# *TYPES OF NUMERALS IN ENGLISH AND ROMANIAN*

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***Abstract:*** *The paper aims to identify the main characteristics of the numeral both in English and in Romanian. The formation and main uses represent the basis of this study. Among the most frequently used types of numerals there can be mentioned the cardinal and ordinal numerals. But, also the distributive, multiplicative, fractional and collective numerals have a great importance for the grammatical system of the two languages.*

***Keywords:*** *language, grammar, numerals, formation, use.*

1. The numeral, both in English and in Romanian, is a controversial part of speech in the sense that it is not always considered a proper part of speech. It denotes an abstract number, makes a numerical determination of objects or establishes the order of objects by enumeration.

According to the Romanian Grammar (2008), the numeral "is part of the semantic class of the quantitatives and reunites, in its capacity as "an expression of the number", words and groups of words with specific syntactic and morphological features. The quantitatives associated to "the idea of number", the numerals, are organized in categories which are different by their particular way to introduce this idea in organizing the speech. The reference to a precise number is achieved linguistically very differently, which explains the grammatical heterogeneity of the numeral." (GALR, I, 2008: 289)

It is to be noted that the numeral is not considered a proper part of speech because, in the sentence, it has the value of various parts of speech such as:

- nouns: *Four and eight is twelve.* (*Patru şi cu opt fac doisprezece.*)
- adjectives: *The third witness did not want to speak.* (*Cel de-al treilea martor nu a vrut.*)
- substitutes (pronouns): *The third did not want to speak.* (*Cel de-al treilea nu voia să vorbească.*)
- adverbs: *When I first came here, I was a child.* (*Când am venit prima oară aici, eram copil.*)

2. Numerals are classified according to their:

- composition;
- derivation;
- content.

2.1. In accordance to their composition, numerals fall into:

- simple: *one, three, four, five, twenty* (in English), *unu, trei, primul, întreit, ambii* (in Romanian);
- compound: *twenty- three, four thousand and six, one hundred and five* (in English), *unsprezece, douăzeci, douăzeci şi trei, o sută douăzeci* (in Romanian).

The numerals have both variable and invariable forms: *three children- trei copii, the second boy- al doilea băiat, the second girl- a doua fată, two millions- două milioane* etc..

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The numerals *hundred, thousand, million* take the *–s* ending to form their plural when they are used as nouns: *hundreds of people, thousands of children*, but when they are used as adjectives and are preceded by other cardinal or indefinite numerals, they are invariable in the plural: *nineteen hundred ninety six (1996), some thousand people.*

The Romanian words *zece, sută, mie, milion, miliard* etc. behave like nouns and are different from the rest of the numerals. They have various forms in what their number regards: *sută- sute, mie- mii, million- milioane* etc.. They also have a fix gender: *sută, mie* belong to the feminine gender, while *milion, miliard* to the neuter gender. These words have forms both for the synthetic genitive: *eforturile sutei/ sutelor (de oameni)* and for the analytical genitive: *eforturile a sute/ a milioane de oameni*.

2.2. According to their derivation, in English, numerals are formed by means of affixation using the suffixes:

- *teen*: *fourteen, eighteen*;
- *ty*: *thirty, fifty, seventy*;
- *th*: *the seventh, the fifth.*

In Romanian, numerals are formed by means of affixation with the prefix *îm/ în* and the suffix *–it*: *însutit, înzecit, împătrit, încincit, îndoit, întreit* etc..

2.3. According to their content, numerals fall into:

a. cardinal numerals: *one, four, five, twelve, three hundred, unu, patru, cinci, zece, unsprezece, o sută douăzeci, trei sute* etc.;

b. ordinal numerals: *the first, the second, the fifth, primul, al doilea, a doua, al treilea, a treia* etc.;

c. fractional numerals: *a/ one half, a/ one third, two thirds, a/ one fourth, three fourths, doime, treime, pătrime, sfert, jumătate* etc.;

d. collective numerals: *couple, pair, brace, span, team, dozen, amândoi, amândouă, tustrei, tustrele, toţi trei, ambii, ambele, câte doi, câte trei* etc.;

e. multiplicative numerals: *double, twofold, threefold, fourfold; înzecit, însutit, înmiit* etc.;

f. distributive numerals: *one by one, two by two, by twos, by threes, unul câte unul, câte doi, câte trei* etc.;

g. indefinite numerals: *several, many, a few, some, a number of,many, plenty* etc.;

h. adverbial numerals: *once, twice, two times, three times, thrice, four times, once and a half, three times a year, many times, o dată, de două ori, de vreo cinci ori, de mai puţin de zece ori* etc..

2.3.1. The cardinal numeral expresses a full abstract number or a definite number of objects: *one, four, five, six, ten, eleven, twenty, one hundred, one thousand, one million, unu, patru, cinci, şase* etc..

In English, the numeral zero is called *nought* (B.E.)/ *naught* (A.E.) in formal language, *zero* in sciences and *o* [ău] when used to express the telephone number.

Regarding the form of the English cardinal numerals, the units, the numerals from *1 to 9, ten, eleven, twelve* are simple, while, the numerals from *13* to *19* are formed by adding the suffix *–teen* to the respective units: *thirteen, fourteen, fifteen* etc..

The numerals which denominate the tens, meaning the numerals from *20* to *90* are formed with the help of the suffix *–ty*: *twenty, thirty, forty, fifty* etc..

The tens are usually connected by a hyphen to the respective units: *twenty-seven, thirty- four, , forty- one* etc. and add the *–s* ending to form their plural: *in the 90s ( nineties).*



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The numerals *hundred, thousand, million, billion* are connected by the conjunction *and* to the tens or units following them: *four hundred and twenty, four hundred and one*.

The Romanian cardinal numerals from *one* to *ten* are simple. The numeral *zero* expresses the idea of *the null set*, when it is used in connection with a noun: *zero jucării*.

They are formed by simply joining the numerals: *treizeci, o mie, cinci sute patru* or by using different elements such as:

- the preposition *spre*: *unsprezece, doisprezece, treisprezece* etc.
- the conjunction *şi*: *douăzeci şi doi, treizeci şi unu* etc;
- the preposition *de*: *treizeci de elevi, douăzeci de mii, patru sute de millioane* etc..

The cardinal numeral has "an infinite capacity to combine the units of the series, creating complex compound numerals, of the type: şaptezeci de milioane două sute treizeci şi cinci de mii opt sute unsprezece (*seventy million two hundred thirty-five thousand eight hundred and eleven*)." ( GALR, I, 2008: 292)

It is to be mentioned the fact that all compound numerals have been formed in Romanian language, while the simple numerals from *one* to *ten* have been inherited from Latin. The words: *sută, million, milliard, trillion* and *zero* were borrowed.

2.3.2. The ordinal numeral describes something by indicating where it comes in a series or sequence: *the first, the second, the third, the fourth, primul, al doilea, a doua, al treilea, al treilea, al patrulea* etc..

Most English ordinal numerals are formed by adding the *–th* suffix to the corresponding cardinal numerals, excepting the first three numerals together with the corresponding compound numerals: *the first, the second, the third, the twenty- first, the twenty- second, the twenty- third.* They are usually preceded by the article *the*: *the fourth, the fifth, the tenth, the eleventh, the twentieth, the one hundredth, the one thousandth, the one millionth*.

The ordinal numerals from *twenty* to *ninety* change *y* into *i* and add a linking *e* before the *–th* suffix: *the fortieth, the fiftieth, the sixtieth.*

The ordinal numerals are used especially to express data: *the fourth of July/ July the fourth*, also *July fourth* or *July four* in spoken English.

When used together with cardinals, ordinals function as adjectives put in front of the respective cardinals: *the first three days*.

A special use of the ordinal numeral is to indicate the order of succession of kings, heads of churches or heads of families: *Henry the Third (Henry III), Henry the Eighth (Henry VIII), Pope Gregory the First ( Pope Gregory I).*

The Romanian ordinal numeral has the distinction of gender. It is formed with the help of *al+ the cardinal numeral+ le (definite article)* + the particle *a* for the masculine/ neuter gender: *al patrulea, al şaptelea,* and with *a + the cardinal numeral* + the definite article *a* for the feminine gender: *a patra, a şaptea* etc..

If the ordinal numeral is a compound one, the elements which help its formation are put to the last element: *al douăzeci şi doilea/ a douăzeci şi doua*.

Alongside the structures derived from the cardinal numeral, there are also used the forms *întâiul/ întâia* which are inherited from Latin and *prim, secund, terţ*, which are Romance borrowed words.

"The ordinal numeral *întâi*, placed before the noun, receives the morphemes of determination for gender, number and case: *întâiul vorbitor* ( *întâiului~, întâii~, întâilor~*), *întâia întâlnire* ( *întâile~, întâilor~*). When it is placed after a feminine noun,



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*întâi* is used in free variation with *întâia*, as it is the case of the phrase *clasa întâi/ clasa întâia*. (according to DOOM2).

The old ordinal numeral *primar* is used today only adjectivally in the phrase *văr primar*.

It is to be noted the fact that for indicating the first day of each month, the ordinal numeral *întâi* is always used in Romanian language, but for the rest of the days, the cardinal numerals are used: *întâi septembrie, doi/ trei/ cinci septembrie*. Still, in enumerations, both the ordinal and the cardinal numerals can be used: *etajul întâi, al doilea, al treilea,* but also *etajul unu, doi, trei.*

2.3.3. Fractional numerals denominate one or more fractions of something considered as a whole, indicating the quantity, the number of parts which are separated from a whole: *a third- o treime, one fourth- o pătrime, two thirds- două treimi, four fifths- patru cincimi, an eighth- o optime* etc..

Both in English and in Romanian, fractions are written in letters or in figures: *a half/ o jumătate*- ½, *a quarter/ un sfert*- ¼ , *three quarters/ trei sferturi*- ¾, *one fifth/ o cincime*- $^1/_5$ etc..

English fractions are expressed with the help of ordinal numerals, excepting the words *half* and *quarter,* while in Romanian, they are formed with a cardinal numeral and a nominal derivative which is formed, in its turn, with the help of the suffix *–ime* from a cardinal numeral.

The Romanian *doime* and *pătrime* are synonyms of the nouns *jumătate* and *sfert*.

Regarding the agreement in number, English people use a verb in the singular when one talks about part of a single thing: *Three tenths of this territory is covered by water*.

When one talks about part of a group of things, English people use a plural verb: *A quarter of the buildings were renovated last year.*

The Romanian language has two different types of agreement:

- the grammatical agreement in the singular or in the plural, when the fractional numerals are used without determinatives: *Au venit mulţi elevi, dar o pătrime **a/ au** plecat mai devreme.*

- the attraction agreement when the fractional numeral is determined by a prepositional group: *O pătrime din oameni **au** venit la muncă*.

It is to be noted that although the noun *oameni* is not in the nominative case, it has the semantic status of the subject.

2.3.4. The collective numeral expresses the numerical idea of plural under the form of a singular word. It has a definite number of units which can be classified into:

2.3.4.1. Collective numerals which denote a group of two: *couple, pair, brace, team, yoke, ambii, ambele, amândoi, amândouă*.

In Romanian, the collective numerals include a cardinal numeral in their structure. The exception of this series of numerals is represented by the neologism *ambii/ ambele*.

It is to be mentioned the fact that between the Romanian *amândoi/ amândouă* and *ambii/ ambele* there are some grammatical and stylistic differences, although they are considered to be synonyms.

The collective numeral *ambii* is always articulated and precedes the noun which it determines: *ambii mei colegi*, while *amândoi* is never articulated and can be used before or after the noun that it determines: *amândoi colegii mei* or *colegii mei amândoi.*



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The element *amân-* comes from the Latin word *ambo* that already means *amândoi*, a fact which makes the collective numeral *amândoi* a pleonasm. But, by losing its etymological value and keeping only its collective one, the element *amân-* is used also in structures such as: *amântrei*, *amânpatru*, structures that are specific to the regional or familial language.

2.3.4.2. Collective numerals that denote a multiple group, such as: *dozen, score, gross, tustrei, tustrele, toţi trei, toţi cincizeci* etc..

While English collective numerals have specific forms: *a dozen eggs, a score of women*, Romanian collective numerals are formed with the help of the element *tus-* which comes from *toţi* or with the help of the element *câteşi-* : *tustrei, tuscinci, câteşitrei, câteşicinci* etc..

Although they seem to be distributive numerals, structures such as: *câte trei bărbaţii, câte patru femeile* are used as collective numerals in Romanian popular language. The difference between the two types of numerals consists in the fact that collective numerals are used only in connection with nouns which are determined by the definite article: *Au mers câte trei bărbaţii*., while distributive numerals are used only in connection with nouns which are not determined by the definite article: *Au mers câte trei bărbaţi*.

The Romanian collective numerals are quite similar to the collective neological nouns such as: *pereche, cuplu, duzină*, words which are considered proper collective numerals in English: *pair, couple, dozen*.

2.3.5. Multiplicative numerals express the proportion in which a quality or a quantity grows.

In English, multiplicative numerals are formed by adding the *–fold* suffix to cardinal numerals: *twofold, threefold, fourfold* etc., except: *single, double, triple, treble*, or by adding the plural word *times*: *one time, two times, three times*, except: *once, twice, thrice*.

In Romanian, multiplicative numerals are either formed from some parasynthetic verbs: *împătrit, încincit, îndoit, întreit, înzecit* etc., or from a numeral: *înşesit*.

Both in English and in Romanian, the multiplicative numerals have neological synonyms: *quadruple, quintuple, sextuple/ cvadruplu, cvintuplu, sextuplu*.

2.3.6. Distributive numerals express the distribution of objects in equal groups.

In English, they are formed with the help of the preposition *by*: *one by one, by twos, by threes*.

In Romanian, the distributive numerals are formed with the help of the adverb *câte* followed by a cardinal numeral: *câte unu, câte cinci, câte zece* etc..

There are cases when the adverb *câte* is followed by a fractional numeral: *câte o cincime, câte o zecime*.

2.3.7. The English indefinite numerals express an indefinite number of objects: *several, many, (a) few, (a) lot(s)*.

Romanian language does not have this type of numeral. Still, it is translated with the help of the indefinite pronouns: *several children- câţiva copii, a lot of books- multe cărţi, many people- mulţi oameni, a few questions- câteva cărţi*.

Indefinite numerals such as: *much, (a) little, a lot, plenty, a great/ good deal* may express the idea of indefinite quantity when used in front of abstract nouns and names of matter: *much sugar, little oil, a lot of water* etc..



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2.3.8. Adverbial numerals express the proportion in which the quantity or quality of an object is repeated. Some of the English grammars consider it to be a particular case in which an ordinal or multiplicative numeral is used adverbially, but there are some other grammarians who mention the fact that the adverbial numeral represents a distinct type.

English adverbial numerals are formed with the help of a cardinal numeral followed by the word *times*: *two times, three times* or they have specific forms: *once, twice, thrice*.

Romanian adverbial numerals are structures which include either a cardinal numeral of the type: *o dată, de două ori, de trei ori, de cinci ori*, an ordinal numeral such as: *întâia dată, prima oară, a doua oară, a şaptea oară* etc. or the preposition *în* followed by an ordinal numeral which in its turn is followed by the word *rând*: *în primul rând, în al doilea rând, în al treilea rând etc*..

An interesting structure is the one in which the adverb *câte* is put between the preposition *de* and the cardinal numeral, the adverb adding a certain distributive value to the respective structure. For example: *de câte trei ori pe zi, de câte cinci ori pe săptămână*.

Both in English and in Romanian, the adverbial numeral is used to express approximation.

This grammatical phenomenon can be rendered by:

- the repetition of a close cardinal numeral: *de două, de trei ori pe lună/ two, three times a month*;

- the use of some adverbs such as: *aproximativ, circa, vreo/ approximately, about*.

In conclusion, one can say that there are similarities between the various types of numerals in the two given languages, but they differ in point of their formation. It is to be noted also the fact that when translating the English numerals into Romanian, one can find the proper grammatical equivalent.

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