

Parametric Variation in Nominal Modifiers in Indo-Iranian

Nominal modifiers exhibit remarkable variation in form & position across Indo-Iranian (I-I). In Western Indo-Iranian (WI-I) (Farsi, Kurdish, Zazaki, Hawrami), modifiers standardly occur postnominally and “link” to the N head via an Ezafe particle (Ez), which may be invariant (Farsi, Sorani), or agree with N in ϕ -features (Kurmanji, Zazaki). The modifiers themselves show no agreement (1a-d). In Central Indo-Iranian (CI-I) Gilaki, modifiers occur prenominally and link to N via a “reverse Ezafe particle” (REZ) that is invariant in both major dialects; again modifiers show no agreement (2a-c). Finally, in Eastern Indo-Iranian (EI-I) Pashto, modifiers occur prenominally, show no Ezafe morpheme, and agree directly with N in ϕ -features (gender & number) and case (direct vs. oblique) (3a,b). In this paper, we propose a derivational relationship among the three types, with WI-I representing the base case, and CI-I and EI-I showing derived patterns. We argue that typological variation in modifier syntax elsewhere can be understood via the I-I parametric fan: that Germanic and Romance languages represent, in effect, the Pashto pattern, whereas Chinese and Japanese pattern like Gilaki. I-I thus offers a privileged glimpse into the parametric space of nominal syntax.

Larson and Yamakido ('05,'06) and Larson ('06) propose an analysis in which (predicative) nominal modifiers originate postnominally as inner arguments of D, which only afterwards combines with NP (4a). A subsequently merged light determiner (d) attracts the D head, deriving D–N word order (4b). [+N] modifiers are assumed to have a case requirement. WI-I meets this with Ezafe, which (following Samiiian 1994) is analyzed as a case marker, licensing modifiers *in situ* (5a-d). Ez (heading EzP) agrees with D, which also agrees with N, hence the pattern of agreement & position in WI-I. By contrast in EI-I Pashto, absence of Ezafe means that [+N] modifiers are not case-checked in base position. Larson (2006) proposes that Pashto d has an edge feature that triggers raising of [+N] modifiers into the high domain of DP where case is checked by agree from a DP-external probe, accounting for modifier “concord”. The derivational steps are in (6a-e). Finally, CI-I Gilaki projects an Ezafe phrase, whose head we assume to trigger movement to its Spec, reversing their order (7a,b). We analyze this EzP as an inherently case-marked item, whose case must be realized in a case-checking position (similar to dative subjects). EzP must therefore raise as in Pashto, although the modifiers do not agree. This accounts for the basic space of I-I variation.

The analysis of cases in I-I can be extended to patterns found elsewhere, with that of Gilaki being particularly interesting. Chinese & Japanese exhibit prenominal modifiers with a “linker” particle or inflection appearing between modifier & N (see 8a-e for Mandarin). Cheung (2006a,2006b) proposes that Mandarin *de* is a form of Ezafe particle serving to mark case. Specifically, she suggests that modifiers begin as complements of *de* & raise to its Spec (9a,b); the entire *de*-phrase then positions higher within DP, deriving prenominal order, essentially along the lines proposed for Gilaki above. The patterning of RC position in Mandarin and Gilaki appears to provide further support for her view. Cheung observes that since Mandarin is tenseless, Mandarin RCs might be expected to pattern essentially as participial/adjectival RCs, requiring case like other [+N] modifiers, and occurring before *de*. Gilaki, by contrast, is a tensed language and hence generates a different prediction. Specifically we would expect Gilaki finite RCs to occur postnominally, and not to exhibit REZ, since finite CPs do not require case. By contrast, we would expect Gilaki participial RCs to pattern like Mandarin: to occur prenominally and show REZ (10b). This appears to be what we find (10a,b), although the final vowel in the participial hides REZ phonetically. Hence Cheung’s Ezafe analysis of Mandarin *de* seems promising. We close with a brief discussion of Japanese prenominal modifiers and inflection, noting (following Yamakido 2005) that these appear remarkably similar to (reverse) Ezafe markers. In particular Japanese appears to be the “reverse Ezafe” counterpart of Zazaki and Hawrami, which exhibits different Ezafe according to whether the modifying element is an AP or an N.

Examples

- (1) a. gol-ê sorx b. minál - i pcúk- i bash c. çav-ê res
 flower-**EZ** red children-**EZ** small-**EZ** good eye-**EZ(m)** black
 ‘red flower’ (Farsi) ‘good, small children’ (Sorani) ‘the black eye’ (Kurmanji)
- d. çav-êñ sor e. zerež-o gîrd
 eye-**EZ(pl)** red partridge-**EZ(m)** large
 ‘the red eyes’ (indicates great anger) (Kurmanji) ‘large partridge’ (Zazaki)

- (2) a. surx-ə gul b. bay -ə gul-an
 red-**REZ** flower ‘red flower’ (Gilaki) garden-**REZ** flower-PL ‘garden flowers’ (Gilaki)

- (3) a. wəgay alək’ ‘hungry boy’ b. wəge péгла ‘hungry girl’ (Pashto)

- (4) a. [DP [NP man] [D, the [AP happy]]] b. [_{DP} **the**-d [DP [NP man] [D, ~~the~~ [AP happy]]]]

(5) Derivation for Farsi *un gol-ê sorx* “that red flower”

- a. [DP [NP gol] [D, un [EzP -ê [AP sorx]]]] *Merge Initial args of D; D agrees with AP*
 b. [_{DP} d [DP [NP gol] [D, un [EzP -ê [AP sorx]]]]] *Merge little d*
 c. [_{DP} **un**-d [DP [NP gol] [D, ~~un~~ [EzP -ê [AP sorx]]]]] *Raise D*
 d. [_{DP} *Pro* [_{DP} un-d [DP [NP gol] [D, ~~un~~ [EzP -ê [AP sorx]]]]] *Project DP Subj*

(6) Derivation for Pashto *agha təge pəgla* “that thirsty girl”

- a. [DP [NP pəgla] [D, agha [AP təge]]] *Merge Initial args of D; D agrees with AP*
 b. [_{DP} d [DP [NP pəgla] [D, agha [AP təge]]]] *Merge little d*
 c. [_{DP} **agha**-d [DP [NP pəgla] [D, ~~agha~~ [AP təge]]]]] *Raise D*
 d. [_{DP} [AP təge] [_{DP} **agha**-d [DP [NP pəgla] [D, ~~agha~~ [AP təge]]]]]]] *d attracts AP*
 e. [_{DP} d [_{DP} [AP təge] [D, **agha**-d [DP [NP pəgla] [D, ~~agha~~ [AP təge]]]]]]]]] *Merge d*
 f. [_{DP} agha-d-d [_{DP} [AP təge] [D, **agha**-d [DP [NP pəgla] [D, ~~agha~~ [AP təge]]]]]]]]] *Raise head*
 g. [_{DP} *Pro* [D, agha-d-d [_{DP} [AP təge] [D, **agha**-d [DP [NP pəgla] [D, ~~agha~~ [AP təge]]]]]]]]] *Project DP Subj*

(7) Derivation for Gilaki *u surx-ə gul* “that red flower” (after b, as in 6)

- a. [DP [NP gul] [D, u [EzP -ə [AP surx]]]] *Merge Initial args of D; D agrees with AP*
 b. [DP [NP gul] [D, u [EzP surx -ə [AP ~~surx~~]]]]] *Raise AP to Spec EzP*

- (8) a. Zhangsan **de** xiezi b. meiguo **de** yinhang c. hong **de** huaping
 Zhangsan DE shoe America DE bank red DE vase
 ‘Zhangsan’s shoe(s)’ ‘American bank(s)’ ‘red vase(s)’

- d. Zai Beijing **de** jia e. wo mai **de** shu
 at Beijing DE house I buy DE book
 ‘the/a house in Beijing’ ‘the book(s) which I bought’ (Mandarin)

- (9) a. [DP [NP huaping] [D, D [DeP -de [AP hong]]]]
 b. [DP [NP huaping] [D, D [DeP hong-**de** [AP ~~hong~~]]]]

- (10) a. u mard-e ki Hasan (diru) bide b. i suyis-e ji vagarse juvon
 that man-REL that Hasan (yesterday) seePST3sg this SW-REz from back-turn **REZ?** young
 ‘The man that Hasan saw (yesterday)’ this young (person) back from Switzerland