

# Zero Plurals of English Nouns

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**Greenbaum, Sidney, and Randolph Quirk. 1990. A Student's Grammar of the English Language. Harlow: Longman.**

**Quirk, Randolph, Sidney Greenbaum, Geoffrey Leech, and Jan Svartvik. 1985. A Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language. Harlow: Longman.**

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## **ABSTRAKT**

Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá analýzou nulových plurálů u podstatných jmen v angličtině. Zatímco první kapitola se zaměřuje na několik gramatik a porovnává rozdíly mezi jejich tvrzeními, následující kapitoly se zaměřují na jednotlivé kategorie nulových plurálů. Cílem této práce je porovnání literatury s korpusem a stanovení rozdílů.

Klíčová slova: nulový plurál, podstatné jméno, názvy zvířat, podstatná jména označující národnost, kvantitativní podstatná jména

## **ABSTRACT**

This bachelor's thesis deals with the analysis of zero plurals of English nouns. While the first chapter focuses on a few grammar books and compares the differences between their statements, the following chapters focus on the individual zero plural categories. The aim of the thesis is to compare the literature with the Corpus and determine the differences.

Keywords: zero plural, noun, animal names, nationality nouns, quantitative nouns

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I hereby declare that the print version of my Bachelor's thesis and the electronic version of my thesis deposited in the IS/STAG system are identical.

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## INTRODUCTION

Regular plural nouns have a different form in singular and plural – while singular nouns have no suffix, plural nouns have usually *-s* suffix. On the other hand, zero plural nouns are nouns, which have the same form in singular and plural – so these are nouns with meaning of plural nouns but in form of singular nouns with no visible plural ending.

The thesis deals with zero plurals of English nouns. The first chapter defines what the zero plural nouns are and focuses on a few grammar books and compares the differences among them. The following chapters deal with individual zero plural categories which have been defined in the grammar books – Animal names, Quantitative nouns, Nationality nouns and Other zero plural nouns. These categories are discussed in more details and individual zero plural nouns are compared with the Corpus. When compared with the Corpus, the amount of the nouns with no suffix, regular plural suffix and zero plurals were taken into consideration in most cases.

The aim of the thesis is to compare the statements from grammar books and literature with the Corpus of Contemporary American English and to identify the differences and irregularities among them.

## 1 ZERO PLURALS

Zero plural nouns are nouns, which have the same form in singular and plural. (Quirk et al. 1985, 307) In other words, these are nouns with meaning of plural nouns, but with no visible plural ending. (Biber 1999, 288) Zero plurals can be called base plurals. (Huddleston 2002, 1588)

As the zero plural nouns are less common in English than nouns with regular plural, there is a tendency to divide these nouns into categories, which differ in most grammar books. The reason for such subcategorization is arguably better understanding of what kind of nouns belong to the category of zero plural nouns. Another reason may be differences in semantic and lexical properties of individual kinds of nouns which determine whether the noun takes zero plural or regular plural.

In the following chapters I will focus on a few grammar books and compare the differences in the zero plural categories.

### 1.1 Animal names

Animal names have usually regular plural, but there is also many of them with zero or both plurals. According to Quirk (1985) and Dušková (2003), nouns in zero plural tend to refer to game animals. (Quirk et al. 1985; Dušková 2003) Biber (1999) and Dušková (2003) also mention that zero plural suffixes designate animals which occur in groups in their natural environment. On the other hand regular plural is connected to the individual species. (Biber et al. 1999, 288; Dušková 2013, 40) This occurrence can be observed in the examples [1] and [2]. In the example [1] the noun *elephant* is used in the context of group and natural environment and that is why zero plural is used. On the other hand in the example [2] the noun *elephant* is not used in its natural environment and thus the regular plural is used.

[1] We saw a herd of *elephant* in the game reserve. (Dušková 2013, 40)

[2] We saw *elephants* in the zoo. (Dušková 2013, 40)

Animal names, indicating animals as a food, are formed without any suffix too. However, in this case these are not zero plurals but uncountable singular nouns. (Dušková 2003, 40) The main difference between the uncountable nouns and zero plural nouns is that uncountable nouns cannot take cardinal numerals as *one*, *two* or *three* while zero plural nouns can. (Huddleston and Pullum 2005, 85 - 86) This can be observed in the examples

[3] and [4]. While in [3] the noun *fish* is used in the context of hunting it is considered to be a zero plural noun where usage of cardinal numeral in front of the noun is grammatical, in [4] the noun *fish* indicates food thus it is treated as an uncountable noun and the cardinal numeral in front of the noun is ungrammatical.

Moreover, even though uncountable nouns have usually the form of a singular noun as well as the zero plural nouns, uncountable nouns are treated as singular in case of subject-verb agreement which is not case of zero plural nouns. (Greenbaum 1996, 98) This claim is shown in the examples [5] and [6]. The example [5] is grammatical because the noun *fish*, in the meaning of food, is treated as a singular even though it is meant to be in plural. On the other hand, the example [6] is not grammatical because it is treated as plural in case of subject-verb agreement.

[3] Two weeks ago, he caught three *fish* in the river.

[4] \*Two weeks ago, he had three *fish* for dinner.

[5] Any *fish* is served in this restaurant.

[6] \*Any *fish* are served in this restaurant.

Zero plural fish names are mentioned by Huddleston. These are for example *carp, cod, haddock, hake, mackerel, perch, roach, salmon, trout* and *turbot*. These and others of the same semantic category have mostly zero plural. However, *-s* plural can be used with fishes when they are ment to be sold as foods and also when the noun refers to a certain kind of fish. (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 1588)

### 1.1.1 Animal names categories

As animal names do not take either regular or zero plural only authors such as Quirk (1985) and Huddleston (2002) divide these names into subcategories.

According to Quirk (1985) there are five subcategories.

The first subcategory contains nouns with regular plural. That means that these words never have zero plural. These are for example *bird, cow, eagle, hen, hawk, monkey* or *rabbit*.

The second subcategory contains nouns which are usually regular plural. These are names such as *elk, crab* or *duck* (only when it refers to *duck* as a wild bird).

The third subcategory contains nouns with both regular and zero plural and these are for example *antelope, reindeer, fish, flounder, herring, shrimp* or *woodcock*.

The fourth subcategory contains nouns which are usually zero plural such as *bison*, *grouse*, *quail*, *salmon* or *swine*.

The last subcategory contains nouns which are always zero plural and these are *sheep*, *deer* or *cod*. (Quirk et al. 1985, 307 – 308)

Huddleston (2002) divides zero plural animals into three subcategories.

The first subcategory contains nouns which are always zero plural. These are for example *bison*, *deer*, *grouse*, *moose* or *swine*.

The second subcategory contains nouns which allow both – zero plural suffix but also regular –s suffix. These are for example *elk*, *quail* or *reindeer*.

The last subcategory contains nouns which have regular –s plural. These are for example *elephant*, *giraffe*, *lion*, *partridge* or *pheasant*. However, there is an exception. When talking about these animals in the context of hunting and shooting or in the context of a group of animals, these nouns have zero plural suffixes. (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 1588)

Biber (1999) Greenbaum (1990) and Dušková (2003) do not divide animal names into categories. They only mention nouns which have zero plural such as *cod*, *deer*, *grouse*, *salmon* and *sheep*. In case of *buffalo*, *duck* and *fish*, regular but also zero plural can be found according to Biber. (Biber et al. 1999, 288; Greenbaum and Quirk 1990, 95; Dušková 2003, 40)

### 1.1.2 Comparison

Generally, all the mentioned authors claim that zero plural animal names are usually game animals, animals perceived as food and animals to which we refer to as a group. The most detailed analysis of animal nouns is made by Huddleston (2002), Dušková (2003) and Quirk (1985). Animal names listed in these books are mostly the same or slightly different, so I did not find any distinctions there.

Animal names, indicating animals as a food, are formed without any suffix too. However, in this case these are not zero plurals but uncountable singular nouns. (Dušková 2003, 40)

The only difference is in the division of the plurals into categories. In case of Quirk (1985) and Huddleston (2002), they divided zero plural nouns into categories and they also mentioned some animal names which have regular plural. These authors do not discuss the purpose of the subcategorization but, obviously, it is to clearly divide the animal names into the categories according to the frequency of how often do these nouns take zero or

regular plural. In other words, there are animal names which take zero plural almost always, then there are these which take regular or zero plural equally and then there are animal names which are mostly regular plural but exceptionally they can take the zero one. And this subcategorization is to help to make these differences clearer.

The other authors listed only the animal names with zero plural and do not mention whether the zero plural is used frequently or exceptionally only. In case of Greenbaum (1990), it can be considered as insufficient source because there is too little information on this issue.

The information at these authors is mostly the same and there are not any mismatches there.

## 1.2 Nationality nouns

While the use of zero plural with animal names is rather matter of semantics and its use differs usually according to the context in which it is used, the use of zero plural with nationality nouns does not change and is fixed.

Nationality nouns with *-ese* suffix in singular have zero plurals. These are for example *Chinese, Japanese, Lebanese, Portuguese, Sinhalese, Vietnamese* or *Swiss*. (Quirk et al. 1985, 308; Biber et al. 1999, 289; Dušková 2003, 40; Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 1589)

Nevertheless, there are nationality and ethnic names, which have usually zero plural but can be used with the regular *-s* suffix too. These are names such as *Apache, Bantu, Bedouin, Hopi, Inuit, Kikuyu, Navaho, Sotho* or *Xhosa*. There is also one exception with the word *Sioux* which has zero plural in writing but regular plural in speech. (Quirk et al. 1985, 308; Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 1589)

### 1.2.1 Comparison

Nationality nouns are discussed at all authors, except Greenbaum (1990). There is no mention of nationality nouns even though it forms an important part of zero plural nouns. But otherwise, the information in all authors is the same without any mismatches.

## 1.3 Quantitative nouns

According to Quirk (1985), Biber (1999), Dušková (2003) and Greenbaum (1990), quantitative nouns *dozen, hundred, thousand* and *million* have usually zero plural, but in some cases it can have also regular plural. When nouns are premodified by another quantitative word, the quantifier has zero plural, but when the quantitative word is followed by an *of*-phrase, the quantifier has a regular plural with *-s* suffix. (Quirk et al.

1985, 308; Biber et al. 1999, 289; Dušková 2003, Greenbaum and Quirk 1990, 96) This difference can be observed in examples [7] and [8].

[7] Five *hundred* people visited the museum.

[8] Five *hundreds* of people visited the museum.

Another zero plural quantifiers are *foot* and *pound*, but only in cases when they are followed by a numeral. In examples [9] and [10] the difference between the use of *foot* and *feet* can be observed. While in [9], singular form is used because *foot* is followed by a numeral, in [10] plural has to be used because it is not followed by any numeral. There is also an exception with the word *pound* which may have also regular plural when it is used in meaning of currency. (Quirk et al. 1985, 309; Biber et. al 1999, 288; Dušková 2003, 40 – 41) In example [11] the word *pound* is used in meaning of currency and that is why regular plural is used. On the other hand, according to Quirk (1985), example [12] with zero plural form is grammatically correct too. There is no difference in the meaning between the example [11] and [12] and so these are considered free variants and it is rather option of the speaker which possibility he chooses. (Quirk et al. 1985, 309)

[9] He is six *foot* three.

[10] He is six *feet*.

[11] The sweater costs four *pounds* fifty.

[12] The sweater costs four *pound* fifty.

There are other zero plural quantitative nouns which are not as frequent as the nouns mentioned above. These are words such as *brace*, *gross*, *horsepower*, *hundredweight*, *(kilo) hertz*, *quid*, *score*, *stone*, *yen*, *yoke* and *p (penny)*. (Quirk et al. 1985, 309; Biber et al. 1999, 288; Dušková 2003, 40) All these words mostly refer to the units of measurement or currency so it can be compared to the above discussed nouns *foot* and *pound* which are used in the same syntactic environment. Thus, it can be deduced from this fact that units of measurement often take zero plural suffixes. In case of currency it is questionable as there are too many currencies existing.

Biber also claims that zero plural quantifiers are used mostly in speech and it is considered as non-standard. Zero plural quantifiers than occur in complex numerical expressions and complex expressions premodifying nouns such as *ten-kilometre-square*

*area* or *seven-pound note*. (Biber et al. 1999, 288) According to Greenbaum (1990), nouns *foot* and *pound* with zero plural are less common than those with regular plural and are considered rather dialectical. (Greenbaum and Quirk 1990, 96)

### 1.3.1 Comparison

In case of quantitative nouns, Huddleston (2002) did not mention them. Biber (1999) has a different point of view of these quantitative zero plurals. He claims that zero plural quantitative nouns are used more in speech and are considered non-standard. Also Greenbaum (1990) claims that zero plural quantitative nouns are rather dialectical and less common than regular plural ones. This opinion cannot be observed in other authors. Otherwise, there are no contradictory views.

## 1.4 Other categories

There are also a few categories which are not the same for all authors.

### 1.4.1 Nouns with equivocal number

According to Quirk (1985), there are zero plural nouns with equivocal number. That means that these nouns can be treated as singular as well as plural. This claim is shown in the examples [13] and [14] where both possibilities are grammatical. In the example [14] there is a plural determiner *these* which corresponds the regular plural form of the noun *barracks* and the noun is treated as plural in terms of subject-verb agreement, too. On the other hand, in the example [13], the noun *barracks* seems to be plural but as far as the determiner and subject-verb agreement is concerned, it is obvious that the noun *barracks* is singular.

[13] This *barracks* is new. (Quirk et al. 1985, 309)

[14] These *barracks* are new. (Quirk et al. 1985, 309)

Quirk (1985) also mentions zero plural nouns *craft* with compounds in the sense of ship as for example *aircraft*, *hovercraft* and *spacecraft*. (Quirk et al. 1985, 309)

There is no such explanation in other authors. Some of these zero plural nouns are only mentioned but without explanation of the reason for the usage of zero plural.



### 1.4.2 Nouns with bases ending in /s/ or /z/

According to Huddleston (2002), terms such as *barracks*, *crossroads*, *dice*, *gallows*, *headquarters*, *innings*, *kennels*, *links*, *means*, *mews*, *oats*, *series*, *species* and *works* have a form of regular plural but in fact, they are taken as zero plural nouns. The reason for this is that *-s* suffixes are in these cases part of their lexical bases. Word *dice* is on the other hand plural of *die* which is no longer used so it is perceived also as a singular. (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 1589)

A few nouns are mentioned by other authors. The word *barracks* is mentioned by Quirk (1985), nouns *dice*, *means*, *series* and *species* are mentioned by Biber (1999) but none of these authors explain the reason why these nouns are zero plural even though they have *-s* suffixes. (Quirk et al. 1985, 309; Biber et al. 1999, 289)

### 1.4.3 Comparison

In case of zero plural nouns mentioned in the chapters 1.4.1 and 1.4.2 there are two different points of view on the same lexical items. While Quirk (1985) categorize these nouns as nouns with equivocal number, other authors such as Huddleston (2002) and Biber (1999) classify the nouns as nouns with bases ending in /s/ or /z/.

Basically, both categories should be correct. The nouns in the chapter 1.4.2 are zero plural nouns and have the /s/ or /z/ ending but this designation does not say anything about the reason why these nouns are zero plural as well as the authors who do not explain the reason for that. On the other hand, Quirk (1985) classifies these nouns as nouns with equivocal number. I would say that this heading is more suitable for nouns mentioned by all three authors.

## 2 ANIMAL NAMES

This chapter will focus on the zero plural animal names in more detail as they represent the largest part of all extant zero plural nouns. Moreover, most of the authors discuss the zero plural animal names whether in detail or not thus the attention should be paid to this category.

As it was already said, zero plural animal names mostly refer to game and farm animals, fish, to animals as a group and it can be used by people who are concerned with animals. (Quirk et al. 1985, 307; Biber et al. 1999, 288) There is also one exception for regular plural animal names. When they are used in the context of hunting and shooting or in the context of group animals they are used with zero plural suffixes instead of regular *-s* suffix. (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 1588)

Even though some animal names are said to have zero plural, this is not always the case. These nouns can be divided into three categories for better understanding. The categories of nouns which are always zero plural, nouns which allow both zero and regular suffix and nouns which have mostly regular plural but there are a few exceptions which will be discussed in the following chapter 2.1. (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 1588)

According to Toupin (2015), there are more than 80 zero plural animal names and most of them refer to game animals and fish as it was also mentioned by Quirk (1985) and Huddleston (2002). (Toupin 2015, 99; Quirk et al. 1985, 307; Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 1588) Moreover, there are about 70 another animal names, which, however, should not be added to the list of zero plurals. These are animals that can be found on the American continent only, as for example *opossum*. Also zero plural nouns which are used only dialectically can belong to this list. For instance the word *horse* is nowadays used with regular *-s* plural, but in some dialects it is still used with zero plural. (Toupin 2015, 99)

On the other hand, even though it seems that use of zero plural has its own rules, Toupin claims that zero plural is an option of the speaker. (Toupin 2015, 102) Therefore, as far as this claim is concerned, all the above mentioned rules are questionable assuming that use of zero plural is an option of the speaker.

I will compare the individual animal names with the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) to find out the frequency of using regular or zero plural and also to compare the theory with examples from the Corpus.

While searching for the results in the Corpus, whether noun with no suffix or noun with regular suffix, I set a search for the nouns only. But despite this setting, the results with adjectives or verbs instead of nouns appeared so this search can be considered a little inaccurate. Moreover, since there are results of nouns with no suffix only the exact number of zero plurals cannot be detected by the system and has to be counted manually. Thus the figures of the zero and regular plural are rather indicative.

## 2.1 Mostly regular plural

Regular plural nouns have a different form in singular and plural. Singular designates one, while plural designates more than one and usually has *-s* suffix. (Greenbaum 1996, 100) Animal names in this category have mostly regular plural but there are a few exceptions. When the noun refers to animals as a group, to hunting and shooting of the animals or to animal names of wild birds it takes zero plural. (Quirk et al. 1985, 307; Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 1588)

Into this category a few animal names can be included. According to Quirk (1985) animals which have usually regular plural are names such as *elk*, *crab* and *duck* – but only with the wild bird. (Quirk et al. 1985, 307) Also, according to Huddleston (2002), when talking about following animals *elephant*, *giraffe*, *lion*, *partridge* and *pheasant* in the context of hunting and shooting or in the context of group animals, than these nouns have zero plural suffixes. (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 1588) On the other hand, Toupin (2015) claims that *giraffe* should not be added to this list because there is no appearance of this noun with zero plural suffixes in Present-Day English (PDE). (Toupin 2015, 104)

### 2.1.1 Corpus

Following animal names *elephant*, *giraffe*, *lion*, *partridge* and *pheasant* can have zero plural suffixes when they are used in the context of hunting, shooting or in the context of a group of animals. (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 1588) But as may be observed in some of the following examples [15] to [29] from COCA these nouns occur with zero plural suffixes in different contexts as well.

*Elephant* (plural *elephants*)

There are 5 462 excerpts with no suffix and 3 518 excerpts with regular plural suffix in COCA. Out of the 5 462, 57 excerpts only contain zero plural suffix. (COCA) The excerpts with zero plural suffixes are showed in the examples [15], [16] and [17]. In the example

[15], the noun *elephant* in the context of hunting can be observed and in the example [17] there is a noun *elephant* in the context of group animals.

[15] ... *it would be very rare if you were carrying an AK-47 in a national park because you were hunting elephant and somebody in a wildlife uniform said...* (COCA:1994:SPOK:NPR\_ATC)

[16] *Thanks to bones discovered here at the same latitude as Boston, we know this was a land with game-like elephant, giraffe, and rhinoceros, but also large predators like sabre-toothed cats.* (COCA:2015:SPOK:PBS\_NEWSHOUR\_6:00\_PM\_EST)

[17] *They moved ahead very fast, unfazed by the herds of elephant we now encountered in the valley.* (COCA:2011:FIC:The\_Spectator)

*Lion* (plural *lions*)

There are 7 593 excerpts with no suffix – only 45 out of these excerpts contain zero plural suffix - and 6 826 excerpts with regular plural suffix in COCA. The excerpts with zero plural can be observed in the examples [18], [19] and [20].

[18] *Is she really going out to hunt lion, small as she is and always cold without me to warm her?* (COCA:2001:FIC:Fantasy\_&\_Science\_Fiction)

[19] *There were hundreds of lion here, in fact, so many, that a pride even took over this building. But that was then. The lion are not coming up these steps anymore. Back when the film was made, there were five hundred lion in Gorongosa, two thousand elephants, fourteen thousand Cape buffalo and three thousand hippos.* (COCA:2009:SPOK:CBS\_Sixty)

[20] *This water-based safari will bring you within meters of thirsty prides of lion and leopard, huge groups of buffalo, waterbuck, giraffe and the largest populace of elephants in the world.* (COCA:2010:MAG:Motor\_Boating)

*Partridge* (plural *partridges*)

In case of *partridge*, there are 493 excerpts with no suffix and 54 excerpts with regular plural suffix in COCA. Unlike the previous examples, there are 26 excerpts with zero plural suffix thus when compared to the 54 excerpts with regular plural suffix the results are quite balanced and it is arguable whether the noun *partridge* belongs to the category of nouns with mostly regular plural suffix.

The following examples [21], [22] and [23] show the noun *partridge* with zero plural suffixes. In [21] and [22], the nouns are used in the context of hunting and group animals but in the example [23] *partridge* refers to food. Thus Huddleston's (2002) claim seems to be refuted because the noun is used in other context than is hunting, shooting and context of group animals.

To come back to the Dušková's (2003) claim that animal names, indicating animals as a food, take zero suffixes and that they are treated as uncountable singular nouns can be disproved too. (Dušková 2003, 40) In example [23] *partridge* appears in the context of food but as can be observed it is not treated as an uncountable singular noun because there is no singular subject-verb agreement.

[21] *Now he's hunting partridge.* (COCA:1999:FIC:Triquarterly)

[22] *A covey of Hungarian partridge scuttled across the weedy lot, articulated like a tiny train, in the window's light the males' ruby throat bands flashing an electric brilliancy amid all the dun color of the wild grass.* (COCA:2014:FIC:The\_ploughmen\_a\_novel)

[23] *Grandma, seeing my disappointment, asked my brother Jesse, "Sooo, what do the partridge taste like?".*  
(COCA:2012:FIC:Women\_&\_Environments\_International\_Magazine)

*Pheasant* (plural *pheasants*)

There are 715 results with no suffix and 409 results with regular plural suffix in COCA. Out of the 715 results with no suffix there are 42 results with zero plural suffixes. (COCA) Excerpts with zero plural suffixes are shown in the examples [24], [25] and [26]. In the example [26], *pheasant* is used in the context of food but just like the previous example [23] the noun is again treated as a zero plural, not an uncountable singular noun.

[24] *They may have chosen different bases of operations, but Jamie and Salva, as they are known in the family, have a lot in common: both love hunting pheasant and wild boar.*  
(COCA:2005:MAG:Town\_and\_Country)

[25] *There are wild pheasant in the hills.* (COCA:2014:FIC:Take\_this\_cup)

[26] *Cover with aluminium foil or a lid and cook for about 45 to 50 minutes or until juices run clear when pheasant are pierced with a fork.*  
(COCA:1994:NEWS:Atlanta\_Journal\_Constitution)

*Giraffe* (plural *giraffes*)

There are 592 excerpts containing no suffix with 12 of these having zero plural suffix and 379 excerpts with regular plural suffix in COCA.

To come back to Toupin (2015) who said that *giraffe* with zero plural suffix is not used in PDE at all, as examples [27], [28] and [29] show, it is possible. (Toupin 2015, 104) Even though there is only 12 excerpts containing the noun *giraffe* with zero plural and 379 excerpts with regular plural in COCA, it can be said that *giraffe* with zero plural suffix is still used in PDE. (COCA) Toupin's claim is therefore refuted.

[27] *Most of them had been up in the forest hunting giraffe or something when we landed, and they'd been successful at it, so we had quite a feast that night.* (COCA:1998:FIC:Analog\_Science\_Fiction\_&\_Fact)

[28] *At the same time, I would praise the salubrious climate, the lovely scenery, and the stunning herds of elephant, giraffe, and zebra they would see in Kenya, which just happened to have an outstanding Peace Corps program.* (COCA:2011:MAG:The\_Washington\_Monthly)

[29] *Giraffe, hippos and the major feline predators are faring well.* (COCA:2001:NEWS:San\_Francisco\_Chronicle)

	No suffix	Zero plural	Regular plural
<i>Elephant</i>	5 462	57	3 518
<i>Giraffe</i>	592	12	379
<i>Lion</i>	7 593	45	6 826
<i>Partridge</i>	493	26	54
<i>Pheasant</i>	715	42	409

Table 1 Comparison of zero and regular plural animal names

Huddleston's (2002) claim that these nouns with zero plural suffixes occur in a certain context only was disproved. In the Table 1, there are the following animal names *elephant*, *giraffe*, *lion*, *partridge* and *pheasant* and their comparison with COCA. These nouns with zero plural suffixes occur rather exceptionally, except the noun *partridge* which belongs more to the category of nouns with both regular and zero plural. With regard to this fact it can be said that nouns *elephant*, *giraffe*, *lion* and *pheasant* are nouns using regular plural, exceptionally zero plural.

According to Quirk (1985), the following animal names *elk*, *crab* and *duck* have usually regular plural suffix, but exceptionally they can have also zero plural. (Quirk et al. 1985, 307)

#### *Elk* (plural *elks*)

The noun *elk* is said to be used mostly with regular *-s* plural. (Quirk et al. 1985, 307) There are 4 094 results for noun *elk* with no suffix, 89 results for the regular *-s* plural noun, but as can be observed in the Table 2, only 31 refers to *elk* as an animal. The rest of 58 regular plurals refer to the name of the bar or to the Elks Lodge and Elks Club. (COCA)

<i>Elks</i> (animal)	31
<i>Elks</i> (bar)	8
<i>Elks Lodge</i>	18
<i>Elks Club</i>	32

Table 2 *Elks – regular plural*

So even if we take into consideration the amount of singular forms of *elk* out of 4 094, it can be said that zero plural form is used more often. This fact can be proved also by Huddleston (2002) who assigned *elk* into the category of both regular but also zero plural. (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 1588)

Examples of zero and regular plural can be seen in [30] and [31]. In the example [30], zero plural is used because the noun *elk* refers to the animals as a group. However, the noun *elks* in the example [31] refers to the group of animals as well thus it is obvious that the author of the text does not have to follow the rules necessarily.

[30] *The elk go through migrations, but parts of their migratory patterns are blocked.*  
(COCA:2016:SPOK:NPR\_Fresh\_Air)

[31] *See bears, elks and eagles at the Alaska Wildlife Conservation Centre before boarding...* (COCA:2015:FIC:Atlantic)

#### *Crab* (plural *crabs*)

Unlike the previous noun *elk*, *crab* in form of regular plural is used more. While there is 4 274 results for *crab* with no suffix, *crabs* with regular suffix are included in 2 209



results. (COCA) So it can be said that this noun belongs more to category of regular plural than the previous one.

In the examples [32] and [33], there are excerpts containing zero as well as regular plural. As it was already mentioned in the section 2.1, when the noun refers to animals as a group then zero plural is used. However, as can be observed in the example [33], regular plural in the context of group animals can be used as well and thus this a bit refutes the claim that group animals take zero plural and it can be compared to the previous example [31] which was discussed above.

[32] “*Must be more than two hundred crab in there!*”  
(COCA:2017:FIC:Bk:YoureOneThatIWant)

[33] *From there, it can be picked up by other animals, such as snails, slugs, freshwater shrimp, crabs, and frogs.* (COCA:2017:MAG:Business\_Insider)

*Duck* (plural *ducks*)

In this case COCA includes results of 6 679 nouns with no suffix and 5 055 nouns with regular suffix. (COCA) When comparing the amount of nouns with no suffix and regular plural suffix, the results are not too different. Thus, when taking into consideration the singular nouns, it can be said that the noun *duck* is considered as noun using regular plural.

In example [34], zero plural is used because the text refers to *duck* in the context of hunting.

[34] “*All the men around here hunt duck, or fish.*” (COCA:2014:NEWS:NYTimes)

[35] *It depicts a stand of cypress trees along the banks of a Louisiana swamp, with wild turkeys, whooping cranes, shrimp, ducks and lots of crabs.*  
(COCA:2017:NEWS:Washington\_Times)

According to this research, it can be said that above discussed animal names belong to the category of regular plural, except the nouns *partridge* and *elk* where the occurrence of zero and regular plural in COCA is quite balanced. Animal names discussed in this chapter take zero plural suffixes when they are related to hunting, shooting or to a group of animals. But as it was proved, zero plurals can appear in other contexts too, as well as regular plural can appear in the context of group of animals.

## 2.2 Both regular and zero plural

This chapter will focus on those animal names which can take either zero or regular plural. The difference between this chapter and the previous chapter 2.1 is in the frequency – how often does the zero plural occur in the comparison to the regular one. While the animal names take zero plural exceptionally in the chapter 2.1, in this chapter the usage of zero and regular plural should be balanced.

Use of zero or regular plural depends on what the noun refers to. When it is used in context of group of animals or in context of hunting and shooting it takes zero plural. (Huddleston 2002, 1588)

As for the context that seems to prefer regular plural Toupin claims that it depends on what is the noun premodified by. When the noun is premodified by an adjective it usually forms a regular plural. The reason is that adjectives are used for concretisation of nouns – in other words – adjectives make animal nouns more specific and seem to refer rather to individual species. While on the other hand zero plural is used in context of groups not in context of individual species and that is the reason why animal names which are not premodified by an adjective have zero plural. (Toupin 2015, 100 – 101)

This claim is shown in the following examples [36] and [37].

[36] *Dear and boar were released into the woods form game farms.* (Toupin 2015, 101)

[37] *Russian Wild Boars were released in 1910 and 1912 on a North Carolina preserve near the Tennessee border.* (Toupin 2015, 101)

Toupin also mentions contexts which seem to prefer zero plural. One of them is a situation when animal name is premodified by an expression such as *a flock of* or *herd of*. (Toupin 2015, 101) This claim is shown in examples [38] and [39].

[38] *I have often seen flocks of snipe crossing the bay.* (Toupin 2015, 101)

[39] *The Calcutta market is well supplied with snipes.* (Toupin 2015, 101)

Using phrases as *both – and* or *neither – nor* in connection with two or more animal names also requires zero plural as it can be seen in the example [40]. (Toupin 2015, 101)

[40] *They could discover in the woods neither Elephant nor Buffalo.* (Toupin 2015, 101)

According to Quirk (1985), the following nouns *antelope*, *reindeer*, *fish*, *flounder*, *herring*, *shrimp* and *woodcock* belong to the category of both regular and zero plural and thus they will be compared with the COCA.

### 2.2.1 Corpus

*Antelope* (plural *antelope* or *antelopes*)

There are 1 247 results for *antelope* with no suffix and 172 results for *antelopes* with regular suffix. (COCA) Out of the 1 247 results with no suffix, 292 excerpts contain zero plurals. Thus when compared to the 172 results with regular plural it is clear that zero plural is used more often with the noun *antelope* than the regular one. But still, the zero plural usage is not unambiguous because there are many results with regular plural too. In examples [41] and [42], there are two similar sentences – both refer to observing animals - but one uses zero plural and one regular plural. According to this comparison it seems that the choice of plural form is more the author's choice than a rule.

[41] *While we stopped to admire the giraffes, hippos, buffalo, antelope, elephants and baboons, she pointed out all the exotic birds that would go unnoticed otherwise.* (COCA:2017:NEWS:New\_York\_Times)

[42] *There, you can see the “big five” (rhinos, leopards, lions, elephants, and cape buffalos), along with antelopes, monkeys, wildebeest, and more than 400 species of birds.* (COCA:2011:MAG:TownCountry)

*Reindeer* (plural *reindeer* or *reindeers*)

In COCA there are 1 252 nouns with no suffix and only 23 nouns containing regular plural suffix. (COCA) According to this comparison it can be said that regular plural suffix is rarely used with the word *reindeer*. As it was mentioned above, Toupin (2015) claims that zero plural suffixes tend to occur when the noun is premodified by expressions as *flock of* or *herd of*. In this case it is the expression *hundreds of* which can be observed in the example [43].

[43] *He's snowmobiling for science, to collect as much data as possible about the hundreds of reindeer that wander the valleys of central Spitsbergen.* (COCA:2014:MAG:Smithsonian)

[44] *We have some holiday cookies dressed up in turkeys and Christmas trees and reindeers.* (COCA:1997:SPOK:CBS\_SatMorn)

*Fish* (plural *fish* or *fishes*)

COCA contains 52 609 nouns *fish* with no suffix and 2 094 nouns with regular plural suffix. (COCA) As the difference in the number of results is significant, it can be said that zero plural is used more often the regular one.

In example [46], there is a regular plural used there. Reason for this might be seeing the fishes as food and also referring to certain kind of fish. (Huddleston 2002, 1588)

[45] *Its citizens as at the end of 2012 have a projected fish demand of 2.66 million tons of fish.* (COCA:2017:ACAD:Journal\_of\_Maritime\_Law\_and\_Commerce)

[46] *From charismatic and endangered species like seahorse, turtle and dugong to important food fishes like cod and herring, seagrass meadows support rich biodiversity.* (COCA:2017:MAG:Phys.Org)

*Flounder* (plural *flounder* or *flounders*)

There are 658 nouns with no suffix and 77 nouns with regular suffix in COCA. (COCA) In examples [47] and [48] there are similar sentences – in both sentences the noun is premodified by a numeral and yet one uses zero plural and the second one uses regular plural. Again it seems to be the choice of the author.

[47] *The number of fish sampled was surprisingly small – 47 speckled trout, seven gaff top, six redfish, six black drum and six flounder.* (COCA:2008:NEWS:Houston)

[48] *This time we got two flounders along with greenling and rockfish.* (COCA:1992:FIC:FieldStream)

*Herring* (plural *herring* or *herrings*)

In case of the noun *herring* there are 1 867 words with no suffix and 133 words with regular plural suffix. (COCA)

Toupin's claims can be applied here too. In example [49] the noun with zero plural is premodified by the expression *loads of* which can be compared to expressions mentioned by Toupin – *flock of* and *herd of*. When the noun is premodified by such expression then zero plural should be used. In example [50] the noun is premodified by adjective *Baltic* and as Toupin argues, when the noun is premodified by an adjective it uses usually regular plural. (Toupin 2015, 100 – 101)

[49] *To procure the ingredients he needs, Mr. Haatuft spends much of his time on projects like nabbing loads of fresh herring before they are sent to the central market.* (COCA:2017:NEWS:New\_York\_Times)

[50] *The quality is intact in such legendary fare as the bowl of Baltic herrings served with crème fraiche.* (COCA:2009:MAG:TownCountry)

*Woodcock* (plural *woodcock* or *woodcocks*)

In this case there are 287 results for noun with no suffix and only 7 results for noun with regular plural suffix. (COCA) It is obvious here that regular plural suffix is in fact not used at all.

The reason for zero plural suffix in example [51] can be the *woodcock* being premodified by an expression *full of* which is similar to *flock of* and *herd of* phrases mentioned by Toupin (2015).

[51] *In 2007, my party averaged a phenomenal five flushes an hour on Chippewa National Forest land north of Grand Rapids, Minn., then finished the afternoon on a county area full of woodcock.* (COCA:2010:MAG:FieldStream)

[52] *These rodents also play a strong role in preserving attractive vistas and maintaining the open habitats favoured by such other wildlife as deer, turkeys, woodcocks, and bluebirds.* (COCA:2002:ACAD:Natural\_History)

The rules for taking zero plural, discussed by Huddleston (2002) and Toupin (2015) were compared to the Corpus. For instance excerpts with nouns like *reindeer*, *herring* or *woodcock* show rule where zero plural suffix occurs after expressions such as *flock of* or *herd of*. The noun *fish* is used with regular plural in example [46] because it refers to food and individual species. Interesting is that excerpts containing nouns *antelope* and *flounder* occur in both zero and regular plural even though they are used in the similar context or

they are premodified by numeral. Thus it is obvious that the rules do not have to be followed all the time.

### 2.3 Zero plural only

Probably, the most discussed zero plural animals are *sheep* and *deer*. They are mentioned by Quirk (1985), who classified these zero plurals to the category of animal nouns which are always zero plurals together with the noun *cod*, and also by Koike (2017) and Acquaviva (2008). (Quirk et al. 1985, 308; Koike 2017, 1 – 2; Acquaviva 2008, 30) According to Huddleston (2002), nouns *bison*, *deer*, *grouse*, *moose* and *swine* are always zero plural but, on the other hand, Quirk (1985) categorizes nouns *bison*, *grouse* and *swine* to the category of animal names which are usually zero plural, but exceptionally they can be used with regular plural. (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 1588; Quirk et al. 1985, 308) Such differences will be compared with the COCA later.

From the semantic point of view, the influence on the usage of zero plural is not that clear. Even though animal nouns are mostly semantically in the same class, this fact does not influence the usage of either zero or regular plural. Usage of zero plural can vary according to the context in which it is used, for example in the language of hunters. (Acquaviva 2008, 30)

Toupin (2015) listed 7 zero plural animal names with foreign non-native origin – namely *grouse*, *hippopotamus*, *luc*, *lynx*, *moose*, *plaice* and *walrus*. All these 7 animal names have a sibilant in their final morpheme in singular and that is why these nouns are considered zero plurals. (Toupin 2015, 100) This can be observed with nouns *partridge* and *crayfish* too. These nouns have origin in Old French (OF) and even though they do not have a sibilant in their final morpheme in PDE, in Old English (OE) they did. Their OE form is derived from OF words *crevice* /'krevis/ and *perdriz/pertriz* /'pə:driz/. (Toupin 2015, 100) Even though these animal names have non-native origin this fact is not crucial while talking about the zero plural determination. The phonological form of the noun and its sibilant in a final morpheme is a decisive factor for the nouns being considered zero plurals. However, these nouns seem to be rather an exception in its category of animal names as the rest of the zero plural animal names is affected by the context in which the noun occurs not by any phonological factor.

As it was mentioned in the section 2.3, *sheep* is considered to be zero plural by most of the authors. Koike (2017) discusses *sheep* in more detail. In PDE the noun *sheep* with zero plural is the only grammatical possibility. It has been so since the OE although

between the 16th and the 19th century, the word *sheeps* with regular *-s* plural was considered grammatical too. Potential reason for grammaticality of the regular plural in this case may be similarity of the Middle English (ME) word *shepes* with OE declension form of *sheep*. Notwithstanding the fact that regular plural of *sheep* was considered grammatical for a while, Koike suggested a few possible reasons why the plural of *sheep* has remained zero since the OE. Except the claim that *sheep* is a herd animal, what most of the authors consider to be one of the reasons for animal names having a zero plural, Koike argues that it can be matter of *sheep* being perceived as a holy or domestic animal. Another suggestion is the *sheep* being a general designation of its sort and thus being a kind of hypernym. As its hyponyms following nouns *lamb(s)*, *ram(s)* or *ewe(s)* can be appointed. (Koike 2017, 7) What needs to be emphasized here is the Koike's claim that the name *sheep* is a zero plural noun probably because it is a domestic animal and is considered to be a kind of hypernym. But when looking at the other domestic animals they all are used with regular plural, except the nouns *swine* and *fowl* which are considered to be zero plural nouns, thus this argument is not acceptable at all. The same applies for the claim that the noun being a hypernym is reason for taking zero plural because there is no evidence or proof for that.

The noun *deer* is considered to be zero plural as well as the previously discussed noun *sheep*. Koike (2017) argues that the *deer* did not have the same meaning as in PDE. In OE, the noun *deer* was used to designate "wild beast" and this designation was commonly used until the second half of the 15th century. Certainly, the noun *deer* had the contemporary meaning since the OE too but the designation of "wild beast" was primary at that time. He also claims that the reason for *deer* having a zero plural since OE is connected with its original meaning – "wild beast" – and that the zero plural form and its meaning in OE may be related. (Koike 2017, 7 – 8) Interesting is that the noun *beast* or *wild beast*, as Koike (2017) argues, has a regular plural thus it does not make any sense why this should be the reason for taking zero plural.

### 2.3.1 Corpus

*Sheep* (plural *sheep*)

As already mentioned, *sheep* is considered to be one of the animal names that has always zero plural. It is discussed especially by Koike (2017) who claims that the word *sheep* with regular plural does not exist in PDE. (Koike 2017, 7) Also Quirk (1985) classified the *sheep* into the category of nouns which are always zero plural. (Quirk et al. 1985, 308) But



nonetheless there are 12 results including the noun *sheep* with regular –s plural in COCA. Out of 8 680 results of *sheep* with no plural suffix it seems to be negligible number but it still disproves the theory that regular plural is not used in PDE at all.

The noun *sheep* with regular plural can be observed in the examples [53], [54] and [55]. On the other hand, majority of the 12 results with regular plural are excerpts from spoken language or fictional literature meaning that the regular plurals were in this case rather choice of the author, especially as far as the spoken language is concerned. (COCA)

[53] *It was very strange for us, because the recruits were lying just like sheeps and goats.* (COCA:2011:SPOK:NPR\_TalkNat)

[54] *And they had to treat us like dogs, you know, like sheeps.* (COCA:1991:SPOK:ABC\_Nightline)

[55] *“Yaar, they fed sheeps to the cows here! God did not make cows for eating of sheeps! And the flesh of Mother Cow is not for us to eat...”* (COCA:1993:FIC:Omni)

*Deer* (plural *deer*)

In this case there are 35 excerpts with the noun *deer* taking the regular –s plural in COCA and some of them are shown in the examples [56], [57] and [58]. (COCA) Although *deer* is considered to be always zero plural noun as can be observed in already mentioned examples it is not always the case. Here the regular plural can be compared to the above discussed noun *sheep* where the –s plural seems to be author’s choice even though it is considered ungrammatical.

[56] *In and around trees and hills, deers, a boar, a lion, and a bear are all about to die from the spears of hunters.* (COCA:1999:ACAD:Art\_Bulletin)

[57] *There has been much worries for the deers and wild pigs that set off the land mines still there.* (COCA:2015:FIC:Antioch\_Review)

[58] *A game reserve in eastern Assam was covered by 15-foot-deep (4.5-meter-deep) flood waters, killing at least two one-horned rhinoceroses and several deers, C.R. Bhobora, a forest official, said on Wednesday in Gauhati, the state capital.* (COCA:1995:NEWS:Associated\_Press)

*Cod* (plural *cod*)

The noun *cod* is classified, together with the above mentioned nouns *sheep* and *deer*, as animal name which is always zero plural. (Quirk et al. 1985, 308) There are 12 excerpts containing *cod* with regular plural suffix and 1 543 excerpts with no plural suffix in COCA. Again, the claim that the noun *cod* is always zero plural is refuted.

Excerpts with regular plural are shown in examples [59], [60] and [61].

[59] *That if you put these cods in these big vats, put some catfish in with them.*  
(COCA:2011:SPOK:ABC\_20/20)

[60] *Bottom fishing techniques include deployment of mobile gear, such as weighted trawls and dredges, that is dragged over the seafloor to capture cods, flatfishes, shrimps, and other species residing near the SWI.* (COCA:2000:ACAD:Bioscience)

[61] *Among the great litany of species our group captured were four kinds of mackerel, five of trevally, four sharks, three cods and many others no one ever dreamed of.*  
(COCA:1995:NEWS:Denver\_Post)

The three animal names *sheep*, *deer* and *cod*, which were discussed above, are classified as nouns that are always zero plural by Quirk (1985). (Quirk et al. 1985, 308) That means that these animal names should not take regular plural suffixes in PDE but as can be observed above there are a few instances where the regular plural suffix occurs. Thus the theory may seem to be disproved by the comparison with the COCA but taking into account the amount of regular plurals of these three animal names that occur in the Corpus the number is rather insignificant. These exceptions in form of using regular plural instead of the zero one can be assigned to the author's choice and his preference for using regular plural.

As mentioned before, there are differences in zero plural perception between Huddleston (2002) and Quirk (1985). While Huddleston considers nouns *bison*, *deer*, *grouse*, *moose* and *swine* as animal names that are always zero plural, Quirk categorizes nouns *bison*, *grouse* and *swine* as zero plurals which are usually zero plural thus can exceptionally have regular plural. (Quirk et al. 1985, 308; Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 1588)

*Bison* (plural *bison*)

The noun *bison* is considered to be always zero plural by Huddleston (2002). On the other hand, even though Quirk (1985) considers it to be zero plural too, he claims that *bison* can

exceptionally take regular plural. (Quirk et al. 1985, 308; Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 1588)

There are 5 excerpts containing the noun *bison* with regular *-s* plural only and 1 910 excerpts with no plural suffixes in COCA. According to this search can be agreed on what Huddleston (2002) claims. It can be easily compared to the previous nouns *sheep*, *deer* and *cod*, which are considered to be always zero plural but still take the regular plural in some cases, thus *bison* can be classified into the category of nouns which are always zero plural and not to the category mentioned by Quirk (1985). (Quirk et al. 1985, 308; Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 1588)

In examples [62], [63] and [64] there are excerpts from the Corpus containing regular plural suffixes. One interesting thing can be observed in example [63] where the noun *bisons* with regular plural is used in the context of hunting whereas as Huddleston (2002) argues, when the animal name is used in the context of hunting it takes zero plural. (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 1588) This occurrence seems to be very atypical especially with the noun that is considered to be always zero plural.

[62] *He first speculated that its long neural spines might have supported a shoulder hump like a bisons, then later surmised that they were part of a dorsal sail, like those sported by some modern lizards and chameleons.*  
(COCA:2014:MAG:National\_Geographic)

[63] *A century ago, bisons, which had been almost exterminated by hunting, were reintroduced to the prairie from the Bronx Zoo.* (COCA:1999:MAG:Newsweek)

[64] *They passed the giraffes with their gentle quizzical looks, the zebras swishing their tails, shaggy bisons and wildebeests seriously in need of a bath.*  
(COCA:1998:FIC:Commentary)

*Grouse* (plural *grouse*)

In case of *grouse* it can be considered as a clear example of noun which is always zero plural because there is only one excerpt containing the noun *grouse* with regular *-s* plural in COCA. Thus Quirk's (1985) claim, that *grouse* belongs to the category of nouns that are usually zero plural, is hereby refuted. (Quirk et al. 1985, 308)

In example [65], the only excerpt with the noun *grouse* taking the regular plural can be observed.

[65] *Off the grid and energy efficient from the veranda of their cabin, all Patti and Neal Mitchell hear is the wind whistling through the pine trees-and, if they're lucky, one of the turkey-size grouses that live in the area.* (COCA:2006:MAG:Sunset)

*Swine* (plural *swine*)

In case of the *swine*, there are two excerpts containing regular plural in COCA. These excerpts are shown in examples [66] and [67] but when looking at these instances it can be seen that the word *swine* is in this context not used in the sense of an animal but a kind of a swear-word. Therefore these examples are not relevant for this research and it can be said that there is no evidence of the animal name *swine* taking the regular plural in COCA.

[66] *This particular morning, however, Tolya found someone else's laundry fouling his private washing machine. "Pigs! Swines!" He grabbed the stiff half-dry clothes, heedless of the pain in his hands, and flung them to the cement.* (COCA:2002:FIC:Literary\_Review)

[67] *Jerry's got our maps you know. Swines. Before the war we helped them run about the desert making maps – and now they get spies into Cairo using our maps, they'll get Rommel into Cairo using our maps.* (COCA:1996:FIC:English\_Patient,\_The)

Above, the three animal names *bison*, *grouse* and *swine* were discussed and compared to the Corpus. As Quirk (1985) argued, these nouns have usually zero plural which means that they can occasionally take regular plural. On the contrary, Huddleston (2002) classified these nouns to the category of nouns which are always zero plural. (Quirk et al. 1985, 308; Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 1588) According to the comparison of these nouns to the Corpus can be seen that Huddleston's categorization was more accurate. In case of the *bison* there are 5 excerpts with regular plural, while at *grouse* there is only one excerpt and even no evidence of regular plural at *swine*. Quirk's theory can be therefore refuted especially when looking back on the nouns *sheep*, *deer* and *cod* which are considered to be always zero plural by Quirk. The amount of these nouns with regular plural is generally higher than the amount of regular plural at *bison*, *grouse* and *swine*. To sum it up, Quirk's categorization is not very accurate when comparing these categories to the Corpus.

One more animal name is included in the category of nouns which are always zero plural by Huddleston (2002) – the noun *moose*. (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 1588)

*Moose* (plural *moose*)

In case of the noun *moose* there are 3 excerpts containing regular plural in COCA. (COCA) These can be observed in examples [68], [69] and [70] but examples [68] and [69] are from the same source. What is also interesting is the fact that examples [68] and [69] use regular plural in the context of killing which can be compared to the theory mentioned by Huddleston (2002) which says that zero plural occurs in the context of hunting and shooting. (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 1588) Notwithstanding, there are 3 instances using regular plural only in the Corpus so the noun *moose* can be considered to be always zero plural as Huddleston (2002) argues. (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 1588)

[68] *And I said, look, aren't you killing all kinds of mooses and elks and other things?* (COCA:1990:SPOK:CNN\_Crossfire)

[69] *Andy, incidentally, Buchanan is a fifth generation Washingtonian, you could tell when he talked about mooses how much time he's- how much time he's spent in the wilderness.* (COCA:1990:SPOK:CNN\_Crossfire)

[70] *You wouldn't have thought a missionary would have gone round killing mooses, would you?* (COCA:1990:FIC:September)

In this chapter, nouns *sheep*, *deer*, *cod*, *bison*, *grouse*, *swine* and *moose* were discussed. In all cases it can be agreed that these animal names belong to the category of nouns which are always zero plural. Of course the designation 'always' cannot be taken literally here because there are exceptions in all of these nouns. These exceptions – meant by use of regular plural – are caused mainly by choice of the author or speaker to use regular plural instead of the zero one. And according to Toupin (2015), these choices are acceptable as he claims that zero plural animal names can take regular plural too and it is still considered grammatical. (Toupin 2015, 102)

Animal names *hippopotamus*, *luce*, *lynx*, *plaice* and *walrus* are considered zero plural by Toupin (2015). They all have a non-native origin and the reason for being the zero plurals is having a sibilant in their final morpheme.

Irregularity can be observed at Quirk's (1985) categorization. According to him, animal names *bison*, *grouse* and *swine* belongs to the category of nouns which are usually zero plural and animal names *sheep*, *deer* and *cod* are always zero plural. (Quirk et al. 1985, 308) But by comparison with the Corpus it is arguable because *bison*, *grouse* and

*swine* almost does not appear with regular *-s* plural suffixes. Thus this categorization can be considered inaccurate.

### 3 QUANTITATIVE NOUNS

This chapter will focus on those quantitative nouns, specifically on units of measure and value, which have a tendency to have zero plural. There are about 16 quantitative nouns which occur with zero plural. However, these zero plurals occur only under certain conditions. (Toupin 2015, 99)

According to Wickens (1992) zero plural is used with nouns referring to the mass, as for example a noun *dozen*, or capacity, as a noun *horsepower*. (Wickens 1992, 19) This claim can be compared with the previously discussed animal names in chapter 2. The animal names take zero plural when they are used in the context of the group of animals which is similar to the Wickens' (1992) claim that zero plural is used with nouns referring to the mass. However, as will be discussed further, semantics is not important when it comes to zero plural quantitative nouns but it is more about the context and premodification.

The first group of quantitative nouns which have in some cases zero plural are nouns *dozen*, *hundred*, *thousand* and *million*. These nouns have zero plural when they are premodified by a numeral or by another quantitative word. (Quirk et al. 1985, 308; Biber et al. 1999, 289; Greenbaum 1990, 96; Dušková 2003, 40; Acquaviva 2005, 252) This claim can be observed in examples [71] to [74]. Moreover the quantitative noun does not have to be premodified in order to have zero plural as it is in case of nouns *foot* and *pound*, which will be discussed further. (Acquaviva 2005, 256)

[71] *There were three dozen people on the market.*

[72] *More than seven hundred dogs were at the exhibition.*

[73] *He was looking at the several thousand stars at the sky.*

[74] *The new machine costs more than five million dollars.*

On the other hand, when these quantitative nouns are followed by an *of*-phrase then the regular plural is used no matter if the noun is premodified by a numeral or another quantitative expression. (Quirk et al. 1985, 308; Biber et al. 1999, 289; Greenbaum 1990, 96; Dušková 2003, 40) However, Quirk (1985) claims that zero plural form, in connection with an *of*-phrase, is common too. (Quirk 1985, 308)

In the following examples [75] to [78], quantitative nouns with an *of*-phrase and regular plural can be observed.

[75] *There were three dozens of people on the market.*

[76] *More than seven hundreds of dogs were at the exhibition.*

[77] *He was looking at the several thousands of stars at the sky.*

[78] *The new machine costs more than five millions of dollars.*

Another two quantitative nouns which occur with zero plural are nouns *foot* and *pound* (denoting weight as well as currency). The condition for the nouns being a zero plural is that they have to be premodified and followed by a numeral. (Quirk et al. 1985, 309; Biber et al. 1999, 288; Dušková 2003, 40) In examples [79] and [81], there are sentences containing quantitative nouns *foot* and *pound* premodified and followed by a numeral while in examples [80] and [82] these nouns are not followed by a numeral therefore they are considered ungrammatical. However, according to Quirk (1985) and Biber (1999) sentences [80] and [82] are considered non-standard but usage of zero plurals not followed by any numeral is widely accepted in conversations and it seems to be a dominant choice of the speakers. (Quirk et al. 1985, 309; Biber et al. 1999, 288) Thus it is arguable whether the sentences [80] and [82] are grammatical or not.

[79] *The child was only three foot seven.*

[80] (\*) *The child was only three foot.*

[81] *His suitcase was too heavy because it was almost ninety pound seventy.*

[82] (\*) *His suitcase was too heavy because it was almost ninety pound.*

Zero plural is used with the nouns *quid*, which means pound or pounds, and *p*, which means penny or pence. As these words are rather colloquial they are used in casual speech. (Biber et al. 1999, 288) The quantitative zero plural nouns *quid* and *p* can be observed in the examples [83] and [84].

[83] *Even though he is poor, he gave me fifty quid.*

[84] *It costs twenty p only.*

Quirk (1985) mentions other quantitative nouns which take zero plural when used with numerals, even though some of them are used rather sporadically. These are units of quantity such as *brace*, *gross*, *head*, *score* and *yoke*, units of weight *hundredweight* and



*stone*, then units of currency or value *quid*, *p* and *yen*, unit of power *horsepower* and unit of frequency measurement (*kilo*)*hertz*. (Quirk 1985, 309)

The above mentioned quantitative nouns will be compared with results in the COCA.

### 3.1 Corpus

#### *Dozen*

In COCA, there are 284 excerpts with zero plural expression *dozen of* and 15 124 excerpts with regular plural expression *dozens of*. Excerpts containing zero plural are shown in examples [85], [86] and [87].

[85] *There were several dozen of them and Martin saw them breathing.*  
(COCA:2017:FIC:Analog\_Science\_Fiction\_&\_Fact)

[86] *A few dozen of them were liberated in Raqqa when the SDF came in.*  
(COCA:2017:MAG:Daily\_Beast)

[87] *Three dozen of his donors are outside Mesa County and include such heavyweights as Philip Anschutz and energy companies in Denver and Houston.*  
(COCA:2014:NEWS:Denver\_Post)

#### *Hundred*

There are 34 064 excerpts containing regular plural phrase *hundreds of* and 382 excerpts containing zero plural phrase *hundred of* in COCA. (COCA) Zero plural expression *hundred of* is shown in the examples [88], [89] and [90].

[88] *They found a thousand aliens on the voter registration rolls, and several hundred of them had voted.* (COCA:2017:SPOK:JOURNAL\_EDITORIAL\_REPORT\_2:00\_PM\_EST)

[89] *Five hundred of this horde are staying at the Crowne Plaza, where the Broadway League is holding its annual road conference.* (COCA:2017:NEWS:New\_York\_Post)

[90] *We are getting a couple hundred of them this week, but we know that there are close to 300 in foster that are also waiting," Grady said.*  
(COCA:2017:NEWS:The\_Boston\_Globe)

*Thousand*

In COCA, there are 396 results containing zero plural expression *thousand of* and 41 335 results containing regular plural expression *thousands of*. (COCA) The expression *thousand of* with zero plural can be observed in the examples [91], [92] and [93].

[91] *No fewer than eleven thousand state and local agencies are registered to use the program and about eight thousand of them are active users.* (COCA:2017:MAG:Salon)

[92] *There are seventy-five thousand of us.* (COCA:2016:FIC:Analog\_Science\_Fiction\_&\_Fact)

[93] *Five thousand of them were dogs.* (COCA:2014:MAG:Esquire)

*Million*

There are 24 180 excerpts with regular plural phrase *millions of* and 2 985 excerpts with zero plural phrase *million of* in COCA. (COCA) Zero plural expression *million of* can be seen in the examples [94], [95] and [96].

[94] *Marinetti tells Bloomberg the location hopes to have 6 million visitors each year, 2 million of those from outside of Italy.* (COCA:2017:MAG:Fortune)

[95] *Facebook has said ads bought by Russian operatives reached 10 million of its users.* (COCA:2017:NEWS:Washington\_Post)

[96] *That's because the Equifax hack contains arguably the most sensitive data about individuals – about 143 million of them – including social security numbers, full names, addresses, birth dates, and even drivers licenses and credit card numbers for some.* (COCA:2017:MAG:Business\_Insider)

Quantitative nouns *dozen*, *hundred*, *thousand* and *million* in their zero plural form followed by an *of*-phrase were compared with the COCA. Notwithstanding the fact that these nouns, when followed by an *of*-phrase, should take regular plural, Quirk (1985) claims that it is possible to use zero plural as well. (Quirk 1985, 308) As can be seen in the examples [85] to [96] the zero plural is used even though not very often. When comparing the amount of regular plural excerpts with zero plural excerpts the amount of zero plurals is rather negligible. However, it proves that zero plural can be used and Quirk's (1985) claim is therefore proven.

*Foot and Pound*

According to Quirk (1985) and Biber (1999), quantitative nouns *foot* and *pound* can have zero plural without being followed by any numeral, even though it is considered non-standard. (Quirk et al. 1985, 309; Biber et al. 1999, 288)

There are 113 excerpts containing the noun *foot* in its zero plural form and 59 excerpts containing the noun *pound* in the zero plural form both not followed by any numeral in COCA. The plural context was differentiated from the singular one by the premodifiers and subject-verb agreement. This claim was proven even though the amount of zero plurals in the Corpus is not significant.

Words *foot* and *pound* in the zero plural form can be observed in the examples [97] and [98].

[97] *Said I'm four foot and 70 pounds, put in a credit card, and they sent him, I think, Oxycontin or something.* (COCA:2003:SPOK:Fox\_OReilly)

[98] *Each cubic feet is eight pound.* (COCA:2003:SPOK:NBC\_Dateline)

There is no evidence for the nouns *quid* and *p* being used with regular plural in COCA. It is arguable why these two nouns are not used with regular plural. One possibility for *quid* and *p* being zero plural only is the fact that these are slang terms. Another possibility may be the fact that *p* stands for *penny*, which is a singular form, and *pence*, which is a plural form. Both of these nouns – *penny* and *pence* do not have the regular plural suffix, even though the noun *pence* has a sibilant in its final morpheme, and this may be the reason for *p* not having the regular plural suffix too. In case of the noun *quid* the reason may be its meaning – “one pound” – which is of course singular.

Also the quantitative nouns mentioned by Quirk (1985), *brace*, *gross*, *head*, *score*, *yoke*, *hundredweight*, *stone*, *yen*, *horsepower* and *(kilo)hertz*, in the form of regular plural together with any numeral preceding are not contained in COCA.

Quantitative nouns *dozen*, *hundred*, *thousand* and *million* were discussed in this chapter. It was proven, by the comparison of these words with the Corpus, that these nouns can take zero plural even when they are followed by an *of*-phrase. Furthermore, it was proven that quantitative nouns *foot* and *pound* are used with zero plural even when they are not followed by any numeral and that regular plural form of nouns *quid*, *p*, *brace*, *gross*, *head*, *score*, *yoke*, *hundredweight*, *stone*, *yen*, *horsepower* and *(kilo)hertz* is not used at all according to COCA.

## 4 NATIONALITY NOUNS

This chapter will focus on those nationality nouns which occur with zero plural. According to Toupin (2015), there are about 10 nationality nouns which take zero plural. (Toupin 2015, 99)

Nationality nouns with *-ese* ending are said to have zero plural. These are for example *Chinese, Japanese, Lebanese, Portuguese, Vietnamese, Maltese* or *Sinhalese* as well as *Swiss* even though it does not have the *-ese* suffix. (Quirk et al. 1985, 308; Biber et al. 1999, 289; Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 1589; Dušková 2003, 40) The reason for such nationality nouns being a zero plural is probably the sibilant in their final morpheme. On the other hand, Huddleston (2002) argues that the usage of zero plural with these nationality nouns, when used as plural, is no longer so common and many speakers consider it obsolete or slightly abusive. These speakers accept plurals such as *the Chinese* but with the structure of nationality adjectives. (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 1589)

Following nationality and ethnic names can be used with both zero and regular *-s* plural: *Apache(s), Bantu(s), Bedouin(s), Eskimo(s)* or *Navaho(s)*. (Quirk et al. 1985, 308)

One exception is a nationality noun *Sioux*. While it has zero plural in the written form in speech it takes either singular or plural. The pronunciation in singular is /su:/ while in plural it is pronounced as /su:z/. (Quirk et al. 1985, 308; Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 1589)

The above discussed nationality names will be compared with results in the COCA.

### 4.1 Corpus

*Chinese, Japanese* and *Portuguese*

As there is no evidence for the nouns *Chinese, Japanese* and *Portuguese* with regular plural suffix in COCA, it can be said that these nationality nouns are clear examples of zero plurals. In the following examples [99], [100] and [101] there are excerpts containing these nouns with zero plural.

[99] *As for the Chinese who are here, are they allowed to enjoy liberty as men of all other nationalities enjoy it?* (COCA:2017:NEWS:Washington\_Post)

[100] *But the Japanese are at the forefront and it's very, very tough to compete with them in terms of the purchase of anything in this country that's front.* (COCA:2017:SPOK:ARCHIVE\_SHOW\_9:00\_PM\_EST)

[101] *But then, the Portuguese never seem to be in a hurry, except when they are behind the wheel of a car.* (COCA:2015:FIC:New\_England\_Review)

### *Vietnamese*

In case of the noun *Vietnamese*, there is no evidence for regular plural as well as at the previous three nouns in COCA. However, all excerpts in the Corpus containing the noun *Vietnamese* are used only with the adjective *south* – as a phrase *south Vietnamese*.

Moreover, Huddleston's (2002) claim is clearly shown with the noun *Vietnamese*. He claims that usage of zero plural with nationality nouns with plural meaning is not common nowadays and that most speakers prefer to use these zero plurals as adjectives. (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 1589) This can be clearly observed with the word *Vietnamese* as there are 374 excerpts with zero plural suffix but only 39 out of these are used as a noun not an adjective. This can be seen in the examples [102] and [103]. While in the example [102] there is the noun *Vietnamese* used as a noun, in the example [103] there is a phrase *Vietnamese people* where *Vietnamese* stands for an adjective and *people* stands for a noun. This situation can be observed with the noun *Vietnamese* only.

[102] *Thousands of South Vietnamese were trying to escape with them.* (COCA:1994:SPOK:ABC\_PrimeTime)

[103] *Thieu's limited popularity with the South Vietnamese people hinged on his ability to deliver U.S. military and economic assistance.* (COCA:1999:SPOK:ABC\_Special)

### *Maltese, Lebanese and Sinhalese*

Surprisingly, there is no evidence for the nouns *Lebanese* and *Sinhalese* in COCA. In case of the noun *Maltese*, there are two excerpts only, however, they are singular not zero plural. (COCA)

### *Swiss*

Similar to the previous nouns, *Maltese*, *Lebanese* and *Sinhalese*, there is no evidence for *Swiss*. More precisely, there are 55 excerpts containing the noun *Swiss*, however none of these refer to the *Swiss* as to nationality noun. (COCA) What the excerpts with noun *Swiss* refer to in the COCA can be seen in the Table 3.

<i>Swiss cheese</i>	23
<i>Swiss chard</i>	11
<i>“dotted swiss” – fabric</i>	8
<i>Swiss bank</i>	3
<i>Swiss burger</i>	3
<i>Swiss ball</i>	2
<i>Swiss steak</i>	2
<i>Swiss chocolate</i>	1
<i>Swiss cattle</i>	1
<i>Swiss army</i>	1

Table 3 *Swiss in COCA*

*Apache* (plural *Apache* or *Apaches*)

There are 639 excerpts with no plural suffix and 477 excerpts with regular plural suffix in COCA. Out of the 639 excerpts with no suffix there are 289 excerpts with zero plural. (COCA) In the examples [104] and [105] sentences with zero plural as well as regular one can be observed.

[104] “That three *Apache* and six *Blackhawks* had been reassigned in my absence for escort duty by CENTCOM, not in Afghanistan but in Florida through MacDill Air Force Base.” (COCA:2016:FIC:The\_mountain\_:\_an\_Event\_Group\_thriller)

[105] *Supposedly, 15 Apaches were killed and Carson was a part of it.* (COCA:2007:MAG:USA\_Today\_Magazine)

*Bantu* (plural *Bantu* or *Bantus*)

Surprisingly, there is no excerpt with either no suffix or regular plural suffix in COCA.

*Bedouin* (plural *Bedouin* or *Bedouins*)

In COCA, there are 557 excerpts with no plural suffix and 133 excerpts with regular plural suffix. Out of these excerpts with no plural suffix, 337 contain zero plural. (COCA) In example [106] and [107], excerpts with zero and regular plural can be observed.

[106] *As the winter session of Israel's Knesset convenes, its agenda includes a proposed law authorizing the forced relocation of more than 30,000 Bedouin from their home villages in the Negev.* (COCA:2013:MAG:Newsweek\_Global)

[107] *The revolt began in 1916 with an estimated 30,000 Bedouins and other tribesmen.* (COCA:2010:MAG:Military\_History)

*Eskimo* (plural *Eskimo* or *Eskimos*)

There are 137 results with no plural suffix with 57 of them being a zero plural and 291 results with regular plural in COCA. (COCA) Regular as well as zero plural can be seen in the examples [108] and [109].

[108] *The Eskimo have twenty-two words for snow.*  
(COCA:2002:FIC:The\_Kenyon\_Review)

[109] *Just like Eskimos have fifty different words for snow, Szanto has at least that many pained expressions.* (COCA:2011:FIC:Eyes\_of\_the\_innocent)

*Navaho* (plural *Navaho* or *Navahos*)

In case of *Navaho*, there are 82 excerpts with no plural suffix with 52 of them being zero plural and only 4 excerpts containing regular plural suffix in COCA. (COCA) Examples [110] and [111] show excerpts with zero and regular plural.

[110] *The Navaho are a pretty secular people, but Paul had business with the Hopi, unusual for a Navaho; and you don't get any stranger than the Hopi.*  
(COCA:1991:FIC:Remaking\_History)

[111] *In his classic 1907 ethnological study, *Games of the North American Indians*, Stewart Culin briefly noted that Navahos imprisoned at Bosque Redondo in 1863 had incorporated elements of baseball in their own game...*  
(COCA:2000:ACAD:American\_Indian\_Quarterly)

Zero plural nationality nouns were discussed in this chapter. The three nouns *Chinese*, *Japanese* and *Portuguese* can be considered a clear example of zero plural nouns as there is no evidence of their regular plural form in the Corpus. The noun *Vietnamese* was discussed as well. This noun is used mostly as an adjective – only 39 excerpts out of 374 contained the noun *Vietnamese* as a noun – but rest of the nationality nouns is not used like

this. This is interesting because as Huddleston (2002) claims, most speakers prefer to use nationality nouns in form of zero plural as an adjective, however, he refers to all nationality nouns with the *-ese* ending and not only to the noun *Vietnamese*. What is also interesting is the fact that there is no evidence for the following nouns *Maltese*, *Lebanese* and *Sinhalese* in the Corpus as well as for the noun *Swiss*.

The nationality nouns *Apache*, *Bantu*, *Bedouin*, *Eskimo* and *Navaho* were compared with the COCA as well. However, when compared to the previous nouns which do not take regular plural, these nouns can be used with both regular as well as zero plural. In case of the nouns *Apache* and *Eskimo* there are more excerpts with regular plural than with the zero one thus it can be said that these two nouns are not entirely zero plurals. On the other hand nouns *Bedouin* and *Navaho* have rather zero plural than the regular one and surprisingly, there is no occurrence of the noun *Bantu* in the Corpus.



## 5 OTHER ZERO PLURAL NOUNS

This chapter will focus on the nouns which do not belong to any previously discussed category – Animal names, Quantitative nouns and Nationality nouns – on nouns with equivocal number and nouns ending in /s/ or /z/. These are nouns which have a form of a regular plural but they are considered to be zero plural nouns because the regular plural –s suffixes are part of their lexical bases. Basically, these two categories are almost the same, as they contain mostly the same nouns, and the difference is rather in the way how the authors present their claims. While Quirk (1985) argues that these nouns are nouns with equivocal number, Huddleston (2002) and Biber (1999) claim that these are nouns with ending in /s/ or /z/ (Quirk et al. 1985, 309; Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 1589; Biber 1999, 289) As these nouns were already discussed in the chapters 1.4.1 and 1.4.2 quite in detail, this chapter will focus on the nouns *barracks*, *craft*, *dice* and *offspring*.

The noun *barracks* is a noun with equivocal number and noun with its ending in /s/. That means that this noun can be treated as singular as well as plural. (Quirk et al. 1985, 309; Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 1589) However, according to Quirk (1985), this noun can be used without the –s suffix as well and phrase such as “*a barrack square*” is possible and grammatically correct too, even though its meaning is rather metaphorical and informal. (Quirk 1985, 309) On the other hand, the word *barrack* is in the phrase “*a barrack square*” an adjective so it cannot be compared with the noun *barracks* thus the Quirk’s (1985) example does not prove that the noun can be used without the –s suffix as well.

Another zero plural noun is the noun *craft* and its compounds *aircraft*, *hovercraft* and *spacecraft*. (Quirk et al. 1985, 309; Biber et al. 1999, 289; Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 1589; Dušková 2003, 40; Acquaviva 2008, 30) When talking about the zero plural form of the noun *craft*, only the *craft* in the sense of ‘ship’ is meant. Other meanings of this word such as skill, art or handicraft take regular –s plural. (Quirk et al. 1985, 309)

The noun *dice* was previously plural of the noun *die* but in PDE it is not used anymore thus *dice* is considered zero plural. (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 1589; Biber et al. 1999, 289) The noun *offspring* is considered zero plural as well. (Dušková 2003, 40; Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 1589)

The above mentioned nouns *barracks*, *craft*, *dice* and *offspring* will be compared with the Corpus.

## 5.1 Corpus

### *Barracks*

As Quirk (1985) argues, the noun *barracks* can be used also without the *-s* suffix. (Quirk 1985, 309) This claim can be observed in the example [112] where the noun *barrack* without regular plural is used. There are 92 excerpts containing the nouns *barrack* in COCA but all these nouns are singular thus it cannot be considered zero plural. (COCA) In the example [113] there is an excerpt with word *barracks* used as a singular because of the singular subject-verb agreement.

[112] *His apartment is as neat and lifeless as a barrack.*  
(COCA:2013:FIC:Kenyon\_Review)

[113] *Their barracks is a real house of stone and cement.*  
(COCA:2016:FIC:Literary\_Review)

### *Aircraft, Hovercraft and Spacecraft*

The noun *aircraft* is considered to be zero plural, especially by Acquaviva (2008) who claims that regular *-s* plural form *aircrafts* is ungrammatical. (Acquaviva 2008, 30) However, there are 51 excerpts containing the regular plural noun *aircrafts* in COCA. (COCA) One of the excerpts can be observed in example [114]. This comparison with the Corpus disproved Acquaviva's (2008) claim.

[114] *Air traffic controllers are working to reroute aircrafts that were planning to land.* (COCA:2015:SPOK:CNN\_NEWSROOM\_1:00\_PM\_EST)

The nouns *hovercraft* and *spacecraft* are considered to be zero plural too. Notwithstanding, there are 7 excerpts containing the noun *hovercraft* in form of regular plural and 18 excerpts containing the noun *spacecraft* in form of regular plural. (COCA) Two excerpts containing regular plural are shown in the examples [115] and [116].

[115] *And you'll love flying in the big airships and hovercrafts.*  
(COCA:2011:MAG:Boys'\_Life)

[116] *Are you the one who thinks the government has two spacecrafts?*  
(COCA:1993:SPOK:Ind\_Geraldo)

*Dice*

There are 43 excerpts containing the regular plural form of the noun *dice* in the COCA. (COCA) One of the excerpts can be observed in the example [117].

[117] *Slices of raw fish are accented with dollops of avocado mousse and dices of fresh stone fruit.* (COCA:2009:NEWS:San\_Francisco\_Chronicle)

*Offspring*

There are 31 excerpts containing regular plural form of the noun *offspring* in COCA. (COCA) Example of the regular plural form is shown in [118].

[118] *The National Schizophrenia Fellowship, like the National Alliance for the Mentally III, is primarily an organization of parents whose offsprings are schizophrenic.* (COCA:1990:ACAD:Current\_Psychology)

Even though most of the authors claim that nouns *aircraft*, *hovercraft*, *spacecraft*, *dice* and *offspring* are zero plural nouns only, the comparison with the Corpus refuted this argument as there are excerpts containing regular plural as well.

## CONCLUSION

The thesis focused on zero plurals of English nouns. The first chapter dealt with the definition of zero plural nouns and focused on a few grammar books and the comparison of the differences among them. The following chapters dealt with individual zero plural categories which were discussed in more details and individual zero plural nouns were compared with the Corpus. The aim of the thesis was to compare the statements from grammar books and literature with the Corpus of Contemporary American English and to identify the differences among them.

The zero plural animal names constitute the largest part of all extant zero plural nouns. These animal names refer to game and farm animals, fish and to animals as a group. Moreover, when the animal names are used in the context of hunting and shooting they are used with zero plural as well. However, the zero plural animal names can be divided into three subcategories – nouns which are always zero plural, nouns which allow both zero and regular plural and nouns which have exceptionally zero plural - as the frequency of using either zero or regular plural differs. The comparison with the Corpus has shown that the statements discussed by the authors in some cases differ from what can be found in the Corpus and it has shown that the subcategorization of the individual zero plural animal names is occasionally inaccurate as well.

In case of nationality nouns, the research has proven some of the theory discussed by the authors but some of the theory was disproven as well. Some nationality nouns have not even been found in the Corpus. There were also differences between the theory and the Corpus with quantitative nouns and other zero plural nouns.

To sum up the thesis, the research confirmed that the theory discussed by many authors does not always correspond the findings from the Corpus. This may be due to the fact that in the Corpus there are also some dialectical and informal excerpts while in the grammar books there are in most cases formal and theoretical examples.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

COCA Corpus of Contemporary American English

ME Middle English

OE Old English

OF Old French

PDE Present-Day English

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