**Another Look at the Ezafe Construction**

NACIL 1. 4/2017. Handout

Vida Samiian

**1. Introduction**

The goal of this presentation is to present the data on Ezafe, review the case analysis of this construction, and discuss a set of data that seems to contradict the case analysis with a possible solution within the case framework.

**2. The Ezafe Data**

1) In the Noun Phrase: [DPN Ez AP/PP/RRC/NP]

1. xune-ye maa

house-Ez 1stPL ‘our house’

1. xune-ye xeyli kucik

house-Ez very small ‘the very small house’

1. xune-ye [kenaar-e daryaa]

house-Ez [next-Ez sea] ‘the house on the beach’

1. in javaan-e az Suis bargashte (Samvelian 2007)

this youth-Ez [from Switzerland returned]

‘this youth, returned from Switzerland’

[Q –Ez NP]

1. hame/bishtar-e xune.haa

all/most-Ez house.PL ‘all/most of the houses’

1. ye livaan-e shir

a glass-Ez milk ‘a glass of milk’

1. hame-ye xune-haa-ye kucik-e kenaar-e daryaa-ye in shahr…

all-Ez house.PL.Ez small-Ez next-Ez sea-Ez this city

‘all of those small houses on the beach of this city…’

2) In the Adjective Phrase: [APA Ez NP]

1. negaraan-e bace.haa

Worried-Ez child.Pl ‘worried about the children’

1. montazer-e Godot

waiting-Ez Godot ‘waiting for Godot’

1. mohtaaj-e pul

needy-Ez money ‘in need of money’

3) In Prepositional Phrase headed by Nominal Ps: [PPP2 Ez NP]

1. ru-(ye) miz

on-Ez table ‘on the table’

1. posht-e divaar

behind-Ez wall ‘behind the wall’

1. vasat-e otaaq

middle-Ez room ‘in the middle of the room’

A central argument to arrive at a generalization is that Prepositions in Persian have two subcategories, a small group are case assigning prepositions P1(14) and a second group P2 are nominal prepositions (15) with locative or temporal semantic content and nominal syntactic characteristics. These two groups behave very differently in a number of syntactic ways (16-20). It is the prepositional phrases headed by nominal prepositions that participate in the Ezafe construction.

1. P1 : Case assigning prepositions

az ‘from/of’

be ‘to’

dar ‘at/in/on’

bar ‘onto/on’ [classical period and literary style]

bare/baraaye [appears with the disappearance of Dative –ra]

baa ‘with’

taa ‘until’

bi ‘without’/bedune

1. jelo ‘front’, posht ‘behind’, ru ‘on/top (horizontal)’, zir ‘under’, baalaa ‘up/top (perpendicular)’, paain ‘below’, beyn ‘in between’, vasat ‘in the middle’, birun ‘out’, tu ‘in’, xaarej ‘outside’, daaxel ‘inside’, kenaar ‘side’, pahlu ‘next’, sar ‘head of’, tah ‘bottom’, ru.be.ru ‘facing’, pish ‘next to/before’, pas ‘after’, qabl ‘before’, bad ‘after’…

Syntactic differences between P1s and P2s:

1. P2Ps take Ezafe before the complement NP; P1Ps don’t

tu-ye otaaq dar otaaq \*dar-e otaaq

in-Ez room ‘in the room’

1. P2Ps occur in Ezafe positions in the NP; P1Ps don’t

xune-ye kenaar-e daryaa \*xune-ye dar saahel

house-Ez side-Ez sea house-Ez on beach

“house next to the sea” ‘house on the beach’

1. P2Ps can take a P1 before them; P1Ps don’t

(i) az kenaar-e daryaa \*az dar saahel

from next-Ez sea from on beach

‘from the seaside’

(ii) dar posht-e divar

at behind-Ez wall

1. P2Ps occur in argument position; P1Ps don’t

tu-ye otaaq-o tamiz kard.am \*dar otaaq-o tamiz kard.am

in-Ez room-ACC clean made.I in room-ACC clean made.I

‘I cleaned inside the room’

1. P2s can pluralize and take determiners; P1 don’t

un baalaa-haa(-ye divaar)-ro tamiz kard.am \*un dar-aa-ye otaq

that up-Pl (-Ez wall)-ACC clean made.1stN, that in-Pl-Ez room

‘I cleaned the top areas of the wall’

1. Some P2Ps take the preposition [az] ‘of’ instead of Ezafe

(i) pas-az paayaan-e jalse

after-of end-Ez meeting

‘after the end of the meeting’

(ii) qabl-az safar-e Saasaan

before-of trip-Ez Sasan

‘before Sasan’s trip’

(iii) bad az maah-e Farvardin

after-of month-Ez Farvardin

‘after the month of Farvardin’

N.B. The preposition [az] also occurs in APs (22-24) and with Partitives (25)

22. deltang az zendegi

depressed of life ‘depressed about life’

23. asabaani az in mozu

angry of this issue ‘angry about this issue’

24. xashmgin az natije-ye entexaabaat

enraged of result-Ez election ‘enraged by the result of the election’

25. (i) cand-ta az ketaab.haa

a few of book.PL ‘a few of the books’

(ii) bazi az ketaab.haa

some of book.PL ‘some of the books’

(iii) xeyli az bace.haa

many of child.PL ‘many of the children

To summarize: The domain of application of Ezafe is (22):

26. DP: N-Ez AP/PP/RRC/NP

QP: Q-Ez NP

AP: A-Ez NP

P2P: P2-Ez NP

1. **Ezafe as a Case Assigner**

Samiian 1994 tried to address the question “What is the function of Ezafe?”

The data clearly shows that it is a morpheme that occurs before modifiers and complements in the NP, AP and nominal PPs summarized in (26)

Samiian 1994 proposed that Ezafe is a case marker, inserted before nominal modifiers and complements of Nominal Categories for the purpose of case assignment.

**Larson’s Case Analysis**

Larson 2006 LSA *Zazaki “Double Ezafe” as Double Case-marking*

Larson 2006 WECOL, *Form and Position of Nominal Modifiers in Indo-Iranian*

Larson and Yamakido 2008 *Ezafe and the deep position of nominal modifiers*

Larson 2009 *The Nature of ‘Attributive Markers’*

Larson 2009 *Chinese as a Reverse Ezafe Language*

In a series of works Richard Larson and Larson and Yamakido extend the case marking analysis by developing a formal proposal of Case Assignment in the DP, posing and answering a further important question:

“Assuming that Ezafe occurs to case-mark complements of non-verbal/nominal elements, how do modifiers fit in? Even if adjectives as [+N] categories are case-bearing elements, why would modifiers need case?”

Based on the semantic analysis of determiners introduced by Barwise and Cooper 1981 and Keenan and Stavi 1994, they assume a hierarchy of Theta-roles for D, parallel to, but distinct from, the hierarchy of Theta roles for V.

Given this analysis they argue that DP is like VP in that

* D selects thematic arguments
* DP syntax is right descending
* DP modifiers are lowest complements of the head

Further DP is also like VP in deploying its own system of case marking:

* [+N] complements of D need Case (baring a case feature that must be checked).
* D/d can (in general) check Case on its internal argument, just as V/v checks one Accusative on an internal argument of V

27. a. in ketab-e sabz-e jaleb [Larson 2008?]

DEF book-Ez green-Ez interesting

‘the interesting green book’

b. [DP *Pro*[D’ in[DP ketab [D’ *t* [DP[XP e sabz] [D’ *t* [XP e jaleb]]]]]]]

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CASE CASE CASE

In his 2009 article “Chinese as a Reverse Ezafe Language,” Larson extends the analysis to account for an additional range of languages, those with a reverse Ezafe construction, Guilaki and Mazandarani, as well as Chinese.

Reverse Ezafe languages REZ, Mazadarani and Guilaki, exhibit almost a mirror image of Ezafe; they are head last in their NP structure, with left branching modifiers and NP complements and take Ezafe before each occurrence (28b).

1. a) Ezafe Languages (Persian, Kurmanji, Sorani):

**N**-Ez NP/AP/PP/RRC

**A**-Ez NP

**Q**-Ez NP

**P2**-Ez NP

1. Reverse Ezafe Languages (Guilaki, Mazandarani)

NP/AP/PP/RRC –REZ **N**

NP -REZ A

NP -REZ P

*Gilaki*

29. Modifiers and Complement of N

a. mi beraar-e xune

my brother-Ez house ‘my brother’s house’

b. xujir-e sabs-e kitaab

good-Ez green-Ez book ‘good green book’

c. daryaa-e kinaar-e xowne

sea-Ez next-Ez house ‘house next to the sea’

30. Complements of A

a. mi rafeq-e muntazer

my friend-Ez waiting ‘waiting for my friend’

31. Complements of P2

a. divaar-e sar

wall-Ez top ‘top of the wall’

b. istaxr-e dowry

pool-Ez around ‘around the pool’

*Mazandarani*

32. Complements and modifiers of N

a. asb-e kale

horse-Ez head ‘horse’s head’

b. farhaad-e xaaxer-e hemsaaye

Farhad-Ez sister-Ez neighbor ‘neighbor of Farhad’s sister’

33. Complements of A

a. gaat-e sere

big-Ez house ‘big house’

b. laaqer-e sefid.ru-e zenaa

thin-Ez pale.faced-Ez woman ‘thin, pale-faced woman’

34. Complements of P2

a. dar-e ben

tree-Ez under ‘under the tree’

b. me otaaq-e dele

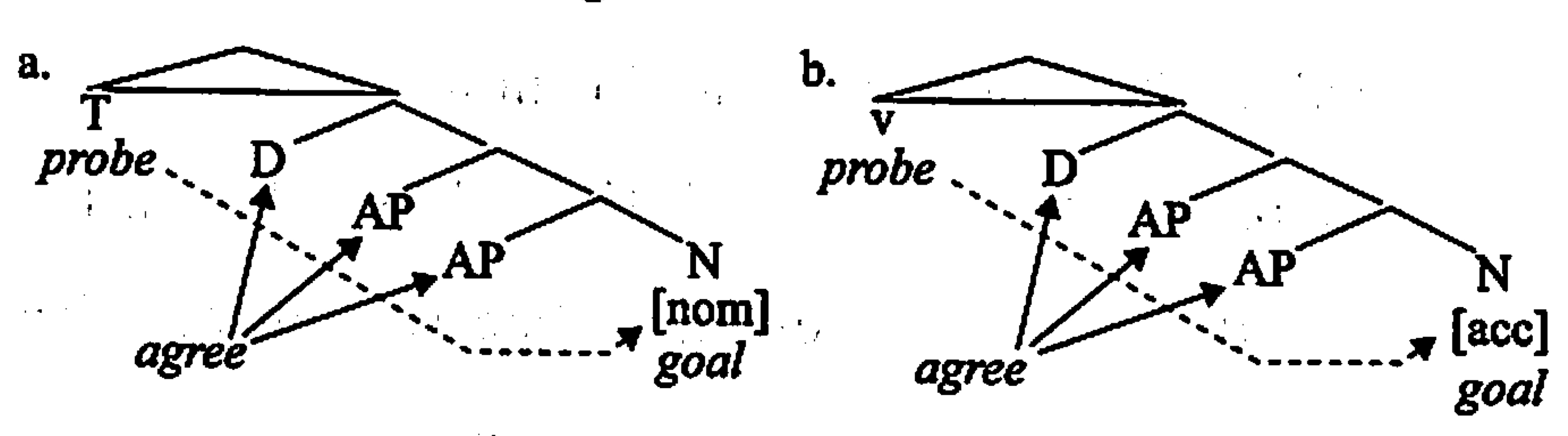
my room-Ez in ‘in my room’

While this looks like a mirror reverse order, Larson points out that the finite relative clauses in these Caspian languages occur post-nominally as in Persian while the non-finite RRC precedes the head Noun.

The question that follows is what is the nature of REZ? a morphological case marker like Ez or something else?

Larson proposes a different analysis for this reverse Ezafe: Case Concord

35.



He argues that REZ is a general concordializer –allowing complements and modifiers of N that require case to move to prenominal attributive position and obtain case by agreement.

36.

a. N [EzP –EZ XP] -EZ checks case on NP/DP

b. XP-REZ N -REZ adjectivalizes NP/DP allowing agreement with N

He further argues that in Reverse Ezafe languages the prenominal attributive position is a derived one, while finite relative clauses remain in their post nominal position.

37. a. N [of/EZ XP]

b. N [XP – ’s/-REZ] x (agreement is impossible here)

c. XP ’s/REZ N [**XP –’s/-REZ**] /

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Through their works on Ezafe and Reverse Ezafe, Larson and Larson and Yamakido have not only developed a formal theory for nominal modifers and complements in Iranian languages, but reached more widely to account for a range of languages including Greek, Japanese, English and Germance. Larson’s theory of DP and case assignment within the DP also reaches across language families to explain the nature of *de* as a case marker in the nominal structure of Chinese.

**4. Occurrence of Ezafe before PPs headed by Case Assigning Prepositions**

In this section I will look at a problematic occurrence of Ezafe before PPs headed by case assigning prepositions.

1. Bahs-e baa Hasan ‘discussion with Hasan’

Discussion-Ez with Hasan

1. Faraar-e az zendaan ‘escape from Prison’

Escape-Ez from prison

1. Safar-e be California ‘travel to California’

Travel-Ez to California

1. Zendegi-ye dar Alaska ‘life in Alaska’

Life-Ez in Alaska

1. Mobaareze-ye ba rezim-e Shah ‘struggle against the Shah’s regime’

Struggle-Ez with regime-Ez Shah

These are problematic because the case analysis precludes the occurrence of Ezafe before case assigning prepositions.

Notice, that Ezafe is not obligatory in this context:

1. Bahs baa Hasan ‘the discussion with Hasan’

Discussion with Hasan

1. Faraar az zendan ‘the escape from prison’

Escape from prison

1. Safar be California ‘the trip to California

Travel to California

1. Zendegi dar Alaska

Life in Alaska ‘life in Alaska’

1. Mobareze ba regim-e Shah dar sal.ha.ye bad-az ku-deta…

Struggle with regime-Ez Shah in year.PL.Ez after-of Coup d’Etat….

‘the struggle against the Shah’s regime in the years after the Coup’

Also all of these nouns can serve as the nominal element of a compound verb using kardan ‘to do/make’ (11-15).

1. Ali ba Hasan bahs kard

Ali with Hasan discussion made ‘Ali had a discussion with Hasan’

1. Ali az zendan faraar kard

Ali from prison ecape made ‘A. escaped from prison’

1. Ali be California safar kard

Ali to California travel made ‘A. traveled to California

1. Ali dar Alaska zendegi mi.kon.e

Ali in Alaska life make. 3rdSg. ‘A. lives in Alaska’

1. Ali ba regim-e Shah mobareze kard

A. with regime-Ez Shah struggle made ‘A. struggled against the Shah’s regime’

And, we can have the same unaccountable Ezafe construction with the infinitival form of the compound verbs as in 16-20. Here too the Ezafe morpheme is optional.

1. Bahs kardan(-e) ba Hasan

Discussion make-Ez with Hasan ‘discussing/to discuss with Hasan’

1. Faraar kardan(-e) az zendan

Escape make-Ez from prison ‘escaping/to escape from prison’

1. Safar kardan(-e) be California

Travel make-Ez to California ‘traveling/to travel to California’

1. Zendegi kardan(-e) dar Alaska

Life make-Ez in Alaska ‘living/to live in Alaska’

1. Mobareze kardan(e) ba rezim-e Shah

Struggle make-Ez with rezim-Ez Shah ‘struggling against the Shah’s regime’

Brame and Karimi 2012 note a similar counterexample with ‘raftan’; as a possible explanation they suggest that it may be a problem related to the preposition ‘be’ and its optionality with verbs of motion. (Linguistics Analysis, 38. 2012)

But additional data with simple verbal infinitives, occurs with a range of Ps (21-24):

1. amadan(-e) az California

coming(-Ez) from California

1. maandan(-e) dar Alaska

staying(-Ez) in Alaska

1. raftan(-e) ba havaapeyma

going(-Ez) with airplane

1. bargashtan(-e) be Iran

returning(-Ez) to Iran

What is common between these verbs and the compound verbs (11-15) is that they require a subject (agent or experiencer):

1. Hasan az California umad.

Hasan from California came ‘Hasan came from California’

1. Ali dar Alaska mund

Ali in Alaska stayed ‘Ali stayed in Alaska’

1. Sasan ba havaapeyma raft

Sasan with airplane went ‘Sasan went by plane’

1. Maryam be Iran bargasht

Maryam to Iran returned ‘Maryam returned to Iran’

First, it is important to establish that these PPs are distinct from nominal P2P modifiers, which occur in the Ezafe construction:

1. (i) bahs-e [pish az jalse]-ye ma bi-natije bud

discussion Ez before of meeting-Ez 1stPl useless was

‘Our discussion before the meeting was useless’

(ii) \*bahs-e ba Hasan-e ma bi-natije bud

discussion-Ez with Hasan-Ez 1stPL useless was

‘Our discussion with Hasan was useless’

The same goes for the infinitival forms 30:

1. (i) bahs kardan-e [bad-az jalse]-ye ma (ba Hasan)

discussion make-Ez [after-of meeting]-Ez 1stPL (with Hasan)

‘for us to have a discussion after the meeting with Hasan’

(ii) \*bahs kardan-e ba Hasan-e ma

discussion make-Ez with Hasan-Ez 1stPL

‘for us to have a discussion with Hasan’

It seems that unlike P2Ps, which are inside the Ezafe construction, these PPs are not.

To confirm the above, we can look at the occurrence of the possessive/complement NP with these PPs. The NP complement cannot follow these PPs and, if it does, it becomes part of the NP complement of the prepositional phrase as in 31-33

1. i. bahs-e ma ba ra’is-e jalse

discussion-Ez 1stPL with chair-Ez meeting

‘our discussion with the chair of the meeting’

ii. bahs-e ba [ra’is-e jalse-ye ma]

discussion-Ez with chair-Ez meeting-Ez 1stPL

‘the discussion with the chair of our meeting’

1. i. faraar-e Hasan az zendan

escape-Ez Hasan of prison ‘Hasan’s escape from the prison’

ii. faraar-e az zendan-e Hasan

escape-Ez of prison-Ez Hasan ‘escape from Hasan’s prison’

A similar piece of evidence relates to the occurrence of the indefinite marker –i. For the Ezafe construction, the boundary seems to be either the possessive/complement NP or the indefinite marker –i, as in (33).

33. (i) xune-ye kenar-e darya-i dar Hawaii peyda kard-im

house-Ez next-Ez sea-IndM in Hawaii found-1stPL

‘we found a house on the beach in Hawaii’

(ii) xune-ye kenar-e darya-e Hasan-o dar Hawaii peyda kard-im

house-Ez next-Ez sea-Ez Hasan-ACC.M in Hawaii found-1stPL

‘we found Hasan’s house on the beach in Hawaii’

Now, these PPs cannot be incorporated in the Ezafe construction once the closing boundary element –indefinite marker (34-36) is there.

34. bahs-(e jaleb) -i ba Hasan dar-gereft

discussion-Ez interesting-Ind.M with Hasan resulted

‘an interesting discussion resulted with Hasan’

35. \*bahs-(e jaleb)-e ba Hasan-i dar-gereft.

Discussion-Ez interesting-Ez with Hasan-Ind.M resulted

‘an interesting discussion with Hasan resulted’

36. \*bahs-e jaleb-e ba Hasan-e Ali

discussion-Ez interesting-Ez with Hasan-Ez Ali

‘Ali’s interesting discussion with Hasan’

Again it seems that these PPs are not part of the Ezafe construction. So, what’s happening? How come they get the Ezafe morpheme, though they don’t seem to be part of the Ezafe construction?

What could explain this puzzling occurrence is the verbal nature of the infinitival nouns both in their simple nominal form and in their infinitival compound and single verbal forms.

In other words, an infinitive nominal like [bahs kardan] ‘to discuss/discussing’ or [bahs] ‘discussion’ requires an argument with agentive theta role as in (37)

37. (i) Bahs kardan-e Nima ba Sasan ‘Nima’s discussion with Sasan’

(ii) Bahs-e Nima ba Sasan ‘Nima’s discussion with Sasan’

In the absence of that, a required agentive [PRO] with arbitrary reference ‘One’ is necessary and the Ezafe morpheme occurs before that.

38. Bahs kardan-e [PRO] ba Sasan ‘for one to discuss with Sasan’

39. Safar kardan-e [PRO] be Iran ‘for one to travel to Iran’

40. Farar kardan-e [PRO] az Zendan ‘for one to escape from prison’

41. Raftan-e [PRO] be Alaska ‘for one to go to Alaska’

42. bar.gashtan-e [PRO] az California ‘for one to return to Iran’

Similarly with the Nouns [bahs], [safar], [farar], in their capacity as verbal Nouns, an agent is required and in the absence of an overt NP, [PRO] with an arbitrary interpretation ‘One’ appears.

43. Bahs-e [PRO] ba Hasan ‘one’s discussion with Hasan’

44. Safar-e [PRO] be Iran ‘one’s trip to Iran’

45. Farar-e [PRO] az zendan ‘one’s escape from prison’

It is interesting to note that infinitives and verbal nominals that are transitive don’t occur in this construction unless the object is incorporated into the verb (46d and 47d).

46. a. \*xordan-e ba Hasan ‘eating-Ez with Hasan’

b. \*xordan-e qaza-ye ba Hasan ‘eating-Ez food-Ez with Hasan’

c. Xordan-e qaza ba Hasan ‘eating-Ez food with Hasan’

d. qaza xordan-e [PRO] ba Hasan

food eating-Ez with Hasan

47. \*xundan-e ba Hasan ‘reading-Ez with Hasan’

\*xundan-e ketab-e ba Hasan ‘reading books with Hasan’

xundan-e ketab ba Hasan

ketab xundan-e [PRO] ba Hasan

Additionally there may be some supporting evidence for this analysis from Kurmanji with the so-called “Absolute Ezafe” (Wurzel 1997, cited by Strunk 2003, reported in Larson 2009, footnote 6). With absolute Ezafe constructions no overt N is present, yet Ezafe itself still appears, with the following phrase, as the constituent [EzP Ez XP] would predict.

Examples like (ia) and (iia) appear to involve an empty noun with Ezafe meaning approximately ‘one’, so that (ia) has structure (ib) with literal gloss ‘One EZ me’ and (iia) has structure (iib) with gloss ‘name EZ one EZ big’

(i) a. ya min

EZ.FEM.SG 1.SG.OBL

‘mine’ (feminine) [Wurzel 1997:25]

b. [N 0] ya min

one EZ me

(ii) a. nav-e ye mezin

name-EZ.MASC.SG EZ.MASC.SG big

‘the big one’s name’

b. nav-e [N 0] ye mezin

[Wurzel 1997:31]

Larson points out that the existence of absolute Ezafe constructions seems to directly refute the proposal by Samvelian (2005-, 2007) that Ezafe constitutes morphology on a preceding N indicating a modificatory relation with the following XP. [Larson 2009]

**Conclusion:**

In this presentation I presented the data on the occurrence of Ezafe in Persian and review the case theoretic framework, in particular Larson and Larson and Yamakido’s Case Analysis with Ezafe and Reverse Ezafe languages. I also addressed a puzzling occurrence of Ezafe before case assigning PPs and provided an account within the case framework.

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