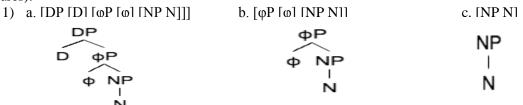# EZAFE ACROSS LANGUAGE FAMILIES: IRANIAN AND ALTAIC

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Aim: Although the nature of Ezafe in different Iranian languages has been mentioned in the previous studies (Larson&Yamakido 2005, Samvelian 2007, Haig 2011, among others), its phrase properties are less discussed with respect to its function in the nominal structure in a broader sense. This paper aims to analyze the constructions involving the Ezafe marker in an Iranian and an Altaic language, namely, Kurmanji and Turkish, to argue for a common ground between the two as well as differences.

Proposal: Extending the analysis for pronouns by Deschaine & Wiltschko (2010) to nominal phrases, we argue that both Kurmanji and Turkish have the three nominal structures in (1) (φP hosts a bundle of features).

1) a. [DP [D] [φP [φ] [NP N]]]   b. [φP [φ] [NP N]]   c. [NP N]

Data & Analysis: The Ezafe marker in Kurmanji relates post-nominal modifiers to a head noun, including pronominal and nominal possessors, adjectives, PPs and relative clauses, and it inflects for gender and number. Examples for pronominal possessors and adjectives are given in (2) and (3), respectively (examples from Haig 2011). Kurmanji also has a demonstrative/anaphoric Ezafe, which we will exemplify later in (9).

2) dest-ê   te
    hand(M)-EZ.M. 2SG.OBL
    'your hand'

3) mal-a   mezin
    house(F)-EZ.F. big
    'big house'

Turkish Ezafe is lesser known. The main reason is that most previous research did not consider the Ezafe marker as such due to its misperception as the 3rd person marker (Kornfilt 1984, Yükseker 1998, Tat 2010; but see Lewis 1967 for reference to Ezafe constructions in Turkish). Erbasi (in preparation) argues that Noun-Noun-(s)I compounds (NNC) as in (4) and Genitive Phrases (GP) as in (5) in Turkish have Ezafe markers (and only those) such that the former has the full ezafe *–(s)I* and the latter has it as a fused suffix composed of [ezafe] and [person], where ezafe is reduced to a single vowel *–I* in overt person agreement markers (i.e. 1st and 2nd) due to fusion. Fusion happens because these features occur in the same head, i.e. φ. Also note that unlike Kurmanji, constructions with Ezafe in Turkish have modifiers on the left, similar to Taiwanese and Mandarin Ezafe-like constructions (Li 2012):

4) çocuk kitab-**ı**   **NNC**
    child   book-Ez.
    'children's book'

5) çocuğ-**un**   kitab-**ı**-Ø   **GP**
    child-3SgGen book-Ez.-3Sg
    'the book of the child'

We argue that NNCs are φPs and GPs are DPs in Turkish. One piece of evidence for this idea derives from the proposal by Déschaine & Wiltschko (2010) that φPs act like variables, hence they can occur in both argumental and predicative positions while DPs occur only in argumental positions. Due to the lack of an overt definite determiner in Turkish, it is difficult to find such contrast. But the following examples provide support for the observation that unlike DPs, φP act like variables in existential constructions:

6) çocuğ-un   kitab-ı   var   **GP**

child-3Gen book-(s)I exist

'The child has a book'

'In restricted contexts: There is the book of the child'

7) çocuk kitab-ı   var   **NNC**

child   book-(s)I exist

'There is (a) children's book'

'*The child has a book'

The existential marking *var* 'exist(s)' requires a genitive subject if it is used to mean possession equivalent to 'X has Y'. If there is a GP in an existential clause, that is the primary meaning as shown in (6). The existential meaning in the form of 'There is/are X', where X is the GP, is available in restricted contexts, one of which is the use of overt location as exemplified below, or with special intonation:

8) masa-da çocuğ-un   kitab-ı   var   **GP**

 table-Loc child-3Gen book-(s)I exist

'There is the book of the child on the table'

'*The child has a book'

We argue that Kurmanji Ezafe constructions are also φPs because they act like a variable. In (9) is an example of a demonstrative/anaphoric Ezafe and in (10) is an example where the two functions of Ezafe are indistinguishable (examples from Haig (2011)):

9) şev-ên   zivistan-ê dirêj in,   **yên** havîne kurt-in

night-Ez.Pl. winter-Obl. long Cop.Pl. Ez.Pl. summer short-Cop.Pl.

'The nights of winter are long, **those of** summer are short' (Bedir Khan & Lescot: 1986: 199)

10) bira-yê   min   ê   mezin-e

brother-Ez.M. 1Sg.Obl. Ez.M. big.Cop.3Sg

'(It) is my big brother'

'My brother is the big one'

There are two differences between the Kurmanji and Turkish. First, Kurmanji has an overt determiner, expressing specificity/definiteness, while the latter does not. Therefore, all Ezafe constructions in the former are φPs and DP is reserved for the determiner. Since Turkish does not have a determiner, the specificity is expressed by a nominal, usually moved from the φP to DP. This results in the two different structures, namely NNCs which are non-referential as they lack a DP, and GPs which are referential as they are DPs. Second, the word order difference between the languages results from agreement facts. In Turkish, the head noun agrees with its possessor in GPs while Kurmanji has no such agreement. Presumably, since the possessor (or any other modifier) is unable to enter into agreement in Kurmanji, the head noun must move to Spec φP for agreement. Though the specifics of this point (e.g. to satisfy which feature?) is not yet clear to us, we believe that this explanation is promising for word order variation.

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