Linker, relativizer, nominalizer, tense-particle

On the Ezafe in West Iranian*

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The Ezafe particle is well known from recent work on Persian syntax, but its historical origins and developmental pathways have received less attention. This chapter redresses the balance by considering the Ezafe in a related West Iranian language, Northern Kurdish. In Northern Kurdish, the Ezafe has largely retained its demonstrative/relativizer origins, and also occurs as a nominalizer in the sense employed in this volume. In Modern Persian, however, these characteristics have entirely disappeared, and the Ezafe is merely a NP-internal Linker. I suggest that there is no reason to afford Persian any special priority when evaluating the developmental pathways of the Ezafe particle as a whole within the West Iranian languages. I also discuss an additional development within Northern Kurdish, where the Ezafe particle has become part of the predicate complex, echoing similar developments in a number of unrelated languages.

1. Introduction

The term 'Ezafe' is adopted from Arabic grammar (*iḍāfat*), where it means 'addition, supplement'. Within Iranian linguistics it is used to refer to an unstressed vocalic particle which occurs between a noun and an adjective or other nominal modifier. Ezafes are found in a large number of West Iranian languages, where they exhibit

striking parallels to the "highly polysemous" morphemes that have been in the focus of research on nominalizers in certain languages of East Asia, for example -*wa* in Chantyal (Noonan 1997), or Mandarin Chinese *di/de* (Yap and Matthews 2008). Although these parallels have not gone unnoticed (Larson & Yamakido 2005; Cheung 2006; Dikken & Singhapreecha 2004), the prevalent research bias towards Persian has led to a reductionist account of the historical developments of the Ezafe within its broader Iranian context. This chapter will focus on the Ezafe in Northern Kurdish, where the Ezafe has retained many of the features of its Old Iranian ancestor, including relativizer, demonstrative and nominalizer functions. The Northern Kurdish Ezafe has also extended its distribution from the nominal into the verbal domain, echoing developments in some languages of East Asia, where erstwhile nominalizers have become so-called "stance particles" in the predicate (Yap, Choi & Cheung 2010).

In stark contrast to Northern Kurdish, the Ezafe in Persian (Farsi) has undergone an almost diametrically opposed development: It has withdrawn from the syntactically more autonomous anaphoric and demonstrative functions, now surviving as just a phonologically atrophied blob of phonetic form with a highly abstract – and still hotly debated – function, perhaps best circumscribed with the term 'Linker'.

This chapter is organized along the following lines: In Section 2, the essential features of the Ezafe in Northern Kurdish are outlined, concentrating on those features where it differs significantly from the better-known Persian variety. In Section 3, the Persian Ezafe is presented together with three current approaches to its analysis. In Section 4, a diachronic scenario is formulated, contrasting the developments in the two languages. Section 5 draws some more general conclusions and relates the Iranian data to ongoing work on nominalization particles in unrelated languages.

2. The Ezafe in Northern Kurdish

The term Kurdish refers to a bundle of closely related languages and dialects spoken across a large area of the Middle East, with its epicentre lying at the intersection of the Iraqi, Iranian and Turkish borders. Three main dialect groups are distinguished: Southern Kurdish, Central Kurdish (or Sorani Kurdish), and Northern Kurdish, also called Kurmanji, abbreviated here as NK. Northern Kurdish is the largest dialect in terms of numbers of speakers (approx. 20 million); it is spoken in parts of North Iraq, in Syria, a large part of Eastern Turkey, and in West Iran around Lake Urmiya. There are also additional pockets in the Caucasus, and in East Iran (Khorasan). Kurdish is traditionally classified as a Northwest Iranian language, as opposed to Persian, which belongs to the Southwest Iranian branch of Iranian. All varieties of Kurdish are OV, though verb arguments expressing Recipients and Goals often occur after the predicate. However, within the NP, most lexical modifiers follow,

while determiners and quantifiers (demonstratives, numerals) precede the head. Northern Kurdish, unlike Central and Southern Kurdish, and unlike Persian, has preserved grammatical gender (masculine and feminine) as well as an inherited two-way case opposition between an unmarked Direct case, and a marked Oblique. NK has split ergativity, with ergative constructions confined to clauses based on past transitive verb forms (Haig 1998; Dorleijn 1996; Haig 2008). In the ergative construction, subjects take the Oblique case.

In NK the Ezafe is one of the most frequent grammatical morphemes and occurs in a number of partially overlapping functions. The NK Ezafe, unlike its cognate in Persian (see Section 3), inflects for gender (masculine vs. feminine) and number (singular vs. plural).[1] The actual forms are shown in Table 1, in standard Roman-based orthography (see Haig & Matras 2002); their distribution is discussed below:

Table 1. The forms of the definite Ezafe in Northern Kurdish

Masculine	Feminine	Plural
-(y)ê	-(y)a	-(y)ê(n)/yêt (Bahdînî)

The numerous functions of the Ezafe in NK can be conveniently divided into two broad groups: the adnominal linking function, and the demonstrative/anaphoric function. In addition, one dialect of NK uses the Ezafe as an aspectual particle (see Section 2.3). Let us begin with the adnominal linking functions.

2.1 The Ezafe in adnominal linking constructions

In this construction, the Ezafe links a post-nominal modifier to the head noun. The gender and number of the head noun determines the choice of Ezafe particle. For example, the head in (1) is *dest* 'hand', which is grammatically masculine; in (2) *mal* is feminine, while in (3) *heval* is plural. The gender/number of the modifier, on the other hand has no effect on the form of the Ezafe:

(1) *dest-ê*   *te*
     hand(M)-EZ.M 2S:OBL
     'your hand'

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

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1. The form of the Ezafe is also sensitive to the definiteness of the noun it refers to, but these complications are ignored here, as is the considerable regional variation in the phonological form of the Ezafe.

(3) *heval-ên*   *keçk-ê*
friend(PL)-EZ.PL girl-OBL
'friends of the girl'

Examples (1) to (3) illustrate typical types of adnominal modifiers in the linker construction: possessor in (1) and (3), and adjective in (2). The Ezafe can also link a PP to the head noun, as in (4):

(4) *zilam-ê*   *li ber*   *derî*
man-EZ.M in.front.of door:OBL
'the man in front of the door'

Ezafe particles are also required when a head noun is modified by more than one successive element, as in the following:

(5) *keçk-a*   *min* *a*   *piçûk*
daughter-EZ.F 1s:OBL EZ.F young(er)
'my young(est) daughter'

As can be seen, the second Ezafe is still sensitive to the gender and number of the head. I will refer to sequences of more than one Ezafe-linked modifier as a modifier chain. In any modifier chain, a possessor always precedes any other elements, as in (5).

The Ezafe can also be used to introduce a relative clause. The next two examples are from the Bahdînî dialect and show a relative clause linked to the head noun solely with an Ezafe. Note that here the masculine singular and the plural form of the Ezafe are homophonous (I have adopted the transcription of the source for these examples, hence the minor differences to the preceding ones):

(6) *tišť-ē*   *[min*   *day-av*   *hinga]*ᵣc
thing-EZ.PL 1s:OBL give:PST-POSTV 2PL:OBL
'The things [I gave to you (PL).]'

(7) *aw*   *ḱas-ē*   *[awwilī* *b-ē-t]*ᵣc
DEM person-EZ.M first   SUBJ-come:PRES-3s
'that person [who shall come first.]'   (MacKenzie 1961a: 203)

In most dialects of NK, however, and particularly in the written language, the head noun takes the Ezafe and additionally, the relative clause is introduced by a complementizer, *ku*:

(8) *çîrok-a*   *[ku*   *wî*   *ji*   *min*   *re*   *got]*ᵣc
story-EZ.F COMPL 3s.OBL ADP 1s.OBL ADP say:PST.3s
'The story [that he told me.]'

Finally, note that the Ezafe in NK is compatible with overtly indefinite nouns. When nouns are singular and indefinite, they take the suffix *-ek* (related to the numeral *yek* 'one'). To this suffix, the Ezafe may be added, as in:

(9) *jin-ek-a*   *kurd*
woman-INDEF-EZ.F Kurdish
'a Kurdish woman'

Furthermore, the Ezafe can be used following a demonstrative pronoun, as in the following example, where the Ezafe links the demonstrative to a relative clause:

(10) *ev-ê*   *ko*   *hat*
DEM-EZ.M COMPL come:PST(3s)
'this(one), who came'   (Bedir Khan & Lescot 1986)

To sum up, in the adnominal linking function the Ezafe particle is generally prosodically dependent on the immediately preceding word. In many descriptive and pedagogical studies (e.g. Blau & Barak 1999), it is actually treated as part of nominal inflectional morphology. It appears to be merely a type of agreement, mechanically replicating features of the head noun and required by a particular syntactic configuration, thus resembling a prototypical inflectional morpheme. However, such an analysis runs into difficulties when confronted with the Ezafe in modifier chains such as (5), where the Ezafe is actually separated from its head noun by other constituents. Here, the relation between Ezafe particle and head noun comes closer to one of anaphora rather than agreement.

The next function we examine quite clearly belongs in the realm of anaphora, as we shall see. Corbett (2003) notes that the distinction between agreement and anaphora can be profitably considered a continuum rather than a categorical one. It is not unreasonable to consider the Ezafe in modifier chains as an intermediate point in a continuum between anaphora and agreement.

2.2 The demonstrative/anaphoric function of the Ezafe

The Ezafe in NK can be, and regularly is, used independently of a head noun. I will refer to this usage as a demonstrative or anaphoric function (MacKenzie (1961a) refers to a 'demonstrative', other authors refer to a 'secondary' or 'absolute' form of the Ezafe). In this function, it comes closest to being a nominalizer in the sense of Noonan (1997). The crucial point is that the demonstrative/anaphoric Ezafe, unlike the linking Ezafe, occurs outside of the phrase in which its antecedent occurs. In fact, it is the pronominal head of its own phrase (though the precise analysis remains debatable). Some examples are the following:

(11) *Tu*   *kijan* *hesp-î*   *di-bîn-î?*
2s   which horse-OBL IND-see:PRES-2s
'Which horse did you see?'

Yê(EZ.M) *Soro/yê min/yê te ...*
'Soros's/mine/yours (Lit: that-of Soro/that-of me/that-of you)'

(12) *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.'

<div align="right">(Bedir Khan & Lescot 1986: 199)</div>

(13) *yē   dwē … yē   sēyē*
    EZ.M second… EZ.M third
    'The second one … the third one'   (Bahdînî dialect, MacKenzie 1961a)

The demonstrative/anaphoric Ezafe achieves the same ends as the English pronoun *one*: it takes its reference from a contextually inferable set of entities, to which an additional feature is added to ensure full interpretability. The phrase *the green one* is used in English to refer to a single element out of a contextually recoverable set; the attribute *green* is singled out as the most salient for identifying the intended referent from among those potentially available. Thus it is often part of the answer to the question 'Which …?', as in (11) above, or it is used in contrastive contexts.[2]

In principle, this type of usage is quite distinct from the adnominal linking function discussed in the preceding section. All traditional accounts of Kurdish take pains to distinguish the two terminologically, coining various additional terms for the anaphoric/demonstrative Ezafe (absolute Ezafe, demonstrative Ezafe, l'ezafe tonique etc.). However, there is a very close association between the demonstrative/anaphoric Ezafe and the use of the Ezafe in modifier chains, discussed above. In some contexts, it is probably impossible to decide which of the two is intended. Consider for a moment a very frequently used phrase with a modifier chain:

(14) *[bira-yê   min   ê   mezin]*$_{NP(subj)}$ *hat*
    brother-EZ.M 1S:OBL EZ.M big   came
    'My older brother came.'

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2. An anonymous reviewer has questioned my analysis of this kind of Ezafe as pronominal, suggesting that the anaphoric function that appears to be associated with it could be attributed to the construction itself. His main criticism of my analysis is that it requires the postulation of more than one Ezafe in EK, differentiated according to function. While I appreciate that this approach is theoretically less satisfying, I am nevertheless at pains to point out the underlying historical unity behind the different types of Ezafe in contemporary NK, which have all developed from what was clearly once a pronominal element. Furthermore, the different labels used here (linking Ezafe, Demonstrative Ezafe etc.) are no more than approximate functional labels, with no great theoretical status implied; in practice, there are fluid transitions and indeterminate cases that defy ready classification. The historical account seems to me best suited to account for this messy data. Indeed, the present variation is no more than the reflex of related changes playing themselves out at somewhat different rates. I do of course concede that this mode of presentation does not allow for a very elegant and readily formalizable synchronic analysis.

There is little doubt that the second Ezafe particle should be interpreted as part of the entire NP headed by *bira* 'brother'. However, if the same sequence of words occurs as the subject of a copula, at least two different interpretations are possible:

(15) *bira-yê   min   ê   mezin-e*
    brother-EZ.M 1S:OBL EZ.M big-COP:3s

The pragmatically neutral interpretation of (15) is: '(It) is my big brother'. But given a particular context, where the speaker is asked to identify his brother among a group of boys, this clause could have the reading: 'my brother is the big one'. In that case, the sequence *ê mezin* would be interpreted as the complement of the predicate, along the following lines:

(16) *[bira-yê   min]*$_{NP(subj)}$ *[ê   mezin]*$_{NP(predicate\ complement)}$ *-e*
    brother-EZ.M 1S:OBL   EZ.M big   -COP:3s

On this reading, we would have to classify the Ezafe in *ê mezin* as an example of the demonstrative/anaphoric Ezafe. Thus in practice there are overlaps between adnominal Ezafes, and independent ones. Examples (17) and (18), from Bedir Khan and Lescot (1986: 198–199), provide further evidence of structural ambiguity (the translations given reflect those of the source):

(17) *re-ya   me   a   dur e*
    road-EZ.F 1PL:OBL EZ.F far COP:3s
    'Our road is long/is a long one'

The structure of (17) would actually allow the interpretation: '(it/that) is our long road', which would leave the phrase *a dur* as a chained modifier, part of the NP headed by 'road'. But this is apparently not intended in the context. On the reading provided in the source, *a dur* is syntactically disjunct from the preceding NP, and actually part of the predicate phrase. The next example is fully comparable; the phrase *ê spî* is a demonstrative/anaphoric Ezafe, not a chained modifier:

(18) *xani-yê   me   ê   spî-ye*
    house-EZ.M 1PL:OBL EZ.M white-COP:3s
    'Our house is the white one'

Such contexts provide a classical case of *bridging constructions* for language change: structurally ambiguous strings whose precise interpretation is coerced from context. Over time, one of the possible interpretations may become conventionalized to the extent that the others are no longer available. In this case, a contextually-driven interpretation becomes a grammatical construction with a fixed pairing of form and meaning. It is tempting to consider the emergence of the anaphoric/demonstrative Ezafe in this light, that is, as emerging from one of the potentially available readings of the Ezafe in a modifier chain. However, the historical evidence suggests that this is not

the case; if anything, the development went the other way (see Section 4). Nevertheless, constructions of the type (17) and (18) almost certainly played a role in the emergence of what is a genuine Kurdish innovation, the use of the Ezafe as a tense/aspect operator, to which we now turn.

2.3 The Tense Ezafe

In the North Kurdish dialect of Bahdînî, spoken around the townships of Zakho, Dohuk and Amediye in North Iraq, the Ezafe morpheme is used in an additional construction, which I refer to as the Tense Ezafe. The Tense Ezafe is briefly discussed in Haig (2007) and Haig (2008), but has otherwise been ignored in the literature on the Ezafe.

As the name implies, the Tense Ezafe is part of the predicate, rather than being associated with nominal syntax. In the terms of Roberts and Roussou (2003), it has crossed from the D and N domain to the T domain – a development that is actually not predicted in their framework. Although a development of this nature appears to be unique in Iranian, it does display striking parallels to the development of so-called "stance particles" in a number of languages of East Asia (Yap, Choi & Cheung 2010), and to the emergence of various kinds of copular particles, which we look at below.

To convey some notion of how the Tense Ezafe works, a number of examples from various sources are given below. Many of the examples contain several exponents of the Ezafe, but the one we are interested in at present is bold-faced:

(19) *xuşk-a   min   ya   çuy-î   sîk-ê*
      sister-EZ.F 1S.OBL EZ.F go:PST-PTCPL market-OBL
      'My sister has gone to the market'   (own fieldwork)

(20) *Sofi Mistefa-y   kiçk-ek   a   hey³*
      Sofi Mistefa-OBL daughter-INDEF   EZ.F existent.COP(3s)
      'Sofi Mistefa has a daughter'   (Blau 1975: 70)

(21) *Got-ê   ku   šah-ê   wan   yê   mir-î*
      say:PST-to.him that king-EZ.M   3PL.OBL EZ.M die:PST-PTCPL
      (He) said to him that their King had died.'   (MacKenzie 1961a)

(22) *Hal-ê   wî   ê   keftî-ye*
      condition-EZ.M 3S:OBL EZ.M fall:PTCPL-COP:3s
      'He is poor (Lit.: 'his condition/state has fallen')' (Hassan 2006: 14)

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3. In the source from which this example is taken, the Ezafe-particle is actually written as part of the preceding word. I have separated here for ease of comparison. There is in fact considerable variation in the orthographic rendering of these particles.

(23) *Ew   (y)êt   kurd-in*
      DEM EZ.PL   Kurd-COP:PL
      'They are Kurds.'   (own fieldwork, Zakho 2006)

Just like the adnominal Ezafe, the Tense Ezafe inflects for number and gender of the closest preceding NP in the absolute case (this can, in many cases, be equated with the 'subject', but there are complications in the past tenses which I will not enter into here): examples (19–20) are feminine, (21–22) are masculine, while (23) is plural.

The phonological forms of the Tense Ezafe are almost identical to the corresponding forms of the demonstrative/anaphoric Ezafe. There is thus no doubt that etymologically we are dealing with the same morpheme; this degree of identity in the paradigm can hardly be coincidence, and there simply is no other morpheme in the language that could plausibly have provided the source.

Note also that the Tense Ezafe is not restricted to third person NPs, but is fully compatible with personal pronouns of the first or second person, where it is also sensitive to gender:

(24) *Ez   ya/yê   kurd-im*
      1S   EZ.F/EZ.M   Kurd-COP:1s
      'I am a Kurd (uttered by female speaker/male speaker)'

In all the above examples, the use of the Tense Ezafe is the normal and pragmatically unmarked means of expressing the sentences given. In other dialects of Northern Kurdish, however, the same propositions would be expressed without the Ezafe particle. Thus for (24), we would simply have *Ez kurd-im* 'I am a Kurd', with no means of differentiating female from male speakers. Now occasionally, BK speakers may use this form too. Whether this is interference from the neighbouring, more prestigious dialects (now widely heard in Kurdish-language media), or whether there is actually a semantic difference between the two forms is extremely difficult to establish at present, for reasons I will discuss below. For the time being, I will be content with providing an account of the environments in which they regularly and consistently occur in spoken texts (e.g. in Blau 1975).

There are certain types of predicate which, in present tenses, are generally associated with the Tense Ezafe: state, existential and locative predicates (BE THERE, EXIST, HAVE), cf. (20, 23, 24). In particular, the Tense Ezafe frequently occurs with resultative participles in -*ī* (as in (21, 22). In other words, the Tense Ezafe is typically associated with stative/resultative predicates rather than with dynamic ones, and is generally associated with a present-tense form of the copula. When combined with a participle, the Tense Ezafe imparts a sense of completed action (resultative), but with relevance to the present. For example, (19) would be uttered only in a situation where the girl concerned was actually gone, and no longer visible.

According to MacKenzie (1961a and 1962), the two types of predicate just mentioned are the sole ones found with the Tense Ezafe. However, more recent sources show that it also occurs with truly verbal predicates:

(25) *Ez ê   di-bêj-im*
      1s   EZ.M   IND-say:PRES-1s
      'I am saying (right now)'   (French transl.: *Je suis en train de dire*, Blau 1975: 40)

(26) *Ez yê   xwarin-ê   çê-di-k-im*
      1s   EZ.M   meal-OBL   PREV-IND-do:PRES-1s
      'I am making/preparing a meal (right now)'
                                        (own field work, Zakho 2005)

When combined with a finite present tense verb form, as in (26), the Tense Ezafe implies that the action concerned occurs at the time of speaking.

At present, little more can be said with certainty on the semantics of the Tense Ezafe, and it has proved methodically very difficult to gain consistent judgements from native speakers. Part of the problem lies in the complex sociolinguistics of Bahdînî Kurdish within Northern Kurdish: Northern Kurdish has an emergent written standard, promulgated on the internet and over satellite television, and currently the object of intense debate among native speakers. Due to decades of linguistic repression, these ongoing controversies are emotionally loaded in the extreme. Now the Tense Ezafe is not part of that emergent standard language, thus it is to a certain extent stigmatized as a Bahdînî localism. As a result, metalinguistic discussions with native speakers on such forms are inevitably sullied with evaluative issues of standardization.[4] A reliable description of the semantics and pragmatics of the Tense Ezafe in Bahdînî Kurdish thus remains a major desideratum in Kurdish studies.

However, the available corpora of spoken Bahdînî Kurdish (Blau 1975 and MacKenzie 1961a, 1962), and my own fieldwork show quite clearly that it is a ubiquitous feature of the spoken language, though its precise semantic contribution to the predicate remains elusive. There are, however, two robust syntactic/pragmatic constraints on the use of the Tense Ezafe: it is restricted to affirmative, declarative clauses; in questions or negated clauses it is not found. These two facts are extremely relevant for understanding the history of the Tense Ezafe, as we shall see.

The starting point for the development of the Tense Ezafe must have been the demonstrative and anaphoric use of the Ezafe introduced above. This type of Ezafe is

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anaphoric in the sense that it refers back to a contextually recoverable NP, with which it agrees in gender and number. Consider now (22), repeated here as (27):

(27) *Hal-ê   wî   ê   keftî-ye*
      condition-EZ.M   3S:OBL   EZ.M   fall:PTCPL-COP.3S
      'He is poor' (lit.: 'his condition/state has fallen')   (Hassan 2006: 14)

In modern Bahdînî Kurdish, (27) is the pragmatically unmarked way of expressing the proposition 'he is poor'. The function of the Ezafe in this clause cannot be considered anaphoric; if anything, it modifies the predicate 'has fallen, be adnominal, and hardly anaphoric; if anything, it modifies the predicate 'has fallen, be in a fallen state'. But it is fairly easy to understand how this construction came about: it must have arisen through constructions where the initial NP was a left-dislocated topic, and the Tense Ezafe was an anaphoric/demonstrative referring back to that topic:[5]

(28) [His state]$_{TOPIC}$ [that$_{DEM/ANAPH-SUB}$ is one that has fallen/which has fallen]$_S$

Over time, this construction lost its pragmatically marked status and became the unmarked means of making such statements. The left-dislocated topic was thus reanalyzed as the grammatical subject of the clause. At this point, the anaphoric/demonstrative Ezafe is rendered superfluous, at least as far as its anaphoric function is concerned. It is then reanalyzed as part of the predicate, where it becomes a marker of perfective aspect, used primarily with non-verbal predicates.

From there, it has extended its range to co-occurrence with more dynamic verbal expressions and taken on the meaning of immediacy (cf. examples (25) and (26) above). Support for this account of the emergence of the Tense Ezafe comes from the pragmatic restrictions on its use: it is not possible in interrogative or negated clauses. In other words, it is not fully grammaticalized as a tense marker, but still carries some traces of its origins in a pragmatically marked structure, which almost certainly would have been restricted to affirmative, declarative clauses.

Further support comes from well-documented parallels in unrelated languages. Li and Thompson (1977) describe several cases of how copulas develop from erstwhile anaphoric/demonstrative elements, the best-documented among them being Mandarin and Hebrew. Less well-known in the literature is the development of the

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predicate marker *i* in Tok Pisin. This particle is always required before a predicate that has a third person subject:

(29) a. *em i   nogut*
     3s   PRED   bad
     'He is bad'

   b. *Jon i   bin wok   asde*
     John PRED PST work yesterday
     'John worked yesterday'

There is little doubt that the predicate marker evolved from the English pronoun *he* (often pronounced [i:]), although the model for the grammatical pattern appears to have been provided by one of the substrate languages (see Mosel 1984). Another particularly well-documented case of demonstratives developing into tense markers is Panare (Carib), described in Gildea (1993), and similar, though somewhat different developments are discussed for the Amazonian language Chamicuro in Parker (1999).

There is thus a striking cross-linguistic pattern for elements originally clustering in the domain of demonstratives and anaphors to shift sideways into the predicate. What is most intriguing in all the cases mentioned above – Kurdish, Hebrew, Mandarin, Tok Pisin, Panare, and the stance particles discussed in Yap, Choi and Cheung (2010) – is the often elusive semantics of the resultant particles. Furthermore, they are often subject to pragmatic or other restrictions in their predicative functions, i.e. they are not fully grammaticalized. For example, in Panare, the erstwhile demonstratives only occur as copulas with third person subjects, clearly betraying their demonstrative origins. It seems that these elements are often only partially incorporated into the predicate domain, and retain both functional and grammatical reflexes of their nominal origins for a considerable period of time. Formulating a formal analysis in terms of discrete category membership for this kind of in-between element is thus often extremely problematic.

In at least one dialect of Bahdînî Kurdish, the developments have been accompanied by phonological erosion and the loss of the nominal categories of gender and number. In the region of Ṭur ʿAbdin in Southeastern Turkey, there are about eight villages inhabited by members of the the religious minority of the Yezidis, a Kurdish-speaking religious group with its centre among the Bahdînî Kurdish speakers of North Iraq. Bailey (2005: 29–30) refers to this dialect as Êzîdiyê Torê (ÊT). ÊT has a particular form of the "present perfect tense", formed with a participle and "a clause with the particle *î/wî*.[footnote ommitted]". Bailey provides the following example of this particle, glossed here simply PART:

(30) *belê, min   î   masî   girtî-n*
     yes,   1s:OBL PART fish(PL) catch:PTCPL-PL
     'Yes, I have caught fish'   (Bailey 2005: 30, original translation, gloss modified)

Although she does not propose a diachronic connection to the Tense Ezafe of Bahdînî Kurdish, it seems certain that the particle *î* in (30) is a continuation of the latter. In favour of this interpretation are four facts: (i) the position and function of the particle correspond exactly to the perfective/resultative use of the Tense Ezafe discussed above; (ii) the close historical ties of the speakers of these dialects with speakers of Bahdînî Kurdish; (iii) the particle does not appear in the corresponding negated clause quoted by Bailey (2005: 29), which again echoes the constraints on the Tense Ezafe in Bahdînî Kurdish; (iv) even in Bahdînî Kurdish, the form of the particle is often unstable and the gender distinction is not always faithfully reflected, leading to a consistent spelling in some sources as *-î*. Thus it is phonologically already extremely close to the ÊT particle. I therefore assume that this particle is a continuation of the Tense Ezafe, which has lost the nominal categories of number and agreement and is now reduced to a single form. The developments are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2. From Demonstrative/Anaphoric to Tense Particle in Northern Kurdish

Dem./Anaph.ezafe	Tense Ezafe	Perfect particle in ÊT
-(y)a →	*-(y)a* ↘	
-(y)ê →	*-(y)ê* →	*-î/wî*
-(y)ên →	*-(y)ên* ↗	
(Common NK)	(Bad. K only)	(ÊT only)

Before closing this section, I should briefly address the issue of the position of the Tense Ezafe. It may appear odd that a particle which generally follows the subject NP, and is thus quite distant from the lexical predicate, should nevertheless be analyzed as part of the predicate. But within an Indo-European context, such a development is actually quite commonplace, and indeed is also characteristic of English: Tense/Aspect clitics occur primarily clause initially, and can be separated from the lexical verb by other items:

(31)   I've always liked linguistics.

Part of this tendency can be attributed to the second-position preference for clitics generally. Northern Kurdish actually has another tense particle, the future marker *dê/wê*, which is likewise bound to the clause-second position (ignoring some additional complications):

(32) *Şevîn dê   wî   bi-bîn-e*
     Şevîn FUT 3s:OBL IRR-see:PRES-3s
     'Şevîn will see him.'
                                              (Rizgar 1996: 144)

2.4   Summary of Northern Kurdish

While the Ezafe in Northern Kurdish shares adnominal linking functions with the Ezafe in Persian, it also exhibits some very remarkable divergent developments. Putting it most generally, the Ezafe in NK is characterized by greater phonological autonomy and substantive content: it inflects for number and gender, and is not prosodically dependent on a preceding host. Its functional distribution basically falls into two broad categories: adnominal linker, that is, linking simple modifiers to head nouns, and demonstrative/anaphoric, where it shares some characteristics of the English pronoun *one*.

In the latter function, it comes closest to what is generally understood as a nominalizer: it transforms some form of modifying phrase, such as a possessive attribute or an adjective, into a NP. From this function an additional extension has occurred in some dialects, most notably in Bahdînî, where the demonstrative/anaphoric particle is reanalyzed as part of the predicate, yielding the Tense Ezafe.

3.   The Ezafe in Modern Persian

Modern Persian, the sole official language in the state of Iran, belongs to the Southwest branch of the Iranian branch of Indo-European. Like Northern Kurdish, it is verb-final and within the NP, most lexical modifiers follow the head noun. Determiners and quantifiers, however (demonstratives, numerals) precede the head. Nominal inflectional morphology is greatly impoverished in comparison to Old Iranian: there is a single case marker, enclitic *-râ*, expressing direct objects (and marginally other functions that can be ignored here), while other case relations are expressed through prepositions, or syntactically. There is no gender, and no trace of ergativity. In Persian, the Ezafe is generally transcribed with *-(y)e*. However, in standard Persian orthography (based on the Arabic script) it is not indicated at all, except indirectly after certain letters. Thus in the written language, the presence of an Ezafe can usually only be inferred from the context.

The Persian Ezafe is restricted to the adnominal linking function: It follows a noun modified by an adjective (33), a noun expressing a possessor (34), a noun with a sortal or type-specifying sense (35), or certain prepositional adjuncts (36). All examples in this section are from Samvelian (2007), unless stated otherwise:

(33)   *lebâs-e   zibâ*
       dress-EZ   beautiful   'the beautiful dress'

(34)   *lebâs-e   maryam*
       dress-EZ   Maryam   'Maryam's dress'

(35)   *lebâs-e   arusi*
       dress-EZ   wedding   'the wedding-dress'

(36)   *lebâs-e   bi   âstin*
       dress-EZ   without   sleeve   'the dress without sleeves'

The postposed modifer can be more complex, as in the following bracketed constituent:

(37)   *qehremân-e   [rande   šode   az   mihan-aš]*
       hero-EZ   driven:PTCPL   become:PTCPL   from   homeland-POSS.3s
       'The hero driven from his homeland'

When a complex NP with an Ezafe-linked modifier is the direct object, then the object marker *-râ* will follow the last item in the NP:

(38)   *Agar   sabr   kon-id   zan-e   [ziba-tar   va   tannâz-tar*
       If   patience   do:IRR-2PL   woman-EZ   beautiful-COMP   and   charming-COMP

       az   ân]=râ   peydâ   xâh-id   kard.
       from   DEM=ACC   finding   FUT.AUX-2PL   do:PST.3s

       'If you are patient you will find a woman [more beautiful and more charming that this]'

As in Northern Kurdish, more than one modifier may be linked to the head noun (modifier chains). Within such chains, each modifier is preceded by an Ezafe particle (alternatively, modifiers of the same category can be linked by the conjunction *va* 'and', but we ignore these issues here):

(39)   *ketâb-e   târix-e   sabz-e   bi arzeš-e   maryam*
       book-EZ   history-EZ   green-EZ   without worth-EZ   Maryam
       'The green, worthless history book of Maryam's.'

There is an important difference between chained modifiers in Northern Kurdish, and in Persian. In Northern Kurdish, a possessor is generally the first item in such a chain (cf. (13) above). In Persian, on the other hand, a possessor is always the final element of a modifier chain. Thus to express 'my little room', only (40b) is possible:

(40)   a.   **otaq-e*   man-e   kučak*
            room-EZ   1s-EZ   small

       b.   *otaq-e   kučak-e   man*

A second important difference between the Ezafe in NK and in Persian is the following: as we have seen, relative clauses can perfectly easily be linked to head nouns with the Ezafe in NK. In Persian, however, this is impossible. The contrast is illustrated in (41):

(41)   a.   **Zan-e   [ke   man   dîd-am]*   (Persian)
            woman-EZ   that   I   see:PST-1s
            Intended reading: 'The woman that I saw'

       b.   *Jin-a   [ku   min   dît]*   (NK)
            woman-EZ.F   that   1s:OBL   see:PST(3s)
            'The woman that I saw'

The constraint against combining relative clauses with Ezafes has been a central issue in the recent literature on the Persian Ezafe (see Section 3.1). However, the data from Northern Kurdish show that it is actually a language-specific constraint, hence the analyses of the Ezafe in Persian cannot be extended wholesale to related languages with Ezafes.[6] A further constraint on the Persian Ezafe is that the Ezafe particle cannot be hosted by nouns bearing certain suffixes, in particular the indefiniteness suffix -*i*:

(42) a. i. *zan*
             woman

        ii. *zan-e*   *zibâ*
             woman-EZ beautiful
             'the beautiful woman'

but:

      b. i. *zan-i*
             woman-INDEF
             'a woman'

        ii. **zan-i-ye*   *zibâ*
             woman-INDEF-EZ beautiful
             Intended for ii: 'a beautiful woman'

To express (42b), we require a paraphrase with a preposed indefinite *yek* (identical to the numeral one): *yek zan-e zibâ*. Alternatively, the indefiniteness suffix can follow the modifier, as in *zan-e zibâ-i*.[7] Finally we must note that the Persian Ezafe is prosodically reliant on a preceding host. Unlike the Northern Kurdish Ezafe, it cannot introduce a phrase. Compare (43) with the Northern Kurdish example (11) above:

(43) **ye Maryam*
      EZ Maryam
      Intended reading: 'the one of Maryam, Maryam's.'

In sum, the Persian Ezafe is a particle required by a certain syntactic configurations obtaining within NPs, but it is subject to the following syntactic and prosodic restrictions:

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6. Richard Larson has suggested that the difference between NK and Persian in this respect may actually go deeper than an isolated fact concerning the distribution of the Ezafe and complementizer; it may be linked to the degree of finiteness of the clauses concerned. I think this observation is correct, and that even in NK, the use of the Ezafe without a complementizer is more acceptable when the relative clause contains a less finite verb form (participle etc.). However, this would lead to a discussion on the finer points of finiteness in the languages concerned, which goes beyond the scope of the present paper.

7. I am grateful to an anonymous reviewer for pointing this out to me.

1. It cannot link the head noun to a finite relative clause introduced by the complementizer *ke*
2. A possessor is always the final element in any chain of parallel Ezafes
3. An Ezafe is prosodically dependent on a preceding host
4. An Ezafe cannot be hosted by a noun bearing the indefiniteness suffix.

3.1 Recent analyses of the Persian Ezafe

While all scholars agree that it is undoubtedly part of a nominal projection, be it a DP, an NP or an AP, the Ezafe is not readily accountable in terms of conventional X-bar phrase structure, and the associated repertoire of functional categories. In a sense, all the proposals outlined in this section are faced with the same dilemma: how to fit the Ezafe particle into a theoretical framework which provides no category that readily accomodates it. Most more recent work draws on Samiian (1983), who formulates an analysis in terms of X-bar structures.

More recent scholars have successively modified Samiian's proposals, but, with the exception of Samvelian (2007), have largely been content with explaining a similar set of data. In this section I will briefly discuss the proposals of Ghomeshi (1997), Larson and Yamakido (2005) and Samvelian (2007). Ghomeshi (1997) suggests that Persian nouns are inherently non-projecting, thus lack both a specifier-position, and complements. They may, however, still be accompanied by modifying material, as we have seen above. This is achieved by stipulating that N-modifiers are adjuncted to the N⁰-level. However, and this is pivotal in the argument, the only modifiers permitted in this position are non-projecting, or non-phrasal.

Ghomeshi's formulation is intended to reflect the fact that there are restrictions on the type of phrases that can be included under an Ezafe, as noted above with respect to relative clauses. Possessor modifiers, on the other hand are in the specifier position of the DP. The latter move accounts for the fact that possessors are the final members of a complex DP (cf. (40) above), thus outside of any other modifiers. Another important motivation for this analysis are definiteness effects: Ghomeshi suggests that the presence of a possessor Ezafe generally renders the entire phrase definite, thus they resemble specifiers. As far as the combination of N with non-possessive modifiers is concerned, on Ghomeshi's account they actually wind up looking rather like compounding structures. The Ezafe itself is reduced to a purely structural linking element, introduced into PF at a late stage of the derivation by a rule of "Ezafe insertion".

The question of its categorial status is thus essentially side-stepped. A number of empirical problems with Ghomeshi's account are pointed out by Samvelian (2007). She notes that contrary to Ghomeshi's claims, phrasal material is possible under the Ezafe, as in (37) above. Thus the claim that Persian nouns are non-projecting is seriously challenged. Furthermore, Samvelian suggests that indefinite readings of possessed NPs

are possible, casting doubts on the validity of the Specifier-analysis of the possessor. Samvelian claims that the apparent definiteness effects can be readily accounted for in terms of morphological constraints on suffix combining, a point we return to below.

A radically different view of the Ezafe is suggested by Larson and Yamakido (2005), who take up a suggestion first put forward by Samiian (1994). On their account, the Ezafe is in fact a case marker. Their claims also build on the observation that the Ezafe is required to precede certain types of modifiers, but not others (for example, relative clauses).

Basically, they suggest that the modifiers which do require the Ezafe bear the feature [+N], while those that do not (relative clauses, certain types of PP) lack this feature. They also claim that many of these modifiers actually have complement status. They are, for example, possessors, or the semantic complements of action nouns (44), or the complements of adjectives (45):

(44)   *taxrîb-e*   *šahr*
destruction-EZ city
'the destruction of the city'

(45)   *nagarân-e* *bache-hâ*
worried-EZ child-PL
'worried about the children'

For these and similar examples, the case-analysis has some intuitive appeal. The problem with the case analysis arises when we come to explain why the Ezafe should also occur with adjectival modifiers: in what sense can they be considered case-assigned by the head noun? To achieve this, the authors propose extending the shell-theory of the VP, originally proposed in Larson (1988), which works on the assumption that the VP is universally right-branching, with additional constituents introduced into the specificer position of some verb. The details of these proposals cannot be discussed here; the crucial point for the Ezafe is that Larson and Yamakido (2005) suggest that within the DP, it is the D that is the head, and and hence may assign case. But note that 'case' in this sense actually refers to quantifier scope effects: the NP that combines with D saturates the quantifier restriction of the D. A simple determiner such as English *every* assigns a single case to its NP, more complex expressions such as *every … except* include additional roles. The net result of this additional machinery is that nominal modifiers – adjectives for example – are not adjuncts, but "oblique complements" which combine with the head prior to other arguments. A consequence of this move is that all modifiers are base-generated in a post-head position, and in a language like English, adjectival modifiers are subsequently moved to pre-head position in the course of the derivation.

What consequences would this revised view of the DP have for the Persian Ezafe? Larson and Yamakido (2005) suggest that Persian includes in its case system

a "generalized genitive preposition", which is inserted to check case on [+N] complements of D inside the DP. On this account, the Ezafe heads its own X-bar phrase, with the modifier as complement. However, for apparently purely prosodic reasons, phonologically it attaches to the preceding item. The advantage of this approach is that it readily accounts for the chains of Ezafe modifiers because it assigns the Ezafe structurally to the modifier it precedes, rather than to the nominal head of the phrase. However, the disadvantages are considerable: it rests entirely on the assumption that a shell-structure, with universal right-branching, is not only viable for the VP, but can be meaningfully applied to DPs. But the shell-analysis of the VP itself is by no means uncontroversial (see Culicover & Jackendoff (2005: 50–56) for a summary critique). The extension of the notion of "case" to adjectival modifiers appears a little post hoc. Furthermore, there are West Iranian languages such as Māzandārani which regularly have prenominal adjectival modifiers, and yet they occur with what the authors analyze as a "case marker":

(46)   *xajir-e*   *rikā*
nice-CASE boy
'the nice boy'   (Borjian & Borjian 2007: 204)

In Turkmen Balochi, attributive adjectives are likewise prenominal, and are obligatorily accompanied by what Axenov (2006: 87) refers to as the "attributive suffix" -*ēn*:

(47)   *rašīd-ēn*   *jinēnzāg-ā*   *bi* *ḍigār-ā*   *yēr*   *kurt*
slender-ATTR woman-OBL to ground-OBL down put(PST.3s)
'He put down the slender woman (from the camel)'

Now according to Larson and Yamakido (2005), the Ezafe on the postnominal adjectives licenses them for case, thus allowing them to remain in their base-generated position. Without case, they would be obliged to move to a prenominal position, as in English. The presence of overtly marked prenominal adjectives is therefore not predicted on this theory, yet this constellation does occur. A second drawback is that Larson's theory predicts that the Ezafe should not occur with relative clauses containing finite verbs, because they are not [+N]. But as we have seen above, Ezafes readily occur with relative clauses in Northern Kurdish.

A very recent contribution to the debate is Samvelian (2007). She rejects both the case-approach of Samiian (1994) and Larson and Yamakido (2005), and the approach of Gomeishi (1997). According to her, the facts of the Ezafe are best accounted for in morphological rather than syntactic terms. She claims that the Ezafe is a "phrasal affix", exhibiting both affixal and clitic-like properties. However, it is morphological rather than syntactic in the sense that it forms a distributional class with certain other affixes. Many of the constraints on the use of the Ezafe which had previously been explained via syntax receive on her account a more natural explanation in terms of

slot competition. As for the function of the Ezafe, she adopts a diametrically opposed stance to Larson and Yamakido (2005). According to Samvelian, the Ezafe is an affix attaching to a nominal head in anticipation of a following complement or modifier. On the head-marking vs. dependent-marking typology of Nichols (1986), the Ezafe is thus an instance of head-marking morphology. On this account, the Ezafe forms a constituent with the N both prosodically as well as functionally. Note how this account contrasts with Larson's, who sees the Ezafe as forming a syntactic constituent with the modifier. Samvelian's approach also differs from Ghomeshi's in assigning Ezafe-linked possessor phrases to a complement position, rather than the specifier position. How-ever, Samvelian is forced to adopt additional stipulations to account for the use of the Ezafe with chained modifiers, which, as shown above, are separated from their putative "bases" by other elements.

In a sense, all three proposals are primarily geared towards accounting for the constraint on relative clauses, which is somehow deemed to require explanation. Ghomeshi (1997) states that relative clauses cannot combine with the Ezafe because they contain phrasal material; Larson and Yamakido (2005) attribute the constraint to the feature [−N] on relative clauses, while Samvelian (2007) interprets the same facts as evidence of a morphological constraint on the co-occurrence of the Ezafe with another suffix. But against the background of West Iranian languages like Northern Kurdish (see above), or Zazaki (Paul 1998: 145), where the Ezafe regularly combines with rela-tive clauses, the Persian facts emerge as very much language-specific particularities, which do not actually tell us very much about the Ezafe as a broader phenomenon in West Iranian. Table 3 sums up the differences and similarities between the Persian and the NK Ezafe:

Table 3. Functions of the Ezafe in Persian and in Northern Kurdish

Function	Persian	Northern Kurdish
Inflects for gender, number	no	yes
Links simple adjectives to head	yes	yes
Links Possessors to head	yes, possessor final in modifier chain	yes, possessor initial in modifier chain
Links modifying PPs to head	some restrictions	yes
Used for modifier chains	yes	yes
Links relative clause to head	no	yes
Can be hosted by an indefiniteness suffix	no	yes
Occurs without overt head noun in nominalizing function ('the one …')	no	yes
Tense marker	no	yes (Bahdînî dialect and ÊT dialects)

4. The forerunners to the Ezafe in Old Iranian: The relative pronoun hypothesis

Nothing is known about the possible lexical source of the Ezafe. However, it can be reliably traced back to certain extremely frequent and polyfunctional grammatical elements of Old Iranian. Two contributions to the analysis of the Ezafe incorporate historical data into their analyses: Haider and Zwanziger (1984) and Karimi (2007), the latter dealing with Central Kurdish. Both analyses assume that the forerunner of the Ezafe particle was basically a relative pronoun. The general line of reasoning is that in Old Iranian relative clauses, an overt copula was often lacking, so the con-struction with the relative pronoun also looked much like the combination of noun with simple adjective or possessor. Over time, the Ezafe lost its complementizer function, which was taken over by different particles (e.g. Persian *ke*, presumably from an old interrogative item). It then underwent further phonological and functional erosion, until it was ultimately reduced to a kind of generalized "genitive case marker" (see Larson & Yamkido 2005), a mrker of a "predication phrase" (Karimi 2007), or a "linker" (Dikken & Singhapreecha 2004), depending on one's analysis. The relative-pronoun hypothesis is particularly attractive for those scholars who restrict them-selves to Persian or Central Kurdish but is less so for the Northern Kurdish data, or for Zazaki (Paul 1998). Furthermore, the two most detailed studies of the Old Iranian ancestors of the Ezafe, Kent (1944) and Seiler (1960), show quite clearly that in origin, the Ezafe was not simply a relative pronoun in the conventional sense. In this section, I will very briefly examine the Old Iranian data before relating them to the phenomena we have been investigating.

There are two main sources for Old Iranian: Avestan, and Old Persian. Old Persian is the direct ancestor of modern Persian (Farsi), and is attested in stone inscriptions dating from 6–4 century BC. Avestan on the other hand is the language of the earliest sacred texts in the Zoroastrian religion. Two varieties of Avestan are distinguished: Old Avestan is the oldest, and is extremely close to to the Sanskrit of the Ṛgveda: the oldest poems are estimated to have been composed around 1500 BC, although the dating remains controversial. Young Avestan on the other hand was spoken presum-ably in the first millennium AD. Texts written in Avestan are collectively termed the Avesta. They are of an arcane religious nature, and were transmitted orally by specially trained priests across centuries before being committed to writing sometime around the middle of the first millennium AD. It should be evident that both the interpretation and dating of the Avesta remains a very delicate undertaking.

Turning first to Old Persian, Kent (1944) systematically examines the then avail-able 388 instances of the Old Persian particle *hya*, the presumed ancestor of the Ezafe. Kent relates *hya* to to the demonstrative *sya-s* of Vedic Sanskrit. The Old Persian

hya (which inflected for case, number and gender) appeared in a large number of constructions. Kent classifies the extant examples according to function and concludes that about 70% of them can be analysed as relatives, while the rest are what he somewhat misleadingly terms 'articles'. Two criteria are investigated by Kent in defining relatives. The first concerns the finiteness of the clause introduced by *hya*:

(48) *ima [tya   adam   akunavam]*
      this [hya:NEUT.ACC 1s:NOM do:PST.1s]
      'this (is) [that.which I did]'

In (48), *hya* introduces a clause headed by a finite verb, hence is classified by Kent as a relative pronoun. The finiteness criterion runs into difficulties, however, because in many cases, the phrase concerned lacks a verb altogether. In such cases, a second criterion may be invoked, namely the case form of *hya*. Kent considers it a property of the relative to take its case from the relative clause it introduces, rather than from its antecedent. Thus the following are also considered by him to be relative clauses:

(49) *[…] Dārayavaum [hya   manā   pitā]*
      Darius:ACC   hya:M.NOM 1s:GEN father
      'Darius [who (was) my father]'

(50) *hacā Sakaibiš   [tyai   para   Sugdam]*
      from Scythian:PL:ABL hya:PL.NOM beyond Sogdiana
      'from the Scythians [who (are) beyond Sogdiana]'

In (49) and (50) *hya* is in the nominative, as required by the relative clause, rather than in the accusative and ablative of their antecedents. Kent therefore counts these examples as relative clauses, despite the lack of a finite verb.

The importance attached to the case form of *hya* has tended to obscure another parameter, at least as revealing of the status of the particle: the definiteness of the head noun. In all the above examples, the putative 'head noun' is definite, for example a proper name, or qualified by a demonstrative. In this type of context, the supposed relative clause is not a restrictive relative clause, because it does not contribute to the identification of the referent. Surely a more natural translation of (49), for example, would be 'Darius, my father'. A substantial number of the phrases introduced by *hya* are thus non-restrictive, or appositive. In the earlier typological literature on relative clauses, this type was actually excluded from the definition of relative clause (Keenan & Comrie 1977). The important point here is simply that what appears to be a relative clause syntactically is functionally more of a loose appositive construction. I believe the primary function of the particle was in fact to introduce such appositive phrases.

The case-criterion is nevertheless revealing because in other examples, *hya* takes its case from its antecedent:

(51) *avam   Gaumātam   [tyam   magum]*
      DEM:ACC Gaumāta:ACC hya:M.ACC Magian
      '(I struck down) that Gaumāta, [the Magian]'

Kent accepts that many examples cannot be reliably classified either as relatives, or appositives, or in his terminology, articles, and I entirely concur with this finding.

There was a very strong tendency – almost a rule of Old Persian – for relative clauses expressing generic senses (English *he who, that which*) to be headless in Old Persian, as in (48) above, and there are also examples of *hya* serving to turn an adjective into a NP (comparable to English *one*, as in *the red one*):

(52) **hya**   *tauvīyā* **tyam**   *skauθim naiy jatiy*
      M:NOM   strong   hya:M.ACC weak:ACC NEG may.strike
      '(that) **the strong (one)** may not strike **the weak (one)**'

Examples such as these reflect what Kent assumes is the origin of *hya*, namely as an amalgamation of an erstwhile demonstrative with a relativizer, basically 'that-which'. If we accept this view, and I am unaware of more plausible alternatives, then it is clear that the Ezafe in Old Persian was already a kind of nominalizer, and not merely a relative pronouns.[8] It is in fact remarkably similar to what I suggested above for the BK Ezafe, although it lacks the Tense Ezafe function. It is therefore reasonable to assume that the forerunners of Northern Group Kurdish had a system of relative/demonstrative particles quite close to that attested in Old Persian. The facts from Avestan are largely compatible with those of Old Persian, although the particle itself is etymologically somewhat different. Seiler (1960) notes that both Old and Young Avestan were characterized by the extremely frequent usage[9] of a particle *ya-*, which inflected for gender, number and case, though the shape of the forms is not at issue here. It was used in the sense of a relative pronoun, introducing clauses with overt predicates as well as clauses lacking them: of the 330 examples investigated by Seiler, almost 60% (197) lack a finite verb in the relative clause (Seiler 1960: 57). In many examples, the particle *ya-* does

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8. Note that in the Digor dialect of Ossetic, there is a prenominal marker *i*, used as a marker of 'definiteness' (Thordarsson 1989: 468), which evidently goes back to the Old Iranian relativizer **ya(h)*. Again this example demonstrates that there is no necessity for the old relativizer to develop into a linker of the Persian type; it may instead (or additionally) become a determiner of some sort.

9. Seiler (1960) does not supply figures on the frequency of *ya-*. Frequency data on the Avesta is now available in Doctor (2004), but regrettably, the author fails to supply a lemmatized frequency list, so that the total frequency of *ya-* must be extracted by totalling the individual frequencies of all the members of the paradigm. My preliminary efforts in this direction indicate that forms of *ya-* are certainly among the 20 most frequent words in the Avesta.

show the agreement properties expected of a relative pronoun (Seiler (1960: 75); simplified glosses have been supplied):

(53) apaši   vazaite   arštiš   [yąm   aŋhayeiti   avi.miðriš]
      backwards fly:PRES.3s lance(NOM) ya:ACC   hurl:PRES.3s Mithra-Foe
      'the lance flies backwards, which the Mithra-Foe hurls'

Here *yąm* takes its case (Accusative) from the relative clause verb *aŋhayeiti* 'hurls', not from its antecedent *arštiš*. However, elsewhere it agrees in case with its antecedent, rather than taking case from the embedded verb. The following example contains two instances of *ya-*, the first corresponding to a headless relative ('he who …, whosoever'). The second is of greater interest:

(54) yō   miðram   aiwi.družaiti **yim**   vacahinəm
      ya:M:NOM contract:ACC break:PRES   ya:ACC   through.word:ACC
      'Whoever breaks the contract which (is) through word'
      (i.e. a spoken agreement)'

Two points are important here: first, the phrase introduced by the second *ya-* is separated from its antecedent (*miðram*), and this is in fact very common. Second, it agrees with its antecedent in case. Both in terms of distance from its antecedent, and of case agreement, it does not conform to the expectations of a relative pronoun. This type of construction is referred to by Seiler (1960: 175) as an "appositive construction"; the phrase introduced by *ya-* is a kind of parenthetic insertion, only loosely integrated into the clause as a whole.

While the facts from Old Iranian remain controversial, we can conclude that neither in Avestan, nor in Old Persian are the presumed ancestors of the Ezafe simply relative pronouns. In both languages there is a strong tendency to couple relativizer with demonstrative functions, reflected in their frequent use in appositive senses, and as 'headless' relatives. These particles thus included a nominalizing component, which has been faithfully retained in Northern Kurdish. In Persian, however, we find a reduction, involving the complete loss of autonomous demonstrative and nominalizing functions, leaving the particle now solely as a linker, dependent on a co-phrasal head noun.

5. Summary and conclusion

Although we do not know what the direct ancestor of the Northern Group of Kurdish was, we can reasonably assume that the ancestor language exhibited a demonstrative/relative very similar to the Old Persian one. The developments from an assumed proto-Northern Kurdish down to present-day Northern Kurdish are summed up in Figure 1:
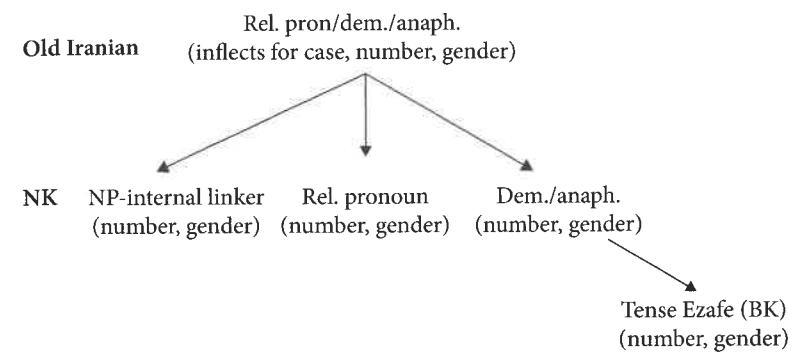
Figure 1. Functional diversification of the Ezafe from Old Iranian to Northern Kurdish

What we find in NK is that all the original functions have been retained (although morphological case distinctions on the Ezafe have been lost), and in the dialect of Bahdînî Kurdish, the Ezafe particle has expanded its functional range 'sideways' as it were into the domain of the Tense system.[10] Otherwise, the situation in NK is remarkably reminiscent of the Old Persian system, where the Ezafe exhibited a hybrid mix of Demonstrative with Relative, as MacKenzie (1961b: 82) had already noted.

The developments in Persian are shown schematically below, where we see that the polyfunctional element *hya* has basically lost most of its positive content, and is now reduced to the so-called 'linking' function in Modern Persian. The diachronic developments in Persian can roughly be characterized as the complete loss of (traditional) functional categories, leading in a sense to a functional dead end, but not complete disappearance of the particle. The developments are summed up in Figure 2:
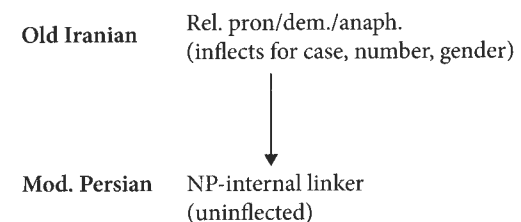

Figure 2. Functional atrophy of the Ezafe from Old Iranian to Modern Persian

The history of the Ezafe in West Iranian is a good illustration of Lass's notion of exaptation. The term is a metaphor from evolutionary biology, used by Lass (1990) to describe instances of once-productive morphology which, through changes elsewhere

10. The additional development in ÊT discussed in connection with (30) above are not included in Figure 1; graphically they would involve an additional arrow from the Tense Ezafe to a particle which has lost gender and number features.

in the system, become functionally redundant. Such productive morphology, particularly if it is frequent, will generally not simply disappear. Instead, it attracts as it were a new function. The development of the Ezafe in Persian can be seen in this light: with the intrusion of a more general complementizer *ke*, and the wholesale loss of gender and case distinctions in the language, the Ezafe lost its relativizing, its anaphoric, and its complementizer functions, yet it remained in situ in the NP, becoming what can be informally circumscribed as a "Linker", though the nature of its function continues to be hotly debated, as we saw in Section 3.1.

Indeed, the question of what function it has may in fact be beside the point; it is there simply as a historical relic. Likewise, the use of the Tense Ezafe in Bahdînî Kurdish can be seen in this light: the tense/aspect value conveyed by the marker was not previously available, and is not part of the tense/aspect system of related dialects. But when the pragmatically-marked construction (left-dislocated topic) became the pragmatically unmarked means of making certain stative/locative statements, the Ezafe marker lost its anaphoric function and was literally left stranded in the resultant construction (see Section 2.3). And again, it came to be associated with a new and hitherto unavailable functional distinction.

Why did the Ezafes in two closely related languages undergo such contradictory developments? There is no certain answer to this question, although it is almost certainly linked to the presence vs. lack of number and gender distinctions. An Ezafe particle that is capable of expressing gender and number has a greater chance of retaining anaphoric and demonstrative functions than one that has lost the features of gender and number. There is presumably some measure of critical phonological and functional mass that enables a polyfunctional particle either to expand its domain, or, when it drops below that threshold, to withdraw into a restricted syntactic and prosodic niche, as is the case of the Ezafe in Persian.

Abbreviations

ABL	Ablative	F	Feminine	PL	Plural
ACC	Accusative	FUT	Future tense	POSS	Possessive
ADP	Adposition	IND	Indicative	PRED	Predicate
AUX	Auxiliary	INDEF	Indefinite	PRES	Present
COMP	Comparative	IRR	Irrealis	PREV	Preverbal particle
COMPL	Complementizer	M	Masculine	PST	Past
COP	Copula	NEG	Negation	PTCPL	Participle
DEF	Definite	NEUT	Neuter	S	Singular
DEM	Demonstrative	NOM	Nominative		
EZ	Ezafe particle	OBL	Oblique		

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PART IV

Korean and Japanese languages