



Geneva where, in 1903, she became the secretary of the editorial board of *Iskra* (Spark), the underground paper of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party. In his autobiography, fellow Russian revolutionary Leon Trotsky recalls that: "She was at the very centre of all the organisation work; she received comrades when they arrived, instructed them when they left, established connections, supplied secret addresses, wrote letters, and coded and decoded correspondence. In her room, there was always a smell of burned paper from the secret letters she heated over the fire to read..."

In 1910, Krupskaya was a co-founder of International Women's Day, which was first celebrated in Russia in 1913. It was conceived, as Krupskaya made clear in her article in the radical women's journal *Rabotnitsa*, as a revolutionary celebration.

Four years later, on March 8, 1917, the massive strike that started the Russian Revolution began on International Women's Day. It was led by women textile workers.

After the revolution, Krupskaya was appointed as deputy to the People's Commissar of Education. Following her husband's death in 1924, and the ascent of Joseph Stalin to lead the Soviet Union, women were rapidly isolated and there

was regression in terms of state and party positions on gender and sexuality. International Women's Day was turned into a twee celebration of patriarchal values, not – as it has been noted – unlike Mother's Day in the United States.

Krupskaya, like other leading women in the new Stalin-led state, was marginalised. But in her case, there was another aspect to the hostility that she encountered.

She was Lenin's widow. Her political and intellectual life and work was rapidly reduced to her relationship to her husband.

Almost two years after her husband's death, she led a public attack on Stalin, before later backing down from this position for reasons that remain unclear and contested.

She also wrote important articles on children and leisure but in 1933 she backed away from some of her earlier feminist positions, again for reasons that remain unclear and contested.

Following her death in 1939 she was largely, although not entirely, forgotten as anything other than the woman who had been Lenin's wife. It is not unusual for historians to credit men around Lenin for aspects of his success. Krupskaya, however, fades into her role as Lenin's wife, a role assumed to be contained to the domestic space, which itself is assumed to be a space outside of politics.

Writing days after her death, Trotsky described her as one of the most "tragic figures in revolutionary history". This view of Krupskaya could only be held by Trotsky because he defined her by the men in her life. He defined her by Lenin, and later by Stalin.

Trotsky's one-dimensional view of Krupskaya is typical of the narratives about women that seek to flatten their identity and have them fit the simplistic narratives of patriarchy. She could not be, as men are often acknowledged to be, a complex individual with a capacity to struggle, love, deceive and hate.

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(3) Krupskaya, pictured in the 1930s, was a co-founder of International Women's Day, first celebrated in Russia in 1913  
(4) Police file picture of the 'political criminal' Nadezhda Krupskaya, taken around 1916  
Photos: Fine Art Images/Heritage Images/Getty Images

# DUAL MEANING: WHEN TWO DOESN'T BECOME ONE

PETER TRUDGILL

explores a mysterious quirk found in some of our smaller languages



The grammatical distinction between singular and plural is straightforward enough: singular applies to one entity, and plural to more than one.

But looking at different European languages shows us that things can be a bit more complex than that.

With English nouns, we generally show the difference between singular and plural through the absence versus the presence of the plural suffix -s: one book, ten books. With pronouns it's different: we have singular forms like *I, me, he, him, she, and her*, versus plural forms like *we, us, and they*.

But then we need to think about the word *both*: it is plural, in that it means 'more than one'; but it is a particular kind of more-than-one.

It refers specifically to two, and only two. If you're enquiring about a family of five people, you can't say "How are you both?". And you can't ask a couple "How are you all?" In English grammar, there is a distinction between *both* and *all* such that *all* means 'more than two'.

The word *both* is an example of the grammatical category which linguists refer to as the dual.

English has several words which express dual rather than plural number. Just as dual *both* corresponds to plural *all*, so the word *either* is the dual equivalent of the plural form *any*, and the word *neither* is the dual form corresponding to plural *none*. If you were asked which one of two undesirable-looking apples you wanted, you wouldn't reply "I don't want any of them"; you would have to say "I don't want either of them". And you couldn't answer "none of them" to that question; you would need to say "neither of them".

Some languages in Europe take the category of dual a good deal further than this and have a much more fully developed system than English, extending it to articles, pronouns and verb forms. In the South Slavic language Slovenian, the pronouns *tebe, vaju* and *vas* all mean 'you'; but *tebe* is singular, *vaju* is dual, and *vas* refers to three or more people. The Slovenian verb forms *si, ste* and *sta* all translate as English 'you are', but they mean respectively 'you (singular) are', 'you two are', and 'you (plural = three or more) are'.

The dual number also plays a role in the Sami languages of northern Norway, Sweden and Finland and adjacent areas

of Russia. In the Pite Sami language of northern Sweden, *dāj* means 'you dual' and *dij* 'you plural'. *Sāj* is 'they dual', and *sij* 'they plural'. Pite Sami also has dual verb forms such as *viesson* 'we two lived' and *viessojden* 'you two lived', alongside plural verbs such as *viessop* 'we lived' and *viessojde* 'you lived' referring to any number of people above two. If you want to say 'thank you' to two people in Pite Sami, you have to say "Gijtov adnen". To thank three or more people, one has to say "Gijtov ednet".

It is an interesting fact that nearly all European languages used to have a fully fledged system of dual number but have now lost it. Ancient Greek had it, but Modern Greek doesn't. Old English had the dual pronouns *wit*, 'we (dual)' and *git*, 'you (dual)', as opposed to *we*, 'we (plural)' and *ge* (later *ye*), 'you (plural)'.

In Modern English we have abandoned this. Polish lost the dual number only in the last few hundred years.

Maltese still has traces of the dual: *jum* means 'day (singular)', *jumejn* is 'days (dual)', and *ijiem* is 'days (plural)'.

Maltese has about 300,000 speakers; Pite Sami has no more than 50 speakers.

Looking at languages around the world, it seems to be true that the bigger a language gets in terms of numbers of native speakers, the less likely it is to have dual verbs and pronouns. It would be nice to say we understand why this is the case, but we don't really.



## DUEL AND DUAL

Duel and dual look like they're related words: a duel is a fight between two people; dual means 'pertaining to two'. But they don't actually come from a common source. Duel is from Archaic Latin *duellum*, 'war', which became *bellum* in Classical Latin. Dual comes from Latin *dualis*, 'containing two', which is derived from Latin *duo*, the number two.