

"Prezafe" to "Parizafe": Parallel Development of Izafe in Germanic

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Abstract : Izafe is a construction typically found in Iranian languages, which is attested already in Old Avestan and Old Persian. The narrow sense of izafe can be described as the linear structure of [NP pt Modifier] with pt as an uninflectable particle or clitic. The history of the Iranian izafe has the following stages: Stage I: Verbless nominal relative clauses, Stage II: Verbless nominal relative clauses with Case Attraction; and Stage III: Narrow sense izafe. Previous works suggest that embedded relative clauses and correlatives in other Indo-European languages might be relevant for the source of the izafe-construction. Stage I, as the precursor of narrow sense izafe, or so-called "prezafe" is not found in branches other than Iranian. Comparable cases have been demonstrated in Vedic, Greek, and some rare cases in Latin. This suggests "prezafe" may date back very early in Indo-European. Izafe-like structures are not attested in branches such as Balto-Slavic and Germanic, but Balto-Slavic definite adjectives and Germanic weak adjectives can be compared to the verbless nominal relative clauses and analyzed as developments of verbless relative clauses parallel to izafe in Indo-Iranian, as are called "parizafe" in this paper. In this paper, the verbless RC is compared with Germanic weak adjectives. The Germanic languages used n-stem derivation to form determined derivatives, which are semantically equivalent to the appositive RC and eventually became weak adjectives. To be more precise, starting from an adjective "X", the Germanic weak adjective structure is formed as [det X-n], literally "the X", with the meaning "the X one", which can be shown to be semantically equivalent to "the one which is X". In this paper, Stage I suggest that, syntactically, the Germanic verbless relative clauses went through CP to DP relabeling like Iranian, based on the following observations: (1) Germanic relative pronouns (e.g., Gothic saei, Old English se) and determiners (e.g., Gothic sa, Old English se) are both from the *so/to pronominal roots; (2) the semantic equivalence of Germanic weak adjectives and the izafe structure. This may suggest that Germanic may also have had "Prezafe" Stages I and II. In conclusion: "Prezafe" in Stage I may have been a phenomenon of the proto-language, Stage II was the result of independent parallel developments and then each branch had its own strategy.

Keywords : izafe, relative clause, Germanic, Indo-European

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