

## **A Study of Indeclinable Nouns in Russian Language**

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### **Abstract**

In Russian language, nouns can have many other forms based on the fact that they are either plural or singular, and six cases in Russian Grammar. The present paper is the study of the nouns which do not change their forms regarding six cases. These nouns do not change not only in terms of word forms but also in pronunciation. Such nouns which do not change both in the word forms and in pronunciation are called indeclinable nouns. In the present paper, the indeclinable nouns are categorized according to their gender as masculine, feminine and neuter. Non-living things are neuter and living things are either masculine or feminine. In Russian six parts of speech, the nouns which stick to their original forms end with certain vowels such as -о, -е, -и, -у, -ю, -я, -а etc. The nouns such as animals, birds, and people are termed as masculine. The words or names referring to the female usually end with consonants and are termed as feminine. The present study is the collection of such indeclinable nouns, which do not change their original forms in terms of six cases in Russian language, together with the sample sentences in which these nouns are used. The data are collected from the prescribed texts for B.A classes.

**Keywords:** indeclinable nouns, loan words, family names

### **Introduction**

The present paper is the study of indeclinable nouns which do not change their original forms in terms of the six cases in Russian Grammar. In the prescribed text books in Russian language, there are many phrases and sentences which consist of indeclinable nouns. When constructing sentences in Russian, it is necessary to know the types of gender that the nouns carry in order to use them correctly together with other words as adjectives and verbs. In Russian Grammar, indeclinable nouns end with vowels and most of them are neuter in gender. They are often loan words from other languages. They remain in their original word forms regardless of the cases and being singular or plural. Some of the indeclinable nouns are the acronyms\_ the combination of the initial letters of the certain words. The present paper highlights the indeclinable nouns found in the Russian prescribed texts for B.A classes, with the example sentences.

### **Aim**

The present paper describes the indeclinable nouns in Russian language. It aims to help Myanmar learners of Russian language to gain an insight to the unusual nouns in the target language. Knowing the type of gender of the nouns can help the learners to use the nouns correctly with other words such as adjectives and vowels. If the learners become aware of the use of indeclinable nouns which do not change their original word forms in terms of six cases, they will be able to produce grammatically correct utterances when they speak and write in Russian.

### **Materials and Method**

In Russian Grammar, there are some unique nouns which do not change their original word forms in terms of six cases. In the present study, such nouns, known as indeclinable nouns, are described with reference to the prescribed texts for B.A Russian classes, *Русский язык для гостиницы и ресторанов, Дорога в*

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Россию 2, 3, Comprehensive Course Russian, Russian-Myanmar dictionaries and internet websites. Descriptive method is used to mention the practical use of the target language.

### Research Questions

1. How are indeclinable nouns categorized in terms of gender?
2. Why are the nouns in question called ‘indeclinable nouns’?

### Indeclinable Nouns in Russian Language

There are basically six cases in Russian Grammar. There are nominative case, genitive case, accusative case, dative case, instrumental case and prepositional case. In terms of the six cases, the nouns in Russian change their word forms. This paper is a study of the indeclinable nouns which do not change their forms when used in all six cases. They are categorized in terms of their gender and either living or non-living things. In Russian, the indeclinable nouns have an ending with vowels like -о, -е, -и, -у, -ю, -э, -а. When a noun ends with vowel -а and if the emphasis (stress) is on that vowel, then it can be defined as an indeclinable noun which do not change the form in all six cases. The data were collected from the prescribed texts from B.A Russian classes.

#### 1.The Classification of Indeclinable Nouns in terms of Gender, and Living or Non-living Things

The following table shows the classification of indeclinable nouns, which do not change their word forms in all six cases in Russian, based on their gender. Non-living things are neuter in gender while living things carry masculine and feminine gender. The acronyms which are compound words resulted from the combination of the initial letters of certain words reflect masculine gender. In the indeclinable nouns can be seen exceptional words by gender.

Одушевлённые Существительные		Неодушевлённые Существительные
Мужской род	Женский род	Средний род
кенгуру, шимпанзе конференсье, боа киви, портье, крупье, папарацци, буржуа, атташе, рефери,	мисс, мадам, леди, Войныч, Алигер, Эдит, фрау, фрекен, инженю	метро, меню, хобби, купе, кино, шоссе, виски, интервью, ателье, пальто, пианино, кафе, казино, авокадо, радио, кашне, рагу, фойе, пюре, бра, алоэ, каноэ, спагетти
Исключительные Слова		
Мужской род	Женский род	
кофе, ООН МГУ, США	авеню, салями, кольраби	

## 2. Sample Sentences with Indeclinable Nouns in Russian Languages

There are six cases in Russian grammar; nominative case, genitive case, accusative case, dative case, instrumental case and prepositional case. The following are the indeclinable nouns and sample sentences taken from the prescribed texts of Russian language.

### 2.1 Indeclinable Nouns which reflect Masculine Gender

The following sample sentences include the indeclinable nouns which do not change their word forms in all six cases in Russian Grammar. These masculine gender nouns are living things.

#### 1. Кенгуру - kangaroo

Я принесла еду для *кенгуру*. (genitive case)

I have brought the food for the kangaroo.

#### 2. Шимпанзе - chimpanzee

Студентка. Вы изучаете биологию, любите детей, жирафов и *шимпанзе*. (accusative case)

Hey schoolgirl, you are studying biology. Then you must love the children, giraffes and chimpanzees.

#### 3. Портъе- porter

Какой сюрприз у *портъе* для Кузнецова. (genitive case)

How can the porter surprise Kusnesob?

#### 4. Папарацци - paparazzi

Она решила стать *папарацци*. (instrumental case)

She has decided to become a paparazzi.

#### 5. Конферансье – Master of Ceremonies

В России первые профессиональные *конферансье* появились в 1910-х годах.

(nominative case)

Professional Masters of Ceremonies became popular in Russia in the year 1910.

#### 6. Крупье - croupier

Если вам не обходимо, я стану *крупье* в казино. (instrumental case)

If you wish, I can be the croupier here.

#### 7. Рефери- referee

На этом моменте *рефери* дал списток наперерыв. (nominative case)

The referee gave them a break at that time.

### 2.2 Indeclinable Nouns which reflect Feminine Gender

There are some nouns in Russian language, which are loan words from other languages and represent the females. They usually end in consonants and they are feminine gender and living things. The following are such nouns and the sentences they are used in.

#### 1. Мисс - Miss

*Мисс* Россия – 2018 Юлия Полячихина. (nominative case)

Yulia Palyiachikina is The 2018 Miss Russian.

**2. Мадам- Madam**

Просите *Мадам*, это старая кассета. (nominative case)

I'm sorry Madam. That's an old cassette.

**3. Эдит- name of the girl**

Я люблю слушать песню *Эдит*. (genitive case)

I enjoy listening to Edith's songs.

**4. Фрау- Mrs, Frau**

Там ни кого нет, *фрау* Лабински. (nominative case)

Nobody is there, Mrs. Labinski.

**5. Инженю- ingénue**

Я должна быть естественной, как настоящая *инженю*. (nominative case)

I must try to be an ingénue.

**6. Войныч - name of the author**

Всех интересует о писательнице *Войныч*. (genitive case)

Everyone is interested in the author, Войныч.

**7. Алигер - name of the poetess**

Стихи поэтессы *Алигер* очень популярные. (genitive case)

Poems by the poetess Алигер are quite famous.

**2.3 Indeclinable Nouns which reflect Neuter Gender**

The following sentences are the examples of neuter gender indeclinable nouns. They are non-living things. In Russian Grammar, most of the indeclinable nouns are the neuter gender nouns.

**1. радио - radio**

Он слушает *радио*. (accusative case)

He is listening to the radio.

**2. кино- cinema**

Вы же знаете, я специалист в области *кино*. (genitive case)

You know I'm an expert in cinema.

**3. авокадо- avocado**

Я хочу *авокадо* и морепродукты. (accusative case)

I'd like avocado and sea food.

**4. шоссе - highway**

Эта дорога идёт к *шоссе* номер -60. (Dative case)

This street leads to No.60 highway Road.

**5. казино - casino**

В *казино* в пятницу вечером было многолюдей. (prepositional case)

There is a big crowd at the casino on Friday evenings.

**6. пианино - piano**

Я играю на *пианино*. (prepositional case)

I am playing the piano.

**7. ателье - studio**

В нашем *ателье* производятся различные изделия из кожи. (prepositional case)

Our studio manufactures different kinds of clothes made of leather.

**8.резюме - summary**

Как видно из моего *резюме*, я переводил для русских делегаций и работал в международной фирме. (genitive case)

As you can see in my profile summary, I work for an international company. I am a translator for the team of representatives from Russia.

**9. пальто - overcoat**

На Наташе будут синее *пальто* и зелёная шляпа. (nominative case)

Nathasha is in a blue overcoat and has a green hat on head.

**10. Пюре – puree, mash**

*Пюре* из картофеля. (nominative case)

This is mashed potato.

**11. метро - metro**

Мы ехали на *метро* в университет. (prepositional case)

We take the metro to university.

**12. кашне - scarf**

Ты распространяешь свой запах по всему *кашне*. (Dative case)

Your scarf smells like you.

**13. фойе - foyer**

В *фойе* второго этажа расположен бар. (prepositional case)

There is a bar in the foyer on the second floor.

**14.Меню - menu**

Можно побыстрее специальное *меню* для детей. (nominative case)

Please give us the special menu for children quickly.

**15. Интервью - interview**

Что вы узнали из *интервью* с Владимиром Спиваковым о его работе. (genitive case)

What did you learn from the interview with Valdimi Spivakof?

**16.рагу - stew**

Будьте добры, один крабовый коктейль, одно *рагу* и одну водку. (accusative case)

A cocktail, a stew, a vodka, please.

**17. хобби - hobby**

Да, это американское *хобби*. (nominative case)

Yeah, that's typical hobby for the American.

**18. кафе – café**

Я хочу тоже, что мы ели утром в *кафе*. ( prepositional case)

I have eaten breakfast in a café this morning. But I'm still hungry.

**19. виски- whisky**

Заказал ещё одно *виски* и выпил. (accusative case)

I drunk another whisky.

**20. Суши - sushi**

*Суши* ассорти готовят из сырой рыбы с рисом. (nominative case)

This is the sushi made of rice and raw fish.

**21. такси - taxi**

Этот господин хочет заказать *такси*. (nominative case)

He wants to wait in the taxi.

**22. бра – wall lamp**

В *бра* нет лампочки. (prepositional case)

There is no lamp in the wall lamp.

**23. алоэ- aloe**

*Алоэ* сдревнейших времён используется для лечения. (nominative case)

Aloe has been used as a herbal medicine since the ancient times.

**24. каноэ - canoe**

Досточива деревянных каноэ носят, главным образом, стетический характер.  
(genitive case)

One good point of wooden canoes is that they are naturally beautiful.

**25. спагетти - spaghetti**

Да, я бы хотела салати *спагетти* болонезе. (nominative case)

Well, I'd like a salad and spaghetti.

**2.4 Exceptional Words in the Form of Indeclinable Nouns**

In the indeclinable nouns can be seen exceptional words by gender. They are кофе ( an inanimate noun, but this word includes the masculine gender) and авеню, салями, кольраби (inanimate nouns, but these words include the feminine).

**1. кофе - coffee**

У меня от *кофе* аллергия. (genitive case)

I'm allergic to coffee.

## 2. авеню- street

Сначала мы идём в магазин на пятой *авеню*. (prepositional case)

Firstly, we can take the Fifth street to go to the store.

## 3. салями- salami

Пицца с *салями* и сыром. (instrumental case)

This pizza is made of cheese and salami.

## 4. кольраби- kohlrabi

Называют *кольраби* в разных странах по-разному. (accusative case)

Kohlrabi has different names in different countries.

## 3. Family name in the Form of Indeclinable Nouns

If Russian names and Ukraine names end in -их, -ых, - ово и-аго, they do not change their form in six cases. The following are the examples for 'Живаго, Хитроао, Дурново, Польских, Долгих, and Крученных'.

### 1. Живаго

Михаил Гордон-филолог, одноклассник по гимназии и лучший друг *Живаго*.  
(genitive case)

The linguist Mihaiil Gardun is Zivago's classmate and best friend.

### 2. Польских

Отец *Польских* погиб на фронте во время Великой Отечественной войны.  
(genitive case)

Paulski's father was killed in the front line during the civil war.

### 3. Крученных

*Крученных* писал много стихотворений. (nominative case)

Karuchanni wrote lots of poems.

## 5. Geographic Names in the Form of indeclinable nouns

The nouns such as the names of cities, villages, rivers, creeks, and lakes do not change their word form in all six cases in Russian Grammar. They are also indeclinable nouns.

### 1. город Батуми

С каждым годом поток туристов в *Батуми* увеличивается. (prepositional case)

There is a gradual increase annually in the number of tourists to Bathumi.

### 2. река Миссисипи

Индейцы жили на берегах *Миссисипи*. (genitive case)

Indian people reside on the coast of Mississippi.

### 3. государство Конго

В августе 1960 года на карте мира появилось государство - республика *Конго*.  
(nominative case)

In August 1960, the Republic of Congo was first seen on the world map.

#### 4. Compound Words in the Form of Indeclinable Nouns

The acronyms which are the compound words resulted from the combination of initial letters of the words are a group of the indeclinable nouns in Russian language. They are inanimate nouns and include masculine gender.

##### 1. ООН- (Организация Объединённых Наций) - United Nations

Детский фонд ООН изучал права детей в разных странах. (nominative case)

The United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) has studied the children's rights in different countries.

##### 2. МГУ- (Московский Государственный Университет) - Moscow Government University

В библиотеке *МГУ* есть много старинных книг, изданных в XIX веке. (genitive case)

There are many ancient books published in the 19<sup>th</sup> century in Moscow Government University Library.

##### 3. США - (Соединённые Штаты Америки) –The United States of America

Мы из *США*. (genitive case)

We are from the U.S.A.

##### 4. СССР - (Союз Советских Социалистических Республик) – The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

Площадь *СССР* - 22 миллиона 400 тысяч квадратных километров. ( genitive case)

The area of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics is 22.4 million square kilometer.

##### 5. НГУ- (Новый Гуманитарный Университет) - New Humanitarian University

Наталя Нестерова является ректором *НГУ*. ( genitive case)

Natharlia Nyatsakyiyawba has become the Rector of New Humanitarian University.

#### Findings

The nouns, which do not change their forms in terms of six cases in Russian Grammar, include the ones which end in vowels such as ‘-о, -е, -и, -у, -ю, -э, and -а. The most common examples are ‘кино, кашне, такси, интервью, кенгуру, and алоэ’. The Russian nouns, which end in - а and if the emphasis (stress) is on the vowel, are indeclinable nouns; for example, боа, бра, Дюма. Loan words can be termed as indeclinable nouns in Russian grammar: for example, ‘ видео, радио, такси, and авокадо’. In terms of gender, the most common indeclinable nouns are neuter gender and non-living things. Living things carry masculine and feminine gender. Nouns such as animals, birds, and people are masculine gender and the nouns such as ‘Мисс and Мадам’ used to address the females and women’s names are feminine gender and they usually end in consonants. When these nouns are used in sentences together with adjectives and action verbs in past tense, the type gender they display is very important, for instance, ‘чёрный кофе and закрыло пари’. When some words in Russian and Ukraine end in ‘-о, -их, and -ых’, they do not change their forms in six cases, for



example, ‘У Долгих, с Белых, and с Матвиенко’. The names of cities, villages, rivers, creeks and lakes also do not change their word forms. ‘город Батуми, река Миссисипи and государство Конго’ are some examples of that kind. The other type of indeclinable nouns is the acronyms which are compound words resulted from the combination of the initial letters of the words. Some of the examples are ‘ООН, МГУ and США’. This paper explores the indeclinable nouns found in the text books used in B.A Russian classes.

### Conclusion

The findings showed that there are some unique nouns in Russian language known as indeclinable nouns. It was also found out that loan words are the most common indeclinable nouns in Russian language. Those nouns can be classified as masculine, feminine and neuter. Living things, non-living things, proper nouns and compound words are also indeclinable nouns. Knowing the usage of these nouns can help the learners to construct phrases and sentences in Russian language correctly.

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