

BANGOLAN ORTHOGRAPHY STATEMENT

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Abbreviations

| | |
|------|--------------------------|
| EX | Exclamation |
| F1 | Future (certain) Tense |
| F2 | Future (uncertain) Tense |
| HAB | Habitual Aspect |
| IMP | Imperative Mood |
| INF | Infinitive Prefix |
| NEG | Negative Marker |
| NP | Noun Phrase |
| PST | Past Tense |
| PROG | Progressive Aspect |
| 1s | First Person Singular |
| 2s | Second Person Singular |
| 3s | Third Person Singular |
| 1p | First Person Plural |
| 2p | Second Person Plural |
| 3p | Third Person Plural |

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BANGOLAN ORTHOGRAPHY GUIDE

by Njeck Mathaus Mbah

1. Introduction

This paper proposes an orthography for Bangolan, a Grassfields Bantu language spoken by about 12,000 people near the eastern border of the Ngoketunjia Division of the North-West Province, Republic of Cameroon. This language has no significant differences in pronunciation or vocabulary and therefore no difficulties in understanding between speakers. The result is that the Bangolan language has no dialects. As far as the author knows, no previous research has been done on this language.

2. Alphabet

The Bangolan segmental alphabet is made up of twenty-four consonants and nine vowels. They are represented below in upper and lower cases:

A a, B b, Ch ch, D d, E e, E e, Ə ə, F f, G g, Gb gb, H h, I i, I i, J j, K k, Kp kp, L l, Mm, N n, ŋ, O o, O o, P p, S s, Sh sh, T t, Ts ts, U u, V v, W w, Y y, Z z, '.

2.1 Consonants

The consonant phonemes, their allophones and graphemes are presented in Table I below. We also show their use in various positions in the word (the three final consonants [t], [ŋ] and ['] are all very common in Bangolan):

| Phoneme | Allophone | Grapheme | Initial position | Medial position | Final position |
|---------|------------------------|----------|------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------|
| /b/ | [p] | P p | pà <i>bag</i> | pəpəŋ <i>beautiful</i> | — |
| | [b] ¹ | B b | — | mbe <i>nail</i> | — |
| /d/ | [d] ¹ | D d | — | ndóŋ <i>horn</i> | — |
| | [l] | L l | ləŋ <i>chair</i> | — | — |
| | [l] ~ [ɾ] ² | | — | tuŋlə <i>ear</i> | — |
| /g/ | [g] ¹ | G g | — | ngut <i>skin</i> | — |
| | [ɣ] | | gatə <i>divide</i> | kəgaŋ <i>okra</i> | — |
| /gb/ | [gb] | Gb gb | gbá <i>laugh</i> | mámgbé <i>girl</i> | — |
| /kp/ | [kp] | Kp kp | kpat <i>leg</i> | təkpat <i>shoe</i> | — |

| | | | | | |
|------|---------------------|-------|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| /t/ | [t] | T t | túŋ <i>dig (v)</i> | ntê <i>cricket</i> | sət <i>hoe</i> |
| | [tʰ] ³ | | tú <i>send (v)</i> | ntuhu <i>six</i> | — |
| /k/ | [k] | K k | ku <i>die (v)</i> | nkyi <i>water</i> | — |
| | [ʔ] ⁴ | ’ ’ | — | tɛ’ɛ <i>find</i> | na’ <i>cow</i> |
| /v/ | [v] | V v | vu <i>ash</i> | mwat <i>circumcision</i> | — |
| /z/ | [z] | Z z | zi <i>face</i> | muzəŋ <i>rib</i> | — |
| | [dz] ¹ | | — | nzə <i>dream</i> | — |
| | [ʒ] ⁵ | J j | ji <i>know (v)</i> | wǎjwí <i>lion</i> | — |
| | [dʒ] ^{1,5} | | — | njiŋ <i>darkness</i> | — |
| /f/ | [f] | F f | fu <i>leaf</i> | mefe <i>squirrel</i> | — |
| /s/ | [s] | S s | saŋ <i>corn</i> | səsət <i>sugarcane</i> | — |
| | [ʃ] ⁵ | Sh sh | shihi <i>vein</i> | məshiŋ <i>bird</i> | — |
| /h/ | [h] | H h | he <i>give (v)</i> | mihi <i>eyes</i> | — |
| /ts/ | [ts] | Ts ts | tsət <i>mouth</i> | ntsə <i>war</i> | — |
| | [tʃ] ⁵ | Ch ch | chi <i>blood</i> | məchwə <i>eagle</i> | — |
| /m/ | [m] | M m | məna <i>animal (v)</i> | lemu <i>orange</i> | — |
| /n/ | [n] | N n | nə <i>snake</i> | nunuŋ <i>bee</i> | — |
| /ŋ/ | [ŋ] | Ŋ ŋ | ŋá <i>spider</i> | səŋnə <i>speak (v)</i> | kaŋ <i>chest</i> |
| /w/ | [w] | W w | wu <i>fall (v)</i> | məwə <i>hawk</i> | — |
| /y/ | [j] | Y y | yi <i>read</i> | məyele <i>leaf</i> | — |

Notes:

- ¹ Consonant phones [b, d, g, dz, dʒ] occur only after nasal consonants while alternate consonant phones [p, l, ɣ, z, ʒ] occur in other positions.
- ² The consonant phone [l] varies freely with [ɾ] only following syllable-final consonants or between vowels inside a root.
- ³ The aspirated consonant phone [t^h] occurs only before [u] in open syllables.
- ⁴ The glottal stop phone [ʔ] occurs only in syllable-final position or between vowels inside a root.
- ⁵ Consonant phones [ʃ, ʒ, tʃ, dʒ] occur only in syllables that are palatalized or labialised while alternate consonant phones [s, z, ts, dz] occur only in syllables without palatalization or labialization.

2.1.1 Prenasalized Consonants

One kind of consonant cluster found in Bangolan consists of clusters where the first consonant is a nasal consonant that is pronounced at the same place of articulation as the following consonant. Quite a few consonants may be preceded by such a homorganic nasal consonant, as in the following chart:

| Consonant Cluster | Allophone | Grapheme | Initial position | Medial position | Final position |
|-------------------|-------------------|----------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------|
| /mb/ | [mb] | Mb mb | mbe <i>nail</i> | témbó <i>palm</i> | — |
| /nd/ | [nd] | Nd nd | ndóŋ <i>horn</i> | shindō <i>road</i> | — |
| /ŋg/ | [ŋg] ¹ | Ng ng | ngut <i>skin</i> | — | — |
| /ŋmgb/ | [ŋmgb] | Mgb mgb | mgbét <i>family</i> | mómgbé <i>girl</i> | — |
| /ŋmkp/ | [ŋmkp] | Mkp mkp | mkpat <i>slave</i> | suŋmkpat <i>trousers</i> | — |
| /nt/ | [nt] | Nt nt | ntê <i>cricket</i> | — | — |
| /ŋk/ | [ŋk] | ŋk ŋk | nkyi <i>water</i> | — | — |
| /ŋv/ | [ŋv] | Mv mv | mwat <i>circumcision</i> | məmvumé' <i>goat</i> | — |
| /nz/ | [ndz] | Nz nz | nzə <i>dream</i> | kútnzə' <i>patience</i> | — |
| | [ndʒ] | Nj nj | njiŋ <i>darkness</i> | — | — |
| /ŋf/ | [ŋf] | Mf mf | mfwə <i>back</i> | tú'mfwə <i>hunchback</i> | — |
| /nts/ | [nts] | Nts nts | ntsə <i>war</i> | — | — |
| | [ntʃ] | Nch nch | nchi <i>in-law</i> | müñchí <i>orphan</i> | — |

2.1.2 Palatalized Consonants

Another kind of consonant cluster is where the second consonant is the palatal glide [j], which is always written in Bangolan as "y". Quite a few consonants may be followed by this glide (or, in the case of grooved fricatives and affricates, merged into a single phone), as in the following chart:

| Phoneme | Allophone | Grapheme | Initial position | Medial position | Final position |
|---------|-----------|----------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------|
| /by/ | [pj] | Py py | pyí <i>born</i> | — | — |
| | [bj] | By by | — | mbyi <i>thight</i> | — |
| /dy/ | [dj] | D d | — | ndyaŋ <i>granary</i> | — |
| | [lj] | L l | — | kpalyaŋ <i>plank</i> | — |
| /gy/ | [gɟ] | Gy gy | — | ngyaŋfú <i>doctor</i> | — |
| /ty/ | [tj] | Ty ty | tyaŋ <i>plan (v)</i> | — | — |
| /zy/ | [ʒ] | J j | jé' <i>taste (v)</i> | jújú'í <i>be alone (v)</i> | — |
| | [dʒ] | | — | njìŋ <i>darkness</i> | — |
| /sy/ | [ʃ] | Sh sh | shenə <i>argument</i> | móshiŋ <i>bird</i> | — |
| /tsy/ | [tʃ] | Ch ch | chífəŋ <i>scar</i> | nchumbí <i>tomorrow</i> | — |
| /ky/ | [kj] | Ky ky | kyét <i>take(v)</i> | nkyi <i>water</i> | — |
| /fy/ | [fj] | Fy fy | fyé <i>storm</i> | — | — |
| /my/ | [mj] | My my | myele <i>grasshopper</i> | — | — |
| /ny/ | [nj] | Ny ny | nyáŋ <i>cook</i> | kúnya <i>pig</i> | — |
| /nyw/ | [njw] | Nyw nyw | nywé <i>river</i> | ménywi <i>knife</i> | — |

2.1.3 Labialized Consonants

The last kind of consonant cluster is where the second consonant is the labiovelar glide [w], which is always written in Bangolan as "w". Quite a few consonants may also be followed by this glide, as in the following chart:

| Consonant Cluster | Allophone | Grapheme | Initial position | Medial position | Final position |
|-------------------|-----------|----------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------|
| /bw/ | [pw] | Pw pw | pwé <i>breast</i> | papwe <i>people</i> | — |
| | [bw] | Bw bw | — | mbwé <i>money</i> | — |
| /dw/ | [dw] | Dw dw | — | ndwé <i>tongue</i> | — |
| | [lw] | Lw lw | lwé <i>weed</i> | — | — |
| /gw/ | [gw] | Gw gw | — | ngwat <i>hole</i> | — |
| /tw/ | [tw] | Tw tw | twí <i>tree</i> | ntwet <i>waist</i> | — |
| /kw/ | [kw] | Kw kw | kwáŋ <i>grave</i> | nkwat <i>rope</i> | — |
| /vw/ | [vw] | Vw vw | vwə <i>ten</i> | mwat <i>circumcision</i> | — |
| /zw/ | [ʒw] | Jw jw | jwí <i>eat (v)</i> | wájwí <i>lion</i> | — |
| /fw/ | [fw] | Fw fw | fwat <i>feather</i> | mófwat <i>he-goat</i> | — |
| /sw/ | [ʃw] | Shw shw | shwí <i>thread</i> | te'éshwí <i>infront</i> | — |
| /tsw/ | [tʃw] | Chw chw | chwít <i>cookingstone</i> | məchwə <i>eagle</i> | — |
| /mw/ | [mw] | Mw mw | mwáŋlá <i>sand</i> | — | — |
| /ŋw/ | [ŋw] | Ŋw ŋw | ŋwét <i>jump</i> | mənguŋwáŋ <i>dog</i> | — |
| /nyw/ | [njw] | Nyw nyw | nywé <i>river</i> | ménywi <i>knife</i> | — |

2.1.4 Consonant Orthography Rules

Various rules on which consonants can occur in which positions or which can occur before and after other consonants are important to learn. Here is a partial list of consonant orthography rules:

1. Never write “b” without an “m” in front of it.
2. Never write “d” without an “n” in front of it.
3. Never write “d” between “n” and “z”.
4. Never write “d” between “n” and “j”.
5. Never write “b” between “m” and “v”.
6. Never write “” word-initially.
7. Never write “b” word-initially.
8. Never write “d” word-initially.
9. The only consonants that can be word-final are “t”, “ŋ” and “”.
10. Never write an “r”. If you hear an “r”, write an “l”.
11. If you hear a nasal consonant before “k” or “g”, always write “ŋ”.
12. If you hear a nasal consonant before “kp” or “gb”, always write “m”.

2.2 Vowels

Bangolan has nine vowel phonemes, presented with their allophones and graphemes in Table II below. The sounds are shown as they occur in different positions of the word.

| Phoneme | Allophone | Grapheme | Initial position | Medial position | Final position |
|---------|-----------|----------|------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| /i/ | [i] | I I | — | pít <i>ask (v)</i> | ndihí <i>name</i> |
| /e/ | [e] | E e | — | fehe <i>grasp[v]</i> | nde <i>sleep</i> |
| /ɛ/ | [ɛ] | Ɛ ɛ | — | tɛt <i>father</i> | fɛhé <i>twins</i> |
| /a/ | [a] | A a | a <i>he/she/it</i> | kaŋ <i>chest</i> | tá <i>come</i> |
| /ɔ/ | [ɔ] | Ɔ ɔ | — | səŋ <i>tooth</i> | mɔ <i>things</i> |
| /o/ | [o] | O o | — | məpɔ' <i>cane rat</i> | pó <i>hut</i> |
| /u/ | [u] | U u | — | kút <i>tie (v)</i> | tú <i>head</i> |
| /ə/ | [ə] | Ə ə | — | məna <i>animal</i> | zəhə <i>broom</i> |
| /i/ | [i] | I i | — | vít <i>oil</i> | pí <i>bad</i> |

Table II: Bangolan Vowels

Note:

In Bangolan, the vowel phonemes /o,i/ could be treated as phonetic portmanteau vowel phones coming from the phoneme sequences /yɔ,yə/. This means that [o,i] would be the phonetic surface realization of TWO underlying phonological realities: the palatalization feature /y/ AND the normal vowel phonemes /ɔ,ə/. In both cases, the addition of the palatalization feature would raise the height of the basic /ɔ,ə/ vowels to the higher [o,i] portmanteau phones. However, in order to more closely pair our proposed graphemes to underlying phonemes, we are choosing to treat the vowels /o,i/ as full vowel phonemes in their own right (a more transparent analysis instead of a more abstract one). We have also chosen this solution as it corresponds more closely with the desire of some to avoid using digraphs in situations like this.

3. Tone

We have identified six surface tones in Bangolan: three level tones, high [á], mid [ā] and low [à]; and three contour tones, rising [ǎ], high-falling [â], and low-falling [ã].

3.1 Lexical Contrasts Marked by Diacritics

As of this point in time, we have discovered numerous minimal tone pairs for words that contrast high tone, rising tone and high-falling tone with each other or with either of the two low tones. Because minimal tone pairs are so rare between mid and high tones and between low and low-falling tones, we propose an orthography where only high (together with mid), rising and high-falling tones are marked by diacritics and the two low tones are not marked. (It is common orthographic practice to indicate non-contrastive or less contrastive tones or even one of the well-attested contrastive tones by specifically omitting to mark a diacritic over the vowel.) See the chart below:

| Tone | Phonetic | Grapheme (Diacritic) | Examples | Frequency |
|--------------|----------|----------------------|--|----------------------------------|
| High | [á] | á | kú <i>die (v)</i> | very many nouns and verbs |
| Mid | [ā] | á | má <i>child</i> | rare |
| Low | [à] | a | ma <i>self</i> | some |
| Rising | [ǎ] | ǎ | kǔ <i>touch (v)</i> | many verbs, few nouns |
| High-falling | [â] | â | twê <i>carry on head (v)</i> | some nouns, few verbs |
| Low-falling | [ã] | a | gɔŋ <i>bow for hunting</i> | very many nouns, no verbs |

Table III: Bangolan Lexical Tones

Our proposal is to write all Bangolan words as they occur in isolation (i.e. as they occur when pronounced by themselves or as they are most frequently pronounced in sentences), and it is these forms that will be written in the lexicon. Bangolan speakers should have no problem reading or pronouncing the actual phonetic tones in a sentence once they recognize the meanings of the individual words in that sentence.

It is fairly easy to find Bangolan words where the only difference between them is tone. For example, note the minimal tone pairs below between the four most frequently contrasted tones:

- (1) **mbí** [mbí] ‘outside’ **pó’** [póʔ] ‘small depression’
mbi [mbì] ‘cockroach’ **pə’** [pəʔ] ‘mushroom’
- kpát** [kpát] ‘paint’ **ndóŋ** [ndóŋ] ‘horse’
kpat [kpàt] ‘foot/leg’ **ndəŋ** [ndəŋ] ‘bamboo’
- má** [mā] ‘child’
ma [mà] ‘self’
- ndé** [ndé] ‘rock’ **kú** [kú] ‘die’ (v)
ndě [ndě] ‘no (NEG)’ **kǔ** [kǔ] ‘touch’ (v)

| | | | |
|--------------------|----------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|
| mkpí [mkpí] | <i>'firewood'</i> | ntó [ntó] | <i>'trap fish' (v)</i> |
| mkpî [mkpî] | <i>'lake'</i> | ntô [ntô] | <i>'be defeated' (v)</i> |
| mbê [mbê] | <i>'abscess'</i> | nzôŋ [ndzôŋ] | <i>'clitoris'</i> |
| mbe [mbè] | <i>'liver'</i> | nzôŋ [ndzôŋ] | <i>'thorn'</i> |
| fwǒ [fwǒ] | <i>'bump' (v)</i> | | |
| fwə [fwə] | <i>'be dim' (v)</i> | | |
| nkǒŋ [ŋkǒŋ] | <i>'plaintain'</i> | kǒŋ [kǒŋ] | <i>'admire' (v)</i> |
| nkəŋ [ŋkəŋ] | <i>'pestle'</i> | kəŋ [kəŋ] | <i>'lance'</i> |
| mó [mó] | <i>'belongings'</i> | wú [wú] | <i>'death'</i> |
| mǒ [mǒ] | <i>'feel active' (v)</i> | wǔ [wǔ] | <i>'fail' (v)</i> |
| mə [mə] | <i>'one'</i> | wu [wù] | <i>'you' (sg.)</i> |
| twê [twê] | <i>'carry on head' (v)</i> | | |
| twě [twě] | <i>'grow (plants)' (v)</i> | | |
| twé [twé] | <i>'metal'</i> | | |
| kpát [kpát] | <i>'catch fish' (v)</i> | ká [ká] | <i>'squeeze' (v)</i> |
| kpát [kpát] | <i>'paint' (n)</i> | ká [ká] | <i>'crab' (n)</i> |
| kpǎt [kpǎt] | <i>'paint' (v)</i> | kǎ [kǎ] | <i>'lack' (v)</i> |
| kpət [kpət] | <i>'foot/leg'</i> | ka [kà] | <i>'rust' (n)</i> |

As mentioned above, there are rare tone pairs that contrast high and mid or low and low-falling tones. It is our feeling that these words can be marked with the same diacritics and that they will be disambiguated by how they are used in context. All of the orthographically ambiguous word pairs that we have found are shown below:

| | | | | |
|-----|------------------|--------------------|-------------------|----------------------|
| (2) | sé [sé] | <i>'elephant'</i> | nzá [ndzá] | <i>'fishing net'</i> |
| | sé [sē] | <i>'hatch' (v)</i> | nzá [ndzā] | <i>'axe'</i> |
| | ndu [ndù] | <i>'on top of'</i> | | |
| | ndu [ndù] | <i>'honey'</i> | | |

We feel that the Bangolan words for "elephant" and "hatch" as well as for "honey" and "on top of" will rarely be confused in context because they belong to different grammatical classes. The two nouns "axe" and "fishing net", however, are disambiguated by the fact that "fishing net" is almost always followed by the word for "fish" in an associative noun phrase while "axe" usually occurs by itself. It is because of these facts that we dare to write high and mid tones as well as low and low-falling tones without using diacritic marks to distinguish them.

3.2 Grammatical Meanings Marked by Diacritics

Tone also plays an important role in the grammar of the Bangolan language. Compare the following examples that differ only in the pitch on the verb:

- | | | |
|------------------------|--------|----------------------|
| (3) Present perfective | [à wé] | <i>'he has gone'</i> |
| Present progressive | [à wē] | <i>'he is going'</i> |

Because of the preceding examples, we must find some way to indicate the tone changes caused by the progressive aspect. In this provisional orthography, we feel the best way to indicate progressive aspect is to replace the lexical tone diacritic on the verb with a mid tone diacritic (as in "ā"). Please note the orthography of the following sentences:

- | | | |
|------------------------|---------------|-------------------------|
| (4) Present perfective | A wé. | <i>'He has gone.'</i> |
| Present progressive | A wē. | <i>'He is going.'</i> |
| Present perfective | A twě. | <i>'He has spit.'</i> |
| Present progressive | A twē. | <i>'He is spitting'</i> |

It is important to note that the mid tone diacritics are used ONLY to mark progressive aspect. It is also important to note that the mid tone diacritic REPLACES the lexical tone diacritic on the verb. This is the only grammatical tone marking that we are proposing at this time. It is of course entirely possible that other kinds of grammatical tone marking may be needed once the Bangolan orthography is in use by many people and more of the language is known.

4. Word Division

In Bangolan, we have chosen to adopt in large measure the orthographic conventions of the language of wider communication of the area, namely English. Our proposals also follow the guidelines of the General Alphabet of Cameroon Languages (Tadadjeu and Sadembouo 1979).

4.1 Subject Marker

Subject markers in Bangolan are written as separate pronouns, as below:

- | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| (5) A pənó mbina. | <i>'He returned from the farm.'</i> |
| 3s return farm | <i>(yesterday or earlier today)</i> |
| Pó pənó mbina. | <i>'They returned from the farm.'</i> |
| 3p return farm | <i>(yesterday or earlier today)</i> |

4.2 Noun Phrase

The noun phrase may consist of a head noun, followed by modifiers such as adjectives and/or determiners.

4.2.1 Associative Phrase

Noun phrases often include NP-NP ("associative" or "genitive") constructions in which the first NP is “possessed” by the second NP. In Bangolan, there is no written associative morpheme (equivalent to "of" in English) between the possessor and the possessed. In Grassfields Bantu languages in general, the associative marker is usually just a floating tone morpheme between the two words. These floating tone morphemes change the phonetic surface tone on the words according to rules that every Bangolan speaker has in his head. We therefore choose not to write either the floating tone morphemes nor the phonetic surface tone, but to write the words with the same tone patterns they have in isolation. Typical associative noun phrases are therefore written with basic word tone on each of the words, as follows:

- | | | | | |
|-----|----------------|-------------|----------------------|--------------|
| (6) | ndát | Tatá | mbe | mbehe |
| | house | Tatá | fence | vegetable |
| | ‘Tata’s house’ | | ‘fence of vegetable’ | |

4.2.2 Reduplication

Reduplication has a wide range of forms and functions in Bangolan. In the proposed orthography, reduplicated words are separated by hyphens, as below:

- | | | | | |
|-----|---------------|-----------|----------------------|------------------|
| (7) | zahá | ‘quickly’ | zaha-zahá | ‘very quickly’ |
| | papwə | ‘people’ | papwə-papwə | ‘full of people’ |
| | pánəmə | ‘soft’ | pánəmə-pánəmə | ‘very soft’ |
| | gó’ | ‘bone’ | gó’-gó’ | ‘bony’ |
| | móhó | ‘fire’ | móhó-móhó | ‘full of fire’ |

4.2.3 Compound Nouns

Compound nouns, on the other hand, are written in Bangolan without a hyphen, just the two roots written together as a single word, as below:

- | | | | | | | |
|-----|-------------|----------|-------------|----------|-----------------|-------------|
| (8) | njě | ‘back’ | ndát | ‘house’ | njěndát | ‘room’ |
| | móna | ‘animal’ | mbo | ‘egg’ | mónambo | ‘banana’ |
| | píhí | ‘bad’ | nzə’ | ‘heart’ | píhínzə’ | ‘wicked’ |
| | sáj | ‘tail’ | móna | ‘animal’ | sájmona | ‘tail’ |
| | tíŋ | ‘strong’ | nduŋ | ‘price’ | tíŋnduŋ | ‘expensive’ |

4.3 Verb Phrase

The imperative is taken as the citation form of the verb in Bangolan. Imperative verb forms do not have visible prefixes or suffixes but do have a high tone suffix that fuses onto the stem. The verb root in Bangolan is usually monosyllabic, though sometimes it becomes disyllabic because of the addition of some formerly productive Bantu extension which has become lexicalised in present day Bangolan (either –ná or –tá). The result is that you won't find disyllabic verbs without one of these two extensions as the second syllable.

4.3.1 Tense

Bangolan distinguishes four tenses which appear as near past, far past, future certain, and future uncertain when combined with perfective aspect. In the orthography, the tense markers are written separately. Note that the "near past" tense is really the present perfective (or zero perfective) construction, as shown below:

| | | |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------|---|
| (9) Near past (present perfective) | A t́. 3s refuse | <i>'He refused.'</i> <i>(yesterday or earlier today)</i> |
| Far past | A ka t́. 3s PST refuse | <i>'He refused.'</i> <i>(two or more days ago)</i> |
| Future (certain) | A wú t́. 3s F1 refuse | <i>'He will refuse.'</i> |
| Future (uncertain) | A kǐ t́. 3s F2 refuse | <i>'He may refuse.'</i> |

4.3.2 Aspect

In addition to the unmarked perfective aspect, Bangolan has two kinds of constructions where a tone change on the verb is (sometimes the only) indication of the marked imperfective aspect: progressive constructions and habitual constructions. Note that while habitual constructions have a habitual marker preceding the verb, progressive constructions have only a tone change on the verb (marked below by the mid tone diacritic). These two kinds of imperfective constructions are shown in the unmarked zero (present) tense below (the parallel zero tense perfective aspect was already shown above):

| | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| (10) Present Progressive | A t̄. 3s refuse.PROG | <i>'He is refusing.'</i> |
| Present habitual | A nyáŋ t̄. 3s HAB refuse. | <i>'He (usually) refuses.'</i> |

This means that the verbs in all progressive and habitual constructions are all marked with the mid tone diacritic, no matter if the tense is present, past or future.

4.3.3 Infinitive

The infinitival prefix in Bangolan is the simple prefix ‘*má-*’ attached to the verb root. In the orthography, this form is written as a single word, as below.

- (11) **mátó** ‘*to refuse*’
 INF-refuse
- mázəhó** ‘*to sweep*’
 INF-sweep

4.4 Negation

There is only one type of general negation in Bangolan. The negative word ‘*pə*’ is always clause final, as in the examples below.

- (12) **A ka tó pó.** ‘*He did not refuse.*’
 3s PST refuse NEG
- A tō pó.** ‘*He is not refusing.*’
 3s refuse.PROG NEG
- A wú tó pó.** ‘*He will not refuse.*’
 3s F1 refuse NEG

5. Punctuation and Capitalisation

The punctuation marks and the rules that govern the Bangolan language are the same as those for English. The punctuation marks used for Bangolan are therefore as follows:

- 1) Full stop (.)
- 2) Question mark (?)
- 3) Exclamation mark (!)
- 4) Comma (,)
- 5) Colon (:)
- 6) Semicolon (;)
- 7) Quotation marks (“ ... ”) and (‘ ... ’)

5.1 Full Stop

The full stop (.) in Bangolan marks the end of a declarative sentence.

- (13) **Tatá wē mbina.**
 Tatá go farm
 ‘*Tata is going to the farm.*’

5.2 Question Mark

The question mark (?) marks the end of an interrogative sentence.

- (14) **Mémé ka sú ka tyé?**
Meme PST buy what market
'What did Meme buy in the market?'

5.3 Exclamation Mark

The exclamation mark is written at the end of a command, or it is placed following exclamatory words or phrases. It functions to express interjections, surprises, excitement, and forceful comments as well as simple commands; as below.

- (15) **Wé!**
go.IMP
'Go!'
- (16) **A tutú pó!**
3s play NEG
'She should not play!'
- (17) **Ndi! Mă lé wu pó?**
EX I tell you NEG
'Ndi! (a call to attention). Did I not tell you?'

5.4 Comma

Commas are used to separate clauses or parallel words within a clause, as below:

- (18) **Pó wē sukút pá, pó wē tyé.**
3p go school NEG 3p go market
'They are not going to school, they are going to the market.'
- (19) **Sali nyít mbúshi, munguṅwáṅ pú mvúme' yetét nzo' ndát.**
Sali has cat dog and goats three in house
'Sali has a cat, dog, and three goats in the house.'

5.4 Quotation Marks

Quotation marks (“ ... ”) occur at the beginning and end of direct speech, as below:

- (20) **A lé ndé, “Wu wē ha?”**
3s say that 2s go where
'He said, “Where are you going?”'

Note: In English and Bangolan, other punctuation marks always precede quotation marks when they occur next to each other.

5.5 Capitalisation

Capital letters are used at the beginning of sentences, for proper nouns, and after a colon.

First word in a sentence:

- (21) **Pó wú wé tyé nywě.**
3p F1 go market today
'They will go to the market today.'

Proper nouns:

- (22) **Ndi ka wé mbina ngyí Tala, Mémé, Sali pú Tatá.**
Ndi PST go farm call Tala Meme Sali and Tata
'Ndi went to the farm and called Tala, Meme, Sali, and Tata.'

After a colon:

- (23) **Mə'ɔ́ ló yɛ: A tsó ndə' pá.**
One thing is 3s is house NEG
'One thing is true: He is not in the house.'

6. Need for further testing of the orthography

Though most of the above orthographic principles are already in use by some native speakers, especially members of the newly elected language committee, we still believe that there are some areas for testing and correction. For example, the choice of tone marks and the addition of the vowels /i/ and /o/ that were not use when the researcher (author) was still on the field. Any new orthography needs people to use it for a time before potential problems reveal themselves. It is our hope that this proposal will be a significant first step in allowing people to start reading and writing the language.

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