1. THE FEATURE [+tense]

The feature [+tense] works well with high and mid vowels. It cuts the high vowel space into two: upper high and lower high, and, similarly, the mid vowels space is divided into upper mid and lower mid.

Upper high and upper mid vowels are [+tense] while lower high and lower mid vowels are [-tense]. Vowels that are [-tense] are called lax vowels.

Standard Polish vowels (Biedrzycki 1974: 28)

The feature [+tense] distinguishes, for example, Polish [i] from English [ɪ] and Polish [ɛ] from English [e]:

Polish [i] is [+tense] while English [ɪ] is [-tense]

Polish [ɛ] is [-tense] while English [e] is [+tense].
2. IS POLISH [ɨ] CLASSIFIED AS [-back] OR [+back]?

Standard Polish vowels (Biedrzycki 1974: 28)

(1)

If this is true, then [ɨ] and [a] are [-back].

(2)

If this is true, then [ɨ] and [a] are [-back].
If this is true, then [ɨ] and [a] are [+back].

The choice is made by looking at the ‘phonological behaviour’ of //ɨ// and //a//.

brud – brudzić //brud+i+ te// → [bruɖzɨtɛ]

brud – brudz+ie (loc.sg.) //brud+ɛ// → [bruɖɛ]

brud – brud+u (gen.sg.) //brud+u// = [bruɖu]

brud – bru+om (dat.pl.) //brud+ɔm// = [bruɖɔm]

brud+ami (instr.pl.) //brud+ami// → brudam’i]

brud – brud+y (nom.pl.) //brud+i// = [bruɖi]

What is the argument for deciding whether the central vowels //ɨ// and //a// are [-back] or [+back]?

Central vowels must be [+back] because they ‘behave’ like back vowels in the sense that they do not cause Palatalization: there is no Palatalization before [u] and [ɔ] and these vowels are unquestionably [+back].