The Nature of “Attributive Markers”
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Many world languages show “attributive markers” (AMs) in nominal modification structures. Mandarin de (1)-(3), and Japanese -no/-na/-i in are examples:

1. Zhangsan de pengyou      Zhangsan de baozhi
   Zhangsan's friend       Zhangsan's newspaper
2. Zhangsan de zuotian de baozhi
   Zhangsan yesterday newspaper
   *Zhangsan's yesterday’s newspaper
3. a. piaoliang de yifu      b. ni zuotian mai de shu
   pretty cloth             ni yesterday buy book
   *pretty's cloth           *you yesterday bought's book
4. a. Taroo -no kyooodai      b. Taroo -no hon
   Taroo's sibling            Taroo's book
   Nihonzin -no gakusei
   *Japanese student
   Japanese student (student who is Japanese)
5. a. Utukushi -i tori      b. Kirei -na uti
   beautiful bird            clean house
   *beautiful's bird          *house's clean

Many proposals: AMs as complementizers, semantic conjunctions (or “meet” operators), type-shifters, articles, heads of ModP, PredP or deP/noP/etc; even grammatically functionless elements, inserted for purely phonological reasons.

In this talk I argue:
- the nature of AMs is clarified by the family of Iranian languages, which show rich variation in nominal structure.
- AMs are fruitfully assimilated to “reverse Ezafe” particles, as exemplified by the Caspian languages Glaki and Mazandaran.
- Ezafe particles are essentially case-related elements, that appear when the elements they co-occur with have noun-like properties.
- Conclusion: AMs is essentially a case-related phenomenon.

I briefly sketch a theory of DP structure that executes some of these ideas technically.

1.0 Iranian Languages: A Very Brief Survey
For current purposes I will divide the Iranian languages into three groups: Ezafe languages, Reverse Ezafe languages, and non-Ezafe languages.

1.1 Ezafe Languages
Ezafe occurs in Modern Persian (Farsi), Kurdish (Sorani, Kurmanji), Zazaki/Dimili and Hawrami/Gorani. Basic pattern: [+N] heads are followed by complements & modifiers; when the latter are themselves nominal, Ezafe particle (EZ) occurs between, cliticized to the preceding element:

6. a. N -EZ NP/AP/PP/nonfinite CP
    b. A -EZ NP
    c. Q -EZ NP (for some Qs)
    d. P -EZ NP (for some Ps)

Farsi (and Sorani Kurdish) exhibits the simplest form of Ezafe; the only variation in EZ is phonological (é/yé):

7. (N-EZ NP)
   a. del-é sang
      heart-EZ stone
      ‘stone heart'
   b. manzel-é John
      house-EZ John
      ‘John’s house'
   c. shahr-é Tehran
      city-EZ Tehran
      ‘Tehran city'
   d. Ali-é Ghozati
      Ali-EZ Ghozati
      ‘Ali Ghozati'
   e. taxrib-é shahr
      destruction-EZ city
      ‘destruction of the city'
   f. hordan-é áb
      drinking-EZ water
      ‘drinking of water'
   g. forunshandé-yé ketáb
      seller-EZ books
      ‘seller of books'
   i. otaq-é besyar kucik
      room-EZ very small
      ‘very small room'
   j. ketáb-é sabz-é jaleb
      room-EZ green-EZ interesting
      ‘interesting green book'

8. Complements of As
   a. aheq-é Hæsæn
      in love-EZ Hasan
      ‘in love with Hasan'
   b. negæran-e bæche
      worried-EZ child
      ‘worried about the child'
c. montæzer-e Godot waiting-EZ Godot ‘waiting for Godot’ (A-EZ NP)

(9) Partitives
a. tamâm-é sherkathá all-EZ companies ‘all/the-totality-of companies’ (Q-EZ NP)
b. tamâm-é-l-n sherkathá all-EZ-the companies ‘all/ the-totality-of the companies’ (Q-EZ NP)

(10) Finite and Reduced RCs
a. marde [ke Nanazzo mibine ] the man REL Nanaz sees ‘the man who sees Nanaz’ (N FRC)
b. sandalro [ke madarbozorg mibine ] the chair REL Grandmother sees ‘the chair that Grandmother sees’ (N FRC)
c. in javân-e [ az suis bar gašte ] this young-EZ from SW ‘back turn’ ‘this young man back from Switzerland’ (N-EZ RRC)
d. aks-e [ĉâp šode dar ruznáme] photo-EZ publication become in newspaper ‘the photo published in the newspaper’ (N-EZ RRC)


(14) Complements of As
a. Haæsæn-á aashiq Hasan-REZ in love ‘in love with Hasan’ (NP-REZ N)
b. zak-á negarun child-REZ worried ‘worried about the child’ (NP-REZ A)
c. Gudut-á muntazir Godot-REZ waiting ‘waiting for Godot’ (NP-REZ A)

(15) Complements of Ps
a. divaa-á sar wall-REZ top ‘up the wall’ (NP-REZ P)
b. vaasæt-á otaq center-REZ room ‘in the middle of the room’ (NP-REZ P)
c. istaxr-á dowri pool-REZ around ‘around the pool’ (NP-REZ P)
d. daryaa(á) kinaar-á xowne sea(á)-REZ next-REZ house ‘house beside the sea’ (NP-REZ P-REZ N)

Mazandarani (Sari)
(16) a. dâr-á sar tree-REZ top ‘top of the tree’ (NP-REZ N)
b. ‘asb-e kale horse-REZ head ‘horse’s head’ (NP-REZ N)
c. farhâd-á xâxer-e hemnsâye Farhad-REZ sister-REZ neighbor ‘neighbor of Farhad’s sister’ (NP-REZ N)
d. me berâr-á rafeq-á ketâb 1sg brother-REZ friend-REZ book ‘book of my brother’s friend’ (NP-REZ PN)

(17) a. gat-á sere big-REZ house ‘big house’ (AP-REZ N)
b. belend-á ku high-REZ mountain ‘tall mountain’ (AP-REZ N)

c. montæzer-e Godot waiting-EZ Godot ‘waiting for Godot’ (A-EZ NP)

1.2 Reverse Ezafe Languages
In Gilaki and Mazandarani, the Farsi/Sorani pattern generally inverts. Compls & mods precede their [+N] heads, and link via an invariant “reverse Ezafe” particle (REZ), which again cliticizes to the preceding element (12).
c. kučik-e ‘otāq  
small-REZ room ‘small room’ (AP-REZ N)
d. lāqer-e sefid-ru-e zanā  
thin-REZ pale-face-REZ woman ‘thin, pale-faced woman’ (AP-REZ AP-REZ N)

(18) a. dār-e ben  
tree-REZ under ‘under a tree’ (NP-REZ P)
b. me ‘otāq-e dele  
1sg room-REZ in ‘in my room’ (NP-REZ P)
c. me ‘berār-e dembāl  
1sg brother-REZ after ‘after my brother’ (NP-REZ P)

(19) Finite and Reduced RCs (Gilaki)

a. u mard-e [ki Hasan (diru) bide]  
that man-REL that Hasan (yesterday) seePST3sg  
‘the man that Hasan saw (yesterday)’ (N FRC)
b. i [suyis-e ji vagarse]  
this [SW-REZ from back-turn REZ?] young  
‘this young (person) returned from Switzerland’ (RRC-REZ N)

(20) Farsi  
Caspian

a. N -EZ RRC  
b.’ RRC -REZ N  “Mirror Inverse”

b. N FRC  
a.’ N FRC  Identical!

1.3 Non-Ezafe Languages: Pashto

Pashto is not considered to show Ezafe & generally resembles English. Numerals, demonstratives, attributive As are prenominal; RCs are postnominal:

(21) a. pindzə paghla  
five girls ‘five girls’ (20)

b. agha moţar  
that car ‘that car’

(22) a. wagay alak  
hungry boy ‘hungry boy’ (20)

b. agha njalañ [tse kamis akhli]  
that girl who dress bought ‘that girl who bought a dress’

Pashto distinguishes 2 numbers (S/P), 2 genders (M/F), 2 cases (Direct/Oblique). Attributive As agree in these features according to membership in one of 4 declension classes (tag- ‘thirsty’ below is class 2):

(23) a. [tagay alak] wobə ghwārī  
thirsty boy water want3S  
MDS ‘the thirsty boy wants water’

b. [tagi alokān] wobə ghwārī  
thirsty boys water want3P  
MDP ‘the thirsty boys want water’

c. [de tagi alak] khwāl wachā wa  
of thirsty boy mouth dry was  
MOS ‘the thirsty boy’s mouth was dry’

d. [de tagi alokān] khwāl wachā wa  
of thirsty boys mouths dry were  
MOP ‘the thirsty boys’ mouths were dry’

e. [tage peghla] wobə ghwārī  
thirsty girl water want3S  
FDS ‘the thirsty girl wants water’

f. [de tage peghla khwāl] wachā wa  
of thirsty girl mouth dry was  
FOS ‘the thirsty girl’s mouth was dry’

g. [de tage peghla khwāl] wachā wa  
of thirsty girls mouths dry were  
FOP ‘the thirsty girls’ mouths were dry’

2.0 The Nature of EZ & REZ

Basic questions:

- What are EZ/REZ?
- What governs their occurrence in Farsi/Sorani and Gilkaki/Mazandarani, and their apparent absence in Pashto?

Reconsider English genitives. These come in two forms:

- prepositional genitives in of  
  ‘Saxon’ genitives in ’s
  - strictly postnominal (24a)  
  - (almost) strictly prenominal (24b)

(24) a. neighbor of John  
b. John ’s neighbor

(25) a. [N drinking] of water  
b. [N seller] of books  
c. [A envious] of Max  
d. [A desirous] of money

(26) a. [N letter] of yesterday  
b. [N heart] of stone (cf. stone heart)  
c. [N thing] of beauty (cf. beautiful thing)  
  (cf. book that you can choose)

d. [N field] of blue (cf. blue field)

e. [N book] of your choosing

(27) a. [pp because of those problems]
  (cf. [p by [N cause]] )

b. [pp in spite of that fact]
  (cf. [p in [N spite]] )

c. [pp in front of that building]
  (cf. [p in [N front]] )

d. [pp inside of that box]
  (cf. [p in [N side]] )

Of is widely analyzed as present for case reasons: nominal [(+N)] elements don’t check case on nominal comp/ mods. Of is inserted to do this.
2.1 Ezafe: Super Of!


(28) a. N -EZ NP/AP
    b. A -EZ NP

(29) Partitive-Q -EZ NP

(30) a. N *-EZ FRC
    b. N -EZ RRC

What about P, which is not usually thought of as [+N]?

(31) Class 1 Ps (reject Ezafe)
    a. be (*-yé) Hæsæn
to (-EZ) Hasan
    to Hasan
    b. æz (*-é) Hæsæn
from (-EZ) Hasan
    ‘from Hasan’
    c. ba (*-yé) Hæsæn
with (-EZ) Hasan
    ‘with Hasan’
    d. dær (*-é) Hæsæn
in/at/on (-EZ) Hasan
    ‘in/at/on Hasan’

(32) Class 2 Ps (permit or require Ezafe)
    a. zir (-é) miz
under (-EZ) table
    ‘under the table’
    b. ru (-yé) miz
on (-EZ) table
    ‘on the table’
    c. bala (-yé) divar
up (-EZ) wall
    ‘up the wall’
    d. jelo (*-yé) Hæsæn
in front of (-EZ) Hasan
    ‘in front of Hasan’

(33) a. beyn-é mæn-o to
between-EZ you and me
    ‘between you and me’
    b. væsæl-é otaq
center-EZ room
    ‘in the middle of the room’
    c. dor-é estæx
around-EZ pool
    ‘around the pool’
    d. bæqæl-é dær
by-EZ door
    ‘by the door’

(34) a. ræft bala (-yé deræxt)
went up -EZ tree
    ‘went up (the tree)’

Conclusion: Class 2 Ps are nominal in nature, as suggested by paraphrases (jelo ‘in-front,’ væsæl ‘in-the-middle’). They are comparable to the English complex PPs like in-spite or because; optionality of Ezafe in (32a-d) is comparable to of optionality in (23d) By contrast, Class 1 Ps are true [-N]'s. Hence no Ezafe.

Samiian's Hypothesis: Ezafe is a clitic, preposition-like element ("Super-Off") that checks case on the following element, and cliticizes onto the preceding one:


b. A [EZP -EZ NP]
c. P [EZP -EZ NP]

(36) a. *[IN man] of tail (cf. tall man, man of (great) height)
b. *[IN field] of nearby (cf. nearby field)
c. *[IN temperature] of inside (cf. temperature inside, temperature of the interior)

Karimi and Brame (1986): Ezafe lgs are "super-nominal": Ns, As, many Ps, reduced/nonfinite RCs are in fact all categorially nouns and require case-checking. By contrast, finite CP compls/mods, true Ps and PPs do not.

2.2 Reverse Ezafe Languages: Super 's!

(37) a. neighbor of John
    b. John 's neighbor

(38) a. *?water 's [IN drinking] (cf. drinking of water)
b. *books 's [IN seller] (cf. seller of books)
c. *Max 's [IN envious] (cf. envious of Max)
d. *money 's [IN desirous] (cf. desirous of money)
Imagine Ezafelike languages that are “super-nominal” - As, Ps, reduced/nonfinite RCs are essentially Ns and require case-checking - but which generalize the ‘s genitive strategy – “Super ‘s’!

Proposal: REZ-languages are “Super ‘s” languages. REZ is a generalized version of prenominal genitive marking.

Follow-up Questions: But what is REZ’s? (‘Lots of possibilities (39).) And why are REZ’s phrases prenominal, in contrast to postnominal EZ/of-phrases?

(37) a. [N water drinking] c. [N Max envy]
    b. [N book seller] d. [N money desire]

(38) a. yesterday ‘s letter (cf. letter of yesterday)
    b. stone (‘s) heart/stoney heart (cf. heart of stone)
    c. blue (‘s) field (cf. field of blue)
    d. *your choosing (‘s) book (cf. book of your choosing)

2.2.1 Case Concord. Traditional grammars standardly describe Ns as being inflected for case and q-features, with attributive elements (including articles and adjectives) as agreeing with them, or exhibiting “concord”.

(40) *all.FEM.PL.NOM bessar briar rnyju all.FEM.PL.NOM these.FEM.PL.NOM three.FEM.PL.NOM new.FEM.PL.NOM kennigar theories.FEM.PL.NOM ‘all these three new theories’

Implication: Case is “real” on N, but present merely as “agreement” on the rest.

(41) [D AP AP N] Concordial Inflection

This view accords with syntactic analyses of case as a probe-goal relation. Probe scans c-command domain, seeking the inflectional values on its goal (N), agreeing with various elements on the path between them:

Note that to agree with N on this picture, an element α must lie between the case probe (T/v) and case goal (N):

(42) a. [T/v . . . [a . . . [ . . . N ]]]
    b. [ . . . T/v . . . N ] . . . α
    c. [ T/v . . . [N . . . . α]]

(43) a. [T/v . . . [a . . . [. . . N]]] √
    b. [ α . . . [T/v . . . N ] . . . a] × (α lies outside T/v’s domain)
    c. [ T/v . . . [N . . . . α]] × (scan terminates before reaching α)

2.2.2 Concordializers. Languages have devices for converting items that are valued for case to ones that merely agree for case – “adjectivalization”/“concordialization”.

(44) a. ‘knih-a Jan-a book Jan-GENSG ‘book of Jan’s’
    b. Jan-ow-a knih-a ‘possessive adjective’
       knih-a Jan-POSS-NOMSGFEM book-NOMSGFEM ‘Jan’s book’

The possessive (Janow) is adjectival: it exhibits the same agreement forms as attributive adjectives, and occurs in the same position, preceding N.

Suppose one had a “super-nominal” language. Strategies for case:
- deploy a generalized case checker, allowing case by checking/assignment.
- deploy a generalized “concordializer,” allowing case by agreement.

Constructions of the first sort would be complement-like, constructions of the second sort would be attributive.

Claim: The first strategy corresponds to EZ lgs: -EZ is “super of”, a generalized checker/assigner. The second corresponds to REZ lgs: REZ is “super ‘s”, a generalized adjectivalizer/ concordializer.
(45) a. N [EzP -EZ XP] -EZ checks case on NP (or DP) checking
b. XP-REZ N -REZ adjectivalizes NP (or DP), allowing agreement with N agreement

2.3 Is One Pattern More Basic?

If the above is correct, EZ and REZ lgs represent “pure” versions of what we find “mixed” in English. English contains of- and ‘s-genitives (46a,b). EZ lgs contain only the former (46c). REZ lgs contain only the latter (46d).

(46) a. a house of John’s (English)
b. John’s house

c. manzel-e John (Farsi)

house-EZ John

d. John-e xowne (Gilaki)

John-REZ house

In TG, the two constructions have not been viewed symmetrically; the ‘s-genitive has been analyzed as deriving from an of-genitive structure by movement (47a,b). Is the same true in REZ lgs? Is prenominal position derived (48a,b)?

(47) a. ______ house [of John’s] [John’s]

b. John’s house [John’s]

(48) a. ______ xowne [John-e] [John-e]

house John-REZ

b. John-e xowne [John-e]

2.3.1 Clausal Modifiers and Complements. Recall that Farsi is “positionally consistent” in its treatment of clausal mods & comps to N, whereas Caspian lgs are not. In Farsi, all are postnominal: nonfinite, reduced relatives (RRCs) link via Ezafe (49), whereas finite relatives (FRCs) don’t (50).

(49) a. in javan-e [az suis bar gašte] this young-EZ from SW back turn ‘this young man back from Switzerland’

b. N -EZ RRC

(50) a. marde [ke Nanazo mibine] the man REL Nanaz sees ‘the man that sees Nanaz’

b. N FRC

Caspian lgs partially follow this pattern: RRCs link via Reverse Ezafe (51) and FRCs don’t (52). BUT: only RRCs appear prenominal. Caspian FRCs appear postnominal, just as in Farsi. Hence EZ-REZ lgs are not simple mirror images. Why?

(51) a. ‘i [suyis-e ji vagarse] juvon this [SW-REZ from back-turn REZ?] young ‘this young (person) returned from Switzerland’

b. N REZ

(52) a. u mard-e [ki Hasan (diru) bide] that man-REL that Hasan (yesterday) seePST3sg ‘the man that Hasan saw (yesterday)’

b. N FRC

Case assigners (of) and concordializers are not equivalent. If postnominal position is basic, the first will allow a case-dependent element (XP) to remain in situ (53a). The second will not (53b). Movement to an agreement position is also required (53c).

(53) a. N [of/EZ XP] (agreement is impossible here)

b. N [XP-/s/-REZ] /

c. XP-/s/-REZ N [XP-/s/-REZ] /

But for non-case-dependent items like FRCs, neither a checker/assigner nor a concordializer is required. These can occupy base position “unassisted” (50b)(52b). Since FRCs occur in the same postnominal position in Farsi & Gilaki, it is natural to take this as the base position for both.

2.3.2 Pashto Again. Pashto is “non-Ezafe” insofar as APs and RRCs occur prenominally without EZ/REZ and agree with N (recall 21-23). BUT Pashto exhibits Ezafe-like possesives. As in EZ lgs, Pashto possesives are prenominal, marked by a particle (de). But in EZ lgs the particle precedes the possessor (54a-e).

(54) a. [de asad] [neway] mojar of Asad new car ‘Asad’s new car’/a new car of Asad’s’

b. [de mêz] andâže of table length ‘table’s length’/‘length of the table’

c. [de ywa] ywashí of cow meat ‘beef’/‘cow’s meat’/‘meat of the cow’

d. [de Yásir-ja] nídal of Yaser seeing/visiting ‘visiting (of) Yaser’

e. [de mêz] landé of table under ‘under the table’/‘the table’s under(neath)’
Pashto possessives resemble “fronted Farsi,” where “EzP” has raised (55):

(55) a. \[ N \quad [EzP \quad EZ \quad NP] \]

b. \[ [EzP \quad EZ \quad NP] \quad N \quad [EzP \quad EZ \quad NP] \]

c. mojar [de Asad ]

d. [ de Asad] mojar [de Asad ]

Evidence for Pashto possessor movement: PPs whose objects contain a possessor. Poss occurs, not at the edge of NP/DP (56a), but at the edge of PP (56b)! Pashto renders English with Asad’s knife as “Asad’s with knife” (57a). This extends to possessor-like, locative constructions (54e).

(56) a. [pp P \[ de NP \quad N \quad ] \(P) \]

b. de NP [pp P \[ N \quad ] \(P) \]

(57) a. de asad [pp pa \quad chāqû ]

b. de asad [pp le \quad newi mojar na ]

c. [de kitébuna] [pp tar \quad maynț ,]

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(58) a. \[ de NP \quad [pp \quad P \quad […] de NP … ] \]

b. \[ NP/DP \quad [ de NP ] \quad N \quad [ de NP ] \]

c. \[ de NP \quad [pp \quad P \quad […] de NP … ] \]

3.0 DP Shells.

An idea widely pursued in early generative grammar was that nominal modifiers were selected by the article (Art), either before it combined with N (59a), or at the same time (59b). In other words they constituted arguments of Art/D.

(59) a. **The ARTICLE-S Analysis**

b. **The ASPECTS Analysis**
Suppose:
- so-called nominal complements project in the low position of CP, as complements of D
- (interactive) nominal modifiers project in the low position of CP, as complements of D (Keenan and Stavi’s (1986) “complex D hypothesis”) just as [*N] args of v/V require case, [*N] args of d/D require case

Consequences:
- Mods/compls that don’t bear Case features (CPs, true PPs) can stay in situ
- Mods/compls that do bear Case features (APs, XPs) must move to a site where agreement is possible, unless some other means is available.

(64) \[ d' \text{ the/THE} \, \text{[DP friends [D' t [CP who have blue-eyes]]]] \]
\[ \text{[pp with blue-eyes]} \]
\[ \text{[AP blue-eyed]} \]
\[ \text{[XP John ‘s] \]}

(65) Ezafe - Farsi
- a. in ketâb - é jâleb
  DEF book -EZ interesting ‘the interesting book.’
- b. [dP...[d' in [DP ketâb [D' t [EzP -é jâleb]]]]
  \[ \text{CASE \]}

(66) a. in marde [ke Nanazo mibine]
  DEF man that Nanaz sees ‘the man that sees Nanaz’
- b. [dP...[d' in [DP marde [D' t [ ke Nanazo mibine]]]]
  \[ \text{CASE \]}

(67) Reverse Ezafe - Gilaki
- a. u surx-\text{-\text{-}EZ} gul
  that red-REZ flower ‘that red flower’
- b. [dP...[d' u [DP gul [D' t [RezP surx -\text{-\text{-}}]]]]
  \[ \text{CASE \]}

(68) a. u mard-\text{-REL} [ki Hasan bide]
  that man-REL that Hasan seePST3sg ‘the man that Hasan saw’
- b. [dP...[d' u [DP mard [D' t [CP -\text{-\text{-}ki Hasan bide]]]]
  \[ \text{CASE \]}

4.0 EZ/REZ Elsewhere

As noted above, many world languages show attributive markers, with distributions similar to Iranian. [*N] prenominal modifiers in Chinese exhibit the particle de:

(59) a. Zhangsan de xiezi
    Zhangsan DE shoe
    ‘American DE bank
b. meiguo de yinhang
    ‘American bank(s)’

c. wo de huaping
    red DE vase
    ‘red vase(s)’

This construction is highly reminiscent of -REZ. Li (1985) notes an interesting split in “PP” behavior. Some PPs don’t co-occur with de (60), but some do (61).

(60) a. ’[ cong Meiguo ] de ren
    from America man
    ‘man from America’
b. ‘[ wei ta ] de wuhui
    for him party
    ‘party for him’

c. [ Zhuozi –shang ] de shu
    table -on book
    ‘book on the table’
    ‘book in/at the house’

(61) a. [ Zhuozi –shang ] de shu
    table -on book
    ‘book on the table’
    ‘book in/at the house’

b. [ Jia -li ] de wuhui
    ‘party for him’

Li (1985): the boldfaced items in (60) are true PPs, but those in (61) are locative nominals (‘table-surface’, ‘house-interior’). The latter occur freely with place nouns mian/bian/tou side, which can in fact head subjects:

(62) a. Zhuozi -shang (mian/bian/tou) you shu
    table -on side have book
    ‘There is a book on the table’
    ‘There is a book on the table’
    ‘I write words on the table’

b. Wo zai zhuozi-shang (mian/bian/tou) xie zi
    at table -on side write word
    ‘I write words on the table’
    ‘The upper side is clean’

Consider also RCs. These occur prenominally and uniformly with de:

(63) a. [ cong Meiguo lai ] de ren
    from America come man
    ‘man from America’
    ‘party thrown for him’
b. wo mai de shu
    I buy DE book
    ‘the book(s) which I bought’
Li (1985) and Tsai (1995) observe that clauses have the same basic distribution as nominals, occurring after V and P – in case-checking positions:

(64) a. Wo dui [ta bu neng lai] hen bu gaoxing
  I to he not can come very not happy
  ‘I am not happy about (the fact that) he cannot come.’
b. Wo dui [zhejian shi] hen bu gaoxing
  I to this matter very not happy
  ‘I am not happy about this matter.’
c. Ta quan ta [bu yao lai]
  he persuade him not need come
  ‘He persuaded him not to come.’
d. Ta quan ta [sheme shi]
  he persuade him what matter
  ‘What did he persuade him of?’

Li’s Generalization: de occurs uniformly with nominal elements.
Li’s Hypothesis: de is a case-marking element.

Chinese as a REZ Language: This pattern strongly resembles that in EZ/REZ lgs: many elements that are non-nominal elsewhere are nominal in Chinese. De has the distribution of a case-related element. (see also Cheung 20006a,b).

One deviation from the Caspian pattern: Chinese has no finite/postnominal RCs. In effect, Chinese RCs behave uniformly like Caspian RRCs. This is perhaps unsurprising since Chinese lacks tense, and any marking of finiteness. Maybe Chinese RCs should be seen as parallel to Turkish

Summary

- Attributive markers are widespread and puzzling, however variation with
  Iranian lgs. places them within a clearer parametric context.
- Prenominal AMs in some Iranian lgs. (REZs) are plainly related to
  postnominal Ezafe elements (EZs) in others.
- My proposal (following Samian 1994): EZ and REZ are case elements.
  EZ is a generalized case assigner/checker ("Super of") and REZ is a
  generalized concordizer ("Super ‘s")
- Generalizing from English genitives, its plausible to think these variations are
dervivable from a single source, with Ezafe lgs. displaying the base, post-
nominal position for nominal compis & mods...
- The fundamental parameter (following Karimi and Brame 1986) is the super-
nominal character of these languages: the fact that many elements that are
non-nominal elsewhere are projected as Ns.
- Chinese de seems a good candidate for a REZ language. There are many others.

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