Some preliminary observations about Baṅgāṇī
pronominal and nominal declension*

Baṅgāṇī, an Indo-Aryan language spoken in the so-called Baṅgāṇ area, a land enclosed by
the Pabar and the Tons rivers (Uttarkāśī district, Uttarākhaṇḍ state), shows in its grammar
and lexicon some peculiar features still rather controversial. The debate is still in course,
due to the lack of enough documentation available, as the majority of scholars complains
about. Moreover Baṅgāṇī, among the Western Pahāṛī languages of New Indo-Aryan, is now
esteemed as a critically endangered language by the UNESCO Atlas of the World’s Lan-
guages in Danger. The paper presents the preliminary results of a fieldwork research with
Baṅgāṇī mother-tongue speakers and the unique elicited text available. In particular a de-
scription of Baṅgāṇī pronominal and nominal declension, focusing on the case marking
and agreement system of the Subject-like and Object-like arguments of intransitive and
transitive clauses (in perfective and non-perfective tenses), is offered. The comparison be-
tween the data that I collected enabled me to offer a good amount of Baṅgāṇī sentences ex-
emplifying the function of the different forms, and thus to understand their use in depth, that
is to shed light on the peculiarities of Baṅgāṇī case marking system.

1. Introduction

Baṅgāṇī is an Indo-Aryan language of the group of Western Pahāṛī
languages spoken in the so-called Baṅgāṇ area located in the Uttarkāśī

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ants and to understand the Baṅgāṇī language. He was also so kind as to send me some of his papers
on Baṅgāṇī and to give me some indications on Pahāṛī languages bibliography. I am also grateful to
the participants who attended the All India Conference on Regional Languages (AICORAL-2015,
10-12 October 2015) held in Jalandhar (Punjab), where I presented an earlier version of this work.
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guistic Fieldwork on Baṅgāṇī” and published in International Journal of Language and Linguistics
Vol. 3, No. 3 (August 2016), pp. 108-114. All errors and inadequacies are my responsibility.

1 The following abbreviations are used in this article: ABL: ablative; ACC: accusative; AOR:
aorist; AUX: auxiliary; CAUS: causative; CP: conjunctive participle; DAT: dative; DIR: direct;
EMPH: emphatic; ERG: ergative; F: feminine; FUT: future; GEN: genitive; IA: Indo-Aryan;
IMPF: imperfective; INSTR: instrumental; INTR: intransitive; LOC: locative; M: masculine; MIA:
Middle Indo-Aryan; NIA: New Indo-Aryan; NOM: nominative; NT: neuter; OBL: oblique; OIA:
Old Indo-Aryan; PART: participle; PAST: past; PAST.PART: past participle; PERF: perfective;
PRES: present; SG: singular; TR: transitive; VOC: vocative.

district of Uttarākhaṇḍ. Esteemed as a critically endangered language by the *UNESCO Atlas of the World’s Languages in Danger*, in the last few decades Baṅgāṇī has been a topic of controversy concerning whether this language contains Indo-European but non-Indo-Aryan vocabulary or not (Zoller 1989; for a summary on this topic see Zoller 1999, the personal website of Peter Edwin Hook at http://www-personal.umich.edu/~pehook/bangani.html, Cardona & Jain 2003: 25, and the recent comments by Hock (ed.) 2016: 9, note 2). Even if the majority of the scholars involved in this controversy concluded their studies by claiming that much work on documentation but especially on the linguistic description/analysis of Baṅgāṇī remains to be done (cf., for example, Abbi 1997, 2000; Hock (ed.) 2016: 9, note 2), not so many of such works, if not at all, appeared till now (except for Van Driem & Sharmā 1997 and Zoller 2007, 2009, 2001a).

The main aim of this paper, and some others that are in preparation (i.e. Drocco forthcoming), is to present the provisional results of 1) my fieldwork with Baṅgāṇī mother-tongue informants, in some cases in the Baṅgān area, and 2) the linguistic analysis of the few Baṅgāṇī elicited texts available (cf. Zoller 2007: 113-138 and Zoller 2015), focusing on pronominal and nominal declension. Therefore, after having advanced some general argumentations about Baṅgāṇī (§ 2), section 3 is devoted to the description of Baṅgāṇī pronouns and nouns, especially as regards their forms with respect to the well-known phenomenon of ergativity. In section 4, I compare Modern Standard Hindī (MSH) and Baṅgāṇī focusing my attention on the Differential Object Marking (DOM).

2. *The Baṅgāṇī language*

Even if the main goal of this paper is to provide a brief description of some morpho-syntactic features of the Pahāṛī language known by the name Baṅgāṇī, the readers will benefit from some general information about this language.

2 As I will explain, Baṅgāṇī is not used in written form. In the examples mentioned below I used the transcription system adopted by the few scholars who have analysed this language: in particular, I followed the Baṅgāṇī transcription system adopted by Zoller (2007, 2015), which is very similar to the one used by Hendriksen (1976-86).
As reported in literature concerning Indo-Aryan linguistics, Baṅgāṇī is an Indo-Aryan language spoken in the so-called Baṅgāṇ area, the latter located in the Uttarkāśī district of Uttarākhaṇḍ state, in particular in the area between the Pabar and the Tons rivers. Baṅgāṇ is part of the western-most region of Gaṛhvāl, whose main borders are Himachal Pradesh, the tribal area of Jaunsar-Bawar and Tehri-Gaṛhvāl (Zoller 1997; Van Driem & Sharmā 1996: 108-109; Balbirsingh 2015: 179). The southern border coincides with the Dehra Dun district, whereas the northern-most village is Monda.

Map 1. Uttarākhaṇḍ state in India

Map 2. Divisions of Uttarākhaṇḍ
The Bangān region comprises nearly 40 villages (Van Driem & Sharma 1996: 109; Balbir Singh, personal communication). To be precise, the Bangān area is part of the Mori tehsil (= administrative division) of Uttarkashi district and consists of three belts or paṭṭī: i) Masmūrpaṭṭī, ii) Piṅgalpaṭṭī and iii) Koṭhīgāṛhpattī (Balbirsingh 2015: 179; Zoller 2015: 3).

The main villages of Masmūrpaṭṭī are:

- Thaḷī, Bāmsu, Uḍāṭhā, Sarās, Petṛi, Sala, Ogmer.

The main villages of Piṅgalpaṭṭī are:

- Ārākoṭ, Ḍāmṭhī, Kaḷić, Mākoḷī, Thunāṛā, Bhuṭāṇu, Maṅjoṇī, Kiroḷī, Pawali.
The main villages of Koṭhīgāṛhpaṭṭī are:

- Tikochi, Bornāḷī, Gokul, Dhara, Joṭuvāḍī, Jāgṭā, Chiwan, Baḷāuṭ, Māuṁde, Ducāṇuke, Kervāṇuke.

Although Baṅgāṇī is spoken in the so-called main region of Gaṛhvāl, unlike Gaṛhvālī, it is not classified as a Central Pahāṛī language, but as a Western Pahāṛī language, included in the Himācalī language group (cf. Zoller 2011a, 2011b; see also Joshi & Negi 1994; Joshi 2002). The website Ethnologue groups Baṅgāṇī under the same entry as Gaṛhvālī, adding that:

The divergent dialect varieties of Bangani, Parvati, and Ravai are no more similar to Western Pahari varieties than to Garhwali.

(see: https://www.ethnologue.com/language/gbm, retrieved 1st September 2016)

Zoller (1997) suggests to include Baṅgāṇī as part of what he calls the Satlaj-Tons group of languages and dialects. On the basis of his subsequent researches he comments:

West Pahāṛī (spoken between Kashmir and Jaunsar) is much closer to Dardic and Nuristani than East Pahāṛī is. East Pahāṛī was perhaps much stronger influenced by Indian languages of the plains than West Pahāṛī... I see no possibility to connect this with some Khasa stories, but what is clear is that if you compare Nuristani, Dardic and West Pahāṛī then you see a movement from older to newer. Nuristani has preserved some pre-Sanskrit features, and Dardic and West Pahāṛī have also preserved a lot of features which are very close to Sanskrit. One may argue that languages in remote areas tend to be conservative, but you don’t find anything comparable at the other end of the Indo-Aryan world, for instance in Oriya. With regard to East Pahāṛī this means that in former times it was perhaps also close to Dardic and Nuristani. However, apart from some very few incidences I have until today not found much substantial evidence.

[adapted from (Joshi 2010: 61)]

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3 For some detailed studies of Central Pahāṛī languages as well as for the linguistic history of the Uttarākhaṇḍ State see Sharma (1980, 1981, 1983).
Besides, it is important to add that Grierson (1916), in his monumental *Linguistic Survey of India* and in particular in the volume dedicated to Pahāṛī languages (*Volume 9, Part 4*), does not mention Baṅgānī at all.

As Map 4 illustrates, the languages in contact with Baṅgānī are:

- Jaunsārī in the South;
- Gaṛhvalī in the East;
- some Himācalī dialects/languages (i.e. Mahasu Pahāṛī) in the West and South-West.

According to the 2001 Census of India, the speakers of Baṅgānī are approximately 21,000. Even if, according to the *UNESCO Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger* Baṅgānī is esteemed as a critically endangered language (cf. [http://www.unesco.org/languages-atlas/en/at-](http://www.unesco.org/languages-atlas/en/at-).
Lasmap/language-id-1606.html, retrieved 14th October 2016), the present situation seems to be less serious. Indeed it seems that now this language is not only spoken, as mother-tongue, by elder generations, but also by younger generations and, more importantly, by children at home and with other people of Baṅgāṇ area. Some interviews with my Baṅgāṇī informants confirmed that children learn Baṅgāṇī from their parents in the home environment. Upon entering the local school system, they are exposed to the Hindī language as well as to the other important regional languages, including Gaṛhvālī and Himācalī. Even if there exist no Baṅgāṇī written literature, oral literature is well attested: one of the best example is the Baṅgāṇī version of the Mahābhārata called pɔṁḍuaṇ, studied and edited by Zoller (1997, 2007, 2015).

As I said above (cf. § 1.), this study is based on the data collected during my linguistic fieldwork with Baṅgāṇī speakers, in some cases in the Baṅgāṇ area. I relied on the information provided by the following informants:

- Gabar Singh Chauhan, 52 years old, born in the Kiroḷī village (in Piṅgalpaṭṭī), but presently living with his family in New Delhi;
- Balbirsingh Rawat, 52 years old, born in the Mañjoṇī village (in Piṅgalpaṭṭī), but presently living with his family in Dehra Dun, the capital of the state of Uttarākhaṇḍ;
- Kailash Chauhan, 35 years old, born in the Gokul village (in Koṭhīgāṛhpaṭṭī), where he is still living with his extended family.

In August 2014, I spent two weeks in New Delhi conducting face-time interviews with Gabar Singh Chauhan. The contacts with this informant extended till July 2015, via Skype, at least one time every two weeks. In October 2015, I was again in India for two weeks and I had the opportunity to interview Gabar Singh Chauhan. Besides, I visited Baṅgāṇī area with the assistance of Kailash Chauhan. I visited with him the majority of villages of the Koṭhīgāṛhpaṭṭī, staying in his house in the village of Gokul. Then I moved to Dehra Dun at Balbirsingh Rawat’s house: I spent with him and his family two days commenting the Baṅgāṇī material collected with Gabar Singh Chauhan and Kailash Chauhan, but at the same time, making some new constructions to understand Baṅgāṇī linguistic features.
As for the elicitation technique, I relied on the ‘interview method’, that Abbi (2001: 84) indicates as the most common and widely used method for field investigations. I interviewed my informants without a questionnaire and adopting Hindi as the language of communication. At this stage of my research, I collected short sentences, normally three or four words long, with the purpose of gathering information on the use of pronominal and nominal forms, as I will show in the following section.

3. Baṅgāṇī pronominal and nominal forms

Baṅgāṇī language presents, both for pronouns and nouns, three cases, that is absolutive, oblique and ergative. I think it is important to start spending some words about the phenomenon of split-ergativity. Indeed, it is well-known that the ergative-absolutive alignment is an important feature of some IA languages/dialects, which influences many aspects of their grammars, as the analysis of Baṅgāṇī pronominal and nominal forms also demonstrates.

In the majority of present-day IA languages, an ergative-absolutive system of case marking is attested in perfective clauses: they are characterized by a split-ergative system conditioned by the tense/aspect of the main verb (Klaiman 1987; Deo & Sharma 2006; Drocco 2008; Verbeke 2013; Stroński 2011; see also the recent papers in Dahl & Stroński (eds.) 2016). Accordingly, in perfective constructions, the Subject-like⁴ argument of intransitive constructions is marked with the absolutive case and shows agreement with main verb. In a similar way, the Object-like argument of transitive constructions bears the absolutive case, whereas the Subject-like argument of transitive constructions is marked with a different case – the ergative case – and generally does not shows agreement with the main verb (Dixon 1994: 9, 22; Comrie 1978). To understand how this type of case marking system works in NIA, we

⁴ In this article I prefer the ‘Subject-like argument of an intransitive construction’, ‘Subject-like argument of a transitive construction’ and ‘Object-like argument’ for the well notions of ‘S’, ‘A’ and ‘O’ (or ‘P’) normally used in studies related to alignment typology, as in Dixon (1994) and Comrie (1978). For a recent overview of these notions see Haspelmath (2011).
propose the following non-perfective (cf. (1) and (2)) and perfective clauses (cf. (3) and (4)) taken from MSH:

(1) gopāl bhārat mē rahtā hai
   gopāl bhārat mē rah-tā hai.
   Gopāl(M) India LOC stay-PRES.M.SG be.AUX-PRES.3.SG
   ‘Gopāl lives in India’ (adapted from McGregor 1977: 18)

(2) gopāl kitāb likh rahā hai
   gopāl kitāb likh rah-ā hai
   Gopāl(M) book(F) write stay-PERF.M.SG be.AUX-PRES.3.SG
   ‘Gopāl is writing the book’ (adapted from McGregor 1977: 71)

(3) sāvitrī kal sārā din mere pās rahī
   sāvitrī kal sārā din m-er-e pās rah-ī
   Sāvitrī(F) yesterday all day 1.SG-GEN-OBL.SG near stay-PERF.F
   ‘Yesterday Sāvitrī remained all day at my home’ (Caracchi 2002: 119)

(4) gopāl ne cāy chānī
   gopāl ne cāy chān-ī
   Gopāl(M) ERG tea(F) pour-PERF.F
   ‘Gopāl poured tea’ (Priyamvadā Uṣā 2000: 42)

In (1), an intransitive non-perfective sentence, the Subject-like argument Gopāl is not followed by any postposition, exactly in the same way as the Subject-like arguments Gopāl of (2) – a transitive non-perfective clause – and Sāvitrī of (3) – an intransitive perfective clause – respectively. The same is true of the Object-like argument cāy in (4), a transitive perfective sentence. Moreover, the above-mentioned arguments agree with the main verb: for example note that in (3) Sāvitrī is feminine and the main verb rahnā ‘to stay’ is also feminine, while in (4) cāy ‘tea’ is feminine (unlike the Subject-like argument Gopāl, which is masculine) and the verb chānnā ‘to pour’ is also feminine. Contrary to (1), (2) and (3) the Subject-like argument of (4) is followed by the postposition ne, the ergative case marker of MSH, that follows the Subject-like arguments of only transitive perfective sentences. In the light of these observations, the ergative alignment systems of case marking displayed by MSH and by Baṅgāṇī may be compared as illustrated in table 1:
An overview of the main Baṅgāṇī pronominal forms (i.e. the absolutive, the ergative and the oblique ones) is offered in Table 2 and 3 below:

Table 1. Ergative alignment features in MSH and Baṅgāṇī

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>feature</th>
<th>ERG alignment in MSH</th>
<th>ERG alignment in Baṅgāṇī</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>found in all transitive perfective constructions</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>for all subjects: pronouns and nouns</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ergative case marker</td>
<td>postposition ne</td>
<td>i) a suppletive form as regards SG pronouns ii) a suffix as regards nouns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>extended in non-perfective constructions</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>yes (but optional)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Differential Object Marking (DOM) in perfective constructions</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Differential Object Marking (DOM) in non-perfective constructions</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.1. *Baṅgāṇī pronominal forms and their function*\(^7\)

An overview of the main Baṅgāṇī pronominal forms (i.e. the absolutive, the ergative and the oblique ones) is offered in Table 2 and 3 below:

\(^5\) Unfortunately, until now I have not been able to collect enough data to discuss this particular Baṅgāṇī feature in detail.

\(^6\) Further observations on this topic will be offered in section 4.

\(^7\) The use of the absolutive, ergative and oblique forms when a pronoun occurs as the Object-like argument of a sentence will be discussed in section 4.
Table 2. Singular pronominal forms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>ABS</th>
<th>ERG</th>
<th>OBL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1SG</td>
<td>aũ</td>
<td>mũ</td>
<td>mũ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2SG</td>
<td>tu</td>
<td>taũ</td>
<td>taũ (or taĩ)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3SG, M, distal</td>
<td>seu</td>
<td>tiũ (or tiũ)</td>
<td>tes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3SG, F, distal</td>
<td>seε</td>
<td>tiε</td>
<td>tiũ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3SG, M, proximal</td>
<td>eu</td>
<td>iṇi</td>
<td>is</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3SG, F, proximal</td>
<td>ee</td>
<td>iũε</td>
<td>iũ</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3. Plural pronominal forms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>ABS</th>
<th>ERG</th>
<th>OBL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1PL</td>
<td>amε</td>
<td>amũ</td>
<td>amũ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2PL</td>
<td>tumε</td>
<td>tumũ</td>
<td>tumũ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3PL, distal</td>
<td>se</td>
<td>tiũε (or tiũ)</td>
<td>tiũ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3PL, proximal</td>
<td>e</td>
<td>iũε</td>
<td>iũ</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
By observing table 2 and table 3, it is apparent that:

- in the plural, 1st and 2nd person pronouns do not distinguish between the ergative and the oblique case;
- 3rd person pronouns display different masculine and feminine forms only in the singular;
- in the singular, except for 3rd person feminine singular pronoun, the ergative form is always realized through a suppletive form, different from the oblique form: this is one of the main differences between the pronouns ergative marking of MSH and Baṅgāṇī;
- the ergative form of the 3rd person feminine singular pronoun and the 3rd person plural pronouns is realized through the addition of the suffix \(-\varepsilon\) to the oblique form.

3.1.1. Absolutive

If we consider the use of the different Baṅgāṇī pronominal forms, it is apparent that the absolutive form is adopted when the pronouns are the Subject-like argument of the majority of intransitive constructions, either in perfective or in non-perfective tenses, as well as of transitive non-perfective constructions. In the following sentence, for example, the 1st person singular pronoun is the Subject-like argument of an intransitive construction and hence occurs in ABS form (aũ):

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{(5)} & \quad \text{aũ keś-keśɔ ḍeũ gɔrε} \\
& \quad \text{aũ keś-keśɔ ḍe-ũ gɔrε} \\
& \quad 1.SG.ABS how-how go-PRES.1.SG home \\
& \quad \text{‘How (can) I go home’} \quad \text{(Zoller 2007: 118, sentence n. 85)}
\end{align*}
\]

The same absolutive form aũ is attested when a 1st person singular pronoun is the Subject-like argument of a transitive construction, but only in non-perfective tenses:

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8 In this paper I do not take in examination the so-called DAT/GEN-Subject construction typical of many modern IA languages (cf. Masica 1991 and the papers in Bhaskararao / Subbarao (eds.) 2008) as well as of Baṅgāṇī (cf. Zoller 2009).
3.1.2. Ergative

As I said before, in some IA languages/dialects where a split-ergativity system is attested – as in Hindī and in Gujarātī (see, among others, Drocco 2008: chapter 3) – the ergative form is used when a pronoun occurs as Subject-like argument of a transitive perfective verb form; the same phenomenon is found in Baṅgāṇī. In (7), for instance, the 1st person singular pronoun displays the ergative form muĩ:

(7) εbε āṇi- goeεn muĩ se bārebε āṇi- goεn muĩ se bāre
Now bring- go-PERF.M.PL 1.SG.ERG 3.PL(distal).M.ABS outside ‘Now I have brought them outside’ (Zoller 2007: 117, sentence n. 74)

(8) muĩ riśpɔt khai- goimuĩ riśpɔt khai- goi
1.SG.ERG bribe eat- go-PERF.F
‘I have taken a bribe’ (Zoller 2007: 117, sentence n. 63)

The text transcribed by Zoller (2007) shows that, in perfective transitive constructions, when the Subject-like argument is a 3rd personal pronouns, Baṅgāṇī speakers adopt in the majority of cases the ergative form of pronouns, as example in (9), but sometimes the oblique form is also used, as example in (10):

(9) to tiũε bolɔ ki [...] to tiũε bol-ɔ ki [...]
then 3.PL(distal).OBL-ERG say-PERF.M.SG that ‘Then they said [...]’ (Zoller 2007: 117, sentence n. 69)

(10) tiũ bolɔ ki [...] tiũ bol-ɔ ki [...]
3.PL(distal).OBL say-PERF.M.SG that ‘They said [...]’ (Zoller 2007: 118, sentence n. 80)
3.1.3. Oblique

The oblique form is used when a pronoun is followed by a postposition, as in (11), where the oblique form *tes* (3rd person (distal) masculine singular pronoun) is followed by the genitive postposition *re*.

(11) *tes re dimag di ēk bicār a-ɔ*

*tes* 3.SG(distal).M.OBL
*re* 3.SG(DISTAL).M.OBL GEN-OBL.SG
*dimag di* mind LOC
*ēk bicār a-ɔ* one idea come-PERF.M.SG
‘An idea came to his mind’.

In the case of demonstratives used as adjectives, when the noun they precede is followed by postposition, the adjective is in the oblique case, even if the latter is undistinguishable from the absolutive one. See the following example:

(12) *es gøre di tsār kəmr-e*

*es* 3.SG(proximal).M.OBL
*gøre di* house LOC
*tsār kəmr-e* four room-ABS.PL
‘There are four rooms in this house (literally, In this house four rooms)’

Extract (13) illustrates the agreement of the demonstrative adjective with the feminine following noun:

(13) *ti kitābī di [...] choubish pənn-e*

*tī* 3.SG(distal).F.OBL
*kitābī di* book(F) LOC
* [...] chōbbiś pənn-e* twenty-six page(F)-PL
‘That book has twenty-six pages (literally, In this book twenty-six pages (are))’

3.2. Baṅgāṇī nominal forms and their function

As pointed out by Van Driem & Sharmā (1997: 181-182), Baṅgāṇī

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9 For the use of the absolutive, ergative and oblique forms when a noun occurs as the Object-like argument of a sentence see section 4.
nouns form their plurals differently depending on the class to which they belong:\textsuperscript{10}

(1) in the first class, masculine nouns form their plurals by a zero ending; accordingly, the singular and the plural forms are the same: e.g. \textit{māṇuc} ‘man’ = \textit{māṇuc} ‘men’, \textit{khozā} ‘footprint’ = \textit{khozā} ‘footprints’. The suffix adopted to express the oblique singular of this class of nouns ending in a vowel is zero, e.g. \textit{bāri} \textit{rɔ} ‘of the potter’. On the contrary, if a noun belonging to this class ends in a consonant, the suffix adopted to express the oblique, before certain postpositions, is \textit{-e} e.g. \textit{gɔ̀r-ε rɔ} ‘of the house’. If the noun is in the oblique case, in the absence of a postposition, the latter suffix does not occur, e.g. \textit{bāṇdi} \textit{r ε gɔ̀r} ‘at the house of an infertile woman’;

(2) in the second class, masculine nouns end in \textit{-ɔ}. The plural is marked by adding the suffix \textit{-e} to the stem: e.g. \textit{bākrɔ} ‘he-goat’ vs. \textit{bākre} ‘he-goats’, \textit{ākhɔ} ‘eye’ vs. \textit{ākhe} ‘eyes’, \textit{śiṅguṭɔ} ‘horn’ vs. \textit{śiṅguṭε} ‘horns’, \textit{tārɔ} ‘star’ vs. \textit{tāre} ‘stars’, \textit{ḍokhrɔ} ‘small field’ vs. \textit{ḍokhre} ‘small fields’;

(3) the feminine nouns of the first class nouns their plurals by adding the suffix \textit{-iε}, e.g. \textit{mɔ̀ĩś} ‘buffalo’ vs. \textit{mɔ̀ĩśiε} ‘buffaloes’, \textit{chewεri} ‘woman’ vs. \textit{chewεriε} ‘women’. When the singular form of a noun of this class ends in \textit{-i}, this ending is replaced by \textit{-iε-} in the plural, e.g. \textit{bākri} ‘she-goat’ vs. \textit{bākriε} ‘she-goats’, \textit{pīni} ‘egg’ vs. \textit{pīnie} ‘eggs’. The oblique case of feminine nouns ending in \textit{-i} of class 3 is marked by zero, e.g. \textit{rɔṇḍi} \textit{rɔ} ‘of a husbandless woman’;

(4) the feminine nouns of the second class end in a consonant: the plural is formed by adding the suffix \textit{-e}, e.g. \textit{bėr} ‘sheep’ vs. \textit{bėr-ε} ‘sheep’, \textit{pākh} ‘wing’ vs. \textit{pākh-ε} ‘wings’.

To sum up, the suffix \textit{-ε} is the oblique singular ending of:

\textsuperscript{10} The first part of this section relies upon the explanation offered by Van Driem / Sharmā (1997), as well as upon the analysis of the data collected from my Baṅgāṇī mother-tongue informants and the sentences with interlinear glosses quoted in Zoller (2007).
- class 2 masculine nouns in (-ɔ), e.g. goṛ-ɛ ɾɔ ‘of the horse’, cīgré-ɾɔ ārkʰɔ ‘backbone’;
- class 2 feminine nouns, e.g. bèṛ-ɛ ɾɔ ‘of the sheep’;

All nouns, irrespective of class and gender distinctions, form the oblique plural by adding the suffix -u: i) masculine nouns, e.g. beru-ɾɔ ‘of cares’; ii) feminine nouns, e.g. bèru-ɾɔ ‘of sheep’. However, in the majority of cases, there is also a nasality in this ending, e.g. gāiũ-ke ‘to the cows’.

The Baṅgāṇī ergative affix is –ei, as illustrated by the following examples:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Absolutive</th>
<th>Ergative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>bāman</td>
<td>bāman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kōilu</td>
<td>kōilu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rākēs</td>
<td>rākēs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>māsu</td>
<td>māsu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bag</td>
<td>bag</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sometimes the same ergative suffix -ei is realized also through a nasalization:

bāmaṇ-eĩ alongside of bāmaṇ-ei
Rām-eĩ alongside of Rām-ei

The few scholars who studied Baṅgāṇī argued that in this language the ergative suffix is simply –ei (alongside –eĩ) (cf. Van Driem / Sharmā 1997; Zoller 2007, 2009, 2011a). However the analysis of the data that I collected from my Baṅgāṇī mother-tongue speakers reveals that, in the
plural, the ergative suffix is normally –ε, the latter always attached to
the noun in the oblique form, as in the following example:

(14) athiũε kelā kha

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{athi-ũ-ε} & \quad \text{kelā} & \quad \text{kha.} \\
\text{elephant-OBL.PL-ERG} & \quad \text{banana(M)} & \quad \text{eat-PERF.M.SG}
\end{align*}
\]

‘(The) elephants ate the banana’

Besides, the plural oblique form of nouns is sometimes adopted to
express the ergative case marker of plural nouns, as illustrated in (15):
this seems to be true especially for feminine nouns.

(15) tiũε rāṇi-ũ kā bol-ɔ [...] 

\[
\begin{align*}
tiũ & \quad \text{rāṇi-ũ} \\
3\text{PL(distal).ERG} & \quad \text{queen(F)-OBL.PL(=ERG)}
kā & \quad \text{bol-ɔ} \\
\text{what} & \quad \text{say-PERF.M.SG}
\end{align*}
\]

‘What did those queens say?’ (Zoller 2007: 115, sentence n. 37)

3.2.1. Absolutive

As for the function of the different forms, as in the case of pronouns,
the absolutive form is adopted especially whenever a Baṅgāṇī noun, ei-
ther singular or plural, is the Subject-like argument of the majority of in-
transitive constructions, either in perfective or in non-perfective tenses, as
well as of transitive constructions, but only in non-perfective tenses. This
is illustrated by the following extract, where bāmaṇ, the Subject-like ar-
gument of an intransitive construction, occurs in the absolutive form:

(16) seu bāmaṇ deɔ kuḷu-kāśmīr khi 

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{seu} & \quad \text{bāmaṇ} & \quad \text{de-ɔ} & \quad \text{kuḷu-kāśmīr} & \quad \text{khi.} \\
\text{that} & \quad \text{Brahmin.SG.ABS} & \quad \text{go-PERF.M.SG} & \quad \text{Kulu-Kashmir} & \quad \text{to}
\end{align*}
\]

‘That Brahmin had gone to Kulu-Kashmir’

(Zoller 2007: 113, sentence n. 2)

A few singular nouns, when followed by postposition, do not take a
case marker (zero oblique form); see the following examples:
(17) *birāḷi rɔī pāṇi pindi lagi.*

*birāḷi rɔ-i\textsuperscript{11} pāṇi pi-ndī lag-i.*

cat(F).SG.ABS stay-PERF.F water drink-PRES.F attach-PERF.F

‘The cat is drinking water’

(18) *birāḷi ri lolti nɔ thi na etkε.*

*birāḷi r-i lolti nɔ-thi na etkε.*

cat(F) GEN-F cord(F) NEG-is NEG here

‘The cord of the cat is not here’

(19) *athi gāũ khi ḍε.*

*athi gāũ khi ḍ-e.*

elephant(M).SG.ABS village to go-PRES.3.SG

‘The elephant goes to the village’

(20) *athi māi ēk māṇuch.*

*athi māi ēk māṇuch.*

elephant(M).SG.(zero)OBL LOC one man(M).SG

‘There is a man on the elephant (literally, On (the) elephant one man)’

As we can see, the singular absolutive form mentioned in (17) is formally identical to the singular oblique occurrence of the same noun in (18). The same is true of examples (19) and (20). Besides, note that most masculine nouns, that is class 1 nouns, do not display an absolute marking in the plural, as illustrated in (22), where the plural absolute form of *athi* is the same as the singular absolute form in (21).

(21) *athi gāũ khi ḍε.*

*athi gāũ khi ḍ-e.*

elephant(M).SG.ABS village to go-PRES.3.SG

‘The elephant goes to the village’

(22) *athi gāũ khi ḍēṇ.*

*athi gāũ khi ḍ-ēṇ.*

elephant(M).(zero)PL.ABS village to go-PRES.3.PL

‘The elephants go to the village’

\textsuperscript{11} In this example it is possible to see that, as in many NIA languages (cf. Masica 1991: 274), also in Baṅgāṇī the use of the perfective verb ‘remain’ is adopted to convey the Continuous aspect.
On the contrary, as I explained above, the absolutive plural of feminine nouns is different from the singular: compare example in (23) with example in (17) mentioned above.

(23) \textit{birāḷi ε rɔi pāṇi pindi lagi.}
\begin{verbatim}
  birāḷi-ε   rɔ-i  pāṇi  pi-ndī  lag-i.
\end{verbatim}
cat(F)-ABS.PL stay-PERF.F water drink-PRES.F attach-PERF.F
‘The cats are drinking water’

3.2.2. Ergative

When nouns occur as Subject-like argument of a transitive perfective construction the ergative suffix -ei is attached, as illustrated by the following sentences where the nouns \textit{bāman} and \textit{athi} display ergative case markings \textit{bāmaṇ-εi} and \textit{athi-yei}, which make them different from the corresponding absolutive forms occurring in extracts (25) and (27), which have already been mentioned (see examples 16 and 19), but are recalled here for the sake of convenience:

(24) \textit{tiṇi bāmaṇ-εi rati ugār-ε se bɔlēd.}
\begin{verbatim}
  tiṇi  bāmaṇ-εi  rati  ugār-ε
3.SG(distal).M.ERG  Brahmin-ERG  in-the-morning  release-PERF.M.PL
se  bɔlēd.
3.PL(distal).M.ABS  oxen(M).ABS.PL(zero)
‘That Brahmin released the oxen in the morning’
\end{verbatim}
(Zoller 2007: 113, sentence n. 9)

(25) \textit{seu bāmaṇ de-ε kułu-kāśmīr khi.}
\begin{verbatim}
  bāmaṇ  de-ε  kułu-kāśmīr  khi.
that  Brahmin.ABS  go-PERF.M.SG  Kulu-Kashmir  to
‘That Brahmin had gone to Kulu-Kashmir’
\end{verbatim}
(Zoller 2007: 113, sentence n. 2)

(26) \textit{athiyei keḷā kha.}
\begin{verbatim}
  athi-yei  keḷā  kh-a.
elephant(M)-ERG  banana(M)  eat-PERF.M.SG
‘(The) elephant ate (the) banana’
\end{verbatim}
The elephant goes to the village.

3.2.3. Oblique

As I have observed in the case of pronouns, Baṅgāṇī nouns display an oblique marking when they occur followed by a postpositions, as the following examples illustrate:

(28) iũ tu gaiũ kɔi khiyaya [...]  
iũ  tu  gai-ũ  kɔi  khiy Ya [...]  
3.PL(proximal).OBL 2.SG.DIR  cow-PL.OBL  DAT  feed-IMP  
‘Feed them to the cows [...]’

(Zoller 2007: 113, sentence n. 7)

(29) [...] deũ phiruε śiṅg-e rɔ khāṛu [...]  
de-ũ  phiru-ε  śiṅg-e  rɔ  khāṛu [...]  
give-PRES.1.SG  twisted-PL.OBL  horn-PL.OBL  GEN  ram  
‘[...] (I) give (you) a ram with twisted horns [...]’

(Zoller 2007: 113, sentence n. 7)

4. The case of the Differential Object Marking: a comparison between Hindī and Baṅgāṇī

It is well known that in MSH the DAT/ACC case marker (in MSH the postposition ko), as in many modern IA languages (cf. Klaiman 1987; Masica 1991: 364-369), can follow the Object-like argument of a transitive construction, irrespective of the main verb tense. As pointed by Masica (1991: 365), the function of this case marker is often more pragmatic than syntactic, because in the case of non-human nouns it normally indicates a ‘definite’ Object-like argument, whereas in the case of human nouns it stresses their Patienthood (as regards MSH see McGregor 1977: 49; Caracchi 2002: 83-84). This is exemplified with MSH constructions (30), (31), (32) and (33).
(30) rām āpke bhāiyō ko jāntā hai.

Rām(M) HON-GEN-M.PL.OBL brother-M.PL.OBL DAT/ACC know-PRES-M.SG be.AUX-PRES.3.SG
‘Rām knows Your brothers’

(31) rām mujhe jāntā hai.

Rām(M) 1.SG.OBL-DAT/ACC know-PRES-M.SG  h-ai.
be.AUX-PRES.3.SG
‘Rām knows me’

(32) rām ne un laṛkiyō ko dekhā.

Rām(M) ERG 3.PL.OBL girl(F)-OBL.PL  ko dekh-ā.
DAT/ACC see-PERF.M.SG
‘Rām saw these girls’

(33) rām ne mujhe dekhā.

Rām(M) ERG 1.SG.OBL-DAT/ACC see-PERF.M.SG
‘Rām saw me’

On the contrary, in (34), the Object-like argument is not followed by the Hindī DAT/ACC case marker ko, thus revealing an ergative pattern: the main verb pīnā presents gender and number agreement with cāy ‘tea’, a feminine noun and the Object-like argument of the construction.

(34) rām ne cāy pī hai.

Rām(M) ERG tea(F) drink-PERF.F be.AUX-PRES.3.SG
‘Rām drank tea’

12 In the absence of explicit reference, the extract is drawn from the interviews conducted with mother-tongue speakers.
But if the Object-like argument is ‘definite’ thus, even if non-human, the DAT/ACC postposition ko is present, as in the following construction:

(35) āj merī bahan is kahānī ko nahī̃ paṛhegī.
    āj m-er-ī bahan is kahānī ko
today 1.SG-GEN-F sister(F) 3SG.OBL story(F) DAT/ACC
nahī̃ paṛh-e-g-ī.
NEG read-3.SG-FUT-F
‘Today my sister will not read this story’
(adapted from Caracchi 2002: 83)

Unlike Hindī, which shares the same marking patterns of most modern Indo-Aryan languages (cf. Klaiman 1987; Masica 1991: 364-369; Drocco 2008: 81-89), Baṅgāṇī displays a different marking pattern: in the presence of a perfective verb form, the Object-like argument of a transitive sentence is never followed by any case marker and thus occurs in its absolutive case. This is true for both pronouns and nouns (cf. also Zoller 2007: 99). In the following two examples, the absolutive form aũ of the 1st person singular pronoun is employed both as the Subject-like argument of a non-ergative construction (cf. example 36), and as the Object-like argument of an ergative construction, that is, in a transitive perfective construction (cf. example 37):

(36) aũ keś-keśɔ ḍeũ gɔr ε
    aũ keś-keśɔ ḍe-ũ gɔr ε
1.SG how-how go-PRES.1.SG home
‘How (can) I go home’ (Zoller 2007: 118, sentence n. 85)

(37) aũ te khai- goɔ oruai.
    aũ te khai- go-ɔ oru-ai.
1.SG.ABS then eat go-PERF.M.SG others-ERG
‘The others have got me’ (Zoller 2007: 120, sentence n. 106)

The same is true for nouns. Indeed the form of Rām occurring as a Subject-like argument of a non-ergative clause – in (38) a transitive non-perfective construction – or as an Object-like of an ergative clause
– in (39) a transitive perfective construction – is, in both cases, the absolute one (which coincides with the stem Rām without suffixes):

(38) Rām mū pite.
    rām mū pite-
    Rām(M) 1.SG.OBL hit-PRES.3.SG
    ‘Rām hits me’

(39) taĩ Rām dekhɔ?
    taĩ rām dekh-ɔ?
    2.SG(F).ERG Rām(M) see-PERF.M.SG
    ‘Did you see Rām?’

In transitive perfective sentences (i.e. in ergative constructions), we have already seen that the form of a pronoun occurring as the Subject-like argument is the ergative one, rather than the oblique. This is one example:

(40) muĩ riśpɔt khai- goi.
    muĩ riśpɔt khai- go-i.
    1.SG.ERG bribe eat- go-PERF.F.SG
    ‘I have taken a bribe’ (Zoller 2007: 117, sentence n. 63)

In non-perfective transitive sentences (that is in non-ergative constructions), on the other hand, if a pronoun occurs as an Object-like argument, its form is the oblique one, as illustrated by extract (41), where the 1st person singular pronoun is the Object-like argument of an imperative verb form:

(41) mũ [...] tu na khā.
    mũ tu na khā.
    1.SG.OBL 2.SG.ABS not eat.IMP
    ‘Please don’t eat me’ (Zoller 2007: 116, sentence n. 57)

In the case of singular nouns the situation is different, because if they occur in the role of Object-like argument of a non-perfective construction their form is not the oblique, but the ergative one. See example
in (42) where Rām, as the Object-like argument of non-ergative clause, is in the same form Rām-ei, like when it occurs as the Subject-like argument of an ergative clause as in (43).

(42) Sītā Rāmei pit-ε.
   sītā rām-ei pit-ε.
   Sītā Rām-ERG hit-PRES.3.SG
   ‘Sita hits Ram’

(43) Rāmei ek chithi likhi.
   rām-ei ek chithi likh-i.
   Rām-ERG one letter(F) write-PERF.F.SG
   ‘Ram wrote a letter’

On the contrary, if plural nouns occur in the role of Object-like argument of a non-perfective construction their form is the oblique one, therefore not the ergative; see example in (44).

(44) nāne iũ bākriũ pit-ēṇ.
    nān-ε iũ bakri-ũ pit-ēṇ.
    boy(M)-ABS.PL 3.PL(proximal).OBL goat-OBL.PL hit-PRES.3.PL
    ‘The children hit these goats’

Moreover, as I said above (cf. § 3.2.), in (45) a plural noun, here a feminine noun, is in the oblique occurring, however, as the Subject-like argument of an ergative clause.

(45) tiũ rāniũ kā bol- ŏ [...] 
    tiũ rāni-ũ kā bol- ŏ
    3.PL(distal).ERG queen(F)-OBL.PL(=ERG) what say-PERF.M.SG
    ‘What did those queens say?’ (Zoller 2007: 115, sentence n. 37)

5. Conclusion

As I said at the beginning of the present paper, some peculiar features of Baṅgāṅī grammar and lexicon are still rather controversial.
Although in the last two decades the majority of scholars claims that these features deserve deeper investigation and more data, the Baṅgāṇī language remains a largely unexplored topic among linguists specialized on IA languages. This paper represents a preliminary step in that direction. In section 2, I presented Baṅgāṇī, the various villages where this language is spoken and the Baṅgāṇī native speakers who provided the data of this research. From section 3 onwards, I offered a description of Baṅgāṇī pronominal and nominal declension, focusing on the case marking and agreement system of the Subject-like and Object-like arguments of intransitive and transitive clauses, in perfective and non-perfective tenses. The comparison between the data that I collected during a fieldwork research with my informants and the elicited texts available in Zoller (2007), enabled me to present a good amount of Baṅgāṇī sentences exemplifying the function of the different forms, and thus to understand their use in depth. The few studies addressing this type of analysis contain only a few examples that fail to shed light on the peculiarities of Baṅgāṇī case marking system. For example, in the plural, the ergative suffix attached to the noun, always in the oblique form, is –ε (cf. extract (14)), rather than the ergative case marker –ei (alongside –eĩ). In a similar way, the plural oblique form of nouns (rather than a specific ergative case marker different form the oblique one (cf. extract (15)), especially in the presence of feminine nouns, is sometimes adopted to express the ergative of plural nouns. As I argued (cf. §3.2.), the previous studies claimed that in both instances the ergative case-marker is –ei (alongside –eĩ).

To sum up, the present analysis reveals that the Baṅgāṇī case marking system, related to ergative alignment and Differential Object Marking, adopts the following endings on both pronouns and nouns:

- **Pronouns:** e.g. 1st person singular pronoun

  - **non-PERF TR clauses**
    - Subject-like argument = **ABS**
    - Object-like argument = **OBL**
    - (cf. ex. (6): aũ)
    - (cf. ex. (41): mũ)
  
  - **PERF TR clauses**
    - Subject-like argument = **ERG**
    - Object-like argument = **ABS**
    - (cf. ex. (40): muĩ)
    - (cf. ex. (37): aũ)
Admittedly, more empirical work is needed in order to describe the different classes of Baṅgāṇī nouns and to grasp the interplay of gender and number distinctions which influences the occurrence of the ergative or oblique case markings.

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