CASE MARKING IN THARU: A COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

Krishna Prasad Paudyal & Kamal Krishna Khanal

Birendra Multiple Campus, Tribhuvan University
Corresponding author: krishnapdyl@gmail.com

This paper compares the case marking system in Kathariya and Dangaura Tharu spoken by an ethnic group called Tharu. Both of these varieties typologically follow the nominative-accusative marking system. These varieties have different markers to code different cases. Only the Genitive marker -kə or -k are shared by both of these varieties. The dative-accusative markers -kehən, or -ke, instrumental marker -ləike, and ablative marker- ti are used in Kathariya Tharu. Dangaura Tharu is unique in its use of compound case marking in Genitive case. The locative marker in Kathariya Tharu is -me but it is -mə in Dangaura Tharu. The experiencer subjects in both of these varieties are dative case marked.

Keywords: Kathariya, Dangaura, Tharu, case marking

1. Background[1]

Tharu is "an umbrella ethnonym' uniting a variety of historically endogamous groups that speak different dialects and are also distinct in many socio-cultural aspects" (Chaubey et al., 2014, p. 1404). It is the largest indigenous group of Nepal living in the 23 Tarai and inner Tarai districts of Nepal and bordering districts like Champaran, Gorakhpur, Gonda, Basti, Baharaich, Lakhimpur Kheri, and Udham Singh Nagar of India.[2] Based on the linguistic and cultural variations, the Tharu ethnic group has been broadly classified into four different groups: the Rana Tharu, the Dangaura Tharu, the Chitoniya Tharu and the Kochila Tharu (Boehm, 1998, p. 3; Paudyal, 2014, pp. 7-8). However, in the 24th edition of *Ethnologue*, this

community is classified as Central Tharu, Dangaura Tharu, Kathariya Tharu, Mid-eastern Tharu, and Rana Tharu[3] (Eberhard et al., 2021, pp. 54-56). The nomenclature 'Tharu' denotes both the community members and the language they speak. Contrary to Grierson's (1968, p. 311) claim "there is no such a thing as Tharu language", this classification shows that we have at least five varieties of Tharu language spoken in Nepal and India. Since no comprehensive studies of all these varieties have been done so far, except Dangaura and Chitoniya Tharu, we cannot claim that all these groups are only the varieties of a single Tharu language or different languages with their distinct linguistic features.

This paper concentrates on comparing two Tharu varieties- Kathariya and Dangaura Tharu- which are in close contact, in terms of case marking system. Dangaura Tharu is spoken in Rupandehi, Dang, Banke, Bardiya, Surkhet, Kailali and Kanchanpur districts, whereas Kathariya Tharu is spoken only in Kailali district of Nepal. In Kailali, as the president of Kathariya Samaj, Nepal, Dukhi Ram Chaudhary reported, out of the total Tharu population, 80% are Dangauras and only 20% are Kathariya Tharus.

2. Methodology

The linguistic data, mainly natural and elicited texts, of Kathariya Tharu were collected from Joshipur municipality-3, Lakkad, Ghodaghodi municipality-9, Sisaiya, Ghodaghodi-12, Kota, and Kailari-8, Lausa, and that of Dangaura Tharu were collected from Rampur-3, Palanse, Tulasipur-4,

---

[2] Rajpoot et al. (2016, pp. 219-20) have surveyed that "More number of Tharu population (approximately 80%) of India are living in western part i.e. Khatima and Sitarganj tehsil of Udham Singh Nagar in Uttarakhand

and small population living in Kheri, Pilibhit, Gorakhpur, Bahirayach of Uttar Pradesh and Champaran District of Bihar."

[3] After the recommendation of the Language commission, Rana Tharu has been officially accepted as a different language.

Badgaun, Hekuli-3 Hekuli and Saudiyar-9, Sisahaniya of Dang district. The collected texts were transcribed and translated. Toolbox was used for morpheme breaks and interlinearization. A corpus of each of these languages was prepared and the examples are taken from these corpus.

3. The typology of case marking

Case is an inherent 'syntactic as well as morphological category' of the noun phrase. It establishes the functional or semantic relation of the arguments in the subject position with the predicate in a clause or sentence. Languages tend to have only three distinct core grammatical relation categories (Subject, Object, and indirect Object) but many (potentially an unlimited number of) semantic roles and pragmatic statuses (Payne, 1997, p. 133). The argument relations in a clause can be realized in the form of case inflections and adpositions, in the form of a bound pronouns attached either to the predicate or to some other constituent of a clause or in the constituent order as in English (Dixon, 2010, p. 119). Both Kathariya and Dangaura Tharu are Indo-Aryan languages and follow the nominative-accusative case marking system. In both of these languages, the arguments in A and S functions are marked with nominative case marker, whereas the arguments in P function are marked with dative-accusative case marker.

4. Case marking in Kathariya and Dangaura Tharu

The discussion of case marking system in modern languages is basically based on the Paninian Grammar of Sanskrit. Unlike the eight-case system including the vocative in OIA (Whitney, 1962, p. 89), both Kathariya and Dangaura Tharu varieties exhibit seven cases excluding the vocative. They are: nominative, dative-accusative, instrumental, ablative, genitive, locative, and comitative.[4] This section presents the morphosyntactic differences between these Tharu varieties.

4.1 Nominative case

The arguments with S and A functions in a clause are in nominative case which is always unmarked in both the Tharu varieties: Kathariya and Dangaura. The nominative case in both of these languages is unmarked.[5] In other words, the subject of an intransitive verb as in (1a and c) and that of a transitive verb as in (1b and d) are in the nominative case and are always unmarked. For example:

(1) a. *ekʈʰo ʈʰaũmʌ pʰul dʑokʰni rani ba* (Dangaura)
         ek-ʈʰo   ʈʰaũ-mʌ   pʰul   dʑokʰni   rani
         one-NCLF   place-LOC   Phul   dʑokʰni   queen

         ba
         be-PRS -3SG
         'There is Phuljokhni queen at a place.'
                                          (FR_MRC.056)

     b. *ʈʌ sə̃pwa kʌhʌl ki mwar maŋ ʌur kutsʰ nʌi ɦo* (Dangaura)
         ʈʌ   sə̃pwa   kʌh-l   ki   mwar
         PRT   snake   say-PST.3SG.NH that 1SG.GEN

         maŋ   ʌur   kutsʰ   nʌi   ɦo
         demand   other some   NEG   be.PRS.3SG.NH
         'Then the snake said that he did not have any other demand.' (FR_MRC.055)

     c. *pʰer gʌinẽ ɦijãse tsʰimanʌnd mʌɦʌtõ* (Kathariya)
         pʰer   ja-n-ẽ   ɦijã-se   tsʰimanʌnd
         also   go-PST-3PL   here-ABL   Chhimanʌnd

         mʌɦʌtõ
         Mahato
         'Then Chimananda Mahato went from here.'
                                          (SRK_PLS..107)

     d. *dʑʌuwaram iskul kʰolle ɦʌe* (Kathariya)
         dʑʌuwaram   iskul   kʰol-le   ɦo-e
         Jauwaram   school   open-PRF   be.PRS -3SG
         'Jauwa Ram has started a school.'
                                          (SRK_PLS..043)

The example (1a) and (1c) have intransitive clauses in Dangaura and Kathariya Tharu respectively. The

---

[4] In contrast, Bhojpuri has only three types of postpositions that are used to express the case relations: the object marking postposition, the genitive marking postposition and the adverbial postposition (Shukla, 1981, p. 97) and there are only three organic cases: the nominative, the instrumental, and locative in Modern Maithili (Jha, 1958, p. 306).

[5] The arguments in A and S functions in Chitoniya Tharu (Paudyal, 2014, p. 84), Maithili (Yadav, 1996, pp. 72-3; Yadava, 2004, p. 253), and Bhojpuri (Shukla, 1981, p. 68) are also unmarked.

subjects in both of these sentences, *pʰul ʤokʰni rani* and *tʃimanʌnd mʌhʌtõ,* are in nominative case and unmarked. Similarly, the noun phrases in Agentive role in examples (1b) and (1d), *sə̃pwa* 'snake' *ʤʌuwaram* 'Jauwa Ram' are also in nominative case and unmarked.[6]

4.2 Dative-accusative case

Dative is the case of indirect object, the recipient, of a ditransitive predicate, whereas accusative is the case of direct object, the patient, of the transitive verb. Because in most of the NIA languages, both the dative and accusative cases are marked with the same marker, Masica (1991, p. 239) claims that "there is no accusative case in the NIA". In both of these Tharu languages- Dangaura and Kathariya-, there is no distinction between the P element and R element. Both the direct and indirect objects are treated equally. However, the Dative-accusative markers in both of these languages are different. In Kathariya Tharu it is coded with *-kehʌn,* as in example (2a) and (2b).

(2) a. *kʌhũ bʌhinijã ʌpʌn dadakehʌn mari?*
        kʌhã-ũ   bʌhinijã   ʌpʌn
        where-EMPH   sister   REFL

        dada-kehʌn   mar-i
        elder brother-ACC   kill-FUT.3SG
        'Will a younger sister ever kill her own elder brother?'   (ELCTD.0516)

    b. *behan huigel to puliskehʌn kʰʌbʌr kʌrdehʌl*
        behan   ɦo-ja-l   to
        morning   be.PRS-go-PST.3SG   PRT

        pulis-kehʌn   kʰʌbʌr   kʌr-de-ʌl
        police-ACC   information   do-give-PST.3SG
        'As it became morning, she informed the police.'   (UCK.MCK.186)

In both of these examples, the arguments functioning as the patient *dada* 'elder brother' and *pulis* 'police' are marked with the accusative marker-*kehʌn.*

Sometimes, the second syllable of this marker *-hʌn* is omitted and only *-ke*[7] is used, as in example (3a).

(3) a. *uttʌm tsʌnd raʤake mardehʌl*
        uttʌm   tsʌnd   raʤa-ke   mar-de-ʌl
        Uttam   Chanda   king-ACC   kill-give-PST.3SG
        '(She) killed Uttam Chanda king.'   (UCK.MCK.184)

    b. *ohʌke leʤake ʤimdarke pʌinʰa diɦi*
        u-ke   le-ʤa-ke   ʤimdar-ke
        that-ACC   bring-go-SEQ   landlord-ACC

        pʌinʰ-a   di-ɦi
        wear-CAUS   give-FUT.1PL
        'We take the garland and make the landlord wear it'.   (Athaiya_MCK.057)

In the examples, *uttʌm tsʌnd raʤa* (3a) and *ohʌke* 'u -ACC' (3b) are in Patient role and *ʤimdar* in (3b) is in the role of Recipient, but all of these arguments are marked with the same Dative-accusative marker *-ke*.

However, Dangaura Tharu is unique in this case. It has a distinct Dative-accusative marker *-hʌnʌ* or its allomorph *-hʌn* or *-ʌn,* which is not found in any other Tharu languages. The examples (4a-b) are illustrative.

(4) a. *u pʰula mʌhihʌnʌ gʰʌlai pʌri*
        u   pʰula   mʌi-ɦʌnʌ   gʰʌl-a-i
        3SG   flower   1SG-ACC   wear-CAUS-NMLZ

        pʌr-i
        have to-FUT.3SG
        '(You) will have to put that flower on me.'   (FR_MRC.099)

    b. *hũkʌn pʰe sʌbʤʌhʌn ʈir lʌgaɖehʌl*
        ɦũkrʌ-ʌn   pʰe   sʌb-ʤʌn-ɦʌn   ʈir
        3PL-ACC   also   all-NCLF-ACC   bank

        lʌga-ɖe-l
        wear-give-PST.3SG.NH
        '(He) took all of them also to the bank (of the river).'   (FR_MRC.114)

Differential object marking (DOM) is also attested in Kathariya Tharu. The difference is based on the

---

[6] In Many of the NIA languages like Bengali (Forbs 1862, p. 21), Hindi (Kachru, 2006, p. 50), Modern Kashmiri (Koul & Woli, 2006, p. 31), Rajbansi (Wilde, 2008, p. 106), Urdu (Schmidt, 1999, p. 7), and Punjabi (Bhatia, 1993, p. 168) the arguments with S function are always unmarked.

[7] *-ke* is a common Dative-accusative marker in Chitoniya Tharu (Paudyal, 2014, p. 89), Bhojpuri (Shukla, 1981, p 78), Lohar (2020, p. 254)), Maithili (Yadav, 1996, p. 73), and many other NIA languages.

animacy hierarchy. Kathariya Tharu distinguishes between human and non-human Patients. In this language, human Patients are obligatorily marked with -*keĥʌn* or -*ke* as exemplified in (2a-b) and (3a-b) above, whereas non-human Patients are again differentiated on the basis of animacy hierarchy.[8] Inanimate Patients are never marked (5a) but the animate non-human Patients are optionally marked with -*ke* or *keĥʌn* (5b-c).

(5) a. *ʌtra ʦaur leke ʤaeb* (Kathariya)
         ʌʈra   ʦaur   le-ke   ʤa-b
         this much rice   bring-SEQ go-FUT.1PL
         'We will go taking this much rice.'
         (Diwari_MCK.007)

     b. *ʤib ʤʌnabʌrkeĥʌn nai mʌrna ʦaĥi*
         (Kathariya)
         ʤib ʤʌnabʌr-keĥʌn nai mʌrna ʦaĥi
         living creatures-ACC NEG kill.INF should
         'We should not kill animals.' (ELCTD.0442)

In the examples (5a), we see the inanimate P argument *ʦaur* 'rice' is not marked, whereas in (5b) the non-human animate P argument *ʤib ʤʌnabʌrkeĥʌn* 'living creatures' is marked with -*keĥʌn*.[9]

On the contrary, Dangaura Tharu does not exhibit differential object marking. No distinction is attested between human -non-human or animate-inanimate Patient arguments in terms of dative-accusative case marking. All the arguments with Patient or Recipient role are marked with the Dative-accusative marker -*ĥʌnʌ* or its allomorph -*ĥʌn*. For example:

(6) a. *ʈʌ apʌn ʦʰawaĥʌnʌ kʌĥʌl*   (Dangaura)
         ʈʌ   apʌn ʦʰawa-ĥʌnʌ kʌĥ-l
         PRT REFL son-DAT   say-PST.3SG.NH
         'Then he told his son.'   (DIL-YRC.143)

     b. *u bʌgʰwa u ʦʌʈurjai giɖraĥʌnʌ pʌkʌrlelis*
         u bʌgʰwa u   ʦʌʈurjai giɖra-ĥʌnʌ
         that tiger that clever   jackal-DAT

pʌkʌr-le-l-is
catch-take-PST-3SG.NH
'The tiger caught the clever jackal.'
(CJ_DLC.028)

In these examples, (6a) has human Patient *apʌn ʦʰawaĥʌnʌ* 'his son' and (6b) consists of a non-human but a living creature *giɖraĥʌnʌ* 'jackal -Dat' but both of these arguments in Patient role are marked with the Dative-accusative marker -*ĥʌnʌ*.

Similarly, Dangaura Tharu does not exhibit the animacy distinction in the non-human living creatures, as in the examples (7a), (7b) and (7c) where the inanimate Patients *hiraĥʌnʌ* 'diamond -ACC', *ʦʰʌʈiĥʌnʌ* 'hive -ACC' and *kʌʈʰaĥʌnʌ* 'story -ACC' respectively are marked with the same Dative- accusative marker -*ĥʌnʌ*.

(7) a. *ʤʌnni mʌnʌijã u hiraĥʌnʌ ʦʰopkʌnʌ dʰʌiɖeĥʌl*
         ʤʌnni mʌnʌijã u   ĥira-ĥʌnʌ
         woman man   that diamond-ACC

         ʦʰop-kʌnʌ dʰʌr-ɖe-l
         cover-SEQ keep-give-PST.3SG
         'The woman kept the diamond covering it.'
         (DIL-YRC.033)

     b. *ɖosrʌ marʌk bʰirjʌk mʌɖrik ʦʰʌʈiĥʌnʌ ʈʰʌʈʰai*
         ɖosrʌ marʌk bʰirja-k
         then   PRT   bumble bee-GEN

         mʌɖri-k   ʦʰʌʈi-ĥʌnʌ   ʈʰʌʈʰa-i
         bumble bee-GEN hive-ACC   hit-3SG.NH
         '(He took him) to hit the bumble bee hive.'
         (BMC-JR.056)

     c. *mʌi apʌn kʌʈʰaĥʌnʌ jahã ʌnʈjʌ kʌrʈʰũ*
         mʌi apʌn kʌʈʰa-ĥʌnʌ jaha ʌnʈjʌ
         1SG REFL story-ACC   here ending

         kʌr-ʈʰ-ũ
         do-PRS-1SG
         'I finish my story here. Thank you.'

         (CJ_DLC.044)

Both of these languages do have postpositions to express the Recipient role or the benefactive function of the argument. In Kathariya Tharu a separate post-position- *tʌĥʌn* 'for' is attested for the

---

[8] Chatterji (1926, p. 722) finds the distinction between animate and inanimate objects in all the Magadhan languages. He states that Magadhan speeches including Bengali preserved the common NIA differentiation between animate and inanimate nouns in the accusative

case. This peculiarity is undoubtedly derived through contact with Dravidian.
[9] Yadav (1996, p. 76) also finds the animacy hierarchy in Maithili where inanimate P arguments are not marked for Dative-accusative case.

purpose. In the examples (8a-b), the Recipient role is coded with the postposition -tʌɦʌn, which is the function of Dative case.

(8)   a.   *dai mortʌɦʌn aʤ bʰat nai nidʰijo*
           dai   mor-tʌɦʌn   aʤ
           mother 1SG.GEN-DAT.ADP   today

           bʰat   nai   nidʰ-i-jo
           food   PROB   cook-FUT-2PL
           'Mother, do not cook food for me today.'
                                          (ELCTD.0230)

      b.   *ʌb u ka kʌrʌl ʌpʌn dadak tʌɦʌn kʰana bʌnail*
           ʌb   u   ka   kʌr-ʌl   ʌpʌn
           now   that what   do-PST.3SG   REFL

           dada-k   tʌɦʌn   kʰana
           elder brother-GEN   DAT.ADPfo   od

           bʌna-l
           make-PST.3SG
           'Now what she did was prepare food for her
           elder brother.'   (UCK.MCK.100)

Similarly, a separate post-position- *lag-* 'for' is attested to express the Recipient role in Dangaura Tharu. It is close to the Nepali post-position *lagi* 'for' which shows the influence of Nepali upon this language. The examples (9a-b) illustrate the case.

(9)   a.   *mwar lag bʌʦaɖelo ki nahi?*
           mwar   lag
           1SG.GEN   DAT.ADP

           bʌʦa-ɖe-l-o   ki   naɦi
           save-give-PST-2PL.MH   or   NEG
           'Have you saved some for me or not?'

                                          (BMC-JR.019)

      b.   *ʈũhar lag bʌʦaɖerʌkʰnũ*
           ʈũɦar   lag   bʌʦa-ɖe-rʌkʰ-n-ũ
           2SG.GEN DAT.ADP   save-give-keep-PST-1SG
           'I have saved for you.'   (BMC-JR.023)

The Dative-accusative case in these Tharu languages is realized quite differently in plural. We have noticed that in singular it is marked by the Dative-accusative marker *-keɦʌn or -ʌn* in Kathariya Tharu and *-ɦʌnʌ or -hʌn* in Dangaura Tharu. But in plural, Kathariya Tharu attests a different Dative-accusative marker *-in* which is applied after affixing the plural suffix-*bʰʌr* to the root form of the argument. It is illustrated in the examples (10a-b) where Patient arguments *nokʌrbʰʌrin* 'servant -PL -DAT.ACC' and

lʌurʰijabʰʌrin 'daughter -PL -DAT.ACC' have been marked differently.

(10) a.   *baba pʌʈʰadeɦʌl nokʌrbʰʌrin*
           baba   pʌʈʰa-de-ʌl   nokʌr-bʰʌr-in
           father   send-give-PST.3SG   servant-PL-ACC
           'Father sent all the servants.'
                                          (KP_MCK.064)

      b.   *i raʤa ʌpʌn lʌurʰijabʰʌrin kʌɦʌle rʌhe ki mor bʰagse kʰaitijã*
           i   raʤa   ʌpʌn   lʌurʰija-bʰʌr-in
           this king   REFL   daughter-PL-ACC

           kʌɦi-le   rʌɦ-e   ki   mor
           say-PRF   be.pst-3SG   that   1SG.GEN

           bʰag-se   kʰa-t-ijã
           fate-ABL   eat-PRS-3PL
           'This king had told all these daughters that they
           all eat due to his fate.'

                                          (KP_MCK.273)

4.3 Non-nominative subject

The argument in the S or A function is in nominative case and it is not overtly marked in both of these varieties. But in most of the NIA "and non-NIA" languages there are expressions in which the arguments used in the subject position are not the Agents or doer of the action. They are rather the experiencers of the predicates in the sentences and are termed as non-nominative subjects (Yadava, 2004, p. 255). Since most of the NIA languages use the Dative construction for such arguments, Masica (1991, p. 346) calls it the dative subject. Such expressions are used only when the predicates embody the "states of affairs that are conceived as uncontrollable" (Shibatani & Pardeshi, 2001, p. 324). Genetti (2007, p. 111) finds the Dative experiencer constructions very common in South Asia and, states that they "are taken as a criterion for establishing the South Asian sub-continent as a linguistic area." Both of these Tharu varieties use dative subject construction, as Masica calls it, to mark the experiencer subject. In Kathariya Tharu the experiencer subject is marked with the dative-accusative marker *-keɦʌn* or its allomorph *-ke*, as illustratesd in (11a-b) where (11a) presents the physical state and (11b) shows the obligation of the experiencer subject.

(11) a.   *lʌurijakeɦʌn sʌrdi lagʌl ɦe*
           lʌurija-keɦʌn   sʌrdi   lag-ʌl
           daughter-DAT-ACC   cold   start-PST.3SG

ɦe
be.PRS.3SG
'My daughter is suffering from cold.'
(ELCTD.0413)

b. *adʑ moɦʌke i kam urbʌina he*
adʑ   mofɦʌke   i   kam   urbʌina   he
today 1SG.DAT this work finish   be.PRS.3SG
'I have to finish this work today.'
(ELCTD.0417)

Similarly, Dangaura Tharu also exhibits the dative subject construction to present the experiencer subject. As illustrated in the examples (12a-b), which show the physical state and the obligation of the experiencer subjects, both the examples are marked with dative case marker *-ɦʌnʌ* and *-hʌ*.

(12) a. *kirʌn radʑɦʌnʌ ris lʌglin*
kirʌn   radʑa-ɦʌnʌ   ris   lʌg-l-in
Kiran king-DAT   anger feel-PST-3SG.NH
'The king Kiran became furious.'
(GAK-BMC.288)

b. *ʈuhiɦʌ ekʈʰo bʰwadʑ kʌrʌ pʌri*
ʈũ-ɦʌnʌ   ek-ʈʰo   bʰwadʑ   kʌr-ʌ
2SG-DAT one-NCLF marriage do-PURP

pʌr-i
have to-3SG
'You have to do one more marriage.'
(FR_MRC.097)

4.4 Instrumental case

The argument which is used as the means or instrument to perform the proposition is marked with the Instrumental case marker. Although it was used to refer to the sense of adjacency, accompaniment, association, along with that of the means and instrument in OIA (Whitney 1962, p. 92), these Tharu languages have preserved it only in the sense of means or instrument. Unlike Chitoniya and Dangaura Tharu, the instrumental case in Kathariya Tharu is coded with the instrumental marker *-lʌike* which is unique instrumental marker in itself.

(13) a. *tsiʈʰrake bʌnʌiɦĩ suilʌike*
tsiʈʰra-ke   bʌna-ɦĩ   sui-lʌike
cloth pieces-GEN make-FUT.3PL needle-INST
'(We) make (a doll) with pieces of clothes with a needle.'   (Pachaiya_MCK.041)

b. *bʌɦinijã redʑalʌike bar tsõtsʌt he*
bʌɦinijã   redʑa-lʌike   bar   tsõts-ʌt
sister   comb-INST hair comb-PROG

ɦe
be.PRS.3SG
'Sister is combing hair with a comb.'
(ELCTD.0454)

The examples in (13a-b) illustrate that the instrument for performing a task is marked with a Instrumental case marker *-lʌike* in Kathariya Tharu. In (13a) *sui* is used as an instrument to make a *gurɦi* 'doll'. Similarly, in (13b), *redʑa* 'comb' is used as an instrument to comb hair. So, both of these arguments are marked with an instrument marker *-lʌike*.

However, Dangaura Tharu attests a different instrument case marker *-le* which is not found in any other Tharu languages. The Dangaura Tharu instrumental case marker *-le* shows the direct influence of Nepali up on this language. Let's see the examples in (14a-b).

(14) a. *mʌi ḍekʰnũ apʌn ãkʰile ḍekʰnũ mʌi*
mʌi   ḍekʰ-n-ũ   apʌn   ãkʰi-le
1SG   see-PST-1SG   REFL   eye-INST

ḍekʰ-n-ũ   mʌi
see-PST-1SG   1SG
'I saw her with my own eyes.'
(DIL-YRC.040)

b. *uhiɦʌ korrʌle putsʰiorse marʌʈ marʌʈ dʑʌgʌilʌ*
u-ɦi-ɦʌnʌ   korra-le   puchi-ɦiwor-se
3SG-EMPH-DAT whip-INST tail-DIR-ABL

mar-ʌʈ   mar-ʌʈ   dʑag-a-l-ʌ
kill-PROG kill-PROG wake up-CAUS-PST-3SG.NH
'(He) woke up (the snake) by whipping him from the tail.'
(FR_MRC.088)

The instrumental case marker *-le* is used with *ãkʰile* 'eye -INST' (14a) and *korrʌle* 'whip -INST' (14b) in these examples.

Besides, Dangaura Tharu also attests another instrument marker *-se* which is common in many of the NIA languages like Hindi (Kachru, 2006, p. 49), Bhojpuri (Shukla, 1981, p. 99) and Chitoniya Tharu. In the examples (15a-b) and (15c) we notice that the instrument marker *-se* is affixed to *kaʈʰik ɦʌr* 'wood -GEN plough', *kurar* 'axe' and *bʰag* 'fate' to mark the instrumental case.

(15) a. *ɦʌmrʌ kaʈʰik ɦʌrse kʰeʈwa dʑwaʈʈʰi*
ɦʌmrʌ   kaʈʰi-k   ɦʌr-se   kʰeʈwa
1PL   wood-GEN plough-INST field

ʤwaṭ-ṭʰ-i
plough-PRS-1PL
'We plough our fields with a wooden plough.'
(ELCTD_ PG.210)

b. *u kurarse apʌn gwara kaṭʌl*
u   kurar-se   apʌn   gwara   kaṭ-ʌl
3SG   axe-INST   REFL   leg   cut-PST.3SG
'He cut his leg with an axe.'
(ELCTD_ PG.214)

c. *mʌi ʌpʌn bʰagse kʰʌitũ* (Kathariya)
mʌi   ʌpʌn   bʰag-se   kʰa-t-ũ
1SG   REFL   fate-INST   eat-PRS-1SG
'I eat because of my own fate.'
(KP_MCK.045)

With the verbs of speaking like *kʌĥ* 'say' and *puʦʰ* 'ask', the instrument marker *-se* is also used with the listener in Kathariya Tharu, whereas in Dangaura Tharu, the listener is marked with Dative-accusative marker *-hʌnʌ*, as illustrated in the examples (16a-b).

(16) a. *to u raʤa ʌpʌn bʌnna wala lʌurʰijase puʦʰʌl*
to   u   raʤa   ʌpʌn   bʌnna wala
PRT   that king   REFL   big   who does

lʌurʰija-se   puʦʰ-ʌl
daughter-ABL   ask-PST.3SG
'The king asked his eldest daughter.'
(KP_MCK.011)

b. *giɖra ʤunʰuk giɖʌrnjahʌnʌ kʌĥʌl* (Dangaura)
giɖra   ʤunʰuk   giɖʌrnja-ĥʌnʌ
jackal PRT   female jackal-DAT

kʌĥi-l
say-PST.3SG.NH
'The male jackal told the female jackal.'
(CJ_BMC.033)

4.5 Ablative case

The ablative case is used to express removal, separation, distinction, issue and the like (Whitney 1962, p. 96). In most of the NIA languages like Hindi (Kachru, 2006, p. 104), Bhojpuri (Shukla, 1981, p. 99), Chitoniya Tharu (Paudyal, 2014, p. 95), and Dangaura Tharu (Paudyal, 2022, p. 60), the ablative function is realized in the form of *-se*.[10] But Kathariya Tharu is unique in this case too. The Ablative function in this language is encoded in the form of *-ti* which is affixed to the argument from

which the 'removal, separation or distinction' occurs. The origin may be temporal or spatial as illustrated in the examples (17a-b).

(17) a. *ĥʌmre gʰʌrti lʌike ʤaeb pʰul mala*
ĥʌmre   gʰʌr-ti   le-ke
1PL   house-ABL   bring-SEQ

ʤa-b   pʰul mala
go-FUT.1PL   flower garland
'We take flowers and garlands from our own home.' (Athaiya_MCK.053)

b. *tʌĩ kʌbti dukanme kam kʌrʌt baʈe?*
tʌĩ   kʌb-ti   dukan-me   kam
2SG.NH   when-ABL   shop-LOC   work

kʌr-ʌt   baʈ-e
do-PROG   be.PRS-2SG.NH
'How long have you been working in a shop?'
(ELCTD.0186)

The example (17a) shows a spatial origin *gʰʌr* 'house' and the one in (17b) shows temporal origin *kʌbti* 'when -ABL' from where the separation takes place.

However, in Dangaura Tharu, the ablative funtion is coded with the ablative marker *-se* which is common in many of the NIA languages. The examples in (18a-b) illustrate the situation.

(18) a. *oĥo sʌŋʰari kʌĥãse aiʈo?*
Oĥo   sʌŋʰari   kʌĥã-se   a-ṭ-o
EXCL   friend   where-ABL   come-PRS-2PL.MH
'Hey friend, where are you coming from?'
(CJ_DLC.031)

b. *uhi ɖinse hũkʌnʌk gʰʌrmʌ bʌɖa mʌʤase rʌlʌ*
u-ĥi   ɖin-se   hũkrʌ-ak   gʰʌr-mʌ
that-EMPH day-ABL   3PL-GEN   house-LOC

bʌɖa   mʌʤa-se   rʌĥ-l-ʌ
much   good-ABL   live-PST-3PL
'That day onwards, they lived a very happily and prosperous life.'   (DIL-YRC.148)

The spatial and temporal origin for ablative marker is attested in Dangaura Tharu too as in the example (18a) we have a spatial origin and in (18b) we see the temporal origin.

In Dangaura Tharu we notice compound case marking system in ablative case which is lacking in Kathariya Tharu.[11] For example:

---

[10] In Maithili, the ablative marker is *sʌ/sə̃* instead of *-se* (Yadav, 1996, p. 86).

[11] A noticeable point regarding the case system in Dangaura Tharu is the compoud case marking system

(19) a. *ɖosrʌ ʥfikʌl dfikoma kũwomʌse*

ɖosrʌ   ʥfik-ʌl   dfikwa-ma
after that   take out-PST.3SG   bank-LOC

kũwa-mʌ-se
well-LOC-ABL
'Then (she) pulled him up onto the edge from the well.'   (BMC-JR.101)

b. *ʈʌb ji gaũmʌse nikʌrʌl ʈʌ ekʈho phulwar rʌfʌ*

ʈʌb   ji   gaũ-mʌ-se   nikʌr-ʌl
then this village-LOC-ABL   come out-PST.3SG

ʈʌ   ek-ʈho   phulwar   rʌfi-ʌ
PRT   one-NCLF   garden   be.PST-3SG
'When he came out of the village, there was a garden.'   (KC-BLC.069)

This compound case marking is attested only in ablative case in which the ablative marker *-se* follows the locative marker *-mʌ* as in *kũwomʌse* 'well -LOC -ABL' (19a) and *gaũmʌse* 'village -LOC -ABL' in (19b). The multiple case marking in Dangaura Tharu is not attested in all the situation of ablative case. The locative marker *-mʌ* is only used when there is the sense of 'from inside'. So in these examples, *kũwomʌse* means 'from inside the well' and *gaũmʌse* means 'from inside the village'.

4.6 Genitive case

The genitive case marker *-kʌ* or its allomorphs *-k* is common in Tharu languages like Chitoniya, Dangaura and Kathariya Tharu and Maithili (Yadav, 1996, p. 90). The genitive marker *-kʌ/k* is affixed to the argument with the genitive relation with the other arguments in the clause. The NP with the genitive case marker always has an adjectival function. The examples (20a-d) are illustrative.

(20) a. *ʌpna ʌpna gaũkʌ ʦʌlʌn* (Kathariya)
ʌpna   ʌpna   gaũ-ke   ʦʌlʌn
REFL   REFL   village-GEN   tradition
'The tradition of one's own village.'
(DR_BRK.163)

b. *ab nafi ai gaũk mʌnʌĩ* (Kathariya)
ab   nafi a-i   gaũ-k   mʌnʌĩ
now   NEG   come-FUT.3SG   village-GEN man
'Now the villagers do not come.'
(Athaiya_MCK.082)

c. *giɖra bʌgfwakʌ ɖʌrleke bepʌʈʈa bfagʌl* (Dangaura)
giɖra   bʌgfwa-kʌ   ɖʌr-le-ke
jackal tiger-GEN   fear-take-SEQ

bepʌʈʈa   bfag-ʌl
unknown   run away-PST.3SG
'The jackal ran away being afraid of the tiger.'
(BMC_TAC.227)

d. *ɖurwa ɖiʈurʌwakʌ gfar djakhʌl nʌi?* (Dangaura)
ɖurwa ɖiʈurʌwa-kʌ   gfar
Durwa Diturawa-GEN   house

djakh-l   nʌi
see-PST.3SG.NH   NEG
'He saw (fire) in Durwa Diturawa's house, didn't he?'   (KCS-JLC.144)

It can be clearly said that both of these languages share the same genitive marker *-kʌ* or its allomorph *-k* as we see in *gaũkʌ* 'village -GEN' (20a), *gaũk* 'village -GEN' (20b), *bʌgfwakʌ* 'tiger -GEN' (20c) and *ɖurwa ɖiʈurʌwakʌ* 'Durwa Diturawa -GEN' (20d), though (20a-b) are extracted from Kathariya Tharu and (20c-d) from Dangaura Tharu corpus.

Besides, Kathariya Tharu also attests a different genitive marker *-ke*. We have plenty of examples in our corpus in which the genitive relation is coded with the genitive marker *-ke* instead of *-kʌ* as in (21a-b).

(21) a. *u mʌlwarake raʥa rʌfe*
u   mʌlwara-ke   raʥa   rʌfi-e
3SG Malhwara-GEN   king   be.pst-3SG
'He was the king of Malhwara.'
(CH.MCK.016)

b. *pʌttake dona bʌnake umne daru rʌfi*
pʌtta-ke   dona   bʌna-ke   u-me
leaf-GEN   leaf bowl   make-SEQ   that-LOC

daru   rʌfi-i
wine   be.pst-FUT.3SG
'We make a bowl of leaves and keep wine in it.'   (DR_MCK.132)

But we do not have a similar genitive marker in Dangaura Tharu.

---

which is a "more interesting deviation from standard IA typology in Tharu" (Boehm, 2008, p. 45).

4.7 Locative case

The locative marker in many of the NIA languages like Hindi, Maithili, Bhojpuri, Nepali, Chitoniya Tharu, Dangaura Tharu, and Kathariya Tharu begin with the bilabial nasal sound *m*. In the languages like Hindi, Maithili, Bhojpuri, it is -*me*, in Nepali it is -*ma*, in Chitoniya Tharu it is -*ma* or its allomorphs -*mʌ* or -*m* and in Dangaura Tharu it is -*mʌ*. But Kathariya Tharu locative is similar to that of Hindi which shows Hindi influence on this language. The examples are in (22a-d).

(22) a. *ʦʌudʰʌrime diutame ʦʌɖʰta* (Kathariya)
   ʦʌudʰʌri-me diuta-me ʦʌɖʰ-t-a
   Chaudhary-LOC God-LOC offer-PRS-3SG
   'In Chaudhary tradition, Jamara is offered to
   the Gods.'   (Athaiya_MCK.069)

  b. *lekin ɦʌmmʌr diutame nai ʦʌɖʰta* (Kathariya)
   lekin ɦʌmmʌr diuta-me nai
   but   1PL.GEN God-LOC NEG

   ʦʌɖʰ-t-a
   offer-PRS-3SG
   'But it is not offered to our Gods.'
         (Athaiya_MCK.073)

  c. *u kʰolwamʌ ekʈʰo gyãɡʈa rʌɦʌ* (Dangaura)
   u kʰolwa-mʌ ek-ʈʰo gyãɡʈa rʌɦi-ʌ
   that river-LOC one-NCLF crab be.PST-3SG
   'There was a crab in the river.'
         (BMC_TAC.014)

  d. *ekʈʰo bʌnwamʌ bʌgʰwa rʌɦʌ* (Dangaura)
   ek-ʈʰo bʌnwa-mʌ bʌgʰwa rʌɦi-ʌ
   one-NCLF jungle-LOC tiger be.PST-3SG
   'There was a tiger in the jungle.'
         (BMC_TAC.011)

The locative marker in Kathariya Tharu is -*me* as in *ʦʌudʰʌrime* 'Chaudhary -LOC', *diutame* 'God -LOC' (22a) and *diutame* 'God -LOC' (22b). But in Dangaura Tharu it is -*mʌ* as in *kʰolwamʌ* 'river -LOC' (22C) and *bʌnwamʌ* 'jungle -LOC' (22d).

4.8 Comitative case

Comitative case in many of the NIA languages begins with -*s*. In Hindi it is *satʰ,* in Nepali it is *sʌŋgʌ*, in Chitoniya Tharu, it is *saŋge* and in Bengali and Oriya it is -*śɔŋge* and -*saŋge* respectively (Masica, 1991, p. 247). In this case Dangaura and Kathariya Tharu share the same comitative postposition -*sʌŋ* as illustrated in the examples (23a-d).

(23) a. *mʌi pʰen tumʰʌr sʌŋ bʌʣar ʥim*
   mʌi pʰen tumʰʌr sʌŋ bʌʣar ʥa-m
   1SG also 2SG.GEN SOC market go-1SG.FUT
   'I will also go to market with you.'
         (ELCTD.0502)

  b. *tʌĩ daik sʌŋ gʰʌrme bʌiʈʰ*
   tʌĩ dai-k   sʌŋ gʰʌr-me bʌiʈʰ-ø
   2SG.NH mother-GEN SOC house-LOC sit-IMP
   'You remain at home with mother.'
         (ELCTD.0504)

  c. *tʌĩ mwar sʌŋ ʦol*
   tʌĩ   mwar sʌŋ ʦol-ø
   2SG.NH 1SG.GEN SOC walk-IMP
   'You come with me.'
         (FR_MRC.152)

  d. *mwar ʥʌnni apʌn bʌɦinjã sʌŋ lʌiɦʌr gʌil*
   mwar ʥʌnni apʌn bʌɦinjã
   1SG.GEN wife REFL younger sister

   sʌŋ lʌiɦʌr   ʥa-l
   SOC parental home go-PST.3SG.NH
   'My wife went to her parental home with her
   sister.'   (ELCTD_PG.219)

The case marking system in both of these languages can be summarized in the table 1.

Table 1. Case Markers in Kathariya and Dangaura Tharu

	Nom.	ACC.	Inst.	Abl.	Gen.	Loc.	Soc.
Kath.	-ø	-kehʌn -ɦʌn	-lʌike	-ti -se	-ke	-me	-sʌŋ
Dang.	-ø	-ɦʌnʌ -ɦʌn -ɦʌ	-le -se	-se	-kʌ -k	-mʌ	-sʌŋ

5. Conclusion

Typologically both Kathariya and Dangaura Tharu languages follow nominative-accusative pattern. In both of these languages the S or A elements are always unmarked, whereas the P element is marked with the dative-accusative marker -*kehʌn or -ke* in Kathariya Tharu and -*ɦʌnʌ or -ɦʌn* in Dangaura Tharu. Kathariya Tharu exhibits the differential object marking (DOM), whereas Dangaura Tharu does not. Kathariya Tharu attests an instrumental case marker -*lʌike*, whereas in Dangaura Tharu it is realized in the form of -*le* or -*se*. Kathariya Tharu is unique in this case, no other Tharu language has this instrumental marker, nor do any language in contact have. Kathariya Tharu is unique in the ablative case too. The ablative case is coded with a

unique case marker -*ti* which is not attested in any other Tharu language. Dangaura Tharu shares the ablative marker -*se* with Hindi and Chitoniya Tharu. Genitive case marking, in both of these Tharu languages, is very close to Maithili, Bhojpuri and Chitoniya Tharu. Genitive case in all these languages is coded with -*kʌ* or its allomorph -*k.* Kathariya Tharu has another Genitive marker -*ke* too. The locative case marker in Kathariya Tharu is -*me* which shares with that of Hindi but in Dangaura Tharu it is -*mʌ*. Dangaura Tharu locative marker -*mʌ* seems to be very close to that of Nepali -*ma* which also shows the influence of Nepali on this language. It is only in the comitative case where these two languages share the same case marker -*sʌŋ*. Thus, even in case marking system, Kathariya and Dangaura Tharu seem to be following different linguistic system, although at the first glance they sound to be similar.

Abbreviations

1	First person	2	Second person
3	Third person	ABL	Ablative
CAUS	Causative	COM	Comitative
NCLF	Numeral classifier	EMPH	Emphatic
FUT	Future	GEN	Genitive
IMP	Imperative	INF	Infinitive
INST	Instrumental	LOC	Locative
NEG	Negative	NIA	New Indo-Aryan
OIA	Old Indo-Aryan	PRT	Particle
PASS	Passive	PL	Plural
PRS	Present	PRF	Perfective
PROG	Progressive	PST	Past
PURP	Purposive	REDUP	Reduplication
REFL	Reflexive	SEQ	Sequential
SG	Singular		

References

Boehm, E. D. (1998). *A phonological reconstruction of proto-Tharu* [Unpublished master's thesis]. University of Texas at Arlington.

Boehm, E. D. (2008). Compound case marking in Dangaura Tharu. *Nepalese linguistics,* 23, 40-57.

Bhatia, T. K. (1993). *Punjabi: A cognitive-descriptive grammar*. Routledge.

Chatterji, S. K. (1926). *The origin and development of the Bengali language,* Part II. Calcutta University Press.

Chaubey, G., Singh, M., Crivellaro, F., Tamang, R., Nandan, A., Singh, K., Sharma, V. K., Pathak, A. K., Shah, A. M., Sharma, V., Singh, V. K., Rani, D. S., Rai, N., Kushniarevich, A., Ilumäe, A.-M., Karmin, M., Phillip, A., Verma, Prank, E., ... Thangaraj, K. (2014). Unravelling the distinct strains of Tharu ancestry. *European Journal of Human Genetics, 22*, 1404-14012.

Dixon, R. M. W. (2010). *Basic linguistic theory,* Vol. II. Cambridge University Press.

Eberhard, D. M., Simons, G. F., & Fennig, C. D. (Eds.). (2021). *Ethnologue: Languages of the World* (24th ed.). SIL International. http://www.ethnologue.com.

Forbs, D. (1862). *A grammar of the Bengali language*. Crosby Lockwood and Son. https://archive.org/details/in.ernet.dli.2015.238518

Genetti, C. (2007). *A grammar of Dolakha Newar*. Mouton de Gruyter.

Grierson, G. A. (1968/1903). *Linguistic survey of India, V*. Part II. Motilal Banarasidas.

Jha, S. (1958). *The formation of the Maithili language*. Luzac & Company Ltd.

Kachru, Y. (2006). *Hindi.* John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Koul, O. N., & Woli, K. (2006). *Modern Kashmiri grammar.* Dunwoody Press.

Lohar, G. T. (2020). *A Grammar of Bhojpuri* [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. Tribhuvan University.

Masica, C. P. (1991). *The Indo-Aryan languages.* Cambridge University Press.

Paudyal, K. P. (2014). *A grammar of Chitoniya Tharu.* Lincom Europa.

Paudyal, K. P. (2022). *A grammar of Dangaura Tharu.* Lincom Europa.

Payne, T. E. (1997). *Describing morphosyntax: A guide for field linguists.* Cambridge University Press.

Rajpoot, A., Kumar, V. P., & Sharma, J. (2016). Current health status of Uttarakhand, Tharu tribe on the basis of blood clinical parameters: a bio-cultural perspective. *International Clinical Pathology Journal, 3*(3), 219–223. DOI: 10.15406/icpjl.2016.03.00077

Shibatani, M., & Pardeshi, P. (2001). Dative subject constructions in South Asian languages. In Rajendra Singh (Eds.), *The Year Book of*

South Asian Languages and Linguistics (pp. 311-347). Sage Publication.

Shukla, S. (1981). *Bhojpuri grammar.* Georgetown University Press.

Schmidt, R. L. (1999). *Urdu: An essential grammar*. Routledge.

Whitney, W. D. (1962). *Sanskrit grammar.* Motilal Banarasidas.

Wilde, C. P. (2008). *A sketch of the phonology and grammar of Rājbanshi.* Helsinki University Print.

Yadav, R. (1996). *A reference grammar of Maithili.* Mouton de Gruyter.

Yadava, Y. P. (2004). Non-nominative subjects in Maithili. In P. Bhaskararao, & K. V. Subbarao (Eds.) *Non-nominative subjects*, Vol. II (pp. 253-264). John Benjamins Publishing Company.