The Ergative System in Balochi from a Typological Perspective

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For the Western Iranian languages the transition from the Old Iranian to the Middle Iranian period is characterised – among other things – by the loss of word-final syllables. This loss had a far-reaching impact on the nominal and verbal systems since it caused the loss of categories which had been expressed by suffixes. The consequences include the emergence of the so-called ergative system.

Although descriptions of the ergative construction in Balochi do exist, there is no treatment yet which takes into account the material of the different dialects. Furthermore, the ergative construction in Balochi has been compared to data from Old Iranian, but not to Middle Iranian languages, and the development from the Middle Iranian stage to the different types found in present-day Balochi has not been studied yet. The aim of this paper is thus to present the data from the Balochi dialects as far as they are known today and to update, complete (and in some points, correct) previous descriptions of the matter.[1]

0. Introduction

Like many other modern Iranian languages, the majority of the Balochi dialects show a phenomenon called split ergativity. It may be defined as follows: In all tenses formed from the present stem, the subject is in the direct case (also called nominative or rectus) and the object (if any) in the oblique case as one would expect.[2] In the tenses formed from the past stem,[3] however, only the subject of intransitive verbs appears in the direct case, whereas the

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[1] The ergative in Balochi has been treated by Moškalo and Farrell (the latter apparently without knowledge of the former's study). MOŠKALO 1985 was written at a time (1981) when major treatments of Balochi dialects had not appeared yet (Southern Balochi: COLLETT 1983 (Kechi dialect of Oman) and FARRELL 1990 (Karachi Balochi), Western Balochi: NAWATA 1981 and BUDDRUSS 1988 on the Balochi of Afghanistan, Iranian Balochi: JAHANI 2003 and BARANZEHI 2003), so some dialect data were missing. The same applies to the treatment of Balochi in BOSSONG 1985. The focus of FARRELL's 1995 study is mainly on the Southern Balochi as spoken in Karachi. Both MOŠKALO 1985 and FARRELL 1995 do use data from Old Persian, but not from Middle Iranian languages in their discussions of the origin of the Balochi ergative construction.

In this paper, the transcription of all examples has been unified. The verbal element *a* marking the imperfect aspect in some dialects which morphologically belongs to the following verb form, but phonologically to the preceding word (cf. BUDDRUSS 1988:62ff.), is noted as an independent word here. A list of abbreviations is at the end of the article.

I would like to express my thanks to Jost Gippert, Carina Jahani and Lutz Rzehak for discussions on topics treated in this paper.

[2] Similar to the situation found e.g. in New Persian, Hindi and Turkish, only definite objects are marked as such in Balochi ("identified object marking", cf. FARRELL 1995:219) while indefinite objects show no ending (i.e. appear in the direct case): "the more definite and the more animate the object the more likely it is to have the [obl.] suffix" (FARRELL 1990:65).

[3] Tenses formed from the Balochi past stem (which ends in *-t*) include the following (terminology as in FARRELL 1990): simple past (e.g. *gušt* "said"), past subjunctive (*bu-gušt-ēn-* "should have said"), and also encompass the tenses formed from the perfect stem (ending in *-t-ag-* if a suffix follows, otherwise in *-t-a*), i.e. present perfect (*gušt-a* "has said"), past perfect (*gušt-a bīt-a / gušt-ag-at / gušt-ag-ā* "had said").

Translations of examples are meant rather literally, the verb forms being rendered by the corresponding English

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logical subject (agent) of transitive verbs[4] appears in the oblique case and the logical object in the direct case, but, as will be shown below, sometimes also in the oblique[5] or the object case[6] (cf. 1.); indirect objects are invariably in the oblique. The verb itself is without ending, which is equivalent to the form of the 3sg. It may agree in number with a 3rd person object in that it can take the suffix of the 3pl.:

verb	cases used	verbal agreement
intransitive	subject: direct case	with the subject
transitive	agent: oblique case object: direct, oblique or object case	with the object (optional)
0.1: use of cases in the tenses formed from the past stem in Balochi		

There is no agreement yet about the number and the terminology of Balochi cases, let alone on a supradialectal level. For the purposes of this paper, the following case system will be assumed as underlying all Balochi dialects:[7]

	direct	oblique	object[8]	genitive	vocative
singular	-∅[9]	-ā	-ārā	-ay[10]	-∅
plural		-ān[11], -ānā	-ān(r)ā	-ānī	-ān
0.2: basic case system of Balochi					

constructions, without implying that the functions are the same.

[4] Some verbs are treated as transitive (i.e. with logical subject in the obl. case) which would be considered intransitive in other languages, e.g. *kandag/handag* "to laugh", *kullag* "to cough", *gwārag* "to rain" (MOŠKALO 1985:118); similar observations may be made for Pashto, including verbs like *xandəl* "to laugh", *prəčəl* "to sneeze", *nacəl* "to dance" (Lutz Rzehak, personal communication). Conversely, some verbs borrowed from Urdu which one might assume to be transitive are treated as intransitives in Urdu as well as in Balochi (FARRELL 2003:200). The (in)transitivity of periphrastic verbal constructions and compound verbs depends on the properties of the finite verb (cf. 2.5).

[5] Note that in spite of FARRELL's notes (1995:222, 224), ergative constructions with both the agent and the object in the oblique case do occur in several Balochi dialects, cf. the examples in tables 1.1ff.

[6] According to FARRELL 1995:224, plurality of an object is rather not marked on the verb if a plural object is in the object case. The other studies do not discuss this situation.

[7] For the case system of Iranian Balochi cf. 1.4.

[8] This case (called dative, accusative or dative/accusative in the sources) is found in most Balochi dialects and used to a varying degree (more often in the sg. than in the pl.) instead of the oblique if an object (direct or indirect) is to be emphasised.

[9] Note that in the direct case, number is not marked on nouns and demonstrative pronouns: e.g. the demonstrative pronoun *ā* (also used as personal pronoun for the 3rd person) may be sg. or pl. The number may be inferred from the verbal ending if the noun/pronoun is the subject of a nominative sentence or the object of an ergative sentence. Since agreement is optional in the latter case, ergative sentences without a suffix on the verb are ambiguous.

[10] The ending of the gen.sg. varies considerably, ranging from *-ay* (WB dialects) via *-ē* (SB and EB) and *-ī* (only in some cases of names etc. in WB) to *-a* or even zero in southern WB (cf. JAHANI 1994:288).

[11] In several Balochi dialects, long vowels + *n* are pronounced as nasalised vowel especially in anteconsonantal position.

In the case of the personal pronouns of the 1st and 2nd persons, the variation between the dialects does not allow to establish a common system. Leaving aside some less important variants, the forms for the three main groups of dialects (Western, Southern and Eastern Balochi) are the following:

			direct	oblique	object	genitive
singular	1st	EB	*mã, ma, mã̃*	*mā*	*manā, manã̃*	
		WB	*man*		*manā*	*m(a)nī*
		SB	*man*	*manā*	*manārā*	
	2nd	EB	*tʰaw, tʰa*		*tʰarā*	
		WB	*taw, ta*		*tarā*	*t⁽ʰ⁾aī, t⁽ʰ⁾ī*
		SB	*taw, tō*	*t(a)rā*	*tarārā*	
plural	1st	EB	*mā*		*mār(ā)*	
		WB	*(am)mā*		*(am)mārā*	*(am)may, mē*
		SB	*mā*		*mārā*	
	2nd	EB	*š(a)wā, šā*		*š(a)wār, šār*	*š(a)wāī, šāī*
		WB	*š(u)mā*		*šumārā*	*šumay, šumē*
		SB	*šumā*		*šumārā*	
0.3: inflection of the personal pronouns in Balochi						

The personal pronouns always appear in the object case when constituting the direct or indirect object. In some dialects, the oblique case is found in agent function and after prepositions, in other dialects, it is the direct case. For more discussion cf. 1.1-1.4, 2.1.

The word order in ergative constructions is agent – object – verb in unmarked cases, but other sequences of elements also occur (MOŠKALO 1985:117f.).

1. The ergative construction in the Balochi dialects

The use of the ergative construction differs markedly depending on the dialects. The system found in the three main groups of dialects will thus be discussed first.

1.1 Eastern dialects

According to the possibly outdated data we possess of the Eastern dialects, the ergative construction is used throughout. The agent (nouns and pronouns) is in the oblique case,[12]

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[12] In one example in ELFENBEIN 1966:14, the pronoun of the 1sg. is in the direct case (i.e. *man*) when functioning as an agent. It is not clear, however, where this example comes from; both GRIERSON 1921 and GILBERTSON 1923 note the use of the oblique also for the pronoun of the 1sg., cf. the examples below. Note that the examples given in ELFENBEIN 1966:11ff. are the same for all dialects discussed, so they seem to be based

the object in the direct case. The verb has a plural suffix (optional according to GILBERTSON 1923:114) if the object is plural. It is noteworthy that the object may appear either in the direct or in the object case (GILBERTSON 1923:114, GRIERSON 1921:352), if it is a plural object also in the oblique (GILBERTSON 1923:197), reflecting some sort of mixing with the nominative construction (GEIGER 1901:239):[13]

agent	object	verbal ending	

obl.:
   sg. *-ā*
   pl. *-ã̄*
	dir.: *-∅*
	 obl./obj.:
	   sg. *-ār(ā)*
	   pl. *-ã̄(rā)*
		agreeing with the object:
		   sg. *-∅*
		   pl. *-ant*	

examples:[14]			
mardum<u>ā</u> Os	*naɣan* D	*wārtʰa*[15]	"the man has eaten bread"
m<u>ā</u> Os	*zahm<u>ã̄</u>* Op	*ārϑaɣ-<u>ant</u>*[16]	"I have brought the swords"
m<u>ā</u> Os	*mard<u>ã̄rā</u>* Ap	*ǰaϑa*[17]	"I have struck the men"
bādšāh<u>ā</u> Os	*man<u>ã̄</u>* As	*kʰuštʰa*[18]	"the king has killed me"
š<u>ā</u> Dp		*zāntʰō kʰuϑa*[19]	"have you done it knowingly?"
ēš<u>ī̄ā</u> Os	*čʰixtar dān* D	*društʰa*[20]	"how much grain has he/she ground?"
ã̄h<u>ã̄</u> Op	*tōbī* D	*ǰaϑa*[21]	"they have dived"
ã̄h<u>ī̄ā</u> Os	*tʰa<u>rā</u>* As	*hēčī na dāϑa*[22]	"he/she has given you nothing"
1.1: the ergative construction in Eastern Balochi dialects			

GRIERSON 1921:357ff. is the only author who reports personal endings agreeing with the agent (which is invariably in the obl.): *mā kʰuštʰaɣ-ã̄* "I have killed" (*-ã̄* is the ending of the 1sg.).

All examples cited above are based on the perfect stem. A simple past tense is not found in the dialects described by Dames and Gilbertson. GRIERSON 1921:358, however, notes a simple past (describing it as a kind of variant of the present perfect), e.g. *mā kʰuštʰ-ã̄* "I killed", (showing verbal agreement with the agent which is in the oblique case).

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on elicited data (if not even constructed by the author).

[13] The mixed types between nominative and ergative construction are discussed in 3.

[14] In the examples to follow, underlining marks oblique (glossed O) and object (A) endings on the agent and the object, suffixed pronouns in agent function (cf. 1.5) and verbal agreement with the object. D denotes direct case which distinguishes the singular (s) from the plural (p) only in the case of pronouns of the 1st and 2nd persons.

[15] Example from DAMES 1881:27.

[16] Example from GILBERTSON 1923:113. *mā* is the obl. of the pronoun of the 1sg., the direct case of which is *ma, mã* or *mã̄* (GRIERSON 1921:343).

[17] Example from GILBERTSON 1923:197.

[18] Example from GRIERSON 1921:352.

[19] Example from GILBERTSON 1923:51.

[20] Example from GILBERTSON 1923:57.

[21] Example from GILBERTSON 1923:59. The literal meaning is "they have struck a dive".

[22] Example from GILBERTSON 1923:68.

1.2 Southern dialects

Similarly to the Eastern dialects, the ergative construction is used throughout in the Southern dialects. The agent is in the oblique case if it is a noun or a pronoun of the 3rd person. The personal pronouns of the 1st and 2nd persons, however, appear in the direct case when they are agents of a transitive verb. The object is usually in the direct case. COLLETT 1983:21 notes that the object is also found in the oblique or object case. However, according to FARRELL 1995:221f., objects cannot take the oblique, but only the object case, which happens in case of a special focus; pronouns of the 1st and 2nd persons are always in the oblique when denoting the object (FARRELL 1990:40). The plurality of a 3rd person object may (FARRELL 1990:40) or should (COLLETT 1983:21) be indicated on the verb.

agent		object		verbal ending	

obl.:
   sg. *-ā*
   pl. *-ān*
 pron. 1st,2nd:
   dir.
		dir.: *-Ø*
		 obl./obj.:
		   sg. *-ā(rā)*
		   pl. *-ān(rā)*
				agreeing with the object (optional):
				   sg. *-Ø*
				   pl. *-ant*	

examples:					
alīā̱	Os	*gunī*	D	*burt-ant*[23]	"Ali took the sacks"
man	Ds	*xat*	D	*likit-ã̱*[24]	"I wrote letters"
man	Ds	*tarā̱*	Os	*gušt*[25]	"I told you"
kučikā̱	Os	*hamā ǰinikā̱rā*	As	*dīst*[26]	"the dog saw that girl"
tō	Ds	*āyrā̱*	As	*ārt*[27]	"you brought it"
āyā̱	Os	*gōk*	D	*kušt*[28]	"he/she killed the cow"
āyā̱n	Ob	*manā̱*	Os	*gušt*[29]	"they told me"
bačikã̱	Op	*mā̱rā̱*	Op	*dīst*[30]	"the boys saw us"
1.2: the ergative construction in Southern Balochi dialects					

The Balochi of Karachi shows a certain degree of dialect mixture, so that many speakers use the nominative construction alongside the ergative one in the present perfect (FARRELL 1990:49), similar to what has been observed by Grierson for the Eastern dialects. Conversely, COLLETT (1983:22) notes that intransitive verbs are also found without personal endings in the present perfect: *man šuta(g)* instead of *man šutag-un* "I have gone". It is not entirely clear if Collett intends to say that the omission of the endings is limited to some frequent verbs, or whether there are discourse restrictions for such constructions; if so, one might perhaps interpret them as conjunctive participles (cf. 2.6 and 3.).

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[23] Example from COLLETT 1983:21.
[24] Example from FARRELL 1990:40. Examples like *man bāz xat likit* "I wrote a lot of letters" show that any marking of the plurality of the object is liable to delete the marking on the verb (FARRELL 1990:40).
[25] Example from COLLETT 1983:9.
[26] Example from FARRELL 1995:221.
[27] Example from COLLETT 1983:10.
[28] Example from FARRELL 1990:39.
[29] Example from COLLETT 1983:9.
[30] Example from FARRELL 1995:224.

1.3 Western dialects

It is chiefly in the Western Balochi dialects that the ergative construction is in competition with the nominative one. Some Rakhshani dialects, i.e. the dialects of Turkmenistan and Afghanistan (SOKOLOV 1956:86, NAWATA 1981:19, BUDDRUSS 1988:60), have lost the ergative system altogether and switched to a nominative system instead:[31]

subject		object		verbal ending	
dir.: -∅		obl.: sg. *-ā* pl. *-ān*		agreeing with the subject: sg. *-un, -ay, -(ī)t* pl. *-an, -it, -ant*	
examples:					
ta	D/Os	*murgā*	Os	*pakkit-ay*[32]	"you cooked the chicken"
man	D/Os	*zāgay gutā*	Os	*gipt-un*[33]	"I took the throat of the son"
ā	D	*manī habarā*	Os	*na-handit-ant*[34]	"they did not laugh at my remark"
ā	D	*uštirān*	Op	*wāpēnt-ant*[35]	"they made the camels lie down"
man	D/Os	*watī mēšā̃*	Op	*mārit-un*[36]	"I counted my (lit. own) sheep"
1.3.1: the nominative construction in Western Balochi dialects					

According to BARKER/MENGAL 1969/I:281ff., 347ff. and FARRELL 2003:198, the nominative structure is also the unmarked construction of the Western Balochi dialects of Pakistan. Besides, however, ergative constructions are found. The occurrence of the ergative construction seems to depend on questions of discourse and style (BARKER/MENGAL 1969/I:347f.,[37] FARRELL 1995:237ff.), with ergative constructions being optionally used in connected narratives, but not in isolated sentences (FARRELL 1995:236f.). It does not seem to be entirely clear, however, whether this adequately accounts for the occurrences in all WB dialects and/or sorts of text.[38]

In the ergative constructions which do occur, the object is either in the direct or in the oblique case. Agreement with the object is not found in Western Balochi (BARKER/MENGAL 1969/I:350).[39] Conversely, there are cases where the verb agrees with the (ergative) agent.

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[31] This does not imply that ergative constructions are entirely absent from Afghanistan Balochi; they are in fact found in songs and epic poetry which are recited on certain occasions (RZEHAK 1998:178).

[32] Example from SOKOLOV 1956:87.

[33] Example from BUDDRUSS 1988:22.

[34] Example from BARKER/MENGAL 1969/I:281, lit.: "They did not laugh my word."

[35] Example from FARRELL 1995:238. The complete sentence is *šārē nazīnkā ki ātant, uštirān ā wāpēntant* "when they came near to the city, the caused the camels to sleep".

[36] Example from BARKER/MENGAL 1969/I:281.

[37] Note that the ergative construction is not fully understood by Barker/Mengal who describe it in terms of "optional omission of personal suffixes from the verb", the obl. being used for "marking the subject of certain types of verbs" etc. (BARKER/MENGAL 1969/I:347).

[38] Cf. the WB texts in ELFENBEIN 1990/I in some of which (e.g. no. 5, 8) the ergative construction is used for the most part, although not entirely consistently. This contrasts with observations by FARRELL 1995:238 that in a longer narrative text, one will find only isolated examples of ergative constructions; the conditioning factors are not clear yet.

[39] ELFENBEIN 1966:19 is the only author who claims that the verb may agree with the object also in WB.

agent	object	verbal ending	

obl.:
  sg. *-ā*
  pl. *-ān*
pron. 1st,2nd:
  dir.
	dir.: *-∅*
	obl.:
	  sg. *-ā*
	  pl. *-ān*
		-∅	

examples:			
bačakkā Os	*watī dantānā̃* Op	*prōšt*[40]	"the boy broke his (own) teeth"
ḍrēwarā Os	*lārī(ā)* D/Os	*āwurt*[41]	"the driver brought the lorry"
Sābirā Os	*ē hawāl* D	*uškit*[42]	"Sabir heard this news"
man Ds	*tarā* As	*gušt*[43]	"I told you"
āwā̃ Op	*kalāt-ē* D	*bastagat-ant*[44]	"they had built a fort"
1.3.2: the ergative construction in Western Balochi dialects			

As the nominative construction is used side by side with the ergative one, the interpretation of a sentence like *tai pissā āī brās kušta* as "your father has killed his/her brother" (ergative) or "his/her brother has killed your father" (nominative, the object emphasised by its position in the sentence) depends on context and on intonation (BARKER/MENGAL 1969/I:350).

1.4 Iranian Balochi[45]

It is not entirely clear yet which Balochi dialects are spoken in Iran and what exactly their respective features are. From the evidence collected so far, it seems that they exhibit differing degrees of mixture between the ergative and the nominative construction. The picture is blurred by the fact that the distinction between direct and oblique case tends to get lost:[46] the oblique plural ending is becoming a general plural marker,[47] and the oblique singular is not marked in a number of functions (e.g. in locative use, with or without prepositions).[48] Indirect and identified direct objects are marked with the endings of the obl. or obj. sg. and

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[40] Example from BARKER/MENGAL 1969/I:348.

[41] Example from BARKER/MENGAL 1969/I:349.

[42] Example from ELFENBEIN 1990/I:62/5 (story in the dialect of Kharan).

[43] Example from ELFENBEIN 1990/I:104/100 (story in the dialect of Panjgur).

[44] Example from BARKER/MENGAL 1969/I:348.

[45] Iranian Balochi has been influenced by Persian in a number of respects, including the pronunciation of the vowels, so that *i, u, ay* of the other dialects are pronounced as *e, o, ey*, respectively, in Iranian Balochi, cf. JAHANI 2003:119[27], BARANZEHI 2003:81.

[46] The situation is thus similar to the one found in Middle Persian and Parthian; it is likely to have been effected by the influence of New Persian (cf. JAHANI 2003:121ff.).

[47] An example which shows what is the obl.pl. in other Balochi dialects in the function of nominative plural is: *angrēzey haḍḍān hanga hamā sengānī čērā wadī a bay-ant* "the bones of the English are still found under those stones" (JAHANI 2003:122).

Although the generalisation of *-ān* as plural marker is far-reaching in Iranian Balochi, examples without ending are also found, e.g. *zemestāney rōč gwand-an* "the winter's day[s] are short" (JAHANI 2003:122). In Sarawani, *-ān* is used as plural marker throughout.

[48] The use of the direct case after prepositions has also been noted by BUDDRUSS (1988:53f.) for Afghanistan Balochi (e.g. *pa laṭ* "with the stick" vs. *pa minatā̃* "with effort"), although as a rule, the obl. is used here as in the other dialects of Rakhshani (NAWATA 1981:30, SOKOLOV 1956:64, BARKER/MENGAL 1969/I:72).

the obj.pl., respectively. Iranian Balochi dialects may thus be said to possess a nominative and an object case instead of dir., obl. and obj. cases of the other dialects. In addition to the genitive construction, the *iẓāfa* construction is used (cf. JAHANI 1994).[49]

	nominative	object	genitive
singular	-∅	*-ā(rā)*	*-ey*
plural	*-ān*	*-ānā*	*-ānī*
1.4.1: the case system of Iranian Balochi			

In contrast to this system, the demonstrative pronouns seem to show four cases in the singular: the pronoun *ā* has the dir. *ā*, the obl. and gen. *āī*, and the obj. *āirā*. In fact, however, the dir. form is mainly found in elicited data, otherwise the obl. form is found in general subject function.[50] Parallel to the nouns, the nom.pl. of the demonstrative pronoun is *āyān / āwān*. The nom. of the pronouns of the 1st and 2nd persons is *man, ta(w)* (sg.); *mā, šumā* (pl.) and the obj. *m(a)nā, tarā; mārā, šumārā*, respectively.

The nominal paradigm of the Iranian Balochi dialects thus differs markedly from the other Balochi dialects. Accordingly, both ergative and nominative constructions have a peculiar form. The ergative construction is used consistently in the Sarawani dialect, which occupies a special position among the Iranian dialects of Balochi. The verb does not agree with the subject, but may agree with the object. Both the agent and the object (nouns and pronouns) are in the nominative case; if the agent is a pronoun, it is usually the appropriate suffixed pronoun which is used, although these may also be used for the object.[51]

agent	**object**	**verbal ending**
nom.: sg. -∅ pl. *-ān*	nom.: sg. -∅ pl. *-ān*	agreeing with the object (optional): sg. -∅ pl. *-ē̃*
examples:		

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[49] The loss of the genitive is complete in the Central Sarawani dialect (which thus has a case system composed of only nom. and obj.) whereas the dialect spoken in Dehwar and the Soran Valley of Iranian Balochistan uses the genitive (BARANZEHI 2003:81f.). Note that in this paper, the term (Central) Sarawani denotes the dialect of the Sarawan valley as described by BARANZEHI 2003 whereas the dialect called Sarawani by Elfenbein and SPOONER 1967 is rather a mixture of several Iranian Balochi dialects (cf. ELFENBEIN 1966:20).

[50] Cf. *āī yaht* "he/she came" besides *aga ā brawt tehrān* "if he/she goes to Tehran" (both JAHANI 2003:121f.). The obl. is also used after prepositions, e.g. *gōn āī* "with him/her". The Sarawani dialect has only *āī* as nom. (BARANZEHI 2003:85).

[51] For discussion of the use of suffixed pronouns in the ergative construction, cf. 1.5.

gwāt	Ns			*čanḏēnt-ẽ*[52]		"the wind swung them"
bačakã̃	Ns	*rōza-y-eš*		Ns	*wārta*[53]	"the boys have broken the fast"
mõ	Ns			*dāt-ẽ ramazān-a*[54]		"I gave them to Ramazan"
				tāp-õ̱ kort-ẽ[55]		"I twisted them"
		yakk dastay-e sohr-ī̱	Ns	*dar ko*[56]		"she pulled out a bar of gold"

1.4.2: the ergative construction in the Sarawani dialect

Similar constructions are found in other places of Iranian Balochistan, e.g.

ta gōn čākar zendegī korta (JAHANI 2003:124)

"you (N) have lived [together] with Chakar (N)".[57]

However, the Balochi dialects of Iran other than Sarawani also show the nominative construction:

agent	object	verbal ending
nom.: sg. -∅ pl. *-ān*	obj.: sg. *-ā* pl. *-ān*	agreeing with the subject: sg. *-ān/-īn, -ey, -(ī)t* pl. *-ēn, -ēt, -an(t)*
examples:		
āwān Ns	*manā̱* As	*na-dīstan*[58] "they did not see me"
xodāwand Np	*tarā̱* As	*yārt edā*[59] "God brought you here"

1.4.3: the nominative construction in Iranian Balochi dialects

1.5 The use of suffixed pronouns

There is a considerable dialectal variation with regard to the number and form of suffixed pronouns. These exist for all persons in several dialects, but it is the 3rd person ones which are most commonly used, the remaining ones being quite rare or even nonexistent in some dialects.[60] Suffixed pronouns are usually attached to the verb, but they may also be found suffixed to the subject or object or some other element of the sentence.

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[52] Example from BARANZEHI 2003:82. The "them" refers to clothes.

[53] Example from BARANZEHI 2003:94. The literal meaning is "the boys have eaten their fast".

[54] Example from BARANZEHI 2003:83. In Sarawani, final vowels are usually shortened, thus the obj.sg. ends in *-a* and the indefinite article is *-e. mõ / mon* is the nominative of the 1sg. pronoun, the obj. of which would be *mona*.

[55] Example from BARANZEHI 2003:86. The literal meaning is "I made a twist to them", with *-õ̱* being the suffixed pronoun of the 1sg.

[56] Example from BARANZEHI 2003:106. The agent is expressed by the suffixed pronoun *-ī̱* (3sg.).

[57] If the verb was treated as an intransitive verb (thence a nom. subject), one would expect **zendegī kurtey.*

[58] Example from JAHANI 2003:121.

[59] Example from JAHANI 2003:124.

[60] The forms of the pronouns may be found in GILBERTSON 1923:70ff., 117ff. (EB), FARRELL 1990:54f. and COLLETT 1983:21 (SB), BARKER/MENGAL 1969/I:242ff., SOKOLOV 1956:71, BUDDRUSS 1988:52 (WB), BARANZEHI 2003:86 (Sarawani). Iranian Balochi dialects have suffixed pronouns for all persons.

For the use of suffixed pronouns in other Iranian and non-Iranian languages of the region cf. ELFENBEIN 1982:91ff. (with references).

The suffixed pronouns are used in all functions of the oblique case. They thus occur as agents of ergative constructions.[61] Similarly, even subjects of transitive verbs in the past tense in dialects which otherwise only use nominative constructions may be expressed by suffixed pronouns, i.e. they represent what would be the agent in an ergative sentence even in dialects which otherwise have lost this construction. In Turkmenistan and Afghanistan, *gušt-ī* "he/she said" is the only ergative-like construction left (BUDDRUSS 1988:60).[62] Suffixed pronouns may even be used as subjects of intransitive verbs and of verbs in the present tense, although this is not common.[63]

In nominative constructions of all dialects, the suffixed pronouns are used to denote direct and indirect objects. Furthermore, they function as possessive pronouns.[64]

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[61] MOŠKALO (1985:113f., 118ff.) describes those ergative constructions the agent of which is expressed by a suffixed pronoun as "second variant" of the ergative construction (the first variant being those cases where the agent is expressed by a noun or a non-enclitic pronoun). The structure is the same in both situations, however, since suffixed pronouns function as oblique forms of pronouns.
Iranian Balochi dialects which pattern ergatively exhibit a strong preference for the use of suffixed pronouns in agent function.

[62] A similar process has occurred in New Persian which uses the nominative construction throughout, *goft-eš* "he/she said" etc. being the only traces of the ergative construction.

[63] Note that occasionally, "doubled" suffixed pronouns are found in addition to a noun or non-enclitic pronoun in the same function (FARRELL 1995:234, no example given). It is not clear, however, how common this phenomenon is. The two examples in table 1.5 (*tamām-e ...; wāǰa alī...*) may be interpreted as showing special conditions since they are from Iranian dialects where agent and object appear in the same case, and there is no object in either sentence. ELFENBEIN 1966:19ff. reports the use of "superfluous" suffixed pronouns in unambiguously agent function (the examples for this phenomenon in MOŠKALO 1985:120 are all from that source): WB *ē zahgān singiēn gis ǰōṛ-iš kurt* "these children built a stone house", SB *zī dard-iš kut padān* "yesterday [my] feet hurt (lit. made pain)") and nominative sentences (subject function: WB, IrB *sawās manī pādān dard-iš kurt* "the sandals hurt my feet"). It is not entirely clear, however, if such sentences are found in authentic texts (cf. the caveat in fn. 12).

[64] According to BUDDRUSS 1988:52, the suffixed pronouns are also found after prepositions, e.g. *gōn-ī* "(together) with him/her". The only other source which notes this use is ELFENBEIN 1982:93: Elfenbein assumes the use of suffixed pronouns after "prepositions or adverbs", with the latter being exemplified by *āškā-iš binind* "sit on that side of them" – obviously from BARKER/MENGAL 1969/I:242. *āšk*, however, does not otherwise function as a preposition, but as a noun: *āšk* "that side" vs. *ēšk / išk* "this side", obl. *āškā* "on that side" with the obl. in its locative function, cf. e.g. *gisā* "in the house", *āškay* "from that side" is the gen. The etymology may be a compound from the demonstrative pronoun + a metathised form of *kš- from *kaš* "armpit", cf. BUDDRUSS 1974:32. The existence of suffixed pronouns attached to prepositions in dialects other than that studied by Buddruss is therefore not certain. It is thus difficult to decide whether Buddruss' *gōn-ī* represents something old (if so, it would be comparable to New Persian expressions like *be(h)-eš* "to him/her", *barāy-aš* "for him/her" etc., Kurdish *lē-t* "against you", ELFENBEIN 1982:92f. referring to MACKENZIE 1961:77) or rather an innovation in this dialect, perhaps modelled on New Persian.

pron.suff. denoting		examples:[65]
agent (ergative constructions)	EB	*maī gōš buriϑaɣant-iš* "they cut off my ears"
	SB	*pīālā-ō̰ zūrta* "I have taken the bowl"
	Sar.	*ez ōdā wāš harkat-ẽ ko* "we set out (lit. made movement) from Khash"
		wāǰa alī gopt-ī "Mr Ali said (...)"
	IrB	*dars-en a wā̃* "we were studying"
	WB	*gušt-ī gō pādišāā* "he/she said to the king (...)" (SOKOLOV 1956:77)
	IrB	*tamām-e sīstān-o-balōčestān xeylī pīšraft-ī korta* "the whole of Sistan-and-Balochistan has made a lot of progress"
subject (nominative constructions)	EB	*nawā̃ bi-yāyant-iš* "perhaps they will come"
		durāh na bīϑa-ī "he/she has not become well (i.e. recovered)"
	SB	*kučikā ǰanant-ē* "they hit (pres.) the dog" (FARRELL 1995:235)
object (nominative constructions)	EB	*hamōδā miṟān-ī* "I will fight him/her there"
		zar dēān-iš̠ "I will give them the money"
	SB	*watī yak kāṛd-ē dant-ī* "he/she₁ gives him/her₂ one of his/her₁ (own) cards"
		man-iš̠ dōčīn "I will sew them" (COLLETT 1983:10)
	Sar.	*brēset-eš* "spin them!"
		hodāy-eš awlād-e nēkēn bdant "may God give you good children!"
		wārt-ē "he/she eats it"
	WB	*drust na kurtun-ē* "I did not recognise him/her"
		guštun-ē "I said to him/her"
		man zar-iš̠ dāt "I gave money to them"[66]
possessor[67]	EB	*nām ēn-ī Naina Bāī* "her name is Naina Bai"
	SB	*dap-ī* "his/her mouth"
	Sar.	*dēm-et* "your face"
	WB	*laškar-un* "my army" (SOKOLOV 1956:71)
1.5: the use of suffixed pronouns in Balochi dialects		

2. Synchronic and diachronic evaluation of the ergative construction in Balochi[68]

2.1 The animacy split

As has been seen above, pronouns are not always treated in the same way as nouns are as far as their use in the ergative or nominative construction is concerned: in the Southern dialects, the pronouns of the 1st and 2nd persons differ from other pronouns and from all nouns (including personal names) in that they appear in the direct case and not in the oblique when functioning as an agent. Similarly, the form found after prepositions in these dialects is *man, taw* etc., not *manā, tawā* etc.

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[65] The EB examples are from GILBERTSON 1923:73, 117f., the SB ones from FARRELL 1990:54, Sar. from BARANZEHI 2003, IrB from JAHANI 2003 and WB from BUDDRUSS 1988:52 if not otherwise indicated.

[66] Example from ELFENBEIN 1982:93. Elfenbein does not note which dialect this example comes from, but compared to the other data, it might belong here.

[67] No examples for suffixed pronouns of the 1st and 2nd persons in the function of possessive pronoun have been found in EB and SB sources. The Southern dialects, however, do not normally use suffixed pronouns for the 1st and 2nd persons anyway.

[68] On the points to follow cf. also SCHEUCHER in this volume.

The split which separates the pronouns of the 1st and 2nd persons from other pronominal and nominal forms fits into a universal feature described by SILVERSTEIN 1976 (cf. FARRELL 1995:221): there is a hierarchy in the nominal system in which the pronouns of the 1st and 2nd persons range first, followed by proper names, then nouns denoting animates, and with nouns denoting inanimates at the bottom. The rule says that if there is ergative case marking for some NP types, there is also ergative marking for all NP types further down on the scale. In the case of Balochi, one might thus say that everything from proper names downwards on the hierarchy will be marked ergatively in the ergative domain, while the pronouns of the 1st and 2nd persons are not marked ergatively.

The Southern dialects of Balochi thus show a feature found in many other languages of the world. There are some interesting points, however, which should be noted in this respect.

The fact that some pronouns are not in the oblique, but in the direct case when used as agent has created the impression that the ergative construction is weakened in the Balochi language as a whole.[69] However, in the Eastern dialects, the oblique of the 1sg. pronoun is used as agent, the remaining personal pronouns not distinguishing dir. and obl. case forms (the same applies to all personal pronouns in Western Balochi), so that one may say that in Eastern Balochi, all pronouns appear in the oblique case when functioning as agent. One might thus be tempted to conclude that the Eastern dialects preserve the full form of the ergative construction while the other dialects show a reduced form with some agents being treated like a subject of an intransitive verb (or of a transitive verb in the present tense) would be. This reduction might be explained as being motivated by the universal tendency above.

The etymology of the pronouns, however, suggests another interpretation. In the 1sg., Parthian has *man* as obl. (dir. is *az*); the 2sg. is always written <tw>, and it is not clear whether this is to be read as two different forms (maybe dir. *tū*, obl. *tō*); the plural does not differentiate for case, 1pl. being *amā(h)*, 2pl. *išmā(h)*.[70] Balochi *man* and *taw* thus represent the outcome of the Middle Iranian oblique forms, the direct forms (*az* and *tū*) being lost.[71] Conversely, Balochi *manā, tarā; mārā, šumārā* must be novel formations since these forms did not exist in Middle Iranian times. At some point of the (pre-)history of Balochi, the 1sg. pronoun must thus have been *man* in all functions, i.e. *man* was used for the direct as well as for the oblique case. This situation may be said to be reflected by the use of *man* in WB and by the other personal pronouns in all dialects. When the inflection of the pronouns was adjusted to fit the system of the nouns[72] and new inflectional forms (*manā* etc.) came into use,[73] the alignment with the nominal system was only partial since the new forms were chiefly ascribed object function, only SB ranging them as general oblique and reducing the inherited forms to the direct case, but they preserved the agent function in most dialects.

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[69] Cf. e.g. the title of FARRELL 1995 and the discussion on p. 230 of that article.

[70] RASTORGUEVA/MOLČANOVA 1981:202, SUNDERMANN 1989:131. The Parthian oblique forms (in the plural: the only forms) are derived from the Old Iranian genitive forms (RASTORGUEVA/MOLČANOVA 1981:202).

[71] Kurdish and Zazaki preserve both forms of the 1sg. pronoun, viz. *ez* (dir.) vs. *mɪn* (obl.).

[72] In the case of the nouns, the Balochi endings and their functions are in part inherited, cf. Parthian obl.pl. -*ān* (preserved as such in Balochi) vs. dir. (sg. and pl.) -∅ (both in Parthian and Balochi). The Balochi ending of the obl.sg. represents something secondary (for theories concerning its origin cf. SOKOLOV 1956:64).

[73] The observation that *manā* etc. are secondary formations made in analogy to the nouns has also been made by MOŠKALO 1985:114, 117.

Therefore, the use of the historically oblique forms (reinterpreted as direct case in some dialects) for the agent in Southern and partially also in Western Balochi is in fact likely to be an old feature. It may be explained as having been preserved since it fitted with the universal that the pronouns of the 1st and 2nd persons may differ from NP types lower down on the scale in terms of ergative marking, which explains why the system was not adjusted to general use of the oblique as agent in some dialects. On the other hand, the use of the new EB oblique *mā* in agent function is an innovation of the Eastern dialects. With regard to the universal tendency described above, such a change might be considered rather unlikely. Maybe language contact might have played a role here, since in Pashto, the 1sg. obl. *mā* is used as agent in ergative constructions, e.g. *mā kār kawǝ* "I (obl.) worked (lit. did work)".[74]

2.2 Tense split

Another property of the ergative construction which fits into typological patterns also observed in other languages is the tense split: there is a typological universal (cf. FARRELL 1995:220f.) that if the ergative is restricted to some tense(s) or aspect(s), ergative constructions occur in the past tense or perfective aspect, while there is nominative construction in the remaining tense(s). In all Balochi dialects which show the ergative construction, its occurrence is limited to tenses formed from the past stem (cf. 0. above), parallel to the situation found in other Iranian and Indic languages; this is not surprising given its origin (cf. 3.).

2.3 Suffixed pronouns

The use of suffixed pronouns is in the main in accordance with the use of comparable elements in other languages (cf. FARRELL 1995:233ff.): they predominantly function as agents in the ergative and as direct objects in the nominative domain. Noteworthy is the occurrence (albeit rare) of suffixed pronouns in the function of subject in the nominative domain (cf. 1.5).

2.4 Other typological aspects

Whereas some characteristics of the Balochi ergative construction fit well with typological observations, there are also some points where Balochi differs from what has been noted in other languages.

According to TRASK 1979, there is a universal that no language may have a Silverstein-type animacy split (cf. 2.1) and a tense split (cf. 2.2) in the ergative construction at the same time. Balochi, however, is a counterexample to this assumption (FARRELL 1995:228f.).[75]

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[74] Note that the origin of EB obl. *mā* is not clear yet. It might represent a contracted form of *manā* which is found in other dialects; it may perhaps also have been influenced by Pashto *mā*.

[75] Georgian is another counterexample: there is a tense split (tenses of the aorist group patterning ergatively, those of the present group nominatively) and an animacy split: the personal pronouns of the 1st and 2nd persons do not distinguish the nominative from the ergative case while the remaining pronouns and all nouns do (the ergative being used in agent function in the aorist tenses). The same applies to the other Kartvelian languages and thus seems to be an ancient feature (Jost Gippert, personal communication).

Another hypothesis by Trask (cf. FARRELL 1995:229) is that languages with tense split in the ergative domain originate from a "nominalized deverbal form with stative force" (e.g. a past participle used with a possessive construction). Although this may be said to apply to the Iranian languages[76] since the Old Persian examples show the genitive in agent function and the perfect passive participle of the verb,[77] it does not hold for the Indic languages: in these languages, the ergative construction goes back to the perfect passive participle with the agent in what is diachronically the instrumental case. As far as the Indo-Iranian languages as a whole are concerned, it is thus questionable whether the universal posited by Trask is a probable one. It is also questionable inhowfar it makes sense to say that the Balochi ergative construction originates from some phenomenon found in Old Persian, since if any system should be considered to be the "origin" of the Balochi one, it would rather be the one found in Parthian than the Old Iranian one.[78]

A third point is that Trask maintains that usually ergative languages do not have a fully developed passive voice. Although the passive voice in Balochi has a rather marginal position indeed and passive sentences with agents are quite rare, passive constructions (consisting of the infinitve and an appropriate form of "to be") do exist and are also used in the past tenses (FARRELL 1995:230f.),[79] e.g. *lānč girag bītagitā* "boats (dir.) had been caught"[80] (FARRELL 1995:230), *ē mardomān ǰaten būtẽ* "these people were beaten" (BARANZEHI 2003:100). The use of "become" in the function of an auxiliary formation in the passive voice may even be traced back to Parthian (cf. GHILAIN 1939:117ff., RASTORGUEVA/MOLČANOVA 1981:225, DURKIN-MEISTERERNST 2002).

2.5 Morphological ergativity

Balochi shows morphogical or surface ergativity (as opposed to "deep ergativity", FARRELL 1995:233). This may be concluded from (among other things) the fact that the transitivity or intransitivity of periphrastic verbal constructions is determined by the respective properties of the finite verb, not by those of the main verb (all examples from FARRELL 1995:226f.): continuous tenses formed from the copula and the infinitive pattern nominatively (e.g. *man išīā gindagā itã* "I (dir.) kept seeing him/her (obl.)"), those composed of the present participle and *kanag* "to do" pattern ergatively in the past tenses (*tēkādārā̃ (...) rēk xatam kanān ku* "the contractors (Op) kept fishing sand (D)"), and the same applies to the "ability construction" formed from the past stem + *kanag* (*āyā̃ kapt kutagā* "they (Op) could have fallen").

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[76] Note that there has been a considerable amount of discussion (reported in FARRELL 1995:229f.) about the origin of the Iranian ergative construction. In these discussions, only the Old Persian examples have been taken into account, data from Middle Iranian or Indic languages has apparently not been considered adequately.

[77] Examples similar to the Old Persian ones may also be found in Avestan, e.g. Y 29, 8 *aēm mōi idā vistō* "I have found this (lit. this by me [gen.] was found) here" (Jost Gippert, personal communication). The Avestan examples noted by CARDONA 1970:3 involve the use of a finite passive form (not the participle in *-ta*) with agent in the instrumental case.

[78] For the ergative construction in Parthian, cf. 3.

[79] Again, Georgian is a further counterexample to this alleged typological universal (passive stem, sometimes derived from another verbal stem). There is a passive voice also e.g. in Zazaki (derived from a verbal stem with the suffix *-ey- / -i-*), in several Kurdish dialects and Pashto (both with infinitive or participle + auxiliary).

[80] The example from FARRELL 1995:230 has *bītagitā*, but since the ending of the 3pl. is *-ã* in all other examples of that paper, there is probably a misprint here.

Similarly, transitivity of compound verbs depends on the transitivity of the simple verb for the most part, irrespective of the semantics:[81] the nominal part of e.g. *bāl kanag* "to fly (lit. to do flying)", *dēr kanag* "to be late (lit. to do late)", *gānā ǰanag* "to sing (lit. to strike song)", *ǰamp ǰanag* "to jump (lit. to strike jump)" is treated like an object, the agent appearing in the oblique in the past tenses, and the same even applies to compounds with *warag* "to eat", e.g. *kawš warag* "to be hit with a shoe (lit. to eat shoe)" or *γam warag* "to grieve (lit. to eat sorrow)". A few compound verbs (termed "exceptions" by FARRELL 1995:233), however, are intransitive in spite of the simple verb being transitive, e.g. the subject of *zār girag* "to become angry (lit. to take anger)" is in the direct case in all tenses.

The ergative construction in Balochi may thus be used to distinguish periphrastic verbal constructions from compound tenses since unlike to the situation observed in the periphrastic constructions, the (in)transitivity of the compound tenses is determined by the properties of the main verb throughout (cf. fn. 3). In the case of transitive verbs used together with nouns, the (non-)occurrence of ergative patterning may likewise be used to check whether a so-called compound verb is indeed one in the proper sense of the word: one might choose to label only those expressions compound verbs which pattern nominatively throughout in spite of containing an otherwise transitive verb (Farrell's exceptions), whereas the majority of these combinations patterns ergatively and thus have not reached a compound stage yet.

FARRELL 1995:233 notes that another feature showing the surface character of Balochi ergativity is that is seems possible to coordinate an agent with an intransitive subject, e.g.

> *manī ē čuk lōgē sarā ǰamp ǰata, kaptag-ī* (FARRELL 1995:235)
> "this child (D) of mine has jumped [from] on top of the house [and] (it) has fallen"

where one would expect the agent (*čuk* "child") to be in the oblique case (FARRELL 1995:232),[82] but as may also be interpreted as the subject of the intransitive verb *kaptag* "has fallen" (although the subject is also expressed by the suffixed pronoun *-ī*), it is in the direct case. Conversely,

> *kiṭagā šu, dān git, ārt* (FARRELL 2003:204)
> "the grasshopper (Os) went, bought grain [and] brought [it]"

shows the agent in the oblique, fitting with the second and third verb, but not with the first one, which is intransitive. It seems possible, however, to account for these constructions in the context of conjunctive participles (cf. 2.6).

2.6 Conjunctive participles

Some variants of the ergative construction show forms where the past stem or the perfect stem (cf. fn. 3) is used in a converb-like manner. Balochi constructions of this type are termed conjunctive participle by FARRELL 2003:201ff. They occur in otherwise ergative as well as nominative sentences. Examples are (conjunctive participles in bold letters):

> *zālbul-iš āṛt **āwurt**, nān **patk**, aw drust mēmānā̃ nān dāt-ant* (BARKER/MENGAL 1969/I:348)
> "their wives (D) brought flour, baked bread, and gave bread to all guests (Op)"

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[81] Cf. the discussion in FARRELL 1995:232f. The same situation is observed in other contemporary Iranian languages, cf. SCHEUCHER in the present volume.

[82] For the ergative construction of "compound verbs", cf. above.

shows agreement of the subject with the last verb (thus a nominative sentence), the first and second one being uninflected,

> *man čē gunāh-ē kurtagat, ki taw manā sazā **dāt**, (...) aw manī zāhg-u-zālbulā̃ wār kurt-ay?* (BARKER/MENGAL 1969/I:347)
>
> "what sin had I (Ds) done that you (Ds) punished (lit. gave punishment to) me (As) and harrassed (lit. did trouble to) my family (Op)?"

likewise omits all verbal endings but the last one (agreeing with the subject again),[83]

> *mã ham-ē ṭēmā **šu**, šikāyat ku* (FARRELL 1995:225)
>
> "that very time I went [and] made a complaint"

lacks a verbal ending on *šu* "went" which an intransitive verb should have, the sentence being an ergative one otherwise,

> *mā watī čukānā̃ bī balōčī darmān **gittā**, **grāstā**, **dātag-ā̃*** (FARRELL 2003:204)[84]
>
> "for our children (Ap) we (Dp) have also bought Balochi medicines (D), have boiled [them] and given them [to the children]"

is constructed ergatively, but has marking of the plurality of the object (*darmān* "medicine", dir.pl.) only on the last verb.

So far, the Western Balochi dialect of Pakistan in the description by BARKER/MENGAL 1969 and the observations by Farrell on Karachi Balochi are the only sources which show the use of conjunctive participles in Balochi. The details of the development of the construction are not entirely clear yet. One factor contributing to its development is likely to be found in the different types of mixture between ergative and nominative constructions (cf. also 3.).[85] On the other hand, conjunctive participles are also used in several neighbouring languages, including Persian and Urdu, so that language contact may also play a role here (cf. FARRELL 2003:205).

3. The development of the Balochi ergative construction

A discussion of how a Balochi grammatical feature might have evolved may conveniently start with a look at the corresponding Western Middle Iranian feature, especially the one found in Parthian. A study of ergativity in Parthian, however, is faced with the difficulty that with the exception of the pronoun of the 1sg., the Parthian oblique case differs from the direct case only in the plural.[86]

The ergative construction found in Parthian may be summarised as follows:

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[83] The change of agent/subject in this sentence favours the interpretation of *man ... kurtagat* as a regular ergative construction rather than as a conjunctive participle.

[84] The perfect stem in *-ā* of Karachi Balochi corresponds to that in *-ag* in the other dialects (FARRELL 2003:203[27]).

[85] Similar to the situation found in Balochi, ergativity in Kurmanji shows different degrees of adaptation to the nominative pattern (cf. DORLEIJN 1996).

[86] Even the Parthian terms of family relations (mother, father etc.), in contrast to those of Middle Persian, do not distinguish the direct from the oblique case (cf. SIMS-WILLIAMS 1981).

agent	object	verbal agreement
noun (obl.), pronoun (obl.), suffixed pronoun	noun (dir., obl.pl.)[87] pronoun (dir.)	with object in number and person
3.0: the ergative construction in Parthian		

From a diachronic point of view, the following Balochi sentence structures may thus be said to correspond to the model found in Parthian:

	agent	object	verbal agreement
form and function inherited from Middle Iranian	noun (obl.pl.), pronoun 3rd (obl.pl.), pronoun 1st,2nd (dir.), suffixed pronoun	noun (dir.), pronoun (dir.)	with 3rd person object in number (optional)
form is a novel formation in Balochi	noun (obl.sg.),[88] pronoun 3sg. (obl.), pronoun 1st,2nd (obl.)		
3.1: Balochi ergative sentence structures continuing the Middle Iranian model			

These constructions are found in Eastern, Southern and some Western dialects.[89] The use of the oblique form of pronouns of the 1st and 2nd persons in the function of agent is limited to the Eastern dialects. Conversely, the direct case of the pronouns of the 1st and 2nd persons is not used in object function in the Southern dialects. Ergative constructions in Western dialects do not show verbal agreement.

One step in the direction to the nominative construction is the use of the oblique or object case for the object. The opposite adjustment, i.e. the use of the direct case for the agent, also occurs to a certain extent.

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[87] Cf. RASTORGUEVA/MOLČANOVA 1981:223f. The ending of the obl.pl., viz. *-ān / -īn*, may also be used in the function of general plural marker (SUNDERMANN 1989:130). One thus finds ergative sentences with the object marked with oblique ending: *abāw-um harwīn brādarān ud wxārīn pad kirbag windād ahēnd* (RASTORGUEVA/MOLČANOVA 1981:223, ANDREAS/HENNING 1934:858) "there, I found all brothers and sisters in piety" (with the agent expressed by the suffixed pronoun *-um*), parallel in structure to Balochi sentences of type A below (table 3.2), and similar sentences are found in MP (NYBERG 1974:282f.). However, as there seems to be no example of this type in the Parthian inscriptions (neither in the MP ones, cf. SKJÆRVØ 1983), it is likely that the Parthian marking of the object with oblique ending in the ergative construction is a secondary process independent from, although parallel to, the Balochi one. It is not clear yet whether objects of ergative sentences are marked with *-ān / -īn* more often than in other instances of what should be the dir.pl. Another Parthian strategy to mark the object (in some cases also the agent) of an ergative construction is the use of a preposition (SUNDERMANN 1989:129, 134).

[88] For the obl.sg. ending of Balochi being an innovation, cf. fn. 72.

[89] For examples, cf. the respective subchapters of 1. There are some constellations for which no example is found in the sources, which is likely to be due to chance. It might be noteworthy, however, that no example seems to occur with the direct case of a pronoun in object function in these sentence types.

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	agent	object	verbal agreement
A: adaptation of the object	noun (obl.), pronoun 3rd (obl.), pronoun 1st,2nd (dir.) suffixed pronoun	noun (obl., obj.), pronoun 3rd (obj.), pronoun 1st,2nd (obl.)	with 3rd person object in number (optional)
B: adaptation of the agent	noun (dir.) pronoun (dir.)	noun (dir.), pronoun (dir.)	
3.2: Balochi ergative sentence structures showing adaptation to the nominative construction			

Type A is found in Southern and Western dialects, in the Eastern ones with the exception of the personal pronouns which are always in the oblique in agent function. According to MOŠKALO 1985:121, Type B is found in some examples of Eastern and Southern Balochi.[90] The ergative constructions found in Iranian Balochi (chiefly in Sarawani) may also be put here: in these dialects, the nominative (sg. -∅ resulting from the direct case, pl. -ān from the oblique plural of nouns and pronouns of the 3rd person) is used both for agents and objects.

A more marked adjustment to the nominative construction consists in the agreement of the verb with the agent/subject:

	subject	object	verbal agreement
C: semi-nominative constructions	noun (obl.), pronoun (obl.) suffixed pronoun	noun (dir.)	with the subject in number and person
	suffixed pronoun	noun (obl., obj.), pronoun (obl., obj.)	
D: nominative construction	noun (dir.), pronoun (dir.)	noun (obl., obj.), pronoun (obl., obj.), suffixed pronoun	
3.3: Balochi sentence structures approaching the nominative construction			

Type C is found in the Eastern dialects and in some Western Balochi dialects. In the remaining Western dialects, it occurs insofar as suffixed pronouns may be used to denote the subject in an otherwise nominative construction. The latter structure is also reported to be found in the nominative domain of the Eastern dialects. Type D is found in certain dialects of the Western and the Iranian group. In Karachi Balochi, it is found side by side with the ergative construction in the present perfect.

It is not entirely clear whether the conjunctive participle construction (cf. 2.6) is to be seen in this context since conjunctive participles and converbs occur in many languages of the world which do not pattern ergatively. However, the Balochi constructions are quite similar to certain ergative sentence types so that it might be possible to interpret them in this

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[90] Note that Moškalo's example from GILBERTSON 1923 is not found on the cited page. The example from MOCKLER 1877 (Southern Balochi) has *taw* as object and shows the agent in the direct case.

context. If so, the origin might be seen in ergative sentence structures of the type *man kurt / kurta* (WB, SB) "I did / have done" which is liable to interpretation as showing a nominative subject and an endingless verb.

	subject	object	verbal agreement
E: conjunctive participle construction	noun (dir.), pronoun (dir.)	noun (obl., obj.), pronoun (obl., obj.), suffixed pronoun	-∅
3.4: converb-like sentence structures in Balochi			

These constructions are found in narrative texts at least in Western Balochi of Pakistan and in Karachi Balochi. They also occur in the Southern Balochi dialect of Oman (cf. 1.2), although the conditions for their occurrence are not entirely clear.

4. Summary

Starting from a point which may be reconstructed from the Middle Iranian data, the Balochi dialects have diverged to a considerable degree, ranging from complete loss of the ergative construction in some dialects of the Western group to a quite consistent use of ergative structures in Southern and Eastern Balochi.

Balochi may thus be said to show multiple-split ergativity, some Balochi dialects patterning ergatively, others nominatively, the rest having mixed systems. The use of the different types of mixed constructions likewise depends on the dialects involved. Oblique or object case marking of the object occurs in all dialects, and verbal agreement with the object is optional if it occurs at all. The use of suffixed pronouns in agent function is very widespread and is even found in dialects which use the nominative construction. All Balochi dialects which use the ergative construction exhibit a tense split (ergative patterning in tenses from past and perfect stems, nominative patterning in those from the present stem, cf. 2.2). The animacy split, on the other hand, is not found in all dialects (cf. 2.1). Transitivity and consequently ergative or nominative patterning of certain groups of verbs differs in some respect from what one might expect (cf. fn. 4, 2.5).

The loss of the ergative construction in the Western Balochi dialects of Afghanistan and Turkmenistan has been attributed to the influence of Persian (BUDDRUSS 1988:60). Conversely, one might assume that the influence of Urdu (and other neighbouring languages) may have supported the ergative construction in the Southern and Eastern dialects of Balochi (FARRELL 2003:169, 199). It is therefore questionable whether ergativity may be said to be weakened in the Balochi language as a whole. Apart from certain adjustments to the nominative construction in terms of marking the object, ergativity is well preserved in a number of dialects, among these the whole range of Southern and Eastern Balochi and even some Iranian Balochi dialects including Sarawani. It is also questionable whether the co-existence of ergative and nominative constructions per se creates a pressure for one of the constructions to be reduced (thus MOŠKALO 1985:121). In fact, split ergativity seems to be quite a stable system in many languages of the world, including the Iranian ones where it has been preserved from its Old Iranian initial stages through the Middle Iranian period into many contemporary languages.

It is likely that depending on the grammatical system of the language(s) a Balochi dialect is in contact with, ergativity will continue to be affected. One may expect that ergative constructions will be further reduced in those dialects which are in especially close contact with Persian, i.e. chiefly the Iranian Balochi dialects. In other dialects, the ergative system may be maintained or even strengthened in areas with a strong influence of Urdu and other Indic languages.

The status and specific form of Balochi ergative constructions thus differ quite markedly depending on the dialect in question, and the same may be said about other aspects of Balochi grammar, e.g. the inflection of pronouns (cf. table 0.3). It is thus obvious that in a number of fields, there is no uniform grammatical system of Balochi. The increasing influence of national languages via education and mass media seems to speed up the diverging process of the Balochi dialects. The question to what degree speakers of a dialect with exclusively nominative sentence structures understand speakers of dialects which pattern ergatively or traditional poetry with ergative constructions remains to be studied.

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Abbreviations:

1sg.: first person singular (other persons are abbreviated accordingly)
A: object case ending
D: direct case ending
dir.: direct case
EB: Eastern Balochi dialect group
gen.: genitive
IrB: Iranian Balochi other than Sarawani
N: nominative case ending
nom.: nominative
NP: noun phrase
O: oblique case ending
obj.: object case

obl.: oblique case
p(l.): plural
pron.: personal pronoun
Sar.: Sarawani (Iranian Balochi dialect)
SB: Southern Balochi dialect group
s(g.): singular
WB: Western Balochi dialect group

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