

Manchu: underspecification and activity

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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	Affixed	Gloss	Affix
xəxə	xəxə-ŋgə	'woman'	Genitive
kumun	kumu-ŋgə	'noise'	
aga	aga-ŋga	'rain'	
itʃʰi	itʃʰi-ŋga	'direction'	
tursun	tursu-ŋga	'form'	

Unsuffixes	Suffixes	Gloss	Suffix
tʰɔn	tʰɔ-ŋga	'number'	
susə	susə-tə-	'coarse'	Causative
χɔrɣa	χɔrɣa-ta-	'fishing net'	
tulpa	tulpa-ta-	'careless'	
tʃili	tʃili-ta-	'anger'	
silxi	silxi-ta	'envy'	
xətʰu	xətʰu-kən	'stocky'	Attenuative
gulu	gulu-kən	'plain'	
farχɔn	farχɔ-kən	'dark'	
χɔtun	χɔtu-qan	'fast'	
pəki	pəki-lə-	'firm'	Causative
paqtʃʰin	paqtʃʰi-la-	'opponent'	
xərə-	xərə-ku	'ladle out'	Nominalization
paqtʰa-	paqtʰa-qɔ	'contain'	
tʃʰili-	tʃʰili-qɔ	'choke'	
səxəxun	səxə-xuri	'vertical'	Augmentative
laqtaχɔn	laqta-χɔri	'drooping'	
əmtʰə	əmtʰə-li	'one each'	Adjectivization
taχa	taχa-li	'follow'	
uli-	uli-xə	'string'	Past
ana-	ana-χa	'push'	
pu-	pu-xə	'give'	

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?

Table 3: Rounding harmony in Written Manchu

Unsuffixes	Suffixes	Gloss
kumun	kumu-ŋgə	'noise'
tursun	tursu-ŋga	'form'
pɔtʃʰɔ	pɔtʃʰɔ-ŋgɔ	'colour'
χɔtun	χɔtu-qan	'fast'
fɔχɔɔn	fɔχɔɔ-qɔn	'short'
gulu	gulu-kən	'plain'
tɔ-	tɔ-na-	'alight'

Unaffixed	Affixed	Gloss
tɔ:-	tɔ:-na-	'cross'
pɔtɔ-	pɔtɔ-χɔ	'think'
pu-	pu-χə	'give'

Questions:

- The data is a bit sparse, but can you make a generalization about when rounding harmony occurs?
- Which vowels trigger rounding? Which ones don't?

Analysis

Given the above generalizations, what featural specifications can we justify?

Feature	/i/	/u/	/ʊ/	/ɔ/	/ə/	/a/
[low]						
[coronal]						
[ATR]						
[labial]						

Xibe

Xibe has no /ʊ/, but has acquired /ɛ y œ/, primarily by assimilation of original /a u ɔ/ by a following /i/.

Table 5: Xibe vowel inventory

Front	Central	Back
i y		u
ɛ œ	ə	ɔ
	a	

Vowel harmony in Xibe

Table 6: Vowel harmony alternations in Xibe

	Written Manchu	Xibe	Gloss
a.	gəthə-xə	gəthə-xə	'awoke'
	uli-xə	uli-xə	'stringed'
	ana-χa	anə-χə	'pushed'
	gətsʰi-χa	gətsi-xə	'cherished'
b.	pu-xə	pu-xu	'gave'
	pətu-χə	pətu-χu	'thought'
c.	nətsi-kən	nətsi-kən	'flat'
	ərtə-kən	ərtə-kən	'early'
	ampa-qan	am-qən	'big'
	χantʃi-qan	χantʃi-qən	'near'
d.	dzuʃuxu-kən	dzyɛxu-kun	'sour'
	xəthū-kən	xəthū-kun	'stocky'
	laptu-qan	lavtu-qun	'many'
	farχə-qan	farχu-qun	'dark'
	fəχəwə-qən	fəχulu-qun	'short'
	ɔsəχə-qən	ɔsəχə-qun	'small'

Questions:

- What happened to [ATR] harmony in Xibe? What about the consonants?
- How does rounding harmony work? What are the relevant classes?

Analysis

Given the above generalizations, what featural specifications can we justify?

Feature	/i/	/u/	/y/	/ɛ/	/œ/	/ɔ/	/ə/	/a/
[low]								
[coronal]								
[ATR]								
[labial]								