

Non-productive Plural Patterns in English

Darina Lapčiková

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Faculty of Humanities

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doc. Ing. Anežka Lengálová, Ph.D.
děkanka



PhDr. Katarína Nemčoková, Ph.D.
ředitelka ústavu

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ABSTRAKT

Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá analýzou neproduktivních tvarů množných čísel v angličtině. Práce je nejprve zaměřena na podstatná jména, číslo, pravidelné a nepravidelné množné číslo. Cílem následující části je analýza výskytu nepravidelných množných čísel v korpusech, porovnání literatury s korpusem a stanovení existujících množných čísel.

Klíčová slova: podstatné jméno, pravidelné množné číslo, nepravidelné množné číslo, cizí množné číslo

ABSTRACT

This bachelor thesis deals with the analysis of non-productive plural patterns in English. At first, the thesis is focused on nouns, number, regular and irregular plural. The aim of the following part is an analysis of the irregular plurals in the Corpora, a comparison of the literature with the Corpora and a determination of the existing plurals.

Keywords: noun, regular plural, irregular plural, foreign plural

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INTRODUCTION

English distinguishes between two subclasses of variable nouns – those nouns that take a regular plural and those that have an irregular plural. The regular plurals are predictable and they do not cause any difficulties in learning. On the other hand, the irregular plurals are those plurals that are not predictable. They come from Old English or they were borrowed from other languages, and they denote non-productive plural patterns.

The thesis deals with nouns in general, with the regular plurals, their formation, differences in pronunciation and with the irregular plurals. The main focus of this thesis is the research which provides a comprehensive analysis of these non-productive plural patterns. This part begins with an introduction to the analysis describing the process of this research. The analysis also provides an overview of the irregular plurals which are divided into five parts: including those nouns ending in *-f*, with a mutation, the *-en* plural, the zero plural, and the foreign plurals – Latin, Greek and French.

The main aim of this thesis is to analyze the non-productive plural patterns found in English from the British National Corpus, The Corpus of Contemporary American English, the Oxford Dictionary and the Internet, and to compare these patterns with those from grammar books to find whether there are any differences.

1 NOUNS AND THEIR CATEGORIES

In terms of grammar, nouns are one of the parts of speech such as pronouns, adjectives, verbs, adverbs, prepositions, conjunctions and interjections. English distinguishes two kinds of parts of speech. The first one is an open class, which is also called the lexical words denoting meaning, and this class contains nouns, adjectives, verbs and adverbs. The second type is a closed class called also the function words because they have a grammatical function. This class includes conjunctions, prepositions, articles and pronouns. Each of these parts of speech has some typical properties. As regards the grammatical categories of nouns, they are number, gender and case. (Fromkin 2003, 73; Yule 2006, 64)

1.1 Number

English distinguishes two forms of number – singular and plural. Singular relates to the quality of one, while on the other hand plural denotes more than one. English also distinguishes invariable and variable nouns. Invariable nouns do not show any difference between singular and plural, whereas the nouns, which distinguish between singular and plural, are known as variable nouns.

Invariable nouns have two subclasses:

Singular invariable nouns include the uncountable nouns, proper nouns, and nouns ending in *-s* – in *diseases, games and scientific disciplines*. They are used only in the singular such as *music, gold, linguistics and statistics*. In these cases singular verbs follow as you can see in following example [1].

[1] *The statistics demonstrate the frequency of plurals.*

Plural invariable nouns include tools, instruments consisting of two parts, articles of dress such as *pyjamas, people and scissors*. These nouns are used only in the plural and plural verbs follow, see [2]. (Quirk et al. 1985, 297-304)

[2] *Many people work in the public sector.*

According to Quirk et al. (1985), we distinguish two subclasses of variable nouns – nouns with a regular plural where the plural form is predictable from the lexical base by the addition of the ending *-s*, as in [3], and those with an irregular plural where the plural is not predictable, as in [4] and these we have to learn. (Crystal 2003, 200-201; Quirk et al 1985, 297-298)

[3] *cat – cats*

[4] *mouse – mice*

1.2 Regular plurals

1.2.1 Their formation

In English, a word consists of elements, which are called morphemes. According to Yule (2006, 63) “a morpheme is a minimal unit of meaning or grammatical function.” English distinguishes two types of morphemes. The first one is the free morpheme, which can stand alone, and it is also a stem of a word. And the second one is the bound morpheme, which can not stand alone, such as prefixes and suffixes. Speaking of these plurals, the bound morpheme *-s* indicates plurals, as in [5]. (Yule 2006, 63)

[5] *tree + s*

(free morpheme) – (bound morpheme)

(stem) – (suffix)

Regarding these plurals, the bound morpheme *-s* or *-es* can be called an inflectional morpheme. The aim is not to produce a new word but to indicate its plural. As you can see in example [5], the form *trees* is composed of two morphs – a lexical morpheme *tree* and an inflectional morpheme *-s*. (Fromkin 2003, 100)

Nouns such as *mouse*, *woman* and *foot* follow the irregular plurals *mice*, *women*, *feet*. The plural morpheme here is called a zero-morph as you can see that there are no plural morphs *-s* or *-es*. The group of these morphs of the morpheme plural is called an allomorph. (Yule 2006, 66-67)

1.2.2 Their spelling

-es ending with the singular ending in a sibilant, if the singular ends in an *-e*, then this *-e* is deleted as in [6], see following examples.

[6] *bus – buses, match – matches, fox – foxes, flute – flutes*

-ies ending with the singular ending in a consonant and *-y*, as in [7].

[7] *ability – abilities, body – bodies, family – families*

-s ending with the singular ending in a vowel and *-y*, see [8].

[8] *boy – boys, day – days, key – keys*

-s ending with the singular ending in a vowel and *-o*, as in [9].

[9] *embryo – embryos, radio – radios, video – videos*

When the singular ends in a consonant and an *-o*, it can be followed with: *-es*, see [10]; *-s* or *-es*, see [11]; or only *-s*, see [12].

[10] *hero – heroes, potato – potatoes, tomato – tomatoes*

[11] *tornado – tornados/tornadoes, volcano – volcanos/volcanoes* (more frequent),
motto – mottos/mottoes

[12] *piano – pianos, photo – photos, kilo – kilos*

(Huddleston 2002, 1585-1586; Quirk et al. 1985, 304-305)

1.2.3 Their pronunciation

As is mentioned below, the regular plural is formed by the inflection *-s* with 3 different way of pronunciation:

/s/ follows after a voiceless consonant apart from the sibilants, see [13].

[13] *pet – pets, cup – cups, book – books, trip – trips*

/z/ follows after vowels and a voiced consonant, as in [14].

[14] *tree – trees, dog – dogs, headphone – headphones*

/ɪz/ follows after the sibilants */s, z, ʃ, ʒ tʃ/* and */dʒ/*, as in [15].

[15] *horse – horses, church – churches, fridge – fridges* (Biber 1999, 285)

1.3 Irregular plurals

This thesis focuses mainly on the analysis of the irregular plurals, which do not follow the regular patterns. Sometimes the right plural of these nouns is not clear; this is caused by the fact that some nouns have been borrowed from other languages, or because of remnants from the Old English period. According to (articles.chicagotribune.com), Nathan Bierma claims that, “Some words were made plural by changing the middle of the word rather the end, so the singular *ƿot* and plural *ƿet* in Old English became our *foot* and *feet*, and the singular *mys* and plural *mys* became *mouse* and *mice*.”

The irregular plurals are divided into several classes, and each class has its common properties of forming plurals: nouns ending in *-f(e)* (*knife – knives*), mutation (*mouse – mice*), *-en* plural (*child – children*), zero plural (*sheep – sheep*), foreign plurals – Latin (*bacterium – bacteria*), Greek (*criterion – criteria*), French (*beau– beaux, beau*), as you can see in following chapters. (Huddleston, 2002 1587; Quirk et al 1985, 305-312)

2 INTRODUCTION TO THE ANALYSIS

The aim is to compare the non-productive plural patterns with those from grammar books to find whether there are any differences. The subject of this research is data taken from the following books: *The Cambridge grammar of the English language* (Huddleston 2002), *A comprehensive grammar of the English language* (Quirk et al 1985), *Mluvnice současné angličtiny na pozadí češtiny* (Dušková 2012) and the *Longman grammar of spoken and written English* (Biber 1999).

These grammars of English language are compared with the British National Corpus (BNC), The Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA), *Oxford studijní slovník* (Phillips 2010), *Concise Oxford English dictionary* (Stevenson 2011), and with the Internet.

Each chapter of the particular plurals is introduced with a characterization of how these plurals are formed and their patterns. The nouns are usually divided into 3 groups - irregular plural, regular plural or both plurals, on the basis of existing plurals analyzed from the BNC or COCA. The plural forms are written in brackets next to their singular form. If both forms of plurals exist, the more frequent plural is specified. Then the theory from grammar books, the result of the research and the plurals are stated. Also the explanations of the nouns are mentioned on the basis of the Oxford dictionaries - *Concise Oxford English dictionary* and *Oxford studijní slovník*. Sometimes plurals differ in their meanings. In brackets you can see the Czech translation based on *Oxford studijní slovník*.

3 NOUNS ENDING IN -F(E)

Singular nouns ending in *-f(e)* with a voiceless /f/ comprise of:

1. the irregular (voiced) plurals ending in *-ves* with a voiced /v/ and following /z/, as in [16] *leaf – leaves*
2. the regular plurals ending in *-(e)s / fs/*, as in [17] *belief – beliefs*
3. the irregular and the regular patterns together, as in [18] *hoof – hooves/hoofs* (Quirk et al, 1985, 306)

3.1 Irregular plurals *-ves*

Elf (plural: *elves*)

The noun *elf* takes only the voiced plural *elves*.

Calf (plural: *calves*)

The noun *calf* takes the irregular plural *calves*. The meaning is a young cow (*telata*) or a part of the body between the knee and ankle (*lýtka*).

[19] *Some of the young calves are fattened on the farms but many are reared for a few months and then sold for fattening in central or eastern Britain.* (BNC)

[20] *A well-muscled pair of calves and ankles swelled.* (COCA)

Leaf (plurals: *leaves*, exception *Maple Leafs*)

The noun *leaf* takes the irregular plural *leaves*. In the Corpora there also appears the regular plural, *leafs*, in the name of the ice hockey team the Toronto Maple Leafs (*Javorové listy*).

[21] *In autumn leaves are falling down.*

[22] *The Maple Leafs probably are about two 20-goal scorers and a few points short of making the playoffs.* (COCA)

Life (plurals: *lives*, exception *still lifes*)

The noun *life* takes the irregular plural *lives*. The regular plural *lives* appears only in the word *still lifes*, which means the object painting (*zátiší*).

[23] *Their lives were so short.*

[24] *Later she bought two more Cubist still lifes.* (COCA)

Self (plural: *selves*)

The noun *self* has only the irregular plural *selves*.

Wife (plural: *wives*)

The noun *wife* has only the irregular plural *wives*.

[25] *Their second wives were both named Betty.* (COCA)

Wolf (plural: *wolves*)

The noun *wolf* takes only the irregular plural *wolves*.

[26] *IDFG has already identified several zones across the state where wolves are devastating our deer, elk and moose.* (COCA)

3.2 Regular plurals -fs

Belief (plural: *beliefs*)

The noun *belief* takes only the regular plural *beliefs*.

[27] *Not all religions hold similar beliefs toward homosexuality.* (COCA)

Chief (plural: *chiefs*)

The noun *chief* takes only the regular plural *chiefs*.

[28] *The new law is supported by every one of the state's 58 sheriffs, more than 400 police chiefs.* (COCA)

Cliff (plural: *cliffs*)

The singular *cliff* takes only the regular plural *cliffs*.

[29] *Sometimes you're flying so close to these cliffs.* (COCA)

Proof (plural: *proofs*)

The noun *proof* has the regular plural *proofs*.

[30] *It doesn't need any more proofs, one is enough.* (COCA)

3.3 Both plurals *-fs* or *-ves*

Dwarf (plurals: common *dwarfs*, *dwarves*)

The noun *dwarf* takes both plurals – the regular *dwarfs* and the irregular *dwarves*. Based on the Corpora the irregular plural *dwarfs* is more widely accepted in British and also American English.

[31] *The Dwarfs were astonished by the power of the Elf forces.* (BNC)

[32] *Dwarves were well-versed in all magical matters.* (BNC)

Half (plurals: common *halves*, *halfs*)

Based on Biber (1999), the noun *half* takes the voiced plural *halves*. In the Corpora the regular plural *halfs* also appeared a few times.

[33] *The human brain is divided into two halves.*

[34] *Julie said if we win we'll go halfs.* (BNC)

Hoof (plurals: common *hooves*, *hoofs*)

The noun *hoof* takes both the regular plural *hoofs* and the irregular plural *hooves*. The frequency of the irregular plural *hooves* is higher than the regular plural *hoofs*.

[35] *I heard the clicking of hooves.*

[36] *Their hoofs slipped on the ice.* (COCA)

Knife (plurals: common *knives*, *knifes*)

The noun *knife* takes the voiced plural *knives*. In the Corpora the regular plural *knifes* appeared, approximately six times. The usage of the regular plural *knifes* is not common.

[37] *There are five kinds of knives - cake knives, fish knives, knives for salad, knives for meat and knives for fruit.* (COCA)

[38] *He had a set of really good chef's knives.* (COCA)

Loaf (plurals: common *loaves*, *loafs*)

The noun *loaf* takes the irregular plural *loaves*. In the Corpora the regular plural *loafs* also appeared two times, the frequency was very low.

[39] *I would like two loaves of bread please.*

[40] *He shaped the seedy bread into braids and the sweet bread into round loafs.*

Roof (plurals: used *roofs*, *rooves*)

The noun *roof* usually takes the regular plural *roofs*. The irregular plural *rooves* appeared in the Corpora five times, which confirms that the plural *rooves* is not widely accepted in English.

[41] *These houses are so dangerous. Roofs are unsafe, and the floors are gone. (BNC)*

[42] *Leaky rooves, peeling paint, flooding in a hallway, schools that are quite literally falling apart. (COCA)*

Shelf (plurals: common *shelves*, *shelvs*)

The noun *shelf* has the irregular plural *shelves*. The regular plural *shelvs* appeared only four times in COCA. Also the Internet research shows that the frequency of the regular plural *shelvs* is very low.

[43] *New shelves were assembled.*

[44] *We bought new bathroom shelf with 4 glass shelves.*

Scarf (plurals: common *scarves*, *scarfs*)

The noun *scarf* has both the regular plural *scarfs* and the irregular plural *scarves*. The usage of the irregular plural *scarves* dominates while the use of the regular plural *scarfs* is not so common.

[45] *Most recently in 2010, the government repealed a regulation banning women from wearing Islamic head scarves at university. (COCA)*

[46] *We all had scarfs around our hands or gloves on. (COCA)*

Thief (plurals: common *thieves*, *thiefs*)

This noun has the irregular plural *thieves*. In the COCA also the regular plural *thiefs* appeared five times.

[47] *I heard raised voices, strange as thieves.*

Wharf (plurals: common *wharves*, *wharfs*)

This noun *wharf* takes both the irregular plural *wharves* and the regular plural *wharfs*. The irregular plural *wharves* is more widely accepted in contrast to the regular plural *wharfs*.

[48] *Ships headed to the wharves.*

[50] *The noise guided him straight to the wharfs, down on the river side. (BNC)*

4 MUTATION

The plurals of some nouns are formed by the change of a vowel (*woman – women*). According to Huddleston (2002) and Biber (1999), these nouns take only irregular plurals but the analyses of the Corpora and the Internet show that also regular plurals of some of these nouns exist, but their frequency is very low so they are not so much used in everyday language.

4.1 Irregular plurals

Man (plural: *men*)

The noun *man* only has the irregular plural *men*.

[51] *British men work on average five hours more per week than their counterparts in France.* (BNC)

Goose (plural: *geese*)

The noun *goose* takes only the irregular plural *geese*.

[52] *Geese spend a lot of time flying to other places.* (BNC)

Tooth (plural: *teeth*)

The noun *tooth* takes the irregular plural *teeth*.

[53] *Two teeth were knocked out and a third was cracked.* (BNC)

Woman

The noun *woman* takes also only the irregular plural *women*.

[54] *Women have the right to return to their jobs after maternity leave on a full-time or part-time basis.* (COCA)

4.2 Both plurals

Foot (plural: common *feet*, *foots*)

Based on the Corpora and the Internet, the noun *foot* takes the irregular plural *feet*, the regular plural *foots* appeared only three times so this usage of the regular plural *foots* is not accepted.

Louse (plurals: *lice*, *louses*, differences in meaning)

According to Huddleston (2002), the noun *louse* takes only the irregular plural *lice*. The meaning here is a small insect living on the bodies of humans and animals (*vši*). The analysis of the Oxford dictionary and the Corpora show that also the regular plural *louses* exists, and there the meaning is an unpleasant person.

[55] *Lice are parasites, which live on an animal's skin.*

[56] *I had to meet the biggest louses on the planet.*

Mouse (plurals: *mice*, *mouses*, differences in meaning)

The first meaning of the noun *mouse* is a small rodent with a long tail (*myš*), and in this meaning the irregular plural *mice* is used. Regarding the cartoon characters created by Walt Disney, the analysis and research of the Internet shows that the couple is called *Mickey and Minnie Mouse*. Based on the Corpora the plural is *Minnie Mouses* or *Mickey Mouses*. The second meaning is an electronic device, which is used with a computer (*počítačová myš*). In this context, according to the Oxford Dictionaries, both of the plurals – the irregular plural *mice* and the regular plural *mouses* can be used but the frequency of the use of *computer mice* is higher than that of *computer mouses*.

[57] *Mice are commonly used for experimentation.*

[58] *The company Logitech has announced some new laser mice.*

[59] *Those who send in their computer mouses will be rewarded with watches. (BNC)*

5 THE *-EN* PLURALS

Brethren, children and *oxen*, these are nouns which have their plural ending in *-en*.

Brother (plurals: *brothers, brethren*, difference in meaning)

The noun *brother* takes the regular plural *brothers* in the meaning of a man who has the same father or mother as somebody else (*bratr*). But it also takes the irregular plural *brethren* in the context a male member of a religious society (*řádový bratr*). In writing the change is clearly visible but here the pronunciation also differs /breðrən or breðrin/.

[60] *The Church of the Brethren has a long history.*

Child (plural: *children*)

The noun *child* follows only the irregular plural *children*. This plural consists of an added *-r* and the *-en* plural ending. In speech the pronunciation also changes as follows /aɪ/ to /ɪ/.

Ox (plural: *oxen*)

The noun *ox* has the irregular plural *oxen*.

[61] *For the hardest work, like ploughing or dragging felled trees away, oxen were used.* (BNC)

6 ZERO PLURALS

Zero nouns are nouns, which show both the singular and plural forms but where the written form of both is identical, and also the pronunciation is same as you can see in the following example (*a sheep* /ə ʃi:p/– *ten sheep* /ten ʃi:p/). According to Dušková (2012, 40) the zero plural form is used with some nouns such as *counsel*, *offspring* and *means*, and also with animal names, nationality names and nouns indicating the number. (Huddleston 2002, 1588-1589; Quirk et al. 2002, 307-309; Dušková 2012, 39-41)

Counsel (plural: *counsel*)

Based on the analysis the noun *counsel* has only the zero plural *counsel*. It is a synonym for a legal adviser (*právní zástupce*).

[62] *Their counsel recommend accusation.*

Means (plural: *means*)

Also this noun *means* takes only the zero plural form *means*.

Offspring (plurals: common *offspring*, *offsprings*)

According to Dušková (2012), the noun *offspring* takes the zero plural *offspring*, but the analysis of the Corpora show that the regular plural *offsprings* also exists, but as the frequency of use is very low, so in written and spoken English the zero plural *offspring* is more common.

[63] *Offspring should take care of parents.*

[64] *And they are all Eve's offsprings.* (BNC)

6.1 Animal names

In general, the majority of animal names follow the regular plural such as *rabbit* – *rabbits*. The zero plural is used for game and wild animals such as *carp*, *deer*, *salmon*, *pheasant*.

There are also some animals taking the zero plural such as *sheep*, *fish*, *grouse*, *moose*, where the regular plural is also sometimes used to identify individuals and species such as in *the fishes of Baltic Sea*. (Dušková 2012, 40; Quirk et al. 1985, 307)

6.2 Nationality names

Also nationality names ending in *-ese* with Swiss are denoted by the zero plurals, see [].

[65] *a Chinese – two Chinese.* (Dušková 2012, 40)

6.3 Nouns indicating the number

Based on Biber (1999) and Dušková (2012), the zero plural is used if the number is mentioned, as you can see in the following example [66].

[66] *four dozen apples, two hundred people, several thousand sheep, ten million pieces, five ton of iron*

But if the specific number is not mentioned the regular plural is then used.

[67] *hundreds/ thousands/ millions of cars*

Foot and pound both take the zero plural if there is another numeral following them, as you can see in following examples.

[68] *five feet – (pět stop); five foot three – (pět stop a tři palce)*

[69] *ten pounds – (deset liber); ten pound thirty – (deset liber a třicet pencí)*

(Biber 1999, 288-289; Dušková 2012, 40-41)

7 FOREIGN PLURALS

Nouns borrowed from foreign languages including Latin, Greek and French, can take only their foreign plural which then retain one common pattern. Others allow both the foreign and also the regular plural forms, while the rest of these nouns have been Anglicized and have adopted just the regular plural. The usage of these nouns differs – foreign plurals are common for science, technology or other such branches or for a more formal style. In every day language however people prefer to use the regular plurals. (Huddleston 2002, 1590-1591; Quirk et al 1985, 311)

7.1 Latin plurals

Latin distinguishes four common patterns:

bases ending in *-a* /ə/ with plural *-ae* /i:/ or /aɪ/

bases ending in *-us* /əs/ with plural *-i* /aɪ/

bases ending in *-um* /əm/ with plural *-a* /ə/

bases ending in *-ex* or *-ix* with plural *-ices* /ɪsi:z/

7.1.1 Bases ending in *-a*

Words borrowed from Latin ending in *-a* /ə/ in the singular usually change the ending of the base by using the plural *-ae*, the usual pronunciation here is /i:/ but in the cases of *algae* and *formulae* it is /aɪ/. (Huddleston 2002, 1591)

Irregular plurals

Alga (plural: *algae*)

The noun *alga* has just its Latin plural – *algae*. The meaning is very simple plants, such as seaweed, that have no leaves, stems or roots (*řasy, chaluhy*).

Larva (plural: *larvae*)

The noun *larva* also has only the Latin plural – *larvae*.

[70] *Larvae hatch in two to three days - or two to three months if the weather is not right.* (COCA)

Regular plurals

Area (plural: *areas*)

The noun *area* takes just the regular plural *areas*. The frequency is very high.

Arena (plural: *arenas*)

The noun *arena* takes only the regular English plural *arenas*. The irregular plural *arenae* appeared in the Corpora only three times.

Dilemma (plural: *dilemmas*)

The noun *dilemma* follows only the regular plural form *dilemmas*.

[71] *During our life we have to manage a lot of dilemmas.*

Diploma (plural: *diplomas*)

The noun *diploma* takes only the regular plural *diplomas*.

[72] *Polytechnics will be able to call themselves universities and to award degrees and diplomas.* (BNC)

Drama (plural: *dramas* or mass noun *drama*)

The noun *drama* follows the regular plural form *dramas*. According to the Corpora the usage of the plural *dramas* is quite common. The noun *drama* can be also regarded as mass noun.

Encyclopedia (plural: *encyclopedias*)

An *encyclopedia* has only the regular plural *encyclopedias*. Especially in British English *encyclopedia* can be also spelled *encyclopaedia* with an *-ae-*. The Oxford Dictionaries claims that this is less common but in comparison with the BNC the frequency of usage of these plurals *encyclopedias*, *encyclopaedias* is nowadays almost similar.

[73] *Just look at the catalogues, encyclopedias and journals of industrial chemistry.*
(BNC)

Guerrilla (plural: *guerrillas*)

The noun *guerrilla* can also be spelled with one -r- *guerilla* but it is less common, and it takes only the English plural *guerrillas*. The meaning is a member of a small independent group taking part in irregular fighting (*partyzán*).

Replica (plural: *replicas*)

The noun *replica* follows the English plural form *replicas*.

[74] *Replicas of paintings are worth less.*

Both plurals

Antenna (plurals: *antennae*, *antennas*, differences in meaning)

The noun *antenna* can have both plurals – the foreign *antennae* and the regular *antennas*. The meaning is in this case different. The plural *antennae* denotes the sensory organs on the heads of insects or animals (*tykadla*) and also the metal equipment for receiving or sending radio and television signals (*antény*). While the plural *antennas* refers only to metal equipment (*antény*). If we want to use the word (*antény*) we can choose from both plurals but according to the BNC the frequency of *antennas* is nowadays higher than *antennae*.

[75] *Antennae of insects are their basic sensory organs.*

[76] *Television antennas are no longer in use.*

[77] *The roof bristled with antennae, of all shapes and sizes, tuned to a variety of radio signals and wavebands. (BNC)*

Formula (plurals: *formulae*, more used *formulas*)

The noun *formula* has both plurals – the Latin *formulae* and the regular *formulas*. If we want to use this noun in the plural we prefer the regular one *formulas* because according to the BNC the usage of *formulae* has disappeared since the 1980's. On the other hand in American English the Latin plural *formulae* still exists, but the frequency of the usage of the regular plural *formulas* is higher.

Persona (plurals: *personae*, *personas*)

The noun *persona* takes both plurals – the Latin *personae* and the regular *personas*. Based on the BNC and COCA, the frequency of usage of these plurals is almost similar. But according to dictionaries the word *personas* is more formal.

7.1.2 Bases ending in *-us*

The base of the Latin singular *-us* / əs/ takes the ending *-i* in the plural and the pronunciation is /aɪ/. There are also plurals which have more than one variant of pronunciation in their Latin form – *bacilli*, *stimuli*, *cacti*, *foci*, *fungi* and *nuclei* with either /aɪ/ or /i:/. (Huddleston 2002, 1591)

Irregular plurals

Alumnus (plural: *alumni*)

The noun *alumnus* follows only Latin plural form *alumni*. The meaning is a former male student of a school, college or university (*absolvent školy*). It is more used especially in American English, which confirmed by its higher frequency in the COCA.

Bacillus (plural: *bacilli*)

The noun *bacillus* has only the Latin plural *bacilli*.

[78] *Bacilli can cause several diseases.*

Locus (plural: *loci*)

The noun *locus* has only the Latin plural *loci*. This term appears mostly in the context of science and technology. The meaning is the exact place where something happens or which is thought to be the center of something (*středisko*, *místo*).

Nucleus (plural: *nuclei*)

According to Dušková (2012) and Huddleston (2002), the noun *nucleus* has both plurals, the Latin form *nuclei* and the regular plural *nucleuses*, but in comparison with the corpus and dictionaries, the noun *nucleus* takes only the Latin plural *nuclei*. The term is used in branches of science such as physics, biology and astronomy.

[79] *The nuclei consist of particles called protons and neutrons.*

Stimulus (plural: *stimuli*)

The noun *stimulus* uses only the Latin plural *stimuli*. In the COCA the regular English plural *stimuluses* appeared only once.

[80] *The two stimuli were presented simultaneously.* (BNC)

Regular plurals

Bonus (plural: *bonuses*)

The noun *bonus* takes only the regular plural *bonuses*.

Foetus (plural: *foetuses*)

Based on the Oxford Dictionaries in British English *foetus* is nontechnical, while on the contrary, American English prefers the spelling *fetus* and the plural *fetuses*. This noun takes only the regular English plural *foetuses* and it means an unborn offspring of a mammal or human, about eight weeks after its conception (*plod, zárodek*). In the COCA the Latin plural *foeti* appeared only once.

Prospectus (plural: *prospectuses*)

The noun *prospectus* has the regular plural form *prospectuses*. The meaning is a book or printed document that mostly gives information about a school, college or about a company's shares before they are offered for sale (*školní nebo firemní prospekt, informační leták*). The Latin plural **prospecti* did not appear in the Corpora.

Status (plural: *statuses*)

The noun *status* takes only the regular plural *statuses*.

[81] *In reality women's statuses are much more complicated.* (COCA)

Both plurals

Apparatus (plurals: *apparati*, more used *apparatuses*)

According to Huddleston (2002), the noun *apparatus* has just the regular plural *apparatuses* but in comparison with the corpus also the Latin plural *apparati* exists, but it is not so common and its frequency is low.

[82] *There are also 'ideological state apparatuses', such as the education system, religion and the family.* (BNC)

Cactus (plurals: more used *cacti*, *cactuses*)

The noun *cactus* takes both plurals – the Latin plural *cacti* and the regular plural *cactuses*. In American English according to the Corpus, both plurals *cacti* and *cactuses* are common in current use, so this means that we can choose both forms, but the Latin plural *cacti* is more preferred to the regular plural *cactuses*. On the other hand, British English uses mainly the Latin plural *cacti*.

Focus (plurals: more used *foci*, *focuses*)

The noun *focus* takes both plurals – the Latin plural *foci* and the regular plural *focuses*. The meaning is the center of interest or activity (*ohnisko*). Both plurals are possible but *foci* is more common in everyday speech.

[83] *Scientists have studied several foci of earthquakes.*

Fungus (plurals: more used *fungi*, *funguses*)

The noun *fungus* also takes both plurals – the Latin plural *fungi* and the regular English plural *funguses*. The meaning is a group of organisms feeding on organic matter, including yeast, mushrooms, and toadstools (*houba*, *plíseň*). In American and British English the Latin plural *fungi* is mainly the most common.

[84] *Fungi are also being used to produce mycoproteins.* (BNC)

Hippopotamus (plurals: *hippopotami*, more used *hippopotamuses*)

This noun has both the Latin plural *hippopotami* and the regular English plural form *hippopotamuses*. The frequency of usage of these plurals is quite low but the regular English plural *hippopotamuses* is said to be used more. According to the dictionaries the informal form of the noun is *hippo* and the regular plural *hippos*, which is preferred for every day language use.

Radius (plurals: more used *radii*, *radius*)

Dušková (2012) and Huddleston (2002) claim, that the noun *radius* has also both plurals, the Latin form *radii* and the regular English plural *radiuses*, but this is in contrary to the Corpus analysis. The meaning is a line from the center to the circumference of a circle (*poloměr*, *rádius*). Based on the BNC in British English the only plural is the Latin form

radii. However according to the COCA in American English we can use both plurals *radius*, *radii* but the frequency of the Latin *radii* is noticeably higher.

Syllabus (plurals: more used *syllabi* in AmE, more used *syllabuses* in BrE)

The noun *syllabus* takes both the Latin plural *syllabi* and the regular English *syllabuses*. There are some differences between usage in British and American English, both forms *syllabi* and *syllabuses* are acceptable but in British English the regular plural *syllabuses* is more preferred, on the other hand in American English it is the reversal, as here the usage of the Latin plural *syllabi* is more frequent.

[85] *On the school website you will find the syllabi.*

Terminus (plurals: more used *termini*, *terminuses*)

According to Huddleston (2002), the noun *terminus* can have both plurals, the Latin *termini* and the regular *terminuses*. In comparison with the Corpus in British English both plurals are possible but the Latin *termini* is more common. In American English only the Latin plural *termini* is used. The meaning is a final point in space or time (*konec*) and mostly in British English the end of a railroad or other transportation route (*konečná stanice*).

Thesaurus (plurals: more used *thesauri* in BrE, more used *thesauruses* in AmE)

The noun *thesaurus* can have both plurals, the Latin *thesauri* and the regular *thesauruses*. The meaning is – a book that lists words in groups of synonyms and related concepts (*tezaurus* or *slovník synonym*). Based on the evidence in British English the Latin plural *thesauri* is more frequent while in American English the regular *thesauruses* is more preferred.

Uterus (plurals: *uteri*, *uteruses*)

The noun *uterus* takes both plurals, the Latin *uteri* and the regular *uteruses*. The meaning is the organ in women and female animals in which babies develop before they are born (*děloha*). The frequency of usage of both plurals *uteri*, *uteruses* is almost similar in both varieties of English.

Virus (plural: *viruses*, *virii* only in the context of computers)

The noun *virus* has only the regular plural *viruses*. The meaning is an infective agent that causes infectious diseases in people, animals and plants (*virý*) and it can also mean a piece of code which can destroy data (*počítačové viry*). In the context of computer software on the basis of the Internet research that I analyzed, also the plural *virii* can be used but this form does not come from its Latin origin.

[86] *Viruses can be seen only with a microscope.*

[87] *Our office computer was inflected with viruses/virii and we lost important data.*

Exceptions

Most English words ending in *-us* are from Latin and their plurals are made by the common patterns as have been mentioned previously. But in English there are also the words with ending *-us* that look like Latin words, but they do not belong etymologically to this group. (Huddleston 2002, 1591)

Corpus (plurals: more used *corpora*, *corpuses*)

The noun *corpus* follows both plural forms – the Latin *corpora* and the regular English *corpuses*. If we compare the frequency of these plurals, the Latin plural *corpora* dominates.

[88] *This thesis deals with the analysis of the corpora.*

[89] *Leech and Beale (1984) provide an overview of their applications in English language research and of the computerized corpuses which are available. (BNC)*

Genus (plural: *genera*)

This noun takes the regular plural *genera*. The meaning is used in biology and it means a group into which animals, plants with similar characteristics are divided (*rod, druh*).

[90] *However, only viruses from 3 genera have been firmly established. (BNC)*

Octopus (plurals: *octopi*, more used *octopuses*)

The noun *octopus* takes both plurals – the Latin plural *octopi* and the regular English *octopuses*. Both plurals are used but the regular plural *octopuses* is more frequent.

7.1.3 Bases ending in *-um*

The base in the ending in *-um* /əʊm/ is changed in the plural by *-a* /ə/. (Huddleston 2002, 1592)

Irregular plurals

Bacterium (plural: *bacteria*)

The noun *bacterium* follows only the Latin plural form *bacteria*. The form **bacteriums* did not appear in the Corpora.

[91] *Bacteria survive heat for a short time.* (BNC)

Datum (plural: *data*)

This noun takes only the Latin plural *data*. Based on the Oxford Dictionaries the plural *data* in its technical meaning takes a plural verb but in its modern use the word *data* is considered as a singular mass noun and hence takes a singular verb.

[92] *Data is analyzed by time perspective.*

Regular plurals

Album (plural: *albums*)

The noun *album* follows only regular plural form *albums*.

Asylum (plural: *asylums*)

The noun *asylum* also takes the regular plural *asylums*.

Museum (plural: *museums*)

The noun *museum* follows only regular plural form *museums*. The Latin plural **musea* did not appear in the Corpora.

Both plurals

Addendum (plural: more used *addenda*, *addendums*)

According to Dušková (2012) and Huddleston (2002), the noun *addendum* has only the Latin plural *addenda* but in comparison to the Corpora, both plurals the Latin *addenda* and also the regular English plural *addendums* exist. The meaning is – additional material

added at the end of a book or other publication (*dodatek or příloha na konci knihy*). The frequency of usage of the Latin plural *addenda* however is higher.

[93] *The addenda consist of supporting evidence for the ideas put forward in the body of the report.* (BNC)

Aquarium (plurals: more used *aquaria* in BrE, more used *aquariums* in AmE)

The noun *aquarium* can take both forms of plurals – the Latin *aquaria* and the regular English *aquariums*. British English prefers the Latin plural *aquaria* while on the other hand American English uses the regular plural *aquariums* more frequently.

Curriculum (plurals: more used *curricula, curriculum*s)

The noun *curriculum* takes both plurals - the Latin plural *curricula* and the regular plural *curriculum*s. Nowadays the usage of the Latin plural *curricula* is said to be higher than the regular plural *curriculum*s.

Forum (plurals: *fora*, more used *forums*)

As stated in Huddleston (2002), the noun *forum* follows only regular plural form *forums*, and this is true but only in British English. Based on the analysis of the COCA it is obvious that in American English both plurals the Latin *fora* and the regular *forums* are possible, but the regular *forums* is more frequent.

[94] *Several public forums were held to allow community members to voice their opinions.* (COCA)

[95] *There are other fora for information and for taking decisions.* (COCA)

Mausoleum (plurals: *mausolea*, more used *mausoleums*)

In British English the noun *mausoleum* follows both plural forms, the Latin plural *mausolea* and the regular plural *mausoleums* which is more common so we would prefer the regular plural *mausoleums*. On the other hand in American English is not possible to use *mausolea*, only *mausoleums* are accepted.

Maximum (plurals: more used *maxima, maximum*s)

According to Dušková (2012), this noun has only the Latin plural *maxima*. However Huddleston (2002) claims both plurals are possible, *maxima* and *maximum*s. Based on the

corpus the noun *maximum* also takes both plurals – the Latin plural *maxima* and the regular English *maximums*. If we compare the usage of these two plurals the frequency of the Latin plural *maxima* is higher.

Medium (plurals: *media*, *mediums*, differences in meaning)

The noun *medium* has two plurals – the Latin plural *media* and the regular *mediums*. The meaning of these plurals is different and we use them in several contexts. The Latin plural *media* is in most cases used in reference to a means of communication, in science or in art, so the Latin plural *media* is used when we refer to a way of communicating information, e.g. *audio-visual media* (*prostředky*). It is also used for sources of information and news such as newspapers, magazines, radio and television (*hromadné sdělovací prostředky*). In the context where *media* relates to mass communication, it is regarded as a singular mass noun, and hence we can use a singular verb. In science it refers to the intervening substance through which sensory impressions are conveyed or physical forces are transmitted (*média*) and in art to the material or form used by an artist, composer, or writer (*média*). The regular plural *mediums* is mostly used when we talk about its meaning as a person claiming to be in contact with the spirits of the dead, or to communicate between the dead and the living.

[96] *Mass media often criticizes the political situation.*

Millennium (plurals: more used *millennia*, *millenniums*)

The noun *millennium* takes both plurals the Latin *millennia* and the regular English *millenniums*. If we compare the frequency of usage, the Latin form *millennia* is nowadays more usual and numerous.

[97] *Archaeologists discovered items that are several millennia old.*

Minimum (plurals: more used *minima* in BrE, more used *minimums* in AmE)

As reported by Dušková (2012), the noun *minimum* follows only the Latin plural form *minima* but in comparison with the Corpora, both plurals – the Latin *minima* and the regular *minimums* are possible. In British English the Latin form *minima* is preferred, but on the other hand in American English more common is the regular English form *minimums*.

[98] *It can also be seen that the B I minima are more sharply defined than the B II.*

(BNC)

[99] *Subsequent investment minimums are usually lower.* (COCA)

Podium (plurals: *podia*, more used *podiums*)

The noun *podium* takes both plurals the Latin form *podia* and the regular English *podiums*. In British English neither one of the plurals is very often used, so the frequency is very low. In American English the frequency is also quite low but the regular English plural *podiums* is more common than the Latin *podia*.

Referendum (plurals: *referenda*, more used *referendums*)

The noun *referendum* takes both plurals the Latin *referenda* and the regular English *referendums*. After a comparison of these two plurals, based on their use in the Corpora, the regular English plural *referendums* mostly dominates here.

Spectrum (plurals: more used *spectra*, *spectrums*)

The noun *spectrum* takes both plural forms – the Latin *spectra* and the regular form *spectrums*. In current language use the Latin plural *spectra* largely dominates.

[100] *They offer diverse spectra of products.*

Stadium (plurals: *stadia*, more used *stadiums*)

The noun *stadium* also belongs to the class with both plurals – the Latin *stadia* and the regular English *stadiums*. The frequency of using the regular plural *stadiums* is higher.

Symposium (plurals: more used *symposia*, *symposiums*)

The noun *symposium* follows both plurals forms – the Latin *symposia* and the regular English *symposiums*. If we compare the frequency of usage based on the Corpora we can claim that usage of the Latin plural *symposia* prevails.

[101] *The symposia have gathered roughly three hundred people a year at several venues around the United States.* (COCA)

Ultimatum (plurals: *ultimata*, more used *ultimatums*)

The noun *ultimatum* has both plurals: the Latin *ultimata* and the regular English *ultimatums*. If we compare the frequency of usage of these two plurals we can see that the regular plural *ultimatums* is more common.

[102] *In these situations ultimatums are just part of the negotiation process.* (COCA)

7.1.4 Bases ending in *-ex* or *-ix*

These Latin nouns ending in *-ex* or *-ix* are replaced by the ending *-ices* and have the pronunciation /ɪsiːz/. These nouns either take both the Latin and regular plural or they only have the regular one. (Huddleston 2002, 1592)

Both plurals

Appendix (plural: *appendices*, *appendixes*, differences in meaning)

The noun *appendix* has both plurals the Latin *appendices* and the regular English *appendixes*. As stated in Huddleston (2002) and Dušková (2012), the meanings of these plurals are totally different, and according to them the Latin plural *appendices* is used for the meaning of addition sections at the end of a book or document (*dodatky*), and the regular plural *appendixes* is used in anatomy for a part of body (*slepé střevo*). Based on an analysis of the Corpora the singular *appendix* can be used for both meanings – (*dodatek* or *slepé střevo*), but the irregular plural *appendices* and the regular plural *appendixes* refer only to the additions (*dodatky*).

[103] *Two appendices have also been added.* (COCA)

[104] *Appendixes contain detailed information that would be distracting in the main body of the manuscript.* (COCA)

Index (plural: *indices*, *indexes*, differences in meaning)

The noun *index* takes both plurals – the Latin *indices* and the regular English *indexes*. The meanings however are different. While the irregular plural *indices* means a sign or a measure of something (*ukazatel*, *koeficient*), the regular plural *indexes* has two meanings: the first one is a list of names or topics which are referred to in a book (*rejstřík*, *seznam*, and the second meaning is a sign or a measure of something (*ukazatel*, *koeficient*). Basically, for the latter (*ukazatel*, *koeficient*) we can use both plurals – the irregular *indices* or the regular plural *indexes*, but based on the Corpora the frequency of the irregular plural *indices* in this context is higher.

[105] *Indexes show that the unemployment rate in the Czech Republic is 8 percent.*

[106] *There are indexes to help you find particular topics.* (BNC)

[107] *General indices of health are among the worst in the world, ranking with such countries as Bangladesh and Haiti.* (BNC)

7.2 Greek plurals

The Greek plurals distinguish between these two common patterns

Bases ending in *-is* /ɪs/ with the plural *-es* /ɪz/

Bases ending in *-on*, the pronunciation differs mostly between /ən/, /ɒn/, /(ə)n/ with plural *-a* usually with pronunciation /ə/ (Huddleston 2002, 1592-1593)

7.2.1 Bases ending in *-is*

Most of the Greek nouns ending in *-is* change into their plural form by using the ending *-es*, whereas the rest of these nouns follow the regular plural form by adding *-es* after *-is*. (Huddleston 2002, 1593)

Irregular plurals

Analysis (plural: *analyses*)

The noun *analysis* takes only the Greek plural *analyses*.

Antithesis (plural: *antitheses*)

The noun *antithesis* also takes only the Greek plural *antitheses*. The frequency of these nouns is quite low.

Basis (plural: *bases*)

The noun *basis* has only the irregular plural *bases*.

Crisis (plural: *crises*)

The noun *crisis* takes the Greek plural *crises*.

[108] *The financial crises were caused by several factors.*

Diagnosis (plural: *diagnoses*)

The noun *diagnosis* has also only the Greek plural *diagnoses*.

Ellipsis (plural: *ellipses*)

The noun *ellipsis* has only the Greek plural form *ellipses*.

Emphasis (plural: *emphases*)

The noun *emphasis* has only the Greek plural *emphases*. The meaning is the placing of stress on some words during speaking (*přívuk*) or it can be regarded as a mass noun *emphasis* with the meaning – the importance which is given to something (*důraz*).

[109] *The emphases of the program are to fight stereotypes about engineering careers.*
(COCA)

Genesis (plural: *geneses*, mostly singular)

According to Huddleston (2002), the noun *genesis* takes the Greek plural *geneses*. Based on the corpora the frequency of the plural *geneses* is very low and the dictionaries claim that this noun is used mostly in the singular *genesis*.

[110] *The scientists have been studying the genesis of the world for a hundred years.*

Hypothesis (plural: *hypotheses*)

The noun *hypothesis* takes the Greek plural *hypotheses*.

Metamorphosis (plural: *metamorphoses*)

This noun takes the Greek plural *metamorphoses*.

Neurosis (plural: *neuroses*)

The singular *neurosis* has the Greek irregular plural *neuroses*.

Oasis (plural: *oases*)

The noun *oasis* takes the irregular plural *oases*.

Paralysis (plural: *paralyses*, mostly singular *paralysis* is used)

As stated in Huddleston (2002), this noun *paralysis* takes the Greek plural *paralyses* whereas according to the Corpora the plural *paralyses* is not so common. Based on the dictionaries this noun is used mostly in the singular or as the mass noun *paralysis*.

[111] *Death occurs in less than a minute, due to paralysis of the respiratory muscles.*
(BNC)

Parenthesis (plural: *parentheses*)

The noun *parenthesis* takes only the Greek plural *parentheses*.

[112] *In parentheses you can see the Czech translation.*

Prognosis (plural: *prognoses*)

The noun *prognosis* takes the irregular plural *prognoses*.

[113] *What are the prognoses of success?* (BNC)

Psychosis (plural: *psychoses*)

This noun *psychosis* takes the irregular plural *psychoses*.

[114] *If the functional psychoses are not ordinary brain diseases, then what are they?*
(BNC)

Synopsis (plural: *synopses*)

The noun *synopsis* has the Greek plural *synopses*. In the COCA the regular plural *synopsises* appeared only once.

[115] *Here are synopses of the new shows, in order of premiere dates.* (COCA)

Synthesis (plural: *syntheses*)

The noun *synthesis* takes the Greek plural *syntheses*.

[116] *Syntheses are processes that are used in chemistry.*

Thesis (plural: *theses*)

The noun *thesis* takes only the irregular plural *theses*.

Thrombosis (plural: mostly the singular *thrombosis* is used)

As stated in Huddleston (2002) and in the Oxford Dictionary the noun *thrombosis* takes the Greek plural *thromboses* but based on the corpora the plural of the noun *thrombosis* is not used. The Greek plural *thromboses* appeared only once in the COCA and in the BNC the plural *thromboses* did not even exist.

Regular plurals

Iris (plural: *irises*)

The noun *iris* has only the regular plural *irises*.

Metropolis (plural: more used *metropolises*, *metropoles*)

As was mentioned previously, the Greek nouns with their bases ending in *-is* follow either the Greek or the regular English plural. Based on the Huddleston, the noun *metropolis* follows the regular plural form of *metropolises*. However according to the Corpora also the Greek plural form *metropoles* exists. The frequency of the regular plural *metropolises* is higher though.

[117] *Although many German collectors buy in a higher range, they do so in metropolises like New York and London.* (BNC)

Pelvis (plural: *pelves*, more used *pelvises*)

Based on the Oxford Dictionary, the irregular *pelves* and the regular *pelvises* plurals exist whereas according to Huddleston (2002), the singular takes only the regular English plural *pelvises*. The analysis of the Corpora showed that in British English both forms of plurals *pelves* or *pelvises* are possible, but on the other hand in American English only the regular plural *pelvises* is used. The meaning is a set of bones which connect the spine and legs (*pánve*).

7.2.2 Bases ending in *-on*

The Greek plurals change the ending *-on* to *-a*. These plurals either follow the Greek plural form or the regular plural, or they take both the Greek and regular English together.

Irregular plurals

Criterion (plural: *criteria*)

The noun *criterion* takes only the Greek plural *criteria*. The regular plural *criteriae* appeared only twice in the Corpora.

[118] *If you want to work as a nurse you have to meet several criteria.*

Phenomenon (plural: more used *phenomena*, *phenomenons*)

According to Huddleston (2002) and Dušková (2012), the noun *phenomenon* takes the Greek plural *phenomena*, the analysis of the COCA shows that also the regular plural *phenomenons* can be used but the frequency is low.

[119] *All phenomena have natural causes.* (COCA)

Regular plural

Electron (plural: *electrons*)

The noun *electron* takes only the regular plural *electrons*.

Neutron (plural: *neutrons*)

The noun *neutron* has the regular plural *neutrons*.

Proton (plural: *protons*)

The noun *proton* also takes the regular plural *protons*.

Both plurals

Automaton

The noun *automaton* can take both plurals – the irregular *automata* and the regular *automatons*. The meaning is a machine which can behave like a person (*robot*). The frequency of the Greek plural *automata* is higher.

7.3 French plurals

The French plurals distinguish between two common patterns:

The bases ending in *-eau* or *-ieu* with the plural *-s* or *-x* and with the pronunciation /z/.

And the bases ending in *-s* with the base plurals ending in *-s*. So here the base is the same in the singular and the plural, only the pronunciation differs in the plural with a /z/.

7.3.1 Bases ending in *-eau* or *-ieu*

The singular follows the irregular plural form ending in *-x* or the regular plural ending in *-s* or both the irregular and regular together. The frequency of these two plurals differs. (Dušková, 2012, 42)

Both plurals

Beau (plural: more used *beaux*, *beaus*)

The noun *beau* takes both the irregular plural *beaux* and also the regular plural *beaus*. The meaning is a male admirer (*švihák*). The frequency of the irregular plural *beaux* is higher.

Bureau (plural: in BrE more used *bureaux*, in AmE more used *bureaus*)

The noun *bureau* takes both the plural irregular *bureaux* and the regular plural *bureaus*. The meaning is a special table, office or department (*stůl, kancelář, oddělení*). Regarding the usage of these plurals, the irregular plural *bureaux* is more common in the BNC, while on the other hand in American English the regular plural *bureaus* is more frequent.

[120] *All these Bureaux are required to conform with national standards in their operation.* (BNC)

[121] *Government bureaus were responsible for geomantic modification of the landscape.* (COCA)

Chateau (plural: more used *chateaux*, *chateaus*)

As stated in Dušková, the noun *chateau* takes the irregular plural *chateaux*. The Oxford Dictionaries claims that in British English the noun *chateau* takes both plurals *chateaux*, *chateaus* and in American English the irregular plural *chateaux* is used. In conclusion, the analysis of the Corpora shows that in British English only the irregular plural *chateaux* is possible whereas in American English along with the irregular plural *chateaux* also the regular plural *chateaus* can be used. Nevertheless, the frequency of the irregular plural *chateaux* is higher.

Plateau (plural: in BrE more used *plateaux*, in AmE more used *plateaus*)

The noun *plateau* has the irregular plural *plateaux* and the regular plural *plateaus*. The meaning is an area with a high ground level (*náhorní plošina*). In British English the irregular plural *plateaux* is preferred, but on the other hand in American English the regular plural *plateaus* dominates.

[122] *Efficiency plateaux are still a long way from becoming a feature of Southern energy economics.* (BNC)

[123] *As these plateaus are more buoyant than normal oceanic crust they would tend to resist subduction.* (COCA)

Tableau (plural: more used *tableaux*, *tableaus*)

Based on Dušková (2012), the noun *tableau* takes the irregular plural *tableaux*. The Oxford dictionaries and the analysis of the Corpora coincide and agree that also the regular plural *tableaus* is possible but the frequency is low. The meaning is some actors who show the scene or some event (*živý obraz*).

Adieu (plural: in BrE only *adieux*, in AmE *adieux* or *adieus*)

In agreement with Dušková (2012), who claims that both the plurals *adieux* and *adieus* are possible, the noun *adieu* takes both plurals in American English. While in British English only the irregular plural *adieux* appeared.

Milieu (plural: in BrE *milieux*, in AmE *milieus*)

The noun *milieu* takes the irregular plural *milieux* and the regular plural *milieus*. The irregular plural *milieux* is said to be more used in British English, whereas on the other hand the regular plural *milieus* is preferred in American English. The meaning is a social environment (*společenské prostředí*).

Base plurals

Faux pas (plural: *faux pas*)

The singular *faux pas* has the plural *faux pas*.

Rendezvous (plural: *rendezvous*)

According to Dušková (2012), this noun takes the base plural. In the COCA the irregular plural *rendezvouses* appeared only once.

CONCLUSION

The beginning of the thesis was focused on the introduction of nouns and their categories such as number - singular and plural, regular plurals and their formation, differences in spelling and pronunciation, and also the irregular plurals. The main aim of the following part of the thesis was to analyze these non-productive plural patterns found in English from the British National Corpus, the Corpus of Contemporary American English, the Oxford Dictionary and the Internet, and to compare these patterns with those from grammar books to find out whether there are any differences and to define the existing plurals.

According to the theory from these grammar books, nouns can have an irregular plural, a regular plural, or both plurals. The analysis of the Corpora showed that along with the irregular plurals, also the regular plurals of some nouns can exist and vice versa. As you could see in the previous chapters, the frequency of usage of regular and irregular plurals was also compared and the more frequent plural was stated. In some cases there are also differences between the usage of plurals in British and American English. The point is that in several cases, if the Latin or French noun has both plurals, British English more often prefers the irregular plural, while on the other hand in American English the regular plural of these nouns is more frequent. The analysis also showed that the meaning of the regular plural and irregular plural of one noun can be totally different.

To summarize: these findings confirm that the theory from grammar books which have been written over many different years do not always agree with the Corpora or the Internet.

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