

Structure of an entry

An entry in this digital dictionary consists of a Khowar word in Perso-Arabic Khowar script, followed by a near phonemic transcription in a roman-based script, an abbreviation indicating the grammatical form or part of speech of the word, and an English gloss (simplified meaning). Then a Khowar sentence exemplifying the use of the entry word is given, followed by the English translation of that sentence.

Abbreviations

The following abbreviations for parts of speech are used:

n	noun
vi	verb, intransitive
vt	verb, transitive
adj	adjective
adv	adverb

Phonetic symbols

The symbols in the roman representations have the following phonetic/phonemic values:

a - low mid vowel. Has the sound of Urdu ا (*alif*) or َ (*zabar*); it is not inherently long.

b - bilabial stop, voiced; as Urdu ب

č - palatal affricate, voiceless; as چ

čh - palatal affricate, voiceless and aspirated; as Urdu چھ,

č̣ - retroflex affricate, voiceless; retroflex counterpart of Urdu چ. The Khowar character is

چ̣, which is چ modified with a small diacritic ط (*toye*) above two dots, rather than three dots.

č̣h - retroflex affricate, voiceless and aspirated; retroflex counterpart of Urdu چھ. The Khowar

character is چ̣ھ.

d - dental stop, voiced; as Urdu د

ḍ - retroflex stop, voiced; as Urdu ڈ

dz - alveolar affricate, voiced; the Khowar character is ذ

e - mid front vowel; as Urdu **ے** in final position

f - labio-dental fricative, voiceless; as Urdu **ف**

g - velar stop, voiced; as Urdu **گ**

ɣ - velar fricative, voiced; as Urdu **غ**

h - pharyngeal fricative, voiceless; sounds as Urdu **ه** and **ح**

i - high front vowel; as Urdu **ی** or **ِ** (zer). No inherent length.

j - palatal affricate, voiced; as Urdu **ج**

ɟ - retroflex affricate, voiced; retroflex counterpart of **ج**. The Khovar character is **چ**, that is, **ج** modified by replacing the dot with a small diacritic **ط** (*toye*).

k - velar stop, voiceless; as Urdu **ک**

kh - velar stop, voiceless and aspirated; as Urdu **کھ**

l - slightly palatalized liquid; as Urdu **ل**

ɭ - velarized liquid; as the ‘dark l’ of English ‘large’. This sound is represented in Khovar with **ڙ**, which is the same character as Urdu retroflex /ɽ/, although the Khovar sound is different.

m - bilabial nasal; as Urdu **م**

n - alveolar nasal; as Urdu **ن**

o - mid back vowel; as in Urdu **دو** /do/ ‘two’; represented with **و**

p - bilabial stop, voiceless; as Urdu **پ**

q - post-velar stop, voiceless; as Urdu **ق**

r - alveolar flap; as Urdu **ر**

s - alveolar sibilant; sounds as Urdu **س ص ث**

š - palatal sibilant, voiceless; as Urdu ش

ş - retroflex sibilant, voiceless; retroflex counterpart of Urdu ش. The Khovar character is ش̣, that is, ش modified so that the top dot is replaced by a small diacritic ط (*toye*).

t - dental stop, voiceless; as Urdu ت

th - dental stop, voiceless and aspirated; as Urdu تھ

ṭ - retroflex stop, voiceless; as Urdu ٹ

ṭh - retroflex stop, voiceless and aspirated; as Urdu ٹھ

ts - alveolar affricate, voiceless; represented by شخ

u - high back vowel; as Urdu و or ُو, not inherently long

v - allophone of labial glide which precedes front vowels; represented by و

w - allophone of labial glide which precedes back vowels; represented by و

x - velar fricative, voiceless; as Urdu خ

y - palatal glide; consonantal value of ی

z - voiced alveolar sibilant; sounds as Urdu ز

ž - palatal sibilant, voiced; as Urdu ژ

ẓ̌ - retroflex sibilant, voiced; retroflex counterpart of ژ. The Khovar character is ژ̣, that is, ژ modified so that the topmost dot is replaced by a small diacritic ط (*toye*).

Representation of Khovar script

The digital dictionaries in the Digital Dictionaries of South Asia are encoded in Unicode, which at the original time of publication of the first edition (2005) did not include the special characters چ, ژ, ش̣, ش̣̣. For this reason, those characters were represented by temporary workarounds. Now, however, all the necessary characters are found in Unicode-based Nastaliq fonts like the Scheherazade font used in this dictionary.

Spelling issues

The spelling of consonant sounds is well established. Letters to represent the six Khowar consonant sounds not present in Urdu or Persian were devised in 1921 by Prince Nasir-ul-Mulk when he published a suggested alphabet for Khowar. These Khowar letters have been in consistent use since that time.

The spelling of vowel sounds, however, presents a different picture. There is considerable variation among writers of Khowar in how they spell vowel sounds. Several issues are involved, among them the following. (1) Should vowel sounds be spelled as they would be if Urdu were being written, i.e. with the full vowel letters ا، ی، ے، و only for indisputably long vowels, and the diacritics *zer*, *zabar*, *pesh* for short vowels; or should their spelling reflect the different phonological system of Khowar, in which there is no phonemic distinction between long and short vowels but stress is phonemically distinctive? For example, should the [i] sound in the word *kíca* ‘how’ be spelled with ی (*ye*) or with ِ (*zer*); and should the final [a] sound be spelled with ا (*aleph*) or with ۛ (*choṭī he*)? Since such questions are as yet unresolved, four spellings of this word are possible: کیچہ، کیچا، کیچا، کیچہ. (2) Should the locative ending *-a* ‘in, at, on’ be spelled with ۛ or with ا (*aleph*)? From the morphophonological point of view, it would seem that this morpheme should be spelled consistently; however, some people represent it following certain letters as ا (*aleph*) while following certain other letters it is represented as ۛ. (3) To what extent should the spellings of borrowed words be retained? A case in point is the word بارابار ‘good, fine’. This word has entered Khowar more than once: from Persian, then from Urdu. The original borrowing, in its Khowar pronunciation is بارابار with the meaning ‘good, fine’. The same Persian word borrowed into Urdu means ‘equal’ and is spelled برابر. The resolution of this and other similar questions will depend on the degree to which each individual word is judged as a an original or thoroughly assimilated Khowar word, or as a borrowed word; and on the degree to which preservation of the historical spelling is deemed important for each individual word. The spellings in this sample dictionary will illustrate some of these issues.

Location and dialect represented

For the initial stage of this project, in order to keep usage and spelling as consistent as possible, it was decided to begin with speakers who share the same dialect. Both of the speakers whose usage and pronunciation are reflected in this digital dictionary are from village Zondrangram in the Terich valley in Tehsil Mulkhov. They are Rahmat Karim Baig, retired Professor of English at the Government Degree College, Booni, and the late Maula Nigah Nigah, formerly Headmaster, Government High School, Zondrangram, Tehsil Mulkhov.