

Lesson 11: Negation

Negation

1. There are five major negative forms in Manchu: *waka*, *ume*, *unde*, *akū*, and *umai*
2. *waka* is used to negate a nominal predicate – that is, it is roughly equivalent to the English “is not” or the Chinese 不是, except that it follows the noun that it negates – *ere niyalma mini ama waka* (This man is not my father). Note that *waka* can be the final word in a noun-modifying phrase – *yargiyan waka baita be ainu agdambi* (Why do you believe this matter which is not true?)
3. *ume* is used preceding an imperfective participle to create a prohibition/negative command – *ume genere* (Don’t go!)
4. *unde* is used following an imperfective participle to mean not yet – *aga nakara unde* (The rain has not stopped yet)
5. *akū* is the most commonly seen negative. On its own, it negates existence (“there is not” “isn’t here”), like the Chinese 没有 or 無 – *boode niyalma akū* (“there are no people in the house”)
 - a. *akū* can also negate an attribute (for instance, an adjective), in which case its translation is more like that of *waka* (“is not” or 不) – *ubaci goro akū* (“it is not far from here”).
 - b. Like *waka*, *akū* can be used in noun-modifying form – *gūnin akū niyalma* (“a person without thoughts,” i.e. a stupid person)
 - c. *akū* is also the negative form used to negate verbs. It can only be combined with participles (ha/he/ho or ra/re/ro). Participles ending with ra, ha, re, ro, and ho will end with *akū* in the negative (that is, *ojoro* becomes *ojorakū*, *genere* becomes *generakū*), but those ending with he (or ke) keep the original e (*genehe* becomes *genehekū*) – *bi manju gisun be tacirakū* (“I am not studying Manchu” or “I will not study Manchu”), *si minde niru be buhekū* (“You did not give me the arrow”).
 - d. Note that *rakū* is sometimes shortened to *rkū*, especially in Sibe texts. In classical Manchu this is most commonly seen with the verb *sambi*, so “don’t know” is usually written *sarkū*.
 - e. To negate verbal forms other than the participle, the following forms are used
 - i. Imperative: *ume* + imperfective participle (see #3 above)
 - ii. Conditional (*ci*): *akū* + *oci* – *si generakū oci, uthai simbe bucebuki* (If you do not go, then I shall kill you).
 - iii. Optative (*ki*): this is very rare in Manchu texts, but either *ki* + *serakū* or *kū* + *oki* seems to be acceptable.
 - iv. Adverbial modification (*me*): *rakū*. The imperfective participle in the negative can fill an adverbial role, and indeed, some negative participles have become words in their own right (e.g. *lakcarakū*,

meaning “ceaselessly” or “without end” comes from *lakcambi*, meaning “to break off” or “to come to an end”)

- f. When questions are formed with negative verbs, the question marker *ni* is frequently shortened to *n* – *geneki serakūn* (“Don’t you want to go?”).
 - g. Similar to Chinese, yes or no questions can be formed by putting a positive and negative verbal form in succession – *mimbe cihalambi cihalarakū* (“Do you love me or not?”).
6. *umai*, which precedes the phrase being negated, combines with *akū* or *waka* to enhance the negation, with *umai* taking the meaning “(not) at all,” “totally,” or “entirely” – *umai akara baita akū* (“there is absolutely nothing to be sad about”).

Practice sentences

Vocab

aha = slave
 aika = if
 ainaha seme = surely, categorically
 ajigan = young
 baimbi = to seek
 booi sonjoho cooha = "Household Selected Soldiers" – a particular division of bannermen
 buya juse = young children
 dalji = relation, connection
 dosinambi = to go in, to go to enter
 eifu kūwaran = graveyard
 ejen = lord
 faššambi = to act vigorously, to exert effort, to take pains
 fe = old
 gelembi = to fear
 ging hecen = 京城
 halambi = to change, to correct
 hoton = city
 jiyanggiyūn = 將軍
 kejine = many, a lot
 kemuni = still, yet, often
 mujakū = extremely
 mukūn falga = clan
 nenehe tušan = refers to the former holder of a post (前任)
 neneme = previously, formerly
 nikacilambi = to act like a Chinese person
 tacibumbi = to teach
 tacin = habit
 tookabumbi = to neglect, procrastinate
 ulhisungge = clever, intelligent
 ulhiyen ulhiyen i = gradually
 umbure = to bury
 urse = people
 weile arambi = to punish

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