

# **REPORT**

## **Morphology of Birjia- Part 1**

### **NAME AND ADDRESS OF THE JRPS**

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**LANGUAGE/ MT: BIRJIA**

During this month we have worked on the word classes of Birjia. These are mainly as follows:

**Pronouns, Nouns, Adjectives, Verbs, Adverbs, Numerals and Function words**

Below we present some observations on the pronouns, numerals, function words, adjectives, adverbs and nouns.

**Pronouns:**

**Personal –**

Persons	Singular	Dual	Plural
First	nia		nia
second	amaʔ	aban	ape
Third	huni 'he' huni kuʔi'she'	hukin	huku

### Demonstratives-

Proximate	noa	noa goʔa, nuku (animate)
Distal	hona	hũku goʔe

### Inclusive-

goʔa 'all'

### Interrogatives-

How	cilkə
What	titana
When	ok'diri
Where	okare
Which	cilkana

Who	oke
Why	cikalena

### **Numerals**

One	mian
Two	barija
Three	peja

Rest is similar to Hindi counterparts. Ordinal number system also matches Hindi Number system.

### **Function words**

1.	after	kote
2.	and	or
3.	because	kan
4.	behind	oit <sup>h</sup>
5.	but	kintu
6.	from	etera?a
7.	if	agar
8.	like	pasin
9.	out	bahaç
10.	under	otetre

### **Adjectives**

beautiful	aca
big	bađe
bitter	haṭi
black	karija
blind	and <sup>hi</sup>
clever	calak
green (colour of leaf)	harijan
hungry	rangeit
old	raram
red	lal
rotten	pacaojama
sharp	cirbi?
small	huđiṅ
strong	balsali
tall (man, woman)	usul
there	honđe
up	usul
white	carka
yellow	pila
round	gol
thirsty	tetaṅ

## Adverbs

yesterday	horoa
suddenly	acanak

## Nouns

Nouns are classified into animates and inanimates. On the basis of natural sex the animate nouns are further classified into masculine and feminine. For example:

### Animate

Masculine	Feminine
koṛa 'boy'	kuṛi 'girl'
raṛ 'widower'	raṛi 'widow'
baḍa 'daughter's son's son'	baḍi 'daughter's son's daughter'
nana 'grandfather (M)'	nani 'grandmother (M)'
mousa 'mother's sister's husband'	mousi 'mother's sister'
dulha 'bridegroom'	dulhin 'bride'

### Inanimate

naki (comb),

darāṇa (valley)

## Word formation

- a) Both animate and inanimate nouns end in consonants, eg., kidīṅ ‘scorpion’, ṭarud ‘lion’, jīnor ‘maize’, gēnd<sup>h</sup> ‘ball’.
- b) Both animate and inanimate nouns end in vowels, eg. koṭa ‘boy’, miṅṭa ‘child’, keṭa ‘banana’, seta ‘dog’.
- c) Feminine nouns are formed by –i suffix, eg. mamu ‘mother’s brother’ : mami ‘mother’s brother’s wife’; nana ‘mother’s father’ : nani ‘mother’s mother’; mousa ‘mother’s sister’s husband’ : mousi ‘mother’s sister’; b<sup>h</sup>agna ‘sister’s son’ : b<sup>h</sup>agni ‘sister’s daughter’; koṭa ‘boy’ : kuṭi ‘girl’,

Influence of Indo-Aryan is seen here.

*In addition, we are presenting in detail our observations on some inflectional categories like Number, Person and Gender also.*

## Number

Birjia has three tier number system – singular, dual and plural.

Dual and plural forms are mainly constructed by affixation. Different rules of dualisation and pluralisation are seen in Birjia depending on the animacy of the nouns.

- Formation of dual and plural numbers in animate nouns

EXAMPLES:

sengoit (sg)      ->      sengoit-kin (du)      ->      sengoit-ku (pl)  
“Child”

sadom (sg)      ->      sadom-kin (du)      ->      sadom-ku (pl)  
“Horse”

- Formation of Numbers in inanimate nouns

The speciality on Birjia inanimate nouns is that they take no affixes to present their state of number. Their forms remain the same both in singular and plural.

EXAMPLES:

mian (one) kaṭ<sup>h</sup> -> bariya(two) kaṭ<sup>h</sup> -> peya(three) kaṭ<sup>h</sup>  
 “Tree”

## Person

First Person shows Clusitivity.

Clusitivity is a grammatical distinction between inclusive and exclusive first-person pronouns.

It is ‘inclusive’ when ‘we’ means ‘you and I’ (includes the addressee).

It is ‘exclusive’ when ‘we’ means ‘he/she and I, but not you’ (excludes the addressee).

Birjia doesn’t carry this distinction grammatically, but they are manifested semantically. They have separate lexical items for denoting Clusitivity for first person pronouns. Examples are explained below with Number distinction.

- Formation of dual and plural numbers in first person:

EXAMPLES:

**My kid-** niarini sengoit

**Our (dual) kid** – alaṅrini sengoit (inclusive)

alinrini sengoit (exclusive)

**Our (plural) kid-** abunrini sengoit (inclusive)  
alinrini sengoit (exclusive)

**My kids (dual)-** niarinkin sengoitkin

**Our (dual) kids (dual) –** alaṅrinkin sengoitkin (inclusive)  
alinrinkin sengoitkin (exclusive)

**Our (plural) kid(plural)-** abunrinku sengoitku (inclusive)  
alinrinku sengoitku (exclusive)

**My tree-** niara? kaṭ<sup>h</sup>

**Our (dual) tree –** alaṅra? kaṭ<sup>h</sup> (inclusive)  
alinra? kaṭ<sup>h</sup> (exclusive)

**Our (plural) tree-** abunra? kaṭ<sup>h</sup> (inclusive)  
alinra? kaṭ<sup>h</sup> (exclusive)

**My trees (dual)-** niara? bariya kaṭ<sup>h</sup>

**Our (dual) kids (dual) –** alaṅra? bariya kaṭ<sup>h</sup> (inclusive)  
alinra? bariya kaṭ<sup>h</sup> (exclusive)

**Our (plural) kid(plural)-** abura? peya kaṭ<sup>h</sup> (inclusive)  
alinra? peya kaṭ<sup>h</sup> (exclusive)

## Gender

From the data collected it appears that there is no grammatical gender in Birjia.

For Example, acc<sup>h</sup>a kuṛi ‘the good boy’, acc<sup>h</sup>a kuṛi ‘the good girl’, acc<sup>h</sup>a kahani ‘the good story’ etc. But some linguists mark the animate-inanimate distinction as grammatical gender distinction. In Birjia gender distinction is found to be based on animacy and inanimacy. As has been mentioned before inanimate nouns do not change their forms in dual and plural numbers whereas animate nouns do.

Further, there is sex-based gender, e.g. koṛa ‘boy’: kuṛi ‘girl’, baba ‘father’: aja ‘mother’, nati ‘son’s son’: natin ‘son’s daughter’, haḍa ‘bull’: gaj ‘cow’, sadom ‘horse’: g<sup>h</sup>oṛi ‘mare’ etc. This appears to be lexical though one or two words are found to be inflected like Indo-Aryan, e.g. koṛa ‘boy’: kuṛi ‘girl’, nati ‘son’s son’: natin ‘son’s daughter’, dulha ‘bride-groom’: dulhin ‘bride’, raṭ ‘widower’: raṭi ‘widow’ etc. In pronoun he/she distinction is expressed as huni ‘he’: huni kuṛi ‘she’.

Further investigations are needed to analyse their agreement or concurrence.

