

A BRIEF GRAMMATICAL SKETCH OF THE BIRJIA LANGUAGE

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Birjia, an endangered language is spoken across the states of Jharkhand, Orissa and West Bengal. In Jharkhand the Birjia community inhabits in the districts of Lohardaga, Gumla, Ranchi and Palamau. They are also found in Simdega. They are still dependent upon the natural resources of the forest. They inhabit in the deeper and denser forest areas and inaccessible agricultural areas. Nowadays, they are more or less settled in the villages and have given up the practice of shifting cultivation. They have some small land holding on which they practice plough cultivation. Dominant languages of these areas are Hindi, Sadri and Panchparganiya (Jharkhand), Oriya (Orissa), and Bangla (West Bengal).

The Birjia people are divided into two subgroups -Sinduraiya and Telia. The Birjia speech of the Birjia community is commonly assumed to be a Munda language.

From the limited data collected from the field i.e. Gumla district of Jharkhand, a brief grammatical sketch of the Birjia language is presented below in the following divisions: Phonology, Morphology and Syntax.

PHONOLOGY

There are eight vowel sounds and thirty three consonant sounds in Birjia. From the limited data, we have determined the phonemic status of the sounds.

VOWELS

A preliminary analysis of the data shows that there are eight vowels in Birjia. They are [i, e, ə, a, ɔ, o, u and ε]. And there are fifteen vowel clusters in the language. They are [ia, iu, ei, eu, eo, ěa, ua, uo, oa, oi, ou, ai, au, ao and ae] .

Vowels:

The eight vowels are shown in the following chart

| | FRONT | CENTRAL | BACK |
|-----------------|-------|---------|------|
| HIGH | /i/ | | /u/ |
| MID HIGH | /e/ | | /o/ |
| MID LOW | /ε/ | /ə/ | /ɔ/ |
| LOW | | /a/ | |

DESCRIPTION AND DISTRIBUTION OF VOWELS:

| Vowels | <u>Initial</u> | <u>Medial</u> | <u>Final</u> |
|--------------------------------|--|---|---|
| <u>FRONT VOWELS</u> | | | |
| /i/: High Unrounded | /itiʔih/ ‘to pinch’, /ijam/ ‘to cry or weep’, /ic/ ‘stool’ | /rimil/ ‘cloud’, /baɖida/ ‘ice’, /riʔ/ ‘spine’ | /jijemi/ ‘to open’, /iremi/ ‘to guide or show the way’, /huni/ ‘he’ |
| /e/: Mid High Unrounded | /ela/ ‘to come’, /egerimi/ ‘to abuse’, /eteraʔa / ‘from’ | /seta/ ‘dog’, /kulseret/ ‘lizard’, /gendra/ ‘sari’, | /d ^h eke/ ‘chest’, /jawarope/ ‘to gather together or assemble’, /goʔe/ ‘all’ |
| [ε]: Mid Low Unrounded | | /mεrom/ ‘goat’ (found in only one instance) | |
| <u>CENTRAL VOWELS</u> | | | |
| /ə/: Mid Low Unrounded | | /gəd ^h a/ ‘donkey’, /mārec/ ‘black pepper’, /səhan/ ‘wood’ | /indrə/ ‘well’, |
| /a/: Low Unrounded | /alom swikarke/ ‘to deny or having done something’, /ara/ ‘saw’, /aca/ ‘beautiful’ | /sekam/ ‘leaf’, /humaʔah/ ‘to kill’, /raram/ ‘old’ | /b ^h anʔa/ ‘brinjal’, /sendra/ ‘hunter’, /ara/ ‘saw’ |

BACK VOWELS

| | | | |
|------------------------------|---|--|--|
| /u/: High Rounded | /uplao/ ‘to float’, /uttər/ ‘north’, /u:l/ ‘mango’ | /kumhər/ ‘potter’, /susun/ ‘dance’, /ajupdiləŋ/ ‘evening’ | /tʰu/ ‘to spit, saliva’, /haku/ ‘fish’, /hasu/ ‘pain’ |
| /o/: Mid High Rounded | /oremi/ ‘to stretch something’, /oʒa/ ‘to smear’, /oke/ ‘who’, /oɾa/ ‘house’ | /bokoin/ ‘father’s sister’s son’, /ʒinor/ ‘maize’, /kote/ ‘after’ | /kado/ ‘mud’, /bōro/ ‘to shiver’, /boɾo/ ‘lung’ |
| /ɔ/: Mid Low Rounded | /ɔr/ ‘and’ | /nɔ/ ‘nine’, /cʰɔ/ ‘six’, | /sersɔ/ ‘mustard’ |

There are seven vowel phonemes in Birjia. The phonemic status of /ɛ/ is doubtful because of limited data. Medial /ɔ/ is found to occur in Hindi loan words. Words with /ɔ/ are also rare in the data. No word with initial /ə/ is found and words with final /ə/ are very rare in the data.

The contrastive pairs of vowels are given below:

/i:/u/

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

/ə:/a/

/pakər/ ‘pebble’: /pakar/ ‘stone’

/a:/e/

/oɾa/ ‘house’: /oɾe/ ‘bird’

/ɔ:/o/

/ɔr ‘and’/: /or/ to drag’

/i:/o/

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

/a/ : /i/

/aja/ ‘father’s father’: /aji/ ‘father’s mother’

VOWEL COMBINATIONS

There are twenty three vowel combinations in the language. They are /ia/, /iu/, /ei/, /eu/, /eo/, /ēa/, /ua/, /uo/, /oa/, /oi/, /ou/, /ai/, /au/, /ao/, /ae/, /əi/, /əe/, /ēu/, /ūe/, /ie/, /æo/, /oe/ and /ui/.

So far as the distribution is concerned it is found in this limited data that /eu/ occurs word initially only; /iu/ and /ūi/ occurs word-finally only; /ia/, /eo/, eṽa/, /uo/, /oe/, /oi/, /ou/, /au/, /ae/, /ṽe/, /ui/, /æo/, uṽe/, /eṽu/ and /ie/ occur medially only; /ei/, /ua/, /oa/ and /ao/ are found in both medial and final positions and the only combination /ai/ occurs in all the three positions. The status of the vowel [æ] in /æo/ is not decided; it may be a variant of [ɛ].

DISTRIBUTION OF VOWEL COMBINATIONS

| <u>Vowel Clusters</u> | <u>Initial</u> | <u>Medial</u> | <u>Final</u> |
|-----------------------|----------------|---|---|
| /ia/ | | /bia/ 'marriage', /pia/ 'I' | |
| /iu/ | | | /g ^h iu/ 'ghee', /niu/ 'foundation' |
| /ei/ | | /teijaŋ/ 'elder/younger sister's husband' | /bilei/ 'cat' |
| /eu/ | | /neula/ 'mongoose' | |
| /eo/ | | /c ^h eora/ 'skin' | |
| /ēa/ | | /pēaj/ 'onion' | |
| /ua/ | | /duar/ 'door' | /seta c ^h ua/ 'puppy', /simc ^h ua/ 'chick' |
| /uo/ | | /muon/ 'ant' | |
| /oa/ | | /horoamand ^h er/ 'day before yesterday' | /noa/ 'this' |
| /oe/ | | /koemi/ 'to ask for something' | |
| /oi/ | | /se oit/ 'child', /bokoin/ 'father's brother's daughter' | |

| | | | |
|-------|-----------------|---|---|
| /ou/ | | /mousi/ ‘mother’s sister’, /mousa/ ‘mother’s sister’s husband’ | |
| /ai/ | /aina/ ‘mirror’ | /mais/ ‘miser’, /kaici/ ‘scissors’ | /b ^h ai/ ‘elder/ younger brother’, /cai/ ‘tea’ |
| /au/ | | /cauha/ ‘chin’ | |
| /ao/ | | /t ^h aore/ ‘front of’ /d ^h ikd ^h ukao/ ‘heart’ | /binao/ ‘weaver’, |
| /ae/ | | /paeri/ ‘anklet’ | |
| /ɔ̃e/ | | / b ^h ɔ̃es / ‘buffalo’ | |
| /əi/ | | | / sərɫəi / ‘matchstick’ |
| /ui/ | | /aguimi/ ‘to bring (something to a place)’ | |
| /æo/ | | /hojæona/ ‘to become’ | |
| /ie/ | | /kumuinieltada/ ‘to dream’ | |
| /ũe/ | | /daʔnũemi/ ‘to drink’ | |
| /ẽu/ | | /ẽur/ ‘to fall’ | |

SUPRASEGMENTALS

The phonemic status of length and nasalisation is not decided because of the limited data.

Further investigation is necessary.

SYLLABLE PATTERNS

SYLLABLE PATTERNS

| <i>PATTERN</i> | <i>Examples</i> |
|-----------------------|--|
| V | u-sul ‘sky’ i-pil ‘star’ a-ʃa ‘father’s father’ |
| V VC | oit^h ‘behind’ |
| VC | ma-is ‘miser’ mu-on ‘ant’ ot^h ‘earth’ |
| CV | ka-do ‘mud’ d^hu-ka ‘wind’ sa-ram ‘deer’ |
| CCV | kin-dro ‘peacock’ gēn-dra ‘sari’ ote-tre ‘under’ |
| CVC | siŋ-gel ‘fire’ mir-cir ‘lightning’ sam-d^{hi} ‘daughter-in-law's father’ |
| CVCC | e-laŋg ‘heat’ se-reŋg ‘rock’ səŋk^h ‘conch’ |
| CVV | bi-lei ‘cat’ sim-c^hua ‘chick’ d^hik-d^hu-kao ‘heart’ bi-nao ‘weaver’ |

WORDS OF DIFFERENT SYLLABIC STRUCTURES

In Birjia, there are monosyllabic, disyllabic and polysyllabic words.

1. MONOSYLLABIC PATTERN:

1. VC : ot^h (earth), up (hair)

2. V : o: (to swell)
3. CV : k^hu (cough)
4. CVC : ʃan (bone) , b^hap (steam)
5. CVCC : menʔ (eye)

2. DISYLLABIC PATTERN:

6. CV-CV : /hasa/ (clay), d^huka (wind)
7. CV-CVC : palah (snow), hadur(thunder)
8. CVC-CVC : /mircir/ (lightning), /sengel/ (fire)
9. CVC-CV : samd^ho (daughter-in-law's mather), cawli (rice)
10. CVC-CCV: bandʒo (storm), sindra (to hunt)
11. V-CV : aʒa (father's father), iʒa (brick)
12. VC-CVC: uttər (north)
13. V-CVC : ipil (star), usul (sky)
14. CVV: ɲia (we), rua (fever)
15. VVC: oit^h (behind)
16. CVC-VCC: reŋetʔ (hunger)
17. CVC-CVV: mərcai (chilli), sərləi(matchstick)
18. VC-CCV: indrə (well)
19. CVVC: ɲein (toy)
20. CVV-CVV: kairao (to get angry)

3. POLYSYLLABIC PATTERN:

1. CV-CV-CV : ʒoʒoma (food), haremi (to bury a dead body)
2. V-CV-CV: iremi (to harvest)
3. VC-CV-CV-CVV : ombagonai (to crawl as a baby)
4. CVC-CV-CV: badlimi (to change)

5. CVC-CV-CV : part^hana (to pray)
6. CV-CV-CV-CV: nakejami (to comb hair)
7. CV-CV-CV-CV: jawarope (to gather together (assemble))
8. CVC-CV-CVV: d^hikd^hukao (heart)
9. V-V-CV: aina (mirror)
10. VC-CVV: ultao (upside down)
11. VC-CVV: uplao 'to fly'
12. V-CVV: ojai 'to give'
13. CV-CV-CV-CV-CVC: tajarajanam 'to prepare'

CONSONANTS

The consonants are 33 in number. They are [p], [b], [b^h], [t], [t^h], [d], [d^h], [ʈ], [ʈ^h], [ɖ], [ɖ^h], [k], [k^h], [g], [g^h], [ʔ], [m], [n], [ɲ], [ŋ], [r], [ɽ], [l], [f], [s], [ç], [h], [c], [c^h], [ʃ], [ʃ^h], [w], and [j].

Chart of Birjia Consonants

Place of Articulation

Manner

| | Bilabial | | Dental | | Alveolar | | Alveo- Palatal | | Palatal | Retroflex | | Velar | | Glottal |
|-------------------|----------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------|-----|----------------|----------------|---------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|---------|
| | vl. | vd. | vl. | vd. | vl. | vd. | vl. | vd. | | vl. | vd. | vl. | vd. | |
| Stop Simple | p | b | t | d | | | c | ɟ | | ʈ | ɖ | k | g | ʔ |
| Stop Aspirated | | b ^h | t ^h | d ^h | | | c ^h | ɟ ^h | | t ^h | ɖ ^h | k ^h | g ^h | |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------|----------|--|----------|--|----------|----------|----------|--|----------|
| Fricative | | | s | | ʃ | | | | h |
| Nasal | m | | n | | ɲ | | ŋ | | |
| Lateral | | | l | | | | | | |
| Trill | | | r | | | | | | |
| Flap | | | | | | ɾ | | | |
| Semi-vowel | w | | | | j | | | | |

The consonant [f] is labio-dental and occurs only once in the data as in [fusri] ‘pimple’.

DESCRIPTION AND DISTRIBUTION OF CONSONANTS

| Consonants | Initial | Medial | Final |
|--|---|---|--|
| Plosives | | | |
| [p]: Voiceless unspirated bilabial | /pahar/ ‘hill’ | /ipil/ ‘star’ | /up/ ‘hair’ |
| [b]: Voiced unspirated bilabial | /bin/ ‘snake’ | /sabeʔah/ ‘to chase and catch’ | /rakab/ ‘to climb a tree’ |
| [b ^h]: Voiced aspirated bilabial | /b ^h atijin/ ‘brother's daughter’ | | |
| [t]: Voiceless unspirated alveolar | /taruʔd/ ‘tiger’ | /mastar/ ‘teacher’ | /kulseret/ ‘lizard’ |
| [t ^h]: Voiceless aspirated alveolar | /t ^h u/ ‘saliva’ | /hat ^h i/ ‘elephant-male, female’, hot ^h o ‘neck’ | |
| [d]: Voiced unspirated alveolar | /datah/ ‘teeth’ | /kuduŋ/ ‘eye-brow’, /pudga/ ‘feather’ | /damad/ ‘elder/younger sister's husband’ |
| [d ^h]: Voiced aspirated alveolar | /d ^h obi/ ‘washerman’ | /gəð ^h a/ ‘donkey’ | |
| [ʈ]: Voiceless unspirated retroflex | /ʈaruʃ/ ‘lion’, /ʈikli/ ‘bindi’ | /iʈa/ ‘brick’ | |
| [ʈ ^h]: Voiceless aspirated retroflex | /ʈ ^h iʈ ^h iʈ oʃe/ ‘sparrow’ | /hāʈ ^h il/ ‘egg’ | |

| | | | |
|---|--|---|---|
| [d]: Voiced unaspirated retroflex | /ɖagrɪn/ ‘midwife’ | /ciɖra/ ‘squirrel’ | /ʈarud/ ‘lion’ |
| [dʰ]: Voiced aspirated retroflex | dʰekar ‘to belch’ | | |
| [k]: Voiceless unaspirated velar | /kacʰa/ ‘tortoise’ | /siku/ ‘louse’ | /cecak/ ‘smallpox’ |
| [kʰ]: Voiceless aspirated velar | /kʰerha/ ‘rabbit’ | /lekʰa/ ‘count’ | /səŋkʰ/ ‘conch’ |
| [g]: Voiced unaspirated velar | /gapa/ ‘tomorrow’ | /ɖagrɪn/ ‘midwife’ | |
| [gʰ]: Voiced aspirated velar | /gʰuti/ ‘wrist’ | gʰarigʰari ‘always’ | |
| [ʔ]: glottal Stop | | bidʔjana ‘to prick as a thorn’ | ti:ʔ ‘insect’, buaʔ ‘jackal’ |
| NASAL | | | |
| [m]: Voiced bilabial | /mastar/ ‘teacher’, /majam/ ‘blood’ | /həromsu/ ‘honeybee’ | /sadam/ ‘horse’ |
| [n]: Voiced alveolar | /neula/ ‘mongoose’ | /menaʔ/ ‘face’ | /bin/ ‘snake’ |
| [ɲ]: Voiced retroflex | /ɲein/ ‘toy’ | | |
| [ŋ]: voiced velar | | /serəŋg/ ‘rock’, /darəŋga/ ‘slope’ /ʈaŋa/ ‘leg’ | /çitoŋ/ ‘sunshine’, /konioŋ/ ‘to adopt a child’ |
| TRILL | | | |
| [r]: Voiced alveolar | /ʈarud/ ‘lion’ | /roʈe/ ‘toad’ | /serser/ ‘foot’ |
| FLAP | | | |
| [ɽ]: Voiced retroflex | /ʈani/ ‘queen’ | /kiʈa/ ‘worm’ | |
| FRICATIVE | | | |
| [f]: Voiceless labiodentals (occurs only in one instance) | /fusri/ ‘pimple’ | | |
| [s]: Voiceless alveolar | /simcʰua/ ‘chick’ | /hasu/ ‘ache/pain’ | /mais/ ‘miser’ |
| [ç]: Voiceless palatal | /çitoŋ/ ‘sunshine’ | | |
| [h]: glottal | Initial: /hapadʔ/ | /bihan/ ‘seed’ | /joʈoh/ ‘again’ |

| | | | |
|---|--|---|---|
| | ‘leech’ | | |
| AFFRICATE | | | |
| [c]: Voiceless unspirated alveolar | /cawli/ ‘rice’, camar ‘cobbler’ | /kaici/ ‘scissors’ | /ic/ ‘stool/shit’, mærec ‘black pepper’ |
| [c ^h]: Voiceless aspirated alveolar | /c ^h utki/ ‘brother’s wife’ | /c ^h uc ^h u/ ‘rat’ | |
| [ɟ]: Voiced unspirated alveo-palatal | /joʔoh/ (fruit), /joʔo/ ‘tamarind’ | /kagɟi/ ‘lime’ | /pɛaj/ ‘onion’ |
| [ɟ ^h]: Voiced aspirated alveo-palatal | /ɟ ^h ara/, /ɟ ^h ari/ ‘liquorice’ | /samɟ ^h ao/ ‘to guide or show the way’ | |
| LATERAL | | | |
| voiced alveolar liquid | /lajemi/ ‘to dig’ | /kulseret/ ‘lizard’ | /usul/ ‘up’ |
| GLIDE OR SEMIVOWEL | | | |
| [w]: Voiced labial | | /bawer/ ‘rope’ | |
| [j]: Voiced palatal | | /lajemi/ ‘to dig’ | /gaj/ ‘cow’ |

The following 21 sounds are established as phonemes: /p, t, k, g, s, h, n, l, r, ʈ, k^h, t^h, ʃ, ʃ^h, c, c^h, b, m, t, g^h, j/.

The contrastive pairs of consonants are given below:

- /r : ʈ/

pahar ‘forest’ : pahaʈ ‘mountain’

- /k : h/

pakar ‘stone’ : pahar ‘hill’

- /n : t/

nani ‘grandmother (M)’ : nati ‘grandson’

- **/l: s/**
lal 'red' : sal 'year'

- **/p: g/**
poṭa 'belly' : goṭa 'all'

- **/h: n/**
hasur 'sprain' : nasur 'garlic'

- **/k^h: / t^h/**
/k^hu/ 'cough': /t^hu/ 'saliva'

- **/j^h: /j/**
/j^hil/ 'lake': /jil/ 'flesh'

- **/ʃ: /b/**
/jil/ 'flesh' : /jib/ 'tongue'

- **/c^h: /m/**
/ac^ha/ 'clean': /ama/ 'you'

- **/t/: /t/**
/daṭa/ 'tooth' : /data/ 'tusk'

- **/g^h:/n/**
/g^hiu / 'ghee': /niu/ 'foundation'

- **/j/: /ʃ/**
/aja/ 'mother': /aʃa/ 'father's father'

The phonemic status of [f] is doubtful. It occurs only in one instance. Though [ʔ] is perceived and one pair like [gol] ‘round’ and [goʔ] ‘to die’ has been found, yet its status is not decided. The status of other consonants is yet to be investigated on the basis of more data.

DESCRIPTION AND DISTRIBUTION OF DOUBLE CONSONANTS

| Double Consonant | Initial Distribution | Medial Distribution | Final Distribution |
|------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------|
| [d+d] | | /guḍḍi/ ‘kite’ | |
| [t+ t] | | /cuṭṭu/ ‘mouse’ | |
| [d+d] | | /meddah/ ‘tears’ | |
| [t+t] | | /uttar/ ‘north’ / gattar/ ‘body’ | |
| [h+h] | | /ahha/ ‘mouth’ | |

LIST AND DISTRIBUTION OF CONSONANT CLUSTERS

| Consonants | Initial | Medial | Final |
|------------|---------|--------|---|
| ŋ+g | | | /elaŋg/ ‘heat’ /serəŋg/ ‘rock’ /citəŋg diŋ/ ‘summer’ |

| | | |
|------------|--|--------------------------|
| d+r | /bandʀo/ ‘storm’ | |
| | /ciɖra/ ‘squirrel’ | |
| n+d | /b^henɖo/ ‘sheep’ | /tanɖ/ ‘field’ |
| t+r | /matrom/ ‘cold- ailment’ | |
| | /natra/, /natri/ ‘dwarf - male, female’ | |
| n+d | /konda/, /kundi/ ‘dumb - male, female’ | |
| g+r | /pagri/ ‘turban’ | |
| n+j | | /panj/ ‘to stamp’ |

LIST AND DISTRIBUTION OF CONSONANT SEQUENCES

| Consonants | Initial | Medial | Final |
|--|---------|---|-------|
| l+k (lateral+stop) | | /halkao/ ‘wave’ | |
| t+k (stop+ stop) | | /chutki/ ‘brother’s wife’ | |
| n+h (nasal+glottal fricative) | | /hanhar/ ‘mother- in-law’ | |
| g+n (stop+ nasal) | | /bhagni/ ‘sister’s daughter’ | |
| l+h (lateral+glottal fricative) | | /dulhin/ ‘bride’ | |

| | |
|--|--|
| d+g (stop+atop) | /pudga/ ‘feather’ |
| m+s (nasal+sibilant) | /həromsu/ ‘honey bee’ |
| l+s (lateral+sibilant) | /kulseret’/ ‘lizard’ |
| k^h+n/k^h+l (stop+naal) | /sik ^h ni/, /sik ^h li/ ‘mosquito’ |
| n+d (nasal+stop) | /bandra/ ‘monkey’ |
| r+h (trill+glottal fricative) | /kul sərhed/ ‘spider’ |
| r+n (trill+nasal) | /birni/ ‘wasp’ |
| p+n (stop+nasal) | /pipni/ ‘eye-brow’ |
| r+g (trill+stop) | /mirgi/ ‘epilepsy’ |
| h+r (glottal fricative + trill) | /behra/ ‘dear’ |
| w+l (semivowel+lateral) | /cawli/ ‘rice’ |
| j+j(semivowel+affricate) | /gajjil/ |
| k+r (stop+trill) | /sukri/ ‘pig’ |
| | /mokre/ ‘knee’ |
| d+r(stop+trill) | /kindro/ ‘peacock’ |
| | /gēndra/ ‘sari’ |
| c+c^h(affricate+affricate) | /pəcc ^h im/ ‘west’ |

MORPHOLOGY

At the outset the word classes are described. Then both nominal morphology and verb morphology are presented one after the other.

Word Classes in Birjia

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 | ɲia | | ɲia |
| second | amaʔ | aban | ape |
| Third | huni 'he' huni kuɽi'she' | hukin | huku |

Demonstratives-

| | | |
|-----------|------|--------------------------|
| Proximate | noa | noa goɽa, nuku (animate) |
| Distal | hona | hũku goɽe goɽa '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 ^h |
| 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 ^h i |
| clever | calak |
| green (colour of leaf) | harijan |
| hungry | rangeit |
| old | raram |
| red | lal |
| rotten | pacaojama |
| sharp | cirbi? |
| small | huđiŋ |
| strong | balsali |
| tall (man, woman) | usul |
| there | honđe |
| up | usul |
| white | carka |
| yellow | pila |
| round | gol |
| thirsty | tetaŋ |

Adverbs

| | |
|-----------|--------|
| yesterday | horoa |
| suddenly | acanak |
| slowly | bisad |

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' |
| raṭ 'widower' | raṛi 'widow' |
| baḍa 'daughter's son's son' | baḍi 'daughter's son's daughter' |
| nana 'grandfather (M)' | nani 'grandmother (M)' |
| mouṣa 'mother's sister's husband' | mouṣi 'mother's sister' |
| dulha 'bridegroom' | dulhin 'bride' |

Inanimate

/naki/ (comb),

/daraṇa/ (valley)

Word formation

- Both animate and inanimate nouns end in consonants, eg., /kiḍiŋ/ 'scorpion', /ṭarud/ 'lion', /ʃinor/ 'maize', /gẽndʰ/ 'ball'.
- Both animate and inanimate nouns end in vowels, eg. /koṛa/ 'boy', /miŋɟra/ 'child', /keṛa/ 'banana', /seta/ 'dog'.
- 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'; /mouṣa/ 'mother's sister's husband' : /mouṣi/ 'mother's sister'; /bʰagna/ 'sister's son' : /bʰagni/ 'sister's daughter'; /koṛa/ 'boy' : /kuṛi/ 'girl',

Influence of Indo-Aryan is seen here.

Nominal Morphology:

1. PRONOUNS

Birjia exhibits five types of pronouns, viz personal pronouns, demonstrative pronouns, interrogative pronouns, possessive pronouns and reflexive pronouns. Let us discuss the personal pronouns first:

PERSONAL PRONOUNS

Personal pronouns in Birjia have three numbers- singular, dual and plural. 1st person includes *nia* (singular and plural). 2nd person includes *ama?* (singular), *aban* (dual) and *ape* (plural). 3rd person includes *huni* 'he' and 'she' (singular) *hukin* (dual) and *huku* (plural). */kin/* and */ku/* are dual and plural markers respectively.

Table 1

| Persons | Singular | Dual | Plural |
|---------|--|----------------|---------------|
| First | <i>/nia/</i> | | <i>/nia /</i> |
| second | <i>/ama?/</i> | <i>/aban/</i> | <i>/ape/</i> |
| Third | <i>/huni/</i> 'he/she' There is no lexical or grammatical difference between Birjia 'he' and 'she'. | <i>/hukin/</i> | <i>/huku/</i> |

Pronominal Paradigm

First Person – Table 2

| Case | Singular | Dual | Plural |
|------------|--|---|--|
| Nom | <i>/nia/</i> | | <i>/nia /</i> |
| Acc | <i>/nia /</i> | | <i>/nia /</i> |
| Inst | <i>/nia /</i> | | |
| Dative | | | |
| Ablative | | | |
| Possessive | <i>/niara?/, /niarinkin/, /niarinku/, niara?</i> | incl: <i>/alaŋ-rini/ and /alaŋ-rinkin/,</i> | Incl: <i>/abun-rini/ and abun-rinku, excl-</i> |

| | | | |
|----------|--------------------------------|---|---|
| | (inanimate) (refer Report May) | excl:/alin-rini/ and /alin-rinkin/ in case of animate Use of suffix - /ra?/in case of inanimate] (refer Report May) | /alin-rini/ and /alin-rinku/ in case of animate] Use of suffix /-ra?/in case of inanimate] (refer Report May) |
| Locative | | | |

Second Person – Table 3

| Case | Singular | Dual | Plural |
|------------|----------|----------|----------|
| Nom | /ama?/ | /aban/ | /ape/ |
| Acc | /ama?/ | | /ama?/ |
| Inst | | | |
| Dative | | | |
| Ablative | | | |
| Possessive | /amara?/ | /amara?/ | /amara?/ |
| Locative | | | |

Third Person – Table 4

| Case | Singular | Dual | Plural |
|------|----------|--------|--------|
| Nom | /huni/ | /huni/ | /huku/ |
| Acc | /huni/ | /huni/ | /huku/ |
| Inst | /huni/ | | |

| | | | |
|------------|------------|-----------|------------|
| Dative | | | |
| Ablative | | | |
| Possessive | /huniraʔa/ | /huniraʔ/ | /hukuraʔa/ |
| Locative | | | |

The different states of occurrences are shown below:

a) /ɲia oʔa ariɲa/
 1sg house be
 'I am in my house.'

b) /ɲia oʔe nel laʔah/
 1pl bird see - past
 'We (plural) saw the bird.'

c) /huni oʔe tidi aj/
 3sg bird kill - past
 'He killed the bird.'

d) /huni oʔe tidi aj/
 3sg(F) bird kill past
 'She killed the bird.'

e) /huku goʔe nonʔe ku weʔoa:/
 3pl all here pl come
 'They (pl) come here.'

f) /hukin hoʔ goʔa oʔe ku nel laʔah/
 3du man all men bird pl see - past
 'They (dual) saw the bird.'

g) /huni oʔe nel taʔ/
 3non-hum bird see - past participle

'It had seen the bird.'

- h) /goṭe hoṭ mi:tiŋ re weʔo lagao/
 all man meeting for come have-3sg (compulsion)
 'Everybody has to come for the meeting.'

/laʔah/ and /aj/ are two past markers.

DEMONSTRATIVE PRONOUNS

Demonstratives in Birjia are of two types - Proximate and Distal. They both can be of singular (proximate- /noa/ in inanimate, /huni/ in animate and distal- /hona/ in inanimate, /huni/ in animate) and plural (proximate- /noa goṭa/ in inanimate, /nuku goṭe/ in animate and distal- /hũku/ goṭe, goṭa 'all'). /goṭe/, /goṭa/ 'all' are plural marker in plural demonstrative pronouns

Table 5

| Number | Singular | Plural |
|-----------|--|---|
| Proximate | /noa/(inanimate), /huni/ (animate) | /noa goṭa/ inanimate), /nuku goṭe/ (animate) |
| Distal | /hona/(inanimate), /huni/ (animate) | /hũku goṭe/ / /hũku goṭa/ /goṭa/ , /goṭe/ 'all', |

The different states of occurrences are shown below:

- a) /**noa** mien oṭa hake/
 this one house be-pres
 'This is a house.'

- b) /**hona** esan t^hao hake ci honde gaj carao oje/
 that place be which cows graze potentiality
 'That is the place where the cows graze.'
- c) /**huni** hoꝛ nia gati hake/.
 this (animate) man my friend be-pres
 'This man is my friend'
- d) /**huni** hoꝛ moꝛa aje/
 that (animate) man fat be-pres
 'That man is fat.'
- e) /**noa** goꝛa nia oꝛa hake/
 these all my houses be-pres
 'These are my houses.'
- f) /**nuku** goꝛe jiliꝛ haku/
 these (animate) all tall be-pres
 'These men are tall.'
- g) /**huku** goꝛe saonija hor hake/
 those (ani) all strong men be-pres
 'Those men are strong.'
- h) /**noa** kam okerhõe erao kara-ole/
 this work anybody no do- potentiality
 'Nobody can do this work.'
- i) /**noa** kam okerhõe karao saka-oje/
 this work anybody positive do-potentiality
 'Anybody can do this work.'

Demonstratives can also be expressed by 'here' /nui/ and 'there' /hondore/

For example-

a) /nui mien bilai hake/

here one cat be
 'Here is a cat.'

b) /hondore barija gajkin idana/
 there two cows be
 'There are two cows.'

Interrogative Pronouns

Interrogatives in Birjia include how 'cilkə', what 'titana', when 'uket iri', where 'okare', which 'cilkana', who 'oke', why 'cikalena'.

Interrogative pronouns lie in the middle of a sentence.

Table 6

| English Interrogative pronouns | Birjia Interrogative pronouns |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| How | cilkə |
| What | titana |
| When | uket iri |
| Where | okare |
| Which | cilkana |
| Who | oke |
| Why | cikalena |

The different states of occurrences are shown below:

- a) How are you?- /aman cilkə ama?/
- b) What is your name?- /amara niumun titana hake/
- c) When do you get up ?- /ama uket iri biri? ijen/
- d) Who is he ?- /huni oke hake/

e) Whose horse is that ?- /huni oke re mi sadom hake/

f) How much did you get? /ama uked nijam lena/

Possessive pronouns

There is presence of animate possessive pronouns in Birjia like my 'nia', our (dual) 'alanj' for inclusive and 'alin' for exclusive and our (plural) 'abun' for inclusive and 'alin' for exclusive. /rini/, /rinkin/ and /rinku/ are animate number markers for singular, dual and plural respectively. /ra?/ is inanimate number marker.

Examples of possessive pronouns in singular, dual and plural forms in Birjia are given below :

- a. My kid- /niarini sengoit/
- b. Our (dual) kid – /alanjini sengoit/ (inclusive)
/alinrini sengoit/ (exclusive)
- c. Our (plural) kid- /abunrini sengoit/ (inclusive)
/alinrini sengoit/ (exclusive)
- d. My kids (dual)- /niarinkin sengoitkin/
- e. Our (dual) kids (dual) – /alanjinkin sengoitkin/ (inclusive)
/alinrinkin sengoitkin/ (exclusive)
- f. Our (plural) kid(plural)- /abunrinku sengoitku/ (inclusive)
/alinrinku sengoitku/ (exclusive)

- g. My tree- /ɲiara? kaɽʰ/
- h. Our (dual) tree – /alaŋra? kaɽʰ/ (inclusive)
/alinra? kaɽʰ/ (exclusive)
- i. Our (plural) tree- /abunra? kaɽʰ/ (inclusive)
/alinra? kaɽʰ/ (exclusive)
- j. My trees (dual)- /ɲiara? bariya kaɽʰ/
- k. Our (dual) kids (dual) – /alaŋra? bariya kaɽʰ/ (inclusive)
/alinra? bariya kaɽʰ/ (exclusive)
- l. Our (plural) kid(plural)- .abunra? peya kaɽʰ/ (inclusive)
/alinra? peya kaɽʰ/ (exclusive)

Reflexive Pronouns

Marker /apente/ is used to express reflexives in Birjia..Some instances are-

- a) /huni apante gagri rakabʔla/
3sg.F herself pot lift.past
'She lifted the pot herself.'
- b) /huni apante paɽʰ parhaolena/
3sg.M himself lessons study.past
'He studied the lessons himself.'

- c) /huni apante goit gana/
 3sg.inani itself die past
 'It died by itself.'

Definiteness

Birjia shows no definiteness in their constructions. /huni hoꝛ/ means 'the man'. /mien/ 'one' is used when indefiniteness is expressed

But indefinite pronouns are present. For examples-

- a) /goꝛe hoꝛ mi:tiŋ re weʔo lagao/
 'Everybody has to come for the meeting.'
- b) /noa kam oker hõe karao sakaoje/
 'Anybody can do this work.'
- c) /noa kam oker hõe erao karaole/
 'Nobody can do this work.'

2. CASE

In Birjia, there are six types of cases viz. nominative, accusative, instrumental, dative, ablative, and locative.

a) Nominative

Nouns of Birjia do not employ any distinguishing signs to express this case. They are used in their basic unmodified form without any case- markers or post- positions. Nominative in Birjia is unmarked.

/koꝛa eneŋ janɛi/

boy-nom play-prog aux-pres-be

'The boy is playing'

/miŋɾa gẽndʰ eʔ eneŋ janɛi/

boy-nom ball with play-prog aux-pres-be

'The boy is playing with a ball'

/məhes ul ʃom laje/

mahesh-nom mango eat -past

'Mahesh ate the mango'

/aja ab mandʒi idinej/

mother now cook -future

'Mother will cook now'

b) Accusative

The accusative case in Birjia is also unmarked.

/miŋɾa kera ʃom lajeʔ/

boy-nom banana-acc eat -past

'The boy ate a banana.'

/miŋɾa haku sab lajeʔ/

children-nom fish catch -past

'The children caught the fish.'

/sindra ku silib ku sab lajeʔ/

hunters.pl deer plural catch -past

'The hunters caught the deer.'

/kuɾi mandʒi ʃom doholajeʔ/

girl meal eat -perf

'The girl had eaten the meals.'

c) **Instrumental**

The Instrumental suffix is /-te/. This is used to indicate that a noun is the instrument or means by or with which the subject achieves or accomplishes an action. The noun may be either a physical object or an abstract concept.

/tangiʔ-te kaʔh maʔ laje/

axe- inst tree cut -passive

'The tree is cut with axe.'

/ram ɲia ra p^houn ten te ciʔt^hi lik^hao laje/

ram my-inst pen by letter write -past

'Ram wrote the letter with my pen.'

d) **Dative**

In Birjia, animate objects carry marker /-ʔta/.

/ram sejam -ʔta kitab ojali dije/

ram shyam -dat book give past

'Ram gave the book to Shyam.'

e) **Ablative**

Postposition /eteraʔ/ is used to denote the ablative case

/huni oɽa usul eteraʔ deɽlen aje/

'He jumped from the top of the house.'

/gapa etera? bəs ero weʒo laje/

'Tomorrow onwards the buses will not run.'

f) Possessive

The possessive suffix is /- ra?/. The data is very limited. There is one example as below:

/ram -ra? ʈop harije/

ram-poss. cap blue

'Ram's cap is blue'

g) Locative

The nouns of Birjia generally don't change their form for the expression of this case, but separate postpositions are used for denoting various locations.

/huni oʒa **bhitar** ria/

'He is **in** the house.'

/ʒa kaʈʰ o **usul** rinije/

'I am **on** the tree.'

/ʒa kaʈʰ a **ʈʰao** rinije/

'I am **beside** the tree.'

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”

/sadam/ (sg) -> /sadam-kin/ (du) -> /sadam-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) kaṭʰ/ -> /bariya(two) kaṭʰ/ -> /peya(three) kaṭʰ/ “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- /ɲiarini sengoit/

Our (dual) kid – /alaɲrini sengoit/ (inclusive)

/alinrini sengoit/ (exclusive)

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

My kids (dual)- /ɲiarinkin sengoitkin/

Our (dual) kids (dual) – /alaɲrinkin sengoitkin/ (inclusive)
/alinrinkin sengoitkin/ (exclusive)

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

My tree- /ɲiara? kaɬ^h/

Our (dual) tree – /alaɲra? kaɬ^h/ (inclusive)
/alinra? kaɬ^h/ (exclusive)

Our (plural) tree- /abunra? kaɬ^h/ (inclusive)
/alinra? kaɬ^h/ (exclusive)

My trees (dual)- /ɲiara? bariya kaɬ^h/

Our (dual) kids (dual) – /alaɲra? bariya kaɬ^h/ (inclusive)
/alinra? bariya kaɬ^h/ (exclusive)

Our (plural) kid(plural)- /abura? peya kaɬ^h/ (inclusive)
/alinra? peya kaɬ^h/ (exclusive)

Gender

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

For Example, /acc^ha kuɾi/ ‘the good boy’, /acc^ha kuɾi/ ‘the good girl’, /acc^ha 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', /sadam/ 'horse': /g^hoṛi/ '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', /raṛ/ 'widower': /raṛi/ '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.

VERB MORPHOLOGY

Simple Verb Bases

At the outset some Simple Verb bases are presented below:

| Bases | Glosses |
|------------------------|--|
| /egeri-/ | 'to abuse' |
| /sod ^h ao-/ | 'to ask question' |
| /koe-/ | 'to ask for something' |
| /saḍi-/ | 'to beat (a drum)'/ 'to play (musical instrument)' |
| /humage-/ | 'to beat (somebody)' |
| /bahaio-/ | 'to bloom' |
| /oṅe-/ | 'to blow (with the mouth)' |
| /sarihjo-/ | 'to believe' |
| /tole-/ | 'to bind' |
| /ḷhuko-/ | 'to bow (bend the body)' |
| /banao-/ | 'to brew' |
| /hare-/ | 'to bury (a dead body)' |
| /hakao-/ | 'to call' |
| /ḷolai-/ | 'to catch (chase and catch)' |
| /manao-/ | 'to celebrate' |
| /badli-/ | 'to change (alter)' |
| /kat ^h ai-/ | 'to chant (mantras)' |

| | |
|---------|--|
| /ɔlai-/ | 'to chase (pursue with intent to catch)' |
| /sine-/ | 'to close' |
| /bide-/ | 'to cultivate (tend crop)' |
| /kame-/ | 'to earn' |

Copula verb-

In Birjia /**hake**/, /**tanai**/, / **idana**/, /**rinije**/, /**jaku**/ and /**aje**/ are copula verbs. For example:

/hui mien bilai **hake**/

here one cat be
'Here is a cat.'

/ram hasu **tanai**/

ram pain be
'Ram is in pain.'

/hondore barija gaekin **idana**/

there two cows be
'There are two cows.'

/nia ka^ha t^hao **rinije**/

1st.Sg tree possessive beside be
'I am beside the tree.'

/nuku goṭe jiliŋ **jaku**/

these all tall be
'These men are tall.'

/huni hoɾ moɾa aje/

that man fat be

'That man is fat.'

Person & Number

Birjia verb does not have markers for denoting person and number.

For example:

/ɲia oɾe nel jana/

1st.Sg bird see –present

'I see the bird.'

/ɲia oɾe nel jana/

1st.Pl bird see –present

'We see the bird.'

/amaʔ oɾe nel jana/

2nd.Sg bird see –present

'You see the bird.'

/huni oɾe nel jana/

3rd.Sg.M bird see –present

'He sees the bird.'

/huni kuɾi oɾe nel jana/

3rd.Sg.F bird see –present

'She sees the bird.'

/huku oꞤe ku nel jana/

3rd.Sg.F bird –plural see –present
‘They see the bird.’

TENSE

Birjia has separate markers for present and a common marker for past and future tenses.

Present Tense:

/ɲia oꞤe nel jana/

1st.Sg bird see –present
‘I see the bird.’

/amaʔ oꞤe nel jana/

2nd.Sg bird see –present
‘You see the bird.’

Past Tense:

/abun oꞤe nel laʔah/

1Pl.Inc bird see -past
‘We saw the bird.’

/ɲia oꞤe nel laʔah/

1st.Pl bird see -past
‘We (plural) saw the bird.’

Future Tense:

/huni oꞤe nel laʔah/

3rd.Sg bird see -future
‘He will see the bird’

/nuku hoꝥ goꝥa oꝥe ku nel laʔah/

these (animate) men all bird –plural see -future
 ‘They will see the bird.’

ASPECT

Perfect:

The perfect marker is the same in present and past.

Present Perfect Aspect:

/ɲia oꝥe nel lidʰiʔajah/

1st.sg bird see -present perfect
 ‘I have seen the bird.’

/nuku hoꝥ goꝥe oꝥe ku nel lidʰiʔajah/

these (animate) men all bird-plural see -present perfect
 ‘They have seen the bird.’

Past Perfect Aspect:

/ɲia oꝥe nel lidʰiʔajah/

1st.Sg bird see -past perfect
 ‘I had seen the bird.’

Future Perfect Aspect:

/ɲia oꝥe nel taʔah/

1st.Sg bird see future perfect
 ‘I shall have seen the bird.’

Continuous:

Present Continuous Aspect

/ɲia nonɖeŋ weʔjo goŋa/

1st.Sg. here come-PRS-CONT
 'I am coming here'

/amaʔ nonɖeŋ weʔjo goŋa/

2nd.Sg here come-PRS-CONT
 'You am coming here'

Past Continuous Aspect

/ɲia oʔe nel jan doholena/

1st.Sg bird see-PST-CONT
 'You were seeing the bird'

/huni oʔe nel jan doholena/

3rd.Sg.M bird see-PST-CONT
 'It was seeing the bird'

Future Continuous Aspect

/amaʔ teʔed boŋga nel-ʔla/

2nd.Sg moon see-FUT-CONT
 'You will be seeing the moon'

Perfect Continuous:

No data has been found

MOOD

a) Indicative - Indicative forms are unmarked.

/huni oṛa bhitar rinije/
 3rd.Sg.M house in be
 'He is in the house.'

/gãe dudd^hu ema/
 cow milk give
 'The cows give milk.'

/seta b^huklaje/
 dog bark
 'The dog barks'

b) Imperative – Imperative forms are marked by verbal suffix 'mi'.

/ama? rini hoponmi ragemi/
 your daughter call-IMP
 'Call your daughter.'

/g^hãs giḍemi/
 grass remove-IMP
 'Remove the grass.'

/duar sinemi/
 door close-IMP
 'Close the door.'

/durumi /, /duru kumi/
 sit-IMP
 'Sit down/Please sit down.'

c) Optative – Optative forms are marked by verbal suffix 'ojemi'.

/huni ikar sen-oajemi/
 'Let him go.'

/huni ikar sen-oajemi/
 'Let it go.'

INFINITIVES

Infinitives in Birjia are expressed by / ta?/

/huni ʃoʔ ʃom taʔ pasantaʔ/
3rd.Sg.M fruit to eat liked

'He liked to eat fruit.'

/huni kat^hao laʔ mandʒi banaotaʔ pasantaʔ/
3rd.Sg.F. said that (she) food to cook likes

'She said that she likes to cook.'

NEGATION

Negation in Birjia is expressed by the markers /kan/, /kae/, /kaie/ and /erao/.

Examples:

1. /nia iskul kan sena/

1st.Sg school neg go
'I don't go to school.'

2. /huni horoa iskul kaie sen doholenaʔ/

3rd.Sg.M yesterday school neg go -past
'He did not go to school yesterday.'

3. /huni noa kam kae karaolaʔah/

3rd.Sg.F. this work neg do -perfect
'She has not done the work.'

4. /noa kam okerhõe erao kara-ole/

this work anybody no do- potentiality

'Nobody can do this work.'

SYNTAX

There are different types of sentences.

1) ***Simple Sentence:***

Simple sentences are of three types- Verbal sentences, Copular sentences and Verbless sentences.

Verbal sentences are of the following types:

a. Declarative

/māhes ul ʃom laje/
mahesh-nom mango eat -past
'Mahesh ate the mango.'

/haram haṭʰi goʔ-janai/
old elephant die-past
'The old elephant died.'

b. Interrogative

/amaʔ uket iri biriʔijen/
2sg when get up
'When do you get up?'

/amaraʔ niemun titana hakeʔ/
Your name what be
'What is your name?'

c. Imperative

Imperative sentences are marked by verbal suffix 'mi'.

/amaʔ rini hopon-mi ragemi/

your daughter- call
 'Call your daughter'

/g^hās giḍemi/
 grass remove
 'Remove the grass'

/duar sinemi/
 door close
 'Close the door'

/nia oṛa ʒu/
 my house go
 'Go to my house'

/gēndra capagimi/
 clothes wash
 'Wash the clothes, please'

/nia ciṭṭ^hi dan/
 I letter give
 'Give me the letter'

Copular sentences

Presence of multiple copular forms has been found in this preliminary analysis of the copular sentences. Some of them are:

- /ram ranget **tanai**/
 ram hungry be
 'Ram is hungry.'
- /ram hasu **tanai**/
 ram pain be
 'Ram is in pain.'
- /ram-raʔ ʒop **harije**/ (No external manifestation of copula 'is')
 ram-poss cap be
 'Ram's cap is blue'
- /nia oṛa etertajum bagica **idena**/
 my house behind garden be
 'There is a garden behind my house'

- /nia kaṭ^h at^hao **rinije**/
I tree beside be
'I am beside the tree.'
- /amara niumun titana **hake**/
you name what be
'What is your name?'
- /huni oke **hake**/
he who be
'Who is he?'
- /nuku goṭe jilij **jaku**/
these all tall are
'These men are tall.'
- /huni hor mota **aje**/
that man fat be
'That man is fat.'
- /nui mien bilai **hake**/
here one cat be
'Here is a cat.'
- /hondore barija gaekin **idana**/
there two cows be
'There are two cows'
- /niara gendra humra gendra tane bagra safa **hake**/
my uniform his uniform than more white be
'My uniform is whiter than his uniform.'

2) Complex Sentence:

- /huni koṛa rage pe gilās ci rapuht dolo laʔae/
that boy call who glass break-past
'Call the boy who broke the glass.'

- /huni kat^hao la? mandʒi banaotaha pasand te?/
she said that meal cook likes to
'She said that she likes to cook'
- /huni aet kote seno tenae agar/
'I shall go if he comes.'

3) Compound Sentence:

- /sin kamemi a?up gititkumi/
day work night sleep
'Work in the day and sleep at night'
- /nui mian bilai hake nui mian seta hake/
here one cat is here one dog is
'Here is a cat and a dog'

4) Word Order

Word order in a sentence of Birjia is predominantly :
Subject+ Verb+ Object (SVO)

- /huni o?e tidi aj/
3sg(F) bird kill past
'She killed the bird.'
- /miŋra gẽnd^h e? eneŋ janɛi/
boy-nom ball with play-prog aux-be
'The boy is playing with a ball.'
- /ku?i mandʒi ʒom doholaje?/
girl meals eat past perfect
'The girl had eaten the meals.'

In interrogative sentences:

/huni oke hake/

he who is
 'Who is he?'

5) Auxiliary Elements

The auxiliary elements appear to be /sakaoje/, /cahi/ and /doholena/.

/huni oʔe ruʔb sakaoje/

3rd.sg bird kill may

'He may kill the bird'

/nia weʔu cahi/

1st.sg come should

'I should come'

/nia noa kam ka karao doholena/

1st.sg this work do PST-PARTICIPLE

'I should have done the work'

6) Optative Form

Optative forms are marked by verbal suffix 'oajemi'.

/huni ikar sen-oajemi/

'Let him go.'

/huni ikar sen-oajemi/

'Let it go.'

7) Obligatory Form

/amaʔ barija kera ʔome cahi/

2nd.Sg two bananas eat should

'You should eat two bananas'

8) Conditional Form

/agər ama? miṭ^hai kam wan redo ijam/

If you sweets neg cry

'If you don't give me the sweets, I will cry'

9) Habitual Form

/ɲia nɔ baʒe ofis e seno-doholena/

1st.S nine time office go-habitual

'I used to go to office at 9 o'clock'

/ramʒit nɔ baʒe baʒər seno-doholena/

Ramjit nine time market go-habitual

'Ramjit used to go to market (bazaar) at 9 o'clock'

10) Reflexive Pronouns

Marker /apante/ is used to express reflexives in Birjia. Some instances are-

/huni apante gagri rakabʔla/

3sg(F) herself pot lift.past

'She lifted the pot herself.'

/huni apante paṭ^h parhaolena/

3sg himself lessons study.past

'He studied the lessons himself.'

/huni apante goit gana/
 3sg.inani itself die past
 'It died by itself.'

11) Negation

Negation in Birjia is expressed by the markers /kan/, /kae/, /kaie/ and /erao/.

For example:

1. /nja iskul kan sena/

1st.Sg school neg go
 'I don't go to school.'

2. /huni horoa iskul kaie sen doholena?/

3rd.Sg.M yesterday school neg go -past
 'He did not go to school yesterday.'

3. /huni noa kam kae karaola?ah/

3rd.Sg.F. this work neg do -perfect
 'She has not done the work.'

4. /noa kam okerhõe erao kara-ole/

this work anybody no do- potentiality
 'Nobody can do this work.'

12) Comparative sentences

Degrees of Comparison are denoted syntactically. The adjective is not inflected to denote the degrees of comparison. The post positional element 'tena' is used to denote the comparative degree after the words with which something is to be compared

In comparative degree, / tena / is used to denote comparison. /bagra/ means more

For example,

1. /joria-ra? dah jhil-ra? dah tena bagra ac^ha hake/
 river-poss water lake-poss water than more clean be
 'River water is cleaner than lake water.'

2. /jia-ra? gendra huni-ra? gendra tena bagra safa hake/
 my uniform/cloth his uniform/cloth than more white/clean be
 'My uniform is whiter than his uniform.'

13) Reduplication

Reduplication is seen in interrogative and declarative sentences. The whole word is repeated and from the limited data it is found that the repeated words are question words and adverbs.

1. /ama? rānci **uket ukethila** senam/
 you ranchi when when go
 'When (kab kab) do you go to Ranchi?'
2. /huni bia re **citan citan** jom la?ah/
 he marriage at what what eat -PST
 'What (kya kya) did he eat in the marriage?'
3. /**oke oke** gutija re oit lenaku/
 who who feast in come -PST
 'Who (kaun kaun) came in the feast?'
4. /huni **bisad bisad** sen doholena/
 3rd.sg. slowly slowly walk-PST-CONT.

'He was walking slowly slowly.'

From the limited data collected from field, there is no evidence of echo formation in Birjia.