BASIC PARADIGMS OF NOUN DECLENSION

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Annotation: This article examines the main paradigms of noun declension in the Russian language, focusing on the morphological principles that determine gender, number, and case forms. It analyzes the structural characteristics of the first, second, and third declension types, as well as irregular and mixed forms that fall outside the traditional classification. Special attention is given to the functional significance of declensional patterns in expressing syntactic relationships and maintaining grammatical coherence. The study highlights the relevance of noun declension for theoretical linguistics, Slavic morphology, and the methodology of teaching Russian as a foreign language.

Keywords: noun declension, Russian grammar, morphological paradigms, gender, case system, linguistic structure.

OTLARNING TUSLANISHINING ASOSIY PARADIGMALARI

Annotatsiya : Maqolada rus tilidagi otlarning asosiy tuslash paradigmalari, ularning jinsi, soni va kelishik shakllarini belgilovchi morfologik tamoyillar yoritilgan. Unda birinchi, ikkinchi va uchinchi tuslash turlarining tuzilishi, shuningdek, an'anaviy tasnifga to'liq mos kelmaydigan irregulyar va aralash shakllar tahlil qilingan. Declensionning sintaktik munosabatlarni ifodalashdagi hamda grammatik izchillikni ta'minlashdagi funksional ahamiyatiga alohida e'tibor qaratilgan. Tadqiqot rus tili grammatikasi, slavyan morfologiyasi va rus tilini chet tili sifatida o'qitish metodikasi uchun muhim ilmiy manba hisoblanadi.

Kalit so'zlar: otlarning tuslanishi, rus tili grammatikasi, morfologik paradigma, jins, kelishik tizimi, til tuzilishi.

ОСНОВНЫЕ ПАРАДИГМЫ СКЛОНЕНИЯ ИМЁН СУЩЕСТВИТЕЛЬНЫХ

Аннотация : В статье рассматриваются основные парадигмы склонения имён существительных в русском языке, а также морфологические принципы, определяющие их род, число и падежные формы. Анализируются структурные особенности первой, второй и третьей парадигм склонения, а также нерегулярные и смешанные типы, не вписывающиеся в традиционную классификацию. Особое внимание уделяется функциональной роли склонения в выражении синтаксических отношений и обеспечении грамматической связности. Исследование подчеркивает значимость системы склонения для теоретического языкознания, славянской морфологии и методики преподавания русского языка как иностранного.

Ключевые слова: склонение существительных, русская грамматика, морфологические парадигмы, род, падежная система, структура языка.

The system of noun declension in Russian represents one of the most fundamental components of the grammatical structure of the language. Russian nouns express grammatical categories such as gender, number, and case, and their forms change predictably according to established paradigms. These paradigms serve as the basis for determining syntactic relations within a sentence and for revealing the semantic roles of nouns. The study of noun declension is therefore essential not only for theoretical linguistics but also for language teaching, lexicography, and comparative Slavic grammar. The present article examines the main declensional paradigms in Russian, their morphological characteristics, and the principles that organize them.

The doctrine of parts of speech has long occupied a central position in Russian grammatical science and remains one of the most debated and conceptually rich areas of linguistic theory. From the earliest grammatical descriptions to contemporary linguistic approaches, Russian scholars have continuously explored the nature, functions, and classification principles of parts of speech, seeking to determine how language organizes its lexical units into meaningful grammatical categories.

Russian linguistic thought traditionally views parts of speech as stable, historically formed lexical-grammatical classes that reflect deep structural properties of language. Early Russian grammarians, influenced by classical models, relied primarily on logical-semantic criteria, grouping words according to their conceptual meaning and their relation to objects, qualities, and actions. This logical orientation laid the foundation for the later development of a more comprehensive grammatical system.
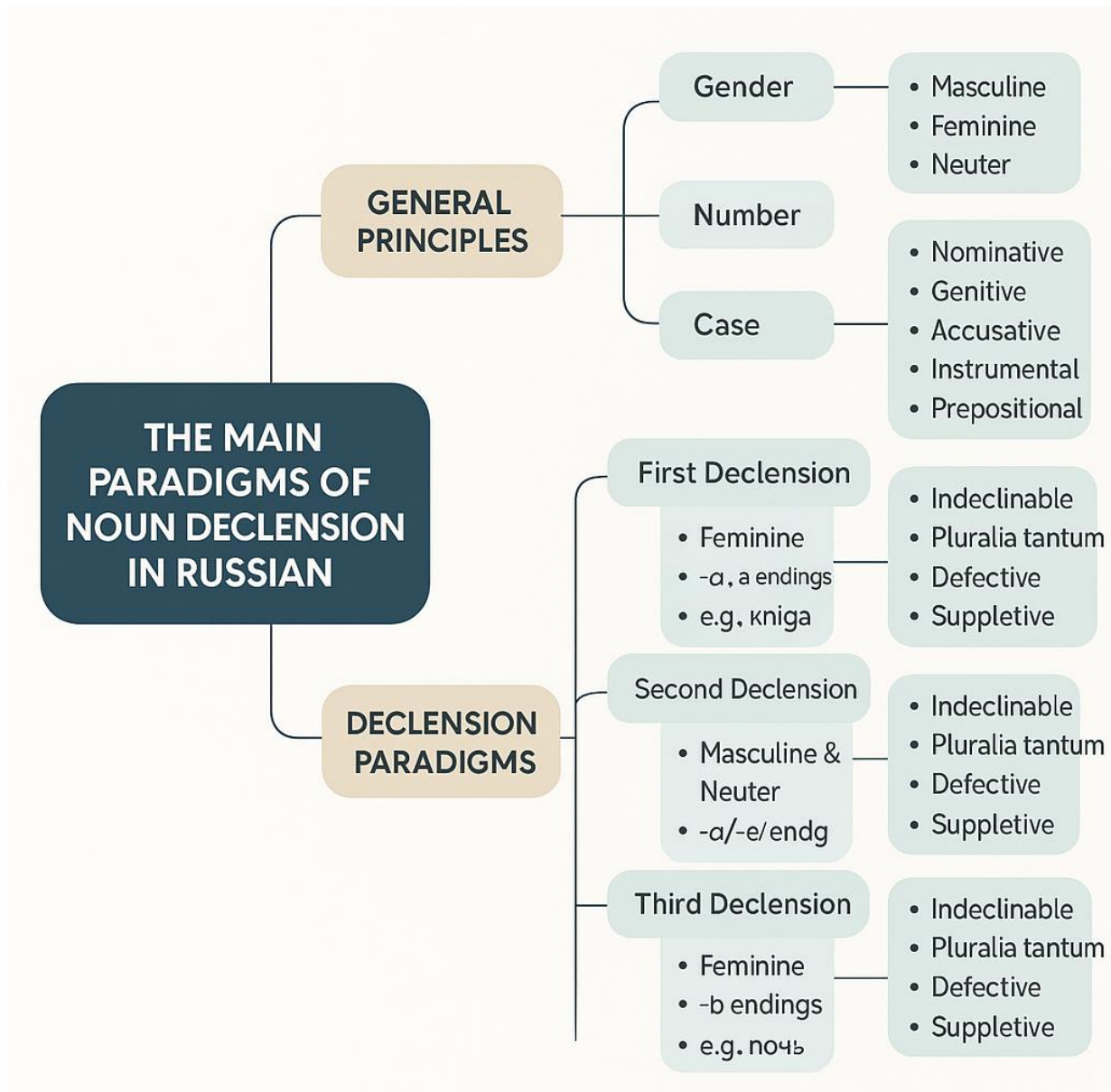
A significant stage in the evolution of the doctrine emerged during the nineteenth century, when scholars such as A.A. Potebnja and F.I. Buslaev introduced psychological and functional considerations into grammatical analysis. They emphasized that parts of speech cannot be explained solely by logical concepts but must be understood in relation to the function of words within the structure of the sentence. This approach marked a transition from abstract logical schemes to a more dynamic view of linguistic reality.

In the twentieth century, Russian grammatical science underwent substantial theoretical development. Scholars such as V.V. Vinogradov, A.M. Peshkovsky, and L.V. Shčerba advanced the idea that parts of speech are determined by a complex combination of semantic, morphological, and syntactic features. Vinogradov's influential contribution was the concept of the lexical-grammatical category, according to which the classification of words is based not on isolated features but on the systemic interaction of meaning, form, and function. His theoretical model emphasized the unity of grammatical and lexical properties, presenting parts of speech as structured, historically conditioned classes that perform specific roles in speech.

Modern Russian linguistics continues to refine the doctrine of parts of speech through functional, structural, cognitive, and communicative approaches. Structural linguists focus on morphological markers as the core basis for classification, highlighting the role of inflectional paradigms and word-formation patterns. Functional linguists analyze how grammatical classes operate within real communication, emphasizing the distributional characteristics of words in syntactic contexts. Cognitive linguistics introduces a new dimension by interpreting grammatical categories as conceptual structures shaped by human perception and mental organization.

The contemporary understanding of parts of speech in Russian grammatical science thus reflects a synthesis of multiple approaches. The interaction of semantic, morphological, functional, and cognitive factors demonstrates that the classification of words is both systematic and flexible. Words may shift between categories depending on syntactic position or communicative intention, illustrating the dynamic nature of grammatical organization.

The study of parts of speech remains highly relevant for modern linguistics, as it offers insights into the mechanisms of language structure, language acquisition, and linguistic typology. The Russian grammatical tradition, characterized by its analytical depth and methodological diversity, has made significant contributions to world linguistics by demonstrating that grammatical categories are not static but evolve with changes in language use and theoretical perspectives.

Russian grammatical science continues to view the doctrine of parts of speech as a fundamental component of linguistic knowledge, essential for understanding the system of the Russian language and the universal principles of language structure. Ongoing research ensures that the theory remains a vibrant field of inquiry that reflects both the historical legacy of the Russian linguistic school and its modern-day innovations.

Russian noun declension is based on three key grammatical categories:

Gender — masculine, feminine, or neuter.

Number — singular and plural.

Case — nominative, genitive, dative, accusative, instrumental, and prepositional.

The declensional paradigm of any noun depends primarily on its gender and formal ending in the nominative singular. These morphological cues determine the type of declension a noun belongs to.

The **first declension** primarily includes **feminine nouns** ending in *-a* or *-я*. A smaller subgroup consists of masculine nouns that refer to male persons but share the same endings, e.g., *папа, дядя, юноша*.

Morphological Features

Typical endings: **-а / -я**

Gender: mostly feminine

Plural formation: replacement of *-а/-я* with *-ы/-и*

Example Paradigm: "книга" (book)

Case	Singular	Plural
Nominative	книга	книги
Genitive	книги	книг
Dative	книге	книгам
Accusative	книгу	книги
Instrumental	книгой	книгами
Prepositional	книге	книгах

The first declension demonstrates clear and predictable patterns, which makes it relatively simple for learners.

3. Second Declension Paradigm

The second declension includes:

1.   Masculine nouns ending in a consonant (e.g., *стол, дом, карандаш*).
2.   Neuter nouns ending in *-о* or *-е* (e.g., *окно, море, поле*).

Morphological Features

Masculine type: zero ending in the nominative singular

Neuter type: endings **-о / -е**

Plural formation: masculine—*ы/и*; neuter—*а/я* or *е* depending on phonetic conditions

Example Paradigm: "стол" (table)

Case	Singular	Plural
Nominative	стол	столы
Genitive	стола	столов
Dative	столу	столам
Accusative	стол	столы
Instrumental	столом	столами
Prepositional	столе	столах

The second declension contains many exceptions due to phonetic alternations, soft stems, and irregular stress patterns.

4. Third Declension Paradigm

The third declension consists exclusively of feminine nouns ending in a soft sign (ь), such as *ночь, дверь, тетрадь*.

Morphological Features

Ending: ь

Gender: feminine

Plural formation: soft stem + и

Example Paradigm: "ночь" (night)

Case	Singular	Plural
Nominative	ночь	ночи

Genitive	ночи	ночей
Dative	ночи	ночам
Accusative	ночь	ночи
Instrumental	ночью	ночами
Prepositional	ночи	ночах

The third declension is smaller in number but highly important because of its characteristic soft-stem pattern.

The Russian noun declension system consists of three primary paradigms—first, second, and third—each defined by gender, stem type, and characteristic endings. Alongside these canonical patterns, the Russian language contains several irregular and mixed types that enrich its morphological structure. Understanding declension paradigms is essential for analyzing grammatical relations and for achieving competence in Russian as both a native and a foreign language. The study of these paradigms remains a central aspect of Russian linguistic theory and pedagogy.

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