

# TRANSLATION ACES NEWS

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## ◆ THE MORE THE MERRIER AT TRANSLATION ACES! ◆

We love formations of collective nouns, and many people think it's fun to know or memorize (though how many know the reasons for) what to call animal, vegetable and mineral groups in English, from a herd of elephants vs. a gaggle of geese to a bunch of grapes vs. a stalk of broccoli, from a vein of iron ore vs. a stand of trees. Does a pack (or deck) of cards have to consist of 52? And why do birds have the most fun: Geese on the ground are a *gaggle* but in flight are a *skein*. Only crows travel in a *murder*. Does an exaltation of larks ever exalt and a murmuration of starlings ever murmur?



There might be a myriad [10,000] of nouns describing plurals differing in meaning but still implying "a great many" – abundance, plenty, plurality, majority, bevy, bazillion, countless, tons, inestimable, innumerable, profusion, loads, wealth, untold, fountain, oceans, plethora, etc.



Plurals in other languages are often formed by just adding an 's' too but, for example in French, some nouns ending in vowel groups such as *eau*, *chateau*, *bateau* add an 'x' instead and become '*eaux*' -- yet are pronounced the same as the singular: 'oh' – get it? The structure of the plural in Indonesian has a logical pattern: just reduplicate the word, especially if a noun. For example, *buku saya* (my book) becomes *buku-buku saya* (my books).



Do only linguists wonder about these things?

And discussion of plurals of international money amounts would take another newsletter!

### ◆ HIGHLIGHT of the MONTH ◆

We recently translated a series of French documents, contracts and correspondence concerning harvesting and manufacturing of raw cotton in Burkina Faso.



### ◆ FEATURE ◆ Lingua Quiz!

1. Correct plural for spoonful is (a) spoonsful (b) spoonfuls (c) spoonfulls
2. Correct plural for moose is (a) mooses (b) meese (c) moose
3. Correct plural for fish is (a) fish (b) fishes (c) school
4. Correct plural for alumnus is (a) alumnae (b) alumnuses (c) alumni
5. Correct singular for data is (a) datum (b) date (c) data
6. Correct singular for media is (a) medium (b) mede (c) media
7. Correct singular for phenomena: (a) phenomen (b) phenomenon (c) phenomenal
8. MIX & MATCH these plurals:  
 (a) Gaggle (1) Kangaroos, monkeys, giraffes

- |                |   |
|----------------|---|
| (b) Herd       | (2) Lions   |
| (c) Swarm      | (3) Ants, rabbits, bats, gulls, penguins, beavers |
| (d) Pride      | (4) Elephants, seals                              |
| (e) Troop      | (5) Geese   |
| (f) Army       | (6) Fish  |
| (g) Colony     | (7) Porcupines                                    |
| (h) Covey      | (8) Owls, rooks                                   |
| (i) Prickle    | (9) Bees  |
| (j) Parliament | (10) Nightingales                                 |
| (k) School     | (11) Caterpillars, frogs, herring                 |

**ANSWERS:**

1 = (a); 2 = (c); 3 = all; 4 = (c); 5 = (a); 6 = (a); 7 = (b); 8. (a) = (5); (b) = (4); (c) = (9); (d) = (2); (e) = (1); (f) = (11); (g) = (3); (h) = (10); (i) = (7); (j) = (8); (k) = (6);

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