

## PLURAL AND SINGULAR FORM OF NOUN IN AZERBAIJANI AND ENGLISH LANGUAGES

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### ABSTRACT

*Nouns as the head of a complex noun phrase follow number system in different languages. They are used in singular or plural forms. These forms are seen in possessive construction, as well as, in the other grammatical categories. In English language the sub classifications of number system are : nouns identified as : a) singular in form ,Either number, b) plural in form, singular in number, c) singular in form ,plural in number, d)singular in form ,singular in number ,e)plural in form , either number ,and f) plural in form ,plural in number. A contrastive study of the number system and its sub classifications in Azerbaijani and English languages reveals both similarities and differences. The current study can be a great help for the grammarians and teachers of the mentioned languages in a multilingual situation.*

*Key words: English language- Azerbaijani language – Number category- Noun*

### INTRODUCTION

Head in a phrase is a word that determines the nature of the phrase (in contrast, for instance, to any modifier or determiners such as the noun in a noun phrase. It is the most important constituent, which any other constituents cluster. It is the head which controls any agreement with other parts of the sentence. (Crystal 1992:120, 2003:222, Hudson, 2000:90-91). There are two main definitions [of head], one narrower and due largely to Bloomfield, the other wider and more usual, following work by R.S. Jackendoff in the 1970s. In the narrower definition, a phrase *P* has a head *h* if *h* alone can bear any syntactic function that *p* can bear. e. g. *very hot* can be replaced by *hot* in any construction: *very hot weather or hot weather*. Therefore the adjective is the head and, by that token, the whole is an adjective phrase. In the wider definition, a phrase *p* has a head *h* if the presence of *h* determines the range of syntactic functions that *p* can bear. E. g. the constructions into which *on the table* can enter are determined by the presence of a preposition, *one*. Therefore the preposition is its head and, by that token, it is a prepositional phrase. ( Mathews, 1997). In the same way “*books*” is the head noun in “*two nice girl’s books*” shows that it is a complex

### Complex noun phrases in Azerbaijani language

The first systematic studies in the field of complex phrases (söz birləşmələr) in Turkish language have been done by Seyidov(1992) . He has divided them into two main groups: complex noun and verb phrases. (ismi və fe‘li birləşmələr ).(seyidov: 2006,2008)and (Abdullayev,et.al,2007).A complex phrase consists of a head and one or more modifiers that keep their meaning in the phrase .(Seyedov, 1992,2007,2008,(Abdullayev, et.al,2007).Complex noun phrases are of two types: modified (tə‘ini) and unmodified (qeyri tə‘ini) . In modified type there is a modification system whereas in unmodified type there isn’t any. In modified complex noun phrases one or more words complete the meaning of the head , they modify it. For example:

### A) Unmodified complex noun phrase:

There isn't modification system in these phrases .For example:

Əlləri qanlı

(His\her \its hands) noun (bloody) noun

### B) Modified complex noun phrases:

-mavi dəniz

Blue sea [modifier: mavi (blue)], [head: dəniz (sea)]

-gözəl giz

Beautiful girl [modifier: gözəl (beautiful)], [head: giz (girl)]

- iki eğitim gormüş Türk oğlan.

Two educated Turkish boys.

[ modifiers :iki(two),egitim gormüş (educated),Turk (Turkish ),[head :oğlan(boy)].

Modified complex noun phrases are of three kinds: first, second, and the third ones.(Seyidov, ).For example:

1) gözəl gül (the first kind)

Beautiful flower

2) müdür otağı (the second kind)

Principal room

3)müdürün otağı (the third kind)

Principal's room

A head in a complex noun phrase can be a noun, pronoun, nominal adjective, adverb (place, time, quantity or numeral), and substantive verb .For example:

1) gözəl *gül* (Head: noun)

2) atamın *öze* (Head: pronoun)

3) sözün *döğrüse* (Head: nominal adjective)

4) almanın *dörde* (head: numeral)

5) baharın *gəlişi* (Head: substantive verb)

### Complex noun phrases in English

A phrase is a syntactic construction which typically constrains more than one word, but which lacks the subject-predicate structure usually found in a clause. (Encyclopedia: 222).Greenbaum (2000:24) defines phrase as:

"The phrase is (2): [his account, contains, many historical solecisms] consists of one or more words." Such as "Angela" ,"she"," illness" etc. He states that complex noun phrase is group of words connected to and including a main noun (the head word).Such as "this old car". So we must make apart a simple phrase such as "illness" from a complex one such as "a serious illness". The parallels of a complex noun phrase is "söz birləşmələri" in Azerbaijani language.

### Head nouns in complex noun phrases in English and Azerbaijani Languages

The definitions of the term head nouns are particularly important for the sake of analyzing the structure of the complex noun phrases .Fries (cited in Lester 1971:38), gives a practical definition of nouns and separates it from all other parts of speech. For example ..... "nouns can be recognized by the fact that they follow articles and ..... that they have a contrast in form between the singular and plural together with other formal properties .Stageberg's (1965:196) definition of nouns seems more meaningful . He says " nouns are identified as nouns by two aspects of forms .Their derivational morphemes and their inflectional morphemes." The derivational morphemes are the non-forming suffixes that are added to verbs, adjectives ,nouns ,adverbs , and bound forms .The inflectional morphemes are the noun plural and non possessive that are shown by "s" in final part of the nouns in English and /lar/ in plural nouns in Turkish. This paper deals with the patterns for the number and possessive system of the head nouns in English and Turkish languages to find out similarities and differences.

## Number System of a head noun

Nouns can be divided into different groups according to the grammatical categories. They are divided into regular and irregular on the basis of their plural forms. Sometimes their plural form influences on their structural forms as the modifiers of the head in a complex noun phrase. For example: "all the boys' books". When we speak about the number, we mean a grammatical distinction which determines whether nouns, verbs, adjectives, etc. in a language are singular or plural. In English this is seen particularly in nouns and demonstratives. (Richard et al. 1992:252).

## Number system of head nouns in Azerbaijani language

The plural suffix is *-lar* for back vowel words and *-lər* for front vowel words for example:

-kitab-lar – books

-ev-lər – houses

When a singular word stands for things in general, such as in the expressions reading books, writing letters, etc. the plural noun in English is translated as a singular in Turkish language. For example:

-kitab oxuyuram -(I am reading books/ a book)

-mektub yazıram -(I am writing letters/a letter)

Similarly, when preceded by a number or other quantity word, the noun is in the singular form. For example:

-iki qələm (two pens)

-çox kitab oxuyuram. (I read many books)

## Number system of head nouns in English

In English the category of number distinguishes between singular and plural nouns. Number contrast does not ordinarily apply to proper nouns, such as Carolines or the Netherlands. (Greenbaum, 2000; 70).

Number contrast goes to countable common nouns, such as house /houses, nurse/nurses.

Determiners that accompany distinctions in number can introduce the nouns. For example

-This car ..... These cars

-A book..... two books

-Every picture ..... Few/several/.....pictures

-One doll.....several/three/.....dolls

In Turkish there isn't any agreement between plural determiners and pre modifiers and the head noun. For example:

-bu maşın	bu maşınlar
-bir kitab	iki kitab
-her ne şekil	nece şekil
-bir gəlin	üç .....gəlin

Some nouns ending in *-f* or *-fe* in English form their plurals by changing the ending to *-ves*. (Greenbaum 2000:86) for example:

-loaf..... loaves

-half..... halves

-knife.....knives

-wife..... wives

Others have regular plurals as well. For example:

-Dwarf.....dwarves or dwarfs

-hoof.....hooves or hoofs

-handkerchief..... handkerchieves or handkerchiefs

-scarf.....scarves or scarfs

Sometimes the plural is formed by a change in the vowel. That is mutation. For example:

- man..... Men
- woman.....women
- tooth.....teeth
- louse.....lice

In *children*, the plural of child, combines a vowel change and the irregular ending *-en* (a survival of an old English plural inflection). A similar combination appears in *brethren*, a specialized plural of brother. The older plural ending is found without vowel change in *Ox/Oxen*. In American English there are also variant plurals of ox regular oxes and the unchanged form ox. (Greenbaum, 2000:87). these are a) the name of some animals such as deer and sheep b) nouns denoting quantity when they are pre modified by a numeral or other quantifier and particularly when they are attached to a noun head. For example:

- four hundred people
- two dozen plants
- seven thousand dollars
- c) The measure nouns foot (length unit), pound (unit of Weight or of British Currency, and stone (British Weight Unit) optionally take zero plurals .such as:
  - twenty stone
  - fifteen pound
  - ten foot

Some nouns have been borrowed from other languages (in particular from Latin and Greek ). They may retain their foreign plurals, but generally only in technical usage. In non-technical usage, the regular plural is normal in some of the instances listed below (Greenbaum, 2000:87, 88)

a) nouns in *-us* , with plural in *-i* :

**Singular**

- alumnus
- bacillus
- locus
- nucleus

**Plural**

- alumni
- bacilli
- loci
- nuclei

b) Nouns in *-us*, with plural in *-a*:

**Singular**

- corpus
- genus

**Plural**

- corpora
- genera

c) Nouns in *-a*, with plural in *-ae* :

**Singular**

- alga
- antenna
- formula
- vertebra

**Plural**

- algae
- antenna
- formula
- vertebrae

d) nouns in *-um* with plural in *-a*:

**Singular**

- addendum
- bacterium
- curriculum
- erratum
- ovum

**Plural**

- addenda
- bacteria
- curricula
- errata
- ova

e) Nouns ending in –ex or –ix , with plural in –ices:

**Singular**

-appendix  
-codex  
-index  
- Matrix

**Plural**

-appendices  
-codices  
-indices  
- matrices

f) Nouns in –is , with plural in –es:

**Singular**

-analysis  
-axis  
-basis  
-crisis  
-ellipsis  
-hypothesis  
-synopsis

**Plural**

analyses  
axes  
bases  
crises  
ellipses  
hypotheses  
synopses

g) Nouns in –on, with plural in –a:

**Singular**

-automaton  
-criterion

**Plural**

- automata  
- criteria

h) Nouns in –eau, with plural in –i:

**Singular**

-bureau

**Plural**

-bureau

i) Nouns in –o, with plural in –i:

**Singular**

-tempo  
-virtuoso

**Plural**

- tempi  
- virtuososi

It's to say that certain nouns in –a are regularly treated as singular, though the ending represents an original plural, such as:

Agenda- insignia.

The use of other nouns in –a as singulars is controversial. They include criteria, media, phenomenon, strata. Media in the sense “mass media” is often treated as singular. Discussing the number system of head noun, we must make apart inflected and uninflected plurals, those that do not have a singular form.

Inflected plurals without a singular are as:

-arms (weapons)  
-clothes (garments)  
-manners (behavior)  
-premises (buildings).etc

Uninflected plurals without singulars are as:

*-Cattle-livestock- people (as plural of person) police-poultry-vermin. etc.*

Sometimes we face with binary plurals. Some nouns with plural inflectional referring to instruments or articles of clothing that are joined to gather. for example :

*Shorts-clippers-pants-trousers-briefs-jeans-spectacles-scissors-binoculars.etc.*

These nouns take a plural verb in a sentence. for example :

*These beautiful white and black sunglasses are very cheap.*

Words such as *team-public-swarm-Jury-crowd-crew-herd-group-company-government-committee-class-gang-nation-firm-mob-audience-family-minority-army-adminstration-enemy-majority-.....* known as collective nouns (Parrot; 12, Stageberg: 133, Alexander: 142)

These words refer to a group of people or animals or to instructions. They may be treated as either singular or plural .some people believe that these nouns should be followed by singular verb forms (the staff was happy) and singular pronouns should be used.(the team won its first match). However, most people use plural verb forms and pronouns.

*The football team wants to make him or herself ready for tomorrow match.*

People sometimes choose either singular or plural verb forms according to whether they are thinking in terms of a unified “body” or of the various people who make it up.

*The team provides an excellent practice.*

*They are trying to make an interview with media*

The head noun in a complex noun phrase may be compound. Such as “ a very skillful typewriter “ , “ my brother’s kind sister –in-law” . compounds generally follow the regular rule by adding the regular –s inflection to their last element .for example:

**Singular**

-Two-year-old  
-gunfight  
-Gin-and-tonics  
-pop group  
-typewriter

**Plural**

- two-year-olds  
- gunfights  
- gin-and-tonics  
- pop groups  
- typewriters

Compounds ending in an adverb also generally follow the regular rule .for example:

**Singular**

-close-up  
-take-over  
-stand-in

**Plural**

- close-ups  
-take-overs  
-stands-in

Compounds having the plural inflectional at the end, take the same regular rule .for example:

**Singular**

-lay-by  
-Stand-by

**Plural**

- lay-bys  
- stand-bys

But the following two compounds are exception.

**Singular**

-passer-by  
-Listener-in

**Plural**

- passer-bys  
- listeners-in

Some compounds ending in –ful usually take the plural inflectional on the last element , but have less common plural with the inflection on the first element .for example:

**Singular**

-Mouthful  
-Spoonful

**Plural**

- mouthfuls, mouthful \*  
-spoonfuls, spoonful \*

\*: indicates less common usage.

Compounds ending –in-law allow the plural either on the first or informally on the last element. For example:

**Singular**

**Plural**

-sister-in-law	- sister-in-laws/law*
-brother-in-law	- brother-in-laws/law*
-son-in-law	- son-in-laws/law*

\*: indicates informal use

Some compounds consist of a noun plus a post modifying adjective. In this case they allow both alternatives.

#### Singular

-poet laureate  
-attorney general  
-court martial

#### Plural

-poets laureate/laureates  
-attorney general/generals  
-courts martial/ martial

Other compounds with a post modifying adjective or prepositional phrase have the plural inflection only on the first part.

#### Singular

-heir apparent  
-right-of-way  
-notary public

#### Plural

-heirs apparent  
- rights-of-way  
-notaries public

Nowadays the rules are ignored and changes time-to-time .in plurals, these violations are seen .these are found in complex noun phrases in the numerals and quantifiers which pre modify the head noun. For example:

*This year, many mile, several book, a few pen.*

Nouns that have irregular plurals in standard dialect may take regular plurals .such as :

*Mousse, louses, sheeps , swines , deers.*

The older plural ending in -(e)r found in the standard double plural *children* is found in non-standard regular form *childer* .(Greenbaum.2000:90-91).as it was seen in the examples, some nouns occur only in form. It means they don't need inflectional morphemes. They are either singular or plural, but with or without a change in number .Corwell (1964) calls them one-form nouns. He says that these words do not act as they may be expected to in the matter of number.

### ***Categories of noun number systems in Azerbaijani and English languages***

Related to the number system of nouns they have six sub classes. Corwell, 1964:348-354)

- plural in form ,singular in number
- plural in form ,plural in number
- plural in form ,either number
- singular in form, singular in number
- singular in form ,plural in number
- singular in form, either number

These forms in English and their equivalents in Turkish languages are discussed.

Table 1. Nouns identified as plural in form, singular in number in English

Plural in form	Singular in number	Plural in number
a) nouns ending in –ics (Hyden (etal.), Perrin(1965,309) Bantas(1974), Ivir(1971)		
1-phonetics		
2-linguistics	+	-
3-physics	+	-
	+	
b) A country , organization , or publication whose name is plural in form		
1) The United States	+	-
2) The United Nations	+	-
c) Miscellaneous		
news	+	-

Table 2. Equivalent of Table 1 in Azerbaijani

Plural in form	Plural in number	Singular in form	Singular in number
a)		a)	
1)		1) fonetika	+
2)		2) dilçilik	
3)		3) fizika	
b)		b)	
1) Amerika Birləşmiş Ştatları		1)	+
2) Birləşmiş millətlər Təşkilatı		2)	
c)		c)	
yeniliklər	+	yenilik	+

Table 3. Nouns identified as plural in form , plural in number in English.

Plural in form	Plural in number
1) glasses	+
2) nippers	+
3) scissors	+
4) pants	+
5) clothes	+

Table 4. Equivalent of Table 3 in Azerbaijani

Plural in form	Plural in number	Singular in form	Singular in number
1) açqıl <u>lar</u>	+	1) açqı	+
2) dişləyicil <u>ər</u>	+	2) dişləyici	+
3) qayçıl <u>ar</u>	+	3) qayçı	+
4) tuman <u>lar</u>	+	4) tuman	+
5) paltar <u>lar</u>	+	5) paltar	+

Table 5. nouns identified as plurals in form. Either number in English

Plural in form	Singular in number	Plural in number
1) corps	+	+
3) crossroads	+	+
5) species	+	+

Table 6. Equivalent of Table 5 in Azerbaijan

Plural in form	Plural in number	Singular in form	Singular in number
1) qoşun <u>lar</u>	+	1) qoşun	+
2) kəşişmə <u>lər</u>	+	2) kəşişmə	+
3) çəkidl <u>ər</u>	+	3) çəkidd	+

Table 7. Nouns identified as singular in form. Singular in number in English

Singular in form	Singular in number
1) advice	+
2) wealth	+
3) information	+
4) progress	+
5) grief	+

Table 7. Equivalent of Table 6 in Azerbaijani

Singular in form	Singular in number
1) məsləhət	+
2) sərvət	+
3) bilik	+
4) proqres	+
5) kədər	+

Table 8. Identified as singular in form , plural in number

Singular in form	Plural in number
1) cattle	+
2) police	+
3) people	+
4) crew	+

Table 9. Equivalent of Table 8 in Azerbaijani

Singular in form	Plural in number
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1)süre	+
2)polis	+
3)xalq	+
4)alay	+

Table 10. Nouns identified as singular in form. Either number in English

Singular in form	Singular in number	Plural in number
1)deer	+	+
2)sheep	+	+
3)aircraft	+	+
4)fish	+	+
5)swine	+	+
6)trout	+	+

Table 11. Equivalentents of Table 10 in Azerbaijani

Singular in form	Singular in number
1)ceyran	+
2)qoyun	+
3)uçaq	+
4)baliq	+
5) donquz	+
6) qızılala balığı	+

## CONCLUSION

Comparing and contrasting number system of the noun in Azerbaijani and English languages reveal both differences and similarities.1) In noun groups that are plural in form ,singular in number two languages are different except the group of countries and organizations such as “The United States Of America” and” The United Nations” that they share the same rule. 2) In noun groups identified as plural in form and plural in number they are not the same. 3) In noun groups identified as plural in form, either number they are not the same .In Azerbaijaini language the form of this group changes in singular and plural form.4) The noun groups identified as singular in form, plural in number and singular in form, singular in number the two languages follow the same rules.5) In noun groups identified as singular in form, either number they are different. In Azerbaijani language their number is singular as their form.

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