

Synchronic and Diachronic Phonology of the Arta Language

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Arta is a language spoken by 11 indigenous Negrito Filipinos living in the province of Quirino in the northern part of the largest Philippine island of Luzon. Arta is first described by Lawrence A. Reid (Reid 1989), where he reveals some unique characteristics of the language, such as the /r/ reflex of *R (Proto-Malayo-Polynesian; PMP) and the low percentage of retentions of reconstructed PMP vocabulary. After his 1989's paper, however, no subsequent research on Arta has been conducted except the author's fieldwork.

In this talk I seek to describe synchronic phonology and discuss how the current system evolved historically from Proto-Northern Luzon or PMP. I observe that synchronically there are 16 consonants (/p/, /t/, /k/, /ʔ/, /b/, /d/, /g/, /s/, /h/, /m/, /n/, /ŋ/, /l/, /r/, /j/ and /w/) and 6 vowels (/i/, /e/, /a/, /o/, /u/, and /ə/); Arta clearly has the long-short contrast of vowels, which may be lexically determined in some cases, but in other cases, affixation, reduplication or cliticization causes vowel lengthening, as is exemplified in the affixation of *paC-*: *dage:tən* 'sew' > *pad-da:ge:tən* 'be sewing'.

From a diachronic perspective, it is argued that the reflexes of *R, *j are reflexed as /r/ and /d/ respectively, as discussed in Reid (1989); *k is lost or in some circumstances retained (as seen in 1SG.GEN pronoun =*ku* and *bərək* 'young pig' < *bəRək (PMP)). Furthermore, I argue that contrastive accents reconstructed in Zorc (1979, 1983) are lost in Arta, but by some loss of coda consonants, the current long-short contrast of vowels has developed.