

Барановичский государственный университет



ТЕОРЕТИЧЕСКАЯ ГРАММАТИКА

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Lecture 5

The Noun

Plan

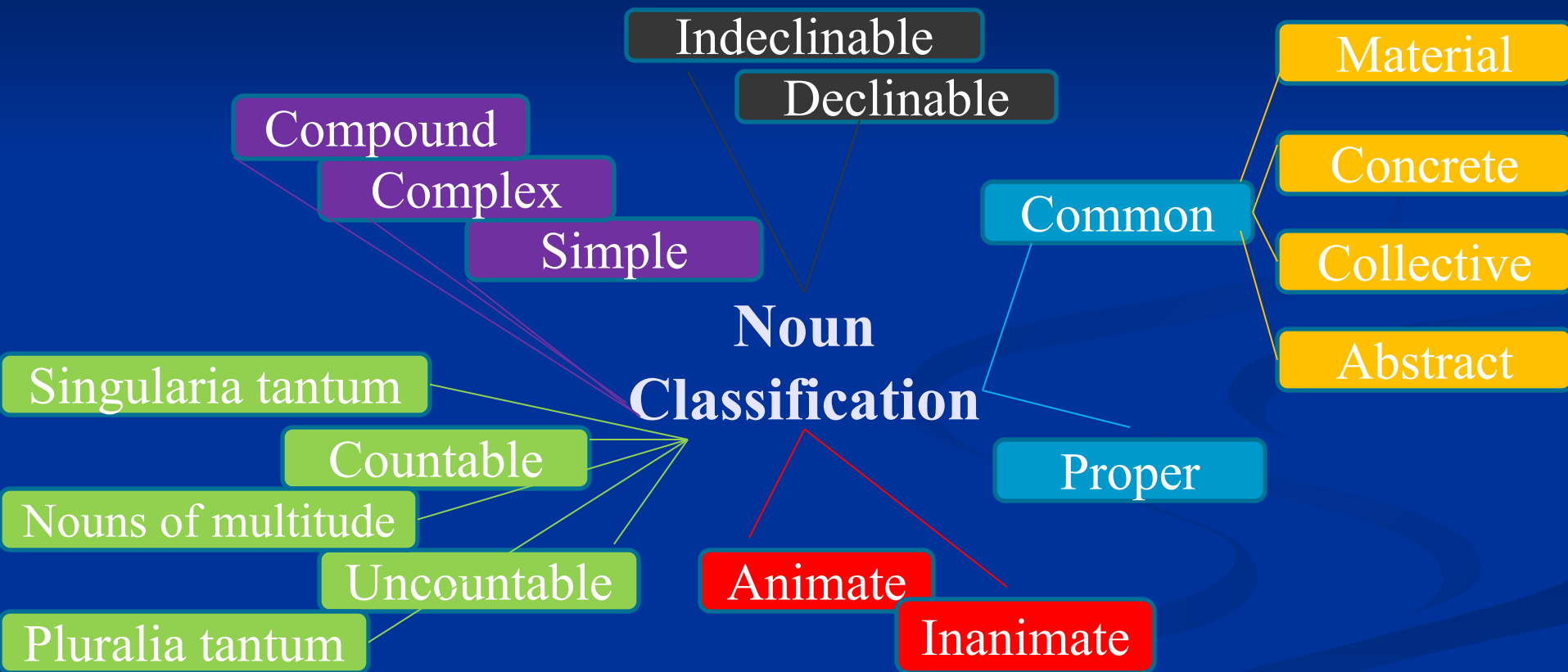
1. Noun as a part of speech.
2. Category of number.
3. Category of case.
4. Category of gender.

Questions

- What substances are denoted by the noun?
- What subclasses are the English nouns divided into?
- What are the “part of speech” properties of the English noun?

Noun is a notional word which denotes substances in the wide sense of this word:

- ❖ living beings,
- ❖ professions,
- ❖ things,
- ❖ places,
- ❖ materials,
- ❖ processes,
- ❖ states,
- ❖ abstract notions,
- ❖ qualities.



The “part of speech” properties of the English noun:

1. the lexico-grammatical meaning of “substance” or “thingness”;
2. typical morphemes (*-ist, -er, -ment, -ness, etc.*);
3. the grammatical categories of number and case;
4. left-hand combinability with articles, prepositions, adjectives, possessive pronouns, nouns; right-hand connections with prepositions, verbs;
5. the functions of a subject, object, attribute, adverbial modifier, predicative.

Questions

- What proves that the English noun possesses the category of number?
- What are the models of forming plural forms of nouns in English?

The category of number is expressed by the opposition of the singular form of the noun to the plural form of the noun.

$\begin{matrix} - & & + \\ \text{dog} & - & \text{dogs} \\ (\text{Sg}) & & (\text{Pl}) \end{matrix}$

Models of forming the plural in English

1. productive model: the suffix *-(e)s*,
e.g. day – days, box – boxes;
2. non-productive models:
 - archaic suffix *–(e)n*, *e.g. ox- oxen*;
 - individual suffixes of the nouns of the Latin origin
 - a*, *e.g. stratum – strataa*
 - i*, *e.g. nucleus – nucleii*
 - ae*, *e.g. antenna – antennae*;
 - vowel interchange, *e.g. man – men, tooth – teeth*;
 - homonymy of the plural and singular forms,
e.g. sheep (Sg) – sheep (Pl).

Questions

- Does the English noun possess the grammatical category of case?
- What are the strong and weak points of the “prepositional”, “positional”, “postpositional” case theories?

The category of case – is a category of a noun expressing relations between the thing denoted by the noun and other things, or properties, or actions.

The category of case is expressed by the opposition of the common case of the noun to the genitive case of the noun.

⁻boy - ⁺ boy`s (toy)
(Common case) (Genitive case)

⁻actresses - ⁺ actresses` (dresses)
(Common case) (Genitive case)

Case theories

- “limited case theory” (recognizes the existence of the genitive case and the common case);
- “theory of positional cases” (recognizes the existence of the inflectional genitive case and 4 non-inflectional, purely positional, cases - nominative, vocative, dative, accusative, e.g. *Are you coming, my friend?* – the vocative case expressing address);
- “theory of prepositional cases” (regards noun combinations with prepositions as case forms, e.g. *to the man*” – *analytical dative case*);
- “postpositional theory” (claims that there are no cases in the English language).

Questions

- What does the peculiarity of expressing gender distinctions in English consist of?
- What makes the category of gender in English disputable?

Gender is expressed in English by the correlation of nouns with the personal pronouns of the third person.

The category of gender is based on two hierarchically arranged oppositions.



Sex distinctions can be shown in English with the help of lexical and derivational means:

- noun pairs, e.g. *boy – girl, brother – sister*;
- combined words, e.g. *boy-friend – girl-friend*;
- derivational suffixes
 - ess, e.g. *waiter – waitress*;
 - ette, e.g. *cap – cappette*;
 - a, e.g. *sultan – sultana*;
 - e , e.g. *viceroi – vicereine*.

Political correctness is a trend opposing linguistic discrimination and suppression by substituting words,
e.g. *godson* – *godchild*,
cameraman – *camera operator*,
mankind – *humanity*,
policeman – *police officer*,
showman – *performer*.

Literature

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Questions

- What are the strong and weak points of the “prepositional”, “positional”, “postpositional” case theories?
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What is the noun?