

On Definite Marking in Laki

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This study investigates definiteness marking and its contribution to the structure of Noun Phrases in Laki, a Northwestern Iranian language (Windfuhr: 2009 and Dabir-moghaddam: 2013, among others). Nouns in Laki inflect for definiteness by the phrasal affix (an edge clitic) *-a* (1) and (2):

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|-----|--|-----|---|
| (1) | <i>māl-a</i>
house-DEF
'the house' | (2) | <i>māl-el-a</i>
house-PL-DEF
'the houses' |
|-----|--|-----|---|

It allows multiple definite marking, when there is an adjective, as it is illustrated in (3).

- (3) *māl-a kalen-a*
house-DEF big-DEF
'the big white house'

Similar fact has been captured by Androutsopoulou (1995) and Alexiadou and Wilder (1998) in Modern Greek and subsequently by Yamakido (2004, 2005), and Larson and Yamakido (2008) as *Definite Spreading/poly-definiteness*.

There are four possible approaches that one can take to account for definite marking in Laki. One is to follow Larson and Yamakido's (2008) approach for Modern Greek DPs, and consider a shell structure for DP in which the multiple occurrences of definite marking are viewed as copies of D, as it raises. The other approach is to follow Alexiadou and Wilder (1998) and consider a separate DP for adjectives when they modify definite nouns. More data reveals that this construction is different from the pattern in Modern Greek. In (4), there are more than one modifier, and the definite marker attaches to the noun and and to the last adjective. Compare (4) and (5).

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|-----|--|-----|---|
| (4) | <i>māl-a kalen sefid-a</i>
house-DEF big white-DEF
'the big white house' | (5) | <i>*māl-a kalen-a sefid</i>
house-DEF big-DEF white-DEF
'the big white house' |
|-----|--|-----|---|

If poly-definiteness is resulted from the copies left behind from the movement of D, or if it is captured via a structure in which we have multiple DPs, why *kalen* 'big' in (4) is not marked for definiteness? Furthermore, Laki DPs do not pass the test of non-intersective adjectives that Alexiadou and Wilder (1998) proposed as a diagnostic for multiple DPs.

From a diachronic point of view, one might argue that the definite marker attached to the noun is a reminiscent of *ezafe* as a linking element (*-i* or *-e*) between the noun and the first adjective. Then it undergoes phonological harmony with the definite marker (along the lines of Karimi's 2007 proposal). More data reveals that Laki does not have *ezafe*. See (6) and (7).

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| (6) | <i>det Irani</i>
girl Iranian
'Iranian girl' | (7) | <i>māl kalen sefid</i>
house big white-INDEF
'a big white house' |
|-----|--|-----|--|

In this study, I am going to take the fourth approach which is Julien's (2003). Laki DPs the same as Scandinavian languages, should have two distinct definite projections, namely *D* and *n*. Furthermore, following Ghomeshi (2003), I consider two distinct projections for definite and indefinite. Based on the evidence of rule conflation of definiteness and number expressions in Sorani Kurdish (another similar variety of Kurdish), proposed by Salehi 2017, I argue for the existence of a strong feature in definite node (*PL), which triggers a head-to-head movement of Num to D¹. This movement accounts for the attachment of plural marker on the noun when it is indefinite, and its attachment on the definite marker when it is definite. Compare (6) and (7).

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| (8) | <i>kor-al bālābarz-i</i>
boy-PL tall-INDEF
'some tall boys' | (9) | <i>kor-a bālābarz-el-a</i>
boy-DEF tall-PL-DEF
'the tall boys' |
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¹singularity is not morphologically marked. So by Num, I mean plural marker.

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