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Vowel Features in Madija

Patsy Adams Liclán and Stephen A. Marlett

This data squib presents the possessed noun paradigm in Madija as a window to the vowel system of that language. The alternations exhibited in these forms provide evidence that the vowel *e* is the unmarked vowel. This fact is important in an account of various vowel harmonic alternations.

Madija has four contrasting vowels, but no possessed noun roots begin with a syllabic *o*. The nouns that begin with consonants except *w* all act alike.¹ The phonological patterns illustrated by these data are also found in verb inflection since the same prefixes are used to indicate subject of the verb.²

The changes which occur with vowels trigger a harmonization of vowels in these nouns. An interesting change is the replacement of *a* by *e* in word-final position. This change occurs only with nouns of this class. Other nouns which illustrate this change include the following (as they appear before the feminine suffix): [ap^ha] *leaf*, [abat^ha] *cheek*, [kofima] *spirit of dead person*, [kota] *younger sibling*, [dopa] *under*, [dzawa] *uterus, afterbirth*, [dzapa] *hand*, [mata] *buttocks*, [nap^ha] *egg*, [tats^ha] *friend*, [nats^hopa] *saliva*, and [tona] *bone*. No examples were found with a medial velar stop in words of this pattern.

There is no prohibition on word-final *a* in verbs, adjectives, or unpossessed nouns, as the words [ts^hona] *fall*, [hada] *old*, [awa] *tree* and [madiha] *people* illustrate. Possession of alienable nouns is not indicated morphologically.

Madija, also known as Culina, is spoken by about 2,500 people in Peru and Brazil in the Juruá Purús river basin. The data in this problem were collected by Patsy Adams Liclán and Arlene Agnew, who worked in this language for more than thirty years. The data and an analysis appeared in Liclán and Marlett 1990.

References

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¹ The sound written as *w* in these data is phonetically [β] before front vowels.

² There are three prefixes for third person in verbs: zero, *i-* and *to-*. The phonological patterns which the latter two exhibit are the same as those seen with the nouns. For discussion of verb agreement morphology, see Wright 1988. The suffix *-ni* occurs only with nouns of this class (inalienably possessed nouns). It does not occur on verbs.

Vowel Features in Madija
(Peru)

	<i>my</i>	<i>your</i>	<i>his</i>	<i>her</i>	
1.	okone	tikone	kone	konani	<i>hair</i>
2.	otati	titati	tati	tatini	<i>head</i>
3.	opano	tipano	pano	panoni	<i>face</i>
4.	owede	tide	ide	ideni	<i>back</i>
5.	oweme	time	ime	imani	<i>flesh</i>
6.	owino	tino	ino	inoni	<i>tooth</i>
7.	owipo	tipo	ipo	iponi	<i>lower lip</i>
8.	owene	tene	ene	eneni	<i>nose</i>
9.	owetefo	tetefo	etefo	eteroni	<i>skin</i>
10.	owebeno	tebeno	ebeno	ebenoni	<i>tongue</i>
11.	owenede	tenede	enede	anadani	<i>chin</i>
12.	owebet ^{he}	tebet ^{he}	ebet ^{he}	abat ^h ani	<i>cheek</i>
13.	owepe	tepe	epe	apani	<i>navel</i>
14.	owats ^h ife	tets ^h ife	ats ^h ife	ats ^h ifani	<i>form</i>
15.	owahari	teheri	ahari	aharini	<i>mouth</i>
16.	owat ^h i	tet ^h i	at ^h i	at ^h ini	<i>word</i>
17.	owamofi	temofi	amofi	amofini	<i>foot</i>
18.	owati	teti	wati	watini	<i>liver</i>
19.	owapi	tepi	wapi	wapini	<i>shape</i>
20.	owaribo	teribo	waribo	wariboni	<i>ear</i>
21.	owahohori	tehohori	wahohori	wahohorini	<i>mastoid area</i>

The forms for *one's* ... are the same as for *my* ..., but with an initial *t*: [tokone] *one's hair*.
The forms for *our* ... are the same as for *your* ..., but without the initial *t*: [ikone] *our hair*.