Mini exercise: Allomorphy

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Morphology
2016
30.05.2016

Outline

1. Allomorphy

2. Mini exercise

Exercise taken from: Haspelmath, M. & Sims, A. D. (2010): *Understanding Morphology* [2nd ed.], chapter 3 'Rules', London: Hodder Education.

Outline

1. Allomorphy

Reminder: allomorphs

- Morphemes may have different phonological shapes under different circumstances: **allomorph**
- For example, the plural morpheme/affix in English -*s* has various pronunciations:
    - [s] as in *cats* [kæts]
    - [z] as in *dogs* [dɒgz]
    - [əz] as in *faces* [feisəz]

Outline

Mini exercise
Somali plural formation

- Somali exhibits a great amount of allomorphy in the plural formation of its nouns. Four different allomorphs are represented in the following examples. (In actual fact, the conditions are more complex, but for this exercise, we have to limit ourselves to a subset of the data and generalisations.)

singular	plural	
awowe	awowayaal	'grandfather'
baabaco	baabacooyin	'palm'
beed	beedad	'egg'
buug	buugag	'book'
cashar	casharro	'lesson'
fure	furayaal	'key'
ilmo	ilmooyin	'tear'
miis	miisas	'table'
qado	qadooyin	'lunch'
shabeel	shabeello	'leopard'
waraabe	waraabayaal	'hyena'
xidid	xididdo	'eagle'

a. Based on these examples, formulate a hypothesis about the phonological conditions for each of the plural allomorphs.

b. Based on the generalisations found, form the plural of the following nouns:

singular	plural	
tuulo	?	'village'
tog	?	'river'
albaab	?	'door'
buste	?	'blanket'

Mini exercise
Somali plural formation: solutions (part A)

Allomorph -**ayaal** (e.g. *awowe*, *awowayaal* 'grandfather(s)').

- Conditions: Used when the stem ends in an [e], which is removed in the plural form.

Allomorph -**oyin** (e.g. *baabaco*, *baabacooyin* 'palm(s)').

- Conditions: Used when the stem ends in an [o].

Mini exercise
Somali plural formation: solutions (part A)

Allomorph -**aC**, where C stands for a consonant that is the same as the
final consonant in the stem (e.g. *beed*, *beedad* 'egg(s)').

- Conditions: Used when the stem has only one syllable (and ends in a consonant).

Allomorph -**Co**, where C stands for a consonant that is the same as the
final consonant in the stem (e.g. *cashar*, *casharro* 'lesson(s)').

- Conditions: Used when the stem has (at least) two syllables and ends in a consonant.

Mini exercise
Somali plural formation: solutions (part B)

singular	plural	
tuulo	*tuulooyin*	'village'
tog	*togag*	'river'
albaab	*albaabbo*	'door'
buste	*bustayaal*	'blanket'