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Numerals In English : A Descriptive Study

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Abstract

This study is mainly concerned with studying numerals in English. It deals with the linguistic side of numerals. The study sheds the light on the nature of numerals, their types, positions in the sentence and their structure.

In this project, there is a historical background on numerals in old civilizations, i.e. in the language of the peoples of those ancient civilization such as Roman, Greek, Hindu and Babylon.

The project continues to explain the use of numerals, in English grammar. In Arabic, There are several divisions of numerals as well as various structures .

It has been founded that numbers are developed historically in all languages from image system into numerical one .

Chapter One

Historical Background

According to **McLeish, John (1978:13)**, Human beings were very interested in counting and arithmetic processes since ancient times. They counted things around in nature such as trees, mountains, rivers, animals, weapon etc.... After changing the way of life from hunting into the life of domestication through communities and human groups that moved to its development stages of life in the first step to build villages and cities, it became obvious that they need to count their cattle and animals, and counting days and seasons.

Counting system was not developed enough as it is today, as there was no specific numerical system as the current decimal system. In ancient civilizations, humans adopted such a primitive way of counting based primarily on using the fingers of the hand, and there were, until recently, primitive tribes in Africa and Native Americans

who used a few numbers in their languages including (one, two, three, four).

Archaeologists and historians give us many different examples concerning humans' primitive ways of counting that were still used by many peoples and tribes even after the first thousandth AD, while other civilizations (Babylonian, Egyptians, Indians, Romans, Greek) developed their counting systems since two thousand years BC. Some civilizations used (gravel) instead of fingers, and the Latin word gravel "Calculi" from which came the word "Calculation" means counting, and the word "Calculator" that means computer or counter. Consider the following text found in the pyramids of Egypt: "The spirit of the devil had defied an Egyptian Pharaoh if he can count his fingers to successfully pass the exam." The invention of writing has had a profound effect on the evolution of counting and numerical systems as presenting symbols for numbers and the way

of reading them as it will be stated in detail in each civilization alone. The first appearance of numbers in the Semitic languages was in religious texts such as : "Moses consulted with "Jehovah" on Sinai Mount for forty days and forty nights" and "The children of Israel remained forty year homeless in the desert" (McLeish, 1978:15).

- **Greek Numerals**

Peter T Daniels and William Bright (1996: 22), say that The Greek numeral system was uniquely based upon their alphabet. The Greek alphabet came from the Phoenicians around 900 B.C. When the Phoenicians invented the alphabet, it contained about 600 symbols. Those symbols took up too much room, so they eventually narrowed it down to 22 symbols.

The Greek borrowed some of the symbols and made up some of their own. But the Greek were the first people to have separate symbols, or letters, to represent vowel sounds. Our own word "alphabet" comes from the first two letters, or numbers of the Greek alphabet -- "alpha" and "beta." Using the letters of their alphabet enabled them to use these symbols in a more condensed version of their old system, called Attic. The Attic system was similar to other forms of numbering systems of that era. It was based on symbols lined up in rows and took up a lot of space to write. This might not be too bad, except that they were still carving into stone tablets, and the symbols of the alphabet allowed them to stamp values on coins in a smaller, more condensed version.

1	α	alpha	10	ι	iota	100	ρ	rho
2	β	beta	20	κ	kappa	200	σ	sigma
3	γ	gamma	30	λ	lambda	300	τ	tau
4	δ	delta	40	μ	mu	400	υ	upsilon
5	ϵ	epsilon	50	ν	nu	500	ϕ	phi
6	ς	vau*	60	ξ	xi	600	χ	chi
7	ζ	zeta	70	$\omicron$	omicron	700	ψ	psi
8	η	eta	80	π	pi	800	ω	omega
9	θ	theta	90	$\koppa$	koppa*	900	$\sampi$	sampi

*vau, koppa, and sampi are obsolete characters

• Roman Numerals

Keyser, Paul (1988: 529-546) explains that the numeric system used

in ancient Rome employs

combinations of letters from the Latin alphabet to signify values. The numbers 1 to 10 can be expressed in Roman numerals as follows: I, II, III, IV, V, VI, VII, VIII, IX, X.

The Roman numeral system is a cousin of Etruscan numerals. Use of Roman numerals continued after the decline of the Roman Empire. From the 14th century on, Roman numerals began to be replaced in most contexts by more convenient

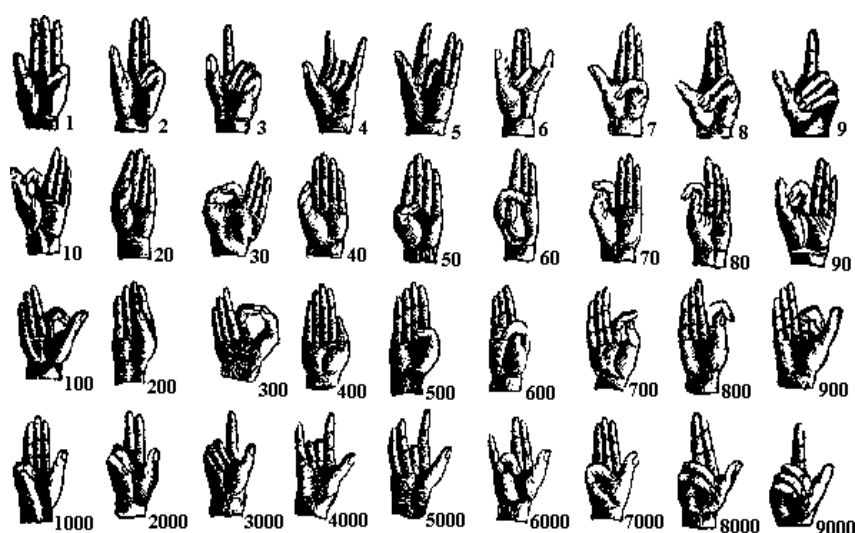
Hindu-Arabic numerals; however, this process was gradual, and the use of Roman numerals in some minor applications continues to this day.

Ifrah, Georges (2000:49), adds that The Romans adopted the Greek numeral system in various sciences and knowledge, it is possible that due to the convergence of the two languages and geographical proximity with each other, as well as that Greeks were taken a lot of science and knowledge of other civilizations by translating them into their language. In fact, this was a great treasure of the Roman that was much different from the well-

known science at their time. Romans blended their own experience of numbers with this important treasure. They have used the decimal system while retaining the symbols to represent numbers, where they divided numbers into to basic as they called, which are (5, 10, 50, 100, 5 million, 1000) and represented them by symbols and are respectively, D, C, L, X, V, and secondary numbers which are (1, 2, 3) being represented by lateral system which are respectively (I, II, III) as well as the use of the spatial formula of numbers.

The Roman numerical system did not develop so easily as listed

previously. Later on they discovered they were in a very primitive stage, which forced them to return to the Greek knowledge of and create their new decimal system. Number one was symbolized by one finger, i.e. a vertical line and number five was symbolized by one hand with five fingers. Thus number ten was represented by both hands. Finally the Roman numbers developed to their present day forms. The following figure states the use of hand fingers (sign language) to represent numbers in the first stages of the Roman linguistic system:



FINGER SYMBOLS
(From a manual published in 1520)

Roman Numerical System

Romans stayed using this method until the second millennium AD. The development of their numbers was closely linked to the

development of the Latin language.

The table below represents the modern numerals of Roman Language (1 - 100).

1	I	21	XXI	41	XLI	61	LXI	81	LXXXI
2	II	22	XXII	42	XLII	62	LXII	82	LXXXII
3	III	23	XXIII	43	XLIII	63	LXIII	83	LXXXIII
4	IV	24	XXIV	44	XLIV	64	LXIV	84	LXXXIV
5	V	25	XXV	45	XLV	65	LXV	85	LXXXV
6	VI	26	XXVI	46	XLVI	66	LXVI	86	LXXXVI
7	VII	27	XXVII	47	XLVII	67	LXVII	87	LXXXVII
8	VIII	28	XXVIII	48	XLVIII	68	LXVIII	88	LXXXVIII
9	IX	29	XXIX	49	XLIX	69	LXIX	89	LXXXIX
10	X	30	XXX	50	L	70	LXX	90	XC
11	XI	31	XXXI	51	LI	71	LXXI	91	XCI
12	XII	32	XXXII	52	LII	72	LXXII	92	XCII
13	XIII	33	XXXIII	53	LIII	73	LXXIII	93	XCIII
14	XIV	34	XXXIV	54	LIV	74	LXXIV	94	XCIV
15	XV	35	XXXV	55	LV	75	LXXV	95	XCV
16	XVI	36	XXXVI	56	LVI	76	LXXVI	96	XCVI
17	XVII	37	XXXVII	57	LVII	77	LXXVII	97	XCVII
18	XVIII	38	XXXVIII	58	LVIII	78	LXXVIII	98	XCVIII
19	XIX	39	XXXIX	59	LIX	79	LXXIX	99	XCIX
20	XX	40	XL	60	LX	80	LXXX	100	C

Modern Numerals of Roman Language (1 - 100).

Babylonian Numerals

According to **Menninger, Karl W.** (1969:42), Babylonia is an ancient Akkadian-speaking Semitic state and cultural region based in central- southern Mesopotamia (present-day Iraq). Babylonian

numerals were written in cuneiform, using a wedge-tipped reed stylus to make a mark on a soft clay tablet which would be exposed in the sun to harden to create a permanent record. The following figure displays the forms of Babylonian numbers:

𐎶 1	𐎵𐎶 11	𐎵𐎶𐎶 21	𐎵𐎶𐎶𐎶 31	𐎵𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶 41	𐎵𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶 51
𐎶𐎶 2	𐎵𐎶𐎶 12	𐎵𐎶𐎶𐎶 22	𐎵𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶 32	𐎵𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶 42	𐎵𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶 52
𐎶𐎶𐎶 3	𐎵𐎶𐎶𐎶 13	𐎵𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶 23	𐎵𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶 33	𐎵𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶 43	𐎵𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶 53
𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶 4	𐎵𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶 14	𐎵𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶 24	𐎵𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶 34	𐎵𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶 44	𐎵𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶 54
𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶 5	𐎵𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶 15	𐎵𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶 25	𐎵𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶 35	𐎵𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶 45	𐎵𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶 55
𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶 6	𐎵𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶 16	𐎵𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶 26	𐎵𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶 36	𐎵𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶 46	𐎵𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶 56
𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶 7	𐎵𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶 17	𐎵𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶 27	𐎵𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶 37	𐎵𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶 47	𐎵𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶 57
𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶 8	𐎵𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶 18	𐎵𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶 28	𐎵𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶 38	𐎵𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶 48	𐎵𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶 58
𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶 9	𐎵𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶 19	𐎵𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶 29	𐎵𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶 39	𐎵𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶 49	𐎵𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶 59
𐎵 10	𐎵𐎵 20	𐎵𐎵𐎵 30	𐎵𐎵𐎵𐎵 40	𐎵𐎵𐎵𐎵𐎵 50	

Babylonian Numerals

This system first appeared around 3100 BC. It is also credited as being

the first known positional numeral system, in which the value of a particular digit depends both on the

digit itself and its position within the number.

Hindu Numerals

The Hindu numbers system as we know it today—for it is more or less

the one we (as in us Westerners) use today as well—can be attributed to two men: the great Hindu astronomer Âryabhaṭa and his pupil Bhâskara I, during the period 499-522 B.C.E. Âryabhaṭa invented a system that was based on using syllables and combining them to form greater numbers. Bhâskara I simplified the system somewhat and made it decimal place-value system. The Hindus had used a decimal system for a long time and even had the zero before this time, but it was not until these two

astronomers came up with their system for forming numbers that the system was more or less complete. As all Hindu literature was written on verse form, they also had to come up with a system to form numbers that fit well in verse. Thus, they substituted different words for numbers. Examples are “moon” for one, as there is only one moon, “eyes” for two, as we have two arms, and so on. 201 would then be *paksa-kha-eka*, or *eyes-hole-one*. **(Carl B. Boyer, 1944: 153-154).**

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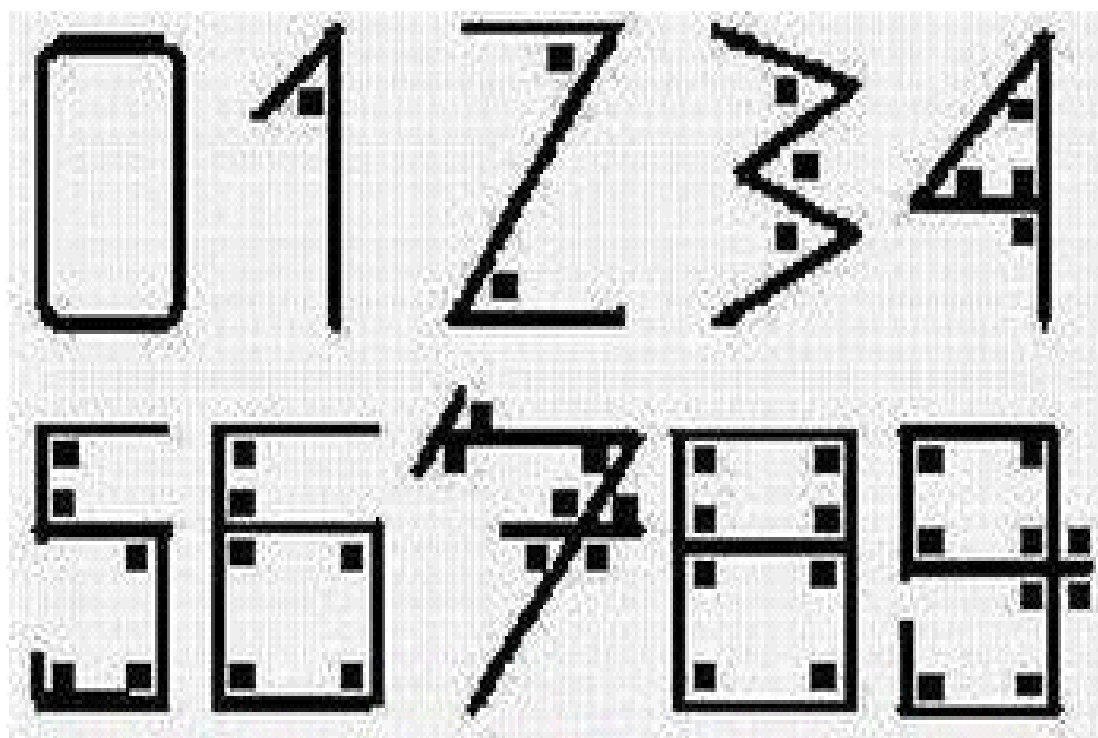
Devanagari Number

Chapter Two

Numerals in English

The numbers we write are made up of algorithms, (1,2,3,4, etc) called Arabicalgorithms, to distinguish them from the Roman algorithms. (I,II,III,IV, etc) The Arabs

popularize these algorithms, but their origin goes to the phoenician merchants that used them to count and do their commercial countability. See www.archimedes-lab.org. Each one of those numbers represents an angle as it is shown in the following figure:



Angles of English Numerals

According to **Jean Praninskas** (1957:38), there are two kinds of numbers in English, Cardinal and ordinal. Cardinal numbers are used in counting and to indicate

quantities. Ordinal numbers are used to indicate position in a series. There are some inconsistencies in the spelling and pronunciation of the numbers. Pay particular attention to the underlined forms.

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1	one
2	two
3	three
4	four
5	five
6	six
7	seven
8	eight
9	nine
10	ten
11	eleven
12	twelve
13	thirteen
14	fourteen
15	fifteen
16	sixteen
17	seventeen
18	eighteen
19	nineteen
20	twenty
21	twenty-one
22	twenty-two
30	thirty
40	forty
50	fifty
60	sixty
70	seventy
80	eighty
90	ninety
100	a/one hundred
101	a/one hundred and one
200	two hundred
1.000	a/one thousand
10.000	ten thousand
100.000	a/one hundred thousand
1.000.000	a/one million

Cardinal Numbers

Numerals In English : A Descriptive Study

1 st	first
2 nd	second
3 rd	third
4 th	fourth
5 th	fifth
6 th	sixth
7 th	seventh
8 th	eighth
9 th	ninth
10 th	tenth
11 th	eleventh
12 th	twelfth
13 th	thirteenth
14 th	fourteenth
15 th	fifteenth
16 th	sixteenth
17 th	seventeenth
18 th	eighteenth
19 th	nineteenth
20 th	twentieth
21 st	twenty-first
22 nd	twenty-second
30 th	thirtieth
40 th	fortieth
50 th	fiftieth
60 th	sixtieth
70 th	seventieth
80 th	eightieth
90 th	ninetieth
100 th	hundredth
101 st	hundred and first
200 th	two hundredth
1.000 th	thousandth
10.000 th	ten thousandth
100.000 th	one hundred thousandth
1.000.000 th	one millionth

Ordinal Numbers

There are also the number forms once and twice which express frequency with the large numbers, is expressed as three times, four

times, a hundred times, etc. When a noun is modified by an ordinal number and a cardinal number, the ordinal always precedes.

Ordinal	Cardinal	Noun
First	two	letters of Walbrook.
The first	five	lessons are easy;
The second	five	lessons are difficult.

- Note that there is no (s) on thousand or million

- American usage of this term and terms for larger amounts differs from British usage. Students in economics should make sure they understand the difference.

Quirk & Greenbaum (1985:261), say that *one* occurs with singular count nouns (one sister, and the other cardinal numerals co-occur with plural count nouns (two, three, etc brothers. In many contexts, *one* may be regarded as a stressed form of the indefinite article and may sometimes replace it;
I would like { a one } photocopy of this article

Thus, the indefinite article normally cannot co-occur with *one*, but the definite article can :

a one book

the one [only] book I like best.

they also argue that the ordinal numerals have a one- for –one relation with the cardinals : first/one, second/two, third/three, twentieth/twenty, etc.

The "general ordinals" include items like next, last, past, (an) other, additional and further which resemble the ordinal numerals grammatically and semantically.

The general ordinal last, past, and next may precede or follow a cardinal with a difference of meaning. For example; the last two pages would mean "the last and penultimate page of a book, where as the two last pages could mean 'the last page in each of two books. Another has two functions. It can be unstressed form of 'one other' in contrast with the other.

Telephone calls

Praninskas (1957:39) says that, most telephone numbers are

pronounced as a series of cardinals. In most areas Zero is pronounced as a series of cardinals. Expect when two or three of them come together. For example, 09071759082, can be read as oh nine oh seven one seven five nine oh eight two. For phone numbers like 1088, people often say one oh double eight. Examples:

507

----- five-o-seven

914

----- nine fourteen, or Nine one four

2649

----- twenty-six forty-nine, or Two-six-

four-nine

Praninskas (1957:39)

Dates

According to **Quirk & Greenbaum (1985:396)**, we always read your dates as hundreds : For example, "1985" can be read as :

"nineteen eighty-five"

"nineteen hundred and eighty-five (formal)"

***"one thousand nine hundred and eighty-five" In the 1600s "sixteen hundreds"**

Day and month are usually indicated thus :

7(th) February or February 7(th) reads as "the seventh of February",

"February the seventh", also "February seven", or "February seventh".

In date abbreviations, numerals are normally separated by an oblique, or a period :
7/ 2/84 or 7.2.84

Praninskas (1957:40) argues that when reading or saying a date, the number of the day is expressed

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by an ordinal number; the year is expressed in groups of tens.

***January 1, 1956 January first,
nineteen fifty six July 4, 1776 July
fourth, seventeen seventy six
December 25, 1881 December
twenty- fifth, eighteen eighty-one***

as 15 or an ordinal number such as 15th can be used to write a date.

15 August or August 15

August 15th or 15th August

In speech ordinal numbers are usual.

***In fifteenth of August or August
the fifteenth.***

In the United States, abbreviated dates are written with the month first. This is different from the practice in many parts of the world. March 1, 1955 is written 3-1-55 or 3/1/55.

Note; the 1980's means (the nineteeneighties) and a man in his fifties.

John Eastwood (1994: 195),
argues that a cardinal number such

Times

The following expressions are used to tell time of day.

<i>6:00</i>	<i>six – six o'clock</i>
<i>6:10</i>	<i>six ten – ten (minutes) after six</i>
<i>6:15</i>	<i>six fifteen – quarter past six – quarter past six</i>
<i>6:30</i>	<i>six thirty – half past six</i>
<i>12:00 noon – midnight</i>	

Hours of the day are not numbered beyond twelve. We use the abbreviations a.m and p.m. instead. The hours before noon are designed a.m.; those afternoon are designated p.m. There are also another uses of numbers such as money, mathematical measurements, distances, length, weight, temperature...etc. (**John Eastwood, 1994:195**) .

Fractions

Quirk & Greenbaum (1985:396), mention that Vulgar fractions are written and read thus :
½ a/one half

½ a/one half 1 ½ one and a half

4/5 four fifths 2/3 two thirds

Hyphens are often used , particularly in premodification :

A three-quarter mile; three (-) quarters of a mile [fourths is a less common alternative to *quarters* here] .

John Eastwood (1994:247), states that a fraction represents a part of a whole. It is a way of expressing a number that is a ratio of two integers. In fractions, we use half, quarter or an ordinal. With numbers less than one, we use of before a noun phrase.

- Two thirds of the field was underwater.
- We get a quarter of the profits .

With numbers above one, we can use a plural noun.

- We waited one and a half hours.
- I'd like six and three quarter meters, please! *1 ¼ one and a half*

Numerals as Postdeterminers and predetermines

Quirk & Greenbaum (1985:253-261) explain that cardinal and ordinal numeral occupy the postdeterminers slot. Postdeterminers follow predeterminers or central determiners (if present). But they precede any adjectives and other premodifying items;

- Cardinal numerals: my three children - the two cats and four houses .

- Ordinal numerals: his fourth birthday - the tenth festival.

- General ordinals: my next project - her subsequent letter.

Postdeterminers can co-occur:

my next two projects - several other people

Greenbaum & Nelson (2002:104)

state that predeterminers specify quantity in the noun which follows them and that numbers, especially fractions, considered as one of the three major types that include multiple expressions and the words 'all' and 'both'.

Examples of fractions:

half my salary
third my salary

one-

He did it in a third of the time it took me

- Examples of multiplying expressions :

Twice a week
times a each year
times per decade

three
four

- examples of both & all

Both my salaries all my salary.

Some Expressions of Numerals

Raymond Murphy (1989: 164)

mentions that (many) and (few) are used with plural nouns, i.e. to refer to indefinite number of things, persons, etc such as many friends many people few cars few countries

Jeanpraninskas (1957:59) says that Many is used before plurals in affirmative and negative statements and in questions. Here, many refers to indefinite number of persons, things, etc.,

Betty has many friends

She doesn't have many relatives?

Does betty have many relatives ?
Here, we don't know the real number of friends, relatives in the examples mentioned above .

Martin Hewings (2005:) mentions plural noun, as in :

- many of the people there were disappointed
- yes , many of use were angry about it.

Betty Azar (2003:180) tells that the objective (more) can be used with a noun to refer to a greater number degree, measure....etc. The noun after (more) is again indefinite, as in:

-I would give you more news papers than I do .

In the two sentences above, more refers to an ambiguous number of newspapers and the thing that 'I' want to give

• **Some special notes about English Numerals**

1 Division

Numbers in English are like Arabic, divided into four main types: singular, compound, coordinative and tens.

Singular numbers begin from 0-9, i.e. they use the digits. Examples: 1

book
6 cars

Thenounafternumberoneisinthe singularallthetime,asinone, one draft, whereas the noun after all

other number from (2-99) will be in the plural form, like:

Twobirds tenpens

twentypages Ninety ninesoldiers

Numbersfrom(10-19)arecalled compoundbecausetheyare composed fo two numbers. Such numbers often come before plural noun, asin

10persons

13students

11 pupils

Tens comprise the numbers (20, 30,,40,50,60,70,80,90). In written English they can be represented as follows :

Twenty- thirty- forty- fifty - sixty - seventy - eighty- ninety

Those numbers are followed by plural noun such as : Twentyyears

The final type of our division to English numerals is coordinative numbers. They are:

<i>21 twenty-one</i>	<i>26</i>
<i>twenty-six</i>	<i>32</i>
<i>thirty - two</i>	

خلاصة

وجد أن الأعداد تطورت تاريخيا بشكل تدريجي من النظام الصوري إلى النظام العددي المتداول حاليا تلبية لمتطلبات كل شعب من الشعوب .. اما في اللغة الانجليزية فقد تطورت من نظام الزوايا الرياضية الى الأعداد المتعارف عليها حاليا ليتم استعمالها في الهواتف والعناوين البريدية والكسور ... الخ

يتناول البحث دراسة الأعداد باللغة الانجليزية وخاصة الجانب اللغوي للأعداد .. تلقي الدراسة الضوء على طبيعة الأرقام وأنواعها ومواقعها في الجملة وبنيتها.

تناول البحث دراسة تطور الاعداد في لغات الحضارات القديمة كالحضارة الرومانية والبابلية والهندية و اليونانية .. ثم يتناول البحث استعمال الاعداد في اللغة الانجليزية من حيث انواعها و استعمالها وتركيبها علاوة على مجالات الاستعمال في اللغة المذكورة .

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