

A Cognitive Comparison of Nouns – English v Polish

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This discourse concentrates on the categories of COUNT-ABILITY and NON-COUNT-ABILITY respectively, of selected English nouns which do not maintain their singularity or plurality in relation to their Polish translational equivalents. Hence, the numerical significance of Polish nouns often influences and undermines the language performance of Polish upper-intermediate and advanced learners of English. It is argued that exposure to authentic usage can foster conceptual interpretations of the referents denoted by the studied English nouns and by those of corresponding types. Therefore, the example nouns are presented as schematic categories in grammar using extracts of authentic context from the British National Corpus.

Keywords: *noun, count-ability, contrast, concord, cognitive linguistics*

1. Introduction

Nouns within the category of COUNT-ABILITY occur in singular form indicated by (SG) and in morphologically marked plural form (PL), also in dual number (DU). Nouns representing the category of NON-COUNT-ABILITY designate uncountable referents, they are signified by (U) in this text. The non-count nouns can be reformulated as countable in partitive expressions (PART), such as *a piece of advice*, among which are collective nouns (COL), for example, *a school in a school of cod*. The focus falls on the following nouns: *fish* (SG *fish*; PL *fish* or *fishes*, DU *fish*; COL *a school/draught of fish*), *cod* (SG and PL *cod*, DU *cod*; COL *a school/draught of cod*), *sheep* (SG and PL *sheep*, DU *sheep*; COL *a flock of sheep*), *aircraft* (SG, PL *aircraft*, DU *aircraft*; COL *a wing of aircraft*), *cattle* (PL, U, COL *a drove/herd/spread of cattle*), *police* (PL, COL. *an army of police*), *bread* (SG, U, COL *a loaf/slice of bread col.*), *butter* (SG, U, COL. *a bar/block/cone/fleck/knob/pack/packet/parcels/scrap/slab/tub of butter*), *luggage* (SG, U, PART/COL *an item of luggage*), *furniture* (SG, U, PART/COL *an item/element of furniture*), *news* (SG, U, PART/COL *an item/round of news*), *information* (SG, U, PART/COL *an item of information*), *advice* (SG, U, PART/COL *an item of advice*), *money* (SG, U, COL *a hoard of money*).

The nouns listed above are presented in contrast to their Polish translational equivalents with a view of two approaches to nouns in cognitive linguistics: by Langacker (1987) and Tamy (2000). The usage of English nouns is often not consistent with the usage in terms of singularity or plurality of their Polish translation equivalents. In case of NUMBER NOTIONS, the transfer of the number of the objects referred to by the Polish translational equivalent nouns fosters errors in English expressions in relation to counting entities which cannot be counted in linguistic realizations. Typical mistakes concern using uncountable English nouns with nominal *-s* inflection marking plurality, or multiple instantiation of object, with determinatives such as cardinal numbers, subject-pronominal concord, and subject-verb concord. For example, based on observed transference from Polish, students

often translate the Polish expression *radę są* as '*¹advices are'. Therefore, this study argues that Polish speakers of English should be introduced to a cognitive interpretation of the category of count-ability contrasted with the category of non-count-ability related to the selected English nouns juxtaposed and contrasted with their Polish translational equivalents. Such exercises would without a doubt bring to light the problem of strong transferability of number from Polish into English. Langacker (1987) and Talmy (2000) offer approaches to grammar within cognitive linguistics, which link nouns, and other grammatical categories, to conceptual interpretations through schematic notions. This study presupposes that a deep cognitive insight into how schematic categories account for nouns grammatically has the potential to foster proper usage of said nouns in utterances created by Polish speakers of English. The insight is to be supported by authentic contextual meaning of a given word, as presented in the *British National Corpus* (BNC).

Contrasting the selected English nouns in extracts of text with their Polish translational equivalents, concord errors and errors in using proper determinatives in the English expressions created by Polish speakers are likely to occur. The aforementioned errors are known as linguistic interference or language transference. The latter has been studied widely from the perspective of psychology (Jarvis 2012), cognitive linguistic approaches to translation (Tabakowska 2013), applied linguistics (Gass & Selinker 1992; Arabski 2006; Odlin 2009; 2010; Gabryś-Barker 2012), and theoretical linguistics (Bullock & Toribio 2009). Formal and functional perspectives on contrast in number between English and Polish nouns have also been published by Polish linguists (Fisiak et al. 1978; Krzeszowski 1990; Willim & Mańczak-Wohlfeld 1997: 107–114). Goddard and Wierzbicka (2004: 153) referred to *cultural scripts*, existing "at levels of generality", relating to "different aspects of thinking, speaking, and behaviour" in various cultures. They exist because "the different ways of speaking of different societies are linked with and make sense in terms of different local cultural values, or at least, different cultural priorities as far as values are concerned". Countable nouns are presented as *count* nouns in subject literature, and uncountable nouns are viewed as *mass* nouns (see Jespersen 1924 for *mass words*), whose category membership "depends partly on the inherent properties of their referents and partly on cultural usage" (Koptjevskaja-Tamm 2004: 1069). Hence, contrasts occur in perceiving entities expressed by nouns across languages.

The framework of Langacker's (1987) cognitive grammar and semantics of grammar have been used in analytical and contrastive discussions of mass and count nouns in English and Polish. Wierzbicka (1988) studies several types of referential entities in English and Polish which are expressed with count nouns v mass nouns, the former are typically SINGULARIA TANTUMS, such as *agrest* 'gooseberry', the latter are PLURALIA-TANTUM nouns, such as *truskawki* 'strawberries'. Wierzbicka's (1988) semantics of grammar addresses count and mass nouns naming those nouns which refer to multiple, co-occurring, homogenous constituents, AGGREGATES, such as Polish words for berry-like fruits, which are *strawberries* 'truskawki', *raspberries* 'maliny', *currents* 'porzeczki', and the like, understood as plural and thus are expressed by plural count nouns in Polish.

The examples of berry-like fruits indicate that nouns of the same type can differ in terms of count-ability, as with the Polish singular term *agrest* v plural *porzeczki*. Dąbrowska

¹ This symbol "*" indicates an erroneous linguistic construction.

(1997: 10) mentioned contrast between specific instances of Polish singular v English plural nouns, such as "Polish *fasola* (a mass noun) and English *beans* [...]". Twardzisz (1998:259) applied Langacker's approach to nouns in relation to names of fish in Polish, such as *pstrąg* 'trout', whose singular form refers to plural number, for example, *jeziora pełne pstrąga* 'lakes full of trout'. Drózdź (2014) used the perspective of cognitive grammar in comparing different construals of nouns, Głaz (2014) and Świątek (2014), respectively, analyzed the English definite article with the framework of cognitive linguistics. Perceiving *pstrąg* in Polish culture and *trout* in English culture either as count or mass noun depends on "various hypothetical machines, or rules of construal, for dealing with the occurrences of one and the same noun in different contexts" (Koptjevskaja-Tamm 2004: 1067). Pelletier (1975) proposes the UNIVERSAL GRINDER, which "can chop any object into a homogeneous mass", as with the Polish noun *fasola*, Bunt (1985: 11) introduces the UNIVERSAL SORTER, which licenses expressions like *a good mineral water* (see *conceptual melding* and *unit excerpting* in Talmy 2000: 56), Jackendoff (1991: 24) contributes the UNIVERSAL PACKAGER accounting for utterances like the title *Two Coffees One Black One with Sugar Please* (for universal grinder, sorter, and packager see Koptjevskaja-Tamm 2004). Although the subjects of CONSTRUALS of nouns and language transference have been exploited in literature, according to my knowledge, no research has been published to date on the topic of interference between English and Polish in terms of a cognitive perception of count-ability and non-count-ability of nouns. Typical Polish expression of thought is most likely to affect, interfere with and thus undermine the linguistic performance of native Poles speaking or writing in English.

The English nouns studied in contrast with their Polish equivalents in the present text have been selected randomly from numerous nouns which are considered either *collective mass* nouns in subject literature, such as *loaves of bread* or *tubs of butter*, or *collective count* nouns, such as *flocks of sheep*. They name aggregates of homogenous constituents, such as *luggage*, or heterogenous elements, such as *furniture*. See Bolinger (1992) for an explicit analysis of the category FURNITURE. See Wierzbicka (1988) and Koptjevskaja-Tamm (2004: 1069) for discussion of "heterogeneous classes of objects" like *furniture* v homogeneous substances like *water*, and "names of substances with a minimal unit" like the Polish term *fasola* and English *sand*, as "singularia-tantum mass nouns". This text only signals the potential areas of conceptual factors, grasped by Talmy's study of nouns, triggering the transfer of Polish thought and use resulting in erroneous English utterances with uncountable nouns.

2. Selected English nouns contrasted in terms of number with Polish equivalents

The English nouns discussed in this text contrast in use with equivalent nouns in the Polish language. The Polish translational equivalent morphological forms of *fish* 'ryba', *cod* 'dorsz', *sheep* 'owca', *aircraft* 'samolot, statek kosmiczny', *bread* 'chleb', *butter* 'masło', *luggage* 'bagaż', *furniture* 'mebel', *money* 'pieniądz', *news* 'wiadomość', *information* 'informacja', and *advice* 'rada', are countable in context of usage. Moreover, the Polish translational equivalent nouns for *police* 'policja' and *cattle* 'bydło' are only in singular concord, unlike the English *police* and *cattle* occurring in plural agreement with other elements in context of use. To highlight the differences in number, and thus facilitate retention, the selected English nouns are analyzed in four groups with common features concerning their morphological forms regarding 'singularity' and 'plurality'.

The first group contains such nouns as *cod*, *sheep*, *aircraft*, called *base plurals*, which do not take the inflectional *-s* ending when used as plural in discourse. Their Polish equivalents are morphologically marked for the plural number with different endings – *dorsze*² 'cod', *owce* 'sheep', *samoloty* or *statki kosmiczne* 'aircraft'. The base plural noun *fish* has the *-s* ending, morphologically marking the plural number of denoted instances in specific situations, in relation to types of *fish* or species, or when used in certain translations of *The Bible* into English, for example, in *The Holy Bible: King James Version, Kindle Edition 2015*. Polish, however, licenses the form *dorsz* SG 'cod', like *pstrąg* 'trout', both in the same *conceptual shell* (see Schmidt 2000). The noun *dorsz* SG can be used in plural meaning with the "universal grinder" operating in, for example, *dużo dorsza w sklepach* 'a lot of cod in shops', in contrast with *dużo dorszy /dorsza w sklepie* 'a lot of cods/cod in a shop'. The plural *dorszy* (in the genitive case, GEN) has a higher frequency of occurrence in Polish than the singular form *dorsza* GEN, and thus fosters errors in the plural in the English word **cods*. Similarly, the noun *owca* SG 'sheep', in plural form *owce* 'sheep PL', leads to the plural noun **sheeps*, which is incorrect with *-s*, and the noun *statek kosmiczny* SG, 'aircraft', in plural *statki kosmiczne* 'aircraft', encourages the erroneous use of *-s* in **aircrafts*. The Polish *dorsze* PL 'cod', *owce* PL 'sheep', *statki kosmiczne* PL 'aircraft' tend to influence the English **cods*, **sheeps*, and **aircrafts* in English utterances expressed by native Poles.

The second group includes nouns like *luggage* and *furniture*, which are semantically UNBOUNDED, and consequently, they are used in singular agreement and singular form. They denote aggregates of heterogeneous entities, bounded in partitive constructions, for example, *a piece of luggage*, *an item of furniture*. Polish equivalents of these nouns are singular or morphologically marked for plural, depending on the context of use: *jeden bagaż jest* 'a piece of luggage is' in contrast with *dwa bagaże są* 'two pieces of luggage are', *jeden mebel jest* 'a piece of furniture is' compared with *dwa meble są* 'two pieces of furniture are'. Collective nouns express "groups" of *mass* or *objects* (see Talmy 2000). The words *luggage* and *furniture*, respectively, designate objects, which can be used individually when bounded as *a suitcase* or *a chair* respectively. In Polish, *bagaż* 'luggage' and *mebel* 'furniture' denote discrete entities, consequently, *bagaż* SG, *bagaze* PL and *mebel* SG, *meble* PL are countable nouns. In the English language, the categories *luggage* and *furniture* appear schematic in relation to *suitcase* and *chair* respectively. Their Polish equivalents express countable objects, therefore, realizations as *dwa bagaże* 'two *luggages', *trzy meble* 'three *furnitures', provoke transference of numerals and plurality into English expressions with *luggage* and *furniture*.

The nouns *news*, *advice* used as counsel, *information*, *bread*, *butter*, and *money* make the third group. They are in singular agreement with other clausal elements, verbs and pronouns. Their Polish translational equivalents are either in singular or plural agreements. In the latter use, the Polish translational equivalents of the words in this group are morphologically marked for plural: *jedna wiadomość* 'a/one piece of news' or 'a piece of information' v *dwie wiadomości* 'two pieces of news' v *wiadomości* 'the news', *jeden chleb* 'a/one loaf of bread', *jedno masło* 'a/one tub of butter', *jeden pieniądz* 'a/one coin' or 'a/one banknote'. The English nouns in this group occur in partitive constructions with *of*, the noun

² The final letter highlighted in bold print is the plural ending of the Polish nouns listed as contrastive examples of the studied English nouns.

money can be used as singular with the collective noun *a hoard*, in the expression *a hoard of money*. The Polish nouns *wiadomość* 'news', *rada* 'advice', *informacja* 'information', *chleb* 'bread', and *masło* 'butter' can be used with endings marking plurality, determined by numerals, for example: *dwie wiadomości* '*two newses', *trzy rady* '*three advices', *cztery informacje* '*four informations', *pięć chlebów* '*five breads', and *sześć masel* '*six butters'. All of the literal translations into English are erroneous for two reasons: first, cardinal numerals are used as determiners, second, the *-s* ending for plural number is added to the English nouns. The Polish noun *pieniądz* 'money' is usually used in plural, for example *pieniądze są* '*moneys are', but the expression *jeden pieniądz* '*one money', most frequently, denotes money as a schematic entity in clauses like "[...] **jeden pieniądz**³ bez wspólnej polityki gospodarczej nie ma sensu"⁴ (Lit. '*one money without common economical policy is senseless'), or a realization/"instantiation", which is *a coin*, as in "dobywając z kieszeni **jeden pieniądz** z tych, które dostał od [...]", (Lit. 'taking *one money out of his pocket, from *these which he received from [...]), cited from *Powieści ludu spisane z podań przez Karola Balińskiego*, 'Folk stories written down by Karol Baliński', chosen and published by Wójcicki in Warsaw in 1842. The contemporary usage of *jeden pieniądz* is most frequent in texts on economy or politics, where *jeden pieniądz* is a schematic category. The instantiation as a coin is obsolete, with a high frequency of occurrence in fables.

The nouns *cattle* and *police* are discussed together as group four. They are used in plural agreement within a clause. The lexical item *cattle* can be preceded by collective nouns, such as *a drove*, *a spread*, *a herd*, in partitive constructions, for example, *a herd of cattle*. The Polish translational equivalent nouns *bydło* 'cattle' and *policja* 'police', respectively, are used in singular concord with accompanying verbs and pronouns, which is drawn from an intuitive scrutiny of subject-verb constructions with *bydło* and *policja* by a native speaker of Polish, and can be verified by subject literature (see, for example, Piasecka 2013 about the semantic and pragmatic potential of the noun *bydło*, which is polysemous, i.e. with different senses).

Polish usage generally guides the train of thought of Polish speakers of English, and thus consequently causes interference in English expressions. The English nouns listed above in four groups were selected as typical examples of mistakes usually made by Polish learners of English, even among upper-intermediate and advanced users of English. Based on the selected nouns, which pose typical areas of mistakes in relation to subject-verb concord and subject-pronominal concord, this text attempts to sensitize non-native speakers of English to English nouns as a system in the language, reflecting human concepts arising from the situations experienced in space.

3. Theoretical assumptions: Langacker's and Talmy's respective views of nouns

In §3.1, the common features of Langacker's (1987) and Talmy's (2000) respective interpretations of nouns as *schematic categories* are presented in two separate views of grammar within cognitive linguistics. In §3.2, a brief description of how *cognitive grammar* (1987) and the *concept structuring systems* (2000) approach the traditional category of NOUN in two individual cognitive analyses. In Conclusions, Talmy's view of nouns, in

³ The expression *jeden pieniądz* is not highlighted by bold print in the original text.

⁴ (<http://www.ekonomia.rp.pl/artykul/759006.html?print=tak&p=0>) (Accessed 2015-16-04.)

§3.2.3, shows intersections among schematic categories observed while juxtaposing selected English and Polish nouns.

3.1 Schematic categories in grammar from two pioneering perspectives

The interpretations of nouns presented by Langacker (1987) and Talmy (2000) substitute such terms for nouns as *common*, *concrete*, *abstract*, *countable* or *count nouns*, *uncountable* or *mass nouns*, which relate to syntactic or lexical categories, with schematic categories describing nouns in conceptual terms as designating *matter* in space, realized as *region* or *quantity*. Langacker defines nouns as words designating or profiling region in space, which is "a set of interconnected entities" (1987: 198). The term *entity* covers "anything we might conceive of or refer to for analytical purposes: things, relations, points on scale, sensations, interconnections, values, etc.". Countable nouns are associated with *bounded* region, which comprises interconnected entities with "some limit" (*ibid.*, see also Jackendoff 1991; Rijkhoff 2002: 50–59). According to Langacker (1987: 198), "the profiling of the interconnected entities is collective: the region as a whole (the full *set* of entities) functions as the designatum and constitutes one instance of the [THING] category". Talmy (2000: 42) perceives nouns as "the kind of quantity that exists in space [...] in respectively continuous or discrete form". While uncountable nouns, are associated with CONTINUOUS quantity and designate mass, countable nouns relate to DISCRETE quantity and refer to objects. As far as the distinction between concrete and abstract nouns is concerned, Talmy proposes the *parameter of palpability*, which is "a gradient parameter that pertains to the degree of palpability with which some entity is experienced in consciousness, from fully concrete to the fully abstract". Talmy (2000: 141–156) distinguishes four levels that can be "designated along this gradient: the (fully) concrete level, the semiconcrete level, the semiabstract level, and the (fully) abstract level". The levels of parameters correspond to 13 types of "cognitive phenomena such as earlier or later stages of processing" with specific features.

In both interpretations, Langacker's and Talmy's respectively, countable nouns denote entities which are understood as coherent conceptual GESTALTS (see Talmy 2000: 181). The basis for associating the referents of nouns with configurations observed in space, real and abstract, is bodily interaction of humans with different entities, physical and abstract, i.e. "our embodied experience" (Johnson 1987/1990: xiv). Cognitive linguists (see Lakoff and Johnson 1980; Johnson 1987; Langacker 1987, 2008; Talmy 2000; constructionists⁵), argue that the bodily experience delivers the concepts externalized by language. Cognitive approaches to grammar are based on studying different units of language as schematic constructions, and semantics and grammar continuum, following Langacker's pioneering theory.

⁵ For CONSTRUCTIONISTS see developers of constructionist approaches to grammar within cognitive linguistics (usage-based models): (i) constructions as argument structures in Goldberg's (1995) *Cognitive Construction Grammar*, (ii) processing constructions through language use in the *Embodied Construction Grammar*, developed by Bergen and Chang (2005), (iii) syntactically-semantic assemblies in William Croft's (2001) *Radical Construction Grammar*.

3.2 Number of the English noun from two pioneering cognitive linguistic perspectives

Langacker (1987 and elsewhere) and Talmy (2000) are individual developers of grammars within the framework of cognitive linguistics, *cognitive grammar* by Langacker and the *concept structuring systems* by Talmy. Langacker connects the noun to the notion of SYMBOLIC UNIT. Talmy (2000: 21) argues that language has two subsystems: GRAMMATICAL and LEXICAL, which "have distinct semantic functions, ones that are indispensable and complementary". While the term *lexical* refers to the OPEN CLASS of morphemes, the term *grammatical* is connected with the CLOSED CLASS of morphemes. Roots of nouns and LEXICAL COMPLEXES, like idioms, are open class elements. According to Talmy (2000: 23–24), GRAMMATICAL COMPLEXES, such as "grammatical constructions, syntactic structures, and complement structures", are "included among closed classes". Langacker shows grammatical constructions as symbolic ones, even single morphemes are constructions.

3.2.1 A view of noun as a symbolic unit in Langacker's cognitive grammar

The symbolic unit is "the construct deployed in cognitive grammar for the representation of both lexical and grammatical structure" (Langacker 1987: 57). According to Langacker (1987: 58, 82), a symbolic unit is a form-meaning pairing with three meaningful structures: phonological, semantic, and symbolic. The scholar (1987: 183–189) argues that nouns, i.e. NOMINAL PREDICATIONS, as well as verbs, adjectives, and adverbs, i.e. RELATIONAL PREDICATIONS, can be defined semantically as symbolic units, "each with a semantic and a phonological pole". The former pole "determines the categorization". The linguist states that a noun "is a symbolic structure whose semantic pole instantiates the schema [THING] [...]", in other words, "a noun designates a **thing**". According to Langacker (1987: 189), "a thing is properly characterized as a **region in some domain**, i.e. every nominal predication designates a region", bounded or unbounded, which relates to whether nouns are conceived as countable or uncountable.

An uncountable noun names an UNBOUNDED REGION and a countable noun designates a BOUNDED REGION "in a primary domain", i.e. in three-dimensional space for physical objects, two-dimensional space for "nouns like *circle*, *point*, *line*, and *triangle*" (Langacker 1987: 190–196), and in the domain of time for bounded regions named by *moment*, *instant*, and *period*. Moreover, colour terms, which are used as nouns, "designate particular regions in color space; most are defined relative to the hue dimension primarily (*red*, *yellow*, *blue*, etc), but a few are confined largely or solely to the brightness dimension (*black*, *white*, *gray*)". Langacker argues that other nominal concepts are placed in the matrix "formed by coordinating basic domains", for example, a *beep* is "bounded in both pitch and time [...]". Finally, abstract domains "presuppose (and thus incorporate) more basic domains. Bounding in an abstract domain is therefore compatible with bounding in an incorporated basic domain, though the former may be primary and the latter derivative". Nouns designating collections of individual entities, such as *swarm*, *archipelago*, and *forest*, also involve the processes of conceptual bounding or conceptual closure, i.e. imposing "a boundary in structuring a conceived situation [...]". Space is "a primary domain for these nouns".

Nevertheless, Langacker (1987: 197) associates collective nouns like *team*, *family*, or *class*, with spatial and also quasi-spatial bounding, since we "recognize a set of individuals as a *team* even if they are scattered all over a playing field and intermingled with members of

the opposition [...] spatial relations are less important than co-operative activity towards a common objective". The scholar claims that "[...] an appropriate schematic characterization of the [THING] category is capable of accommodating both count and mass nouns, as well as nouns whose content is highly abstract (eg deverbal nominalizations)". Langacker (2008: 129) acknowledges that while the names for physical objects, such as *diamond*, *book*, *cup*, are typical for count nouns, the names of physical substances, such as *gold*, *meat*, *water*, are typical for mass nouns. Moreover, "count nouns also label creatures (*cat*), parts of larger wholes (*tail*), and geographical regions (*county*), as well as entities that are either nebulous (*cloud*) or abstract (*idea*)". As far as mass nouns are concerned, they "designate entities whose substantial nature is rather tenuous (*air*, *electricity*) or which are wholly nonphysical (*nonsense*, *righteousness*)". Consequently, following Langacker's analysis, English countable and uncountable nouns can be understood by forming concepts of the designated referents or regions in some domain, which means that they are *conceptualized*. Talmy (2000) also studies nouns through conceptual constructs, as *schematic categories* or *conceptual categories*.

3.2.2 A view of noun in Talmy's approach to grammar

Talmy (2000: 21) argues that the grammatical elements which occur in languages, "taken together, specify a crucial set of concepts". In Talmy's approach to language, "this set of grammatically specified notions collectively constitutes the fundamental conceptual structuring system of language". Within the four main *concept structuring systems*, the system of language referred to as CONFIGURATIONAL accounts for nouns and verbs alike. While nouns name *quantities* within space, verbs designate quantities conceptualized in relation to time. Both categories are interpreted according to the same features. In a brief sketch, the configurational system accounts for how the quantity called *matter* is configured in space, as "a single object or mass of material" (Talmy 2000: 191), and how the quantity named *action* is configured in time. Talmy (2000: 47–68) identifies four main schematic categories for the configurational system: the category of (1) DISPOSITION OF QUANTITY, the category of (2) DEGREE OF EXTENSION, the category of (3) PATTERN OF DISTRIBUTION, which intersect with one another, also the categories of (4) AXIALITY and (5) SCENE PARTITIONING. Categories from (2) to (5) are not addressed in the present text, therefore, they are not focused upon in this section. The category of disposition of quantity involves "an intersection of four categories of attributes" – "domain, **plexity**, **state of boundedness**, and **state of dividedness**" – which "pertain to a quantity simultaneously", together constituting "a complex of attributes that may be termed a quantity of **disposition**".

As far as **plexity** in relation to matter is concerned, the quantity in question is perceived in agreement with "the traditional linguistic category of 'number' with its component notions 'singular' and 'plural'." Semantically, plexity relates to one element in space (uniplex) or to more than one (multiplex). Not only count nouns specify multiplexity, also mass nouns like *furniture*. Nevertheless, the intrinsically multiplex, internally discrete matter realized as *furniture*, refers to unbounded region in space. Hence, intersections of the schematic categories occur. The following examples show the category of plexity encoded in a base plural noun and in a mass noun. For instance, uniplex matter is realized by the three phrases *a peaceful fish*, *a single female cod*, and *a sheep* in (1a–c), also by the partitive construction *a piece of* with the noun phrase *hand luggage* in (3a) and *furniture* in (3b). The latter example displays *unit excerpting* in connection with the matter designated by *furniture*.

Plexity relating to multiplex matter is lexicalized by the noun phrases highlighted by bold print⁶ in (2a–h) and in (3c–f). "Meaning is found in texts and patterns in texts make meanings observable" (Mahlberg 2005: 36). In agreement with this observation, see the following example sentences regarding the studied nouns conceived as uniplex and multiplex quantity in space in context of use accessed via the BNC:

- (1) Nouns encoding referents triggering uniplex quantity in space:
 - a. *fish* as species - *The latter is **a peaceful fish**, whereas *elongatus* is **a real killer**.* (C97 944)⁷
 - b. *cod* as a discrete "generic" entity - ***A single female cod** can produce six million eggs in one spawning.* (F9F 60)
 - c. *sheep* a discrete "specific" entity - ***A sheep** walked down the road seeming big in the swirling grey white.* (FP3 833)
- (2) Nouns having multiplex structure by being countable (with numerals: *two*, *three*, etc.):
 - a. *fish* as discrete referents with the numeral *three* - *The only **three fish** I am left with **are** a *Majestic Witch*, which also has a white mark around the mouth, a *Black Wedge*, which is not feeding, and the *Moon Angel*, that is still in good health.* (FBN 2123)
 - b. *fish* or *fishes* as species - *From the 340 million year old oil shales round Wardie Bay he collected **specimens of ray-finned (paleoniscoid) fishes** which **were** once as common as *cod* is now.* (HSA 434)
 - c. *cod* as discrete referents triggered by the coordinated numerals *one or two* - *Boats took **one or two cod** from deeper water but generally poor.* (A6R 1339)
 - d. *sheep* as discrete referents with the numeral *two*, and by being conceptually recovered in the reciprocal pronouns *each other* - *If, on the other hand, **the two sheep are** of similar size **they** can assess **each other** only by fighting.* (CJ3 1909)
 - e. *cattle* as discrete referents with the numeral *two* - *He said he told him the story and he said if you could just get back to to Greentoft, he says, I would give you **the best two cattle out of my byre**.* (HEA 75)
 - f. *aircraft* as discrete referents with the numeral *three* - *The **aircraft were** in two flights of **three aircraft**.* (CLU 1666)
 - g. *police* as discrete referents with the numeral *three* - *The **three police** stood watching them.* (CR6 3615)
 - h. *The **three police officers** were grim-faced and intent.* (G0N 1474)
- (3) Nouns having uniplex or multiplex structure in partitive constructions, due to the cognitive process of unit excerpting:
 - a. *luggage* as a discrete referent, of bounded structure with the partitive *one piece*, the lexical item *luggage* triggers a luggage bag - *Take only **one piece of hand luggage** to minimise security-check time.* (EDG 2107)
 - b. *furniture* as discrete referents, of bounded structure with the partitive *a piece of* - *Bring a **piece of furniture** you wish to restore [...].* (C9X 992)
 - c. *information* as discrete referents through unit excerpting with the partitive *items*, preceded by the numeral *four*, bounded when conveyed by *number*, *title*, *address*, *date* - *The title page shows a minimum of **four items of information** - number, title, address, date.* (FEU 1327)

⁶ The particular expressions in bold print in the examples cited from the BNC in this text are not written in bold in the examples available at <http://corpus.byu.edu/> nor at <http://www.natcorp.ox.ac.uk/>.

⁷ The acronyms and numbers written in brackets on the right of each example sentence from §3.2.2 and §4.3.2 indicate the sources of the examples accessed through the BNC.

- d. *news* as discrete referents through unit excerpting with the partitive *pieces*, preceded by the numeral *two* - *Before then the office came alive with **two pieces of news** - Sniffy Wilson had been captured and Marilyn Duxbody had been charged under the Obscene Publications Act.* (GWG 2421)
- e. *bread* as discrete referents through unit excerpting with the partitive construction *loaves*, preceded by the numeral *nine* - *He counted **nine loaves of bread** on the highest shelf and a dozen tins of meat stacked on the dresser.* (ACW 1783)
- f. *butter* as discrete referents evoked by the partitive *flecks*, preceded by the pronoun *a few* - *Add the bay leaf and **a few flecks of butter** and bake for about 15 minutes.* (H06 3020)

While all example sentences in (1) have the studied nouns with the indefinite article, the sentences in (2) contain nouns expressing multiplex discrete quantity in space. Those which occur with the verb in plural agreement (2a,b,d,f) trigger multiplex bounded quantity through the plural verb and the numeral, those which are only with a numeral (2c,e,g) evoke multiplex bounded quantity with the number. The sentence in (2g) has the noun phrase *the **three police*** filling out the position of the subject. Using either *policemen* or *policewomen*, instead of *police*, would be inappropriate in relation to representatives of both genders involved in the commented situation. The word *police* is neutral in this respect. So is the expression ***police officers***, as in (2h). The nouns in (3) have multiplex bounded regions expressed by the collective nouns *items*, *loaves* and *flecks*, and by the plural partitive element *pieces*.

The category of **state of boundedness** relates to bounded matter and unbounded matter, and "corresponds to the traditional linguistic distinction between 'mass' and 'count' " nouns. In semantic terms, unbounded quantity is perceived as "continuing on indefinitely with no necessary characteristic of finiteness intrinsic to it. When a quantity is understood as bounded, it is conceived to be demarcated as an individuated unit entity" (Talmy 2000: 50). For example, the grammatically massed nouns which become semantically bounded through partitive constructions, such as *bread* with the collective noun *loaf* in *a loaf of bread*, are submitted to a "cognitive operation of bounding, or portion excerpting, as triggered by *a piece of bread*, which is realized in this sentence: *If you break a glass, use a piece of bread to sponge the area where the pieces shattered*⁸. The unlimited volume designated by the given mass noun is bounded when the noun is used in partitive constructions, as in the examples in (3) above. Bounding entails dividing the expressed referent in cognitive operations, but it is not the same as dividedness.

The category of **state of dividedness** relates to a specific internal segmentation of the given quantity: "**composite** or (internally) **discrete**", if it has "breaks, or interruptions, through its composition" (Talmy 2000: 55). For example, internally discrete matter is realized by the noun *furniture*, but internally continuous matter is expressed by the noun *water*, which cannot be segmented into pieces. Nonetheless, processes of DISCRETIZING and MELDING alter the conception of the quantity involved in the analysis. According to Talmy (2000: 56), the former operation occurs when

[...] the originally continuous referent would become conceptualized as a particulate aggregation. Conversely, a grammatical form for a discrete-type lexical item would

⁸ (See Whitson Gordon at <http://lifehacker.com/5826887>) (Accessed 2015-04-06.)

trigger an operation of melding, whereby the separate elements of the original referent would be conceptualized as having fused together into a continuum.

While the quantity expressed by the noun *water* undergoes discretizing in 90, 921.8 drops of water in a gallon⁹, the expression *the mass of the people*, used in *the mass of the people voted against the government's policy*¹⁰, illustrates the process of melding. Talmy (2000: 56) states that SPONTANEOUS MELDING is observed when "no grammatical form" like *mass* unites the individual elements, which, among others, relates to the noun *furniture*.

3.2.3 Intersections among schematic categories in juxtaposing English and Polish nouns

The categories of disposition of quantity intersect with one another. For instance, the English noun *furniture* designates multiplex unbounded and internally discrete matter. The Polish plural noun *meble* 'furniture/*furnitures' has a singular form *mebel* 'a piece of furniture'. Hence, the Polish single form *mebel* 'furniture' expresses uniplex bounded and discrete matter and thus triggers transference of the native usage into the noun *furniture*, i.e. conceptualizing this noun as countable. Other nouns which are brought to the readers' attention for the same reason are: *fish*, *cod*, *sheep*, *aircraft*, *cattle*, *police*, *bread*, *butter*, *luggage*, *news*, *information*, *advice* meaning *counsel*, and *money*. Talmy (2000: 59) schematizes intersections of categories, based on which the following examples are compiled: multiplex unbounded discrete, e.g. *furniture*, and continuous, e.g. *information*; multiplex bounded discrete, e.g. *sheep*, and continuous, e.g. *sea*. Parallels between the nouns listed above and others which share their characteristics in terms of Talmy's configurational system can be outlined through analogical schematic analyses. Section 4 attempts to delve into schematic intersections of the selected nouns analysed as categories within Talmy's configurational system and as Langacker's schematic categories designating bounded or unbounded region. Nouns are cognitively processed.

According to cognitive linguists, words are points of access to vast repositories of non-linguistic encyclopedic knowledge, which is highly structured and consists of what Evans (2013: 23) calls *cognitive models*. This study uses the BNC as a means to diminish transference of Polish thought process into numerous utterances constructed in English by Polish students.

4. Practical implications

In §4.1, a collection of English nouns that are recommended for practice via the BNC are presented in Tables 1 through 3. Table 1 shows the studied nouns with focus on boundedness of the designated reference entities, which unites certain aspects of Langacker's (1987) view of nouns and Talmy's (2000) conceptually based analysis of nouns. Table 2 demonstrates English nouns as schematic categories of the configurational system in Talmy's approach to grammar. Table 3 shows Polish translational equivalent nouns of the studied English examples as schematic categories referring to the analysis shown in Table 2. In §4.2, the studied English nouns are grouped according to schematic categories of the configurational system in Talmy's approach to grammar, interpreted in terms of plurality and

⁹ (<http://askascientist.co.uk/physics/many-drops-water/>) (Accessed 2015-18-03)

¹⁰ (<http://www.thefreedictionary.com/Mass>) (Accessed 2015-18-03)

singularity contrasted with their Polish translational equivalents. In §4.3, the research findings are demonstrated through the numbers of correct uses contrasted with erroneous choices made by 83 undergraduate students at the beginning of their course in the English language and literature. The results were obtained from the selected answers out of the multiple possible replies, correct and wrong ones, in the particular slots of the administered questionnaire. The research led to recommendations for studying different uses of "problematic" words and expressions, in this case the analyzed nouns, by scrutinizing examples of use in discourse, accessible through the BNC (for details on the contemporary corpora see <http://corpus.byu.edu/>) (Accessed 2015-04-18). The recommendations are illustrated with several examples suggesting how one can apply elements of Talmy's grammar to studying examples of use of selected words and expressions.

4.1 The studied English nouns contrasted with Polish translational equivalents by means of schematic categories

Taking into consideration Langacker's (1987) and Talmy's (2000) respective views of nouns, Table 1 addresses the former approach, Table 2 focuses on the latter interpretation. Both tables attempt to present the selected English nouns as schematic categories. Table 1 only lists the nouns which belong to the given schematic category, called *bounded* or *unbounded* region. Table 2 also enumerates the selected nouns within the particular category, named *multiplex* matter, *bounded* or *unbounded* matter, *discrete* or *continuous* matter. Table 3 has a contrastive semantic interpretation of Polish translational equivalents of the selected English nouns (with view of Saloni & Świdziński 2007).

Table 1: English nouns as nominal predications representing bounded v unbounded region

An interpretation of the selected English nouns based on Langacker's study	
Schematic categories	Nouns and expressions realizing the given schematic category
Bounded region	<i>fish, cod, sheep, cattle, aircraft, police</i>
Bounded region through partitive constructions, otherwise unbounded	<i>a loaf of bread, a tub / bar / stick of butter, a hoard of money a piece of news / advice [=¹¹counsel] / information/furniture / luggage</i>
Unbounded region	<i>news, advice [=counsel], information, bread, butter, furniture, luggage, money</i>

Table 2: English nouns as schematic categories of the configurational system

An interpretation of the selected English nouns based on Talmy's study	
Schematic categories	Nouns, expressions and fragments of sentences realizing the given schematic category, co-occurring with these elements which imply that the specific noun is countable in the particular usage
Uniplex matter	<i>fish is (as species), the fish itself (as a discrete referent), a single female cod, a sheep, one luggage</i>

¹¹ This symbol "=" indicates that the preceding entity is a semantic equivalent of the following entity.

Uniplex matter through partitive constructions	<i>a piece of furniture, an element of furniture, a loaf of bread a stick of butter, a tub of butter, a bar of butter a piece / an item of news, a piece / an item of advice [=counsel], a piece / an item of information, a hoard of money</i>
Multiplex matter	<i>fish and cod (as discrete referents and as species), sheep, cattle, furniture (conceived as multiplex but unbounded), aircraft, police</i>
Multiplex matter through partitive constructions	<i>news (three items / pieces / rounds of news), advice [=counsel], e.g. three items of advice), information (three pieces of information), bread (three loaves of bread), butter (three tubs / three bars / three sticks of butter), luggage (two pieces of luggage)</i>
Bounded matter	<i>fish, cod, sheep, cattle, police, a piece luggage, aircraft, a loaf of bread, a tub of butter or a stick of butter or a bar of butter</i>
Unbounded matter	<i>news, advice [=counsel], furniture, information, bread, butter, money</i>
Discrete matter	<i>fish, cod, sheep, cattle, police, luggage, furniture, aircraft</i>
Continuous matter	<i>news, advice [=counsel], information, bread, butter, money</i>

The schematic categories of bounding and unbounding, in Table 1 and in Table 2, respectively, correlate in terms of confining the region and the matter by means of partitive elements with reference to the nouns considered uncountable, regarding formal descriptive grammar. Table 3 shows Polish equivalents of the selected English nouns, reflecting the schematic categories presented in Table 2, with the schematic boundedness, also included in Table 1.

Table 3: Polish nouns as schematic categories of the configurational system

An interpretation of Polish nouns equivalent to the selected English nouns	
Uniplex matter	<i>jedna ryba SG NOM (in the nominative CASE), 'one fish', jeden dorsz SG 'one cod', jedna owca SG 'one sheep', jeden statek powietrzny SG 'one aircraft', jeden mebel SG '*one furniture', jeden chleb SG '*one bread', jeden bagaż SG '*one luggage', jeden pieniądz SG '*one money'</i>
Multiplex matter	<i>ryby PL '*fishes', dorsze PL '*cods', owce PL '*sheeps', bydło SG, 'cattle' PL, policja SG, 'police' PL, bagaże PL, '*luggages', meble PL, '*furnitures', statki powietrzne PL, '*aircrafts', wiadomości PL, '*newses', rady PL, '*advices', informacje PL, '*informations', chleby PL, '*breads', pieczywo SG 'bread', masła PL, '*butters', pieniądze PL, '*moneys'</i>
Bounded matter	<i>ryba SG, 'fish', dorsz DU, 'cod' DU, owca SG, 'sheep', bydło SG, 'cattle' PL, policja, SG, 'police' PL, bagaż SG, 'luggage', statek powietrzny SG, 'aircraft', chleb SG & pieczywo SG, 'bread', masło SG, 'butter', wiadomość SG, 'news', rada SG, 'advice', mebel SG, 'furniture', informacja SG, 'information, pieniądze SG, 'money'</i>
Discrete matter	<i>ryba SG, 'fish' DU, ryby PL, 'fishes', dorsz SG, PL, 'cod' DU, dorsze PL, '*cods', owca SG, 'sheep' DU, owce PL, '*sheeps', bydło SG, 'cattle' PL, policja SG, 'police' PL, bagaż SG, 'luggage' SG, bagaże PL, '*luggages', mebel SG, 'furniture' SG, meble PL, '*furnitures', statek powietrzny SG, 'aircraft' DU, statki powietrzne PL, '*aircrafts', wiadomość SG, 'news' SG, wiadomości PL, '*newses', rada SG, 'advice' SG, rady PL, '*advices' [=counsel], informacja SG, 'information' SG, informacje PL, '*informations', pieczywo SG, chleb SG, 'bread' SG, chleby PL, '*breads', masło SG, 'butter' SG, masła PL, '*butters', pieniądze PL, 'money' SG</i>

The schematic categories of selected English nouns rarely maintain their singularity or plurality in relation to their Polish translational equivalents.

4.2 Selected nouns grouped according to schematic categories

The selected English nouns submitted to a brief analysis with a view to Langacker's and Talmy's respective approaches to nouns are placed in groups from (1) to (4) below. They are arranged with respect to the observed English-Polish contrast in number reflected through schematic boundedness, plexity, and discreteness, applied to the English nouns listed in Table 1 and Table 2, respectively.

The referents named by the nouns in (1) *fish, cod, sheep, aircraft*, are understood as multiplex matter, bounded through the process of melding, "whereby the separate elements of the original referent would be conceptualized as having fused together into a continuum" (Talmy 2000: 56). Without this process, they are used as uniplex, i.e. singular forms, highlighting individuated entities. Polish equivalent nouns to those in (1) have both forms: singular and morphologically marked plural: *ryba* SG, *ryby* PL for 'fish' DU, *dorsz* DU, *dorsze* PL for 'cod' DU, *owca* SG, *owce* PL for 'sheep' DU, *statek powietrzny* SG, *statki powietrzne* PL for 'aircraft' DU.

The objects designated by the nouns in (2) *luggage, furniture*, are perceived as unbounded matter, and discrete matter, individuated only through partitive constructions. Their Polish equivalent nouns – *bagaż* SG, *bagaze* PL for 'luggage' SG and *mebel* SG, *meble* PL for 'furniture' SG – take the singular form or the plural form depending on the context of usage. The Polish plural forms are morphologically marked for plural.

The nouns in (3) *news, advice [=counsel], information, bread, butter, money*, refer to unbounded matter and continuous matter with Polish equivalent nouns in both forms: singular and morphologically marked plural (see Table 3). They are expressed as uniplex matter in partitive constructions, *money* is used in *a hoard of money*.

The nouns in (4) *cattle, police*, denote individuated bounded and discrete referents with plural agreement but singular form through the process of melding. The Polish translational equivalents of *cattle* and *police* are their converse forms in terms of the encoded number.

All four groups include English nouns which are schematically and constructionally different from Polish translations of English utterances with those nouns. The subject-verb and subject-pronominal concord in English utterances with the selected nouns differ from the grammatical agreements observed in their Polish versions.

4.3 Questionnaire results and post-questionnaire recommendations

In §4.3.1, Table 4 presents empirically confirmed observations relating to the errors in proper use of the English nouns contrasted with their Polish equivalents. Each expression has a number of recorded answers considering the given construction correct. In §4.3.2, extracts of authentic text from the BNC with expressions containing the given nouns are recommended as a sample of readily accessible self-administered practice.

4.3.1 Conclusive questionnaire results

Table 4 shows conclusive evidence that the errors made are mainly related to transference of schemata from Polish nouns into their English expressions.

Table 4: The results of the questionnaire filled out in class by 83 Polish BA students of English

Selected English nouns	Polish equivalents explained in singular and plural number	Choices of noun-verb agreement. Scores indicating use		
		Singular noun and singular verb	Plural noun and plural verb	The form or the forms
<i>fish</i> DU; <i>fishes</i> PL (=types; species)	<i>ryba</i> SG, <i>ryby</i> PL	one fish is 45 fish is 65	<i>fishes</i> are 42 (=species) <i>fish</i> are 32	<i>fish</i> 62 <i>fishes</i> 25 (=species)
<i>cod</i> DU	<i>dorsz</i> DU, <i>dorsze</i> PL	one cod is 37 cod is 53	<i>cods</i> are 73 (=species) cod are 7	<i>cod</i> 54 <i>cods</i> 52 (=species)
<i>sheep</i> DU	<i>owca</i> SG, <i>owce</i> PL	one sheep is 45 sheep is 56	* <i>sheeps</i> are 53 <i>sheep</i> are 26	<i>sheep</i> 57 * <i>sheeps</i> 35
<i>cattle</i> PL	<i>bydło</i> SG	* <i>cattle</i> is 42	* <i>cattles</i> are 20 <i>cattle</i> are 45	<i>cattle</i> 57 * <i>cattles</i> 16
<i>police</i> PL	<i>policja</i> SG	* <i>police</i> is 35	* <i>polices</i> are 5 <i>police</i> are 61	<i>police</i> 61 * <i>polices</i> 6
<i>aircraft</i> DU	<i>samolot</i> SG, <i>samoloty</i> PL	one aircraft is 42 aircraft is 53	* <i>aircrafts</i> are 73 aircraft are 8	<i>aircraft</i> 50 * <i>aircrafts</i> 51
<i>bread</i> SG	<i>chleb</i> SG, <i>pieczywo</i> SG, <i>chleby</i> PL English has only <i>bread</i> for 'pieczywo'.	*one bread is 32 bread is 62	* <i>bread</i> s are 17 * <i>bread</i> are 2 no plural form 49	<i>bread</i> 59 * <i>bread</i> s 18
<i>butter</i> SG	<i>masło</i> SG, <i>masła</i> PL	*one butter is 19 butter is 63	* <i>butters</i> are 5 * <i>butter</i> are 5 no plural form 58	<i>butter</i> 58 * <i>butters</i> 7
<i>luggage</i> SG	<i>bagaż</i> SG, <i>bagaze</i> PL	*one luggage is 31 luggage is 55	* <i>luggages</i> are 28 * <i>luggage</i> are 12 no plural form 31	<i>luggage</i> 58 * <i>luggages</i> 22
<i>furniture</i> SG	<i>mebel</i> SG, <i>meble</i> PL	*one furniture is 17 furniture is 51	* <i>furnitures</i> are 25 * <i>furniture</i> are 25 no plural form 21	<i>furniture</i> 54 * <i>furnitures</i> 22
<i>news</i> SG	<i>wiadomość</i> SG, <i>wiadomości</i> PL	*one news is 24 news is 58	* <i>newses</i> are 4 * <i>news</i> are 54 no plural form 12	<i>news</i> 65 * <i>newses</i> 5
<i>information</i> SG	<i>informacja</i> SG, <i>informacje</i> PL	*one information is 34 information is 56	* <i>informations</i> are 54 * <i>information</i> are 8 no plural form 14	<i>information</i> 52 * <i>informations</i> 42
<i>advice</i> [=counsel] SG	<i>porada</i> SG, <i>rada</i> SG, <i>porady</i> SG, <i>rad</i> y PL	*one advice is 30 advice is 61	* <i>advices</i> are 46 * <i>advice</i> are 14 no plural form 14	<i>advice</i> 54 * <i>advices</i> 36
<i>money</i> SG	<i>pieniądz</i> e PL, <i>pieniądz</i> SG	*one money is 6 money is 67	* <i>moneys</i> are 6 * <i>money</i> are 31 no plural 43	<i>money</i> 63 * <i>moneys</i> 6

The following results were obtained in relation to the constructions whose Polish countable equivalents have a high frequency of occurrence in spoken language: **furnitures are* and **furniture are* were given in over 30% of the answers, **one advice is* scored 36,1% and **advices are* scored 55,4%, **money are*, **luggages are* and **one luggage is* obtained over 37%, **one bread is* got 38,5%, **one information is* received almost 50%, **informations are* and **news are* were indicated by 65% of the participants, *cods are* were chosen by almost 88% of the respondents, but nobody indicated that the plural -s ending applies to cod as a type or species. The root nouns themselves in the studied constructions have errors in number resulting from transference. For example, **sheeps* had 42%, **informations* received over 50%, **aircrafts* obtained over 61%, but the correct expression *aircraft are* had only 9,6%. Moreover, between 51% and 54% of the students selected the correct expressions *one fish is* and *fishes are*. The respondents were misled not only by analogy, but also by literal transference. Therefore, *fishes are* was selected automatically, not on the bases of background knowledge since nobody specified the context of use, i.e. as species or types, or in Biblical discourse. Additionally, the English plural nouns *police* and *cattle*, respectively, were also associated with their Polish singular equivalents, hence, **police is* received 42,1% and **cattle is* scored over 50%. Apart from *policja* 'police' and *bydło* 'cattle', all other Polish nouns listed in (1) through (4) above are countable. Hence, Polish students of English tend to transfer count-ability of Polish nouns into expressions with their English translational equivalents.

Polish users of English at the upper-intermediate and the advanced levels need further language practice of uncountable nouns through contact with diversified extracts of authentic text. It is recommended that students of English as a foreign language emerge themselves in individual practice of the selected nouns, apart from other words, through studying authentic text with the given constructions.

4.3.2 Recommendations for practice – a selected example

Extracts of text accessible in language corpora, such as the BNC database, can supplement the dictionary definitions with authentic utterances. Examples cited from the BNC illustrate the studied nouns processed through the schematic category of disposition of quantity in §3.2.2. Searching for context with particular words or expressions by keying the given expression in the search box, such as those highlighted by bold print in examples (1) through (5) below, leads to a variety of authentic text extracts. Students can analyse the searched noun studying its usage in various clauses. An attempt to interpret the nouns schematically is recommended, as presented in the following examples from the BNC.

- (1) *Fish don't have passports.* (ASV 1366) (The referent of the base plural noun *fish* is multiplex, which is coded by the noun-verb concord.)
- (2) *But that's what it cost, the fish itself, four pound.* (KB7 15240) (The the referent of the noun *fish* is uniplex, which is shown in the noun-pronominal concord.)
- (3) a. *In 40 years, he flew more than 100 aircraft, including Concorde.* (CH6 7285) (The referent *aircraft* is multiplex, which is expressed by the noun-determinative concord. *100* is a huge number.)
 - b. *The scheme commenced 18 Sep 66 initially with two aircraft, and three aircraft were added at periodic intervals.* (EWS 154) (The referent *aircraft* is multiplex, bounded

and discrete, which is conveyed by the noun-determinative concord used twice: *two aircraft, three aircraft.*)

- (4) *Uncover the loaf and let everyone admire the bread.* (HS7 254) (The referent *bread* is multiplex, unbounded and continuous in real space, which is communicated by a noun-partitive construction.)
- (5) *One or two extra and up-dated pieces of information are supplied* (*Eco-Systems 1982*). (APN 804) (The referent *information* is multiplex, unbounded and continuous in abstract space, countable as discrete counted elements obtained by unit excerpting shown in the partitive construction *pieces of information*, thus in plural concord with the verb *are*.)

Moreover, English text accessed through the language corpora, such as fragments of books, newspapers, periodicals, advertisements, internet blogs, and the like, provides an opportunity for reading what is of interest to students i.e. for entertainment or information on what they are already familiar with or for new information. Since textbooks are not always of interest to students at the upper-intermediate and the advanced levels, they should exploit language corpora and other sources of authentic text published on the Internet. It is argued that IMMERSION (see Anderson & Rhodes 1983) in authentic examples of usage will help students retain the schematic representations of proper grammar. This discourse recommends continual wide range study of examples of usage of the particular English utterances through the database of the BNC, for example, leading to immersion in authentic text.

5. Consolidation and conclusions

English nouns display properties related to number which are specific for the English language, i.e. how native speakers of this language perceive their referents and what information those referents convey. The studied nouns, apart from *policja* 'police' and *bydło* 'cattle', are conventionally countable in the Polish language. The English nouns selected for discussion are uncountable, several base plurals have dual number, depending on the context of usage. Therefore, this text attempts to highlight differences in grammatical number between the chosen English nouns, used as examples of typical differences in number, and their Polish translational equivalents. Exposure to authentic usage takes place through conceptual interpretations of the referents denoted by the selected English nouns by means of schematic categories in grammar and extracts of authentic context with the studied words from a language corpus, e.g. the BNC. Such contact with the selected nouns is expected to substitute immersion in authentic communication in English for Polish speakers of this language. Immersion provides them with conventional patterns of English expressions which need to be used automatically when communicating in English. According to this discourse, dictionary definitions and grammatical rules do not sufficiently fill the need of immersion in authentic context of language usage.

This study addresses differences between selected nouns with regard to count-ability and non-count-ability. English nouns such as *fish, cod, sheep, aircraft, cattle, police, bread, butter, luggage, furniture, news, information, advice [=counsel], money*, and their Polish equivalents in terms of number are compared by applying a cognitive interpretation, based on Langacker's (1987) and Talmy's (2000) studies of nouns as schematic categories. The analyzed differences between the English nouns and their Polish equivalents relate to grammatical concord with varied components of sentence structure. This discourse argues

that the numerical significance of Polish nouns influences and undermines the language performance of Polish upper-intermediate and advanced learners of English. Consequently, transference errors occur in English utterances where nouns in terms of numerical disparity in their Polish equivalents are used. These findings are supported by the results of the questionnaire conducted among 83 undergraduate students of the English language at a Polish university in October 2014. The grammatical features of count-ability and lack of count-ability of English nouns are to be delved into by means of authentic context of usage. Extracts of text from the BNC, which expand examples of usage found in dictionary entries are recommended. Full utterances and texts accessed through examples can become sources of information and entertainment, which in turn spur retention of English constructions, especially those which are susceptible to errors due to the possibility of numerical coordinate transfer from the Polish language. Consequently, the topic of this paper is open for further discussion.

Abbreviations and symbols

COL	a collective noun
DU	dual number
e.g.	for example
GEN	genitive
i.e.	that is
NOM	nominative
PART	a partitive element
PL	plural
SG	singular
=	semantically equivalent
*	unacceptable

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In SKASE Journal of Theoretical Linguistics [online]. 2015, vol. 12, no.2 [cit. 2014-06-25].
Available on web page http://www.skase.sk/Volumes/JTL28/pdf_doc/08.pdf ISSN 1336- 782X.