

Turkana

Module type: Exercise

Class: Phonology

Keywords: Turkana, phoneme, allophone, complementary distribution, variation

Turkana is an Eastern Nilotic language spoken by the Turkana people in northwestern Kenya. It has approximately 1 million speakers.

Instructions

Consider the data below, which is adapted from Zetterstrand (1996).

[a.ki.ru]	'rain'
[a.ma.kuk]	'stool'
[ɲi.ke.no]	'fireplace' (plural)
[ɲa.ki.maɣ]	'old woman'
[a.rʊ.kom]	'cough'
[a.kɛ.pʊ]	'vein'
[ɛ.qɔ.rɪ]	'rattle' (singular)
[ɛ.qɔl.cɔr:]	'pelican'
[e.qod]	'tax' (singular)
[e.qoj]	'matter'
[ɛ.qa.le:s]	'ostrich'
[ɲɪ.qa.jo]	'tree' (plural)

Do [k] and [q] belong to separate phonemes or are they allophones of the same phoneme? Explain.

Examine the additional data below. Notice that there is variation between [k] and [q]. Propose an account for this variation. Note that [χ] is a voiceless uvular fricative.

[ɲɪkadoχot ~ ɲɪqadoχot]	'monkeys'
[amʊkat ~ amʊqat]	'shoes'
[nikor ~ niqor]	'Samburu' (plural)
[louko ~ louqo]	'in this lung'

Sources

Zetterstrand, Silvia. 1996. The phonological representation of vowel height. Doctoral dissertation, Harvard University.