

Manchu: underspecification and contrast

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Written Manchu

Table 1: The vowel inventory of Written Manchu

Front	Central	Back
i		u
		ʊ
	ə	
	a	ɔ

The vowel [i] exerts a palatalizing influence on at least some preceding consonants.

Vowel harmony in Written Manchu

Table 2: ATR harmony in Written Manchu

Unaffixed	Gloss	Affixed	Affix
xəxə	woman	xəxə-ŋgə	Genitive
aga	rain	aga-ŋga	
itʃʰi	direction	itʃʰi-ŋga	
tʰɔn	number	tʰɔ-ŋga	Causative
susə	coarse	susə-tə-	

Unsuffixed	Gloss	Suffixed	Suffix
χ̣oṛχa	fishing net	χ̣oṛχa-ta-	
tulpa	careless	tulpa-ta-	
ṭʂili	anger	ṭʂili-ta-	
silxi	envy	silxi-ta	
xət ^h u	stocky	xət ^h u-kən	Attenuative
f̣aṛχ̣ʊn	dark	f̣aṛχ̣ʊ-kən	
p̣əki	firm	p̣əki-lə-	Causative
paqṭʂ ^h in	opponent	paqṭʂ ^h i-la-	
x̣əṛə-	ladle out	x̣əṛə-ku	Nominalization
paqt ^h a-	contain	paqt ^h a-q̣ʊ	
ṭʂ ^h ili-	choke	ṭʂ ^h ili-q̣ʊ	
ṣəx̣əx̣un	vertical	ṣəx̣əx̣uri	Augmentative
laqṭax̣ʊn	drooping	laqṭax̣ʊri	
əmt ^h ə	one each	əmt ^h ə-li	Adjectivization
ṭax̣a	follow	ṭax̣a-li	

Questions:

- What is the distribution of velars and uvulars? How do they relate to vowels?
- What classes do the vowels fall into with respect to ATR alternations?
- Are any vowels exempt from patterns involving ATR?