

# NOUNS – Proper/Common, Number, Case, Gender

Gramatika 1 – 02+03

# NOUNS: PROPER / COMMON

- **PROPER NOUN** = a **specific** name for a particular person, place, or thing
  - always capitalized
  - sometimes called proper names
  - e.g.: *Buckingham Palace; Peter Pan; Tom; New York*
- **COMMON NOUN** = **generic** name for one item in a class / group
  - e.g.: *dog; ice cream; dentist*

# NUMBER: SINGULAR / PLURAL

- **Singular:**

- Noun form indicating: **one** object (a book, a boy) or
- **indivisible** whole (snow, friendship, foliage)

- **Plural:**

- denotes more than one object (books, boys)

- When nouns **only in PL:**

- the form of the plural has **collective meaning**:  
sweepings, belongings, tidings or
- indicates **composite objects**:  
scissors, eye-glasses, trousers

# PLURAL- REGULAR

- The **PL** of a noun is formed by **adding -s** to the **SG**:  
cat - cats, day - days, tub - tubs
- **-s** is pronounced in different ways:
  - **[-s]** after **voiceless consonants** other than sibilants:  
caps, cliffs, hats, forks
  - **[-z]** after **voiced consonants** other than sibilants and **after vowels**:  
arms, bags, bells, doors, eyes, lessons, verbs
  - **[-iz]** after **sibilants**:  
bridges, horses, noses, pages

- **-s, -ss, -x, -ch, -sh** or **-tch** PL by adding **-es**:

- an **extra syllable** pronounced **[-iz]**

buses, glasses, boxes, benches, brushes, matches

- **-o** by adding **-es**:

echoes, heroes, tomatoes but:

- nouns of **foreign origin** / **abbreviated words** **-s** only:

autos, radios, dynamos, zoos, pianos, kilos, photos, Eskimos

- **both -s** and **-es**:

buffalos/buffaloes, cargos/cargoes,

commandos/commandoes, volcanos/volcanoes

## nouns ending in **-y**:

- **after a consonant:**

- **-y** dropped + **-ie** added:

babies, countries, flies, ladies

- **proper nouns** add **-s**:

Henrys, Marys, the Kennedys

- **preceded by a vowel**, add **-s**:

boys, days, guys, keys



# NOUNS: -F(E)

- PL with **voicing** spelled **-ves**:

calves, elves, knives, lives, loaves, wives

- **regular** PL:

beliefs, chiefs, cliffs, proofs

- both **regular** + **voiced** PL:

dwarfs/dwarves, hoofs/hooves, scarfs/scarves



# MUTATION

- involves a **change in a vowel** (7):

feet, geese, lice, men, mice, teeth, women

- Note:

- woman - women: **pronunciation differs in both syllables**, while
- postman - postmen, Englishman - Englishmen, SG an PL **pronounced identically**

# What is the PL form of the following nouns?

1. deer, mackerel, salmon, sheep, trout
2. duck, partridge, pheasant
3. fish
4. craft
5. Chinese, Vietnamese
6. basis, crisis, criterion
7. album, dogma, gymnasium
8. formula, antenna
9. Person
10. boy friend, break-in, manservant, editor-in-chief

# SOLUTION:

1. deer, mackerel, salmon, sheep, trout
2. duck/ducks, partridge/partridges, pheasant/pheasants
3. fish/fishes
4. craft
5. Chinese, Vietnamese
6. bases, crises, criteria
7. albums, dogmas, gymnasiums
8. formulae/formulas, antennae/antennas
9. people (\*persons)
10. boy friends, break-ins, menservants, editors-in-chief

# CASE

- Defines **relation of a N to other units**
- Old English: **4 cases**; present day English: **common case, genitive** (possessive case); word order + closed classes (function words) used instead
  - -es genitive ending from old English: as **'s** (apostrophe s) for some N in **SG** and **s'** (s apostrophe) for some in **PL**.

*an **actress's** career*

***men's** work*

*the **dog's** kennel*

***Russia's** exports*

*a **child's** dream*

***women's** clothes*

***children's** games*

*a **waitress's** job*

***John and Mary's** bank balance*

# GENITIVE: FORM

- **Variable pronunciation (/s/, /z/, /iz/)** after:

- Voiceless consonants:
- Vowels and voiced consonants except /z, ž, dž/:
- After /s, z, š, ž, tš, dž/:

*cat's, Jack's*

*boy's, men's*

*Charles's, George's*

*boys – boys'*

- **PL form:**

- **Variation: proper nouns ending in –s**

- *Charles's grandfather always maintained that the aristocracy was becoming far too lax.*
- *He is in many people's minds the next logical man to fill Charles' place.*

- Sometimes **optional use of genitive:**

- *A man deserves **a few weeks'** / **weeks** holiday.*
- *This is the most serious of the offences in the Act attracts a maximum penalty of **ten years** imprisonment.*
- *... **dollars'** worth v. **pounds** worth ... currency preference*
- *an **hour's** discussion, a **month's** holiday ...*
- ***two-week** period, a **five-year** sentence, **ten-dollar** bills.*

# SPECIFYING GENITIVES

- Function: to specify the reference in the same way as a DETERMINER
  - Compare with other Dets: *a/the/that/the girl's face*
- Paraphrased by a postmodifying PP (of):
  - *the girl's face* v. *the face of the girl*
- Generic reference also possible: (specific v. generic)
  - *He heard the clip-clop of a horse's hoofs behind him.*
  - *He had something of a horse's dreadful beauty.*
- Can be substituted for a possessive pronoun

# CLASSIFYING GENITIVES

- Function of some Gs is to classify (rather than specify)
  - *S: Several hours later [the **bird's** relieved owner] arrived at the station, explaining the parrot had flown off.*
  - *S: Even [her **two children's** clothes] disappeared.*
  - *C: His hair felt like [a **bird's** nest]. He was a mess.*
  - *C: Hoppity in Hartlepool is one of the few nearly new shops specializing just in [**children's** clothes].*
- C. Gs answer: “What kind of ... ?” rather than “Whose ...?”; similar to adjectives/PREMODIFIERS (rather than determiners)
- Inseparable with the following N: *new children's clothes*
- Paraphrased by for-phrase: *clothes for children*
- Idiomatic meaning: *a bull's eye, a hornets' nest v. bees wax*  
(idiosyncratic spelling)
- Frequent use with personal Ns (especially in PL): *boys' camp, a women's clothing*

# GENITIVES OF TIME AND MEASURE

- function: specify location in time (often in news)
  - *As far as we know, **yesterday's** job was only their second.*
  - *The Stock Exchange is investigating **Friday's** steep rise in the share price of Pearl Group.*
- Alternating with common case:
  - *Her visitor had a strong pungent odor of a **winter's** day.*
  - *All four children stood blinking in the daylight of a **winter** day.*
- function: in expressions of duration, distance, value, amount
  - *an hour's discussion, a moment's consideration, a month's holiday, a year's sabbatical, ten minutes' duration*
  - *I held the telephone at **arm's length** and stared at it.*
  - *They now kept **a stone's throw** to the left of the road.*
  - *She had to buy **fifty pounds'** worth.*
  - *Perhaps he took my thousand dollars and put me to sleep with **two dollars'** worth of ether.*
  - *In my book you're **a nickel's** worth of nothing.*



# ELLIPTIC (INDEPENDENT) GENITIVES

- If HEAD NOUN recoverable (from context), the G phrase on its own:
  - *That isn't my [handwriting]. It's **Selina's!***
  - *Albert, you are neglecting the [glasses]. **Mr Deane's** is almost empty, and so is **Monsieur Belmont's.***
  - *If a [car]'s dirty, it's a **woman's.***
- Full NP with G reduced if it reappears later in the text/utterance:
  - *A: Yeah, I fancy going out anyway. I don't fancy sitting in **Terry and Lindsay's flat** all night.*
  - *B: Oh no, I wasn't planning on staying at **Terry and Lindsey's** all night.*
- Conventionalized Gs = no need for a head noun:
  - *She's going to **a friend's.***
  - *An open bottle of **Jack Daniel's** is on the candle table.*

# GROUP GENITIVES

- G suffix attached to the last word of a G phrase:
  - *The father of five's face was so badly busted he had to be fitted with a metal cage to keep the bones in place until they set.*
- Coordinate construction:
  - *The new girls slept in Zoey and Lucy's room.*
  - *He had to take a minute or two's rest to recover his breath.*
- Choice between a group G and 2 coordinated s-Gs may correlate with a difference in meaning:
  - *Sir David did not comment on Britain and China's war of words over Hong Kong's future.*
  - *Not only do the World Cup organizers have to keep England's and Holland's supporters apart, they, will also have to cope with Ireland's peaceful "green army", which could number 20,000.*

# DOUBLE GENITIVE

- Phrase with **of construction + s-G**; head N usually with indefinite article
  - *This was **a good idea of Johnny's**.*
  - *The woman who owns Harte's is **a friend of ours, well, of my father's** and she's quite incredible.*
  - *Remember he's **a relative of Kupka's**, and close to his wife.*
- Commonly used **with demonstratives pronouns**
  - *The child found herself permanently transported from her mother's two-room house to **this mansion of her father's***
- Occasionally **with wh-determiners**
  - ***What business of Winter's** was it that he'd had a mere half-bottle of champagne with his common pheasant supper?*

# GENDER



- **less important** grammatical category (compared to e.g. Czech); no grammatical form makes G explicit, only 3<sup>rd</sup> pers.
- Tied to **biological sex**; reflected in co-occurrence patterns (SG pers., possessive and reflexive pronouns)
- Not only reflects reality; also:
  - **Convention**
  - Speaker's **choice**
- Strategies to **avoid gender refs.**

	example nouns	pronouns
personal/human:		
masculine	<i>Tom, a boy, the man</i>	<i>he</i>
feminine	<i>Sue, a girl, the woman</i>	<i>she</i>
dual	<i>a journalist, the doctor</i>	<i>he, she</i>
non-personal/neuter:	<i>a house, the bird</i>	<i>it</i>

- **Pronouns** marked for **personal/neuter gender**:

	personal	neuter
indefinite	<i>-body/-one</i>	<i>-thing (e.g. nobody, no one, nothing)</i>
interrogative	<i>who</i>	<i>what</i>
relative	<i>who</i>	<i>which</i>

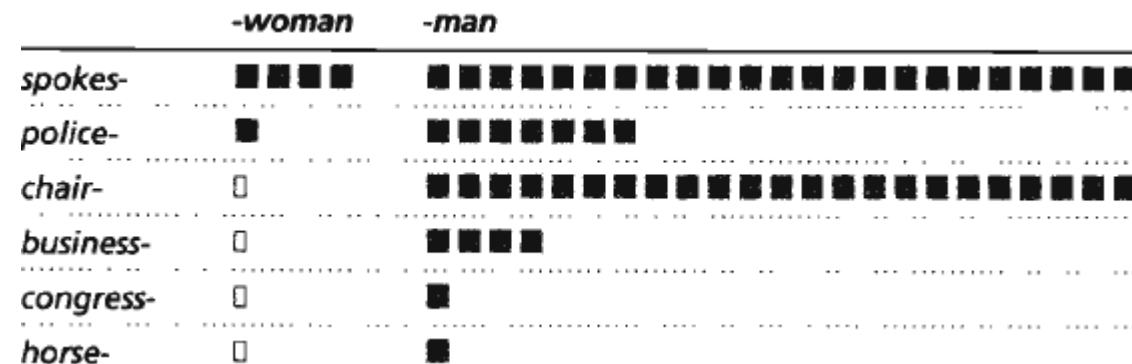
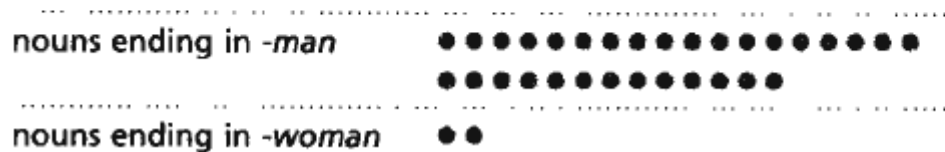
# GENDER: LEXICAL PAIRS



- male v. female (MASCULINE, FEMININE) denotations:
  - Family relationships, social roles, animals:
    - king, father, uncle, lord, bull ... queen, etc.
- Formal markers:
  - Premodification: *male/female ...*
  - Compounding: *-man/-woman ...*
  - Derivational endings: *-ess ... (-or/-er)*
    - Some words have strong masculine overtones: soldier, labourer, alderman

Frequency of compound nouns ending in *-man* v. *-woman*; occurrences per million words

each ● represents 20



- Masculine term if no specific referent identified:
  - *A Ford **spokesman** admitted the existence of an internal document.*
- Masculine used even for women:
  - *That's the **view** of Sheila Davidson, **chairman** of the Institute of Public Relations.*
  - *Eyeline **spokesman** Rosie Johnson said: "We don't need a vast sum but without it, we'll be forced to close."*
- Means of expressing dual gender reference: **-person(s), -people**; to overcome bias associated with the use masculine forms:
  - *The rally will also be addressed by Amanda Hallaway, **chairperson** of the Youth Committee of the Northern Ireland Congress of Trade Unions.*
  - *Mrs Ruddock, who said she had been nominated as **spokesperson** for the wives, told reporters: < . . . >*
- Only moderately common compounds:
  - chairperson, spokesperson, salespeople, townspeople*

# GENDER SPECIFIC / DUAL GENDER REFERENCE

- If Ns/pronouns of dual gender: *friend, individual, journalist, ... anybody*; problem when referring by: *he, his* v. *she, her* (no neuter personal pronoun †)
  - *Each [novelist] aims to make a single novel of the material **he** has been given.*
  - *Each [individual] is thus the recipient of the accumulated culture of the generations which have preceded **him**.*

... heavily criticized though intended to have dual reference
- Strategies to avoid gender-specific reference:
  - **Coordinated pronoun forms**: he or she, he/she
    - *The user acts on **his/her** own responsibility*
  - **Use of plural rather than singular**:
    - *Not everybody uses **their** indicator.*
    - *Now they expect responsible customers to pay for **their** folly.*

**Most common nouns ending in *-ess* or *-er/-or*, compared to parallel terms; occurrences per million words**

each ● represents 5

Most common nouns ending in *-ess*:

	feminine	masculine
<i>princess/prince</i>	●●●●●●●●●●●●●●	●●●●●●●●●●●●●●
<i>actress/actor</i>	●●●●●	●●●●●●●●●
<i>mistress/master</i>	●●●	●●●●●●●●●●●●●●
<i>duchess/duke</i>	●●	●●●●●
<i>waitress/waiter</i>	●●	●●●
<i>countess/count</i>	●●	●
<i>goddess/god</i>	●	●●●●●●●●●●●●●●
<i>hostess/host</i>	●	●●●●●●●●●
<i>stewardess/steward</i>	●	●●



