

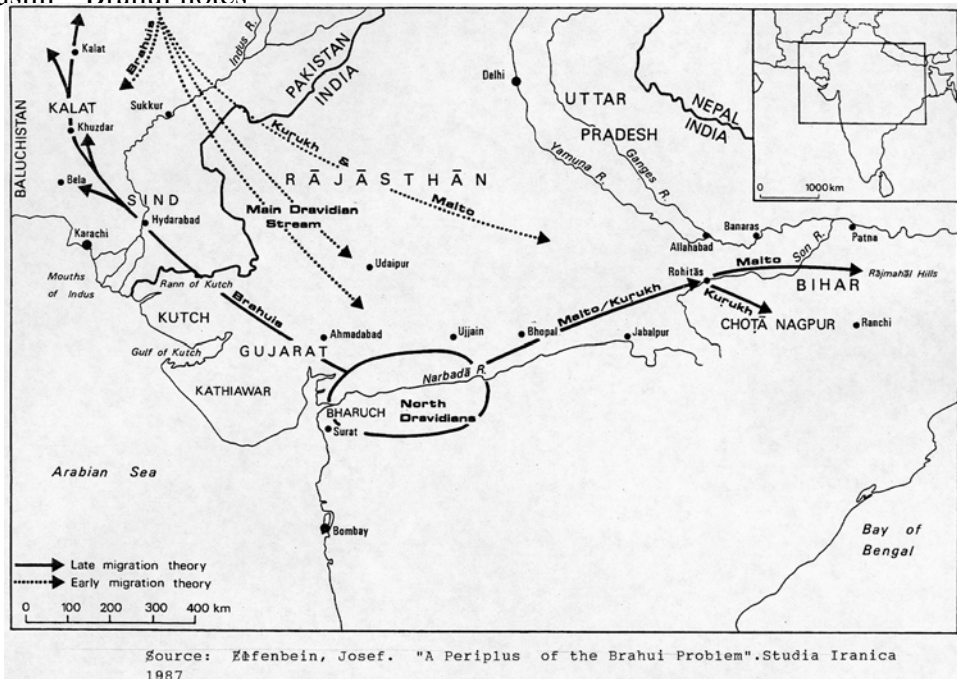
Brahui - Notes
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Brahui is a Northern Dravidian language, spoken mainly in Pakistani Balochistan. There are about 2,000,000 speakers in Pakistan, 200,000 in Afghanistan, 10,000 in Iran, and a small number in Turkestan (<http://www.ethnologue.com>). There are two theories of how Brahui speakers come to be in Balochistan, whereas the speakers of other Dravidian languages are concentrated in South India. One group of scholars holds that the Brahui speakers in Balochistan are a relic group, left behind when the main body of Dravidian speakers continued south into southern India. The other maintains that Brahui speakers first went farther south, and then returned in a northwest direction to their present position in Balochistan. The map on the following page diagrams these two views.

Brahui as a Dravidian language. The following table compares some aspects of Brahui lexicon and grammar with Indo-Aryan Urdu and other Dravidian languages. Although Brahui has been influenced massively by Balochi, it retains enough basic lexicon and morphology to identify it as Dravidian.

Brahui compared with Indo-Aryan and Dravidian

	Representative Indo-Aryan (Urdu)	Brahui	Other Dravidian
First 3 numerals	<i>ek</i> '1' <i>do</i> '2' <i>tiin</i> 'e'	<i>asi</i> '1' <i>iraa</i> '2' <i>musi</i> '3'	<i>oR</i> (Drav. root) '1' <i>ir-</i> (Drav. root) '2' <i>mur</i> (Drav. rot) '3'
Interrogative element	<i>k-</i> , e.g. <i>kyaa</i> 'what'	<i>a-</i> , e.g. <i>ant</i> 'what'	Telugu <i>emi</i> 'why'
Negative	<i>n-</i> e.g. <i>na</i> 'not' <i>m-</i> e.g. <i>mat</i> 'don't!'	separate negative conjugation, with <i>-a-</i> plus marker of tense	<i>-a-</i> general Drav. negative formant
Causative formant	<i>-a-</i> , <i>-aw-</i>	<i>-if-</i>	cf. <i>-vi-</i> (Tamil causative formant)
2nd person pronoun	<i>tuu</i> 'you' (sg.) <i>tum</i> 'you' (pl.)	<i>ni</i> 'you (sg.)' <i>num</i> 'you (pl.)'	<i>nii</i> (Drav.) 'you (sg.)' cf. <i>num-</i> (OBL in Tamil)
Plural marker	<i>-e</i> (m. pl. suffix)	<i>-k</i>	<i>-k</i> (Gondi) <i>-kaL</i> (Drav.)



Brahui migration routes

Balochi influence on Brahui. Brahui has been heavily influenced by Balochi; the languages have been in close and continuous contact since the 14th century. For example:

- Balochi phonological system adopted
- Grammatical gender lost in Brahui
- Imperfective prefix *a-* < Balochi
- Present continuous tense formed as calque on Balochi model, which is in turn an IA influence
- Use of conjunctive *ki* < Balochi
- Suffixed pronouns as in Balochi
- Brahui verb stem *kan-* 'do' < Balochi
- *-aa* LOC case < Balochi
- Word order
- 20% of Brahui lexicon is from Balochi

Lexicon. Brahui's lexicon is of mixed origin; contains only 15% Dravidian words.

Dravidian origin	15%
Balochi origin	20%
Indo-Aryan origin	20%
Perso-Arabic origin	35%
Unknown origin	10%

Nevertheless, Brahui retains distinctive Dravidian elements (see table above):

Dialects. There are three main dialectal divisions within the Brahui area: (a) Sarawani (spoken in Mastung, Kalat, Kanak, Murgachar, Khardig~p, Bolan, and Quetta); (b) Jhalaw~ni (spoken in Khuzd~r, Zari, Vad, Mula, and Jahu (up to Bela); and (c) Chaghi (spoken in Noshki (up to Iran), Kh~ran, Besema (up to Panjgur).¹

Important dialectal differences in phonology involve: (a) the realization of initial /h/, (b) alternations of dental and retroflex consonants, and (c) aspiration.

Brahui dialectal differences - phonology²

Feature	Dialect		
	Jhalawani	Sarawani	Chaghi
Initial /h/	Initial /h/ pronounced	Initial /h/ pronounced in most areas (not in belt near Chaghi).	Initial /h/ not pronounced. Realized as [ʔ] (glottal stop).
Dental and retroflex consonants	Dental /d/ sometimes pronounced as retroflex /D/	/d/ and /D/ both maintained	/d/ and /D/ both maintained
Non-contrastive aspiration	Present in all Jhalawani-speaking groups	Some Sarawani tribes have aspirated pronunciation.	Completely absent in Chaghi area.

Resources on Brahui. There are quite a few English-language publications on Brahui. For example, the University of Chicago catalog lists 17 English-language books on Brahui.

Basic, fairly easily-accessible English-language books and articles include:

Andronov, Mikhail S. 1980. *The Brahui language* [translated from the Russian by V. Korotky]. Moscow : Nauka Pub. House.

_____. 2001. *A Grammar of the Brahui Language in Comparative Treatment*. Munich: Lincom, Europa. [New publication by eminent Dravidianist. According to LinguistList announcement, it contains a detailed practical grammar, illustrated with examples from

¹I am grateful to Abdul Razzak Sabir for this information.

²From Bashir (1991:4)

Brahui literary texts, comparative-historical information on the evolution and origin of the main elements of the language (phonemes, origins of case suffixes and other nominal desinences, numerals and pronouns, and verbal personal suffixes. The primary systems of gender, tense and mood, lost or modified in the contemporary language, are reconstructed in comparison with these of Old Tamil and other classical languages. Introduction contains general information on Brahui, the history of its study, and discussion of the position of Brahui within the Dravidian family. A bibliography of earlier works on the Brahui language is appended in the end.]

Bashir, Elena. 1991. *A Contrastive Analysis of Brahui and Urdu*. [A report prepared for the Directorates of Primary Education, NWFP and Balochistan]. Peshawar: Academy for Educational Development. [Pedagogically oriented study prepared for use of educators preparing learning materials for Brahui-speaking children learning Urdu.]

Bray, Denys. *The Brahui language*. Originally published, Calcutta: Superintendent Government Printing, 1909-34. Several subsequent reprints. [Classic grammar of Brahui. Still regarded as a classic by Brahui speakers, especially for the words and forms which are no longer found.]

In addition, there is an increasing number of publications in Urdu directed at readers in Pakistan. Recently, language enthusiasts have begun creating web pages, some with useful information. A few of these are:

<http://members.tripod.com/~Svaxen/grammar.htm> (a skeleton grammar)

<http://www.alphabets-world.com/brahui.html> (gives Perso-Arabic Brahui alphabet)

http://www.southasiabibliography.de/Bibliography/Dravidian/Brahui___Birouhi/brahui___birouhi.html (partial bibliography of scholarly works on Brahui)

<http://members.tripod.com/~Svaxen/k.htm> (example page [k] from a Roman Brahui-English dictionary)

<http://members.tripod.com/~Svaxen/software.htm> (a vocabulary teaching program)

<http://www.wordgumbo.com/dr/bra/erengbra.htm> (English to Brahui word list)