



Morphology – Noun

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Romani has two genders – masculine and feminine, number comprises singular and plural. In principal properties – number and type of cases – the case system of *Romani* resembles those of other (Indo-)European languages, only case-formation is typical New-Indo-Aryan (see table):

The two-levelled nominal inflexion consists of three primary and five secondary cases. The three primary cases are: nominative, oblique, and vocative. The vocative holds a special isolated position. The oblique functions as accusative of discourse prominent entities. These entities are semantically very often, but not always, characterised as animated, which led to the correlation of the phenomenon accusative = nominative : accusative = oblique with inanimacy : animacy. The oblique is the basis for the five secondary cases: dative, ablative, locative, instrumental/sociative and genitive. The double suffixation that appears in the formation of these secondary cases – oblique morpheme: {/es/a/en/} + case morpheme: dative {/ke//ge/}, ablative {/tar//dar/}, ... – is described, as an agglutinating feature of *Romani*¹. From a diachronical point of view these secondary case morphemes are grammaticalised postpositions. (for the case system see the enclosed table).

There are variety-specific differences in the realization of the instrumental singular on the one hand:

manušesa : manušeha ("with the human being")

rakljasa : rakljaha ("with the girl")

and with the genitive, which primarily used in an attributive way and thus additionally is differi in gender and number, on the other hand:

manušeskero : manušeskoro : manušeskro : manušesko manušeskeri : manušeskiri :

manušeskri : manušeski manušeskere : manušeskere : manušeskre : manušeske

manušengero : manušengoro : manušengro : manušengo manušengeri : manušengiri :

manušengri : manušengi manušengere : manušengere : manušengre : manušenge

In a gradually different manner, a multitude of varieties has additionally developed analytical case formation, which frequently replaces the synthetical locative. Likewise, the ablative is affected; very rarely if at all, however, the instrumental case is replaced analytically. In *Romani* varieties that share this development, which is primarily to be seen as a result of contacts with the languages of the Balkan, "old" synthetical forms are complemented by "modern" analytical prepositional cases – mostly in the way of preposition + nominative – as demonstrated below:

gavestar : katar o gav ("from/out of the village")

gaveste : ando gav ("in the village")

The declension in the remaining nominal area – articles, adjectives, pronominal adjectives – is two-levelled and characterised by the dichotomy nominative: oblique. The noun phrase is governed by the head-noun, as illustrated by the following examples:

o lačno raklo : le lačne raklessa ("the good boy" : "with the good boy")

¹ In order to avoid misunderstandings, it needs to be noted that, typologically, *Romani* is a synthetical inflectional language with analytic and agglutinative features.



i terni džuvli : la terna džuvljatar ("the young woman" : "from the young woman")

e tikne čhave : le tikne čhavege ("the little sons" : "for the little sons")

The table below shows the variants of the definite article:

	sg. masc.	sg. fem.	pl.
nom.	o	i / e	e / le / o
obl.	le / e	la / e	le / e

Variation of the adjective-endings in most cases is restricted to the feminine singular form of the oblique:

	sg. masc.	sg. fem.	pl.
nom.	baro	bari	bare
obl.	bare	bare/a	bare

baro "big"

Aside from these flexing adjectives, *Romani* also has a few undeclinable adjectives, such as for instance *šukar* "beautiful".

So far, the nouns used as examples have been elements of the inherited lexicon. As such, they are differently marked morphologically than loanwords. As to the adjectives, loaned adjectives are differently flexed in comparison to the inherited ones: for instance, there is no differentiation of gender or of both gender and number:

	Kalderaš-Romani	Kalderaš-Romani	Bugurdži-Romani
	sg. / m. + f.	pl.	sg. and pl.
nom.	lungo	lungo(ne)	dlgo
obl.	lungone	lungone	dlgone

lungo "long" [←rum. lung]; *dlgo* "long" [skr.dial. dlgo]

As far as declination is concerned, masculines are generally distinguished by different vocalism of the oblique-singular-suffix, which in the case of the "thematic declination of inherited words" is realised as /-es/, while in the case of the "athematic loanword declination" there is evidence of assimilation or, respectively, of analogy according to the vocalic final position of the nominative.

	pre-european	european	european
	general	Kalderaš-R.i	Burgenland-R.
nom.	bakro	sokro	polgari
dat.	bakreske	sokroske	polgariske

sokro "Father in law" [←rum. *socru*]; *polgar* "citizen" [←ung. *polgár*]



In *Kalderaš-Romani*, among others, inherited words are additionally distinguished from loanwords through accent. While with inherited words the accent lies on the last syllable, with loanwords it is generally the penultimate syllable is stressed:

baló [←ai. *ba:la*] : trájó [←rum. *trai*] (pig : "life")

bakrí [←ai. *barkara-*] : trásta [←rum. *traistă*] ("sheep" [fem.] : "bag")



References

Elšik, Victor / Matras, Yaron (eds.) (2000) *Grammatical Relations in Romani: The Noun Phrase*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia.