

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
ɛ	ɔ
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.

<u>Phoneme</u>	<u>Allophone</u>	<u>Description</u>
/i/	[i]	high front vowel.
/e/	[e]	high-mid front vowel.
/ɛ/	[æ]	low-mid front vowel occurring finally and before the consonant cluster [-ki-] medially. eg. [kæ] 'why'; [xæ] 'salutation' [bhækli] 'frog'; [tækli] 'a small earthen pot'
	[ɛ]	low-mid front vowel occurring elsewhere.
/a/	[a]	low central vowel.
/u/	[u]	high back vowel.
/o/	[o]	high-mid back vowel
/ɔ/	[ɔ]	low-mid back vowel.

## 3. Examples of the vowel phonemes.

Initially	medially.	Finally.
/i/. /i/ 'this person'	/til/ 'Psesamun; 'a mole on the skin'	/ki/ 'what'
/ita/ 'brick'		
/e/. /etu/ 'this'	/bed/ 'the vedas'	/akhe/ 'fried paddy'
	/deh/ 'priest'	/made/ 'queen'
/ε/. /εta/ 'one'	/tε l/ 'oil'	/dε / 'to give'
	/dε u/ 'ghost'	
	/bε z/ 'barber'	
/a/. /ata/ 'grandfather'	/tal/ 'gymbal'	/apa/ 'boy'
/at/ 'sto tie'		
/ɔ/. /ɔ za/ 'physician'	/tɔl/ 'below'	/xɔ / 'dead body'
/o/. /ol/ 'a variety of aruni'	/tol/ 'a sanskrit teaching school'	/xako/ 'a small bridge'
/u/ /ud/ 'otter'	/tul/ 'stool, to pick up'	/du/ 'to milk'

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

/i/ : /ĩ/	/pih/ 'thirst' ;	/tīh/ 'cucumber'
/e/ : /ẽ/	/betu/ 'a knob' ;	/bēhū/ 'military array'
/ε/ : /ε̃/	/xεta/ 'pale' ;	/xēta/ 'parting of hair'
/a/ : /ā/	/bari/ 'stick' ;	/bāri/ 'widow'
/ɔ/ : /ɔ̃/	/kɔha/ 'a kind of copper vessel' ;	/kōhar/ 'a bell-metal worker'
/e/ : /ē/	/kos/ 'a fold' ;	/kēh/ 'inner pulp of a fruit'
/u/ : /ū/	/pua/ 'dawn' ;	/pūa/ 'a float in a fishing hook'

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.

If in the sequence of two vowels, the second vowel is a high one then they will form one syllable, i.e. they are diphthongs. In the sequence of three and four vowels if the second and the third ones are high vowels, then the first three vowels will form one syllable. They may be called triphthongs. The diphthongs are of the 'falling' type, i.e. they have their greater

prominence at the beginning. The diphthongs may be both nasalized and non-nasalized ones. Examples:-

### Diphthongs

/in/	: /ĩn/.	/zin/ 'life';	/ghĩn/ 'ghee'
/ei/	: /ẽi/	/dei/ 'gives';	/sẽi/ 'a pod'
/eu/.		/deul/ 'a festival'	
/ɛu/	: /ẽu/	/sɛu/ 'a piece';	/tẽu/ 'he' (hon)
/au/	: /ãu/.	/gau/ 'body';	/gãu/ 'village'
/ai/	: /ãi/.	/gai/ 'cow';	/ghãi/ 'a bird-net'
/ɔu/	: /õu/	/kɔue/ 'a kind of fish';	/kõu/ 'speak'
/ɔi/	: /õi/	/bɔih/ 'age';	/bõihtar/ 'a land tenant'
/ou/.		/dhou/ 'wave'	
/oi/	: /õi/.	/soita/ 'plate made of the sheath of plantain tree'	/sõiha/ 'piece'
/ui/	: /ũi/.	/zui/ 'fire';	/pũi/ 'a vegetable creeper'

### Triphthongs:

/ai/	/sauira/ 'a kind of fish',	/khauira/ 'a great eater',	/bhauira/ 'a clown',
	/auigla/ 'to point out',	/bauina/ 'brahminie'	
/eui/.	/keuila/ 'a solitary devotee'.		
/oui/.	/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 /y/ and /x/. /y/ does not occur initially. /x/ does not

occur finally except in exclamatory utterances. All the consonants contrast with all others in monosyllables except /ŋ/ 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  
 m n ŋ  
 l r s z x h

#### 9. Consonant phonemes and allophones.

Phoneme	Allophone	Description.
/p/	[p]	bilabial unaspirated, voiceless stops.
/ph/	[ph]	bilabial aspirated voiceless stop.
/b/	[b]	bilabial unaspirated voiced stop.
/bh/	[bh]	bilabial aspirated voiced stop.
/t/	[t]	alveolar unaspirated voiceless stop.
/th/	[th]	alveolar aspirated voiceless stop.
/d/	[d]	alveolar unaspirated voiced stop.
/dh/	[dh]	alveolar aspirated voiced stop.
/k/	[k]	velar unaspirated voiceless stop.
/kh/	[kh]	velar aspirated voiceless stop.
/g/	[g]	velar unaspirated voiced stop.
/gh/	[gh]	velar aspirated voiced stop.
/m/	[m]	bilabial voiced nasal.
/n/	[n]	alveolar voiced nasal
/ŋ/	[ŋ]	velar voiced nasal.
/l/	[l]	alveolar voiced lateral.
/r/	[r]	alveolar voiced trill
/s/	[s]	alveolar voiceless spirant
/z/	[z]	alveolar voiced spirant
/x/	[x]	post-velar voiceless spirant, produced with less amount of friction.

Phoneme	Allophems	Description
/h/	[ h ]	glottal voiced spirant.

## 10. Examples of the consonant phonemes.

<u>Initially</u>	<u>Medially</u>	<u>Finally</u>
/p/. /pat/ 'leaf'	/apa/ 'boy'	/rap/ 'beauty'
/ph/. /phat/ 'split'	/apha/ 'the poppy'	/bhaph/ 'vapour'
/b/. /bat/ 'read'	/aba/ 'grand mother'	/dab/ 'green cocoanut'
/bh/. /bhat/ 'boiled rice'	/bhab/ 'scarcity'	/labh/ 'gain'
/t/. /tan/ 'difficult'	/ata/ 'grand father'	/pat/ 'mad'
/th/. /than/ 'holy place'	/atha/ 'glue'	/oth/ 'lip'
/d/. /dan/ 'gift'	/ada/ 'ginger'	/xɔd/ 'taste'
/dh/. /dhan/ 'paddy'	/adha/ 'half'	/bodh/ 'intelligence'
/k/. /kal/ 'age'	/uka/ 'marsh gas'	/thok/ 'bunch'
/kh/. /khal/ 'ditch'	/akha/ 'hope'	/bhɔkh/ 'hunger'
/g/. /gal/ 'check'	/agar/ 'belch'	/thɔg/ 'beauty'
/gɔ/. /gɔn/ 'to count'		
/gh/. /ghɔn/ 'thick'	/agha/ 'a kind of reel for winding thread on.'	/mɛgh/ 'cloud.'
/m/. /man/ 'a maund'	/ami/ 'we'	/lam/ 'hair on the body'
/n/. /nan/ 'salt'	/ana/ 'anna'	/xan/ 'to hear'
/ɳ/. .....	/aɳar/ 'live coal'	/xɳɳ/ 'to smell'
/l/. /lɔɳ/ 'cleve'	/alu/ 'pebble'	/mɛl/ 'meeting'
/r/. /rɔɳ/ 'colour'	/aru/ 'again'	/mɛr/ 'a round'
/s/. /sal/ 'skin'	/asu/ 'red yarn'	/mas/ 'fish'
/s/. /sal/ 'net'	/asi/ 'to-day'	/maz/ 'middle'
/x/. /xat/ '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/. /kɔ ppho/ 'phlegma'
- /bb/. /oibbah/ 'habit'
- /tt/. /bitti/ 'profession'
- /tth/. /batthi/ 'the stone of a mango fruit'
- /dd/. /kɔ dde/ 'a kind of fruit'
- /ddh/. /xaddha/ 'liking'
- /kk/. /raikkɔ h/ 'demon'
- /kkh/. /lokkhi/ 'goddess of wealth'
- /gg/. /seiggu/ 'sacrifice'
- /mm/ /ahammɔ kh/ 'foolish' < Ar.
- /nn/. /unnih/ 'nineteen'
- /ll/. /bhɛ lla/ 'in abundance'
- /ss/. /assi/ 'mirror'
- /sz/. /xussa/ '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/. /babbhai/ 'father and brother'
- /ggh/. /pagghɔ r/ '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 monosyllabic and disyllabic words. A few

clusters of three consonants can occur medially in ~~stx~~ 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.,/ɔ mba/, /pɔ rbha/, /poitma/. The clusters /-nth-, -ɳg-, -ɳgh-, -nm-/ are found in more Sanskrit words e.g.,/ɔ ntho-kɔntho/ 'the neck' /xɔɳ gho/'club'; /sɔ nno/ ('birth'. The clusters /-hb-, -bs-, -bd-/ are found in loan words e.g.,/tɔ hbil/ 'fund'; /kɔ bsa/ 'hinges'; /sɔ bde/ 'force'.

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

- /pt/. /sɛ pta/ 'flat'
- /pn/. /dapni/ 'mirror used in the marriage ceremony'
- /pl/. /taipla/ 'buttock'
- /pr/. /pipra/ 'ant'
- /ps/. /dhɛ psa/ 'fat'
- /phl/. /gɔ phli/ 'horse's mane'
- /phr/. /xoiphram/ 'a kind of fruit'
- /bn/. /khabni/ 'a scraper'
- /bl/. /dɔ bla/ 'weak'
- /br/. /dɔ bra/ 'small boil'
- /bs/. /bɛ bsai/ 'trade'
- /tk/. /mutki/ 'a big earthen vessel'
- /tl/. /tɛ tli/ 'tamarind'
- /tr/. /batra/ 'news'
- /thl/. /bhɔ thiɽ/ 'a festival'
- /thr/. /bhɔ thɽ/ 'blunt'
- /dph/. /moidphal/ 'fruit of the papaya tree'
- /dl/. /madli/ 'a drum shaped amulet'
- /dr/. /sidro/ 'deficiency'
- /dha/. /gɔ dhma/ 'thick'



- /dhl/. /adhli/ 'eight anna piece'  
 /dhr/. /kɔ dhra/ 'a kind of ring to keep something on it'  
 /kt/. /xakta/ 'dried leaf of jute plant'  
 /ka/. /hukaa/ 'a kind of instrument to catch fish'  
 /kn/. /ɔ kni/ 'louse'  
 /kl/. /bakla/ 'cover'  
 /kr/. /kakra/ 'crab'  
 /ks/. /mksa/ 'towel'  
 /kha/. /akhni/ 'a kind of stick for threshing corn'  
 /khl/. /bɔ khla/ 'a slice'  
 /khr/. /bhakhri/ 'store house'  
 /gl/. /bouglā/ 'crane'  
 /gr/. /bougrī/ 'plum'  
 /ghr/. /ɛ ghrɔ/ 'eleven'  
 /mp/. /sampa/ 'a kind of flower'  
 /mt/. /ghuati/ 'sleep'  
 /mbh/. /xɔ mbhɔ b/ 'possible'  
 /mth/. /an̄thi/ 'the kernel inside the stone of a mango fruit'  
 /mk/. /haunka/ 'a support'  
 /ma/. /uani/ 'warmth'  
 /ml/. /kɔ mli/ 'blanket'  
 /mr/. /bhɔ ara/ 'bee'  
 /ms/. /gansa/ 'towel'  
 /ap/. /painpeli/ 'a kind of flower'  
 /nt/. /khɔ nta/ 'hoe'  
 /nd/. /landa/ 'having no-body, i.e. childless.'  
 /nda/. /xindhi/ 'a hole made in a wall by a thief'  
 /nk/. /thunka/ 'brittle'  
 /ns/. /ghunsa/ 'lace of coloured thread'.

- /ns/. /xɔ nsuk/ 'instrument'  
 /ɲt/. /la ɲ ta/ 'naked'  
 /ɲth/. /au ɲ thi/ 'ring'  
 /ɲ k/. /bau ɲ ka/ 'a kind of stick used to carry things'  
 /ɲ kh/. /hi ɲ kha/ 'malice'  
 /ɲ ɛ/. /z ɔ ɲ gal/ 'forest'  
 /ɲ n/. /ni ɲ ni/ 'mouse'  
 /ɲ l/. /au ɲ li/ 'finger'  
 /ɲ r/. /z ɛ ɲ ra/ 'rainy'  
 /lp/. /z ɔ lpɛ/ 'a kind of sour fruit'  
 /lt/. /alta/ 'opposite'  
 /lth/. /kɔ lthi/ 'a soft belly-part of a fish'  
 /ldh/. /haldhi/ 'turmeric'  
 /lk/. /phoilkar/ 'white complexioned'  
 /lkh/. /xalkha/ 'bar of a gate way'  
 /ly/. /sa ɲ i/ 'sive'  
 /ls/. /koilsa/ 'heart, courage'  
 /rp/. /kirpin/ 'miser'  
 /rph/. /tirphɔ la/ 'the three myrobalans used together as medicine'  
 /rb/. /kɔ rbir/ 'a kind of flower'  
 /rk/. /bhɔ rka/ 'a spring coming out during earthquake'  
 /rkh/. /guirkha/ 'cowherd'  
 /rg/. /mirgi/ 'a kind of fainting disease'  
 /rn/. /kurma/ 'relative'  
 /ry/. /xɔ ry a/ 'bore'  
 /rh/. /arhi/ 'model'  
 /st/. /distan/ 'riddle'  
 /sa/. /laisma/ 'a kind of fish'  
 /sn/. /bisni/ 'fan'

~~/as/ccccccccak/~~

- /sl/. /nɪslə/ 'a prown'  
 /sr/. /asrə/ 'sɔ̃tʃ'  
 /zn/. /asnɪ/ 'sty'  
 /zl/. /pɪzlə/ 'young louse'  
 /hp/. /bɪrəhpɒtɪ/ 'thursday'  
 /ht/. /kʰɔ̃hta/ 'rough'  
 /na/. /d̃ɔ̃hni/ 'junction of two months'  
 /na/. /mahnu/ 'man'  
 /hl/. /kʰoɪhle/ 'oil-cake'  
 /hr/. /ɔ̃hri/ 'a kind of bean'

14. Three consonant clusters:

- /ndr/. /ɪndrə/ 'a well'  
 /ndhr/. /p̃ɔ̃ndhr̃ɔ̃/ 'fifteen'  
 /ntr/. /əntrɪs/ 'twenty nine'  
 /ktr/. /ɛ̃ktrɪs/ 'thirty one'  
 /str/. /xastro/ 'treatise on religion'  
 /hnn/. /bahnnɪ/ 'broom stick'  
 /skr/. /ɪskrup/ 'screw'

15. Final clusters - In monosyllables.

- /nt/. /paɪnt/ 'an indoor game'  
 /nd/. /kand/ 'to weep'  
 /ndh/. /g̃ɔ̃ndh/ 'smell'  
 /rh/. /p̃ɔ̃rh/ 'read'

-In disyllables.

- /ndh/. /x̃ɔ̃mandh/ 'relation'

16. Semi vowel. There is no phonemic semi-vowel in the dialect<sup>1</sup>. 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., /duar/ 'door' [duwar] /piah/ 'thirst' [piyah]

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

/kō ual/	'tender, soft'	[kō wal]
/kō ue/	'a kind of fish'	[kō we]
/tāus/	'father's friend'	[tāwe]
/ε kōkan/	'fifty one'	[kōkan]
/bauan/	'fifty two'	[bauan]
/tε uan/	'fifty three'	[tēwan]
/kaio/	'no-body'	[kayo]
/khāia/	'ditch'	[khāya]
/laiō k/	'fit'	[layō k]
/kō ia/	'a kind of grass'	[kō ya]

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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: Vayaṣa > bō ih 'age'; Veda > bed 'the vedas'; deva > den 'priest'; Śiva > xib 'lord' siva; Yoga > zog 'penance'; Satya > xoitto 'truth'; Samaya > xō mō i 'time' viṣaya > bikhō i 'subject'.