Number Categories in Abstract Nouns

Ramunė Kasperavičienė

Abstract. Abstract nouns are uncountable from the point of view of number. In Lithuanian nouns referring to actions are derived from verbs by means of suffixes and endings in the same way as nouns referring to qualities are derived from adjectives. All nouns referring to actions and qualities are, in principle, uncountable and singular, except a few nouns which possess a plural ending. Yet, there is always the potentiality of every noun to form the plural. Thus, certain abstract nouns referring to actions and qualities may be used in the plural, or in other words, may be treated as countable nouns in Lithuanian. The paper focuses on the possibility of the plural forms of abstract nouns referring to actions and qualities and on the meanings acquired in the plural since often these are different from the meanings in the singular. English equivalents of Lithuanian nouns are also taken into consideration to determine whether abstract nouns may also be treated as both uncountable and countable and whether the meanings acquired in the plural in English are similar to those acquired by the same nouns in Lithuanian.