

ON THE REPRESENTATION OF THE CATEGORY OF NUMBER IN NOUNS IN ESTONIAN AND RUSSIAN DICTIONARIES

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Abstract. Perceiving the category of number as the subject of grammar only is an oversimplification. Number forms of nouns are very lexicalized, and their dictionary interpretation (especially *singularia* and *pluralia tantum*) is sometimes inconsistent. The analysis of contemporary dictionaries (mostly defining and explanatory) compiled in Estonia and Russia is a study on the interpretation of grammar in typological lexicography. The research examines the interpreting of number paradigm in nouns, difficulties of reflecting the availability of number forms in different semantic classes as well as the change in number paradigms with the formation of complex words. The analysis of dictionary entries brings to light the dependence of this representation on the national lexicographic traditions and dictionary types. Resolving the aforementioned inconsistency may be important as many contemporary dictionaries become the foundation for numerous software and online resources.*

Keywords: *singularia tantum*, *pluralia tantum*, lexicography, Estonian, Russian

1. Introductory remarks

The category of number in Estonian and Russian nouns is widely presented as an opposition of singular and plural forms. This singular/plural opposition in the system of Russian is considered obligatory for all declinable nouns (Švedova 1980: 469, Panova 2010: 90), and plural in this opposition is the marked form. Estonian grammar descriptions also tend to recognize the fact that each noun has its number form with singular appearing to be the unmarked form (EKK: 180, EKG I: 204, Tiits 1983: 356). However, not all nouns may be used in both singular and plural forms. Russian and Estonian distinguish *singularia tantum* (used only in singular)

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and *pluralia tantum* (used only in plural) nouns. For linguists, many questions are triggered by the use of words with “empty” number paradigm valence in speech, e.g. is such a paradigm defective, is the marking of number on a noun obligatory or not, does a singular form always refer to a single referent and a plural form to multiple referents, and if a word without number marking is a *word-form* at all (Guzev 2020, 2016: 35–37)? Many of these questions remain unanswered despite the close attention that linguists pay to the category of number¹ in nouns in many languages including some of the most well described ones.

Linguistic research (in our case, of Russian and Estonian) that aims to describe number in nouns and present a number paradigm looks, first of all, at the dictionaries of the languages in question. Grammar is by no means the goal of a dictionary but it should be present there in some way or other, and grammar marking is not always easy for the lexicographer (Viks 2000: 486, Langemets et al. 2005)². Existing handbooks of lexicography see no or little issue in describing the number properties of nouns accurately. We are going to look at this problem in more depth. Number forms of nouns are very lexicalized. It is the dictionary entry that, according to the researcher’s expectations, should provide the information on number forms: does the word have a full number paradigm or is it used only in singular or plural forms? The entry’s grammar field becomes the focus of a linguist expecting the dictionary’s lexicographer to provide the answers. Information may be presented with the help of the following means:

- 1) there is a paradigm of forms, singular and plural forms given,
- 2) there is a grammar mark describing the noun’s number paradigm (e.g. *pl*, *sing.* or *sg.*),
- 3) there is a “not used/rare” indication of some forms (singular or plural) or “singular/plural (only)” which is more common.

Information about noun forms may be explicit in a dictionary entry’s headword. If, e.g., a noun is used only as plural, the headword is in plural, too, and the singular form is missing (either there is no singular form or it is possible but not used). The lack of Russian *pluralia tantum* words’ singular forms in dictionaries (*ножницы* ‘scissors’, *сань* ‘sledge’) and their presence for some reason³ in dictionary entries in Estonian (EVS) can serve a good example:

(1) **leetri|d** <pl l’et·er·ri·ri|t -,·ri|te·re[id S 02]> (EVS 2: 868) ‘measles’

In Estonian, *leetrid* ‘measles’ is a *plurale tantum* noun. The dictionary, however, gives the singular form.

Examples of usage (pattern illustrations) from dictionary entries can provide information on nouns’ number behaviour. Some set expressions, adverbial and bound verb phrases may become examples of such number behavior and stimulate the researcher to pay attention to the use of such forms and phrases in the text, recognizing the existing problems in description.

¹ The category of number is the focus of numerous studies by linguists, cf. an extensive monograph by Corbett (2000) and its list of references.

² Bo Svensen outlined the general principles of how grammar should be reflected in dictionaries; in particular, the inflectional information (Svensen 2009: 124–135, 143–157). The western lexicographic tradition of marking (un)countability, however, differs from that of Russia and Estonia, as will be shown below. Some dictionaries may follow such principles, as: “1. Inflectional information does not belong in dictionaries. This attitude was common previously but has mostly been abandoned today. 2. The users are expected to be familiar with the regular features of inflection; if they are not, they will have to consult a grammar [---]” (Svensen 2009: 125)

³ One of these reasons may be the ability of some *pluralia tantum* nouns to appear in singular in set expressions, constructions with nouns, locative cases and partial words. For more on this and Estonian examples see (Tiits 1983: 358, 360–363); on partial words in lexicography see (Atkins, Rundell 2008: 180).

The focus of our research is on how modern Russian and Estonian lexicography reflects the nouns' number forms in the grammar field of entries. The in-depth knowledge of this representation is crucial for linguists, i.e. expert users who incorporate vocabulary data into their own research, and other dictionary users. It is the vocabulary data that often forms the basic hypothesis and the basic data system thus preceding corpus-based research. Sometimes number marking is deceptively simple.

First of all, we are interested in how Estonian and Russian dictionaries reflect the following:

- 1) whether a noun has singular and plural forms used in speech,
- 2) whether a noun is *plurale tantum*,
- 3) whether a noun is *singulare tantum*,
- 4) preference in the use of singular or plural for some words (e.g., a *rare/often* mark).

Our aim is to find out if the means of lexicographic description providing the information on nouns' number behavior create a coherent system. Such a system, combined with the knowledge of grammar and vocabulary, allows for a clear picture of the number category in the language in question.

In the next section we give a brief overview of the presentation of number forms in Estonian and Russian dictionaries. In Section 3 we examine the strategies of number form marking, with further analysis and discussion in Section 4.

2. Dictionaries and entries' grammar fields

In this section we look at how various Estonian and Russian dictionaries render information on the use of words in singular and/or plural.

2.1. Estonian dictionaries

Singularia and *pluralia tantum* research in many languages mostly uses the database from defining dictionaries (for Russian, see, e.g., Lyaševskaja 2004: 12–13).

For Estonian, the most credible and only up to date academic defining print dictionary is the EKSS, first published in 2009 by the Institute of the Estonian Language. This dictionary is a second enlarged and improved edition of the Explanatory Dictionary of Written Estonian ("Eesti kirjakeele seletussõnaraamat", EKSS), first published in twenty-six volumes in 1988–2007. EKSS contains around 150 000 entries, and its online version is accessible at the Institute of the Estonian Language website. The paper version is an extensive six-volume publication.

In this dictionary, full paradigm nouns have an indication of their declination class in the grammar field of the dictionary entry, e.g., *haru* 'branch' is marked as class 11:

(2) **haru** <11> s (EKSS 1: 452) 'branch'

For words used only in singular the dictionary does not provide an indication that the word is listed as *singularia tantum*. E.g., *headus* 'kindness' lacks the *sg.* marking common to this dictionary:

- (3) **headus** <-e 5 v. -e 4> s. (EKSS 1: 460) 'kindness'

Approximately sixty nouns are defined as *sg, hrl sg (harilikult singular 'often singular')* for one of their senses, e.g., *argipäev* '1. work day 2. everyday life'. The latter case is marked *sg.*:

- (4) **argi|päev** 1. tööpäev [---] 2. (sg.) argielu [---] (EKSS 1: 135)⁴

Such marking of just some senses as *singularia tantum* most likely reflects a semantic shift for the word.

In the dictionary, *pluralia tantum* nouns are grammatically marked *pl.*, their headword noun is plural, as in *käärid* 'scissors', *lauakombed* 'table etiquette rules', *õekesed* 'sisters', *tunked* 'overalls':

- (5a) **käärid** pl., **lauakombed** pl., **õekesed** pl.⁵ (EKSS 1: 8)
(5b) **tunked** <6> s. pl (EKSS 1: 12, EKSS 5: 972)

For the nouns used only (or "often") in plural in one of their senses the *pl. (hrl,pl.)* mark is given only in relation to this sense and is bracketed. The headword is given in singular, as in *krõps* 'crisps' (*kartulikrõpsud* 'potato crisps'); *emaema* 'mothers's mom' (*esiema* 'foremother'):

- (6a) **krõps** 1 <-u 21> s. [---] 2. (hrl. pl.) KÕNEK kartulikrõpsud (EKSS 1: 12, EKSS 2: 518)
(6b) **emaema** ema poolt vanaema || (pl.) esiema (EKSS 1: 12)

Another defining dictionary is the PSV printed in 2004. The dictionary contains 5 000 entries and is intended for the learners of Estonian (A2–B1 levels). The dictionary is also accessible at the Institute of the Estonian Language website. In this dictionary, nouns with a full paradigm have their forms of singular and plural (Est. *mitmus*) Nominative, Genitive and Partitive, e.g.:

- (7) **haru** nimisõna <haru, haru, haru; *mitmus* harud, harude, harusid> (PSV: 74) 'branch'

If the word is used mainly (or "often") in singular, the plural forms are not given (PSV: 8):

- (8) **gripp** nimisõna <gr`ipp, gripi, gr`ippi, gr`ippi> (PSV: 8, 69) 'flu'

The PSV uses the *ainsuses* 'in singular' mark which indicates that in one of its senses the noun is used in singular only, e.g.:

- (9) **kask** nimisõna <k`as`k, kase, k`as`ke; *mitmus* kased, k`as`kede, k`as`ki>
1. puu, mille tüvel on valge koor [---]
2. (*ainsuses*) see puu materjalina (PSV: 124)
kask noun <k`as`k, kase, k`as`ke; *plural* kased, k`as`kede, k`as`ki>
1. the tree with white bark [---]
2. (*singular*) birchwood

For the words used only in singular the PSV online version provides a paradigm table with the singular forms only (see Table 1).

144 ⁴ Cf. **argipäev** <+p`äev päeva p`äeva =, p`äeva[de p`äeva[sid & p`äev/i S 22> (EVS 1:265). Only one meaning is provided in the EVS for the word *argipäev* 'workday; everyday life'. The word has a full paradigm.

⁵ Cf.: **õeke[ne]** <õeke- & -ne -se -s[te -s[se, -s[te -s/i & -se[id S 12 & 10?> (EVS 5: 895). The singular form is given, not marked as *plurale tantum*.

Table 1. Plural forms of *kurbus* ‘sorrow’ missing. Source: PSV

Case	Singular	Plural
Nominative	k`urbus	–
Genitive	k`urbuse	–
Partitive	k`urbust	–
Illative, short form of	–	–
Illative	k`urbusesse	–
Inessive	k`urbuses	–
Elative	k`urbusest	–
Allative	k`urbusele	–
Adessive	k`urbusel	–
Ablative	k`urbuselt	–
Translative	k`urbuseks	–
Terminative	k`urbuseni	–
Essive	k`urbusena	–
Abessive	k`urbseta	–
Comitative	k`urbusega	–

If a word is used only in plural, the grammar field will have the *mitmus* ‘plural’ mark and give only the plural forms:

- (10) **käärid** *mitmus* nimisõna <käärid, k`ääride, k`ääre> (PSV: 8, 184) ‘scissors’

The approach that EKSS authors take is fully compatible with that of the authors of the EVS, published in five volumes between 1997–2009 by the Institute of the Estonian Language. There is also an online version of the EVS (EVS 2019), which is in fact the second and enlarged release of the 1997–2009 printed text. While the EKSS grammar field provides reference to the declination class number (numerical code) (i.e., one can conclude that the declination paradigm has singular and plural forms including *pluralia* and *singularia tantum*), that of EVS shows all singular and plural forms for Nominative, Genitive and Partitive including *singularia* and *pluralia tantum* words, as in the *singularia tantum* words *headus* ‘kindness’ (11a) and *agitatsioon* ‘agitation’ (11b), and *pluralia tantum* or often used in plural words, e.g. (12a–12b).

- (11a) **headus** <h`eadus·e·[t·[se, ·[te·/i & ·e[id S 11 & 09> (EVS 1: 634) ‘kindness’
- (11b) **agitatsioon** <agitatsi·oon·ooni·’ooni =, ·’ooni[de·’ooni[sid & ·’oon/e S 22> (EVS 1: 146) ‘agitation’
- (12a) **drevljaanid** <pl drevlj·’aan·aani·’aani =, ·’aani[de·’aani[sid & ·’aan/e S 22> (EVS 1: 13; 404) ‘drevlians’
- (12b) **eel+võistlus** <hrl pl +v`õistlus·e·[t·[se, ·[te·/i & ·e[id S 11 & 09> (EVS 1: 13; 429) ‘prelims, qualifying rounds’

According to the EVS, “the mark on the use of singular or plural serves a notifying rather than banning function and shows the preference or common nature in

use of a form in question” (EVS I: 15, 33). However, there is only one grammatical commentary directly pointing at the *singulare tantum* use of a word in Estonian for almost one thousand pages of volume 1:

- (13) **abielurahvas** <sgt +rahvas r’ahva rahvas[t -, rahvas[te r’ahva[id S 07>
(EVS 1: 125) ‘couple, spouses’

It is worth mentioning that in its translation section the EVS consistently marks the Russian equivalents used only in singular with a relevant mark. Cf. the translation options for Estonian *kurbus*: печаль ‘sorrow’, грусть ‘sadness’, скорбь ‘grief’, горе ‘woe’ (14).

- (14) **kurbus** <k’urbus· ·e·[t·[se,·[te·/i &·e[id S 11 & 09> печал|ь <-и sgt ж>, груст|ь <-и sgt ж>, скорб|ь <-и sgt ж>, горест|ь <-и sgt ж>, гор|е <-я sgt c> (EVS 2: 602)

Consistent marking of *singularia tantum* nouns in the translation section is true for the active type dictionaries⁶ only and makes them a useful tool for the learner of Russian (the case of EVS). For more on the principles of presenting grammar information in active type dictionaries, see (Viks 2008: 250).

2.2. Russian dictionaries

Here we examine only the defining dictionaries of Russian that are comparable in volume with the EKSS, namely The Dictionary of the Russian Language («Словарь русского языка») in 4 volumes ed. by A. Yevgenyjeva, and the Big Russian Explanatory Dictionary («Большой толковый словарь русского языка», BRED), ed. by S. Kuznetsov. The former is often referred to as the Small Academic Dictionary («Малый академический словарь», MAS). The principles of reflecting nouns’ number behaviour in these dictionaries fall in the long-established Russian tradition and are still in use (cf. the grammar features for different parts of speech in Russian dictionaries in (Švedova 2005: 422)).

MAS is a dictionary of standard Russian. Its first edition appeared in 1957–1961 and contained around 80 000 entries; its second, updated version (1981–1984) and further releases are enlarged to around 90 000 entries. Nouns with correlative (without a meaning shift) singular and plural forms are listed in singular; their Genitive form, functioning in Russian dictionaries similarly to the declination class number in Estonian dictionaries, is also provided. Nouns used only in singular do not possess specific indication, e.g.:

- (15) **БЕЛЬЁ**, -я, ср., собир. (MAS) ‘linen; underwear’⁷

Pluralia tantum nouns are marked with the *мн.* ‘plural’ mark, the headword is given in plural with an indication of their Genitive ending, e.g.:

- (16a) **САНИ**, -ей, *мн.* (MAS) ‘sledge’
(16b) **ВЕСЫ**, -ов, *мн.* (MAS) ‘scales’

⁶ Svensen (2009) calls them ‘dictionaries for production’.

⁷ Cf. собир. ‘collective’ in (15) with the English practice to tag COUNT and MASS nouns (Atkins, Rundell 2008: 221, 337, 400) and use the PL code for indicating the syntactic agreement (e.g., see noun *cattle* marked PLURAL N example in English (*ibid.*: 406)).

Nouns that are used mainly in plural (but have a singular form, too) are also given in plural, their singular form in such cases is bracketed with the indication of their Genitive ending and gender, e.g., the entry for the lexeme *льџи* 'ski', *усы* 'moustache':

(17a) **ЛЫ́ЖИ**, *льџ*, мн. (ед. лы́жа, -и, ж.) (MAS)

(17b) **УСЫ́**, -óв, мн. (ед. ус, -а, м.) (MAS).

The first edition of BRED appeared in 1998 in St. Petersburg and contains around 130 000 words. Nouns with no plural forms are listed without any specific indication of this morphological feature, e.g.:

(18a) **ЖАЖДА**, -ы; ж (BRED) 'thirst'

(18b) **ОВОЩЕВОДСТВО**, -а; ср. (BRED) 'vegetable growing'

Nouns with no singular forms are listed in plural (gender not indicated), e.g.:

(19a) **ДРОЖЖИ**, -ей; мн. (BRED) 'yeast'

(19b) **САНИ**, -ей; мн. (BRED) 'sledge'

Headwords for nouns used mainly in plural (types of shoes, some paired objects etc.) are given in plural and are marked with *мн.* 'plural'. Singular forms are given in brackets with the indication of Genitive and gender, e.g.:

(20a) **ЖАБРЫ**, жабр; мн. (ед. жабра, -ы; ж.) (BRED) 'gills'

(20b) **КОЗНИ**, -ей; мн. (ед. кознь, -и; ж.) (BRED) 'intrigue'

Russian dictionaries use similar marks: *мн.* 'plural' for *pluralia tantum* nouns (16a, 19a), *ед.* 'singular' to indicate the singular forms of nouns most commonly used in plural (e.g. **САПОГЫ́**, -но́г, -áм, мн. (ед. сапо́г, -á, м.) (MAS) 'boots'). Estonian dictionaries use various grammar marks: *sg.* (4) / *ainsuses* (9) 'in singular', *sgt.* for *singularia tantum* nouns (or senses) (13); and *pl.* (5a, 5b) / *mitmus* (10) 'plural' for *pluralia tantum* nouns; *hrl.pl.* 'often in plural' (6a, 12b), *tavaliselt mitmuses* 'often in plural' (e.g., *närv* [---] 2. (tavaliselt mitmuses) (PSV: 256) 'nerves') to indicate nouns commonly used in plural.

3. Strategies of number form marking in dictionaries

3.1. Nouns with correlative singular and plural forms

For all nouns with correlative singular and plural forms the headword is given in the singular form of Nominative. In Estonian dictionaries the entry's grammar field either indicates the noun's declination class (e.g., *tegevus* <-e 5> s (EKSS 5: 698) 'activity'; *laud* <laua 23> s (EKSS 3: 67) 'table') or lists the singular and plural forms of the three basic cases (e.g., *mees* <mehe, meest, mehesse, meeste, mehi, meestesse 35> s (EKSS 3: 377) 'man'). In Russian dictionaries such "full-paradigm" nouns are shown with the singular Genitive form and gender marking (e.g., **СТОЛ**¹. -á, м. (MAS) 'table').

3.2. Singularia and pluralia tantum nouns

Linguists pay considerable attention to nouns with defective number paradigms where the missing singular or plural forms may be explained by systemic (semantic or functional) reasons and the nouns classified on semantic grounds.

When *pluralia* or *singularia tantum* nouns are included in a dictionary, the lexicographer inevitably faces the problem of their grammatical description, i.e. what information is needed in the grammar field of the entry. The strategies here may be influenced by the lexicographic tradition(s) and the lexicographer's professional approach.

It seems that it is the lexicographic tradition for both the Russian dictionaries and EVS to present the headwords for ethnic groups in plural (here we talk about the cases when plural is formed according to the regular rules from the singular form):

- (21a) **langobardid** (EVS 2: 831) 'Langobards', **sardid** (EVS 4: 374) 'Sards', **sardiinlased** (EVS 4: 374) 'Sardinians', **zaporoožlased** (EVS 4: 830) 'Zaporozhye cossacks'

unlike the names of the ethnic groups where the singular form is not always available:

- (21b) **lõunaslaavlased** (EVS 2: 1033) 'south Slavonians', **läänemeresoomlased** (EVS 2: 1057) 'Baltic Finns', **obiugrilased** (EVS 3: 575) 'Ob-Ugrians', **tšuurid** (EVS 5: 129) 'Chudes'

BRED has 335 ethnic headwords in plural, e.g.:

- (21c) **белорусы** 'Belorussians', **эстонцы** 'Estonians' **японцы** 'Japanese' (BRED; also in MAS)

Plural in the dictionary entry, even when this plural is regularly derived from the singular (e.g., *Japanese – the Japanese*), may be justified by the interpretation of the plural form as an aggregation with its own qualities rather than the arithmetic multitude (*Japanese + Japanese + Japanese*). EKSS explains this in the following way: "In some cases, e.g. in order to facilitate the definition of ethnic groups' individual members, the headword is supplemented by the plural which is defined" (EKSS 1: 10):

- (21d) **abhaas** <-i 21> s., **abhaasid** pl. rahvas Kaukaasias (EKSS 1: 10) 'Abkhaz <-i 21> s., Abkhazians, a Caucasian people'

Nouns presented in plural (for the convenience of such presentation) in scientific classifications can be related to the lexicographic tradition to treat terminology; e.g.:

- (22a) **kaslased** <pl k'asla-ne ·se ·s[t ·s[se, ·s[te ·s/i & ·se[id S 12 & 10?> (EVS 2: 138) 'felines'
(22b) **karelehelised** <pl +leheli-ne ·se ·s[t ·s[se, ·s[te ·s/i S 12> (EVS 2: 115) 'starflower'

Russian dictionaries do not mark the "technical" inability of some words to form plural, when a word's lack of "one or few forms due to phonological or morphological difficulties (for some occasional reasons) is not accounted for while relating

the word to a certain grammatical class, e.g. no plural of *мгла* ‘darkness’, *мзда* ‘bribe’, *хна* ‘henna’ (Zaliznyak 1980: 5). Traditional grammars of Russian and Estonian treat the nouns that form only singular or plural as nouns with defective (incomplete) paradigms (Švedova 1980: 453, Zaliznyak 2002: 30, Panova 2010: 33–34, EKG I: 99). In Russian monolingual dictionaries *singularia tantum* words are listed without any specific grammatical commentary. The lexicographers share the position of A. Zaliznyak who defines it in the Grammatical Dictionary of Russian: “The so-called *singularia tantum*, e.g. *еда* ‘food’, *диета* ‘diet’, *нейтралитет* ‘neutrality’, *гордость* ‘pride’, *горение* ‘burning’ etc. are believed to possess both numbers: plural is potential and almost never used, but, when necessary, it can still be formed and understood correctly” (Zaliznyak 1980: 5).

Grammar outlines that sometimes precede the dictionaries often contain paradigm tables. Thus, the VES has Russian paradigm tables (VES 1: 42–128). Unfortunately, these tables bear traces of either inattention at printing or the authors’ unclear position (see Table 2; for details, see VES 1: 49):

Table 2. Missing SG forms of *братья* ‘brothers’, *брусья* ‘bars’, *друзья* ‘friends’ (VES 1: 49)

Number	Case	Animate	Inanimate	Animate
Singular	Nom	–	–	–
	Gen	–	–	–
	Dat	–	–	–
	Acc	–	–	–
	Inst	–	–	–
	Prep	–	–	–
Plural	Nom	брáтья	брúсья	друзья
	Gen	брáтьев	брúсьев	друзей
	Dat	брáтьям	брúсьям	друзьям
	Acc	брáтьев	брúсья	друзей
	Inst	брáтьями	брúсьями	друзьями
	Prep	о брáтьях	о брúсьях	о друзьях

Bilingual and learners’ dictionaries offer recommendations on the use of *singularia tantum* words, providing only their singular forms. This approach is shared by PVS and EVS for the Russian words.

Pluralia tantum words are always marked as plural or only plural. Even in the Grammatical Dictionary of Russian, Zaliznyak states his position in the following way: “In order not to hamper the readers with terminological novelties, such nouns are presented in this dictionary as close as possible to the traditional way, i.e. in the entry they are marked with *мн.* (plural) instead of a gender mark; the declination tables list them as possessing only plural; in the grammar outlines they are referred to by the traditional *pluralia tantum* term” (Zaliznyak 1980: 5). The fact that a noun is only used as plural is also indicated by its plural headword.

Our analysis of the existing Estonian lexicographic sources makes it possible to assess the following “strategies” to introduce *pluralia tantum* nouns. A *plurale tantum* noun:

- 1) is listed as a plural headword and has a grammar mark (23a);
(23a) **liha_v`õtted** mitm (ÕS 2018: 484) ‘Easter’
- 2) is listed as a singular headword and has a grammar mark (23b, 23c);
(23b) **liha|võte** <hrl. pl.> (EKSS) ‘Easter’
(23c) **lihavõte** < hrl pl +võte v`õtte võte[t -, võte[te v`õtte[id S 06> (EVS 2: 905) ‘Easter’
- 3) is listed as a headword without grammar marks (23d, 23e).
(23d) **neeruvoolme|d**, -te (Tamm 1999: 319) ‘renal colic’
(23e) **jutu_märgid** (ÕS 2018: 275) ‘quotation marks’

We notice that strategies 1 and 3 quote examples from the same source.

There are nouns that, strictly speaking, cannot be considered “absolutely” defective. In the dictionaries they are marked *hrl pl*, *скорее/обычно мн./преимуществ. мн.* ‘often plural’:

- (24a) **jalats** < hrl pl jalats· ·i·i[t -, ·i[te ·e[id S 02> (EVS 1: 856) ‘shoe, footwear’
- (24b) **traks II** < tr’aks traksi tr’aksi =, tr’aksi[de tr’aksi[sid & tr’aks/e S 22; hrl pl> (EVS 5: 81) ‘suspender’

In Russian, similarly to Estonian, they are, first of all, the nouns denoting paired objects: *кегли* ‘skittles’, *подтяжки* ‘suspenders’, *возжи* ‘reins’. We can also look at some nouns that do not denote paired objects and are not “absolutely” defective.

- (25a) **hiidlaine** < hrl pl +laine l’aine laine[t -, laine[te l’aine[id S 06> (EVS 1: 657) ‘tsunami’
- (25b) **ahju|puu** < hrl pl +p’uu p’uu p’uu[d -, p’uu[de & puu[de p’uu[sid & p’u[id S 26*> (EVS 1: 152) ‘firewood’

The dictionaries also reflect the process of word formation that affects the number category⁸. To illustrate this, the dictionaries in many cases show a noun with a full paradigm of correlating singular and plural forms becoming part of a complex word (cited under a separate headword) and changing its number behavior. E.g., Estonian *king* ‘shoe’ has singular and plural while the complex word *jooksukingad* ‘running shoes’ is marked as *plurale tantum*:

- (26a) **king** < k’ing kinga k’inga =, k’inga[de k’inga[sid & k’ing/i S 22> (EVS 2: 269) ‘shoe’
- (26b) **jooksu+kingad** <pl+k’ing kinga k’inga =, k’inga[de k’inga[sid & k’ing/i S 22> (EVS 1: 877) ‘running shoes’

A correlating example in Russian would be the complex words with the second component *товары* ‘goods’: *канцтовары* ‘stationery’, *хозтовары* ‘household goods’; *материалы* ‘materials’: *стройматериалы* ‘building materials’.

This seeming inconsistency in the ways to render the number behavior of nouns in dictionaries may be explained, at least to some extent, for *singularia tantum* words by the nouns’ ability to rebuild their full morphological paradigm. *Pluralia tantum* words are listed in the dictionaries according to the general lexicographic

150 ⁸ This is why many linguists question whether the category of number is inflectional or derivational; see Soboleva (1979), Bulatova (1983), Melchuk (1998).

tradition and the authors' methodology, most commonly in bilingual dictionaries. The grammatical status of *pluralia tantum* words decisively affects the way they are presented. This status is based on the theoretical interpretation of number as an inflexional or derivational category and the (non)acceptance of paradigmatic gaps, or "defective" paradigms.

4. Conclusion

Modern dictionaries in both Russian and Estonian lexicographic traditions try to mark the number behavior of nouns by reflecting it in the number forms of head-words and in the grammar field of the entries. However, as shown before, sometimes this marking is quite inconsistent. Learners' and bilingual dictionaries may be an exception, as their authors deliberately try to offer word descriptions that might be of use in the choice of a standard form and in the general study of language.

This inconsistency in the marking of number forms often follows from the complex nature of the language itself. For instance, in theory it may be related to an unsettled norm or change in the number behavior of certain nouns over the course of language and society development (Kostomarov 1994: 189–190, Gorbov 2014). For obvious reasons, dictionaries may not be fast enough to reflect all the changes the language is going through; electronic and online versions of the dictionaries, easily enlarged and updated, therefore gain new importance.

In some cases the dictionary marks mirror the problem of determining the paradigm itself (cf. example 4) or provide just the singular Partitive when it is possible to build a full paradigm, which seems to be the case of all Estonian nouns except for the borrowed calques like *de jure*, e.g. *mahti*:

- (27) **m`ahti** <ainult ains os> aega, võimalust [---] (ÕS 2018: 529) 'm`ahti <only SG PART> time, ability'

We also assume that the cases when an element can be interpreted as a noun or part of a verbal form (for details, see Muischnek, Vider 2004) may cause complications for lexicographic description.

Other reasons for difficulties in determining a paradigm of commonly used forms may be their varying contextual use, the author's stylistic devices or the stems' derivational potential. This is characteristic of the words normally used in singular but always available for the potential building and use of plural, e.g.:

- (28a) Tuleb arvestada ka iga konkreetse rahva minevikuga. (EKK: 194) 'One should also consider the past (*past*-SG) of every people in question.'
- (28b) Ühise keele leidmiseks olid nende meeste minevikud olnud liiga erinevad. (EKK: 194) 'In order to find the common language, these men's past (*past*-PL) was too far from one another.'

For nouns most commonly used in plural, the use of singular is possible in some set expressions, e.g.:

- (29a) Jõulud olid sel aastal ilma lumeta. (EKK: 194) 'Christmas (Christmas-PL) this year was without snow.'
- (29b) Tule jõuluks koju. (EKK: 194) 'Come home for Christmas (Christmas-SG).'

Similar examples are also found in the example fields of dictionary entries. The aforesaid urges the lexicographer into the theoretical interpretation of number forms and their paradigmatic relations. This interpretation may prove not easy at all when attributing a word to a part of speech and may in the end yield to varying representation in dictionaries and computer processing algorithms.

The authors believe that a cohesive (uniform) approach to marking the number behavior of nouns should be extended to at least the whole lexicographic publication, and even further to the lexicographic tradition the dictionary belongs to. This appeal in modern times becomes almost a practical requirement as more various dictionaries appearing on top of the current lexicographic boom later become the foundation for large corpora and other electronic resources.

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NIMISÕNA ARVUKATEGOORIAST EESTI JA VENE LEKSIKOGRAAFIAS

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Nimisõna arvukategooria on laiem kui pelgalt grammatika nähtus. Nimisõna arvuvorme iseloomustab tugev leksikaliseerumine, mistõttu on sõnaraamatutes esitatav info selle sõnaliigi arvuvormide olemasolust ja moodustamise võimalustest sageli ebapiisav või ebajärjekindel. Eriti puudutab see *plurale* ja *singulare tantum* -sõnu. Autorid on analüüsinud tänapäeval Eestis ja Venemaal ilmunud (eelkõige seletavates) sõnaraamatutes esitatud grammatilisi andmeid tüpoloogilise leksikograafia aspektist. Käsitletakse nimisõna arvuparadigma interpreteerimise probleeme, eri tähendusrühmadesse kuuluvate nimisõnade arvuvormide esitamiskusi märksõnaartiklis, arvuparadigma muutumist liitsõnade moodustamisel. Sõnaraamatute analüüsist ilmneb nii rahvusliku leksikograafia traditsiooni kui ka sõnaraamatu tüübi mõju nimisõna arvuvormide esitamisele. Samas läheb leksikograafiaallikate suurema ühtsuse saavutamise seoses digihumanitaaria arenguga järjest olulisemaks.

Võtmesõnad: *singularia tantum*, *pluralia tantum*, leksikograafia, eesti keel, vene keel

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