividing them into masculine nouns and feminine nouns. Thus, the **first** opposition can be regarded as **the upper opposition** in the category of gender, while the **second** one as **the lower opposition** in this category.

THE CATEGORY OF GENDER

☐ As a result of the **double** oppositional correlation, a specific system of three genders arises, which is represented by the traditional terminology: the **neuter** (non-person) gender, the **masculine** (masculine person) gender, the **feminine** (feminine person) gender.

☐ In the upper opposition the strong member is the human subclass of nouns ('person', 'personality'). The weak member of the opposition comprises both inanimate and animate /ˈænɪmət/ non-person nouns (tree, marriage, desk; cat, ant, bull, cow, cock, hen, etc.). Non-person nouns are replaced by "**it**".

THE CATEGORY OF GENDER

- The strong member of the lower opposition is the feminine subclass of person nouns (**"female sex"**). Here belong such nouns as *'woman', 'girl', 'mother', 'sister', 'bride'*, etc. The masculine subclass of person nouns (man, boy, father, bridegroom, etc.) makes up the <u>weak member of the opposition</u>, because <u>if there is no special need to indicate the sex of a person</u> or we are not sure about it, <u>we define the person as "**he**"</u>.

- The linguists who recognize the existence of gender in English usually distinguish **four genders**, though they are not indicated by inflective forms.

THE CATEGORY OF GENDER

MASCULINE	FEMININE	COMMON (either sex)	NEUTER (no sex)
father	mother	parent	desk
uncle	aunt	cousin	marriage
brother	sister	dancer	tree

A great many person nouns in English are capable of expressing both feminine and masculine person genders: *parent, person, cousin, doctor, teacher, president*, etc. These are referred to as nouns of the "**common gender**".

THE CATEGORY OF GENDER

- Some English nouns can show *sex lexically*, **1)**either by means of being combined with certain words used as sex indicators (***boy-friend, girl-friend, signalman, signalwoman, landlord, landlady, cock-sparrow, hen-sparrow, he-bear, she-bear***), or **2)** else *by suffixal derivation* (***master, mistress, actor, actress***, etc.). One might think that this kind of ***expressing sex*** contradicts the above given gender system of nouns, since (*так как*) the sex distinctions expressed in the given pairs of words refer not only to people (persons), but also to other animate beings.

THE CATEGORY OF GENDER

- On closer observation, however, we see that this is not at all so. In fact, the referents of such nouns as "*cock-sparrow*", or "*hen-sparrow*", or the like, can be quite naturally represented by the pronoun "**it**", while the representation of such nouns as "*boy*", "*girl*" is different – only "**he**", and "**she**". Even the word combinations '*he-bear*' and '*she-bear*' express a feature <u>related to sex, not gender</u>. If these sex distinctions are not important, both may be defined as "it".

Boy   Girl

Lioness   Lion

Bull   Cow

Wife   Husband

THE CATEGORY OF GENDER

- In Russian, the <u>category of gender</u> divides all the nouns into the ***inanimate objects*** having <u>*no meaningful gender*</u> (***яблоко - оно, груша – она, апельсин – он***) and the ***animate objects*** having a meaningful gender (***бык – он, корова – она, кот – он, кошка - она***).

- In distinction from this, the **English category of gender is only meaningful**, and as such it is represented in the system of nouns as a whole.

4. THE NOUN. THE CATEGORY OF CASE

- **Case** is the 'immanent (*неотъемлемый, свойственный*) morphological category of the noun manifested in the forms of noun declension. This category shows the relations of the referent expressed by the noun to other objects and phe'nomena.

- The category is expressed in English by the opposition of the forms in **-'s** (the a'postrophized **s**), usually called the "possessive" case, or more traditionally, the "genitive" case, to the unfeatured form of the noun, usually called the "common" case.

THE CATEGORY OF CASE

- The noun possessive morpheme **-s** has the same phonologically conditioned allomorphs as the plural: [-z, -s, -iz]. The apostrophized **-s** serves to distinguish *in writing* the singular noun in the genitive case from the plural noun in the common case: ***the man's duty, Kate's decision***, etc.

- The genitive of the bulk (*основная масса*) of plural nouns remains phonetically unexpressed. The few exceptions concern only some of the irregular plurals, e.g. ***the women's jewels, children's literature.***

- Therefore the apostrophe [ə'pɔstrəfɪ] of the genitive case acquires the force of a grammatical sign.

THE CATEGORY OF CASE

Functionally the forms of the English nouns which are considered to be "**case forms**" relate to one another in an extremely peculiar way: **1)** the *common case* form is absolutely indefinite from the semantic point of view, whereas the *genitive form* is restricted to the functions which have a parallel expression by prepositional constructions (esp. **an of-phrase**). **2)** The common case form is also capable of rendering the genitive semantics (namely, in contact and prepositional combinations), which makes the whole of the genitive case into a kind of subsidiary /səbˈsɪdɪərɪ/ (*дополнительный, побочный, вспомогательный*) element in the grammatical system of the English noun.

THE CATEGORY OF CASE

- This feature characterizes the English noun declension as something utterly different from every conceivable (*возможный*) declension in principle.

- The term "possessive", or "genitive" is not a satisfactory label for the morpheme **-'s** because a variety of different semantic relationships can exist between the possessive noun and the one that follows.

THE CATEGORY OF CASE

For example:

1. Possession or belongingness (**John's hat**),

2. Organic possession (**John's hand**),

3. Characterization or description (**a sailor's walk**),

4. Purpose or destination (**women's footwear, men's coats**),

5. Origin (**Repin's paintings, Christie's novels**),

6. Measure (time, value, space) (**an hour's wait, a dollar's worth, a stone's throw**),

7. Subject of action (**John's flight = John flew**),

8. Object of action (**John's critics = They criticized John**), etc.

THE CATEGORY OF CASE

☐ So we see that the real relations between the two nouns depend on the lexical meanings of these nouns, whereas the **form in -'s** does not always denote the possessive relation.

☐ The problem of case in Modern English nouns is one of the most vexed [vekst] (*спорный*) problems in English grammar. **The most usual view is that English nouns have two cases.**

☐ Other views may be classified into two main groups:

1) the number of cases in English is more than two,

2) there are no cases at all.

THE CATEGORY OF CASE

- Some scientists regard the English noun as <u>having completely lost the category of case</u> in the course of its historical development. All the cases of the noun are considered as extinct (*устаревший*), and the lingual unit that is <u>named the genitive case by force of tradition</u>, would be in reality <u>a combination of a noun with a postposition.</u>

- *This view* may be called the **"theory of the possessive postposition, or postpositional theory".**

THE CATEGORY OF CASE

- Of the various reasons supporting this theory the following two should be considered as **the main** ones.

- 1. The postpositional element **-'s** is loosely connected with the noun. It is used not only with single nouns, but also with whole word-groups of various status: **somebody else's daughter, John and Mary's house**, etc.

- 2. There is a parallelism of functions between the possessive case forms and the constructions with the preposition "of": the daughter of somebody else, the house of John and Mary.

THE CATEGORY OF CASE

* *The second view* may be called the "**theory of prepositional cases**".There are certain combinations of nouns with prepositions which are understood by some linguists **as case forms, even as morphological ones**. To these belong first of all the combinations "to + Noun", "for + Noun" (the "dative" case) and the combination "of + Noun" (the "genitive" case). These prepositions are regarded as grammatical elements equivalent to the endings (inflexions) of case-forms. This theory is interesting but it is not likely to be productive, because from this it naturally follows that not only the of-, to-, and for-phrases, but also all the other prepositional phrases in English must be regarded as case-forms, or analytical cases.

THE CATEGORY OF CASE

- Many linguists recognize the existence of a limited inflexional system of two cases in English, one of them feature<u>d</u> and the other unfeatured. *This view* formulated by such scholars as H. Sweet, O. Jespersen, A.I. Smirnitsky may be called the "**limited case theory**".

- At the same time there is some difference in the interpretation of the nature of the apostrophized **s**.

THE CATEGORY OF CASE

- At the same time there is some difference in the interpretation of the nature of the <u>apostrophized **s**</u>.

- **M.Y. Blokh** believes that we should recognize that English nouns have a two-case declension. The common case is a 'direct' case, and the genitive case is the only oblique case. But, unlike the case system in other languages based on inflexions, the case system in English is founded on a particle.

THE CATEGORY OF CASE

☐ The particle nature of -'s is evident from the fact that it is added in post-position both to individual nouns and to various word-groups That's why, he says, we have the word genitive and the phrase genitive, and both of them are not inflexional, but particle case-forms.

☐ From the functional point of view the English genitive case, on the whole, may be regarded as subsidiary [səb'sidıərı] to the syntactic system of prepositional phrases: the tiger's leap = the leap of the tiger.