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*Araştırma Makalesi • Research Article*

## **Ezafe (Genitive) in Zaza Language**

### *Zaza Dilinde Tamlama*

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**Abstract:** Ezafe, which is known as Genitive in European languages and used in Turki, Iranian and Sami languages spoken in the Middle East, is used to link two syntactic elements. Generally, one of the elements is the possessor and the other one is the modifier. There are grammatical elements that link these syntactic structures which at least consist of two units. The historical development of these elements, which varies according to languages, in Iranian languages did not follow the same process. While the languages classified in Northwest Iranian languages, such as Zazaki, varies with a nominal construction, there are some similarities with Zazaki in the languages belonging to the Southwest Iranian languages group. The purpose of this article is to explore the structures of the nominal phrase in Zaza Language. Both noun and adjective phrases will be analyzed in detail, and other nominal phrases will also be scrutinized. It will also be examined whether these syntactic structures have semantic functions. The origin of Ezafe will be traced back to the Old Iranian languages, and its structure in the Modern Iranian languages will also be investigated. The similarities and differences will be discussed by comparing the functioning of the Zaza language with other Iranian languages. In addition, the nominal phrase constructions in many Zaza dialects will be examined, and it will be investigated whether there are differences between them.

**Keywords:** Zaza, Ezafe, Izafe, Genitive, Iranian Languages

**Öz:** Avrupa Dillerinde Genitive olarak bilinen, Ortadoğuda konuşulan Turki, İrani ve Sami dillerinde kullanılan Ezafe kavramı iki sentaktik öğeyi birbirine bağlamak için kullanılır. Genellikle öğelerden biri tamlayan biri ise tamlanan olur. En az iki birimden oluşan bu sentaktik yapıları birbirine bağlayan gramer öğeleri mevcuttur. Dilden dile farklılık gösteren bu öğelerin irani dillerdeki tarihi gelişimleri aynı seyri izlememiştir. Zazaca gibi Kuzeybatı irani diller grubunda tasnif edilen diller tamlama konusunda ayrışırken güneybatı irani diller grubuna ait dillerde Zazaca ile benzeşenler vardır. Bu makalenin amacı Zaza Dilinde var olan tamlama yapısını incelemektir. Gerek isim gerekse sıfat tamlamaları detaylı olarak analiz edilerek bunların dışındaki tamlama şekillerine de göz atılacaktır. Bu sentaktik yapının semantic işlevlerinin olup olmadığı da incelenecektir. Ezafenin tarihi eski irani dillere kadar götürülerek yeni irani dillerdeki yapılarına da bakılacaktır. Zaza Dili ile diğer irani dillerdeki işleyiş karşılaştırılarak benzerlikler ve farklılıklar ele alınacaktır. Ayrıca birçok Zaza ağızlarından tamlama verileri de incelenerek kullanım farklılıklarının olup olmadığı araştırılacaktır.

**Anahatar Kelimeler:** Zazaca, Ezafe, Izafe, Tamlama, İrani Diller

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## Abbreviations

A: Adjective, AP: Adjectival Phrase, DIR: Directional, EZ: Ezafe, EZ<sub>F</sub>: Ezafe<sub>Feminine</sub>, EZ<sub>M</sub>: Ezafe<sub>Masculine</sub>, EZ<sub>P</sub>: Ezafe<sub>Plural</sub>, FS: Fusion Sound, N: Noun, NOM: Nominative, NP: Nominal Phrase, OBL: Oblique, PL: PLURAL, Pl: plural, PRES: Present, PRT: preterit, S: Sentence, SG: SINGULAR, Sg: singular, SghS.: Saṅghātasūtra, V: Verb, VP: Verbal Phrase.

## 1. Introduction

Ezafe or Izafe, which comes from the Arabic word *Idāfah* (إِضَافَةٌ) constitutes a syntactic unit by linking two or more elements in Iranian languages. Ezafe, which is also available in Sami languages, passed from Persian to Turkish during the Ottoman Turkish period (Mingazova, 2018: 40). Ezafe is used in languages that had spread over a large area such as Sami, Iranian and Turki. ‘Ezafe, which literally means ‘annexation’ or ‘addition’ and is traditionally known as the ‘Genitive’ marker, is an indispensable element inside any noun phrase comprising a head modified by at least one non-clausal modifier and/or complement’ (Parsafar, 2010: 637). The history of the Ezafe construction, whose origin dates back to the Persian relative pronoun *hya* (Samvelian, 2007: 643), *aya-/taya-* (Kent, 1953: 85)<sup>1</sup>, is expressed by different theories. According to some researchers, it is a feature of the Iranian languages, while for others it originates from the influence of Elamite and Urartu (Yakubovich, 2020). It is accepted as the starting point of influence that the head of nominal phrase in Urartian and Elamite was on the right, and the Iranian languages were partially neighbouring these languages and partially intertwined.

## 2. The historical development of Ezafe in Iranian languages

Ezafe started to function as a genitive case whose functions were semantically benefactive, possessor and experiencer in Old Persian (Haig, 2008: 56). At the beginning of the Middle Iranian period, when the ergative system started to come into play, Ezafe functioned as a genitive case marker by preserving the possessive feature of the Genitive case. The main feature that distinguishes the nominal phrase system in Old Persian from Modern Persian is that Ezafe did not have the predicate feature in Old Persian (Skjærvø, 2002: 92). When the accusative system replaced the ergative system in some Iranian languages in the Modern Iranian period, the absolutive and oblique cases were replaced by nominative and accusative cases. While the two-case system morphologically continued, the Ezafe structure preserved itself and continued to perform the function of the genitive case as an enclitic<sup>2</sup>.

(2.1) Genitive in Old Iranian languages (Yakubovich 2020:94-95).

a. byd                      š’bwhr š’h-’n š’h br’d    bwd            (m)yšwn xwd’y  
furthermore            Shapurking-s king brother be.3SG.PRT Mesene    lord

‘Furthermore Shapur, king of kings, had a brother, lord of Mesene’ (M 47.I 6–7, [Sundermann 1981: 102]).

b. rty                      MN xmyr w’nkw pwstkw ’’βr-nt            pr    xmyr xws’nty-’kH    c’-β’k  
furthermore from amir such.ACC letter            bring-3PL.PRT with amir satisfaction            from-you

‘And they brought from emir this letter with emir’s satisfaction with you’ (Mugh 1.I 4–5, [Yakubovich 2002: 234]).

c. πδοοασατο            χοακαμο            χοασινδοβαγοφαρνο            ζαμωδο πορο  
declare.3SG.PRT    own.wish            own.approval Bagfarn            Zamod son

‘And Bag-farn, son of Zamod declared freely and willingly...’ [Sims-Williams 2000: 33], A 8.

d. tt-ye                      uysnor-i            kädägānīne-i            hambīs-ä  
that-GEN.3SG.M    being-UEN.3SG.M karma.related-NOM.3SG.M heap-NOM.3SG.M

<sup>1</sup> Cited in Yakubovich 2020: p.100

<sup>2</sup> A clitic is used when one of the two elements linked is dominant and other one is weak.

‘The karmic heap of this being...’ (SghS. §35.2, [Canevascini 1993: 16]).

The left-branching system, which is also found in the Northwestern Iranian languages such as Kurdish and Zazaki, remained unchanged in both Middle Persian and Modern Persian. ‘The other four Middle Iranian languages, namely Parthian (2.1a), Sogdian (2.1b), Bactrian (2.1c), and Khotanese (2.1d), all select left-branching without a linker as the main strategy of forming noun phrases’ (Yakubovich 2020: 94). Ezafe has been preserved in two varieties in the Iranian languages in an independent way from the subgroups.

### 2.1. Modern Iranian Period

The Ezafe structure is present in Modern Iranian languages which are morphologically both accusative and ergative. Even though Ezafe does not syntactically have the same structure, it has preserved itself in these languages. ‘As has already been mentioned, Ezafe comes in two varieties. The first, called simply Ezafe (EZ), is found in Persian and Kurdish (among other languages) and is a construction where modifying elements are linked post-nominally to their head by the Ezafe. The second, termed the ‘Reverse’ Ezafe (REZ) is found in Gilaki and Baluchi, and links modifiers pre-nominally’ (Haghkerdar, 2009:3).

Ezafe is considered as a vowel linking elements within a phrase (Ghomeshi, 1997), a case marker (Samiian, 1994; Larson & Yamakido, 2005), a linker presenting subject-verb inversion (Den Dikken, 2006), a phrasal affix (Samvelian, 2007), a functional head (Toosarvandani & Van Urk, 2012) and a marker associated with movement (Kahnemuyipour, 2014, 2016). Kahnemuyipour (2014, 2016) proposes a roll-up movement for the Persian Ezafe constructions and assumes that the canonical word order of the noun phrase in Persian is head-final and the head-initial noun phrase is derived via phrasal movement to specifiers of intermediate functional projections. Kahnemuyipour argues that Ezafe is the element triggering movement.

Larson and Yamakido (2005, 2006) proposes that the Ezafe suffix in Zazaki is a case marker which marks gender, number, and attributive or possessive relationship between the head noun and its complement.

In most Iranian languages, including modern Persian, the head noun is on the left while it is on the right in languages spoken on the south coast of the Caspian Sea (Yakubovich, 2020: 93). Zaza Language, which has many common features with the Iranian languages spoken on the coast of the Caspian Sea, differs from these languages in terms of a nominal phrase construction, and is like modern Persian and Kurmanji. The head of a nominal phrase in Persian and Kurmanji is on the left and the modifier on the right. Turkish, which is another neighbouring language, uses the same style of a nominal phrase construction with the Iranian languages on the shore of the Caspian Sea, where the head noun is also on the right. In (2.2) example, the differences between (a) “my brother's house” and (b) “my brother's big house” (Samiian, 2017: 2) are given.

#### (2.2) Northwest Iranian languages

- |                           |               |
|---------------------------|---------------|
| 1. (a) ceman berar ka     | [Tati]        |
| (b) ceman berar pila ka   |               |
| 2. (a) me berar-e xene    | [Mazandarani] |
| (b) me berar-e gat-e xene |               |
| 3. (a) me berer-e sere    | [Gorgani]     |
| (b) gat-e sere me berer   |               |
| 4. (a) mi berar-e xune    | [Guilaki]     |
| (b) me berar-e pile xune  |               |

5. (a) ceman bera ka [Taleshi]  
 (b) ceman bera pila ka
6. (a) mi berer-e xane [Deylami]  
 (b) mi pila berer-e xane

The Zaza language, which has common features with other Northwestern Iranian languages spoken on the south coast of the Caspian Sea in terms of many grammatical categories, uses a similar structure like in Modern Persian, which is known as the Southwestern Iranian language. ‘It is probably fair to say that the *ezāfe* construction in Zazaki exhibits more similarities to the *kāra haya manā* in Old Persian than the *ezāfe* construction in New Persian...’ (Yakubovich, 2020: 103). The Northern dialect of Zaza language distinguishes masculine, feminine and plural in the Ezafe structures. In the Southern dialect, the Ezafe suffixes differ from the ones in the Northern dialect in some constructions. The suffix /-ê/ also becomes the suffix /-i/ in some regions. There are also some regions which use all Ezafe suffixes as a single suffix /-i/ (Keskin, 2008). Since there are drops (Arslan, 2018) in the Ezafe suffixes as well as in the other suffixes in Southern Zazaki, the examples were selected from Northern Zazaki. The suffixes may vary depending on the case of the units which constitute Ezafe.

**Table 2.1** The Ezafe suffixes in Zazaki

		definite		indefinite	
Number	Gender	nominal	adjectival	nominal	adjectival
Singular	maskuline	-ê	-o	-ê de	-o de
	feminine	-a	-a	-a de	-a de
Plural		-ê	-ê	-ê de	-ê de

The examples used in this article will consist of definite nominal phrases. Since the lexeme *de* is always used in indefinite structures, this is not included in the examples.

### 3. Nominal Ezafe

The head of a nominal phrase in Zazaki is located on the left and the possessor on the right. In a unit consisting of two nouns such as in the example *dest-ê lazek-i* ‘boy’s hand’, the Ezafe suffix is added to the first element, namely the head noun. The possessor (on the right) is always in oblique case. The head noun takes different affixes according to number (singular/plural) and gender, and the verb is conjugated according to these inflections.

(3.1)

- a. Xal-ê                      lazek-i                      so-n-o                      çê.  
 uncle-EZ<sub>M</sub>                      boy-OBL                      g<sub>OPRES</sub>-PRES-3sgM home.OBL  
 ‘Boy’s uncle goes home.’
- b. Xal-a                      lazek-i                      so-n-a                      çê.  
 aunt-EZ<sub>F</sub>                      boy-OBL                      g<sub>OPRES</sub>-PRES-3sgF home.OBL  
 ‘Boy’s aunt goes home.’
- c. Xal-ê                      lazek -i                      so-n-ê                      çê.  
 uncle-EZ<sub>P</sub>                      boy-OBL                      g<sub>OPRES</sub>-PRES-3sgP home.OBL  
 ‘Boy’s uncles/aunts go home.’

Only the verb changes in past tenses as the subject of an intransitive verb is always in the absolutive case. Since this study examines the elements of Ezafe, the properties of verbs will be excluded from the study. In the English translations of the examples provided in (3.2), the modifiers have been translated as personal pronouns in order to show the details since the modifiers cannot be distinguished as masculine and feminine in all words.

(3.2)

- a. Ciran-a mı kitab-ê malim-i waz-en-a.  
 neighbour-EZ<sub>F</sub> 1SG.OBL book-EZ<sub>M</sub> teacher-OBL want<sub>PRES-PRES-3sgM</sub>  
 A ey waz-en-a.  
 ‘My neighbour wants the teacher’s book.’  
 ‘She wants his book.’
- b. Ciran-a mı kitab-ê malim-i was-t-Ø.  
 neighbour-EZ<sub>F</sub> 1SG.OBL book-EZ<sub>M</sub> teacher-OBL want<sub>PAST-PAST-3sgM</sub>  
 Ae o was-t-Ø.  
 ‘My neighbour wanted the teacher’s book.’  
 ‘She wanted it.’
- c. Ciran-ê mı kitab-un-ê malim-i waz-en-ê.  
 neighbour.PL.NOM-EZ<sub>P</sub> 1SG.OBL book-PL.OBL-EZ<sub>P</sub> teacher-OBL want<sub>PRES-PRES-3pl</sub>  
 î ine waz-en-ê.  
 ‘My neighbours want the teacher’s books.’  
 ‘They want them.’
- d. Ciran-un-ê mı kitab-ê malim-i waş-t-i.  
 neighbour-PL.OBL-EZ<sub>P</sub> 1SG.OBL book-PL.NOM-EZ<sub>P</sub> teacher-OBL want<sub>PAST-PAST-3pl</sub>  
 Îne i waş-t-i.  
 ‘My neighbours wanted the teacher’s books.’  
 ‘They wanted them.’
- e. Ciran-ê mı kitab-un-ê malim-u waz-en-ê.  
 neighbour.PL.NOM-EZ<sub>P</sub> 1SG.OBL book-PL.OBL-EZ<sub>P</sub> teacher-OBL want<sub>PRES-PRES-3pl</sub>  
 Î ine waz-en-ê.  
 ‘My neighbours want the teacher’s books.’  
 ‘They want them.’
- f. Ciran-un-ê mı kitab-ê malim-u waş-t-i.  
 neighbour-PL.OBL-EZ<sub>P</sub> 1SG.OBL book-PL.NOM-EZ<sub>P</sub> teacher-OBL want<sub>PAST-PAST-3pl</sub>  
 Îne i waş-t-i.  
 ‘My neighbours wanted the teacher’s books.’  
 ‘They wanted them.’

Since the possessor is in the oblique case in all Ezafe structures, the dominance of the head is striking in the examples (3.2). When the modifiers are converted into personal pronouns, the head noun

is taken as the reference. Since the singular elements as in (3.2a) and (3.2b) do not have the absolutive case markers, only the case of the head in the plural as in (3.2c) and (3.2d) becomes clear. When the oblique plural suffix */-un/*<sup>3</sup> appears, the absolutive plural case marker */-i/* fuses. The stronger sound */-ê/* follows the oblique plural suffix. When there is no suffix following the oblique case marker, the sound */-n/* of the suffix */-un/* usually drops, even though it is used in some regions. The verb is inflected according to the head noun. While the singular possessor *malim* of the nominal phrase in the object position in (3.2c) becomes plural in (3.2d), the verb inflection does not change.<sup>4</sup> Whereas the head noun is singular, the verb does not take any suffixes in the past tense (3.2b). A simple sentence is shown as a phrase tree in Figure 3.1 below.

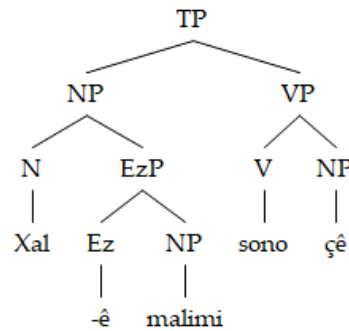


Figure 3.1 The Nominal Phrase

#### 4. Adjectival Ezafe

Adjectives follow the head noun and are linked to it with the ezafe marker.

(4.1)

- a. Çên-a pil-e so-n-a, laz-o qız man-en-o.  
 girl-EZ<sub>F</sub> old-3SG.OBL go<sub>PRES-PRES-3sgF</sub> boy-EZ<sub>M</sub> young.NOM stay<sub>PRES-PRES-3sgM</sub>  
 ‘The old girl goes, the young boy stays.’
- b. Heî-a gewr-e baî-o gıran-∅ a-n-a.  
 donkey-EZ<sub>F</sub> grey.3SG.OBL load-EZ<sub>M</sub> heavy-NOM bring<sub>PRES-PRES-3sgF</sub>  
 ‘The grey donkey brings a heavy load.’
- c. Heî-a gewr-e baî-o gıran-∅ ard-∅.  
 donkey-EZ<sub>F</sub> grey.3SG.OBL load-EZ<sub>M</sub> heavy-NOM bring<sub>PAST-PAST-3sgM</sub>  
 ‘The grey donkey brought a heavy load.’
- d. Heî-ê gewr-i baî-un-ê gıran-u a-n-ê.  
 donkey-PL.NOM.EZ<sub>P</sub> grey.PL.NOM load-PL.OBL-EZ<sub>P</sub> heavy-PL.OBL bring<sub>PRES-PRES-3sgF</sub>  
 ‘The grey donkeys bring heavy loads.’
- e. Heî-un-ê gewr-u baî-ê gıran-i ard-i.  
 donkey-PL.OBL-EZ<sub>P</sub> grey-PL.OBL load-PL.NOM.EZ<sub>P</sub> heavy-PL.NOM bring<sub>PAST-PAST-3sgM</sub>  
 ‘The grey donkeys brought heavy loads.’

<sup>3</sup> It is used as */-an/* in some regions regardless of the dialect.

<sup>4</sup> The verb is inflected according to the object in past tense because of the ergative system in Zazaki.

In Zazaki, there are no elements of Ezafe that syntactically behave differently as in Persian (Samiian, 2017: 2). The noun is always the first element, and a feature is the next element in adjectival phrases. While the phrases such as *sur kitav* ‘red book’ or *Xıdır kitav-i* ‘Xıdır’s book’ are available in some Northwest Iranian languages such as Gilaki and Mazandarani, they are meaningless in Zaza Language. The absolutive suffix /-e/ which is added to the adjective when the head noun is feminine drops in many parts of the Southern dialect: *Qelem-a sur* ‘the red pen’, see (4.2b).

(4.2)

a. *Kitav-o sur* ‘the red book’.

*Kitav-ê ae-o sur-ø* ‘her red book’.

*Kitav-ê ae-o sur-o qıckek-ø* ‘her small red book’.

*Kitav-ê ae-o sur-o qıckek-o qılerin-ø* ‘her dirty small red book’.

*Kitav-ê ae-o sur-o qıckek-o qılerin-o qan-ø* ‘her dirty small old red book’.

b. *Qelem-a sur-e* ‘the red pencil’.

*Qelem-a ey-a sur-e* ‘his red pencil’.

*Qelem-a ey-a sura qıckeke* ‘his small red pencil’.

*Qelema ey-a sura qıckeka qılêrine* ‘his dirty small red pencil’.

*Qelema ey-a sura qıckeka qılêrina qane* ‘his dirty small old red pencil’.

c. *Kitav-ê sur-i* ‘the red books’.

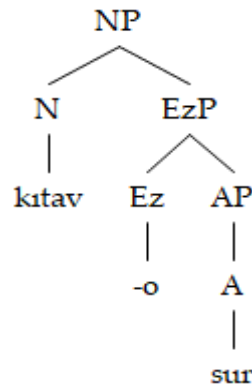
*Kitav-ê sima-ê sur-i* ‘your red books’.

*Kitav-ê sima-ê sur-i-y-ê qıckek-i* ‘your small red books’.

*Kitav-ê sima-ê sur-i-y-ê qıckek-i-y-ê qılerin-i* ‘your dirty small red books’.

*Kitav-ê sima-ê sur-i-y-ê qıckek-i-y-ê qılerin-i-y-ê qan-i* ‘your dirty small old red books’.

In cases where the head noun is followed by a nominal modifier and then by an adjective in modifier chain constructions, the possessive suffix *-yê* is usually used before the adjective. But such an obligation does not arise when the nouns are replaced by personal pronouns. The sentence *kitav-ê ey-o sur-ø* ‘his book which is red’ in (4.2a) appears as *kitav-ê Xıdiri, u-y-o sur-ø* ‘Xıdır’s book, the red one. Even though *kitav-ê Xıdiri-o sur-ø* ‘Xıdır’s red book’ is used in some cases, the phrases with the possessive are usually used. Using new adjectives in a nominal phrase does not cause any changes in the suffixes, but the nominal phrase affixes come into play when the noun is used. In addition, it is possible to derive the new words such as *porederg* ‘long-haired’, *saredez* ‘headache’ from some phrases. In Figure 4.1 below, a simple adjectival phrase inside a nominal phrase is shown as a phrase tree.



**Figure 4.1** The Adjectival Phrase

## 5. Other Nominal Phrase Structures

Phrases can be constituted with many more elements as well as the nominal and adjectival phrases. The first of these are demonstrative pronouns. They appear in the prenominal position and they do not need Ezafe to be linked to the head noun. In other words, they do not cause any changes in the structure of the Ezafe. The following examples are given, taking into account the combinations of masculine and feminine.

### (5.1) Demonstratives

- a. Qelem-a lazek-i.  
pen-EZ<sub>F</sub> boy-OBL  
'the boy's pen.'
- b. Kıtav-ê çênek-a qıc-e.  
pen-EZ<sub>M</sub> girl-OBL young.OBL  
'the young girl's book.'
- c. Qelem-a na malime<sup>5</sup>.  
pen-EZ<sub>F</sub> DEM teacher.OBL  
'this teacher's pen.'
- d. Na malım-o kıkım-ø.<sup>6</sup>  
DEM teacher-EZ<sub>M</sub> old-OBL  
'this old teacher.'
- e. Kıtav-ê n-a malım-a kıkım-e.  
book-EZ<sub>M</sub> DEM girl-OBL old-OBL  
'The book of this old teacher.'
- f. \*Qelem-a na [] kıkımı/kıkıme.  
pen-EZ<sub>F</sub> DEM old-OBL  
'The pen of this old [].'
- g. Kıtav-ê n-a-o sur-ø.  
book-EZ<sub>M</sub> DEM red-OBL  
'The book of her, the is red.'
- h. \*Kıtav n-a-o sur-ø.  
book-EZ DEM red-OBL  
'The book this [] old.'

All the examples excluding (5.1f) and (5.1h) are grammatically correct sentences as demonstrative pronouns precede the nouns. In the example (5.1f), after the demonstrative pronoun, there is a null (head) element which is possessive and is not normally pronounced. Even if it is not pronounced, the semantic presence of this element makes the sentence grammatical. On the contrary, the semantic absence of this null element yields an ungrammatical sentence. Because they have possessive properties, demonstrative pronouns only appear before nouns. Demonstrative pronouns cannot precede adjectives since adjectives have no possessive properties. While the noun *kıtav* in (5.1g) is linked to the

<sup>5</sup> Malım: Teacher (Masculine), Malime: Teacher (Feminine).

<sup>6</sup> Kıkım: old (Masculine), Kıkıme: old (Feminine).

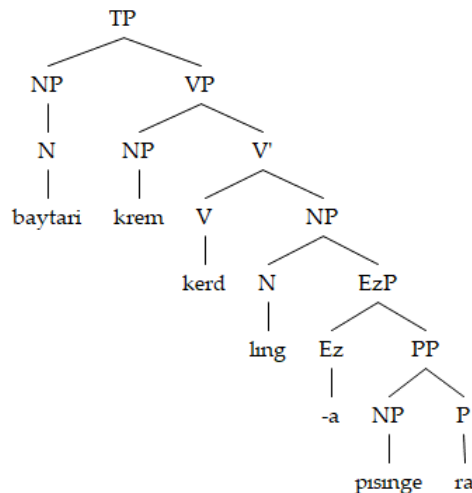


demonstrative pronoun via the Ezafe suffix, this link does not exist in (5.1h). Therefore, it is an incomplete sentence.

(5.2)

- a. Qelem-ê na dı çênek-un-ê pil-u.  
pen-EZ<sub>P</sub> DEM two girl-PL.OBL-EZ old-PL.OBL  
'These two old girls' pen.
- b. Kıtav-ê çênek-a na ciran-i, yê a-w-a qıç-e.  
book-EZ girl-EZ DEM neighbour-OBL, POSS 3SG<sub>F</sub>-FS-3sg<sub>F</sub> young-NOM  
'the book of this neighbour's girl, the young one's.'
- c. Baytar-i krem kerd-ø lıng-a pısinge ra.  
veterinarian-OBL cream do-PAST foot-EZ<sub>F</sub> cat.OBL DIR  
'Veterinarian applied cream on the cat's paw.'  
→ pı ra kerdene 'to attach, to rub'.
- d. Firaze çê de mend-e.  
Firaze-NOM house.OBL DIR stay-PAST  
'Firaze stayed at home.'  
→ te de mendene 'to stay inside'.

In sentences where the nominal and adjectival phrases are used together, it is important which element the demonstrative pronouns are associated with. It is necessary to use the possessive to distinguish these elements in some instances as in (5.2b). The possessive indicates that the adjective belongs to the head noun. In sentences where two possessions are intertwined, the possessive indicates which head noun the possessor depends on. The element of the sentence does not always consist of just one Ezafe. The verb prefix can also appear within this phrase as in (5.2c).



**Figure 5.1** Other nominal structures

The Ezafe structure as a phrase can be included in VP, NP, AP or PP. 'Ezafe vowel appears between elements within noun phrases, adjective phrases, and most prepositional phrases. The only phrasal category in which Ezafe is not found is the verb phrase' (Ghomeshi 1997:731). In terms of the verb structure, Ezafe can also appear within VP (verbal phrase) in Zazaki. If the speaker and the addressee have the knowledge of Ezafe, the target object pronouns can be substituted for Ezafe. *Pı ra* can be used for *lınga pısinge ra* in (5.2c) and *te de* can also be used for *çê de* in (5.2d). These pronouns

have semantic functions. Therefore, the position that each pronoun is used depending on the form and style of the verb. The pronoun *pi* appears when the direct object moves to the surface of the target object and continues its movement on the surface. As for the pronoun *te*, it refers to the state of staying inside an object. Apart from these, there are a number of target object pronouns that perform different functions.

(5.3)

- a. Na bécık-a şikiya-yi-e.  
DEM finger-EZ<sub>F</sub> broken-OBL  
'This broken finger.'
- b. Na hêga-o bare kerd-e  
DEM field-EZ<sub>F</sub> share made-OBL  
'This shared field.'
- c. lazek-ê diine  
boy-EZ<sub>M</sub> second  
'The second boy.'
- d. zê heli serê ko-u ra  
like-EZ<sub>M</sub> eagle-OBL over mountain-OBL DIR  
'over the mountains like an eagle.'
- e. lazek-o en pêt  
boy-EZ<sub>M</sub> most hardworking  
'the most hardworking boy.'
- f. her kıtav serva mı  
all book for 1SG.OBL  
'each the book is for me.'

The Ezafe vowel does not change in nouns and adjectives which are derived from both transitive verbs as in (5.3b) and intransitive verbs as in (5.3a). The suffixes */-e/* (masculine) and */-iye/* (feminine) are added to the verb in the adjectival Ezafe constructions. They take their position as postpositional like other adjectives. Only the lexem *en* is inserted in superlatives as in (5.3e). As for in certain quantifiers as in (5.3f), the Ezafe vowel is not inserted since there is no pronoun which follows the head. While Ezafe is used in (5.3c), it is not used with the cardinal numbers. The Ezafe structure, which consists of at least two elements, must consist of a noun or a pronoun which represents it. When the phrase in (5.3a) is pronounced as *no barekerde*, there is a null noun between the two elements. Ezafe never appears with a single element. It must link at least two words due to the possessive.

The Ezafe suffixes do not have a semantic meaning. The meaning changes when the elements are moved: *Biraê cirane* 'the neighbour's brother' → *ciranê biray* 'the brother's neighbour'.

## 6. Conclusions

In this study the history, structure and features of Ezafe used in Zaza language have been scrutinized. The development of the cognate Iranian languages has also been examined in the historical development process. It has been found out that Ezafe as a syntactic structure has come until today from the Old Iranian languages. Ezafe, which did not have a predicate feature in the Old Iranian languages, gained the predicate feature later. The Modern Iranian languages divide into two groups in regards to the word order in the Ezafe constructions:

- a. Left-branching languages, head + complement (Zazaki, Persian, Kurmanji)
- b. Right-branching languages, complement + head (Gilaki, Tati, Mazandarani)

In these branching, the main element of the structure is the head. The head is in the government position. The Ezafe suffix takes gender and singular /plural affixes as for the head (4.1). When nouns are also converted into personal pronouns, the head is taken as a reference. While the subject is in nominative case in the present tense in transitive verbs, the head of Ezafe is in nominative form (4.1a), (4.1b), (4.1c), (4.1d). When the subject becomes oblique in the past, the head of Ezafe representing the subject also becomes oblique.

The head noun can be in nominative or oblique form as for the case of Ezafe elements due to the ergative feature of the Zaza Language. The complement is always in oblique form. In Zaza language, the head is on the left whereas the complement is on the right in all nominal constructions. Even if the head noun is null in some situations, a noun is obligatory. Adjectives, etc. cannot take place in this position. Especially, when the head is preceded by a demonstrative pronoun, the head is null in some situations. However, the head is present as a category and it is also known by the people who exchange information (5.1).

The Ezafe suffixes do not have a semantic meaning. When the position of elements changes, the meaning also changes: *Biraê cirane* ‘the neighbour’s brother’ → *ciranê biray* ‘the brother’s neighbour’.

The general result from other studies on the subject is that it is highly probable that the Ezafe structure in Zazaki is a continuation of the structure in the Old Persian.

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