

**REFERENCE GRAMMAR
OF THE
NIRAV LANGUAGE**

Мнрав ['mn̩i.rəf]



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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. The Language

This section is incomplete.

1.1.1. Goals

This section is incomplete.

1.1.2. Culture

This section is incomplete.

1.1.3. Symbolism

This section is incomplete.

II

PHONOLOGY

2.1. Vowels

Table 2.1.a shows the 5 primary and 4 allophonic vowels present in the language. Allophonic vowels are highlighted in gray.

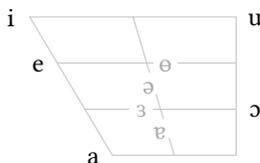


Table 2.1.a Vowels

There is no semantic distinction between long and short vowels, but unstressed vowels are generally shortened before ejective consonants, such as in *cam̩a* [sǎ.t̩ə] ‘fog’ or *ɪʔɛl* [j̩.k̩əl] ‘denial’.

2.1.1. Allophony

As highlighted in Table 2.1.a, certain primary vowels have allophonic variants which appear in specific environments. Allophony is not indicated in the orthography and may not always be precisely reflected in pronunciation.

Vowel Reduction

Certain primary vowels may be reduced to a lax allophonic vowel if they form the complete nucleus of an unstressed syllable. Specifically,

[a] → [ɐ], [e] → [ɜ], and [u] → [ə], although [a, e] → [ə] in word-final syllables. [i] and [ɔ] do not undergo reduction.

Vowel reduction can never occur in stressed syllables, but can occur in unstressed diphthongs. Allophonic vowels are not indicated in the orthography and may not always be precisely reflected in pronunciation.

2.1.2. Diphthongs

The vowels [i] and [u] can function as on- and off-glides with all other primary vowels by becoming non-syllabic [j̥] and [w̥] as per Table 2.1.b. [i] and [u] generally cannot on- or off-glide with themselves with the exception of [i] on-gliding with itself by forming the semivowel [j̥]. In unstressed syllables, off-glide [w̥] reduces the vowels [a, e] → [ə].

ON-GLIDE [i]	ON-GLIDE [u]	OFF-GLIDE [i]	OFF-GLIDE [u]
j̥a	'u̥a, u̥ə	a j̥	'a u̥, ə u̥
j̥e	'u̥e, u̥ə	e j̥	'e u̥, ə u̥
j̥i	u̥i		i u̥
j̥ɔ	u̥ɔ	ɔ j̥	ɔ u̥
j̥u		u j̥	

Table 2.1.b Diphthongs

Diphthongs are commonly pronounced across both syllable and word boundaries. Hiatus, instances where subsequent vowels are not pronounced as diphthongs, is indicated in the orthography as per Section 3.1.2. Hiatus may shift syllable boundaries.

2.2. Consonants

Table 2.2.a shows the language's 17 primary, 17 allophonic, and 2 gliding consonants. Allophonic and gliding consonants are highlighted in gray.

	LABIAL	ALVEOLAR	PALATAL	UVULAR
PLOSIVE	p b	t' t d	k' k ɡ	q' q ɢ
NASAL	m ɱ	n		ŋ
TRILL		r ʀ		
FRICATIVE	f v	s ʃ z ʒ	ç ʒ	x ɣ
AFFRICATE		ts tʃ dʒ dʒ	tʃ dʒ	
APPROXIMANT		l	j	

Table 2.2.a Consonants

2.2.1. Allophony

As highlighted in Table 2.2.a, many consonants have allophonic variants which appear in specific environments. Allophony is not indicated in the orthography and may not always be precisely reflected in pronunciation.

Voicing

When a voiceless consonant is surrounded by vowels or diphthongs on both sides, it becomes voiced, e.g. *Ima* [ʃi.də] ‘the letter I’. This behaviour can occur across both syllable and word boundaries, but not across sentence boundaries. If the consonant does not have a preceding or following vowel, e.g. at the beginning or end of a sentence, it remains voiceless.

Nasal and approximant consonants are always voiced, while ejective consonants are never voiced.

Devoicing

The consonant [r] → [ʀ] when it precedes either [i], [ɨ], or [j]. It takes precedence over palatalization but does not block it, e.g. *ɲpɪʃ* [ɨu.ʀʃif] ‘whistle’.

Palatalization

When a consonant is immediately followed by [i] or [j], it is palatalized and replaces the on-glide/semivowel, e.g. *Алиѣ* [e.ʎif] ‘the letter A’. The consonants [ʃ] → [ç] and [ʒ] → [ʒ̟] when palatalized, as do their respective affricates, i.e. [tʃ] → [tʃ̟] and [dʒ] → [dʒ̟].

Nasalization

Both [m] → [m̠] and [n] → [n̠] when they directly precede either [k] or [q], e.g. *амѣ* [ə̠mk] ‘midwife’.

2.3. Phonotactics

This section is incomplete.

2.3.1. Syllable Structure

This section is incomplete.

2.3.2. Consonant Clusters

This section is incomplete.

2.4. Stress

The primary stress of a word typically falls onto the antepenultimate (third to last), and the secondary stress onto the penultimate (second to last) syllable, e.g. *меѡавѣ* [te.ʒa.və] ‘déjà vu’.

If the word is only two syllables long, the primary stress falls onto the first syllable with no secondary stress, e.g. *шолѡун* [ʃɔ.ləʊn] ‘fox’.

Monosyllabic words are always unstressed, e.g. *Шѣ* [ʃə] ‘the letter Ш’.

Syllables whose nucleus contains [i, i̠] or palatization always receive the primary stress regardless of position, e.g. *Алиѣ* [e.ʎif] ‘the letter A’. This also applies to monosyllabic words, e.g. *Юѣ* [i̠us] ‘the letter Y’. If multiple syllables qualify, the last one receives primary stress, from which position

the regular stressing rules continue to be applied. For example, in *Яливанга* [jɛ.'lʲi.vɛ̌.be.gə] 'alphabet', the second syllable receives primary stress by being the last syllable to contain [i, ɨ] or palatalization, and the penultimate syllable receives secondary stress as per the regular stressing patterns.

III

ORTHOGRAPHY

3.1. Script

The language is primarily written using the Cyrillic script. A recognized, standardized Latin script variant of the orthography exists, but is not widely used among speakers.

Table 3.1.a shows the 25 letters in alphabetical order. The order is based on the order of the Latin alphabet. The first occurrence of either the base consonant or matching allophone is used to determine the order. ‘Ц’, ‘Ч’, and ‘Б’ were appended to the end, as they do not have direct Latin equivalents.

The script features a few non-standard glyphs and letter forms. The otherwise archaic letter ‘Ђ’ is used to represent [ɟ] rather than e.g. Russian ‘Ё’. The lowercase form of ‘І’ is a Latin-style small capital I, i.e. ‘i’, rather than the standard Cyrillic dotted ‘і’.

The alphabet goes by the name of *Ялѡанега* [jɐ.ˈlʲi.vɐ.bɜ.gə], initially derived from Latin *alphabetum*, but adapted over time to contain the first few letters of the Nirav alphabet.

GLYPH	ITALIC	NAME	PHONEMES	LATIN	
А а	<i>A a</i>	Алив	[a, ɐ, ə]	A a	Aliv
Я я	<i>Я я</i>	Ята	[j̥a, j̥ə]	Ȧ ȧ	Ȧta
П п	<i>П п</i>	Пе	[p, b]	P p	Pe
Г г	<i>Г г</i>	Ге	[k, g]	C c	Ce
Т т	<i>Т т</i>	Те	[t, d]	T t	Te
Е е	<i>Е е</i>	Ета	[e, ɜ, ə]	E E	Eta
Є є	<i>Є є</i>	Єта	[j̥e, j̥ə]	Ě ě	Ěta
В в	<i>В в</i>	Ве	[f, v]	V v	Ve
Х х	<i>Х х</i>	Хе	[x, χ]	H h	He
И и	<i>И и</i>	Иота	[i]	I i	Iota
І і	<i>І і</i>	Іта	[ji]	İ ĩ	İta
Л л	<i>Л л</i>	Ле	[l]	L l	Le
М м	<i>М м</i>	Ме	[m, m̥]	M m	Me
Н н	<i>Н н</i>	Не	[n, ŋ]	N n	Ne
О о	<i>О о</i>	Ом	[o, ɔ]	O o	Om
Ѣ ѣ	<i>Ѣ ѣ</i>	Ѣта	[j̥ɔ]	Q q	Qta
К к	<i>К к</i>	Ке	[q, ɕ]	K k	Ke
Р р	<i>Р р</i>	Ре	[r, ʀ]	R r	Re
С с	<i>С с</i>	Се	[s, z]	S s	Se
Ш ш	<i>Ш ш</i>	Ше	[ʃ, ʒ]	Ss ss	Sse
У у	<i>У у</i>	Юс	[u]	U u	Ўs
Ю ю	<i>Ю ю</i>	Ют	[ju]	Ў ȳ	Ўt
Ц ц	<i>Ц ц</i>	Це	[ts̆, d̆z̆]	Ts ts	Tse
Ч ч	<i>Ч ч</i>	Че	[tʃ̆, d̆ʒ̆, t̆ç̆, d̆ʒ̆]	Tss tss	Tsse
Ъ ъ	<i>Ъ ъ</i>		[ɔ̆]		

Table 3.1.a Alphabet

3.1.1. Ejectives

Ejective consonants are marked by appending ⟨ʼ⟩ and thus compose the digraphs ⟨тʼ⟩ [tʰ], ⟨гʼ⟩ [kʰ], and ⟨кʼ⟩ [qʰ]. In the Latin script, the consonant is doubled, i.e. ⟨tt⟩ [tʰ], ⟨cc⟩ [kʰ], and ⟨kk⟩ [qʰ].

3.1.2. Vowel Hiatus

Table 3.1.a describes diphthongs with an [i]-onset to have their own glyphs. If vowel hiatus occurs in these cases, the vowels in hiatus are written separately, compare *ᄂma* [i̯.ɔ.də] ‘the letter ᄂ’ and *Иoma* [i̯.ɔ.də] ‘the letter И’.

In all other diphthongs, ⟨ʼ⟩ is used to indicate a vowel hiatus between two adjacent vowels, compare *cau* [sɛi] ‘fish’ and *cauʼ* [sɛ.ʼi] ‘thought’, as well as *вауна* [ʼfaɯ.nə] ‘fauna’ and *вауʼна* [ʼfa.u.nə] ‘basket’. The last example also shows how hiatus can shift the syllable boundary.

When writing Nirav using the Latin script, a diaeresis is used to indicate vowel hiatus, i.e. *sai* [sɛi̯] ‘fish’ and *saï* [sɛ.ʼï] ‘thought’, and *vauna* [ʼfaɯ̈.nə] ‘fauna’ and *vaüna* [ʼfa.ü.nə] ‘basket’. The diaeresis is always required for ‘U’ in hiatus but only required for off-glide ‘I’ in hiatus. As such, on-glide ‘I’ in hiatus does not require a diaeresis, e.g. in *Iota* [i̯.ɔ.də] ‘the letter И’.

3.1.3. Capitalization

This section is incomplete.

IV

MORPHOLOGY

4.1. Nouns

This section is incomplete.

4.1.1. Noun Classes

Each noun corresponds to one of four semantically distinct noun classes. This classification affects agreement patterns with definiteness, adjectives, pronouns, and verbs, as is described in later sections.

Human Nouns

Class 1 includes all nouns exclusively referring to people in any capacity, as individuals or groups, e.g. *мин* ['tin] 'person'.

Animate Nouns

Class 2 includes all nouns which are historically considered to be alive while not being human. This includes obvious categories such as animals, e.g. *шолан* [ʃɔ.ləpɪn] 'fox'; plants and vegetation, e.g. *вауна* [ˈfaʊ.nə] 'fauna'; deities, e.g. *Гаиѳа* [kɐ.'iə] 'Gaia'; celestial bodies, e.g. *ню* [nʲu] 'moon'; the weather, e.g. *самѳа* [sǎ.t'ə] 'fog'; and certain natural features, e.g. *шы* [ʃə] 'river'.

Ephemeral Nouns

Class 3 includes all nouns which are historically considered insignificant, intangible or lacking a permanent physical form. This includes abstract concepts, e.g. *пишайм* [ʔi.ʒəʏm] ‘law’; thoughts or feelings, e.g. *тешаву* [te.ʒa.və] ‘dèjà vu’; numbers, e.g. *нул* [nəl] ‘zero’; certain natural phenomena, e.g. *лоп* [lɔr] ‘sound’, as well as social constructs, e.g. *нинит* [ni.nit] ‘time’. It notably includes *мни* [mnʲi] ‘speech’ and *аурав* [ai.rəf] ‘language’, but not *аму* [e.ti] ‘writing’, which is a regular noun.

Regular Nouns

Class 4 include all nouns which do not fit into any of the other classes, e.g. *аму* [e.ti] ‘writing’.

Class Reassignment

Although these classes are considered grammatically immutable, it is common for fluent speakers to creatively reassign nouns to different classes for emphatic effect. For example, referring to a pet as a human noun may convey strong affection, while calling a treasured object an ephemeral noun might emphasize fragility. This can also have the opposite effect, such as referring to a person as an ephemeral noun to imply situational insignificance.

Class reassignment is generally frowned upon in formal contexts.

4.1.2. Definiteness

This section is incomplete.

4.1.3. Counting

This section is incomplete.

- Countable nouns have singular, dual, plural
 - Dual grammatically correct, but typically only used for things in pairs, e.g. shoes
- Uncountable nouns

4.1.4. Case Declension

This section is incomplete.

- Nominative/Absolutive
- Ergative
- Accusative
- Genitive
- Dative
- Locative
- Ablative
- Sublative
- Instrumental

4.2. Verbs

This section is incomplete.

4.2.1. Verb Classes

This section is incomplete.

4.2.2. Tense and Aspect

This section is incomplete.

4.2.3. Conjugation

This section is incomplete.

4.3. Adjectives

This section is incomplete.

- Not really a thing, nouns are verbified, i.e. it is green = it “greens”

4.3.1. Comparison

This section is incomplete.

4.4. Pronouns

This section is incomplete.

- 1st singular, dual, plural inclusive, plural exclusive
- 2nd singular, plural
- 3rd singular, plural
- no formality registers, formality by using (proper) nouns

4.5. Derivational Morphology

This section is incomplete.

V

SYNTAX

5.1. Simple Clauses

This section is incomplete.

5.1.1. Negation

This section is incomplete.

5.1.2. Questions

This section is incomplete.

5.1.3. Noun phrases

This section is incomplete.

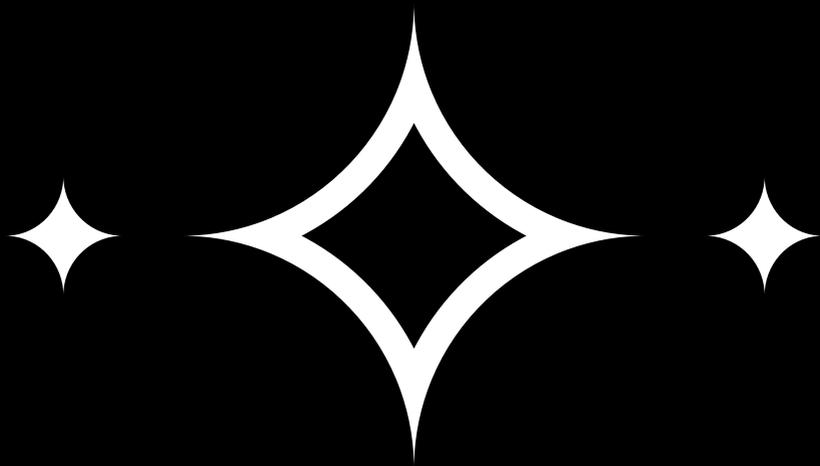
5.2. Complex Clauses

This section is incomplete.

5.2.1. Conjunctions

This section is incomplete.

APPENDICES



A

SAMPLES

A.1. Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

(from the United Nations General Assembly, 1948)

This section is incomplete.

All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

Лорем унсум.

A.2. The Tower of Babel (Genesis 11:1–9)

(from the Bible)

This section is incomplete.

Now all the Earth continued to be of one language and of one vocabulary. As they travelled eastward, they discovered a valley plain in the land of Shinar, and they began dwelling there.

Then they said to one another: "Come! Let us make bricks and bake them with fire." So they used bricks instead of stone, and bitumen as mortar. They

now said: "Come! Let us build a city for ourselves and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a celebrated name for ourselves, so that we will not be scattered over the entire face of the Earth."

Then the Lord went down to see the city and the tower that the sons of men had built. the Lord then said: "Look! They are one people with one language, and this is what they have started to do. Now there is nothing that they may have in mind to do that will be impossible for them. Come! Let us go down there and confuse their language in order that they may not understand one another's language."

So the Lord scattered them from there over the entire face of the Earth, and they gradually left off building the city. That is why it was named Babel, because there the Lord confused the language of all the Earth, and the Lord scattered them from there over the entire face of the Earth.

Лорем унсул.

A.3. The North Wind and the Sun

(from Aesop's Fables, Perry 46)

This section is incomplete.

The North Wind and the Sun were disputing which was the stronger, when a traveler came along wrapped in a warm cloak. They agreed that the one who first succeeded in making the traveler take his cloak off should be considered stronger than the other.

Then the North Wind blew as hard as he could, but the more he blew the more closely did the traveler fold his cloak around him; and at last the North Wind gave up the attempt. Then the Sun shined out warmly, and immediately the traveler took off his cloak. And so the North Wind was obliged to confess that the Sun was the stronger of the two.

Лорем унсул.

A.6. Iroh and the Four Elements

(from Avatar: The Last Airbender)

This section is incomplete.

Fire is the element of power. The people of the Fire Nation have desire and will, and the energy and drive to achieve what they want.

Earth is the element of substance. The people of the Earth Kingdom are diverse and strong. They are persistent and enduring.

Air is the element of freedom. The Air Nomads detached themselves from worldly concerns, and they found peace and freedom. And they apparently had great senses of humor.

Water is the element of change. The people of the Water Tribes are capable of adapting to many things. They have a sense of community and love that holds them together through anything.

Лорем унсул.

A.7. Leaves from the Vine

(from Avatar: The Last Airbender)

This section is incomplete.

Leaves from the vine

Falling so slow

Like fragile tiny shells

Drifting in the foam

Little soldier boy

Come marching home

Brave soldier boy

Comes marching home

Happy birthday, my son.

If only I could have helped you.

Лорем ипсум.

В

LEXICON

- ати** (*n.r.*) writing, text, lyrics
амг (*n.h.*) midwife
Алив (*n.r.*) the letter А
аирав (*n.e.*) language
Ята (*n.r.*) the letter Я
Ялвапега (*n.r.*) alphabet, writing system
Пе (*n.r.*) the letter П
Ге (*n.r.*) the letter Г
тин (*n.h.*) person, human, man, woman
тешаву (*n.e.*) déjà vu
Те (*n.r.*) the letter Т
Ета (*n.r.*) the letter Е
Єта (*n.r.*) the letter Є
Ве (*n.r.*) the letter В
вауна (*n.a.*) fauna, vegetation, plant life
ваиџна (*n.a.*) basket, woven container
Хе (*n.r.*) the letter Х
Иота (*n.r.*) the letter И
Ита (*n.r.*) the letter I
игъел (*n.e.*) denial, negation
лор (*n.e.*) sound, noise
Ле (*n.r.*) the letter Л
мни (*n.e.*) speech, voice, dialect
Ме (*n.r.*) the letter М
нул (*n.e.*) zero, insignificance
ню (*n.a.*) moon
нинит (*n.e.*) time, duration
Не (*n.r.*) the letter Н
Ом (*n.r.*) the letter О
Ѓта (*n.r.*) the letter Ѓ
Ке (*n.r.*) the letter К
ришаум (*n.e.*) law, rule, regulation, principle
Ре (*n.r.*) the letter Р
саиџ (*n.e.*) thought, idea
саи (*n.a.*) fish, seafood, marine life
Се (*n.r.*) the letter С
сатџа (*n.a.*) fog, mist
шу (*n.a.*) river, stream, creek, flowing water
шолан (*n.a.*) fox
Ше (*n.r.*) the letter Ш
Ют (*n.r.*) the letter Ю
Юс (*n.r.*) the letter У

юрѣв (*n.r.*) whistle

Цѣ (*n.r.*) the letter Ц

Че (*n.r.*) the letter Ч