

Plural Forms

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Plural forms

There are three types of plural forms in English:

1- regular plural (-s pl): /s/, /z/, /ɪz/

2- irregular plural

A- (en) plural

B- ∅ plural

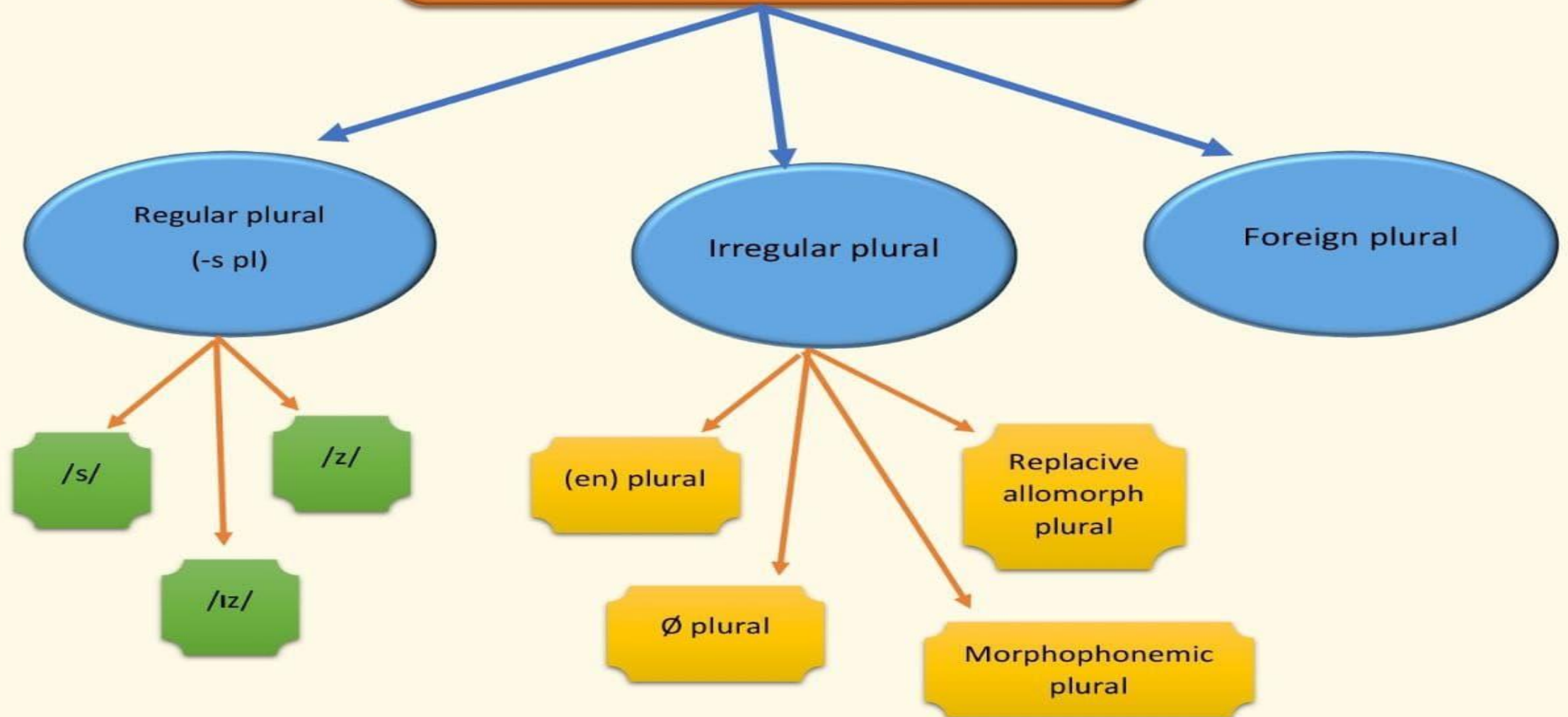
C- Replacive allomorph plural

D- Morphophonemic plural

3- foreign plural



Plural forms



Regular plural

Nouns that are pluralized by adding the inflectional suffix (-s pl.) There are three phonemic forms (allomorphs) for this morpheme:

/s/.... Books, lamps, seats, chefs, feasts,...

/z/.... Ribs, boys, ideas, ladies, mountains,...

/ɪz/....buses, boxes, marshes, fezzes, ridges,...



Irregular plural

1- (en plural)

There are three nouns only that are pluralized by (en)plural:

Child- children

Ox- oxen

Brother- brethren



2- Ø plural

- This type of plural indicates that the plural form has the same form as the singular.
- The nouns that are pluralized by (Ø plural) include the names of edible animals, game animals, fish and birds. **Examples: deer, sheep, antelope, bass, pike, quail, grouse,...**
- However, not all birds or fish follow (Ø plural), as there are similar words with regular plural like, **pigs, goats, suckers, pheasants, chickens, bullheads...**
- Some others have both forms; the (Ø plural) and the regular plural.
Duck (sg.).....duck (pl.) and ducks (pl.)
Herring (sg.)..... herring (pl.) and herrings (pl.)
Shrimp (sg)..... shrimp (pl.) and shrimps (pl.)



3- The Replacive allomorph plural

There are seven common nouns that are made plural by replacing sounds. They are the following:

Man- men

Woman- women

Goose- geese

Tooth- teeth

Foot- feet

Mouse- mice

Louse- lice



4- Morphophonemic plural

In this form of plural, the stem of the singular noun is changed after adding the –s pl suffix. The final sound in the singular stem is changed into another sound in the plural stem. For example:

1- the change from /s/ to /z/

House /haʊs/.....houses /haʊzɪz/

2- the change from /f/ to /v/

Wife /waɪf/..... Wives /waɪvz/

Calf /kɑ:f/.....calves /kɑ:vz/

Half /hɑ:f/.....halves /hɑ:vz/

3- the change from /θ/ to /ð/

Mouth /maʊθ/mouths /maʊðz/

Path /pɑ:θ/.....paths /pɑ:ðz/



Note: most nouns that end with /f/ or /θ/ undergo morphophonemic change; however, there are nouns that end with these two sounds but do not make a morphophonemic change. For example:

Chief /f/.....chiefs /f/

Chef /f/.....chefs /f/

Grief /f/.....griefs /f/

Depth /θ/.....depths /θ/

Few nouns have both forms of the plural:

Youth /θ/..... youths /θ/ or /ð/

Scarf /f/scarfs /f/ or scarves /v/



Foreign Plural

□ This form of plural is related to the borrowed nouns from other languages. Most of these nouns abandon their original plural system and follow the English plural system. Some of them follow both systems, and few of them retain their own original system.

1- Nouns that follow the English system only. For example some of the Italian words that end with (o) are made plural by adding the English (-s pl) instead of the Italian (-i pl):

Soprano..... Sopranos

Piano.....pianos

Cello.....cellos

Casino.....casinos

Studio.....studios

Spanish words also follow the English plural system as it is similar to the Spanish system, for example:

Cafeteria.....cafeterias

Cigar..... Cigars

Tornado.....tornados

Guitar.....guitars

Barbecue.....barbecues



2- some other nouns follow both plurals (the native or the original plural and the English plural)

Concerto.....concerti or concertos

Curriculum.....curricula or curriculums

Syllabus.....syllabi or syllabuses

3- few borrowed nouns resist change and they follow their native plural only.

Alumna.....alumnae

stratum.....strata

Agendumagenda

