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# Collocations with nominal quantifiers

## Semantics and combinability

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This article discusses the collocations that express the meaning of an indeterminate, large quantity of objects. As our analysis has shown the plurality in these collocations is expressed by two classes of collocators: aggregate nouns (full-meaning words) and nouns with quantificative semantics that do not have a referential meaning, and their usage is based on metaphorical transfer. Despite the fact that aggregate nouns in metaphorical transfer undergo a semantic shift, and, changing their status, fall into the class of quantifiers, their semantic influence in the meaning of collocations is more considerable, than that of collocators with quantificative semantics.

**Keywords:** collocations, quantifiers, semantics, lexical combinability

## 1. Introduction

This article discusses semi-set phrases that have received the name “collocation” in literature. Let us recall that collocations are semi-phrasemes in which a semantically important component, or a key word, is used in its literal meaning, while the other component—the collocator—is chosen by the speaker to express a specific meaning, depending on the main component.<sup>1</sup>

Collocators can express various thoughts.<sup>2</sup> Thus, we can differentiate collocators which are used in a metaphorical sense to express positive or negative assessments: *дьявольская улыбка* ‘a devilish smile’, *пресный человек* ‘a vapid man’, *хомут брака* ‘the yolk of marriage’, *мрак порока* ‘the darkness of vice’, *солнце свободы* ‘the sun of freedom’, *метастазы коррупции* ‘the metastases of corruption’, *свалка идей* ‘a junkyard of ideas’, *смад роскоши* ‘the stench of luxury’, *мусор в голове* ‘trash in one’s head’, *словесный понос* ‘verbal diarrhea’, etc.; and intensifiers, expressing the thought of “a high level of the sign’s manifestation or a magnitude of the main quality of N”:<sup>3</sup> *жгучий брюнет* ‘a burning brunette’, *закадычный друг* ‘a bosom friend’, *закоренелый преступник* ‘a hardened criminal’, *проливной дождь* ‘pouring rain’, *заклятый враг* ‘a sworn enemy’, *трескучий мороз* ‘biting cold’, *промокнуть до нитки* ‘soaked to the skin’, etc.<sup>4</sup> A special type of collocation is the verbal-nominal periphrasis, in

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<sup>1</sup> We will not dwell on the various interpretations of the term “collocation.” Readers should refer to the works of I. Mel’čuk (2007, 2003), A.N. Baranov & D.O. Dobrovol’skij (2008), F. Grossman & A. Tutin (2003), F. J. Hausmann (1979), and others.

<sup>2</sup> The meaning expressed by the collocator may be based on the typology of collocations. For more on this topic, refer to Grossman & Tutin 2003.

<sup>3</sup> For features of lexical functions, refer to Apresjan (1974), Apresjan (2008), Iordanskaja & Mel’čuk (2007), Mel’čuk (1995), Mel’čuk (1998), and others.

<sup>4</sup> Note that in some instances, the collocator simultaneously actualizes the semantics of assessments and intensifiers. This refers to, for example, phrases such as *куриные мозги* ‘chicken brains’, *собачья преданность* ‘canine

which the support verb does not have its own lexical meaning, or has a weakened meaning, and serves to express the grammatical category of time, aspect, mood, voice, person, etc.<sup>5</sup> For example: *вести атаку* ‘to lead the attack’, *давать разрешение* ‘to give permission’, *испытывать зависть* ‘to feel jealousy’, *испустить крик* ‘to let out a yell’, *подвергаться старению* ‘to undergo aging’, *совершить взлет* ‘to take off’, *сделать заявление* ‘to make a statement’, etc.<sup>6</sup>

Collocators are the object of our analysis; specifically, those that express the meaning of an indeterminate, large quantity of objects, designated by a key word, in a nominal genitive construction. We will examine the semantics of words such as *стая* ‘flock’, *табун* ‘herd’, *полк* ‘regiment’, *армия* ‘army’, *лес* ‘forest’, *букет* ‘bouquet’, *рой* ‘swarm’, *прорва* ‘mass’, *гряда* ‘pile’, *ворох* ‘heap’, *куна* ‘stack’, and others, and attempt to determine their status in semi-phrasemes.

To accomplish this, it will be necessary first of all for us to distinguish between two classes of lexemes, both of which express the meaning of plural in N+N<sub>gen</sub> constructions. We will first analyze aggregate nouns.

## 2. Aggregate nouns

Aggregate nouns include singular words used to express the meaning of plurality of a homogeneous person or living beings and organisms.<sup>7</sup> These are lexemes such as *стая* ‘flock’, *табун* ‘herd’, *полк* ‘regiment’, *армия* ‘army’, *лес* ‘forest’, *букет* ‘bouquet’, *рой* ‘swarm’, etc. These nouns are catemematic (full-meaning), that is, they express an independent lexical meaning, reflecting the reality. Therefore, they can be used as part of a nominal genitive construction (1a), as well as independently (1b):

- (1) a. *Табу́н лошадей промчался по степи.*  
 ‘A herd of horses raced along the steppe.’  
*Полк десантников промаршировал под нашими окнами.*  
 ‘A regiment of paratroopers marched under our windows.’  
*Мы поставили букет цветов в вазу.*  
 ‘We put the bouquet of flowers in a vase.’
- b. *Табу́н промчался по степи.*  
 ‘The herd raced along the steppe.’  
*Полк промаршировал под нашими окнами.*  
 ‘The regiment marched under our windows.’

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devotion’, *лисиная хитрость* ‘sly as a fox’, *медвежья неповоротливость* ‘bear clumsiness’, etc. Moreover, metaphoric transfer can serve to intensify the trait expressed by the key word: *вихрь перемен* ‘a whirlwind of change’, *шквал революции* ‘a revolutionary storm’, *буря обиды* ‘a storm of resentment’, *ураган ненависти* ‘a hurricane of hate’, *смерч событий* ‘a tornado of events’, *тайфун махинаций* ‘a typhoon of fraud’, etc.

<sup>5</sup> For more on verbal-nominal periphrasis with support verbs, see Apresjan (2004), Apresjan (2008), Gross (1998), and others.

<sup>6</sup> In addition, circumlocutions, which are built on rhemo-thematic relationships, composed of a nominal component and a semantic predicate, that refer to an object designated by a word that is not part of the circumlocution, are sometimes treated as collocations. For example: *часовые здоровья* (=врачи) ‘the sentinels of health (=doctors)’, *лоцманы Вселенной* (=космонавты) ‘the pilots of the universe (=astronauts)’, *медные каски* (=пожарники) ‘copper helmets (=firefighters)’, *корабль пустыни* (=верблюд) ‘the ship of the desert (=camel)’, *четвероногий плотник* (=бобер) ‘a four-legged carpenter (=beaver)’, etc. See Byteva (2008).

<sup>7</sup> As opposed to collective nouns such as, for example, *родня* ‘relatives’, *молодёжь* ‘young people’, *студенчество* ‘students’, *дичь* ‘game’, *бельё* ‘undergarments’, etc., aggregate nouns may be used in the plural or in phrases with quantitative numerals.

*Мы поставили букет в вазу.*  
 'We put the bouquet in a vase.'

In nominal genitive constructions, aggregate nouns are combined with complements specifying living beings and organisms according to selective restrictions, since, as opposed to individual object nouns, combinations of these lexical units are conditioned by their categorical and semantic selectivity, or, to put it another way, by their lexical and semantic ties to a specific class of nouns consisting of aggregates, which they designate. Thus, for example, the selective component of following words requires combinations with some nouns:

- *рой* 'swarm' requires combinations with *пчелы* 'bees', *осы* 'wasps': *рой пчел* 'a swarm of bees', *рой ос* 'a swarm of wasps';
- *табун* 'herd' with *лошади* 'horses', *олени* 'deer': *табун лошадей* 'a herd of horses', *табун оленей* 'a herd of deer';
- *стая* 'flock/pack' with *волки* 'wolves', *собаки* 'dogs': *стая волков* 'a pack of wolves', *стая собак* 'a pack of dogs';
- *букет* 'bouquet' with *розы* 'roses', *гвоздики* 'carnations', *черемуха* 'cherry tree flowers' and so on: *букет роз* 'a bouquet of roses', *букет гвоздик* 'a bouquet of carnations', *букет черемухи* 'a bouquet of cherry tree flowers' etc.

and limit their combinability with other nouns of living beings and organisms in phrases such as *?рой птиц* '?a swarm of birds', *?табун коров* '?a herd of cows', *?стая слонов* '?a pack of elephants' or *?букет веток* 'a bouquet of branches'.

Nevertheless, combinatorial analysis of aggregate nouns is not limited by the above words. They can be combined with nouns of other classes, particularly with object nouns that do not express aggregation of living organisms, designated by the given lexemes. Thus, in the phrases *стая туристов* 'a pack of tourists', *табун любопытных* 'a herd of gawkers', *лес рук* 'a forest of rivers', *букет проблем* 'a bouquet of problems', *полк нахлебников* 'a regiment of freeloaders', *рой самолетов* 'a swarm of airplanes', we are not, of course, talking about a group of animals of the same species, nor about a herd of horses grazing together, nor a multitude of wild trees located on a large expanse, nor gathered flowers, nor military troops, nor a family of bees. Nevertheless, these phrases are not considered semantically incorrect, and they are easily interpreted.

It is completely clear that in this case we are not dealing with free lexical combinations, which are constructed according to selective restrictions rule, but with collocations, in which aggregate nouns are used in a metaphorical sense.<sup>8</sup> Metaphorical transfer can easily be checked with the help of the opposition connector *но* 'but',<sup>9</sup> as well as with other transformational tests, particularly the rule of identity. Compare:

(2)

\**Это стая, но волков*  
 '\*This is a pack, but of wolves'

\**Это табун, но лошадей*  
 '\*This is a herd, but of horses'

*Это стая, но туристов*

'This is a pack, but of tourists'

*Это табун, но иностранцев*

'This is a herd, but of foreigners'

<sup>8</sup> This is indicated by Ju.D. Apresjan: «[...] нарушение семантически мотивированного правила сочетаемости приводит к метафоре или метонимии [...]» («[...] violating semantically motivated phrase rules leads to metaphor or metonymy [...]») (Apresjan 1974: 64).

<sup>9</sup> This opposition is based on the discrepancy between fact or cause, which must have a consequence, and the consequence itself, which differs from the expected, or is the opposite. To quote O. Ducrot: "[...] en disant 'A mais B', on envisage une conclusion *déterminée* qui est servie par A et desservie par B" (Ducrot 1995: 148).

|                                                    |                                                    |
|----------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| <i>*Это рой, но пчел</i>                           | <i>Это рой, но самолетов</i>                       |
| '*This is a swarm, but of bees'                    | 'This is a swarm, but of airplanes'                |
| <i>*Это букет, но цветов</i>                       | <i>Это букет, но болезней</i>                      |
| '*This is a bouquet, but of flowers'               | 'This is a bouquet, but of disease'                |
| <i>*Это полк, но десантников</i>                   | <i>Это полк, но нахлебников</i>                    |
| '*This is a regiment, but of paratroopers'         | 'This is a regiment, but of freeloaders'           |
| <i>Полк десантников – это полк.</i>                | <i>*Полк нахлебников – это полк.</i>               |
| 'A regiment of paratroopers – this is a regiment.' | '*A regiment of freeloaders – this is a regiment.' |
| <i>Стая волков – это стая.</i>                     | <i>*Стая туристов – это стая.</i>                  |
| 'A pack of wolves – this is a pack.'               | '*A pack of tourists—this is a pack.'              |
| <i>Рой пчел – это рой.</i>                         | <i>*Рой самолетов – это рой</i>                    |
| 'A swarm of bees – this is a swarm.'               | '*A swarm of airplanes – this is a swarm.'         |
| <i>Букет цветов – это букет.</i>                   | <i>*Букет болезней – это букет.</i>                |
| 'A bouquet of flowers—this is a bouquet.'          | '*A bouquet of diseases – this is a bouquet.'      |

The following question arises relating to the above data. Is it possible to believe that in metaphorical collocations, the words *стая* 'pack/flock', *табун* 'herd', *полк* 'regiment', *армия* 'army', *лес* 'forest', *букет* 'bouquet', *рой* 'swarm' maintain their status as aggregate nouns? If this statement is true, then the second element of the collocation, that is, the key word, may be curtailed in exactly the same way as in free phrases. However, in this situation, shown by the examples below, when opposed to words in free lexical combinations (3a-3a'), the sentence's meaning with collocations (3b) is changed or becomes semantically incorrect (3b').

- (3) a. *К вечеру табун лошадей удалось загнать на ферму.*  
'By evening, we managed to drive a herd of horses to the farm.'  
*Полк гвардейцев в полном составе вышел на плац.*  
'A regiment of guards at full strength came to the parade ground.'  
*Рой пчел со злобным гудением слетел с куста.*  
'A swarm of bees buzzing angrily flew off the bush.'
- b. *Тишина музея была нарушена появлением табуна туристов.*  
'The silence of the museum was ruined by the arrival of a herd of tourists.'  
*Появилась жена банкира в окружении целого полка нахлебников.*  
'The banker's wife was surrounded by a whole regiment of freeloaders.'  
*Тут мне на ум пришел целый рой мыслей.*  
'Then a swarm of thoughts came to my mind.'
- (3) a'. *К вечеру табун удалось загнать на ферму.*  
'By evening, we managed to drive a herd to the farm.'  
*Полк в полном составе вышел на плац.*  
'A regiment at full strength came to the parade ground.'  
*Рой со злобным гудением слетел с куста.*  
'A swarm buzzing angrily flew off the bush.'
- b'. *?Тишина музея была нарушена появлением табуна.*  
'?The silence of the museum was ruined by the arrival of a herd.'  
*?Появилась жена банкира в окружении целого полка.*  
'?The banker's wife was surrounded by a whole regiment.'  
*\*Тут мне на ум пришел целый рой.*  
'\*Then a swarm came to my mind.'

This means that in collocation constructions formed with metaphorical transfer, aggregate nouns lose their status as categorematic nouns and turn into syncategorematic words, that is semantically incomplete. In other words, in collocation constructions, aggregate nouns lose their referential meaning, that of expressing the plural of homogeneous persons or living beings as a

type of whole, collective unity, and are used to express the meaning of a large, indefinite quantity.<sup>10</sup> The collocator's referential meaning is also eliminated when it is the name of an artifact or natural object.<sup>11</sup> Compare:

- (3) c. \**вагон проблем – это вагон*  
 ‘\*a heap of problems—this is a heap’  
 \**воз неприятностей – это воз*  
 ‘\*a cart of problems—this is a cart’  
 \**море слов – это море*  
 ‘\*a sea of words—this is a sea’  
 \**океан манифестантов – это океан*  
 ‘\*an ocean of demonstrators—this is an ocean’  
 \**гора знаний – это гора*  
 ‘\*a mountain of knowledge—this is a mountain’  
 \**лавины событий – это лавина*  
 ‘\*an avalanche of events—this is an avalanche’  
 \**туча проблем – это туча*  
 ‘\*a cloud of problems—this is a cloud’
- (3) d. *У нас появился вагон проблем.*  
 ‘We had a heap of problems.’  
*Каждая травма влечет за собой воз неприятностей.*  
 ‘Every trauma attracts a cart of unpleasantness.’  
*Не знаешь, за что схватиться в этом море слов.*  
 ‘You don’t know what to grab in this sea of words.’  
*Когда мы встречаемся с христианством, то перед нами появляется огромная гора знаний.*  
 ‘When we meet with Christianity, a huge mountain of knowledge will be before us.’  
*Его захлестнула лавина событий.*  
 ‘He was overwhelmed by an avalanche of events.’
- (3) d'. ?*У нас появился вагон.*  
 ‘?We had a heap.’  
 \**Каждая травма влечет за собой воз.*  
 ‘\*Every trauma attracts a cart.’  
 ?*Не знаешь, за что схватиться в этом море.*  
 ‘?You don’t know what to grab in this sea.’  
 ?*Когда мы встречаемся с христианством, то перед нами появляется огромная гора.*  
 ‘?When we meet with Christianity, a huge mountain will be before us.’  
 ?*Его захлестнула лавина.*  
 ‘?He was overwhelmed by an avalanche.’

### 3. Nouns with quantificative semantics

We will now consider the nouns *гряда* ‘pile’, *оханка* ‘armful’, *прорва* ‘mass’, *ворох* ‘pile’, *куна* ‘stack’, *куча* ‘pile’, etc. These lexemes, which have a component of plurality in their semantics, are radically different from aggregate nouns in terms of their categorematic status, since they reflect a segment of the real world only in association with other concepts. This means that beyond the nominal genitive construction, these words do not have a referential meaning, and

<sup>10</sup> O. Benninger proposes considering aggregate nouns as occasional quantifiers. For more on categorematic and syncategorematic status of quantifiers, see Benninger (2001).

<sup>11</sup> Since we are dealing with one and the same phenomenon, we will not analyze artifacts and natural objects separately.

function just like collective quantifiers (counting words, indefinite numbers, quantitative nouns, etc.), such as *много* ‘many’, *мало* ‘little’, *немного* ‘some’, *столько* ‘that many’, *несколько* ‘few’, *пять* ‘five’, *сто* ‘hundred’, *большинство* ‘most’, *килограмм* ‘kilogram’, *десяток* ‘dozen’, etc.<sup>12</sup> Compare (4a)-(4a') and (4b)-(4b'):

- (4) a. *Я купил десяток яиц.*  
 ‘I bought a dozen eggs.’  
*Мне нужно пять тетрадей.*  
 ‘I need five notebooks.’  
*В зале сидело много ученых.*  
 ‘Many scientists sat in the hall.’  
*Несколько человек вышло из аудитории.*  
 ‘A few people left the auditorium.’  
*На столе лежал килограмм яблок.*  
 ‘A kilogram of apples was on the table.’
- b. *Во дворе лежала гора металлолома.*  
 ‘A heap of scrap metal was in the yard.’  
*Он взял охапку дров и ушел.*  
 ‘He took an armful of wood and left.’  
*На кровати была разбросана куча белья.*  
 ‘A pile of laundry was scattered on the bed.’  
*Вчера мы истратили прорву денег.*  
 ‘We spent a mass of money yesterday.’  
*Через некоторое время они принесли ворох тряпья.*  
 ‘After a while, they brought a pile of rags.’  
*Дочь положила на стол кипу бумаг.*  
 ‘The daughter laid a stack of papers on the table.’
- (4) a'. *\*Я купил десяток.*  
 ‘\*I bought a dozen.’  
*\*Мне нужно пять.*  
 ‘\*I need five.’  
*\*В зале сидело много.*  
 ‘\*Many sat in the hall.’  
*\*Несколько вышло из аудитории.*  
 ‘\*A few left the auditorium.’  
*\*На столе лежал килограмм.*  
 ‘\*A kilogram was on the table.’
- b'. *?Во дворе лежала гора.*  
 ‘?A heap was in the yard.’  
*\*Он взял охапку и ушел.*  
 ‘\*He took an armful and left.’  
*\*На кровати была разбросана куча.*  
 ‘\*A pile was scattered on the bed.’

<sup>12</sup> In his dictionary, Ušakov (2000) indicates two meanings for the word *прорва* ‘mass/bottomless pit’, not related to semantic plurality: 1. Новое русло, промытое, прорытое рекой (обл.). || Рукав, соединяющий два русла реки (обл.). (1. A new riverbed, washed out, created by a river (regional word). || Branches, connecting two riverbeds of a river (regional word). 2. Топкое место, яма в болоте, овраг с водой (обл.). || Речной омут, глубокое место на реке или озере (обл.). (2. A swampy area, a pit in a swamp, a ravine with water (regional word). || A river slough, a deep place in a river or lake (regional word). Considering that both of these meanings are marked as “regional words,” as well as the fact that the usage of the word *прорва* ‘mass/bottomless pit’ outside of the genitive nominal construction is non-prototypical for native speakers of modern Russian (compare *?Мы шли вдоль прорвы* ‘?We walked along the mass/pit’; *?Он провалился в прорву* ‘?He fell into the mass/pit’; *?Течением его затянуло в прорву* ‘?Its flow was engulfed in the mass/pit’, etc.), we consider it possible to examine the noun *прорва* ‘mass/bottomless pit’ as a semantically incomplete lexeme.

- \*Вчера мы истратили *п р о р в у*.  
 \*‘We spent a mass yesterday.’  
 \*Через некоторое время они принесли *в о р о х*.  
 \*‘After a while, they brought a pile.’  
 \*Дочь положила на стол *к и п у*.  
 \*‘The daughter laid a stack on the table.’

Therefore, as opposed to aggregate nouns, these nouns cannot have an adjective or participle as an epithet: *взбудораженный рой* ‘an agitated swarm’, *большой табун* ‘a large herd’, *сводный полк* ‘a mixed regiment’, but *?небольшая охапка* ‘?a small armful’, *?целый ворох* ‘?a whole bunch’, *?лежащая груда* ‘?a lying heap’, *?тяжелая кupa* ‘?a heavy stack’, and phrases such as *?Вася взял небольшую охапку и ушел*. ‘?Vasya took a small bunch and left.’; *?Маша положила на кровать целый ворох*. ‘?Masha laid a whole heap on the bed.’; *?Мы удивились, увидев лежащую грудю*. ‘?We were surprised to see a lying pile.’; *?Дочь вывалила тяжелую купу* ‘?The daughter dropped a heavy stack’, etc., are semantically incomplete. This fact shows the semantic inferiority of the above lexemes, and thus confirms their syncategorematic status as related to a quantificative function.<sup>13</sup>

In order to illustrate the difference in usage of syncategorematic quantifiers, within free lexical combinations and collocations, refer to examples (5a) and (5b).<sup>14</sup>

- (5) a. *ворох сена, ворох листьев, ворох бумаг, ворох тряпья*  
 ‘a pile of snow, a pile of leaves, a pile of papers, a pile of rags’  
*груда мусора, груда металлолома, груда камней, груда развалин*  
 ‘a heap of trash, a heap of scrap metal, a heap of stones, a heap of rubble’  
*купа книг, кupa бумаг, кupa белья, кupa писем, кupa документов*  
 ‘a stack of books, a stack of papers, a stack of laundry, a stack of letters, a stack of documents’  
*охапка дров, охапка книг, охапка цветов, охапка сена*  
 ‘an armful of wood, an armful of books, an armful of flowers, an armful of hay’
- b. *ворох вопросов, ворох новостей, ворох строк, ворох лжи, ворох проблем, ворох подлости, ворох трусости, ворох слабости*  
 ‘a pile of questions, a pile of news, a pile of string, a pile of lies, a pile of problems, a pile of meanness, a pile of cowardice, a pile of weakness’  
*груда страстей, груда сведений, груда информации, груда изысканий*  
 ‘a heap of passion, a heap of data, a heap of information, a heap of effort’  
*купа проблем, кupa компаний, кupa судеб, кupa дел*  
 ‘a stack of problems, a stack of companies, a stack of fate, a stack of work’  
*охапка счастья, охапка надежд, охапка вопросов*  
 ‘an armful of happiness, an armful of hope, an armful of questions’

In (5a), the combinability of the words *груда* ‘heap’, *охапка* ‘armful’, *ворох* ‘pile’, and *купа* ‘stack’ with object nouns is semantically motivated, as conditioned by the quantifiers’ semantic concordance with their arguments.<sup>15</sup> Thus *ворох* ‘pile’ is combined with nouns of objects that are easily moved, *груда* ‘heap’—with nouns, referring to heavy, and in most cases useless, objects, *охапка* ‘armful’—with nouns whose object can be encompassed by one’s arms, and *купа* ‘stack’—with nouns of objects, most frequently referring to paper, can be laid one on top of the

<sup>13</sup> Syncategorematic nouns do not have an independent meaning, and compared to categorematic nouns, are significant only in combinations with other words (*Antologija mirovoj filosofii* 1969: 903).

<sup>14</sup> Examples are taken from the National Corpus of Russian language, [www.ruskorpora.ru](http://www.ruskorpora.ru), and web searches with [www.yandex.ru](http://www.yandex.ru)

<sup>15</sup> The principle of semantic concordance consists of repeating the sense of the meanings of two elements combined with each other (Apresjan 2008: 35).

other. Consequently, the phrases in (5a) are formed based on selective restrictions imposed by quantifiers.<sup>16</sup>

The phrases in (5b) are based on metaphorical transfer, as the words *ворох* ‘pile’, *гряда* ‘heap’, *куна* ‘stack’, and *охапка* ‘armful’ are not being used in their literal meaning, and do not represent a large number of stacked items or items piled one on top of each other, or objects that can be encompassed by one’s hands. Metaphorical transfer is confirmed with the help of the transformational tests shown below (example 6).

(6)

|                                                                               |                                                                                    |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>*это ворох, но листьев</i><br>‘*this is a pile, but of leaves’             | <i>это ворох, но лжи</i><br>‘this is a pile, but of lies’                          |
| <i>*это куча, но бумаг</i><br>‘*this is a stack, but of papers’               | <i>это куча, но проблем</i><br>‘this is a stack, but of problems’                  |
| <i>*это охапка, но цветов</i><br>‘*this is an armful, but of flowers’         | <i>это охапка, но счастья</i><br>‘this is an armful, but of happiness’             |
| <i>ворох листьев – это ворох</i><br>‘a pile of leaves—this is a pile’         | <i>*ворох лжи – это ворох</i><br>‘*a pile of lies—this is a pile’                  |
| <i>куна бумаг – это куча</i><br>‘a stack of papers—this is a stack’           | <i>*куна проблем – это куча</i><br>‘*a stack of problems—this is a stack’          |
| <i>охапка цветов – это охапка</i><br>‘an armful of flowers—this is an armful’ | <i>*охапка счастья – это охапка</i><br>‘*an armful of happiness—this is an armful’ |

Therefore, we are dealing with metaphorical collocations. However, the impact of metaphorical transfer on semantically incomplete quantifiers has a different, “weakened” nature, compared to metaphors with aggregate nouns. Metaphor can broaden the combinational possibilities of these words, and, as a result, can create new phrases; the status of the nominal quantifiers, however, does not change: they are and remain syncategorematic nouns.

#### 4. Collocators’ semantic contribution

In most cases, collocators remain semantically meaningful in semi-phrasemes. Therefore, the semantic contribution of nominal quantifiers in a collocation’s meaning is not limited by the meaning of plurality.<sup>17</sup> Lexical plurality is added to quantitative situations by qualitative parameters, and the selective lexical combinative power of the collocator and key word are predetermined in most cases by their semantics. Thus, the animate component in the semantics of lexemes such as *полчище* ‘horde/multitude’, *стая* ‘pack/flock’, *табун* ‘herd’, *армия* ‘army’, *полк* ‘regiment’ allows these collocators to be used with the names of people (7a) and imposes a limit on their compatibility with names of objects (7b):

(7a)

*полчище бюрократов*  
‘a horde of bureaucrats’  
*стая туристов*

(7b)

*\*полчище тарелок*  
‘\*a horde of plates’  
*\*стая стрел*

<sup>16</sup> It should be emphasized that in some quantifiers the level of selective limitation is minimal. Thus, *куча* ‘heap’ can be combined with nouns whose objects can be easily moved: *куча тряпья* ‘a heap of rags’, *куча листьев* ‘a pile of leaves’, *куча бумаг* ‘a heap of papers’, as well as with nouns expressing heavy objects: *куча камней* ‘a heap of stones’, *куча железа* ‘a heap of iron’, *куча земли* ‘a heap of earth’, etc.

<sup>17</sup> The question of nominal qualifiers’ semantic contribution is examined in detail in the works of Li Su Xen, Raxilina (2005, 2010), Ljaškevič (1985), Perepjat’ko (1972) and others, therefore we will not repeat it here and will give only a few examples.

‘a pack of tourists’  
*табун любопытных*  
 ‘a herd of on-lookers’  
*армия бездельников*  
 ‘an army of loafers’  
*полк нахлебников*  
 ‘a regiment of hanger-ons’

‘\*a pack of arrows’  
 \**табун книг*  
 ‘\*a herd of books’  
 \**армия стульев*  
 ‘\*an army of chairs’  
 \**полк стаканов*  
 ‘\*a regiment of glasses’

The semantic component of *неудержимо движущаяся масса* ‘an irrepressible moving mass’ blocks the compatibility of the collocators *лави́на* ‘avalanche’ and *пото́к* ‘flow’ with static objects (8b) and determines their use with nouns designating or associated with moving objects (8a).

(8a)

*лави́на людей*  
 ‘an avalanche of people’  
*лави́на огня*  
 ‘an avalanche of flowers’  
*лави́на обвинений*  
 ‘an avalanche of accusations’  
*лави́на событий*  
 ‘an avalanche of events’

*пото́к манифестантов*  
 ‘the flow of demonstrators’  
*пото́к информации*  
 ‘the flow of information’  
*пото́к света*  
 ‘the flow of light’  
*пото́к брани*  
 ‘the flow of abuse’

(8b)

?*лави́на словарей*  
 ‘?an avalanche of dictionaries’  
 ?*лави́на телефонов*  
 ‘?an avalanche of telephones’  
 ?*лави́на карандашей*  
 ‘?an avalanche of pencils’  
 ?*лави́на компьютеров*  
 ‘?an avalanche of computers’  
 ?*лави́на травы*  
 ‘?an avalanche of grass’

?*пото́к столов*  
 ‘?the flow of tables’  
 ?*пото́к ламп*  
 ‘?the flow of lamps’  
 ?*пото́к кроватей*  
 ‘?the flow of beds’  
 ?*пото́к картин*  
 ‘?the flow of pictures’  
 ?*пото́к деревьев*  
 ‘?the flow of trees’

The indication of *скопление частиц в атмосфере* ‘a cluster of particles in the atmosphere’ in the semantic structure of the lexeme *туча* ‘cloud’ conditions its combinational ability with nouns designating flying living beings, usually of a small size (9a), and prevents the combination ability of this quantifier with the names of objects and nouns that refer to living organisms that do not fly (9b):

(9a)

*туча комаров*  
 ‘a cloud of mosquitoes’  
*туча мух*  
 ‘a cloud of flies’  
*туча голубей*  
 ‘a cloud of pigeons’  
*туча мошек*  
 ‘a cloud of insects’  
*туча саранчи*  
 ‘a cloud/swarm of locusts’  
*туча птиц*

(9b)

?*туча собак*  
 ‘?a cloud of dogs’  
 ?*туча пауков*  
 ‘?a cloud of spiders’  
 ?*туча рыб*  
 ‘?a cloud of fish’  
 ?*туча самолетов*  
 ‘?a cloud of airplanes’  
 ?*туча кораблей*  
 ‘?a cloud of ships’  
 ?*туча шкафов*

‘a cloud of birds’

‘?a cloud of closets’

Note also the presence of a negative connotation in the collocator *туча* ‘cloud’, which influences its frequency usage with negatively marked nouns: *туча проблем* ‘a cloud of problems’, *туча неприятностей* ‘a cloud of troubles’, *туча забот* ‘a cloud of worries’, and others, and leads to limitations on its combinability with words having positive shades: *?туча радости* ‘?a cloud of joy’, *?туча веселья* ‘?a cloud of fun’, *?туча счастья* ‘?a cloud of happiness’, *?туча праздников* ‘?a cloud of holidays’, *?туча свадеб* ‘?a cloud of weddings’, etc.

The semantic contribution of categorematic lexical units in the collocation’s meaning is, without doubt, more significant than that of syncategorematic units. Thus, for example, the phrases in (10a), which are collocations with aggregate nouns (that is, initially full-meaning lexemes), propose an implication, which is revealed through comparison, whereas such an implication is not possible in phrases with semantically inferior syncategorematic nouns (10b).

- (10)a. *С т а я хулиганов напала на милицейский патруль.*  
 ‘A pack of hooligans attacked the police patrol.’  
*Т а б у н любителей сгрудился вокруг памятника.*  
 ‘A herd of on-lookers gathered around the monument.’  
*Р о й самолетов кружился в небе.*  
 ‘A swarm of airplanes circled in the sky.’
- b. *После каникул появится к и п а проблем.*  
 ‘A stack of problems arose after the holidays.’  
*Можно подумать, что это принесло тебе о х а п к и счастья.*  
 ‘It’s possible to think that this brought you an armful of happiness.’  
*В романах его целые груды страстей.*  
 ‘In his novels there is a whole pile of passion.’  
*Бабушка высыпала ворох дачных новостей.*  
 ‘The grandmother spilled a heap of dacha news.’
- (10) a'. *Хулиганы ст а е й / как ст а я напали на милицейский патруль.*  
 ‘Hooligans in a pack / how a pack attacked a police patrol.’  
*Любители табуном / как табун сгрудились вокруг памятника.*  
 ‘Onlookers in a herd / how a herd gathered around a monument.’  
*Самолеты р о е м / как р о й кружились в небе.*  
 ‘Airplanes in a swarm / how a swarm circled in the sky.’
- b'. *?После каникул проблемы появятся к и п о й / как к и п а.*  
 ‘?Problems arose in a stack / like a stack after the holidays.’  
*?Можно подумать, что это принесло тебе счастье о х а п к а м и / как о х а п к и.*  
 ‘?It’s possible to think that this brought you happiness in an armful / like an armful.’  
*?В романах его страсти груд а м и / как груд ы.*  
 ‘?In his novels there is passion in a pile / like a pile.’  
*?Бабушка высыпала дачные новости в о р о х о м / как в о р о х.*  
 ‘?The grandmother spilled dacha news in a heap / like a heap.’

## 5. Conclusion

In this article, we have attempted to show that plurality in nominal genitive constructions in modern Russian is expressed by two classes of nouns: categorematic and syncategorematic nouns, and that their usage in collocations is based on metaphorical transfer. However, as our analysis has shown, the impact of metaphors on both classes of nouns is different. As a result of the process of metaphor, aggregate nouns, as well as nouns expressing artifacts and natural objects which reflect the semantics of plurality, lose their status as categorematic nouns and move into the category of syncategorematic lexemes. While the metaphorical impact on nouns with

semantic quantifiers serves to broaden their combinational possibilities, it does not, however, affect their categorical assignment.

In this case, despite the fact that aggregate nouns in metaphorical transfer undergo a semantic shift, and, changing their status, fall into the class of quantifiers, their semantic influence in the meaning of collocations is more considerable, than that of syncategorematic nouns.

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