PART - I

PHONOLOGY
Chapter I

The Phonemic Analysis of the Dialect

I. Vowels: There are seven vowel phonemes in the Kamrupi dialect showing contrasts in tongue position: front, central and back; tongue height: high, high-mid, low-mid and low. Back vowels are rounded, others are unrounded. The vowel phonemes are:

\[ i \ u \ e \ o \ e \ a \]

All the vowels may occur initially, medially and finally. The vowel /o/ is limited in distribution. It is very rare in monosyllables. Even there it does not occur initially. In final position it occurs with /u/ forming a diphthong.

2. List of vowel phonemes and allophones.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phoneme</th>
<th>Allphone</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/i/</td>
<td>[i]</td>
<td>high front vowel.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/e/</td>
<td>[e]</td>
<td>high-mid front vowel.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/e/</td>
<td>[æ]</td>
<td>low-mid front vowel occurring finally and before the consonant cluster [kl] medially.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/ɛ/</td>
<td>[æ]</td>
<td>low-mid front vowel occurring elsewhere.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/a/</td>
<td>[a]</td>
<td>low central vowel.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/u/</td>
<td>[u]</td>
<td>high back vowel.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/o/</td>
<td>[o]</td>
<td>high-mid back vowel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/ɔ/</td>
<td>[ɔ]</td>
<td>low-mid back vowel.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. Examples of the vowel phonemes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initially</th>
<th>Medially</th>
<th>Finally</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/i/ /i/ 'this person'</td>
<td>/til/ 'Feasamum'; 'a mole on the skin'</td>
<td>/ki/ 'what'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/ita/ 'brick'</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/a/. /eta/ 'this'</td>
<td>/bed/ 'the vedas'</td>
<td>/akhe/ 'fried paddy'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>/deh/ 'priest'</td>
<td>/made/ 'queen'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/e/. /eta/ 'one'</td>
<td>/eta/ 'oil'</td>
<td>/de/ 'to give'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>/de u/ 'ghost'</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>/be u/ 'barber'</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/a/. /ata/ 'grandfather'</td>
<td>/tal/ 'alphabet'</td>
<td>/apa/ 'boy'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/at/ 'to tie'</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/u/. /u/ 'physician'</td>
<td>/tol/ 'below'</td>
<td>/xoc/ 'dead body'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/o/. /ol/ 'a variety of arum'</td>
<td>/tol/ 'a sanskrit teaching school'</td>
<td>/xako/ 'a small bridge'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/u/ /ud/ 'otter'</td>
<td>/tal/ 'stool, to pick up'</td>
<td>/du/ 'to milk'</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. Nasalization is phonemic. The following are the examples of nasalized vowels showing contrasts with the non-nasalized ones.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initially</th>
<th>Medially</th>
<th>Finally</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/i/ /i/ 'thirst'</td>
<td>/ti/ 'cucumber'</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/e/ /e/ 'a knob'; /e/ /e/ 'military array'</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/a/ /a/ 'pale'</td>
<td>/a/ /a/ 'parting of hair'</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/a/ /a/ 'stick'; /a/ /a/ 'widow'</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/o/ /o/ 'a kind of copper vessel'; /o/ /o/ 'a bell-metal worker'</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/u/ /u/ 'a fold'</td>
<td>/u/ /u/ 'inner pulp of a fruit'</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/u/ /u/ 'drown'</td>
<td>/u/ /u/ 'a float in a fishing hook'</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. Vowel length is not phonemic in the dialect. Vowels in monosyllabic words and in the word final position are a bit longer.

6. Vowel sequences. Sequences of vowels may consist of two, three or four vowels.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initially</th>
<th>Medially</th>
<th>Finally</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/i/ /i/</td>
<td>/i/ /i/</td>
<td>/i/ /i/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/i/ /i/</td>
<td>/i/ /i/</td>
<td>/i/ /i/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/i/ /i/</td>
<td>/i/ /i/</td>
<td>/i/ /i/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/i/ /i/</td>
<td>/i/ /i/</td>
<td>/i/ /i/</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
prominence at the beginning. The diphthongs may be both nasalised and non-nasalised ones. Examples:

Diphthongs:

/iu/ : /i/u. /zin/ 'life'; /ghiu/ 'ghee'
/ei/ : /ei/ /dei/ 'gives'; /oi/ 'a pod'
/eu/. /deul/ 'a festival'
/eu/ : /eu/ /su/ 'a piece'; /teu/ 'he' (hou)
/an/ : /an/. /gau/ 'body'; /gan/ 'village'
/ai/ : /ai/. /gai/ 'cow'; /ghai/ 'a bird-net'
/au/ : /au/ /kou/ 'a kind of fish'; /kou/ 'speak'
/oi/ : /oi/. /coi/ 'age'; /bhi/ 'a land tenant'
/ou/. /dhou/ 'wave'
/oi/ : /oi/. /coi/ 'plate made out of the sheath of plantaféa tree'
/ai/ : /ai/. /sui/ 'fire'; /pu/ 'a vegetable creeper'

Triphthongs:

/sui/ /sauira/ 'a kind of fish', /khaunira/ 'a great eater', /bhaunira/ 'a clown',
/sauila/ 'to point out', /bauina/ 'brahminis'
/sui/. /keuila/ 'a solitary devotee'.
/ou/. /sou-souia/ 'liquid', /kou-kouia/tapat/ 'very hot'.

7. **Stress.** Stress is predictable and hence it is non-phonemic in the dialect. In words of two syllables high stress is on the first syllable. In words of more than two syllables the stress is on the second syllable.

8. **Consonants:** There are twenty-one consonants phonemes in the dialect. The consonants include twelve stops, three nasals, one lateral, one trill and four spirants. The stops show voice-voiceless and aspirated-unaspirated contrasts. The nasals, the lateral and the trill are all voiced. The spirants show voice-voiceless contrasts. All the consonants occur initially, medially and finally with the exception of /j/ and /x/. /j/ does not occur initially. /x/ does not
occur finally except in exclamatory utterances. All the consonants contrast with all others in monosyllables except /g/ and /x/. They of course contrast in a disyllable, e.g. /agar/ 'live coal', /axam/ 'the state of Assam'.

The consonant phonemes are:

\[
p b t d k g
\]

\[
ph bh th dh kh gh
\]

\[
s n g
\]

\[
l r s z x h
\]


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phoneme</th>
<th>Allophone</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/p/</td>
<td>[ p]</td>
<td>bilabial unaspirated voiceless stops.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/ph/</td>
<td>[ ph]</td>
<td>bilabial aspirated voiceless stop.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/b/</td>
<td>[ b]</td>
<td>bilabial unaspirated voiced stop.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/bh/</td>
<td>[bh]</td>
<td>bilabial aspirated voiced stop.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/t/</td>
<td>[ t]</td>
<td>alveolar unaspirated voiceless stop.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/th/</td>
<td>[th]</td>
<td>alveolar aspirated voiceless stop.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/d/</td>
<td>[ d]</td>
<td>alveolar unaspirated voiced stop.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/dh/</td>
<td>[dh]</td>
<td>alveolar aspirated voiced stop.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/k/</td>
<td>[ k]</td>
<td>velar unaspirated voiceless stop.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/kh/</td>
<td>[kh]</td>
<td>velar aspirated voiceless stop.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/g/</td>
<td>[g]</td>
<td>velar unaspirated voiced stop.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/gh/</td>
<td>[gh]</td>
<td>velar aspirated voiced stop.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/m/</td>
<td>[ m]</td>
<td>bilabial voiced nasal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/n/</td>
<td>[n]</td>
<td>alveolar voiced nasal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/y/</td>
<td>[y]</td>
<td>velar voiced nasal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/l/</td>
<td>[l]</td>
<td>alveolar voiced lateral.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/r/</td>
<td>[ r]</td>
<td>alveolar voiced trill.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/s/</td>
<td>[s]</td>
<td>alveolar voiceless spirant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/z/</td>
<td>[z]</td>
<td>alveolar voiced spirant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/x/</td>
<td>[x]</td>
<td>post-velar voiceless spirant, produced with less amount of friction.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Phoneme | Allephones | Description
--- | --- | ---
/h/ | [ h ] | glottal voiced spirant.

10. Examples of the consonant phonemes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initially</th>
<th>Medially</th>
<th>Finally</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
/p/ /pat/ 'leaf' | /apa/ 'boy' | /rap/ 'beauty' |
/ph/ /phat/ 'split' | /aphu/ 'the poppy' | /bhab/ 'vapour' |
/b/ /bat/ 'read' | /abs/ 'grand mother' | /dab/ 'green coconut' |
/bh/ /bhath/ 'boiled rice' | /bhab/ 'scarcity' | /labh/ 'gain' |
/t/ /tan/ 'difficult' | /ata/ 'grand father' | /pot/ 'mud' |
/th/ /tham/ 'holy place' | /atha/ 'glue' | /oth/ 'lip' |
/\h/ /idan/ 'gift' | /ada/ 'ginger' | /\d/ | 'taste' |
/dh/ /dhan/ 'paddy' | /adha/ 'half' | /bodh/ 'intelligence' |
/k/ /kal/ 'age' | /uka/ 'marsh gas' | /thok/ 'bunch' |
/th/ /thal/ 'ditch' | /akha/ 'hope' | /thokh/ 'hunger' |
/g/ /gal/ 'cheek' | /agar/ 'belch' | /thog/ 'beauty' |
/g/ /g[a]n/ 'to count' | /ahga/ 'a kind of reel for winding thread on.' |

/m/ /man/ 'a man's' | /mai/ 'we' | /lma/ 'hair on the body' |
/n/ /nan/ 'salt' | /ana/ 'anna' | /nan/ 'to hear' |
/y/ /yan/ 'to smell' | /ayar/ 'live coal' | /xay/ 'to smell' |
/l/ /lal/ 'clove' | /alu/ 'potato' | /ai/ 'meeting' |
/r/ /ral/ 'colour' | /ara/ 'again' | /ar/ 'a round' |
/s/ /sal/ 'skin' | /asu/ 'red yarn' | /mas/ 'fish' |
/a/ /sal/ 'net' | /asi/ 'to-day' | /mas/ 'middle' |
/x/ /xam/ 'seven' | /axam/ 'the state of Assam' | / |
/h/ /hat/ 'hand' | /aha/ 'you come' | /xih/ 'ear of corn' |
11. **Consonant length.** Long consonants or double consonants occur in the medial position of a word. In some words, a consonant is lengthened for emphasis e.g. /thapar/, emphasized /thappar/ 'to strike by the hand'. The following are the long consonants in the dialect:

/\pp/. /\thappar/ 'strike by the hand'
/\pph/. /\ko \ppho/ 'phlegm'
/\bb/. /\cibbah/ 'habit'
/\tt/. /\bitti/ 'profession'
/\thth/. /\batthi/ 'the stone of a mango fruit'
/\dd/. /\k\ddde/ 'a kind of fruit'
/\ddh/. /\xaddha/ 'liking'
/\kk/. /\raikk\k h/ 'demon'
/\kkh/. /\lokki\ h/ 'goddess of wealth'
/\gg/. /\seiggu/ 'sacrifice'
/\mm/. /\sham\kkh/ 'foolish' < Ar.
/\nn/. /\unnih/ 'nineteen'
/\ll/. /\bh\ll\l/ 'in abundance'
/\ss/. /\assi/ 'mirror'
/\ss/. /\xussu/ 'sun'

The above mentioned long consonants are found within a word i.e. without morpheme boundary, with the coming together of two words i.e. with morpheme boundary the following long consonants only are found:

/\bbh/. /\babb\h\i/ 'father and brother'
/\ggh/. /\paggh\v/ 'kitchen'.

12. **Consonant clusters.** All the consonants can form clusters medially except /\x/. No initial cluster is found except /\tr/ in /\tris/ 'thirty'. The liquids have generally greatest number of clusters. A limited number of clusters of two consonants can occur finally in monosyllables and dysyllabic words. A few
clusters of three consonants can occur medially in disyllabic words. With the addition of suffixes and consonants can form clusters medially. The clusters /mb-, rbh-, tm-/ are found in proper names of Sanskrit origin. e.g., /mba/, /rbha/, /poitma/. The clusters /nth-, yg-, ygh-, nm-/ are found in more Sanskritic words e.g., /ntho-k ntho/ 'the neck' /ygh gho/ 'club'; /s onmo/ 'birth'. The clusters /hb-, bs-, bd-/ are found in loan words e.g., /mbhili/ 'fund'; /bsama/ 'hinges'; /sbdo/ 'force'.

13. The following are the common clusters of two consonants occurring medially in words without any addition of affixes:

/pt/ /eka pta/ 'flat'
/pn/ /dapan/ 'mirror used in the marriage ceremony'
/pl/ /taipla/ 'buttock'
/pr/ /pbra/ 'ant'
/ps/ /dhpsa/ 'fat'
/pl/ /gdpkli/ 'horse's mane'
/phr/ /xophram/ 'a kind of fruit'
/bn/ /khabni/ 'a scraper'
/bl/ /dbbla/ 'weak'
/bn/ /dbrbra/ 'small boil'
/ba/ /bebsai/ 'trade'
/tk/ /antki/ 'a big earthen vessel'
/tl/ /tati/ 'tamarind'
/tr/ /batra/ 'news'
/thl/ /bhthili/ 'a festival'
/thr/ /bhthtri/ 'blunt'
/dph/ /moldphal/ 'fruit of the papaya tree'
/dl/ /madli/ 'a drum shaped amulet'
/dr/ /sidro/ 'deficiency'
/dha/ /gghdhaa/ 'thick'
/dhl/ /adhli/ 'eight anna piece'
/dhr/ /kɔ dhra/ 'a kind of ring to keep something on it'
/kə/ /xukta/ 'dried leaf of jute plant'
/ka/ /huksa/ 'a kind of instrument to catch fish'
/kn/ /kni/ 'louse'
/kl/ /baksła/ 'cover'
/kr/ /kakra/ 'crab'
/ks/ /akska/ 'towel'
/khn/ /ukhni/ 'a kind of stick for threshing corn'
/khl/ /bɔkhła/ 'a slice'
/khr/ /bhaksła/ 'store house'
/gl/ /bougla/ 'crane'
/gr/ /bougri/ 'plum'
/ghr/ /ɛ ghrɔ/ 'eleven'
/am/ /samə/ 'a kind of flower'
/āt/ /ghumta/ 'sleep'
/amh/ /xɔmɔhɔ b/ 'possible'
/atb/ /atbhi/ 'the kernel inside the stone of a mango fruit'
/am/ /hamsa/ 'a support'
/ma/ /amsi/ 'warmth'
/ml/ /kɔmli/ 'blanket'
/mr/ /bhɔmra/ 'bee'
/mi/ /gaməa/ 'towel'
/ap/ /painpeli/ 'a kind of flower'
/at/ /khɔnta/ 'hoe'
/nd/ /landa/ 'having no-body, i.e. childless'
/adn/ /xindhi/ 'a hole made in a wall by a thief'
/ak/ /thunka/ 'brittle'
/na/ /ghunsa/ 'lace of coloured thread'.
/ns/. /xɔnɔmɔk/ 'instrument'
/ŋt/. /lɔʈʈa/ 'naked'
/ŋth/. /aŋʈʈi/ 'ring'
/ŋ k/. /baxɔka/ 'a kind of stick used to carry things'
/ŋ kh/. /hiŋ kha/ 'salice'
/ŋ s/. /sɔŋ gal/ 'forest'
/ŋ a/. /niŋ ni/ 'mouse'
/ŋ l/. /aŋŋli/ 'finger'
/ŋ r/. /sɔŋ ra/ 'rainy'
/lp/. /skɔlpɛ/ 'a kind of sour fruit'
/lk/. /ultra/ 'opposite'
/lth/. /kɔlθi/ 'a soft belly-part of a fish'
/ldh/. /haclusão/ 'turmesia'
/lk/. /phoılıkɛɾ/ 'white complexioned'
/lkh/. /xalkha/ 'bar of a gate way'
/ly/. /safʒi/ 'ekive'
/ls/. /koĩlsɔ/ 'heart, courage'
/rp/. /kiriŋi/ 'niser'
/rph/. /tirphɔla/ 'the three myrobalans used together as medicine'
/rb/. /koɾbir/ 'a kind of flower'
/rk/. /bbɔɾka/ 'a spring coming out during earthquake'
/rkh/. /guirkha/ 'cowherd'
/rɡ/. /mrɡi/ 'a kind of fainting disease'
/ra/. /kurma/ 'relative'
/rɔ/. /ɔɾɔŋɔ/ 'bore'
/ro/. /əɾhi/ 'model'
/st/. /distan/ 'riddle'
/sn/. /laismɔ/ 'a kind of fish'
/sn/. /bisiŋi/ 'fan'
11. Three consonant clusters:

/ndr/. /indra/ 'a well'

/ndhr/. /pɔndhrɔ/ 'fifteen'

/ntr/. /antris/ 'twenty nine'

/ktr/. /ɔktris/ 'thirty one'

/str/. /xastro/ 'treatise on religion'

/hnn/. /bahani/ 'broom stick'

/skr/. /iskrup/ 'screw'

15. Final clusters — In monosyllables.

/at/. /paint/ 'an indoor game'

/ad/. /kand/ 'to weep'

/adh/. /gɔndh/ 'smell'

/rh/. /pɔrh/ 'read'

— In disyllables.

/ndh/. /xɔmandh/ 'relation'

16. Semi vowel. There is no phonemic semi-vowel in the dialect. In sequences of two vowels if the first ones are high front or back vowels then [y] and [w]
will be respectively automatic e.g., /duár/ 'door' [duwār] /písh/ 'thirst' [piyāh]

In sequence of three vowels the high vowels occupying the middle position are non-syllabic. Examples:

/kəwəl/ 'tender, soft' [kəwəl]
/kənə/ 'a kind of fish' [kənə]
/tənə/ 'father's friend' [tənə]
/ɛ kəkan/ 'fifty one' [ɛkəkan]
/bəuan/ 'fifty two' [bəwan]
/tɛ təuan/ 'fifty three' [tɛtəwan]
/kaio/ 'no-body' [kaio]
/khāia/ 'ditch' [khāia]
/laiɔ k/ 'fit' [laiɔ k]
/kəsiə/ 'a kind of grass' [kəsiə]

1. From the historical point of view also it can be shown that there is no semi-vowel in the dialect. Sanskrit /v/ and /y/ have initially become /b/ and /z/ respectively in the dialect. Non-initially they have developed to /b/ and /u/ in the case of /v/ and /i/ in the case of /y/. Examples: Vayaşā > bōih 'age'; Veda > bed 'the vedas'; deva > dem 'priest'; Śiva > xib 'lord' siva'; Yogyā > zog 'penance'; Satya > xoitto 'truth'; Samaya > xɔ moi 'time' visaya > bikhɔi 'subject'. 