NON-TYPICAL CASES OF PLURAL NOUNS IN ENGLISH AND POLISH

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The aim of the present paper is to survey the contexts allowing the usage of plural forms the sense of which goes beyond the standard concept of plural. The considered examples are claimed to be non-typical not because of their syntactic form but because of the new semantic values they bring about the forms presented below exceed the limits of standard definitions of plural, which specify its meaning as "more than one" or "other than one" (Strang 1964: 86, Quirk et al. 1972: 165).

The problem of singular/plural distinction is closely connected with the mass/count distinction and some linguists claim these two distinctions to be inseparable. Gleason, for instance, suggests that since in fact every common noun can occur both as mass and as count, the count/mass distinction does not divide the English nouns into two separate subclasses. It is thus similar to the singular/plural distinction in that it affects nearly all nouns and takes similar forms in the surface structure (Gleason 1965: 134—137).

Katz's proposals are still more radical: the [+Count] and [-Count] features determine the co-occurrence relations between determiners and nouns and between nouns and singularity and plurality (Katz 1972: 374).

Gleason's and Katz's statements, which associate number with countness and massness, were accepted as the basic assumption of the present paper. However, although Gleason's claim is that almost every noun can be used both as count and as mass, only the plurals of [+Count] nouns will be here considered as standard.

Although many linguists have been concerned with some aspects of the phenomenon of non-typical plurals, it seems that its scope and frequency of occurrence have not been fully recognized yet. Most authors treat non-standard plurals marginally, and their presence in dictionaries is also rather
incidental. My tentative classification and rich exemplification are thus supposed to signal that the phenomenon is common and varied enough to attract greater attention and to be taken into account by grammarians and lexicographers.

All the analysed material is based on information given by British and Polish informants, but, since dictionaries often do not confirm this information, each part contains some brief comments as to the dictionary interpretation.

Two dictionaries have been consulted in all the discussed cases, these are: The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary and Słownik Języka Polskiego, but the nouns which appeared to be controversial have also been looked up in Webster’s Third New International Dictionary, Słownik Ortograficzny Języka Polskiego and Słownik Poprawnej Poleszczyzny.

In the approach taken so far the problem of non-typical plurals concerns mainly those nouns which, being basically [−Count] occur in [+Count] form as well. However, the reclassified plurals cannot be interpreted as true count nouns, since the addition of the plural ending is always accompanied by a change of meaning and in its new sense the noun can occur in plural only. Presumably, we are here concerned not with syntactic shift, but with semantic reclassification.

It is very difficult to specify the scope of the changes brought about by semantic reclassification. In a great number of cases the reclassification will in fact result in a new lexical item, but on etymological grounds and because of the high degree of sense similarity the two meanings are usually considered to be contextually conditioned variant readings of the same noun. The other possible result of reclassification is a modification of the field of reference — the modification which does not influence the basic meaning of a noun.

There is still one more argument for accepting the semantic source of non-typical plurals, namely, the fact that very few of them can be modified by a numeral. Thus, contrary to the standard concept of countlessness, the presence of the -s ending is not accompanied by true countability. To be able to account for this in my paper I assume two distinctions instead of one, i.e., count/mass distinction is here supplemented by countable/uncountable distinction which determines the presence or absence of numeral modification.

Needless to say, “count” does not imply “countable”.

1.1. Mass nouns denoting metals will start our discussion of reclassified plurals: iron as well as Polish żelazo is basically a mass noun, but we can produce a plural form irons in such expressions as fire-irons, irons in the sense of “stirrups” or put somebody in irons — an equivalent for Polish załoc kogot w żelazo, i.e., in cases where features of the substance are in a way transposed on the product. However, this pluralization is not followed by countability.

for none of these examples allow numeral modification. A plural form of iron accompanied by a numeral (two irons) is also acceptable, e.g., in the very common shortening of flat-iron. In Polish the form żelazo cannot be modified by a numeral.

The next example, bronze, is used in the plural form bronzes in the sense of works of art, statues made of bronze. Bronze in English, however, corresponds to two different terms in Polish: brąz and spis. The plural form brązy is parallel to English bronzes (works of art), whereas the form spis is restricted to two meanings: cannons and bells. Brass also has the plural form brasy denoting things made of brass, but the Polish equivalent mosiądz cannot be pluralized. All of these plurals, in Polish as well as in English, do not allow numerals as modifiers.

Silver does not have a plural form in English except for a colloquial use with the “s” article or in plural when we speak about sports medals. In Polish the plural form srebra, which cannot be modified by numerals, again denotes products made of silver, namely, tableware or liturgical vessels.

Copper and nickel both have a very common plural form meaning “coins”, which can be modified by numerals: five coppers or three nickels is perfectly acceptable in English.

In Polish miedź does not have a plural form, whereas the plural nikło, as well as chromy, denotes nickel or chromium ornaments (e.g. of motorcars); neither form can be modified by numerals. Surprisingly enough, SJP, while taking into account the common usage of nikło, adds the specification “no plural” to the entry of chrom.

Złoto is basically not pluralized, although SJP allows the plural, but uncountable, use of złota in the sense of liturgical vessels (“złota kościele”). The countable form of gold is acceptable only in the case of “medals” (see note 1).

Finally, the mass noun marble can be pluralized to denote marble sculptures, as in the Elgin Marbles.

Another group of nouns which are subject to reclassification is the group of fabrics. Silk has the plural form silks in the sense of “garments made of silk”, cotton is pluralized to cottons (cotton garments), but wool, according to SOED, cannot be reclassified in this way, as there is a separate form wooleen to express the same kind of dependency (see also part 2). In Polish jedwab

1 “International Herald Tribune” of February 14/15th 1976 says that one of the competitors in Olympic Games won “two golds and a silver”.

2 For the sake of convenience titles of dictionaries are here used in an abbreviated form: SJP — Słownik Języka Polskiego, SOED — Shorter Oxford English Dictionary.

3 As regards fabrics see also part 2.
is pluralized into jedwabie — silk dresses and wełna into wełny — woolen
clothes; bawełna cannot be reclassified in this way. All these pluralizations
of fabrics, in Polish as well as in English, do not allow numeral modification.

The next examples in this section are paper and glass. Paper can have a
plural countable form in several meanings, but not when papers mean notes,
documents, letters, memoranda. In Polish we predominantly use papier
in the sense of documents.

The mass noun glass has the plural form glasses, which denotes any article
made of glass, in particular it can stand for spectacles, and thus remain un-
countable, or for drinking vessels, and thus become countable. The Polish
equivalent szkło is pluralized mainly with regard to spectacles or to the very
lenses. Like in English, this form cannot be modified by numerals.

The Polish noun słodycz denotes the quality, the feature of being sweet,
and thus its plural uncountable form słodycze stands for sweets. The relation
in English is not so clear, since sweets are derived from the adjective sweet
and not from the noun sweetness.

A somewhat obsolete synonym of słodycze is the uncountable pluraliza-
tion of cukier — cukry. Another meaning of cukry is that of chemical com-
ounds.

The noun weight, which basically stands for a specific characteristic of
objects, can also be applied to denote an object or objects used for measuring
weight: a weight or (two) weights. In Polish the case is somewhat different, as
we have two separate items to cover these readings: waża (or ciężar) for weight
and odwaga (or ciężar) for a weight — weights.

Finally, the Polish floret is reclassified into the uncountable plural form
fiolety when it stands for bishop’s robes, as their colour is their essential
feature.

There is another interesting example concerning garments. The word
gronostaj — ermine can be pluralized in two ways: when the animal is meant
we are allowed to use numerals, but when we mean trimmings or garments
made of ermine only the plural form can be used, as in: przybrany w grono-
stajce — wearing ermines.

The above examples present the linguistic phenomenon that can hardly
be interpreted within the frame of the so far established syntactic and se-
"mantic terms. The derived nouns are not always standard plurals — most
of them cannot be modified by numerals. What is more, in this new, derived
sense they are often used in plural only, whereas true count nouns have the
possibility of forming both singular and plural. Finally, they involve changes
in meaning which are not accounted for by syntactic relations.

The semantic interpretation of the above examples will involve semantic
ambiguity, as they all have at least two readings: one stands for the sub-
stance, the other for the product, but their identical phonetic form is not
incidental, on the contrary, the semantic markers which are essential for the
“substance item” are also essential for the “product item”, and thus we are
here concerned with a high degree of semantic similarity. With regard to this,
I claim the two forms to be two readings of the same noun, not separate
lexical items.

The above discussion concerns one type of semantic reclassification, but
further considerations will attempt to point to some more examples of this
kind of regularity.

1.2. As Grzebiieński has noted in his analysis of the English mor-
phology and syntax, the plural form of some abstract nouns has concrete
meaning, as e.g. in “force” — “forces” (military) (Grzebiieński 1964: 42). This
type of semantic reclassification — the one in which the possibility of using
the plural comes with the specification or individualization of some general
concept or phenomenon — will be discussed in this section.

1.2.1. We can quote a number of general or even abstract concepts and
notions which can be assigned the exact, but concrete equivalents. Thus, the
abstract concept of height as a measurement from bottom to top, has its
counterparts in various heights or a height of a particular object. Another
meaning of the plural form heights is synonymous with hills but in this
sense it is uncountable.

Altitude — almost an equivalent of height, but more often used in a geo-
matical sense, also has its plural form altitudes.

Polish wysokość reveals the same kind of regularity, producing the plural
form wysokości.

However, all these plurals can hardly be used with numerals alone, except
perhaps for such a geometrical description as dwie wysokości trójkąta, but
they are often accompanied by the adjective różny — different, as in: Ob-
serracje prowadzono na dwóch różnych wysokościach — Observations were
carried out on two different heights. Besides that, the adjectival modification of
this noun is also rather limited.

The same opposition of abstract and concrete, and the same kind of mo-
dification, is revealed by the three remaining dimensions: depth, width and
length (głębokość, szerokość, długość). However, width and length, as well as
Polish szerokość and długość, can also become countable when they denote

4 Interestingly enough, in Polish we use such adjectives as doryźny or młyń in order to
modify wysokość, whereas in English high and low are used (e.g. high altitudes). This is
certainly due to the fact that niższa wysokość would be felt self-contradictory, and wysoko-
śc ma wysokość redundant on etymological grounds.
the dimensions of a swimming pool: He managed four widths (two lengths)
of a swimming pool - Przepłynął cztery szerokości (dwie długości basenu). 4
Length and długość may also be used in the set phrases: to win by two lengths -
wygrał o dwie długości (mainly in horse racing, cycling and boat racing).

The Polish noun pieniędz is an abstract economic concept, whereas its plural
form pieniędzy stands for funds, banknotes and coins. Interestingly
enough, this relation in English works the other way round. Singular money
is concrete, whereas plural monety is an abstract term used in banking. None
of these forms can be modified by a numeral.

Weight behaves similarly to measurements: it is often met in plural when
expressing heaviness of particular objects, often in a numerical form, (e.g.
the weights of the planets).

The Polish noun waga (ścióg) is rarely used in plural wagi, except for set
expressions miary i wagi - weights and measures and podnoszenie ściągów.

Another abstract concept, time, is often pluralized to denote a specified
period, such as: the times of Henry VIII. Parallely in Polish: abstract czas
versus casy stanisławskie. Numerals never modify times or casy, but
adjectives do, e.g. good times - dobry czas.

The undoubtedly abstract noun love can have a plural form loves in the
sense of love affairs, such as: "loves like ours have always been hated" (Jones
1975: 603). In Polish this form is even more common: miłości Woltera, miłości
mojego życia. 4 Numerals are never used in such phrases.

The item beauty has mainly the qualitative character, but it can also
denote a person or an object which is particularly beautiful: two famous beauties
of those times, the beauties of Donne's poetry.

Evil is an abstract concept of wrong-doing, but it can be reclassified to
mean an evil thing or deed, as in: choosing the lesser of the two evils. Polish
zło has no plural form in any case.

Art (as well as Polish sztuka) stands for all creative skills and achievements
of humanity, but when we want to stress its concrete branches we can use
the plural form arts (e.g. fine arts, Master of Arts) sztuki (sztuki piękne, sztuki
plastyczne). None of these forms can be used with a numeral, and, since all
these expressions are kind of set phrases even the adjectival modification is
very limited.

The noun good denotes some abstract qualities, but goods have gradually
come to mean commodities or merchandise. Polish dobry is also used as an
abstract concept, whereas its plural form means either real property (e.g.
dobra ziemskie) or good things (e.g. dobra dozwone). Both forms, goods and dobra,

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4 SJP and Słowianki Poprawnej Polszczyzny do not confirm this usage.

5 The entry miłości is specified "bха" in SJP and in Słowianki Poprawnej Polszczyzny.
nouns denoting the literary output, e.g. poezje Norwida, pisma Bolesława Prusa. While speaking about individual countable pieces of poetry we have to use the form poems — wiersze.

1.2.3. The next type of reclassification concerns continuous, non-concrete natural phenomena and elements, such as light, fire, snow, rain, water and sand, and their individual, concrete, non-continuous forms and instances of occurrence, i.e. lights (sources of light), fires (instances of burning), snows (snowfalls or snow expanses), rains (rainfalls), waters (water expanses), or sands (sand expanses). Countable form of these is hardly possible, and must be definitely rejected in the case of waters and sands. The countable form of fires seems to be acceptable only when we speak about instances of destructive burning, such as: We have already had two forest fires this week.

The Polish equivalents reveal the same kind of regularity: światełko, ogień, dym, mgła, śnieg, deszcz, woda, piasek, łódź as general denotations of natural phenomena are always singular. The possibility of a plural form appears with individual instances of their occurrence, as in: zapalone światełko, dymny fabryczny, opętane ciemnymi, gęstoką śniegiem, ucieczka deszcze, wódki terytorialne, piaski Mazurskie, łodzie na rzecie. Numerals are basically not used in such phrases, except perhaps for światełka and ogień.

1.2.4. The last section in this paragraph presents several examples which do not fit into the patterns outlined above, but which still stand in accordance with the general pattern given in 1.2. For instance, the plants such as grass or paprika are not generally pluralized when they stand for a species, but when we mean individual plants of grass or individual pods of paprika we often use the form gras or paprikas. Polish equivalents follow the same pattern: trava — (uncountable) trawa, as in trawa pożarnicy, and papryki — (countable) papryki, as in pokrojone dwa papryki.

The last problem in this section is pluralizing the nouns in set phrases: smelling salts, Epsom salts, table waters, sole trzesieńc, ruchome piaski, wody żurawie. Obviously, numerals are not acceptable in these phrases.

1.3. The hitherto applied criteria do not cover a number of semantically reclassified pluralizations which appear in a very specific, usually unique context. For instance, the shareholders of steel and oil corporations would ask How are stocks? or How are oils? — meaning, of course, the position or price of shares of oil and steel companies.

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Some restaurants serve set meals called tea or afternoon tea and in this sense tea can be used in the countable plural, as in: The waitress has served fifteen teas since three o'clock.

Both Polish and English nouns expressing numbers can be reclassified into the plural, e.g. when we mean size of shoes (Ozy są siedemkii, I wear seven) or tram numbers (Przejchały dwie trzynastki). Another interesting example of such usage is the sailor's term the roaring forties — rajce czterdziestki denoting the stormy regions between 40° and 60° south latitude.

The plural form of łód — łodzie is also used in the sense of frozen sweets. Interestingly enough, the plural has to be maintained regardless of the number of portions. The English equivalent, ice-cream, is similarly reclassified, or rather, abbreviated to ice or icles, but the plural and singular forms are here used regularly, i.e. we ask for one water-icle or two lemon icles.

One of the meanings of air denotes appearance or manner, as e.g. He has an air of importance, but when used in plural, in such an expression as give oneself airs, it slightly changes its meaning into unnatural pretentious behaviour.

The Polish noun chleb can also be used in plural in the sense: "loaves of bread", but, unlike the previous examples, where the numeral modification was only acceptable, it is now necessary, as in: Mam krępą dwie chleby.

Our final example here is the pluralization of kurz in kwarcz kurzu.

1.4. In this section we shall deal not only with number, but also with gender. Namely, some of the nouns which distinguish masculine and feminine forms have the possibility of reclassifying their plural masculine forms to stand for dual gender as well. Thus, while the singular form aktor refers always to a man, the plural form aktorzy denotes either both men and women; or men only. In fact, the sense of aktorzy as regards gender is solely dependent on the context, for it means "two men" in: Górnice i Branido are aktorzy, but men and women in the dictionary entry of cast in SOED: "...the set of aktors collectively..."

Among the nouns which are morphologically unmarked for gender (bractor — siostra, brat — siostra) only a few can presumably be used in the dual gender sense, e.g. dogs — psy. An additional example in Polish is the dialectal use of ojcowie in the sense of "parents".

Morphologically marked nouns, both Polish and English, allow possibilities for the dual gender plural. In English this would concern the nouns taking -en feminine suffix: god, steward, lion, tiger, and, especially, author and poet, since authoresses and poetesses forms are rare. Polish nouns taking feminine suffixes -ica (kot — kociica) and -ka (kelnar — kelnarka) are also subject to reclassification.

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* There is still another meaning of pisie — "an official document", in which it is also used as a countable plural.
* I do not consider here such idioms as gra w dwa ogień, zostaj w ognistym w dwa ogień — parallel to English between two fires.
There are, however, several pairs which will probably not be reclassified, apparently because the masculine/feminine distinction is unlikely to be disregarded (duke — duchess, emperor — empress, księżę — księżna, cesarz — cesarzowa, król — królowa).

Interestingly enough, stallions and mares, which are masculine and feminine respectively, are supplemented by the third, only dual form — horses. (In Polish ogier — klacz — konie).

Contrary to English, the Polish system of numerals can disambiguate the gender of personal nouns. Namely, czterej nauczyciele refers to men, cztery nauczycielki to women, whereas czworo nauczycieli — to both men and women. Still, as the collective numerals can modify only personal nouns, the problem of gender of animal nouns remains unsolved.

2. The second part of the present paper presents another basis for pluralization of mass nouns, the one which was briefly mentioned by Quirk et al. (1972), Katz (1972), Gleson (1965), Lyons (1968) and Jacobs and Rosenbaum (1968).

A Grammar of Contemporary English considers the plural form of such mass nouns as bread, as in: what bread have you got today? to be the case of conversion of a mass noun into a count noun; breads in that case means kinds or types of bread (Quirk et al. 1972: 126 n. [a]).

This explanation, however, cannot be accepted as satisfactory, since [+Count] and [-Count] are syntactic features and the conversion from [-Count] to [+Count], being an example of syntactic, not semantic, shift, cannot account for the new interpretation of meaning. The syntactic shift from mass to count can also be understood as the shift from the collective reference to the distributive one. It is the case in Quirk’s example, but such a statement does not exhaust the semantic interpretation of the sentence, since what the speaker has in mind is not leaves of bread, but kinds of bread, i.e. distributive reference is here a reference to variety as well.

There are other reasons to claim that it is semantic, not syntactic reclassification that underlies such forms. First, the addition of the plural ending does not automatically entail countability, i.e. acceptability of numeral modification. What is more, the plural form itself often requires some contextual justification. The most common contextual means which enables us to use the plural in the sense of “kinds” is the adjective different — in Polish, paralelly, różny. The need to use different becomes more obvious if we try to modify the “kinds” plurals with numerals. In the majority of cases native speakers confirm that phrases with numerals and different — różny (two different insks, dwie różne atramenty) are perfectly acceptable and unambiguous, while these with numerals only (two insks, trzy atramenty, 5 fine fuels,

(|pięć paliw) are at the best substandard. Different — różny can obviously be substituted by other contexts, or even extra-linguistic situation, as long as the reference to types is clearly indicated.

Contrary to most examples in part 1, none of the cases of “kinds” reclassification brings about the formation of a new lexical item — the only modification concerns the field of reference.

The examples from both languages are presented in Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English lexical item</th>
<th>SOED</th>
<th>British informant</th>
<th>Polish equivalent</th>
<th>SJP</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>gold</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>złoto</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>meat</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>mięso</td>
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<td>coal</td>
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<td>wegiel</td>
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<td>jedwab</td>
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<td>glass</td>
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<td>±</td>
<td>szklko</td>
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* "+" — "kinds" plural confirmed.
* "-" — not confirmed.
* "±" — doubtful, "blm"—dictionary symbol for "no plural"

Only some of the entries in SOED have "kinds of" in the list of their readings. We could assume that separate entries are given to those items which are very common in this particular form but it is impossible to judge whether the form wool is more popular than silks, still, wools in the sense "kinds of wool"! have a reading in SOED, while silks do not. Even if we refer to reality, it is equally easy to enumerate kinds of wool (light wool, lamb wool) and the kinds of silk (natural silk, Chinese silk).

The examples of "kinds" plural in SJP are very rare and many nouns are classified "blm". It seems that the examples given are in a way incidental,
while the regularity as such is not recognized at all. It is probably due to the fact that the examples in SJP are taken from literary works, whereas the usage in question is colloquial.

Czerwjetz, for instance, is specified “blm” while art critics often use the form czerwjetz to denote various shades of red.

Ser in SJP is assigned the plural form sery, but only as lumps of cheese we can buy in shops, whereas we undoubtedly can say: Nie lubię ostrzych serów.

Atrament has not “blm” specification, but the entry does not give any plural example, while we often produce such a form in sentences like: Nie podoba mi się kolorowe atramenty.

SJP gives the example of the plural form oleje only in the context oleje świeże, which would rather fit into the pattern of 1:2:4, whereas there is a popular form smery i oleje which denotes “kinds of”. Analogously, palivo is pluralized to palivá when different kinds of fuel are meant, e.g. palivá plynů.

The pipe smoker will certainly say tytonie to denote different blends of tobacco.

Wielno has not “blm” specification in SJP as bawełna has, but the examples given in the entry again do not include the shop advertisement wafel. Of all fabrics only jedwab contains adequate examples (jedwabie sztuczne i naturalne).

The treatment of the names of drinks is also incoherent: piwo has the example piwa żołądkowe, while wino has none, although we can say wina czerwone, wina palivá, etc.

As regards other dictionaries, Webster’s dictionary does not recognize such possibilities of plural formation, although some entries contain a few uncommented examples, e.g. writing-inks. Identical approach can be observed in Słownik Poprawnej Polszczyzny — in some entries we are given an example, e.g. sóki warzywne in the entry of sók, but in the remaining cases the “kinds” plural is disregarded.

3. In the present part I intend to analyse a very specific usage of plurals of both mass and count nouns, when the phrases in question stand for portions.

3.1. Let us first consider “portions” pluralizations of mass nouns. For instance, in Polish we order dwa mleka, trzy kasz, dwie herbaty, cztery piwa, dwa sóki pomarańczowe or trzy koniaki. SJP confirms only the most common forms of the “portions” plural: kasy, herbaty and piwa, whereas the other examples are not mentioned, and mleko is even marked as “blm”.

Also in the entry of the basically mass noun zupa the phrases denoting portions, such as: dwie zupy mleczne are not discussed. The other, still more colloquial, form of ordering soup — dwie pomidorowe, dwie ogórkomowe, etc., is not considered either.

Presumably, SJP acknowledges the possibility of such a reclassification of nouns into the “portions” plural, but only in the most common cases. Parallel English nouns can often be found in similar contexts: two coffees, four brandies, two beers, four juices. The case of milka is a little doubtful, as not all my informants confirmed the possibility of plural. As regards SOED, it does not exemplify such a regularity at all, while Webster’s dictionary discusses the “portions” plural of coffee, beer and whiskey — juice and tea, however, are again left out.

Contrary to the examples in part 1 and 2 “portions” phrases are obligatorily modified by numerals, as without the need to express plurality, definite number of portions, the reclassification of a noun would be unnecessary and the plural form nonsensical. Thus, this time, the syntactic change accompanying the semantic reclassification is fully regular: [− Count] changes into [+ Count].

3.2. Types of reclassification presented so far concern only mass nouns. The “portions” shift, however, covers count nouns as well, and, since their plural form is grammatical, the reclassification enforces its reformulation.

A pea, a bean, a noodle, a mushroom have regular plural forms peas, beans, noodles, mushrooms, which, except being standard plurals, are used to denote the name of a dish or a portion of this dish. Thus the numeral modification of these nouns, e.g. two peas, three beans, is meaningful only when we speak about separate items, as in: There were only two peas in the god.

Using numerals as modifiers to cases denoting portions of a dish would be confusing, hence the natural way to ask for a given number of portions is: mushrooms for two, peas for one, etc.

The regularity is also very common in Polish, i.e. nouns such as: naleśnik, pieczarka, pyza, knedle, pierogi, etc., have regular plural forms which can be modified by numerals when denoting separate objects (e.g. zjedz dwa naleśniki, but the same plurals are pre- or post-modified by the phrase composed of a numeral and razy when they stand for more than one portion, e.g. pierogi dwa razy, trzy razy knedle etc., or by the word raz when only one portion is meant (tak razem).

Groszki is a singular collective form for pea seeds, so when it stands for a portion of peas the form groszki is definitely rejected and it is pluralized by means of razy. Fusolka, however, can be unambiguously pluralized in both
ways: Poproszę dwie fasolki po bretonsku or Poproszę dwa razy fasolki po bretonsku.

A diminutive form buraczek has a regular countable plural form, thus a portion of a vegetable called buraczki has to be pluralized with razy or equivalent phrases.

The same rule will also hold for the nouns not having a singular form, e.g. Polish frytki. As regards English chips, this form can be referred to the singular a chip in the same way as, e.g., noodles.

SOED, as well as Webster’s dictionary, do not consider the possibility of plurals meaning dishes in any of the cases mentioned above; all the nouns are analysed only from the point of view of their singular form and plural forms are not assigned any specific meaning.

SIP acknowledges plural forms in the sense of “portions” in those cases where this very form is the dominant one (kliksa, kleści, pieróg, pyza), and in these entries the nouns in question are followed by “żywyli in” specification (usually in plural).

In the entries of pieczarka and naleśnik there is no “żywyli in” and thus the plural examples quoted do not exemplify the issue now under consideration.

Also the entries of groszek and fasolka do not emphasize the possibility of reclassification, both nouns are defined as collective for seeds or plants.

The specific plural usage of buraczki is discussed as a separate item and classified “żywyli in”.

Finally, frytki, as not having a singular form at all, are classified “bip” (no singular).

3.3. The last section in this part presents a few items of minor importance, which, however, add something to our discussion of specific behaviour of plurals in contexts denoting portions.

The English nouns cake and pie can have two lexical readings expressed by Polish ciasto and ciasto. However, not all kinds of cakes are available in both variants, and thus a customer asking for a cheese-cake or two apple-pies will be served a piece or pieces of cake, not the whole cake or even more than one.

In Polish we presumably can cite only two nouns which allow such a usage: tort and keks (we order dwa tarty, trzy keks, etc.). Serwak and piernik are common both as big and small cakes so the order dwa serwaki clearly refers to small cakes.

Except for the possibility of count and mass usage of cake, the dictionaries do not confirm the acceptability of the above phrases.

Presumably, the examples analysed in this part show that the name of a dish or a drink, when printed in a menu card, can be treated as a singular unmodified form denoting a portion. Since this form may be mass or count, or even plural, its numeral modification or plural form may deviate from what we consider to be correct phrases. However, these “deviations” not only do not make the phrases nonsensical, but, on the contrary, are the only means to make them meaningful in a given context.

What is also worth noticing is the fact that the reclassification presented in this part allows for true countability, including singular and plural. Namely, the form one beer—jedno piwo is as much reclassified as two beers—dwa piwa, since beer is basically not countable.

Finally, it is the first case in this paper in which one semantic regularity results in more than one kind of phrase in the surface structure: one brandy and peas for one, two brandies and peas for two, etc. This confirms our earlier claim that semantics is here prior to syntax.

4. The final part of the present paper discusses stylistic and semantic consequences of form variance—generally speaking, the variant plurals are overt signs of ambiguity, which in singular can be revealed only by the context.

4.1. The first section of the present part is devoted to the analysis of these nouns which have more than one plural form and the variant forms of which belong to different registers of the language or are stylistically marked for some specific use.

For instance, foreign plurals of English nouns often occur in variation with regular plurals. As it was pointed out by Quirk et al. (1972: 181), the foreign plurals, such as: formules, antennae, appendices, etc., tend to occur in technical usage, whereas the regular ones, such as: formulas, antennae, appendices, etc.,—in everyday speech.

However, when we consult the dictionaries many cases appear to be controversial (e.g. SOED claims the form antennae to be occasional, while The Advanced Learner’s Dictionary rejects it altogether).

In Polish the irregular stylistically marked plural form is to be found in the class of masculine human nouns, such as doktor, robotnik, Francuz, etc., which, having the regular plurals, like: doktory, robotniki, Francuzi, etc., (i.e., according to human declension) can also be used in the derogatory sense in the form doktory, robotniki, Francuzy, (i.e., according to non-human declension). However, not all the nouns have the variant derogatory form, and in these cases the demonstrative adjective remains as the only sign of stylistic marking, e.g., ci malarze—te malarze.
The noun anioł is also a very interesting example from the stylistic point of view; there are three plural forms of anioł: aniołowie — found in religious texts, anieli — emotional, somewhat obsolete, and anioły — used in everyday style.

4.2. The present section is devoted to the problem of nouns having more than one lexical reading when one of these readings requires a different plural form. In these cases the plural form can be interpreted to have the quality of differentiating not only stylistic, but also semantic values, the more so as in all the examples below the singular declension does not have any overt signs of ambiguity.

The English examples are not numerous and they are included in most English grammars. They are: brother — brothers (members of the same family) and brethren (members of the same religious society); penny — pennies (individual coins) and pence (items in British currency); index — indexes (tables of contents, lists of items given at the end of books) and indices (fingertips, markers). Finally, there is a group of animal names (fish, antelope, reindeer, flower, herring) which take the -s ending when they denote different individuals (the fishes of the Baltic Sea) and the -a ending when they stand for hunting quantities (they caught only a few fish).

In Polish such meaningful variants are much more common. Let us consider two examples suggested by J. Tokarski (1973: 99): akt and organ. Akt is usually pluralized to (countable) aktów, but when it stands for official documents, it receives the Latin ending -a (akta), and the numeral modification is rejected. Organ has the plural form organy in biological sense, but organs when it denotes institutions, offices or journals. This distribution of plurals is confirmed by Słownik Ortograficzny and Słownik Poprawnej Polszczyzny, but not by SJP, which gives the form organa only as an obsolete one, and does not quote any examples of this use. Like akt, the form organa seems to be somewhat "repetitive" to accept plurals.

The noun oko has two possible plurals: oczy (the former dual number) — eyes, and oki — eyes of fat on soup, meshes in a net. Ucho has the plural form uszy (also former dual number) in the sense of ears, but ucha when it means "a handle". Interestingly enough, the forms oczy and uszy never occur with ordinary numerals, but with collective ones, as in: dwa oczy, dwa uszy.

The noun król has the plural form królówie (human declension) when it means "male ruler of a state", but króle (non-human declension) when it denotes a playing card with a picture of a king. The entry of król in SJP discusses both readings, but the change of declension and plural form is not en-

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4.3. Finally, we must consider the cases where the plural form of a noun can be used in two or more different meanings. For instance, wszechśwata (wosków) can be used in two or more different meanings.
English: colours can be interpreted in three ways - 1. tints, hues, 2. a flag, 3. colours of a club, regiment, etc.

I found only one example common to Polish and English: ash - popiół denotes a powder remaining after something has burnt. Its plural ashes - popióły either means the same as ash or refers to burnt or cremated remains of the human body.

4.4. This section discusses subject names with -ics ending: mathematics, linguistics, etc.; both English subject names and their Polish equivalents are usually not pluralized. There are several studies, however, which developed more than one system that can bear the name of the study itself and thus created the need for using them in the plural form.

In this sense these terms are usually modified by an adjective, e.g., many-valued logic, modal logic, non-Euclidean geometry, Boolean algebra. The Polish equivalents are analogous except for algebra Boole'a.

Neither Polish nor English dictionaries consider the possibility of such a use: Słownik Powszechnego Polskiego classifies all the three nouns as not having the plural form ("blm"); in SJP only logika is specified in this way.

4.5. The last section in this part is devoted to several miscellaneous cases. There are some nouns, like, for example, fame, which can be used both in singular and in plural without a change of meaning. The same applies to sky - skies, but the plural skies has an additional, metaphorical interpretation - as a synonym of heavens (Polish nieba is used only in this metaphorical sense).

The singular forms of the nouns ryba and książka are sometimes used in a collective sense, as in: ryba dziś bierze or książka polega ma dobrą sławę za granicą.

The following examples illustrate the possibility of using a singular form with collective reference in the phrases concerning doing shopping. Masculine nouns are here used in plural: kupimy ziemniaki, buraki, while feminine nouns in singular: kupimy marchew, pietruszki. The names of fruit, however, are used in plural regardless of gender.

Interesting examples can also be encountered among geographical names, e.g., the form Ameriki denoting North and South America and the Americas - for both continents and Central America considered together; different meanings of India - Indie, India - Indies; the form the Two Chinas often used by journalists to denote China and Taiwan; and, finally, the name of the former kingdom including Naples and Sicily - Królestwo Obuji Sicylki, in English - The Kingdom of Two Sicilies.

Plural nouns in English and Polish

CONCLUSIONS

The general conclusions can be summed up in the following statements:

1. Mass nouns can be used in the plural (but not in the standard sense), when a semantic reclassification, i.e., a partial change in meaning, is involved.

2. As a result of the reclassification we often obtain a new lexical reading of an item, which, however, preserves high degree of semantic similarity. In other cases the field of reference of the item is altered (limited or modified).

3. Semantic reclassification may account for such regularities as: substance - product relation, particularization of general concepts, plurals of mass nouns meaning "kinds", plurals of mass and count nouns denoting portions, etc.

4. Reclassification originates on the semantic level and thus its formal, syntactic aspect reveals many irregularities (possibility of the plural form is not always followed by the use of the a article in singular, nominal modification is often restricted or unacceptable, in many cases the presence of the adjective different - różny is the prerequisite of acceptability, etc.).

5. If the noun has more than one plural form, its plural variants may be stylistically marked or reveal semantic differences within an ambiguous item.

6. The final conclusion is that in certain contexts the plural is an overt sign of semantic reclassification, and not just a grammatical device used to indicate plurality pure and simple.

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