

PHONOLOGY

Consonants

stops: p, t, k, q, ʔ

affricate: tʃ

fricatives: v/β, j, γ

nasals: m, n, ŋ

lateral: l

roll: r

The lateral /l/ is voiceless.

Vowels

weak: i, e, u

strong: e, a, o

+ ə

That is /e/ = [ɛ] is ambivalent; /ə/ is neutral. This division underlies the Chukchi system of vowel harmony: the vowels in a word are drawn either from the weak or from the strong series, not from both. What is particularly interesting about Chukchi vowel harmony is that root vowels in a weak-series word are regraded to strong series when a strong-series affix is added to the word. This is in striking contrast with Altaic, for example, where it is the affix that takes its vocalic cue from the stem. This also happens in Chukchi: see **Verb** below.

Examples of regrading of weak vowels before a strong-series affix are given by Skorik in *JaNSSR*, Vol V (1968): *keḡikupren* ‘sweep-net’, *ya.kagekopra.ma* ‘with the sweep-net’, where weak-series *e, i, u* have been regraded as *a, e, o*, in concord with comitative case-marker *ya...ma*. The reverse case – the regrading of strong vowels as weak – is not found.

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