

The thesis “The evolution of noun’s categories” describes how Latin nouns changed into Italian nouns in respect of their categories. First of all the evolution of the Latin declension system into Italian classes is discussed. Five Latin declensions are reduced to three Italian classes by moving the nouns from the fourth and fifth declensions to the one of three Italian classes. The second chapter deals with the Latin case system which disappeared in the Italian language and it also deals with the reasons for this development. It is shown that the Italian nouns are morphologically invariant and they derive from Latin accusative forms. Then there the expression of the case functions by word order and by the deployment of prepositions is addressed. The number in the noun is discussed in the third chapter where the modern Italian system of number inflection is also described. In this chapter properties of irregular plurals are also described. The class of masculine singular nouns ending in –o, which have the property of displaying grammatically feminine plurals with inflection identical to that of the first class feminine –a are dealt with in more depth. The fourth chapter focuses on gender which is largely arbitrary both in Latin and in Italian. The problem of gender is first discussed from a pure theoretical perspective and then it is illustrated on concrete examples. Gender is defined accordingly to Hockett’s definition; it depends on the morphological agreement between nouns and their modifiers. In accordance with Corbett the kinds of assignment of gender are distributed in semantic and formal systems. The formal system can be further divided into phonological (Italian) and morphological systems. The last major subject matter of the thesis is the breakdown of the inflectional distinction between masculine and neuter and the origination of the category of ‘non-feminine’, in other words masculine gender in Italian language. Finally more concrete topics such as the gender of persons, animals, names of fruits, trees and cities are discussed.