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Oscillation of plural forms in English nouns

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I confirm that this thesis is my own work written solely using the sources and literature properly quoted and acknowledged as works cited.

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Poděkování

V první řadě bych ráda poděkovala vedoucímu mé bakalářské práce Mgr. Petru Kosovi, PhD. za odborné a profesionální vedení a trpělivost při psaní této práce. Dále bych chtěla poděkovat mým spolužačkám za obrovskou podporu v těchto letech studia a v neposlední řadě mé rodině, že to se mnou psychicky zvládli.

Annotation

Some English nouns borrowed from other languages retain the foreign (irregular) plural form, while a definite one is possible. Grammar books merely note this possible oscillation in plural formation but do not indicate which form prevails in the present language or to what extent the plural form depends on the context and genre of speech.

Thus, this thesis will analyze the use of plural forms in contemporary language for selected nouns using corpus tools and evaluate the resulting tendencies.

The thesis will include a search for how grammar handbooks describe the topic, and, on this basis, this thesis will define a sample of nouns for subsequent analysis. My will is to retrieve individual nouns from the sample from a synchronic English corpus and determine the frequencies of each form, depending on the genre of the source. I will then evaluate the resulting tendencies.

Key words

Morphology, regular noun, irregular noun, oscillation, corpus analysis

Anotace

Některá anglická podstatná jména přejatá z jiných jazyků si zachovávají cizí (nepravidelný) tvar množného čísla, přičemž je možný i tvar určitý. Gramatické příručky tuto možnou oscilaci v tvoření množného čísla pouze konstatují, ale neuvádějí, která forma v současném jazyce převažuje, ani do jaké míry je forma množného čísla závislá na kontextu a žánru řeči.

Tato práce tedy bude analyzovat užívání tvarů množného čísla v současném jazyce u vybraných podstatných jmen pomocí korpusových nástrojů a vyhodnotí výsledné tendence.

Součástí práce bude rešerše toho, jak toto téma popisují gramatické příručky, a na základě toho tato práce vymezí vzorek podstatných jmen pro následnou analýzu. Mou vůlí bude získat jednotlivá podstatná jména ze vzorku ze synchronního anglického korpusu a určit četnosti jednotlivých tvarů v závislosti na žánru pramene. Výsledné tendence pak vyhodnotím.

Klíčová slova

Morfologie, pravidelné podstatné jméno, nepravidelné podstatné jméno, oscilace, korpusová analýza

Content

Introduction

The main topic of my bachelor thesis is the analysis and evaluation of plural nouns taken from foreign languages such as Latin, Greek, and French.

For nouns, plurals are formed using the regular or irregular form. Talking about nouns of foreign origin, which are the main interest of my work, in this case, the plural form is formed in three ways; regular, and irregular, in some cases both forms can be used, which is the main aim of my work.

In the case where both forms can be used for nouns, I will mainly be concerned with which form prevails in the current language and how the adopted words use both plural forms depending on the textual genre and the language's geographical variation.

In order to determine to what extent adopted nouns use the regular form, the irregular form, or both forms, I will use the grammar guides of Libuše Dušková (1994) and Randolph Quirk (1988) whose results I will review in the Corpus of Contemporary American English and the British National Corpus, which illustrate regional differences in word usage in English.
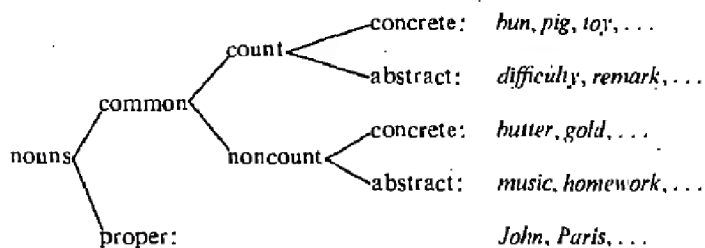
I will examine the occurrence of plural forms on two levels, spoken and written language, in order to obtain the most objective results. I will then compare the numerical and percentage results obtained with each other in separate tables.

Thus, the aim of my thesis is to analyze nouns adopted from foreign languages plural in regular or irregular form based on the claims made by grammar manuals along with the use of these nouns in real situations through the spoken and written language obtained from the corpus results. I will then compare the results obtained with the data already given to see whether theory and practice differ from each other.

Grammatical Background

English nouns are divided into two groups, common nouns, and proper nouns. Nouns that fall into the category of common nouns are further divided into countable and uncountable nouns. For the category of countability already mentioned, we must further distinguish whether the nouns are concrete or abstract. Figure 1 shows the division of nouns according to Randolph Quirk.

Figure 1 (Quirk 1985:247)

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                              concrete:   hun, pig, toy, . . .
                     count
                              abstract:   difficulty, remark, . . .
           common
                              concrete:   butter, gold, . . .
  nouns              noncount
                              abstract:   music, homework, . . .

           proper:                        John, Paris, . . .
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Every countable noun has a plural form as well as a singular form. Since my bachelor thesis deals with the plural form of nouns, I will focus mainly on the grammatical background of this form.

The plural form is used to indicate more than one. In English, we distinguish two plural forms, regular and irregular.

Firstly, the formation of the regular form, which is achieved by attaching the suffix *-s* or *-es*, pronounced three ways [s], [z], *or* [ız], to the base of the singular form. The pronunciation variant [s] is used when the singular form ends in a voiceless consonant with the exception of words ending in [s], [ʃ], and [tʃ].

In the case of the pronunciation of [z], the use of this form is possible in the suffix variant – *es* and *-s*, and this is the case if these suffix forms are preceded by a voiced consonant, except [z], [ʒ], [dʒ]. Furthermore, the pronunciation variant [ız], which is mostly pronounced after [s], [z], [ʃ], [ʒ], [tʃ], [dʒ] (Dušková 1994:37).

Focusing on the spelling of regular nouns, the plural -*s* ending is added to singular nouns that end in a vowel, and in some cases a consonant. The suffix ending – *es* is used mostly for words ending in *s, z,* and *x*, and after *i*, corresponding to *y* in the singular. The plural ending -*es* is also found in words ending in the letter *o* (Dušková 1994: 37-38).

Secondly, the plural form is also an irregular form for which no rule can be made and therefore must be learned by heart. In this case, we encounter both a change of final consonants and a change of stem vowels.

Talking about the change of the final voiced consonants to the voiceless ones, it is meant by letters [s], [θ], and [f]. It should be added that in the case of [s], [θ] these are mostly pronunciation changes, not spelling changes. In the case of the final consonant [s], which changes to [z], we only encounter this phenomenon in the word *house* [haʊs] - *houses* [haʊzɪz].

In the case of the final [θ]-*th*, pronunciation changes to [ð] if it is preceded by a long vowel, for example, *bath [baːθ] - baths [baːðz]*. If a short vowel or consonant occurs before the -*th*, there is no change, for example, *moth [mɒθ] - moths [mɒθs]*. (Dušková 1994:38).

In the case of a change from [f] to [v], there is both a pronunciation and a spelling change. These changes are encountered, for example, in the words *thief* [θiːf] - *thieves* [θiːvz] or *wolf* [wʊlf] - *wolves* [wʊlvz]. However, if the singular nouns end in the letter *f* or *ff* in this case, only the suffix -*s*, *cliff* [klɪf] – *cliffs* [klɪvs], is attached (Dušková 1994:39).

Another type of change in irregular nouns is the change of the stem vowel, which also changes pronunciation. We encounter such changes, for example, in the words *man [mæn]- men [men]*, or *goose [guːs]- geese [giːs]*, in which case we have a pronunciation change, which is reflected in the spelling (Dušková 1994:39).

However, there are also words of foreign origin in English, mainly adopted from Latin, Greek, or French.

It is these words that are the key focus of my bachelor thesis, where for some words we can use both plural forms, regular and irregular, furthermore, in some cases is the

possibility of the occurrence only in a regular or irregular form, not both. The reason why I have chosen foreign language borrowings over domestic plural forms for my research is simple. Domesticated nouns belong to the common vocabulary and are encountered every day, and thus there is a very low probability of oscillatory occurrence, meaning that these types of words can occur in both plural forms, regular and irregular. If the word occurred in a form not expected by us, it would be a morphological error.

According to Dušková, "foreign nouns of a specialised nature retain the original plural, which is often alternated with the native form. When both forms of the plural exist, the foreign form is restricted to professional contexts" (Dušková 1994:41) and Quirk's "foreign plural also often occurs in variation with regular plurals. One rule of thumb is that foreign plurals often occur in technological usage, whereas the -s plural is the most natural in everyday language. For example, *formula* in singular form, *formulas* (general) ~ *formulae* (in mathematics)" (Quirk 1985: 311).

Although I mentioned that there is no rule for the formation of irregular forms, this is not the case with foreign plurals, but in this case, it is more a suffix change than a change in the root of the word.

Latin is the language from which English has borrowed the most. There are four suffixes in this language that indicate the singular form - a, -us, -um, -ex, -ix (Quirk 1988: 311-312). These suffixes then give rise to a plural change.
If a noun of Latin origin is ending in the suffix *-us*, the irregular plural form is ending in *-i*, for example, *bacillus - bacilli*, ending in *-a, corpus - corpora*, or *-uses, campus - campuses.*

Substantives ending in *-a* can form the irregular plural form *-ae*, as in *larva - larvae.*

For nouns ending in *-um*, the irregular plural is formed in most cases by adding the suffix *-a*. This is the case with the word *addendum - addenda.*

The last possible suffix change of Latin origin is *-es* or *-ix*, which have the irregular plural form *-ices*, for example, *matrix - matrices* or *apex - apices.*

For most nouns of Latin origin, we can find both regular and irregular plural forms, such as *appendix - appendices - appendixes, vortex - vortices – vortexes,* or *aquarium - aquaria - aquariums.* In this case, we can therefore say that the irregular form is mostly used for specialist words and the regular form for words of common vocabulary, as in the word *appendix.*

In Greek, we then encounter the suffixes -on and -is, which then form the irregular plural form.
Again, this is the same principle of plural formation as in Latin. If the word ends with the singular ending *-on,* the irregular plural form is formed with the suffix *-a, criterion - criteria.*

Substantives ending in *-is,* form the irregular plural form with the ending *-es.* This is the case, for example, with the word *analysis - analyses.*

The last type of nouns that I will analyse in my work are words of French origin in which the ending *-eau* or *-eu* in the singular form changes to the plural form *-s* in the regular form and *-x* in the irregular form, such as *beau - beaux - beaus.*

Based on Dušková (1994: 42) claim, some French nouns that end in *-s* or *-x* in written form have the same form for both singular and plural, such as *chamois - chamois.* In this case, there is a difference in pronunciation since the plural form has the pronunciation [z].

Table 1 shows an overview of the formation of the plural forms according to Dušková and Quirk.

Table 1.

Language	Singular form	Plural irregular form
Latin	-us	-i -a -uses
Latin	-a	-ae
Latin	-um	-a [ɑː]

Latin	-ex	-ices
	-ix	
Greek	-on	-a
Geek	-is	-es
French	-eau	-x
	-eu	
French	-s	-s
	-x	-x

I have divided the foreign plurals generally according to their origin, suffix plural ending, and then according to their typology. From this breakdown, I then selected individual words that are chosen contrastively among themselves for better comparison and understanding of oscillatory occurrence.

From the category of words of Latin origin, I have selected polysemous words, i.e. those that have their specific meaning in regular and irregular form. As mentioned above by Dušková and Quirk, words of foreign origin in the irregular form tend to be used more in a specialized field such as medicine or biology, whereas the regular form tends to be used more in everyday life. For the analysis of polysemous words, I chose the words *antenna* and *appendix*, which correspond to the aforementioned statement.

The next type of words in my analysis are words for which only the irregular plural form is expected. Hence, we can speak of specialist words, taking into account the claims of the linguists already mentioned, and hence the low probability of occurrence in a non-specialist field. In this case, we are talking about the words *codex* and *addendum*.

As a contrast, I have chosen for my analysis words which, on the other hand, are expected to have only a regular form, and thus it can be said that the words *dilemma* and *campus* fall into the category of commonly used words without any tendency of use in the scientific sphere. It can therefore be said that these words are not subject to oscillation.

For plurals of Greek origin, I have chosen for analysis words that admit both forms of the plural and are either technical or non-technical. Talking about a word of technical character, the *phenomenon,* we encounter mostly in technical texts and grammar manuals.

The contrastive word is the *podium*, which can be classified in the typology of words used in ordinary conversation. It can thus be said that the words *phenomenon* and *podium* are subject to oscillation as they retain both forms of plural.

The last language of my analysis is French. In this case, I have chosen words that may again be commonly used in everyday conversation and words that are obsolete and thus very rarely encountered. In this case, too, we can speak of the fact that the words *chateau, plateau, beau,* and *trousseau* admit both plural forms, and in this case, too, they are subject to oscillation.

Table 2 shows the words I deal with in my work according to Dušková and Quirk

Table 2

Origin	Type of word	Regular form	Irregular form	Type of word
Latin	Antenna	Antennas	Antennae	Polysemous
Latin	Appendix	Appendixes	Appendices	Polysemous
Latin	Codex	-	Codices	Specialized
Latin	Addendum	-	Addenda	Specialized
Latin	Campus	Campuses	-	Common
Latin	Dilemma	Dilemmas	-	Common
Greek	Phenomenon	Phenomenons	Phenomena	Technical
Greek	Podium	Podiums	Podia	Non-technical
French	Chateau	Chateaus	Chateaux	Common
French	Plateau	Plateaus	Plateaux	Common
French	Beau	Beaus	Beaux	Rare
French	Trousseau	Trousseaus	Trousseaux	Rare

Method of Search

To get the best results and to be able to confirm or refute the hypotheses, I used the British National Corpus (BNC) and the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA).

I worked with both types of corpora in the same way. For the search sample, as mentioned earlier, I divided the genre into spoken and written language, and for the written language, I focused on the use of foreign plurals from the perspective of formally and informally written texts. The category of informal texts includes the occurrence of certain plural forms in magazines, fiction, and newspapers. I then summed the numerical values obtained, since I thus placed them in one category, and calculated a percentage value from this total, as I did for spoken language.

For the words of polysemous meaning, *antenna,* and *appendix*, I determined a sample of one hundred randomly occurring words, which I manually went through and sorted by meaning.

I analyzed the remaining single-meaning words using these corpora, along with numerical and percentage calculations.

Analysis

In order to obtain the best result, I have divided the words by origin, since the resulting tendencies of occurrence may be different in Latin and other languages, such as French or Greek.

Since some of the words I am analysing fall into the polysemy category, I have separated these types of words from the single-meaning ones, as the resulting tendencies of dual meaning differ in usage, and thus through a separate tabular analysis, the tendency of usage between regular and irregular forms, as well as between written and spoken genres, will be more visible from the results.

Therefore, I have divided the corpus results by genre into spoken, regarded as the least formal, and written language, understood as the most formal, and then into formally and neutrally written language. This division will make the differentiation between spoken and written genres and between formal and informal forms, which are the target of my thesis, highly visible. Along with the genre division, I have also made a geographical division between British and American English, as there may also be differences in frequency of use.

I will then compare the results of both genre differences and differences in the usage of certain words in British and American English with each other.

4.1. Analysis of Latin Plurals

As Dušková and Quirk mentioned, Latin plurals in their irregular base have a greater tendency to occur in academic and technological terms; there may be a high probability that some of the words listed below belong to the already mentioned fields.

Thus, I divided the analysis of Latin plurals into polysemous words, whose results are likely to vary according to meaning, words with the non-expected dual form, and words with expected only regular form in order to confirm or refute Dušková and Quirk's hypotheses.

As mentioned in the introduction, words from foreign languages, such as Latin, were adopted for three reasons. Either out of prestige, as some words came to be used in early

politics or medicine, or because of filling in the gaps and even translating foreign plurals into appropriate languages such as English.

4.1.1 Polysemy Words

In order to obtain adequate results, I searched for words of a polysemy nature in both types of corpora, BNC and COCA, separately with a selection of one hundred words at random. Then I manually went through the search results in both genres and separated them into different tables according to the meaning of the word.

Since these types of words in my analysis fall into the category of polysemous words that have two meanings, Libuše Dušková and Randolph Quirk hypothesize that a polysemous word has a plural form in a given meaning, either regular or irregular, depending on the academic or technical nature of the word. This subchapter will therefore address the above hypothesis, along with an analysis of the results obtained from BNC and COCA, which will be either confirmed or refuted.

Table 3 examines the words of my analysis in a polysemy nature.

Table 3: Polysemi words

Singular form	Regular plural form	Irregular plural form
Antenna	Antennas	Antennae
Appendix	Appendixes	Appendices

Antenna

The word *antenna* falls into the category of polysemous words that have two meanings. On the one hand, we can understand the word *antenna* in the sense of a TV or wifi wire, on the other hand, as growths on the heads of insects. Thus, the following tables 2 - 5 show the percentage occurrence of both meanings with the subsequent tendency of usage.

It should also be added that according to the dictionary, the word *antenna* is used in British English mainly in the sense of growths on the heads of insects, whereas in the sense of television wire, it is more likely to find the word *aerial.*

In contrast, American English uses the word *antenna* in both words equally, either in the sense of a television wire or in the sense of the growths on the heads of insects already mentioned.

Table 4: BNC, the antenna as a Wi-Fi or TV wire

Type of genre	Absolute Value	Regular form	Irregular form	% regular form	% irregular form
Spoken	0	0	0	0 %	0 %
Written neutral	1	0	1	0 %	100 %
Written formal	4	3	1	75 %	25 %
Total Value	5	3	2	60 %	40 %

Table 4 examines the results of the British National Corpus with a total value of 5 per hundred occurrences.

Focusing on the spoken language, it is strikingly apparent that the word *antenna* in the sense of wireless or TV wire is not found in the BNC in any form, regular or irregular.

On the other hand, neutrally written text is inclined to use only irregular form, *antennae*. On contrary to formally written text, it is visible that regular form, *antennas*, dominates over irregular form *antennae.*

The overall occurrence in usage between regular and irregular forms is thus 60 % to 40 %, that is to say, the regular form, *antennas*, is the most used form in British English although the word *antenna*, in the sense of TV wire, has its own equivalent as well as it satisfies Dušková and Quirk's hypothesis of using the regular form primarily in non-academical terms.

Table 5: COCA, the antenna as a WiFi or TV wire

Type of genre	Absolute Value	Regular form	Irregular form	% regular form	% irregular form
Spoken	80	68	12	85 %	15 %
Written neutral	709	555	154	78 %	22 %
Written formal	135	115	20	85 %	15 %
Total Value	924	738	186	80 %	20 %

Thus, according to the results in table 5, it can be seen that American English uses the word *antenna* in the sense of television wire to a greater extent than British English mentioned above.

In terms of genres, it is quite clear from the table that the regular form, *antennas*, is used more frequently, at 80 %, compared to the irregular form, *antennae*, which is only 20 % represented in the table.

If we focus on the regular form of the word *antenna, antennas*, which is consistent with Dušková and Quirk's hypothesis, it is evident that the spoken genre is the least used numerically compared to the written genre, which is divided into two categories, namely neutrally and formally written texts, with the neutrally written text being the most predominantly used numerically.

Although the word *antenna*, in the sense of a television wire, occurs in both types of English, it is very noticeable that American English shows a higher tendency of the word's usage than British English.

Speaking of the genre, as mentioned above, British English thus uses a different equivalent for television wire, *aerial*. Despite this fact, the word *antenna* is also used in this form of English, mostly in the regular form, which is more widely used compared to the irregular one.

Thus, according to the results of a dictionary search, the word *antenna* is considered to be predominantly an American word. The two forms of usage are therefore independent of genre, as the ratio of results is virtually similar, and also fulfill the already mentioned hypothesis of Dušková and Quirk about the usage of the word *antenna* in the sense of TV or wifi wire in the regular form, *antennas*.

Table 6: BNC, the antenna as growths on the heads of insects.

Type of genre	Absolute Value	Regular form	Irregular form	% regular form	% irregular form
Spoken	0	0	0	0 %	0 %
Written neutral	16	0	16	0 %	100 %

Written formal	37	0	37	0 %	100 %
Total Value	53	0	53	0 %	100 %

Table 6 shows that the word *antenna*, in the sense of growths on the head of an insect, is, according to the BNC, a 100 % irregular plural form of the word whose predominant use is found in formally written texts, with a total of 37 occurrences per 100.

In this case, it can be said that the expectations of the hypothesis set out by Dušková and Quirk are satisfied as well.

Table 7: COCA, the antenna as growths on heads of insects

Type of genre	Absolute Value	Regular form	Irregular form	% regular form	% irregular form
Spoken	7	3	4	43 %	57 %
Written neutral	213	44	169	21 %	79 %
Written formal	181	13	168	7 %	93 %
Total Value	401	60	341	15 %	85 %

In comparison with British English, table 7, focusing on search results from COCA, shows that although the result is not as clear-cut as table 6 above, the word *antenna* in the sense of growths on the head is also used in the irregular form, with 85 % frequency, to a greater extent than in the regular form.

From the column of percentage results for the irregular form, the range of usage is very clear, with spoken language, understood as the least formal genre, and written language in the formal style as the most used. Thus, these results demonstrate the fact that the word *antenna* is very genre dependent in this sense, meaning that experts are more likely to use the irregular form than the regular form, while spoken language, which is predominantly the least formal form, uses both regular and irregular forms of the word almost equally. In this case, too, it can be said that the expectations of the hypothesis set out by Dušková in her book have been fulfilled.

From tables 6 and 7, it can be seen that the word *antenna* from a biological point of view is mostly used in the irregular form *antennae*, thus it retains its original form, with the highest percentage frequency of use in formal written texts. Thus, these results confirm the assumption of Dušková and Quirk of keeping the word in its, original, irregular form when using it in academic or technical fields.

Appendix

Like the *antenna*, the word *appendix* falls into the category of polysemous words, which can be understood either as an *appendix* in the sense of a part of an organ in the human body or as a part of written documents.

Table 8: BNC, appendix as a body part

Type of genre	Absolute Value	Regular form	Irregular form	% regular form	% irregular form

Spoken	0	0	0	0 %	0 %
Written neutral	0	0	0	0 %	0 %
Written formal	0	0	0	0 %	0 %
Total Value	0	0	0	0 %	0 %

Table 8, which shows the results of the British National Corpus, shows that the word *appendix*, which means body part, is not used in the plural in the British National Corpus at all. Based on these results, we are not able to refute or confirm the claim of Dušková and Quirk, who state that the regular form is usually used to form the plural of the *appendix* meaning body part.

Table 9: COCA, appendix as a body part

Type of genre	Absolute Value	Regular form	Irregular form	% regular form	% irregular form
Spoken	1	0	1	0 %	100 %
Written neutral	4	4	0	100 %	0 %

Written formal	0	0	0	0 %	0 %
Total Value	5	4	1	80 %	20 %

Table 9 shows that the Contemporary American English Corpus results are a marked contrast to the BNC results.

Although we encounter both plural forms of the word *appendix*, the column showing the numerical occurrence of the word according to the COCA results shows that the regular form is thus more widely used.

The following sentences, which are extracted from the Corpus of Contemporary American English, serve as evidence of a possible generic reference of the use of the word *appendix* in the sense of body part and in the possible number, confirming Dušková and Quirk's hypothesis of the use of the word *appendix*, especially in the regular form, and with a percentage value of 80 %.

1. "We're able to remove appendices when they become infected. We're able to transplant organs. (Corpus Of Contemporary American English: Pbs_Newshour; Penalty Phase;Making Babies;Death Of The Salesman;Foreign Correspondence)"
2. "According to Johns Hopkins Medicine, doctors still aren't 100 % sure why we need appendixes in the first place. ("12 Body Organs You Can Live Without")"

Sentence number one shows an example of a spoken language transcription in which the word *appendix* occurs in an irregular plural form.

Sentence number two then shows an excerpt from a magazine in which the word *appendix* is found in the regular plural form.

Although the plural form of the word *appendix* in the sense of a human organ is biologically impossible, as confirmed by the BNC results with a 0 % occurrence, the

Corpus of Contemporary American English refutes this claim with a resulting 80 % occurrence of the regular form of the word *appendix*, which also confirms the Dušková and Quirk's hypothesis.

Table 10: BNC, the appendix as a part of written documents

Type of genre	Absolute Value	Regular form	Irregular form	% regular form	% irregular form
Spoken	19	0	19	0 %	100 %
Written neutral	8	0	8	0 %	100 %
Written formal	14	0	14	0 %	100 %
Total Value	41	0	41	0 %	100 %

Table 10 showing the word *appendix* in the sense of the written document section illustrates the results evaluated by the British National Corpus.

The table shows that the form *appendixes*, as a regular form, is not encountered in either genre. Therefore, these results show that the irregular form, *appendices,* is the most used form and predominantly in the spoken genre with a total of 19 per 100 randomly selected occurrences.

As with the word *appendix* in the sense of body part, we can confirm the hypothesis of Dušková and Quirk, who argues that the word *appendix* in the sense of part of a written

document has a greater tendency to occur in the irregular form *appendices* compared to the regular form, as shown in table 9.

In this case, it can therefore be said that the word *appendix* in the sense of part of a document is independent of genre since there is no fundamental difference between the numerical values.

Table 11: COCA, the appendix as a part of written documents

Type of genre	Absolute Value	Regular form	Irregular form	% regular form	% irregular form
Spoken	4	0	4	0 %	100 %
Written neutral	45	8	37	18 %	82 %
Written formal	186	49	137	26 %	74 %
Total Value	235	57	178	24 %	76 %

Table 11, showing the results of the Corpus of Contemporary American English, demonstrates quite different numerical and percentage results, since the word *appendix* in the sense of part of a written document is encountered in both the regular form, *appendixes*, and the irregular form, *appendices*.

Despite the fact that this polysemous word is represented in both forms of the plural form, the irregular form of the word *appendix*, *appendices*, is represented 76 % of the

time. Thus, with this resulting percentage value, we can again confirm Dušková's aforementioned hypothesis about the different usage of the word *appendix*.

It can also be added that in this case the word *appendix*, according to the COCA results, is genre dependent with a predominance of formally written texts.

As already mentioned, polysemous words are words of such a nature that carry more than one meaning, such as the words *antenna* and *appendix* I examined.

The 4-11 tabular analyses showed the separate occurrences of the words already mentioned according to the two corpora, namely the British National Corpus and the Corpus of Contemporary American English, both in numerical and percentage values.

Along with this analysis, I also investigated whether or not the words already mentioned fulfilled Dušková and Quirk's hypothesis.

Focusing on this hypothesis, that the vast majority of words of Latin origin occur in the irregular form, especially in the academic or technological sector, it can be said that the words I have examined do fulfill this hypothesis. The exception is table 6 focusing on the word *appendix* in the sense of body part, which has an overall value of zero and thus cannot be evaluated and thus does not fulfill the hypothetical assumption. Also, the assumption that non-academic words have a greater tendency to occur in regular form is fulfilled by adding the suffix -*s* or -*es*.

4.1.2. Words with Expected Irregular Form Only

According to Dušková and Quirk, we encounter some types of foreign plurals that retain a purely irregular plural form. Therefore, in the subchapter entitled *Words with Expected Irregular Form Only*, I will examine whether or not the selected words *addendum* and *codex* meet this assumption.

Addendum

According to the Cambridge Dictionary, the word addendum is used more in publishing, so it can be argued that it is a specialized word meaning "something that has been added to a book, speech, or document. (Cambridge Dictionary)"

The expected form for this word is therefore the irregular form of the *addenda*.

Table 12: BNC, addendum

Type of genre	Absolute Value	Regular form	Irregular form	% regular form	% irregular form
Spoken	4	3	1	75 %	25 %
Written neutral	2	0	2	0 %	100 %
Written formal	1	0	1	0 %	100 %
Total Value	7	3	4	43 %	57 %

Although the *addendum* is considered to be a verbal species that forms only one plural form, the BNC results partially refuted this hypothesis. Although the word *addendum* occurs in the regular plural form, *addendums*, only in spoken speech, the irregular form, *addenda*, is still the most commonly used form. Thus, this result can be understood to mean that the regular form is very rare, and so the resulting percentage of the irregular form of 57 % is consistent with Dušková and Quirk's hypotheses.

Even in this case, it cannot be said that this type of word is somehow dependent on the genre, since the overall numerical values do not differ that much. Although the word *addendum* is considered by dictionaries to be a specialized word, the BNC results contradict this claim with its prevalence in neutrally written texts.

Example sentence number 4 illustrates the occurrence of the word *addendum* in the regular form in the spoken genre.

4. "Any more addendums and (pause) Are you making an amendment or an addendum? (*Inserting Rules And Regulations*)"

Table 13: COCA, addendum

Type of genre	Absolute Value	Regular form	Irregular form	% regular form	% irregular form
Spoken	3	0	3	0 %	100 %
Written neutral	38	8	30	21 %	79 %
Written formal	66	2	64	3 %	97 %
Total Value	107	10	97	9 %	91 %

Table 13 shows the numerical and percentage results according to the Corpus of Contemporary American English. Again, this word cannot be said to be 100% mono-plural, since the regular form of the word, *addendums*, occurs 9% of the time.

Despite this fact, the irregular form, *addenda*, is still predominant at 91% with the highest numerical occurrence of 64 in formally written texts, so it can be confirmed that this type of word also satisfies Dušková and Quirk's hypothesis of the predominant retention of the irregular form, just as it can be confirmed that according to American English, this word is predominantly formal in nature and is, therefore, genre dependent.

Example sentence number 5 illustrates the use of the word *addendum* in the regular form by adding the suffix -s, and in the formal genre.

5. "In the Whitewater case, there is ample room to wonder whether it would have spun off into so many addendums (including the Monica Lewinsky investigation) if independent counsel Starr had been required to work at the initial Whitewater investigation full-time, write a report, and return to his legal practice at Kirkland &; Ellis. (Gormley)"

Codex

The word *codex* is another word that Dušková and Quirk describe as having an irregular plural form only, *codices*.

According to the Cambridge Dictionary, we should encounter this word most often in the category of publishing with a specialisation in nature, which means "an ancient book that was written by hand. (Cambridge Dictionary)"

Table 14: BNC, codex

Type of genre	Absolute Value	Regular form	Irregular form	% regular form	% irregular form
Spoken	0	0	0	0 %	0 %
Written neutral	6	0	6	0 %	100 %
Written formal	2	0	2	0 %	100 %
Total Value	8	0	8	0 %	100 %

Table 14 showing the results from the BNC proves that, according to British English, the word *codex* is 100 % mono-plural, which satisfies Dušková and Quirk's hypothesis. On the other hand, however, it can be refuted that this word is predominantly formal in nature, as it is more prevalent in neutrally written texts.

Table 16: COCA, codex

Type of genre	Absolute Value	Regular form	Irregular form	% regular form	% irregular form
Spoken	0	0	0	0 %	0 %
Written neutral	22	2	20	9 %	91 %
Written formal	49	0	49	0 %	100 %
Total Value	71	2	69	3 %	97 %

The results of a search of the Corpus of Contemporary American English show that the use of the word *codex* is quite different from that of British English.

Although in this case it cannot be said that the result is clearly 100 %, it can still be said that the word *codex* in American English also meets the Dušková and Quirk assumption.

Likewise, it can be said that in this type of English, the word *codex* is genre-dependent, as evidenced by the distinct numerical results of the irregular form of the word *codex*, *codices*, having the highest numerical occurrence in formally written texts, which satisfies the assumption set forth in the Cambridge Dictionary.

Example sentence number 6 illustrates the use of the word *codex* in the regular form of neutrally written texts**.**

6. "It was rumored that Dexter possessed a bizarrely variant scroll of the Egyptian Book of the Dead, as well as several Mayan codexes not collected in the Popol Vuh or the Dresden Codex, though no one was quite sure. (Jablokov)"

The subsection entitled *Words with Expected Irregular Form Only* dealt with the hypothesis of Dušková and Quirk that some words have only irregular forms when forming plurals. To investigate this claim, I chose the words *addendum* and *codex*, for which I examined their occurrence in spoken and written speech in BNC and COCA.

From the results obtained, I concluded that the two words I selected meet the hypothesis given by Dušková and Quirk despite the fact that in small numerical values, the words *addendum* and *codex* are also used in regular form, but it could rather be said that these are isolated cases.

4.1.3. Words with Expected Regular Form Only

In this chapter, I will deal mainly with the hypothesis established by Quirk, namely that some foreign nouns in the plural retain only the regular plural form.

To confirm or refute this claim, I have chosen the words *dilemma*, predicted to occur only in regular plural form by adding the suffix *-s*, and *campus*, predicted to occur only in regular plural form by adding the suffix *-es*.

The reason why I decided to investigate these words was, firstly, that words of foreign origin ending with the same suffixes have an irregular form, and this type of word is marked only by the regular form, and also because of the evolution of the language and therefore confirmation or refutation of Quirk's theory, which was created in the 1980s and therefore in the twenty-first century, we can see different results.

Dilemma

As mentioned above, the word *dilemma* has only one expected plural form, namely the regular form, which is formed by adding the suffix *-s*.

Tables 17-18, which illustrate the results of a search against the British National Corpus (BNC) and the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA), confirm or refute this claim.

Table 17: BNC, dilemma

Type of genre	Absolute Value	Regular form	Irregular form	% regular form	% irregular form
Spoken	3	3	0	100 %	0 %
Written neutral	40	40	0	100 %	0 %
Written formal	122	122	0	100 %	0 %
Total Value	165	165	0	100 %	0 %

The word *dilemma* is one of those words that, according to Randolph Quirk, cannot be expected to have an irregular form.

Table 17, showing the results of the British National Corpus search, confirms this statement 100 %; namely, that the regular form *dilemmas* is the only plural form that is used.

Furthermore, it can also be said that the word *dilemma* is genre dependent, with formal written texts expected to be the most used genre and spoken language the least used.

Table 18: COCA, dilemma

Type of genre	Absolute Value	Regular form	Irregular form	% regular form	% irregular form
Spoken	131	131	0	100 %	0 %
Written neutral	622	622	0	100 %	0 %
Written formal	1239	1239	0	100 %	0 %
Total Value	1992	1992	0	100 %	0 %

We find the same results as for table 18 above, which shows the occurrence of the word *dilemma* in both regular and irregular forms in American English. In this case, Quirk's theory that the word *dilemma* does not have the irregular form *dilemata*, but only the regular form, *dilemmas*, can be confirmed.

Focusing on the use of the word *dilemma* across genres, table 18 shows that this type of word is most used in formal written texts and can thus be considered a word of a specialist nature. On the contrary, it is the least used in the spoken genre. Thus, these results show that the word *dilemma* is also a genre-dependent word.

As mentioned above, according to Randolph Quirk's hypothesis, the word *dilemma* uses only the regular plural form by adding the suffix -*s*. From the results obtained from

the British National Corpus and the Corpus of Contemporary American English, we can confirm this hypothesis 100 % and in both types of English, British, and American.

Furthermore, it can also be said that the word *dilemma* is genre dependent and has the highest numerical occurrence in formal written texts, and thus it can be said that it is predominantly a technical word.

Campus

The same statement as to the word *dilemma* is found with the word *campus*.

In this case, the most expected suffix is *-es*.

Table 19: BNC, campus

Type of genre	Absolute Value	Regular form	Irregular form	% regular form	% irregular form
Spoken	0	0	0	0 %	0 %
Written neutral	12	12	0	100 %	0 %
Written formal	34	34	0	100 %	0 %
Total Value	46	46	0	100 %	0 %

Based on the results, it can be said that British English 100% confirms Quirk's claim and, therefore, the irregular form, *campi*, is not encountered at all in this type of language.

According to British English, this word is mostly used in formal style, perhaps because the word *campus* is understood as an area that surrounds the university building as well as the land. Thus, it may be also said, that the word *campus* is gender dependent as table 19 illustrates 0 % occurrence in spoken language. From the statement of gender, it may also be said that the word *campus* has a rising tendency with the highest usage in the formal written language.

Table 20: COCA, campus

Type of genre	Absolute Value	Regular form	Irregular form	% regular form	% irregular form
Spoken	707	707	0	100 %	0 %
Written neutral	2375	2375	0	100 %	0 %
Written formal	1799	1799	0	100 %	0 %
Total Value	4881	4881	0	100 %	0 %

In the case of American English, we also encounter the same result of Quirk's hypothesis, again with 100% use of the word *campuses* as a regular form.

However, what differs is the numerical occurrence of the word *campus* in genres. In table 20, we already encounter the use of the word *campus* in spoken language, although it is not among the peak usage. Thus, it can be said that the word *campus* is predominantly the type of word we read in American English before we say it.

In contrast to table 19, which looked at the use of the word *campus* in British English, in this case, it occurs mainly in informally written texts, suggesting that it is a genre-dependent, neutral word.

The chapter entitled *Words with Expected Regular Form Only* dealt with the words *dilemma* and *campus*, for which Randolph Quirk established the hypothesis that these words have the aforementioned regular plural form only. For the 17-20 tables showing the occurrences of these words according to the British National Corpus and the Corpus of Contemporary American English, it can be said that these words 100 % satisfy the already mentioned hypothesis, and therefore it is not possible to use the words *dilemma* and *campus* in the irregular form, i.e. *dilemata* and *campi*.

Furthermore, it can also be said that the occurrence of the words *dilemma* and *campus* has an upward tendency through the genres, considering that spoken language is the least formal genre. This statement implies that we mostly encounter the words *dilemma* and *campus* in formally written texts, and thus they are words of a formal nature.

In the chapter dealing with Latin plurals, I examined several hypotheses established by Dušková and Quirk.

The first hypothesis was to confirm or refute whether polysemous words conform to the established proposition. To achieve an adequate result, I chose the words *appendix* and *antenna*, which I divided according to their meaning into separate tables. I then examined the words with the appropriate meanings in the British National Corpus and the Corpus of Contemporary American English in two genres, spoken, taken as the least formal, and written, which I divided into neutral and formal written text.

From the results obtained from the British National Corpus and the Corpus of Contemporary American English, I concluded that the hypothesis established by Dušková and Quirk can be confirmed.

The second hypothesis dealt with words that are not expected to have a dual form. To investigate this claim, I chose the words *addendum* and *codex*, which I also researched in BNC and COCA. Again, we can agree with Dušková and Quirk in full.

4.2. Analysis of Greek Plurals

The chapter entitled *Analysis of Greek Plurals* will be mainly devoted to the study of a word that carries a technical meaning and thus will be used mainly in formally written texts.

On the contrary, I have chosen a word that, on the other hand, is mostly encountered in ordinary conversation and is therefore likely to be used in neutrally written texts.

Through this study, I will either confirm or refute Dušková and Quirk's statements about the usage of the irregular form of the noun plural primarily with words carrying the technical meaning.

4.2.1. Word With a Technical Meaning

In the chapter entitled *Word With a Technical Meaning*, I will deal with the word *phenomenon*, as a word we can mostly encounter in formal language. Tables 18 and 19 will therefore be the most expected occurrences of this word in the formal writing genre.

Phenomenon

The word *phenomenon* can be considered another type of word with two types of plural forms.

According to the Cambridge Dictionary, the regular form, *phenomenons*, is mostly used to describe extraordinary objects, events, or persons. The irregular form, *phenomena*, is the recommended plural.

Table 21: BNC, phenomenon

Type of genre	Absolute value	Regular form	Irregular form	% regular form	% irregular form
Spoken	18	0	18	0 %	100 %
Written neutral	49	0	49	0 %	100 %
Written formal	787	0	787	0 %	100 %
Total value	854	0	854	0 %	100 %

Thus, the word *phenomenon* can be considered a technical word whose most used form is irregular, *phenomena*, and it is 100 %, which meets Dušková and Quirk's assumption that words of technical character occur mainly in irregular form.

In terms of genre, the word *phenomenon* is, therefore, most used in formally written texts, which may imply that the *phenomenon* is predominantly academic in nature, as opposed to spoken language, which uses the *phenomenon* very rarely. Thus, from the results of table 21, it can be said that the word *phenomenon* fulfills Dušková and Quirk's assumption with the highest numerical usage in formal written language and an upward trend from spoken language as the least formal language to written formal language dominating the occurrence.

Table 22: COCA, phenomenon

Type of genre	Absolute value	Regular form	Irregular form	% regular form	% irregular form
Spoken	316	6	310	2 %	98 %
Written neutral	1490	11	1479	1 %	99 %
Written formal	3716	7	3709	0 %	100 %
Total value	5522	24	5498	0 %	100 %

Even though the word *phenomenon* is encountered in American English with both plural forms, the *phenomenons,* and *phenomena,* numerical values of the irregular form dominate over the regular form, which is also reflected in the percentage values. In this case, the previously mentioned assumption that the word *phenomenon* is predominantly of a technical nature with 100 % occurrence in the irregular form *phenomena* can be confirmed.

Thus, the use of the word *phenomenon* is genre-dependent. The regular form *phenomenons,* which refers mainly to extraordinary objects, events, or persons, is most often encountered in neutrally written texts, and it can be said that the tendency of genre occurrence is downward sloping. In contrast, the irregular form, *phenomena,* which is the recommended plural, has an upward tendency in genre occurrence both numerically and in percentage terms, with the spoken language being seen as the least formal.

As already mentioned, the word *phenomenon*, according to Dušková and Quirk's hypothesis, is understood as a word of a predominantly technical character. Tables 21-22 examine this type of word according to British and American English confirming this hypothesis 100 %.

However, the numerical values differ between the two types of languages, as does the use of the two plural forms. Thus, Table 21, focusing on British English, shows that the regular form, *phenomenons*, is not used at all and the irregular form, *phenomena*, is the most dominant, appearing for the most part in formally written texts.

Even though American English, table 22, uses both plural forms, the 100 % occurrence of the irregular form again confirms the aforementioned hypothesis.

Comparing the two forms of the English language, it can be seen that American English is more benevolent towards the use of the word *phenomenon* in both plural forms but still retains the dominance of the irregular form, as well as in the numerical use of the word, compared to British English, where the overall value of the use of the word is multiplied less.

4.2.2. Word with Non-technical Meaning

In contrast to the word *phenomenon*, the chapter words with non-technical meaning examine the word *podium* and its percentage occurrence in regular or irregular plural form in British and American English.

Podium

The word *podium* can be understood as an elevated place intended, for example, for performances or award ceremonies. Since it is understood as a type of word encountered almost everywhere, it can be understood as a word of non-technical meaning.

The 23-24 tables focusing on the use of the word *podium* in British and American English will illustrate whether the regular or irregular form has a greater tendency of use, along with genre occurrence and the aforementioned assumption of the word's neutral character.

Table 23: BNC, podium

Type of genre	Absolute value	Regular form	Irregular form	% regular form	% irregular form
Spoken	0	0	0	0 %	0 %
Written neutral	4	2	2	50 %	50 %
Written formal	0	0	0	0 %	0 %
Total value	4	2	2	50 %	50 %

As table 23 shows, British English, despite its very low numerical occurrence, uses the word *podium* in both plural forms, *podiums,* and *podia,* equally. As with the other foreign plural words already examined, the word *podium* can be said to be genre-dependent, and can therefore be considered a neutral word, which fulfills the assumption.

Table 24: COCA, podium

Type of genre	Absolute value	Regular form	Irregular form	% regular form	% irregular form
Spoken	23	23	0	100 %	0 %
Written neutral	65	59	6	91 %	9 %
Written formal	54	13	41	24 %	76 %
Total value	142	95	47	67 %	33 %

American English, however, has completely different results. Again, we encounter the word *podium* in both plural forms, *podiums,* and *podia*, but American English is more inclined to use the regular-form *podiums* 67 % of the time.

In this case, we encounter the use of the word *podium* in all genres. In the regular form, *podiums*, we encounter a numerically upward-downward tendency with the highest occurrence in neutrally written texts, thus satisfying the assumption that the word *podium* is predominantly neutral.

In contrast, the irregular form, *podia*, has both a numerical and percentage upward tendency of usage. Unfortunately, the word *podium* in the irregular form cannot be said to be a neutral word, since it has the highest incidence of use in formally written texts, and thus cannot be said to satisfy the assumption in this form.

The chapter on Greek plurals examined two types of words and their use in British and American English.

The first word is the word *phenomenon*, which is assumed to carry a predominantly technical meaning; the second word is the word *podium*, which in turn is assumed to carry a non-technical meaning.

According to the 21-22 tables examining the word *phenomenon*, it can be said to be 100 % irregular in the plural form in both forms of English, and therefore the assumption is met, if we take into account the hypothesis of Dušková and Quirk who claim that words of technical research are largely found in the irregular form already mentioned.

In contrast, the 23-24 tables examined the word *podium* and thus the aforementioned assumption that this type of word can be considered non-technical.

Table 23 examining the word *podium* based on the British National Corpus showed that both regular and irregular forms occur in the same percentage of 50 %. Hence, no definite result can be said from this result. However, if we focus on numerical representation, we can confirm the hypothesis in this case. Thus, these results suggest that British English uses the word *podium* in a non-technical sense.

In contrast, table 24, which focused on the use of the word *podium* in American English, clearly fulfilled the assumption.

In conclusion, therefore, it can be said that both words fulfilled the assumption in both types of English.

4.3. Analysis of French Plurals

For the chapter entitled *Analysis of French Plurals*, I have chosen two types of words, namely those that are used in ordinary conversation, i.e. those that are not expected to have a large numerical occurrence in the irregular form regarded as words with technical meaning. The second type of words I have chosen are those that are rarely used in conversation and hence can be seen as either archaic words or words of a technical nature, which can therefore be expected to have a more likely occurrence in the irregular form.

My main goal in this chapter will be to confirm or refute, again, the claims of Quirk, who is of the opinion that " a few nouns ending in *-eau* and *-eu*, eg: *bureau* and *adieu*, may retain the French *-x* as the spelling of the plural (*bureaux*, *adieux*), beside the commoner *-s* (*bureaus*, *adieus*). In English, the plurals are however almost always pronounced as regular, *ie /z/*, irrespective of spelling. (Quirk 1985: 312)"

4.3.1. Commonly Used Words

In the chapter entitled *Commonly Used Words*, I will deal with the words *chateau* and *plateau* in particular in which plural form these words are most often used, whether regular or irregular, together with the aforementioned statement about the use of suffixes in written language, since in this case, it is very irrelevant to examine the spoken language because of the transcription, which was most likely made by a linguist.

Chateau

The word *chateau* is the same example as the aforementioned words *bureau* and *adieu*. Tables 25 - 26 will therefore deal with the use of either the regular or irregular plural form in written language in British and American English and thus confirm or refute Quirk's claim.

Table 25: BNC, chateau

Type of genre	Absolute Value	Regular form	Irregular form	% regular form	% irregular form
Spoken	X	X	X	X	X
Written neutral	11	0	11	0 %	100 %
Written formal	1	0	1	0 %	100 %
Total Value	12	0	12	0 %	100 %

As already mentioned, the word *chateau* is irrelevant to research in spoken language, for this reason, I have marked all fields with an *X*.

However, if we focus on written language, it can be seen from the results obtained from the BNC that the regular form *chateaus* have zero value in all the remaining genres and thus the word *chateau* satisfies the claim that English retains the original, irregular, form formed with the suffix *-x*.

Since I have categorized this word as a word that is commonly used, it can also be said that the word *chateau* satisfies the assumption I have made with its highest occurrence in neutrally written texts.

Table 26: COCA, chateau

Type of genre	Absolute Value	Regular form	Irregular form	% regular form	% irregular form
Spoken	X	X	X	X	X
Written neutral	91	19	72	21 %	79 %
Written formal	12	5	7	42 %	58 %
Total Value	103	24	79	23 %	77 %

We encounter the same case with table 26, which examined the word *chateau* according to the Corpus of Contemporary American English.

In this case, too, I have marked the spoken language with an *X* as irrelevant data.

As far as the written genre is concerned, in this case too we can confirm that American English is 77 % inclined to use the irregular form, just as it can be said that the word *chateau* is considered a neutral word encountered in ordinary conversation.

Tables 25- 26, deal with the word *chateau* and its use in British and American English only in the written genre, due to irrelevant results in the spoken language. For both styles of English, we can confirm Quirk's assumption about the overwhelming tendency to use the irregular form by adding the suffix -*x*, and also my own hypothesis about the use of *chateau* in ordinary conversation, which implies that neither British nor American English considers *chateau* to be a technical word.

Plateau

Based on Dušková's statement, the word *plateau* is used in both plural forms, *plateaus* and *plateaux*. The 27-28 tables examining this word in British and American English either refute or confirm this claim together with Quirk's hypothesis, as well as my hypothesis that the word *plateau* also falls into the category of commonly used words.

Table 27: BNC, plateau

Type of genre	Absolute Value	Regular form	Irregular form	% regular form	% irregular form
Spoken	X	X	X	X	X
Written neutral	8	0	8	0 %	100 %
Written formal	32	22	10	69 %	31 %
Total Value	40	22	18	55 %	45 %

Again, it is not possible to evaluate the spoken language, since, according to Quirk, the pronunciation is always /z/ as in the previous word *chateau*. Therefore, in this case, I have marked the spoken language with an *X* as a non-evaluable result.

Although the word *plateau* is of French origin and hence one would expect the same results as for the word *chateau*, in this case, the exact opposite is the case.

Table 27, examining the word *plateau* according to the BNC, shows that in this case, the word *plateau* occurs 55 % in the regular form, *plateaus*, and 45 % in the irregular form, *plateaux*, thus confirming Dušková's hypothesis that this type of word uses both plural forms. On the other hand, Quirk's hypothesis of retaining the irregular form in French plurals has to be refuted.

Unfortunately, however, the hypothesis I established about the use of *plateau* as a common word must be refuted, because British English uses the word *plateau* predominantly in formal written texts, which implies that it is a genre-dependent word, in the regular form *plateaus*.

Table 28: COCA, plateau

Type of genre	Absolute Value	Regular form	Irregular form	% regular form	% irregular form
Spoken	X	X	X	X	X
Written neutral	198	193	5	97 %	3 %
Written formal	84	81	3	96 %	4 %
Total Value	282	274	8	97 %	3 %

American English uses the word *plateau* in its regular form, *plateaus*, 97 % of the time, making it the most used form of the word and thus refuting Dušková's claim that

the two forms are almost equally used, as well as Quirk's hypothesis of retaining the irregular form.

In contrast to table 27, refuting that the word *plateau* falls into the category of regularly used words, in this case, table 28 confirms my hypothesis. Thus, it can be said that American English differs in genre usage in some cases compared to British English.

The subchapter, *Commonly Used Words,* dealt with the words *chateau* and *plateau*, for which two hypotheses were established.

The first hypothesis was based on Quirk and Dušková's claim, which was confirmed 100 % for the word *chateau*, as well as the hypothesis established by me that this type of word falls into the category of commonly used words.

The second word of my research was the word *plateau*. In this case, the results of the hypotheses examined differ. Focusing first on British English, in this case, we can make the 100 % hypothesis of Dušková, since the overall percentages are not that different. However, in this case, the hypothesis set by me is refuted because British English uses the word *plateau* most in academic texts.

In contrast, I used the results from the Corpus of Contemporary American English, which 100 % refuted Dušková's hypothesis since the most used is the regular form of *plateaus*, but on the contrary, confirmed the hypothesis I established. This statement could be used to say that the word plateau is very genre-dependent in a particular form of English.

4.3.2. Words Rarely Used

In the subsection called *Words Rarely Used*, I will deal with the words *beau* and *trousseau*, which we do not encounter so often in everyday conversation.

Again, I will examine two hypotheses, namely, whether these old-fashioned words are more commonly used in the irregular form and thus again fulfill Quirk's assumption, and further, since the words, *beau* meaning " a boyfriend (Cambridge Dictionary)" and *trousseau* meaning "a collection of personal possessions, such as clothes, that a woman takes to her new home when she gets married (Cambridge Dictionary)" can, because of

their meaning, be understood as informal, common, words, and thus, if so, they also meet the assumption in this case.

Beau

As already mentioned, the word *beau* is an obsolete word for the word boyfriend.

The 29-30 tables will look at what form of the plural is thus most used as well as the most frequent occurrence across genres.

Table 29: BNC, Beau

Type of genre	Absolute Value	Regular form	Irregular form	% regular form	% irregular form
Spoken	0	0	0	0 %	0 %
Written neutral	29	1	28	3 %	97 %
Written formal	1	0	1	0 %	100 %
Total Value	30	1	29	3 %	97 %

Table 29 showing the results for British English shows that the word *beau* retains the irregular form as the most used of the 97 %, which may therefore confirm Quirk's hypothesis that words of French origin have a greater tendency to be used in their original form. The remaining three percent may be regarded as a very rare case, as it denotes only one occurrence in a million.

From a genre perspective, it can be said, the word *beau* is a neutral word, which proves 28 occurrences per million, which can also confirm the predetermined assumption. Last but not least, it should be mentioned that this type of word is genre-dependent with an upward-downward tendency in British English.

Table 30: COCA, Beau

Type of genre	Absolute Value	Regular form	Irregular form	% regular form	% irregular form
Spoken	8	3	5	37 %	63 %
Written neutral	320	43	277	13 %	87 %
Written formal	61	5	56	8 %	92 %
Total Value	389	51	338	13 %	87 %

For a contrasting illustration, I also researched the word *beau* in the Corpus of Contemporary American English.

Compared to British English, it could be said that in this case, the word *beau* is not so unique with a total occurrence rate of 389 per million.

Even in table 30, Randolph Quirk's hypothesis can be confirmed, with 87 %. The remaining 13 % cannot be seen as the only case encountered in table xy, but rather, in linguistic terms, as a simplification of the written form.

In this case, it can also be said that the word *beau* is the genre-dependent word with the highest tendency of occurrence in neutrally written texts, according to American English, thus we can confirm the second hypothesis that the word *beau* falls into the category of neutral words.

Trousseau

The word *trousseau*, meaning a collection of personal possessions, such as clothes, that a woman takes to her new home when she gets married, is another word for which we can examine already established hypotheses.

Tables 31-32 showing data from BNC and COCA either confirm or refute these claims.

Table 31: BNC, trousseau

Type of genre	Absolute Value	Regular form	Irregular form	% regular form	% irregular form
Spoken	0	0	0	0 %	0 %
Written neutral	0	0	0	0 %	0 %
Written formal	0	0	0	0 %	0 %
Total Value	0	0	0	0 %	0 %

Table 31 examines the word trousseau in British English shows that this type of word is so obsolete that it is not used at all. In this case, the stated hypotheses cannot be tested.

Table 32: COCA, trousseau

Type of genre	Absolute Value	Regular form	Irregular form	% regular form	% irregular form
Spoken	1	1	0	100 %	0 %
Written neutral	9	4	5	44 %	56 %
Written formal	1	0	1	0 %	100 %
Total Value	11	5	6	45 %	55 %

In contrast to British English, which did not record the word *trousseau* in BNC at all, table 32 focusing on American English proves the opposite.

Despite the low absolute value, 11 occurrences per million, it can be said that the word is very rarely used in American English.

As far as Quirk's hypothesis is concerned, in this case, the regular form and the irregular form are almost on par. Despite this result, however, it can be said that a difference of 10 % is not a sufficient indicator to confirm or refute the hypothesis, which implies that the irregular form *trousseaux* is, therefore, the dominant plural form. In this case, it can be said that the regular form, *trousseaus*, and the irregular form, *trousseaux*, are on the same level.

Furthermore, the hypothesis can also be confirmed that the word *trousseau* cannot be said to be formal in this case either. Thus, the results examining genre representation suggest that the word *trousseau* is genre-dependent with a peak occurrence in neutrally written texts.

The 29-32 tables dealt with the words *beau* and *trousseau* which are nowadays seen as obsolete words.

The hypotheses I established for the research on these words were based on Quirk's claim that words of French origin predominantly retain an irregular plural form. This hypothesis can be confirmed in tables 29, 30, and 32. Table 31, focusing on the word *trousseau* in British English, does not fulfill this hypothesis, since it does not occur in that language type at all.

Another opinion was to confirm or refute whether the words *beau* and *trousseau* are neutral in nature, given their meaning. In this case, too, it can be said that both the words I examined meet 100 % of the stated assumption. The only exception is again the word *trousseau*, table 31, which has the aforementioned null results.

The chapter entitled *Analysis of French Plurals* dealt with two types of words.

The first type was words that are commonly used, especially *chateau* and *plateau*. In this case, I used the British National Corpus and the Corpus of Contemporary American English to obtain adequate results to confirm or refute the hypothesis of Quirk, who claims that words ending in -*eau* and -*ue* retain an irregular form to form plurals.

For the word *chateau*, this hypothesis can be confirmed 100 % in both British and American English. Unfortunately, however, in the case of the word *plateau*, this hypothesis must be refuted in both British and American English, since both languages use the word *plateau* in its regular plural form, *plateaus*.

The second hypothesis of this subsection was to determine whether the words *chateau* and *plateau* fall into the category of neutrally used words. For the word *chateau*, this hypothesis can be 100 % confirmed in both British and American English.

For the word *plateau*, it is exactly half and half. Table 27, which examined the word *plateau* in the British National Corpus, proves that the word *plateau* in British English appears predominantly in formally written texts. Table 28, on the other hand, from the perspective of American English, confirms the hypothesis I have established.

The second type of words examined were *beau* and *trousseau*, which are nowadays understood as old-fashioned.

Again, I examined these words on the same hypotheses as the previous words. The Quirk one on the grounds that they are still French words and the hypothesis I set out on the grounds that the words *beau* and *trousseau* do not have a technical meaning according to the Cambridge Dictionary.

If we focus first on the hypothesis set out by Quirk, in all cases we can confirm his claim 100 %. The only exception is the word *trousseau* used in British English, which has an overall value of zero.

Along with Quirk's hypothesis, the assumption that the words *beau* and *trousseau* are predominantly neutral in nature can also be confirmed 100 %.

The last hypothesis was to confirm or refute whether the words *dilemma* and *campus* fall into the category of words that form only the regular plural form. In this case, we can also agree with the linguists already mentioned.

Conclusions

My bachelor thesis aimed to investigate the oscillation of plural forms of nouns adopted from foreign languages in British and American English. For this research, I chose Latin, Greek, and French as source languages for loans to English

Countable nouns allow regular and irregular plural forms. My main concern in this thesis was that if both plural forms can be used, to what extent and in what genres is either the regular or irregular form used.

Therefore, I divided my work into two main parts. In the first part, I provided a brief outline of the formation of plurals in English, and how the plural form is formed, especially in terms of regularity and irregularity. I then described in more detail the formation of the plural form of the words of foreign origin that were the main interest of my work, which are typically formed in the irregular plural form but can also be formed in the regular form, and in some cases, both forms can be used, according to the grammar handbooks of Libuše Dušková and Randolph Quirk.

In the second part, I then dealt with word analysis.

First, I started by selecting words that are of foreign origin and allow plural oscillation.

I then divided these into words of polysemous character, i.e. those that have a specific meaning in both regular and irregular form from the others. I examined the words so divided in the British National Corpus and the Corpus of Contemporary American English. Since my main interest was in the occurrence of the analyzed words across genres, I focused mostly on spoken and written language in the corpora, with the spoken language being the least formal in terms of the range of formality. I also examined written language in terms of formality; informal texts included magazines, fiction, and newspapers.

From the results, I then divided the single-meaning words into six categories: words with only irregular form, words with only regular form, technical and non-technical words, and lastly, frequently used and rarely used words.

I entered the collected data separately into tables and compared them, geographically, with each other based on regularization, which corresponded to the type of origin of foreign nouns.

I then compared the results with the grammatical manuals that formed the basis of the whole analysis, which I either confirmed or refuted. It can be generally said that, based on the corpus results, the vast majority of words with the oscillating plural form favored irregularity, and these were mostly words of a technical or professional nature.

For example, for polysemous words, the assumption could therefore be confirmed that when it comes to the technical meaning, the plural form is mostly irregular, whereas the meaning that is commonly used tends to be more regular, as outlined in Tables 4-11.

The same principle, i.e., if the word is more technical in meaning, it retains an irregular plural form, whereas a word that is commonly encountered tends to be used in a regular plural form, was encountered for the rest of the words analyzed. The only exception was the word *plateau*, for which a hypothesis was established on the basis of the grammar manuals that words of French origin predominantly retain an irregular plural form, which I, unfortunately, had to refute from the corpus results obtained.

On the other hand, in the course of my research, I encountered words that were subject to the phenomenon of anglicization and thus were more inclined to the regular form in both types of English; American and British, which may be the case of the word *plateau*. Based on the corpus results, I found that American English gives more preference to the use of regular forms over irregularity, whereas British English places more emphasis on the formality and informality of words and hence plural forms that correspond to this.

Regarding the genres mentioned, the written language numerically outnumbered the spoken one, which implies that the transcription contains a considerably smaller number of words.

Finally, it should be added that thanks to the comparative analysis, we can say from the corpus data obtained and the information given by the grammar manuals that the overall results do not differ that much. However, thanks to comparative analysis, I have gained a deeper understanding of the subject matter.

Nevertheless, if we want to use nouns of foreign origin in the correct plural form, we should think about the overall context in which we use the words. Unfortunately, grammar books do not give us enough information on how to use particular plural forms correctly.

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