

Tharua Grammar

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Chapter 1- Phonology

PART -1

VOWELS

A preliminary study of the collected data shows that there are mainly 6 vowels in Tharua. These are [i, e, a, o, u and ə].

	Front	Central	Back
High	i		u
Mid-high	e		o
Mid		ə	
Mid-low			
Low	a		

The above vowels are illustrated with the following examples:

/i/: Front high Unrounded

d^hərti ‘earth’

bijli ‘lightning’

din ‘sun’

kī:c mud

imli tamarind

/e/: Front mid-high Unrounded

meh ‘rain’

sera ‘jackal’

peɽ 'belly'

ẽɽi 'heel'

boe 'saw'

/a/: Front low Unrounded

dulha 'bridegroom'

kira 'cockroach', 'centipede'

sora 'pig'

d^ha:n 'paddy'

a:d^ho 'half'

/ə/: Central

bəg^hɽa 'tiger'

rəkət 'blood'

əia 'mother'

lao 'flame'

/o/: Back mid-high Rounded

lomɽi 'fox'

muso 'mouse'

kor 'eyelid'

ɽōk 'leech'

ōɽ^h 'lips'

/u/: Back high Rounded

buɽɽi 'flesh'

muɽ 'head'

k^hanu 'food'

ɽunna 'maize (corn)'

unia 'loin cloth'

The vowels /ɛ/ and /æ/ are sometimes found in few instances.

For example: /ɛ/ as in g^həɾɛm ‘house’

/æ/ as in gæ̃ɾa ‘rhinoceros’
tæ ‘you’

However these are restricted to few words and mainly to songs. In most of the speech varieties these two vowels are not present. This shows a mere phonetic variation in the language.

Phonemic Contrast

The six vowel phonemes that have been identified above present phonemic contrast in the language Tharua.

Following are a list of minimal pairs that have been identified in the language:

- /i:/o/
/da:do:/da:di/
‘father’s father’ , ‘father’s mother’

/sa:ro:/sa:ri/
‘wife’s younger brother’ , ‘wife’s younger sister’

/karo:/kari/
‘black (male)’ , ‘black (female)’
- /i:/a/
/b^həneji:/b^həneja/
‘sister’s daughter’ , ‘sister’s son’

/ b^hẽɾĩ:/b^hẽɾa/
‘sheep (female)’ , ‘sheep (male)’

/mækri:/mækra/
‘spider (female)’ , ‘spider (male)’
- /i:/e/
/til:/tel/
‘matchstick’ , ‘oil’
- /o:/e/
/p^hul p^huli gəo:/ /p^hul p^huli gæ/
‘flower blooms’ , ‘flowers bloom’

(sing) (plu)
- /u:/e/

/muh/:/meh/

‘face’ , ‘rain’

- /ə/: /u/
/p^həl/:/p^hul/

‘fruit’ , ‘flower’

/ə/: /e/

/məro/:/mero/

‘dead’ , ‘my’

Vowel Distribution

In case of the distribution of vowels we find that they appear in all positions, viz. word-initially, word-medially, and word-finally. Their presence is shown in the following chart:

Vowels	Word-initially	Word-medially	Word-finally
/i/	imli ‘tamarind’ īṭa ‘brick’ ikəllo ,alone‘ ikdəmse‘always‘	din ‘sun’ mir ‘my’ b ^h ətijo ‘brother’s son’ pi:b ‘pus’ ji:b ^h ‘tounge’	hərđi ‘turmeric’ lahi ‘mustard’ ma:ṭi ‘clay’ bədri ‘cloud’ d ^h ərti ‘earth’ a:gi: ‘fire’ biḷli ‘lightning’
/e/	ēṭi ‘heel’ ek ṭhina ‘to arrange (put things in order)	kəcəhri ‘to gather together’ kərehāo ‘waist’ b ^h əneji ‘sister’s daughter’ peṭ ‘belly’ deh ‘body’	ikdəmse ‘always’ təre ‘down’ mae ‘I’ boe ‘saw’ si:re ‘north’ dəhine ‘rightside’
/a/	a:gi: ‘fire’ a:sma:n ‘sky’ ā:nd ^h i ‘storm’ a:dmi ‘husband’ ā:k ^h i ‘eye’	sikari ‘hunter’ puḷari ‘priest’ b ^h a:r ‘cave’ ba:d ^h ‘flood’ ra:t ‘night’ g ^h a:ṭ ‘valley’	k ^h iləuna ‘toy’ nədia ‘river’ həwa ‘air’ pətt ^h əria ‘pebble’ k ^h əlla ‘slope’ gələua ‘cheek’ dana ‘chicken pox’ həija ‘cholera’
/ə/	əia ‘mother’ ēṭa egg’ əcc ^h o na ləgna ‘ill’ əggu ‘front of’	ḷəṭ ‘root’ pəkəlle ‘to catch’ bən ‘forest’ həm ‘we’	d ^h ərəmpuṭrə ‘adopted son’ sudd ^h ə ‘death ritual’

	ənkcaciti ‘suddenly’ əga:r ‘east’	wəh ‘he/she’ bisk ^h əpro ‘lizard’ b ^h əō ‘eye brow’	
/o/	ōt ^h ‘lips’ oɟ ^h əl ‘to disappear’	ɟot ‘plough’ nəcorna ‘to squeeze’ ɟōk ‘leech’ kor ‘eyelid’ lo:h ‘iron’	ikəllo ‘alone’ bətō ‘big’ sono ‘gold’ mero ‘my’ b ^h ətijo ‘brother’s son’ səsure ‘father in law’ da:do ‘grandfather’ (on mother’s side’
/u/	unia ‘loin cloth’ ūŋgri ‘fingers’ upər ‘up’ u ^h aike leiɟa ‘to drag (a heavy object)	du:b ‘grass’ pəsuri ‘rib’ d ^h u:p ‘sunshine’ tum ‘you’ p ^h ua ‘father’s sister’ sun ‘cripple’ muɟ ‘head’	p ^h oɟu ‘picture’ əggu ‘in front of’ g ^h a:mu ‘heat’ ba:ru: ‘sand’ bəhu ‘daughter-in- law’ ba:u ‘father’s elder brother’ sa:su ‘mother-in- law’ k ^h anu ‘food’

Diphthongs

In the present language we find a number of vowel sequences, also termed as diphthongs. 14 such sounds are identified after the preliminary study of the data. They are [ia], [io], [iu], [ea] [ei], [eo], [ai], [ae], [ao], [au], [oe], [oa], [oi], and [ua].

Examples:

[ia] pətt^həria ‘pebble’
nədia: ‘river’

[io] pio ‘drink’

[iu] d^hiutin ‘daughter’s daughter’
d^hiuto ‘daughter’s son’

[ea] beah ‘marriage’
peas ‘thirst’

[ei] u^haike leiɟa ‘to drag a heavy object’

[eo] bəg ʃan deo 'let him go'

[ai] mai 'mother's brother's wife'
ʃəmhuai 'yawn'

[æ] milae le 'to mix'

[ao] kʰəbao 'to feed'

[au] ba:u 'father's elder brother'

[oe] boe 'saw'

[oa] p̄oar 'name of a month'
ʃoan 'young'

[oi] bahnoi 'younger sister's husband'
nəndoi 'husband's sister's husband'

[ua] kicua 'earthworm'
bʰəlua 'bear'

Triphthongs

There are also few instances of triphthongs in the language Tharua. We can see in the following examples:

[əia] əia 'mother'
gəĩã 'cow'
ɖəɖʰəia 'male deer'
biləia 'cat'
cəʃəia 'mat'

[əua] dəua 'father'
kəua 'crow'
gələua 'cheek'
nəua 'barber'

[əiə] bəiər 'woman/wife'

[uia] kũiã 'well'

Vowel Length

The language Tharua does not show any contrast between short and long vowels. Vowel length can be seen in words like:

pi:tʰ ‘back of the body’

mu:ɾ ‘skull’

ɟi:bʰ ‘tongue’

It can thus be determined that length is a phonetic feature in the language rather than a phonemic one.

Nasalization

This feature can be seen in items such as

bʰəũr-bʰəũɾ ‘honeybee’

cirəĩɲã-cirəĩɲã-cirəĩɲa ‘bird’

The degree of nasalization varies with different speakers. There appears pronunciation variation and also few lexical variations. Nasalization too seems to be a phonetic feature and not a phonemic feature in Tharua. Further investigation is needed to support the facts more strongly.