Count-Mass Distinction of Concrete Nouns: What makes mass nouns?

具象名詞の可算性：何か物質名詞を形成するか

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1. Count-to-Mass Noun Shifts

"The conceptual basis of the count-mass distinction is fairly transparent; it has to do with the distinction between an individuated 'object' and an unindividuated 'substance'," says Taylor (2002: 367). He also says: "the count-mass distinction is a matter of how speakers construe a thing." This means as Langacker (1991: 72) argues: "Given proper circumstances, almost any count noun can be construed as designating a homogeneous, unbounded mass and thereby come to function as a mass noun grammatically." The following examples are often cited to show how count nouns become mass nouns:

(C-M1) After I ran over the cat with our car, there was cat all over the driveway.
(C-M2) Emmy finds squashed spider more nauseous than the living thing alive.
(C-M3) The scrapyard is full of smashed car awaiting recycling.

It is claimed that the mass use of cat, spider or car is chosen since the cat (C-M1), the spider (C-M2) or the car (C-M3) refers to bits and pieces of the referent, which is an unbounded mass, and is therefore construed as uncountable. The unbounded condition of a referent, however, does not necessarily coerce the uncountable use of the noun. More often than not, the countable use is preferred, and 'cat', 'squashed spider', and 'smashed car' can be replaced respectively with such countable equivalents as 'bits and pieces of a cat', 'a squashed spider', and 'smashed cars'.

The uncountable use of concrete nouns that refer to a discrete entity will be examined to show that it is not the physical condition, but the speaker's construal that determines their countability. The example sentences cited in this article are from three sources: the British National Corpus (BNC) with about 100 million words, the WordbanksOnline (WBO) with about 53 million words, which is developed by HarperCollins and made available for research on the Internet, and from various websites found through Google Advanced Search. (All the underlines and boldfaces in the example sentences cited in this article are mine.)

2. Countability of Cat and Spider

2.1. Countability of Cat

Langacker (1991: 70) mentions, as distinguishing factors between mass and count nouns,
"homogeneity", "expansibility/contractibility", and "replicability" in addition to "bounding." These factors pertain to the physical aspect of an entity that a noun refers to. This analysis explains the following example (4a) provided by Langacker himself (1991: 73), but not the other two (4b, 4c).

Given proper circumstances, almost any count noun can be construed as designating a homogeneous, unbounded mass and thereby come to function as a mass noun grammatically. Consider these examples:

(4) a. After I ran over the cat with our car, there was cat all over the driveway.
   b. I don't like shelf — I'd rather eat table.
   c. When he finished using his knife to tunnel through the stone wall, it had very little blade left.

In (4a), the unfortunate cat loses its structural integrity through the accident, being converted into an effectively homogeneous substance. (Though a single cat will yield only a limited quantity of this substance, the internal properties of the mass do not impose any inherent limit on its potential expanse.) Example (4b), it has been noted, would be conceivable if uttered by one intelligent termite to another. Here the mass-noun status of shelf and table reflects both function and scope of predication. For purposes of consumption, the overall configuration of a shelf or a table is less important than the qualitative properties of the substance comprising it. Moreover, a termite is so small relative to such objects that their boundaries can be expected to fall outside the scope of predication, if this latter is adjusted to the typical scale of termite experience. Finally, (4c) is less concerned with the blade as an integral, functional whole than with its diminishing size. In effect its spatial expanse is construed as a quantifiable substance.

'Shelf' and 'table' (4b) or 'blade' (4c), unlike 'cat' (4a), does not lose its structural integrity, or physical identity. What makes them uncountable is the change of perspective, or conceptual shift, from a human's to a termite's point of view in (4b) and from seeing the blade as a part of the knife, which has its integral structure, to viewing it as a substance losing its quantity. There are two factors that make the count-to-mass shift: physical condition of the referent and conceptualization.

Langacker (1991: 72-3) explains that the count noun 'cat' gains the mass status because "the unfortunate cat loses its structural integrity through the accident, being converted into an effectively homogeneous substance." This account shares the idea of the "universal grinder" of Pelletier (1979: 5-7), through which a man, for instance, can be transformed into the condition of "There is man all over the floor." What Langacker says with the above example (4a) is that the physical condition of an entity (or a referent) determines its countability; cat is countable when it keeps its structural integrity, and uncountable when it is converted into a mass of a substance. It, however, does not work the way as Langacker argues. Cat, with its structural integrity lost, is likely to retain its countability as a count noun and can be used with the indefinite article (1) or in the plural form (2).

(1) Well, this is a short horror story that happened to a friend of mine. Yesterday morning he got up, went to his car, and when he turned the key he heard this incredible scratching/screaming sound. He did not know what to think, so he pops the hood and
sees that there is this thick liquid everywhere, red liquid. As he gets closer he finds little *bits and pieces of a CAT* (I’ll leave my explanation at that). The theory goes that because of the warmth of the motor, the cat decided to spend the night there, it was a pretty small one, and please don’t ask why we know it was a cat and not some other small animal. Well we’re still cleaning the mess, poor animal, my friend really felt bad afterwards. So remember to honk.

(2) “What I picked up personally was roughly around **twenty cats,**” says animal-control officer Jeff Pierce. “There were **pieces of cats.** It’s hard to tell when you have a leg here and a leg there.” The trapped cats had starved to death one by one, leaving the others to feed on their remains.

Langacker should apply his account of ‘shelf’ and ‘table’ (4b) or ‘blade’ (4c) to the case of ‘cat’ (4a). In (4b), it is the termite’s viewpoint that converts the countable *shelf* and *table* into the uncountables. As Langacker says, “For purposes of consumption, the overall configuration of a shelf or a table is less important than the qualitative properties of the substance comprising it.” In (4c), the speaker “is less concerned with the blade as an integral, functional whole than with its diminishing size.” The speaker’s interpretation determines the use of the noun, count or mass.

*Cat* can be construed as either countable or uncountable; it is a matter of the speaker’s interpretation. In (1), the speaker’s focus is on a poor little cat, which has turned into “little bits and pieces” through the unfortunate accident. In (2), the focus in on the multiplicity of cats, seeing “twenty cats” in the mess. In both (3) and (4), the speaker sees in the bits and pieces, not a cat, but a kind of dirt that has to be cleaned (3) and “a terrible mess” scattering all over the place that needs cleaning (4).

(3) I had to clean **bits and pieces of cat** off the front of my car a couple of months ago, damn thing ran out in front of me.

(4) All at once it exploded, with **bits and pieces of cat** and fur going everywhere, mostly on the king. The king was furious. His cat was dead, and he was covered with a terrible mess.

2.2. Smell of Cat

*Cat* has another uncountable use, as Taylor (2002: 378) points out:

Even nouns which at first blush might seem to resist a substance interpretation can sometimes be used as mass. One does not have to imagine someone ‘eating cat’ in order to construe *cat* as a mass noun—see the examples in (3)—while the mass use of *car* (again, a pretty good candidate, one might think, for an exclusively count noun) has become familiar from the advertising slogan *More car for your dollar!* In fact, it may not be too outrageous to suggest that just about any noun—some more readily than others, to be
sure—can, under special circumstances, be used as either count or mass.

(3) a. After the accident, there was cat all over the road.
   b. There's a smell of cat in this room.

The uncountable use of *cat* in (3b) is different from that in (3a), although Taylor does not seem to distinguish one from the other. *Cat* in (3a) means bits and pieces of (probably) one cat. In this context, you cannot say, “There was a cat all over the road.” or “There were cats all over the road,” which has a quite different meaning. On the other hand, *cat* in (3b) can be replaced with the countable use with the indefinite article or in the plural form (5-7).

(5) Get a cat, the living mousetrap. The cat will never get tired of going out into the garage to find mice. The ones she kills, she will bring to you and the ones she doesn't will have run off and stayed off, for the smell of cat will keep them away.

(http://www.stretcher.com/stories/981022c.cfm)

(6) If you don't have a cat, try to borrow one for an afternoon. The smell of a cat will make any mice it doesn't devour move out.


(7) The smell of cats causes fear in mice.

(http://scienceclub.org/~sciclub/cgi-bin/scifair/hint.html)

*Cat* in (5) is uncountable because it does not refer to any particular cat or reflect the number of cats the speaker has in mind, while that in (6) and (7) does. Whether there is just one or more than one cat, the uncountable use is preferred when the emphasis is on the smell, not on the cat (or cats) mentioned (8-11). (12) is a typical example of the mass use of *cat*, in which the smell is in the foreground, and the existence of a cat, a dog, or other animals is irrelevant in this context. If a particular cat or cats are in mind and their existence is in focus, the countable use is chosen (13-16). This explains the slight differences in meaning between (5), (6), and (7). The smell is in the foreground in (5), and it is not important whether there is a cat or not, while in (6) and (7) the existence of a cat (or cats), which produces the smell, is in focus.

(8) Emma keeps a cat, her apartment smells of cat.

(http://www.poetrymagazines.org.uk/magazine/record.asp?id=1739)

(9) The next morning when Wilb was ready to leave, he went out to his van and on the driver’s side, the side door was open slightly. When he got in he could smell cat. When Barry got in Wilb asked him if he could smell cat. At first, no, then Barry got a whiff—yup—with the door open all night and the lingering smell of fish—some old Tom Cat had been in and sprayed.

(http://www.k12.nf.ca/jmolds/exchange/day6/day6.html)

(10) He had cats and the cats used to use the mattresses quite a lot, so the mattresses smelled of cat.


(11) This couple have about 50 cats living in their house. There were 7 or 8 juvenile males
in the kitchen, on the counters, the chairs, the table, the floor. There were two queens in cages with kittens...one in the living room and one in the upstairs hall. There was a queen with four kittens and two spayed females in the bathroom. There were four breeding toms in the basement. There were at least 20 cats in the living room, females, spayed and not, spayed males, three juveniles and one three month old kitten. There were two large cat trees in the living room, and there were cats on the tables, the sofa, the floor, the woodstove (not lit of course) and the TV. I didn't go into the bedrooms, but I'd wager there were cats there too. There were food and water dishes and litter boxes around, and the place smelled of cat.

(12) Although I don't have a sensitive nose to detect differences in odors of different races, I would not find it surprising that you find such a distinction. I can smell cat, dog, cow, chicken, horse, etc. Each animal does have a specific odor, just as each person has a unique fingerprint, DNA. It stands to reason that each person has a unique odor.

(13) “I smell a cat,” said Boris. “I hope it's a friendly cat.”

(14) She said Rory Christie had thoroughly cleaned her car, including its upholstery, when the children complained of a bad smell.

“It was definitely the smell of a cat,” she said.

“It smelt like a cat had weed in the car.

“Rory scrubbed the whole car down. It got rid of the smell.

“It was quite obvious it was a cat.”

(15) I love the smell of a cat that has just been shampooed.

(16) There's an old adage that “south London smells of curry, north London smells of cats”!

2.3. Countability of Spider

The same can be said of spider, which Allan (1980: 547) uses as an example to show that normally count nouns can be used uncountably. He gives the following example:

"Emmy finds squashed spider more nauseous than the living thing alive.

Spider, in the same way as cat, remains countable, as long as we recognize an individuated spider even in the squashed condition or in the form of dried corpses (17-21). When we do not see a spider but a kind of dirt, as in the case of cat (3, 4), it is construed as uncountable (22). It is not physical condition, but conceptualization, or construal that determines countability.
(17) Even though most spider bites are not serious, if you are bitten you should seek medical attention as soon as possible. It will help the doctor if you can take the offending spider with you so that it can be identified. Capture the spider in a tightly sealed container if possible. Even a squashed spider may be identifiable if all of the parts can be saved.

(18) When I was younger, I once put my foot in my shoe when I accidentally squashed a large spider to death—I felt something rather mushy so I took my foot out and my sister who saw it started to scream hysterically (she has a spider phobia), and when I realised that it was a squashed spider I fainted.

(19) Squashed spiders are very hard to identify.

(20) Something that was really cool about this is they used all real spiders in all the shots. Think of how many squashed spiders there must have been after making this movie.

(21) The whitewashed walls were smoke-tanned and dotted with millions of fly-specks; the dried corpses of squashed spiders formed large black patches; all four corners of the ceiling were festooned with cobwebs.

(22) I'm really scared of spiders. I absolutely hate them, and I always have. I think me and Ron would get on well. But anyway, generally I just run screaming in the opposite direction and make my brother or my dad kill it, but once I was reading HP in bed @ like 3 am, and a spider was crawling up my doona towards me. I thought that I was very brave, seeing as I didn't scream or anything...I flicked my doona cover up so that the spider flew off onto the floor, then I threw OotP at it (luckily it was my sister's copy, not mine...I don't think I'd have liked having bits of squashed spider on the cover of my book).

(Note: "HP" stands for "Harry Potter" and "OotP" for "Order of the Phoenix")

3. Countability of Car and Others

3.1. Countability of Car

Taylor (2002: 367-8) explains the basic count-mass distinction as follows:

The conceptual basis of the count-mass distinction is fairly transparent; it has to do with the distinction between an individuated 'object' and an unindividuated 'substance'. An individuated object has its own internal structure and composition—split it up and it loses its identity. Dismantle a car and you have car parts, not a car any more. But if you divide up a quantity of meat you still have meat, and if you put two quantities of meat together you have, again, meat. If you put one car next to another car you have, not 'car', but 'two cars'.

The distinction between count and mass can be appropriately captured in terms of internal homogeneity. Flowing from this are the properties of divisibility, replicability, and inherent boundedness.
A substance is internally homogeneous, hence any portion of the substance counts as a valid instance of it and a multiplication of instances also counts as an instance. To be sure, any instance will be bounded in its domain of instantiation. The water in a lake constitutes a bounded instance of ‘water’. However, the boundary is not inherent to the concept [WATER].

Individuated objects differ on all these properties. First, they lack internal homogeneity. A part does not count as an instance while an accumulation of instances counts as just that: a multiplicity of instances. Moreover, individuated things are inherently bounded; the boundary does not simply define the extent of the instance, it legitimizes the categorization of the entity as an object of the appropriate kind. The boundary of a lake is inherent to the concept [LAKE].

Although well founded conceptually, there is an important respect in which the count-mass distinction is a matter of how speakers construe a thing. ...

The role of construal is apparent from the fact that a given entity can often be construed in alternate ways. We can speak about the ‘houses’ in the neighbourhood (focusing on the individuated things) or about the neighbourhood’s ‘housing’ (focusing on the houses as a collective entity). We talk about the ‘machines’ in a factory or about the factory’s ‘machinery’, about the ‘pebbles’ on a beach or about the ‘shingle’. Moreover, one and the same noun can often be used as both count and mass. You can eat your stew with ‘potato’, or with ‘potatoes’. In the first case, the stew is accompanied by ‘potato-substance’ (probably, potatoes in their mashed form). In the second case the stew is accompanied by ‘potato-objects’ (probably, roast or boiled potatoes).

What Langacker and Taylor say is that an entity that keeps its structural integrity and stands as an individuated object is treated as countable while an entity that does not have its structural integrity and stands as an internally homogeneous substance is uncountable. Those nouns that refer to an entity which is typically countable, such as car, are construed as uncountable when they lose their structural integrity and become an unindividuated substance. Allan (1980:547) gives the following example to show that car can be used uncountably:

The scrapyard is full of smashed car awaiting recycling.

Langacker argues, as cited above, “Dismantle a car and you have car parts, not a car any more.” This means that a car, when it is disfigured to the extent that it loses its configuration as a car, is not a car any more; it is a mass of wreckage and is treated as uncountable. It is, however, not physical condition, but conceptualization that determines the countability of nouns. A car is most likely to be construed as an individual, countable entity even when the car is smashed, dismantled or turned into steel pancakes (23-28).

[smashed car]

(23) Nearby, police experts pry apart the wreckage of a smashed car—one of more than 1,000 in the vast junkyard of vehicles retrieved from the streets around the twin towers. (http://www.firehouse.com/news/2002/1/15_APwtcdebris.html)

(24) This children’s book follows the progress of crashed and smashed cars as they proceed through the recycling process in junkyard heaven. The story, which takes place at Gates Salvage Yard in Hardwick, Vermont, explains how incoming automotive wrecks are drained of their fluids and then stripped for spare parts.
(http://www.enc.org/resources/records/0,1240,019241,00.shtm)

(25) Every once in a while as you're cruising down the highway, you'll see one of those trucks—the ones that are carrying a truckload of smashed cars. We're talking, you know like, steel pancakes here.

(http://www.gospelcom.net/rhm/awwy/view.php?id=4568)

[dismantled car]

(26) A dismantled car takes up far more space than you think and in a normal single car garage there just isn't room to take everything to pieces and work at the same time.

(http://www.buyclassiccars.com/articles/38.asp)

(27) Right now I have 2 1/2 dismantled cars sitting at my house that my mom wants me to get rid of and that aren't worth much to me anymore. (http://www.totallyvw.com/vw/vwnews/watercooled-vw-cars-makers/watercooled-vw-cars-makers-p-3002.html)

(28) All nonconforming wrecking yards and junkyards shall be enclosed by a solid board or masonry fence at least six feet in height for fire prevention and prevention of the spread of litter and debris, except that no junk, dismantled cars or machinery shall be stacked higher than the fence. Wrecking yards and junkyards shall comply with these special regulations. (http://www.ci.marina.ca.us/codehtml/Mrna17/17-52.htm)

Contrary to Taylor's argument, car retains its countability as a countable noun whether the referent keeps or loses its structural integrity. Google Advanced Search finds 4,850 instances of 'smashed cars' in the plural form, 1,370 with the indefinite article (including those followed by a noun such as 'window'), while the singular form with no determiners or possessives are quite rare. The BNC has only two instances of 'smashed car', both apparently countable with a definite article (and no instance of the plural form).

Whether a car is smashed, dismantled or however it might be disfigured, it is countable as long as we see the image of an individuated car. Dismantled cars can even be counted (27). It is conceptualization that determines the countability of a noun. The countable use of car seems to be so strongly instilled that it is extremely difficult for us not to see individuated cars in their smashed or dismantled form. When we do not see a car as an individuated entity, it is not a car, not even a smashed or dismantled car. It is just car parts or car wreckage. We simply use a different word for it, just like we call the meat from a cow as beef and that from a pig as pork. Car does not behave as chicken, which has both count and uncount uses.

3.2. Countability of Bottle, Glass, Mirror, Leaf, Brick, etc.

Nouns that refer to a discrete entity with clear boundaries, e.g. bottle (29, 30), glass in the sense of a container (30, 31) or of a pane of glass (32), mirror (33, 34), brick (35,36), leaf (37-39), tree (40, 41), house (42), home (43), human body (44), etc., are most often countable and they are most likely to retain their countability as count nouns however deformed they might be. Concrete nouns such as these very strongly resist being converted to mass nouns.
(29) Police were forensically examining a smashed bottle that was found in the couple's driveway. (http://www.deaftoday.com/news/archives/004101.html)

(30) The gathering was suddenly brought to an end as a cluster of mortar bombs exploded on the village green shattering the windows of the café and dislodging bottles from the shelves. Everybody scattered, including the scared young lady with the serious skin condition; she just vanished out of the back of the café leaving us with smashed bottles and glasses. [Millin, Bill (1991). *Invasion*. The Book Guild Ltd. (cited from BNC)]

(31) The host is the first to offer a toast, by standing and raising a glass. Banging on the glass with a piece of flatware is never a good idea and can actually result in a shattered glass, a spattered beverage and an unforgettable evening (unforgettable for the wrong reasons).

(http://www.savannahnow.com/exchange/stories/122201/SROLEtiquette.shtml)

(32) If I want to break a lock on someone's front door, I can think of three ways. One is I pick it—for which I need the right jiggler. Two is I break a pane of glass, reach through and turn the knob. The third is I use a Lloyd. I have to try this method because I don't have a jiggler and a smashed glass is hard to hide.

[James, Russell (1993). *Payback*. Victor Gollancz Ltd. (BNC)]

(33) “I ran headfirst toward an aluminum pillar holding up the lounge ceiling,” Sutherland says. “I tripped and crashed into it with my head. It wasn't aluminum after all; it was a mirror. Now a shattered mirror.”

[Chutkow, Paul (1994). *Depardieu*. HarperCollins (cited from WBO)]

(34) The small apartment, however, had tipped-over lamps and furniture in every room, and several shattered mirrors. (http://bellsouthwp.net/p/r/proptart/heat.htm)

(35) Sadly, the headstone to the right belongs to my grandmother's youngest sister, who passed away before her time. Her husband had apparently not used the money to buy a real headstone, so she has been buried with a shattered brick marking her final resting spot. (http://www.hawaiistories.com/archives/004956.shtml)

(36) I offered to make a sculpture which related to the Holocaust but which had elements of hope in it that such an event should never happen again. It was to be made in whole and smashed bricks, the whole bricks to represent the walls of the world—the Berlin Wall, the Walls of Jericho, the Western (Wailing) Wall, the Great Wall of China and Hadrian's Wall—and the smashed bricks to represent the breakdown of Jewish life and status as they knew it.


(37) While I may not agree with them all the time (or sometimes even often) my horizons are expanded, my knowledge is greater, and my life richer for having met them. To think, all this from a few ounces of an obscure wood, a “bit” of rubber or plastic and a pinch of a shredded leaf. I smoke a pipe because it is my hope to be a tie to the future. (http://www.glpease.com/Articles/WISP.html)

(38) Stir in the shredded leaves and broccoli.
(39) Compost is always used when digging the beds for the division of perennials in the spring. In the autumn, a time-consuming task is the raking up of leaves. We have improved matters by cutting up the fallen leaves with a rotary grass-cutting machine which makes it easier for raking and collection for the compost heaps; the chopped leaves also rot down that much quicker.

(40) He travels deep into the forest, near a shattered tree that has long ago been struck by lightning. (http://www.fansofrealitytv.com/forums/showthread.php?t=21098)

(41) A hundred yards ahead a long line of men trotted slowly across the scarred earth towards some shattered trees and broken walls.

(42) Much of the centre of the city had been destroyed by the German 380 mm long-range guns. On every deserted street gutted houses sagged open, their contents indecently exposed to view.

(43) Shattered homes were ablaze and trees torched by flaming aviation fuel.

(44) LANCE Henderson was a boy of 13 on the overcast night he heard about the crash. The news spread as quickly as the horrendous fire which engulfed the fallen plane. He seized his bike and pedalled furiously to the scene. The wrecked Wellington bomber still smouldered in the open field. The shattered bodies which had been hurled from it when it exploded were being gathered up on stretchers.

4. Countability of Vegetables

Vegetables are a type of food which is most often cooked to be eaten, and in cooking most of them lose their structural integrity partly or completely, depending on how they are cooked. This daily experience of ours makes it easy for us to conceptualize vegetables as either countable or mass, unlike cats, cars, bottles, etc. The countability of vegetables, however, is not determined by their physical condition that changes through the process of cooking. Even in a mass or mass-like condition, vegetables can be construed as either countable or uncountable. The count-to-mass shift is influenced by how the speaker sees a vegetable in a particular condition than its physical condition. When the number of the vegetable to be used is emphasized, it is treated as countable, while it is construed as uncountable regardless of its number or amount when its physical condition is in focus. It is probably because we see part of the vegetable(s), not the whole, when we describe its condition.

4.1. Countability of Potato

Taylor (2002: 367-8) says (as cited in 3.1): “Moreover, one and the same noun can often be used
as both count and mass. You can eat your stew with ‘potato’, or with ‘potatoes’. In the first case, the stew is accompanied by ‘potato-substance’ (probably, potatoes in their mashed form). In the second case the stew is accompanied by ‘potato-objects’ (probably, roast or boiled potatoes).” This means that potato is countable when it keeps its structural integrity, while uncountable when it does not, which implies that mashed potato has to be uncountable.

In fact, potato can be countable even in the mashed form (45-48). Potato in a mass or mass-like form can be countable or uncountable. One potato in a mashed form may be construed as countable and takes an indefinite article (46) or uncountable with zero article (49). With more than one potato, it may take a plural form (48) or may be construed as uncountable (50). Potato without its structural integrity is still construed as countable as far as it remains as solid objects, such as in the form of chopped, cubed, or sliced pieces (51-54).

(45) These crunchy burgers are delicious served with boiled or mashed potatoes, a tomato sauce or tomato ketchup, and seasonal vegetables or salad.


(46) Most chowders contain bacon and cream. For a lighter touch, this one skips the bacon and uses half-and-half. It’s thickened with a mashed potato, which you can leave out to save time. You’ll have a thinner soup that still has a lot of flavor.

(San Francisco Chronicle: Wednesday, September 29, 2004)

(47) Aioli (Ingredients: 100 g (2 pieces) boiled, peeled potatoes)

Peel the two potatoes you set aside, and mash them. Mix the mayonnaise, lemon juice, water and finely minced garlic and stir until you have a smooth sauce. Season with salt and pepper and add to the two mashed potatoes. Serve as a cold sauce to the salad.

(http://www.justgardener.com/hrsc/recipes/recipes_sauces.html)

(48) Smashed Spud Soup (Ingredients: 1 pound potatoes)

1. Peel the potatoes and cut them into one-inch pieces.

2. Add the potatoes to the water in a pot. Bring to a boil, cover, and cook for 15 to 20 minutes, until the potatoes are very soft.

3. Mash the potatoes in the pot with a potato masher, until they are completely smashed.

4. Stir the milk, onion, peanut butter, and butter into the potatoes. Cook over medium heat, stirring now and then, until the mixture starts to boil.

(http://www.healthyhighways.com/kc/i.pdf)

(49) Salmon & Corn Chowder (INGREDIENTS: 3 russet potatoes)

Peel potatoes. Quarter one and place in a small saucepan. Cover with water and add a little salt. Bring to a boil, reduce heat and simmer until tender, about 15 minutes. Drain, mash and set aside. Melt butter in the pan, add onion and celery; sweat over medium-low heat until onion is translucent, about 10 minutes. Meanwhile, dice
remaining 2 potatoes. When onion mixture is ready, add diced potatoes, broth and water. Bring to a boil and season with salt and pepper. Simmer until potatoes are cooked through, about 25 minutes. Add salmon and corn. Simmer until salmon has cooked through and flaked into smaller pieces, about 7-10 minutes. Whisk in mashed potato.


(50) Mashed Potatoes
Peel the potatoes and if large, quarter them. Put in a large pan, cover with cold water, add a dash of salt, bring to the boil and cook at a rolling boil for about 20 minutes. Test with a fork to see if they are soft right through, then drain them and mash them roughly while they are still hot with the mashing gadget (or a fork will do the job eventually). Put in a big knob of butter, and a small amount of milk (or for luxury cream, or for Americans sour cream and chives). Mash it again very thoroughly. If it is not to be served immediately, for instance it is to go with a joint or there are more vegetables to cook, put it in the oven to keep warm. For extra luxury, break a raw egg into the mashed potato and mix very thoroughly until the potato is quite soft and creamy. Put the mash into a baking dish, fork over the top to make rough peaky bits and return to a medium oven to bake for a further half hour.

(http://www3.mistral.co.uk/apbw/potato.htm)

(51) Easy Crockpot Meatball Soup
You could substitute just about anything for the frozen mixed vegetables. Try sliced carrots, some chopped onions, perhaps a chopped potato or two.

(http://busycooks.about.com/od/hotsourcipes/r/cpmeatballsoup.htm)

(52) I chopped celery, carrots and onion and sauteed them until they were fragrant, added a spoonful or two of flour, sauteed that for a few minutes before adding what clear stock I could from the big stock pot. I stirred the stock in and it thickened a little from the flour. Then added two chopped potatoes and covered them with the last of the big stock pot’s stock and I let them cook for a good twenty minutes.


(53) Heaven and earth with frankfurters (Ingredients: 750g/1½lb potatoes, cubed)
Place the potatoes, apples, sugar, one teaspoon of salt and the vinegar in a large pan and just cover with water. Bring to the boil and cook for about 15 minutes until the potatoes and apples are cooked. Heat the frankfurters by leaving them to stand in a pan of water that has just boiled for about 5 minutes. When the potatoes and apples are cooked, drain them well and mash them.


(54) Smoked fillet of trout with sauté potatoes (Ingredients: 85g-110g/3-4oz anya potatoes, sliced)
1. Preheat the oven to 220C/425F/Gas 7.
2. For the potatoes, bring a medium pan of water to the boil and blanch the potatoes for a few minutes, to soften. Drain.

3. Heat the oil and butter in a non-stick frying pan and add the potatoes. Season and sauté for 5-6 minutes, turning occasionally or until the potatoes are crisp and golden.

(http://www.bbc.co.uk/food/recipes/database/smokedfilletoftroutw_72601.shtml)

4. 2. Countability of Tomato

Tomato, in the same way as potato, is treated as countable regardless of its physical condition. It is used with the indefinite article or in the plural form even when it is chopped (55, 56), and takes a plural form even in the condition of being soft and collapsed (57), or being cut into chunks and then pulsed to be fairly fine (58). It may be construed as uncountable when its physical condition is in the foreground, and as countable when the focus is back again on the plurality (59).

(55) Southwestern Style Bruschetta
Tip from Rita's kitchen: No time to make this? Don't fret. If you don't want to make your own bruschetta, feel free to get a jar of it at the grocery. Kroger's carries one of my favorites under its private label brand. All I do is mix it with a finely chopped tomato, spread it on toasted bread rounds and sprinkle with Parmesan and basil!


(56) Adapt some of your own favourite recipes to low fat versions by using methods suggested in these recipes, such as cooking onions in water or in chopped tomatoes instead of frying them. [Humphreys, Maggie & Snowdon, Les. 1991. The walking diet. Mainstream Publishing Company. (BNC)]

(57) Slow-roast beefsteak tomatoes
Cut the tops from tomatoes and gently squeeze out the juice and seeds. Set the tomatoes upright in a shallow baking dish, drizzle with olive oil, and season with minced garlic, salt, pepper, and minced herbs like rosemary, thyme, or parsley. Roast at 325°F until the tomatoes are soft and have collapsed. Serve as a savory side dish, or roast further until they're drier and use them as a topping for crostini or pizza.

(http://www.taunton.com/finecooking/pages/c00160.asp)

(58) GREEN TOMATO MINCMEAT (Ingredients: 3 pounds green tomatoes, 6 to 7 large)
Prepare the tomatoes: Rinse and core the tomatoes. Cut them into chunks and transfer them to a food processor fitted with the steel blade. Pulse until tomatoes are fairly fine but not pureed. Drain in a colander. Transfer to a saucepan and cover with water. Bring to a boil and simmer hard for 5 minutes. Drain again. You will have 4 cups of prepared tomatoes.

(http://www.post-gazette.com/pg/04274/387621.stm)

(59) Brie or Camembert stuffed tomatoes (Ingredients: 2 large beef tomatoes)
Gently fry the onion in plenty of olive oil until soft and browning. Meanwhile, cut the tomatoes in half along their middles (so the stalk is in the middle of one half) and
scoop out the flesh in the middle, taking care not to damage that round the edge. Add the scooping to the onion, and add the sliced mushrooms, the olives and the seasonings. Cook gently until the mixture thickens up and the tomato is soft. Remove the pan from the heat and stir in the diced brie, capers and mustard. Taste and season if necessary. Place the tomatoes on a well oiled baking tray, and spoon in the mixture (it may be quite liquid). Sprinkle breadcrumbs over the tomatoes, top with an olive half, and bake for twenty to thirty minutes until the tomatoes are soft and the breadcrumbs are golden brown.

(http://www.see.ed.ac.uk/~pmh/Recipes/Savouries/Brie.html)

4.3. Countability of Carrot
Grated carrot is physically a mass of carrot substance and is impossible to count, but it is often treated as countable, with an indefinite article (60, 61) or in the plural form with numbers (62, 63). It can also be construed as uncountable (64). The carrot in the same physical condition (of being grated) may be conceptualized as either countable or uncountable (65).

(60) My father would order something like partridge and it would come with all the trimmings and several vegetables, all for about 4/6d. (46 pence today.) I'd probably be given liver and onions or steak and kidney pie (things I would never eat now); my mother would be on a diet and Sara would eat a grated carrot. It's funny, all I can recall is the booth, the music, the smile on my fathers face, the burnished orange texture of his tweed jacket but nothing of what was ever said.

(http://www.hackwriters.com/roastingcoffee.htm)

(61) Carrot Cake
Preheat the oven to 180 degrees C and line a 1kg/2lb loaf tin. Beat together an egg and an egg white, 2 tbs sunflower oil and 50g soft brown sugar until thick and smooth. Sieve in 65g each plain and wholemeal flour, a level tsp cinnamon, a pinch of nutmeg and a tsp baking powder, and fold into the creamed mixture. Stir in a grated carrot, 50g raisins and a mashed ripe banana and spoon the mixture into the prepared tin. Bake for 30 minutes or until a skewer inserted in the centre comes out clean.

(http://edietsk.co.uk/news/article.cfm/article_id,1571)

(62) Crock Pot Macaroni 'n Cheese  (Ingredients: 1 or 2 finely grated carrots (optional))
Note: To cut down on fat, use nonfat evaporated milk, nonfat skim milk, less than 1 stick margarine, and less than 24 oz. of cheese. You may also add a grated carrot or two for additional nutrition.

(http://www.holidayfamilyfun.com/recipes/crockpotmacncheese.htm)

(63) Chocolate Passion Cake  (Ingredients: 2 carrots, grated)
Sift the flour and cocoa into the bowl and carefully fold into the egg mixture. Fold in the grated carrots, the walnuts and the oil.

(http://www.bbc.co.uk/dna/getwriting/A2288568)
(64) Carrot Cake (Ingredients: 450g/1lb carrots, grated)

3. Beat the butter, sugar and orange rind until they are light and fluffy.
4. Slowly add the eggs, beating well to incorporate each addition fully before adding more.
5. Fold in the grated carrot and chopped nuts.

(http://www.bbc.co.uk/food/recipes/database/carrotcake_7464.shtml)

(65) Baby carrot cakes

A picnic isn’t a picnic unless it comes with its own sturdy, portable fruit cake or rich nutty carrot cake. Better still, is a muffin tray of little carrot cakes, left in the tray for easy transporting. You’ll need two large or three medium carrots to end up with the required 200g grated raw carrot.

(Ingredients: 200g finely grated raw carrot)

Heat the oven to 180C/Gas mark 4. Sift the flour, baking powder, cinnamon, nutmeg, ginger and mixed spice into a large bowl. Add the sugar and mix well, then add the oil, lightly beaten eggs and vanilla essence and beat well. Fold in the grated carrots, chopped walnuts and raisins or sultanas.

(http://www.timesonline.co.uk/article/0,,4703-774315_3,00.html)

4. 4. Countability of Apple

In the same way as carrot, grated or mashed apple, which is a mass of apple flesh, can be conceptualized as either countable (66-68) or uncountable (69-71). It is treated as uncountable when its qualitative condition is emphasized and its amount is irrelevant (72).

(66) The soup begins with a chopped onion and a peeled and grated apple in a Dutch oven that has been sprayed with nonstick cooking spray.

(http://augustachronicle.com/stories/112002/fea_049-5115.000.shtml)

(67) Vegan Mince Pies

To make vegan mincemeat combine two grated apples, two grated carrots, finely chopped walnuts (the same quantity as apple), juice of one lemon plus grated rind, juice of one orange plus grated rind, knob of vegan margarine, a generous handful of sultanas (you cannot have too many) and lots of mixed spices to taste.

(http://www.bbc.co.uk/glocestershire/christmas/2003/10/xmas_vegan.shtml)

(68) This recipe can be adapted to use dried apples and to be pan-fried. In saucepan, place about 2 cups dried apples, cover with water and simmer until apples are soft and liquid has evaporated. Check often to make sure water does not evaporate before apples soften. Mash apples, add sugar to taste. Add a little cinnamon if desired. Roll biscuits as directed above and place a bit of cooked apples on each piece of dough.

(http://www.journalnow.com/servlet/Satellite?pagename=WSJ%2FHTMLPage%2FWSJ.HTMLPage&c=HTMLPage&cid=1031769618029)

(69) Grilled Smoked Sausage with Apple Fennel “Sauerkraut” (5 Granny Smith apples,
Count-Mass Distinction of Concrete Nouns: What makes mass nouns?  

grated)
Meanwhile, mix grated apple with lemon juice and add to pan, cover and cook, stirring occasionally for 15 minutes.

(http://www.foodnetwork.com/food/recipes/recipe/0,1977,FOOD_9936_23065,00.html)

(70) When ready to use, add a little grated apple (a quarter to half an apple should be enough for one serving).


(71) Apple Dumplings (Ingredients: 1 1/2 cups grated apples, or more)
1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Separate uncooked biscuits. Roll out each piece as thin as possible. Spoon some grated apple into center of each biscuit. Pull up edges of biscuit and pinch together at the top to seal.

(http://www.journalnow.com/servlet/Satellite?pagename=WSJ%2FHTMLPage%2FWJS_HTMHTMLPage%c=HTMLPage&cid=1031769618029)

(72) Put chopped apples, sultanas, sugar, marmalade, margarine and syrup into a saucepan with 4 oz cold water. Simmer gently until apple has softened.


Concluding Remarks
The physical condition of a referent definitely influences the countability of a noun, but it is not a determining factor. You may see a cat and feel sorry for it in a mess of scattered bits and pieces of the flesh, or you may just see dirt that has to be cleaned. You could identify a spider in its smashed form. Your sofa may smell of cat, or of a cat, or cats, each with a slightly different meaning from one another. You see a number of cars in the form of steel pancakes or in the car parts from the dismantled vehicles. A cook may see two apples in the grated form of apple flesh.

If you feel the number is important, you prefer the countable use of the referent even in a physically uncountable condition. If the quality or the smell of the referent, for instance, is in focus and its number is irrelevant, the referent is construed as uncountable. Some entities, such as vegetables, are readily conceptualized as either countable or uncountable, while others, such as ‘car’, ‘cat’, and ‘spider’, strongly resist the shift to the mass use. It is not physical condition or structural integrity, but construal or conceptualization that determines the countability of nouns.

References


