

French Nouns – 2

Construct a lexicon and grammar to account for the French data below (given in standard IPA transcription). To do this, you must figure out what is predictable and what is not.

Warning: If you know French, ignore what you know. Construct your lexicon and grammar on the basis of this set of data alone, as though it were an unfamiliar language. If you use your previous knowledge of French in solving this problem, two things can go wrong: 1) you may put things into your solution that you were told in French class instead of basing your solution on the generalizations you see in this set of data and 2) you may be blinded to certain generalizations by what you were told in French class.

	<u>DEFINITE SINGULAR</u>	<u>DEFINITE PLURAL</u>	<u>INDEFINITE SINGULAR</u>	<u>INDEFINITE PLURAL</u>	<u>GLOSS</u>
1.	ləʃwa	leʃwa	œʃwa	deʃwa	‘choice’
2.	lavwa	levwa	ynvwa	devwa	‘voice’
3.	lepe	lezepe	ynepe	dezepe	‘sword’
4.	lete	lezete	œnete	dezete	‘summer’
5.	lətip	letip	œtip	detip	‘type’
6.	latabl	letabl	yntabl	detabl	‘table’
7.	ləbato	lebato	œbato	debato	‘boat’
8.	luʁs	lezuʁs	œnuʁs	dezuʁs	‘bear’
9.	loʁej	lezœʁej	ynoʁej	dezoʁej	‘ear’
10.	laʃɛz	leʃɛz	ynʃɛz	deʃɛz	‘chair’
11.	lœʁ	lezœʁ	ynœʁ	dezœʁ	‘hour’
12.	ləkœʁ	lekœʁ	œkœʁ	dekœʁ	‘heart’
13.	lotɛl	lezotɛl	œnotɛl	dezotɛl	‘hotel’
14.	lobɛʁʒ	lezobɛʁʒ	ynobɛʁʒ	dezobɛʁʒ	‘inn’
15.	ləmo	lemo	œmo	demo	‘word’
16.	lavjɔ̃	lezavjɔ̃	œnavjɔ̃	dezavjɔ̃	‘airplane’
17.	lavwatyʁ	levwatyʁ	ynvwatyʁ	devwatyʁ	‘car’
18.	lavâtʁyʁ	lezavâtʁyʁ	ynavâtʁyʁ	dezavâtʁyʁ	‘adventure’
19.	lil	lezil	ynil	dezil	‘island’
20.	legliz	lezegliz	ynegliz	dezegliz	‘church’
21.	ladâ	ledâ	yndâ	dedâ	‘tooth’
22.	liveʁ	leziveʁ	œniveʁ	deziveʁ	‘winter’
23.	lakuʁs	lekuʁs	ynkuʁs	dekuʁs	‘course’
24.	lamoʁ	lemoʁ	ynmoʁ	demoʁ	‘death’
25.	lamuʁ	lezamuʁ	œnamuʁ	dezamuʁ	‘love’
26.	ləgɑʁsɔ̃	legɑʁsɔ̃	œgɑʁsɔ̃	degɑʁsɔ̃	‘boy’
27.	lafij	lefij	ynfij	defij	‘girl’
28.	lɔ̃m	lezɔ̃m	œnɔ̃m	dezɔ̃m	‘man’
29.	lafam	lefam	ynfam	defam	‘woman’
30.	lœ̃kl	lezœ̃kl	œnœ̃kl	dezœ̃kl	‘uncle’

31.	latāt	letāt	yntāt	detāt	‘aunt’
32.	ləfu	lefu	œfu	defu	‘crazy man’
33.	lafɔl	lefɔl	ynfɔl	defɔl	‘crazy woman’
34.	luvɛie	lezuvɛie	œnuvɛie	dezuvɛie	‘male worker’
35.	luvɛiɛɛ	lezuvɛiɛɛ	ynuvɛiɛɛ	dezuvɛiɛɛ	‘female worker’
36.	lekɔlje	lezekɔlje	œnekɔlje	dezekɔlje	‘schoolboy’
37.	lekɔljeɛ	lezekɔljeɛ	ynekɔljeɛ	dezekɔljeɛ	‘schoolgirl’
38.	ləfātœɛ	ləfātœɛ	œfātœɛ	defātœɛ	‘male singer’
39.	ləfātœz	ləfātœz	ynfātœz	defātœz	‘female singer’
40.	lami	lezami	œnami	dezami	‘male friend’
41.	lami	lezami	ynami	dezami	‘female friend’

The Issue

In French, nouns’ class membership is *partially predictable*, i.e. it is predictable for some nouns but not for others.

Where class membership is predictable, we should state the generalization or rule that predicts it. This has a benefit: if a noun's class membership is predictable, we need not state that noun's class membership under "Morphological information" in its lexical entry, for it is uneconomical to list what is predictable. Instead, the generalization or rule that predicts class membership can be thought of as supplying class membership information for those nouns whose class membership is predictable. This enables us to construct a lexicon in which we list class membership information only for those nouns for which this information is *not* predictable, simplifying the lexical entries of those nouns whose class membership *is* predictable.