

REPORT-2

NAME AND ADDRESS OF THE JRPS

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LANGUAGE/ MT: BIRJIA

Part of Birjia Phonology

Phonology: Vowels

Birjia has five vowel phonemes. They are /i/, /e/, /a/, /u/ and /o/.

Description and Distribution of Vowels

VOWELS	INITIAL	MEDIAL	FINAL
FRONT VOWELS			
/i/: Close Unrounded	/iheil/ ‘feather’, /ipil/ ‘star’, /iʔt/ ‘to excrete’	/dirin/ ‘horn’ /tikin/ ‘noon’ /ac^him/ ‘to sneeze’	/moci/ ‘cobbler’ /pajeri/ ‘anklet’ /bijari/ ‘dinner’
/e/: Close-mid Unrounded	/eneiʔ/ ‘to play’ /eger/ ‘to abuse’ /ewergendra/ ‘sari’	/lended/ ‘leech found in soil’ /taher/ ‘cucumber’	/rote/ ‘frog’ /t^hāore/ ‘front/ close by’ /tajem re/ ‘back’

		/reheʔd/ ‘root or tributary root’	
CENTRAL VOWELS			
/a/: Open Unrounded	/ amawas/ ‘new moon’ /aʔ/ ‘bow’ /adʔ/ ‘to disappear’	/panj/ ‘claw’ /lal/ ‘red’ /caba/ ‘end’	/tumba/ ‘pumpkin’ /dʰənija/ ‘coriander leaf’ / dʰitua/ ‘stalk’
BACK VOWELS			
/u/: Close Rounded	/usul/ ‘sky/up’ /ul/ ‘mango’ /udʰra/ ‘interest’	/susun/ ‘dance’ /dʰulki/ ‘type of drum’ /ajup/ ‘night’	/puʈu/ ‘mushroom’ /alu/ ‘potato’ /kaʃu/ ‘cashewnut’
/o/: Close-mid Rounded	/oʔr/ ‘ash’ /oʔ/ ‘to swell’ /oda/ ‘to urinate’	/canlom/ ‘tail’ /pos/ ‘Birjia month of December’ /soca/ ‘to imagine/ to think’	/roʔo/ ‘housefly’ /dʰipao/ ‘reheating’ /bʰado/ ‘Birjia month of August’

The mid central vowel [ə] though occurs in the language, is not phonemic. For example: /təmrəs/ ‘guava’, /bʰrəndə/ ‘toad’, /cilkən/ ‘how’.

It is mainly found in loan words, for example: /bəhin/ ‘sister’, /gəhna/ ‘ornament’, /məsala/ ‘spices’, /rəs/ ‘juice’ etc.

In many cases, it is changed to /a/, or near open central vowel /ɐ/ in free variation. For example: Hindi /pərəb/ ‘festival’ and Hindi /cəʃma/ are pronounced as /parab/ and /casma/ respectively in Birjia. Again Hindi words

like /ʃənəm/ ‘birth’, /ləŋɾa/ ‘limp’, /mækɾi/ ‘spider’ etc are changed to /ʃənəm/, /ləŋɾa/ and /mækri/ respectively in Birjia.

Sometimes [ə] is also changed to open mid rounded back vowel [ɔ], for example: /palɔg/ ‘spinach’, /b^hɔʃan/ ‘bhajan’, /nɔ/ ‘nine’, /c^hɔ/ ‘six’ etc.

Front near open unrounded [æ] is found in loan words only, for example, /p^hul pænt/ ‘full pant’.

The contrastive pairs of vowels are given below:

/u:/i/

/mamu/ ‘mother’s brother’: /mami/ ‘mother’s brother’s wife’

/sukri/ ‘pig’: /sikri/ ‘garland’

/a:/e/

/oɾa/ ‘house’: /oɾe/ ‘bird’

/a:/u/

/tamba/ ‘copper’: /tumba/ ‘dried pumpkin’

/balam/ ‘spear’: /bulum/ ‘salt’

/a:/i/

/ʃal/ ‘net’: /ʃil/ ‘meat’

/a:/o/

/kaɾa/ ‘male buffalo’: /koɾa/ ‘boy’

/i:/o/

/samd^hi/ ‘daughter-in-law’s father’: /samd^ho/ ‘daughter-in-law’s mother’

Diphthongs and their distribution:

There are 17 diphthongs (including the nasalized ones) in Birjia. They are /iu/, ŋiu/, /ei/, /eo/, /eu/, /ai/, /āi/, /ao/, /āo/, /au/, /oi/, /ou/, /əi/, /əu/, /ui/, /ūi/ and //ɔi//.

Diphthongs	Initial	Medial	Final
/iu/, ʃiu/		/piun/ ‘peon’	/g ^h iu/ ‘ghee’
/ei/		/oʃeiʔ/ ‘khai/cura’, /uku eneiʔ/ ‘hide and seek’, /t ^h akrurein/ ‘female barber’	/səlei/ ‘matchstick’
/eo/		/deota/ ‘god’, /deohari/ ‘sorcerer’, /c ^h eora/ ‘skin’	/seo/ ‘apple’
/eu/		/neura/ ‘mongoose’	
/ai/, ʃai/	/aina/ ‘mirror’	/baʃaikin/ ‘female weaver’, /saikil/ ‘bicycle’, /pain/ ‘drainage’, b ^h ais/ ‘buffalo’	/mərcai/ ‘chillie’, /baʃai/ ‘weaver’, /murai/ ‘radish’, /d ^h ai/ ‘cockroach’
/ao/, ʃao/		/laoŋ/ ‘clove’, /caoli puʃu/ ‘type of mushroom’, /saotʃi/ ‘big grass’, /t ^h aoʃe/ ‘front’	/paʃao/ ‘indigestion’, /ghao/ ‘shoebite’, /dhasao/ ‘landslide’

/au/	/aur/ ‘and’	/k ^h auɽi/ ‘to stir’	
/oi/		/hoinhar/ ‘father in law’, /boiha/ ‘cousin’	
/ou/		/p ^h oultən/ ‘pen’, /couha/ ‘chin’, /pakouri/ ‘pakora’	
/əi/		/gəis/ ‘gas’	/biləi/ ‘cat’
/əu/		/cəukidar/ ‘watchman’	
/ui/, /ũi/		/muiʔn/ ‘ant and types’	/pũi/ ‘a kind of spinach’
/ɔi/		/kəsɔili kaɽ ^h / ‘betel nut tree’	

Vowel Combinations and their distribution: There are 7 vowel combinations.

Vowel Combinations	Intial	Medial	Final
/ia/		/mian/ ‘day after tomorrow’, /siahi/ ‘ink’, /ɲian/ ‘to come and get’	/bɔɽhia/ ‘beautiful’

/ie/		/nəriel kat ^h /	
/oa/, /õa/			/b ^h ɛɾoa/ ‘lady’s finger’, /weɟoa hapta/ ‘next week’, /rõa/ ‘fur’
/ua/		/duar/ ‘door’	/satua/ ‘satoo’, /mua/ ‘demon’, /sadam c ^h ua/ ‘foal’
/ɔel/		/andʒarɔel/ ‘loin cloth’	
/ẽa/		/pẽaɟ/ ‘onion’	

It is to be noted a trivocalic combination [iao] is found in /p^hup^hiao/ ‘snake’s sound’. It is a combination of a single vowel /i/ and a diphthong [ao].