

## **Siraji: A Phonological Description**

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### **Abstract**

This paper takes up the Phonological description of Siraji with focus on the segmental part including consonants, vowels, diphthongs, syllables, including their distribution and arrangement in the language.

**Keywords:** Siraji, Consonants, Consonant cluster, Syllable, and Vowels, Diphthongs, Gemination

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

Siraji is the language that is primarily spoken in the mountainous area called Siraj situated in the Chenab valley, of Jammu and Kashmir and falls partly in district Ramban and partly in district Doda. Siraji has been classified as a dialect of Kashmiri (Grierson 1919). In the 2011 census, Siraji has been reported to be spoken by around 125,000 speakers. The word ‘Siraj’ means ‘The Kingdom of Shiva’ and hence any ‘wild mountainous country’ and the speech variety became Siraji. Grierson (1919) regarded Siraji as a mixed language because it contains borrowings from other languages with which it is in contact like Bhaderwahi, Kishtwari, Poguli and Rambani. It doesn’t have any script of its own and uses Arabic or Devnagri script. In this backdrop the present paper aims to provide a description of Siraji Phonology, wherein a detailed account of Siraji sounds would be given. The linguistic repertoire of Siraji speaker comprises of Siraji, Kashmiri, Urdu and English.

### **2. METHODOLOGY**

The data used for the study was collected from the Siraji speakers settled in Neera Village of Ramban district of Jammu and Kashmir state. The data was collected in the months of January and February 2016. An extensive questionnaire consisting of words and sentences was prepared to elicit the data. The data was collected by using a highly sophisticated voice recorder. The collected data was later transcribed and subjected to analysis.

### **3. ANALYSIS**

As already mentioned, the present paper focuses on the aspects of segmental phonology of Siraji.

### 3.1 SEGMENTALS

The segmental inventory of Siraji is observed to include 31 Consonants and 13 vowel sounds which are discussed below.

#### 3.1.1 CONSONANTS

Based on the analysis of the distribution of consonantal segments, Table 1 represents the consonant sounds of Siraji on the basis of their place of articulation, manner of articulation and states of glottis.

Manner of Articulation	Place of Articulation								
		Bilabial	Labio-dental	Dental	Alveolar	Retroflex	Palatal	velar	Glottal Stops
Stops	vl.unasp	p			t	ʈ		k	
	vl.asp	p <sup>h</sup>			t <sup>h</sup>	ʈ <sup>h</sup>		k <sup>h</sup>	
	vd.unsap	b			d	ɖ		g	
	vd.asp	b <sup>h</sup>			d <sup>h</sup>			g <sup>h</sup>	
Affricates	vl.unas						tʃ		
	vl.asp						tʃ <sup>h</sup>		
	vd.unas						dʒ		
	vd.asp								

<b>Nasal</b>		m			n			ŋ	
<b>Trill</b>					r	ɾ			
<b>Lateral</b>					l				
<b>Fricative</b>	vl		f		s		ʃ		h
	vd				z				
<b>Semivowel</b>			v				j		

**TABLE 1: CONSONANT SYSTEM OF SIRAJI**

Table 2 shows the distribution of consonants at initial, medial, and final positions of words, wherever possible.

<b>Consonant</b>	<b>Initially</b>	<b>Medially</b>	<b>Finally</b>
p	purnma:ʃi: 'full moon' pathar 'stone' pa:ni: 'water'	kho:pɽi: 'skull' sāpi 'snake' pa:paɾ 'papad'	ta:p 'heat'
/p/ phoneme is found at all three positions of a word.			
p <sup>h</sup>	p <sup>h</sup> ul go:bi: 'cauli flower' p <sup>h</sup> e:rje: va:la: 'hawker' p <sup>h</sup> a:ɾna: 'to break'	bap <sup>h</sup> a: 'scab'	.....
/p <sup>h</sup> / phoneme is not found at final position of a word.			
b	bũʃa:l 'earth quake' ba:ɾ 'flood' bula ba:sa: 'valley'	kumba: 'family' e:kka: ʃabar 'relatives' kobu:tar 'pigeon'	dʒ i:b 'tongue' peʃa:b 'urine' dʒ ila:b 'diarrhoea'
/b/ phoneme is found at all three positions of a word.			
b <sup>h</sup>	b <sup>h</sup> ā:dʒ a: 'sister's son' b <sup>h</sup> edʒ ina: 'to send' b <sup>h</sup> ā:dʒ i: 'sister's daughter'	ba:b <sup>h</sup> i: 'brother's wife' bida:n sab <sup>h</sup> a: 'assembly' əb <sup>h</sup> ine:j 'acting'	.....

/b <sup>h</sup> / phoneme is not found at final position of a word.			
t	ta:p 'heat' təla:b 'pond' təvi: 'river'	re:gista:n 'desert' kudrəti: 'nature' darti: 'world'	re:t 'sand' se:ht 'health' ʃa:t 'ring'
/t/ phoneme is found at all three position of a word.			
t <sup>h</sup>	t <sup>h</sup> uki 'saliva' t <sup>h</sup> a:li: 'plate' t <sup>h</sup> am 'pillar'	pat <sup>h</sup> ar 'rock' ha:t <sup>h</sup> i: 'elephant' mət <sup>h</sup> a: 'forehead'	.....
/t <sup>h</sup> / phoneme is not found at all final position of a word.			
t	ʃaŋtana: 'mithun' tu:ŋge: 'hip' teʃi: 'stool'	mitti: 'clay' giʃi: 'pebble' bo:ʃi: 'wife'	ko:t 'coat' ʃikaʃ 'ticket' ra:dʒ e: na mukaʃ 'crown'
/t/ phoneme is found at all three positions of a word.			
t <sup>h</sup>	t <sup>h</sup> ādq̄i 'cold' t <sup>h</sup> uʃi: 'chin' t <sup>h</sup> o:dq̄i 'lip'	ko:t <sup>h</sup> a: 'ceiling' paʃ <sup>h</sup> a: 'brinjal' mulaʃ <sup>h</sup> i: 'liquorice'	dʒ e:t <sup>h</sup> 'husband's elder brother' ū:t <sup>h</sup> 'camel' pe:t <sup>h</sup> 'stomach'
/t <sup>h</sup> / phoneme is found at all three positions of a word.			
d	darti: 'world' do:tra: 'daughter's son' da:di: 'father's mother'	kudrəti: 'nature' badal 'cloud' kho:da: 'eunuch' da:di: 'father's mother'	dā:d 'bull' amru:d 'guava' kuma:d 'sugarcane'
/d/ phoneme is found at all the three positions of a word.			
d <sup>h</sup>	d <sup>h</sup> u:l 'dust' d <sup>h</sup> uvā: 'smoke'	vid <sup>h</sup> va: 'widow' jud <sup>h</sup> i 'war' ad <sup>h</sup> a: 'half'	sansad <sup>h</sup> 'parliament' aʃirva:d <sup>h</sup> 'blessing'
/d <sup>h</sup> / phoneme is found at all three position of a word.			
d̪	d̪a:l 'slope' d̪aɖu 'toad' d̪əka:r 'belch'	t <sup>h</sup> ādq̄i 'cold' munɖa: 'boy' rənd̪i: 'prostitute'	d̪e:d̪ 'one and a half'
/d̪/ phoneme is found at all the three positions of a word.			
k	kudrəti: 'nature' kohra: 'fog' kūva:ra: 'bachelor'	ʃikaʃ 'mud' ləkʃi: 'wood' gaʃkəna: 'thunder'	saʃak 'road' batak 'duck' k <sup>h</sup> urk 'itch'
/k/ phoneme is found at all three positions of a word.			
k <sup>h</sup>	k <sup>h</sup> o:da: 'eunuch'	mək <sup>h</sup> i: 'fly'	dʒ õ:k <sup>h</sup> 'leech'

	k <sup>h</sup> o:ta: 'donkey' k <sup>h</sup> u:n 'blood'	k <sup>h</sup> a:k <sup>h</sup> ã: 'cheek' ãk <sup>h</sup> i 'eye' duk <sup>h</sup> na: 'ache'	pa:k <sup>h</sup> 'pus' mulak <sup>h</sup> 'country'
/k <sup>h</sup> / phoneme is found at all three positions of a word.			
g	gufa: 'cave' gi:ti: 'pebble' greh 'planet'	re:gista:n 'desert' agi 'fire' ʃamgidaʃ 'bat'	pi:lja: ro:g 'jaundice' ba:g 'garden' as lo:g 'we'
/g/ phoneme is found at all three positions of a word.			
g <sup>h</sup>	g <sup>h</sup> usal kha:na: 'bath room' g <sup>h</sup> e:ra: 'fence'	siŋg <sup>h</sup> i 'horn'	.....
/g <sup>h</sup> / is not found at final position of a word.			
m	mitti: 'clay' mo:sam 'weather' mã: 'mother'	dʒəmi:n 'ground' purnma:ʃi: 'full moon' asma:n 'sky'	bu:ʃam 'earth quake' mo:sam 'weather' malham 'ointment'
/m/ phoneme is found at all three positions of a word.			
n	ane:ra: 'darkness' ne:ri: 'storm' nu: 'bride'	pa:ni: 'water' munða: 'boy' dʒ ana:ni: 'female'	re:gista:n 'desert' dʒəmi:n 'ground' asma:n 'sky'
/n/ phoneme is found at all three positions of a word.			
ŋ	.....	dʒ aŋgal 'forest' paŋgi 'feather' aŋgli: 'finger'	lo:ŋ 'clove'
/ŋ/ phoneme is not found at initial position of a word.			
r	re:gista:n 'desert' re:t 'sand' rəndʒi: 'prostitute'	ane:ra: 'darkness' kudrəti: 'nature' baraf 'ice'	pathar 'stone' dʒ uva:r 'high tide' lehar 'wave'
/r/ phoneme is found at all three positions of a word.			
ʈ	.....	a:ʈe: 'ember' gaʈkəna: 'thunder' saʈak 'road'	ba:ʈ 'flood' ʃikaʈ 'mud' gi:daʈ 'jackal'
/ʈ/ phoneme is found only at medial position of a word.			
l	lƏkʈi: 'wood' lehar 'wave' lo:mqi: 'fox'	təla:b 'pond' pi:li: 'ant' ba:lu: 'bear'	bũʃa:l 'earth quake' dʒ i:l 'lake' dʒa:l 'slope'

/l/ phoneme phoneme is found at all three positions of a word.			
f	fakɪ 'husk' fu:ɹi: 'mat' fo:ɹu: 'picture'	gufa: 'cave' fe:fɹa: 'lung' ka:fi: 'coffee'	baraf 'ice'
/f/ phoneme phoneme is found at all three positions of a word.			
v	vid <sup>h</sup> va: 'widow' vəki:l 'advocate' vja:m 'exercise'	dʒ uva:r 'high tide' təvi: 'river' hava: 'air'	nov 'nine'
/v/ phoneme phoneme is found at all three positions of a word.			
s	sarək 'road' səɖʒ i: 'ash' su:radʒ 'sun'	re:gista:n 'desert' mo:sam 'weather' asma:n 'sky'	sasi 'mother in law' o:s 'dew' ma:s 'flesh'
/s/ phoneme is found at all three positions of a word.			
ʃ	ʃe:r 'lion' ʃiri:r 'body' ʃehad 'honey'	purnma:ʃi: 'full moon' peʃa:b 'urine' ʃi:ʃa: 'mirror'	ba:riʃ 'rain' khuf 'happiness' danuf 'bow'
/ʃ/ phoneme is found at all three positions of a word.			
z	.....	be:zti: 'insult'	taraz 'mercy' hava:ʃi: dʒ ahaz 'aeroplane'
/z/ phoneme is not found at initial position of a word.			
ɖʒ	ɖʒaŋgal 'forest' ɖʒi:l 'lake' ɖʒuva:r 'low tide'	səɖʒ i: 'ash' bətɪ:ɖʒ i: 'brother's daughter' ʃũɖʒ i 'beak'	su:radʒ 'sun' mara:ɖʒ 'bridegroom' məri:ɖʒ 'patient'
/ɖʒ/ phoneme is found at all three positions of a word.			
ʃ	ʃikaɹ 'mud' ʃa:ni 'moon' ʃuva: 'mouse'	bũʃa:l 'earthquake' baʃʃpan 'childhood' biʃu: 'scorpio'	ka:li: marʃ 'black pepper' na:ʃ 'dance' ba:d viʃ 'after'
/ʃ/ phoneme is found at all the three positions of a word.			
ʃ <sup>h</sup>	ʃ <sup>h</sup> ā: 'shade' ʃ <sup>h</sup> a:ti 'chest' ʃ <sup>h</sup> a:la: 'boil'	pəŋʃ <sup>h</sup> i: 'bird' maʃ <sup>h</sup> i 'crocodile' məʃ <sup>h</sup> i: 'fish'	pũ:ʃ <sup>h</sup> 'tail'
/ʃ <sup>h</sup> / phoneme is found at all three positions of a word.			
h	har e:k gal 'echo'	lehar 'wave'	greh 'planet'

	hava: 'air' hira:n 'deer'	kohra: 'fog' məhma:n 'guests'	bijah 'marriage' mū:h 'face'
/h/ phoneme is found at all three positions of a word.			
j	jud <sup>h</sup> i 'war' ja:d karna: 'to remember' dʒ a:gi: je:na: 'to wake up' ja: 'or'	pijo: 'father' ta:ja: 'father's brother' bijah 'marriage'	.....
/j/ phoneme is not found at final position of a word.			

**TABLE 2: INITIAL, MEDIAL AND FINAL POSITIONS OF CONSONANTS OF SIRAJI**

### 3.1.2 VOWELS

On the basis of the analysis of data Siraji has 13 vowels which are arranged in the Table 3.

	Front	Mid	Back
<b>High</b>	/i/ /i:/	/ɨ/	/u/ /u:/
<b>Mid</b>	/e/ /e:/	/ə/	/o/ /o:/
<b>Mid Low</b>	/ɛ/		
<b>Low</b>		/a/ /a:/	

**TABLE 3: VOWEL SYSTEM OF SIRAJI**

Table 4 shows the distribution of vowels of Siraji at initial, medial and final positions of words wherever possible.

Consonant	Initially	Medially	Finally
/i/	ili 'vulture' imli: 'tamarind'	mit̪i: 'clay' re:gista:n 'desert'	.....

	imtiha:n 'examination'	ʃikaɾ 'mud'	
/i:/	ĩ:ʃi 'brick'	ɖʒ əmi:n 'ground' ki:ɾa: 'worm' ɖʒ i:na: 'alive'	səɖʒ i: 'ash' mittʃi: 'clay' kudrəti: 'nature'
/e/	ethē: 'its'	lehar 'wave' greh 'planet' deji: ʃʰo:ɾna: 'to return'	tre 'three'
/e:/	e:kka: ʃabar 'relatives' e:nak 'spectacles' e:ki 'one'	ane:ra: 'darkness' re:gista:n 'desert' re:t 'sand'	a:ɾe: 'ember' ethē: 'its' uthē: 'itself'
/a/	ane:ra: 'darkness' agi 'fire' anda: 'egg'	ʃʰāɖʃi 'cold' ɖʒ aŋgal 'forest' ʃikaɾ 'mud'	.....
/a:/	a:ɾe: 'ember' a:lu: 'potato' a:ri: 'saw'	re:gista:n 'desert' bũʃa:l 'earthquake' ba:ɾ 'flood'	gufa: 'cave' ane:ra: 'darkness' ʃʰā: 'shade'
/o/	.....	kohra: 'fog' qobri: 'gourd' lovha:r 'black smith'	.....
/o:/	o:s 'dew' o: 'that' o:r 'and'	mo:sam 'weather' kho:ta: 'donkey' lo:mɖʃi: 'fox'	lo: 'light'
/u/	ullu: 'owl' ũ:ɾʰ 'camel' uparle: ʃʰoɖʃi 'upper lip'	gufa: 'cave' bũʃa:l 'earthquake' kũva:ra: 'bachelor'	ɖaɖu 'toad'
/u:/	.....	dʰu:l 'dust' su:raɖʒ 'sun' su:r 'pig'	nu: 'bride' ba:lu: 'bear' ullu: 'owl'
/ə/	əbhine:j 'acting' əlmu:nijam 'alluminium' əbrak 'mica'	səɖʒ i: 'ash' ɖʒ əmi:n 'ground' kudrəti: 'nature'	.....
/i/	.....	sipe:ra: 'snake charmer' sita:rā: 'seventeen'	ʃʰāɖʃi 'cold' agi 'fire' sasi 'mother on law'

**TABLE 4: INITIAL, MEDIAL AND FINAL POSITIONS OF VOWELS OF SIRAJI**



### 3.2 DIPHTHONGS

A diphthong in phonetics is a gliding vowel in the articulation of which there is a continuous transition from one position to another. It refers to two adjacent vowel sounds occurring within the same syllable. Siraji has two diphthongs which usually occur in word medial and final positions. Table 5 shows the diphthongs of Siraji.

Diphthong	Example	Gloss
Ai	baibi: hats dʒai	'brothers's wife' 'scene'
ua:	gua:l dua:r	'cowshed' 'door'

**TABLE 5: DIPHTHONGS OF SIRAJI**

### 3.3 CONSONANT CLUSTERS

Different types of consonant clusters are found in Siraji language. Combinations like stop + /r/ is found at the initial place. Different types of clusters involve combination of sibilant + stop, nasal + stop, lateral + stop, stop + stop, affricate + fricative. However, tri-consonant clusters are absent in Siraji language. Some examples are provided below.

br	bra:nda:	'verandah'
pr	pra:	'brother'
tr	triɖa:	'cockroach'
mb	bamb	'bomb'
vj	vja:m	'exercise'
ɖr	ɖra:ma:	'village show'
sʈ	sʈa:pu:	'hopscotch'
nt	ʃa:nt	'sober'
nd	nana:nd	'sister-in-law'
ht	bo:ht	'many'

### 3.4 SYLLABLE STRUCTURE

A syllable is typically made up of a syllable nucleus (most often a vowel) with optional initial and final margins (typically, consonants). Syllables are often considered the phonological "building blocks" of words. Syllables have internal structure: they can be divided into parts. The parts are onset and rhyme; within the rhyme we find the nucleus and coda. A syllable may or may not have an onset and a coda. In Siraji syllabification has been done as:

- i. Monosyllabic
- ii. Disyllabic, and

iii. Polysyllabic words

**I. Monosyllabic**

1. V	e:	'this'
2. CV	tu:	'you'
3. VC	o:r	'and'
4. CVC	kun	'who'
5. VCV	ut <sup>h</sup> ē:	'at'

**II. Disyllabic**

1. CV-CV	goɾa:	'horse'
2. V-CV	e:ki	'one'
3. CV-CVC	naram	'soft'
4. CVC-CVC	ho:ʃja:r	'smart'
5. CVC-CV	dh <sup>i</sup> :ma:	'week'

**III. Polysyllabic**

1. V-CV-CV	ila:ka:	'state'
2. VC-V-CV	aɬ <sup>h</sup> a:rā:	'eighteen'
3. CV-CVC-CV	gilehri:	'squirrel'
4. CV-CV-CV	bata:li:	'forty two'
5. CV-CV-CV-CV	ʃikaka:ji:	'shikakai'

**3.5 Gemination:** Gemination is found in Siraji. Table 6 shows the common geminates found in Siraji.

Consonant Combination	Example	Gloss
/tt/	k <sup>h</sup> att̪o:	'sour'
/ll/	killa:	'fort'
/tt/	patto:	'behind'
/nn/	panna:	'emerald'
/dd/	addo:	'half'
/mm/	amma:	'mother'
/kk/	makkəɖ	'monkey'
/tʃʃ/	batʃʃi	'baby'
/ss/	rassi:	'rope'

**TABLE 6: GEMINATES FOUND IN SIRAJI**

**4. CONCLUSION**

The present paper presented the phonological description of Siraji with focus on segmental part of the phonological system including consonants, vowels and diphthongs. It is observed that the consonantal system is rich consisting of 31 consonants while as 13 vowels are also present. Siraji possess double consonant clusters at the word initial, medial and final positions. The present work presents insights and findings which are helpful for further study.

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