

Structure of ezafe in Urdu – a compounding approach.

The Persian ezafe has been borrowed into Urdu (but not Hindi) (Schmidt, 1999) with a limited range of applications. Previous work, suggests that the Ezafe construction is a sort of possessive construction calling the Ezafe a clitic at the phrase level occupying the same position as the possessive marker (Bögel et. al. 2008; 2007; Butt & King, 2004). Contrary to these analyses, I propose that Urdu ezafe is compounding, and that the reversal of word order is a result of synthetic compounding as proposed by Harley (2009).

In these previous approaches, the ezafe is considered to correspond to the regular possessive marker *ka/ki/ke* that is used in Urdu/Hindi. Utterances such as those in (1) and (2) are analogous excepting that change in word order (Urdu/Hindi is usually left-headed; however, ezafe constructions are right-headed) (Bögel & Butt, 2010). In these analyses, ezafe and possession are in complementary distribution as they occupy the same head.

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|------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1) Pakistan ki hakumat | 2) hakumat e Pakistan |
| Pakistan POSS.F government | government EZ Pakistan |
| ‘the government of Pakistan’ | ‘the government of Pakistan’ |

However, these approaches miss two very important differences between the two constructions. First, the result of the ezafe construction in (2), unlike the possessive construction in (1), can be used as a name, and is used productively to create names and titles – some of which are not compositional as I show in the comparison of (3a) and (3b). Unlike Persian, when multiple ezafe occurs, the result is always a proper name or title. Secondly, unlike the possessive construction in (1), the ezafe construction can be used to combine adjective+noun constructions as shown in (4a) and noun+noun constructions (2). As we can see below in (4b), it is ungrammatical to use the possessive *ka/ki/ke* in this manner.

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|----------------------|----------------------------|
| 3) a. jan e man | 4) a. divann e am |
| life EZ I | place EZ common |
| ‘darling’ | ‘public audience hall’ |
| b. ?man ki jan | b. *am ki divaan |
| I POSS.F life | common POSS.F place |
| ‘my life’ | ‘common place’ |

Based on these qualities, I propose that these two qualities of ezafe constructions mark them as entirely different from possession. When ezafe is combined with a nominal root, this triggers movement and incorporation into the root that dominates it forming a compound. In this paper I show that the NP or AdjP modifier is adjoined to the NP it modifies which projects maximally; then ezafe is merged as n^0 , which then triggers movement of the NP to its specifier, due to an EPP feature like the one proposed for ezafe constructions in Kurdish (Karimi, 2007).

This approach better accounts for the non-compositionality of the data, and the differences in use between the two constructions, and explains the more limited stacking and productivity of Urdu ezafe without compromising the facts of scope taking noted by Bögel et. al. (2008); and has the benefit of bringing an analysis of Urdu ezafe in line with other proposals, such as Karimi (2007).

Works Cited

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