

UKLO Round 2 2012

5. Catalan plurals (25 marks)

Catalan is the official language of Catalonia, in north-east Spain. The plural of Catalan nouns is usually formed by adding the ending -s. But if the noun ends in one of the letters s, x or ç, more complex rules apply. Here are the singular and the plural forms of some Catalan nouns (in simplified spelling) and their English translations. Some forms are missing.

singular	plural	translation	singular	plural	translation
el apèndix	els apèndixs	appendix	el ònix	[f]	onyx
el bastaix	[a]	carrier	el pàncrees	els pàncrees	pancreas
el troleibús	[b]	trolley-bus	el pedaç	els pedaços	patch
el cactus	els cactus	cactus	la pelvis	[g]	pelvis
la càries	les càries	caries	el permís	els permisos	permission
[c]	les clos	meadow	el pis	[h]	flat, lodgings
el contumaç	els contumaços	rebel	el [i]	els sequaços	(male) follower
la faç	les faços	face	la [j]	les sequaços	(female) follower
el flux	els fluxos	stream	el sufix	els sufixos	suffix
el gimnàs	els gimnasos	gym	[k]	els tastaolletes	frivolous person
la hèlix	les hèlixs	screw	el teix	els teixos	yew
el índex	els índexs	index	la trencadís	les trencadís	piece of crockery
el iris	[d]	rainbow	el vas	els vasos	vase
el llaç	[e]	loop	la xeix	[l]	(the letter) x

Q5.1. Fill the gaps. Explain your solution.

Q5.2. The marks ` and ' indicate the stress in certain Catalan words. Find out when they are used.

Q5.3. Which syllable is stressed in those words where there is no ` or ' mark?

5. Catalan plurals

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5.1	a.	b.	c.	
	d.	e.	f.	
	g.	h.	i.	
	j.	k.	l.	
5.2				
5.3				

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5.1	a. els bastaixos	b. els troleibusos	c. la clos	3																								
	d. els iris	e. els llaços	f. els ònixs	3																								
	g. les pelvis	h. els pisos	i. el sequaç	3																								
	j. la sequaç	k. el tastaolletes	l. les xeixs	3																								
	<p>Plural. We see that the ending <i>s</i> mentioned in the statement of the problem is not added to words whose singular form already ends in <i>s</i>. Also, in the problem there are words with the plural ending <i>os</i>. Let us divide all words into groups according to their gender, final consonant and plural:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th rowspan="2">Final consonant</th><th colspan="2">Plural in <i>s</i> (0 after <i>s</i>)</th><th colspan="2">Plural in <i>os</i></th></tr> <tr> <th>masculine</th><th>feminine</th><th>masculine</th><th>feminine</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>-s</td><td>el cactus; el pàncrees</td><td>la càries; la trencadís</td><td>el gimnàs; el permís; el vas</td><td></td></tr> <tr> <td>-x</td><td>el apèndix; el índex</td><td>la hèlix</td><td>el flux; el suffix; el teix</td><td></td></tr> <tr> <td>-ç</td><td></td><td>la faç (la sequaç)</td><td>el contumaç; el pedaç (el sequaç)</td><td></td></tr> </tbody> </table> <p>We see that feminine nouns can only have the ending <i>s</i> (0 after <i>s</i>) in the plural, while masculine nouns get <i>os</i> if they are stressed on the last (or only) syllable, and <i>s</i> (0 after <i>s</i>) otherwise.</p> <p>Theoretically one might derive the forms <i>*la clo</i> and <i>*el tastaollete</i>, but those are poorly compatible with the statement of the problem, which talks of nouns ending in the letters <i>s</i>, <i>x</i> or <i>ç</i> only. The forms <i>*el sequaços</i> and <i>*la sequaçs</i> are also wrong, because it is hinted that the words for ‘(male) follower’ and ‘(female) follower’ are only differentiated by their articles in the singular.</p>			Final consonant	Plural in <i>s</i> (0 after <i>s</i>)		Plural in <i>os</i>		masculine	feminine	masculine	feminine	-s	el cactus; el pàncrees	la càries; la trencadís	el gimnàs; el permís; el vas		-x	el apèndix; el índex	la hèlix	el flux; el suffix; el teix		-ç		la faç (la sequaç)	el contumaç; el pedaç (el sequaç)		6
Final consonant	Plural in <i>s</i> (0 after <i>s</i>)		Plural in <i>os</i>																									
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-ç		la faç (la sequaç)	el contumaç; el pedaç (el sequaç)																									
5.2	<p>The marks ` and ' are used when the stress falls on a non-default syllable. We can see that the mark ` is placed over <i>e</i>, <i>o</i>, <i>a</i> and the mark ' over <i>i</i>, <i>u</i>. Examining the words ending in <i>s</i>, we notice that the stress marks in them are placed on the last syllable or the third one from the end. We can assume that in such words the stressed syllable is usually the penultimate, and the stress is explicitly marked when it is not. In all other words stress usually falls on the last syllable, and is marked when it does not.</p>			6																								
5.3	<p>When there is no ` or ' mark, the stress is penultimate if the word ends in <i>s</i>, otherwise it is final.</p>			3																								