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LOANWORD LENGTHENING IN SERI

Stephen A. Marlett

Moser and Moser, in "Seri Noun Pluralization Classes"¹ list numerous words borrowed into Seri, mainly from Spanish. The consonant and vowel changes that are made in these words during the loan process are worthy of note. However, the topic of this paper is restricted to the length of the vowels and consonants in these loanwords.

Among the many rules that are needed to describe the phonological processes seen operating in Seri verbs are two lengthening rules.² The first lengthens the vowel in the syllable following a stressed vowel (long or short) and a consonant when it precedes a consonant (even if that consonant is in the next word). This rule may be written as follows:

$$V \rightarrow [+long] / \begin{array}{c} V \quad C \quad _ \quad C \\ [+str] \end{array}$$

The second rule lengthens a consonant if it follows a stressed vowel (long or short) and precedes a vowel (even if that vowel is in the next word). This rule may be written as follows:

$$C \rightarrow [+long] / \begin{array}{c} V \quad _ \quad V \\ [+str] \end{array}$$

These rules may be seen operating in verbs and nouns almost without exception. They are illustrated by the following nouns, the plurals of which are formed by adding the suffix *-k*.

<u>Singular</u>	<u>Plural</u>	<u>Gloss</u>
ʔápxa	ʔápxa+k	<i>cottontail</i>
kíšši	kíšši+k	<i>sardine (sp.)</i>
koyókko	koyókko+k	<i>dove</i>
náapxa	náapxa+k	<i>red-headed buzzard</i>
nóossi	nóossi+k	<i>mourning dove</i>
šáaxxa	šáaxxa+k	<i>heron (sp.)</i>

Loanwords are pluralized in a variety of ways. The lengthening rules mentioned above are seen operating in a few of these, as shown below.

<u>Singular</u>	<u>Plural</u>	<u>Gloss</u>
ʔappaats	ʔappaats	<i>Apache</i>
káppoota	káppootax	<i>jacket</i>
kóttöon	kóttöošax	<i>shirt, blouse</i>
míist	míissaatx	<i>cat</i>
óot	óottoo+k	<i>coyote</i>
tóm	tómmatx	<i>money</i>
yékkiim	yéktš	<i>Yaqui</i>

Most Seri loanwords are pluralized in the manner of some other Seri

nouns--by adding the suffix -ox to the noun. (The o of the suffix is deleted if the noun stem ends in a vowel.) The great majority of these loanwords prove to be exceptions to the lengthening rules, however. Notice the following examples.

<u>Singular</u>	<u>Plural</u>	<u>Gloss</u>
ařistóon	ařistóonox	<i>ribbon</i>
išáayo	išáayox	<i>Saturday</i>
móona	móonax	<i>monkey</i>
páař	páařox	<i>priest</i>
pašáato	pašáatox	<i>shoe</i>
tóořo	tóořox	<i>bull</i>
třóoki	třóokix	<i>car, truck</i>
tšikóoti	tšikóotix	<i>whip</i>

In fact, of the more than seventy loanwords listed in Moser and Moser's article, only a half dozen can be cited as examples of the lengthening rules mentioned above. On the other hand, it becomes readily apparent that another vowel lengthening rule is operating instead of these. This rule lengthens a stressed vowel which is followed by a consonant, as illustrated by the following nouns.

<u>Singular</u>	<u>Plural</u>	<u>Gloss</u>
méetřo	méetřox	<i>meter</i>
motóoř	motóořox	<i>motor</i>
sóaano	sóaanox	<i>sheet</i>
sóeřo	sóeřox	<i>spur</i>
χáařo	χáařox	<i>glass jug</i>
yáablo	yáablox	<i>devil</i>

This rule can be written as follows:

$$V \rightarrow [+long] / _ C$$

$$[+str]$$

The domain of this rule is the clause.

It appears, then, that loanwords need to be marked to undergo either "normal" lengthening, i.e., (unstressed) vowel and consonant lengthening, or to undergo loanword lengthening.

FOOTNOTES

¹Edward and Mary Moser, "Seri Noun Pluralization Classes", Hokan Studies, ed., M. Langdon and S. Silver, Janua Linguarum, Series Practica no. 181 (The Hague-Mouton, 1976), 285-296.

²See Stephen A. Marlett, "A Sketch of Seri Verb Morphophonemics", 1976 Workpapers of the Summer Institute of Linguistics, University of North Dakota, ed., Richard A. Rhodes, Vol. 20, 39-66. The formalization and ordering of some rules have changed since this article was written.