



Affective Palatalization in Itelmen

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5-я конференция по уральским, алтайским и палеоазиатским языкам



1 Introduction

The issue: status and distribution of lj [ɭ], nj [ɲ] in Itelmen

(1)		labial	coronal	palatal	velar	uvular
	stops, ejectives	p, p'	t, t'		k, k'	q, q'
	affricates		č, č'			
	fric., approx	ɸ, β	s, z	j	x ^(w) , ɣ ^(w)	χ
	nasals	m	n	n ^j	ŋ	
	laterals		l, l ^j	l ^j		
	other		r		ʔ	

Володин (1976) “peripheral phonemes”

(2)	plain	palatal		Headwords in	Полный словарь
	l ^(j) 1670	136	12:1		Volodin, Ono et al. 2021
	n ^(j) 2187	240	9:1		

Georg & Volodin (1999: 19-20) suggest phonemes borrowed from Koryak.

(3) l^jaŋe ‘girl’, χol^j(l^j)a ‘youth’, ...

They do occur in non-borrowed morphemes: e.g., adjective suffix -laχ ~ -l^jaχ

(4)	‘low’	izu-laχ	‘small’	ul ^j u-l ^j aχ
	‘rough’	item-laχ	‘short’	ikəm-l ^j aχ

New claim here: source = affective palatalization

Diacritic marking (floating feature) [PAL] with diminutive-like meaning

Fossilized/lexicalized

Alternative: long-distance palatal harmony (cf. Koryak, Alutor)

Morphological, not phonological, process (in Itelmen)

1.1 Exclusions: Russian loanwords, proper names

(5)	plain	palatal (unassim.)	loans	names	
	l ^(j)	1670	136	50	13 sol ^j 'salt', kl ^j ep 'bread'
	n ^(j)	2187	240	31	4 n ^j etu 'not', men ^j aʔk ^{as} 'to change'

1.2 Local palatalization (assimilation)

(6) $n \rightarrow n^j / __ \{\text{ɫ}, \text{č}\}$

Morphological conditions: stem-internal, PL. DIM., but not before SG. diminutive -čax
inflectional prefixes *n-*, *xən-*, *mən-* do not alternate,
causative (ə)*n-* inconsistent transcriptions

(7)	(n)ən ^j č	βan ^j č-k	xeʔn ^j č	zun ^j ɫ-	min ^j ɫ	qsχ-oʔn ^j ɫ
	fish (N)	up-(LOC)	NEG.FUTURE	live (V)	hare (N)	dog-AUG

- Of 205 (non-Russ/name) instances of n^j in Headwords, 165 (80%) are $__ \{\text{ɫ}, \text{č}\}$
- Of 35 instances of $n / __ \{\text{č}\}$ in Headwords, **only one** is stem-internal: *βanč-k* 'upwards', probably mistranscription. All others at morpheme junctures (prefixes, diminutive, reduplication).
- Of 42 instances of $n / __ \{\text{ɫ}\}$ in Headwords, majority (n=27) are prefixes, a few more at morpheme juncture. Remainder doubtful.

(8) $l \rightarrow n^j / __ \{\text{ɫ}\}$

$l \rightarrow \text{ɫ} / __ \{\text{č}\}$ (var, l^j rare:) 'to see' *ɔɫčku-*, variants: *ɔl^jčku-*, *ɔčki-*

(9)	'knife'	√ φal-	+INSTR -ɫ	= φan ^j -ɫ
		(dial. βaɫ-)	+SG -č	= φaɫ-č
			+PL -<ʔ>	= φa<ʔ>l

- Instances of $l __ \{\text{ɫ}, \text{č}\}$ in Headwords, n=4: 1 compound, 2 diminutives, 1 Russian suffix
- Instances of $l^j __ \{\text{č}\}$ in Headwords, n=6, of which 3 variants with ɫ

1.3 Alternation I - laX, -ljaX

(10) Adjectives in *-laχ* ~ *-l^jaχ*; Headwords in *Полный словарь*

	-laχ (n=116)		-l ^j aχ (n=7)
good	teŋ-laχ	small	ul ^j u-l ^j aχ
warm	om-laχ	short	ikəm-l ^j aχ
hard	kt-laχ	thin	kčon ^j -l ^j aχ
rough	item-laχ	narrow	°qun ^j -l ^j aχ
stubborn	kɫči-laχ	damp, moist	el ^j we-l ^j aχ
bitter	əmč-laχ	thin	ol ^j we-l ^j aχ
brave	ən ^j č ^j ŋu-laχ	small	učkun ^j -l ^j aχ
beautiful	č'inəŋ-laχ		
...	...		

Possibility 1: Affective/Expressive Palatalization (Alderete & Kochetov 2017)

Diminutives, sometimes lexicalized
replacement of designated phonemes with palatals
Cross-linguistically well attested
Diacritic (floating) feature of specific morphemes [+PAL]

Possibility 2: non-local palatal harmony (Koryak/Alutor: Жукова (1980); Nagayama (2003))

ənn ‘fish’ -pilⁱ DIM → ənⁱnⁱə-pilⁱ Alutor
ala ‘summer’ -nⁱaqu AUG → alⁱa-nⁱaqu Nagayama (2003: 8)
(Various caveats - process is lexically restricted, and variable)

Proposal Historically < Affective Palatalization

Some morphemes are associated with a diacritic/floating [+PAL] with affective meaning
All *l, n* in such a word (stem) are palatalized
Appearance of non-local harmony, without “harmony” as a process
Need not have phonological trigger
Mostly in words/morphemes that are lexicalized diminutives/expressives in other languages

- (11) Most (a) roots that take *-lⁱaχ* have a palatal segment in the root

but not all (b)

Palatal in root does not entail *-lⁱaχ* (c)

a.	ul ⁱ u-l ⁱ aχ	‘small’	ul ⁱ u-q	ADV
			ul ⁱ u-se-kas	‘to decrease’ (INTR)
			ol ⁱ o-se-kas	(same)
			n-ol ⁱ o-as	‘to make smaller’ (TR)
	°qun ⁱ -l ⁱ aχ	‘narrow’	qun ⁱ -qun ⁱ	NOUN
			qun ⁱ -se-kas	сужаться (INTR)
	kčon ⁱ -l ⁱ aχ	‘thin’	kčon ⁱ -se-kas	VERB
			NB. kčon ⁱ -l ⁱ aχ	(var. ?)
	el ⁱ we-l ⁱ aχ	‘damp, moist’	el ⁱ wə-mək	type of coat
			Alutor: iil ⁱ ə-	‘damp’, il ⁱ əʔil ⁱ ‘rain’
b.	ikəm-l ⁱ aχ	‘short’	ikəm-čxen	‘мышь короткохвостая’
c.	ən ⁱ č ^h ŋu-laχ	‘cloudy’		мутный
	n ⁱ exiq ^h eβ-laχ	‘weak’		Russian <i>не-</i> + xi-q ^h eβ-laχ
	əmč ^h -laχ	‘bitter’		č = local palatalization trigger

- (12) All the roots that take *-lⁱaχ* mean ‘small’ along some dimension (Ono 2021: 42)

(if ‘damp’ = ‘a small amount of wetness’)

cf. lexicalized diminutive ADJ: Russian *мал-еньк-уй*, English (Germanic) *litt-le*, etc.

- (13) u l u [PAL] + l a χ Diacritic (floating) [PAL]

- (14) i k ə m [PAL] + l a χ Diacritic (floating) [PAL], but no palatal in root

- (15) ə n č' ŋ u + l a χ No Diacritic, Local assimilation only


2 Other occurrences of l^j

- (16) l 1670
l^j 136 50 Russian loans
19 -l^jaχ ADJ or derivative: PAL
13 Proper names
12 Diminutives
9 ‡ in other sources
7 suffix -l^jat
... other

- (17) Diminutives
- | | | | | |
|----|---|--------------------|--------------------|----------|
| a. | l ^j aŋe-čχ | ‘girl’ | l ^j aŋe | < Koryak |
| | χol ^j a-čχ | ‘youth/boy’ | χol ^j a | < Koryak |
| | ek-ul ^j uška-čχ | ‘girl’ | eke-čχ | DIM-DIM |
| b. | atk'al ^j a-čχ | ‘butterfly’ | | DIM ONLY |
| | l ^j il ^j uk'e-čχ | ‘little fish head’ | | DIM ONLY |
| | č'ol ^j ol ^j a-čχ | ‘lark’ (bird) | | DIM ONLY |
| | l ^j ul ^j u-čχ | ‘nipple’ | | DIM ONLY |
| c. | l ^j aŋo-čχ | ‘eye’ | loŋ | |
| | l ^j opa-čχ | ‘knuckle’ | lop-lop | ‘joint’ |
| | l ^j eβe-čχ | ‘egg’ | lβi-lx | |
| | kəl ^j l ^j a-ŋn ^j č | ‘beads’ | < k'ela- ‘roll’ ? | |

Also like c. pχal^jl^ja-čχ ‘hole-DIM’ < pχal-pχal ‘hole’ (Володин 1976: 132)

- (18) Unlike Koryak, Alutor, DIM in Itelmen normally does not trigger palatalization/harmony:
stoβala-čχ < stoβal ‘cedar grove’
lač-čaχ < lač ‘sun’
βalβa-čχ < βalβal ‘duck’
- (19) Alternating forms like l^jopačχ < loplop show that these roots do not inherently have the [PAL] diacritic. It can be added, with diminutivizing, affective function:
l^jopačχ = lop + PAL + DIM

(20) Others (n=13), including

a.	lʲβi [lʲʲi]	‘very’	[li] < Kor
b.	lʲeɬk'oč	‘mouse’	? Kor. lʲavəɬʲʲa ‘squirrel’
	tatʲač	‘fur seal’ (морской котик)	
	klʲime-lɲən	‘kidney’	cf. Kor: ksim(a)
c.	saʔlʲa	decorated headwear	
	ikumplʲikeʔn	short boots	Kor. qujmaplaku
	kawalʲo	type of parka	Kor. kayolʲu
	lʲeləŋ	‘sleeve’	Kor. lili
	alʲe-ʔn	summer footwear	Kor: alʲe ‘summer’
	lʲepxe	woven grass basket	Kor: lʲapɣen
	čnilʲeʔnəŋ	board for stretching footwear	čni- + lʲeβenəŋ; Kor: ilɲən
d.	lʲenʲiɬʲan	‘every’ (всякий)	

(21) Verbs in *-lʲat-* (Δ = Sedanka/Tigil [Koryak-adjacent])

sklʲaβlʲat- Δ	‘run (around)’	sklaβo-	‘run’	
pəŋlʲolʲat -	‘ask around’ спрашивать	pəŋlo-	‘ask’	
kansolʲat- Δ	‘smoke’ (накурить?)	kansa-	‘smoke’	
tiβlʲat-	‘wander’ бродить по реке	?< tiβi-	‘go on skis’	
(ə)n salʲlʲat-	‘slide around?’ катать	—		
salʲilʲat-	‘slide around’	sali-	‘slide’	Ono
kərwlʲat- Δ	‘talk, chat’ болтать	kərwlʲat-	(variant)	
		cf. qərwlʲuški	‘lullaby’	
kulʲilʲat- Δ	‘roll around’	kuli-	‘roll’	Ono
teβrelʲat- Δ	‘drown’	tewre	‘sink’	Ono

- stem-internal l~lʲ alternation Ono (2021: 172) suggests presence of [PAL] with this suffix
- Ono (via Google Translate): *-lʲat-* = repetition and duration: ‘do something for a while’ but cf. English ‘to V around’ (+ affective sense?)
- appears to be borrowed from Alutor/Koryak: *-lʲat-~-lʲʲat-~-sʲat-* (Nagayama 2003)

(22) Alutor:

arɲin-at-ə-k	‘rain’	arɲinʲ-ə-lʲʲat-ə-k	‘долго идти дождь’	(p.9)
waɲi-k	‘sew’	waɲi-lʲʲat-ə-k	‘sew often, long time’	(p.308)
kərvi-	‘happy’	kərvi-lʲʲat-ə-k	‘be happy’ веселиться	(p.34)

(23) Volodin 1976:214 identifies five verbs formed with a suffix *-la* (n=4) or *-lat* (n=1)

Itelmen	<i>oje-lat-kas</i>	‘tend a fire/stove’	< <i>oje-kas</i>	< <i>uʔ</i>	‘wood’
cf. Alutor:	<i>uji-lʲʲat-ə-k</i>		< <i>uji-k</i>	< <i>u(tt)</i>	‘wood’
(Nagayama 2003: 303-4)					

(24) Must be borrowed with diacritic/floating [PAL]: — [PAL] l a t

Suggests it should have affective sense (as well as duration)
origin of (apparent) palatal harmony, but distinct from local palatalization

- (25) Speculation: (as in German) verbal diminutive here has *activity* Aktionsart, gives sense of duration/iterativity
- (26) German verbal diminutives in -e(r)l-n (Weidhaas & Schmid 2015; Grestenberger & Kallull 2019)
- | | | | |
|--------------|-----------------|--------------|-----------|
| köch-el-n < | koch-en | dräng-el-n < | dräng-en |
| boil-DIM-INF | boil-INF | urge-DIM-INF | urge-INF |
| ‘to simmer’ | ‘to cook, boil’ | ‘to jostle’ | ‘to urge’ |
- (27) Die Suppe hat zwei Stunden lang /* in zwei Stunden ge-köch-el-t
the soup has two hours long in two hours PTCP-boil-DIM-PTCP
‘The soup simmered for /* in two hours.’ Grestenberger & Kallull (2019)

Aside

- Distinct from attenuative/diminutive -ala

- (28) kza by ənan luk tʰetʰeβa kʰ-əmpxa-ala-n, čtob na βiaq muza-ʔn ʔotzu
2SG SJNC 3SG.POSS bow string COND-cut-DIM-3.OBJ so.that 3SG NEG.FUT 1PL-PL shoot
xan-iʔ-qzu-βu(ʔ)m=nən
3SG.IRR-AUX-ASP-1OBJ-(PL)=CL
‘You could cut his bowstring a bit, so that he can’t shoot us.’ [TL (87)]
- (29) onm-ala-t-kas ‘to stop for a bit at many places’ < onme-kas ‘to stop’
čʰetʰe-la-t-kas ‘go party/feast’ < čʰetʰe-kas ‘eat one’s fill’ (or -ata andative?)

3 Other occurrences of nʲ

- (30) n 2187
nʲ 240 165 Local palatalization __ {ʔ,č}
31 Russian loans
17 < qunʲ- cf. qunʲ-lʲaχ ‘narrow’ ADJ; [PAL]
4 Proper names
7 Diminutives
7 anʲts...
- (31) anʲts... (one anʲtz) ...
anʲts ‘bed’
anʲts-kas ‘to make up a bed’
Could this be: anʲč-(kas) or anʲčs-kas
NB. Itelmen does not distinguish s from ʃ (transcriptions inconsistent: c~ш)

(32) **Remainder:**

- | | | | |
|----|---|------------------|--|
| a. | n ^j aačit ^Δ | ‘alone’ | |
| | φin ^j n ^j at ^Δ | ‘alone’ | < φin ^j n ^j at ^Δ < °φne ‘he alone’
cf. kilβinet ^j < °kilβin ‘you alone’
cf. t ^Δ βinet ^Δ < t ^Δ βin ‘they alone’
=? φneβa < °φne |
| | φin ^j βe | ‘in secret’ | |
| b. | qn ^j iŋ | ‘one’ | also qn ^j iŋ |
| | k-ɬxen ^j t ^Δ le-ʔin | ‘cursed’ | < ɬxent ^Δ -kes |
| c. | l ^j en ^j ɬʔan | ‘every’ (всякий) | (also above) |

4 Conclusions

- ikəm-l^jaχ (palatal suffix allomorph, no trigger) → diacritic/floating [PAL]
- ən^jč^jŋu-laχ (local palatal assimilation, no harmony) → no [PAL]
- preponderance of diminutive/affective meanings with [PAL]
→ Affective Palatalization (as source of apparent harmony)
→ lexicalized/fossilized (cf. мал-енк-ий, Mäd-chen, etc.)
- Borrowings < Koryak include floating [PAL]
- Even if l^j, n^j now treated as phonemes, origin best described via affective palatalization
- No advantage to positing additional phonological harmony process
- Open question: how different is this from Alutor/Koryak?

(33) Palatal Harmony in Alutor (Nagayama 2003: 8-9)

ənn ‘fish’	-pil ^j DIM	→	ən ^j n ^j ə-pil ^j
ala ‘summer’	-n ^j aqu AUG	→	al ^j a-n ^j aqu

Nagayama: “Difficult to determine when palatal harmony will apply.”

(34) Palatal Harmony - no trigger

lla ‘eye’	-p-ə-k V-E-INF	→	l ^j ə ^j la-p-ə-k ‘watch’
n- ... -qin STATIVE	-mq ‘small’	→	n ^j -ə-mq-ə-qin ‘small’

(35) Palatal Harmony - Lexical Variability

tiŋl ‘throw’	-tkujv-ə-k ITER-E-INF	→	siŋs-ə-tkujv-ə-k ‘throw around’
təm ‘kill’	-tkujv-ə-k ITER-E-INF	→	təm-ə-tkujv-ə-k (not: səm-)

(36) Palatal Harmony - Variation in outcome l → l^j ~ s

mily ‘fire’	mil ^j y-ə-jusy-ə-n ‘match’	~	mil ^j y-ə-jusy-ə-n ‘match’
arŋin ^j -ə-l ^j ʔat-ə-k ‘долго идти дождь’	~	arŋin ^j -ə-sʔat-ə-k ‘переждать дождь’	

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